



## La Posada Providencia

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October 31, 2011

Texas Rural Communities, Inc.  
ATTN: Sandra Tenorio  
168 Cimarron Park Loop  
Buda, Texas 78610

Dear Ms. Tenorio:

Greetings! Enclosed is a grant request for \$5,000 on behalf of La Posada Providencia, an emergency shelter located in the South Texas community of San Benito. The shelter is a ministry sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence, a community of women religious. Since 1989, the Sisters have provided basic living assistance and life-skills education to indigent immigrants and persons seeking political/religious asylum as they progress through the Immigration Court process and prepare for resettlement in this country. Basic assistance and intense case management are provided to address the specific needs of this constituency.

Men, women and children come to La Posada from around the world – from the poorest countries in Central America, Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. All seek safety, freedom and the opportunity to create better lives for themselves and their families.

We appreciate the opportunity to share the details of our needs and program with you and we pray that the Texas Rural Communities, Inc. finds merit with our request. For more information about La Posada, please visit our website at [www.LPPshelter.org](http://www.LPPshelter.org).

Respectfully submitted,

Sister Zita Telkamp, CDP  
Program Director  
1610 Marydale Road  
San Benito, TX. 78586

cc: Ana Schulz, Director of Development

**Texas Rural Communities, Inc.**  
**168 Cimarron Park Loop**  
**Buda, TX 78610**

**Program Summary: La Posada Providencia**

The purpose of this request is to solicit \$5,000 in grant funding to cover automobile costs incurred by La Posada Providencia staff for clients as they continue the legal process of gaining political asylum or other legal residency status in the United States. Funds will be used to help defray transportation costs, such as gasoline and vehicle maintenance.

Upon notification from U.S. immigration authorities and attorneys, La Posada picks up released asylum seekers and provides them with supportive services – food, shelter, and case management (the latter highly dependent upon local transportation). For most of these clients, the circumstances from which they have emigrated are dire. Hence, they have little or no financial resources to help defray the local transportation costs for the numerous legal appointments and other needed services that occur as a result of pursuing/obtaining asylum or other legal status. Moreover, there is limited public transportation available in San Benito, where La Posada is located. What is available is costly and not a viable option for our clients to use. Many do not speak fluent English, some speak neither English nor Spanish, but a dialect different from either language. Furthermore, upon arrival our clients do not possess the life-skills necessary to navigate a public transportation system. To our knowledge, there are no other agencies in the area providing local transportation for this specialized client group. Since La Posada serves a large number of people annually and due to rising fuel costs, our transportation costs are significant. Hence, La Posada actively pursues funding to support this important client service.

La Posada is located in Cameron County, Texas and provides shelter to persons who have been displaced by war, a natural disaster or civil/political unrest in their native lands. Some flee their countries having suffered dire poverty and starvation. They reside at La Posada as they progress through their individual legal cases. Lengths of stay vary according to the particular circumstances surrounding each client's case as well as client health and ability to travel. Until clients are granted appropriate work authorizations, can secure employment and/or have appropriate recourse to resettle, La Posada provides their sole means of support *and* reference for understanding U.S. culture.

La Posada accepts men, women and families with children. Ages range from infants to elders. The constituency served is diverse ethnically and racially; most clients come from Central America, Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia.

La Posada's shelter outcomes are for its target constituency – individuals who are **legally** released from immigration detention into the community. These outcomes include comprehensive and specific services that ensure access to ongoing legal representation, housing and basic needs, an educational program, access to medical and dental health care, employment skills training and a wide ranging combination of cultural and spiritual support to promote safety and self-sufficiency. The desired overall outcome is to demonstrate to clients that they can break the language barrier and achieve productive and independent living in this country with hard work and their inherent skills.

**Texas Rural Communities, Inc.  
168 Cimarron Park Loop  
Buda, TX 78610**

**Grant Application: La Posada Providencia**

**Section I: Contact Information**

**a. Name, Mailing Address, Telephone Number and e-mail of Contact person for grant**

Program Director: Sister Zita Telkamp, CDP

Address: 1610 Marydale Road

City: San Benito State: TX Zip: 78586

Work Phone: 956/399-3826 Home Phone: 956/399-3826

Fax: 956/399-2898 E-mail: cdplaposada@sbcglobal.net Website: www.lppshelter.org

**b. Name / Address of Organization: La Posada Providencia  
(address same as above)**

**Section II: Organizational Description**

**a. Mission Statement**

*La Posada Providencia*, founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence, is a ministry for people in crisis from around the world, who are seeking legal refuge in this country. The shelter staff provides a safe and welcoming home; mentors to promote self-sufficiency and cultural integration; and imparts values which witness God's Providence in our world.

**b. Purpose**

To provide temporary shelter for indigent immigrants and asylum seekers in South Texas upon release by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to meet their basic needs and to promote their successful integration into United States culture.

**c. Organizational History**

La Posada Providencia (La Posada) was founded in 1989 by the Sisters of Divine Providence (a community of women religious in the Roman Catholic Church) to address two unmet needs they identified for indigent immigrants and asylum seekers in the lower Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. First was the need for basic shelter while these individuals proceeded through their legal processes, and second was the need to help them with their respective resettlement preparation. These needs prompted the Sisters to establish an

emergency shelter program in Harlingen. Later, in 1995, La Posada settled into its permanent home in San Benito, a community adjacent to Harlingen.

In 1998, La Posada's operations were transferred to Providence Ministry Corp. (PMC), a Missouri nonprofit corporation with tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status. In 2000, PMC was granted a certificate of authority to transact business in Texas and operate under the assumed name of *La Posada Providencia*. In 2011, La Posada terminated its incorporation in Missouri as PMC and is now separately incorporated in Texas as the non-profit agency *La Posada Providencia*.

#### **d. Major Accomplishments**

1. Provided shelter and resettlement assistance to more than 5,500 clients since 1989.
2. Increased program capacity to include a comprehensive ESL Assistance and life-skills curriculum.
3. Increased volunteer support and retention from La Posada's Volunteer Ministry project initiated in 2003. Part-time tutors support the ESL program and other operational needs.
4. Increased public awareness for target constituency needs and services. Clients benefit from more than 30 community collaborations, including but not limited to immigration and social-service agencies, civic organizations and medical, dental and pharmaceutical agencies and professionals.
5. Contributed support received by previous clients to "pay forward."

### **Section III: Program Description**

#### **a. Identifying and meeting constituency needs**

La Posada responds to the needs that exist in the lower Rio Grande Valley to provide emergency shelter and supportive services to homeless immigrants, asylees and asylum seekers as they wait for their legal cases to adjudicate before the immigration court. A holistic approach is required for these individuals who are legally released from detention into the community. This approach includes providing comprehensive services that ensure access to ongoing legal representation, housing and basic needs, an educational program, access to medical and dental health care, employment skills training and a wide ranging combination of cultural and spiritual support to promote safety and self-sufficiency.

These needs became apparent when one of the Sisters of Divine Providence worked as executive director for *Proyecto Libertad*, a pro-bono agency in Harlingen, Texas that promotes and defends human rights in the Rio Grande Valley. Her experience showed there were few options available for emergency shelter for the target constituency. Most clients slept on office floors. It was also apparent that this vulnerable group was without reliable and consistent access to the needed supportive services described above.

#### **b. Program Description**

La Posada is an emergency shelter for homeless immigrants, asylum seekers and asylees who have been oppressed in political conflicts, displaced after a natural disaster, or persecuted by life-threatening situations. Many have endured severe hardships, including poverty, unjust imprisonment, abuse, even torture. Often our clients come wearing the clothes they are wearing and carrying their documents in a plastic grocery bag. They come to the United States seeking safety, freedom and opportunity.

Our clients stay at La Posada as their cases adjudicate before the U.S. Immigration Court. They are in the legal process of seeking asylum or other legal recourse for residency. They come to us either directly from Homeland Security or as referrals from immigration attorneys and churches.

Lengths of stay vary and are case-specific. Some clients stay with us for a few days, while others can stay for several weeks, months or up to one year. During their stay, La Posada provides clients with their primary means of support. Each receives specialized case management with supportive services.

Case management includes needs assessment, goal-setting and facilitation of services to meet identified needs. Supportive services satisfy the basic needs for shelter, food and clothing, plus local transportation to off-site agencies (health care, legal-aid and social services), access to on-site communication resources, paperwork/translation assistance, and English literacy and life-skills education. The latter educational component is designed to assist clients achieve self-sufficiency and cultural integration more readily.

Due to the large annual client census, providing local transportation for clients is a major daily activity. It is an important component of the supportive services we provide. Public transportation is not feasible for these clients; they do not possess the life skills necessary to navigate the public transportation system. Moreover, the public transportation system in Cameron County, where La Posada is located, is limited and does not provide adequate transportation service alternatives.

To obviate challenges for clients to access needed services, we offer door-to-door transportation to legal-aid, court, employment, health care and social-service agencies, bus station, airport, etc. When medical needs arise, staff transports clients to their medical/dental appointments. As their legal cases progress, clients must meet with their attorneys and make court appearances; they also require transportation assistance when submitting and obtaining their work permits. Often when clients obtain employment, staff drives them to and from their places of employment.

As such, it is not unusual for us to travel 100 miles in one day. For the period July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011, a total of 26,074 miles were logged for client transportation. Due to the cost of fuel and the considerable miles driven, our transportation costs are significant.

Since fuel costs are rising and all indications are that they will continue to remain high, our pressing need is to seek as many ways as possible to fund this component of the shelter program. ***Hence, maintaining the capacity to provide a key client service while the related costs continue to rise is a major focus for fund development.***

**1. Primary Goals for shelter transportation:**

- a) Continue providing local door-to-door client transportation.
- b) Manage limited resources to reduce shelter automobile costs as much as possible.

**2. Methods to accomplish goals:**

- a) Maintain separate mileage logs for each shelter vehicle.
- b) Each log includes entries for driver initials, client name(s), purpose/date & time of trip, destination, number of miles, and description of activity.
- c) Log data into a transportation spreadsheet that calculates miles by destination and time of day.
- d) Routinely monitor summarized data to help identify peak times, and assess the sequence of travel routes in order to evaluate how client transportation can best be managed and improved.
- e) Schedule vehicle maintenance checks as directed by the auto manufacturer.
- f) Continue to develop funding streams to support transportation costs.

**c. Description of program participants or beneficiaries.**

Program participants include men, women and children. Ages range from infant to elders. For the fiscal period ended June 30, 2011, La Posada sheltered 229 individuals (114 males and 115 females). Of these, 74 were children under the age of 18. Our clients have traveled from more than 70 different countries. Many have come from Central America; others have come from Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe; most come from the poorest regions of the world. Clients possess a variety of skills and levels of formal education.

**d. Not applicable**

**e. Proposed Project Budget**

**Client transportation costs: \$11,450**

**Principal budget line item cost elements**

\$1,500 (client travel and transportation);

\$4,000 (program vehicles-gas);

\$3,000 (repair/maint.);

\$2,950 (program vehicles-insurance)

**Principal cost elements requested: \$5,000**

\$4,000 (program vehicles-gas);

\$1,000 (repair/maint.)

This proposal requests a recognition grant. If the total request cannot be funded, La Posada would accept a smaller grant award and direct it toward gasoline expense.

**f. Expected Client Outcomes from program**

Local transportation is the critical link between our clients identified resettlement goals and their ability to move forward with these goals. Providing local transportation for current and future clients improves their potential for achieving self-sufficiency and

effective cultural integration and, in so doing, create opportunities for enriching U.S society.

#### The outcomes

- 1) 100% of adult clients (staying longer than seven days) who presented physical health or mental health needs will be given access to appropriate healthcare providers.
- 2) 100% of clients (staying longer than four days) needing social services, education, and health services will be made aware of available resources and will be referred to appropriate agencies and health care providers.
- 3) 100% of all clients will receive needed access to legal aid information.
- 4) 100% of clients receive transportation to needed services.
- 5) 99% of clients receive assistance coordinating travel arrangements for their next resettlement location.
- 6) 100% of clients enroll in English language assistance and life-skills classes; those staying longer than seven days will demonstrate improvement from baseline skills.
- 7) 80% of clients follow through with their goals during their shelter stay.
- 8) 70% of clients show improvement in job readiness and 95% of job ready clients (with Social Security cards and work permits) will seek and/or gain employment by end of residency.
- 9) 85% of those who achieve asylum/legal-resident/citizen status will be living either independently or with roommates/relatives by the fifth month after receiving asylum.

#### Measurements

For clients staying longer than seven days:

- 1) Intake survey to document stated/observed health, literacy and computer/job-skills needs.
- 2) Class attendance recorded.
- 3) Participation in individual self-paced study recorded.
- 4) Oral assessments for ESL beginners; worksheets, quizzes and tests for advanced ESL.
- 5) Clients obtaining work permits, and employment recorded.
- 4) Follow-up with departing clients to document living arrangements.

Curriculum and curriculum delivery methods:

- 1) Assessed through feedback from exiting and former residents interviewed by staff.
- 2) Evaluated at year's end by the program director and lead teacher.

#### **e. Proposed timeline for project expenditure of proposed grant funds.**

All funds will be expended within one year from the date the award is received.