



## **WNC Honors Program & Awards Application**

2025

Updated 5/15/25

### **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 practice sharing, facilitation of collaboration among communities, networking, 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 of at least \$1000. 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 Volunteer 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the WNC Communities' Honors Awards program in the past, or if a new organization, it must be replacing a club that is no longer active or be in an area not being served by a current member community and be approved by WNC Communities.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 the eligibility to participate in various capacity-building training programs, consulting services, grants from WNC Communities, the George H.V. Cecil Journey Scholarship program, our Emergency Readiness Network, and our WNC Honors Learning Center website.**

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

- **Only online applications will be accepted.**
- **Information on your application should be for activities from July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025 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 **Wednesday, August 6th, 2025**, 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 IN A PREVIOUS YEAR, you can skip this section. Please do not fill it out again.**

**IF YOU FILLED IT OUT IN A PREVIOUS YEAR, BUT YOU WANT TO MAKE UPDATES TO IT, please email [susangarrett@wnccommunities.org](mailto:susangarrett@wnccommunities.org) to let us know. Please do not fill out this section.**

**IF YOUR CLUB WAS NOT ACTIVE WITH US IN THE PAST 2 YEARS 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. We strongly recommend entering an *email address for at least two officers* as this is our primary way of communicating with our members. If you do not have a listed title filled, please enter "0" in each field for that title. **Note that if you currently do not have at least 3 officers, you will need to call Susan at WNC Communities to discuss your club's situation to see whether you are eligible to apply.**

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

VP **Greg Christopher**, 828-452-6768 and 828-734-3679,  
[Gregchristopher2324@gmail.com](mailto:Gregchristopher2324@gmail.com)

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

Treasurer **Pat Carr**, 828-648-0075, [carr4pat@aol.com](mailto:carr4pat@aol.com)

Other **Board Chair: Brent McKee**, 828-456-6055, [bpm1259@gmail.com](mailto:bpm1259@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 2024 – June 2025) **Yes – All but one**
  - WNC Honors Awards (held online via Zoom in February 2025) **Yes**

- Non-violent Communication (NVC) training (in person)
- Trusted Leader training (in person)
- How to Run a Great Meeting training (in person)
- Madison Digital Leaders (digital skills training at Center Community Center)
- Emergency Readiness Network meeting(s) (via Zoom) **Yes**
- Grant Roundup 1 and/or 2 (via Zoom) **Yes**
- Transylvania Communities Convening (Transylvania only, in person)
- Community Center Disaster Recovery Grant
- Promoting our George H.V. Cecil Journey Scholarship to youth in your community **Yes**
- 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 **Yes**
  - 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  
**Board meets bi-monthly with open meetings**  
**Membership meets bi-monthly with open meetings with advance notice/reports**  
**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 2025. **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. **Attach**

### **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 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 2024 – June 2025), 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
- Non-profit governance-related training
- Strategic planning
- Leadership **Yes**
- Communication skills **Yes**
- Digital skills (i.e. how to use Google Workspace or Zoom or other)
- Other - please describe below
- **Haywood County Community Development Council (HCCDC) (ongoing discussion of expanding Broadband)**
- **HCCDC (ongoing discussion about alleviating homelessness in Haywood County)**
- **HCCDC (beginning discussion about emergency management in Haywood County)**
- **HCCDC ( Digital Navigation in Haywood County – computer literacy in local communities)**
- **We had at least one member attend all but one Coffee Hour and two participated as speakers at one Coffee Hour.**
- **Members receive training via speakers about the following topics:**  
**Mountain Research Station Superintendent, Waynesville, Haywood County, spoke about programs and projects that benefit farmers.**  
**Public Information Officer, Haywood County Emergency Services, spoke about Emergency Preparedness**  
**Lake Logan Episcopal Conference Center Director spoke about the flood recovery projects at Lake Logan.**  
**The Haywood Waterways Association Director spoke about the services available to remove debris from waterways.**  
**A WCU professor spoke about finding historic graves via GPR and cadaver dogs.**

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 Volunteer Award entry below, if appropriate. See the requirements under that section.) (Limit: 200 words)

**BRCO promotes youth leadership:**

- **Presents a \$1,000 scholarship to a senior - Application requires enumeration of school/community involvement, particularly activities that mesh with BRCO's focus on skills/abilities that can enhance the quality of rural life in Bethel.**
- **BRCO supports a philosophy advocating "good citizenship" by working with Bethel Middle School teachers to select a student who exemplifies the qualities of leadership, social accountability, and stewardship (\$50 award).**
- **Two graduating fifth graders who excelled in STEM and English are recognized during a ceremony. Also recognized are the most improved in STEM and English (\$50 awards).**
- **Provides opportunities that allow youth to participate with our organization - This year, three homeschoolers assisted our Community Pantry Committee with packaging/distributing food to citizens in need.**
- **Bethel Middle School eighth graders attended BRCO's local history training in which discussion of early local settlers enabled them to participate by relating to their own family history.**
- **First and second graders involved with a summer enrichment program attend an educational session where they learn about local history and ecology. These students assisted the Rural Preservation Committee chair with distributing milkweed seeds, learning about Monarch butterflies, and planting pollinator-friendly flowers in our garden.**

## 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 (2025) with some categories or details about the types of anticipated 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 balance of at least 3 months of operating costs. We have attached our budget for 2025 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. A budget template is available for your use on the Learning Center under Finance > Budgeting, if desired, but it is NOT required that you use it). Attach budget***

13. What is the total amount of income you made for the past year (July – June) from rentals, fundraisers, grants, and other sources? **\$47,269.63**

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:

**CHURCH: \$10,400**

**OTHER RENTALS:\$1,125**

**TOTAL: \$11,525**

- b) from grants including any from WNC Communities: **\$28,048 + \$5,000 FOR BRCO BUT FACILITATED BY HAYWOOD CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES**

- c) from fundraising: **\$1,217.38**

- d) from other sources: **\$6,479.25**

- e) If you answered that you had other sources of income above, please describe briefly:

**DONATIONS:**

**CHURCHES: \$3,346.25**

**INDIVIDUALS: \$2,533**

**SALES: \$600**

**TOTAL: \$6,479.25**

15. What grants have you received in the past year (July 2024 - June 2025)? 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)

**FARMS AND PANTRY COUPON PROGRAM**

HAYWOOD COUNTY FARM BUREAU - \$2,000

HAYWOOD EMC - \$500

**FACILITY UPGRADES**

CANNON FOUNDATION - \$11,398

**PANTRY**

FOUNDATION OF THE CAROLINAS – \$3,000

HAYWOOD CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES - \$100

MANNA FOOD BANK - \$2,000

MANNA LOCAL FOOD PURCHASE ASSISTANCE - \$5,000 (FUNDS FACILITATED TO BRCO THROUGH HAYWOOD CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES)

**GENERAL**

HAYWOOD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS - \$2,000

HAYWOOD COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (HCCDC) - \$50

WNC COMMUNITIES - \$7,000

**TOTAL: \$28,048 PLUS \$5,000 FOR BRCO PANTRY BUT FACILITATED BY HAYWOOD CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES**

**We have already shared information during the March 4, 2025, Coffee Hour about the Cannon Foundation and Foundation for the Carolinas (Food Lion) grants.**

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)

We partnered with the owner of the Juke Box Junction Restaurant, a popular eating establishment in Bethel. The owner agreed to host a Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser to benefit BRCO. The dinner included spaghetti, salad, garlic bread, beverage, and one scoop of ice cream for a cost of \$12 plus tax with take-outs available. His restaurant is normally closed on Mondays, and he said we could hold the dinner on a Monday evening. He and his staff helped to prepare the food and take in the money. A dozen BRCO volunteers helped with serving the food and also preparing the take-out dinners.

The Spaghetti Dinner was announced in the local newspaper, in a free county-wide newspaper, in a free 4-county weekly publication, and also on Facebook and Next Door. The announcement explained that it was a fundraiser and that the proceeds from the dinner would be used to support BRCO programs including its benevolence fund, student scholarships, rural and historic preservation initiatives, educational programs, and community pantry.

A huge crowd showed up, and all of the dinners were sold within an hour and a half. The total income was around \$1500, and BRCO netted more than \$1200 after the owner's food and beverage expenses were covered. The restaurant benefitted because it received a lot of publicity and attracted quite a few new customers, as a number of them were from outside Haywood County and had never eaten at the restaurant before. It was also a great opportunity for the community to come together for a good cause. Many of the people who showed up that evening were delighted to run into old friends at the restaurant. Handouts on BRCO programs and activities were distributed, and BRCO volunteers answered customers' questions about BRCO. BRCO Officers and Board members received many positive comments from the community in the days following the Dinner.

A representative from BRCO would be happy to share our spaghetti dinner fundraising experience on a WNC Communities Coffee Hour.

### **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

17. Please enter your total number of volunteers for this year (July 2024 - June 2025): **46**

18. Total volunteer hours for the year:

**Board: 99**

**General Membership: 373**

**Individuals and Committees: 2831**

**TOTAL: 3,303**

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.): **34**

20. Total youth volunteers under the age of 22: **15 (CP-3; RP-12)**

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. **Yes**  
**We recognize volunteers at general meetings, in our newsletter, on Facebook, and in articles in local media.**
- 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 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)

#### **Youth – Answered in question 11**

##### **BRCO Committee Chairs:**

**Beautification:** Carol Litchfield – oversees decorations/facility upgrades

**Benevolence:** Greg Christopher – facilitates all assistance requests

**Buildings & Grounds:** Gina Valeri – building/grounds maintenance and rentals

**Community Pantry:** Stephanie Quis-Garrett – oversees twice monthly food distribution (one via car; one shopping inside facility) to families-in-need

**Education:** Greg Christopher – oversees graduating student scholarship, Bethel Middle School Citizenship award, and Bethel Elementary STEM and English awards

**Historic Preservation:** Evelyn Coltman – oversees research/documentation/education of historic projects/programs

**Rural Preservation:** Carol Litchfield – oversees conservation/farm-related projects/education

**BRCO's committees provide the core mechanism for implementing 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 or officially co-hosted by your community center.** Note that in addition to being part of the judging, the ones you select will

appear on your Community Club Listing (your page) on the WNC Honors Learning Center website, showing as programs you offer.

## **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.

- Early childhood education **Yes**  
**Morning Star United Methodist Church's Early Childhood Summer Enrichment Program. Topic: "What is History and What is 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 Childhood Summer Enrichment Program**
- Literacy assistance
- Tutoring
- Higher education enrollment assistance
- Scholarships **Yes**  
**Reading and STEM competency awards for elementary students (\$50 each for 4 students)**  
**Citizenship Award for a Middle School student (\$50)**  
**Scholarship for a high school graduate (\$1,000)**
- Job skills training
- Workforce development courses
- Language classes
- Financial classes
- None of the above
- Other education access improvement programs: **Yes**  
**Bi-monthly meetings include a speaker whose topics are of interest to members.**  
**Community Pantry (CP) routinely hands out recipe cards that help with sustainability.**  
**Historic Preservation (HP) routinely researches topics relating to the history of local cemeteries, schools, camps, post offices, sites, and people.**  
**HP conducted early childhood education training about local history.**  
**HP presented a program to eighty Bethel Middle School eighth graders about local history.**  
**HP collected a historic art print.**  
**HP sells art prints, books, CDs, and DVDs that educate about local history.**

**HP worked on updating historic topics for the website which contains extensive data about local history, rural preservation, and community outreach programs.**

**Rural Preservation (RP) educated first and second graders about Monarch butterflies and ecology.**

**RP sponsors Buy Haywood's Agritourism Guide that educates about local farms and food businesses.**

**RP has available a DVD about local farm preservation programs.**

**BRCO's bimonthly newsletter has an extensive email outreach that educates about the projects of every BRCO committee.**

**BRCO publicizes accomplishments in two local media outlets that educate the public.**

**BRCO has an active Facebook that educates about organizational and local information.**

**BRCO maintains an email that enables visitors to the account to receive information from the organization and from our committees.**

### **23. Economic Stability**

These are programs that support economic stability in your community by providing people with greater access to income, housing, the 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 **Yes**  
**BRCO pays a local cleaning company who is also a CP client to clean the fellowship hall after food distribution.**
- 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.**  
**BRCO sponsors the Buy Haywood Agritourism Guide that features local farms, markets, restaurants, and other farm-related entities.**  
**BRCO attempts to utilize small local businesses as much as possible.**
- Farmers market **Yes**
- Artisan market
- Other entrepreneurial support **Yes**  
**Bethel businesses are promoted on our website.**  
**We use local contractors, when possible, on maintenance projects at our community center.**  
**BRCO hires a local cleaning service and lawn care service.**
- Daycare program

- Financial workshops
- Housing access support
- Internet access **Yes**
- Broadband coordination **Yes**
- Community garden
- Gardening classes
- None of the above
- Other programming that helps people gain economic stability: **Yes**

**BRCO's Benevolence Committee has assisted with donation for a family who lost everything in a fire.**

**Benevolence Committee assists with utilities needs when requested.**

**Benevolence supports indigent children with a Christmas fund for Bethel Elementary and Bethel Middle School.**

**Benevolence supports the Sheriff's Department's Christmas shopping with children that ensures these children will have a Merry Christmas.**

**BRCO's Community Pantry (CP) food program ensures food security so that families can spend money elsewhere.**

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

**BRCO coordinates with HCCDC to address Broadband issues.**

**BRCO coordinates with HCCDC and WNC Communities regarding Emergency Preparedness that facilitates recovery after natural disasters for local households and businesses.**

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

#### **24. Community Well-being**

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**  
**Ongoing preparation to produce BRCO's Historic Schools of Bethel video project**  
**Website information about historic topics**  
**Collection of historic art prints that are on display in our community center**

**Sale of art prints, books, CDs, and DVDs about Bethel history**

- Historic preservation **Yes**

**Beautification and Buildings & Grounds Committees oversee the upkeep of our historic facility**

**Provide upkeep of a historic watering hole**

- Festivals
- Dances
- Food pantry **Yes**
- Food deliveries **Yes**
- On-site meals for those in need
- Social meals **Yes**
- Thrift store
- Utilities assistance **Yes**
- Other bill assistance **Yes**
- Emergency shelter
- Disaster recovery **Yes**

**Funds for a family whose house burned**

- Art or culture classes **Yes**

**HP provided first and second graders with a summer historic program that focused on our historic art prints and our historic facility.**

**HP educated 80 Bethel Middle School students about local history.**

**RP provided first and second graders with a summer ecology program that focused on Monarch butterflies and other pollinators by distributing Milkweed seeds and planting flowers**

**BRCO presented a program about the Pigeon Valley Award for Historic Preservation**

- Speaker series **Yes**

**Mountain Research Station Superintendent educated about local agricultural research.**

**Local videographer updated us about the status of our *Historic Schools of Bethel* video project**

**Lake Logan Conference Center educated membership about the offerings that the nearby facility provides during the year as well as summer camp and school.**

**Haywood County Emergency Services educated members about data relating to Hurricane Helene as well as ongoing emergency services.**

**Haywood Waterways taught members about the benefit of the organization's programs and projects.**

**Members learned from a WCU professor about his endeavors to locate remains in Native American, slave, and other cemeteries.**

- Candidate forum
- Veteran appreciation
- Programs that promote cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and inclusiveness **Yes**

**Program by Blair Tormey about locating remains from Native American and slave cemeteries**

- Programs that bring elders together with youth to foster cross-generational appreciation **Yes**

**HP members educated first and second graders about local history.**

**HP taught Bethel Middle School students about local history.**

**RP members taught first and second graders about Monarch butterflies and other pollinators, planting flowers, and ecology.**

- None of the above
- Other programs to support community well-being:

**Benevolence donated \$500 to the Christmas fund for children in need at Bethel Elementary and \$500 to Bethel Middle School.**

**Benevolence donated \$350 to the Sheriff's Department's Christmas shopping with children event.**

**Benevolence donated \$2,000 to a local family who lost everything in a fire**

**CP's food programs support food security.**

**RP's coupon program benefits pantry participants and local farms.**

**RP sponsors Buy Haywood's outreach to the community that supports local farms and food-related businesses.**

**Rentals allow us to support a local congregation as well as those needing space for events.**

**Speakers at our meetings promote awareness of the availability of local services.**

## **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 community**:

- Trash pickup
- Beautification **Yes**

**Upkeep and restoration of the historic facility that is our community center**

**Pigeon Gap Watering Hole maintenance**

**Water garden upkeep**

**Circle garden upkeep**

- Recycling project
- Energy conservation program
- Reducing water use
- Weatherization assistance
- Renewable energy education
- Wildlife habitat **Yes**

**Pigeon Gap Watering Hole provides habitat for local wildlife.**

**Water and Circle Gardens at our facility provide pollinator habitat.**

**RP Chair oversees maintenance of the Heritage Garden for Monarch butterflies at the Museum of NC Handicrafts at Shelton House**

- Cleaning or protecting a creek **Yes**

**Pigeon Gap Watering Hole – BRCO protects and maintains**

- Removing invasives

- Conservation easement **Yes**

**BRCO has 543 acres in permanent easement as well as protection for river and stream frontage (3.8 miles are under protective agreements).**

- Farm preservation **Yes**

**RP coupon program encourages those in need to purchase local produce from local farms and stands, a project that helps with the viability of local farms.**

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

**RP sponsors Buy Haywood initiatives that support local farm products, events, and activities in the Agritourism Guide that is distributed countywide and online.**

**RP has available a DVD that promotes farm and rural stewardship.**

- Stormwater management
- None of the above
- Other environmental stewardship programs: **Yes**

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

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

**Oversight over historic Osborne Boundary Oak**

**Mountain Research Station Superintendent educated about local farmers protecting water quality.**

**Program about restoration and management after Helene at a BRCO meeting**

**Program about Haywood Waterways projects involving water, river, and stream front protection at a BRCO meeting**

**Program about conservation of Native American, slave, and other historic graves at a BRCO meeting**

## 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 **Yes**

**Local produce via our food coupon program**

**Local produce via the LFPA program**

**MANNA recipe cards**

- 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
- Other healthcare access programs:

**Haywood County Health and Human Services Agency provides an updated Food Security Guide to CP participants.**

**CP partners with MANNA and Haywood Christian Ministries to secure canned, frozen, and fresh food.**

**CP provides All Souls Counseling Center handout information for mental wellbeing**

**CP provides healthy recipe cards from MANNA.**

**CP partners with Haywood County Gleaners to secure fresh produce for the pantry.**

**CP secures grants that extend our capacity for providing healthy staples and produce.**

**RP partners with local farms with our food pantry coupon project that provides fresh produce for CP participants.**

**RP partners with Buy Haywood 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 **Yes**
- D) Within the last 2 years

### **Strategic Plan Update**

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

**CP participants**

**HCCDC Broadband survey**

**Renters (survey for feedback)**

**Farmers and produce stands (survey for feedback)**

**Bethel history advocates (communicate routinely with committee members and community members to develop research priorities)**

### **28. Program(s) Narrative**

**Please describe 1–3 programs (from those checked above) that show your club's positive impact or represent a best practice others could replicate. For each program, include:**

- Your club's role (planning, leading, supporting, etc.)
- How your volunteers or resources were involved
- Who was impacted and how
- Any partner agencies
- Why you're proud of the program

Reminder: To maintain or advance your Honors Level (Trillium, Mountain Laurel, etc.), you must submit new narratives each year. You can talk about the same programs with updated information, just please do not reuse past submissions. White Oak level only: Also, briefly share what you learned from evaluating one of your programs. *(Limit: 1500 words)*

**BRCO's Historic Preservation (HP) Committee has made a concerted effort to reach out to the youth in our community to ensure that, along with the state and national history curriculum relayed by Social Studies teachers, these students would also be exposed to Haywood County and Bethel history – a focus not evident in state education planning. Outreach included first and second grade students in a summer enrichment program as well as Bethel Middle School eighth graders in their final year at Bethel.**

**1.**

**Keeping a group of first and second graders entertained in the midst of summer during an enrichment program designed to focus on local history and ecology can be challenging. In anticipation of creating positive lessons for the children, five members of the HP Committee ensured that pupils would gain insight into understanding not only their past but also of their current world and how they can impact it in a constructive way. An introductory lesson on the meaning of “history” enabled students to comprehend that history is any thing, event, or idea that came before. Our thirty-one-art print collection of historic sites in Bethel that hangs in our fellowship hall allowed us an opportunity to create a fun puzzle game for the students. We divided the students into three groups. Each group looked at small pictures that contained segments from our larger art prints. They proceeded to tour the room to locate the appropriate art print that matched their small picture. HP members then relayed a speech about each picture and its importance in Bethel’s past. Students also toured the 1885 Bethel Presbyterian Church sanctuary that is a part of BRCO’s community center.**

**The second part of the presentation focused on “ecology.” Students learned about milkweed, Monarch butterflies, extinction, and preservation. The highlight of the day was when each student participated in dispersing milkweed seeds and planting flowers in front of our facility. Students left feeling happy, not only about their accomplishments, but also with their take-home bag of art supplies and seed packets. HP Committee members felt a sense of accomplishment that they had played a positive role in directing young minds to an appreciation of planet earth and how they can play a positive role in preserving its ecology and history.**

**2.**

**In respect to middle school students and in anticipation of the America 250 celebration that recognizes our country’s founding, BRCO’s goal was to concentrate on our country’s origin story framed by a local perspective that included the story of an animal that left a local ecological legacy, Native Americans that preceded the formation of our country, the Rutherford Trace March that initiated the Revolutionary War effort in our area, local ancestors’ participation in that march that enabled their return to settle our community, and the religious heritage that created BRCO’s historic community center. We coordinated with the principal and four eighth grade teachers at Bethel Middle School so that eighty students were allowed to walk from the school to our community center for a lesson in local history. HP Committee members researched, wrote, and presented speeches that included a discussion about the role the passenger pigeon, before its 1914 extinction, played in the community’s ecology. Outlined were the three Native American cultures of Cherokee ancestors in the area as well as four documented archaeological excavations at Bethel’s Garden Creek site from 1880-2011. The Revolutionary War, locally, had its beginnings with the Rutherford Trace March in 1776 when soldiers marched by the location of the school and the community center on their westward journey. Names of settlers from that march**

allowed students to indicate if they shared a history with these early families to the area. Since BRCO's community center is the historic Bethel Presbyterian Church, the HP Committee shared a history of the church and its role in Bethel's religious and educational legacy. A tour of the sanctuary where students learned about the architecture of the 1885 structure allowed students time to meditate on the significant role of religion among early settlers as well as their building skills that contributed to Bethel's architectural history. A final discussion of the history behind BRCO's collection of thirty-one historic art prints displayed on community center walls enabled the committee to relay details about local churches, houses, schools, structures, natural features, people, and ideas.

Information utilized in writing the speeches included details outlined in the local America 250 project that includes oversight by Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society located in the Shook-Smathers House, DAR, and SAR. Five members of BRCO's Historic Preservation Committee participated in the program. We were fortunate that one of our own historic DVDs recorded in 2010 contained a recording by a local expert about the route of the Rutherford Trace March. This BRCO DVD recording is, in fact, being used by other groups throughout the region since it is the best available encapsulation of the direction and implications of the Rutherford Trace March.

#### **EVALUATION – BETHEL MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM**

Throughout the presentation, we came to realize that these students were learning details about their own local history of which they were completely unaware. They did not know about the passenger pigeon – even though the “Pigeon River” meanders through our community, “Pigeon Gap” defines the perimeter, and “Pigeon Valley” is the community's alternate name. Some students were familiar with the Garden Creek mound but had no comprehension about the implications of Native American heritage of the area. They were unaware of the important role the Rutherford Trace March played in the nation's development, and they did not have a clue about its significance regarding the settlement of their own community. Some, until that day, were unaware that their ancestors were the first settlers in the community. They were enthusiastic about raising their hands when we called out the names of early settlers with whom they shared a familial name. They sat reverently to learn about the construction of the lovely sanctuary that is a significant part of BRCO's community center. Finally, many were able to make connections to historic sites revealed in our art print collection. One student relayed that he recognized one of our paintings as being the same one that is in his grandmother's living room. Until our program, however, he was unaware that it was the church that his ancestors had founded and attended in the early 1900s.

The committee realized that we had made a positive impact when people, unsolicited, later reported back to us about the success of our presentation. One grandmother called to tell us

how much she appreciated our program because her granddaughter, who does not ever comment about anything she has learned at school, came home enthusiastically relaying details about what she had learned via our presentation. The student was especially proud to hear that her family was among the early settlers. Another lady stopped a committee member in town, walked across the street, and relayed that she had read about our program in the local newspaper, and she wanted us to know what a wonderful concept it was for us to teach about the history of our own community. She said, "These pupils will really benefit from learning about where they came from."

Prior to the program, our members felt uneasy because one had previously taught middle school children and had expressed to us how unruly these students can be. We had anticipated how to handle students who might create a "scene" during the midst of our presentation. None of that was required since these middle schoolers seemed to be enthralled with our instruction, and they behaved like perfect students who were inquisitive but respectful, interested but appropriately subdued. We praised their teachers for bringing us such well-mannered students, and the teachers praised us afterward for our preparation of a topic of interest that they would not have received if we had not made the effort to create this class.

Assessment of the program enabled our HP Committee to realize that we had accomplished three things for these students and their teachers:

- Ensured an awareness of and interest in the importance of their own local history
- Developed an appreciation for the fact that their own heritage played an important role locally, regionally, and nationally in our country's origin
- Created a day of rest for the teachers who, admittedly, learned a great deal themselves about local history

BRCO's Strategic Plan includes our intention to connect our local history with the greater countywide efforts to research and educate about our heritage in connection with the national America 250 efforts to celebrate our nation's founding. With our Bethel Middle School eighth grade collaboration, we initiated that goal while simultaneously creating a sense of pride in students regarding their local history as well as that of the nation. That accomplishment allowed us to linger after the program and praise ourselves because we felt really good, not only about our program, but we were also proud that students and teachers really enjoyed and appreciated the lesson.

## 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  
Donated Christmas funds for children in need**

**Bethel Middle – Granted monetary award for Good Citizenship  
Donated Christmas funds for children in need  
Partnered with eighth grade students in a program where the students learned about local history**

**Pisgah High – Granted \$1,000 scholarship**

**Home Schoolers – Three homeschoolers worked with our CP to distribute food.**

**SOAR – filmed a segment with a teacher at this historic school that originated in Bethel.**

**Former Lake Logan Academy (Summit Academy) – Located the building where this private boarding school existed and filmed a session for our Historic Schools video project**

- Churches **Yes**

**Bible Believers Baptist – Rental**

**Crestview Baptist – Donor to CP**

**Encouraging Word Baptist – Donor to C P**

**Morning Star United Methodist – Partnered with Our HP and RP Committees to teach first and second graders in their summer enrichment program about local history and ecology**

**Riverside Baptist – Donor to CP**

**Pastor gave a speech at our Pigeon Valley Citizens for Historic Preservation Award ceremony**

- Farms. Please list: **Yes**

**Chambers Farm**

**Christopher Farms**

**Leatherwood Family Farm**

**Lenoir's Creek Cattle Farm**

**Sloan's Plant Farm**

**Ten Acre Garden**

- Local Businesses. Please list:

**Arrowwood Installation**

**C & K Lawn Care**

**Canton Insurance Agency**

**Clay Sullivan Repair and Maintenance**

**Doug Chambers Productions**

Duke Energy  
Food Lion  
Fresh Start Flooring  
Go Grocery  
Haywood Builders  
Haywood EMC  
Home Trust Bank  
Janet Ross Cleaning Service  
Johnson Appliance  
Jukebox Junction  
Linton's Gas Piping  
Little Debbie  
M & T Lawn Care  
*Mountaineer*  
Owl Market  
Print Haus  
*Positively Haywood*  
Riverview Farm Supply  
Safeguard Business Supplies  
SavMore  
*Smoky Mountain News*  
Spectrum  
Stephenson's Pest Control  
Tech Soup  
US Liability Insurance  
Village Framer  
Villazon Plumbing  
Wal Mart

- Police/Sheriff Department **Yes**  
**BRCO contributed to the Christmas shopping for children program**
- Fire Department
- Council on Aging
- MANNA Food Bank **Yes**  
**Primary delivery of food for CP program**  
**CP Committee distributes MANNA's recipe cards to participants**
- Goodwill
- Community college or university **Yes**  
**BRCO partnered with HCC in promoting the Digital Navigator program to get the word out that community training sessions can be held in our community center.**
- Chamber of Commerce

- **Tourism Development Authority Yes**  
**Partner with TDA on the Haywood County Quilt Trail**
- **City/County government Yes**  
**Haywood County Government provides grant funding - \$2,000**  
**Haywood County Commissioner – HP coordinated with Kevin Ensley to discuss the County Home Cemetery**
- **Health and Human Services Yes**  
**Food Security Guide – CP hands out to pantry participants**  
**All Souls Counseling Center – hand out brochure**
- **Boys Club or Girls Club**
- **Boy or Girl Scouts**
- **4-H**
- **County Cooperative Extension Yes**  
**The farm agent spoke at our meeting about agricultural projects at the Test Farm.**  
**Members attended meetings for HCCDC at the Extension Department**
- **County Emergency Management Yes**  
**An agent had a program at our meeting**  
**HCCDC clubs agreed to participate in emergency management planning as a focus.**  
**BRCO agreed to furnish signage in cooperation with emergency management that allows a location for emergency updates at our facility.**  
**WNC Communities – participate in Emergency Services regional planning**
- **Other community clubs or other organizations - please list: Yes**  
**All Souls Counseling Center**  
**America 250**  
**Beaverdam Community Club**  
**Blue Ridge National Heritage Area’s Heritage Trail**  
**Buy Haywood**  
**Canton Area Historical Museum**  
**Cruso Community Club**  
**Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)**  
**Fines Creek Community Club**  
**Food Lion’s Foundation of the Carolinas**  
**Haywood Advancement Foundation**  
**Haywood Christian Ministries**  
**Haywood County Community Development Council (HCCDC)**  
**Haywood County Fraternal Order of Police**  
**Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society**  
**Haywood County Interagency Council**  
**Haywood Gleaners**  
**Haywood Waterways**  
**Museum of NC Handicrafts at Shelton House**

**NC Department of Archaeology  
NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources  
North Hominy Community Club  
Pigeon Community Multicultural Center  
Pioneer Heritage Festival  
Preservation NC  
Saunook Community Club  
Sons of the American Revolution (SAR)  
WNC Communities**

### **30. Collaboration Narrative**

Please describe one collaboration (from those listed above) that you feel was especially strong or a best practice. What made it effective? What impact did it have, and what did you learn? If others could benefit from this example, let us know if someone from your community is willing to share at a future WNCC Coffee Hour. This should be a different initiative than those in your Program Narratives, OR a deeper look at the collaborative aspects of one of the initiatives you already described. White Oak only: Please describe how you helped another WNC Communities member develop a program or build capacity. (Limit: 400 words)

**BRCO's most significant collaboration was with Allison Richmond, Haywood County Emergency Services Public Information Officer, and the Community Clubs that comprise the Haywood County Community Development Council (HCCDC). We collaborated together in establishing emergency preparedness procedures by which the Community Clubs could quickly and efficiently respond to community needs before, during, and after an emergency. This collaboration proved effective because we shared and benefitted from the lessons we had learned during and after Helene.**

The Haywood County web site ReadyHaywood.com was established to convey information on how to be prepared and how to respond when an emergency occurs. Richmond urged community club representatives to contact her directly if they had suggestions or issues that needed to be addressed. She e-mailed a Ready Haywood newsletter to the Community Clubs that BRCO forwarded to Bethel residents through its BRCO contact list.

**BRCO took the lead in this emergency preparedness initiative by having Richmond present a program at the BRCO general membership meeting in January. As a result of that meeting, BRCO members endorsed the following approaches suggested by Richmond:**

- **An information board or kiosk would be installed in front of the community center that Richmond would supply with up-to-date information during and after an emergency.**
- **The link to "Ready Haywood" would be added to the community club web site.**

- If the county obtains hand-crank radios, the radios would be handed out through the community center.
- The community club would let Richmond know if their community center could serve as a point of distribution and what types of services would be easiest to offer at that location.

BRCO was the first community club to agree to install an information board/kiosk and was the first to respond to the survey that Richmond sent out which asked in what capacity each community club was able to serve during and after an emergency.

The BRCO President also participated in Zoom meetings that resulted in the WNC Communities Emergency Readiness Network (ERN) being established. She conveyed information about the Ready Haywood initiative to ensure that the Haywood County initiative and the ERN regional initiative could function in support of each other. The Haywood County example presented by BRCO helped the other community clubs in the ERN to understand the best approach for working with their county's Emergency Services team in order to build capacity for emergency preparedness at the local level.

(Have shared in ERN Zoom meeting)

## PHOTOS

### 31. Upload up to 4 current, high-quality photos that highlight your accomplishments.

Label each file clearly and briefly describe each image below. Accepted formats: JPEG, JPG, or PDF.

1. Bethel Middle School eighth grade students at history program
2. Doug Chambers Pigeon Valley Award ceremony
3. Morning Star children's summer education program
4. BRCO Community Center with Circle Garden in front

By submitting, you give WNC Communities permission to use these photos in publications, websites, and presentations without compensation. **Note:** File size must be **20MB or less**. Please compress if needed.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT & FUTURE PLANS

WNC Communities wants to support your club's growth and effectiveness. This self-assessment helps us understand your challenges and goals so we can the tailor support, training, and grant opportunities we offer. **Your answers won't be scored, so please be candid.**

32. How many new officers began serving in the past year (not counting anyone who served as an officer in the previous 3 years and who is now coming back to serve)? Enter a number: **1 - Our Treasurer changed.**

33. How many new board members have joined over the past year? Enter a number: **0**  
**Our board chair changed, though he was already a member of the board.**
34. How many of your current board members are also chairing a committee? Enter a number: **1** - **Our President also chairs two committees.**
35. Briefly, what's working especially well on your board?  
**Board members are committed to regular attendance at board and general meetings. If they commit to doing something, they follow through. Board meetings run smoothly, and a great deal is accomplished because of pre-planning and a thorough agenda sent to members prior to the meeting. All board members actively participate in various committee activities.**
36. What internal challenges is your board currently facing? Check all that apply.  
 (Reminder: this is not scored)
- A) Long-serving board members are tired or burned out
  - B) One strong leader carries too much; things may fall apart without them **Yes**
  - C) Some officers miss meetings regularly
  - D) Some board members don't contribute outside of meetings
  - E) 1 - 3 members do over 60% of all the work to run the club and its programs
  - F) Some members don't follow through on commitments; our progress is hindered
  - G) Officers rarely rotate out; no fresh leadership every 2–4 years **Yes**
  - H) Few or no efforts to recruit new board members
  - I) We have no officer role descriptions and/or no onboarding training for officers
  - J) Current or potential future officers lack needed skills to run our organization
  - K) Our regular meetings consistently run 2 hours long or more
  - L) We need to refresh our mission or goals to revitalize us/ our meetings
  - M) Other challenges: (Please specify) **Yes**  
**Need more members who are willing to assume board or officer responsibilities**
37. What are your top board improvement goals for the coming year?  
**BRCO's goal is to have a means by which we can replace board members and officers with people who are ready, willing, and able to do it.**
38. What specific support, programs, and/or services would you like WNC Communities to provide your club that would help you to better serve your community? Please select **the top 3 – 5 services or trainings** that you feel would *most benefit your organization in the coming year* and/or describe anything else not listed that you feel you need:
- How to recruit more people for your board **Yes**
  - Board roles and responsibilities
  - Leadership: how to build trust
  - Leadership: how to build accountability
  - Communicating effectively and handling conflict (Non-violent Communication)
  - How to run a great meeting that accomplishes a lot in a shorter time

- How to create a budget
- Board fiduciary responsibilities and how to put financial controls in place
- Digital skills to help your organization collaborate better, such as how to use Zoom, Google Workspace, and/or email effectively
- How to recruit more volunteers for specific roles **Yes**
- Convening community centers in your county to discuss issues such as emergency readiness, relationships with the county, to get some specific training, or just to get to know each other
- Emergency readiness and food system resilience
- Setting SMART Goals
- Action planning with your community, involving 8 hours of meeting time (open to aspiring Redbud and above only)
- Strategic planning involving a deep exploration of 16 hours or more over a few months (open to Redbud and White Oak only)
- Writing grants
- None of the above
- Other (please specify): **Yes**

**How to find candidates who have the skills needed to serve as Treasurer**

39. **How is your community center doing in its recovery from Helene, and what current needs should we know about for possible future support?**

**BRCO was not directly affected by Helene, though some of our members were.**

**BRCO is coordinating with Haywood's Emergency Readiness program to install signage in front of our facility that would be synchronized with the Haywood Emergency Readiness coordinator to facilitate a notification system for people in our community in the event of another natural disaster.**

If Helene didn't impact your community, please share your interest in joining WNC Communities' Emergency Readiness Network or receiving emergency preparedness training.

**Haywood County's joint group of the seven community clubs (HCCDC) has chosen to focus on Emergency Readiness training, coordination, and support.**

**In addition, BRCO President has attended WNC Communities Emergency Readiness Network online meetings to tie our efforts into the greater WNC preparedness program. Our President's knowledge gleaned from both groups can be relayed back to any of the six other local community clubs and simultaneously to any of the clubs in the WNC Communities regional group.**

40. Briefly, how will you invest the Award funds, which will most likely be at least \$1000? (Limit: 200 words)

BRCO has completed major upgrades to our facility, thanks to Cannon Foundation and Community Foundation of WNC grants. However, smaller beautification projects that may not be covered by a grant would benefit from WNC Communities' award funding. Improvements to window valences throughout the facility would modernize the appearance and make the building more attractive to renters. The addition of modern chairs instead of battered folding chairs in our dining hall would also improve the building's appearance.

While most of the building received paint, two exterior doors did not; painting them would complete our exterior painting.

We have installed new flooring throughout the facility – except for one classroom, and we could complete the flooring with this funding. Resurfacing the flooring in the historic sanctuary would also improve its appearance.

Our 1885 sanctuary contains historically appropriate antique lighting furnishings – except for two mid-century modern fixtures that are inappropriate for the setting. The sanctuary's lovely lighted stained glass pulpit fixture needs electrical upgrades so that the lighting comes on immediately instead of the several minute delay that currently occurs.

The kitchen needs renovation, but that project would require another large grant. The WNC Communities' funding would address minor improvements to enhance BRCO's facility.

### SPECIAL AWARDS

(Optional) Only communities wishing to be considered for recognition for specific initiatives need to answer these questions. **Note that the Youth Leadership Award has changed to the Youth *Volunteer* Award and now includes a cash prize, as does the Impact Award.**

#### **Calico Cat Award (Optional)**

Describe any improvements made to your community building or space between July 2024–June 2025. Include updates that made it more usable for events, your community, business incubation, or for energy/water efficiency. Estimate the square feet (or linear feet for wiring) improved, who did the work (volunteers or contractors), and how it was funded. You may attach up to 2 photos. *(Limit: 500 words)*

#### **Youth Volunteer Award (Optional) - NEW in 2025**

Share a compelling story of youth volunteerism at your community center that could inspire others. Who was involved? What did they do? What impact did it have on your center or the people you serve? What made their service stand out? Approximately how many hours did they volunteer? You may attach up to 2 photos. *(Limit: 500 words)*

**This new award replaces the previous Youth Leadership Award** and encourages youth to develop leadership by deciding upon and managing a real project at your community center.

**Prize:**

- \$1,000 to fund a project at your community center of the youth's choice (with board approval)
- \$250 "Party Purse" for the center to celebrate the winning youth(s)

Ideas for using the Party Purse include gift cards, an educational or recreational outing, a celebration, or a leadership program for the winning youth(s). The \$1,000 and \$250 must be used by **August 30, 2026**. Winners will present their project, its impact, and how they were celebrated at the **2025 WNC Honors Awards on November 15, 2025**.

**WNC Communities Impact Award (Optional)**

Describe a project your club led this past year that made a measurable, lasting difference in your community. This should be a project that empowered others that your club originated, organized, and staffed with volunteers. Some examples include expanding healthcare access, helping people gain job skills and employment, or supporting local entrepreneurs with space and services. Explain how the effort empowered others or improved their lives, how you measured impact, and the outcomes achieved. Include future plans if relevant. You may highlight a project already mentioned in a previous narrative, just include the requested detail. Attach up to 2 high-quality photos. (Limit: 500 words)

**Note:** The 2025 award is \$3,000. Past winners must wait three years after their award to apply again but may include work done during that time.

**The deadline to submit your application is:  
August 6, 2025 by 11:59 pm.**

Thank you for all you do to strengthen your community!