

# PODER Emma Cooperative Housing Network

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*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

## ***Colaborativa La Milpa***

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# Application Form

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## *Question Group*

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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.

PODER Emma Cooperative Housing Network

## **Amount of Funds Requested\***

\$799,400.00

## **Recovery Fund Eligible Category\***

Please select one:

Services for disproportionately impacted communities

## **Brief Project Description\***

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

PODER Emma's Cooperative Housing Network protects permanently affordable, dignified housing. The network provides critical home repair services to preserve existing deeply affordable housing, providing a viable solution for low income communities in a market that can not offer the same level of affordability through the construction of new housing. Our organization serves units that, with a relatively low level of

investment for repair, will provide housing for families for generations and keep people in place that would otherwise be at risk for homelessness and displacement.

The Cooperative Housing Network also utilizes a transformative property management model that includes crisis support, financial literacy and leadership training, engages residents in key decision making, provides rental assistance to residents facing crisis, and offers a path to ownership for community members who have traditionally been excluded from the opportunity of home ownership.

## Project Plan\*

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

PODER Emma's project will be structured under two program areas, Dignified Home Repair and Transformative Property Management and Resident Support. This three year project would begin by scaling up from PODER Emma's New Start accomplishments and then stabilize into an ongoing home repair, property management, and resident support program.

### Dignified Home Repair

Applicants to the Dignified Home Repair Program work with PODER Emma to create a shared scope of work for home repair based on a 3rd party inspection and assessment that identifies health, safety, and significant quality of life concerns. Each unit is guaranteed a minimum amount of repair to address health and safety concerns, and additional funding is prioritized and allocated to address additional quality of life repair needs. This program addresses important public health issues including mold, heating/cooling/insulation and energy efficiency, accessibility, and repairs related to aging in place. Our Dignified Home Repair program will serve an estimated 24 units per year with a scope of work of approximately \$10,000 per unit.

### Transformative Property Management and Resident Support

This program currently serves residents to ensure that they have sufficient support to effectively participate in and remain in their affordable housing. It provides one on one support to residents experiencing crisis via resource and referral and rental assistance, as well as access to shared training in areas such as financial literacy and leadership. An additional component community member capacity development, with technology and tools for effective, culturally competent, and transformational property management that ensures quality, dignified, safe housing for all residents. To address needs that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, PODER Emma would create an emergency rental assistance fund, invest in higher quality software and technology to ensure effective and efficient management, and develop a policy and operating manual to effectively train community members in this model of management.

## Statement of Need\*

Describe the need that this project will address. Include data to demonstrate the need, and cite the source of the data.

There is a well established lack of affordable housing in Buncombe County. The 2019 Bowen National Research Report commissioned by the City of Asheville found that 46.1% renters in Buncombe County are cost burdened, spending over 30% of their income on housing, with 19.4% severely cost burdened. The study also showed there were only 82 homes for sale for under \$200,000 in Buncombe County.

There are a multitude of causes for this crisis, including the fact that existing affordable housing in Buncombe County has been systematically disinvested in, as investors often use it as a place to temporarily put their money and then sell for profit.

PODER Emma's dignified home repair and transformative property management supports residents of the Emma community, which is disproportionately impacted by the lack of affordable housing with 73% of the population earning less than \$50,000 a year (US Census). The census also indicates that 37% of the homes in Emma are mobile homes, which are the focus of our home repair work.

There is a critical need to protect and repair existing affordable housing, as new construction can't replace affordability at the same level. This is the primary need our project is designed to address, while also addressing inequities through transformative property management and resident support.

### 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.

PODER Emma primarily works with Latinx immigrants and people of low income. These marginalized community members face many barriers to be successful as tenants, and additional barriers to become owners of their housing. These pre-existing systemic barriers were only worsened by COVID-19 due to loss of income, disproportionate infection rates, and increased isolation.

The loss of income that occurred as a result of COVID-19 business closings has meant that for many families, homes are in greater disrepair. The dignified home repair program outlined in our proposal is needed to protect existing affordable housing stock.

The resident support component of our proposal will address lingering crisis situations related to COVID-19, while providing residents with tools such as financial literacy to prevent and/or better handle future challenges.

The rental assistance fund in our proposal is in response to the fact that many in our community are being impacted by evictions that are coming on the heels of COVID-19 eviction moratoriums.

In addition, funding would fortify PODER Emma's Cooperative Housing Network to sustain existing units and properties over the long term and support our transformative property management for a strong recovery from COVID-19.

### Population Served\*

Define the population to be served by this project, including volume and demographic characteristics of those served.

This project will serve people in the Emma community and Erwin school district. Emma Elementary School reflects the racial demographics of our community: students are 47% Hispanic; 17% Black; 30% White; and 5% 2 or more races. 99% of Emma Elementary students are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

The work outlined in this proposal will focus on the 130 residents, the majority of whom are Latinx immigrants of low income, living in neighborhoods in our Cooperative Housing Network. These residents are diverse in terms of age, sexuality, religion, and gender.

## 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.

Performance measures that will be tracked and reported include:

# of housing units repaired through Dignified Home Repair Program - goal 24 units

# of individuals served through Transformative Property Management and Resident Support - goal 130 individuals

Transformative Property Management operations manual created - goal 1 manual

# financial literacy and leadership trainings offered to residents - goal 6 trainings per year

# households served by rental assistance fund - goal TBD

## Evaluation\*

Describe the data collection, analysis, and quality assurance measures you will use to assure ongoing, effective tracking of contract requirements and outcomes.

Building on our experience with the New Start grant, we will continue door-to-door visits to track data and to determine resident personal and housing repair needs.

These visits will inform our dignified home repair and transformative property management and resident support work plans. Work plans will also encompass proposal goals such as training in financial literacy and leadership and development of a property management operations manual. The detailed work plans will be used in an ongoing manner to track progress on the repairs we commit to implementing, as well as provision of resident services, communications, and support.

All repair work will be inspected through Canary Home Inspections.

A PODER Emma staff team, with support from Colaborativa La Milpa, will be tasked with ensuring this work plan tracking system is aligned with contract requirements.

An evaluation tool will be developed and used to measure quality and outcomes for all components of the project.

## 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?

PODER Emma staff and the majority of residents we work with are members of Buncombe County's Latinx immigrant community which confronts racism, xenophobia, and marginalization on a daily basis. As a result, we experience inequities in outcomes in all areas of life. For example, while 7% of the population of Buncombe County is Hispanic, 30% of Hispanic residents in the county live below poverty level, as compared to 13.3% of the population as a whole (US Census). Hispanic residents also contracted COVID-19 at a similarly high percentage, 20% of total cases (NCDHHS).

We believe that the people most impacted by inequities are most qualified to eliminate them. Our community's mutual aid efforts during COVID-19 were a vivid demonstration of that truth.

PODER Emma addresses the root causes and disproportionate impacts of inequities by proactively building economic strength and stability. This strategy grew out of years of fighting wage theft and renter's rights cases one at a time, which reinforced our understanding that the nature of employment and housing, particularly for our community, is exploitative. We decided to create infrastructure to support the growth of immigrant-owned businesses and real estate in order to make sure that people in our community could have quality, dignified jobs and housing.

The incorporation of the cooperative model into our work came from our belief in the benefits of collective action. Cooperatives provide a way to meet individual needs while raising the quality of life for all members.

Investing in home repair and transformative property management to protect and enhance the affordable housing in PODER Emma's Cooperative Housing Network will help ensure that our community has a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery.

## 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.

For the proposed scope of work, PODER Emma will subcontract with Chispas Property Management & Maintenance Cooperative to inspect the units, advise which repairs are most needed, and implement repairs. They will work with us on emergency and public health protocols for the properties to inform the operations manual we will create. This would entail 50% of the overall scope of work

In terms of non-funded key partners, PODER Emma will collaborate with the Compañeros Inmigrantes de las Montañas en Acción (CIMA) Consulta Tu Compa program, who will provide resource and referral and accompaniment services to residents who are experiencing crisis or complex needs. Consulta Tu Compa works with a number of area organizations including Písgah Legal Services, Project Access, and UMOJA Health, Wellness, & Justice Collective.

## 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.

Since PODER Emma's founding in 2018, we have supported the establishment of six housing and real estate cooperatives with a total of 44 units of permanently affordable housing and two key commercial properties in the heart of the Emma neighborhood. We have stewarded five member businesses in our Worker Owned Cooperative Network as well as established an Early Childhood Education (ECE) Cooperative Network and a bulk food buying cooperative. This proven track record demonstrates our capacity for delivering the proposed project.

In terms of managing federal funds, as a member of Colaborativa La Milpa, our organization receives fiscal oversight and management services through Power in Numbers Bookkeeping and Corliss & Solomon, PLLC.

We have established budget monitoring systems and strong financial management policies, with financial reports reviewed and approved by Colaborativa La Milpa's board of directors.

For this project, PODER Emma will scale up our New Start pilot project based on lessons learned through that experience. Since this is our first federal grant proposal, we are not increasing # of units served, to ensure that we continue to grow and learn incrementally.

## 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.

Recovery-Funds-PODER Emma.pdf

## Special Considerations\*

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

We want to emphasize that all of PODER Emma's work is community-led. For example, we support the Emma Neighborhood Council which works to make sure that community voices are heard when important decisions are being made that affect Emma, including zoning and new development. The Council also stewards the Neighborhood Planning processes and implementation of the Plan, to ensure that local government, institutions, and agencies work in alignment with our community's vision for the future. In 2018 the first Plan was finalized to identify community based strategies to prevent displacement; you can find it on our website, [poderemma.org](http://poderemma.org). In 2020 we began the second phase of Planning to create public policy, zoning and investment recommendations. This is projected to be finalized by the end of 2021.

## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

- Recovery-Funds-PODER Emma.pdf

## Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

<b>Organization Name:</b>	PODER Emma Community Ownership
<b>Project Name:</b>	PODER Emma Cooperative Housing Network
<b>Amount Requested:</b>	\$799,400

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Buncombe COVID Recovery Funding	\$ 799,400.00	pending	
Seed Commons	\$ 22,000.00	confirmed	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 821,400.00</b>		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Home repair; materials and labor	\$ 720,000.00		\$ 720,000.00	Operating	
Software and technology	\$ 12,000.00		\$ 12,000.00	Operating	
Staff; transformative management	\$ 44,000.00	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 66,000.00	Operating	
Administrative support	\$ 23,400.00		\$ 23,400.00	Operating	
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 821,400.00</b>		