

Working on Wellness

RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

A Therapist Like Me

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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), 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.

Working on Wellness

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$1,574,040.00

Recovery Fund Eligible Category*

Please select one:

Address disparities in public health outcomes

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Grounded in racial equity, A Therapist Like Me (ATLM) was created to support minority-identifying therapy clients, minority-identifying therapists in the greater Asheville community. A Therapist Like Me is working as a community within our community to navigate systems of oppression. We support therapists of color, of LGBTQ+ identifications, with disabilities, and all other forms of minority (marginalized)

identification and help clients find a therapist that they can best identify with. To accommodate the therapist and consumer we also provide therapy vouchers for those in need of financial assistance. Working on Wellness is an expansion of the services provided by ATLM and is a three-prong approach to increase medical, behavioral, and mental health in underserved communities in Buncombe County. The three prongs are health awareness and education, mental health community outreach, and health and wellness trainings for minoritized mental health professionals.

Project Plan*

Explain how the project will be structured and implemented, including timeframe.

The three-prong approach to Working on Wellness includes Health Awareness and Education (HAE), Mental Health Community Outreach (MHCO), and Health and Wellness Trainings (HWT) for minority-identifying mental health professionals. For HAE, ATLM will host a series of workshops and informational sessions led by BIPOC medical professionals with specific knowledge on COVID and its health effects on marginalized individuals to underserved communities in Buncombe County. ATLM will host four workshops per quarter in three major communities. MHCO expands the voucher service ATLM currently offers to support marginalized clients who need assistance paying for counseling with therapists who belong to similar minority identities. ATLM will also secure a building and finance a small staff to offer counseling by BIPOC and marginalized therapist who are on our directory, offer supervision services to those same therapists, and contract with schools, churches, and other agencies in Buncombe County to host Pop-Up Clinics. The last aspect of MHCO is purchasing a school bus and transforming it into Wellness on Wheels, which will travel to schools, churches, housing communities, community centers, businesses, and agencies in underserved parts of Buncombe County, providing a brief introduction on mental health, information on counseling, and brief counseling services when a need arises. Wellness on Wheels will initially be used to share COVID and vaccination information. HWT will consist of monthly trainings offered by ATLM clinicians and contractors in the areas of supervision, internships, skill and intervention, multiculturalism, ethics, and substance abuse. Funds will help cover the costs the trainers and elite BIPOC clinicians, ensuring quality services are provided to people of Buncombe County.

Timeline:

10/21, Finding and renting a space for drop-in clinics and supervision, hire staff purchase and renovate a bus.

10/21 – 12/21, Increase voucher availability, offer the first series of health sessions for underserved communities in Buncombe County, advertise the new initiatives coming in 2022.

1/22 – 12/26, Continue to offer the vouchers for counseling and establish contracts with schools, churches, businesses, housing, and agencies to host Wellness of Wheels stop, continue our Health Program by bringing in medical professionals such as Dr. Nadine Burk Harris to talk about Adverse Childhood Effects and how to manage them and Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett to discuss how she was able to help develop the COVID-19 vaccine.

4/22 -12/26, Offer counseling services, community mental health workshops, and mental health trainings in our building and out in the community.

7/22 – 12/5, ATLM will have contracted therapist offer counseling sessions, work with interns, and facilitate community Pop-Up clinics and trainings sessions throughout the duration of the Working on Wellness initiative.

Statement of Need*

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

In Asheville the Black population constitutes 11% but 22% live below poverty, 29% of households have no access to a vehicle, 19% are stopped by the police (3X the rate of White citizens), 45% were involved in a police officer using force when stopped, 68 % suspended from school, and 46% arrested for marijuana use (when use rates the same for Whites and Blacks). Black adults are 20 percent more likely to report serious psychological distress any other racial group and have the highest reported rate of mental illnesses (Mental Health Association, MHA). Since the end of May 2020, nearly every racial/ethnic group has been experiencing consistently higher rates of suicidal ideation than the 2019 average according to the most recent MHA Screening data. MHA also found that loneliness or isolation was most likely to be selected as one of the top three things contributing to the individual's mental health concerns and 21% of Blacks/African Americans cited racism as one of the three contributing factors. Despite the mental health concerns and issues in the minority population, in 2018, 8.7 percent of African American and Latino adults received mental health services compared with 18.6 percent of non-Hispanic whites. These numbers indicate the growing need for services directed toward minority-identifying individuals and the need for ATLM to expand the services offered. Having Wellness of Wheels will allow ATLM to go into the community and meet people where they are. Many people do not have access to medical and mental health services or are wary of using such services because those providing aid do not look like them and the tragic history of the medical profession and BIPOC individuals. Working within the different neighborhoods, schools, churches, and businesses to educate community members and having similarly identifying therapists decreases the stigma and increase awareness so more people deciding to invest in their medical and mental health.

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.

Prior to COVID-19, research had extensively documented the impact of discrimination on living conditions, work, physical health and mental health. COVID-19 increased these already existing issues worsening stress and associated mental health concerns. In 2019, Black persons reported not having enough food three times and Hispanic persons two times more frequently than White persons (USDA). COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Blacks and Hispanics in terms of the illness and death and the lasting effects of the illness on individuals and those who have lost someone will need to be addressed. Researchers have identified stigma, including harassment and discrimination, and social or structural determinants of health (access to housing, healthy food, transportation, and health care) as factors that increase the risk for chronic stress among persons in minority groups and affecting their mental and physical health, all of which were exacerbated by COVID-19. The need for tailored interventions for racial and ethnic minority groups is essential during and post COVID-19. SAMSHA (2020) described in a report submitted by its Office of Behavioral Health Equity stated "given the existing impediments to care for Blacks and Latinos due to social determinants of health, COVID-19 pandemic will place those with behavioral health problems at even higher vulnerability. Blacks and Latinos have lower access to needed treatment, often terminate treatment prematurely, and experience less culturally responsive care." The programs prosed by ATLM address these vulnerable populations. The experience of ATLM in the area of promoting mental health for minority-identifying persons, positions us to expand these services to the communities in which we currently have a small presence. Programs will focus on COVID-19 and reducing the spread throughout vulnerable populations and offer education and therapeutic opportunities to those reluctant in seeking such services.

Population Served*

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

Mental health was identified as the number one priority in the 2018 Buncombe County Health Assessment Buncombe. Several key measures lead to this decision including the percentage of the population with no insurance (12.5%), low numbers of mental health care providers (1 provider for every 190 people), 26% of the population responding that they do not get needed social and emotional support and 16.3% unable to obtain needed mental health services double from 2015. Buncombe County also has a high suicide rate continues to trend up (17 per 100,000). Research has found that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) influence a person's health and mental health. In Buncombe County 39.9% of adults experienced emotional abuse during childhood and 23.5% of adults experienced household mental illness during Childhood, also considered an ACE. Recently researchers and therapists have included Adverse Community Experiences which include social/cultural environments, physical/built environments, and economic environments. Therefore, therapists are becoming more in tune with how life experiences with poverty, discrimination, lack of mobility opportunities, poor housing and community violence influence people's mental health. A Therapist Like Me responds in a way that destigmatizes oppressed identities in our community. We center these identities among our therapist members, support therapists of color, provide a directory of minority-identifying therapists to our community, and provide therapy vouchers for clients sharing similar identities. Specifically, ATLM will focus on the 44,402 BIPOC and more than 1500 LGBTQ+ residents in Buncombe County.

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.

The ultimate impact of this project is to increase access to Health and Wellness for BIPOC and other minority identifying people in Buncombe County. Our objectives

1. Increase the number of positive, safe spaces for people of minority-identities to seek therapy - this will be tracked through the number of therapists engaging with our training course and Interns not Allies training, as well as how many community partners, therapists, and organizations are impacted by those we train.
2. Increase the number of minority-identifying people receiving mental health and wellness information and services-this will be track through self-report surveys from both therapist and community members.
3. 20 therapists trained who are added to the directory or become licensed at their specified level and/or received certification credentials for specialized training and/or become community trainers themselves.

Evaluation*

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

Surveys on the reduction of barriers, the number of clients seen each quarter (with a steady increase), the number of vouchers used (increasing over time), number of schools, churches, and other agencies that host mental health activities, and the number of people that attend the trainings, pop-clinics, and other educational events will be used to measure the success of the program. Quarterly reports will be given to Buncombe County and the ATLM Board of Directors. The ATLM staff and board will use the quarterly results to identify strengths to build upon and weaknesses to address as a way to assure ongoing effectiveness of the program. When gaps are identified in the services provided ATLM staff will increase outreach to the underserved communities

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?

While data is not available on a local level for understanding the effects of race, gender, gender identity, and poverty on mental health, national statistics show the need for therapy that addresses these Adverse Community Experiences. Black and African American people living below poverty are twice as likely to report serious psychological distress than those living over 2x the poverty level. Black and African American teenagers are more likely to attempt suicide than White teenagers. In 2018, 16% of Black/African American people reported having a mental illness, and 22.4 percent of those reported a serious mental illness. Blacks/African Americans hold beliefs related to stigma, psychological openness, and help-seeking, which in turn affects their coping behaviors. The National Alliance on Mental Health estimates that untreated mental illness costs the country up to \$300 billion every year due to losses in productivity. If minorities, who already experience discrimination, lower wages, job discrimination, continue to suffer from untreated mental health issues their mental health becomes another social harm. By addressing the systemic and individual trauma felt by minority-identifying communities and exasperated by COVID 19 ATLM is addressing the mental and physical health barriers, so BIPOC and other minority populations can effectively recover from the physical, emotional, and economic stress caused by COVID-19.

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.

We have a relationship with Building Bridges, Racial Equity Inclusion, My Sistah Taught Me That, and Kairos' Racial Equity program led by Naomi Tutu. Additionally, we have collaborated and/or partnered with Blue Ridge Pride, Tranzmission, Camp Lakey Gap, the Veterans Administration, Our Voice, Helpmate, YWCA, Lenoir-Rhyne, Western North Carolina University, UNCA (including their office of accessibility), and Montreat. We have established relationships with Everybody Yoga, Land of Sky, and The Council on Aging in Asheville.

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.

ATLM has provided 37 vouchers for eligible clients and have 41 minority-identifying therapists in our directory. Recently we expanded our staff to include an administrative assistant, contract grant writer, and bookkeeper which provides greater capacity to manage the expanding voucher and training programs. We have an accountant who manages our funds and is familiar with federal fund management. Our staff has extensive experience. Dr. Noreal Armstrong, CEO, earned her PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision and is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor Supervisor (LMHCS), Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC), a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC). As a former Associate Professor in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program at Montreat College, she has a strong research agenda in the areas of multiculturalism, deaf populations, substance abuse, adolescent development, and women in the professorate and is passionate about advocacy, mentoring, and educating future counselors. Catie Beaulieu, works on trainings and is the founder and former CEO of ATLM. She holds an M.B.A in Business Administration and M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. In 2014, she began work at Gestalt Wellness Studio in Asheville NC,

where she is an owner, consultant and trainer and has her own practice, Faith Beaulieu Private Practice. Lauren Andrews is the Administrative & Program Coordinator for A Therapist Like Me. She is working on a Human Resources Management at Asheville/Buncombe Community College. She has been an Administrative Specialist and Clubland Editor for Mountain Xpress and was a marketing liaison responsible for assisting with revenue ideas and collection, as well as community liaison responsible for directing all inquiries to the proper persons and resources. With our organization, she handles core training, events, meetings, marketing, and fundraising as well as networking with businesses, seeking out events, trainings, workshops, and funding opportunities.

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-ATLM.pdf

Special Considerations*

Provide any other information that might assist the County in its selection.

ATLM has continually grown since its beginning in 2019 as we serve the minority population in Buncombe County.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Recovery-Funds-budget-ATLM.pdf

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

Organization Name:	
Project Name:	
Amount Requested:	

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 1,574,040.00		
Buncombe County Tipping Point	\$ 5,000.00	Confirmed	Vouchers
Dogwood Health Trust	\$25,000	Confirmed	training
Co Think	\$ 3,500.00	Confirmed	Vouchers
Donations	\$ 100,000.00	Confirmed	\$20,000 a year used for Vouchers and salary
Workshop Fees	\$ 100,000.00	Confirmed	funds used for workshops for professionals and salary
Dogwood Health Trust	\$ 125,000.00	Pending	salary and training
Gamma Mu Foundation	\$ 3,500.00	Pending	Vouchers
CFWNC Human Services	\$ 25,000.00	Pending	Vouchers
Grants over the next 5 years	\$ 520,000.00	Pending	Salary and vouchers
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
Total	\$ 2,481,040.00		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Salary	\$491,640.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 741,640.00	Operating	Funds Requested for .5 FTE (ED, Admin, Bus Driver) 1 FTE(Assistant)
Vouchers	\$200,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 700,000.00	operating	For assisting those in need with payments for services
Contracts	\$ 276,000.00		\$ 276,000.00	Operating	Cleaning and supervision
Facility	\$ 177,600.00		\$ 177,600.00	Operating	Rent, utilities
Bus	\$20,200.00		\$ 20,200.00	Capital	Bus for Wellness on Wheels
Mental Health Community Outreach	\$ 18,600.00		\$ 18,600.00	Operating	Cost for materials and gas
Health Awareness and Education	\$ 168,000.00		\$ 168,000.00	operating	Workshops and Materials (stipends for presenters)
Health and Wellness Trainings	-	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 85,000.00	operating	Training for therpaists
Vehicle Gas and Maintenance	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00	Operating	gas for neighborhood trips and maintenance
Supplies and Outreach	\$ 69,000.00	\$ 69,000.00	\$ 138,000.00	Operating	office supplies and outreach/marketing materials
Indirect	\$ 143,000.00		\$ 143,000.00	Operating	indirect overhead
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
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Total			\$ 2,478,040.00		