



VOICES FOR
RACIAL JUSTICE

March 22, 2023

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee,

Voices for Racial Justice celebrates Governor and Lt. Governor's decision to include the Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant Program in their Department of Health budget bill SF 2995 and encourages the committee to strongly support this initiative as well by **including SF402 in the Senate Health and Human Services Omnibus budget bill.**

As it has been successfully proven in recent years, with the first pilot grants, this program would continue to allow communities of color across the state to implement successful solutions to the daily struggles that our communities constantly face while raising their families. For example, last week we had the honor to listen to five women who participated in the Family Home Visit (FHV) program provided by Centro Tyrone Guzman and financially supported by MN Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant in 2019. **It was very moving to hear and see how grateful they were for the Community Solutions grant.**

After our conversation with them, it was clear that the **Community Solutions grant** supported the young latine mothers in their Mental health and fostering deep relationships. In the area of mental health, they all mentioned that the program helped them in controlling stress and frustration while raising their kids under challenging circumstances. In addition, it is evident that the **Community Solutions grant** built community between latine parents and contributed to managing the isolative life that some of our communities had to deal with daily. One mother added, "The program was a blessing as I had my first child during the COVID outbreak, and there was a lot of solitude... It wasn't easy to connect with other people. The FHV through Zoom was a great way not to feel alone". In addition, one of them added, "the program not only helped me as a mother but also as a woman as the home visit facilitators encouraged me to pursue my life goals like getting my driver's license, which I was terrified to do ". One of the closing remarks was "the FHV has been the best thing that has happened since I arrived in MN."

We hope the words written in this letter encourage you to **join the Governor and Lt. Governor in giving this innovative program the permanent funding needed to fully deliver on its promise (SF402).** This bill is important for our communities as it recognizes the essential knowledge BIPOC communities have to implement successful solutions to the daily struggles and the importance of **ALWAYS** including them in any policy effort. We are glad to hear about the Community Solutions program's positive impact and we are excited about the future of our community if this bill becomes permanent .

Sincerely,


Nicole Donoso (She/her)

Policy & Democracy Organizer



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