

CONTACT: Kathi M. Petersen

Director of Public Information
Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau
828.318.8960
kpetersen@ExploreAsheville.com

BUNCOMBE COUNTY TDA APPROVES GRANT FUNDING OF \$110,000 TO SUPPORT 26 LOCAL FESTIVALS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

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

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (Oct. 27, 2021) – Local events and festivals that both residents and visitors can enjoy in celebrating our community will receive a total of \$110,000 in 2022 from the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, as approved by the board at its Oct. 27 monthly meeting.

The eclectic collection of 26 community festivals and cultural events receiving grants through the authority's Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund ranges from time-honored celebrations such as the Sourwood Festival in Black Mountain, Downtown After 5 and the Southern Highlands Craft Fair, to cultural events like Asheville Celtic Fest, Blue Ridge Pride Festival, GRINDFest 2022 and Hola Asheville, and new celebrations such as Flacktoberfest, honoring Black Mountain native and Grammy Award-winning singer, songwriter and pianist Roberta Flack.

The Buncombe County TDA's Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund grant program started in 2016 to provide financial support for local events that support and preserve the cultural identity of the community and are enjoyed by residents as well as 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 another way the Buncombe County TDA 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 (*see below*) reviewed dozens of funding requests submitted by local nonprofits. Those that met eligibility requirements and were most closely aligned with the Buncombe County TDA's four strategic imperatives – *Deliver Balanced Recovery & Sustainable Growth, Encourage Safe & Responsible Travel, Engage & Invite More Diverse Audiences, and Promote & Support Asheville's Creative Spirit* – were recommended to the BCTDA board for consideration and approval. The entirety of funding available for this grant cycle was depleted and will be disbursed in 2022 following the successful completion of each event.

The Festivals & Cultural Events grant program was temporarily suspended in 2020, due to the pandemic and restrictions placed on mass gatherings. Revenue earned was instead contributed by the Buncombe County TDA to the One Buncombe COVID relief fund: a lead gift of \$50,000 in March 2020 and a second contribution of \$40,000 in January 2021.

(MORE)

Grant Recipients and Events Approved for 2022 Funding by Buncombe County TDA

Fund recipients, who are required to be 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 nonprofit organizations, also receive marketing assistance from Explore Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau to promote attendance. Including today's announced total, nearly \$693,000 has been granted to festivals and events through the program.

- ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Program) | ASAP Farm Tour | \$5,000
- Asheville Brewers Alliance | AVL Beer Week | \$5,000
- Asheville Celtic Group | Asheville Celtic Fest | \$5,000
- Asheville Downtown Association | Downtown After 5 | \$5,000
- Asheville Downtown Association | Asheville Holiday Parade | \$5,000
- Asheville Fringe Society | The Asheville Fringe Arts Festival | \$5,000
- Asheville Makers | Asheville Makers Faire | \$2,000
- Asheville Mardi Gras | Asheville Mardi Gras Parade & Queen's Ball | \$4,000
- Asheville Quilt Guild | Asheville Quilt Show | \$3,700
- Asheville Symphony Orchestra | ALT ASO | \$5,000
- Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center | {Re}HAPPENING 10 | \$3,000
- Black Mountain Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce | Sourwood Festival | \$5,000
- Black Wall Street AVL | GRINDfest 2022 | \$5,000
- Blue Ridge Pride Center, Inc. | The Blue Ridge Pride Festival | \$5,000
- Buncombe County Recreation Services | Lake Julian Festival of Lights | \$5,000
- Congregation Beth Ha Tephila | HardLox Jewish Food & Heritage Festival | \$3,600
- Connect Beyond Festival | Connect Beyond Festival | \$5,000
- Folk Heritage Committee | Shindig on the Green and Mountain Dance & Folk Festival | \$5,000
- Hola Carolina | Hola Asheville | \$5,000
- LEAF Global Arts | LEAF Downtown AVL | \$5,000
- Leicester Artists | Come to Leicester Artists Studio Tour | \$1,000
- Moog Foundation | Moogmentum: The 15th Anniversary Celebration | \$3,700
- North Carolina Arboretum | Winter Lights at the North Carolina Arboretum | \$5,000
- PubCorps | Flacktoberfest 2022 | \$1,000
- Southern Highland Craft Guild | 74th Annual Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands | \$5,000
- WNC Green Building Council | CiderFest NC | \$3,000

Members of the Festival & Cultural Events Support Fund Grant Committee

- **Leah Ashburn**, Buncombe County TDA Board Member and Treasurer of the Nonprofit; owner of Highland Brewing Company
- **Jon Fillman**, City of Asheville Community Event Manager
- **Vic Isley**, Explore Asheville President & CEO
- **Rasheeda McDaniels**, Buncombe County Community Engagement
- **Peyton O'Conner**, Buncombe County Parks and Recreation Director

Additional Funding Opportunities

In addition to grants available through the Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund, the Buncombe County TDA 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 aforementioned strategic imperatives to be eligible for and receive funding. Sponsorship requests are reviewed on a quarterly basis. Nov. 15 is the deadline for the next series of sponsorship requests. Find the BCTDA Sponsorship Application Form [here](#).

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