

# Project Fresh Start

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*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal  
Recovery Funds*

## ***Buncombe County Government***

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# Application Form

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## Question Group

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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. To date, Buncombe County has awarded projects totaling \$23,093,499, leaving a balance of \$27,639,791 available to award.

Visit <http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding> for details.

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](#)

## Organization Type\*

Public

## Nonprofit documentation

If nonprofit, attach IRS Determination Letter or other proof of nonprofit status.

## Name of Project.\*

Project Fresh Start

## New/Updated Proposal\*

Is this a new project proposal or an updated version of a proposal submitted during the earlier (July 2021) Recovery Funding RFP?

New project proposal

## Amount of Funds Requested\*

\$20,000.00

## Category\*

Please select one:

- Affordable Housing
- Aging/Older Adults
- Business Support/Economic Development
- Environmental/Climate
- Homelessness
- K-12 Education
- Infrastructure and/or Broadband
- Mental Health/Substance Use
- NC Pre-K Expansion
- Workforce

Workforce

## Brief Project Description\*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

According to an April 1 report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in professional and business services is 723,000 higher than in February 2020. With increased opportunity for career mobility, Project Fresh Start will support Buncombe County residents looking to grow into available professional and business careers. Through partnerships with existing workforce development programs, non-profits, and local professionals, Project Fresh Start will provide at no cost to the community:

- Four regional career growth opportunities
- Resume review services
- On-site professional clothing closets in a gender-inclusive setting
- Professional headshots
- Print-ready business card templates
- Connection to existing professional career opportunities in Buncombe County

Project Fresh Start Aligns with the Buncombe County Strategic Plan community focus area of a vibrant economy and helps prepare jobseekers to fill positions in the region's targeted industries.

## Project Plan\*

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

Project Fresh Start will launch in June 2022 in four of our local communities: Asheville's South Slope, Barnardsville/Big Ivy, Sandy Mush community, and West Asheville. We plan on having four Project Fresh Start events starting in June 2022 until August 2022. The Buncombe County Communications and Public Engagement team will facilitate facility rental, professional services, promotion, and registration. Project Fresh Start partners include AB-Tech's STEP program, NC Works, ABCCM West and South, Stephanie's Clothes Closet, and Goodwill Industries. Project funding will cover the costs associated with professional services and facility rental. There will be no sub-recipients of funding.

The Project Fresh Start events will feature an online registration process for jobseekers to select which of the services they would like to access. Jobseekers will schedule appointments online or can call for assistance in scheduling and selecting services. All purchases with federal funds will be made directly by Buncombe County and that there will be no subrecipients.

If approved, ARPA dollars would fund:

- Advance promotional support
- Printing
- Costs for professional photography services
- Interpreter services
- Program support for clothing providers
- Program support for professional services
- Facility rental, custodial, and/or security fees
- Event refreshments
- Ancillary event-associated fees

## Statement of Need\*

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

On March 4, 2022, Nathan Ramsey, Director of Mountain Area Development Board, stated to WLOS that the unemployment rate has hit a historic low in the Asheville area of early March. "Right now, that number is at 2.6%. That 2.6% is a big change from what the region saw at the height of the pandemic." But with that change comes a new challenge. "Most people that lost their job during the pandemic have gone back to work. Our greatest challenge is we still haven't recovered the jobs that we lost prior to the pandemic, and our labor force is smaller by almost 10,000 individuals," Ramsey said. He said there are far more jobs than people in the area. On any given day, he said, there are about 20,000 jobs open in the region." With the large number of openings coupled with a growing cost of living in Buncombe County, Project Fresh Start will help connect jobseekers with the tools needed to secure professional and business careers that may also provide higher wages, more benefits, and more regular schedules. Project Fresh Start also affords Buncombe County the opportunity to fill existing vacant positions as well as a slate of up to 71 new positions proposed for FY23.

## 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.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered one of the worst jobs crises since the Great Depression, with the real danger that the crisis will

increase poverty and widen inequalities for years to come. To stop this jobs crisis from turning into a social crisis, the organization recommends reconstructing a better and more resilient labor market, and Project Fresh Start helps do just that.

## Population Served\*

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

We will serve all Buncombe Residents looking for a new employment opportunity. We will focus on neighborhoods in Central Asheville and rural areas of the County, emphasizing to support marginalized, BIPOC and Latinx communities.

Proposed locations include:

- Edington Center, Asheville
- Big Ivy Community Center, Barnardsville
- Sandy Mush Community Center, Sandy Mush
- Emma Elementary School, Asheville

## 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 prepare our Project Fresh Start participants to be the best they can be in an interview. We will help provide them the confidence of having a strong resume, beautiful headshot, professional attire, and business cards to leave the best impression for potential employers. We plan on having at least 80 participants through this project.

1. # of residents that participate in the program
  - Each location will be able to accommodate 20 appointments
2. # of residents that get an interview
  - All participants will have the opportunity to interview with Buncombe County Government

## Evaluation\*

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

This project is new for our department, but we can get a baseline of data-driven solutions to formulate the foundation to do another PFS in the future. We will use Results-Based Accountability (RBA) methodology as our evaluation tool. This tool works well with decision-making processes to help communities talk about their accomplishments or challenges through data and take actions to solve community problems. In conjunction with RBA, we will have a pre-survey and post-survey for each participant to look at how this program can change over time, hoping for more participants participation each year. CAPE would follow the straightforward guidelines of RBA by asking, "How much did we do?" "How well did we do it?" and "Is anyone better off?" Each Project Fresh Participant will receive a post survey about their experience after this event so that it could be folded into future operating budgets if it demonstrates overwhelming community needs.

## 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?

CAPE will provide tailored efforts to support people of color and people in marginalized communities to provide in-person skill-building techniques to help with capacity building. Through this funding, we can provide support and strengthen our relationships with our BIPOC and marginalized rural communities by looking at and addressing inequities such as racism, lack of access to quality resources, social-economic barriers, and disproportionate unemployment and underemployment rates.

## 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.

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;
  - Photographer (providing professional headshots)
  - Clothing closets- Stephanie's Clothes Closet, ABCCM Clothes Closets, and Goodwill Industries
  - Resume reviewer partnerships-AB-Tech STEP Program, NC Works, and Goodwill Industries
  - Local Caterer
  - Interpreters
  - Professional services

- 2.) What percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform?

Subcontractors will perform 80% of the work. The Buncombe County CAPE team will provide the remainder of services.

## 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 Buncombe County Community Engagement Specialists has a long-standing connection with the community. We demonstrate equality by meeting people where they are and bringing the services to them and we foster equity by removing barriers to access and success.

## 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.

PFS budget page.xlsx

### Special Considerations\*

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

This project is modeled after best practices from other local governments that have helped facilitate individual components of Project Fresh Start.

# File Attachment Summary

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## *Applicant File Uploads*

- PFS budget page.xlsx



**Project Fresh Start (PFS) Budget line**

<b>Items- contracted services</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Description</b>
Photographers	\$4,000.00	CAPE will hire 4 photographers and each one will be assigned to one of the four PFS events. We will hire each photographer from each community to support small businesses.
Interpretation services	\$2,500.00	Interpreters will assist jobseekers through the process on-site
Space Rental	\$3,000.00	CAPE will rent 4 places for 4 events, including any custodial and/or security services required
Adverstisement	\$4,500.00	CAPE will promote each event to increase participation and resources for each event
Event Materials	\$2,000.00	Provide backdrops, tables and chairs rentals, etc.
Snacks	\$1,000.00	Hire caterers, and provide light snacks, coffee and water
Resume reviewers and Mock interview staff (in-kind)	\$0.00	NCWorks, Goodwill and AB-Tech STEP programs will provide employees to review resumes and conduct mock interviews.
Professional services	\$2,500.00	Fees from partners for professional services
Indicentals	\$500.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,000.00</b>	

