

# PRESS RELEASE

## **FLETCHER GROUP TO DRIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHILE PROMOTING LONG-TERM RECOVERY**

LONDON, KY (December 3, 2025) – The Fletcher Group, a 501c3 not-for-profit headquartered in London, Kentucky, has been awarded \$9.2 million to lead Kentucky’s role in a new *Connect Appalachia* project that will strengthen recovery ecosystems, address critical workforce shortages, and expand economic opportunity across the region.

“Efforts to address substance use disorder and improve economic opportunity are too often siloed, discouraging the exchange and adoption of effective practices,” said Fletcher Group Founder and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ernie Fletcher. “The Connect Appalachia project will bring together experienced organizations in the six-state service area to provide employers with a high-quality workforce while helping individuals maintain recovery and obtain employment. The Fletcher Group is proud to partner with these organizations to strengthen recovery pathways and expand economic opportunity so that more people can return to work, support their families, and contribute to a brighter future.”

As the primary recipient of the grant issued by the Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies and funded by the the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Fletcher Group will work hand-in-hand with seven well-known recovery allies: *East Tennessee State University*, the *First Tennessee Development District*, *Highland Rivers Behavioral Health*, *Jobs and Hope West Virginia*, the *Kentucky Chamber Foundation*, the *New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board*, the *Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness*, the *Upper Cumberland Development District*, and the *Wilkes Recovery Revolution*.

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Using a Recovery-Ready Workplaces training and education model created during a previous ARISE planning project, the region-wide initiative will serve the economic interests of over 2,500 businesses in 252 communities. The goal is to provide job-readiness training, recovery-friendly workplace training, and job-placement resources to 1,500 people recovering from substance use disorder living in Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

### **About the Fletcher Group**

Decidedly different right from the start, the Fletcher Group applies a uniquely entrepreneurial approach to helping people move from the disease of addiction and the devastation of homelessness to lives of hope, dignity, and fulfillment. Staffed by financial, technical, business, and treatment experts, the Fletcher Group provides organizations, communities, counties, and states with an extensive suite of highly innovative and adaptable professional services—everything from technical assistance and ground-breaking research to program evaluation and project management.

The debt-free, self-sustaining model of recovery housing promoted by the Fletcher Group is based on the *Recovery Kentucky* program launched by Dr. Ernie Fletcher when governor of Kentucky. Called a model “Evidence-Based Program” by SAMHSA and “a model that works” by the Department of Health and Human Services, Recovery Kentucky's 17 peer-driven facilities have helped thousands of Kentuckians rebuild their lives while saving millions in taxpayer dollars.

Combined with a laser-like focus on what works best in the real world of SUD recovery, the Fletcher Group's growing nationwide impact (over 5,000 clients, nearly 4,000 training participants, and more than 13,000 technical assistance encounters) has enabled the company to serve as a field catalyst, leading the way to an exciting new era in addiction recovery. To learn more about how the Fletcher Group is helping make a real difference in people's lives, visit the Fletcher Group website at [www.fletchergroup.org](http://www.fletchergroup.org).

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### **About Connect Appalachia**

Connect Appalachia is a multi-state initiative created to drive large-scale economic transformation by supporting job readiness and job placement for Appalachians participating in SUD treatment and recovery programs. The initiative applies a Recovery-Ready Workplaces training and education model to help build and strengthen local recovery ecosystems, reduce workforce gaps, and expand economic opportunity across the Appalachian region.

### **About ARC**

Formed by a partnership of the federal government with 13 state governments, the Appalachian Regional Commission provides grants, publishes research, and sponsors learning experiences to help Appalachian communities seize opportunity, address economic disparity, and advance prosperity. ARC's leadership includes the governors from each of the 13 Appalachian states and a Federal Co-Chair who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Dedicated to creating jobs and strengthening the economies of 423 counties across 13 states, ARC's unique structure ensures that every investment is made in partnership with state leadership. Since its establishment in 1965, ARC has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in ARISE projects with recent awards covering areas like disaster recovery, cybersecurity training, and tourism. For detailed FAQs about ARC, including information on how to apply for grants and links to recorded webinars that explain the application process, visit the ARC Website at [www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov).

### **About ARISE**

The Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies is a multi-state initiative launched and funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission to drive regional economic transformation through large-scale, collaborative projects across multiple states. Since January of 2023, \$188.6 million has been invested in 69 projects impacting all 13 Appalachian states. Those investments are projected to create or retain over 22,300 jobs, leverage more than \$274.6 million in additional private investment into Appalachia's economy, and prepare nearly 16,000 workers and students for opportunities in broadband development, workforce education, and manufacturing.