

Expansion of Biltmore Avenue Family Dentistry to Increase Access to Pediatric and Family Dental Care

RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

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Application Form

Question Group

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.*

Expansion of Biltmore Avenue Family Dentistry to Increase Access to Pediatric and Family Dental Care

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*

\$750,000.00

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

Business Support/Economic Development

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Biltmore Avenue Family Dentistry currently has 3 offices located in Doctor's Park beside Mission Hospital. We accept most dental insurance plans as in-network providers and see all NC Medicaid and Health choice patients in need of care. There is a tremendous lack of access to care in this part of the state, and our current offices are not enough to handle the load.

We are proposing the addition of 3 new office spaces in Doctor's Park. We would need funding for dental equipment, supplies and technology to open the offices. Two of these facilities would be dedicated to pediatric dentistry and the third would be a family practice that sees all ages. Many of our pediatric patients are currently having to wait 6 months or more to be seen by a pediatric specialist, and often drive 90 minutes in each direction for a networked provider. With the addition of the new office space, we will bring on our own pediatric specialists who can see these children locally and in a timely fashion.

Project Plan*

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

Biltmore Avenue Family Dentistry was established in 2013 by Dr. Leslie Wessinger with the intent of bringing inclusive, high-quality dentistry to Western North Carolina. Our office sees patients of all ages and is a proud participant in North Carolina's state funded plans with dental coverage that include: Medicaid for

Pregnant Women, NC Health Choice, Medicaid for Foster Children, Medicaid for Disabled Individuals, Medicaid for Families with Dependent Children, and Medicaid for Infants and Children. We often find that individuals and families that are covered under these plans have a difficult time finding a dental provider.

It is our mission to expand our office to help our community by providing additional dental care. Currently we are unable to accept new patients due to our limited size. Additional funding would allow us to see approximately 80 - 100 additional patients per day. Although we do offer dentistry for children, many of our younger patients require hospital sedation or advanced care with a pediatric dentist. At the moment, we are referring these patients to Caldwell County, approximately a 90 minute drive from Asheville, so that they can receive the care they need. By bringing on two pediatric dentists, we can eliminate the need to refer to pediatric dental care outside Buncombe County. Pediatric dentists have additional residency training that allows them to handle young children, sometimes less than 1 year old, either in-office or in a hospital. We hope to create a pediatric dentistry hub for Western North Carolina here in the heart of Buncombe County.

This project can be completed in as little as one year, but may take an additional year if upfitting space takes longer than expected. We plan to use \$250,000 for one family office (Adults and Minors) and \$500,000 for two pediatric offices (Children Only). We have space reserved for the offices within Doctors Park, where our other three offices are located. Each office is expected to take approximately 3 - 6 months to complete.

Statement of Need*

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

According to the latest reports, Buncombe County has 113,7232 (1) out of 259,5763 (2) residents who are enrolled in a Medicaid Plan. However, Buncombe County only has 38 North Carolina Medicaid registered dental providers. Of those providers registered, 12 are accepting new patients and 26 are not (3). Buncombe County is also seeing an influx of new residents. Over the last decade, Buncombe county has seen a yearly population growth ranging from 1,932 to 3,152 annually (4).

Unfortunately, there are not enough dental providers within Buncombe County to handle the current population of enrolled Medicaid residents. Our office is currently turning away 400 - 500 new patients per month and referring out 100 - 200 patients that we are unable to care for. Biltmore Avenue Family Dentistry hopes to fill this need by opening three new offices that can see approximately 4000 - 5000 patients each per year. This will help alleviate part of the provider deficit within Buncombe County.

References:

(1) NC Medicaid. (n.d.). Retrieved April 12, 2022, from <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/medicaid-and-health-choice-enrollment-reports>

(2) North Carolina counties by population. North Carolina Outline. (n.d.). Retrieved April 12, 2022, from https://www.northcarolina-demographics.com/counties_by_population

(3) Find a dentist. InsureKidsNow.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved April 12, 2022, from <https://www.insurekidsnow.gov/find-a-dentist/index.html?state=NC&BP=NC%2BMedicaid&rad=50&Loc=28801&pat=1>

(4) Buncombe County, North Carolina population 2022. (n.d.). Retrieved April 12, 2022, from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/nc/buncombe-county-population>

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.

Since the beginning of Covid-19, the dental industry has been severely impacted in multiple areas. At first, we were forced to close for 2 months by a state mandate. Once we reopened, a number of our staff refused to return over fear of the virus. Those who did return, demanded higher wages for taking on the risk. It continues to be a problem finding qualified help in this area. Many potential employees are only interested in working from home, while others will only work for the office that can afford to pay the most.

We invested in expensive external suction devices to decrease the viral load in the air, commercial grade air purifiers, as well as elaborate PPE. The cost of all of our supplies has exponentially increased, as the demand for supplies is high and the supply is limited. Regardless of the cost involved, we continue to provide the highest level of service to all our patients.

Population Served*

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

At Biltmore Avenue Family Dentistry, our main goal is to provide excellent dental care to everyone, regardless of their personal or financial situation. We are networked with every major insurance company, as well as NC Medicaid. Over half of our patient base is comprised of recipients of Medicaid who are in extremely low-income situations. A large percentage of our patient population has not seen a dentist regularly in the past 10 years. We spend a huge amount of time educating about the importance of regular dental care, and how neglected dentition and gums will impact the body as a whole. According to an online article by NC Health News, NC has a "Dental Desert," which is the lack of adequate oral health care across the state. 98 out of NC's 100 counties have been classified by the Federal Government as being a shortage area of providers (5). Of the available providers, even fewer fully accept Medicaid patients. We are trying to help bridge that gap here in Asheville.

References:

(5) Carolina Public Press, Oct 24, 2020, NC Health News/viewed
04/06/2022/northcarolinahealthnews.org/2020/10/24/dental-deserts-inadequate-oral-health-care-nc/

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.

This project will positively impact Buncombe County residents who have difficulty finding dental care, especially pediatric patients who are enrolled in a North Carolina Medicaid plan. The following metrics will be used to evaluate the results of adding three additional offices, two solely dedicated to pediatric care:

1. Number of new patients seen at the offices. This will give us an overall idea of how many new patients are seeking dental care.
2. Number of new patients that are enrolled in a North Carolina Medicaid plan. This will give us an idea of our positive impact on our current Medicaid enrolled population we are able to serve.
3. Reduction in referrals out of the county for dental treatment. Our goal is to completely eliminate out-of-county referrals for pediatric care.
4. Reduction in wait times for dental care, especially for pediatric patients whom we currently are unable to see.
5. The ability to take new patients and see them quickly. If we were to start taking new patients again, they would be faced with a 2 - 4 month wait time for their initial appointment. We hope to reduce this to same-day for emergencies and 1 - 3 weeks for routine dental care.

Evaluation*

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

As we build and open the three projected offices, the following metrics will be routinely monitored to assure compliance with our contract:

1. Monthly evaluation of New Patients.
2. Number and percent of New Patients who are enrolled in a North Carolina Medicaid plan.
3. How many out-of-county referrals as compared to our current state.
4. Average wait times to be seen as compared to our current wait times to schedule an appointment.

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?

Many of our patients are minorities who have been hit the hardest by the impact of Covid-19. They tell stories of how their family members have succumbed to the virus, and how this has financially and emotionally devastated them. People who previously had jobs and private insurance have been forced out of work and onto Medicaid. Their former dental offices would no longer see them as patients. With the expansion of our office, we want to welcome every patient with open arms, providing a dental home for them, regardless of their financial state.

We have strategically positioned ourselves to be centrally located in Asheville, beside Mission Hospital. We are close to major interstates and are located directly on the bus route. This has made us easier to reach by those with transportation hardships.

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 project proposal is for new dental equipment, all other aspects of the project will be internally funded. Our equipment and supply company is Benco Dental Company (Benco) who will be designing all three offices as well. Benco offers a free design service for laying out the floor plan of dental offices with the purchase of equipment.

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.

We started Biltmore Avenue Family Dentistry in the fall of 2013. We began with just 3 employees: one dentist (myself, Dr. Leslie Wessinger), one hygienist and my husband, Jeremy. At this time, we had one treatment room. Since 2013, we have expanded to employ 4 doctors, and over 20 additional employees. We

went from nothing to 3 thriving practices that are all completely at capacity. Our office has an excellent reputation in the community, and we are excited to continue to give back to the local area that has so graciously supported us.

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-budget-template Leslie Wessinger DDS PA.xlsx

Special Considerations*

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

Dentistry is an often overlooked, but extremely valuable member of the healthcare community. It is our goal to provide exceptional dental care to as many families within Buncombe County as we can. Based on our current feedback from patients, new patients calling in and referrals to out-of-county pediatric dental facilities, Buncombe County would greatly benefit from two additional pediatric dentistry offices. In addition, parents often tell us they like to establish themselves at the same office as their children.

By adding an additional family dental office, we can see all members of a family. This will help reinforce the importance of dentistry within each family, increasing routine preventative care. According to Cigna, routine care reduces emergency care upwards of 20% and while saving families and North Carolina Medicaid money. Cigna found a 37.3% savings to customers from reviewed dental claims between 2012 and 2019. These results suggest a positive impact to families and a reduction in North Carolina Medicaid claims filed with routine dental care.

References:

(6) Unexpected ways to reduce medical costs. (n.d.). Retrieved April 12, 2022, from <https://dental-dna.cigna.com/unexpected-ways-to-save>

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Recovery-Funds-budget-template Leslie Wessinger DDS PA.xlsx

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

Organization Name:	Leslie Wessinger DDS PA, DBA: Biltmore Avenue Family Dentistry
Project Name:	Expansion of Biltmore Avenue Family Dentistry to Increase Access to Pediatric and Family Dental Care
Amount Requested:	\$750,000

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 750,000.00	Pending	
Office 1 (Pediatric Dentistry)	\$ 1,200,000.00	Pending	Expected Annual Revenue Based on Current Offices
Office 2 (Pediatric Dentistry)	\$ 1,200,000.00	Pending	Expected Annual Revenue Based on Current Offices
Office 2 (Family Dentistry)	\$ 1,200,000.00	Pending	Expected Annual Revenue Based on Current Offices
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Total	\$ 4,350,000.00		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Benco Dental - Equipment, Supplies and Technology	\$ 750,000.00		\$ 750,000.00	Capital	
Payroll	\$ 2,800,000.00		\$ 2,800,000.00	Operating	Expected Annual Expense Based on Current Offices
Laboratory Fees	\$ 42,000.00		\$ 42,000.00	Operating	Expected Annual Expense Based on Current Offices
Office Expenses	\$ 80,000.00		\$ 80,000.00	Operating	Expected Annual Expense Based on Current Offices
Repairs and Maintenance	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00	Operating	Expected Annual Expense Based on Current Offices
Technology	\$ 28,000.00		\$ 28,000.00	Operating	Expected Annual Expense Based on Current Offices
Insurance	\$ 12,000.00		\$ 12,000.00	Operating	Expected Annual Expense Based on Current Offices
Utilities	\$ 22,000.00		\$ 22,000.00	Operating	Expected Annual Expense Based on Current Offices
Miscellaneous	\$ 20,000.00		\$ 20,000.00	Operating	Expected Annual Expense Based on Current Offices
Supplies	\$ 60,000.00		\$ 60,000.00	Operating	Expected Annual Expense Based on Current Offices
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Total			\$ 3,824,000.00		