



Request for Proposals

Project Name:

The Pursuit of Dignity: Honoring Intellect Among Asylum Seekers Leading Abolitionist Strategies

St. Louis Project Partners/National Team:

Dr. Adriano Udani is a professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) in the Department of Political Science and the director of the Public Policy Administration program. He serves as the project's principal investigator.

St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA) is a non-profit organization that uses education and organizing to convene an inter-faith community to accompany the people of Latin America in their work for human rights and social justice.

María Torres Wedding, MPH, is a consultant partnering with agencies to center impacted communities in research and practice. María has helped shape this project since its inception through her work with the Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project (MICA), a non-profit immigration legal service provider based in St. Louis, MO.

Migrantes Unidos (MU) is a group of 50 asylum seekers in the St. Louis region meeting on a monthly basis to provide and receive peer support while living under surveillance by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and their private contractor, Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP).

Project Background:

In 2020 the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) partnered with two local non-profit agencies, St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA) and the Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project (MICA), to answer the question, "In what ways can asylum seekers formulate a collective plan to eliminate state sanctioned violence against them?"

Over the last five years, these two agencies worked to address emerging community concerns over abusive practices by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and their private contractor Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP).

Recognizing the power, expertise, and strength of immigrant communities, IFCLA and MICA chose to collaborate with the UMSL to create an opportunity to position asylum seekers as decision-makers and lead efforts to fight oppressive government practices against their communities. With funding from the University of Missouri System, the three entities began facilitating a virtual space where asylum seekers could mutually support one another and decide how to advocate for the end of state-sanctioned violence against immigrants.



All asylum seekers engaging in this endeavor are paid for their time and expertise, as their work together generates a tremendous amount of knowledge and guidance for all three entities. After a year of regular meetings attended by all partners (Dr. Udani, IFCLA, MICA, and MU), the project has received funding to train other interdisciplinary teams to implement this methodology with their local communities of asylum seekers. In addition to training and technical support, each interdisciplinary team will be given funds to pay asylum seekers for their time and expertise.

The Project's Driving Principles:

- A. The team rejects all forms of detention, including the use of ankle monitors and other disruptive and harmful “alternatives to detention.” As partners, the group works together toward an equitable future without borders.
- B. As a way to intentionally monitor and address power dynamics in hubs, the terms “core group” and “support group” will be used to distinguish lived experience. Those with personal experience seeking asylum will be referred to as members of the core team. The term support team will consist of individuals without live experience seeking asylum.
- C. No one on the team works for or with ICE or ISAP. Any communication with ICE or ISAP will be the result of an explicit request by asylum seekers.
- D. Regular meetings create space for asylum seekers to provide and receive peer support while deciding on how to best organize against the detention of immigrants.
- E. Asylum seekers are the experts and ultimate decision makers of the group. As experts, they must receive fair compensation for their time. They receive \$20 per hour of time dedicated to the group.
- F. Those supporting the group without lived experience of detention will work to raise awareness of the cause while always ensuring that messages center members of the impacted community.
- G. All publications, presentations, and conference materials will be vetted and edited by asylum seekers.

Funding Opportunity

The Henry Luce Foundation has provided the St. Louis team with \$250,000 to extend this model of co-production of knowledge across the United States. It will allow five other interdisciplinary “hubs” to learn to de-center service providers, researchers, and advocates; equitably pay asylum seekers for their time and knowledge; and visualize common dimensions of action priorities that end state sanctioned violence against asylum seekers.



Five interdisciplinary team hubs from historically under-invested U.S. regions will receive training and technical support from the National team based in St. Louis, Missouri. Teams will be trained on how to equitably offer information, resources, and funds for asylum seekers to lead and own system changes as intellectuals and movement leaders in their respective region.

Following an onboarding period of five months, each hub will receive funding to be used exclusively to pay asylum seekers to engage in decision-making, knowledge production, and leadership opportunities over the course of two years.

The project will culminate in a national conference to celebrate collective learning and review aggregated data from all hubs. Travel expenses for asylum seekers will be covered. The information shared in the conference will also be publicly disseminated in a series of policy briefs. The National Team, in partnership with advocacy hubs, will propose a book manuscript that empirically identifies key factors and processes that center asylum seekers as intellectuals and leaders who work toward ending all forms of detention.

The Henry Luce Foundation seeks to enrich public discourse by promoting innovative scholarship, cultivating new leaders, and fostering international understanding. Established in 1936 by Henry R. Luce, the co-founder and editor-in-chief of Time, Inc., the Luce Foundation advances its mission through grantmaking and leadership programs in the fields of Asia, higher education, religion and theology, art, and public policy.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Funding recipients must have a history of working with asylum seekers through service provision or organizing.
2. Each interdisciplinary team must have at least one academic (e.g. research designated, undergraduate, junior, community, junior) and one community-based agency (e.g. organizing/advocacy-based non-profits, legal services, congregation, health centers, direct service providers).
3. A strong preference will be given to teams comprising agencies/members with a record of intentionally centering impacted communities in research.
4. Teams must have the ability to distribute funding to asylum seekers in their community through the most accessible payment method (cash, check, venmo).



5. Applications will be accepted from any state. However, a preference will be given to historically under-invested U.S. regions.

6. A commitment to the full project timeline of thirty months is required.

Funding Timeline

Deadline for application submissions: May 1, 2022

Teams will be notified by: June 30, 2022

Onboarding process will begin: August 1, 2022

Total amount to be awarded: \$60,000

Total number of available subawards: 5

Average award amount: \$12,000

Apply Online: <https://stl-ifcla.org/mu-rfp>

Questions? Email migrantesunidos@ifcla.net.



Application

This version is for reference only. Please submit applications online at <https://stl-ifcla.org/mu-rfp>.

Please respond to the following questions. (Word maximum per question: 1,500)

1. This funding opportunity requires recipients to work as an interdisciplinary team that includes community-based agencies and an academic institution. Please describe your respective agencies/institutions and the history of your work together.
2. Please describe the qualifications of your key personnel using **Attachment A**. Complete one form per staff member. Please also attach a resume/cv for each member of the team.
3. Funds received will be used exclusively to pay asylum seekers for their time and expertise. How do your respective agencies plan to support dedicated staff time and additional resources for this endeavor?
4. Which entity will be responsible for managing the funding? Describe your process for distributing funds to asylum seekers.
5. It's imperative that funding recipients have a strong existing relationship with asylum seekers in their area. Please describe the evolution of your agencies' connection to local community members seeking asylum. Please outline any immigrant representation in agency staff or board.
6. Describe how detention and harmful alternatives to detention, such as ankle monitors, have impacted the communities you serve. Describe the local landscape of support services, or lack thereof.
7. Describe your vision for immigrant communities living in the United States.
8. To what degree does this project fit into, shift, or expand your existing work plan, strategic plan, or annual plan?
9. Please reflect on our core principles. Which would be most challenging for your interdisciplinary team and why? What is your plan for addressing this issue?
10. How do your agencies determine what services to provide in your region? What initiatives have you taken to solicit feedback from impacted community members?



11. Please describe any experience coordinating or providing services in a group setting.
12. *This question is specifically for your team member who is an academic. "Civically engaged research" (CER) is the systematic and rigorous production of knowledge through reciprocal partnerships with people beyond the academy that contributes to the improved governance of social and political problems." Please describe what reciprocity means to you, and how you intend to practice it in your role as an academic on your team.*
13. Is there anything else you would like us to know about your agencies, work history, communities served, or interdisciplinary partnership?
14. What questions do you have for us?

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Attachment A: Key Personnel

Please print as many copies of this attachment as needed.

Name:	
Agency:	
Title:	
Proposed roll	
% time committed to project	

Education:

Degree, Certification, or other	Institution	Year

Employment History

Organization	Role	Year

Lived and professional experience relevant to this funding opportunity:

Topic	Years of Experience	Description of experience

Other background information: