



Isaac Coleman Economic Community Investment

I. Purpose

People and neighborhoods are impacted by race, poverty, and historical trauma that has resulted in racial disparities. These factors create barriers to educational achievement, economic success and even impact the health of newborn babies. From early on, these cumulative pressures impact children, hampering the development of the necessary social, emotional, educational, and work skills to achieve well-being. As a community, we cannot leave this talent behind. We need every child in our community to realize their potential and contribute to our community.

Named for local social justice champion Isaac Coleman, the Isaac Coleman Economic Community Investment Grant program calls for targeted investments in our communities that are working toward eliminating racial disparities and to champion equitable opportunity.

This fund aims to support Buncombe County's Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) to:

- Enhance quality of life for all individuals through equitable opportunities, such as increasing economic growth and educational improvement in communities;
- Expand community partnerships in equity programs to build social capital by increasing trust among community members and supporting the ability of communities to work together for a common goal;
- Increase the self-organization of community members and capacity of community leaders toward a shared goal while using cultural identity to provide a sense of "place" for communities, bringing them together around cultural pride and ownership.

By focusing on these factors and harnessing the talents of community members, we can build a more vibrant economy and a more resilient community.

II. Funding

Isaac Coleman Economic Community Investment funding is budgeted annually, and the amount available for FY2024 is \$500,000, subject to budget adoption. Grants through this program will be made for a 3-year period with annual renewal subject to project performance and budget availability. Previous annual awards have ranged from \$43,000 to \$150,000. Applicants may request up to \$150,000. Partial awards may be made based on the pool of proposals.

III. Eligibility

To be eligible for an Isaac Coleman Economic Community Investment Grant, an organization and or project must meet the following criteria:

- a. **Nonprofit.** Organizations must be incorporated as nonprofit organizations, classified as tax-exempt by the Internal Revenue Service. Organizations must operate in Buncombe County with service to Buncombe County. If an organization does not meet these criteria, it may partner with another organization to serve as a fiscal agent to administer grant funding. Nonprofit



organizations that have previously been awarded funds are eligible to re-apply for additional awards.

- 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 before 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.
- d. **Projects.** Funded projects should seek to address all of the following areas:
 - i. **Increase Racial Equity:**
 - Buncombe County’s REAP defines equity as the state of being just, impartial and fair. Racial equity is defined as when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes, and outcomes for all groups are improved.
 - ii. **Increase Equitable Opportunities:**
 - This includes both economic growth as well as educational improvement in communities. Buncombe County’s REAP calls for initiatives that address earnings and wealth gaps as well as education partnerships to reduce career and college readiness gaps.
 - iii. **Strengthen Social Capital:**
 - Buncombe County’s REAP describes a need for increased trust and healing. Building trust among community members and supporting the ability of communities to work together for a common goal can be accomplished:
 - by increasing the self-organization of community members toward a shared goal;
 - by increasing the capacity of community leaders; and
 - by leveraging cultural identity to provide a sense of “place” for communities, bringing them together around cultural pride and ownership.

IV. Timeline

December 19, 2022	Grant application opens
January 9, 2023	Optional grant writing workshop - 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm
February 10, 2023	Applications due by 5:00 pm
TBD	First Review Team meeting - select FY24 finalists
TBD	Interviews for Finalists
TBD	Final Review Team meeting - select FY24 grantees
April 28, 2023	Funding recommendations due to County budget office
May 2023	Committee grant recommendations published with County Manger’s budget message
June 2023	Grant awards finalized with County budget adoption during Board of Commissioners regular meeting
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024	Funding year

V. Application Process

Organizations are encouraged to apply online through Buncombe County’s grant software, which can be accessed at [buncombecounty.org/apply](https://www.buncombecounty.org/apply) or linked through the Strategic Partnership Grants website at

buncombecounty.org/grants. Paper applications are available at and should be returned to 200 College Street, Suite 343, Asheville, NC 28801. **Applications are due by 5:00 pm on February 10, 2023.**

A grant writing workshop (optional for applicants) will be held on January 9, 2023, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm. This will be a virtual meeting. This purpose of the session is to provide in-depth information about the grant process for applicants and potential applicants. Contact Angelyn.Johnson@buncombecounty.org to register.

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. **Funding Request:** How much funding is this project requesting for FY2024?
Previous annual awards have ranged from \$43,000 to \$150,000. Applicants may request up to \$150,000. Partial awards may be made based on the pool of proposals. If partial award is made, staff and/or Review Team members will work with organizations to identify a scaled-down project plan
2. **Lead Organization:** What group or organization will serve as lead group and be responsible for managing the award? Highlight two or three key facts and accomplishments that best define your organization's proven record of success.
3. **Project Plan:** Provide a description of the proposed project program and or organization's identified aspiration as it relates to equitable opportunities and/or social capital for community members. Please indicate how you chose this community-driven issue and how community buy-in is demonstrated.
4. **Equity:** How does your project and or organization employ strategies for eliminating racial inequities?
Equity is one of Buncombe County's values expressed in the strategic plan. Inequities exist across all areas, whether looking at geography, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, and many other traits. Racial equity is a priority because of pronounced racial disparities at a community level. Buncombe County defines equity as the state of being just, impartial and fair. We define racial equity as when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes, and outcomes for all groups are improved
5. **Partnerships:** Do you have informal and formal connections with other community members and organizations that support strategies of this project and or organization? Who are the people and groups that contribute in this partnership, and what roles do they play? What networks of support are you plugged into?
6. **Results:** List the proposed results of your efforts. How will you know you are successful? How do you tie these efforts to increased economic and educational improvement, social networks, community trust and increased capacity to connect, lead and self-organize? What will be different a year, two years and three years from now?

7. Evaluation: How will you ensure accountability to communicate and evaluate your proposed results? What qualitative and quantitative measures do you propose to track progress toward equitable opportunity?
8. Budget: Attach a detailed annual budget for the full project amount, including proposed start-up and operating costs by category. Also, include information about other sources of funding that support the work. Use this space to provide any budget notes.
9. Sustainability: How will the project continue to succeed after the funding of the grant? Explain your plan for making this an ongoing effort. If you are re-applying for a project that has already been funded through this grant program, please include reasons for seeking additional funding, including prior project successes, challenges, and data to back up your renewal request
10. Other: Please share other things that pertain to your group that you think are important for us to recognize as we evaluate proposals

VII. Review Committee

Isaac Coleman Economic Community Investment Grant review committee will consist of seven (7), who will:

- a. Apply through an application process open to the public;
- b. Be appointed annually by the County Manager;
- c. Abide by the conflict of interest policies;
- d. Utilize a standardized, points-based scoring system to review grants; and
- e. Participate in ongoing monitoring of grant initiatives.

VIII. Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by the Review Committee utilizing a standardized, points-based system.

Reviews will be conducted independently by members of the committee, and discussion will occur during committee meetings.

The following criteria will be considered by the Committee:

- Lead Organization
- Project Plan
- Equity
- Partnerships
- Results
- Evaluation
- Budget

Scoring will be on a scale of 1 to 5 with a maximum total score of 35. Each criterion is weighted equally. See Attachment A - Scoring Criteria for details.

The committee will recommend projects and funding amounts based on project scores as well as balance within the overall portfolio, taking factors into consideration such as geography, project focus areas and population served.

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, and copies of the grant applications will be made available online. Grant awards will be finalized with budget adoption.

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.

FY2024 contracts will be for the period July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. All funds must be spent or returned to the County by June 30, 2024.

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.

In addition to the standard contract expectations for all organizations doing business with the Buncombe 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 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. Performance results will be published online in 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. For more information, contact Strategic Partnerships Director Rachael Nygaard at Rachael.Nygaard@buncombecounty.org or (828) 250-6536.

Attachment A - Scoring Criteria

Scoring will be on a scale of 1 to 5 with a maximum total score of 35. Each criterion is weighted equally.

Proposal Evaluation	Incomplete 1 Point	Insufficient 2 Points	Adequate 3 Points	Good 4 Points	Excellent 5 Points	
1	<u>Lead Organization</u>	Lack of clarity about the organization and what the goals and services are.	Limited information about the organization, what services it they provides, and a record of success	Adequate information provided about the organization and the services they provide, but little information about their accomplishments or proven record of success	Clear and detailed information about the organization, what services they provide, and some information about their accomplishments or proven record of success.	Clear and detailed information about the organization's history, detailed services, proven experience and qualifications that are likely to facilitate success
2	<u>Project Plan</u>	Project explanation is unclear and lacks mention of a specific goal.	Explanation is vague, project is loosely structured, and/or semi-related to the goals of the grant fund	Project structure is clear, including implementation plans, and is aligned to the goals of the grant funds.	Project is well designed, includes implementation steps, and is well aligned with the goals of the grant funds	Project is very well designed, includes implementation steps, and is well aligned with the goals of the grant funds.
3	<u>Equity</u>	Very limited or no explanation of approach to racial equity or inclusion.	Equity definition is vague with little or no strategy for eliminating racial inequities.	Provides an organizational definition of racial equity that is understandable and reasonable.	Clear organizational definition of equity, and concrete description/strategy of how racial equity is reflected in the proposed project.	Clear organizational definition of equity. Concrete, tangible description of how racial equity strategy is reflected in proposed project for a high impact in the community.
4	<u>Partnerships</u>	No partnerships that will benefit from the grant are associated with this project	Project demonstrates limited partnerships	Partnerships are in place, including explanation of contribution and role	Well-defined relationships are in place between partners	Partnerships are an integral part to this project, and the project/organization clearly states benefits and levels of contribution
5	<u>Results</u>	Little to no description of results or ways to measure performance of the project.	Description of what will be achieved by the project is unclear and/or lacks explanation about performance measurement. (If applicable, poor previous results track record.)	Proposed results are adequately described, aligned to the goals of the grant and project plan, but more information is needed about performance measurement. (If applicable, adequate previous results track record.)	Proposed results are well described, aligned to the goals of the grant and project plan, and there is a clear plan for measuring success. (If applicable, good previous results track record.)	Proposed results are clearly described and likely to have a high impact in alignment with goals of the grant funds, including specific measures and methods for effectively measuring results of the funded project. (If applicable, excellent previous results track record.)

Attachment A - Scoring Criteria

Scoring will be on a scale of 1 to 5 with a maximum total score of 35. Each criterion is weighted equally.

Proposal Evaluation		Incomplete <u>1 Point</u>	Insufficient <u>2 Points</u>	Adequate <u>3 Points</u>	Good <u>4 Points</u>	Excellent <u>5 Points</u>
6	<u>Evaluation</u>	Project goals are incomplete and/or unrelated to grant priorities, and there is no clear system for capturing performance	Project goals are un-testable or semi-related to grant priorities, and there is a limited system for capturing performance	Project includes short and long-term goals and has an adequate system for capturing performance	Includes detailed, measurable short and long-term goals and has identified a solid system or process for capturing performance.	Includes detailed, meaningful, measurable short and long-term goals with an advanced system for capturing performance
7	<u>Budget</u>	Project budget is incomplete, unrealistic, and/or poorly aligned with the budget narrative.	Budget lacks sufficient detail, is unclear, or includes items that do not seem reasonable.	Budget is complete, clear, realistic, and reasonably aligned with the narrative and project plan, but there are questions on some items.	Budget is form is complete with explanatory notes, clear, reasonable and matched to the community need and project plan.	Budget is complete with explanatory notes, clear, detailed, realistic, comprehensive, efficient and clearly aligned with the narrative and project plan.