



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Kevin Maurer
kmaurer@nhcendowment.org
(910) 903-7995

NHCE Invests More Than \$6.5 Million in Grants Addressing Student Aid, Disaster Preparedness

WILMINGTON, N.C., August 1, 2024 – The New Hanover Community Endowment (NHCE) will invest more than \$6.5 million in nine grants to improve workforce pathways, increase disaster preparedness, and support arts, healthcare, and education programs.

The largest grant supports the Forward Fund (TFF) and addresses gaps in our workforce pathways through short-term loans for students engaged in high-yield training programs in the skilled trades, technology, and healthcare. The majority of the TFF grant – \$2.5 million out of \$3 million – will go directly to students to pay for enrollment, tuition, and program fees, along with life expenses. The remaining \$500,000 will provide operating support.

“We’re excited to be part of the Forward Fund’s innovative approach to supporting our students,” said Lakesha McDay, executive vice president of programs and operations at NHCE. “Finances are a major challenge for many seeking continued education. This program will reduce financial barriers and give all students the opportunity to pursue fulfilling, high-wage careers.”

NHCE is also investing in the Red Cross to establish the first North Carolina-based American Red Cross Community Adaptation Program (CAP). As extreme weather worsens, Red Cross CAP teams are working with local partners in areas with higher disaster risk and chronic social issues to expand access to nutritious food, healthcare, and affordable housing. Already established in 18 other communities around the country, the program aims to holistically build community resilience before disasters.

“Better preparing New Hanover County for hurricanes and other disasters is just one way we can help every citizen in the county,” McDay said. “We’re proud to support the Red Cross in launching North Carolina’s first CAP and to help create a safer community.”

The remaining grants provide emergency radios for New Hanover County residents, fund grassroots nonprofit arts organizations, and support education programs ranging from preserving Wilmington’s history to helping pregnant and parenting teens.

This slate of grants is part of NHCE’s ongoing funding process to invest in transformational change in New Hanover County. NHCE encourages organizations to share ideas and programming updates with its network officers to identify partnership opportunities. For more information, visit www.nhcendowment.org/grants.

“New Hanover Community Endowment strives to be a partner to organizations, not just a funder,” McDay said. “We’re eager to collaborate on solutions as we look to invest in building a better community.”

For more information about the New Hanover Community Endowment, please visit www.nhcendowment.org.

Grants

The Forward Fund - \$3,000,000

The Forward Fund (TFF) finances short-term, high-yield training programs in the critical sectors of skilled trades, technology, and healthcare. TFF operates with a clear mission: empowering individuals in Southeastern NC to achieve upward mobility through tailored financial support and coaching for education and training, aligned with workforce demand, paving the way for high-wage careers and inclusive economic growth. A majority of the grant – \$2.5 million – will be placed in the revolving loan fund to go directly to students. The learner-centric loans pay for enrollment, tuition, and program fees, along with life expenses. The remaining \$500,000 will provide operating support.

Contact: *Meaghan Dennison* mdennison@theforward.fund

Red Cross - \$2,490,474 over 3 years

This funding will support the first North Carolina-based American Red Cross Community Adaptation Program (CAP). As extreme weather worsens, Red Cross CAP teams are working with local partners in areas with high disaster risk and chronic social issues to expand access to nutritious food, healthcare, and affordable housing. Already launched in 18 other communities around the country, the program aims to holistically build community resilience before disasters.

Year 1: \$941,087

Year 2: \$952,433

Year 3: \$596,954

Contact: *Mike DeCinti* Michael.decinti@redcross.org

The Arts Council of Wilmington/NHC- \$200,000.00

This grant will provide critical funding to 15-20 grassroots nonprofit arts organizations in New Hanover County through subgrants administered by the Arts Council. New Hanover County's nonprofit arts sector creates employment opportunities, generates revenue, and is a vital part of cultivating an inclusive community and economy.

Contact: *Rhonda Bellamy*, info@artswilmington.org

The Carousel Center- \$200,000.00

This grant provides the Carousel Center with core operating support for the two New Hanover County locations. The Carousel Center fosters resilience in children victimized by physical or sexual abuse. This grant supports the mission to end child abuse in our community.

Contact: *Amy Feath*, amy.feath@carouselcenter.org

Pine Forest Education & Learning Center- \$131,000.00

This grant will enable Pine Forest Education & Learning Center to foster educational programs, enhance accessibility to public spaces, and promote civic engagement. The grant cultivates an inclusive community while preserving Wilmington's history.

Contact: *LaToia Brown*, pfcadmin@pineforestcemetery.org

Planned Parenthood South Atlantic- \$200,000.00 over two years

This core operating grant supports the Adolescent Parenting Program (APP). The APP uses home visits, evidence-based sex education, and access to medical care to help pregnant and parenting teens delay having a second child until completing high school. The program also provides pathways to resources, including transportation, job interviews, and more.

Contact: *Elizabeth Irwin*, elizabeth.irwin@ppsat.org

Retake- \$4,000.00

This grant provides general operating support, including program costs, staffing, and supplies. This unique service assists families as they heal from the trauma of fleeing conflicts or surviving natural disasters by giving new keepsakes in the form of family portraits.

Contact: *Danielle Desnoyers*, d-desnoyers@retakeorg.com

St. Mary's Health Center- \$60,000.00

This grant will increase the capacity and capability, including supplies and hiring a part-time assistant, which will enable them to continue to provide emergency oral surgery and services to those who otherwise would not be able to access this essential care.

Contact: *Laura Vinson*, stmary.dentalclinic@gmail.com

WHQR Public Media- \$34,973.00

This grant will purchase emergency radios and cover the administrative and distribution costs of WHQR and their partner agencies. These efforts will improve the community's resilience and safety during emergencies and allow for quicker recovery in the event of a disaster.

Contact: *Mary Bradley*, mbradley@whqr.org

###

About NHCE

The New Hanover Community Endowment’s mission is to invest and partner with the non-profit community to address the root challenges in healthcare, education, safety, and economic opportunity and develop impactful solutions for every person in the New Hanover County community. NHCE was established from the sale of the county-owned New Hanover Regional Medical Center in 2020. From its sale, the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners invested nearly \$1.3 billion to form the endowment to benefit the community.