



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

5A

Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: June 24, 2025

Title of Item: Award Business Development & Recreation Grants

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	Action Requested: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only								
Submitted by: Mark Jeffers		Department: Economic Development								
Presenter (Name and Title): Mark Jeffers, Economic Development Coordinator		Estimated Time Needed: 5 min.								
Summary of Issue: <p>The Aitkin County Economic Development Committee has received and reviewed grant funding requests for the Business Development & Recreation Grant Program. Grant applications and grant award summary are included.</p> <p>The Committee was unanimous on the recommendation, with Commissioner Sample abstaining on the Forgotten Heroes Ranges & Retreat application. The Committee recommends and requests approval to award the following grants at this time:</p> <table><tr><td>Downtown Aitkin Retail Committee</td><td>\$2,000</td></tr><tr><td>Sampaguita</td><td>\$2,000</td></tr><tr><td>CAPS</td><td>\$1,530</td></tr><tr><td>Forgotten Heroes Ranges & Retreat</td><td>\$2,000</td></tr></table> <p>The purpose of this grant fund is to leverage county funds, private funds, and volunteer efforts to enhance small business development activities in Aitkin County, with a focus on increasing sustained tourism and recreational events. Organizations may apply individually or submit a joint application. To demonstrate their commitment to the grant request, organizations must provide a 1:1 match of funds in good faith. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners has approved this funding to be used directly for the benefit of the Aitkin County community through the Aitkin County Business Development & Recreation Grant.</p>			Downtown Aitkin Retail Committee	\$2,000	Sampaguita	\$2,000	CAPS	\$1,530	Forgotten Heroes Ranges & Retreat	\$2,000
Downtown Aitkin Retail Committee	\$2,000									
Sampaguita	\$2,000									
CAPS	\$1,530									
Forgotten Heroes Ranges & Retreat	\$2,000									
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:										
Recommended Action/Motion: Economic Development requests approval of a motion to award the recommended grants.										
Financial Impact: <p>Is there a cost associated with this request? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</p> <p>Is this budgeted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Please Explain:</p>										

Business Development and Recreation Grant

#	Facility Name	Project Name	Contact Name	Email	City	Phone	\$ requested	\$ Awarded
1	Growth Innovations	multi-tenant signage	Tami Jacobs	tjacobs@growthiv.org	Aitkin	218.927.2172	\$ 1,025	\$ -
2	Clear Lake Gardens	Aitkin Farm Trail	Kelley Rajala	clearlakegardens@gmail.com	Aitkin	707.331.6850	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
3	Long Lake Foundation	Nature Rocks	Bob Marcum, Dave McMillan	rmarcum@llcfoundation.org	Aitkin	218.768.4653	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
4	Food as Medicine Festival	Riverwood/Clear Lake Gardens	Kelley Rajala	clearlakegardens@gmail.com	Aitkin	707.331.6850	\$ 500	\$ 500
5	Aitkin Area Chamber of Commerce	Riverboat Heritage Days	Stephanie Mollet	upnorth@aitkin.com	Aitkin	218.394.2202	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
6	Aitkin Area Chamber of Commerce	Paddle Your Glass Off	Stephanie Mollet	upnorth@aitkin.com	Aitkin	218.394.2202	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
7	Union Woodland Cemetery	cemetery beautification	Ramona Hooper	rh59750@frontiernet.net	McGregor	218.426.3344	\$ 2,000	\$ -
8	Shamrock Township	Shamrock Shindig	Candace Kral	townofshamrock@shamrocktwp.org	McGregor	218.426.3736	\$ 1,225	\$ -
9	Palisade Events Committee	2nd Annual ATV Ride	Dawn Quade	quadedawn@gmail.com	Palisade	320.232.5776	\$ 490	\$ 490
10	Green Owl Yarn & Gifts	Community Craft Fairs	Skye Fiedler	greenowlgallery@gmail.com	Aitkin	612.735.4222	\$ 2,000	\$ -
11	Jaques Art Center	Art for fun- fun for all	Pam Andell	info@jaquesart.com	Aitkin	218.927.2363	\$ 1,961	\$ 1,961
12	Petals of Peace	Awning Project	Arlene Selander	selandercoachingandconsulting@gmail.com	Aitkin	218.820.2813	\$ 2,000	\$ -
13	Tamarack Activities Club	Tamarack Pollinator Garden	Debra Drexler	ddrexler57@gmail.com	Tamarack	612.743.4329	\$ 812	\$ 812
14	Hill City Events Committee	Hill City 4th of July	Sue Kaslow	suekaslow@yahoo.com	Hill City	218.244.3422	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
15	Downtown Aitkin Retail Committee	downtown Aitkin Beautification project	Amanda Lowe	amc2987@cioua.com	Aitkin	218.330.6057	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
16	Sampaguita	Sampaguita Community Engagement	Richard Lupu	rlupu@ci@gmail.com	Aitkin	763.370.5452	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
17	Committee for the Awareness & Prevention of Suicide	STAY: Walk, Run & Rally	Stacey Durgin Smith	stacey.durgin@stefanowich.com	Aitkin	218.927.7224	\$ 1,530	\$ 1,530
18	Forgotten Heroes Ranges & Retreat	Kids Day and Disabled Day on the Range	Brenda Evacevich	peggy3frontier@aol.com	McGregor	218.290.2558	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
19	Aitkin Eats	Clear Lake Gardens	Kelley Rajala	clearlakegardens@gmail.com	Aitkin	707-331-6850	\$ 1,350	\$ -
20								
21								
22								
23								
24								
25								
26								
							\$ 30,893	\$ 21,293



Application for Aitkin County Business Development & Recreation Grant Program

January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025

1. Grant requests should be submitted by EMAIL to:
mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us, subject line: BD&R2025 or
by mail to:
Mark Jeffers
Aitkin County Government Center
307 2nd Street NW, Room 316
Aitkin, MN 56431
2. Funding recommendations will be considered at the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Aitkin County Economic Development Committee. Application deadline is **May 31, 2025**.
3. Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners for final approval.
4. The purpose of this grant fund is to leverage county funds, private funds, and volunteer efforts to enhance small business development activities in Aitkin County, with a focus on increasing sustained tourism and recreational events. Organizations may apply individually or submit a joint application. To demonstrate their commitment to the grant request, organizations must provide a 1:1 match of funds in good faith. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners has approved this funding to be used directly for the benefit of the Aitkin County community through the Aitkin County Business Development & Recreation Grant.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Project/Event Name: Downtown Aitkin Beautification Project

Date(s) of Project/Event: Spring / Summer 2025

Location of Project/Event: Downtown Aitkin

Organization/Community Name: Downtown Aitkin Retail Committee

Person in Charge of Project: Amanda Lowe

Organization Mailing Address (Street Name or P.O. Box or Route and Box # and City and Zip Code): 223 MN Ave N, Aitkin, MN 56431

Contact Person's Phone #: 2183306057

Contact Person's Email: amac2869@icloud.com

Description/focus/purpose of your organization: See Attached

The Downtown Aitkin Retail Committee is dedicated to promoting tourism and driving traffic to our vibrant downtown area. Through strategic campaigns—including billboards, print materials, and radio advertising—we showcase all that the Aitkin area has to offer.

We also organize exciting community events like *Ladies Night Out*, designed to bring energy and visibility to local businesses and highlight the unique charm of our downtown. All retail business owners are encouraged to attend our monthly meetings and be part of the conversation and planning.

Our sole source of funding comes from the Gobbler Cards, which are sold annually by the high school football team. We design and produce these cards and collaborate with local businesses to create special promotions. This effort generates approximately \$4,000 each year, which is reinvested into marketing efforts such as advertising and promotional materials.

In addition to marketing, the committee is also responsible for enhancing the downtown atmosphere by maintaining the flags on the light poles and the seasonal flower pots that add beauty and character to our streets.

We are excited to host a **Farmer's Market and Live Music on The Terrace** on the first and third Thursday of each month. A portion of the funds we are requesting will go toward compensating the musicians, as well as covering advertising and promotional materials for the events.

Additionally, the project will help support the purchase of flowers for the downtown planters, enhancing the beauty and charm of our community.

Lastly, we aim to purchase new flags for the downtown light poles. These flags will help reinforce our brand and welcome both residents and visitors alike to the heart of Aitkin.

Due to the recent changes in the Farmer's Market location, downtown has experienced a noticeable decline in foot traffic on Saturdays. By introducing a second market on Thursdays, we aim to draw more visitors to the downtown area while also providing local farmers with additional opportunities to grow their businesses.

Hosting the market on The Terrace and offering free live music will help attract a broader audience and showcase all that our downtown has to offer. Additionally, the new flags and flower pots will enhance the visual appeal of the area, creating a more welcoming and vibrant atmosphere for residents and visitors alike.

This project is designed to foster long-term vitality and sustainability for the Aitkin community in several meaningful ways:

1. **Economic Growth:** By hosting an additional Farmer's Market and live music events downtown, we aim to boost foot traffic, which directly benefits local retailers, restaurants, and farmers. Increased visibility and customer engagement help sustain small businesses and support the local economy.
2. **Support for Local Agriculture:** Providing farmers with a second market opportunity allows them to sell more of their goods and build a stronger customer base. This contributes to the sustainability of local agriculture and encourages consumers to shop local.
3. **Community Engagement & Quality of Life:** These events create a fun, family-friendly atmosphere that draws residents together and attracts visitors. A lively and welcoming downtown builds community pride and enhances the overall quality of life.
4. **Beautification & Downtown Identity:** The investment in new flags and flower pots not only improves the visual appeal of downtown but also strengthens Aitkin's identity and branding through the "New Roads Lead to More Fun" campaign. A well-maintained and inviting downtown encourages repeat visits and continued growth.
5. **Sustainable Tourism:** By creating ongoing, seasonal attractions, this project encourages sustainable tourism. Visitors are more likely to return and support businesses year-round, helping Aitkin thrive beyond single events or peak seasons.

In short, this initiative strengthens community ties, supports local businesses and farmers, and enhances the long-term economic and cultural sustainability Aitkin.



FUNDING:

Amount requested from Aitkin County

\$ 2000.00

(Minimum \$100.00, maximum request is 2,000.00). The Economic Development Committee may recommend to the Board of Commissioners to increase or decrease the amount awarded at their discretion. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners grants the final approval for funding.

Amount of your organization's match

\$ 2000.00

Total projected budget

\$

PROJECT/EVENT DESCRIPTION: Be concise and complete; attach supporting information if needed.

See Attached

What do you hope to accomplish, how it will be done and specifically how the grant funds will be used.

See Attached

Explain how your project will bring visitors to or provide a positive and sustainable economic impact on Aitkin County.

See Attached

List target audience: Ages 0 to end of life

How many people usually attend this project/event? The Market and Music is a new event that we believe will draw new people to the Farmer's Market and Terrace that are unable to attend the markets on Saturdays.

If awarded, how many incremental visitors do you hope to attract?



4. **PROJECT BUDGET:** in the space below, provide a budget for the entire event.

Category	Grant Funds	Applicant Funds	Total
TOTALS			

Contact Signature:

Name _____ Date: _____



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Application for Aitkin County Business Development & Recreation Grant Program January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025

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mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us , subject line: BD&R2025 or
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APPLICANT INFORMATION

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Project/Event Name: Sampaguita Community Engagement

Date(s) of Project/Event: June 2025-May 2026

Location of Project/Event: **Organization/Community Name:** Sampaguita – Aitkin, MN

Person in Charge of Project:

Richard Lupu

Organization Mailing Address (Street Name or P.O. Box or Route and Box # and City and Zip Code):

Mailing Address: 204 Minnesota Ave N, Aitkin, MN 56431

Contact Person's Phone #: 763-370-5452

Contact Person's Email: rmlupu@gmail.com

Description/focus/purpose of your organization:

Sampaguita is a community-focused arts and retail space built around the idea of a "Third Place"—a welcoming environment outside of home and work where people can gather, connect, and feel a sense of belonging. Inspired by the work of Ray Oldenburg, we created Sampaguita as a space where people are free to *Just Be*—without pressure, expectations, or the need to buy or do anything.

At Sampaguita, community comes first. We host concerts, art shows, classes, puppet performances, and informal gatherings—all designed to encourage creativity, connection, and conversation. Our retail space is intentionally



integrated into the environment: everything from the furniture to the artwork is for sale, creating a living gallery where people can experience the arts in an immersive, relaxed setting.

More than a business, Sampaguita is an ever-evolving hub for the arts—a place where people can show up as they are, explore at their own pace, and feel truly welcome.

FUNDING:

Amount requested from Aitkin County \$ 2000.00

(Minimum \$100.00, maximum request is 2,000.00). The Economic Development Committee may recommend to the Board of Commissioners to increase or decrease the amount awarded at their discretion. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners grants the final approval for funding.

Amount of your organization's match \$ 2000.00 +

Total projected budget \$ 4,000.00 +

PROJECT/EVENT DESCRIPTION: Be concise and complete; attach supporting information if needed.

Between June 2025 and May 2026, Sampaguita will host 24–36 live performances, averaging 2–3 shows per month. These events will feature a diverse lineup of local musicians and performers from around the region, including Indigenous artists, immigrants, seniors, and Veterans.

Grant funds will be used to promote the events, pay performers, and cover essential production and operating expenses. Performances will take place in Sampaguita's listening room, a welcoming, community-centered space designed to foster connection, creativity, and cultural exchange. The goal is to offer accessible, high-quality programming that supports regional talent and strengthens community ties.

What do you hope to accomplish, how it will be done and specifically how the grant funds will be used.

Our goal is to strengthen community connection through inclusive, high-quality live performances that spotlight local and regional talent. By featuring musicians from diverse backgrounds—including Indigenous artists, immigrants, seniors, and Veterans—we aim to create a space where all community members feel seen, valued, and inspired.

The project will be carried out by hosting 2–3 performances per month between June 2025 and May 2026 in Sampaguita's listening room. These events will range from acoustic sets to experimental acts, providing a platform for both emerging and established musicians. All events will be open to the public, with a focus on accessibility and creating a welcoming environment for audiences of all ages.

Grant funds will be used in three key areas:

- **Artist Fees:** Ensuring compensation for all performers.
- **Promotion:** Covering costs for graphic design, printed materials, digital ads, and outreach to attract diverse audiences.
- **Operations and Hospitality:** Supporting expenses such as set up, cleaning supplies, green room supplies and tea/coffee/water for guests.

By supporting this project, the grant will help sustain a vital creative space while amplifying the voices and stories of those who live and work in our region.

Explain how your project will bring visitors to or provide a positive and sustainable economic impact on Aitkin



County.

- This project will bring consistent cultural programming to Aitkin County, drawing both residents and visitors to the area. By hosting 24–36 performances over the course of a year, we will create recurring opportunities for people to attend live events, shop local, and dine out—benefiting surrounding small businesses.
- Sampaguita’s unique blend of live music, retail, and community gathering attracts a broad audience from across the region, especially those seeking authentic, small-town experiences centered around art and culture. Visitors often make a day or weekend trip out of performances, generating additional foot traffic for restaurants, shops, gas stations, and lodging in the area.
- In addition, the project supports the local creative economy by hiring regional musicians and artists. We have the largest collection of Aitkin artists art hanging and for sale in Sampaguita. This not only keeps money circulating within the county but also helps position Aitkin as a vibrant, welcoming place for artists and audiences alike—laying the foundation for long-term cultural tourism and economic sustainability.

List target audience:

- Local residents of all ages seeking community events and cultural enrichment
- Regional visitors from surrounding towns and rural areas
- Music lovers interested in intimate, high-quality live performances
- Supporters of local and independent artists
- Seniors and retirees looking for accessible, welcoming social experiences
- Indigenous community members and cultural supporters
- Immigrants and multicultural audiences
- Artists, creatives, and musicians seeking connection and inspiration
- Tourists and weekend visitors exploring unique experiences in Aitkin County
- Families looking for inclusive, intergenerational events

How many people usually attend this project/event?

Approximately 1300-2000 annually

If awarded, how many incremental visitors do you hope to attract?

Each event has 20-60 participants

4. **PROJECT BUDGET:** in the space below, provide a budget for the entire event.

Category	Grant Funds	Applicant Funds	Total
Artist Fees	\$1600	\$3200	\$4800
Branded Materials (flyers and graphic design)	\$200	\$280	\$480
Hospitality supplies (water, cleaning supplies, etc)	\$200	\$200	\$400
TOTALS	\$2000	\$3680	\$5,680



Contact Signature: *[Handwritten Signature]* Name Date: 5/29/25



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January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025

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APPLICANT INFORMATION

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Project/Event Name: STAY: Walk, Run, & Rally
Date(s) of Project/Event: 8/2/25
Location of Project/Event: Aitkin
Organization/Community Name: Committee for the Awareness & Prevention of Suicide
Person in Charge of Project: Stacey Durgin Smith

Organization Mailing Address (Street Name or P.O. Box or Route and Box # and City and Zip Code):

CAPS c/o Stacey Durgin Smith
 Aitkin County Health & Human Services
 204 1st Street NE
 Aitkin, MN 56431

Contact Person's Phone #: 218-927-7224
Contact Person's Email: stacey.durgin@aitkincountymn.gov

Description/focus/purpose of your organization:

Reduce stigma, increase access to resources, encourage help-seeking behaviors, and develop, implement or coordinate education regarding the risks and warning signs and responding to a mental health crisis.

**FUNDING:**

Amount requested from Aitkin County

\$ 1,530.00

(Minimum \$100.00, maximum request is 2,000.00). The Economic Development Committee may recommend to the Board of Commissioners to increase or decrease the amount awarded at their discretion. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners grants the final approval for funding.

Amount of your organization's match

\$1,550.00

Total projected budget

\$3,080.00

PROJECT/EVENT DESCRIPTION: Be concise and complete; attach supporting information if needed.**What do you hope to accomplish, how it will be done, and specifically how the grant funds will be used.**

The Committee for the Awareness and Prevention of Suicide will be conducting its 2nd Annual STAY: Walk, Run, & Rally. We will be kicking off Riverboat Days in support of the Aitkin Chamber of Commerce. We have re-routed our Color Walk & Run for Life to end downtown, to educate participants about the Petals of Peace drop-in and resource center, and to bring participants into downtown Aitkin, to Riverboat Days and the Ripplesippi music fest. Our resource vendors will be joining those who have responded to the Chamber's invitation, lined up in front of Petals of Peace, so that they can be identified by walkers and runners, and so that those who have come down for Riverboat Days will have the opportunity to learn about local resources that support mental health and/or support those having a mental health crisis. Additionally, our speakers will be presenting from The Terrace stage in downtown Aitkin, reaching more people and providing education.

Grant funds will be used to purchase t-shirts for walkers and runners and for volunteers. We do not want anyone to be limited and unable to participate, so there is no charge for participation in the walk/run. Therefore, we do not have automatic coverage of the cost of the shirts, colors, speakers, etc. We ask for participants to donate what they can.

Explain how your project will bring visitors to or provide a positive and sustainable economic impact on Aitkin County.

People attend suicide prevention walk/runs to show their support for the effort. Other people look for opportunities to participate in any kind of run. We had over 100 walkers/runners for the first event. Participants were from all over the county and outside of the county. These people will be pulled into downtown Aitkin, where they can join Riverboat Days festivities enjoy the Ripplesippi Music Fest, and support businesses in downtown Aitkin.

List target audience:

Our target audience is anyone who is suffering from a mental illness or enduring suicide ideation, their friends and family members, their providers, and anyone who touches their lives.

How many people usually attend this project/event?

During the first year, 180 people participated in this event, including walkers, runners, vendors, and volunteers.

If awarded, how many incremental visitors do you hope to attract?

We would like to see the number of persons reached through the event increase by 10% each year.



4. **PROJECT BUDGET:** in the space below, provide a budget for the entire event.

Category	Grant Funds	Applicant Funds	Total
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	Econ Grant Funds	CAPS Funds	Total Fuds
Advertising			
Posts		\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Advertising : Reg V+		\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00
Rally			
Music for Walk/Rally (Mike & Jan)		\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Speaker for Walk/Rally		\$ 300.00	\$ 250.00
Volunteer T-shirts		\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Vendor Fair-Misc		\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Walk/Run Supplies:			
Bibs	\$ 30.00		\$ 30.00
Goggles	\$ 300.00		\$ 300.00
Event T-shirts	\$ 1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
Refreshments (bananas, granola bars, etc.)	\$ 200.00		\$ 200.00
Misc Supplies		\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 1,530.00	\$ 1,550.00	\$ 3,030.00

Contact Signature:

Name Stacey Durgin Smith Date: 5/29/25

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APPLICANT INFORMATION

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Project/Event Name: Kids Day & Disabled Day on the Range

Date(s) of Project/Event: Weekend of August 9, 2025

Location of Project/Event: Forgotten Heroes Ranges & Retreat, 23796 450th St, McGregor, MN

Organization/Community Name: Forgotten Heroes Ranges & Retreat

Person in Charge of Project: Brenda Evancevich, Vice President/Operations Director

Organization Mailing Address (Street Name or P.O. Box or Route and Box # and City and Zip Code):
PO Box 405, McGregor, MN 55760

Contact Person's Phone #: 218-290-2588

Contact Person's Email: bge5@frontiernet.net

Description/focus/purpose of your organization:

We are building an outdoor recreation area, Vet Center/Community Center for disabled veterans, law enforcement, first responders and any citizen who is disabled will be able to use for free. Able bodied citizens will also be allowed to use it for a free will donation of any kind.

**FUNDING:**

Amount requested from Aitkin County \$ 2,000.00
(Minimum \$100.00, maximum request is 2,000.00). The Economic Development Committee may recommend to the Board of Commissioners to increase or decrease the amount awarded at their discretion. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners grants the final approval for funding.

Amount of your organization's match \$ 5,000.00

Total projected budget \$ 7,000.00

PROJECT/EVENT DESCRIPTION: Be concise and complete; attach supporting information if needed.

We are having a weekend at Forgotten Heroes Ranges & Retreat (FHRR) this summer - Kids Day and Disabled Day on the Range. We will provide kids and disabled individuals an opportunity to experience the outdoor activities in a safe environment. There will be many activities and presentation from various agencies for all to participate in. This event is offered at NO Cost to all who attend.

What do you hope to accomplish, how it will be done and specifically how the grant funds will be used.

Our goal is to allow all who attend a relaxing, enjoyable and informative day to experience the outdoors and to showcase what FHRR and Aitkin County has to offer, not only to able-bodied individuals but disabled as well. One of our goals is to to coordinate with handicap industry corporations to partake at FHRR for a way to improve the disabled individual's quality of life. If awarded, the grant, funds will be used for advertisement and promotion and to help offset some of the expenses for the event, i.e. game rentals, handicap aids such as matting, etc.

Explain how your project will bring visitors to or provide a positive and sustainable economic impact on Aitkin County.

This event will bring handicap individuals and children from throughout the region and promote what Aitkin County has to offer. thus promoting Aitkin County's "Naturally Better" is for EVERYONE, not just those who are able-bodied. FHRR has already spent \$400,000 plus in local businesses. The US Air Force, who is building it, have also brought repeated business to local hotels, restaurants, gyms, gas stations, etc. Our events are attracting 200-300 people from outside the area at our fundraising events. People are starting to notice Aitkin County and are coming back to visit.

List target audience:

For this event, we are targeting kids of all ages, their parents and any individual who is disabled, no matter what their age.

How many people usually attend this project/event?

As this is our first event of either kind, we are unsure of this. However, we have already received a lot of interest at our other events which have been attended by 200-300 people and growing each time.

If awarded, how many incremental visitors do you hope to attract?

Our goal is to attract 1500 people or more. Each event is growing in numbers and is bringing attention to not only FHRR but to Aitkin County and what we have to offer for those who are able-bodied and more importantly, those who are disabled. Our goal is to make Aitkin County the destination for a population of citizens who have been overlooked by society, the disabled. When FHRR is completed, we will be the only place like this in the United States. Aitkin County will definitely be "Naturally Better"...for ALL.



4. **PROJECT BUDGET:** in the space below, provide a budget for the entire event.

Category	Grant Funds	Applicant Funds	Total
Snacks & Beverages (water, etc)	\$200.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,200.00
Advertising & Marketing	500.00	900.00	1,400.00
Activity Funds (Rentals of Games, etc)	400.00	1,000.00	1,400.00
Prizes/Awards	200.00	800.00	1,000.00
Site Prep/Event Rentals (tents, tables, etc)	700.00	1,300.00	2,000.00
TOTALS	\$2,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$7,000.00

Contact Signature: Brenda Evancevich

Name Brenda Evancevich Date: 5/30/2025



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service
Tax Exempt and Government Entities
P.O. Box 2508
Cincinnati, OH 45201

FORGOTTEN HEROES RANGES AND RETREAT
C/O BRET SAMPLE
23796 450TH STREET
MCGREGOR, MN 55760

Date:
02/28/2022
Employer ID number:
87-2167163
Person to contact:
Name: D. Trimble
ID number: 31309
Telephone: (877) 829-5500
Accounting period ending:
December 31
Public charity status:
509(a)(2)
Form 990 / 990-EZ / 990-N required:
Yes
Effective date of exemption:
August 12, 2021
Contribution deductibility:
Yes
Addendum applies:
No
DLN:
26053642008201

Dear Applicant:

We're pleased to tell you we determined you're exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donors can deduct contributions they make to you under IRC Section 170. You're also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522. This letter could help resolve questions on your exempt status. Please keep it for your records.

Organizations exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3) are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined you're a public charity under the IRC Section listed at the top of this letter.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that you're required to file Form 990/990-EZ/990-N, our records show you're required to file an annual information return (Form 990 or Form 990-EZ) or electronic notice (Form 990-N, the e-Postcard). If you don't file a required return or notice for three consecutive years, your exempt status will be automatically revoked.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that an addendum applies, the enclosed addendum is an integral part of this letter.

For important information about your responsibilities as a tax-exempt organization, go to www.irs.gov/charities. Enter "4221-PC" in the search bar to view Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, which describes your recordkeeping, reporting, and disclosure requirements.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Martin

Stephen A. Martin
Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings and Agreements

PROGRAM INFORMATION**Project/Event Name:** Aitkin Eats**Date(s) of Project/Event:** June - December 2025**Location of Project/Event:** Aitkin County (County-wide)**Organization/Community Name:** Clear Lake Gardens**Person in Charge of Project:** Kelley Rajala**Organization Mailing Address:** 31213 292nd St. Aitkin, MN 56431**Contact Person's Phone #:** 707-331-6850**Contact Person's Email:** clearlakegardens@gmail.com**Description/focus/purpose of your organization:**

Clear Lake Gardens (CLG) is a small business in the Glen Township of Aitkin County. We operate a 2-person, 2-acre sustainable farm that grows vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers. We sell our goods directly to the public at the Aitkin Farmer's Market and onsite Farmstand, as well as selling wholesale to local restaurants, institutions and retailers via the Aitkin Food Hub.

FUNDING: Amount requested from Aitkin County \$1,350

Amount of your organization's match \$1,400

Total projected budget \$2,750

Project Description:

Aitkin Eats is a marketing and public education program to help develop our local food system and build economic relationships between farms, restaurants and the public. Using art from local artists, we will develop a series of attractive postcards to highlight seasonal menu specials served at local restaurants, sourced from local farms. The postcards will be free to the restaurants to help promote their local, seasonal dishes to the public. We piloted the Aitkin Eats program in May developing the first three postcards for mixed greens, asparagus and herbs. The Beanery is the first eatery to launch the

initiative with mixed greens specials on their menu. The art was created by artist Rita Fortunato and printed by Tidholm Printing – fanning the economic multiplier effect. We have also incorporated Aitkin Eats into the Find Food Aitkin County website:

<https://findfoodaitkincounty.org/aitkin-eats/> Here you can see some of the farms and restaurants we expect to participate. This project is in collaboration with Aitkin Public Health, the Aitkin Food Hub and Farmer's Market.

What do you hope to accomplish, how it will be done and specifically how the grant funds will be used.

We hope to build stronger economic relationships between farms, restaurants and the public. This program aims to help farmers sell what's in season to the restaurants, encourage restaurants to create menu specials with those ingredients, and inspire the public to eat locally grown and produced food to support the restaurants and farmers. We know there is a lot of opportunity in Aitkin to grow the local food system and believe this marketing program can help catalyze these relationships for a healthier population in Aitkin County.

Grant funds will be used to pay for the artwork, design, and printing of the postcard series.

Explain how your project will bring visitors to or provide a positive and sustainable economic impact on Aitkin County

Our hope is to make Aitkin an even greater place to eat. Many people are looking for healthy food choices and this program can help our restaurants further their reputation as "farm to table" eateries. This program may draw visitors from Crow Wing and neighboring counties and entice Aitkin residents to travel to other parts of our county for local dining experiences.

As mentioned, the underlying goal of this project is to build and strengthen the economic relationships between farms, restaurants and the public. If awarded, all of the funds would be used to pay other Aitkin County businesses. We also like that this marketing program will be free to the participating restaurants.

List target audience:

People who like to dine out.

People who are seeking healthier food choices.

People who choose to spend their money locally.

How many people usually attend this project/event?

At this time we expect at least 6 farms and 7 restaurants to participate in the program. We hope these numbers grow as the project gains traction. We hope that 5% of diners choose the local menu special, and that that number will grow as well.

If awarded, how many incremental visitors do you hope to attract?

300 in 2025

PROJECT BUDGET:

Category	Grant Funds	Applicant Funds	Total
Artwork	450		
Design		250	
Printing	900		
Web Design		300	
Marketing & Outreach		600	

Partnership Coordination		250	
TOTAL	1350	1400	2,750

Contact Signature:

Name: Kelley Rajala, co-owner Clear Lake Gardens

Date: 5/31/25