

THE WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT HUB

Our Work and Its Impact
2018 - 2019



THE HUB
West Virginia
Community Development Hub

2018-2019 Impact Report

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The past year has been a huge year of learning and growth for us here at the WV Community Development Hub.

Ten years ago, The Hub was founded by a small group of passionate, committed community development leaders who saw an opportunity to establish a new, innovative approach to supporting and catalyzing community growth in struggling rural communities in West Virginia. Their goal was to create an organization that would serve as a technical assistance provider, a coach for communities, and an intermediary to support and connect a network of resources to better serve communities across the state.

Over the past decade, we have experimented, we have learned, we have walked beside communities as they have had successes and failures, and we have identified key strategies for rural community development that we believe can work anywhere that there is a small group of dedicated, passionate, and diverse local leaders who want to improve their communities.

Our belief in the potential for transformational change in West Virginia communities is boundless.

We have seen in communities large and small that the key ingredients for success are a team that works together, leadership that supports when helpful and gets out of the way when necessary, and partners, practitioners and resource providers who are proactive in reaching out to provide services – and commit to the hard work of sticking beside communities for the long haul as they work towards change. Because this is, at a very basic level, long haul work for community transformation that we are in together.

As we look toward the next ten years, we know that challenges will continue to face our communities and our state that are often beyond our control. What we can control is how we work together, how we support and celebrate each other and our successes, and how we continue to push each other to innovate, experiment and learn so that we can continue to achieve new levels of success each year.

We look forward to learning and growing with you in the coming year!


Stephanie Tyree

Thank you to the Appalachian Regional Commission, BB&T, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, Just Transition Fund, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, One Foundation, US Department of Agriculture, West Virginia Development Office, and all of our generous donors.

Cover photo: Participating residents from Cultivate WV community Cowen accept mini-grant awards

THE HUB IMPACT DASHBOARD (Data points shown here reflect activities from June 2018 - May 2019)

THE HUB'S FOUR APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

1.

COMMUNITY COACHING & LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

2.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

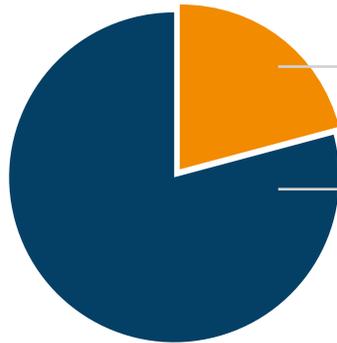
3.

POLICY SOLUTIONS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

4.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS

FIND US AT
WWW.WVHUB.ORG AND
INFO@WVHUB.ORG



481,034

POPULATION IMPACTED BY THE HUB

1.8 MILLION

TOTAL NUMBER OF WV RESIDENTS

\$467,219

OUTSIDE FUNDING LEVERAGED FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

1,896

COMMUNITY MEMBERS ATTENDED MEETINGS, EVENTS, AND TRAININGS

15

COMMUNITIES RECEIVED IN-DEPTH COACHING

61

COMMUNITIES RECEIVED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

91

COMMUNITY PROJECTS INITIATED

22

COMMUNITY PROJECTS COMPLETED

39

ARTICLES PUBLISHED BY THE MEDIA ABOUT HUB INITIATIVES

156

COMMUNITY TEAM MEMBERS ACTIVELY ENGAGED

73

ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS ACTIVELY ENGAGED

67,095

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STORY READERSHIP

1,241 **6,727**

VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

VOLUNTEER HOURS INVESTED IN COMMUNITY PROJECTS

606,655

CONNECTIONS TO POSITIVE COMMUNITY STORIES

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KEY WINS

HUB INITIATIVES IMPACT 1 IN 4 WEST VIRGINIANS

NEW & RENEWED EFFORTS LAUNCHED

The Hub launched new major initiatives across all four approaches to the organization's work: **Cultivate WV** supports low-capacity, low-resourced communities to kickstart revitalization efforts through organizing multiple local teams to complete dozens of community development projects in each community in one year; the **Blueprint Communities** program, in partnership with the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, supports cross-sector community teams to build strategies to make a lasting impact on the economic well being and quality of life for their fellow residents; the **Next Generation Communities Project**, in partnership with Generation WV, supports community teams to identify and implement local policies that will create economically vibrant towns that are inviting to young people; the statewide **Community Development Think Tank** and supporting efforts are reorganizing and catalyzing the state's Community Development Network to level-up efforts over the next 10 years; and **#NewStoryWV** creates an accessible, participatory movement to capture positive stories of work happening on the ground in West Virginia.



Moorefield residents participate in a storytelling workshop as part of Cultivate WV

SIGNS OF MOMENTUM ABOUND

In the first round of the new Cultivate WV program, participating community teams in Cowen and Moorefield successfully mobilized to receive nearly \$80,000 in mini-grant funding to go toward 47 community projects that will be visible signs of momentum toward a brighter future for both communities.

CAPACITY LEAPS FORWARD

Members of the Abandoned Properties Coalition successfully created and kickstarted a coalition strategic plan (including convening a steering committee and adopting bylaws) and formed a team to oversee coordination to successfully transition the coalition to the WVU BAD Buildings Program over the next two years, enabling an increase in the impact and sustainability of the group.



Participants at Community Development Think Tank

SYSTEMS IMPROVE

More than 100 people have been engaged as part of the 2019 Community Development Think Tank process, a systematic effort to celebrate successes, research and evaluate work, and set a 10-year vision to create catalytic impacts for West Virginia's community development network.

COMMUNITY CONFIDENCE EARNED

Community teams in Grafton and McDowell County secured major gifts to support their work, including a \$50,000 bequest for All Aboard Grafton and a \$55,000 donation from an anonymous donor to support the new Jack Caffrey Arts and Culture Center in Welch.



Grafton residents participate in a conversation to celebrate and strengthen community development efforts

COMMUNITY COACHING & LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING



Moorefield residents participate in a Cultivate WV community meeting

Two WV Communities Spark Momentum toward Revitalization

By Kathryn Ryan, Community Development Program Associate

Having the opportunity to revitalize your community can be exciting, but it can also be overwhelming. How do you decide the projects that will have impact?

Residents of Cultivate WV communities Cowen and Moorefield attended a series of workshops offered by program leaders to explore this challenge in a guided process that built community teams and offered expertise paired with access to resources. They generated ideas to revitalize their downtowns, improve tourism, strengthen cultural pride, increase access to healthy living, and so much more.

What did the community teams do with their project ideas?

They applied to fund them through the program's mini-grant opportunity. **Forty-seven mini-grant projects were awarded through this initiative that will spark momentum in these two communities through fast wins and quick completion of visible local projects.** Project ideas like community garden spaces, farmers markets, performing and visual arts, small-scale repairs to community infrastructure, flower boxes, workshops, and little

libraries are moving forward in Moorefield and Cowen.

With support from community coaches, these community teams are thinking critically about how to build impact in their communities in ways that their fellow citizens can get behind. Building community revitalization initiatives can come with challenges, but with support from experts, access to resources, and gathering people who care, it's an exciting and motivating endeavor.

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COMMUNITY COACHING & LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING (Continued)



Blueprint Communities participants gather for kickoff conversation

MORE HIGHLIGHTS AND WINS

- ▶ **Energizing Entrepreneurial Communities:** Awarded \$18,000 in mini-grants for 9 community projects to participating community teams in Grafton, Madison, and Lincoln County including projects to increase online sales for local artists; business website resource; storytelling skill-building; and others
- ▶ **HubCAP:** Two communities formed new, independent community groups—Hinton Full Speed Ahead and Richwood Rising—to continue and build upon the work begun in the program
- ▶ **Cultivate WV:** Participating communities Cowen and Moorefield established regular community conversations, providing a platform for a diverse range of stakeholders to come together to discuss challenges and identify plus implement solutions
- ▶ **Entry-Level Community Leadership Team Coaching:** Supported McDowell County Convention and Visitors Bureau and Welch News through strategic planning processes, both teams now have strategic directions with roles assigned to carry out the work
- ▶ **VISTA Program:** VISTA Volunteers engaged 581 volunteers for 3,109 hours of service across 14 communities
- ▶ **Blueprint Communities:** Offered assistance to 33 communities as part of application outreach process, resulting in 9 applications for the program and 6 accepted communities—Kingwood; Lewis County; Meadow River Valley of Greenbrier County; Monticello neighborhood of Clarksburg; New Martinsville; and Parsons

ASSOCIATED PROJECTS + GOALS

ENTRY-LEVEL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TEAM COACHING	Building community teams and diverse community development leadership in the state's most under-resourced areas
CULTIVATE WV	Catalyzing community revitalization in small, rural communities
ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES	Building a culture of community leadership and support to catalyze local entrepreneurship
HUB COMMUNITIES OF ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM (HUBCAP)	Building community capacity to identify and execute transformational community development projects impacting rural downtowns
BLUEPRINT COMMUNITIES	In partnership with the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, building cross-sector teams of community leaders to create strategies and access resources for community revitalization
AMERICORPS VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE TO AMERICA (VISTA) PROGRAM	Sponsoring up to 15 AmeriCorps VISTA members focused on community development capacity building across the state
RESPONSIVE COMMUNITY COACHING	Offering community capacity building and leadership development on-demand

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Building a Network for Transformational Impact

By Stephanie Tyree, Executive Director

When The Hub's team put out the word that we were preparing to have a Community Development Think Tank, we expected 30 or 40 people to express interest in having a conversation about ways to level-up West Virginia's community development system. The level of response and interest far exceeded our expectations, demonstrating that there is a robust and growing group in WV that is passionate about community development.

Energy was up and spirits were high in the conference center room in Bridgeport, WV. Representatives from 14 sectors across the system—such as community capacity building; downtown development; and arts, culture and creative placemaking—gathered around large sheets of paper to record their responses to questions like, “What is holding back better outcomes in our work?,” and “What are the most important things that could be done to improve the impact of this sector?”

The momentum continues to grow. **More than 100 people have now been engaged as part of this process to reflect on past successes, identify gaps and challenges, and build a stronger network to increase our collective impact into the future.**

Five communities have taken part in in-depth conversations to examine the efforts and impacts happening on the ground, and more than a dozen representatives have signed on to an advisory group to oversee the development of a research report on the state of community development in West Virginia over the past ten years—and what we can do to increase the system's efficacy over the next ten.

The energy and demand for this work has been so great, that we have agreed to hold a second Community Development Think Tank in the fall of 2019 to open up the discussion to even more people.

More good news is to come on this initiative as we continue our efforts in earnest to support building a stronger network amongst community development practitioners in the state.



Participants converse at Community Development Think Tank

MORE HIGHLIGHTS AND WINS

- ▶ **WV POWER Grantee Support Initiative:** Engaged 24 POWER project teams in communications coaching efforts and 50 representatives from POWER teams in communications trainings to support meeting key metrics and sustaining their projects into the future
- ▶ **Property Rescue Initiative:** Educated more than 500 people at community meetings on funding options to demolish abandoned and dilapidated properties and coached 28 individuals and community teams seeking resources to address abandoned and dilapidated properties
- ▶ **Property Rescue Initiative:** Partnered with WVU BAD Buildings to host a BAD Buildings Summit for 110 community leaders working to address abandoned and dilapidated buildings in their local community
- ▶ **Community Capacity Building Coordination:** Convened resource providers that offer community capacity building and coaching services in West Virginia to coordinate activities, discuss community needs and opportunities, and build stronger partnerships and coordination across program activities

ASSOCIATED PROJECTS + GOALS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Creating alignment and greater connection between the actors in the state community development system in order to facilitate more impactful, coordinated efforts across multiple sectors

WV POWER GRANTEE SUPPORT INITIATIVE

Coaching and convening to support the successful implementation of large-scale projects to drive innovative economic development in WV

PROPERTY RESCUE INITIATIVE

Partnering with the WVU Northern Brownfields Assistance Center to educate and support communities to access state resources to address abandoned and dilapidated properties

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POLICY SOLUTIONS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE



Abandoned Properties Coalition members gather to formulate strategic plans

Residents Lead The Way

By Taylor Bennett, Community Development Policy Coordinator

No one knows how to meet the needs of WV communities better than community members themselves. When residents work together, they can create local policies that meet the unique challenges and vision that they share for their community.

The Next Generation Communities Project is supporting communities across WV who are doing just that.

We believe that a future with strong communities and economies is possible, and we know that young West Virginians play a key role in making that vision a reality. In 2019, The Hub teamed up with Generation WV to support residents in making local changes that create inviting communities for young people.

Through this project, we work with West Virginian teams as they identify policy changes they want to make at the local level, build the relationships that they'll need to succeed, and create a strategy that will help guide them through each step of the change-making process.

Over the course of 2019, The Hub and Generation WV will be meeting with communities and local Generation chapters across the state to introduce them to the program and sign on teams that are ready to tackle policy change in their own communities.

We are excited to see the innovative local changes that communities across the state will make through this initiative.

MORE HIGHLIGHTS AND WINS

- ▶ **Legislative Hubbub:** Published 35 educational articles geared toward how to take part in the legislative process during West Virginia's 2019 Legislative Session with more than 1,000 readers each week engaging with the associated email newsletter
- ▶ **Abandoned Properties Coalition:** Formalized a partnership with the WVU BAD Buildings Program to establish a permanent home for the Coalition and to implement a long-term strategic plan for growth; established a new steering committee to oversee the work of the Coalition and adopt formal policies and procedures
- ▶ **Abandoned Properties Coalition:** Launched new policy teams to support communities across West Virginia through: 1) building an administrative policy process to support communities with vacant and underutilized public school buildings, and 2) addressing the need for creating flexible demolition and rehabilitation funding for a variety of types of dilapidated properties
- ▶ **Community Policy Skill-building:** Held five events, reaching 180 West Virginians, to increase knowledge on key legislation identified by community groups and build skills for continued citizen engagement in the legislative process

ASSOCIATED PROJECTS + GOALS

ABANDONED PROPERTIES COALITION	A statewide coalition that supports individual policy teams to identify, plan and pass state administrative and legislative policies to address abandoned and dilapidated buildings
COMMUNITY POLICY SKILL-BUILDING	Offering interactive workshops and training to teach and engage West Virginian residents in the policy and decision-making processes happening at local and state levels
NEXT GENERATION COMMUNITIES PROJECT	Supporting community teams in enacting policy changes that will create inviting communities for young people
LEGISLATIVE HUBBUB	Delivering accessible, unbiased updates and education regarding WV's policymaking process on a weekly basis during the state's annual 60-day legislative session

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS

We're Collaborating on a New Story About West Virginia

By Emma Pepper, Director of Strategic Network Communications

What if we could open a door to see all the good that is happening in West Virginia? There are thousands of West Virginians working on the ground to support their fellow residents.

This year, we created an accessible opportunity for these West Virginians to begin to collectively document the stories of their work on social media using the hashtag #NewStoryWV.

The #NewStoryWV Pact, a statement of support for the project, already has 75 signers—and is growing by the day—including community groups, nonprofit organizations, higher education institutions, motivated West Virginians, and others. Community foundations and groups are participating in skill-building workshops to learn how to improve their ability to tell the story of their good work and to engage with this unique opportunity to be a part of a movement to change the narrative about the state.

Research shows us that the more interest, enthusiasm, and momentum that we can build to tell positive stories about what's happening in West Virginia today, the greater the likelihood that residents will be able to sustain momentum toward their personal goals in the face of challenges. Research also shows us that communities, on the whole, are better able to withstand shocks and downturns in their economies when they participate in positive storytelling practices.

These long-term outcomes could have lasting impacts on the major challenges of our day, including how residents are responding to concerns like obesity and substance abuse addiction, motivating to participate in community and economic development efforts as well as how well communities are adjusting to transitions in their economies.

We're working together to document a story that shows the innovation, perseverance, and grit that is the true spirit of West Virginia. Everyone is welcome to come on board—find out more at newstorywv.org.



Cultivate WV's Cowen residents participate in a storytelling workshop

MORE HIGHLIGHTS & WINS

- ▶ **Developed 5 new community communications trainings**, including a unique training designed to support leaders of community mini-grant projects that has been delivered to Hub communities as well as at the Try This conference
- ▶ **Led trainings and offered 1-on-1 coaching** to 47 different groups across West Virginia, including nonprofit organizations, community groups, and community institutions such as local newspapers with the goal of driving sustainability through amplifying impact-driven communications and community engagement
- ▶ **Published and widely circulated more than 200 positive news stories** about work happening on the ground in West Virginia, leading to more than 600,000 impressions—or connections with individuals—for positive activities happening in the state

ASSOCIATED PROJECTS + GOALS

WV COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK	Connecting and providing resources to West Virginians who are invested in creating and documenting positive stories about the state
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS COACHING	Building communications capacity for community development stakeholders
HUBBUB E-NEWSLETTER + SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY	Widely promoting an alternative narrative of always-positive news about communities in West Virginia
#NEWSTORYWV	Building a participatory, accessible on-ramp for West Virginians to document positive stories about work and connections happening on the ground

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WHERE WE WORK

The following communities have received in-depth coaching services from our team since the West Virginia Community Development Hub formed in 2009:

● BLUEPRINT COMMUNITIES

Ansted
Bluefield
Fairmont
Gilmer County
Hinton
Kingwood*
Lewis County*
Marlinton
Meadow River Valley of
Greenbrier County*
Monticello neighborhood
of Clarksburg*
McDowell County
Mullens
New Martinsville*
Parsons*
Princeton
Richwood
Ritchie County
Salem
Shinnston
Sophia
St. Albans
Williamson

● CULTIVATE WV

Cowen*
Moorefield*

● ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES

Grafton*
Lincoln County*
Madison/Danville*
Wyoming County*

● THE HUB'S COMMUNITIES OF ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM (HUBCAP)

Ansted/New Haven
Belington
Buckhannon
Chester/Weirton
Clay County
Doddridge County
Fairmont
Hinton*
Lincoln County
Marshall County
Martinsburg
Matewan*
McDowell County
Mullens
Princeton*
Richwood*
Shinnston
Wayne County
Whitesville*
Williamson

● ENTRY-LEVEL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TEAM COACHING

Gary*
laeger*
Man*
Northfork
War*

● INNOVATION ACCELERATION STRATEGY

Alderson
Madison
Lincoln County
Wyoming County
McDowell County

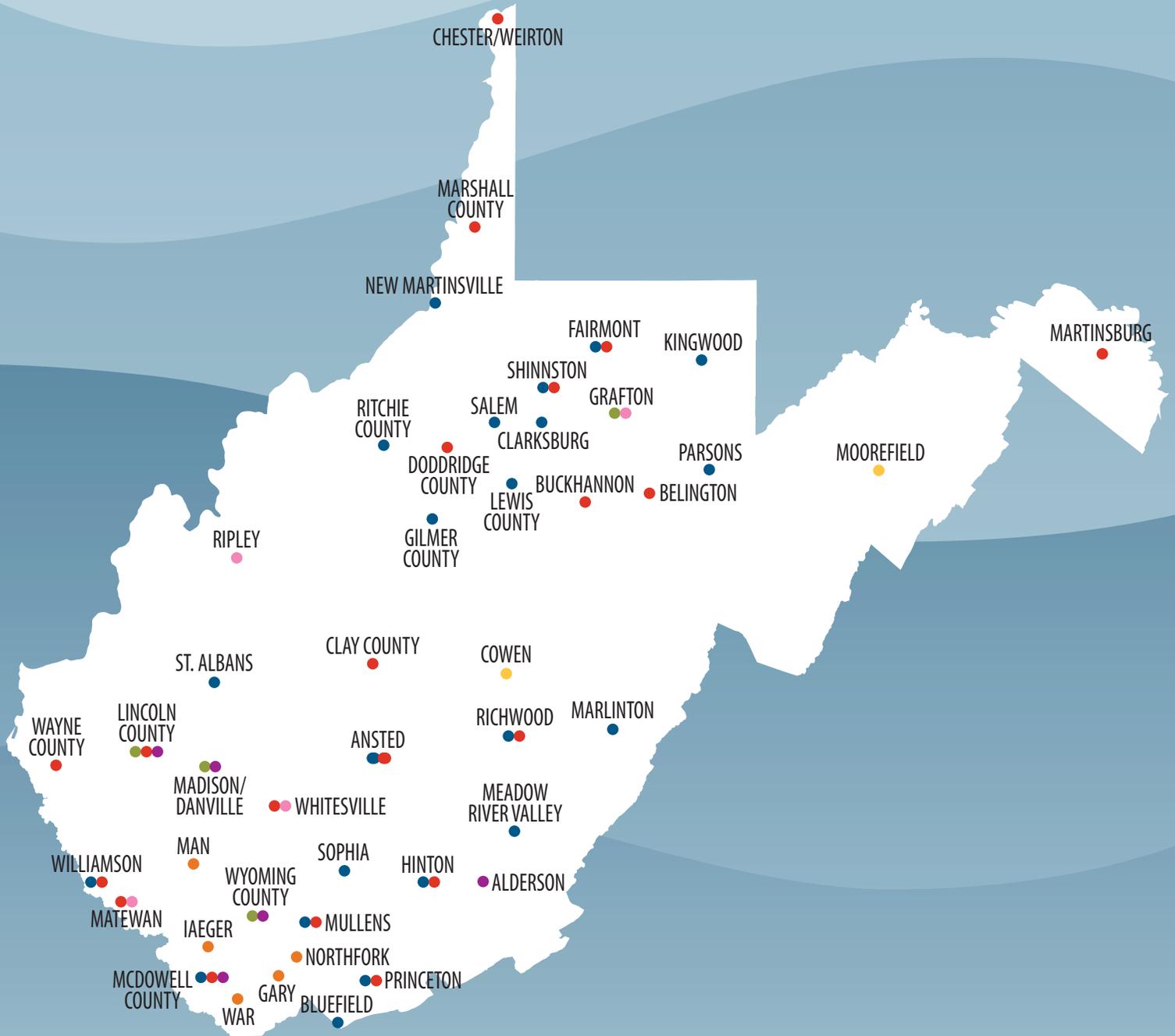
● TURN THIS TOWN AROUND

Grafton
Matewan
Ripley
Whitesville

**Current participating communities.*

"Blueprint Communities" is a registered trademark of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh.

HUB COMMUNITIES: 2009-2019





THE HUB
West Virginia
Community Development Hub

OUR TEAM

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Executive Director

AMANDA WORKMAN

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Engagement

EMMA PEPPER

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