



Draft as of 11/25/19

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Early Childhood Education and Development Fund is to ensure that every child in Buncombe County has an equal opportunity to thrive during their first 2,000 days, including access to quality early childhood education. The Fund was established in response to a well-documented local shortage of quality early childhood education programs, barriers that families face in accessing existing programs, including affordability, and a well-documented shortage of qualified teachers and staff in classrooms and centers.

The goals of the Early Childhood Education and Development Fund are as follows:

- Collaborate with community leaders and stakeholders for a coordinated system approach.
- Increase the availability of high quality early childhood care and education with an emphasis on pre-k programs.
- Address issues of affordability, both for providers in a sustainable business model and for families in access to care.
- Support a robust career track in the field of early education, with development ladders from entry level to highly educated, credentialed, seasoned professionals.
- Cultivate a system that responds to the needs of families, such as those impacted by trauma, poverty and addiction.

II. Funding

On October 30, 2018, the Board of Commissioners for Buncombe County voted to create the Early Childhood Education and Development fund for the purpose of annually investing \$3.6 million beginning in the FY2020 budget with an annual increase of 2% in future years. The amount for FY2021 is \$3,672,000 (subject to budget adoption).

III. Eligibility

To be eligible for an Early Childhood Grant, an organization and project must meet the following criteria:

- Organization.** All organization types are eligible to apply. This includes public/governmental agencies as well as private organizations, including nonprofits and private businesses. 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 agent for the purposes of administering grant funding.
- 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 through the online grant software before the application deadline. No late applications will be accepted.
- d. **Projects.** Funding will be allocated for the following purposes:
 1. Creating new classrooms to serve more children in early care and education settings
 2. Supporting capacity and/or quality for existing programs
 3. Implementing workforce development strategies to recruit and retain qualified teachers
 4. Providing support services for children and families enrolled in early care and education programs
 5. Enhancing the effectiveness of overall system of early care and education
- e. **Funding.** There are no restrictions on the amount of funding that can be requested or granted to an organization or project. Multi-year requests will be considered.
- f. **Capital.** Requests for capital projects will be restricted to the public school systems. Capital outlay projects are defined as planning, construction, reconstruction, enlargement, improvement, repair, or renovation of buildings and for the purchase of land for early childhood care and education purposes.

IV. Timeline

First Tuesdays of each month from 1:00 to 2:30	Early Childhood Education Committee
December 16, 2019	Grant application opens
Date TBD	Community Engagement Session (in lieu of regular January Committee meeting)
January 18, 2020	Grant writing workshop – optional for applicants
February 14, 2020	Applications due by 5:00pm
February 17 – April 23, 2020	Grant review by committee
April 24, 2020	Funding recommendations due to County budget office
May 5, 2020	Committee grant recommendations shared with Board of Commissioners as part of pre-meeting
May 19, 2020	Committee grant recommendations published with County Manger’s budget message
June 2, 2020	Public hearing on budget as part of Board of Commissioners regular meeting
June 16, 2020	Grant awards finalized with County budget adoption during Board of Commissioners regular meeting
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	Funding year

V. Application Process

Organizations are required to apply online through Buncombe County's grant software, which can be accessed at buncombecounty.org/apply or linked through the Early Childhood Grants website at buncombecounty.org/grants. Applications are due by 5:00pm on February 14, 2020.

An grant writing workshop (optional for applicants) will be held on Saturday, January 18, 2020 from 10:00 to 11:30 at 200 College Street in downtown Asheville, NC in the ground floor conference room. Free parking will be available in the County garage at 164 College Street. In the case of inclement weather, an announcement will be posted on buncombecounty.org/grants and the workshop will be rescheduled.

Staff is available to provide basic one-on-one support to applicants by request and will also work to match applicants with other community-based grant writing resource support if needed. Staff do not participate in the grant scoring process. Applicants are asked not to communicate with review committee members regarding their applications outside of the regular committee meeting structure.

Language interpretation and translation is also available by request.

VI. Required Elements

The application consists of a questionnaire, primarily of questions requiring a narrative response. Applicants are also required to complete and upload a standard budget form.

VII. Review Committee

Early Childhood Grant recommendations are prepared by the Early Childhood Education and Development Committee. The Committee consists of fifteen (15) members which serve two (2) year staggered terms and are appointed by the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners upon application as follows:

- three (3) members of the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners;
- one (1) business community or economic development professional;
- one (1) funder or community investment professional;
- one (1) parent;
- one (1) pediatrician or medical professional in service to young children;
- one (1) professor or higher education professional;
- one (1) retiree from the field of early childhood education; and
- six (6) members of the public representing the community at large.

The Committee holds regular meetings on the first (1st) Tuesday of each month at 200 College Street, ground floor conference room. Meeting materials and announcements are posted on the Early Childhood Grants website at buncombecounty.org/grants. All meetings are open to the public and include a public comment period at the end of every regular meeting limited to three minutes for any individual or representative addressing the committee.

VIII. Review Process

Applications are reviewed by the Early Childhood Committee utilizing a standardized, points-based system. Reviews will be conducted independently by members of the committee, and discussion will

occur during regular meetings. Grant review will occur beginning February 17, 2020, and recommendations will be submitted to the County Budget Office by May 8, 2020.

The following criteria will be considered by the Committee:

- Organization
- Need for the Project
- Project
- People Served
- Results
- Evaluation
- Equity
- Collaboration
- Budget
- Scale-up

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 as presented to the Board of Commissioners at their regularly scheduled meeting on May 19, 2020. Grant awards will be finalized with budget adoption on June 16, 2020.

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.

FY2021 contracts will be for the period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. All funds must be spent or returned to the County by June 30, 2021.

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 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.

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 with support from a cross-departmental team including staff from the Communications, Performance Management, and Health and Human Services departments.