

BREAKOUT Session - Engaging the community in visioning and planning for new opportunities

Thursday October 5, 4:05 - 4:50 PM EST

[Full Agenda Linked Here](#)

Notes

- These projects are particularly important to have a multi-stakeholder vision process
- How can we make sure the community stakeholders have a voice in the process?
- Participant interest in this work:
 - Housing
 - Many coal-fired power plants and open coal ash ponds; looking to redevelop and involve/engage community
 - Coal reclamation, impact of open pit strip mining
 - Job loss in community, better address the issue through the Building Resilience Economies in Coal Communities
 - Keeping rails open to help with economic development
 - Southern WV Coal impacted communities - figure out what they want to do with coal impacted communities (community coaching)
 - Community Based groups/Task Force in Indiana County - building resiliency with the prospect that coal-fired power plants would eventually closed, identity assets, challenges, opportunities for community engagement and sustainability
 - Better understand community needs
 - How the transition to renewable energy and green manufacturing can build wealth in communities that lack wealth for historical reasons
 - Community Land Trusts, alternative land tenure arrangement (as opposed to private property arrangements)
 - Community participation and control that builds the economy in a sustainable way
 - Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services - support communities in creating shared vision; think about visioning from a legal perspective, bring people in who are often left out of these community visioning conversations
 - Brownfield site, mixed-use development
 - Legal protections and precedents for CBAs, especially for projects getting Federal Tax Credits

- Discussion Questions:

1) How do we resource communities to do this work? Developers have money and other organizations have resources - how to get communities involved when resources are sparse?

- a) Create basic plans: Community Development Plan *separate* from Economic Development Plan; public vs. private
 - i) The two work together but are different
- b) National Philanthropic Organizations seeking to fund community coalitions that would play a Community Benefits negotiation role. And local foundations on a smaller scale. Certainly inadequate and could be scaled up
 - i) Dream.org
 - ii) Heartland Fund
 - iii) Just Transition Fund
- c) Financial Resources for smaller villages that are coal impacted are often unavailable - needs to be a way to financially support the planning process
- d) Fair Shake provides pro-bono and sliding-fee-scale legal representation in PA, OH & WV, including representing community coalitions in Community Benefits negotiations. Feel free to reach out if anyone wants to chat more - mniebler@fairshake-els.org
- e) Many different resources and funds for a lot of different things - important to understand specific terminology:
 - i) Newer terminology, typically tied to a private sector project (ex. Battery manufacturer looking for DOE funding, DOE requires Battery manufacturer must have CBP):
 - (1) Community Benefit Plan (CBP)
 - (2) Community Benefit Agreement (CBA)
 - (3) Examples can be found [here](#) and [here](#)
 - ii) Every region *should* be doing, and if not should start, public:
 - (1) Community Development Plan
 - (2) Economic Development Plan
- f) Important to create coalitions - to help inform what community agreements are wanted from the private entity for CBP
- g) ReImagine Appalachia has a listserv for grant opportunities (there are grants for writing grants!) - [sign up here](#).
- h) Gap between type of community organization we need and the type of community funding the government wants to see

- i) Connect ecosystems to people looking for information within the ecosystems, covers policy work, nonprofit sector, private sector - trying to figure out how to address the issues
- j) Working together to create support resources/template that fit Federal funding requirements
- k) Mostly top-down funding, where do you see the typical economic development and organizations (LDDs, Chambers, etc.) role being in this work?
 - i) ReImagine Appalachia has been reaching out to LDDs in coal communities, mid-success but need to keep pushing to try and find an in to connect with resources
 - ii) Can be hard to “sell” the idea of Community Benefits
- l) Energy Resilience - starting from the recognition that the renewable energy technology are completely scalable, need to enable this scaling