SAFETY NET & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT GRANT

Purpose

Approximately 11.2% of Buncombe County residents live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau. 2024) and 20.5% of Buncombe County adults between 18 – 64 years of age lack health insurance (2024 WNC Healthy Impact Community Health Survey, WNC Health Network, Inc.). Safety Net systems are designed to provide healthcare and other wraparound services to people who are uninsured, underinsured, or have high-deductible plans, and other vulnerable populations. These funds are intended to help fill gaps and thereby increase access to care.

Per N.C. Gen. Stat. § 122C-115(d) and Session Law 2015-241, Section 12F.2.(e) the purpose of the Behavioral Health Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Funds is to support programs that provide services related to, or in combination of, Mental Health, Intellectual & Developmental Delays, or Substance Use to people who do not have insurance or who are not eligible for Medicaid.

To determine the priorities for this funding, Buncombe County Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health conducted a review of results and recommendations from the Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan, reports from County Strategic Plan workgroups, survey from behavioral health-related County departments and subject matter experts from local community collaboratives, such as the County's Safety Net Committee and Behavioral Health Justice Collaborative.

Funding

There are two designated funding streams available that combined make up $1.5 million dollars annually for a three-year grant cycle starting in Fiscal Year 2026. Both Safety Net and MOE funds are supported through general County funds; however, the amount of Safety Net funds available is subject to change based on availability and would be directly contracted through the County, whereas MOE funds are passed through to Vaya Health for contracting and dispersing of funds and have a minimum/maximum budget of $600,000 each year.

Eligibility

To be eligible for Safety Net/MOE funds, an organization and project must meet the following criteria:

1. **Status.** Applicants can be non-profit or for-profit; however, departments/programs of Buncombe County Government may not apply. Organizations must operate in Buncombe County with services to people in Buncombe County. Organizations should be in good standing with Vaya Health and/or not on the List of Excluded Individuals/Entities by the Office of Inspector General.
2. **Projects.** Funded projects must align with one or more of the following priorities identified for this year's funding. Organizations are encouraged to partner with smaller community-based organizations (CBOs), preferentially BIPOC CBOs, to assist with implementation and/or outreach to marginalized community members.
    o   Behavioral Health/Substance Use Services
    o   Access to Clinical Care/Preventative Healthcare/Whole Person Care
    o   Social Determinants of Health (SDoH)

3. **Application.** Organizations must submit a grant application before the application due date. No late applications will be accepted. Joint applications will be accepted with the primary applicant being the funding recipient.
4. **Funding.** Annual funding is subject to revenue availability, but could be as much as $900,000 for Safety Net activities and $600,000 for MOE funds. Depending on the project, an awardee may receive a portion of funds from either funding stream. If a combination of proposals to be awarded exceeds the approved budget, the review committee will work with applicants on adjusting budgets with a focus on equitable distribution.

Timeline

January 17, 2025	Grant application opens
January 31, 2025	Questions regarding applications are due by 5:00 pm to Christa.Lance@buncombecounty.org
February 7, 2025	Questions & Answers will be posted by 5:00pm
February 28, 2025	Applications are due by 5:00 pm
March 3 – March 21, 2025	Review of applications by committee
April 4, 2025	Awards announced
July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026	Funding Year

Application Process

Deadline: Applications are due by 5:00pm on February 28th, 2025. 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 the information desk at Buncombe County Health & Human Services, 40 Coxe Ave., Asheville, NC 28801. Completed applications should be in an envelope labeled "Safety Net/Behavioral Health MOE application".

Questions & Answers (Q & A): Questions regarding eligibility, applications, projects, etc. can be submitted up to January 31st at 5:00pm to Christa.Lance@buncombecounty.org. The review committee will post all questions and answers at buncombecounty.org/grants by January 31st, at 5:00pm.

Required Elements

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

1. Project Name:
2. Organization: Provide a brief summary of your organization including name, mission, values, tax status, types of services or supports provided to whom and where, current funding sources and percentage of funds that come from each type (i.e. Medicaid/Medicare/State Funds, Grants, Pro Bono), and any recent success stories and/or examples of your past initiatives that demonstrate your ability to carry out the project plan. Include current staffing and capacity to begin implementing the project at the start of the funding year.
3. Priority Topic Area (select from list):
    a. Behavioral Health/Substance Use Services

  b. Access to Clinical Care/Preventative Healthcare/Whole Person Care

  c. Social Determinants of Health (SDoH)

4. <u>Funding Request Amount</u>:

5. <u>Priority Alignment</u>: Explain how the project aligns with the selected priority area and how it will make an impact. Include any available information to support how it will make a positive impact. If this proposal is to continue a project previously funded through Safety Net/MOE funds, please summarize any success or impact, including aggregate numbers.

6. <u>Project Plan</u>: Describe how the project will work and who it will serve. Include any models or evidence-based practices that will be included and any collaborative partners critical to success. What specific activities and milestones are included in the project plan?

7. <u>Equity</u>: How does your organization define equity? Describe your organization's equity strategy and activities. Explain how equity is reflected in the proposed project. 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.

8. <u>Results</u>: What results do you hope to achieve with this project, and how will you measure success? Be specific about how much work will be completed and/or how many people will be served. 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?

9. <u>Budget Narrative</u>: Explain how funds will be used, including a summary of what expenses will be covered by County funds.

10. <u>Budget Form</u> (attachment) Upload a detailed annualized budget that aligns with the scope of the project. Include all sources of proposed revenue for the project (committed & pending); all planned expenses for the project (paid for with Safety Net/MOE funds & other funds).

11. <u>Sustainability (Optional)</u>: If this is an ongoing project, describe the organization's capacity to continue this project beyond the current year's funding. Are there any other plans or opportunities the organization is seeking to continue this project? What would be needed to sustain this current work?

12. <u>Other</u>: (text and/or attachment) Is there anything else that you want the committee to know?

Review Process

Applications will be reviewed utilizing a standardized, points-based system. The following criteria will be considered:

- Capacity – Organization is structured to carry out the project as described.
- Priority Alignment – Project fits with the identified priority area and meets an essential community need.
- Project Plan – Project includes clear, reasonable actions that are likely to meet the need.
- Equity – Organization has a demonstrated commitment to equity reflected in the proposed project.
- Proposed Results – Project includes quantifiable results and a plan for measuring success.

- Budget – Includes a clear, reasonable, and efficient budget matched to proposed project.

Scoring will be on a scale of 1 to 5 with a maximum total score of 30. Each criterion is weighed equally. See Attachment A - Scoring Criteria for details.

Grant Agreements

All grant awards will be administered via a grant agreement with reporting measures for the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. Agreements for MOE funding will be established through Vaya Health to include scope of work that defines services, deliverables, and reporting measures. Invoices for MOE funding will be sent to Vaya Health for processing per the established contract.

Funds are budgeted on an annual basis; however, based on the project, contracts may have an option to renew on an annual basis for up to two (2) years. Renewal is dependent on performance and budget availability.

Lead Department/Division

Buncombe County Health and Human Service's Public Health Division is responsible for managing these funding streams.

Attachment A - Scoring Criteria

Scoring will be on a scale of 1 to 5 with a maximum total score of 30. Each criterion is weighed equally.

Proposal Application	Incomplete 1 Point	Insufficient 2 Points	Adequate 3 Points	Good 4 Points	Excellent 5 Points
Capacity	Lack of clarity about the organization and what the goals and services are	Limited information about the organization, what services it provides, and a record of success.	Adequate information provided about the organization and the services they provide, but little information about their accomplish-ments or proven record of success.	Clear and detailed information about the organization, what services they provide, and some information about their accomplish-ments 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.
Priority Alignment/ Need	Little to no info regarding the importance of the project to the community at large or does not align with the identified priority areas.	Presents limited info about the need and/or has weak alignment to priority areas.	Presents basic info demonstrating community need and alignment to priority areas.	Presents qualitative and/or quantitative justification for levels of community need and aligns to one or more priority areas.	Presents significant need with a compelling argument and multiple qualitative or quantitative data points that strongly align with the identified priority areas.
Project Plan	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 implementa-tion steps, and is well aligned with the goals of the grant funds.
Equity	Very limited or no explanation	Equity definition is vague with	Provides an organizational definition of	Clear organizational definition of	Clear organizational definition of

	of approach to racial equity or inclusion.	little or no strategy for eliminating racial inequities.	racial equity that is understandable and reasonable.	equity, and concrete description/ strategy of how racial equity is reflected in the proposed project.	equity. Concrete, tangible description of how racial equity strategy is reflected in proposed project for a high impact in the community.
Proposed Results	Little to no description of results or ways to measure outcomes of the project.	Description of what will be achieved by the project is unclear and/or lacks explanation about outcome measurement. (If applicable, organization has a history of poor previous results).	Proposed results are adequately described, aligned to the goals of the grant and project plan, but more information is needed about outcome measurement. (If applicable, organization has a history of adequate previous results).	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, organization has a history of good previous results).	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, organization has a history of excellent previous results).
Budget	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 complete with explanatory notes, clear, reasonable, and matched to the community need and project plan.	Budget is complete with explanatory notes, clear, detailed, realistic, comprehen-sive, efficient and clearly aligned with the narrative and project plan.