

## Calfee Training School Adaptive Reuse:

### *Harmon Learning Center and Venable Digital Learning Lab*

Executive Summary for Community Development Block Grant Application

**Project Title:** Calfee Training School Adaptive Reuse: Harmon Learning Center and DeBerry Digital Learning Lab

**Project Grantee:** Town of Pulaski, 42 First St., NW, Pulaski, VA 24301

**County Served:** Pulaski

**Contact:** Darlene Burcham, Town Manager ([dburcham@pulaskitown.org](mailto:dburcham@pulaskitown.org), 540-994-8600)

**Distressed Area Census Tracts:** None

**Basic Agency:** Department of Housing and Community Development

**Purpose:** The proposed project will expand and strengthen the local workforce, support the establishment or expansion of local food-based businesses, leverage local cultural assets, and build local leadership capacity through constructing a commercial-grade kitchen and adjacent event space.

#### Funding:

Source	Amount	% of Total	Status of Funding
Requested ARC	\$500,000	17%	Pending
Nat'l Park Service	\$500,000	17%	Pending
Nat'l Trust for Historic Preservation	\$150,000	5%	LOI Submitted
CDBG	\$1,500,000	35%	Will submit April 2021
Local Funds	\$313,000	10%	Committed In-Kind
Federal and State Historic Tax Credits	\$336,300	12%	Process Initiated
Virginia Outdoors Foundation	\$80,000	3%	Committed
First United Methodist Church of Pulaski, VA	\$10,000	<1%	Committed
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,876,300</b>	<b>100%</b>	

#### Description:

*The Calfee Training School Adaptive Reuse Project* will repurpose the Jim Crow-era African American school into a community and cultural center to include: (1) a childcare center that will serve 97 children, a majority from LMI families, (2) a commercial kitchen that supports local value-added food entrepreneurs and food distribution agencies, (3) a digital learning lab that will support workforce development trainings, (4) a museum that will highlight local Appalachian African American leaders and history, and (5) an event space for community, cultural and educational programming, and (6) small business incubation and meeting spaces. CDBG funding is requested to complete the renovation of the Lucy and Chauncey Harmon Learning Center and the Dorothy DeBerry Venable Digital Learning Lab. The Town of Pulaski will oversee the CCCC's renovation after which the Town's Redevelopment and Housing Authority will transfer ownership of the property to the Calfee Community & Cultural Center's Board of Directors, the incorporated non-profit entity that will serve as the designated permanent operators of the facility.

**Rationale Narrative:**

Local employers report that it is difficult to fill jobs, in part because of a lack of reliable childcare options locally. Indeed, Pulaski County only has licensed childcare slots for 8.5% of preschool aged children leaving nearly 1,500 children without care. The COVID19 pandemic has also highlighted the need for flexible out-of-school care options for older children, allowing parents to work while their children are in safe environments equipped to manage virtual learning while social distancing and other health-related guidelines are met. With a higher-than-average poverty rate of 24.7%, the Town of Pulaski is also challenged with regard to food security and access to healthy foods. And the County's farmers are struggling to bring in enough revenue to make ends meet. The combined childcare center, computer lab, commercial kitchen, and adjacent event space at the Calfee Community & Cultural Center will address all of these challenges while also leveraging cultural resources and building local capacity to take on future challenges.

**Benefits of Entire Project:**

- 97 children will experience high quality childcare opportunities and their parents will be able to access training and higher-paying jobs.
- Employers will experience less absenteeism of employees.
- At least 17 full time jobs will be created onsite at the CCCC.
- Food-based businesses will be created and expanded.
- Farmers will have year-round access to individual and institutional consumers.
- Food distribution organizations will be able to coordinate and expand services.
- Well appointed community event space will be created.
- Blight in downtown area will be reduced.
- Local leadership and partnership capacity, across lines of race, class, and generations will be enhanced.

**Outputs/Outcomes of CDBG-Funded Project:**

- Renovation and upfitting of 4542 square feet into a quality early childhood education facility.
- Renovation and upfitting of 2340 square feet to create digital learning lab and co-working space that will provide out-of-school care for children ages 5-12 and workforce credential and job skills training for the community at large.
- At least 64 local FTE jobs retained by LMI individuals because of the childcare services offered
- At least 17 local FTE jobs created at the CCCC
- The creation of at least 3 small food-based businesses

**Leveraged Private Investment:**

Jobs retained are a primary source of LPI for this project. We also anticipate some LPI potential through several key employers who have expressed an interest in investing in the childcare program as a benefit for their employees.