



Program:

02/20/2026 11:48 PM

Application #: 361378

Application / Project Name:

Center for - 361378

Application Party ID:

360652

Organization ID#:

361355

Please complete the fields below for your organization. If your program is sponsored by a fiscal agent, please complete the information for the sponsor organization.

Organization Legal Name:

Center for Black Southern Culture

LIVEGIVEmidsouth.org Profile URL:

<https://roundtable.livegivemidsouth.org/organizations/iCFHyCfsFuBjcxN3w>

Organization Address:

12 N Idlewild St. Memphis, TN 38104

Organization Phone Number:

9016495376

If your program is sponsored by a fiscal agent, please list the name of your program.

Grant Contact Name:

BRITTNEY SESSOMS

Grant Contact Title:

Grant Admin

Grant Contact Email:

bsessoms@blacksouthernculture.org



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Grant Contact Phone:

9016495376

As stated in the application guidelines, an eligibility requirement for this application is a LIVEGIVEmidsouth.org profile in progress. To meet eligibility, the applying organization needs to submit a new LIVEGIVEmidsouth.org profile to be published OR submit updates to an existing profile for review by February 6, 2026.

I understand this requirement.

Yes

As stated in the application guidelines, a representative from each organization chosen as a grant finalist must participate in the presentation for the GiVE 365 Finals event in April.

I understand this requirement.

Yes

In order to keep GiVE 365 members informed of the grant's progress, grantees are required to provide brief updates that can be shared with members two times in the twelve-month grant period. If awarded this grant, you will be asked to provide updates that might be shared with GiVE 365 members through some or all of the following methods: social media, e-newsletters, photos/videos, site visits, and other donor education opportunities.

I understand this requirement.

Yes

How will GiVE 365 funds be used?

General operating support (to advance our food access work)

Grant Amount Requesting:

\$10,000.00



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Please provide a brief 2-3 sentence summary of your project or program for use in communications with GiVE 365 members and for The Finals event program, should your application be chosen. (The description may be edited by staff.)

The Center for Black Southern Culture is building a Black-led food and culture ecosystem in Memphis through sustainable living, community markets, cooking classes, herbal workshops, and storytelling circles that center Black Southern cultural knowledge. We help neighbors feed each other, share knowledge, and keep dollars, skills, and traditions circulating. We bring together growers, cooks, elders, youth, and neighbors together to learn, eat, heal, and reconnect to the land and one another.

Please explain the ways your organization helps build food access and community connection through homegrown solutions.

The Center for Black Southern Culture builds food access and community connection by starting with what our people have always known, the land, our porches, our kitchens, our memories, and our culture; we turn those into living, homegrown solutions. We are a Black-led organization in Memphis and the Mid-South, working at the intersection of food, land, and culture. Our programs bring together Black farmers, backyard growers, cooks, herbalists, elders, and youth to grow, cook, sell, and share food in ways that feel familiar and dignified. Through our Black-led community farmer's market and pop-up land and food events, families can barter, buy fresh produce, herbs, and prepared foods and value-added goods directly from Black growers and makers at fair prices. We pair our farmer's market with tastings, cooking demos, and simple nutrition education so people not only have access to food, but also know how to prepare it in ways that keep culture and health intact.

Our work is "homegrown" in both design and practice. We have and continue to listen closely to what neighbors, elders, and youth say they need and want, as well as invite them into co-creating the solutions. That might look like an elder teaching youth how to grow at our market or a teen helping harvest and bag produce for market while learning how to price and sell. We seek to pay community members stipends for their time and knowledge whenever possible, as an act of planting the seeds to turning local skills such as gardening, cooking, needlework, storytelling, and music into economic opportunity.

In addition, we host workshops and small gatherings in trusted spaces like church fellowship halls, schools, partner gardens, and neighborhood centers where people can safely learn practical skills like stretching SNAP dollars at grocers/markets, cooking on a budget, making simple herbal teas and syrups for home remedies, starting small container or vertical gardens where there is no land access, and practicing low-waste living through reuse, repair, and recycling

For us, planetary health and community health are linked, thus we teach that caring for the land through composting, seed-saving, reusing jars, and reducing waste is part of caring for ourselves and



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our neighbors. Given the depth of our work and the people we serve, connection is as important as food. At our gatherings, we intentionally make space for story, song, and spiritual grounding because that's what has always held our communities and families together, no matter what. We prioritize room for elders to share stories, land memories, and recipes, we prioritize space for youth to document those stories with photos, audio, and video and we prioritize opportunity for everyone to see themselves as part of a longer line of Black Southern land stewards, cooks, and culture keepers. Through intergenerational exchange we aim to build pride and belonging, which also helps protect knowledge that might otherwise be lost. Alongside all of this, we work to connect farmers with chefs, corner stores, and small food businesses, helping keep Black dollars circulating locally and strengthening the small-scale, hyperlocal food economy that feeds our neighborhoods. We prioritize room for elders to share stories, land memories, and recipes, we prioritize space for youth to document those stories with photos, audio, and video and we prioritize opportunity for everyone to see themselves as part of a longer line of Black Southern land stewards,

How will the grant funds be used?

Grant funds will support our Black Southern food and culture ecosystem in 2026, with a focus on making fresh, culturally rooted food more accessible while deepening community connection. Funds will help cover core costs for our 5th Black Farmer's Market season, launching our Black Southern Folks School at the market, and related homegrown programs: small stipends for educators, elders, artists, growers, cooks, and herbalists so they will continue to serve; youth stipends for attendance and overall participation. Resources will also support tents, tables, cold-holding, and simple kitchen and garden supplies for cooking demos, tastings, storytime, performances, and hands-on skill sessions.

A portion of the grant will support essential staffing and administration, including planning with partners, communicating with vendors and participants, managing stipends, and collecting feedback from community members. We will also use a portion of the funds for outreach and educational materials, including flyers, recipe cards, and various guides on stretching SNAP, cooking on a budget, using herbs, and practicing low-waste, sustainable habits. Finally, a small share will support documentation and evaluation to track who we are serving, what they are accessing, what they need next, and then adjust programming in real time. Overall, the grant will underwrite the people, places, and systems that keep food, cultural knowledge, and community care circulating where needed.

Explain how people from the communities you serve are involved in your organization's decision-making.

The people we serve help shape our work at every level. Our board and close advisors include Black farmers, elders, parents, and community organizers who live in the neighborhoods we serve. They



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help set priorities, review ideas, and decide how we use our time and resources. For each season, we sit down with elders, growers, vendors, and neighbors to co-design themes across our work and outreach so it fits real life which includes church schedules, weather, and transportation.

During markets and events, we use simple feedback loops such as quick check-ins at booths. We take note of what people are buying,, what they can afford, what they want to see next, and what barriers they face.

A recent example is our partnership with Methodist for their Community Health Needs Assessment at our farmer's market. Neighbors shared concerns about high blood pressure, stress, and the cost of fresh food. Farmers and shoppers share about wanting more practical support with their operations, marketing, SNAP, and low-sodium cooking. Based on any of that input, we adjust our plans. In this way, community voice directly changes what we do, how we move, what we produce, source, grow, and teach.

We are planning an intergenerational community advisory board to work alongside our board, as a way to show what community leadership looks like.

As a result of this funding, what will be achieved for both your organization and those you serve?

Through our initiatives, community members gain improved access to nutritious, culturally-appropriate food, enhancing their health and well-being. They develop valuable skills in agriculture, food preservation, and entrepreneurship, opening pathways to economic empowerment. More families will be able to regularly grow or buy greens, beans, herbs, prepared foods, and other staples grown or made by themselves or people who understand their tastes, budgets, and health concerns.

We expect to see more households reporting that they can get fresh food closer to home, more people using SNAP and other benefits at our market, and more neighbors knowing how to cook and stretch what they buy. Over time, this will help ease some of the strain around food costs and support small but real shifts in diet quality, especially around adding vegetables, beans, and homemade foods back into everyday meals. We also expect community members to feel more connected to one another, farmers, elders, and youth because they are gathering regularly in a space and place that honors ingenuity of Black Southern culture, stories, and skills.

For the Black farmers/growers, cooks, and makers we work with, this funding will mean more stable income and a clearer sense that their work is valued. We expect an increase in the number of repeat customers, higher average sales for vendors, and more opportunities for them to teach, lead, and be



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recognized as experts. Youth and elders who participate will gain leadership experience, confidence, and small but meaningful earnings for their time. We also expect to see more people practicing low-waste and sustainable habits like reusing jars, trying composting, saving seed, and seeing land and neighborhood clean-up as part of community care.

For our organization, this funding will make our work more stable and strategic. We will be able to plan a full season of programming with clear goals, track who we are reaching and how often, and use that information to refine our approach. Our partnerships with hospitals like Methodist, schools, and other local groups will deepen because we can show concrete outcomes around access, engagement, and cultural relevance. This, in turn, will strengthen our ability to attract future support, invest in staff capacity, and continue building a food and culture ecosystem that is guided by community voice rather than short-term projects.

Full Name of Executive Director or Authorized Signer:

Brittney Shelby Sessoms

Date:

2/20/2026

Center for Black Southern Culture

Project Budget: Black Southern Food & Culture Market Season (2026)

Total Project Cost: \$100,000

GiVE 365 Request: \$10,000

Revenue Budget (Projected)

Revenue Source	Status	Amount
GiVE 365 – Nourished Communities grant	Requested	\$10,000
Echoing Green fellowship – internal project allocation	Committed / internal allocation	\$8,000
Additional grants, partners, donors & earned income	To be raised (projected)	\$82,000

Note: Niagara Bottling will provide in-kind bottled water for the full market season; this in-kind support is not reflected in the cash revenue totals above.

Total Revenue (Projected): \$100,000

Detailed Expense Budget

Line Item	Description	Amount
Program staff & coordination	Part-time/seasonal staff to plan markets, organize vendors, coordinate partners, schedule artists, manage communications, and handle logistics.	\$30,000
Admin & outreach support	Support for emails, calls/text reminders, registrations, tracking stipends, and basic administration.	\$6,000
Farmer & vendor stipends / fee offsets	Small stipends or reduced fees so Black farmers, gardeners, cooks, and makers can consistently participate.	\$9,000

Youth stipends	Paid roles for youth assisting with set-up/breakdown, harvest, tabling, and documentation.	\$6,000
Elder / cultural knowledge stipends	Honoraria for elders sharing recipes, land memory, spiritual practices, and textile/repair skills.	\$5,000
Artists & performers	Stipends for DJs, musicians, poets, and other artists anchoring cultural programming at the market.	\$7,000
Site & insurance costs	Site rental/fees, permits, and a share of liability insurance for markets and events.	\$7,000
Tents, tables & equipment	Canopies, tables, chairs, signage hardware, small equipment, and replacements.	\$4,000
Cold storage & food safety	Coolers, ice, thermometers, gloves, hand-washing supplies, and food-safe packaging.	\$3,000
Cooking demo & tasting supplies	Ingredients, servingware, and basic kitchen tools for demos and tastings.	\$4,000
Marketing & educational materials	Graphic design, flyers, posters, recipe cards, SNAP/'how-to' guides, and other printed/digital outreach.	\$3,000
Uniforms & promo bags	Branded shirts/aprons for team members and reusable promo bags for	\$2,000

	market guests and vendors.	
Textile / reuse / sustainability supplies	Basic supplies for mending/repair circles, reuse projects, and compost/recycling education.	\$2,000
Documentation & evaluation	Stipends for community documenters, survey tools, and light data analysis.	\$3,000
Data systems / tech	Email tools, survey tools, shared drives, and other software that supports the project.	\$2,000
Indirect / overhead (admin backbone)	Portion of bookkeeping, storage, utilities, website, and leadership time that make the project possible.	\$7,000

Total Expenses: \$100,000