

Active Aging Center

*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal
Recovery Funds*

Buncombe County Government

200 College St Suite 300
Asheville, NC 28801

Jen Teague

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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.

Active Aging Center

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$9,537,200.00

Recovery Fund Eligible Category*

Please select one:

County only

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

The application is for capital funding to build an Active Aging Center in Buncombe County. The Active Aging Center is a collaborative, integrated service delivery model with a goal to provide a streamlined approach and “one-stop” shop for older adults, caregivers, and community members to access services and supports to assist all people to “age in community”. The proposed Active Aging Center (AAC) would address

RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery

many of the social determinants of health impacting older adults including food insecurity, transportation issues, social isolation, and access to activities for health and wellness, while also providing intergenerational activities such as adult day care services, childcare services, senior center and congregate nutrition. In addition, there would be clinic space in which older adults would be able to speak with someone regarding their medications, vaccinations needed, and health concerns. The project proposes approximately 67,000 square feet of shared mixed-use physical space.

Project Plan*

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

Since May 2019, a cross section team of aging service professionals have been meeting to discuss the concept, vision and planning for an AAC. Over the last two years the committee has been led by three agencies: Buncombe County Health and Human Services, Council on Aging of Buncombe County and MountainCare. Through funding from the WNC Bridge Foundation, a consultant was hired to research similar projects, facilitate focus groups, interview key stakeholders in the community, gather responses from older adults and develop a business plan. Once the feasibility study was finalized, the steering committee made their recommendation that Buncombe County own and operate the AAC.

The timeline includes a projected opening date of January 1, 2024.

The following will be completed to support the success of the project:

- Determine/obtain specific funding to begin pre-development project process
- Engage additional community partners to further define interest and details
- Develop specific funding sources including capital funding
- Determine/finalize physical site location
- Outline terms for building, land lease, tenants, etc.
- Hire an Active Aging Center Coordinator
- Discuss and prioritize community partnership opportunities
- Refine and finalize AAC programs and services
- Engage architect
- Develop AAC financials, capital costs and proformas
- Develop AAC operations, policies, and procedures
- Open for business!

The concept and operations structure is mirrored off the Family Justice Center model, in which Buncombe County owns the building and provides an Active Aging Center Coordinator. All other service providers utilizing the space will remain independent non-profits who hire, supervise their own staff, and manage their own programming. The Coordinator of the AAC will be responsible for specific tasks to ensure the ongoing success of the Active Aging Center as a whole, not focused on a specific service or agencies.

Services and programs that will be co-located in the space are listed below. The partners on the AAC steering committee will be the service providers offering these services. Through a streamlined approach there will be a decrease in overhead costs.

- Adult Day Care/Day Health
- Aging Service Providers (offering caregiver support, information assistance, and housing services)
- Insurance/Seniors Health Insurance Information Programming
- Clinical Services/Pharmacy and Medication Assistance
- Nutritional support through congregate nutrition, café and food pantry
- Technology and Educational Training space (computer lab, classes)
- Health and Wellness Activities (physical exercise, evidence based health promotion)
- Childcare to provide for intergenerational activities
- Senior Center Activities (painting, weaving, crafts, games, etc)
- Socialization and Volunteer opportunities

Statement of Need*

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

BC's 2025 Strategic Plan identifies four focus areas with one area "Educated and Capable Community" having a goal of protecting "older residents' ability to age in place". Protecting one's ability to "age in place" is broad and includes ensuring services and supports are easily and efficiently accessible for older adults and their caregivers. The AAC's goal is to ensure that residents have the ability to age in place which ensures easy access to services and supports. The 2019 NC Aging Profile states that 27% (71,578) of Buncombe County's population is currently age 60+ and this number is expected to continue to increase over the coming years. NC ranks as the 9th oldest state by population age in the nation and WNC has the fastest growing older adult population in the state.

At the beginning of Covid-19, Buncombe County Government created the Emergency Operations Center and the community workgroups. One of the workgroups was an aging services group. This group was led by BC HHS and facilitated discussions about ensuring services and supports were available for older adults. The group developed pharmacy delivery lists, grocery delivery lists, organized homebound food deliveries, partnered with agencies to offer support through virtual connection to homebound individuals and shared resources for personal protective equipment, hand sanitizer, and education. This collaboration served as a safety net for many in the community. The unified focused effort across many aging service providers demonstrated the difference a collective impact can make. It helped reduce duplication, generated new ideas, allowed for shared resources and delegation of tasks. The AAC would serve in this collaborative role ensuring that the safety net continues, the collective impact momentum grows and that resources continue to be shared to meet the challenge of the growing senior population.

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 National Institute of Health (NIH) states "older adults have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, with higher susceptibility to severe illness, hospitalization, and death. In the US, those who are age 65+ comprised about 80% of all COVID-19 deaths as of late 2020; worldwide, estimates suggest that 95% of pandemic related deaths have been among those age 60 and older. Based on these statistics it is clear to see that Covid-19 had the greatest health risk to those in the age bracket that the AAC would serve. Due to Covid-19, many older adults were fearful to leave their homes and were being told to have their groceries delivered, to isolate and socially distance from all individuals and if they must go out, to go at times when businesses were less busy. Senior Centers, congregate meal sites, and Adult Day sites had to close, yet the services had to continue because these important programs are the safety net for those most vulnerable in our community. The aging services providers rose to the occasion with increased home meal deliveries, new home delivery services, and drive through congregate nutrition sites. It was a tremendous effort that could have been more efficient if it had been orchestrated from one location with a centralized ability to respond. While the pandemic brought the effect of social isolation to the forefront for many, the impact of social isolation is something that aging services providers have long understood. NIH reports that there is a growing body of literature that confirms "social isolation has a significant negative influence on the mental and physical health outcomes, with social isolation and loneliness associated with higher risk of depression, dementia, stroke, and mortality." Experts state that "being socially connected is critical to health and survival" yet recent research notes the severe impacts of Covid-19 on the "connectedness among seniors" and reports "the pandemic has worsened social isolation among older adults."

Population Served*

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

According to the State Aging Report of the 71,578 individuals aged 60+ in Buncombe County, over 28% (14,000+) live alone and over 31% (15,000+) were living with one or more disabilities. The objective of the center is serve the current older adult population while also planning to expand services as the older population and their needs grow. While the AAC's primary focus will be on providing services to individuals 60+, caregivers and community members, there will be many services for individuals between ages 18-59. Adult Day Care/Day Health is offered to any individual age 18+. Insurance, Medicare, and economic services assistance/education will be offered onsite and would be available to individuals who are eligible regardless of age. Caregivers of all ages will be offered support, education, and respite services. In addition, the food pantry will be available to anyone in the community and will remain open during normal business hours which is unlike many if/not all food pantries currently in the County. The demographic make-up of the participants would mirror the demographic make-up of those 60+ in the County including serving Veterans, LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex), BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), socio-economic status and zip codes. The space would be able to accommodate approximately 400 people a day. Buncombe County Parks and Rec (BCPR) reports their most frequent request from older adults is for a pickleball court and this is listed in the 5-year strategic plan. The AAC could be the physical location of the new pickleball court. The AAC could serve as a new location for BCPR indoor programming for seniors. With the creation of the AAC future public health services targeted at older adults can be offered through this one location including vaccinations for flu, Covid, pneumonia and other yearly shots as well as regular blood pressure check clinics, fall prevention efforts and blood sugar checks.

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 AAC will provide individuals with a centralized location for accessing aging services. This concept and center will allow for reduced transportation trips as an individual will be able to arrive at the AAC and participate in physical activity programs, access congregate nutrition, food boxes, medical care and socialization. In addition, caregivers would be able to utilize the adult day care program while meeting their own needs and support. The goal of the AAC is to provide assistance and support to meet all of an individual's social determinants of health needs.

Many of the programs offered in the AAC will be provided through the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) funding (federal, state and local dollars) that support aging services such as congregate nutrition, senior center activities, adult day care and transportation. The services and programs are currently measured and will continue to be measured using a results-based accountability (RBA) framework (how much did we do, how well did we do it, is anyone better off). Specific performance measures would include number and impact for each of the following:

- # of aging services offered on site
- # of clients participating in each service, comparison to previous data prior to the AAC opening
- # of trips provided by the HCCBG transportation provider (currently Mountain Mobility) and Asheville Regional Transportation (ART)
 - Cost savings from providers that are co-located in the space (reduced overhead/administrative costs such as copier leases, telephone systems, wifi systems, etc)
 - # of clinical services offered on site
 - # of calls to the center requesting information and assistance

Evaluation*

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

As mentioned above all services will be measured and monitored using an RBA framework. Data collection will include:

- Participant surveys
- Focus groups
- Advisory committee for participants of services to help develop future programming
- Review ARMS (Aging Resource Management System) data (or equivalent system if new system is purchased by the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services for use by providers): ARMS is the system used by aging service providers to track services delivered per client
 - Database tracking for all calls to the center requesting information and assistance

One of the frequent concerns heard by community members regarding aging services is they don't know where to call. Do they call Health and Human Services, Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging, Council on Aging, 2-1-1, or other aging services providers, etc.? While none of these are necessarily wrong, each of these service providers offer a small piece of the whole system. By developing the AAC and co-locating services under one roof, an individual would only need to call the AAC to get connected to services. This would decrease the current burden on older adults and their caregivers regarding accessing services. We would compare the current number of calls to each of the agencies listed above over the next 3 years and compare those to the numbers of call received to the AAC once open. We believe this will help to streamline services for older adults and also decrease demand on other agencies.

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?

Older adults have been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. Funding received from the American Rescue Plan should be allocated to support a long-term vision of meeting the needs of older adults.

In helping to create the vision and mission of the AAC, individuals from across Buncombe County have been surveyed, interviewed, and provided platforms to have their voices heard. It is important to the vision leaders of the AAC, that BIPOC have a say in the development of this project. The AAC's mission is to serve all individuals who seek to "age in place". As we continue to finalize the programming and services offered in the space, we have reached out to the BC Community Engagement Department to assist with continued surveys and focus groups. AAC leadership will survey individuals that come to the community markets and work with associations that are in historically African American communities to ensure that we are not assuming what types of services, classes, and supports should be offered without hearing the voices of our older BIPOC community members. In addition, we have met with individuals from Generation Plus, a program for members of the LGBTQI+ that are fifty years old and older to hear their thoughts and ideas on programming and services. The goal of the center would be to create a level playing field for all older adults. Many if not all of the exercise programs, classes, and technology supports would be offered at no cost. We know that older adults are the most heterogeneous group of people in society. With this diverse population comes unique opportunities for adults to share their skills, to bridge generations, and to bring together those with different backgrounds, beliefs, and lifestyles in a welcoming, knowledgeable and equitable capacity. The agencies involved know that this growing population requires diverse solutions and partnerships.

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.

The AAC would not have any sub-contractors. Instead, this would be a collaborative center in which the County provides the space and hires the AAC coordinator to ensure that the building is open, lights are on, building is maintained, and activities are scheduled in certain spaces. Each entity within the center would operate independently and would determine their own programming and policies that fall within the scope and mission of the AAC. Each agency operating in the space would provide a critical and essential piece of the programming and services offered.

List of the key partners:

- o Council on Aging of Buncombe County: Medicare counseling and education, congregate nutrition, information and assistance counseling, housing resources and home repair services, caregiver support, elder justice navigation, transportation, etc.
- o MountainCare: adult day care, adult day health, caregiver support, grief support programming, and wheelchair seating clinic.
 - Steering Committee
- o Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging: flex space in which staff from different programs could be onsite during the month to provide services
- o University of North Carolina Asheville: potential for partnership on their millennial campus and partnership with OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute)
- o City of Asheville: discussions about offering senior center activities through Parks and Recreation
- o MAHEC: opportunities to provide clinical services on-site
- o YMCA: food and nutrition support and services
- o Buncombe County Library Services: technology classes, lending library and device check outs (laptops, wifi hotspots, etc), meeting rooms and quiet space
 - Additional conversations and partners that are not on the committee:
 - o Mountain Mobility to ensure transportation access
 - o Meals on Wheels to ensure partnership and no duplication
 - o Buncombe County Parks and Recreation for experiential activities, pickleball
 - o MANNA food bank for food pantry
 - Provider still to identify
 - o Childcare provider

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.

Buncombe County Health and Human Services (HHS) is the applicant for this project. Buncombe County HHS led by Director Stoney Blevins has the capacity and experience to bring this project to fruition. HHS has decades of experience working in the aging services arena. In FY 21, HHS became the “lead agency” for HCCBG funding (\$1.5 million in federal and state funds). These funds will be used to support many of the services provided within the AAC.

Jen Teague, Program Manager for Aging and Adult Services is one of the members of the leadership team for the AAC. She currently manages and administers over \$4 million in contract funding through Buncombe County. She has experience administering federal funding and has worked as a coordinator for a similar AAC project in another county. Most recently, she was the original grant writer for the funding received from the WNC Bridge Foundation to hire the contractor and complete the business plan.

BCHHS will work with aging service providers who bring a depth of experience and knowledge to the field of the aging services and who have the capacity and commitment to deliver this project. Buncombe County Government along with HHS has strong staff in finance that are able to manage and serve as the fiscal agent for the project.

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-template.xlsx

Special Considerations*

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

Letter of Support BC Active Aging Center 7.13.21.pdf

In addition to the direct link of this project to Covid-19, there is a strong connection to the Buncombe County Strategic Plan 2020-2025. As noted above, the AAC aligns with the foundational focus area of Educated and Capable Community. While the AAC does have a primary goal of providing supports to ensure older adults have the ability to age in place, it does have a secondary goal of ensuring that older adults are safe, healthy, and engaged in their community and aligns specifically with another one of Buncombe County's foundational priorities of Resident Well-Being.

The AAC would provide recreational spaces for older adults to remain active and socially engaged. Through a physical fitness center, walking track, and pickleball court individuals would be able to continue to engage in physical activities while also being able to be mentally stimulated through arts, crafts, educational sessions, and technology offerings.

In 2017, Buncombe County joined the World Health Organization and AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Since that time, Buncombe County has contracted with an Aging Plan Coordinator that oversees, manages, and facilitates the work of the Age-Friendly Action Plan (AFAP). The AFAP's primary focus is to ensure that older adults are safe, well, and engaged and the plan is aligned with the priorities and strategies of the Buncombe County Strategic Plan.

The members of the AAC Steering Committee understand the importance of aligning the values of the AAC with the values of Buncombe County. Equity and collaboration are at the heart of the AAC as is shown in the diversity of the providers on the Steering Committee. This project will continue to build on community partnerships and will leverage those relationships to build an equitable, accessible, and inclusive center for all older adults in Buncombe County.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Recovery-Funds-budget-template.xlsx
- Letter of Support BC Active Aging Center 7.13.21.pdf

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

Organization Name:	Buncombe County Health and Human Services
Project Name:	Active Aging Center
Amount Requested:	\$9,537,200

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 9,537,200.00	Pending	
NC State Funding	\$ 3,000,000.00	Pending	submitted overview on 6/23/21
Dogwood Health Trust	\$ 3,000,000.00	Pending	formal application not yet complete
Foundation Support	\$ 2,000,000.00	Pending	formal application not yet complete
Private Funding	\$ 2,000,000.00	Pending	Capital Campaign Planned
List other sources here			
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List other sources here			
Total	\$ 19,537,200.00		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Construction	\$ 6,537,200.00		\$ 6,537,200.00	capital	building construction and general contractor fees
Permit and Fees	\$ 3,000,000.00		\$ 3,000,000.00	capital	design, engineer, permit, and legal
Construction		\$ 9,252,800.00	\$ 9,252,800.00	capital	building construction and general contractor fees
Contingencies		\$ 497,200.00	\$ 497,200.00	capital	2.60%
FFE		\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	capital	furniture, fixtures, and equipment
List expenses here			\$ -		
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Total			\$ 19,537,200.00		

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June 13, 2021

Jennifer Teague, M.A.
Buncombe County Health and Human Services
Aging and Adult Services Program Manager
40 Coxe Avenue
Asheville, NC 28801

Dear Ms. Teague:

Land of Sky Regional Council is writing this letter of support for Buncombe County to consider utilizing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support the initiative for an Active Aging Center (AAC). Recognizing that traditional federal and state aging funding sources do not allow for the purchase or construction of such a center, we are hopeful that funds available through ARPA would support this project.

The Active Aging Center will take a collaborative and cohesive approach to wrap around services for older adults and caregivers. Each of the services "under one roof" will address some aspect of the social determinants of health, whether that be a nutritional need, a physical/social wellness need, a medical need, a housing/home repair need, etc. The concept of the "one-stop shop" means that individuals will not need to travel to multiple locations for services.

As a member of the Steering Committee, we recently voted to move forward with the Buncombe County owner and operations model where the county would maintain the facility, hire an AAC Coordinator, and would work in collaboration with non-profit partners to arrange for programming. Land of Sky is in support of this recommendation and believes this is an exciting step in this process. This type of center is much needed as the older adult population in Buncombe County continues to grow.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nathan Ramsey".

Nathan Ramsey
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "LeeAnne Tucker".

LeeAnne Tucker
Area Agency on Aging Director