

# WNC Honors Awards

## Application 2022

Updated 6/15/22



### INTRODUCTION

The WNC Honors Awards recognize rural communities for implementing programs or projects 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 and learn how we can help our communities to continuously improve.

The applications are reviewed by a committee to determine which Honors Award level of development each community has achieved: *Trillium*, *Mountain Laurel*, *Redbud*, or *White Oak*. Within each level, at least one community that stands out for its accomplishments will be recognized as Best in Class. Additionally, there are awards for specific achievements: the Calico Cat, 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 a president and other officers 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the WNC Communities' Honors Awards program in the past, or if a new organization, it must be replacing a club that is no longer active. WNC Communities reserves the right to define eligibility.

Completion of this annual application is a prerequisite to being considered active with WNC Communities and entitles the community to participate in additional programs offered throughout the year, such as the George H.V. Cecil Journey Scholarship and various capacity-building training programs.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- **Only online applications will be accepted.** However, for 2022 only, if this will cause a hardship for your community, please contact [susangarrett@wnccommunities.org](mailto:susangarrett@wnccommunities.org) **no later than August 1, 2022** to make arrangements for how to submit a hard copy of your application. Note that if you submit a hard copy application, it must be **received** by the August 31st deadline and the U.S. postal service has been slower than usual. Please plan accordingly as no late applications will be accepted.
- **Information on your application should be for activities from July 2021 - June 2022 only.**
- 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 **Monday, August 15th**, by 11:59 pm.

## COMMUNITY CONTACT INFORMATION

Your Community Center/Club's Name: [Bethel Rural Community Organization](#)

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

Your Community Club's Email Address: [haywoodbrco@gmail.com](mailto:haywoodbrco@gmail.com)

Your Community Club's Phone Number: [828-452-7536](tel:828-452-7536)

Your Community Club's Mailing Address, if different from the physical address above: [PO Box 1333, Waynesville, NC 28786](#)

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

Email address of person filling out this application [evelyn3226@charter.net](mailto:evelyn3226@charter.net)

## 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 "none" in each field for that officer.

President – [Carol Litchfield, 828-452-7536, Cltchfld@aol.com](#)

VP – [Greg Christopher, 828-734-3679, greg.christopher@haywoodcountync.gov](#)

Secretary – [Beth Cook, 828-734-8776, ehc78@bellsouth.net](#)

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

Other – [Pat Carr, Board Chair, 828-648-0075, carr4pat@aol.com](#)

2. How many households are in your community approximately: [3,500](#)
3. Which of the following specific programs coordinated by WNC Communities did your community club participate in during the past year (if any)? Check all that apply:
  - WNC Coffee Hours (Sept. - June) [Yes](#)

- How to Write Great Bylaws workshop (Oct.) [Yes](#)
- WNC Honors Awards (Dec.) [Yes](#)
- Bylaws Q & A workshop (Jan.) [Yes](#)
- Adult & Youth Volunteer Recruitment & Retention workshop (Feb.) [Yes](#)

### GOOD GOVERNANCE

- Does your community have written bylaws? Choose the description below that best matches your community's situation:
  - No, OR if yes, they have NOT been reviewed and/or updated in over 10 years
  - Yes - some have been developed and approved by the board, but they are weak or are not being used consistently
  - Yes - quite well developed, approved by our board, and we're using them regularly
  - Yes - fully developed, approved by our board, used regularly, revisited annually with appropriate adjustments made, and include Conflict of Interest and Whistleblower clauses [Yes, except we have no Whistleblower clause](#)
- How often do you meet on average (in a typical, non-COVID year) and how do you run your meetings? Please choose one:
  - Regularly and at least 6x per year
  - At least monthly with public attendance (open meetings)
  - Board meets at least monthly (open meetings) and we have committees that meet regularly
  - Board meets at least monthly (with open meetings) with report outs given by committees in advance of those meetings
  - Other: [Board meeting 6 times a year; Membership meets 6 times a year.](#)
- Is your community center/club a 501c3 (or 501c4) tax exempt organization?:
  - No
  - [Yes](#)
- If yes, what is your Tax ID number? (Do not enter any dashes). [342063022](#)
- What is the status of your Strategic Plan? Please choose one:
  - We have no written Strategic Plan yet.
  - We are working on a plan and currently have strategic goals.
  - We have a written strategic plan that is being implemented. We have attached our plan. [Yes](#)
  - We revisit our strategic plan annually and track our progress. We have attached our plan indicating which items we have already accomplished through June 2022.
- If you answered that you have strategic goals or a Strategic Plan in the question above, please attach.

### SEE STRATEGIC PLAN AT END OF APPLICATION

- (Optional question) Please describe briefly any other long-term sustainability planning you are doing (such as a Building Management Plan) and attach that plan below, indicating any progress through June 2022. (Limit: 60 words)

[Food Pantry Plan: Monitor number of food recipients monthly during drive-through, which increased from 16 in 2019 to 46 families in 2021. BRCO solicits funds from churches/individuals to respond to increased need. Plan for increased food storage \(new freezer in 2022\) and](#)

increased number of \$10 food coupons available to families to trade for produce at local farms. Contributes to sustainability of produce stands/farms, boosts local agriculture, and ensures families have fresh food.

Optional: Upload your Building Management Plan or other long term sustainability plan if you answered Question 10 above:

Food Pantry Planning includes monitoring the number of families served each month; soliciting donations to respond to the increased need, arranging for increased food storage onsite, and increasing the number of Fresh Produce Coupons available for families to use at local produce stands - which helps boost the local economy by promoting local agriculture (see attached plan with progress recorded).

## **BRCO FOOD PANTRY PLAN for Long-Term Sustainability**

**(The items below can also be found in the BRCO Strategic Plan)**

<b>GOAL 3: INCREASE THE CAPACITY OF THE BRCO FOOD PANTRY IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE A 10% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED EACH YEAR</b>	
During each month of each year, maintain a list of families who regularly rely on monthly food boxes, note any new additions, and monitor the list through the year to determine when an increase occurs in the total number of families receiving food boxes. (3-1)	<i>During the first half of 2022, the average number of families served each month increased to 48. (In the past three years, the average number of families served each month increased from 16 families per month in 2019 to 46 per month in 2021).</i>
Increase the amount of food ordered from MANNA to meet the increased demand. (3-2)	<i>Amount of food ordered was increased during 2022 to meet increased demand.</i>
Increase freezer capacity to accommodate storage of increased amounts of frozen food. (3-3)	<i>Freezer capacity is being monitored to determine when new freezer will be needed.</i>
Increase the number of BRCO pre-paid coupons that Food Pantry clients can use to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at produce stands in Bethel. (3-4)	<i>The number of coupons was increased during May 2022 in time for the opening of local produce stands. (The coupons are redeemable for \$10-worth of</i>

	<i>fresh produce; BRCO reimburses the produce stand operators for the coupons they collect).</i>
Solicit a 10% increase in Food Pantry donations from organizations and individuals not associated with the local churches that regularly support the Food Pantry. (3-5)	<i>During the first six months of 2022, \$500 was received from Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 980, \$1000 from Farm Bureau, and \$1000 from Food Lion.</i>
Apply for a grant to help fund the expansion of the Food Pantry storage area. (3-6)	<i>Capacity of storage area is being monitored to determine when expansion needs to occur.</i>

**LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE**

- 11. How many board members do you currently have? 5
- 12. How many of your current board members are new this year? 2
- 13. Which of the following best describes your board’s level of leadership development?
  - 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 ongoing rotation of officers and board members and provide opportunities for volunteers to take on committee leadership roles.
  - D) We have all of the above plus a diverse board representative of our community with ongoing opportunities for the community to engage with the board. [Yes. Our President is automatically on our board which has its own Board Chair and Vice-Chair.](#)
- 14. In the past 2 years, indicate whether your current officers, Board and/or your still-actively-volunteering, past board members have attended training on the following topics in support of your community club. Check all that apply.
  - None
  - Volunteer recruitment & retention [Yes - 3](#)
  - Financial management [Yes - 1](#)
  - Grant writing
  - Fundraising [Yes - 2](#)
  - Recruiting and cultivating board officers [Yes - 1](#)
  - Non-profit governance-related training [Yes - 1](#)
  - Strategic planning [Yes – 8 – 2 sessions](#)
  - Other - please describe below [Yes](#)
  - [Food Pantry – MANNA Food Safety training for food pantries](#)
  - [Historic Preservation Committee – attended 22 Zoom webinars about regional and local history and historic site preservation.](#)

- Rural Preservation – Attended HWA sponsored streambank stabilization training
  - Rural Preservation - Attended rivercane planting workshop at Lake Logan
15. (Optional - for White Oak level aspirants only) Share any additional information regarding your leadership structure and recruitment (for example: do you have committees or programs with community volunteer leadership?) (Limit: 200 words)

BRCO: Board directed-Officer facilitated-Committee managed.

Board, Officers, Members, and Committee Chairs: recruit officers/board/new members

Committee Chairs: BRCO members

Committees: Include BRCO members/non-members who facilitate projects relevant to their mission, relatively free to manage within budget. Committees solicit funds for their own projects as well as receive funding approved by board and membership.

Examples: Historic Preservation (HP) Committee has 18 members, several from other states, who conduct research; HP raises funding via art, book, CD, DVD sales, and donations as well as BRCO funding.

Food Pantry (FP) has member leaders but numerous non-member volunteers. FP receives funding from businesses, churches, individuals, and other non-profits as well as income from BRCO.

Committees:

Beautification (community center oversight and decorating for meetings)

Buildings & Grounds (oversees rentals/maintenance)

Benevolence (filters requests/grants assistance to community members)

Education (grants awards/scholarship to students and provides meeting speakers)

Food Pantry (food from MANNA and other sources sorted, stored/boxed/distributed to families in need)

Fundraising (sponsorships/grants/income projects)

Historic Preservation (conducts research/produces educational products in coordination with research facilities to enhance historic knowledge of Bethel)

Rural Preservation (coordinates with farms/food pantry for BRCO's coupon project, supports Bethel FFA, maintains Monarch Waystation, supports local conservation efforts, and promotes landowner/other conservation easements/projects).

## **FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP**

16. What is the status of your community club's financial plan? Choose the one that most closely represents your club's current situation:
- A) We have a bank account, a spreadsheet for tracking income and expenses, and someone in charge of keeping our books in order.
  - B) We have the above, plus an annual budget which includes utility and maintenance costs that is approved by the Board.

- C) We have the above, plus a financial plan showing how we will meet our annual budget goals for program and facility improvements through fundraising, grant writing, and other income generating activities. We have attached our plan below.
- D) We have the above, plus we maintain a reserve fund with a fund balance of at least 3 months of operating costs. **Yes**
- E) We have no approved budget, or no consistent way of tracking income and expenses, or no one set person who is doing that.

Please upload your financial plan if you answered C or D above on Question 16. **Attached BRCO WNC Budget/Financial Plan**

- 17. For those who have an annual budget, what is the total amount of your annual budget? (If you have no annual budget, please mark 0). **\$50,500 for 2022**
- 18. What is the total amount of income you generated for the past year (July 2021 - June 2022) from space rental, fundraisers, grants, and other sources? **\$39, 206.90**
- 19. When looking at the total money you brought in this past year, what amount did your community club bring in:
  - a) from income-generating activities such as renting your facility?: **\$9,410**  
\$50 (Free); \$9,000 (Harmony Baptist); \$80 (Messer); \$50 (Pisgah View Homeowners); \$25 (Mosa Meadows); \$50 (Putnam); \$50 (Rigdon); \$105 (Riddle)
  - b) from grants?: **\$2,650**  
\$1,150 (Food Lion); \$1,000 (Haywood County Farm Bureau); \$500 (Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 980)
  - c) from fundraising events?: **\$16,755**  
**Flood Relief Fund (FR): Individuals: \$11,105; Non-Profits: \$1,550; Businesses: \$4,100**

**Individual donations for Flood Relief: \$11,105**

\$100 (Benson); \$250 (Burgin); \$1,000 (A. Carr); \$100 (T. Carr); \$200 (Coltman); \$500 (Crute); \$110 (Estes); \$100 (Fields); \$50 (Grove); \$50 (Hanning); \$35 (Heather & Jennifer); \$50 (Henry); \$200 (James Trustees); \$65 (Jones); \$200 (Larsen); \$50 (Liden); \$60 (McMahan); \$100 (Miner); \$100 (Mutinelli); \$1,000 (Nettles); \$200 (Ogle); \$50 (Owen); \$50 (Pond); \$250 (Powlass); \$3,300 (Terrell); \$2,500 (Tingle Trust); \$35 (Wachob); \$300 (Wisneski); \$100 (Young)

**Non-profits donations for Flood Relief: \$1, 550**

\$300 (Brasstown Community Civic Center); \$250 (Cowee Community Development Organization); \$1,000 (Cherokee Community Club Council)

**Businesses donations for Flood Relief: \$4,100**

\$250 (Blue Ridge Books); \$1,000 (Cold Mountain Nursery); \$500 (Jamey Hughes LLC); \$500 (Life Property Solutions); \$250 (Nature Photos by Judy); \$100 (Underwood Dills & Associates); \$1,500 (Zoolie's Natural Food Market)



- d) other?: **(NON-Flood Relief) TOTAL: \$10,391.90**  
e) If you answered that you had other sources of income above, please describe briefly.

**Individual donations: \$4,075**

**Beautification: \$900 (Litchfield)**

**Food Pantry: \$75 (Henry); \$100 (Stines)**

**Historic Preservation: \$500 (Litchfield)**

**Rural Preservation: \$2,500 (Bottoms)**

**Churches: \$1,865**

**Food Pantry: \$480 (Crestview Baptist)**

**Food Pantry: \$750 (Encouraging Word Baptist)**

**Food Pantry: \$635 (Riverside Baptist)**

**Government: \$2,000**

**General: \$2,000 (Haywood County Commissioners)**

**Non-Profits: \$1,050**

**General: \$1,050 (WNC Communities)**

**Sales: \$1,358.65**

**Beautification decorations: \$275**

**Historic Preservation art: \$100**

**Historic Preservation books: \$30**

**Historic Preservation CDs: \$40**

**Historic Preservation DVDs: \$898.65**

**Rural Preservation DVDs: \$15**

**Cash donations: \$43.25**

20. What grants have you received in the past year (July 2021 - June 2022)? Please include the name of the grant funder, what it was for, and the amount. If you received none, please enter N/A. (50 words)

**Food Pantry: \$1000 grant - Food Lion**

**Food Pantry: \$150 coupon - Food Lion**

**Food Pantry: \$500 grant - Vietnam Veterans of America (Chapter 980)**

**Rural Preservation Coupon Project: \$1,000 grant - Haywood County Farm Bureau**

**TOTAL GRANTS: \$2,650**

21. (Optional question) Narrative: If you've had a very successful fundraiser with lessons learned that could help other communities, please describe it below. Please include total income, expenses, volunteer hours, 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 most successful fundraiser was the Benevolence Committee's Flood Relief Fund established after Tropical Storm Fred.

- Held meetings/publicized our Flood Relief Fund via local newspapers/WNC Communities after Tropical Storm Fred's flooding devastated Bethel/Cruso. (39 hours)
- Benevolence Committee chair coordinated relief funding/projects. (40 hours)



- BRCO's President attended a government coordinated meeting designed to assess the disaster and best approaches to address community needs. (2 hours)
- Individuals/families, businesses, and other community organizations directed funding to BRCO's Flood Relief Fund. (29 individuals/families; 3 non-profits; 7 businesses)
- Partnered with businesses, churches, fire departments, and families to assist with cleaning supplies, personal necessities, clothing, bedding, household essentials, construction materials, and labor.
- Food Pantry/Benevolence Committees provided food/clothing/supplies at three giveaway events to individuals coming to our facility on pantry day. (40 hours)
- Distributed food/clothing at church-run food/clothing banks designated for flood victims. (12 hours)
- Collaborated with Red Cross/USDA/Haywood Community College/Canton Library/ Cruso Methodist with food distribution projects for flood victims. (37 hours)
- Worked with Cruso Community Center/East Fork Baptist Church; delivered food for meals for families/workers. (3 hours)
- Processed donations of furnishings for distribution to flood victims. (6 hours).
- Cruso Community Club's budget was financially devastated; our President donated \$1,000 to show BRCO's support for Cruso Club's shortfall.
- Support to family with house loss (30 hours)
- Established an account at local businesses for flood families to purchase construction supplies. (Belk's, Davis Clothing, Del Ray's, Haywood Builders, Hometown Hardware, Mattress Firm, Pisgah Tire, Van's, Walmart) (24 hours)
- Buildings & Grounds chair coordinated with Riverside Baptist work crew to rebuild a ramp/stairway (13 volunteers; 146 hours)

Total Income: Individuals/families (\$11,105); Non-profits (\$1,550); Businesses (\$4,100) = \$16,755

**Expenses: \$4,784.89**

**Volunteers: 64**

**Volunteer Hours: 379**

#### **Partners**

**Businesses:** Belk's, Blue Ridge Books, Cold Mountain Nursery, Davis Clothing, Del Ray's, Haywood Builders, Hometown Hardware, Jamey Hughes LLC, Life Property Solutions, Mattress Firm, Pisgah Tire, Underwood-Dills Assoc., Van's, Walmart, Zoolie's

**Churches:** Bethel Baptist, Crestview Baptist, Cruso Methodist, East Fork Baptist, Riverside Baptist

**Fire Departments:** Center Pigeon, Cruso, Lake Logan

**Government:** Haywood County Library (Canton);USDA

**Non-Profits:** Brasstown Community Civic Center, Cherokee Community

Club Council, Cowee Community Development Organization,

Cruso Community Club, WNC Communities

**Schools:** Haywood Community College

**Individuals/Families:** 29

**Individuals/Families Assisted:** 10

**Successful Tips:**

- Limited efforts to families – not businesses
- Limited Flood Relief Fund to cover cleaning/building supplies. FP supplied food; Benevolence supplied clothing/furnishings.
- Screened requests to use money wisely
- Aided on small projects not covered by other sources of funding
- Focused on finding individuals/families recommended to us by Cruso Community Club, churches, or individuals who knew of specific needs
- We were effective in modest ways for numerous families and in larger ways for specific families.
- Lesson learned – expending funds on worthy projects has been a slow process since potential recipients often insist that others in need should receive help first.
- Recovery is slow; funding projects will continue for months as people continue to rebuild.

**VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

22. Please enter your total number of volunteers for this year (July 2021 - June 2022): **62 + 12 = 74**

23. Total volunteer hours for the year: **3,900**

24. How many active volunteers did you have 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.) **62**

25. Total youth volunteers under the age of 22: **0**

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

- a) We don't have a plan yet.
- b) We have regular volunteer appreciation to help with retention.
- c) We have recognition and have attached our Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Plan, including for youth, below. **Yes**
- d) We have recognition, an active youth program, and have attached our Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Plan, which also shows our progress through June.

Attach your community’s Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Plan if you answered C or D to the question above. If you answered D, be sure to indicate your progress to date on your plan.

# BRCO VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT PLAN

(The items below can also be found in the BRCO Strategic Plan)

<b>GOAL 4: PROMOTE BRCO PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE BETHEL SEVICE AREA</b>	
During 2022, develop an outreach plan that identifies local businesses, churches, and recreation sites where information on BRCO can be made available to residents and visitors. (4-1)	<i>This will be completed during July-August 2022.</i>
During 2022, identify areas of Bethel where the distribution of BRCO information can be achieved more effectively by utilizing rural route mailings. (4-2)	<i>Six Rural Routes were identified within a 5-mile radius of the BRCO Fellowship Hall during April 2022.</i>
From 2022 through 2024, experiment with making available BRCO information at various businesses, churches, and recreation sites and through rural route mailings. (4-3)	<i>An “Every Door Direct Mailing” will be tested for the six selected Rural Routes during August 2022.</i>
In 2025, make improvements in the outreach strategy based on the lessons learned from the results of the outreach conducted in 2022-2024. (4-4)	
During 2022, partner with the Haywood County Senior Center to share BRCO volunteer opportunities with newly retired seniors and others who visit the Senior Center. (4-5)	<i>This will be done in September 2022.</i>
During 2022, partner with Pisgah High School to share BRCO volunteer opportunities with Pisgah’s JROTC cadets who desire to earn credit for community service. (4-6)	<i>This will be done in September 2022.</i>

## 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.

### 27. Education Access and Quality

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:

- Scholarships [Yes](#)
- Financial workshops
- Job skills training
- Language classes
- Literacy assistance
- Tutoring
- Early childhood education
- Assistance with enrolling in higher education
- None of the above
- Other education access or quality improvement programs: [Yes](#)
- [Provided STEM and Reading Awards for Bethel Elementary School students](#)
- [Provided Citizenship Award for Bethel Middle School](#)
- [Provided support for the George H.V. Cecil Journey Scholarship applicant](#)
- [Provided art prints, books, 2 CDs, 5 DVDs, 5 historic markers to educate about Bethel farms/history](#)
- [Donated DVDs to Bethel Middle School for classroom teacher use](#)
- [Maintain a file library of documents relating to Bethel history](#)
- [Selected in the WNC Communities book, \*In Pursuit of a Greater Good\*, for a “Collected Stories of Community” segment.](#)
- [Provided 6 informative programs per year to which BRCO invited the public at no charge](#)
- [Distributed brochures about BRCO programs](#)
- [Attended 2 Blue Ridge Heritage Festivals/handed out brochures](#)
- [Participated in Tinsel Trail of Christmas Trees at Shelton House Museum; our Christmas tree decorated with Bethel memorabilia was voted 2<sup>nd</sup> best by visitors.](#)
- [On Haywood County TDA’s Quilt Trail](#)
- [On Blue Ridge National Heritage Area’s Heritage Trail](#)
- [Participated in HWA’s streambank stabilization training and relayed training information](#)
- [Participated in Lake Logan Conference Center’s river cane planting project with Bethel students](#)
- [Sponsor of Buy Haywood’s brochure to educate about local farms/produce stands](#)
- [Maintained extensive website that educates about BRCO programs/community history](#)
- [Continually updated our website to relay information about projects of our committees and the use of our facility](#)
- [Published electronic newsletter bi-monthly](#)
- [Maintained Facebook page that educates about our programs](#)
- [Maintained a BRCO Email address through which people can contact us with questions](#)
- [Belonged to Nextdoor local social media](#)
- [Distributed an electronic survey to BRCO membership to receive input about BRCO programs/activities/how best to serve Bethel Community.](#)
- [Planned Every Door Direct mailing of a flyer designed to educate about BRCO and encourage involvement in BRCO programs/activities. Placed the flyer at local businesses.](#)
- [Distributed information about local and county assistance programs to Food Pantry participants](#)

## 28. 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 provides:

- Job creation
- Entrepreneurial support
- Helping people out of poverty through easing their access to housing [Yes](#)
- Supporting workforce development
- Small business development or incubation
- Providing access to internet [Yes](#)
- Coordinating installation of broadband [Yes](#)
- Empowering access to healthy, affordable food through a community garden, gardening classes, or development of farmers' markets [Yes](#)
- None of the above
- Other programming that helps people gain economic stability:
  - [Food coupon project ensured that families in need were able to obtain fresh produce](#)
  - [Buy Haywood brochure \(sponsored by BRCO\) encouraged the public to visit local farms.](#)
  - [Benevolence Committee supported families with utilities payments](#)
  - [Flood Relief Fund helped flood victims recuperate and rebuild.](#)
  - [Furnished funds for clothing for indigent children at Christmas](#)
  - [Listed local businesses on our website](#)

## 29. Community Well-being

These are programs that support cultural preservation, social cohesion, and/or helping others in your community. Check the ones your club provides:

- Preserving traditions, heritage, and/or language [Yes](#)
- [Participated in 22 Zoom historical webinars](#)
- [Conducted historical research about sites, individuals, and traditions](#)
- [Provided 6 books/2CDs/3DVDs/5 historic markers that educate about history](#)
- [Supported Preservation NC projects](#)
- [Supported Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society projects](#)
- Preserving historical buildings [Yes](#)
- [Refurbished disability ramp with Hometown Hardware partner and chose new door for our facility](#)
- [Displayed 26 historic art prints/awards at community center and commissioned another painting](#)
- [Responsible for 2 National Register site designations and facilitated another National Register inquiry.](#)
- [On TDA's Haywood County Quilt Trail](#)
- [On Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's Heritage Trail](#)

- Participated in Lake Logan Conference Center's river cane planting that preserves a native plant and provides materials for native artisans
- Bringing people together to share, connect, and enjoy each other at events such as Trunk or Treat, dances, holiday dinners, festivals, etc. **Yes**
- Benevolence. Giving assistance to those in need such as food distribution, food or clothing pantries, Christmas giving tree, helping distressed families with bills or funerals, etc. **Yes**
- Worked with a local ramp-building crew to rebuild a deck for a family devastated by Tropical Storm Fred
- Donated funds/labor to assist with clean-up/rebuilding flood damaged homes
- Worked with businesses, fire departments, non-profits, churches, and individuals to help families impacted by the August flood to receive food, clothing, furnishings, and supplies
- Donated funds to assist children in need at Christmas
- Donated funds to support utilities for families
- Made available funding for vision care
- Made available funding for dental care for children
- Holding classes related to culture, independent living, arts, having fun, or other helpful topics. **Yes**
- Conducted historic tour for ladies new to the community at no charge
- Community interest/special topic guest speakers **Yes**
- Promoting awareness of and opportunities to engage in issues that are important to your community, and/or providing a forum for candidates or elected officials to speak to citizens and hear their concerns **Yes**
- Programs that promote cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and inclusiveness **Yes**
- Participated in river cane planting project that promotes awareness of Cherokee culture
- Programs that bring elders together with youth or that otherwise foster cross-generational appreciation
- None of the above
- Other programs to support community well-being:
  - Food Pantry distributed information about available social/governmental programs
  - Distributed clothing, personal supplies, food, cleaning supplies, furnishings to flood victims
  - Provided shopping location for construction supplies for flood victims
  - Collaborated with Red Cross, USDA, churches, community clubs, fire departments, businesses, and numerous groups after flooding to assist people in need.

### 30. 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:

- Spearheading trash pickup efforts on an ongoing basis
- Beautification of your community **Yes**
- Installing recycling facilities at your facility and promoting recycling in the community **Yes**
- Reducing energy and water use in your community facility **Yes**

- Promoting weatherization or water efficiency in your community and providing related resources to residents
- Creating animal habitat on your facility campus or elsewhere or otherwise protecting biodiversity [Yes](#)
- [Rural Preservation Committee maintained a Monarch Waystation at a local museum](#)
- Cleaning up creeks of trash or otherwise protecting streams (i.e. preventing stormwater runoff, creating protective policies in collaboration with your city, etc.)
- Removing invasive plant species
- Creating conservation easements to preserve wildlife areas or farmland [Yes](#)
- [BRCO is responsible for 543 acres of conservation easement land and thousands of feet of stream frontage preserved.](#)
- None of the above
- Other environmental stewardship programs:
  - [Historic marker project showcased environmental/rural heritage sites \(tree, farm, watering hole\)](#)
  - [Mowed/maintained a historic watering hole](#)
  - [Mowed/maintained donated plot of land at entry to Bethel](#)
  - [Planted river cane to stabilize riverbank above Lake Logan](#)
  - [Attended streambank stabilization training](#)
  - [Maintained rock garden and water garden at community center](#)
  - [Supported FFA projects](#)
  - [Supported Haywood Waterways projects](#)
  - [Showcased past efforts that resulted in 543 acres of land under conservation easement and thousands of feet of stream frontage preserved](#)

### 31. **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 provides:

- Assistance with SNAP, Medicaid, Medicare, health insurance access, [Yes](#)
- Telehealth,
- Opioid, smoking, or addiction education and prevention resources,
- Healthy eating and cooking classes
- Transportation services to primary health care appointments, etc.
- Free mental health evaluations and/or counseling
- Create and maintain a walking or biking trail to enable exercise
- Provide and maintain athletic facilities such as playgrounds, basketball courts or soccer fields where people can exercise or organize athletic clubs for people to play sports together
- Provide exercise classes such as yoga, dance, weightlifting, or other
- None of the above
- Other healthcare access programs - please list and describe briefly:
  - [Made available dental assistance for children](#)
  - [Made available vision assistance for community members](#)



### 32. Program(s) Narrative

Please elaborate on 1 - 3 specific programs you have checked above *that best illustrate your positive impact on your community*. In your description, include your club's role (planning, coordination, leading, supporting, etc.), what staffing, and other resources you provided, who was impacted, how they were 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). Do not cut and paste narratives from previous years' applications. (Limit: 1500 words)

Since inundation caused by Tropical Storm Fred created havoc for the twin communities of Bethel and Cruso, the bulk of our focus for several months has centered on clean-up, rebuilding, and assisting devastated families whose lives were disrupted by the deluge. BRCO participated in numerous projects (three are highlighted here) that improved the lives of one family, educated members and the community about the prevention of streambank erosion, and restored a native species, which has erosion control properties, with deep roots in our native community, region, and culture.

1.

BRCO members became involved in numerous projects addressing food, furnishings, and clothing needs of flood victims. Our Benevolence Committee's Flood Relief Fund initiative focused on providing funding for clean-up and rebuilding. BRCO's Building and Grounds Committee Chair, Ted Carr, garnered assistance from and oversaw the experienced twelve-member Riverside Baptist Church work crew. Carr created a deck design drawing that detailed replacement of a family's flood-damaged stairway/porch. The job required removal of three thousand pounds of concrete and block steps as well as damaged deck boards. Volunteers came throughout the project, with Carr and the final workers staying to finish the job by 4 p.m. (146 hours). After a well-earned cup of tea, Carr received a call from the ecstatic owner who was immensely pleased with the renovation that enabled him to enter his home safely once again. BRCO's Flood Relief Fund paid for materials for the project. The Benevolence Committee also established accounts with Belk's, Davis Clothing, Del Ray's Consignment, Haywood Builders, Hometown Hardware, Mattress Firm, Pisgah Tire, Van's, and Walmart to be able to purchase building and other supplies for flood recovery projects of other families. BRCO featured photos and descriptions of the event in the April newsletter.

2.

BRCO also initiated flood control efforts regarding environmental restoration and preservation. After witnessing the environmental damage resulting from Tropical Storm Fred, BRCO's Rural Preservation (RP) Committee chair took the initiative to attend a Haywood Waterways Association (HWA) streambank stabilization workshop held at the site of an eroding streambank. Workshop attendees participated in a hands-on training exercise that included preparing the site, seeding/mulching the bank, and planting bank-stabilizing saplings and shrubs. Instruction centered on the NC Cooperative Extension Service publication, "Small-Scale Solutions to Eroding Streambanks." This publication proved to be so helpful that BRCO distributed it to its membership and made it available to others who may have

experienced stream damage and erosion during the August flooding. BRCO featured photos and descriptions of the event in our April newsletter.

3

Along the same vein, BRCO's RP Committee has selected projects that will benefit environmental health, promote economic sustainability (particularly for farmers), and create opportunities for partnerships that are mutually beneficial. A project that fit those criteria was the River Cane Planting project on the West Fork of the Pigeon River above Lake Logan. This project was needed to restore an ecologically significant riparian buffer that had been damaged during the recent flooding. The project would not only help to restore a damaged riverbank, but it would also showcase the value of planting river cane, a plant critical to the preservation of Cherokee heritage.

A sizeable list of partners participated in the effort. Camp Henry director at the Lake Logan Episcopal Conference Center obtained a grant for the project from the Episcopal Church's Creation Care Alliance Fund, a morally driven organization that supports creation care efforts through inspiration, education, service, and advocacy. Students at Warren Wilson College harvested river cane that grows in abundance on their campus and transported it to the site above Lake Logan. The Project Director for the Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources demonstrated the best methods for ensuring a successful planting and explained how the river cane will slow future flood waters enough that sand and silt will fall out of suspension and accumulate on the bank. River cane rhizomes then grow in the same deposits, allowing the river cane to build a natural levee. Applying the methods the Director had demonstrated, Bethel students and the BRCO RP Committee chair helped to plant the river cane. Once matured, the river cane will be ready for Cherokee artists to harvest to use for basket weaving and other crafts, thus perpetuating traditional crafts that provide livelihoods for native artisans. An added benefit of the newly stabilized riverbank upstream is that there will be less threat of undesirable sediment accumulating on the fields of farmers downstream.

In addition, Camp Henry's director plans to utilize the planting of river cane as the impetus for a conservation curriculum for outdoor programs connected with the camp. Instruction that day was the first outdoor curriculum, with all participants, including Bethel students, reaping the benefits of the experience. BRCO featured the river cane planting project in our December newsletter.

BRCO has felt an especially poignant connection to the river cane project since the Cherokee, native to our community centuries ago, have worked to restore a plant that once guarded streambanks. Cherokee are also teaching others the ancestral art of river cane planting. That plant has been and will be used by Cherokee artisans. The EBCI Cherokee Development Council and other community organizations have been so gracious to BRCO by donating to our Flood Relief Fund. We hope that we can, in a small way, repay their generosity by endorsing and participating in this project that benefits Cherokee culture and people.

### **COLLABORATION**

33. Please check all Community Partners within your community with whom you collaborated on projects in the past year:
  - Local schools (pre, K-12) Yes – Bethel Elementary, Bethel Middle, Pisgah High, Master's (Homeschool) Academy

- Local community college or university
- Churches [Yes](#) - Bethel Baptist, Crestview Baptist, Cruso Methodist, East Fork Baptist, Encouraging Word Baptist, Harmony Baptist, Lake Logan Episcopal Conference Center, Riverside Baptist
- Farms [Yes](#) – Chambers Farm Market, Fresh Corn & More, Leatherwood Family Farms, 10 Acre Garden
- Local Businesses. Please list: [Appalachian Antique Hardwoods](#), [Bethel Grocery](#), [Cold Mountain Nursery](#), [Frank's Up-the-River Market](#), [Jukebox Junction](#), [Single Stop](#), [Sloan's Plant Farm](#)
- Police/Sheriff Department [Yes](#)
- Fire Department [Yes](#) – [Center Pigeon](#), [Cruso](#), [Lake Logan](#)
- 4-H
- Other: [Camp Henry at Lake Logan](#), [Pigeon/Cecil Precinct](#), and six families who supported flood relief efforts

34. Please check all Community Partners outside your community with whom you collaborated on projects in the past year:

- Council on Aging
- County Extension Office [Yes](#)
- MANNA Food Bank [Yes](#)
- Goodwill
- Community college or university outside your community [Yes](#) – [Mountain Heritage Center WCU](#); [WCU/UNCA – Southern Appalachian Digital Collection](#); [Haywood Community College \(food collection collaboration\)](#); [Warren Wilson College \(river cane planting\)](#)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Development Authority [Yes](#)- [Haywood County Quilt Trail](#); [Blue Ridge National Heritage Area – Heritage Trail](#)
- City/County government [Yes](#) – [Haywood County Commissioners](#)
- Health and Human Services [Yes \(Food Pantry\)](#)
- Boys Club or Girls Club
- Boy or Girl Scouts
- Other community clubs or other organizations - please list: [Beaverdam Community Club](#), [Bethel Professional Building](#), [Blue Ridge Books](#), [Brasstown Community Civic Center](#), [Buy Haywood](#), [Cherokee Community Development Council](#), [Christopher Farms](#), [County Council of Community Clubs](#), [Cowee Community Development Organization](#), [Cruso Community Club](#), [DAR](#), [Davis Clothing](#), [Delray's Consignment](#), [Doug Chambers Productions](#), [Fines Creek Community Club](#), [Food Lion](#), [Go Grocery](#), [Haywood Advancement Foundation](#), [Haywood Builders](#), [Haywood County Emergency Services](#), [Haywood County Farm Bureau](#), [Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society](#), [Haywood County Interagency Council](#), [Haywood County Public Library \(Canton\)](#), [Haywood Gleaners](#), [Haywood Waterways Association](#), [Hendersonville Heating/Air](#), [Hometown Hardware](#), [House of Raeford Farms](#), [Life Property Solutions](#), [Mc Carson Landscaping](#), [Mattress Firm](#), [The Mountaineer](#), [Museum of NC Handicrafts in Shelton House](#), [NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources](#), [NC Department of Transportation](#), [Nature Photos by Jan](#), [North Hominy Community Club](#), [Owl Market](#), [Pigeon Community Club](#), [Pisgah Tire](#), [Positively Haywood](#), [Preservation NC](#), [Print Haus](#), [Red Cross](#), [Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources](#), [Saunook Community Club](#), [Sewah Studios](#), [Spectrum](#), [Staples](#), [Underwood Dills & Assoc.](#), [ULSI](#)

Insurance, US Department of Agriculture, Van's, Vietnam Veterans of America, Village Framer, Walmart, WNC Communities, WNC Historical Association, Zoolie's Natural Food Market

### **35. Collaboration Narrative**

Please provide a narrative describing one collaboration that had a powerful impact on your community's well-being or resilience. Please answer the who, what, where, when, why, and how for this collaboration. This should be a different initiative from what was described in the Program Narrative above and the Impact Award below (if you are applying). (Limit: 500 words)

The following storyline is compelling because it details how BRCO, inadvertently, assisted desperate people in need and has, therefore, become knowledgeable about how to handle similar situations involving Bethel residents in need.

During the first half of 2022, BRCO seized an opportunity to make an impact on the well-being of citizens in distress by collaborating with the "Bethel Professional Building" in Waynesville, known locally as the "Bethel House." In January 2022, BRCO's President, Carol Litchfield, began receiving phone calls from individuals who were desperate to talk to the staff at Bethel House. These callers had heard, through the grapevine, that Bethel House provides valuable assistance to people in dire need of support. Not knowing the phone number for Bethel House, these individuals first tried searching online for "Bethel House" in Waynesville. The Bethel Professional Building has no web site and no information available online; however, the online search does produce the name of the Bethel Rural Community Organization along with Litchfield's phone number.

After Litchfield began receiving the calls, she paid a visit to the Bethel Professional Building to let the staff know that she had been receiving the phone calls. She asked for the phone number of Bethel Professional Building in order to provide that number to anyone who called looking for Bethel House. The staff was appreciative of Litchfield's willingness to help the callers connect with their services and provided Litchfield with a handout that described the services that can be obtained at Bethel Professional Building. The services include assistance relating to court dates and medical appointments, access to Peer Support Specialists, and referral to whatever entity is best suited to address the individual's needs. Bethel Professional Building is located in a house where individuals can do their laundry, take a shower, and eat lunch on weekdays or attend church service on Sundays.

From January through June, Litchfield, as the BRCO contact person, received at least six calls each month from individuals seeking help from the staff at Bethel Professional Building. Sometimes the phone calls were as simple as wanting the phone number, asking directions to Bethel Professional Building, or requesting the hours of operation. Other phone calls were more desperate. Litchfield received three phone calls from individuals who were calling from jail, as well as a phone call from an attorney on her way to attend a meeting at the Bethel Professional Building. One young man called Litchfield early one morning and told her that he was tired of being "strung out on drugs" and that he was ready to turn his life around. A young mother told Litchfield that she and her 4-year-old daughter needed a voucher for lodging. Another mother needed help with utilities. Whatever their circumstances, all callers greatly appreciated Litchfield's willingness to connect them with the help they needed. Litchfield, as a result of her training involving Bethel House can work with BRCO's Benevolence Committee to ensure appropriate referrals for Bethel citizens in need of Bethel Professional Building's services.

## PHOTOS

36. Please upload up to 3 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. (Not included here)

## 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 all of our organizations 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 to inform what training, coaching, and planning to offer to our communities, so please be candid. 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, etc.

37. What are your community club's current strengths and weaknesses, and what are your goals for self-improvement over the next year? (Limit: 500 words)

### STRENGTHS:

- BRCO is highly organized which allows us to determine which projects need our focus, what methods work, and which concerns are worth pursuing. We maintain a controlled financial structure that allows us to sustain fiscal solvency – even during pandemics, floods, and other potential disasters. Committees have produced award-winning, saleable products that provide ongoing income for the organization.
- BRCO functions efficiently, because of updated, strong, and flexible Bylaws and board/officer direction which empowers committee chairs to fulfill their missions as long as they stay within their pre-approved budgets. Volunteers appreciate the opportunity to participate in meaningful projects overseen by the committees. BRCO is gifted with a powerful base of volunteer support.
- BRCO supports the community through benevolence/food initiatives, historic/rural preservation, education, beautification/building maintenance, and fundraising. BRCO maintains strong relations with local schools/educational institutions, churches, businesses, governmental entities, non-profits, other community centers, organizations, and individuals.
- BRCO maintains an informative website, has an email address that allows for easy contact, and has significant social media presence (Facebook and Nextdoor). We are utilizing electronic and hard copy surveys that allow us to learn from community members what role they envision our organization should play. BRCO is researching other outreach methods that will further encourage community involvement in BRCO initiatives.
- BRCO is fortunate to have a community center that provides a space for a local church to use a beautiful historic sanctuary for services and a fellowship hall for social functions. Our pantry program operates out of the facility. BRCO and community members benefit from affordable rental of our center which we supply with amenities needed for meetings, parties, and other events.

#### WEAKNESSES:

- We have a limited number of volunteers who can help on a continuing basis.
- We struggle to find individuals who are willing to serve in leadership roles.
- We need new members who are ready, willing, and able to volunteer.
- Maintaining a dependable source of revenue from year to year is a challenge.
- Our aging community center, while well-maintained, needs updating to ensure that the dining hall is rentable and that the food pantry has enough space to function efficiently. Typically, grants do not fund building maintenance, and upgrades are expensive.
- Our facility is underutilized by the community. Developing strategies for our center to be used for youth-oriented programs, adult education, crafts and cooking lessons, exercise classes, tutorial assistance, etc. requires diligent effort.

#### GOALS:

- To maintain a quality facility
- To update the Fellowship Hall
- To increase the capacity of the Food Pantry
- To promote BRCO programs, services, and volunteer opportunities
- To promote the general welfare of Bethel residents by contributing funds, donating items, arranging in-kind services, and facilitating county assistance
- To support educational endeavors by providing learning opportunities, educational materials, awards, and scholarships
- To preserve and share the history of the Bethel area
- To preserve farmland, streams, habitats, and environmental attributes

#### 38. How will you invest the award funds, which will most likely be \$500? (Limit: 350 words)

BRCO has several projects to which it could apply funding, but the most pressing need continues to be for food pantry assistance. Our pantry need has grown from an average of 16 families per year in 2019, 25 in 2020, 46 in 2021, to an average of 48 families (including 119 individuals) thus far in 2022.

Fortunately, MANNA delivers shelf stable food items regularly. Haywood County Gleaners also boosted supplies of fresh produce for our storeroom. In addition, after flooding from Tropical Storm Fred, BRCO collaborated with Haywood Community College/ Red Cross/USDA at two events, providing fifty emergency food boxes for flood victims.

Complicating our Food Pantry mission of supplying nourishment for families in need in Bethel, however, is the fact that MANNA supplies are sometimes deficient in food items such as meats and fresh produce. Therefore, we required 2 extra volunteer duties and more funds to shop for healthful food at Food Lion, Go Grocery, and House of Raeford Farms where items are pricier – adding additional expense to the pantry program. Additionally, the 2021 flood resulted in a massive increase in demand since affected families lost everything, including groceries.

BRCO is privileged to benefit from pantry donations from two businesses, three churches, and one non-profit. In collaboration with these partners and six farms/produce stands, we have established a food

coupon project that enables pantry participants to visit local farms to exchange coupons for produce. Because of the additional number of families (tripled in three years) and the increased demand for this program, expenses for this category have increased dramatically.

To supplement our increasing demand to fund the pantry program, BRCO has applied for grants, recently obtaining a \$1,000 grant from Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation for Feeding the Hungry. We also received a Food Lion gift card for \$150 from the Food Lion Feeds program sponsored by Food Lion's Community Relations team. Haywood County Farm Bureau granted \$1,000. Ever increasing requests for food, a surge in food prices, and dwindling money available to support the program means that every extra dollar received is required by the food pantry program.

39. Please list areas in which WNC Communities may be of assistance to your organization in the future.

BRCO developed its Strategic Plan and will need guidance in adjusting the plan to capture new actions while closing out completed one.

BRCO could use more assistance with grants and grant writing.

We believe that community centers with historic properties could benefit from WNC Communities partnering with the NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources to offer a training about steps required to do a National Register of Historic Places application and what criteria make a site worthy to be considered for National Register. Some facilities are National Register worthy, but they need assistance with the requirements.

Along those lines, some community centers could benefit from consultation with Preservation NC about whether a site (perhaps a historic community center) should be preserved with preservation easements to prevent the structure from being torn down if the ownership ever changes.

We would appreciate workshops about environmental sustainability programs, projects that help our community adjust to climate change, and projects that encourage farmland protection.

We could benefit from training about assistance with finding and researching old cemeteries. Our Historic Preservation Committee is embarking on tracing the 22 cemeteries that exist in Bethel. Bethel has two slave cemeteries that we would like to document, but we lack the expertise to conduct the research. Both are on private land, and we need guidance in how to approach the topic with the owners.

## **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 2021 - June 2022 to make it rentable or usable for events, to house businesses you are incubating, to make it more energy and water efficient, 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) **NO**

### **Youth Leadership Award (Optional)**

Please describe a youth-initiated and youth-led project or program that youth in your community club initiated and led this past year. Please list the names of the youth leaders, as well as describe the project and outcomes. We want to encourage youth participation, initiative and leadership. This should be a different initiative than what you entered anywhere else in a narrative on your application. Please attach 1 photo. (Limit 500 words) **NO**

### **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 getting to a new level of well-being. A few examples would be helping people who had depended on the food pantry to grow their own gardens and become able to provide their own food or advocating and coordinating to get broadband for your community, or helping people gain skills and get employed, or helping entrepreneurs start a business and get to their next level. This should be a project that empowers 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 should be a different initiative than what you entered anywhere else in a narrative on your application. Please attach up to 2 high quality photos. (Limit: 500 words)

#### **WNC COMMUNITIES IMPACT AWARD – FOOD COUPON PROJECT**

The BRCO Rural Preservation (RP) Committee worked in partnership with the BRCO Food Pantry Committee and local produce stand operators to establish and implement a Fresh Produce Coupon Program.

**How the Program Works:** Each year, the BRCO Rural Preservation Committee consults with local produce stand operators and prepares and prints Fresh Produce Coupons. Each month, during the BRCO Food Pantry Drive-through, the Fresh Produce Coupons are given out to families in need. Each \$10 coupon can be used to purchase fresh produce at a local produce stand. The participating produce stands for that year are listed on the coupon. The produce stand operators contact BRCO later in the month to redeem the coupons they have collected (see attached photo of the Fresh Produce Coupon). More than 40 families in need can utilize this program each month. Produce stand customers use the most coupons from June through September when the variety and quality of the produce is at its best. The number of coupons redeemed amounted to \$2300 from July 2021 through June 2022. This amount likely would have been much greater had it not been for the August 17, 2021, flood that destroyed crops and negatively impacted local businesses, including the produce stands.

#### **Positive Impacts of the Fresh Produce Coupon Program on Families in Need:**

- Each family can choose from a wide selection of fresh produce at their favorite produce stand.

- The individuals buying the produce often buy more than what the coupon covers because they are impressed with the amount and quality of fresh produce that is available for a reasonable price. The fresh produce adds nutritional value to family meals.
- Families get to enjoy all the amenities that the produce stands offer. Visitors can walk in the adjacent fields where they may pick their own berries or cut their own flowers. One produce stand provides live music and free pizza cooked in outdoor ovens on its “Customer Appreciation” Saturdays.

#### **Positive Impacts of the Fresh Produce Coupon Program on Produce Stand Operators:**

- The income and goodwill generated by the Fresh Produce Coupons boosts the economic viability of the produce stands.
- The produce stands benefit from having their names and locations listed on the coupons and from the word-of-mouth marketing that occurs every time coupon users share with their friends how much they enjoyed visiting the produce stands.
- The produce stand operators enjoy being able to provide “free” produce to families in need; the transaction uplifts both the customer and the operator (see attached photo of a happy produce stand operator holding coupons that he has collected).

#### **Positive Impact of the Fresh Produce Coupon Program in Appealing to Donors:**

- It is easier for BRCO members to convince potential donors to make generous contributions to BRCO. Donors are impressed that BRCO not only helps families in need but also supports the local produce stand operators.