

# Recreation Services-Broadband Park Infrastructure

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*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal  
Recovery Funds*

## ***Buncombe County Government***

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***Mac Stanley***

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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\*

Public

## Nonprofit documentation

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

## Name of Project.\*

Recreation Services-Broadband Park Infrastructure

## 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\*

\$275,000.00

## 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

Infrastructure and/or Broadband

## Brief Project Description\*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Recreation Services seeks funding to facilitate the expansion of Broadband in multiple Buncombe County parks (e.g., Lake Julian and Buncombe County Sports Park). Recreation Services park Wi-Fi expansion began in Fall 2021 at Lake Julian and is expected to be complete by May 2022. Owen and BCSP are in the design stage looking to start work in late spring. Both projects will not have ample coverage within the whole park. Recreation Services staff identified additional funding is needed to complete the projects at Owen and BCSP. We are also looking to fund additional coverage areas at Lake Julian, this project will produce high-quality, future-proof Broadband to serve residents of these parks for decades. This project will meet the immediate needs of our approximately 1M annual patrons using the park for remote work and school work as well as everyday use.

## Project Plan\*

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

Project Selection:

Recreation Services worked with the Information Technology Department to identify a vendor. If additional funds are awarded, this vendor would continue to be used.

Project Implementation:

The vendor has developed a park design for the project implementation. Upon award of the funds, the vendor would procure and install equipment. This schedule may be dependent on supply chain limitations. Project construction will be coordinated with the Buncombe County General Services team.

**Project Evaluation:**

Recreation Services will review monthly usage reports to determine usage.

## Statement of Need\*

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

High-speed Internet is currently unavailable across Buncombe County Parks. Broadband access at parks will give our patrons connectivity throughout the park to work remotely as well as do schoolwork remotely. With the addition of turf fields at Buncombe County Sports Park, the new playground at Charles D. Owen, and many of the activities going on at Lake Julian we are looking at a major increase in park visitation.

## 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.

The COVID-19 public health emergency has underscored the importance of being out in parks. Many people have had remote school and work at these various parks and have not had the available means to do their work therefore having to use personal hotspots. Many Buncombe County residents were unable to complete normal daily activities related to education and employment at these readily available park locations. Unable to complete related tasks due to the impacts of COVID-19 and the subsequent closure of schools and sending employees home to work. Broadband access is a critical need to all residents of Buncombe County and without such access, residents were disproportionately impacted by the risks of COVID-19.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) highlighted the growing necessity of broadband in daily lives through its analysis of NTIA Internet Use Survey data, noting that Americans turn to broadband internet access service for every facet of daily life including work and study. With increased use of technology for daily activities and the movement by many businesses and schools to operate remotely during the pandemic, broadband has become even more critical for people across the country to carry out their daily lives.

Recognizing the need for such connectivity, the ARPA provides funds to State, territorial, local, and Tribal governments to make necessary investments in broadband infrastructure. The guidance issued by the Department of Treasury for the American Rescue Plan specifically cites broadband infrastructure as an eligible use of the funding. Specifically, the guidance cites this use of funds, "Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure, making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and to expand access to broadband internet".

## Population Served\*

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

This will serve primarily residents of south, west, and eastern Buncombe County. Recreation Services parks being impacted will be Buncombe County Sports Park, Charles D. Owen Park, and Lake Julian Park. Below you will see the visitation of the three parks over two fiscal years, the increase in visitation from the past years shows a vast need for broadband in our parks.

#### FY 2020-2021 Park Visitation Numbers (people)

- Lake Julian (Main Park) 447,000
- Lake Julian (Backside) 202,101
- Owen Park 421,524
- BCSP 634,431

#### FY 2019-2020 Park Visitation Numbers (people)

- Lake Julian (Main Park) 324,447
- Lake Julian (Backside) 160,209
- Owen Park 282,870
- BCSP 637,218

## 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.

The proposed impact of this project is to allow park visitors to utilize internet services as needed. These three parks average nearly 1M visitors per year. Parks Recreation Services will track usage statistics to understand user adoption.

- Number of unique users accessing internet
- Average Number of minutes used by park visitors
- Number of users accessing internet for school-related purposes (survey)

## Evaluation\*

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

Recreation Services staff will compile monthly usage reports from the vendor.

## 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?

The provision of broadband in our parks will reduce the impacts of the digital divide. The digital divide refers to the gap between those able to benefit from the digital age and those who are not. The concern is that people without access to the Internet and other information and communication technologies will be disadvantaged, as they are unable or less able to obtain digital information, shop online, participate democratically, or learn skills and offer skills. An individual must be able to connect to achieve enhancement of social as well as achieve mass economic gains in productivity. Being able to provide this need in a park space that is accessible to everyone would help with this impact.

Access to the internet in our parks will allow school aged children to access educational materials and attend school remotely when required in one of our park spaces. Additionally, adults will be able to work remotely, manage home-based businesses, and participate in online workforce training and education programs in a beautiful park space.

The digital divide also impacts children's ability to learn and grow in low-income school districts. Without Internet access, students are unable to cultivate necessary tech skills in order to understand today's dynamic economy.

## 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.

This funding will be used with the selected provider. The provider will install the infrastructure. The subcontractor will perform 100% of the work.

## 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 support the management of this project. The selected provider is a global supplier of telecommunications services and has committed resources to this 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 - Recreation Services - Additional Broadband.xlsx

## Special Considerations\*

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

This project supports Buncombe 2025 goals for educated and capable community, resident well-being, vibrant economy, and equity. This infrastructure will enable residents to access educational material and remote work opportunities within some of our Buncombe County parks. The need for the internet starts while children are in school – necessary for matters such as school portal access, homework submission, and

assignment research. This broadband infrastructure will give children the opportunity to complete those tasks within a Buncombe County park.

# File Attachment Summary

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## *Applicant File Uploads*

- Recovery Funds - Recreation Services - Additional Broadband.xlsx





List expenses here			\$	-		
			<b>Total</b>	\$	275,000.00	