

Increasing Housing Stability Among Vulnerable Households in Guilford County:

A Countywide Program for Eviction Mediation, Housing Resource Navigation, and Tenant Capacity Building

Proposal Submitted to the Guilford County Government
UNCG - CENTER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY STUDIES



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Contents

I.	Background	1
	COVID19 & Housing Instability in Guilford County.....	1
	Community Context.....	4
II.	Proposal.....	6
	Housing Counselling and Resource Navigation	6
	Eviction Mediation.....	2
	Increasing Housing Security & Capacity.....	6
	Timeline, Goals, & Evaluation	8
	Value and Benefits to Guilford County	9
	A Plan for Program Sustainability	10
UNC Greensboro		11
	UNCG Organizational Information	11
	UNCG CHCS Contact Information	11
	Programmatic Matters.....	11
	Contractual Matters.....	11
	Fiscal Matters.....	11
	CHCS Organizational Qualifications.....	12
	Center for Housing and Community Studies Leadership	13
	Community Advisory Committee.....	13
	Resident Advisors	13
	Institutional Advisors.....	13
	University Advisors	13
Proposed Personnel.....		14
	Dr. Stephen Sills, Professor, CHCS Director, Lead-PI.....	14
	Dr. Kenneth Gruber, Senior Research Scientist, Co-PI, Evaluation	14
	Bruce Rich, MPA/JD, Mediation Project Director	15
	Sohnie Black, Community Advocacy & Tenant Capacity Building.....	15
	Atigre Farmer, Resource Navigation	15
VI. Project Costs		17
	Budget Narrative.....	17
	Labor and Fringe.....	17
	Local Travel	17
	Supplies and Materials	17
	Other Direct Costs.....	17
	Facilities and Administrative Costs	17
	Total Costs	18

Procedures for Billing 18
UNCG Office of Sponsored Programs..... 18
UNCG Contract and Grant Accounting 18
Accounts Payable Department 18

I. Background

This proposal was developed by the UNC Greensboro Center for Housing and Community Studies (CHCS) in response to an invitation to apply for funding from the Guilford County Government. Our proposed project builds upon existing CHCS programs to address the needs of vulnerable, low-income communities experiencing housing precarity and potential evictions. In particular our proposed project will: address impending evictions that have resulted from COVID19; assist residents with underlying issues causing housing instability; and build resiliency, leadership skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy in these communities to address future housing needs.

COVID19 & Housing Instability in Guilford County

The COVID-19 pandemic landed during an already dire housing and eviction crisis and threatened to make it much worse. With a severe shortage of affordable housing and rising rents, the number of cost-burdened North Carolina households—already over a million—continued to rise with the sudden spike in unemployment. One of the most impactful interventions ultimately came from the Centers for Disease Control’s eviction moratorium, which saved lives. Then came waves of funding and programs to try to repair the economic damages and keep people stably housed.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, one in five homeowners in NC (19.9%) and two in five renters (43.3%) were considered cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing-related costs. According to a 2020 study by the Urban Institute, there is a projected deficit of over 380,000 low-income or affordable units in North Carolina. The majority of existing low-cost rental stock is unsubsidized, with no public funding or support for tenants. As a result of the lack of affordability, North Carolina already had a high eviction rate with about 170,046 summary ejection filings each year. Lack of affordability and high eviction rates contributed to the more than 27,900 people in the state experiencing homelessness in 2019.

In Guilford County, the rates of cost burden were even higher than the state averages: (21.4%) homeowners and nearly half (45.2%) of renters were cost burdened. This led to an eviction rate in Guilford County of 7.6% per 100 renter households. The eviction rate in Greensboro was 8.4% (4,948 evictions), which was the seventh highest in the country for large cities (Eviction Lab 2016).

In March of 2020, Governor Roy Cooper declared a state of emergency. With this order, the state closed schools and restaurants, banned mass gatherings, and eventually issued a stay-at-home order. The shutdown of commerce resulted in an unemployment rate of 14.8%, the highest rate recorded since data has been collected by the federal government. The leisure and hospitality industry saw an even higher unemployment rate of 39.3%. Initial claims for unemployment assistance soared from about 3,500 weekly before COVID-19 to over 172,000

a week at the peak. Over 1.54 million new unemployment claims were filed, representing 30% of the pre-pandemic workforce. Women, Latinx people, immigrants, young workers, and those with less education were most vulnerable to layoffs, and those groups were already among the most precariously housed.

Nationally the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (the CARES Act) became law on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act, while containing numerous health-related provisions for testing and research, was primarily an economic stimulus package. Its \$2.1 trillion in aid was devoted to business loans, supplemental unemployment insurance, one-time stimulus checks to individuals, and a Coronavirus Relief Fund of \$150 billion. The Act provided for forbearance of payments on federally backed mortgages and emergency housing assistance funds to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness and low-income renters. The Act prohibited landlords from evicting residents or charging late fees for nonpayment, and from evicting for any reason with fewer than 30 days' notice. The scope and impact of the federal moratorium was unclear, as only about a third of all renter households were covered. Also, while funding was beginning to move into the community by mid-2020, there were many restrictions and the total support for rental assistance was limited.

The North Carolina Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions Program (HOPE Program), administered by the North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR) in the state Department of Public Safety, was funded by CARES Act allocations and began accepting applications on October. The program provided rent and utility assistance to prevent evictions and utility disconnections. United Way of North Carolina and NC 211 provided call center support for the HOPE Program. In less than a month, 37,000 renters applied for assistance and the program stopped taking new applications on November 11. Initially some landlords, unwilling to accept the terms of assistance, refused the HOPE payments. Changes were made to the terms of the landlord agreements in January in order to entice more landlord participation. According to recent news reports, tenants have faced utility cutoffs, threatened evictions, and lack of communications from caseworkers administering the program. Four months after the application period ended, only 55% of funds have been paid to landlords or utility providers. This bottle neck in resources from the HOPE program underscored the need for local solutions that were agile and responsive to needs of landlords and tenants.

In December, as part of the \$900 billion Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, Congress created the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), with \$25 billion for rental assistance, some of which is already flowing directly to municipalities and county governments across the state. The ERAP program provides significantly more rent and other housing costs—up to 12 months including arrears and prospective rent—and unlike previous programs, landlords may initiate the application directly on behalf of their qualifying tenants. There has been more than \$94 million in

Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) funding awarded to counties and cities in the Triad. The program in Guilford County (with separate allocations to the City of Greensboro and the balance of the county through Guilford County Government) has begun to provide relief. Nonetheless, nationally 19% of all renters say they are not yet caught up on rent, while a third of African American (33%) renters are behind (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities).¹

Even more rental assistance is on the way. The American Rescue Plan signed by President Biden on March 11, adds another \$21.6 billion to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, \$10 billion for homeowners to avoid foreclosures, \$5 billion for emergency housing vouchers, and \$5 billion to help create housing and services for people experiencing homelessness. Governor Cooper has also signed the North Carolina COVID-19 Response & Relief Bill 196, adding additional state funds to federal emergency rental assistance.

The combination of local, state, and federal funds and all of the many organizations working on housing stabilization should begin to address the need for repayment of rental arrears, but many vulnerable communities are still falling through the cracks and some landlords are insistent upon evicting 'holdover' tenants and even those that qualify for assistance.

Eviction, or even the threat of eviction, has been shown to affect mental and physical health. Mental health issues resulting from eviction can range from anxiety and depression to, tragically, suicide. Tenants who are forced to relocate to poorer housing conditions may face the possibility of increased emergency room visits resulting from lower standards of living and causing further economic hardship for the household. Eviction touches the lives of Greensboro's youngest residents. School performance tends to decrease when students are in unstable housing situations. Some researchers have suggested that these health effects are large enough to constitute a public health crisis.

Eviction diversion and mediation can provide relief to the overburdened court system and help coordinate resources between various community agencies currently providing emergency rental assistance. The CHCS Mediation Program in partnership with the Guilford Cares Program has the potential to help both tenants and landlords during a time when housing instability not only threatens the well-being of those affected, but endangers our community as a whole as eviction and housing instability have been demonstrated to impact mental and physical health, decrease educational achievement, reduce workforce readiness, and stress an already over-burdened social support network. The program provides a platform for landlords and tenants to work through issues in a collaborative way that benefits both parties without the expense, hassle, or burden of contentious litigation. This program is coupled with resource triage, housing counseling, and system navigation to help

¹ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/housing-assistance-in-american-rescue-plan-act-will-prevent-millions-of-evictions>

tenants make the best use of funds and support agencies, as well as tenant education and outreach to get ahead of the issues that created housing precarity before the pandemic.

Community Context

Guilford County is a sprawling urban and peri-urban county in the heart of the Piedmont which includes the Greensboro-High Point MSA as well as incorporated towns of Gibsonville, Jamestown, Oak Ridge, Pleasant Garden, Sedalia, Stokesdale, Summerfield, and Whitsett. It covers an area of 658 square miles and a population of over 534,529 (ACS 2019). The County is a very accessible place intersected by 8 interstate highways, 6 US highways and 7 major NC highways. It is home to a major airport (Piedmont Triad International) and has a railroad depot located in downtown Greensboro with daily passenger traffic up and down the eastern corridor and in state transportation to Raleigh and Charlotte. The County is home to two major municipalities, Greensboro and High Point, with separate courts, jails and county human services departments in each city. According to Data USA, the largest industries in Guilford County, NC are Health Care & Social Assistance (36,249 people), Manufacturing (33,614 people), and Retail Trade (28,427 people), and the highest paying industries are Management of Companies & Enterprises (\$52,220), Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (\$52,177), and Information (\$48,805).

According to the American Community Survey (2019), Guilford County is the third most populated county in NC and has experienced a population growth of 21.6% since 2000, increasing 7.2% since 2010. The county is expected to maintain a population growth of between 1-2% annually. The median age was 37.3 years old with 15.0% of the population 65 years or older and 21.8% being children under 18. The population was mostly White (53.7%) and Black/African American 34.7%. About 6.2% of the population are veterans (ACS 2019) and 8.4% of the population 18 years old and older are disabled (Experian Simmons 2018).

According to the Census Bureau, nearly half of households were female headed (45.5%) while 54.5% were male headed (ACS 2019). One-fifth of family households (20.0%) were single parents with children, while just over a quarter were married with children (28.3%). Few family households were male headed with children (3.4%) while 16.6% were female headed with children. 41% of households living in subsidized housing households are female headed with children (HUD 2018).

Foreign born residents make up 10.2% of Guilford County's population (54,604 total). The Census defines foreign born as anyone who was not a U.S. citizen at birth. In general, there was a low percentage of foreign-born citizens in the more rural areas of the county. High Point has a higher percentage foreign born than Greensboro. One-in-five foreign born residents (9,715) have an income below the poverty level in last 12 months (ACS 2018). And 2,950 foreign-born households are single parent with children living below the poverty line.

Prior to COVID19 the unemployment rate was 3.6% in Guilford County (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Nov 2019), that rate soared to over 14% in the summer of 2020 and has dropped back to about 6% by early 2021. The median household income in Guilford County is \$64,462 (ACS 2019). Income is highest in northwest Greensboro and northwest High Point and lowest in south and east Greensboro and south High Point. Nearly one-in-six (17.0%) live in poverty (ACS 2019). Low wages and the high numbers who have left the labor force during the 2009-2013 recession resulted in 25.8% of the population without health insurance coverage (2019, MRI Consumer Survey). Educational attainment in Guilford County is relatively high with 88.7% of adults completing at least high school or a GED and 32.1% of adults have a higher education degree (bachelor's, master's, or doctorate; ACS 2019). The average freshman high school graduation rate in the 2016-2017 school year was 89.8% (National Center for Education Statistics). There are 14 head start centers in the county (Head Start 2019).

In Guilford County 89.9% of households have internet access, but that was not distributed equally throughout the county. Guilford County ranked “moderate to high” in terms of social vulnerability, which was a variable that considers four categories: socioeconomic; household composition (ranked as “low to moderate”); minority and language; and housing and transportation (ranked as “high”; CDC 2016). The justice served population includes 17,000 people released per year from Guilford County Jail. The EASI Total Crime Index value for the county was 96 out of a scale of 200 (2019). A higher value indicates more crime than average.

The area is served by two major hospital systems, Cone Health and High Point Regional, with a total of four hospitals. Other health-care assets include 18 mental health facilities (SAMHSA, 2016) and 27 drug and alcohol treatment facilities (SAMHSA 2016). Nonetheless, 5 urban census tracts (Greensboro's eastside) have been designated as Medically Underserved Areas for having too few primary care providers, high infant mortality, high poverty, and/or a high elderly population by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA 2019). The County has an active Public Health Department that partners with community groups and individuals on a variety of health-related projects. It routinely creates a community input process on health issues and health action planning. Still, about a quarter of residents (23.6%) self-report poor physical health and a fifth (20.4%) report poor mental health in the past 30 days (CDC BRFSS, 2013).

II. Proposal

Our goals are to preserve tenancy, reduce cost-burden, strengthen community efficacy, and assure landlords of being reimbursed for rental arrears. Our proposed intervention to address housing instability in Guilford County has three key components: 1) a triage system of housing counselling and resource navigation that will guide tenants through options to address rental arrears, address cost burden, and connect with existing resources in the community (including but not limited to ERAP and other COVID19 resources); 2) an eviction mediation service that facilitates a resolution to pending or eminent evictions; and 3) a training program to build capacity in vulnerable and low-income renter communities to address the factors which may lead to eviction and/or housing instability.

Housing Counselling and Resource Navigation

The Urban Institute has shown that stable housing has a greater impact on reducing family poverty than "expanding transitional jobs, child support, the earned income tax credit, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, or increasing the minimum wage." The high cost of housing perpetuates poverty and presents a barrier to self-sufficiency and economic mobility. Our programs have been helping more households qualify for programs that reduce the cost of housing-related expenses by reducing energy costs, reducing health care costs, increasing the well-being of residents, and reducing the number of lost work or school days. Housing cost savings directly translate into more resources for healthy food, better health care, improved transportation, and other needs.

For the last four years we have been canvassing neighborhoods in High Point and Greensboro and attending community events where we make over 4,000 "contacts" annually. There are many federal, local, and state funds available for home improvements. Yet, most low-income residents we encounter do not know they qualify for resources. And when they do, they find the application process confusing and cumbersome. We have been assisting resident navigate applications for Lead-Safe Housing funds, emergency repair funds, and weatherization funds. Even during the pandemic, we developed a COVID-safe outreach protocol and continued assisting clients guiding nearly 130 households

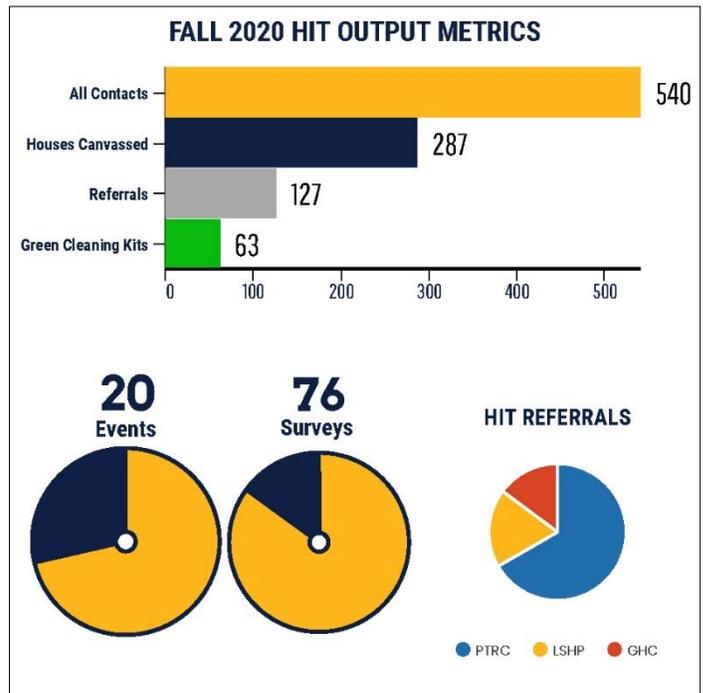


Figure 1 - Resource Navigation Output Fall 2020



Figure 2 - Resource Needs of CHCS Clients

through the application process for lead safe housing, weatherization, and emergency repairs.

Recently, with funding from the United Way and North Carolina Healthcare Foundation, we began assisting residents in low-income apartment communities with emergency rental assistance and food needs. In all we distributed ~\$50,000 in rental assistance and about \$7,500 in food gift cards. When CARES Act funding became available, we also began assisting residents in negotiating the application process for aid. And now that there is funding from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), we have been assisting residents with the process of collecting required documentation for both Guilford Cares ERAP and the City of Greensboro ERAP. Often, we also assist these same clients with application to SNAP/EBT, the Guilford Community Care Network, and other programs that may reduce their cost burden.

From our tracking of calls to our help line (Figure 2), we see the greatest need among those seeking assistance is for help navigating this application process and seeking rental and utility assistance. Therefore, we are proposing to greatly expand what we are doing in this sphere. First, we will move from a paper-based system to one that is secure, and cloud based and allows from better case management including contact logs, follow-up call reminders, a repository for paperwork and application materials, and client data. Second, we will add 1.25 FTE to the existing housing triage system in the form of a full-time housing counselor/system navigator and add a quarter-time from our current Health Impact Team navigator to the housing navigation unit. This unit will leverage community support programs by assisting clients in applications and making warm-handoff referrals. Moreover, we will seek out those who need assistance by going to low-income and vulnerable communities directly. Finally, the intake process will screen for the need for immediate attention from our Eviction Mediation Program.

Eviction Mediation

The Mediation Service is led by the Center for Housing and Community Studies in partnership with Legal Aid of North Carolina and Greensboro Housing Coalition, with support from United Way, the Community Foundation and the Foundation for a Healthy High Point, and cooperation from other community stakeholders including Salvation Army, Greensboro Urban Ministry, Wake Forest Law School, and the District Court of the 18th Judicial District.

Recognizing that tenants falling behind in rent has been a major consequence of the pandemic, for the present we are focusing on so-called “simple non-payment cases” having no contested legal issues relating to the tenants’ or landlords’ obligations under the lease or local law. We take over from Legal Aid and GHC the work of finding solutions, structuring payment plans and negotiating settlement agreements, so that they can devote their scarce resources to litigation and counseling. We also help tenants navigate the rental assistance



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UNCG Mediation Service
Helping Landlords and Tenants Avoid Eviction!



A friendly and neutral mediator is available to assist any Guilford County tenant or landlord to resolve a case where a tenant has fallen behind and is at risk of eviction or where eviction papers have been filed.



We can

- Help navigate through rental assistance applications
- Facilitate communication
- Negotiate payment plans
- Draft settlement agreements

Voluntary and Free of Charge!



336-256-1499



**3707 MHRA Building
1111 Spring Garden Street
Greensboro, NC 27412**



uncgmediationservice@uncg.edu

Figure 3 - Outreach Flier

programs and other social services that could help them avoid eviction and prevent recurring crises. Finally, in cooperation with the court administration we seek to identify active summary ejection cases and offer mediation services to the parties.

Our mediators are friendly, neutral intermediaries facilitating a resolution in an atmosphere free of the acrimony that often characterizes landlord-tenant disputes. The service will be available to any Guilford County household facing rent arrears or other lease violations that put the tenant at risk of eviction or that have already resulted in the filing of eviction papers. The tenant and the landlord must both agree to participate, and to suspend any legal proceedings for the duration of the mediation process. We charge no fee for providing this service.

Planning for the Mediation Project was begun on June 29, 2020 at a meeting of the founding partners, Legal Aid of North Carolina, the City of Greensboro Human Relations Department, the City of Greensboro Neighborhood Planning, Elon University School of Law, the NC District Court administration, and UNCG's Center for Housing and Community Studies, Department of Peace and Conflicts Studies and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement. In the following months, a small working group met weekly to develop a mediation program that could offer an alternative way to resolve rent arrears and avoid the drastic remedy of eviction. As part of that process, we consulted with stakeholders throughout the community. These included Greensboro Housing Coalition and other providers of emergency rental assistance including Greensboro Urban Ministry, Welfare Reform Liaison Project and Faith Action International House; the City of Greensboro Department of Neighborhood Development; the Greensboro Bar Association; Chief Judge Vincent of the District Court of the 18th Judicial District; the Guilford County Sheriff's Department; the Piedmont Triad Apartment Association (PTAA); Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro (CFGG) and United Way of Greater Greensboro. We received expressions of support from these partners as well as seed funding from CFGG, the Foundation for a Healthy High Point, and the United Way.

The Mediation Project is developing a pool of volunteer mediators. Mediators are community members with experience in mediation or who wish to receive training; student mediators affiliated with the Wake Forest Law School, Elon Law School, and UNCG's Program in Conflict Studies and Dispute Resolution; or active or retired volunteer lawyers. We have developed two training modules: (a) an adapted version of the Legal Aid COVID Eviction training video, and (b) a description of procedures and rules for Mediation Project Settlement Case mediation, which are written or presented live by Project staff.

Mr. Bruce Rich, JD/MPA, directs the program and oversees all aspects of the process. CHCS has hired one part-time graduate assistant and has leveraged staff from our other programs to assist. A dedicated telephone line has been established and a web portal will be created within the CHCS website, with information and application capabilities. With support from

Guilford County, we will add a full-time program coordinator, a housing counselor, and a second part-time graduate assistant. We will also develop a media outreach campaign. Project staff will identify landlords, with guidance from the PTAA and other organizations, for one-on-one communications, with a view to informing landlords of Mediation Project services and assessing the level of interest. With increased staffing will also begin scheduling regular days at the small claims court and working with the clerk of the court to disseminate information in both the High Point and Greensboro Courthouses to landlords and tenants involved in summary ejection cases.

Eventually we would like to build our capacity to mediate disputed issues as well, making the mediation service a true alternative to expensive and risky court proceedings. We see the need for a broad range of community mediation services that would extend beyond rental housing to family matters, school and employment, and commercial disputes.

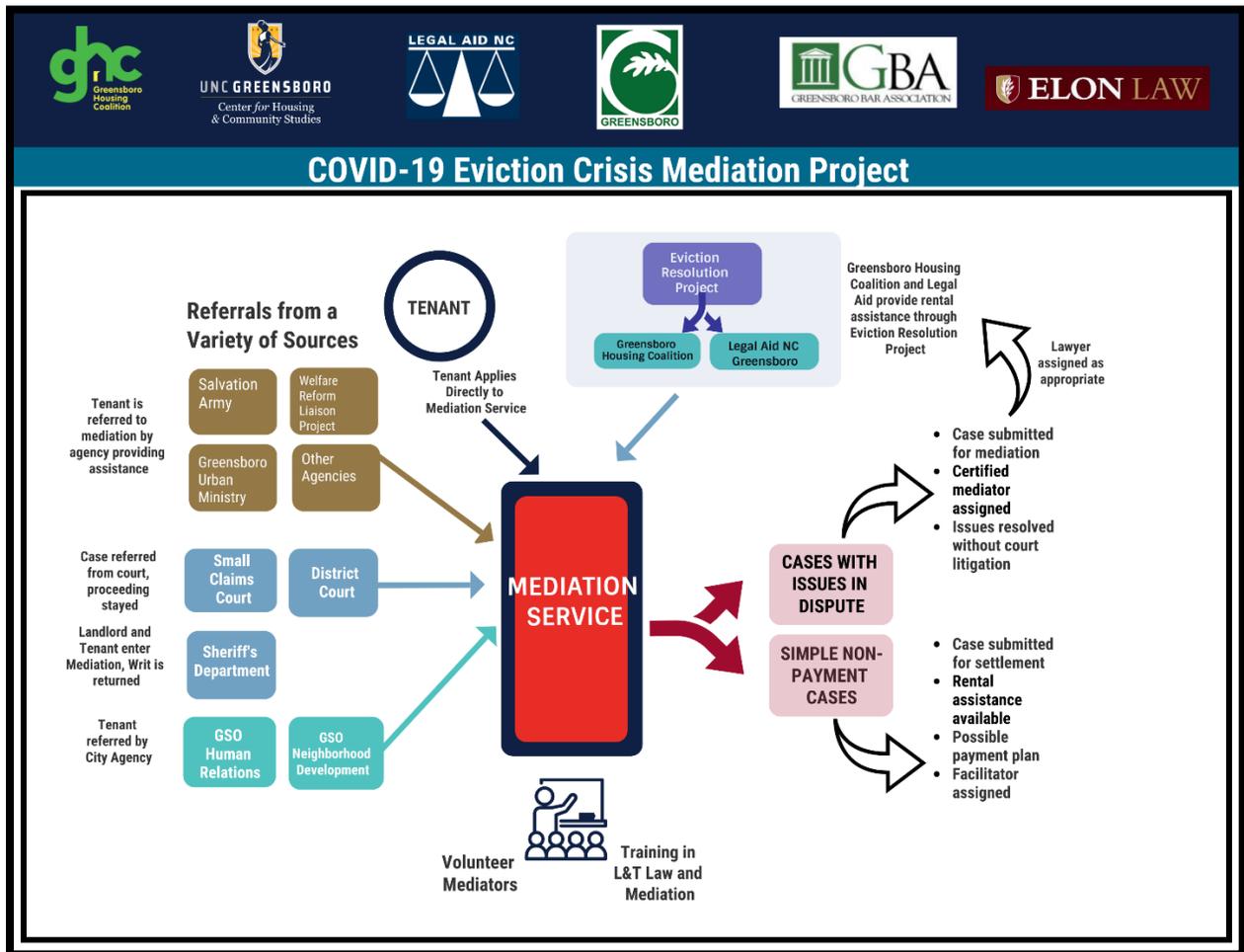


Figure 4 - Mediation Program Flow Chart

Increasing Housing Security & Capacity

Importantly, CHCS and partners are trying to get in front of the issue of housing insecurity and eviction by equipping tenants in low-income housing with an understanding of landlord-tenant law, awareness of community resources to help reduce rent burden and improve the quality of life, building connections to organizations that help to represent tenants' rights, and developing new approaches to organizing communities to proactively improve housing conditions. This process of developing skills, abilities, processes, and resources is accomplished through three approaches: 1) public workshops, 2) the Tenant Leadership Academy (TLA), and 3) technical assistance to tenant associations and groups. The general, open to the public series of workshops will include two or more monthly sessions (>30 during the contract period) on tenants' rights, rental resources, code enforcement, household health and safety, eviction prevention, fair housing, and ways to reduce cost burden. We will borrow from and build upon the Rent Smart Curriculum² from the University of Wisconsin-Madison for these sessions. The sessions will be delivered live in-person at low-income apartment communities throughout the county, as well as online via zoom. Recordings will be made available for past sessions to allow for continual learning well after the initial event dates.

The CHCS Tenant Leadership Academy (TLA) was developed with support from the Ford Foundation and ran an initial four cohorts of leaders (>40 graduates) in 2019-2020. With funding from Guilford County Government, we will reboot this program as a live, in-person series to be offered at apartment communities, churches, recreation centers and other venues in High Point, Greensboro, and in select townships and unincorporated areas. In this program, apartment residents attend 25-hours of workshops in six sessions over the course of 12 weeks. Each session is broken into 2-3 topic areas and includes interactive activities. The TLA brings in local community leaders and guest speakers to lead workshops. The main components of the course include an overview of neighborhood history, learning about present day housing disparities, developing an awareness of local housing-related

Tenant Leadership Academy

Learn How to Form a Tenant Association

Are you a renter at a Greensboro apartment community with a passion for improving housing conditions? We need you for a series of Saturday workshops beginning February 8, 2020.

- Know your rights and obligations as renters
- Find out where the right resources are
- Recognize and build leadership skills
- Organize the neighbors
- Reduce the number of evictions
- Address poor housing conditions
- Advocate for changes in tenant law

Participants will receive up to \$250!
Applicants must be renters!
Lunches, transportation, and childcare available!

To Apply: go.uncg.edu/tenantacademyapplication
Or call 336-338-8021 - or use QR code

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Figure 5 - Example Recruitment Flyer for Social Media

² <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/rentsmart/>



Figure 6 - TLA Organizing Manual

resources, learning how to organize and cultivating leadership skills. Each participant in the academy receives a copy of the CHCS Tenant Academy Manual. This manual contains reference materials, data, details on tenants' rights and tenant law, fair housing information, asthma-safe cleaning practices, lead-safe housing information, basic home repairs, resource lists, apartment building inspection checklists, sample complaint letters for landlords, etc.

Our final approach to engagement and capacity building is in providing ongoing technical assistance directly to past and current TLA graduates to engage in their organizing campaigns. Assistance will include helping to structure meetings, connect with speakers, engage media, negotiate landlord-tenant issues,

and lobby for tenants' rights. We will provide ongoing capacity-building, tenant association trainings, opportunities for convenings and unity building, and peer-learning models as TLA graduates build community advocate for tenant-friendly policies, voice issues to policy makers, unify their neighborhoods, address poor housing conditions, and strengthen their renter communities.

Importantly, we have removed barriers of attendance by paying tenants a stipend, located the workshops within the community at the resource centers and local spaces, and provided meals for participants. In the 15-month project period we anticipate running 5-6 cohorts of 12 tenants for a total of >60 graduates. The rebooted program will be led by Ms. Sohnle Black, a community advocate and organizer with more than 20 years of experience. We will also employ a part-time graduate assistant on the program to assist in delivery of content, development of outreach and recruitment, and other aspects of program implementation.



Figure 7 - Graduates of Winter 2019

Timeline, Goals, & Evaluation

The project will be conducted over a 15-month period from 6/1/2021 to 10/31/2022. Project team members will meet monthly with Guilford County staff to report progress and updates. Internally team members will meet weekly to triage cases, review outcomes, and iteratively assess performance. In Q1, the UNCG team will hire additional staff, recruit and train additional volunteer mediators, develop an advertising and outreach campaign, and move from a paper-based to cloud-based tracking system for cases (PlanStreet's Case Management Software).³ In addition, for those cases that intersect with the Guilford County Homeless Continuum of Care, we will work with Partners Ending Homelessness to enter them into the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Simultaneously, we will begin delivering an expanded workshop series and recruit tenants in low-income and public housing for our Tenant Leadership Academy. A revised logic model, similar to the one on the following page, will be developed within the first 30 days of the project detailing evaluation measures and targets for outcomes and outputs. Likewise, a full evaluation plan will be developed by that time as well. In Q 2-5 (July 2021 - Sep 2022), UNCG CHCS will fully implement the programs and scale countywide for implementation. Revisions and modifications of the program will continue throughout the implementation period and to streamline the process and capacity. We will be developing long-term sustainability planning no later than Q3 of the project to ensure ongoing support post COVID19 funding.

This program will reduce evictions due to COVID19-related non-payment, increase tenant awareness of the ERAP program and other assistance available to reduce rental arrears, reduce cost-burden by connecting renters with non-COVID19 related resources for utilities/food/health and other costs, increase tenant voice in mediation and negotiation with landlords, and leverage grass-roots capacity within low-income communities for engaging residents in improvements to housing. The funding provided by Guilford County Government will not only allow us to provide direct mediation to >150 households over the course of the project, it will further enable efforts to support the rental/housing stability of many more households living in the vulnerable communities by linking residents in searching for employment, rent assistance, and accessing other currently existing resources. We anticipate assisting as many as 500 tenants with this form of resource navigation and housing counseling (30-50 per month). Finally, we anticipate more than 480 attendees at capacity building workshops and >60 Tenant Leadership Academy Graduates. In this way, our programs' impact can extend beyond this immediate COVID19 related instability, ensuring a more sustainable approach to housing stability and the reduction of poverty.

³ <https://www.planstreetinc.com/>



Program: CHCS Eviction Mediation Project Logic Model

Situation: Pending Evictions due to COVID19

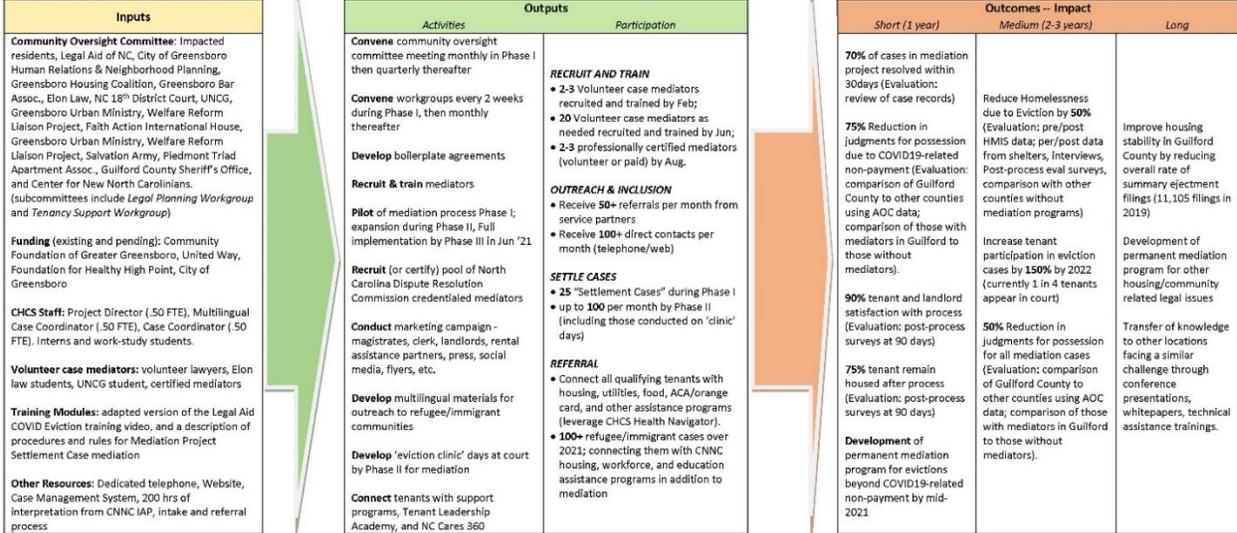


Figure 8 - Example Logic Model

It is important to understand the outcomes and outputs of the project in relation to the project activities. Iterative improvements to the project will be made on the basis of ongoing formative assessment. Case tracking and case management are a crucial element. As such a cloud-based case management system will be developed and tailored to each aspect of the project with the assistance of PlanStreet's Case Management Software. Additionally, feedback and outcome data collection will continue throughout the project timeline with surveys and interviews of those we assist. We will track outcomes of mediation and housing counseling for up to 6 months after intake as well as follow-up with those who attend trainings and the Tenant Academy through survey outreach 90-days post training. We will also work with community partners to collect feedback on mediation trainings and volunteer experiences.

Value and Benefits to Guilford County

The proposed project will address several gaps of need of residents that have been hard hit by COVID-19 and for whom existing community assistance is limited or non-existent. Providing residents access to information and assistance that can enable them to remain in their current housing, improve the safety and quality of their housing, and participate in the improvement of the housing within their neighborhoods and communities represents a valuable investment to the County. Through the services outlined in this proposal we believe the results will make a substantial difference in not only the individuals and families who receive assistance through the proposed programming but many others who are family, friends, and neighbors will benefit from program recipients as they learn about community resources, community services, and their rights as residents of Guilford County.

A Plan for Program Sustainability

CHCS is a respected partner to many service organizations and agencies serving the County. We will leverage those connections to build on the achievements of the proposed project so that the efforts of this proposal to improve the situations residents living in insecure or unsafe housing will become an ongoing focus for those who need this assistance. Deidentified and aggregated data will be shared with Guilford County DHHS as well as the Guilford County Continuum of Care. We envision that there will be a cost-savings to the County as well as the system of care in terms of prevention of homelessness, reduction in reliance on county resources, and efficiency created by coordination of services from which long-term sustainability of the project may be developed. We will also pursue philanthropic and federal support for the program beyond the end date of the contract.

Optional - Social Return on Investment Analysis

As an additional option, a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis may be conducted by Dr. Jeremy Bray (Professor and Head of Department UNCG Economics) and Will Queen (PhD Candidate UNCG Economics). SROI is a process of understanding, measuring, and reporting on the social, environmental, and economic value that is being created by an intervention or organization. The SROI framework is an approach to measurement – developed from benefit-cost analysis, social accounting, and social auditing – which captures social value by translating social objectives into financial and non-financial measures. SROI has been used by a range of organizations across the not for profit, public, and private sectors, including those that are small, large, new and established. Estimating the SROI of publicly financed services from a social perspective is the standard approach in many evaluations. Social Return on Investment brings together financial and social program analysis by facilitating the comparison of the resources invested in an activity to the benefit generated by that activity. The process analysis of the social return on investment will allow us to understand the cost savings to the County (DHHS and Sheriff), the courts, social service agencies, landlords, tenants, etc. Through this approach, we will give answers to several related questions. First, how much did the County spend on eviction-related activities prior to the UNCG Mediation Project? Second, how much did the County spend on mediation and eviction prevention in the UNCG Mediation Project? Third, how much did the UNCG Mediation Project reduce County expenditures on eviction-related issues? Finally, how much money did the County save due to the UNCG Mediation Project, net of costs? This information will be useful in development of a sustainability plan for ongoing mediation efforts.

UNC Greensboro

UNCG Organizational Information

DUNS number: 616152567
Federal Employment ID/Taxpayer ID: 56-6001468
UNCG W-9 <http://go.uncg.edu/ospw9>

UNCG CHCS Contact Information

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The Carnegie Foundation classifies UNC Greensboro as a Research University with High Research Activity, Community Engagement, and Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships. UNC Greensboro is well equipped and well suited to bring together the proposed research project. It is a comprehensive doctoral research institution with \$42,000,000 in annual sponsored research funding. UNCG has also been identified as a Minority Serving Institution, with a student body in Fall 2019 consisting of 16,106 degree-seeking undergraduates, among which approximately 34.7% identify as African American and 11.7% identify as Hispanic or Latinx. UNCG also serves a significant proportion of students with financial need, with approximately 51.8% of UNCG students eligible for need-based Pell Grants, leading the U.S. Department of Education to officially recognize UNCG as a Title III Part A institution.

This project will be well supported by Office of Research and Engagement staff who assist in grant and contract management, federal financial reporting, payroll and accounting, website development, information technology management, public relations, etc. leaving the researchers to focus on applied, community-engaged health research. UNCG's facilities and resources are robust and fully capable of supporting all grant and contract activities and sustaining programming following the end of the project. The Information Technology computing environment centrally managed software including statistical and mathematical analysis programs, such as SAS, SPSS, AMOS, Stata, Matlab, Maple and Mathematica; and

qualitative research packages including Atlas.ti and QSR Nvivo. The technology infrastructure at UNCG maintained by a highly qualified team of certified systems, networks, database and infrastructure engineers, monitored centrally by a Service Operations Center that is fully staffed 24x7x365. Additionally, the UNCG Library contains over 2.4 million volumes of books, government documents, recordings and scores. It also has extensive virtual resources through its web site including over 40,000 electronic journals, over 300 databases and over 300,000 electronic books, electronic resources accessible from the 16 other UNC libraries and several academic libraries in the Piedmont.

CHCS Organizational Qualifications

CHCS was established in 2015 as a research, evaluation, and technical assistance center. As part of its mission, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's Center for Housing and Community Studies is committed to investigating and understanding how the social, economic, environmental and spatial aspects of home and neighborhood affect people's health, well-being, and the life course. Recent projects also include the use of advanced data visualization and mapping. We have conducted HUD Fair Housing Assessments and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, as well as paired-testing studies. We are actively engaged in funded studies of impediments to fair housing, Continuum of Care for the homeless, housing market trends and market segmentation studies, municipal, county and regional community planning, and studies of the impact of housing on health.

CHCS was the lead organizer of the Invest Health Greensboro Collective Impact initiative, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Reinvestment Fund. This cross-sector collaboration model aligning Cone Health, the City of Greensboro, East Market Now, the Greensboro Housing Coalition, and UNCG CHCS focused on assisting residents in remediating substandard housing to create improved health outcomes in identified "Health Impact Communities," identified through Cone Health System data. The Invest Health project combined services (outreach, health education, resource navigation) with repair and rehabilitation work to empower residents and landlords to make their properties healthier and safer. The project has led to over \$4.5 million in neighborhood revitalization efforts (RWJF/Reinvestment Fund Invest Health Grant). Now in its second round of competitive funding, CHCS is leading Invest Health Greensboro to develop a pipeline of affordable housing investment projects in Greensboro.

CHCS currently has a staff consisting of twenty-seven researchers, research assistants, interns, and work-study students. Our full-time staff includes: Director (PhD Sociology); Senior Research Scientist (PhD Psychology); Evaluation Specialist (PhD in Educational, Psychology, and Methodology); a GIS Specialist (MGIST); Housing and Urban Policy Coordinator (JD/MPA); Community Advocacy Coordinator; and Healthy Homes Program Coordinator. This year CHCS is also host to a Faculty Research Fellow from the UNCG Department of Public Health. CHCS is housed within the Office of Research and Engagement

(ORE) under the direction of Dr. Terri Shelton, Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement. CHCS works with a 15-member *Community Advisory Board* which includes residents living in health impacted communities, non-profit and governmental organizations, and researchers at area institutions.

Center for Housing and Community Studies Leadership

Dr. Stephen J. Sills, Ph.D. – Director, CHCS

- Professor of Sociology, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Dr. Terri L. Shelton, Ph.D. – Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement

- Office of Research and Engagement, UNCG

Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., Ph.D. – Chancellor, UNCG

Community Advisory Committee

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University Advisors

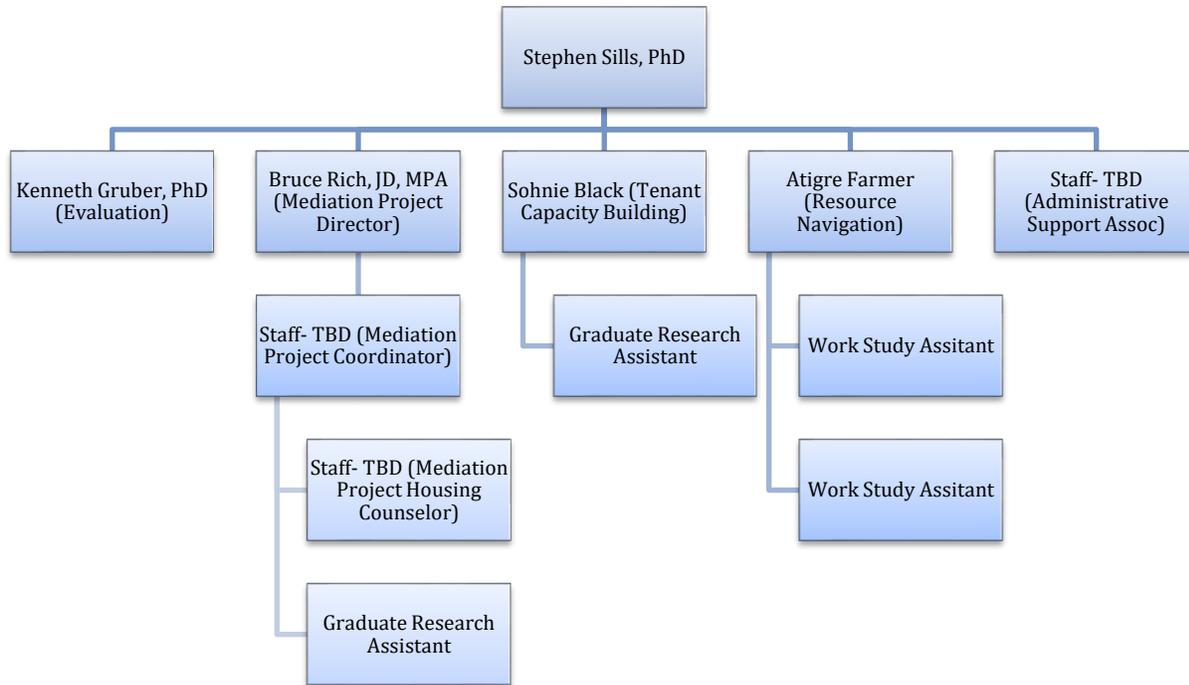
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Proposed Personnel



Dr. Stephen Sills, Professor, CHCS Director, Lead-PI

Dr. Stephen Sills is a Community-Engaged Scholar and Full Professor of Sociology. He received a B.A. in Spanish from UNCG, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Sociology from Arizona State University. His early work focused on global migration, immigrant access to health and social services, and social support networks for marginalized people working often in Southeast Asia. For the last fifteen years, Dr. Stephen Sills has conducted housing research in North Carolina. Dr. Sills has served as the principal investigator, co-principal investigator, evaluator, and methodological consultant on over 100 applied and community-engaged projects. Dr. Sills often uses Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) frameworks such as Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), Participant Action Research (PAR), and methods such as PhotoVoice (PV), Community Asset Mapping (CAM), and Community Action Planning (CAP) to leverage community resources to empower residents. He has been part of a “living laboratory” model of collaboration formalized in a partnership between UNCG and Guilford County Government through the MetroLab Network. This partnership has been used to identify community issues (including eviction, homelessness, and substance use) that can be solved through innovative research, development, and deployment (RD&D).

Dr. Kenneth Gruber, Senior Research Scientist, Co-PI, Evaluation

Dr. Kenneth Gruber is a research psychologist with over 40 years of research and program evaluation experience. His areas of specialty include data collection design and methodology,

statistical analysis, program evaluation, technical writing assistance, and grant application review. His evaluation/research experience has covered a variety of community health topics including chronic illnesses, nutrition, adolescent pregnancy prevention, the impact of diet on health and weight management, health access for uninsured adults, substance use and environmental factors in the home affecting the incidence of asthma. He is currently working on projects relating to integrated care and treatment of co-occurring disorders for the insured adults, the impact of a rapid response and syringe exchange program in connection with address opioid overdose (GCSTOP), housing as a health issue, housing eviction and homelessness, and pediatric asthma.

Bruce Rich, MPA/JD, Mediation Project Director

Bruce Rich is a researcher, advocate and policy coordinator with the Center for Housing and Community Studies. A lawyer by background and the recipient of the degree of Master of Public Affairs at UNCG with a concentration in Community and Economic Development, Bruce conducts research for nonprofit organizations and local governments in the fields of housing, health equity and access to justice. He is also now the program coordinator for the of the Center’s Mediation Project, which provides a free mediation service to landlords and tenants seeking to avoid the drastic remedy of eviction. He has done research and field work with Triad Health Project and case management with the Greensboro Housing Coalition and has been a volunteer with Legal Aid NC and the Guilford County Detention Center in Greensboro.

Sohnie Black, Community Advocacy & Tenant Capacity Building

Sohnie Black joined the staff of the Center for Housing and Community Studies after working for the Fund for Democratic Communities- a local operating foundation, for more than a decade. She brings with her a passion for justice and decades of experience as a community organizer. She excels when helping members of marginalized groups harness their collective power to address issues and bring about needed change in their communities. She looks forward to applying her skills at CHCS to the issues of environmental justice and affordable housing. Sohnie believes that well informed and organized residents are the bedrock for strong and resilient cities. When she’s not working on one organizing effort or another, she can be found at home reading, listening to podcasts or working on one of her many home improvement projects.

Atigre Farmer, Resource Navigation

Atigre’ Farmer is a recent graduate who received a B.A. in Spanish and Media studies at UNCG. Before becoming program coordinator for the Health Impact Team, Atigre’ worked with the center for three years using her Spanish language background to assist numerous projects in the office and Greensboro community. She was a canvasser and health navigator on the Health Impact Team Project. Before graduation she was promoted to part-time lead field interviewer for Health Impact Team (HIT) and eventually as the HIT program coordinator full-time.

Optional SROI Analysis

Dr. Jeremy Bray

Dr. Jeremy Bray is the Jefferson-Pilot Excellence Professor in Economics and Head of the Department of Economics in the Bryan School of Business and Economics at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. His research focuses on the economics of health behaviors, with two primary areas of focus: the economics of risky health behaviors, such as alcohol or illicit drug use, and the economic evaluation of behavioral health interventions. In his work on the economics of risky health behaviors, he has led or contributed to multiple studies that explored both the economic causes and consequences of risky health behaviors. His results confirm that economic considerations such as prices and taxes influence health behaviors, thereby supporting a broad range of policy efforts to reduce the prevalence of risky health behaviors. In his work on the economic evaluation of behavioral health interventions, he has conducted economic evaluations of many behavioral interventions; including workplace substance abuse prevention programs, alcohol screening and brief interventions for at-risk drinking, and behavioral interventions combined with pharmacotherapy for the treatment of alcohol dependence. Dr. Bray has served as PI or co-investigator on numerous economic evaluations funded by federal agencies such as NIH, CDC, and SAMHSA. His publications in this area have been referenced hundreds of times by other researchers and have had a profound impact on public health by supporting the resource allocation decisions of federal, state, and local policymakers, as well as employers, both nationally and internationally.

Will Queen

Will Queen is a PhD candidate in the Department of Economics at UNCG. Queen's research broadly focuses on the economics surrounding mental health and he specializes in health economics, econometrics, and program evaluation. Queen works with the Center for Housing and Community Studies to evaluate the return on investment of children's mental health programs in North Carolina. Queen received his BA in economics from Appalachian State in 2017 with a minor in mathematics. He received his MA in applied economics from UNCG in 2018.

VI. Project Costs

Budget Narrative

Labor and Fringe

Direct labor and fringe costs are the greatest expense in this project. Fringe rates are computed at 41% -46% for staff, 0% for enrolled students, and 8% for unenrolled students in the summer. Labor and fringe for the seventeen months of the project include:

- Director - Stephen Sills .10 FTE = \$24,753
- Mediation Director - Bruce Rich .20 FTE = \$22,690
- Evaluator - Ken Gruber .10 FTE = \$18,369
- Tenant Capacity Building - Sohnie Black .25 FTE = \$27,848
- Mediation Coordinator – TBD 1.0 FTE = \$100,133
- Housing Counselor – TBD 1.0 FTE = \$93,316
- Resource Navigation - Atigre Farmer .25 FTE = \$18,440
- Administrative Support – TBD 1.0 FTE = \$72,580
- Additionally, two graduate student research assistants will be hired at 20hr a week @ \$17.00/hr to support the Mediation Program and the Tenant Capacity Building Program for a total of \$56,781.

Total direct labor and fringe for this team is \$434,910.

Local Travel

Travel costs for ~60 local trips (about 900 miles) to go to the High Point and Greensboro Court Houses and other locations around Guilford County at \$.56 per mile is projected at \$504.

Supplies and Materials

Two new Dell laptops will be purchased for use in mobile and popup mediation clinics with a total cost of \$2,400. Other supplies include printing costs, mailings, and office supplies totaling \$5,564. The subtotal for supplies and materials is \$7,964.

Other Direct Costs

Other direct costs include advertising and communications through radio, print, and other media (estimated at \$5,000), case management software (2 years, \$13,000), and incentives for tenant capacity building workshops (100x\$20=\$2,000). The total of other direct costs is \$20,000.

Facilities and Administrative Costs

The subtotal of direct costs for this project is \$463,378. Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs for UNCG as allowed by Guilford County Government for this project is 10% for a total of \$46,338.

Total Costs

The total cost for this project is \$509,716

Optional – Social Return on Investment Analysis

The optional Social Return on Investment Analysis includes the direct labor and fringe costs for Dr. Jeremy Bray (.013 FTE) and Will Queen (.20 FTE) for a total of \$34,957. Supplies include printing costs and office supplies totaling \$350. Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs for UNCG as allowed by Guilford County Government for this addition to the project is 10% for a total of \$3,531. *The total cost for the optional SROI Analysis for the project is \$38,838.*

Procedures for Billing

UNCG Office of Sponsored Programs

The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) supports sponsored research activities at UNCG. This unit is the central point of coordination for sponsored projects and the University's authorized representative for grants, contracts, and other agreements from government agencies, private industry, and non-profit foundations.

UNCG Contract and Grant Accounting

Contract and Grant Accounting provides financial oversight for externally funded grants and contracts. CGA ensures that projects are managed responsibly according to the sponsor's guidelines as well as institutional policy.

Accounts Payable Department

The Accounts Payable (AP) Department is responsible for timely and accurate processing of transactions that are properly authorized in accordance with University policies for payment. It is the goal of AP to work with each department to promote understanding of the University's payment requests' procedures, including proper form use for particular transactions to ensure accurate and efficient processing of accounts payable transactions. In addition to University policies and procedures, the Accounts Payable Department is responsible for compliance with state sales and use tax, state personal services withholding tax, and federal 1099 reporting requirements.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro utilizes an automated billing system. A separate fund is established for each sponsored award to the university, to account for all costs associated with the individual projects. We bill monthly, and our standard cost reimbursement invoice includes direct cost categories for salary, fringe benefits, travel, other direct costs, along with a line for the indirect costs.