



# Steel Smiling

An Organization in Residence of  
Neighborhood Allies

*Bridging the gap between Black people and mental health support through education, advocacy, and awareness.*



Steel Smiling is the premier community-based mental health organization centering Black people in Pittsburgh. We are an entry point and a connector for local Black people to participate in mental health education and trainings, explore workforce development opportunities within the mental health field, and access a variety of supports for individual healing and mental wellness. Our vision is to foster a local mental health ecosystem that centers the culturally specific needs of Black people, mitigates harm, adopts person-centered practices, and views every individual in the full context of their lived experiences.

**Our goal is to expose every Black resident in Pittsburgh to a positive mental health experience that improves their quality of life by 2030.**



## Programs + Impact

Steel Smiling provides a variety of mental health-focused programming to Southwestern Pennsylvania's Black community. Our flagship program, **Beams to Bridges**, democratizes mental health information by encouraging residents to become Community Mental Health Advocates in their own neighborhoods through a series of trainings, workshops and events. Our Beams to bridges graduates also gain new pathways to workforce development opportunities in the mental health field as a result of their participation in the course.

Steel Smiling also prioritizes and is intentional about making mental health support and treatment resources accessible to local community members. We do this through the **Black Mental Health Fund**. This program creates on-ramps for Black community members to connect with clinicians who are best-equipped to deliver culturally-specific resources and services. Through the Black Mental Health Fund, Steel Smiling serves as a "broker" or "concierge" for community members by supporting the matchmaking process and making referrals to trusted clinicians.

2,500+ hours of free mental health support/treatment invested.

250+ community members supported since 2020 across the country through the Black Mental Health Fund Referral Program.

\$300,000+ invested in Beams to Bridges program participants through workforce development stipends and emergency financial assistance.

\$300,000+ invested to offset mental health treatment and support costs for community members through the Black Mental Health Fund since 2020.

STEEL SMILING IS A PROUD ORGANIZATION-IN-RESIDENCE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIES

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# About the Partnership

The Organization-in-Residence initiative is an innovative pilot program co-created by Neighborhood Allies and Steel Smiling. Through this partnership, Steel Smiling is sharing the organizational infrastructure, resources and social, human and political capital of Neighborhood Allies, who is serving as mentor or “incubating” entity. At the end of the three-year Residency, both entities will collaboratively assess Steel Smiling’s interest and preparedness to launch as a stand-alone 501c3 or remain affiliated with Neighborhood Allies in some capacity. Through this partnership, we are working to mitigate the racial inequities that often prevent nonprofits of color from serving their community members to their highest potential. At the core of this model is the intention to disrupt inequitable patterns of investment and resourcing when it comes to building capacity for Black-led, Black-focused nonprofits and other non-profits of color in the Southwestern Pennsylvania Region.



## Our Work On the Ground

Beams to Bridges [BTB] equips Black adults with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to serve as Community Mental Health Advocates. While matriculating through this experience, cohort members receive group peer support, mental health resources, behavioral health treatment, workforce development stipends, and social service connections. Topics covered include but are not limited to: substance misuse, overcoming anxiety, trauma-informed care, mental health first aid, combatting depression, crisis response, mindfulness, meditation, yoga, case management, active listening. Meet two of our BTB Advocates Denita and Rick:



*“BTB helped train and give me the reassurance of being a mental health advocate. I have received Mental Health First Aid certifications for adults and children as well and Trauma Crisis Training. These skills have been vital in being a mental health leader in my community.”*



*“Beams to Bridges is more than a program; it’s a lifestyle. Programs end--they come and go. But this cohort paved the way and worked with us to grow Beams to Bridges together.”*

**The Beams to Bridges lifestyle isn’t going anywhere. It was created by community members for community members to meet a real need. The work that program graduates accomplish is a testimony to what happens when they lead.**

For more information or to get involved with Steel Smiling contact: [info@steelsmilingpgh.org](mailto:info@steelsmilingpgh.org)

