

# Building Capacity and Demand for Local Food in Buncombe County

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*FY 2018 Buncombe County Community  
Funding*

## ***Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project***

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# Application Form

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## Project Name\*

Name of Project

Building Capacity and Demand for Local Food in Buncombe County

## Amount Requested\*

Amount Requested

\$30,000.00

## Service Area\*

Which Commissioner Districts are served by this program?

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

District 1

District 2

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](#).

Economy > Sustainable Local Food Systems > Increase demand for locally produced foods

## 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 > Sustainable Localized Economy > Promote "Buy Local" programs

## 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.

Economy > Sustainable Local Food Systems > Promote sustainable agricultural production and personal and community gardening

## **Project Description**

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### **Project Description\***

#### Description of Project

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) requests \$30,000 for the project Building Capacity and Demand for Local Food in Buncombe County to continue increasing demand and markets for locally-produced food, while also promoting sustainable agriculture production. This project will directly support Buncombe County's Sustainability Plan for Sustainable Local Food Systems by driving demand for local food and building stronger connections between farms, consumers, and food businesses. Implementing proven promotions, outreach strategies, and training and technical assistance, this project will also incorporate ongoing research and feedback from farms, businesses, and consumers to keep work relevant to supporting Buncombe County's sustainable food systems. This project will promote farms and businesses through the 2018 Local Food Guide; promote Buncombe County as a local food and farm destination through ASAP's Farm Tour; train and assist farmers in agritourism, marketing, accessing markets and planning for sustainable businesses; and support direct sales through Appalachian Grown promotions and a community supported agriculture (CSA) Fair.

This project supports ASAP ongoing program work, for which we have received past support from Buncombe County. The basis of the work is strengthening Buncombe County farms over time through stronger and deeper connections with the community, increase farmers' business and marketing skills, and develop diverse and consistent markets for local products that ensure long-term farm viability for a vibrant local food economy. Continued support for this project will ensure that a sustainable local food system is driving a thriving localized economy and creating opportunities for more Buncombe County farms and businesses to succeed.

### **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?

The project will serve people across several categories, including residents, farmers, businesses, and visitors.

Promotions: 575,000 total impressions. 30,000 Buncombe residents and visitors will learn about Buncombe farms and local food.

Appalachian Grown (AG) farms: 139 Buncombe farms will access promotions and/or training and technical assistance (T&TA) to improve their farm businesses.

AG food businesses: 160 Buncombe businesses will access promotions and/or T&TA.

Direct Market Outlets: 89 farms (unique selling at farmers markets, offering CSAs, U-pick, and/or roadside stands/farm stores) will benefit promotions and/or T&TA.

Business of Farming (BOF): 200 farms will access T&TA and/or make market connections.

CSA Fair: 14 farms will access 250 potential customers.

Farm Tour: 1,500 people (over 60% from Buncombe) will visit at least one Buncombe County farm.

Local Food Guide: 290 Buncombe farms, markets, and businesses listed in Guide.

## 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.

The goal of this project is to increase demand for local food/farm products and promote sustainable agriculture production in Buncombe County in support of the County's Sustainability Plan. Project activities will build farmer capacity to connect with new customers, build stronger relationships with existing customers, and drive demand for local food in the region. The AG program serves 139 Buncombe County farmers, nearly half of which are female and 44% indicate they fit the USDA's definition of a limited resource farm. The community/public will be engaged through the Local Food Guide (LFG), media promotions, Farm Tour, farmers markets, and CSA Fair. Community demographics from the US Census Bureau (2015) indicate an estimated population of just over 253,000 in the county, with about 90% white and 52% female, with about 20% younger than 18 and 18% older than 65. Engagement also serves tourists estimated for 2015 at 9.8 million visitors that spent over 1 billion dollars in Buncombe.

## 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.

Promotions: July 2017-June 2018: Promote farmers markets, and CSAs, U-Pick, roadside stands through LFG, media advertising and events.

Appalachian Grown: Ongoing: certify farmers and food business partners, provide training, technical assistance and market connections, offer AG materials/promotional support. Drive consumer demand for AG products through the LFG, advertising and promotions.

Farm Tour (FT): March - June 2018: conduct farm outreach for participation in the 2018 FT. Provide farms with best practices, training and preparation materials. Conduct FT promotion. Host tour in June 2018.

Business of Farming Conference: Nov 2017-Feb 2018: plan and develop logistics and workshop topics, conduct outreach, and host conference.

CSA Fair: March 2018 host fair.

Local Food Guide: Nov 2017-Feb 2018: conduct 2018 LFG outreach to farms and food businesses. Feb-April 2018: design and print 50,000 copies of the LFG. April-June 2018: distribute copies.

### **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?

ASAP conducts ongoing evaluation and uses constituent feedback to refine and improve program work. Based on ASAP survey results from the 2016 Business of Farming Conference, 94% of attendees agreed that workshops provided information and resources to help build their farm businesses. According to the survey results from the 2016 CSA Fair, 100% of respondents agreed that the fair d exposed their farm to potential new customers. Annually, we send out a survey to gather feedback on the AG program. On the 2015 survey, farmers indicated that they benefit from the Conference; the Farm Tour; and assistance with business planning, marketing, and understanding market requirements. Additionally, 82% of farmers listed in the Local Food Guide reported that it is important for increasing farm sales. The results of this survey also suggest high consumer demand for AG products: 68% of farmers reported that buyers/customers are specifically asking if their farm or products are certified AG.

### **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.

AG: Use Salesforce (SF), an information management system, and the online LFG to document outreach and data, track material and LFG distribution, track farmer training participation.

Direct Markets: Farmers markets, CSAs, U-pick farms, and roadside stands/farm stores measured through data in the online LFG.

CSA Fair: Document farms participating in Fair through SF. Measure public attendance through door count. Paper survey participants on impacts. Electronic post-Fair surveys to measure the impacts on CSA businesses.

BOF: Track registration through SF. Surveys and evaluation conducted at conference, with follow up electronic survey.

Farm Tour: Survey conducted at pre-tour training to identify need and topics to build farmer capacity. Post-tour electronic survey of farmer participants to measure FT impacts. FT public participation through ticket sales and sign in. Post-tour electronic survey of visitors to measure the impact of the FT on their thinking about food/farms.

### **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?

ASAP has extensive experience with tracking data and reporting outcomes. Implementing numerous federally funded projects from programs like USDA Risk Management Agency, Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program, and Farmers Market Promotion Program has given ASAP a thorough understanding of outcomes-based reporting and a solid track record for achieving deliverables using various online reporting systems.

Internally, ASAP uses a cloud-based database (Salesforce) to track activity types, deliverables, number of people impacted, and qualitative data relevant to activity impacts. Regular training is provided to staff to ensure proper and consistent data collection and entry. All staff at ASAP are required to use the same software and technology systems such as Google Drive and Windows 10. ASAP strives to use the most current technology to its greatest advantage in conducting its programs. ASAP's admin team is responsible for adaption and use of technology within the organization.

## **Organizational Profile**

### **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.

ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. In 2016 ASAP completed a strategic capacity building project to identify opportunities to increase self-sufficiency of core program activities. This process informed annual planning and longer-term strategic program development including an action plan to build program financial sustainability. As a nonprofit our work and mission achieve public benefits that are difficult or impossible to monetize as a business venture. Buncombe County support ensures that all community members and farmers benefit from a growing local food economy. The proposed project activities will strengthen and grow local farms, expand access to locally grown food, grow the local economy, and increase community engagement in local food for Buncombe County residents.

### **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.

ASAP's work sustains and improves market opportunities and builds connections around local food. ASAP's impacts include:

Over 900 farms and 400 food business partners in 60 Southern Appalachian counties in the AG program in 2016.

Publishing/distributing 170,000 copies of the LFG in the last three years. Launched updated online LFG with improved functionality and a custom trip planner, with more than 1,300 listings in 2016.

35 vendors over the last three years who have promoted their CSAs and sold a total of 115 CSA shares (estimated at \$42,375) through the CSA Fair in Asheville.

13 successful annual BOF conferences. FY2017 will represent the 14th year of offering training, technical assistance, and farmer-buyer networking which draws 200+ farmers annually.

More than 4,018 people attending the Farm Tour since 2014, spending \$59,925 on farm products. The potential impact of avian flu cancelled the 2015 FT and the 2016 tour was shifted to June, when the virus is not as transferable.

## 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.

Relationships and building connections are the story behind ASAP's work and farmers and businesses featuring local food are key partners in telling that story. Much of our work is driven by input we receive from farmers and businesses through our research and we draw on their knowledge and experiences as presenters for ASAP trainings and workshops. Food buyers are integral to the farmer-buyer meetings held annually at BOF and since Asheville is the region's largest market, Buncombe County buyers are especially critical. ASAP relies on relationships with multiple agencies and organizations including Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water, FSA, Organic Growers School, and NC Choices to increase farmer outreach and training. An ASAP-Mountain BizWorks partnership ensures that farmers have access to farm business planning. ASAP also works with the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau to promote Asheville as a food and farm destination to tourists.

## Financial Information

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### 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.

ASAP 2015 Form 990 Final for Public Inspection.pdf

### **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.

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

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

ASAP 2015 Audit Report Final.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.

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.

There are no significant differences between the current FY2017 and proposed FY2018 budgets for the organization. There are no pending grant funding sources for 2018. Other pending sources of funds include our consulting and earned program income, sponsorships and donations. All of these estimates are based on prior year achievements and have been consistently conservative in comparing budget to actual. On the budget spreadsheet, the project for which the funding is requested reflects the last two years of Buncombe County support. The total organizational budget is for all program activity of the organization.



**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.

Not applicable

**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

NA

**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

\$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour (10)  
\$20.00 - \$24.99 per hour (1)  
\$25.00 - \$29.99 per hour (1)  
\$40.00+ per hour (1)