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City of Hyattsville

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The City of Hyattsville
4310 Gallatin Street
Hyattsville, MD 20781

To: Laura Reams, City Clerk

Subject: Request for Proposal (RFP): Mental Health Services to support the
Children and Youth Center Initiative

Submitted By: Cheryl Aguilar, The Hope Center for Wellness, LLC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a Request for Proposal to offer mental health services to children, youth and community members served by Hyattsville's Children and Youth Center Initiative. As founding director and therapist at award-winning Hope Center for Wellness, a bilingual (Spanish and English) mental health practice focused on holistic healing with a track record of designing and leading mental health and wellness programs for diverse communities including in Hyattsville, I submit this proposal with much enthusiasm, hope and humbleness.

Building upon the foundational commitment expressed in the submission of the Request for Proposal, we are poised to embark on a journey of meaningful impact and transformative change within the Hyattsville community, a special community where I began my social work career and work with youth. The forthcoming proposal sections answer delineates a plan of elaboration and implementation of a comprehensive mental health service program tailored to the unique needs of children, youth, and community members associated with Hyattsville's Children and Youth Center Initiative.

Leveraging the expertise of the Hope Center for Wellness, renowned for our holistic and innovative healing methodologies, such as expressive based interventions, children/youth play interventions, TeleMental Health, in different settings, such as community centers, schools, and a juvenile detention center, we anticipate fostering an environment of resilience, empowerment, and wellness to the Hyattsville community.

Our plan encompasses a series of targeted interventions, workshops, and support systems designed to address the varied mental health challenges faced by children, youth, their families and the community at large. With an unwavering dedication to healing, excellence and compassion, we look forward to the opportunity to collaborate closely with stakeholders, families, and individuals in co-creating a future where mental wellbeing is prioritized and accessible to all. Through this endeavor, we aim not only to meet the immediate needs of the community but also to lay the groundwork for sustainable mental health practices that will benefit generations to come, all while maintaining a posture of humility and openness to learn from the very communities we serve.



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ABOUT THE HOPE CENTER FOR WELLNESS

[The Hope Center for Wellness](#) was founded by Cheryl Aguilar, a licensed independent clinical social worker who began her social work career in Hyattsville, Maryland. In November 2016 after having worked as a bilingual substance use counselor at Prince George's County Health Department and as the first TeleMental Health therapist at La Clinica del Pueblo for several years, Cheryl registered The Hope Center for Wellness. The company was established as a Limited Liability Company (LLC) and began its full operation on August 29, 2017, with a vision to provide comprehensive culturally sensitive mental health services to DC metro area community members (Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia) and mental health awareness, training, healing and empowerment programs nationwide. The center was conceptualized and initiated to address a growing need for culturally attuned mental health services that cater to diverse communities, particularly Latinx, immigrant and BIPOC communities.

The inception of Hope Center for Wellness was motivated by a desire to bridge the gap in mental health services for marginalized and underserved populations. Recognizing the disparities in access to mental health care, particularly among minority communities, the founder aimed to create a practice that not only offered high-quality mental health services but also fostered an environment of inclusivity, respect for cultural differences, and understanding. Today, the Hope Center for Wellness serves individuals from all walks of life and backgrounds, and it prides itself for its ability to design unique healing experiences for diverse individuals and communities.

Services are facilitated by a group of mental health professionals in person at our offices at 1627 K Street, NW Suite 400, Washington, DC 20006, by video or at our partner sites. The team of professionals receive training and support by Cheryl Aguilar and other clinical, and wellness consultants. With a shared vision, these professionals bring together their expertise and commitment to healing and social change, emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive and trauma-informed care.

The primary business of Hope Center for Wellness revolves around providing mental health services through individual, family, group therapy, community outreach programs and wellness training. The center specializes in addressing issues related to trauma, anxiety, depression, transitions, challenges related to environmental factors, cultural and identity concerns, among many other issues and topics. The center also engages in advocacy work, striving to improve access to mental health care for all, especially for those from historically marginalized communities. The Hope Center for Wellness stands out for its commitment to offering multilingual services in person and by video.

As an independent contractor and as the Hope Center for Wellness, Cheryl Aguilar and the Hope Center have been contracted by dozens of local, regional and nationwide organizations including the Latin American Youth Center/Maryland Multicultural Youth Centers, Maya Angelou Schools and the See Forever Foundation, the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, CASA, Community Change, La Clinica del Pueblo, SENECA Families of Agencies, CentroNia, among many other organizations.

ABOUT CHERYL AGUILAR, FOUNDING DIRECTOR AND PROJECT'S LEAD

Cheryl Aguilar is a licensed independent clinical social worker with over two decades experience in the public and private sectors. She is the founder and therapist at Hope Center for Wellness, a multicultural mental health practice focused on holistic healing. She is pursuing a social work Phd degree at Smith College School for Social Work and she is a fellow at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Health Policy Research Scholars program and the American Psychological Association's Interdisciplinary Minority Fellowship program.

Cheryl specializes in clinical work with Latinxs, immigrants and refugees and other BIPOC communities. She has designed and implemented culturally sensitive support groups and innovative programs including Art-Based support groups for teens, *Emociones y Política*, a support group for immigrants facing anxiety due to the political climate and a support group for immigrant parents separated from their children and later reunified. For over a decade, Cheryl has been on the vanguard of the latest mental health innovations. In 2015, Cheryl spearheaded Washington, DC's first TeleMental Health program for Spanish speaking immigrants. She is a speaker and trainer on Trauma-Informed Interventions for Youth, Mental Health 101, Grief and Loss, Culturally Sensitive Work with Latinx, immigrants and refugees, TeleMental Health, Self-Care, among other topics.

Throughout her career, Cheryl has held several roles as communicator, organizer, advocate, case manager and has held volunteer leadership positions. Cheryl serves as advisory board member for WETA Well Beings/Mental Health project, an initiative aimed to raise mental health awareness through radio, television and public events. She has served as an appointed committee member of the National Association of Social Workers' Mental Health Specialty Practice Section and as appointed board member of the Congressional Research Institute for Social Work Policy.

Cheryl combines her passion for micro and macro work, advocating for the communities she serves. She founded and co-leads Social Workers United for Immigration, a network of social workers committed to advancing immigrants' rights.

In 2019, Cheryl was featured in Social Work Today magazine as 1 of 10 dedicated and deserving social workers making extraordinary impact across the country and in 2023, she was named Social Worker of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) DC/VA Chapter.

Since 2017, Cheryl has fostered the leadership and clinical skills of over a dozen of recently graduated social workers, therapists and clinical interns as a supervisor and mentor. About 7 of her past mentees have gone on to establish their own mental health private practices and are leading innovative work in their communities.

SCOPE OF PROPOSAL

The Hope Center for Wellness is well positioned to meet the requirements of the City's Children and Youth Mental Health Wellness Initiative RFP with its comprehensive and adaptive approach to mental health services. By leveraging evidence-based practices and our decade-long clinical expertise, the Center can enhance mental health knowledge, resilience, and coping strategies among children, youth and residents of Hyattsville.

Aligned with the City of Hyattsville's Scope of Work our offerings include individual, family, and group counseling/support sessions tailored to increase protective factors, process mental health challenges and everyday distress. In the last decade, we have led similar work in various communities, and we have extensive experience as clients and vendors of many organizations.

With our stellar team of mental health providers, the Center promises personalized care through both video and in-person sessions, aligning with the RFP's request for individual therapy. Furthermore, the Hope Center for Wellness's commitment to inclusive, culturally appropriate services ensures access to comprehensive mental health support for all individuals in Hyattsville through our innovative and interactive community workshops and more.

Our experience and plan 1) to provide mental health services for youth, 2) to host educational and support mental health cohorts for youth during key programming sessions throughout the year, along with 3) community information sessions, directly addresses the city's need for widespread mental health awareness and education.

The Hope Center's long-standing experience and ability to organize and facilitate mental health workshops and expressive intervention groups, showcases our innovative approach to therapy and community engagement. These activities not only support mental health awareness but also foster a sense of community and belonging. Moreover, the Hope Center for Wellness's collaborative and wrap around services approach align well with the request to collaborate with Hyattsville's Community Services Department to provide additional resources and support for clients.

Understanding that different clients have different needs, including need of providers who they may feel connected with, part of our implementation plan for Hyattsville's Children and Youth Center Initiative is to assign different members of our diverse team to the project. These members include two licensed independent clinical social workers, an artist and two graduate clinicals pursuing their second-year master level studies.

With a well-planned budget allocation covering individual therapy sessions, workshop facilitation, expressive interventions, program coordination, and necessary supplies, the Hope Center for Wellness is fully equipped to fulfill the RFP deliverables. Our budget plan ensures a sustainable and impactful delivery of services to meet the mental health needs of Hyattsville's children and youth.

PROJECT APPROACH

Our project approach begins with a thorough **Needs Assessment**. We engage with the community partner and community, as aligned with partner requirements and standards, through surveys, focus groups, meetings to identify the specific needs of community members and to evaluate our services. This proactive engagement helps us understand the various factors affecting youth mental health, including societal pressures, family dynamics, and individual circumstances. By analyzing this data, we ensure that our programs are tailored to address the most pressing needs, such as anxiety, depression, social isolation, and stress management.

Moving to our **Methodology**, the Hope Center for Wellness employs evidence-based and practice-informed practices and innovative strategies to address mental health challenges. Our methodology integrates psychodynamic strategies, expressive interventions, trauma-informed care, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness practices, person-centered and strength-based approaches, among some of our approaches, within all our programs. We prioritize creating a safe and inclusive space where children, youth and families can explore their feelings, challenges, and aspirations. Our multidisciplinary team of mental health professionals, including social workers, counselors and artists are trained in children, youth and family mental health and are committed to providing compassionate, culturally competent care.

In terms of **Program Design**, our offerings are diverse and inclusive, designed to cater to the varying needs of different populations. We work closely with our partner to design and implement interventions of the highest standards that align to our mental health professions' code of ethics, professional standards, our clinical experience, evidence-based approaches and our partner's vision. Recognizing the importance of prevention, our workshops also extend to parents, educators, and community members, equipping them with the tools to support the youth effectively.

Our **Evaluation** of services includes pre-post tests for groups, satisfaction surveys, clinical screenings. Other methodologies may include focus groups and narrative inquiries. Each program is evaluated for its impact and adapted based on feedback and changing needs, ensuring our services remain relevant and effective.

RFP Deliverables, Budget, and Staff Responsibilities

Item No.	Deliverable	Budget	Staff Member Responsible	Other Line Item/Notes
1	Mental Health Services (individual therapy by video and in person)	\$60,000 to serve 25 children, youth in individual and family or child/parent (s) therapy sessions throughout the year) (Between \$45 and \$85 fee per session compensation to licensed provider based on experience) No-show/late cancellations fee for providers are paid at same billing rate for each provider.	<i>Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker</i> Patricia Rivas (video) <i>Graduate Counselor, Provisional Licensed by May working under Clinical Supervision,</i> Janese Matos (video and in person) Other MD licensed therapists from Hope Center for Wellness as needed	
2	Mental Health Workshops Planning and Facilitation (4) <i>Sample months and themes:</i> May (mental health awareness month) August/September (tied to children/youth starting school) October (world mental health day) December (holiday wellness)	\$4,600	<i>Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and project lead, Cheryl Aguilar and other Hope Center wellness facilitators</i>	
3	Expressive Interventions Groups Design, Facilitation, and Consulting (3 groups)	\$14,000	<i>Group Facilitator and Art-Based Consultant</i> Hyattsville based Artist Blue Robin	

	<p>Groups could be art-based, crochet based or other children/youth friend activities that connect for wellness</p> <p>By the end of the art related co-horts, participants would have worked on “showable” art-pieces such as makeshift mural, single art pieces, that could be displayed at community wide event.</p>		<p><i>Group facilitator (co-facilitator groups)</i> Graduate Counselor, soon to be licensed in May, working under Supervision, Janese Matos</p> <p><i>Group facilitator (co-facilitator groups),</i> Graduate Social Worker interning under supervision</p>	
4	Program Coordination and Clinical Consultation	\$8,400	Cheryl Aguilar, providing program coordination and clinical support	
5	Supplies and Snacks	\$3,000		<p>Snacks for groups</p> <p>Art-based materials for groups</p> <p>Art-based, play, Therapeutic tools for in person services for children and youth</p>
6	Indirect Costs	\$10,000		