

Chester County Community Foundation Grant Request

NAME OF ORGANIZATION Project Libertad

Legal Name (as designated on 501c3) Project Libertad
(if different than above)

Address: 1220 Black Powder Drive, Phoenixville, PA 19460

Phone: 484-302-8551 Fax: none

E-mail: info@projectlibertad.org Website: www.projectlibertad.org

Executive Director: Rachel Rutter, Esq.

Current Board President: Rogelio Ayllon

Primary Contact: Rachel Rutter, Esq. Title: Executive Director
(if different than above)

Phone: same as above E-Mail: rachel@projectlibertad.org
(if different than above)

IRS 501(c)(3) Nonprofit?

- Yes** (Please attach IRS designation letter)
 No (Please attach written agreement from the fiscal agent)

Federal ID # 81-0747522

Type of Grant Requested:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Capital | <input type="checkbox"/> Capacity Building |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Operating Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program/Project | |

Name of Program/Project/Campaign: n/a – general operating support to support our work in Chester County (Phoenixville currently, and Avon Grove beginning Fall 2023)

Amount Requested: \$20,000.00 **Application Deadline:** n/a
(if applicable)

Total Program/Project Budget: n/a – general operating support **Duration of grant requested:** one year

Total Organizational Budget for 1 year: \$286,761.00 **Fiscal Year End:** December 31

State your organization's mission:

Project Libertad empowers newcomer immigrant youth and their families by providing essential, youth-led and youth-centered legal and social services. Project Libertad envisions a world where all newcomer immigrant youth have access to the legal services, social services, academic support, and leadership opportunities needed to thrive.

Summarize the proposal and how it fits with the funder's mission and grantmaking priorities:

Project Libertad requests \$20,000 in general operating funds to support its work with newcomer immigrant youth in the Greater Philadelphia Area.

Lia, a 12-year-old asylum seeker, was raped by her father in Honduras. She fled to the US seeking safety with her aunt in the Philadelphia region, only to find herself in deportation proceedings without a lawyer and without needed social services. Lia suffered from undiagnosed, untreated PTSD and was suspended from school due to trauma-related behavioral problems. In immigration court, Lia struggled to articulate her case to the judge, who determined she was not credible and looked negatively at her school disciplinary record. Lia was deported back to her abuser. Without a lawyer and without access to critical social services, Lia's voice went unheard.

Lia's story is typical for immigrant children in the region. An estimated 24,000 children have deportation proceedings pending against them before the Philadelphia Immigration Court. 75% of those children have no lawyer and must represent themselves in an arcane system in a language they do not speak. Representation matters: 75% of represented kids win the right to stay in the US legally, while 90% of unrepresented children like Lia are deported to dangerous situations.

Despite the clear need, there are no limited legal services for youth in the region, leaving children like Lia to fend for themselves in immigration court, with the vast majority of those cases ending in needless deportation.

Migrant children like Lia arrive in the United States with extensive prior trauma before facing additional stressors in the US, like the threat of deportation, a lack of legal counsel, difficult family dynamics, and more. These challenges exacerbate existing mental health problems. As a result, newcomer youth are more likely to struggle in isolation with symptoms of PTSD, Anxiety, and Depression, and struggle academically and behaviorally at school. Yet, these children cannot access needed social services due to multiple barriers, including financial barriers, cultural and linguistic barriers, the primacy of resettlement needs, and the stigma attached to mental illness. Social service and mental health resources for newcomers are extremely limited in the region. Newcomer youth without access to social services and mental health care are more likely to experience behavioral challenges and academic difficulties. Such youth can be viewed negatively in the eyes of the immigration courts. A lack of social services and mental health services negatively impacts the child's immigration case, which can have dire consequences, as in Lia's case.

Recognizing these challenges and the dire gap in services for newcomer youth, Project Libertad empowers newcomer immigrant youth like Lia and their families by providing essential, youth-led and youth-centered legal and social services -- the only such services available in the Greater Philadelphia Area. By filling this gap in needed services, Project Libertad furthers its vision of a world where all newcomer immigrant youth have access to the legal services, social

services, academic support, and leadership opportunities needed to thrive. Project Libertad requests funding from the Anna Maria Moggio Foundation to support and expand services for newcomer youth in the Greater Philadelphia Area.

List of largest funders in the last fiscal year and grant amount.

1. Scattergood Foundation Community Fund for Immigrant Wellness: \$51,500.00
2. Montgomery County Recovery Office: \$43,250.00
3. L'Oréal Paris Women of Worth: \$20,000.00

List the proposal's target population, constituents, and geographic communities:

Project Libertad serves newcomer immigrant youth in the Greater Philadelphia Area. While 95% of the youth served by Project Libertad are Central American refugees from the Northern Triangle Countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, Project Libertad has a global footprint, welcoming youth from across the globe, including Angola, the DRC, Haiti, Brazil, Vietnam, China, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Bangladesh, and more. Project Libertad provides social services primarily in Chester, Bucks, and Montgomery counties, and legal services to youth across PA. Community strengths that further Project Libertad's work with immigrant youth include resiliency, perseverance, optimism, adaptability, tenacity, and gratitude.

AGREEMENT

I certify, to the best of my knowledge, that all information included in this proposal is correct. The tax-exempt status of this organization is still in effect. If a grant is awarded to this organization, the proceeds of that grant will not be distributed or used to benefit any organization or individual supporting or engaged in unlawful activities.



Signature of Executive Director

Date: March 14, 2023

Current Programs and Services include:

- **Immigrant Youth Advisory Team:** Team of Project Libertad alumni and current program participants who direct programmatic decisions and program development for the organization. Project Libertad is the only agency in the area to utilize this unique leadership model.
- **Immigrant Children's Defense Project:** Provides legal services to immigrant children facing deportation. Promotes justice and stability for youth.
- **Know Your Rights Project:** Youth-led annual assemblies that educate over 300 students in six schools on their legal rights. Promotes justice in the immigration system. Promotes youth leadership.
- **Legal-Mental Health Partnership:** Youth-led partnership with Immigrant Psychology Network that educates over 330 students in six schools annually about mental health and provides free mental health screenings and referrals. Increases access to mental health care for immigrant youth by removing traditional barriers to care. Improves academic and immigration court outcomes by addressing underlying mental health concerns and promoting social emotional development. Promotes youth leadership.
- **Juntos para Jóvenes: United for Youth:** This project provides direct case management services to newcomer immigrant youth and their families who are experiencing barriers to their self-sufficiency, in order to meet a variety of their basic needs that have been caused and/or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Jóvenes Fuertes: Strong Youth:** This program is a 12-week, culturally-responsive social-emotional learning (SEL) program created by a Latinx immigrant psychologist to support the mental health of Latinx newcomers in schools. The program is offered in collaboration with partner school districts.
- **Newcomer Support Programs:** Weekly, youth-led programs that provide over 100 students in six schools with leadership skills, academic support, college preparation, and ESL. Promotes youth leadership. Improves postsecondary outcomes for immigrant youth. Decreases violence against immigrant youth.
- **One-on-One Mentoring Program:** Provides one-on-one mentorship to middle and high school students in order to promote academic success and improve postsecondary outcomes for newcomer youth.
- **RISE: Refugee and Immigrant Students Excelling:** Weekly, youth-led girls' empowerment program that provides high school refugee and immigrant girls with leadership skills, academic support, college preparation, and other life skills. Promotes youth leadership. Improves postsecondary outcomes for immigrant youth. Decreases violence against immigrant youth.
- **Educator Training Program:** Youth-led professional development program where youth work with staff to train over 400 educators and other professionals annually on best practices for supporting immigrant youth. Promotes youth leadership. Improves postsecondary outcomes for immigrant youth.
- **Adult ESL Program:** Conversational English education program for parents/caregivers of Project Libertad youth.