

# Sustainable Economy and Public Engagement

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## *FY 2018 Buncombe County Community Funding*

### ***Just Economics***

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# Application Form

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## Project Name\*

Name of Project

Sustainable Economy and Public Engagement

## Amount Requested\*

Amount Requested

\$15,000.00

## 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 Localized Economy > Ensure a diverse economy with competitive wages

## 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 > Identify and reduce barriers to employment (e.g., childcare, transportation, housing, insurance)

## 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.

Community > Citizen Participation in Community Decisions > Value and respect contributions of all Buncombe County citizens

## ***Project Description***

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### **Project Description\***

#### Description of Project

Just Economics is an Asheville-based nonprofit whose mission is to educate, advocate, and organize for a just and sustainable local economy that works for all in Western North Carolina. Our primary focuses have

been: Sustainable local economy initiatives including the largest Living Wage Certification program in the country; Poverty remediation by helping to remove systematic barriers to economic mobility; and Public participation in community decisions by marginalized populations. Just Economics is requesting continued

funding from Buncombe County to maintain this work in line with the County's focus on a localized economy

and the Buncombe County Sustainability Plan.

Funding will support Just Economics' staff positions for 2 related programs that coincide to reduce poverty in Buncombe County.

The first program is our voluntary Living Wage Employer Certification Program. This program focuses on working with businesses to voluntarily raise the wage floor and increase economic mobility for low-wage workers in Buncombe County.

The second project is our Voices for Economic Justice program, a leadership training for low-wage workers and low-income people to involve them in public decisions that affect their lives.

Low-income leaders that emerge from the Voices for Economic Justice program are involved in community efforts that identify and reduce barriers to employment. Low-income leaders from this program are currently working with staff and committees from the City of Asheville to improve the bus system, as lack of reliable transportation is a major barrier to employment.

We believe the best community change comes about when the people most impacted by the problems are involved in creating the solutions. Low-income people are involved in and leading many of our efforts. Together we are strategizing effective and meaningful solutions to work toward living wages, affordable housing, and efficient transit in Buncombe County.

### **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?

In the 2018 fiscal year, Just Economics will serve:

- 6,500 Buncombe County workers covered under our program. These individuals will be working for Living Wage Certified Employers. Of those 6,000 workers, 500 will be added to our program during the grant

cycle and at least 100 will have received a wage increase as a result of our program because their employer

raised wages to meet our standards. 6000 workers will remain covered under our program and their employers will continue to voluntarily pay at least a living wage.

- 30 low-income residents graduating from our leadership development program focused on community engagement. Five leaders from our Voices for Economic Justice program will participate with community stakeholders in community issues. The results of this participation will affect thousands of low-income residents. For example, an estimated 5,000 transit-dependent local residents are affected by the work of these low-income leaders on transportation issues.

## 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 work of Just Economics takes a three-pronged approach to poverty remediation by working with employers to create more sustainable employment opportunities; working with system changes that remove barriers to economic mobility; and working with low-income individuals to build leadership from marginalized communities resulting in public participation from these communities.

In our work with businesses, we focus our attention on business owners in target industries and geographic locations. Our goal is to impact low-wage workers. In 2017, our strategic focus will include businesses in Buncombe County located outside the City of Asheville, businesses with more than 30 employees, and businesses in the hospitality & retail, health care, brewing, and nonprofit industries.

Our community engagement work and systems change work focuses on the impacts to low-income people in Buncombe County. Women, children, and people of color are disproportionately represented in this population.

## 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.

During the 2018 fiscal year Just Economics will:

- \* Work with Buncombe County businesses to increase or maintain wages to at least a living wage standard and to create more sustainable business environments, reducing turnover and increasing productivity.

- The living wage rate for 2017-2018 is increasing and Just Economics will work directly with businesses utilizing the support of partner organizations to be sure that local small businesses currently Living Wage Certified are able to remain solvent while raising their wage floor.

- JE will certify 40 new Living Wage businesses with an estimated 10 businesses to increase wages.

\* Just Economics will host 2 sessions of our leadership development program for low-income people with a target of 15 graduating participants in each class. Follow-up with graduating participants as well as ongoing follow-up with previous leaders will include connecting low-income people to opportunities to participate with Buncombe County stakeholders.

### **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?

Our Living Wage Certification program is the largest in the country and the leading example for the nation. Certification programs (like certified organic) create marketing strategies that target conscious consumers and result in increased market shares for certified businesses. Fair Trade Certification and Certified B Corps are examples of successful certification programs focusing on working conditions and wages.

In our Voices for Economic Justice program, Just Economics chooses to use Popular Education methodology in the program design because of its relevance to our work and constituency. Organizations like United for a Fair Economy use this model and have shared their successes working with people from low-wealth communities. Another reason our program has proven successful is because we remove barriers to

participation by providing food, transportation, and childcare to our program workshops and follow-up meetings.

### **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.

Just Economics tracks data and keeps records of our employers involved in our certification program in our database. The information is collected through an online application and a follow-up interview. Employers are required to recertify every two years and the same online application and follow-up interview

is used in the recertification process. We create reports from our database and spreadsheets.

Just Economics collects data from our Voices for Economic Justice participants through participant evaluations and interviews. We use our database to track client participation in follow-up activities. The database that we use is Salesforce Nonprofit Version.

### **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?

Just Economics' greatest strength in regards to technology is our Salesforce database from which we can track data and create reports.

Our greatest challenge is our human resources available for data entry and report creation, as well as training for staff to optimize the use of Salesforce. We know that with additional training and funding for staff time, we could be using Salesforce more effectively.

Currently the Executive Director is responsible for managing the use of technology in our organization. Just Economics often contracts for help with technology including website updates and Salesforce adaptations.

In the 2017 calendar year, Just Economics plans to hire an additional part-time staff person in an effort to increase our capacity and best manage our resources.

## **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.

The mission of Just Economics is to educate, advocate, and organize for a just and sustainable local economy that works for all in Western North Carolina.

The four major goals identified in our strategic plan revised in 2015 include:

- 1) People have access to living wage jobs.
- 2) Policies promote overall good quality of life for workers and their families.
- 3) Workplaces have fair and just practices and employers and employees are organized in relationships based on their mutual, interdependent interests.
- 4) Low-wage earners are able to use their voice and are organized with allies from all socioeconomic groups on behalf of a just economy.

This funding proposal includes support for 2 programs that make up the proposed project, our Living Wage Employer Certification program and our Voices for Economic Justice program.

Our certification program work relates directly to goals 1 and 3, and our Voices for Economic Justice program relates directly to goals 2 and 4.

### **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.

Some of the strengths of Just Economics include serving as a model for cutting-edge programs, authentically engaging low-income people in public decisions, and working with stakeholders to create systematic improvements. Some of our accomplishments include:

- Launched the largest Living Wage Employer Certification Program in the country. 400+ employers have been Living Wage Certified, and we have an estimated annual impact on our local economy of over \$1 million

in the form of wage raises to low-wage workers. With two national partners we developed a toolkit for this

program now being used across the country.

- Created Voices for Economic Justice, our leadership development program for low-wage workers. We trained over 200 low-wage worker leaders. Leaders from this program now serve on our board and participate on other boards and committees in the community.

- Worked with Asheville, Weaverville, Montreat, Canton, and Buncombe County to adopt Living Wage policies for their employees.

## 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.

In regards to our Living Wage Certification program, we partner with local businesses. We partner directly with the Asheville Grown Business Alliance and the Mountain Xpress through the Go Local Directory. We also partner with organizations Mountain Bizworks, Self-Help, Eagle Market Street Development Corporation, Project Equity, and others, building a coalition aimed at creating support for businesses interested in more just and sustainable workplace practices and supporting the development of worker owned cooperatives.

In regards to our public engagement work through the Voices for Economic Justice program, we partner with several organizations we have worked with over the years whose commitment is demonstrated by their continued involvement such as Children First/CIS, and faith communities like First Presbyterian. We are also in an alliance with Bountiful Cities, BeLoved, Asheville Greenworks, and the local NAACP with program plans to improve upon our leadership development work.

## 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.

JE 2015 Form 990EZ Final e-filed 2016-08-01 [164589].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).

JE 2015 Compilation Report [117762].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.

Just Economics budgetfy18.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.

**Revenue:** The major changes in our revenue are primarily in grant funding because we received a grant for one of our partnerships and also, we anticipate getting 2 grants that we did not receive in 2016.

**Expenses:** Our major changes in our expenses include an additional half time staff person who will help us to increase our capacity. We plan to hire a part time development professional to assist the Executive

Director with some of the fundraising. We expect this position to be an investment that aids in our financial sustainability.

2017 \$64750 Committed

(\$7750 from Buncombe County-our fiscal year is the same as the calendar year)

\$5000 from CCHD notification expected May 2017

\$10,000 from Parsec Prize

### **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

### **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

We do not provide health insurance.

**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

We have 2 part-time employees between \$15.00-\$19.99/hr and 1 employee between \$20.00-\$24.99/hr.