APPLICATION REPORT

Project Name: Access, Collaboration and Training Now (ACT Now)

Applicant Organization: Level Up NorCal

Awarded Amount: $322,455

Funding Announcement Name: Promoting Service Access and Equity Grant

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Access, Collaboration and Training Now (ACT Now) project will target the Southeast Asian population in Far Northern Regional Center's catchment area through a combination of culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and training to improve access to services for consumers and families. ACT Now is comprised of three focus areas: 1) Outreach and Engagement to increase awareness of regional center services, 2) Parent Education and Training to improve access to technology to increase self-advocacy and 3) Workforce Capacity Building to increase the cultural and linguistic competency of regional center and service provider staff.

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
Applicant Eligibility		
Applicant Information		
1. Project Title What is the Project Title?	**Applicant Response** Access, Collaboration and Training Now (ACT Now)	
2. Awarded Amount	**Applicant Response** $322,455	
3. Organization Type Please check the box that describes your organization	**Applicant Response** Community Based Organization, non-501(c)(3) EIN	
4. Description of Organization/Group	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
Provide a brief description of the organization/group (organization type, group mission, etc.). Explain what experience your organization has managing a program similar to the proposal and state the outcomes of that program.	Level Up NorCal is a community-based organization whose mission is to improve and promote the health, well-being and advancement of underserved minorities through education, support and advocacy. Currently, Level Up is in Q3 of providing outreach under 19-C09 to reduce service access disparities in the Southeast Asian ("SA") population in the catchment area of the Far Northern Regional Center. Level Up provides promotora services to the Hmong and Mien consumers of FNRC, helping them understand and access direct and indirect services and programs. 19-C09 is the second year of funding, building upon the previous year's efforts within the SA population under 18-C09. Under 18-C09, Level Up successfully completed all program objectives, with an actual impact of 946 when the estimated impact was 820 at 22 outreach events. At the end of 18-C09, POS authorization among SA consumers was up 119% with an average increase of $2,696 in authorized POS in FY18-19 compared to FY17-18. Currently in Q3 of 19-C09, Level Up is on target to complete all program objectives by grant end. Average POS utilization for SA consumers has increased to 64.5% as of July 2020, compared to 46% in February 2020. Actual overall POS expenditure total for SA consumers for the same time period has also increased by 135% from $695,993 to $941,056. This proposal continues to build upon the groundwork laid by 18-C09 and expanded upon by 19-C09.	
5. Applicant in Good Standing	**Applicant Response**	
Is the applicant in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and California Department of Tax and Fee Administration?	Yes	
6. Subcontractors in Good Standing	**Applicant Response**	
Are the applicant's subcontractors in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and California Department of Tax and Fee Administration?	Not Applicable	
Grant Reapplication Information		
Grant Reapplications Only		
1. Grant Number	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplications Only) What is the Grant Number of previously awarded project? If not applicable select Not Applicable.	19-C09	
2. Project Title	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
(Reapplications Only) What is the Project Title of previously awarded project? If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Building Bridges – Connecting Southeast Asian Minorities with Regional Center Services	
3. Project Start & End Dates	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplications Only) What are the Start & End Dates of the previously awarded project? If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Start Date: 03/04/2020, End Date: 03/03/2021	
4. Project Duration	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplications Only) What is the Total Project Duration (in months) of the previously awarded project? If not applicable select Not Applicable.	12	
5. 2016/2017 Award	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplications Only) Enter the amount of funding that was awarded in FY 2016/2017. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Not Applicable	
6. 2016/2017 Expenses	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplicants only) Enter the amount of funding that was expended in FY 2016/2017. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Not Applicable	
7. 2016/2017 Remaining	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplicants only) Subtract the Total Expenses from the Total Award to determine the amount remaining from FY 2016/2017. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Not Applicable	
8. 2017/2018 Award	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplicants only) Enter the amount of funding that was awarded in FY 2017/2018. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Not Applicable	
9. 2017/2018 Expenses	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplicants) Enter the amount of funding that was expended in FY 2017/2018. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Not Applicable	
10. 2017/2018 Remaining	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplicants only) Subtract the Total Expenses from the Total Award to determine the amount remaining from FY 2017/2018. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Not Applicable	
11. 2018/2019 Award	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
(Reapplicants only) Enter the amount of funding that was awarded in FY 2018/2019. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	$334,112.00	
12. 2018/2019 Expenses	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplicants only) Enter the total amount of funding that was expended, or is anticipated to be expended, in FY 2018/2019. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	$302,074.00	
13. 2018/2019 Remaining	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplicants only) Subtract the Total Expenses from the Total Award to determine the amount remaining from FY 2018/2019. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	$32,038.00	
14. 2019/2020 Award	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplicants only) Enter the amount of funding that was awarded in FY 2019/2020. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	$346,604.00	
15. 2019/2020 Expenses	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplicants only) Enter the total amount of funding that was expended, or is anticipated to be expended, in FY 2019/2020. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	$153,464.00	
16. 2019/2020 Remaining	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplicants only) Subtract the Total Expenses from the Total Award to determine the amount remaining from FY 2019/2020. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	$193,140.00	
17. Total Awarded	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplicants only) Combine the amounts included in FY 2016/2017, FY 2017/2018, FY 2018/2019, and FY 2019/2020 for the total amount awarded for the project. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	$680,716.00	
18. Initial Proposed Number of People Served	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplications Only) Include the initial number of people projected to be served. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	2300	
19. Actual Number of People Served	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
(Reapplications Only) Include the actual number of people served. Explain why this number is different from the projected impact number. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	As of 12/1/20, the number of people served under FY 19/20 19-C09 is 1,084. We have several large events scheduled that will keep us on schedule to meet the impact number by grant end on 3/4/21.	
20. Regional Centers in Catchment Area	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplications Only) List all Regional Centers in the project catchment areas that the project has served. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Far Northern Regional Center	
21. Cities Served	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplications Only) List the cities your project has served. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	See Question 22 - we serve cities within the nine counties of the Far Northern Regional Catchment area.	
22. Counties Served	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplications Only) List the counties your project has served. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity	
23. City of Los Angeles	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplications Only) If your project has served the City of Los Angeles, list the zip code(s) and/or community(ies) your project has served. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Not Applicable	
24. Activities to Date	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
(Reapplications Only) Provide a detailed explanation of project activities to date. Include what the project has accomplished to date. From the start of the project to the date of reapplication, what are the key accomplishments? Have all activities been completed? If no, why not? If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Activities as of 12/1/20: • Monthly Information Help Table (12) – 9 of 12 completed, on schedule to complete remaining 3 by grant end • Booths at Cultural Events for Outreach (3) – 1 event scheduled for Q3, 2 scheduled for Q4 (all public cultural events and gatherings in Q1 and Q2 have been cancelled due to COVID-19), on schedule to complete by grant end • Translation (8) – 6 of 8 plain language documents created and translated to Hmong, on schedule to complete remaining 2 by grant end (See Attachments) • Focus Groups (2) – 1 of 2 focus groups completed, remaining focus group scheduled for Q4, on schedule to complete remaining focus group by grant end • Workforce Capacity: Cultural Competency Training (2) – 1 training scheduled for 12/10/20, 1 training scheduled for Q4, on schedule to complete both trainings by grant end • Cultural Resource Fair (2) – 1 of 2 fairs completed in Q2, remaining fair scheduled for Q4, on schedule to complete by grant end (See Attachment) We are currently in Q3 of the 19-C09 and on schedule to complete all grant activities by the end of the performance period. With the uncertainty around COVID-19, many grant activities that were intended to draw large crowds (e.g. cultural resource fair), that was meant to be in person training (e.g.cultural competency training), and events organized by others (e.g. cultural events), were either put on hold, rescheduled and then cancelled, or outright cancelled. After organizing as much as we could, but unable to schedule certain events due to the uncertainty of being able to gather in large groups, we had to pivot to drive-through or online for many events. This shifted many of our timelines to Q3 and Q4 instead, but we are on schedule to complete all grant activities. Key Accomplishments While we could not perform outreach in the same way as pre-COVID, we were able to pivot and were able to increase the estimated number of referrals made for services--estimate of 25 referrals for the project and we are at 46 referrals as of the end of Q2. With food insecurity issues this year, many families were interested in a food pantry service authorization for culturally appropriate food. With the job insecurity, housing insecurity, etc., many families were also interested in services for family and community support that could help them source resources and apply for assistance. With shelter-at-home, social distancing, bans on gatherings, and ever changing guidelines, we weren't sure if we would be able to complete all our grant activities because many of them, if we organized them as originally conceptualized, would be in violation of orders. We were able to pivot though with the biggest test being the first of two drive thru cultural resource fairs. We signed up 16 vendors (estimate was 15), with over 350 people impacted. Because vendors were unable to be there, we picked up their resource materials for dissemination on their behalf, packaged everything together into a resource bag, and afterwards, shared a post-event report (see attached).	5
25. Project Impact & Outcome	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
(Reapplications Only) Provide a detailed explanation of project impacts and outcomes to date. Attach data (summary of pre-tests and post-tests), participant success stories to demonstrate project outcomes and impacts. Provide outcomes of your project's impact in serving the target communities. Using your attached data, provide a brief statement of key findings. If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Impact numbers as of 12/1/20: • Overall Impact: 1,084 of 2,300 (1,216 remaining) • Cambodian: 56 of 50 (exceeded) • Hmong: 559 of 1,000 (441 remaining) • Mien: 594 of 1,000 (406 remaining) • Vietnamese: 34 of 100 (66 remaining) • Laotian: 41 of 100 (59 remaining) • Thai: 56 of 50 (exceeded) Through our outreach efforts, we met a SA family that had a child on services for several years but no authorized services due to a cultural and linguistic barrier. Upon follow up with the regional center, it was discovered the family had been deactivated due to no contact. With our assistance, the family was reactivated and now has family and community support and food pantry services authorized. At another outreach event, we met another SA family also with limited English dependent on a teenage sibling for translation. Further compounding the situation, the family lived 1.5 hours from the nearest regional center and even after being a client for several years, did not have any authorized services due to their location and cultural and linguistic barriers. After reviewing regional center programs and services, we connected the family with their service coordinator. The family is now authorized for family and community support, food pantry and respite services. The impact of COVID-19 on families has created food insecurity in a significant number of regional center SA families, especially for culturally appropriate food that was already limited in supply in our region. Through our outreach efforts, we also referred numerous regional center families that were then authorized for culturally appropriate food pantry services. Key Findings • Being able to offer culturally appropriate food and beverage to attendees at the events has been incredibly helpful, especially this year during COVID-19 and with so many of our target population experiencing food insecurity. Feedback has been that attendees feel more comfortable/relaxed when talking to us because they are used to talking over food/drink. • Cultural and linguistic barriers continue to be an impediment to clients being able to advocate for themselves. Many are dependent on another sibling, cousin or other relative to help them navigate applying for and understanding services with limited actual time availability for what can sometimes be very time-consuming needs. • Consumers are being inactivated for not having services, but usually, families do not even know that they were inactivated, why that happened or that they can appeal. Mailing notices to a consumer and their family that have cultural and linguistic barriers does not actually notify the family if they have little to no English skills. Unfortunately, we only learn of the inactivation from our outreach events—at which point we are able to assist. When we describe the programs available, all families with regional center consumers have expressed interest in those services—which means these families should have POS authorized and utilized, but many are being inactivated instead.	
26. Project Objectives	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
(Reapplications Only) What are the projects objectives in addressing disparities and what remains to be addressed/completed? Explain why these objectives have not been completed during the current grant period. Provide a brief description of the key lessons learned from your current project, if any. What were some of the challenges that prevented your project from meeting your objectives/measures? What are some strategies your organization plans to implement to address challenges, if any? If not applicable select Not Applicable.	Objective: Increasing POS authorization and utilization by Southeast Asian consumers to reduce disparities. We are currently in Q3 of 19-C09. Based on POS data from Far Northern Regional Center, the overall POS expenditure total for the target population has increased 135% from $695,993 in February 2020 to $941,056 in July 2020—the same period from when we began performance of 19-C09. For the same time period, average POS utilization for the target population has increased to a 64.5%, compared to 46% in February 2020. While the grant is still ongoing, based on the POS data, we have accomplished our objective. Key Lessons • Do not overwhelm the consumer/family with information about all the regional center programs at once. We understand the cultural and linguistic barriers our target population faces because we had the same experiences. This helps us understand how to present information to them in a way that they can understand and manage. Just because you have a lot of information to share does not mean the consumer/family wants to hear it. • One-on-one works best. Consumers and families in the target population do not want to be pressured and feel like they have to make a decision on the spot. While social distancing, we talk to them as much as possible in a conversational manner without pressuring them to sign up for a service. As naturally as possible, we share information on services so that it feels like a natural exchange and not a lecture.	
27. Project Transition	**Applicant Response**	
(Reapplications Only) If awarded, how will your current project transition into the 2020/21 proposed project? How does your proposed project complement your current project? Does your proposed project expand or continue your current project, if so how? What activities, measures, or target groups are being added? Provide a summary of the differences and reasons why you are proposing the change. If not applicable, select Not Applicable.	The proposed project continues to build upon the groundwork laid by 18-C09 and expanded upon by 19-C09. Transition will be seamless with an immediate start on the project. 18-C09 was focused on culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach to SA regional center consumers and the SA community in general. 19-C09 built on the first year to more than double the culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach impact to the same target population with the addition of workforce capacity building. This proposed project will continue the needed outreach and workforce capacity building, but with the addition of deeper impact within SA regional center consumers to empower self-advocacy through culturally and linguistically appropriate training that improves access to technology. With the trust built within the SA community from the previous and current project, the proposed project will continue to bring awareness to the SA community in general, build cultural competency within service providers, and enable regional center consumers to access information and increase self-advocacy. The objective and target group remains the same— Southeast Asians (Hmong, Mien, Laotian, Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian) and to increase the POS authorization and utilization of SA consumers to reduce service access disparities. 19-C09 Grant Activities and Measures • 12 Outreach Events - number of attendees • 2 Cultural Competency Trainings - number of staff trained, pre/post assessment • 2 Cultural Resource Fairs - number of attendees • 8 Translations - actual translated documents • 2 Focus Groups - narrative summary • 3 Cultural Event Booths - number of attendees/agencies • Number of referrals to regional center	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
	• Overall Impact: 2,300	

	Proposed Project • 10 Outreach Events – number of attendees • 2 Cultural Competency Trainings – number of staff trained, pre/post assessment • 2 Focus Groups – narrative summary • 9 Technology Training Workshops – pre/post assessment • Number of referrals to regional center • Overall Impact: 2,050 In the proposed project, we removed the cultural resource fairs, event booths, and translations. While there may always be information that needs to be translated, DDS has put in a lot of effort and time to develop plain language materials that are consistent and intended for use throughout the state, so we do not want to duplicate that effort. COVID-19 brought the socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic barriers of our target population to the forefront when shelter at home and social distancing was implemented. Southeast Asians are particularly vulnerable because they largely have limited to no English, limited to no access to technology or ability to utilize it, and had a difficult time understanding why they could no longer do certain things when they could not understand what was being said and why. In the proposed project, we intend to offer a series of training workshops to improve access to technology. Because the target population largely does not even have basic technology skills, the time and effort to be invested to develop a training curriculum and do the trainings will be large, but we believe to be incredibly important if they are ever to be able to advocate for themselves. By training them on the use of technology, they can look up information on their own, get email alerts, watch a webinar, keep in contact with their service coordinator, and more. Because the training is more time-intensive, while our overall impact number is 2,050 (down from 2,300 in 19-C08), the impact on consumers/families will be deeper and more sustainable because they will have gained skills they can continue to build.	

General Application
Proposal Summary

1. Individuals Impacted	Applicant Response	
Enter the projected number of individuals impacted.	2050	

2. People Served	Applicant Response	
What is proposed number of people projected to be served?	2000	

3. Duration of project	Applicant Response	
What is the duration of the project? Enter Start & End Dates.	Start Date: 02/28/2021, End Date: 02/27/2022	

4. Duration of project (months)	Applicant Response	
What is the total duration of project in months?	12	

5. Regional Centers	Applicant Response	
List all Regional Centers in the project catchment areas.	Far Northern Regional Center	

6. Cities Served	Applicant Response	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
List the city or cities your project proposes to serve.	Cities within the nine counties of the FNRC catchment area.	
7. Counties Served	**Applicant Response**	
List the county or counties your project proposes to serve.	Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity	
8. City of Los Angeles	**Applicant Response**	
If your project proposes to serve the City of Los Angeles, list the zip codes and/or communities your project will serve.	Not Applicable	
9. Community Based Organizations	**Applicant Response**	
Will you be working with one or more Community Based Organization?	No	
10. Regional Center Data	**Applicant Response**	
If you plan to use regional center data for your project, indicate what steps you will take (or already have taken) to acquire it. For example, completing a data agreement, completing a data request, meeting with RC to discuss data availability/timelines, etc.	Level Up has worked closely with, and plans to continue working with, FNRC's diversity and inclusion specialist and their directors of case management and community services to ensure data availability. We plan to utilize a combination of publicly available POS data published by the regional center including their annual POS Expenditures data, supplemented by more real-time POS data from the regional center to show an increase in POS authorized and expended within SA consumers.	
11. First Project Type Selection	**Applicant Response**	
Select your first project type.	Engagement and Outreach (community events, etc)	
12. Second Project Type Selection	**Applicant Response**	
Select your second project type (if applicable).	Parent Education (online or in person trainings, etc)	
13. Third Project Type Selection	**Applicant Response**	
Select your third project type (if applicable).	Workforce Capacity and Development (staff training, etc)	
14. Multiple Organizations	**Applicant Response**	
Does your project include partnership with one or more organizations either as a co-applicant or subcontractor? If "yes", please upload a letter of support from each organization, that includes an explanation of their role in the partnership.	No	
15. Leverage & Strategies	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
Describe how your organization will leverage and build upon strategies, collaborations, and lessons learned to continue to address the identified disparities after completion of the project. How will your project continue its work after the grant funding has concluded?	After completion of the project, Level Up NorCal will document the strategies and lessons learned to ensure a comprehensive list of best practices is compiled so that support and outreach to the SA community continues. These best practices will also be shared with the Regional Center so that the SA community continues to receive the outreach needed to help close the service access and equity gap. In the first round of funding under 18-C09, we developed a website with plain language and translated to Hmong on regional center services and programs—we have maintained that website and intend to continue to maintain it as an information resource for the SA community. Under the current 19-C09, we have developed plain language handouts in English and Hmong that will continue to be available to the SA community after the end of this current grant. After the proposed project is completed, Level Up will continue to offer information on regional center programs and services during outreach efforts in the SA community.	

Target Population

1. Target Groups Served	Applicant Response	
Select all groups the project will serve. If you select "Pacific Islander" or "Other" use comment section to list all groups.	Cambodian , Hmong , Mien , Vietnamese , Other (list)	
Applicant Comment	Other: Laotian, Thai	
2. Number of Target Group Served	Applicant Response	
For each target group selected in previous question, list number served.	- Hmong - 900 - Mien - 900 - Cambodian - 50 - Laotian - 50 - Vietnamese - 50 - Thai - 50 Total: 2,000	
3. Languages	Applicant Response	
Select all Languages the project will serve. If you select "Other" please list all languages.	Hmong , Mien , Vietnamese , Other (list)	
Applicant Comment	Other: Laotian, Thai and Cambodian	
4. Age Groups Served	Applicant Response	
Select all Age Groups the project will serve. If you select "Other" please list groups.	Birth up to Three (Early Start) , Three to Five , Three to 21 , 16 to 21 , 22 and older	
Applicant Comment		

Project Application
Project Application

1. Project Summary	Applicant Response	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
Provide a clear and concise project summary that includes a defined target population, catchment area, and project design. Specifically describe what your project will accomplish and how it will benefit the community served.	The Access, Collaboration and Training Now ("ACT Now") project will target the Southeast Asian population in Far Northern Regional Center's catchment area through a combination of culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and training to improve access to services for consumers and families. ACT Now is comprised of three focus areas. 1. Outreach and Engagement – FNRC's catchment area is the largest geographic area within the regional system. To address the geographic challenges, Level Up will organize 10 outreach events, rotating throughout the catchment area. Culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and engagement will increase awareness of regional center programs and services. When a population is not even aware of the regional center, much less the programs and services offered, they cannot ask for such programs or services. Additionally, outreach to this population is typically difficult due to an ingrained mistrust of government and agencies. 2. Parent Education & Training/Self-Advocacy – COVID-19 exposed how groups already marginalized and vulnerable due to cultural and linguistic barriers became even more isolated due to a lack of access to and understanding use of technology. Numerous alerts and resources are emailed, and without understanding how to use technology, SA consumers and their families are left behind even more. Through a series of training workshops offered to regional center SA consumers/families, Level Up will train FNRC SA consumers/families on using technology to keep in contact with their service providers and coordinators, how to sign up for and attend online webinars and meetings, creating and using email, how to look up information online, and more. At the end of series, clients that went through the training series will have increased their ability to self-advocate by improving their ability to remain in contact with their providers and being able to independently look up information, participate in online forums, etc. The training series will also offer opportunities for consumers and families to meet, collaborate and support each other. 3. Workforce Capacity Development – ACT Now will also work to increase the cultural and linguistic competency of regional center and service provider staff. Level Up will offer two trainings on cultural competency focused on the SA population. The trainings will focus on increasing understanding and awareness of the Hmong and Mien communities within the SA population, and how to improve interactions and working with that population. Increased understanding and awareness of this difficult to reach and serve population will improve the services and level of services SA consumers will receive.	
2. Organization Experience	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
What experience does the organization/group have working with the target population?	Our staff have over 20 years of experience working with the Southeast Asian ("SA") community providing outreach, education, advocacy, training, and translation services. Level Up participates in community events, hosts tables/booths at outreach functions, provides information to the general public and regional center consumers on local resources and programs, including translation as needed. During times of crisis like with the wildfires and COVID-19, we disseminated information on resources, face masks and hand sanitizer to the SA community. As a vendor to FNRC, Level Up services FNRC's Promotora Program for Hmong and Mien regional center consumers. Our bilingual and bicultural staff assist FNRC Hmong and Mien consumers with direct and indirect services, including reviewing services and programs, assessing their needs, assisting them with acquiring services and translation of English to Hmong or Mien and back. As first generation immigrants, our bilingual and bicultural staff have a depth of understanding of the cultural and language barriers of this target population that is unmatched by anyone who has not lived through the same experiences. Our staff will leverage their deep understanding and community connections within this community to connect them to regional center services.	
3. Underserved Target Populations	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
Explain how the target population(s) are underserved using RC POS data or other data as supporting evidence of the disparity.	The target population for the proposal is Southeast Asians (Hmong, Mien, Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian and Thai). POS among these groups are historically lower than their counterparts. Most have both cultural and linguistic barriers, with a primary language that is not English and parents that have little to no formal education. Barriers to equitable access to services and supports include language, cultural and socioeconomics. FNRC's 2019 Disparity Report found that families from disadvantaged backgrounds are far more likely to accept regional center decisions as final and not appeal or request advocacy assistance. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) released the Disparity Measures report and how-to-read guide that supports that there is still disparity in the services provided to Asians when compared to Whites. While White consumers average $22,312 in POS, all other ethnicities average only $12,001--46% less than White consumers (ethnicities not broken down further). For early start consumers (ages birth to two years), DDS' Disparity Measures report shows Asians have the lowest representation ratio of any major ethnic group when compared to their share of the general population--Asians comprise 12% of the general population but make up only 8% of the early start consumers of regional center services, an indication that there may be systemic or cultural barriers. The disparity in services between Whites and Asians can also be seen at the regional center level in our target catchment area. In FNRC's 2019 Disparity Report (the "FNRC's Report"), Asians were authorized for 36% less in authorized POS than Whites--$13,859 for Asians compared to $21,698 for Whites. The disparity is even higher when looking at actual utilization with Asians receiving 46% less in actual services than Whites--$8,740 for Asians compared to $16,069 for Whites. FNRC's Report also discloses that a comparison of the average authorization of services shows that Asians are the second lowest at 59%, just 1% higher than the lowest group. Actual utilization of POS was also the second lowest of all ethnic groups at 63.1%, less than a 2% difference from the lowest group. Compared to the state, Asians in the FNRC catchment area have, on average, almost 20% less utilization than statewide. FNRC's Report also included the findings from focus groups with Hmong consumers and several reasons were given for not using services--trust was a concern across the board for not using services. Findings from a Hmong focus group held by FNRC in 2018 stated that while they wanted more information about services, the sheer volume of information received during visits with their service coordinator or promotora (promotora vendor changed after this focus group) made it difficult to process and overwhelmed them. A lack of understanding of culture and language continues to be barrier to service utilization as evidenced by the FNRC's 2019 Disparity Report that access to services and the types of services offered did not resonate with the cultural values of the ethnic consumers and their families.	
4. Input from Community	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
How did your organization use input from the community and/or target population to design the project? What methods did your organization use to allow the community to advise you in designing the project? Were there any changes to your project design as a result of community input?	Level Up NorCal currently conducts outreach to the SA community as well as provides services to the Hmong and Mien for FNRC through their Promotora Program. Our bicultural/bilingual staff has worked closely with the community to address barriers to service, inform, and educate them on Regional Center programs and services. The project design for ACT Now is based on feedback from regional center SA consumers and families, and the SA community in general. Feedback was received either through focus groups, surveys or received in person. Through the Promotora Program, and reinforced by feedback from SA attendees at various outreach events, we have found that the community/target population continues to feel overwhelmed and confused by the volume and type of information received through the Regional Center, and oftentimes, the language and cultural barriers create a lack of understanding. For many families, one of the most often received feedback is that they did not even know an agency (the regional center) even existed, much less offered services like what we were telling them about. Even for families of regional center consumers, many are too confused to even ask for authorization for services, leading to low to no authorization for services. Our first area of focus is outreach and engagement to help increase awareness of the regional center and its programs and services to the SA population. The impact of COVID-19 has also shown how isolated the SA population can become during a time when technology sometimes offered the only means of contact and information gathering. Feedback from the SA community is that even those with a smart phone mainly use it only to make and receive calls because they do not know how to use the other functions of the device. Many also lack access to a computer or anything larger than a smart phone. Our second area of focus is parent education and training to improve access to and understanding of technology to enable an increase self-advocacy. For the SA population, not questioning authority or disagreeing with someone in a perceived position of authority is a cultural barrier, oftentimes leading to SA consumers being uncomfortable advocating for themselves. By training them, we empower them to seek their own information, draw their own conclusions and improve their ability to self-advocate. Regional center families have also expressed interest in programs and services but they often do not request authorization for services because the service providers are unable to provide culturally and linguistically competent staff. This catchment area does not mirror the diversity seen in the rest of California. Our third area of focus is workforce capacity to help service providers increase their cultural and linguistic competency so that they may expand their level of service to SA consumers. The consistent input received from current Regional Center consumers and the SA community at large is that they would like someone who is bicultural/bilingual that they can speak to freely without a feeling of judgment that often comes from a lack of understanding. They are more comfortable working with an outside agency, understanding the information is confidential, sharing their fears and concerns without having to worry that this will affect programs or services available to them through the Regional Center, but may in fact help them better navigate the programs.	
5. Improve Access	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
How will your project improve equity, access and reduce barriers to services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families and is sustainable?	Through this project, regional center consumers and their families will not only learn about regional center services and programs through outreach and engagement, they will gain the skills to enable themselves to find information on their own and participate in online forums and webinars through parent education and training. By training service providers to be more culturally competent and the effect of implicit bias, we increase and improve the ability of service providers to be able to better service SA consumers and their families in more culturally and linguistically appropriate ways. FNRC's 2019 Disparity Report found that families from disadvantaged backgrounds are far more likely to accept regional center decisions as final and not appeal or request advocacy assistance. The knowledge, skills and awareness gained by regional center consumers, their families and service providers through this project will stay with them beyond this project and creates a base for them to continue to build on. If we act now, consumers and their families will have something to build on.	
6. Support RC's Recommendations	**Applicant Response**	
How does this project support the RC recommendations and plan to promote equity and reduce disparities in their catchment area? If you are a RC, how does this project support your recommendations and plan to promote equity and reduce your identified disparities? How will your project collaborate with other organizations that serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families?	FNRC recommendations are that consumers of color feel more comfortable working with someone with the same or similar background and their diversity initiative should include diversity in their vendors. For this project, in support of FNRC's recommendation, all outreach and training will be provided by bicultural and bilingual staff who have similar backgrounds to the SA population we are serving. To assist with FNRC's recommendation for diversity in their vendors, the trainings in cultural competency and service provider consultations will help increase their cultural understanding and awareness of the SA population with tips and strategies for them on how to diversify their their staff to better serve SA consumers.	
7. Project different or unique	**Applicant Response**	
How is the proposed project unique or different from a currently funded grant (e.g., strategies, activities, and goals) in the proposed regional center catchment area? If the project is similar to a currently funded grant listed on the Department's website, how is the proposed project different?	Level Up currently has a grant, 19-C09 which provides for 1) outreach and engagement through monthly information help tables, focus groups for feedback and improvement, booths at cultural events and cultural resource fairs; 2) translation through development of plain language handouts on Regional Center ("RC") programs and translated to Hmong; and 3) workforce development through trainings on cultural competency focused on the Hmong and Mien. All activities under the grant are scheduled to be complete by the end of the grant period in February 2021.

The feedback from ethnic stakeholders including SA in the Regional Center's 2019 Disparity Report stated that they still felt like they lack information about the regional center and the services provided, and that if they were given information, it was too much and overwhelming--a finding also reinforced by a Hmong focus group that FNRC held in 2018. In March 2019, the state also released a report on the background and process for developing disparity measures (the "State Report")--identifying cultural and linguistic barriers in the RC system as impediments for service delivery. The state report shared that barriers to utilization of services included lack of clarity on services available, lack of materials available in other languages, lack of translators, assumptions being made that did not reflect cultural values, etc. To address this, as our bicultural and bilingual staff conducts outreach, they can do so in a culturally appropriate manner with | |

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS

understanding of the cultural concerns of SA families.

Outreach and Engagement

Currently, the regional center in this catchment area is not performing outreach to the Southeast Asian population. Our proposal builds upon 19-C09 and includes outreach to all nine counties in the catchment area. Once 19-C09 finishes at the end of February 2021, there will be no project or group providing outreach to the SA community in their native language that is responsive to cultural and linguistic barriers. This proposal includes outreach that will build on 19-C09 in the native language of the target population. Outreach is intended to also reach SA families not already consumers of the regional center that would not otherwise learn of the regional center and its services.

While the regional center periodically hosts focus groups, they have difficulty with this target population due to cultural and linguistic barriers and have not hosted one since 2018. This proposal will conduct focus groups in the native language of the consumers in a manner that is responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of SA consumers. As a neutral agency, we can give SA families a candid voice in how the regional center can improve to increase access and overcome barriers. Given the innate distrust of government and agencies within the SA population, focus groups by an outside agency held in their native language will increase their comfort level with sharing information and providing feedback.

Parent Education and Training

Currently, the regional center has a small grant to provide training on technology to regional center consumers and their families that is performed by a service provider. The training is intended for consumers that are fluent in English. Consumers and families with cultural and linguistic barriers, such as the SA consumers/families, are unable to participate. This proposal will provide a series of training workshops developed to be responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of SA consumers and their families to improve access to technology and increase self-advocacy. There is no current project or grant that addresses this area of concern for the SA population.

Workforce Capacity and Development

Currently, other than the training on cultural competency provided under 19-C09, no other group provides training on cultural competency. This proposal will provide training on cultural competency to regional center staff and service providers focused on the SA population. There is no project or group providing either cultural competency training in general or focused on SA.

The FNRC 2019 Disparity Report stated that an obstacle to obtaining and using services for SA consumers was the lack of diversity in vendors. This is reinforced by the State Report that service providers are making assumptions that do not reflect the families' cultural values and how cultural norms vary. To improve this, Level Up will develop and offer cultural competency training for staff of service providers to increase cultural understanding when providing services to the SA community. Service providers with a better cultural understanding of SA consumers and their values will be able to provide more culturally appropriate services.

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
8. Activities & Measures to Achieve Goal	**Applicant Response**	
Clearly and specifically state how the schedule of activities and measures demonstrate the operational details and steps that the project will take to achieve its stated goals, activities, and measures. **Note: Before answering this question, applicant may want to complete the Activities Template located in the tab directly above.**	Project activities and measures are designed to maximize reach and depth into the Southeast Asian community. Activities show are top level of major activities. Outreach and engagement events are intended to reach Southeast Asian regional center consumers and the general Southeast Asian population, for whom the vast majority are not even aware there is an agency such as the regional center that can assist individuals with developmental disabilities. At many of our outreach events, we also reach regional center consumers that have been inactivated, have no services and/or have no idea what the regional center does. Our outreach is the only way many in this difficult to reach population even learn about the regional center and its services. The measures track the number of attendees at outreach events by overall totals and broken down by ethnic group. Outreach events will rotate throughout the catchment area in locations where there are large concentrations of the target population. For this target population, offering food and drinks is a cultural norm when we invite someone to come see us, so our events will offer culturally appropriate food and drinks as well. Staff will speak with attendees one-on-one and give out information on regional center services. Pre/post assessments will be conducted with attendees of the cultural competency trainings and the technology training workshops to show a growth in skills/knowledge. Trainings will be spread throughout the catchment area. Through a combination of classroom learning and interactive modules, attendees will gain awareness and understanding of other cultures. As attendees learn more about how to be more aware as regional center and service provider staff offering services to Hmong and Mien, the level and quality of their service towards this target population should improve. Pre/post assessments will be analyzed throughout the project to ensure trainings are responsive to the needs of the population, with changes made as necessary. As attendees gain skills with technology, they gain independence in their ability to access information and being able to self-advocate. Through a series of workshops developed to help them gain basic skills with technology, attendees will learn how to do something and then put that to practical use; such as, learning how to create and use email, composing emails, checking their email, responding/forwarding emails, and more. For this target population, especially in the first generation, most do not even have an email address which means they cannot sign up for online services and alerts, do not receive email notifications, have no way of tracking correspondence with service providers, etc. Pre/post assessment will show an increase in practical skills gained from the workshops and the final skills assessment will show retention of skills. Feedback from focus groups will assist in shaping and revising project activities as needed, as well as letting us know what areas are important. One focus group will be conducted at the beginning of the project and the second one will be at the end of the project so we can see what improvements/changes have been made in response to the first group. Focus groups will be conducted over a meal as this population is used to talking over a meal, which will also help lower any pressure they may feel. The narrative summary from focus groups has already helped with reducing service access disparities—FNRC has been responsive and addressed concerns and requests arising from focus groups.	
9. Measures	**Applicant Response**	
Are your proposed measures appropriate to track project goals and activities, provide insight into the effectiveness of the overall design of the project and demonstrate how the impact on the community will be evaluated?	The measures will track the overall effectiveness of our project design. Measures will track how many individuals are actually reached through outreach and engagement efforts, with breakdowns for individual ethnic groups. The effectiveness of trainings for both cultural competency and technology training workshops will be measured through pre and post assessments to show changes in skills/knowledge. Tracking of referrals will correlate to increasing POS for consumers. Each project activity and measure is intended to track the success of each activity in achieving its impact and to obtain feedback on changes needed to activities as the project progresses.	
10. Budget Narrative	**Applicant Response**	

APPLICANT QUESTION	APPLICANT RESPONSE	ATTACHMENTS
Note: Before uploading your Budget Narrative, applicants should complete the Budget Template located in the tab directly above. After you complete the Budget Template, please return to this question to upload your Budget Narrative. The project budget is consistent with stated projected goals and activities, and clearly and concisely explains how the proposed expenditures support the overall project design. The project budget costs are clearly associated with the project activities and goals. The project budget does not include non-allowable costs. The overall project budget is appropriate to the outcomes proposed. Please attach your Budget Narrative document. An example of a Budget Narrative can be found in Attachment C.		1
Proposal Certification		
Certification		
1. Applicant & Regional Center Discussion	**Applicant Response**	
If you are a CBO, have you discussed your proposal with the RC(s)?	Yes	
2. Applicant Certification	**Applicant Response**	
By submitting this application, the Applicant is certifying the truth and accuracy of the proposal. The applicant also certifies that if you have subcontracting organizations, each participating organization has reviewed your project and agrees to their assigned activities, measures, and the budget. (Select Yes or No and enter you name in the comment box.)	Yes	
Applicant Comment	Meuy Lee	