

# IMPACT-Rebuilding our Communities and Resiliency through SEL and Mental Health Support

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*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

## ***Asheville City Schools Foundation***

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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. To date, Buncombe County has awarded projects totaling \$23,093,499, leaving a balance of \$27,639,791 available to award.

Visit <http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding> for details.

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](#)

## Organization Type\*

Public

## Nonprofit documentation

If nonprofit, attach IRS Determination Letter or other proof of nonprofit status.

## Name of Project.\*

IMPACT-Rebuilding our Communities and Resiliency through SEL and Mental Health Support

## New/Updated Proposal\*

Is this a new project proposal or an updated version of a proposal submitted during the earlier (July 2021) Recovery Funding RFP?

Updated version of previously submitted proposal

## Amount of Funds Requested\*

\$800,000.00

## Category\*

Please select one:

- Affordable Housing
- Aging/Older Adults
- Business Support/Economic Development
- Environmental/Climate
- Homelessness
- K-12 Education
- Infrastructure and/or Broadband
- Mental Health/Substance Use
- NC Pre-K Expansion
- Workforce

Mental Health/Substance Use

## Brief Project Description\*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

The initiative of the IMPACT program-Inspire More Powerful Achievements through Community Trust- is to have a positive IMPACT in our city, communities, and schools by repairing and rebuilding trust and resiliency within our village. IMPACT teams will offer a blend of treatment modalities to provide families with the resources needed to gain and sustain the mental capacity to excel in combining social/emotional & physical wellness resulting in academic progression. The program looks to use case management, mental health counseling, learning, health, and independent living skills offered by relatable and reliable staff, as well as outreach programs/events to strengthen low-income community gaps exacerbated by COVID 19. The team will assist the communities in identifying tools & resources to navigate systems & improve functioning in familial, social, and educational domains while providing support for the community by extending services to the home and community directly.

## Project Plan\*

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

If awarded, IMPACT will immediately begin to disseminate free mental health treatment offered by a team of relatable experts and specialists. The intent of IMPACT is to assist low-income community members in utilizing resources to set & activate goals that result in positive community participation & decrease negative

symptoms of systematic and economic decline. The IMPACT team is a diverse team of professionals with backgrounds & expertise in SW, MH counseling, community development & homelessness prevention/care. Utilizing the team's expertise, the mission of IMPACT will be realized by providing in-house all-around treatment to improve the overall health & well-being of each community member. This, in turn, will strengthen the community from within & assist in decreasing the growing violence attributed to these said communities. According to crimegrade.org, Asheville NC is above the national average for violent crimes. IMPACT will focus its efforts to address residual mental health issues that have been exacerbated by COVID 19 and that have contributed to the increase of violence, substance use, and crime within our communities. The team also provides skills training through psycho-education & will offer support throughout the school's MTSS process. IMPACT will provide a trauma-informed, therapeutic academic space within their alternative to the suspension program; this resolves the issue of students going home, hence losing more academic time and increasing the achievement gap. Our IMPACT program will work in conjunction with school systems to report progress on a quarterly basis; using goal-setting structures to quantify progress with review dates every 30 days. Educational measures will be set and shared with schools based upon IMPACT's strategic planning and individual goal setting. An example of this is if a student is having issues staying in class & is often sent to the principal's office, IMPACT will assess the situation, set goals to identify & assist by offering strategies & tools to support students in reducing the number of disciplinary office referrals and out of school suspensions. There are some cases where the student's behavior has warranted a short-term or long-term suspension or expulsion. These expulsions tend to lead to more idle time & activities for the youth, therefore increasing the opportunity for unsupervised time for young people can result in engagement in crime. IMPACT will offer a place where the students would work online & remotely but in a therapeutic and supportive space. Students will learn how to better manage their emotions, effectively communicate & the importance of self-value & worth. Once this measure is met the team can then assist the family in addressing their psycho-educational and therapeutic needs as a whole. These efforts will be supported by working in conjunction with housing, the schools, Asheville city professionals, and community members in efforts to positively impact client's hierarchy of needs.

## Statement of Need\*

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

There has been a need to intentionally support the disproportionalities of our students, and communities of color for decades. The achievement and opportunity gaps are evidence that what we have attempted in the past has not worked as there has not been a decrease in gaps, instead those numbers are on a continual incline. The emotional wellness of all people, particularly people of color, has been negatively impacted even more since the COVID 19 pandemic. IMPACT hopes to positively address the wellness of those who otherwise would not have access to therapeutic resources offered by relatable staff and clinicians. It has been shared with the public numerous times over the last 10 years that the achievement gap in Asheville City Schools is one of the highest in the state. Students of color make up only 18% of the entire Asheville City Schools student body but are the majority in regards to those students who are a part of the achievement gap. This continues to be a horrific and true reality for many in the city of Asheville. IMPACT will intentionally support the academic, social, emotional, mental, and physical needs of our clients by offering, therapy, case management, an alternative to suspension space, community outreach forums and engagement events. Data from Buncombe County showed the racial achievement gaps at Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools were disproportionate by class and race. In 2018, 20% of black students at Asheville City Schools met grade level proficiency compared to more than 80% of white students. WLOS Apr 19, 2021, Our IMPACT team will intentionally address these needs and poor outcomes by enhancing relative and relatable resources, mental health programming, and case management. We will fulfil the community asks and the desires of many to have opportunities offered to them by people of color or those with lived experiences; as stated by a parent "someone who will understand them me without judgment".

## 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.

Health equity is when all members of society enjoy a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Public health policies and programs centered around the specific needs of communities can promote health equity. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought social and racial injustice and inequity to the forefront of public health. It has highlighted that health equity is still not a reality as COVID-19 has unequally affected many racial and ethnic minority groups, putting them more at risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19. [1], [2] The term “racial and ethnic minority groups” includes people of color with a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. Negative experiences are common to many people within these groups, and some social determinants of health have historically prevented them from having fair opportunities for economic, physical, and emotional health. [3] Social determinants of health are the conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, play, and worship that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes. (Stokes EK,2020; Killerby ME 2020; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Social Determinants of Health 2020)

Health equity includes mental health. IMPACT will address the mental/social/emotional/behavioral health needs within our communities. The wellness of our students will be supported by offering therapeutic spaces to address trauma and behaviors. During the pandemic, several mental health services ended abruptly for our community members and students; causing an even wider mental health equity divide for POC and their counterparts. The community mental health agencies continue to be challenged with hiring qualified staff to offer these services. IMPACT has qualified team member to support clients immediately. If awarded, IMPACT will be able to offer its services for free of charge to participants. Payment for needed resources continues to be a major barrier to accessing wellness services.

## Population Served\*

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

Our IMPACT teams will serve students, families, and communities that have been negatively impacted mentally and economically by systematic barriers and racism which have been exacerbated by the COVID 19 pandemic. Our primary focus is to serve the school and communities experiencing mental and social-emotional illness, that are also due to systematic injustices and lack of access to the relevant resource. We plan to hire relatable staff to make up a minimum of 3 IMPACT wellness teams (each team consists of 4 members-1 Clinician, 2 Community Health Workers, and 1 Social Worker) who will offer opportunities to see themselves differently, in a system that has not been favorable or supportive currently or in the past. Each team will have the capacity to serve up to 10-12 students at a time within the school and community settings. When proven successful we will look to add 2 additional IMPACT teams within the next 3 months, having a total of 5 teams by the end of the fiscal year.

## 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.

\* Increase the social and mental wellness of students within the schools and home communities by 75-80% with an 85% goal completion rate and a high percentage of positive growth documented on Purpose Intervention and Effectiveness (PIE) goal sheets.

\*Aggressively decreasing the achievement and opportunity gaps of our beneficiaries as evidenced by the high IMPACT wellness participation rate. Caseloads stay consistently high in number with 10-12 participants per team.

\*Between 75-80% percent of beneficiaries will see growth and improvements academically and behaviorally as evidenced by a decrease in discipline referrals and an increase in community pride and engagement.

The IMPACT teams will work very closely together with schools and community health agencies to ensure there are common and realistic goals shared, and agreed upon, and that we have student, family, and community buy-in. Each team member will complete PIE (purpose, intervention, and effectiveness) notes to track their progression or lack thereof on their personal and wellness goals. Each team will also track the number of enhanced mental and physical health referrals made for clients. IMPACT teams will attend school meetings per parental consent, extracurricular activities, and other social gatherings to track if students are utilizing skills taught and modeled by team members and to witness if clients are working on their personal goals in different settings. Teams will meet weekly to discuss and staff clients on a case-by-case basis and to get team feedback and expert suggestions from their peers. Team members will meet and work with students a minimum of 3 days a week, with goal progression or regression driving the student's service time.

## Evaluation\*

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

IMPACT team coordinators will review weekly wellness goal data/notes to measure the total number of students making progress. Coordinators will additionally offer training and guidance to team members when deemed appropriate and necessary. IMPACT teams will work to re-engage students and families in mental and social wellness services by offering relatable, additional support, advocacy, and guidance when necessary. IMPACT teams will review the academic performance of students consistently and frequently as well as guide families and community members in regard to their goals. The families' goals will be measured and documented as well, as we know if we grow and guide parents; the students will achieve.

Grades and discipline referrals will be constantly reviewed in order for the student progress/regression to be compared to their baseline and for the opportunity to assess and document social, emotional, academic, and economic improvement that may be correlated with their participation on the IMPACT team. To measure changes in students' opportunity thresholds, surveys questioning their levels of achievement and their abilities to succeed will be administered at the beginning and end of their service time. Qualitative data regarding students' growth will be evaluated through student, guardian, support staff (coach, aunt, counselor, etc.) feedback, observations, and meetings. We will also review and discuss the students' academic, behavioral, and attendance data frequently. The students' involvement in developing and tracking their own goal plan is imperative and expected of each of them with the guidance from IMPACT. The coordinator will be responsible for compiling and keeping track of this data over the extent of the funding period. Assessment findings related to program initiatives shall be used to inform the coordinator and team members of possible changes needed to strengthen the program and/or service delivery. The teams will move and document accordingly.

## 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?

Our teams will offer students quality and relevant support services. We will work to ensure each student has access to wellness resources that are needed for the beneficiaries to be successful. Staff will always keep the students and families at the forefront of our minds, offering opportunities for alternative outcomes and increased mental and academic wellness. The teams will encourage mental wellness and excellent achievement by changing the ideas and stigma associated with such in the communities of color. Teams will be made up of people with lived experiences who can support students and families to see themselves differently by being modeled by them and their leadership. By offering the students and communities a voice around the table, we will create equitable dialogue and a realistic baseline to guide our goals and outcomes. Relatable support raised expectations and equitable opportunities will create a chance for positive and impactful change within spaces that feel genuine and where everyone can be their authentic selves without judgment.

## 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 will continue to work very closely with key partners such as:

Asheville Housing Authority who will rent us space within the community for IMPACT teams to work from on a weekly basis with the intention being to meet clients where they are within their home spaces.

LCMHC(A) or LCSW(A) offering group and/or individual therapeutic services. If awarded IMPACT will pay the clinicians 35-40 dollars per client/ max of 12 clients/seeing them 2 times per month. contingent on service contracts and levels of expertise. (960 per month) IMPACT will offer \$100 per family, peer group session.

Community Health Workers -20-25 dollars an hour contingent on service contract and levels of expertise. 20 hours a week (1,600 a month)

Social Workers-25 dollars an hour 20 hours a week (2,000 a month)

IMPACT Qualified Mental Health Professionals- 30 dollars an hour/25 hours a week (3,000 a month)

Local Doctors Offices, Local Afterschool Programs, Local Mentor Groups, and Youth Athletic Leagues; we will look to these community partners for referrals to and from our teams. Communication and collaboration are key in repairing community relationships.

It is our responsibility to continuously seek support and resources from our communities that will be beneficial to helping participants reach their wellness goals. With that being said we will reach out to others such as United Way, AB-tech, Asheville City School Foundation, the City of Asheville as the opportunities present themselves.

## 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.

The IMPACT teams will be under the direction of the Executive Director. The Executive Director has both clinical and school licensers and experience. They shall have the capacity and education to assume the roles of each team member if needed. IMPACT team members are natives who have lived experiences within the schools and communities here in Asheville. Lived experiences cannot be taught and that in and of itself sets

our IMPACT teams apart from others. With the diverse expertise and backgrounds of the IMPACT team members, I am confident that with passion, loyalty and hard work they will be able to live up to the mission as it is stated; (Inspire More Powerful Achievements through Community Trust) to have a positive IMPACT in our city, communities, and schools by repairing and rebuilding trust and resiliency within our village. Together we have therapeutic, trauma-informed, crisis management, restorative practices, community engagement and SEL training, experience, certifications, and licensures. All current team members have relevant lived experiences and others have some level of higher education. All team members have the capacity to guide other schools and community members to deliver impactful support services to our clients.

If awarded, IMPACT looks to collaborate with the Asheville City Schools Foundation to help with the management of all federal funds.

## 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.

IMPACT Budget (1).pdf

## Special Considerations\*

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

I would like to take the time to thank everyone involved for offering this opportunity to address the mental wellness of some of our most vulnerable students and families; particularly those who make up the achievement and opportunity gaps. I am elated that the state is paying close attention to the correlation between mental wellness and academic achievement. It has forced us to take a closer look at the epidemic people of color are asked to "live with" daily. The truth of the matter is without resources and professional support we can't live; we just do our best to simply survive.

With Asheville City Schools' challenging achievement gap, its discipline disproportionalities, and the lack of resources along with the climate of our housing communities, I could not let this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity pass me by. The pandemic has heightened these deficits and there doesn't seem to be any long-term sustainable solutions available. Our teams would like to change that narrative. If given the chance, we could, with additional staff, aggressively work on closing the achievement and opportunities gaps by building capacity and resiliency through SEL and mental health initiatives in our communities and schools. While I may not be an expert at writing proposals, I am an expert at supporting our most disenfranchised student populations, as I too am a part of that number. To have the opportunity to positively IMPACT the communities in which we grew up would be life-changing for many, ourselves included as we aspire to give back to our youth in a major way. Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

- IMPACT Budget (1).pdf

