

Congaree Complex Community Development Corporation Grant Impact Report

Grant Award and Acknowledgments

The Congaree Complex Community Development Corporation (CCCDC) was awarded a grant totaling \$100,000.00, which has provided significant opportunities for residents of Lower Richland and the surrounding areas. CCCDC expresses deep gratitude to Senator Darrell Jackson, the Senate Appropriations Committee, and the South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism for their support and generosity in awarding this grant.

Background and Mission

Founded in 2009 by Red Hill Baptist Church, the Congaree Complex CDC is dedicated to serving and empowering individuals in Lower Richland and nearby communities. Its mission is to address both physical and spiritual needs by offering access to economic and educational development, services, employment, and activities. Over the years, CCCDC has partnered with Red Hill Baptist Church to provide summer camps that feature reading, creative writing, mathematics, arts and crafts, healthy nutrition, project-based learning, and sports such as basketball and tennis. Additionally, a special entrepreneurship camp has been incorporated into these programs. The organization also provides summer employment for youth aged 13 to 17, enabling them to gain valuable work experience.

Overview of Funded Projects (2024–2025)

Project 1: Weekend Warriors Entrepreneurship Training

The first initiative funded by the grant was the Weekend Warriors project, a comprehensive 10-week training course designed to equip teens and adults with the essential skills and knowledge needed to start, own, and operate a business. This program was tailored for individuals new to entrepreneurship, providing a supportive and community-focused learning environment. The project started on February 17, 2024, and continued every Saturday from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. for ten weeks. Two certified workshop consultants led weekly sessions, each lasting two hours, with an additional hour available for computer access to complete assignments. A supplemental 60-minute Zoom call was also offered during the week for further assistance.

Fifteen participants, ranging from high school age to 65 years old, took part in the program, with three maintaining perfect attendance and an average daily attendance of

nine. Students utilized Apple computers and Brother printers to develop their business plans and designed logos using Canva at computer stations equipped with new tables and chairs. Each week, participants received booklets containing entrepreneurship resources and assignments. The project culminated with the completion of business plans, and three participants are currently working to launch their own businesses.

Project 2: After School Homework and Enrichment Activities

The second project provided an after-school program that began on March 12, 2024, running every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. for ten weeks. This initiative was extended into the fall of 2024, completing an additional ten weeks from September 10 to November 14. The program was designed for elementary students, offering homework assistance and enrichment activities such as sports, arts and crafts, and games. Six elementary students received individualized support in reading, writing, and mathematics for one hour each day, followed by arts and crafts and physical activity for another hour. The program was highly successful, with students bringing in unfinished assignments and receiving targeted help.

Project 3: Summer Camp Programs

Summer Camp 24, held from June 3 to June 28, 2024, provided 21 rising third through eighth-grade students with a four-week camp experience. Facilitators coached students in math, reading, and writing, while introducing them to arts and crafts, entrepreneurship, drones, coding, and other computer-related activities. Participants enjoyed a field trip to go bowling and received incentives for achievement and attendance.

Summer Camp 25 took place from June 16 to June 27, 2025, serving 30 rising second through sixth graders over two weeks. Facilitators helped students strengthen their reading, writing, and math skills, while Phoenix Aviation drone facilitators taught students about earning income with drones and provided both simulator and real drone flying experiences. Participants further developed their abilities in arts and crafts and participated in various sports activities.

Project 4: Summer Youth Employment

The fourth project supported summer employment for approximately 15 youth, ages 13 to 18, who worked at local businesses for two weeks, four hours per day. This initiative provided valuable work experience and helped foster practical skills among participating youth.

Use of Grant Funding

The grant provided essential funding for facilitators, coaches, consultants, equipment, supplies, computers, furniture, printers, and all other resources necessary to successfully implement these projects.

Community Impact and Benefits

All of the programs made possible through this grant have created substantial opportunities for area residents. CCCDC has empowered community members to become entrepreneurs and access recreational and educational activities that were previously unavailable. These projects have delivered significant public benefits, promoting independence, boosting self-esteem, and enhancing work skills among youth and adults alike.

The initiatives have provided safe and productive environments for young people during out-of-school and after-school hours, reducing idle time and crime in the community. Youth participants learned about Internet safety and business planning, and the knowledge gained extends to their families and the broader community. The purchase of Apple computers and new furniture has established a community computer center, which now serves as a Thrive Hub, assisting community members with applications for SNAP, Welvista, and other services.