

June 28th, 2022



Merced Youth Soccer Association  
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Dear City Manager Stephanie Dietz,

It is with great pleasure and excitement that we are applying for the City of Merced Community Grant Funding. The Merced Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) is well known for providing the Merced's youth community with opportunities to play and develop their soccer skills, but our goal with our application is to further expand our student athlete programming. Our proposed program will sharpen our youth's leadership skills by exposing them to college and trade schools, life skills, and by connecting them to local leaders in various fields. The following is our mission, goals, and objectives.

**Mission:**

MYSA provides youth recreational and competitive soccer programs that inspire players to develop to their highest potential, and experience the rewards of pursuing excellence, teamwork, and sportsmanship. Our players, families, and coaches aspire to:

- Demonstrate integrity, respect, leadership, and sportsmanship.
- Instill a lifelong love of the game.
- Build a strong sense of community among all our members.
- Take a holistic approach to developing our student athletes (Technical, Social, Physical)
- Develop all of our athletes, regardless of skill level, to their full potential.

**Goals for our Organization:**

- Establish MYSA as a regional youth sports leader
- Increase recreational program participation rates to underserved communities and vulnerable youth populations

- Establish K-12 educational opportunities for our student athletes
- Establish a full player development pyramid (4 year olds to adults)
- Create a women's semi pro team
- Create our own soccer complex

**Objective:**

Expand our outreach to our student athletes and community beyond soccer by creating programs that create future leaders. Create educational programs outside the realm of sports, such as Merced United Leadership Academy.

Through an introspection of our organization's mission and work over the past forty years, we have identified that a gap exists within our organization. We provide excellent sporting opportunities, but the addition of a Leadership Academy will help in filling the gap in our student athletes' holistic education. Our funding request will be the beginning of the Merced United Leadership Academy (MULA) to help prepare our high school student athletes for the next steps in their career with exposure to a variety of life skills, community leaders, and educational opportunities.. Sessions in our curriculum will cover the following topics:

1. College Admission
2. Technology and Trade Schools
3. Financial Aid: How to pay for college or vocational training
4. Careers in Education / Education Pathways
5. Introduction to City of Merced and County of Merced government and leaders
6. Financial Literacy
7. Entrepreneurship
8. Health and Wellness
9. Connecting with Community Organizations
10. The World of Work

Our goal is to expand the program to not only allow more of our student athletes to participate in the future, but to also open it up to the entire community. With our Board members' expertise and past and current collaborations with various organizations, we are confident our MULA program will develop to be an integral and valuable program for our student athletes.

MYSA' experience in organizationing programming is listed below. Each program has it's own respective team of volunteer Board members that coordinate and manage all

duties of the program

**I. MYSA Recreational Soccer**

A. Description:

Established in 1979, our flagship youth recreational programs serve age groups from U6 (4 and 5 year olds) to U18s. With a Spring and Fall season, together both programs combined bring in around 1,600 youth players annually. All coaches are volunteers within our community and kids come from every school in the City of Merced. MYSA Recreational Soccer is affiliated with the California Youth Soccer Association, United States Youth Soccer Association, and the United States Soccer Federation. With these affiliations, we are also affiliated and connected to the worldwide soccer body, FIFA.

B. Dates:

*Spring Season:* - March- June.

*Fall Season:* September - November

D. Locations:

Games are held at Merced Sports Complex and Merced College. Practices are held at the Merced Sports Complex and Merced College, as well as at city parks and all Merced city schools.

E. Program Expenses: Facility rentals, Sports Complex and McNamara Park Lights, Referees, Field Maintenance, Field Equipment, Player Uniforms, Coach background checks, Insurance, and Miscellaneous.

**II. Merced United**

A. Description:

The city's first competitive youth soccer program has created opportunities for boys and girls to develop and compete at the highest levels of soccer domestically and internationally. With 400-500 competitive players annually, the coaches follow a club-wide curriculum to train players in a holistic approach combining technical, social and physical training methodologies. All of our youth teams play in NorCal Premier Soccer, a statewide organization that is affiliated with the United States Soccer Federation. Age groups begin at the Under8 level up to a recently established semi-pro team where our players who age out from youth soccer can continue to play. Our semi-pro team also includes talented players from high schools, Merced College, and UC Merced. Our semi-pro team plays in the United Premier Soccer League. We are

currently establishing the groundwork for a women's semi-pro team. All our players are afforded the opportunity to connect with college programs and domestic and international professional teams. Our players have gone on to many of the country's top universities and to the professional ranks as well.

B. Dates:

Year-round

C. Locations

McNamara Park and Merced College

E. Program Expenses:

Facility rentals, Sports Complex and McNamara Park Lights, Referees, Field Maintenance, Field Equipment, Player Uniforms, Coach and Volunteer background checks, Insurance, and Miscellaneous.

**III. Merced United Adult Recreational League**

A. Description:

Due to an overwhelming demand by the student athlete's parents for an opportunity for them to also play, the Adult Recreational League was established in 2018. All adults are now able to play in one of our several divisions. We currently offer the following divisions: Coed, open Men's, and a 35+ Men's. There is a division for every level of play so that everyone wanting to play is able to play. Our Adult Recreational League grew exponentially in popularity, with over 300 men and women playing every Sunday in an organized, safe and fun environment. The proceeds from this league goes to our youth programs, with a small percentage to our semi-pro teams until they become self-sustaining.

B. Dates:

Sundays, Year-round

C. Location:

McNamara Park

D. Program Expenses:

Facility rental, McNamara Park Lights, referees, field maintenance, Insurance, and field equipment.

**IV. MYSA Indoor Futsal Recreational League**

A. Description:

Established in the Winter of 2019/2020, the MYSA Indoor Futsal Recreational League was created for those players that wanted to

develop their soccer skills in a fast paced, small field soccer environment. The league's inaugural season had about 145 boys and girls play. The COVID-19 pandemic stopped the league from continuing. Our goal is to start it up again as soon as the facilities are available.

B. Dates:

Winter 2019-2020 January - March.

C. Location:

Boys and Girls Club gymnasium

D. Program Expenses:

Facility rental, referees, insurance, uniforms. Purchasing of specialized Futsal goalposts and soccer balls.

**V. Merced United eSports Tournaments**

A. Description:

Created in the Spring of 2020 due to COVID-19 Pandemic, Merced United eSports is an innovative program that combines sports and computer technology where players compete against each other in tournaments on the Xbox, PlayStation or PC platforms. Our innovative and first of its kind in California, the Merced United eSports was noticed nationally, and was the direct catalyst that led the groundwork for a Northern California eSports League under the NorCal Premier Soccer League where over 800+ players competed online representing their youth soccer club on FIFA 2020. This program involves the learning of the innovation, business, technology, computer programming and social psychology of eSports gaming.

B. Dates:

Spring 2020

C. Location:

E3 Gaming in Merced (closed)

D. Program Expenses:

Gaming equipment, renting spaces.

**VI. Merced United Day**

A. Description:

Created in 2017, Merced United Day is an event that brings all the MYSA programs together to celebrate our annual successes, to have our older players connect with our younger players, and to acknowledge players and family devotion to the sport. All 400-500 players take a Merced United group picture. We invite community members, vendors, food trucks, to make the environment fun and lively.

B. Dates:

- Every Summer (except 2020 and 2021)
- C. Location:  
Merced College or Golden Valley High School
  - D. Program Expenses:  
Facility Rental, Food, Promotional Material, Miscellaneous.

Additional information about the Merced United Leadership Academy, budget, and staff experience is provided in the attached documents.

Thank you for your time in reviewing our application for the City of Merced Community Funding. We look forward to a positive outcome to our proposal as we are excited to begin our Leadership Academy.

Warmest Regards,  
Daniel Jovan Pulido  
President, Merced Youth Soccer Association

## Merced United Leadership Academy Staff Experience

### **Daniel Jovan Pulido -**

President of Merced Youth Soccer Association for the past 5 years. Has worked on every program that MYSA has created, and represents MYSA at the City and County level connecting with numerous organizations and colleges to create college pathways for student athletes.

*United States Soccer Federation C License, Director of Coaching Diploma.*

Has been involved with every program at MYSA for the past 7 years. He has coached at every level from youth recreational, youth competitive, and to the semi-pro team. Having his professional coaching license with US Soccer, and in a Professional Scouting Program under the San Jose Earthquakes has led him to connect with numerous collegiate soccer programs, creating college pathways for MYSA student athletes

### **Christopher Michael Bernal -**

Vice President of Merced Youth Soccer Association for the past 4 years. During his undergraduate studies at UC Merced, he worked four years in Development and Alumni Relations, where he coordinated events, speaker series, as well as bridging the gap between UC Merced and the Community of Merced.

Bachelors in Management and Business Economics with a double minor in Art and Public Health from *University of California, Merced,*

Masters in Sports Management, *University of San Francisco.*

PhD Candidate in Management of Complex Systems at *University of California Merced*

## **MERCED UNITED LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (MULA)**

### **OBJECTIVE:**

Merced Youth Soccer Association's (MYSAs) MULA was developed to teach life and employment soft skills outside of soccer to our student athletes, as well as to expose them to community leaders to aid in the athlete's holistic education. Throughout MULA, our student athletes will build their network by engaging in conversations and group activities focused on professional development.

### **PROGRAM TIMELINE:**

- I. Cohort I: September – November 2022
  - a. Fifteen student athletes
- II. Cohort II: February – April 2023
  - a. Fifteen student athletes

### **TARGET POPULATION:**

A diverse group of high school aged student athletes from MYSAs Merced United (MU) competitive program. The following will be requirements:

- I. Member of our MU soccer program
- II. High School Student
- III. GPA
  - a. 3.5+ four student athletes
  - b. 2.5 – 3.5 seven student athletes
  - c. 2.0 – 2.5 four student athletes

### **PROGRAM GOALS:**

- Develop youth leaders in our community
- Network with industry leaders to mentor our students
- Identify college and career pathways

### **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:**

- Prepare student athletes for obstacles outside of sports
- Connect student athletes to leaders in the community through speaker sessions, Q&A seminars, and group activities
- Share various college pathways and career opportunities with student athletes

### **MULA COHORT SESSIONS:**

All sessions will include experts in the specific topics. All experts are TBD.

#### **I. College Admission**

Navigation of the college admission process, selecting a major, admission and support programs (i.e. EOP, Puente Program), and information on college athletic recruiting.

**II. Technology and Trade Schools**

Discussion on Technology careers and Trade Schools, as well as the importance of vocational training.

**III. Financial Aid: How to pay for college or vocational training**

Grants, scholarships, and other ways to pay for post-secondary schooling.

**IV. Careers in Education / Education Pathways**

Post-secondary school representatives will discuss their roles in their educational field.

**V. Introduction to City of Merced and County of Merced government and leaders**

City and county government programs, departments, and leaders. Differences in city and county government.

**VI. Financial Literacy**

Opening a bank account, bank vs credit union, money management, credit scores, personal and business loans.

**VII. Entrepreneurship**

Opening a small business from idea through startup, business plans, business loans, and challenges small businesses face.

**VIII. Health and Wellness**

Maintain a healthy physical and mental lifestyle, as well as local resources for those that need physical and mental health assistance.

**IX. Connecting with Community Organizations**

Community organizations are an integral part of a community, thru the services they provide to a vast array of populations.

**X. The World of Work**

Job search workshops covering job interviews, resumes, and employer expectations.

**MULA DINNER GRADUATION:**

Student athletes and their families will experience a graduation ceremony to display their successful achievement of the Merced United Leadership Academy. All the session speakers will be invited, as well as other dignitaries.

Graduates will be required to speak to the audience on what they have learned, what they envision their career path to be, and how MULA helped them prepare for the future.

Graduates will receive at graduation:

- I. Stipend
- II. Graduation stole/cord
- III. Graduation plaque/award

# MU Leadership Academy (MULA)

Item	Cost	Cost Per
Program Logistics		
Stipends	\$6,000	200 per student
Reservations	\$600	300 per cycle
Food/Snacks/Beverages	\$600	300 per cycle
Graduation Dinner	\$1,500	750 per cycle
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,700</b>	
Student Supplies/Gear		
MULA Notebooks	\$600	20
MULA Pens	\$300	10
MULA Misc. Supplies	\$300	10
MULA Graduation Stole/Cords	\$1,200	40
Program Completion Awards	\$1,050	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,450</b>	
Staff		
Program Coordinator	\$4,000	2000 per cycle
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>	
<b>Program Total Cost</b>	<b>\$16,150</b>	

To Whom It May Concern:

It is a pleasure to write this Letter of Support of Merced Youth Soccer's (MYSA) application for the City of Merced's Community Fund Grant. The program, named Merced United Leadership Academy (MULA), is an exceptional candidate for this funding, as it will extend MYSA's outreach to the community and players beyond the playing of soccer. Current MYSA soccer players, of which a high number come from low-income backgrounds, will be taught life and employment soft skills, and will be exposed to community leadership. The MULA student athletes will achieve these objectives by attending life skills workshops, and by connecting to speakers from community organizations, city and county public servants, college representatives, health professionals and entrepreneurs.

MYSA is one of the longest running and largest non-profits in Merced County. MYSA has been serving the local youth soccer community since 1979 by providing low cost recreational and competitive soccer for young athletes in Merced County. The youth competitive program, Merced United (MU), will provide most of the MULA recruits. MU has student-athletes in every high school in the Merced High School District, with the majority hailing from Merced High School, El Capitan High School and Golden Valley High School.

MYSA has an excellent track record of financial stability and is highly qualified to apply this proposed program. It is my belief that MULA will exceed all expectations and provide 30 Youth with a path to being our future leaders.

MYSA's MULA for Merced Youth has my full support and I urge it be selected to provide this great service to our local youth. If you have any further questions about their qualifications, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Valente Huitrón

(209) 631-0877

[mrhuitron@hotmail.com](mailto:mrhuitron@hotmail.com)

Staff Services Analyst @ County of Merced



To whom it may concern,

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the proposal for Merced United Leadership Academy submitted to the Merced City Community Funding grant by Merced Youth Soccer Association.

This program will help create networking opportunities throughout the County of Merced with high school students that are current players in Merced United. As a small business owner (Fruta Loca & Smart Depot), we are enthusiastic in participating in this program as speakers, in which we would focus our dialogue on the trials and errors and what it takes to run a small business in Merced.

We hope with our participation, we can encourage other businesses to participate in future Merced United Leadership Academy sessions to connect the student-athletes to in-depth knowledge of business and management.

We hope the City of Merced can help fund and support the Merced United Leadership Academy program to help sustain it and make it free for the student-athletes. If you have any questions regarding our support, please feel free to contact me at 209.819.9284

Best Regards,

Hector Berber

City of Merced  
678 W. 18th St.  
Merced, Ca, 95340  
June 27, 2022

To whom it may concern,

I am pleased to be writing a letter of support for Merced Youth Soccer Association's Community Grant application for the development of the *Merced United Leadership Academy*, which will create classroom-like sessions with professionals and experts from numerous fields. Merced United student-athletes in high school will be prioritized. I strongly support this grant application and the focus on encouraging our city's youth by increasing access to networking and mentorship opportunities.

As a past employee of the City of Merced, I understand the need to create more vibrant youth programming and support the organizations and environment to foster the programs to flourish. I know this will be a flagship program of MYSA that the city can be excited to support.

Through this letter, we acknowledge the specific roles and responsibilities we will fulfill in this partnership. In the event you agree to the funding, we would expect our role in this project to include:

- Forming a true partnership to grant access for Merced United youth to apply to MULA.
- Gathering input from the youth and participating partners on ways to improve in the future.
- Study this roll-out to research other educational opportunities to offer
- Creative and innovative ideas on how best to encourage membership.

MYSA will take responsibility to lead the *Merced United Leadership Academy* overall goals and strategy, as well as the day-to-day operations.

We look forward to working with you in educating the youth of our communities.

Sincerely,  
Mark Hamilton  
Merced United Coordinator

