



Grant Proposal Request for Funding SIEM: A Therapy Program and Sanctuary for Immigrant Refugees in Eastern Massachusetts



Olivia Yahner, on behalf of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
December 10th, 2024

Table of Contents

<i>Executive Summary</i>	4
<i>Statement of the Problem</i>	5
<i>Statement of Request</i>	6
<i>Description of Proposed Work</i>	7
Timeline Phases	7
Therapeutic Support	7
Cultural Integration Process	7
Community Outreach	7
Measure of Project Success	8
Quantitative Metrics	8
Qualitative Metrics	9
Impact Assessments	9
Evaluation Tools and Timeline	10
Key Indicators of Success	10
<i>Available Facilities</i>	11
Boston Medical Center (BMC) – Immigrant & Refugee Health Center	11
La Alianza Hispana.....	11
Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center (RIAC)	11
Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) – Immigration Services	11
Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) – Center for Immigrant Health.....	11
<i>Personnel Qualifications</i>	12
Dr. Linh Nguyen, Ph.D.	12
Dr. Maria Gonzalez, Psy.D.	12
Dr. Ahmed El-Sayed, M.D.	12
<i>Budget</i>	13
Personnel Salaries \$120,000.....	13
Multilingual Resource Development \$30,000.....	13
Community Outreach and Events \$20,000.....	13
Facility and Operational Costs \$15,000	14
Program Evaluation and Impact Measurement \$15,000	14
<i>Summary</i>	15
<i>Conclusion</i>	16
<i>Works Cited Page</i>	17

Olivia Yahner

The Boston Foundation
75 Arlington St, Boston, MA 02116
November 30th, 2024

Dear Orlando C. Walkins,

I am truly honored to be submitting this grant proposal to The Boston Foundation on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Immigrants who were forced to flee their home countries experience significant trauma that impacted them negatively. Immigrants who flee their country often face brutality against border parolee's, witness the deaths of their fellow travelers, and are unceremoniously assigned to refugee facilities without any empathy.

My main objective is to establish a therapy program that not only provide immigrants the emotional support and counseling they need but help acclimate them to environments that to them. Not only are immigrants fleeing their country due to conflicts and war, but also due to environmental factors such as climate change, natural disasters, and human-rights related issues. The place they once call home is no longer safe to lie in and their only choice is to leave the only home they know.

Boston has a large immigration population. You're funding in creating a therapy program could not only benefit them but benefit you. You could help a broader diversity of immigrants and make them feel more welcome to the United States.

Your consideration of the proposal is deeply appreciated, and we are hopeful you accept

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Olivia Yahner

Executive Summary

As you know, Boston is a large city with a prosperous immigration population of about 184,000, 27.6% percent of them are foreign-born. Many of these individuals and their family members have fled to other countries like the United States either to escape war, violence, environmental crisis, and human rights violations that were enforced in their home countries.

Upon their arrival to their new environment, they're forced to enter an environment that is completely foreign and new to them. The trauma, cultural disorientation, and limited support networks make an immigrant's acclimation process harder and slower.

A 2021 study by the World Health Organization (WHO) highlighted that gender identities, religion, cultural differences, and low social hierarchy ranks create challenges for immigrants in obtaining entitlements when entering the new country. WHO also pointed out immigrants during migration travel are exposed to challenging and life-threatening conditions including violence, detention and lack of access to services that cover basic needs. Pre-migration, WHO pointed out that immigrants had lack of live hoods, opportunities for education and development, exposure to armed conflict, violence, poverty, and persecution from their home country, making their susceptibility to degradation of their mental health more vulnerable.

My proposal seeks funding to establish a therapy program I call Sanctuary for Immigrants of Eastern Massachusetts or SIEM for short to help support immigrants of Boston, Massachusetts through group therapy sessions, culturally tailored counselors, and other resources to help immigrants adjust to their new environment. Through partnerships with local immigrant advocacy organizations and robust outreach strategy, we aim to improve the well-being of Boston's immigrant communities while nurturing their integration and sense of belonging.

The initiative of my proposal is informed and supported by my extensive research into the mental health challenges faced by immigrant populations and draws on proven methods of trauma-informed care. By providing accessible, multilingual therapy services and practical resources, SIEM will provide empowerment to the immigrants of Boston, to rebuild their lives, contribute to their communities, and achieve long-term stability. The project has the potential to become a model for similar programs in other cities around Massachusetts with large immigrant communities.

We are requesting \$200,000 dollars to launch the program which will serve at least 150n immigrants in its first year and create. A foundation for future expansion. My proposal of a therapy program may not be original, but I believe it will stand out because I deeply care for everyone on a diverse level which most therapy programs seem to lack. Your support of my proposal would benefit the emotional well-being of Boston's immigration communities as well as provide them a sense of belonging to our country.

Statement of the Problem

Beginning with the circumstance, immigrants are forced to leave their home countries either due to war, persecution, environmental disasters like earthquakes or severe weather. They endure dangerous border patrols, risky journeys, and witness the immigrants die trying to flee to safety. Upon their arrival to the United States Immigrants endure more physical, emotional, and psychological trauma at the hands of our people. These experiences create a unique set of psychological challenges that include anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder which often go untreated due to systematic barriers placed on immigrants.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 35 million people worldwide are displaced due to conflict and violence, and the number of immigrants continues to grow due to climate change and geopolitical instability between countries. Immigrants often experience traumatic moments such as dangerous border crossings, persecution from their home country, and shelter from severely underfunded refugee facilities.

Upon their arrival to the United States, they are immediately faced with more borders, language barriers, cultural isolation, and systematic inequalities based on their status. A study published called Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health found that over 50% of refugees and asylum seekers experience significant amount of mental health challenges, and only a fraction of them receives the care they need.

Boston's immigrant population reflects the reality of the ongoing situation, immigrants are vital to the Boston community, they contribute significantly well to Boston's economic and cultural foundations. The immigration community is diverse and consists of people from Haiti, Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and more. Boston's immigrants enrich its community and economy, and make it prosper and thrive diversely.

Based on my research, a lot of mental health facilities seem to lack the unique necessities immigrants such as multilingual personnel who can communicate with patients who have little to no grasp of English language and personnel who have limited understanding culturally of immigrants.

These missing essentials are contributing factors of increasing depression, anxiety, and PTSD of immigrants. Without intervention, it can hinder an immigrant's ability to thrive in life, it may affect their family members, communities, and perhaps other immigrant communities in Boston.

Statement of Request

We request a grant of \$200,000 dollars from the Boston Foundation to initiate SIEM. The fund will support and develop the comprehensive therapy program designed to meet and exceed the expectations of Boston's immigration population and their mental well-being. The funding is essential to address a critical gap in mental health services and provide much-needed support to individuals and families who have endured significant trauma and displacement. The funds will be used to:

- **Personnel Costs:** \$120,000 will be used to hire licensed physiologists and therapists, a community outreach coordinator, and a program manager. These professionals will ensure that therapy sessions, workshops, and outreach efforts are delivered with the highest level of cultural competence and effectiveness.
- **Resource Development:** \$30,000 will be used to create multilingual educational materials and digital resources in main languages spoken by Boston immigrants (English, French, Spanish, etc.) to ensure that participants can access information and services in their native language.
- **Community and Outreach Events:** \$20,000 will be used to support efforts to build trust and awareness through partnerships with local immigrant organizations, cultural centers, and media outlets.
- **Facility and Operational Costs:** \$15,000 will be used to cover rental of therapy spaces, technology for telehealth services, and other operational needs.
- **Program Evaluation:** \$15,000 will be used to fund independent evaluation efforts to measure the program's impact, accountability, and success rate.

The funding will directly impact at least 150 immigrants in the program's first year through therapy sessions, workshops, and community outreach activities. The program aims to create a model for scalable, culturally sensitive mental health care that can be replicated into other cities of Massachusetts and possibly other cities in the United States with significant immigration populations.

SIEM's initiative aligns closely with The Boston Foundation's mission to promote equality, access, and opportunity for all residents. By supporting this program, the foundation will play a pivotal role in addressing one of the most pressing challenges facing Boston's immigrant communities today and possibly even more in 2025 due to the November 2024 electoral results. Regardless of it, we can create a future where every immigrant who comes to the United States feel supported, empowered, and integrated in every area of Boston's society and immigrant communities.

Your consideration of this proposal is not just an investment in the health of individuals, it is an investment in the well-being of Boston as a whole. Boston's economy is heavily prosperous due to the immigrant communities' contributions, but they cannot reach their full potential unless they are in good health physically and mentally. It is up to us and you to ensure we make immigrants of Boston and Boston as a whole a prosperous community, and a prosperous economy.

Description of Proposed Work

SIEM's initiative is designed to provide holistic approach to immigration mental health by combining therapeutic approaches, cultural integration resources and community outreach. The program will be set up based on the timeline phases over the course of one year.

Timeline Phases

- **Phase 1** (0-3 months): Program setup, hiring, resource development.
- **Phase 2** (4-12 months): Therapy sessions and workshops begin, outreach expands.
- **Phase 3** (12+ months): Program evaluation and scaling plans.

Below are the descriptions of what will be the foundation blocks of our therapy program.

Therapeutic Support

Therapeutic support is one of the main cores of SIEM's initiative. Our approach is grounded in trauma-informed care, which recognizes the pervasive impact of trauma and prioritizes safety, trust, and empowerment towards the immigrants and their mental well-being.

- **Individual Therapy:** Participants will receive one-on-one counseling tailored to their unique experiences and cultural backgrounds. Therapists will use techniques such as cognitive-based therapy (CBT) and narrative therapy, to help clients process trauma and build resilience against it.
- **Group Therapy:** Group sessions will provide a supportive space for immigrants to share their experiences, their feelings, build connections with their peers, and learn coping strategies. Groups will be organized based on language and cultural background to ensure comfort and accessibility.

Cultural Integration Process

Many immigrants struggle with cultural adjustment, which can exacerbate feelings of isolation and anxiety in immigrants. To address this, the program will offer workshops and resources focused on:

- Navigating U.S. systems, healthcare, educational facilities, and employment facilities.
- Understanding cultural norms and managing cross-cultural challenges
- Building practical skills like English language proficiency and financial literacy (U.S. Dollars)

Community Outreach

Effective outreach is essential to the success of the therapy program. We will collaborate with local immigrant advocacy programs, religious institutions, and cultural centers to identify participants and promote awareness of the program and its initiative. Outreach activities will include:

- Hosting community events to build trust and raise awareness about mental health resources to immigrant populations of Boston.
- Distributing multilingual flyers and digital materials through community networks
- Partnering with local media outlets to highlight the program and its benefits.

Measure of Project Success

To ensure SIEM's initiative achieves its intended goals, success will be measured through a combination of quantitative metrics, quantitative feedback, and impact assessments. These measurements will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the program's effectiveness and guide for future improvements.

Quantitative Metrics

Quantifiable data will track the reach and output of the program, offering clear indicators of its performance:

1. Number of Participants served

- Goal: 150+ participants served receiving therapy (individual and group) in the first year.
- Breakdown: 100 participants in individual therapy, 50 participants in group therapy sessions.

2. Number of Sessions conducted

- Goal: conduct a minimum of 300 therapy sessions over 12 months.

3. Workshop Attendance

- Goal: Deliver 10 Workshops with an average attendance of 20 participants per session. Workshops will focus on cultural integration, navigating U.S. Systems, and emotional resilience.

4. Community Outreach

- Goal: Host 5 major community events in collaboration with local immigrant organizations reaching at least 500 community members.

5. Resource Distribution

- Disseminate 1,000 multilingual educational brochures and digital toolkits to immigrants and their family members within the Boston area.

Qualitative Metrics

Qualitative evaluations will provide deeper insights into participant experiences and program impact:

1. Participant Surveys

- Participants will complete a pre- and post-program assessment surveys to determine what changes in mental health status, cultural adaptation, and overall well-being.

Key Metrics

- Reduction in reported symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD.
- Increase sense of belonging and community.

2. Focus Groups

- Small focus groups will be conducted quarterly to gather participant feedback on the program's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

Themes to explore

- Comfort with therapy format and environment.
- Perceived relevance of resources and workshops

3. Case Studies

- In-depth case studies of selected participants will illustrate individual progress and the program's overall impact on their lives.

Impact Assessments

1. Community Impact

- We will monitor changes in community health indicators such as increased use of mental health services by immigrants in Boston
- Evaluate feedback from partner organizations on the program's contribution to community and well-being

2. Scalability Assessment

- Determine the feasibility of expanding the program to additional areas of Boston's immigrant population
- Identify the necessary modifications for replicating the program in other cities in the US with large immigrant populations like California, New York, New Jersey, and more.

Evaluation Tools and Timeline

1. Data Collection Tools

- Surveys and Questionnaires (digital and paper-based).
- Tracking software for participants progress and session attendance.
- Qualitative coding software for analyzing focus groups.

2. Evaluation Timeline

- Quarterly reviews will be used to analyze progress and adjust as needed
- Annual Reports will be used to publish comprehensive reports that detail the successes, challenges, and lessons learned during the program.

Key Indicators of Success

1. Mental Health Outcomes

- Participants will report a measurable improvement in their emotional well-being such as reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression, and trauma.

2. Community Engagement

- Increase in participation in workshops and therapy sessions that demonstrate community trust and buy-ins.

3. Sustainability

- The program will secure additional funding and expand its reach, showing its value to funders and stakeholders

By combining quantitative metrics, qualitative insights, and broader impact assessments, SIEM will demonstrate its effectiveness in addressing the mental health needs of Boston's immigrant communities. This evaluation approach ensures transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Available Facilities

Boston Medical Center (BMC) – Immigrant & Refugee Health Center

- Location: Boston, MA
- Overview: BMC's Immigrant & Refugee Health Center offers a centralized location for immigrants and refugees to access a range of health services, including mental health support. The center is designed to address the unique needs of immigrant populations, providing culturally competent care.
- Facilities: The center includes private therapy rooms, group meeting spaces, and administrative offices, all tailored to support mental health services.

La Alianza Hispana

- Location: Boston, MA
- Overview: La Alianza Hispana is a social service agency dedicated to supporting Boston's Hispanic population. The organization offers various programs, including mental health counseling, and has a history of advocating for equal access to services for the Hispanic community.
- Facilities: The agency provides spaces suitable for individual and group therapy sessions, as well as community outreach activities.

Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center (RIAC)

- Location: Boston, MA
- Overview: RIAC promotes cultural, educational, and socioeconomic development within the refugee and immigrant community. The center offers comprehensive orientation and support services to assist newly arrived families in adjusting to life in Boston.
- Facilities: RIAC's facilities are equipped to host counseling sessions, workshops, and community events, providing a supportive environment for mental health services.

Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) – Immigration Services

- Location: Boston, MA
- Overview: ABCD offers a range of free immigration services through its network of neighborhood sites. The organization provides English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and other support services aimed at helping immigrants adjust to life in Boston.
- Facilities: ABCD's neighborhood sites include spaces suitable for educational workshops, counseling sessions, and community gatherings.

Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) – Center for Immigrant Health

- Location: Boston, MA
- Overview: MGH's Center for Immigrant Health fosters excellence in clinical care, education, advocacy, and research to improve the health and well-being of immigrants. The center serves the needs of both immigrant patients and staff, providing a range of health services, including mental health support.
- Facilities: The center includes clinical spaces designed to provide comprehensive health services, including private rooms for therapy sessions.

Personnel Qualifications

The success of SIEM's initiative will be dependent on assembling a team of qualified professionals in the psychology field with expertise in immigrant and refugee mental health. Boston is home to several esteemed institutions and organizations that specialize in this area. Below is a list of potential personnel with their occupations and specialties.

TBD

Budget

SIEM seeks \$200,000 in funding to implement the therapy program for Boston's immigrant populations. Below is the elaborated chart of the expenses and estimated costs for developing the SIEM therapy Program.

Personnel Salaries \$120,000

Licensed Therapists (2): \$90,000

- Each Therapist will focus on providing individual and group therapy sessions, with a specialization in trauma-informed care and cultural competence. This includes sessions for 150+ participants in the first year.
- Therapists will also contribute to the development of culturally tailored mental health materials and workshops

Community Outreach Coordinator: \$15,000

- Coordinators will be responsible for developing partnerships with local immigrant organizations, cultural centers, and media outlets to promote the program.

Program Manager: \$15,000

- Program managers will oversee the program, ensuring the milestones are met, resources are efficiently allocated, and the staff are supported in their roles.

Multilingual Resource Development \$30,000

Multilingual Materials: \$15,000

- Includes the creation and printing of educational brochures, guides, and therapy resources in key languages spoken by the Boston's immigrant communities such as Spanish, Haitian, Creole, Vietnamese, and Arabic.

Digital Content: \$10,000

- Development of online resources including video tutorials and mental health toolkits, accessible via user-friendly websites and social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, X, and more.

Workshop Curriculum: \$5,000

- Creation of culturally relevant workshop materials for sessions on navigating the U.S. systems, building financial literacy, and coping with cultural adjustment challenges.

Community Outreach and Events \$20,000

Outreach Activities: \$12,000

- Will include hosting community events to build trust and raise awareness about the program. These events will be held in collaboration with local organizations at cultural centers, places of worship, and public venues around the Boston area.

Advertising and Media: \$8,000

- Development of multilingual advertisements through local media channels (radio, newspapers, social media) to reach immigrant communities.

Facility and Operational Costs \$15,000

Facility Rent: \$10,000

- Will include leasing space for therapy sessions, workshops, and community events. Spaces will be located in accessible areas such as public transportation hubs, and include private rooms for therapy.

Utilities and Supplies: \$5,000

- Covers basic operational expenses including electricity, internet, and office supplies needed to support the system.

Program Evaluation and Impact Measurement \$15,000

Independent Evaluation Consultant: \$10,000

- An external evaluator that will assess the program's effectiveness through the participant's responses to an evaluation survey, focus groups, and data analysis. This ensures transparency and provides insights in areas that need improvement.

Data Analysis Tools: \$5,000

- Investment in software and tools for tracking participant progress and program outcomes.

Below is a simplified chart of the expenses and estimated costs for development the SIEM therapy Program.

Expense Category	Estimated Cost
Personnel Salaries	\$120,000
Multilingual Resource Development	\$30,000
Community Outreach and Events	\$20,000
Facility and Operational Costs	\$15,000
Program Evaluation	\$15,000
Total	\$ 200,000

Summary

SIEM is an initiative therapy program in response to critical mental health challenges faced by faced by Boston's as well as the entire United State's immigrant populated cities. Immigrants endure constant traumatic experiences in their home countries and during their journey's, followed by additional stressors upon resettling into a new country that is foreign to them. Cultural disorientation, language barriers, and systematic inequalities further exacerbate immigrant's reluctance to receive help for their mental well-being.

SIEM seeks to bridge this gap by providing immigrants with culturally sensitive, trauma-informed mental health services that restore and empower individuals to heal and thrive in their new environment. By combining one-on-one and group therapy with resources for cultural integration, SIEM aims to help participants rebuild their lives and foster a sense of belonging in their new environment. The comprehensive outreach strategy we have planned will ensure the program reaches the city's diverse immigrant communities, and will include an evaluation framework that will measure the impact and effectiveness of the therapy program

With the funding request of \$200,000, this program will serve at least 150 participants in its first year, delivering 300 therapy sessions and hosting workshops that address the unique challenges immigrants faced from their home country and their migration here to the US. The fund will support specialized personnel, resource development, outreach efforts, and program evaluation. By addressing a pressing need, SIEM will have the ability to create a scalable model for immigrant health care, both in Boston and beyond.

The initiative aligns with The Boston Foundation's mission to foster equity and access for all residents. By supporting this program, the foundation will play a pivotal role improving the lives of Boston's immigrant communities while promoting inclusivity, resilience, and social cohesion.

Conclusion

In Boston, immigrants contribute to the city's cultural and economic vitality, yet many immigrants face unseen battles as they navigate the complexities of trauma, displacement, and cultural adjustments upon their arrival to the United States. By empowering immigrants to heal and rebuild their lives, the initiative will also strengthen the immigrant community, making Boston a more inclusive, welcoming, and resilient economy.

The grant funding request of \$200,000 is not just an investment in mental health, it's an investment in equity, inclusion, community, and economic well-being. The funding will enable the program to deliver immediate benefit to the participants of the therapy program by laying out groundwork for scalability and impact of the program's outcome during a one-year period. Our goal based on the measurable outcome to serve a minimum of 150 participants and conduct 300 therapy sessions within a year will be determined by the program's measurable outcomes such as improved mental health, greater community integration, and increased access to resources. The outcome of the program's success will demonstrate its effectiveness and potential model for other therapy programs around Boston.

By supporting SIEM, The Boston Foundation could make a profound impact on the lives of Boston's most vulnerable residents and make a profound difference that could benefit Boston's immigrant community and its image. Together we can ensure that every immigrant in Boston and new arrivals feel supported and valued. We thank you for considering the proposal and look forward to the possibility of collaborating with us on this potentially transformative initiative.

Works Cited Page

- “Center for Immigrant Health.” *Massachusetts General Hospital*, www.massgeneral.org/children/immigrant-health. Accessed 2 Dec. 2024.
- “Easily Find Immigration Therapists in Boston, MA.” *Immigration Therapists in Boston, MA / Mental Health Match*, mentalhealthmatch.com/browse-therapists/massachusetts/boston/immigration. Accessed 5 Dec. 2024.
- “Global Trends in Forced Displacement – 2020.” *UNHCR US*, www.unhcr.org/us/media/global-trends-forced-displacement-2020. Accessed 2 Dec. 2024.
- “Home.” *Action for Boston Community Development*, bostonabcd.org/service_categories/immigration/. Accessed 2 Dec. 2024.
- “Immigrant and Refugee Health Center.” *Boston Medical Center*, www.bmc.org/immigrant-refugee-health-center. Accessed 2 Dec. 2024.
- Kirmayer, Laurence J, et al. “Common Mental Health Problems in Immigrants and Refugees: General Approach in Primary Care.” *CMAJ: Canadian Medical Association Journal = Journal de l’Association Medicale Canadienne*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 6 Sept. 2011, pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3168672/.
- “La Alianza Hispana Empowers Latinos through Technology.” *LULAC*, lulac.org/programs/technology/la_alianza/. Accessed 2 Dec. 2024.
- “Mental Health and Forced Displacement.” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-and-forced-displacement. Accessed 4 Dec. 2024.
- “Refugee and Immigration Assistance Center (RIAC), Boston.” *Office for Gender Equity*, oge.harvard.edu/links/refugee-and-immigration-assistance-center-riac-boston. Accessed 2 Dec. 2024.