



HARRISONBURG VA FRIENDLY BY NATURE



For Immediate Release – July 26, 2023

Contact: Michael Parks, Harrisonburg Director of Communications
540.432.7701
Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov

Six organizations to receive ARPA Mental Health Funds to support community

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Six organizations in our community will soon be receiving funding to support mental health needs in The Friendly City thanks to the Harrisonburg City Council’s American Rescue Plan Act Mental Health Fund.

The fund, approved by City Council in December 2022 as a way of addressing needs brought to light during the COVID-19 pandemic, is designed to support organizations providing mental and behavioral health services with an emphasis on services to low-income, underserved, uninsured and/or underinsured individuals and families. The need to address issues related to mental and behavioral health and substance abuse arose during the City’s ARPA public engagement process, where community members had the opportunity to provide feedback on how federal ARPA funds should be allocated. Improving community mental and physical health emerged from the process as a top public priority.



DETERMINING OUR FUTURE

....

CHAMPIONING OUR VALUES

....

HELPING OUR COMMUNITY

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

City Council dedicated \$400,000 toward the effort. Funds will support a myriad of programs and staffing positions focused on aiding a number of vulnerable populations in the Harrisonburg community. Recipients and their planned use of funding are listed below:

Boys & Girls Club of Harrisonburg and Rockingham (BGCHR) - \$123,574 (full funding)

The *Advancing Mental Health Equity through Out-of-School Time Programming* project will fund a new, full-time Mental Health Advocate for BGCHR City Clubs to provide support for existing staff, group programming for approximately 500 youth and individual support for youth and their families. The Mental Health Advocate will help staff facilitate existing group programming, supplement Club curricula to promote positive social emotional development and address identified needs, provide individualized services to participants who exhibit signs of poor mental health and refer youth and their families to community-based support services. Staff capacity to support youth mental health will be bolstered by a partnership with Harrisonburg City Public Schools.

GREAT FUTURES START [HERE](#).



Strength in Peers - \$111,877 (full funding)

The *Back on Track Recovery Program* project will provide full funding for a Peer Recovery Specialist (PRS) position and partial funding for a Case Manager and a Resident in Counseling. The PRS will work with the Case Manager and Resident in Counseling to provide mental health support and other services for homeless individuals and individuals facing housing insecurity. Offered support and services will include case management, individual and group therapy, housing application support, psychiatry and behavioral health assessments.



STRENGTH IN PEERS

Gemeinschaft Home - \$69,813 (99% funding)

The *Gemeinschaft Home Behavioral and Mental Health Services ARPA Expansion* project will expand the community's capacity to respond effectively to the behavioral health needs of low-income, underserved, criminal justice-involved individuals who have a mental or behavioral health disorder or co-occurring mental and behavioral health disorder by expanding access to one-on-one counseling sessions and increasing the number of classes/hours offered of evidence-based curricula to address substance use disorder and co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders.



The Collins Center - \$40,569 (full funding)

The *Sustainable Staffing for Comprehensive Mental Health Crisis-Intervention and Long-Term Therapy Services for City of Harrisonburg Primary and Secondary Victims of Sexual Harm* project will fund a Bilingual Trauma-Informed Counselor position at the Collins Center and raise base salaries for the existing Clinical Coordinator/Therapist and Therapist-in-Residence positions to sustainably retain the existing clinical staff. All Collins Center services are free to both primary and secondary victims of sexual harm to allow them to begin embracing resilience, wellbeing and safety.



First Step: A Response to Domestic Violence - \$34,167 (full funding)

The *Bilingual Domestic Violence Counseling Services* project will fund a Bilingual Domestic Violence Counselor position and promote the services available to survivors of domestic violence. While receiving treatment from the Bilingual Domestic Violence Counselor, the survivor will also be offered advocacy services from First Step Advocate staff members to assist them in accessing other community resources and benefits, including but not limited to Medicaid.



Community Counseling Center - \$20,000 (full funding)

The *Sliding Scale Program* project will cover the cost of wages for counselors seeing clients with problems such as depression, anxiety, anger, conflict in the family and/or parenting concerns who utilize the Community Counseling Center's sliding scale. The sliding scale allows those who do not have or cannot afford to use healthcare insurance to receive treatment at a cost equal to a percentage of their income. Session costs will generally range from \$25 to \$100 per session.



“Creating a City for All, like we are doing here in Harrisonburg, requires us to ensure that all members of our community feel safe, valued and have abundant opportunity,” Harrisonburg Mayor Deanna Reed said. “The work these six organizations will do in our community is going to make Harrisonburg a better place for all who call it home, and ensure that people who need aid navigating mental and behavioral health challenges receive that support and know we care about their wellbeing. I am glad to know the ARPA Mental Health Fund will make that a possibility.”

During the City's ARPA engagement process, community members identified health-related needs such as providing adequate health care clinics to meet demand, increasing substance abuse treatment services and expanding accessible and affordable mental health treatment for youth and individuals experiencing homelessness as key concerns, leading to the creation of the ARPA Mental Health Fund. City staff created a review committee to consider all applications for funds consisting of staff members and local experts, with the committee considering projects' target population, funding requested, implementation timeline and average application score. After much deliberation, the committee decided to award full funding to five applicants and nearly full funding to one other applicant. Fourteen applications in total were received, requesting a combined \$1,374,169.

More information about the City's ARPA-funded projects is available at <https://harrisonburgva.gov/ARPA>.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 55,700 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.