

# Equity Substance Abuse and Mental Health Support

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*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

## ***Umoja Health, Wellness, and Justice Collective***

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# Application Form

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## Question Group

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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.

Equity Substance Abuse and Mental Health Support

## Amount of Funds Requested\*

\$1,783,500.00

## Recovery Fund Eligible Category\*

Please select one:

Enhance behavioral and mental health services

## Brief Project Description\*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Umoja and partners will offer a multifaceted system of supports to address the complex mental health and substance abuse needs of Black and Latinx community members.

- Crisis support and stabilization services including 24/7 hotline and mobile unit staffed by trauma-informed Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPPS)

- Triage of needs and initiation of treatment plans through culturally aligned Comprehensive Clinical Assessments
  - Supportive transitions to and from substance abuse rehabilitation services
  - A wide range of psychoeducational options to build awareness of the impact of stress, trauma, and oppression and practice tools to promote healing and recovery
    - One on one support or therapy to support healing and growth for individualized concerns and circumstances
    - Group support or therapy to build connection and recovery with others who share a common thread of lived experience
    - Ongoing support groups to promote continued connection and accountability

## Project Plan\*

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

Many components of the project are currently in place and producing the desired results. Umoja will soon be a Vaya Health provider allowing Umoja to bill for services. The funding for this project is in part requested to sustain the existing structure while building the capacity as an established provider and to increase the capacity of Umoja and partners to provide services to a wider population.

**Peer Support Specialist Certification** The current process for certifying Peer Support Specialists, which has produced 37 CPPSs under the Isaac Coleman Grant, Umoja will certify at least 20 Culturally aligned, trauma-informed Peer Support Specialists in the next year. Process includes 60 hours of specialized training in partnership with others community agencies. CPPSs work not only at Umoja, in many mental health agencies throughout the community.

**Crisis Unit** Umoja is already offering crisis support after hours, as individuals consistently call the main number and receive support from the Executive Director. This process is not sufficient nor sustainable. Umoja has partnered with RHA, the current provider of mobile crisis services for the area. 3 CPPSs from the most recent certification process will have a paid 3-month internship at RHA, splitting time evenly between RHA services and the mobile crisis hotline team. This collaboration is set to begin immediately.

Unit will cover 6pm-6am weekdays and 6pm Friday - 6am Monday. It will be fully operational within the next year, adding positions every 3-4 months as RHA internships are completed, the first addition in 3-4 month. A staff of at least 10 will be required, each shift staffed with three people to include at least one: male, female, Spanish speaker, and LGBTQA+ competent ally.

**Support Group Education** Umoja and Partners have created several successful curricula that are currently offered via contract with BCDHHS to DSS involved parents. Funding will provide immediate expansion of course offerings to a wider audience.

**Sustainable infrastructure** Umoja is transition from full grant funding to revenue funding via insurance billing. To strengthen infrastructure, Umoja will hire full time Clinical Director and Director of Programs within 3 months. Once staff are in place, work with consultant regarding strategic planning, organizational assessment and system design, and other infrastructure supports.

**Competency Framework** The process of building culturally aligned community competencies will be a community led effort in the format of a taskforce. Taskforce will research existing model, create opportunities for community input, develop competencies and accountability measures, create pilot project, adjust based on findings of pilot project, offer training, consultation and coaching to providers interested in gaining competence in this framework.

## 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 2018, 16% of Black and 16% of Latinx people reported having a mental illness, and 22.4 % of those reported a serious mental illness over the past year[1]. Only 1 in 3 Black people who need mental health care receives it [2] and 90% of Black individuals over the age of 12 with a substance abuse disorder did not access treatment [1]. The mental health system has not demonstrated an ability to care for Black and Latinx people with compassion, centering our humanity.

Black and Latinx people often receive poorer quality of care from white providers. The traumas of oppression are not often addressed in the current mental health models. Bias is evident in treatment and diagnosis [2] [3]. Stigma and awareness of mental health issues are barriers. The current system disparages the health and wellness of Black and Latinx communities.

There are about 5,900 Black and 6,300 Latinx people living in Asheville. If 16% sought care, that would be about 1,950 people. It would require 97 providers with caseload of 20 to provide care. There is not an official Black and Latinx provider registry; however, the local director of therapists of color at A Therapist Like Me lists 12 therapists who offer services based on racial and ethnic identity. There is a significant shortage of clinicians of color.

CPPS offer a unique support centered on lived experience. The competency framework will increase the quality of care for Black and Latinx people by white providers.

1Mental Health America <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/black-and-african-american-communities-and-mental-health>

2American Psychiatric Association <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/cultural-competency/education/mental-health-facts>

3Mental Health America. (n.d.). Latinx/Hispanic Communities and Mental Health. Retrieved 2021 from <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/latinxhispanic-communities-and-mental-health>

5 NAMI <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/Black-African-American>

## 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.

It is well established in research studies, news reports, and in the voice of those with lived experience that the pandemic has disproportionately harmed Black and Latinx communities. Not only were the physical and economic effects of the pandemic disproportionately placed upon Black and Latinx communities, the emotional and traumatic toll of the pandemic was as well. The repeated messaging in the media that provides a constant reminder that Black and Latinx people are disproportionately affected by the virus, coupled with the reality that the risk of exposure is greater, as many of society's essential workers are Black and Latinx people, is a real threat to Black and Latinx lives, not just perceived. Black and Latinx people have been required to courageously go beyond the threat and harm to access what is needed, which is an oppressive trauma experience. This toll compounds on top of the ongoing racism and oppression experienced by Black and Latinx people.

The Center for Disease Control indicates that "addressing psychosocial stressors, mental health conditions, and substance misuse among U.S. adults during the COVID-19 pandemic is important, as are interventions tailored for racial and ethnic minority groups." The funding of this project will directly address the mental health priorities for Black and Latinx populations by providing culturally aligned, trauma-informed, and peer led mental health services.

## Population Served\*

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

Umoja currently provide services to those who identify as Black as well as some individuals who identify as Latinx and white. Umoja services individuals who are experiencing emotional distress, those who have unmet mental health needs, justice and child welfare involvement individuals and families, and those who desire additional support to create resilience and integration into life. The majority of Umoja's population are considered low wealth, less than 150% of the poverty line. Umoja has plans to intentionally expand services to the Latinx community soon.

Individuals will seek services through Umoja by walk in as well as referral from DHHS, justice services- both adult and juvenile, school systems, workforce development initiatives, etc.

At full capacity, Umoja and partners will serve at least 100 individuals each year and will include the highest need, most impacted individuals in the community.

## 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.

Umoja and partners will implement a multifaceted system of supports to address the complex and competing factors that impact the mental health of Black and Latinx community members.

- 45 CPPSs will be actively providing services to the Black and Latinx communities in various capacities.
- Those who receive services from Umoja will have an understanding of the impact of stress, trauma, and oppression on their lives, confidence in their ability to manage the effects of stress, trauma and oppression, and connection to others with a shared experience, all of which supports a healthy and productive life. Umoja and partners will provide opportunities for self-assessment of all individuals engages in services. The assessment will provide an opportunity for individuals to rate their understanding of trauma and the impact on their self, behaviors, and overall life, their confidence in managing the effects of trauma and everyday stress, and their connectedness with others of their racial/ethnic identity. The measure of success will include an overall increase all areas.
  - Black and Latinx individuals will receive culturally aligned services that address their unique circumstances within the context of racial and oppressive traumas. Several measures will be tracked.
    - o The existence of a completed culturally aligned competency framework is a measure of success.
    - o The existence of a registry with at least 10 providers who have been deemed competent in cultural alignment based on the created framework.
    - o Black and Latinx individuals who seek services both within Umoja and in outside agencies will rate individual providers and the service agency based on the competency measures that are yet to be determined. The measure of success will include rates of satisfaction or highly satisfied on all areas of cultural alignment competency.

## Evaluation\*

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

Regarding the number of CPPS serving the Black and Latinx communities, the names and places of work/service will be tracked via spreadsheet and updated quarterly to ensure quality and support efforts to meet goal.

Regarding measuring growth through the self-assessment, a survey will be given at set intervals throughout the service delivery period: at initiation of services, once at least one month into service delivery, and again at discharge of services. All survey responses will be entered in spreadsheet or google form and tabulated quarterly to determine what the data mean and any trends

Regarding measuring the culturally aligned competency framework:

- The number of providers trained in the framework

- The number of providers who complete coaching/consultation of the framework
- The names of providers who complete the competency framework and accountability measures, thereby receiving the status as competent in cultural alignment
  - the satisfaction of culturally aligned competencies, a survey will be given at set intervals throughout the service delivery period: once at least one month into service delivery and again at the discharge of services. All survey responses will be entered in spreadsheet or google form and tabulated quarterly to determine what the data mean and any trends

## 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?

This project addresses disparities in the mental health system that directly impact the Black and Latinx communities. As indicated in the statement of need and the link to COVID-19 sections, the current mental health system continues to harm Black and Latinx people by leaving the traumas of racism and oppression unaddressed in treatment, providing poor quality and culturally incompetent care that results in misdiagnosis, increased psychiatric crisis and hospitalizations, and inaccessible services, and by perpetuating a dynamic that requires Black and Latinx people to courageously rise beyond the harm to access services needed for healing and recovery. This project provides financial support as Umoja and partners fortify their existing services as established mental health provider, offers the ability to respond in this moment to the existing needs by offering expansion to current offerings, and allows for voice of lived experience to reclaim the narrative of what is needed and how needs should be met, which is equitable and just in that “there should be nothing about us with us.”

After the completion of this project, Umoja and partners will be positioned to be competitive in the mental health service delivery system, offering culturally aligned, peer-led services that address the whole person. Black and Latinx people will have the ability to access treatment that focuses on their complexity and appreciates the intersection of personal and collective traumas.

## 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.

Umoja will operate within a well-established network of partners. Through this project, subcontractors are as follows:

- Operation Gateway: will provide Community Health Worker to support Returning Citizens
- Jordan Peer Recovery: will provide sober living supports
- From the Ashes: will provide Comprehensive Clinical Assessments, group and individual therapy
- Sister Soul Sessions: will provide counseling sessions
- Cassandra Ingram CPPS/QP: will provide Rebuilding for Healing curriculum
- Walker Wilson Consulting: will provide strategic planning and organizational assessment services, program design and evaluation, policy creation and update direction, and leadership coaching
  - Murmuration Consulting: will provide curriculum development support, administrative support, and offer training and consultation around systems change

Umoja will continue to receive collaboration through unfunded partnerships with the following:

- Resources for Resilience: will continue to provide Reconnect for Resilience™ trainings to staff and clients
- Vaya Health: collaboration and implementation of provider services

## 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.

Umoja has a unique history of creating effective partnerships that produce the promised results. This project follows this pattern, leaning into the work of many to access the collective wisdom of a range of lived experiences and professional knowledge and skill, and the accountability of many parts seeking a shared vision.

Umoja and partners provide many of services outlined in this project and have had great success. This project provides an expansion of services and to allow for dedicated staff to continue the work. This project also allows Umoja direct staff to continue service delivery without interruption while management shifts gears from fully grant funded to incorporate revenue streams. This will increase the capacity of Umoja to serve the Black and Latinx communities.

37 CPPSs currently work in the community after receiving training and support from Umoja through the certification process. This alone is evidence that the program is affective.

Umoja's curriculums have proven effective to support growth and change for participants, evidenced by BCDHHS's plans to renew the existing contract. Many families who have received services through Umoja have made progress on their DSS case plans and in several cases, have reunified with their children.

Strengthening infrastructure will also increase the capacity of Umoja to continue to provide services beyond this project. Walker Wilson Consulting has a history of supporting non-profits and has a track record of exceptional outcomes.

The existence of a culturally aligned competency framework will provide a common language and shared expectations within Umoja and with community partners. The taskforce who will shape this framework will be members of the community who have years of experience in providing culturally aligned services and navigating the world of mental health. The product of this collaboration solid and change the shape of mental health service delivery in our community and possibly beyond.

## 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.

Umoja.budget.covid.relief.xlsx

## Special Considerations\*

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

Umoja has been providing innovative and essential services for over a year. This project request is to enable Umoja to continue this work while transitioning to a mental health provider. Umoja and partners offer

services that are not available anywhere else for the Black and Latinx population with this level of quality and intention.

## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

- Umoja.budget.covid.relief.xlsx

