

Buncombe County Admission Offset and Operating Support

FY 2017 Buncombe County Community Funding

Friend of the Nature Center

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Application Form

Project Name*

Name of Project

Buncombe County Admission Offset and Operating Support

Amount Requested*

Amount Requested

\$65,000.00

Service Area*

Which Commissioner Districts are served by this program?

Access a map of Buncombe County Commissioner districts [here](#).

District 1

District 2

District 3

Which county sustainability goal aligns best with the goals of this project?*

Based on the Buncombe County Sustainability Plan, select a Category, Goal & Objective that align with the focus of the project and the specific results that will be achieved.

Access the Buncombe County Sustainability Plan [here](#).

Community > Equity in Access > Increase quantity and quality of recreational activities

If applicable, select a second sustainability goal that aligns with project goals.

Result 2 is optional - Select if project aligns with more than one Sustainability Category, Goal & Objective.

Environment > Partnerships for Conservation/Preservation/Restoration of Natural Resources > Protect ecological systems/wildlife

If applicable, select a third sustainability goal that aligns with project goals.

Result 3 is optional - Select if project aligns with more than one Sustainability Category, Goal & Objective.

[Unanswered]

Project Description

Project Description*

Description of Project

The WNC Nature Center (WNCNC) provides education on the natural resources and wildlife of the region, and works to preserve those resources through conservation programs including the Red Wolf Survival Program and the rainwater catchment system. The Friends of the Nature Center (FONC) supports the WNCNC by creating awareness and providing financial resources for programs and capital needs through fundraising, membership, and events. As an Asheville City property, The WNCNC provides reduced admission (a discount of \$3.00) to City residents. A generous grant by the Buncombe County Service Foundation to the FONC provided funds to offer that discount to non-City residents of the County in FY2016. The FONC requests consideration for a grant of \$65,000: \$33,000 to continue this program in FY2017; and \$32,000 toward offsetting the salary of a membership coordinator. Membership accounts for nearly 90% of revenue. In 2014, the Friends signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Asheville requiring the FONC to begin providing operational funds to the Nature Center to reduce the city subsidy of the WNCNC, putting a new burden on our budget. The requested County grant funds will allow us to maintain the staff necessary to build capacity while continuing to work diligently to support the WNC Nature Center as a resource for western North Carolina.

How many people will this project serve?*

State the number of individuals or households in Buncombe County that will be served by this project. Also state the number of people that will experience the desired result. For example, if dropout prevention services are being delivered to 100 students, how many will successfully graduate from high school?

Every Buncombe County resident attending the WNC Nature Center during the fiscal year 2016-2017 will receive the lower admission rate of \$7.95 (Adult) \$6.95 (Seniors 65 and older) or \$5.95 (Youth 3-15). The anticipated number of Buncombe County residents attending the Nature Center over that period is 11,000. This number is based on current attendance and projected growth. The Nature Center began tracking Buncombe County/non-Asheville City resident attendance in January, 2015. From January through Nov. 23, total attendance of County residents has been 9,244. Total visitors to the Nature Center in that time is 115,053, and is currently on track to be a record-breaking year of growth in attendance for the fifth year in a row.

Describe the people this project will serve.*

Characterize the demographics of the project's target population in terms such as age, gender, income, race, ethnicity, geographic area, etc. Include information about method of referral/recruitment of the target population.

The demographics of attendees to the Nature Center are reflective of those of the County. All ages, from children to the elderly purchase tickets. From January through November 2015, 48% of ticket purchasers were adults, 35% were children, 5% were seniors, and 12% were school groups. Geographic area is also tracked. Every ticket purchaser is asked to provide their zip code. Racial, ethnic, and income indicators have not been tracked by the Nature Center.

What key steps will you take to achieve the results of this project?*

Describe the core elements of your implementation plan, including milestones that will take place within the funding timeframe.

At the time of ticket purchase, every person is asked to provide their zip code. County residents will be provided the discounted ticket prices immediately. Because the Buncombe County Service Foundation provided support for this offset in FY 2016, front desk staff and volunteers are already trained to do this, and it is part of the training of new staff and volunteers. The Friends of the Nature Center will continue marketing the WNC Nature Center throughout the region to reach new County residents.

Describe the evidence of success that backs this project's approach.*

What evidence of success (i.e. evidence-based research, practice model, accreditation, industry standards, and/or other framework) are you using as a basis for your project design?

Specialized lower ticket prices are a strong incentive to attract attendees. From Disney World offering Florida residents discounted rates to many regional zoos and aquariums offering reduced rates for in-county residents, the practice is industry standard and proven to be a good benefit to residents. The FONC have been raising awareness and funds for the WNC Nature Center for over four decades and are well-positioned to continue this success with the support of constituents throughout the County who are committed to the long-term strength of this organization.

Describe your data collection, tracking, and reporting procedures.*

Explain your methods for documenting project, service and client information. Include a description of any software or other tools utilized.

The WNC Nature Center uses RecTrac as its Point of Sale system. Each ticket purchaser is asked to provide their zipcode, which is entered into the system. RecTrac also keeps record of the type of ticket sold (child, adult, senior, school group, etc.) to capture age demographics. The data is immediate and accurate for reporting purposes.

Explain your technological resources and capacity.*

Explain your current technological strengths and barriers and how this impacts your ability to track data and report outcomes. Who is responsible for adaptation and use of technology within your organization?

RecTrac allows the Nature Center to capture attendance data in real time, and provide reporting swiftly and accurately. There are no limitations within the system for providing age and residency information.

Organizational Profile

How does the proposed project support your mission and strategic plan?*

State your mission and the date of your most recent strategic plan, and explain how the proposed project helps advance your organizational goals.

The Mission of The WNC Nature Center is to connect people with the animals and plants of the Southern Appalachian Mountain region by inspiring appreciation, nurturing understanding, and advancing conservation of the region's rich biodiversity. The Friends of the Nature Center seeks out and provides financial resources to the WNCNC. The WNCNC 2020 Vision, adopted in 2012, names Visibility & Awareness, and Increased Funding as two of five Strategic Focus Areas. The proposed funding for admission offset will directly support Buncombe County residents attending the Nature Center, which will increase visibility, as well as supporting the Friends as they increase outreach and marketing efforts throughout the County to increase awareness on behalf of the WNC Nature Center. The requested operational funds will help the FONC build capacity raise increasing funds through membership and fundraising.

What expertise/accomplishments do you have that are relevant to the proposed project?*

List your organization's strengths as well as accomplishments from the past 3 years that position the organization to be successful with the proposed project.

The WNC Nature Center has been providing education and conservation of the region's resources and wildlife since 1973 through school field trips, summer camps, programming, exhibits, and much more. An accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the WNCNC has seen increasing attendance each year for the past five years (from 87,607 in 2010 to a projected 120,000 in 2015). With the award of a \$313,000 grant from the Buncombe County TDA, matched by funds raised by the Friends of the Nature Center, construction will begin in early 2016 on the new front entrance complex and renovation of the old entrance into educational facility. With the signing of the MOU with the City of Asheville, the FONC have been steadily increasing capacity to provide growing support to this iconic western North Carolina treasure.

Describe partners that are critical to the success of your organization.*

List any external partners, intermediaries or advisors important to your success, and describe their role and evidence of their commitment. Describe successful collaborations with these people or groups.

In addition to good relationships with Buncombe County and the City of Asheville, The Friends of the WNC Nature Center are proud to count many local businesses as our partners, including Conrad Industries, Biltmore, Blue Ridge Hops, Festiva, Karpen Steel, Starks Financial Group, and many more. The Nature Center also maintains close working partnerships with Buncombe County Schools, and provides discounted admission for parents and siblings accompanying a school group. The WNC Nature Center has a long history of connection to this region and will continue to forge strong partnerships throughout the County.

Financial Information

Nonprofit financial assurance requirements:

Financial statements, prepared using a recognizable basis of accounting (i.e., modified accrual) and IRS Form 990s must be submitted to Buncombe County annually.

- Organizations with annual revenues of \$300,000 or greater must submit financial statements audited in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.
- Those with revenues between \$100,000 and \$300,000 must submit financial statements reviewed in accordance with SSARS 19.
- Those with revenues of less than \$100,000 must submit non-disclosure financial statements compiled in accordance with SSARS 19.

All financial statements must be reported on by a certified public accountant and include a full balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement.

These requirements are considered minimum requirements. Organizations may submit a higher level of assurance than is required.

IRS Form 990 - Upload Here

Click Choose File to upload a copy of the 990 form you most recently completed.

990 - FRIENDS OF THE WNC NATURE CENTER 6.30.14.pdf

If your organization does not have a 990, briefly state the reason.

Include a statement of intent to comply with nonprofit financial assurance requirements as listed above.

[Unanswered]

Financial Statements - Upload here

Click Choose File to upload a copy of the most recently completed financial statements (audit, compilation or review).

Friends of WNC Nature Center, Inc. 6-30-2014 Financial Statement ISSUED.pdf

If your organization does not have financial statements, briefly state the reason.

Include a statement of intent to comply with nonprofit financial assurance requirements as listed above.

Complete Budget Worksheet - Upload Here*

Download the budget form [Here](#).

Complete the budget form for this project/program and the overall agency. Save it to your computer, then upload it by clicking Choose File.

community-funding-budget-form.xlsx

Budget Narrative*

Describe all differences between current year and proposed year. List all pending funding sources with expected date of notification. Please detail any other information that may help clarify the budget.

In 2014, the Friends of the WNC Nature Center signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Asheville to provide increasing amounts of general operating funds to the Nature Center over the next three fiscal years. These funds are in addition to the program and capital funds the FotNC provide.

What (if any) portion of requested funds will be used to support capital expenses?*

Capital projects are defined as those used to acquire or upgrade physical assets such as property, buildings, or equipment. Please detail.

The funds requested from Buncombe County will be used for operating expenses and to offset reduced ticket prices for non-Asheville City residents of Buncombe County.

Employee Wages

Please provide information about the wage breakdowns of your employees. Living wage for Buncombe County has been identified as \$11.00 per hour for employees with employer-provided health insurance and \$12.50 per hour for employees without.

Employees with employer-provided health insurance*

List the number of employees in your organization with employer-provided health insurance in each wage category. For salaried employees, use hourly wage equivalents.

\$7.25 - \$10.99 per hour

\$11.00 - \$14.99 per hour

\$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour

\$20.00 - \$24.99 per hour

\$25.00 - \$29.99 per hour

\$30.00 - \$34.99 per hour

\$35.00 - \$39.99 per hour

\$40.00+ per hour

No employees of the Friends of the Nature Center have employer-provided health insurance.

Employees without employer-provided health insurance*

List the number of employees in your organization without employer-provided health insurance in each wage category. For salaried employees, use hourly wage equivalents.

- \$7.25 - \$12.49 per hour
- \$12.50 - \$14.99 per hour
- \$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour
- \$20.00 - \$24.99 per hour
- \$25.00 - \$29.99 per hour
- \$30.00 - \$34.99 per hour
- \$35.00 - \$39.99 per hour
- \$40.00+ per hour

Friends of the Nature Center: 1@ \$12.50-\$14.99/hour; 1@ \$15.00-19.99/hour; 1@ \$20.00-\$24.99/hour.