

Equitable voting for elderly residents of Buncombe

RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Buncombe County Government

200 College St Suite 300
Asheville, NC 28801

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Board of Elections

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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.

Equitable voting for elderly residents of Buncombe

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$7,039.00

Recovery Fund Eligible Category*

Please select one:

Prevent and mitigate COVID-19

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Buncombe County Election Services is asking for funds to purchase iPad tablets for our Multi-Partisan Assistant Teams (MATs) to use at nursing homes. These voting assistants serve a population which cannot otherwise access the voting location during an outbreak. NC Election law prevents residents from receiving assistance from employees at the facility, meaning MATs may be the only option for these residents to access

voting. This need was heightened during COVID-19, as family members were unable to visit and assist. This project will expand equitable access to voting for these populations by ensuring that even during a COVID-19 outbreak, these residents are able to access assistance if desired.

iPads assist with requesting of an absentee ballot via the new online portal, allowing quicker and more accurate service. iPads also allow for our teams to look up voters information, which increases election security and enhances service for residents.

Project Plan*

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

This project has a quick timeframe. The funds would be used to purchase iPads or other comparable tablets. Once the project is approved, the tablets could be ordered within a few days by an Election Services staff member. They would be received within a couple weeks, depending on availability and shipping times.

Statement of Need*

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

This project will address the need that residents in nursing homes should receive equitable access to voting. Residents of nursing and adult care homes who require assistance and do not have visitors utilize our multi-partisan assistance program to vote. Our MAT teams currently complete a paper form at the direction of each of these residents. There are a number of barriers that come along with completion of a paper form instead of the online portal which was implemented in NC Session Law 2020-17.

The online portal allows for faster processing and allows us to correct and catch errors faster. The online portal requires you to enter the voter's name and identification information before you can move forward with the request. This will help reduce errors, especially in patients with memory loss who may have trouble remembering their correct address or identification information. Previously, we would not know of these errors until we brought the form back to the office. With the portal, residents will be made aware and they will have the opportunity to correct the error. Buncombe County had 1,066 invalid absentee requests in 2020. The ability for residents to check their registration information would reduce this number.

Aside from the online portal, there is a major need for our MAT teams to have access to the list of registered voters in NC. Access to the voter list would allow our MAT teams to check the voter's current registration status. This is important as many voters of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to check their registration status and ensure they are still registered, are not inactive or removed, and have all of their information up to date. Residents in nursing homes cannot currently receive this information from our MATs. Voters who are voting in person are able to speak with an election official who has access to this registration information and correct their record with ease. Voters residing in nursing homes should be able to do the same.

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.

During the pandemic nursing homes and assisted living facilities were closed to non-residents. These residents were unable to visit with family members. Due to a NC law preventing employees in nursing homes from assisting voters, these residents often rely on family to assist them in the voting process. Outside visitors increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19, causing nursing homes to shut down to the public. Even as the

vaccination rates increase, some facilities are temporarily restricting visitors during large COVID outbreaks (NCDHHS). It is vital that even during the COVID pandemic, residents of covered facilities are able to exercise their right to vote with ease. MAT members are key to providing voting opportunities to these residents, and it is important that they have the technology needed to provide equitable access.

Source: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/news/press-releases/2021/03/12/cms-relaxes-guidance-visitation-long-term-care-facilities-ncdhhs-rescinds-ltcf-visitation>

Population Served*

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

Multi-partisan assistance teams are permitted to assist residents in facilities licensed to operate per chapters 122C, 131D or 131E of the general statutes of North Carolina (08 NCAC Ch. 16). These facilities include hospitals, clinic, nursing homes, adult care homes, or other facilities that operate residential or in-patient healthcare. There are 19 nursing facilities and 16 adult care homes in Buncombe County, as per the licensed facility lists provided by NC DHHS at <https://info.ncdhhs.gov/dhsr/reports.htm>. These facilities serve a maximum of 2886 residents. We also have hospital locations where individuals could request assistance, as well as other facilities that offer residential healthcare such as mental health facilities or some independent living facilities. This is the population served by our assistance teams and each of these individuals has the opportunity to receive the benefits from this program. We see that our program largely benefits residents of nursing homes and adult care homes. The demographic characteristics would largely be elderly residents of these facilities. Oftentimes, the residents who require assistance have disabilities which would prevent them from completing the form themselves.

Results*

Describe the proposed impact of the project. List at least 3 performance measures that will be tracked and reported. If possible, include baselines and goals for each performance measure.

The impact of the project is increased ease of access to voting information, decreased errors, and greater convenience and confidence for the residents and MAT members.

To measure the impact of the project we can use the following performance measures. One, to determine if the iPads are being used by residents, we will have a team member record whether the request was done via the iPad portal or by paper. We will also ask that the MAT teams record whether they checked the voter's registration first via the online public database. The MAT teams are already required to keep a detailed log of every resident they assist, so this would add these two columns to the log.

The other two performance metrics could be done via surveys. Many residents have had MAT teams assist them in the past. We will utilize one short survey given to the residents to ask if they found the iPad process to be easy and/or useful. We will also survey our MAT members to ask if they found the iPads easy and/or useful.

The goals would be for positive survey responses from both residents and MAT teams. The goal would also be to see that MAT teams utilized the iPad to check the registration for 100% of residents, to ensure that each voter is treated equitably and that the MAT members have the most accurate information.

Evaluation*

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

We will have a team member record whether the request was done via the iPad portal or by paper. We will also have the MAT teams record whether they checked the voter's registration prior to completing the request. The MAT teams are already required to keep a detailed log of every resident they assist, so this would add two columns to the log. These columns can then be used for data analysis. Positive metrics will be that each voter was looked up prior to requesting. This ensures that registration forms are completed for those who need to register and that voters registered in other counties are able to vote where their permanent residence is.

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?

Nursing homes were hit hard during COVID-19 as the population which lives there consists of many high risk individuals living in shared spaces. Our MAT teams provide a service to these residents that allows them to safely exercise the right to vote. For residents whose facilities were under lockdown, our MAT teams were the only opportunity they had to cast their ballot. It is important that our MAT teams are equipped with technology that can efficiently assist these residents.

After the passing of NC Session Law 2020-17, there is now an online portal to complete an absentee ballot request. This portal assists residents of nursing homes in two main ways. First, it is more convenient and allows for faster processing time than completion of a paper form. The data from the portal goes directly into our system for review by a specialist within a matter of hours. A paper form takes 1-2 days to process. The portal also checks the data before it arrives to us. A voter must have the correct name and identification number to use the portal. Many of our errors on absentee request forms from nursing homes stem from these fields, especially with patients suffering from memory loss. When paper forms are completed, our staff are not aware of the issue until the following day. The portal would alert our MAT teams immediately that the voter's information was incorrect and the teams could address the issue immediately.

A number of nursing home residents rely on our certified MAT members to exercise their right to vote. As these residents are higher risk and living within shared residential spaces, they are still facing challenges relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Tablets for our MAT teams would not only allow these residents to have faster and more convenient service when requesting a ballot, it would also prevent errors. At the same time, it will reduce the spread of COVID-19 as residents will not have to travel outside or receive outside visitors in order to vote.

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.

Buncombe County IT would purchase the data contract for the iPads, and then bill elections for the recovery funding, as is consistent with county policy. After two years, Elections would nest the data cost into their yearly budget.

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.

This proposal focuses mostly on enhancing programs already in place to ensure equitable voting access. Our staff has had experience with MAT programs for many years. For a few of those years, our MATs utilized an iPad from the office to service residents. We are prepared to start this program again.

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 MAT Ipads Budget Template.xlsx

Special Considerations*

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

Quote for Ipads.pdf

Information Sources

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/news/press-releases/2021/03/12/cms-relaxes-guidance-visitation-long-term-care-facilities-ncdhhs-rescinds-ltcf-visitation>

<https://info.ncdhhs.gov/dhsr/reports.htm>

Attached is the quote for 5 iPads which is where we determined the cost.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Recovery Funds MAT Ipads Budget Template.xlsx
- Quote for Ipads.pdf

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

Organization Name:	Buncombe County Board of Elections
Project Name:	Equitable voting for elderly residents of Buncombe
Amount Requested:	\$7,039

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 2,479.00	Pending	Purchase of five Ipads
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 4,560.00	Pending	Data for five Ipads for two years
List other sources here			
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Total	\$ 7,039.00		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Five Ipads quoted from CDWG LLC. 10.2 Inch with Wifi and Cellular 32GB 8th gen	\$ 2,479.00		\$ 2,479.00	Capital	
Data for five Ipads for two years	\$ 4,560.00		\$ 4,560.00	Operating Expense	Yearly subscription will be added to county budget after two years
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
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Total			\$ 7,039.00		

QUOTE CONFIRMATION



DEAR NICOLE POLAT,

Thank you for considering CDW•G LLC for your computing needs. The details of your quote are below. [Click here](#) to convert your quote to an order.

QUOTE #	QUOTE DATE	QUOTE REFERENCE	CUSTOMER #	GRAND TOTAL
MFFV950	6/16/2021	IPAD W/CELLULAR	0972545	\$2,478.71

QUOTE DETAILS				
ITEM	QTY	CDW#	UNIT PRICE	EXT. PRICE
Apple 10.2-inch iPad Wi-Fi + Cellular - 8th generation - tablet - 32 GB - 1	5	6248970	\$463.31	\$2,316.55
Mfg. Part#: MYN32LL/A Contract: NC eProcurement System				

PURCHASER BILLING INFO	SUBTOTAL	
Billing Address: COUNTY OF BUNCOMBE FINANCE DEPARTMENT 200 COLLEGE ST STE 400 ASHEVILLE, NC 28801-3040 Phone: (828) 255-5485 Payment Terms: Net 30 Days-Govt State/Local	SHIPPING	\$0.00
	SALES TAX	\$162.16
	GRAND TOTAL	\$2,478.71
	DELIVER TO Shipping Address: COUNTY OF BUNCOMBE FINANCE DEPARTMENT 200 COLLEGE ST STE 400 ASHEVILLE, NC 28801-3040 Phone: (828) 255-5485 Shipping Method: UPS Ground (2- 3 Day)	
Please remit payments to: CDW Government 75 Remittance Drive Suite 1515 Chicago, IL 60675-1515		

Need Assistance? CDW•G LLC SALES CONTACT INFORMATION		
	Emily Tarashi 800.808.4239	emiltar@cdwg.com

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