

**ReCONNECT to Move Forward: Mental Health and Well-Being  
Community Cohort  
Cover Page Template**

<b>Lead Applicant Organization</b>	
<b>Person Submitting Application: Name</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Phone</b>	
<b>Communities Involved (List all)</b>	

# **ReCONNECT to Move Forward: Mental Health and Well-Being**

## **A Call for Proposals from NC Communities**

**DUE: Monday, July 27, 2020, 5:00 p.m. EST**

***In light of COVID-19, how are communities across the state working together to improve mental health and well-being for adults and young people?***

The Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) at North Carolina State University is seeking applications from NC “communities” that are actively working to improve mental health and well-being in their communities in a time of COVID-19. Selected communities will join IEI’s *ReCONNECT to Move Forward: Mental Health and Well-Being* virtual community cohort.

Communities selected for the cohort will benefit from:

- A platform to talk about their initiative at the October 29, 2020 *ReCONNECT to Move Forward: Mental Health and Well-Being* virtual meeting. Five complimentary event tickets will be available to each community team.
- A virtual peer learning network to share with--and learn from--communities across the state,
- Free capacity building activities, including storytelling, training on dialogue across difference and more. Two strategic planning sessions will also be available and will take place virtually or in your local community once it is safe to do so, and
- Increased visibility and potential for greater financial support of a community’s reconnection efforts.

There is no fee for participating in the cohort and all meetings will be available virtually.

More information about the cohort and who can apply is included below.

### **What is ReCONNECT NC?**

ReCONNECT NC is an initiative of the Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) at North Carolina State University created to respond to a profound challenge our state faces: the loss of connection — to work, to civic institutions, to one another. This disconnection has serious consequences for statewide and personal well-being. Without strong ties to employers, schools, local communities and neighbors, people are far less likely to contribute to economic growth, maintain their health, or participate in the social and civic activities that define our shared quality of life.

Originally, the ReCONNECT NC initiative consisted of six forums over three years, with each forum focused on a different topic concentrated on one aspect of the state’s loss of connection. In light of COVID-19, we have adjusted our forum model and will instead host a

series of three large virtual convenings on what we are learning roughly six months into the global pandemic. For more information about past and future forum and meeting topics and locations, visit our website at <https://iei.ncsu.edu/reconnectnc/>.

### **ReCONNECT to Move Forward: Mental Health and Well-Being**

While everyone may not contract COVID-19, everyone's mental well-being has been affected by the pandemic in some way. Recent data reveals that adults experiencing signs of serious mental illness have increased eight-fold, skyrocketing from 3.4% in 2018 to 28% during the pandemic. In addition to clinical mental health, many are experiencing loneliness, grief, and anger--whether from job loss, disconnection from family and social networks, or from societal inequities and COVID's disproportionate impact on communities of color. Young people are also being impacted during a crucial period of their development. While health care providers, faith leaders, nonprofits and other community efforts have mobilized to try to support those in need today, there are too many unknowns about the long-term impact this pandemic will have on our mental health and well-being. On October 29, 2020, we will convene a large virtual meeting to share our collective strategies for coping and be cared for in the midst of this pandemic and examine what it will take to improve the mental health system so we can all thrive in a post-pandemic world.

At IEI, we believe that **local communities** -- with their traditions, willingness to work, and history of coming together in tough times to solve big challenges -- are the unit of change to spark this commitment to reconnection. For each forum, five communities whose work aligns with the forum topic will be chosen to be a part of that forum's community cohort. As part of the cohort, the community will work with IEI and other communities to implement new solutions that make them stronger, better equipped to succeed, and more connected. We see communities as the experts that can lead change and inspire others to become part of a more connected North Carolina. IEI is currently working with three existing cohorts as part of the ReCONNECT NC series: [ReCONNECT to Community](#), [ReCONNECT Rural and Urban](#), [ReCONNECT to Economic Opportunity](#), and [ReCONNECT to Technological Opportunity](#).

### **DO YOU HAVE AN INITIATIVE OTHERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?**

IEI is accepting applications from NC "communities" that are actively working on successful efforts to improve mental health and well-being for adults and/or young people in light of COVID-19. This can include but is not limited to innovative clinical care, community-based services, or programs that address mental health and well-being as part of their broader efforts (e.g., workplace programs, educational support services, faith initiatives). Specifically, we are looking for programs that are focusing on equity and inclusion in this work.

IEI will follow these communities over the duration of the project, capturing their successes and lessons learned in case studies that will be shared statewide.

**Who Can Apply:** Specific to this cohort, a "community" refers to an organization or partnership located in a region, county, city, town, or neighborhood. These can include, but are not limited to, entities of local government, educational institutions, businesses,

non-profit organizations, and faith communities. While virtual initiatives will be considered, preference will be given to virtual efforts with ties to a specific geographic place.

To be considered for the cohort, each group should identify a diverse local team of 5 representatives from the community to participate in a series of virtual cross-community capacity-building meetings over the course of one year (see cohort structure below). Due to the pandemic these virtual meetings are optional, though we hope your team will take advantage of the opportunity to learn from, and share with others.

Applications are due no later than Monday, July 27, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. EST. The benefits and expectations for participating communities and the application process are outlined below.

### ***ReCONNECT to Move Forward: Mental Health and Well-Being Community Cohort Meetings***

The five communities selected for the *ReCONNECT to Move Forward: Mental Health and Well-Being* community cohort will have access to numerous capacity building and peer-learning opportunities over a nine-month period. These meetings are structured as a cross-community peer learning collaborative, which is an opportunity for different communities working on similar challenges to learn from one another. This opportunity will provide mutual learning and support, and valuable new relationships. Communities will have different assets and deficits; the peer learning approach encourages openness, mutual accountability and the formation of supportive relationships that outlive the initiative.

In return, cohort communities will commit to sharing what they learn with a statewide audience as part of the broader ReCONNECT NC effort in the hopes of capturing lessons learned and scaling what works, *and to “mentor” at least one other community.*

Capacity-building activities and a sample meeting timeline is provided in **Appendix 1**. Due to the pandemic these virtual meetings are optional, though we hope your team will take advantage of the opportunity to learn from and share with others.

### **Application Criteria**

Eligibility: “Community” is defined as a neighborhood, municipality or county and can focus on the whole community or a specific subset. Communities with active initiatives must provide the following information to be considered for the *ReCONNECT to Move Forward: Mental Health and Well-Being* community cohort. The application narrative must not exceed 2 pages, single-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. The cover page (template provided on the first page of this RFP) and letters of support are not included in the 2-page limit.

The application narrative should not exceed two pages and must include the following:

- Current Effort: Tell us about your community’s efforts that help improve adult mental health and well-being in light of COVID-19 in the community. These efforts can be privately led, publically led, or some combination of both. Include relevant data and

describe recent activities and investments that have received public and/or private support.

- Challenges and Opportunities: What are the current challenges and potential opportunities for your initiative? How will participating in the *ReCONNECT to Move Forward: Adult Mental Health and Well-Being* cohort enhance your community's success?
- Cohort Team and Local Engagement: List all members and affiliations that will participate in your community "team." Describe what each member of the team brings to the table in terms of diversity (regional, demographic, sector, perspective, etc.), expertise, and partner support. Are there other stakeholders that are not engaged, and if so, describe how you plan to encourage their participation? Explain how your team will engage broader community stakeholders in this work (outside of the local team). While some meetings are limited to the local leadership team only, we expect teams to share lessons learned with a broader group of community stakeholders.

*\*If your community team is selected to participate, IEI will provide technical assistance for engaging critical partners.*

Application submission and review : Applications are due no later than **Monday, July 27 2020, at 5:00 p.m. EST** and should be emailed in a **single PDF** to Trishell Moore, IEI's AmeriCorps VISTA, at [tcmoore6@ncsu.edu](mailto:tcmoore6@ncsu.edu).

An email will be sent to confirm receipt of the application. A committee comprised of IEI staff and external partners will review each application against the criteria described above and select five communities to join this effort. These communities will represent a diverse mix of initiatives from across the state.

All communities submitting applications will be notified by **July 30, 2020**.

**Appendix 1: Sample capacity building and peer-learning meeting timeline.**

When	Focus
Aug. 3, 2020  4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	<p><b>Welcome and orientation</b>            Get to know other community teams in your cohort and hear more about the ReCONNECT NC peer-learning network.</p> <p>Who: <u>Community leadership teams only</u></p>
Aug. 4, 2020  3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	<p><b>The Personal and the Professional: Maximizing my civic and community engagement</b></p> <p>This workshop encourages personal and professional reflection around who we are and where we've been as a process to determine "where we want to go." Utilizing a variety of tools, including the Tree of Life and 10 Lens exercise, we'll examine how we serve in the civic sphere, as a paid professional and as a community volunteer (e.g., board work, faith community involvement) along with unpacking some issues of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity. Ideally, we'll identify goals for future learning in our personal and professional lives through civic conversations as well as intentional engagement and reflection.</p> <p>Who: <u>Open to anyone. Session will be recorded for later review.</u></p>
Aug. 11, 2020  3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	<p><b>A Story to Remember, Part I</b></p> <p>"What do you do?" It's a simple question, but not always easy to communicate in a way that resonates with your audience. And if people can't remember who you are or why you do what you do, you may be overlooked when it comes to collaboration, funding, and other resources. As Jeff Polish often says, <i>"In the end, it's more important to make people care deeply about why you do what you do, rather than get lost in the details of what you do. And that is what stories can communicate best—a relatable sense of motivation based on conflict or need."</i> This session will break down the key components of a great story and how to best market your impact so that others will take notice.</p> <p>Who: <u>Open to anyone. Session will be recorded for later review.</u></p>
Aug. 14, 2020  3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	<p><b>A Story to Remember, Part II</b></p> <p>Work session: team practice with coaching from Jeff Polish.</p> <p>Who: <u>Community leadership teams only.</u></p>
Aug. 18, 2020  3:00 p.m. -	<p><b>Adaptive Leadership 2020</b></p> <p>Everyone on track with their 2020 goals? Let's discuss our own leadership and how well we've adapted. Whether it's the public health crisis with the COVID-19 pandemic, the related</p>

4:30 p.m.	<p>economic crisis, the spotlight on systemic racism, politics, hurricane season, or some combo, the terrain has made everyone burn their calendars and conjure up new visions for how to get to 2021. “Where do we go from here?” Bring all of your tools and your compass. Buckle up for a wide-ranging conversation and let’s share what’s worked, what hasn’t, and how we’re getting oriented for the journey in front of us.</p> <p>Who: <u>Open to anyone. Session will be recorded for later review</u></p>
<p>Aug. 25, 2020</p> <p>3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Collective Impact In Practice</b></p> <p>Today’s challenges are large scale, arise from interactions of many factors, and therefore require a multi-organizational response. Collaboration alone won’t do. Collective Impact is built on a common goal and outcomes and requires active coordination, data-sharing and continuous improvement. It focuses on both the task at hand and the system around it. This session will present an overview of collective impact, including real-world examples of how it works--and fails--in practice, and how to start this work in your community.</p> <p>Who: <u>Open to anyone. Session will be recorded for later review</u></p>
<p>Sept. 2020</p> <p>TBD</p>	<p><b>Dialogue Across Difference</b></p> <p>Communities will gain understanding in effective communication that can lead to better problem-solving and/or more effective government. Participants will gain skills in talking and working across racial, economic, and political divides.</p> <p>Who: <u>Community leadership teams only.</u></p>
<p>Sept. 2020 – April 2021</p> <p>TBD</p>	<p><b>Strategic Planning/ Coaching</b></p> <p>Depending on a community’s unique needs, each local team will have access to strategic planning facilitation or coaching support. These sessions will take place in the local community or in several virtual sessions per community.</p> <p>Who: <u>Community leadership teams and their partners.</u></p>
<p>Oct. 29, 2020</p> <p>9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>ReCONNECT to Move Forward: Mental Health and Well-Being</b> virtual meeting</p> <p>One person per community will have their “Ted-style” talk featured during the the virtual meeting</p> <p>Who: <u>IEI will provide five complimentary tickets per local team (which includes a ticket for your team presenter). Other team members are encouraged to attend the meeting if able.</u></p>
<p>Nov. 2020</p> <p>TBD</p>	<p><b>Cross-Cohort Meeting #1</b></p> <p>Capacity building, program update and peer learning with all five ReCONNECT NC cohorts comprised of 25 community teams from across the state.</p> <p>Who: <u>Community leadership teams only.</u></p>
Feb. 2021	<p><b>Cross-Cohort Meeting #2</b></p>

TBD	Capacity building, program update and peer learning with all five ReCONNECT NC cohorts. Who: <u>Community leadership teams only.</u>
Feb. 2021 – April. 2021	<b>Creating Your Community Case Study</b> IEI will work with communities to create a case study. Who: <u>Community leadership teams only.</u>