

Application Report



Applicant Organization: Level Up NorCal
Project Name: Bridges to Services 2.0
Application ID: App-22-708
Funding Announcement: FY 22-23 Service Access and Equity Grant
Awarded Amount: \$285,000

Project Summary: Bridges to Services 2.0 targets the Latinx and Southeast Asian (SEA) communities in the Far Northern Regional Center and Alta California Regional Center catchment areas. The project's objective is to increase community awareness and engagement of regional center services through culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach activities, and to educate diverse and marginalized communities on Early Start services and resources.

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Section Name: Applicant Eligibility

Sub Section Name: Applicant Information

1. Applicant Question: Project Title

What is the Project Title?

Applicant Response:

Bridges to Services 2.0

2. Applicant Question: Awarded Amount

What is the total amount awarded for the project?

Applicant Response:

\$285,000

3. Applicant Question: Organization Type

Choose the response that best describes your organization.

Applicant Response:

Community Based Organization, non-501(c)(3) EIN

4. Applicant Question: Description of Organization/Group

Provide a brief description of the organization or group. Explain what experience your organization has managing a project similar to the proposal and state the outcomes of that project. You may upload your brochure or add a website link.

Applicant Response:

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 and engagement under 21-C08 to reduce service access disparities in the Southeast Asian (SEA) population in the Far Northern (FNRC) and Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) catchment areas.

21-C08 is the fourth year of funding, building upon the previous years' efforts within the SEA population under 18-C09, 19-C09, and 20-C08. The project objective each year remained the same—increasing POS authorization and utilization by Southeast Asian consumers to reduce service access disparities. 18-C09 and 19-C09 projects were only in FNRC's catchment area. 20-C08 and 21-C08 expanded to include both FNRC and ACRC's catchment areas. This proposal continues to build on the previous successfully completed grant projects.

5. Applicant Question: Applicant in Good Standing

Is the applicant in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and California Department of Tax and Fee Administration? Please upload confirmation letter(s) or proof of good standing.

Applicant Response:

Yes

Attachment:

[Certificate of Good Standing 10.24.22.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

6. Applicant Question: Subcontractors in Good Standing

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?

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Section Name: Grant Reapplication Information

Sub Section Name: Grant Reapplications Only

1. Applicant Question: Previous Award(s)

Did your organization receive DDS grant funding in fiscal year 2020-21 or 2021-22? If yes, go to question 2 to complete each column. If no, skip this category and go to category 3.

Applicant Response:

Yes

2. Applicant Question: Previous Grant Award(s)

Since fiscal year 2020, complete a row for each DDS Service Access and Equity grant your organization was awarded funding.

Applicant Response:

Year Awarded	Project Title	Grant Number	Award Amount
FY 20-21	ACT Now: Access, Collaboration and Training Now	20-C08	\$322,455
FY 20-21	Project Eagle Feather	20-C09	\$223,114
FY 21-22	Nqoi Jiouh – Open Bridges for Families and Children to Regional Center Services	21-C08	\$200,000

3. Applicant Question: Previous Grant Outcomes

Provide a brief grant summary of your project outcomes for fiscal year 2020-21 and/or 2021-22.

Applicant Response:

FY20-21, Grant No. 20-C08. All project objectives met and/or exceeded. Impact of 3,073 individuals when 2,000 projected. 11 outreach events completed of 10 projected. 2 focus groups held with 88 individuals impacted. 2 trainings on cultural competency completed with 93 individuals trained. 40 individuals with cultural and linguistic barriers received technology training to improve and increase their access to and understanding of technology.

FY20-21, Grant No. 20-C09. All project objectives met and/or exceeded. Impact of 1,763 individuals when 350 projected. 10 outreach events completed when 6 projected. 26 parent education trainings completed of 20 projected with 58 parents/family members trained on regional center services and programs in 1:1 family group setting.

FY21-22, Grant No. 201-C08. Currently in Q3 of FY21-22 project. On target to meet or exceed all project objectives. 5 of 6 outreach events completed, 1 of 2 resource fairs completed, 4 of 7 walk-in office hours completed. Outreach to Hmong, Mien and Vietnamese exceeded as of end of Q2. All other ethnic population targets are on target for successful completion.

4. Applicant Question: Project Transition

If awarded, how will your current project(s) transition into the 2022-23 proposed 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.

Applicant Response:

Transition will be seamless with an immediate start on the project. Bridges to Services 2.0 expands on our current and previous projects focused on Outreach and Engagement. Bridges to Services 2.0 adds a new target group—the Latinx, 20-C08 and 20-C09 focused on culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and engagement to Southeast Asian communities on regional center (RC) programs in the Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC) and Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) catchment areas. This project expands to include the Latinx and builds on our successfully completed 19-C08 outreach and engagement project.

With Bridges to Services 2.0, we will transition our outreach and engagement to include information sharing in Spanish, Hmong, Mien and other languages as needed. The outreach will include the services provided by the RC and vendors to help families understand what programs vendors provide and how those services can help them lead more independent and inclusive lives in their communities. Bridges to Services 2.0 also expands to include developmental milestone screenings for Early Start eligibility. For many in the Latinx and Southeast Asian (SEA) communities, there is still a stigma attached to having a child with developmental delays that make parents hesitant to have screenings done. Our screenings will be culturally and linguistically appropriate to help overcome those challenges.

The reach of RCs are largely limited to existing RC clients, with difficulty reaching and educating the wider Latinx and SEA communities due to an ingrained mistrust in government agencies. Turnout for RC events or to RC booths are typically very low to none within these communities. Bridges to Services 2.0 will provide culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and engagement to the Latinx and SEA communities from us as a trusted messenger with deep relationships in the communities this project serves.

Section Name: General Application

Sub Section Name: Proposal Summary

1. Applicant Question: Project Type

Choose the project type that best describes your activities from the list below:

Applicant Response:

Engagement and Outreach

Applicant Comment:

Culturally appropriate outreach and engagement to the Latinx and Southeast Asian communities in FNRC and ACRC's catchment areas.

2. Applicant Question: Duration of project

Choose the duration of your project.

Applicant Response:

12 months

3. Applicant Question: Regional Centers

Choose the Regional Center(s) that your project will serve. Check all that apply. If you are proposing a statewide project, select the All Regional Centers/Statewide option.

Applicant Response:

- Alta California Regional Center
 - Far Northern Regional Center
-

4. Applicant Question: Counties Served

List the county or counties your project proposes to serve. Check all that apply. If you are proposing a statewide project, the select All Counties / Statewide option.

Applicant Response:

- Butte County
 - Colusa County
 - Glenn County
 - Sacramento County
 - Shasta County
 - Siskiyou County
 - Sutter County
 - Tehama County
 - Trinity County
 - Yolo County
 - Yuba County
-

5. Applicant Question: Community Based Organizations

Will you be working with one or more Community Based Organizations? If so, provide the name of the organization and how you will be working together.

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:

Not Applicable

6. Applicant Question: Multiple Organizations

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.

Applicant Response:

No

7. Applicant Question: Strategies and Sustainability

How will your project continue its work after the grant funding has concluded?

Applicant Response:

After a project ends, the needs do not, particularly for communities with cultural and linguistic barriers. After the end of our previous service access and equity grant projects ended, the website we developed with plain language on regional center services and programs was to our main website and we continue to maintain it as an information resource for the community. The plain language handouts we developed in English, Spanish and Hmong on various regional center programs is still made available to the community. We still also continue to provide refreshers as needed for participants trained in project to improve access to technology. For this project, after grant funding is concluded, we intend to continue to make available the walk-in open office hours.

Sub Section Name: Target Population

1. Applicant Question: Ethnicity Groups Served

Select the ethnicity group(s) the project will serve. For "Indian", "Pacific Islander", "Slavic" or "Other" use comment section to list specific groups.

Applicant Response:

- Cambodian
- Hispanic
- Hmong
- Mien
- Vietnamese
- Other (list)

Applicant Comment:

Thai, Cambodian

2. Applicant Question: Ethnicity Group(s), Language(s) and Number of Individuals Served

For each ethnicity group, provide the number of individuals your project intends to serve and the related language(s).

Applicant Response:

Ethnicity Group(s)	Individuals Served	Language(s)
Latinx	2500	Spanish
Hmong	1000	Hmong
Mien	1000	Mien
Vietnamese	150	Vietnamese
Thai	50	Thai
Laotian	50	Laotian
Cambodian	50	Cambodian

3. Applicant Question: Age Group(s) Served

Select all Age Groups the project will serve.

Applicant Response:

- Birth up to Three (Early Start)
- Three to Five
- Three to 21
- 16 to 21
- 22 and older

Section Name: Project Application

Sub Section Name: Project Application

1. Applicant Question: Project Summary and Organizational Experience

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. In your answer, include what experience your organization has working with the target population and how your organization will work with the local RC(s).

Applicant Response:

Bridges to Services 2.0 targets the Latinx and Southeast Asian (SEA) communities in the Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC) and Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) catchment areas. This project's objective is to increase community awareness and engagement of regional center services through culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach activities, and to educate diverse and marginalized communities on Early Start services and resources.

Our staff have over 20 years of experience working with the Latinx and SEA communities--providing outreach, education, advocacy, training, and translation services. Level Up participates in community events, host tables/booths at outreach functions, provides information to the general public and regional center consumers on local resources and programs, including translation as needed. We currently provides Promotora Program services for regional center Latinx and SEA clients. Our bilingual, bicultural staff assist RC clients with direct and indirect services, including reviewing services and programs, assessing their needs, assisting them with accessing and obtaining services and translation of English to their native language and back. During the pandemic, we have provided outreach and education to both the Latinx and SEA communities on the COVID-19 vaccine, best practices and safety guidelines. The RCs can continue to provide feedback on our outreach and engagement efforts, and partner with us for the convenings, resource fairs and developmental screenings.

Proposed Project

- Target Groups: Latinx, SEA
- 12 Monthly Convenings
- 3 Cultural Resource Fairs
- 3 Developmental Milestone Screenings
- 12 Monthly walk-in office hours
- Overall Impact: 4,800

12 – Monthly Convenings – Monthly outreach activity alternating months for either the Latinx or Southeast Asian community to come together and learn about RC services and programs with a rotating focus on a specific RC program or service each month.

3 – Cultural Resource Fairs – Turnout in the Latinx and SEA communities for typical events is low to none. The cultural component of our resource fairs, paired with culturally appropriate food and performances, reaches and engages the target communities.

3 – Developmental Milestone Screenings – The cultural stigma attached to having a child that is developmentally delayed discourages many parents from getting their child screened. Our culturally and linguistically appropriate screening events are intended to provide a simple and easy way for parents to screen their child in a safe space.

12 - Monthly walk-in office hours – This activity addresses the fact that not everyone is able to attend an outreach event the day and time we hold it. Walk-in office hours provides greater flexibility to busy families to be able to stop in at their convenience to get information on regional center services.

2. Applicant Question: Data and Community Input

Explain why you have selected your priority population(s) using RC POS data and other data as supporting evidence of the disparity or inequity. Include how your organization used input from the community, target population, and RC to design the proposal.

Applicant Response:

Project design is based on feedback from RC Latinx and SEA consumers and families, the Latinx and SEA community in general, and DDS priorities. Feedback from the Latinx and SEA consumers and community was received either through focus groups, surveys or received in person.

In 2022 Purchase of Service Disparity Report, FNRC identified disparities for Latinx and Asians in their catchment area, and acknowledged that there was still a noticeable disparity gap in the average utilization of services. The average utilization for the Latinx group is 51.5% and for the Asian group it was 57.2%. Ethnicities with the highest percentage of no POS were Asians with 32.1% and Latins with 51.5%. That means 1 out of 3 Asian consumers and half of all Latinx consumers are not receiving any services through FNRC currently.

ACRC reported in their FY20-21 POS Expenditures that while 10% of consumers are Asian, they only make up about 6% of the POS expenditures, and Latinx consumers comprise the second largest consumer group at ACRC at 18% but only make up 10% of expenditures, compared to white consumers who are 46% of the consumers but receive 63% of the POS expenditures. White consumers average \$24,457 in POS authorization while Latinx and Asian consumers average 48% less with just over \$14,000 in authorizations. The disparity in authorized and utilized POS compared to the consumer makeup of the RC show there is still a significant disparity in service access equity.

3. Applicant Question: Uniqueness

How is the proposed project unique from a currently funded grant (e.g., strategies, activities, and goals) in the proposed RC catchment area? If the project is similar to a currently funded grant listed on the Department's website, how is the proposed project different?

Applicant Response:

In our conversations with the cultural specialists at both FNRC and ACRC, both indicated that there is a need for outreach and engagement within both demographics. One cultural specialist mentioned how the need for what we do was so important, and wished she knew about our services before. Both FNRC and ACRC largely only provide outreach to RC consumers and have difficulty reaching these target populations, with low to no turnout even for RC hosted events. Even when the RC hosts a table at an ethnic event, attendees are hesitant to approach their tables because of the ingrained mistrust of government agencies, and would prefer to speak with us as a third party than approach the RC staff.

While there are other service access equity grants targeting the Latinx and SEA populations, no other project provides outreach to both these demographics in the same catchment areas and counties that we are proposing. The other projects are targeting either Latinx or SEA in metro centers whereas ours largely targets more counties in the more rural areas.

4. Applicant Question: Improve Equity and Service Access

How will your project measurably improve equity, access, and reduce barriers to services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families?

Applicant Response:

As trusted messengers of our communities, through this project, regional center consumers and their families, as well as the wider Latinx and SEA community will not only learn about regional center services and programs through culturally appropriate outreach and engagement, they will gain greater understanding of how their child is developing in ways that respect and show appreciation of their culture and background. 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. Through our bilingual/bicultural outreach, we have met numerous families that were regional center consumers that were very surprised by all the programs and services we told them about. Even as current consumers, they were still unaware of the regional center programs that could assist their family member that was a consumer. After speaking with them, most self-referred themselves for additional services, resulting in the 15% increase in authorization of services in FNRC's catchment area compared to the 2% average increase for all other minority groups. Our outreach and engagement gets information to those who most need it in a way that is approachable, understandable and respectful of their cultural and linguistic barriers.

5. Applicant Question: Support of RC Plan

Does the project support the RC plan to promote equity and reduce disparities in their catchment? 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 to promote community inclusion?

Applicant Response:

FNRC recommendations are that consumers of color feel more comfortable working with someone with the same or similar background. All our outreach will be by bicultural/bilingual staff with similar backgrounds to the SEA population we are serving. FNRC acknowledges there is still a noticeable disparity when looking at POS authorized and utilized.

FNRC's plans to promote equity and reduce disparities includes gathering input from consumers and their families and partnering with local community-based organizations. Our project includes opportunities for partnering, and we continue to provide feedback from consumers and their families throughout the project to help shape the programs offered by FNRC, such as the culturally appropriate food pantry and promotora programs.

ACRC has launched several programs for Latinx and African American consumers with some also for Hmong, Slavic, Punjabi and Vietnamese families. While efforts are being made where possible, our target SEA population is largely unaddressed and our project would fill that gap.

Feedback from RC consumers and the Latinx and SEA community is usually surprise that these programs exist, even among current RC consumers. Our project educates the families in plain language, in their native language, apply culturally appropriate outreach that does not overwhelm them with information. The first step in promoting equity and reducing disparities is making sure families know who the RC is and what programs they offer.

6. Applicant Question: Project Activities and Measures

Note: Before answering this question, applicants must complete the Activities Template located in the middle tab directly above.

The schedule of activities clearly and specifically demonstrates the steps that the project will take to achieve its stated objective and measures. Do the proposed measures appropriately track the project objective and activities, provide insight into the effectiveness of project, and demonstrate impact on the target population?

Applicant Response:

Project activities and measures are designed to maximize reach into the Southeast Asian communities in FNRC and ACRC's catchment areas.

Outreach and engagement events are intended to reach the Latinx and SEA regional center consumers and the general Latinx and SEA community, for whom the vast majority are still not even aware there is an agency such as the regional center that can assist individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Through the four different outreach methods—outreach events, cultural resource fairs, developmental screenings, and walk-in office hours, the outreach and engagement will reach different sections of the Latinx and SEA community.

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 areas 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.

Bilingual/bicultural staff will speak with attendees one-on-one and give out information on regional center services. By offering cultural performances and food at the resource fairs, we draw interest and attendance that would normally never attend a regular resource fair. The walk-in office hours will provide greater flexibility for Latinx and SEA community members to obtain information at a time more convenient to them. The developmental milestone screenings will be a simple and safe way for parents to see their child's development and obtain assistance if needed.

Proposed Project

- Target Groups: Latinx, SEA
- 12 Monthly Convenings
- 3 Cultural Resource Fairs
- 3 Developmental Milestone Screenings
- 12 Monthly walk-in office hours
- Overall Impact: 4,800

7. Applicant Question: Budget Template and Narrative

Note: Before answering this question, applicants must complete the Budget Template located in the tab directly above.

The project budget is consistent with the stated project objective and activities, and clearly and concisely explains how the proposed expenditures support the overall project design and outcomes. The project budget costs are clearly associated with the activities and does not include non-allowable costs or costs funded by other sources.

- Budget Template example is located at [Attachment C](#).
- Budget Details and Restrictions are available [here](#).

Applicant Response:

Tracking of attendee numbers will correlate to the success of each event by tracking the turnout in each ethnicity of the target populations. 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. Impact is counted as actual attendees at events.

The language needs of the target populations, Latinx – Spanish, and SEA – Hmong and Mien, is reflected in the budget requested with two bilingual Spanish speakers and a bilingual Hmong speaker and bilingual Mien speaker. The population sizes in the catchment areas are large enough to require regular staff that speak those languages. The RCs have recognized that consumers and community members respond better to staff that can speak the native language of the target populations and understand their cultural values and needs. All project staff will be bilingual and bicultural to be better positioned to provide culturally appropriate outreach and engagement.

Operational costs include costs for printing of flyers for events, handouts, and mailing of flyers. Travel is extensive with one way travel sometimes over 100+ miles because of the large geographic distances and rural nature of the FNRC and ACRC catchment areas. Efforts are made to limit travel and carpooling where possible. Because travel is so extensive, staff will often be on the road and using their cell phones for directions, checking email, calling who they are meeting, coordinating and organizing meetings, etc. Food and beverage has been found to be a large draw for attendees and we propose to provide culturally appropriate food items to increase attendance at the outreach events and resource fairs with an estimated 4,800 attendees at those events. The additional translation is to ensure we have sufficient translators for the languages needed at outreach events/fairs.

Section Name: Proposal Certification

Sub Section Name: Certification

1. Applicant Question: Confirm Proposal Discussion with RC(s)

CBOs are required to discuss their proposal with each RC(s) the CBO is intending to serve. If you are a CBO, have you discussed your proposal with each RC you are intending to serve?

Applicant Response:

Yes

2. Applicant Question: RC Contact

CBOs are required to submit their application concurrently to the Department and to each RC(s) catchment the CBO is intending to serve. If you are a CBO, state the name(s) of the contact person(s) at each RC you have emailed your proposal application. The RC contact list is available here at [Attachment F](#).

Applicant Response:

Mai Her, Cultural Specialist, ACRC
Martha Alvarez, Cultural Specialist, FNRC

3. Applicant Question: Code of Conduct

Grantee Code of Conduct

The Department is committed to supporting services and programs with integrity that foster collaboration and professionalism. Grantees are expected to conduct project activities in a professional and respectful manner that include:

- **Valuing Diversity and Inclusion.** Grantees should embrace diversity that includes but is not limited to: ability, race, language, national origin, citizenship, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, and religion.
- **Conducting Activities with Personal and Professional Integrity.** All activities with individuals, families, community organizations, regional centers, and state, local and federal agencies should be conducted with professionalism, dignity, respect, and fairness. Grantees should be open to listening to different points of view and fostering productive communication.
- **Providing a Positive Work Environment:** All projects should foster a positive and respectful work environment with their colleagues and other grantees.

Applicant Response:

- I acknowledge that I have reviewed the Code of Conduct.

4. Applicant Question: Applicant Certification

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.

Applicant Response:

Yes
