

Gloria Sosa: [00:02](#) So thank you so much, Elizabeth, for giving me this time to talk to you and, um, we'll get started. So can you please share with me your preferred gender pronouns and during what years were you Cal State LA?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [00:15](#) Yeah. Um, pronouns, she, her and I started at Cal State LA in 2007, the summer of 2007. Um, and I did my bachelor's there at my master's, my teaching credential. So I probably finished my time there not too long ago, like 20, Jesus, like 2017-18 <laugh>.

Gloria Sosa: [00:47](#) It was a quite while.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [00:49](#) Yeah, I was there for a long time. I took a break in between, but overall Okay. I think I was there for that. Okay.

Gloria Sosa: [00:55](#) That's a good amount of time.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [00:57](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:58](#) Yes. Um, where were you born and raised?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [01:01](#) So I was born in Puebla, Mexico. Um, my mother brought me and a few other siblings over when I was four. And so I, the rest of the time I've been here raised in L.A., Boyle Heights, East LA area.

Gloria Sosa: [01:17](#) Okay. Were you, did you always live in, around that area? The Boyle Heights area?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [01:22](#) Yeah. Yeah. Um, it wasn't until recently, about five years ago that I got the chance to live in, um, in Long Beach for a while, then Alhambra <laugh>, then back here to East LA.

Gloria Sosa: [01:36](#) Okay. So you're back at East LA.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [01:39](#) I'm back in East LA.

Gloria Sosa: [01:40](#) Okay. Nice. Um, Could you describe your current occupation?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [01:47](#) I'm a sixth grade math science teacher.

Gloria Sosa: [01:51](#) Oh, nice, nice. So, um, what was your major at Cal State LA?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [01:57](#) Um, I always wanted to go into teaching, so mm-hmm. <affirmative>, I was part of the, oh, I forgot what they call it. Arts and letters. Arts and letters. Um, so liberal arts. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And then when I went back for my Master's, that

was in, um, math education. Mm-hmm. And then for the credential, well they do a, like a multiple subject credentials, so.

- Gloria Sosa: [02:22](#) Okay. So you can teach basically any grade school.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [02:27](#) Yeah.
- Gloria Sosa: [02:28](#) Whatever.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [02:29](#) I dunno, K -8. I think they have it as.
- Gloria Sosa: [02:32](#) Right. That's a well, so interesting. Okay. Um, so can you share with me your educational history? Meaning, so, you came here when you were 4 years old, right?
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [02:45](#) Yeah.
- Gloria Sosa: [02:45](#) Okay. So maybe start there. <laugh>, How was that like? Right.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [02:50](#) Oh, interesting. Ok.
- Gloria Sosa: [02:51](#) Yeah. So let's start there. Let's just start from the beginning.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [02:54](#) Well, um, arriving here. I enrolled, my mom enrolled me at a LAUSD school in the neighborhood. Um, so I started kindergarten here. Um, I was transitioning, right, learning English, right?
- Gloria Sosa: [03:08](#) Mm-hmm.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [03:08](#) And I think I captured it very quickly just because I was so young. Um, right. So I've been in LAUSD for throughout, even now. I am a teacher now at LAUSD. Um, After elementary I attended a middle school, same system, high school at Roosevelt <laugh>. And, uh, for a while I did go to DBM, that's a magnet school in Downtown LA. And then after that, um, I graduated from Roosevelt though. So I, I had a friend who one day came up and it was our senior year and said, oh, let's go to college. And I didn't really know what that was, um, but she said it was school, so I've always liked school. So I said, okay. Uh, we ended up going to Riverside, um, and there I came to realize, you know, I need a social security number, I need to work. And so staying there was not sustainable. Um, so I came back. I knew I wanted to pursue higher education, um, but I also knew my limitation. So I looked into ELAC (East Los Angeles Community College), and they're at ELAC. Um, I started making plans to transfer. Um, the closest thing that became more

accessible was Cal State LA because it was, you know, in the neighborhood easy to get to. Um, and back then I was working, um, at a clothing store, so that made it, that made it easy to commute between both. Um, Went to Cal LA uh, right after ELAC. Um, and then that's where I've been <laugh>.

Gloria Sosa: [04:53](#) Okay. Yes. So, um, always tell you my living cost, right?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [04:59](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [05:00](#) So, um, so let's say you were, uh, you did elementary school here in, um, middle school. At what point did you learn about your undocumented status?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [05:12](#) I think I was towards, um, in my high school years. In my high school years. Uh, mainly as a senior, I think it was. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. It was when, when my friends start talking about college and we started talking about filling out applications, you know, and then we saw that, that requirement there, <laugh>.

Gloria Sosa: [05:35](#) How did you feel? What were the feelings that you had at the moment when you knew that? Because you always knew you, you like school and you wanted to go on to higher education, but, um, what were the feelings that crossed your mind at that time?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [05:52](#) You know, um, I wasn't fully aware of being undocumented. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, like, to me it was just like I was missing. I didn't have a number. So I figured, okay, well maybe later I get a number. You know, to me that that's what it was. You know, cuz you, you're exposed to what an idea is. So I figure it's like a school ID. No, it didn't amount to much to me. I think it was not until I, I moved out with my friend. We moved out to Riverside and we tried to go to school there, and I think it was at that moment where I saw, I saw part of the limitation, but still not surmounting to what it really became later mm-hmm. <affirmative> as I became more aware. Um, so we came back here, I came back home. She actually graduated from, from UCR. Mm-hmm. But I came back home and I started, uh, I started thinking about school. Um, I did have a mentor because in high school there was a program called like Salud, Jovens por la Salud, I think it was called mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And this woman had talked about college back then. And so I remember her and I reached out to her. Um, she told me I needed a social security number to enroll at school. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Um, she might have had a connection at Cal State LA or something. And she had worked with another student who was

in my situation and so she proposed for me to meet with someone, I don't know, I guess someone she had connections with. And we mm-hmm. <affirmative>, we talked about going to college. Um, there was a way, I don't know what that way was. We never really explored further, uh, because I was cautious. I wanted to make sure that I was following the rules. Um, and so just me not having that social security number mm-hmm. <affirmative> it, it didn't, it didn't, it didn't make me feel comfortable to go along with the application. So I, so I stopped, um, and I let that opportunity go. And so then the idea of community college popped in my head, um mm-hmm. <affirmative>, and again, I knew I didn't have the social security number. Um, I met with an advisor there and I remember them asking, um, like sending me right to the financial aid office afterwards mm-hmm. <affirmative> and talking to me about EOP (Early Outreach Program) and so forth. And the same topic came, came to mind, like the lack of social security number. Right. Um, luckily I eventually met with an advisor who, who very, um, very intentionally told me to go to the EOP office and just do, you know, fill out the application and don't answer, like, don't offer more information than it was needed. So I went there and I, you know, filled out the application.

- Gloria Sosa: [08:35](#) And this is a ELAC?
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [08:36](#) This is a ELAC. I put my, um, my student ID number under the social security.
- Gloria Sosa: [08:44](#) Do you remember what year was this?
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [08:46](#) Yeah, it must have been, um, my god, 2000, I'm trying to track back <laugh> track back 2007. So five, four, maybe four, 2004.
- Gloria Sosa: [08:56](#) Wow, okay.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [08:57](#) Yeah. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So I go there and I mm-hmm. <affirmative> and I fill out the application and, um, I don't know, it just, um, it just worked out that whoever, there must have been some understanding or some some acknowledging of the limitations that students like me were facing. And they, they accepted my application through, um, EOP and um, that helped a lot. Right. Because they offered a bus pass and they offered a, I think it was like 200, \$300 at that time to, uh, for books and tuition. And so that helped some. Um, and then the rest of it, I just, I worked, I worked all day on the weekends.
- Gloria Sosa: [09:42](#) So the application was to enroll at the EOP program?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [09:46](#) Yeah. For, for supports, yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [09:49](#) Oh, okay. So, um, let's backtrack a little. So during high school, you had a mentor you mentioned, right? So was this the first, um, I guess, um, was it a part, like a school stuff, this mentor?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [10:02](#) You know, it wasn't necessarily about college. I think they, there, I, I think the, the program's goal was to orient kids into different careers.

Gloria Sosa: [10:14](#) Okay.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [10:14](#) For some reason I lacked, I wasn't conscious of that. To me it was like a, an opportunity to earn money because it's a summer program, but an opportunity to have fun with other, other youth. Um, so I don't think I was thinking that far ahead in that sense. Um, you know, and it all goes back to what you see the greatest need in your family is, you know, in monetary stability was one for my family. And so just the opportunity to make some money on in the summer for me to have that power to do that. I think that's what, that's what I had in mind. I didn't see beyond until a lot later in life.

Gloria Sosa: [10:55](#) So, in what year did you graduate from high school?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [10:58](#) 2001.

Gloria Sosa: [11:01](#) 2001. Okay. So then you said you move out to Riverside to maybe go to UCR? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Okay. That didn't work. So, um, so the, the mentor that you had in high school, was that the first person that you disclosed your status to in the system?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [11:18](#) Yes, I did disclose my status to her, but I didn't do it during high school. I did it, um, I did it after coming back from ucr, which was after graduation day.

Gloria Sosa: [11:29](#) Okay. But you never attended UCR?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [11:31](#) I ne- I never attended. I went to their orientation, like we saw the campus. It was exciting, but, but no, I just, it wasn't, it didn't make sense.

Gloria Sosa: [11:42](#) Right, right. So, okay. So then you, something came into your head and into your mind, and then you decided to go to community college. What was that? What, what made you change that? Um, because when you're in survival mode, you

feel like you need to survive, right? Yeah. Like you said, whatever your family needs. So what changed?

- Elizabeth Aguil...: [12:07](#) Yeah. You know, um, it wasn't Roosevelt, but I had gone to this middle school, this, uh, high school in, um, in Downtown LA and I think it served, it served middle class kids, <laugh>. So I was, uh, I joined their magnet program, so I was able to get a bus to pick me up from my Boyle Heights area and take me there. Um, and I think there, I started noticing social classes.
- Gloria Sosa: [12:36](#) Right.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [12:37](#) And, um, and I made friends. And unfortunately I couldn't continue there because as I said before, my, my family needed money. And so I had a job. And, um, this going back and forth was not something I could do because the school was far anyway, <laugh> Yes. Going past that. Um, so when I graduated from high school, I, from Roosevelt, I then, um, ran into some old friends from that school, from that mm-hmm. <affirmative> Middle class school. And I remember all them talking about, oh, we're gonna go here, we're gonna go here, school, school wise, university wise mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And I was like, okay. You know, that's, that's very, they're very enthusiastic and it sounds so promising, you know, to their futures. And I remember talking to, to one person specifically, um, just a bunch of friends hanging out and I, I, I heard him speak and he was so eloquent and he was using these words I had never heard before. And, um, and it just, it sparked an interest. And I said, I wanna be like him, you know, I wanna be that, like, I wanna sound like that. <laugh>. Um, and so, um, so I think that was the thing. So I came back home and I was like, okay, I am going to work this job. And I was there at this, at this job for many years. This was, um, like a cashier.
- Gloria Sosa: [14:08](#) At a store?
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [14:10](#) At a store. It's a clothing store? Yeah. Oh, okay. Store. I was there for many years. So, so whatever money I was able to get there from working like a shift from like nine to 10 on Saturday and Sunday, and, you know, like three to nine on the weekdays, all that money, that's where it went. Yeah. So I think he, he inspired me.
- Gloria Sosa: [14:37](#) It sounds like it.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [14:40](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [14:40](#) So then, um, you started doing your own research and how to enroll in community college? Or did you study?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [14:46](#) I just walked in.

Gloria Sosa: [14:47](#) You just went in!

Elizabeth Aguil...: [14:48](#) <laugh>? I just walked in. I was like, let's, let's see what this is about. I didn't know anyone else who was in my circumstance other than my siblings. Right?

Gloria Sosa: [14:56](#) Right.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [14:58](#) So it wasn't like I could call someone and say, hey, let's go do this together, or what do you know about this?

Gloria Sosa: [15:03](#) Right. So, um, if you don't mind asking me asking, how many siblings do you have?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [15:08](#) Six. Six oh five. With me it's six.

Gloria Sosa: [15:11](#) Oh okay. Okay. <laugh>. Um, the, all of them were born in Mexico?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [15:16](#) No, some of them were born here. Yeah. Okay. The younger ones. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [15:20](#) Okay. How many do you have that you that were born in here?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [15:25](#) Two.

Gloria Sosa: [15:26](#) Two. Oh, okay. So four were in the same boat.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [15:30](#) Yeah. Yeah. Going back to your question, um, about, um, about ELAC, I think during that time, um, I'm going back now, now that I remember. I think another thing that pushed me forward that was encouraging mm-hmm. <affirmative> for me to go see what, what was out there for me, it was, um, I wanna say it was AB 540, I think AB 540 had, was, was in talks at that time. And so the year that I, that I decided to go to school there, they had just announced that it was, that we were now able to pay in state tuition, which is why I knew that the job that I had, and, you know, the help from EOP was gonna be, was gonna be how I was able to make that goal come true. You know, that dream come true. But yeah. Thank you for refreshing my mind.

Gloria Sosa: [16:29](#) <laugh>. No, yes, no, no, I get it. I get that sometimes that isn't so far away, but then it's like, it just happened yesterday, so like, which one is say, yeah. Yeah. Um, so two, um, in 2001, that's when AB 540 became, um, uh, a law, but then it was implemented in the following school year. Yeah. So it must have been in 2002, the school year, 2002, 2003. So, um, you graduated 2001. So when you went to ELAC in about 2004?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [17:03](#) Yeah, 2004, 2003 because, um, again, I, I took off to Riverside and I came back. I didn't have any money. <laugh>

Gloria Sosa: [17:12](#) <laugh>. Right.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [17:14](#) In fact, I, I might have registered in like 2003, but again, I didn't have any money. So by the time I came to like pay for classes, I, I had to drop, which I forgot to drop, um, formally right through the form. And I ended up with like F's everywhere. Um, yeah. I learned the hard way. I rectified that mistake letter. I remember that my counselor was like, oh, you need to fill out this form, you know, to make sure those get taken off your record. But, but that's what happened to me. And, um, yeah. And then I went back, I went back with the vengeance and I, I had already saved some money, so I was able to pay. And, and then again, this time around EOP kicked in. And so with those two supports in place, mm. I kept going.

Gloria Sosa: [18:06](#) Yeah. So, um, let's come back to when you first entered ELAC. So you went knowing pretty much nothing, right? Yeah. Of what it was going to be. So what happened,

Elizabeth Aguil...: [18:17](#) <laugh>, I went in, I, um, I sat with the advisor. I, in fact, um, not a lot of them knew about AB 540. I think I, I experienced that moment where I had to go in and say, well, you know, I'm allowed to come because I'm here for AB 540. And then they're like, you know, what exactly? What is it? Yeah, yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [18:36](#) Oh my God.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [18:37](#) Yeah. The state of California has no, whatever, <laugh>. Um, and like literally just reiterate what I had heard on the news, right. Because I had no one else to bounce ideas off or Mm. Or any other guidance. So I, so that's what I said. I said, whatever I heard on the news, I was like there to claim it. And they were like, yeah, let me, let me, we're trying to work out some kinks and, you know, to see how we're gonna process. You know, we're new to all this, but, you know, they were helpful. And so I sat there with the advisor and we, we, I got had classes and I, I

might have attended the class, which is why they didn't drop me. And so I had to formally drop myself, which I never did until later. Um, but it was good. But I, again, I didn't know anything. I just, I shut up to class a few times and then just felt the, uh, the load of work and having to go to work mm-hmm. <affirmative> and I stopped. I stopped knowing that I would be back.

- Gloria Sosa: [19:39](#) Okay. So that wasn't back of your mind.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [19:42](#) Yeah. Oh yeah. I wanted to be like this guy, you know, <laugh>.
- Gloria Sosa: [19:46](#) Right. This eloquent person. Right. So you are about, in 2003 you registering, you mee- you dropped because you couldn't, um, the work load filled too much. Yeah. Or was it because you couldn't pay for it?
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [20:02](#) I couldn't pay for it. I couldn't pay for it, and I had to go to work.
- Gloria Sosa: [20:05](#) <laugh>. Right.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [20:06](#) Yeah.
- Gloria Sosa: [20:09](#) Okay. And then, um, tell me when you came back, you were more, um, I guess ready.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [20:16](#) Yeah, I think I, I center myself. I created a plan. I knew. I knew that the classes were gonna cost something and the books were gonna cost more. And just having, having access to EOP, that really made a difference for me. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, like, I knew, okay, if I can make, you know, this much money to cover the cost of the classes, and I can, that I can rely on EOP for the books and, and transportation. Because at the beginning I think I went in thinking, okay, I can pay the classes. But, but then as they started delivering the syllabus and, you know, talking about books that you needed to buy and school materials and all of that, I think it just, it was really overwhelming to the point where I, I said, okay, I need to stop right now and, and I'll be back.
- Gloria Sosa: [21:06](#) Right. Because at this time, there's not like the PDFs that you can get from somewhere. Right?
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [21:13](#) Yeah. I mean, with time you just, you become resourceful and you start learning how you can help yourself. I think those supports were maybe, you know, like, like, uh, instructors putting books in the library for you to check out. Like, that's not new. I'm sure they've done this before, but I didn't know that,

so, and I didn't talk about my problem. I think had I opened up and said, you know, at least to my counselor or someone, right. An advisor and said, this is how I feel. Like what supports are there in place for me to, to continue on. I maybe, but I didn't. I was very quiet. I was to myself. I, you know, I didn't make much or any friends <laugh>.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [22:00](#)

Why do you think it was that?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [22:03](#)

Um, oh, um, well, I met a, I met one friend later when I, when I went back to ELAC mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Um, he, he had a friend who he had met at LACC. And um, and he brought her over. And this friend was undocumented and she was a striver. Like, she knew where she was going and how she was getting it done. And, um, he was like, I need you to meet this person. And so we go to the li the library once, and there she is. And I open up to her about, about my status. And she was just the kindest person. We're still friends by the way. And she, um.

Gloria Sosa: [22:47](#)

Nice.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [22:48](#)

She said, I know, I know your struggle, you know, and she said, and I, and I'm there with you and mm-hmm. <affirmative>, I wanna help you, you know, I wanna help you like navigate this, this system that we're getting to know. And I said, okay, <laugh>. And, uh, we were friends since then. Um, so she would like make sure I, you know, that we were both motivated to go to class. And she was only there for one summer, um, to take a class at ELAC because it wasn't offered at LACC. And then I would see her periodically. Um, but just knowing that there was one other person who, who was who I thought one other person. Right, right,

Gloria Sosa: [23:27](#)

Right.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [23:29](#)

Um, that made me feel like, okay, my goal is tangible and I just need to stick with it.

Gloria Sosa: [23:34](#)

Yeah. So your friend ELAC knew your, your status, your legal status.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [23:39](#)

Yeah. He wasn't, he wasn't undocumented. He, he was Persian and had this, I don't even know why he was in ELAC, but why he was, I'm glad he was there because I got to.

Gloria Sosa: [23:49](#)

Right.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [23:50](#) You know, he, he served a purpose in my life.

Gloria Sosa: [23:53](#) Yeah. So you remember, um, how did you disclose your legal status to someone who I guess didn't look like you didn't speak like you?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [24:01](#) Yeah. Um, so he, I was actually in line for, for EOPNS. Um, I was in line for like, either picking up like a voucher or mm-hmm. <affirmative> or some paperwork. I'm not, I don't remember. But we were in line and it was a really long line. And, um, I needed to go to the restroom and he was standing right in front of me. And I, you know, I, I like tapped him on the shoulder and I was like, hey, you know, do you mind holding my spot? Like, I need to run? And he was like, yeah. Yeah. And so when I came back, we just started talking and um, and we went in to the office and I remember them asking him about, uh, FAFSA, like, part of that, that exchange at the counter was like, oh, did you remember to apply for financial aid? And he was like, oh yeah, here's the paperwork. And when they got to me, um, now we were side by side and they said that to me.

Gloria Sosa: [24:53](#) Right, right.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [24:55](#) And I mean, you know, I said, oh, you know, um, I haven't been able to, you know, cuz they had asked me say, more than not to say more. Right. So not been able to could, could have meant like, not yet. I don't have the time yet, whatever. But not that I can't. So.

Gloria Sosa: [25:12](#) Your counselor was the one, uh, ELAC who had, who gave you this advice, right?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [25:16](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [25:18](#) Okay.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [25:18](#) So, um, yeah. So then, um, so then I, I guess he might have waited around or something. He just, he just asked me a question, like, I don't know, I think I was just comfortable and I said, oh, you know, I can't, like, I can't, I didn't, I don't think I went into great depth about why mm-hmm. <affirmative>, I just said, I can't, I'm not, you know, I don't, I'm not there yet. Like, I don't have the paperwork yet. And then he was like, oh, okay. You know, and then we never spoke about it again, like that was it like he didn't think more of it? I didn't think more of it either, but I guess when this, when this person came into his life, he might have, cuz we were really close friends. Like we were best

friends and, and I think he might have felt like, okay, maybe she needs some guidance and the only person who might be able to offer it is this girl who, who seems to be on in the same boat.

- Gloria Sosa: [26:09](#) <laugh>. Right. Were you, were you like ashamed of telling your, your legal status or concerned about your safety?
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [26:19](#) No, I don't think I was. I wa I think I was completely oblivious. Like what it really meant, you know, that that, okay. That people could get deported. I don't, I don't think I knew that. I think I just, I knew I lacked something and it was different and things were gonna be, things were the way they are at the moment. I wasn't really thinking ahead of, ahead of time. Um, I just, it wasn't something that I was really conceptualizing.
- Gloria Sosa: [26:49](#) When, when were you able to see the full picture of what it, what mean undocumented really means?
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [26:58](#) You know, when I, when I try to open up bank account, uh, that was a very depressing moment. <laugh> I had, um, because I was working, I saved money and I, and I saw my family struggle so much that I was like, that's not gonna happen to me. You know, like I, I'm gonna change it. And, um, and I took money to the bank. And the bank, um, didn't, you know, they were like, oh, you can't open a bank account. And I was like, and that to me was like, you don't want my money. <laugh>.
- Gloria Sosa: [27:28](#) <laugh>. Right.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [27:31](#) So I think it was, it was that. It was that, that I was like, oh, wait a minute.
- Gloria Sosa: [27:35](#) Mm-hmm. <affirmative> H- how did that make you feel? That time?
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [27:39](#) Worthless.
- Gloria Sosa: [27:42](#) Okay.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [27:43](#) Yeah, it was hard.
- Gloria Sosa: [27:47](#) Did you have, um, did you have someone to, to I guess any support system at that time when you were experiencing these negative feelings?
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [27:58](#) No. <laugh>? I was all alone. <laugh>? Yeah. Yeah. No. Not yet.

Gloria Sosa: [28:04](#) You didn't share, no. Not even with your siblings.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [28:06](#) I didn't care. No. Um, no, because some of them were too young. Some of them were a lot older. Yeah. Which is weird, now. You know, you, I've learned the value of sharing your story, but I didn't do it then.

Gloria Sosa: [28:20](#) Right. Do you, do you know, uh, do you think, what do you, why do you think that was? And I know this might triggers some feelings that you, you know, some negative feelings or emotions, but it, and it's okay if you don't wanna share, but I would love to know, um, why, why do you think with that you kept so much things to yourself?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [28:42](#) I think it's because, um, I think it's because in my household there was a need for money. There was a lot of, um, instability with emotions between my parents. And I think my, my attention was there. And so while something in me wanted to drive my attention to school or anywhere else, I think to me it was survival mode. You know, as you said so before.

Gloria Sosa: [29:06](#) Right? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [29:07](#) Um, any opportunity to make money, I was like, okay, I'm on that boat, you know, and wherever that boat takes me, <laugh>, it must be good.

Gloria Sosa: [29:14](#) You jump in.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [29:15](#) Oh, I can now I can give, you know, I don't know, a hundred to my mom or like \$50 to, you know, to spend on whatever. I think that was always my focus. Like, I was very aware that my family had these limitations and I, I wanted to help. And so everything else was not, I wasn't really understanding. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [29:37](#) Not a priority maybe. Right?

Elizabeth Aguil...: [29:39](#) Yeah. Something like that. Like something like, I'm gonna get, I'm gonna get to it, but it's not, but I need to eat and I need to.

Gloria Sosa: [29:46](#) Right.

Elizabeth Aguil...: [29:47](#) Like, I need my family. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> feel more stable.

Gloria Sosa: [29:50](#) Yeah, definitely. Um, so it sounds like this were a challenge. Were, were some of the other challenges, um, that you faced or

the obstacles that you faced during this time to get to community college and, and, um, I guess move on.

- Elizabeth Aguil...: [30:12](#) I think was, once I was in community college and I felt the support of EOP and, and I, and I had, you know, money from my job. I think I was okay. And I didn't look back at being undocumented. Like I didn't, I didn't see that again. Like I didn't connect with that idea anymore until I had to transfer. Yeah. Until the very day that I, that I was going to transfer and I walked into the office and I was in front of the computer and I had to fill out this application.
- Gloria Sosa: [30:44](#) Right.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [30:44](#) And it wouldn't let me go to the next page because I didn't have a social security number and I didn't know how to fill it out. And I think at that moment it came back to me like, I was like, oh yeah, that's right. <laugh> something different. <laugh>
- Gloria Sosa: [30:58](#) And who helped you with this application?
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [31:01](#) You're not gonna believe it. But, um, this other girl who, who knew my, uh, the girl's name is Mariana, I'm gonna say it, <laugh> <laugh>. Who knew the first girl? This other girl who knew the first girl she used.
- Gloria Sosa: [31:14](#) Mariana.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [31:15](#) Yeah. She was like, do you need help with that? And I said, um, and at that moment I think I did feel ash- ashamed. I think at that moment I just felt, because I was frustrated, I didn't know what to do and I.
- Gloria Sosa: [31:26](#) Right.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [31:26](#) And this was a complete stranger. And so, and so at that moment, I did say, I said, you know what? I don't have a social security number and it's asking me for this. Do you know what else I can put here? And then this, this, this girl just happened to be undocumented too. <laugh>.
- Gloria Sosa: [31:41](#) Oh my god. So you two were at the office filling out the application the same date, the same time? Yeah. Oh my God.
- Elizabeth Aguil...: [31:49](#) And she was, she was the only other person in that, in that, in that office. And she was like.

Gloria Sosa:	31:54	Really?
Elizabeth Aguil...:	31:55	And yeah, and I still talked to her. I, I mean we recently just reconnected and she was, I just told her, you change, you inspired me to be open and resourceful. And.
Gloria Sosa:	32:09	Yes, I mean, whether you think it would have happened, if she wasn't there at that time, at that moment, at the right moment when you needed to help.
Elizabeth Aguil...:	32:19	You know, I probably would have worked it out, but, but it was because of her that I started connecting with my futures SURGETas. It was her.
Gloria Sosa:	32:29	Oh my god.
Elizabeth Aguil...:	32:30	She was the one who was like, here we go, you're gonna go there. You're gonna talk to this person. They're forming a group and we're gonna get through this. She was it.
Gloria Sosa:	32:40	Wow. Okay. I think this is a good moment to stop.