

OUTREACH INCENTIVE GRANT FUNDING: END-OF-YEAR PROJECT REPORT

Title of Proposal: Immigration Legal Literacy: Empowering the Community One Person at a Time

Name: Karla McKanders

Project Date: Spring Semester of 2014

Additional project support received from other university or external sources:

Source

Lincoln Memorial University, Duncan School of Law
Centro Hispano of East Tennessee
University of Tennessee, College of Law
Estefania Chavez, UT Law Third Year Student

Amount/Title

Professor and Student Attorneys Volunteers
Volunteer administrative Assistance, Logistics, Interpreters
Matching Grant for \$1,100
Independent Study during Spring 2014

Please use this sheet to answer each of the following questions about your project (1-2 pp total)

1. **ASSESSMENT:** How did this project document or assess its engagement with the community?

Through the *Immigration Legal Literacy Project*, the UT Immigration Clinic was able collaborate with *El Centro Hispano of East Tennessee* (Knoxville) to provide free legal immigration consultations to the Latino and immigrant community in Knoxville and the surrounding areas. The legal consultation clinics helped empower the foreign-born population by giving individual legal consultations which informed the clients on legal immigration issues affecting them and then referral of the clients to organizations that provide attorneys at a reduced rate or *pro bono*. The Clinics were held on Saturdays in January through March 2014. The clients would call *Centro Hispano* to set up an appointment, would come into the Saturday morning clinic and would meet with immigration attorney and law student volunteers to seek advice on immigration issues. The attorneys would advise the client on legal remedies that may be available to them and provide them with referral resources if they needed further legal advice. During the legal clinics, quantitative data were collected to assess the impact of the project.

2. **PARTNERSHIP/RECIPROCITY:** How did the university and community work together?

In collaboration with *Centro Hispano* the University of Tennessee College of Law's Immigration Clinic was able to reach its ultimate goal to begin to understand the legal needs of immigrants in Knoxville. In particular, *Centro Hispano* was key in providing administrative assistance and help with the logistics of the clinics. *Centro* was instrumental in providing access to the affected communities who needed legal consultations. In particular, in meeting with *Centro*, we discussed how to best advertise the legal clinics to reach targeted audiences and how to overcome issues of trust in the immigrants interacting with volunteer immigration attorneys and law students. Through the collaboration, we were able to have our clinics at *Centro Hispano* and our last clinic at Lonsdale Elementary School where there is a significant population of Latino immigrants in need of immigration consultations. In addition, through the collaboration, we were able to engage in targeted outreach to WKZX 93.5 FM, a Latino Radio station, to advertise the legal clinics to the Latino population in Knoxville. The community's familiarity with *Centro Hispano* as a reliable organization that helps the community provided the attorneys and student volunteers' access to the targeted populations. UT's Immigration Clinic was able to leverage its resources in terms of access to *pro bono* attorneys and law students to provide necessary legal support to deliver the consultations to the community. UT's *Latino Law Student's Organization, Enlace*, was able to provide law student interpreters and volunteers for the Saturday clinics.

3. **BENEFITS:** What were the benefits (University/community) of this partnership?

A number of benefits resulted from the partnership. First, we were able to reach out the Latino community that *Centro Hispano* has already established a relationship with through the services they provide to the community. Second, our partnership with *Centro Hispano* provided us with a facility to host our Saturday clinics that created a friendly and safe environment for the clients. Overall, the biggest benefit to the partnership developed with *Centro Hispano* is that we were able to provide free immigration legal clinics to the foreign-born population in Knoxville and the surrounding area and provide law student exposure to legal immigration issues.

4. SHARED DECISION-MAKING: Did the community have a "voice" or role for input into this project?

Throughout the development of the project as a whole we met to ensure efficiency and success. *Centro Hispano* provided input from where the clinics should be held, keeping in mind the needs of the clients, and finding different volunteers needed to host the clinic. *Centro Hispano* ensured that we had proper interpreters for the clients and attorneys, as well as, provided volunteers for childcare for the parents while they met with attorneys. Additionally, *Centro Hispano's* Program Director, Nijole Vileikis, volunteered to assist us with the logistics of the clinics through scheduling appointments, handling logistics and checking the clients into their appointments.

5. SCHOLARSHIP: Are there any examples of faculty scholarship that will be informed by this project?

The quantitative information collected will be used to tailor future programs to the specific needs of the immigrant community in Knoxville. A brief report for Knoxville will be produced inform future clinics as to the types of immigrants present and the corresponding legal services the immigrants are seeking. In addition, the participants in the program from the volunteer lawyers, community activists, and law students were all informally surveyed. This information will be used to improve future immigration clinics. A proposal to a conference will also be prepared and submitted. Based on the findings, the Immigration Clinic will pursue funding for future clinics.

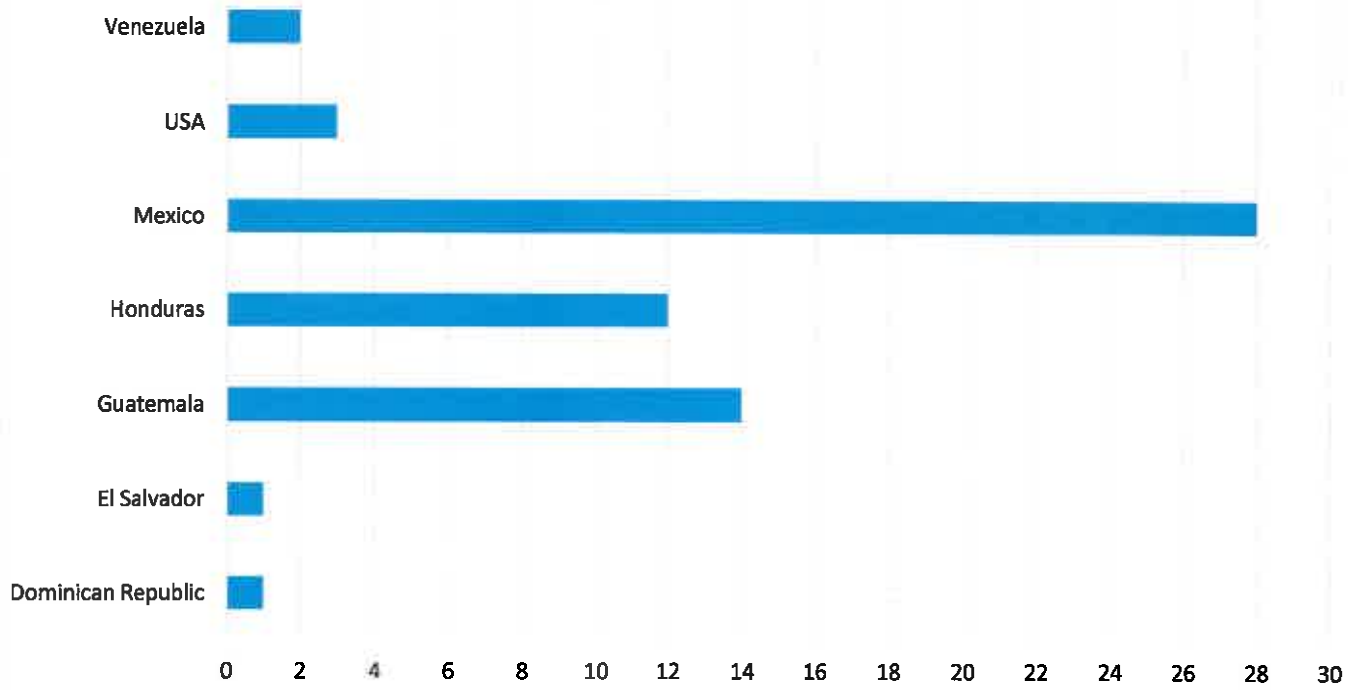
6. CONCLUSIONS: What conclusions and best practices can be drawn from the partnership?

The partnership with UT's Immigration Clinic and *Centro Hispano* was a great benefit to the Latino community in Knoxville. The clinic reached out to both undocumented and documented immigrant populations. Approximately, 55 clients, including families, received free immigration consultations from the Saturday legal clinics held in the month of January, February and March 2014. Moreover, the legal advice provided through the clinic has exceeded expectation by allowing some clients to continue their legal case outside of the clinic, either by being referred to the University of Tennessee Immigration Clinic or by continue to meet with Lincoln Memorial University Duncan School of Law School Professor Barbara Szveda and other non-profit legal organizations. Through the clinic we did not just simply provide legal advice on that particular day, rather we provided resources and referral information for those who have an immigration relief available. The legal clinics were able to respond to the community's need for understanding of how to address their immigration status and pathways to legalize their status. The growing foreign-born population in Knoxville is in constant need of educational programs and clinics so that they can be advised of their rights. Additionally, these clinics have provided law students interested in immigration law with the opportunity to engage in the interviewing process with firsthand involvement with clients, to learn more about immigration issues faced by the growing Latino and foreign-born population in Knoxville, and interacting with community attorneys. One of the biggest obstacles that we faced was getting enough community attorneys to volunteer for the clinics. In the future we will definitely need to develop a new strategy to increase and encourage the involvement of community attorneys. However, our great engagement of the law student body, both at the University of Tennessee College of Law and Lincoln Memorial University Duncan School of Law, leads us to believe this obstacle might decrease once law students transition into licensed attorneys practicing in the area of immigration law.

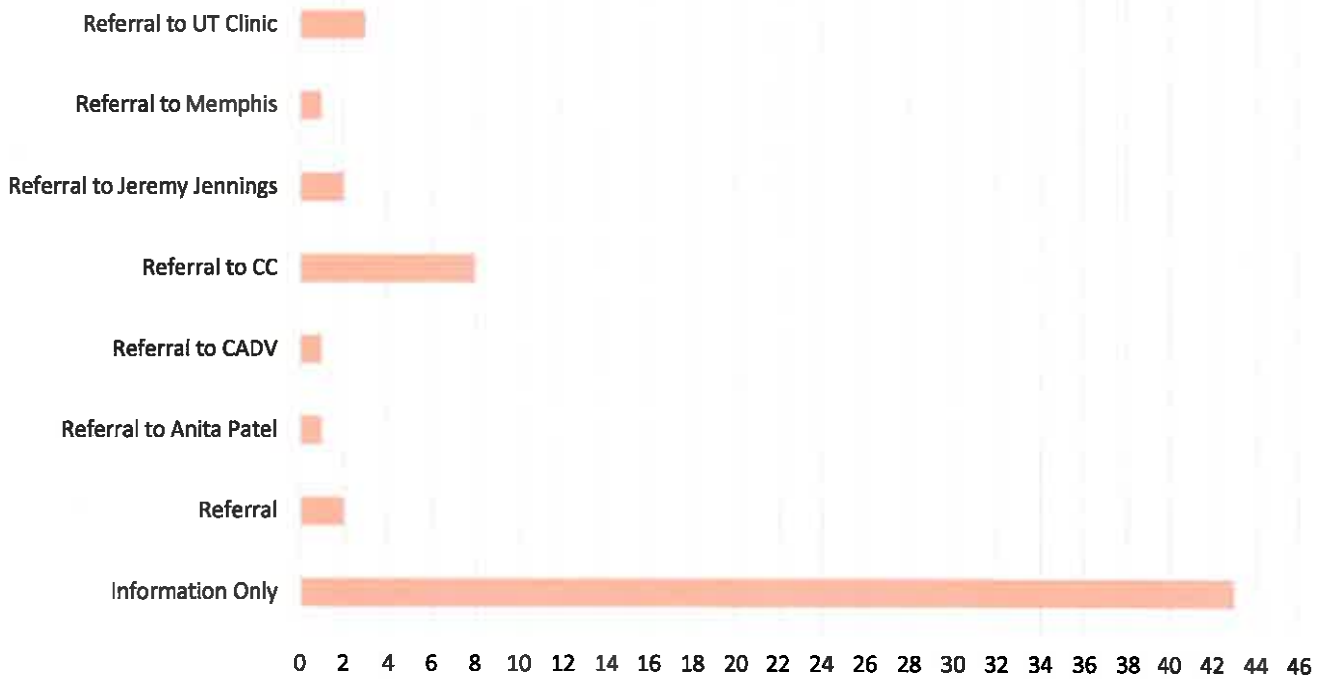
7. FUTURE PLANS: What are the future plans for this partnership?

In the future we will continue to provide immigration literacy clinics to the Knoxville foreign-born community. We aim to host at least one immigration clinic per semester. This will allow us to focus our efforts on increasing the participation of volunteer students, attorneys and clients. Additionally, we will continue our very productive partnership with both *Centro Hispano* and Lincoln Memorial Duncan School of Law. In our efforts to ensure success in the future we will need to keep in mind the funding necessary for advertisement and building rental, using to the maximum the free resources available to us as a partnership such as social media and facilitates. Above all, we certainly believe that word of mouth will be our best ally in the process, and given the excellent results of the past clinics we do not foresee lack of clients as a problem. The goal is to empower law students to become informed citizens and competent lawyers who will give back to their communities and become compassionate citizens of the State of Tennessee, the nation and the world as they learn to interact with cultures that are different from their own.

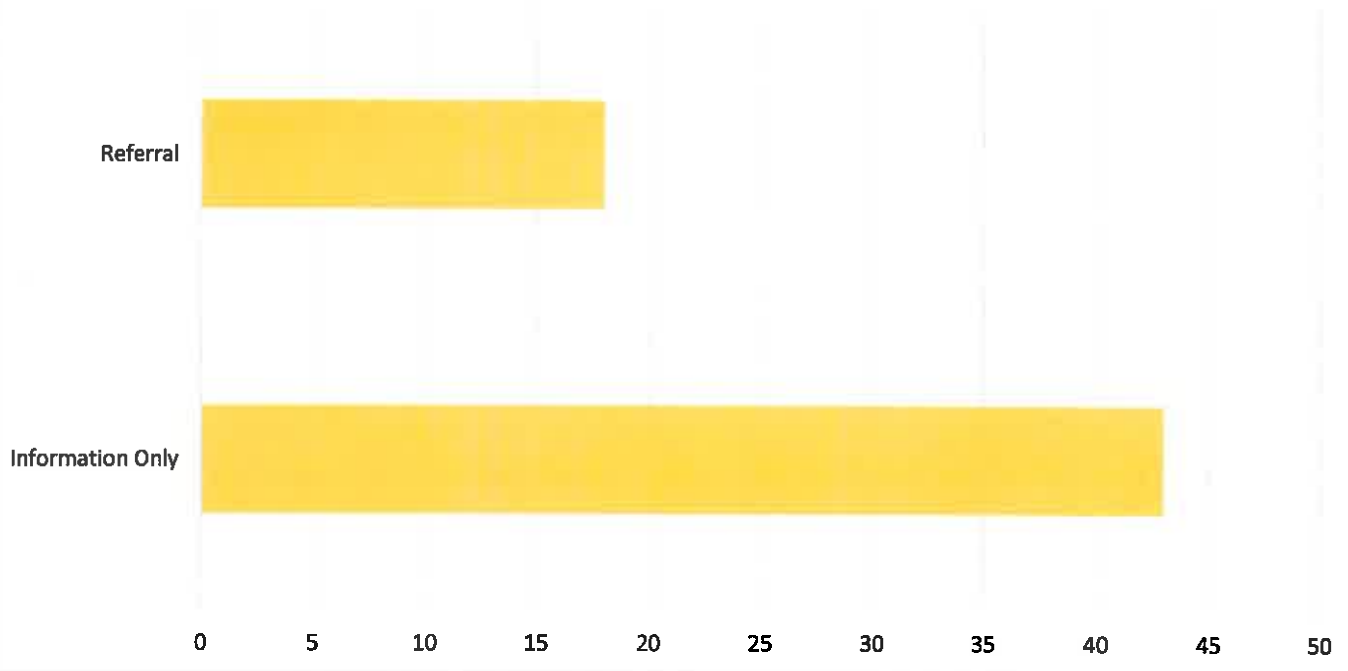
Nationality



Form of Assistance



Form of Assistance 1.2



Type of Immigration Relief

