

Buncombe County

Tourism Jobs Recovery Fund

Eligibility Criteria

- **Business or Organization Provides a Direct and In-Person Tourism Experience:** Prior to January 1, 2020, the business has been engaged in Buncombe County primarily in an activity that provides a direct in-person tourism experience and increases patronage of lodging facilities in the county.
 - This includes (but is not limited to) restaurants, retail establishments, studios and galleries, visitor attractions, tours and activities, breweries, wineries, cideries, distilleries, entertainment and event venues, museums, theaters, and other providers of food, drink, or entertainment to visitors.
 - The business can clearly demonstrate that at least 20% of its primary customers are tourists.
 - The following are examples of services that are not considered to be direct in-person experiences: tourism marketing services (maps, online sites, etc.), publications, and tourism business suppliers
 - A business engaged in providing lodging, *in whole or in part*, is not eligible.
- **In Business Prior to January 1, 2020**
- **Both For-Profit Business and Nonprofit Organizations Are Eligible**
- **Between 2-200 employees:** The business or nonprofit must have had at least 2 and not more than 200 Full-Time Equivalent employees as of the NC State of Emergency declaration on March 10, 2020.
 - In calculating full-time equivalent (FTE), each full-time position shall count as 1 FTE and each part-time position shall count as 1/2 FTE. For example, a business with 5 full-time positions and 4 part-time positions would be 7 FTE.
 - Owners who are actively working in the business do count as employees for the purposes of determining FTEs; passive owners and independent contractors do not.
- **Physically Located in Buncombe County:** Must have a physical location within Buncombe County (may include businesses that offer tourist experiences in Buncombe County, which do not have an actual storefront or similar physical fixed location).
 - For eligible businesses that also have locations outside of Buncombe County, eligibility and funding amounts will be determined using only Buncombe County-based location revenue and employee data.
- **Economic Loss Due to COVID-19:** The applicant must demonstrate at least a 25% decline in revenue and a change in operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - All application amounts must be substantiated with documentation validating loss of revenue, and showing costs such as payroll, inventory, rent, mortgage, utilities, and other costs required to resume operations and, if needed, adapt the business to be safe and financially sustainable over at least the next year. Examples of documents to substantiate these costs could include:
 - Most recent tax return
 - 2019 and 2020 year-to-date financial statements (Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet)
 - Re-opening budget
- **Safe and Realistic Re-Opening Plan:** The applicant must demonstrate a clear plan, budget, and strategy to safely re-open and still be open 1 year after the grant is awarded.
- **Agree to Report at 6 Months and 1 Year After Grant:** The applicant must agree to report on the financial condition of the business and use of funds received 6 months and 1 year following the receipt of funds.
- **Agree That Funds Will Only Be Used for Re-Opening the Business:** Applicant must certify in writing that it will only use this grant for employee compensation, inventory, mortgage, rent, utilities, and other operating costs and expenses incurred in reopening or otherwise resuming normal operations of a business and hiring employees in Buncombe County.
- **Agree to Award Announcement:** Applicant understands and agrees that all grantee business names, grant amounts, and number of jobs supported will be publicly announced.
- **Submits a full and complete application** including all required attachments prior to application deadline.