



Forsyth County American Rescue Plan Application Overview

As a convening member of the Women's Gun Violence Prevention Coalition, Action4Equity is requesting funds as a fiscal agent to support the both the capacity and work of this coalition of women from the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County community, organizers, grassroots organizations, and gun violence activists addressing the ongoing and exacerbated public health crisis of youth violence in the Winston-Salem community. Through the collaborative power of partners already embedded in the community, the Women's Gun Violence Prevention Coalition is situated to launch with a groundwork of trust and rapport needed to rapidly identify youth at risk and their families for violence and/or gang involvement and be an immediate interruptor while providing strategies and community driven solutions for gun violence prevention.

The vision of the Women's Gun Violence Prevention Coalition is to enact "A Community Response to the Escalating & Traumatizing Impact of Gun Violence." The coalition was formed by convening existing grassroots organizations, individuals, activists, and gun violence survivors already embedded in the community and doing aspects of prevention, interruption, or response work in reply to the growing frequency of more serious, violent and gang-related infractions during the last 18 months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Violence and gang-related activity in Forsyth County has continuously proven itself to be a pressing issue; community of Forsyth exhibits a critical need for programs which are proven to be effective in providing youth and young adults with the skills, tools, and resources necessary to not only prevent gang involvement in the first place, but also programs to intervene with individuals who are trying to exit violent and/or gang-related activities.

The county has already demonstrated a commitment to address this issue by commissioning a Comprehensive Gang Assessment that is due to be released this summer. However, research shows that the most effective approaches to address gang-involvement are comprehensive approaches that mobilize a wide spectrum of community resources working together, provide opportunities for education and/or employment, and provide on-going support for the youth involved.

The Women's Gun Violence Prevention Coalition provides leadership, organizing, and community-led strategy development to form and lead a community-wide action plan to address youth gun violence. In partnership with coalition members, WWGVPC will develop and implement a three-pronged approach with targeted community-based, data-driven intervention programming in each of the following areas:

- 1. Early Prevention with Youth,
- 2. Violence Interruption, and
- 3. Post-Violence Healing.

By investing in the infrastructure and capacity of WWGVPC members already embedded in the community, the coalition is building community power and agency, ensuring that strategies are culturally-relative and effective, and collecting empirical evidence on how to make communities safer and healthier.

The developing plan of action includes prevention, interruption, and intervention components. Prevention efforts are focused on younger, school-aged youth while the intervention component is designed to work with individuals in the 16- 25 year age range.

The strategic plan framework are outlined below:

1. Early Prevention With Youth

- a. Street Outreach programs - meeting youth in their neighborhoods (sports, street clean ups, special events), developing connections with the youth who meet criteria
- b. Group programming and mentoring - invite eligible youth to participate in either group programming and/or a mentoring relationship
- c. Family Connections - invite two cohorts of 8 families each to participate with Keep Connected Institute
- d. Trauma Informed Family Resources - provide programs and caseworkers to work more intentionally with our community youth and families to address specific needs, challenges and goals while providing social emotional, mental, spiritual and trauma informed healing.
- e. Advocating for the investment and implementation of Cure Violence with Forsyth County

2. Violence Interruption

- a. Interrupters - 24 hour hotline, Self Defense classes, Threat Assessment Training, Conflict Resolution, Crisis Intervention, On the Ground Interruptor Teams
- b. Case Management

3. Post-Violence Healing

- a. Support Groups, Retreats, Counseling
- b. Hospital and Family Visits

The Women's Gun Violence Prevention Coalition is a community-led framework that elevates the current work of organization and activist' capacity to operationalize the grassroots community to be the centered voice and driving force that informs institutionalized decision making around community violence. The strategies of this model make multi-level investment in place-based, trauma-informed, community-driven initiatives that impact the epidemic of youth violence, poor educational outcomes, racial wealth disparity, and multi-generational economic mobility.

Funding for developing infrastructure alongside program implementation will be a priority investment for WWGVPC to support the ongoing growth and capacity needs, ie. leadership and professional development, technical assistance, strategic planning, communications, community organizing, and other community power building tools. This innovative approach is designed to disrupt the cycle of generational poverty and violence in the East Winston community by employing culturally relative and evidence-driven social change initiatives that shift community conditions.