# Amplifying Stability for Therapeutic Adventure Work Transformation Through Relationship 

## RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal

Recovery Funds

## PIVOTPOINT WNC

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## Application Form

## Question Group

Buncombe County requests proposals for projects to help the community recover from and respond to COVID-19 and its negative economic impacts.

Buncombe County has been awarded \$50,733,290 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funding)i, as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. This infusion of federal resources is intended to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

Buncombe County is committed to investing these funds in projects that:

- Align to county strategic plan and community priorities
- Support equitable outcomes for most impacted populations
- Leverage and align with other governmental funding sources
- Make best use of this one-time infusion of resources
- Have a lasting impact

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

Click here for the full terms and conditions of the RFP

## Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

Name of Project.
Amplifying Stability for Therapeutic Adventure Work - Transformation Through Relationship

## Amount of Funds Requested* <br> \$743,501.00

## Recovery Fund Eligible Category*

Please select one:
Enhance behavioral and mental health services

## Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.
The Pandemic wrought havoc on all dimensions of health and wellness, especially within western North Carolina. According to the United Nations (UN), one of the most pressing concerns stemming from the pandemic is employment vulnerability; The UN asserts that this instability could "damage the social and economic fabric and, without decisive action, may weaken support for a renewed social contract."

RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery

The PIVOTPoint WNC proposal would serve a bifurcated purpose of: 1.) addressing the deep employment crisis by providing contract PIVOTPoint staff workers a salaried position, which would serve to 2.) increase access to subsidized outings for the communities most impacted by the pandemic.

## Project Plan*

Explain how the project will be structured and implemented, including timeframe.
Grounded in theoretical principles of Adventure Therapy (AT) and Wilderness Therapy (WT),
PIVOTPoint WNC combines the therapeutic benefits of the adventure experiences and activities with those of more traditional modes of therapy (Newes \& Bandoroff, What is Adventure Therapy?). More specifically, the organization uses hands-on, tangible and practical activities implemented in the natural environment to challenge, instruct, and provide opportunities for participants to practice pro-social, interpersonal, problem-solving, communication and self-regulation skills. PIVOTPoint WNC will address the continuum of needs of participants by providing multimodal and innovative interventions that effectively reduce substance use/abuse and improve the building of interpersonal skills.

Suggested duration of engagement is 3 -months, during which outings will be scheduled in consideration of each referring agency's schedule and client availability. Outings will be delivered with a frequency ranging from 1-4 outings per week for the duration of each program cycle.

While participating in outings with PIVOTPoint WNC, clients work with facilitators who have
years of experience working specifically with the substance use population. Through intentional, small group facilitation, PIVOTPoint WNC experiences introduce and support a mindful approach to living, which effectively supports substance use reduction among participants. Throughout the outdoor experience, participants are encouraged to reframe their relationships with themselves, which allows them to reframe their overall approach to relationship-building and maintenance. This reframing and recalibration forms the foundation of recovery for many individuals.

Specific experiences will be planned/scheduled in partnership with referring/partner agencies and the clients themselves, including a combination of hiking, rock climbing, paddling and biking. Facilitators posses a minimum of 5 years direct-care experience working with the target populations and all have outing-specific safety training and credentials including, but not limited to: Swiftwater Rescue; Raft Guide training; NatureConnected Coach; WFR; neuro-feedback technician; Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (CSI+) training; Motivational Interviewing 1; and, Clinical First Responder (CFR 1) training. The organization contracts out with industry-standard-certified specialists when mountain biking and rock climbing. All facilitators are peers who have personal experience with substance use recovery. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), peer support services are emerging as a promising practice in both behavioral health and substance use/abuse treatment and prevention. Peer support staff can provide strength- and experience-based support to individuals in recovery or treatment as they inspire work, serve in a partnership role with clients in recovery, and provide evidence of a roadmap to recovery.

## Statement of Need*

Describe the need that this project will address. Include data to demonstrate the need, and cite the source of the data.

COVID-19 has impacted both the working staff providing services and exacerbated conditions for the consumers. As mentioned in the Project Description, the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the precarious nature of [contract] jobs, leaving many workers with little support when they needed it most1. Providing stability and removing barriers to optimized performance, such as food and rent insecurities, are essential to cultivate a foundation of the essential therapeutic efficacy of the organization's work. And the need for this work is ever apparent. In Buncombe County, the number of overdose deaths has risen between $400 \%$ and $600 \%$ since 1999, depending on the substance involved with the death. Statewide, the number of overdose deaths has almost doubled since 2014.2

According to the North Carolina Medical Society, 2016 costs associated with opioid use disorders totaled over $\$ 21,000,000,000.3$ Over $91 \%$ of the population using illicit drugs in North Carolina did not receive substance abuse treatment between 2009-2013.4 Approximately one in three people imprisoned in North Carolina are serving time for a drug or property offense as of May 2018, and 71\% of screened incarcerated people reported having a substance use disorder requiring intermediate or long-term treatment. 5 These concerns illuminate the growing need for services that specifically address substance use and addiction while also decreasing client justice-involvement.

References:
[1] Companies Must Step Up to Protect Their Contract Workers for the Remainder of the COVID-19 Crisis and Beyond, December 2020
[2] North Carolina Department of Health \& Human Services presentation - Jan. 2018
[3] North Carolina Medical Society - North Carolina Opioid Report - January 2018
[4] Recovery Connection, Lakeview Health, Substance Abuse Statistics - 2019
[5] NC Policy Watch (09/05/2018): New report lays out roadmap for ending mass incarceration in North Carolina.

## Link to COVID-19*

Identify a health or economic harm resulting from or exacerbated by the public health emergency, describe the nature and extent of that harm, and explain how the use of this funding would address such harm.

The proposed programmatic development addresses the impact of COVID-19 on multiple levels. This project supports the direct-care staff of the organization who have been drastically impacted by the pandemic as contract employees whose pay is directly related to the deliverables of our therapeutic adventure work. As a direct result of COVID-19, the organization's facilitators were disproportionately affected by the pandemic. By providing stability for facilitators who lost compensation due to COVID, we are enhancing access to mental health and behavioral health support services for disproportionately impacted community members.

The project responds to the needs of both essential frontline workers and underserved populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19. By providing therapeutic wilderness experiences to small groups of recovery, diversion, and other behavioral health program residents at a time, direct-care staff at each sober living facility in Buncombe county can provide for more direct care at each program and their burden is lessened. PIVOTPoint WNC is proposing to expand its offerings to low-income, financially underserved populations in Buncombe County. This funding will enable us to provide fully subsidized, evidence-based therapeutic wilderness experiences to the individuals involved with area programs such as Veterans Treatment Court, Adult Drug Treatment Court, Justice Resource Center, Juvenile Crime Prevention Council and the Department of Juvenile Justice, Sobriety Court, as well as addiction treatment organizations at various levels of the recovery process. As reported in The Wall Street Journal and according to provisional overdosedrug data released Wednesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "The deaths from drug overdoses form a twin public health crisis with Covid-19 and show how the human toll of the pandemic extends well beyond the estimated 377,883 U.S. deaths involving that disease last year." Our focus remains here.

## Population Served*

Define the population to be served by this project, including volume and demographic characteristics of those served.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need for recovery support services among both individuals in recovery, and for individuals at risk of developing SUD. PIVOTPoint WNC aims to reduce the social isolation, anxiety and depression that has become elevated among program participants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Because of social distancing requirements and other COVID-19 avoidance strategies, many individuals experiencing SUD no longer have access to the critical in-person treatment or therapy programs that were
previously available prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (Dunlop, et al., 2020). Moreover, many individuals in recovery from SUD, including many PIVOTPoint WNC participants, are unemployed or underemployed. Many of these individuals are also uninsured or underinsured and already have difficulty obtaining or maintaining necessary treatment. The confluence of these risk factors makes the population of individuals experiencing SUD who participate in PIVOTPoint WNC programs particularly at risk, disproportionately affected by COVID19, and also underserved. An investment in PIVOTPoint WNC programs will expand access to individuals who otherwise may not be able to afford access to such programs.

This expanded-reach of PIVOTPoint services is achieved when we provide our contract-based workers with a stable, living-wage income. Stability in the lives of our clinicians ripples out into the community. By honoring the service-providers with compensation commensurate to their worth, we empower them to better serve/honor our client-populations.

Resources and citations available upon request.

## Results*

Describe the proposed impact of the project. List at least 3 performance measures that will be tracked and reported. If possible, include baselines and goals for each performance measure.

Due to the multifaceted nature of the project, the effectiveness of the proposal will be best displayed through the analysis of the clients served. Clients are tracked during each outing with pre- and post-trek, Likert-scale self-assessment questionnaires. These forms are adjusted to suit the targeted population of each outing/program (adolescent (14-17) or young adults (18+)). The assessment tools utilized by PIVOTPoint are evidence-based and culturally informed. Recognizing the diverse range of backgrounds, cultures, norms, and experiences of our client-systems, all data collection methods use a maximum of 6th-grade level language. Feedback-Informed Treatment (FIT) assessments are used to track overall programmatic efficacy. FIT uses measures to solicit feedback about progress and the quality of the therapeutic relationship. The organization also utilizes the Adventure Therapy Experience Scale (ATES), developed in order to assess outcomes that are specific to therapeutic adventure experiences. The direct impact of our proposal can be measured by our retention of facilitators. The pandemic de-stabilized our contract facilitators' employment, leaving many underemployed and at-risk of eviction and food insecurity. Providing stable incomes to our team in the field reduces the burden brought on by the pandemic.

The overarching goal is to reduce the social isolation, anxiety and depression, elevated among program participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. We aim to have participants achieve the following four objectives over the course of the project. They include: 1. Improved personal sense of positive social integration by $35 \%$; 2 . Improved sense of interpersonal relationship building skills by $40 \%$; 3 . Improved personal sense of well-being by $40 \%$; and 4 . Improved sense of intrapersonal relationship-building skills by $45 \%$. Data will be collected on these measures at baseline as well as 3 months and 6 months following the completion of the outing.

## Evaluation*

Describe the data collection, analysis, and quality assurance measures you will use to assure ongoing, effective tracking of contract requirements and outcomes.

Using the Feedback Informed Treatment model assures that the voice of the client is heard. Through this process, students/clients have the opportunity to highlight any variances in language, norms, and values. This positive feedback loop not only serves to shape future service delivery, but also the data collection process. Determining if changes need to be implemented is done by the Program Director in conjunction with her regular monthly meetings with the facilitators. An Educational Consultant will conduct all QI efforts. After each outing, the lead facilitator will implement one of the FIT measurement tools to assess the Session Rating Scale (SRS). If the student is an adolescent, the Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS) will be utilized. To complete the feedback loop, the FIT assessment tool also includes a supervisory assessment tool which will
be used quarterly to provide organizational checks and balances; This will enhance the efficacy of these assessment tools, strengthening relationships at all strata of PIVOTPoint operations.

Confidentiality and informed consent are an essential part of any therapeutic program. PIVOTPoint is committed to promoting a culture of safety by using standardized confidentiality agreements and informed consent. All information collected will be stored electronically, behind dually-encrypted management systems.

Resources:
Brattland, H., Koksvik, J. M., Burkeland, O., Klöckner, C. A., Lara-Cabrera, M. L., Miller, S. D., ... \& Iversen, V. C. (2019). Does the working alliance mediate the effect of routine outcome monitoring (ROM) and alliance feedback on psychotherapy outcomes? A secondary analysis from a randomized clinical trial. Journal of counseling psychology, 66(2), 234.

Miller, S. D., Hubble, M. A., Chow, D., \& Seidel, J. (2015). Beyond measures and monitoring: Realizing the potential of feedback-informed treatment. Psychotherapy, 52(4), 449.

## Equity Impact*

How will this effort help build toward a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery? How are the root causes and/or disproportionate impacts of inequities addressed?

By stabilizing the financial reality of our own core staff, the organization is best positioned to expand its offerings to low-income, financially underserved populations in Buncombe County. The organization will continue to provide fully subsidized, evidence-based therapeutic wilderness experiences to individuals involved with area programs such as Veterans Treatment Court, Adult Drug Treatment Court, Justice Resource Center, Juvenile Crime Prevention Council and the Department of Juvenile Justice, Sobriety Court, as well as sober living and transitional living programs throughout Buncombe County. Participants will include adolescents, young adults and adults - both those assessed as at-risk, and those in early recovery from SUD. Within these populations, participants will reflect a diverse cultural background, including but not limited to the BIPOC community in Buncombe County, marginalized and underserved youth, veterans, and adults.

Michelle Alexander reveals that the criminalization of color is evident within our local justice-system, stating, "One in three young African American men are currently under control of the criminal justice system in prison, in jail, or on parole- yet mass incarceration tends to be categorized as criminal justice issues as opposed to a racial justice or civil rights issue (or crisis)." By supporting our justice-involved population in WNC, we are working to promote equity and inclusion; increasing access-to-services for our justice-involved population is inherently working to mitigate the consequences of an oppressive white-power system. As a organization, we take a strong anti-racist stance in all aspects of program development and operation.

## Project Partners*

Identify any subcontractors you intend to use for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, indicate:
1.) What products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor and;
2.) What percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform.

Also, list non-funded key partners critical to project.
Since PIVOTPoint WNC was founded in 2017, it has facilitated outings for an estimated 1500 unique individuals with substance use disorder. Additionally, PIVOTPoint WNC has been the recipient of several grants, which has allowed it to expand access to its programs. Most notably, PIVOTPoint WNC has an established partnership with the Department of Juvenile Justice and has received a Dogwood Health Trust grant. With additional funding, the organization will expand its reach to a significant number of individuals in the region.

As noted in "Project Plan" section of the proposal, the organization contracts out with industry-standardcertified specialists when mountain biking (The Professional Mountain Bike Association (PMBIA) Level 1

Mountain Bike Instructor Certified) and rock climbing (The American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) Single-pitch Instructor Certified).

To ensure compliance with state and CDC requirements and recommendations related to the COVID-19 pandemic, PIVOTPoint WNC will work directly with referring agencies to engage groups of participants rather than emphasize individual engagement. The following organizations will serve as primary referral sources but are not formal partners in this endeavor: Veterans Treatment Court, Adult Drug Treatment Court, Justice Resource Center, Sobriety Court, Buncombe County School System, and Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) - all with an intentional focus on individuals formerly assessed as at-risk and those at various stages of the recovery process within the county.

## Capacity*

Describe the background, experience, and capabilities of your organization or department as it relates to capacity for delivering the proposed project and managing federal funds.

PIVOTPoint WNC provides services through funding by individual donors,Charitable Foundations, Buncombe County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, Dogwood Health Trust as well as other local funding sources. PIVOTPoint WNC currently has two employees and a number of independent contractors. For delivery of services, the Executive Director has 7 years experience providing therapeutic wilderness experiences, and has the following credentials: Credentialed Nature-Connected Coach; Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor, NCI+ de-escalation/nonviolent communication training, involvement in the local recovery community for over 8 years, and has been cultivating community relationships since 2014 to ultimately support the organization's mission through executive level leadership, administrative skills, and personal ties to the community and population being served.

The Program Director has the following credentials: Wilderness First Responder and Adult and Child CPR certifications; NCI+ de-escalation/nonviolent communication training; more than 4 years supervising directcare staff in a therapeutic wilderness setting; and, over 5 years of experience working with the substance use and mental health population both in residential and wilderness therapy settings. In addition, there is a team of facilitators who will implement the outings. Each one of them has the requisite credentials to offer meaningful experiences to our clients.

The Treasurer has over 50 years of accounting experience, working with organizations that receive funds from Federal, state and local agencies. He has worked with organizations funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and other government funding sources. He monitors the expenditures against budget and also reviews the accounting of transactions in the organization's accounting books and records. He reports to the Board on the operating results and prepares the required Federal tax return and state annual filings.

## Budget*

Provide a detailed project budget including all proposed project revenues and expenditures, including explanations and methodology. For all revenue sources, list the funder and denote whether funds are confirmed or pending. For project expenses, denote all capital vs. operating costs, and reflect which specific expenses are proposed to be funded with one-time Buncombe County Recovery Funds.

Download a copy of the budget form HERE. Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.
Recovery-Funds-budget-PIVOTPoint WNC.xlsx

## Special Considerations*

Provide any other information that might assist the County in its selection.
RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery
Printed On: 15 July 2021
Funds

2021 Buncombe County Letters of Support.pdf
The guiding ethos for PIVOTPoint WNC is "Transformation through Relationship." The organization recognizes that rapport and the therapeutic alliance are the greatest determinants that shape positive client outcomes. By focusing on the safety and stability of our staff and ensuring they are compensated at a living wage rate and provided health benefits, our organization is better equipped to facilitate our transformational therapeutic adventure work.

For the opportunity for change to occur, it is essential that we offer a living wage for guides, so that they can experience these relationships. Strong rapport and community relationships within a professional setting are at the foundation of the trust inherent in a successful therapeutic relationship. It is upon this foundation that the pillars of long-term recovery and healthy decision-making can be made. The proposed project will enhance the following for those living with substance use disorder: emotional regulation through selfreflection; enhanced realistic appraisal of individual strengths, weaknesses, and self-imposed limitations; and interpersonal skill building. These are essential skills for long-term sustainable recovery, which we provide through challenge-based therapeutic adventure programming. The increased awareness cultivated at PIVOTPoint leads to better decision-making abilities, not only in these immediate times of extended trauma, stress, and uncertainty; but also, throughout the life of participants. The demand for our work in Buncombe County continues to expand at an exponential rate - as shown in the attachment; the need for our services is documented and the need for fundamental stability for our therapeutic behavioral and mental health services is essential to promote the highest quality deliverables for the populations we serve. To most effectively deliver this stability for our team and our clients, we request equal monthly payments in advance of dispersement.

## File Attachment Summary

## Applicant File Uploads

- Recovery-Funds-budget-PIVOTPoint WNC.xlsx
- 2021 Buncombe County Letters of Support.pdf


## Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds <br> Proposed Project Budget



Line 26-28
Line 26

Bear Committee Members,
This letter is in support of PIVOT Point and the opportunity for them to expand the work they do for our community and with Drug Treatment Court. This organization is truly invaluable to our population of people involved in the justice system. 80\% of the people coming through our justice system struggle with mental health and substance use challenges. Many of them need more than traditional 12 step programs, they need connection, they need to heal holistically, and in ways that best serve their success and growth and PIVOT Point is an organization that can do this. Through their services that provide therapeutic wilderness experiences, PIVOT Point is an immense asset to our Drug Treatment Court participants. I cannot express enough how much we value the relationship we have with PIVOT Point. We would benefit greatly from their ability to expand and increase the wonderful work they are doing.

Amanda Jo Murphy BA, NCCPSS


Sala Menaya-Merritt<br>Diversion Services Program Manager

April 23 ${ }^{\text {rd }}, 2021$

To Whom It May Concern,
It is with great pleasure that I write and submit this letter of support for Mr. Matt Nannis and PIVOTPoint WNC services.

The Justice Resource Center (JRC) and the programs housed under its umbrella such as the Veteran's Treatment Court (VTC) and our other treatment courts are always seeking out strong and dependable collaborative partnerships to provide services to our participants/clients. PIVOTPoint WNC Services is one of those partnerships.

The safe atmosphere that they provide for our individuals who suffer from the disease of addiction is one key resource that assists in recovery. The program provides diverse practices in their approach which includes coupling their outings with mindfulness practices - it is a unique and positive way to engage and support the recovery process.

The JRC, without hesitation is proud to support the work and partnership of PIVOTPoint WNC. We look forward to the continued partnership and support.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions. My email is: sala.menayamerritt@buncombecounty.org

Thank you.
Respectfully,


## Sala Menaya-Merritt

Diversion Services Program Manager
Justice Resource Center
Buncombe County

4/15/21
Re: Matt Nannis
Executive Director
PIVOTPoint WNC
matt@pivotpointwnc.com
pivotpointwnc.org
828.528.3373

To Whom It May Concern, I am writing this letter of support for PIVOTPoint NC for initiating the efforts in requesting funding. I believe this program will create remarkable changes and results in the lives of many youth and adults, their families, and our local community. PIVOTPoint NC has done an excellent job in expanding much needed services to at-risk youth and adults who lack services for support through their recovery from substance use disorders and mental health challenges. Those who have been privileged to engage in the PIVOTPoint NC program have been able to experience support, connection, and advocacy. Each participant has been exposed to authentic compassion and understanding to elevate their desired quality of life.

PIVOTPoint NC has done great work with Buncombe County's Treatment Court programs and Department of Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Council to allow equal access to needed services. In order to continue the great work PIVOTPoint NC is doing, financial support is needed to allow additional access. There is an exponential need in Buncombe County to look beyond the confines of a building and utilize nature to connect each participant to themselves and others as they discover recovery is possible.

In conclusion, I deeply support the efforts of PIVOTPoint NC to seek funding to expand to a greater reach. Your support for this program will highly impact individuals, families and our greater community. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Melisa Enclade, MSW, LCSW-A, LCAS
Veterans Treatment Court
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Kevin@ncbrookhaven.com

April 7 ${ }^{\text {th }}, 2021$
To Whom It May Concern,

The Buncombe County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) is honored to voice our unwavering support for Mr. Matt Nannis and PIVOTPoint WNC services.

The success of the VTC is dependent on our strong partnerships with community providers and their implementation of evidence-based best-practices. As a Certified Substance Abuse Counselor and Nature-Centered Coaching candidate, Mr. Nannis provides culturally-congruent and ethically-sound care, with a strong emphasis on person-centered treatment. Through the modality of experiential learning, PIVOTPoint provides a safe atmosphere for individuals suffering from the disease of addiction to strengthen their recovery resiliency and resolve. Incorporating mindfulness practices into their outings, PIVOTPoint is able to meet an individual at their unique stage of change-preparedness and help them to self-determine a path towards recovery.

The VTC is proud of our partnership with PIVOTPoint WNC and we look forward to our continued collaboration to support justice-involved veterans. It is the VTC's hope to leverage PIVOTPoint WNC four (4) to five (5) times per month as we see the value to our participants to be well worth the return on investment.

Please feel free to email any questions/concerns to: kevin.rumley@buncombecounty.org


Kevin Rumley, VTC Coordinator, MSW, LCAS, LCSWA, CSI
Buncombe County Veterans Treatment Court, 60 Court Plaza, ${ }^{\text {th }}$ Floor
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