

Submit To:

Department of Community Services and Development
Attention: Community Services Division
P.O. Box 1947
Sacramento, CA 95812-1947

Section I - Agency Information	
Agency	NORTH COAST OPPORTUNITIES, INC.
Address	413 NORTH STATE STREET
City	UKIAH CA 95482

Agency Contact Person Regarding CSBG Recovery Act Local Plan	
Contact Person	PATTY BRUDER
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Section II - Certification

As a part of the efforts to ensure transparency and accountability, the Recovery Act requires Federal agencies and grantees to track and report separately on expenditures from funds made available through the stimulus bill. Please check to acknowledge that your agency is aware of this requirement and has the capacity to track CSBG Recovery Act program activities and expenditures separately from all other CSBG or other funding, including activities and expenditures carried out by delegate agencies and other service providers supported by subcontracts under Recovery Act funding.

The undersigned hereby certify that this agency complies with the requirements of this CSBG Recovery Act Local Plan and the information in this plan is correct and authorized.

Board Chair

Date

Executive Director

Date

Section III - DUNS Number

Provide your agency's Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. If your agency has not registered, do so and provide the number below.

DUNS Number	#089187264
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Section IV - CCR Number

Provide your agency's Central Contractor Registration (CCR) number. If your agency has not registered, do so and provide the number below.

CCR Number	CAGE Code #3VJA9
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Section V - Verification of Public Inspection

Provide verification of public inspection of your agency's CSBG Recovery Act Local Plan. Documentation of public inspection must also be provided, (i.e. copy of web page, e-mail blasts, etc.)

A) Describe how your agency made this Local Plan available for public inspection.

A draft of NCO's draft ARRA Plan has been placed on NCO's website for public inspection, and an email message was sent to approximately 1,500 people (those that were invited to participate in the community assessment survey described in Section V.G) to inform them that the plan had been posted. Please see attached documentation.

Section VI - General Plans

For each question in this section, provide a comprehensive narrative of what plans you have made to date.

A) Provide a description of Recovery Act projects for purposes of creating and sustaining economic growth and employment opportunities. Include a description of targeted individuals and families; services and activities; and how the services and activities are tailored to the specific needs of the community.

NCO began to focus on strengthening local food systems while participating in the Partnership for the Public's Health Initiative, which began in 2001. This statewide initiative funded local groups and county health departments in 13 California counties to identify local needs and increase the capacity of local grassroots groups to respond to those needs. Through this process, the needs that emerged most strongly were largely food-related: lack of exercise, obesity, diabetes, individual food security, costs of healthcare and access to healthcare services, and community dependence on external food sources. Focusing on these issues soon revealed that of the food that is consumed locally, only a very small percentage is grown locally. According to the Mendocino County Agriculture Commissioner, only 320 of the county's two million-plus acres were under vegetable cultivation in 2007, producing less than 1% of the year's agricultural value. Furthermore, production is declining—the total gross agricultural value for commodities produced in 2007 showed a 9.4% decrease from the 2006 value. However, historical research shows that in past decades, Mendocino County was largely self-sufficient in terms of food production. Since then, the level of knowledge of how to grow, harvest, prepare, and preserve fresh fruits and vegetables has also declined.

Today, although county residents support development of strong localized economies, sustainability must begin with addressing the greatest gap in the food system—insufficient local production. Toward this end, NCO has developed strategic partnerships with organizations and entities representing all sectors of the food system and has worked with them to develop specific food-related projects.

For example, funding from The California Endowment is establishing a community kitchen at a local grange hall that will be available to low-income individuals for processing value-added products to supplement their incomes. As described below, NCO has become a strong supporter of community and school gardens, which are increasing local food production and building gardening and nutrition skills. One strategy that supports both community food security and low-income access to healthy foods is the development of the Granary Project. Through Mendo Food Futures, people can use a local currency to buy 10-pound increments of organic grains and rice that NCO purchases in bulk from growers in California's central valley. Having these foods stored in the community increases community food security, and buying them in bulk makes them affordable for low-income families. Because the Granary Project offers both beans and rice, it has been especially attractive to local Latino families.

NCO will use ARRA funds to develop a range of activities designed to strengthen local food systems and food security. These include:

- Building the Community Action Agency's capacity to support local food security efforts (by funding a Community Support Assistant position);
- Supporting specific food system programs and activities (assistance to the Community Gardens Project's outreach, education, and garden development activities);
- Piloting a new self-contained aquaponics program at Ukiah High School that will become a demonstration site and training center;
- Educating the public about local food security efforts, why they are important, and how the public can participate (through a broad media campaign); and
- Continuing to build capacity (by seeking additional funding through grantwriting).

All of these strategies are designed to increase access to low-cost, locally-produced healthy foods for low-income families and individuals, and all families affected by the current economic recession, to increase their skills and self-reliance in producing their own food.

B) Provide a description of the service delivery system for Recovery Act projects for purposes of providing a wide range of innovative services and activities. Include a description of the geographical area served.

All proposed ARRA activities and projects will take place in Mendocino County and be administered within NCO's Community Action Agency under the guidance of the Community Action Director. The Community Gardens Project Coordinator will be responsible for expanding the program by contracting with one or more individuals to assist with outreach, education, and development of new community gardens and market farms. The Community Action Director will monitor the subcontract with Ukiah High School for the Aquaponics Project, grantwriting activities, and media campaign development, with the support of the Community Support Assistant position that is included in this funding proposal.

Mendocino County (pop. 90,000) lies approximately 100 miles north of San Francisco. Ethnically, the county is primarily White, with 6% American Indian and 20% Latino. Poverty is high, with one in every three households reporting an annual income below \$25,000 (compared with 25% statewide). During the past year, unemployment has risen by 70%, increasing from 6.9% in 2008 to 11.7% in March 2009. Mendocino County's legal economy centers on a dying logging industry, viticulture, small business, and local government, while an underground economy flourishes on the illicit growth of marijuana. A recent MSNBC special reported that two-thirds of the county's economy is derived from marijuana cultivation.

With dramatically rising food costs, many local families are struggling in their efforts to prepare and serve healthy food for their families. Food insecurity is demonstrated in the following data from the 2007 California Health Interview Survey and the California Food Policy Advocates:

- 38% of Mendocino County families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level cannot afford enough food. This percentage has more than doubled since 2005, when the survey was

last conducted. For Latino families, the rate is even higher, at 52%.

- Only slightly over half (55%) of Mendocino County households with low food security report good, very good, or excellent health.
- Although two-thirds of local students participate in school meals, researchers report that up to one-third of eligible children do not enroll.
- Only 29% of county teens report eating at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

C) Describe how your agency will use Recovery Act funds to meet the short-term and long-term economic and employment needs of individuals, families and communities.

By adhering to a "localization" strategy for all proposed activities, NCO will keep money circulating in the community and ensure that local businesses benefit from any purchases that are made for the proposed activities. By offering opportunities and education to increase people's capacity to grow food and develop value-added food products, they will be able to supplement family incomes and create jobs. By allocating funding for future grantwriting, NCO anticipates that even more jobs will be created. Finally, by establishing clear review criteria and applying it to the proposed ARRA projects, and providing them with on-going support, NCO anticipates that new business ventures will succeed and employment will be retained. Although the ARRA allocation for Mendocino County is small, NCO believes that the proposed activities and strategies will build capacity within the county to address food security goals:

- Enhance economic viability of sustainable farms and local food networks.
- Encourage production and consumption of affordable and sustainably produced local foods.
- Develop relationships, strengthen networks, and increase collaboration between producers, consumers, food, and agricultural organizations/agencies and policymakers.
- Enhance economic viability of sustainable farms and communities throughout Mendocino County.

D) Provide a description of how linkages will be developed to fill identified gaps in services through the provision of information, referrals, case management and follow up consultations.

Collaborative relationships (described in Section VI.E), and the community needs assessment process, help to keep NCO and its partners aware of both long-standing and emerging gaps in services. Over the past several years, NCO has been strengthening its understanding of the local food system and has written several successful grants to fund related projects that are beginning to fill some of these gaps. These are described in Section VI.F below. NCO does not foresee any of the proposed activities including a case management component. However, referrals through community partners and information dissemination through the proposed media campaign will be integral program components.

E) Provide a description of how Recovery funds will be coordinated with other public and private resources, to avoid duplication and/or supplanting.

NCO's Community Action Agency is deeply involved with partners throughout the county and has been working in collaboration with schools, community-based organizations, faith-based groups, the business community, farmers, and local government on a range of projects. This level of collaboration is essential among the scattered communities of a large rural county such as Mendocino County, especially in the current economic environment. Intensive and frequent collaboration ensures that all players are well informed of existing activities, which also helps avoid any potential duplication.

F) Provide a description of how the funds will be used to support innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives related to the purposes of the Recovery Act, which promotes food, housing, health services and employment-related services and activities.

Through ARRA funds, NCO will be able to support additional food security components that strengthen and expand local food systems. Because of the short time frame allowed for preparing this plan, NCO has determined the focus of ARRA Plan activities, but will ensure community participation in planning and development by relying on a broadly representative Advisory Group. Initially, the Advisory Group will meet to develop criteria for assisting people that want to develop or extend small market farms, such as income level, potential for enhance economic viability, readiness, and commitment. The Advisory Group will also detail specific strategies, approaches, structure, and capacity building. The Advisory Group will comprise small farmers representing communities throughout the county, and may also include representatives of localization groups, food security/safety net providers, community gardens, CSAs, the University of California Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau, the Farmers' Market Association, Mendocino Private Industry Council, Workforce Investment Board, Mendocino College, etc. NCO has been meeting with representatives of many of these groups through past and current planning and assessment efforts, and in partnership with on-going projects. Their participation on the Advisory Group will continue to strengthen these links.

In early 2008, NCO began to develop a Communities Gardens Project to strengthen existing school gardens and establish new gardens at additional schools and in low-income communities and facilities that serve low-income clients, such as senior centers and low-income housing. This program has grown faster than Jack's mythological beanstalk, and the project is currently offering support and technical assistance to more than 10 productive gardens. In addition, the project website provides information on techniques, equipment and tool sharing, land exchange, volunteer opportunities, and a blog. (www.gardensproject.org). Garden participants have opportunities to learn a range of skills, including gardening, healthy cooking, irrigation systems, greenhouse construction, composting, and more.

ARRA funds will be used to expand the reach of the Community Gardens Project by hiring or contracting for help in addressing the growing demand for assistance with garden and small farm start-up and improvement. The project will assist with organizing and conducting outreach and community education; coordinating volunteers; processing applications for assistance with establishing or improving community gardens and small market farms; recruiting community volunteer teams to help process or preserve surplus produce that might otherwise go to waste; and linking available farm land with landless farmers. Contractors may also assist with organizing group or individual trainings to assist low-income individuals in market analysis, development, production, and marketing of a value-added food product. As more and more gardens are established, new needs and opportunities will be identified and funding may be used to purchase equipment, such as a food dryer that would be placed at the commercial kitchen, or offer trainings that build local capacity in the area of food preservation for commercial sale.

As an example of projects currently in need of development, the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians has inquired about assistance with the development of a 40-acre plot of farmland. Most of the gardens and farms in the county are between 1 and 5 acres, and many are even smaller. Working with a 40-acre farm could make a significant contribution to community food security. The Community Gardens project also works closely with schools, and with ARRA support will have additional time for assisting school food service departments to increase their utilization of fresh local produce in school meals and snacks. When students are involved in gardening, they are more interested in eating fresh produce; when food services use local produce, students have the opportunity to consume more nutritious food; and having more students enrolled in meal programs increases the strength of those programs. As a subset to this project, NCO will also contract with Ukiah High School to work with Mendocino Ecological Center to

develop and pilot a self-contained aquaponics system that will become a training center and demonstration site for interested individuals and groups throughout the county and beyond.

NCO is working with Redwood Coast Community Action Agency to assign two VISTA members to support staff working with local food system projects throughout the county. VISTAs will learn new skills (e.g., fundraising, event planning, volunteer coordination) that will facilitate their entry into the job market upon completion of their term of service. A portion of ARRA funding will be allocated to supplement infrastructure donations, such as irrigation systems and gardening equipment. In summary, NCO will use ARRA resources to move forward in the next step toward local food security by beginning to develop a new generation of gardeners and farmers.

G) Provide a description of the community-needs assessment (which may be coordinated with community-needs assessments conducted for other programs).

NCO's most recent needs assessment was completed in the summer of 2007 for the 2008-2009 Community Action Plan. NCO is now collecting surveys from individuals throughout the county for the 2010-2011 Community Action Plan. To date, NCO has received more than 500 responses to a web-based survey, which included questions on priority needs and concerns relevant to preparing this ARRA Plan. (The community needs assessment survey is also being conducted by volunteers on-site at food banks, Head Start Programs, grocery stores, and other venues, but these surveys are not yet completed. As part of the needs assessment process, NCO will also be collecting secondary data from social and human service agencies, law enforcement, clinics, schools, etc.) Survey results are showing that unemployment and underemployment are among the top five concerns of respondents, and the lack of living wage jobs with benefits received nearly twice as many votes as the second highest employment concern. In considering the best way to use ARRA funds, the areas that are receiving the most votes are "developing a local food economy" and "small light industry focusing on renewable energy." Because NCO's allocation of ARRA funds is not large enough to address light industry development, this plan focuses primarily on strengthening the local food system. However, grant writing funds included in this plan may be used to seek funding for light industry development.

H) Provide a description of the service delivery system for benefit enrollment coordination activities for purposes of identifying and enrolling eligible individuals and families in Federal, State, and local benefit programs. Include a description of the geographical area served and a listing of sub-grantees providing the services and service areas.

NCO will ensure that all staff and subcontractors are trained to understand eligibility criteria and enrollment procedures for benefits programs (e.g., food stamps, Healthy Families, Medi-Cal, LIHEAP, etc.) and that all project participants receive this information and are referred to enrollment agencies.

I) Describe your education and outreach projects to advertise and market the Recovery Act services and outcomes.

NCO will contribute funds from the Recovery Act allocation to participate in a statewide media development project organized by the Cal-Neva Community Action Partnership. Cal-Neva will create and disseminate public information messages to raise awareness about Community Action Agency services and opportunities, including utilization of ARRA funding. Messages will be customized to address the residents and needs of each county, and will be delivered through appropriate local media that may include television, radio, newspapers, or other approaches. For Mendocino County, many of these messages will be designed to educate the public about the importance of food security and sustainable local economies, the Community Action Agency's food-related projects, and how people can become involved.

Section VII - Energy Coordination

For each question in this section, provide a comprehensive narrative of what plans you have made to date.

A) Describe how your agency has/will establish a mutual referral service agreement with your local energy provider to ensure that clients receive services that support their progress towards achieving self-sufficiency.

NCO is working with North Coast Energy Services, the LIHEAP contractor in Mendocino County, to improve the structure of referral services for low-income clients. This will be accomplished by: stocking and distributing LIHEAP applications and brochures through NCO offices, including administrative offices, Head Start programs, and child care providers; 2) inserting applications into Head Start parent packets; and 3) publishing a link to LIHEAP programs on the NCO website.

B) Describe the activities your agency will conduct to actively coordinate with the local energy program in employment training and job placement of clients.

NCO has begun working with North Coast Energy Services and other partners (businesses, Workforce Investment Board, and Community Action Agencies from nearby counties) to plan and submit a funding proposal that will train low-income people as solar installers and then work with them to install solar systems in low-income homes, at no cost to the homeowner. This is the beginning of a working relationship that NCO will be continuing to strengthen, in keeping with its focus on green job development and training.

Section VIII - Workforce Development Projects and Activities

In this section, provide information on projects or activities that will be funded in part or totally by Recovery Act funds that will be administered by your agency. For each project or activity, include the following: title, cost, an estimate of the number of jobs created or retained, and a description of the project or activity.

A.1) Project/Activity #1

Title	Community Gardens Project
Cost	\$116,316
Est. # of Jobs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Created # 6.00 FTE <input type="checkbox"/> Retained # 1.00 FTE
Description	ARRA funds will be used to expand the Community Gardens Project to address the growing demand for assistance with community garden and small farm start-up and improvement. A portion of funding will be allocated to supplement infrastructure donations, such as irrigation systems and gardening equipment.

A.2) Project/Activity #2	
Title	Community Support Assistant
Cost	\$50,000
Est. # of Jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> Created # 1.00 FTE <input type="checkbox"/> Retained # 0
Description	Over recent years, the Community Action Agency has expanded its work in support of the local food system through a number of grants and community partnerships. During that time, the Community Action Director has continued to oversee all of these activities single-handedly. Additional support for completing routine tasks will enable the Community Action Director to continue developing new partnerships and new projects to fill gaps in local food systems and to address other community needs by developing services for low-income clients. The Community Support Assistant will also develop and coordinate the VITA program, working with local banks and volunteers to assist low-income individuals to complete tax forms and ensure that they receive the earned-income tax credit if they qualify for it.

In this section, provide information on projects or activities that will be funded in part or totally by Recovery Act funds that will be carried out by a delegate agency or other service provider pursuant to a subcontract with Recovery Act funds. For each project or activity include the following: title, subcontractor name, cost, an estimate of the number of jobs created or retained, and a description of the project or activity.

B.1) Subcontractor Project/Activity #1	
Title	Aquaponics Project
Subcontractor	Ukiah High School
Cost	\$12,000
Est. # of Jobs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Created # 2.00 FTE <input type="checkbox"/> Retained #
Description	NCO will contract with Ukiah High School to work with the Mendocino Ecological Center to develop and operate an aquaponics system. Aquaponics systems incorporate the symbiotic cultivation of plants and aquatic animals in a recirculating environment. Aquatic animal effluent (for example fish waste) accumulates in water as a by-product of keeping them in a closed system or tank. The effluent-rich water becomes high in plant nutrients but this is also toxic to the aquatic animal. Plants uptake the nutrients, reducing or eliminating the water's toxicity. The water, now clean, is returned to the aquatic animal environment and the cycle continues. Water is only added to replace water loss from absorption by the plants or evaporation. Once the system is established, it will become a demonstration site and training center for other local high schools and communities, which will provide operational income for the school. Income will be generated through sale of fish raised in the system—some local restaurants have already committed to purchasing fish from the school.

B.2) Subcontractor Project/Activity #2	
Title	Statewide Community Action Media Campaign
Subcontractor	Cal-Neva Community Action Partnership
Cost	\$10,000
Est. # of Jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> Created # <input type="checkbox"/> Retained #
Description	NCO is participating in a statewide project that will create promotional and educational materials to raise the profile of community action agencies by explaining services and how they benefit the community. Media messages will be customized for Mendocino County and delivered through a variety of media, including television, radio, and newspaper. For Mendocino County, many of these messages will be designed to educate the public about the importance of food security and sustainable local economies, the Community Action Agency's food-related projects, and how people can become involved.

B.3) Subcontractor Project/Activity #3	
Title	Grantwriting
Subcontractor	Hopper & Rodin Associates
Cost	\$10,000
Est. # of Jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> Created # <input type="checkbox"/> Retained #
Description	NCO has a long-standing relationship with this local consulting firm. Hopper & Rodin Associates will assist in preparing grant proposals for projects that will further buttress the local food system, and will also seek funding to promote green job development and training. Successful grants will definitely result in job creation and retention, but there is no way to estimate these numbers.

B.4) If you specified any project/activity in B.1 – B.5, describe the process you will use to select the above subcontractor(s) to provide services funded in part or totally by the Recovery Act funds.	
<p>NCO will follow existing procurement policies to identify and contract appropriate individuals or entities to carry out subcontracted projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements are in place with Hopper & Rodin Associates, local grantwriters. • The contract with Ukiah High School will be sole-sourced because Mendocino Ecological Center is the only organization with expertise in this area and because this project is shovel-ready. • The contract with Cal-Neva Community Action Partnership for the media campaign is also a sole-source arrangement in partnership with Community Action Agencies throughout the state. 	

In the section below list all projects or activities that will be funded in part or totally by Recovery Act funds, the applicable National Program Indicator (NPI) and a description of the project or activity.

C) Under the regular CSBG program, eligible entities use funds to provide services and activities addressing unemployment, education, better use of available income, housing nutrition, emergency services and/ or health to combat the central causes of poverty. Such services continue to be supportable under the CSBG Recovery Act. In recognition of the intent of the Recovery Act, agencies are encouraged to support employment related services and activities that create and sustain economic growth.

NPI	Project or Activity	Description
NPI 1.1 Employment NPI 2.2 Community Quality of Life and Assets	A.1) Community Gardens Project	ARRA funds will be used to fund a portion of the time of the Community Gardens Project Coordinator and to hire an Assistant Coordinator to help address the growing demand for assistance with community garden start-up and improvement. A portion of funding will be allocated to supplement infrastructure donations, such as irrigation systems and gardening equipment.
NPI 1.3 Economic Asset Enhancements and Utilization NPI 4.1 Expanding Opportunities through Community-Wide Partnerships	A.2) Community Support Assistant	ARRA funds will be used to support an assistant to coordinate routine food system work, which will enable the Community Action Director to continue developing new partnerships and new projects to fill gaps in local food systems and address other community needs. The assistant will also develop and coordinate the VITA program, working with local banks and volunteers to assist low-income individuals to complete tax forms and ensure that they receive the earned-income tax credit if they qualify for it.
NPI 3.2 Community Empowerment through Maximum Feasible Participation	B.1) Aquaponics Project	To develop the Aquaponics Project, NCO will contract with Ukiah High School, who will work with the Mendocino Ecological Center to construct and operate an aquaponics system as a demonstration site and training center.
NPI 4.1 Expanding Opportunities through Community-Wide Partnerships	B.2) Statewide Community Action Media Campaign	NCO is participating in a statewide project that will create promotional and educational materials to raise the profile of community action agencies by explaining services and how they benefit the community. Media messages will be customized for Mendocino County and delivered through a variety of media, including television, radio, and newspaper.
NPI 5.1 Broadening Resource Base	B.4) Grantwriting	NCO will contract with Hopper & Rodin Associates to assist in preparing grant proposals for projects that will further buttress the local food system and promote green job development and training.

D) Provide a description of planned infrastructure investments, the purpose, total cost and the rationale for funding the infrastructure investment with funds made available under the Recovery Act. (Capital Improvements are not allowable costs per P.L. 105-285 Sec. 678F)

Infrastructure investment included in this plan is primarily related to the Aquaponics Project, although support for the Community Gardens Project may include garden sheds or greenhouses. These costs, however, will not exceed a unit cost of \$5,000. These projects are appropriate for ARRA funding because they will create jobs and generate income.

E) Will your agency use a portion or all the Recovery Act funds for administrative costs? Check the appropriate box.

Yes, our agency will use a PORTION of the Recovery Act funds for administrative costs.

Yes, our agency will use ALL of the Recovery Act funds for administrative costs.

No, our agency will NOT use any of the Recovery Act funds for administrative costs.

E.1) If you checked one of the "YES" boxes in E, explain how the funds allocated to administrative costs will be tracked to a measurable outcome.

NCO has allocated 8% of direct costs for indirect expenses, equal to \$15,865 of the total allocation of \$214,181, based on NCO's approved indirect cost rate. Administrative costs are most closely connected to Goal 2 (*The conditions in which low-income people live are improved*) and Goal 4 (*Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved.*)

Section IX - Required Disclosures

For each question in this section, disclose any unresolved findings and/or recommendations, or any legal proceedings.

A) List all non-CSD funded programs administered by the agency within the past three (3) years that have unresolved findings and/or recommendations or have been terminated as a result of deficiencies.

None

B) List all legal proceedings the agency is currently involved in or has been in the past three (3) years. Include a brief description of the proceeding and the outcome. If the proceeding is currently, active provide the status.

None

Section X - Barriers

For each question in this section, provide information on potential barriers to your agency's success.

A) Identify any barriers that your agency feels it may face in meeting the requirements of the Recovery Act (i.e., subcontracting, staffing, workforce development, compliance with reporting, performance).

NCO foresees no barriers in meeting reporting requirements, subcontracting, staffing, workforce development, performance, or any other barriers.