

Advancing Health Equity for Vermont's Black, People of Color, Immigrant, Refugee, New American and Indigenous Communities

Proposal: We propose allocating \$2.5 million in state ARPA monies to support community organizations in hiring cultural liaisons to provide culturally responsive community health care, outreach, and education to reduce racial disparities in health. These funds would **complement but not duplicate or conflict with work planned by the Vermont Department of Health from the CDC Health Disparities grant.** This health equity proposal would be focused on supporting small, community-led organizations to grow and expand health equity-focused initiatives by and for Vermont's Black, People of Color, Immigrant, Refugee, New American and Indigenous Communities in both clinical and non-clinical settings. This proposal would be administratively designed to provide timely and streamlined funding allocations to community-based organizations.

Background

- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated health disparities faced by Black, People of Color, Immigrant, Refugee, New American and Indigenous Vermonters
- Investing in culturally responsive care, health education, and outreach aligns with Vermont's stated commitment to health equity and declaring racism a public health emergency
- Access to health care is limited, which disproportionately impacts oppressed communities
- Immigrants, refugees, and New Americans will need support to safely establish themselves and access vital health and mental health care services as resettlement increases
- Vermont has substantially underfunded support for the health of the Indigenous community, which currently has the lowest COVID-19 vaccination rate in the state continues to experience numerous disparities in health outcomes and access to care

Eligibility

- Funding can be used by private community organizations, non-profit groups and/or any of the 4 Vermont State Recognized Tribes to provide health and education services for Black, People of Color, Immigrants, Refugees, New Americans and Indigenous people
- Funds would be used to increase access to primary care services, vaccine, testing, and treatment clinics, mental health crises response, and COVID-19 related educational outreach to Black, People of Color, Immigrant, Refugee, New American, and Indigenous Vermonters.

Outcomes

- Reduce disparities in access to care, quality of care, and health outcomes for Black, People of Color, Immigrant, Refugee, New American, and Indigenous Vermonters
- Grow and strengthen a highly skilled cultural liaison workforce to respond to unmet needs in a culturally responsive way.
- Prioritize and fund efforts to improve health access for Indigenous communities
- Help promote successful resettlement for Immigrant, Refugee, and New American children and their families who are moving to Vermont
- Provide substantial economic benefits to Vermont communities through employment opportunities, business innovation, and civic engagement

Endorsements

Dr. Mercedes Avila: Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics in the Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont; Director of the Vermont Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (VT LEND) Program; Member of Vermont Governor's Racial Equity Task Force, Member of the Vermont Governor's Children and Family Council for Prevention Program

Dr. Andrea Green, MDCM, FAAP: Director of the UVM Pediatric New Americans Clinic; Professor of Pediatrics, Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont

Olivia Sharrow: Executive Director of Vermont's Free and Referral Clinics (VFRC)

The Open Door Clinic (Middlebury)

Bennington Free Clinic (Bennington)

Good Neighbor Health Clinic & Red Logan Dental Clinic (White River Junction)

Health Assistance Program at UVM Medical Center (Burlington)

Health Connections at Gifford (Randolph)

People's Health & Wellness Clinic (Barre)

Rutland County Free Clinic & Dental Clinic (Rutland)

Valley Health Connections (Springfield)

Windsor Community Health Clinic at Mt. Ascutney Hospital (Windsor)

Chief Don Stevens: Chief of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk - Abenaki Nation

Fred Wiseman: Director, the Wôbanakik Heritage Center, Swanton, VT

Joanne Crawford: Member of Abenaki Nation at Missisquoi

Vera Sheehan: Director of the Vermont Abenaki Artists Association; member of the Vermont Coalition for Ethnic Studies and Social Equity in Schools; Founder of the Abenaki Arts & Education Center Open Education Resource (OER).

Pamela Berenbaum: Director of the Global Health Program and Professor of the Practice of Global Health at Middlebury College

HB Lozito: Executive Director, Out in the Open, Brattleboro, VT

Alison Segar: Project Director, Vermont Language Justice Project

