

THE WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT HUB:

Our Work and Its Impact 2017



THE HUB
West Virginia
Community Development Hub

OUR STAFF

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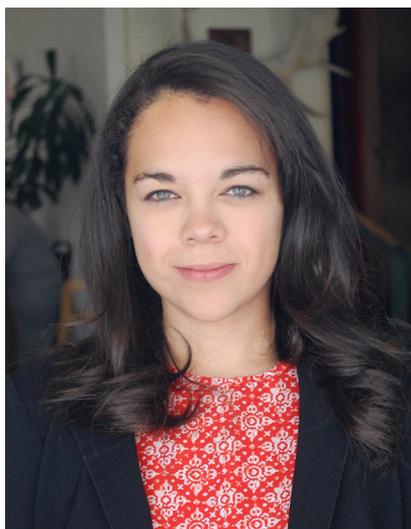
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Message from Our Executive Director

The past year has been a time of extraordinary change at The Hub. New staff, new organizational leadership, new programs, and new partnerships have all led to a sense of rejuvenation and vibrancy as we head into The Hub's ninth year.

This past year, we deepened our impact by driving forward innovative approaches to community development as well as betting big on the importance of narrative change and policy solutions for blighted properties.

We grew our reach to include entrepreneurial development and investing in ideas for locally-driven economic diversification as long-term solutions to build leadership and transform West Virginia's coalfield communities.

Through all this change and expansion, The Hub remains deeply committed to creating a community development culture that is built on collaboration and partnerships, that isn't afraid to experiment, and that is constantly searching for innovative solutions to systemic challenges.

We are consistently steered by two principles: in order to lead we must begin by serving, and successful leadership is found in joining communities as equal partners to build the future we want to see together.

I'm excited to share our past year with you through this report, and look forward to working together as we build a brighter future for communities in West Virginia.

Very Best,

Stephanie Tyree
Stephanie Tyree

Thank you to the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, One Foundation, Just Transition Fund, US Economic Development Administration, Appalachian Regional Commission, US Department of Agriculture, The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, and all of our generous donors.

Front cover: Alderson team wins mini-grant. See "Community Coaching" page for story.

THE HUB DASHBOARD

OUTSIDE FUNDING LEVERAGED

(BY COMMUNITY GROUPS ASSISTED THROUGH HUB TIME AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES)



\$1.1 Million
TO 25+ COMMUNITY
PROJECTS



\$34.3 Million
TO 41 APPALACHIAN
REGIONAL COMMISSION
POWER PROJECTS

\$35.4 Million

TOTAL OUTSIDE FUNDING LEVERAGED TO 66+ PROJECTS

ARC POWER PROJECTS FUNDING GROWTH

(BEFORE AND AFTER HUB ASSISTANCE, IN MILLIONS)



THE HUB'S FOUR APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

1. COMMUNITY COACHING & LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING
2. CONVENING COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST
3. POLICY SOLUTIONS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE
4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS

12

COMMUNITIES
COACHED

106,518

TOTAL IMPACT COMMUNITY
POPULATION (WV RESIDENTS)

24

PROJECTS INITIATED
BY COMMUNITIES

6

PROJECTS COMPLETED BY
COMMUNITIES (INCLUDES CURRENT
AND RECENT PAST PARTICIPANTS)

78

NEW PARTNERS
ENGAGED

17

COMMUNITY
MINI-GRANTS AWARDED

\$41,465

TOTAL COMMUNITY
MINI-GRANTS INVESTMENT

305

WV COMMUNICATIONS
NETWORK MEMBERS

324

NEW STORY CONVENING
REGISTRANTS

60,467

TOTAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT STORY
READERSHIP

POLICY SOLUTION PROGRESS

ISSUE AREA	STATUS
PROPERTY TAX SALE REFORM POLICY	Received national research award to analyze how to put blighted properties into productive reuse
STATE HISTORIC TAX CREDIT POLICY	Bill passed out of House + Senate to increase property tax credits; failed in special session; expected to be reintroduced in 2018 session
LAND REUSE AGENCY AUTHORIZATION POLICY	Bill passed to allow land banks first access to purchase county tax sale properties valued at greater than \$25,000

Data shown here reflects activities from June 2016 - May 2017.

COMMUNITY COACHING & LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Bucks for Bright Ideas Spurs New Community Growth

In fall 2016, The Hub kicked off a mini-grant competition, Bucks for Bright Ideas, to encourage new projects in communities participating in the Innovation Acceleration Strategy program. The final five candidates were invited to make pitches for three awards at an event in December.

After a public vote, three diverse projects rooted in local community priorities received awards:

\$5000 AWARD: Alderson Main Streets is creating a riverfront redevelopment plan with Downstream Strategies. The group used the grant to successfully leverage funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission.

\$3000 AWARD: Lincoln County Farmers Market is building a marketing plan to expand local agriculture, including the creation of a farm trail. As a result of the funding, the group is applying for status as an independent 501c3.

\$1000 AWARD: Wyoming County high schooler Joey Watson is partnering with his local 4H Club and Southern Community and Technical College to build a remote control car racetrack. Meetups will begin when the track opens in late 2017.

Building on the success of Bucks for Bright Ideas, The Hub rolled out a non-competitive mini-grant program for the Innovation Acceleration Strategy program communities that has invested more than \$30,000 into similar projects around the state. The initiative was generously funded through the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation and The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation.



Alderson team accepts top award with Hub Executive Director. Photo by Daniel Raines.

16-17 HIGHLIGHTS + IMPROVEMENTS

- ▶ Convened four communities participating in the new Energizing Entrepreneurial Communities program for two days of resource sharing and relationship building
- ▶ Established a full-time community coach for McDowell County focused on community capacity building, local leadership development, and creative placemaking plus food, education, and health systems
- ▶ Community Coaching Win: Turn this Town Around (TTA) community Grafton secured ownership of the town freight station to be redeveloped as the farmer's market.
- ▶ Community Coaching Win: TTTA community Whitesville formed the Whitesville Redevelopment Committee and purchased the hazardous "Big Star" building located on the main street, which will be razed and given a new use.
- ▶ Community Coaching Win: TTTA + HubCAP community Matewan completed significant progress toward restoration of the town historic jail into a tourism destination.

ASSOCIATED PROJECTS	GOALS
TURN THIS TOWN AROUND	Community capacity building driven by non-traditional local leadership
HUBCAP III	Community capacity building to transform keystone main street vacant buildings
INNOVATION ACCELERATION STRATEGY	Fostering community innovation for economic diversification in 5 WV coalfield communities
ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES	Building communities that support and attract entrepreneurs
RESPONSIVE COMMUNITY COACHING	Providing an on-going mechanism for community capacity building and leadership development

CONVENING COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST



Hub Executive Director speaks at a panel in Washington, DC with representatives from the Sierra Club and White House.

16-17 HIGHLIGHTS + IMPROVEMENTS

- ▶ Held two statewide convenings with more than 200 grantees and potential grantees for the ARC's POWER initiative, leading to \$34.3 million in federal funding for WV
- ▶ Presented at multiple national conferences to teach the ARC POWER Initiative Convening model
- ▶ Secured new \$1 million funding stream through WVDOC for community and economic development
- ▶ Invited by new national funder to join a small delegation in Germany to study the economic transition away from the coal industry

ASSOCIATED PROJECTS	GOALS
ARC POWER INITIATIVE CONVENINGS	Increasing capacity + revenue streams
WV DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONVENINGS	Demonstrating value of the state's community development sector
ABANDONED PROPERTIES COALITION	Improving community assets

Hub Convening Leads to New \$1 Million Revenue Stream

In early 2017, Woody Thrasher was appointed to be WV's new Secretary of Commerce. By leveraging the Hub's network, the organization was able to meet the Secretary in person prior to his start date, and get an appointment with him during his first week in his new position. The Hub saw an opportunity to make a pitch: the Department of Commerce should be a stronger partner to the economic and community development organizations working hard to diversify the state's economy.

Instead of meeting individually with the Secretary, The Hub took a gamble and invited 15 of WV's strongest economic and community development organizations to showcase the value of their work. The gamble paid off. The Secretary was intrigued and asked The Hub to convene bi-weekly meetings to meet other stakeholders.

Over six subsequent meetings, The Hub convened 50 stakeholders to meet with the Secretary and representatives from his office. Stakeholders spoke of their work, their impact, and how the Department could be a strong partner. The Hub focused its role as a convener, catalyzer, and amplifier of the work happening across the state.

At the final meeting, the Secretary announced a new \$1 million grant fund available to these and similar organizations that was inspired by the engagement. In addition to broadly promoting the opportunity, The Hub provided coaching to 20 potential grantees and 11 grants were awarded in June 2017.

POLICY SOLUTIONS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Historic Property Tax Credit Earns Widespread Popular Support

In early 2016, four people in The Hub-convened Abandoned Properties Coalition signed on to research the possibility of pushing forward policy around increasing tax credits to redevelop historic properties in WV. By the time legislation reached the floor during WV's 2017 session, the effort had grown to 39 organizers, including a pro bono lobbyist, and featured 38 cities, counties, and organizations who endorsed the proposal. The effort gained enough traction to merit four bills introduced in the House and Senate with 34 legislators sponsoring those bills.

The original group of four had spawned a grassroots movement in support of improving WV communities that began calling itself Revitalize West Virginia's Downtowns Coalition. The group went on to attend 85 meetings with legislators and hold five public forums to educate more than 200 people total. The legislation was cited by name as part of the justification given by the Office of the Governor for the 2017 special session.

The state historic property tax credit bill passed out of both the House and the Senate during the regular session but died in conference committee on the last day. The momentum and widespread support this policy received in its first year of introduction is a testament to the great value that West Virginians place on revitalizing their downtowns. The Coalition has already begun plans to reinvigorate this effort for the 2018 legislative session.



Historic tax credits public education meeting in Fairmont. Photo by Lincoln Wolfe.

16-17 HIGHLIGHTS + IMPROVEMENTS

- ▶ 3000+ people educated about the value of historic property tax credits through the Revitalize West Virginia's Downtowns website
- ▶ 30+ media mentions for historic property tax legislation
- ▶ Passed legislation to grant state Land Reuse Agencies and land banks first pick of properties at county tax sales
- ▶ Secured support through the Center for Community Progress to analyze the cost of blight on West Virginia communities + provide policy recommendations
- ▶ Completed intensive multi-year policy coaching with WV Food and Farm Coalition and WV Farmers Market Association; organizations lobbied independently for the first time in 2017 session

ASSOCIATED PROJECTS	GOALS
REVITALIZE WEST VIRGINIA'S DOWNTOWNS COALITION	Educating public + passing property redevelopment legislation
CENTER FOR COMMUNITY PROGRESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESEARCH	Identifying economic data on cost of blight to communities and policy strategies to address vacancy and dilapidation
PROPERTY RESCUE INITIATIVE	Providing community support to secure state funding for demolition and code enforcement

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS



New Story 2016. Photo by David Smith/WVU Reed College of Media.

16-17 HIGHLIGHTS + IMPROVEMENTS

- ▶ Added 147 people to the WV Communications Network for a total of 305 members to promote resource sharing and relationship development between people publicly communicating about West Virginia
- ▶ Increased registrants for New Story, a two-day event designed to shift narratives in + about West Virginia, by 20% from 268 to 324
- ▶ Increased the number of people learning about community development initiatives through the Hub website by 38% over the previous year, from 43,744 to 60,467 people
- ▶ Partnered with the National Conference on Citizenry to release the first ever WV Civic Health index

ASSOCIATED PROJECTS	GOALS
NEW STORY CONVENING	Shifting challenging narratives in + about WV
WV COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK	Connecting communications professionals
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS COACHING	Building communications capacity for community development stakeholders
STATE OF OUR COMMUNITIES	Shifting common narratives about WV through partnering with traditional media to provide data and metrics analysis about community-led development initiatives

Lincoln County Takes Back Ownership of Community News

Lincoln County, WV, population 21,564, has one weekly newspaper. Residents must pay to read any news in print or online through *The Lincoln County Journal* and the publication gives few column inches to the numerous positive events and stories happening in the area. The Hub's community coach Dan Taylor saw an opportunity - and a need - to help residents promote stories about good things happening in Lincoln County.

Getting the word out about community events, progress that community-led groups are making on projects, and positive stories about what may seem to be small, everyday moments can be an essential part of turning the tide for the better in WV communities.

In February 2017, Dan enlisted previous Director of Strategic Network Communications Jake Lynch to travel to Lincoln County for a training. At the workshop, Jake walked community members through the process of creating and updating an online blog plus best practices for generating stories and photography. Jake also encouraged the community members to create an associated Facebook page for their blog and taught them how promoting stories on social media can amplify their voices. While he was teaching, Jake set up a WordPress blog for the community members. *The Lincoln Log* was born and community members were armed with the knowledge to start promoting their own stories.

THE CITY OF
GRAFTON, WEST VIRGINIA
"Birthplace of Mother's Day"

Welcome
WV Community
Development
Hub

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Thank you for
all you do for
West Virginia

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