

## Burke County

### COVID-19 Grant Outcomes and Accomplishments

*County and local governments used these funds in many ways, including: supporting public health and safety personnel, equipment for health departments, grants for small businesses and non-profits, and economic support to individuals.*

Session Law	Item	Total Funding Authorized to Burke County
S.L. 2020-4	Local Government Assistance	\$3,478,349

#### Burke County Projects

##### **DLX Tent - Enhanced Tent Needed to Support COVID-19 Testing Sites**

The use of temporary pop-up tenting has not been conducive to support COVID-19 testing sites due to wind and storm conditions that have and can occur. In addition, the need for climate-controlled facilities will enhance the comfort and ability to work at remote sites in rural areas of the county for extended periods of time. This is a sole source project due to the uniqueness of the type of tent that is deployable with a minimum of personnel.

Burke County Emergency Management will deploy and manage the purchased tent with staff and support from volunteer agencies



##### **Plum Case Extended 5G Ready Needed to Support Electronic Communications in Remote Area Supporting COVID-19 Testing Sites**

Due to the need for remote testing sites for COVID-19, Burke County Health Department and Emergency Services needed an enhanced internet access tool that multiple computers and cell phones could connect to the cellular towers in the county. Many of the locations where remote testing will be needed will need enhanced systems to allow connectivity due to the topography and rural nature to the county. This system will be maintained by Burke County Emergency Management for deployment and support.



### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Burke County Emergency Management has worked with all agencies that will require or have a possible need for PPE during the current and projected COVID-19. The types of supplies consist of rubber gloves, masks of varying types (N-95, surgical, procedural), protective gowns, face shields, etc. The number of projected supplies is based on the current burn rate plus a percentage for surge protection. These resources will be centrally housed in the Burke County Emergency Management warehouse for inventory control purposes to avoid shortages that have occurred early during this event.

### 30 Storage Containers for PPE Push Packages for Warehouse

Burke County Emergency Management will be organizing the PPE order at the warehouse for rapid deployment needs by creating push packages of combined equipment. To do this, they will be using heavy duty/stackable plastic containers. This system of organization will help to sustain the product inventory as well as support an inventory management system that accounts for rotation of durable goods.



## **Burke County Emergency Management Warehouse Climate Control System**

Due to the need for larger quantities of PPE to support response efforts to COVID-19, there is a need to use current available warehouse space for storage. To reduce the chance of expensive losses of critical equipment, the warehouse will need to be climate controlled.

Heating is already installed and the need for cooling during the warmer months will prevent premature loss of this critical equipment. AC units will need to be installed to maintain adequate climate control.



## **Time and Mileage Contract (June-December) with Specialized Consulting Services, LLC to Provide Staffing Support for Management of Cares Act Funding and Documentation**

Additional staffing was needed to expand Burke County Finance Department due to the increased reporting requirements and project management. SCS, LLC brings extensive experience from local and state perspective through retired government workers who have been involved in grants and project management.

## **Courts Jury Selection Pool Space Lease**

Based on Order from NC Chief Justice, it was determined that a larger space would be needed for Jury Pool Briefing and Selection. Burke County has entered into a lease agreement with the City of Morganton to use the CoMMA for this purpose. This facility will be used as needed when jury pool selections are scheduled.

## **Signage for Temporary Court Facility at Foothills Higher Education Conference Center**

The Foothills Higher Education Conference Center is being used by the courts to facilitate social distancing requirements. Signage was requested to be installed at various locations for directions on where to enter for court sessions and to assure secured parking and entrance for the court staff.

## **Pulse Oximeters for Public Health**

Pulse Oximeters are a noninvasive and reliable way for clinicians to measure a person's blood oxygen levels. Public Health will be using these during their medical follow-up of COVID-19 patients. The units will be brought back and disinfected and reused. This is in line with what the hospital is doing.



### **Purchase of Cleaning and Sanitation Supplies and Expanded Cleaning Requirements**

Due to rigid requirements of extra cleaning and sanitation, extra supplies and inventory will be required in all locations maintained by Burke County. This item also includes expanding the current contract with cleaning services for County facilities.

### **Installation of Touchless Soap and Towel Dispensers in Burke County-Maintained Bathrooms**

The current contracted cleaning service company was requested to purchase and install motion sensor activated soap and towel dispensers in the bathrooms it provides cleaning services. This supports the touchless faucet project to provide hand washing areas that prevent cross contamination through a touchless environment.



### **Payroll Expenses for Multiple Positions in Public Health, Emergency Management, Emergency Medical Services, Law Enforcement and Finance.**

Guidance given by North Carolina is that any personnel that are “substantially dedicated” to COVID-19 response can be paid through the CRF funds. The guidance further explains that “all county or municipal public safety and public health employees are presumed to be “substantially dedicated” to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency; this designation is not based on a percentage of time dedicated to COVID-19 activities. All payroll costs including salary, benefits and hazard pay related to these employees are allowable.”

In addition to public safety as explained above, other employees (essential, nonessential, administrative) that meet the Treasury guidance on “substantially different use” the payroll expenses of these employees are deemed to be an eligible CRF expense. “Substantially different use” is defined to include, but are not necessarily limited to, costs of personnel and services that were budgeted for in the most recently approved budget but which, due entirely to the COVID-19 public health emergency, have been diverted to substantially different functions. Employees whose salary were budgeted but have stopped performing their usual job duties and are reassigned or redeployed to different job duties related to COVID-19 would be considered “substantially different use”.

To meet the “substantially dedicated” definition a public employee must work 50% or more of their scheduled working hours on mitigations or response to the COVID-19 health pandemic activities to be “substantially dedicated”. CRF money can be used to cover 100% of payroll cost for substantially dedicated employees. Adequate documentation must be maintained to support payroll expenses. Public Health and Public Safety employees would not be required to document time since they are presumed to be substantially dedicated.

## Glass Shield and Partitions

This project is intended to provide a safety barrier between the public and county/state employees. The initial project included multiple locations within the county where the public must directly interact with employees (paying taxes, tax listing, multiple locations in the courts, Board of Elections, etc.). After acquiring a vendor, several additional facilities have been added, as change orders, which were overlooked during the first review.

Before and After Pictures of Tax Office and Board of Elections



## Office Renovations

Two locations in county buildings were identified as needing some renovations to control access into areas where employees are located.

With the current plans to secure access to county buildings, the Avery Building will require closure of an opening off the lobby on the first floor which will become the public access area. In order to be ADA compliant, work will be done to the front entrance doors and sidewalks. After securing this location the public will have to notify the party to which they need to visit and be escorted which will help to ensure social distancing and safety precautions needed to meet CDC recommendations.

In the tax listing and GIS area of the Burke Services Building there is two projects. One is to install doors in the hallway leading in the tax personnel offices off the public lobby area. This will be building and fire code compliant construction and adaptable to the planned proximity card project. In addition, there will be a window placed in the wall at GIS for the public to review maps when needed.

The first round of request for bids came in higher than expected and the scope of the projects were changed for a new bid process. The second round of bids came in at a more reasonable rate and was awarded to two different companies.

### **Proximity Card and Public Access Control Project**

Most of Burke County owned buildings have limited to no controls on access and are keyed locks which causes the use of multiple keys for multiple buildings. This project will be two-fold in that it limits touch for access to just opening doors. A system of electronic door locks that are programable to need of access will be installed and keyed access will be eliminated. To the greater cause, the public will not be able to walk through employee only areas without escort which elevates social distancing measures, infection control and security of sensitive areas.

### **Touchless Faucets Within Burke County Buildings**

130 locations were identified by General Services for installation of touchless faucets. This project is faucet replacement intended to provide touchless faucets in each restroom that will operate through a motion sensor. The quote request is for battery operated systems (9 volt) including installation.



### **Computers and Software to Allow Teleworking/Training/Distance Meetings**

Multiple county employees have been assigned portable computers and associated equipment to allow working from home or locations where social distancing can be better achieved. Along with this requirement some of the county's cyber security software was required to be updated to protect the county infrastructure as personnel access county systems remotely.

### **Hand Sanitizing Stations**

Several locations within Burke County Offices were identified as needing wall mounted or free-standing automatic hand sanitizer dispensers. This project will also be supporting polling locations during the upcoming elections. Funding will be supported from CRF that was allocated to the Board of Elections directly from the State.

### **Updated Graphics for Western Piedmont Regional Transportation Authority Busses**

WPRTA requested updated sign wraps for their bus sides that will help to educate about the wearing of masks, hand washing and social distancing. These will be durable vinyl signs that adhere to the bus and can be removed as needed when obsolete.

## **TV/Radio Ads with WBTV Broadcaster to Enhance Outreach and Information Dissemination to the Public**

Using local and regional media outlet to broadcast current or planned actions as well as protective measures to be taken to mitigate COVID-19 spread provides a consistent message to the public. WBTV, one of the regional broadcasters with both television and radio capabilities, was contracted to provide this medium between October 1- December 14, 2020.

## **Distribution of Cloth Masks to Government Personnel and Non-Profit Organizations**

Burke County Emergency Management received 4,500 cloth masks from US DHHS for distribution. We reached out to the county agencies, municipalities and nonprofits and are distributing these masks if they are available.

## **Pro-Lift Cots for Burke County Emergency Medical Services**

Due to the size of Burke County and multiple EMS stations within the county, all Burke County Emergency Medical response units are available to respond and transport potential COVID-19 patients. With the Pro-lift Cots, the ability to limit the number of personnel that must be near a patient is greatly reduced due to the power lift of the cot and only two medical personnel being exposed. Currently, there is the potential of 4-6 personnel having a close encounter with a patient depending on their size. In addition, First Responder Services have been limited due to COVID-19 and the support of these personnel not being available for lifting situations has hampered EMS personnel.



## **Broadband Support for Burke County Schools through CARES Act Funding to Purchase Mi-Fi's for Student Use**

Burke County School system has continued remote learning and identified several areas of concern in which students did not have access to internet facilities within their homes. Funding was made available

to the school system to purchase 750 Mi-Fi's that will enable identified students to continue remote learning.



### Reusable Gowns for Emergency Medical Services

Burke County Emergency Medical Services has continued to use large amounts of PPE in response to COVID-19 potential emergencies and transports. One of the items they are finding difficult to acquire are protective gowns. The purchase of reusable/washable gowns will allow for up to 100 uses. The cleaning process is the same as traditional laundering. This will allow EMS employees to have gowns when disposable ones are not available.

### Courthouse Tent Lease

Based on Order from NC Chief Justice, there was a need to expand facilities at the Burke County Court House to facilitate social distancing. A large tent was leased to be placed in front of the courthouse to allow social distancing and staging areas prior to entry into the courthouse. This was directed by the resident superior court judge.





### **Automatic Door, Concrete Work and Awning Cover for Outdoor Testing and Vaccination Area at the Public Health side of the Human Resources Building**

Burke County Public Health received additional funding from NCDHHS to develop enhanced capabilities for testing and vaccination of the public. A development team identified a solution using the existing structure. A large window was changed to an automatic opening door for testing staff to enter and exit a staging area within the current structure. Engineered sidewalk enhancements along with an awning to cover the testing area have been added and made compatible with current building and zoning codes as required by the City of Morganton.



### **Increased Cost of Landfill Disposal Operations**

July landfill costs were averaged by comparison over a 4-year period and were found to be increased in 2020 by 377.153 tons during COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. It is assumed that this increase is caused by residents using extra time to clean-up and clean-out.