

FY2024 Buncombe County Strategic Partnership Grant Report

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|--|-------------------------|---|
| Organization Name: | Pisgah Legal Services | |
| Project Name: | Justice For All Program | |
| Reporting Quarter: (Check one) | | Quarter 1 (July 1, 2023 - September 30, 2023) |
| | | Quarter 2 (October 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023) |
| | | Quarter 3 (January 1, 2024 - March 31, 2024) |
| | X | Quarter 4 (April 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024) |

Narrative summary of grant related activities

Please provide a brief summary (no more than 1500 characters). You may attach supplemental documents if needed.

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| Quarter 1 | Pisgah Legal Services has provided legal services to 581 families, helping 1,180 people in the first quarter of the grant. In the 47 cases closed for Buncombe County immigrants this past quarter, we helped provided representation to 25 clients to help them obtain legal status and/or employment authorization. The vast majority of the 581 cases Pisgah Legal provided assistance on this quarter were for help with immigration-related issues. However, the remaining cases are for immigrants seeking assistance with issues across Pisgah Legal's areas of practice, including housing, health, domestic and interpersonal violence, employment, and consumer law. In addition to the 47 cases closed for Buncombe County immigrants we helped to obtain legal status or employment authorization, Pisgah Legal closed 60 cases in which we helped immigrant clients secure driver's licenses or identification cards, prepare wills, avoid eviction, obtain child custody and child support, escape violence, protect essential property, stop illegal creditor harassment, and otherwise manage their limited resources. |
| Quarter 2 | Pisgah Legal Services has provided legal services to 647 families, helping 2,071 people in the two quarters of the grant. Of the 26 cases closed for Buncombe County immigrants this past quarter, 57% were related to obtaining legal immigration status and the other 43% of cases were related to obtaining employment authorization. For the cases related to employment authorization, 37% specifically obtained employment authorization for domestic violence victims. In addition to working cases directly for our clients, Pisgah Legal's immigration team along with the assistance of a local pro bono attorney have two pending cases against the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services related to U Visas. Only 10,000 U Visas are set aside each year, which are for immigrant victims of crimes who have cooperated with law enforcement. Currently, the waitlist is 15 years and growing. There are, however, interim benefits written into the regulatory framework that immigrants should be receiving if they get an interim review designation. These benefits have been taking 5 years or longer. This practice is unreasonable and harming Pisgah Legal's clients (among all immigrants on the U Visa waitlist) and causing more work for our attorneys, which is why they sued. In December, the government agreed to begin giving most of the 175 clients in one of the lawsuits their interim benefits, which is great news for our clients and offers positive signs for U Visa petitioners across the country. |

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| Quarter 3 | <p>Pisgah Legal Services has provided legal services to 757 families, helping 2,377 people in three quarters of the grant. Pisgah Legal closed 60 cases for immigrants during the quarter, providing representation and/or advice on a wide range of legal issues. We closed 12 cases for Buncombe County immigrants related to immigration status or employment authorization, and provided representation to help 10 of those clients obtain employment authorization or legal status. Pisgah Legal also provided legal advice and obtained work authorization for an additional 43 Buncombe County clients whose cases remain open as they await further progress on their path to legal status.</p> |
| Quarter 4 | <p>Pisgah Legal Services provided legal services to 844 immigrant families, helping 2,681 people during the grant period. Pisgah Legal closed 85 cases for immigrants in Buncombe County during the quarter, providing representation and/or advice on a wide range of legal issues. We closed 36 cases for Buncombe County immigrants related to immigration status or employment authorization and provided representation in 34 of those cases. Pisgah Legal closed many cases this quarter for clients who sought asylum after fleeing Afghanistan in 2021. Several of these parolees had been working with U.S. forces before the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and had been severely wounded prior to evacuation. As part of Pisgah Legal's Afghan Asylum Project, dozens of volunteer attorneys assisted these clients with complicated, time-sensitive applications under a special program. These clients will now be allowed to remain in the U.S. permanently and apply for their family members, who remain in Afghanistan, to join them here.</p> |

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Progress toward annual goals

| | | Actual Results (Enter Data) Please only include new data for the specific quarter | | | | Progress toward Annual Goal |
|---|-------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Measure | Annual Goal | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 | |
| # of Buncombe County people (immigrants and their children) helped by the Justice for All program | 1390 | 1880 | 191 | 306 | 304 | 2681 |
| # of Buncombe County cases handled (closed and pending) | 485 | 581 | 66 | 110 | 87 | 844 |
| # of Buncombe County cases handled (closed and pending) through this grant | N/A | 203 | 23 | 39 | 30 | 295 |
| # of closed Buncombe County cases supported through this grant | 32 | 11 | 9 | 4 | 13 | 37 |
| Success rate obtaining a positive outcome | 90% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 98% | 99.50% |

Comments:

Note: Pisgah Legal identified errors that were made while revising project goals during contract development. Pisgah Legal's second goal ("Number of Buncombe County cases handled (closed and pending) through this grant = 485") was calculated incorrectly. The goal of 485 would have been a more appropriate goal for "# of Buncombe County cases handled (closed and pending)" rather than the percentage attributable to Buncombe Strategic Partnership funds. We have added a row (row 15), above, to show the discrepancy of those two numbers. Since Strategic Partnership funds account for 35% of the Buncombe County JFAP project budget, the amount supported through the grant would be 35% of that number (row 16). Cases reported in the first quarter include cases for immigrants opened prior to the grant period that remained open during the quarter, as well as cases opened during the quarter. Subsequent quarters will only include new case numbers.

During the quarter, we closed a case for Juan (name changed), a young man who had come to the United States at the age of 17 to live with a family member. Juan had been abandoned by both of his parents in his country of origin and had been raised by his grandmother. After an uncle of Juan's was killed and the murderer was sent to jail, the murderer's family began to make threats to Juan and other members of his family. Juan's U.S. family member brought him to Pisgah Legal to see if there were any immigration remedies to help him. Pisgah Legal Attorney Jacob Oakes believed that Juan had two potential pathways to help him remain in the U.S. First, he helped Juan's family member secure legal custody of him so that Juan could apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) status, which would allow him to work eventually apply for a green card. Given the unpredictable nature of immigration cases, Attorney Oakes also helped Juan apply for asylum, for which Juan was also eligible to apply and which could potentially be the best legal remedy for his situation. Pisgah Legal will often provide at least advice on multiple potential immigration remedies to increase a client's chances of success. While waiting for an asylum decision, Juan's SIJ status was approved, allowing him to apply for a green card. Before his green card was approved, Juan's asylum application was also approved. Juan ultimately received a green card, allowing him to live and work in the U.S. permanently.

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Use of funds to date and any budget considerations

| Spending Category | Starting Budget | Total Spending (Enter Data) | | | | Amount Remaining |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| | | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 | |
| Personnel | \$ 64,000 | \$ 16,000 | \$ 16,000 | \$ 16,000 | \$ 16,000 | \$ - |
| Training | | | | | | \$ - |
| Supplies/Materials | | | | | | \$ - |
| Meetings | | | | | | \$ - |
| Equipment/Furniture | | | | | | \$ - |
| Printing/Marketing | | | | | | \$ - |
| Licensing/Memberships/Dues/Subscriptions | | | | | | \$ - |
| Client Support | | | | | | \$ - |
| Contracts | | | | | | \$ - |
| Professional Services | | | | | | \$ - |
| Insurance and Bonds | | | | | | \$ - |
| Building Maintenance | | | | | | \$ - |
| Total | \$ 64,000 | \$ 16,000 | \$ 16,000 | \$ 16,000 | \$ 16,000 | \$ - |

Comments: