

Community Safety and Violence Prevention

*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.

Community Safety and Violence Prevention

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$499,944.00

Recovery Fund Eligible Category*

Please select one:

Services for disproportionately impacted communities

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Due to the rise in gun violence, especially during the period of COVID-19, this project will work towards advancing Community Safety and Violence Prevention through:

1) Sustaining community-led violence prevention work: Continuing community-based violence prevention work launched in 2021 with the Buncombe County Safety + Justice Challenge (SJC)). A multi-

disciplinary team is deployed in communities on a daily basis, including a trauma-informed specialist from Umoja; a Community Health Worker from SPARC; and a youth mentor from My Daddy Taught Me That. This team is working in collaboration with community members to put strategies into place to decrease violence and increase community healing.

2) Developing a trauma-informed violence deterrence program in the Courts: Hiring a Program Coordinator within the Justice Services Department to provide coordinated support for a new trauma-informed violence deterrence program.

Project Plan*

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

Community-led violence prevention work: In January, 2021, the Buncombe County SJC awarded a contract for launching the new Community Safety Initiative violence prevention work to The SPARC Foundation in coordination with Umoja, MDTMT, and the RJC. This funding would provide seed money to establish this work as the team builds their program model. The team is building up relationships in neighborhoods with higher rates of violence to identify where expand the work, with the goal of sustaining progress in current neighborhoods, and adding at least one additional neighborhood each year. The current model was developed through canvassing neighborhoods across Asheville experiencing the high rates of gun violence and the two neighborhoods which were identified are Hillcrest and Klondyke. These are the first two communities where comprehensive services are being provided. The multi-disciplinary team is deployed to those communities on a daily basis, including a trauma-informed specialist from Umoja; a Community Health Worker from SPARC; and a youth mentor from MDTMT. This team is providing support, practical resources, and developing goals in collaboration with community members, and working to put strategies in place to decrease violence and increase community healing. SPARC is also contracting with the RJC to conduct further research and gather community input to develop a program in Asheville to provide targeted outreach and mentoring to young adults most at risk of engaging in violence.

Developing a trauma-informed violence deterrence program in the Courts: The Justice Services Department is partnering with courts including the DA's office to develop a new trauma-informed violence deterrence program. Proposed funds will be leveraged to hire a staff person within Justice Services to provide coordinated support for trauma-informed violence deterrence for individuals charged with lower-level violent offenses; potentially including low-level/misdemeanor gun charges. This program will be modeled after the current Adult Misdemeanor Diversion Program, and will provide trauma-responsive opportunities for participants. Many individuals with justice involvement are also impacted by trauma, and many who cause violent harm have been victims of violence themselves. This program will include an emphasis on responding to underlying trauma and providing appropriate services and seamless linkages to community resources. Successful completion of program conditions within the required time will result in voluntary dismissal of criminal charges and avoidance of collateral consequences. Involvement in the criminal justice system can carry lifelong impacts on the health, safety and well-being of individuals, families, and neighborhoods. Diversionary programs aim to minimize consequences of current system involvement and deter individuals from future justice involvement by engaging them in evidence-based models to motivate change and modify risky behaviors.

Statement of Need*

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

Both violence and the justice system have disparate impacts on Black people living in Buncombe County. For example, in the first seven months of 2020, there were nine homicides, seven of the victims were Black men. In 2019, Black people represented 6.3 percent of Buncombe County's population, yet comprised 25

percent of the jail population and 69 percent of gun violence victims. On June 28, 2018, The Citizen Times reported a 55% increase in gun violence over a three-year period.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, partners across the justice system worked diligently and quickly reduce the local jail population out of concern for health and safety. That effort succeeded in dramatically reducing the average daily population by nearly 40%, or 158 people. However, while both Black and White people have been released during the pandemic, the rate of inequity within the jail population increased, resulting in Blacks representing 33% of the average daily population in July. One driver in this increased inequity was because individuals charged with high level and violent felonies were not released from custody.

Community members voiced a strong desire for investment in community-led approaches to support safety in their communities, and there is strong interest from various SJC partners – including leadership from Asheville Police Department, Asheville Housing Authority, and the County’s Child Fatality Review Team – to address community safety and violence prevention.

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 COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the stressors that drive violence, locally and across the Country. Root causes that fuel the cycle of violence, including intersecting trauma and stress, have been intensified during the pandemic. As of July 14, there have been 7 homicides in Asheville in 2021 ; in 2020 there were 10 , and 6 in 2019 . In 2020, the APD reported 45 people were shot:

- Of offenders :
 - o 14 were Black; 3 were white.
 - o 15 were male, 2 female.
 - o Most were between 20-25 years old — 4 were under 20; 6 were 20-25; 4 were 26-30; 1 was 41-50; and 2 were over 50.
- Of victims:
 - o 37 were Black, 7 were white.
 - o 6 were female, 38 male.
 - o Most were between 19-25 years old — 3 were under 19; 17 were 19-25; 8 were 26-30; 7 were 31-40; 5 were 41-50; and 4 were over 50.

The Biden Administration is encouraging communities to leverage ARP funds to support this work: “With the secondary consequences of the pandemic ... we have seen increased violence. Homicides rose 30%, and gun assaults rose 8% in large cities in 2020. The number of homicides in the first quarter of 2021 was 24% higher than the number of homicides in the first quarter of 2020, and 49% higher than in the first quarter of 2019. Black and brown Americans are disproportionately harmed by the direct and indirect consequences of gun violence... We are experiencing an epidemic of gun violence in this country. This violence robs us of loved ones and causes life-altering physical injuries. It causes lasting trauma, with cascading consequences for children, families, and communities. It steals our freedom, our sense of belonging and security, and has ripple effects for our economy.”

Population Served*

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

According to the State of Black Asheville, of the ten public housing communities with 3,100 residents; 71.8% of these residents are Black. The Street Team initially canvassed multiple low income/high crime

neighborhoods with the purpose to meet with community members, discuss intentions of the team, determine engagement and support for the project. Members of the team canvassed many public housing communities in Asheville, including Klondyke, Erskine, Walton, Livingston, Hillcrest, Deaverview, Bingham Heights. Upon completion of canvassing, the team determined to focus on Hillcrest and Klondyke where the team felt momentum was strong for partnership and engagement.

The street team is building up relationships in Pisgah View Apartments, and other neighborhoods with higher rates of violence around Buncombe County. They will continue these outreach efforts as they work to identify future neighborhoods to expand the work. The Asheville Police Department recently launched a dashboard that maps gun-violence ([linked here](#)), and Buncombe County and City of Asheville partners are working on mapping broader community violence incidences. These data sources, combined with community outreach will continue to inform the expansion to future neighborhoods.

The trauma-informed violence deterrence program will serve develop criteria for participation in partnership with the DA's Office the Courts. It will serve all eligible individuals who are interested in participating in the program. As the program is developed, intentional focus will be given to best practices develop eligibility criteria with equity in mind, and to mitigate consequences of the structural racism when possible by using the Racial Equity Tool that SJC partners have adapted from the Government Alliance for Racial Equity to guide program, policy, and practice decisions.

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.

Goal: To decrease violence and increase community healing.

Performance measures will include (but are not limited to) the following measures, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender whenever possible:

- a. Number of people connected to employment and resources
- b. Number of people receiving trauma and resilience training.
- c. Number of youth engaged with a youth mentor: Number and percentage of youth participating in events such as conflict resolution activities and positive recreational activities offering young residents alternatives to violence.
- d. Quantitative and qualitative reports of participants in initiative programming impacted by violence. Though we expect impact of these investments to take time that will likely extend beyond the life of this funding, we will also be tracking community-level indicators including:
 - o Rates of community violence in Buncombe County. As available, this data will be disaggregated by neighborhoods served; while recognizing that the impacts of violent incidences expand beyond the location of the event through the impacts on families and friends of those involved.
 - o Rates of racial inequities in our jail population related to people charged with violent offenses

Evaluation*

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

Partners are currently developing systems to collect data and track outcomes across partners and systems, and reporting on a quarterly basis, with results disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender whenever possible:

- SPARC and the Buncombe County Court Diversion programs both capture data on the people they serve utilizing the web-based system, Apricot, including the number of people connected to employment and other resources. Consistent follow up and contact with participants to determine sustainability of employment and/or other resources will allow the programs to understand its impact on this outcome.

- Umoja will track the number of people receiving Trauma and resilience training, and the effectiveness of trainings and the increased resilience of residents will provide qualitative outcomes. Surveys will be the main mode of gathering this information.

- MDTMT is tracking the number of youth engaged with a youth mentor. Events such as conflict resolution activities and positive recreational activities offer young residents alternatives to violence. Surveys will be conducted with these participants.

Partners are currently exploring how to capture data on the informal relationship building that is imperative in this work as well; acknowledging that much of the community work occurs through the development of informal relationship building that is more expansive than the interactions that occur in formal training or case management sessions.

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?

COVID-19 has exacerbated longstanding structural inequities rooted in racism that have led to increased poverty, disrupted family systems due to justice system involvement, and exposure to trauma within Black communities. These stressors are drivers of violence, and violent felonies are a significant driver of inequities in our jail system. Addressing violence, and the disparate effects that violence has on Black communities (detailed above) is critical to also addressing inequities in incarceration.

There is often an overlap between those who are survivors of violence and those who commit violence, and that the risk of violent victimization and offending is highly concentrated during the transition to adulthood that spans from roughly 16 – 25 . This population of “emerging adults” also experiences some of the worst racial inequities in the justice system. According to the Emerging Adult Justice Project: “In 2019, Black and Latinx 18- and 19-year-old males were 12.4 times and 3.2 times more likely to be imprisoned than their white peers respectively.”

The Governor’s task force on Racial Equity in the Criminal Justice System released their recommendations in December, including supporting violence prevention programs. On July 15th, 2021, the TREC hosted a training session on leveraging American Rescue Plan funding to support Violence Prevention Programs. The proposed initiatives are aiming to address the need to build and grow local violence prevention and community safety work, ideally using an approach that centers community leadership (rather than law-enforcement) using a public health, trauma responsive, and economic development approach.

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.

- 1) Subcontractors:
 - o SPARC
 - o Umoja
 - o My Daddy Taught Me That
 - o Racial Justice Coalition
- 2) Key Partners include (but are not limited to):
 - o Buncombe County District Attorney’s Office
 - o Public Defenders Office

- o North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts in Buncombe County
- o Justice Resource Advisory Council
- o Safety + Justice Challenge Working Groups
- o City of Asheville, Asheville Police Department
- o Asheville Housing Authority

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.

There is funding allocated within the SJC to maintain staffing levels in 2022, so this proposed funding will support staffing at the current level in 2023 and 2024. Additional funding will be sought to grow the work. This investment in the initial years of this work will provide a foundation to see what is working, what needs to be adapted to improve outcomes and to develop collaborative plans with community and system partners on how to integrate this work into the future of a Comprehensive Community Safety and Violence Prevention plan for Buncombe County (this plan is being developed in 2021 – 2022 with support from SJC funds).

The Buncombe County Justice Services Department already manages multiple funding streams, including federal funds, \$1.75 million in SJC grant funding from the MacArthur Foundation between 2018 – 2022, and another \$1.75 SJC renewal grant that runs between 2021 – 2023. The department has successfully partnered with justice and community organizations to implement systemic reforms, fund staff positions within the County and through contracts with partners, and to invest in innovative community led-solutions like the launch of the Community Safety Initiative this past year.

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 - Community Safety and Violence Prevention.xlsx

Special Considerations*

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

Many municipalities across the country are leveraging ARP funding to invest in violence prevention efforts that are rooted in community-led solutions from a public health and trauma responsive lens (e.g. Knoxville, Atlanta, Multnomah County/Portland; Philadelphia; Oakland; New Orleans and Baton Rouge to name a few). Durham has recently invested \$935,000 in growing their violence intervention program, Bull City United, and Charlotte is currently launching a violence intervention program using the Cure Violence model.

This proposal includes a small portion of the funding that it will take to truly grow and sustain this work, particularly in the aftermath of the stressors and impacts of the dual pandemics of COVID and systemic racism (both of which are ongoing). However, this money can be used to seed these programs so that efficacy and impact can be used to identify additional funding streams to sustain this work in the future. The Justice Services and community-based partners will continue to seek additional funding opportunities to support

expanding the Violence Interrupter model based on best practices across the county and local input on what will work best for building on locally specific strengths and needs.

During 2021, the RJC is conducting research and gathering community input to develop a program in Asheville to provide outreach and mentoring to young adults most at risk of engaging in violence. Additionally, the SJC partners are in the early stages of bringing together community partners and system stakeholders to develop a collaborative and coordinated plan to prevent and respond to gun-violence. The goal is to develop this plan over the coming 6-months, at which point there will be a more comprehensive picture of the funding needed to support implementation of additional recommendations.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Recovery-Funds-budget-template - Community Safety and Violence Prevention.xlsx

