

# Collaborative Apprenticeship Program

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*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal  
Recovery Funds*

## ***Bountiful Cities***

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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. To date, Buncombe County has awarded projects totaling \$23,093,499, leaving a balance of \$27,639,791 available to award.

Visit <http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding> for details.

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](#)

## Organization Type\*

Nonprofit

## Nonprofit documentation

If nonprofit, attach IRS Determination Letter or other proof of nonprofit status.

bcp\_501c3\_letter.pdf

## Name of Project.\*

Collaborative Apprenticeship Program

### New/Updated Proposal\*

Is this a new project proposal or an updated version of a proposal submitted during the earlier (July 2021) Recovery Funding RFP?

New project proposal

### Amount of Funds Requested\*

\$215,670.00

### Category\*

Please select one:

- Affordable Housing
- Aging/Older Adults
- Business Support/Economic Development
- Environmental/Climate
- Homelessness
- K-12 Education
- Infrastructure and/or Broadband
- Mental Health/Substance Use
- NC Pre-K Expansion
- Workforce

Workforce

### Brief Project Description\*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Bountiful Cities requests \$215,670 across two years to support the Collaborative Apprenticeship Program and two program partner agencies in Workforce Development activities. The year-long Apprenticeship program provides skill building and resources to pursue employment within the local food system, offering education in farming, business or nonprofit operations, and food distribution strategies, while also providing in-the-field experience, mentorship, and support to obtain employment, all while earning a living wage. The project brings together six community and food system leaders committed to both nurturing apprentices' development and to hiring program graduates as positions become available. The program is designed for individuals and communities who typically have less access to education and employment opportunities, prioritizing people of color and people with low generational wealth.

### Project Plan\*

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

This program is based on both established model programs and the direct input of community leaders and partners to inform content and logistics. Community assessment and program planning took place across 2021, and the program launched its first three-person cohort in March, 2022. This pilot year will include continuous feedback loops to gather data related to the success of both the educational content and the apprentices' experience in the program. The program's weekly structure includes three classes grouped by unit and taught by local experts, one full day of field work onsite with one of our partner organizations, one cohort session to build socio-economic connections and resources, and monthly individual mentorship sessions with a food system leader of their choice. As apprentices near graduation staff and partners will provide instruction and support in resume building, job seeking, and interview preparation. After program completion graduates will continue to receive support in securing employment through shared job postings and providing professional references. The goal of the program is to provide adequate preparation and support to see every cohort member who completes the program employed within the local food system within six months of graduation. From the second year onward the cohort size will increase to 6-8 individuals per program year, pending available funding.

The Collaborative Apprenticeship Program was designed for and actively recruits apprentices who typically have less access to educational and career opportunities, focusing in particular on individuals of color and individuals with low generational wealth. To provide added support and remove barriers to participation the program pays apprentices a living wage for the duration of their attendance and will ensure that all participants have access to a laptop, an office with wifi, transportation, a lending library of resources, and all the equipment and gear necessary to fully participate in outdoor and hands-on educational activities.

Two of the apprenticeship partner agencies, Southside Farm and Root Cause Farm will conduct additional Workforce Development activities within their programs focused on administrative skill building and leadership development for staff and interns, resulting in the creation of two permanent and four seasonal positions within their organizations. These positions may become employment opportunities for graduating apprentices.

As the third year of the Collaborative Apprenticeship Program begins in March, 2024 that cohort will also benefit from the funding provided by this grant, although their graduation won't take place until January, 2025, and their new employment will take effect and be reported after that time. As a result of this funding supporting a portion of three cycles of the program, we anticipate the graduation and new employment of at least 15 newly skilled apprentices within the local food system.

## Statement of Need\*

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

According to the 2018 Buncombe County Community Health Assessment a double-digit growth rate of the overall population in Buncombe County is expected to continue over the next 20 years. The demand for food increases along with population growth, adding extra pressure to existing food systems. In 2008 the World Bank reported that the world will need 70% to 100% more food by 2050 in order to feed 9 billion people.

According to research by the Urban Agriculture Alliance and other local researchers, food security was greater within low wealth communities of color prior to the Urban Renewal policies of the 1970's (Mountain Xpress, 2017). Many elders of these communities describe a "foodtopia" in Asheville's historic African American communities, in which there were plentiful backyard gardens, abundant fruit trees and berry bushes, and many who grew and canned food, fed countless neighbors in their community, and even operated food based microenterprises. Due to Urban Renewal many hundreds of residents' homes were lost in communities of color, and thousands of people were relocated to public housing, where it was not encouraged or even approved of to grow food for decades to come, resulting in a generation gap in skills and experience.

Community-based food system models can provide residents with a sense of agency within their local food system and can be managed directly by community members and community based organizations. The challenge, though, is that this level of program management requires residents to have developed professional and farming skills that many low wealth individuals of color have now lacked access to develop and practice, resulting in a largely white privileged nonprofit food sector. The goal of the Apprenticeship program is to restore the leadership of community food systems to the residents of those communities, thereby providing employment opportunities, increasing food security within their neighborhoods, and eliminating the generation gap.

### 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.

Globally, the COVID-19 outbreak led to a massive change in market demand and introduced unexpected stresses on food systems. Large scale farmers dumped vegetables, livestock, dairy and poultry due to labor shortages and lack of drivers to move the products from one place to other (Deaton & Deaton, 2020; Gray, 2020). This has amplified the need for building up our local food system within Buncombe County and supporting urban farmers, growers, and food distributors. Supporting urban agriculture and community food systems in Buncombe County can reduce food insecurity, increase employment opportunities, improve land, water and air quality, as well as improve the preparedness of neighborhoods and our City and County as a whole to respond to emergencies in the future.

According to MANNA Foodbank, food insecurity is at an all-time high and the impact in the Asheville-metro area has been particularly hard. Between March of 2020 and May of 2021 they saw the average rate of food distribution climb 30% as compared to the same time period in the previous year. Many urban growers have increased their production in the last 15 months but still lack the resources and manpower needed to fully meet demand. The Collaborative Apprenticeship Program supports that labor pool as well as opportunities to expand and improve community based food growing and distribution efforts, thereby increasing food security, and supporting communities in meeting their own food access needs.

### Population Served\*

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

The first pilot cohort of apprentices (which began in March, 2022) is limited to three individuals, however, the second cohort (beginning in March, 2023) will expand to include six-eight individuals as funding allows. The second year of grant funding will also include the third cohort of six to eight individuals (beginning March, 2024). This Collaborative Apprenticeship Program has been designed and is being targeted toward low wealth individuals and communities of color living in Asheville and Buncombe County. Of the 15-19 individuals served during the two years of grant funding being requested we estimate that as many as 12 will likely be women, and at least 10 will be people of color, many of whom will be directly from Buncombe County's historic African American communities. All individuals will be low wealth, and ages will likely range from 20-35. These estimations are based on the current general rates of community participation in urban agriculture and non-profit programming in addition to intentional program outreach and recruitment activities and applicant screening.

Southside Farm and the Peace Gardens and Market in Burton Street, two of the six primary organizational partners, will serve in outreach roles to encourage and promote this opportunity to young adults from those legacy neighborhoods. Bountiful Cities and other partner agencies will work with additional legacy neighborhoods and Housing Authority developments to advertise the program, partnering with legacy

neighborhood leaders who contributed to the program's Community Assessment process to help get the word out about this unique opportunity.

## 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.

The apprenticeship program will provide participants with community food system skills and professional experience, resulting in the increased potential for their economic mobility through new employment opportunities with participating organizations or other businesses, agencies, or community groups within the food system.

By the end of this grant period (February, 2025) the Collaborative Food Security Apprenticeship Program will have graduated at least 15 well trained apprentices, ready to enter the workforce with the skills and experiences needed to make an impact on their local food system. Within six months of their graduation at least 85% of these graduates will become employed, and will be earning a living wage. Additionally, by the end of the grant period at least 66% of the participating community food system organizations within the collaborative will have hired one or more recent graduates of the program.

Program graduation numbers will be tracked through attendance and the issuance of certificates of completion.

Post-graduation employment will be reported by apprentices through quarterly follow up communications, and employment can be verified as necessary through confirmation with the hiring companies.

Collaborative partner organizations will report new apprentice hires at quarterly partner meetings.

## Evaluation\*

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

All contract expenses will be tracked through receipt filing, internal spreadsheet accounting methods, and external bookkeeping services. All attendance and participation in Apprenticeship programming will be recorded through timesheets and paid through Bountiful Cities' bookkeeper on individual 1099's. Quality of Apprenticeship programming will be measured annually through participant surveys as to the overall effectiveness and accessibility of the program and its resources.

Additionally, our evaluation process will have continuous feedback loops built into the program, in which program quality and delivery will be assessed during weekly cohort debriefs and quarterly partner meetings. These feedback loops will evaluate the effectiveness of the program content, schedule, and support systems for both the partner programs and the apprentices themselves. Data will also be collected as part of the educational programming showing progress on information and skills gained from the program.

The six collaborative organizational partners will conduct quarterly evaluation meetings in which we will look at both the quantitative data on attendance, participation, and the educational assessments as well as qualitatively evaluating the participant and partner feedback. Upon completion of the first year of this program's operations, we will assess the overall effectiveness of the program, looking at content, logistics, and outcomes for the program participants.

## 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?

The Collaborative Apprenticeship Program supports a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery by providing ongoing resources to address food insecurity (which was amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic), and by providing opportunities for people of color and low wealth individuals (who were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic) to acquire new skills and career pathways within the local food system. Additionally, strengthening community based food systems helps to ensure that communities will be more well equipped to not only weather the economic and food security challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic but also future crises which will undoubtedly emerge over time. By prioritizing these services to those experiencing systemic and economic inequities we enhance the resources of communities who need the most support, and who are also able to make the most positive impact on long-term food security in their own neighborhoods.

## 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.

Primary collaborative partners for this project include Southside Farm, Bounty & Soul, Root Cause Farm, Peace Garden and Market at Burton Street, and Patchwork Urban Farms. In addition to Bountiful Cities these groups will support ongoing curriculum development and refinement, provide onsite apprentice field instruction and supervision, and will support evaluations and reporting of program outputs, outcomes, and expenditures. Peace Gardens and Market and Southside Rising will also play a central role in community outreach to prospective apprentices.

While these five organizations are primary partners only two will receive funds from this grant. Root Cause Farm and Southside Farm are using a portion of grant funds (22%) to build their internal workforce capacity and skills, resulting in the creation of six new positions between their organizations.

Additional (unfunded) partners include Organic Growers School, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, Everybody's Environment, Green Opportunities, and others who will support program outreach and referrals as well as career connections for apprentices. Warren Wilson College Social Work interns have played an important role in supporting the Community Assessment process, and additional student interns will likely support the program implementation in the coming months and years. Finally, neighborhood leadership and community programs such as My Daddy Taught Me That, Youth Transformed for Life, and Asheville Writers in the Schools will serve as important referral partners to ensure that graduating students are aware of and able to enroll in this program as desired.

## 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.

Bountiful Cities' is the urban agriculture resource of Asheville and Buncombe County. Our work is to create self-sufficiency, health, and food security. We were founded in 2001 to develop urban agriculture

projects. By 2003 our work had evolved to focus on supporting low wealth communities of color, women, and youth by teaching sustainable agriculture skills, advocating for policy change, supporting entrepreneurial opportunities, and creating urban agriculture systems.

Since that time we have supported the development, maintenance, and/or expansion of over three dozen local community gardens, have held countless series of community-placed, youth-based agriculture education programs, have transformed hundreds of private yards into edible agriculture spaces, have provided business incubation support to multiple start-up food and agriculture based businesses owned and operated by people of color, and have implemented a free resource and information sharing Community Garden Network. In January 2018 we merged with FEAST, and now provide FEAST youth gardening and cooking education programming within multiple elementary schools and seven afterschool programs in Asheville and Buncombe County. In 2019 this work expanded to a school in Madison County, as well. We co-founded and continue to provide ongoing leadership to the Asheville Buncombe Food Policy Council, the WNC Food Justice Planning Initiative, and the Asheville Buncombe Community Land Trust, and participate actively in CoThinkk, Southside Rising, and other food security based collaborative initiatives.

Our three person Leadership Team has nearly 60 combined years of experience in urban agriculture, community organizing, educational program development, and nonprofit management. Bountiful Cities has a track record of successfully managing grant dollars of all sizes and sources, including CDBG federal HUD funds, and currently serves as a trusted fiscal agent to numerous community groups and initiatives.

## 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.

Bountiful Cities Recovery-Funds-budget.xlsx

## Special Considerations\*

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

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on Bountiful Cities' staffing, programming, and funding. As programs were halted due to social distancing requirements, staff were furloughed, and several funding sources were interrupted. Bountiful Cities is now recovering from these impacts, has brought staff back into their previous roles and restarted programming as social distancing restrictions lifted around the country. However, it was also during this time that Bountiful Cities was able to make significant gains in program and community development, not only completing planning and successfully launching the Collaborative Apprenticeship Program, but also leading or supporting the hiring for eight brand new positions within area collaborative initiatives. We have been partnering with the Food Policy Council on the development and installation of three outdoor food pantries in low wealth communities of color as well as working with communities to develop Neighborhood Emergency Food Plans and supporting the work of the Food Security Reparations Coalition. We are expanding our in-house plant nursery to provide thousands of free seedlings to area community gardens, and have supported the creation of four satellite seed libraries in legacy neighborhoods. We are also taking a hard look at succession planning, thinking about how our Leadership Team and staff can eventually be replaced by members of the communities in which we have been focusing our efforts for so many years. And we are excited and honored to steward the Collaborative Apprenticeship



Program which may provide a pathway to achieve that long-term goal for not only our organization but for countless organizations with whom we collaborate.

## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

- bcp\_501c3\_letter.pdf
- Bountiful Cities Recovery-Funds-budget.xlsx

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE  
P. O. BOX 2508  
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: APR 18 2008

THE BOUNTIFUL CITIES PROJECT INC  
PO BOX 898  
ASHEVILLE, NC 28802-0898

Employer Identification Number:  
05-0587434  
DLN:  
17053089806048  
Contact Person: CARLY D YOUNG ID# 31494  
Contact Telephone Number:  
(877) 829-5500  
Public Charity Status:  
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)

Dear Applicant:

Our letter dated October 2003, stated you would be exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and you would be treated as a public charity, rather than as a private foundation, during an advance ruling period.

Based on the information you submitted, you are classified as a public charity under the Code section listed in the heading of this letter. Since your exempt status was not under consideration, you continue to be classified as an organization exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

Publication 557, Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization, provides detailed information about your rights and responsibilities as an exempt organization. You may request a copy by calling the toll-free number for forms, (800) 829-3676. Information is also available on our Internet Web Site at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

If you have general questions about exempt organizations, please call our toll-free number shown in the heading.

Please keep this letter in your permanent records.

Sincerely yours,



Robert Choi  
Director, Exempt Organizations  
Rulings and Agreements

Letter 1050 (DO/CG)

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

<b>Organization Name:</b>	<b>Bountiful Cities</b>
<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Collaborative Apprenticeship Program</b>
<b>Amount Requested:</b>	<b>\$215,670</b>

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 215,670.00	Pending	
Dogwood Health Trust	\$ 59,000.00	Confirmed	This is in support of the pilot year, but we will be applying again in
WNC Bridge Foundation	\$ 40,000.00	Confirmed	This is in support of the pilot year, but we have applied again in
CFWNC Women For Women	\$ 40,000.00	Pending	We applied for \$20,000 per year for 2 years.
City of Asheville ARPA	\$ 54,000.00	Pending	We applied for \$18,000 per year for 3 years for the Apprenticeship
Dogwood Health Trust	\$ 110,000.00	Pending	As mentioned above we will be applying again for support of this
WNC Bridge Foundation	\$ 60,000.00	Pending	As mentioned above we have applied for additional funding for years
Southside Farm Matching Funds	\$ 3,250.00	Committed	From program donors
Southside Farm In-kind Contributions	\$ 2,000.00	Committed	Contributions from program partners
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 583,920.00</b>		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating	Notes
Apprentice Pay	\$ 107,200.00	\$ 93,800.00	\$ 201,000.00	Operating	1099: Apprentices are paid \$20/hr for all time spent
Supervisor Pay	\$ -	\$ 21,600.00	\$ 21,600.00	Operating	1099
Program Direction	\$ -	\$ 43,200.00	\$ 43,200.00	Operating	In-house
Classroom Instruction	\$ -	\$ 43,200.00	\$ 43,200.00	Operating	1099
Cohort Support	\$ -	\$ 14,400.00	\$ 14,400.00	Operating	In-house
Program Coordination	\$ -	\$ 72,000.00	\$ 72,000.00	Operating	In-house
Outreach Support	\$ -	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	Operating	Stipends
Payroll Expenses	\$ -	\$ 11,050.00	\$ 11,050.00	Operating	In-house paid taxes, workers comp, etc related to program positions
Mentor Pay	\$ -	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	Operating	1099
Apprentice and Staff Development	\$ 29,700.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 34,700.00	Operating	For apprentice, staff, and Southside Farm conferences and trainings
Materials and Equipment	\$ 10,620.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 15,120.00	Operating	For apprenticeship program and partner org internship dev't
Mileage Reimbursement	\$ -	\$ 2,250.00	\$ 2,250.00	Operating	For apprenticeship program and partner org staff dev't
Marketing Materials and Printing	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,800.00	Operating	For apprenticeship program
Collaborative meetings	\$ -	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00	Operating	
Event Expenses	\$ -	\$ 5,600.00	\$ 5,600.00	Operating	Apprenticeship graduations and Cohort Gatherings
Capacity Building	\$ 17,100.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 20,600.00	Operating	Financial audit, federal funds reporting, and succession planning.
Administrative Expenses	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 26,900.00	\$ 48,900.00	Operating	To Bountiful Cities for management and dispersement of grant funds
Direct Payment to Southside Farm	\$ 3,750.00	\$ -	\$ 3,750.00	Operating	1099: Southside Farm staff time for planning and attending trainings
Direct Payment to Root Cause Farm	\$ 24,000.00	\$ -	\$ 24,000.00	Operating	1099: Root Cause Farm staff and intern time for trainings
			\$ -		
			\$ -		
			\$ -		
			\$ -		
			\$ -		
			\$ -		
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 583,920.00</b>		