

BREAKOUT Session 2B - ReImagine your Community

Wed Jan 17, 12:30 - 1:30 pm

[Full Summit Agenda Here](#)

[Tips for Zoom and Jamboard Here](#)

[Tips for Mentimeter Here](#)

Workshop 2B: Reimagining Our Communities with New Federal Funding

Description: Appalachia is at an unprecedented moment for community development opportunities, but how do we best respond to this moment? What are the barriers communities are facing? How can we help each other identify technical assistance and other resources for community and economic development? How do we translate federal opportunities to on the ground practical action? How do we break status quo patterns for under-resourced communities to get federal funding this time around?

For Sherene:

- Share the presentation that was created with us
- What the connections and barriers exist for under-resourced communities to get federal funding this time around?

Facilitator: Natalia Rudiak & Sherene Hess

Notetaker: Sionainn Rudek

Outcomes:

- **What are inspirational examples of local wins?**
- **What can communities offer each other? What kind of existing networks can communities plug into? What new connections need to grow?**
- **What kind of programming / support can ReImagine offer?**
 - **Structure or ideas for the Grant of the Month Club?**

Draft Agenda:

- 1) 5m - Natalia Rudiak, Introduction
 - a) Why we're here
 - i) [Mentimeter](#) - *What's one struggle you're having in connecting federal resources to your community?*
 - b) Outcomes:
 - i) Commissioner Sherene Hess, rural Indiana County with anchor small towns, tell us about your development local vision for sustainability and culture, integrating into the culture. Inspirational wins.
 - ii) What can communities offer each other? What kind of existing networks can communities plug into? What new connections need to grow?
 - iii) What kind of programming / support can ReImagine offer?

- (1) Structure or ideas for the Grant of the Month Club?
- 2) 10m - Commissioner Sherene Hess, Indiana County
 - a) Personal story + community development Powerpoint
 - b) Wins and outcomes
 - c) Continued barriers
 - 3) 25m - Discussion - Natalia facilitates discussion
 - a) Open it up to questions and comments. Note that we all have community-specific examples, as we talk about our issues, let's make it as relevant as to the whole group as possible.
 - b) What can communities offer each other? What kind of existing networks can communities plug into? What new connections need to grow?
 - c) What research needs done?
 - d) What stories need to be told?
 - e) Key partners that should be included?
 - f) How can ReImagine Appalachia support this work?
 - g) How can regional collaboration help grow this work?
 - 4) 5m - Grant of the Month Club -
<https://reimagineappalachia.org/epa-community-change-grant-office-hours/>
 - 5) [Mentimeter](#) - *what's one next step you're going to take after this session to connect your community to federal resources?*

Notes:

- This is the time to apply for funding!

Commissioner Hess:

- Try to center optimism
- [Northern Appalachian Folk Festival](#)
- People, Places and Projects: Reimagining Your Community with New Federal Funding (Indiana County)
 - Always comes back to people and places
 - Community revitalization (very intersectional)
 - Having a County Government as a partner is a huge asset, especially with workforce development and community revitalization
 - Community Conditions: coal closures, poverty
 - Created a task force to address shuttered coal plant job loss
 - Bottom up approach to answer questions and come up with solutions
 - Brought together a diverse group for facilitated discussion (facilitation is key)
 - Environmental groups
 - Educational groups
 - Building and construction
 - Economic development
 - Collaboration → talking and listening
 - Federal Funding:

- Look and see if there are any organizations offering collaborative funding cohorts etc.
- Mix of soft and hard power
- What's one struggle you're having in connecting federal resources to your community?
 - Overwhelming grant applications
 - Resources
 - Fast turnaround time

Natalia/RA:

- [ReImagine Your Community Visioning Session Project](#)
- Another RA Resource - Grant of the Month Club
 - Recognize some of these challenges → take a specific federal resource and doing a deep dive with communities
 - [EPA Community Change Grant](#) = first GOTM Club

Mentimeter:

What's one struggle you're having in connecting federal resources to your community?

Lack of experienced grantwriters	A majority of our council who are climate deniers	Federal grants have quick turnaround time.	matching funds for grants
Residents don't know how to find trustworthy people to do the work or are too overwhelmed with everyday life responsibilities to prioritize weatherization/efficiency improvement work.	Council who has suspended our climate action plan	Municipal leaders are following up. Not seeing it as worth their time? Not sure...need to send them a multimeter.	Capacity at the municipal and county level to keep track of opportunities and apply.

What's one struggle you're having in connecting federal resources to your community?

Competitiveness of programs	So many! Which grants would fit best?	Capacity to develop the team and concept at scale.	Org capacity to keep up with federal reporting
Overwhelming grant applications	Resources for help and meeting deadlines	Able to show these funds are worth going after.	Understanding of the role of boards to create and achieve vision/mission

What's one struggle you're having in connecting federal resources to your community?

Federal and state resources often require sustainability certification. Without it, our community suffers	capacity at the local level to follow through	Contact our grant writer with some of the info given the workshop chat.	Quantifying the opportunity cost of inaction in this brief moment
Getting local elected officials to GET IT!			

what's one next step you're going to take after this session to connect your community to federal resources?

Share the great info I received here

Stay positive and find examples

Questions/Discussion:

Question 1) What have you find helpful when it comes to communities helping each other? What kind of existing networks can communities plug into? What new connections need to grow?

- Climate Action Board
 - Found out that community wanted to do all sorts of things
 - Survey

- Municipal Leaders
 - Excited for what's coming up next and the opportunity to access federal funding
 - Community Change Grants are good to go for, longer time to apply
 - Talk Tuesday about coming back from trauma, substance abuse, and/or returning citizen = inspiring and the way to go
 - Focus on renewable energy, housing crisis, transportation
 - Everyone wants to be greener! It's NOW or never for our planet
 - Council of Governments (COG) → can be municipalities or county wide
 - Can apply for funds from EPA, but worry about how "sexy" it will look to EPA

- Cooperative Development
 - Provide technical assistance, business plan development, help folks interested in cooperatives (access significant capital)
 - Issue is the local support for the projects
 - How to convince people to support/how do we get some of this federal money to focus on this cooperative development work
 - A lot of pre-work training/educating people in a lot of different ways
 - A lot of them probably can start their construction/manufacturing businesses, but need time to find teams and create cooperative, then receive funding to start cooperative

- Looking for a way to develop local capacity to pull down federal money
- Having enough capacity is a big barrier
 - Need to understand how nonprofits work
 - Financial documents
 - What is the role of the Board of Directors? What is not their role?
 - How to run a nonprofit?
- CDFIs
 - There are mechanisms out there
- Housing ExPo
 - Bring together different community members that deal with housing issues
 - Do not have experience with city planner
 - City not really taking an active/proactive role in this
 - People want to work together but missing the driver (someone who can put the overarching vision together and facilitate/organize people)

Question 2) Have there been any resources that have been helpful for meeting project goals?

- Cohort with ARC - OVRDC
 - Led to the [Inspire grant](#)
 - ARC is led by a Commission composed of the Governors from each of the Region's 13 states, and a Federal Co-Chair who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Each year, the governors select a States' Co-Chair to lead the Commission in partnership with the Federal Co-Chair.
 - Each Appalachian Governor selects an appointee to represent their states' interests and priorities to the Commission. These representatives, referred to as State Alternates, are liaisons between the Governors and ARC Leadership. Every state also has a State Program Manager who is the state-level contact for ARC and facilitates ARC investments with ARC staff. Alternates and State Program Managers work closely with local organizations, including Local Development Districts, to guide ARC investment decisions and policy decisions. ARC staff review proposals, manage investments, and conduct research in cooperation with the states.
 - Addition is an issue in the region >> Inspire Grant is reopening
 - Collaboration between business and community action
 - Broadly: public private partnership
 - Success coach who acts as a caseworker → someone who works at the organization/business who is here to help employees with issues
 - Childcare
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - What is a Local Development District?

- Every region has its own LDD
- Get funding through the state but linked to ARC funding
- Boots on the ground middleman
- Try to facilitate federal and state dollars and local stakeholders
- Meetings with representatives from local counties
- Revolving loan fund
- Here's a link to all of the "Local Development Districts" in our Appalachian footprint - <https://www.arc.gov/local-development-districts/>
 - Can reach out to LDD (could be called rural development district) to see what middle person can provide in terms of assistance
- ARC INSPIRE grant info here: <https://www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/sud/>
- Suite of Social Services set up next to the local prison
 - WORC
 - Substance abuse place
 - Wrap around services
 - When applying to grants, it helps to explain the big picture and specify how much you need this year
- Has anyone seen good examples showing how ARPA and other federal stimulus funding received by local governments has been appropriated/used?
 - Circle
 - Work with communities to focus on these issues that we have discussed over a three year period
 - Have community support and federal funding
- Community Census
 - Communities tell us what data they would like to have collected
 - Hire people in the community, train and equip them to go out and talk to their neighbors
 - Gather information and use data to connect people with resource they said they needed
 - When doing a survey, ask people to volunteer and to connect with resources
 - Able to use tax credit funding
 - Now that they have data, what is the community going to do with the data and get funding
 - Community can own this data