

SAFE Community Grants Request for Proposals

Timeline

Conference call

Vera will hold an optional conference call for organizations interested in applying for the SAFE Community Grants. The calls will be held on **March 5, 2020 at 12:30-1:30PM PT/3:30-4:30 PM ET (in English) and on March 6, 2020 11:30-12:30pm PT/2:30-3:30 ET (in Spanish)** to share more information about Vera's SAFE Network, universal representation, the RFP process and to discuss the solicitation and answer questions. Please [RSVP](#) in order to receive dial-in information and to register for updates about this RFP.

Application

Vera is seeking proposals from grassroots organizations and advocates committed to mobilizing and centering immigrant communities in furtherance of SAFE pilot programs and in support of universal representation.

Application materials must be submitted by **Wednesday, March 25 (11:55 pm PST)** via Submit at the following link: <https://vera.submit.com/>

Submit allows you to upload and attach files in Word, plain text, PDF, and video formats.

Applications can be submitted in your preferred language.

We anticipate that applicants will be notified by **Monday, May 25, 2020** of the outcome of their application.

Background: The SAFE (Safety and Fairness for Everyone) Network

In November 2017, the Vera Institute of Justice launched the [SAFE \(Safety and Fairness for Everyone\) Network](#) by convening a group of 11 diverse cities and counties that committed public funding to provide legal representation for immigrants in their communities facing deportation.

Despite the high stakes of detention and deportation, immigrants facing deportation do not have the right to a public defender if they can't afford a lawyer. Yet the government trying to deport them always has counsel. As a result, most people fighting for their lives in immigration court—including 70 percent of people in detention—navigate the complexities of immigration law alone. And legal representation makes a significant difference. Immigrants who are represented are 3.5 times more likely to be released from detention on bond and up to 10 times more likely to establish a right to remain in the United States. Much like a public defender model in the criminal justice system, the universal representation model advanced by the SAFE Network envisions a system where **everyone** facing deportation has access to due process and a fair day in court even if they cannot afford an attorney, regardless of income, race, national origin, or history with the criminal justice system. For more information about the universal representation model, please see [The Case for Universal Representation](#). These principles establish a “North Star” that sets a course toward fully funded and sustainable programs in individual jurisdictions

whose success will help strengthen the case for a federally recognized right to government-funded counsel in deportation proceedings for everyone.

With increased attacks and threats facing immigrants and families, the communities in the SAFE Network are dedicated to the goal of providing publicly funded lawyers for people facing deportation. Under the SAFE Network model, Vera provides one year of funding to programs in jurisdictions that sign up and expert technical assistance to help design, launch, and administer these programs. Vera also partners with legal service providers to deliver ongoing substantive, procedural, and programmatic technical assistance to the Network and build a community of practice. As SAFE enters its [third year](#), we have successfully launched 18 such programs in 11 states. Through this work and the ongoing efforts of Vera to advance universal representation, we have [shown](#) that publicly funded counsel programs are an effective and common-sense approach to protecting immigrant communities from detention and deportation and to standing up to harsh federal enforcement. This work has also contributed to what is now a rapidly growing national movement for universal representation across the country.

Our experience in developing and growing the SAFE network has underscored the significance of grassroots organizing and advocacy, and the importance of the voices of those most impacted by harsh immigration enforcement. **Vera recognizes and is committed to strengthening our model by helping support and build capacity for a network of grassroots organizations, community organizers and advocates committed to mobilizing and centering immigrant communities in furtherance of SAFE pilot programs and universal representation.**

Vera now invites applicants to join this growing partnership in localities across the country to advance and expand deportation defense programs.

Funding Opportunity: Inaugural Round of SAFE Network Community Grants

The SAFE Network will now issue its inaugural round of community partnership grants to support local advocacy that advances universal representation in recognition of the following dynamics:

- (1) While immigrants are under attack, community-based organizing has fueled critically needed progressive state and local policies, like pilot universal representation programs across the country that ensure inclusive and safe communities. While protecting immigrants and their families from draconian federal immigration policies, they are also building a national movement for radical change at the federal level. Strengthening the community-based organizing power for universal representation is critical for the future of immigration reform and the universal representation movement;
- (2) Increased collaboration between city and county governments, legal service providers, and advocates and organizers representing directly impacted communities will sustain and expand universal representation beyond pilot programs;

- (3) The most ambitious efforts to implement and expand universal representation have been driven and sustained by locally rooted organizing and advocacy and coalitions that create momentum for reform and hold local government accountable for progress;
- (4) The movement for universal representation requires greater public awareness and mobilization around the need and impact of legal representation for immigrants and greater collaboration with other movements for immigrants' rights and justice reform;
- (5) Community-based organizations serving immigrant communities benefit from opportunities to share strategies and be connected to the SAFE Network and broader movement for universal representation; and
- (6) The voices of impacted immigrant communities are critical to our efforts to advance a system of justice that is informed by the wisdom and experience of immigrant families, organizers and grassroots organizations.

To elevate community-based organizing for universal representation, Vera is awarding an inaugural round of grants to grassroots, community-based and/or statewide advocacy organizations based in and/or serving jurisdictions within Vera's SAFE Network. These organizations must be committed to advancing publicly funded legal representation for every person facing deportation, regardless of income, race, national origin, or history with the criminal justice system. These grants are designed to support work that will:

- (1) Build capacity for a powerful grassroots network led and informed by communities directly impacted by immigration policies in support of universal representation; and/or
- (2) Change the public narrative and elevate public awareness around detention, access to counsel, and universal representation; and/or
- (3) Foster collaborations and broad coalitions around universal representation; and/or
- (4) Build public and governmental will to advance and expand universal representation; and/or
- (5) Elevate the voices of those most impacted so that the lived experiences of immigrant families contribute directly to the movement for universal representation; and
- (6) Use a racial equity lens in organizing and advocating for universal representation for immigrants.

Grants may not be used to support or oppose candidates for office. However, funds may be used to educate or brief elected officials about key issues, convene impartial candidate forums to address immigration and detention, or other forms of public and policymaker engagement. Grant money might also be used for a broad range of additional activities that support the above goals, including, but not limited to grassroots events (rallies, community forums, educational events); grassroots lobbying, the creation and dissemination of materials; public art initiatives, salaries of personnel who manage or direct activities meant to achieve the goals of the grant; production of audiovisual content, community initiatives, storytelling initiatives, trainings, organizing, and canvassing.

Applicants are eligible to apply for grants from \$15,000 to \$30,000 to support work over an eighteen-month period (July 2020-December 2021). Through a competitive selection process, Vera will fund organizations representing communities in Vera's SAFE Network in the first round. **The funding is intended to support community-based organizing in support of universal representation programs.**

The grant will entail a close relationship with Vera's SAFE Network team, and grantees should plan to make use of Vera's existing research on support for and impact of representation and help identify opportunities to fill data and knowledge gaps. We will convene grantees via teleconference throughout the grant period to share strategies, tactics, and challenges and receiving additional training. Grantees will also be a part of Vera's annual SAFE convening.

Grantee Expectations

This grant is designed to support multiple levels of involvement of the grantee:

- **Community-based organizing:** A SAFE community grant can be used for grassroots organizing, mobilization of immigrant communities and allies, communications, storytelling, coalition, grassroots lobbying and advocacy work to sustain existing funds in SAFE jurisdictions, support expanded funding and/or regional expansion, promote a "universal representation" vision of deportation defense; or foster partnerships and collaboration and build support for the right to counsel for immigrants. Organizations able to do advocacy can target elected officials, the public, legal community, and in limited circumstances, candidates for office. Any candidate engagement must be conducted in keeping with the requirements of Section 501(h) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- **SAFE Network Community:** Grantees will become part of the community of the SAFE Network and the broader community of leaders in this space, including government leaders and champions of the program and the legal services providers that provide the critical representation locally. The SAFE Network and broader community will help build capacity and foster relationships and collaboration among groups, best practices for organizing and advocacy, and partnership among groups working toward universal representation across the country. The experience will include a limited number of meetings via phone or video and at least one (1) in-person convening, which will involve the entire SAFE Network.¹
- **Support from Vera:** We envision a close partnership between Vera and the grantees. Vera's team, including advocacy, communications, programmatic, and research staff will be available to answer questions, address obstacles, identify or support media opportunities, support your work, strategize around filling data or knowledge gaps, and facilitate connections with others in the field. We can provide presentation materials,

¹ Travel to the convening will be reimbursed by Vera outside of the partnership grant.

factsheets, talking points, identify stakeholders for coalitions, and other resources using our repository of research on access to counsel and representation, and help identify and support strategies to update policy-relevant data, when possible.

- **Direct Lobbying:** Vera’s primary purpose for these grants will be community-based organizing, though we will consider funding projects that include lobbying activities. Activities, including preparation activities, that constitute lobbying as defined by Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, must be itemized in the budget.

Eligibility

Organizations based in and/or serving SAFE Network cities and counties are eligible and encouraged to apply. Community-based organizations are strongly preferred. Organizations that do not directly represent or work with directly impacted individuals and families will not be considered. However, note that we are seeking a broad and diverse array of applicants and project proposals. If you are interested in applying but unsure of eligibility, we strongly encourage you to submit an application and/or reach out to us with any questions.

SAFE Network jurisdictions include:

- Atlanta, Georgia
- Austin, Texas
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Chicago, Illinois
- Columbus, Ohio
- Dallas, Texas
- Dane County, Wisconsin
- Denver, Colorado
- Long Beach, California
- New Haven, Connecticut
- Oakland/Alameda County, California
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Prince George’s County, Maryland
- Ramsey County/St. Paul, Minnesota
- Sacramento, California
- San Antonio, Texas
- San Francisco, California
- Santa Ana, California

Who Can Apply

Eligible applicants are organizations that have a demonstrable history of representing, serving, and working to protect immigrant communities at the state and/or local level and whose primary work is focused on grassroots organizing.

We will consider applications that include partnerships between two organizations, including groups working across SAFE jurisdictions in the same state and groups working to expand programs or build greater partnership or synergy between advocacy movements. Each partner organization is eligible to receive a maximum grant of \$30,000. A maximum of two (2) organizations can enter into partnership. Applicants must be located in States, Districts, or Territories of the U.S.A., and must commit to:

- Achieve clear and demonstrable progress toward increasing public awareness, capacity-building, and support for universal representation. This might be measured in press coverage, owned and earned media, public opinion change, public commitments or statements from civil servants, number and type of events held and the target audiences that are reached, growth or development of local coalitions or issue campaigns, people mobilized or trained, or concrete policy and practice change. Applicants should be prepared to indicate how they will measure this progress in their grant proposal.
- Ensure that impacted communities are active participants in the advocacy efforts taking place and playing key roles.
- Participate in the SAFE Network and community of practice, which will include Network sharing opportunities, regular check-ins and meetings with Vera staff, webinars and trainings, and one in-person convening (location TBD) with travel funded.
- Use storytelling, public opinion, research, and data in service of public education, advocacy, narrative shift, and building public and governmental will for universal representation programs.
- Complete one short interim report on the work that funds are supporting.
- Complete a final report that summarizes impact, challenges, and lessons learned.
- Grant Vera permission to publish blog posts, fact sheets, talking points, profiles and other resources related to the work funded by the partnership grants.

How to Apply

To apply, navigate to the application page linked above at Submit and click on “Apply” on the upper right-hand side of the screen.

Application Components

The application consists of the following components:

- 1. Applicant Profile**
- 2. Proposal**

3. Budget Detail and Narrative

Each of these components is described below.

1. Applicant Profile:

You will need to complete a form on Submit that provides basic information about your group(s) or organization(s), including name; city/town, county, and state where you are located and where you plan to work; contact information of the point person for the application; the amount of funding requested; and a brief summary of the specific efforts or initiatives to be supported by this funding.

2. Proposal:

Your proposal should include the following:

- a) A description of your group(s) or organization(s), its mission, and the qualifications and experiences (formal or informal) that speak to your ability to achieve the goals of mobilizing, organizing, and advocating for universal representation, making data and knowledge widely available, changing the public narrative about immigrants, detention, and access to counsel, and/or building partnership and collaborations with legal services and broader immigrant rights and criminal justice movements as well as legal services organizations.
- b) A description of the work that these funds will support (please note whether this will support existing work, new collaborations, expansion or broadening scope);
- c) The specific strategies or activities you will engage in with the support of these funds over what time period, and any specific opportunities during the grant period (e.g. local budget cycle, gaps in grassroots organizing power in the jurisdiction, political climate, elections, etc.);
- d) How you will measure progress achieved by your work;
- e) How you will work in partnership with other organizations or entities, and whether you have a history of collaboration with those partners;
- f) What support from Vera would be most helpful in reaching your goals, including research, data, communications, and trainings.

Please upload a written summary (no more than 10 pages, using a 12-point font of your choice, double-spaced with one-inch margins) or no more than 15 minutes in Video format. Acceptable file formats include PDF, Word, and Video formats.

3. Budget Narrative

You will need to upload a budget narrative on Submit. Acceptable file formats include: Video, PDF, Word, and Excel. Below is an example of a budget narrative.

Your budget should display a clear link between the specific project activities and the proposed budget items and explain how the applicant estimated and calculated costs.

Review Process and Notification

Applications will be reviewed by Vera staff as well as identified experts in the field. We may follow up with questions about the proposal. We anticipate notifying applicants of the outcome of their applications by **May 25, 2020**. Please email safe@vera.org with questions.

Terms of Solicitation

Vera has the right to amend or cancel this solicitation at any time. Vera reserves the right, at the time of evaluation of any application, to request any additional information that it deems necessary. Vera further reserves the right to reject any or all applications after evaluation, and to be the sole judge of the merits of those received. Vera will not be responsible for late or incomplete applications. Any applications which do not comply with this solicitation may not be considered. Vera will not return any materials it receives and will not reimburse applicants for any costs incurred in developing an application.

Name of Organization	
Date	

Budget Narrative Example

Purpose: The budget narrative example may be used as a guide to assist you in the preparation of your budget narrative. You may submit your budget narrative using this format or in the format of your choice.

PERSONNEL EXPENSES:

SALARIES (by staff member, including title and FTE)

Staff Member	Job Title	Annual Salary	FTE%	Annual Fringe	Total

FRINGE COSTS (please specify how they are calculated):

OTHER THAN PERSONNEL EXPENSES (OTPE):

(The categories listed below are illustrative, not exhaustive. You may add additional categories as necessary. Be specific in describing how costs are calculated or determined.)

- **Overhead** (*rent, utilities, etc – you can also break out each item*)
- **Travel** (be specific with number of trips to each destination, meals, lodging, transportation, number of miles (roundtrip), and reimbursement rate)
- **Interpretation/Translation**
- **Supplies**
- **Insurance**
- **Consultants/contracts**
- **Other**

Explain how the listed personnel and other expenses support your project activities:

