West Virginia Access Center for Higher Education 2011-2016

The Educational Opportunity Center is a federally funded TRIO outreach program designed to assist adults with educational planning by offering services based on individual need.

Bluefield State College and the West Virginia Access Center for Higher Education (WVACHE) share a collective mission: increasing educational attainment in the State. They work collaboratively to achieve this goal and are assisted by a partnership with the College Foundation of WV (CFWV). Joint initiatives undertaken include College Goal Sunday, FAFSA Training and Assistance, and College Counseling via Text-Messaging. The WVACHE Director leads the College’s Regents Bachelor of Arts degree initiative, a non-traditional degree completion program for adult students. And, the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), a federally-funded TRIO program at Bluefield State College, provides access services to first-generation, low-income adults in 11 counties in southeastern WV.

Nontraditional Adult Participants Served: 6,699
First Generation and Low-Income Adult Participants Served: 74%
Nontraditional Adult Postsecondary Enrollment Rate: 52%

Services & Resources Provided

- College preview and selection
- Scholarship information
- Initial academic advising
- Referral to community resources
- Interest testing and career planning
- College placement exam information
- Assistance with admissions and financial aid applications to any school

Bluefield State College
Dr. Sarita A. Rhonemus
sarhonemus@bluefieldstate.edu
INVESTMENTS IN WEST VIRGINIA
October 2015–January 2017

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a federal-state partnership. Its mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in 420 counties across the 13 Appalachian states. ARC’s strategic plan identifies five investment goals to advance this mission: creating economic opportunity; preparing a ready workforce; building critical infrastructure; leveraging natural and cultural assets; and cultivating leadership and community capacity.

In partnership with the West Virginia Development Office, ARC has supported 55 projects in West Virginia totaling nearly $24.1 million. These investments have been matched by nearly $24.6 million and will attract nearly $27.9 million in leveraged private investments in West Virginia. They will also create or retain nearly 2,750 jobs, train and educate over 16,500 students and workers, and benefit the 1.8 million residents in West Virginia’s 55 counties.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES IN WEST VIRGINIA

The West Virginia Development Office has prioritized these three ARC investment goals:

**ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**
ARC has invested nearly $13.0 million in entrepreneurial and business strategies to strengthen the economy in Appalachian West Virginia.

**READY WORKFORCE**
ARC has invested nearly $4.0 million to increase the education, knowledge, skills, and health of West Virginia’s Appalachian residents to work and succeed.

**CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**
ARC has invested nearly $5.7 million in West Virginia’s critical infrastructure development, including broadband, transportation, and water/wastewater systems.

**ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES**
ARC has invested nearly $1.5 million to cultivate leadership and community capacity in Appalachian West Virginia.

IMPACT ON DISTRESSED COUNTIES

In Appalachian West Virginia, 9 counties were considered economically distressed in fiscal year 2016. 38 projects totaling over 79% of ARC investment dollars will have a direct impact on these counties.

INVESTMENTS IN ACTION

The Coalfield Development Corporation (CDC) was granted $1.87 million through ARC’s POWER Initiative to provide low-income West Virginians a comprehensive workforce training program in construction, agriculture, solar energy, and other high-demand industries. Much of the training takes place at Coalfield’s West Edge facility, a formerly abandoned garment factory in Huntington, West Virginia, that has been developed into a comprehensive training center. CDC projects that over 550 trainees will receive their professional certificates or associate degrees through its innovative workforce development model. CDC also plans to expand the organization’s service territory to other coal-impacted areas in southern West Virginia.