

Home Repair and Supportive Services for Low-Income Residents

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.

Home Repair and Supportive Services for Low-Income Residents

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$6,000,000.00

Recovery Fund Eligible Category*

Please select one:

County only

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Buncombe County's Planning and Development Department's Community Development Division requests \$6,000,000 for the purposes of supporting of a combined home repair and supportive services program (the project) The COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on low-income households and compromised the ability of many households to maintain stable housing when under the strain of the public

RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery

health and economic crisis. The project, which will involve identifying one or more partners to provide repairs and support services, is anticipated to support an estimated 200 to 1,000 home repairs (dependent upon individual unit repair costs). The project is modeled after the Affordable Housing Services Program (AHSP) emergency home repair program, but expands repair support to \$30,000 per unit (above the existing \$15,000 maximum of the AHSP). The project offers to improve the lives of the County's most vulnerable residents while establishing a model for integrating services to improve health.

Project Plan*

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

The project expands upon existing AHSP home repair work undertaken in Buncombe County. For over a decade, Buncombe County has directly supported emergency home repair work for low-income residents. Despite substantial investments (totaling over \$1,000,000 in local funds over the past two (2) fiscal years), the need for home repair continues to expand. This need is reflected in the substantial wait lists kept by our existing emergency home repair partners and consistent requests from neighborhood and advocacy groups. The project recognizes that ARPA funding is a unique opportunity for the County to not only directly affect residents impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also consider how to make transformative changes in our existing support systems.

As the cost of housing in Buncombe County increases, many of the County's lowest-income households have struggled to maintain a healthy and stable residence. Home repair work for low-income residents has consistently been one of the most cost effective and impactful ways to address affordable housing needs. This project intends to directly respond to citizens' stated highest ARPA funding priority for affordable housing.

Guidance provided by the U.S. Department of the Treasury for ARPA funds, identifies a direct connection between public health and housing. The project seeks to expand Buncombe County's home repair work to task partners with identifying all present issues in homes that affect the health and soundness of residents. Buncombe County's existing emergency home repair program limits investment to \$15,000 per home. This project proposes a \$30,000 repair limit providing for comprehensive repairs beyond immediately emergent repairs.

The project will include a request for project proposals to facilitate the selection of a development partner or partners to deliver the home repairs and supportive services. The project is anticipated, based on existing need and increased capacity afforded by this award, to be completed within a four (4) year period if not sooner.

Statement of Need*

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

The Buncombe County Housing Needs Assessment 2020 ("the Bowen Report") notes that approximately 29% of Buncombe County homeowners are considered low-income. Buncombe County's housing stock is also among the oldest in the state (Source: American Community Survey's Housing Adequacy Survey), including a significant proportion of mobile homes. This data suggest many low-income homeowners are aging, on fixed incomes, in aging homes where home maintenance costs becomes an increasing struggle to afford. A recent survey of AHSP home repair beneficiaries showed that over 75% were seniors, with many bringing in less than \$1,000 in income per month. Further, Buncombe County's traditional AHSP emergency home repair partners have extensive wait lists. As of the submittal of this application, there are 106 households awaiting emergency home repairs from our existing partners. The aging of the housing stock, the percent of low income households, and the combined strain of maintaining older houses on low- and fixed-incomes creates a significant need for a more expansive home repair and support services program.

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.

Guidance provided by the U.S. Department of the Treasury for ARPA funds identified specific populations that experienced disproportionate health and economic effects from the COVID-19 pandemic. Low-income, BIPOC, and homeless individuals were highlighted, and explicit guidance was given to local governments to build stronger communities through investment in housing and neighborhoods. Access to stable housing allowed individuals to stay properly isolated during the most critical periods of the pandemic, and there is a clear directive to communities that increasing the supply of affordable housing will improve resilience in the case of future pandemics.

The ability to sustain housing is expensive in its requirement of regular ongoing maintenance. Because low-income households were also likely to suffer the most economically during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that a number of households (beyond the normal number of households) deferred to make repairs over the last 18 to 24 months in order to preserve resources for more immediate needs. It is anecdotally understood that home conditions will have deteriorated for many, amplifying the need for this program.

Population Served*

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

Guidance provided by the U.S. Department of the Treasury for ARPA funds offered a clear indication that the production of affordable housing was an eligible use of funds when said housing was provided in “a Qualified Census Tract, to families living in a Qualified Census Tract, or (...) to other populations, households, or geographic areas that are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.” The document further clarifies the description of disproportionately impacted populations and households, highlighting “low-income communities, people of color, and Tribal communities.” Staff understand this guidance to indicate that affordable and/or transitional/supportive housing that results from the project should be made available only to individuals and households who meet the Federal definition of low-income (meaning at or below 80% of the Area Median Income).

The project outreach will focus on households using an equity lens, seek to support older adults, and seek to be implemented in threatened neighborhoods while monitoring and employing a geographically equitable allocation.

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.

This program will track and report three performance measures:

- 1) The number of households served with home repair services through the program.
- 2) The number of individuals who engage with supportive service coordinators (understanding that the needs identified and potentially addressed are disparate, and a qualitative review of this element of the program will also necessarily be conducted).
- 3) The equitable impact of both prime elements of the program. Data will be tracked regarding the income levels, race, age, and disability status of program beneficiaries, as well as geographic distribution of the work.

At a minimum, an anticipated 200 households and as many as 1,000 households are expected to receive home repairs and may receive support services.

Evaluation*

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

Buncombe County Planning and Development's Community Development Division has an established method for collecting and analyzing the impact of the existing AHSP emergency home repair work, primarily through the monitoring of construction quality, fiscal soundness, and eligibility of recipients. The project will build on the existing methods for monitoring home repair programs to improve the gauging of impacts by incorporating monitoring of outcomes for program recipients along with the collecting even more detailed recipient data. The project will thus improve the awareness of the impact of the work, the equitable distribution of the work, and a more informed, effective, and comprehensive home repair program in the long-term.

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?

Buncombe County's Racial Equity Action Plan consistently refers to housing access and the preservation of established neighborhoods as tangible goals. These goals are, likewise, reiterated in the U.S. Treasury ARPA guidance. The Racial Equity Plan indicates that access to home repair and sustaining BIPOC homeownership are two (2) of the seven (7) outcomes established for improving quality of life. Outreach and reliance on partners with unique inroads to difficult to engage populations is critical and will be part of the partner selection process. The project offers the opportunity to engage some of Buncombe County's most disproportionately impacted residents, and the intention is to capitalize on that engagement to build in roads to a just, equitable, and sustainable recovery.

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 expectation is that the Buncombe County Planning and Development Department's Community Development Division will operate as the subgrantee for the project, and utilize an RFP to identify qualified contractors or subgrantees to carry out the work. An open call for project proposals, adherent to the project description herein and ARPA guidance, would be held after award date. Organizations capable of carrying out both the home repair and supportive services work will be engaged. .

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 Planning and Development's Community Development Division staff have the experience and capacity to manage the project. Staff currently administer the AHSP emergency home repair funding and will be expanding staff capacity to seek CDBG-NR funding to support additional home repair opportunities beyond this ARPA request. Staff will be able to coordinate the work and manage the program for quality control, fiscal soundness, and program compliance. Since 2010, Buncombe County has funded and

managed the successful repair of 391 home for low-income Buncombe County residents. Emergency home repair work has traditionally relied upon two non-profit partners (Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity and Mountain Housing Opportunities, Inc.), Recently, Colaborativa La Milpa, an organization that has deep ties to Buncombe County's Latinx community (a population traditionally underserved by affordable housing work), has partnered with Buncombe County on emergency home repair. Additional staff will likely be needed at the partner level, which is reflected in the budget and the applicant for additional funding support from Dogwood Health Trust. Although many emergency home repair organizations possess staff experienced in the work, these partners will require funding to be secure before committing to additional staff capacity. Community navigation partners and their requisite staff will require a longer lead period to scale up. The project anticipates that actual repair work can begin immediately after funds are disbursed, with the idea to prioritize the most critical repairs, and retroactively provide services as soon as support staff are fully integrated.

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.

07.15.21_ARPA_Home Repair and Supportive Services for Low-Income Residents_Application_Budget_Submitted.xlsx

Special Considerations*

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

This application will be coupled with a request for funding from Dogwood Health Trust's ARPA Advantage Grant program (due August 2021). The ARPA Advantage fund offers grants that aim to support affordable housing projects funded by ARPA, and mentions the rehabilitation of housing that mitigates displacement or gentrification as a priority. There will be additional emphasis on capacity development that encourages "the collaboration across organization and industry lines". Should the Dogwood Health Trust application prove successful, the funding will first be directed to cover administration and soft costs that directly support the new elements of the project, including, but not limited to, community navigator staff salaries and extraneous health care or legal costs for project recipients. Any remaining funds from the Dogwood Health Grant are proposed to be directed to home repair costs.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- 07.15.21_ARPA_Home Repair and Supportive Services for Low-Income Residents_Application_Budget_Submitted.xlsx

Total	\$ 6,750,000.00		
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