

Blue Ridge Community Action, Inc.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Community Needs Assessment

**Proposal Due Date:
December 1, 2023**

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW:

Blue Ridge Community Action, Inc. (BRCA), a public Community Action Agency operating in Burke, Caldwell, and Rutherford Counties, supervises the delivery of services funded by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) for the region. BRCA advocates for grant allocation tailored to meet the needs of low-income households, under 150% Federal Poverty Level, in our region. Guided by CSBG benchmarks, a tripartite board has been convened consisting of members from Public, Community, and Low-Income sectors of Burke, Caldwell, and Rutherford Counties. Our program coverage includes varying initiatives such as Child Development Programs, Adult Day Care, Home-Delivered Meals, Congregate Nutrition, Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Community Services Employment Program, Energy Division, Circles Program, Self-Sufficiency Program, Community Housing Development Organization's affordable housing program and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW:

BRCA is calling for submissions for a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) covering Burke, Caldwell, and Rutherford Counties. The primary objective of this assessment is to guide planning and service delivery to low-income families in these counties. Tasked with the oversight of the Community Service Block Grant in these counties, BRCA is required to complete a CNA every three years in order to adhere to CSBG guidelines.

The needs assessment should be completed by June 30, 2024.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Currently, BRCA is utilizing a needs assessment compiled in 2019. Our goal is to develop a CNA that incorporates up to date detailed data from Burke, Caldwell, and Rutherford counties resulting in a more accurate county/regional perspective. This proposal must meet all CSBG Organizational Standards. There should be a focus on identifying the top needs within the counties detailing challenges faced by individuals, households, the community overall and their root causes. This should include but is not limited to Education, Employment, Health and Social, Nutrition, Housing, Childcare, and Transportation needs of the community. The assessment

should present diverse data, categorized by income brackets, stakeholder types, raw survey data, and a collated overview of qualitative findings. All proposals should describe the sampling pool used for each measurable component, the target number of responses, and any strategies that will address low response rates if they occur. To ensure consistent analysis of trends, submissions must include the survey instruments used for trend analysis. The final report should be thorough, integrating statistical data, survey results, and in-depth qualitative observations featuring an Executive Summary, a detailed explanation, comprehensive analysis, and actionable recommendations at both the county and wider regional perspective.

Blue Ridge Community Action, Inc. will use the information gathered during the commission of the CNA to guide the agency's strategic decisions relating to the distribution of funding and services to low-income individuals and families over the next three years in the counties served.

Reputable outside sources as well as information readily available from the Census Bureau should be used to formulate a demographic profile for each county and the overall region. Findings from other Needs Assessments conducted in the service area can be incorporated, however, they should not be the exclusive source of data. The CNA must adhere to the CSBG Organization Standards' criteria. These standards are:

- **Standard 1.2:** The organization analyzes information collected directly from low-income individuals as part of the Community Assessment. Data can be collected through a variety of ways including, but not limited to, focus groups, interviews, community forums, customer surveys, etc. Documentation that this standard is being met includes data summaries, review of low-income data in with notation in the appendix of the assessment, community forum summaries, and interview transcripts.
- **Standard 2.2:** The organization utilizes information gathered from key sectors of the community in assessing needs and resources, during the community assessment process. These sectors would include at minimum: community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector, and educational institutions. Documentation is needed to demonstrate that all five sectors have been engaged: community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector, and educational institutions. BRCA prefers that survey data is used for this portion of the assessment but focus groups can also be utilized.
- **Standard 2.3:** The organization communicates its activities and its results to the community. The final document must include an Executive Summary or other abbreviated document that can be distributed electronically. A 15-minute PowerPoint presentation could be part of the final product that can be used for community events.
- **Standard 3.2:** As part of the community assessment, the organization collects and includes current data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for their service area(s).

- **Standard 3.3:** The organization collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data on its geographic service area(s) in the community assessment. This will be documented in the analysis section of the assessment.
- **Standard 3.4:** The community assessment includes key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the communities assessed. Conditions of poverty may include items such as: numbers of homeless, free, and reduced school lunch statistics, SNAP participation rates, etc. Causes of poverty may include items such as: lack of living wage jobs, lack of affordable housing, low education attainment rates, etc. This will be documented through the analysis section of the assessment.

SCOPE OF WORK:

Statistical Profile: Compilation of analyzed data obtained from reputable sources that highlight the causes of poverty in the 3 counties and wider region. Poverty in relation to gender, age, race, and ethnicity are required components of the profile.

Survey Data: Data from focus groups, surveys, polling, etc. that directly involved members of the low-income community must be included. Respondent is responsible for obtaining sufficient number of responses.

Stakeholder Involvement: Data from focus groups, surveys, polling, etc. that directly involved key stakeholders must be included. Respondent is responsible for obtaining sufficient number of responses.

Qualitative Results: All data gathered from this assessment belongs to BRCA. BRCA will receive the raw data in a usable format for more analysis and future trend tracking. Any secondary data will have references for updates. Qualitative data will be given as a written summary. While this data won't be in the main Needs Assessment report, BRCA will get it separately.

County/Regional Analysis: The Needs Assessment will analyze information and highlight the top community needs ranked by severity. It will pinpoint individual, and community needs in areas like Education, Employment, Health and Social, Nutrition, Housing, Childcare, and Transportation needs relevant to Burke, Caldwell, and Rutherford counties.

Final Report(s): BRCA expects 2 versions of the final document suitable for sharing with the public and stakeholders, which should be easily distributable electronically or in print. Additionally, BRCA desires a PowerPoint presentation for use in meetings and seminars.

- **Version 1:** Reports information for Burke and Caldwell Counties only.
- **Version 2:** Reports information for Burke, Caldwell, and Rutherford Counties.

The chosen Respondent will have access to BRCA's past Community Needs Assessment and Community Action tools, as well as the opportunity to engage with BRCA staff, Board, and

clients for focus groups or interviews. While BRCA will assist in disseminating online surveys via their email lists, it's up to the recipient of the award to ensure there are sufficient respondents for reliable data interpretation.

The applicant should anticipate at least three meetings with BRCA management, including the final presentation. The number of meetings will be based on project progress.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

The deadline for submission of proposals is December 1, 2023, no later than 5:00 pm EST. All costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal are the Respondent's responsibility and will NOT be reimbursed by BRCA. It is the Respondent's responsibility to ensure that BRCA receives the proposal by the date and time specified above.

Electronic submissions can be submitted to selvesufficiency@brcainc.org with the subject line "CNA RFP" no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on December 1, 2023. All files should be submitted as a PDF.

BRCA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. An approved contract for the proposal will be based on the requirements contained in this RFP.

Efforts will be made to utilize small businesses, minority-owned businesses, and women's businesses.

A decision on the selected Respondent is anticipated on December 8, 2023. Once final negotiations with the selected Respondent are completed, all those who submitted proposals will be notified in writing of the decision.

PROPOSAL INQUIRY CONTACTS:

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to the contacts listed below:

- Primary Contact: Aryn Smith, Community Services Directors, asmith@brcainc.org
- Secondary Contact: Shawna Hanes, COO, state@brcainc.org

*****LATE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED*****

PROPOSAL FORMAT: 16-pg limit for proposal not including resumes.

1. Introduction/Organizational Capacity (2 pages): History of your organization and experience with conducting Community Needs Assessments.
2. Personnel (2 pages with resumes as an attachment): Qualifications and experience of key staff/team working on project.
3. Work Plan (5 pages): How will you meet the requirements described in the RFP. How will you capture and analyze county level -vs- regional statistics? How will you get low-income participation? What will you do in the event of low participation by low-income

families? How will you conduct key stakeholder interviews including low-income participants? What survey tools will you utilize?

4. Organizational Standards (3 pages): How do you plan to meet all the CSBG Organizational Standards?
5. Timeline (1 page): Provide a timeline for the project that includes when the surveys will be initiated and completed, when the key stakeholder focus groups/interviews be started and completed.
6. References (1 page): Provide 3 references.
7. Budget (2 pages): Provide a budget summary. This can be an excel document or pdf. Demonstrate you understand the requirements for the project and have planned for implementation cost needed to complete the project.

REVIEW PROCESS:

There will be a 2-phase proposal review process. This 2-phase process will involve reviewing applicants' previous experience, interviews with applicants' staff assigned to this project, consulting with provided references, knowledge of the communities, etc.

1. **Phase one:** Review will examine the proposal to make sure it meets all the requirements of the RFP. If it does not meet the requirements, it will be rejected. All pertinent information must be submitted in order (sections 1-7) with all necessary attachments included and must be received by November 6, 2023, no later than 5:00 p.m. EST
2. **Phase two:** Proposals that meet the RFP requirements will be evaluated by BRCA staff and key stakeholders. An interview with potential vendors may be conducted.

The lowest/best bid will not be used as the sole basis for determination of the contract award.

PAYMENT:

Payment will be made in three installments with the final installment after the final document has been presented, reviewed, approved, and upon the completion of the last community presentation.

Payment 1: Initial start-up costs for project. 1/3 of the project cost will be paid at onset.

Payment 2: Midpoint payment made if 50% of agreed upon timeline benchmarks are met. 1/3 of the project cost will be paid.

Payment 3: Final payment made after the final document is presented and approved. 1/3 of the project cost will be paid.

KEY DATES:

November 16, 2023, RFP release date

December 1, 2023, Proposals due by 5:00 pm EST

December 8, 2023, Notification of Award

June 30, 2024, Assessment completed by 5:00 pm EST

(Extension may be granted based on project progression)