



**CLEVELAND COUNTY  
RECOVERY PROGRAM**



## **Cleveland County Partners with The Virtue Center to Expand Clinical and Behavioral Health Services**

*Cleveland County announces a significant contribution of ARPA funds of \$500,000 to The Virtue Center in Norman.*

**NORMAN, OKLA (Oct. 26, 2022)** - On Tuesday, Cleveland County announced its partnership with The Virtue Center. In an effort to eradicate the devastating effects of addiction in our community, the county is investing American Rescue Plan monies that will support building operations and programmatic funding, including clinical and behavioral health services. In a special announcement at The Virtue Center, Cleveland County Commissioners announced a \$500,000 investment of ARPA funds to support the work of the nonprofit and to allow for an expansion of services to more people.

“Cleveland County is among the most diverse of Oklahoma’s 77 counties, bringing together a wide mix of urban and rural geography, stakeholders and challenges,” said County Commissioner Rod Cleveland. “What makes Cleveland County special is our willingness to work together for the good of the people. Cleveland County is proud to use ARPA dollars to fortify those connections.”

The diversity in population and communities in Cleveland County makes it a wonderful and interesting place to live, but it also makes it difficult to use a “one size fits all” approach in recovery funding.

“From the beginning, Cleveland County Commissioners were committed to creating a practical and effective Recovery Plan for the COVID Recovery Funds. We thought it was important that the dollars are tied to the needs of our various communities,” continued Commissioner Cleveland. “We did surveys and hosted focus groups to get public input. Cleveland County residents told us they want ARPA dollars to benefit people, infrastructure and the economy.”

As the primary outpatient treatment center for substance abuse based in Cleveland County, The Virtue Center supports a number of entities within the Department of Corrections, along with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services’ (ODMHSAS), county schools, indigent populations and the general public.

“Cleveland County’s nonprofits are key stakeholders in promoting recovery for all of Cleveland County,” said County Commissioner Darry Stacy. “They’re on the front lines serving people and they know the effects of the pandemic on everyday folks. We are fortunate that our nonprofits work together to provide services to those who were most severely impacted and can address those needs including mental health, food insecurity, substance abuse, and homelessness. When we started planning how best to invest these funds, we knew it was important to ask the charitable organizations to share what they had learned and to help point the way by identifying what they need to continue their work.”

The Virtue Center’s Executive Director and CEO Teresa Collado said the funds will go a long way to help more people as needs continue to grow post-pandemic.

“The Virtue Center is a place of help and hope for people facing addiction and mental health challenges. Our vision is for every person in the county affected by addiction and mental health challenges to heal and thrive,” Collado said. “Every year, we serve close to 2,000 individuals, and thanks to this investment by Cleveland County we hope to more than double our reach, increasing that number to 5,000 people annually within five years.”

When discussing the need for services, Collado shared that ODMHSAS estimates only 12.4 percent of the persons in Cleveland County needing treatment for substance use disorders receive the help they need to fully recover from their disease.

“With this investment of \$500,000 in ARPA funds, we can change that,” she said. “These dollars will allow us to provide recovering individuals and their families with the wraparound services they need for long-term success. On behalf of our partners, our staff, our community and most importantly our clients – thank you for this important and strategic investment in The Virtue Center.”

County leaders look forward to building upon the natural collaboration and existing coordination already found in Cleveland County, without duplicating or supplanting existing services.

“Thank you again to our residents who provided input on our recovery efforts,” said County Commissioner Harold Haralson. “Today, Cleveland County is proud to partner with The Virtue Center to significantly expand the clinical and mental health services they’re able to provide to communities across our great county. We are deeply grateful for the important and life-changing work they do.”

### ***About The Virtue Center***

*The Virtue Center provides comprehensive trauma-informed outpatient treatment services for substance abuse, problem gambling and mental health issues. The center is certified for outpatient treatment services for substance abuse and gambling by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and supported through the United Way of Norman. To learn more, visit [thevirtuecenter.org](http://thevirtuecenter.org).*

### ***About Cleveland County***

*Cleveland County covers more than 500 square miles and a steadily growing population of close to 300,000 people (2020 census), making it the third most populous county in Oklahoma.*

### **Media Contact:**

Public Information Officer Joy Hampton

[jhampton@clevelandcountyoak.com](mailto:jhampton@clevelandcountyoak.com)

405-308-0442