



APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

POWER AWARDS, FEBRUARY 2019

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ALABAMA

\$1,459,335 ARC grant to West Alabama Works (WAW) in Tuscaloosa, AL, for the *POWER2 Expand Initiative*. In partnership with the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce, West Alabama Works (the regional workforce council) will deliver training and reemployment opportunities to residents in 10 coal-impacted counties of Central Alabama (Bibb, Fayette, Hale, Jefferson, Lamar, Marion, Pickens, Shelby, Tuscaloosa, and Walker). In addition to connecting high school students and adults with industry-driven credentials, the project will strategically connect unemployed and underemployed individuals with adult basic education and advanced training opportunities. This will enable them to obtain the necessary credentials to earn a livable wage. The training programs include General Education Development (GED), Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), high school diploma, as well as short- and long-term, post-secondary training. The project builds on WAW's strong partnership with local industries. The project will improve 1,615 workers/trainees, connect 1020 individuals with employment, and equip 859 individuals with industry-recognized credentials. Additional support for the project is being provided by the Alabama Department of Commerce and Cengage Learning.

KENTUCKY

\$1,677,529 ARC grant to The Fletcher Group in Lexington, KY, for the *Recovery, Hope, Opportunity and Resiliency* program (RHOAR), which will address the challenges of unemployment and opioid use in Eastern Kentucky by establishing new addiction recovery programs. The RHOAR initiative will expand economic development through workforce development, social enterprises, and entrepreneurship in collaboration with educational institutions to provide meaningful employment for those recovering from substance use disorders. The Fletcher Group will partner with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, Fahe (another POWER grantee), Kentucky Housing Corporation, Recovery Kentucky, Operation Unite, and others to identify information and criteria needed to complete the "tool kit" that will be utilized throughout the programs, as well as areas to place new facilities. The project will serve 300 individuals in recovery and will leverage \$24 million in private capital and up to \$4.8 million annually in other funding.

\$1,500,000 ARC grant to the East Kentucky Advanced Manufacturing Institute, Inc. in Paintsville, KY, for the *eKAMI Workforce Development Program*. Through eKAMI's basic program dislocated, unemployed, and underemployed adults receive training in the CNC machining industry leading to certifications on Haas equipment. The project will expand the existing eKAMI programming to include support of a nine-

month Young Adult Advanced Manufacturing Technology Program for those out of school and new to the workforce and support of the High School Advanced Manufacturing Technology Program, providing a career path for current high school students. The expansion will also include initiation of an Advanced Manufacturing Technology Teacher Training Program for high school career and technical education instructors, initiation of a Correctional Facility Workforce Development Pilot Program, and expansion of eKAMI's signature 16-week Adult Training Program for those unemployed and underemployed who have work experience in other careers.

\$1,463,927 ARC grant to Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) in Richmond, KY, for the *Kentucky's Appalachia Aviation Maintenance Technician Training* project. In partnership with two community colleges and regional airports, ECU will create an aviation maintenance technician program at multiple campuses in Eastern Kentucky. Identifying a growing employment sector, the project responds to the need for economic diversification, job creation, and workforce development within Kentucky's Appalachian counties. Each aviation maintenance technician cohort will begin training in classrooms at the Richmond ECU campus and two of Eastern Kentucky University's regional campuses, Hazard Community & Technical College and Big Sandy Community & Technical College. Each is strategically chosen for its proximity to a partnering regional airport. Once trainees fulfill basic coursework requirements inside the traditional classroom setting, the training will move to the regional airports for hands-on work training. The program will yield industry-recognized certification and will serve 86 workers/trainees, all of whom will be certified and employed as aviation maintenance technicians.

\$1,461,078 ARC grant to Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP) in Hazard, KY, for the *Eastern Kentucky Addiction Recovery & Training Program (eKART)*. EKCEP is partnering with Sullivan University and Addiction Recovery Care to implement the eKART program, which will bridge the gap between addiction recovery and productive participation in the workforce for individuals in recovery. The program will provide valuable career training and supportive services, as well as cultivate second-chance job opportunities. This project will provide regional businesses with information on ways to provide a supportive environment for employees in recovery, increasing the opportunities for work-based training and apprenticeships, while also partnering with treatment providers to identify and recruit recovering individuals appropriate for those opportunities. Sullivan University, which is successfully training individuals in recovery to become Peer Support Specialists, will enable participants to return to the workforce in jobs where they can help other individuals enter and complete recovery. The project will train 65 new peer support specialists and at least 125 individuals in recovery will re-enter the Eastern Kentucky workforce. Sixty-three businesses will be certified as recovery-friendly workplaces. Additional funding is provided by the Kentucky Department of Behavioral, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities and Kentucky Opioid Response Effort.

\$1,301,983 ARC grant to Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED) in Somerset, KY, to expand the reach and capacity of the *Supplier Education and Economic Development (SEED) Program*. The project's training and support services will improve the competitiveness of manufacturing companies in coal-impacted counties of Eastern Kentucky and will help them acquire the competence

needed to win government and private contracts. Key partners in the project are Advantage Kentucky Alliance (AKA), which will provide the training, and the Kentucky Procurement Technical Assistance Center (KY PTAC), which will assist participating companies in developing new business with Department of Defense prime contractors. The project expects to create 350 jobs and leverage \$3 million in private investment.

\$1,000,000 ARC grant to Fahe Inc. in Berea, KY, for the *Second Chance Employment* project, which will create a stronger second-chance employment market for those in recovery from addiction in Eastern Kentucky. Fahe will work with local employers in 6 coal-impacted counties (Harlan, Jackson, Knox, Rockcastle, Laurel, and Pulaski) to expand successful reemployment models by creating opportunities for business owners to become part of the solution, and by enabling Kentuckians in recovery to craft a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities. The project will create a coach/mentorship program for those interested in becoming Second Chance employers. Fahe will partner with DV8, an innovative business located in Lexington, Kentucky, that is pioneering a reemployment model built on providing second-chance opportunities for individuals in recovery by providing job training and above-average pay. The experienced staff of DV8 Kitchen (a social enterprise restaurant and bakery focused on hiring and training people in recovery) will educate local businesses and organizations on the facts about recovery and offer the chance for these organizations to apply for an intern. Employers will apply to obtain a six-month paid recovery intern, with the understanding that the employee will be hired after satisfactory performance. The labor pool for these internships will be derived from Kentucky addiction treatment centers. As a result of the project, 45 businesses will be improved through their knowledge of recovery-friendly workplaces and 30 workers will be placed as interns. Additional funding for the project is provided by the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation.

\$867,582 ARC grant to the Appalachian Artisan Center, Inc. in Hindman, KY, for the *Troublesome Creek Stringed Instruments Company*. The project will support a startup manufacturing company in making high-end custom artisanal guitars, mandolins, and mountain dulcimers from Appalachian hardwoods. The Appalachian Artisan Center's existing School of Luthiery will serve as the workforce development arm and Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP) will provide financial assistance for training for supplemental employment costs. The company will use an existing building and woodworking facility at the Kentucky School of Craft, which will be rented to the company at a discounted rate by the Hazard Community and Technical College. This will be Knott County's first manufacturing plant. The project will create additional demand for high quality Appalachian hardwood tonewoods and will support local businesses supplying these woods. The company projects new employment of 18 over the first three years, growing to 37 by year six and ultimately reaching 65 employees.

\$833,670 ARC grant to the Housing Development Alliance, Inc. in Hazard, KY, for the *Hope Building* program. Housing Development Alliance (HDA), in partnership with the Perry County Drug Court (PCDC), Hickory Hill Recovery Center (HHRC), Hazard Community and Technical College (HCTC), and Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP), will provide people in recovery from

addition with training and support services to re-enter the workforce. Through paid, on-the-job training opportunities in the residential construction industry, Hope Building participants will develop a positive work history and gain valuable certifications while earning wages from on-the-job training. Trainees will be supported by EKCEP as they search for permanent job placement and will receive counseling and support services from HHRC or PCDC. Hope Building will benefit the regional economy by creating workforce housing in an area where the demand for new, modest housing exceeds the current housing supply. After homes are constructed and sold by HDA, the proceeds will be reinvested in the program. Over three years approximately 25 participants will receive training, counseling, and related services and build 15 units of workforce housing.

\$76,000 ARC grant to the Lewis County Fiscal Court in Vanceburg, KY, for the *Lewis County Broadband Strategic Plan and Feasibility Study*. Lewis County, like most of Eastern Kentucky, does not have adequate broadband coverage. The project conduct a feasibility study and craft a strategic plan to assist the county in creating a phased broadband implementation plan that can be used as a roadmap for action. The study will determine what broadband assets and resources currently exist in the county and determine what broadband bandwidth the community needs to foster economic growth.

\$50,000 ARC grant to the Carr Creek Alumni Association in Littcarr, KY, for *The Magic of Carr Creek: A Community Revitalization Project*. Designed to maximize the economic impact of over 690,000 annual visitors to Carr Creek Lake, the project will examine the conversion of a former high school into a multi-use facility. The project will conduct an economic feasibility/market demand study, develop a regional strategic agenda for tourism, and conduct community engagement and partnership development efforts. Project partners include the tourism offices of Letcher, Knott, and Perry counties.

NEW YORK

\$60,000 ARC grant to the city of Dunkirk, NY, for the *Dunkirk/Chautauqua County Power Plant Redevelopment Alternatives and Feasibility Analysis* project. The city of Dunkirk will conduct a redevelopment and feasibility analysis for the NRG Power Plant site, the location of a closed coal-fired power plant. The site consists of 75.9 acres of land located at Dunkirk Harbor on the City's Lake Erie waterfront. NRG has announced that the company will abandon the site, resulting in lost jobs and reduced tax revenue. The feasibility analysis will guide the redevelopment of the site into a productive and tax-generating property. The scope of the work includes an assessment of the assets and liabilities of the site, market analysis, reuse strategy alternatives, and recommended actions.

NORTH CAROLINA

\$98,300 ARC grant to The Industrial Commons in Morganton, NC, for *Capturing Emerging Markets Through the Creation of a Textile and Furniture Circular Economy*, a feasibility study of creating a closed circle economy network in Western North Carolina and upstate South Carolina that aggregates textile and furniture waste and transforms it into new, marketable products that go back into the supply chain. The study will identify and map manufacturers in two regions and conduct 100 waste stream audits to

understand the content and volume of their waste. The study will also produce a business plan and proformas that define the financial viability of operating a sorting and aggregation facility (the one component missing to create the loop), and provide an understanding of the job creation and investment impacts that could result from such a model.

\$98,273 ARC grant to the North Carolina Department of Information Technology in Raleigh, NC, for the *Broadband Feasibility Study for Telehealth Deployment in Western North Carolina* project. The feasibility study will investigate telehealth programs and assess broadband capabilities for 20 counties in Appalachian North Carolina. The study will examine existing telehealth programs to gauge their efficiency and will conduct an analysis of the broadband infrastructure required to effectively support telehealth applications.

OHIO

\$49,000 ARC grant to the Vinton County Commissioners in McArthur, OH, for the *Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Project*. The project will produce a broadband feasibility study for Meigs and Vinton counties in Southeast Ohio. Both counties are interested in expanding the broadband footprint in their region and the results of this study will provide information needed for specific plans to build the necessary infrastructure (both fiber and towers) needed for that expansion. The study will concentrate on a complete inventory of existing assets, the development of a partner plan, a model for network design, and an analysis of fiber and tower costs.

PENNSYLVANIA

\$1,100,000 ARC grant to Clarion University in Clarion, PA, for the *Northwest Pennsylvania Diversifying the Regional Economy* project. The project offers training opportunities to reinvigorate the regional economy and prepare for the emerging petrochemical industry by developing highly skilled secondary education pre-apprenticeship programs, offering certification of employer-demanded apprenticeships, creating career-ladder training in targeted industry clusters, identifying customized training needs to upgrade the existing workforce, and implementing entrepreneurial training leading to job growth. By the conclusion of the project, 150 high school students will have obtained employment or enrolled in further education or training, 75 workers/trainees will have enhanced their position or found new employment, and 30 adult participants will have completed entrepreneurship training and started at least four businesses.

\$1,014,730 ARC grant to Youngsville Television Corporation in Youngsville, PA, for the *Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Broadband Deployment Initiative*. The project will provide broadband services to unserved and under-served areas in the northwest region of Pennsylvania. Using a combination of wired and wireless systems, the project will deploy broadband service to business districts in Crawford and Warren counties, partnering with the municipalities' Volunteer Fire Departments. The Volunteer Fire Departments will serve as anchor institutions, housing the equipment and hardware needed to support

the regional wired and wireless broadband deployment. For serving as the anchor institutions, each fire department will be afforded broadband connectivity at no cost for the life of the fiber network. Given the large potential impact broadband access may have on the economic development and revitalization of Northwest Pennsylvania, the project will open the doors to a variety of possibilities for diversifying the regional economy, which as suffered from the decline of the coal industry.

\$60,000 ARC grant to the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission in Ridgway, PA, for the development of a Regional Freight and Mobility Strategic Plan for the six-county region of Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter counties in North Central Pennsylvania. The coal downturn has greatly impacted North Central Pennsylvania, leading to loss of high paying jobs and a declining tax base, as well as supply chain and infrastructure issues. Developed in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, the plan will help impacted communities better understand the freight challenges they face as a result of the coal decline, inventory existing infrastructure and freight assets across transportation modes, and develop strategies to optimize the freight network in support of industry diversification and economic growth.

TENNESSEE

\$2,147,125 ARC grant to Duck River Electric Membership Corporation (DREMC) in Shelbyville, TN, for its *East Loop and Smart Grid Fiber Communication* project. The project will deploy smart grid improvements that form the backbone of a gigabit-speed fiber retail broadband network. The project will enable DREMC's Internet service provider (ISP) partners to provide affordable broadband access to 1,202 businesses and 2,876 households in Franklin, Coffee, and Marion Counties, resulting in the creation of 103 new jobs.

\$577,840 ARC grant to the Appalachian Investors Alliance in Knoxville, TN, for the *Angel Investing in Coal Communities* program. Building on a prior POWER grant, the project will develop new Angel Investment Funds serving coal-impacted communities in Appalachia and provide technical and investment support to existing funds. The project will create four new angel funds in the Appalachian region, each capitalized with between \$500,000 and \$2 million of private financing. Additionally it will provide due diligence support to Appalachian angel investment funds that lack professional management staff, expand educational offerings to investors and entrepreneurs, and sponsor a referral network of syndication and co-investment partners to increase investment in the region. Typically, angel investments focus on companies that support advanced manufacturing, advanced materials, aerospace, healthcare, agricultural technology, and other regionally significant industry clusters. The project anticipates these activities will result in syndication and direct investment of \$11.25 million in leveraged private investment, with 25 businesses served, leading to 125 entrepreneurial jobs created.

\$35,000 ARC grant to Lawrence County, TN, for the *Lawrence County Broadband Feasibility Study* project. The broadband feasibility study will be used to help determine next steps in obtaining better broadband coverage throughout Lawrence County. Currently only 25 percent of the population has

access to broadband service. The study will include the creation of a steering committee for the county and address identifying broadband demand, creating an accurate broadband availability map, conducting a strategic review of county and city policies for broadband, developing an inventory of assets, and studying potential adoption rates.

VIRGINIA

\$1,250,000 ARC grant to Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) in Abingdon, VA, for the *Seed-to-Sale: Strengthening the Central Appalachian Food Corridor* project. ASD, in partnership with Refresh Appalachia, Sprouting Farms, the Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development, Community Farm Alliance, and Whitlock Farm, will expand the impact and scale of the Central Appalachian Food Enterprise Corridor across four Appalachian states. Through previous POWER funding, the Central Appalachian Food Enterprise Corridor has effectively connected established and emerging producers throughout Central Appalachia to wholesale distribution markets, leading to increased agricultural business development and job creation. The current project will focus attention on portions of the Corridor that need additional support by increasing technical assistance and extending effective practices. It will enhance the network through mediation between private industry and small-scale farmers, fostering aggregation and distribution opportunities. It will increase the supply of produce, attracting more regional and national buyers to purchase local produce, and will pursue priority procurement policies by states and institutions. The project will span 91 counties in four states (Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee) and serve 349 businesses and 938 participants. It is anticipated that the project will improve 238 businesses and 786 participants, create 38 new businesses and 85 jobs, and leverage \$732,666 of private investment.

\$486,769 ARC grant to People Incorporated Financial Services (PIFS) in Abingdon, VA, for the *New Market Tax Credit Project Growth in Appalachia* project. PIFS will launch a new program providing technical assistance and advisory services to entrepreneurial start-ups, emerging businesses, units of local government, and other community-based organizations to engage in and carry out high impact, capital intensive projects. PIFS will increase capacity of these actors to undertake transformative community development projects. Capacity building will include assistance in how to plan, structure, fund, and carry out community and economic development projects. It will also build capacity to leverage multiple sources of funding, understand and access complicated financing sources, such as New Markets Tax Credits, and accept significant financial and organizational risk. To select projects, PIFS will work with regional, state, and local economic development organizations, community development leaders, private philanthropy, federal/state agencies, and past POWER grant recipients. PIFS anticipates working with eight to ten unique projects over a three-year period, creating 50 jobs, and leveraging \$10 million in new capital into the impacted communities. The initiative will focus on coal-impacted communities in West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky.

\$459,764 to Bland County, VA, for the *Bland County Broadband Deployment* project. The project will construct a 33-mile fiber run that will be used to supply broadband to businesses in Bland County. The fiber run will start in Rocky Gap and go south through Bastian and on to Bland. The fiber will run along the Route 52 corridor. Once the fiber construction is finished, the competitively selected ISP partner will use wireless technology to reach additional locations off Route 52. The project will make access available to 37 businesses, as well as Bland County schools, the Board of Education Offices, and the Bland County Medical Clinic, a Federally Qualified Health Center.

\$100,000 ARC grant to Friends of Southwest Virginia in Abingdon, VA, for the *Building POWERful Economic Diversity and Sustainability within Appalachian Communities* project. It will create an interstate collaborative plan for developing common natural and cultural assets that can boost regional economic diversification. This process will bridge communities in Southwest Virginia with their neighbors in North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Kentucky, to create a community-driven identification and planning process. This will expand current collaboratives within the footprint of Friends of Southwest Virginia, including a previous POWER project, beyond Southwest Virginia to develop natural and cultural assets and strategies that are shared across neighboring states. Natural and cultural asset planning across state lines will help generate a diverse and sustainable economy for Central Appalachia.

WEST VIRGINIA

\$1,020,556 ARC grant to the West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition in Charleston, WV, for the *Geographic Food and Agriculture Systems Development* project. The project will provide coordination, capacity building, training, and technical assistance to enable farmers, food businesses, and community members to determine and execute agribusiness priorities. This will result in increased food production and access to previously unreachable markets, thereby creating greater economic diversity for areas that have been heavily impacted by the decline in coal production. The project will deploy seed capital, in the form of mini grants, to attract private dollars and execute larger-scale projects that strengthen the local food system. The West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition will strengthen the local food supply chain, increase market opportunities for local growers, including more than 75 food-related entrepreneurs, and attract private investment in five foodsheds that span seventeen coal-impacted counties of West Virginia. Additional funding for the project is provided by the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation and the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation.

\$1,000,000 ARC grant to the WV Community Development Hub (The Hub) in Charleston, WV, for the *Mountain State Capital: Filling the Critical Venture Capital Gap in West Virginia* project. The project will support the development of a new venture capital (VC) fund to support high-growth startups in Central Appalachia. The fund will be a partnership between The Hub and Mountain State Capital (MSC). It seeks to boost entrepreneurial activities and grow capital investment by supporting the creation of the first seed-stage venture capital investment fund serving West Virginia and Central Appalachia. MSC will fill a critical gap in the state's entrepreneurial ecosystem, providing coaching, technical assistance support, and VC investment funds to business startups. MSC and The Hub, as a community-driven institutional

investor, will target West Virginia-based startups during the first phase of the investment cycle. All revenue generated by the initial investment will be directed to a dedicated technical assistance fund to support community development across West Virginia, with particular priority given to coal-impacted rural communities. The success of these business startups will then provide long term investment return to MSC and The Hub and enable the expansion of their technical assistance grants to support community development, entrepreneurial learning, and business development products across the state.

\$796,924 ARC grant to Grow Ohio Valley (GOV) in Wheeling, WV, for the *Agribusiness Development in the Upper Ohio Valley* project. Serving agricultural producers and businesses in a three-state region (West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania), Grow Ohio Valley will help diversify and strengthen the regional economy in an area that has been heavily dependent on coal. It will launch a year-round consignment market in an unused downtown space of Wheeling, West Virginia, and will develop a branded product line featuring local ingredients to be sold at the market. The project will bridge gaps in the supply chain by producing in-demand goods not currently grown by local farmers. Additional market opportunities for farmers will be developed through the expansion of GOV's FARMacy initiative, which partners with healthcare providers to offer prescriptions of fresh produce to patients suffering from chronic diseases and substance abuse issues. The project will also roll out a STEM-focused curriculum in Ohio County, West Virginia, schools that equips high school students to pursue indoor agricultural careers. The project will improve 100 businesses, create 66 jobs, launch three businesses, and leverage more than \$460,000 in private investment. Additional funding is provided by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

\$485,284 ARC grant to Morgantown Sober Living Inc. in Morgantown, WV, for the *Reintegrate Appalachia: Job Creation and Workforce Development for West Virginians Impacted by Substance Use Disorders* project. Reintegrate Appalachia is a unique job creation and workforce development project specifically designed for those recovering from substance use disorder (SUD). Morgantown Sober Living, with its addiction treatment expertise and recovery monitoring approach, will enhance Coalfield Development Corporation's successful workforce development model by adding a robust addiction recovery monitoring program to create the 33-6-3-PLUS program. The 33-6-3-PLUS program consists of 33 hours of full-time employment per week, 6 hours per week of higher education in a community or technical college setting, 3 hours per week of a professional development curriculum and mentorship, and an addiction recovery monitoring program (the PLUS). Reintegrate Appalachia re-engages each participant in the community through meaningful employment and the opportunity to continue their education and grow their professional skills, while providing the clinical and peer-to-peer support needed to maintain sobriety. The project will establish centers in Braxton, McDowell, Wayne, and Monongalia counties. At least 40 adults will obtain full-time employment and 24 will still be enrolled in the program and working towards that goal at the end of the project period.

\$100,000 ARC grant to the Center for Rural Health Development in Hurricane, WV, for the *Creating a More Vibrant Economy for Coal-Impacted Counties in West Virginia* project. The project will provide technical assistance for the development of a Community Health Improvement Plan in each of five targeted distressed West Virginia counties (Calhoun, Logan, McDowell, Roane, and Webster). Each plan

will be developed by a cross-sector partnership involving government agencies, private businesses, education, economic development organizations, health care organizations, and residents in each county. The project will build capacity through a model of change that was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). The project aims to create a culture of health which will help prevent future opioid use and help stymie expansion of the current opioid crisis. Financial partners include the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, the Logan Healthcare Foundation, and the Sisters of Health Foundation.

\$80,691 ARC grant to the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER) in Washington, D.C., for *Benefit U: An Entrepreneur's Guide to Financial, Health Insurance, and Retirement Solutions*. Targeting five distressed counties in West Virginia (Boone, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, and Wyoming), WISER will develop Benefit U to serve as a virtual human relations department for entrepreneurs, self-employed workers, independent contractors, and other workers without access to benefits resources. Benefit U will include paycheck guidance, income tax assistance programs, health insurance navigators, emergency and long-term savings advice, and financial education and retirement planning tools.

\$79,270 ARC grant to the Marshall University Research Corporation, in Huntington, WV for the *Craft Beer and Spirit Trail* project. The project will conduct an economic impact study of the emerging craft beer and spirits industry in central and western West Virginia counties (Cabell, Kanawha, Putnam, and Roane). The study will identify emerging strengths, existing leakages, and new business and employment opportunities to guide local economic development leaders. Project activities will include asset mapping, leakage monitoring, and guidance to establish a road map for building local efforts into a cohesive regional program for the craft beer and spirits trail. Key partners include the WV Department of Tourism, Putnam County Economic Development Authority, Huntington Area Development Corporation, Huntington Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the Charleston Area Alliance.

\$59,500 ARC grant to the New River Gorge Trail Alliance (NRGTA) in Fayetteville, WV, for the *Linking Trails and Communities to Spawn Economic Growth and Wellness: Expanding the Southern West Virginia Bike Trail Network* project. The project will guide the expansion of the current regional trail network to add five counties: Kanawha, Monroe, Raleigh, Summers, and Webster. Key partners include the Rails to Trails Conservancy, WV Division of Highways, Region 4 Planning and Development Council, and the National Park Service. The project will support community engagement for trail towns, trail vision mapping, capacity building for local trail organizations, and trail mapping, which includes rail corridor and road inventory, rail and trail assessment, and trail feasibility efforts. The trail planning documents will serve as a comprehensive roadmap for communities to transform an unused railroad corridor or other areas into a dynamic multi-use trail and will produce trail town toolkits to benefit all eight counties along the trail.