

# Career Academy at Erwin High School

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*FY 2017 Buncombe County Community  
Funding*

## ***Buncombe County Schools***

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# Application Form

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## Project Name\*

Name of Project

Career Academy at Erwin High School

## Amount Requested\*

Amount Requested

\$94,000.00

## Service Area\*

Which Commissioner Districts are served by this program?

Access a map of Buncombe County Commissioner districts [here](#).

District 3

## Which county sustainability goal aligns best with the goals of this project?\*

Based on the Buncombe County Sustainability Plan, select a Category, Goal & Objective that align with the focus of the project and the specific results that will be achieved.

Access the Buncombe County Sustainability Plan [here](#).

Community > Educational Resources that Match the Needs of the Community > Increase high school graduation rate

## If applicable, select a second sustainability goal that aligns with project goals.

**Result 2 is optional** - Select if project aligns with more than one Sustainability Category, Goal & Objective.

Economy > Workforce Development > Encourage collaboration among workforce and educational institutions

## If applicable, select a third sustainability goal that aligns with project goals.

**Result 3 is optional** - Select if project aligns with more than one Sustainability Category, Goal & Objective.

## **Project Description**

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### **Project Description\***

#### **Description of Project**

It has been determined that students are more inclined to stay in school if they pass classes and connect to a career early on. Exploring career options in the classroom and community helps students narrow their work focus and stay in school. Making school relevant for students allows them to answer that age old question, "When am I ever going to use this?" Through partnerships with local business and industry and community partners (ex. RAMP (Raising Awareness of Manufacturing Possibilities) Consortia, Biltmore, The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce/EDC, A-B Tech, etc.), students will learn work-ready skills that they can use immediately while in high school or upon graduation.

The Career Academy is a work-based learning program focusing on Career and College Readiness. A cohort of 25-30 ninth grade students is selected each year to participate in this model program which allows students to not only focus on academic performance but on 21st century workplace skills. Emphasizing the need for a high school diploma and the continuation or college or workplace readiness, Career Academy's main objective is to prepare students for life after high school and being contributing members of society. A middle school component will be added this year, along with an additional part-time staff member to work with these students. This will allow middle school students, who can be identified early, to receive additional support and participate in a summer-bridge experience helping in the transition to high school.

For the eight years the program has been at Erwin High School. The hands-on experiences have allowed students to see the direct correlation between what they are learning in school and how it relates to their future. The Graduation Advocate is there to be a mentor, friend, teacher and person who link students and their families with community resources and future careers. He/She personalizes learning for the students until they graduate and transition to life.

### **How many people will this project serve?\***

State the number of individuals or households in Buncombe County that will be served by this project. Also state the number of people that will experience the desired result. For example, if dropout prevention services are being delivered to 100 students, how many will successfully graduate from high school?

Each year, 25 to 30 new students enroll and the remaining 75-90 students progress through to the next grade levels. Each year the goal is 100% graduation, however, knowing that students have barriers they must work through, students may take longer to achieve the goal or an alternative path toward graduation. The current success rate of the students in the program, runs from around 85% which is higher than the state graduation rate and the school system graduation rate. For the 2016-17 school year, 25 at-risk 8th graders will receive services as they prepare to transition to the high school.

High school students will gain beneficial workplace skills as they participate in a paid summer work-based learning experience with various businesses and industries. This allows them to earn a paycheck and assist either themselves or their families financially. Middle school students will participate in a summer program and also have career awareness opportunities throughout the year.

### **Describe the people this project will serve.\***

Characterize the demographics of the project's target population in terms such as age, gender,

income, race, ethnicity, geographic area, etc. Include information about method of referral/recruitment of the target population.

Students in grades 8-12 at Erwin Middle and High School will be served. Both male and female students are in the program. They come from a variety of home situations, are culturally and ethnically diverse and almost every participant receives Free or Reduced Lunch. Students are selected based on need and referrals. By working with the middle school to identify students earlier, the students will be able to receive an extra year of support from the program. Students are referred if they have or show at-risk behaviors such as: poor reading, writing and comprehension skills, poor organization skills, those who do not perform well on tests, research projects, assignments; students may have a hard time sitting all day or may be hands-on students who struggle with maintaining their focus for long periods of time; they might not learn the traditional way and become bored easily; they may no longer be connecting to school have cultural barriers, come from poverty, or disrupted homes.

### **What key steps will you take to achieve the results of this project?\***

Describe the core elements of your implementation plan, including milestones that will take place within the funding timeframe.

The Career Academy helps students navigate through high school by providing extra help and support. The program uses a support structure to keep students moving toward a diploma, a meaningful career, and college if appropriate. The Career Academy follows students through each grade level, helping them every step of the way, removing obstacles when they arise, and keeps them moving toward graduation. Schedules are monitored and regular contact with teachers and parents are an integral part of the program. Support staff is regularly called upon to assist. Contracts, regular one-on-one talks, goal setting and four year plan revisions help students remain focused on their objectives. Positive behavior is rewarded through Career Academy events and other methods of recognition. Students experience career exploration through field trips to local places of work and visit local community college and traditional college campuses. These students see the entire picture of what it takes to succeed.

### **Describe the evidence of success that backs this project's approach.\***

What evidence of success (i.e. evidence-based research, practice model, accreditation, industry standards, and/or other framework) are you using as a basis for your project design?

Based on national studies of career academies, participants substantially improved the labor market prospects. Through a combination of increased wages, hours worked, and employment stability, participants in the academy earned over \$10,000 (18 percent) more than those in non-academy control groups over a four-year follow-up period. In 2012, our local Career Academy conducted a fidelity study to confirm that it was replicating the national model. Last year, 25 out of 27 seniors graduated which was a 93% graduation rate.

The Career Academy works with students to align their career interest to their graduation plan. This is a crucial part of the program as students progress towards graduation and participate in the work-based learning program. Students need to begin preparing for their options after high school and honing their job skills throughout their high school career. By adding middle school awareness and working with eighth graders we can start the pipeline earlier.

## **Describe your data collection, tracking, and reporting procedures.\***

Explain your methods for documenting project, service and client information. Include a description of any software or other tools utilized.

Each month a report is submitted to show how many students continue towards graduation and it is documented if students leave and why. Students are tracked using data to drive the success of the program. Also, the Graduation Advocate tracks students progress towards graduation and meets with each students and his/her teacher to ensure students' success in the classroom. This one-to-one contact is vital as it includes all stakeholders of the students educational career.

Also, Career Academy students who are selected to participate in the summer work-based learning program receive summer stipends and are evaluated on workplace readiness. This additional measure helps us track a student and allows him/her to earn course credit towards gradation. A high school diploma is the ultimate tracking measure for the students who participate in Career Academy. With the addition of middle school students, the same types of data will be collected and their progress will be tracked and evaluated.

## **Explain your technological resources and capacity.\***

Explain your current technological strengths and barriers and how this impacts your ability to track data and report outcomes. Who is responsible for adaptation and use of technology within your organization?

Buncombe County Schools uses PowerSchool as its Student Information System. This online system tracks grades, attendance and other vital information. Students use online web resources to complete career interest inventories and explore post-secondary options. PowerSchool's parent portal allows students and parents to track progress towards graduation and merge their career interest with their courses they are signing up for.

In addition to these programs, the Graduation Advocate uses Microsoft Office to track and monitor students too. Buncombe County Schools supplies the Graduation Advocate with a computer and display projector to use in the classroom. A cell phone is provided for communication.

Buncombe County Schools uses an excel program to track the number of students in the program and the number who leave the program. If a student transfers out of the system to another school, he/she do not count as a dropout. Data is reported each month to the appropriate persons.

## **Organizational Profile**

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### **How does the proposed project support your mission and strategic plan?\***

State your mission and the date of your most recent strategic plan, and explain how the proposed project helps advance your organizational goals.

Buncombe County Schools adopted a new Strategic Plan in 2012. The plan provides a new comprehensive look at the key priorities for our school system and the objectives and strategies needed to achieve them. Buncombe County Schools Mission is to collaborate with stakeholders to provide a safe, caring, rigorous and engaging learning environment that prepares all students to be Career and College Ready.

For Priority 1 of the Strategic Plan: All students will graduate as high-achieving and globally-competitive learners with 21st Century skills- the Career Academy is part of the school system's strategic plan as a strategy to accomplish the objective to graduate students Career and College Ready. With the program focusing on career preparation and graduation as its purpose, the program is an integral part of our plan to ensure students' success.

The Career Academy also is part of the Career and Technical Education State Plan which is completed each year by local school systems.

## **What expertise/accomplishments do you have that are relevant to the proposed project?\***

List your organization's strengths as well as accomplishments from the past 3 years that position the organization to be successful with the proposed project.

In June, 2015, 25 out of the 27 seniors graduated, and the other two seniors will return in the fall to complete the requirements for their diplomas. Seventeen students participated the work-based learning experience in June. This paid experience is key to their success. Students in the program continue to progress through graduation and their progress is monitored daily. The proven success of the program comes from the family-like bond that is built between the Graduation Advocate and the students. This will be enhanced through the new middle school program.

Students gain valuable insight and experience from their visits to post-secondary institutions and field trips they take to local business and industries. It is vital for them to explore and see the opportunities available for them in their community and the skills they will need to get and keep a job. By creating this pipeline, we will be able to create a sustainable workforce and show students the value of a good education.

## **Describe partners that are critical to the success of your organization.\***

List any external partners, intermediaries or advisors important to your success, and describe their role and evidence of their commitment. Describe successful collaborations with these people or groups.

A-B Tech serves as a partner to bring the post-secondary perspective and to show the relationship between the workplace and the education needed to enhance their skills. This partner hosts school visits, as well as, campus tours and connects the high school campus to the A-B Tech campus. Challenging students to go further than a high school education is what some students need.

Goodwill is another partner that reinforces workplace skills. They will help run a Career Camp/Summer Bridge Program this summer for students.

The RAMP Consortia can provide work-based learning opportunities for students in the area of advanced manufacturing. The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce helps expose students to the economic clusters and finally Biltmore who has been a partner for numerous years and they continue to offer work-readiness skills training. Other partnerships will be explored as employers across the county are seeking candidates they can help recruit and train for gainful employment.

## ***Financial Information***

### **Nonprofit financial assurance requirements:**

Financial statements, prepared using a recognizable basis of accounting (i.e., modified accrual) and IRS Form 990s must be submitted to Buncombe County annually.

- Organizations with annual revenues of \$300,000 or greater must submit financial statements audited in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.
- Those with revenues between \$100,000 and \$300,000 must submit financial statements reviewed in accordance with SSARS 19.
- Those with revenues of less than \$100,000 must submit non-disclosure financial statements compiled in accordance with SSARS 19.

All financial statements must be reported on by a certified public accountant and include a full balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement.

These requirements are considered minimum requirements. Organizations may submit a higher level of assurance than is required.

### **IRS Form 990 - Upload Here**

Click Choose File to upload a copy of the 990 form you most recently completed.

### **If your organization does not have a 990, briefly state the reason.**

Include a statement of intent to comply with nonprofit financial assurance requirements as listed above.

Buncombe County Schools does not file the 990 form.

### **Financial Statements - Upload here**

Click Choose File to upload a copy of the most recently completed financial statements (audit, compilation or review).

issued Financial Statements 06-30-14.pdf

### **If your organization does not have financial statements, briefly state the reason.**

Include a statement of intent to comply with nonprofit financial assurance requirements as listed above.

### **Complete Budget Worksheet - Upload Here\***

Download the budget form [Here](#).

Complete the budget form for this project/program and the overall agency. Save it to your computer, then upload it by clicking Choose File.

fy-16-community-funding-budget-form.xlsx

## Budget Narrative\*

Describe all differences between current year and proposed year. List all pending funding sources with expected date of notification. Please detail any other information that may help clarify the budget.

The only difference in funding is that we will include an additional salary for a middle school support person. This person will not be paid at the same rate as the Graduation Advocate and will be a split funded position. This person will be responsible for the middle school program and also helping with the high school program and working with the Graduation Advocate in the summer for the summer work program and the summer bridge program.

## What (if any) portion of requested funds will be used to support capital expenses?\*

Capital projects are defined as those used to acquire or upgrade physical assets such as property, buildings, or equipment. Please detail.

None of this will be for capital purposes. It will be used for Salaries and Benefits of the Graduation Advocate(s) and student work study. Funds for supplies, field trips, and other support services will be a minimal amount and will be supplemented with other funding sources by the school system if needed. Technology devices will be furnished and supported by Buncombe County Schools. Funds from this allocation are strictly operational, however, if a need arises, the program director has the discretion to move funds between various line items.

## Employee Wages

Please provide information about the wage breakdowns of your employees. Living wage for Buncombe County has been identified as \$11.00 per hour for employees with employer-provided health insurance and \$12.50 per hour for employees without.

## Employees with employer-provided health insurance\*

List the number of employees in your organization with employer-provided health insurance in each wage category. For salaried employees, use hourly wage equivalents.

\$7.25 - \$10.99 per hour

\$11.00 - \$14.99 per hour

\$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour

\$20.00 - \$24.99 per hour

\$25.00 - \$29.99 per hour

\$30.00 - \$34.99 per hour

\$35.00 - \$39.99 per hour

\$40.00+ per hour

- 1 Graduation Advocate (Teacher): \$26.05 per hour
- 1 Graduation Support Staff (Non-certified): estimated \$15.00 per hour

Buncombe County Schools employs 3726 people as of their latest data report. Of those, over 3100 have insurance. The employee records are not broken down in into the categories listed above and records on insurance are not kept in accordance to those standards. If additional information is needed, we will need to do further work with the finance and personnel departments as I spoke with the Personnel Director for this information.

**Employees without employer-provided health insurance\***

List the number of employees in your organization without employer-provided health insurance in each wage category. For salaried employees, use hourly wage equivalents.

\$7.25 - \$12.49 per hour

\$12.50 - \$14.99 per hour

\$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour

\$20.00 - \$24.99 per hour

\$25.00 - \$29.99 per hour

\$30.00 - \$34.99 per hour

\$35.00 - \$39.99 per hour

\$40.00+ per hour

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