



STAFF REPORT

Agenda Title: Community Partnership Grant Applications

Staff Contact: Shannon Tuch, Town Manager

Meeting Date: November 15, 2022

Summary:

Community Partnership Grant application review and award approval.

Background:

The Town Manager presented a detailed review of Woodfin's historic directly funded and in-kind support of community programs at the August 2022 Town Council meeting. Council members recommended moving forward with maintaining the existing budgeted allocations and in-kind support but also supported the creation of an application process to allow community service providers to apply for funds from the town in order to provide needed services to the community that the town was unable or ill-equipped to provide.

In August 2022, various community service providers were contacted and invited to apply with the first round of applications closing on September 12, 2022. Two applications were received including:

- 1) RiverLink – 2,500.
Program Focus: Education RiverRATS (**R**esearch and **A**ppreciation **T**hrough **S**cience)
- 2) Asheville-Buncombe Community Land Trust (ABCLT) - \$50,000.
Program Focus: Affordable Housing

In reviewing these applications at their September 20th meeting, council members expressed concern that there had been no applications for emergency assistance, which had been identified as a high priority service. It was decided to delay consideration of the applications and re-open the application process for a second round of applications limited to emergency assistance. This second application period will close on November 14, 2022. To date, two applications have been received including:

- 1) Asheville-Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM) – \$50,000
Program Focus: Emergency assistance (heating/utility, housing, etc.)
- 2) Eblen Charities - \$50,000

Program Focus: Emergency assistance (heating/utility, housing, etc.)

Staff Analysis:

Based on the information provided, all four applications meet the criteria established by the town, while two of the four applications (Eblen & ABCCM) provide a substantially similar service.

ABCCM & Eblen Charities - both agencies are well-known and well-regarded in the community and have a long and respectable history of meeting critical needs in the community. Both agencies are highly qualified to provide emergency aid in partnership with the town. ABCCM proposes lowers overhead costs, and has an office location within the Town of Woodfin making them slightly more competitive.

River RATS (RiverLink) – this request is modest (\$2500) but has the potential for a profound effect both in terms of meeting an educational need that addresses goals for equity, but also for promoting education related to river (and community) health.

ABCLT – affordable housing is generally regarded as the lynch pin for community health and housing stability. ABCLT's goal is to leverage a \$50K grant from the town to raise \$100K needed to provide a permanently affordable home in the Town of Woodfin. While the reach is small (one home, one family) the impact is profound and moves the town closer to meeting one of the town's highest priority goals.

Budget Impact:

In recognition of the high value placed on emergency assistance, combined with the stated interest of using previously collected funds (\$51,235) for this express purpose, the applications can be organized in two funding categories with the emergency assistance program to be funded from the existing account, and other programs to be funded from the town's fund balance.

For each approved grant request, a budget amendment will be prepared for Council review and approval.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends moving forward with ABCCM to provide emergency assistance, to be paid for from the existing funds. Staff also recommends moving forward with awards to both RiverLink and ABCLT, to be paid for from fund balance.

All applications and partnerships will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis.

Attachments:

(1) Grant applications



Town of Woodfin

Application for Community Partnership Grant

Name of Organization: _____

Program Name: _____

Local Address: _____ Phone #: _____

Point of Contact: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Is your organization:

_____ 501(c)3 _____ Local Government Partner _____ Local School/Board

_____ Other: _____

How long has your organization been in operation: _____

- What is your organization's mission?

- Please provide a brief (2-3 sentences) program description.

- Please tell us more about your funding request.
 - a. Monetary - how much is being requested? What percent of the funds received will go directly to benefit the individuals served vs. program overhead? Please describe how the money will be leveraged, if applicable.
 - b. In-kind – what is needed, date(s), and for how long?

- Please describe who is directly served by this program and what are the target age groups. Please include whether you primarily (or exclusively) serve a low-moderate income population and whether you verify income to participate in the program.
- Do you (or can you) serve only the residents of Woodfin? Do you verify residency?
- Is participation in your program open to the public (do you require “membership”)?
- What town adopted goals does your organization or program support?
- How does this program support goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- What is the anticipated impact of the program (# people served, how long will the impact last, etc.)
- What kind of records or data do you collect on program participation and impact?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your organization or program?



Town of Woodfin

Application for Community Partnership Grant

Name of Organization: _____

Program Name: _____

Local Address: _____ Phone #: _____

Point of Contact: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Is your organization:

_____ 501(c)3 _____ Local Government Partner _____ Local School/Board

_____ Other: _____

How long has your organization been in operation: _____

- What is your organization's mission?

- Please provide a brief (2-3 sentences) program description.

- Please tell us more about your funding request.
 - a. Monetary - how much is being requested? What percent of the funds received will go directly to benefit the individuals served vs. program overhead? Please describe how the money will be leveraged, if applicable.
 - b. In-kind – what is needed, date(s), and for how long?

- Please describe who is directly served by this program and what are the target age groups. Please include whether you primarily (or exclusively) serve a low-moderate income population and whether you verify income to participate in the program.
- Do you (or can you) serve only the residents of Woodfin? Do you verify residency?
- Is participation in your program open to the public (do you require “membership”)?
- What town adopted goals does your organization or program support?
- How does this program support goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- What is the anticipated impact of the program (# people served, how long will the impact last, etc.)
- What kind of records or data do you collect on program participation and impact?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your organization or program?



Town of Woodfin

Application for Community Partnership Grant

Name of Organization: Eblen Charities Inc.

Program Name: Emergency Aid

Local Address: 50 Westgate Pkwy Phone #: 828.255.3066

Point of Contact: Roberta Irby

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: rirby@eblencharities.org

Is your organization:

501(c)3 Local Government Partner Local School/Board

Other: _____

How long has your organization been in operation: 30 years

- What is your organization’s mission?
Eblen Charities is a community based charity that focuses on assisting families and individuals during times of crisis and hardship, whether medical, financial, or emergency need.
- Please provide a brief (2-3 sentences) program description.
Eblen provides low income families within Buncombe County with basic living expenses - from utilities, medical assistance, clothing, and rent. Eblen gives back to those in need through our various programs - such as St. Nicholas Project, Giving Thanks at Thanksgiving, Hoops against Hunger, Tools for Schools, and our Prom Giveaway.
- Please tell us more about your funding request.
 - a. Monetary - how much is being requested? What percent of the funds received will go directly to benefit the individuals served vs. program overhead? Please describe how the money will be leveraged, if applicable.
 - b. In-kind – what is needed, date(s), and for how long?

A. Eblen are requesting that 10% of the funds be allocated toward the administrative cost for Eblen to administer the program for the Town of Woodfin. Another 5% for supplies and other overhead expenditures. The remainder of funds will go towards the Emergency Aid programs for Town of Woodfin clients.

B. N/A

- Please describe who is directly served by this program and what are the target age groups. Please include whether you primarily (or exclusively) serve a low-moderate income population and whether you verify income to participate in the program.
Eblen have a application and interview process that each client goes through to determine eligibility of services. Eblen serve clients that are at or below 150% of poverty.
- Do you (or can you) serve only the residents of Woodfin? Do you verify residency?
Eblen currently serve residents of Buncombe County (including residence of Woodfin) and also currently partners with Woodfin water to help residence of Town of Woodfin. Verifying residency is part of the application and interview process.
- Is participation in your program open to the public (do you require “membership”)?
Our program does not require membership. It is open to the public.
- What town adopted goals does your organization or program support?
N/A
- How does this program support goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion?
Eblen accepts applications from any resident no matter their race, color, creed, nationality, and/or sexuality. Our only requirement is that you are respectful our staff.
- What is the anticipated impact of the program (# people served, how long will the impact last, etc.)
Eblen has been serving Buncombe county for over 30 years. Eblen has currently served over 800 families in the last three months with various types of needs to make sure that they are able to stay in the homes and continue to have water, heat, gas, medical assistance, and electricity. No matter how large or small the need, the impact helps to get that client through the hardship they are currently facing.
- What kind of records or data do you collect on program participation and impact?
Once we determine the need and if the client is eligible for services; during the processing of payment we collect what service the client received and the amount client received from funding source.
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your organization or program?



Town of Woodfin Application for Community Partnership Grant

Name of Organization: RiverLink, Inc.

Program Name: RiverRATS (Research and Appreciation Through Science)

Local Address: 170 Lyman St., Asheville, NC 28801 Phone #: 828-252-8474

Point of Contact: Justin Young

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: justin@riverlink.org

Is your organization:

501(c)3 Local Government Partner Local School/Board

Other: _____

How long has your organization been in operation?

35 years.

What is your organization's mission?

RiverLink promotes the environmental and economic vitality of the French Broad River and its watershed. RiverLink accomplishes its mission by providing permanent public access to the river through conservation and recreation easements, reclaiming contaminated lands for public use and enjoyment, empowering over 1,000 volunteers each year, and annually educating over 3,000 students, as well as the public at large, about the importance of a healthy French Broad River watershed.

Brief Program description (2-3 sentences):

This project will provide experiential science learning activities at no cost to approximately 50 students at Woodfin Elementary in 2022-23, primarily in grades 3-5, led by a RiverLink educator in classrooms and outdoor stream locations. The project is part of RiverLink's effort to expand service to vulnerable populations at Title 1 schools serving some of Buncombe's most at-risk students, and build the next generation of river stewards.

Please tell us more about your funding request. a. Monetary - how much is being requested? What percent of the funds received will go directly to benefit the individuals

served vs. program overhead? Please describe how the money will be leveraged, if applicable. b.In-kind – what is needed, date(s), and for how long?

This proposal seeks \$2,500 to support delivery of hands-on discovery lessons led by an expert educator through field trips to local streams, and also for learning activities in the classroom (especially if bad weather intervenes on a scheduled field trip). Program duration will be the 2022-23 academic year, ending June 1, 2023. All grant funds will support direct program delivery, including staff time to consult with Woodfin teachers and deliver the desired lessons, plus transportation, equipment, and consumable supplies.

Students will engage in hands-on lessons using microscopes, chemical test kits, stream population surveys, interactive models and more. Acting as scientific investigators, they will discover the physical features of streams, the diverse habitats and creatures found there, the chemistry of the water, and how human actions can impact water quality and communities downstream. The strength of the program lies in the ongoing partnerships with Buncombe educators, and the tailored, scaleable nature of the lessons. RiverLink’s tested approach works 1:1 with classroom teachers to identify instructional needs, building customized lessons that integrate required curriculum objectives, and provide material teachers can share with each other, and use in subsequent lessons.

Please describe who is directly served by this program and what are the target age groups. Please include whether you primarily (or exclusively) serve a low-moderate income population and whether you verify income to participate in the program.

The River RATS program is in demand at schools in every Buncombe community, including at charter schools and afterschool programs. By seeking support to work with students and teachers at Woodfin Elementary, we seek to ensure that the program is delivered to the targeted group: low- to moderate-income students, including students of color, whose families typically struggle to provide high-quality experiential learning opportunities in the field or at home, especially when it comes to freshwater ecology – water being the lifeblood of all communities.

Do you (or can you) serve only the residents of Woodfin? Do you verify residency?

Funds requested with this application will only serve Woodfin Elementary. Buncombe County Schools and Woodfin Elementary verify residency; we propose to serve classrooms of students enrolled at Woodfin (and their teachers).

Is participation in your program open to the public (do you require “membership”)?

We do not require membership. RiverRATS is open to K-12 students at participating Buncombe schools, until our annual schedule is full.

What Town-adopted goals do you support?

This program will support the Town of Woodfin in achieving its objectives in K-12 education, particularly for the development of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) skills that are essential as we seek solutions to a new set of challenges in a time of client change. Participating students and teachers will grow science-based environmental knowledge, appreciation, and stewardship awareness; the project will also deliver new teaching resources and expand relationships with local educators, to support quality science instruction in some of Buncombe's neediest communities. The program will mark shifts in student and educator knowledge and attitudes toward the environment; deeper understanding of local ecosystems; and desire to take action on pressing environmental concerns, including clean water, freshwater ecology, stream dynamics, and the impacts of climate change.

How does this project advance DEI goals?

RiverLink has placed diversity, equity, and inclusion as the #1 priority in its Strategic Plan. This priority is being enacted through our programs in several ways, including through neighborhood stream restoration and stormwater management projects in historically marginalized communities in Buncombe County, such as the Southside neighborhood in Asheville. In Woodfin and other communities serving greater numbers of economically disadvantaged families and people of color, we are seeking grant support to expand delivery of our high-quality discovery programs at no cost to the participating schools. Our approach has enjoyed considerable success, as the program has received support in 2022 from Buncombe County Strategic Partnerships grant program, the Walnut Cove Members Association, Prestige Subaru, and a number of private donors.

What is the anticipated impact of the program (# people served, how long will the impact last, etc.)

In the 2022-23 academic year, we hope to serve 50 students and 2-3 educators at Woodfin Elementary. We believe the impact is life-long, and we have evidence that our impact extends to families and friends, because once a child understands our impact on local streams and rivers, and what it means to the greater community, they are more likely to act in ways that improve community stewardship of these essential natural resources. They begin to see themselves and their families as actors with influence in the realm of stewardship – a critical step in solving 21st Century environmental problems.

What kind of records or data do you collect on program participation and impact?

RiverRATS program staff collect qualitative data using pre- and post-lesson surveys and live observations recorded during each lesson that indicate the program's effectiveness and point the way to any adjustments needed to better serve participating students and teachers.

1) The project will mark success when a teacher at each school has accepted a modest leadership role, and supported participating teachers at their school (in their grade level) in making full use of this program through the end of the school year. This will include sharing

RiverLink's pocket naturalist guides; promoting experiential instruction tips; and submitting surveys that RiverLink uses to collect feedback to ensure continuous improvement in content, presentation, equity and more.

2) The project will mark success when 90% of participating educators agree with survey statements including, "I have increased confidence in my capacity to provide live science investigations with my students," and "I have observed a notable increase in my students' understanding of environmental science topics."

3) The project will mark success when our educators have observed at least 25 instances of a transformative or "ah-ha moment" for students. This could be a statement that reflects new knowledge such as, "WOW! Look at the PINCHERS on that dragonfly larva!" or a student building the confidence to touch a crayfish despite being initially alarmed by it.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your organization or program?

The RiverRATS program is delivered during the school year by two expert educators. In the next 12-18 months, RiverLink plans to hire another educator to support expanded program delivery to students of color and working families. The position would work mostly with after-school groups but would increase our overall capacity, and thus the number served. The after-school program is intended to focus particularly on ensuring equity and will be partnering with groups that already work with a majority of Black and Latinx youth. For this reason we hope to hire an educator of color who can serve as a relatable role model, enabling students of color to see themselves in leadership roles in education and in nature. This new educator would be a key team member to advance the overall aims of this project.