



2024 CED Grant Recipient Conference

RURAL READY

Bottom-Up Strategies for Sustainable Rural Development

AMBER RAVENSCROFT

DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION

10

years of
experience

5

million in
funding

60,000

rural stakeholders
impacted



- Co-Chair, National Entrepreneurship Week
- Co-Chair, West Virginia Entrepreneurship Ecosystem
- K-12 Special Interest Group Chair, USASBE
- Design Thinking Innovation Catalyst
- Strategic Doing Certified Workshop Leader
- High Performance Leadership Certificate at Chicago Booth
- M.S.Ed. in Education Entrepreneurship at UPenn



WHO ARE WE?

- 501c3 Nonprofit
- 23+ Years of Service in Appalachia
- Community Capacity Building
- Education Innovation

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TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

This session will provide practical tools and strategies to drive positive change and promote economic vitality in rural regions. Join us as we collaborate to unlock the full potential of rural communities and create a more resilient, inclusive future for all.

01

Discuss common barriers unique to rural environments.

02

Explore innovative approaches to building sustainable rural CED projects.

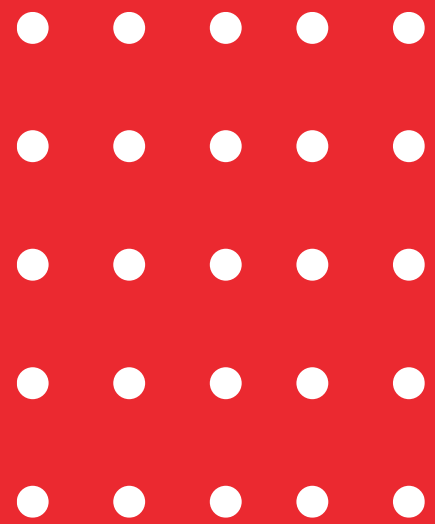
03

Practice linking and leveraging assets to develop creative CED projects.



COMMON BARRIERS

FACING RURAL COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



LET'S

- **EXPLORE:** Common barriers in your CED programs
- Infrastructure deficiencies
- Workforce challenges
- Limited market access

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PERSISTENT PROBLEMS IN RURAL REGIONS



Transportation



Housing



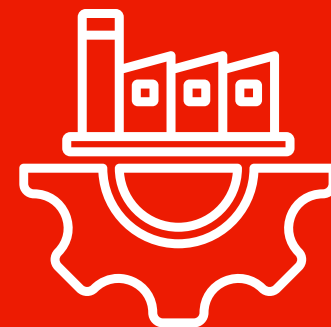
Childcare



Childcare



Internet



Industry Base





WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT + TRAINING

- Retaining skilled workers
- Attracting new talent
- Rural “brain drain”



MARKET ACCESS



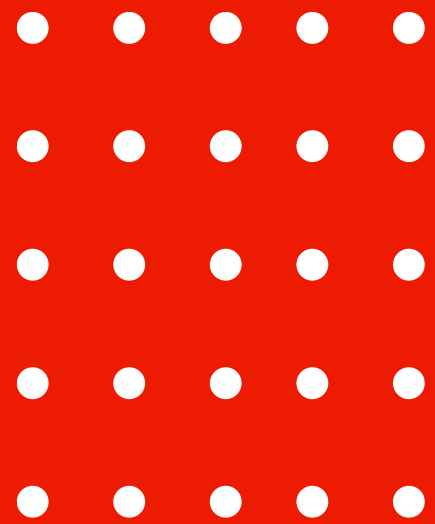
01 Geographic Isolation

02 Distribution Channels

03 Existing Industry



RURAL READY: STRATEGIES TO DESIGN, DELIVER, AND SUSTAIN RURAL PROJECTS






LET'S

- **EXPLORE:** Essential foundations of a strong rural project
- Positioning your project for delivery success
- Sustaining impact beyond initial funding

STEP 1.0 MARKET ANALYSIS

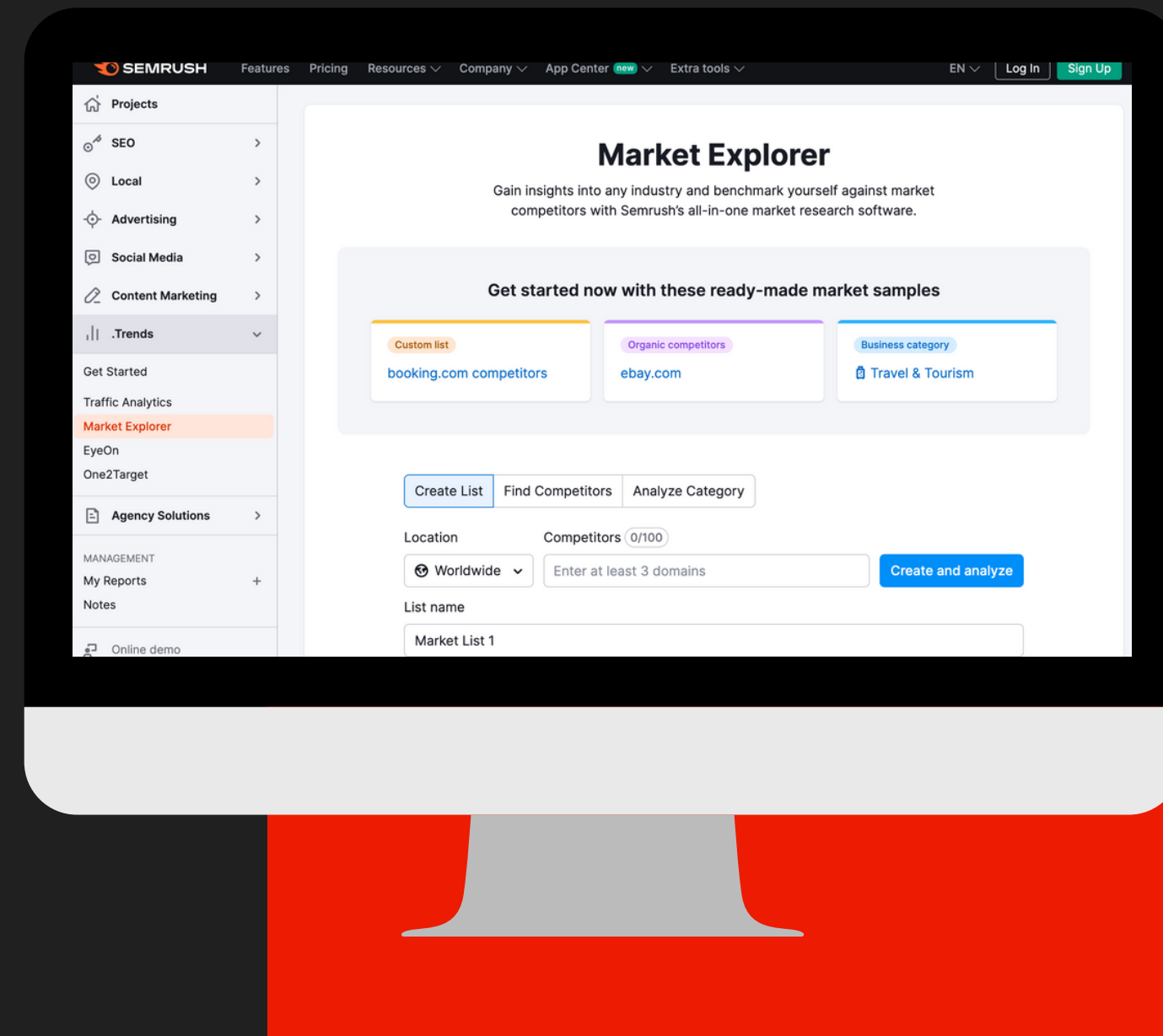
Benefits of Market Analysis

- 
 Can estimate market size + potential to determine viability
- 
 Can identify your target customers and their needs and preferences
- 
 Can analyze competitors and their strategies to grow your market share



Tips + Tactics

- Industry Cluster Analysis
 - Cluster analysis detects the potential spillovers of technology, skills and information that cut across industries, workers and resources.



STEP 1.1

ESTABLISH NEED

- Conduct surveys and interviews with community members to understand their needs and priorities.
- Organize focus groups to gather insights from various stakeholders including residents, businesses, and local organizations.
- Host community events and workshops to facilitate open discussions and idea sharing.

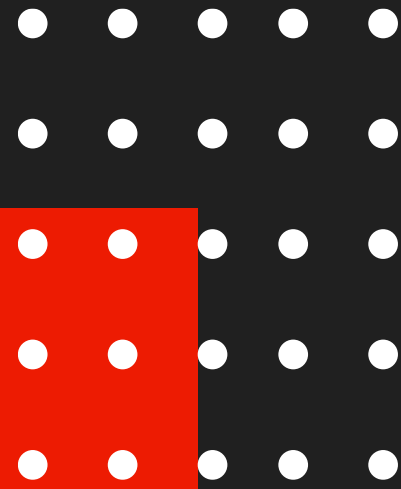


Tips + Tactics

- Design Thinking
 - Empathy Interviews
 - Follow-Me-Homes

CASE STUDY

WV ESHIP ECOSYSTEM



The ecosystem was born.
ESOs from across West Virginia convened to discuss synergies and ways to work together, recognizing a duplication of efforts and gaps in service.

WVEE secures first federal funding.
With support of the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation and the Appalachian Regional Commission, WVEE launches its targeted subcommittees and strategic visioning efforts.



WV BusinessLink was established.
The Ecosystem grew with WV Dept. of Economic Development support, housing the state's first resource repository for entrepreneur resources and establishing entrepreneurship as a "thriving industry".

RURAL READY

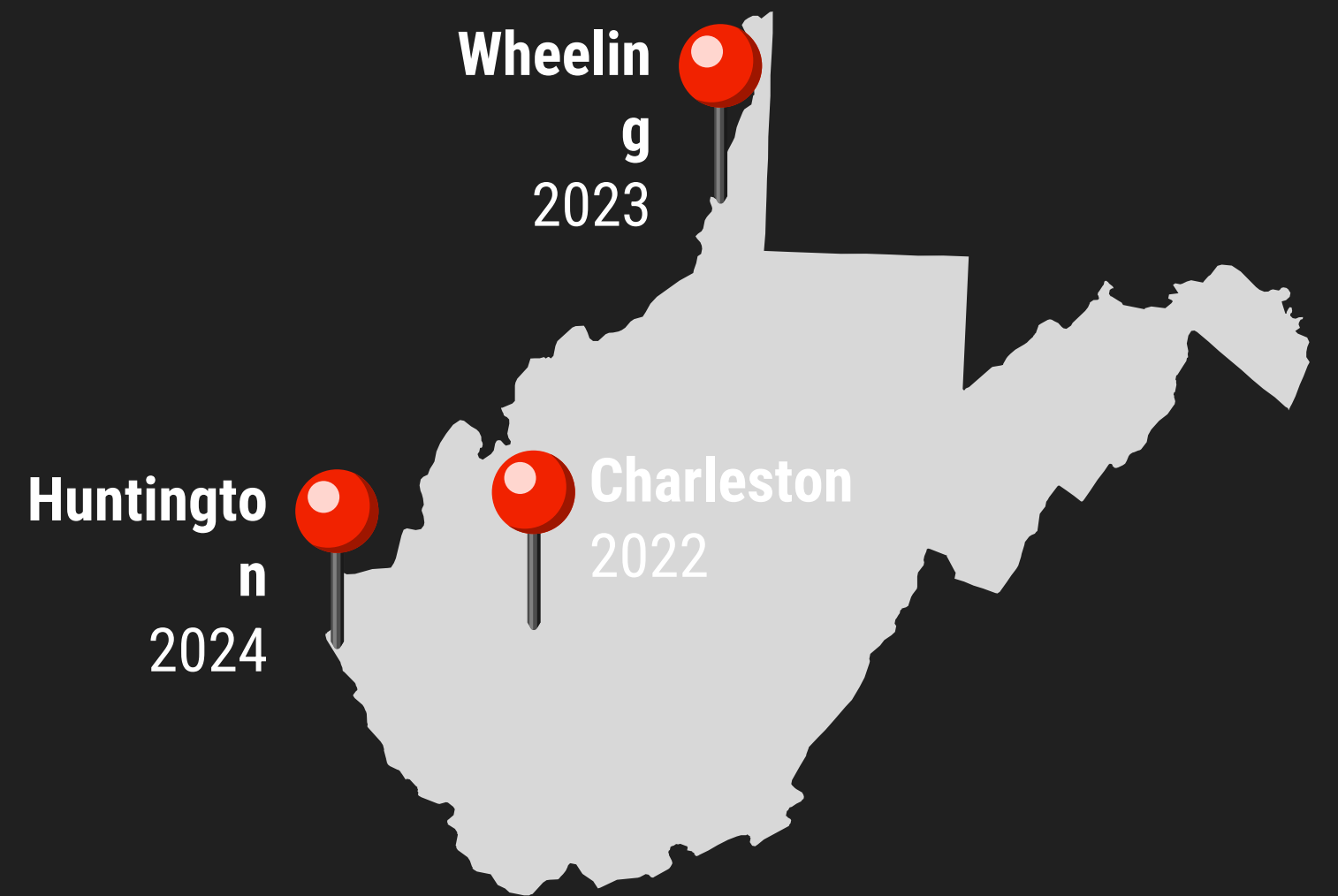


TODAY: A THRIVING ECOSYSTEM

1 Bridging Innovation Week
The state's premier annual event for entrepreneurship-led economic development.

2 Target Subcommittees

- Arts Subcommittee - Tamarack Foundation for the Arts
- Capital Subcommittee - INNOVA Commercialization
- Regulatory Subcommittee - Executive Training Centers + Right to Start
- Talent Subcommittee - Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Experts
- Youth Equity in Entrepreneurship - WVU Extension



\$735,000 in investment into entrepreneurs
\$350,000 in funding and sponsorships

x 100 = **210%**
Return on Investment

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STEP 2.0

STRATEGIC PLANNING & VISIONING



01

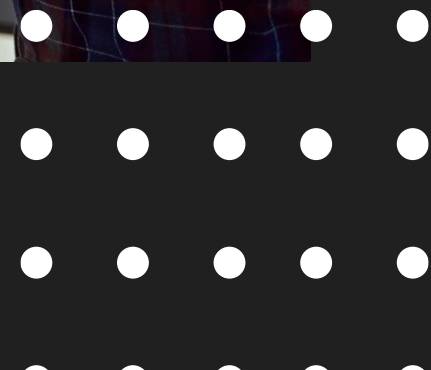
Create a clear vision, goals, and action plan for the project.

02

Establish objectives, timelines, and performance indicators.

03

Develop mechanisms to monitor progress, collect data, and gauge impact.



STEP 2.1

GAIN BUY-IN

1

Create key messages.

- Key messages can be used for a variety of communication materials, such as press materials, talking points, speeches, and social media posts.

2

Map your ecosystem.

- Gain an understanding of the key stakeholders and interconnected intricacies of your local community's ecosystem.

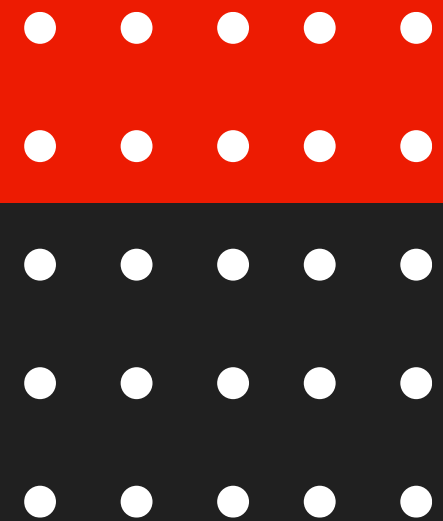
3

Cultivate partnerships.

- Focus on relationship building.
- Partner outside the box.
- Give and accept feedback.

Key Messages		
Question or Concern?	Stakeholder Group/Target Audience	
Likely Conditions for Use	Date Last Updated	
Key Message/Fact 1	Key Message/Fact 2	Key Message/Fact 3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting Message/Fact 1.1	Supporting Message/Fact 2.1	Supporting Message/Fact 3.1
Supporting Message/Fact 1.2	Supporting Message/Fact 2.2	Supporting Message/Fact 3.2
Supporting Message/Fact 1.3	Supporting Message/Fact 2.3	Supporting Message/Fact 3.3

KEY MESSAGES TEMPLATE





STEP 2.2

CAPACITY BUILDING

Asset-based Approach to Community Development



Ultimate Goal: Empowerment

- Empowering people + place through organizing, access to resources, and external help

1 > Self Sufficiency

2 > Technical Assistance

3 > Conflict Resolution



Tips + Tactics:

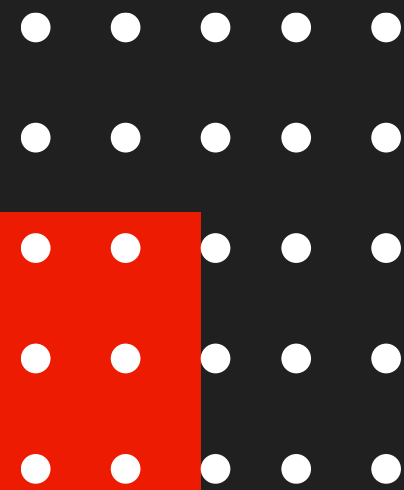
Entrepreneurial Skills
Training

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CASE STUDY

COALFIELD'S 33-6-3

MODEL



RURAL READY



33

Hours of Paid Work

6

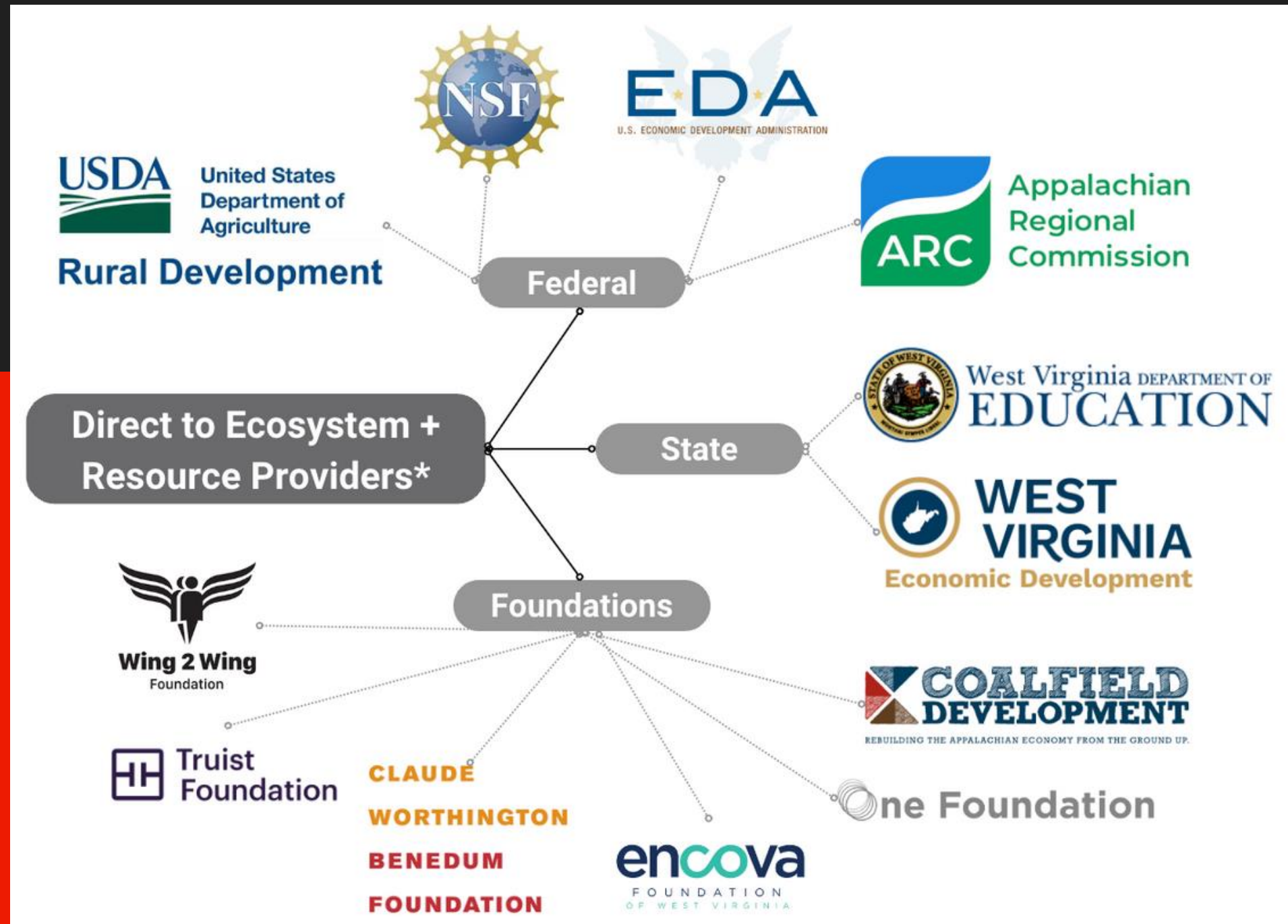
Credits of Higher Ed

3

Hours of Mentorship

Academic	Personal
Safety	Physical Health
Initiative	Life Management
Problem Solving	Citizenship

STEP 3.0 DIVERSIFY FUNDING



1

Create a funding web.

- Diversify your funding streams to minimize reliance on one funding source.

2

Establish revenue-generating activities.

- Explore opportunities to charge for products or services that are an outcome of your effort.

3

Cultivate partnerships.

- Leverage existing resources through partners that align with your needs to avoid duplications of costs.

STEP 3.1

BUILD OWNERSHIP + ENGAGEMENT

Empower local residents, organizations, and leaders to take ownership of the initiative and drive decision-making.

- Community-led governance structure or advisory boards

Involve stakeholders in project planning, implementation, and evaluation.



Tips + Tactics:

The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership

Ignore --> Inform --> Consult --> Involve --> Collaborate --> Defer to

STEP 3.2

STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

**01**

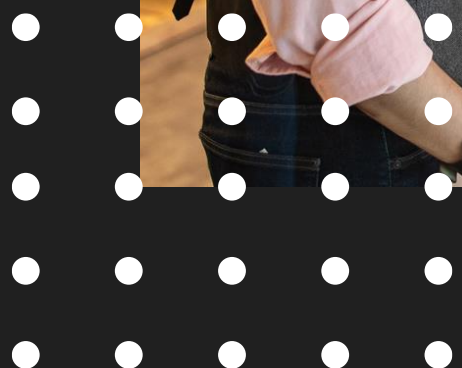
Invest in capacity building of local organizations; enhance skills in project management, fundraising, financial management, and strategic planning.

02

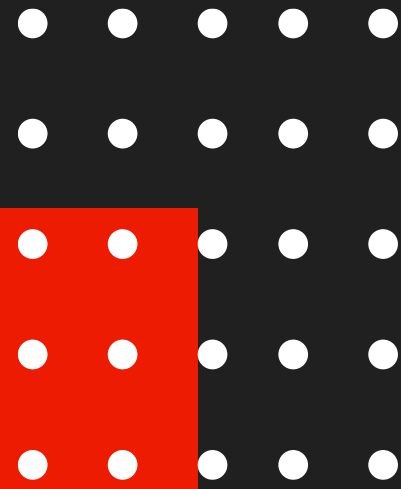
Foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders to facilitate learning, innovation, and continuous improvement.

03

Leverage technology and innovation to streamline processes, enhance productivity, and create new opportunities for growth and development.



CASE STUDY
NORTHAMPTON,
MASSACHUSETTS



12 Guiding Principles:

- 1** Support a diverse and integrated community.
- 2** Act as a part of a broader region.
- 3** Improve energy efficiency + promote alternative/renewable energy.
- 4** Support a wide variety of housing types.
- 5** Support the arts, local culture, and history.
- 6** Connect municipal capital improvements to the goals of Sustainable Northampton.
- 7** Adopt land use patterns that maintain a mix of urban and rural areas.
- 2** Recognize and foster the unique history and character of neighborhoods.
- 3** Recognize that a diverse and vibrant economy is integral to success.
- 4** Make the city more transit-oriented.
- 5** Improve lives through continuous, high-quality education.
- 6** Operate the city as a democratic enterprise that is responsive to the needs of its citizens.

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RURAL READY: LINKING AND LEVERAGING ASSETS



LET'S

- **EXPLORE:** Types of assets to support community economic development projects
- How to link and leverage assets



ASSET MAPPING

An asset map is a visual representation or inventory of the strengths, resources, and assets within a community or organization. It identifies the positive attributes and capacities that can be leveraged to address challenges, promote well-being, and foster collaboration.



SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

The skills and knowledge of the people directly doing the work



SOCIAL CAPITAL

Networks and relationships that can be leveraged



PHYSICAL & FINANCIAL

Financial resources and tangible resources at your disposal



CULTURE & CREATIVE

Local traditions, assets, and creative endeavors



TABLE ACTIVITY: **LINK & LEVERAGE**

- Spend 10 minutes mapping your assets.
- Identify three assets you can link.
- Leverage the assets into a creative CED project idea.

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THANK YOU



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