

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Strong Minds, Strong Communities State-wide Dissemination of Mental Health Intervention

RFA Posted	07/25/2025
Information Session	Tuesday, August 5th: 2pm-3pm Join the meeting now Thursday, August 7th: 10am-11am Join the meeting now
Questions Due	08/15/2025
Applications Due	09/01/2025
Anticipated Notice of Award	09/15/2025
Anticipated Performance Period	10/01/2025-09/30/2026 with annual option to renew pending continued funding.
Service	Strong Minds, Strong Communities State-wide Dissemination of Mental Health Intervention for Underserved Populations
Issuing Agency	The University of North Carolina at Greensboro with funds from NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health.
Email Applications and Questions to	Claire Poindexter, c_poinde@uncg.edu

ABOUT THIS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

This Request for Applications (RFA) is issued by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), with funding from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), Division of Mental Health.

Purpose of this RFA: The primary purpose of this RFA is to solicit applications from qualified community-based organizations and/or community clinics across North Carolina to serve as host sites for the statewide dissemination and implementation of the "Strong Minds, Strong Communities" (SMSC) mental health intervention. Through this collaboration, UNCG seeks to expand access to culturally competent, evidence-based mental healthcare for underserved populations and to grow the Community Mental Health Worker (CMHW) workforce within the state.

Nature of this Solicitation: This RFA advertises UNCG's need for specific services related to the SMSC program. All applications received will be treated as offers to contract. Successful applicants will enter into a formal agreement with UNCG to provide the services described herein, subject to the specifications, terms, and conditions outlined in this RFA and a subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and fidelity agreement.

Key Program Components: Selected organizations will be funded to recruit, hire, and manage a team of Community Mental Health Workers (CMHWs) and a licensed clinical supervisor who will be trained by UNCG to deliver the 10-session Strong Minds intervention. The Strong Minds program aims to improve mental health outcomes for adults 18 years or older, particularly those from racial/ethnic and linguistic minority groups, by addressing mental health needs and social determinants of health.

Anticipated Number of Awards: 3 Anticipated Funding Per Award (Year 1): Up to \$166,950 (covering specified personnel costs only, as detailed in Section 3.0) Anticipated Project Length: Up to 2 years, with annual option to renew pending continued funding and successful performance.

Eligibility: Applicants must be established community-based organizations or community clinics in North Carolina with a demonstrated history of serving underserved populations and the ability to receive federal funds. Refer to Section 2.0 for detailed eligibility requirements.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Mental health disorders are highly prevalent with depression and anxiety affecting around 34% of the population. Adults from ethnic and racial minority groups are less likely to initiate and remain engaged in mental health care and there is an acute shortage of mental health professionals, with fewer having the linguistic capacity to address the mental health needs of non-English speakers. Community Mental Health Workers (CMHWs) have long been an important part of addressing health workforce shortages and are increasingly being incorporated into settings where there are language barriers. The Strong Minds, Strong Communities program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has launched a state-wide dissemination of its mental health program in collaboration with the NC Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Mental Health to address workforce shortages and expand access to mental health care. The Strong Minds program is an evidence-based, 10-session mental health program for adults 18 years or older who speak English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, or Arabic, provided one-on-one by trained Community Mental Health Workers. Organizations selected through this RFA will support program dissemination by using funds for 2 full-time Community Mental Health Workers, 1 part-time licensed clinical supervisor, and 1 part-time site leader to expand access to quality, culturally competent mental health care.

1.1 PURPOSE

Community-based organizations and/or community clinics funded through this RFA, with support from the Department of Health and Human Services, will help grow and expand the mental health workforce by providing a culturally adapted, evidence-based psychosocial skills program. Organizations receiving funding will receive training on implementing the Strong Minds program and will agree to support the Strong Minds team in disseminating the program to the communities you serve. The selected organization(s) will:

- Identify 2 Community Mental Health Workers to complete the Strong Minds training program
- Lead recruitment and outreach including identifying and screening interested participants for the Strong Minds program.
- Provide the Strong Minds psychosocial skills program under the guidance of a licensed clinical supervisor in accordance with all Strong Minds policies and procedures, including hosting weekly clinical supervision, adhering to required fidelity checks, and reviewing weekly flagged cases.
- Document all screener assessments and program sessions utilizing the Strong Minds data tracking system.
- Collaborating with the UNCG Strong Minds program team, including attending regularly scheduled meetings and agreeing to regularly scheduled site visits.
- Ensure participant confidentiality and adhere to all confidentiality and safety protocols.

1.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Strong Minds program is to increase access to culturally competent mental health care for adults in North Carolina. Accordingly, the goal of this RFA is to create collaborative relationships with organizations in North Carolina to help UNCG develop and sustain program implementation of the Strong Minds program.

1.3 OUTCOMES AND DELIVERABLES

The Strong Minds program seeks to expand access to quality mental health care and improve mental health outcomes for adults in North Carolina. Additionally, the program seeks to grow the mental health workforce and professionalization of the Community Mental Health Worker field. Thus, expected outcomes from this RFA will be measured by:

- Number of Community Mental Health Workers completing training, achieving certification, and continuing to implement the Strong Minds program.
- Participant having a reduction in social determinant of health needs from pre to post program involvement as indicated by number and type of social determinant of health needs.
- Number of participants screened for and enrolled in the Strong Minds program
- Participants having a reduction in symptoms of anxiety, depression, and trauma, and increase in functioning.
- Number of clients reporting high program satisfaction

1.4 TARGET POPULATION SERVED

The Strong Minds program is committed to sustainably increasing access to quality mental health care for North Carolinians facing significant barriers to seeking mental health support. We specifically seek to expand care for populations that: (1) are at elevated risk for experiencing mental health needs, (2) have historically been unserved or underserved, and (3) experience health disparities.

Organizations applying for this RFA must demonstrate a clear commitment to reaching populations fitting these descriptions, such as racial/ethnic minorities, linguistic minorities, and/or communities in rural areas.

While we are interested in expanding the overall reach of the Strong Minds program, we encourage applications that demonstrate capacity to serve:

- **New Geographic Areas:** We are particularly interested in expanding services into counties where Strong Minds currently does not have implementation partners. We currently have partners in Guilford, Forsyth, Wake, Orange, Durham, Ashe, Alleghany, Surry, Stokes, Davie, Caswell, Burke, Cleveland, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Chatham, Granville, Franklin, Harnett, Johnston, Sampson, and Duplin counties
- **New Linguistic Groups:** The program currently serves clients in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Vietnamese. We are particularly interested in applications from organizations with the capacity and expertise to serve clients who speak Mandarin and/or Cantonese.
- **Existing Areas with Demonstrated Need:** Applications proposing to expand access and deepen reach within counties where Strong Minds already operates will also be considered, provided there is a clear justification of unaddressed or significant unmet needs within those specific communities or populations.

Applicants should clearly articulate how their proposed approach aligns with the goal of expanding access to quality mental health care for underserved populations in North Carolina, whether through

new geographic areas, new linguistic capabilities, or by addressing specific unmet needs in existing service areas.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must demonstrate:

- Understanding of program goals and how the Strong Minds program outlined in this RFA will advance access to mental health care for racial/ethnic and linguistic minority groups.
- Expertise and a history of accomplishment in current service areas
- Desire to expand current mental health programming at their organization and/or expand to offer mental health programming.
- Ability to receive federal funds.
- Upon acceptance, must submit a W9 form and Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Tax ID.
- Capacity to implement a rigorous, evidence based program with demonstrated organizational leadership and administrative support.

3.0 AWARD INFORMATION

Total Anticipated Available Funding: FY26: \$166,950; FY27: \$171,899

Anticipated Number of Awards: 3

Length of Project: Up to 2 years with the option to renew upon successful completion of deliverables and availability of continued funding.

Selected applicants will receive full project funding for 2-full time Community Mental Health Workers compensated at \$25 hourly, a 5 hour-per-week clinical supervisor compensated at \$50 hourly, a 2 hour-per-week program manager compensated at \$50 hourly, and additional funds for project supplies and fringe, such as program workbooks, which are estimated at \$8 per workbook. Sites will have full access to the central Strong Minds team who will be responsible for all program tracking and reporting. Funding will include fringe and, pending continued funding and successful implementation of the Strong Minds program, annual salary increases noted at 3% annually for cost of living. Please contact the Strong Minds team at c_poinde@uncg.edu for a sample budget. Upon award, a detailed budget will be developed and approved by both parties.

4.0 SCOPE OF WORK

Applicants selected through this RFA will act as a host site for implementing the Strong Minds program and agree to provide professional and technical support to program staff through the training with the Strong Minds program and ongoing implementation of the program.

UNCG will train Community Mental Health Workers at each site to support implementation of the Strong Minds project. Community Mental Health Workers will be hired at the partner site. UNCG can

provide a list of recommended qualifications and job description, and if interested, can support hiring by attending virtual interviews. Once trained, we anticipate a full time CMHW will be able to see 12-15 cases each and be able to spend some of their time training other CMHWs. A licensed clinical supervisor is required up to 5 hours per week to provide clinical oversight, address urgent needs in the event of identified suicidal ideation, and monitor fidelity to the program. While it is recommended to have an on-site clinical supervisor, UNCG may be able to support with clinical supervision. Such requests will be considered by UNCG based on our capacity and these requests should be detailed in the staffing plan. A Site Leader, funded by this RFA, is essential to manage day-to-day logistics and programming.

The Community Mental Health Worker and supervisor team will receive didactic and experiential training, practice and pilot case delivery, feedback and coaching sessions, regular individual and group supervision, special monthly trainings, and monitoring and tracking of intervention fidelity components from the SMSC training team. The full training takes roughly 70-80 hours, including didactic and practice components. CMHWs will be certified and receive a certificate once they are ready to provide the SMSC intervention, after successfully providing three cases. Certification will be based on attendance at the training and achieving at least 80% adherence to intervention fidelity for the first three cases and ongoing fidelity compliance of a random 10% of sessions.

Sites will identify potential participants through identification one-on-one; clinician referrals; at community events and activities; and through word-of-mouth referrals from other participants. There will be a fact sheet for participants to review to provide their consent to take part, an initial interview, and an interview at 6 months after the program is complete. The UNCG SMSC team can help with these components, or they can be done by the community sites.

4.1 ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure participant confidentiality.
- Follow all safety and emergency protocols.
- Follow a professional code of conduct.
- Work with central Strong Minds team for ongoing compliance and evaluation.
- Identify the best contact person for the UNCG team for any matters related to implementation and to help collect data.

4.2 CMHW RESPONSIBILITIES

- Must complete Strong Minds training program, which includes 60-80 hours of program video modules, program role plays, and meetings with the Strong Minds team.
- Must attend ongoing supervision meetings, even after training has been completed.
- Must complete 3 full program cases with at least 80% program fidelity to receive program certification.
- Must have language concordance with the participants they work with.
- Audio-record intervention sessions.
- Must fill out post-session notes.
- Coordinate care management resources and referrals for participants.
- Adhere to all safety and emergency protocols.

- CMHWs should collectively enroll 40 participants in year one and 70 participants in year 2.
- Must have flexible schedule and ability to complete evening and weekend sessions as needed.
- Achieve minimum enrollment and retention metrics of a 12-client caseload by 5 months, 50% program completion (10 sessions), 70% partial completion (6+ sessions), and 60% of clients demonstrate a reduction in social determinant of health needs.

4.3 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Must be a licensed mental health professional, such as a licensed psychologist, social worker, or counselor with no prior record of license suspensions or revocations.
- Must have language concordance with the CMHWs they supervise and with the language used for program delivery.
- Must receive Strong Minds supervisor training.
- Must conduct weekly supervision with all Community Mental Health Workers assigned to them for supervision.
- Must adhere to all program safety and emergency protocols.
- Must listen to session recordings and conduct fidelity checks in accordance with Strong Minds protocols.
- Can be housed at the organization, contracted by the organization, or supplied by UNC Greensboro.

4.4 IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

The Strong Minds program anticipates providing a notice of award on September 1, 2025, with an intended start date of October 1, 2025. The Strong Minds training will be divided into three phases as described below, with opportunities to meet with the Strong Minds team throughout the process to ensure training and implementation progress. Quarterly progress reports will be provided to the team.

- Notice of award, September 15, 2025
- Start of award period, October 1, 2025
- Phase 1: November 2025-January 2026
 - CMHWs receive Webinar-based training organized across 5 modules of approximately 20 hours in total.
 - CMHWs complete two audio recorded 10-session role plays listened to for feedback and coaching. Weekly individual supervision and coaching through intensive fidelity checks.
 - Meetings with UNCG team to establish outreach and recruitment initiatives
- Phase 2: February 2026-April 2026
 - Pilot and participant sessions underway; pilots and first 2 cases closely monitored with audio recordings listened to and reviewed for feedback.
 - Weekly supervision and coaching through intensive fidelity checks.
 - Monthly trainings for special cases and needs. Regular meetings to report on the progress of the training and discuss clinical and management issues.
 - Meetings with UNCG team as guidance is required to complete training and begin program outreach.
- Phase 3: May 2026-September 2026

- CMHWs have fully built caseloads of at least 12 clients and achieve program certification
- 10% sessions ongoingly reviewed for fidelity
- Ongoing continuing education opportunities provided.
- CMHWs maintain client caseloads.
- CMHWs serve more than 20 clients in year 1, and 35 clients in years 2 and beyond
- Quarterly Reports: March 2026, June 2026, and September 2026

5.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The organization agrees to work with the UNCG Strong Minds team to reach outcome measures and project deliverables. The UNCG team will produce quarterly progress reports outlining training progress, enrollment progress, and outcome metrics to ensure program compliance and fidelity. The organization agrees to work with the UNCG team should there be any difficulties reaching goals or identified challenges through the training or implementation process.

6.0 INVOICING AND REIMBURSEMENT

Upon execution of this contract, the applicant shall submit to Strong Minds team a monthly reimbursement request for services rendered the previous month by the 15th of each month and, upon approval, receive payment within 30 days. Monthly payment shall be made based on actual expenditures made in accordance with the approved budget on file with both parties and reported on the monthly expenditure report submitted by the applicant. If this contract is terminated, the applicant shall complete a final accounting report and return any unearned funds to the Strong Minds team within 30 days of the contract termination date. Strong Minds shall have no obligation for payments based on expenditure reports submitted later than 30 days after termination or expiration of the contract period. All payments are contingent upon fund availability. Payment shall be made in accordance with the contract documents as described in the scope of work.

7.0 APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit the requested information below by the application deadline. UNC Greensboro reserves the right to reject any and all applications for any reasons. Any cost incurred by an organization in preparing or submitting a proposal is the applicant's sole responsibility.

7.1 APPLICATION CONTENT AND INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants should provide concise responses to the requested information and bullets are encouraged. Recommended space is provided in the text boxes, but applicants are welcome to extend space as needed if applications remain under 7 pages in length. Appendices should be attached separately and do not count towards the page limit.

Please submit all requested materials to c_poinde@uncg.edu no later than **5:00 PM EST on September 1, 2025**.

Application Sections	
A	Organization Information
B	Organization Background and Qualifications
C	Proposed Program Plan
D	Program Infrastructure
E	Appendices

A: Organization Information - Provide the requested organizational and authorized representative information.

B: Organization Background and Qualifications - Describe your organization's history, mission, key services, client demographics, community engagement, existing mental health offerings, and cultural/linguistic competence. Explain your interest in implementing the Strong Minds program.

C: Proposed Program Plan - Outline your organization's approach to implementing the Strong Minds program, including strategies for participant recruitment and outreach, a proposed timeline, and how your plan will contribute to achieving the RFA's outcomes and deliverables, and detailing any anticipated support needed from UNCG.

D: Program Infrastructure - Describe your organization's capacity and resources for program implementation, including staffing plans, dedicated space, previous implementation success, and administrative support.

E: Appendices - Provide résumés/CVs of key program staff, an organizational chart, and optional letters of commitment from partners.

Submit complete Application, including signature of authorized representative to c_poinde@uncg.edu no later than 5:00pm on September 1, 2025

7.2 EVALUATION SCORING AND CRITERIA

Award of a contract resulting from this RFP will be based upon the applications best aligned with the mission and goals of the Strong Minds program. RFP proposals will be evaluated using a standardized evaluation sheet for the elements from the RFP outline to ensure that the applicant (1) meets the qualifications, (2) currently serves underserved populations, (3) has the capacity and infrastructure to implement the Strong Minds program, and (4) has a desire to implement mental health programming.

All applicants will receive written notification of the results of the evaluation of their application

Scoring	
Evaluation Criteria	Score
Organization Background and Qualifications	/50
<i>History and longevity in the Community</i>	5
<i>Demonstrated engagement with underserved populations</i>	5
<i>Demonstrated Community trust and relationships</i>	10
<i>Prioritization of Mental health (current or future)</i>	5

<i>Cultural Competence</i>	10
<i>Desire and willingness to Implement</i>	5
Feasible implementation plan	5
Program expands reach of program (Language and/or catchment area	5
Program Infrastructure	/50
<i>Identified space and resources</i>	
<i>Plan for program staffing (site leader, CMHWs, supervisor) including leveraging UNCG resources if needed</i>	10
<i>Demonstrated implementation success</i>	15
<i>Demonstrated administrative and leadership support</i>	10
TOTAL	/100