

Leading the Way to Recovery

*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal
Recovery Funds*

Wortham Center for the Performing Arts

Rae Geoffrey
18 Biltmore Ave
Asheville, NC 28801

O: 828-257-4530

Jennifer S Zemp

18 Biltmore Avenue
Asheville, NC 28801

jennifer@worthamarts.org
O: 828-210-9849

Application Form

Question Group

Buncombe County requests proposals for projects to help the community recover from and respond to COVID-19 and its negative economic impacts.

Buncombe County has been awarded \$50,733,290 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funding), as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. This infusion of federal resources is intended to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

Buncombe County is committed to investing these funds in projects that:

- Align to county strategic plan and community priorities
- Support equitable outcomes for most impacted populations
- Leverage and align with other governmental funding sources
- Make best use of this one-time infusion of resources
- Have a lasting impact

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

[Click here for the full terms and conditions of the RFP](#)

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

Name of Project.

Leading the Way to Recovery

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$250,000.00

Recovery Fund Eligible Category*

Please select one:

Small business and non-profit support

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

As the leader in the arts community of Buncombe County, Wortham Center for the Performing Arts requests recovery support to maintain services to the community by providing venue space for local artists and companies, helping students learn through the arts, and presenting health and wellness workshops for the community.

Project Plan*

Explain how the project will be structured and implemented, including timeframe.

The arts are a powerful tool for healing, education, empathy and connection. The arts build social relationships and networks; enhance civic engagement, support inclusion and build community. The arts hold our stories – our history, our traditions and our important lessons. As a cultural leader in the region, Wortham strives to unite, uplift and promote voices of all ethnic groups through artistic work, education, and community collaborations. This project helps Wortham continue to provide access and services for local artists and companies, support the education series for students, families and teachers, create summer learning opportunities for children, and workshops for community members. Recovery funding will help Wortham continue its commitment to lifting voices of color by providing affordable venue space and services to Different Strokes! Performing Arts Collective. DS!PAC, a local, black- led company presenting works which explore racial issues, social diversity and LGBTQ rights, became a resident company in the new Tina McGuire Theatre in 2019. In 2020, the Board unanimously voted to provide DS!PAC free rent to deepen organizational commitment to supporting artists of color in our community. Rental services provided by Wortham include performance space, professional box office and technical support, professional lighting, seating and sound infrastructure, full use of the Wortham Center courtyard, lobby, lounge and concession area. Wortham's Operations Manager works with the DS!PAC to help meet their needs for successful events. In addition, Wortham has three venue spaces that are home to many local arts and civic organizations all year round for performances, workshops, conferences, wedding receptions, educational events, and youth and children's events. Recovery funding will benefit the following local organizations that utilize the facility: Asheville Contemporary Dance Theatre, Asheville Performing Arts Academy, Blue Ridge Orchestra, Asheville Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Asheville, NC Local Government Information Systems Association, Stewart/Owen Dance, Hola Community Arts, Asheville Ballet and many more. Wortham helps students learn through the arts through curriculum-related arts programming for students and teachers each season through the Matinee Series of school programming, workshops, master classes and continuing education for teachers. Students expand classroom learning on historical topics, social emotional growth, leadership, health and wellness, literacy, empathy and cultural awareness. The Matinee Series schedule is September through May. Wortham's Community Engagement Director works with the Buncombe County Schools, Asheville City Schools, and local magnet/charter schools to increase access to arts learning programs for K-12 students. This year, Wortham will expand community programming to include summer learning opportunities for children and community workshops in arts-related health and wellness initiatives.

Statement of Need*

Describe the need that this project will address. Include data to demonstrate the need, and cite the source of the data.

Wortham Center respectfully requests support to restart programming and vital community services disrupted during the pandemic. The performing arts industry experienced devastating loss during the shutdown as we were the first to close and the last to reopen. In the past 15 months, the Wortham Center lost approximately \$1,500,000 in revenue, canceled 50 Wortham Center Presents performances, 36 Matinee Series performances, approximately 100 rentals with community partners, lost approximately 58,700 attendees, and laid off/furloughed 80 employees. A recent arts impact survey from Asheville Area Arts Council reported "\$23.1 million in lost revenue since March 2020" in Buncombe County and 504 fewer jobs in arts businesses. "Before COVID, 68% of arts professionals in Buncombe County reported they were making enough from their creative sector jobs to cover their expenses. That number has now dropped to 38%," according to the survey. In North Carolina, 96% of arts organizations canceled events, losing 6,057,182 attendees, 1,088 employees were laid off, 1,006 employees were furloughed, and 354 positions were vacant due to hiring freezes. According to NCArts, "the arts industry has never struggled more, and while we are coming back, it will take the arts 3 to 5 years to recover."

Due to COVID-19, Worham Center projects a net income loss of \$269,400 during the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Funding from this grant will provide financial resources for this upcoming year of rebuilding for rental space, restaff at a living wage due to the job market at an all-time low, rebuilding the community with various programming and workshops, operational costs for new staff training and cleaning supplies for sanitizing the theatres after performances.

Link to COVID-19*

Identify a health or economic harm resulting from or exacerbated by the public health emergency, describe the nature and extent of that harm, and explain how the use of this funding would address such harm.

Worham's economic harm from COVID was precipitated by a complete shutdown of all performances, resulting in a loss in earned income of \$1,500,000 over the past 15 months. While drastically reducing expenses through layoffs and negotiated contract expense reduction, significant fixed costs remained to maintain the facility and basic services. The organization's financial shortfall for fiscal year 2020-2021 is forecasted to be \$220,000 before COVID-related grants. As Worham gradually builds back programming and welcomes smaller audiences back to the facility, expenses are expected to increase at a greater rate than earned revenue. A loss of \$269,400 is projected for fiscal year 2021-2022. This period in history severely impacted Worham Center's financial reserves, and created significant loss of staff and programs. Recovery will take several years, and assistance is vital.

As a leader in the arts industry, Worham committed resources to community partners at reduced rates, followed through on a strong commitment to equity and inclusion, and provided free rental space to Different Strokes! Performing Arts Collective and Torre White's Power of You project.

Funding from BC Recovery Grant will support Worham Center's return to full services, and help more than 40 community partners relying on the venue for financially successful events.

Population Served*

Define the population to be served by this project, including volume and demographic characteristics of those served.

The Worham Center is the most active and diverse performance facility in WNC serving more than 65,000 participants annually. 75-80% of participants come from within the local market defined as zip codes 288** and zip code 287** or the 7 counties contiguous to Buncombe plus 7 other WNC counties. Demographics vary depending on the nature of the event and presenting company.

A wider audience base is engaged through the Worham Center's local partner organizations. The ability to provide a home for local companies and performers is a core value of the Worham Center. In a typical season, more than 40 companies and artists use the Worham Center each season, ranging from local dance studios, schools, choirs, civic and community groups, local and national festivals, theatre companies, dance companies and local groups fundraising for nonprofit causes. From a production of The Nutcracker with 100 children to the Miss Gay Latina pageant, the events made possible through the Worham Center serve audiences as different and diverse as our wonderful community. Events and companies such as Marcus Anderson Jazz and Coffee Escape and Different Strokes! Performing Arts Collective draw younger, more racially and economically diverse patrons.

The Matinee Series for students, teachers, and families reaches across the ethnic and socio-economic spectrum of our community and 16 surrounding counties. Twenty-five percent of the students attending

Matinee shows are on free-lunch programs and/or attend Title One Schools and receive free admission to the shows.

Results*

Describe the proposed impact of the project. List at least 3 performance measures that will be tracked and reported. If possible, include baselines and goals for each performance measure.

Wortham Center is a cornerstone for the Buncombe County community —feeding our local economy, growing leaders for the future, providing a vibrant arts scene and cultural life comparable to much larger cities. This vital support will help Wortham Center continue to provide access for all residents to benefit from the arts, allow local artists and companies to thrive and grow, provide employment, strengthen training and mentorship, grow local revenue, and create a strong sense of place and pride.

Projected goals for this project include:

1. 50 in-person Different Strokes! Performing Arts Collective performances in the Tina McGuire Theatre September 2021 through June 2022. During the 19-20 season, DS!PAC had 22 performances scheduled September 2019 through June 2020, however, only 18 performances were produced with a total attendance of 657 patrons. Due to COVID-19, four performances were canceled and DS!PAC has been dark since March 2020.
2. 18 in-person Matinee Series performances in the Diana Wortham Theatre September 2021 through June 2022. During the 19-20 season, Wortham scheduled 25 Matinee Series performances September 2019 through June 2020 and only ten performances were produced with a total of 3,415 patrons in attendance. Fifteen performances were canceled due to COVID-19.
3. Four weeks of summer camps June 2022 through August 2022 serving 200 students. The summer camp program was scheduled to debut in June 2020 and was canceled due to COVID-19.
4. 20 in-person community events in the Henry LaBrun Studio July 2021 through June 2022. Events will include yoga classes, dance classes, master classes with visiting artists, pre and post show discussions, exhibits and more.

Evaluation*

Describe the data collection, analysis, and quality assurance measures you will use to assure ongoing, effective tracking of contract requirements and outcomes.

Every event/performance held at the Wortham Center has a quantifiable goal for attendance and ticket revenue. All ticket sales are tracked in the ticketing database, which allows for data to be analyzed in a variety of methods. An address, including zip code, is collected at the time of ticket purchase, along with the number of tickets per event.

To obtain target market numbers, a database report of ticket-purchasers (defined as zip codes 288** and zip code 287** or the 7 counties contiguous to Buncombe plus 7 other WNC counties) is pulled for all events at the Wortham Center.

Equity Impact*

How will this effort help build toward a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery? How are the root causes and/or disproportionate impacts of inequities addressed?

Wortham Center is deeply committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in all aspects of operations. All members of our community have the right to experience, benefit and learn from the arts. Staff and board recognize Wortham's role as a community leader in this field and are committed to the lifelong work and constant evaluation needed to grow to support all members of our community equitably.

Three of Wortham's 14 board members are Black. A Community Engagement Committee comprised of select board members, Latino and Black community leaders addresses Wortham's role in bridging equity gaps through the performing arts.

Wortham utilizes a programming matrix to ensure the center is presenting artists of all backgrounds which represent our diverse population. Wortham participates in training on DEI issues pertaining to the performing arts field through the NEA, Americans for the Arts, Arts NC, Asheville Area Arts Council, Leadership Asheville, Building Bridges, NC Presenters Consortium, South Arts, Dance Touring Initiative and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters.

The facility is accessible to those with limited mobility, hearing impairment, vision impairment and differently abled patrons. Wortham is a training ground for Guide Dogs for the Blind; supports special-abled students and adults; and hosts adult care groups from Care Partners and Irene Wortham Center.

Hola Community Arts partners with Wortham to serve LatinX audiences through workshops, exhibits and performances featuring LatinX/Hispanic artists.

Project Partners*

Identify any subcontractors you intend to use for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, indicate:

- 1.) What products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor and;
- 2.) What percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform.

Also, list non-funded key partners critical to project.

Hola Community Arts partners with the Wortham Center to serve LatinX audiences through collaborative workshops, exhibits, and performances featuring LatinX/Hispanic artists.

Different Strokes! Performing Arts Collective became a resident company in the Tina McGuire Theatre in 2019. DS!PAC is a local, Black-led company presenting works which confront issues of racial and social diversity. Wortham currently provides rehearsal time, performance space, and technical support for DS!PAC's annual performance series.

The following is a partial list of community groups which rely on the Wortham Center to create and present their work or events: Asheville Ballet, Ballet Conservatory Asheville, Asheville Contemporary Dance Theatre, Terpsicorps Theatre of Dance, Asheville Art Museum, Asheville Symphony, Miss Gay Latina Asheville, Asheville City Schools, Buncombe County Schools, and Haywood Street Congregation, just to name a few.

Capacity*

Describe the background, experience, and capabilities of your organization or department as it relates to capacity for delivering the proposed project and managing federal funds.

The mission of Wortham Center for the Performing Arts is to enrich, enlighten, educate and entertain through the performing arts. Through its mission and as a leader in the arts community, Wortham unites, uplifts and promotes voices of all ethnic groups throughout our work and community collaborations.

Wortham Center has served Buncombe County residents and visitors for more than two decades, establishing a reputation for excellence and earning acclaim as a regional and national leader in the performing arts.

Typically, Wortham Center operates with a 15–20-member Board of Directors, a staff of 8-10 full-time employees and 40-50 part-time employees. The board meets monthly and provides fiscal oversight and operates with Executive, Finance, Board Development, Advocacy and Community Engagement committees.

As an organization which relies on gathering in large numbers for maximum impact and financial health, Wortham Center is proud of the steps taken during this difficult time to keep the organization healthy and to continue to serve the community and address the needs of resident well-being despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Throughout this time, Wortham Center brought performances back to the community in unique ways. Music and storytelling performances featuring local artists were held outdoors in the Wortham’s Rhino Courtyard and on the top floor of an adjoining parking deck. Wortham partnered with Stewart/Owen Dance to create and present a Drive-in Dance performance in the parking lot at Asheville Outlet Malls and, later, a walking tour of dance and poetry in socially distanced spaces inside and outside of the Wortham Center. Please see our full list of performances and community collaborations included in the supporting material.

Budget*

Provide a detailed project budget including all proposed project revenues and expenditures, including explanations and methodology. For all revenue sources, list the funder and denote whether funds are confirmed or pending. For project expenses, denote all capital vs. operating costs, and reflect which specific expenses are proposed to be funded with one-time Buncombe County Recovery Funds.

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Recovery-Funds-budget-template.xlsx

Special Considerations*

Provide any other information that might assist the County in its selection.

Since its inception, Wortham Center was part of a partnership with Buncombe County designed to be a catalyst for downtown revitalization. The project was designed to serve as a home for local groups and provide world-class live performances of dance, music and theatre, as well as educational programs for local students. Wortham Center serves the needs of Buncombe County artists, children and audiences, and continues to remain an essential local resource to enrich, educate, train, employ and showcase homegrown talent. Careful curation and stewardship by cultural leaders such as Wortham Center help to ensure that those stories represent the entirety of our community and not simply one group of people or funders. For culture to be truly equitable to all and accessible by all, the arts are dependent on public/private partnerships to remove barriers to participation to ensure that all people in the community are served.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Recovery-Funds-budget-template.xlsx

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

Organization Name:	Pack Place Performing Arts dba Wortham Center for the Performing Arts
Project Name:	Leading the Way to Recovery
Amount Requested:	\$250,000.00

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 250,000.00	pending	
List other sources here	\$ -		
List other sources here	\$ -		
List other sources here	\$ -		
List other sources here	\$ -		
List other sources here	\$ -		
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
Total	\$ 250,000.00		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
List expenses here: Rental Fees	\$ 50,000.00	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	Operating Expense	Different Strokes! Performing Arts Collective
List expenses here: Staffing	\$ 100,000.00	\$ -	\$ 100,000.00	Operating Expense	
List expenses here: Artist Fees - Matinee	\$ 50,000.00	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	Operating Expense	
List expenses here: Community Programming	\$ 25,000.00		\$ 25,000.00	Operating Expense	workshops, community classes
List expenses here: Operational	\$ 25,000.00		\$ 25,000.00	Operating Expense	new staff training, cleaning supplies after performances
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
Total			\$ 250,000.00		