

December 19, 2018



This is the last newsletter of 2018. The next issue will be available on January 16. Happy New Year!

Welcome to the latest issue of **“Growing Stronger Economies in Our Nation’s Coal Communities.”** This curated bi-weekly newsletter is a joint resource from the [National Association of Counties \(NACo\)](#) and the [National Association of Development Organizations \(NADO\) Research Foundation](#). NACo and NADO are collaborating on a POWER technical assistance grant generously provided by the [U.S. Economic Development Administration’s Denver Regional Office](#). This newsletter provides a national perspective on diversification efforts in coal communities, resources and funding opportunities, and upcoming events and trainings to support your work in a variety of areas to improve economic development, infrastructure, and quality of life in your region. It is delivered every other Wednesday.

Content Wanted! Have a news story or event that you would like featured in our newsletter? Send an e-mail to Brett Schwartz at bschwartz@nado.org. We welcome your feedback on content and ideas and encourage you to share this newsletter with your colleagues and partners. Thanks for reading!

Economic Diversification News

- The Prosperity Fund is **supporting small businesses in four Alabama counties that have been impacted by the downturn in the coal mining industry**, reports *Business Alabama*. From the article: “[Managing Director Steven Puckett] and his team of 11 college interns travel the four-county area, searching for small businesses and entrepreneurs that they can help. They consult with them, offering their expertise and networking to help with most anything that might help a small business grow and add jobs... Services offered to businesses are free, thanks to \$1.2 million in funding from ARC and another \$1.2 million in matching funds being raised by Southern Research.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **New Mexico’s Navajo Technical University will develop a Center for Advanced Manufacturing after receiving \$3.5 million from the National Science Foundation**, reports the *Durango Herald*. From the article: “In September, NTU was also awarded a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce to build a Metrology and Materials Testing Center to help re-employ and train workers displaced in the energy sector, such as from the declining coal industry. The Navajo Nation contributed \$1.5 million in matching funds. As part of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing, the testing services will be offered to industry and other institutions and include a certified lab for student learning. It is estimated to generate \$15 million in private investment, and generate 500 high-tech, high-wage jobs.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Plans are underway for NCI, a Richmond-based solar installation company, **to build six solar installations in Southwest Virginia**, reports *WVTF*. From the article: “The Solar Workgroup of Southwest Virginia has been looking to bring solar power to the region since it was formed two years ago. Now, it’s first set of solar electric projects is on the table...NCI promised to hire local workers and offer training in solar installation. The Solar workgroup is a mix of people from local nonprofits, community and state agencies, universities, and just everyday interested citizens and businesses. The plan is to bring on a locally rooted solar industry to diversify the economy in far southwestern Virginia, which once relied almost entirely on coal mining.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- A guest post in *Forbes* shares **lessons learned from Colorado’s experience in retiring coal-fired power plants and four steps utilities can take to do so responsibly**. From the article: “By honestly assessing the cost of operating existing coal-fired generation, managing depreciation changes, refinancing regulatory assets, and reinvesting refinancing proceeds, utilities can benefit from fast-changing energy economics – not be defined by them.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- West Virginia’s Coalfield Development Corporation, in partnership with Unlimited Future Inc., has been awarded \$1 million as part of the Communities Thrive Challenge, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, reports the *Charleston Gazette-Mail*. From the article: “The **funding will be used to strengthen the two organizations’ programs and to help 100 other communities around the Tri-State region replicate the 33-3-6 model that Coalfield has developed**. That model features for participants 33 hours of paid labor, six hours of higher education class time, and three hours of life

skills mentorship per week. The model has proven successful as 100 percent of Coalfield crew members have found jobs upon graduation." Click [here](#) to read the article.

- **The Canadian coal town of Coronach is exploring options to remain viable in the future as the Canadian government moves to phase out coal by 2030**, reports *CTV News Regina*. From the article: ""We expect there will be a lot of population decline," said Catherine Mackay-Wilson, town administrator for Coronach. "The coal mine has about 150 employees and the plant is about 130, and with that is also all their families. So, we are predicting the possibility of up to 70 per cent of the people leaving Coronach"...Some people in the town of Coronach hope that the provincial government will convert the Poplar River Station into a carbon capture facility similar to Boundary Dam outside of Estevan. "Sask Power built this town into what it is and it's Sask Power's responsibility and the government's responsibility to maintain what we have if and when coal is no longer used here," MacKay-Wilson said." Click [here](#) to read the article.

Funding Opportunities and Resources

- [USDA Rural Development](#) is hosting a webinar on **Thursday, December 20 at 2 p.m. ET** that will provide a high-level **overview of the funding opportunity available under the [ReConnect Program](#)**. RD staff will discuss types of funding available, eligibility provisions, notice of proposed service area, and evaluation factors. To join the webinar, click [here](#). Additional webinars will be held in January.
- [HRSA/FORHP](#) has **announced a second round of the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program**. The purpose of the program is to support treatment for, and prevention of, substance use disorder – including opioid use disorder – in rural communities. In FY18, HRSA made 95 awards and in FY19, HRSA anticipates making approximately 120 awards. The current awardees can be found on the [HRSA website](#). Any domestic organization forming a consortium of four or more members in a rural community may be eligible to apply for funding. More information on eligibility and requirements can be found in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#). Applications are due on **January 15, 2019**, with a program start date of June 1, 2019. Please contact ruralopioidresponse@hrsa.gov with additional questions.
- The Environmental Protection Agency has **released application guidance for Fiscal Year 2019 brownfields grant funding**. Funding guidelines are available [here](#). Last year, the EPA awarded \$54.3 million for brownfields assessment and cleanup of a total of 144 communities across the county. For FY 2019, a total of \$50 million is expected to be awarded to more than 100 recipients. Participants can access the webinar [here](#). The deadline to submit proposals is **January 31, 2019**.
- The [National Endowment for the Arts](#) (NEA) is accepting applications **now through February 14, 2019** for its [Art Works grant program](#). **Projects may be large or small, existing or new, and may take place in any part of the nation's 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories**. NEA encourages applications for artistically excellent projects that address any of

the following activities: Honor the 2020 centennial of women's voting rights in the United States (aka the Women's Suffrage Centennial); Engage with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic or Latino organizations, or the Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian arts; Celebrate America's creativity and cultural heritage; invite a dialogue that fosters a mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all persons and groups; Enrich our humanity by broadening our understanding of ourselves as individuals and as a society. Matching grants generally will range from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.

- [EPA's Environmental Justice Small Grants \(EJSG\) Program](#) provides **funding directly to community-based organizations for projects that help residents of underserved communities understand and address local environmental and public health issues**. Projects should engage, educate, and empower communities to better understand local environmental and public health issues and develop strategies for addressing those issues, building consensus in the community, and setting community priorities. Applications are due **February 15, 2019**. Click [here](#) for more information.
- The [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) has **launched a new special initiative, Accelerating Promising Practices for Small Libraries (APP)**, and is accepting grant applications now through **February 25, 2019**. This funding opportunity is designed to strengthen the ability of small and rural libraries, archives, and related organizations to serve their communities. Award sizes range from \$10,000 to \$50,000. Click [here](#) to learn more and apply.
- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Office of Rural Development](#) has announced the [ReConnect program](#) which will **offer up to \$600 million nationwide in loans and grants to help build broadband infrastructure in rural America through a new pilot program**. The loans and grants will consist of \$200 million in grants, \$200 million in low-interest loans, and \$200 million in loan and grant combinations. Projects funded through this initiative must serve communities with fewer than 20,000 people that have no broadband service or where existing service is slower than 10 megabits per second (mbps) download and 1 mbps upload. To qualify, projects must increase access speeds to at least 25 mbps upload and 3 mbps download. Priority will be given to projects that propose to deliver higher-capacity connections to rural homes, businesses, and farms. The start of the application window will be announced in February 2019. Applications **must be received by April 29, 2019, for grant funding, by May 29, 2019, for combined loan and grant funding, and by June 28, 2019, for loan funding**. The USDA will host a series of webinars and in-person workshops to share information and answer questions about the program. The full list of public events will be made available soon on the [ReConnect Program resource portal](#)
- The [Treasury Department](#) and the [Internal Revenue Service](#) **have issued proposed regulations and other published guidance for the new Opportunity Zone tax incentive**. Opportunity Zones, created by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, were designed to spur investment in distressed communities throughout the country through tax benefits. Under a nomination process completed in June, 8,761 communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories were designated as qualified Opportunity Zones. Opportunity Zones retain their designation for 10 years. Click [here](#) to learn more.

- The [Federal Reserve](#) is currently conducting its [Small Business Credit Survey](#). Please **reach out to small businesses in your region and encourage them to participate** by **December 21, 2018**. The survey will take approximately nine minutes and includes questions about business conditions, financing needs, and credit experiences. Summary results will be shared with participants, and all responses are confidential. The survey will provide critical information that service providers, policymakers, and lenders use to improve programs for small business owners. Click [here](#) for the survey link.
- A new report from the [National 4-H Council](#) **seeks to answer the question: What are the circumstances in rural communities that help young people advance economically?** *"Social Mobility in America: Insights from Communities Whose Young People Are Climbing the Income Ladder"* explores upward mobility in rural America, and provides a close-up view in a handful of rural communities where young people are readily making their way up the income ladder. Click [here](#) to learn more and access the report.
- The [American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy](#) has released a new report, "Reaching Rural Communities with Energy Efficiency Programs." This report **highlights six energy efficiency programs serving rural areas**. It describes trends across programs for rural customers and offers recommendations to help utilities and other stakeholders better serve these communities. Click [here](#) to download the report.
- A report from the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition **shares a variety of case studies of innovative mine reclamation in Central Appalachia**. This report seeks to spur innovative economic development throughout Appalachia in communities where the landscape has been irreparably changed by coal mining. Specifically, the report provides case studies of projects that advance community development amidst abandoned mine lands. Click [here](#) to download the report.

Events and Trainings

- On **January 15 and 23**, the [WV Community Development Hub's](#) Director of Strategic Network Communications Emma Pepper will lead **two online trainings to support West Virginians working for the greater good in sharing their story with the world**. If you're with a small business or social enterprise, a nonprofit or community group, or are a West Virginian change-maker of any stripe, check out these workshops on promoting your work and getting noticed by the media. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.
- [LISC](#) has announced a **six-part webinar series called "How to Do Creative Placemaking"** that will run **through April**. Creative placemaking—the practice of integrating arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities—has become a widespread practice in communities of all shapes and sizes to advance local economic, physical,

and/or social outcomes. Webinars will cover topics such as building partnerships, community engagement, measuring impact, communicating success, hiring & contracting artists, and more. Click [here](#) to learn more and register.

A Dose of Inspiration

- *PBS News Hour* features health care investments underway in Pikeville, KY in the first installment of its “Future of Work” series. From the video: “Pikeville, Kentucky, is a small city of 6,700 nestled deep in a river valley in the heart of rural Appalachia. As the coal industry declined, towns across the region struggled to survive. Since 2011, an estimated 13,000 coal jobs were lost here in Eastern Kentucky alone. Some experts say to make up for the wages and revenue lost in that time, it would take 30,000 new jobs today. **Pikeville is now trying to fill some of that gap by shifting to health care, and investing in its hospital system, serving 450,000 people across three states.** It also employs 3,100 people, nearly half of Pikeville's population.” Click [here](#) to watch the news segment.

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