Buncombe County Supplemental Aging Funding (BCSAF)
Monitor Report for FY25

Name of the Organization: Unmet Needs in Equity vs. Transformational Empowerment (UNETE) Inc.

Program Name: Mi Vida

Amount Funded: $15,573.00

Staff Members Present: Norma Brown, J.D., Executive Director and Jose Infanzon Chavez, UNETE CHW Program Regional Coordinator

Date: 6/24/25

1. What were your highlights and challenges in accomplishing your program in FY25?
   The highlights were seeing the connections form between varied participants. Participants varied by educational and income levels and country origins. Participants were very engaged in the programming and it was them that decided to do a 1 mile walk together before each session. The participants also decided to change the name of the program so now it is called the Mi Vida/Forever Young program. The Mi Vida program reduced social isolation and increased physical and mental wellbeing for the participants.
   One challenge was the lack of transportation for participants to get to the sessions. Families were another challenge. Family dynamics are difficult. Many participants take care of their grandchildren while the parents work. There is not understanding that these sessions are vital to support participants' wellbeing. At one session, one participant came with her grandchildren, Norma explained that these sessions were for their own health with time away from family responsibilities. Norma and Jose plan to do more outreach with the families and explain the benefits of the sessions.

2. How do you determine eligibility for clients?
   UNETE makes announcements about the Mi Vida program during many of their programs and activities, creates flyers, and uses WhatsApp app with the age eligibility listed. UNETE checks to make sure participants are 60 and over.

3. Has the vendor met the invoice guidelines laid out in the supplier responsibilities in the contract? Is there adequate documentation to support payment?

UNETE met the invoice guidelines of sending the invoice by the 10th of the following month. Being a new BCSAF funded provider, it took a while for UNETE to start the Mi Vida program with submitting the required documentation by BCHHS Finance and getting the logistics figured out to start the program. Then Hurricane Helene hit, and the program didn't start until January 2025.

There is much documentation to support payment. Jose is timely in submitting the invoices and provides the necessary receipts/documentation. Jose always provides a detailed report of activities each month. Some of the activities included: identity struggles as immigrants; chair yoga; tai chi; brain gymnastics; discussion on perceptions of aging; discussion of nutrition, diet, and physical activity to improve health; a classical music violin concert; presentation on self-esteem, health, and relaxation on the immune system; shared cultural meals and discussed cultural differences in food, customs, and language; watched a video, *Fear of Aging* and shared their cultural and personal perspectives about getting older; presentation about falls prevention from UNCA Center for Health and Wellness; presentation about depression and discussion afterward; dementia presentation; how to monitor vital signs; laugh therapy; steps to take to prevent chronic disease; and the benefits of artistic expression on health.

Jose sends pictures every month, which is always a highlight.

4. BCSAF monitor will review the Scope of Work for the supplier in each contract to make sure each area related to supplier responsibilities is being met. If an area is not, find out the barriers to meeting the guidelines and does the contract need to be amended?

   The Scope of Work was met by UNETE as defined in the contract regarding a senior center (Mi Vida Program) providing socialization and educational opportunities to reduce loneliness, depression, and social isolation as well to improve physical and mental health for eligible older adults from different cultural backgrounds. There were 16 sessions held; the contract specified up to 17 sessions. Each session was facilitated by a bilingual program coordinator and two NC certified community health workers. Staff connected participants to resources/services as well. UNETE hopes to expand this program to other communities, perhaps partner with another non-profit organization, and have sessions for English and Spanish speakers.

   Norma Brown, Executive Director, shared a testimony about the impact of the Mi Vida/Forever Young Program and the success of the program among participants. Before the last session, there was a rumor that ICE would be at the meeting. All of the participants came to the last session despite the fear. Participants are looking forward to when the program will be starting up again as Norma and Jose are receiving inquiries.

   Emma Fellowship Church where the Mi Vida Program was held was sold to Orchard Church of Haywood County in May 2025. UNETE is searching for a new location, but the Mi Vida Program will be most likely be held at Riverside Baptist Church where other UNETE programs (ex: food distribution) are located. Participants like Riverside Baptist Church because it feels like a safe space. UNETE is working with the church to get the air conditioning repaired.

5. How can Buncombe County best support your organization as you do the work?
   UNETE would like help with promoting their work. They would like more people to know about UNETE and its programs. I offered to send out any information/flyers through Age-Friendly. UNETE would like an article written up in the Asheville Citizen Times or Mountain Express. I said I would connect them to the BC Communications and Public Engagement (CAPE) when they are ready as CAPE has connections.

6. Review 10% of client files, but no less than 3 client files and/or receipts.
   Receipts for monthly expenses were reviewed again.

UNETE made great strides in getting the Mi Vida Program started after Helene. UNETE met their responsibilities related to the Scope of Work by providing a supportive environment where participants socialized, connected, and shared their cultural heritages as well as improved their physical and mental wellbeing through the educational programs and support from each other.