

Sugar Britches Relaunch

RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Sugar Britches

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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.

Sugar Britches Relaunch

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$22,000.00

Recovery Fund Eligible Category*

Please select one:

Small business and non-profit support

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Relocation of Sugar Britches retail business to downtown space. Upfitting costs in new space include electrical upgrades, new flooring, building of interior walls and support systems for product displays, creation of fitting rooms, installing new lighting and retail fixtures. We've been closed since March 2020 and have just secured a lease on new space. We also need help with moving expenses to take merchandise out of

storage. We need to re-hire some day workers to help with the weeks-long set up involved so that we can open as soon as possible, ideally mid-to-late-August.

Project Plan*

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

In 30 days starting July 10th, we need to have the 40 yr old rug removed and replaced with vinyl flooring. This project is approximately \$12,000 and we hope to complete it in the first 15 days. Electrical upgrades include adding outlets to one whole side of the large room and installing lighting and security system. Electrical estimate is approximately \$3000. Build-out includes adding one wall and stage displays for mannequins and building two fitting rooms plus a sales counter area, construction estimate is approximately \$2800. Moving estimates and paid worker set up will comprise the balance of the pre-opening costs. We are hoping to accomplish this in 30 to 45 days.

Statement of Need*

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

At the time Covid-19 hit, Sugar Britches had been open for 10 months and was generating reliable income for 25+ LOCAL fabric, textile and costume artists. For many of our artist-consigners, Sugar Britches was their primary source of income and for others, it was supplementary income that helped support their families and pay basic survival needs. There are very few places in Asheville where LOCAL clothing designers can sell their wares and where up cycled materials are used to make wearable art. The town is full of art, glass and pottery outlets but sorely lacking in a location where locals and tourists alike can see and buy textile creations and costumes that originate in WNC. By displaying the works of artists participating in Costume Drama, Color Me Goodwill, Fashmob and Asheville Mardi Gras, we were the #1 spot for local costume and fabric artists to get exposure and generate income.

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.

We lost our business when we were required to close in mid-March at the start of the pandemic. We had invested \$30,000 in personal funds to upgrade a vacant space in RAD, expecting to be in business for 3+ yrs and exercise our multiple year lease extensions. We took over a shell of a building, needed to access building/plumbing/electrical permits, add a bathroom, install complete electrical and lighting, build walls and fitting rooms etc. NONE OF THAT COULD BE TAKEN WITH US, when our landlord asked us to vacate the space entirely by June 30th, because he had another "dream tenant" also a small business, Grail Moviehouse. They remained closed for the next six months and as of today they are barely operating. We were essentially hurried out of our lease in the middle of a pandemic, and we were denied a refund of our \$4300 security deposit despite "leaving the space in great shape" (their words). They said that our lease allowed them to keep the deposit because rent had not been paid for the closed pandemic months! Honestly we were crushed. To meet their 10-day vacate-the-premises deadline, we had to simply donate thousands of dollars of furniture and supplies that we could not afford to store.

Population Served*

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

25 or more artists located throughout Buncombe County were selling their wares at Sugar Britches and for many, making a profit for the first time in years. I can supply an artist sales and payout sheet to prove this, I just don't have that document on my personal computer and the shop computer is not unpacked yet! We provided working hours each week for three residents as barter for their space in the shop so they could maximize their income potential. Tourists came by the hundreds and told us this was the "most Asheville" place they had been to. Repeatedly we heard that the creative LOCAL offerings we had on display and for sale were exactly the kind of vibe they had heard about and hoped to find.

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.

Each of 10 LOCAL artists we have already contacted have agreed to put their merchandise in the new Sugar Britches asap. We will reach out to at least 10 more local artists as soon as we have begun to build the space. Our store sales put money directly into the pockets of local makers.

We will have sales figures and artists payouts available within a few weeks of opening and can provide these metrics at regular intervals - 3 months, 6 months, yearly.

We have negotiated fair rent in a spot that was previously occupied for 40+ yrs. We've chosen a location in the heart of downtown across from several newly relocating businesses on what's being called "restaurant row." 3 of the surrounding businesses were our former business neighbors in RAD: The Wedge, Pleb Wine Bar and Summit Coffee. We KNOW we're in good company as our businesses supported one another before.

We will host special events for the community, FREE, which feature the work of local fashion and design makers.

Evaluation*

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

Sales data speaks for itself. We can run regular reports that show who sells what, at what price point and commission. In short order we know our top sellers. We'll continue to recruit new designers to sell in the shop to enhance the variety. We offer merchandise at all price points and a varying split for the best-selling artist consigners.

Marketing efforts, some paid and unpaid, will pay off directly to earning money for local artists. We're adept at social media and we work hard to keep a high profile in the tourism promotions.

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?

Artists need access, expertise and promotion to sell their work and Sugar Britches provides it. The pandemic hit artists especially hard because closing down the world closed down creativity and outlets for sharing art. We all know that the bulk of artists are on the lower economic strata and struggle with affordable housing and cost of living expenses so that they can maintain a non-traditional type of work. Asheville real

estate is on fire and this is making it less and less likely that artists can afford to live here or have studio space. Sugar Britches was founded on the idea that textile and fabric artists need exposure and a place to sell their wares.

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.

We will use Leicester Flooring for the flooring tear out and install.

We will use Asheville Electrical LLC for the electrical work

We will use Ray Griffiths for the wall building and interior counter build up.

We will pay several of our contributing designers on a daily basis to help get the store ready to open.

I don't know the percentages of the break down but I have outlined the necessary work as best I can.

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.

We were hugely successful in our first effort, only 10 months into our lease. That's why we KNOW we can do it again. Every designer we have asked immediately said they want to be part of Sugar Britches again, that tells us something. We had gross sales of almost \$100,000 (more than 50% of that was paid out to local artists!) in our first year which is unheard of for new retail, and we were in a very challenged location due to extensive road construction and flooding in RAD Foundation. We are both experienced professionals with 20+ yrs in corporate life and we know how to manage projects, funding and personnel.

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.pdf

Special Considerations*

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

We do not have a detailed budget created for this relaunch. We have been in a holding pattern since March 2020. I have provided estimates on the budget template based on contractor estimates I have received for the new space. We expect it will take a full 30-45 days to recreate Sugar Britches in a new location. We

want nothing more than to open a space where artists can begin selling and help them get a share of tourism spending, esp. as we approach the Fall season and the world starts to return to normal.

We really need the financial assistance to make this come to life again. I'd welcome the chance to meet with anyone or provide any data that could help us secure some funding. We're a small business with small needs yet we can deliver a big financial gain for struggling local artists from all over the County.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Recovery-Funds-budget-template.pdf

List expenses here			\$	-		
			Total	\$	34,200.00	