

**THRIVE** ASHEVILLE

[thriveasheville.org](https://thriveasheville.org)



**CONNECT  
COLLABORATE  
TAKE ACTION  
THRIVE**

**RELATIONSHIPS  
TO RESULTS**

2022 Impact Report





*Working together is critical to finding new solutions,  
and Thrive Asheville is helping us do just that.*

— SHENEIKA SMITH, VICE-MAYOR, CITY OF ASHEVILLE



# HOW DO WE THRIVE?

We can all agree that these are challenging times. Asheville is truly at a crossroads – where the interests of our people, natural environment, and cultural character must be nurtured and protected. The question is: How do we respond?

Thrive Asheville was born out of concern and love for this very special community. We see a gap between what we are and what we want to be. Our community suffers from soaring housing prices and a high cost of living, strained infrastructure, divisive development, a widening breach between those who benefit from growth and those left behind, and a fraught racial history whose wounds live on today.

We need a community that works together – with policies, programs and practices that build equity and sustain our place for all who call Asheville home. Already, from Thrive’s recent work bringing leaders and advocates together to brainstorm strategies and link resources, we can clearly see opportunity ahead – in the areas of housing and tourism, where we have been focusing so far. We have the local people, the talent, and the tenacity to ensure that Asheville is a great place to live long into the future.

If we learn and plan together, and call for the change we need, we can get through tough times and find new solutions. We will be on our way to thriving.

This report is a snapshot of the early innovative work that has engaged many leaders from across our community. Read on and be hopeful about the Asheville and Buncombe County we are building together!

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**Kim McGuire**  
Board Chair

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**Kate Pett**  
Executive Director

**Thrive Asheville**  
brings together  
local community  
advocates,  
policymakers,  
and professionals  
from diverse fields  
and backgrounds  
to find equitable  
solutions to our  
city’s toughest  
challenges.



## THRIVE ASHEVILLE BOARD 2022-2023

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Liz Button</b>         | <b>Kim McGuire</b><br><i>Chair</i>         |
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| <b>Lakesha McDay</b>      |  |

## THRIVE ASHEVILLE STAFF

- Kate Pett**  
*Executive Director*
- Aisha Adams**  
*Director of Community Engagement*
- Garrett Raczek**  
*Program Director*
- Francina Edmonds**  
*Landlord Navigator*
- Kristal Khyentse-Perez**  
*Tenant Navigator*





# MISSION

We collaborate with local residents and leaders from diverse perspectives to understand our city’s challenges, forge new relationships, and act on the best solutions together.

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## VISION

Asheville is a place where all thrive—we share in the beauty and prosperity of our city because we are equitable, sustainable, and connected.

## WHO WE ARE

Thrive Asheville is made up of people from communities across Asheville. We work together cross-culturally, and cross-racially, and with other groups to make Asheville better for all.



# HOW WE SOLVE PROBLEMS AND BUILD A BETTER FUTURE

## Creating Change: The 4 Cs

How do communities work together effectively to solve big problems and create a better future? Thrive Asheville has identified **4 Cs** as critical community assets to address the challenges resulting from rapid growth and change.

- 1 CONNECTION**  
*We can only tackle our most pressing challenges if we build authentic relationships among community members from diverse backgrounds and engage in purposeful planning together. Thrive is intentionally convening groups that reflect the variety of opinions, experiences, and expertise in our community.*
- 2 COLLABORATION**  
*We are greater than the sum of our parts when our efforts are aligned. Thrive coordinates the learning and doing of agencies, local government, and business and community leaders so that we can achieve the impact our community needs.*
- 3 COMMITMENT**  
*We can innovate when we bring the necessary resources to bear on our issues. Thrive identifies effective strategies, informs and engages our community in driving resources to what works.*
- 4 IMPROVED CONDITIONS**  
*Our bottom line is that we must improve the quality of life for our residents, increase equity, and ensure we become more resilient to disruptions and challenges ahead.*



## First Year Results

In our first year as an independent nonprofit, Thrive Asheville, with our partners, has delivered results in each of the 4 Cs. This report highlights some of our successes this year, and points to where we are headed. We hope that you will participate in this work of learning and doing. Acting locally is one of the best ways that each of us can shape the future.







# HOW WE WORK TO ADDRESS THE HOUSING CRISIS

## Changing the Way We Live Together

Thrive Asheville makes connections between people from all over the city—from nonprofit, community-based organizations to elected leaders to businesses—to change the way we live together for the better.

When community leaders came together to identify Thrive’s first issues, housing rose to the top as a complex challenge that required new ideas and effective collaboration. We asked, “What’s missing from the array of housing strategies that could make an immediate difference, and lead to long-term change?”

We learned from housing advocates, landlords, and policy-makers that millions of dollars in federal housing subsidies go unused in our community each year.

*Currently, there are hundreds of families and individuals in Buncombe County with housing choice vouchers—guaranteed financial assistance to move from public housing into private rentals—but they often cannot find landlords to take the vouchers.*

Thrive Asheville created the Landlord-Tenant Partnership Program to learn more about how we can **CONNECT** families to landlords with properties in neighborhoods of opportunity – that have the power to change the trajectory of children’s lives.

By **CONNECTING** families with landlords, and **COLLABORATING** with local government, the housing authority, and other nonprofits, **CONDITIONS** improved for 50 families.



50 families, including more than 100 children, were able to find more secure housing



25 families were able to partner with landlords who would accept their vouchers, and so 25 families were able to move from lengthy waitlists to housing security in public housing developments.



84% of these families signed second-year leases, and continue to THRIVE



*We tried to accept vouchers in the past and it did not work out. Thrive allowed us to trust in the process and each of us had someone to turn to for communication assistance. We are so lucky to have our current Thrive tenant. Knowing she and her children are living in a well maintained home and a great neighborhood while her kids are growing up means a lot to us.*

-DEBBY VANCE, HOUSING PROVIDER IN THE LTP



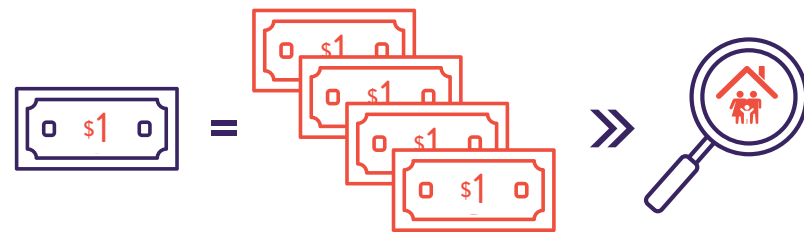




## Growing Partnerships that Create Results

The success of the Landlord-Tenant Partnership program has spurred increased local government investment in this strategy. City and County leaders COMMITTED significant resources to scaling up this solution, and greatly expanded the number of people who can access new housing opportunities.

Utilizing this funding creates wins for families, landlords, and our community.



For every local dollar invested, we access more than **\$4 dollars** in federal funding to help our neighbors find housing security.



**+ \$400K AND COUNTING**  
has been added to our affordable housing resources

Thrive's **COMMITMENT** to a unified coalition of housing services providers to better serve all clients is exciting, and we are glad to be a part of it.

-ANTONIO DELTORO, WNC AIDS PROJECT (WNCAP) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*I was ready for this opportunity. Even after two years, I wake up in the morning and I can't believe I live here.*

— B. SHAW, TENANT LEADER, LANDLORD-TENANT PARTNERSHIP

Thrive Asheville will act as the backbone organization for a **COLLABORATION** among local housing agencies - linking efforts, resources, and expertise to house **150** vulnerable households in the next two years.

In the process, we will learn more about what works, and what's needed to make accepting rental subsidies the *expectation* in our community, instead of the *exception*.

### PARTNERS IN THE BUNCOMBE RENTAL ASSISTANCE COLLABORATIVE:



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs





*Our community needs new ways to address our crisis in housing. Thrive Asheville is bringing innovative new strategies forward to help families access better opportunities and their approach can impact many more through effective **COLLABORATION** with other agencies.*

— BROWNIE NEWMAN, CHAIR, BUNCOMBE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



The first Landlord-Tenant Partnership family, thriving two years later.





# HOW WE WORK TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

## Serving our people, our place, and our economy

Too often the conversation around tourism is oversimplified, and focused on the most divisive aspects of visitation. We know there is also pride and love for the artists, restaurants, attractions, and other local businesses that we value, and who thrive within the tourism economy.

We needed a new way to talk about the future of tourism.

Thrive Asheville adapted a proven statewide model to create the Ideas to Action Leadership Forum (I2A), and chose sustainable tourism as the focus. We engaged a broad cross-section of folks with divergent views in in-depth exploration of the challenges and opportunities that tourism presents.

*Tourism isn't like other industries. It depends on the destination - which is a place where people live. Success can't be measured in economic growth alone, but has to include more holistic measures of the destination, including the quality of life of residents and protection of the environment.*

- FUTURE OF TOURISM WEBINAR SERIES



**CONNECTION** — 34 tourism sector leaders, local government elected officials and staff, and community advocates explored in-depth the challenges and opportunities that tourism presents.



**100%** of participants said they formed new relationships with community members they wouldn't have otherwise known.



**84%** of participants reported they learned about the opinions of others, gained new knowledge about the issue, and valued the time they spent together.

## I2A SECTORS REPRESENTED

FINANCIAL JOURNALISM EDUCATION LEGAL  
REAL ESTATE LODGING/ACCOMMODATIONS  
CITY/COUNTY GOVERNMENT HEALTHCARE  
SMALL BUSINESS ART & CRAFT FOOD & BEVERAGE  
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY  
NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP URBAN PLANNING  
TRAVEL & TOURISM OUTDOOR RECREATION

➤ Read our new I2A - Sustainable Tourism summary and see the complete list of I2A Participants at [www.thriveavl.org](http://www.thriveavl.org)





## Moving from Ideas to Action

Thrive Asheville's purpose is to identify and pursue innovative solutions to challenging community problems. At the last I2A Forum session, cohort members proposed three actions to increase sustainability in the tourism sector.

Over the coming year, Thrive staff will support the COLLABORATION efforts of three working groups – focused on the actions below – to learn more about how to adopt these sustainable tourism best-practices and implement them in Asheville.

**1** Increase BIPOC-owned businesses engaged in the tourism sector - by developing and piloting an incubator to highlight, nurture and support the professional growth of Black and Indigenous people of color (BIPOC).

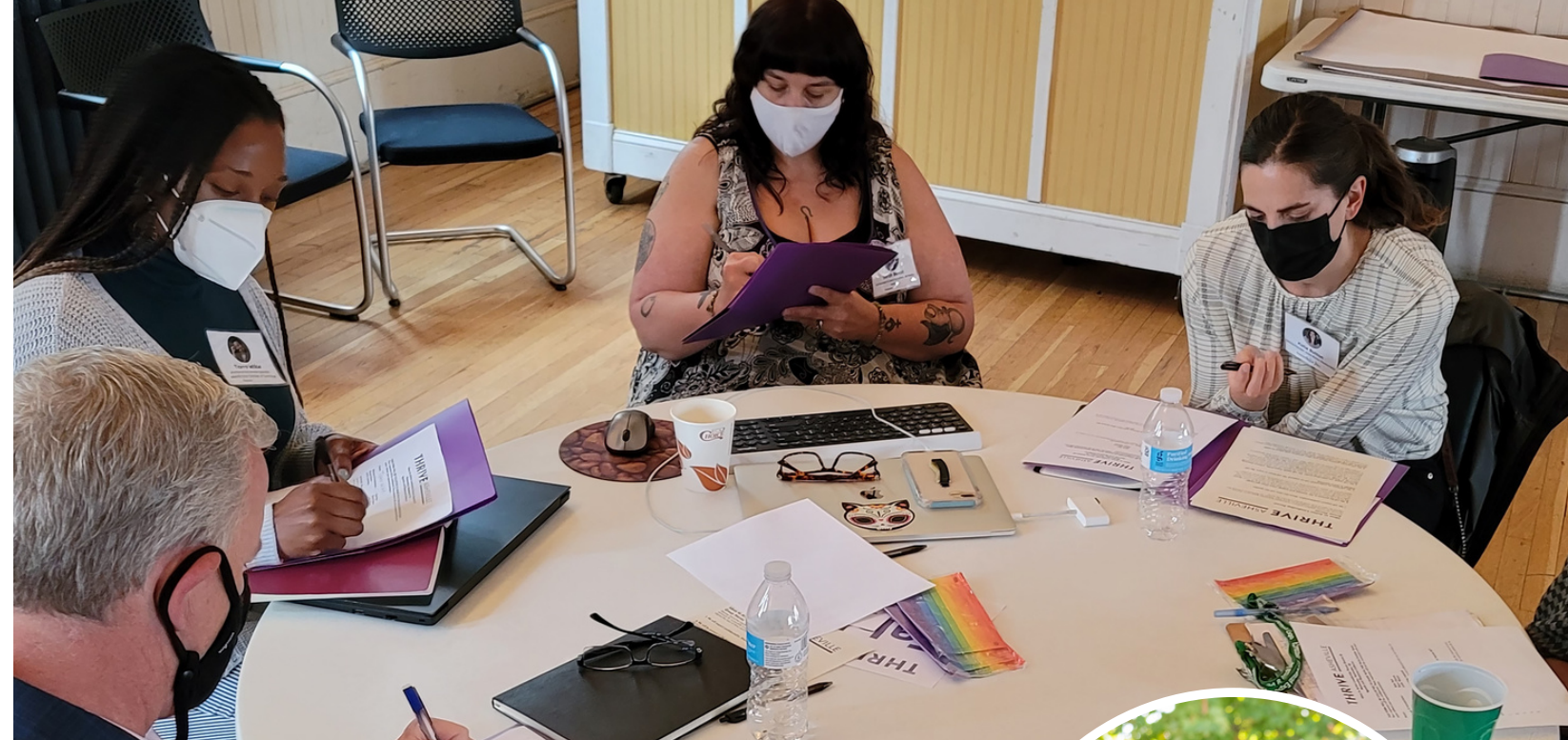
» 100% of the cohort made a COMMITMENT to being a champion or supporting this action.

**2** Conduct a natural and cultural asset inventory to preserve and invest in the places that make our community special and support a thriving visitor economy.

» 88% of the cohort made a COMMITMENT to being a champion or supporting this action.

**3** Explore the formation of a Destination Stewardship Council to integrate tourism planning with our long-term community goals.

» 74% of the cohort made a COMMITMENT to being a champion or supporting this action.



*Because I was a part of I2A, Katie Button Restaurants is now an Inclusive Hiring Partner (IHP). I didn't know about IHP until I was paired up with Tiarra Wilkie from the Chamber of Commerce as part of the I2A process.*

— KATIE BUTTON, CEO/FOUNDER, KATIE BUTTON RESTAURANTS



## How We Work

### 1 IDENTIFY CHALLENGES & MEASURE CHANGE

Thrive director, Board and Civic Leaders

### 2 PROMOTE SHARED LEARNING

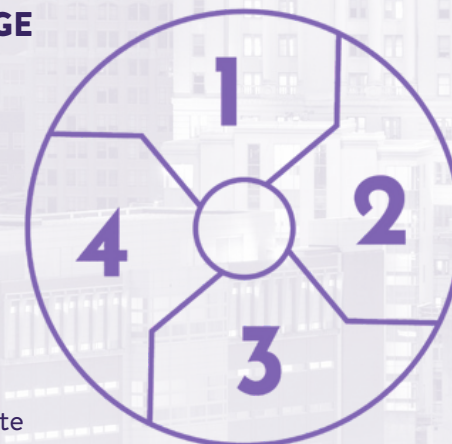
We bring together leaders with diverse perspectives to learn about our community challenges and to become advocates for a change agenda

### 4 ADVOCATE AND EDUCATE

We build a constituency of supporters and advocate for the change agenda

### 3 COORDINATE ACTIVITY

We bring together the right people and organizations to implement changes







*I am **COMMITTED** to working with members of the cohort to learn more about how we can shape tourism to improve the environment and more equitably benefit people in our community.*

– DAWN CHAVEZ, GREENWORKS



*I had a wonderful experience **COLLABORATING** with other community leaders and thinkers in I2A. This process bettered my understanding of the tourism impact in our community and how important sustainable tourism is to other community leaders as well.*

– DEXTER HAZEL, ALOFT HOTEL



# OUR SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS

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## PROGRAM PARTNERS

AB Children First/Communities in Schools  
 Asheville Housing Authority  
 Asheville Habitat for Humanity  
 Homeward Bound  
 Helpmate  
 WNCAP  
 YMI Cultural Center  
 Veterans Affairs

## BUSINESS SUPPORTERS

Dewey Property Advisors  
 The Foundry Hotel  
 Katie Button Restaurants  
 HATCH Innovation Hub  
 Land of Sky Association of Realtors  
 Mosaic Realty  
 North Carolina Association of Realtors  
 Town and Mountain Realty

## GRANTORS

Buncombe County      City of Asheville      Dogwood Health Trust

# 2021-2022 Financials

## REVENUE & SUPPORT

Contributions .....	\$206,156
Nonprofit and Foundation Grants .....	\$85,500
Government Grants .....	\$20,000
Total Revenue and Support .....	\$319,196

## OPERATING EXPENSES

Program Services .....	\$123,971
Management and General .....	\$40,975
Fundraising .....	\$13,742
Total Operating Expenses .....	\$178,687

