



Empowering Impoverished
Neighborhoods to Thrive

209.259.8950



lifeline@lifelinedc.org



www.lifelinedc.org



Loughborough Community Center
3135 Meadows Ave. Bldg. 8 #59
Merced CA 95348
209-354-4914

Winton Community Center
7081 N Winton Way
Winton CA 95388
209-358-6939

Mailing Address:
731 E Yosemite Ave Ste B # 165
Merced CA 95340

Office:
393 E Donna Dr.
Merced CA 95340



1 July 2022

City Manager Stephanie R. Dietz
City of Merced
678 W. 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

Re: Grant Proposal for \$15,000 to open a youth wellness area in a new community center

Dear Ms Dietz and City Council,

LifeLine CDC would like to be considered to receive a grant for a dedicated area in our new Neighborhood Community Center in the City of Merced. LifeLine CDC has a 15-year history of providing resources and opportunities for under-served neighborhoods in Merced County. Our strength-based approach to engage community members in their own solution has proven to be effective in empowering impoverished communities towards resilience and move towards thriving. It addresses the need for training, capacity building and community unity.

Our current community center in the Loughborough area is a place where people can come to receive help like emergency food, computer help, signing up for services, volunteer and community service opportunities, job searches, referrals to other resources and much more. Our many conversations with community members help determine what neighbors feel they need to take steps out of poverty. In the Loughborough community the request for youth activities was a driving factor to create an after school program where youth have a safe place to be, get help with homework, learn social skills and experience life with new opportunities. It is a place where young people find wellness and enjoy a safe and engaging environment. Among other things we just completed our VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program for our local community members and brought \$250,000 back into the local community. Our work (Asset Based Community Development) is helping people to (re)discover their own strength, helps them to engage in their own solution and then help someone else. It builds the social capital of people and gives people access to resources (e.g. HSA, BHRS, Health Department, WorkNet) that they might not have known about before. We are creating platforms for people to move towards their preferred future.

We would like to open a 3rd community center in one of our under-resourced neighborhood in the City of Merced, and would like to dedicate an area for the youth of the neighborhoods to provide wellness opportunities and request a grant for \$15,000 to determine a new the site, have conversations with community members and specifically youth and stakeholders and create a presence in the community.

We have heard the call for a Youth Wellness Center at City Council meetings. We will engage the neighborhood youth and invite them to help shape the agenda for our proposed center, but also train them to be part of the community survey process for community input and buy-in. We will listen to the call for wellness and all that emerges from our collective engagement and conversations with the neighborhood community. Every community is different, and it is important to let people set the agenda for change.

Thank you for considering our request.



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Re: Grant Proposal to open a new neighborhood community center

Project Scope of Work:

Open a new Community Center in an under-resourced neighborhood in Merced with a dedicated are for the youth and their wellness.

Living in an under-resourced neighborhood is like living in a bubble. You might not know where to find resources, who to contact, how to take steps that move you out of poverty. A Community Center is place where some of the 'bubbles can be popped', by providing a one stop for community members to have access to resources, work together towards a better community, and build the resilience of families. We recognize that relationships are always the driving force to see individual and community change. We value community members and their resilience and want to work together to see change. We never do for people what they can do for themselves.

Over the last year we have built the capacity of the staff, explored neighborhoods where a community center might be helpful and have dreamed about next steps.

Our amazing staff (all coming out of under-resourced life situation themselves), have gifts, strengths and stories that provide platforms to help others move forward.

Asset Based Community Development work follows several steps to ensure that a community center can be successful:

1. Explore the neighborhood
2. Have conversations with community members to share their vision for the community
3. Engage the youth by letting them determine some of the things they would like to see happen, but also train them to be part of the community survey process to determine what a center would look like.
4. Map the assets of the neighborhood and bring people together who care enough to act (What has already been done? Who are the community leaders? What is already present? What does the youth want to see? Etc).
5. Bring people together to set the agenda of what they would like to see happen (How can we partner? Who are the stakeholders that need to be at the table?)
6. Work together to see change – and open a community center that will be a good fit for the community with a large emphasis on the deeds and dreams of the young people.
7. Celebrate small successes and work on new initiatives to see change happen

We want to build the resilience of community members (that in turn will enhance the neighborhood) by providing access to resources that move them out of their current life situation and empower them to work together to help each other move forward. We recognize that most people have been affected by ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and the move towards reliance is a long and difficult road, but we also know how many times we have seen these changes in the past and that in community change can happen.



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Re: Grant Proposal to open a new neighborhood community center

Project Outline:

July – September 2022

- Determine a neighborhood for the next community center - conversations with community members, apartment complex managers, City Council members and other stake holders

October 2022

- Have youth engaged in the planning process to help with the mapping

November – December 2022

- Finalize a location and work with community members
- Have a community center in the neighborhood and develop the resources needed for it (furniture, staff/volunteers, resources etc.)
- Celebrate the opening of the center with the community

January 2023

- Have the center open at least 20 hours a week with a combination of staff and community volunteers
- Develop partnerships with organizations that would benefit the community

February – June 2023

- Center is fully functioning and providing recourses and opportunities for community members

In the past our community centers have provided resources and activities in a variety of areas, and we believe that similar requests will be made, but we do not want to limit to those.

Some of our current activities include:

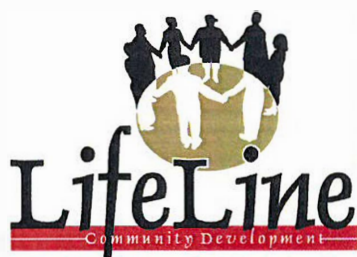
- Community meetings
- Youth activities to create wellness at every aspect of life
- Help with resources
- Partnerships/Collaborative work with HSA, MHRS, WorkNet, Health Department, First 5, non-profits and faith communities, and many others
- Workshops and learnings around a number of topics
- Opportunities to volunteer, do community service, do internships
- Community clean-ups and graffiti abatement
- Community gardens/SNAP education
- Partnerships with schools
- Reentry Assistance
- A place for people to find peace and wellness

These are all ways that we can help people have them to move towards better lives.



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Re: Grant Proposal to open a new neighborhood community center with an emphasis on youth wellness

Staffing Experience:

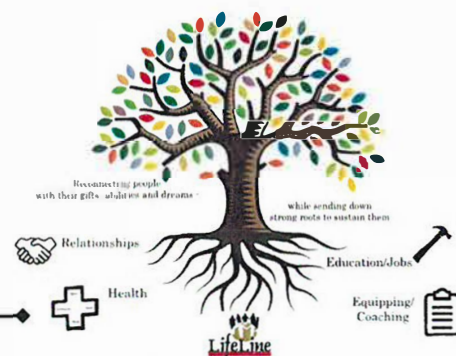
Monika Grasley, ED of LifeLine CDC has over 30 years of Asset Based Community Development training and work history. Monika is passionate about helping under-resourced neighbors discover their gifts and passions and move towards resilience and thriving.

Our staff has all come our of difficult living situations themselves and are the best advocates for change. They know the struggle of self-sufficiency and the difficulty in balancing life in poverty. They are passionate in helping other people and have been trained in a variety of skills that will enhance the community.

Proposed Scope of Work and Services:

Open a 3rd community center in an under-resourced neighborhood in the City of Merced as a hub for community engagement, enrichment and training. The Center will have major input from the youth to create a place where young people can find wellness and help each other grow and develop. Our centers help community members have access to resources, develop new skills, and take steps to move out of their current situation. We believe strongly in collaboration and enjoy partnering with groups that further the vision to empower impoverished neighborhoods to thrive. The new community center will be a place to where people come together, receive resources and work together toward a preferred future. The Center will be place a where people find connections, peace and wellness.

We are currently in conversation with 2 local churches to use part of their facilities as a community center, as well as a local school to explore options around using an empty classroom as the hub for a community center.



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Budget:

Request for \$50,000 to develop a new community center in an under-resourced neighborhood

\$30,000 staffing

\$10,000 for ED for training and equipping of the
Establishment of the new community center

\$20,000 for 2 part time employees to establish the community center

\$10,000 supplies for community gatherings, meetings, food etc

\$10,000 material and equipment for the center

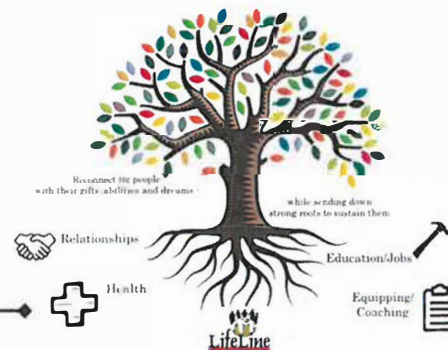
We always work with community members and community partner and we estimate about \$20,000 of in kind-services.

References:

Stephanie Russell
Former Health Educator and Partner at Merced Health Department
209-768-3184
stephanie.russell@aging.ca.gov

Jerry Porter
Manger of Meadows Apartments where we have a community center
209-922-2997
jp11947@yahoo.com

Dee Espinoza
Behavioral Health specialist and partner at our Community Centers
209-446-1472
DEspinoza@co.merced.ca.us



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