

## **BRIDGESTONES AMERICAS TRUST FUND GRANT 2015**

(Ashli, Sophie, Abbey, Tyler, Mitch)

**Our organization is:** Nashville International Center for Empowerment

**National?** No

**Local?** Yes

### **SECTION ONE**

**Who may we contact about this application?**

**First Name:** Kathy

**Last Name:** Edson

**Contact's Email Address:** kathy@empowernashville.org

**Phone:** 615-315-9681

### **SECTION TWO**

**Organization Information:**

**Organization name:** Nashville International Center for Empowerment

**Country:** United States of America

**Street Address:** 417 Welshwood Dr.

**Apt./Suite:** Suite #100

**City:** Nashville, TN

**ZIP Code:** 37211

### **SECTION THREE**

**We consider contributions to a variety of causes and organizations. Categories we consider regularly are listed below. Please select all that apply to your organization or program.**

Education: Youth Development Program

### **SECTION FOUR**

**Tell us about your organization.**

**What are some of the key accomplishments of your organization? (5000 characters)**

The Nashville International Center for Empowerment (NICE) was officially founded in 2005 as the Sudanese Community and Women's Services Center, and renamed NICE in 2010. Since its founding, the organization has served over 15,000 people from 72 different nations, predominantly in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. NICE is run by a Sudanese refugee who struggled in his resettlement due to educational limitations that he faced in his home country. The organization establishes "long-term independence" for refugees, specifically through teaching English literacy and securing employment for refugees to cultivate self-sustainable lifestyles for them in Nashville; a federally appointed home for incoming refugees. NICE's programs serve as an effort to lower the local poverty rate and encourage national integration as more refugees enter the United States. NICE strives to maintain and improve the quality of this service through funding for their many education driven programs and initiatives.

NICE served 2,290 total refugees during the 2014 fiscal year, providing service in the following ways:

- 720 Education program students, with 95% improving their grades as a result.

- 115 Teachers were educated via Culture Exchanges.
- 336 Health program participants, of which 97% decreased their glucose level/blood pressure, and 72% moved closer to a healthy BMI.
- 201 Refugees were resettled in 2014.
- 224 Refugees were placed in jobs.
- 426 Clients were served via the immigration program.
- 228 Refugees served through the Refugee Integration Support and Empowerment (RISE) program, which offers Tennessee Childcare Provider Training and CPR/AED certification, professional degree evaluation, a driver's license training course, and English language programs.

The funding that NICE receives determines the amount of refugees the organization serves and upholds the quality of their service. A grant from Bridgestone would help NICE expand its budget to accommodate new refugees settling in Nashville each day.  
(2,010 Characters)

**What are the key objectives of your program? (5000 characters)**

NICE's overarching goal is to empower refugees, their families, and communities. The organization's program components are designed to address barriers and advocate self-sufficiency within the ethnic community. This process involves providing legal consultation, education, housing and food. We have required programs that assist with each step of the resettlement process. These provide comfort for incoming refugees, but also allow them to reach their full potential, to fully integrate the refugees into our society.

NICE focuses on refugee youth education through the Culture Exchange Series, which strives to assist local schools in integrating refugees into their curriculum, as many Davidson and Rutherford County schools are not fully prepared to support them. In addition, most refugee families are not familiar with the education system in the U.S., and experience difficulty interacting with the local school system and meeting its expectations.

The Culture Exchange Series provides workshops that are tailored to assist schools and refugees with this transition, by contracting with representatives from specific refugee communities to educate school personnel on their culture and refugee life. The program also promotes English Language Learning (ELL) and academic skills, which enable many refugee children to ultimately graduate from high school, attend college, and ultimately succeed in the community.

The program's success relies on NICE's leadership and ability to build strong community relationships, which is cultivated by a respectful resource center that has established networking partnerships in Middle Tennessee and across the country.  
(1,663 characters)

**Who would benefit from your program? (5000 characters)**

The funds for this grant will be used to support the Youth Education Program at NICE. This after-school and summer program targets supporting youth from limited-English speaking homes, specifically from the refugee and immigrant populations. The Youth Education program currently serves 30 students in youth programs found at Glenclyff and Antioch High Schools, 15 students at McMurray Middle School, and 110 students in the summer program, totaling 155 students served. The Youth Education program helps these students improve their academic performance. Youth program staff work closely with school personnel to target student needs. The purpose of this program is to promote English language learning and improve academic skills for youth who have had limited or interrupted access to education. The Youth Education program assists students in graduating and also encourages enrollment in higher education. The program provides a safe space for immigrant and refugee youth in an atmosphere where their individual abilities are recognized and celebrated. Youth Program staff teach and encourage students, develop confidence, and build leaders of the community.

The summer school program allows elementary and middle school students the tools to increase academic, social, and problem-solving skills through fun, educational activities. It is particularly important for the students to maintain exposure to educational content during the summer school break. The after-school and summer program provides ELL (English Language Learning) and academic help year round, raising student's chances of graduation and attending college. Continuing to serve the middle school population is extremely important as it helps ELL students catch up at an earlier age than high school students, increasing their opportunity to graduate high school and attend college.

The Youth Development program also offers a Culture Exchange program. The Culture Exchange program will also benefit from this grant. Our Culture Exchange program supports the teachers of new students arriving in schools that are not fully prepared for them. Many refugee children and families are not familiar with the education system in the U.S. and experience difficulty navigating their way through the system and understanding expectations of the school. The goal of the Culture Exchange Series is to provide school personnel with information they need to better serve and relate to refugee students and their families. We do this by providing cultural workshops that are tailored to the needs of the school. Each workshop includes representatives from specific refugee communities to educate school personnel on their culture, country and refugee life. -  
(4154 characters)

**What method(s) would you use to evaluate the program's success? (5000 characters)**

Program's accomplishments will be measured and considered a success based on the following outcomes:

- 85% increased fluency (accuracy or speed) demonstrated among elementary and middle school students who participate for the duration of the summer program on leveled passages using the Reading A-Z curriculum.
- 85% homework report improvement displayed among high school students in the after-school program who participate for the duration of the summer program.
- 85% improvement in grade average displayed among students who participate for the duration of the semester's after-school program.

Evaluation of after-school program students will be based on grades and homework completion. Upon enrollment, student's educational level will be assessed to determine areas of need. Improvement in homework completion will be based on student and teacher reporting.

Evaluation of the summer program will be based on pre and post-tests given to students upon enrollment and exit from the program, along with teacher evaluations.

## **SECTION FIVE**

**Help us understand the level of contribution you're seeking**

**What dollar amount are you seeking in relation to the total need? (5000 characters)**

Nashville International Center for Empowering is seeking \$46,542. This amount represents 30% of the existing Youth Education Program expense of \$155,140.

**How would your organization use Trust Fund money? (Be as precise as possible). (5000 characters)**

The trust would support the Youth Education Program at NICE to serve the students currently enrolled in the program as well as potential new students as they come into the Nashville area.

The goals of this program are to:

- Promote English Language Learning (ELL) and academic skills, especially for youth who have had limited or interrupted access to education, to enable them to graduate from high school and enroll in higher education;
- Provide a safe space for immigrant and refugee youth where their individual abilities are recognized and celebrated;
- Encourage and develop confidence in immigrant youth to become leaders in their community.

In terms of promoting English Language Learning (ELL), funds will support the program in order to increase elementary and middle school students' academic skills through educational, fun, social, and academic problem-solving activities. Funding will serve the refugee student population, who can work on their ELL skills in order to catch up to the overall population, leading to opportunities for high school graduation and higher education for each student. By providing opportunities for interactive tutoring in a personal environment, students will develop their confidence and character, strengthen leadership skills, and broaden their horizons regarding possible life goals and higher education. To maintain exposure to educational resources during the summer school break, a summer program will be available for all students to receive ELL and academic help year round.

In terms of safe learning space, NICE also plans on using funds to meet its ongoing need for classroom space. Funding will fill a need for expansion and attain more qualified full time staff to meet the increasing refugee populations' needs. NICE's program expansion allows the acceptance of more refugee students into the program while maintaining the safe atmosphere currently provided. Further, additional staff may conduct enrollment outreach, assessments, teach classes, and coordinate the class sites. This smaller tutor-tutee ratio and expanded classroom space will benefit the refugee children participating in the program by encouraging confidence in their educations and future life choices.

(2217 characters)

## **SECTION SIX**

**Please share some information to help us evaluate need**

**Current year's operating budget, if available: \$1,304,550**

**Tax-Exempt Status:** Yes

**Non-Discrimination:** Yes

## **SECTION SEVEN**

**Who are the members of your Board of Directors?**

**Member 1:** Nancy Dickinson

**Title:** Chair

**Member 2:** Amy Richardson MPH

**Title:** Vice Chair

**Member 3:** Pallavi Reddy

**Title:** Secretary

**Member:** Dominic Hong

**Title:** Treasurer

**Member:** Gatluak Thach

**Title:** NICE President/CEO

## **SECTION EIGHT**

**Please list other contributors and the amount of their donation**

**Contributor 1:** Dan and Margaret Maddox Foundation in 2015

**Amount of Donation:** \$20,000

**Contributor 2:** Tennessee Office of Refugees in 2015

**Amount of Donation:** \$7,264

**Contributor 3:** Ethiopian Community Development Council in 2015

**Amount of Donation:** \$25,000

**Contributor 4:** Community Enhancement Fund in 2015

**Amount of Donation:** \$10,000

**Contributor 5:** Nashville After-School Zone Alliance in 2014-2015 school year

**Amount of Donation:** \$15,000

**If benefits are involved, please describe the breakdown of deductible vs. non-deductible portions (5000 characters)**

At this time, the grant team is unsure of how to answer this question. Before submitting this grant, please review this question and answer it according to NICE's standards.

**I have questions. Please contact me before reviewing our applications: No**