

North Coast Opportunities Building Homes, Building Lives (BHBL) Proposal

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

North Coast Opportunities, Inc. (NCO) will use grant funds to expand and enhance its countywide Building Homes, Building Lives (BHBL) Program to provide creative solutions to Lake County housing challenges. Activities will include:

- Developing complementary funding streams to leverage grant dollars, including developing cost-share agreements with landlords, community sponsorships, and material discounts from local merchants.
- Expanding eligibility criteria to include participants referred by community partners.
- Building program capacity to reduce reliance on and costs of using local contractors as instructors, by providing additional construction training for the project coordinator.
- Hiring participants as NCO employees to ensure their access to a breadth of trainings.
- Developing creative partnerships with additional contractors to increase employment opportunities for program graduates and expand program capacity to work on multiple construction projects simultaneously.
- Conducting outreach to landlords to identify sites for accessory dwelling units (ADU).

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The NCO New Digs Program works to develop stable living situations for individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, helping them to achieve the stability they need to move forward toward securing permanent housing on their own. New Digs helps people quickly move into and retain stable housing by providing assistance ranging from rent payments to help with utility payments, application fees, and more. Intensive case management focuses on assessment of client readiness for permanent housing and working with clients to identify and address barriers to their self-sufficiency.

Lake County's shortage of affordable housing continues to be a significant challenge for unhoused or precariously housed people, including New Digs clients. To address this challenge,

in 2020 NCO initiated the Building Homes, Building Lives (BHBL) Program. BHBL helps vulnerable people develop construction skills while experiencing the satisfaction of contributing to their community. Participants are homeless people, people at risk of homelessness, or people from other vulnerable populations who are recruited from current New Digs clients and other community programs; most also have a history of trauma. Serving this population comes with challenges; New Digs intensive case managers help participants to overcome barriers that have kept them from obtaining permanent housing and employment. Participants also have access to support services (e.g., health care, counseling) through NCO partners in the Lake County Continuum of Care for the Homeless.

The grassroots BHBL Program provides training in hard and soft job skills, work experience, group mentoring, and job placement opportunities. The 300-hour BHBL training cycle includes classroom instruction in workplace safety and use of tools, on-the-job training and work experience, classes covering soft job skills, and presentations from potential employers in the construction sector. Up to five individuals participate in each cohort, allowing time and opportunity for them to develop group cohesion and mutual support. Participants also receive a basic wage during their training. NCO works with a licensed contractor to provide construction training and oversee the construction process. At the end of the training period, participants receive a certificate, job placement assistance, and a letter of recommendation.

BHBL also provides unique benefits for the community as it reduces the number of Lake County residents who are homeless and/or unemployed while increasing the inventory of available rental housing and the skilled construction labor force. The New Digs Housing Navigator conducts on-going outreach to landlords to identify potential homes in need of rehabilitation. The program has increased the affordable housing inventory by remodeling or repairing uninhabitable rental properties, some of which have been adapted for multi-family occupancy. BHBL has also constructed small housing units, with each 190-sq foot house having its own HVAC system, two windows, and a locking door. (These units are located at a site that has a bathroom, shower, outdoor kitchen area, and on-site property management).

PROJECT OUTCOMES TO DATE

Since NCO began implementing BHBL, five cohorts totaling 15 participants have participated in the program, and 8 participants have graduated. Of the graduates, all but one has secured full-time work in the construction sector. BHBL has also increased Lake County's rental housing inventory. A total of 28 housing units have been constructed or improved by the program, and 33 families now have stable homes in these units.

PROJECT PARTNERS

BHBL's success is due in part to strong relationships with community partners who have supported the project in a variety of ways. These partners are listed below:

Adventist Health Clear Lake	Hope Rising
Bridges Construction	Lake County Behavioral Health
California Workforce Development Board	Lake County Board of Supervisors
CareerPoint LAKE	Lake County Continuum of Care for the Homeless
Citizens Caring 4 Clearlake	LC Department of Social Services
Community Development Services	Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians
EDD – Employment Development	Woodland Community College
Equus	Worship Central Middletown
Hope City	

PROPOSED PROJECT GOAL, OBJECTIVES, OUTPUTS, AND OUTCOMES

The proposed expansion of the BHBL program will continue to address housing shortages, the shortage of skilled construction workers, and the employment challenges of vulnerable individuals, with the goal of reducing both the number of Lake County residents who are homeless and the number of people who are unemployed.

Project results will be measured by: the number of training participants that complete training and receive certificates; the number of training participants that secure employment following their training; the number of participants and other vulnerable individuals that secure permanent housing during the course of the project; and the number of habitable houses added to the county's affordable housing inventory. Project objectives, outputs, and outcomes to be achieved by the end of the project are detailed below.

- Up to 30 participants will participate in BHBL training, and at least 24 (80%) will graduate from the program.
- 100% of graduates will demonstrate hard and soft job skill acquisition, measured through a skills assessment conducted at the end of the training.
- 80% of graduates will secure employment.
- 100% of participants will be securely housed.
- At least 3 landlords will be identified for placement of ADUs.
- At least 2 additional contractors will begin working with the program.
- By the end of the project, at least 25 habitable homes will be added to the county inventory of affordable rental housing.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

BHBL Training

- The program will conduct 6 training cycles during the grant period of 24 months.
- Each training cycle will provide 300 hours of instruction over approximately 3 months to a cohort of 5 participants, of whom at least 4 will complete the program. If participants need additional training, they will be encouraged to participate for an additional 50 hours.
- Training will begin with an initial orientation focused on workplace safety and work etiquette. Topics covered will include work attire, jobsite dangers, handling hazardous conditions, sexual harassment, job placement opportunities, substance use policies, what to do in case of an injury, etc.
- Hard skill training will be overseen by licensed contractors. Having a licensed contractor as an instructor lends credibility to participants' experience when they are ready to find a job. The first two weeks of training will focus on safe demolition of uninhabitable buildings, including dealing with molds, asbestos, dry rot, leaking plumbing, and live electricity. On-going construction skills training will include light electrical, painting, flooring, window and toilet replacement, door installation, etc. Instruction will also be provided by the Project Coordinator, who will broaden his current construction experience by working with a Bridges crew for at least one month at the beginning of the funding period. Having a qualified instructor on staff will reduce the costs of working with contractors for activities that do not require a licensed contractor.
- Soft skill job instruction will be provided weekly by NCO staff, covering punctuality, resume development, on-the-job relationship and communication skills, etc. Participants will have the opportunity to practice their interview skills twice—at the beginning and again at the end of their training. This component also includes monthly presentations by potential employers.

- Each participants will receive a construction toolkit, transportation support (gas cards or bus passes) if needed, and a graduation gift that will be useful in their new profession, such as a power tool.
- Each student will receive on-going assessment and 1:1 guidance and, at the completion of the 300-hour training, each participant will receive a full report of the construction skillset they have mastered and a certificate of completion.
- Each participant will receive job placement support. NCO has secured job placement agreements with local employers who are willing and eager to hire BHBL graduates.

Construction Activities

- Each cohort will learn and practice basic construction skills by working on potential rental properties that are currently not habitable. Work may include flooring replacement, wall and window repairs, ADA adaptations, HVAC, landscape improvements, etc. Landlords often cover the cost of building materials for these improvements in exchange for the labor provided by the program and the landlord's agreement to rent to New Digs clients.
- As a legacy project, each cohort will spend time working on construction of an ADU, with three to four such homes completed during the project period.
- Contractors will provide instruction and oversight of all activities requiring a permit.
- For each construction project, NCO will work with landlords to develop a funding package that braids funds from a variety of sources (e.g., grant funds, landlords, material discounts) to cover project costs.

PROJECT WORKPLAN

NCO will implement the project over a two-year period. A preliminary timeline is provided below.

MONTH	ACTIVITIES
Month 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach and recruitment of participants and landlords • Interview and hire participants • Identify landlords for initial construction projects • Develop training and construction schedule • Project Coordinator works with Bridges crew for one month
Month 2-4 <i>Cohort 1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver initial training and orientation to new participants • Deliver soft job skill training, including employer presentations • Provide on-the-job hard skill training, including 1:1 guidance • Construct an ADU as legacy project
Month 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide job placement support to Cohort 1 graduates • Conduct outreach and recruitment of Cohort 2 participants • Interview and hire participants • Identify Cohort 2 construction projects • Develop Cohort 2 training and construction schedule
Month 6-8 <i>Cohort 2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat training activities
Month 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide job placement support • Conduct recruitment and other preparatory activities
Month 10-12 <i>Cohort 3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat training activities
Month 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide job placement support • Conduct recruitment and other preparatory activities

MONTH	ACTIVITIES
Month 14-16 <i>Cohort 4</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat training activities
Month 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide job placement support Conduct recruitment and other preparatory activities
Month 18-20 <i>Cohort 5</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat training activities
Month 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide job placement support Conduct recruitment and other preparatory activities
Month 20-22 <i>Cohort 6</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat training activities
Month 23-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide job placement support Conduct recruitment and other preparatory activities

BUDGET

Budget Line	Cost Breakdown	Cost
Personnel (salaries include 3% annual increase)	Project Director: 10% FTE @ \$87,360 annual salary = \$17,734 Coordinator: 100 FTE @ \$60,320 annual salary = \$122,450 Housing Navigator: 25% FTE @ \$52,000 annual salary = \$26,390 Project Assistant: 50% FTE @ \$45,760 annual salary = \$46,446 Fringe Benefits @ 30% = \$63,906	\$276,926
BHBL Program Operation Costs	Local travel: 200 miles/month @ \$0.585/mile = \$2,808 Marketing, outreach, and recruitment @ \$500/year = \$1,000 Professional development @ \$250/year = \$500 Office supplies @ \$100/month = \$2,400 Office occupancy and storage @ \$500/month = \$12,000 IT support @ \$100/month = \$2,400 Communication @ \$110/month = \$2,640 Training supplies @ approx. \$55/participant x 30 = \$1,671 Participant incentives: \$350/participant x 30 = \$10,500 Participant wages: \$16/hour + 15% fringe x 300 hours/participant x 5 participants/cohort x 6 cohorts = \$165,600	\$201,519
Construction Costs	<i>Note that construction costs will also be drawn from landlords and other sources, in addition to grant funds.</i> ADUs: 3-4 units @ approx. \$60,000 each = \$180,000 Rental renovations: 2-5 homes/cohort @ \$5,500/cohort x 6 cohorts = \$33,000 Contractor: \$85/hour x 250 hours = \$42,500	\$255,500
Indirect costs	9% of \$733,945 in total direct costs = \$66,055	\$66,055
TOTAL		\$800,000