



## IMP Grant Request

I am currently working on a photographic documentary on immigration in Ligonier, Indiana. Ligonier's Hispanic population currently makes up one-third of its total population (4,500.) As box stores have replaced local businesses the city center is struggling to remain relevant under these conditions. Hispanic families have started businesses and are making use of the vacant storefronts in the downtown area. Ligonier's main source of employment comes from the industrial park made up of manufacturing plants. The effects of the current economic crisis have caused double-digit unemployment in neighboring counties and many of the same symptoms are being felt in Ligonier. Local government and volunteer organizations foresee consumer activity transitioning from distant to local making a functional downtown in Ligonier critical to its residents.

Immigration is a polar subject typically represented by locations such as the Southwest, Los Angeles, The Border, and Immokalee, Florida. I feel that an investigation on immigration in the Midwest offers a more profound view of this complex subject. Immigration in the Midwest demonstrates some of the topics more subtle characteristics which are typically overshadowed by the more extreme locations. Ligonier is the most appropriate location for my project because it has a history of multiple immigrant groups settling in the area. This background offers an additional layer and unique angle in which to view the most recent group of Hispanic immigrants. This project is dynamic because it has multiple levels in which it functions and offers commentary. In the case of Ligonier, the Hispanic population

that harbors resentment in other parts of the United States could be the town's savior.

Ligonier has a history of foreign and domestic immigration. In the late 1840's German Jewish immigrants settled in the village establishing themselves as the dominant group in terms of population and commerce. By the 1920's the number of Jewish families had dwindled by half to 24 families. The children of the Jewish population attended schools in larger cities such as Chicago and as a result had little connection to the town and never returned. As the parents of the second generation retired they moved from Ligonier to be close to their children. In 1981 Ligonier's last remaining Jewish resident died.

In the 1950's an industrial park was created and migrant workers from the Appalachian region were recruited to fill manufacturing jobs in Ligonier. Many of these migrant workers remained in the town as permanent residents. Around the same time Hispanic migrant workers, mostly single men, worked on area farms picking tomatoes. Some families settled permanently in Ligonier after the working season but many returned to Mexico or followed the harvest. In the 1970's the industrial park expanded creating a work force shortage. At one point a sign was posted on the Mexican-American border reading, "Come to Ligonier, Indiana for work." This wave of immigrants consisted of families who settled in the area permanently

This project requires sensitivity and the necessity to build relationships on familiarity and trust. Some of the undocumented individuals stand to lose their livelihood and families if deported. The paranoia of being deported creates an

unusual barrier between the subject and documentarian. The process of building relationships and gaining the subjects trust has been lengthy. It is difficult to convince an undocumented immigrant that the significance of their experience and story outweigh the risks that they are taking by giving you access to their life. The individuals that I have had the opportunity to meet and build bonds with have offered invaluable insights and humanized the topic of immigration.

The majority of expenses I have and will continue to incur are on gas, film, photographic paper, and books related to Mexican immigration into the United States. Ligonier is approximately 200 miles north of Bloomington, Indiana therefore the expense of gas is an obstacle in making frequent trips to the town. I am working with an analogue 35mm and 4x5 view camera. I realize that digital photography is the norm and that traditional black and white photography is perceived as outdated. I am choosing to follow the older traditions of past documentary photographers because I am well versed with this process. I also feel that the permanence and control gained by hand developing film and making silver gelatin prints gives my project and subject matter heightened relevance. The 5x7 Arista Edu paper is a resin-coated paper used for making small proof prints. The 11x14 Adox Vario-Tone Classic paper will be used to create larger archival exhibition prints.

The materials I have requested below will allow me to continue my investigation on the city of Ligonier. I envision this project taking many forms upon completion. I am passionate about this subject and want to make my images and information accessible to the largest number of people possible. I am currently working on creating a website containing photographs of the project as well as a

detailed interviews and descriptions of the project. I would like to self-publish a book of images through i-book, which would allow individuals and institutions to possess this body of work at minimal cost. I have two different exhibitions planned upon completion. I intend to exhibit approximately 20 11x14 silver gelatin prints at Ligonier's city library during the annual Marshmallow Festival. I am also interested in partnering with Indiana Universities Spanish and Latino Studies departments to exhibit this project in combination with a discussion on the subject of immigration. I am excited about the dialogue that this project will inspire in all of its finished forms. I feel that this project is unique and worthy of your financial support.

**Amount requested \$ 500.00**

**Detailed budget:**

- 1.) One box of Kodak TXP320 (4x5 film @ 59.99/Box of 50)  
Total \$59.99
- 2.) Twenty five rolls of Kodak Tri-X (35mm film) @ 3.99/Roll  
Total \$99.75
- 3.) Ten rolls of Fuji-NeoPan 1600 (35mm film) @ 4.99/Roll  
Total \$49.90
- 4.) One box of Arista Edu 5x7" RC semi-matte paper @ 41.99/Box of 250 sheets.  
Total \$41.99
- 5.) One box of Adox Vario-Tone classic 11x14" fiber paper @ 73.99/Box of 50 sheets.  
Total \$73.99
- 6.) Gas expenses from Bloomington to Ligonier 400 miles round trip.  
Seven trips @ approximately \$25.00/trip  
Total \$175.00

**Total Budget: \$500.62**