

**2017 Kentucky ARC Flex-E-Grants
List of Funded Projects: April-September 2017
Submitted March 22, 2017**

Administered by Brushy Fork Institute and The Center for Rural Development

Flex-E-Grants provide a critical resource for communities to plan and implement projects that address local and regional development efforts. Funds serve to improve economic conditions within distressed counties by developing local and regional leadership, supporting long-term visioning and strategic planning, and laying foundations for more intensive investments and interventions.

For the 2017 cycle of Appalachian Regional Commission Flex-E-Grants, Brushy Fork Institute and The Center for Rural Development collaborated on the design of funding guidelines and joint release of a request for proposals. Funding guidelines were designed to encourage applicants to consider the strategic investment goals of ARC's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan and develop effective responses to the economic transition underway in the region.

57 applications, representing 30 economically distressed Appalachian counties, were submitted in response to the request for proposals. 11 of these proposals represented multi-county efforts.

Upon completion of a thorough committee review, 22 projects were funded at a total of \$183,100 in grants funds with \$84,000 in matching contributions, consisting of cash and in-kind support provided locally.

These grants were awarded in economically distressed counties, as designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission, including the following: Carter, Clay, Cumberland, Estill, Harlan, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Lawrence, Lee, Letcher, Magoffin, Menifee, Metcalfe, Morgan, and Whitley.

Three additional multi-county projects with a regional development focus will have beneficiaries and impacts within the counties of Bell, Breathitt, Clay, Harlan, Jackson, Knox, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Owsley, Perry, Powell, Whitley, and Wolfe.

7 project awards were made within Kentucky Promise Zone counties. These projects collectively amount to \$59,250 in grant awards: one-third of total awards.

The project descriptions that follow include the amount of ARC's grant investment and a brief project summary outlining project goals and activities.

**1. Carter County, Kentucky: Galaxy Project: Building a Strong Foundation
Fiscal Agent: The Galaxy Project, Inc.**

FEG Request: \$5,000 Match: \$1,700 Total: \$6,700

The Galaxy Project is a youth center that provides free services in the areas of recreation, education, leadership, humanities, and health and wellness. The goal of this project is to create a social enterprise development plan to identify business ventures that can resource and sustain the youth center's mission-related work. A consultant contracted through the Community & Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK) will facilitate the planning process. Community engagement will be solicited through surveys, public forums, and stakeholder meetings designed and organized by local youth working in collaboration with the project consultant. Significant project outputs include the creation and dissemination of a business plan and professional training for participating youth and adults in social enterprise development.

**2. Clay County, Kentucky: Shaping Clay Part II (Promise Zone County)
Fiscal Agent: Stay in Clay**

FEG Request: \$5,000 Match: \$2,500 Total: \$7,500

This continuation project will result in the production, staging, and performance of an historical outdoor drama to be used as a tool for connecting arts and heritage tourism efforts with Trail Town marketing initiatives. This project builds upon the results of previous Flex-E-Grant activities, including social theater training provided to youth and adults, construction of an outdoor stage that now serves as a public trailhead, and the recent designation of Manchester as a Kentucky Trail Town. The Kentucky Trail Town program is designed to help connect communities to trail systems and develop the locations as tourist destinations.

Stay in Clay commissioned and completed Part I of this project in 2016 utilizing Flex-E-Grant funds. Project outputs included the production and performance of an historical drama that spanned the period from 1807 to 1862. Part II extends this history by continuing the narrative arc established in the last play. Anne Shelby, a notable Appalachian author, produced the playscript for the first performance. A multi-generational cast of nearly 30 people contributed more than 9,000 volunteer hours as part of the rehearsal and performance. More than 500 people attended the opening performances. Select scenes were also performed for representatives from the Kentucky Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts during a recent visit to Manchester. This play will be reprised at the annual Saltworks Appalachian Homecoming Festival to be held over Memorial Day weekend.

This festival, established with 2014 Flex-E-Grant funds, is held each May and celebrates Manchester's history of salt mining. Both the historical drama and the festival are intended to contribute to arts and heritage based tourism efforts, a regional development approach advocated and supported by the Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) initiative. The outdoor drama recognizes and develops local talent while providing a marketable tourism opportunity for Manchester. Ticket sales will help ensure project sustainability.

3. Cumberland County, Kentucky: Philanthropic Capacity Building Project
Fiscal Agent: Cumberland County Fiscal Court

FEG Request: \$5,000 Match: \$2,300 Total: \$7,300

The goal of this project is to educate the general public about the benefits of strategic community philanthropy. This grant request allows the Cumberland County Fiscal Court to contract with the Lake Cumberland Area Development District to conduct a series of six educational community workshops and meetings. These workshops will serve two primary purposes: 1) to educate community members and groups about the tax advantages of donations and 2) to educate community members and groups about the process and benefits of endowment building. Educational workshops will be tailored to target audiences, including accountants, attorneys, industrial groups, nonprofit organizations, investment advisors, and other entities or individuals who wish to participate.

The long-term goals of the project are to build local philanthropic capacity within Cumberland County and promote the creation of component funds to support community development initiatives. The work of retaining and endowing local wealth for community good advances the development of local philanthropy, a key component of regional development strategies. This project also extends the work seeded with the Appalachian Rural Philanthropy Development Initiative by continuing to build capacity through public education, with the intent that this education will eventually lead to more local investment and more structures to facilitate and enable local and regional philanthropy.

4. Estill County, Kentucky: Dream Estill County
Fiscal Agent: Estill County 21st Century, Inc.

FEG Request: \$10,000 Match: \$3,500 Total: \$13,500

The goal of this project is to develop a strategic plan for the Estill Development Alliance (EDA), a non-profit economic development group serving Estill County, Kentucky. Founded in 1995, the Alliance assumes primary responsibility for coordinating community and economic development initiatives for the cities of Irvine and Ravenna. EDA services include programs supporting the growth and development of entrepreneurs, downtown revitalization efforts, regional leadership training programs, business recruitment and incubation efforts, tourism trail development, support for the performing arts, and citizen engagement in development activities.

This planning process will create a strategic plan to provide strategies for stabilization and growth of the organization. EDA will issue an RFP to hire a qualified consultant who will lead their staff, board members, and community stakeholders in the development of a long-term strategic plan. The consultant will also provide assistance with evaluating current systems, processes, and policies for efficiency and effectiveness. The resulting strategic plan will allow the organization to better serve its mission and provide constituents with the services needed to develop the local economy while providing for better coordination of the many operating divisions the Alliance manages.

Significant project outputs include a community-driven plan identifying 3-5 key development strategies and preparing board and strategic planning committee members with the knowledge needed to begin pursuing resources to implement this work.

5. Harlan County, Kentucky: Economic Development Authority Website (Promise Zone County)
Fiscal Agent: Harlan County Fiscal Court

FEG Request: \$6,900 Match: \$1,700 Total: \$8,600

The primary goal of this project is to build a professional website for the Harlan County Economic Development Authority. The authority was established by the Harlan County Fiscal Court in 2015. The purposes of the authority are to support local business expansion and attract new capital investment. With the assistance of a 2016 SOAR Kentucky Appalachian Region Development (KARD) grant, the authority was recently able to hire the county's first full-time economic development director.

This website will be used to promote local development and capital investment in the community and neighboring region. The project is part of a larger community effort to rehabilitate the economy through diversification. Once established, the website will help showcase available land and properties suitable for business development and assist with marketing the county's ample natural assets. It will also provide geographic, demographic, and social information on the county and target professional site selectors and other key decision makers in business, industry, retail, and other important economic sectors. The website will be created by Mountain Tech Media, a technology and media services provider located in Whitesburg. The Harlan County Economic Development Authority will provide ongoing site maintenance.

6. Harlan County, Kentucky: Activating Space in Harlan County: A Strategic Planning Process (Promise Zone County)
Fiscal Agent: Southeast Education Foundation

FEG Request: \$9,850 Match: \$8,300 Total: \$18,150

The primary goal of this project is to engage a broad spectrum of Harlan County residents in the creation of a strategic plan for utilization of two downtown buildings held in the public trust. The Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College (SKCTC) will work with the Harlan Tourism and Convention Center, Harlan County 2020, the Tri-Cities Main Street Program, the Harlan County Community Foundation, the Judge Executive's office, and other community organizations and volunteers to develop a plan for the renovation and reuse of the Belk Building in downtown Harlan and the Rowlett Furniture Building in downtown Cumberland.

This project expands opportunities for residents to participate in community development processes and will result in plans for the renovation of two key downtown properties as potential host sites for industries related to creative placemaking. These properties are the focus of a POWER proposal, for which this project lays the foundation and provides strategic direction. Project partners will contract with BLDG, a design and consulting firm based out of Covington, Kentucky, that will provide facilitation of community meetings and produce the resulting planning documents. BLDG has previously worked with the Kentucky Arts Council and communities throughout Kentucky to provide tools regarding the use of the arts to reinvigorate struggling economies. Many communities have secured national creative placemaking grants as a result of these collaborations.

**7. Johnson County, Kentucky: Creating the Authentic Appalachian Experience
Fiscal Agent: Route 23 Cultural Heritage Network**

FEG Request: \$10,000 Match: \$13,000 Total: \$23,000

The goal of this project is to implement a creative placemaking strategy that involves artisan training, product prototyping, and tourism packaging. The Route 23 Cultural Heritage Network will work with Cooperative Extension Services, skilled artisans, and food management experts to train 25 participants in one of six mediums: clay, wood, textiles, paint, glass, and locally sourced foods. Participants will be recruited from Johnson County and Magoffin County.

Over the course of a twelve-week period, participants will develop new products to include in a small catalogue of locally made goods. These products will be marketed through existing local tourism venues and bundled as part of a tourism package experience, including travel to a local tourism destination, a Kentucky Proud meal, overnight accommodations, and opportunities to purchase handmade gifts and other locally made products.

Four tourism packages will be designed with an option to choose from six local products. At least one of the packages will be field tested during the grant period. Systems will be established for ordering the products produced and for training additional artisans as part of the project's sustainability strategy. Tourism packages will capitalize on the county's growing tourism and food industries. Training provided to residents will increase their capacity to create marketable products and participate in the local tourism economy.

**8. Knott County, Kentucky: Crafting a Plan at the Appalachian Artisan Center
Fiscal Agent: Appalachian Artisan Center of Kentucky**

FEG Request: \$4,300 Match: \$2,500 Total: \$6,800

The goal of this project is to develop a strategic plan for the Appalachian Artisan Center, an anchor organization within Appalachian Kentucky's creative economy that serves area artists, artist entrepreneurs, and children and youth who benefit from arts education programs. The Artisan Center has juried works from more than 300 area artists. These works are sold in the physical gallery and made available for online purchase.

Grant funds will allow the Artisan Center access to strategic planning expertise provided through the Kentucky Arts Council Peer Network (KPAN). This network identifies vetted independent consultants with expertise in the arts. This consultant will facilitate the strategic planning process and help solicit input from artists, cultural partners, local officials, staff and board members, and other stakeholders. The resulting plan will increase the organization's capacity to manage and expand their retail gallery and studio and art education programs.

9. Knott County, Kentucky: Heritage Food and Dance Trail
Fiscal Agent: Hindman Settlement School

FEG Request: \$10,000 Match: \$2,800 Total: \$12,800

The goal of this project is to develop a Heritage Food & Dance Trail that will use print and digital media to guide tourists to cultural heritage and gastronomic points of interest throughout Appalachian Kentucky. Project efforts will result in the catalog of local heritage assets and help leverage a newly developed regional identity around heritage food and dance traditions. Community asset mapping sessions will be conducted in Whitesburg (Letcher County), Hazard (Perry County), Morehead (Rowan County), Louisa (Lawrence County), Campton (Wolfe County), and Manchester (Clay County).

Funds will allow the grantee to contract with a consultant from the Southern Foodways Alliance at the University of Mississippi, provide implementation support for six regional asset mapping sessions, help resource the creation of print and digital media (such as travel guides and customizable trip planners) to increase the visibility of Appalachian Kentucky's cultural assets, and provide travel support to visit model sites: The Crooked Road in southwestern Virginia, the Blue Ridge Heritage Music Trail in western North Carolina, and the West Virginia Farm and Food Trail.

This project closely aligns with Kentucky's statewide tourism efforts. The Commonwealth has recently developed a Cultural Heritage Tourism Strategic Plan to coordinate the efforts of state and local entities and provide a blueprint to guide the efforts of the cultural heritage tourism program in the Kentucky Department of Tourism. This strategic plan was used as a guide for the development of this project. The applicant will work closely with the Director of Cultural Heritage Tourism at the state cabinet and local representatives in the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism of the Kentucky General Assembly to further develop and promote this project. Post project, the applicant will pursue tourism grants and other incentives to further trail development and promotion.

10. Knox County, Kentucky: Youth Wellness Program (Promise Zone County)
Fiscal Agent: Union College

FEG Request: \$9,500 Match: \$2,600 Total: \$12,100

The purpose of this project is to establish a youth wellness program to serve Knox County youth ages 6-13 years old. This program will employ a research-based health program that promotes wellness, nutrition, and physical activity. Project activities include training community members to serve as health leaders, hosting parent and child wellness workshops and community cooking events, and engaging youth in afterschool and summer programs focused on wellness.

Partners in this project include Union College, PRIDE, county extension, Barbourville Independent School District, Knox County School District, and the City of Barbourville. These entities are also implementing partners of the Promise Neighborhood Initiative coordinated through Berea College. The resulting youth wellness program will be maintained at Union College, which will provide ongoing monitoring, maintenance of educational supplies, and evaluation of program outcomes.

11. Lawrence County, Kentucky: ReDiscover Louisa Lock and Dam
Fiscal Agent: City of Louisa

FEG Request: \$9,100 Match: \$2,800 Total: \$11,900

In 2015, the City of Louisa began a campaign to rebrand the city as a tourism destination. The effort, titled ReDiscover Louisa, seeks to build upon existing assets and leverage their location on the Big Sandy River to expand tourism opportunities. Upon launching this campaign, the city began planning for a recreational trail complex that included the rehabilitation of local parks and the creation of a riverwalk connecting recreational areas of the city. Long-term goals are to connect with other cities and towns built along the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River to promote a regional river trail.

This project extends these efforts by highlighting the historical significance of a local landmark, the site of the first needle dam built in the United States. Project activities include the construction of an observation deck that overlooks the remnants of this 1896 dam accompanied by an informational kiosk. Project activities are implementations of a development plan resulting from previous ARC grant support. The city has applied for additional support through the Transportation Alternative Funding program to complete the construction of the riverwalk that will connect the Lockview Park Complex to a planned boat launch area. The lock and dam observation deck will serve as an historical point of interest along this trail.

12. Lee County, Kentucky: Lee County Kentucky River Trailhead Development
Fiscal Agent: Lee County Tourism Commission

FEG Request: \$3,500 Match: \$2,900 Total: \$6,400

This project is designed to advance goals within the Lee County Tourism Strategic Plan, which includes development of recreational activities along the Kentucky River through river trail development, increased navigational signage, and improved river access. Project partners include the Lee County Tourism Commission, Three Forks Historical Society, Lee County Diabetes Coalition, People Encouraging People, Boy Scout Troop #84, Kentucky River Authority, and the City of Beattyville.

Major project activities include constructing three informational kiosks at public access points along the Kentucky River and hosting three river sweep events, during which community volunteers will install kiosks and clean up trash along the river, banks, and boat docks. Informational brochures that include a river trail map will also be produced and made available at public access points. These maps, combined with the new informational and directional signage, will increase the quality of experience for adventure tourists.

Following the river sweeps, two community canoe and kayaking events will be held to inform participants about the potential for small business development around river opportunities, including serving as an outdoor outfitter or commercial fishing guide. The grantee also intends to formally establish a local paddle club to promote family friendly water recreation and coordinate ongoing river maintenance.

13. Letcher County, Kentucky: Back to Our Appalachian Roots Project (Promise Zone County)
Fiscal Agent: Hemphill Community Center

FEG Request: \$10,000 Match: \$2,500 Total: \$12,500

The goal of this project is to establish an annual pioneer festival in Hemphill, Kentucky, a community of approximately 500 residents. Leading up to this culminating event, the community will host a series of public workshops facilitated by regional tradespeople and artisans. These workshops will focus on various pioneer homesteading skills and cultural traditions, including beekeeping, gardening, food preservation techniques, quilting, woodworking, and blacksmithing. Additional demonstrations include traditional folk dance and open fire cooking.

The grantee is a member of the Letcher County Culture Hub and will work with other partner agencies to plan and promote the event. Community participation and cultural preservation are key elements of this project. Grant funds will provide educational opportunity for residents, family friendly entertainment as part of the pioneer festival, and supplies that will help promote sustainability by lowering the cost of replication. Ticketing for the open fire community cooking demonstration to be held as part of the festival will generate additional revenue to support future festivals.

The community ultimately aspires to be a stop on the heritage food and dance trail proposed and coordinated by Hindman Settlement School, a project detailed earlier in this proposal package. The proposed festival will provide an organizing event for the community around which they can build their heritage tourism efforts.

14. Magoffin County, Kentucky: Stage Our Talent
Fiscal Agent: City of Salyersville

FEG Request: \$10,000 Match: \$4,400 Total: \$14,400

This project continues to build upon activities designed to put in place amenities to support the city's application to become a certified Kentucky Trail Town. During the 2016 cycle of Flex-E-Grants, the City of Salyersville engaged youth in the design and installation of a wayfinding system that makes use of QR Code technology. This system enables the city to better capitalize on its proximity to the Dawkins Line Rail-to-Trail project and helps visitors discover the distinct history of the community.

The current project builds upon previous downtown development efforts by establishing a community gathering and performance space within a vacant greenspace located in downtown Salyersville. Project activities include the construction of a gazebo through volunteer labor to serve as the organizing center of what will officially become a community park. Long-term plans include establishing an arboretum and botanical garden on the selected site.

The resulting structure will be used as the epicenter for recurring community programming and events, including bi-weekly musical outdoor musical performances, 4th of July festivities, Chautauqua performances organized by the Magoffin County Civil War Committee, and the city's Heritage Days Festival that includes a Watermelon Social.

15. Magoffin County, Kentucky: Project Phase I
Fiscal Agent: South Magoffin Community Activists, Inc.

FEG Request: \$9,600 Match: \$10,400 Total: \$20,000

The goals of this project are two-fold: to update South Magoffin's existing strategic plan and establish a center for community and health programming. Both goals serve to promote the health and welfare of local citizens.

The strategic planning portion of project activities will update an existing plan created in 2010, which needs new development strategies to respond to the economic impacts of regional industry decline and local factory closures that have left residents without economic alternatives.

The portion of the grant focused on establishing a center for community and health-related meetings and programming makes effective use of a space recently donated to the organization. This facility has already benefitted from many upgrades enabled by supply donations from local businesses and residents. Grant funds will help complete remaining upgrades, including the installation of a kitchenette, expansion of an outdoor walking trail promoting physical activity, and the addition of a pavilion to serve as an outdoor classroom for programming events.

Once completed, this center will serve as a host site for local health-related programs, offering space for convening agriculture, diabetes, addiction recovery, and extension services programs. The community also plans to use the site to host healthy cooking classes and demonstrations and mobile dental health clinics to be coordinated with other providers.

16. Menifee County, Kentucky: Menifee County Tourism Marketing Plan
Fiscal Agent: Menifee County Fiscal Court

FEG Request: \$10,000 Match: \$3,400 Total: \$13,400

The goal of this project is to create a strategic plan for tourism development and marketing for Menifee County. This plan will be developed with the assistance of the Gateway Area Development District, which will work with government entities and community groups to inventory area attractions and display them on interactive maps utilizing Quick Response (QR) Code technology. This technology can be scanned by smartphones to provide tourists with more information about local assets, such as the neighboring Cave Run Lake or Red River Gorge.

The resulting plan will seek to capitalize on regional trends in rural tourism, such as agritourism, adventure tourism, and recreational, heritage, and food trails. Six area attractions will be selected and highlighted on physical interactive maps to be strategically placed within the county. Data will be collected and analyzed regarding the number of visitors accessing the tourism website through the QR Code feature embedded within these maps.

17. Metcalfe County, Kentucky: Farmers Market Community Garden Development
Fiscal Agent: Metcalfe County Farmers Market

FEG Request: \$8,550 Match: \$3,000 Total: \$11,550

The primary goal of this project is to increase the consumption of fresh, locally-grown produce among Metcalfe County's limited resource families with children age 12 and under and develop greater local foods awareness and support within the Edmonton community. A secondary goal is to engage families in the process of producing and preparing fresh fruits and vegetables grown at the Farmer's Market Community Garden, which includes a children's garden area.

Project partners include the Metcalfe County Farmer's Market, Metcalfe County Cooperative Extension, and the Barren River District Health Department. Activities will result in the creation of a productive community garden that will provide fresh fruits and vegetables across all seasons and valuable learning opportunities for participating family volunteers. The community garden will be located on Cooperative Extension property which is adjacent to the Metcalfe County Farmer's Market Pavilion. This garden will serve as the epicenter for recurring hands-on growing and harvesting activities and community education events related to food preparation and nutrition, to be scheduled to coincide with the Farmer's Market hours of operation.

Additionally, families will be instructed in how to create, plant, grow and maintain their own personal small-scale garden spaces, which will help improve their dietary choices and health outcomes.

18. Morgan County, Kentucky: Strategic Business Marketing Plan
Fiscal Agent: City of West Liberty

FEG Request: \$10,000 Match: \$2,600 Total: \$12,600

The goal of this project is to create and implement a strategic business marketing plan for the City of West Liberty. This plan will provide direction for economic development efforts within the city and rejuvenation of the local business culture, which was devastated by a destructive tornado in 2012. Grant funds will enable West Liberty to contract with the Gateway Area Development District to facilitate this planning effort. Gateway ADD will conduct consultations with city officials, public advisors, and business and tourism professionals to solicit input on this plan.

Major outputs include the development of a database inventorying all industrial and commercial properties and an interactive online map to showcase the properties to prospective businesses. This map will allow interested parties to take a virtual tour of properties and provide convenient attributes and information about each site. These tools will increase the capacity of the community to generate interest in commercial properties and attract new investments in business development efforts.

**19. Multi-County Project: Promise Zone Profiles (Serves All Promise Zone Counties)
Fiscal Agent: Eastern Kentucky University**

FEG Request: \$8,000 Match: \$2,000 Total: \$10,000

The goal of this project is to develop and launch a web and social media campaign designed to help market local assets and promote positive images of the Kentucky Promise Zone region. This project will be coordinated through the Eastern Kentucky University Office of Regional Stewardship. This office will collaborate with the Promise Zone coordinator through the Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation and regional high school teachers and students to produce Promise Zone profiles. These profiles will highlight people, businesses, civic organizations, and community projects that are positively shaping the future of the region. The project encourages collaboration and networking among young adults, adult mentors, regional professionals, civic leaders, and government officials, with a common goal of promoting the communities in which they live. Project outputs also include the creation of a curriculum that provides educators with the tools needed to sustain the project beyond the grant period.

The project was designed in response to the recommendations presented as part of the final report of the SOAR Tourism, Arts, and Heritage working group last year. The purpose of these working groups was to produce a final report that prioritized needs discovered during listening sessions held within the Appalachian Kentucky region. This report revealed a need for direct tourism industry promotion, a promotional plan for small regional businesses to attract new customers, and strategic and targeted marketing employing social media and other online tools. This project helps fulfill this identified need.

**20. Multi-County Project: Regional Economic Development Council
Fiscal Agent: Jackson County Development Association**

FEG Request: \$8,800 Match: \$3,000 Total: \$11,800

This multi-county effort is designed to serve five economically-distressed Kentucky counties (Clay, Jackson, Lee, Leslie, and Owsley) through the formation of a regional economic development council. Grant funds will allow for the hiring of a strategic planning consultant to move this initiative forward. This plan will provide a comprehensive view of regional resources, including available properties, labor force demographics, natural assets, and other business and industry assets that will inform plans to leverage these resources and market them to state, regional, and national businesses. The resulting plan will also provide guidance in how participating counties may pool resources for more effective business recruitment as well as determine the feasibility of forming a regional economic development organization.

The Community & Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK) will facilitate the development of the strategic plan. CEDIK has worked with regional communities to identify alternative economic development strategies beyond traditional industrial recruitment and has expertise in expanding existing businesses, cluster analysis, entrepreneurship, and developing and supporting the creative class. CEDIK will work with industry, business, and government officials to establish economic development goals for the five-county region, which will provide a roadmap for implementing a more coordinated regional approach to economic development. All participating counties have passed resolutions to support the formation of a regional economic development initiative prior to submitting the grant proposal.

21. Multi-County Project: Musical Heritage Center Feasibility - Phase II
Fiscal Agent: Kentucky River Area Development District

FEG Request: \$10,000 Match: \$2,500 Total: \$12,500

The goal of this project is to complete a feasibility study focused on the repurposing of a regional business park as a regional performing arts center. The Pine Ridge Regional Industrial Authority owns and operates this business park, which is located just off the Mountain Parkway near Natural Bridge State Resort Park and Red River Gorge in Wolfe County, Kentucky. The site is also located within close proximity to Jenny Wiley State Park, Buckhorn State Park, and numerous other area attractions. The Authority serves the counties of Owsley, Wolfe, Powell, Breathitt, and Lee – all of which stand to benefit from the economic benefits of expanding regional tourism opportunities.

With the decline in regional industry, the Authority has requested and received permission from the State of Kentucky to repurpose a 25-acre section of the park for tourism development efforts. Flex-E-Grant funds provided support for the completion of Phase I: a feasibility study for establishing a RV park and amphitheater on the grounds. Phase 2 assesses the feasibility of adding a regional performing arts center. The feasibility study is informed by the master plan for the complex, which includes a theater, visitor’s center, amphitheater, and RV and campground areas. Once completed, the study will enable the Authority to pursue state, federal, and private investment for the development of a Musical Heritage Center to be located at the site.

22. Whitley County, Kentucky: Let’s Get Healthy (Promise Zone County)
Fiscal Agent: Whitley County Health Department

FEG Request: \$10,000 Match: \$3,600 Total: \$13,600

The primary goal of this project is to equip residents with the skills and resources needed to effectively prevent and manage chronic disease. Whitley County faces severe health challenges and ranks 98 of 120 among Kentucky counties in overall health outcomes. Through providing residents free access to a proven prevention and management program, this grantee intends to decrease the high rates of obesity among county residents and encourage lifestyle changes that will provide health benefits across the life span.

Using the Microclinic International model, two local health educators and dieticians will host a 12-week series of health education classes for 20 residents who are at risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and other illnesses exacerbated or caused by obesity. Curriculum content is designed to increase the capacity of individuals to manage and prevent chronic illnesses through taking control of eating habits and adding physical activity to their daily routines. These focused sessions will be complemented with broader community education outreach efforts, including seven health education fairs held across the county, two public diabetes education classes, and direct educational services provided to families participating in the WIC program.

The Microclinic approach is evidence-based and field-tested. During a pilot program conducted in Bell County, Kentucky—evaluated by researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health—95% of participants improved in at least one of five health measures: body mass index (BMI), waist circumference, blood pressure, cholesterol, and/or HbA1c measurements of blood glucose.

This study showed that not only did program participants see results, they sustained their healthy behavior changes over time.

This project ultimately seeks to help turn the tide against obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease in Appalachian Kentucky through building on the power of positive peer influence to help people adopt healthy behaviors so they can live longer, healthier, and more productive lives.