



## Appalachian Regional Commission Economic Diversification Awards

Project Summaries—January 2017

### Implementation Award Summaries

**\$3,500,000** ARC grant to Big Sandy Community and Technical College in Prestonsburg, KY, for the *Eastern Kentucky Coal County Transformation* project. The ARC award will enable three eastern-Kentucky education institutions—Big Sandy, Hazard Community and Technical College, and Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College—to launch a comprehensive, employer-driven workforce development program focused on building the digital economy and strengthening digital innovation and entrepreneurship across a 16-county region in eastern Kentucky. The consortium—in partnership with Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) and the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP)—will establish educational programs that develop workforce skills in emerging regional career clusters such as cybersecurity, medical coding, and advanced manufacturing. The program will specifically engage dislocated workers from the coal industry through targeted advertisements, and will provide adult basic education as needed to ensure that these individuals can participate in the training courses. In addition, to support the development of a technology-driven economy beyond classroom training, the program will identify and promote a number of digital innovation hubs, providing facilities and resources to encourage entrepreneurial activities. Success coaches will be available to instill critical 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills and provide support to nascent technology workers, and a regional committee will be established to monitor industry trends and best practices. The project will serve 300 trainees and improve the operations of 30 existing businesses in the first two years of the award, and will lay the groundwork for the development of a vibrant and lasting digital economy in eastern Kentucky.

**\$1,920,000** ARC grant to Beville State Community College in Jasper, AL, for the *Beville State Community College POWER 2016 Initiative*. The project will create a new Rapid Training Center at Beville State's Jasper campus that will serve as a regional workforce training and job placement hub in northwest Alabama—an area that has been adversely affected by the recent retirement of coal-fired power generation facilities and the closure of multiple coal mines. The Rapid Training Center will offer accelerated workforce training programs that provide industry-recognized credentials in six growing regional industries: welding, commercial trucking, rigging, hydraulics/pneumatics, healthcare, and print reading. Through a partnership with the Alabama Department of Labor, individuals directly impacted by the decline in coal production will be offered up to \$1,000 in scholarships and stipends to move them through the Center's retraining programming in the most efficient manner possible. In addition, Beville State is partnering with the AARP to tailor a portion of the retraining and placement support for individuals who are 50+ years old. The project will train 4,000 trainees over the life of the award, and will improve 40 existing businesses in the region.

**\$1,500,810** ARC grant to West Alabama Works (WAW) – Region 3 Workforce Development Council in Tuscaloosa, AL, for the *WAW 2020 Initiative*. The project will deliver job training services to fill critical regional workforce needs in the rapidly growing automotive and advanced manufacturing industries in western Alabama—an area that has been adversely affected by the changing economics of the regional coal economy. WAW has partnered with Mercedes Benz to develop a specific recruitment and training plan for positions in mechatronics and industrial maintenance at their facilities in the area. In addition,

the project will create a “pop-up” Community Resource Center in Brookwood, AL, to serve as a hub for community engagement; renovate the Brookwood Technical High School and Training Center to offer credentialing services to students at four regional high schools for employment in hospitality and culinary arts, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing; and, through a partnership with Energy Alabama and the Alabama Automotive Manufacturer’s Association, develop business-specific plans that will speed the adoption of sustainable energy in Alabama’s automotive industry. The project will train 1,000 dislocated workers and credential 500 students over the life of the award.

**\$1,500,000** ARC grant to Hazard Community and Technical College (HCTC) in Hazard, KY, for the *Intergenerational Training Center*. ARC funds will be used to construct a 14,700 square foot facility at HCTC’s Lees College Campus in Jackson, KY, that will deliver job training and credentialing courses focused around four emerging regional career clusters: information technology, telemedicine and health sciences, mechatronics, and eco-tourism/small business development. The project will leverage the capacity of the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Inc. (EKCEP) and the Kentucky Career Center to promote and market the program to out-of-school youth and displaced and underemployed workers impacted by the decline in the coal industry. The project will serve a seven-county area in southeastern Kentucky, and will train 295 dislocated workers and credential 228 students over the life of the award.

**\$1,500,000** ARC grant to the Marshall University Research Corporation in Huntington, WV, for the *Appalachian Hatchery* project. The program, operated through the Robert C. Byrd Institute, will assist specific businesses affected by the decline in coal production return to profitability through the adoption and deployment of emerging advanced manufacturing technologies—primarily 3D printing and additive manufacturing. In addition, the program will provide other business assistance services, including shared equipment options, modern workforce development strategies, and the establishment of better linkages between large and small manufacturers. The program will serve a 20-county region—including 13 Distressed or At-Risk counties—in southern West Virginia, will create or retain 375 jobs, and will leverage \$750,000 in private investment. Additional funding is being provided by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

**\$1,325,655** ARC grant to the Marshall University Research Corporation in Huntington, WV, for the *Sustainable Employment for Community Health Workers in Coal-Impacted Counties* project. The ARC award will create permanent jobs for at least 26 Community Health Workers (CHWs)—who will provide healthcare coordination services directly to high-risk patients in coal-impacted communities across 10 counties in southeastern Ohio, eastern Kentucky, and central West Virginia. CHWs will be a critical component of the local care team, supervised by a Registered Nurse and Nurse Practitioner or other clinician. Their inclusion in the regional healthcare workforce will streamline the provision of healthcare services; increase health outcomes for patients suffering from diabetes, congestive heart failure, and COPD—diseases that are disproportionately common in Appalachia; and ultimately drive down the overall cost of healthcare in the service territory. In addition to the 26 permanent jobs created, the project will serve 625 patients and leverage \$780,000 over the life of the award. Additional funding is being provided by the Sisters Health Foundation and the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

**\$1,307,650** ARC grant to the Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc., in Abingdon, VA, for *The Heart of Appalachia Economic Transition Project*. The project will align the grantee—a non-profit industry association of manufacturers from southwest Virginia—local workforce development boards, and the Virginia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Center to deliver business technical assistance to coal supply chain manufacturers in an effort to return them to profitability. The project will

conduct outreach to prospective companies in the 16-county southwest Virginia service territory, and perform network analysis that will allow for participating companies to retool their manufacturing efforts in the most feasible, cost-effective manner possible. In addition, the project will increase the number of young adults pursuing careers in manufacturing by redefining the image and value of manufacturing among young people, their parents, their educators, and policy makers. The award will create 300 jobs and retain 200 existing jobs, and will positively impact the operations of 58 existing businesses.

**\$1,290,000** ARC grant to Maysville Community and Technical College (MCTC) in Maysville, KY, for the *KY-WV Regional Drone Technology Workforce Project*. MCTC will partner with Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College to deliver comprehensive training courses in small-air drone operation to a seven-county area in southern West Virginia and a 13-county area in northeastern Kentucky. Specific training activities will enable graduates to operate drones and drone sensors to provide in-demand commercial services—such as the close-up inspection of fixed structures like power lines, utility poles, and cell phone towers. The project will serve 100 trainees over the two-year life of the award, will leverage \$14,000,000 in private investment, and will, in conjunction with a previous ARC POWER award, further strengthen the emerging drone industry cluster in the West Virginia-Kentucky-Virginia tri-state area.

**\$1,250,000** ARC grant to the Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation in London, KY, for the *Kentucky Highlands Employment and Financial Training Program*. The ARC award will capitalize a loan fund to enable Kentucky Highlands to invest in local entrepreneurs at both the start-up and expansion stages of companies located across 21 southeastern Kentucky counties. In addition, ARC's award will engage the Appalachian Community Federal Credit Union (ACFCU) to expand their portfolio of financial literacy services to the project's service territory. Specifically, ACFCU programs will increase financial knowledge, security, and wellness through the provision of credit builder loans, debt consolidation loans, payday alternative loans, affordable non-prime auto loans, and 80/20 mortgage loans. The project will create or retain 200 jobs and leverage \$2,250,000 in private investment.

**\$1,213,868** ARC grant to the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAPDC) in Altoona, PA, for the *Southern Alleghenies Entrepreneurial Ecosystem* project. The project will strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem of a three-county region in southwestern Pennsylvania through the provision of a wide array of diverse, wrap-around business support services, facilitated via business coaches and mentors. In addition, the award will renovate several existing entrepreneurial spaces in the region where much of the programmatic activity will take place. The project will create 125 new jobs and 25 new businesses, and will leverage \$3,750,000 in private investment.

**\$1,200,000** ARC grant to the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Career Centers Inc. in Prosperity, PA, for the *New Start Retraining Initiative for Displaced Coal Industry Workers* project. The ARC award will deliver workforce training and job placement services to unemployed coal mine workers in eight southwest Pennsylvania counties and two southern West Virginia counties. UMWA will partner with the Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics, the Allegany College of Maryland, and Pennsylvania Highlands Community College to design and implement training programs in strategic regional career sectors including commercial trucking, cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing. Training will be complemented by job placement and other wraparound support to ensure that each trainee has maximum potential for securing employment. The project will serve 400 trainees over the life of the award.

**\$1,073,304** ARC grant to the West Virginia Regional Technology Park Corporation in South Charleston, WV, for the *Green Mining Model Business Program*. The project brings 17 public and private partners together to operate a system of linked activities designed to use reclaimed soils on inactive surface mining land to grow value-added crops; extract high-value products from these crops and market/sell them; and leverage land reclamation, crop cultivation, and chemical extraction and processing activities to provide displaced coal and energy industry workers across 13 West Virginia counties with training, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities. The project will focus primarily on training these displaced workers to farm and cultivate lavender—during a demonstration of the project, it was discovered that cultivation of 2.5 acres of lavender supported the direct and indirect employment of 25 individuals. The WV National Guard and coal company partners will donate free or reduced-cost land and land preparation assistance to the project, and the West Virginia Regional Technology Park will provide access to its multi-million dollar chemical manufacturing facilities. The project will create 250 direct and indirect jobs, leverage \$459,987 private investment, and create six new businesses. Additional funding for will be provided by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

**\$1,000,000** ARC grant to the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises (FAHE) in Berea, KY, for the *UPLIFT Appalachia Recovery* project. The ARC award will be used to finance three community recovery facilities that will support residents' recovery from addiction, provide needed health services, and create job opportunities in coal-impacted communities. These facilities will primarily serve three eastern Kentucky counties—each of which is located within the federally designated USDA Strike Force Zone. Specifically, the award will facilitate the development of a housing facility in Louisa, KY, that works with patients for 2–3 years and focuses on transitioning them from the center's care directly into an internship or job; assist in the creation of a 100-bed facility in Somerset, KY, that employs a peer-based care model in which patients in different stages of recovery work together to get and remain sober; and enable an existing facility in Jackson, KY, to expand their services to an additional 990 people, to build a dental clinic, and to partner with the University of Pikeville for optometry care. The award will serve 5,060 patients, create or retain 63 jobs, and will leverage investment from USDA's Uplift America program and private investors.

**\$950,000** ARC grant to Mountain Empire Community College (MECC) in Big Stone Gap, VA, for the *Power Linemen Career Education* program. MECC will partner with regional power industry employers to develop and implement a training curriculum that equips participants across a four-county area in southwest Virginia for entry-level employment as apprentice utility line workers and positions them for a career as journeyman-level power lineman. The project will also partner with the Flatwoods Job Corps Center's in order to utilize their outdoor instructional facilities. The project will serve 362 trainees over the life of the award.

**\$948,673** ARC grant to Somerset County, PA, for the *Somerset County Fiber Extension Project*. ARC funds will be used to install 22 miles of fiber optic cable on existing pole lines that will allow a variety of business, residential, medical, and educational customers in Somerset County access to broadband services. The area does not currently have cable broadband available and DSL service is not offered ubiquitously. The project will serve 1,094 businesses and 3,962 households, and will act as an economic and tourism driver in the county.

**\$856,050** ARC grant to the West Virginia Healthy Kids and Family Coalition (HKFC) in Charleston, WV, for the *Growing Social Enterprise and Healthy Communities* project. HKFC will expand the successful Try This WV economic and community development program to 15 local communities in the service territory—which will enable them to phase-in second stage development activities designed to improve

community vitality and health. Simultaneously, Strong Mountain Communities, a southern West Virginia economic development organization, will build a pre-market social enterprise development program and create an Investors' Circle; combined, these two activities will deliver technical assistance directly to social entrepreneurs, and will raise capital to invest in the creation and expansion of local social enterprises. The project will serve 23 counties in southern West Virginia, create 100 jobs, leverage \$1,200,000 in private and community financing, and will provide for 200 entrepreneurs and community leaders to receive in-depth technical assistance.

**\$800,000** ARC grant to Virginia Community Capital in Christiansburg, VA, for the *New Economy Loan Fund* project. The project—which will leverage the capacity of a variety of regional governments, education institutions, and business incubators—will provide needed capital and targeted technical assistance to small business owners in coal-impacted communities across nine counties in southwest Virginia. Specifically, ARC funds will assist in capitalizing a loan fund that will support small business development in the service area, and will enable a full-time technical assistance provider to deliver business assistance directly to entrepreneurs to build the knowledge and skills for continued profitability and sustainability. The project will create or retain 55 jobs, enable 17 businesses to receive loans and 30 businesses to receive technical assistance, and leverage \$4,800,000 in private capital.

**\$653,400** ARC grant to the Washington Greene County Job Training Agency, Inc., in Washington, PA, for the *Transitioning from Black to Blue: Training Former Coal Workers for Natural Gas Utility and Pipeline Careers in Appalachia* project. The ARC award will provide a targeted retraining program for displaced coal workers that enables them to pursue local employment in the natural gas utility and pipeline industry. The training courses will be offered at three regional education institutions—Butler County Community College, Westmoreland County Community College, and Washington State Community College. The curriculum includes input from the Gas Technology Institute to ensure that participants' knowledge and skill development is industry-standard and best positions them to find stable employment in an expedited manner. The project will primarily serve a 23-county area in southeast Ohio and southwest Pennsylvania, and will serve 100 trainees.

**\$500,000** ARC grant to the City of Whitesburg, KY, for the Whitesburg Daniel Boone Hotel Stabilization project. ARC funds will be utilized to make immediate and urgent repairs to stabilize the historic, brick Daniel Boone Hotel—which represents the city's rise after the arrival of railroads and the opening of the region's coalfields. The hotel is a central component of Whitesburg's economic development future and revitalization plans. After the structure is stabilized and renovated, it will be a regional destination and economic driver. The project will create 23 jobs, leverage \$2,000,000 in private investment, and will attract 9,900 additional visitors annually to the area.

**\$471,843** ARC grant to the SEDA-Council of Governments in Lewisburg, PA, for the *Central PA Asset Based Economy—Adaptive Reuse of Coal-Impacted Land and Outdoor Recreation as an Economic Engine* project. ARC funds will be used to position reclaimed mine land in five central Pennsylvania counties as a regional outdoor tourism destination. Specifically, the project will construct an EMS/cell tower to provide 911 and cellular communications and broadband services to the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area (AOAA); design and construct 15 miles of new multi-use trails; develop and construct in-facility campground infrastructure; provide support for a coordinated marketing campaign focused on the region's tourism options; and provide entrepreneurial assistance activities to build-out the service industry around the increased tourism activity in the area. The project will drive 12,000 new visitors annually to the area, generate over \$18,000,000 in non-export revenue, and create 26 jobs.

**\$400,000** ARC grant to the West Virginia University Research Corporation in Morgantown, WV, for the *Manufacturing Value Stream for Shale* project. The project will transition companies and suppliers affected by the downturn in the coal economy toward the emerging shale-manufacturing sector by providing direct economic diversification and investment assistance. The applicant—partnering with the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Centers in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio—will identify specific companies in the tri-state service area with shale-manufacturing assets and opportunities; assess participating companies' prospective entry points into the shale-manufacturing value stream; and deliver direct guidance to SMEs on value chain opportunities. The award will create 400 new jobs and 12 new businesses. Additional funding is being provided by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

**\$300,000** ARC grant to Woodlands Community Lenders (WCL) in Elkins, WV, for the *Financing Entrepreneurship in Randolph, Barbour and Tucker Counties* project. The ARC award will expand WCL's proven, comprehensive set of services to the tri-county area of Randolph, Barbour, and Tucker Counties in northeast West Virginia. Specifically, the project will deliver program participants services focused around small business development, real estate and downtown redevelopment, innovative financing of entrepreneurs, and finance packaging. WCL will work closely with local small business development center business coaches, and with Main Street/OnTRAC staff to provide technical assistance to borrowers. The project will create 100 jobs and 25 businesses, and will leverage \$1,100,000 in additional private investment.

#### **Technical Assistance Award Summaries**

**\$100,000** ARC grant to the Northwest PA Regional Planning and Development Commission in Oil City, PA, for technical assistance to develop a feasibility study for broadband access in the Northwest Pennsylvania region. The *Northwest PA Broadband Assessment* project will include capacity building among regional partners, identify gaps in high-speed internet infrastructure, and recommend solutions to improve internet connectivity among residents and local business. State sources will provide an additional \$86,047 to support the project.

**\$100,000** ARC grant to Jobs for the Future (JFF) in Boston, MA, for the *Career Online High School: A Leapfrog Strategy for Appalachian Communities* project. JFF will partner with Cengage Learning to eliminate high school completion barriers for individuals in Appalachian states and help them progress along learning and career paths. Key to the project's success will be the integration of a cutting edge high school diploma completion model with educational and career pathway strategies and supports to ensure long term workforce and economic opportunity for students. Through a competitive process, JFF will work with coal-impacted communities from Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia to help students complete high school and secure in-demand jobs. The project will train 40 students and expose 1,000 participants to the high school completion program.

**\$99,670** ARC grant to Appalachian Voices in Norton, VA, for the *Southwest Virginia Renewable Energy and Economy* Project. The project will conduct a feasibility study, develop a strategic plan, and provide capacity building assistance to determine the viability of a renewable energy plan for the Southwest Virginia region. The project's activities will include a structured process for engaging local officials and organizations that are interested in renewable energy as part of the region's economic diversification strategy.

**\$77,680** ARC grant to the Alabama Center for Sustainable Energy (ALCSE) d/b/a Energy Alabama in Madison, AL, for technical assistance for a study of strategies to develop an advanced energy economy, with an emphasis on coal-impacted communities. It will identify the advanced energy industry of the coal-impacted areas, the available jobs within that industry, the resources of community colleges to support workforce training, and the career centers that can facilitate placement in the advanced energy industry of unemployed workers. The project will also support stakeholder engagement to explore and harness additional careers in sectors such as aerospace, advanced manufacturing, entrepreneurship, healthcare and information technology. Local sources will provide an additional \$79,857 to fund the project.

**\$61,603** ARC grant to the Virginia Coalfield Coalition, Inc., for technical assistance to conduct a comprehensive assessment of Southwest Virginia's telecommunication needs, which include identifying current levels of service, any gaps in that service, and the affordability of various broadband solutions. The *Virginia Coalfields Telecommunications Planning Grant* will develop a road map to address the specific deficiencies in each community and assess building capacity amongst regional partners. Local sources will provide an additional \$37,757 for the project.

**\$50,000** ARC grant to the Armstrong County Industrial Development Council in Freeport, PA, to develop an Economic Development strategy for the county. The *Armstrong County 2017 POWER Technical Assistance* project will, in cooperation with local partners, build a road map for shaping the delivery system of economic development services and programs in Armstrong County. The plan will look at new and existing services, programs and initiatives. Local sources will provide an additional \$60,820 for the project.

**\$48,000** ARC grant to Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, Inc., in Frostburg, MD, for technical assistance to develop an economic development plan for the I-68 region in Maryland and West Virginia. The *I-68 Regional Economic Partnership* project will include the development of a regional asset map, regional labor shed analysis, a target industry list, as well as county and regional lists of recommendations. The data and maps developed through the project will serve as resources for companies looking to build, hire, or expand in the region. Workforce training and job creation are two anticipated outcomes of the project. Local sources will match the \$48,000 in project funding provided by ARC.

**\$36,700** ARC grant to Unlimited Future, Inc., in Huntington, WV, for capacity building and development of a feasibility study for expansion of local food systems. The *Beefing Up the Local Food Economy* project will support the planning process for a value-added meat processing facility in a local, vacant plant. The project will also look at workforce training programs serving the meat business and at expanding market opportunities for producers across the region, which includes Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia. Local sources will contribute an additional \$20,000 to the project.

**\$34,750** ARC grant to Grayson Land Care, Inc., in Fries, VA, to develop a feasibility study for the development of an abattoir, or slaughter house, in the I-81 and I-77 corridor, a region which includes parts of Virginia and West Virginia. The *Blue Ridge Plateau Abattoir* project will, in cooperation with local partners, directly support the development and planning tasks needed to launch the facility and implement a workforce training program. The proposed abattoir would strengthen the local food system and help diversify the regional economy.