

BOONE

WEST

FOUNDED IN 184 VIRGINIA

The **American Rescue Plan** Act provides the Boone County Commission with \$4,167,771 in direct federal aid to assist our community in its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Boone County received the first round of funding, approximately \$2 million, in 2021. In general, the American Rescue Plan Funds can be used to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, to replace lost public revenues, to support economic stabilization, and to make necessary investments in water, sewer, public health and broadband infrastructure. For additional information please see ARP State and Local Rules.¹

Please complete the application below in its entirety. You may attach additional pages if needed. Once submitted this application and any supporting document is considered a public record and will be made available to the public and media upon request.

PLEASE CERTIFY THAT YOU HAVE REVIEWED THE US TREASURY GUIDELINES REGARDING THE ELIGIBLE USES OF AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN STATE AND LOCAL RECOVERY FUNDS

Name: Dig In Inc

Address: Physical 368 Wahanda Lane Madison, WV 25130

Mailing 951 Hope Street Madison, WV 25130

Phone number:
681-439-0940

Section One: Contact information

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<https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds>

Email address:
digin304@gmail.com

Section Two: Project Summary

Please provide a narrative overview or summary of your proposal, including but not limited to the following:

1. Brief description of the proposal
2. Purpose and key anticipated outcomes
3. Individuals or communities served
4. How the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated this request
5. Amount of funding requested
6. Amount of any bids or cost estimates received to date, if applicable
7. Amount and source of matching funds raised or committed by your organization
8. How ARP funds, if awarded, will be used
9. How long it will take you to complete the project if awarded funding

- 1) The Dig In Living Education Center is aimed at continuing to build and expand a place to provide information and teach future generations the skills and cultural traditions that are deeply ingrained into our past. For generations, the people of the southern Coalfields have been highly independent and relied only on themselves and their local communities. In the last couple of generations, those practices and traditions have slipped away from the majority of the population. Every family used to have a garden. They raised vegetables, animals, and foraged for a number of different natural items, which provided a significant source of healthy, locally grown food for the majority of the population. Today, those food sources are no longer present. There are just not a lot of opportunities that provide access to locally grown foods. This has led to communities being overly reliant on highly preserved foods shipped in from other states. This project hopes to not only provide people with a small sample of our agricultural past, but also the knowledge and experience to bring that past back to life. The primary function of this project is to provide the location and resources to hold a variety of agro-educational opportunities for the community. As part of this educational process, Dig In Inc will provide live working examples of the concepts taught. We believe that this method is the best way to show people that not only do these things work, but they can work for them in their own communities. Our organization has begun building the location for this project along Rt 85 between the southern West Virginia towns of Madison and Van. The area, known as Robinson, is a small half- acre of property that has been purchased to house our project. This location was selected due its past use of livestock on the property, and also due to its affordability. Half of the property has already been fenced in, with the hope that this grant can be used to fence in the remainder. Thanks to a donation from the community, we have been able to plant a handful of berry bushes to get the perennial food forest model started. Dig In, Inc. has also made space for inground growing rows to be placed, and has also acquired

materials to start mushroom logs in the fall. We aim to have materials to also provide in- depth lessons on beekeeping, raised bed growing, container growing, composting, vermicomposting, plant starting, garden planning, and a host of other concepts., Dig In Inc. will immediately begin construction on raised beds, a greenhouse, a shed, and any other non season dependent items. Our organization will also immediately obtain the needed woodchips for the floor of the perennial food forest. In the spring, Dig In, Inc. will secure the budgeted plants from the Rain Tree Nursery online store, and will proceed to plant them as soon as possible. We plan to continue our partnership with Grow Appalachia, in order to help provide starting plants and seeds for Dig In Inc. projects. Our partnership with Grow Appalachia began as a direct result of the insecurities that developed in our food systems due to COVID-19. When local stores showed that they had difficulty securing everyday foods that the community took for granted, the faith of the community was directly shaken. This caused both of our organizations, as well as many others, to ask what could be done to help people find confidence in their ability to feed themselves. In our shared opinion, nothing could help alleviate this issue more than teaching people the skills they need to create their own personal food security systems. Understanding that COVID- 19 is still a looming threat, our organization will provide online resource videos to the community on the topics covered in our in- person course materials. Dig In, Inc's social media accounts will likely host these videos, with Facebook and YouTube being the primary access points.

- 2) Boone County lacks any significant access to locally grown foods, educational opportunities around raising food, and is void of any hands-on opportunities to experience the gratification of doing it for themselves. The bigger goal is to provide the means for the community to explore their interests in raising food, while creating opportunities for the community to access affordable healthy foods.
- 3) This project will continue to primarily serve the people of Boone County and the surrounding communities. Although we have had the honor of having education participants from around the world.
- 4) Just prior to Covid 19, our organization put its full efforts into developing a community garden and a farmers market. We raised funds, wrote grants, put in major hours to help build what we thought would be the initial steps of a new locally grown food system in our community. Then Covid 19 abruptly negated our plans and efforts up till that point. The farmers market was a failure and the community garden didn't bring as much participation as anticipated. This led to us rethinking our efforts. The many food shortages that became a regular thing during covid, only showed that we still needed to have local food access. Only that our chosen method was not effective. It was then that we decided that if people were going to have the best chance at securing real access to locally grown foods, then they would have to take that job into their own hands. Thus we decided that our community needed a place were they could come to learn different ways to raise different kinds of foods. This undertaking was taking a step back, with hopes that it would eventually lead to building the larger access that the community needs.
- 5) \$9998
- 6) We have no bids. All our work has been done by staff and volunteers donating their time to bringing this project to life.

- 7) Matching funding includes grants from: The Pallottine Foundation of Huntington \$4000, Try This WV \$3000, The Greater Kanawha Valley Building Bridges Leadership Program \$5000, as well as additional funding from Dig In's general budget.
- 8) ARP funding will be used to complete the final initial phase of the education center. This includes: finishing outdoor classroom space materials, providing gravel for the parking area, the wire fencing, staples, and gates to finish the second phase of the fence, a portion of the money owed for the fence posts, a power tool set for multiple purposes, the electrical wiring for the indoor classroom space, and three additional high wall garden beds.
- 9) We estimate that if money is dispensed by the beginning of spring, we should be able to finish these things before the end of summer.

1. Please describe the problem or need which your project seeks to address.

Boone County lacks any significant access to locally grown foods, educational opportunities around raising food, and is void of any hands-on opportunities to experience the gratification of doing it for themselves.

2. Please describe goals and expected outcomes of your proposal. The bigger goal is to provide the means for the community to explore their interests in raising food, while creating opportunities for the community to access affordable healthy foods. The longer term goals are to help develop partnerships with other organizations to provide education to the other parts of the county that otherwise might not travel to our location independently. We hope to use this space to provide training for people looking to get into agricultural endeavors that expand from purely recreational into more business minded ventures.

3. Please provide your project timeline, e.g., if funded when the project or proposal be fully implemented.

As soon as funding would come through we immediately begin ordering the needed materials and scheduling for our volunteers to begin the last of the more labor intensive parts. The outdoor classroom, garden beds, and fencing would be our first focus. Followed immediately by the parking area. Then we would finish up with the wiring of the indoor classroom space.

4. Please provide your total proposed budget.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1a05IRa7MW4XyOXCYPAlUr00Ir8IBX8u/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=112483025157410982602&rtpof=true&sd=true>

5. Please list any partners in this proposal, and the partner's role and your relationship with them.

Dig In is the only organization claiming direct control and responsibility for the project. Although we have contributions from multiple organizations including : Try This WV, The Pallottine Foundation of Huntington, The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, Grow Appalachia, The BARN, MotherJones Community Foundation, The One Foundation, WV State Extension Office, WVU Extension Office, and tons of volunteers of various natures.

6. Please describe your plan for sustainability of the project or initiative after the grant the award has been exhausted.

Dig In Inc has maintained multiple streams of funding from both grants and foundations to birth and expand our programming thus far. We are currently working towards building partnerships with budding businesses and organizations that will secure the small amount needed to provide the needed time from our small staff. Once the education center is completely finished, we will also have the means to raise funds from the sale of seedlings, mushroom grow kits, and a host of other small items. Between these things and other traditional methods of fundraising, we believe that we can afford to maintain our minimal staff and utilities.

Section Four: Organization information

1. Please provide your organization's mission statement.

Our Mission is to provide our community with the opportunities to build, learn, and grow a better future for themselves and their families.

2 . Describe the history of your organization, tell us about your current programs and

activities. Dig In, Inc. is a relatively new organization that is primarily focused on economic and community development in Boone County, WV and the surrounding communities. To date, we have several projects to our name, the first of which is the Boone County Farmers Market. For the last two years, we have managed and operated a small free- to- the- public Farmers Market in Madison, WV. The only requirement set forth by Dig In, Inc. is that each vendor follow the required regulations set by the state Department of Agriculture. Despite varied results, we are confident that the community at large is more aware of the need for a market. Another project of Dig In, Inc. is our community garden. Also in Madison, while in operation, our community garden provides tools, seeds, starter plants, gardening advice, and raised beds to community members free of charge. Our ten regular raised beds and a mix of other small beds were all occupied during operation and produced a variety of vegetables that feed community members, volunteers, and even a few hungry deer. This Agriculture Education Center will be our biggest project to date.

3 . Please describe three significant accomplishments of your

organization. 1) We were lucky enough to have a class of graduate students from Future Generations University to come tour our community garden and the site of the developing education center. This class included students from across the United States, Haiti, Africa, Nepal, and the middle east. 2) We have been responsible for helping develop a new cutting edge program currently being hosted in South Charleston. Grow Your Own Future is building community to bring change. This includes 6 participants that are from Boone County. 3) We were selected to participate in the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation's Building Bridges Leadership Institute program.

4. Please list your Owner(s), Board of Directors, senior staff members, or other key members of your organization:

President/Director Forest Dolin

Vice President Terry Bartley

Secretary Catherine Sowards

Board Member Rachel Price

5. Please list the staff involved with this project and describe their roles and

responsibilities: All of our board has been involved in helping with organizing, program planning, grant writing, hands on volunteering, and marketing. Our Director has taken on the lead role and primary responsibility for the project.

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6. Please upload/attach the following financial documents, if applicable: cash flow

statement for applicant's most recent fiscal year, two years of audited financial statements, current operating budget. If the applicant has not been audited, please include an unaudited balance sheet and income statement as prepared by the applicant.

7. List any federal, state, local or private grant awards or funding received in the last three

years and the current status of those funds. If your organization has previously received funds from Boone County, please list the amount, nature of the project(s) and current status of the funding and project(s).

Never requested any funding from Boone County

8. If you have made application for funding for this project from other sources (city, state, private or non-profit organizations) please list the same here.

The Pallottine Foundation of Huntington \$4000, Try This WV \$3000, The Greater Kanawha Valley Building Bridges Leadership Program \$5000, as well as additional funding from Dig In's general budget.

Section Five: Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Please explain the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it relates to your request, e.g., reduction in services, closures, increased costs, impacts to the community. Just prior to Covid 19, our organization put its full efforts into developing a community garden and a farmers market. We raised funds, wrote grants, put in major hours to help build what we thought would be the initial steps of a new locally grown food system in our community. Then Covid 19 abruptly negated our plans and efforts up till that point. The farmers market was a failure and the community garden didn't bring as much participation as anticipated. This led to us rethinking our efforts. The many food shortages that became a regular thing during covid, only showed that we still needed to have local food access. Only that our chosen method was not effective. It was then that we decided that if people were going to have the best chance at securing real access to locally grown foods, then they would have to take that job into their own hands. Thus we decided that our community needed a place where they could come to learn different ways to raise different kinds of foods. This undertaking was taking a step back, with hopes that it would eventually lead to building the larger access that the community needs.

2. If you are requesting lost revenue due to COVID-19, provide that information here.

Attach documentation sufficient to verify your request.

The nearest similar farmers market that would match the grassroots style of development would be the Williamson Farmers Market. In 2019, prior to Covid, they recorded over \$39,000 in sales. In 2022, with Covid in full effect, they still managed to report nearly \$28,000 in sales. It is our belief that our community would have been more than capable of bringing together sales that would more than match the amount in this request over the two years that covid impact the markets birth.

3. How will ARP funding, if awarded, aid in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?

This funding will help our organization complete our project that will provide meeting space, event space, as well as multiple fundraising opportunities. This will essentially move our organization close to true sustainability after Covid ruined or efforts to due so through other means.

Section Six: Supplementary information

1. Please enter at least one third-party reference.

Team Member #1 Organization Name Email Address Phone Number Contribution 28. Jenine Kimbler, Kimbler Hollow Apiary, jeninekimbler@yahoo.com, 304-543-4781, Construction Volunteer, Bee Expert/Educator, Grant planning team.

Team Member #2 Organization Name Email Address Phone Number Contribution 29. Chase Jarrell, Community Organizer, chasejarrellwv@gmail.com, 304-962-6390, grant team, community outreach Van area, leadership advisor

Team Member #3 Organization Name Email Address Phone Number Contribution 30. Dustin Moore, MooreforWV, mooreforwvboe@gmail.com, 304-784-1984, nutrition advisor, grant team, community outreach Madison area

Team Member #4 Organization Name Email Address Phone Number Contribution 31. Josh Barker, WV Auditors Office, josh.barker@wvsao.gov, 3048559065, Community Outreach Big Ugly, Connection to State Agencies, local farmer.

2. Please include any supplementary information or documentation (such as letters of support, newspaper articles, etc.) which you feel will be essential to the County's review.

<https://padlet.com/fdolin1/dig-in-s-living-agriculture-education-center-blhv1zqvumek4okd>

<https://padlet.com/fdolin1/dig-in-s-living-agriculture-education-center-504foivxqllgpe5m>

<https://padlet.com/fdolin1/dig-in-s-living-agriculture-education-center-2tr2vwo4awc2e13b>

<https://padlet.com/rwilcox23/dig-in-s-living-agriculture-education-center-rn9a3p6g746imgd7>

Signature:

Name (Print):

Forest Dolin

Title: Director

Date: 3/24/2023

How to Submit an ARP Application to Boone County?

You may email it to pwhite@boonecountywv.net **or** mail to:

Boone County Commission

Attention County Administrator

206 Court St.

Madison, WV 25130.

For questions, call 304-369-7301 or email pwhite@boonecountywv.net

