I. Purpose
Strategic Partnership Grant funding is granted to nonprofit organizations working toward outcomes in alignment with County Commissioner goals. Buncombe County envisions a healthy, safe, well-educated, and thriving community with a sustainable quality of life. County Commissioners are dedicated to setting fiscally, socially, and environmentally responsible goals that will guide decisions and improve the community for future generations.

II. Funding
Strategic Partnership Grants are supported through general county funds, which are budgeted as part of Buncombe County’s annual budget. The amount for FY2021 is $889,305 (subject to budget adoption).

III. Eligibility
To be eligible for a Strategic Partnership Grant, an organization and project must meet the following criteria:

a. Nonprofit. Organizations must be incorporated as nonprofit organizations, classified as tax exempt by the Internal Revenue Service, in active operation for a minimum of two (2) years. Organizations must operate in Buncombe County with service to Buncombe County. If an organization does not meet this criteria, it may partner with another organization to serve as fiscal agent for the purposes of administering grant funding.

b. Public Purpose. Projects must meet a public purpose and fall within County authority to fund per NC General Statutes, to be affirmed by review by Buncombe County legal department prior to grant award.

c. Application. Organizations must submit a grant application through the online grant software before the application deadline. No late applications will be accepted.

b. Projects. Funded projects must align with focus areas in Buncombe County’s Strategic Plan, which include:

- Educated & Capable Community – A county where all people thrive and demonstrate resilience throughout their lives
- Environmental Stewardship – High quality air, water, farmland and renewable energy for future generations
- 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

Projects that more closely align with other Buncombe County grant programs may referred to those processes. Details about Buncombe County grant programs are listed at buncombecounty.org/grants including the following: Affordable Housing Services Program; Aging Services Funding; Community Recreation Grants; Early Childhood Fund; Isaac Coleman
Grants; Juvenile Crime Prevention Council; Strategic Partnership Grants; and Tipping Point Grants.

e. **Funding.** Strategic Partnership Grant funding is limited to no more than three (3) years for a single project. The beginning date for the 3-years is July 1, 2020. Funding must represent less than thirty percent (30%) of an organization’s annual budget.

### IV. Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 25, 2019</td>
<td>Committee member application opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 13, 2019</td>
<td>Committee member applications due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 16, 2019</td>
<td>Grant application opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 7, 2020</td>
<td>Board of Commissioners appoints committee during Commissioners regular meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 17, 2020</td>
<td>Optional grant writing workshop</td>
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<td>300 to 4:30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>200 College Street, Asheville, NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 14, 2020</td>
<td>Applications due by 5:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 17 – April 23, 2020</td>
<td>Grant review by committee (meeting schedule to be determined)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 24, 2020</td>
<td>Committee funding recommendations due to County budget office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 5, 2020</td>
<td>Committee grant recommendations shared with Board of Commissioners as part of pre-meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 19, 2020</td>
<td>Committee grant recommendations published with County Manger’s budget message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2, 2020</td>
<td>Public hearing on budget as part of Board of Commissioners regular meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 16, 2020</td>
<td>Grant awards finalized with County budget adoption during Board of Commissioners regular meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021</td>
<td>Funding year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### V. Application Process

A grant writing workshop (optional for applicants) will be held on January 17, 2020 from 3:00 to 4:30 at 200 College Street in downtown Asheville, NC in the ground floor conference room. Free parking will be available in the County garage at 164 College Street. In the case of inclement weather, an announcement will be posted on buncombecounty.org/grants and the workshop will be rescheduled for the following week.

Organizations are required to apply online through Buncombe County's grant software, which can be accessed at buncombecounty.org/apply or linked through the Strategic Partnership Grants website at buncombecounty.org/grants. Applications are due by 5:00 on February 14, 2020.
Staff is available to provide basic one-on-one support to applicants by request and will also work to match applicants with other community-based grant writing resource support if needed. Staff do not participate in the grant scoring process. Applicants are asked not to communicate with review committee members regarding their applications outside of the regular committee meeting structure.

Language interpretation and translation is also available by request.

VI. **Required Elements**

The application consists of a questionnaire, primarily of questions requiring a narrative response. Applicants are also required to complete and upload a budget form along with a list of members of the Board of Directors. Proof of nonprofit status, such as IRS Determination Letter or documentation from the North Carolina Secretary of State, will be required at the time of application.

VII. **Review Committee**

Grant recommendations will be prepared by the Strategic Partnerships Grant Committee. The committee will consist of nine (9) members, three (3) members per each of the Commissioner Districts, who will:

- Apply for membership through the Office of the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners;
- Be appointed by the Board of Commissioners;
- Serve three (3) year staggered terms;
- Represent expertise in the Strategic Plan focus areas;
- Represent the geographic diversity of the County;
- Abide by conflict of interest policies, to include not serving on the Board of Directors or staff of an applicant organization within the past year;
- Hold open meetings and comply with public records requirements;
- Utilize a standardized, points-based scoring system to review grants;
- Hold in-person presentations for grant finalists; and
- Recommend a portfolio of grants for approval by the Board of Commissioners; and
- Meet throughout the year to monitor grants and review progress.

A committee meeting schedule, once determined, will be posted on the Strategic Partnership Grants website, along with meeting materials and announcements. All meetings will be open to the public.

VIII. **Review Process**

Applications are reviewed by the Strategic Partnership Grants Committee utilizing a standardized, points-based system. Reviews will be conducted independently by members of the committee, and discussion will occur during regular meetings. Grant review will occur beginning February 17, 2020, and Committee recommendations will be submitted to the County Budget Office by April 24, 2020.

The following criteria will be considered by the Committee:

- Alignment to Commissioner goals (strategic plan)
- Public purpose & community need
- Impact & cost effectiveness of model/project design
• Project plan is clear, measurable, achievable
• Demographics of client population (including location/District)
• Performance outputs, outcomes & demonstrated success
• Extent and quality of community partnerships & collaborations
• Leverages other funding and/or community connections
• Organizational financial health & sustainability
• Connection to other County funding/contracts

IX. Awards
Grant recommendations prepared by the Committee will be submitted for a vote of approval from the Board of Commissioners. The list will be published as part of the County Manager’s recommended budget as presented to the Board of Commissioners at their regularly scheduled meeting on May 19, 2020. Grant awards will be finalized with budget adoption on June 16, 2020.

County Commissioners will not serve on any board or organization seeking funding from County Government unless said service is a requirement through legislation or legal agreement.

X. Performance Contracts
All grant awards will be administered via performance contracts. Contracts will include a scope of work that defines services, deliverables and reporting measures.

FY2021 contracts will be for the period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. All funds must be spent or returned to the County by June 30, 2021. Requests for extensions will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Contracts will also include standard indemnification and insurance expectations, which lists the minimum insurance coverage which Contractors agree to procure and maintain. Required insurances and levels vary depending on the nature of the project and can include types such as: Worker’s Compensation; Commercial General Liability; Employer’s Liability; Professional Liability; etc. The County will collect and review certificates of insurance as part of contract compliance. Insurance is an allowable expense and can be built into the grant funding budget.

In addition to the standard contract expectations for all organizations doing business with the County, nonprofits receiving grant funds must also:
   a. Open their books for the contracting department;
   b. Submit copies of annual IRS tax filings (Form 990s); and
   c. Submit annual financial statements based on a tiered structure, consistent with industry standard practice:
      • Audit: Organizations with annual revenues of $300,000 or greater must submit financial statements audited in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.
      • Review: Those with revenues between $100,000 and $300,000 must submit financial statements reviewed in accordance with applicable Statements on Standards for
Accounting and Review Services (SSARS).

- Compilation: Those with revenues of less than $100,000 must submit non-disclosure financial statements compiled in accordance with applicable SSARS.
- Nonprofit agencies may request a waiver to use other third-party provided documents.

Contract performance will be monitored and evaluated by the County throughout the year, including review of financial and programmatic reporting. Performance results will be published online in a funded projects dashboard. Approval of renewal grant funding requests shall be contingent on meeting performance criteria.

XI. Minority Business

Buncombe County’s adopted Minority Business Plan encourages participation by minority and women owned businesses. Buncombe County policy is to provide minority contractors an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of its contracting and procurement programs, and to prohibit any and all discrimination against persons or businesses in pursuit of these opportunities. Minority Business Plan questions may be directed to Buncombe County Procurement at (828) 250-4154. Sources for certified minority firms are available at http://www.doa.nc.gov/hub.

XII. Lead Department/Division

Staffing for this grant program is provided by Buncombe County’s Strategic Partnerships Department.