

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

Program Summary: La Posada Providencia

La Posada Providencia (La Posada) is asking for \$7,500 in funding from Texas Rural Communities, Inc. to help support the provision of healthy and well-balanced meals for the men, women, and families it serves. If funded, the monies received will directly affect La Posada's budget for food by supporting the purchase of fresh meats, produce, dairy items and other healthy food products used each day to prepare client meals.

Often clients arrive at La Posada exhausted and malnourished. They embarked on a long, harrowing journey to the U.S. border, sometimes going days with little or no food. Then, upon arrival in the U.S., women and children generally experience extended stays in a holding cell with no access to showers and are served very light meals, typically cold sandwiches, while men often spend months in a detention center. When these individuals and families are released to La Posada, the immediate objective is to restore their overall health and wellness.

To accomplish this goal, the shelter strives to offer clients nutritious, well-balanced meals. Without expenditures for fresh lean meats, produce and dairy products, La Posada is solely dependent upon the area Food Bank and meal donations from a neighboring shelter, with occasional donations from churches. Products necessary for a healthy diet such as lean meats, fish, poultry, fresh vegetables, milk and eggs are available infrequently or not at all from these sources. Hence, La Posada purchases these healthy food products from local grocers.

In FY 2015 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015), La Posada served 21,228 meals. The volume of meals served continues to grow in tandem with the increasing rate of clients arriving in dire need of shelter services. Thus, La Posada seeks additional funding to ensure that it can continue supporting a healthy diet food budget for the vulnerable men, women, and families arriving in the coming year.

The primary goals for the food program are:

- a) Achieving well-balanced meals that include fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh dairy products, fresh lean meats and high fiber grains and lentils.
- b) Successfully meeting the demands for feeding the clients we serve.
- c) Offering nutrition education and experiential learning to help clients practice healthy and environmentally sustainable lifestyles upon resettlement.

This is an ongoing operational project. Grant monies received as a result of this grant application will be expended within one year from the date of receipt of said grant monies.

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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: 30094 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@lppshelter.org 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 emergency shelter for indigent immigrants and asylum seekers in the lower Rio Grande Valley 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 was founded in south Texas in 1989 by the Sisters of Divine Providence, a community of women religious of the Roman Catholic Church. Then, as now, the need exists for temporary, emergency shelter for poor immigrants, asylees and asylum seekers in the lower Rio Grande Valley.

The Sisters recognized this need when a member of their community worked in Harlingen, at a non-profit legal agency that assisted immigrants, asylees and asylum seekers. This agency's clients were receiving legal assistance, but had no place to stay. While the Valley is commonly regarded as a thoroughfare for recent immigrants, it lacked then, as it does now,

the infrastructure needed to adequately serve this population. Specifically, there are major gaps in the provisioning of important resettlement services such as lack of emergency housing; inadequate options for employment preparation; lack of accessible English classes and life-skills education; inadequate local public transportation; and lack of access to social services and healthcare until legal status is resolved. La Posada's purpose effectively closes these gaps in services for current and future immigrants.

Initially, these gaps prompted the Sisters to establish an emergency shelter program in Harlingen. La Posada's first client, Teresa from El Salvador, arrived on December 1, 1989. In 1995, La Posada settled into its permanent home in nearby San Benito.

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 abandoned its incorporation in Missouri as PMC and is now separately incorporated in Texas as the non-profit agency, La Posada Providencia.

For many arriving clients, La Posada was (and continues to be) the next stop after being processed by U.S. immigration authorities. Since our founding, La Posada Providencia has provided shelter and assistance to more than 8,000 "strangers" – now friends – from more than 70 nations.

d. Major Accomplishments

1. Increased capacity affecting better management of services by strengthening one position, the Volunteer Coordinator (increased hours at market rate) and by adding two new positions, Site Coordinator and Handyman.
2. Increased and positive awareness, nationally and internationally, for the mission and purpose of La Posada including interviews by media outlets such as National Public Radio's (NPR) Morning Edition with Steve Inskeep; Texas Public Radio; Texas Observer; San Antonio and Houston ABC affiliate local news; Telemundo; Univision; Japan Independent News Net; Swedish National Public Radio; and the Korean Broadcasting System.
3. Increased and positive awareness, locally, for the mission and purpose of La Posada including being named San Benito News Citizen of the Year for 2014.
4. Well established English as Second Language and Life-Skills curriculums that every client staying at least eight days is able to benefit from, acquiring essential language knowledge and life skills that can be used well beyond their shelter stay.
5. Improving services to families by reorganizing shelter living space to ensure equal access for all families and by installing an outdoor play system for children, thus creating a structured playtime option.

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. Although there are other local agencies and churches assisting the immigrant and asylee population, La Posada is the only shelter in the Valley with specialized case management to optimize resettlement outcomes for this population.

Despite the fact that La Posada is located in San Benito, it serves the four counties in the Rio Grande Valley: Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy. In particular, our shelter meets the needs of the San Benito community by housing hundreds of men, women, and children each year who would otherwise spend their days and nights on the street. There are no other homeless shelters in San Benito. The closest homeless shelter is in neighboring Harlingen, and only allows residents to come in the evening for supper, night shelter and breakfast. Early in the morning, after clients receive a breakfast, the shelter closes. Additionally, due to high demand, the Harlingen shelter is typically at capacity and has limits on the amount of time clients are allowed to stay. La Posada does not have such restrictions in place. Our shelter remains open 24/7 and clients reside as long as their legal process requires.

La Posada serves another important role in the community by educating and raising awareness about the immigrant and asylum seeking process. Multiple times each year, we welcome different local, state, and national groups to visit our shelter and learn about our work and purpose. Immigration has and continues to be a controversial and political issue; visiting our shelter and meeting our clients provides an opportunity to learn about the human side of the issue. La Posada does not take one political stance over another; we do not serve politics, we serve people.

For the past 26 years, La Posada has often been the first stop for arriving clients after immigration detention. We use this opportunity to the best of our capacity to teach and model practices that help to build our clients' confidence so that they can more readily break language and cultural barriers and achieve positive resettlement outcomes.

a. Program Description

La Posada is a 24/7 emergency homeless shelter for indigent immigrants and asylum seekers. Our shelter program offers immediate and tangible support in the form of food, shelter, clothing, medical supplies and care. Also provided is a case management process which includes needs assessment, goal-setting and facilitation of services to meet identified needs. Supportive services include local transportation to off-site agencies (health care, legal-aid and social services), access to on-site communication resources, paperwork/translation assistance, English literacy, employment readiness, and life-skills education. 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.

Noteworthy is that La Posada defies a general definition of a shelter. Rather, La Posada provides a welcoming home for men, women, and families who have endured unimaginable suffering – emotionally and physically – due to extreme poverty, natural disaster, political oppression, religious persecution and civil unrest in their homelands. They are referred to La Posada by Homeland Security and immigration attorneys as they wait for their asylum cases

to proceed through the immigration court. These individuals have fled their homelands with little more than hope in their pockets – hope for securing safety and the opportunity for a better life. They have left everything behind to achieve this and to achieve it lawfully in the U.S. They are destitute, with minimal possessions and no money.

Clients typically arrive exhausted and malnourished. They embark on a long, harrowing journey to the U.S. border, sometimes going days only eaten little or no food. Then upon arrival in the U.S., women and children generally experience extended stays in a holding cell with no access to showers and are served only cold sandwiches, while men often spend months in a detention center. When these individuals and families are released to La Posada, the immediate goal is to restore their overall health and wellness.

To accomplish this goal, the shelter offers clients nutritious, well-balanced meals. Without expenditures for fresh lean meats, produce and dairy products, La Posada is solely dependent upon the area Food Bank and meal donations from a neighboring shelter, with occasional donations from churches. Canned meat, other canned foods, and dry starches are available from the Food Bank. Loaves & Fishes, a general population homeless shelter in Harlingen, satisfies some of La Posada's shelter food needs by donating evening meals on Mondays, and Wednesdays. The donated meals tend to be high in starches and carbohydrates. Products necessary for a healthy diet such as lean meats, fish, poultry, fresh vegetables, milk and eggs are available infrequently or not at all from these sources. La Posada must purchase these healthy food products from local grocers.

In FY 2015 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015), La Posada served 21,228 meals. The volume of meals served continues to grow in tandem with the increasing rate of clients arriving in dire need of shelter services. Thus, La Posada seeks additional funding to ensure that it can continue supporting a healthy food budget for the vulnerable men, women, and families arriving in the coming year.

La Posada seeks funding assistance in the amount of \$7,500 from Texas Rural Communities, Inc. to continue to meet clients' food needs. If funded, the support received will directly affect La Posada's budget for food and allow us to purchase meats, produce, dairy items and other healthy food products used each day to prepare well-balanced meals for clients.

Primary Goals for the shelter's client food program:

- a) Achieving well-balanced meals that include fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh dairy products, fresh lean meats and high fiber grains and lentils.
- b) Meeting the demands for feeding the clients we serve.
- c) Offering nutrition education and experiential learning to help clients practice healthy and environmentally sustainable lifestyles upon resettlement.

Methods to accomplish goals:

- a) Provide each client with three balanced meals daily.
- b) Offer formal classroom nutrition education through our life-skills program 2.5 hours a day, Monday – Saturday (15 hours per week).

- c) Provide experiential learning opportunities via the staff client mentor by engaging clients in group planning and performing daily tasks such as planning a grocery list, instructing about smart-shopping and reading nutrition labels, gardening (understanding the notion of “from garden to table”), observing the preparation of meals, and conversing at mealtimes.

c. Description of program participants or beneficiaries.

La Posada serves homeless immigrants and asylum seekers referred by immigration officials and attorneys in the Rio Grande Valley. This includes men, women, and families from newborn to elder who are in the legal process of obtaining political or religious asylum, or other legal recourse of residency. Ethnicities vary depending on current immigration policies.

The number of individuals to be served with this grant can be anywhere between 300 to over 1,000. To date this fiscal year, (July 1, 2015 – October 31, 2015), we have served 116 clients from 14 countries, including Bangladesh, Cuba, Eritrea, Honduras, and Syria.

d. Not applicable

e. Proposed Project Budget -- see attached

f. Expected client outcome from program and how this will be measured

100% of clients staying longer than overnight will be served healthy, well-balanced meals.

Measurement is performed as follows:

1. The number and characteristics of clients served with grant funds will be tracked and documented.
2. The number of meals provided will be tracked daily.
3. Purchases of food items will be tracked and receipts will be documented.
4. Client knowledge and perception of healthy eating will be documented in the life-skills classes.

g. Proposed timeline for project expenditure of proposed grant funds.

This is an ongoing operational project. Grant monies received as a result of this grant application will be expended within one year from the date of receipt of said grant monies.

h. Not applicable.

Section III: Program Description

e. Profit/loss statement and program budget.

The profit/loss statement is listed on column 1 of the Statement of Revenue and Expenses report.

The budget for our client food appears as the first line item under the 'Clients Needs' section.

This line item is highlighted.

If awarded, funding received from Texas Rural Communities, Inc. will be used to fund the client food budget line item. At this time, La Posada is seeking \$7,500 in funding

Yes, La Posada Providencia would accept a smaller grant from Texas Rural Communities, Inc.