

Progress Report
Larimer County Immediate Needs Grant Reimbursement
Friday, April 28, 2023



THE YARROW
COLLECTIVE

PEER SUPPORT, EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

Dear Josh Fudge,

Please accept this letter as a progress report for the Larimer County Immediate Needs grant awarded to the Alliance for Suicide Prevention, dba Yarrow Collective: Peers of Larimer. We used this fund to supplement our peer support group budget and support two part time positions — a peer outreach coordinator and a peer bridge who supported folks experiencing incarceration including navigating re-entry.

With this funding we were able to support local peers by offering a stipend to help reduce barriers to attend our free Alternatives to Suicide training. Also, this funding allowed us to continue to run our peer support groups so that they could be free to attend and create a space for folks to be in during the post-covid isolation. In responding to the needs in our community, it was tremendously helpful to have this fund to add to our group budget, during a time when many of participants reported needing regular spaces to find support, we were able to keep our Alternatives to Suicide groups running weekly, and even added our Unity in Community BIPOC exclusive group to support our underserved populations.

In 2022, across all our groups have supported 802 participants, and 162 unique individuals. Our Unity in Community BIPOC-exclusive group based on the Alternatives to Suicide model has supported 129 participants, and our ECHO teen group supported 229 participants in 2022, most of whom were predominantly transgender & nonbinary teens.

In describing the Alternatives to Suicide group experience, one of our participants wrote to us saying “We share our experiences, we share our emotions, our emotional responses, we share really vulnerable things, our fears - the last few times I’ve gone, it’s sparked me to think really deeply about what’s going on in my life and I definitely had some insights about my journey and it’s helped me feel like I can contribute to other people’s healing just by sharing my own experience which is really also very powerful and healing. By hearing other people, you feel so much less alone and just by being listened to and seen and heard by people who have similar thoughts of suicidality, it is ... you know in therapy I learn skills and in group, I learn how to love and be loved.”

Outside of groups, through our outreach positions, in 2022, we hosted 329 individuals across community building events about peer support and 165 in our trainings we provided for other organizations and community members interested in learning about how peer support skills can improve their communication skills and build stronger communities. Throughout the past year we have been able to create a partnership with Larimer County Jail & Alternative Sentencing Department, and Larimer County Community Corrections, which has laid a foundation for the

amazing work that is being done and to come. We also got the opportunity to collaborate with other local organizations like Northern Colorado Health Alliance (NCHA) who we have since been working alongside to be sure to provide the best support we can to our community members experiencing incarceration.

The two positions we were able to fund through this grant were for Lucrecia Medrano and Kyle Rogers, our Jail Re-entry Navigators offering 1:1 peer support for folks experiencing incarceration and Melissa Lozano, our Community Outreach Coordinator. They have been doing incredible work in our community and no doubt have saved lives through the connections they are making. Though only hired a couple months ago, Kyle has met with 16 different folks to offer support and has been making more connections in the jail and community corrections to expand our work providing 1:1 re-entry peer support. Melissa, co-founder of Unity in Community, our BIPOC-exclusive peer support group, has also been making the necessary youth community connections to expand our youth work and offer a couple community programs this summer for youth. During a time when we know youth are struggling and many states are declaring a state of emergency regarding youth mental health, these supports will be an incredibly important offering for our youth community. With this funding we were able to support both Lucrecia and Melissa in getting trained in Xinachtli, which is a gender-responsive, culturally-based rites of passage philosophy, process, and curriculum that promotes healing, resilience, and leadership capacity of Chicana, Latina and Indigenous girls and nonbinary youth. Lucrecia and Melissa will be offering this program here in Larimer County later this year in 2023.

This fund helped us bridge the hours of these important folks on our team while we sought out and obtained more sustainable funding for them to be doing the important work they're doing.

We greatly appreciate the support and are looking forward to continued partnership with you. If you have any further questions about our work or this progress report, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Silen Wellington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Silen Wellington (they/he)
Peer Supporter & Interim Director
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Yarrow Collective: Peers of Larimer