

County Commissioners:

Todd McNeill, Chair

Chuck Olive, Vice Chair

William Sands

Mike Eldreth

Jerry D. Powers

County of Ashe

150 Government Circle, Suite 2500

Jefferson, North Carolina 28640

County Manager

Adam Stumb

Clerk to the Board

Missy Seivers

January 17th, 2023

Valerie Fegans

NC Department of Commerce

Rural Economic Development Division

4346 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-4346

Re: Ashe County CDBG – CV 20 – V – 3509
Extension Request for Obligation, Spending and Closeout

Dear Ms. Fegans:

Ashe County respectfully requests an extension for the above referenced CDBG – CV grant. The county would like to move the final date of obligation from March 17, 2023, to March 15, 2024. In addition, the County requests that the last day to spend funds be moved from June 17, 2023 to June 17, 2024. Finally, the county would like to extend the time for the submission of the closeout paperwork to Commerce be extended from September 17, 2023 to September 17, 2024. If these dates do not work with your requirements, please give us as much time as you possibly can so that we can help as many people as we can with these funds.

Ashe County received the notification letter on November 24, 2020 stating that we had been awarded the grant. Then we received the Grant Agreement and Funding Approval on December 17, 2020. Approximately six months later, the funds were released in a letter dated June 7, 2021. After it became apparent that the demand for utility assistance from people affected by Covid would not be sufficient to spend the grant money within the allotted time frame, on August 23, 2021, Ashe County requested adjustments to the services that we could provide with these funds. On October 27, 2021, we received approval for the modification but with the contingency that the Sub-recipient Agreement be approved before those additional areas of spending would be allowed.

It took some time to get the sub-recipient agreement to be approved. (Two letters sent to NC Department of Commerce on June 23, 2022 and August 16, 2022). In a letter dated October 20, 2022 from the Department of Commerce, the Ashe Food Pantry was the only entity allowed to expend these funds. After telephonic communication, it was determined that there was some confusion about the role of Ashe DSS and the sub-recipient agency in regards to who would be approving applicants for the items 1 – 3 on the request for amendment. That confusion was alleviated and the County sent a letter of clarification to the NC Department of Commerce on October 24, 2022. With an email received on November 1, 2022, Ashe County now had

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approval to spend the grant funds on 1. Rental and Mortgage Assistance, 2. Existing Internet Payment Assistance, and 3. New Internet Connection Assistance.

In addition to the utility assistance that we were previously allowed to provide, we have now begun to spend funds in those three areas. To date, we have spent a total of \$41,624.79 and have \$11,028.90 pending for checks to be written. We are still seeing new Covid cases and long Covid cases in Ashe County that have a negative impact on people's ability to provide for themselves. The subsistence payments and other Public Services provided by this grant have had and will continue to be able to help those in need.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact Michelle Ball at High Country Council of Governments at (828) 265-5343 ext. 115 with any concerns or questions you may have regarding Ashe County's CDBG – CV grant.

Sincerely,

Adam Stumb
Ashe County Manager

Cc: Shycole Simpson-Carter, s.simpson-carter@commercenc.gov
Michelle Ball, mball@hccog.org