



Dear Selection Committee:

Please accept the following Letter of Inquiry from the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind and Vision Impaired (SALBVI).

Project Title

Blind Children's Education Program

To support children who are blind or visually impaired by emphasizing the nine elements of the Expanded Core Curriculum, specifically through enrichment sessions and a lending program for assistive technology

Amount of Funding Request

\$28,500

Brief Statement of the Organization's Purpose and History

For more than 84 years, the SALBVI has been San Antonio's icon for training and educating the blind and severely vision-impaired as well as a manufacturing leader for military and government agencies. The Lighthouse began as a small sewing plant in 1933; it now employs more than 400 people and provides 10,000 services annually. In its blind-staffed manufacturing plant, employees support our nation's military efforts by producing combat apparel and supplies. The SALBVI's programs also include Children's Education, School to Work Transitional Training, a Seniors' Center, a Low Vision Clinic, Technology Education and Training, and Career Guidance. Through these options, the SALBVI strives to empower blind and visually impaired individuals to live high-quality, independent, and productive lives.

Project Description

To support the Blind Children's Education Program, the requested funding will finance a lending program for assistive technology and enrichment sessions at local businesses. The Education Program focuses on activities supporting the Expanded Core Curriculum's nine elements. The Texas Education Code mandates that schools arrange for these elements (assistive technology, orientation and mobility, compensatory skills, self-determination, independent living skills, career education, recreation and leisure, sensory efficiency, and social interaction skills) to be addressed "beyond regular school hours to ensure the student learns the skills and receives the instruction."

First, the SALBVI plans to establish a lending program for assistive technology like low-vision CCTVs and Braille displays. While public school students receive this technology from their districts, those in private schools or home-schooling must purchase devices themselves. The costs are often staggering. For example, a quality CCTV, which projects magnified text onto a

screen, can cost several thousand dollars—a price many families cannot afford. A lending library would thus allow children from financially-strained backgrounds to access resources they normally could not. As a result, they will use this assistive technology to develop their compensatory skills and self-determination.

In addition, the SALBVI will continue financing enrichment sessions at local businesses. Frequently, blind children and their families grow isolated even if other families in similar circumstances live nearby. By funding activities like bowling, arcade games, ceramics, and pizza-making, the SALBVI allows parents to forge supportive bonds while children develop their orientation and mobility, self-determination, sense of recreation and leisure, sensory efficiency, and social interaction skills. Furthermore, since the SALBVI completely covers the costs of attendance (for the blind child, two parents, and up to three siblings), many low-income families are able to participate in activities they would not otherwise be able to. Each enrichment session usually ranges from \$1500-\$4000.

Brief Statement of Any Previous Funding Received from The Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation

In 2012, the SALBVI was awarded a \$100,000 two-year grant to support the establishment of a facility for the new Blind Children’s Education Program. In 2008, the SALBVI was awarded a \$41,000 grant to expand its School to Work Transition Program (for students aged 16 to 22).

How the Proposed Project Relates to The Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation’s Funding Priorities

The SALBVI’s Blind Children’s Education Program, and specifically its lending program for assistive technology and enrichment sessions at local businesses, aligns with The Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation’s priority to fund education for children. The requested grant would support technology and activities that address the state-mandated Expanded Core Curriculum (in particular assistive technology, compensatory skills, orientation and mobility, recreation and leisure, sensory efficiency, social interaction skills, and self-determination).

Furthermore, The Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation’s core values stress “education for every child” and “believing in every child’s dreams.” The repetition of “every child” signals the prioritizing of unique interests and needs. Similarly, the SALBVI’s Children’s Program bases its curriculum on differentiated instruction. When designing enrichment sessions, teachers focus on addressing the specific capabilities and challenges of visually impaired students.

Line-Item Budget for Project in Which Funds Are Being Requested

Line Item Description	Total Project Funds Allocation	Najim-Requested Funds Allocation
Lending Program Equipment	\$4,200	\$4,200
Support Software	\$800	\$800
Family Enrichment Sessions	\$7,500	\$7,500
School District Enrichment Sessions	\$16,000	\$16,000

## Children Impacted

The total project initiative will impact 182 unduplicated children.

NFF-requested funds will impact 182 unduplicated children.

### Organization Total Revenue and Expenses for Current Fiscal Year

Total Revenue: \$21,705,000

Total Expenses: \$19,497,956

### Project Timeline (beginning and ending dates)

January 2018 to December 2019

### Brief Project Evaluation Criteria

To evaluate the lending program, staff members will document the number of times each item is borrowed. In addition, patrons will complete surveys that assess what these devices are used for. To evaluate the enrichment sessions, staff members will analyze the number of RSVPs and the actual attendance. They will also distribute teacher surveys after each session as well as annual participant surveys.

### List of Other Project Funders (pending and committed, including dollar amount)

Pending and committed funders for the Blind Children's Education Program's enrichment sessions and lending program consist of the following:

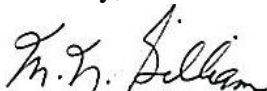
Amy Shelton McNutt Charitable Trust (received in March 2017): \$2,000 for operating expenses  
Texas Cavaliers Charitable Foundation (will receive in April 2018): \$10,000 for two Braille Sense Polaris devices

### Contact Information (name, address, phone, email)

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We would welcome the opportunity to submit a full proposal, and we thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mike Gilliam  
CEO/President