Horizons at Carolina Day School Summer 2022 and School Year

RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Carolina Day School

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Application Form

**Question Group**
Buncombe County requests proposals for projects to help the community recover from and respond to COVID-19 and its negative economic impacts.

Buncombe County has been awarded $50,733,290 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funding), as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. This infusion of federal resources is intended to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

Buncombe County is committed to investing these funds in projects that:

- Align to county strategic plan and community priorities
- Support equitable outcomes for most impacted populations
- Leverage and align with other governmental funding sources
- Make best use of this one-time infusion of resources
- Have a lasting impact

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

Click here for the full terms and conditions of the RFP

**Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds**
Name of Project.
Horizons at Carolina Day School Summer 2022 and School Year

**Amount of Funds Requested**
$25,000.00

**Recovery Fund Eligible Category**
Please select one:
Services for disproportionately impacted communities

**Brief Project Description**
Provide a short summary of your proposed project.
Horizons at Carolina Day School (CDS) is an equity-centered, transformational educational experience that closes opportunity gaps and changes the trajectories of children’s lives. We are a part of a national network of evidence-based enrichment programs that have proven to significantly impact long-term student success.
During our six-week summer program, we provide an exciting learning environment outside of the traditional school year that enables under-served children to overcome the odds through academic achievement and healthy youth development. Our students engage in a rich academic curriculum and explore swimming, music, art, and other extracurriculars.

Every year they are involved in our program, Horizons students build lasting relationships with their teachers, peers, and volunteers, learn to tackle new challenges, and develop a multitude of skills that will serve them for the rest of their lives.

**Project Plan**

Explain how the project will be structured and implemented, including timeframe.

Horizons at CDS is an equity-centered enrichment program for students experiencing poverty. Students join Horizons the summer after grade K and remain involved for 9 years or more. All Horizons students qualify for free or reduced lunch, and at least \( \frac{2}{3} \) of our students start off performing below grade level in school.

Working with the children and families who participate in Horizons is a long-term commitment to improve children's education and opportunity, with a goal of reducing poverty for the family and community. We make a concerted effort to build relationships with the families whose children participate in our program and involve them in a variety of ways. We understand that families living in poverty can be significantly impacted by unexpected crises that set them back and impact children's well-being and education. In order to help families and children undertake steps to move them out of poverty, we help link the families with any other services in our community that could help them meet their needs, such as food assistance, health care, free educational testing, scholarships, and internships.

In summer 2022, we will expand to serving 75 children and their families. During our summer program, our students are immersed in an all-day STEM-centered curriculum that improves literacy and math proficiency. Students explore a project-based curriculum taught by professional teachers with a 5:1 student to teacher ratio, where each child receives an individualized academic experience. We provide students with two healthy meals and snacks per day. They also explore social-emotional learning, perform volunteer work, go on field trips, develop conflict resolution skills, learn to play an instrument, run a community garden, and learn to swim.

During the school year, our students participate in afterschool programming: small group classes and one-on-one tutoring sessions. We conduct several check-ins with our students and their families, providing resources as necessary. We also communicate with our students' teachers and school administrators to prepare to support them in the following summer program. As an organization, we hold multiple food/clothing/toy drives.

Horizons at CDS is a Carolina Day program with significant in-kind support from the school, but we fundraise separately. Our extensive community support is essential to our success. Our partners include: Avery's Creek and Ira B. Jones elementary schools teachers and administrators, the YMCA of WNC, the NC Summer Food Service Program, Open Doors of Asheville, The Diana Wortham Theatre, Pan Harmonium, Asheville Greenworks, the Carolina Mountain Club, and the Asheville Museum of Science.

**Statement of Need**

Describe the need that this project will address. Include data to demonstrate the need, and cite the source of the data.
Horizons at CDS serves students living in poverty in Buncombe County. We aim to eliminate the opportunity and academic achievement gaps our students face due to their family’s socioeconomic status. In 2018, Buncombe county officials found a significant socioeconomic status-related achievement gap among public school students. In Asheville City Schools only 39% of economically disadvantaged students at ACS were performing at grade level proficiency compared to their more affluent peers, of which 81% were on track. And in Buncombe County Schools, only 50% of low-income students were on track compared to 76% of their peers (https://www.buncombecounty.org/common/Commissioners/20200721/Pre%20Achievement%20Gap%20-%20Buncombe%20County%20ppt.pdf).

A 2010 KIDS COUNT Special Report posits that “for low-income children in particular, a ‘readiness gap’ fuels what has become known as an achievement gap” (https://www.ccf.ny.gov/files/9013/8262/2751/AECFReporReadingGrade3.pdf). This readiness gap includes things like feeling safe, having family support, feeling excited about learning, and having positive social interactions with their peers.

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to live in unsafe neighborhoods and attend schools in districts with overwhelmed teachers, inadequate facilities, and fewer resources like after-school tutoring. Out of school, they face issues like food-insecurity, unreliable internet access, and they often do not have the benefit of parental involvement due to longer, lower wage working hours. Living in poverty can also prevent students from participating in academic or sports extracurriculars, isolating them from their peers and leading to increased rates of mental and physical health issues.

**Link to COVID-19**

Identify a health or economic harm resulting from or exacerbated by the public health emergency, describe the nature and extent of that harm, and explain how the use of this funding would address such harm.

“Students took nearly 2 full years to make up lost ground for the loss in instructional time due to Hurricane Katrina (Harris & Larsen, 2019)” and researchers are predicting a similar trend concerning COVID-19-related learning loss and interruptions and the long-term educational recovery that will be required (journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0013189X20965918).

COVID-19 school closures and remote learning have exacerbated existing achievement and opportunity gaps and created new ones for students living in poverty. Low-income students had to rely on donated devices and equipment and unreliable hotspots. And even students receiving in-person instruction suffered from learning interruptions when classes were sent home or entire schools were closed due to COVID outbreaks.

Researchers from Johns Hopkins found that “children from low-income families who were chronically absent in kindergarten also had the lowest levels of achievement in fifth grade.” In the same study, they found “chronic absence in one early grade is linked with lower test scores throughout elementary school” (http://new.every1graduates.org/data-matters-using-chronic-absence-to-accelerate-action-for-student-success/).

During a normal school year, low-income students tend to have more absences and are more likely to be chronically absent, compared with their more affluent peers (Whitney & Liu, 2017). COVID-19 only made things worse for low-income students, who had to deal with unreliable internet access and failing technology preventing them from attending school virtually. Considering the years of research on absenteeism, COVID-19-related absences will undoubtedly affect our students well into the 2022-2023 school year.

We are keenly attuned to the needs of families living in poverty and how COVID-19 has affected them, and we work year-round to eliminate the barriers that prevent our students from participating fully during our summer enrichment program or the school-year.
Population Served*
Define the population to be served by this project, including volume and demographic characteristics of those served.

Horizons students are from the Asheville area and attend Asheville City or Buncombe County Schools. All of our students rely on free or reduced lunch during the school year, and their families demonstrate significant financial need.

In Summer 2022, we will expand to accommodate 75 students in grades 1-5. Our demographic breakdown as of Summer 2021 is 75% African American, 17% Latinx and 8% Caucasian, and we anticipate those ratios will change very little.

We also extend significant support to our students’ families, making our expected number of people served in the 2022-2023 summer/school year to be around 400.

Providing greater educational opportunities to non-white students is essential in a place like Asheville, where the disparity in academic achievement between black and white students in our City Schools is the worst in the state of NC. Asheville’s education system also has the fifth largest racial achievement gap in the nation.

Western North Carolina has seen a decade of substantial economic growth that has left behind many families of color, who have been historically excluded from accessing opportunities in this area. Our Horizons program will make a pivotal difference in the Asheville region, where only 12 percent of the city’s African-American students in grades three to eight score as “proficient” or higher on end-of-grade exams, compared with 73 percent of white students.

Results*
Describe the proposed impact of the project. List at least 3 performance measures that will be tracked and reported. If possible, include baselines and goals for each performance measure.

Over each 6-week summer session, Horizons students achieve an average 8-12 weeks improvement in reading and math, sending them to school ahead of where they left in June. Evidence shows the Horizons approach mitigates gaps of opportunity, skills, and achievement with 97% of students in Horizons high school programs graduating on time.

We evaluate our student’s performances utilizing STAR Reading Assessments, STAR Math Assessments- and for social emotional learning- integrate Yale’s RULER approach.

During the 2022-2023 school year, students will progress to being on or beyond grade level in reading and math. We measure this growth through STAR assessments, as well as through individualized student quarterly reports, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data. We will receive evaluations, academic records, and behavioral/attendance records from our partner schools. We visit these schools throughout the year, meeting with teachers and encouraging ongoing communication. Contact with Horizons families is also ongoing throughout the school year in the form of text messages, calls, and gatherings, helping us to receive feedback from parents on how Horizons participation impacts their child.

Students will employ an expanded emotional vocabulary, using self-regulation strategies, exhibiting fewer disciplinary issues and showing greater willingness to participate in conflict resolution with peers. Our goal is that students will employ self-regulation strategies with reminders mid-program and on their own at least 50% of the time by program’s conclusion. We anticipate that behavior issues with individual students will decrease by 25% by the end of the program and that students will exhibit improved conflict resolution skills by the summer program’s end. The Student/Family Support specialist will track this progress by keeping quantitative and qualitative data on behavior and conflict resolution interventions.
**Evaluation**
Describe the data collection, analysis, and quality assurance measures you will use to assure ongoing, effective tracking of contract requirements and outcomes.

We employ many methods to gather data on program outcomes, including: reports from public school teachers, STAR literacy and math pre- and post-tests, parent surveys, student surveys, student-led conferences, and quantitative and qualitative evaluations performed by our teaching staff. We receive regular, on-going, long-term feedback from parents on how Horizons is shaping their child as a learner and as a person. We also use Salesforce to manage our data and use this data to inform academic groupings and programmatic choices.

We receive evaluations, academic records, and behavioral/attendance records from our partner schools in order to monitor our students’ progress. We visit these schools throughout the year, meeting with teachers and encouraging ongoing communication. We will know that we are successful in improving social emotional learning by informal observation of classrooms.

We will also know we are tracking our goals through feedback from our partner schools. A close relationship with our partner schools allows us to share information on student growth and needs, as well as to track improvements over time that occur during the school year. A commitment to remaining connected to our students through high school graduation will help us confirm that participation in Horizons at CDS improves graduation and higher education opportunities.

Utilizing STAR Early Literacy Assessments, academic growth of Horizons students is measured at the start and end of the summer, and outside evaluators regularly assess the effectiveness of the nationwide program.

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**Equity Impact**
How will this effort help build toward a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery? How are the root causes and/or disproportionate impacts of inequities addressed?

At Horizons, we believe that all children should have the same opportunities to learn, experience, and achieve. In the wake of COVID-19, the impacts of education inequity are felt now more than ever by students in under-resourced communities and by students of color. Disparities in education are not just fundamentally unfair, they are a recipe for poverty that persists from generation to generation and keeps all of us – students, families, communities, and our nation – from reaching our full potential.

Equity in education means access and opportunity for all students to achieve personal success through high quality instruction and engaging learning experiences. Children who grow up in poverty have much less access than their more affluent peers to safe neighborhoods, quality out-of-school programs, and excellent schools – a perfect storm for creating and sustaining systemic inequity. Children from low-income families are disproportionately African American, Latino, and English language-learners, inherently linking gaps of achievement and opportunity with ethnicity.

We are taking a dynamic approach to address the opportunity gaps, systemic inequity, and rapidly changing education landscape in our community.

As an equity-centered program, we are also committed to examining our own biases, rearranging our power structures, recognizing that each child is a unique and layered individual, celebrating differences, establishing an inclusive environment, accommodating different learning styles and abilities, affirming our families’ experiences of inequity, cultivating a culture of belonging for students and parents, and encouraging students to have agency in identifying their own strengths and needs.
**Project Partners***
Identify any subcontractors you intend to use for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, indicate:

1.) What products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor and;
2.) What percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform.

Also, list non-funded key partners critical to project.

Our most essential partnership is with Carolina Day School. CDS, although not providing any direct funding to Horizons, gives significant in-kind support in the form of classroom space, administrative support, consultation with leadership staff, and use of school equipment. CDS students, parents, and teachers also fill important volunteer roles in the program, which both enhances the curriculum and helps keep costs down.

We primarily partner with Avery’s Creek and Ira B. Jones elementary schools. Our relationship with the schools entails an ongoing dialogue on our students’ needs and successes to help us best serve each child. However, we are committed to our students no matter what school they may attend or transfer to. Our current group of students attends 7 different area schools.

Other partnerships include the following:

- The YMCA of WNC offers us a significant discount on swim lessons, as well as priority in scheduling and water safety training for our volunteers.
- Elinor Earle, director of Youthful HAND and tireless advocate for increased opportunity for children living in public housing in Asheville, has helped us connect on a deep level to the communities and families that we serve. She can be called on at any time to help improve family engagement or connect families to resources in times of need.
- Open Doors of Asheville works with us to support and engage mutual families that we serve and connects us with committed and exemplary older students to serve as volunteers.
- The NC Summer Foods Program, which provides healthy, balanced meals twice a day for our children each day of the six week summer program, ensures the children have their nutritional needs met and helps keep costs down for our program.
- Numerous community groups, such as the Diana Wortham Theatre, Pan Harmonium, and the Carolina Mountain Club help us provide meaningful enrichment activities to our students at no cost.

**Capacity***
Describe the background, experience, and capabilities of your organization or department as it relates to capacity for delivering the proposed project and managing federal funds.

Our relationship with Horizons National and the Horizons Network of 58 other programs is essential in supporting capacity building and sustainability in our organization. Horizons National continues to be directly involved in supporting the board, mentoring staff, assessing program effectiveness, collecting and distributing data, hosting national conferences, rolling out teacher training, maintaining a database of resources, and facilitating a nationwide Giving Day each year. In addition, Horizons Directors around the country are readily available to answer questions, offer administrative resources, and mentor younger programs like ours, greatly enhancing the capacity of our staff.

Another factor in our sustainability is our gradual growth model. Having started in Summer 2018 with 15 students, we continually add another class of 15 rising 1st grade students each year to ultimately reach full program maturation with 9 grades and 135 students. By growing at an incremental rate, we are able to support a gradual increase in staff size and capacity, meet progressively growing funding requirements and successfully expand into utilizing more physical space on the CDS campus.

While our program at Carolina Day is in its fourth year, the national program has been around since 1964. With nearly 60 affiliates around the country, the program has helped thousands of families rise out of poverty. Based on Horizons National data, students who begin in grade K continue through the program, building deep relationships, skills, knowledge, and confidence, which lead nationally to a 99% high school graduate rate and a 91% rate of going on to attend college or other post-secondary training. Since 1995,
Horizons National has worked closely with third-party evaluators to assess the effectiveness of the program. Key findings demonstrate that Horizons students, who represent a broad range of learning styles and ability, achieve success in school and beyond.

**Budget**
Provide a detailed project budget including all proposed project revenues and expenditures, including explanations and methodology. For all revenue sources, list the funder and denote whether funds are confirmed or pending. For project expenses, denote all capital vs. operating costs, and reflect which specific expenses are proposed to be funded with one-time Buncombe County Recovery Funds.

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

**Special Considerations**
Provide any other information that might assist the County in its selection.

[Horizons at CDS Info Packet-compressed.pdf](#)
File Attachment Summary

**Applicant File Uploads**

- Recovery Funds Budget - HORIZONS AT CAROLINA DAY.xlsx
- Horizons at CDS Info Packet-compressed.pdf
## Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
### Proposed Project Budget

### Organization Name:
Horizons at Carolina Day School

### Project Name:
Summer 2022 and 2022-2023 School-Year Programming

### Amount Requested:

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<th>Proposed Project Revenue Funder</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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**Total** $205,573.00

### Proposed Project Expenses

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**Total** $205,573.00
WE BELIEVE IN THE PROMISE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL CHILDREN
Our mission—
To improve the life trajectory of children facing inequity in Asheville by increasing their opportunities...

to fall in love with learning...

to develop the skills to succeed in and outside of the classroom...

to build the confidence to achieve their dreams.

Our vision—
A world of opportunities where all children are empowered and able to reach their greatest potential.
Horizons at CDS is an equity-centered enrichment program for children in Asheville, North Carolina.

Our joyful summer and tutoring programs:

- Make summers educational and inspirational
- Close the opportunity and achievement gaps for under-served students in Asheville
- Stop learning loss that is impacting our community’s most vulnerable children
We believe in the promise of opportunity for a child.

We collaborate with teachers and school administrators to identify the students with the greatest need.

Every Horizons student qualifies for free/reduced lunch.

2/3 of our students come to us performing below grade level.

We serve students attending Asheville City Schools and Buncombe County Schools.

Our cohort represents the diversity of our community.

*As of Summer 2021, we serve grades K-3.

*By Summer 2026, we will serve grades K-9.
The challenges–

The Summer Slide

The summer slide describes the tendency for students, especially those experiencing poverty, to lose academic ground over the summer.

COVID slide describes the learning losses students suffered due to disruptions caused by the COVID 19 Pandemic.

These "slides" are so detrimental because academic losses are cumulative and snowball into huge gaps in skill and knowledge.

What are achievement gaps?
Significant and persistent disparities in academic performance between two or more distinct groups of students.

Achievement Gap in Asheville
Asheville has some of the worst achievement gaps in the country, and they are only growing worse.

What are opportunity gaps?
Ways in which:
- race
- socioeconomic status
- community wealth
- ethnicity
- English proficiency
- familial situations
or other factors contribute to or perpetuate lower educational achievement for students.

61% of economically disadvantaged students are performing below grade level in Asheville City Schools compared to 19% of their more affluent peers. In other words—economically disadvantaged students are failing at a rate 3x greater.

SOURCE: MEDIA.BUNCOMBECOUNTY.ORG/ADMINISTRATION/ACHIEVEMENT-GAP-PRESENTATION.PDF
The opportunity–

Summer Enrichment
Our summer program is a joyful six weeks of structured learning activities that promote healthy youth development.

The following are the essential opportunities we offer to our students every summer...

**Academic Instruction:** We reverse summer learning loss by engaging our students in a high-quality curriculum personalized for their specific needs. Our students benefit from a 5:1 student-teacher ratio and individualized support and attention.

**Nutrition:** Every Horizons student receives a minimum of two meals and one snack daily to address their physical needs and help close the hunger gap that exists for many children who depend on Free/Reduced Price Lunch during the school year.

**Swimming Lessons:** Most students come to the program as non-swimmers who are afraid of the water. Swimming is not only a life-saving skill, but by learning to swim, our students build trust and self-esteem – qualities which influence success in the classroom.

**Field Trips:** Our students expand their horizons by exploring what the Asheville community has to offer on field trips.

**Transportation:** We provide transportation to and from our campus, field trips, swimming, and all special events, ensuring equitable access for all students to fully participate.

**Music & Dance Lessons:** Our young scholars love to sing, dance, and drum, and our staff does too! Our shining stars get to show off what they have learned for their parents at our end-of-summer celebration!

**Arts & Crafts:** We encourage our students to embrace creativity all summer long, but especially so during arts & crafts time– no summer would be complete without rock painting, friendship bracelets, and tie-dye!
We are committed to serving our students and families year-round.

Our school-year outreach includes...

**School-Year Tutoring Program:** We offer all of our students the opportunity to attend both 1:1 and group tutoring sessions multiple times a week throughout the school year.

**Holiday Parties:** Whether at our annual Halloween bash, the bowling alley, swimming pool, or potluck dinner, our great big Horizons family loves to come together and have fun!

**Family Check-ins:** During family check-ins, we don’t just inquire about our students, but their parents and siblings as well. We know our students’ success is largely dependent on the well-being of their families, which is why we do all we can to ensure our Horizons families are supported and primed for success.

**Food, Clothing & Book Drives:** Throughout the year, we run various food, clothing and book drives to benefit families in our Horizons community. The generosity we witness never ceases to amaze us.

**Agency Referrals:** Because we stay in close contact with our Horizons families, we often become aware of needs that arise. We connect our families to other agencies or services in the region and follow up to ensure they found the resources they needed.

**School Visits:** We are always met with surprised smiles when we show up to visit our students in the fall and spring of each school year. We love seeing that moment of recognition when it dawns on our students that Horizons is not just a summer event, but a bigger part of their lives.

**Meetings with Teachers and Administrators:** Our close relationship with our two partner schools, Avery’s Creek Elementary and Ira B. Jones Elementary, allows us to work with teachers and administrators to best serve our students needs all year.
Our results—
There is an abundance of evidence that Horizons helps our students achieve their full potential...

- Higher attendance rates at school
- 8-12 weeks of gains in reading and math proficiency over the summer
- Fewer disciplinary referrals
- Higher GPAs in 9th grade, a critical year
- Fewer incidents of repeating a grade
- More course credit earned in 9th/10th grade
- Higher scores on standardized science tests
- 100% learn to swim, a life-saving skill
- Higher scores on standardized reading tests