

Community Center for Immigrants (CCI): 2026 Application Overview

PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES:

Community Center for Immigrants (CCI) will improve opioid prevention and medication safety among refugee and immigrant adults in Milwaukee County by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate education during the critical period after prescription medications are issued. The project addresses barriers related to limited English proficiency, low health literacy, trauma, and limited familiarity with the U.S. healthcare system, helping participants safely manage prescription medications and reduce the risk of opioid misuse.

SCOPE OF WORK AND KEY ACTIVITIES:

Over the 24-month project, CCI will:

- Reach approximately 1,000 refugee and immigrant adults through opioid risk screening, medication safety education, and targeted support to prevent unsafe opioid use
- Increase participants' understanding of safe medication use, opioid risks, counterfeit fentanyl-containing pills, and appropriate follow-up care.
- Improve participants' confidence communicating with healthcare providers about medications and pain management.
- Provide individualized education and referral support to 40–50 participants identified as having elevated opioid-related risk or difficulty managing prescription medications.
- Develop sustainable multilingual prevention resources that can be shared with refugee-serving organizations across Milwaukee County.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

CCI will integrate opioid prevention into existing refugee education and support programs by:

- Conducting opioid risk screenings through ESL classes, immigration legal services, healthcare navigation, and community outreach.
- Providing medication safety and opioid prevention education in trusted community settings using low-literacy teaching methods.
- Developing 4-6 multilingual ESL lesson plans and 2-3 educational videos in Rohingya, Burmese, Karen, and Swahili.
- Hosting six community education sessions in partnership with the Burmese Rohingya Community of Wisconsin (BRCW).
- Using teach-back methods and follow-up support to reinforce safe medication practices.
- Connecting participants with specialized substance use prevention and treatment resources when additional support is needed.

TARGET POPULATION AND COMMUNITY IMPACT:

The program serves refugee and immigrant adults living primarily in Milwaukee County neighborhoods with large refugee populations, including individuals from Burma (Rohingya, Karen, Chin, and Karenni), the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Afghanistan. Many participants live below the federal poverty level, have limited formal education, and face significant language and health literacy barriers.

By delivering prevention education through trusted community organizations and in participants' primary languages, CCI will reduce barriers to healthcare communication, improve medication safety, strengthen connections to healthcare providers, and expand access to opioid prevention resources for communities that have historically been underserved by traditional prevention efforts. The project will also create culturally responsive educational materials that can benefit refugee-serving organizations throughout Milwaukee County beyond the grant period.