

## SHANNON McGAUGHEY

### VIVIAN

After a decade of living and working in Chicago, Shannon and Josiah McGaughey moved to Asheville in the hopes of opening a brick-and-mortar restaurant. The McGaugheys own Vivian, a restaurant in the River Arts District of Asheville. “We really felt that when 2020 started we were going to hit a big stride and reach that success level that we have been waiting for,” says Shannon, general manager of Vivian.

When it opened December 2017, Vivian represented exactly what the McGaugheys wanted: a menu blending comfortable Southern favorites with old-school European cuisine made special for their locals, regulars, and neighbors.

Alongside Josiah, her co-owner husband and Vivian’s executive chef, Shannon is one of many North Carolina small business owners who have recently received an emergency bridge loan through the NC COVID-19 Rapid Recovery Loan program. NC Rapid Recovery is a statewide consortium of partners—including the Golden LEAF Foundation, the NC Rural Center, and a consortium of nonprofit lenders—working across the state to support small-business owners struggling with the economic impact of COVID-19. The program was launched at the onset of the pandemic and is structured to provide loans with a low-interest rate and no payments required in the first six months.



## VIVIAN



## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



Vivian is a case study for organically grown businesses with local support. At first, the McGaugheys operated a pop-up serving food at Burial Beer Co., which grew into a permanent food truck on site that they successfully ran for two years.

“When we were starting from bare bones and trying to build up our brand it was extremely helpful to have interactions with all these Ashevilleians giving us feedback on our cuisine and finding out first and foremost if people like our food,” says Shannon.



When the McGaugheys tried to open their restaurant around 2012, they struggled to access the necessary startup capital. “Restaurants and first-time business owners are high risk, so it was hard for us to find funding to open,” says Shannon. Mountain BizWorks provided the McGaugheys the startup capital, as well as professional assistance managing payroll, finances, and other paperwork.

Shannon reconnected with Mountain BizWorks, now a Rapid Recovery lending partner, after COVID-19 shut Vivian down. “I said ‘how can we stay on our feet? Our bank account is about to hit zero and we’re nervous.’ It was terrifying.”

The Rapid Recovery loan arrived “like lightning,” says Shannon. “When we were able to get the support it lifted a huge weight off our shoulders.”

The restaurant, open again, employs 13 people and continues to partner with a variety of local merchants, farmers, mushroom foragers, wine bottlers, and more. “It feels so good to work with those people and watch their businesses survive with ours at the same time. It is a chain reaction there as well,” says Shannon.

“Knowing that we have support from the community via the funding is a huge vote of confidence for who we are as a business. It is giving us that boost to say, ‘we do need to fight for this, we do need to carry on.’”