

**Buncombe County FY2020 Strategic Partnership Grants  
Application Summary Sheet**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Community Playback</b>
<b>Organization</b>	<b>PRC Applications</b>

<b>Amount Requested</b>	\$24,000	<b>Strategic Priority or Sustainability Goal</b>	Equity in Access
<b>New or Renewal Request</b>	New	<b>Commissioner Districts Served</b>	All

<b>Organization Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRC Applications is a local web and mobile software development firm that dedicates 20% of its company time towards community projects driven by civic technology or public data. Projects utilize technology to improve the interactions between community members and local government, with a primary goal of increasing government transparency to provide a solid foundation for community trust.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Community Playback program proposes to live broadcast County boards and commissions meetings on free platforms like Facebook and YouTube, as well as distribute important materials to community members before and after the meetings that will assist them in gathering context on any public business addressed during the meeting. The program will make it easier for those who cannot attend these meetings to remain informed on important public matters, providing far more comprehensive information than can be assessed by reading the meeting minutes. By allowing community members to “digitally attend” meetings, the Buncombe County policymaking process becomes more accountable and transparent, and community members can participate in the public process even if they’re unable to physically attend.</li> </ul>
<b>People Served</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While the Community Playback program will serve all residents of Buncombe County, its greatest impact will be on members of the community who find it difficult to attend public meetings. This could be members who have housing instability, transportation difficulties, scheduling conflicts, or prior commitments. Community members with dependents, low-income, and those with medical or mobilization issues will experience equal access to public meetings from their computer or mobile device. According to Facebook’s Analytics, typically receives 100 - 500 video views for each meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures of success will mainly focus on digital attendance and engagement for each meeting. Will look for community members to provide us feedback through ongoing surveys to determine whether we are providing new opportunities for public participation. Each video will automatically track how many users “digitally attend” each meeting. In addition, will look for the community to submit feedback on improving the viewing and digital engagement experience, as well as which meetings that community members feel are most important.</li> </ul>

<b>Budget</b>			
<b>Amount Funded FY2019</b>	n/a	<b>Increase Request</b>	n/a
<b>Project Budget</b>	\$40,000	<b>Total Organization Budget</b>	\$60,000
<b>Other Funding Sources: N/A</b>			

<b>Additional Information</b>

# Community Playback

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## *FY2020 Strategic Partnership Grants*

### ***PRC Applications***

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Mr. Jesse T Michel  
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# Application Form

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## Question Group

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Please complete the form below and upload the required files for your application. Organizations submitting more than one project must complete one submission form for each project. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Priority is given to nonprofit organizations with projects that contribute to Buncombe County's strategic priorities or sustainability goals.

For FY2020, no Strategic Partnership Grant applications will be considered for the strategic priorities "Affordable Housing" or "Early Childhood Education." Funding for affordable housing projects is managed through Buncombe County's Affordable Housing Services Program. Funding for early childhood projects will be managed through the newly forming Early Childhood Education and Development Fund.

### Project Name\*

Name of Project.

Community Playback

### Amount Requested\*

\$24,000.00

### Strategic Priority\*

Which of the following priorities best reflects the primary goal of your project?

Buncombe County Commissioners are dedicated to strengthening the quality of life for everyone by setting new fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible goals that will guide decisions and improve our community for future generations. The Board has committed to strategic priorities as a guide to shape partnerships and investments of resources to insure a healthy, safe, well-educated, thriving and sustainable community.

Details about the Strategic Priorities are available at [THIS LINK](#).

Other Sustainability Goal

### Strategic Priority - Other Sustainability Goal

If you selected "Other Sustainability Goal" from the list of Strategic Priorities, please list it here.

Details about the Sustainability Goals are available at [THIS LINK](#).

We are promoting two of the stated goals within the "community" focus area of the Buncombe County Sustainability Plan — citizen involvement and equity in access.

## Organization Description\*

Tell us about your organization. What is your mission? Highlight two or three key facts and accomplishments that best define your organization.

PRC Applications is a local web and mobile software development firm that dedicates 20% of its company time towards community projects driven by civic technology or public data. Our projects utilize technology to improve the interactions between community members and local government, with a primary goal of increasing government transparency to provide a solid foundation for community trust.

In 2018, the PRC Applications team was awarded with a Community Fellowship from Code for America to assist Dr. Dwight Mullen in transforming the State of Black Asheville — originally an undergraduate student research effort — into a community resource to drive policy discussion.

In 2016, PRC Applications launched Sunshine Request, a website that makes it easy for any citizen to anonymously submit public data requests and see the results of requests others have made. In 2018, we started live streaming public meetings as part of our “Community Playback” program.

## Project Description

What do you propose to do? What is your plan? What are your goals?

Currently, only the County Commission meeting is broadcast live. Public process, however, often flows through various boards and commissions before matters come before County Commission for vote. The Community Playback program will live broadcast these public boards and commissions meetings on free platforms like Facebook and Youtube, as well as distribute important materials to community members before and after the meetings that will assist them in gathering context on any public business addressed during the meeting. The program will make it easier for those who cannot attend these meetings to remain informed on important public matters, providing far more comprehensive information than can be assessed by reading the meeting minutes. By allowing community members to “digitally attend” meetings, the Buncombe County policymaking process becomes more accountable and transparent, and community members can participate in the public process even if they’re unable to physically attend.

## Key Steps\*

How will the project work? What are specific activities and milestones that your project entails?

Community Playback will take specific actions before, during, and after each meeting to ensure that the meeting is properly noticed ahead of time and pertinent materials are distributed. We will notify the community regularly on which boards and commissions meetings we plan to attend via an online calendar, and will solicit feedback on which meetings the community would like us to cover.

We will attend each meeting with video and audio recording equipment, and will live broadcast the meetings (both on Facebook and Youtube). Members of the community will be able to comment on the live feeds, and we will ensure that pertinent meeting materials are available for review and linked to from the live feed video.

After the meeting, The Community Playback team will ensure that the videos are properly archived and categorized on [sunshinerequest.com](http://sunshinerequest.com) (and on the County website, if desired), and will distribute links in a weekly “digest” via email to all subscribers.

## Area Served\*

Which areas of the County will be served by this project? Which Commissioner District(s) will be served?

A Buncombe County Commissioner district map is available at [THIS LINK](#).

The Community Playback program will serve all residents of Buncombe County. Our efforts to make public meetings accessible via a digital video feed will be particularly valuable to residents who live farther from Asheville, as that is where most County meetings are held. Also, by providing a historical archive of all meetings, our program will provide residents who are new to Buncombe County or participation in the local government with valuable context and information.

## People Served\*

Who are the members of our community this project will serve? How many people will be served? Include demographics, including age, area median income, race, neighborhood and/or school.

While the Community Playback program will serve all residents of Buncombe County, its greatest impact will be on members of the community who find it difficult to attend public meetings. This could be members who have housing instability, transportation difficulties, scheduling conflicts, or prior commitments. Community members with dependents, low-income, and those with medical or mobilization issues will experience equal access to public meetings from their computer or mobile device.

According to Facebook's Analytics, we typically receive 100 - 500 video views for each meeting we record. Our proposal is flexible, offering the ability to cover 20 meetings a month depending on the level of funding provided.

By eliminating the requirement of being physically present at public meetings, we create access in two ways — community members can “digitally attend” live-streamed meetings remotely, and community members can “digitally attend” archived meeting recordings after the fact.

## Partners\*

Which other organizations are you working with to reach your goals? What other local organizations provide similar services or serve similar beneficiaries, and how do you work together?

To this point, there are a small number of individuals who attend public meetings of interest and either record or provide written updates during the course of the meeting on social media. Some local news organizations use Twitter to provide live coverage of Council or Commission meetings.

We feel that Community Playback would complement these existing efforts, allowing people to participate more fully in meetings knowing that a recording is being made, and allowing them to share the full details of the meeting with other community members.

We will allow community members to indicate upcoming meetings of particular interest, so that we can prioritize attending and streaming those meetings.

Our goal is to make as many public meetings as possible digitally accessible in a consistent manner. When the City of Asheville announced they were going to record their 6 Council Committees each month, we were able to record citizen-led committees that were not covered by the City work plan.

## Personnel\*

Who is responsible for the project? Briefly describe project leaders and the role each will play in the project. How do these leaders reflect the population or community that you serve?

The team of PRC Applications, who manages Sunshine Request, would be responsible for the project.

Videographer Holden Mesk would be responsible for attending each meeting, performing the audio and video recording. Project manager Lauren Showfety would be responsible for distributing materials before and after each meeting, noticing the community on the meetings that our team plans to attend, and monitoring the visual and audio quality during each meeting.

Web developers Jesse Michel and Patrick Conant will be responsible for technically supporting the project, including expanding the Sunshine Request platform's capabilities to include a calendar of upcoming and archived meetings and tools to solicit feedback from the community.

Our team has been committed to community efforts to increase government transparency as individuals, through our business, and through our volunteer work with Code for Asheville and other community organizations.

## Success\*

How will you measure results? What will success look like? How will you document the impact of your project? Include whether there is a model that serves as basis for project design.

Our measures of success will mainly focus on digital attendance and engagement for each meeting. We will look for community members to provide us feedback through ongoing surveys to determine whether we are providing new opportunities for public participation.

Each video will automatically track how many users "digitally attend" each meeting. In addition, we will look for the community to submit feedback on how we as a team can improve their viewing and digital engagement experience, as well as which meetings that community members feel are most important.

We will include these findings in a program report that is updated on a yearly basis.

We did not base this project design on an existing model, however we feel strongly that community-driven programs that build capacity are the best way to drive positive change in local government.

## Funding\*

What is your plan for finding the balance of the project budget? What is your funding timeline and what are your other sources of support?

We have a flexible funding request that can scale to meet the needs that are determined by the County. The variability in cost relates to the number of meetings that the Community Playback team will attend.

In this proposal, we are requesting funding to live-stream 20 meetings per month, which will provide us with the capacity to cover the majority of Buncombe County public meetings.

The funding request can be revised down to as few as 10 meetings per month, or increased to cover the full agenda of public meetings. We would recommend that additional capacity is reserved on a monthly basis to allow us to attend meetings on short notice, should a local issue arise that is of significant public interest.

## Sustainability\*

How will this project be maintained? Please describe funding sources and how you plan to sustain the project in future years.

The current Community Playback program is provided by existing staff resources at PRC Applications. This allows us to cover 5 - 10 public meetings a month, and we expect to be able to continue this level of support indefinitely. However, due to our limited resources, we have not been able to record any meetings from Buncombe County meetings to this point.

We plan to apply for additional grant opportunities over the next year, in particular programs geared towards citizen journalism and government transparency.

Ultimately, our goal is to document a model for low-cost, community-driven efforts towards making public meetings digitally accessible, which in turn improves community engagement and interest in public matters.

## ATTACHMENTS

### Project Budget\*

Download the budget form at **THIS LINK**.

Complete the budget form for this project and the overall organization.

Save it to your computer, then upload it.

FY2020 Strategic Partnership Grants.xlsx

### Financial Statements

Upload a copy of the most recently completed financial statements.

All financial statements must be audited, reviewed or compiled by a certified public accountant and include a full balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement.

If your organization does not have financial statements, briefly state the reason.

PRC Applications is a single-member LLC registered in the State of North Carolina. For that reason, we're not clear what financial statements would be appropriate to provide.

## IRS Form 990

Upload a copy of the 990 nonprofit tax reporting form that you most recently completed.

If your organization does not have a 990, briefly state the reason.

PRC Applications is a single-member LLC registered in the State of North Carolina. We have reached out to several non-profit organizations to gauge their interest in being a fiscal sponsor for this project. We have confirmed that Democracy Apps, a registered 501c3 non-profit corporation, has expressed interest in partnering on this proposal. As an alternative, we would be willing to create a 501c3 corporation for Sunshine Request and the Community Playback program.

## Board of Directors List

Upload a current list of your organization's Board of Directors.

If your organization does not have a board of directors, briefly state the reason.

PRC Applications is a single-member LLC registered in the State of North Carolina. As such, we do not have a board of directors.

## Authorized Signatory

By typing in below the name of the authorized signatory and date of submittal, you acknowledge that your governing body has authorized this application, that it is true and current to your knowledge. As a condition of any grant awarded, this organization will provide all information in the manner described in the contract to be executed between the organization and Buncombe County or its designee, including program and financial reporting.

Name & Date

Jesse Michel 2.8.2019

Other attachments or supplemental information may be submitted to Rachael Nygaard at [rachael.nygaard@buncombecounty.org](mailto:rachael.nygaard@buncombecounty.org)

# File Attachment Summary

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## ***Applicant File Uploads***

- FY2020 Strategic Partnership Grants.xlsx