COVID-19 Rapid Response Mini-Grant Letter of Request

Date: May 14, 2020

Contact Information

Organization Name: Project Libertad
ED/CEO Name: Rachel Rutter, Esq.

Address:  
1220 Black Powder Dr.  
Phoenixville, PA 19460

ED/CEO E-mail: rachel@projectlibertad.org

Phone: 484-302-8551

Board Chair Name: Britta Pennypacker, M.Ed.

Website: www.projectlibertad.org
FEIN: 81-0747522

Primary Contact Name: Rachel Rutter, Esq.
Primary Contact E-mail: rachel@projectlibertad.org

In a few brief paragraphs, please explain:

1. What geographic area is served? (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served)

   Phoenixville, PA

2. What population is served, what has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?

   Population Served

   Project Libertad (“PL”) provides newcomer immigrant youth in Phoenixville with the only wraparound legal and social services available to newcomers in all of Chester County and the Greater Philadelphia Region. PL defines newcomer youth as immigrant children who arrived in the United States within the past one to three years. PL prevents the deportation, trafficking, and abuse of newcomer children and helps them adjust to life in the United States by providing critical legal and social services.

   While 95% of the youth served by PL are Central American refugees from the Northern Triangle Countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, PL welcomes newcomer youth from across the globe. PL serves youth from 15 countries, including Haiti, Brazil, Vietnam, China, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic.

   PL also supports the larger Phoenixville community by providing free teacher trainings on best practices for working with immigrant students in the Phoenixville Area School District and by providing families of newcomer youth with free adult ESL classes and legal information sessions. Finally, while PL is based in Phoenixville, PL also serves newcomer youth and families in Montgomery County.
**Impact of COVID-19**

COVID-19 has devastated newcomer immigrant youth and their families in Phoenixville, leaving parents unemployed and unable to provide food, shelter, and other basic necessities for their children. These families generally do not qualify for government relief, either because of their immigration status or that of a family member. As a result of COVID-19 and their exclusion from government assistance programs, newcomer children are enduring hunger and homelessness.

**Project Libertad’s Response to COVID-19**

Project Libertad has responded to the impact of COVID-19 in the following ways:

1. **Feeding Our Families: Emergency Grocery Fund**: Project Libertad has successfully fundraised and distributed nearly $11,000 in emergency grocery assistance to local immigrant families experiencing food insecurity due to the pandemic.

2. **PA Immigrant Relief Fund**: Project Libertad received a $15,200 grant from the PA Immigrant Relief Fund (part of the Philadelphia Foundation PA is Ready! Fund). This grant allowed Project Libertad to distribute $800 of emergency cash assistance to 19 local immigrant families at risk of hunger and homelessness due to the pandemic.

3. **Suspension of all Nominal Legal Fees**: Project Libertad has suspended all nominal fees charged for immigration legal services in response to the pandemic. Legal clients continue to receive uninterrupted, high quality legal services.

4. **COVID-19 Resource Guide**: Project Libertad has created a comprehensive COVID-19 Resource Guide to direct immigrant families to community resources to meet their most pressing needs.

5. **COVID-19 Family Outreach**: Project Libertad has individually reached out to each family served to identify any unmet needs as a result of COVID-19 and make appropriate referrals.

6. **Rapid Transition to Online Services**: Project Libertad has rapidly adapted to pivot all in-person services to online or remote service models.

3. **How much funding is sought? How does this compare to your annual operating budget? What will the funding be used for? What is the expected timeframe for use of funds?**

   Project Libertad seeks a mini-grant of $5,000, approximately 6.9% of our 2020 operating budget of $72,200.

   Project Libertad’s comprehensive COVID-19 response has required significant staff time to implement. These COVID-19 efforts will continue to require significant staff time to sustain. This funding will be used to cover payroll expenses related to Project Libertad’s currently unfunded COVID-19 response over the remainder of the fiscal year.