

-Project Summary: Summarize the request in two sentences. Example: “\$10 million in state funds is requested to acquire land, predesign, design, construct, furnish and equip a new building for the ABC Community Group to be located in X.”

SEWA-AIFW, Inc. is requesting \$2,856,224.00 to acquire, redesign, furnish and equip a building that will provide a place of assistance, refuge, and overall growth for the South Asian communities. The location of the building to be acquired is 6645 James Avenue N. Brooklyn Center, MN.

Project Description: Describe the project in detail, including: scope, total cost (especially if different than the funding amount requested), key funding sources, etc. For new projects, identify the new square footage planned. For remodeling, renovation, or expansion projects, identify the total square footage of current facilities, the square footage to be renovated, and/or the new square footage to be added.

With the funds received we will be using a large portion to acquire a 16,861 square foot building. The goal of SEWA - AIFA is to eliminate the need of two separate buildings we are currently occupying, and combine all our services into one convenient location, that also allows us to continue to advance our services in the most efficient way possible for all parties. Within these walls we wish to build a refuge for those of the Southern Asian Community, providing services that aid against domestic violence, offer health services, including but not limited to a covid testing and shot distribution center, blood pressure level, glucose, and diabetes testing that many seniors and community members would otherwise not have access to, and even a community kitchen where we will continue to prepare and give meals to those in need. Currently the building is almost completely gutted, leaving us plenty of opportunities to design it to fit all current and future services we will provide. In scope here are the facilities and renovations we will be adding immediately to the building to assure we get the most use and it remains functional in our goal to support the Southern Asian community.

- A community kitchen/proper ventilation system One of the largest services we offer is our meal preparation and delivery services to those in need. With a large community kitchen and one place to hold all our resources, our program can continue to prosper and expand. The kitchen will need industrial sized appliances, such as proper refrigeration, storage, dishwashers, and counter spaces to hold the max amount of food possible. There are also specific cultural food preparation tools like rice steamers, idli maker (special grinder), chapati maker that are needed for certain foods normal community kitchens may not have. There is a portion of the building we have already dedicated for the use of the kitchen, and after cost analysis and research, it will come to around \$450,000 to build, and get the kitchen in functioning order. This is price is broken down by the following costs: Kitchen Construction- \$250,000- \$350,000 Kitchen Equipment- Can go as high as \$80,000 Food licenses, permits, and insurance-\$12,000 Food inventory, additional continuing costs to keep the kitchen running.

-Refurbishing bathrooms and adding additional stalls In the current floor plan there is about four bathroom stalls. We are looking to add in an additional bathroom and a breastfeeding station. For the bathroom stalls alone, prices can range between \$990 per stall to \$2650. This is not including labor costs, plumbing, or costs to extend walls if needed for more room. For the breastfeeding/lactation space, we are looking to do a modified version, that is cost efficient and can be moved around if needed. For the example I've attached you will see someone made this possible using a \$1000 budget, though

her materials weren't as sturdy as we liked. We are asking for \$2000 to see to it that we supply everything needed to make this a comfortable and relaxing space for the mothers and children. - A covid testing and vaccination center (This can include flu shots or other vaccinations) Price/funding will be determined at time of construction

- Media Center- for both our digital communication abilities and possible learning opportunities We would like to create a space that allows our communication team to have everything they need to be able to help spread our message and goals efficiently over the digital platform. Some things that will be needed but not limited to are listed here: cameras, computers, a digital monitor for large presentations, green screen, etc. While this room may be used by staff, we are also hoping to use it for educational purposes, whether to get kids more involved with technology they may otherwise not have access to or introduce adults to technology that may offer them more career opportunities.

-Meditation room Whether one needs a moment to relax and get away from the world for just a moment, is seeking an isolated place for prayer, or a place for potential free classes like yoga that the community can get involved in, the meditation room will be for all to enjoy. Not much furniture will be needed here, so the general costs will be included in the building renovation/construction costs.

- Create a permanent office for the volunteer doctors offering outpatient services and mental health services office In addition to hosting our once monthly health events, we would like to have a permanent office for our volunteer doctors to continue offering their outpatient services. In MN the average costs to fund and build an outpatient facility is about \$450 per square foot. This includes the hard costs, soft costs, furniture and equipment, design fees, FF&E fees, and contingency. Being a continuous service, we will need to factor in the future maintenance costs of equipment and medical supplies.

-Remodeling the entire office to make it a welcoming, cultural relevant setting. On average design costs alone fall between \$5000 to \$12000 depending on building, location, and how much we want to renovate in the building itself. Overall costs to renovate an entire building can fall anywhere between \$200-300 per square foot. This can include design costs, labor, materials, and can also depend on the location of the building. Because most of the renovations mentioned above already include the costs, this number will mainly be in focus to ensure our general office, lounge area, offices, and meeting areas offer the most inviting and safe-haven possible for the community members. Within these lounge areas, potential activities like youth tutoring sessions, and senior gatherings would be possible, encouraging the different communities to come together and find mutual enjoyment. I am also noting, we do not have the exact square footage per room yet, so we are estimating costs based on the overall square footage of the building rather than each independent room.

Project Rationale: Why is this project needed? Justify the request.

SEWA serves a community with origins in 7 Asian countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Ayana, and Sri Lanka diaspora). It is a challenge to directly survey the ethnic populations in the community but data from the 2015-2016 MN Dept of Education report on languages spoken in the home reported 8,173 students spoke a South Asian language; 97% of these students live in the seven-county metro area. Between 2000 and 2010, the South Asian population in Minnesota doubled. The 2010 Census recorded a total South Asian population just over 47,000. The significant growth of the South Asian population continues. According to the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS), Asian

Indians (alone) are the second largest Asian population in Minnesota, numbering 52,000 plus the most common languages, other than English, spoken by South Asians in the United States are Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Telegu, Nepalese, Karen, and Urdu. Local estimates are that 70,000 - 80,000 South Asians live in MN. The majority (75%) of South Asians in the United States are foreign-born. The immigration status of South Asian individuals is varied from spousal visas to U.S. citizenship.

Because most Asians in the United States are foreign-born, there have been a wide variety of resettlement experiences for South Asian immigrants to the U.S. in the different waves of migration from the 1890s to the 2000s. Additionally, work skills varied greatly in each wave. Though there are many who enjoy success, others with limited language or work skills, or those who are elderly have not had the same experience.

Currently 7.8% of the South Asian community in Minnesota lives in poverty. The diversity within the South Asian community presents challenges of differing languages and the limited availability of culture/language specific services. A lack of service providers who understand cultural proscriptions related to issues like food consumption or gender relationships. Project SAHAT found the three most cited barriers to seeking medical care were: inability to navigate the system or don't understand what services are covered (18%); health care providers do not understand South Asian culture (8%); lack health insurance (6%). Chronic health conditions (diabetes and heart disease) and mental health issues are prevalent in the community as its members are transitioning from cultural traditions of the country where they were born to the cultural norms of the United States. These transitions and changing norms affect family/marital relationships, health and wellness, economic wellbeing, and social interactions. A huge challenge for the community is helping its members to understand how centuries old cultural practices and behaviors need to change to eliminate the conditions that create violence and specifically domestic violence. The mindsets and roles of men and women will both need to change as men recognize and respect the value of women, and women are in a better position to achieve their full potential.

In 2004 Sewa-Aifw was created and formed to begin challenging the family values related to the concept of "shame" and the practice of shaming. The opportunity is that since 2004 SEWA has worked diligently to create systems change. The organization has developed a network of South Asian medical professionals that create access to health care for the insured and by working with their employer's/associates to provide pro bono/charity care to individuals who do not have health insurance. SEWA is providing a monthly health clinic in three religious organizations' space. Men are now serving on SEWA's board of directors. South Asians are recognized and included in research projects on the Asian community in Minnesota. A network of survivors of domestic violence, community members and health professionals has come together to work at the community level to directly address change in the legacy culture that creates violence in families and develop new community norms. Sewa's work to-date has built a network of individuals who are committed to total wellness within the Twin Cities Metro South Asian community. SEWA has been able to increase its funding to work with members of the South Asian community, yet flexibility is needed to address immediate needs of families, emerging issues, and organizational challenges.

SEWA-AIFW, Inc. is committed to bringing 'Total Family Wellness' to the South Asian community in Minnesota. Our vision: Envisioning a South Asian community that is healthy and violence-free, with self-determined women, engaged and supported elders and families.

The goal of Sewa-Aifw is to ensure that Seniors, children and families, especially low-income, isolated individuals, in the South Asian community can successfully navigate community systems and obtain culturally specific services that close the gap in health disparities. This wellness service center will assist them in continuing to address their health and human service's needs. 90% of seniors served live below the federal poverty level, and 99% of seniors served are considered vulnerable. SEWA expects that South Asian seniors served by this program will:

- 1) Better maintain their wellness due to services provided at the service center with free health clinics and culturally specific mental health services, where they can use their preferred language, and have access to culturally preferred/familiar foods through cultural pantry also at sight.
- 2) Have an improved sense of wellbeing due to more social interactions with peers on a regular basis, including group meetings for the LGBTQ+ community, domestic abuse survivors, youth and senior activities, and even men or women circles.
- 3) Live independently for a longer time in the home of their choice.
- 4) Become more engaged in the community and better understand community issues, through education and information provided in their preferred language. Activities that will be carried out in the Service center will include:
 - 1) Provide South Asian seniors with assistance in their preferred language, so they can learn about community resources and connect to needed services.
 - 2) Create, translate, and distribute language/culture-specific educational materials (e.g., elder abuse inside the home, legal and immigration issues - help and resources), brochures and host community events/activities all under one roof.
 - 3) Programs will include and coordinate monthly trips to Asian grocery stores, food shelves like CAPRIUSA, and in the summer farmers markets to ensure seniors have access to culturally preferred foods.
 - 4) Coordinate monthly trips to free health clinic that provide services out outpatient facility cannot.
 - 5) Stay in touch with seniors with chronic conditions and help them to remember keep up with health maintenance appointments and/or go to our free health clinic where they can complete testing for diabetes, hypertension, and heart health with no cost, and have a free consultation with a nutritionist who volunteers her time. Volunteer physicians will visit the center to address issues and refer to federally funded clinics.
- 6) Plan and implement monthly social and educational events for seniors
- 7) Encourage seniors and family members to find ways to reduce loneliness and boredom that some seniors experience.
- 8) Engage seniors in ethnic community events, so they can remain connected to their culture and community.

SEWA also provides programming at community locations, such as, senior housing communities, Hindi, and Sikh temples. With our new building, all this can happen at one location, giving the

community a safe place to come whether for assistance, a friendly place of gathering or even as a trusted messaging site. During this pandemic time South Asians had no testing or vaccination center for Covid. The community was calling Sewa-Aifw, and we were referring them to different sites making an already challenging time since our current office is located directly where the George Floyd riots were being held that much more difficult for the people. Because of these riots Sewa-Aifw had to step in and rescue women from shelters that were supposed to offer safety, instead bringing them to temporary hotels to ensure no one was harmed.

The trauma, uncertainty, and insecurity along with anxiety that brought isolation and depression to all our staff who were front line workers, still lingers and we wish to ensure they never have to be put in that situation again. Not just giving our employees, volunteers, and community a better sense of security. this location will allow us to continue to provide food, cultural pantry, and PPE material like the weekly 500 meals we provide to the community. As we continue to expand, so do our services, allowing us to assist and make a difference for a larger population.

Project Timeline: Describe the sequence of the project by month/year (predesign, engineering, design, construction etc.). Summarize other influencing factors or interactions (ex: coordinating the request with other projects).

We are wishing to begin as soon as the funding is available. Ideally, we would like to start the design process in January 2022 so we can get our whole organization into one location and begin helping the community at a larger scale.

During this time, we will have contractors come out to begin giving us quotes for the project and map out the best time to begin the work, as building material prices can play a huge role in how far we are able to stretch our budget.

Other Considerations: Is there anything else that decision makers should know about this project?

Sewa-Aifw is not just trying to find a new secure location for its community, volunteers, and employees, but also to meet the needs of any future projects and larger communities we wish to reach. Sewa-Aifw has partnered with MDH, and Hennepin County to bring trusted messages across our communities and TPT to translate and bring emergency preparedness to our communities, via social media. In 2019, SEWA reached over 8,106 individuals in 8 programs through social media activities. These programs included: Domestic violence prevention, injury prevention, different senior programs, youth leadership and sports, free health clinics, lead hazard education, census education/outreach, women's support, outreach during community events for all programs, and even training of professional's program serving low-income, vulnerable seniors, age 60 and older, in the South Asian community.

The Awaz program for example, seeks to bring total family wellness to seniors by ensuring they have connections to other people who understand their culture, offers a chance for them to effectively communicate in their preferred languages, provides transportation to get to appointments, and obtain services, like SNAP, for those that qualify. It conducts outreach in the community, seeking to connect with the most isolated seniors and those with limited incomes. Awaz works with seniors, men, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals, to ensure that they can stay in their homes, maintain their cultural traditions, access needed resources to support wellness, and stay connected to the community.

Minnesota is home to over 92,000 South Asians, and because of the services and community relevance SEWA has to offer, the increase in requests for assistance has gone up by 200% since it started in 2004. This fact, alongside the dream we hope to achieve in the future offering even more assistance to the community requires a bigger, more secure location. Prior to this, Sewa-Aifw chose a building, signed a purchase agreement, and the bank financing was completed, after 7 months of little communication, the seller retracted the signed agreement. As you can imagine both the bank and we were left in shack. The seller later shared with our agent he was not sure if he was going to let us build a community kitchen, as he doesn't care for the smell of our food. But to Sewa he only stated his business plans had changed.

This action put us in a difficult position as all summer we were providing cultural food from a garage to meet the basic need of our community, particularly our seniors. We do not ask for your help for ourselves but rather others, to ensure something like this never happens again and we can offer the best of services, and a place of safety and refuge in times of need.

Who will own the facility?:

Sewa-Aifw

Who will operate the facility:

SEWA employees, including the CEO and volunteers will all be onsite operating the facility.

Who will use or occupy the facility?:

Sewa employees and volunteers with a wide diversity in languages and skill sets will occupy the facility offering effective services and a place of refuge for those in need. Some volunteers include onsite educational tutors, physicians, and a nutritionist all with the goal in mind to ensure 'Total Family Wellness' to those seeking their aid.

Public Purpose:

Sewa's public purpose is to serve the underserved and vulnerable communities of immigrants and refugees in a culturally specific way that is healthy and violence-free, with self-determined women, supported elders, and families.

To see this through we have many programs to navigate the systems for BIPOC communities, encouraging civic engagement, Senior health and activities, mental health awareness and aid, youth activities, domestic violence assistance, and focus on the LGBTQ+ community, that lead way for "Total Family Wellness".