

**Buncombe County FY2019 Strategic Partnership Grants  
Application Summary Sheet**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Living Wages and Economic Mobility</b>
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Just Economics</b>

<b>Amount Requested</b>	\$12,500	<b>Strategic Priority or Sustainability Goal</b>	Diverse Community Workforce
<b>New or Renewal Request</b>	Renewal	<b>Area Served</b>	District 1, 2 and 3

<b>Organization Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Just Economics' mission is to educate, advocate, and organize for a just and sustainable local economy that works for all in Western North Carolina. Just Economics has three primary areas of work: Policy Advocacy, Living Wage Employer Certification, and Grassroots Leadership Development. Just Economics is focused on the issues of living wage, affordable housing, and better transit. The organization is intentional about not just advocating for, but advocating with marginalized communities to bring about change.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certifying 40 new employers over the grant period with at least 400 employees newly covered under our program.</li> <li>Maintain Certification for 400 existing Living Wage Certified employers.</li> <li>Host at least 4 networking opportunities, workshops, or peer to peer learning experiences for existing LW Certified Business owners to support them in maintaining LW Certification and growing the living wage workforce.</li> <li>Participate with the New Economies Coalition in our efforts to educate and involve community members in business models that create jobs and build wealth in our community such as worker owned cooperatives.</li> <li>This coalition is still in the planning and data collection phase.</li> </ul>
<b>People Served</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low-wage workers between the age of 18-65 making less than \$13.00/hr. Women and people of color are disproportionately represented among low paid workers.</li> <li>It is anticipated to more than 400 employees in newly LW Certified workplaces over the grant period</li> <li>The plan is to serve at least 40 employers through our support network</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain existing Living Wage Certified Employers and continue to build the program.</li> <li>Results of our workshops, networks and supports is more qualitative. We collect subjective feedback from program participants in our evaluation of this work.</li> </ul>

<b>Budget</b>			
<b>Amount Funded FY2018</b>	\$10,500	<b>Increase Request</b>	\$2,500
<b>Administrative Budget</b>	19% (from 2016 IRS Form 990-EZ)	<b>Total Organization Budget</b>	\$144,650 (projected FY2019)
<b>Other Funding Sources:</b> Grants, Individual donations, Government funding, Organizations and Faith Communities, Events/Business Sponsorship, Earned Income			

<b>Strengths</b>
Thoughtful plan to sustain project for future years
Project serves underserved, underrepresented, minority, and/or high-need population
Diverse/Balanced funding sources

# Living Wages and Economic Mobility

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*FY2019 Strategic Partnership Grants*

## ***Just Economics***

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# Application Form

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## Question Group

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### Project Name\*

Name of Project.

Living Wages and Economic Mobility

### Amount Requested\*

\$12,500.00

## PROJECT NARRATIVE

### Area Served\*

Which areas of the County will be served by this project? Which Commissioner District(s) will be served?

A Buncombe County Commissioner district map is available at [THIS LINK](#).

All districts in the County will continue to be served by this project.

### Organization Description\*

Tell us about your organization. What is your mission? Highlight two or three key facts and accomplishments that best define your organization.

Just Economics' mission is to educate, advocate, and organize for a just and sustainable local economy that works for all in Western North Carolina. Just Economics has three primary areas of work: Policy Advocacy, Living Wage Employer Certification, and Grassroots Leadership Development. We are focused on the issues of living wage, affordable housing, and better transit. We are intentional about not just advocating for, but advocating with marginalized communities to bring about change.

Over the past ten years we have accomplished a lot. We built the largest voluntary Living Wage Certification program in the country and are teaching other communities how to do the same. We worked with the City of Asheville and Buncombe County to create and pass Living Wage policy. We have trained more than 175 grassroots leaders through our Voices for Economic Justice program, and graduates of that program initiated the Peoples' Transit Campaign working with the City to build better buses together.

### Strategic Priority\*

Which of the following priorities best reflects the primary goal of your project?

Buncombe County Commissioners are dedicated to strengthening the quality of life for everyone by setting new fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible goals that will guide decisions and improve our community for future generations. The Board has committed to strategic priorities as a guide to shape partnerships and investments of resources to insure a healthy, safe, well-educated, thriving and sustainable community.

Details about the Strategic Priorities are available at [THIS LINK](#).

Diverse Community Workforce

## Strategic Priority - Other Sustainability Goal

If you selected "Other Sustainability Goal" from the list of Strategic Priorities, please list it here.

Details about the Sustainability Goals are available at [THIS LINK](#).

## Shared Vision\*

What critical community problem or challenge are you hoping to improve through this project?

Buncombe County has a high cost of living and relatively low wages. According to the North Carolina Justice Center, more than 40% of our County's workforce is living below the Living Income Standards and the 4 fastest growing industries do not pay a living wage.

Additionally, low-income people in our community are challenged with barriers to economic mobility such as lack of affordable housing and consistent transportation. More than 51% of renters in this County spend more than 30% of their income on rent. A person earning minimum wage would have to work 87 hours/week to afford a 2-bedroom apartment at FMR. Additional barriers such as reliable transportation limit economic mobility.

Our work is aimed at developing pathways to economic mobility by taking a multi-faceted approach, involving the voice of low-income people in public policy and planning aimed at removing barriers to employment while at the same time, working to increase the number of living wage jobs.

## Key Steps\*

How will the project work? What are specific activities and milestones that your project entails?

We plan to build on our successful Living Wage Employer Certification program, support business owners as we continue to build a network of employers interested and able to grow living wage jobs, and provide opportunities for potential worker owners through the New Economies Coalition. Specific activities include:

\*Certifying 40 new employers over the grant period with at least 400 employees newly covered under our program.

\*Maintain Certification for 400 existing Living Wage Certified employers.

\*Host at least 4 networking opportunities, workshops, or peer to peer learning experiences for existing LW Certified Business owners to support them in maintaining LW Certification and growing the living wage workforce.

\*Participate with the New Economies Coalition in our efforts to educate and involve community members in business models that create jobs and build wealth in our community such as worker owned cooperatives. This coalition is still in the planning and data collection phase.

## People Served\*

Who are the members of our community this project will serve? How many people will be served? Include demographics, including age, area median income, race, neighborhood and/or school.

In our experience as the national leader with our Living Wage Certification program, around 20% of employers give wage raises in order to meet certification standards. The people most impacted by our program are low-wage workers between the age of 18-65 making less than \$13.00/hr. Women and people of color are disproportionately represented among low paid workers. While we collect data on wage raises given to meet Certification, there is an additional impact on employees making more than a living wage as wage scales are adjusted. We anticipate impacting more than 400 employees in newly LW Certified workplaces over the grant period.

In addition to workers employed at newly Living Wage Certified Employers, our work impacts business owners, prospective business owners, and potential worker owners. We plan to serve at least 40 employers through our support network. We do not yet have estimates of how many people we will serve through the work with the New Economies Coalition.

## Partners\*

Which other organizations are you working with to reach your goals? What other local organizations provide similar services or serve similar beneficiaries, and how do you work together?

Our major partners in this work are the organizations that make up the New Economies Coalition including Bountiful Cities, the Center for Local Economies, Eagle Market Street Development Corporation, Green Opportunities, Mountain Bizworks, Neighborhood Economics and Self-Help Credit Union. We also work with the Asheville Grown Business Alliance when appropriate.

While we are the only organization that does Living Wage Certification we work with these organizations to provide resources for businesses, to develop workshops focused on growing Living Wage jobs, and provide networking and peer sharing experiences.

The New Economies Coalition just completed an Economic Leakage Study that we are know sharing with the community for input in a series of 6 neighborhood workshops. At the same time the NEC is collecting data and learning skills to train others in wealth building business models that include worker owned cooperatives and Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOP).

## Personnel\*

Who is responsible for the project? Briefly describe project leaders and the role each will play in the project. How do these leaders reflect the population or community that you serve?

Our work is led by our committees and our decisions are made by our board. Our staff supports the work of our committees and board. The committee most directly involved in this work is our Certification Committee made up of business owners, workers, non-profit staff people, and interested community members. Our board includes a diverse cross-section of the community with authentic representation from people of color, low-income people, the labor community, faith communities, and business owners. Kelly Prime (owner Relax and Rejuvenate), Michael Carter (AB Tech), Noah Wilson (Emergent Opportunities) and Gerri Leonard (Building Bridges/YWCA) are primary leaders.

Our two primary staff people responsible for this project include Carmen Ramos-Kennedy and Vicki Meath. Carmen is our Living Wage Program Coordinator and is also the head of the local NAACP. Vicki is the

Executive Director and is the primary point person in the National Living Wage Network and the New Economies Coalition.

## Success\*

How will you measure results? What will success look like? How will you document the impact of your project? Include whether there is a model that serves as basis for project design.

This proposal is one year in a longer term plan to make living wages common-place in our community as outlined in our Strategic Plan. We will know we will have succeeded over the grant period when we have been able to maintain existing Living Wage Certified Employers and continue to build the program. We document the impacts in data collected through our Certification application and phone interviews with employers. We report the results to our Board and Certification Committee at least bi-annually and use those results as we create organizational strategy to most efficiently achieve our goals.

Our results of our workshops, networks and supports is more qualitative. We collect subjective feedback from program participants in our evaluation of this work.

The New Economies Coalition is using the findings of Democracy at Work and the successes of employers like the Evergreen Cooperative and Opportunity Threads as models to work from as we design our collaborative projects.

## Funding\*

What is your plan for finding the balance of the project budget? What is your funding timeline and what are your other sources of support?

This work is also supported by the United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County. Several years ago, we implemented an application fee to help sustain this program through earned income. If awarded this grant we will have little balance left to fund from our unrestricted donations from individuals.

We operate on a calendar year fiscal cycle, so our while our annual budget goes from January to December, these grant funds will be used between July of 2018 and June of 2019. We plan to begin or continue the activities outlined in this proposal in July and complete a year of this multi-year plan by June of 2019. We also have general operating supported committed from the Z Smith Reynolds Foundation and we have general operating support pending with the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

## Sustainability\*

How will this project be maintained? Please describe funding sources and how you plan to sustain the project in future years.

Our primary funding for this aspect of our work comes from a combination of grant funding and earned income. We have worked over the years to diversify our funding sources so we are less reliant on grant funding. We will continue to increase our earned income, build on our support from local business and faith communities, and increase our income from individual small and large donors.

Additionally, we are working on a strategic and intentional Fund Development Plan with the help of local consultant, Beth Trigg, and the Western North Carolina Nonprofit Pathways.

**ATTACHMENTS****Project Budget\***

Download the budget form at [THIS LINK](#).

Complete the budget form for this project and the overall organization.

Save it to your computer, then upload it.

strategic-partnership-grants-FY2019-budgetJEbuncco.xlsx

**Financial Statements\***

Upload a copy of the most recently completed financial statements.

All financial statements must be audited, reviewed or compiled by a certified public accountant and include a full balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement.

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

JE 2016 Final Compilation Report.pdf

**IRS Form 990\***

Upload a copy of the 990 nonprofit tax reporting form that you most recently completed.

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

JE 2016 Form 990 Final e-filed 2017-08-15.pdf

**Board of Directors List\***

Upload a current list of your organization's Board of Directors.

If your organization does not have a board of directors, briefly state the reason.

JEstaff& Board List 2018.doc

## Authorized Signatory

By typing in below the name of the authorized signatory and date of submittal, you acknowledge that your governing body has authorized this application, that it is true and current to your knowledge. As a condition of any grant awarded, this organization will provide all information in the manner described in the contract to be executed between the organization and Buncombe County or its designee, including program and financial reporting.

Name & Date

Vicki Meath 2/9/18