

Building on Success: Supporting Working Farms Through Local Food Connections

FY2021 Strategic Partnership Grants

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

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Application Form

INSTRUCTIONS

As part of the FY2021 Strategic Partnership Grants program, Buncombe County requests proposals for community-based projects working toward outcomes in alignment with Strategic Plan focus areas.

Please refer to the Grant Guidelines published on the Strategic Partnership Grants website at buncombecounty.org/grants for complete information about the grant program, including: Purpose; Funding; Eligibility; Timeline; Grant writing workshop; Review process; Awards; and more.

Applications are due by 5:00 on February 14, 2020.

BASIC INFORMATION

BASIC INFORMATION – Before completing the application, please tell us a little about the request.

Project Name*

Building on Success: Supporting Working Farms Through Local Food Connections

Strategy*

Recognizing that some projects will use more than one strategy, select the strategy that most closely applies to this project:

- Environmental Stewardship - High quality air, water, farmland and renewable energy for future generations
- Educated & Capable Community - A county where all people thrive and demonstrate resilience throughout their lives
- Vibrant Economy - A robust and sustainable economy that builds on homegrown industries/talent and provides economic mobility for all
- Resident Well-Being - A county where residents are safe, healthy, and engaged in their community

Environmental Stewardship

Funding Request*

How much funding is this project requesting for FY2021?

\$30,000.00

Grant Guidelines*

Have you read and understand the information presented in the FY2021 Grant Guidelines Strategic Partnership Grants?

Click here for the Grant Guidelines.

If no, please contact County staff to request assistance: Rachael Nygaard, (828) 250-6536 or rachael.nygaard@buncombecounty.org.

Yes

Nonprofit Status*

Upload proof of nonprofit status, such as IRS Determination Letter or documentation from the North Carolina Secretary of State. If this documentation is not available, briefly state the reason.

501c3 Letter_ASAP (1).pdf

Board of Directors*

Upload a current list of your organization's Board of Directors. If your organization does not have a board of directors, briefly state the reason.

_ASAP Board Memembers 2020.pdf

APPLICATION

APPLICATION QUESTIONS – Responses to these questions will be scored by the grant committee. Each question is worth 10% of the final score.

Organization*

Tell us about your organization. What is your mission? Highlight two or three key facts and accomplishments that best define your organization.

A leader in the local food movement for over two decades, ASAP is a non-profit organization with a mission to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. Our work is based on the conviction that the loss of Appalachian family farms threatens our rural heritage, weakens our regional economy, and prevents the development of a sustainable food system. ASAP's goals are to create demand for local farm products, build farmer capacity to meet new demand, and make connections between farmers and markets. ASAP achieves these goals through three major programs that take a holistic approach to the food system: the Local Food Campaign, the Growing Minds Farm to School program, and the Local Food Research Center.

The Local Food Campaign is devoted to the promotion of local foods and building farmer capacity to access local markets through education and buyer connections. The Growing Minds program supports hands-on experiential education for children and families and increasing the amount of locally grown food served in institutional cafeterias. The Local Food Research Center studies the region's food system, evaluating the impacts of ASAP's work and the strategies other food system stakeholders (e.g., farmers, local food entrepreneurs, etc.) use to access and expand demand for local food.

ASAP's organizational capacity is demonstrated by key accomplishments including our annual Business of Farming Conference, held in Buncombe County since 2004, which provides training and networking to thousands of farmers and businesses. Additionally, ASAP produces and distributes resources like the online and printed Local Food Guide and CSA Guide, which educate consumers on how and where to connect directly with area food and farms, including farmers markets and farm tours.

Need for the Project*

What is the main issue this project is established to address? What data or qualitative factors/stories are available to show that need?

Supporting local food is a powerful tool for increasing environmental stewardship, building community resilience, and strengthening local economies. Buncombe County is a leader in the local food movement nationwide, but local food system development is a long-term effort that needs sustained support. While new farmers are being drawn to our region thanks to increasing opportunities, we are still recovering from the dramatic loss of farms and farmland as tobacco disappeared as a viable crop. The Census of Agriculture shows between 1997 and 2012, Buncombe County lost over 200 farms and more than 20,000 acres of farmland. Additionally, nearly 70% of farmers are over age 55, including 25% over 70.

In 2017, Census shows progress in reversing these trends, with an increase in 13 farms and over 800 acres of farmland. The data shows a continued decline in farms growing crops like tobacco and hay but an increase in farms growing edible crops, including 34 additional farms growing fruit, 23 vegetables, and 64 producing poultry products. New and younger farmers are also entering the business. The 2017 data shows a 63% increase in farmers under age 35.

Preserving farmland is directly tied to the economic viability of farms. Our efforts to build demand while providing market opportunities and assistance to farmers is working. There are tremendous challenges to increasing the number of farms and amount of farmland in production in the county. Even sustaining the number of farms takes a significant amount of resources, as beginning and transitioning farmers face a steep learning curve in production, business planning, and building market connections.

Local Food system work accomplishes goals across Buncombe County's Sustainability plan and the focus areas included in the developing strategic plan. Building food systems that support the preservation of working farmland fulfills multiple goals within environmental stewardship, and complements the goal of a vibrant economy.

Project*

Explain the project and how it will work. Include the overall purpose and any models or evidence-based practices that will be included. What specific activities and milestones are included in the project plan?

This project will directly support Buncombe County's Environmental Stewardship focus area by driving demand for local food and building stronger connections between farms, consumers, and food businesses. Implementing proven promotions, outreach strategies, and training and technical assistance, this project will also incorporate ongoing research and feedback from farms, businesses, and consumers to keep work relevant across Buncombe County's strategic focus areas. County support for ASAP's work will help sustain the economic viability of working farms, keeps farmland in production, encourages new and beginning farmers, and offers multiple connections to support homegrown economies and healthy resilient communities.

This project will directly support Buncombe County's Environmental Stewardship and Vibrant Economy focus areas by:

~Driving demand and promoting local food, farms, and businesses through media and events (July 2020-June 2021), including CSA Fair and ASAP's Farm Tour (Feb-June 2021: conduct farm outreach, provide farms with training and materials, promote and host fair and tour)

~Training and assisting farmers in marketing and businesses planning through the Business of Farming Conference (Nov 2020-Feb 2021: manage logistics, develop content, conduct outreach, host conference) and Appalachian Grown program (ongoing: certify farmers and food business partners, provide training and market connections, offer materials/promotional support)

~Supporting food system connections through ASAP's Local Food Guide (Nov 2020-Feb 2021: conduct Guide outreach to farms, farmers markets, and food businesses to update web database. Feb-April 2021: design and print 70,000 copies of the Guide. April-June 2021: distribute copies)

People Served*

How many people will be served by this project? Describe the people served, including demographics such as geography, income, race & ethnicity, age, etc.

As the market center for the region, Buncombe County plays a critical role in our foodshed. By supporting a thriving local food system in Buncombe County, this project will help sustain efforts to build demand for local food and increase local outlets for farms.

While local food systems work has a wide range of impacts on multiple levels, the measures for this project will focus on the impacts on farms and food businesses in Buncombe County. ASAP currently works with 135 farms (310 total farm operators) in Buncombe County, ranging in size from 0.25 acres to over 1,600 acres. The farmers we work with in the county are 45% women, 38% limited resource, 35% new or beginning farmers (farming 10 years or less), and have an average age of 48. Additionally, this project will also serve 165 local food businesses, including restaurants, caterers, groceries, artisan producers, distributors, and institutions. The majority of these businesses are locally owned and operated (representing all three county districts), ranging in size from small artisan producers (jams, cheeses, specialty goods) to large retail grocery chains. These local food businesses are critical market outlets for farms in the region, not only lending to the economic impact of this project, but also a key element in the economic viability of farms selling into local markets.

As a result of the services this project will allow us to provide to farmers and food businesses, more healthy, local food will be available for all community members. In 2019, ASAP initiated a Double SNAP program at the Asheville City Market, expanding efforts to increase access to local food while continuing to benefit farms. Through Double SNAP, nutrition benefits to under-resourced community members are

matched one-to-one. Direct and easy access to the freshest and healthiest foods available benefits community members of all ages, races, ethnicities, and income levels.

Results*

What results do you hope to achieve with this project? Be specific about how much impact the project will have in line with Commissioner focus areas.

ASAP's food system work encompasses multiple strategies and focus areas within the county's developing strategic plan. Our approach to farmland preservation, a key component of the Environmental Stewardship focus area, is to build the market environment in which farmers can be economically viable. Supporting the economic viability of farms is an effective strategy for preserving working farmland, but is also directly tied to a robust and sustainable economy that builds on homegrown industries/talent and connections. This holistic systems approach also offers intersections with a county where all people thrive and demonstrate resilience throughout their lives and where residents are safe, healthy, and engaged in their community.

This project will offer short and long term impacts in line with Commissioner focus areas including:

- ~preserving working farmland and creating environments in which farming is a viable option for future generations.
- ~sustaining a variety of local market opportunities and building relationships between farmers and area buyers.
- ~supporting homegrown businesses that purchase from Buncombe County farms and contribute to a robust and sustainable economy.
- ~empowering an educated and capable community that has connections with local agriculture
- ~improve resident well being through community engagement and resources to support community health.

The basis of the work is the strengthening of Buncombe County farms over time through stronger and deeper connections with the community, increase farmers' business and marketing skills, and develop diverse and consistent markets for local products that ensure long-term farm viability for a vibrant local food economy. Support for this project will ensure that a sustainable local food system is driving a thriving localized economy, building positive community connections with fresh healthy foods, and creating opportunities for more Buncombe County farms and businesses to succeed.

Evaluation*

How will you know you have succeeded? Explain the project evaluation process, including specific measures that will be tracked.

The goal of this work is strengthening the Buncombe County local food system, impacting Buncombe County's Environmental Stewardship and Vibrant Economy focus areas. Success measures will include:

- ~number of Buncombe County farms serving local markets supported and sustained by this project (goal:130)
- ~number of Buncombe County direct market outlets supported by project activities (goal:85)
- ~number of Buncombe County businesses that feature local food and farms (goal:165)
- ~number of consumers reached through local food and farm community engagement events (goal:2,000)

- ~number of consumer connections through media and promotions (goal:600,000)
- ~acres of farmland in production for local markets (goal:2850)

ASAP's Local Food Research Center conducts ongoing evaluation to measure the impacts of our work and improve the services we offer. Success is the continued development of food and farm connections in the community, increasing farmers' business and marketing skills, and developing diverse and consistent markets for local farm products. To document impact, ASAP will maintain an up-to-date database of all the farms, food businesses, and direct market outlets in Buncombe County. This database includes the above quantitative measures. To capture qualitative measures of success like knowledge gained, best practices implemented, and behaviors changed, we will conduct post-training surveys, an annual survey with the farmers and businesses served, and surveys with attendees of local food/farm events.

Collaboration*

List any formal and/or supportive partners. Describe their roles in the project. How will they make it stronger?

ASAP works with a variety of partners across the county, including non-profits, government agencies, and local businesses. With food systems work being complex and relationship based, these partnerships are critical for both broadening the impact and reach of our work. A few examples of these partnerships include:

ASAP partners with Mountain BizWorks and NC Cooperative Extension on the the development and implementation of farmer training and technical assistance. This collaboration offers producers wrap around support in business, production, and market planning.

While ASAP manages the Asheville City Markets, we also partner with the network of 10 other farmers markets across the county to share best practices and meet shared goals through county-wide promotions. Our work to increase the capacity of farmers markets is directly tied to Improving the economic viability of farms in the county.

The Asheville City Market is a strategic event partner with the City of Asheville, making it possible to close North Market Street on Saturdays and host a large market downtown. This prominent location has increased the visibility of the market, along with the number of customers and sales.

Buncombe County Health and Human Services was instrumental in helping raise awareness of the Double SNAP program available at the Asheville City Markets and ART (Asheville Redefines transit) worked with ASAP to develop a bus map including farmers markets across the county. Partnerships like these expand outreach and engagement across the county and make local fresh foods more accessible to all members of our community.

Budget*

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

Explain how grant funds will be used, specifically what type of expenses will be covered by County funds. Describe other sources of revenue, including type of funding, source, restrictions and status.

ASAP FY21_SPGrant_Budget_Form.xlsx

County support for this project will be used to cover personnel, printing & publications, occupancy & related costs, travel & transportation, training & conferences, contract services, advertising & promotions, and program expenses for ASAP's Local Food Campaign. This funding allows us to put special emphasis on

Buncombe County specifically around farmer training/technical assistance, local food and farm promotions, and community engagement activities.

This proposed project complements with an ASAP regional effort supported by secured funds through the USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program, USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program, the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, and ASAP earned income sources, including Business of Farming Conference sponsorship/registration and Local Food Guide advertising. Support from the Buncombe County Strategic Partnership Fund allows for increased and targeted services, outreach, promotion, and activities in Buncombe County.

Other County Funding*

List all other Buncombe County funding that is provided to your organization. For each item, list the project being funded, amount of funding, source (grant, departmental contract, etc.) and whether funding is to be renewed for FY2021.

ASAP has one active Buncombe County grant in the amount of \$18,283 for the project Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project - Supporting a Thriving Local Food System in Buncombe County. This grant term ends on June 30, 2020.

Sustainability*

How will the project continue to succeed after the funding of the grant? Explain your plan for making this an ongoing effort.

To maintain the sustainability of our programs, ASAP strives to diversify funding and build revenue streams. We continue to build earned income sources, including sponsorship for events, registration for conferences/trainings, and ad sales for the print edition of the Local Food Guide. Additional support from grant funding allows us to increase outreach and promotions, keep services, materials, and resources affordable for farms and local food businesses, and offer individualized support where needed. ASAP has built our capacity as an organization to strategically and effectively build connections across the local food system, consistently building on public and private partnerships to serve farmers, area businesses, and local communities.

Additionally, this effort is addressing an ongoing need. The pressures on farmers and the need for greater access to locally grown farm products continues to grow. This project will build capacity and increase participation but the scope of the issues addressed are large and play out within an ever shifting environment that requires continued attention and application of resources.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION

OPTIONAL INFORMATION – This information will not impact grant scoring but will be helpful to the committee.

Partial Funding

If the project were to be offered a grant for partial funding, what factors would need to be considered?

The Buncombe County Strategic Partnership grant offers critical funds for ASAP to implement proven strategies for building local food systems that benefit Buncombe County. The proposed budget is an estimate of the actual costs necessary to achieve project goals and support the County's strategies/focus areas. With partial funding we would scale back work accordingly, reducing the overall benefit to County farmers and communities.

Resource Support

Beyond this grant request, how can Buncombe County support your organization with this project and in strengthening your work?

We value this partnership that has been nurtured over the years. The County has promoted various events and activities and that has helped reach wider audiences that we hope will continue. Sharing information through County media on farmers markets creates a win-win that supports farms and increases community access. The County can also promote the availability of SNAP and Double SNAP at farmers markets through the health department. ASAP can also provide workplace CSA opportunities for County staff.

Other

Is there anything else that you want the committee to know?

Nonprofits can be an efficient and effective means for the County to achieve strategic goals. ASAP is uniquely positioned to allow the County to accomplish goals and strategies it has set for itself. We have the organizational capacity and programmatic experience to carry out this work and account for the outcome measures and budget. We encourage the County to look at our proposal and the qualified proposals from other organizations as essential partnerships to achieve shared goals to benefit the people of Buncombe County.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- 501c3 Letter_ASAP (1).pdf
- _ASAP Board Memembers 2020.pdf
- ASAP FY21_SPGrant_Budget_Form.xlsx

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

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: FEB 21 2007

APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
PROJECT
729 HAYWOOD RD STE 3
ASHEVILLE, NC 28806

Employer Identification Number:
06-1642769
DLN:
17053027734037
Contact Person:
THOMAS C KOESTER ID# 31116
Contact Telephone Number:
(877) 829-5500
Public Charity Status:
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)

Dear Applicant:

Our letter dated DECEMBER 2002, 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.

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,



Lois G. Lerner
Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings and Agreements



2020 ASAP Board of Directors

Dr. Brian Asbill, President

Amy Ager, Vice-president

Julie Jensen, Secretary

Terri Orange, Treasurer

Duane Adams

William Dissen

Craig Mauney

Joey Owle

Lisa Payne

Strategic Partnership Grants Proposed FY2021 Project Budget (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

Organization Name:	Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)
Project Name:	Supporting a Thriving Local Food System in Buncombe County
Grant Amount Requested:	\$30,000

FY2021 Proposed Project Revenue	Amount	Committed or Pending?
Proposed Buncombe County Strategic Partnerships Grant	\$ 30,000	Pending
USDA Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program	\$ 12,500	Committed
USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program	\$ 11,500	Committed
Earned Income	\$ 25,000	Committed
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
Total	\$ 79,000	

FY2021 Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Grant	Other Funds	Total	Notes
Personnel	\$ 14,000	\$ 15,500	\$ 29,500	Salaries and related expenses for staff time to execute project implementation and milestones
Training	\$ 1,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 4,000	Training/conference events for expenses related to direct market trainings including speaker stipends, food, space, etc
Travel	\$ 400	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,400	Travel for staff to visit farms, markets, and participate in training events.
Supplies / Materials	\$ 3,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 8,000	Program expenses/ supplies including training and event materials, printing of resources, etc.
Meetings (Food, Interpreting, Child Care, etc.)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Equipment / Furniture			\$ -	
Printing / Marketing	\$ 8,300	\$ 13,700	\$ 22,000	Advertising and promotions including print materials such as CSA Guide, Local Food Guide, and other promotional materials.
Licensing / Memberships / Dues / Subscriptions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Client Support			\$ -	
Contracts	\$ 1,000	\$ 5,500	\$ 6,500	Professional and contract fees for web maintenance to support marketing strategies, distribution of publications, etc.
Professional Services (Legal, Accounting, etc.)			\$ -	
Insurance and Bonds			\$ -	
Building Maintenance (Rent, Utilities, Repairs, etc.)	\$ 1,800	\$ 5,700	\$ 7,500	Operational costs including occupancy and related costs including rent, utilities, and communications to support the project.
List other costs:			\$ -	
List other costs:			\$ -	
List other costs:			\$ -	
List other costs:			\$ -	
Total			\$ 79,900	

Overall Organization Budget	Amount	Notes
FY2019 Actual Year-End Revenue	\$ 1,226,401	FYE not finalized
FY2019 Actual Year-End Expenses	\$ 1,197,913	FYE not finalized
FY2020 Adopted Budget Amount	\$ 1,245,000	
FY2021 Proposed Budget Amount	\$ 1,245,000	