Application Report

Applicant Organization:	The Arc of California
Project Name:	Congreso Familiar
Application ID:	App-22-620
Funding Announcement:	FY 22-23 Service Access and Equity Grant
Award Amount:	$200,000

Project Summary: This project is designed to reach Spanish-speaking families who have family members with a disability. Our project design includes: 1. Continue our current iPad and hotspot lending project in VMRC and CVRC 2. Expand the iPad and hotspot lending project to three additional regional centers: KRC, RCEB and ACRC 3. Continue and expand the technology trainings 4. Continue and expand access to virtual presentations This project will provide iPads to families who currently do not have a device to access virtual resources in their communities. Families will be able to use these iPads to participate in IEP and IPP meetings, support groups, trainings, presentations, and conferences. We will also provide technology trainings to families who need support learning how to use the iPads, learning how to access and effectively participate while using virtual platforms, provide information about low-cost internet programs or provide hotspots as needed. Our goal is to continue to address the digital divide so that families are not left behind and unable to have access to valuable resources. Congreso Familiar has been supporting Spanish-speaking families for over 20 years. We provide education, information, and resources in their language to ensure families have the tools and skills to effectively advocate for their family members with IDD.

Project Director/Manager: Patricia Albeno palbeno347@gmail.com -

---

Section Name: Applicant Eligibility

Sub Section Name: Applicant Information

---

1. Applicant Question: Project Title

What is the Project Title?

Applicant Response:

Congreso Familiar

---

2. Applicant Question: Awarded Amount

What is the total amount awarded for the project?

Applicant Response:

$200,000

---

3. Applicant Question: Organization Type

Choose the response that best describes your organization.

Applicant Response:

Community Based Organization (CBO), 501(c)(3)

---

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:

Congreso Familiar is an annual conference that has provided information and education to Spanish-speaking families for over 20 years both in Alameda and Contra Costa County.
Our goal is to ensure families have the information they need to help them navigate the IDD service system. Congreso Familiar has a long history of empowering families to make informed decisions to effectively advocate for their loved one with a disability.
We recognize the importance of providing information and trainings to families in their language to help break down communication barriers and ensure the families receive the support they need. Providing these supports in their language provides them better understanding and access to much needed services in their communities.
On the Congreso Familiar's website, the community has access to numerous resources on their topics of interest. (www.congresofamiliar.org)
Attached is a copy of the Congreso Familiar brochure in both English and Spanish.

Attachment:
Brochure Español 2022.pdf - PDF FILE
Brochure English 2022.pdf - PDF FILE

---

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

---

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	Latinos Aprendiendo Juntos	20-C29	$283,769
FY 21-22	Congreso Familiar	21-C29	$100,000

---

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:

This project began in fiscal year 20-21. The number of families we reached the first year totaled 483 of our 200-participant goal.
This included participation at the iPad distributions, the technology trainings, outreach presentations and virtual trainings.
70 iPads and 15 hotspots were distributed to families from CVRC and VMRC.
We offered 8 virtual presentations, and we held 2 community events at each RC.

During fiscal year 2021-22, we continue to distribute iPads and provide technology trainings.
So far this year, we have been able to distribute 5 additional iPads and 2 additional hotspots.
We had 6 iPads returned because families were gifted, or they saw the value in purchasing their own devices as a long-term solution. We are happy to see families take such importance in finding ways to address their needs to have access to technology and make such investments.
Additionally, we have focused our efforts on building connections and collaborating with community partners. Some of them include Advocacy Is Success, Autism Speaks, DRAIL, UC MIND Institute, Family Resource Centers, Special Needs in My City, SCDD, ARCA, Hlub Hmong Center, Ally Comprehensive Services, and Jewel of Justice.

Congreso Familiar has offered 7 virtual presentations so far and we have a schedule full of more topics of interest for families.

Date	Topic	Partnerships
5/7/22	ICFs	This topic was presented for the first time in collaboration with UC Davis CEDD
6/4/22	SSI	Collaboration with SSA
6/29/22	Restoration of Social Recreation Services	Collaboration with The Arc of CA, Congreso Familiar and ARCA
7/9/22	Graduation Celebration	This is the first time a graduation celebration has been held to acknowledge everyone's achievements.
8/18/22	Supported Decision Making: The Basics	Collaboration with UC Davis CEDD
9/3/22	Learn about CVRC	Collaboration with CVRC
10/1/22	IEP Basics	Collaboration with DREDF

We continue to add presentations to our YouTube channel as permitted by presenters, where families have on-demand access to videos on various topics. We encourage families who are not able to join us during the virtual presentations to reference the recordings that they missed or use them to refresh their understanding of some of these difficult topics.

Our website is regularly updated, and we have added several resources such as information on how to locate their local FRC, information about the regional centers with a link to the DDS RC lists as well as information about respite. These resources can be accessed in their language and are of great benefit to families.

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:

The proposed 2022-23 project will support the continuation of the iPad lending library, technology trainings and virtual presentations to Spanish-speaking families who have a family member with a disability both in VMRC and CVRC catchment areas.

The proposed project also looks to expand to three additional regional centers: KRC, RCEB and ACRC.

We have learned that although many organizations have returned to having in-person supports and services, families in these catchment areas continue to participate in virtual activities for various reasons. Families who care for individuals with special health care needs struggle and are fearful to participate in person and prefer to continue virtually. We have also learned that many families do not have transportation and having the ability to connect to resources and services virtually have opened an opportunity for them to stay connected and get involved from the comfort of their homes. Transportation is no longer a barrier for families who wish to participate in their local support groups and virtual trainings.

Because we are local to Alameda and Contra Costa counties, families in the RCEB catchment area have reached out to us for technological support as many are still learning how to connect to virtual supports and use the various virtual platforms for things such as IPPs, IEPs, support groups, etc. Many of these families are part of the aging parents' group who care for a loved one with a disability. They have shared with us that "it is difficult to learn this new technology at our age". We recognize the fear that a lot of aging parents face, but we have been successful in helping them to feel comfortable utilizing devices and virtual platforms to access the support their needs.

We have been able to provide help to a few families that have reached out to us, but we would love to expand this support to more families who either do not have suitable devices or need technological support.

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:

Education and Training

Applicant Comment:

Congreso Familiar focuses on providing information, education, advocacy, and leadership skill to increasing parents' knowledge about topics relating to service access, the regional center system, leadership development, advocacy, and developmental disabilities. Our goal is also to remove language barriers by providing all these supports in their primary language: Spanish.

We will provide families with an iPad, hotspot if needed, and offer on-going technology trainings.

---

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:
- Central Valley Regional Center
- Regional Center of the East Bay
- Valley Mountain Regional Center
- Alta California Regional Center
- Kern 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:

- Alameda County
- Amador County
- Calaveras County
- Contra Costa County
- Fresno County
- Madera County
- Mariposa County
- Merced County
- San Joaquin County
- Stanislaus County
- Tulare County
- Tuolumne County
- Kings County
- Alpine County
- Colusa County
- El Dorado County
- Inyo County
- Kern County
- Mono County
- Nevada County
- Placer County
- Sacramento County
- Sierra County
- Sutter 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:

We are aware of the significant impact this project has had on the Spanish-speaking community in VMRC and CVRC. Since the inception of this project, we have created partnerships with organizations across the state such as AT&T, Fresno Unified, The Latino Community Foundation and other private organizations who support our efforts and have shared their commitment to this project. These partnerships along with the ongoing support of The Arc of CA and the regional centers, will allow Congreso Familiar to continue to bring these useful resources to empower Spanish-speaking families. Collaboration plays an important role in achieving sustainable goals that will only benefit our community.

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:

- Hispanic

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)
Hispanic	500	Spanish

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:

This project is designed to reach Spanish-speaking families who have family members with a disability.

Our project design includes:

1. Continue our current iPad and hotspot lending project in VMRC and CVRC

2. Expand the iPad and hotspot lending project to three additional regional centers: KRC, RCEB and ACRC

3. Continue and expand the technology trainings

4. Continue and expand access to virtual presentations

This project will provide iPads to families who currently do not have a device to access virtual resources in their communities. Families will be able to use these iPads to participate in IEP and IPP meetings, support groups, trainings, presentations, and conferences.

We will also provide technology trainings to families who need support learning how to use the iPads, learning how to access and effectively participate while using virtual platforms, provide information about low-cost internet programs or provide hotspots as needed. Our goal is to continue to address the digital divide so that families are not left behind and unable to have access to valuable resources.

Congreso Familiar has been supporting Spanish-speaking families for over 20 years. We provide education, information, and resources in their language to ensure families have the tools and skills to effectively advocate for their family members with IDD.

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:

In analyzing the regional center FY20-21 purchase of service (POS) expenditures data, we see that the Hispanic community continues to be underserved compared to their white counterparts in all five regional centers. The data chart attached clearly shows the disparities that continue to impact the Spanish-speaking community which is why Congreso Familiar continues to prioritize these families. As family members ourselves, who care for an individual with IDD, we know how difficult it is to navigate the IDD service system. We recognize that by adding the language barriers, it only magnifies the challenges that these families face.

This project continues to be relevant because families share with us that "*RCs need to be clear about what services they offer*". We continue to learn that families struggle with receiving the appropriate information and understanding what supports and services RCs provide and how to access them.
When we ask families about their primary concerns with navigating the RC system, the response we get most often is "*the inequities in our Latino community.*"

Families are sharing that they feel discriminated against and often feel helpless and hopeless that the system does not meet their needs.
Congreso Familiar's mission is to continue to provide families with reliable technology, internet access, and the training they need to support their learning, advocacy, and empowerment skills.

Attachment:
RC POS Data.pdf - PDF FILE

---

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:

This project is unique because the staff that implements the trainings, virtual presentations, and interacts with families, have experience advocating for family member with IDD who are clients of a regional center. The staff has learned how to advocate and navigate the same systems that we teach the community to navigate. We empathize with families about the barriers they face, and we acknowledge that the systems are not easy to understand especially if there are language barriers that get in the way.

Congreso Familiar understands first-hand the challenges involved in caring for someone who has a disability and providing supports in their primary language encourages direct communication with professionals. We have witnessed the level of involvement Spanish-speaking families demonstrate when the presentations are in their language versus when presentations are in English with interpreters.
Congreso Familiar creates a space where families feel supported, heard, and understood.

This project is also unique because not only are we able to provide families with iPads and hotspots, but we also teach families all the basics of using the iPads as well as how to connect and interact during virtual presentations. All this support is provided in their primary language, Spanish and in a calm, supportive environment where families feel safe to ask questions.

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:

Congreso Familiar will continue to provide trainings and presentation on a variety of topics to equip families with the information and resources they need to effectively advocate for their loved one's needs. To reduce language barriers, Congreso Familiar is committed to continue to provide supports in Spanish including our virtual presentations, all iPad settings, flyers, technology trainings, Facebook posts, our website and YouTube channel.
We know that the more knowledge and information families receive, the better they will be able to know about their rights, how to exercise them, and what to do when their rights are violated. We recognize that teaching families about supports and services as well as advocacy skills, takes time but we also know that once families learn these skills, families will improve their chances of having access to more supports and services.
We model for families ways they can ask clarifying questions, follow up with key individuals, we encourage them to be persistent and we recommend they participate in as many trainings and support groups as possible.

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:

Congreso Familiar has met and discussed the plan to continue this project across VMRC and CVRC. We have also met with KRC, RCEB and ACRC who all agree that this project aligns with their plan to continue to promote equity and reduce disparities. Everyone acknowledges that providing families with reliable devices and internet connectivity is an ongoing need that families in their catchment areas continue to face.

We have been successful in creating partnerships and collaborating with organizations in the VMRC and CVRC catchment areas such as FRCs, school districts, and other non-profits to continue our efforts to reach more Spanish-speaking families and promote inclusion.

We foster as many collaborations as possible including organizations outside of our catchment areas such as PHP in San Jose, SCDD in the L.A. area, and CREO in Yolo County to name a few.

We believe that promoting community inclusion helps families learn new skills and it helps to build and boost their self-confidence. During our in-person iPad distributions and technology trainings and during the virtual presentations, community inclusion paves the way to creating relationships with other parents, sharing experiences, and learning new advocacy skills.

---

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:

The schedule of activities will ensure that we have a clear vision of the steps we need to take to ensure a successful project and to stay on track to meet our objectives. We will be able to track the project objectives and the effectiveness of the trainings and presentations by utilizing surveys.

We will have families fill out pre and post surveys during the iPad distributions and technology trainings. Evaluating training effectiveness will show us how useful our current training offerings are and how we can improve them in the future.

We also provide a post satisfaction survey after every virtual presentation. We value feedback from families as it provides real-time knowledge about any opportunities that we may have to better serve them. It has been the families' perspective that had led us to the most fruitful changes. We want families in our community to let us know what they value and ultimately what they want from our supports. We have been on a steep learning curve since the project began and we have made numerous adjustments based on the information we have received from the community as well as the Congreso Familiar committee.

We are extremely appreciative of everyone's feedback because it has forced us to continue to grow, be creative, and improve processes. In addition, taking family's comments and concerns into consideration impacts the Spanish-speaking community as it helps them feel heard and empowered.

We have a number of measures in place that include both number and narrative data that helps us keep track and show progress and outcomes of our project activities.

Our quantitative data measures include the number of total families reached, the number of virtual presentations, the number of outreach presentations to the community and the number of participants at each outreach presentation. We also track the number of devices that are checked out and the number of social media views each recorded presentation receives.

Our qualitative data measures include participant comments, feedback, and success stories.
This data helps us learn more about concepts, thoughts, and family experiences. We gather qualitative data through post satisfaction surveys after every virtual training and pre and post surveys during the iPad distributions and technology trainings, by doing follow ups, and periodic check-ins with families. Each quarter and at the end of the project we will be able to report our findings from qualitative data summarized in writing.

---

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:

The budget costs are directly associated with curriculum development, outreach, networking, providing ongoing trainings in VMRC and CVRC that are relevant to the needs of its community in navigating the IDD service system and becoming stronger and more confident advocates and leaders. The additional costs for this year for this project includes the expansion to 3 additional RCs to provide access to services and trainings based on the requests of participants and their families who have reached out to us for support.

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:

CVRC - Natasha Ambriz, Cultural Diversity Specialist
VMRC - Christine Couch, Director of Consumer Services for Adults
RCEB - Lisa Kleinbub, ED & Jairo Guiza, D&E Specialist
KRC - Michi Gates, ED & Enrique Roman, Community Services Director
ACRC - Maria Byrne, Mgr

Please see letters of support attached.

Attachment:
FY 22-23 LOS - Congreso Familiar CVRC.pdf - PDF FILE
FY 22-23 LOS - Congreso Familiar VMRC.pdf - PDF FILE
FY 22-23 LOS - Congreso iPad Lending EFC.pdf - PDF FILE
FY 22-23 LOS - Congreso Familiar KRC.pdf - PDF FILE
FY 22-23 LOS - Congreso Familiar CEDD.pdf - PDF FILE

---

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