



WNC Honors Program & Awards Application

2024

Updated 5/30/24

INTRODUCTION

The WNC Honors Program works with member community development centers across western North Carolina to help them improve the vitality of their organizations, programs, and communities. We provide workshops, best practices sharing, facilitation of collaboration among communities, grant opportunities, strategic planning events, coaching, and other assistance. The answers you provide on this application inform what programs we offer.

The WNC Honors Awards is an annual event to recognize these communities for implementing valuable programs to enhance the quality of life for their residents. We seek not only to celebrate WNC ingenuity and hard work, but also to highlight best practices.

The applications for the WNC Honors Program & Awards are reviewed by a committee using the WNC Honors Levels to determine which level of development each community has achieved: *Trillium*, *Mountain Laurel*, *Redbud*, or *White Oak*. Each eligible community that submits a complete application will receive a grant award. Within each level, at least one community that stands out for its accomplishments will be recognized as Best in Class and will earn additional cash awards. There are also Special Awards for specific achievements: the Calico Cat, the Youth Leadership Award, and the WNC Communities Impact Award. All communities are encouraged to compete for these.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to apply, a community must:

- be formally organized with at least a President, VP, and a Secretary-Treasurer;
- be working together to improve the quality of life for all residents, and be engaging a broad range of community residents in various programs that have an impact on families, seniors and youth;

- submit an application by an individual authorized by your club to do so; and
- be an established community center that has been active in the WNC Communities' Honors Awards program in the past, or if a new organization, it must be replacing a club that is no longer active or be in an area not being served by a current member community and be approved by WNC Communities. WNC Communities reserves the right to define eligibility.

Completion of this annual application is a prerequisite to being considered active with WNC Communities' WNC Honors Program and gives the community access to participate in various capacity-building training programs, our WNC Honors Learning Center website, consulting services, collaborative efforts with WNC Communities, and the George H.V. Cecil Journey Scholarship program.

INSTRUCTIONS

- **Only online applications will be accepted.**
- **Information on your application should be for activities from July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024 only, unless otherwise noted in an application question.**
- Any uploaded photos must be jpg (jpeg) files. Please make sure your pictures are clear. We may want to use them in the event slideshow or otherwise feature them at the event.
- We recommend you compose answers for the narrative sections in Microsoft Word, use the "word count" feature to make sure you are within the word limit, then copy and paste them into the online application.
- Applications are due **Thursday, August 8th, 2024**, by 11:59 pm.

COMMUNITY CONTACT INFORMATION

NOTE: This information will be used to update our mailing list, your Community Listing in the WNC Honors Learning Center website, and to cut your Award check. Please take care with accuracy. Thank you!

Your Community Center/Club's Official Name (spelled how it should appear on your award and your check): [Bethel Rural Community Organization](#)

Your Community Club's Physical Address: [664 Sonoma Road, Waynesville, NC 28786](#)

Your Community Club's Phone Number:

Your Community Club's Email Address: haywoodbrco@gmail.com

Your Community Club's Mailing Address, if different from the physical address above:

[PO Box 1333, Waynesville, NC 28786](#)

The NC County Where Your Club is Located: [Haywood](#)

First and Last Name of person filling out this application: [Evelyn Coltman](#)

Email address of person filling out this application: evelyn3226@charter.net

WNC HONORS LEARNING CENTER COMMUNITY CLUB LISTING

This section is to help you join the WNC Honors Learning Center website we created just for our member communities. Aligned with our mission, we are seeking to enhance collaboration among communities in sharing their knowledge and helping each other. This private, password-protected, members-only website has a Members Directory where each community club has their own page, called the Community Club Listing.

To check your Community Club Listing, go to the WNC Honors Learning Center and enter the username: [honorsmember](#) and the password: [SmokyMtn34!](#) And then click on Members Directory in the top navigation bar. Find your community in the list and click on it to see what is currently posted under your Community Club Listing on the website.

IF YOU FILLED OUT THIS INFORMATION LAST YEAR, you can skip this section. Please do not fill it out again.

IF YOU FILLED IT OUT LAST YEAR, BUT YOU WANT TO MAKE UPDATES TO IT, please email susangarrett@wnccommunities.org to let us know. Please do not fill out this section.

IF YOUR CLUB WAS NOT ACTIVE WITH US LAST YEAR in the WNC HONORS PROGRAM and therefore you have no Community Club Listing, fill out this section (A – I) completely so you can access the website as one of your Member Benefits and be a part of the Members Directory:

A) Your Community Description. Briefly describe your best practices/successes in programs, fundraising, and/or collaboration. These should be things that other communities may want to learn about to inform creating their own programs. (This should *not* be a long list of everything your club offers.) Guiding question: What is something we do that is so great that other clubs would LOVE to know how we did it? (Limit: 700 words)

B) Your Community Club Listing Contact's Name (a person that other communities can contact to learn more about your club's best practices):

C) Your Community Club Listing **Contact's Email**:

D) Your Community Club Listing **Contact's Phone**:

E) Your **Community Club Listing Administrator Name** (a designated person in your club who will be responsible for accessing the website to update your Community Club Listing):

F) Your Community Club Listing **Administrator's Email Address**:

G) Your Community Club Listing **Administrator's Phone**:

H) Your Community Club's **Website Link** (if you have one, if not leave blank):

I) Your Community Club's **Facebook Page Link** (if you have one, if not leave blank):

COMMUNITY PROFILE

1. Please list the names, phone numbers, and emails of your officers. If you do not have a listed title filled, please enter "0" in each field for that title. We strongly recommend entering an *email address for at least two officers* as this is our primary way of communicating with our members.

President : [Carol Litchfield, 828-452-7536 and 828-476-0048, cltchfld@aol.com](#)

VP: [Greg Christopher, 828-734-3679, Gregchristopher2324@gmail.com](#)

Secretary: [Roxanna Billings, 617-543-2676, rsbillings51@gmail.com](#)

Treasurer: [Mike McLean, 828-275-4057, memclean@aol.com](#)

Other: [Frances Adamson, Board Chair: 828-648-7292 and 828-734-4804, mulemom9@gmail.com](#)

2. How many households are in your community approximately: **3,500**
3. Which of the following specific programs or initiatives presented or sponsored by WNC Communities did your community club participate in during the past year (if any)? Check all that apply:
 - WNC Communities' Coffee Hours (any of the 10 offered on Zoom between July 2023 – June 2024) - **Yes**
 - WNC Honors Awards (November 2023) - **Yes**
 - Volunteer Recruitment Workshop - **Yes**
 - Strategic Planning Workshop - **Yes**

- Goal Setting or SMART Goals Workshop: [Yes](#)
- Grant Roundup: [Yes](#)
- County-level Convening (Buncombe, Transylvania, Madison, Cherokee)
- Promoting our George H.V. Cecil Journey Scholarship to youth in your community – [Yes](#)
[We announced it in our BRCO newsletter.](#)
[Submitted it to The Mountaineer which published it countywide](#)
- Hemlock Restoration Initiative educational session on how to treat hemlocks for woolly adelgid.
- None of the above

GOOD GOVERNANCE

4. Does your community have written bylaws? Choose the description below that best matches your community's situation:
 - a) No, OR if yes, they have NOT been reviewed and/or updated in over 10 years
 - b) Yes - some have been developed and approved by the board, but they are weak or are not being used consistently
 - c) Yes - well developed, approved by our board, and we're using them regularly
 - d) Yes - fully developed, approved by our board, used regularly, revisited annually with appropriate adjustments made. We also have a Conflict-of-Interest section and a Whistleblower policy - [Yes](#)
5. How often do you meet on average and how do you run your meetings? Please choose one:
 - a) Regularly and at least 6x per year
 - b) At least monthly with some public attendance (some open meetings)
 - c) Board meets at least monthly (with some open meetings) and we have committees that meet regularly
 - d) Board meets at least monthly (with open meetings) with report outs given by committees in advance of those meetings
 - e) Other:
[Board meets bi-monthly with open meeting](#)
[Membership meets bi-monthly with open meetings with advance notice/reports of both meetings.](#)
[Committee members meet according to the needs of each committee, with some of them meeting several times a month and others doing much of the work online.](#)
6. Is your community center/club a 501c3 or 501c4 tax exempt organization or have a fiduciary sponsor? Check one:
 - a) No
 - b) Yes, we have a 501c3 fiduciary sponsor, which we can use to apply for grants

- c) Yes, we are a 501c3 - [Yes](#)
 - d) Yes, we are a 501c4
7. What is the status of your Strategic Plan? Please choose one:
- a) We have no written Strategic Plan or goals yet.
 - b) We are working on a plan and currently have 4 - 6 SMART goals. They are attached.
 - c) We have a written, 1-year strategic plan that is being implemented and that contains SMART Goals and SMART Actions organized by committee, program, or other categories. We have attached our plan.
 - d) We have the above, revisit our strategic plan annually, have a refined mission statement, and track our progress. We have attached our plan indicating which items we have already accomplished through June 2024. – [Yes](#)
- NOTE: See our SMART Goals Primer on the WNC Honors Learning Center under Governance > Strategic Planning if you have questions about SMART Goals requirements. See the Strategic Planning Primer, the Wonder Cove Strategic Plan Example, and Strategic Planning Template on the WNC Honors Learning Center under Governance > Strategic Planning if you have questions about Strategic Planning requirements.
8. If you answered that you have SMART goals, a strategic plan, or an updated strategic plan in the question above, please attach. [Attached](#)

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

9. Which of the following best describes your board’s level of leadership development?
Choose one:
- A) We have officers: President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer.
 - B) In addition to officers, we have other board members and recruit new board members annually, with a rotation of at least one new member coming on board.
 - C) We have officers/board members and other community leaders recruit and mentor community members to take on future leadership roles. We have an ongoing rotation of officers and board members and provide opportunities for volunteers to take on committee leadership roles.
 - D) We have all the above plus a diverse board representative of our community with ongoing opportunities for the community to engage with the board. - [Yes](#)
10. Board Training.
- a) In the past year (July 2023 – June 2024), indicate training that your board’s current officers, committee chairs, or still-actively-involved past board members attended. This training could be through WNC Communities or other organizations or trainers, in person or online. Coffee Hours on these topics also count. Check all that apply.
 - None

- Volunteer recruitment & retention - Yes
- Financial management - Yes
- Grant writing - Yes
- Fundraising - Yes

- Recruiting and cultivating board officers - Yes
- Non-profit governance-related training - Yes
- Strategic planning - Yes
- Other - please describe below - Yes
- Blue Ridge Rising with Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation (several members attended several meetings to coordinate our county's plans)
 Haywood County Community Development Committee (developed plans for expanding Broadband and addressing homelessness in Haywood County)
 NCDOT (regarding plans to replace or demolish bridges in Bethel)
 We had at least one member attend all Coffee Hours, and those meetings were summarized for other officers and board members.
 Membership received training via speakers about the following topics:
 Preservation of the Monarch butterfly
 Preservation of historic properties
 Museum of Haywood County History
 Haywood County Extension Department services
 Haywood County Public Schools
 Canton mayor discussing Canton and Bethel after the mill closure
 Community Pantry (CP) participated in the following MANNA video training classes:

 Welcome Neighbor
 Setting the Stage
 Health, Nutrition, and Food Security
 Trauma and Resilience
 Resilience
 Trauma Informed Principles 1, 2, 3
 Trauma Informed Principles 4, 5, 6
 Reframing and Responding
 Final Thoughts and Sharing Gratitude for You.
 CP took a verification for food safety class.

b) In the past year, indicate how many of your current officers, Board and/or your still-actively-volunteering, past board members attended the training you checked above:

- 0
- 1

- 2
- 3
- More than 3 - Yes

c) Were takeaways from that training shared with the rest of board or other members?

- Yes
- No

11. (Required for White Oak level aspirants. Optional for everyone else.) How have you developed youth leadership in your community? (You can reuse this narrative toward the Youth Leadership Award entry below, if appropriate. See the requirements under that section.) (Limit: 200 words)

BRCO provided an opportunity to the Bethel FFA. We needed a bench in front of our community center so that visitors/pantry clients would have comfortable outside seating. They developed a design and used it to construct a comfortable, attractive bench. The resulting bench met our needs, and the FFA students learned carpentry skills in the process.

Our Historic Preservation Committee is filming the *Historic Schools of Bethel* video. Production requires transitional music between segments. Bethel Middle School band/chorus (22 members) stepped up to provide that music. Our videographer filmed them. They were excited about being in a video production. They provided two songs, with band and chorus alternating as well as making music together.

Morning Star United Methodist Church's summer enrichment program's first/second graders visited our facility to learn about the history of our community and about our ecological projects. They toured the 1885 sanctuary, went on a scavenger hunt to discover unique features in our thirty historic art prints, learned about the Monarch butterfly life cycle, released milkweed seeds into the breeze, planted flowers in front of our community center, took home the following: flower seed packets, Monarch bookmarks and bumper stickers, and historic pictures to color.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

12. What is the status of your community club's financial planning? Choose the one that most closely represents your club's current situation:

- A) We have a bank account, a spreadsheet where we track all income and expenses, and someone in charge of keeping our books in order.
- B) We have a list of all income and expenses from last year and the totals for each uploaded below.
- C) We have the above, plus a budget showing projected income and expenses for this year with some categories or details about the types of income and expenses. The budget has been approved by the board and has been uploaded below.

D) We have the above, plus we maintain a reserve fund with a fund balance of at least 3 months of operating costs. We have attached our budget for 2023 below, which shows our reserve fund. [Yes](#)

Please attach the appropriate document if you answered B, C or D above on Question 12. **(NOTE: Budgets may be for the calendar year rather than for the July – June timeframe used for other questions on this application).** - [Attached budget](#)

13. What is the total amount of income you made for the past year (July – June) from rentals, fundraisers, grants, and other sources? **\$35,468.40**

14. (NOTE: When added together, answers to 17. A, B, C, & D below should total the amount listed in #13 above). When looking at the total money you brought in this past year, what amount did your community club bring in:

- a) from renting your facility: **\$11,510**
- b) from grants including any from WNC Communities: **\$6,780**
- c) from fundraising: - **Donations - \$15,943.40**
- d) from other sources: - **Sales - \$1,235**
- e) If you answered that you had other sources of income above, please describe briefly:

DONATIONS

Individuals

- Beautification: \$1,000
- Buildings & Grounds: \$5,050
- General: \$513.90
- General (Memorials): \$2,785
- Historic Preservation: \$3,750

TOTAL INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS: \$13,098.90

Churches

TOTAL CHURCHES DONATION: \$2,844.50

TOTAL DONATIONS: \$15,943.40

SALES

HP Books - \$365; CD/DVDs - \$345 = \$710

Beautification: \$325

Community Pantry: \$200

TOTAL SALES: \$1,235

GRANTS

Food Lion's Foundation for the Carolinas: \$2,000

Haywood County: \$2,000

Haywood County Community Development Council: \$50

WNC Communities: \$2,730

TOTAL INCOME FROM GRANTS: \$6,780

RENTALS

- Bible Believers Baptist: \$9,600
- Celebrations of Life: \$800
- Regular Rentals: \$1,110

TOTAL INCOME FROM RENTALS: \$11,510

TOTAL INCOME FROM ALL SOURCES: \$35,468.40

15. What grants have you received in the past year (July 2023 - June 2024)? Please include the name of the grant funder, what it was for, and the amount. If you received none, please enter N/A. Please also indicate if this is something you'd be willing to share about on a WNC Communities Coffee Hour. (50 words)

We received grants from the following:

Haywood County - Grant to each Haywood County Community Club: \$2,000

WNC Communities - Grant for White Oak Level – Best in Class: \$2,730

Haywood County Community Development Council - Best attendance: \$50

Food Lion's Foundation of the Carolinas – Food for pantry: \$2,000

Total: \$6,780

16. (Optional) Narrative: If you've had a very successful fundraiser or other income-generating effort with lessons learned that could help other communities, please describe it below. Please include total income, expenses, how many volunteers were involved, any partners, what made it so successful, and any tips that could be helpful to other communities wishing to take on a similar project. Also, please indicate if someone from your community would be willing to share about it at a WNCC Coffee Hour. (Limit: 500 words)

Our chief fundraising opportunity, because our community center is a historic church facility, is through rentals. We gained a new permanent church tenant that uses our sanctuary every Sunday and Tuesday – Bible Believers Baptist Church: **\$9,600.**

In addition, we added a new utilization of the facility that is an appropriate use of our beautiful 1885 solid chestnut sanctuary. After one of our founding members and former President and Board Chair of the organization passed, the family decided to use the sanctuary for a celebration of life. The family provided a welcoming meal to all in attendance in the dining hall/kitchen. BRCO was specified as the donation preference. Two other families who attended that celebration lost loved ones and appreciated our facility so well that they chose to host their loved one's celebration of life at the community center. Another family learned about our facility via word-of-mouth and held their loved one's service there as well. These events were meaningful to the families and added income to our coffers: **\$800.** Our site is gaining attention because of

its quaint country church appeal. We anticipate future celebrations of life. In addition, memorial donations (15 donors) totaled **\$2,785**. We also rented the facility for birthdays, showers, family holiday dinners: (16 Events) **\$1,110**. Except for the cost of heating/air/electricity/insurance, renters provide their own food, supplies, and clean-up, so there is virtually no added cost to our organization for these rentals. We had a one-time expense to upgrade the sound system in the sanctuary and dining hall.

Total Rental Income: \$11,510; With Memorial Donations: \$14,295

Total Expenses: Provided Heating/Air/Electricity/insurance. Upgraded sound system: \$867.31

Things Learned:

Developed new Celebration of Life Agreement

Settled on appropriate price for sanctuary and dining hall for celebrations of life (charged too little for the first ones)

Updated church rental agreement

Updated other rental agreement and increased price

Reconfigured sound system for the sanctuary to accommodate celebrations of life

Installed new sound system in dining hall to enhance usage of the facility

Total Volunteers: 6

Provided attendants at celebration of life services

Helped decorate for one celebration of life service

Partners: Wells Funeral Home, catering service, family members, renters

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

17. Please enter your total number of volunteers for this year (July 2023 - June 2024): **60**

18. Total volunteer hours for the year: **4,398**

19. How many active volunteers would you estimate you had this past year? (“Active” means a volunteer who helped on at least 3 different activities or on the same activity on at least 3 different dates for your club. They didn’t just support one event for a few hours but showed repeated engagement.): **45**

Some individuals played a role in several committee or board/officer duties. So, some of these people may be counted twice.

Beautification: 5

Buildings & Grounds: 8

Benevolence: 2

Community Pantry: 18

Education: 5

Historic Preservation: 8

Rural Preservation: 3

Board: 5

Officers: 4

Media: 2

20. Total youth volunteers under the age of 22: 34

21. What is the status of your volunteer recruitment and retention? Choose one.

- a) We don't provide volunteer appreciation.
- b) We have regular volunteer appreciation to help with retention.
- c) We have volunteer appreciation, and we advertise volunteer opportunities regularly on our social media site(s) and/or our local newspaper or newsletter.

We recognize our volunteers through mention at general meetings as well as newsletter articles about their contributions and local media publicity about programs to which they have contributed their time. We also have an active Facebook and Next-Door account. We honor deceased members with a memorial tribute in our newsletter.

- d) We have the above plus at least 10 youth volunteers *or* an active youth program demonstrating monthly programming organized from within the community club *and* at least 3 committees with volunteer Chairs. - Yes

If you answered D, also enter a very brief description of your youth volunteers/programming *and* list your committees and each one's volunteer Chair from this past year. (Note for White Oak: if you answered the youth portion of this question already in question 11, please say so, and there's no need to repeat it here.) (Limit: 100 words)

Question about youth - answered in questions 11 and 20 (34 youth volunteers).

Beautification: Carol Litchfield – oversees decorations/approves facility upgrades

Benevolence: Greg Christopher – facilitates utilities/other assistance requests

Buildings & Grounds: Gina Valeri – building maintenance, grounds upkeep, and rentals

Community Pantry: Stephanie Quis-Garrett - oversees bi-monthly food distribution to families-in-need

Education: Greg Christopher – oversees Pisgah scholarship, Bethel Middle Citizenship award, and Bethel Elementary STEM and English awards

Historic Preservation: Evelyn Coltman – oversight of research/documentation of historic projects

Rural Preservation: Carol Litchfield – over conservation/farm-related projects

BRCO's committees are central to carrying out the organization's mission. They plan/budget/implement/analyze outcomes of each project.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

For each of the 5 categories below, check the programs that your community club has initiated or actively supported with volunteers and/or other resources through your club. These should **not** be programs your club members merely participated in, such as a neighboring church's activities. **These should be offerings created by and/or hosted by your community center.**

22. Education Access

These are programs that provide education access for youth or adults that contribute to elevating members' abilities to gain employment or otherwise support their families and enhance their lives, or for children to improve their access to growth and development. Check the ones your club provides. These should be offerings created by and/or hosted by your community center:

- Early childhood education - Yes
Early childhood program in cooperation with Morning Star United Methodist Church's summer enrichment program. Topic: "What is History and Ecology"? Offered history quiz and tour as well as training about Monarch Butterflies and planting flowers as part of our Historic Preservation, Rural Preservation, and Beautification Committee efforts.
- Homeschooling support
- Afterschool enrichment program
- Summer camp enrichment program – Yes
Morning Star United Methodist Church summer enrichment program with first and second graders.
- Literacy assistance
- Tutoring
- Higher education enrollment assistance – Yes
Haywood Community College instructors presented a program about the potential to cooperate with BRCO concerning community classes in trades to enhance available workforce in trade skills.
- Scholarships – Yes
Citizenship award for middle school students
Reading and math competency awards for elementary students
\$1,000 scholarship for Pisgah High School graduate
- Job skills training
- Workforce development courses
- Language classes
- Financial classes

- None of the above
- Other education access improvement programs:
 - Bi**-monthly meetings include a speaker whose topics are of interest to members.
 - Historic Preservation (HP) Committee** routinely researches topics relating to local cemeteries, historic schools, historic post offices, historic sites, and people who created Bethel history.
 - HP** discovered/documentated the site of the County Home Cemetery whose location had been unknown for seventy years.
 - HP** member traced genealogy of County Home residents.
 - HP** filmed a local history session about a gathering of slave descendants, slave owner descendants, and caretaker descendants at a historic farm.
 - HP** reached out to first and second graders to feature a program about our historic facility and historic art prints.
 - HP** presented a program to fellow community club: Saunook.
 - HP** worked with Bethel Middle band/chorus to film the 1954 Bethel school song.
 - HP** collected four historic art prints.
 - HP** located a historic school and filmed the session.
 - HP** filmed a school (SOAR) that began in Bethel.
 - HP** located a local author, received her book, and received permission from the family to reprint it next year.
 - HP** sells art prints, books, CDs, and DVDs to teach about Bethel history.
 - HP** created a notebook about our art prints for visitors to the community center.
 - Our** website contains extensive documentation of the history of Bethel as well as data about projects of every committee. The website serves as an outreach educational format.
 - Community Pantry (CP)** hands out recipe cards to participants
 - Rural Preservation (RP) Committee** coordinated with FFA to design and create a bench.
 - RP** worked with first and second graders to teach about Monarch butterfly ecology and how to plant seeds and flowers.
 - RP** sponsors Buy Haywood's brochure that educates about local farms and food-related businesses
 - BRCO's** bi-monthly newsletter has an extensive email outreach that educates about the projects of every BRCO committee.
 - BRCO** publicized our accomplishments in two local media outlets to educate the public.

23. Economic Stability

These are programs that support economic stability in your community by providing people with greater access to income, housing, internet, or other supports that help them stabilize financially. Check the ones your club provided in the past year. These should be offerings created by and/or hosted by your community center:

- Paid staff
- Youth stipend program
- Internships
- Long-term rentals to businesses - **Yes**
Bible Believers Baptist
- Marketing small businesses – **Yes**
Local produce stands and farms benefit from our Rural Preservation coupon program.
Buy Haywood Agritourism guide that features local farms, markets, restaurants, and other farm-related entities – BRCO sponsors
Bethel businesses- featured on our website
- Farmers market – **Yes**
Sponsor Buy Haywood Agritourism Guide that supports local farm markets
Coupon project supports local farms and farm stands.
- Artisan market
- Other entrepreneurial support – **Yes**
Bethel businesses are promoted on our website.
We use local contractors on maintenance projects at our community center.
BRCO hires a local cleaning service.
BRCO buys from local businesses at every opportunity.
- Daycare program
- Financial workshops
- Housing access
- Internet access - **Yes**
- Broadband coordination - **Yes**
- Community garden
- Gardening classes
- None of the above
- Other programming that helps people gain economic stability: - **Yes**

Haywood County Community Development Council (HCCDC) – we coordinate and research ways to address homelessness and the economic programs needed to support homeless individuals in our community and in the county.

HCCDC – BRCO coordinates with the county council to address Broadband issues.

RP coupon program ensures fresh produce so that families can spend money elsewhere.

CP food program ensures food security so that families can spend money elsewhere.

Community Well-being

24.

These are programs that support cultural preservation, social cohesion, and/or helping others in your community in need (benevolence). Check the ones your club provides. These should be offerings created by and/or hosted by your community center:

- Preserving heritage - Yes
- Historic preservation – Yes

Historic Preservation (HP) is a core committee.

HP worked with NCDOT in an effort to salvage a historic bridge.

HP worked with NCDOT to collect data about historic sites near bridges.

HP wrote an article about a 100-year-old bridge and the descendants who recalled their ancestors' help in moving the bridge.

HP is working with NCDOT to track the location of a slave cemetery.

HP collaborated with Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society, Silver Bluff Village, Lorelei Inn, and local and state governmental agencies to locate a historic cemetery.

HP member created genealogy of County Home Cemetery residents.

HP collects art prints of historic sites, films historic school locations, researches historic cemeteries, and researches historic post offices.

HP added a historic marker to the county's oldest farm and filmed family descendants, slave descendants, and caretaker descendants.

HP collected a book by a local author and received permission to reprint

HP honors a person each year for historic preservation.

BRCO wrote obituaries in our newsletter for people who had helped us preserve history.

HP collaborated with Canton Area Historical Museum about Garden Creek School, collected an art print of the school, and filmed a session at the school.

HP filmed a session at a local school (SOAR) that traces its roots to Bethel.

HP attended program by Peter Robertson about Canton/Sunburst history

HP donated funds to support Bethel Middle School's history department.

BRCO hosted a program by Preservation NC about permanent easement for our facility

BRCO hosted a program by the Haywood County History Museum about its collection.

HP sells historic art prints, books, CD/DVDs.

BRCO presented a program to Saunook Community Center that featured one of our DVDs.

A recording from our DVD will be of significant use for the American 250 celebration of our nation's founding.

- Festivals – Yes

BRCO provided a table at the following festivals:

Blue Ridge Heritage Festival

Plott-Ober Fest

Shelton House Tinsel Trail

- Dances
- Food pantry - Yes
- Food deliveries - Yes
- On-site meals for those in need
- Social meals - Yes
- Thrift store
- Utilities assistance – Yes
- Haywood EMC - \$180 and \$338
- Other bill assistance – Yes
- Haywood Builders - \$603.62
- McElroy, Inc. \$213.95
- Emergency shelter
- Storm recovery – Yes
- Baptist on Mission donation to the group for home restoration after flood - \$500
- Recovery relief for one family - \$2,000
- Art or culture classes – Yes
- HP and RP provided first and second graders with a summer historic and rural preservation outreach program that focused on our historic art prints and ecology.
- Speaker series – Yes
- Canton Mayor (Flood Recovery)
- Haywood County Extension Department
- Haywood County Schools Superintendent
- Monarch Butterfly Waystations
- Museum of Haywood County History
- Preservation NC (Historic Preservation of BRCO facility)
- Candidate forum
- Veteran appreciation
- Programs that promote cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and inclusiveness – Yes
- Engineered a gathering of family descendants, slave descendants, and caretaker descendants at a local historic farm.
- Recreated a historic marker to include slave and women’s contributions
- Programs that bring elders together with youth to foster cross-generational appreciation – Yes
- HP Committee members schooled first and second graders about local history.
- RP gave instructions about preserving Monarch butterflies and ecology.
- None of the above
- Other programs to support community well-being:

● RP Committee’s coupon program benefits pantry participants and local farms.

CP Committee's food program supports food security.

Benevolence Committee donated \$1000 to the Christmas funds for children in need at Bethel Elementary and Bethel Middle Schools.

Rentals enable a local church to thrive

Those needing a place to host a celebration can use our facility

Celebrations of life in our sanctuary comfort community members who are grieving.

Speakers at meetings include topics about the dilemma of the mill closing, the state of our schools, and services offered by the Extension Department.

25. Environmental Stewardship

These are programs that help your community protect the environment or natural resources, address climate change, or foster appreciation of nature. Check the ones your club provides.

These should be **programs or projects** created by and/or hosted by your community center and **involving the broader community**:

- Trash pickup
- Beautification- Yes
 - Pigeon Gap Watering Hole upkeep
 - Water garden upkeep at our facility
 - Circle garden upkeep at our facility
- Recycling project
- Energy conservation program
- Reducing water use
- Weatherization assistance
- Renewable energy education
- Wildlife habitat – Yes
 - Pigeon Gap Watering Hole – wildlife habitat
 - Water garden at our facility - pollinator habitat
- Cleaning or protecting creek – Yes
 - Pigeon Gap Watering Hole
- Removing invasives – Yes
 - Pigeon Gap Watering Hole
- Conservation easement – Yes
 - BRCO has 543 acres in easement
 - BRCO is the sounding board for those in our community interested in placing their sites under protective agreements.
 - BRCO has 3.8 miles of stream frontage under protective agreements.
 - RP Committee recognizes that the quality of rural life is best preserved by retaining our farming heritage, promoting sustainable agriculture, and protecting farmland, wildlife lands, and waterways while also educating farmers and residents.

RP sponsors Buy Haywood initiatives that support local farm products, events, and activities in the Agri-Tourism brochure that is distributed countywide and online.

- Farm preservation – Yes

Coupon program encourages those in need to purchase local produce from local farms and stands, a project that helps viability of local farms.

RP sponsors Buy Haywood that encourages people to visit and purchase from local farms and produce stands.

- Stormwater management

- None of the above

- Other environmental stewardship programs: - Yes

Monarch Waystation garden oversight at the Museum of NC Handicrafts in Shelton House

BRCO hosted a program about Monarch preservation at our meeting.

RP taught first and second graders about Monarch butterflies and plant ecology.

Water garden and circle garden at our facility provide support for pollinators

Pigeon Gap Watering Hole maintenance

Oversight of the historic Osborne Boundary Oak “witness” tree

Program about farm-related services offered by the Extension Department.

26. Health Access

These are programs that help your community members to understand and access health services and/or promote their own health. Check the ones your club provided in the past year:

- SNAP assistance
- Medicaid or Medicare assistance
- Telehealth
- Addiction prevention
- Addiction recovery
- Healthy eating and cooking classes
- Transportation services
- Mental health evaluations
- Health checks or clinic
- Walking trail
- Biking trail
- Athletic facilities
- Playground
- Basketball
- Soccer field
- Baseball field
- Pickleball
- Yoga classes

- Dance classes
- Exercise classes
- None of the above - Yes
- Other healthcare access programs: - Yes
 - Haywood County Health and Human Services Agency provides updated Food Security Guide to pantry participants.
 - Pantry provides recipe cards from MANNA.
 - Pantry partners with Haywood County Gleaners to secure fresh produce for the pantry.
 - RP partners with local farms with our food pantry coupon project that provides fresh produce for pantry participants.
 - Pantry partners with MANNA to secure canned, frozen, and fresh food.
 - Secured a grant for food from Food Lion's Foundation for the Carolinas.
 - Partner with Buy Haywood to offer farm and food business support

27. When was the last time you did a community survey to understand your residents' needs and what programs to offer?
- A) We have never done a community survey
 - B) Over 5 years ago
 - C) Within the last 2 - 5 years
 - D) Within the last 2 years – Yes

Strategic Plan update – May 2022

BRCO continues to ask for feedback from the people we serve and with whom we affiliate:

Community Pantry participants

HCCDC Broadband Survey

Renters

Farmers and produce stand operators

Bethel history advocates

28. Program(s) Narrative

Please elaborate on 1 - 3 specific programs you have checked above *that best illustrate your positive impact on your community or what you consider a best practice others could replicate.* In your description, include your club's role (planning, coordination, leading, or supporting, etc.), what volunteers and other resources you provided, who was impacted, how they were positively impacted, whether you partnered with other agencies to deliver these services and if so what those partners' roles were, and any other details that help us understand why you are proud of your program(s). NOTE: If you wish to maintain or advance your Honors Level (i.e. Trillium, Mountain Laurel, etc.), you will need to submit a new narrative each year sharing new information about your programs. We will not accept recycled content. Thank you for not cutting and pasting narratives from previous applications. :) *For White Oak level only*, also briefly describe what you learned from the program self-evaluation of one of your programs. (Limit: 1500 words)

1.

Our Historic Preservation Committee has erected six local historic markers to commemorate historic sites in our area. Lenoir's Creek Farm is the longest continuing farm in the county (1807) with the longest continuing herd of cattle (1849). Our farm signage was damaged by the flooding of 2021, so we worked with A-to-Z Signs to replace it. A donor from Montana is a civil rights advocate, and he funded the new sign with the suggestion that we update wording to include slave contributions. To ensure accuracy, we contacted Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society to locate slave descendants. Gwen Cradle helped us rework the wording to include historical data from the slaves' perspective. We also reached out to slave, family, and caretaker descendants to arrange a gathering and videography session at the sign/community center/local cemetery where slaves were buried. Arranging the encounter that included several members from each group was a monumental task. The event was rewarding, with descendants from the three groups reminiscing about their ancestral ties to the land 159 years after the Civil War. Visitors (17) came, some from hundreds of miles. They developed a camaraderie, toured the farm, traded genealogical data, were happy to tell their stories, and appreciative that we listened and facilitated the event. They thanked us and hugged our necks for bridging a historical gap that dates to 1807 - 217 years ago. We are planning publicity and will produce a video that members of all groups can keep - cherishing this special cross-cultural/cross-generational memory.

2.

For seventy years, people in our community had been searching for the County Home Cemetery. The Historical Society and Silver Bluff Village, a nursing home that is the site of the former County Home, also had people request to visit relatives' graves at the cemetery. County Homes were legislated in the early 1900s, and each county was to have a home for indigent people or those who were unable to care for themselves ("Poor Folks Home"). We contacted the Historical Society and Silver Bluff to compare notes. We contacted the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources for a map of the cemetery. However, the map they provided did not indicate a precise location. We contacted Haywood County's chief commissioner who is also a surveyor. He found a larger older map that showed the location. We then contacted the property owner on which the cemetery is located. She knew about it, took us to it, but indicated that all remains had been removed in the 1980s by a group connected with NC State. We consulted with the local lands records office as well as NC State, but neither had a record of any remains being moved. The commissioner believes that the bodies were not moved and visited the GIS map to indicate that Haywood County still owns the property. We consulted with Melissa Timo who heads the state's cemetery studies, and we are awaiting instructions about what to do. So, after all these years, when others had looked for the graves of 28 County Home residents, we found them through diligence, cooperation from other organizations, and detective work that has taken years. A genealogist committee member has traced the descendants of the 28 deceased. Now, we must continue our quest to find the remains. That task will require consultation with legal experts who will instruct us about our options for pressing the county to do its job of clearing the overgrown cemetery and determining where

these long-ago remains are located. Then families will be able to visit the graves of long-loved ones when that happens.

3.

Program Self-Evaluation of BRCO Community Pantry during and after implementation of a \$20,000 grant to improve Pantry operations.

In December 2022, BRCO received a \$20,000 grant from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina to improve our Community Pantry operations, a project that had to be completed by December 2023. This was the first time that we had received a grant of such magnitude. While we understood that it would be a major undertaking with regard to our pantry operations, we had not realized the degree to which it would also impact every aspect of how we functioned as an organization. Between July and December of 2023, when most of the implementation tasks associated with the grant were being completed, we found ourselves in a state of constant self-evaluation, not only of our Pantry operations, but also of our facility management, our “Request for Payment” process, and our ability to communicate both internally and externally with the right people at the right time to ensure a quality outcome. These self-evaluations are summarized below.

Facility Management

Our facility (includes a Fellowship Hall, church sanctuary, church classrooms, kitchen, Pantry area, and two bathrooms), serves the community in a variety of ways. During the grant implementation period, the sanctuary and classrooms were used by a church congregation every Sunday and every Tuesday. BRCO Board meets on the first Monday of odd-numbered months, Membership meetings were on the second Tuesday of odd-numbered months. Our Fellowship Hall was rented for community events on 2-4 Saturdays each month. Our Food Pantry received MANNA food deliveries on two Mondays each month. Pantry food boxes were packed a few days prior to the boxes being picked up on the second Wednesday of each month. All of these uses had to be acknowledged and respected during the grant implementation period. The people involved in carrying out the tasks associated with implementing the grant had to complete those tasks without disrupting the above activities. These circumstances proved to be extremely challenging initially. Fortunately, everyone put in the extra effort that was required and became adept at communicating and considering the needs and deadlines of everyone involved. Our improved efforts at communication and coordination continue to be of great benefit to us going forward.

Request for Payment Process

Before a BRCO check can be written to cover a BRCO expense, the Committee Chair who oversees that type of expense must complete and sign a form that documents for the Treasurer a description of what needs to be paid for, the pre-approved Budget line item from which the

payment is to be deducted, to whom the payment should be made, and how and when the payment needs to be made (the invoice serves as supporting documentation). This process had to be modified during the grant implementation period to ensure that a task approved by the Building and Grounds Committee Chair (e.g. for the installation of Pantry flooring) was also approved by the Pantry Committee Chair (who was in charge of projecting and tracking the expenses that were to be covered by the Pantry grant). Self-evaluation and improvement of this process in real time was essential to ensure that grant funds were expended appropriately and in accordance with grant requirements.

Internal and External Communications

We discovered during the grant implementation period that we needed to enhance communications within our BRCO Committee structure. When the flooring, the new doors, and the renovated ramp were being installed, each phase of the work had to be coordinated with the Pantry Committee (to ensure positive impact on Pantry operations); with the Building and Grounds Committee (to ensure quality workmanship); and with the Beautification Committee (to ensure coordinated colors and consistent design features). We met regularly to get concurrence from the Committees; then we conveyed the resulting decisions to the contractors and volunteers who were performing the work. This created a sense of camaraderie among all those involved in the process. Our Committees continue to operate in this manner because they now realize this process achieves a more satisfying outcome with minimal strife.

Quality Outcome

BRCO utilized volunteers and local businesses to implement the following improvements: renovating an interior room to accommodate more efficient storage of greater volumes of food; installing new flooring, improving lighting and HVAC system, installing three new freezers; replacing the food delivery entrance ramp (with the help of the Riverside Baptist Church ramp-builders); and enhancing the food box pick-up area in the parking lot. In 2022, our volunteers had limited space in which to operate and could barely keep up with serving 48 families a month. After implementing the grant, our volunteers now serve 60+ families a month and are able to meet that need in a safe and efficient manner.

The families have expressed to us how grateful they are to be able to receive the food boxes in the parking lot by simply driving up and explaining to us what they need. They often share with us the challenging circumstances they face every day, and we will share with them other sources of additional assistance from which they might benefit. Because the grant enabled us to be much more efficient in how we prepare and distribute the food boxes, we now have the opportunity to devote greater attention to each client's needs.

COLLABORATION

29. Please check all Community Partners with whom you collaborated on projects in the past year:

- Local schools (pre, K-12) Yes

Bethel Elementary – granted monetary awards for STEM and English students

Bethel Elementary - donated to Christmas fund

Bethel Elementary – filmed segment with Principal Amanda Watson for our *Historic Schools* video

Bethel Middle – granted monetary Citizenship Award

Bethel Middle - donated to Christmas fund

Bethel Middle School Band and Chorus – filmed students providing transition music for our *Historic Schools of Bethel* video.

Bethel Middle - FFA provided a work bench students had created to enhance the front seating area of our community center.

Pisgah High – Granted scholarship

Superintendent of Haywood County Public Schools - gave a speech at our meeting about the status of local public schools

Superintendent of Haywood County Public Schools filmed a segment about Bethel Schools for the *Historic Schools* video.

SOAR - filmed a segment at this school that originated in Bethel

Bethel Middle and Riverside Baptist Church – collaborated to create a ramp for Haywood County Sheriff's Department's room where training items are stored at the school storage area

- Local community college or university - Yes

Featured a presentation by Haywood Community College teachers about initiating a work training program at our facility to encourage trade workforce

Consulted with NC State Department of Archives regarding gravesite remains from the County Home Cemetery

- Churches – Yes

Food Pantry program is dependent on contributions of food and funds from three churches to support our program that has tripled in the past three years:

Crestview Baptist

Encouraging Word Baptist

Riverside Baptist.

Baptists on Mission – donated flood relief funds to the organization (\$500)

Bible Believers Baptist – rents our church.

Lake Logan Episcopal Center sells out *Sunburst* DVDs.

Riverside Baptist collaborated with BRCO, Bethel Middle School, and Haywood County Sheriff's Department to build a ramp for Sheriff's training supplies stored at the school.

Riverside Baptist collaborated with BRCO's Buildings & Grounds Committee to upgrade the community center ramp.

Morning Star United Methodist Church's children's summer enrichment program affiliated with our Beautification, HP, and RP Committees to train youngsters in our "What is History and Ecology" program.

Long's United Methodist Church affiliated with our HP Committee to collect a painting of the church for our art print collection

- Farms. Please list: Yes

Chambers Farm

Christopher Farms

Leatherwood Family Farm

Lenoir's Creek Devon Cattle Farm

Sloan's Plant Farm

Ten Acre Garden

- Local Businesses. Please list:

Arrowhead Installation

Blue Ridge Books

C & K Lawn Care

Canton Insurance Agency

Doug Chambers Productions

Duke Energy

Edisto Gas

Food Lion

Go Grocery

Haywood Builders

Haywood EMC

Haywood Heating and Air

Home Trust Bank

Hometown Flooring

Hometown Hardware

Janet Ross Cleaning Service

Johnson Appliance

Jukebox Junction

Linton's Gas Piping

Loralei Inn

Lowe's

M & T Maintenance

McElroy, Inc.

Mountaineer

Owl Market

Painting Unlimited

Phillip Wright Services

Print Haus

Positively Haywood

Silver Bluff Village

Spectrum

Staples

Stephenson's Pest Control

Village Framer

- Police/Sheriff Department – Yes

Haywood County Sheriff's Department – BRCO collaborated with Haywood County Sheriff's Department and Haywood County Schools to create a ramp for storage room where training supplies at a Bethel Middle School are stored

- Fire Department

- Council on Aging

- MANNA Food Bank – Yes

Primary delivery of food for Community Pantry program

Community Pantry Committee distributes MANNA's recipe cards to participants

- Goodwill

- Community college or university – Yes

Haywood Community College – two teachers spoke at a meeting about the desire to collaborate with groups in communities to create educational training

- Chamber of Commerce

- Tourism Development Authority – Yes

Haywood County Quilt Trails program with TDA

- City/County government – Yes

Haywood County Government provides grant funding - \$2,000

Town of Canton – Mayor spoke about the mill closing

Haywood County Land Records Office – HP Committee coordinated to learn about graves at the County Home Cemetery

Haywood County Commissioner – HP Committee coordinated with to locate a historic map of the County Home Cemetery

- Health and Human Services – Yes

Food Security Guide – Community Pantry hands out to pantry participants

- Boys Club or Girls Club

- Boy or Girl Scouts

- 4-H

- County Extension – Yes

Agent spoke at our meeting

Participated in a workshop with WNC Communities about 4-H that featured Sally Dixon, Haywood County Extension agent

Haywood County Community Development Council (HCCDC) - meets at Extension center quarterly, and BRCO belongs to HCCDC

HCCDC held a special meeting about homelessness in the county at the Extension Department, and members of BRCO participated

Haywood County Extension Agent met with Beautification Committee to review ideas about upgrading the kitchen.

- Other community clubs or other organizations - please list:

America 250

Beaverdam Community Club

Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation's Blue Ridge Rising

Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's Heritage Trail

Buy Haywood

Canton Area Historical Museum

Canton Branch Library

Community Foundation of WNC

Cruso Community Club

Fines Creek Community Club

Food Lion's Foundation of the Carolinas

Haywood Advancement Foundation

Haywood County Community Development Council

Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society

Haywood County interagency Council

Haywood County TDA's Quilt Trail

Haywood Gleaners

Haywood Waterways

Museum of NC Handicrafts in Shelton House

NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources

NC Department of Transportation

NC Office of Archaeology

NC State Archives

North Hominy Community Club

Pigeon Community Multicultural Center

Preservation NC

Plott-Ober Fest

Saunook Community Club

WNC Communities

30. Collaboration Narrative

Please describe one of your collaborations above that you feel was particularly good or was a best practice. What was so great about it? How was it helpful and what impact did it have? Did you learn anything useful from the process? If it is something you feel other community clubs

could copy or benefit from, please let us know if someone from your community would be willing to share about it at an upcoming WNCC Coffee Hour. This should be a different initiative from what was described in the Program Narratives above. **For White Oak only:** Your narrative should describe how you helped another WNC Communities member to develop a program or capacity and should be different from your Program Narratives. (Limit: 400 words)

When Saunook Community Club made initial efforts to become a viable community organization, the group turned to BRCO for guidance with organizing the club as well as drafting By-laws. Saunook followed our advice and has become a community organization in good standing with the Haywood County Community Development Council (HCCDC). The new group has been having regular programs, and BRCO provided the program for one of their meetings. We also alerted our organization about a fundraising spaghetti supper at Saunook, and some BRCO members attended.

BRCO, Saunook, and five other Haywood County community groups have, during the past two years, become primary movers in the county to support the Broadband expansion effort, an initiative that has proven successful and is continuing. BRCO member (HCCDC President) suggested having a designated computer outreach that allowed individuals to determine their current broadband accessibility proved very informative for county officials. (2023)

Two BRCO members are officers in the HCCDC: President and Secretary. This year, at the suggestion of BRCO member (HCCDC President), the group embarked upon a joint task of attempting to solve the homeless situation in the county. BRCO member (HCCDC President) reached out to a former homeless individual to be the speaker at an HCCDC meeting where he relayed the steps he had used to resolve the homeless crisis in his life. He also recommended ideas our organization could initiate for solving the problem in the lives of Haywood County's homeless population. Another speaker from the Salvation Army gave insight into the difficulties of solving the homeless crisis and the potential for a worsening situation with elderly people more likely to become homeless in the future. We have held two meetings to solicit suggestions from HCCDC members and recently held a third meeting with the sole intent of garnering ideas to solve the homeless dilemma. The speaker at this meeting who came at the request of BRCO member/HCCDC President, was knowledgeable about solutions that had worked at his former home in Florida.

HCCDC members, including BRCO, are gathering newspaper, magazine, and online articles about the best and least expensive approaches to provide housing for the homeless. We are also collecting data about which pitfalls to avoid.

Knowing that solutions to the homeless issue may involve long-term commitment, HCCDC will move forward with suggestions garnered from these speakers and from research data in our endeavor to address this problem.

PHOTOS

31. Please upload up to 4 high quality, current photos that best tell the story of your accomplishments you described in your application. Please title each file to match what is pictured and describe each briefly below. You may upload a jpeg, jpg, or pdf file. By submitting this application, you hereby grant permission to WNC Communities to use any photographs submitted as part of the WNC Honors application to be used in WNC Communities' publications, mailings, brochures, websites, presentations, etc. (including electronic and web publications) without compensation. PLEASE NOTE: Pictures must be 20MB or less in file size! Please compress your pictures if they are larger than this.

- [Photo of historic marker gathering](#)
- [Photo of pantry upgrade in progress \(ramp\)](#)
- [Photo of children at our "History and Ecology Day" event with Morning Star](#)
- [Photo of children receiving school awards](#)

SELF-ASSESSMENT & FUTURE PLANS

WNC Communities' goal is to help you build your club's capacity to deliver services and programs that help your community to thrive, and self-assessment is a valuable tool that helps our members improve and better serve our communities. This is vital information for us to understand your challenges and aspirations and how we can best assist you in the coming year. ***We will use this information (as well as everything in your application) to inform what training, coaching, and planning to offer to our communities, and what grants to pursue, so please be candid. You will not be scored on the questions in this section.*** A few examples of areas you could include in your self-assessment as either strengths or weaknesses are: the board's level of organization or effective communication, fundraising or grant writing ability, how focused and efficient your meetings are, your effectiveness at volunteer engagement or retention, recurring issues with building maintenance, computer skills, etc.

32. What are your community club's current strengths and weaknesses, and what are your goals for self-improvement over the next year? (Reminder: **none** of the questions in this section are part of the scoring). (Limit: 400 words)

STRENGTHS:

FINANCES

- [Recurring income from donations, sales, grants, and rentals](#)
- [In addition to our checking account, we have 3 Certificates of Deposit that earn interest.](#)
- [Prepare a balanced budget yearly, and committees operate within their budgets](#)
- [Conduct a bi-annual internal audit to ensure accuracy and stability](#)

ORGANIZATION

- [Strong mission and vision](#)
- [Logo that symbolizes our purpose](#)

- Review Bylaws bi-annually and make necessary changes
- Utilize a 5-Year Strategic Plan that we update annually
- Have Policies and Procedures for the organization and for each committee
- Strong committee structure with committee chairs who propose and budget projects
- Keep our facility in prime condition with goal to upgrade to meet future demands
- Voted second best civic organization in Haywood County in a *Mountaineer* newspaper poll.

OUTREACH

- Coordinate with other community groups under strong central leadership (Haywood County Community Development Council)
- Place food security and benevolence needs as a priority to ensure we meet citizen needs
- Offer community center to citizens for rentals
- Provide a church facility for a local Baptist church
- Publish a bi-monthly newsletter to capsulize our goals and accomplishments while giving recognition to our workers and members
- Maintain an impressive website, Facebook, email, and Next-Door accounts with constant upgrades to ensure that information is accurate, timely, and useful.
- Utilize publicity in two local newspapers to enhance our message
- Affiliate with local governmental agencies, churches, farms, schools, civic groups, non-profits, businesses, and individuals to implement programs and projects that benefit the community.

WEAKNESSES:

FINANCIAL

- Lack an annual fundraising event that can raise a significant amount of funds in an enjoyable, efficient manner

ORGANIZATION

- Lack a “deep bench” of candidates who would be willing to serve in a leadership position

OUTREACH

- Need to create an agenda to ensure more comprehensive use of our facility
- Need to create more types of programs for which our facility is suited

GOALS

- Our Strategic Plan adequately outlines our goals
- Maintain our facility; upgrade the dining hall and kitchen
- Expand programs, services, and volunteerism
- Contribute funds and opportunities for promoting the general welfare of our citizens while connecting those in need with governmental agencies and non-profit services
- Strive to encourage optimal educational opportunities for students by offering incentives, awards, recognition, and a scholarship
- Research, document, and educate about the history of the community

- Support environmental and conservation efforts regarding farmland and animal habitat sustainability

33. Based on your answers above (and any other needs you've not yet stated), what specific support, programs, and/or services would you like to see WNC Communities provide that would help your club to better serve your community? For example, what support (if any) does your community need with your governance or leadership (bylaws, 501c3 status, or strategic planning, running meetings, accountability, board training), finances (budgeting, financial controls, grant writing), programs (rental contracts, how-to on specific programs or services, etc.), volunteers, collaboration, or anything else?

WNC Communities could develop a table that lists the grants that community clubs have been awarded during the past five years. For each grant, the table could show the following:

- Be a "ready reference" that we could refer to when we are ready to pursue a grant
- Indicate the minimum/maximum amount that is typically awarded (e.g., if we had \$10,000-worth of needs for a project, we would look for a grant in the table that had been used to fund community club projects for that amount)
- Indicate what the grant cycle is for each grant listed
- Rate the extent to which the community club was required to have repeated interactions with the grantor to clarify the specifics of the project
- Rate how easy or complicated it was for the community club to meet the documentation requirements for the grant
- Indicate the thing (s) that caused the most frustration for the community club when applying for the grant or while implementing the grant
- List which community clubs had received each grant so that those clubs could be contacted for more information about all that is entailed in applying for and implementing the grant.

This table would help all of the community clubs to benefit from the "Lessons Learned" by each community club and might also serve to identify the best grants to pursue.

34. How will you invest the Award funds, which will most likely be at least \$700? (Limit: 300 words)

We will use the funds to help pay for our "Fresh Produce Coupons" that we give to our Community Pantry clients. The coupons not only enable clients to visit local produce stands to pick out their favorite fruits and vegetables, but they also provide an economic boost to the produce stand operators.

BRCO initiated the "Fresh Produce Coupons" program when our Rural Preservation Committee and our Community Pantry Committee realized that fresh produce was often lacking in options from pantry suppliers and that we had the means to achieve better health status for our clients while also supporting the bottom line for our local farmers/produce stands.

This program also allows pantry participants an opportunity to travel to produce stands, go outdoors and walk farm property for those stands adjacent to a farm, mingle with others, and possibly purchase even more produce than their coupons allow. Thus, the coupon program benefits clients from an “eating healthier” standpoint while also encouraging more physical and social activity. In addition, the farmer is happy with the extra income.

One of our elderly farmers recently retired and sold the operation to a young family. When we went to retrieve the coupons for redemption, the new owner found numerous coupons that the former owner had not turned in for reimbursement. He was thrilled to receive an unexpected \$160 as his first introduction to our cooperative program.

This program, when it started, utilized only hundreds of dollars per year to operate. Now, it requires thousands of dollars of our funds to continue. We believe that it is money well spent to ensure healthier and more enjoyable outcomes for pantry participants.

35. Do you own your own community building?

- a) Yes - Yes
- b) No, we don't have a building.
- b) No, our building is owned by the county.
- c) No, our building is owned by someone other than the county or us.
- d) Other:

39. What is the status of your building access?

- a) We own our building outright OR are paying off a loan to own it outright. Our access to our building is secure. [Yes – We own our building](#)
- b) We have a lease with a term of 5 years or more. Our access is not in jeopardy.
- c) We have a lease with a term of less than 5 years. We expect to be able to renew, and don't anticipate any issue with access to our building.
- d) We have a lease with a term of less than 5 years. We are not certain of our future in our building.
- e) N/A. We don't have a building.
- f) Other:

40. What assistance, if any, do you need from WNC Communities in convening community clubs in your county or area to work collaboratively or to learn what each other are doing? If you see no need, answer “None.”

[The seven community clubs in Haywood County are already meeting together quarterly to work collaboratively.](#)

41. How do you define the geographic boundaries of your community? (This helps us determine eligibility of new communities who may wish to join WNC Communities, and we get asked this question a lot).

BRCO considers our service area to be within a 5-mile radius of our community club facility. If we were to go beyond that, we would be encroaching into areas that are closer to other community club facilities than to ours.

42. How did you determine the number of households in your community on question # 2 on this application?

BRCO determines the number of households in the 5-mile radius by visiting the USPS web site and doing a search under "Every Door Direct Mail." We select the rural routes that are located within the 5-mile radius (there are six), conduct a search, and it will display for us the number of households along each of the six routes. We total the households listed for the six routes to get an estimated 3,500 households that we serve.

SPECIAL AWARDS

(Optional) Only communities wishing to be considered for recognition for specific initiatives need to answer these questions.

Calico Cat Award (Optional)

Please describe improvements you have made to your existing community building/space from July 2023 - June 2024 to make it rentable or usable for events, to house businesses you are supporting, to make it more energy and water efficient, to adopt renewable energy, or to otherwise benefit your community. Roughly how many square feet (or linear feet, if doing wiring) were renovated or improved? Please also include whether the work was done by volunteers or contractors, and how you paid for the renovations/updates. Finally, please attach up to 2 photos below (required). (Limit: 500 words)

Youth Leadership Award (Optional)

Please describe a youth-led project or program that youth in your community club initiated and led this past year. For example, this could be a brand-new program the youth wanted to start, or it could be an initiative to revitalize or improve an existing program at your club, or a project to upgrade your facility. It is fine if the youth leader(s) enlisted adult help to bring their idea to fruition. The key is that the program or project was the youth's idea, and its planning and execution was led by the youth. Please list the names of the youth leader(s), describe the project and outcomes, and clearly describe the youth leader(s) role(s) in the project. Please note that for your youth leader(s) to be eligible for the prize associated with this award - a free, weeklong outdoor course with NC Outward Bound - the winner(s) must be between 14 - 18

years of age in summer of 2024 and fully COVID vaccinated. We want to encourage youth participation, initiative and leadership, so up to three youths in your community may receive the Outward-Bound Course award *if they all had clear **leadership roles** in the project*. This can be a program you already shared in a narrative elsewhere on your application, just be sure to give sufficient detail to be considered for the award. Please attach up to 2 photos. (Limit 500 words)

WNC Communities Impact Award (Optional)

Describe an initiative your community club led this past year that had a significant, measurable impact on your community or a group within your community. This should be something that changed lives over the long term and helped people get to a new level of well-being. A few examples would be advocating and coordinating to get broadband for your community, or helping people gain skills and get employed, or helping entrepreneurs have affordable rental space for their businesses and providing additional services that helped them get to their next level. This should be a project that empowered others that your club originated, organized, and staffed with volunteers. Include how you measured the impact on people and share the outcomes, plus any future plans. This can be a program you already shared in a narrative elsewhere on your application, just be sure to give sufficient detail to be considered for the award. Please attach up to 2 high quality photos. (Limit: 500 words) **NOTE:** If you won the Impact Award in the last three years, you are not eligible to apply again until the fourth year after your initial award. You may count anything that happened during the 3-year hiatus if you apply once you are eligible again.

**The deadline to submit your application is:
August 8, 2024, 11:59 pm.**