



BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FY2018 PRIORITIES: ACTIVITIES & RESULTS

Buncombe County envisions a healthy, safe, well-educated, and thriving community with a sustainable quality of life. Commissioners are dedicated to strengthening the quality of life for everyone by setting fiscally, socially, and environmentally responsible goals that will improve our community today and for future generations.

In Fiscal Year 2018, the Board of Commissioners identified six strategic priorities:



Affordable housing: Ensuring comprehensive opportunities for affordable and safe housing as a foundation for healthy and thriving families and neighborhoods



Clean and renewable energy: Reaching 100% clean and renewable energy sources for Buncombe County Government operations by 2030 while educating, equipping, and moving our community toward the same goal within 25 years



Diverse community workforce: Cultivating a robust, inclusive local economy featuring a diverse workforce and pipelines to jobs and educational opportunities to all



Early childhood education: Ensuring that every child has an equal opportunity to thrive during their first 2,000 days, including access to quality early childhood education



Justice resource support: Coordinating a justice system that is efficient, effective, equitable, and that actively protects our community's public safety while holistically addressing the needs of those in the justice system



Opioid addiction: Stemming the disease of opioid addiction, which is a crisis threatening the health and safety of a growing number of people in our community and beyond

The Board of Commissioners has taken action and achieved meaningful results. The following pages list specific activities, innovations and outcomes in priority areas.

Affordable Housing



- Completed **Williams-Baldwin Teacher Campus**, with 24 units of Asheville-Buncombe teacher housing, on land provided by Buncombe County in partnership with Buncombe County & Asheville City Schools, Eblen Charities, and State Employees Credit Union
- Committed funding for **Lee Walker Heights** mixed-income redevelopment project which will include 212 affordable apartments, in partnership with Housing Authority of the City of Asheville, Mountain Housing Opportunities, the City of Asheville, and the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency



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- Committed funding for **Eagle Market Place** which will include 32 affordable apartments and 30 workforce apartments, in partnership
- Committed funding for **Simpson Street** rental units which will include 70 affordable apartments, in partnership with Swannanoa Bend, LLC
- Committed funding for **East Haven** rental units in Swannanoa which will include 95 affordable apartments, in partnership with Mountain Housing Opportunities
- Joined in the establishment of a **Community Land Trust** program to leverage public land for affordable housing, in partnership with the City of Asheville
- Held a **Board of Commissioners Work Session** on housing affordability and sponsored the **Affordable Housing Summit** to engage community partners, share information and explore solutions

Home Ownership



- Committed funding for **Jon Kraus Way** and **Curry Court** projects which will provide homeownership for 20 households, in partnership with Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity
- Funded **Self-Help Home Homeownership** and single-family home construction projects through partnerships with non-profits and other housing developers which will provide homeownership assistance for 20 households
- Maintained **Employee Housing Assistance Program** home buying assistance for qualifying Buncombe County employees
- Administered **Senior/Disability Property Tax Relief** programs to reduce homeownership cost burden for qualifying households
- Administered **Permit Fee Rebate Program** on building, well and septic permits for housing that is constructed and sold or rented affordably
- Provided a grant **Emma Community Ownership Project** to support creation of a home ownership cooperative
- Provided a grant to groups in the **Shiloh, East End, Shiloh and Burton Street** communities to preserve culture, history and neighborhoods

Homelessness



- Partnered in creating **Homeless Initiative Strategic Plan** for 2017-2022 focusing on housing, case management, health care, education, employment, transportation and prevention/diversion
- Provided funding for **Homeless Initiative Coordinator**, in partnership with the City of Asheville
- Provided funding for **Coordinated Assessment** of up to 1,000 people who are homeless and **Supportive Housing Programs** for 50 people who are formerly chronically homeless, in partnership with Homeward Bound
- Provided funding for **Hard to House Program** at Woodfin Apartments to provide housing for 18 formerly chronically homeless individuals with severe physical or behavioral health care needs, in partnership with Housing Authority of the City of Asheville and Homeward Bound



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Housing Quality



- Provided funding for **home repairs** for 35 households, in partnership with Mountain Housing Opportunities and Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity
- Promote information about the **North Carolina Fair Housing Act**
- Provided funding for **housing related legal services** at no cost for low-income people, such as substandard housing or discrimination, in partnership with Pisgah Legal Services
- Updated the minimum housing standards model in partnership with Pisgah Legal Services
- Established a **one stop weatherization assistance** model with a focus on equity and inclusion, in partnership with Blue Horizons and Southeast Sustainable Community Fund
- Provided funding for **low-income residential weatherization** for 80 households, in partnership with Energy Savers Network and United Community Development

Housing Stability



- Provided funding for **Housing Assistance** to 458 households maintain housing and avoid eviction or foreclosure through Emergency Assistance and County General Assistance, in partnership with Eblen Charities
- Provided funding for **Tenant Based Rental Assistance** to help 40 households maintain housing in partnership with Eblen Charities

Energy Initiatives



- Created Buncombe **County Office of Sustainability**
- Held a **Board of Commissioners Work Session** on energy initiatives to engage community partners, share information and explore solutions
- Implemented **energy reduction measures** identified in 2014 energy audit - including installing efficient HVAC (heating, ventilating & air conditioning) units, roofing and lighting updates
- Managed a **diverse portfolio of fleet vehicles**, including multiple fuel sources.
- Continued strategic, routine maintenance to achieve **efficiency through available technologies** including replacements of florescent lighting fixtures with LED, HVAC equipment replacements, building automation initiatives, to produce annual cost savings and energy reduction
- Estimated an overall 2% toward carbon reduction goal with facilities and fleet measures

Promoting Renewable Energy



- Provided leadership in the **Energy Innovation Task Force** to research and recommend energy efficiency and demand-side management programs in Buncombe County, in partnership with the City of Asheville and Duke Energy Progress, including the launch of the **Blue Horizons Project**
- Approved the establishment of a **solar farm** on the site of Buncombe County's former landfill, in partnership with Duke Energy Progress



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- Maintained a **landfill methane gas to electricity system**, providing 1.3 MW annual energy production
- Explored options to source **renewable energy for utilities** for Buncombe County facilities and will issue a Request for Proposals to conduct a planning study, in partnership with the City of Asheville

Fostering Energy Sustainability in the Community



- Conducted **energy audits** for 30 public and nonprofit community facilities
- Provided funding for 8 **energy efficiency projects** in community facilities in follow-up to energy audits
- Provided funding for **low-income residential weatherization and energy efficiency** for 80 households, in partnership with Energy Savers Network and United Community Development
- Received a Southeast Sustainable Community Fund grant to fund creation of a one-stop for weatherization assistance with a focus on equity and inclusion, in partnership with City of Asheville
- Conducted **energy conservation awareness** activities in public schools, in partnership with Buncombe County Schools
- Provided **energy conservation education programming** for Buncombe County employees to promote programs such as EnergyWise Home and Home Energy House Call, in partnership with Duke Energy Progress and Green Built Alliance
- Held **community forums** targeting area business sectors to promote energy efficiency

Early Childhood Education



- Held a **Board of Commissioners Work Session** on early childhood education to engage community partners, share information and explore solutions
- Provided funding and leadership in the **Asheville Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative**, in partnership with Buncombe Partnership for Children diverse public-private stakeholders
- Participated in **system coordination activities** at local and state levels including the Institute for Emerging Issues' Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Development
- Advocated for **legislative and policy changes** at other levels of government, such as increased Subsidy reimbursement rates, increased funding for NC Pre-K, and reauthorization of federal Child Care and Development Block Grants

Increasing Availability of Early Childhood Care & Education



- Provided funding for the **Valley Child Development** program to serve 50 young children, in partnership with Southwestern Child Development
- Provided a building on an in-kind basis allowing **expansion of child development center at Eliada** to serve 60 additional children
- Provided funding to offer a **pre-k classroom at the Christine W. Avery Learning Center** in partnership with Asheville City Schools, Hill Street Baptist Church, and NC Pre-K to serve an additional 14-18 children



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- Provided funding to establish a new **Head Start classroom at Johnston Elementary School**, near the Deaverview neighborhood in partnership with Community Action Opportunities, Buncombe County Schools, and NC Pre-K to serve an additional 18 children
- Provided funding for **YWCA Child Care expansion** to serve an additional 42 children with priority for foster care and an emphasis on workforce development and underserved populations
- Provided funding for **Empowerment Child Care** to for flexible, drop-in style care for people accessing basic and workforce needs, in partnership with YWCA
- Administer state/federal **Child Care Subsidy** program to provide subsidized child care services to eligible families

Supporting Careers in Early Childhood Education



- Held a **Board of Commissioners Work Session and Call to Action** with state legislators, local professionals, and representatives from institutes from higher education to discuss policy changes that could impact workforce barriers in early childhood education
- Allocated **economic development incentive funds** for early childhood education to support workforce-related emerging efforts and creative partnerships
- Provided funding for **Partnership for Excellence in Early Childhood Education** to establish a pipeline for developing professionals beginning in high school, through community college and a 4-year degree program, in partnership with Warren Wilson College, Verner Center for Early Learning, A-B Tech and Buncombe County Schools
- Provided funding for **Career and Technical Education** programming at Buncombe County and Asheville City Schools to develop career ladders and future workforce in early childhood education
- Provided funding for completion of the fifth floor of the **Allied Health Building** at A-B Tech Community College for early childhood instruction classrooms
- Provided funding for **Childcare Resource and Referral** technical assistance for providers, in partnership with Buncombe Partnership for Children and Southwest Child Development

Trauma Informed Approaches in Early Childhood Education



- Implemented **trauma-informed strategies to child welfare**, such as Project Broadcast to equip staff and community partners to better serve children
- Facilitated community access to **Positive Parenting Program** (Triple P) and **Community Resiliency Model** (CRM) curriculums for responding to trauma
- Developed a community plan to respond to special needs of children in families impacted by addiction and babies born dependent on substances, in partnership with Perinatal Substance Use Alliance
- Provided public health support and coordination for the **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Collaborative** which is addressing adversity, in partnership with **Community Health Improvement Process** (CHIP) partner organizations



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Economic Development to Support Diverse Community Workforce



- Allocated **economic development incentive funding** to attract new and expanding businesses and jobs, in partnership with the Economic Development Coalition (EDC)
- Implemented **updated economic development policy**, which prioritizes incentives based on average wages, workforce diversity, sustainable business practices, and child care
- Provided capital funding support for A-B Technical **Community College job training/education, certificates and degrees**
- Partnered with the **Mountain Area Workforce Development Board** to provide policy, planning, oversight and funding for local workforce development programs and address workforce issues.
- Engaged with community partners on the next steps to respond to gaps identified in the **Asheville Economic Leakage Study**

Innovative Workforce Models



- Administered **Skills Training and Employment Program (STEP)** to increase opportunities for recipients of public benefits, serving 73 students with vocational training with 35 people gaining employment at an average pay of \$11.49 per hour, in partnership with A-B Technical Community College
- Participated in **Economic Inclusion in Southern Cities** consortium to gain knowledge of strategies and models for equity, in partnership with City of Asheville and Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Provided funding to support **living wage employer certification program**, in partnership with Just Economics
- Received a grant from **Upskill WNC** to embed workforce supports in the **Justice Resource Center**, in partnership with the Workforce Development Board and A-B Technical Community College
- Partnered in **efforts to increase employment in living wage jobs for residents in public housing** neighborhoods such as Hillcrest and Deaverview, in partnership with Housing Authority of the City of Asheville, A-B Technical Community College, Pisgah Legal Services, Workforce Development Board & area employers

Small Business Development



- Created the **Diversity Supplier Network** consortium working to make minority contractors aware of, and bid on, county and other available contracts, in partnership with City of Asheville,
- Provided funding for **Western Women's Business Center** providing small business development, technical assistance and access to capital
- Allocated funding to support the **Community Capital Revolving Loan Program** to assist historically disadvantaged businesses with gaining access to capital and business support, in



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partnership with Mountain Community Capital Fund, Carolina Small Business Development Fund, City of Asheville, Mountain Biz Works, and Self Help Credit Union

County Workforce



- Continued membership in the **WNC Diversity Engagement Coalition** to create attract, retain, and build connections and capacity supporting the development and promotion of diverse professionals
- Created an **employee resource group for professionals of color** who work in public service
- Continued practice of “**ban the box**” as an inclusive hiring strategy to prioritize a job candidate's qualifications and minimize the stigma of a conviction or arrest record
- Increased wages for lowest paid employees to a **living wage**
- Provided a 1.5% **salary increase to employees making \$45,000 or less**, achieved with no new funds by reducing salaries/positions at the highest level of management
- Engaged in a **salary study** to assess pay and classification for County positions.

Neighborhood Based Pipelines to Job Skills and Work



- Provided funding and support for Isaac **Coleman Economic Community Investment Grants** support seven community groups engaging neighborhoods to increase pipelines to jobs, self-sustaining businesses and education - Program includes a component of leadership development and capacity building around skills such as book keeping and facilitation
 - **ABIPA Cares Cooperative** is developing a community owned business cooperative offering entry level job in home aides and home healthcare.
 - **Deaverview, Residents, Schools and Community in Partnership** is working to increase volunteerism in schools, decrease school discipline provide adult training and employment, and increase capacity of community leaders.
 - **Emma Community Ownership Project** is a community-based coop supporting a coordinated approach to address community needs such as increased economic sustainability and improved educational outcomes.
 - **My Community Matters, Word on the Street and Youth Empowerment** are community groups aligning efforts to support a continuum of support for services including summer programs, paid stipends e.g., as writers, and college readiness programs.
 - **Shiloh Community Association** is partnering with **Burton Street** and **East End** communities in the **Pearson Plan**: neighborhood-based economic development including a focus on small business, affordable housing, green spaces and culture.
 - **United Community Development** is creating a community training center with a focus on weatherization of homes as one of the job builders.



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- **YTL Youth Training Program GRACE for Teens** is strengthening the relationship between parents, children and the schools through resiliency skills such as mindfulness and internal resourcing.

Support For Local Community Efforts



- Funded **Tipping Point Grants** to help amplify community efforts aimed at creating greater resiliency and build out a resource grid – these actions create a tipping point by stacking positive factors such as stronger connection, communication, and development of our community leaders, while offloading negative factors like isolation, hopelessness, and violence
 - **Altitude Print and Design** - Mentoring and skill building project to accelerate the professional development of minority males
 - **Beloved Asheville** - Leadership and cooperative development project to support people who are homeless or formerly homeless in being leaders and creating economic opportunities
 - **Black Community Healing and Restorative Justice Circle** - Black autonomous space supported by various types of Black healers, utilizing a circle process as a tool to address larger scale sexual violence
 - **Community-Casting Curriculum and Program Pilot** - Development of a curriculum for podcasting and digital media storytelling, providing inclusion of diverse and marginalized voices and teaching communication and technological skills
 - **Father to Father Empowerment Project** - Project to strengthen families by involving low-income fathers in their children's lives and increase their capacity to contribute to the well-being of those children
 - **G.R.A.C.E** - Teen afterschool program designed to expose participants to empowerment, cultural connection and learning opportunities
 - **JMPROTV** - Community channel project including production of live programs, reports, cultural notes and interviews that are shared through social networks with emphasis on the Hispanic community
 - **My Sistah Taught Me That** - Program for girls and young women ages 11-19 focused on development, encouragement, inspiration, skills and education
 - **Project CLIMB** - After school program for students in grades 6-8 focusing on academic enhancement and positive intervention/prevention activities to address individual, family and community issues
 - **Radio Emma** - Multilingual community internet radio broadcast and multimedia audiovisual space designed to share important information, broadcast dialogues, interviews and music, and create a shared community voice
 - **RAICES** - Afterschool cultural and community organizing program that involves parents and children, focusing on developing resilience and a strong sense of Latino cultural identity
 - **SistasCaring4Sistas** - Doula program to serve as a bridge between community and medical professionals, as well as capacity building for employment opportunities



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- **Southside Community Garden** - Volunteer run garden, dedicated to growing food for the community kitchen, food preservation, and community involvement
- **WNC Sanctuary Movement** - Interconnected group of leaders, faith community representatives, people who are Latinx, and over 500 allied community members that have come together to build networks of safety and support
- Provided funding for **Community Connectors** to collaborate with **County Community Engagement Team** working throughout county districts to link neighborhood projects to resources and increase collaboration
- Provided funding for **job skills training program** serving people that face barriers to employment, in partnership with Green Opportunities
- Established **Library Board of Trustees** to increase community input and participation in leadership of County library system
- Provided funding for renovation and building of new **East Asheville Library**

Justice Resource Support



- Pledged commitment to the National Association of Counties (NACo) **Stepping Up Initiative** to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jail
- Formed the **Justice Resource Advisory Council** to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the local criminal justice system by serving as a priority-setting and advisory body to the policy makers, judiciary and partner groups, modeled after national best practice for Criminal Justice Advisory Councils
- Established the **Justice Resource Center** in the Buncombe County Courthouse, a one-stop resource center for people involved in the justice system to access employment and other services, serving more than 500 people since opening in October 2017, in partnership with A-B Tech, Pisgah Legal Services, RHA Health Services, and Sunrise Community for Recovery and Wellness
- Established a **Justice Resource Coordinator** staff position to provide support for the advisory council, resource center and stakeholders in establishing, implementing and reporting on criminal justice improvement plan
- Continued operation of **Pretrial Services** program to allow pretrial defendants to safely and accountably await trial in the community, providing supervision to 2,526 defendants annually with 150,450 jail days saved
- Provided funding to double the capacity for **electronic monitoring** in Pretrial Services a tool for the courts to allow more people to await trial in a community setting rather than in the detention facility
- Received MacArthur Foundation **Safety and Justice Challenge Innovation Grant** focusing on protocols for domestic violence defendants in Pretrial Services and joined national network
- Expanded use of **web-based dashboards** for data-informed resource allocation



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- Conducted a System Mapping (sequential intercept mapping) of 55 leaders from criminal justice and mental health systems collaborating to identify resources and gaps and set shared priorities

Law Enforcement



- Provided funding for **Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)** training for law enforcement personnel across jurisdictions to equip for responding to behavioral health crisis, in partnership with RHA Health Services
- Provided funding and building for **Comprehensive Care Center** to provide immediate help for behavioral health needs, including protocols for law enforcement drop-offs
- Provided funding and partnership for **Changing Together** focused deterrence protocols for violent offenders, including domestic violence, in partnership with SPARC Foundation and criminal justice stakeholders

Diversion



- Provided funding for **Juvenile Misdemeanor Diversion Program** to offer youth ages 16-17 facing potential arrest an opportunity to engage in programming rather than enter the criminal justice system, serving 60 youth year to date
- Funded and established an **Adult Misdemeanor Diversion Program** to offer low-level, first time defendants an opportunity for a voluntary dismissal after completion of a program, serving 117 people year to date
- Funded and established a **Felony Drug Diversion Program** to offer people charged with certain felony possession charges and little to no criminal background an opportunity for a voluntary dismissal after completion of a peer-support based program, serving 35 defendants year to date
- Invited to participate in Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA)'s **Best Practices Implementation Institute** focused on national initiatives in reducing the number of people with mental and substance use disorders in the criminal justice system

Re-Entry



- Provided funding for a **Jail-Based Re-Entry program (JUST)** and case managers to assist people impacted by mental illness and substance abuse, with 21 specialized jail discharges year to date
- Provided funding to establish a jail-based **District Attorney Prosecution Unit** to expedite case processing
- Provided funding for 4 treatment courts for specialized responses for populations involved in the criminal justice system: **Adult Drug Treatment Court; Family Drug Treatment Court; Sobriety/DWI Court; and Veterans Court**
- Provided funding to match and administered state grant funding for **Buncombe County Re-Entry Council** and services for individuals returning from the community from incarceration
- Provided funding to create an attorney position to coordinate access to criminal record **expungement**, in partnership with Pisgah Legal Services



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- Connected citizens with needed Economic and/or Public Health Services while at the Justice Resource Center, including 67 Food and Nutrition applications since October 2017, with a 70% approval rate resulting in more than \$20,000 in benefits

Victim Support



- Continued provision of in-kind facility for operation of **Family Justice Center** (FJC) people experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault, serving nearly 700 people since opening in 2016, in partnership with Helpmate, Mission Health, Our VOICE, Pisgah Legal Services, Law Enforcement and Prosecution
- Implemented **specialized approaches for domestic violence incidents** and cases including Lethality Assessment Protocol, used in more than 1,200 calls for safety since established 2016
- Continued funding for FJC-based domestic violence **District Attorney Prosecution Unit**
- Administered federal funding for services in the FJC, such as law enforcement, intake, case management and counseling
- Implemented public campaigns: **eNOugh and Still Standing** to increase community awareness about domestic and sexual violence, including 54 Still Standing silhouettes posted in community locations
- Provided funding for **crisis services for domestic violence victims** including court advocacy, shelter and counseling, serving more than 1,500 unique clients annually
- Developed and funded **jail and community-based program tracks for mothers** and people with mental health illness to ensure a continuum of care

Opioid Awareness & Community Engagement



- Implemented **Closer Than You Think**, a countywide plan to raise public awareness of the dangers of addiction and connect citizens to needed resources, including website, posters, magnets and bookmarks
- Partnered on an **opioid awareness event for faith leaders** to increase knowledge, develop strategies, and create a network - attended by more than 70 faith leaders
- Provided leadership of inter-agency **Painkiller Task Force** to explore and implement community-based strategies on combating the disease of opioid addiction, including tool kits
- Held opioid town hall conversations and community listening sessions in locations across the county, with total attendance exceeding 300 participants
- Establishing a **prescription painkiller speakers bureau** of medical professionals and peer support specialists to share information about addiction and resources, with more than 50 presentations conducted year to date
- Partnered with HOPE Rx in Henderson County to host **Sam Quinones**, author of Dreamland for community conversation about opioid addiction



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Opioid Prevention



- Partnered on training of **safer prescribing practices for medical providers**, with approximately 3,000 safer pain management book marks distributed in area practices
- Working with **Partnership for Substance Free Youth** to develop materials and training for youth in schools and to provide resources to school administrators and parents regarding substance use.
- Offered **education and tools for School Health Nurses**, including a safer pain management flyer distributed to all student athletes at Asheville City Schools
- Supported a youth-led Opioid Summit focused on opioid education and awareness, in partnership with Buncombe County Schools, Asheville City Schools and Partnership for Substance Free Youth

Limit the Supply & Hold the Industry Accountable for Prescription Painkillers



- Became the first County in North Carolina to file a **public nuisance lawsuit** against the drug manufacturers and wholesale drug distributors that made the opioid epidemic possible
- Provided funding for **drug take back events** throughout the community, 10 events annually collecting approximately 850 pounds of medication
- Increased **law enforcement approaches** focusing on holding offenders accountable for contributing to the illegal supply of opioids in the community

Opioid Treatment & Wellness



- Funded and delivered **Public Health Services** for people experiencing opioid use, including Clinical Services, Nurse Family Partnership and School Nursing education, screenings and referrals
- Partnered with Vaya Health to install a **Self Screening Kiosk** at HHS Campus, 40 Coxe Avenue
- Connects citizens with resources based on needs identified during screening process
- Embedded an **opioid diversion peer support model** in the Justice Resource Center
- Embedded a qualified substance abuse professional within Economic Services to assist with referrals and monitor participation in substance use treatment
- Partnered with medical leaders to provide **support to pregnant and new mothers with substance use disorders**, focusing on safety, care and treatment
- Funded and developed use of **parent mentors in the child welfare system** to offer structured peer support to families impacted by addiction
- Provided funding for the creation of a **ABBA's House**, a 14-room transitional housing option for new mothers in recovery who are involved with the child welfare system, to provide peer support and safe housing along with their newborns, in partnership with WNC Rescue Ministries

Strengthening our Community's Overdose Response Network





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- Increased the availability of **Narcan overdose reversal medication** in emergency response settings, including Emergency Management Services, where it was administered approximately 750 times in 2017
- Provided funding for a **community outreach peer support specialist** with Sunrise Community for Recovery and Wellness to provide resources and follow up for individuals who have survived an overdose and their families
- Provided funding for **harm reduction and naloxone distribution services** with the Steady Collective, who distributed 561 overdose reversal kits annually
- Partnered with Community Engagement Team and a **coalition of faith-based community leaders** to create an overdose reversal kit distribution network