

Family Visitation Program

FY2021 Strategic Partnership Grants

The Mediation Center

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Suite B
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Application Form

INSTRUCTIONS

As part of the FY2021 Strategic Partnership Grants program, Buncombe County requests proposals for community-based projects working toward outcomes in alignment with Strategic Plan focus areas.

Please refer to the Grant Guidelines published on the Strategic Partnership Grants website at buncombecounty.org/grants for complete information about the grant program, including: Purpose; Funding; Eligibility; Timeline; Grant writing workshop; Review process; Awards; and more.

Applications are due by 5:00 on February 14, 2020.

BASIC INFORMATION

BASIC INFORMATION – Before completing the application, please tell us a little about the request.

Project Name*

Family Visitation Program

Strategy*

Recognizing that some projects will use more than one strategy, select the strategy that most closely applies to this project:

- Environmental Stewardship - High quality air, water, farmland and renewable energy for future generations
- Educated & Capable Community - A county where all people thrive and demonstrate resilience throughout their lives
- Vibrant Economy - A robust and sustainable economy that builds on homegrown industries/talent and provides economic mobility for all
- Resident Well-Being - A county where residents are safe, healthy, and engaged in their community

Resident Well-Being

Funding Request*

How much funding is this project requesting for FY2021?

\$15,000.00

Grant Guidelines*

Have you read and understand the information presented in the FY2021 Grant Guidelines Strategic Partnership Grants?

Click here for the Grant Guidelines.

If no, please contact County staff to request assistance: Rachael Nygaard, (828) 250-6536 or rachael.nygaard@buncombecounty.org.

Yes

Nonprofit Status*

Upload proof of nonprofit status, such as IRS Determination Letter or documentation from the North Carolina Secretary of State. If this documentation is not available, briefly state the reason.

501 in PDF.pdf

Board of Directors*

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.

200204 ABD Board List.docx

APPLICATION

APPLICATION QUESTIONS – Responses to these questions will be scored by the grant committee. Each question is worth 10% of the final score.

Organization*

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

The mission of The Mediation Center is to create opportunity from conflict. We offer free, neutral conflict mediation services for a variety of community disputes, and provide the Family Visitation Program (FVP) which delivers supervised visitation and safe exchange services to families with a history of domestic violence, child maltreatment, stalking, sexual assault, substance abuse, mental health concerns, or child abduction risk. All our services help people move through difficult conflict and avoid violence and abuse. In this way, The Mediation Center creates a safer and more peaceful community for everyone.

The Mediation Center was founded in 1984 to provide community mediation and conflict resolution services. We began providing supervised visitation and safe child exchange through FVP in 2007, and in the past 5 years, we have provided more than 4,200 supervised visits and child exchanges to families in

Buncombe County. Each year, more than 50 families use this service and all of them are safe from ongoing trauma and abuse during visits and exchanges. Over the past three years, we have developed special expertise in ensuring safe visitation between child victims of sexual assault and the perpetrating parent when the court has ordered such visits and are now able to serve these families in addition to those who are victims of other types of abuse. Previously, these families were falling into a service gap with no options for safe supervised visitation.

Need for the Project*

What is the main issue this project is established to address? What data or qualitative factors/stories are available to show that need?

The Family Visitation Program ensures that child and adult victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child maltreatment are not re-victimized during visits or exchanges with the non-custodial parent.

Family violence is a significant problem in Buncombe County. According to the NC Judicial Branch data report for 2018-2019, 1,227 Emergency Domestic Violence Protective Orders were filed in Buncombe County District Court during this time period. Many of the 1,227 victims who filed for these protective orders have children. In situations where there are concerns about domestic violence, child maltreatment, or child abduction risk, the court often orders the non-custodial parent to have supervised visitation or safe exchange with the child.

Supervised visitation allows children to visit with their non-custodial parent in a safe, secure environment. There is a trained visit monitor in each visit who ensures safety. Custodial and non-custodial parents do not have contact with each other at any point while using this service. Supervised visitation ensures that children can remain connected to both of their parents while eliminating abuse and neglect and reducing inappropriate parenting behaviors.

Safe Exchange allows a child to transition between parents for unsupervised visits without the parents having contact. When there is family conflict or a safety concern, safe exchange prevents domestic violence victims from encountering their abuser and prevents children from witnessing conflict or violence between parents.

Without FVP, these families would be forced to encounter abusers in non-secure locations, and child and adult victims would be put at risk of violence, abuse, abduction, or ongoing trauma during visits or child exchanges. FVP is a long-term investment in public safety because it breaks the cycle of abuse.

Project*

Explain the project and how it will work. Include the overall purpose and any models or evidence-based practices that will be included. What specific activities and milestones are included in the project plan?

Funding for this project will ensure that the Family Visitation Program has the capacity to serve all the families who need it.

The Family Visitation Program closely follows the Federal Office on Violence Against Women's Guiding Principles for Supervised Visitation Programs, including (1) equal regard for child and adult victims, (2) valuing multiculturalism and diversity, (3) incorporating an understanding of domestic violence, (4) respectful and fair interaction with all clients and (5) advocacy for child and adult victims. By closely aligning our practices with these principles, we consistently provide a high-quality and safe service. We also follow the best practice standards of the International Supervised Visitation Network to ensure that the service is safe for child and adult victims.

When families begin using the service, each parent separately participates in an orientation session where we learn about their family and their unique needs. We also provide tours and orientation sessions to children as appropriate so they know what to expect during the visit or exchange. Parents come and go at staggered times and use different entrances and exits so that they never have contact. All services take place in our secure facility and are directly supervised one-on-one by a trained visit monitor. Visits take place in living-room-like spaces that are filled with toys, games, snacks, and craft supplies. In addition, a second person, often a security officer, watches video and audio feed of all parent/child interactions as well as parking lots and hallways. The visit monitor creates neutral and factual documentation of all parent/child interactions. Staff and security officers are prepared to immediately respond to any inappropriate parenting behavior or security concerns. Families can use visits and exchanges as long as they need the service. Some families visit for a few months, others for several years.

People Served*

How many people will be served by this project? Describe the people served, including demographics such as geography, income, race & ethnicity, age, etc.

FVP serves families in Buncombe County when contact between parents or unsupervised contact between children and parents creates a safety risk. Families served have a history of domestic violence, sexual assault/abuse, child abuse, mental health concerns, substance abuse, inappropriate parenting behavior, and/or child abduction attempts.

Children served range from infants to teenagers. 80% of clients are at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. 82% of clients are Caucasian, 10% are African American, 8% are Hispanic. 47% of clients live in rural areas of the county.

Families are referred by domestic violence and family courts, the Department of Social Services, Pisgah Legal Services, and mental health providers. Services are provided on a sliding scale to ensure access.

Results*

What results do you hope to achieve with this project? Be specific about how much impact the project will have in line with Commissioner focus areas.

One of Buncombe County's strategic priorities is Justice Resource Support. Under that priority, the county has a goal to "offer trauma-informed support for victims of crime, including domestic violence and sexual assault." The Family Visitation Program supports both child and adult victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

We intend to serve 50 families over the course of the year, and we will provide more than 700 visits and exchanges. All of these visits and exchanges will be free from abuse and neglect.

Evaluation*

How will you know you have succeeded? Explain the project evaluation process, including specific measures that will be tracked.

Will we know this project has been successful when we have provided 700 units of supervised visitation or safe exchange to at least 50 families and all of those visits and exchanges have been safe.

We use a cloud-based case management database to track the number of families we serve and the number of visits and exchanges we provide. To document the absence of violence and abuse, a visit monitor takes extensive and neutral notes on parent/child interactions, a security officer or staff member observes parent/child interactions via video/audio feed, and parents are surveyed twice a year by a neutral person. All concerns are evaluated and documented in visit notes.

Collaboration*

List any formal and/or supportive partners. Describe their roles in the project. How will they make it stronger?

We have long-standing partnerships with Buncombe County DSS, Helpmate, Buncombe County judges, Pisgah Legal Services, and Mountain Child Advocacy Center. Each of these partners work with children and families to prevent ongoing violence or trauma. All provide referrals, resources, and expertise and ensure that the program is easily accessible to victims. These organizations and others are active in the Family Visitation Advisory Committee which brings together local experts whose partnership is critical to the program's success through quarterly meetings and ongoing support of the program. Members ensure effective outreach, give input on complex policy issues, and strengthen community connections. This year, our focus for increasing collaboration is building stronger connections to substance abuse professionals and Spanish-speaking communities.

Budget*

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Explain how grant funds will be used, specifically what type of expenses will be covered by County funds. Describe other sources of revenue, including type of funding, source, restrictions and status.

200214 ADV BCSF Family Visitation Program Budget.xlsx

Grant funds will be used for personnel costs that are not covered by other grants. This includes portions of visit monitors to provide one-on-one supervision for all visits, the program director who directly supervises all staff, and the client services coordinator who schedules all client appointments and is the primary point of contact for all families.

The program receives funding from the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission and is currently funded through 9/30/2020. An application for continued funding is pending; the program has been funded 9 years in a row.

Visiting parents who use the Family Visitation Program pay a sliding scale fee according to their verified income. Those with higher incomes pay the full cost of the services; grant dollars do not supplement the cost of service for higher-income families. Victims of domestic violence are never charged a fee for services.

We have a three-year grant from the United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County. A portion of this grant is used for the Family Visitation Program. The exact amount of the grant for the 2020-2021 fiscal year will vary with the overall amount of money raised by the United Way, but is not expected to decrease by more than 10-15%.

As mentioned above, The Mediation Center provides training to professionals in the community including attorneys and mental health professionals. Fees from these training programs generate unrestricted income which supports our programming. We continue to grow this side of our work in order to become more sustainable.

Other County Funding*

List all other Buncombe County funding that is provided to your organization. For each item, list the project being funded, amount of funding, source (grant, departmental contract, etc.) and whether funding is to be renewed for FY2021.

Other than the \$10,000 that the Buncombe County Service Foundation is providing to this program for the 2019-2020 fiscal year, we do not have any other county funding.

Sustainability*

How will the project continue to succeed after the funding of the grant? Explain your plan for making this an ongoing effort.

The Mediation Center is dedicated to the ongoing operation of the Family Visitation Program. Over the past few years, we have been developing our training program which provides for-fee training in mediation, conflict resolution, and related topics to professionals in a variety of fields including attorneys and mental health professionals. While this program is in its infancy, it is growing into a new and substantial source of unrestricted funds for the agency. Funding from these activities is not adequate to support the entire Family Visitation Program, but we are dedicated to continuing to grow unrestricted sources of funding so that we can be more sustainable and ensure that families in need can depend on life-saving supervised visitation programming.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION

OPTIONAL INFORMATION – This information will not impact grant scoring but will be helpful to the committee.

Partial Funding

If the project were to be offered a grant for partial funding, what factors would need to be considered?

The amount of funding we are requesting will allow us to meet the demand from families in our community who need the service and ensure that families are not placed on a waiting list. If partial funding is provided, we will provide services to as many families as possible with the resources available.

Resource Support

Beyond this grant request, how can Buncombe County support your organization with this project and in strengthening your work?

It would be helpful for us to have more opportunities to talk or otherwise communicate with Buncombe County Child Protection social workers about the program, and how it can protect families (a) whose cases are being closed by DSS because the child is safe living with one parent but the other needs supervision and (b) who are screened out of services but supervised visits or safe exchanges are still needed. Social workers refer to many community programs and we understand that it is difficult for them to keep track of the ins-and-outs of them all.

We also request that the county discourage families from exchanging children in front of the sheriff's department or other government buildings if there is a history of domestic violence. While the proximity of law enforcement or the presence of cameras may discourage violence by some abusers, the risk is not eliminated, and officers are generally unable to respond until after the situation has become escalated. In addition, children, who may have been repeatedly traumatized by witnessing violence in the past, often dread these exchanges and the tension, conflict, and/or violence that occurs when their parents have contact. FVP eliminates this stress and risk and makes children more comfortable since parents do not have contact.

Other

Is there anything else that you want the committee to know?

The Family Visitation Program does not provide supervised visitation for families when the Department of Social Services (DSS) has placed a child in foster care. In those cases, DSS is mandated by the state to provide this service. FVP provides supervised visitation when the child lives with one parent, but the court has decided that visits with the other parent must be supervised in order to be safe. DSS often refers families to us when they close foster care cases and are unable, by statute, to continue to provide supervision. The two services are complimentary and do not overlap at all.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- 501 in PDF.pdf
- 200204 ABD Board List.docx
- 200214 ADV BCSF Family Visitation Program Budget.xlsx

Internal Revenue Service

Date: July 25, 2007

MEDIATION CENTER
40 NORTH FRENCH BROAD STE B
ASHEVILLE NC 28801

Department of the Treasury
P. O. Box 2508
Cincinnati, OH 45201

Person to Contact:

Viola Wahoff 31-07420
Customer Service Specialist

Toll Free Telephone Number:
877-829-5500

Federal Identification Number:
56-1424025

Dear Sir or Madam:

This is in response to your request of July 25, 2007, regarding your organization's change of address. We have updated our records to reflect the change as shown above.

In February 1985 we issued a determination letter that recognized your organization as exempt from federal income tax. Our records indicate that your organization is currently exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Our records indicate that your organization is also classified as a public charity under sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Our records indicate that contributions to your organization are deductible under section 170 of the Code, and that you are qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Internal Revenue Code.

If you have any questions, please call us at the telephone number shown in the heading of this letter.

Sincerely,



Janna K. Skufca, Director, TE/GE
Customer Account Services



The Mediation Center Board of Directors – Updated February 4, 2020

Board Member	Office and/or Committee	Term of Service End Date	Primary Affiliation	Mailing Address	Email	Phone
Bill Brazil	<i>President/Executive</i> , Nominating, Governance, Continuing Education	March 2022*	Attorney/Brazil & Burke	77 Central Ave, Suite E Asheville, NC 28801	bill@brazilburkelaw.com	C: (828) 777-9997
Lynn Cook	<i>Treasurer/Finance</i> (chair), Executive	November 2021**	VP, Commercial Relationship Manager/HomeTrust Bank	312 Vista Falls Road Mills River, NC 28759	lynn.cook@hometrustedbanking.com	C: (828) 318-7700 W: (828) 251-7526
Sarah Corley	Fundraising, Finance, Continuing Education	November 2022*	Mediator/Mediation Works NC	338 Stratford Rd Asheville, NC 28804	sarah@mediationworksnc.com	C: (828) 779-9327
Jeanne Cummings	<i>Secretary/Executive</i> , Nominating, Continuing Ed	June 2021**	Clinical Psychologist	647 Town Mountain Rd Asheville, NC 28803	cummingsjd@yahoo.com	H: (828) 299-9887
Deborah Grey	Governance	January 2021*	Licensed Clinical Social Worker	PO Box 2112 Fairview, NC 28730	debgraync@gmail.com	C: (336) 749-0903
Laura Jeffords	Ex Officio	(N/A)	Executive Director/The Mediation Center	40 N French Broad Ave, Ste B, Asheville, NC 28801	laurahj@mediatewnc.org	W: (828) 251-6089 C: (828) 280-0263
Todd Lester	Fundraising, Finance	January 2021*	Community Volunteer	37 Fairfax Ave Asheville, NC 28806	tlester33@gmail.com	C: (646) 220-1810



The Mediation Center Board of Directors – Updated February 4, 2020

James Robinson-Long	<i>Immediate Past President</i> Executive, Finance, Continuing Education	June 2021**	Biltmore Company	307 10 th Street Black Mountain, NC 28711	jrobinsonlong@biltmore.com	C: (828) 777-9620
Sabrina Rockoff	Executive, Nominating, Fundraising	June 2021*	Attorney/McGuire, Wood, & Bissette	9 Saddle Ridge Fletcher, NC 28732	srockoff@mwblawyers.com	C: (828) 254-8800
Philip (PJ) Roth	Fundraising, Governance	October 2020*	Attorney/Marshall, Roth, & Gregory	P.O. Box 769 Asheville, NC 28802	proth@mrglawfirm.com	C: (828) 279.7319
Beth Vogler	Fundraising	December 2020*	Mars Hill University	117 David Biddle Trail Weaverville, NC 28787	bvogler@mhu.edu	C: (828) 279-5295
Kevin Young	Nominating, Fundraising	April 2022*	Biltmore Company/Strategic HR Business Partner	11 B Rathfarnham Rd Asheville, NC 28803	kyoung@biltmore.com	H: (828) 225-1365 C: (828) 777-7147

*first term, **second term

- How many Board Members are serving on the Board of Directors at the time of this application? 11 members What is the minimum 7 and maximum 16 allowed by your bylaws?
- How many Board Members have made a personal financial contribution to the organization in the past 12 months? 100%
- How many Board Meetings are scheduled yearly? 9 meetings How many have occurred with a quorum of members in the past 12 months? 9 meetings
- What is the length of your Board's term of service? 3 years What is the maximum number of successive terms? 2 terms

Strategic Partnership Grants

Proposed FY2021 Project Budget (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

Organization Name:	The Mediation Center
Project Name:	Family Vistiation Program
Grant Amount Requested:	\$15,000

FY2021 Proposed Project Revenue	Amount	Committed or Pending?
Proposed Buncombe County Strategic Partnerships Grant	\$ 15,000	pending
List other sources: North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission	\$ 194,111	25% committed, 75% pending
List other sources: United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County	\$ 8,230	committed
List other sources: Program service fees	\$ 22,500	clients pay on a sliding scale, those who are able pay the full cost of the service
List other sources: Earned income/donations	\$ 17,500	pending
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
Total	\$ 257,341	

FY2021 Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Grant	Other Funds	Total	Notes
Personnel	\$ 12,000	\$ 161,517	\$ 173,517	
Training		\$ 598	\$ 598	
Travel		\$ 5,806	\$ 5,806	
Supplies / Materials		\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250	
Meetings (Food, Interpreting, Child Care, etc.)		\$ 471	\$ 471	
Equipment / Furniture		\$ -	\$ -	
Printing / Marketing		\$ 1,257	\$ 1,257	
Licensing / Memberships / Dues / Subscriptions		\$ 594	\$ 594	
Client Support		\$ -	\$ -	
Contracts		\$ -	\$ -	
Professional Services (Legal, Accounting, etc.)		\$ 31,728	\$ 31,728	A majority of this line is for security offices to be present during service hours
Insurance and Bonds		\$ 4,085	\$ 4,085	
Building Maintenance (Rent, Utilities, Repairs, etc.)		\$ 27,035	\$ 27,035	
List other costs:			\$ -	
List other costs:			\$ -	
List other costs:			\$ -	
List other costs:			\$ -	
Total			\$ 257,341	

Overall Organization Budget	Amount	Notes
FY2019 Actual Year-End Revenue	\$ 614,090	
FY2019 Actual Year-End Expenses	\$ 611,108	
FY2020 Adopted Budget Amount	\$ 667,676	
FY2021 Proposed Budget Amount	\$ 675,593	