

The need for access to mental health services is well documented across the state of Texas, but also specifically here in Denton County. According to the 2021 State of Mental Health in America Report, Texas ranks 50 out of 51 in terms of access to mental health care. This suggests that Texas has low access to both insurance and treatment/services for mental health (Fritze et al., 2020). In addition, the United Way of Denton County 2022 Community Needs Assessments reports that there is one mental health provider for every 750 persons in Denton County.

Recognizing the great need within our community for access to trauma-informed therapy and mental healthcare, in 2021 Cumberland Youth & Family Services began to expand counseling services beyond only Cumberland Youth & Family Services residents to serve vulnerable, low-income/uninsured community members in the Denton County area. To be eligible for Community Counseling services, clients must be Denton residents, uninsured, and low-income households as determined by <https://www.huduser.gov/>

Cumberland's counseling program serves individuals often face substantial challenges in accessing mental health services due to cost and a community-wide shortage of available mental health resources. The goal of this program expansion is to provide our residents and community members with the means to address the trauma they have experienced in a compassionate, trauma-informed environment.

In 2022, we provided 1,259 counseling sessions and hired an additional full-time licensed therapist to support this program. Their primary focus is serving community members in need and our results for 2023 YTD already have this therapist at a full caseload. As we continue to serve both our residents and community members, we have outgrown our current space on campus and will be moving to a separate building dedicated to our Counseling Program. Here we will have 4 counseling rooms, a group therapy room, a play therapy room, dedicated workspaces for our counselors, and a welcoming client waiting room.

We are requesting \$5,000 from the Denton Noon Rotary help furnish our new counseling center. The goal of this center is to create a private and accessible area, separate from regular campus traffic where residents and community clients will feel safe, comfortable and their privacy can be maintained as they receive trauma-informed care from our team of counselors.

Rotary support will help support the expansion of this critical program through the creation of safe, welcoming, and comfortable spaces and ultimately help increase the access to mental health services in our community. This will allow us to continue to serve both residents and community members; creating positive counseling outcomes for residents, individuals, and families within our community.