

Application Report



Applicant Organization: San Diego Regional Center
Project Name: Building the PUENTE Family Network for Parent Empowerment and Connection
Application ID: App-22-568
Funding Announcement: FY 22-23 Service Access and Equity Grant
Awarded Amount: \$245,000

Project Summary: The new proposal will expand PUENTE 2.0 in two ways: (1) provide ongoing group support for families after completion of the core PUENTE service; and (2) provide access to the individual components of the PUENTE curriculum to families not receiving the individual service. This access will be provided through multiple community facing avenues to be identified during a collaborative development process. (e.g., promotoras presenting PUENTE content within existing community groups/events and promotora "office hours" at SDRC). Specifically, we will co-design the PUENTE Family Network with multiple stakeholders and then pilot test the implementation. The pilot will assess feasibility, reach, and acceptability.

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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:

Building the PUENTE Family Network for Parent Empowerment and Connection

2. Applicant Question: Awarded Amount

What is the total awarded requested for the project?

Applicant Response:

\$245,000

3. Applicant Question: Organization Type

Choose the response that best describes your organization.

Applicant Response:

Regional Center (RC)

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:

PUENTE is administered through a community-academic partnership between San Diego Regional Center and researchers at the Child and Adolescent Services Research Center (CASRC). SDRRC staff leading PUENTE include Karelly Mendez and Brenda Bello Vazquez (cultural specialist). CASRC investigators involved in PUENTE include Lauren Brookman-Frazer, PhD (CASRC Associate Director, Professor, UCSD, and Lead of the PUENTE Evaluation and Quality Monitoring Team) and Sarah Rieth (Associate Professor, SDSU, and Lead of the PUENTE Implementation Team). The PUENTE evaluation support staff are also located at CASRC, as are the PUENTE promotoras, supervisor, and assessment specialist. PUENTE was formed to address ethnic disparities in POS for DDS services in San Diego and Imperial counties. Previous PUENTE projects have resulted in a sustainable parent psychoeducation and empowerment program offered to Spanish-speaking families of children 11-16 with intellectual disabilities and/or autism.

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:

Yes

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 |
|--------------|--|--------------|--------------|
| 2020-2021 | Adapting the PUENTE Program for Sustainment and Scale Up | 20-SDRC | \$222,260 |

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:

Prior to our 2020-2021 project, we developed and successfully pilot tested PUENTE 1.0 with 34 families in collaboration with multiple stakeholders and based on mixed qualitative and quantitative data on service access needs for Latinx families. PUENTE involves identification of low/no POS families, initial family needs assessment, 12 sessions delivering curriculum, between-session contact with promotoras, communication between promotoras and service coordinators, and ongoing evaluation of program effectiveness. Results indicated that PUENTE was feasible and associated with reductions in parent depression and strain and increases in parent self-efficacy. However, adaptations were needed to the curriculum and implementation model for sustainment and extension through the SDRC catchment area.

In the 2020-2021 project, we used mixed quantitative and qualitative methods (e.g., surveys, focus groups, and interviews) to create the adapted PUENTE model ("PUENTE 2.0"). Adaptations included changes to the (1) overall service model (identification and referral process, communication between PUENTE team and service coordinators), (2) curriculum content (tailoring Parents Taking Action curriculum to adolescents), (3) modalities of content delivery, (4) training/fidelity monitoring, (5) regions of service delivery, and (6) avenues of community outreach (adding resource fairs and parent groups). Following these changes, rate of referrals increased (from .5 per month to 5) and promotoras reported significantly increased utility of the curriculum content.

Recently, parents who have completed the program and current and former promotoras have identified a need for continued contact and support from other parents to sustain the positive impacts of the program. In response, we held a "PUENTE Alumni" reunion, which was attended by 9 parents and 2 promotoras. In addition to the social connections, participants shared service navigation resources and experiences. Attendees reported that the event was empowering, supportive, and informative. One parent shared, "Gracias por la reunion, Es lo mejor, estar con otros padres, ahi es donde esta la verdadera comprension" (*Thank you for this reunion. It's the best thing, to be with other parents, that's where the real understanding lies.*) Since the event, participants have continued to communicate with each other and the promotoras through group messaging and have requested additional events and structures to facilitate ongoing connection. They also expressed desire to connect other families whom they know to PUENTE 2.0 and to this emerging PUENTE community. There were also requests from service coordinators for promotora presence at Regional Center offices to provide drop in support to families in accessing services (assistance with completing forms) and answer questions from a parent perspective. In sum, there is a strong need to expand PUENTE to include a broader network to support ongoing service navigation.

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 2022-2023 proposal builds on the successful collaborations of the team in prior projects and creates a new array of group-oriented services for parents. The objective of the proposal is the creation of the PUENTE Family Network, which represents a new type of community support for parents of school-aged children with developmental disabilities. The prior projects focused on developing, implementing, and adapting the PUENTE service model, which is now a vendored service of SDRC being offered to Latinx families of school-age children. It is an individual service in which one family/parent receives a family needs assessment and is connected to a promotora for a 12-session curriculum ("Parents Taking Action") and between session communication.

The existing vendored service will continue separately from this proposal. The new proposal will expand PUENTE 2.0 in two ways: (1) provide ongoing group support for families after completion of the core PUENTE service; and (2) provide access to the individual components of the PUENTE curriculum to families not receiving the individual service. This access will be provided through multiple community facing avenues to be identified during a collaborative development process. (e.g., promotoras presenting PUENTE content within existing community groups/events and promotora "office hours" at SDRC). Specifically, we will co-design the PUENTE Family Network with multiple stakeholders and then pilot test the implementation. The pilot will assess feasibility, reach, and acceptability.

A primary motivation for this expansion in PUENTE's focus is requests from PUENTE alumni and their desire to be continually connected to other parents beyond an individual service. There were already a number of parents who would like to provide drop in support to families in accessing services (e.g., assistance with completing forms) and answer questions from a parent perspective.

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:

Community Connector

Applicant Comment:

Based on needs/gaps identified in previous grant and feedback from PUENTE alumni, expand PUENTE model to include family network aimed to increase community connections, family knowledge of service system, engagement with SDRC, and family empowerment.

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:

- San Diego 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:

- San Diego County
 - Imperial 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:

The Child & Adolescent Services Research Center (CASRC) is a consortium of researchers from multiple academic institutions in Southern California (UC San Diego, San Diego State University). Its mission is to improve the quality, effectiveness, and implementation of community-based behavioral health services for children, adolescents, and families. CASRC investigators will support the design, implementation and mixed qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the PUENTE Family Network.

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:

Yes

Attachment:

[Rieth Letter of Commitment signed 2022.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

[UCSD Letter of Commitment DDS 22-23_mjk.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

7. Applicant Question: Strategies and Sustainability

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

Applicant Response:

The core (individual family) PUENTE Program developed in previous projects is now a vendored service. The extension of PUENTE to be co-designed in the proposed project will include a "PUENTE Family Network". It will be designed with sustainability in mind from the beginning. For example, the funding and lead organization for each component will be considered at the outset.

Additionally, SDRC and CASRC researchers continue to partner on other CASRC and SDRC led projects. Our CASRC partners plan to submit an application to the National Institute of Mental to testing the replication of the PUENTE model (both core and the extended network) to other locations.

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 | 35 | Spanish, English |

3. Applicant Question: Age Group(s) Served

Select all Age Groups the project will serve.

Applicant Response:

- Three to 21

Applicant Comment:

In prior grants, we have limited PUENTE to ages 11-16 based on analyses of SDRC POS disparities. In response to emergent needs and changes in SDRC, the vendored service has expanded to ages 6 to 16. Therefore the proposed family network will include the full age range of the individual PUENTE service.

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:

The new proposal will expand PUENTE 2.0 in two ways (1) provide ongoing group support for families who graduate from PUENTE; and (2) provide access to individual components the PUENTE curriculum through multiple community facing avenues (e.g., promotoras presenting PUENTE content within existing community groups/events and holding SDRC office hours). Specifically, we will co-design the PUENTE network with multiple stakeholders and then pilot test the new components. The pilot tests will assess feasibility, reach, and acceptability.

Overall Objective: Expand PUENTE Model to include PUENTE Family Network to connect parents to one another

Based on the needs and gaps identified in previous grants and feedback from PUENTE alumni, we aim to expand the PUENTE model to include a family network aimed to increase community connections, family knowledge of the service system, engagement with SDRC, and family empowerment.

Activity 1: Co-Design Network Components with Multiple Stakeholders (PUENTE Alumni, PUENTE Promotoras, SDRC Cultural Specialist). Although the specific Network components will be determined through the co-design process, possible strategies include:

- Monthly Promotora "Office Hours" at multiple SDRC branches to offer support for navigating services and delivery of relevant curriculum content to support individual needs. In the co-design process, we will explicitly define the role of the promotoras relative to the services coordinators and other service providers to ensure there is not duplication of services.
- Quarterly regional alumni events, including formal presentations and informal connection/conversation time
- Quarterly promotora outreach and education to existing parent groups throughout San Diego and Imperial counties or community conference/resource fairs
- A social network and ongoing communication to empower parents through access to information from one another

Activity 2: Pilot PUENTE Family Network Components (quarters 2-4)

Activity 3: Evaluate the impact of the PUENTE Family Network (quarters 2-4) to examine reach, feasibility, and acceptability:

- Conduct focus groups to gather stakeholder perceptions of feasibility and acceptability
- Track participation to assess reach
- Obtain qualitative data from Promotoras on perceptions of greatest service needs.

Organization's Experience:

PUENTE is administered through a community-academic partnership between San Diego Regional Center and researchers at the Child and Adolescent Services Research Center. PUENTE was formed to address ethnic disparities in POS for DDS services in San Diego and Imperial counties. Members of the team have expertise in service development and implementation, parent engagement, and program evaluation. Previous PUENTE projects with this team have resulted in a sustainable parent psychoeducation and empowerment program offered to Spanish-speaking families of children 11-16 with intellectual disabilities and/or autism, which is currently offered as a vendored service from SDRC.

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 earlier Service Access & Equity projects, we used mixed quantitative and qualitative methods to identify a target population for disparity reduction efforts. Specifically, service utilization data from 27,343 SDRC clients were examined to identify the ages and diagnoses demonstrating the greatest disparities in POS dollars between non-Hispanic White clients and Hispanic/Latinx clients. Data revealed that disparities emerged between these groups beginning at age 14, and particularly for clients with diagnoses of intellectual disability and/or autism. The PUENTE team has continued to focus on this population based on these analyses, and based on needs reported by SDRC staff following recent significant organizational restructuring.

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:

The 2022-2023 proposal builds on the successful collaborations of the team in prior projects and creates a new array of group-oriented services for parents. The objective of the proposal is the creation of the PUENTE Family Network, which represents a novel type of community support for parents of school-aged children with developmental disabilities. The prior projects focused on developing, implementing, and adapting the PUENTE service model, which is now a vendored service of SDRC being offered to Latinx families of children ages 6-16. It is an individual service in which one family/parent receives a family needs assessment and is connected to a promotora for a 12-session curriculum ("Parents Taking Action") and between session communication.

The vendored service will continue separately from the proposed project. The new proposal is unique because it will expand PUENTE 2.0 in two ways: (1) provide ongoing group support for families who graduate from PUENTE; and (2) provide access to individual components the PUENTE curriculum to families not receiving the individual service through multiple community facing avenues (e.g., promotoras presenting PUENTE content within existing community groups/events and SDRC office hours). These group-oriented supports and avenues of information delivery supported by parents with lived experience with children with developmental disabilities and navigating the SDRC system are a unique offering in the SDRC catchment area.

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:

The individual PUENTE 2.0 Program (developed in previous projects and now a vendored service) was designed to empower parents of youth served by SDRC to access needed services through access to a psychoeducational curriculum delivered by Promotora/Lay health workers who have lived experience with children with development disabilities served by SDRC.

The new proposal will expand PUENTE 2.0 in two ways: (1) provide ongoing group support for families after completion of the core PUENTE service; and (2) provide access to the individual components of the PUENTE curriculum to families not receiving the individual service. This access will be provided through multiple community facing avenues to be identified during a collaborative development process. (e.g., promotoras presenting PUENTE content within existing community groups/events and promotora "office hours" at SDRC).

Because all Promotoras are themselves parents of individuals with developmental disabilities, they are able to draw on their unique personal experiences to foster connection and trust with the parent receiving the service. Promotoras have considerable expertise navigating service systems, including Regional Center, and are able to provide families with on-the-ground support to connect with available resources, thus reducing barriers to service. The expansion will increase the reach of the program through the new, expanded PUENTE network.

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:

When disparities in Regional Center spending were initially identified and California Regional Centers were tasked with addressing these disparities, SDRC partnered with local researchers at the Child and Adolescent Services Research Center to optimally identify and evaluate potential disparity reduction strategies. The proposed project is the continuation of an on-going partnership that is built upon continual cycles of stakeholder feedback (including families served by SDRC, SDRC service coordinators and program managers, and service providers) with the overall goal of improving service utilization specifically for Latinx and Spanish-speaking families, thus increasing spending and reducing identified disparities. Through close collaboration with the research team, the target activities for the proposed program was based on systematic evaluation of our prior project and emerging needs and SDRC priorities. The PUENTE team represents a collaboration of key community organizations with the capacity to design and implement the PUENTE Family Network, as well as evaluate its feasibility, reach, and acceptability and continually make necessary adjustments.

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 measures were specifically designed to align with project goals and activities and provide accountability to project objectives. All activities are linked with multiple corresponding performance measures.

Overall Objective: Expand PUENTE Model to include PUENTE Family Network to connect parents to one another

Activity 1: Co-Design Network Components with Multiple Stakeholders (PUENTE Alumni, PUENTE Promotoras, SDRC Cultural Specialist).

1. Number of stakeholders involved in the Family Network co-design process
2. Description components of the PUENTE Family Network

Activity 2: Implement PUENTE Family Network Components (quarters 2-4)

1. Number of alumni events held
2. Number of community events held
3. Number of SDRC "Office Hours" held

Activity 3: Evaluate the impact of the PUENTE Family Network (quarters 2-4) to examine reach, feasibility, and acceptability

1. Number of families attending alumni events
2. Number of families attending SDRC "Office Hours"
3. Stakeholder perceptions of feasibility and acceptability

Attachment:

[Copy of Final Activities Template.docx](#) - WORD DOCUMENT

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:

See Budget Report for the budget.

Additionally, see attached Budget Narrative for the subcontract budget narrative. In sum, subcontract to UCSD includes evaluation team personnel (Dr. Brookman-Frazee, evaluation coordinator, and postdoctoral fellow), materials, travel/mileage, consultant fees, and a service agreement to SDSU. The SDSU service agreement includes implementation team personnel (Dr. Rieth, promotora supervisor, promotoras, implementation coordinator). Indirect costs are included.

Attachment:

[DDS 22-23 UCSD Budget Narrative.docx](#) - WORD DOCUMENT

[SDRC Budget Report 22-23.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

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:

Not applicable, Regional Center Application.

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
