

16 May 2022

Buncombe County Commission  
200 College Street  
Asheville, NC 28801

Dear Commissioner,

On behalf of the leadership of Chosen, we sincerely thank you for allowing us to submit a proposal to Buncombe County. In the case that the grant should be awarded, Chosen kindly requests an amount of \$265,700 to fund 2022 Summer Camp. The Chosen PODS Summer Camp is aimed at helping youth living in Southside, Hillcrest, Pisgah view and Deaverview Communities. The camp will provide these campers between the ages of 06 -14 a safe environment, with educational activities, structured programs, field trips, and weekly fun outings. Last year's camp was such a success. We had 75 kids each day, employed youth and adults from the community. This year we have registered 140 youth and have incorporated cultural dance lessons and sporting activities. The Summer Camp will begin the first Monday after the last day of classes for ACS and continue weekly Monday - Friday until the last Friday before ACS classes resume. We will continue to partner with the Asheville Housing Authority and utilize the Arthur R Edington Education center on Livingston Street. This has become a safe space for youth with daily activities and community involvement. The Housing Authority uses a program that allows us to hire responsible adults living within the community to work in the camps. This has created a greater sense of pride within the community. For the past 4 years the Western Carolina Rescue Ministry has agreed to be the fiscal agent for Chosen. This was done to ensure proper accounting of all funds along with proven leadership and oversight. Western Carolina has agreed to continue to act in this capacity in order to ensure programs continue to empower the youth and the community being impacted. This accounting oversight is done at zero cost to Chosen.

Sincerely,  
Micheal A. Woods, Chosen Board Member  
Western Carolina Rescue Ministries, CEO

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Proposal for the Chosen PODS Summer Camp 2022  
Chosen/ Western Carolina Rescue Ministries May 16, 2022

### Executive Summary

Similar to the Buncombe County Commission, Chosen with the help of (WCRM) has spent the past 4 years engaging the community, empowering youth and increasing positive outcomes. . Through such a match of values and mission, the Buncombe County Commission and Chosen have the ability to create change in the lives of these young populations that will ensure the next generation is given every opportunity to step out of the grip poverty holds on them and their families in a way that lasts.

Chosen's mission has expanded to providing essential needs to local students through various youth programs specifically targeting at-risk youth. According to Rawhide Youth Services, "A youth at-risk is a child or adolescent who faces extreme threats to a successful transition into adulthood" (par.1). The site also explains that one of the greatest catalysts to putting more youth at-risk is a rise in poverty levels. According to local reporter Beth Walton, there has been a 20% increase in poverty between the years 2014 and 2015, and an increase of up to 44% between 2006 and 2015 in Buncombe County alone (Walton, 2016). Due to this massive increase, there has formed a need for sustainability not just in getting families out of poverty, but also in meeting the additional needs that such a rise in poverty causes such as food, and educational assistance.

In order to meet the needs of local at-risk youth, Chosen is continuing to host a growing after school program, an annual summer long day camp, Chosen youth basketball and Chosen Dance. All of the programs incorporate a mixture of academic and behavioral education, while also creating a safe high character environment for the kids to learn and be fed both physically and spiritually.

The annual budget to run such programs and begin new ones comes to a total of \$950,000. . This amount includes the after school program, summer camp, daily healthy meals, academic support, transportation and sporting activities. With the support of WCRM, Asheville Housing Authority, Dogwood Trust and many others we believe that we can give the youth in our community the opportunity to achieve greatness. The amount requested for the summer long camp will allow us to serve 140 + kids and employ 20 youth impact workers. The impact these programs have on the community is imperative. Not only do the programs impact the lives of the students academically, but they also show the love of adults that are willing to go the extra mile. The students are held to standards that they complete the work in front of them, but then they are also rewarded for their hard work and taught to persevere no matter the circumstance. Creating such an environment for these students also reciprocates throughout the community and wherever these youths go, freeing them from the hand of poverty for generations to come.

The children enrolled in the after school program get the first opportunity to sign up for camp. Currently we have a waiting list for the summer camp. When considering the growth that has been experienced in the students from the neighborhoods, CEO and Executive Director Micheal Woods states:

"We have over 80 children from all neighborhoods, and this is allowing us to reunite our community. An assistant with Asheville City Schools has reported that teh children that are



attending the Chosen After school program or experiencing greater academic gains. The programs Chosen offers to youth range in their intended goals, but are all commonly intentional in a targeted reach to improve the local community. The problems that the organization seeks to solve are more than physical behavior, but to also instill principles with the intention of breaking generational curses..

## Needs Assessment

### The Problem

Summer camp and afterschool programs are more than enjoyable for children, they are integral to their development into adulthood. However, many families with low income and unstable home environments lack the resources and sometimes the ability to involve their children in such programs. Students in these environments are defined as “high-risk,” meaning they face extreme threats to having a transition into adulthood that is successful and beneficial to their lives, as well as their community. High-risk students have several other factors that contribute to their lack of success. These factors include:

- o Poverty
- o Household instability
- o Unstable academic tools
- o Poor community resources
- o Adverse childhood experiences

The commonality between these different factors is their cultivation of feelings of isolation and possibly estrangement. Such emotions cause at-risk youth to react negatively to their surroundings.

### The People

The levels of at-risk youth are growing in Western North Carolina. Data collected in the NC Youth Risk Behavior Survey by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction shows summaries of various trends related to youth in school. Not only does the data show a rise in behavior tied to developing at-risk children, but between the middle school and high school years it also shows very little change, if any, between the years of 2017 and 2019.

Child poverty is linked to factors such as academic achievement, physical and psychological health, and overall well-being (Effects of Poverty, Hunger and Homelessness on Children and Youth). Taking a closer look at local conditions, an article published in the Citizen Times states that, “Among 37,000 people identified in Buncombe County by the U.S. Census Bureau as living below the federal poverty threshold in 2015, set last year at \$12,082 for a single individual and \$25,257 for a family of four. That amounts to just over one in six people in Buncombe County living in poverty in 2015, a 20 percent increase from the year prior and up 44 percent since 2006” (Walton, 2016, par.11). Such a rise in the local poverty levels means the services provided by Chosen are needed like never before.

The target audience for these projects are children defined as at risk, particularly within the communities of Pisgah View, Livingston, Deaverview and Hillcrest. These are four of the lower-income suburban areas in the Asheville area. The afterschool program is open to kids from kindergarten – 8th grade, the summer camp welcomes kids from 1st – 9th grade..

### Previous/Current Interventions

Currently, Chosen facilitates the largest after school program for at risk youth in Western North Carolina. The program runs five days a week from 2:30pm – 6:00pm and students are provided a full meal within this time. During the summer, Western Carolina Rescue Ministries also began hosting a day camp for these children. Last year, the camp saw 85 kids enrolled and the organization was able to provide them with two full meals as well as two snacks. Signups for the summer camp are open to the children in the afterschool program a week early, then expand to any children within the targeted grade levels. All programs are available to sign up for at the schools themselves, as well as in the housing centers.

### Potential Barriers

Because the programs offered by Chosen do not run on payment from families or schools, funding poses one of the biggest potential barriers. However, the financial records of past years of operations and the attached current budget are evidence of healthy management of resources and the probability of reaching funding goals is reasonable and highly likely.

### Gaps in Current Services

Other afterschool programs and summer day programs currently in place also include various programs offered at the YMCA, Camp Good News, and school camps hosted by the Asheville Museum of Art and Science, although all of these programs differ in that they require some form of payment by either parents or schools (Buncombe County Schools Website).

### Goal, Objectives, and Methods

#### Goal

To break the cycles of poverty by mentoring and providing meals for youth via day camp, afterschool programs, and emerging programs targeting at-risk youth.

#### Outcomes

##### For the Day Camp in the Summer:

There will be an increase from 65 up to 140 in attendance of at-risk youth in the daily summer camp, which will last the entire afternoon for five days a week from June 13th – August 12th under the supervision of current employees and volunteers. The academic gaps in these students will be targeted and significantly closed, with specific emphasis on reading and math.

**Program Approach:** This objective will be completed with the help of employees and trained volunteers, as well as collaboration with ACS and the CHOSEN after school program.

Spreading awareness of the camp will first take place within the daily after school program within the school year. These students will have the first choice of available spots within the summer camp, then any remaining availability will be advertised within the schools themselves.

Tutoring for the students will also come from collaboration with Mathematics students at University of North Carolina Asheville (UNCA) and the local Read to Succeed program. Focus on these two specific subjects will target them for academic improvement within the students.

Recreational activities will then take place after tutoring in the afternoons and will include subjects such as music, art, swimming, roller skating, basketball, hiking, and dance.

### Evaluation



The evaluation for these programs will coordinate with the academic levels of the students and any shifts within their behavior as a result of higher levels of engagement. Attendance will be taken via the signups distributed by the schools and Chosen. The rate at which the programs fill up and any potential waiting lists will also be noted. These records will be evaluated and analyzed in the future as the programs persist.

Records such as test scores will be observed by the schools, especially in students who have participated in the tutoring services as part of the Afterschool and Summer Camp programs. Subjects pertaining to reading and math will be specifically looked at. The hired liaisons (Adult Youth Impact Workers) will be tasked with communicating any behavioral changes or needs and program information between Chosen, the school they are assigned to, and the parents of the children involved. Therefore, these liaisons will serve as integral parts to the evaluation process. In addition to academic and behavioral records, soft data that will also be collected will include updates, quotes, and photos from teachers, and parents.

#### Future Support

Long-term support for these programs have largely stemmed from members of the CHOSEN after school organization, as well as WCRM's CEO fund. The first grant for these programs came as \$15,000 from the Chaddick Foundation, and while grants provide efficiency to raising funding for such programs, they are not the sole form of fundraising Chosen uses. Because these programs are intended to remain available to the target population long-term, Chosen seeks to also raise funds by building relationships with entities such as local schools, ministries, partnering financially with churches, and continuing to build a healthy relationship with the local community.

While the schools are not the biggest asset for raising funds, they are an integral part in keeping the existing and upcoming programs funded. The local schools serve as a main area in which Chosen is able to identify at-risk children and progress is able to be monitored. The schools also play a huge part in local dissemination of Chosen and the services it provides through holding signups and consulting kids and parents on what they can expect within them. Devotion to building these local bonds also helps keep the community updated on both its needs and the solutions being made to fit those needs.

#### Conclusion

While poverty might be a growing problem in Western North Carolina, Chosen is determined to not let the story end there. Investing in the next generation through the afterschool and summer programs provides not just a means to build connection with the local community, but to lead it into a brighter future. Through partnering with Buncombe County the potential to raise this community out of poverty is ready and available. On behalf of everyone at Chosen, we appreciate your consideration of this grant and hope that whatever decision is made, it is all for the betterment of the community.

PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET

<b>Project Name</b>	Chosen PODS Summer Camp				
<b>Amount Requested</b>					
	*This project would still be viable with a partial award*				
<b>Proposed Project Revenue Source</b>		<b>Amount</b>	<b>Confirmed or Pending?</b>	<b>Notes</b>	
	<b>Total:</b>	\$0.00			
<b>Proposed Project Expenses</b>	<b>Proposed ARPA Funds</b>	<b>Other Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Capital or Operating Expense</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Edington Center staffing	\$141,600.00		\$141,600.00	Operating	1- Program Director- \$18/hour, 1- Admin- \$16/hr, 20 staff members @ \$16/hr
Edington-Academic Leads/Tutors	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00		10 hours/week @ \$25/hr x 2
Edington-Liability Insurance	\$3,000.00		\$3,000.00		
Edington- Meals	\$50,000.00		\$50,000.00	Operating	3 meals/day 10 weeks
Edington-Arts and crafts supplies	\$2,500.00		\$2,500.00	Operating	
Edington-Academic Supplies	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00		
Edington- Cleaning and PPE supplies	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	Operating	
Laptops	\$2,000.00		\$2,000.00	Operating	
Building equipment cost (e.g. tables and chairs)	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	Capital	
Transportation Operation Renting, Insurance, Gas,	\$20,000.00		\$20,000.00		
Transportation Capitol every 3 years	\$0.00		\$0.00		
Swimming 3x/Week	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00	Operating	
Skating 2x/mo (All Sites)	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	Operating	
Bowling	\$2,000.00		\$2,000.00		
LEAF Global trips x2	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	Operating	
Dance classes	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	Operating	
Dance uniforms	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00		
DJ & MC- 2 dance recitiles	\$600.00		\$600.00		
Foam Party x2	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00		
Board Games, Balls, Outdoor games	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00		
Annual trip to the aquarium	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00	Operating	
Young Bus	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00		
Family Engagement Events-2	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00		
Staff Supplies (chairs)	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00		
Other activities and events	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00	Operating	
		<b>Total:</b>	\$265,700.00		

22 staff  
140 Children