



# COAL COMMUNITY SOURCEBOOK

Local Experts, Issues &  
Ideas from Local Voices

This Sourcebook provides information from community listening sessions held in West Virginia, Kentucky and Wyoming by the Partnership for Responsible Growth and the National Wildlife Federation, together with DC-based colleagues. These national groups are working on developing data or amplifying local voices on issues of importance to coal-impacted communities and are eager to be further engaged in this work.

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# Introduction

Too often federal policy intended to address local issues in communities impacted by coal extraction has been formulated without adequate input from the communities most knowledgeable about what they need and what, in their experience, would work best for them. This Sourcebook contains information about, ideas from, and contacts for local voices that should be heard during policy discussions in Washington about how to revitalize and promote the economies of these communities.

The local people and groups included in this Sourcebook are a robust sample of ongoing work in West Virginia, Kentucky and Wyoming and can provide a better understanding of the issues and priorities for these communities. This Sourcebook introduces a wide range of local voices with a summary of their work and features an appendix with a more extensive list of local contacts for use by DC-based policymakers and advocacy organizations.

As background, the Sourcebook also contains summary information about key issues and challenges identified by the communities. It closes with a list of key federal programs, actions and ideas that were identified by the communities as helpful, productive and worthy of support with continued authorization and enhanced funding. The information provided here comes from community listening sessions held

in West Virginia, Kentucky and Wyoming by the Partnership for Responsible Growth and the National Wildlife Federation, together with colleagues from Resources for the Future, the Brookings Institution, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) during 2019. All of these Washington-based national groups are working on developing data or amplifying local voices on issues of importance to coal-impacted communities and are eager to be DC-based resources when useful. Contact information and areas of expertise for these national groups are listed in the appendix at p. 19.

Clearly there are others in these states who have important views and bring additional ideas but were beyond the scope of our meetings; we will continue to reach out and expand this list. In addition, these listening sessions are a work in progress geographically. There are several other states in coal country that are working on similar issues and have important voices to be heard, including Pennsylvania, Ohio, Montana, New Mexico, and Utah. We hope to include them in a later version of this Sourcebook. We wanted to make information on the states we initially visited widely available as quickly as possible, since important policy discussions and decisions relevant to their issues are ongoing.

# Background & Issues

Coal mining, the use of coal to produce electrical power, and coal jobs have all declined precipitously in the past decade. This is largely the result of sharp reductions in the cost of natural gas and renewables but also stems from efforts to reduce coal-related pollutants harmful to health. All expert forecasts show that this decline is likely to continue, given market conditions, and would be accelerated by any new national climate change policy. Yet the federal government has provided insufficient resources to cushion the transition for the most impacted communities and to promote other opportunities for jobs and economic development.

The people in communities economically dependent on coal have worked hard and often sacrificed their own health to provide energy for all Americans. They are now dealing with a variety of very challenging circumstances threatening their economic well-being and health—and the very existence of some rural communities. The existing challenges are, of course, made even more difficult by the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbates health, economic, educational and infrastructure issues. There are also knowledgeable experts and creative leaders in these communities who are developing a wide range of solutions. Their shared view is that solutions that are sustainable must build on local strengths and come from the communities themselves.

In Britain, Germany and the EU, as countries have adopted industrial policies phasing out coal, billions of dollars have been committed to coal-dependent regions to assist in this energy transition. Should federal climate change policy be adopted here, Congress should allocate significant funding for similar programs, but other federal policies can provide

**Appalachia has faced significant reductions in mining employment in recent years, going from 57,979 employees in 2009 to 30,620 employees by 2018, a loss of nearly 50 percent.**

important assistance to these communities in the nearer term, as many are already going through such a transition. The primary coal-producing regions in the country today are Wyoming's Powder River Basin and Appalachia. Appalachia in particular has faced significant reductions in mining employment in recent years, going from 57,979 employees in 2009 to 30,620 employees by 2018, a loss of nearly 50 percent.<sup>1</sup> These challenges are compounded by a history of isolation, poverty and neglect in the region and a series of coal company bankruptcies and reorganizations.<sup>2</sup> The companies have often managed these bankruptcies, through reorganizations that move pension and health care liabilities into separate entities that are underfunded or stranded and reconstitute the most valuable assets, leaving workers and their families with limited legal recourse.

In Wyoming, the state currently producing the most coal at about 40 percent of U.S. output, the downturn has been less severe so far. However, further reductions are clearly coming and will have a dramatic impact on coal-production areas as well as the state budget. In Wyoming, more than any other state, government budgets at both

**Knowledgeable experts and creative leaders in these communities are developing a wide range of solutions. Their shared view is that solutions that are sustainable must build on local strengths and come from the communities themselves.**

the state and local level are inordinately dependent on extractive industries. There is no state income tax, and both commercial and residential property tax is assessed at only a small percentage of its value, so around 60 percent of the state's revenue depends on coal, oil and gas.<sup>3</sup>

Downturns in any of these markets severely limit public services throughout the state. Ironically, because other industries are so lightly taxed, an influx of new business and workers could actually cost the state money because the taxes from those businesses may not cover the cost of public services for their workers. Thus, diversified economic development, which is often an important approach to help coal-impacted communities, can be a double-edged sword in Wyoming. Work has begun at the state and local level to review these tax issues, but no significant changes have taken place as yet.

Many communities in these states are working hard to plan for their future and to identify priorities and creative ideas for making changes that fit their unique needs and challenges. In our discussions we've identified several overarching issues that unite these communities and, because of their scale, are particularly suited to federal funding or other support. These are:

- **Infrastructure**, beginning with clean water needs. This includes water treatment for sources polluted by mine activities as well as repair of infrastructure built by coal companies and abandoned years ago that have not been maintained by state or local governments.<sup>4</sup>
- **Access and connectivity**, because it is essential to education and health care in the communities, and without it, new businesses will not come into areas that seem remote or poorly connected with the rest of the state and country.
  - **Road improvements**—Roads into the smaller communities are an important issue. Many are not well maintained, extending travel times by a factor of two or more in some cases and making it much more difficult for potential businesses to consider locating in these areas.<sup>5</sup>

- **Broadband**—Broadband connections are expensive to locate in small, remote communities but are essential for new business development. Indeed, many communities, particularly in West Virginia, lack basic cellular phone service. Furthermore, affordable and reliable connectivity is a critical component of community well-being, allowing rural community members to stay connected with schools, healthcare centers and one another.
- **Mine reclamation** and protection of communities from mine waste and pollution.
- **Small business support**, including access to capital and technical support for local business and for local government planning.
- **Securing miners' benefits**—Protection of pensions, health care and black lung benefits that are owed to miners and their families.
- **Worker training**—Mining and mining-related jobs have significantly declined. Workers have particular skills, and training for new jobs is sometimes offered, but very little research exists to guide policy decisions in this area. Often workers are trained for jobs that do not exist, and some training programs fail to make the best use of the experience and skills that workers already have. Training needs to be conducted more thoughtfully and guided by the communities, not by generic ideas of where the next generation of jobs will be.
- **Health and health care**—Health problems include opioid addiction, obesity, diabetes, dental care and depression. There are also opportunities to bring health care jobs and telehealth into these communities to boost the local economy and provide care for local residents who cannot access doctors or hospitals easily.
- **Appropriate economic development**—Rather than depend on bringing large new and unfamiliar businesses into a community, define the community's own positive aspects, even if they are modest, and try to build on them.

Other systemic issues that were identified by the communities include: land ownership (out-of-state coal and land companies own large portions of West Virginia's coal country, precluding private ownership and intergenerational wealth transfer through inheritance of family residences); perceived state and local government mismanagement of outside funding; housing and the need for rehabilitation of abandoned and blighted properties; and a negative public narrative, limiting communities' ability to help themselves and to attract new residents and businesses.

# Ideas from the Communities

The organizations described below represent a cross-section of those working locally to create a new future for coal-impacted communities. Each organization represents an area of work that the community believes is essential to their sustainable recovery. As stated, these groups were part of our outreach and listening sessions over the past year, and a wider range of contacts is listed in the Appendix. In addition, several other states have similar issues and creative people and groups working on solutions and important information to share with national policymakers. We present these valuable contacts as a starting point and urge those working on coal country policy to hear from them and others directly.

## Social Entrepreneurship

### COALFIELD DEVELOPMENT WAYNE, WV

Coalfield Development has developed a new and creative model, focusing on revitalizing community-based real estate, initiating employment-based social enterprise and fostering personal academic development.

Since 2010, Coalfield Development has garnered \$16 million in regional investment, created over 250 new jobs, trained 1,200 people in new sectors, revitalized 200,000 square feet of formerly abandoned property of historic importance to their community and supported 50 new businesses. The numbers alone do not tell the entire story. They build lifetime assets in people, which transfer to personal empowerment and eventually community and regional growth.

Their approach to on-the-job training is relationship-based and holistic, using their innovative 33-6-3 model: 33 hours spent on-the-job training, 6 to community college and business coursework for an Associate's Degree in Applied Sciences, and 3 for personal development coaching.

*www.coalfield-development.org*  
*Brandon Dennison, CEO, bdennison@coalfield-development.org*  
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*mwwrenn@coalfield-development.org*

**“We are dedicated to developing the potential of Appalachian places and people by unlocking their creative power to transform problems into opportunities in the communities we came from. This requires above all else: courage, creativity and character.”**

**Brandon Dennison, CEO, Coalfield Development**

## Media & Education

### CENTER FOR RURAL STRATEGIES WHITESBURG, KY

The Center for Rural Strategies uses strategic communications, coalition building, public information campaigns, journalism, and public policy to improve the understanding of economic and social conditions in rural communities. Although a primary goal is to serve as a source for rural Americans, it also aims to connect urban and rural communities in a way that strengthens them both through compelling and accurate narratives of rural lives and cultures. The Center believes that rural America's fate is interrelated with that of urban America. Building stronger rural communities helps the nation as a whole, and we are stronger when we work with each other. The Center hosts a number of innovative projects, including the Daily Yonder and the Rural Assembly.

**The Daily Yonder** is a digital news platform that covers rural news for a national audience, aiming to inform both urban and rural readers about issues facing rural America.

**“The Daily Yonder reports on rural life for the people actually living it.” —Neiman Lab**



**CANE indoor farmers market, right, and weekly community dinner at CANE Commercial Kitchen | Source: CANE**

The National Rural Assembly is a coalition of 400+ organizations and individuals from 47 states working together at all levels of policymaking to create more opportunities for rural communities.

**“We have these powerful tools. Cameras and computers and broadcast licenses. And we can use them for a lot of meanness. To divide people and to make them feel like they were never made in the image of God. Or we can use them for healing, to pull people together, and to help give people faith in what they might find when they get around the bend.” —Dee Davis**

[www.ruralstrategies.org](http://www.ruralstrategies.org)

Dee Davis, President, [dee@ruralstrategies.org](mailto:dee@ruralstrategies.org)

## Agriculture & Food Services

### COMMUNITY AGRICULTURAL AND NUTRITIONAL ENTERPRISES WHITESBURG, KY

Eastern Kentucky has a rich food tradition with gardens and small farms playing an important role. In a great example of building on the resources that are already in the community, Community Agricultural and Nutritional Enterprises (CANE) was established to provide new markets and increase the agricultural footprint in Letcher County, KY, and surrounding communities. Their work includes community education about farming and nutrition issues, access for low-income families to fresh produce and help for farmers in creating local markets and producing value-added products.

CANE operates a 9,000-square-foot commercial kitchen where farmers can preserve their products and create shelf-stable, value-added products to take to markets across the region, while alleviating many of the typical risks involved in scaling up operations to meet demand.

The kitchen also serves as a community gathering space and rental event venue, including for on-site educational programs for low-income families about healthy eating and health impacts and the USDA Summer Feeding Program for kids who rely on free school lunches during the school year.

CANE has also been instrumental in establishing a weekly local farmers market, giving lower-income families access to fresh produce and creating a source of income, particularly for new farmers, including those who have been in the coal industry. The market has implemented a number of innovative programs, such as the Pharmacy Program, providing tokens for use at the market to individuals with diet-related diseases; and \$10 vouchers for use at the market to those who walk at least a mile to the market. CANE also serves a weekly free community meal using local products. As of June 2020, CANE Kitchen has provided 100,000 meals to area families in need.

[www.cane-kitchen.com](http://www.cane-kitchen.com)

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Brandon Fleming, Manager, [brandon@caneinc.org](mailto:brandon@caneinc.org)

## Rural Regional Philanthropy

### FOUNDATION FOR APPALACHIAN KENTUCKY HAZARD, KY

The Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky is a regional community foundation in the heart of southeastern Kentucky's distressed Appalachian counties. Recognizing that to develop competitive and sustainable economies, communities must have the capacity to plan for and take advantage of economic opportunities, the Foundation invests in organizational capacity, downtown revitalization, education and entrepreneurial ecosystems. Leveraging charitable giving, community involvement and strategic partnerships to create sustainable, locally-controlled assets in the area, the Foundation has invested over \$12 million in Southeastern Kentucky communities since 2009.

In 2017, the Foundation expanded its work with strategic grantmaking and impact investing through the launch of the Appalachian Impact Fund (AIF), which supports economic transition and community investment in Eastern Kentucky. To date, AIF has provided more than \$1.5 million in grants to numerous regional nonprofit organizations and small businesses, invested more than \$1.1 million in downtown revitalization, entrepreneurial ecosystems, housing and homeownership initiatives, and attracted an additional \$6 million in new investment funding to the region.

[www.appalachianky.org](http://www.appalachianky.org)

Gerry Roll, Executive Director, [gerry@appalachianky.org](mailto:gerry@appalachianky.org)

## Local Government Economic Redevelopment

### MINGO COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY WILLIAMSON, WV

The Mingo County Redevelopment Authority is a local government organization that promotes and encourages the continued and increased economic and civic well-being of Mingo County through the development, attraction, and retention of businesses, industries, and commerce. Their economic development expertise facilitates business development through creative use of public and private funds and federal grants. Recent projects include Blue Acre Aquaponics Center, which will provide fresh greens and tilapia for the regional market and serve as an employment and training center for Mingo and nearby counties and as a model for other coalfield counties, and Mingo County Air Transportation Park, a state-of-the-art general aviation airport developed as a post mine land use project with nearly 500 acres of developable property, which will facilitate the development of aerospace and aviation manufacturing sectors and capitalize on the skill sets of former coal miners.

[www.developmingo.com](http://www.developmingo.com)

Leasha Johnson, Executive Director, [ljohnson@developmingo.com](mailto:ljohnson@developmingo.com)



## Community Economic Development

### SHAPING OUR APPALACHIAN REGION (SOAR) PIKEVILLE, KY

SOAR (Shaping Our Appalachian Region) is a non-profit entity established in 2013 by Kentucky elected officials as a bipartisan effort that believes in the future of Appalachia and the ability of the community to transform the region. The organization led over 1,500 community members in the development of a Blueprint for the Future of Appalachia.

This blueprint is based on seven priorities: broadband, workforce development, entrepreneurship in the digital economy, healthy communities, industrial recruitment, local foods, tourism and downtown revitalization. They build on these priorities by facilitating partnerships—they now work with more than 240 partners—among businesses, public organizations and grassroots groups to create real community impact. Working toward this future involves expanding job creation, enhancing regional opportunity, innovation, and identity; improving the overall quality of life in the state; and supporting those working to achieve these goals in Appalachian Kentucky.

In 2019, SOAR helped facilitate the expansion of Kentucky Wired, a 3,000-mile high-speed, high-capacity fiber optic middle-mile network across Kentucky that went live across portions of Appalachia and will give internet service providers the ability to connect to the network. They also provided support to AppHarvest, a high-tech agriculture startup that is constructing a more than 2.5 million square-foot greenhouse in Morehead, KY. Regional grants awarded in 2019 by federal and state government entities and other funders aligned to the Blueprint totaled nearly \$52 million.

[www.soar-ky.org](http://www.soar-ky.org)

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Blue Acre Aquaponics Center, left, and Mingo County Air Transportation Park | Source: Mingo County Redevelopment Authority



“ We recognize the challenges we face but also recognize the opportunities to address those generational challenges and leverage technology and innovation to create new opportunities. People, businesses and organizations throughout Appalachia Kentucky are collaborating across sectors and county lines to bring about true and transformative change. ”

Jared Arnett, Executive Director, SOAR

## Community Health & Wellness

### WILLIAMSON HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER WILLIAMSON, WV

The Williamson Health and Wellness Center began as a small healthcare facility that also operated a free clinic in Mingo County, WV. Mingo County was among the worst in the state in chronic diseases—obesity, hypertension and diabetes—and a center for pill mills and the opioid epidemic. Dr. C. Donovan Beckett, founder of the clinic, realized that the clinic needed to be focus on preventative care and promoting wellness through healthy food and physical activity and set about reinvesting the clinic’s revenues into other health-related projects.

Today, the Center has a staff of more than 100 with a mission of creating an innovative culture of health that accelerates positive growth throughout rural communities. It has a goal of 10,000 healthier lives, and believes that wellness is a critical asset that also can serve to unite a community. Innovative community-based projects include: home-based care for high-risk diabetes patients that can focus on diet, exercise, housing and other needs and has had dramatic improvement in testing results; “Healthy in the Hills” running program that has become a way to connect with others and start to exercise; a “Garden of Eatin’” near a public housing project with fresh produce for the community as well as a downtown farmers’ market that will include a commercial kitchen and grocery; and renovation of an empty downtown building formerly known as a “pill mill” pharmacy that will become a one-stop facility for substance abuse treatment and workforce training.

They have partnered with Stanford University’s Impact Experience program, which connects small businesses to

venture capital. In addition, they have recently purchased to the Williamson Hospital out of bankruptcy and continue to provide emergency care in the community.

*williamsonhealthwellness.com*

*Dr. C. Donovan Beckett, CEO, cdbeckett.do@gmail.com*

*Darrin McCormick, Executive Assistant,*

*admccormick@williamsonhealthwellness.com*

### MOUNTAIN COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CORPORATION

WHITESBURG AND OTHER LOCATIONS  
THROUGHOUT EASTERN KY

Mountain Comprehensive Health Corporation started in rural Leslie County, KY in 1971 with one trailer. Now it is one of the largest rural community health centers in the United States with 58 healthcare providers and 390 staff in nine clinics located across Eastern Kentucky and serving over 40,000 people annually.

MCHC exemplifies the importance of wellness to community economic development. The definition of wellness for their work includes not only direct medical care but preventative care and community spirit and livability that can attract new investment. In addition to becoming an important employer in the area, it has extensive diabetes prevention and educational activities as well as food and nutrition efforts. It is revitalizing the abandoned Whitesburg High School building, an important symbolic building to the community, which now includes a 9,000 square foot community commercial kitchen leased to a nonprofit organization for \$1 and used by farmers to create value added products and by the community for feeding programs, community meals and nutrition education.

*www.mchcky.com*

*Mike Caudill, CEO, lmcaudill@mtncomp.org*

## Natural Resources Protection & Sustainable Agricultural Economies

### POWDER RIVER BASIN RESOURCE COUNCIL SHERIDAN, WY

More than 40 percent of coal in the United States comes from Wyoming’s Powder River Basin. Although a major part of the state’s economy and the nation’s energy system, coal development presents many challenges to the state. For over 40 years, the Powder River Basin Resource Council (PRBRC) has advocated for the protection of Wyoming’s landscapes and natural resources. Founded by ranchers and townspeople concerned about the impact of strip mining, the group has played a central role in the passing of landmark state and federal mining laws and regulations.

“Coal’s decline is a reality, and we cannot stop this fact or wish it away. Creating a different future requires intelligence and will and leaders who can reinvent Wyoming. We have the opportunity to learn from other states that have diversified their economies and reformed their tax structures.”

**Marcia Westkott, PRBRC Chair**

Today, they advocate for environmental protections for mining, effective bonding and reclamation standards, fair returns on the publicly owned coal, and Wyoming’s clean energy transition, particularly through the state’s growing wind and solar capacities.

*www.powderriverbasin.org*

*Jill Morrison, Executive Director, jmorrison@powderriverbasin.org*

*Shannon Anderson, Staff Attorney, sanderson@powderriverbasin.org*

## Budget Policy & Government Spending

### WEST VIRGINIA CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY (WVCBP) CHARLESTON, WV

For over a decade, WVCBP has fought for a shared prosperity for all West Virginians. WVCBP does this in partnership with its coalitions and at the state legislature advocating for living wages and family economic security, affordable and accessible health care, tax fairness, and communities where working families can prosper. This work has assisted in raising the wages of 127,000 West Virginians, increasing pay by \$156.8 million annually; protecting the state budget by closing \$100 million in tax loopholes; and expanding Medicaid, helping 200,000 people gain access to health care. Most recently, WVCBP assisted in the enactment of expanded Medicaid to include adult dental coverage for 300,000 West Virginians and healthcare for expectant mothers up to 300 percent of poverty. WVCBP’s priority with policy outcomes is to utilize data to

improve the lives of people traditionally left out of the policy making process, especially children, persons of color, low wage workers, women and West Virginians with disabilities. They believe that rigorous research is vital to economic justice, and that economic justice is tied to freedom.

WVCBP is a statewide nonpartisan and nonprofit policy research organization whose research is designed to support informed public dialogue and policy in West Virginia. During COVID-19, they have compiled data to detail the impact of the disease on West Virginians, many of whom are particularly susceptible to the disease due to black lung and other existing conditions and have developed and supported important policies to address these impacts.

*wvpolicy.org*

*Seth DiStefano, Policy Outreach Director, sdistefano@wvpolicy.org*

*Kelly Allen, Interim Executive Director, kallen@wvpolicy.org*

## Legal Expertise

### APPALACHIAN CITIZENS’ LAW CENTER WHITESBURG, KY

The Appalachian Citizens’ Law Center (ACLC) was founded in 2001 and has since served hundreds of families, primarily in the Central Appalachian region. ACLC is a nonprofit law firm that fights for justice in the coalfields by using a high-impact three-pronged strategy for change: litigation, advocacy and organizing. They represent and organize coal miners on issues of black lung and mine safety, work with community groups to protect the land and people from misuse and degradation caused by extractive industries, and analyze and advocate for policy that supports a more equitable future in the region. Their policy work includes advocacy for mine worker health and safety, abandoned mine land reclamation, and investment in community, economic, and public infrastructure. They co-convene the RECLAIM Working Group.

As their Director Wes Addington said, “We provide free legal representation, advocacy, and organizing support to make sure people’s voices are heard and that they have power over the decisions that affect their lives.”

*www.appalachianlawcenter.org*

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*Rebecca Shelton, Coordinator of Policy and Organizing, rshelton@aclc.org*

# Federal Policy Priorities

## POLICY COALITIONS

Several coalitions of local and national voices are working on more detailed statements of policy and legislative priorities, and some are working with Congress on specific legislative proposals. The coalitions listed below include many of the groups named in this Sourcebook and are important additional sources of collective information.

**The Alliance for Appalachia** is a regional coalition of 15 grassroots and nonprofit groups promoting a healthy, just Appalachia by supporting member organizations in communities impacted by destructive resource extraction.

*Lyndsay Tarus, Engagement Coordinator,  
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**The BlueGreen Alliance** operates with the belief that there does not have to be a choice between good jobs and a clean environment and that the two objectives can be simultaneously achieved by bringing together labor unions and environmental organizations. The Alliance, along with its supporters, recently released the Working Class People on Jobs and the Environment ([bluegreenalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Working-Class-People-on-Jobs-and-the-Environment.pdf](http://bluegreenalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Working-Class-People-on-Jobs-and-the-Environment.pdf)) as well as the Solidarity for Climate Action Plan ([bluegreenalliance.org/work-issue/solidarity-for-climate-action/](http://bluegreenalliance.org/work-issue/solidarity-for-climate-action/)) which illustrate how this can be achieved.

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**The Just Transition Fund** helps create economic opportunity for frontline communities and workers hardest hit by the transition away from coal by providing direct investments in economic development and transition planning support. Guided by a belief in the power of community-driven solutions, the Fund and its partners have recently issued a National Economic Transition (NET) Platform ([justtransitionfund.org](http://justtransitionfund.org)). Prepared by a diverse stakeholder group of 85+ local and regional leaders from communities facing energy transitions, the document outlines a comprehensive seven-point platform of integrated federal policy solutions to help strengthen and diversify local economies undergoing transition.

*Heidi Binko, Executive Director and Co-Founder,  
[hbinko@justtransitionfund.org](mailto:hbinko@justtransitionfund.org)*

**RECLAIM Working Group** is composed primarily of state and local groups working to pass legislation to accelerate long-delayed reclamation of thousands of abandoned mine sites, providing jobs and healthier more liveable communities.

*Dana Kuhnline, RECLAIM Working Group Coordinator,  
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**Reimagine Appalachia** is a coalition of West Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Ohio groups working to create a blueprint for expanded economic opportunity and reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the Ohio River Valley region. ([reimagineappalachia.org](http://reimagineappalachia.org); *Reimagine Appalachia: A New Deal That Works For Us*, [reimagineappalachia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ReImagineAppalachia\\_Blueprint.pdf](http://reimagineappalachia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ReImagineAppalachia_Blueprint.pdf))

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Angie Rosser, Executive Director, West Virginia Rivers Coalition, [arosser@wvriivers.org](mailto:arosser@wvriivers.org); Amanda Woodrum, Senior Researcher, Policy Matters Ohio, [awoodrum@policymattersohio.org](mailto:awoodrum@policymattersohio.org); Jacquelyn Bonomo, President and CEO, PennFuture, [bonomo@pennfuture.org](mailto:bonomo@pennfuture.org)*

**Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC)** is a regional network of grassroots community organizations that provides training and coordinates issue work for its more than 18,532 members and 37 local chapters in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Montana's seven Native American reservations, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Their work aims to promote the balance of economic growth, public health, and ecological stewardship. In 2019, WORC published *Planning for Coal's Decline*, a data-driven portrayal of the state of coal mine reclamation in the Western U.S. with policy recommendations to improve pre- and post-mine closure cleanup ([worc.org/media/WORC\\_Report\\_Planning\\_For\\_Coals\\_Decline-web.pdf](http://worc.org/media/WORC_Report_Planning_For_Coals_Decline-web.pdf)).

*Sara Kendall, Program Director, [sara@worc.org](mailto:sara@worc.org)*

## ISSUE PRIORITIES

As demonstrated above, many communities have impressive intellectual capital focused on economic redevelopment and creative business and investment priorities. The overwhelming sentiment is that they must rebuild their communities themselves, not wait for the next big out-of-town business.

Federal policymakers working on transition issues should consider and consult these community voices when determining where the federal government can be most useful. Existing law, including some provisions that need reauthorization, relatively small adjustments of authority, and/or additional funding can provide important resources for these communities' priorities if properly focused and adequately funded. Specific examples of such are set out below.

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**Reclamation/Abandoned Mine Cleanup/Job Creation—**

Reclamation of abandoned mine sites and cleanup of mine-waste pollution are critical to attracting new business to these areas and to their health and social capital. It can also be a source of employment, utilizing skills that laid-off miners already have. The Abandoned Mine Land Fund (AML) (30 USC § 1231), administered by the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) within the Department of Interior, needs to be reauthorized and better funded. There is also a need to expedite the use of existing funds in the Abandoned Mine Land Fund, to reclaim abandoned coal mines and stimulate economic development on the reclaimed land. Reauthorization legislation is pending in the 116th Congress and has passed the House (*H.R. 4248 passed the House of Representatives as part of H.R. 2 on 7/1/20; S. 1193 was referred to Energy and Natural Resources on 4/11/19*).

The RECLAIM Act intends to accelerate the clean-up of abandoned coal mines through fast-tracked spending of \$1 billion of currently unappropriated AML funds over five years, targeted specifically in areas hard hit by coal industry decline (*H.R. 2156 passed the House of Representatives as part of H.R. 2 on 7/1/20; S. 1232 was referred to Energy and Natural Resources on 4/30/19*). Government estimates suggest that at least 4,600 direct reclamation jobs could come as a result of the spending. RECLAIM, through the cleaning up of coal mines and the waters polluted by them, could serve as an economic development catalyst to local communities and has been supported by a national coalition that includes several national environmental groups and dozens of local organizations.

Pilot project funding enhancing the AML fund and authorizing economic development spending, which received appropriations in the last two budget cycles, should be increased. The AML Pilot Program provides grants to six Appalachian states to clean up abandoned mine lands. Since the program is funded through annual appropriations to OSMRE, the opportunity is not contingent on coal production. The program could benefit from increased appropriations, as well as a broadening of eligibility criteria for more states to participate (*See Public Law 116-94: Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020. (133 Stat. 2534; 12/20/19)*).

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**Clean Water Issues—**Abandoned mine sites often pollute water sources for communities, and reclamation can assist with this essential issue. In addition, EPA authorities set out below

are vital to addressing local water issues, and funding for the work authorized is historically inadequate. EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management (42 USC §9601 *et seq.* (1980)) supports communities in cleaning up brownfield sites. The Safe Drinking Water Act (42 USC §300f *et seq.* (1974)) authorizes Revolving Fund grants to provide technical assistance to states, small communities and systems serving under 10,000 people. (*See also Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, 42 USC 300j-3d, which establishes a clearinghouse for cost-effective technologies for alternative drinking water delivery focused on communities of 500 or less.*)

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**Miners' Pension and Health Benefits and Black Lung Trust Fund—**

Programs that can make miners and their families whole and recognize the sacrifices they have made for energy production are critical for community health and revitalization. The downturn in the industry has seriously threatened all these programs, which were underfunded even at their best. Bankruptcies in the coal industry have been generally accompanied by employers shedding their liabilities to their employees. These programs are even more important, given the impact of the coronavirus on these communities.

The Bipartisan American Miners Act of 2019, which was included in the 2020 federal spending package, funds existing multi-employer coal industry pension obligations as well as health care benefits for miners who worked for companies that declared bankruptcy between 2018 and 2019. This covers retirement benefits for 92,000 retired miners and health care benefits for 13,000 miners (*See Public Law 116-94: Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020. (133 Stat. 2534; Date: 12/20/19)*).

The Black Lung Disability Trust Fund (26 USC §9501), administered by the Department of Labor Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, provides disability benefits to miners who suffer from the respiratory disease pneumoconiosis, known as black lung. Black lung cases, caused by exposure to mine dust and silica, have been increasing rapidly in recent years. The Fund is financed by a tax on coal produced and is intended to cover benefits that coal operators do not pay. Because of the number of companies defaulting on their obligations, in FY 2019 the Fund had to borrow about \$1.9 billion from the Treasury. Four coal mine operator bankruptcies alone over the last five years have left the trust fund with an additional responsibility for \$865 million for 3,322 beneficiaries. (*See Government Accountability Office, GAO-20-438T, "Black Lung Benefits Program," (2/26/20); and GAO-20-21, "Black Lung Benefits Program, Improved Oversight ... Needed," (2/21/20)*). Pending legislation and GAO-recommended executive branch action would address this issue (*See, e.g., bills pending at the time of printing: H.R. 3786, Black Lung Disability Trust Fund Solvency Act, introduced in 116th Congress 7/23/19; and S. 2205, Black Lung Benefits Improvement Act of 2019, introduced in 116th Congress 7/23/19*).

**Small Business Assistance and Broadband**—The programs and agencies set out below could be valuable in providing infrastructure and capital for small businesses in these communities, including planning, economic development strategies, and obtaining broadband and similar infrastructure.

- **Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration**—EDA administers grants to promote job creation, innovation, and sustainable economic growth through financial assistance in economically distressed communities. Grants are available to states, units of local government, universities, tribes and tribal organizations, and non-profits based on level of economic distress as determined primarily by unemployment rates and per capita income. Implementation grants—which include Public Works, Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA), and Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC)—are particularly beneficial to coal-impacted communities. Public Works grants aim to provide additional insight into the state of a community’s existing physical infrastructure and the resources for expansions and upgrades. EAA grants provide flexible funding assistance for communities facing sudden or gradual adverse economic changes, often funding economic studies, planning or strategy grants, construction grants, etc. ACC (formerly the Power Initiative) provides grant opportunities for communities specifically impacted by changes to the coal economy (*42 U.S.C. § 3121 et seq.*). Eligible projects result in an increased community organizing capacity, a diversified workforce, and the execution of coordinated economic and workforce development strategies.
- **Appalachian Regional Commission**—(*40 USC § 14101*) ARC provides funding for projects in the Appalachian Region in a wide range of program areas, including community infrastructure, ready workforce, energy, business development, health, leadership development, telecommunications, tourism development and transportation.

The ARC has a long track record of investments and job creation in coal communities. Since 2015 the ARC’s POWER initiative has provided \$195 million on 242 projects touching 350 Appalachian counties in 13 states. In FY 2018 alone, ARC invested \$125.6 million in 522 economic development projects. These region-wide investments are attracting more than \$1 billion in leveraged private investments, and are projected to create or retain 26,600 jobs, as well as train or educate 34,000 students and workers. For example, in July 2020 the ARC provided a \$6 million investment package for six West Virginia lending organizations to provide loans to small businesses in the State.

In addition, ARC, in partnership with the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration and Delta Regional Authority, administers the Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC). The initiative aligns workforce development efforts

with existing economic development capacities and strategies, particularly rural communities hard hit by the economic transition that are slow to recover.

**Small Business Administration**—Through its nearly 1,000 Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), the SBA provides technical assistance and counseling to existing and aspiring small businesses. Its Office of Native American Affairs provides similar services in Native American communities hurt by coal market changes.

The SBA Rural Lending Initiative is a resource available for rural small businesses to increase their capital. The program allows Certified Development Companies (CDCs) to make certain loans for projects located in a rural county in the CDC’s SBA region.

**Department of Agriculture (USDA)**—The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) (*7 U.S.C. § 2008c (2018)*) manages a portfolio of economic development programs and has dedicated Community Economic Development staff; Circuit Rider and Technical Assistance and Training Programs for compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act; broadband programs; and Forest Service work on recreational economy potential.

The Rural Housing Service (*42 U.S.C., Chapter 8A, Subchapter III, 1471, et. seq.*) manages programs intended to build new or improve existing housing and essential community facilities in rural areas. There are a number of financing options available, including loans, grants, and loan guarantees. Beyond single- and multi-family housing, this service also aims to increase community capacity through the financing of first responder vehicles, fire houses, and similar essential infrastructure.

The Rural Utilities Service (*7 U.S.C. 922*) assists in providing water, electric and telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas. In addition to the funding available, the program aligns communities with technical assistance organizations that provide training on the sustainable use and integration of the infrastructure into the community.

USDA’s ReConnect Program (*Public Law 115-141: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018. 132 Stat. 348; 3/23/18*) makes loans and grants available for the construction, improvement or acquisition of facilities and equipment necessary for rural broadband connectivity.

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program (*7 U.S.C 950 aaa-2 et seq.*) equips rural communities with the necessary assets to implement reliable distance learning and telemedicine. The program makes available grants that can be used to acquire equipment/capital assets, instructional programming and technical assistance for rural communities.

# Appendix

## Organizations & Individual Leaders, by State

### KENTUCKY

#### Appalachian Citizens' Law Center Whitesburg, KY

Primary contacts: Wes Addington, Executive Director, [wes@aclc.org](mailto:wes@aclc.org); Rebecca Shelton, Coordinator of Policy and Organizing, [rshelton@aclc.org](mailto:rshelton@aclc.org)

[See Sourcebook p. 10](#)

#### Appalachian Groundswell Whitesburg, KY

Primary contact: James Stapleton, Stream/Wetland Mitigation Director, [james@appalachiangroundswell.com](mailto:james@appalachiangroundswell.com)

Appalachian Groundswell is a stream mitigation company that preserves, enhances, establishes and restores the streams and wetlands of Kentucky's eastern coalfields, not only for the healing of the environment but also to create sustainable jobs for the region.

#### Appalachian Impact Fund Hazard, KY

Primary contact: Lora Smith, Executive Director, [lora@appalachianky.org](mailto:lora@appalachianky.org)

The Fund is a social impact investment fund that blends capacity-building grantmaking with investment capital for community economic development in the coalfields of Eastern Kentucky. Through nimble early-

state capital to overlooked entrepreneurs and neglected downtowns, the Fund readies communities for broader investment.

#### Appalshop Whitesburg, KY

Primary contact: Ada Smith, Institutional Development Director, [ada@appalshop.org](mailto:ada@appalshop.org)

Appalshop uses cultural creativity as community economic development work. Their goal is to use their collective platform to articulate the cultural and creative diversity of the region and raise the collective Appalachian voice through storytelling. They operate a radio station, theater, art gallery, record label, and film institute, among other platforms.

#### Center for Rural Strategies Whitesburg, KY

Primary Contact: Dee Davis, President, [dee@ruralstrategies.org](mailto:dee@ruralstrategies.org)

[See Sourcebook p. 6](#)

#### Community Agricultural and Nutritional Enterprises Whitesburg, KY

Primary contacts: Valerie Horn, Community Engagement Officer, [valerieisonhorn@gmail.com](mailto:valerieisonhorn@gmail.com); Brandon Fleming, Manager, [brandon@caneinc.org](mailto:brandon@caneinc.org)

[See Sourcebook p. 7](#)

#### Community Farm Alliance Berea, KY

Primary contact: Martin Richards, Executive Director, [martin@cfaky.org](mailto:martin@cfaky.org)

CFACY works to organize and encourage cooperation among rural and urban citizens through leadership development and grassroots democratic processes to ensure an essential, prosperous place for family-scale agriculture in local economies and communities.

#### Cowan Community Center Whitesburg, KY

Primary contact: Valerie Horn, Community Engagement Officer, [valerieisonhorn@gmail.com](mailto:valerieisonhorn@gmail.com)

The Center provides educational, social, cultural, and recreational experiences for the entire community in order to sustain a wholesome and healthy lifestyle that encourages intergenerational relationships.

#### Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program Hazard, KY

Primary contact: Jeff Whitehead, Executive Director, [jwhitehead@ekcep.org](mailto:jwhitehead@ekcep.org)

EKCEP helps workers and businesses in 23 Eastern Kentucky counties have access to training, employment, and workforce development programs all in one place.

#### Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky Hazard, KY

Primary contact: Gerry Roll, Executive Director, [gerry@appalachianky.org](mailto:gerry@appalachianky.org)

[See Sourcebook p. 7](#)

## Grow Appalachia

Berea, KY

*Primary contact: Valerie Horn, Community Engagement Officer, valerieisonhorn@gmail.com*

Grow Appalachia partners with organizations, communities, and families in Appalachia to create healthy, resilient and economically viable food systems.

## Kentuckians for the Commonwealth

London, KY

*Primary contact: Lisa Abbott, Deputy Organizing Director for Just Transition, lisa@kftc.org*

Kentuckians for the Commonwealth is a statewide organization working for a new balance of power and a just society. They believe that the solutions to community problems come from working together and building collective strength.

## Kentucky Highlands Investment Company

London, KY

*Primary contact: Melissa Conn, Director of the KHIC Center, mconn@khic.org*

KHIC aims to provide and retain employment opportunities in Southeastern Kentucky through financial investments and managerial assistance among 22 counties.

## Kentucky Maple Syrup Association

Lexington, KY

*Primary contact: Seth Long, President, sethlong@bellsouth.net*

Maple syrup is a growing agricultural product in Kentucky, and the Association connects farmers to share production and marketing information.

## Letcher County Culture Hub

Whitesburg, KY

*Primary contact: Annie Jane Cotten, Organizer, annie@appalshop.org*

The Letcher County Culture Hub is a growing network of community-led organizations that work together to build a culture and economy where they own what they make. The Culture Hub's 20-plus partners include community centers, local businesses, artist and artisan organizations, volunteer fire departments, public and educational organizations, and nonprofit corporations, among others.

## Letcher County Farmers Market

Whitesburg, KY

*Primary contact: Valerie Horn, Community Engagement, Officer, valerieisonhorn@gmail.com*

The Market, which is a USDA Summer Feeding Program site, provides residents with locally grown produce and helps local growers, artisans, musicians and crafters generate income through their respective products.

## Levitt Amp Music Festival Whitesburg

Whitesburg, KY

*Primary contact: Steve Ruth, Coordinator, levitt@cowancommunitycenter.org*

Two years in a row, Cowan County was one of 15 nationwide recipients of a prestigious Levitt AMP Series grant, through which underused public spaces are transformed one night a week for 10 weeks into free, live concerts.

## Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED)

Berea, Paintsville and Hazard, KY

*Primary contacts: Betsy Whaley, Executive Vice President, betsy@maced.org; Ivy Brashear, Appalachian Transition Director, ivy@maced.org*

MACED has worked in Eastern Kentucky for more than 40 years on a range of economic development issues, working with businesses and communities to advance a just transition to a new economy in Central Appalachia. They offer small business loans and business guidance to existing and start-up enterprises, particularly those that may not qualify for traditional financing. They also provide technical assistance and funding for homeowners, businesses, nonprofits, schools and local governments.

## Mountain Comprehensive Health Corporation

Whitesburg, KY

*Primary contact: Mike Caudill, CEO, lmcaudill@mtncomp.org*

**See Sourcebook p. 9**

## Pine Mountain Scenic Trail

Kentucky

*Primary contact: James Stapleton, President, freshwater@suddenlink.net*

The Trail is a key connecting link in the Great Eastern Trail, 1,800 miles of footpath from Alabama to New York. The Pine Mountain Scenic Trail will, once completed, connect Breaks Interstate Park with the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park.

## Rural Assembly

Whitesburg, KY

*Primary contact: Dee Davis, President, dee@ruralstrategies.org*

**See Sourcebook p. 7**

## Rural Health Opioid Project Operation UNITE

London, KY

*Primary contact: Joann Vanzant, Program Director, jvanzant@centertech.com*

Operation UNITE is a nonprofit launched in 2003 in response to a Lexington Herald-Leader article that exposed the addiction and corruption of drug abuse in southern and eastern Kentucky. It is a three-pronged, comprehensive approach to combating substance abuse and misuse.

## Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR)

Pikeville, KY

*Primary contacts: Jared Arnett, Executive Director, jared@soar-ky.org; Joshua Ball, Associate Executive Director, joshua@soar-ky.org*

**See Sourcebook p. 8**

## WEST VIRGINIA

### ACT Foundation

Charleston, WV

*Primary contact: Steve White, Director, stevewhite@actwv.org*

The ACT Foundation is the research, advertising and public relations arm of the West Virginia State Building Trades, acting as a watchdog of public works projects to ensure a level playing field and the proper use of West Virginians' tax dollars.

## Advantage Valley

Charleston, WV

Primary contact: Terrell Ellis, Executive Director,  
terrell@terrellellis.com

Advantage Valley leverages local partnerships to attract new investment, retain industry and support entrepreneurship across West Virginia.

## American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

Charleston, WV

Primary contact: Kris Mallory, President, Kanawha Valley Labor Council, kmallory@aftwv.org

## Call to Action for Racial Equality (CARE)

Charleston, WV

Primary contact: Katonya Hart, Board President, katonyahart@gmail.com

CARE aims to promote racial equality through the dismantling of oppressive structures in West Virginia through community organizing, youth leadership development and policy change.

## Christians for the Mountains

Dunmore, WV

Primary contact: Allen Johnson, Coordinator, allen@christiansforthemountains.org

CFTM is a network of persons committed to advocating that Christians and their churches recognize their God-given responsibility to live compatibly and sustainably with Earth.

## Coalfield Development

Wayne, WV

Primary contacts: Brandon Dennison, CEO, bdennison@coalfield-development.org; Marilyn Wrenn, Chief Development Officer, mwrenn@coalfield-development.org

## See Sourcebook p. 6

## Citizen Action Group

Charleston, WV

Primary contact: Gary Zuckett, Executive Director WV-CAG, garyz@wvcag.org

WV CAG is driven by the belief that full-time citizen participation in the decision-making processes of the state is essential to lasting change. For over 50 years, the group has advocated for better public policy, rights

of individuals, a clean environment and a stronger democratic process.

## Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation

Charleston, WV

Primary contact: Sara Dearing, Executive Director, sdearing@drwvfoundation.org

The DRWV Foundation has been working for over two decades to diversify the economy of West Virginia by providing businesses with the necessary resources to grow and succeed in a global economy.

## Downstream Strategies

Morgantown, WV

Primary contact: Evan Hansen, President, ehansen@downstreamstrategies.com

Downstream Strategies is an environmental and economic development consulting firm.

## Energy Efficient West Virginia

Charleston, WV

Primary contact: Emmett Pepper, Executive Director, emmett@eewv.org

Energy Efficient West Virginia is a group of residents, businesses, and organizations in West Virginia that all believe residential, commercial and industrial energy efficiency is critical to West Virginia's future. Formed initially in response to a rate increase by the Appalachian Power Company in 2009, the group works to protect residents from rate increases and drive a market for energy efficiency services.

## Five Loaves and Two Fishes Food Bank

Kimball, WV

Primary contact: Linda McKinney or Jenna Belcher, jbelcher@nrgrda.org

Five Loaves and Two Fishes provides non-perishable food items, hygiene products and household goods to residents of McDowell County. The Food Bank, which also includes a clothing bank, toy pantry, and children's snack pantry, serves almost 15,000 individuals a year.

## Generation West Virginia

Charleston, WV

Primary contact: Natalie Roper, Executive Director, natalie@generationwv.org

Generation West Virginia works to attract, retain and advance young talent in West Virginia.

## The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation

Charleston, WV

Primary contact: Michelle Foster, President and CEO, mfoster@tgkuf.org

The Foundation, the largest community foundation in West Virginia, makes investments that grow the multiple forms of wealth necessary for a thriving community, including individual, intellectual, social, cultural, political, natural, built, and community financial assets.

## Huntington Area Development Council (HADCO)

Huntington, WV

Primary contact: Dave Lieving, President and CEO, dlieving@hadco.org

HADCO works to attract new employers to Cabell and Wayne counties, to retain existing employers and to help local employers expand their businesses.

## Hatfield-McCoy Trails

Williamson, WV

Primary contact: Jeff Lusk, Executive Director, jlusk@trailsheaven.com

The multi-county trail system is well-known for its off-highway vehicle trails and serves as a great tourist attraction to the local areas.

## The Huntington Regional Chamber of Commerce

Huntington, WV

Primary contact: Bill Bissett, President and CEO, bill@huntingtonchamber.org

## Mingo County Redevelopment Authority

Williamson, WV

Primary contact: Leasha Johnson, Executive Director, ljohnson@developmingo.com

## See Sourcebook p. 8



## Mountain State Justice

Charleston, WV

*Primary contacts: Daniel Hedges, Executive Director, daniel@msjlaw.org; Emmett Pepper, Legislative Advocate, emmett@msjlaw.org*

Mountain State Justice is a non-profit legal services firm dedicated to redressing entrenched and emerging systemic social, political, and economic imbalances of power for underserved West Virginians through legal advocacy and community empowerment offered regardless of ability to pay.

## Our Future West Virginia

Charleston, WV

*Primary contact: Chad Webb, Interim Executive Director, chad@ourfuturewv.org*

For too long West Virginian communities have been stripped by outsiders and left with a mess: an opioid epidemic, big farming, extractive industries, etc. Our Future West Virginia works to increase economic justice, education justice, racial justice, and civic engagement across the state in an effort to take back what belongs to West Virginians.

## Partnership of African American Churches

Charleston, WV

*Primary contact: Rev James Patterson, President, patterson@paac2.org*

The Partnership of African American Churches is a collaborative, non-profit, faith-based community development corporation.

## People Concerned About Chemical Safety

Charleston, WV

*Primary contact: Pam Nixon, President, pam@chemsafety.org*

People Concerned About Chemical Safety is an environmental justice organization dedicated to the protection of health and safety of all who reside, work and study in the vicinity of local chemical plants producing highly toxic chemicals.

## Reconnecting McDowell

Charleston, WV

*Primary contact: Chad Webb, Partnership Coordinator, cwebb@aftwv.org*

Reconnecting McDowell works toward educational improvement in McDowell County to create lasting economic prosperity in the area.

## Step by Step WV

Charleston, WV

*Primary contact: Kandi Workman, VISTA, kworkman@stepbystepwv.org*

Step by Step works to ensure that disadvantaged children living in economically challenged communities throughout the southern coalfields of West Virginia receive continuous, comprehensive care from birth to independent adulthood. Through community centers, afterschool and summer programs, and home visits, at-risk children and their families have access to free education services, healthcare, economic support and training opportunities.

## UMWA Career Center

Beckley, WV

*Primary contact: Brett Dillon, Program Director, bmdillon41@hotmail.com*

The Career Centers work in the rural mining communities of Appalachia to provide job training, education and job placement opportunities to workers and their families dislocated from the mining industry.

## United Way of Central West Virginia

Charleston, WV

*Primary contact: Margaret O'Neal, President and CPO, moneal@unitedwaycwwv.org*

The United Way of Central West Virginia works to mobilize the caring power of the community through its ability to identify needs, develop and mobilize resources, create shared leadership, and enhance the capacity to build a better community.

## Unlimited Future, Inc.

Huntington, WV

*Primary contact: Gail Patton, Executive Director, gail@unlimitedfuture.org*

Unlimited Future, Inc. is a nonprofit micro-enterprise development center and business incubator through which they supply the tools, resources and connections people need to improve their economic status.

## West Virginia AFL-CIO

Charleston, WV

*Primary contact: Josh Sword, President, jsword@wvaflcio.org*

## Warrior Creek Development

War, WV

*Primary contact: Craig Snow, Executive Director, snow@warriorcreekdev.org*

Warrior Creek Development, an economic development social enterprise focused on ensuring quality homes and quality jobs, is modeled after Coalfield Development's Quality Jobs Initiative, an innovative on-the-job training mentorship program. Warrior Creek Development, a licensed general contractor, will employ trainees full-time to construct affordable housing, deconstruct dilapidated buildings, and repurpose abandoned buildings.

## West Virginia Center for Civic Life

Charleston, WV

*Primary contact: Betty Knighton, Director, knighton@wvcivicle.org*

The Center is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that helps engage West Virginians in community discussions of important public issues that affect their state and country.

## West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy

Charleston, WV

*Primary contacts: Kelly Allen, Interim Executive Director, kallen@wvpolicy.org; Seth DiStefano, Policy Outreach Director, sdistefano@wvpolicy.org*

## See Sourcebook p. 10

## West Virginia Environmental Council

Charleston, WV

*Primary contact: Karan Ireland, Lobby Team Coordinator, karan.ireland@gmail.com*

The Council promotes environmental protection in West Virginia through organizing grassroots groups, facilitating interaction among environmental organizations, and corresponding with local, state, and federal agencies involved with the management of West Virginia's environment.

## West Virginia Rivers Coalition

Charleston, WV

Primary contact: Angie Rosser,

Executive Director, [arosser@wvrivers.org](mailto:arosser@wvrivers.org)

Founded by paddlers and whitewater enthusiasts, the Coalition is the statewide voice for water-based recreation and clean, drinkable, swimmable and fishable rivers and streams in West Virginia.

## Williamson Health and Wellness Center

Williamson, WV

Primary contact: Dr. C. Donovan Beckett,

CEO, [cdbeckett.do@gmail.com](mailto:cdbeckett.do@gmail.com);

Darrin McCormick, Executive Assistant, [admccormick@williamsonhealthwellness.com](mailto:admccormick@williamsonhealthwellness.com)

## See Sourcebook p. 9

## WV Community Development Hub

Charleston, WV

Primary contacts: Stephanie Tyree, Executive Director, [s.tyree@wvhub.org](mailto:s.tyree@wvhub.org); Emma Pepper, Director of Strategic Network Communications, [e.pepper@wvhub.org](mailto:e.pepper@wvhub.org); Amanda Workman Scott, Director of Community Engagement, [a.workman@wvhub.org](mailto:a.workman@wvhub.org)

The Hub works to cultivate community leaders and assets, develop plans and set goals. These efforts have resulted in initiatives that address community opportunities and challenges such as developing local food systems, enhancing community sustainability, securing funding for community facilities and restoring historic downtowns.

## WV State Building and Construction Trades Council

Charleston, WV

Primary contact: Dave Efav, Secretary Treasurer, [daveefaw@wsbt.org](mailto:daveefaw@wsbt.org)

## Jim Probst

[probstfurnituremakers@gmail.com](mailto:probstfurnituremakers@gmail.com)

Member, Citizens Climate Lobby  
West Virginia

## Perry Bryant

[perrybryant@suddenlink.net](mailto:perrybryant@suddenlink.net)

Member, Citizens Climate Lobby  
West Virginia

## WYOMING

### National Wildlife Federation, Western Wildlife and Conservation

Cheyenne, WY

Primary contact: David Willms, Senior Director, [willmsd@nwf.org](mailto:willmsd@nwf.org)

In this role, David works on western public land and wildlife issues with a variety of stakeholders.

### Powder River Basin Resource Council

Sheridan, WY

Primary contacts: Jill Morrison, Executive Director, [jmorrison@powderriverbasin.org](mailto:jmorrison@powderriverbasin.org); Shannon Anderson, Staff Attorney, [sanderson@powderriverbasin.org](mailto:sanderson@powderriverbasin.org)

## See Sourcebook p. 9

## Wyoming Outdoor Council

Lander, WY

Primary contact: Stephanie Kessler, Program Director, [stephanie@wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org](mailto:stephanie@wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org)

The Wyoming Outdoor Council is a statewide conservation advocacy group founded in 1967. The mission of the Council is to protect Wyoming's environment and quality of life now and for future generations.

## Cathy Connolly

[Cathy.connolly@wyoleg.gov](mailto:Cathy.connolly@wyoleg.gov)

Wyoming House of Representatives  
Minority Floor Leader

## DG Reardon

[dgr01@ccgov.net](mailto:dgr01@ccgov.net)

Campbell County Commissioner

## Louise Carter-King

[carterl@gillettewyo.gov](mailto:carterl@gillettewyo.gov)

Mayor of Gillette

Gillette, situated in Wyoming's Powder River Basin, is in close proximity to a number of high-production mines. The Basin produces nearly half of the coal for the United States.

## Michael Von Flatern

[michael.vonflatern@wyoleg.gov](mailto:michael.vonflatern@wyoleg.gov)

State Senator

## Robin Cooley

[robin.cooley2@wyo.gov](mailto:robin.cooley2@wyo.gov)

Director, Department of Workforce Services,  
State of Wyoming

## Rusty Bell

[Rrb001@ccgov.net](mailto:Rrb001@ccgov.net)

Campbell County Commissioner

## Educational Institutions

### Appalachian Studies, Berea College

Berea, KY

Primary contact: Chris Green, Director of the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center, [greenchr@bera.edu](mailto:greenchr@bera.edu)

### Gillette College

Gillette, WY

Primary contact: Janell Oberlander, Vice President, [joberlander@sheridan.edu](mailto:joberlander@sheridan.edu)

Gillette College houses the GC Technical Education Center, a 91,000 sq. ft state-of-the-art facility for the Mining, Machine Tool, Diesel, Welding, Industrial Electricity, Industrial Technology, and Engineering technical programs. The Center allows for local industry partnerships and use of commercial standard equipment for the respective trades.

### Marshall University

Huntington, WV

Primary contacts: Dr. Jerome Gilbert, President, [gilbert@marshall.edu](mailto:gilbert@marshall.edu); Sara Payne Scarbro, Associate VP for External Engagement, [sara.payne@marshall.edu](mailto:sara.payne@marshall.edu); John Maher, VP for Research, [maherj@marshall.edu](mailto:maherj@marshall.edu)

### Southern Appalachian Labor School

Kincaid, WV

Primary contact: Dr. John David, [jddavid@citynet.net](mailto:jddavid@citynet.net)

### Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College

Logan, WV

Primary contacts: Bryan Shaw, Program Administrator, Entrepreneurship and Business Coaching Center, [bryan.shaw@southernwv.edu](mailto:bryan.shaw@southernwv.edu)

## West Virginia University

Morgantown, WV

Primary contact: John Deskins, Assistant Dean for Outreach and Engagement, Dean's Office; Associate Professor, Economics, john.deskins@mail.wvu.edu

## WV State University

Institute, WV

Primary contact: Anthony Jenkins, President, Anthony.Jenkins@wvstateu.edu

## University of Wyoming

Laramie, WY

Primary contact: Rob Godby, Deputy Director, Center for Energy, Regulation and Policy, rgodby@uwyo.edu

## University of Wyoming College of Law

Laramie, WY

Primary contact: Michael Duff, Professor of Law, Michael.duff@uwyo.edu

## Other State Contacts

### BlueGreen Alliance

Louisville, OH

Primary contact: Lee Geisse, Regional Program Manager for the Labor Climate Project, leegeisse@sbcglobal.net

### Headwaters Economics

Bozeman, MT

Primary contact: Mark Haggerty, mark@headwaterseconomics.org

He has expertise in fiscal policy, rural economic development, and community planning.

### Northern Plains Resource Council

Billings, MT

Primary contact: Svein Newman, Political Organizing Director, svein@northernplains.org

### Policy Matters Ohio

Cleveland, OH

Primary contact: Amanda Woodrum, Senior Researcher, awoodrum@policymattersohio.org

### Utility Workers Union of America

Washington, DC

Primary contact: Lee Anderson, Director of Governmental Affairs, landerson@uwua.net

## DC-Based Partners

### Brookings Institution

Primary contacts: Adele Morris, Policy Director, Climate and Energy Economics Project, amorris@brookings.edu; Siddhi Doshi, Senior Research Assistant, SDoshi@brookings.edu

### Center for Climate and Energy Solutions

Primary contact: Elliot Diringere, Executive Vice President, diringere@c2es.org

### National Wildlife Federation

Primary contacts: Shannon Heyck-Williams, Director, Climate and Energy Policy, HeyckWilliamsS@nwf.org; Jim Lyon, Vice President, Conservation Policy, lyon@nwf.org

### Resources for the Future

Primary contact: Wesley Look, Senior Research Associate, look@rff.org

### Union of Concerned Scientists

Primary contact: Jeremy Richardson, Senior Energy Analyst, jrichardson@ucusa.org

# Endnotes

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- 2 Kuykendall, Taylor, "Latest round of coal bankruptcies hits buyers of others' distressed assets," (July 25, 2019).
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- 4 Boles, Sydney, "First These Kentuckians Couldn't Drink the Water. Now They Can't Afford It," NPR (October 31, 2019); Sellers, Frances Stead, "A crisis in Kentucky shows the high cost of clean drinking water," (Apr 16, 2019)
- 5 Grindley, Stephanie, "Country roads third worst in nation, who's paying up?" (May

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**Sustainable solutions must come from local voices. Too often federal policy intended to address local issues in communities impacted by coal extraction has been formulated without adequate input from the communities most knowledgeable about what they need and what, in their experience, would work best for them. This Sourcebook is an introduction to those voices.**



**Partnership for  
Responsible Growth**



For their generous support for this work, NWF and PRG want to thank The Samuel Freeman Charitable Trust and The Alex C. Walker Educational and Charitable Foundation.