

# Low-barrier mental health counseling for vulnerable, COVID-affected communities

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*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

## ***Jewish Family Services WNC***

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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\*

Nonprofit

## Nonprofit documentation

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

IRS Determination Letter with SFB address correction.pdf

## Name of Project.\*

Low-barrier mental health counseling for vulnerable, COVID-affected communities

## 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?

New project proposal

## Amount of Funds Requested\*

\$110,000.00

## 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.

Jewish Family Services of WNC (JFS) seeks to expand Healing Solutions Counseling (HSC) clinical mental health counseling program and provide necessary mental health counseling support to vulnerable populations who are also disproportionately affected by COVID. JFS provides one point of entry, allowing for increased coordination of in-house services for those experiencing mental health impacts of COVID, including depression, anxiety, isolation, grief and PTSD. Through our wraparound services, JFS is a gateway to numerous free social support services. With support of COVID Recovery Funding, JFS will provide more reduced-fee counseling for individuals with barriers to access; deepen community outreach and education to promote preventative measures to support the mental health of individuals with even higher vulnerability, before they reach crisis; and provide easier-access and more flexible counseling options through Telehealth/phone.

## Project Plan\*

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

JFS increased our footprint in January 2022 - when the entire team safely returned to the office - by subleasing additional private office space in an adjacent suite, through September 30, 2022. Upon contract with Buncombe County, JFS will:

- Immediately accept first right of refusal, amending our current lease to include the entire adjacent office suite, adding 4 total private offices, for a total of 5 private offices dedicated to mental health counseling. This will allow for JFS to occupy the entire first floor of our building on South French Broad Avenue through December 2025. JFS hired 2 additional therapists to provide Telehealth services while the office was closed during COVID shutdown. We are now needing the additional private space to facilitate our operations to serve in-person and Telehealth clients.

- Immediately begin the process of hiring an additional therapist who specializes in mental health counseling for diverse populations. JFS has identified and made contact with licensed therapists, any of whom would be a great fit for the role, as they are dedicated to community mental health; inspired by the mission, vision and values of JFS; excited by JFS wrap-around services and looking to give back to our community.

- Immediately increase pay for our Clinical team. In 2014 a pay rate of \$35 per 45-minute session was established, and never adjusted to account for the soaring cost of living in Western North Carolina. We would increase pay to \$50 per 45-minute session, to provide continuity for clients by reducing therapist turnover.

- Immediately and over the following weeks and months, bolster outreach to referral partners, faith leaders and other nonprofits supporting vulnerable COVID-affected populations, including older adults, communities of color and rural communities, many of whom are uninsured or underinsured. JFS currently does not turn away sliding scale clients and remains optimistic we can secure consistent funding to support these individuals. There are very few other opportunities for clients to receive quality and accessible reduced-fee support without entering a months-long queue for services.

- Immediately, and over the following weeks and months, bolster efforts to educate community of the benefits of mental health counseling, including efforts to educate individuals on how to identify symptoms of mental illness and substance abuse.

- Over the following weeks, increase the Case Manager's hours to provide additional client intake and assessment support.

- Over the following months, extend office hours beyond 5 p.m. to further lower barriers to access, and offer Sunday appointments should there become a need.

## Statement of Need\*

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

According to a June 2021 CDC survey, U.S. adults reported considerably elevated adverse mental health conditions. Racial/ethnic minorities, rural populations, older adults and unpaid adult caregivers reported having experienced disproportionately worse mental health outcomes and elevated suicidal ideation. NC Dept. of Health & Human Services states substance abuse among adults 60+ is one of the fastest growing health problems facing the country. The CDC states the public health response to the pandemic should increase intervention and prevention efforts to address associated mental health conditions. HSC improves quality of life for our clients, with services provided by therapists who assess their mental health status and engage them to identify and achieve therapy goals. Therapists use person-centered theories of treatment and modalities of practice such as Dialectical Behavioral and Cognitive Behavioral therapies and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. Client outcomes are enhanced by the JFS Continuum of Care including case management, spiritual care, and access to crisis funds and a food pantry. Mental health services are often designed to only kick-in during crisis. However, waiting until a mental health crisis makes treatment more difficult, versus having effective support services earlier and throughout life. JFS embraces a preventative mindset utilizing outreach/education strategies to help clients before they reach crisis. In a June 2021 survey, a counseling client reported 100% achievement of mental health goals, as well as 95% improvement in mood/quality of life, sharing, "During a difficult time, emotionally and financially, JFS provided me the opportunity to receive support and made it financially possible without judgement. I was teetering on crisis

and avoided it. Thank you, JFS family.” It is regularly articulated that our clients prefer the small-agency feel of JFS, with more individual attention provided.

### 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.

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Admin. states "given existing impediments to care for Blacks and Latinos due to social determinants of health, the pandemic will place those with behavioral health problems at even higher vulnerability. Blacks and Latinos have lower access to treatment, often terminate treatment prematurely and experience less culturally responsive care." A June 2021 AARP survey states, "The majority of those ages 50+ say the pandemic has increased levels of concern about the future (77%) and general worry (76%). 70% say they have increased depression and anxiety. Findings are supported by recent results from National Poll on Healthy Aging which found many individuals ages 50-80 report worse depression, sadness, anxiety, worry and issues with drugs/alcohol since start of the pandemic." Health/financial problems, substance abuse and death of a loved one cause stress that can be alleviated by therapy. JFS will focus extensive energy on outreach to disproportionately affected populations, though connecting with faith leaders in Black, Latino and rural communities and primary care physicians, provide education around mental health awareness and stigma of mental illness, and provide reduced fees to minimize burden. JFS is positioned to serve, having therapists and a Clinical Director with extensive experience providing support for diverse populations. With initial support from Recovery Funds, JFS is confident we can intentionally and mindfully grow HSC, providing a lifeline for our most vulnerable community members, creating lasting impact beyond the immediate effects of COVID. Among many benefits, clients will have tools to manage stress more effectively, improved abilities for problem-solving/conflict resolution and learned life-long coping skills; JFS will have established a larger network of referring partners, supporting local networks; and the community will feel more empowered to access mental health services, and less affected by stigma.

### Population Served\*

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

JFS serves people ages 18+ of all faiths, ethnicities, genders, sexual identities and socioeconomic status. In 2021, 33% of JFS mental health clients received financial assistance; 27% were uninsured and 6% were underinsured; 38% were below 200% of FPL. Our 2021 client pool was as follows: 76% female; 15% of our clients were between ages 19-39; 23% were between 40-59; and 61% were ages 60+; 15% of our clients identified as being LGBTQAI+. 20% of our clients were people of color. 90% of our clients were Buncombe County residents.

In past, JFS has not marketed our services and has largely been an organization driven by word-of-mouth -- through United Way 211, primary care physicians, MemoryCare, referrals from All Souls Counseling, local clergy and historical presence in our community. Supported through Recovery Funds, the JFS Clinical Director will target and intensify outreach to local faith leaders in Black, Latino and rural communities, county agencies and other clinics providing free services.

### 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.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services lists health care access/quality as a Social Determinant of Health for a community, and "by working to establish policies that positively influence social and economic conditions, and those that support changes in individual behavior, we can improve health for large numbers of people in ways that can be sustained over time. Improving the conditions in which we live, learn, work, and play and the quality of our relationships will create a healthier population, society and workforce." JFS believes communities heal, grow strong and thrive when there is access to mental health services. Improved mental health allows individuals to function as contributing members of society. Therapy may help clients recognize deep-seated issues such as addiction or substance misuse. Marketing and outreach can help destigmatize mental illness in under-served communities. We would be encouraged to see individuals more willing to seek out services, whether with JFS or another provider. JFS will measure success of HSC clients through data collection from biannual surveys. Self-reporting surveys will track: progress to or achieve a mental health goal; improvement in quality of life; improved mood/reduced depression; whether clients will refer JFS counseling services. Based on these results and clinical measures, we know receiving services from JFS improves symptoms and therefore helps build resilient communities. In 2021, JFS provided 150 unique individuals with counseling. At that time, we employed 3 part-time therapists. In our June 2021 survey (74% response rate), 87% improved quality of life and 88% reported improvement in mood/reduced depression. With 5 therapists, JFS anticipates at least doubling unique clients served, accomplishing a 15% increase in serving people of color and older adults. Through use of Electronic Health Record, JFS is able to efficiently track and report on demographics of clients, helping gauge success of outreach.

## Evaluation\*

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

The overall goal of Healing Solutions Counseling is to reduce symptoms, improve mental health status, improve functionality, and improve quality of life. These results are measured through clinician tracking of goals that are agreed upon by the client and clinician, and through biannual client surveys that ask clients to assess their satisfaction with the program. For all programs and services for which the agency surveys clients, JFS utilizes Results-Based Accountability principles. Hopeful outcomes include:

- 90% of clients will make progress to or achieve a mental health goal (goals include: addressing anger, anxiety, depression, grief/loss, social adjustment, trauma, substance abuse and relationship issues)
- 90% of clients will report an improvement in quality of life
- 90% of clients will report improved mood/reduced depression
- 95% of clients will consider referring JFS counseling services to others

In addition to survey questions related to our performance measures, we have also been surveying clients about their experience using Telehealth because the service is so different from that which we had been providing in the past. 100% of respondents reported their experience with Telehealth was at least "very good" or "excellent." This is critical, as many of the individuals we wish to support in future cite access to transportation, gas prices and distance as a barrier to access.

JFS will have the capacity to achieve the above-stated metrics by ensuring the following:

- We will have at least 5 therapists offering an average 6 sessions 5 days per week.
- We will have access to 5 private counseling rooms.
- Therapists will be paid a rate of \$50 per session, geared towards retention and continuity for clients.
- We will serve at minimum 300 unique clients

## 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?

JFS values include Integrity, Respect, Caring, Quality, and Justice. It is our sense that there have been and are to this day institutional barriers that effectively work to disadvantage certain members of our society. It is

a value of this organization to help those who come to us, and those whom we can access through our outreach, to become skilled and empowered, and to more effectively and successfully surmount these obstacles. Internally, we will work to eliminate barriers that prevent those needing our services to be able to access them. To that end, JFS offers free case management services, spiritual care, and access to emergency funding and food. Our sliding scale structure for mental health counseling is designed to benefit those who are living below Federal Poverty Line - of which many of our clients are living WELL below. We offer counseling via multiple platforms, which addresses the barriers to access based on neighborhood, access to transportation (owned or public), and stigma. JFS is actively working to meet people where they are - emotionally, physically and financially.

## 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.

JFS has a contract to provide mental health counseling for the CarePartners PACE program with clinical staff collaboration for each client. There is mutual cooperation with All Souls Counseling Center to limit wait times for mental health services. JFS is receiving 4-8 referrals per month from the center. JFS also partners with MANNA Food Bank for the JFS Food Pantry, which counseling clients may access. We partner with Mountain Mobility to ensure clients do not have transportation barriers to access mental health counseling. JFS also receives financial support from Buncombe County/Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging for mental health counseling for those ages 60-65 or are live-in caregivers for a family member over 65.

## 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.

Cindy Smith, Executive Director, has over 8 years in nonprofit leadership in the social services sector. She will provide project oversight and reporting and ensure that goals are being achieved. Cindy will support the Clinical Director with outreach, and coordinates fundraising, marketing, communications and HR.

Audrey Morris, Clinical Director, is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor and Licensed Clinical Addictions Specialist, with over 10 years' experience working for nonprofits and in community mental health, most recently as Team Lead of Intensive In Home Clinical Support at RHA. Audrey oversees the Clinical Team and will also see clients, support intake/scheduling and provide outreach to targeted populations.

Liz Drake, Finance Manager, oversees financial operations, including payroll, contracts, audits, expense tracking and reporting, and EHR management. Liz has been with JFS for over 8 years.

Carrie McGuire, Case Manager, has an MS in Human Services. In addition to providing Case Management services, Carrie supports intake coordination and assessment of clients.

Rebecca Gibson, MSW, LCSW has over 45 years of clinical counseling experience and has worked in psychiatric hospitals, community mental health and in private practice. She co-authored the suicide prevention book "The Suicide Dilemma: Finding a Better Choice."

Melissa Woodworth, LCSW, has 10 years of experience working as a care manager and in residential programs and clinics for individuals with mental health challenges.

Ryan Barker, LCMHC, has worked for 5 years in Intensive In-home and with children, adolescents, adults, and families in the community, their homes, schools, and clinic settings.

Andrew Dwyer, MSW, LCSWA, LCASA has worked as a therapist in Assertive Community Treatment, and in public and private counseling. He spent several of his seven years in social work as the head teacher in a living skills class for older adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## 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.

JFS Recovery Funds budget.xlsx

## Special Considerations\*

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

While JFS is one of a few area organizations that provide reduced fees to support the mental health counseling needs of uninsured and underinsured individuals, it is one of the **ONLY** nonprofit organizations that also provides one point of entry for services that are free of charge and part of a continuum of care, in an intimate and familial environment. JFS is also proud to have shifted to using Electronic Health Record (EHR), a decision that has simplified information sharing among all of our service areas while remaining HIPAA compliant, provided exceptional records security, and has improved communication among service providers, resulting in better service delivery to clients. Finally, to support our work in the broader community, JFS has completed an organizational rebrand aimed at clarifying our mission and values. We are committed to ensuring our community understands that JFS welcomes individuals of all faiths and backgrounds.



## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

- IRS Determination Letter with SFB address correction.pdf
- JFS Recovery Funds budget.xlsx

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE  
P. O. BOX 2508  
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: MAR 20 2012

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES OF WNC INC  
C/O EDWARD FIDELMAN  
\* 236 CHARLOTTE ST  
ASHEVILLE, NC 28801

Employer Identification Number:  
45-2497063  
DLN:  
201293004  
Contact Person:  
RENEE RAILEY NORTON ID# 31172  
Contact Telephone Number:  
(877) 829-5500  
Accounting Period Ending:  
December 31  
Public Charity Status:  
170(1)(b)(A)(vi)  
Form 990 Required:  
Yes  
Effective Date of Exemption:  
June 7, 2011  
Contribution Deductibility:  
Yes  
Addendum Applies:  
No

\* Current address:

53 S. French Broad Ave, Ste 100  
Asheville, NC 28801

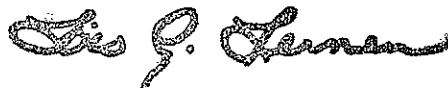
Dear Applicant:

We are pleased to inform you that upon review of your application for tax exempt status we have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to you are deductible under section 170 of the Code. You are also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Code. Because this letter could help resolve any questions regarding your exempt status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

Organizations exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Code are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined that you are a public charity under the Code section(s) listed in the heading of this letter.

Please see enclosed Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, for some helpful information about your responsibilities as an exempt organization.

Sincerely,



Lois G. Lerner  
Director, Exempt Organizations

Enclosure: Publication 4221-PC

Letter 947 (DO/CG)



List expenses here			\$	-		
			<b>Total</b>	\$	275,000.00	