

Application Report



Applicant Organization: South Central Los Angeles Regional Center

Project Name: SCLARC Language Access and Cultural Competency Grant

Funding Announcement: FY 21/22 Regional Center Funding To Improve Language Access And Cultural Competency

Requested Amount: \$745,884.00

Project Summary: SCLARC will work with parent leaders to provide input on policies and programs through listening sessions and focus groups. Some of the topics that will be included are the Family Portal app and the SDP program. SCLARC will expand outreach efforts and prioritize support for individuals and families within the Spanish-speaking, Latino/Hispanic, and African American communities. A key component of this accessibility effort will also include training and connecting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to technology. SCLARC will also develop training videos about SCLARC services and the regional center system in English and Spanish to better support our target population.

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Project Manager/Coordinator: Kiara Lopez kiara@sclarc.org -

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Section Name: Regional Center Profile

Sub Section Name: RC Organization Profile

1. Applicant Question: Description of the Cultural, Linguistic, Racial and Ethnic Diversity of the Catchment

Provide a description of your regional center that includes:

- Counties served
- Geography of the region
- Primary languages of the individuals/families
- Demographics of ethnicities and cultures
- Other relevant information to describe your communities

You may upload an attachment but you must provide a narrative here. Limit your attachments to no more than 3.

Applicant Response:

SCLARC serves South and Southeast Los Angeles, including County Service Planning Area 6 (SPA 6), and the western half of Service Planning Area 7 (SPA 7). Communities in these SPAs include the cities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Maywood, Paramount, Cudahy, Downey, Huntington Park, South Gate, Compton, Lynwood, Gardena, Vernon and Carson, as well as the South Los Angeles communities of Watts, Crenshaw, Florence/Firestone, Leimert Park, View Park and Baldwin Hills. Of all individuals served by SCLARC, 70% are Latino, 22% African-American, 6% other, 2% White, and 42% are primarily Spanish-speaking.

The majority of the communities served by SCLARC have high rates of crime, infant mortality, poverty, lack of education, and significant health disparities, with a population facing overwhelming barriers to accessing services. In comparison to other SPAs, and the County of Los Angeles as a whole, SPA 6 & 7 have disproportionate rates of negative outcomes in health and wellbeing, while also having the largest percentage of African-American and Latino residents of any area within Los Angeles County.

SCLARC's client population closely reflects the community served, which is made up of 27% African-Americans, 70% Latinos, and 3% other races, and 44 percent of the local community are monolingual Spanish speakers. The area has the highest county-wide percentage of families with household incomes less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Level; 33%, compared to 18% percent of the entire county.

2. Applicant Question: Description of Regional Center Efforts to Increase Language Access and Cultural Competency

Provide a description of your regional center's prior and ongoing efforts to increase language access and cultural competency in your catchment area. Examples of language efforts may include but are not limited to:

- Translation(s)
- Language interpretation
- Increase Bilingual staff
- Bilingual service provider recruitment
- Resource development to support those with a primary language other than English
- Other

You may upload a document (e.g. strategic plan or internal policy etc.) but you must provide a narrative here. Limit your attachments to no more than 3.

Applicant Response:

SCLARC has several efforts to increase access for non English speakers, and provide culturally competent services. SCLARC recruits bilingual staff to serve Spanish-speakers, and the agency's diverse staff mirrors the community, with 64% of staff who are Latino, 31% African-American, 5% Other, and 60% of staff who are bilingual in Spanish. Bilingual staff ensure that meetings with individuals served are held in the language of choice, and that all agency documents are translated into the individual and family's language of choice.

Supported by DDS funding, the Navigator Program offers one to one education and support to individuals and families in acquiring services. Since 2017 the program targets underserved Latinos and Spanish-speakers with no POS, providing education and support in connecting to services. SCLARC has also funded start-up costs for culturally competent service providers in communities with high numbers of Latino, Spanish-speaking families. Selected service providers were required to have bilingual supervisors and staff, and to establish programs in the Southeast catchment area, which is predominantly Latino.

In 2018, SCLARC worked with a consultant to provide staff with cultural competency training. Held in small group sessions, staff received training on understanding culture, awareness and acknowledgment of differences, strategies and skills for navigating the dynamics of difference, and understanding the cultural needs of SCLARC's unique community.

Section Name: Language Assessment

Sub Section Name: Language Access and Culture Plan

1. Applicant Question: Language Data Review

Explain how your regional center will review, consider, and incorporate data provided by the Department on April 6th in your language assessment process. Examples of data analysis and consideration may include:

- Review data within the organization/staff
- Review with Board Members
- Review with families, community, and stakeholders
- Steps to improve data
- Steps to broadly share data
- Outreach/In-reach efforts to share data

Applicant Response:

SCLARC has already reviewed the data provided by the Department internally with agency leadership and with key staff who currently conduct outreach and community education efforts to develop our plan for Language Access and Culture. In addition, the agency developed and released a community needs survey around language access issues as part of our process to develop proposals to meet the needs of our community. SCLARC reviews data related to ethnicity, race and language at annual town hall meetings held with our stakeholders, and will continue to review this information at these events, which are also used to gather input from the community served.

SCLARC will present this data, along with the Language Access and Culture Plan at a scheduled July board meeting, and at a fall public meeting which typically includes families and community stakeholders. As part of SCLARC's Language Access and Culture Plan, the agency proposes to fund community listening sessions, at least one of which will include a review of SCLARC's language data review. These sessions will offer small group focused discussions of particular topics, and will provide a chance for individuals and families served to provide detail about their experiences and recommendations related to service access.

2. Applicant Question: Gathering Stakeholder Input

To better understand the language needs of your community, select what strategies your regional center will implement to gather stakeholder input. Check all that apply. Provide details for each selected strategy in the textbox. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

Applicant Response:

- Listening sessions
- Public meetings
- Outreach events
- Surveys

Applicant Comment:

Six listening sessions will be held, hosting an average of 25 individuals per session, held at different times of the day to better serve working parents. Each session will have a theme including topics such as self-determination, enhanced case management, service access, and efforts to improve disparity. Two sessions will focus on the needs of African-American and D/HH communities, and each will offer a \$50 stipend for childcare or transportation, lunch and refreshments.

3. Applicant Question: Listening Sessions and Public Meetings

One strategy to build trust with your community and learn about the language needs of individuals and families served by your regional center is to host listening sessions and/or public meetings. Check all of the types of listening sessions and/or meetings you plan to host to gather input on language needs. Detail may be added for each selected strategy in the textbox below. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

Applicant Response:

- Host listening session(s) with self-advocates
- Host listening session(s) with family members
- Host interagency meetings with local governmental agencies
- Host public community meetings

Applicant Comment:

In addition to regularly scheduled public meetings including the annual Case Load Ratio and Disparity Town Halls, SCLARC plans to host at least 6 Listening Session events with individuals served and family caregivers. SCLARC also plans to participate in interagency meetings with local government agencies including the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services workgroup for children dually served, and with the County Department of Public Health Help Me Grow planning group.

4. Applicant Question: Language Focus in Listening Sessions

If your language assessment includes hosting listening sessions or community meetings, identify the language(s) focus for each session planned. Check all that apply. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

Applicant Response:

- American Sign Language
- Spanish

Applicant Comment:

SCLARC will primarily focus on English and Spanish speakers for all listening sessions as those are the majority groups served by SCLARC. Listening sessions will also have an ASL interpreter to improve connection to D/HH individuals or caregivers served. Simultaneous live interpretation will be offered in both Spanish and American Sign Language.

5. Applicant Question: Survey Recipients

Surveying is one method to learn more about the needs of your community. Select individuals and/or group(s) your regional center will survey. Choose all that apply.

Regional centers including this in their plan will be required to include standardized survey questions that will be provided by the Department. Detail may be added for individuals and/or group(s) selected in the textbox below. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

Applicant Response:

- Self-Advocates/Consumers
 - Family Members
 - Regional Center Board Members
 - Service Providers
-

6. Applicant Question: Development of Survey

Explain how you will create the survey and include what steps you will take to store data received from the survey. Examples of steps to develop a survey:

- Review language data
- Use professional language translation
- For quality assurance, review draft language translations with community organizations, universities, and other community partners
- Identify distribution list

Applicant Response:

SCLARC will work with a consultant to work with the agency to review language data, develop survey questions, identify target groups, disseminate and collect survey data. The consultant will use a survey management system to safely store respondent data, and will conduct a data analysis to support SCLARC in using data collected to drive program planning. The consultant will use a certified translator to ensure translation into Spanish meets the needs of the community served.

7. Applicant Question: Distribution of Survey

Select what method(s) you will use for distributing the survey. Choose all that apply. If you select "Other", please identify what that will be.

Applicant Response:

- Email
- Text Message Link
- QR Code
- Website Link

Applicant Comment:

SCLARC has used the Everbridge alert system to disseminate information, including survey links, by text and email to individuals and families served by SCLARC. SCLARC will use Everbridge, in addition to other dissemination methods to distribute the survey.

8. Applicant Question: Surveys - Language Focus

For surveys developed into videos or translated into Non-English languages, identify the language(s) your regional center will focus. Check all that apply. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

Applicant Response:

- English
 - Spanish
-

9. Applicant Question: Coordinating with Other Regional Centers

If you plan to coordinate with another regional center(s) who serve(s) a common diverse population (e.g., Cambodian, Hmong, and/or Slavic, etc.) or if you will consolidate efforts to meet common cultural needs within your catchment, state what steps you will take to coordinate efforts.

Applicant Response:

As SCLARC's service population is distinctly different from that of other Regional Centers in our area, we do not plan to coordinate with other Regional Centers at this time. SCLARC hopes to participate in local or statewide collaborative learning sessions to learn of initiatives implemented at other Regional Centers, and may consider coordination or collaboration in the future.

Section Name: Cultural Competency Assessment

Sub Section Name: Cultural Competency Assessment

1. Applicant Question: Culture, Ethnicity and Race Data Review

Explain how your regional center will review, consider, and incorporate data provided by the Department on April 6th in your cultural competency assessment. Examples of data analysis and consideration may include:

- Review data within the organization/staff
 - Review with Board Members
 - Review with families, community, and stakeholders
 - Steps to improve data
 - Steps to broadly share data
 - Outreach/In-reach efforts to share data
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Applicant Response:

SCLARC has already reviewed the data provided by the Department internally with agency leadership and with key staff who currently conduct outreach and community education efforts to develop our plan for Language Access and Culture. In addition, the agency developed and released a community needs survey around language access issues as part of our process to develop proposals to meet the needs of our community. SCLARC reviews data related to ethnicity, race and language at annual town hall meetings held with our stakeholders, and will continue to review this information at these events, which are also used to gather input from the community served.

SCLARC will present this data, along with the Language Access and Culture Plan at a scheduled July board meeting, and at a fall public meeting which typically includes families and community stakeholders. As part of SCLARC's Language Access and Culture Plan, the agency proposes to fund community listening sessions, at least one of which will include a review of SCLARC's language data review. These sessions will offer small group focused discussions of particular topics, and will provide a chance for individuals and families to provide detail about their experiences and recommendations related to service access.

2. Applicant Question: Gathering Stakeholder Input

To better understand community needs related to cultural competency, cultural humility, and/or cultural sensitivity etc., identify what strategies your regional center will implement to gather stakeholder input. Check all that apply. Provide details for each selected strategy in the textbox. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

Applicant Response:

- Listening Sessions
- Public meetings
- Surveys

3. Applicant Question: Listening Sessions and Public Meetings

One strategy to build trust with your community and to learn about the cultural competency needs of your catchment area is to host listening sessions and/or public meetings. Check all that apply. Provide details for each selected strategy in the textbox. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

Applicant Response:

- Host listening sessions with self-advocates
- Host listening sessions with family members
- Host public community meetings
- Host interagency meetings with local governmental agencies

4. Applicant Question: Ethnicity Focus in Listening Sessions

If your cultural competency assessment includes hosting listening sessions or community meetings, identify the ethnicities and/or culture(s) for each session planned. Check all that apply. For example, if you will focus on the Middle Eastern community, check Other Ethnicity or Race/Multi-Cultural and provide detail of your efforts in textbox below.

Applicant Response:

- Black/African American
 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - Hispanic
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5. Applicant Question: Survey Recipients

Surveying is one method to learn more about the needs of your community. Select individuals and/or group(s) your regional center will survey to complete your cultural competency assessment. Choose all that apply. Provide details for selected individuals and/or group(s) in the textbox. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

Applicant Response:

- Self-Advocates/Consumers
 - Family Members
 - Regional Center Board Members
 - Service Providers
-

6. Applicant Question: Development of Survey

Explain how you will create the survey and include how you will store data received from the survey. Examples of steps to develop a survey:

- Culture, ethnicity and race data
- Identify distribution list
- Use professional language translation
- For quality assurance, review draft language translations with community organizations and partners

The Department will review all surveys before distribution.

Applicant Response:

SCLARC will work with a consultant to work with the agency to review race and ethnicity data, develop survey questions, identify target groups, disseminate and collect survey data. The consultant will use a survey management system to safely store respondent data, and will conduct a data analysis to support SCLARC in using data collected to drive program planning. The consultant will use a certified translator to ensure translation into Spanish meets the needs of the community served.

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Applicant Response:

As SCLARC's service population is distinctly different from that of other Regional Centers in our area, we do not plan to coordinate with other Regional Centers at this time. SCLARC hopes to participate in local or statewide collaborative learning sessions to learn of initiatives implemented at other Regional Centers, and may consider coordination or collaboration in the future.

10. Applicant Question: Culturally Competent Language Interpretation

Describe how your Regional Center will provide consistent and culturally competent language interpretation in individual planning meetings and public meetings (e.g., Self-Determination Program, Local Advisory Committee meetings and activities etc.).

Applicant Response:

SCLARC will provide culturally competent language interpretation for all public meetings including those of the Board, Supportive Services and Parent Advisory Committees, public meetings on service access and case ratio data, and Listening Sessions.

A certified interpreter will provide Spanish interpretation at all of the above meetings. This interpreter has a long history of providing services in the SCLARC community and within the area of social services and healthcare. This experience provides the interpreter with an additional understanding of the cultures of Spanish-speakers served by SCLARC and common phrases and terminology used to increase understanding.

SCLARC has also identified an American Sign Language interpreter, who is also bilingual in Spanish, to ensure that interpretation meets the cultural needs of our unique community. ASL will be provided at all meetings, excluding the Parent Advisory Committee, as there are currently no members of the committee who use ASL.

Section Name: Language Access and Culture Plan

Sub Section Name: Language Access and Culture Plan

1. Applicant Question: Regional Center Staffing

Funding for regional center staffing shall not exceed 50% of the total allocation received. If you plan to hire regional center staff to implement your Language Access and Culture Plans, explain what they will do and how they will support your efforts to improve language access and culture in your catchment. Include staffing in your budget.

All staffing requests must be approved by the Department. DDS will review and approve staffing requests within the GrantVantage system.

Applicant Response:

SCLARC proposes to retain and recruit bilingual Spanish-speaking staff to the agency by increasing stipends for bilingual staff. SCLARC currently compensates staff with \$85 a month, which falls below the typical industry rate for bilingual pay differentials.

This has led to a decline in the number of qualified Spanish-speakers who apply for positions, and an increasing number of bilingual positions which are vacant. While data provided by the Department shows 42% of individuals served are Spanish-speaking, many SCLARC families also share that while they speak English, they are bilingual, and feel more comfortable working with staff who speak Spanish.

SCLARC will increase the stipend to \$125 per month for bilingual Spanish-speakers in recognition of the additional informal translation and interpretation work that is required when working with Spanish-speaking families. SCLARC currently has 215 bilingual positions, which would each receive a stipend of \$1,500 per year.

2. Applicant Question: Consultants

If your regional center proposes consultants to complete your assessment, planning process and/or implementation, provide a brief narrative as to the minimum qualifications of the consultant, provide a scope of work, and a budget. Include consultants in your budget.

All consultant requests must be approved by the Department. DDS will review and approve staffing requests within the GrantVantage system.

Applicant Response:

SCLARC will use a consultant to implement surveys and listening sessions. SCLARC believes the use of a neutral outside consultant to facilitate discussion and gather feedback will lead to more honest dialogue, and will support the agency in gathering and analyzing input received in a meaningful way.

A bilingual consultant will conduct outreach to enroll individuals and caregivers in SCLARC's online Family Portal, which improves communication with SCLARC and gives families access to key documents. Consultant will contact new eligible clients to increase awareness of the Portal and of monthly Orientation meetings.

SCLARC will also contract with EmpowerTech, a local non-profit working to connect individuals with disabilities to technology, to lead beginning computer skills classes. EmpowerTech will hold bilingual classes for individuals served by SCLARC and caregivers. Attendees will receive a technology stipend to connect internet services, or to apply toward the purchase of a device.

3. Applicant Question: Language Access and Cultural Goals

Timelines for completion of your language assessment and the development of your Language Access and Culture Plan will include short-term and long-term goals that may extend beyond a fiscal year. Provide at least one long-term goal and at least 2 short-term goals. All RC Language Access and Cultural Competency Plans and reports will be due as follows:

- Language Access and Culture Plan to be submitted by June 15
- Semi-Annual Progress Report due by October 1
- Semi-Annual Progress Report due by April 1

Applicant Response:

SCLARC's short term goals include outreach to newly eligible clients, hosting listening sessions, and launching of technology access classes. Within one month of project implementation, SCLARC will contract with a Bilingual Community Liaison Consultant. It is expected by the Semi-Annual Progress Report date, the consultant will have reached at least 300 individuals to help enroll them in the Family Portal, or register for a new parent orientation session. By April 1, 2023, SCLARC will have launched technology access classes, and listening sessions, and will have held at least 6 technology and 3 listening sessions.

Long term, SCLARC aims to increase outreach and community awareness of services with specific information campaigns focused on reaching Spanish-speakers, Latinos, African-Americans and individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing. This campaign will involve the use of Facebook ads which can use demographic data of users to target ads, and educational videos about SCLARC and services available which will be recorded in English and Spanish with subtitles.