

# RFP for Community PFAS Outreach Grant

## 2. Organization info

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### Contact Information

Submitting Organization : Catholic Multicultural Center  
Street Address : 1862 Beld St  
City : Madison  
County : Dane  
Zip Code : 53713  
Email : laura@cmcmadison.org

**Is your organization a Madison-based community group or non-profit with a Federal Tax ID number?**

Yes

**If yes, please list your Federal Tax ID Number**

Federal Tax ID Number : 39-0824008

**If no, please list the name of your fiscal sponsor and their Federal Tax ID Number**

## 3. Application questions

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### Application Details

Name of Project/Program/Initiative : CMC and WEL BIPOC/low-income PFAs Exposure Outreach  
Amount requested : 7000  
Anticipated start date : 01/02/2024  
Anticipated completion date : 06/30/2024

**What does your proposal seek to accomplish? Include a description of your project(s), how funds will be spent, and information about if this is a new initiative/program/activity or if it is supplemental to an ongoing effort. Response limited to 500 words (10 points).**

The goal of this proposal is to raise awareness in BIPOC and low-income communities on the dangers of PFAS and the steps to reduce exposure. This will be achieved via:

1. Developing culturally adapted infographics and handouts;
2. Outreach to at least 200 individuals in-person and 2,000 via social media;
3. Hosting one bilingual community event focusing on conservation and PFAs education.

This joint project between the Catholic Multicultural Center and Wisconsin EcoLatinos will take place from January to June 2024.

CMC and WEL will utilize existing programming as a natural fit to bring PFAs education and empowerment to vulnerable populations and EPA-designated Environmental Justice Communities. CMC serves hundreds of BIPOC, immigrants, and low-income people each month through community-based and social service programs. CMC has nearly 10 years of experience bringing environmental education and stewardship opportunities to these populations. WEL was created in 2020 with the sole focus of engaging, educating, and empowering Latinos to learn about and take action on environmental issues, and has directly reached more than 500 individuals.

Many PFAs available educational materials are wordy, complex, and do not meet the needs of CMC and WEL participants. Staff will develop clear, concise handouts featuring PFAs sources, exposures, and protections in English, Spanish, and potentially other languages, using credible sources like PHMDC and the DNR. The agencies will act as trusted messengers to distribute information to program participants including the CMC food pantry, daily free meal, ESL classes, and twice-monthly WEL outreach events. The agencies will create a bilingual social media tool kit and conduct a campaign via social media, local print, and radio media with a potential to reach 3000+ BIPOC community members.

With its experience and existing connections to target populations, CMC and WEL staff are well prepared to coordinate this initiative. However, additional staff support is required to carry out this work. WEL will hire a bilingual intern to implement the PFAs outreach initiative: researching, developing, and distributing materials, conducting the media campaign, and helping to host an educational event in Spring 2024, when people are outdoors and looking for activities to do. Advertised as such, an event centered on PFAs is not likely to attract the target populations. However, a fun, family friendly outdoor event with food creates a platform for CMC and WEL to engage up to 40 participants in PFAs education. The event will be modeled after a successful Learn to Kayak event at a Madison lake this year.

The largest proposal budget item is partial salary/employment costs for the intern, seven weekly hours during the project period. Funds are requested for the community event including food, materials, and logistic costs such as canoe/kayak rental. Funds are budgeted for printing and advertising including one to two radio shows and professionally printed hardcopies of educational handouts. Finally, funds will support agency staff time and operational costs in carrying out this proposal, from managing the intern, assisting with PFAs educational materials distribution and in-house printing, and coordinating and implementing the special event.

**What experience does your organization have with serving underserved or marginalized communities? Please include the specific communities that you have worked with. Response limited to 100 words. (10 points)**

CMC serves low-income people, people of color, and immigrants from 50 plus countries around the world. CMC offers food pantry, free meal, English classes, family programming in Spanish, immigration legal services, and bilingual community environment program. WEL offers environmental education, advocacy, and outdoor activity opportunities with the goal of empowering the Latino community to take action against environmental hazards affecting our community. WEL has successfully completed projects in air quality awareness and mitigation exposure with the Latino Academy of Workforce Development and is involved with climate change perception and stormwater management projects with the University of Wisconsin Madison.

**Please describe how the actions and activities you are planning will have an impact. This may include identifying systemic inequities and how your program plans to address or mitigate the impacts of those systems. Responses limited to 250 words (10 points).**

According to the DNR, PFAs have been detected in Madison and Dane County in soil, municipal wells, surface water, and groundwater. CMC and WEL is already effectively engaging the populations most impacted by PFAs exposure and must alert these communities about this hazard. We are confident we can effectively reach constituents, encourage behavior change, and reduce exposure.

This proposal follows a model CMC successfully implemented in 2021 to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates among vulnerable populations. Interpersonal interactions are one of the most effective ways to get messaging to immigrants and marginalized groups who do not know about, understand, or trust mainstream information sources. Materials and messaging will be tailored to the target population – concise, clear, and in their first language – and delivered by a trusted messenger (CMC/WEL staff) who will offer constituents the opportunity to discuss PFAs and answer their questions. The expected outcome is that at least two hundred individuals will have the tools they need to act by directly receiving information on PFAs hazards, sources of exposure, and how to protect oneself.

CMC and WEL will strive for the big-picture outcome of increased awareness of this issue within our community and influencing decision-makers so that in the future, no one need face unjust exposure to this toxic chemical in our environment. The educational event in spring will have the impact of providing dozens of marginalized community members with the foundation to know how to participate in and conduct PFAs advocacy to local government and corporations.

**Please identify the geographic or identity groups, within Madison, on which your project will focus and how you identified this target audience/population? Responses limited to 250 words (10 points).**

The target population is CMC and WEL program participants, with whom the two agencies already have well-established contact and trust. This includes the populations most likely to be harmed by PFAs exposure, specifically BIPOC, low-income and/or immigrant people who live near contaminated waterways.

WEL has the potential to reach a statewide audience through its social media, though the focus of this proposal is the greater Madison area with an emphasis on South Central Madison. This area where the CMC is located is at high-risk for PFAs exposure: a densely populated urban area with a high BIPOC population containing two contaminated waterways – Wingra Creek and Lake Monona.

Amid this geographic focus, this proposal aims to serve low-income people and immigrants. The health of our local waterways has been a concern that CMC and WEL have actively been trying to address for a decade. Unhealthy waterways mean adverse health effects for the people that CMC and WEL serve. CMC sees the high potential for contaminant exposure among its low-income clients, including those who fish for food and those who buy secondhand goods or continue to use items beyond their safe use period because they cannot afford to replace them. Language and cultural barriers make it difficult for news of the presence of PFAs and its damaging effects to reach immigrants. One of the strongest ways to spread news to this underserved community is through word of mouth from a trusted messenger with the capability to communicate accurately in their first language.

**Please describe your experience working with your target population in past projects. Response limited to 250 words (10 points).**

Since 2014, the CMC has offered a bilingual (English/Spanish) community environment program aimed at including marginalized people in environmental stewardship. During that time, the program has reached over 300 people, more than half who are Spanish-speakers. Water quality is an ongoing theme. Each year, CMC conducts an annual trash pick-up of Wingra Creek. The program began with a community-based installation of a large, educational rain garden on the CMC property engaging forty participants. Last summer, CMC offered a family-friendly "Wingra Water Walk" aimed at educating and engaging around water quality. Almost all participants were Latino. Activities on the walk included stream monitoring, a visit to a wetland, and talks on freshwater ecology, concluding at Lake Wingra with a picnic and a song about the plight of our water written and performed by a CMC staff member. This summer, WEL invited CMC to team up for a water-centered event during Latino Conservation Week. The Learn to Kayak event in Spanish helped overcome financial and language barriers so that more people could experience this marvelous way to enjoy Madison lakes. The event began with a talk on water quality and discussion of easy steps we can all take to promote the health of our lakes and streams.

Through all of its programming, CMC and WEL reaches thousands of low-income and immigrant individuals each year, from 600 immigration legal services program clients to hundreds of WEL outreach event participants to 500 food pantry households, of which 70% have a non-English first language.

#### **4. Thank You!**

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**Thank you for your application. You will be informed of our decision on August 25, 2023.**