



# 2022 American Rescue Plan: Services to Undocumented Immigrants

Submit Application to: [CDDapplications@cityofmadison.com](mailto: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:	Centro Hispano Inc.	Amount Requested:	\$ 150,000
Title of Proposal:	Addressing emerging needs in the recovery of undocumented Latinx students and families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic		
Contact Person:	Karen M Coller	Email:	karen@micentro.org
Agency Address:	810 W Badger Road Madison WI 53713	Telephone:	608-442-4010
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.

Communities of color have been most impacted by COVID-19 and in the Latinx community Centro recognized immediately that the undocumented community would be most vulnerable. We knew this because for years, individuals, families, and entire communities have shared with staff at Centro their immigration journey - struggles with access to safe and affordable housing, food insecurity, concerns over health, healthcare and mental health, concerns about their children’s educational goals, and safety and discrimination in the workplace. In recent years, as a response, Centro has mobilized and received funding to help strengthen mental health services in partnership with Dane County Journey Mental Health and those offered directly by paraprofessionals at Centro. We have also partnered with private attorney firms to strengthen a safety net of pro-bono and low-bono legal services for criminal cases, cases of employment discrimination, and wage theft, complementing other work being done through the Office of Civil Rights and in the community. The pandemic forced unexpected, immediate action. Through our partnership with the Latinx Consortium for Action - a network of 19 Latinx-led organizations, councils, associations - in 2020 we moved together in responding to the pandemic, developing a model for directing flexible cash assistance to the undocumented community (LCA Relief Fund) that has received statewide interest.

This proposal is now requesting funds to continue to directly support emerging financial needs as undocumented Latinx students and families continue to recover from COVID. Our goal is to get as many funds in the hands of community through continued direct cash disbursements. We are also conscious that the undocumented community has always faced barriers with access to pro-bono legal representation. Undocumented immigration status is equated with vulnerability, risk, and a tenuous sense of belonging that has only been compounded by the financial, social and health impact of COVID19. This proposal requests funds to improve access to legal services in Madison. Lastly if granted, funds will be made accessible to young people, during this very challenging year, who have been substantially impacted through the pandemic and whose trajectory is at risk.

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.).

Centro Hispano of Dane County (Centro), located in south Madison, is the largest non-profit with a history and mission of supporting the Latinx community. Annually, Centro consistently sees approximately 5,000-7,000 individual visits - each visit includes holistic wrap around support, be it for participants in our workforce program, youth program, or adult programming. Among our participants, 100% meet the criteria for free or reduced lunch and 90% are predominantly of Mexican/Central American descent, the majority immigrant. Because Centro serves as a hub for resources in the Latinx community, we can estimate that close to 70% of our immigrant clients are categorized as undocumented by federal status, are DACA recipients and more recently asylum seekers. Approximately 74% of community members at Centro are ages 30-59 years old, 22% 18-29 years old, 4% are 60+ years old, 53% Female and 47% identify as Male.

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

Latinx are the largest non-White racial/ethnic group in Dane County, WI (~35,000), close to 70% live in Madison and Fitchburg. This community continues to be uniquely vulnerable during the COVID-19 crisis: 70% are renters, 68% live in multi-unit dwellings, 34% fall below the poverty line, and almost two out of every five work in the service industry. Moreover, nearly 50% of Latinx lack healthcare insurance coverage in Wisconsin. Among Latinx, the undocumented community is marginalized due to persistent national anti-immigrant sentiments, rumors they will be denied citizenship status if public benefits are utilized, and a lack of access to drivers' licenses. This has resulted in less trust and engagement between the Latinx community and formal systems of support. In 2020, with the creation of the LCA Relief Fund, the Latinx Consortium for Action stood together leveraging our collective trust, knowledge and understanding to help this community navigate the crisis and overcome barriers. In 2020, \$1.18 million dollars in funding were disbursed to 1,464 households with over 10,000 in hours of staff time invested. Since January 2021, close to \$400,000 (\$394,362.33) have been disbursed and to date 492 households assisted with flexible emergency financial assistance. As we recover from the pandemic the undocumented community remains vulnerable. Formal systems are not equipped to easily address the needs in community, catching up, learning how to prioritize trust and engagement to in turn eventually be able to move to action. Because of a number of requirements, federally funded resources meant to facilitate/support basic needs of the family can still remain inaccessible to many who remain ineligible because of non-traditional, more complicated, living and working arrangements with landlords and employers. We see funding direct guaranteed cash assistance as essential to recovery for very marginalized populations and trusted organizations like Centro as essential in ensuring nimble and quick action so those most in need of support do not "fall through the cracks".

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. This is important given 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. At Centro 100% of young people involved in programming graduate from high school with post-secondary plans however they face significant barriers in their journey. A recent report (2021) from UnidosUS the oldest advocacy organization in the US and funder of Centro, cites how the greatest 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 percent of students reported their personal finance situation was worse than it was prior to the pandemic. Among survey respondents, 23 percent reported they were struggling to pay for college as a result of the pandemic. Data from the survey shows that COVID-19 seems to have impacted the ability for students to pay for school among students of color more than White students. Moreover, at UW-Madison, DACA students are not eligible for federal, state or institutional need-based financial aid. In addition undocumented students and DREAMERS continue to not be eligible for in-state tuition under Wisconsin Statutes. In existence for over 20 years the Centro Becas scholarship programs helps youth and families who have a history of engagement with Centro, overcome financial barriers. Once selected students are supported with an annual stipend towards their educational expenses. Over the past 4 years we have grown the amount we give out to scholars each year (from \$500 to \$5,000 for each high school graduate (4 students) and from \$2000 to \$10,000 annually for a cohort of college scholarship recipients through graduation (4 students). City of Madison funds will be set aside for undocumented/DACAmented college students at Centro, whom to date have benefited from Centro's support and encouragement, easing the financial burden as we recover from COVID.

As mentioned, for many in Madison, the financial challenges alone of not having the resources to pay for legal support during as they navigate the path to citizenship can be significant (i.e. retainer fees for asylum attorneys are between \$5,000 - \$9,000 alone). In 2020, \$22,000 in funds at Centro were set aside to help pay for the federal fees necessary to process 40 immigration applications through US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), close to 500 cases were screened for immigration support, and 200 clients received deep wrap-around case management. Providing more pro-bono attorney representation remains an urgent need as we begin 2022.

Over the last ten years, the expansion of legal immigration services for Latinx has been a priority for Centro for a number of different reasons. We are committed to expanding our current work in immigration because we know state resources are limited and the detrimental impact of immigration trauma is multi-generational and long-term. For many years, Centro housed the only native-heritage Spanish-speaking Department of Justice (DOJ) accredited representative in Dane County. In 2017 because of rising fears surrounding ICE activity in cities across the US, our organization advocated for the creation of the Office of Immigration Affairs and in partnership with Dane County and a collaborative of legal service providers successfully applied for federal funds that strengthened deportation defense in Madison, at the Community Immigration Law Center (CILC) a key partner organization for Centro. CILC attorneys provide invaluable deportation and legal assistance. In 2019 following years of asylee restriction the US witnessed a spike in asylum decisions in the US under the new Biden administration. Asylum is a form of protection that immigrants who believe they are facing persecution can lawfully request at the borders of the United States or while inside the country. As we recover from COVID we are now faced with increased demand for services for asylees. In 2020, the Dane County Office of Immigration Affairs noted providing orientation to 19 asylee families and continuing to provide support in the community, by 2021 that number had risen to 71. To date many asylum seekers in Madison continue their immigration cases without legal representation, as they cannot afford private attorney fees. Those that have the financial means retain private attorneys, often times outside of the city. A major concern is that without accessible and reliable legal assistance needed, many will miss their one-year filing deadline jeopardizing their asylum application. To strengthen immigration services in Madison it is necessary to grow the number of pro-bono immigration attorneys locally, including those that can focus on asylum work, providing long-term support to work already being done by the Office of Immigration Affairs and complementing the work of CILC. Funds in this proposal supplement dollars already secured at Centro for the hire of an immigration/asylum attorney, while also set

aside necessary dollars for immigration filing fees/expenses related to Centro's immigration work as we recover from COVID in 2022.

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

Direct Cash Assistance: Clients would follow the same protocol for requesting financial assistance that has worked for the LCA Relief Fund. Clients can call, email or reach Centro through social media or be referred directly to our Family Support Services team for an assessment through Centro's network of community partners. Typically a full family-centered assessment is done where income is verified/members of the household and basic needs are evaluated. Intakes are generated and tracked utilizing Centro's secured client database where we store financial information, current and future impact of COVID on employment and recovery, and confidential details such as whether the client has a legal work permit, and primary form of identification. For those who qualify for immediate financial assistance trained Family Support Services staff would request a discretionary one time max payment of \$500 for an individual applicant or up to \$1,000 for a family. In households where multiple families live, each family that applies would be counted separately. Clients are also referred to resources in the community and at Centro for support and further stabilization.

Youth Stipend recipients: Application process for Becas occurs each Spring, with scholarship recipients selected by a volunteer community panel. Successful candidates have limited opportunities for other forms of programmatic or federal financial aid. Applicants are free to be creative in how they answer application questions and can choose from any form of media (video, film, writing, arts) to give the committee a perspective on their life journey as immigrants or children of immigrants. Scholars are presented to the community at an event Centro holds annually that brings together families, scholars, community members and key partners, emphasizing that higher education for Latinx is a community goal and once enrolled in college also enroll in Centro's Avanzando through College transition program for wrap around support.

Attorney support at Centro would be a pro-bono service. To be eligible for additional financial support related to immigration, clients/participants would be required to set up an appointment with attorney/DOJ accredited staff for an assessment. At Centro we have a staff committee (includes adult, youth and workforce staff) that evaluates requests for financial support and provides input on whether an application should be moved to receive financial support, with final recommendations made by Centro's Executive Director. Clients must meet our federal poverty thresholds for eligibility - 200% of federal poverty level. If recommended for financial support, each request for financial assistance would be eligible to receive funding to cover federal fees related to DACA renewals, asylum applications, permanent residency, as well as medical exams, interpretation services necessary for legal process, etc at the discretion of the immigration team.

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.

All staff (33) at Centro are 100% bilingual (Spanish) and bicultural. Our Department of Justice Accredited Representative at Centro is one of the first native-heritage Spanish-speaking DOJ Rep in the County. Because of the complex needs in our community, understanding of immigration, trauma, and history/background of our families is

a requirement for staff hire across all Centro programs. Additionally all Family Support Services staff have received peer support training, youth and adult staff have trauma-informed certifications.

Centro also consistently provides weekly and monthly spaces where staff can learn ways to reawaken and reclaim indigenous knowledge, strengthen sense of identity and belonging, and access to cultural and linguistic assets for fostering wellbeing, healing and resistance in both themselves and their clients. All staff receive training in the Healing Ethno-Racial Trauma (HEART) Framework. This means strategies for immigration support, family support services and youth programming are implemented using a lens that prioritizes Liberation Psychology, re-affirming the lived experience of Latinx communities in 1-1 appts and program gatherings that build self-compassion and resilience. While outcomes are a priority at Centro we believe the process of relationship building with community, driving outcomes, is perhaps even more important for longer term impact.

We firmly believe in growing our own - 95% of staff started out at Centro as volunteers or program/community participants. Our Avanzando through College staff who also oversees our Becas Scholarship program is an example. Alondra is a DACAmented recipient and graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has been involved in Centro since middle school. Her leadership, resilience, and voice, have opened the eyes, hearts, and minds of many. A poet, artist, public speaker, educator, community activist, she co-founded and was a former co-facilitator of [Re]Generacion, a youth program at Centro founded and facilitated by youth for youth. As a Becas scholarship recipient Centro was proud to fully cover Alondra's college journey. She majored in Latin America, Caribbean, and U.S. Latinx Studies (LACUSL) at UW-Milwaukee with an emphasis on Psychology and Mental Health. As the first in her family from both sides to receive a 4-year college degree, she continues to serve as a role model for Latinx youth. With Centro Hispano, Alondra utilizes her leadership, background and lived experience to uplift Latinx students like her in obtaining a post-secondary education through Avanzado Through College as Centro's first-ever College Transition Coordinator.

Timeline:

- Describe the anticipated timeline for your proposal.

Program Start Date January 1, 2022	Program End Date December 31, 2022
Remember funds will be allocated by the second quarter of 2022, and are available until 12/31/24.	

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

BUDGET EXPENDITURES	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	AMOUNT OF CITY \$ REQUESTED
<b>A. Personnel Costs</b>		
Salaries/Wages (show detail below)	70,000	
Fringe Benefits and Payroll Taxes	24,000	20,000
<b>B. Estimated Program Costs</b>		
Utility Bills		
Internet Bill		
House Supplies		
Transportation		
Job Training Assistance		
Language Learners Assistance		
Meal Programs		
Telephone		
Other (explain below):	300,000	130,000

TOTAL (A + B)	394,000	150,000
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Other please explain:

Direct Cash Assistance: \$70,000 (Total 2022 need estimated to be half of 2021, \$200,000); School Stipends: \$40,000  
(Total Annual Expense for Becas \$80,000); Immigration Fees/Expenses: \$20,000