

**AGENDA
LEBANON CITY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 2, 2020**

9. NEW BUSINESS:

**9.A – DISCUSSION AND SET PUBLIC HEARING FOR SEPTEMBER 16, 2020:
CDBG-CV APPLICATION FOR WEST CENTRAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
MOBILE HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE - LEBANON**

BACKGROUND

Community Development Block Grant-COVID (CDBG-CV) funds were authorized under the CARES Act and must be used to prepare for, respond to, or recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA), runs the CDBG balance of state program on behalf of the State of New Hampshire. New Hampshire has been allocated two awards of CDBG-CV funds totaling approximately \$10 million. The CDFA has identified that there is a significant need for Public Services assistance, additional microenterprise and small business technical assistance. Of the initial \$5.4 million award, CDFA has allocated approximately \$1.7 million to microenterprise and small business technical assistance which has been awarded. The remaining \$3.7 million is available for this Public Services round. All regular CDBG requirements are applicable to this round. CDBG funds must primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Categories and eligibility for the remaining CDBG-CV allocations will be determined in the near future. CDFA typically receives approximately \$9 million annually for the statewide CDBG program which includes all non-entitlement municipalities and counties. The CDBG-CV funds are supplementing the regular program under which municipalities are eligible to apply for up to \$500,000 in each of the following categories: housing, public facilities and economic development. Emergency grants of up to \$500,000 and planning grants of up to \$25,000.

West Central Behavioral Health (“West Central”) requests that the Lebanon City Council support the submission of a CDBG-CV for Public Services - for up to \$500,000 to support an enhanced behavioral health crisis response through a proposed MOBILE HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE initiative to better serve the residents of Lebanon. If successful, the funds would be sub-granted to West Central (less administrative costs) to be used to implement this new initiative. The current COVID-19 pandemic has 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.

Please see the attached description and project overview for more information.

ACTION

Should the Council decide to move the CDBG application forward, the Council is requested to approve the following action:

MOVED, that the Lebanon City Council hereby schedules a public hearing for Wednesday, September 16, 2020, beginning at 7:00pm, Remote via Microsoft Teams, for the purpose of receiving public input and taking action on a proposed CDBG-CV grant application for up to \$500,000 in CDBG-CV Public Services funds to be sub-granted to West Central Behavioral Health; and to authorize the City Manager to sign, submit, and execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG Application and contract.

Included in this Section:

1. Project Description – West Central Behavioral Health – MOBILE HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE

**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).

**PAGE
INTENTIONALLY
LEFT BLANK**