

BCTDA Approves \$90,150 of Investments to Support 22 Local Festivals & Cultural Events

Financial support is made possible through earned revenue collected through advertising sales and lodging reservations booked on ExploreAsheville.com

PRESS RELEASE

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (Oct. 27, 2022) — Local events and festivals that celebrate Asheville and Buncombe County's communities and are for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors will receive a total of \$90,150 in 2023 from the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), as approved by the board at its Oct. 26 monthly meeting.

The eclectic collection of 22 community festivals and cultural events that were awarded investment through the BCTDA's **Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund** Grant Program range from long-established celebrations such as Symphony in the Park and the Sourwood Festival in Black Mountain, to paramount cultural events such as the Pritchard Park Summer Series, Blue Ridge Pride Festival, Peace Gardens and Market Annual Spring Fling!, and LEAF Downtown AVL.

The Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund Grant Program was launched in 2016 by the BCTDA to provide financial support for local events that support and preserve the cultural identity of the community. Contributing to the financial viability and long-term sustainability of festivals and cultural events, the fund seeks to stimulate new events and expand on existing ones that are enjoyed by residents and visitors. Funding for the program comes from unrestricted, earned revenue collected through advertising sales and lodging reservations booked on ExploreAsheville.com. This earned revenue fund is one of the ways the BCTDA invests in the community. It does not have the same state level restrictions as occupancy tax revenue.

A committee whose members include representatives from the City of Asheville and Buncombe County reviewed dozens of funding requests submitted by local nonprofits. Those that met eligibility requirements and aligned closely with **Explore Asheville's Strategic Imperatives** were recommended to the BCTDA board for consideration and approval. Investment support ranges from \$1,000 to a maximum of \$5,000 and cannot exceed a 50% match of the total event budget.

Awarded festivals and cultural events must occur in Buncombe County and be represented by a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to conduct programs that benefit the citizens and visitors of Buncombe County. In addition to financial support, recipients also receive marketing assistance from Explore Asheville to promote attendance.

Including the Oct. 26 commitments, more than \$783,000 has been invested in festivals and cultural events through the program.

Grant Recipients and Events Approved for 2023 Investments by BCTDA

- Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Program | ASAP Farm Tour | \$5,000
- Asheville Celtic Group | Asheville Celtic Fest | \$5,000
- Asheville Creative Arts | Peace Gardens and Market Annual Spring Fling! | \$5,000
- Asheville Downtown Association | Asheville Holiday Parade | \$5,000
- Asheville Downtown Association | Downtown After 5 | \$5,000
- Asheville Downtown Association | Pritchard Park Summer Series | \$3,850
- Asheville Independent Restaurant Association (AIR) | Taste of Asheville | \$5,000
- Asheville Makers Inc. | Maker Faire Asheville | \$2,500
- Asheville Mardi Gras | Asheville Mardi Gras Parade & Queen's Ball | \$4,000
- Asheville Symphony Society, Inc. | Symphony in the Park | \$5,000
- Aurora Studio & Gallery, Inc. | Zelda Fitzgerald Week | \$800
- Black Mountain Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce | Sourwood Festival | \$5,000
- Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center | {Re}HAPPENING 11 | \$3,500
- Blue Ridge Pride | Blue Ridge Pride Festival | \$5,000
- Center for Honeybee Research (CHBR) | Asheville HoneyFest | \$5,000
- Connect Beyond Festival | Connect Beyond Festival | \$5,000
- Green Built Alliance | CiderFest NC | \$3,500
- Johnny Shields Productions LLC (Open Doors Asheville) | Beer City Comic Con | \$2,500
- LEAF Global Arts | LEAF Downtown AVL | \$5,000
- Outdoor Gear Builders of WNC | Get in Gear Fest | \$2,500
- Swannanoa Valley Museum | Walk Through History | \$2,000
- The Center for Craft, Creativity, & Design Inc. | Krafthaus | \$5,000

Members of the Festival & Cultural Events Support Fund Grant Program Review Committee

- **Matthew Lehman**, BCTDA Treasurer ; Grand Bohemian Hotel General Manager
- **Jon Fillman**, City of Asheville Community Event Manager
- **Rasheeda McDaniels**, Buncombe County Community Engagement
- **Allison Dains**, Buncombe County Parks and Recreation Director

- **Vic Isley**, Explore Asheville President & CEO

Additional Funding Opportunities

In addition to the Festival & Cultural Events Support Fund, the BCTDA offers sponsorships of professional and community development opportunities organized by Buncombe County-based nonprofits. Also funded through earned revenue, such opportunities must be in alignment with at least one of the BCTDA's strategic imperatives to be eligible for and receive investment. Sponsorship requests are reviewed on a quarterly basis. November 15 is the deadline for the next series of sponsorship requests. Find the BCTDA Sponsorship Application Form [here](#).

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MEDIA CONTACT

Ashley Greenstein, Public Information Manager
agreenstein@ExploreAsheville.com