



Women's Giving Circle

Grant Application

I. Contact Information

Name of organization:	Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services
Name, title of individual who can answer questions about this application.	MaryKate Blankenship, MSSA, LISW Program Director, Mary's House/Refugee Single Mothers Program
Mailing address:	7800 Detroit Ave. Cleveland, OH 44102
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Organization website and social media:	https://www.ccdacle.org/service-areas/migration-refugee-services Facebook: Cleveland Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services Instagram: clevelandmrs

II. Organization Information

Tax ID Number: <i>Attach an IRS status determination letter and most current IRS Form 990</i>	Attached.
History of organization: <i>Please include the following: how many years you have been a non-profit, if you are partnering with other organizations, provide information about them.</i>	Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services has been working to resettle refugees since 1948, guided by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. All humans are created in the image and likeness of God and are therefore entitled to human dignity and respect; at Migration and Refugee Services we work with refugees from all over the world to provide safety, stability, and a chance to thrive in Northeast Ohio.
Mission of the organization:	Under the leadership of the Bishop of Cleveland inspired by the Gospel, Catholic Charities continues the mission of Jesus by responding to those in need through an integrated system of quality services designed to respect the dignity of every person and build a just and compassionate society.
Leadership of organization: <i>Please attach composition of organization's staff and Board of Directors, including names and titles</i>	Attached.
Sources of organizational funding:	The Mary's House/Refugee Single Mothers Program is fully funded by the Sisters of the Humility of Mary through their legacy trust.

III. Project/Program Description

Project Overview –

Describe the specific purpose of the project and how funds will be spent.

This project will aim to increase the knowledge of car seat safety and provide refugee single mothers with appropriate car seats within the Mary's House/Refugee Single Mothers Program. Car seats are an essential safety item for all children, decreasing the risk of fatal infant injury by 71% and fatal toddler injury by 54% (National Child Passenger Safety Board, 2024). Refugee single mothers have come to the US after fleeing war, violence, and significant human suffering and have to learn an entirely new culture, with new laws and safety regulations, without the help of a spouse or a partner. This is an incredibly overwhelming experience and through little fault of their own, this lack of support or appropriate resources can lead to serious injuries or even death.

Although car seats are an essential safety item for all children, most of the refugee single mothers come from countries where car seat use is not mandated by law when transporting children. When the single mothers come to the US, they are exposed to car seats but are not educated on proper installation and often cannot afford to purchase them, so they turn to their family, friends, or community members for used car seats. Unlike other items which you can safely donate, car seats should never be second hand. This is to ensure the car seat has not been compromised by being in a car crash and that it has not expired. Most individuals are unaware of these important regulations and are unknowingly putting their children at risk. Infant seats, convertible car seats, and booster seats are all investments with the cost ranging anywhere from \$55 up to \$750 per seat. This is cost prohibitive and often makes the single mothers in the Mary's House/Refugee Single Mothers Program choose between paying the rent and choosing to purchase car seats. As of 2025, there are limited programs for free or reduced cost car seats and there are no programs that offer comprehensive and ongoing education to ensure the car seats are installed properly. This gap in education and resources has greatly contributed to the car seat misuse rate in Cleveland with 83% - 93% of all car seats installed incorrectly (data from National Child Passenger Safety Technician Training, 2024).

With the generous help of the Women's Giving Circle funds, the Mary's House/Refugee Single Mothers Program can provide comprehensive, ongoing education on proper car seat installation in the mother's native language and will provide each single mother with car seats. This education and consistent follow up will be provided by Mollie Clark, a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician, and Refugee Case Manager in the Mary's House/Refugee Single Mothers Program. This will empower the women to make safe, educated choices for their children and will keep the children safe.

<p>Project Details – <i>What do you hope to achieve? Why is the project needed? Who will participate in your project? What specific activities will you do to achieve your goals?</i></p>	<p>With the help of the Women’s Giving Circle, the Mary’s House/Refugee Single Mothers Program can provide the refugee single mothers with car seats and comprehensive education on safe installation. In Northeast Ohio, only University Hospitals Rainbow Safety Center has funding to provide reduced cost car seats and one-time education, however, they are now required to utilize an online program that is only offered in English and Spanish. Online programming with limited language offerings has prevented the single mothers from accessing this resource; the mothers in our program have limited digital literacy so they learn best with in-person instruction with onsite interpretation.</p> <p>The Mary’s House/Refugee Single Mothers Program will conduct a needs assessment with the single mothers to determine how many of the women have appropriate car seats, knowledge of laws and regulations in the State of Ohio, and if they know how to properly install a car seat. Once the needs assessment is completed, the Mary’s House/Refugee Single Mothers Program staff will work with each woman to provide car seat education, installation practice, and will provide necessary car seats for their children. This can be done individually in the home, in a small group at the office, or at a community gathering location. Mollie Clark, CPST will conduct a pre and post-test during the education session and then will follow up with each person one month after instruction. At this one month session, Mollie will have the single mother install the car seat and provide additional education and hands on instruction, as needed and administer the final post-test. We anticipate an 80% increase in knowledge and proper installation with this program.</p> <p>By providing instruction in-person with an interpreter, the refugee single mothers will have more time to ask questions and practice these life-saving skills. The Mary’s House/Refugee Single Mothers Program aims to provide our women with the tools and education to thrive in their community using an empowerment model; when we give women the tools to succeed, our communities are safer.</p>
<p>Organizational Capacity – <i>Who will staff your project? What are the qualifications of your staff? What experience does your organization have that will support the project’s success? How does the project help your organization meet its mission?</i></p>	<p>The Mary’s House/Refugee Single Mothers Program has been operating for eleven years and is the only single mothers program for refugees across the country. The program specializes in intensive case management and creates a supportive environment to promote healing, mutual support, and the acquisition of skills to thrive in their new community. The Program Director, MaryKate Blankenship, MSSA, LISW, has been with the program since 2020. Mollie Clark, CPST has been the Refugee Case Manager in the Mary’s House/Refugee Single Mothers Program since 2022 – we are proud to report we have served 523 single women and 1,295 minor children since the beginning of our program. Every day, program staff is living out the Catholic Charities mission by responding to the needs of our mothers by advocating, teaching, and accompanying the mothers and their children throughout the different systems in Northeast Ohio. Our staff is skilled at medical</p>

	intensive case management and maternal and child wellbeing and we navigate multiple systems to accomplish this including the medical system, community-based resources, spiritual communities, and ethnic community based organizations. Without safe child transportation, mothers would not be independent in the community and this prevents them from integration within the larger system, and can potentially lead to serious injury or death of their children.
Project Evaluation – <i>What are your specific measurable outcomes for this project? What criteria will you use to measure your success?</i>	The Mary's House/Refugee Single Mothers Program will provide education and car seat installation practice to any mother interested and will purchase appropriate car seats for 20 children. The mothers will have increased knowledge of car seat laws in Ohio, how to properly install a car seat into a vehicle, and will be more confident in safely transporting their children. We will measure this with a pre and post-test and we anticipate an 80% improvement for the single mothers.
Project Sustainability – <i>What are your plans for continuing this project after your grant cycle ends?</i>	To continue this project, the Mary's House/Refugee Single Mothers Program will integrate this project into the Sisters of Humility of Mary Legacy Trust grant and if needed, seek out other sources of funding.
Partnerships – <i>Do you plan to partner with another organization(s)? If yes, please describe the partnership arrangement(s).</i>	We do not plan to partner with any other organizations for this project.

IV. Project/Program Funding

Requested Funding:	\$15,000
Brief Narrative of Project <i>Budget indicate how WGC funds will be used.</i> <i>Attach project budget. Include all committed and anticipated funding for the project and the project's expenses, itemized by category e.g. salaries with F.T.E.</i>	The funds from the Women's Giving Circle will go towards Mollie Clark's salary and to purchase new, appropriate car seats. Mollie will be able to conduct one-on-one or group education classes with up-to-date safety regulations for the refugee single mothers and provide ongoing support, as needed.

National Child Passenger Safety Board. (2024). Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training. National Safety Council. <https://www.cpsboard.org/trainings/>.