

## Small Business Success Story: The WAE Clinic

**Owner Name:** Susan Lynn Prather  
**Community:** Cleveland, Mississippi



After struggling with an illness that doctors and specialists couldn't understand, Susan Lynn Prather decided to take a more holistic approach to her health — changing her diet, lifestyle and adding new wellness treatments — and began to see real, positive results.

As a Nurse Practitioner in a small rural community, Susan was frustrated by both the limitations of conventional medicine and the lack of area holistic health options. The fact that residents had to drive several hours for healthcare regularly motivated Susan to leave her job at a traditional practice and open her own clinic. Still, she needed financial support to get the new business — Wholly Authentic Exposures to health and wellness, also known as the WAE Clinic — started.

Susan approached several traditional financial institutions, including her longtime personal bank, for a business loan but was not able to secure funding. “I had had a good 20 people tell me ‘no’, but I was just really persistent. I was not going to take no for an answer,” said Susan.

A quick online search soon led Susan to LiftFund, where she was able to work with the team to receive an SBA Community Advantage business loan. The loan allowed her to purchase

equipment and supplies for the clinic while retaining working capital. “LiftFund was a place that took a chance on somebody who was thinking outside the box. And as a result, we have helped over 150 patients who were previously frustrated with conventional medicine and its inability to get to the root cause of their health problems,” shared Susan.

Using an innovative membership and monthly concierge medicine model, WAE Clinic opened in July 2019 and quickly found a loyal clientele, eventually surpassing the staff’s membership expectations. Business growth came to a sudden halt in March when COVID-19 hit the U.S. However, as an essential service, the clinic has continued to see and treat patients safely.

Today, the WAE Clinic is proud to provide patients with enhanced access to their provider, as well as telehealth and patient portal care options at a fraction of the conventional model’s cost. Despite the ongoing pandemic, Susan is confident that her business is on track to meet its goals for continued business growth, success and its mission to improve patients’ lives.