



2025
Community & Capacity
Grants Program

Community Enrichment
Initiatives Incorporated



THE ENDOWMENT
NEW HANOVER COMMUNITY ENDOWMENT

May, 2026

THE MISSION

The Endowment's mission is to improve the health, education, safety, and economic opportunity of every person in New Hanover County.



Social and Health Equity



Education



Community Safety



Community Development

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Britt Foundation



Children's Museum of Wilmington



Children's Museum of Wilmington



The Wilmington Farmer's Market



Smart Start

Letter from the President & CEO

Dear New Hanover County Community,

2025 marked an important milestone with the launch of our first small grants program. The 2025 Community and Capacity Grants Program pilot was intentionally designed to open a lane for all eligible organizations serving our community. Through this effort, we invested \$500,000 across 111 grants, reaching a broad and diverse range of community organizations addressing critical needs throughout New Hanover County.

At its core, this program reflects our belief that strong organizations are essential to strong communities. These grants provided practical, flexible support that organizations could apply where it was most needed, helping sustain day-to-day operations and services as nonprofits continued their work in an increasingly complex and evolving environment.

Importantly, this program has strengthened our understanding of the nonprofit landscape across New Hanover County and the work happening in the field. Through our engagement with applicants and partners, we gained insight into both the challenges organizations face and the opportunities that exist to better support their work. This learning continues to shape how we approach funding, partnerships, and long-term strategy.

Building on the foundation established through the 2025 pilot, the 2026 Community Grants Program reflects an evolution of this work, expanding opportunity, refining our approach, and continuing to invest in a nonprofit ecosystem that is resilient, responsive, and rooted in community. Informed by lessons learned, the program continues to prioritize accessibility and flexibility while strengthening alignment with community-identified needs.

We are grateful to the organizations and leaders who make this work possible and who continue to serve New Hanover County with dedication and care. Together, we are learning, growing, and building a stronger future for our community.



With sincere gratitude,
Sophie Dagenais,
President and CEO

Network Associate Message

Dear Friends and Partners,

As The Endowment's Network Associate, it is a privilege to witness the determination and creativity demonstrated through the 2025 Community and Capacity Grants Program. The program offered a unique window into the strength, innovation, and commitment of the organizations serving New Hanover County.

The program also generated data and insights that are shaping how we approach the future. We are using what we've learned to better understand community needs, identify gaps and opportunities, and refine how we support organizations in more meaningful and sustainable ways.

As we move forward, this process continues to reinforce the importance of listening, ensuring that the experiences of community organizations help guide funding decisions and program evolution.



With deep appreciation,

Shannon Wick,
Network Associate

SUMMARY

In 2025, The Endowment piloted a small-grants initiative designed to create an accessible funding pathway for community-rooted organizations serving New Hanover County. The 2025 Community and Capacity Grants Program awarded \$500,000: 70 Community grants (\$313,312) and 41 Capacity grants (\$186,688).

In summary:

- Grants helped sustain organizational capacity through the hiring or support of over 30 workforce roles, including interns, staff, and fellows.
- Approximately 7,000 individuals were served through community-driven programming, such as youth entrepreneurship activities, early childhood summer readiness programs, food access services, and maternal health support.
- More than 540 community members and staff strengthened their skills through training, courses, and certification opportunities.
- More than 60 community members gained access to opportunities through scholarships, financial assistance, and memberships.
- Marketing and capacity-strengthening funding expanded organizational reach through 2 video productions, website enhancements, and approximately 18 outreach events, collectively engaging 3,890 community members.
- Art and culture programming reached over 2,000 community members through lessons, camps, and hands-on creative workshops.

While narrative and quantitative reporting do not fully capture the breadth of impact, the data demonstrates the significance of these investments in strengthening community capacity and expanding access to critical resources. These insights informed the continuation of this work through the 2026 Community Grant Program, including the intentional recognition of art and culture as a dedicated funding lane in partnership with the Arts Council of Wilmington and New Hanover County.



BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

As The Endowment’s inaugural small grants program, the 2025 funding cycle provided small, flexible grants to support both programmatic needs and organizational capacity across New Hanover County’s nonprofit ecosystem. This report presents a generalized analysis of impact, overarching outcomes, and cross-cutting themes. Its purpose is to capture the collective impact of these investments and provide an understanding of how funding contributed to strengthening programs, organizations, and the community.

Data and Methods

- Uses grantee outcome reports to track use of funds, numbers served, programs implemented, outreach events, and capacity building.

Limitations

- Variability in grantee reporting, from narrative formats to detailed quantitative data, limited the ability to standardize and compare outcomes across grants, likely reflecting differences in funded activities and reporting approaches.

Community & Capacity

GRANTS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

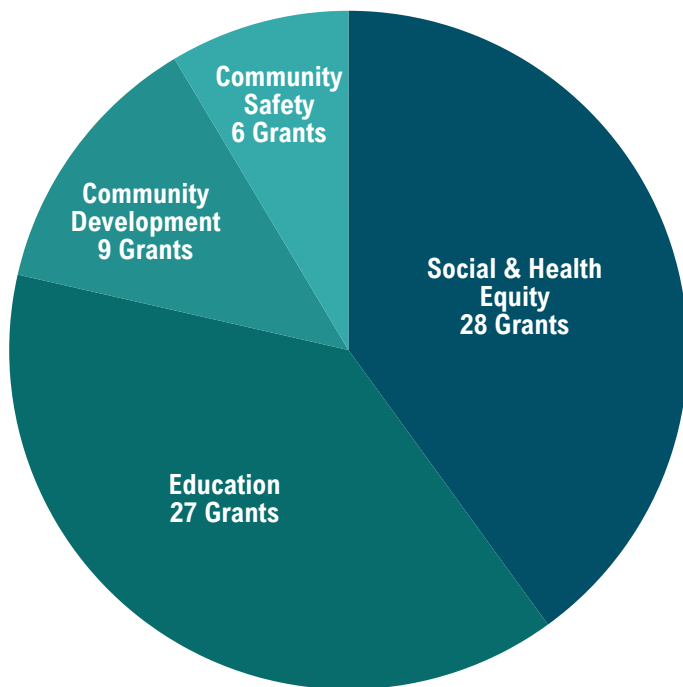
Scope, Goals and Reach

The program as a whole aimed to strengthen the nonprofit ecosystem in New Hanover County by creating an accessible funding pathway for community-rooted organizations through flexible support that advances both programmatic impact and organizational capacity. The program was designed to respond to immediate community needs while contributing to a more resilient, responsive nonprofit landscape across the county.

As designed, the program was divided into two categories of grants:

- **Community Grants**, to support programs, services, and initiatives to create positive outcomes for individuals and families in New Hanover County.
- **Capacity Grants**, to assist with organizational stability, governance, and growth. These grants could support strategic planning, professional and leadership development, succession and board planning, fundraising, research, program evaluation, and data organization.

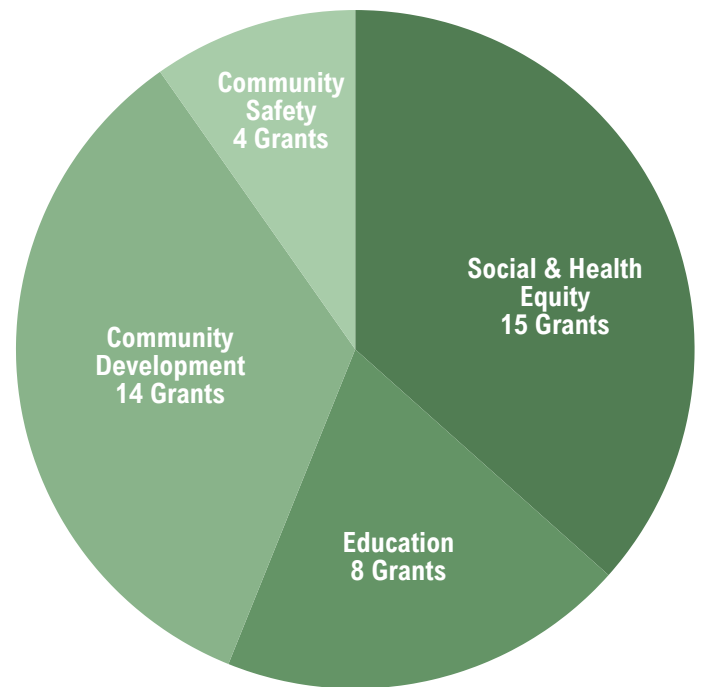
Community Grants



70 COMMUNITY GRANTS: \$313,312

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Social & Health Equity | ■ Community Development |
| ■ Education | ■ Community Safety |

Capacity Grants



41 Capacity Grants: \$186,688

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Social & Health Equity | ■ Community Development |
| ■ Education | ■ Community Safety |

111

Grants Awarded

\$500,000

Total Funding Awarded

TRACKING OUR IMPACT: METHODOLOGY

To assess the impact of the 2025 community and capacity grants, The Endowment used a structured approach that combined quantitative and qualitative data.

Data Sources: Outcome data were drawn from final grantee reports. Metrics include the number of programs expanded or sustained, individuals reached, workforce capacity strengthened, and courses, trainings, and certifications completed.

Categorization: All reports' outcomes were grouped into themes such as Programmatic Support and Services, Workforce Capacity and Development, Capital/Infrastructure Improvements, Marketing and Communication, and Organizational System Implementation. Data was reviewed for completeness, recognizing that many grants delivered cross-cutting outcomes (results/impact) and outputs (what was delivered) that may be represented across multiple metrics.

Continuous Learning: The methodology emphasizes the impact and importance of investments in community-rooted organizations, encouraging grantees to align reporting and to submit both measurable data and success stories for a deeper understanding of the nonprofit landscape informing future iterations of this program.

This mixed-methods approach enabled The Endowment to both quantify results and learn from community experience, guiding future investment and strategy refinement.



Cape Fear Literacy Council



Cameron Art Museum



Carolina Beach Mural Project



CAPE FEAR CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA



DREAMS Center for Arts Education



LESSONS LEARNED

The Children's Museum of
Wilmington

Veterans Creative Arts Program

Carolina Beach Mural Project

- Distinctions Between “Community” and “Capacity” Created Confusion:** The 2025 pilot structured funding through two categories: Community Grants, intended to support direct programs, services, and initiatives benefiting individuals and families in New Hanover County, and Capacity Grants, designed to support organizational stability, governance, and growth, including activities such as strategic planning, leadership development, succession and board planning, fundraising, research, evaluation, and data development. Through implementation, we learned that this distinction, while conceptually sound, proved difficult to understand in practice. Applicants expressed confusion about how to define “community” versus “capacity,” and how certain needs or activities fit within either category. Many requests naturally spanned both areas, reflecting the reality that programmatic impact and organizational capacity are deeply interconnected.
- Capacity Investments Drive Programmatic Impact:** Funding that supports staffing, systems, and infrastructure is not separate from direct service outcomes – it enables them. Strengthening organizational capacity enhances effectiveness, reach, and sustainability of programs.
- Flexible Funding is Critical in a Rapidly Changing Landscape:** These grants play an essential role in helping organizations respond to immediate and emerging community needs within an evolving funding environment. Flexible support allows grassroots organizations to adapt quickly and maintain continuity of services.
- Quantitative Data is Essential to Complement Qualitative Insights:** While narrative reporting highlights meaningful stories and context, it does not fully capture the scope or scale of impact. Strengthening quantitative reporting would provide a more comprehensive understanding of outcomes across the portfolio.
- Application Quality and Organizational Effort Suggest the Need to Reassess the Current \$5,000 Grant Cap:** The quality of applications, combined with the level of effort required and the degree of demonstrated need, suggests merit in considering an increase to the current \$5,000 grant maximum. Many organizations operate with limited resources, which can restrict their ability to expand services or strengthen infrastructure. Higher funding levels would allow organizations to invest more fully in staff, systems, and other capacity-building priorities, enhancing both immediate programmatic impact and organizational sustainability.

These lessons informed the design of our 2026 Community Grants Program, building on the successes and insights from the 2025 Community and Capacity Grants Program pilot. For example, the 2026 program simplified the structure by consolidating funding into a single Community Grants category. This approach aligns more closely with how organizations operate and apply resources, reduces confusion, and preserves flexibility while continuing to support both programmatic work and organizational capacity through one accessible funding pathway. The program also doubled in size from \$500,000 annually to \$1 million dollars in 2026.

2025 Community & Capacity Grants

SUMMARY OF GRANT IMPACT

Project Description	Community	Capacity	# Impacted (Program/People)
Workforce Capacity & Staffing	3 interns/fellows/apprentices hired or supported 13 new hires or expanded roles	13 staff/board/consultants supported hired or expanded 4 staff supported in well-being initiatives	33
Trainings, Courses, Certificates	501 (411 low-income, unemployed adults provided employment and job readiness training, trauma-informed training for 24 families, trauma and resilience-based micro certifications earned through 9 community members, 25 Northstar learning certificates earned, 4 interns/volunteers trained on archival handling and processing, 28 participants certified in Breast Health Peer Educator training)	4 certifications completed (Perinatal Mental Health Certification, CompTIAA+, Neuraesthetics and Aging in Place Certification) 41 staff completed trainings/courses (i.e., Diversity & Inclusion Course, Care Management and Care Coordination Training, Harvard's Business School's High Potentials Leadership Program, Duke Nonprofit Management Course, Emotional Intelligence and FORTE Leadership Training)	545
Professional Development Conferences, Events Attended		7 (i.e., Southeastern Museums Conference, Association of Fundraising Professionals Conference, NC IDEA Ecosystem Summit, Food Corridor Shared Kitchen Summit, National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference, Children's Advocacy Center of North Carolina Symposium, Public Media Development and Marketing Conference)	7
Organizational Systems Implemented		10 grants reported funds for sytem implementation (i.e., Fundraising/Financial Mgmt, Data Collection/Research System, Administration/CRM Software, License/Memberships)	10
Individuals Served in Programming	6,979 (25 students participated in garden club, 150 trauma-informed haircuts, 2860 people provided breakfast and a safe-space, 27 participants in PSB-adolescent group, 45 mothers involved in new mother meetups, 46 individuals served in social recreation program, 10 student/6 military veteran involvement in outdoor leadership experience, 6 individuals supported in doula/labor support and 1 in postpartum, 67 kids participated in PAL program 2 nights a week 2x a month, 24 students supported in summer outdoor expeditions, 45 clients reimbursed for car repairs, 41 student participate in youth entrepreneurship shark tank, 236 girl scouts involved in mobile program, 30 girls participated in girl scouts day camp, 800 girl scouts in leadership experience, wellness support retreat for 60 cancer patients, 192 residents served through free civil-legal services, 12 student supported weekly in Purpose Teen Camp, 50 low-income families served through PreK Jump Start summer program, 355 customers provided food access, social support for 2 degree-seeking students with autism. 50 community members served through food pantry, 23 student participation in STEM youth workshops, 82 student participation in Digital Literacy Program, 1734 criminal charges expunged)		6979
Program Sessions Conducted	215 (2 garden clean up days, 33 new mother postpartum doula home visits, 18 mobile program visits for financial literacy and engineering, 39 half and full day art camps supported, 8 educational programs conducted, 65 therapeutic riding sessions, 9 Saturday Academy sessions conducted, 103 mental health counseling sessions provided, 3 film-centered events for career exploration in film conducted)		215

2025 Community & Capacity Grants

SUMMARY OF GRANT IMPACT

Project Description	Community	Capacity	# Impacted (Program/People)
Scholarships, Memberships, Financial Assistance Provided	63 (10 youth scholarships, 24 mothers in direct financial assistance, 2 teen scholarships, 16 children scholarships, 11 young men sponsored by Boys State Program)		63
Event Attendees	13,709 (250 Christmas concert attendees, 2500 attendees for Bookbag Block Party, 150 End-of-Semester Luncheon, 10000 attendees at Space Makers exhibit, 809 attendees at Community Day)	1,775 (1500 - India Day, 40 - Celebration Luncheon, 235 - Chamber Music Wilmington Concert Attendees)	15,484
Marketing & Communication	2 videos created, 3890 community members reached, 18 engagement events (1000 educational brochures distributed, 9 community & club outreach events, 11 outreach engagements conducted, 1 housing video created (~300 views), 1 community land trust video created (~2000 views), 90 community members reached through breast health education, 500 parents engaged in group outreach, leading to 55 new enrollments)	3 marketing initiative executed, 1 website funded, 1 outreach materials funded (90 educational outreach materials distributed - Music For Youth Program)	2 videos, 1 website, 3 marketing initiatives, 18 events, 3980 community members reached
Art & Culture Programming	1,683 (112 children provided weekly art and music lessons, 1104 registrations for age-specific creative art camps, 382 participants in various arts programs, 20 residents involved in creative activity workshops, 65 participant involvement in 53 art enrichment classes)	360 children weekly (Music Is Life! Program)	2043
Access to Basic Needs, Resources	3,895 (25 mattresses and 27 platforms purchased, 2 sets of dentures purchased for dental access, 2 sets of geode learning materials purchased increasing third grader reading proficiency from 58% to 70% and decoding proficiency from 59% to 68%; 40 books purchased focused on food community and justice; 528 ebt transactions recorded; provided total of 200 stocked book bags to HS, MS, and ES students w funds; 1718 books ordered and distributed; 70 take home art kits; 8 recording kits for classroom; 75 backpacks given away for free in aug yard sale and 104 backpacks distributed to local community; 10 new laptops funded, 1086 free trees distributed)		3895
Facility/Capital/Infrastructure Improvements	36 (1 social recreation area revamped, 1 greenhouse repaired, 6 trees planted for survivor patient privacy, 1 window/door replacement to benefit 60 seniors, 1 gutter repair for educational rain barrel, 2 historical archive equipment purchases, 10 raised beds and 4 trellis for school garden, 1 robot replacement, 1 mobile salon repair, 8 toolkits purchased for home repair delivery for low-income homeowners)		36

Community Grants

2SHARE, Inc | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Basic Needs Access
4th Trimester Mission | \$3170 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Maternal & Infant Health
Access Dental Care | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Preventative Care
Alliance for Cape Fear Trees | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support
Autism Society of North Carolina, Inc | \$5000 | Focus: Capital/Infrastructure
Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern North Carolina | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Youth Development
Bread for Life Senior Pantry | \$4300 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Food Access
Britt Foundation | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Youth Development
Cameron Art Museum | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Arts & Culture
Cape Fear Area Doulas | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Maternal & Infant Health
Cape Fear Community Land Trust | \$5000 | Focus: Marketing Engagement
Cape Fear Literacy Council | \$4447 | Focus: Staffing Support/Workforce Development
Caridad Inc. | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Maternal & Infant Health
Carolina Beach Mural Project | \$2500 | Focus: Staffing Support/Arts & Culture
Child Development Center | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Youth Development
City of Wilmington Police Department | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Youth Development
Community Enrichment Initiatives Inc | \$5000 | Focus: Capital/Infrastructure
Domestic Violence Shelter and Services, Inc | \$1313 | Focus: Capital/Infrastructure
East Carolina Community Development, Inc | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Arts & Culture
Education Without Walls | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Youth Development
Edwin A. Alderman Elementary School PTA | \$2990 | Focus: Programmatic Support/K-12 Achievement Gaps
Elderhaus | \$4528 | Focus: Capital/Infrastructure
Engine Angels | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support
First Baptist Church Wilmington | \$4528 | Focus: Staffing Support
Five14 Revolution | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Basic Needs Access
Fostering Bridges, Inc | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Certifications & Trainings
Genesis Block Foundation | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Innovation & Entrepreneurial Development
Girl Scouts North Carolina Coastal Pines | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Youth Development
Going Beyond the Pink | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Preventative Care
Growing Resilience | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Food Access
Hope Abounds Cancer Network | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Preventative Care
Island Montessori Charter School | \$4382 | Focus: Capital/Infrastructure
Leading Into New Communities, Inc | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Certifications & Trainings
Legal Aid of North Carolina | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support
Low Vision Rehab Solutions Foundation | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Basic Needs Access
Lower Cape Fear Historical Society | \$3505 | Focus: Capital/Infrastructure, Arts & Culture
New Horizons Elementary School | \$4800 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Arts & Culture
North Carolina American Legion Post 10 | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Youth Development
North Carolina Coastal Land Trust | \$5000 | Focus: Marketing Engagement
One Christian Network | \$4,528 | Focus: Marketing Engagement

Community Grants

Opera House Theatre Company | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Arts & Culture
Pine Valley Elementary PTA | \$5000 | Focus: Capital/Infrastructure
Purpose International | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Youth Development
Region O Council for the Advancement of Minorities in Engineering | \$2717 | Focus: Capital & Infrastructure
Restored Souls Foundation | \$4528 | Focus: Capital & Infrastructure
Soaring as Eagles Outreach Ministry Inc | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Early Childhood Education
StepUp Wilmington | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Workforce Development
Thalian Association Community Theatre | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Arts & Culture
The Carousel Center | \$4528 | Focus: Staffing Support/Youth Development
The Children's Museum of Wilmington | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support
The Coastal Therapeutic Riding Program | \$4875 | Focus: Programmatic Support
The Wilmington Farmers Market | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Food Access
Transitions Foundation NC Inc | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support
Trauma Institute & Child Trauma Institute | \$4528 | Focus: Staffing Support/Mental Health
Trinity United Methodist Church | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Basic Needs Access
Union Missionary Baptist Church | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support
United Way of Cape Fear | \$4894 | Focus: Programmatic Support/K-12 Achievement Gaps
University of North Carolina at Wilmington – Precollege Mentoring Program | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Food Access
Veterans Creative Arts Program | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Arts & Culture
Vigilant Hope | \$4528 | Focus: Staffing Support/Community Resiliency
WARM NC | \$4528 | Focus: Capital/Infrastructure
WHQR Public Media | \$4500 | Focus: Programmatic Support
Wilmington CareNet Counseling Center | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Mental Health
Wilmington Housing Authority | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Food Access
Wilmington Symphony Orchestra | \$4145 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Arts & Culture
Wilmington Virtuosi Brass | \$2717 | Focus: Staffing Support/Arts & Culture
Working Films | \$5000 | Focus: Marketing Engagement/Arts & Culture
Wrightsboro UMC | \$2717 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Basic Needs Access
Young Life | \$4500 | Focus: Staffing Support/Youth Development
Young Scientist Academy | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support/Youth Development

Capacity Grants

4th Trimester Mission | \$1335 | Focus: Professional Development/Certification
ACCESS of Wilmington | \$5000 | Focus: Technology/Data Systems
Alliance for Cape Fear Trees | \$4270 | Focus: Technology/Data Systems
BAPS Community Outreach | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support
Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern North Carolina | \$4528 | Focus: Professional Development/Training
Brooklyn Arts Music Academy | \$4949 | Focus: Technology/Data Systems
Cameron Art Museum | \$5000 | Focus: Professional Development/Events
Canines for Service, Inc | \$4528 | Focus: Technology/Data Systems
CAPE FEAR CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support
Cape Fear Literacy Council | \$3690 | Focus: Professional Development/Trainings
Chamber Music Wilmington | \$4528 | Focus: Staffing Support
Domestic Violence Shelter | \$5000 | Focus: Professional Developments/Trainings
DREAMS Center for Arts Education | \$5000 | Focus: Marketing Engagement
Education Without Walls | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support
Elderhaus | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support
First Fruit Ministries | \$4528 | Focus: Capital/Infrastructure
Fostering Bridges, Inc | \$4740 | Focus: Technology/Data Systems
Genesis Block Foundation | \$3870 | Focus: Professional Development/Events
Going Beyond the Pink | \$5000 | Focus: Technology/Data Systems
Good Shepherd Center | \$4528 | Focus: Professional Development/Trainings
Growing Resilience | \$5000 | Focus: Professional Development
IndependentWorks | \$5000 | Focus: Technology/Data Systems
Leading Into New Communities, Inc | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support
Legal Aid of North Carolina | \$4528 | Focus: Professional Development/Trainings
MedNorth Health Center | \$4528 | Focus: Technology/Data Systems
Port City Playwrights' Project | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support
Preservation NC | \$2900 | Focus: Technology/Data Systems
PTA at the International School of Gregory | \$5000 | Focus: Capital/Infrastructure
Ruthie Trammel's Champions for Compassion | \$5000 | Focus: Professional Development/Trainings
The Arts Council of Wilmington/NHC | \$5000 | Focus: Programmatic Support
The Carousel Center | \$4528 | Focus: Professional Development/Events
The Healing Place | \$4528 | Focus: Professional Development/Trainings
The LGBTQ Center of the Cape Fear Coast | \$5000 | Focus: Staffing Support
Union Missionary Baptist Church | \$4820 | Focus: Technology/Data Systems, Staffing Support, Professional Development/Training
United Way of Cape Fear | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support, Marketing Engagement
Veterans Creative Arts Program | \$5000 | Focus: Staffing Support
Welcome Home Angel | \$5000 | Focus: Technology/Data Systems
WHQR Public Media | \$4610 | Focus: Professional Development/Events
Wilmington Symphony Orchestra | \$4528 | Focus: Marketing Engagement
Wilmington Virtuosi Brass | \$4528 | Focus: Marketing Engagement
Working Films | \$4528 | Focus: Programmatic Support



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