



**LEBANON CITY COUNCIL  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
Wednesday, September 16, 2020 -7:00pm  
REMOTE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS  
[LebanonNH.gov/LIVE](https://LebanonNH.gov/LIVE)**

The Lebanon City Council will hold a public hearing on September 16, 2020, beginning at 7:00pm for the following:

- A.** Public hearing for the purpose of receiving public input and taking action on a proposed Public Services grant application for up to \$500,000 in CDBG-CV funds to be subgranted to West Central Behavioral Health for their Mobile Health Crisis Response Initiative; and to authorize the City Manager to sign, submit, and execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG Application.

The September 16, 2020 City Council agenda package will be available in City Hall and on the City's website ([www.lebanonnh.gov](http://www.lebanonnh.gov)) beginning September 11, 2020. Documents pertaining to the above described public hearing are attached.

*Due to the current situation with the COVID-19 Pandemic, the City of Lebanon is offering its meetings via Microsoft Teams. Members of the public are encouraged to attend by going to [LebanonNH.gov/Live](https://LebanonNH.gov/Live) where you will find instructions on how to enter the meeting. Members of the public will be able to participate and ask questions through the Microsoft Teams software or by phone. Please visit [LebanonNH.gov/Live](https://LebanonNH.gov/Live) for full details.*

**WEST CENTRAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
CDBG – CV PUBLIC SERVICES APPLICATION  
MOBILE HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE  
September 2, 2020**

West Central Behavioral Health (“West Central”) requests that the Lebanon City Council support an application for a Community Development Block Grant (CV) for Public Services funds up to \$500,000 to provide enhanced behavioral health crisis response services to City of Lebanon residents through its Mobile Health Crisis Response initiative. The funds, less administration, will be subgranted to West Central to implement the program.

CDBG-CV funds are authorized and provided under the CARES Act and must be used to prepare for, respond to, or recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The current COVID-19 pandemic has certainly amplified and publicized the need for emergency mental health services among non-vulnerable populations, but among the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of Lebanon residents with whom West Central works each day, the need for crisis mental health services has spiked dramatically. While West Central’s mission is to serve this vulnerable population – hopefully before a crisis occurs - the need for comprehensive mobile emergency mental health services is great and will continue to grow.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the demand for emergency mental health services will reflect the toll the pandemic is taking on the lives of residents of the Upper Valley community. Research has established a strong link between economic upheaval and suicide and substance use, and experts predict an “historic wave” of mental-health problems due to the pandemic, including depression, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide.

West Central Services, Inc. d/b/a West Central Behavioral Health (hereafter referred to as “West Central”) proposes a partnership with the City of Lebanon to provide enhanced behavioral health crisis response services to the city’s residents. These services are necessary due to the growing number of such crises attributable to the stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic, and are in particular need by those in the mid- and lower-income population of the city. Presently, West Central provides limited emergency services to persons in need in the region. These services are provided to meet the unfunded state mandate that each New Hampshire community mental health center offer minimal emergency services to the communities they serve. As such, West Central is staffed on weekdays, from 8 AM to 5 PM, with on-site emergency clinicians in Sullivan County and lower Grafton County. Historically, the Upper Valley (lower Grafton County) has placed a substantially lesser demand on these crisis services than Sullivan County. Thus, current funding only supports one full-time crisis clinician dedicated to the entire Upper Valley during weekday business hours, with phone support on call from Sullivan County afterhours. During these “off” times, West Central provides phone assessment and support to callers from the Upper Valley, referring the most urgent calls to DHMC for in-person assessment and/or emergency admission.

The primary goal of the proposed project is to provide 24/7 mobile behavioral health crisis services for the City of Lebanon, ensuring that clinicians are available to any resident in crisis at all hours to provide high-quality, in-person, crisis intervention. Eventually, West Central proposes to collaborate with other towns and municipalities in the New Hampshire portion of the Upper Valley to establish complementary and coordinating services such that emergency mental health services are available to all in need in the region.

## Project Description

West Central proposes an expansion of its existing crisis personnel in Lebanon to cover 24 hours per day. Having an awake, in-office crisis clinician able to respond to a crisis call from the community should progressively shift the direction of these calls to West Central's emergency services and away from police dispatch. This will allow police to focus their efforts on law enforcement and it ensures more timely clinical intervention with residents in crisis.

Until a community culture shift has fully occurred, it is anticipated that public safety communications centers (i.e., 911) will likely be fielding significant number of calls. Based on state or local requirements, police or other first responders may be required to respond to any 911 dispatch. Police or first responders who identify a situation as reflecting a behavioral health crisis can contact West Central's emergency services clinicians and request a crisis response at the location where services are needed within the community using agreed-upon protocols borne of best practices. At times when an emergency clinician is not able to provide an on-site, in-person intervention due to high demand or other factors like bad weather, telehealth interventions can be provided through a first responder using the appropriate technology. Triage and crisis intervention will occur upon arrival within the community. The West Central crisis staff will work closely with the first responders to determine when the first responders may disengage from the situation. This is likely to occur if it is determined that the environment is safe and the crisis is stable enough to be managed by a crisis clinician. Critical to this service is the follow-up services provided by the crisis staff. Within 24 hours of any crisis outreach, West Central will also provide follow-up communication to these residents and maintain that follow-up as long as needed to ensure that they are properly engaged with active behavioral health and other social services within the community. This process should expedite service engagement and minimize the resident's need to contact emergency services in a new state of crisis.

While the funding requested in this proposal is limited to support the emergency services crisis response program within the City of Lebanon and particularly the increase in demand for services due to the COVID pandemic, a future, more comprehensive service is envisioned throughout the New Hampshire Upper Valley region.

### Goals:

- Goal #1: Improve the mental health of those living in Lebanon by providing high-quality mobile mental health services to those in crisis.
- Goal #2: Reduce or eliminate the number of police, fire & EMS responses to 911 calls more appropriately responded to by mental health professionals.
- Goal #3: Reduce the number of hospital assessments and admittances, by providing immediate mental health supports during "off" hours, and follow-up treatment during normal business hours.
- Goal #4: Reduce the incidence of negative outcomes, such as death by suicide or accidental overdose, experienced by area residents experiencing behavioral health crises.
- Goal #5: Enhance the quality of life and address the needs of persons living with mental illness and/or substance use disorders, whether acute or chronic.

- Goal # 6: Create a partnership with other Upper Valley municipalities in New Hampshire to provide seamless emergency coverage for those in need of emergency mental health services.

### **Objectives:**

- Objective #1: Provide on-duty clinical staffing to respond to urgent and crisis mental health needs in the community during both business hours and non-traditional hours of operation on a 24/7 basis.
- Objective #2: Replace police, fire & EMS response to mental health-related calls when possible and, when not possible, reduce the time that first responders need to be present for a mental health intervention.
- Objective #3: Reduce the number of mental and behavioral health problems escalating to an extent that they cannot be effectively managed through outpatient community health resources.
- Objective #4: Develop and implement a team approach with first responders and other provider entities.
- Objective #5: Create a formal partnership with the NH towns and municipalities of the Upper Valley to create a seamless emergency response to mental health crises in the region, including protocol development/implementation and training with the respective departments and officials in these municipalities (police, fire & EMS, and human services).