

Pretrial Release COVID-19 Impact Relief

*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal
Recovery Funds*

Buncombe County Government

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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.

Pretrial Release COVID-19 Impact Relief

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$565,025.10

Recovery Fund Eligible Category*

Please select one:

County only

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

The purpose of this project is to help alleviate the enlarged workload brought on by a backlog of pending cases and an upsurge in supervisions assigned by the court during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will also increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Pretrial Services department by adding to and further equipping the current workforce. The funds will be used for two additional FTE's – one additional Pretrial

Coordinators and one Administrative Assistant. A small portion of the funding will be used for client support and for training staff in evidence-based, person-centered case management strategies.

Project Plan*

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

The project will follow the existing structure in the Justice Services Department- Pretrial Services Division, which includes the direct supervision of assigned defendants by Pretrial Coordinators in order to hold the supervisees accountable to their court-ordered conditions of release. Support staff members, such as the Administrative Assistant IV, assist with the intake paperwork and processing of new assignments from the court. In addition to salaries, the funds will also be used to procure additional equipment, such as computers, phones, and office supplies, for use by the new staff members, as well as for providing resources for evidence-based, trauma-informed training for all Coordinators. The project can be implemented as soon as funds are made available to hire new staff. On average, the hiring process in Buncombe County typically takes approximately 30-45 days.

Statement of Need*

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

Pretrial Services staff have faced changes and factors that have significantly impacted the efficiency and effectiveness in meeting the demands of their job descriptions. In the two months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a new case management system, Ce Pretrial, was implemented. In addition, a new risk assessment process was implemented, and while this did not directly affect the Coordinators, it did affect the Supervisor of Screeners, who also carries a caseload and performs duties associated with supervising Pretrial defendants.

The COVID-19 pandemic created a drastic increase in the workload for Pretrial employees due in part to a backlog of existing pending court cases being supervised by Pretrial and also due to the increased number of cases assigned to Pretrial Services in a specifically COVID-19 focused effort to reduce the jail population. Between fiscal years 2020 and 2021, the average cases per year per FTE increased by 248.87 cases. Pretrial Services manages a variety of supervision levels and as expected with case management work, time spent on each case may vary based on complexity, effectiveness and quality factors. The following data demonstrates the relationship between the active cases per fiscal year divided among the number of Coordinators per fiscal year.

FY 2015 281
 FY 2016 365
 FY 2017 247
 FY 2018 307
 FY 2019 348
 FY 2020 367
 FY 2021 616

Additionally, Pretrial staff's ability to perform their work with efficiency and effectiveness is of particular importance when it comes to ensuring public safety. Currently, defendants charged with violent crime represent the majority (56%) of cases being supervised by Pretrial Services. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) cases account for approximately 1/3 of total Pretrial supervisions while another 23% of cases involve violent felonies or misdemeanors that are not IPV-related.

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.

The Interim Final Rule recognizes that “decrease[s] to] a state or local government’s ability to effectively administer services” can constitute a negative economic impact of the pandemic. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, many courts were unable to operate safely during the pandemic and, as a result, now face significant backlogs. In Buncombe County, court backlogs resulting from the inability of courts to safely operate at full capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic decreased the government’s ability to administer services. One such service is that performed by Pretrial Coordinators.

Court backlogs in Buncombe County have also contributed to an increase in the length of time defendants are on Pretrial supervision. Furthermore, there has also been a significant increase in supervision assignments from the court during the pandemic due to a concerted and focused effort to reduce the population of the jail and reduce the likelihood of the facility becoming a potential breeding ground for the virus. Per the most recent Pretrial Services Monthly Report, the average days of Pretrial supervision for felonies was 357 with a maximum amount of 3,032 days, 147 days for misdemeanors with a maximum of 869, 322 days for traffic charges with a maximum of 664, and 230 days for “unclassified” charges with a maximum of 1,531.

The primary use of the funding will be to hire and train staff, addressing the harm caused by reducing the average caseload size of the individual Coordinators and equipping them to use a more trauma focused approach in their work.

Population Served*

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

A snapshot of the population demographics for the Buncombe County Detention Facility on 7/10/21 included the following: Of the 400 total inmates being housed, 288 (72%) were identified as White, 106 (26.50%) were identified as Black, 4 (1%) were identified as American Indian, and 2 (0.50%) were identified as Asian/Pacific. Of the population being supervised by Pretrial Services (just over 900 people), a snapshot on that same day showed that 75% were identified as White, 24% were identified as Black, and 1% were identified as Unknown/Other.

According to the Data USA website (<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/buncombe-county-nc>) the overall population of Buncombe County as of 2018 was 83.3% White (Non-Hispanic), 6.21% Black or African American (Non-Hispanic), 2.13% Multiracial (Non-Hispanic), 1.02% Asian (Non-Hispanic), 0.38% American Indian & Alaska Native (Non-Hispanic), 0.149% Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander (Non-Hispanic), 5.68% White (Hispanic), 0.87% Other (Hispanic). A comparison of the two data sets shows there are a disproportionate number of Black citizens involved in our local criminal justice system.

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.

The impact of the project, which will focus on reducing the average caseload size for each Coordinator, will give them more time to concentrate on case management strategies that will be more collaborative and person-centered, resulting in better outcomes for the defendants under supervision as well as the community. The project will work to reduce the Pretrial technical violation rate (currently 16.8%), increase the public safety rate (currently 87.1%) and increase the court appearance rate (currently 87.7%). The

current average caseload size is approximately 112 defendants; the goal is to reduce this number to an average of 90.

Evaluation*

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

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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?

This project will help build toward a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery by giving Pretrial Coordinators more time to focus on collaborative, evidence-based case management techniques, such as motivational interviewing and using trauma-informed approaches in order to support and promote change in justice-involved citizens who are typically more difficult to serve. As the figures mentioned previously show, there is a racial disparity in the criminal justice-involved population of Buncombe County in comparison with the overall populace and this disparity is slightly more pronounced in the population supervised by Pretrial Services. In alliance with Buncombe County's Racial Equity Plan, this project will address the impacts of these inequities by allowing staff time to help provide trauma informed criminal justice responses for the Black community and to coordinate with justice and community partners to reduce adult and juvenile recidivism.

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.

Other than current resources and community partners already working with Pretrial Services, there are no additional partners designated for this project. Some of the existing partnerships include the Office of the District Court Judges, Office of the District Attorney, Office of the Public Defender, Buncombe County Sheriff's Office, and the Buncombe County Clerk of Court.

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 most tenured employee in Pretrial Services has actively participated in three different segments of funding awarded to Buncombe County from the MacArthur Foundation, beginning with the Innovation Fund awarded in 2017 regarding the development and implementation of a specific case management strategy for IPV cases, the initial award in the Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) grant, focused on the implementation of the Public Safety Assessment (PSA), and continuing with the most recent phase of the SJC grant, awarded to help support initiatives aimed at safely reducing Buncombe County's jail population and advancing racial equity.

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-Pretrial Services.xlsx

Special Considerations*

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

Buncombe County's Strategic Plan states that over the next 20 years, our five-county region is expected to grow 40%, to over 640,000 people, the bulk of which will reside in Buncombe and Henderson counties. This expected influx of people will likely also lead to a growing jail population, which Pretrial Services already serves to avoid. In fiscal year 2021, Pretrial Services saved the Buncombe County Detention Facility a total of 135,011 bed days, or 370 beds per day. Based on an estimated cost of approximately \$112 per day to house one inmate, this equals a savings of approximately \$15 million dollars in detention costs for Buncombe County. In addition, given that the existing racial disparities in the criminal justice system could grow wider in Buncombe County, we must be intentional about addressing the impact of these inequities before the population increases further. Thus, this project would help fulfill Buncombe County's commitment to make the best use of this infusion of resources and have a lasting impact on our community.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Recovery-Funds-budget-Pretrial Services.xlsx

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

Organization Name:	Buncombe County Justice Services
Project Name:	Pretrial Services COVID-19 Impact Program
Amount Requested:	565,025.10

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 565,025.10	Pending	
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Total	\$ 565,025.10		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Pretrial Services Coordinator Year 1	\$ 87,338.00		\$ 87,338.00	Operating	
Pretrial Services Administrative Assistant Year 1	\$ 71,200.00		\$ 71,200.00	Operating	
Pretrial Services Coordinator Year 2	\$ 89,958.14		\$ 89,958.14	Operating	
Pretrial Services Administrative Assistant Year 2	\$ 73,336.00		\$ 73,336.00	Operating	
Pretrial Services Coordinator Year 3	\$ 92,656.88		\$ 92,656.88	Operating	
Pretrial Services Administrative Assistant Year 3	\$ 75,536.08		\$ 75,536.08	Operating	
Professional Development Year 1	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00	Operating	
Professional Development Year 2	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00	Operating	
Professional Development Year 3	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00	Operating	
Client/Program Support Year 1	\$ 15,000.00		\$ 15,000.00	Operating	
Client/Program Support Year 2	\$ 15,000.00		\$ 15,000.00	Operating	
Client/Program Support Year 3	\$ 15,000.00		\$ 15,000.00	Operating	
List expenses here			\$ -		
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Total			\$ 565,025.10		