

# Application Report



**Applicant Organization:** Tierra del Sol  
**Project Name:** Communications Access for Deaf Artists with Lifelong Developmental Disabilities  
**Application ID:** App-22-619  
**Funding Announcement:** FY 22-23 Service Access and Equity Grant  
**Awarded Amount:** \$344,200

**Project Summary:** This project will increase the linguistic competency of Tierra staff, by providing American Sign Language interpretation to artists. This will strengthen staffing to ensure that each associate’s language and cultural needs are met. As a result, language barriers will be taken down, allowing artists to meet their unique goals and pursue lives in which they are fully included, valued, and accepted for their unique contributions.

**Authorized Certifying Official:** Rebecca Lienhard    rlienhard@tierradelsol.org    -  
**Project Director/Manager:** Rebecca Lienhard    rlienhard@tierradelsol.org    -  
**Project Manager/Coordinator:** Rebecca Lienhard    rlienhard@tierradelsol.org    -  
**Compliance/Fiscal Officer:** Amy Rosenstein    arosenstein@tierradelsol.org    8183521419

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**Section Name:** Applicant Eligibility

**Sub Section Name:** Applicant Information

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**1. Applicant Question:** Project Title

What is the Project Title?

**Applicant Response:**

Communications Access for Deaf Artists with Lifelong Developmental Disabilities

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**2. Applicant Question:** Awarded Amount

What is the total amount awarded for the project?

**Applicant Response:**

\$344,200

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**3. Applicant Question:** Organization Type

Choose the response that best describes your organization.

**Applicant Response:**

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

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**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:**

Tierra del Sol Foundation's mission is to champion inclusion and value for all individuals with disabilities through creative pathways to employment, education, and the arts.

Each day, Tierra ([www.tierradelosol.org](http://www.tierradelosol.org)) empowers 795 adults with developmental disabilities to realize their potential, thereby becoming an integral part of their communities, establishing a valued role in society, and attaining successful employment. Tierra partners with 197 organizations, comprised of 43 businesses, 146 nonprofits, seven colleges, and one occupational center.

In 2021, Tierra revamped its staff training program to meet current needs of people served and encourage professional development. The CEO and Learning and Development Manager gathered and analyzed feedback from staff and people served. In response, Tierra implemented the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals' E-Badge training program. This has provided additional expertise and staff competency to the organization.

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**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:**

[CA Entity Status Letter DEC17.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

[CA Dept of Tax and Fee Administration.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

[Entity Status Letter\\_Franchise Tax Board.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

[Search\\_California Secretary of State.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

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**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

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**Section Name:** Grant Reapplication Information**Sub Section Name:** Grant Reapplications Only

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**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:**

No

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**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
None	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable

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**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:**

Not Applicable

**Applicant Comment:**

Not Applicable

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**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:**

Not Applicable

**Applicant Comment:**

Not Applicable

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**Section Name:** General Application

**Sub Section Name:** Proposal Summary

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**1. Applicant Question:** Project Type

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

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**Applicant Response:**

Workforce Capacity and Development

**Applicant Comment:**

This project will increase the linguistic competency of Tierra staff, by providing American Sign Language interpretation to artists. This will strengthen staffing to ensure that each associate’s language and cultural needs are met. As a result, language barriers will be taken down, allowing artists to meet their unique goals and pursue lives in which they are fully included, valued, and accepted for their unique contributions.

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**2. Applicant Question:** Duration of project

Choose the duration of your project.

**Applicant Response:**

24 months

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**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:**

- North Los Angeles County Regional Center
  - Inland Regional Center
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**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:**

- Los Angeles County
  - San Bernardino County
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**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.

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**Applicant Response:**

College of the Canyons and California State University Northridge are active partners in helping Tierra create a bridge for employing direct support professionals who are trained in ASL. CSUN’s well-known Interpreter Education Program teaches students about the signed language-spoken language interpreting processes. Tierra can either create a hiring pipeline for recently-graduated interpreters, or help students with gaining required Student Volunteer Communication Service hours.

**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:**

Tierra will evaluate the project effectiveness and determine whether the tools, trainings, and resources can sustain ongoing progress. If so, the training will be integrated into Tierra’s staff training program. This is led by the Learning and Development Manager with the CEO, who support Program Directors to consistently apply best practices and training programs throughout the agency. The Chief Clinical Officer will work with Program Directors to determine which individuals would most benefit from staff who complete this training. These are all existing roles that are funded via Regional Center contracts and can be sustained via fundraising (e.g., donor cultivation, special events, grants).

If the evaluation process finds that the outcomes would be improved via changes to the design of the program and products (e.g., training materials), Tierra will seek additional grant funding – via the Department of Developmental Services or other funders – to continue the project.

**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:**

- African American
- Hispanic
- Pacific Islander (list)

**Applicant Comment:**

Ethnicities served may shift based on new enrollments prior to the grant period starting, as well as during the period of performance.

**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	51	English
Hispanic	11	Spanish
Asian	9	English
Asian	1	ASL
Black/African American	18	English
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	2	English
White	37	English
White	1	Armenian

**3. Applicant Question:** Age Group(s) Served

Select all Age Groups the project will serve.

**Applicant Response:**

- 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:**

Tierra requests funds to support a two-year long project to create staff training curriculum that bridges the gap between daily supports required to pursue individuals' chosen career in the arts, while providing services in artists' primary language: American Sign Language (ASL). The target population is adults with developmental disabilities (who qualify for NLACRC or IRC services), who are also deaf or hard of hearing. Areas served include Upland and Los Angeles (91040, 90012), within Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties.

Art is a visual language. Yet, for individuals with developmental disabilities who are D/deaf, communication with fellow studio artists is at best fragmented and at worst, non-existent. Tierra has found that artists, who work in creative studios in which they can communicate with other artists, are more active producers, develop their professional skills, and show more career-choice satisfaction.

Many D/deaf people have been left behind because the system sees them primarily as a person with a developmental disability, and not as part of the deaf community. In-house interpreters are necessary to address the system's failure in equipping direct support professionals in ASL basics and communication strategies for people who are D/deaf.

Using feedback from Marie Grace, other D/deaf artists, and partners, Tierra's proposed project will bridge this gap. Funds will support two new hires who use fluent sign language to support D/deaf artists with developmental disabilities. A letter of support is attached.

This project will fund two full-time art studio interpreters (one for each of Tierra's professional art studios – in Sunland and Upland), immediately bridging the communication gap for artists who have had to rely on low-skilled or intermittent interpretation. This will create a more trusting environment for artists to share their struggles, goals, and concerns with their direct support professional.

It will create an onramp for staff to build their skills. Short-term ASL training has been shown to improve adults' proficiency after just three months (Human Brain Mapping, 2020). By the end of the project, the new hires will create a basic language curriculum. Using a "train-the-trainer" model, the entire program will be more accessible to people who are D/deaf.

As a result of this project, eight adults will be supported in their primary language. Over 120 additional artists with disabilities will learn from and collaborate with deaf artists. More will be admitted based on referrals from IRC and NLACRC, expanding access to arts services to individuals for whom deafness is currently a barrier to the services that meet their unique career and life goals.

### **Attachment:**

[letter of support from artists.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

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## **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:**

Approximately 40% of deaf or hard of hearing children show additional disabilities, such as ID and autism (Journal of Autism and Related Disorders 2022). As these children become adults, many disruptive behaviors, attention difficulties, and social skills challenges are not caused by hearing loss itself, but by the associated communication deprivation (ibid). These adults continue to face layers of challenges that the developmental services system addresses from a disability perspective, but is not equipped or funded to address from a language support perspective.

This aligns with Statewide disparity measures for Equity in Supported Work Programs for working-age adults. Locally, 47% of respondents in NLACRC's 2022 POS disparity survey indicated that staff availability impeded them from taking advantage of approved services.

In addition to this data informing the proposal, Tierra consulted with deaf/hard of hearing associates in its Careers in the Arts program. Artist and weaver Marie Grace shared that, to have full access to different elements of her career, she needs an interpreter at some online and in-person events, as well as during her studio work. She has told Tierra that relying on contracted interpreters makes speaking opportunities and in-person exhibitions complex and challenging, and reduces her ability to share her unique vision. The experiences of Marie Grace and her peers show the need for readily available interpreters who understand Tierra's values.

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### **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 different from other funded projects on the Department's website due to the geography covered (e.g., SARC Regional Center's 21/22 project and NorCal Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing focus on northern California vs. L.A. County) and the target population (CA Hands and Voices' project focuses on children rather than adults).

The 20/21 NLACRC funded projects focus on children (Children's Hospital L.A., South Central Prevention Coalition), cultural competency (PathPoint, Integrated Community Collaborative, So'oh-Shinai Sister Project), and peer mentoring for Parent-run CBOs (USC UCEDD at CHLA). The 21/22 NLACRC funded project focuses on general competitive employment.

Similarly, the 21/22 IRC funded projects focus on children (Access Nonprofit Center, Acorns to Oak Trees), parents (Autism Society, Familias First), and remote workforce development (Autism Society).

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### **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:

Artists who are D/deaf and have developmental disabilities need control over their artistic pursuits, and influence over how they and their work are represented (Studies in Social Justice 2021). IRC's 21/22 POS SAE report showed that 26% of eligible adult consumers who use ASL have no purchased services. IRS also created a new role to advance access and equity efforts for IRCs Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Tierra's project will help meet these needs by giving D/deaf artists the tools and interpreters needed to communicate their needs and vision.

Tierra's two new hires will be dedicated 100% to this project. They will report to the Director of Arts, and work closely with the CEO and Learning and Development Manager. In addition to providing in-the-moment interpretation, they will build relationships with D/deaf artists and their families. They will use formal feedback tools (e.g., satisfaction surveys, weekly check-ins) and provide case notes on daily interactions via Tierra's HIPAA-approved client information management system.

Progress will be measured against artists' perspectives and needs, gathered as artists join the program. This data will be analyzed by the Learning and Development Manager with the CEO, based on each individual's change in answers, and compared to a set of Associate Satisfaction Surveys completed by artists who are not D/deaf.

The CEO will also assess the ongoing needs of the greater community via Regional Center Purchase of Service Annual Reports.

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### 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:

Staff and Community Trainings (p. 6):

NLACRC is promoting educational opportunities to our staff and in our community. Staff receive ongoing trainings on Person Centered Planning. In addition, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) training is being provided to NLACRC staff in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through these DEIB trainings, case management staff will gain and/or reinforce tools to focus on cultural humility and awareness as staff meet with consumers and families.

Responding to the community's value for staff training to ensure that they can effectively assist consumers and families and respect toward consumer and family cultures and language preferences (page 13):

This project not only provides language interpretation, but also trains staff about Deaf culture. It will also support staff to understand the implications of one's identity being aligned with their deafness ("Deaf"), compared to the experience of people who see deafness as just one of their traits ("deaf") rather than part of their core identity.

Providing other interpretation and accommodation services upon request, including ASL, to meet the community's expressed needs (page 16):

Current resources don't allow for immediate responses to requests for interpretation and accommodation services. However, by hiring interpreters who can build a staff training curriculum, Tierra will have in-house experience and expertise to meet these requests as they arise.

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### 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:**

Proposed measures track the key activities of the project, while also gathering qualitative and quantitative data throughout the period of performance, to ensure accurate assessment of the project's success.

Pre- and post-surveys (Measures 01 and 05) will provide comparable data to determine the impact the program makes on participants. With the summary of this data, the narrative (Measures 02 and 07) will provide the change from beginning to end, as well as the participants' and staff's experiences with the program, as they describe them (Measure 04). By tracking milestones, Tierra will make sure key program activities are completed in a timely manner, thereby ensuring that the program achieves its intended outcomes (Measures 03, 06, and 08).

Activities directly relate to measures. The systematically gather data, check understanding, develop strategies and tools, pilot those strategies and tools, gather feedback, train other staff on the curriculum, and ensure consistent application of the program concepts. Participants have built-in feedback opportunities during daily check-ins with staff, and formal feedback opportunities throughout the proposed activities (Activities 01, 05, and 07).

Ultimately, these feedback opportunities will result in both qualitative and quantitative data, demonstrating the impact of the program on the lives of people served.

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### **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:**

Personnel expenses charged to the grant include: Recruiter will recruit and vet candidates for new hires (Activity 02). The cost is estimated based on average amount of time spent recruiting staff for comparable positions to the ASL Interpreter. Two full-time Direct Support Professionals who have ASL interpretation skills. The \$3 per hour increase (over base direct support professional wage covered via Regional Center contracts) will be charged to the grant (Activities 03, 04, 07). Each of the two art studio Program Directors will be allocated 2% to the project, for project management, staff support, and liaising with families, college and volunteer site partners, and referring organizations (Activities 03, 05, 07). The Learning and Development Manager will be allocated 5% for oversight on curriculum development and staff training (Activities 01, 03, 04, 05, 07, 08). The CEO will oversee the project, and focus on reporting and outcomes tracking. This will be 2% of her time. The Chief Clinical Officer will spend 1% of her full-time position for associate intake, clinical review, and working with the Regional Centers (Activities 07, 08). Each personnel expense includes an additional 13% in benefits.

Operating expenses for the project will cover expenses such as cell phones, computers, mileage, project and office supplies, rent, utilities, and licenses for software. Associates work out of Tierra's Sunland and Upland art studios, which are equipped with a variety of professional art supplies, such as textiles, ceramics, acrylic paint, pastels (Activity 04, 06, 07). Direct Support Professionals/ASL Interpreters will also have supplies to keep associates safe in community-based settings. For example, during visits to galleries and exhibitions, staff bring a backpack with first aide supplies and teaching tools (Activity 04, 07). Allocations of expenses for Tierra's Upland Art Center and Sunland Art Studios are also included, based on the percentage of the space and time that will be used for the project. New hires are provided with an intensive ten-day orientation to help them become familiar with Tierra's philosophy, values, and mission (Activities 02, 03). Additionally, Tierra's has a year-round staff training calendar which ensures that core concepts included in New Employee Orientation are reinforced throughout staff members' time at Tierra (Activity 05, 06). This training aligns with the National Association of Direct Support Professionals' code of ethics.

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**Section Name:** Proposal Certification

**Sub Section Name:** Certification

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### **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

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### **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:**

Ruth Janka and Evelyn McOmie - North Los Angeles County Regional Center  
Lavinia Johnson, Maria Rodriguez, and Dan Moore – Inland Regional Center

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### 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.
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### 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

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