



2022 American Rescue Plan: Services to Undocumented Immigrants

Submit Application to: CDDapplications@cityofmadison.com

Deadline: 12:00 pm CST (noon) January 28, 2022

Late applications will not be accepted

Please limit your proposal and responses to the spaces provided in this form. Any materials submitted in addition to this application form will not be considered in the evaluation of the proposal. Please *do not attempt to unlock or alter this form*. If you need assistance with this proposal or are unclear about how to respond to any questions listed below, please contact CDD staff at 266-6520

Agency Name:	Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc.	Amount Requested:	\$ 96,000
Title of Proposal:	Advocating Access of Services for Undocumented Families		
Contact Person:	Thomas Solyst	Email:	tsolyst@veracour.org
Agency Address:	614 Vera Ct Madison, WI 53704	Telephone:	608-246-8372
Is this Group a 501 (C) (3)?	Yes or No Yes	If no, applicant will need to secure a fiscal agent with 501 (C) (3) status.	
Name of Fiscal Agent (if Applicable):		Fiscal Agent Phone:	
Fiscal Agent Contact Person:		Fiscal Agent Email:	

Project Goal:

1. Please describe your proposal's goal of supporting undocumented immigrant households as they deal with the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. has a strong 20-year history on the northside of Madison supporting and advocating for immigrants, many of whom are undocumented. It is through this history in the same neighborhood that Vera Court Neighborhood Center (VCNC) has been able to establish strong relationships built on trust with local community residents. This sense of trust has flowed into Bridge Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood Center (BLW) on the southside of Madison, making programs successful because of the established trust between community and staff. Families in these communities trust the staff at this agency to know their personal and sensitive information, such as immigration status, because of that history of trust. People walk into the community centers and they see friendly, diverse faces who they trust to help them more than social service organizations or even the school districts.

The Family Resource Center at these centers has been doing case management work for more than ten years, building on those established relationships and sense of trust to support more community members and connect them with essential services and resources. In the past two years, the agency has distributed over \$640,000 in COVID-19 relief checks to families who needed assistance paying bills due to lost or reduced employment as a result of the pandemic. The agency has already identified over 50 families who qualify for this project, and with these funds, the Family Resource Center will find more families with undocumented immigrants who may not have access to essential government services and who need financial assistance, especially in light of the negative impacts of COVID-19.

Through this project, Advocating Access of Services for Undocumented Families, Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. will provide wrap-around services and financial assistance to a total of 180 families, 90 per site over two years, through the VCNC and BLW sites. The Community Support Specialist at each location will work with the family to provide community support and financial assistance that meet the unique needs of each family.

Many immigrant families currently served by the Family Resource Center and other programs have reported many negative impacts of COVID-19, including facing barriers to participation in safety net programs and other supports. Many of these barriers include restrictive immigrant eligibility rules for federal assistance as well as policies and practices that discourage eligible family members from program participation. Another significant impact of the pandemic includes reduced employment causing significant financial burdens on households, still seen nearly two years into the pandemic. Many families have struggled financially with rent and utility payments, access to healthy food, and paying other bills.

The Family Resource Center will support households with undocumented immigrants by providing monetary assistance in an area of need specific to each family at an average of \$350 per household while also providing access to other services offered by the centers such as the Family Resource Center, food pantry, community meals, gathering spaces, and youth programs. Through the process of wrap-around services and financial support, the Family Resource Center will work with the family to seek out culturally and linguistically competent agencies, programs, and services that reflect the cultural, racial, ethnic and linguistic differences of the populations we serve, while facilitating access and utilization of appropriate services and supports to eliminate disparities in care.

2. Please describe the demographics of the immigrant population(s) your organization serves. (e.g. age groups, ethnicity, economic status, holders, , specific income ranges, etc.).

At VCNC on the northside, the families currently participating in available programs are 90% people of color who are low income and qualify for free and reduced lunch. There is a large population of newly arrived immigrant families from West African countries as well as Latin American countries living in immediate and nearby neighborhoods. At BLW on the southside the families currently served through programs are mostly people of color who are low income and qualify for free and reduced lunch. There is a large population of newly arrived immigrants from Latin American countries in immediate and nearby neighborhoods.

Both sites are not exclusive to their immediate neighborhoods, and welcome anyone in the city of Madison who is in need of services. However, they are both located in geographic areas in Madison where there are little or no other similar services for those neighborhoods. Both sites offer programs to anyone who needs them. Both sites serve children in youth programs ages six to fourteen. BLW has an early childhood program, Los Niños Primero, that serves children three to five as well as their caretakers. VCNC has a high school program that serves children ages fourteen to eighteen. Both sites serve adults through facility use, the Family Resource Center, family programs, and other adult programs. BLW also serves seniors through its senior program.

3. Describe how your project will address any formal and informal barriers that prevent undocumented immigrants from accessing needed services.

To better serve families outside of the programs already offered by the organizations, and to accommodate the language barrier for the large population of Latinx immigrant families in both neighborhoods, the Latino Family Resource Center was created. Both BLW and VCNC have offered this service for over 10 years where families can be directed to essential services, be provided with essential household items and nutritious foods, and be better engaged with their community. Over the years, this program grew to offer support services to all families and became the Family Resource Center. This program, like all our programs, is so successful because of the relationships and level of trust that have been built over the last 20 years of the agency's history. Because of that history of trust, families trust agency staff to know their personal and sensitive information, such as immigration status, school based IEP meetings, and county based CPS cases. People walk into the community centers and they see friendly, diverse faces who they trust to help them more than social service organizations or even the school districts. This history between agency

staff and the communities they serve will overcome the barrier that exists due to a lack of trust between clients and social service organizations.

Our bilingual staff will address the language barrier that prevents many immigrants from accessing essential services. At VCNC, there are employees who speak Spanish, French, and regional dialects of West African languages to reflect the population of immigrants from West Africa and Latin American countries. At BLW there are many employees who speak Spanish to reflect the population of immigrants from Latin American countries.

All personal information collected from participants will be kept confidential, with only key staff having access to it. Agency programs are open to all and do not require any proof of citizenship or collection of social security numbers. This practice addresses the barrier of a lack of documentation to access essential services.

4. Describe the process your clients/participant will need to follow to receive assistance.

The Community Support Specialist will reach out to people in the community and let them know of the case management and other support available to them. To sign up for services, participants will need to call or stop by the centers to make an appointment with the Family Resource Center.

This first meeting includes putting together a detailed written plan to help manage any critical situations the family may be facing. Part of the planning process includes identification and authorization of services that will help the family recognize and effectively handle stressful moments and events. During this meeting, the Community Support Specialist and participant will work together to find in what area the participant most needs financial assistance: healthy food, household supplies, utilities, internet, phone, or transportation.

Within the first month in the program, the Community Support Specialist will begin the process of developing a “plan of care” which includes identifying family strengths and needs. During this time, funds will be distributed to families based on their indicated area of financial need. The plan will also include putting together detailed plans to help manage critical situations. Part of the planning process includes the identification and authorization of services that will help the family meet the needs that have been identified in the plan of care. Families will work closely with the Family Resource Center and agency staff during the situational specific duration of time needed to work through each item on the plan of care. The Community Support Specialist will be in consistent communication with families until this happens.

Once the plan of care has been completed, the participants will have a sense of self-efficacy surrounding their now natural support systems and they will no longer be facing the instabilities they needed assistance with. The Community Support Specialist will follow up with participants afterwards in one, six, and 12 month intervals to assess goal achievements and inquire about any new challenges they may be experiencing.

In addition to the wrap-around case management process, the Family Resource Center will also provide a space for families to gather for a variety of six week long sessions focusing on housing stability, workforce development, education skills, nutrition, and a myriad of fun topics focused on the interest of the participants. The agency will provide food, childcare, and door prizes at each engagement night.

Staff:

5. Please briefly describe any relevant lived experience, as well as formal training, possessed by your staff, and how it will help make this project successful.

Many agency staff share relevant lived experience through immigration. There are staff members who have emigrated from countries in West Africa and Latin America both as children and adults. These staff members are very good at building and maintaining relationships with members of the community and contribute to the foundation of trust between the community and the center. Specifically, our current Community Support Specialist understands, through lived experience, the hardships immigrants face while navigating around complicated barriers

and policies to access essential services. It is because of this understanding that immigrants in the community feel safe coming to the Family Resource Center for help.

Current and past Family Resource Center staff have attended Pláticas training that focused on how to identify, recognize, and react responsibly to emergency situations. Family Resource Center staff have also had many other trainings including QPR, CPR, Certified Community Partners, Core Correctional Practice, and Dialogical Facilitated Method Training. Supervisors of this program will also receive professional development around basic case management and best practices for supervising case managers.

All staff participate in culturally and linguistically relevant program training. These include restorative justice training and trauma informed care training. There are opportunities for staff members with relevant field knowledge to share that knowledge with the rest of the staff. The agency has made a commitment to start and continue anti racist and restorative justice training with all staff and programs.

Many of the agency’s staff members have relevant training, degrees, and experience. At VCNC, the Program Director and the Academic Coordinator come from experience within Madison schools and know how to navigate the system. The Director of Operations has a history of case management through juvenile justice systems and transitional housing and a degree in child development and psychology. The Middle and High School Program Manager also had a history of case management. At BLW, the Elementary Program Coordinator has a degree in elementary education. Many agency staff members have mandated reporting, CPR, and Serve Safe training.

Timeline:

6. Describe the anticipated timeline for your proposal.

Program Start Date 04/01/22	Program End Date 12/31/24
April - June 2022	Begin initial meetings with participants
May - July 2022	Destribute first round of funds
August - October 2022	Begin initial meetings with second round of participants
September - November 2022	Destribute second round of funds
December 2022 - February 2023	Begin initial meetings with third round of participants
January - March 2023	Destribute third round of funds
April 2023 - December 2024	Continue offering services through the Family Resource Center and other center programs. Follow up with participants as needed and in one, six, and twelve month intervals.
Remember funds will be allocated by the second quarter of 2022, and are available until 12/31/24.	

7. Budget: Summarize your project budget by estimated costs for staff and participants.

BUDGET EXPENDITURES	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	AMOUNT OF CITY \$ REQUESTED
A. Personnel Costs		
Salaries/Wages (show detail below)	\$89,733	\$24,000
Fringe Benefits and Payroll Taxes	\$30,833	\$8,520
B. Estimated Program Costs		
Utility Bills	\$7,080	\$7,080

Internet Bill	\$12,700	\$12,700
House Supplies	\$12,700	\$12,700
Transportation	\$5,600	\$5,600
Job Training Assistance	\$0	\$0
Language Learners Assistance	\$0	\$0
Meal Programs	\$12,700	\$12,700
Telephone	\$12,700	\$12,700
Other (explain below):	\$0	\$0
TOTAL (A + B)	\$184,046	\$96,000

Other please explain:

The salaries and wages are broken down as follows:

Two staff members in the positions of Community Support Specialist at \$40,000 a year, totaling \$80,000. We are asking for 15% of those positions for two years, totalling \$24,000.

Two supervisors each giving five percent of their time totalling \$9,733. We are not asking for funding for supervisor time.