THE WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT HUB

Our Work and Its Impact
2018 - 2019
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


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
   - 15 COMMUNITIES RECEIVED IN-DEPTH COACHING
   - 61 COMMUNITIES RECEIVED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
   - 39 ARTICLES PUBLISHED BY THE MEDIA ABOUT HUB INITIATIVES

2. SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM
   - $467,219 OUTSIDE FUNDING LEVERAGED FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

3. POLICY SOLUTIONS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE
   - 91 COMMUNITY PROJECTS INITIATED
   - 22 COMMUNITY PROJECTS COMPLETED
   - 481,034 POPULATION IMPACTED BY THE HUB

4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS
   - 606,655 CONNECTIONS TO POSITIVE COMMUNITY STORIES
   - 67,095 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STORY READERSHIP
   - 1,896 COMMUNITY MEMBERS ATTENDED MEETINGS, EVENTS, AND TRAININGS

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

1,241 VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS
6,727 VOLUNTEER HOURS INVESTED IN COMMUNITY PROJECTS
73 ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS ACTIVELY ENGAGED
156 COMMUNITY TEAM MEMBERS ACTIVELY ENGAGED
**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.

**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.

**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.
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.
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 |
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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK</strong></td>
<td>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</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WV POWER GRANTEE SUPPORT INITIATIVE</strong></td>
<td>Coaching and convening to support the successful implementation of large-scale projects to drive innovative economic development in WV</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROPERTY RESCUE INITIATIVE</strong></td>
<td>Partnering with the WVU Northern Brownfields Assistance Center to educate and support communities to access state resources to address abandoned and dilapidated properties</td>
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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.
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

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<td><strong>Abandoned Properties Coalition</strong></td>
<td>A statewide coalition that supports individual policy teams to identify, plan and pass state administrative and legislative policies to address abandoned and dilapidated buildings</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Policy Skill-building</strong></td>
<td>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</td>
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<td><strong>Next Generation Communities Project</strong></td>
<td>Supporting community teams in enacting policy changes that will create inviting communities for young people</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legislative Hubbub</strong></td>
<td>Delivering accessible, unbiased updates and education regarding WV's policymaking process on a weekly basis during the state's annual 60-day legislative session</td>
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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.

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

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

- **ENERGY 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
OUR TEAM

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