

# Solar-Powered Trash Compactors and Recycling Bins at Buncombe County Sports Park (20), Charles D. Owen Park (14), and Lake Julian Park (6)

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*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

## ***Buncombe County Government***

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200 College St Suite 300  
Asheville, NC 28801

***Chris Bubenik***

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[Chris.Bubenik@buncombecounty.org](mailto:Chris.Bubenik@buncombecounty.org)

# Application Form

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## Question Group

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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.

Solar-Powered Trash Compactors and Recycling Bins at Buncombe County Sports Park (20), Charles D. Owen Park (14), and Lake Julian Park (6)

## Amount of Funds Requested\*

\$280,000.00

## Recovery Fund Eligible Category\*

Please select one:

County only

## Brief Project Description\*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

This initiative involves the replacement of 60 existing trash and recycling receptacles at Buncombe County's largest public parks with solar-powered compactors and matching recycling bins.

## Project Plan\*

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

Once funds have been approved, an RFP will be issued to multiple vendors pursuant to Buncombe County policy. (Estimated cost is based on Waste Management's BigBelly model.) Following vendor selection, units will be installed in both temporary and permanent locations throughout the three parks. Temporary locations will be moved around every three months for the course of a year to ensure most efficient placement. Following that 12-month period, all units will be placed in their permanent locations. The units have a 20-year life-span.

## Statement of Need\*

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

Current receptacles have outlived their lifetime usefulness and are often overflowing, leading to litter finding its way into nearby neighborhoods, trails, waterways, and other outdoor spaces. Solar-powered trash compactors will hold up to five times as much refuse as our typical municipal trash barrels. With greater capacity and technology that alerts when a unit is full, replacing the existing barrels should result in up to an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions associated with collection trips.

Immediate benefits to the community are the elimination of trash strewn by wind, animals, and people. The enclosed design keeps animals out. Long-term benefits include cost savings for taxpayers, environmental enhancement to the community, and more productive allocation of County staff and resources to important tasks such as trail repair and installation of new amenities.

The compactor is completely powered by the sun and runs on less energy per day than is required to toast a slice of bread.

## 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.

As most options for families and community members shut down during COVID-19, public parks saw record-breaking visitation. As restaurants, amusement parks, and other entertainment options have reopened, attendance has not cooled. Our reality is that far more people are visiting public spaces than were originally envisioned – and that number will continue to grow as people retain the sense that outdoor gatherings and activities are safest.

Buncombe County Recreation Services is driven by the primary goal of providing equitable low- and no-cost opportunities for high-quality recreation and active living experiences. There are no exorbitant admission fees or exclusionary policies. Parks build a healthy, active community and aid in the prevention of chronic disease, provide therapeutic recreation services for those who are mentally or physically disabled, counter social isolation by connecting people with nature and each other, and also improve the mental and emotional health of all citizens.

Additionally, these three parks have been identified by Buncombe County emergency operations leaders as locations that can act as emergency shelter and healthcare locations during times of crisis such as the coronavirus pandemic. In fact, Buncombe County Sports Park was the site of a long-running drive thru

vaccination clinic because of the sizable Latinx and Hispanic populations living within a small radius of the park.

The Department of Treasury has also clarified that American Rescue Plan funds can be used to address maintenance and upkeep issues because of the increased use parks saw during the pandemic and to improve spaces that have been disproportionately impacted.

Source: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRPFAQ.pdf>

## Population Served\*

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

These three parks are true regional hubs with visitors consisting of those who live nearby, other Buncombe County community members, others from within western North Carolina, and tourists. All three are located near neighborhoods (Enka-Candler, Swannanoa, and Arden/Skyland) that consist of aging apartment buildings, modest multi-family homes, mobile home parks, and new construction. As the overall rate of those covered by health insurance in Buncombe County is lower than the national average, the fitness courses, trails, playspaces, sports fields, and access to wellness-focused amenities are a particular draw for senior residents and families from low-income pocket neighborhoods near the park and help neighbors connect with one another to combat isolation. Buncombe County parks had over 2.5 million visits last year.

During the pandemic, local counties and municipalities realized having access to parks and open spaces are a necessity. The greatest impact on parks in the foreseeable future will be overcrowding. We must ensure that parks can accommodate a larger capacity of people and provide opportunities for spaces that can function for various activities in the sun and/or shade for both active and passive uses.

## 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.

Many community members changed lifestyles to greater incorporate recreation and active living as daily staples within their lives as a result of COVID-19's effects. Now that the public has a renewed awareness of recreational opportunities, it is imperative that Buncombe County capitalize on this momentum to build and encourage healthy habits within those who live within the county boundaries. Buncombians are engaging in lifestyle changes that will ultimately save the County money in the coming decades and this is a chance to show leadership as a local government.

- Pounds of trash collected
- Number of trips by Buncombe County staff for collection
- Increase or decrease in visitation to parks

## Evaluation\*

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

- Pounds of trash collected (digitally tracked by compactors)
- Number of trips by Buncombe County staff for collection (tracked by General Services)
- Increase or decrease in visitation to parks (measured by digital car counters)

## 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?

It is not enough to build a park and expect people to come. For-profit amusement and recreation entities such as Biltmore, Navitat, and local outdoor outfitters are focused on user experience, but those are not options for many residents from low-income households. Buncombe County's public parks (and safe connections to nearby low-income and majority minority neighbors via greenways, sidewalks, bike lanes, and natural trails) represent the promise of welcoming spaces and equal access for all. In many communities that have seen disinvestment, parks are ground zero for civic commitments to be made or broken. We demonstrate care through asking residents and delivering on those commitments.

What does this look like in a post-pandemic world? We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them. It is well documented that years of neglect and disinvestment have saddled our lowest income neighborhoods more exposed to pollution, natural disasters such as flooding, and health disparities. By reducing litter and greenhouse gas emissions at these large regional parks, we seek to deliver the proven environmental, health, economic, and social impacts of greener parks and open spaces for low-income households and BIPOC park users.

## 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.

Supplies and installation will be provided by subcontractor(s) with an emphasis on engaging companies with women and BIPOC owners. General Services and Recreation Services will work together on this initiative.

## 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 Recreation Services has been the trusted steward of the county's parkland for decades and continues to serve the public by providing, protecting, and preserving a unique collection of 21 outdoor and indoor recreational facilities – which we see as a core service to the people of Buncombe County. We believe our community is a better place when everyone from infants to retirees have the opportunity to be strong, healthy, and successful. Our projects and programming represent a primary goal of low-cost, equitable, inclusive wellness and therapeutic opportunities that are accessible to all residents regardless of cultural, physical, cognitive, or socioeconomic background to create a livable, healthy, and vibrant community.

## 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.

Solar\_Powered\_Trash\_Compactors.xlsx

## Special Considerations\*

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

A 2018 Penn State study examining the impact of the Great Recession found that local park and recreation agency funding plunged 21% between 2009 and 2013. No local government service — public safety, education, or transportation — suffered as much. Equitable and accessible parks, recreation, and active living spaces are essential to addressing the Buncombe 2025 focus areas of an educated and capable community, environmental and energy stewardship, resident well-being, and a vibrant economy:

- Promote community resiliency and wellness by providing better mental health, improved physical health, and increased physical activity by providing safe multigenerational spaces for popular sports, adaptive and inclusive play, greenways and hiking trails, swimming pools, and many other activities designed to promote active lifestyles.
- Critical to childhood development and foster mountain spirit, imagination and creativity, healthy habits, teamwork, social equity, emotional stability, mutual trust, and environmental responsibility.
- Drive economic opportunity by expanding the local tax base through support of the outdoor recreation economy, increased tourism, and attraction and retention of businesses.
- Build healthy, active communities that aid in the prevention of chronic disease, provide therapeutic recreation services for those who are mentally or physically disabled, counter social isolation by connecting people with nature and each other, and also improve the mental and emotional health of all citizens.
- Provide cost-effective and sustainable environmental solutions while preserving the culture, beauty, and well-being of our region.
- Improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, preserve ecological splendor, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, and produce habitat for wildlife.
- Have the transformative power to connect communities, preserve culture, and change lives.

# File Attachment Summary

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## *Applicant File Uploads*

- Solar\_Powered\_Trash\_Compactors.xlsx

## Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

<b>Organization Name:</b>	Buncombe County Recreatin Services
<b>Project Name:</b>	Solar-Powered Trash Compactors and Recycling Bins at Buncombe County Sports Park, Charles D. Owen Park, and Lake Julian Park
<b>Amount Requested:</b>	\$280,000

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
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<b>Total</b>	\$ -		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
40 solar-powered trash compactor receptacles	\$200,000		\$ 200,000.00		
40 recycling receptacles	\$80,000		\$ 80,000.00		
List expenses here			\$ -		
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<b>Total</b>			\$ 280,000.00		