**Friends Foundation for the Aging**

**AFSC Immigrant Rights Program – Services for Immigrant Seniors Application**

**September 2020**

1. ***Executive Summary*** *–this should include the amount requested, brief description of the problem, objectives and your plan to achieve those objectives (theory of change). Max 150 words.*

American Friends Service Committee’s (AFSC) New Jersey Immigrant Rights Program seeks to ensure that all immigrants are treated with dignity and respect. Over the last four years, our Services for Seniors Project has delivered case management to help immigrant seniors access benefits and has educated other service providers about the needs of this population. In the last six months, we have pivoted to respond to the extreme conditions for immigrant elders during the COVID19 pandemic. We are seeking a renewal grant of $50,000 from Friends Foundation for the Aging to continue this important work.

**Our objectives for this project are:**

1. At least ten new senior immigrants will receive services and benefits that improve their quality of life, and
2. At least 100 service providers, 50 immigrant seniors, and two agencies serving seniors will have an increased understanding of immigrant eligibility for public benefits.

***Brief statement of the organization’s history and competence for this effort.*** *Max 100 words.*

AFSC’s New Jersey Immigrant Rights Program started integrating social work and case management into its programming six years ago; this service has improved the lives of 232 immigrants. AFSC’s Social Worker has helped immigrants and service providers navigate their eligibilities for public benefits and fight systems that deny immigrants, particularly seniors, the services they deserve. Over the last four years support from FFA has provided resources that allow us to focus on the needs of immigrant seniors. The Social Worker is part of the organizing and advocacy team that works to create policies and a culture that treats immigrants fairly and with dignity.

***Project details: (max 5 pages)***

1. **What problem are you addressing? Evidence of need, why this solution was chosen, demographics, description of community and people to be served.**

Immigration in the U.S. continues to be at the forefront of political conversations, while immigrants continue to be used as scapegoats for social problems under the current anti-immigrant administration. Many policy changes issued by the administration are intended to make immigrants’ lives extremely challenging, and they are succeeding. In one example, the definition for what constitutes “public charge,” which makes immigrants ineligible to adjust to lawful status, has expanded, incorporating more need-based programs and further deterring immigrant seniors from accessing services. Public benefit usage, under the new changes to the public charge rule, could negatively impact immigrants’ ability to become a Legal Permanent Resident, the first step toward U.S. citizenship. This, in addition to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, has created further dissonance in the lives of many senior immigrants, leaving them in an impossible situation of having to choose between utilizing benefits to meet their basic needs or a pathway to citizenship in a more precarious financial situation.

**Impact of COVID-19:** Immigrant Rights Program staff have observed increased needs among the immigrant community in the current political climate, including financial instability, food insecurity, medical and mental health issues, and a sense of uncertainty, which have been exacerbated by COVID-19. Seniors are among the most vulnerable within the immigrant community, due to their elevated health risks. The combination of a broken immigration system, coupled with the implementation of new and harmful immigration policies and a global health crisis has heightened anxiety, fear, and isolation and caused greater needs for services amongst our senior clients.

**Effectiveness of Social Work**: AFSC’s Immigrant Rights Program in New Jersey has found intensive case management to be a strong solution for navigating the additional barriers immigrant seniors face and the limited safety net services available to this population. AFSC’s Social Worker helps clients bypass barriers such as language, cultural differences, benefit systems bureaucracy, misinformation, and fear. She connects immigrant seniors with needed resources and services. We have found this method to be effective, as evidenced by a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, including the outcomes of services provided to previous immigrant senior clients.

For example, through our post-services client satisfaction survey, we found that 68% of clients (11 of 16 completed surveys received) reported satisfaction with services rendered by the Social Worker, that their needs were met, and that they achieved a level of stability with services received. In addition, the personal stories of individual clients, detailing the impact services have had on their lives, have demonstrated the effectiveness of providing immigrant seniors with comprehensive social work services.

One example is that of a 62-year old man, originally from Ghana, who was detained upon entering the U.S. and was first assisted by AFSC’s detention team. AFSC’s Social Worker worked with the detention attorney and provided a letter of support for his release into the community. He was released and granted work authorization until his next court hearing. The Social Worker helped him to apply for a social security number and to access resources such as food and medical treatment, as he was recently diagnosed with cancer. She also assisted him with securing legal representation for his upcoming immigration hearing. Despite his challenging circumstances, he expressed immense gratitude for the support and assistance he received from AFSC. Unfortunately, with the prognosis of his illness not being favorable and the difficulties he experienced here in the U.S., he ultimately decided to return to Ghana.

1. ***What action(s) will you take?***

AFSC will address the need for information and support, particularly among senior immigrant communities in Newark, through the following actions:

* Providing current and new senior immigrant clients with comprehensive case management to increase access to needed services;
* Advocating for senior clients to ensure they receive the benefits they are entitled to and that they are treated with dignity;
* Updating clients regularly via email or other means regarding public events where they may be able to apply for or access resources;
* Updating clients with reminders on how to stay healthy in the pandemic and where to access needed resources (PPE);
* Where possible, supply funds for food or other essentials to people with immediate needs (evaluating those at greatest risk in another pandemic lockdown).
* Educating social service providers and immigrant communities about eligibility for public benefits, policies affecting eligibility, and how to overcome barriers to accessing needed services;
* Networking, researching and allocating wellness resources to expand referrals including maintaining existing resource list and creating COVID-19 resource list;
* Developing informative materials for dissemination to clients and service providers and for posting on AFSC’s website;
* Supporting local and statewide advocacy campaigns to expand eligibility for immigrants seeking public benefits including economic relief; and
* Opposing proposals to limit or end immigrant eligibility for public benefits.
1. ***What other organizations will you partner with on this project?***

This past year, AFSC’s Social Worker collaborated with the New Jersey Foundation for the Aging and presented both a webinar at the onset of the pandemic and a workshop in their virtual conference in August. Here, she was able to connect with other senior serving agencies, potentially helping to expand AFSC’s outreach to more seniors as well as to build the capacity of other providers to serve older immigrants. In the upcoming year, AFSC will continue to network, explore possible collaborations, and offer informational presentations to other organizations including St. Stephan’s Lutheran Church Newark, St. Lucy’s Catholic Church in Newark, the Red Bank Resource Network, New Jersey Foundation for the Aging, New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice, Rutgers School of Social Work and St. Clare’s Social Services Program.

1. ***What outputs (measurable, specific) do you expect?***

The overall goal of the AFSC Services for Immigrant Seniors Project is to promote a better quality of life for aging immigrants through comprehensive case management services, which remove barriers, so seniors can access needed services. The COVID-19 pandemic created new barriers and has further exacerbated existing barriers for seniors over the past six months. With office closures, higher rates of job loss, extensive delays in application processing, PPE shortages and infection rates in U.S., we anticipate a lower caseload due to more extensive time needed to address individual case issues and needs. We expect the following measurable outcomes in the year ahead:

* 10-15 senior immigrant clients (10 new clients annually plus 6-8 clients from previous funding cycle) will receive at least 2-3 services from AFSC staff, including referrals, application assistance, accompaniment, and advocacy phone calls to help them obtain services that address their needs for food, healthcare, housing, Social Security, or other essential benefits.
* At least 6 presentations will be conducted, reaching a combination of at least 200 service providers, community members, and others who service seniors.
* At least 8 seniors will receive food access through assistance with NJSNAP application, renewal or referral to food distribution or pantry.
* At least 8 seniors will receive access to healthcare through assistance with Medicare or Medicaid application, renewal or referral to low-income clinics.
* More than 50% of participating senior-serving agencies and immigrants will increase their understanding of benefits eligibility and navigating related challenges through AFSC presentations primarily online.
* At least 90% of senior immigrant clients will identify, through satisfaction surveys, that their needs were addressed and that they are satisfied with the services rendered by AFSC’s Social Work.
1. ***What outcomes do you expect—what change will occur, what impact will it have?***

AFSC expects the following changes will occur as a result of this work:

* Senior immigrant clients will experience an improvement in their overall stability by being connected to needed services related to healthcare, food access, mental health, and other basic needs.
* Social service providers will gain a better understanding of immigrant eligibility for public benefits and issues facing seniors, leading to better services for this population from other service providers.

Overall, we anticipate this work will have the following impact: immigrant seniors will have access to clear and correct information regarding services and resources available to them, their rights to these services, and government policies affecting their access to services. Simultaneously, service providers and community members will receive information and resources to best support the immigrant seniors in their lives.

1. ***How will you measure outputs and outcomes?***

AFSC’s Social Worker will document the quantitative and qualitative impact of her services. The Social Worker will maintain each client’s records in a case management database, inputting the services rendered and benefits received, to measure quantitative outcomes. She will also send surveys to clients toward the end of the cycle to identify the effectiveness of and their satisfaction with services and whether their needs were met to gather quantitative outcomes.

After conducting presentations for service providers, the Social Worker will distribute surveys to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the session. For virtual presentations, AFSC will distribute our own survey via email; when presenting through another agency, AFSC will use the survey provided by the agency. The post-presentation surveys will assess whether participants have increased knowledge regarding immigrant benefit eligibility and availability of community resources.

1. ***How will you sustain the project after the grant period?***

AFSC is committed to serving immigrant seniors in Newark and surrounding areas and will sustain this project after the grant period by continuing to raise support from philanthropic partners who share our commitment to this population. Through a three-year grant from the van Ameringen Foundation, we have secured 50% of the funding for the Social Worker position, described in this proposal, for the next year. AFSC will continue to actively seek other potential funding sources for this critical work.

1. ***How will your results be shared and replicated?***

AFSC’s benefit directory and COVID-19 resource list will be shared with staff, volunteers, community partners, social service providers, and the immigrant community. The directory will be updated at least once this year and made available on AFSC's website. It will be translated into Spanish and French if there is a demand. Educational and outreach materials, developed over the course of this proposal, will be shared with partners, and posted on AFSC's website. Through post-screening and recording senior clients' case summaries, staff may learn of new issues facing immigrant seniors and of other available resources. They will share these and other key lessons with organizational partners.

1. **How does this project fit with Friends Foundation values?**

AFSC’s Services for Immigrant Seniors Project addresses the Foundation’s values in the following ways:

* The focus of the project is *Service to Diverse Populations* with the client base of low-income immigrant seniors from a variety of countries of origin.
* This project has the *Potential to Create Change* on an individual level by improving the quality of life for senior immigrants and on a community level by identifying and addressing barriers to services for immigrant seniors and sharing resources with other service providers. On a wider systems level we advocate for policy change.
* AFSC works to *Leverage Resources* for this program and currently has funding from the van Ameringen Foundation and the Friends Foundation for the Aging for this program. Together, these grants allow us to provide more comprehensive services for seniors, including mental health, which is under-diagnosed and often misunderstood among older adults.
* All AFSC work is done in collaboration with other organizations, and we would welcome the *Continued Engagement of the Friends Foundation for the Aging*. Over the last year our connection through NJFA webinars and discussion with other FFA grantees have increased our engagement. In partnership with the Foundation, AFSC has been able to strengthen and sustain this program, which is unique in its focus on immigrant seniors. We are very grateful that the Executive Director has participated in some of AFSC’s educational and outreach activities.
1. ***Project budget and timeline, including other sources of support, budget narrative.***

Attached:

Program budget, timeline, other funding sources

IRS 501-c-3 letter

990 exemption letter