

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. 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.

Name of Project.*

Working on Wellness

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*

\$446,200.00

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.

Grounded in racial equity, A Therapist Like Me (ATLM) was created to support minority-identifying therapy clients and 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 both the therapist and consumer, we also provide therapy vouchers for those who need 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.

Our focus for the Working on Wellness expansion is our Wellness on Wheels (WOW) initiative, which provides community outreach and education on mental health, COVID safety, and overall wellness. This is implemented by using a bus to travel to schools, churches, and community agencies. We will target our WOW destinations to serve underserved populations in our community, focusing on individuals marginalized by

identifying as BIPOC, LGTBQ+, and homelessness. To accomplish this goal, we will use several approaches. First, ATLM plans to host a series of workshops and informational sessions held in the major communities. These sessions will discuss mental health and the cross section of mental and physical health. Second, we will contract with schools, churches, and other agencies in Buncombe County to organize and host Pop-Up Clinics to boost mental health awareness and education, as well as community knowledge of available services. We will schedule a series of Pop-Up Clinics focused on supporting the homeless population, which will address topics like personal safety, substance abuse support, housing and food support, health and medication management, and career education. Some Pop-Up Clinics focusing on other populations and topics are currently funded through other source. These clinics allow us to collaborate with other health and mental health agencies in the area to provide a solid structure of support. Third, we will purchase a bus to travel to high crisis areas and neighborhoods. The WOW bus will provide the flexibility to easily travel to schools, churches, housing communities, community centers, and similar hubs in underserved areas of Buncombe County to offer a brief introduction to mental health and mental health services, as well as introductory counseling sessions. The WOW bus also allows us to better serve those experiencing homelessness by going to them. Finally, with funds from this grant, we will be able to secure a large office space with rooms for counseling sessions, group sessions, and safe spaces for clients to find rest, resources, and support. As part of our education and outreach, we will connect those who are interested with counseling services offered through ATLM and our directory. ATLM currently provides support to clients who need financial assistance and match with therapists in our directory. With the additional funding, will be able to increase the number of vouchers given to account for increased outreach and interest. We will also utilize the new office space and finance a small staff to offer counseling performed by BIPOC and marginalized therapists from our directory.

Our projected timeline is: June-August 2022, find and rent a space for drop-in clinics, increase staff time, purchase and renovate a bus; September-December 2022, expand voucher availability, begin Wellness on Wheels, begin hosting new workshops and Pop-Up Clinics, and outreach to homeless. Program goals will be evaluated quarterly.

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% of total population, of which 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% experienced force when stopped by police, 68% are suspended from school, and 46% are arrested for marijuana use (when use rates are the same for Whites and Blacks). Black adults are 20% more likely to report serious psychological distress compared to 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 were most likely to be selected as one of the top three factors contributing to individuals' 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 present in minority populations, in 2018, only 8.7% of African American and Latino adults received mental health services compared to 18.6% 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 directly into the community and meet people where they are. Many do not have access to medical and mental health services or are wary of using such services because of the tragic history of the medical profession in relation to BIPOC individuals and decades of stigma. Working within the different neighborhoods, schools, churches, and businesses to educate community members, and having similarly identifying therapists, decreases stigma and increase awareness so more people can decide 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 illness severity, lasting effects, and death. The effects of the pandemic on those who have lost someone 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, all of which were exacerbated by COVID-19 and affect both physical and mental health. 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 that “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 promoting mental health for minority-identifying persons positions us to expand these services for communities in which we currently have a small presence. Programs for vulnerable populations reluctant in seeking services will address COVID-19 directly, as well as the effects on mental health for those who have suffered increased stress, loss, or lengthy isolation.

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 that 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, both considered ACEs. 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 are to:

1. Increase the number of positive, safe spaces for people of minority-identities to seek therapy - this will be tracked through the number people who attend the Pop-Up Clinics, and come to the safe locations (the WOW Bus and our offices).
2. Increase the number of minority-identifying people learning about mental health and wellness options and services-this will be track through self-report surveys from those who come to the Pop-Up Clinics and other educational events, and when appropriate pre-post surveys.
3. 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 and vouchers used.

Evaluation*

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

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

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 to provide 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-template ATLM updated.xlsx

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 and have some upcoming opportunities to expand again with capacity building grants.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Recovery-Funds-budget-template ATLM updated.xlsx

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

Organization Name:	A Therapist Like Me
Project Name:	Community Mental Health
Amount Requested:	446,200

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 446,200.00		
Buncombe County Tipping Point	\$ 5,000.00	Confirmed	FY22 Vouchers
Buncombe County Tipping Point	\$5,000	Pending	Adolescent Mental Health
Tzedek	\$ 15,000.00	Confirmed	operating given for two more years
Donations	\$ 50,000.00	Confirmed	\$10,000 a year used for Vouchers and salary
Workshop Fees	\$ 96,000.00	Confirmed	funds used for workshops for professionals and salary
Dogwood Health Trust	\$ 100,000.00	Pending	Scholarships and interns
WNC Bridge Foundation Capacity Building Grant	\$ 150,000.00	Pending	Three years \$50,000 each year
CFWNC Human Services	\$ 20,000.00	Confirmed	Clinics and staff began 1-22
Buncombe County Strategic Planning	\$ 30,000.00	Pending	Salary and vouchers
Grants	\$ 300,000.00	Pending	
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
Total	\$ 1,217,200.00		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Salary	\$200,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 400,000.00	Operating	Funds Requested for .5 FTE (ED, Admin, Bus Driver)
Vouchers	\$50,000.00	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 400,000.00	operating	For assisting those in need with payments for services
Contracts	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	Operating	Cleaning and supervision
Facility	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	Operating	Rent, utilities
Bus	\$20,200.00		\$ 20,200.00	Capitial	Bus for Wellness on Wheels
Mental Health Community Outreach	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	Operating	Cost for mateirals and gas
Pop Up Clinics	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 42,000.00	operating	Workshops and Materials (stipends for presenters)
Interns no Allies	\$ -	\$ 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	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	Operating	office supplies and outreach/marketing materials
Indirect	\$ 40,000.00	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00	Operating	indirect overhead
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
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Total			\$ 1,207,200.00		