

**City of Seattle Families and Education Levy Attachment 1**

**Request for Qualification  
College and Career Readiness and Planning**

**COVER SHEET**

**Organization Information:**

Organization name: El Centro de la Raza

Organization address: 2524 16<sup>th</sup> Ave. South, Seattle, WA 98144

Describe your legal status and, if applicable, state of incorporation (for example, Washington State non-profit corporation, Washington State partnership, sole proprietorship):

Washington State non-profit corporation

**Application Components and Checklist (submit in this order)**

- X Cover Sheet
- X Key People
- X Previous Experience
- X Tracking to Success
- X Women and Minority Inclusion; Non-discrimination

**Contact Information:**

Contact person: Denise Perez

(please print clearly)

Title: Director of Human Services

Mailing address: 2524 16<sup>th</sup> Ave. South, Seattle, WA 98144

Day/Work phone: 206-957-4609 Email address: dperez@elcentrodelaraza.org

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2/14/2012

Additional information is provided in Attachment 3.

### **Key People**

1) The College Readiness Coach at El Centro de la Raza is a full-time position that carries out college counseling services. The College Readiness Coach holds a Bachelor's degree, has experience working with youth, and is bilingual in English and Spanish. As a recent college graduate, the College Readiness Coach has recent and direct experience navigating the process of applying to college and acquiring funding to attend. Because of the program's continuity, the College Readiness Coach is able to draw from the institutional knowledge built by previous College Readiness Coaches and is guided by a manual of Desktop Procedures, which outlines the activities that are expected them—this is updated annually. The position has played an ongoing instrumental role in helping Latino students achieve the following outcome:

*Graduates enrolling in post-secondary education:* this is achieved through strong partnerships, personalization and planning, education and exposure, and some limited case management. As part of this outcome, the program also works to ensure that middle and high school students see college as an attainable goal.

2) Denise Perez, the Community Services Director, leads the program to achieve results. Denise holds a Bachelors' degree and post-graduate studies in Business Administration with emphasis in Finance. Her education includes Executive Leadership training at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and the Center for Creative Leadership. Ms. Perez's twenty years of experience includes grant and cooperative agreement management for the United States Department of Commerce, project management for the City of Denver, and multiple years working for diverse communities, primarily Latino populations.

### **Previous Experience**

1) El Centro de la Raza's College Readiness Program (CRP) targets low-income youth of color (ages 12-18) residing in/or enrolled in middle and high schools in south/central Seattle and King County. The CRP partners with Proyecto Saber (Project: Knowledge), a program that serves academically at-risk Latino students with homework assistance, workshops on racism and leadership skills, and opportunities for cultural expression.

Latinos constitute the vast majority of participants, and are largely disenfranchised despite having the fastest growing population—as of 2010 there are 40,329 Latinos in Seattle, making up 6.6% of the total population. This is up from 29,719 in 2000, representing a 26% increase in ten years (US Census Bureau). Despite rapid population growth the Latino community remains economically, socially and politically disenfranchised, confronted by poverty, cultural/linguistic barriers, lack of access to educational resources and a general lack of confidence navigating US education culture.

Latinos currently face high dropout rates and a persistent academic achievement gap. According to the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Seattle Public Schools reported a 7.3 percent senior dropout rate for Latinos in the 2009-10 school year—compared to just 2.7 percent for Whites. The on-time graduation rate for

Latinos in Washington State in the 2009-10 year was only 64 percent, compared to 87 percent for Whites. Latinos are grossly underrepresented in institutions of higher learning—according to a 2008 College Enrollment Study by Washington State University, less than 26 percent of Latino high school students transitioned into college, making their college transition rates the lowest in the state. In the 2010-2011 school year, 71 percent of program participants were Latino/a; 14 percent were White; 5 percent were African American; 3 percent were Native American; 5 percent were Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; and the remaining 2 percent were Multiracial. Eighty-four (84) percent resided in households with incomes less than 125 percent of HHS federal poverty threshold. Many of the students that Proyecto Saber serves are English Language Learners (ELL) students at varying levels.

2) The College Readiness Program has had tremendous success achieving the following outcome: *students enroll in post-secondary education*. In the 2010-2011 school year, all 84 of students who were enrolled in the program applied to college. Seventy-one (71) of those students went on to attend a two-year college, 11 went on to attend a four-year college, one joined AmeriCorps, and one joined the Marines. In the 2009-10 school year, 53 students decided to pursue higher education. These results were achieved with *strong partnerships* with the Proyecto Saber program at Ballard High School and Chief Sealth High School, and the Trio program at Chief Sealth. Our Program has been growing. In the 2009/2010 school year, participants received a total of \$49,000 in scholarships. From October 2010 to March 2011, the program helped participants secure \$166,000 in scholarship money.

The College Readiness Coach serves as an advocate to help students move on to postsecondary education, guiding them through the process of applying to colleges and universities, scholarships, and federal financial aid. At the same time, the College Readiness Coach works to develop partnerships with families and local colleges and universities by delivering event parent workshops and coordinating with college recruiters to increase access to college readiness events on campus. The program bridges the economic gap by providing education on financial assistance, assisting with school/scholarship applications and writing letters to colleges.

*Education and exposure* are central components in creating a college-going culture. We have developed a "Scholarship Newsletter" that is distributed bi-monthly to students, teachers and families. The newsletter highlights scholarships, qualifications, deadlines and how to apply. Staff members also connect youth with school counselors to ensure they are on track with credit requirements and additional school resources. As a result of our partnerships we are able to provide bi-monthly school site workshops and panels allowing students and parents to ask questions and receive personal feedback on career/academic options. Relationships with focus schools and community agencies that promote post-secondary education allow for significant collaborations that directly benefit students.

*Personalization and planning* are essential components of the program. For each student, service is delivered through an Individualized Service Plan (ISP), designed to help them develop a *High School & Beyond Plan* and perceive higher education as an attainable goal. Through the ISP, students learn about the requirements for admission into colleges; fill out college/scholarship applications; are encouraged to participate in

positive extracurricular activities; visit college campuses; and accompany their parents to college prep workshops. The College Readiness Coach checks in with students on a weekly or biweekly basis to make sure that they are on track. The ISP aims to achieve the following outcome: *graduates enroll in post-secondary education.*

In October, the College Readiness Program hosts a College Fair (open to the public) and targets Latino parents, teachers and youth through promotional materials (fliers, radio spots, etc.) in the schools and throughout the community. The idea is to expand the Program’s normal services to the larger Latino community, thereby widening the net and providing increased resources for parents and students. The CRP also encourages students to start building their college and career knowledge in middle school. The College Readiness Coach delivers workshops in Proyecto Saber classroom at Denny Middle School that provides an effective and purposeful curriculum supporting a college-going culture—they familiarize the students with high school classes, post-secondary options, admissions requirements and the financial aid process. The College Readiness Coach works in partnership with Proyecto Saber teachers and teaching assistants, who track students’ academic progress and assist them with improving academic achievement.

<b>3) FUNDERS</b>	
Notre Dame AmeriCorps	Lauren Mel, Program Director seattle@ndmva.org
Verizon Foundation	Asia Powell, Strategic Programs asia.powell@verizon.com
<b>SCHOOL STAFF</b>	
Proyecto Saber, Ballard High School	John Hernandez, teacher johernandez@seattleschools.org
Proyecto Saber, Chief Sealth High School	Roberta Lindeman, teacher rmlindeman@seattleschools.org
Trio, Chief Sealth High School	Leti Bravo, Career Counselor Leticia.bravo@seattlecolleges.edu
<b>COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS</b>	
University of Washington	Candice Garza, Hispanic/Latino Recruitment Coordinator garzac@uw.edu
Multicultural Affairs, UW School of Medicine	Felicity Abeyta-Hendrix, Program Coordinator fabeyta@uw.edu
Washington State University	Dina Ibarra, Assistant Director, Enrollment Counseling Office of Student Affairs Jocabed@wsu.edu
Western Washington University	Lee Che Leong, Admissions Coordinator, Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies Leech.leong@wwu.edu
Cornish College of the Arts	Caroline Brown, Adjunct Instructor cbrown@cornish.edu

Reel Grrls	Monica Olsson, Disability and Accessibility Advocate mmolsson@gmail.com
Seattle 826	Alex Bleecker, Programs Coordinator alexb@826seattle.org
Education Access Network	Linda Coleman, President and Founding Director info@educationaccessnetwork.org
Seattle College Access Network	Duron Jones, Student Engagement Coordinator Jonesd5@seattleu.edu
Scholarship Junkies	Sam Lim, Founder and Executive Director sam@scholarshipjunkies.com
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)	Julio-Alberto Mata, Community Education Associate jmata@maldef.org

4) Most participants are low-income, at risk of dropping out, limited English proficient, behind in credits, and first generation to pursue and/or enroll in post-secondary education. Many of our participants never seriously considered college a feasible option. In Seattle youth of color often face language and cultural barriers, systemic discrimination, feelings of alienation and isolation, and low self-esteem. These barriers often lead to sense that higher education isn't attainable for them. The majority of students in the CRP start with the idea that attending a four-year college is simply not affordable for them. They are not aware of resources like FAFSA and scholarships that make going to college feasible, nor do they understand the concept that a degree will give them the earning potential to pay back student debt. These students must often rely on scholarships and earned income to fund their college education, making our services absolutely essential to their success in pursuing higher education.

**Addressing Barriers:** El Centro provides culturally and linguistically appropriate intervention to put Latinos on the road to college. They may think college is unattainable, but once they are engaged with the idea they become enthusiastic—many are the children of immigrants who place a high priority on their success. Because El Centro shares the same background as our participants, we are able to engage both the student and the parent, communicating to them that higher education is attainable, and address their feelings of alienation. It gives them self-confidence to see other Latinos who have succeeded in making the transition, and to have someone on their side encouraging them every step of the way. We provide both students and parents with information on the process of applying for college and what needs to be done once accepted. Because many of them face academic challenges, we work closely with Proyecto Saber to ensure that students' academic needs are prioritized.

To address financial concerns, the CRP works with students one on one to make sure they not only understand that financial resources (like FAFSA or scholarships) exist, and checks in with students frequently to make sure that they take advantage of these resources. All services are provided by culturally competent, bilingual staff

steeped in the culture of the participants (the organization has over 17 years of experience serving youth of color), and the program has a strong track record with proven results. During the 2010-2011 school year the College Readiness Coach coordinated a total of eight workshops to Ballard High School and Chief Sealth High School on college-ready topics including presentations from college recruiters at the University of Washington, Washington State University, Eastern Washington University and Western Washington University. Workshop topics include: "Why College?", "Exploring the Financial Benefit of Going to College", "College 101: Researching Colleges and Universities", "Mock College Admissions", "Debunking the Myths of Financial Aid" and "Virtual Student Panel".

### **Tracking to Success**

1) In the last two years, the CRP has tracked the following indicators: *students pass all courses, students reduce absences*; students develop an educational plan; students perceive higher education as an attainable goal; parents attend college prep workshops; students participate in positive extracurricular activities; students understand requirements for admissions into higher education institutions; students fill out college/scholarship applications; and students visit college campuses.

2) In the last two years, the CRP has improved student outcomes through the tracking of data used to guide students toward successfully meeting the indicators listed in question 1. These data points are tracked and updated in each student's ISP. Each student must complete two of the outcomes to successfully exit the program. The College Readiness Coach maintains case files on each student as well as a database that tracks students' progress toward meeting the indicators. Records are kept in each student's file indicating which colleges, universities, and scholarships each student applies to in addition to record of any college-ready events or campus visits. This data is actively used by the College Readiness Coach to ensure that students don't fall behind in meeting indicators.

3) In the last two years, the CRP has worked closely with the Proyecto Saber program, which monitors the academic progress of its students. With parental permission, Proyecto Saber utilizes The Source (the City of Seattle's online academic resource for parents), allowing us to review daily and weekly grade and attendance data. We can then identify strengths and weaknesses in the student's performance and work with Proyecto Saber to ensure that students receive the academic support that they need to get the most out of the college ready services that the CRP provides. By monitoring student progress we can work with the student to ensure that they meet their outcomes by addressing areas of concern with encouragement and offering praise for their successes. This has helped us keep students on track to apply for and attend college.

4) *See attached*

### **Women and Minority Inclusion**

1) We do not plan on doing any additional hiring or subcontracting if our program.

