



STRATEGIC PLAN AND IMPACT REPORT 2024

**We have trained
over 3,000 people
in new economic
sectors.**

(Impact Statistic as of January 2024.)

CONTENTS

Mission, Vision, and Values.....	3
Organizational Theory of Change and Team Principles.....	4-7
Strategic Plan Introduction.....	9-10
Strategic Goal Summary.....	12
Logic Model.....	13-14
Service Delivery Models.....	15-18
The Size of Our Intervention.....	19-21
Sectors and Programs.....	22-23
Specific Goals.....	24-25
Labor Force Participation.....	26
Crucial North Star Goals.....	28
Executive Team SWOT Analysis.....	29-30
Conclusion.....	31
A New Appalachian Economy is Possible.....	32-33
Appendix A.....	34-55
Appendix B.....	57-60
Appendix C.....	62-63



REBUILDING THE APPALACHIAN ECONOMY FROM THE GROUND UP.

MISSION

Inspiring the courage to grow, activating the creativity to innovate, and cultivating communities of opportunity in central Appalachia through four core capabilities:

- **Designing and Scaling New Programs in Emerging Sustainable Sectors**
- **Incubating and Investing in Well-Paying Employment Social Enterprises**
- **Facilitating Personal, Professional, and Academic Growth for People Facing Barriers to Employment**
- **Advancing, Completing, and/or Managing Community Based Revitalization Projects**

VISION

Resilient rural communities with socially, environmentally, and financially thriving economies which create the community conditions for all kinds of people to unlock their full potential, power, and purpose.

VALUES

Gumption

- No complaining or whining
- Commit to excellent work
- Fully participate; dive in
- Believe in yourself, each other, and your community
- Do hard work towards big goals

Grit

- Doggedly pursue solutions to problems
- Follow through
- Reflect; be fully present
- Find the joy
- Learn and grow

Grace

- Stay humble; continually improve
- Trust and relationships are top priority
- Take time to listen, especially with whom you differ
- Value each other's unique strengths
- Be genuine and honest

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY OF CHANGE AND TEAM PRINCIPLES

Our principles correspond directly with the organization's overall strategies, as the next page will show. The principles help you set priorities and shape decision-making. The principles help you take the organization's theory of change and understand how to apply it day-in and day-out. Just as with all the work of the organization, they are grounded in our values and our vision, but they are more specific and tangible.

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY OF CHANGE FOR TRANSFORMATION

- **Diversify Local Economies so Wealth Creation Self Perpetuates**
- **Link to Broader Regional Systems Change so Tangible Improvements Can Stick**
- **Provide Measured Mentorship and Accountability**
- **Advance Higher Education and Personal Growth**
- **Employ People through Paid On-the-Job Working and Learning**
- **Start New Employment-Based Social Enterprises**
- **Collaborate Creatively and Cross-Sectorally on Difficult but Valuable Work**
- **Patient Speed on Tangible, Often Experimental Work Grounded in Community and Diversity**

TEAM PRINCIPLES TO ADVANCE THE STRATEGIES

- **Contribute to Market Shaping**
- **Be a Systems Leader**
- **Engage as a Professional Mentor**
- **Celebrate Learning**
- **Work Side-by-Side with People**
- **Have an Entrepreneurial Mindset**
- **Embrace Challenges Thoughtfully**
- **Keep Trust and Relationships as Your Top Priority**

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY OF CHANGE FOR TRANSFORMATION



NOTE

It is best to read these from the bottom up. These elements of our Theory of Change build upon one another. Traditionally, human development is smaller-scale, one-person-at-a-time work. Traditionally, educational development is top-down larger-scale. Both are needed and should more tightly align and coordinate. They represent what we believe will really change things for the better.

TEAM PRINCIPLES TO ADVANCE THE STRATEGIES

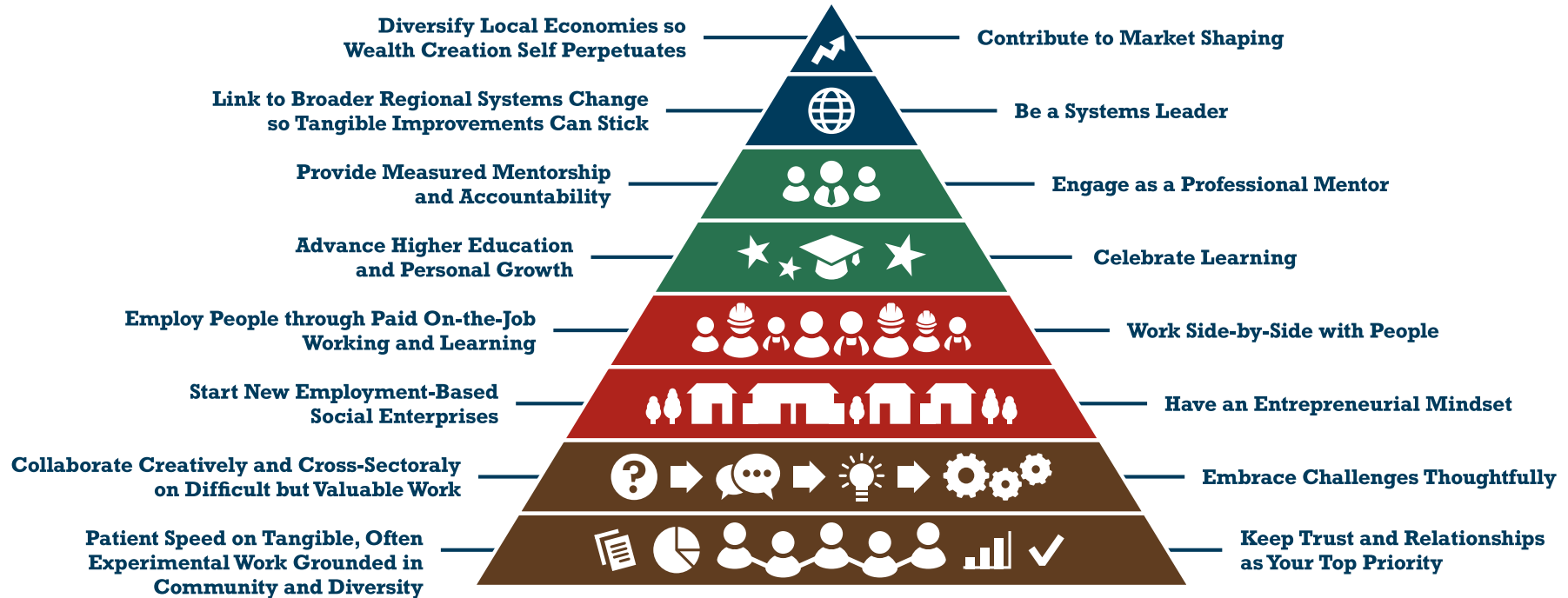


NOTE

It is best to read these from the bottom up. These elements of our Theory of Change build upon one another. Traditionally, human development is smaller-scale, one-person-at-a-time work. Traditionally, educational development is top-down larger-scale. Both are needed and should more tightly align and coordinate. They represent what we believe will really change things for the better.

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY OF CHANGE FOR TRANSFORMATION

TEAM PRINCIPLES TO ADVANCE THE STRATEGIES



A black and white photograph of a man with a shaved head, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt, leaning over a large tray of small seedlings in a nursery. He is looking down at the plants with a focused expression. The background is a solid dark blue.

**We have supported
and grown 72 new
businesses.**

(Impact Statistic as of January 2024.)

Photo courtesy of Stand Together.

STRATEGIC PLAN INTRODUCTION

A LETTER FROM CEO JACOB HANNAH

Howdy! My name is Jacob Israel Hannah and I am very excited to introduce myself as the next CEO of Coalfield Development! Serving Coalfield alongside Brandon for the last half decade as our Chief Conservation Officer has been an incredibly rewarding experience for me; and I am incredibly honored to enter into this next chapter together through this innovative succession model Brandon and the Coalfield Board has designed. Coalfield is a truly transformational organization that is reviving Appalachia as we know it, and our vision for 2024 is our brightest one yet! And I am fully committed to Coalfield and Appalachia to champion and advance the four core capabilities of our mission to their fullest potential:

- **Designing and Scaling New Programs in Emerging Sustainable Sectors.** I truly believe that Coalfield's programs are the laboratories of innovation, and I want to continue to deeply explore new program potential. Since my time at Coalfield, I have started or led the development of multiple new and innovative programs around renewable energy, reuse and upcycling, deconstruction, and brownfield and mineland remediation. I will continue to explore new horizons for Appalachia while also leaning deep into supporting the innovative sectors that we have currently incubated.
- **Incubating and Investing in Well-Paying Employment Social Enterprises.** I am so excited for what the under-tapped potential of the social enterprise landscape has for Appalachia, and will maximize Coalfield's unique position to go deep in this sector – especially as it pertains to maturing programs for renewable energy and the environment. I will continue to leverage catalytic funding and initiatives that directly support social enterprises in our region, and will have hands-on involvement on enterprise incubation.
- **Facilitating Personal, Professional, and Academic Growth for People Facing Barriers to Employment.** This piece hits closest to heart for me. I know that feeling in my stomach when I saw my dad open his last paycheck in the mail from the coal mines; or to lose a family member to opioid addiction. I've known the importance of community when I've lost everything to wildfire, how just a room with a bed can be the game-changing structure needed to study for a GED while working 70 hour weeks. These life experiences that I carry with me are interwoven everyday into my management style and will be the sources of empathy that I will draw on as I oversee the development and mentorship of our on-the-job trainees and crew members.
- **Advancing, Completing, and/or Managing Community Based Revitalization Projects.** As a serial home flipper of dilapidated houses in West Virginia, I understand the multi-faceted complexity that these projects demand, and I am committed to position Coalfield to truly embody a just transition for our communities. And I will lead and support our redevelopment initiatives to ensure that our built environments reflect the radiant hearts of our rural communities.

West Virginia is my home – my family has stewarded these mountains and hollers for 5 generations, 3 of which have worked mining coal – so I understand the challenges our people are saddled with for navigating what a just transition looks like. I carry a deep and holy passion for West Virginia and her people – it has given me a sort of sacred endurance and energy beyond my understanding to write that all-nighter grant, or rally practitioners to join our cause, or sit long hours in the hospital with a trainee when they don't have family to be there with them. I am blessed to have such a deep and trusting relationship with Brandon as my friend, mentor, and role model for this transition, and through the structure of his co-leadership role as Executive President for Coalfield, I am excited for this opportunity to continue that work alongside him, our team, and our communities for the wisdom sharing and brainstorming that will be generated for this role together!



Jacob Israel Hannah
Chief Executive Officer
Coalfield Development



We have played a key role in attracting over \$160 million in new investment to the region.

(Impact Statistic as of January 2024.)



STRATEGIC GOAL SUMMARY

Top 10	2023 Metrics Achieved	2024 Projected Metrics
1	At least a \$35 million economic impact on our region	\$50 million economic impact
2	Revitalized more than 45,000 square feet of formerly dilapidated property	Revitalize an additional 50,000 square feet of formerly dilapidated property
3	Engaged over 4,000 community members	Engage over 6,000 community members
4	Trained over 500 people	Train 750 people
5	Over 80% of participants earned wage increases	Over 90% of participants will earn a wage increase
6	Offset our carbon footprint by 38%	Offset our carbon footprint by 50%
7	Diverted over 1 million pounds of materials from landfills	Divert 1.5 million pounds of material from landfills
8	Supported over 20 new social enterprises	Support over 30 new social enterprises
9	Over 61 million media views	75 million media views
10	Sub-grants and capacity building with more than 10 community partners throughout the region as we continue scaling and replicating our model	Sub-grants and capacity building with more than 15 community partners throughout the region as we continue scaling and replicating our model




Our greatest resource is our people. As we continue to create the conditions for socially, environmentally, and financially thriving economies, we aim to unlock people's full potential, power, and purpose. With this vision realized, we can set the foundation for a stronger, more resilient Appalachia with a triple bottom line of People, Planet, and Profit.

LOGIC MODEL

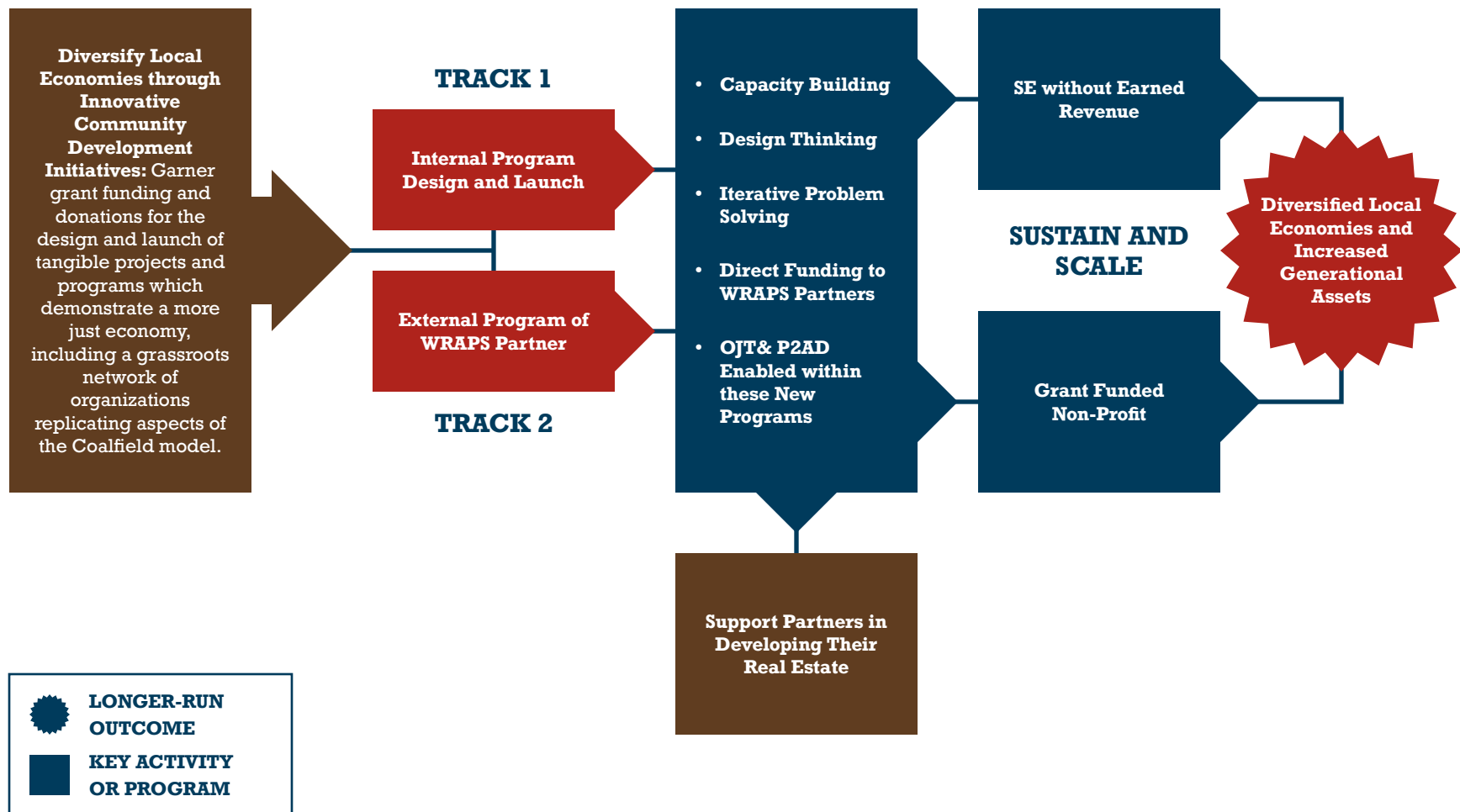
Core Capability	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Deeper Impacts
<p>Designing and Scaling New Programs in Emerging Sustainable Sectors</p> <p>That model very tangibly demonstrates what a better economy looks like and creates the conditions for...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of staff • 20% of budget • Program and sector research • Creative program design • Risk of failure • Collaboration at grassroots • Networks • Grant seeking • Grant management • Communications strategies and systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch new programs • Program evaluation • Sector shaping • “Lead from behind” through networks • Negotiate formal partnerships • Run experiments • Public relations and social media “storytelling” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New examples of viable community and economic development • Deep data informing decision making • Robust networks of “doers” • Fresh “R and D” • New mental models introduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveraged investment into region • New approaches scaled and replicated • Local capacity for programming increases • Publications • Viewers and readers • Policy changes • Changed community narratives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing sustainable sectors • Economic diversification • Changed employer practices • New sustainable technologies outpace old unsustainable technologies • Better systems • Improved community psychology
<p>Incubating and Investing in Well-Paying Employment Social Enterprises</p> <p>Which diversify the local economy, build new wealth, and most importantly employ unemployed people and holistically cultivate opportunity for these employees through...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of Coalfield’s staff • Coalfield brand • Risk of ownership • Public/private partnerships • Market research/ scans for new business ideas • Jointly developed business plans in partnership with social entrepreneurs/TA network • SEED Fund/actual funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in new enterprises • Attract additional investment to enterprises • Strategy/structure design • Budget approvals • Operational support to social enterprises (decision making and problem solving – degree of which depends on ownership level) • Marketing and sales • Agree on mission/ margin hiring split 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New businesses begun • New permanent positions created for people facing barriers - Social enterprise concepts evaluated - Hours of day-to-day support for those started - New credentials earned by leader/ staff of enterprise - \$ invested in social enterprises - New sales channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of growing businesses (75% “success” rate for original new businesses) • # of combined permanent, “staff”(could be “graduates-see below”) - Total revenue - Average ROI - \$ amount Leveraged investment - Combined carbon reduction - New innovations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing new sectors/ markets; economic diversification • Significant wealth creation/asset building • Entrepreneurial culture changes from “get a job” to “live out a passion.” • Wages increase 30% for employees (both Coalfield and non), and ownership opportunities in the businesses are seized by employees
			# recruited # hired # retained past 30 days		

LOGIC MODEL

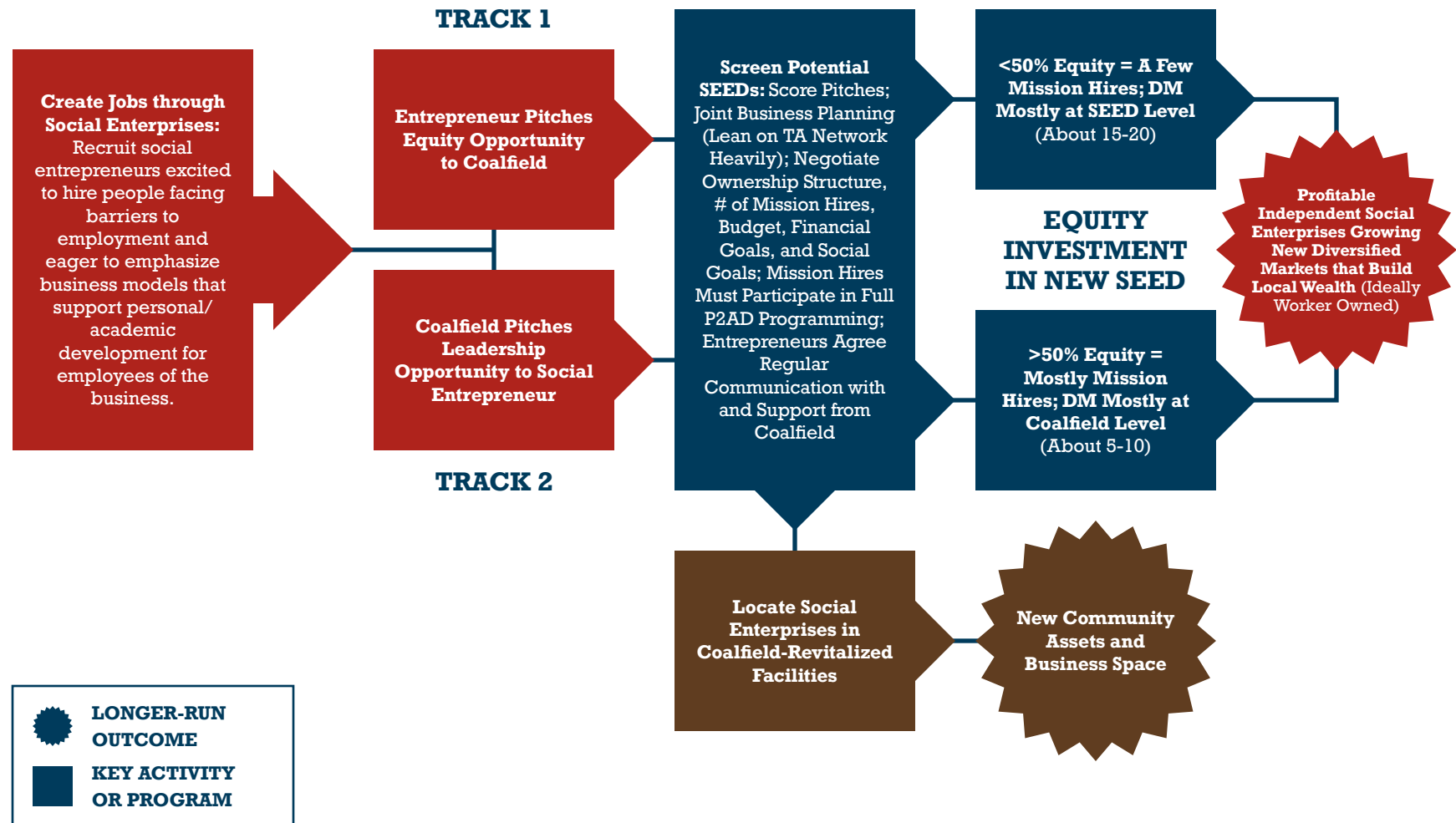
(CONTINUED...)

Core Capability	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Deeper Impacts
<p>Facilitating Personal, Professional, and Academic Growth for People Facing Barriers to Employment</p> <p>Who do work in or on places being revitalized through collaborative community development (we could be a partner, a developer, or even an owner of the site, depending on the community's vision)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% of Coalfield's staff 50% of org. budget Journals/curriculum Develop milestones CTC agreements Recruit from community partners Risk of employer Local non-profit WRAPS execution partners On-the-job training and apprenticeships Employer Network (Chambers of Commerce) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WRAPS  33-6-3 Evaluation/reflection Crew Councils Week 3 experiences Unique scheduling Access to aggregated support networks Employment search support CFPB \$ literacy/open savings accounts/get insurance Academic counseling Social media community of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program participants transitionally employed - # of WRAPS "Trainees" (6 months) - # of 33-6-3 "Crew Members" (1-3 yr.) - Hours of work experience gained by the individual - Hours of mentorship - Certificates earned - Life-plans created by participants: improved well-being, family asset, and academic goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of "Graduates," meaning 6 months and 4 certs (80% retention) # of "Champions" meaning Associates Degree and 1-3 yrs. Exp. (75% retention) # of good jobs gained combined between grads and champs (100%) Milestones achieved Well-being surveys improve 50%, family asset increases, degrees earned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of self confidence and agency renewed Optimism for region improved Labor participation rate increases by 2% per county served Poverty decreases equaling 3% in each county served <p>(will provide community-wide research/surveys to ascertain)</p>
<p>Advancing, Completing, and/or Managing Community Based Revitalization Projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% of Coalfield's staff 25% of org. budget Site control of Project Pipeline GC license Risk of developer Risk of property owner Local project partnerships Carpenters Union agreement <p>(P2AD outcomes for Revitalize crew are above)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing mixed-use/mixed-income projects in high need areas Predevelopment process Financing process (mix of grant and loans) Construction (put crew members to work through these projects) Asset Management Community engagement/design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # crew member positions created through projects Square feet redeveloped - Space and Support for __ new businesses - Units of affordable housing developed - Citizen hours volunteered on projects - KW/clean energy - # of new re-use sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New business investments attracted for business tenants % occupancy for owned properties - % crime reductions - \$ million in leveraged investment - % of tenants engage Personal Dev. (see above) - Tenant energy bills down - Conserve __ million MJs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better community morale Community vacancy rates decline by 25% Better Community sense of future Community sense of agency improves New business activity, storefront investments increase County Section 8 waiting lists decline by 20%

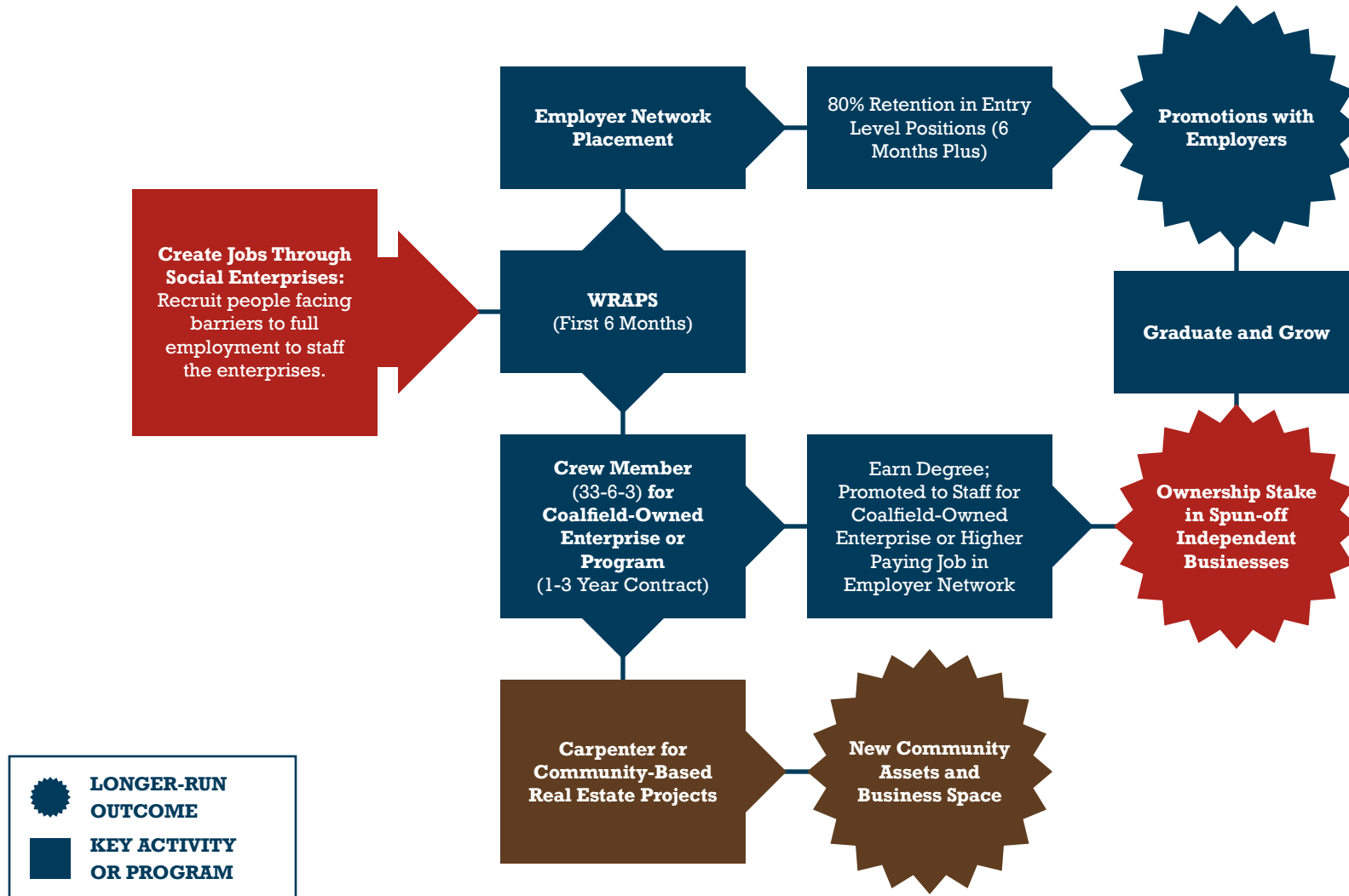
DESIGNING AND SCALING NEW PROGRAMS IN EMERGING SUSTAINABLE SECTORS



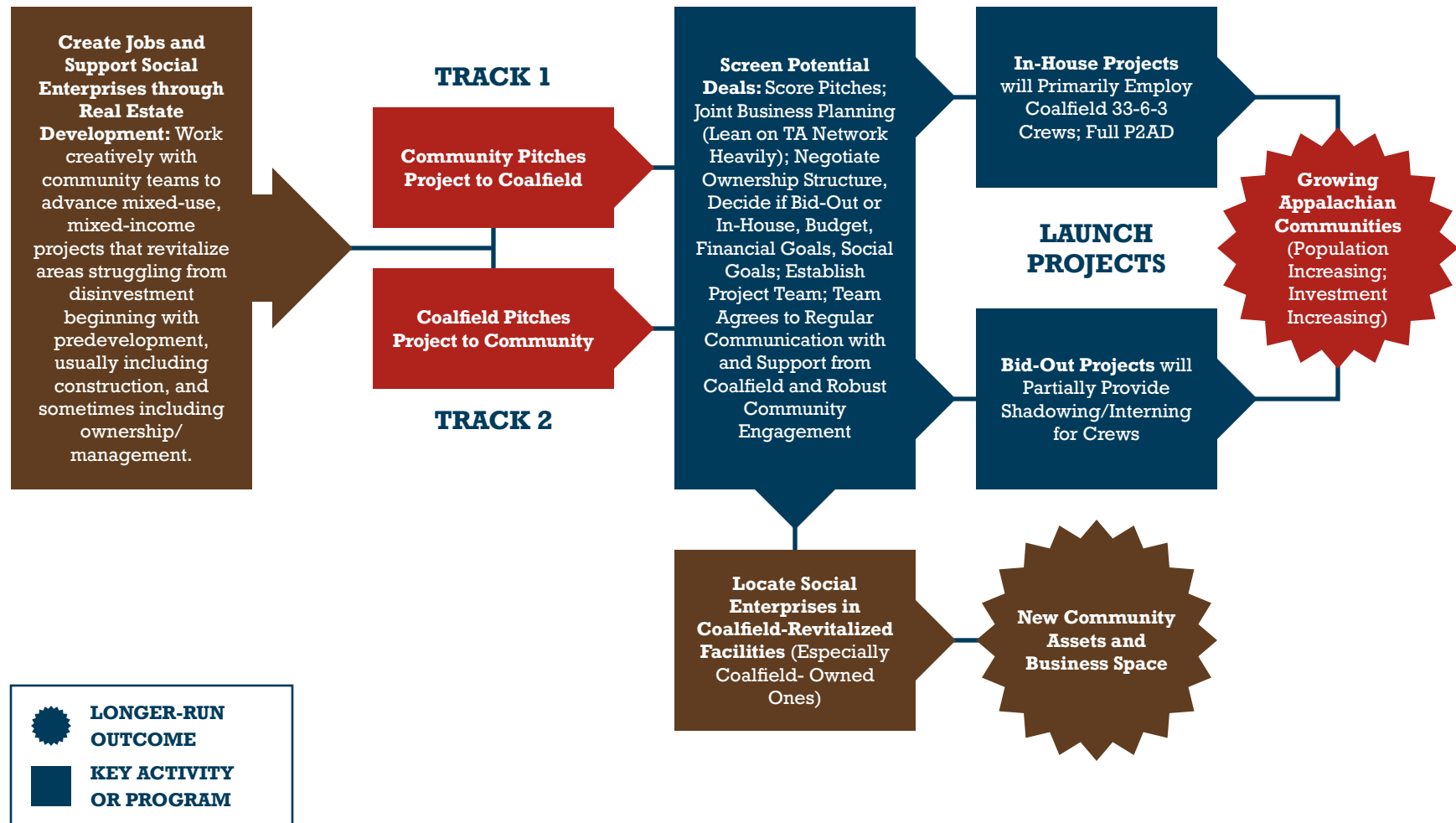
INCUBATING AND INVESTING IN WELL-PAYING EMPLOYMENT SOCIAL ENTERPRISES



FACILITATING PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH FOR PEOPLE FACING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT



ADVANCING, COMPLETING, AND/OR MANAGING COMMUNITY BASED REVITALIZATION PROJECTS

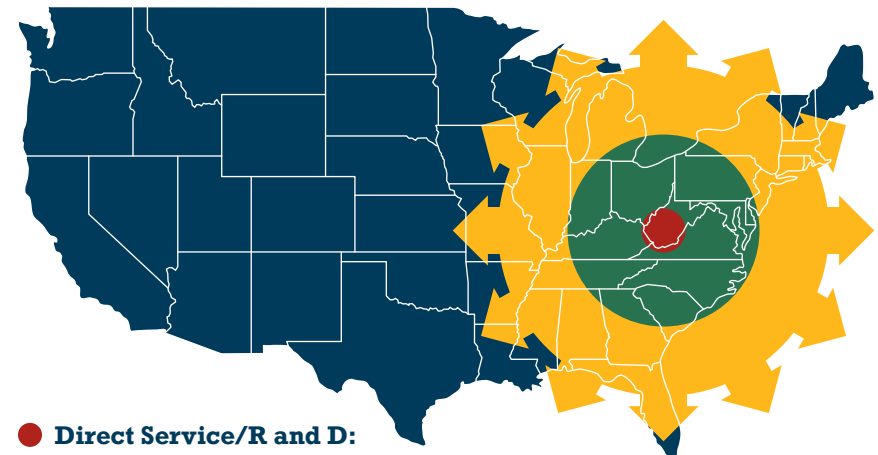


THE SIZE OF OUR INTERVENTION

If, because of our work, rural communities are seeing a shift to new economic sectors and support systems with a triple bottom line, then how can other rural communities take the “R and D” we’ve done and apply it to their own community? How can other communities learn from our models and then tangibly create new social enterprises, human development, and real-estate renewal in their own local context? How can we creatively, collaboratively, and effectively provide resources (financial, time, energy, knowledge, research, etc.) that empower local communities in developing their unique owned solutions? WRAPS and SEEDS are two answers. Another answer is more broadly disseminating our model through knowledge sharing and investment.

If we’re tangibly demonstrating what a new economy is here in West Virginia, how do we know when we’ve reached an inflection point, to know we’ve achieved our piece of building that new economy? We’ll know when we’ve directly implemented our capabilities in each of the southern West Virginia counties included in the Alliance for the Economic Development of Southern West Virginia (coordinated by Marshall University). There are 21 counties in this service area, and we want to be directly active in each of them over the next five years (we’re currently active in eight).

If we’re sharing the models directly implemented in southern West Virginia with other Appalachian communities to replicate in their own places and in their own unique ways, then how do we know we’ll have hit an inflection point regionwide? We’ll know when at least one element of our model has been replicated in at least 50% of the 60 “distressed counties” in the central Appalachian region as defined by U.S. Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). We project this happening over the next 2-10 years.



● **Direct Service/R and D:**
Every southern WV
county: 1-5 years

● **Replication:** 50% of
all ARC “distressed”
central Appalachian
counties: 2-10 years

● **Dissemination/Commercial
Adoption:** Other extraction
communities in the U.S. and
around the world: 2-20 years

Aside from directly investing and programming, we can also scale through dissemination of our unique insights through our ecosystem of community organizations and social enterprises. If we're creating a commercial "app" or "platform" for other extraction communities around the world to use in developing their local solutions, how will we know we've hit an inflection point with that commercial dissemination of our knowledge "product"? We'll know when our product has been purchased and utilized in at least half of the World Bank's designated "transition" communities over the next 2-20 years.

In summary, we are theorizing the way in which our granular, "in-the-trenches" work in southern West Virginia can steadily spread to affect an even larger change on an even larger scale in other places facing similar challenges because so many of the pressing challenges of our time are global in nature. Covid-19 surely taught us this. Climate change keeps reminding us daily. Our planet is wrestling with how to mitigate climate change and become more resilient in the face of its effects. Ecologically, this cannot be done without Appalachian forests. Economically, this cannot be done without a just transition for fossil fuel workers. Politically, this cannot be done without rural buy-in. Psychologically, this cannot be done without tangible, viable options for people to turn toward (rather than just imploring fossil fuel communities to turn away from traditional approaches). This all culminates with a clear Theory of Scale and Impact.



ACTION, CONDITIONS, AND IMPACT

If (Action)	And (Certain Conditions)	Then (Intended Impact)
We launch (or directly invest in) triple-bottom-line businesses in extractive, mono-economy communities	Good quality training is available (or can be created) through these businesses and their employees	We will see an increase in demand for employees with a variety of skillsets relevant to emerging sustainable economic sectors
We see an increase in demand for employees with a variety of sustainable skillsets relevant to emerging sustainable economic sectors	Well-paying businesses (including the ones we start) seek to hire locally amongst a newly trained workforce	We will see an increase in employment for local workers and overall labor force participation
We see an increase in employment for local workers	Employers provide well paid, career jobs; new sustainable sectors are gaining traction	We will see increased incomes and decreased population loss in communities that we serve directly
We see increased incomes and decreased population loss in communities that we serve directly	Other communities are interested in replicating that success	We can learn very tangibly how a truly diversified and sustainable economy can become possible
We can learn very tangibly how a truly diversified and sustainable economy can become possible	There are organizations/enterprises in other southern WV communities we can partner with who know local needs and opportunities	We build tools to directly serve each of the counties in the Alliance for the Economic Development of Southern West Virginia
We build tools to directly serve each of the counties in the Alliance for the Economic Development of Southern West Virginia	Capacity exists or can be actively co-developed in ARC distressed counties (ideally as part of broader networks and communities of practice)	We can expand Coalfield's model through investment, tools, and technical assistance through other distressed counties regionwide
We can expand Coalfield's model through tools and technical assistance to the distressed counties in central Appalachia	Other coal regions across the country and even the planet are interested in replicating that success	We can expand Coalfield's model through tools and technical assistance to other coal extractive-economy areas (see JTF and World Bank partnerships)
We can expand Coalfield's model through tools and technical assistance to other coal extractive-economy areas (see JTF and World Bank partnerships)	Key sustainable sectors of the new economy are more prominent and investable than old, traditional, extractive industries	We can build resilient rural communities with socially, environmentally, and financially thriving economies which create the community conditions for all kinds of people to unlock their full potential, power, and purpose.

SECTORS AND PROGRAMS



In addition to not being able to directly serve all people in Appalachia who could benefit from our model, we also are not able to innovate in all sectors of the economy. As a team, we've been thinking hard about which sectors make sense for us to lead on and shape, and which sectors make sense for other actors to lead on. Perhaps a helpful caveat is the fact that choosing not to play a leading, shaping role in a certain sector does not automatically mean complete engagement from that sector. But collaborative involvement in a certain sector versus playing a leading, shaping role are two plays of very different sizes. Humbly, we must admit we just can't make big plays in all the sectors and pretend to remain effective. Two good questions to frame this discussion are:

1. What work have we done that's had a bigger impact than expected?

2. What work have we done that hasn't had as big an impact as we expected?

The success in the solar industry of Solar Holler and Rewire Appalachia was a huge surprise to anyone who knows anything about "green" efforts here in the heart of the Appalachian coalfields. We learned here that we don't have to completely own and control all the social enterprises that are needed in the region. In fact, it's usually ideal that we don't. We can't be experts in every single business of every single sustainable sector in the region. Because we were willing to share risk and prove tangible experiments very early in its development, we ended up playing a crucial "market shaping" role for the solar sector. What we have learned from risk and experimentation has proved important. Solar Holler has gone on to have a far greater impact than some other enterprises we incubated and operated ourselves. Several of our service-based concepts (such as the coffee shop) did not have as big an impact as anticipated.

Other criteria for sectors we choose to shape include:

- **Alignment with our Vision and Values (primary)**
- **Alignment with our existing Expertise and Experience**
- **Triple bottom line opportunities (especially environmental since that's so central to our vision for resilient communities)**
- **Viability, given the challenges and opportunities of this particular region**
- **Timing, given community and market conditions**
- **Comparative advantage analysis (is there another group better positioned than us?)**



Given these learnings and mental models, the following sectors make the most sense for us as of 2024:



Real Estate



Light Manufacturing



Agriculture



Re-Use and Recycling



Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency



Sustainable Mine Land Reclamation



Tourism and Hospitality: We plan on significant investments in the near future in the Tourism and Hospitality space. This is consistently the fastest growing sector in southern West Virginia and aligns with our largest SEED investment: HighWall, an eco-tourism lodging site on a former mountaintop removal site near the Hatfield-McCoy ATV trail system.

SPECIFIC GOALS

Having clarified our theory of change, our approach, and the sectors we wish to shape, we now establish our specific goals. In recent years, the triple bottom line has emerged as the crucial standard for our business decisions. The team has unanimously said it wants to do more on the environmental front. And our organization has found a unique voice in the national and international climate change discussion (significant progress in shifting from a fossil-fuel based economy to a renewable economy is not really possible without ensuring a good economic future for old fossil-fuel communities). The ACT Now Coalition is tremendous tangible evidence. There are many goals that must be achieved in order for our organization to realize its vision, so a more complete goal-setting section is further down. But it's important we all get clear and agree on just a few "North Star" goals which can easily be conveyed to external partners and which our entire team can rally around and push towards.

There are 21 counties in the Alliance for the Economic Development of Southern West Virginia. When we remove the two most urban counties (Cabell and Kanawha) and shift our focus to the most rural counties, the average population is roughly 28,000 people (see chart below). With a labor force participation rate of approximately 39%, compared to 62% nationally. This means there are 6,225 people on average who are left out of the workforce in each county. Some of those people should be out of the workforce because they're a child, they're elderly, or they're severely disabled. However, many could be in the workforce if the local economy were better. Remember, the unemployment rate only measures the percentage of the workers who

are unemployed but are actively trying to find new employment. Once a person gives up on finding new employment, they exit the labor force and become part of this haunting statistic. The national average labor force participation rate is roughly 62%, meaning we are over 20% below the national average.

In order to attain parity with the national average, we need to **increase labor participation by 6,225 people per Appalachian county** to get from 11,000 people active in the workforce to 16,000. That would mean to serve 100% of this target population, we (and our partners) need to **create and fill 118,267 new jobs in southern West Virginia**. Crucially, our values dictate that our focus be on the creation of good quality jobs which pay well, offer benefits, and value the well-being of employees (especially those facing barriers). While we cannot create all the jobs that need created, an element of what makes our organization special is the fact we are a direct job creator. By running paid training programs and by launching well-paying Employment Social Enterprises (ESE's) we are, in fact, a significant job creator in many of the hills and hollows we serve. And in being a direct job-creator, we can model to other employers how best to care for and support employees with significant barriers. Our models are paid; we do not expect low-income participants to forego wages or put their career on hold to undergo costly training. We start building assets right away, from the very moment a person is oriented.

How each community gets to that approximately 6,225 new labor participants number will differ. Deeper community engagement and planning will be needed

(primarily through strategic and local partners more so than by our staff) to develop realistic plans to hit the target.

Such plans would or could include in-migration, traditional entrepreneurship, existing business expansion, social entrepreneurship, remote-workers, business recruitment, public sector employment, private sector employment, etc. Coalfield Development will only play a small direct role in each county's equation, but we can play an out-sized indirect role by modeling new approaches, influencing strategy, and leveraging new investment. We can be the tip of the spear for a new emerging economy.

There are 78 distressed counties in the region, according to the Appalachian Regional Commission. 10 of these are in southern West Virginia and would be covered by our direct service strategy. That leaves 68 distressed counties outside of our direct service strategy. If we were to invest, support, and train (less direct service, more replication and dissemination) in half of these, that would mean reaching 34 additional counties outside the Alliance counties. Since population averages are similar to southern West Virginia, we could then assume **an additional 211,650 jobs are needed regionwide for our mission to be truly accomplished.**

Between our direct service strategy and our broader systems change in Appalachia, alone, there are 329,917 new jobs that need to be created before we can say our work is done.

One thing to note is many existing employers in the region (including nearly all the companies in our employer network) are reporting they have available positions but struggle finding workers to fill them. Sometimes these jobs don't pay well enough. Sometimes these jobs are too far away. And sometimes these jobs require advanced training which is expensive to obtain. But the most likely barriers to available jobs relate to what we call the "human" elements: transportation, child care, healthcare, trauma, recovery, justice-system involvement, etc. Workforce development is usually regarded as a technical problem regarding technical-skills training.

But technical training is only half of the equation. Deep human supports (personal, professional, academic, etc.) are needed if we were even going to bring potential workers off the sidelines and back in the workforce game. Potential workers need broad and deep mental, emotional, and social support. They need flexibility. They need guidance navigating complex systems. This is the work of our Human Development Team and we're increasingly sharing that work throughout our employer network. Doing so will help get to 118,267 new jobs filled.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Counties	County Population (Total)	County Poverty Rate	National Poverty Rate	County Labor Participation Rate	County Labor Participation Rate (Percent)	National Average Labor Participation Rate (2022-12-02)	Hard Number Needed to Close Labor Gap
Wayne	38,498	22.30%	12.80%	15,520	40.30%	62.10%	8,393
Boone	21,312	24.30%		7,180	33.70%		2,039
Clay	7,892	27.10%		3,000	38.00%		1,902
Fayette	39,927	20.00%		16,280	40.80%		8,505
Greenbrier	32,608	17.90%		15,600	47.80%		4,663
Lincoln	20,126	25.10%		7,030	35.00%		5,454
Mingo	23,005	28.70%		6,080	26.40%		8,213
Monroe	12,332	16.40%		6,270	50.80%		1,394
Nicholas	24,300	18.30%		9,150	37.70%		5,929
Pocahontas	7,841	16.70%		4,300	55.00%		557
Logan	31,909	23.30%		10,980	34.40%		8,839
Mason	25,157	17.50%		10,080	40.10%		5,535
McDowell	18,363	33.30%		4,290	23.40%		7,107
Mercer	59,097	19.80%		20,960	35.50%		15,720
Putnam	57,260	9.20%		26,920	47.00%		8,646
Raleigh	73,771	24.90%		30,770	41.70%		15,049
Summers	11,908	22.90%		4,580	38.50%		2,810
Webster	8,249	28.00%		3,320	40.20%		1,807
Wyoming	21,051	21.70%		7,360	35.00%		5,705
Average	28,137	21.97%	12.80%	11,035	39.02%	62.10%	6,225
Total	534,606	N/A	N/A	209,670	N/A	N/A	118,267

Data provided by WorkForce WV and the U.S. Census Bureau.



BEFORE



AFTER

We have successfully revitalized more than 260K Sq. Ft. of formerly abandoned property.

(Impact Statistic as of January 2024.)

CRUCIAL NORTH STAR GOALS



Labor Participation Rate Increases

5% by 2030 in
Communities Served



Poverty Rate Decreases

2% by 2030 in
Communities Served



Population Rate Increases

2% by 2030 in
Communities Served



Carbon Offset

25% by 2030 in
Communities Served

Appendix A reveals the more detailed, nuanced, and very specific metrics against which our team will be measuring itself in the years to come. Ultimately, all those specific metrics should add up to achieve the North Star Goals.

EXECUTIVE TEAM SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT	Internal		External	
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More money than ever • Strong culture • Low turnover • Mission clarity • Good Strategic plan • Perspective of each team member is truly valued • Deep willingness to do this • Connecting as people • Integrating new learning • Laughter • Continuously integrating changes in the region • Tenacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective integration (pausing when needed) • Expanding team • Continued refinement of the model • Union relationship going well • New succession plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New funder relationships • ACT Now; BBBRC win • Immutable theory of change and approach (remains highly relevant) which community members and stakeholders genuinely connect with • Learning/integrating • Opportunity to share what we've learned with others (get better at documenting this) • CAN (Central Appalachian Network) leadership roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Virginia's unique political position • Emphasis on place-based policies • Continued implementation of Biden Administration's "just transition" policies • TA providers (Autodesk, BDO, ACT Now consultants, etc) • Accelerating shift to clean energy (IRA, BIL etc.)
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important but non-urgent work suffers • Where will they work when they graduate!? • Mid-range planning is unclear on individual roles (BBB, etc... Who does what?) • Growing pains for onboarding on our current systems/capacity (how do we ensure that all new people know our values?) • Communication strategy • Defining the gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal reporting and analysis • Technology • Alumni network • Gear shifting between phases of BBB are tiring and confusing (sub-award vs. reporting) • Nutrition at our work sites • Diversity at leadership level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception among funders of "founder syndrome" • Absentee land ownership • State agency relationships • We're complex and confusing to people • Several partners trying to do same thing at same time (but not always even aware) • Lack of mental health supports • Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare • Nutrition • Appalachia is still not well understood by most funders • Dept. of Ed adding regulations that hurt our CTC relationships • SUD situation still not under control • Supply chains and inflation! (and, now, interest rates)

EXECUTIVE TEAM SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT	Internal		External	
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program improvements (with new team members) • Clarifying RREs, DMR's • Action Teams • Endowment becoming more possible • Employer network is activating • NICRA is within reach • Procurement coalition could be helpful • Expose our trainees to new cultures/ideas • Curriculum "App" project (replication doesn't have to be expansion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cross-enterprise/ cross-program training, sharing, learning, working etc. • Desire for more community service within personal development • Potential for leveraging our model in support of democracy and citizenship • Deeper, better DEI learning and equitable staffing (especially at leadership level) • Add diverse board members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers and organizations need TA on HR and grant management • New partnerships • Bigger voice than ever • More coalition building • Opioid settlement money • IRA • Bigger employers coming and wanting to engage/plus backfilling • Deeper and expanded community engagement • Building relationships in new counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing policy discussions (multiple congressional testimonies and national news pieces) • Contributing to research/ partnering with universities • Expanded partnership with unions • New WRAPS partners • Bigger and better community trainings • Continuation of genuine relationships with majority-minority organizations
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More scrutiny; "we're under a microscope" • Culture change • ACT Now could be its own organization • Old partners feeling we've forgotten them • Voluminous requests for sub-grants and sponsorships: "Hey, Coalfield has money for that" • Staying relatable with mission hires and community members • Internal OM affecting different parts of the organization differently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still not as financially self-sustaining as we'd like to be • Feedback loops and problem solving will slow down as we grow • Succession plan is approved by board; actual process is always a "tricky" moment for organizations, especially with founder • Burnout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different Congress • Potential for different federal administration in 2024 (less funding for sure) • Drowning in bureaucracy with federal grants rules and regulations • So many want to partner with us...which opportunities do we take and which do we turn down? • Funders think we're flush with cash..."Surely Coalfield has enough money now" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued polarization and politicization (finding and keeping our voice/caught between worlds...what connects locally does not connect nationally and vice versa) • Misinformation divides and confuses folks • Extremism is growing • Potential gentrification of Appalachia

CONCLUSION

Coalfield is in an incredible season of growth as we look towards 2024, much of this is thanks to our diverse teams, capabilities, and partners. Each of these aspects are like twine – they have grown longer and reach further than ever before! This growth is during a time of transition as well, so the strength of each “twine” is important to our organization. It is key to note that growth does not always equal strength; so as each team’s twine grows in length and reach in Appalachia, what makes them stronger isn’t tying them around a CEO, or growing them longer (although those help), it’s braiding them together. Identifying intentional opportunities for our work to interweave and compliment the holistic approach of community revitalize is paramount – and it’s already been a part of our strategy through initiatives like the ACT Now Coalition. This has historically been an external approach through partner and stakeholder collaboration; now, I am leading our organization to **BRAID** our collective work together and manifest an intentional ecosystem of impact within and throughout Coalfield Development:

B - Boldly

R - Reach out

A - And

I - Intertwine our

D - Diversity

**BOLDLY REACH OUT
AND INTERTWINE
OUR DIVERSITY.**

A NEW APPALACHIAN ECONOMY IS POSSIBLE

A LETTER FROM OUTGOING CEO BRANDON DENNISON

2023 was a successful year for Coalfield Development. ACT Now is fully launched. We created more than 100 new jobs in one year. We trained over 500 additional community members. And we advanced more revitalization construction projects than ever before. Our scale of impact continues to grow.

Of course, the big news was my transition out of the CEO role and into the Executive President role. I am extremely excited for the new era beginning under Jacob's leadership. Jacob is the right person at the right time for this organization and for this region. He is wise. He is visionary. He is resourceful. He is committed. Jacob has my full confidence, and I look forward to supporting him every way I can.

This is, of course, a big change. However, keep in mind the fact that I will be a formal, compensated, leadership presence at Coalfield Development for many more years to come. Effective January 1, the Board has approved my appointment as Executive President of the organization. While Jacob will be the day-to-day decision maker, I will continue supporting vision, strategy, and fundraising. I will also remain the Regional Economic Competitiveness Officer of the ACT Now Coalition.

Coalfield Development is in my soul, and I will continue giving it my very best efforts, even if the



focus of those efforts shifts during this transition. My new responsibilities at Marshall University very much align with Coalfield's vision and mission. Both organizations are strategically aligned around a vision for a new Appalachian economy, as a formal articulation agreement has cemented.

While I founded Coalfield Development, and while I care deeply about its work, I have always viewed this amazing organization as much bigger than me. In fact, if people only associate Coalfield Development with me, then I would have failed as the kind of servant leader I aspire to be. Our strong team has established good systems and strong collaboration making this transition not just a challenge needing mitigated but an opportunity to increase the resilience of the organization.

Thank you for your support of this amazing organization. If you are reading this, you are part of the community we're cultivating, a community where opportunity is abundant for all kinds of people. While all the work we do is important, my heart always settles on the trainees and crew members enrolled in our on-the-job training program. They are an incredible inspiration. They prove a new Appalachian economy is possible. Thank you to each trainee and crew member for your gumption, grit, and grace. Here's to 2024!



"The transition is a signal that Coalfield Development is strong and ready. Since I have been here, there have been so many chapters to our story and some yet untold. We are excited and grateful to Brandon and proud of where he is going and where he has been. We are especially proud of the vision he has carved out over the past nearly 14 years. Coalfield is in a strong position with the strongest board we have ever had. The board is very much excited to work even closer with Marshall University."

– **Kenzie New Walker**, Board President



"Brandon's new position at Marshall will help us build and find new strengths in the organization that will impact our whole mission for this region. I strongly believe Brandon's new role at Marshall University makes sense for Brandon and Coalfield Development. And more importantly, it makes sense to the region we are serving."

– **Ric MacDowell**, Board Treasurer

APPENDIX A

Much of our strategic planning focuses on numeric metrics and outcomes we expect to achieve. Numbers are important, but numbers do not tell the whole story. In many ways, qualitative stories better illustrate the depth and breadth of impact achieved here at Coalfield Development. This impact is achieved at the individual level when new opportunities are cultivated and the entire trajectory of lives change for our trainees and crew members. This impact is also achieved at the community-wide level when new enterprises are launched or new facilities are constructed thus converting liabilities into assets and transforming what's possible for a local economy. In order to capture these deeper impacts, we tasked our team-of-teams with writing prompts designed to illicit the true value of the work we do.



WRITING ACTIVITY: FORT STAR HIGH



He could feel the drumbeats deep in his chest as his emotions stirred. Along Main Street, people laughed and talked while straining on tiptoe to see around the bend as the drums got louder and the double roll-off sounded. When the first notes of his Alma Mater's fight song reached him, he was chanting along with the crowd.

"Stand with the Red Knights of Fort Star High!

Listen close and you'll hear our cry!

Fight! Fight! Fight to win!

Stand with us; we won't give in!

We are the Red Knights of Fort Star High!

We never stop when it's do or die!"

Hundreds of voices thundered the words, and the feeling of pride and unity was nearly overwhelming. It wasn't under the Friday night lights of long ago, and the band marching up the street was aging alumni dressed in bits of uniform salvaged after school consolidation happened in the 90's, but the excitement was there! The feeling of a community brought together to face a common foe was back! And standing as a backdrop to this parade was not the dilapidated ruins of their once proud high school, but the building itself, solid and renewed. His grandkids might have settled into

the new school just fine (did they even have a fight song?) but like most of the community, he was a Red Knight. And maybe it took them a while to gain traction, but they hadn't given in. They fought. And today proved it.

The parade led the crowds to gather on the sloping green lawn of the school as dignitaries sorted themselves behind the thick red and black ribbons across the doors. "Today is a day of nostalgia and also new beginnings," began the mayor. "Many of us never dreamed we would be entering these halls again, and many of you will be walking them for the first time..."

As the speech continued, his mind wandered, remembering. His buddy, Coach, was the first to tell him something was up with the old school.

"Yeah, a group from Wayne says they're gonna start workin' on it. Says they're gonna hire local folks, too. Coalfield Development. Heard of them?"

He hadn't. But no doubt they were just like the rest. Big promises, a little hope, and then nothing. Seemed to him that since he and his wife retired in 2015 to take care of their grandkids, the town had hit rock bottom. Between the mines shutting down, that flood in 2018, and worst of all, the addiction that had taken the life of his daughter and so many in the community, sheer hopelessness had made him bitter. Driving past the old high school every day, watching the graffiti appear as the windows shattered and the roof fell in echoed the mood of the town.

Coach seemed undaunted. "I'll give them a chance. If they're going to hire locals to do the construction, train them and everything, I'm all for it. Maybe they'd take on that grandson of yours. Much longer and he'll find something to do, and chances are it won't be good."

Coach was right about Tyler. He was a good kid, but dang, if he didn't get into something positive, he was going to get into the same things that took his mom. And his brother and sister were coming on right behind him. With a sigh, he agreed that he'd show up to the first community meeting. What was there to lose?

He kept waiting for the "gotcha," but it never came. Sydney had been with Coalfield for a couple of years and knew her stuff. She was part of their Revitalize Appalachia team that focused on community real estate development. She did not talk down to them, she didn't have that, "Let me tell you what you need" attitude that made everyone feel powerless. At first, she and the rest of the Coalfield team had listened. Just listened. Asked them questions and listened some more. Where did people go to celebrate? Who did people rely on the most? What brought joy? What was missing? Who else needed to be at the table? She listened as they told her the story of their hometown in the hopes that she would fully understand that this once proud building wasn't just a project but represented their hope for community renewal.

In addition to losing their high school nearly 20 years earlier, the town had lost its senior center and community center during the flood, and the land they had been on was sold. The library had morphed into the new community center – sort of – but it was so small and terribly underfunded. The high school’s large lawn was a gathering place in good weather, and Camelot Days was an annual homecoming celebration the town still looked forward to. Covered in tents and tarps, the former home of the Red Knights turned swiftly into a makeshift command and control center during the flood, and people got used to showing up there for food and clothing drives.

Revitalize’s team of architects and engineers, planners and program staff started bringing maps and blueprints to the meetings to capture emerging visions for the old building. There was enough room there for some much-needed housing, senior services, and community meeting space. Coalfield committed to building a job training center where the old gymnasium was; taking advantage of nearby classrooms that would be brought back to life. Maybe most exciting, though, was that the old school’s theater was going to be preserved for the community to use for all sorts of events.

And who was hired to do the work? Tyler. And six others from right there in the community...including Coach! With a background in building, Coach was hired as a Revitalize Crew Chief, and was teaching Tyler and the rest of the crew how to tear down and build back. Coalfield provided the wages, the materials, and the technical oversight. The Crew worked Coalfield’s 33-6-3 schedule: 33 hours of paid on-the-job training, six hours of class time working towards their associate degrees, and 3 hours of personal development each week. Word on the street was that the project was going to expand, and a second crew would be hired come spring.

And through the months, people started to remember their town with pride while unpacking their grief. The decision to consolidate wasn’t theirs, but how do you “fight fight fight to win” against a decreasing population and tight budgets? Did they fail their kids, or was sending them to a new school with modern amenities for the best? They didn’t have all the answers, but as construction continued, and new gleaming windows replaced broken shards, he realized that he was losing the bitter edge he’d been holding to. Tyler was thriving and he was so proud of him. And now the community was working to save the old town hall, but could they create enough good jobs to bring people back home? He hoped so, and feeling hope again felt good. The original group still met regularly, working through frustrating slowdowns, while celebrating milestones. And Coalfield was always there too. Still listening. Still working. He was jostled out of his memories by his wife as Coach, Tyler, and the rest of the crew were recognized for their work and contributions. Coach was pink to the tips of his ears with a smile not seen since the Red Knights had been crowned state champs back when hope was common, and pride was easy. They basked in this feeling knowing that it was not limited to their own small community but could be felt throughout many communities in Southern WV, where similar Coalfield projects had flourished.

“With that,” said the mayor, slicing through the ribbons, “may I welcome all into the halls of the Fort Star Community Hub!”

He caught Coach’s eye, and they mouthed the words together.

“We are the Red Knights of Fort Star High! We never stop when it’s do or die!”



WRITING ACTIVITY: HIGHWALL



Growth. It is hard to notice in the milliseconds of life. You often look back and see a trail of small triumphs that have led you to this place. What a gift it would be to feel it in the moment. To not let the critical melodies that swirl within my mind dictate the joy I could have at any time, that I wished to indulge in. The question I asked would have shifted from “How did I get stuck on this mountain?” to “How could I fall deeper into her beauty?”

Highwall was my calling card. It was a unique project located right in the middle of the billion-dollar coal fields, Mingo County, WV. It was an old, strip-mined site patiently waiting not to be forgotten. The plan was to restore the soil from a whole bunch of rocks, weeds, and the ole faithful Autumn Olive trees. Sounds crazy, but I was enough crazy to see it was for me. I started at Highwall three years ago. Three years seems like a hundred when your luck has run out the door. I was a mess. My family wasn’t surprised. They knew the roots of my past that ran so deep. How could a boy from the hills make it? I remember the summer nights when we ate only what we could grow or hunt. Raising yourself is difficult. I didn’t have a map to follow, so every route relied on a guess. There wasn’t a lot of hope of getting to where I needed to get by just relying on luck. I made a couple of wrong guesses that led me to

disorder. Then I found myself at Highwall. Everything can be overwhelming when you first start something new. This was no exception. The hardest part is trusting those that say they want to help. It is just not something you are used to. But that’s what I got, help. A person’s biggest barrier can be admitting they have them in the first place. It is weird having your boss ask how your college classes are going, ya know? But I grew used to it. It soon became a treasure. I’m getting ahead of myself. Let’s go back a bit. A fond memory was seeing Highwall for the first time. A memory that I can feel deeply. I remember feeling like I knew this place. Like I grew up with it. It was mined several years back, now left to just move on, hoping to find some luck it didn’t really have. A place can feel strange when you don’t see

any green grass, hear birds chirping, or feel any sign of life. It was like looking into a Picasso painting. Overgrowth as the result of neglecting the elephant in the room - chaos. I saw so many bare rocks. How could anything come of that?

We started to move animals on this land. We would give them a fresh paddock every day. It felt ignorant at first, something I wasn't used to – order. It was like the land was just waiting for something or someone to put her back in place. I started to feel that happen in my own life. I dared to dream that things could be different. So, as I helped put order into Highwall with moving hay where it needed to be or preparing a fresh piece of grassy hill that a cow needed to graze on, I started to make the decision to be present with my family, learn about making a budget, and taking my wife on a date. The unfamiliar feelings of these activities started to melt away and become safe, like an old friend.

I know seeing grass grow may not be the most exciting news, but to a guy needing to find some hope, it was like hearing Johnny Cash for the first time. Those bare rock places turned into green pastures filled with life underneath. Then the food came. I remember trying to carry a pumpkin that I swore felt heavier than me. They told me we couldn't grow 1 pound of food on this land, and I laughed at that over 3,000 times. A laugh for every pound. we grew. The birds decided to come back, and along with them were the bees, butterflies, foxes, and the many colors that used to call this place home.

It always hits you at once, the change I mean. You get in the habit of not celebrating the moments of growth when you're in it. It is easier to notice the water boiling than the slow rise of temperature before. They say slow and steady wins the race. At Highwall, slow and steady makes you realize that you don't have to feel like you're in a race. You can breathe and enjoy the walk. As Highwall grows, I grow. I am a part of Her, and she is a part of me.

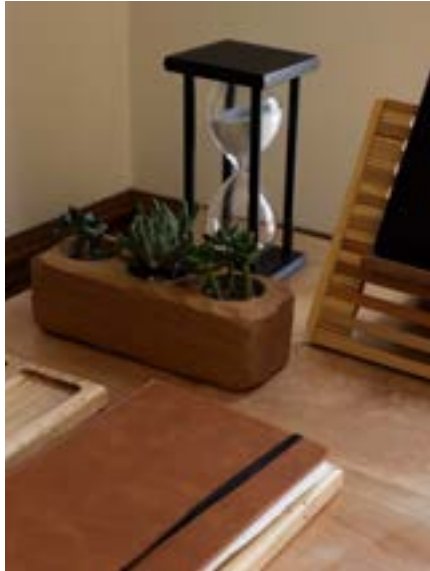
Growth. Every day. Every moment. It could be better than the last and I am starting to see it.

Signed,

A son of Appalachia



WRITING ACTIVITY: MOUNTAIN MINDFUL



At a converted warehouse in the trendy part of town, old-fashioned glass and metal mailboxes stood in contrast to the row of electric cars and bikes just across the parking lot. Like the building itself, Cathy had liked the boxes' solid form and the subtle reminder of the area's industrial past the first time she saw them. And although usually filled with junk mail and bills, she had quickly developed the habit of stopping by her box on her way in from work. This evening she was somewhat surprised to find the usual papers sharing the space with a large puffy envelope. Grabbing her package and shoving the annoying flyers straight into the recycling bin, Cathy headed to the elevator, glad to be home after long day. Her unit was on the fourth floor, which gave her a good view of the city. Once inside, kicking off her shoes as she went, Cathy headed for the kitchen, package in hand.

"Where's Rollie? Where's my buddy?" Rollie was where Rollie always was when dinner was late: sitting by his dish with a rather disapproving look. "I'm sorrrry!" she explained to her sullen cat as she dished out his kibble. "I didn't know I'd be working late again today." Rollie's forgiveness was tied closely to the speed at which his food hit the dish and he was back to good-natured purring by the time she had constructed her own dinner.

Since she and Rollie had moved to Boulder, she'd been working long days and loved her job, but was also developing a longing for home that she felt she and Rollie shared. Sometimes she'd find him just sitting in the window staring at the bright city skyline framed against the soaring mountains; their jagged peaks very different from the ones familiar to her having grown up in Pittsburgh. Of course, her lack of furnishings might also have something to do with his choice of seating. She had left most of her old furnishings behind and planned to curate only things she loved for her new abode.

"Look buddy," it's from Mom! The familiar handwriting on the envelope was as comforting as her grilled cheese and tomato bisque had been. Wiping the last of the butter from her fingers, she opened the package.

Hi Sweetie,

I was on Facebook the other day (don't judge, it's how I keep up with your Aunt Janice) and saw an ad for this really cool company called Mountain Mindful. It's based in West Virginia, and they have some of the neatest tee-shirt designs! I saw this one and knew you had to

have it since we had just been talking about how much you miss home. It's 100% recycled, which I know you like, too. They also have a lot of products made from reclaimed wood that would look great in your condo. It's all very cozy and natural, and it'd be like having a little piece of home! Also, every purchase supports a person who needs an opportunity – You've always been about making a difference, and this seems like a win win win.

Google them.

I hope you love your shirt!

Miss you,

Mom

Three weeks later Cathy looked around her home – cozy and comfortable - and smiled. She loved everything Mountain Mindful sold and was happy with her choices. Rollie was lounging on the corner of her new standing desk, and candles graced the elegant reclaimed wooden tables that had history embedded in their very being. Like the building she called home, Mountain Mindful products felt authentic, and she felt a satisfying connection knowing she played a role in helping the people who crafted them.

And she did, in fact, love her shirt. And owed her mom a thanks...

Hey Mom,

Just wanted to say hi, and to thank you again for the shirt. And I googled Mountain Mindful like you told me too. I can't wait for you to see my place when you come to visit. It could be the Mountain Mindful showroom. What they do is incredible! They are helping their community build a whole new economy that's sustainable, and you know how important that is to me. More than half their participants are people recovering from drug addiction. They genuinely seemed to love their job, helping model the products and tell their stories. This one young woman shared a design she had made. The design was inspired by her journey through recovery, which Mountain Mindful was supporting. The design built off the theme of butterflies and transformation. Beyond their jobs in the print shop, the trainees volunteer in their community. They were really finding their purpose. The participants even get the chance to earn a degree from the community college – as a teacher, I thought you'd like to know that.

This is not just a normal business. This group is making a real difference in people's lives and surrounding myself with their products has made me feel more at home – just what I needed!

All my love (and watch the mailbox... you will find a butterfly shirt in it soon!)

Cathy



WRITING ACTIVITY: REUSE AND DECON



Growing up in West Huntington, West Virginia, Toni has witnessed and heard stories about the ups and downs of her community, from the glory days of industry to the challenging times of transition. In the midst of it all, she found her inspiration in something unexpected - the power of reuse. Today, she is committed to staying and living in West Virginia and is a passionate advocate for the Reuse Corridor, a coalition of folks in Central Appalachia working to grow a market around reuse and circular economy.

For Toni, it all began when she joined a local community workshop on Earth Day hosted by the Reuse Corridor and Coalfield's Deconstruction Crew. After hearing the stories of the crew, like how they recently finished up deconstructing her local high school that she attended years ago, she was inspired by adaptive reuse- to turn a building that sat empty for years full of memories and possibilities into an asset for her community. There, at this workshop, she discovered the joy of upcycling and the powerful potential of adaptive reuse. Transforming discarded materials into beautiful, functional pieces ignited her creativity and sparked a newfound sense of purpose.

She started with small projects, using reclaimed wood from the Deconstruction Crew to craft unique furniture and decor. Soon, word spread about her work, and she began collaborating with other artisans and makers in the Reuse Corridor. Her involvement and background in inventory management led to her joining Coalfield Development's Reuse team, where she manages materials, oversees creative reuse activities, and works with the Deconstruction crews to market and sell their reclaimed wood and architectural salvage. Together, they find innovative ways to give new life to old materials.

For Toni, the magic of reuse extends beyond creativity. It's about revitalizing her community. She saw how her work and the work of others were breathing fresh life into old and discarded materials, abandoned buildings and vacant lots. They were turning liabilities into community spaces, repurposing old factories into workshops, making products out of plastic and wood, and creating job opportunities for local residents.

Toni also became involved in the educational programs organized with the Reuse Corridor. She taught workshops on upcycling to local youth, inspiring them to see waste as an opportunity. Together, they transformed discarded items into art, showcasing the beauty of reuse.

As she continued her journey with the Reuse program, Toni found a profound sense of fulfillment in knowing that her efforts were contributing to a more sustainable Appalachia, one where waste is minimized and valued beyond its traditional life cycle. She realized that they were not just making products and diverting waste from landfill; they were rewriting the narrative of their region.

In the heart of Appalachia, Toni and her fellow stakeholders found inspiration in the transformative power of reuse. They were proof that by embracing and working creatively toward zero waste systems, they could shape a brighter, more sustainable future for generations to come.

To Toni, the Reuse Corridor is not just a network; it is a movement. It is a community of like-minded individuals, businesses, and organizations all working toward a common goal - to cultivate and grow a Circular economy in Appalachia where waste is minimized and community, sustainability, and creativity thrive.



WRITING ACTIVITY: CREW MEMBER VIGNETTE



These journal entries are based largely on the experiences of one of our OJT employees, with their permission. Although not their actual words, these entries are a fair representation of what it is like to go through both the Workforce Readiness and Professional Success Trainee Program and the 33/6/3 Crew Member Program.

4/19/21

I am very excited about my first day at Coalfield Development! I admit it is a bit intimidating. I don't want to let anyone down—especially myself. I am excited about being able to learn new skills and still get paid \$11 an hour, which is surprisingly good for around here. Having that consistent income will help me get things straightened out.

4/21/21

Most of this first week is onboarding, but we will finally get to meet the crew we will be working with tomorrow. They took us to buy work boots, based on what kind of crew we're on. I even got to choose which pair. One of the other trainees in this onboarding class said that she couldn't believe how they "treat us like people!" She is

in recovery, too, and I know what she means. Once you've been stuck in the madness of addiction, it is rare to be treated with respect. But I think they are serious here about helping us overcome all sorts of barriers to employment, even the ones we've created ourselves.

One of the things we did as part of onboarding was to set goals for 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, 5 years, and 10 years from now. We each filled out a Strengths and Needs survey. We got to sit down and talk about it to make sense of it with someone from the Human Development Team. It was awkward at first, but I got a chance to pick milestones to focus on, and also think about things I'm good at. This is the first time I've even thought about what strengths I have and say them out loud. I'm almost done with my recovery program, so my first milestones are to get my driver's license and start saving money for a place to live. It feels good to be planning my future.

Here are my milestones:

- **1 month: Get my driver's license. Start saving 10% of my paycheck.**
- **3 months: Graduate my sober living program and have a down payment for a place to live.**

- **6 months:** Have my own place and be a WRAPS graduate.
- **1 year:** Have my own car and be working, maybe as a crew member here.
- **2 years:** Be in college with a good paying steady job; continue to build savings.
- **5 years:** Have a degree or certification; be able to take family vacations and buy things that we want instead of only having enough for what we need. No more barely getting by!
- **10 years:** Own my home and be working in a real career of my choice.

5/19/2021

This first month as a trainee has flown by! With my first Coalfield paycheck, I've been able to put 10% of it (\$72) into a savings account. I'm hoping to do this every payday. My Resource Navigation Coach helped me learn how to find resources (I did not realize how much support was out there), so I will be able to rent my own place when I graduate from my sober living recovery program in a couple of months. I'm starting to make friends in my crew and others. One girl that I'm friends with became a Green Hat which is like a peer leader and I'm hopeful that I can earn that one day. We had the first of a series of trainings yesterday and I am now trained to use a forklift! I think next month is mental health first aid, I'm really curious to know how they'll relate mental health to work. I've been able to pay off DMV fines with the WRAPS support funds and used a Coalfield vehicle to take the driving test. I'm now licensed for the first time in years!

7/19/2021

I'm halfway through the WRAPS program and feeling a little bit of stress. What's next for me? I'd like to become a crew member, but I know that's not a guarantee. I'm especially worried about the higher education requirement, because of my previous school experience (which did NOT go well). I've been talking with the Human Development Team about my options, so I'm going to work with a partner organization to see what I can do to be prepared for college and hopefully get my student loans out of default. We are also running a background check so I can practice what to say to potential employers about my past.

I graduated from the sober living program! I'm ready to stand strong and stay clean. I'm taking it one day at a time. I don't want to lose the momentum of moving in the right direction and staying sober, and this journaling helps me think through my next steps.

My girlfriend and I are hopeful that her daughter will be able to come live with us now that we are both in recovery

and doing well. I have enough saved to make a downpayment, so I used milestone time yesterday to tour an apartment. CPS told us everything that was needed to start having visitation, and this is the third one we've seen that isn't going to work. This one looked nice, but because of my safety training at work, I saw signs of mold. We will keep looking, and I'm sure we will find something. We are also on the wait list for the apartments that Coalfield manages nearby, and that might end up being the best option. While it's kind of scary, I'm excited to be standing on my own.

10/19/2021

I am a WRAPS Graduate! I can't believe how fast time has flown by and how much more stable my life has become. Holding the certificates that I worked so hard to earn made everything seem more real. It is a good feeling to be satisfied and confident in myself. I've accepted Coalfield's offer to become a crew member. In my current crew I've had the opportunity to learn basic transferable skills and was exposed to a couple of different types of trades. I found that I really enjoy building things and luckily there is an opening on the construction crew.

I applied and have been accepted to Mountwest Community and Technical College, and I'll be starting classes in January. I originally thought I would pursue a Veterinary Technician degree, but the job prospects didn't align with my goals. The Associate's Technical Studies degree will be better for me, especially with the credit we get through on-the-job training with Coalfield. I don't qualify for financial aid right now, but Coalfield will pay my tuition until I can get my GPA back up. This is the first time going back to school has actually seemed possible to me. It's going to be a lot to juggle and will probably be overwhelming at times, but, looking back at all I have accomplished in just 6 months, I know I can do it.

4/19/2022

I've been a crew member for six months now. I'm still saving to purchase a car. I'd like to save enough to pay for a used car outright so that I have enough each month to pay for insurance. For now, I still use the bus that I catch just a couple of blocks from the apartment that I rent.

It's been an adjustment balancing multiple responsibilities. I'm trying to make attending local union meetings a priority to build up that professional network, while also staying on top of my classes and working at Coalfield along with being a house leader at the sober living program that I completed. I'm hopeful that being in the carpenter apprenticeship program opens doors for me later.

I had to learn a hard lesson recently about following policies and budgeting my time off. I had used all of my paid time off a little haphazardly, even though in the moment it seemed like good use of PTO. I had used it all and then ended up getting sick, even though I told my supervisor that I never get sick so didn't need to save days. Luckily, I got a second chance, but now I really can't use any more time or I'll lose my job!

4/19/2023

I've been able to move into a leadership role as a Green Hat. I love being able to take what I have learned at Coalfield to develop my leadership skills and mentor others. I have learned a lot about myself and how to best use my knowledge to teach others and help them learn.

I've also learned that I have to give grace to others. There have been some interpersonal dynamics on the crew that have taken some time to figure out. Also, there have been a couple of times that my crew chief needed to improve on a technical skill. Initially I got frustrated about these types of situations, but I've needed to really think about patience, and how to effectively communicate a concern and then work through the problem collaboratively.

I'm on the honor roll at Mountwest and have been asked to be a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. I've also begun volunteering with an organization that presented at Coalfield Council Day, of which I really connected with their mission. Most of the people that attend the meetings are retired folks, and it's been an enlightening experience.

12/8/2024

Today I'm being celebrated as a Coalfield Champion! I have a job lined up through the carpenter union and I only have 6 months left of the apprenticeship before becoming a journeyman.

4/19/2026

Work is steady and I've been told that with both my associate degree and my leadership experience, I could be selected to be a foreman of a project soon. We were able to regain custody of my girlfriend's daughter a year and a half ago and I feel like we've managed to budget for back-to-school clothes and holidays in a way that we didn't get buried in debt. In fact, we're able to take a family trip to Myrtle Beach this June.

4/19/2031

My large fenced-in backyard is perfect for the dogs that we foster. My love of animals and consideration of being a vet tech has come full circle in being able to care for animals through a local animal rescue organization that I'm a part of now. In fact, our house that we own is a nice walk to the local dog park and short commute to my office at a local contracting company.

I've been looking back at the first journal entry that I did with Coalfield Development back in April of 2021. The strides that I've been able to take still astound me.



WRITING ACTIVITY: RENEWABLE ENERGY



Narrative of a coal-impacted composite character and what Coalfield's renewable energy program means for them or how it will impact them.

Characters:

- **Coal miners, past and present. Identifying with coal as history and cultural identity amidst a shifting climate, society, and economy.**
- **Local nonprofits and governments seeking a renewable energy source for their buildings**
- **People facing barriers to employment seeking a career in renewable energy (e.g. solar training). Reaching for awareness of what renewable energy is and is not (dispel misconceptions).**
- **Communities and individuals facing higher electricity bills seeking a more affordable energy source**

Concepts to impart through the story:

- **Diversity of energy sources**
 - Moving beyond reliance on coal as a single solution
 - Five fingers on the hand: Gas, nuclear, oil, coal, renewable energy
- **Types of renewable energy**
 - Solar
 - Geothermal (Cody has a client who implemented solar and geothermal)
 - Hydro (good storage)

- **Role of politics in renewable energy**

- Reality: we need government support for renewable energy policies

- **Economic perspective**

- When energy prices go up, recession occurs
- Stability of energy prices supports a stable economy
- OPEC controls a high percentage (40%+) of the oil supply

- **Challenges in renewable energy**

- Storing the energy
- Energy consumption, residentially, is highest in the morning and evenings when we are not at work. However, there is more sunlight during the afternoon!

- **There are different ways to create energy, but only one energy source: electricity**

- **It is harder to create energy with renewables than it is to store and transmit**

Past:

- **Coal miners as history and culture**

Present:

- **Debunking misconceptions about what renewable energy is and is not**
- **Education: Creating skills and programs that unlock new opportunities**
- **Training and projects**

Future:

- **Better jobs, stronger climate**
- **More energy sources**
- **Sustaining and expansion of programs**
- **Our demand for energy will continue growing:**
 - Cell phones, computers
 - Electric vehicles and aircraft

In the heart of the Appalachian region, the coal miner stands as a symbol of strength, resilience, and the driving force behind America's power. For generations, coal mining has shaped the culture, history, and economy of the region. It was both a livelihood and an identity for the hardworking men and women who toiled deep below the earth's surface.

As the world began to shift towards a cleaner and more sustainable future, the coal miner found themselves at a crossroads. The changing climate and society demanded a departure from the reliance on coal as the sole energy source. It was time to embrace renewable energy and find a new path forward.

In this story, we meet Sarah, a coal miner who has lived through the decline of the industry firsthand. Sarah had always identified with coal as a symbol of her heritage and the backbone of her community. The shift towards renewable energy seemed like a threat to her way of life, but little did she know the transformative power it held.

After noticing the ever-changing landscape and the decline of the once bustling local economy, she decided to take a step back and do some research on the future of the energy economy. Growing up in Appalachia, Sarah discovered that misconceptions she had grown up with and had herself about renewable energy were still widespread and impacting her community's openness to the topic. Many believed that it was unreliable or too expensive. She realized the importance of debunking these myths and spreading awareness about the true potential of renewable energy.

Sarah also encountered individuals facing barriers to employment who were seeking a career in renewable energy. She witnessed the power of education and training programs that unlocked new opportunities for them. As more people embraced renewables, the demand for skilled workers grew, creating better jobs and a stronger economy.

Looking towards the future, Sarah envisioned a world with a diverse range of energy sources. She understood that relying on a single solution, like coal, was no longer sustainable. She has seen her own coal-dependent energy grid increase in costs exponentially over time and experienced more frequent blackouts and instability.

Through her curiosity, Sarah stumbled upon some information on a one-month solar training course being offered by Coalfield Development and decided to sign up. In this training she learned solar industry basics and standards, and solar panel installation. Not only was there detailed classroom learning but also plenty of hands-on training and job shadowing with local companies. During this course Sarah also learned about heavy equipment operation and gained personal professional development.

Following this training, Sarah found employment at a local solar installer and entered the workforce already armed with industry knowledge. She had now officially started her new and lucrative journey in the renewable energy sector. As Sarah embarked on her journey, she encountered local nonprofits and governments who were actively

seeking renewable energy sources for their buildings. They saw the potential to not only reduce their carbon footprint but also create new opportunities for the community and allow individuals and business to save money on their energy costs enabling them to reinvest into their futures. Ironically, as it seemed, the place that had been a champion for the nation's energy was now bearing the brunt of rate hikes from utility companies.

By bringing renewable energy to her community, Sarah carried forth the legacy of power created by the coal miners before her. But it was not the same. The energy was not new, but renewed. Sarah no longer toiled under the mountains for a treasure that could only be possessed by its destruction. It was not the “coal” that made Sarah a miner. It was the hard work, resilience, and bringing energy to the people around her that brought Sarah to the graces of her ancestors. She embraced the potential of renewable energy to create a better future for her community and the world. With each step, Sarah witnessed the growth of programs and the expansion of renewable energy initiatives.

The demand for energy continues to grow, fueled by the increasing electrification of commodities, transportation, utilities, and more. Sarah understood that the transition to renewable energy was not just about saving the planet; it was about building a better future for her and other coal-impacted communities.

And so, Sarah's journey symbolized the transformation of the coal miner's legacy. With renewed hope, she embraced the possibilities of renewable energy, knowing that it held the key to a better world - a world with cleaner air, sustainable jobs, and a brighter future for all.



WRITING ACTIVITY: REFRESH PLANNING



Fran Hampton had been hard at work when the fog rolled in, and now, looking up, was surprised she could no longer see across the valley. Stretching, she picked up her basket of freshly cut leaves and bark and loaded it and her tools on the back of the trusty ATV. Coming down the path from the woods she checked on the patch of ramps to make sure deer hadn't breached the fence, and saw the first fiddle-head ferns popping up through the litter of leaves. She appreciated the beauty of it all, but this was also her business, and what she was looking at was inventory. Annie was waiting for her, and together, moved and sorted the produce into the proper bins. The walk-in refrigerator was cooler than the air outside, but just barely.

Annie and Fran ran their 10-acre mountain farm with efficiency and were pleased to see their hard work paying off. Tinderhook Farms had been in her family for years and when she inherited it, had no desire to keep it in cattle and hay. It was a beautiful piece of land with good meadows and a healthy forest right on the edge. At first, becoming full-time farmers seemed like a pipe dream. Yeah, they sold some blackberries at the farmers market and Annie made wonderful jewel weed soap every summer, but they both kept their day jobs. The itch to be a farmer was strong, though. When she came across an ad for a workshop designed for "forest farmers"

she was excited. Farming the forest was exactly how she pictured what she and Annie were doing, but had never heard it called that before.

The workshop was hosted by Refresh Appalachia, a program of Coalfield Development. She had seen Refresh Appalachia stickers on produce at some local markets but hadn't realized the full extent of what they did until that workshop. And they did so much! Not only did they train people to farm, but they knew how to get their products to market and helped them with everything from branding to insurance. In the years since they had worked with Refresh, they had gotten to know the staff, and no longer felt alone; they could pick up the phone and call any number of folks for answers and advice.

Currently, the farmers Refresh worked with were fulfilling a regional demand for ramps, and the tasty ferns that were fetching \$50 per pound in Richmond. Having this early spring market had helped them increase revenue while the sugar snap peas and leafy greens were getting a good running start in their new high tunnel. These veggies would be headed to the county school system in a few weeks, and the revenue that those sales generated would help fund the planting of summer and fall crops. Working with the school system was amazing. Not only did Refresh tell them about

this opportunity but set them up for success by training them in safe food handling and even helped them access funding for the sinks and other equipment they needed. They knew that jumping into full-time farming could be risky, but they had gotten to know Alex at Refresh, and trusted he would walk them through the processes.

The best thing, though, was that Annie had been able to quit her job! With Refresh's help, they had expanded Tinderhook Farms' product line using the forest botanicals they'd found and were now propagating deliberately. Alex had introduced them to Jane at Appalachian Action who came and walked their land with them, talking about opportunities in honey, and maple syrup, and even how to lease a portion of their land to other farmers. They had loved this idea and were excited when they met James and Jenny. Just starting out, and with two young kids, James and Jenny lived nearby and were growing elderberries on their leased plot. The berries fetched a good price, and now they were selling growing stock to help others get started in this lucrative market. The four of them had recently attended an information session on a new USDA grant that could help take their businesses to the next level. The Refresh team had helped win this grant for the region, and now Tinderhook and other small farms had access to more funding and technical assistance than ever before. They were investing in their business, growing it, and making a real difference in their community.

Maybe soon, they'd *both* be full-time farmers and living their dream.

—

Refresh narrative prompt: Build a composite character of an Appalachian farmer and their experience with Refresh and the impact Refresh has had on them.

Farmer Fran raises a variety of specialty crops on a ten-acre farm with access to forest land. Before Refresh, they were farming without a go-to person to increase their bottom line and introduce them to new markets. Although Fran had access to some systems, in agriculture, opportunities are not always equitable. They knew that Refresh works to provide the resources needed for agricultural businesses and entrepreneurs to compete in modern markets. Refresh offered Fran the “keys” to unlocking new markets, cutting costs, and access to workshops that would offer Fran insight into other aspects of agriculture.

Some of the workshops Refresh offered Fran were Food Safety, Sustainable Farming Training, Marketing and Branding, Finance, and Value-Added Production. As an example, during one season, Fran grew too many tomatoes. To provide a solution to the excess, we provided Production Planning and Packaging workshops. As a result, Fran found more secure markets and increased their margins. This made Fran consider what other markets may be available to them.

Utilizing Refresh's Food Hub, Fran was able to explore the Farm to School market. Previously, Fran had wondered if it would be possible to break into the school market but was unsure of how to do so. They were able to contact the Food Hub who walked them through the process of selling their products to schools.



WRITING ACTIVITY: PROGRAM AND SECTOR



"We don't often get opportunities like this..."

Sylvia was folding and unfolding a slip of paper as she looked at the crowd. Her well-thought-out notes momentarily forgotten; she was speaking from the heart.

"...I'm from here. I know how bad things have been for our young people who just want to stay here and work. This funding – a one-point-five-million-dollar grant from the Department of Labor – gives us the chance to build people up so they will know the dignity of work. We will break the cycle of hopelessness. We CAN envision a future here and I'm so proud of our team that's made this possible."

She looked around the room and caught Ashley's eye. Ashley looked down at her slightly shaking hands clutched in her lap. Sylvia had asked her to speak about her experience at Unlimited Hope and she was ready...nervous, but ready. Sylvia's smile next landed on Tom and Joyce Beckham. Beckham's Construction had hired Ashley along with DeShawn, Davy, Lill, and Monica. Unlimited Hope's first cohort of trainees had been trained and placed with Beckham's Construction more than a year earlier, and all were thriving. Years ago, Tom and Joyce had moved back to Branchland to build their business and "do something meaningful," and boy, had they ever!

Susan Miller was also in the crowd and she and Sylvie shared a quick smile. How many phone calls, how many cups of coffee had she and Susan shared as they worked through what it meant to hire people with barriers to employment? The struggle to find the right balance between holding WRAPS Trainees accountable for their decisions, and extending opportunities for them to continue to learn and grow was real! They were all trying to navigate a future they all feared was beyond their reach.

Susan had been with her since she formed Unlimited Hope. With a wild idea born from feeling the frustrations of her declining community and a tenacity that sometimes defied reason, she had been building her nonprofit from the

ground up for a decade. When Coalfield Development approached her about a two-year WRAPS Partnership, she jumped at the chance. The partnership would fund Unlimited Hope to hire up to five WRAPS Trainees and also fund her organization to build their own capacity around fundraising; to provide the TA she needed to deeply help people like Ashley. She could build her board and finally upgrade their accounting system. But as importantly, she knew that Coalfield would help make introductions to funders and connect her with the executive directors of other WRAPS Partnership organizations across the nation. She needed that. The ability to talk with people who wake up facing the same stresses, to know there were people she could rely on as a sounding board for some of her more ambitious ideas...it would be a game changer.

Glancing down, Sylvia unfolded her tattered remarks.

“I want to thank everyone who has supported Unlimited Hope on our journey to build our workforce development program. From the Trainees who trusted us to help them become the people they wanted to be, to our local employers like Beckham’s Construction, to our funders who now includes the Department of Labor, and the new Branchland Community Fund. I’d also like to thank Coalfield Development for including us as a WRAPS Partner two years ago. The funding and support of the WRAPS network has meant the world to us.”

She looked up again and smiled at Roger. He smiled back, nodding. As the WRAPS Partner Coordinator, he knew the challenges that building a new program presented; knew what capacities had to be built for such a program to be sustainable. He’d been there every step of the way, and today, was as pleased as Sylvia herself.

“For those of you who don’t know, ‘WRAPS’ stands for ‘Workforce Readiness and Professional Success’”, she continued. “For the past couple years, Coalfield’s program funded our first WRAPS Training cohorts, and helped us connect with other nonprofits across the region. This support gave us the confidence to step into the workforce development space. Since then, we’ve been able to compete for this DOL grant, we’ve hired more staff, and this fall, I’m thrilled to announce we will be hiring and training double the number of people who need this opportunity. People like Ashley Jonson.”

This was Ashley’s cue and she rose and walked to the podium.

“Good morning,” she began, taking a deep breath. “I’m Ashley Jonson. Usually at this time of day I’m on a job site driving an excavator for Beckham’s Construction. But two years ago, I was homeless, struggling to stay sober, and not sure what to do next. I had been going to Unlimited Hope for meals now and then, and saw they were hiring. The sign said, ‘no experience necessary’ and thought yep...that’s me!”

“As a WRAPS Trainee, I was paid for working 33 hours a week. I started working in Unlimited Hope’s garden program. It was great! I never thought I would be anywhere long enough to see a seed I planted turn into a tomato. I also did three hours a week of personal development with Susan. She helped me connect with the services I needed to find housing. I got a bank account. We looked at my credit score – it was awful – and made a plan to start rebuilding it. It wasn’t all smooth. Staying in recovery is hard and I’m glad that Unlimited Hope gave me the chances I needed to learn and grow even after I messed up a couple of times. They held me accountable and taught me the tools I needed to set a path for myself and stick to it. I’m so thankful that I had a team of people to work with that were going through the same thing, too.”

“When I got the chance to learn how to drive an excavator, I jumped on it...like for real! This was part of the “professional development” component of WRAPS. Over five weeks, instead of working in the garden I learned the ends and outs of driving this machine and I loved it! It gave me the push I needed to get my driver’s license, too. And then I met Tom and Joyce. Coalfield had invested in their business through their SEED Fund since they wanted to create jobs, and hire ‘second chance’ people like me. The excavator training was their idea and helped Unlimited Hope set it up. Coalfield supported it, too, by finding the trainer and equipment. As soon as I graduated from my WRAPS program, they hired me and the other graduates. We’re now over across town working to prep a site for the new housing that’s going in.”

Ashley paused, and like Sylvia, put her notes aside.

“I made it sound easy just now, didn’t I? Like a straight line...it wasn’t”. She paused before continuing.

“There were days I wanted to quit. There still are days that I think about it, but then I look back at how far I’ve come. I love the life I’m building for myself and I’m proud of me. But it took Sylvia and Susan and Tom and Joyce and Roger being proud of me before I could see it myself. And I’m proud of Unlimited Hope. The team there grew along with me, and it wasn’t easy for them, either. But look where we are today...as people, as a community, we are healing, and rebuilding, learning and growing and I’m looking forward to seeing how far I can go.

**We have helped
create more than
800 new jobs.**

(Impact Statistic as of January 2024.)



Photo courtesy of Stand Together.

APPENDIX B

2023 ANNUAL RETREAT: STRATEGIC ISSUES

During our annual staff and board retreat in December 2023, we broke into teams exploring key strategic issues facing the organization. Each team proposed at least 15 various potential response to the issues, then voted on the top 2-4. These potential solutions are summarized below. Over the next year, organizational leadership will review these proposals in more detail and issue action plans with assigned action teams in order to move solutions forward.

CAPACITY FOR PARTNERS

Coalfield has partnerships ranging from the public sector to the private sector. Our goal is to help private sector partners, like from our employer network, develop the capacity to support people facing employment barriers. Our goal for the public sector is to work with other non-profits, including our WRAPS (Workforce Readiness and Professional Success) partners to build their capacity to do more workforce development initiatives for people facing employment barriers by securing funding to scale the size of their organization and their impact.

Proposed solutions:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Establish clear pathways for partner development/ packaged responses to financial and workforce development situations

a. Multi-modal/Multi-level approach

b. Assess, Teach, Do | 3. Non-profit focused accounting firm

a. Social impact

i. Job training

ii. Affordable loans for nonprofits |
| 2. Teach/connect partners to resources to regarding funding/fundraising/grant proposals (MU Grant writing center as one example) | 4. Resource sharing (tangible things like tools, equipment, etc.) |

EMPLOYER NETWORK

Coalfield Development has built a robust network of employers in our region that offer career pathways for our trainees. Our mission for 2024 is to build deeper relationships with our employers and also help them build capacity by adopting best-practices for hiring people with barriers to employment.

Proposed solutions:

- 1. Employer resource navigator**
 - a. Benefit bundling/issue solving
- 2. Connect employer and WRAPS partners**
- 3. Offer personal development services**
- 4. OJT specific to local employer needs**

CREW CHIEF SUPPORT

It has been said many times over that Crew Chiefs are the frontline heroes at Coalfield Development. They play a **vital** role in the personal and professional development of our Trainees and Crew Members; working with them every day to build their skills and overcome their barriers. This is naturally a difficult job that requires a lot of discipline and humanity, so in 2024 we are dedicated to finding more ways to support our Crew Chief's mental health and wellbeing.

Proposed solutions:

- 1. Processing groups**
- 2. Wellness programs**
- 3. Engage Crew Chiefs to directly hear what support they would like to have**
- 4. Offer more trauma-informed training on working with people facing barriers**

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

While the last couple of years has seen an unprecedented amount of federal funding flooding into our region, we know that the well will eventually run dry. Keeping that in mind, we are focused on identifying diverse funding sources that will help achieve the financial sustainability of an organization as large as Coalfield.

Proposed solutions:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Cashflow businesses | 3. Expand SEED Fund as a profit center |
| 2. Major gifts from donors | 4. Explore cost-cutting measures |

COORDINATION/COORDINATORS

Coordinators are often working across teams on projects that have an impact on the entire organization. Collaboration across teams is key, which is why in 2024 we are committed to lean in further to our Team of Teams philosophy to increase consistency and efficiency on these important projects Coordinators are often championing.

Proposed solutions:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Monthly coordinator meeting (celebration) | 3. Master list of resources |
| 2. Consistency across organization DMR's | 4. More autonomy/increased DMR's |

GROWTH/EXPANSION/REGIONAL ROLE

We know that Coalfield cannot change the landscape of our workforce alone. To achieve our mission and vision, we must grow our organization and our partnerships to directly or indirectly achieve the impact we aim to have, which is to rebuild the Appalachian economy from the ground up.

Proposed solutions:

- 1. Expansion through WRAPS and SEEDS**
- 2. Getting a grasp on the geographic scope (maybe we already have this?)**
- 3. Explore more ways to further involve ourselves/
connect with partnered towns/organizations/
communities**
- 4. More micro-credentials and PATH training through
partnerships with MU, CTC's, others...**

**We have helped divert and upcycle
more than 75 tons of landfill
destined resources.**

(Impact Statistic as of January 2024.)



APPENDIX C

The colors, fonts, and overall feel of our organization's visuals were intentionally selected to capture the grassroots, bottom-up philosophy of this creative organization. This design choice has largely succeeded in giving us an authentic and unique brand. However, we've struggled for years to really establish a true logo. We've tried hundreds of different concepts and had dozens of brainstorming sessions facilitated by multiple consultants only to come up empty handed; nothing ever seems to capture the breadth and complexity of our work while still honoring the bottom-up vibe that is still so true to us today. Gracefully, we admit that sometimes we are guilty of trying to do too many things at once here at Coalfield... and this has likely been true of our past attempts at creating logos as well. But today, I think we've finally got it! Much thanks to JJN Multimedia, a West Virginia company, for helping us get here.



Our logo has three triangles in it. These are deltas: the universal symbol of change. Their orientation illustrates how we at Coalfield Development go about embracing and shaping change. The brown on the bottom shows how we are rooted in the places we work. We are willing to get in the trenches with coalfield communities and do the hard, dirty work needed to claw out of poverty. The blue on top represents the big vision we have, the blue skies of a better reality on the horizon that we're not afraid to dream of. Both the patient grit needed on the ground and the bold vision necessary for inspiration are important to our work. But a long-time problem in Appalachia has been a disconnect between the two. A quote in the foreword from *The Stories of Breece DJ Pancake*, written by Breece's mentor James Alan McPherson, perfectly captures this disconnect.

"I did not understand the focus of his life until I had driven through his home state, along those winding mountain roads, where at every turn one looks down at houses nestled in hollows. In those hollows, near those houses, there are abandoned cars and stoves and refrigerators. Nothing is thrown away by people in that region; some use is found for even the smallest evidence of affluence. And eyes, in that region, are trained to look either up or down: from the hollows up toward the sky or from the encircling hills down into the hollows. Horizontal vision, in that area, is rare. The sky is circumscribed by insistent hillsides thrusting upward. It is an environment crafted by nature for the dreamer and for the resigned."

This is where the red delta in the middle of our logo comes in. Red is the color of boldness, action sparking, creativity, and activation. Interestingly, there is often friction between the big vision and the day-to-day realities of our work. It can feel like we've just taken on too much or we're moving too fast. But the friction is where innovation can iterate and we can stretch and grow.

In the near future, you will begin seeing undertones of green interwoven into the logo. The green represents sustainability and climate resilience; a major strategic focus for Coalfield that has been increasingly interconnected with all of our programs and enterprises. It also represents growth. All of us at Coalfield share a deep commitment to learning and growing together. This is especially well symbolized through our "Green Hat Program." Crew members showing great commitment and leadership potential earn a raise, as well as additional leadership responsibilities. They don a literal green hat to wear on the job site to remind them and their teammates of their commitment. When trainees first start out, they wear a brown hat. When they advance to Crew Member they earn a red hat. Our leadership team wears a blue hat.

Coalfield not only has the patience and grit to dig in and work hard at the grassroots (the brown delta). We not only have the gumption to inspire new horizons (the blue delta). We are an organization always in motion, driving tangible progress toward our vision of Appalachian places and people unlocking their full potential, power, and purpose. We make plans become reality – having that "horizontal vision". We take risks. We make things happen (the red delta). So many Appalachian people are burned out on meetings, planning documents, and press conferences. We are understandably skeptical of the newest trends in community development – new bottles, same old wine. But we can't become pessimists. We choose problem-solving over apathy – having the courage to do things differently. And our new logo captures such inspiration perfectly.

**Support us in rebuilding
the Appalachian economy
from the ground up.**



2923 PARK AVE. HUNTINGTON, WV 25704

COALFIELD-DEVELOPMENT.ORG