

Ser Familia

Request for Funding

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Mission: Ser Familia's **mission** is to provide preventative family services and to equip Latinos with the tools, resources, and skills they need to move from crisis to thriving. By working with a historically disenfranchised population, Ser Familia advances equity for the Latino population through fair access to resources by enabling the ability to fully participate in community and civic life. Having the largest footprint of services for the Latino community, the organization is the leading agency **providing wraparound and comprehensive, multidisciplinary, culturally specific, and linguistically proficient social, family, and mental health services** to Spanish-speaking Latinos.

Organization Background: Since 2001, Ser Familia has focused on strengthening families through linguistically and culturally proficient services and helping to stabilize those that are struggling so all can ultimately thrive. Ser Familia bridges a gap in services in the Metro Atlanta area for Latinos by offering a continuum of **evidence-based programming** that address the unique challenges and situations that they face delivered by a fully bilingual staff originally from a variety of Spanish-speaking countries. The organization offers model programming garnering strong and consistent outcomes overtime to strengthen area Latino families.

Ser Familia currently has **several successful signature programs:** comprehensive and holistic Family Services, including Family Resource Centers at every site (FRCs are based on a successful national model program); case management; parenting and couples; positive youth development; mental health for all ages including young children; financial education and literacy; domestic violence; basic needs; legal; and educational. Ser Familia has been **recognized many times at the national level** for their services and model programming by several federal agencies, including SAMHSA, HHS, and Dept of Justice. They have received several **federal and state appropriations** (the only Latino Serving agency in GA to do so), and in 2022 received an **official US Congressional Commendation** for services rendered to vulnerable populations that was read aloud on the House floor and printed in the Federal Registry.

Overall, since March 2020 when COVID hit and in addition to traditional services, Ser Familia has **increased staff by over 100%** (from 22 to 45, plus 7 contractors) and served more than **18,000+ clients in 36 counties**, not including those served with food distribution. During this time, Ser Familia also distributed close to 1,000,000 pounds of food and served over 45,000 prepared meals. Other **COVID relief numbers/measures** include rental/mortgage assistance, legal help with housing and domestic violence, utilities assistance, diapers/formula/toiletries distribution, medical supplies assistance, and more totaling over \$3million (however about 40% was distributed to non-Latino families due to the fact that Ser Familia was able to route the money quickly and had a system in place to do so).

Traditional comprehensive family services were growing as well and unfortunately, the over 4000 individuals we saw a year were in a fragile state prior to the pandemic. That

number climbed to almost 7000 served in 2020 and to over 8300 in 2022. ***In 2022, Ser Familia served over 750 clients from Dekalb County alone.***

Programming: Ser Familia’s wraparound family programming provides for the mental health and wellbeing needs of Latino youth and their **families through a comprehensive family plan model** that addresses needs of all members through assessment, case management, and provision of services. A combination of therapeutic methods is used as deemed appropriate by clinical staff. These methodologies address the trauma that each has faced so that they can recognize it, know how to handle it, and implement appropriate tools and strategies to heal and become productive members of their communities.

Each family member (above the age of 12) is assessed to determine further needs including mental health, domestic violence, family, parenting, and financial assistance. Moreover, Ser Familia supports families that require help registering for SNAP, Medicaid or free and reduced lunch. Ser Familia is a Gateway Center, able to complete applications similar to a DFCS office.

Ser Familia is **continually shifting and developing programming to meet the changing needs** of its clients. Currently, the organization now has many successful programs, including:

- Wrap-around, comprehensive, and holistic Family Services
- Case management*
- Mental health counseling for families, couples, and youth, including play therapy in children’s therapy rooms (all ages), EMDR, and more
- Parenting and family programming that strengthen the entire family unit
- Positive youth development programming - practical tools to develop leadership skills, strengthen communication skills, and address mental health, trauma, and healing
- Financial education and literacy
- Domestic violence services
- Emergency and basic needs (food, shelter, health, utilities help, transportation, and learning loss)
- Legal assistance
- Educational supports – started right before the pandemic and is now permanent – including school registration, tutoring, lessons, parental supports, explanations, access to technology and supplies, and more
- Family Resource Centers which provide tailored community and family services and are located within the community itself.

**Case management services* also increase family access to, and utilization of, informal and formal community supports. Access to these community supports is imperative to relieve the isolation and hardship many Latino families live in.

Currently, **all Ser Familia locations offer their full list of programs and services**, with some needing heavier resources for particular program areas than others.

Ser Familia has strong, viable services to assist families on becoming self-sufficient. In order to provide an equitable recovery, Ser Familia, the leading multi-disciplinary organization providing comprehensive support services to Latino residents in the state, will provide wraparound family services to those still struggling from the pandemic’s fallout. Our plan serves the population with evidence-based and proven effective culturally competent and linguistically proficient services so that they are able to have a full recovery and contribute back to their communities.

The Need: (throughout the Metro Area and in DeKalb) Research demonstrates that the Atlanta Metro area **lacks culturally and linguistically proficient services to assist families toward self-sufficiency.**

The **Hispanic population** in metro Atlanta nearly doubled from the 2000 census to the 2010 census (a jump of over 93%). Further, according to the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Latino population will increase by 153% by 2040, suggesting that needs will continue to increase significantly. Statistics continue to paint a grim picture. About 33% percent of Latinos are uninsured, a rate much higher than Georgia's average (14%) and Latinos nationally (18%). [Source: UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute. 15 Facts about Latinos in Georgia, 2022] (GA ranks in the top 7 states for uninsured). School dropout rates, domestic violence incidences, and suicidal ideations in the Latino population are the highest of any racial/ethnic group. Ser Familia has seen a dramatic uptick in need for services – **domestic violence calls have risen over 110%** during the pandemic (more than double the number of pre-pandemic cases), with **child sexual abuse calls and referrals skyrocketing a startling 231%.**

Major studies indicate that Latinos both young and adult present **a disproportionately higher rate of food insecurity, housing insecurity, and mental health issues** and other negative outcomes associated with social determinants of health than other ethnic communities due in part to acculturation stress, feelings of isolation, trauma related to the immigration experience, and other stressors. Major studies also indicate that Latino both youth and adults present a **disproportionally higher rate of mental health issues** than other ethnic communities. **Disparities** between Latinos and youths/young people of other races appear to be larger in GA than nationwide. Other major studies demonstrate that Latino youth and adults have a much higher rate of mental health issues due in part to acculturation stress, poverty, feelings of isolation, trauma related to the immigration experience, and other stressors. Even with a large Latino population and these very alarming statistics, family, social, and mental health services in Spanish are **almost nonexistent** in many counties and locations, including the metro area.

There are **less than 80 licensed bilingual mental health counselors** in the metro area to serve close to 1,000,000 Latinos, with the population growing rapidly, creating a **severe shortage of providers** at crisis levels. To make matters worse, local DFCS and CSB offices and domestic violence safe houses have no capacity to serve Spanish speaking families and address all the barriers they face in a culturally or linguistically proficient manner. Sadly, **GA ranks as one of the worst states for access** to mental health care for any racial/ethnic group. If Latino families are to reach independence, trauma-informed and culturally proficient services and resources must be readily available.

Partnering with **Emory University in 2021**, Ser Familia **surveyed Latino families** on the effects of the pandemic and their experience. What Ser Familia found was alarming, but not surprising. Many reported economic and food insecurity, and **every client family Ser Familia saw had experienced at least the loss of one source of income, many families had lost all sources.** Further evidence of grim impact included:

- **80%** had significant frustrations due to COVID-19 (uncertainties, changes, anxiety, etc);
- **60%** did not have enough money to pay rent;

- **50%** did not have enough money to put gas in the car;
- **48%** identified as an essential worker;
- **53%** did not have enough money for food;
- **38%** did not have enough to access transportation, and
- **24%** did not have a regular place to sleep or stay.

Additionally, research shows us that Latinos tend to **drop out of school several grades before** their white and African American counterparts, well prior to when dropout rates are typically calculated, so rates are MUCH higher than they appear. Additionally, Latino serving agencies are afraid that due to COVID-19 many students will **drop out of school and not go back because families need them to work**. According to the Georgia Department of Education, only 76% of Hispanic students in Georgia graduated. A large number of our Latino children live in economically disadvantaged households where parents have low schooling and face important language barriers. (Upwards of 2/3rds).

Funding Request: The **ultimate aim** of services is to increase protective factors in Latino families which build family assets and resiliency, keeps families out of the system, and makes them stronger and more independent in the long run.

Ser Familia's work centers on **comprehensive, wraparound services** that include the entire family. This funding will provide Ser Familia resources to offer their holistic services based on a strong case management model to struggling DeKalb students and their families.

DeKalb families have come to Ser Familia throughout the pandemic with the related needs for housing and food stability, but also for complex mental health needs, family services with navigation, and youth development.

Services provided under this funding and through robust case management by Ser Familia will center on the following for students at Cross Keys:

Ser Familia's recently instituted **SPARCS (Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress)** which is provided in-person and will be offered on-site at the school or in Ser Familia offices (with transportation provided) through trained facilitators and clinicians. Groups will meet at least once a week, after school for mental health counseling and support. Academic supports will also be available for students on an as needed basis once they are assessed and treatment plans are drafted. This will serve as the basis for a Cross-Keys Partnership similar to what Ser Familia is already offering in Marietta City Schools.

Ser Familia ensures that all programming is based on **Best Practices in the field and innovative care**. Ser Familia's array of culturally sensitive, evidence-based engagement services and tools provide a **safety net** for vulnerable and disenfranchised Latino families in Metro Atlanta. Operating from solid and proven program models, Ser Familia's track record **demonstrates strong systematically evaluated outcomes** through its continuum of services.

BUDGET AND NUMBERS

Outlined below is the total amount of funding requested for **SPARCS (Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress)** programming at Cross Keys HS and budget information outlining Ser Familia's typical full project costs.

DeKalb County Budget				
	<u>Cross Keys HS Work</u>	Year 1	Year 2	2 year TOTAL
	School Based Counselor and SPARCS programming (portion of salary)	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 70,000
	2nd facilitator for SPARCS (need to have two based on regulations)	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
	SUB TOTAL	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 80,000
Payroll/Fringe	Payroll Taxes & Fringe Benefits @25%	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000
	TOTAL	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 100,000

Ser Familia's TYPICAL Full Project Costs				
	<u>Cross Keys HS Work</u>	Year 1	Year 2	2 year TOTAL
	School Based Counselor and SPARCS programming (portion of salary - Full Time Salary is \$75,000/yr typically)	\$ 35,000	\$ 36,750	\$ 71,750
	2nd facilitator for SPARCS (need to have two based on regulations - Full Time Consultant is typically ~\$20,000/yr)	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,250	\$ 10,250
	SUB TOTAL	\$ 40,000	\$ 42,000	\$ 82,000
Payroll/Fringe	Payroll Taxes & Fringe Benefits @25%	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,500	\$ 20,500
TOTAL SALARY	SUB TOTAL	\$ 50,000	\$ 52,500	\$ 102,500
Programming	Materials/supplies	\$ 2,500	2500	\$ 5,000
	Occupancy (Rent & Utilities)	\$ 3,000	3000	\$ 6,000
	CROSS KEYS HS SUB TOTAL	\$ 55,500	\$ 58,000	\$ 113,500
	Indirect costs (10%)	\$ 5,550	\$ 5,800	\$ 11,350
	GRAND TOTAL	\$ 61,050	\$ 63,800	\$ 124,850

The **benefits** to the county center on families regaining stability and being able to work toward self-sufficiency so they are contributing back to the community and tax base and not a burden on multiple systems.

Our programming is based on **successful and proven effective programming**, which all focus on social determinants of health (SDOH), strong family units, and model services following Best

Practices. The **outcomes** of these programs include higher productivity, lower treatment costs, less suffering, reduced premature mortality, AND more cohesive and independent families. SDOH guide educational, economic, mental health and wellbeing, and overall family outcomes, and **Ser Familia's programming addresses all of these areas**. Therefore, stronger, healthier, and more resilient individuals and families emerge, ensuring a vibrant and flourishing community and economic sector.

Ser Familia planned service delivery and detailed scope:

- Anticipated number of children to receive services.
 - 30 Children served in 2 SPARCS groups composed of 15 each
 - 13 sessions per fifteen-member group for a total of 26 sessions.
 - 10 individual mental health sessions dedicated to priority individuals from the SPARCS participants or other internal school referrals.
- Anticipated number of service hours per child.
 - All youth participating in SPARCS receive approximately 20 hours of services.
 - Students with mental health referrals may receive up to 5 additional sessions individual sessions.
- Anticipated number of (SPARCS) sessions
 - SPARCS participants should expect 26 sessions in total
 - Individuals with mental health sessions should expect approximately 50 hours of combined individualized sessions.
- Administrative fee and cost notes. – We would love to include a 10% admin fee but could not fit it into the \$50,000/year budget. A full-time mental health counselor costs close to \$70-75K plus fringe.
 - Ser Familia will use matching funds to cover the typical 10% administrative cost associated with service delivery.
 - Typical costs for full-time mental health counselors average \$70-75K in addition to fringe benefits.
 - Ser Familia will cover the remaining costs with internal or partner funds that have already been earmarked.