



Tipping Point Grants

I. Purpose

These are small grants to help amplify community efforts. These grants will either fuel what is already happening or allow you to develop your own local projects that create pathways to greater resiliency in your community – actions that will stack positive factors, such as stronger connection, communication, and development of our community leaders, while offloading negative factors like isolation, hopelessness, and violence. These initiatives help build out a resource grid in our community that enables all of us to be safer and healthier. The intention of the program is to not only provide a financial infusion, but also bolster existing community connections and communication platforms. Ultimately, we are looking to develop leaders while increasing both your connections and the ability to communicate your work to the community. Those efforts will also help lead to eliminating barriers such as isolation and hopelessness. This funding source is aimed at bolstering individual innovative ideas and existing nonprofits that are vital to the health of our community. All individual innovators must be in partnership with a nonprofit agency.

II. Funding

Tipping Point Grants are supported through general county funds, which are budgeted as part of Buncombe County's annual budget. The amount for FY2025 is \$100,000, subject to budget adoption. Tipping Point Grants will be allocated at \$5,000 per project.

III. Eligibility

To be eligible for a Tipping Point Grant, an organization and project must meet the following criteria:

- a. **Nonprofit.** Applicants must be nonprofit organizations, classified as tax exempt by the Internal Revenue Service, in active operation as an incorporated nonprofit 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 sponsor 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 before the application deadline. No late applications will be accepted.
- d. **Projects.** Project must connect to "Ensuring Positive Place," "Connecting People," and/or "Improving Equitable Opportunity". For more information on the THRIVE model, [read here](#).
 - Funding must be used for a one-time expense, such as equipment, training, materials or staffing, which could help get a project on better footing (tipping it).
 - Funding must be for a new project, activity or new idea to improve an existing program
 - Project funding is not for ongoing operational costs.
 - Previously funded projects are not eligible for funding. Previously funded organizations may apply for new projects.



- e. **Other County Grants.** Projects may not apply for funding from more than one county grant program. Application must be submitted to grant program most closely fitting the proposed project. Details about Buncombe County grant programs are listed at buncombecounty.org/grants

IV. Timeline

December 18, 2023	Grant application opens
January 10, 2024	Grants Open House (optional for applicants) 4:00 – 6:00 pm 200 College Street, Ground Floor Conference Room
February 9, 2024	Applications Due by 5:00 pm
April 26, 2024	Review Team funding recommendations due to County budget office
May 2024	Grant recommendations published with County Manger’s budget message
June 2024	Public hearing on budget as part of Board of Commissioners regular meeting
June 2024	Grant awards finalized with County budget adoption during Board of Commissioners regular meeting
July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025	Funding year

V. Application Process

Applications are due by 5:00 on February 9, 2024. Organizations are encouraged to apply online through Buncombe County’s grant software, which can be accessed at buncombecounty.org/apply or linked through Buncombe County’s grant website at buncombecounty.org/grants. Paper applications are available at and should be returned to 200 College Street, Suite 343, Asheville, NC 28801.

A grants open house (optional for applicants) will be held on January 10, 2024 from 4:00-6:00 pm at 200 College St, Ground Floor Conference Room. The purpose of the session is to provide in-depth information about the grant process for applicants and potential applicants.

Staff is available to answer questions and to provide basic one-on-one support to applicants. Visit <https://calendly.com/buncombe-county/grant-consultations> to sign up for a session. Staff will also work to match applicants with other community-based grant writing resource support if needed.

VI. Required Elements

The application consists of a questionnaire including the following items. Text boxes are limited to 1,500 characters.

1. **Project Description**
2. **Vision:** How do you see this project making a difference in your community? How do you see these funds having an ability to “tip” this project toward greater impact?

3. **Goals:** How does your project connect to: Ensuring Positive Place”, “Connecting People” and/or “Improving Equitable Opportunity”?
4. **Partners:** Provide a list of partners involved in the project and their roles. If the project is using a fiscal sponsor, provide the name and contact information of individual at the nonprofit. What role will the fiscal sponsor have in their project?
5. **Project Budget:** Upload a project budget that includes a listing of proposed expenses for how the grant would be used. Include notes of explanation where needed. Also include information on the overall organization budget.
6. **Sustainability:** Will this project have an ongoing impact after these funds are expended? What are your future funding plans for this project?

VII. Review Team

Grant recommendations will be prepared by the Tipping Point Grant Review Team. The Review Team consists of seven to nine (7-9) members with an application process open to the public, and the County Manager approving yearly appointments.

VIII. Review Criteria

Applications are reviewed by the Tipping Point Grant Review Team utilizing a standardized, points-based system. Reviews will be conducted independently by members of the review team, and discussion will occur during review team meetings.

The following criteria will be considered by the Committee:

- Goals connect to the THRIVE Model;
- Public purpose & community need;
- Connected to a specific neighborhood/geography;
- Led by an individual or community-based group;
- Shows self-organizing coherence;
- Prioritizes community goals above individual interests;
- Evidence of trusting relationships;
- Grounded in cultural identity and sense of place;
- Project scale appropriate to grant amount;
- Capacity-building focus;
- Funding has potential to “Tip” the effort.

IX. Awards

Grant recommendations prepared by the Review Team will be submitted for approval to the Buncombe County Manager. 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 in May 2024. Grant awards will be finalized with budget adoption in June 2024.

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.

FY2025 contracts will be for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. Funds will be paid in full up front once contracts are fully executed. All funds must be spent or returned to the County by June 30, 2025.

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. Contract performance will be monitored and evaluated by the County throughout the year.

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.
 - Nonprofit agencies that may have challenges with these expectations have the option to work with staff in finding alternative proof of financial standing.

Contract performance will be monitored and evaluated by the County throughout the year, including review of financial and programmatic reporting to ensure funds are utilized in accordance with the public purpose for which they have been granted. Performance results will be published online, and all information related to the grant is considered to be public record.

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. For more information, contact Strategic Partnerships Director Rachael Sawyer Nygaard at Rachael.Nygaard@buncombecounty.org or (828) 250-6536.