

Buncombe County - Employee Retention Grant

*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal
Recovery Funds*

Buncombe County Government

200 College St Suite 300
Asheville, NC 28801

Sharon Burke

sharon.burke@buncombecounty.org

New project proposal

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$3,912,000.00

Category*

Please select one:

- Affordable Housing
- Aging/Older Adults
- Business Support/Economic Development
- Environmental/Climate
- Homelessness
- K-12 Education
- Infrastructure and/or Broadband
- Mental Health/Substance Use
- NC Pre-K Expansion
- Workforce

Workforce

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Retention of employees is critical in order to deliver the core services necessary to keep our communities healthy, safe and resilient. In the past 12 months, we have seen 250+ exits compared to 190 new hire entries with the majority of this turnover occurring at lower rates of pay. The continued loss of employees in functions such as Public Safety, Social Work, and Emergency Management will have drastic impacts on our ability to effectively serve Buncombe County residents. As a response to this, Buncombe County proposes a county-wide retention incentive program. This program is modeled after similar programs across government and private industry both in and outside of North Carolina. The retention incentive will apply to all county employees (e.g., full-time, part-time, grant, temp) and will be tiered based on employee salary (i.e., larger incentive for employees making less). The incentive will be paid in two payments over a 12 month period for employees hired before March 1, 2022.

Project Plan*

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

Proposed Tiers and payments:

- Tier 1: Employees with annualized salaries below \$60K, Potential Incentive: \$3K, Number of Employees: 1,139, Percentage of Total Workforce: 70%, Total Estimated Cost: \$3M

- Tier 2: Employees with annualized salaries between \$60K and \$99.9K, Potential Incentive: \$2K, Number of Employees: 434, Percentage of Total Workforce: 27%, Total Estimated Cost: \$860K

- Tier 3: Employees with annualized salaries above \$100K, Potential Incentive: \$1K, Number of Employees: 52, Percentage of Total Workforce: 3%, Total Estimated Cost: \$52K

Determine Eligibility:

Buncombe County proposes payouts for the following staff.

- Eligibility:

- o All Full-Time, Part-Time, Regular, Temporary, and Grant Employees

- o Active Employee and hired before March 1, 2022

- Ineligibility:

- o Employees will not be eligible for Retention Incentive payouts if the employee separates prior to the Incentive Payout Date

Incentive Payouts:

Buncombe County staff will receive two payments based on the estimated schedule below. The timing of these payouts may change, but the goal is for employees to receive 2 payments within a 12-month period.

- Payout 1: Fall 2022

- Payout 2: Summer 2023

Project Implementation:

The project will be administered by the Human Resources Department in coordination with the Finance and Payroll Departments. The timeframe for this project is 12 months from project award.

Project Evaluation:

The project will include performance metrics for employee retention and attrition.

Statement of Need*

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

Buncombe County Government like many employers has been undergoing workforce retention and hiring issues. Over the past three years, Buncombe County turnover has steadily increased from 7.2% in FY19 to 14.25% in FY22. These exits have been most pronounced among workforce that make less than \$60K per year who comprise 70% of exits over the past 12 months. Buncombe County Human Resources has attempted to resolve these issues with additional recruitment strategies, yet retention challenges persist. In the past 12 months, we have seen 250+ exits compared to 190 new hire entries with the majority of this turnover occurring at lower rates of pay.

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.

Although the pandemic's impacts have been widespread, both the public health and economic impacts of the pandemic have fallen most severely on communities and populations disadvantaged before it began. Low-income communities, people of color, and Tribal communities have faced higher rates of infection, hospitalization, and death, as well as higher rates of unemployment and lack of basic necessities like food and housing. Pre-existing social vulnerabilities magnified the pandemic in these communities, where a reduced ability to work from home and, frequently, denser housing amplified the risk of infection.

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The guidance issued by the Department of Treasury for the American Rescue Plan specifically cites employee retention incentives and COVID premium pay as valid expenditures.

Population Served*

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

This project will serve all 1,600+ Buncombe County employees, including all Full-Time, Part-Time, Regular, Temporary, and Grant Employees hired before March 1, 2022. These employees have a significant impact on the health, safety and quality of life in our communities by serving in core positions, including, but not limited to Detention Officers, EMTs, Social Workers, Clinical Nurses, Sheriff Deputies, and more. Many of these employees are responsible for working with our most vulnerable populations and those most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. By supporting the retention of these employees, Buncombe County is fundamentally improving the health and safety of all residents of Buncombe County.

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 project supports Strategic Plan goals including, but are not limited to, Resources: Ensuring funding, talent, and partnerships that enable high quality delivery of services and information; Operational Excellence: Proactively managing an infrastructure that contributes to best-in-class performance; and the ability to support all Buncombe 2025 goals with our active, engaged and motivated workforce.

The project will track:

- Number of incentive payouts made for Payout 1 & Payout 2, by Tier
- Number of employees receiving incentive payments, by Tier
- Total amount of funds issued in employee retention incentive payments
- Employee Turnover percentage over time, by Tier

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 uses Workday as its enterprise management system for human resources and financial data. Workday reports will provide information including: employees by tier, eligibility for retention incentive payments, payouts made, and employee turnover. If needed for U.S. Treasury reporting, Workday can also provide reports on information such as employee demographics. All data in Workday is managed in accordance with county personnel, finance, and information technology policies and procedures.

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?

This project proposes to provide retention incentives to all employees, but specifically provide the largest incentives and the majority of incentives (70%) to employees making less than \$60K. Many of these employees may find themselves as among the most impacted by negative economic impacts of COVID-19.

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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.

Project partners will be internal to Buncombe County. Once approved by the Board of Commissioners, the County Manager will work with Human Resources and Finance to determine eligibility and issue incentive payments. The Office of Strategy and Innovation and IT departments will support data reporting and analysis as needed.

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 government will manage project.

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 - Retention Incentive - Buncombe.xlsx

Special Considerations*

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

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File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Recovery Funds - Retention Incentive - Buncombe.xlsx

