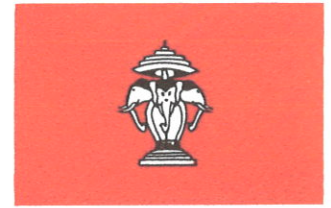




MERCED LAO FAMILY COMMUNITY, INC.
A Non-Profit Organization



DATE: 12/30/2021

Attention: Jennifer Flachman
Merced Civic Center
678 W 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

RE: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

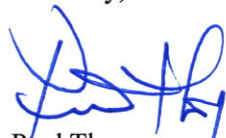
Dear City of Merced Council,

Merced Lao Family Community, Inc. (MLFC) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit, community-based organization, established in 1981, for the purpose of assisting Southeast Asians to acculturate and assimilate into the mainstream Western society. For over forty (40) years, MLFC has proudly served the Southeast Asian community in Merced County. MLFC's mission is to encourage self-respect and self-sufficiency for all Merced County community members; to maintain pride in cultural histories, to offer positive support and hope for the future and to empower the people in Merced County; to meet their needs and address their issues. The ongoing COVID-19 public health crisis has introduced new barriers and challenges, as well as opportunities to improve the overall well-being of our communities. As such, MLFC wishes for the Southeast Asian community to be included within the consideration of the City of Merced's ARPA funding.

On behalf of MLFC, I would like to address key points within the Council approved ARPA funding plan to ensure that the most vulnerable population within our community are provided with adequate tools and resources to fully utilize the ARPA funding opportunities. Our past forty (40) years of experience serving the Southeast Asian community of Merced County have shown that many within our target population lacks the English proficiency and technology know-how to navigate the funding opportunities presented within the approved ARPA funding plan. It is our belief that many within our Southeast Asian community will be unable to access these ARPA funding opportunities due to a lack of English literacy, both verbal and written. Therefore, MLFC, as an organization, wishes to be included in the ARPA funding plan to expand our services to address the following key points in order to best serve the Southeast Asian community of the City of Merced.

- Affordable Housing
- Utility Bill Relief
- Stimulus Payment Program
- Non-profit Support
- Ongoing COVID-19

Sincerely,



Paul Thao
Executive Director