

**North Coast Opportunities
American Rescue Plan Act Funding**

CONTACT INFORMATION

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

North Coast Opportunities (NCO) will work in close coordination with Mendocino County and community partners to assist the County's effort to meet local needs through the American Rescue Plan Act, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, and other available funding. NCO will provide direct financial assistance to and improve food security for families suffering economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This project will also provide financial support for small local farmers whose businesses have been challenged by the COVID-19 crisis.

NCO will:

- Provide community outreach and education about available resources.
- Provide case management services through NCO's People Helping People program.
- Distribute direct financial assistance and locally sourced food boxes to eligible households facing food and financial insecurity.
- Provide immediate financial assistance to farmers facing food distribution challenges, provide farm income through locally sourced food boxes, and provide related small business assistance to small family farmers who have been severely impacted by both the COVID-19 pandemic and the local drought.

PROJECT EXPERIENCE AND LOCAL NEEDS

NCO's People Helping People program was created in March 2020 to support community members struggling to deal with unemployment, sickness, and/or shelter-in-place orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic. With financial support from the County of Mendocino, the Community Foundation of Mendocino County, and other funders, the People Helping People program has assisted over 730 households throughout Mendocino County since the pandemic began. The program has helped to fill gaps for some of Mendocino County's most vulnerable individuals who did not qualify for unemployment or federal stimulus packages, had been laid off and unable to produce

income, and/or were otherwise experiencing food, housing, or other financial crises as a direct consequence of the

As local food insecurity amplified during the pandemic, NCO distributed more than 10,000 boxes filled with fresh local produce that kept dozens of small farmers in business when their usual markets to restaurants and schools were significantly reduced due to the pandemic.

After the County's funding through the CARES Act ended in December 2020, NCO continued to help local constituents facing financial hardships through limited funding opportunities such as the State's Emergency Rental Assistance Program. However, there are clear gaps in the funding available and more local relief is needed to provide healthy food and wrap around funding for individuals and populations hardest hit. An equitable recovery must address the longstanding economic challenges and disparities that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis.

PROJECT GOALS

The proposed project will strengthen economic recovery and increase family stability. For eligible households, the project serves the long-term goals of improving food security and preventing evictions, foreclosures, and homelessness.

For local farmers, the project supports immediate needs to stabilize food distribution and provides a diversified funding stream to help strengthen their businesses while serving the long-term goals of increasing access to locally grown food and promoting the nutritional value of locally sourced organic fruits and vegetables.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Direct financial assistance will be distributed through People Helping People's case management process, which accepts applications for assistance and determines eligibility prior to making disbursements.

Food boxes will be sourced from local farms through the MendoLake Food Hub and distributed directly to People Helping People clients and/or to local food banks and other safety net organizations throughout Mendocino County.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

These activities are based on NCO's experience responding to local needs since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the COVID-19 situation continues to change, NCO will be flexible in adapting the proposed activities and projected numbers.

- **Direct financial assistance.** Upon receipt of an application from the affected family or farm, NCO case managers will identify specific needs to determine their eligibility for assistance. *During the project period of September 2021 – June 2022, NCO anticipates providing assistance averaging \$1,000 - \$3,000 for up to 300 households.*
- **Locally-sourced food boxes.** NCO will distribute food boxes directly to families participating in the People Helping People program and will work with community food banks and other safety net organizations throughout the county to increase access to locally grown food for low-income families by sourcing and distributing

food boxes. *During the project period of September 2021 – June 2022, NCO anticipates distributing at least 3,500 food boxes.*

PROJECT WORKPLAN

NCO will implement the project over the 9-month period of September 15, 2021 – June 15, 2022. A preliminary timeline is provided below.

MONTH	ACTIVITIES
September 2021 – December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct outreach and community education about available resources.• Update People Helping People application tracking and related processes, including data collection regarding socially disadvantaged and COVID-19 impacted farmers.• Leverage California’s Emergency Rental Assistance Program and any other available funding to assure there is no duplication of financial assistance.• Begin distributing direct financial assistance to eligible households and farmers who face immediate threats to food supply/distribution.• Begin distributing food boxes.
January 2022 – June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide ongoing case management for those most vulnerable and hardest hit by the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.• Develop case management tools and local resource guides to improve economic recovery for impacted individuals/families and further develop self-sufficiency strategies.• Continue outreach and community education.• Continue distributing food boxes.• Continue distributing direct financial assistance.
June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey and report program outcomes for households and farmers.• Provide recommendations for longer term economic recovery and intervention strategies.

BUDGET

Budget Item	Activity and Purpose/Justification	Cost Breakdown	Cost
Case managers	Project activities will be coordinated by NCO Case Managers who will assist with all components of the project.	3 half-time case managers x \$2,165 per month x 9 months = \$58,455 30% fringe benefits = \$17,540	\$75,995
Outreach project assistance	Conduct community outreach/education and administrative assistance to ensure community members are aware of available resources.	1 half-time project assistant to provide community outreach and administrative support x \$1,735 per month x 9 months = \$15,615 30% fringe benefits = \$4,685	\$20,300
Direct financial assistance	Accept applications for assistance, determine eligibility, and disburse direct financial assistance.	Anticipated range of \$1,000 - \$3,000 in direct financial assistance	\$300,000
Food box distribution	Source local foods, assemble food boxes, and distribute boxes to individual families and through food banks and other safety net organizations.	Refrigerated truck rental @ \$1,750 per month x 9 months = \$15,750 Food delivery expenses (e.g. insurance, fuel, maintenance) @ \$500 per month x 9 months = \$4,500 Food boxes @ \$35 per box x 3,500 boxes = \$122,500 in direct food assistance	\$142,750
Total direct costs	Direct support to local families and farmers	NCO staffing/care coordination: \$96,295 Infrastructure support: \$20,250 Direct financial/food assistance: \$422,500	\$539,045
Indirect costs	Administrative overhead	9 % of total direct costs	\$48,515
TOTAL			\$587,560