

# Application Report



**Applicant Organization:** FNRC

**Project Name:** FNRC Language Access & Cultural Competency Plan

**Funding Announcement:** FY 21/22 Regional Center Funding To Improve Language Access And Cultural Competency

**Requested Amount:** \$188,093.00

**Project Summary:** FNRC will host listening sessions and create surveys to better understand the needs of our diverse communities to improve language access for limited or non-English individuals. Equity Praxis Group will be contracted to provide guidance and support for our culturally diverse outreach and listening sessions. Our focus will be on the following communities: Latino/Hispanic, Hmong, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, and Black/African American. To implement agency-wide cultural competency and better serve our diverse clients and families, FNRC will hire a Community Services Supervisor who will provide structure and leadership for the DHH Specialist, Cultural Specialist, Employment Specialist, and Tribal Engagement Team.

**Project Manager/Coordinator:** Martha Alvarez malvarez@farnorthernrc.org -

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**Section Name:** Regional Center Profile

**Sub Section Name:** RC Organization Profile

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## 1. Applicant Question: Description of the Cultural, Linguistic, Racial and Ethnic Diversity of the Catchment

Provide a description of your regional center that includes:

- Counties served
- Geography of the region
- Primary languages of the individuals/families
- Demographics of ethnicities and cultures
- Other relevant information to describe your communities

You may upload an attachment but you must provide a narrative here. Limit your attachments to no more than 3.

### Applicant Response:

Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC) is located in Northern California in the fertile Central Valley, surrounded by the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountain Ranges. We are a smaller RC but cover the most territory, our catchment area includes nine counties, Butte, Glenn, Plumas, Tehama, Lassen, Shasta, Trinity, Siskiyou, and Modoc. This region is well known for its numerous lakes, rugged mountains, forests, rivers, clear mountain lakes and waterfalls, it is a highly rural area with some urban cities. Population ranges from approximately 9,000 in Modoc county to our most heavily populated counties, Shasta and Butte with approximately 182,000 and 220,000 respectively. The families we serve are predominantly White (73%), Latino (12.7%), Black/African American (2.3%), and South East Asian, and Native American both at 2%. The Native American community has an incredibly rich history in our area and there are Rancherias in seven of the nine counties we serve. There is a big trust barrier that FNRC needs to address to reach them. Butte, Glenn and Tehama counties are heavily agricultural and many of our Latino/Hispanic families work in this field. Both the Latino and South East Asian families have a low literacy level and many have little education. They struggle just to provide the basic necessities of life and are very protective of each other. A more personal approach to case management is needed. The only threshold language is Spanish but Hmong is approaching threshold.

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## **2. Applicant Question:** Description of Regional Center Efforts to Increase Language Access and Cultural Competency

Provide a description of your regional center's prior and ongoing efforts to increase language access and cultural competency in your catchment area. Examples of language efforts may include but are not limited to:

- Translation(s)
- Language interpretation
- Increase Bilingual staff
- Bilingual service provider recruitment
- Resource development to support those with a primary language other than English
- Other

You may upload a document (e.g. strategic plan or internal policy etc.) but you must provide a narrative here. Limit your attachments to no more than 3.

### **Applicant Response:**

In the last few years, FNRC has focused its efforts to assure that non English speaking families have language access. All written communications are translated to Spanish, our only threshold language. Our website is accessible in various languages and we have added 5 new vendors that offer numerous language options. We provide interpretation for in person events using whisper mics when requested. Increasing our bilingual staff has been a continuous goal and have increased bilingual staff by approximately 30% in the last few years. FNRC implements a team approach, the cultural specialist meets with bilingual service coordinators to assess unmet needs, current services, new resources and determine where efforts should be focused. Culturally competent resource development is equally important and all vendors have to address their efforts in reaching the underserved communities in their plan designs. FNRC has an SAE grant that addresses the technology barrier that is closely related to language access since many of our families are left out of trainings and presentations because they do not know how to access Zoom, email, or internet. We recognize the uniqueness of our area and that we need to improve in language access and cultural competency. Our goals include establishing a good language access plan and an organized outreach plan. Community contacts are often lost because of staff promotion or turnover due to the lack of organization.

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**Section Name:** Language Assessment

**Sub Section Name:** Language Access and Culture Plan

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## **1. Applicant Question:** Language Data Review

Explain how your regional center will review, consider, and incorporate data provided by the Department on April 6th in your language assessment process. Examples of data analysis and consideration may include:

- Review data within the organization/staff
- Review with Board Members
- Review with families, community, and stakeholders
- Steps to improve data

- Steps to broadly share data
- Outreach/In-reach efforts to share data

**Applicant Response:**

The Cultural Specialist provided the data at the Diversity Team meeting which includes executive and case management staff and it will be presented to the Board during their yearly competency training in September. The only threshold language aside from English is Spanish. One of our goals is to capture our data more accurately, especially the Deaf Plus clients and to train staff in order to have clean data. The following language needs were identified: Website accessibility for non or limited English speaking and DHH families; coordination and streamlining of interpretation/translation services; creating and implementing quality control measures to assure accuracy and cultural appropriateness of translations; and creating and implementing an Intake Navigator program to assist Spanish and Hmong speaking families complete the intake process. This will be done with the help of a specialized consultant, Equity Praxis Group who will complete an assessment of FNRC's current language access procedures and help develop a language access plan in order to guide our language access efforts and train key FNRC staff.

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**2. Applicant Question:** Gathering Stakeholder Input

To better understand the language needs of your community, select what strategies your regional center will implement to gather stakeholder input. Check all that apply. Provide details for each selected strategy in the textbox. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

**Applicant Response:**

- Surveys
- Other

**Applicant Comment:**

FNRC plans to gather stakeholder input via surveys or interviews in regards to the amount of bilingual staff they have, how they interact with limited or non-English speaking clients, and any needs and/or challenges that have not been addressed. This will be completed with guidance from the language consultant, EPG who will help with the creation of the questions in order to obtain the best data.

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**3. Applicant Question:** Listening Sessions and Public Meetings

One strategy to build trust with your community and learn about the language needs of individuals and families served by your regional center is to host listening sessions and/or public meetings. Check all of the types of listening sessions and/or meetings you plan to host to gather input on language needs. Detail may be added for each selected strategy in the textbox below. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

**Applicant Response:**

- Host listening session(s) with family members
- Partner with CBOs to host a community meeting

**Applicant Comment:**

FNRC will be focusing on Spanish and Hmong with plans to have three listening sessions, two in Spanish and one in Hmong. These will be completed with guidance from the consultant, EPG and hope to complete these in-person as this is the most effective way to reach clients in our catchment area although we will have to consider Covid-19 transmission numbers and precautions. Partnering with Promotores will be a strategy as well as providing good incentives to attract as many clients as possible.

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**4. Applicant Question:** Language Focus in Listening Sessions

If your language assessment includes hosting listening sessions or community meetings, identify the language(s) focus for each session planned. Check all that apply. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

**Applicant Response:**

- Spanish
- Hmong

**Applicant Comment:**

FNRC's only threshold language is Spanish and Hmong is approaching threshold. The plan is to focus our efforts on these two languages only, two Spanish sessions are planned and one in Hmong.

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**5. Applicant Question:** Survey Recipients

Surveying is one method to learn more about the needs of your community. Select individuals and/or group(s) your regional center will survey. Choose all that apply.

Regional centers including this in their plan will be required to include standardized survey questions that will be provided by the Department. Detail may be added for individuals and/or group(s) selected in the textbox below. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

**Applicant Response:**

- Self-Advocates/Consumers
- Family Members
- Service Coordinators
- Intake Staff

**Applicant Comment:**

We plan to survey clients, family members, intake staff and service coordinators in order to get a feel for our current status and needs in regards to language access.

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**6. Applicant Question:** Development of Survey

Explain how you will create the survey and include what steps you will take to store data received from the survey. Examples of steps to develop a survey:

- Review language data
- Use professional language translation
- For quality assurance, review draft language translations with community organizations, universities, and other community partners
- Identify distribution list

**Applicant Response:**

The surveys will be developed with guidance from the language consultant, EPG who has extensive experience in this field. They will help to design the survey instrument and process for administering it, including crafting the questions and the process for sending out to the respondents, as well as the follow up process for maximizing responses. This survey will be created in a way that addresses both language and culture.

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**7. Applicant Question:** Distribution of Survey

Select what method(s) you will use for distributing the survey. Choose all that apply. If you select "Other", please identify what that will be.

**Applicant Response:**

- Website Link
- US Mail
- Text Message Link

**Applicant Comment:**

FNRC will consider all three and may use a combination of these in order to get the most responses.

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**8. Applicant Question:** Surveys - Language Focus

For surveys developed into videos or translated into Non-English languages, identify the language(s) your regional center will focus. Check all that apply. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

**Applicant Response:**

- Spanish
  - Hmong
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**9. Applicant Question:** Coordinating with Other Regional Centers

If you plan to coordinate with another regional center(s) who serve(s) a common diverse population (e.g., Cambodian, Hmong, and/or Slavic, etc.) or if you will consolidate efforts to meet common cultural needs within your catchment, state what steps you will take to coordinate efforts.

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**Applicant Response:**

We are not planning to coordinate with another regional center at this time, but the language consultant, EPG will be working with other regional centers and will determine if FNRC can coordinate or share results.

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**Section Name:** Cultural Competency Assessment

**Sub Section Name:** Cultural Competency Assessment

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**1. Applicant Question:** Culture, Ethnicity and Race Data Review

Explain how your regional center will review, consider, and incorporate data provided by the Department on April 6th in your cultural competency assessment. Examples of data analysis and consideration may include:

- Review data within the organization/staff
- Review with Board Members
- Review with families, community, and stakeholders
- Steps to improve data
- Steps to broadly share data
- Outreach/In-reach efforts to share data

**Applicant Response:**

As with the language data, the Cultural Specialist provided the information at the Diversity Team meeting which includes case management and executive staff. This information will also be presented to the Board at their yearly cultural competency training in September. After reviewing the data the following cultural needs were identified: Outreach material needs to be reviewed and updated for cultural appropriateness; obtaining feedback from clients and families about cultural needs as this has not been done in the past; offer more cultural competency trainings for all FNRC staff. FNRC will be working with the language consultant to work on the identified needs, listening sessions and surveys are planned as well as a cultural proficiency training with a focus on the results obtained from the surveys and listening sessions.

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**2. Applicant Question:** Gathering Stakeholder Input

To better understand community needs related to cultural competency, cultural humility, and/or cultural sensitivity etc., identify what strategies your regional center will implement to gather stakeholder input. Check all that apply. Provide details for each selected strategy in the textbox. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

**Applicant Response:**

- Surveys
- Other

### **Applicant Comment:**

FNRC plans to gather information via interviews and possibly web based surveys from our vendors to determine staffing and overall cultural competency/sensitivity and current needs. We recognize that a big need in our area is bilingual/bicultural staff within our vendors and programs. This is an important reason why many of our families do not utilize services. FNRC will work with the consultant EPG on the best process to gather this information.

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### **3. Applicant Question:** Listening Sessions and Public Meetings

One strategy to build trust with your community and to learn about the cultural competency needs of your catchment area is to host listening sessions and/or public meetings. Check all that apply. Provide details for each selected strategy in the textbox. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

#### **Applicant Response:**

- Host listening sessions with self-advocates
- Host listening sessions with family members
- Partner with local CBOs to host a community meeting

### **Applicant Comment:**

FNRC will work with the consultant EPG to host 5 listening sessions, 2 Latino/Hispanic; 1 Hmong; 1 Native American and 1 Black/African American. We plan to partner with key CBO's to attract as many participants as possible. Due to our large catchment area, key locations where the largest numbers of these communities reside will be chosen and incentives will be offered. Transportation and high gas costs will deter people from participating and why location and incentives will be important.

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### **4. Applicant Question:** Ethnicity Focus in Listening Sessions

If your cultural competency assessment includes hosting listening sessions or community meetings, identify the ethnicities and/or culture(s) for each session planned. Check all that apply. For example, if you will focus on the Middle Eastern community, check Other Ethnicity or Race/Multi-Cultural and provide detail of your efforts in textbox below.

#### **Applicant Response:**

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic

### **Applicant Comment:**

These ethnicities were chosen based on the data provided. Because the Latino/Hispanic group is our largest ethnicity behind White, 2 listening sessions are planned for this group.

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### 5. Applicant Question: Survey Recipients

Surveying is one method to learn more about the needs of your community. Select individuals and/or group(s) your regional center will survey to complete your cultural competency assessment. Choose all that apply. Provide details for selected individuals and/or group(s) in the textbox. If you selected "Other", please identify what that will be.

#### Applicant Response:

- Self-Advocates/Consumers
- Family Members

#### Applicant Comment:

FNRC will focus on surveying Spanish and Hmong speaking clients this year. We plan to develop one survey to gather input on needs related to both language and culture in order to keep it simple for our families. As stated before, many of our clients and families with language needs have low literacy skills.

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### 6. Applicant Question: Development of Survey

Explain how you will create the survey and include how you will store data received from the survey. Examples of steps to develop a survey:

- Culture, ethnicity and race data
- Identify distribution list
- Use professional language translation
- For quality assurance, review draft language translations with community organizations and partners

The Department will review all surveys before distribution.

#### Applicant Response:

The survey will be created with guidance from the consultant, EPG which includes the crafting of the questions and possible modalities. Questions will be reviewed by the FNRC diversity team to determine if they are the most appropriate for our population and we will use a translation service to translate them in both languages. The data will be reviewed and analyzed by the language consultant EPG who will provide a report to the FNRC team with their findings.

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### 7. Applicant Question: Distribution of Survey

Select what method(s) you will use for distributing the survey. Choose all that apply. If you select "Other", please identify what that will be.

#### Applicant Response:

- US Mail
- Text Message Link
- Website Link

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**Applicant Comment:**

There will be one survey only with both language and culture components. We will consider using the above methods or a combination, depending on what our consultant advises in order to maximize responses.

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**8. Applicant Question:** Surveys - Language Focus

For surveys developed into videos or translated into Non-English languages, identify the language(s) your regional center will focus on. Check all that apply. If you select "Other", please identify what that will be.

**Applicant Response:**

- Spanish
  - Hmong
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**9. Applicant Question:** Coordinating with Other Regional Centers

If you plan to coordinate with another regional center(s) who serve a common diverse population (e.g., Cambodian, Hmong, and/or Slavic, etc.) or if you will consolidate efforts to meet common cultural needs within your catchment, state what steps you will take to coordinate efforts.

**Applicant Response:**

FNRC does not have plans to coordinate with other regional centers this year.

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**10. Applicant Question:** Culturally Competent Language Interpretation

Describe how your Regional Center will provide consistent and culturally competent language interpretation in individual planning meetings and public meetings (e.g., Self-Determination Program, Local Advisory Committee meetings and activities etc.).

**Applicant Response:**

FNRC will focus on having a culturally competent staff who in turn will recognize the need to provide language access services. Cultural Competency trainings are planned for all FNRC staff and a specific training will be designed after reviewing the results of the data from surveys and listening sessions. FNRC will also develop and streamline language access services through a complete Language Access Plan which will be created with the help of the language consultant. Staff will be trained on how to access these services for their clients. Reminders and support will be provided to service coordinators at the Diversity Team meetings and the Cultural Specialist will be available anytime for questions about this process. FNRC will also work on creating a list of common terms/services and regional center vocabulary for interpreters so they have an understanding of our services and allow for more accurate and consistent interpretation.

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**Section Name:** Language Access and Culture Plan**Sub Section Name:** Language Access and Culture Plan

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**1. Applicant Question:** Regional Center Staffing

Funding for regional center staffing shall not exceed 50% of the total allocation received. If you plan to hire regional center staff to implement your Language Access and Culture Plans, explain what they will do and how they will support

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your efforts to improve language access and culture in your catchment. Include staffing in your budget.

All staffing requests must be approved by the Department. DDS will review and approve staffing requests within the GrantVantage system.

#### **Applicant Response:**

FNRC plans to hire a Community Services Supervisor with the primary role of providing coordination and support for existing staff including Cultural Specialist, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community Specialist, Employment Specialist and client advocates, including coordinating agency outreach activities. We currently do not have an outreach specialist on staff and recognize there are many missed opportunities for public engagement with our underserved communities. This position will support our efforts to improve language access and culture by providing structure and leading our agency wide efforts in regards to our language access plan and collaborating across our nine counties with CBO's, schools, day and work programs. Creating and improving partnerships and being more involved with the community will help break that trust barrier with our underserved families. He/she will also coordinate specialized resource development identified through unmet needs to create equitable services.

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#### **2. Applicant Question:** Consultants

If your regional center proposes consultants to complete your assessment, planning process and/or implementation, provide a brief narrative as to the minimum qualifications of the consultant, provide a scope of work, and a budget. Include consultants in your budget.

All consultant requests must be approved by the Department. DDS will review and approve staffing requests within the GrantVantage system.

#### **Applicant Response:**

The chosen consultant is Equity Praxis Group (EPG) who has partnered with Bridging Voices, Uniendo Voces. EPG is comprised of a team of practitioners who have experience in areas such as equity and justice, organization development, systems change, leadership development, language access and justice, human development, and more; and they have worked with regional centers in the past. Bridging Voices, Uniendo Voces provides consulting services on equity, diversity and inclusion with an expertise in language justice which includes quality interpretation and translation services between English and Spanish. They have over ten years experience and use an educational research based approach with a lens of equity to create inclusive, multilingual spaces. They will be assisting FNRC create the Language Access Plan as well as helping develop the surveys, conducting the listening sessions and providing cultural competency trainings.

#### **Attachment:**

[FNRC Language and Cultural Planning Proposal 2022-2023 v.2.docm.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

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#### **3. Applicant Question:** Language Access and Cultural Goals

Timelines for completion of your language assessment and the development of your Language Access and Culture Plan will include short-term and long-term goals that may extend beyond a fiscal year. Provide at least one long-term goal and at least 2 short-term goals. All RC Language Access and Cultural Competency Plans and reports will be due as follows:

- Language Access and Culture Plan to be submitted by June 15
- Semi-Annual Progress Report due by October 1
- Semi-Annual Progress Report due by April 1

**Applicant Response:**

FNRC recognizes the uniqueness of the area and people served; we are a smaller regional center but have identified areas that we would like to improve. Our short term goals include first and foremost, creating organization throughout our regional center in regards to language access and cultural competency. We have four offices over the nine counties and currently no organized outreach or language access plan. The Community Services Supervisor that we plan to hire would provide that organization and keep our efforts focused and consistent. Second is reviewing and revising our data collecting practices so that the data collected for the DHH and Spanish speaking families is more accurate. Our long term goals include creating and implementing a language access plan so that all offices are consistent and all our communications, meetings, and trainings are provided in the language of choice; gathering information via surveys and listening sessions to identify strengths and needs in regards to language and culture; providing more cultural competency training for all staff; updating our website to make it more accessible and inviting to our diverse community; and improving our intake procedures so that limited English speaking families do not get left behind. The consultant should provide us with needed information on where we stand as an agency on language access and cultural competency and how to best move forward.

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