

COVID-19 Economic Recovery Programs

*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal
Recovery Funds*

YMI Cultural Center

Ms. Dewana LaShanda Little
39 S. Market Street
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

ymicc@att.net
O: 8282574045
M: 8287476097

Mr. Philippe Philippe Rosse

39 South Market Street
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

philippe@ymiculturalcenter.org
O: 8282438762

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*

Nonprofit

Nonprofit documentation

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

Buncombe County- ARPA - May Submission.xlsx

Name of Project.*

COVID-19 Economic Recovery Programs

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?

Updated version of previously submitted proposal

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$1,000,000.00

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

Workforce

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

YMICC has begun a capacity-building project to repair its building and enhance space usage for expanded economic and social programs which together constitute a strong economic recovery model. Programs include: (1) workforce training; (2) peer support to remove barriers to employment; (3) a jail diversion program with Buncombe County; (4) Successful Transitions, for home ownership and asset building; (4) youth-based programs such as Positive Steps, the Black Student Union, tutoring, and college tours; and (5) business incubation through a partnership with Eagle Market Street.

The building restoration will serve as a beacon for cultural history of this population. The restoration positions YMICC as a major community resource through which to expand partnerships with public and private leaders on behalf of equity for this disproportionately impacted community

YMICC's physical stabilization and service growth goals are upward economic mobility for the African-American community.

Project Plan*

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

The proposed program is a comprehensive initiative to preserve, restore, and renovate the historic YMICC building. With these changes, YMICC will continue to build capacity and support equity for the local African-American community. The structure and implementation of the project is as follows:

Programmatically, YMICC's key programs (workforce, homeownership and equity building, and youth services and education) are operational. They will continue as well as expand during the renovation of building thanks to community partnerships. Local stakeholders, including WNC Bridge Foundation and the United Way, have donated space for the YMICC staff to be located. A strategic planning process, including the hiring of a Managing Director, will be initiated in the summer 2022. This staff will be responsible for program site coordination and expansion with the key stakeholders. In December 2022, all programming will move back to the YMICC facility, with expanded capacity and outreach.

Spatially, renovations will expand and re-purpose existing spaces to increase program and service capacity and community engagement. This work includes creating a new classroom and multipurpose event room, upgrading existing exhibition galleries and auditorium, and improving the building's rental office and retail spaces. The project will also create permanent displays for their collection of art and artifacts celebrating African-American history and culture, helping to stimulate additional tourism to the area.

Structurally, the project will address deteriorated building conditions and ensure the long-term health of the facility and its users. In partnership with YMICC, Self-Help released a request for qualifications (RFQ) for design and construction services, ultimately selecting a team led by Neighboring Concepts (a Black-owned architecture firm based in Charlotte) and supported by general contracting firm WEAVERCOOKE Construction. This team has worked closely with YMICC to turn their vision into a comprehensive structural plan that maximizes the building's potential.

Following is the project timeline:

Phase/Milestone	Estimated Completion
Complete fundraising campaign	January 1, 2022 to October 31, 2022
Sign construction contracts, obtain building permit, and secure final pricing	January -April 2022
Construction opening and completion	May 1 to November 30, 2022
Expansion of workforce development program	June 1, 2022
Initiation of summer 2022 Positive Steps Youth Program with YMCA	June 15, 2022
Organizational Strategic Planning and Board Development	July 1 to September 30, 2022
Opening of Site and On-Boarding Services	December 1, 2022
Review of FY2022 and Strategic Planning for FY 23 Funding	January and February, 2023
Completion of FY2022 programs/ Annual Reporting	June 2023

Statement of Need*

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

YMICC began more than 130 years ago to create equitable resources for African-American residents in Asheville. Today, through its programming and community partnerships, YMICC continues to honor its beginnings. Located in the historic downtown "Block," YMICC is an anchor to the exciting revitalization of Asheville's long-standing African-American Community.

YMICC's building was constructed in 1892 and is recognized as a national historic landmark. Assessments show the structural integrity of YMICC has been compromised, with the last significant repair work 40 years

ago. As such, proposed funding prioritizes work required for YMICC facility to continue providing Buncombe County residents with equitable programs, services, and special events. The request for funding is forward-thinking strategic development.

A major area of renovation for YMICC's facility will be on repurposing interior spaces to accommodate more programs, cultural events, incubation modules, and event capacity. This work will also maximize income-generating potential through improved event and long-term tenant rentals. Example of some of the highlighted changes include: (1) repurposing the basement level for adult and youth classrooms, workstations, and training programs; (2) creating multiple collaborative community working and meeting spaces equipped with hybrid technology; (3) renovating administrative areas including more responsive CRM programs; (4) adding a co-working space for ongoing community partnerships; and (5) improving current business incubation locations including addition of a functional kitchen.

With changes to the building and its stabilization, YMICC can shift its focus fully to equitable opportunities across the county.

[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.

Economic: Even before COVID-19, there were significant economic gaps: (1) The mean household income for Blacks is just 70.9% (\$30,000) that for Asheville (\$42,333); (2) 39% of Black women live below the Asheville poverty line, and 61% of single Black mothers live below the poverty line; (3) Asheville has the 8th lowest rate of minority-owned start-ups among mid-sized MSAs. White populations own 80% of the nation's start-up businesses; African Americans own 3%. With greater space capacity provided through this grant, YMICC will expand its workforce development and training programs to build job skills for high-demand jobs; support workforce re-entry; and serve as a business incubator.

Homeownership and Equity: There is a 10x wealth gap between white and black households in net worth. This gap grew during COVID, as unemployment hit minorities the hardest, when lower-wage jobs shut down. The current homeownership rate for Blacks is currently below the 1968 level of 40.9%, in comparison with homeownership for non-Hispanic Whites which stands at 73.1%. This lack of opportunity for generational wealth and stability has historical roots as well as ongoing social and economic sustained factors including discrimination. With this grant, YMICC will implement culturally relevant services that maximize successful multi-sector partnerships and resources to address inequity.

Education: Estimated learning losses, particularly for minorities, are six to 12 months for reading and math respectively. More classroom space will be allocated to educational programs with this funding. YMICC will schedule afterschool daily tutoring and homework support. Mentors will be made available to youth to help with readjustments to an onsite school experience following COVID. These supports will help reduce the alarming achievement gaps—close to 60% (as reported by Asheville City schools), increase early grade literacy rates, and improve college and career readiness for older youth.

Population Served*

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

The African-American community in Buncombe County is the target population. This includes residents living in Qualified Census Tracts 1.00, 3.00, 9.00, and 14.00 contiguous to YMICC. Through its youth programming, the target population extends further into the community. Direct services for these residents will mitigate long-term impacts of the pandemic by increasing engagement with programs, services, and cultural and community events provided at YMICC.

Its longevity and high-quality programming has established YMICC as a center for African-American culture and education. Its vision and mission reflected its continued commitment to equitable opportunities for the population it serves.

Through ongoing programs as well as monthly and annual community activities, more than 2,000 participants engage in YMICC's core programs. These individuals come from a variety of demographic and economic backgrounds, but primarily are local, Black, and from low socioeconomic backgrounds. This population will continue to be a core constituency for YMICC. However, with expanded capacity, marketing and recruitment, YMI anticipates integrating the whole community in social interaction as well as promoting education, historic understanding, cultural exchange, and recreation throughout the County.

Through community forums, cultural events (including Goombay), and cultural engagement, tens of thousands individuals will engage in cultural and recreational efforts. These events will integrate the whole community in social interaction and promote education, historic understanding, cultural exchange, and recreation. These events will be promoted throughout the County and will include all demographics.

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.

Workforce Readiness: 120 participants will enroll. Achievement will be measured by the percent who: (1) receive wraparound services; (2) improve their technical and work skills; (3) earn an industry-approved certification or credential; (4) continue onto postsecondary education; (5) secure employment; and (6) retain employment.

Homeownership: Expected outcomes are: (1) 6 aspiring homebuyers will be matched with down payment assistance; (2) 25 participants will enroll in the program, and 20 will complete the program; (3) 1,000 people will be reached through community engagement, with 100 people having gained knowledge, skills, and a connection to resources from program activities; and (4) 10 people will receive home or business loan financing as a result of the program, either through Self-Help or other partner organizations.

Youth/Education: In partnership with the YMCA, the YMICC's Positive Steps program provides enrichment opportunities for youth ages 11 to 18 to improve their professional development skills through financial awareness, goal setting, and mentorship. Expected outcomes include regular attendance, increased participation, and increased levels of knowledge as measured by teacher input and testing. Afterschool and weekend tutoring will also continue to show gains.

Community Engagement: YMICC is an important cornerstone of the Black community. One of YMICC's strategic goals is greater engagement across the Black community to create a welcoming environment for all populations. YMICC anticipates increased attendance at its cultural events; increased foot traffic in YMI's galleries featuring local artists and permanent exhibitions of Black history and culture; and increased

attendance at shared community events. Results will be between 20% to 40% increase in attendance across these events.

Evaluation*

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

Workforce: Evaluation will include skills pre-tests to establish baseline data; and five- (mid-program) and ten-month (end of program) testing to measure growth. All participants will receive bi-monthly progress assessments to monitor progress. Participants will be required to prepare a video or written summary of their program experience.

Homeownership and Equity: Evaluation metrics include the number of participants who: (1) complete workshops and trainings; (2) reach savings goal, thereby qualifying for the match; (3) report (pre/post-testing) knowledge gained; (4) report behavioral change on exit evaluations, due to knowledge gained; (5) earn Homeowner Readiness Certification; (6) secure home or small business loans; and (7) receive down payment assistance.

Youth and Education: For youth education programs, attendance will be monitored. The quantitative evaluation will include skills pre-tests to capture baseline data for measuring growth, mid-program and end of program testing. Qualitative measures will be self-report and teacher input. Progress reports will monitor improvements as well as challenges.

Community Relations: Evaluation will track attendance at collaborative community and historic events hosted at or sponsored by YMICC. The number of community meetings, forums, and training sessions will be tracked by number of participants and organizations represented. An analysis of organizational participation will determine impact in terms of size, location, and population served to ensure equity.

Revenue-generation with Building: Impact of building changes are measured by: (1) updating internal systems are projected to save YMICC up to 30% in operating costs, which could be reallocated to equity-based programs; and (2) making use of new spaces across the building is expected to increase community participation in programs and services by 40% the first year and 20% annually thereafter.

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?

Through sustainability of its facilities as well as educational, health, workforce, cultural, and community programs and services, YMI uniquely addresses the opportunity gap faced by Blacks. This root cause of inequity refers to the arbitrary circumstances in which people are born and how these circumstances too often determine their opportunities in life. YMI's efforts will instead ensure all people have the chance to achieve to the best of their potential.

YMI embraces its role as a lead organization for advancing equity and empowerment for African-Americans in Buncombe County. YMICC is intrinsically culturally literate, has the facilities and equipment to dedicate to the program, and is comfortably accessible to the target population. Through restoration and renovation of its physical building and internal space, YMI will play an even greater role in ensuring equity is

a standard for the county. The YMI has served as a key forum for difficult, but critical conversations, regarding issues of racial reconciliation and the best path forward as a whole community. The YMI leadership has served on multiple Boards and committees, and will continue to provide a key location for continued engagement.

Through its community involvement and collaborative partnerships, YMI has the human capacity to develop and deliver a meaningful program with achievable outcomes. Staff members comprise qualified professionals who play a key role in building wealth and assets in the Black Asheville community. This leadership will extend to other Black community organizations to ensure a stronger grassroots presence.

In this position, YMI is best suited to eliminate inequitable opportunities across the health, economic, workforce, and education sectors in Buncombe County.

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.

To eliminate duplication of services, YMI has adopted a model to prioritize partnering with and expanding existing community initiatives from all sectors.

☐ Economic Development partners include Self-Help Credit Union, OnTrack, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (AB Tech), Asheville Chamber of Commerce, and Mountain BizWorks.

☐ Key business leaders include Keller Williams, Emery Electric, MB Haynes, Conmet, and Virtelle Hotel Group and East Fork Pottery.

☐ Youth and Education partners include the YMCA, UNC-Asheville, Asheville City and Buncombe County schools, and local colleges and universities.

☐ Health and Wellness includes partnering with the Buncombe County Department of Health, VAYA Health, Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) and Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement (ABIPA)

Facility:

WeaverCooke Construction will serve as general contractor for renovations. Other participating members of the team include: (1) Neighboring Concepts, a Black-owned architectural firm, which will serve as the lead designer; (2) O'Brien Architecture, which will be a preservation consultant; and (3) C2 Engineering Solutions, a full-service mechanical, electrical, and plumbing consulting firm.

Initial feasibility studies and critical structural repairs were supported by a grant from the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority.

Community:

YMI is strengthening partnerships with key tenants on the "Block," including Eagle Market Streets, Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church and the River Front Development Group. These partnerships will be in parallel to the larger community-wide engagement through the cultural and tourism offices of the City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and Chamber of Commerce, as well as partners in the adjacent African-American communities in Western North Carolina. Emerging partnerships with all sectors and the faith community will continue to expand and sustain all efforts.

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.

YMICC staff and Board is 100% representative of and connected to the African-American community. YMICC's Board is led by Anthony Thomas, owner of UpStaff Personnel, who has served in community leadership for more than a decade. Dewana Little, YMICC's Executive Director, has a strong background in organizational capacity-building and banking, including her work with Self-Help Credit Union. To meet its growing need, YMICC has expanded its staff from three FTE in 2019 to a targeted 11 FTE by 2023. This staffing includes dedicated financial, development, and equity outreach directors. The Board of Directors added five new community leaders in 2022 and instituted a community membership model for greater accountability. In addition to these key staff, each major program will be led by a Board-sanctioned community leader with expertise in the program area. These individuals will provide insight and guidance in implementing key services and integration of partners and stakeholders.

YMI's current funding campaign has amended key historic financial issues including (1) retiring past debt; (2) paying all historic and current taxes; (3) increasing and diversifying revenues for cash flow; and (4) updated audited statements which are currently being contracted for FY2021. In addition to building renovations, \$1.4 million of funds are being raised for increased organizational capacity. This funding will promote strategic planning, Board development, and staff and volunteer training programs. The goal will be to: (1) increase skills and knowledge through professional development; (2) integrate effective technologies reviews of best practices; and (3) discuss new ways to improve processes, programs, policies, and relationships with the community. These efforts will continue to enhance YMICC's current ability to deliver programming through local, state, and federal funding sources.

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.

Buncombe County- ARPA - May Submission.pdf

Special Considerations*

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

When the YMI was built, there was a lack of educational opportunities for Black people in Asheville. The YMI provided a night school for adults, a day school for youth, and the city's first kindergarten for Black children. A vibrant lecture series combined mechanical and industrial education with the cultural arts. In addition to a swimming pool, public bath, and other health facilities, the YMI also provided other amenities not available to the Black community such as a library, medical office, drug store, funeral parlor, and lecture hall. Congregations without a church home met there, and through the 1960s the YMI provided lodging for African-American travelers turned away from segregated hotels.

Since the first brick was laid, YMI has reflected the self-reliance and richness of the Black community and has garnered respect from policymakers and stakeholders across the county. Intentional programming has served to support the community through: (1) preservation of cultural artifacts and heritage; (2) creative

place-making and hosting of special events and festivals; (3) educational and community programs; and (4) economic development and business incubation. Today, the facility houses archives and artifacts in permanent exhibits and a library that traces African-American history in the region. Exhibits showcase the work of local artists, and festivals held throughout the year celebrate Black culture and encourage community involvement.

The YMI has pursued a diverse funding strategy in addressing the multiple aspects of its mission which included a million dollar submission for the City of Asheville ARPA to promote community communication and a similar request to the Dogwood Health Trust for capacity building and support with our renovations.

** Please note, schematic and detailed reports of construction and financial planning and fundraising can be provided as an addendum.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Buncombe County- ARPA - May Submission.xlsx
- Buncombe County- ARPA - May Submission.pdf

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

Organization Name:	YMI Cultural Center
Project Name:	COVID-19 Economic Recovery Programs
Amount Requested:	\$1,000,000

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 1,000,000.00	Pending	
Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (TDA)	\$ 300,000.00	Confirmed	Received a Tourism Product Development Fund award in 2018 for capital improvements. (Total award- \$800,000)
National Park Service - Historic Preservation Fund	\$ 228,000.00	Confirmed	Grant awarded in August 2021 for capital improvements. (Total award- \$496,000)
Cannon Foundation	\$ 50,000.00	Confirmed	Confirmed and received.
Tzedek Foundation	\$ 20,000.00	Confirmed	Confirmed and received.
City of Asheville COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 100,000.00	Pending	Requested \$1M for increasing community communication for COVID 19 relief
Dogwood Health Trust	\$ 100,000.00	Pending	Requested \$1M over 2 years for capital improvements and capacity building. Application currently being reviewed.
Individual Donations	\$ 100,000.00	Pending (In Process)	Have raised more than \$150,000 with individual campaign starting in January 1, 2022 and ending October 31, 2022
Corporate Donations	\$ 100,000.00	Pending (In process)	Have raised more than \$135,000 with individual campaign starting in January 1, 2022 and ending October 31, 2022
Total	\$ 1,998,000.00		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Site improvements	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 82,250.00	\$ 112,250.00	Capital	Sidewalk repairs, curb/gutter repairs, and upgrading building entrances to meet all ADA accessibility requirements.
Electrical service, data wiring, and telecommunications	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 224,000.00	\$ 364,000.00	Capital	Upgrade electrical service and data wiring to expand internet capability for use by staff and participants in youth, workforce, and equity programs; upgrade telecommunications systems to support more robust online/hybrid community engagement.
Construction of new program/event spaces	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 116,000.00	Capital	Construction of an additional classroom and multipurpose event room for youth education and workforce development programs. These rooms will also provide meeting space for partner organizations and African-American community agencies.
Retail storefront upgrades	\$ 70,000.00	\$ -	\$ 70,000.00	Capital	Upgrades to retail storefront spaces to support business incubation programs in partnership with Eagle Market Street. Serve as a central location for development of 'The Block' as a cultural and economic hub for the African-American community.
Office upgrades	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	Capital	Upgrades to office spaces to support Peer Support Specialist and other key community-facing staff.
Board Room upgrades	\$ 40,000.00	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00	Capital	Equip the Board Room to support online/hybrid communications among YMI leaders and to support meetings & connections among current and emerging community leaders.

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