

YMI Library Liaison Services

*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal
Recovery Funds*

Buncombe County Government

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Asheville, NC 28801

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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.

YMI Library Liaison Services

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$90,149.16

Recovery Fund Eligible Category*

Please select one:

County only

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Buncombe County Public Libraries (BCPL) will expand upon previous work with the YMI Cultural Center (YMI) to offer a lending collection at the YMI and support YMI archival initiatives.

BCPL will purchase a collection of popular books that visitors to the YMI may borrow, including titles read by the YMI and BCPL's joint venture, the Black Experience Book Club. Other selections will be made by mutual agreement of the YMI and BCPL. A YMI library liaison, hired by BCPL, will visit the YMI on a regular schedule to make library cards, answer questions, and distribute information about BCPL programs and services.

The YMI houses hundreds of unique historical documents that, due to present storage conditions, are not easily accessible to the public and are at risk of deterioration. BCPL will provide personnel support, archival storage materials, and the use of its Archival Collections Management System (CMS) to the YMI to ensure the preservation and accessibility of these unique resources

Project Plan*

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

The YMI Cultural Center (YMI) will begin a much-needed \$6.1 million renovation in October 2021, with an anticipated completion date of October 2022. The newly renovated space will provide the perfect opportunity for the YMI and Buncombe County Public Libraries (BCPL) to expand our work together to bring additional services to the community and preserve the YMI's wealth of historical documents for generations to come.

The project involves three main components, 1) hiring a part-time staff member to act as a liaison between BCPL and the YMI, 2) purchasing and organizing borrowing materials that will be housed at the YMI, and 3) purchasing and providing archival materials to assist with preservation of YMI records. These components would be implemented according to the following timeframe:

1) BCPL would advertise the opening of a part time temporary position for a YMI liaison in August 2022, with an anticipated start date of October 2022. The person in this position would work 19 hours per week, representing the Library during outreach visits to the YMI, running the Black Experience Book Club and other collaborative programs, meeting with both YMI and BCPL staff, and assisting with the provision of archival materials. BCPL will submit a budgetary request in the 2026 fiscal year to convert this position to a part time permanent position, as part of BCPL's long term plan to create a formal Outreach department.

2) BCPL currently holds multiple copies of books read by the Black Experience Book Club. At least one of each of these titles would be converted to become part of the YMI borrowing collection, in addition to any further titles selected. The liaison would consult with both YMI staff and other BCPL staff to select additional titles to include in the YMI borrowing collection. Throughout the year, the liaison would purchase books and/or other media to add to the collection.

3) BCPL will purchase shelving and other materials for the care and keeping of books and archival materials. These specialized supplies (i.e acid-free paper products, PVA/mylar document protectors, etc.) are important for the long term preservation of fragile and aging documents. BCPL's Buncombe County Special Collections (BCSC) staff will work together with YMI volunteers and staff to safely house the materials and describe them in BCSC's ArchivEra CMS. This top-level archival processing would begin in Fall 2021 and with an expected end date of Fall 2026.

Statement of Need*

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

The YMI was founded 1893, when community leaders Edward S. Stephens and Isaac Dickson, established an organization to provide the Black community opportunities for business improvement and socialization unavailable in a segregated city like Asheville. Nearly 130 years later, the YMI is among the oldest Black-led community organizations in the U.S.

With the YMI's history as a social and cultural hub, it holds over a century's worth of archival material related to the organization and community. These documents and artifacts include organizational and community history, photographs, and AV materials. Present storage conditions make these materials inaccessible to the community and researchers.

BCPL has an obligation to address the historic denial of access to library services for Black people locally and nationally. Prior to the opening of the Asheville Colored Library at the YMI in 1927, no library services were available to Black residents in our area. That library became a branch of the Asheville-Buncombe Library System in 1953, but Black residents of the County did not have access to the public library's collection until 1961.

Recently, the YMI and BCPL began collaborating to bring cultural activities to residents. These have included an ongoing book club and a presentation of the history of Black actors in the Oscars, with plans for future events. The impending renovations at the YMI present a unique opportunity to collaborate to expand services to the County's Black community and begin to redress a historic wrong.

As cultural institutions with shared goals, the YMI and BCPL are key players in strengthening access to resources and improving the social determinants of health for Black residents. Together, we can magnify our impact, increasing access to information that will allow individuals to advocate for and educate themselves on local and national issues, explore local history, and improve quality of life through events that promote community-building.

[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.

COVID-19 has caused ripple effects through communities, negatively affecting not only individual community members' physical health, but the social determinants used to assess the health of a community overall, such as housing, education, and other quality of life measures. This impact is keenly felt in communities of color, especially Black communities. As Devakumar et al write in "Racism and discrimination in COVID-19 responses," "The strength of a health system is inseparable from broader social systems that surround it. Epidemics place increased demands on scarce resources and enormous stress on social and economic systems. Health protection relies not only on a well functioning health system with universal coverage, but also on social inclusion, justice, and solidarity."

Research suggests that community health also is impacted by public narratives of historical trauma and the relationship a community has with their past. Mohatt et al argue in "Historical trauma as public narrative: A conceptual review of how history impacts present-day health" that group traumas like enslavement and racialized violence have long term impacts on community health.

Providing the YMI and BCPL with greater opportunities to collaborate and serve community members will improve social determinants of health and quality of life for everyone both institutions serve. Increased access to libraries not only provides individuals with books to check out for lifelong learning and pleasure, but free internet and computer access, early learning and socialization opportunities for children, free classes and activities for people at all stages of life, assistance with research, an entry point for other County services, and much more. Similarly, providing access to the YMI's historical materials will create opportunities for community members and outside researchers to disrupt traumatic narratives, thereby building a more comprehensive understanding of our shared past.

Population Served*

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

The YMI Cultural Center is an important fixture to all people in the greater Asheville area, but especially as a trusted resource, gathering place, and historical touchstone for the local Black community. According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts report, 16,455 (6.3%) of Buncombe County's 261,191 residents describe themselves as African-American.

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.

We will measure the success of the implementation of the YMI library liaison services program according to the following three objectives:

1) Increase the Buncombe County Black community's access to materials related to local history and genealogical resources.

Goal: The liaison will meet regularly with the Special Collections manager and CAPE team to perform outreach activities in Buncombe County's historically Black communities and organizations resulting in broader community awareness and buy-in of local history preservation initiatives.

Goal: The liaison will work with the BCSC and YMI staff to care for and accurately arrange and describe historical materials.

2) Increase the Black community of Buncombe County's awareness of and access to library resources that can improve health and quality of life measures, including internet access, access to books, databases, and other research materials, early literacy and learning programs, and events promoting lifelong learning.

Goal: The liaison will make themselves available for a minimum of 10 hours per week or 40 hours per month on site at the YMI to speak to community members, answer questions, and connect visitors and YMI staff/volunteers with library and other county resources. The remaining 9 hours per week will be spent on programs, meetings, and planning.

Goal: Cultivate a library of popular fiction and non-fiction books that visitors to the YMI can borrow and/or use on site. \$350 worth of materials will be added to this collection each month.

3) Increase connection and collaboration between cultural institutions in Buncombe County, resulting in the provision of free events and programs that improve quality of life.

Goal: The liaison will have a minimum of one monthly meeting with YMI and BCPL staff to communicate information about new resources and initiatives and plan for upcoming collaborative opportunities.

Evaluation*

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

In collaboration with BCPL staff, the YMI library liaison will monitor the archival and borrowing collections and track:

- Archival collection use, including types of materials used
- Reference questions related to local history and genealogy
- Number of records in the YMI collection described in the ArchivEra CMS
- Trends in borrowing collection items used by YMI visitors. This information will be used to assist in guiding future purchasing decisions.

The liaison also will provide a monthly statistical report to BCPL administration, outlining the following information:

- Total reference questions answered
- Number and type of events held
- Event attendance

The liaison will meet with their supervising manager, the BCPL outreach committee, and BCSC staff on an annual basis to review these data collection points and any related qualitative information collected by the liaison. Based on the information gathered, the group will discuss any necessary adjustments to provision of services and materials. We would anticipate a year over year increase in each of the data points outlined above.

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?

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted people of color. Supporting the work of the YMI and strengthening the County's relationship with the organization will work to redress historic inequities in library and County services to Black residents. Addressing these inequities will have short and long-term impacts on community resilience and social determinants of health.

In the near term, we will provide an increased number of culturally relevant educational and community-building events and services to the Black community. As these would be developed in collaboration with the YMI and with their expertise, we would hope for them to be of particular interest and relevance to Black residents, creating a greater sense of belonging among community members.

This partnership will also result in public, in-person access to the archives at the YMI Cultural Center and virtually via BCSC's CMS. Preservation of and access to the YMI's historical records will allow people to benefit from these cultural resources. At this time, less than 5% of all records described by the Buncombe County Special Collections relate to the local Black community. By working with the YMI to arrange and describe the historic documents in their care, it is expected that BCSC will surpass its strategic equity goal of ensuring a 20% increase in the number of records in our system with the subject heading "African Americans."

Long-term, we hope to begin to right the historical wrongs done to the Black community by its members' exclusion from participation in cultural institutions. By re-establishing a library connection to the YMI, we hope to demonstrate a renewed commitment to building equitable and inclusive cultural institutions where all are welcome and have equal access to information and resources relevant to their pursuit of fulfillment and wellbeing. Taking steps to address this historical wrong will contribute to improvement in the social determinants of health for the County's Black community.

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.

No sub-contractors will be used to complete this project, but the Library's non-funded key partner will be the YMI Cultural Center.

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.

BCPL's roots as an organization reach back to 1919, when the City of Asheville took over operation of a public subscription library that had been operated by the Asheville Library Association. Neither of these libraries were open to people of color. The Asheville Colored Library, located inside the YMI, began lending books in 1927. In 1953, that library became a branch of the Asheville-Buncombe Library System. However, the libraries remained segregated, and Black residents of Asheville and Buncombe County did not have access to white-only branches until 1961. Over the years, library services grew to include 12 locations across Buncombe County. The County assumed responsibility for the operation of the library system in 2007, with the system's name changing to Buncombe County Public Libraries.

BCPL staff specialize in the provision of information and resources, collection development, and planning and executing educational and cultural events for the community. We frequently work with community partners such as the YMI to provide free programs and services to the community at large. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, BCPL has already partnered with 44 community agencies or organizations from January to July 2021. Our operating budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 was approximately \$6.4 million.

Within BCPL, Buncombe County Special Collections is a medium sized archival facility and reference library. BCSC staff are experienced archival professionals with a diverse background of knowledge and expertise. The staff frequently work alongside community partners and volunteers to care for and expand the collection. One of the department's most successful ventures has been the implementation of community-driven archives initiatives. These programs have resulted in the successful preservation of community history and memory. For example, the Fairview Community History Project resulted in more than 40 oral history interviews now archived at BCSC

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.

YMI library liaison services grant budget.xlsx

Special Considerations*

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

Beyond the goals outlined above, this project will support Buncombe County Public Libraries' strategic Equity goal to expand and maintain access to cultural and recreational assets.

Works Cited:

Devakumar, D., Shannon, G., Bhopal, S. S., & Abubakar, I. (2020). Racism and discrimination in COVID-19 responses. *Lancet* (London, England), 395(10231), 1194. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30792-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30792-3)

Mohatt, Nathaniel, Thompson, A., Nghi, T., & Tebes, J. (2014). Historical trauma as public narrative: A conceptual review of how history impacts present-day health. *Social Science and Medicine* (Harvard), Vol. 106, pp. 128-136.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- YMI library liaison services grant buget.xlsx

**Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
Proposed Project Budget**

Organization Name:	Buncombe County Public Libraries
Project Name:	YMI Library Liaison Services
Amount Requested:	\$90,149.16

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$90,149.17	Pending	Spreadsheet will not allow us to correct this to \$90,149.16
List other sources here			
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Total	\$ 90,149.17		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Position funding from Nov. 1, 2022 - June 30, 2026 (165 week book budget)	55761.65	\$ -	\$ 55,761.65	Operating	We will request for this position to convert to permanent PT as of July 1, 2026. External hire specialist rate: \$17.03/hour x 19 hours/week x 165 weeks = \$53,389.05. Internal hire specialist rate: \$17.79/hour x 19 hours/week x 165 weeks = \$55,771.65
archival materials	\$13,300	\$ -	\$ 13,300.00	Capital	\$350/month x 38 months
shelving - borrowing collection	12668	\$ -	\$ 12,668.00	Capital	\$4,000 per year x 3.167 Examples of archival materials: Acid Free Folders Acid Free Boxes PVA/Mylar Photo and Document Sleeves Climate Monitoring Device Conservation Supplies (silica gel, outdated media conversion)
shelving - archival collection	\$2,192.36	\$ -	\$ 2,192.36	Capital	Gaylord single-faced steel shelving with angled shelves (66"H, 36"W, 13"D); Starter shelf: \$628.99, Add on x 2: \$573.99 each; \$1776.97 + \$14.43 tax + 271.96 shipping
staff laptop	\$4,858.84	\$ -	\$ 4,858.84	Capital	Estey Double-Faced Steel shelving units (36W x 66H x 25"); 5 units at \$845 per unit = \$4225 +\$315.97 shipping +\$317.87 tax
outreach kit	\$1,200	\$ -	\$ 1,200.00	Capital	
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Total			\$ 90,149.16		