

2026 WOMEN UNITED GRANT APPLICATION FORM

Organization Information

Organization Name

Church World Service (CWS)

EIN

13-4080201

Project Name

Healing Pathway: Mental Health Support for Refugee and Immigrant Women

Address

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United States

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Executive Director / President (If different)

Valentina Ross

Eligibility Criteria

Is your organization a registered nonprofit organization with an official letter of determination of 501c3 status from the Internal Revenue Service?

Yes

Has your organization operated in Lancaster County for at least one year (operating in Lancaster before July 1, 2025)?

Yes

Does your organization or program you are requesting funding for in this application serve primarily women and/ or teen girls?

Yes

Does your organization provide services to families at or below the ALICE threshold in Lancaster County?

Yes

Is your organization delinquent on any state or federal debt?

No

Does your organization share United Way's view of collaborative and inclusive service to the entire community, without excluding anyone on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, ethnicity, national

origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other factor not relevant to a person's eligibility for service or ability to contribute?

Yes

Has your organization update your listing with PA 211 in the last 12 months?

No - All applications are required to update with PA 211, please reach out to [Trish Houser](mailto:houser@uwlanc.org) (houser@uwlanc.org) to complete your update

Application Elements

Executive Summary

CWS Lancaster seeks Women United funding to expand our Healing Pathways pilot program, an early-intervention emotional-wellness program for refugee and immigrant women experiencing trauma, chronic stress, and barriers to care.

Using the World Health Organization's Problem Management+ model, Healing Pathways provides 5-6 culturally responsive, trauma-informed sessions that reduce stress, build coping skills, and strengthen daily functioning. Women United funding will allow CWS to serve 12-15 additional women between July 2026 and June 2027, providing a trusted entry point to healing, stability, and improved women's health. Amid rising fear, isolation, and reduced federal support for newcomer services, accessible mental-health care is increasingly urgent.

Organization Description

Church World Service (CWS) is a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster. CWS Lancaster (CWS LNC) is committed to showing welcome to refugees, immigrants, asylum-seekers and other uprooted people within the United States who are seeking safety and the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

Since opening our doors in 1987, we've helped thousands of families fleeing violence and persecution find safety and rebuild their lives in Lancaster County. Through partnerships with faith groups, organizations, and individuals, we empower our newest neighbors with the tools, resources, and relationships needed to heal and thrive. Beyond initial resettlement, our economic empowerment, health and family wellness, and immigration legal services programs support individuals as they navigate new systems, achieve stability, and build communities of belonging.

As the region's oldest and largest refugee resettlement and nonprofit immigration legal services provider, CWS LNC has played a central role in shaping Lancaster's welcoming community for almost 40 years.

Commitment to Equity

CWS LNC has supported thousands of newcomers from diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds as they rebuild their lives across our organizational history. Many newcomer families face barriers that mirror disparities outlined in the Lancaster County Racial Equity Profile, including economic hardship, language-based barriers to healthcare, and unequal access to physical and mental-health supports. Refugee and immigrant women experience these inequities most acutely, often arriving with limited prior access to health services, histories of gender-based violence during conflict and migration, and cultural stigma surrounding mental-health care.

All CWS LNC programs are designed to emphasize client agency, safety, social connection, and opportunities for full participation in community life. We partner with clients, volunteers and community organizations to reduce common integration barriers—from transportation to language access and insurance navigation—while also contributing to broader advocacy efforts that advance equitable access and protect newcomer rights.

Our multilingual, culturally diverse staff, many of whom are former refugees or first-generation immigrants themselves, reflect the lived experiences and languages of the communities we serve. Community voice is embedded across our work, including through our Refugee Advisory Board, which provides ongoing guidance on mental-health programming and broader community needs. These insights have reinforced the importance of expanding onsite,

culturally responsive mental-health supports that offer a trusted point of entry for women seeking care.

Proposal Details

Main Priority Area

Women's and/ or Teen's Health

Grant Dollar Amount Requested

\$19,028.77

What percent of the overall project budget is covered by the Women United grant?

100

Will this program/project start or continue to operate if you do not receive 100% of the funding requested?

Yes

Project Description

Refugee and immigrant women often arrive to Lancaster after experiencing profound trauma, including the loss of home, separation from family, and, for many, exposure to gender-based violence during periods of conflict and migration. Even after finding safety in a new community, they must navigate unfamiliar systems, shifting family roles, financial pressure, and increasingly, fear related to immigration enforcement—stressors that often intensify existing trauma and significantly impact long-term emotional and physical health.

Despite these needs, many newcomer women have had little or no exposure to mental-health care and face persistent barriers in accessing care, including cultural stigma, lack of transportation, language and literacy limitations, and limited trust in unfamiliar service providers.

Earlier this year, CWS LNC launched a pilot in-house mental health program. Facilitated by CWS Lancaster's Associate Director for Integration, refugee women experiencing mild to moderate mental distress receive personalized early-intervention emotional-wellness support using the World Health Organization's Problem Management+ (PM+) model, an evidence-based, non-clinical framework proven effective in low-resource and post-trauma settings. Designed as an early-intervention model, PM+ aims to help clients manage daily problems and reduce stress. Through 5-6 personalized sessions, clients are supported in managing their own emotional distress and reducing their own practical problems using psychoeducation and problem-solving techniques. This non-clinical support does not include diagnosis or formal treatment planning; instead, it focuses on reducing stigma and developing self-care and coping strategies to promote psychosocial well-being.

Although still early in implementation, the program shows strong promise, with two clients successfully completing all sessions and additional referrals in the pipeline.

Women United funding will allow us to expand this pilot program to serve an additional 12-15 additional refugee and immigrant women between July 2026 and June 2027. Awarded funds will directly support staffing, supervision, participant accessibility, and essential program operations. This expansion comes at a crucial time, as newcomer women face rising levels of fear and stress alongside ongoing federal disinvestment in services for refugee and immigrant communities.

Healthy Pathways programming will provide:

- Trauma-informed, relationship-based engagement: Sessions are offered in trusted, familiar spaces and delivered by trained CWS LNC staff with longstanding relationships with newcomer families.
- Cultural and linguistic accessibility: Every session integrates interpretation and visual tools aligned with participants' cultural norms and communication styles.
- Flexible offerings: In-person sessions are prioritized to build trust, with virtual options available when transportation

or childcare barriers arise.

- Warm handoffs for higher-level care: As part of CWS's broader Health & Family Wellness portfolio, participants who need additional support can be rapidly connected to intensive case management, family-wellness programming, or mental-health providers.

This expansion directly advances Women United's goal of promoting women's health by ensuring that newcomer women, who face some of Lancaster County's deepest disparities, have equitable access to trusted, culturally attuned emotional-wellness support during a time of heightened anxiety and fear. By equipping women with the skills to reduce distress, improve emotional stability, and re-engage in daily life, the Healing Pathways program strengthens not only individual well-being but also family and community resilience.

Collaboration

CWS LNC maintains a strong network of formal and informal partnerships that is essential to delivering effective, culturally responsive mental-health support for newcomer women. We work closely with medical, behavioral-health, educational, and community-based organizations to ensure coordinated referrals, shared learning, and seamless access to longer-term supports. These partners will continue to play a critical role in identifying women who may benefit from early-intervention services.

CWS LNC also leads the South-Central PA Immigrant & Refugee Mental Health Coalition, a cross-sector space for exchanging best practices and strengthening community-wide support for immigrant and refugee mental health. This coalition not only helps maintain an informed referral network, but ensures best practices in providing culturally-responsive care for newcomers, expanding capacity for long-term mental health support for providers across the county.

Program oversight will also include biweekly supervision between the program lead and a contracted Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) to ensure high-quality service delivery, adherence to ethical standards, and clear service boundaries.

Together, these collaborations will expand the program's reach to ensure women receive timely, coordinated, and holistic support while strengthening Lancaster's mental health network's ability to serve diverse community members.

Implementation Plan

The Associate Director (AD) for Integration will serve as the primary program lead responsible for outreach, client enrollment, and service provision. The AD has a Master of Social Work degree and is trained in trauma-informed care, mental health first aid, and conflict mediation. To ensure high-quality service delivery and appropriate boundaries, the AD will participate in biweekly supervision meetings with a contracted LCSW. These meetings will provide space for case consultation, program feedback, and ongoing professional support.

Outreach & Recruitment

At program launch, CWS LNC will update program availability through United Way's 211 program and the PA Navigate platform. Program services and the referral process will be promoted across CWS LNC programs and existing networks, including local health care providers, immigrant service organizations, and the CWS-led Coalition of Mental Health Providers in South-Central PA. Referrals will be accepted on a rolling basis as cases are closed and capacity opens throughout the program implementation period.

Intake and Programming

Upon receiving a referral, the AD will promptly reach out to introduce herself and the program (within 1-3 weeks of receiving referral), and if the client confirms interest, schedule a pre-assessment and intake appointment.

During this appointment, the program lead will gain understanding of the practical and emotional problems experienced by the client. Clients will also complete the PHQ-9 and WHODAS 2.0 (12-item) assessments, which evaluate emotional distress and overall health and functioning. If the client is determined to be an appropriate fit for the program and confirms interest in participating, a full intake will be completed. This includes gathering demographic information, reviewing program guidelines, expectations, and limitations, and identifying one to two primary concerns the client wishes to address during their support period.

Participants will then meet weekly with the AD for one-hour sessions over the course of 5-6 consecutive weeks. These sessions will follow the PM+ model and include structured check-ins, progress monitoring, and safety assessments, including screening for suicidality at the start of each session. Each session introduces a key topic through psychoeducation, and clients then apply it to their own well-being goals through guided discussions and supported exercises. Sessions will focus on topics such as strategies for managing current stressors, strengthening social support networks, and re-engaging in meaningful and energizing activities. Interpretation services and picture-based guides will be incorporated as needed to enhance understanding and application.

Sessions will be conducted in-person, either in the client's home or in the CWS LNC office, depending on accessibility and barriers. Telehealth options will be available for clients unable to meet in person, based on capacity and resources. Similar to other CWS-led programs, clients can opt to end services at any point.

Further Referrals

CWS LNC also operates an extensive portfolio of Health & Family Wellness services, including intensive case management, family-centered programming, & youth mentoring, ensuring a strong infrastructure for wraparound support. Clients requiring additional or higher-level assistance can be quickly connected to these complementary programs or through referrals to CWS LNC's extensive mental health network to ensure ongoing stability & sustained wellness.

Post-Program Assessment

Approximately one month after the final session, clients will complete a post-program assessment to evaluate ongoing stability and reflect on their experience in the program.

Project timeline

Healing Pathways activities outlined above will follow a continuous, cyclical model of outreach, enrollment, service delivery, and follow-up to ensure consistent access for newcomer women, with the program lead serving 2-3 cases at one time.

Outcomes & Evaluation

Healing Pathways participants will experience meaningful shifts in their daily well-being, resulting in less social isolation, fewer symptoms of distress, and stronger confidence in managing stressors.

CWS LNC will implement a structured evaluation framework to measure program effectiveness and track client learning and outcomes. Data will also be used to identify emerging needs and refine mental health support throughout the grant cycle. This iterative process guarantees that programming remains relevant, effective, and responsive to real-world challenges—such as immigration policy, enforcement, and access to services.

By the conclusion of the July 2026–June 2027 program period, the Healing Pathways Program will achieve the following outcomes:

- 12-15 new refugee and immigrant women enrolled in program, with 80% full completion rate (attending all sessions and post-program assessments)
- Referral timeliness will remain within 1–3 weeks from referral to first session.
- 75% of participants will receive in-person support, reducing isolation and increasing engagement.
- Reduction in emotional distress for at least 80% of participating women, as demonstrated through pre- and post-intervention self-report measures assessing stress, worry, and daily functioning.
- Improved coping and problem-solving skills to use when navigating future stressors for a minimum of 80% of participants, as indicated by session completion data, participant goal-tracking, and qualitative reflections.
- Increased continuity of care, with 100% of participants requiring a higher level of support successfully connected to internal or external mental-health services through facilitated, staff-supported referrals.

With strengthened coping strategies, decreased distress, and increased stability, women will be better equipped to manage future stressors and heal from past trauma.

Documents

Required Documents

- [CWS-LNC-Women-United-3.27.2026.pdf](#)