

# Human Trafficking Survivor Services

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*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

## ***Our VOICE***

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# 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. To date, Buncombe County has awarded projects totaling \$23,093,499, leaving a balance of \$27,639,791 available to award.

Visit <http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding> for details.

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](#)

## Organization Type\*

Nonprofit

## Nonprofit documentation

If nonprofit, attach IRS Determination Letter or other proof of nonprofit status.

Our VOICE \_ 501c-3 Letter.pdf

## Name of Project.\*

Human Trafficking Survivor Services

## New/Updated Proposal\*

Is this a new project proposal or an updated version of a proposal submitted during the earlier (July 2021) Recovery Funding RFP?

New project proposal

## Amount of Funds Requested\*

\$75,000.00

## 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

Mental Health/Substance Use

## Brief Project Description\*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Our VOICE provides crisis response to survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking through our 24/7 crisis line and hospital accompaniment. Throughout the pandemic, and for the foreseeable future, one of the greatest needs of those we serve is increased mental health support. Survivors are experiencing more anxiety, depression, hopelessness, and fear than in any other time in our agency's nearly fifty-year history. To meet the needs of survivors, especially those of human trafficking, Our VOICE requires additional support as we expand our resources. This includes, but is not limited to, operating our 24/7 crisis line, crisis case management and de-escalation, connection with housing and substance abuse service providers, and improving our response to human trafficking survivors. Additionally, Our VOICE provides training and education programs to service providers in the County who may interact with trafficking survivors; these networks of resources are critical to our work.

## Project Plan\*

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

Our VOICE plans to implement new case management protocols and responses to survivors of human trafficking who need more comprehensive support. This includes expanding the type agencies with whom we have MOUs across the region to include housing and long-term community living settings as well as substance abuse providers, employment training, and long term mental healthcare homes. The plan includes providing training for first responders, law enforcement, medical personnel, and those in the tourism/hospitality industry who come into contact first with trafficking survivors and need tools to provide immediate and safe support/resources.

A timeline to implement these is as follows – October through December a new case management system will be implemented, and all staff will be trained. This time will also involve creating more extensive MOUs and contracts with agencies who can support Our VOICE in providing wrap-around services for trafficking survivors. In the beginning of the 2023, training will begin with outside agencies. Internal staff training will be ongoing; providing services for trafficking survivors will also be ongoing. This project is slated for October 2022 – September 2023.

### Statement of Need\*

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

When Our VOICE added “supporting survivors of human trafficking” to the mission statement in 2016, nothing could have prepared the agency for what this would ultimately entail, especially during a pandemic.

Our VOICE has learned after directly supporting trafficking survivors for eight years that many of their needs are very complex, involve the judicial system, involve the need for immediate housing and often new personal documentation, involve the need for collaboration, and involve the ability to maintain support of a survivor no matter how difficult the situation may get or how long it may take.

Survivors of trafficking who Our VOICE supports are often in and out of the prison system and often have such deep trauma that they are either in active substance abuse or unable to maintain employment. These individuals may have been trafficked by someone they believed was their intimate partner, by someone who provided essentials such as housing/food/clothing and then required sexual favors in return, or by a parent or other family member. While it does happen, these individuals are as a rule not “kidnapped off the street and forced into sex work against their will,” as the mainstream would have people believe.

Each year, Our VOICE supports over 40 survivors of human trafficking and this number continues to grow. The needs of these individuals are ever-changing and require intense and long-term case management. As North Carolina is the 9th state in the country with the highest number of trafficking cases, Our VOICE is proud to serve as the WNC anti-human trafficking hub providing support to other agencies and survivors outside of Buncombe County. Our VOICE continues to grow and develop the most trauma-informed policies and procedures to ensure survivors have the resources and the support they need to heal and lead a healthy and productive life.

### 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 previously mentioned, Our VOICE has seen a significant increase in the needs of survivors with whom we work during the last two years. This includes the need for emergency shelter, transportation, food/clothing, substance abuse care, and long-term mental health support.

As the world begins to open back up, we have found that the needs that were exacerbated during COVID-19 have remained and that the services we provide are needed more than ever. Additionally, Our VOICE, like so many other social service agencies in our community, support those impacted by the local housing crisis which has no end in sight.

## Population Served\*

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

Our VOICE serves all individuals impacted by sexual violence and human trafficking over the age of 13 in Buncombe County. This includes primary and secondary survivors. For this specific project request, funds will support survivors of human trafficking. These individuals can be as young as 13 or as old as 60 and are typically female though we have worked with several male trafficking survivors. We strive to support the most marginalized survivors who have the most limited resources; this typically includes BIPOC survivors, undocumented individuals, and those who are low income and/or houseless.

## 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.

1. Provide trauma-informed/wrap-around crisis response, case management, and counseling to 50+ survivors of human trafficking. While our baseline is typically 40 individuals each year, we know this number will grow as our network strengthens and widens and our referrals from partners grow.

2. Provide human trafficking awareness and resource training to 250+ individuals who are first responders, law enforcement, and medical personnel. This will be accomplished through our relationships with the Buncombe County Sheriff's Department, Asheville Police Department, Mission Hospitals and other providers. The baseline is that we currently provide training for approximately 50 such individuals each year.

3. Provide human trafficking awareness and resource training to 250+ individuals in the tourism/hospitality industry. This will be accomplished through deepening our relationship with the Buncombe County TDA, the Chamber of Commerce, and our longstanding partnership with the Asheville Brewers Alliance. The baseline is that we currently provide training for approximately 50 such individuals each year.

## Evaluation\*

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

Our VOICE utilizes an internal database specifically for collecting information about the survivors with whom we work. The non-identifying information is then shared with our community partners, state funders, and ultimately is part of the national data regarding sexual violence and human trafficking. Staff enter data on each individual whether they are a one-time crisis line caller or a counseling client that has a long-term relationship with the agency. This data is secured in a zero-encryption platform as to conform with survivor confidentiality requirements of our federal funders.

Success for this project will be measured by comparing annual data of survivors as well as those being trained. Data is typically provided quarterly for our funding partners.

## 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?

Our VOICE believes that gender-based violence is rooted in systems of oppression such as white supremacy and patriarchy and that the power dynamics of this exist all around us. As such, we see our work as part of the liberation of all people, both survivors of violence and those who perpetrate as a result of their own harm.

Our VOICE strives to provide services that are culturally competent, trauma informed, and include survivors at the center of their own healing. As such, we have a DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Committee made of staff and board members who meet monthly to determine organizational policy and guide our work within an equity framework. Our VOICE has received funding from the Dogwood Health Trust and Tzedek Foundation to further develop our equity work and each staff member has personal requirements as it pertains to their individual growth around equity.

Internally, Our VOICE is in the process of flattening the hierarchy of our agency by having co-Executive Directors, implementing collective decision-making processes, and raising the baseline pay to \$22/hour. Our VOICE also provides health and dental care for all full-time employees, pays additional for those who are bi-lingual, and supports employee professional development. Taking good care of our employees allows them to take good care of survivors and the whole community benefits. This is at the root of equity.

We know this work is challenging and we are committed to ensuring that those individuals most impacted by violence, specifically those from traditionally marginalized communities, remain at the center of our mission.

## 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.

Our VOICE, as part of the Family Justice Center, partners with Helpmate, Pisgah Legal Services, Buncombe County Sherriff, Asheville Police, the Mediation Center, YWCA, Mission Health, Buncombe County DHHS, and Mountain Child Advocacy Center. Our VOICE also has dozens of community partners such as RHA, WNCAP, WNCCHS, and others who support survivors.

For this specific project, partnership to provide support for survivors will be primarily with those listed above and our regional partners in shelter; partnership for trainings will include those listed above and others seeking training. Without our deep community ties, Our VOICE could not serve the over 750 survivors we help each year.

There are no planned products and/or subcontractors proposed for this project.

## 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.

Our VOICE has been serving Buncombe County for nearly fifty years and has grown exponentially, both in budget and in clients served, in the last decade. Our services are supported through a combination of federal and state grants, foundation partnerships, special events, individual donations, and fee-for-service programs.

Our VOICE is one of several partner agencies to receive federal funds as part of the Family Justice Center as well as through independent awards from VOCA (Victim of Crime Act) and VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) exceeding \$100,000/contract. Our VOICE manages the SAKI (Sexual Assault Kit Investigation) initiative for the state of North Carolina through the Department of Justice and employs a RPE (Rape Prevention Education) Coordinator through a grant from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) as well as from the North Carolina Council for Women & Youth Involvement.

## 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.

Our VOICE Recovery-Funds-budget.xlsx

## Special Considerations\*

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

Our VOICE continues to navigate the changing landscape of human trafficking in North Carolina. With our trauma-informed lens, commitment to equity/inclusion, and our survivor-centered practices, we feel we are the leader in providing services and training. These funds will support the continued need of trafficking survivors as well as provide capacity for our agency to conduct trainings and deepen resources. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request on behalf of all survivors of sexual violence and trafficking in Buncombe County.

## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

- Our VOICE \_ 501c-3 Letter.pdf
- Our VOICE Recovery-Funds-budget.xlsx



Internal Revenue Service

Department of the Treasury

P. O. Box 2508  
Cincinnati, OH 45201

Date: August 30, 2000

Person to Contact: \*  
Tonya Martin 31-03017  
Customer Service Representative

Our Voice, Inc.  
P.O. Box 7453  
Asheville, NC 28802-7453

Toll Free Telephone Number:  
8:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. EST  
877-829-5500

Fax Number:  
513-263-3756

Federal Identification Number:  
58-1491531

Dear Sir or Madam:

We have received the copy of the Amended Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of North Carolina, on July 11, 2000, indicating that your name has been changed from Rape Crisis Center, Inc. to the name shown above.

Our records indicate that a determination letter issued in August 1983 granting your organization exemption from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. That letter is still in effect.

Based on information subsequently submitted, we classified your organization as one that is not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because it is an organization described in sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

This classification was based on the assumption that your organization's operations would continue as stated in the application. If your organization's sources of support, or its character, method of operations, or purposes have changed, please let us know so we can consider the effect of the change on the exempt status and foundation status of your organization.

Your organization is required to file Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, only if its gross receipts each year are normally more than \$25,000. If a return is required, it must be filed by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of the organization's annual accounting period. The law imposes a penalty of \$20 a day, up to a maximum of \$10,000, when a return is filed late, unless there is reasonable cause for the delay.

All exempt organizations (unless specifically excluded) are liable for taxes under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (social security taxes) on remuneration of \$100 or more paid to each employee during a calendar year. Your organization is not liable for the tax imposed under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA).

Organizations that are not private foundations are not subject to the excise taxes under Chapter 42 of the Code. However, these organizations are not automatically exempt from other federal excise taxes.

Donors may deduct contributions to your organization as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to your organization or for its use are deductible for federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

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

<b>Organization Name:</b>	Our VOICE, Inc.
<b>Project Name:</b>	HumanTrafficking Survivor Services
<b>Amount Requested:</b>	

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 75,000.00	Pending	This application
VOCA (Victim of Crime Act) Basic Services - Fundamental Elements	\$ 45,000.00	Confirmed	24/7 Crisis Line/Hospital Accompaniment
NCCW (North Carolina Council for Women)	\$ 35,000.00	Confirmed	Supervision/Operational Support
NCCW (North Carolina Council for Women)	\$ 20,000.00	Confirmed	Education/Training Support
VOCA (Victim of Crime Act) Human Trafficking Survivor Services	\$ 50,000.00	Pending	Case Management Support
VOCA (Buncombe County Family Justice Center)	\$ 75,000.00	Confirmed	Portion of Counseling and Legal Advocacy
List other sources here			
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<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 300,000.00</b>		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Personnel	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 190,000.00	\$ 265,000.00	operating	Counselor, Legal Advocate, Case Manager, Supervision
Operational Support	\$ 35,000.00		\$ 35,000.00	operating	Rent, utilities, bookkeeping, office supplies, technology
List expenses here			\$ -		
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<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 300,000.00</b>		