



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bounty & Soul Receives \$180,000 from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina's Melvin R. Lane Fund to Strengthen Fundraising Capacity

BLACK MOUNTAIN, NC (July 23, 2026) — Bounty & Soul has been awarded \$180,000 over three years by the Melvin R. Lane Fund of The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina (CFWNC) to build a dedicated grants and impact position focused on deepening relationships with communities and funding partners. The investment will strengthen the organization's capacity to secure the funding needed to meet the surge in demand for its services since Hurricane Helene.

Bounty & Soul is one of eight Western North Carolina nonprofits sharing \$1,320,000 in capacity-building grants from the Melvin R. Lane Fund this year. The Fund's program is designed to strengthen organizations that provide essential support to individuals in need, youth, older adults, and people facing mental or physical health challenges.

Founded in 2014, Bounty & Soul is a community-driven nonprofit committed to connecting, sharing, and celebrating nutritious food, education, and community. By addressing food and nutrition insecurity, Bounty & Soul works toward communities where everyone has the right and opportunity to eat well, be nourished, and thrive. In 2026, it expects to distribute two million pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables through eight weekly, welcoming, no-cost market sites across Buncombe County, in Black Mountain, Swannanoa, Asheville, and Fairview. Though the sites are based in these four communities, participants travel from five counties to access fresh food, health resources, and connection in a trauma-informed, joyful environment. Monthly participation has surged to 27,500 individuals since September 2024.

"We are deeply grateful to the Melvin R. Lane Fund and the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina for this transformative investment of \$180,000 over three years," said Ali Casparian, Founder and Executive Director of Bounty & Soul. "By helping us establish a dedicated Grants and Impact position, this funding will strengthen our ability to build lasting relationships with community members and funding partners, diversify our revenue, and communicate the full impact of our work. Ultimately, this investment allows us to sustain and deepen dignified access to fresh, nutritious food, strengthen our community-centered programs, and respond more effectively to the growing needs of families across Western North Carolina at a time when so many are struggling with rising food insecurity, compounded by Helene's aftermath, cuts to SNAP and other programs, and prices that keep climbing."

Among the families the markets serve are Shawntale Harper and her son, Carson, who live near the Bounty & Soul market site at Rock Hill Baptist Church in Shiloh. "I was born and raised in this neighborhood, and I love to cross the street and come to this market," Shawntale said.

"Carson picks out the fruit. The cost of food in the grocery store is so high, and the prices have gone up so much. But because of this market, I can feed my family well. Because of this market, we can stay healthy. The local people who gather here work so hard and are so wonderful. We get our community back here, and we are grateful to Bounty & Soul."

This latest award adds to CFWNC support Bounty & Soul has already received through the Black Mountain–Swannanoa Valley Endowment Fund and the Human Services and Education Fund.

About Bounty & Soul

Bounty & Soul is a community-driven food and health equity organization serving Buncombe County in Western North Carolina. Since 2014, Bounty & Soul has worked at the intersection of food, farms, and health to improve food and nutrition security, sustain the local food and farming system, and advance health and wellbeing. Through its Produce to the People™, Rooted in Health™, and Farmers Alliance™ programs, Bounty & Soul provides trauma-informed, dignified support to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity. The organization operates eight weekly no-cost community markets and partners with more than 65 local farm and garden partners to strengthen the regional food system. Bounty & Soul's mission is to provide access to fresh produce and wellness education for everyone. Together, we connect, share and celebrate nutritious food, education and community. For more information, visit bountyandsoul.org.

About The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina

The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina (CFWNC) connects donors with nonprofits and community needs across the region. The Melvin R. Lane Fund, established at CFWNC in 2000, builds the capacity of human service nonprofits so they can help more people. Learn more at cfwnc.org.

Media Contact: Chelsea Gillespie, Marketing & Communications Specialist, 540-250-2508, chelsea@bountyandsoul.org