



Talia Lomax O'dneal, Director of Finance Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson  
County Department of Finance  
Division of Grants Coordination  
700 2nd Avenue South, Suite 201  
P.O. Box 196300  
Nashville, TN 37219-6300

February 8, 2019

Dear Ms. O'dneal,

Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors seeks \$100,000 from Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County through direct appropriations in order to increase our services that enhance public safety, provides for the well-being of Davidson County children, and establishes trust between immigrant communities and local government.

The following are our responses to questions concerning this direct appropriations request. If you have any further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [wade@tnjfon.org](mailto:wade@tnjfon.org) or by phone at (615) 477-2009.

Sincerely,

Wade Munday / Executive Director

cc:

Dennise Myers Vaughn Wilson

1. What services does your organization provide to residents of Davidson County?

TNJFON provides affordable, high-quality immigration legal services to immigrants, educates the public and faith-based communities about issues related to immigration, and advocates for immigrant rights. Founded in Nashville in 2008, TNJFON has assisted over 2,300 individual clients in a variety of immigration matters, with a focus on representing low-income individuals who are eligible for humanitarian forms of relief. We primarily serve individuals earning below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Approximately 60% of our clients live in Davidson County. We hold monthly clinics in which we conduct intake, evaluate immigration and other relevant history, and advise of any available options to change immigration status. In this setting, we provide basic information regarding U.S. immigration law and process. Where a form of humanitarian relief is available, we provide direct representation as capacity allows.

Our attorneys have created educational content and presented to a wide variety of audiences such as public schools, places of worship, and community-based events. We have hosted ad hoc legal information sessions for the immigrant community in both Spanish and English. Our attorneys have recruited, trained, and mentored over 100 attorneys to provide pro bono representation in immigration matters. Our service model is based on significant volunteer participation; we work with community volunteers and law students from Belmont University College of Law, Nashville School of Law and Vanderbilt School of Law on an ongoing basis.

2. How many residents are you currently serving and how do they benefit?

We currently represent 217 residents of Davidson County in an immigration matter before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services or the Immigration Court. We represent individuals who have been victims of certain types of serious crimes including armed robbery, domestic violence, and trafficking as well as children who have been abused, abandoned and neglected. If successful, these clients will be able to live and work lawfully in the United States, and, in some cases, apply for U.S. citizenship. In addition, we represent young people who were brought to the United States as children and qualify for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a form of temporary relief from deportation that also provides access to a work permit and, in Tennessee, a driver's license.

3. How much funding are you requesting from Metro?

We are requesting \$100,000 to promote the well-being of children living with foreign-born parents in Davidson County by increasing the parents' access to the information and resources needed to navigate the U.S. immigration system.

4. If funding is awarded, how many additional residents will be served and how will they benefit?

- 1,080 total

- 20 foreign-born parents (with at least 1 U.S. citizen child) at risk of deportation will participate in a six-week course that will provide essential information regarding U.S. immigration in an interactive, user-friendly format; will be eligible for a comprehensive immigration consultation that will provide an evaluation of their immigration legal options, a deportation risk minimization plan and a family preparation plan; where a legal remedy is available, be eligible for matching with an attorney for pro bono representation in the immigration case; and a referral to partner agencies for assistance with other non-immigration civil legal needs
- 5 partner agencies will have access to the educational materials (course materials and recordings of the interactive course sessions) on an ongoing basis
- 1,000 Davidson County residents will have access to recordings of interactive course sessions available via podcast and Facebook Live
- 20 volunteer attorneys and law students will be trained to consult with foreign-born Davidson County parents and provide an evaluation of immigration legal options, a plan to minimize risk of deportation and a family preparation plan

5. In addition to serving more residents, are there other community benefits Metro funding would help you achieve?

The Vera Institute for Justice recently released their findings that safe and welcoming communities increase the “likelihood of indigent immigrants prevailing and returning to their families, jobs, and communities. Providing legal representation to those facing deportation maintains trust in governmental institutions and supports public safety for the entire community.”

Funding for our programs would increase the likelihood that more families will remain together, children and their parents will experience less depression and anxiety, and immigrant communities will be more inclined to trust local government agencies when interacting with law enforcement or school officials.

6. How would you use this funding to help create a more equitable Nashville, where all residents have an opportunity to participate in the city's success?

Through years of experience working with this population, we have found that lawful immigration status provides tangible benefits such as increased educational opportunities, improved job prospects, more secure housing, and, in general, greater economic stability, as well as intangible benefits such as the opportunity to live without the constant fear of deportation.