STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GRANTS COMMITTEE

Presented by

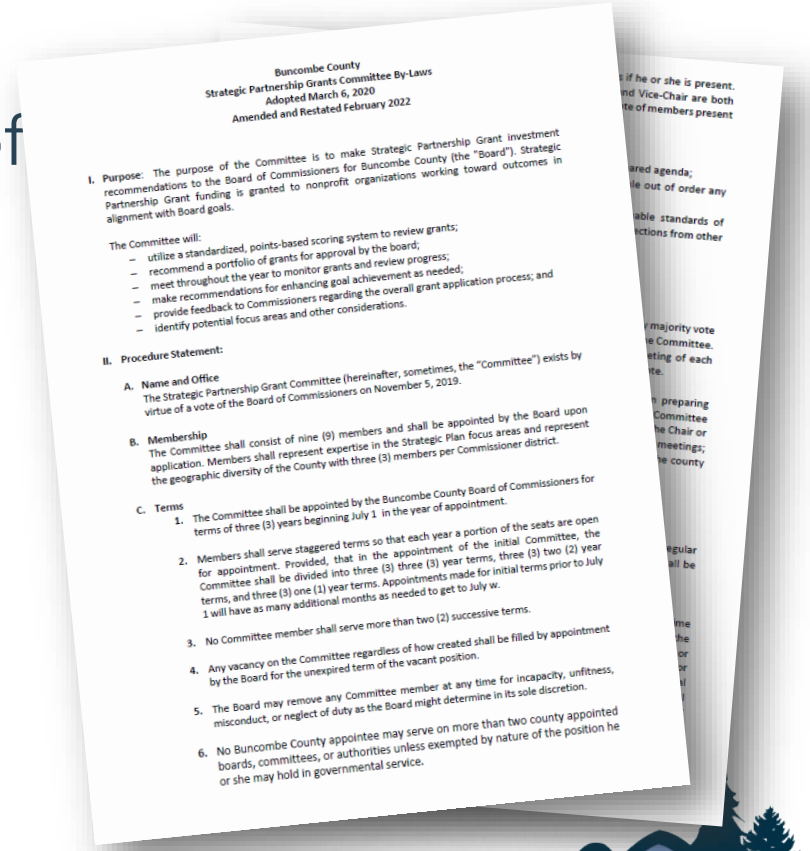
Ray Hemachandra and Charlie Beck

August 18, 2026

COMMITTEE

Per the By-Laws, the committee consists of nine (9) members, who:

- Apply for membership through the Office of the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners;
- Are appointed by the Board of Commissioners;
- Serve three (3) year staggered terms;
- Represent expertise in the Strategic Plan focus areas;
- Represent the geographic diversity of the County;
- Abide by conflict of interest policies



Buncombe County
Strategic Partnership Grants Committee By-Laws
Adopted March 6, 2020
Amended and Restated February 2022

I. Purpose: The purpose of the Committee is to make Strategic Partnership Grant investment recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for Buncombe County (the "Board"). Strategic Partnership Grant funding is granted to nonprofit organizations working toward outcomes in alignment with Board goals.

The Committee will:
- utilize a standardized, points-based scoring system to review grants;
- recommend a portfolio of grants for approval by the board;
- meet throughout the year to monitor grants and review progress;
- make recommendations for enhancing goal achievement as needed;
- provide feedback to Commissioners regarding the overall grant application process; and
- identify potential focus areas and other considerations.

II. Procedure Statement:

A. Name and Office
The Strategic Partnership Grant Committee (hereinafter, sometimes, the "Committee") exists by virtue of a vote of the Board of Commissioners on November 5, 2019.

B. Membership
The Committee shall consist of nine (9) members and shall be appointed by the Board upon application. Members shall represent expertise in the Strategic Plan focus areas and represent the geographic diversity of the County with three (3) members per Commissioner district.

C. Terms
1. The Committee shall be appointed by the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners for terms of three (3) years beginning July 1 in the year of appointment.
2. Members shall serve staggered terms so that each year a portion of the seats are open for appointment. Provided, that in the appointment of the initial Committee, the Committee shall be divided into three (3) three (3) year terms, three (3) two (2) year terms, and three (3) one (1) year terms. Appointments made for initial terms prior to July 1 will have as many additional months as needed to get to July w.
3. No Committee member shall serve more than two (2) successive terms.
4. Any vacancy on the Committee regardless of how created shall be filled by appointment by the Board for the unexpired term of the vacant position.
5. The Board may remove any Committee member at any time for incapacity, unfitness, misconduct, or neglect of duty as the Board might determine in its sole discretion.
6. No Buncombe County appointee may serve on more than two county appointed boards, committees, or authorities unless exempted by nature of the position he or she may hold in governmental service.

MEMBERS

Ray Hemachandra, Chair
Ann Flynn, Vice-Chair
Bing Owens
Charlie Beck
Dede Styles
Mark Mickey
Vacant (3)

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GRANTS







Funding granted to nonprofit organizations working toward outcomes in alignment with Buncombe County's strategic plan:

Promoting a healthy, safe, well-educated and thriving community with a sustainable quality of life

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

- $1,000,000 total budget, up to $85,000 per grant
- Funded projects must align with strategic objectives from County Strategic Plan
- Priority for projects that contribute to recovery from Tropical Storm Helene
- Applicants must be a nonprofit organization that operates in Buncombe County and serves its residents (fiscal sponsorship allowed)
- One application per organization (unless serving as fiscal sponsor)
- No duplication with other Buncombe County investment programs

FY2027 GRANT TIMELINE

January 5, 2026	Grant application opened
January 13, 2026	Grant writing workshop
January – February 2026	Grant consultations with applicants
February 20, 2026	Application deadline, 5:00pm
February – April 2026	Grant review by committee
May 2026	Committee funding recommendations published with County Manager's budget message
June 2026	Grant awards approved during County budget adoption
July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	Grant funding year

REVIEW PROCESS

- Applications were reviewed by the Strategic Partnership Grants Committee utilizing a standardized, points-based system:
  - Strategic Alignment
  - Helene Recovery
  - Project Plan
  - Proposed Results
  - Capacity
  - Access to Services
  - Budget
- Reviews were conducted independently by members of the committee, and award amount determinations occurred during committee meetings.

APPLICATIONS & AWARDS

76 Applications Received
Totaling **$4.65 M**

16 Projects Funded
Totaling **$1 M**

Balanced Allocation
21.0% of submissions approved covering 21.5% of dollars requested

AWARDS BY FOCUS AREA

	Energy and Environment	Public Safety	Community Health	Education	Economic Development
Requested	9 projects 9.8% of requested funds	9 projects 15.8% of requested funds	38 projects 45.7% of requested funds	11 projects 14.9% of requested funds	9 projects 13.8% of requested funds
Funded	4 projects 18.79% of awarded funds	2 projects 14.43% of awarded funds	7 projects 46.8% of awarded funds	1 project 3% of awarded funds	2 projects 17% of awarded funds

FY2027 AWARDS (1-8)

Organization	Project	Amount
Appalachian Mountain Community Health Centers	The Appalachian Mountain Health Mobile Behavioral Health Clinic Van Upfit	$53,378
Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project	Buncombe Farm Preservation and Food System Redevelopment Project	$84,975
Asheville GreenWorks	Buncombe County Cleanups	$38,000
Asheville Poverty Initiative	12 Baskets Cafe and Community Services	$85,000
Babies Need Bottoms	Tiny Humans, Big Needs: Essential Hygiene and Feeding Support for Buncombe's Smallest Residents	$62,600
Bounty & Soul	Advancing Long-Term Recovery by Creating Food & Health Equity in Post-Helene Food Deserts	$85,000
Carolina Day School	Horizons at Carolina Day Summer Enrichment Academy	$29,891
Food Connection	Helene Recovery Prepared Meals & Food Rescue — Buncombe County	$60,000

FY2027 AWARDS (9-16)

Organization	Project	Amount
Full Circle Forestry Collective	Hazards to Heat: Transforming woody debris from Hurricane Helene into Free firewood	$84,274
Leicester Community Center	Building a Better Leicester	$22,000
MANNA FoodBank	Rooted in the Southside: MANNA's Neighborhood Food Access Intervention	$85,000
Pisgah Legal Services	Civil Legal Services for Buncombe County residents	$85,000
RiverLink	A Lasting Legacy: Post-Helene Land and Water Restoration for Climate Resilience in Buncombe County	$54,882
The Blessing Project, Inc	Swannanoa Hurricane Helene Recovery Program	$75,000
W4H Asheville dba Working Wheels	Discounted Vehicle Repairs for Buncombe County Families Impacted by Helene	$85,000
WNC Grows	Swannanoa Streambank and Community Greenspace Restoration Project	$10,000

PROGRAM IMPACTS ANTICIPATED

- 150 behavioral health patients served with mobile health
- 140 farms supported with business outreach
- 205,000 pounds of fresh produce distributed
- 36 households receiving discounted vehicle repairs
- 30,000 diapers distributed
- 130 students served with summer camp
- 50 cords of firewood collected, processed and distributed
- 500 volunteers engaged in litter clean up events
- 750 feet of streambank restored

HELENE RECOVERY IMPACTS ANTICIPATED

- Improving food systems and increasing food access
- Distributing basic need items to residents impacted by Helene
- Turning storm impacted trees into firewood distributed at no cost through community partners
- Restoration of lands and waterways, reducing impact of future storms

NEXT STEPS

- Fill committee vacancies
- Review project performance reports as published online quarterly
- Host Fall Grantee Gathering
- Plan for next grant cycle

Thank You





