

Interim Community Center Service Providers

West Valley Community Services RFI

Introduction: Include a statement of interest and pertinent introductory information. Include your current service territory and whether or not you currently serve the Los Gatos.

West Valley Community Services is a private, non-profit, community-based agency that has been providing direct assistance and referral services in the west valley communities of Los Gatos, Saratoga, Cupertino, Monte Sereno, West San Jose, and the unincorporated mountain regions for nearly 50 years. We provide a continuum of basic needs and housing assistance services, including information and referrals, food, homeless services, affordable housing, rental and utility assistance, and case management. In addition to distributing basic needs services, West Valley Community Services focuses on providing case management to each client and ensuring access to a continuum of services to provide a strong foundation for those threatened with hunger and homelessness. The mission of the organization is to unite the community to fight hunger and homelessness.

Experience and Service: Include a detailed description of the experience and expertise required to provide the proposed community service and how it fulfills a basic and/or unmet need within the community. Indicate a measurable goal or desired outcome of becoming a community partner at the Interim Community Center and a method of tracking progress and evaluating effectiveness in the community.

Many families and individuals living in the West Valley struggle to put food on the table and pay their rent in the wake of staggering increases in gas, food, and electricity, stagnant wages, high rents, and a tight affordable housing market. According to the San Jose State University 2022 pain index, \$2,365 is the median monthly rent in the San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara metro area in December 2021, making it the most expensive metro area to rent in the U.S. Families living on minimum wage and seniors who are on fixed income feel the rent burden more and get evicted at a faster rate in Santa Clara county. Poverty creates further barriers to accessing critical services, including health services, nutritious food, and other necessities, contributing to poor physical and mental health. Poverty also inhibits socialization and engagement with the community. For low-income families with limited English language skills or at-risk seniors, finding where or how to access services is much more of a challenge. In some cases, these families may not know where to go or may not have reliable transportation to get the help they need. This can result in significant delays in service delivery, leading them further into financial crises, unhealthy or risky living conditions, or circumstances that make them vulnerable to being taken advantage of.

For the past 50 years, West Valley Community Services has been the safety net for families experiencing short-term crises, helping families with food, housing, and emergency financial assistance in the West Valley. However, the trends have shown that the circumstances for the many families that access our services have not changed, and as a result, they continue to need access to basic services to survive. West Valley Community Services has become one of many clients' first responders. Through case management, we have successfully connected them with basic services such as access to health care services, information about health care coverage, free tax, and public benefits assistance, which helps to reduce poverty.

The West Valley region has a large population of families who are more likely to live in poverty and are in greater need of services. They also face other unique issues, such as:

- **Lack of accessibility and availability of resources:** West Valley Community Services' service area comprises a broad and diverse socio-economic spectrum. Amongst the million-dollar single-family homes, there are also homes where the power or water has been shut off or multiple families rent rooms in single-family homes. Because of the large number of high-income families living in our service area who do not have basic needs, many of these services are located outside the Cupertino-Saratoga-Los Gatos corridor, creating accessibility issues for low-income individuals.
- **Isolation of high-risk individuals:** Low-income individuals and families in affluent communities struggle with low self-esteem, isolation, and less social involvement. Individuals in need are too embarrassed and ashamed to ask for help. They cannot also access the resources to help them succeed or maintain a healthy standard of living.
- **Lack of public transportation:** The cost of owning and operating a car is beyond reach for most individuals served at West Valley Community Services. Given our mass transit system's limited reach or slow speed, people without cars need help accessing services.

To address these challenges, WVCS programs and services ensure impoverished households have easy access to public benefits, supportive services, and education resources that help families build financial and household stability. West Valley Community Services is our community's safety net. We ensure that low-income and homeless individuals and families receive the support and services they need to build the foundation for a brighter future.

- By providing supplemental food, West Valley Community Services prevents hunger, improves health and nutrition, and enables clients to spend more of their financial resources on housing, transportation, medical costs, and other life essentials.
- By providing case management, information, and referrals, West Valley Community Services is helping clients find the resources they need to acquire

suitable housing, learn about public benefits, eat more healthily, cover healthcare expenses, and much more.

- By providing access to a mobile food pantry, West Valley Community Services is making food pantry service accessible to all close to where they live. The mobile food pantry has several locations in West San Jose, Saratoga, and Los Gatos.
- By providing emergency rental and utility assistance, West Valley Community Services is preventing clients from eviction and homelessness. With this help, clients are prevented from entering the downward spiral that can make returning to stability difficult or impossible.

If awarded this Service Provider contract, WVCS will provide case management, an accessible food market that provides weekly groceries, and supportive services for the homeless.

Qualifications: Name, phone number, and email of the contact person and/or project manager; qualifications of these individuals and their team that demonstrate the ability to provide the services described in this RFI successfully; a list of at least two professional references with names, addresses, emails, phone numbers, business relationship, and a brief description of the project or interaction.

West Valley Community Services' staff have significant educational and professional expertise in working with low-income families, seniors, and the homeless community in the West Valley region of Santa Clara County. We have held several State, County, and Town contracts and met all our deliverables. The West Valley Community Services staff that provide direct services to clients either hold a Bachelor's degree in social sciences or have at least three years of work experience in social services. Vahnessa Hayes, who has five years of experience in program management and supervision, will provide program and clinical supervision. Mateo Lumbraras, the Director of Client Services, has extensive countywide experience running offsite programs successfully. Sujatha Venkatraman, the Executive director who holds an MSW and has over 30 years of experience in community development, program, and contract management, will lead the strategic program's direction. WVCS leverages the cost of other staff supporting this program through other grants.

As the Executive Director, Sujatha will work closely with West Valley Community Services staff and board to ensure appropriate financial and programmatic transparency to support the organization's core mission. In addition, all contractual management obligations, including reporting, are under the responsibility of the Executive Director and the Finance Director.

Organization: The total number of volunteers and/or staff who will provide the required services and their role(s) at the Interim Community Center.

We anticipate having one to two staff members and two volunteers at the Interim Community Center.

Schedule and Space: Include a statement indicating whether a shared rotational desk space could work for the service(s) provided and the ideal schedule. For example, Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please also include the ideal scenario of how much space and what kind of space would be ideal for providing your services at the Interim Community Center. There are no guarantees that the schedule and space can be accommodated; however, this will help us understand the needs. Indicate whether storage space is needed and how much.

Ideally, we would like to have the space for one week to two times a week to provide case management, an accessible food market that provides weekly groceries, and supportive services for the homeless. Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. to noon and Thursday from 2-5 pm. Ideally, We would like a space 200-300 SF for a mini food pantry with a refrigerator, freezer, and shelves for dry goods(pasta, beans, and rice). Along with space for one staff member and a volunteer.



COUNSELING AND
SUPPORT SERVICES
FOR YOUTH

April 17, 2024

Robert Gray
Chief Building Official
Town of Los Gatos
rgray@losgatosca.gov

Dear Mr. Gray,

Since 2009, Counseling and Support Services for Youth (CASSY) has shown how effective and powerful school-based counseling can be for everyone involved. Through partnering with schools and communities, we integrate mental health support into the fabric of the school and reach students in a familiar, safe environment.

We have grown and now partner with schools throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, but our roots with Los Gatos High School remain strong. In fact, we now work with all the high schools that support the majority of Los Gatos students – Los Gatos High, Saratoga High, Leigh High, and Westmont High. Our highly qualified, post-graduate therapists provide individual, goal-oriented counseling; group therapy; proactive mental health education to students; staff and parent consultations and support; and crisis intervention.

We know from experience that placing competent and caring therapists where students are located will lead students to accessing the help they need. We also have a good understanding of what works and what doesn't in Los Gatos. We understand the intense issues the students in our community are dealing with. We also know that these issues do not end when the school day ends nor do they cease during school breaks. We believe that CASSY and the Town of Los Gatos have a unique opportunity to leverage the community center space for Los Gatos youth who may need additional support.

In community,
Marico Sayoc
Executive Director

I. Background of Provider

Agency Philosophy

As a nonprofit agency with experienced leadership, we are both ambitious and pragmatic. Our mission is to destigmatize mental health and make supporting students' social and emotional well-being the norm in our local schools. We envision a world where all youth get the support they need to be successful in school and in life. At the same time, we understand that creating such a utopia will take a serious commitment from more than our schools and requires our community's involvement.

Although every CASSY program is unique, we stick to five core values:

1. We are available to help all students, regardless of their ability to pay.

We serve all students, where free services at school are the only realistic way to reach youth. We also serve financially stable communities where many families have the resources, but other barriers such as stigma, transportation, and insurance limits get in the way.

2. We partner with communities that value mental health in the educational process.

The only way to achieve our shared goals is to create a strong working relationship between our agency and our communities. To do so, we would like to set up shop right at the Los Gatos Interim Community Center. Together, we will create a mental health resource team that extends beyond any one school campus for Los Gatos youth.

3. We tailor our programs to meet the unique needs of the population we will serve.

We factor in the unique characteristics of our community when creating any new program, and this venture will be an innovative idea for CASSY.

4. We hire, train and mentor professional therapists who love working with youth.

We use experienced therapists to tackle our clients' issues rather than using our clients' issues to train inexperienced therapists. Our model starts with a licensed Clinical Program Manager who supervises a staff of professional postgraduate therapists.

5. We are committed to making a difference.

We take great pride in improving the lives of the students we support. We view each case independently to decide the best course of treatment – whether to handle it internally, provide services on campus, or refer out to another community-based provider. When there is a mental health crisis at the Community Center, we will be there leading the way.

II. Our Proposed Services and Programs

The specific services we propose to implement at the Los Gatos Interim Community Center will be aligned with CASSY's values.

For Students:

Proactive Mental Health Education

An ideal way to improve students' overall mental health is to educate them before they are in crisis. We provide psycho-educational presentations directly to students and their families. With the community center space, we can offer presentations to all Los Gatos students who may benefit, regardless of which school they attend.

Ongoing Counseling – Individual and Group

CASSY provides individual and group counseling sessions on-campus during school hours. There may be times when a student requests a session after school hours, and the Interim Community Center would be a convenient meeting space.

For Parents & Community:

Parent Consultation

CASSY therapists are experienced dealing with adolescent behaviors and issues. We offer parents confidential consultations at the schools we serve; however, some parents cannot meet during school hours and would like to meet after hours. Having an office at the Los Gatos Interim Community Center will allow parents to consult with our staff at a convenient location after school hours – or even during school hours at a location they might prefer for reasons of confidentiality.

Community Outreach

CASSY provides parent education opportunities by giving presentations and leading discussions about raising emotionally healthy children. These presentations can be provided at the Los Gatos Interim Community Center for everyone to attend, regardless of whether they have students in Los Gatos.

III. Filling an Unmet Community Need

Under our current model, CASSY provides mental health services on campus during the school day. Some of the concerns we deal with include depression, anxiety, academic stress, family conflict, and peer relationship issues. However, not all of our student's issues are appropriate for the school-based model, thus a room in the neighboring community center would be an ideal venue for counseling to continue.

We want to give our students the continuity of care they deserve and want to offer counseling options until the presenting issues are resolved and any negative symptoms are relieved. CASSY would like to provide continuity of care for our clients outside of school hours, but we do not currently have a physical location for this support. The Los Gatos Interim Community Center would provide a much-needed solution.

The Los Gatos Interim Community Center would also be an ideal venue for CASSY to provide community-wide presentations on mental health topics and be a resource for those who do not know how to enter into the behavioral system.

IV. Program Evaluation/Expected Data Collection

We offer the following measurable objectives to assess our program:

Quantitative:

- **Pediatric Symptoms Checklist (PSC)** – The PSC is a psychosocial screen designed to facilitate the recognition of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral problems so that appropriate interventions can be initiated as early as possible. CASSY therapists assess students at the beginning and end of treatment, with the results compiled at the end.
- **Progress toward treatment goals** – Treatment goals are the building blocks of a student's treatment plan. Goals are developed with the student and are designed to be specific, realistic, and tailored to the needs of each individual youth.

Qualitative:

- **Self-report by students** – We ask students if they thought counseling was helpful and whether they would seek counseling again in the future.
- **Parent feedback** – We request a parent feedback form which gives the parent an opportunity to evaluate the impact of our services on their child.
- **Staff feedback** – We invite key staff to complete an end-of-year survey.

V. Qualifications

Contact

Marico Sayoc
Executive Director
msayoc@cassybayarea.org
(408) 493-5289

All clinical staff who will be working from the Los Gatos Interim Community Center are BBS-registered MFTs or MSWs.

Professional References

Dr. Kristy Grasty
Assistant Principal, Los Gatos High School
20 High School Ct.

Los Gatos, CA 95030
kgrasty@lgsuhd.org
[\(408\) 354-2730](tel:(408)354-2730)

In 2009, Dr. Grasty was instrumental in ushering in an award-winning partnership with CASSY to serve students at Los Gatos High School.

Tylor Taylor
Executive Director, Successful Aging Solutions & Community Counseling (SASCC)
19655 Allendale Avenue
Saratoga, CA 95070
tylor@sascc.org
(408) 644-8625

We partnered with Tylor and SASCC on a community-wide mental health fair at Los Gatos High School in September 2022. The purpose was to provide intergenerational mental health resources to the entire Los Gatos and Saratoga communities. With space at the Los Gatos Interim Community Center, we hope to continue with this type of programming.

VI. Organization

CASSY has 40 employees; however, the number of CASSY staff on site would vary, depending on the type of services performed. For example, individual or group counseling would have one therapist on site in a private room whereas a community wide presentation may have two to three staff.

VII. Schedule and Space

CASSY's ideal space would be one dedicated office for confidential sessions. However, we know space is limited, so the next best option would be the use of a private office that we could reserve on an as-needed basis. We also request use of the large multipurpose room – when available – to provide presentations to the community on mental health concerns. No storage space is needed; however, if there will be a resource wall, CASSY can provide resources for the community.

We would be honored to partner with the Town of Los Gatos to support the mental health of our youth. Please let me know if there are any questions about our proposal or if I can provide more information.

April 15, 2024

Robert Gray
Chief Building Official
Town of Los Gatos
110 E. Main Street
Los Gatos, CA 95030

Dear Robert,

I am pleased to submit this Statement of Interest respectfully requesting to become a prospective Community Partner with the Town and provide services to the community at the Interim Community Center, also known as the Adult Recreation Center, located at 208 E. Main, Los Gatos. AWQ is the word for skin and color in the Nigerian language of Yoruba. We're a social justice non-profit vehemently dedicated to unifying the glorious shades of HUEmanity. Founded in 2020 in response to the death of George Floyd, we provide community space where people can ingest accurate cultural narratives – about themselves, others, and HUEmanity as a collective. We have been based in Los Gatos since inception and continue to serve the community and its surrounding areas including Campbell, San Jose, Saratoga, Monte Sereno and beyond.

The Vision of AWQ is to achieve a more inclusive and representative world by focusing on the unheard stories of individuals within society to build a more collective understanding about ourselves.

To deliver our innovative HUEmanity programs, we use education and awareness supported by the arts and culture. The art forms we use to support our efforts are storytelling, music and dance. We are well vast in implementing community engagement events, public education and awareness events that promote community conversations, dialogue and different perspectives from black, indigenous, ethnic, urban, and rural artists and speakers, who come from diverse backgrounds and use their life experiences to inspire, empower and model how to break down barriers and bring healing to local communities.

I founded AWQ and I am the Executive Director. Debra Crenshaw is the Executive Program Manager. We have a combined work experience of over 60 years in delivering community engagement events and programming, and school programming in the US, Nigeria and UK. Our core team of instructors and artists are versatile and work really well with all ages. They have a combined 100-120 years experience in community engagement work all across the globe.

AWQ, through its Wellness for Huemanity Program, proposes an innovative approach to improve individual and community health & well-being through shared narratives, engaging interactive activities and experiential learnings related to boosting health and emotional well-being. Our Wellness for Huemanity Program aims to accomplish health and social goals such as improving mental wellness, reducing stress and tension and alleviating pain. In addition to its healing potential, we focus on magnifying the message of diversity, inclusion, equity, belonging and lived experience. We believe when people think collectively, can creatively collaborate and are introduced to new cultures, ultimately, they enhance and expand their understanding, appreciation and respect of diverse communities and perspectives. Participants will explore their own identities and intersect with those around them. Services will help individuals recognize the role diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and lived experiences play in enhancing community cohesion and building strong local communities. For the first time and in a structured setting, if this opportunity is given, we will be providing not just a one time experience per event but a continuum of collective experiences over a period of time and through weekly or biweekly sessions. This is a next level development for our community engagement services. With additional space, we automatically expand and enhance the delivery of our community engagement offerings.

Our program directly addresses factors like:

- Social and Community Context: Such as social integration, social support and community engagement.
- Neighborhood conditions: Creating safe and inclusive spaces for well-being exploration and for fostering a sense of community belonging.
- Advocacy and access to healthcare: Connecting participants to relevant healthcare services and advocating for culturally competent care.

Three specific desired outcomes if we become a community partner at the Interim Community Center are– community healing, global perspectives and combat loneliness & relationship building

First, local community members who come from diverse backgrounds (youth, disabled, high resourced, refugee, elderly, immigrant, etc.) will use their life experiences to inspire, empower and teach how to gain confidence and use their own voices to break down barriers, bridge gaps and bring healing to communities through listening sessions, honest conversations, music-making activities, such as drumming circles, songwriting, shared narratives or group singing, we can facilitate emotional release, promote self-reflection, and create a sense of community. Our arts engagement offerings can also serve as a catalyst for social connection and support, breaking down barriers and bridging divides.

Second, local community members will see, hear and experience new insights and global perspectives from local artists, educators, speakers and other community members who will broaden self-understanding, cultural competency and empathy for people different from themselves.

Third, our activities create inclusive spaces where people from diverse backgrounds can come together, collaborate, and build relationships based on shared interests. These experiences promote social cohesion, combat loneliness, and provide a support network that can positively impact overall well-being throughout The Town and its surrounding areas.

To track progress, we will carry out a lot of social documentation work including collecting, publishing and archiving oral stories, capturing observations and reactions through photography and videography of the program in progress and collection of written surveys by participants. All these help us assess the process and also provide ideas and inspiration for future programs.

Yes, a shared rotational desk space could work. Depending on the group size and activity type during any one session, there could be anywhere between 1-5 staff and/or volunteers. It would be good to have a space that is no less than 600 square ft. A safe storage space of no less than 150-200 square feet is ideal too so if there is a possibility that this can be available, that'll be great. Friday (4-10pm), Saturday 9-3pm and/or Sunday from 1-6pm will be ideal schedules.

1. Board Member: Tomara Hall, 349 Cereza Place, San Jose, CA 95112, 209-408-9791, tomarahall7@gmail.com
2. Community Volunteer: Marie Tagne 510-684-3087, meyoum@gmail.com

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Warmest regards,



Folake Phillips
Founder & Executive Director
AWQ: Skin. Color. Race.

*AWQ is a Registered Charity: 87-3912985 Address: 1484 Pollard Road
Los Gatos #242, Los Gatos, CA 95032 | Tel: 408-601-0364 |
Web: www.AWOcenter.org*