



## Youth, Young Adult and Adult Employment APPLICATION FORM

Submit Application to: [cddapplications@cityofmadison.com](mailto:cddapplications@cityofmadison.com)

Deadline: 12:00 pm CST (noon) on **August 19, 2022**

*Official submission date and time will be based on the time stamp from the CDD Applications inbox. Late applications will not be accepted*

Please limit your proposal and responses to spaces provided in this form. Responses to this RFP should be complete and comprehensive but succinct. Materials submitted in addition to this application form will not be considered in the evaluation of the proposal. If you are applying for multiple program or activity areas you must fill out this application for each program or area. ***Do not attempt to unlock or alter this form.*** Font should be no less than 11 pt.

If you have any questions **related to the content of the application**, please contact: Hugh Wing – [hwing@cityofmadison.com](mailto:hwing@cityofmadison.com) or Yolanda Shelton-Morris – [yshelton-morris@cityofmadison.com](mailto:yshelton-morris@cityofmadison.com)

If you have any questions or concerns that are related to **technical aspects** of this document, including difficulties with text boxes or auto fill functions, please contact Jen Stoiber – [jstoiber@cityofmadison.com](mailto:jstoiber@cityofmadison.com)

Legal Name of Organization:	Centro Hispano of Dane County	Total Amount Requested:	\$ 110,000
Program Name:	Escalera Youth Program		
Program or Activity are you Applying for:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth Employment Services (ages 14-21) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth Employment & Training <input type="checkbox"/> Wanda Fullmore Youth Internship Program <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult Employment Services (ages 18-26) <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Employment Services (18+)		
Contact Person:	Jamie Quam	Email:	jamie@micentro.org
Full Address:	810 W. Badger Road, Madison WI 53713	Telephone:	608-982-6870
501 (c) 3 Status:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Fiscal Agent (if applicable)	N/A

### **Organizational Qualifications:**

1. Describe your organization's experience implementing services relevant to the services described in the Youth, Young Adult and Adult Employment RFP, including to those who are furthest from resources and opportunities and who face systemic barriers to employment.

Centro Hispano of Dane County (Centro) is the largest non-profit supporting the Latinx community in Dane County, WI. With nearly 40 years of experience working with the immigrant and Latinx community, the agency annually supports 7,000+ clients and 3,000+ families with free bilingual/bicultural programs and strategies. Our agency operates out of its building located on the Southside of Madison, WI, as well as out of a satellite office located in Sun Prairie. Centro's mission is Empowering Youth, Strengthening Families, Engaging the Community, and we aspire to a vision where Dane County will be a community where Latino families can aspire upward, to reach their personal goals and dreams because they feel engaged and strengthened with the tools for success.

We offer over 15 different programs for youth, adults, and families, and over 95% of the staff at Centro are Latinx and either emerged out of Centro programs or have a long-time connection with the agency. Programs at Centro are holistic and informed by social determinants – we focus on education across the lifespan, employment & workforce development, social and family support services, advocacy skills, and the neighborhood environment. Because the work is personal, Centro's culturally and linguistically competent staff are knowledgeable in implementing programs that address inequities including, barriers to support in the proper navigation of institutional systems, the challenges associated with immigration status and lack of language access, while understanding the importance of increasing civic participation and community engagement. Centro has the only pro-bono bilingual/bicultural Department of Justice (DOJ) Accredited Representative for Immigration Services in Dane County, assisting with DACA renewals, advanced parole, citizenship applications, and barriers to support in the proper navigation of institutional systems, the challenges associated with immigration status and lack of language access. We are the lead organization for "La Red de Cobertura Latina" - the WI statewide Latinx health care access navigator network. Additionally, our family support specialists are trained in outreach, resource navigation, and adult case management, support that stabilizes families and complements the work of our youth coordinators and facilitators working with young people in the schools and career specialists assisting workforce trainees in our Caminos program. All Centro's strategies (adult, family, youth, and community) are implemented with a lens toward healing ethno-racial trauma and prioritizing Latinx strengths.

Over the past 20 years, the percentage of young Latinx in Madison and Wisconsin has increased. In 2012, 65% of Latino high school seniors graduated from the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) schools, compared to 88% of non-Hispanic White students. Most recently, this number has increased to 74% but it is still below that for non-Hispanic White students at 90%. The Escalera program targets low-income underperforming MMSD Latinx students who, because of social determinants (i.e., first-generation college student, immigration status, work/family responsibilities, bullying) and system barriers, are disengaged from school. Throughout the years, Centro has prioritized youth programs and workforce initiatives as key to a thriving community. Our approach is unique because strategies focus on identity as a critical cultural asset and supporting transitions across key developmental stages with technical, soft-skills, and social-emotional tools. These transitions include middle school to high school and as young people emerge as adults beyond post-secondary education. Students transition in cohorts of 25-35 youth from 6th – 12th grade and are offered a breadth of post-secondary pathways through Avanzando (college transition program) and Centro's Caminos workforce training program. Centro takes a family-centered approach, understanding that barriers to opportunity and employment impact the whole family, and in immigrant families, workforce decisions need to meet family priorities.

Escalera, offered in all four MMSD high schools, seeks to broaden employment options while sustaining educational attainment and economic mobility for first-generation Latinx youth and English language learners. The program uses a national evidence-based curriculum developed by UnidosUS and centers on several critical areas for success. As a part of this program, we utilize comprehensive wrap-around family-centered support that addresses the extensive challenges facing youth. We also use a cohort model that uplifts positive peer influence contributing to student success and providing access to broader career networks. Program components include tutoring, innovative career workshops, guest speakers, resume-building workshops, ACT/SAT prep, and summer internships. In our programming, 100% of students graduate from high school with a plan for post-secondary life.

The Escalera Summer Internship Program empowers Latinx youth in their path through higher education while exposing students to professional experience in diverse fields of interest. Centro seeks out Latinx leaders from various businesses and organizations in Dane County who serve as mentors for rising high school Juniors and Seniors during and after their internship experience. The goal is to broaden usual access to advanced careers while exploring diverse paths to personal success (2-year college and 4-year degrees, certificate training). Students spend 12 hours a week for nine weeks at their internship sites and participate in the summer learning and professional development sessions four hours a week for eight weeks. They learn through career awareness, professional development workshops, and intermittent field trips to Wisconsin colleges, local businesses, museums, and more. Students grow by assessing skills and interests, computer literacy, essential workplace skills building, career exploration, and engagement. Internship mentors are encouraged to stay in touch with Escalera students beyond the summer internship experience. Over the last three years, we have doubled the summer Escalera educational stipends offered to students while remaining committed to keeping our internship experience open to students regardless of immigration status. Centro also partners with the Wisconsin Center for Evaluation Research (WCER) to train the next generation of youth evaluation specialists with the skills and knowledge for program evaluation in schools and community centers. As part of their internship experience, Escalera youth are registered and eligible to receive the MMSD Employability Skills Certificate.

Centro's post-secondary educational opportunities (Caminos, Avanzando) mirror Escalera's work. Caminos and Avanzando staff constantly communicate with Escalera coordinators as a resource on career exploration and aligning curriculums with Escalera. To date, Caminos has included exposure to and training in crucial workforce sectors: Healthcare (Certified Nursing Assistant Track), Finance (Bank Teller Training), and fields where targeted training can lead to significant career advancement (Administration/Customer service, Hospitality, Government, and Biotech). Centro is also piloting a Google Certificates course offered during the spring to address the need to increase Latinx representation in the local tech sector. In 2020, national research and data confirm that Madison had the country's biggest tech migration rise with a 74% jump in one year (LinkedIn and Big Technology), yet very few Latinx work in the industry. In 2021, we also began the Latinas in Savings Initiative. This multi-generational initiative helps Latinx girls and women (often mothers and daughters) understand their finances, overcome barriers to savings, develop achievable savings goals, open a savings account and develop a savings habit by making monthly deposits. They receive matched savings after six months provided by our credit union partners (Summit and UW Credit Union). In 2022, through funding from the City of Madison and in partnership with Just Dane, Access to Independence, and the State of WI, Centro is supporting the translation and adaptation of the statewide peer support curriculum and implementing a peer support training track through Caminos.

Funding from the City of Madison will support the continued involvement of a full-time Escalera Coordinator and the introduction of a full-time High School Internship Coordinator. Over the last ten years, Centro's internship experience has supported 10-25 students/year in various placements. In the future, we seek to expand unique internship opportunities in health, finance, tech, and even evaluation, connecting with post-secondary options, including those offered through Caminos at Centro. We want to grow the number of students supported through the Escalera

internship experience by hiring dedicated staff to work with our students during high school and bridge the connection with post-secondary life.

2. Describe how your agency builds relationships and authentically engages with individuals and households served. Specifically include information on previous strategies used to authentically engage with BIPOC, LGBTQ+, immigrant and/or low-income households and individuals.

Centro programming has grown tremendously; we now have almost three times more programs than we did ten years ago. Our programs are proactive and reactive to the changes in the population over the last 40 years, growing and adjusting as necessary to meet the needs of our families. The South-Central Wisconsin Latinx community's strong trust in Centro gives us a unique entrée to recruit and retain youth into programming.

The Escalera coordinators emphasize the importance of developing solid relationships with their students and families both in and outside the school environment. Coordinators attend student sporting events, plays, council meetings, dance performances, and graduation ceremonies in support of kids. Parents and students note this and tell us it makes them feel like part of Centro's family. It is the development of secure relationships like these that help students feel more comfortable in themselves and more comfortable in their community, including their schools. These relationships are the driving force behind our student recruitment and retention. We routinely offer opportunities for students to have their voices heard on curriculum, field trips, and programming structure.

Most students come to Escalera already working 2-3 jobs and, at times, are the primary breadwinners in their families. To better support students in attending programming, we play to our strengths in relationship-building and family support. Through individual consultations with Escalera coordinators and Centro family support staff, we match families with Centro staff to discuss housing, careers, English language skills, and personal health issues. Families feel supported and more involved, and students develop a closer relationship with their Escalera coordinators. We are continually developing Centro's wrap-around services and, in 2021, piloted a resource specialist position deepening family support services specifically for families transitioning from Sennett to La Follette High school to understand specific challenges for Latinx students.

3. Describe your organization's experience, education and training requirements for program staff and management staff.

Centro's Executive Director, Karen Menendez Coller, holds a background in public health and has over 20 years of experience working nationally on how community-based programs can successfully improve the trajectory for Latinx families. A significant success of our programming has been hiring the "right staff" to lead programming that relies on first-hand lived experience and leveraging local connections. For example, our Avanzando through College Coordinator, Alondra Quechol-Ramirez, has been involved in Centro youth programs since high school. She also supported the Escalera internship experience while funded by a Centro college scholarship.

Adapting to the new digital way of delivering services is a continuous learning curve. Since March, Centro staff has joined various professional development opportunities, workshops, and webinars to ensure that we utilize online platforms and tools most efficiently and humanly when we deliver programming and services. For example, managers completed a three-month equity coaching course in April, which supported our initial transitions. Annually, all Centro Escalera coordinators, managers, and agency leadership join a three-day national Conference organized by UnidosUS. During the conference, UnidosUS affiliates shared best practices related to educational programming, advocacy, housing, immigration policy, and successful workforce strategies. Each team has also had the opportunity to join different training courses based on their areas of expertise. For example, the workforce team has recently joined a two-day training course focused on virtual implementation. This training included workshops on delivering case

management services via phone, best practices in the virtual classroom, strategies to keep students engaged, teaching adults in virtual/blended classrooms, and creating an inclusive, safe, and culturally relevant environment.

Best practices also mean that everyone's wellness and mental health are at the forefront of Centro's activities. In the past two months, Centro provided sessions with local professional coaches for staff. During those sessions, teams had the opportunity to discuss challenges, learn stress management techniques, and explore healing practices and a safe space for best wellness practices during the pandemic. Centro is implementing a five-year Wisconsin Program Partnership grant in collaboration with the School of Education and Counseling Psychology, providing specific support to agency staff that centers on healing ethno-racial trauma (HEART) and infusing HEART principles in all program implementation.

### **Partnerships, Collaboration & Coordination**

1. Describe your current and recent collaboration and partnerships with the following groups, specifying organization names, collaboration/partnership dates, and information about your shared work and accomplishments.

- a. Organizations and groups that work with youth, young adults and/or adults.

Centro has had a long-standing relationship with businesses throughout Dane County that have served as sites for Escalera students. Together we build internship experiences that are fulfilling for immigrant students regardless of immigration status. Centro's partnership with MGE was crucial for informing MGE's Ambassador Program, a summer program providing an in-depth look at many gas and electric utility-related careers and academic pathways unknown to most high school students. Additionally, the UW Hope Program has been a partner for the last nine years. This program provides a one-day seminar that offers under-represented groups of high school students the opportunity to learn about over 40 specific careers in health care with the guidance of a college mentor. Centro has recently explored innovative partnerships with the Wisconsin Bike Federation, urban planning, education, inspiration, and equity, and the Wisconsin Center for Evaluation Research (WCER). Centro is a community partner in WCER's Evaluation Clinic, responding to Madison's small-scale evaluation needs by matching Centro and Escalera youth staff with schools and community organizations in Dane County to strengthen community evaluation capacity.

As part of our ongoing work in the City Centro, we participate in the MOST (Madison-area Out-of-School Time) and YEN (Youth Employment Network) collaboratives. Madison West, Madison East, Memorial, and La Follette High Schools are our existing partner schools for Escalera programming at Centro. Centro does not partner with a high school unless there is a gap in services for Latinx youth and an understanding that our programming can meet this as approved by the MMSD School Board. There also needs to be a commitment by leadership that Escalera will be an integral part of the vision for the school. We rely heavily on staff and teacher referrals to the program and constant monitoring and communication regarding students' progress. Centro is one of two high-intensity partners for the Madison Metropolitan School District, with rigorous reporting and annual evaluations reported to the School Board. The Madison Metropolitan School District also financially invests in Escalera, strengthening the partnership's commitment.

- b. Organizations that provide pre-employment/career preparation, employment services, and/or training and education.
    - c. Organizations and groups that focus on working with, or have a history of working with, low-income households, women, and those that are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, and/or individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer + (LGBTQ+).

2. Describe your plans to partner, collaborate, and coordinate services with organizations and groups, including names and partnership details. Please explain why and how these collaborations benefit the participants served. Organizations that identify key partnerships must provide written documentation of agreement/commitment from each listed partner.

At the national level, UnidosUS remains a vital partner for Escalera – providing a space for shared best practices in curriculum development and employment/internship opportunities. Most of Centro's collaborations locally focus on aligning a vision for youth education and workforce programming throughout Dane County that ensures holistic development and is informed by youth voice. Centro was on the United Way of Dane County Vision Council, and the agency's leadership was previously on the Education Community Solution team along with MMSD that drafted United Way's education mobilization plan prioritizing social-emotional learning in educational programming integrating holistic youth development for successful workforce development experiences. As part of the HIRE Employer Council Leadership team, alongside the Latino Academy of Workforce Development, Urban League of Greater Madison, and Literacy Network, Centro has formed a long-standing partnership with Madison College, WorkSmart, and 30 employers to solve educational and workforce equity gaps across Dane County. HIRE provides a space for shared best practices and alignment. Previously, Centro was on the United Way Board of Directors, a role that informed a collaborative vision between United Way and Centro. As an organization, we continue establishing solid and long-lasting relationships with technical colleges and 4-year universities through our workforce program, youth summer internships, and work-study volunteering programs. We also work with the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (WCER) to ground our evaluation efforts with youth input. We will also continue collaborating with partners at UW Madison to utilize healing ethno-racial trauma principles in program implementation and strengthen coordinators and facilitators in how they deliver programming.

### **Program Design**

1. Describe the organization's program and proposed service delivery plan including recruitment and selection of participants, individual assessment process, anticipated number to be served, who will be served, duration, location, and goals.

Since its inception in 2013, Escalera has been a cornerstone of Centro's youth programming. Escalera is run at each high school by a full-time program coordinator and annually serves between 100-150 high school students and their families. Coordinators implement curriculum, support wrap-around case management sessions with students, and develop and maintain local business contacts in preparation for summer internship opportunities. Families and community members with whom we work see Escalera and the coordinators as resources and advocates for the Latinx community in schools that historically have not provided those roles for their students. During the school year, Escalera sessions take place by grade Monday through Thursday after the school day, 3:30 PM-5:30 PM on-site at each of the four high schools. Junior and Senior cohorts each meet at least once weekly for Escalera programming and academic mentoring. Additional weekday afternoons (3:30-4:30 PM) are dedicated to academic mentoring and workshops for Freshmen & Sophomore students to prepare them for future entry into the Escalera program.

Escalera coordinators prioritize working intimately with school staff and teachers. Student recruitment takes place mainly in the Fall during school registration. Students/parents submit a formal application for the program, and currently, groups have a waitlist. Staff routinely announce upcoming Escalera events, registration deadlines, and scholarships/internships on-site at the schools (i.e., Latinx Parent meetings). Aside from direct teacher referrals, Escalera coordinators also serve on student support teams with school staff (counselors, ESL teachers, bilingual resources specialists, and principals) to advertise and gather student referrals from school leadership. We also recruit early through visits to 8th-grade classrooms at our Juventud sites. Juventud alumni who join 9th & 10th grade "Early Escalera" cohorts receive academic tutoring and career-based workshops to motivate them to continue in Escalera during their Junior year.

The Escalera 9-week summer internship will focus on practical work experience, job shadowing and deeper career exploration. If funded our goal is to serve 25 – 40 Escalera students/summer. Each student will be paired with an employer/mentor who during the course of the summer will be responsible for guiding the student through the internship experience. Escalera Internship Coordinator will conduct 1on 1 check-ins with students, schedule site visits at internship sites, and conduct bi-weekly phone calls with internship mentors. Each student will make a presentation in front of employer partners on a project worked on during the internship experience they will be required to reflect on how their experience will influence future life goals.

2. Describe the outreach/marketing methods the organization intends to employ to generate participation in the program and to reach the targeted populations considered priority for this funding.

Student recruitment takes place mainly in the fall during school registration. Coordinators and the Youth Programs Manager routinely announce upcoming Escalera events, registration deadlines, and scholarships/internships. Escalera coordinators also serve on student support teams with school staff (counselors, ESL teachers, bilingual resources specialists, and principals) to advertise and collect student referrals. Many staff are already referring their students and families to Escalera during these meetings and parent/teacher conferences - this is the preferred recruitment method. We also recruit early through visits to 8th-grade classrooms at our Juventud sites.

We also leverage our social media presence to encourage students and parents to apply to the program. Coordinators, facilitators, and the Youth Programs Manager will routinely announce upcoming youth program events and deadlines through our college partners and Centro's website and Facebook page, with close to 10,000 followers. Recruitment also occurs by leveraging high school staff (counselors, teachers, directors, and other students in our high school program), school visits and presentations, and direct student referrals.

3. Describe how your program includes input or suggestions from target population served in your program design and operation.

Centro's organic efforts to develop strong and long-lasting relationships with students and their families extends to gathering input. Portions of our youth program are co-created with students. We gather from them about the types of careers they want to learn about or the types of field trips they want to take. We also gather feedback annually to address how the program can be improved to better meet their needs.

### **Theory of Change & Logic Model**

1. Describe how your proposed services are based on evidence of success, and how you will meet performance outcomes while maintaining quality services customized to each participant's needs. Please include the following in your response:

- a. Past service outcomes and other accomplishments that validate your approach.
- b. Best practices and proven resources for youth, young adults, and/or adults you will utilize.
- c. How you will incorporate past experience with performance tracking and reaching outcomes, including challenges overcome.

During the academic year 2021-2022, a total of 172 total students enrolled in Juventud Middle School grades 6-8 (75); Escalera High School grades 9-10 (51); Capstone grades 11-12 (46) receiving 1152 hours of academic support. Part of the success of Centro is prioritizing holistic family-centered support to all students. During the 2021-2022 academic year, Centro piloted two new roles (promoted from in-house talent): Youth Programs Community Engagement Coordinator (overseeing volunteers) and a Youth Programs Family Engagement Liaison MSW position. The first one with the goal of deepening relationships between volunteers, guest speakers and tutors and the second one to nurture school connections for families transitioning from Sennett MS into LaFollette HS.

A mark of our family-centered commitment, in 2021-2022, 100% of families in Juventud and Escalera were engaged through parent meeting nights at each school site through 393 phone calls, 262 in-person meetings, 13 home visits,

and 41 group meetings. As a result of this collective effort, 100% of Escalera high school Seniors graduated from high school with a post-secondary plan. Yet the impact of COVID19 including a lack of transportation access (i.e bus driver's shortage - access for after-school youth programming) and shifts in staff within MMSD (i.e new principals, BRS, MSCR coordinators, etc) continues to be felt in Centro youth programming. During each change Centro has pivoted, shifted and adapted to meet the needs of our families.

The Escalera curriculum uses a national model by UnidosUS that addresses barriers to diverse workforce opportunities for Latinx youth. The program utilizes a holistic approach to achieving positive educational and career outcomes; case management as a core program function to address socioeconomic barriers to success; positive peer influence in achieving school success; and access to broader educational and career networks. Escalera also draws upon the framework established by the Consortium for Chicago School Research (CCSR) at the University of Chicago by emphasizing academic behaviors, perseverance, and mindsets, using a peer-based approach for emphasizing creative learning strategies, and prioritizing social skills.

As a high-intensity partner in MMSD, Centro has significant experience with data tracking. We have consistently tracked our outcomes and prioritized building out systems at Centro to facilitate this work supported by the City of Madison and our partners in MMSD.

Centro is part of a formalized high-intensity partnership with the district and participates in the Madison Out of School Time (MOST) Network which facilitates data tracking through a city-wide data access portal. The partnership with MMSD is based on a 3-year MOU with an annual contract renewal process by the MMSD School Board. Data reporting includes tracking attendance, workshop implementation, and student engagement and happens monthly, quarterly, and annually. Pre-COVID formal evaluation by the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research took place periodically throughout the year and formally at the end of three years and these results were presented to the MMSD School Board.

In 2020, Centro invested in an agency-wide strategic software system in partnership with Cascade, <https://www.strategisys.com/software>, to track alignment across programs (youth and adults) regarding values-based implementation of activities and curriculum. This software can track key real-time performance indicators (outcomes and processes). We will then be able to utilize data in real-time to ensure our programmatic purpose.

2. Please describe current and past success in engaging community members and service recipients in developing and improving services.

Most students participating in Escalera are employed throughout the academic year and may sometimes be the primary breadwinners in their families. To better support students in attending programming, we play to our strengths in relationship-building and family support. Through individual consultations with Escalera coordinators and Centro family support staff, we match families with Centro staff to discuss housing, careers, English language skills, and personal health issues. We also address how these play a role in life goals, employment, and dreams. We consistently revisit this information for program development and improvements. Families feel supported and more involved, and students develop a closer relationship with their Escalera coordinators. We are continually developing Centro's wrap-around services. In 2021, we piloted a resource specialist position deepening family support services for families transitioning from Sennett to La Follette High school to understand specific challenges for Latinx students.

3. Please describe your plan to meaningfully involve service recipients, including past, present and potential recipients, in ongoing design, flexing and improvement of proposed youth, young adult, and/or adult employment services.



Centro engages Escalera students in ongoing program improvements by building relationships. We typically remain engaged with youth and families throughout their lifetime, including transitioning from middle school to high school and beyond. This approach will continue to be our priority for meaningful qualitative input that we can consider on an ongoing/iterative basis to improve services. Successful youth engagement and retention takes time - building relationships and trust. The space at Centro is also a trusted, safe space where youth who face many responsibilities (in-school, activities, work, etc.) find a strong cohort with close, trusted ties that allow them to be more open and ready to share.

Such input has resulted in several activities and improvements that have facilitated recruitment and engagement for Escalera. For example, youth who are active participants of Escalera are most competitive for Centro scholarships to pursue post-secondary education; they are also eligible to attend the annual UnidosUS national conference. Those who are active participants of Escalera are most competitive when applying to open positions as support staff for youth programming at Centro. Because of the significant need to work, we have also prioritized building an internal career pathway for Escalera grads who may be interested in youth development work.

Youth in Escalera are also encouraged to join (Re)Generación - Centro's by youth for youth space, where students create community solutions, utilizing diverse forms of self-expression. This group has been significant in informing "how" we choose to implement programming at Centro and our emphasis on centering healing ethno-racial trauma, especially when working with immigrant communities. Centro recognizes that student trust and input largely depend on our families' physical, social & emotional health. Prioritizing youth voice in curriculum, services, and how we do the work is vital.

**Budget** - Complete the Budget Worksheet, including all costs for which you request funding through this RFP. All costs included must be reasonable, allowable, necessary, and allocable among the stated cost categories.



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Contact Person:	Jamie Quam	Email:	jamie@micentro.org
Full Address:	810 W. Badger Road, Madison WI 53713	Telephone:	608-982-6870
501 (c) 3 Status:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Fiscal Agent (if applicable)	N/A

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1. Describe your organization's experience implementing services relevant to the services described in the Youth, Young Adult and Adult Employment RFP, including to those who are furthest from resources and opportunities and who face systemic barriers to employment.

Centro Hispano of Dane County (Centro) is the largest non-profit supporting the Latinx community in Dane County, WI. Centro's mission is Empowering Youth, Strengthening Families, Engaging the Community, and we aspire to a vision where Dane County will be a community where Latino families can aspire upward, to reach their personal goals and dreams because they feel engaged and strengthened with the tools for success. With nearly 40 years of experience working with the immigrant and Latinx community, the agency currently supports 7,000+ clients and 3,000+ families annually with free bilingual programs and services. The agency operates out of its building on the Southside of Madison, WI, as well as out of a satellite office in Sun Prairie.

Centro's programming includes Escalera, offered in three high schools, [Re]Generación, provided to all Dane County high schools, Juventud, offered in four middle schools, and Avanzando through College, which supports college students across different counties. Our workforce programs include three industry-specific Caminos Career training options; Healthcare (Certified Nursing Assistant), Finance, Progreso (manufacturing, administration/customer service, hospitality, government, and biotech), and our newest Caminos, InnoTech, focusing on tech careers and by offering Google certificates options. Caminos InnoTech will address the need to increase Latinx representation in the local tech sector. In 2020, national research and data confirm that Madison had the country's biggest tech migration rise with a 74% jump in one year (LinkedIn and Big Technology), yet very few Latinx work in the industry. Centro also has the only Bilingual DOJ Accredited Representative for Immigration Services in Dane County, assisting with DACA renewals and citizenship applications. Family Support Specialists assist with language access services, housing assistance, payment plans, and other crucial family stabilization services. Furthermore, we have an in-house bilingual health navigator, and our latest addition was the Latina Saving Initiative, offered in partnership with the national organization WISER. This initiative helps participants understand their finances, overcome barriers to saving, develop achievable savings goals, open a savings account, understand and plan for their retirement, long-term, and short-term investment accounts, and develop a saving habit by making monthly deposits and receiving matched savings after six months.

Centro's workforce and youth team are dedicated to strengthening efforts to develop a more direct line of referrals and connections between youth and workforce programming. Funding awarded by the City of Madison would support a full-time retention coach who will complement current Caminos career specialists to build bridges between youth programs (Escalera High School Program, Avanzando through College) and workforce training programs. They will also provide retention support, case management, and guidance to Caminos training graduates. In the past two years, we have been able to pilot job readiness and professional development workshops offered by Caminos specialists to Escalera high school and Juventud middle school students. In 2021, we could only provide four workshops and three so far in 2022. These workshops have raised interest in Escalera students exploring further options after graduating high school. However, there's a gap between workshops and Caminos connection due to capacity. By having a Retention Coach, we can provide more workshops focusing on Caminos and career pathways explorations. After the workshops, the Retention Coach will be able to work with students to map out next steps and collaborate with Escalera coordinators and Caminos career specialists to provide the necessary support and tools to make sure they take the next step. Furthermore, our Caminos model has proven that case management throughout the training has been critical to ensuring students' success. The Retention Coach will be able to continue the case management, guidance support, and employment retention services to provide Caminos' and Escalera graduates the ability to continue their desired journey with the support they need.

We are seeing an increasing percentage of young adults applying to Caminos. This information represents an opportunity to grow our support for the 18-26 demographic group during a crucial recovery from the COVID19 pandemic. This age group has specific developmental needs and could benefit from deeper engagement as they make career choices and transition from high school to their next step in post-secondary life, through college and/or training and eventual employment. Retention at Centro means staying with families regardless of life trajectories or journeys. We do this work holistically. With that in mind, retention includes transitions made in schooling and employment and retention with Centro so that we may best support life transitions. Caminos Career Specialists currently focus on case management support of individual participants, facilitating a space for socio-emotional support, and overcoming barriers and logistical challenges of training in diverse industries (health, finance, etc.) A retention coach position would grow our capacity to orient, screen, recruit, and place participants into training and employment position(s) as teenagers emerge into young adults while keeping them connected to Centro. The retention coach will also be a principal connection with finance, health, and the new Latinx in Tech training, supporting emerging adults as they make their way through our specific activities. They will also connect with Progreso's more general digital literacy training to make young adults more confident and competitive with our employer partners hiring in fields such as customer service. Students may participate in different Caminos tracks depending on where they are in their life journey, and a retention coach will be there to keep them in "training at Centro." Most importantly, the retention coach will be able to continue case management and guidance support to ensure Caminos' and Escalera graduates continue their desired journeys with the support they need after being placed in employment or one year into their educational careers.

Due to the exponential growth of the Latinx community, Centro's Caminos workforce training programs have become a crucial component of strengthening families during these uncertain times. The Latinx community in Dane County has grown more than 74% in the last ten years. Before the pandemic, Latinx were already experiencing a growing inequity in workforce development. Unemployment had increased to 6.9% above the national average, and underemployment continued to be a challenge, with many workers concentrated in low-wage jobs with little to no benefits. A recent center analysis shows that about 8 million Latinx workers were employed in restaurants, hotels, and other service sectors at high risk of job loss or exposure. Within Dane County, almost two out of five Latinos work in the service industry (38.8%), and many work in the city of Madison. Service industry work is not only the most common occupation among Latinos in Dane County, but it is also the only real industry of growth among the Latinx population, even within second generation Latinx population.

Additionally, the current local workforce and educational gaps have further isolated a disengaged workforce of young Latinx adults. At Centro ensuring youth are successful in making the challenging transitions from high school to higher education, career, and life, regardless of immigration status, has been a priority since the organization's inception. A high-intensity partner with the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD), Centro youth programs are evaluated annually for rigor and effectiveness in engaging students with their education and dreams. We do this because over 70% of Latinx students in MMSD graduate from high school, but the WI Department of Public Instruction shows that less than 30% complete a 4-year college degree. A recent report (2021) from UnidosUS, the oldest advocacy organization in the US and funder of Centro, cites how the most significant barrier to accessing and staying enrolled in college for Latinx youth is still the cost of higher education. A recent survey from the Center for Community College Student Engagement (2021) found that in Spring 2021, 34% of students reported their financial situation was worse than before the pandemic. Among survey respondents, 23% said they struggled to pay for college due to the pandemic. Data from the survey shows that COVID-19 seems to have impacted the ability of students to pay for school among students of color more than among White students. Moreover, at UW-Madison, DACA students are not eligible for federal, state, or institutional need-based financial aid. In addition, these students do not qualify for in-state tuition under Wisconsin Statutes.

Centro's Caminos workforce training programs have addressed the workforce gap since 2012. We have grown alternative industries, increased pathways into the health and finance sectors through our certified nursing assistant and finance program (2016), and prioritized skills-building that can guarantee promotion and retention. Before the pandemic, Centro had identified the need to support Latinx professionals and jobseekers by providing them with job readiness, professional development, and digital literacy skills needed to be successful in navigating the complex workforce system and achieve upward mobility.

Our Caminos Workforce program design promotes sustainable employment, career advancement, and family stability. The training programs have historically targeted and served low-and-moderate income individuals from all of Dane County. In 2019, 90% of training program participants identified as low-and-moderate income individuals or families with hourly wages ranging from \$0 to \$14.50, and a majority with minimum or no benefits. In 2021, the number of unemployed participants increased to 40%, and the rest fell on the low-income spectrum due to experiencing reduced hours at work. Furthermore, the number of young adults benefiting from Caminos has increased in the past three years. In 2019, participants' average age was the mid-30s. This year, participants' average age is the mid-20s, with more than half of the students between 18 and 23.

Centro has been implementing short-term and long-term cohort-based, industry-specific training since 2012. Our first Caminos career training as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), now Caminos Health, was initiated with UnidosUS seed funding and has graduated over 150 CNAs. As of 2021, Caminos Health (CNA) enrolled 18 students, 75% have successfully passed the state certification exam, and more than 60% have moved from unemployed/part-time status to full-time employment with benefits. On average, hourly wages have increased by \$4/hr. Our two short-term Caminos career training courses are Finance and Progreso, ten weeks and seven weeks respectively. Caminos Finance launched in 2016 and Progreso in late 2020. Since its inception, Caminos Finance has enrolled 162 participants and graduated 150, with an employment placement rate of 70%. Fewer than half of the graduates have experienced a job promotion within 12 months of employment. Retention rates are 70% across both sectors, and wage increases total over \$500,000/annually for the Finance track alone. Our newest Caminos Progreso served 27 students and graduated 24 in 2021, placing 14 in livable wage employment, and three received promotions, while two more went back to college. Four major milestones our Caminos programming achieved in the past two years were:

1. Participants earning a 1-credit digital badge on professional development through Madison College
  2. Welcoming six new employer partners committed to equity, sustainability, and growth of our programs while retaining current ones
  3. Paid training for all Caminos through a collaboration with the Department of Workforce Development
  4. Implementing morning and accelerated cohorts for Caminos Health and Finance
  5. Embedded a three-hour Latinas in Savings workshop to all Caminos training to increase financial literacy knowledge and participate in a matching savings program
2. Describe how your agency builds relationships and authentically engages with individuals and households served. Specifically include information on previous strategies used to authentically engage with BIPOC, LGBTQ+, immigrant and/or low-income households and individuals.

The South-Central Wisconsin Latinx community's strong trust in Centro gives us a unique entrée to recruit and retain young adults into programming. Centro has grown programs tremendously. We now have almost three times more programs than we did ten years ago. Ninety-five percent of staff are from the neighborhoods we serve; some have graduated from our youth and Caminos programs, are bilingual, and identify as Latinx. Centro's culturally and linguistically competent staff implement holistic programming that addresses education and workforce inequities, systems navigation, immigration, and language access while increasing community engagement. Programs at Centro are holistic and informed by social determinants – we focus on education across the lifespan, employment &

workforce development, social and family support services, advocacy skills, and the neighborhood environment. Our programs have a long-standing history in Dane County, and we have been reactive and proactive to the changes in the population over the last 40 years, growing and adjusting as necessary to meet the needs of our community.

Centro's work is intentional; building trusting relationships with participants and students is our priority, and this trust is the basis for nurturing authentic community engagement. Building trust is an organic process through all our programming and services. We engage in conversations around needs, resources, and wellbeing during our intake processes. Our case management for Caminos participants does not end upon training completion; we continue engagement for 12 months, and our youth programming offers ongoing support through Middle School, High School, and College. Our families and youth feel engaged because they feel safe, celebrated, and supported at Centro. Ultimately, Centro offers a holistic and multigenerational approach and space where the community feels celebrated, shares collective learning, and engages in impactful ways.

3. Describe your organization's experience, education and training requirements for program staff and management staff.

Adapting to the new digital way of delivering services is a continuous learning curve. Since 2021, Centro staff has joined various professional development opportunities, workshops, and webinars to ensure that we utilize online platforms and tools most efficiently and humanly when we deliver programming and services. For example, in April 2021, managers completed a 3-month equity coaching training, which supported our initial transitions. In July 2021, all Centro staff joined a 3-day national Conference organized by Unidos US. During the conference, we could hear some work organizations from all over the country are doing related to education, advocacy, housing, immigration, economy, health, and workforce. Each team has also had the opportunity to join different training courses based on their areas of expertise. For example, the workforce team joined a 2-day training on digital learning. This training included providing best case management services via phone, best practices in the virtual classroom, strategies to keep students engaged, teaching adults in virtual/blended classrooms, and creating an inclusive, safe, and culturally relevant environment. Best practices also mean that everyone's wellness and mental health are at the forefront of Centro's activities. Centro has provided a series of sessions with local professional coaches for staff. During those sessions, teams had the opportunity to discuss challenges, learn stress management techniques, and explore healing practices and a safe space for best wellness practices during the pandemic. Centro staff professional development funds are renewed annually to nourish growth and professional development.

Additionally, Our Caminos Career Specialists represent the community we serve. Our Caminos Health Specialist was a graduate of the program and is enrolled in the nursing program. Our former Caminos Finance specialist is a Human Resources graduate from UW-Madison and worked as a recruiter for one of our employer partners. Our Caminos Progreso specialist came with five years of experience in workforce programming and implementation. Our specialists recruit, enroll, and facilitate job readiness components such as resume building, cover letter writing, interview strategies, workplace etiquette and confidence, job search skills, workplace relationship building and rapport, professional development, career exploration, and case management/coaching. Through this initiative, we seek to build capacity and hire a Caminos Tech Specialist with experience in Tech and/or digital literacy, who has culturally relevant facilitation skills, can lead recruitment, implement culturally relevant Caminos, UnidosUS, and Google curriculums, and has strong collaborative and team-building skills. The Workforce and Career Pathways Manager is currently doing the Project Management and Data Analytics certificates to better understand and collaborate with new specialists and to have a more robust onboarding and training process with the support of the workforce team in sharing best practices.

Employer partners have shared that the pandemic has shaped the future of working in different fields. We're actively exploring curriculum updates that adapt to the changing workforce and employers' needs. Additionally, we are exploring infusing HEART (Healing, Ethno, and Racial Trauma) into our job readiness curriculum, including tools that will facilitate navigating workforce culture as a person of color, knowing your worth, micro-aggressions, and more. We are also intentionally focusing on increasing the advancement pipeline by engaging program graduates in various activities, including focus groups, on understanding/improving current gaps in the transition from training to employment and from employment to advancement.

### **Partnerships, Collaboration & Coordination**

1. Describe your current and recent collaboration and partnerships with the following groups, specifying organization names, collaboration/partnership dates, and information about your shared work and accomplishments.

a. Organizations and groups that work with youth, young adults and/or adults.

Currently, each Caminos track has an employer council. Each group is deeply involved in program development, implementation, hiring/retention of participants, and community collaboration. The employer councils are committed to the importance of diversifying and investing in career advancement for program graduates. Additionally, since 2013, Centro has partnered with the United Way of Dane County HIRE Initiative – a consortium of over 30 employers in high-demand industries – that is committed to placing under-served job seekers into jobs paying \$15 or more per hour. The HIRE Initiative represents over 15 industry sectors, from health and science to administrative, trades, and more. The involvement in HIRE has deepened relationships with employer council partners, now collaborators in Centro's Caminos Progreso Advancement training, and added additional partners to the table. The Progreso Employer Council now includes a Diversity Recruitment specialist from the Tamara D. Grisby Office of Equity and Inclusion at Dane County, a Talent Acquisition team member from American Family Insurance, and a Human Resource Specialist at Madison Gas and Electric and Career Pathways Recruitment Coordinator at UW-Health. Other partners include TDS, Exact Sciences, and local School Districts. These partners have committed to increasing diversity and offering employment opportunities that lead to career advancement, sustainable wages, and middle-management positions.

Overall, employer partners often share that our Caminos programs are some of their most successful partnerships. They have acknowledged that our model has catalyzed systematic changes and meaningful impact in Dane County and beyond. Centro leverages our role as a community hub for collaboration, including partners in government (i.e., WorkSmart, Big Step) and education (Madison College) to inform our work in different industries. For example, the largest hospital in Madison, UW-Health, has shared that our Caminos Health program executed in partnership with Madison College has the highest employment and retention rates among their partnerships. While this is a critical component of our model, we believe that building career pipelines that increase representation and promote advancement opportunities for our community mean that in the next five to ten years, Latinx will be moving to management, supervisor, and CEO positions, and will go from 30k-40k yearly income to 60k to 80k+ annual income. We see our Caminos programming as a catalyst for multi-generational impact. If our families reach stability and sustainability today, future generations' well-being and wealth will be better off. Ultimately, we would co-create innovative digitalization and tech career pathways with Madison College and major digital and tech businesses. Using best practices from current Caminos' efforts and identifying gaps and areas where we could collaborate, innovate, and address inequities.

b. Organizations that provide pre-employment/career preparation, employment services, and/or training and education.

- c. Organizations and groups that focus on working with, or have a history of working with, low-income households, women, and those that are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, and/or individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer + (LGBTQ+).
2. Describe your plans to partner, collaborate, and coordinate services with organizations and groups, including names and partnership details. Please explain why and how these collaborations benefit the participants served. Organizations that identify key partnerships must provide written documentation of agreement/commitment from each listed partner.

Most of Centro's collaborations nationally focus on aligning a vision for youth education and workforce programming that secures holistic professional development, promoting work and careers. We have two anchor partners for our Caminos program, UnidosUS, and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation - both provide an integral space to share best practices in curriculum development and employment/internship opportunities with affiliates throughout the country.

Locally, Centro was on the United Way of Dane County Vision Council, and the agency leadership was previously on the Education Community Solution Team along with MMSD. This team drafted United Way's education mobilization plan prioritizing socio-emotional learning in educational programming and integrating holistic youth development for successful workforce development experiences. As part of the HIRE Employer Council Leadership Team, alongside the Latino Academy of Workforce Development, Urban League of Greater Madison, and Literacy Network, Centro has formed a long-standing partnership with Madison College, WorkSmart, and 30+ employers to solve educational and workforce equity gaps across Dane County. Previously Centro was on the United Way Board of Directors, a role which informed a collaborative vision between United Way and Centro. As an organization, we continue establishing solid and long-lasting relationships with technical colleges and 4-year universities through our workforce program, youth summer internships, and work-study volunteering programs. Most importantly for us, as a Latinx-led organization, are our relationships with the Latinx-led organizations that are part of the Latinx consortium for action. Leadership meets monthly and includes the Latino Chamber of Commerce, Latino Academy of Workforce Development, and Common Wealth Development – Latinx partners don't have an outlined MOU; instead, the Latinx Consortium for Action is a place for trust-building, relationship building and alignment, and support of strategies and individual visions.

### **Program Design**

1. Describe the organization's program and proposed service delivery plan including recruitment and selection of participants, individual assessment process, anticipated number to be served, who will be served, duration, location, and goals.

Caminos training curriculum focuses particularly on the following components: (1) Job readiness, (2) Digital literacy, (3) Financial literacy, (4) ELL support classes, (5) Hands-on training, (6) Professional development, (7) Madison College credits, (8) Civic engagement, (9) Intensive case management, and (10) Employer engagement to secure employment, retention and advancement.

The Caminos Finance program is a 10-week training program where participants will learn the basics of becoming a Bilingual Customer Representative at a Bank or Credit Union. Participants will enhance their employability and professional skills, increase their digital literacy knowledge, increase their confidence when searching, applying and interviewing for jobs, learn the basics of networking and building an online presence. The 10-week program includes a 3-credit class at Madison College, Personal Finance ([click here for course info](#)). Throughout the program, participants will connect with potential employers, and explore career opportunities in the finance field. Selected participants will receive case management, scholarships, and access to other supportive services and resources such



as childcare and more. This course is offered three times a year, with morning and evening options in a hybrid model at Centro and virtual.

The Caminos Progreso training, a 6-week training will provide participants with the necessary resources and tools to enhance their customer service, communication, critical thinking, emotional intelligence skills, and prepare them to successfully navigate the US workforce, employment search and feel confident in their workspace as a professional. Participants will explore different career options in the fields of manufacturing, customer service, government jobs, biotechnology and more. Additionally, students complete a 10-hour community volunteer engagement activity to cultivate their leadership skills. This class will introduce participants to critical workforce topics including but not limited to the topics listed above. Students receive case management support, connection to employers, scholarships and other resources such as access to childcare, housing assistance, immigration services and many more. This course is offered three times a year, with morning and evening options in a hybrid model at Centro and virtual.

The Caminos Health program is a 5-month program specialized for advanced English language learners that seek to begin a career as CNA's, get sustainable employment, and explore further options in healthcare, such as nursing and medical assistants. Caminos Health offers a 4-week ESL-healthcare vocabulary and medical terminology class (40 hours), an 8-week CNA course offered by Madison College (120+ hours), 4 weeks of Caminos job readiness (45 hours) and digital literacy learning (25 hours) offered by our Caminos Career Specialist. This course is offered twice a year, with morning and evening options in a hybrid model at Centro and virtual.

As part of this funding request, we want to focus on emerging young adults 18-26 years old. We anticipate that 90% will be unemployed or underemployed. Additional program requirements will include GED/HS Diploma, participants residing in Madison, current Escalera, Avanzando through College students, and Caminos' graduates. The Retention Coach will visit Escalera and Avanzando sessions to provide professional development and Caminos' informational sessions and work with interested prospects to develop a plan and support the next steps. The candidate will then contact our career specialists to meet with candidates to complete registration and assessment requirements.

Additionally, we have monthly info sessions via Zoom that prospects can register for to find out about requirements and eligibility. Eligible prospects may take a reading ACCUPLACER exam at Madison College, an online skills assessment, and an interest profile assessment. They will also be asked to provide two recommendation letters and a skills assessment form filled out by the same person writing the letter, and the Retention Coach will support this task. When someone is not accepted into the program, the retention coach will guide prospects toward the following steps and connect them with partners or services needed. We anticipate serving approximately 100 Escalera, Avanzando, and Caminos participants (18-26) with the support of funding for a retention coach.

2. Describe the outreach/marketing methods the organization intends to employ to generate participation in the program and to reach the targeted populations considered priority for this funding.

Centro's best recruitment method for its workforce programs is word of mouth. In recent surveys conducted with CNA and Finance graduates, 100% said they'd recommend Centro's program to a friend or family member. Our Facebook Page is also one of the primary outreach tools; with close to 10,000 followers and reaching all over the state, our posts often garnish thousands of views. Centro also has a monthly radio show on the only Spanish radio station in Dane County, which reaches 10,000 daily listeners and is used for recruitment and sharing information. Centro continues to use traditional media such as bulletins and post flyers in highly Latinx-concentrated businesses. Through our youth programs at MMSD, we share training opportunities with families and bilingual resource specialists so that they can refer to any interested parents. Recruitment is ongoing. Lastly, referrals among partner agencies such as the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Job Center, United Way of Dane County,

Joining Forces for Families, Madison College, and more local agencies and employers have strengthened collaboration efforts.

3. Describe how your program includes input or suggestions from target population served in your program design and operation.

Younger adults, especially recent high school graduates and those that graduated in the past 3 years and have worked in hospitality or low-paying jobs, enrolled in our Caminos training programs have shared that they “wished they’d have known about Caminos before.” Completing Caminos and exploring options in a safe space that understand their barriers and challenges has been a game changer for many young adults.

Additionally, having a Retention Coach Specialist would give us the capacity to engage program graduates in a variety of activities including focus groups to understand better current gaps in transition from training to employment and from employment to advancement. The Retention Coach will also coordinate alumni engagement activities to create a support network among graduates and students. Employer partners have shared that the pandemic has shaped the future of working in the finance field, including shifting teller positions to universal bankers and other employment positions. We began conversations on what this means for our current program and how we can address those changes to make sure participants have the necessary skills, including more types of communication, sales strategies, and other relevant topics.

In collaboration with our Caminos Specialists, the Retention Coach will form close relationships with all Caminos participants, with a commitment to supporting students throughout their employment and career journey. Input or suggestions are always encouraged at every phase of the program and inform all phases of the program, from recruitment to enrollment, and current employment placements. However, retention is an area where the most support is needed, thus the Retention Coach will be able to address this gap, and create and sustain a long-term plan with Caminos and Escalera graduates.

### **Theory of Change & Logic Model**

1. Describe how your proposed services are based on evidence of success, and how you will meet performance outcomes while maintaining quality services customized to each participant’s needs. Please include the following in your response:
  - a. Past service outcomes and other accomplishments that validate your approach.
  - b. Best practices and proven resources for youth, young adults, and/or adults you will utilize.
  - c. How you will incorporate past experience with performance tracking and reaching outcomes, including challenges overcome.

The Caminos program nurtures a small learning environment for participants to train and be competitive as they apply to diverse employment sectors. It is the wrap around support, peer support, and on-going case management that makes a difference. Between 2012 – 2020 Caminos saw 180 adult graduates, with a 75% employment percentage, 70% retention at 6 months and 65% retention at 12 months. Placements resulted in increased wages. Centro’s workforce and youth team have been working on strengthening efforts to develop a more direct line of referrals and connections between youth and workforce programming. In the past 2 years, we have been able to pilot job readiness and professional development workshops offered by Caminos specialists to Escalera high school and Juventud middle school students. In 2021 we were only able to offer 4 workshops and 3 so far in 2022. We know that these workshops have raised interest in Escalera students exploring further options after graduating from high school, however, there’s a gap between workshops and Caminos connection due to capacity. By having a Retention Coach, we will be able to provide more workshops that focus on Caminos and career pathways explorations. After

the workshops, the Retention Coach will be able to work with students in mapping out next steps and in collaboration with Escalera coordinators be able to provide the necessary support and tools to make sure they take the next step.

Our Retention Coach will allow us to grow capacity by connecting Escalera graduates to an array of options that will support their next steps in their journey. Whether choosing a Caminos training track, joining Avanzando or exploring other employment and professional development options, the Retention Coach will provide case management and guiding services to map out potential next options and provide the necessary support and tools to encourage participants to build confidence in acting with respect to careers and their future. Most importantly, the Retention Coach will be able to continue case management and guidance support to ensure Caminos graduates and Escalera graduates continue their desired journey with the support they need after placed in employment or one year into their educational careers.

UnidosUS published a sentinel report based on national affiliate feedback identifying key contributing factors to the success of Latinx workforce strategies all which are incorporated into Caminos program implementation. Among them were a holistic approach to achieving positive educational and career outcomes; case management as a core program function to address socioeconomic barriers to success; positive peer influence in achieving success and the value replicating small learning communities; and access to broader educational and career networks.

In order to meet performance tracking and outcomes, we have identified and addressed internal operational challenges and with this proposal hope to address some external challenges. In 2020, our Deputy Director transitioned to a new role as the Director of Program Planning and Evaluation for Esperanza. Esperanza is an innovative community-based model of strengthening mental health service delivery for Latinx in Dane County and in partnership with the UW Madison School of Education. Esperanza mobilizes hope by nurturing and growing the potential of our Latinx community through 1) increasing access to culturally appropriate mental health services with training and intervention; and 2) strengthening Centro's family-centered community programming that addresses the social determinants of health. The Director of Program Planning and Evaluation now works directly with the Executive Director, Workforce and Career Pathways Manager, Youth Manager, Development Director, Administrative Director, and Family Support Services Manager to build internal systems that allow Centro to assess, monitor, and evaluate our programs to ultimately transform and positively impact the Latinx experience in Dane County while leading and shaping our own narrative.

Currently, we utilize a combination of Microsoft and Google tools such as excel, surveys, and word to evaluate and track programming progress, goals, outcomes, and improvements. Furthermore, through our partnerships with employers and Madison College, we can track additional data for outcomes and success.

One of the biggest challenges we will address with the support of the Retention Coach is the collaboration with employers and partners to identify internship and employment opportunities. Currently, the youth team and the workforce team work with employer partners separately, which means that employers meet with youth and workforce separately to identify potential opportunities. Having a Retention Coach will help us coordinate efforts with employers in identifying best ways to cross-collaborate and ease the internship and employment processes for Caminos participants and Escalera students.

2. Please describe current and past success in engaging community members and service recipients in developing and improving services.

Through our Escalera internships and Caminos pathways, we have been able to engage the community at large, from listening to parents', students' and family needs to engaging employers and partners in critical conversations on how

to bridge current gaps that bring Latinx needs to the forefront. Employer council meetings happen quarterly and before engaging employers in internships, there are conversations regarding the commitment and purpose of providing such opportunities. Throughout programming, Centro staff develops relationships with students and their families, and we engage them with other Centro's activities such as El Mercado, graduations, celebrations, and other signature events.

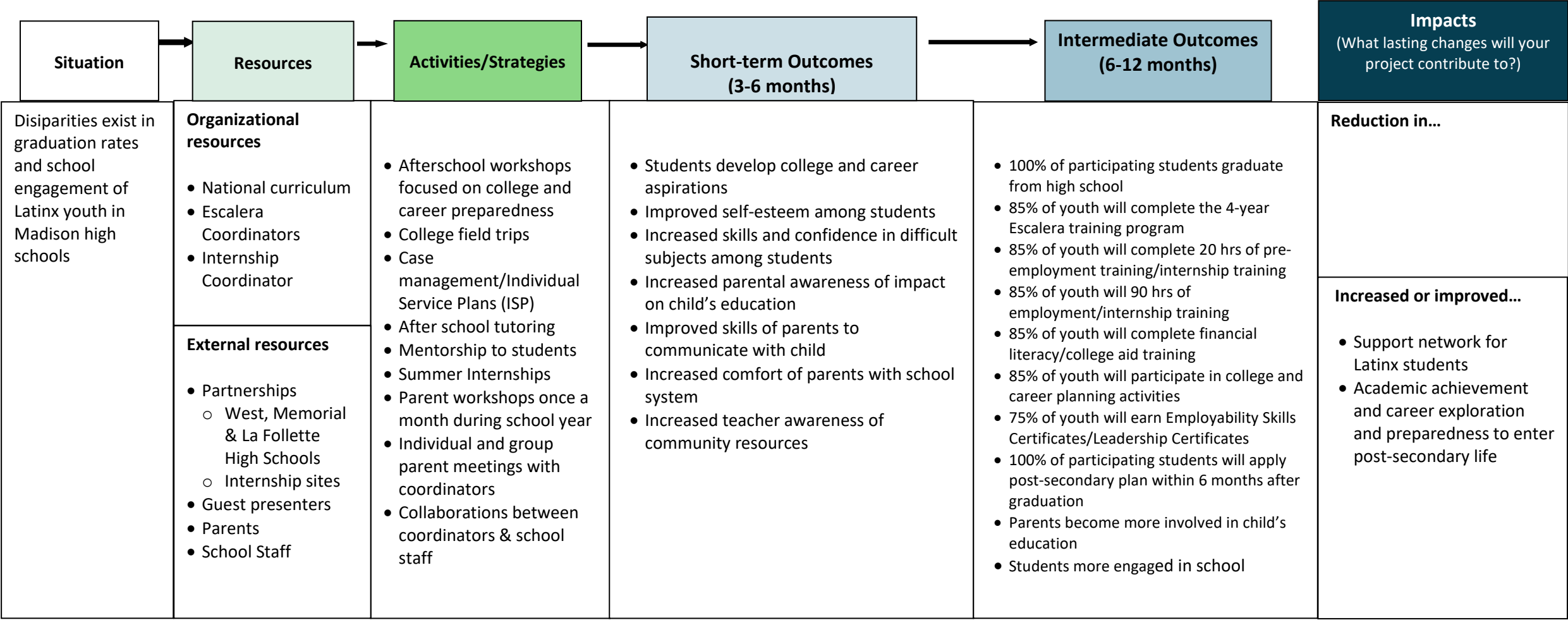
Continuous improvement means that we have already identified the need to adapt and improve our programs with changing trends and demographics, including serving younger adults. Our goal is to have participants fully equipped with comprehensive digital education and professional etiquette skills. Most importantly, Centro and employer partners are ready to respond and be proactive to these changing times. Meaningful engagement means that parents, students and everyone that is part of Centro has a voice and space to be heard.

3. Please describe your plan to meaningfully involve service recipients, including past, present and potential recipients, in ongoing design, flexing and improvement of proposed youth, young adult, and/or adult employment services. The Retention Coach will work closely with Escalera and Avanzando Coordinators and Caminos Career Specialists in bridging talent and training and educational opportunities. Most importantly, the Retention Coach will continue to provide quality case management, guidance and support beyond Escalera and Caminos training for advancement and engagement purposes.

Caminos participants' feedback has indicated that they wish they knew about Caminos programming before or upon high school graduation to go directly into a good-paying job that offers growth opportunities than have gone into retail, hospitality and other low-paying jobs. Even if they knew, they articulated that more individual support exploring options and enrollment processes would have been helpful. They have also demonstrated interest in returning as Caminos graduates and sharing their testimonials with current high school students or Caminos participants as well as helping with recruitment efforts. The Retention Coach will coordinate these activities as well as alumni engagement activities such as gatherings, focus groups, networking events, volunteer opportunities and feedback to continue building workforce and advancement pathways.

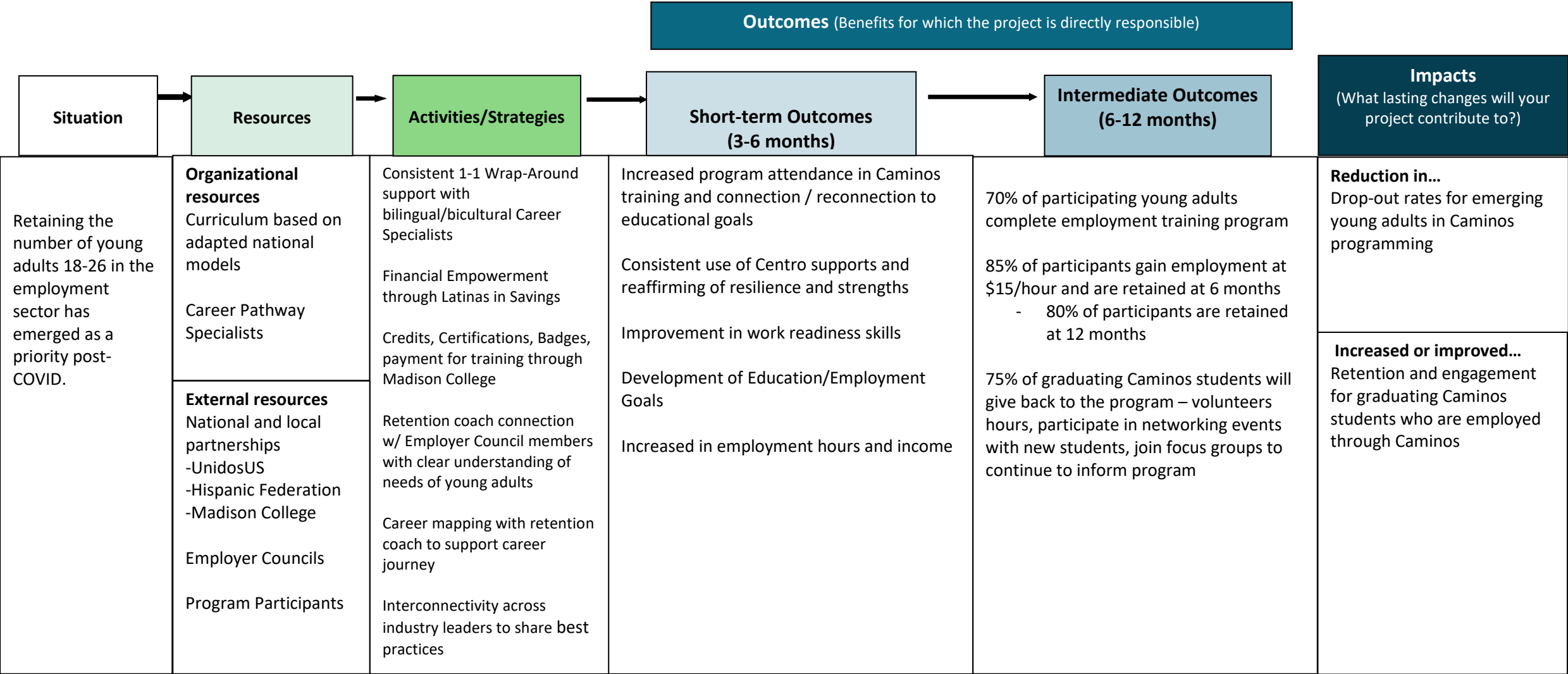
**Budget** - Complete the Budget Worksheet, including all costs for which you request funding through this RFP. All costs included must be reasonable, allowable, necessary, and allocable among the stated cost categories.

Youth Logic Model  
Centro Hispano of Dane County



# Emerging Adults Logic Model

Centro Hispano of Dane County





August 15, 2022

City of Madison  
Community Development Division  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53703

To Whom it May Concern,

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for Centro Hispano of Dane County's (Centro) application to the City of Madison's Youth and Adult Employment request for proposals. Under this proposal, Centro will build the capacity of their *Escalera* and *Caminos* programming which serves high school youth and young adults with work placement and training services. The hiring of additional staff allows Centro to operationalize the goals of empowering youth, strengthening families and engaging the community by providing additional pathways to a better future.

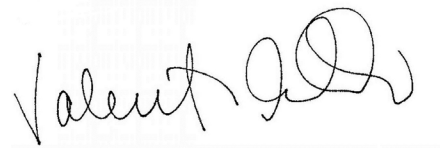
With increased capacity resulting from the hiring of a full-time internship coordinator and a retention specialist, Centro would provide a viable alternative to a 4-yr college degree for the youth and young adults pursuing *Caminos* workforce training programs. Just as importantly, the additional capacity will also allow Centro to connect those youth and *Caminos* workforce participants who *do* wish to continue their education with the additional support of the *Avanzando to College* program. *Avanzando's* services are meant to close the academic achievement gap often experienced by first-generation, low-income students of color.

Madison College considers Centro a critical partner in carrying out our mission to provide accessible, quality education to serve our community's evolving needs. Over the years, we have worked together to create and advance meaningful workforce development opportunities that have transformed the lives of our students and their families as well as business and industry. These efforts include, among others, a *Caminos* nursing assistant program which has increased the bilingual healthcare workforce. In addition to meaningful employment, Centro ensures its programming creates change: *Caminos* finance students are trained to work in the banking industry and along the way learn about mortgages and saving for retirement and college. With increased financial literacy, students and their families have experienced increased financial

well-being, and even increased home ownership, something truly transformational. Further, our collaboration to better connect Latino youth with higher education opportunities has led to an increase in the number of students participating in programs at the college such as the Scholars of Promise and Sánchez Scholars. These programs provide financial, as well as critical wrap-around services like advising and academic success coaching, to its participants.

Madison College has been proud to call Centro one of our long-standing partners and I hope that you will fully fund Centro's proposal to increase their capacity to better serve a population so disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Centro provides what we consider the gold standard in wrap-around support services and increasing their capacity to do their best work will surely bring forth an outstanding return on the investment you make for our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valentina Ahedo", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Valentina Ahedo

Vice President, Goodman South Campus & School of Academic Advancement



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August 15, 2022

City of Madison  
Community Development Division  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53703

To Whom it May Concern,

It is my pleasure to offer this letter of support for Centro Hispano of Dane County's (Centro) application for funding from the City of Madison. With the City of Madison's support, Centro will be able to continue their current youth and employment programming which has demonstrated successful outcomes over the years and provide much needed strategic expansion in the capacity of that programming.

United Way of Dane County has been a proud partner of Centro since 1983, for almost 40 years! We have invested in Centro's youth programming since its inception and continue to partner with Centro's Caminos program through the HIRE Initiative, a collaborative effort of 7 organizations and around 50 Dane County employer partners for the last 10 years. Centro staff are actively a part of the HIRE Initiative, which includes partnership between United Way of Dane County, JustDane, Latino Academy of Workforce Development, Literacy Network, Urban League of Greater Madison, and YWCA Madison.

Centro has consistently provided vital and quality services for the Latinx population in Dane County through their community building and strategic vision. Centro provides leadership, strategic and in-kind support, and direction to the collaboratives that we partner in, and their individual programmatic work to improve outcomes for individuals and families in Dane County continues to see strong and leading results among peer programs in this community. Centro staff, and the Caminos program, have built strong relationships with key employers in our community, like UW Health, American Family Insurance, and a variety of banks and credit unions, to facilitate and initiate connections and remove barriers to employment in careers with family sustaining wages for their participants. The programs and staff delivering the programs at Centro are innovative, creative and uniquely qualified to support and serve the Latinx and immigrant populations in Dane County.

Centro staff also serve as partners and volunteers in a variety of roles on our United Way Board of Directors, Vision Council and Community Solution Teams, because working together is a priority for our shared vision for a thriving Dane County community.

United Way is proud to have Centro as one of our long-standing partners and I hope that you will consider fully funding Centro's proposal.

Sincerely,



Renee Moe  
President & CEO



August 15, 2022

City of Madison  
Community Development Division  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53703

To Whom it May Concern,

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of support on behalf of Centro Hispano of Dane County (Centro). UW Credit Union has been a proud partner of Centro for years not only as an Agency Partner to the whole organization but as a member of their Caminos Finance Program. We are continually impressed by their inclusion of Madison organizations and businesses when creating and maintaining their programming.

In Dane County, I think it goes without saying – Centro is a gift to our Madison community. They have been a steadfast in their commitment to our Latinx families while remaining agile and innovative to ensure the people they serve have supports and programs to not only reach stability but also to thrive in pursuing their dreams.

The Caminos Finance Program is a powerful example of the unique role Centro plays in the Madison community. Rather than a single agency's standalone program, they have skillfully engaged employers, funders, facilitators, and like organizations to create a multi-directional, mutually beneficial program that supports their clients on family-sustaining career paths while taking a broad approach to meet the needs of and create positive impact in our community. We are honored to have had the opportunity to follow Centro's lead because we have immense trust in their vision and work.

With support from the city of Madison, Centro will be primed to grow their youth and employment programming to better meet the needs of Latinx youth and young adults throughout the community. By providing this support to Centro, the city of Madison will not only show how important our Latinx neighbors are to our thriving community but they will be investing in an organization with almost four decades of proven success. Centro works diligently and successfully to put the needs of the community first and they show this every day by gathering input from community partners and putting that input into action.

UW Credit Union is incredibly excited to be a part of the change needed in Madison and Centro is a proven leader in creating that change. It is my hope that you will fully fund Centro's application because you can be confident it is a well-made investment. Please let me know if there is any further information I can provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SHK' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Stephanie Harrill Kyle  
Director of Financial Inclusion & Community Engagement

August 15, 2022

City of Madison  
Community Development Division  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53703

To Whom it May Concern,

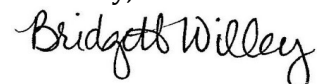
I am writing to support the application of Centro Hispano of Dane County (Centro) for funds in the City of Madison Youth and Adult Employment funding application. As the Director of Allied Health Education and Career Pathways at UW Health I have worked closely with Centro through their, Juventud, Escalera and Caminos programming. Centro has a proven track record of developing partnerships with area organizations and businesses to provide critical programming that addresses the needs of the Latinx community.

Centro Hispano and UW Health have been an excellent example of these partnerships. Together we have supported over 200 young people in career exploration activities, including paid summer internships and adult apprenticeship programs. We have also supported over 75 adults in obtaining training and certification as nursing assistants, 47 of which have entered the workforce at UW Health clinical sites. One certified nursing assistant has also gone on to complete our Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship program and several more have used the UW Health, Unity Point-Meriter, HOPE Scholarship at Madison College to complete the Associate Degree in Nursing.

This City of Madison funding is critical for programs and organizations that provide a continuum of education and employment services for youth and young adults and adults who face countless barriers to gainful employment. Through this funding, Centro Hispano will be able to continue and expand their programming to focus on building retention capacity that will connect their Escalera and post-secondary youth programming with their workforce programs.

Funding support for Centro Hispano will make a significant impact on the Latinx community and the City of Madison as a whole. The organization has strong leadership, staff and is deeply rooted in the needs of the community. Please consider fully funding Centro to continue their efforts and commitment to serving Latinx individuals, families, and community.

Sincerely,



Bridgett Willey, PhD, RDMS, RVT, RDCS, RT(R), FSDMS  
Director, Allied Health Education and Career Pathways

August 15, 2022

City of Madison  
Community Development Division  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53703

To Whom it May Concern,

I am very pleased to offer my support of Centro Hispano of Dane County's (Centro) application to the City of Madison's Youth and Employment request for proposals. The Evaluation Clinic at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) at UW-Madison is a group of professional evaluators and graduate students working together with community-based partners to do culturally responsive and equity-focused evaluation. The foundations of this work are in systems-level change in areas like education and health. WCER has partnered closely with Centro for over 8 years in the development of youth-centered evaluation initiatives, namely youth evaluation teams and internships at WCER in research and evaluation.

Through these experiences in the youth evaluation team and internships, young people learn the core principles of culturally responsive and equity-focused evaluation, design studies based on questions they generate, collect and analyze data to address those questions, and then communicate what they learn for the purposes of informing public understanding, as well as program and policy decisions. These experiences expose youth to research and evaluation as a tool for collective action for systemic change, and they have the opportunity to work alongside those who have chosen this as a career path.

Support from the City of Madison is fundamental to sustaining and expanding initiatives throughout Madison to support youth, young adults and adults who face numerous barriers when trying to achieve gainful employment. Many of these individuals are members of the Latinx community and Centro's programming plays a key role in supporting their empowerment.

Centro illustrates how an organization who leads from within and works to gain expertise from the community in which they support can be powerful force for change. Please consider fully funding Centro to continue their efforts and commitment to serving Latinx individuals, families and community, and feel free to reach out with further questions about our partnership.

Sincerely,



Annalee Good, PhD.  
Co-Director, Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative & WCER Clinical Program  
Wisconsin Center for Education Research, at UW-Madison