

# FOOD JUSTICE PLANNING INITIATIVE

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ANNUAL REPORT  
2022



# PROJECT MANAGER'S STATEMENT

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Since its inception, the FJPI has been committed to tackling the complex web of layers that contribute to food injustice with persistence, creativity and an equity mindset.

Supporting 18 counties and the Qualla Boundary is no small task. In fact, the FJPI serves one of the broadest geographic ranges of any food initiative in North Carolina.

Whether it be a community garden build, a tool share purchase for farmers, or a free cooking class, FJPI stakeholders know that the formula for large scale change is small-scale grassroots relationships. In 2022, countless members our WNC community benefitted from almost \$39,000 in micro-grants, countless resource sharing, and ongoing community advocacy.

When I look to the remainder of 2023 and beyond, I gather strength and momentum in knowing the strong foundation FJPI has built will serve us well as we expand our impact, deepen relationships, and move collectively, towards a resilient and inclusive food system in WNC.

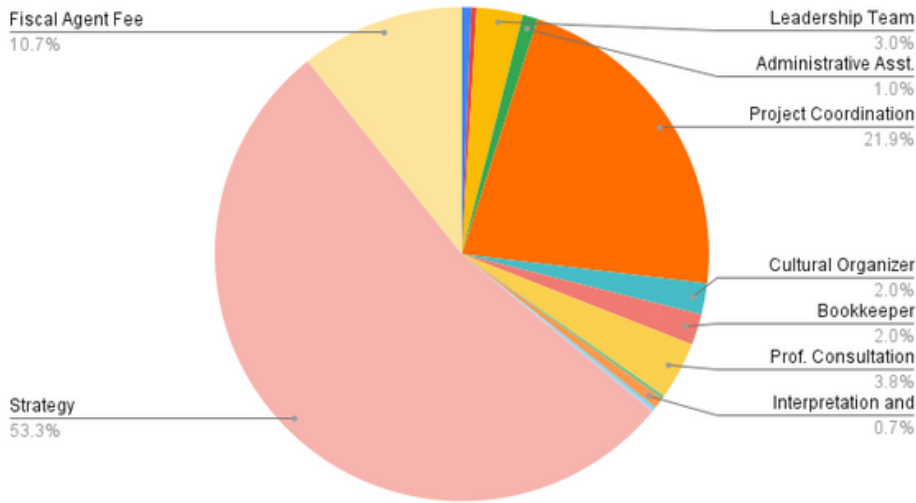
Thanks for joining us!

**DANA CHOQUETTE**

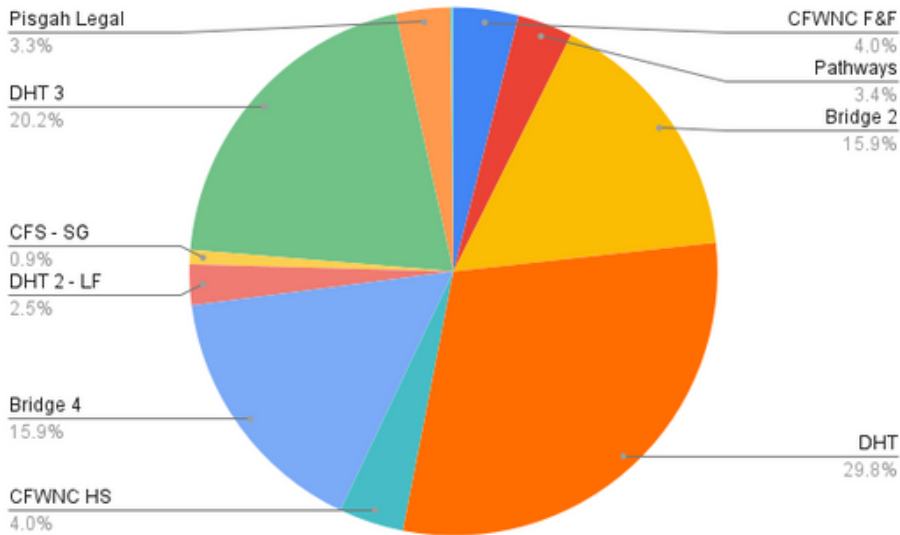
Project Manager

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## 2022 FJPI Budget



## 2022 Grant Breakdown



## Key Terms and Abbreviations

- ◆ FJPI - Food Justice Planning Initiative
  - ◆ SA - Strategy Area
  - ◆ LTM - Leadership Team Member/s
  - ◆ CAN - Collaborative Ag. Network SA
  - ◆ CGSA - Community Gardens SA
- ◆ FWR - Food Waste Reduction SA
- ◆ HFD - Healthy Food Distribution SA
- ◆ NCE - Nutrition and Cooking Education SA
- ◆ RFC - Regional Food Council SA

# WHO WE ARE

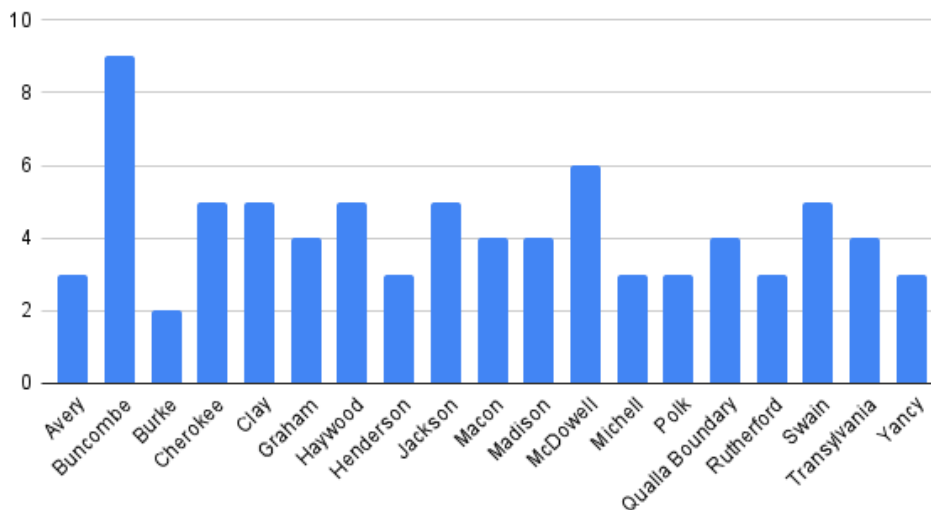
We are a coalition of food systems nonprofits, community members, farmers, community gardeners, food distributors, food aggregators, food waste experts and nutrition educators. Between the 50+ people in our collaborative initiative, we have hundreds of years of experience combined.

Individual vs. Organizational Representative



The FJPI has three levels of partnership: Leadership Team Membership, Strategy Area Membership, and Large Group Membership.

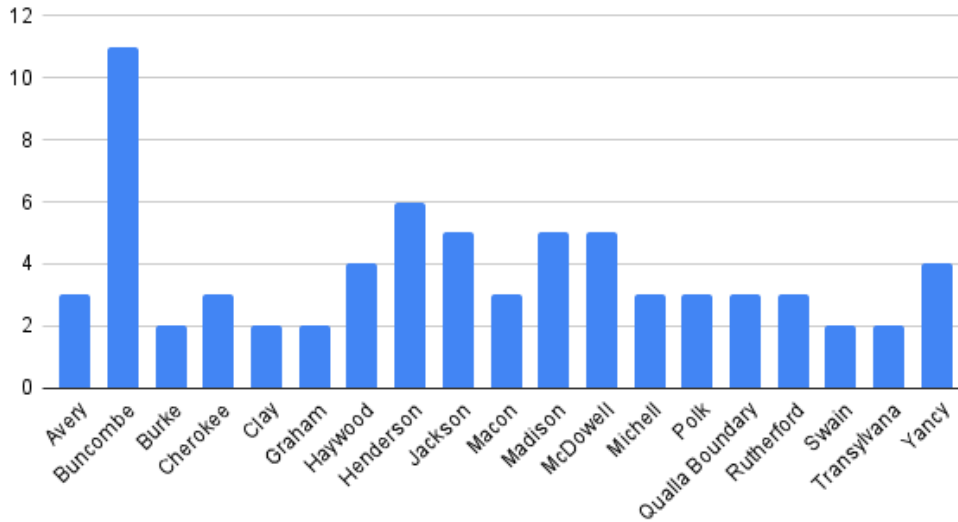
Leadership Team Representation by County



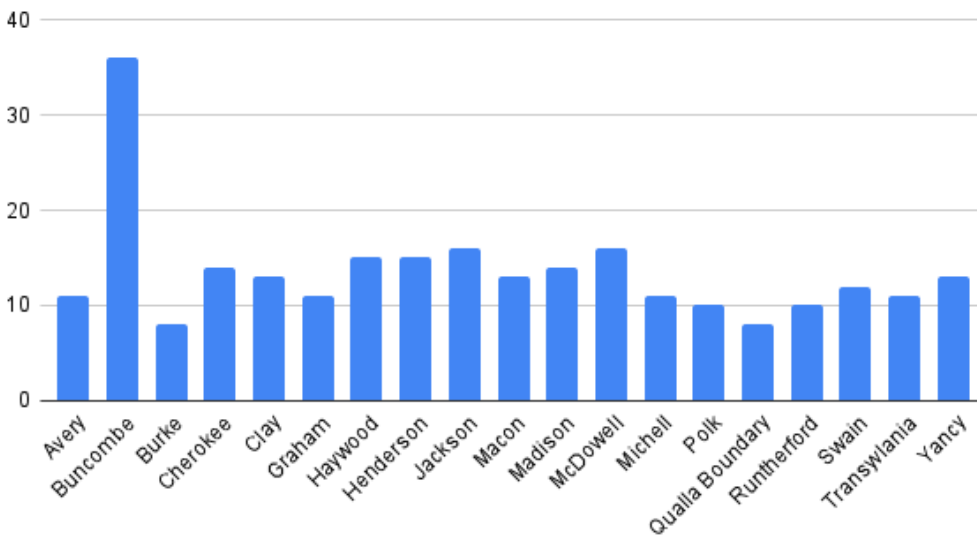
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### Strategy Area Member Representation



### Large Group Representation by County



# RESULTS



\$38,989 Gifted to  
Community Groups



\$14k Leveraged for  
Community Groups



Over \$31k in Participant  
Compensation

**CGSA**-Distributed \$13,489 to 12 community gardens resulting in the development of new tool sheds, improved irrigation systems, the purchase of educational equipment and supplies, etc.

**CAN**- Shared-giving process used participatory budgeting technique to collectively decide how to distribute \$20k seed-funding to a farmer mentorship program, no-till plough to start a toolshare, neighborhood food hub infrastructure and equipment for a mobile seed processing unit.

**HFD**- \$5,000 was distributed to immediate need aid to Abundancia, a food pantry serving primarily Latinx families

**FWR**-Approved the funding of several compost builds and other community-based compost projects in Madison County that will inform wider strategy in WNC.

**NCE**-Awarded three BIPOC communities with \$500 dollars to help purchase cooking materials and/or food for their education classes: the Cherokee County, Madison and Jackson counties.

**CGSA**-Two gardens the CGSA financially supported were able to leverage outside support from Atlas Organics and an anonymous donor for a combined value of over \$14,000 of additional soil and equipment purchases.

Strategy Area (SA) meetings range from 6-25 participants depending on the SA and quarterly Large Group meetings range from 15-40 participants many of whom are compensated for their time.

# RESULTS

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Supported 26 new & existing gardens across 7 counties



Four food councils held initial Meetings

**CGSA**, made up of about 10 gardeners and organization representatives developed, an Outreach and Engagement Plan which lead to working with 30+ total garden contacts. The SA supported 26 new and existing gardens, across 7 counties, through relationship building and information sharing. This SA is currently engaging in partnership discussions with NC Community Garden Partners to develop a shared database of WNC gardens to inform both the FJPI and NCCGP maps.

The **RFC** partnered with Community Food Strategies and Empowering Mountain Food Systems to hold in-person meetings in Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Swain, Macon, and the Qualla Boundary to gauge the interest in creating food councils within each county. Over 100 attendees participated and a free workshop was offered on facilitation techniques, group goal setting, and agenda planning for roles as leaders on this project.

Since this workshop, 4 have held initial meetings to start a food council. The RFC will continue to play a role as a support partner.

# RESULTS

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5 FJPI Contractors and 13 LTM's attended convenings



Led/supported 3 Regional Assessments



6 contract jobs created and sustained

The FJPI financially supported 4 Contractors and 13 Leadership Team Members to attend 4 trainings or convenings:

- 2 to Farm-Based Education Network's Racial Justice Training
- 2 to CFS Shared Gifting Convening
- 4 to Collaborate to Co-liberate
- 12 to Conflict Transformation Training

- Developed a regional community gardens database to support people across the region in accessing community gardens where they live, and develop a networking and resource support system for area community gardeners.
- Perform community needs assessment with food distribution organizations across region concerning the current needs and barriers to offering healthy and local food options, and identify client preferences for incorporating more healthy foods in charitable distributions.
- Perform regional assessment of all available food security resources and potential stakeholders in development of the forthcoming Regional Food Council.

FJPI hired and sustained contract positions for 6 WNC residents: 4 SA Coordinators, 1 Program Manager, 1 Administrative Support



# RESULTS

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Supported Partner  
Community Events

In May 2022, EBCI Tribal Foods Distribution hosted a ribbon cutting for our new building and a large MANNA market. This was an important event for us because USDA representatives and MANNA officials were in attendance, and we wanted to show how the EBCI could turn food distributions into beautiful community events. We gave away plant starts, had over 12 booths that distributed anything from Narcan to clothing and other necessities, Tribal Dancing groups, and thanks to Shaniqua Simuel we had a cooking demonstration as well. It has been so helpful to have a network of nutrition educators who are passionate about their job and the mission to bring healthy and delicious food to everyone. It was a real opportunity for FJPI to support their Nutrition Educators and show how to lead and support one another in this mission. One that day we fed over 1,000 people and the Cherokee Community experienced a new ideal in how you receive nutrition support and much more. Now our community members come to our MANNA markets knowing that they will receive equitable, diverse, and fun support when they attend our markets.



6 Members trained-  
Participatory Action Research

During Phase 1 of **CAN's** Participatory Action Research (PAR) project six farmers were trained to interview others regarding successes and opportunities in the region for collaboration. Fifteen priorities were produced from 8 farmer interviews that will be used to inform strategy in the region.

# RESULTS

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Built Countless  
Meaningful Relationships

"Because of the connections made through the FJPI's 18 county-wide collaborative food system work, I have built new relationships with organizations and community groups I have never worked with before. These relationships are now translating into the co-development of a large scale collaborative Community and Economic Impact Assessment involving nine different Healthy Food Box site partners scattered across the FJPI's entire WNC footprint. Without all of our groups' involvement in the FJPI over these last few years, this important and impactful work would not be coming to fruition at this time. The FJPI was developed in order to bring together the experts on the ground to build a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable food system, and I am seeing the effects of that in my day to day work." - Nicole Hinebaugh, HPHC Project Director with MountainWise



Began the process to  
become a 501(c)3

The **Regional Food Council** engaged FJPI participants, contractors and leadership team members in an organizational design process to prepare for FJPI's transition from a fiscal agent to an independent non-profit. Collaboratively, the group crafted a mission statement, value statements, and board by-laws. They also worked together to create a new name for FJPI, which is to be used after the transition to a non-profit--**WNC Food Systems Coalition**. The hope is that the new name and mission and value statements will effectively communicate the nature and breadth of our work moving forward.

# TESTIMONIES

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"Data and information are powerful tools to understanding our local food systems. I'm thankful for the opportunity to work with FJPI on data research and visualization to help advance their mission of greater food sovereignty in western NC. FJPI's approach to collaboration and systems change is innovative, and exhilarating! It takes grit, and passion. They're doing it!" -Erin Hostetler, Food Systems Consulting

"Having this grant funding has enriched my nutrition and food preservation classes abundantly. Being able to utilize new equipment and have additional funding for food, I was able to offer a canning class for parents and educate participants on the food safety and benefits of canning. I also instructed an Into to Canning class, Strawberry Jam class and MED Instead of Meds 6 class series. One participant of the MED program was able to pass the cooking skills and recipes to her two oldest daughters who began to prepare healthy meals for their family. Another participant reported as a result of her new healthy eating habit and lifestyle changes she was able to meet personal goals for weight loss. I feel greater confidence in providing cooking education, which is something I had never done before. I am thankful for the provision of the right tools and appliances made possible by this grant. Thank you for supporting FCS programs through the N.C. Cooperative Extension in Cherokee County." Marlana Baker, Cherokee County N.C. Cooperative Extension

"The funds have allowed Hot Springs Elementary School's garden program to expand our offerings and we now offer a winter cooking unit for K-5 students. This unit is intended to teach students the joy of cooking so they can integrate fresh produce and healthy eating habits into their daily lives. Funding has also helped complete the garden shed at Hot Springs elementary school, allowing us to keep tools and supplies on site and facilitate the experience of learning about plant life cycles and agricultural systems in our garden plot" - Natalie Hesed, Hot Springs Elementary School Garden

"I am so grateful for the grant! We had some incredible testimonials immediately following the grant! And through my teaching at a local HeadStart office, I was able to connect the organization with free garden bed supplies which will be used to provide fresh nourishing produce to participants!" - Betsy Hooker, EFNEP Educator, Henderson County Cooperative Extension

# AT A GLANCE

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# THANK YOU CONTRIBUTORS!

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ABIPA, Abundancia Food Pantry, AmeriHealth Caritas, Appalachian Sustainable Agricultural Project (ASAP), Asheville-Buncombe Food Policy Council, Backyard Organics, Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture, Bountiful Cities, Bounty and Soul, Buncombe County Cooperative Extension, Buncombe County Health and Human Services, Centro Unido Latino Americano, City of Asheville Sustainability, Clay/Cherokee Food Council, Community Food Strategies, Cooperate WNC, CoThink, Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Dig In! Yancy, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Public Health and Human Services Division, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Food Distribution, EMH Food Systems Consulting, Empowering Mountain Food Systems/Center for Environmental Food Systems, Foothills Food Hub, Formative Health Consulting, Fruitland Farmstead, Henderson County Committee for Activity and Nutrition, Hood Huggers International/Peace Gardens and Market, Hot Springs Elementary Garden Education, Land of Sky, Lott Farms and Abiary, Macon Food Council, MANNA Foodbank, McDowell County Cooperative Extension, Mighty Gnome Market Garden LLC, MountainWise, NC Extension (Henderson, Cherokee, Buncombe/McDowell, Rutherford, Madison), NC Center for Health and Wellness University of North Carolina Asheville, NCSU Extension, Organic Growers School, Patchwork Alliance, Pigeon River Garden Club, RAD Farmers Market, Reconciliation House, Resourceful Communities, Root Cause Farm, Rutherford Food Council, Shiloh Community Garden, Smoky Mountain Harm Reduction, Soul and Soil Project, Southwest NC Resource Conservation and Development Council, Southwestern Commission, Sustainabilies, Tierra Fertil, Tiny Farm, TRACTOR Food and Farms, UNC Chapel Hill, UNCA McCullough Institute, Uncomplicated Kitchen, Utopian Seed Project, Vecinos, Inc., We, Give A Share, Wild East Farm, WNC Farm to Table, WNC Food Waste Solutions, WNC Health Networks (WNCHN), WNC Nonprofit Pathways, Woodsen Branch Elementary School, YMCA of WNC, YWCA of Asheville

# THANK YOU FUNDERS!

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The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, Dogwood Health Trust,  
WNC Bridge Foundation