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Introduction
The West Virginia Development Office contracted with Collective Impact, LLC to conduct a review of the Flex-E-Grant (FEG) program to learn more about what works to support community innovation and to identify the degree to which the FEG program is effective in supporting rural community development. In addition, there is interest in identifying a model for local development in rural small town communities which can be used in future years that would lead to sustainable and ongoing community capacity building and positive changes in local conditions. This review was intended to inform a number of objectives identified by the WV Development Office including:

- Learn more about what works to support community innovation.
- Define pre-requisite local community conditions that need to be in place for successful projects.
- Provide recommendations for the design and implementation of the Flex E Grant program for the future that will promote the key factors identified for community readiness and the ability to create, institutionalize, and sustain community improvement efforts.
- Develop a “model” of effective change that constitutes community readiness and capacity in rural areas.
- Help funders make better grant award decisions – i.e. support those applicants likely to be successful.

The consultants were instructed to conduct a review of the existing Flex-E Grant program to inform a model for rural CED that would have potential to “move the needle”. In that regard the WVDO was not interested in the type of evaluations that had been conducted in the past which were focused on the degree to which grantees did what they said they would do. The purpose of the current review is to determine if the FEG program is effective in promoting community change and broad-based community capacity building; and to provide recommendations for “re-tooling or redefining” the Flex-E Grant program to achieve place-based community-level outcomes.

The FEG program is a fifteen-year-old small grants program making awards to non-profit organizations, public agencies, colleges or universities, regional planning and development councils, or cooperative partnerships involving any of these entities. Program partners contributing to FEG support include the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, and the West Virginia Development Office. Grants of up to $10,000 have been awarded to support a wide range of individual,
organizational, or community-wide capacity building activities in West Virginia. FEG funds cannot be used for administrative costs, construction costs, equipment purchases, or indirect costs. The program is particularly focused on capacity building projects in distressed, at-risk, and transitional counties as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

The review of the FEG program was comprehensive in scope and was carried out over a nine-month period from July, 2016 to March, 2017. The review included a number of components including:

- **Planning meetings**: Two (2) planning sessions were held with the WVDO project contact and Collective Impact consultant.
- **Pre-Assessment Phase Review**: Summaries of FEG project awards for FY 2009 through FY 2013 were reviewed by Collective Impact, LLC - a total of 183 projects.
- **Phase 1 Review-Step 1**: A more in-depth review of those projects identified for further study – 40 projects.
- **Phase 1 Review-Step 2**: A total of 25 FEG projects were selected based on a content analysis of the narrative reports submitted representing 23 separate grantees.
- **Phase 2 Survey**: A survey was developed to collect further information from the 23 grantees identified and a total of 10 FEG projects returned one or more surveys completed by local team members.
- **Phase 2 Site Visits**: Site visits were conducted with eleven (11) projects by a Collective Impact consultant. A total of 27 people participated in the site visits.
- **Literature Review**: A review of the literature related to community economic development in rural areas was prepared by the project researcher.
- **Key Informant Interviews**: Telephone interviews were held with four (4) national and state community development experts to further inform and supplement the literature review.
- **Stakeholders Meeting**: A meeting was held with 14 key stakeholders from across the state and the West Virginia Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) representative to discuss preliminary findings from the site visits and review various community economic development (CED) models for rural areas.

It is important to recognize that all of the above review and assessment components contribute to and inform the final report and recommendations for the FEG program, including the proposed model for “moving the needle” in community development in the state.

The following terms are defined for purposes of this research:

**“Community”** – A group of people who live in the same geographically defined area such as a city or town. For purposes of the research there is an intentional focus on rural small town Appalachian communities in West Virginia.
“Community Capacity” – The level of resources, assets, human capital, and social capital available to a group of people (community of common purpose) to achieve the results they want and care about.

“Organizational Capacity” – The level of human resources, physical and material resources, financial resources, and information resources available to a specific organization to achieve that organizations goals.

“Individual Capacity” – Skills and abilities of a particular individual which can be applied to achieve personal, organizational, or community-wide results.

“Community of Common Purpose” – A group of community residents who are connected through a shared vision for community change.

“Complex Adaptive System” – Dynamic systems able to adapt in and evolve with a changing environment.

“Asset” – What a community values. What people want to keep, build upon, and sustain for future generations.

“Community Capitals” – Types of capital or wealth contributing to sustainable community development. Seven community capitals are recognized in the literature (Flora, Flora & Fey, 2004) – natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built.

“Social Capital” - the product of social interactions that may contribute to the social, civic or economic well-being of a “community of common purpose”. The interactions draw on knowledge and identity resources and simultaneously use and build stores of social capital. The nature of the social capital depends on various qualitative and quantitative dimensions of the interactions in which it is produced, such as the quality of the internal-external interactions, the historicity, the reciprocity, the trust, and the shared values and norms.

Acronyms commonly used in this review include:

WVDO – West Virginia Development Office
CED - Community Economic Development
FEG - Flex-E Grant
CAS - Complex Adaptive System
Review of the Literature

There are unique challenges which must be overcome related to community economic development in isolated rural areas. As stated by the Community Development Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco:

“Rural places pose unique challenges in terms of both economic and community development. Remoteness, lack of public infrastructure, and low population densities all make attracting private enterprise difficult. The sheer diversity of rural America means that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions”.

Purpose of the Literature Review

The literature review is one component of the overall project. A review of the literature related to underlying theory and models for effective community development provides information that informs recommendations about what local conditions, processes and models tend to lead to positive results in rural communities. Other components of the FEG review have included a comprehensive review of grant funded projects, a survey of selected grantees, site visits with selected communities supported by the FEG program who have pursued CED initiatives, and a meeting of key CED stakeholders.

The review of the literature is focused on the theory, local processes, and existing models to support community development in rural areas. The research examines underlying theory that is driving current thinking about CED and looks at effective practices that have the potential to promote community-wide outcomes that improve local quality of life for community residents. Such approaches are qualitatively different than individual or organizational development. Although individual and organizational capacity building undoubtedly contributes to sustainable community-wide development, the literature review provided here is intentionally focused on identification of local community conditions and practices that have the potential for sustainable community-wide change.

The review of the literature included a web-based search of resources focused on community development, development models, applications of complexity theory to local development, asset-based approaches, and other topics related to successful CED in rural areas.

In addition, telephone interviews were conducted with several persons with extensive experience in CED work in rural Appalachia and other areas. The review was further...
informed by personal conversations the researcher has had with national and international research and practice professionals over several years.

**Complex Adaptive Systems**

The literature related to how communities improve local conditions in a sustainable way increasingly considers (and in some cases fully embraces) the implications of complexity theory and the principles of complex adaptive systems (CAS). Although economic conditions in a rural community may, at times, be improved by an influx of substantial outside investment such as a major manufacturing plant creating good jobs for community residents, sustainable community economic development (CED) is far more likely to occur through a complex network of interconnected players engaging with one-another in ways that produce an ongoing process of discovery, feedback, learning, and emergence. Such a network of interconnected players may include individuals, organizations, businesses, public agencies, and other community agents. When these players are bound together by a shared vision for an improved quality of life, a dynamic “community of common purpose” is formed which exhibits CAS characteristics. The emergent ideas, solutions, and projects that result from this process are unpredictable in advance. Agreement on strategies and actions to promote CED is shaped by the interactions among the players, and the continual feedback loops established as diverse community agents consider new information and learn from that new information and one another. This is a process that no single organization or individual can predict or control, and no predetermined solution can achieve; thus, it is important to engage many people and organizations from different sectors of the community.

The Overseas Development Institute³ based in London is one of the many organizations applying complexity theory to development work. CED is addressed through a process referred to as “adaptive development”. This approach responds to several key understandings about development flowing from what is known about CAS: (1) that development actors may not be able to fully grasp the circumstances on the ground until engaged; (2) that these circumstances often change in rapid, complex, and unpredictable ways; and (3) that the complexity of development processes means actors rarely know at the outset how to achieve a given development outcome – even if there is agreement on the outcome of interest.⁴

Ralph Stacey, Professor of Management and Director of the Complexity and Management Center at the University of Hertfordshire in Great Britain outlines a compelling case that any community of common purpose is a complex adaptive system. Such a system is defined as an ensemble of independent agents:

- Who interact with one another to create an eco-system,
- Whose interaction is defined by a change of information,
- Who self-organize in non-linear ways to produce emergent results,

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³ https://www.odi.org/
• Who exhibit characteristics of both order and chaos, and
• Who evolve over time.  

The literature also indicates it is important (and necessary) to involve a broad diversity of local community residents and organizations in a community of common purpose focused on CED efforts. The “Medici Effect” is a term used for an explosion of innovative ideas at the place where different fields meet. Merging the ideas or concepts usually viewed as separate and distinct, produces new approaches that would otherwise not be considered. When people from different fields, disciplines, or cultures intersect and engage one another, creative new ideas and innovative solutions are often the result. This complex adaptive process of “thinking together” across normally accepted boundaries is necessary to catalyze creative ideas.

Leadership in Complex Adaptive Systems

Complex problems including rural economic development are fundamentally different than technical problems. A technical problem is well-defined and can usually be addressed through a simple logic model – an If-Then type of analysis. We know from experience that a linear solution will produce a desired outcome when dealing with technical problems.

For example:

If someone has a bacterial infection;

Then, treatment with an antibiotic drug will resolve the problem.

Predetermined solutions work best when (1) technical expertise is required, (2) the consequences of actions are predictable, and (3) some central authority is in a position to assure necessary action is taken. A single individual or organization is generally able to solve technical problems.

Our more traditional view of leadership – people who set the direction, make key decisions, and possess the technical knowledge necessary to solve problems – is often effective when dealing with these technical issues. There is convincing evidence in the literature, however, that strategic planning as it is normally used is ineffective in addressing complex problems such as how best to improve rural community conditions. As Henry Mintzberg, Canadian academic, management consultant, and author states: “While strategic planning is well suited for technical challenges, when we are faced with adaptive challenges, we should rely on strategic thinking”.

Complex adaptive problems are not well defined, answers are not known in advance, and many different agents (stakeholders) are involved that bring different perspectives to possible

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5 Stacey, R. Complexity and Creativity in Organization, 1996
6 Johansson, F. The Medici Effect,
solutions. Adaptive problems require innovation and learning through feedback loops that inform possible action. Adaptive leadership is a necessary component; this type of leadership involves managing the conditions that enable those people and organizations interested in addressing complex social issues to figure out and undertake solutions that require changes in their ways of thinking and working together.  

Peter Senge, Director of the Center for Organizational Learning at MIT's Sloan School of Management believes leaders of adaptive processes are designers, stewards, and teachers.

As Senge states, the role of leadership within a learning organization is managing “creative tension”. This “creative tension” describes the gap between current reality and vision which can only be resolved by either working to change current reality over a sustained period or by lowering the vision to be more in keeping with the current state of affairs. Unfortunately, too many rural Appalachian communities when confronted with this phenomenon often deal with creative tension by lowering their vision.

Peter Hille, President of the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development in Kentucky shared a number of case studies of local leaders with the researcher that illustrate the type of leaderful qualities needed to negotiate complex systems. The case studies conducted prepared by Dr. Vaughn Grisham and Brushy Fork Institute looked at successful community leaders working in rural Appalachia. These leaders exhibit the characteristics of adaptive leadership including: non-acceptance of the status quo, listening to others, promoting learning, and keeping a vision for change over the long term.

The hopelessness and helplessness often observed in many smaller Appalachian communities can be overcome through adaptive leadership and shared vision that is reinforced over a sustained period through incremental but highly visible progress. Addressing complex adaptive issues becomes difficult or impossible, however, when sufficient support for rural CED is not available over a long enough period of time to produce good solutions.

**Implications of Complexity Theory for CED**

The literature about complex systems as applied to CED suggest that top-down interventions and a-priori planning will either not make much difference or have an unpredicted and perhaps counter-productive effect. Such linear approaches to development are based on an underlying assumption - a particular action will reliably result in a predictable and known

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11 Innes, J. & Booher, D. Indicators for Sustainable Communities – A Strategy Building on Complexity Theory and Distributed Intelligence, 1996.
outcome. This linear approach is inconsistent with what we know about how complex systems work. It is therefore important and instructive to consider the characteristics of CAS and how such systems function over time.

Defining characteristics of CAS are summarized in the following table with likely implications for rural CED.

### CAS Properties and Their Implications for CED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of a Complex Adaptive System</th>
<th>What This May Mean for Community Economic Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A network of many agents.</td>
<td>More diversity of opinion leads to better solutions. Local groups concerned with CED need to be inclusive and inviting of individuals, organizations, government officials, business owners and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a state of non-equilibrium.</td>
<td>Disruption, confusion, frustration, disagreement and chaos are necessary conditions to awaken creativity and find new solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributed control.</td>
<td>Overall behavior of the group cannot be explained as the sum of the parts. The whole is more than and different from the individual agents making up the system. Adaptive leadership is required in order to continually expand and sustain a vision for change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectivity.</td>
<td>People (agents) engaged in interactions to promote CED must be connected to each other and to the community eco-system. A decision or action by one agent influences all but not in any uniform or predictable way. The network needs to be both horizontal and inclusionary across all parts of the community and vertical to connect the community to outside resources and expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-evolution.</td>
<td>The network (or community of common purpose) changes based on interaction among the agents and the environment. New information is necessary for change to take place. Information that is seen as meaningful is transmitted within the network and acted upon generating new insights. Community members begin to change how they see their community and explore new possibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive dependence on initial conditions.</td>
<td>When the initial rules governing interaction, mental models, available information, or other initial conditions are changed there is no linear correlation with outcomes. Small changes in the way people look at their community, do business with one another, expose themselves to new information, and interact can have surprising, dramatic, and unpredictable effects on community conditions, rural CED, and local quality of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent order.</td>
<td>New and unexpected possibilities, projects, and ways of doing business result from non-linear feedback loops among those agents participating in the CED process. The process of involving diverse agents is dissipative in nature as the community of common purpose engages in the CED process and lets go of its present form in order to reorganize in a way more suited to changes in the environment. Over time, this can result in an explosion of innovation and constructive action as more and more people in the community become involved and share a collective vision for their community.</td>
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</table>
Given the extensive literature and research demonstrating that any group of people engaged in a collective process is a complex system, the underlying characteristics of CAS are important to understand in the context of rural development. The construction of any model to support CED in rural areas will be significantly informed and more likely to result in desired outcomes when the lessons learned from complex processes are applied. Local groups engaged in a CED process need to operate within what Stacey describes as “the zone of complexity” where traditional problem solving approaches are not very effective. This is the zone of high creativity, innovation, and breaking with the past to create new modes of operating.  

Review of Process Models for Community Development

A number of rural CED models and processes were identified and reviewed in order to identify commonalities that tend to be important to the CED process and successful community outcomes. Key elements of these models are summarized and discussed in the following sections.

The Tupelo Experience

One of the better known and most instructive case studies informing rural CED is based on the dramatic results obtained in Tupelo Mississippi. The Tupelo experience has been studied by Vaugh Grisham at the McLean Institute for Community Development at the University of Mississippi.

Dr. Grisham's case study is the basis for the Tupelo Model of Community Development. The model recognizes a hierarchical progression beginning with human development and leadership development which leads to organizational development, community development, and ultimately, economic development. This model recognizes the importance of human development and adequate stores of human capital. As Grisham and Gurwitt put it: People were not so much the answer to problems as the raw material from which answers could be crafted. Connecting people and community institutions is the basis for balanced and sustainable economic development.  

13 Grisham, V. & Gurwitt, R. Hand in Hand: Community and Economic Development in Tupelo,
Some of the guiding principles for CED emerging from the Tupelo experience include:

- Local people must address local problems.
- Each person in the community is a resource.
- The goal is to help people help themselves.
- The poorest members of the community should be full partners in helping to design efforts.
- Leadership is a prime ingredient.
- Development must be done both locally and regionally to achieve full benefits.
- Never turn the CED process over to any organization that does not involve the people of the community.
- Expenditures to support CED are an investment that will generate returns to the investors. People with money have both a responsibility and a self-interest in the development of their community.

In 2001, Michael Winer, author of the Collaboration Handbook and nationally known consultant examined the Tupelo experience from his perspective of having worked with local collaborative groups across the nation. The analysis done by Mr. Winer led him to four conclusions related to key factors influencing successful CED:

1. The process requires the constant influence of a single individual who has a vision for change and the means to influence that change.
2. The ability to continually achieve small successes that have an immediate pay-back to investors and bring observable improvement to people's lives.
3. Meticulous record keeping and effective evaluation.
4. The formation of a community-wide system (on-going structure and process) that institutionalizes the change.\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{Future Generations – a school for communities}

The Future Generations Model for community development has been used to promote development in rural areas around the globe. The process is based on four foundational principles:

- **Build from community success.** Change grows from within communities and is built upon existing strengths in a community.
- **Three way partnerships.** A three-way partnership is needed for sustainable change and must be supported by local officials and informed experts.
- **Evidence-based decisions.** All three partners (community members, officials, experts) must work from objective data about the local situation.

\textsuperscript{14} Unpublished conversations among Michael Winer, Peter Hille, Steve Heasley and others involved in CED, 2001.
Changes in Community Behavior. Those involved must be willing to change their behaviors in order to achieve lasting results. Community enthusiasm becomes contagious through feedback loops that create new expectations and community momentum redefines the collective future.

This model defines seven essential steps that produce a cycle of community effort:

Building community capacity (1, 2 & 3)
1. Create a coordinating committee to distribute responsibility.
2. Identify prior successes.
3. Study other communities and adapt what works.

Choosing a vision (4&5)
4. Gather information and conduct self-evaluation based on objective data.
5. Engage in effective decision making through data driven discussion that leads to solutions.

Taking action (6&7)
6. Start popular projects to build momentum.
7. Maintain momentum and improve what works.

The Future Generations process has been used in at least 26 countries to promote CED in both rural and urban environments.

Three Way Partnership To Promote Sustainable Development
Top Down - Bottom Up - Outside In

FSG (Foundation Strategy Group) - Collective Impact
The approach used by FSG is based on five key conditions that need to be present within a community of common purpose in order to produce sustainable social change. These conditions are:
1. All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.

2. Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

3. Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

4. Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

5. Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.

**Strong Rural Communities**

This model was developed by the South Worcestershire Rural Communities Program in England. Key elements in this approach that contribute to CED include:

- Community mobilization to identify volunteers interested and willing to serve as a community of common purpose and coordinate the community effort to improve local conditions.
- Spaces to meet where community members can interact and learn from one another.
- Engagement of diverse groups and individuals in the conversation.
- Exploration of shared values and sense of community.
- Effective communication through a variety of methods to keep community members informed.
This South Worcestershire model also recognizes the importance of “professional support” which might include local officials and outside experts necessary to remove barriers that may be encountered, provide technical support, and link volunteers to resources beyond the traditional boundaries of the community.

**Community Design Innovations**

This model was developed by Collective Impact, LLC as an approach for facilitating comprehensive and holistic community or system development. Using a sunflower as a metaphor, this model for community development focuses on key components necessary to improve community conditions including leadership development, a team of well informed and highly functioning individuals drawn from key stakeholders, and development of a community design plan to guide the work.

The goal of the Community Design Innovations approach is to establish a “thriving community”. One that does more than survive – a community that blooms with economic security and a high quality of life. Key processes that define the Community Design Innovations model include:

**Grass roots** involvement of a diversity of stakeholders.

**Aim** – To identify and aspire to a collective vision.

**Assess** – Identify assets, strengths, and opportunities within the community that contribute to successful outcomes.

**Plan** – Development of a *Community Design Plan* which increases ability to implement identified solutions within a comprehensive design and leverage funding and support for executing priority projects.

**Execute** – Carrying out the necessary steps to reach desired outcomes and improve community conditions. To follow through, to work the plan, to do what we said we’d do.

**Evaluate** – Using data to determine if progress is being made and inform changes in how the work is being carried out.

The Community Design Innovations approach values and gives attention to ongoing “catalytic” community processes including:

**Team Development and Capacity Building** – *Team Development* is the act of deliberately setting out to learn and practice getting better at working together as a team. *Capacity Building* is the planned process used to deepen our individual and collective abilities to positively contribute to the work of innovative community development.
Learning with Peers and Experts - The "fertilizer" of the Community Design Innovations model is the sharing of our own experiences and insights with each other, as well as bringing in the expertise of others to help move us toward our collective vision.

Community Engagement and Public Relations - The tools and techniques used to effectively communicate ideas, actions, and plans so that members of the community participate in developing their neighborhoods.

Cultural Competence - an ability to understand and interact effectively with people of different cultural backgrounds. Culture is shaped by economics, gender, spiritual beliefs, race, ethnicity, and many other factors.

Innovation, Diffusion, and Legacy - Innovation is the use of ideas and approaches to produce novel results. Diffusion is the act of spreading ideas and approaches to others for modification and application to their own circumstances. Legacy is to leave behind something of value for generations to come.

Triple Bottom Line - People, planet, and profit together represent the triple bottom line. They are three indicators that many corporations and communities are using to measure the impact of their work. The triple bottom line can also be used as an assessment tool by asking; “how might this decision: affect our residents; affect our environment; and affect our prosperity?”

West Virginia Community Development HUB

The WV HUB uses a model for their development work with local communities that incorporates several components of the other models reviewed and also recognizes the need for community coaching as a key element that moves local communities of common purpose forward. Other elements of the HUB approach involve working with engaged citizens through a community coaching process to assist them in working through issues they may encounter and to build local capacities necessary for CED. Visioning, assessment of local capacities, and planning are acknowledged as necessary components within this model; and four types of specific capacity building are referenced:

1. Leadership development,
2. Organizational development,
3. Social Capital development, and
4. Resource development.
The HUB model also provides for small grants to communities to support the CED process. Staff of the HUB identify several conditions or initial expectations for community groups including: a collaborative partnership, diverse involvement of community stakeholders, an inclusive process, and a focus on new perspectives and ideas about the local community. Staff also emphasize the need for technical assistance provided through community coaches particularly around issues related to accessing ongoing financial support for development projects.  

**MACED Model for Entrepreneurial CED**

An emerging model for rural CED has been developed by the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development. This model was shared with the researcher by Peter Hille, current President of MACED. The model is based on a dynamic relationship between the entrepreneurial ecosystem, local enterprises, and likely market opportunities for rural Appalachian areas. The “Entrepreneurial Ecosystem” supports new entrepreneurs who in turn produce goods and services which feed into markets. MACED has identified promising market sectors particularly suited to communities in the Appalachian region. These market opportunities tend to flow from an examination of the community capitals present in many rural communities and include energy, forestry, broadband development, tourism, local food, and health care. The MACED model results in a number of community benefits emanating from regional economic transition focused on realistic market opportunities.

15 Phone interview with Stephanie Tyree, Executive Director.
Summary and Conclusions from CED Models Reviewed

Four (4) of the models outlined above have been used to guide CED related work with local communities in West Virginia. All seven (7) of the models appear to have common elements which can inform future decisions about what works in rural Appalachian communities. These common elements include:

Community Engagement - All CED models recognize the importance of engaging community members in the development process. Some of these models recognize and intentionally emphasize the need for a wide diversity of opinion and ideas.

Leadership - Leadership is a key component found in all models reviewed and ongoing leadership development is valuable. The differences between technical leadership and adaptive leadership are not always obvious within these models.

Learning - Working from good information and learning from others engaged in the process is important. Each model identifies a need for effective communication. Some approaches appear to place special emphasis on learning from outside experts or community coaches while others are more organic and rely more on self-discovery among those engaged in the process.

Planning - a plan that outlines who will do what is an explicit component of most models. It is not clear from this limited review to what extent each of the models call for a traditional strategic plan or at what point in the process such a plan is most useful.

Evaluation - Each model for CED explicitly addresses or implies through predicted outcomes that some type of evaluative process is needed in order to demonstrate progress and accomplishments to community members. Formal evaluation is, however, not explicit in these models – monitoring indicators that are meaningful to the community appear to be more important.

Sustaining and Managing Change – The models reviewed are somewhat mixed as to how they incorporate new structures or community institutions to sustain or institutionalize change. Some are explicit about the need to do so while other models do not appear to acknowledge a need for ongoing management of changing local conditions.

Other Paradigms That Inform Rural Community Development

In addition to the increasing interest in applying principles of complex adaptive systems to the CED process already discussed, there is growing evidence that approaching CED in rural areas from a perspective of examining what is good about the community as opposed to what problems exist promotes positive change. Redefining community wealth and examining all the assets available to local communities that can be leveraged to improve the quality of life of community members is being shown to produce positive results.

The importance of social capital within the community cannot be over-emphasized as a key component and pre-requisite condition for CED.

“Although some…continue to believe that healthy economies create vibrant communities, in fact, the reverse is more often the case. A strong community is a prerequisite for creating a healthy economy because it alone produces social trust.”

- Jeremy Rifkin, Economic & Social Theorist and Adviser to the European Union.
There is a wealth of evidence in the literature that indicates communities with adequate stores of social capital including shared values, trust in fellow citizens and community institutions, and a high degree of connectivity, are well positioned to move forward with CED. Social capital is increasingly seen in the literature as a vital ingredient of economic development around the world. Scores of studies of rural development have shown that a vigorous network of indigenous grassroots associations can be as essential to growth as financial investment, appropriate technology, or getting prices right. Government interventions that ignore the importance of social infrastructure can go seriously awry.\(^\text{16}\)

Other researchers have emphasized the link between learning, which complexity theory tells us is an essential ingredient, and the ability for communities to change local conditions and pursue economic development. Although the quality and quantity of the prevailing social and economic conditions contribute to desired civic and economic outcomes, these factors alone are not sufficient to achieve such outcomes. Human agency, exerted through social interactions, creates the processes of learning and change which, in turn, tends to produce economic growth.\(^\text{17}\)

Groundbreaking research in 1993 by Cornelia and Jan Flora examined the characteristics of entrepreneurial communities. The researchers found those rural communities that were most successful in supporting a healthy sustainable process of community economic development had a considerable degree of social infrastructure (the group-level, interactive aspect of organizations or institutions), and this social infrastructure is the key to linking individual leadership to physical infrastructure and to facilitating community development.\(^\text{18}\)

Multiple types of capital were defined from this and subsequent research and these “community capitals” establish asset domains that can be used by rural communities to assess local resources and identify those community assets that might be leveraged for CED. In 2003, the types of capital present within communities was further developed into the “community capitals framework”. In addition to identifying the capitals and the role each plays in community economic development, this approach also focuses on the interaction among these seven capitals as well as how investments in one capital can build assets in others.\(^\text{19}\) The community capitals framework is being used in many countries as a way for local rural communities to examine assets and think more creatively about a CED process to improve their community. The

\[^{16}\text{Putnam, R. The Prosperous Community – Social Capital and Public Life, 1993.}\]
\[^{17}\text{Falk, I & Kilpatrick, S. What is Social Capital? A Study of Interaction in a Rural Community, 1999.}\]
\[^{19}\text{Flora, Flora, & Fey, 2004.}\]
approach is closely aligned with new ways of viewing local economic conditions and the types of wealth found within local communities.

This new paradigm for rural development suggests that traditional ways of thinking about the wealth of communities has focused far too much on concepts like gross domestic product (GDP) and investments of financial capital. This often leads to a desire to attract new industry that offers “good jobs” and too little attention to other forms of wealth that can be leveraged for effective CED in rural areas.

In recent years, this has been recognized by leaders of developed countries who have been examining ways to measure prosperity using a broader range of indicators more related to the concept of well-being and less related to traditional definitions of national wealth as measured by the GDP. A 2009 study on alternatives to GDP, commissioned by French president Nicolas Sarkozy and led by economists Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz, and Jean-Paul Fitoussi points out that many factors relevant to the overall well-being of a society are often left out of the equation. This was also recognized by Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom who announced in 2010 that the UK Office for National Statistics would start measuring the “subjective well-being” of citizens to help guide national policy.

The rural development model developed by the Rural Economic Policy Program of the Aspen Institute also acknowledges the importance of examining community assets. The Aspen Institute model is based on a “rural development triangle” consisting of civic capacity, economic development, and stewardship. The partners of the Rural Economic Policy Program state: “Community stewardship is made possible when rural citizens acknowledge the value of their resources and engage in civic dialogue to determine, as a community, how and which resources should be developed or preserved.”

The Wealthworks Initiative supported by the Ford Foundation and developed by the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group uses the community capitals framework as a way to assess community assets and explore local market opportunities in rural areas. This approach has

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Capital</th>
<th>The environment, natural beauty, lakes, rivers and streams, forests, wildlife, soil, the local landscape.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Capital</td>
<td>Ethnicity, generations, stories and traditions, spirituality, habits, and heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Capital</td>
<td>All the skills and abilities of people, leadership, knowledge, and the ability to access resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital</td>
<td>Groups, organizations, networks in the community, the sense of belonging, bonds between people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Capital</td>
<td>Connections to people in power, access to resources, leverage, and influence to achieve goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built Capital</td>
<td>Buildings and infrastructure—schools, roads, water and sewer systems, and main streets in a community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Capital</td>
<td>Money, charitable giving, grants, access to funding, and wealth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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three major components – exploring community capitals, identifying market opportunities, and linking community capital to the market opportunity by constructing a value chain.\textsuperscript{22}

The basic principles of the “\textit{Genuine Wealth}” model as outlined by the Canadian economist Mark Anielski also addresses community capital in a broad way and this model may also be useful to develop a more comprehensive approach to development in rural communities. Anielski discusses the genuine wealth of communities which extends across multiple asset domains. Community wealth is, therefore, much more than financial assets; it includes many other types of capital that contribute to quality of life and the well-being of local people.\textsuperscript{23} These assets or stores of community capital can be tapped to improve local conditions and support development in rural areas.

Another closely related construct for looking at community assets is outlined by McKnight and Kretzman in their discussion of asset-based community development. They describe five types of assets found in any community:

- the skills of local residents,
- the power of local associations,
- the resources of public, private and non-profit institutions,
- the physical infrastructure and space in a community,
- the economic resources and potential of local places, and
- the local history and culture of a neighborhood.\textsuperscript{24}

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCD) located at the Stearns Center for Community-Based Service Learning at DePaul University has been carrying out the types of development work discussed by McKnight and Kretzman in 1993. The ABCD Institute focuses on CED related work based on what they describe as a large and growing movement that considers local assets as the primary building blocks of sustainable community development.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{Interviews with Key Informants}

To further inform the literature review, the researcher held telephone interviews/conversations with several key informants familiar with rural CED in West Virginia and/or other rural communities. These informants included:

- Cornelia Butler Flora, Distinguished Professor of Sociology Emeritus, Iowa State University and Research Professor, Kansas State University.
- Peter Hille, President; Mountain Association for Community Economic Development, Berea, KY.

\textsuperscript{22} http://www.wealthworks.org/basics/wealthworks-your-region-introduction
\textsuperscript{23} Anielski, Mark, The Economics of Happiness - Building Genuine Wealth, 2013.
\textsuperscript{24} McKnight, J. & Kretzmann, J. \textit{Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community}, 1993.
\textsuperscript{25} https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/Pages/default.aspx
- Becky Anderson, Community Development Consultant and Founder of HandMade in America, Ashville, NC.
- Stephanie Tyree, Executive Director - West Virginia HUB, Charleston, WV.

These interviews served to confirm and validate many of the findings from the literature. Those persons interviewed were asked about the community conditions they believe need to be present in order to achieve successes related rural CED. The research, experience, and practice of these key informants led to the following conclusions:

- Inclusive collaborative partnerships are necessary. A wide diversity of community agents (individuals, organizations, churches, civic organizations, government, businesses, and others) need to be involved in discussions about how best to improve the community. New perspectives are needed—not just the usual suspects.
- Leadership (a “Spark Plug”) is needed over the long term. Leadership needs to be developed locally and successful local leaders need to exhibit qualities of adaptive leadership and avoid being perceived as authority figures.
- Examine strengths and assets within the community in a comprehensive manner. Discuss what people like about their community. Respect and encourage all ideas and views.
- Think about resources that could be enlisted—university resources, outside experts to help with technical problems.
- Acknowledge and explore self-interest of local people.
- Establish a learning community—review new information and learn from what other rural communities have done.
- Small incremental and visible successes are important.
- Measure progress. Identify indicators of progress that are meaningful to the community.
- Need for an organization or structure to deal with logistical issues without dictating process or expectations.
- Requires sustained effort over a long period of time.

These key informants also had some recommendations for how the FEG program might be carried out in the future including:

- Focus on communities where social capital exists. Communities where people have some history of working together and where people like each other. Where churches and civic organizations are involved in improving the community.
- Establish some form of local leadership development program focused on adaptive leadership and development of “Spark Plugs” that drive a vision forward.
- Engage communities in an asset-based approach. Explore all seven community capitals as an initial step in the CED process.
- Develop a pool of resources to support communities in their CED efforts and link local communities to the resources. May include university resources—student projects, TA in areas of grant management, financing options, etc.
- Bring people engaged in CED from different communities together to learn from one-another and share successes.
- Support CED across multiple grant cycles (over several years) so progress can be sustained over a sufficient length of time and a culture of development can be developed.
- Convene a Flex-E-Grant Advisory Group to provide ongoing feedback and suggestions and potentially serve as a pool of potential providers of ongoing support and technical assistance.

**Discussion and Conclusions**

The review of the literature was undertaken with the goals of the overall FEG review in mind. These goals include:

- Learn more about what works to support community innovation.
- Define pre-requisite local community conditions that need to be in place for successful projects.
- Provide recommendations for the design and implementation of the Flex E Grant program for the future that will promote the key factors identified for community readiness and the ability to create, institutionalize, and sustain community improvement efforts.
- Develop a “model” of effective change that constitutes community readiness and capacity in rural areas.
- Help funders make better grant award decisions – i.e. support those applicants likely to be successful.

The literature review strongly suggests the principles underlying all complex adaptive systems should be considered when supporting local communities. Some of the implications for CED are summarized in the chart on page 8 of the review. Sustainable CED cannot be accomplished over the short term. There is no evidence in the literature that investments in projects to address the capacity of a single organization or individual contribute substantially to achieving community wide outcomes. Neither is there any evidence in the literature that would lead to the conclusion that top-down, pre-determined solutions to community issues results in just and sustainable changes in local conditions. Further, traditional strategic planning is not effective in creating the culture of development necessary to “move the needle” in any significant way.

There are initial conditions supported in both the research literature and the extensive experience of key informants interviewed that are likely to produce the type of organic, grassroots development necessary over the long term. Although these local conditions should not necessarily be pre-requisites for investment of funds through the FEG program or other outside resources, they can serve as a guide to determine where support might be most effective and/or the types of support that might lead to sustainable development. These local community conditions include: (1) a willingness or demonstrated practice of involving many individuals, organizations, and community institutions including those that have been
marginalized and had little voice in the past, (2) an examination of community assets and identification of attributes that can be leveraged to improve local conditions and promote economic growth, (3) the presence of adaptive leadership within the community and a local infrastructure to develop additional adaptive leadership, (4) access to meaningful information and learning, and (5) sufficient social capital to allow for engagement and sustained effort over the long term.

The review of the literature tells us CED cannot be done for rural Appalachian communities and it cannot be done to them. It must be done by them. The challenge is how best to support local leaders, entrepreneurs, and all members of the community engaged in this complex and often frustrating process.
Process and Findings from the Review of the FEG Program

Review of FEG Funded Projects

Pre-Assessment Review

The initial review of 183 grant awards was designed to identify up to 50 projects that could best inform the goals of the overall FEG program review and assessment. Project descriptions were filtered based on a number of criteria (see Appendix 1). Since the researcher was specifically looking to identify FEG projects that emerged from community engagement and focused on community-wide benefits, those projects exclusively focused on training a limited number of individuals or supporting conference attendance of individuals were not considered for further study. Projects that were “consultant driven” and focused on organizational development within a specific agency or organization with limited or no community involvement were not considered in selecting projects for further review. Other types of projects filtered out were those that supported delivery of some specific direct service to a small group of individuals (generally children or youth). 40 FEG projects were identified as possible candidates for further study representing 22 individual counties and 6 multi-county areas. These 40 FEG projects appeared to have potential for contributing to broad based community economic development as opposed to being focused on building the capacity of individuals or a single organization. The report of the Pre-Assessment Phase review of the 183 FEG projects is included as Appendix 1.

Phase I Review

A content analysis of the narrative final reports from the 40 projects selected for further study during Phase I was conducted in order to identify up to 25 projects that would be considered for a site visit where the project would be discussed in more detail with persons involved in designing and implementing the FEG project. The content analysis was designed to assess each of the 40 FEG projects identified during the pre-assessment phase based on seven criteria identified in the literature as factors influencing successful CED outcomes. These criteria are:

- Were diverse community members engaged in the project?
- Did the project increase community capacity (as opposed to individual or organizational capacity)?
- Was the project supported by local government?
- Was the project informed by resource people or expertise from outside the community? If so, how useful was this?
- Did the project appear to have consistent leadership?
- Was there a capacity for record keeping and evaluation?
- Was there a community process in place or a local organization that could sustain any changes resulting from the project?
Based on the content analysis of the narrative reports 17 FEG projects were identified that appeared to demonstrate at least 4 of the 7 criteria outlined above. 8 additional projects were selected that, in the opinion of the consultant, might best inform the overall goals of the FEG program for a total of 25 FEG projects. 18 different counties and 3 multi-county areas are represented in the suggested list of 25 projects for further study and these counties are geographically distributed across West Virginia. These 25 FEG projects appeared to focus on CED that engaged community members and was not solely focused on human development of individuals or organizational development within a particular agency or organization. The narrative report summarizing the Phase I review of FEG supported projects is included as Appendix 2.

**Key Findings from Pre-Assessment and Phase 1 Review of the FEG Funded Projects**

The review of the 183 FEG grants awarded between FY2009 and FY2013 leads to a conclusion that relatively few projects funded during this period demonstrate indications they had the potential to significantly “move the needle” and meaningfully contribute to CED in rural communities over the long term.

- The initial review identified only 40 projects (22%) which appeared to have potential for ongoing CED work. The remaining 143 projects reviewed were focused solely on skill development of a small number of individuals (such as leadership training or conference attendance) or capacity building within a single organization or agency with no apparent direct impact on CED in the larger community.

- 4 or more of the 7 indicators used to assess the potential for sustainable and broad-based community economic development were identified in only 17 of the 183 projects (9.3%).

**Phase II Review**

A survey was designed to secure additional information from those 25 FEG grantees selected for possible site visits. The WV Development Office was not able to contact 6 of the 25 selected projects due to the initial grantee contact being no longer available; thus, a total of 19 FEG projects were initially selected to receive the survey. 2 additional projects were added to the list at the request of the FEG program. These two additional projects were focused on organizational development and were not initially included in the 25 projects resulting from the content analysis of the 40 projects selected in the pre-assessment phase of the study. Consequently, a total of 21 local projects received a request to complete the survey and 13 completed surveys were returned for analysis. 10 of the 21 FEG projects asked to complete the survey were represented in the survey responses (multiple survey responses were received for 2 of the projects). A report of findings from the survey responses received was prepared which documented how the selected projects had contributed to building community capacity.
in number of ways. The survey report is included as Appendix 3 including all survey responses and verbatim responses to open ended questions.

**Key Findings from Phase II Review and Survey of Selected FEG Grantees**

- The inability to locate a contact person for 6 of the 25 recommended projects considered for a site visit tends to indicate FEG funded projects are short-term and likely do not produce on-going CED activity at the local level.
- The lack of any survey response from 15 of the 25 FEG grantees contacted about a possible site visit is a further indication that the current structure and grant process for the FEG program may tend to promote short-term, time-limited efforts at the local level.
- 9 of the 10 FEG projects responding to the survey said their FEG project had a positive impact in the community and the remaining project indicated they were “not yet sure what the impact will be”.
- 6 of 10 projects surveyed said the project resulted in a better quality of life for community residents and the remaining 4 projects said it was “too soon to tell”.
- 84.6% of the local team members completing the survey indicated local citizens were involved in the FEG project and social capital was increased in the community.
- 84.6% indicated they increased ability to plan for needed change within the community.
- 69.2% said they learned “a lot” from outside experts that will benefit their community in the future.
- 61.5% improved their ability to keep records and evaluate progress.
- 61.5% reported local leadership skills were enhanced.
- 61.5% improved relationships among local governmental organizations and community members.
- 30.8% said the FEG project resulted in establishing some type of new organization to sustain progress.

**Site Visits**

Site visits were conducted with available local team members using a standardized interview protocol designed to identify key conditions and process steps leading to successful outcomes. Site visits were conducted with 11 projects one of which did not return a survey but agreed to a site visit to discuss their project. A total of 27 people participated in the site visit discussions. Descriptions of those projects participating in site visits and the site visit protocol may be found in Appendix 4. A written summary was prepared for each site and a content analysis of the site visit summaries was then conducted to identify cross-cutting themes and recommendations from the local FEG grantees participating. The summaries of the 11 site visits is included as Appendix 5.
Findings from the site visits include:

- 7 of the 11 local FEG projects were not able to involve more than 1 additional person who was involved in the FEG funded project in the site visit discussion and in 4 of the cases, the local contact was the only person involved. This seems to be another indicator that the current FEG program does not tend to promote ongoing CED activity in local communities over a sustained period.

- Access to expertise (higher education institutions, non-profit organizations, private consultants, architects, public agencies, etc.) and resources outside the community is considered important to success by those persons participating in all 11 site visit interviews; and 10 of the 11 projects visited reported the expertise or resource from outside their community was essential to accomplishment of project outcomes.

- Grass roots community involvement was recognized by 9 of the 11 FEG projects as having been key to successful project outcomes. One of the projects visited was focused on organizational development and the organization did not feel that community involvement was necessary and the remaining project was driven by county EDAs to develop a tool for local communities to use in the future.

- Community involvement was often mentioned during site visits as something that is valuable to ongoing development.

- 5 of the projects emerged from grass roots community discussions, 3 projects were initiated because of a recognized opportunity for potential economic development, and 3 were driven by a single organization and focused on an internal organizational need.

- All 11 projects visited said project planning was important to project success. 9 of the projects said they had engaged in pre-planning prior to receiving an FEG grant and 2 used the FEG grant to initiate a planning process.

- 7 of the projects were actively supported by local government, 1 was carried out by citizens residing in an unincorporated community, and 3 were limited to a single organization.

- All 11 projects could identify a specific source of leadership that was recognized as necessary and important to success.

- All 11 grantees reported a sufficient level of capacity for record keeping and evaluation; however, grantees noted project record keeping was generally not cumbersome and the FEG program does not require extensive evaluation.

- Some type of community system or organization to sustain change and continue momentum was seen as important by all eleven 11 grantees.

- 8 of the visited projects reported their local efforts increased social capital within the community.
Some secondary capital formation related to human, built, natural, cultural and political capital was also identified by project participants and the type of capital reported was determined by the type of project that was implemented.

8 of the 11 projects explicitly stated additional funding to fully implement, expand, or sustain CED related work was necessary.

When asked, “what went well with the FEG grant and project implementation”, FEG grantees identified the following:

- Contact at West Virginia Development Office was supportive and accessible.
- Grant application and reporting is not cumbersome - an easy process.
- The flexibility of the FEG program and lack of prescriptive requirements is seen as a plus by local grantees.

When asked, “what could be improved about the FEG program”, multiple grantees participating in the site visits observed:

- Obtaining 3 bids for goods and services is a problem in rural areas.
- The length of time between grant approval and release of funds can lead to a loss of momentum.
- Assistance with financing and access to continued support is important.
  - “Provide a bridge to longer term implementation support and funding – a phase 2 FEG”.
  - “Offer technical assistance at the end of FEG funding to help identify and/or access implementation funding to continue the project through completion”.
  - “Need funding or connections to funding beyond FEG support”.

Other suggestions identified through the site visits include:

- Some type of ongoing assistance would be useful to help the community deal with technical challenges, financing, and other issues related to their projects.
- Learning from other successful local projects and other similar communities would be useful and many of the grantees visited recommended establishing a “learning community” to assist grantees and share successful experiences.
  - “Consider using organizations and communities funded with FEG funding as experts to assist other communities/organizations in their applications and/or projects”.
- Ongoing support to build civic infrastructure and citizen engagement is needed.
Stakeholders Meeting

A meeting of local, state, and federal stakeholders was held on February 23, 2017 to report on preliminary findings and further inform the overall FEG program review. The following 14 FEG stakeholders attended:

- James Bush, WV Development Office
- Todd Dorcas, Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation
- Christy Laxton, Wyoming County EDA
- Marlo Long, BB&T
- Monica Miller, WV Development Office
- Rick Moorefield, WVU Extension Service, Summers County
- Sue Mooreland, Appalachian Regional Commission
- Marlena Mullins, WV Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Fred Rader, Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council
- Sarah Riley, High Rocks Educational Corporation
- Craig Snow, Warrior Creek Development
- Carrie Staton, Norther WV Brownfields Assistance Center
- Geary Weir, Webster County EDA
- Nikki Williams, WV Development Office

Meeting participants reinforced the review findings related to the importance of visionary local leadership, outside coaching, technical assistance and expertise, and local government support. A focus on asset-based development was also recognized as useful and participants felt the successes resulting from the FEG program should be marketed and showcased.

Six CED models were reviewed with meeting participants and observations about these models included:

- Focus on human development as a prerequisite to CED project implementation.
- The models reviewed appear to assume local community members are “on the same page” and meeting participants appear to believe that some process of dialogue (thinking together) within the community is necessary to get “on the same page”.
- Simpler is better. Those in attendance indicated very involved models that try to identify all necessary inputs and outputs lead to confusion and local communities can’t and won’t follow them.
- Tasks described in a CED model should be manageable and “issue-driven”.
- There should be a focus on mission, vision, and community values/guiding principles.

Stakeholders had the following recommendations for the FEG program:
Include business plans for CED projects.
Bring back the “learning community”. Take best practices to other communities.
Explore partnerships with WVNPA, Redevelopment Expert Exchange, LWV, WVEDC and other applicable events/conferences to help people build ability to share stories and promote best practices.
Develop a “reflection template” as a way to facilitate sharing of information.
Allow expenses for local staff.
Tell the FEG story better – highlight successes with the legislature, funders, etc.

Overall Conclusions from the FEG Program Review

The overall review of the literature and the current FEG program suggests that local community economic development in rural Appalachian communities is a complex process which must be supported in a number of ways over a sustained period in order to significantly impact local community-wide conditions and improve quality of life for area residents.

The following are overall conclusions from the review of the FEG projects (183 total projects) supported over the five-year period examined:

- Relatively few (approximately 10%) of the FEG projects funded between FY2009 and FY2013 appear to have contributed to sustainable CED at the local level.
- Most (approximately 80%) of the FEG projects funded between FY2009 and FY2013 were focused on building capacity within specific individuals or a single organization.
- The impact of FEG projects funded over the period FY2009 to FY2013 has generally been one-time capacity building within individuals and organizations or support for short-term small development projects.

Conclusions supported by the research literature, experienced experts interviewed (see page 20), FEG grantees participating in site visits, and stakeholders attending the February 23rd meeting include the following:

- Rural CED is a complex process that requires broad-based engagement over a sustained period.
- Adequate stores of social capital are necessary within the community in order to engage in meaningful dialogue and sustain progress.
- Participation by a wide diversity of community residents and institutions is necessary for community-wide change with multiple benefits.
- All ideas and points of view need to be heard and respected.
- Leadership is needed over the long term.
- Leadership needs to be developed locally and successful local leaders need to exhibit qualities of non-directive adaptive leadership.
- It is useful to examine strengths and assets within the community in a comprehensive manner to identify opportunities for successful CED.
- Small, early successes are necessary to inspire hope and demonstrate the value of collective action.
- Local communities need sustained support over a long period of time in order to change local conditions.
- Outside resources are valuable and necessary. Rural communities benefit from access to technical expertise and a range of resources including access to financial investments.
- The types of support required and benefits derived from access to outside resources changes over time as local communities identify viable development opportunities.
- Learning from other communities is valuable – new information should be explored as it drives innovation and positive change.
- Indicators of progress that are meaningful to the community should be developed and changes in these indicators should be monitored over time.
- Some ongoing local structure is necessary to convene stakeholders, facilitate discussions, and document progress; however, such structure should not be directive as to process or opportunities for CED.

Although the review indicates successful development is largely achieved by community members “pulling themselves up by the boot straps,” there is much that can be done to support them in these efforts. The overall conclusions listed above lead to a proposed model for rural CED which is supported by the findings from all six components of the overall review of the FEG program (literature review, key informant interviews, review and analysis of FEG funded projects, survey of grantees, site visits, and stakeholders input meeting).

A Proposed Model for Rural CED

The recommended model for consideration by the FEG program is a two-stage model for rural CED which is graphically depicted on page 33. Stage 1 focuses on broad-based engagement, examining community assets and learning; and stage 2 is more focused on implementation of viable opportunities emerging from the adaptive process. The model proposes a somewhat new approach to development in rural communities – an organic and systemic approach that acknowledges the need for an ongoing and sustained local effort over time. Such a model has applicability beyond the FEG program and calls for a greater coordination among programs and resources to assist rural communities in exploring new ideas and new opportunities. It requires ongoing support to rural communities through FEG funded services and/or other resources leveraged by the FEG program that are focused on community-wide change.
An initial “community of common purpose” interested in improving local conditions begins the process and the model identifies a minimal number of prerequisite conditions that would tend to indicate there is fertile ground within a community for CED to take root. Grass roots involvement and a vision for change are two of the indicators of a local area likely to bear fruit. A healthy dose of social capital also appears to be a necessary ingredient – people who don’t like each other and have no history of working together are not likely to engage in the type of sustained effort required over the long term. The fourth condition that appears to be necessary is an inclusionary spirit. Are all points of view welcome? Is diversity honored? Are disenfranchised and economically challenged community members respected? These prerequisite conditions can be assessed as part of an initial application process.

Given the level of resources available to the FEG program, the proposed model focuses on investing in those rural communities where pre-requisite conditions are in evidence and then focusing on the necessary processes to grow, support, expand and sustain ongoing and broad-based community engagement. During this stage of the process, local communities need to focus on developing adaptive leadership and involve as many people as possible in assessing community assets and learning from each other about possible ways to improve local conditions. The model is not prescriptive but is supportive – local areas can draw on the types of support most useful given their stage of development.

When community members begin to adapt to new ways of thinking and generate viable ideas for local development some different types of support will likely be needed. This second stage focused on the ready community will likely require more attention to developing business plans, securing financing, and making deals. These second stage issues are often more technical and may be more amenable to traditional strategic planning. Implementation issues may also be addressed by a subset of the larger community; but, since local development projects flow from the assessment and adaptation that takes place with many people involved, they tend to enjoy broad-based community support. It is also important during this stage for the ready community to develop indicators that are meaningful to those persons involved that will allow the community to monitor progress and celebrate successes. Continuing learning and adaptation to changing conditions is also necessary as an ongoing process; thus, the ready community is not an end but a beginning to ongoing CED.

The proposed model is focused on community-wide capacity building and development and improved well-being of residents. It is not designed to support short-term or one-time capacity building projects limited to a small group of individuals or a single organization. Although these types of projects have been supported by the FEG program in the past with varying degrees of success, the overall FEG review including the proposed model is intentionally focused on creating, institutionalizing, and sustaining community improvement efforts over the long term.
The model is simple and intuitive and flows from information gleaned through the literature review, site visits, and discussions with key informants. It recognizes the complex, adaptive nature of the CED process and includes a number of ways the FEG program can provide relatively low-cost services and supports to those rural communities engaged in ongoing development efforts to first catalyze and sustain engagement and learning, and then subsequently to support implementation of community and economic development opportunities that emerge from the adaptive process.

The following types of FEG capacity building supports and services are suggested by the model:

**During the Engagement, Assessment, and Human Development stage:**

- Adaptive Leadership Training.
- Assistance with Appreciative Asset Mapping (exploring all 7 community capitals).
- Coaching & Facilitation.
- Cross-community learning and exchange of information among rural communities working on CED.
- Assistance for small, low cost and highly visible community improvement initiatives that foster hope and demonstrate the rewards of working together.

**During the CED Emergent Opportunities stage:**

- Assistance with focusing on local emergent market opportunities.
  - Assistance with value chain mapping.
- Access to technical assistance.
  - Business Plan development.
  - Exploration of financing options and facilitation of deal making.
  - Planning and problem solving.
- Assistance with identifying meaningful indicators to measure progress.
- Continuing networking, learning, and adaptation.

The proposed model for rural CED is conceptual in nature but is grounded in what we know from the research and practice about successful development in rural areas and what we have learned from the review of FEG funded projects over a five-year period. Adoption of this approach will require the FEG program to engage federal, state, and local partners in a process of thinking together about how best to support smaller rural communities in a process of inclusive learning and adaptation and how to work together to support them. In this regard, several recommendations are offered based on comments of those persons informing this review:
✓ Identify other programs and resources currently available to West Virginia that support rural CED and convene discussions about how these programs, services, and resources might be better coordinated to provide ongoing advice, support, and financing to local communities based on the proposed CED model.

✓ Establish a pool of FEG service providers who are pre-approved to assist rural communities with the types of outside expertise outlined in the proposed model. Such providers might include higher education institutions, non-profit organizations, private consultants, and public agencies. Discuss ways these resources can be drawn upon by local communities as needed without securing competitive bids.

✓ Support periodic opportunities for rural communities engaged in CED work to get together, share progress, and learn from one another.

✓ Sponsor training and learning opportunities for local communities focused on key components of the proposed CED model including an overview of the model during pre-application workshops.
**Community Engagement, Assessment and Human Development**

**Pre-Requisite Conditions**
- Stores of social capital
- A Champion (local spark plug)
- Vision for change
- Grass roots community involvement
- Inclusionary spirit

**Continual Learning & Adaptation**

**FEG Support:**
- Adaptive Leadership Training.
- Assistance with Appreciative Asset Mapping (explore all 7 community capitals).
- Coaching & Facilitation.
- Cross-community learning and exchange of information among rural communities working on CED.
- Assistance for small, low cost and highly visible community improvement initiatives.

**Ready Community Ideas & Solutions**

**Ready (Adaptive) Conditions**
- Emergent ideas
- Learning is valued
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Collaboration
- Identified market opportunities
- Can-do attitudes
- Adaptive leaders

**FEG Support:**
- Assistance with focusing on local emergent market opportunities.
  - Assistance with value chain mapping.
- Access to technical assistance.
  - Business Plan Development.
  - Exploration of Financing Options and Facilitation of Deal Making.
  - Planning and Problem Solving.
- Assistance with identifying meaningful indicators to measure progress.
- Continuing networking, learning, and adaptation.
Appendix 1 - Summary of Pre-Assessment Review

Purpose:

The initial review of Flex-E-Grant projects was designed to identify up to fifty projects that might likely inform the Assessment of the Flex-E-Grant program. Objectives of the assessment include:

- Define a “model” of effective change and effective community capacity building for rural small town communities.
- Learn more about what works to support community innovation.
- Make better grant award decisions – i.e. support those applicants likely to be successful.
- Define pre-requisite local community conditions that need to be in place for successful projects.

Description of Initial Review Process:

The West Virginia Development Office (WVDO) provided Collective Impact consultants with brief summaries of all Flex-E-Grant project awards made during the period FY2009 through FY2013. The researcher reviewed all summaries and identified a number of project summaries that were duplicated in the MS Word file provided. All projects awarded in FY2010 with project numbers beginning with 11- were included in the file twice with the exception of project 11-ARC-P007. After removing the duplicated summaries, a total of 183 projects were reviewed by the researcher. Eleven (11) of these 183 project awards were cancelled prior to implementation or otherwise not completed.

All 183 project descriptions were reviewed and a number were identified that appeared to exhibit properties that might further inform the assessment objectives. The primary lens or criteria used to identify the candidates for further study was those projects that appeared to be community oriented with some level of collaborative community involvement that extends beyond the boundaries of a particular agency or organization. The researcher looked for those projects that would most likely result in improved community conditions, sustainable development, institutionalized improvement processes, and/or result in increased potential for citizen-driven local action to further develop the community.

In order to further examine the wide range of projects funded over the five year period, the 183 projects were compiled in an Excel spreadsheet in order to classify and sort the projects as to type, location, grantee, and other factors.
After all projects were compiled in a sortable spreadsheet, the projects were classified according to the following typology:

- **Training or Conference Attendance** – Projects using funds primarily to train specific individuals in a particular area or support individuals in attending a conference.
- **Leadership Development/Training** – Projects supporting specific individuals to attend some type of leadership development course or program.
- **Strategic Planning** – Projects primarily focused on developing a written strategic plan. **Feasibility Study** – Projects designed to assess the feasibility of some type of project or local action.
- **Organizational Development** – Projects focused on building capacity or addressing an issue within a particular agency or organization.
- **Categorically Defined Direct Services** – Projects that support services to a specific group of individuals such as mentoring programs, substance abuse prevention projects, after school programs, etc.
- **Miscellaneous Projects** – Includes a wide range of other types of projects to improve local conditions.

Those projects that appeared to be “consultant driven” where the work was turned over to a consultant or firm, were also designated within the spreadsheet. The above outlined typology was then used to further filter out projects that do not appear to be consistent with the assessment objectives. Those projects exclusively focused on training a limited number of individuals or supporting conference attendance of individuals were not considered for further study. Projects that were “consultant driven” with limited or no community involvement were also not generally considered in selecting projects for further review. Other types of projects filtered out were those that supported delivery of some specific direct service to a small group of individuals (generally children or youth).

**Findings from the Initial Review**

Using the criteria outlined in the described process above, 40 projects were identified that appear to have potential for informing the assessment objectives. 11 of these projects were awarded in FY2009, 9 were awarded in FY2010, 4 were awarded in FY2011, 7 were awarded in FY2012, 8 were awarded in FY2013, and 1 was awarded in FY2014.

The 40 projects identified represent geographically diverse areas of the state. Twenty-two (22) individual counties are represented in the identified projects and six of the projects focus on multi-county areas. The 41 projects also represent 32 different grantee organizations.
Appendix 2 – Phase I Review of FEG Projects

Purpose:

Forty (40) Flex-E-Grant projects were previously identified from a review of project summaries on 183 projects funded during the period FY2010-FY2014. This was step 1 in the assessment project and the process for selecting the 40 projects for further review was described in a report on this pre-assessment phase of the project dated August 22, 2016. The West Virginia Development Office then provided the Final Project Report Narrative for each of these 40 selected projects to the consultant team for further review.

Step 2 of the Phase I Review which is outlined here is based on a review of each narrative report and is designed to narrow that list of 40 grant-funded projects to 25 candidates for site visits. The purpose of site visits is to conduct a more in-depth review of the process and factors that influenced local implementation through discussion with the local project manager and others involved in implanting the Flex-E-Grant project. A total of fifteen (15) site visits are planned.

In order to further narrow the list of 25 candidates resulting from completion of Phase I of the assessment, the consultants will ask each of the project contacts for the 25 projects to respond to a short survey. The survey will be designed to further assess suitability and availability for a site visit during December and early January at which time we will further explore experiences of local project teams in carrying out their particular local project.

Description of Initial Review Process:

The literature review and research for the project (which is ongoing) has identified a number of factors or conditions that tend to promote successful community development in rural areas. Among these conditions are:

- The project emanates from broad community engagement – “Change grows from within the community”.
- The project builds on and increases community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization).
- The project and envisioned change in local community conditions is supported by local government.
- The project is informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community).
- There is consistent leadership from someone who has a vision of desired change and the means to influence the change.
There is capacity for record keeping and evaluation by the grantee.
There is a community system or organization that has the potential to sustain (institutionalize) changes achieved.

Although the above local factors are not inclusive of all the contextual elements found in the literature that tend to promote successful outcomes, the above factors appear to be particularly important to successful and sustainable outcomes. Consideration of these factors provide a basis or framework for reviewing the forty (40) previously selected projects. Assessing the projects as to whether or not the above factors appear to be present provides for a somewhat objective analysis of what is an inherently subjective process of selecting grant funded projects for further study. The goal for this step in the overall assessment is to determine which projects may be the best candidates for site visits that would be likely to inform the research and inform any changes in the way in which the Flex-E Grant program is structured.

Each of the 40 Narrative reports was reviewed in order to determine (to the extent possible) the degree to which the project was consistent with the factors known to influence successful outcomes. The consultant tried to answer each of the following questions for each project based on the narrative report submitted.

- Was the broad community engaged in the project?
- Did the project increase community capacity?
- Was the project supported by local government?
- Was the project informed by outside expertise?
- Did the project appear to have consistent leadership?
- Did it appear capacity for record keeping and evaluation was present?
- Was there a community process in place or local organization that could sustain any changes resulting from the project?

In at least four cases, a grant award included in the previously selected list of 40 projects was a continuation of a prior year grant award to the same grantee for the same general project. These multi-year projects include:

- Grants to Collaborative for 21st Century Appalachia for toolkit development and training in cultural heritage tourism.
- Grants to the City of Shinnston for development of a community center.
- Grants to the City of Hinton and the Summers County Commission to update the county strategic plan and promote business development.
- Grants to Southern Appalachian Labor School for the re-purposing of the old Oak Hill School.
There were also other grantees that received more than one of the forty grants previously selected for study; however, in these cases the grants were awarded for distinctly different projects.

**Findings from the Initial Review**

Based on review of the 40 Final Project Narrative Reports, a list of 25 Flex-E-Grant projects was recommended for further study and possible site visits. These 25 FEG projects appear to be the best candidates for informing the objectives of the overall project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Number</th>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-0012</td>
<td>Town of Addison</td>
<td>Baker's Island Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-0022</td>
<td>Nicholas Co. Community Foundation</td>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-0023</td>
<td>Lincoln County Commission</td>
<td>Camp Lake View Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-0030</td>
<td>City of Spencer</td>
<td>Artist Colony Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-0059</td>
<td>Barbour CDC &amp; Belington ON TRAC</td>
<td>Capacity building for downtown merchants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-0061</td>
<td>Friends of Monroe</td>
<td>Farm Museum Feasibility Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-004</td>
<td>Summers County Commission</td>
<td>Fundraising Plan for John Henry Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-018</td>
<td>City of Shinnston</td>
<td>Community input - Use of Community Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-033</td>
<td>Clay Co. Business Dev. Authority</td>
<td>County-wide strategic plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-047</td>
<td>City of Keystone</td>
<td>Community clean-up and website development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-058</td>
<td>WV Food and Farm Coalition</td>
<td>Farmer's Market development in Williamson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-076</td>
<td>Collaborative for 21st Century Appalachia</td>
<td>Development of Cultural Heritage Toolkit for identifying and branding local cuisine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-082</td>
<td>City of Romney-ON TRAC</td>
<td>Business plan for Romney Marketplace Co-op</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-086</td>
<td>Wyoming Co. EDA</td>
<td>Community involvement &amp; market feasibility study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-024</td>
<td>Step By Step</td>
<td>Grass roots capacity building and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-049</td>
<td>City of Thomas/New Historic Thomas</td>
<td>Building repair workshops and capital campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-034</td>
<td>City of Hinton</td>
<td>Strategic plan &amp; business recruitment plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-049</td>
<td>Town of Anstead</td>
<td>Tourism promotion through birding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-006</td>
<td>Calhoun Co. Commission</td>
<td>Night Sky viewing destination site development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-014</td>
<td>Coalfield Development Corp.</td>
<td>Community housing plan development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-018</td>
<td>Doddridge County EDA</td>
<td>Heritage tourism plan development and marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-036</td>
<td>Step By Step</td>
<td>Coalition building for success in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-049</td>
<td>Wyoming EDA</td>
<td>Recreation and heritage tourism plan for Pineville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-050</td>
<td>McDowell EDA</td>
<td>Recreational and educational ATV trail planning in Welch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15A</td>
<td>Linwood Alive, Inc.</td>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seventeen (17) of the 25 recommended projects were determined through the analysis of final reports to exhibit 4 or more of the 7 factors examined that tend to promote successful community economic development in rural areas. The remaining projects selected reflect
those processes and outcomes that, in the opinion of the consultant, are likely to inform the purposes of the assessment.

Eighteen (18) different counties and 3 multi-county areas are represented in the suggested list of 25 projects for further study and these counties are geographically distributed across West Virginia. Twenty-three (23) different grantees are represented in the suggested list of 25 projects for further study.
Appendix 3 – Report of Survey Findings and Survey Responses

Report of Survey Findings:

Summary of Survey Process

The overall purpose of the assessment of the Flex-E-Grant program is to:

- Define a “model” of effective change and effective community capacity building for rural small town communities.
- Learn more about what works to support community innovation.
- Make better grant award decisions – i.e. support those applicants likely to be successful.
- Define pre-requisite local community conditions that need to be in place for successful projects.

As part of the assessment, local grantees selected for a possible site visit in January were surveyed to gather information about their Flex-E Grant experience at the local level and their availability for a site visit by Collective Impact, LLC in January. The survey was designed by Collective Impact consultants to collect key information from grantees prior to conducting site visits and to assist in developing a general protocol for the visits that can best inform the overall objectives of the Flex-E Grant Assessment project.

Consultants were informed by the FEG program Director that a current local contact for 6 of the 25 projects was not available: and, therefore, a request to complete the survey could not be sent. Two additional projects were subsequently added to the list to receive a request to complete the survey at the recommendation of the Development Office. Consequently, a total of 21 project contacts received a request to complete the survey. This included the 25 projects originally identified by Collective Impact less 6 projects with no current contact person plus the 2 additional projects. Local contacts were asked to share the survey with other key project team members for their input as well. The survey was conducted on-line and a request to complete the survey was to each of the project contacts from the West Virginia Development Office by James Bush.

The 21 FEG grantees receiving a request to complete the on-line survey were:

- Barbour CDC & Belington ON TRAC
- Calhoun County Commission
- City of Hinton
- City of Keystone
- City of Romney -ON TRAC
- City of Shinnston
- City of Spencer
- City of Thomas/New Historic Thomas
- Coalfield Development Corporation
- Collaborative for 21st Century Appalachia
- Doddridge County EDA
- Friends of Monroe
- Lincoln County Commission
- Linwood Alive, Inc
- Step By Step
- Summers County Commission
- Town of Addison
- Town of Anstead
- Wyoming County Commission
- 4-H Camp Caesar
- High Rocks

After repeated requests, responses were received from 13 people: however, 2 responses were received from project team members for the City of Shinnston, and 3 were received from local representatives for the Wyoming County EDA. Thus, a total of 10 Flex-E-Grant projects are represented in the survey responses.

Projects responding to the survey include:

- Calhoun County Commission – Development of a night sky viewing destination.
- City of Shinnston – Community involvement in end use plan for a community center.
- Collaborative for 21st Century Appalachia – Cultural heritage toolkit development in Braxton County.
- Doddridge County EDA – Heritage tourism plan development.
- Linwood Alive, Inc. – Strategic planning for Linwood in Pocahontas County
- Town of Addison – Development of Baker’s Island
- Wyoming County EDA – Marketing plan development and recreation and heritage tourism planning for Pineville, WV
- 4-H Camp Caesar – Economic impact study in Webster County
- High Rocks Education Corporation in Pocahontas County – Management systems planning and organizational development.
**Survey Findings:**

All projects responding indicated they would be willing to talk with consultants about their Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit. 7 of the 10 projects indicated it may be possible to pull members of the local project team together for discussion with consultants; however, 3 projects indicated the people involved were no longer available (Collaborative for 21st Century Appalachia, Linwood Alive, and High Rocks).

Respondents from 9 of the 10 projects said the Flex-E-Grant supported project has had a positive impact in their community. The remaining project (Doddridge EDA) said they were not sure what the impact will be. When asked if the Flex-E-Grant project has resulted in a better quality of life for residents, 6 projects answered “yes” and the remaining 4 said it was too soon to tell. Verbatim comments from respondents about how their project improved the quality of life are included under open ended comments. Respondents were also asked to describe what was accomplished and how the project improved local community conditions and these comments are also listed.

Team members representing 7 of the 10 projects said they had experienced some difficulty or set back in implementing their Flex-E Grant project (see comments). These projects provide a good opportunity for the West Virginia Development Office and consultants to explore the types of issues encountered and get input about what steps might have helped to avoid implementation problems.

Those people responding to the survey were also asked about what seemed to “work well” as they engaged with others to implement the proposed project. These responses provide insight into some of the conditions that tend to promote successful outcomes. Verbatim responses to this question are also listed.

Finally, Respondents were asked to designate the ways the Flex-E Grant project impacted local community capacity. Seven choices were provided and respondents were able to select all ways capacity was built through their project.

Based on the responses, the most significant ways capacity was built are in areas of planning for change and building social capital. Nearly 70% of the respondents to the survey also indicated they learned from outside experts contracted to assist with the project in ways that will benefit the community in the future; and over 60% said community relationships were improved, leadership skills were enhanced, and their ability to keep records and evaluate progress was improved. The chart on the following page summarizes responses to this question about community capacity.
General Conclusions:

The projects responding to the survey are likely to inform the overall objectives of the Flex-E-Grant Assessment in valuable ways.

- The selected projects appear to have built multiple types of community capacity.
- Comments indicate access to outside resources and expertise is important to success.
- Several of the implementation issues cited by survey respondents may have been avoided with more attention to planning prior to project start-up.
- Community input and involvement appears to be a critical factor in sustaining effort and achieving project goals.
Survey Responses:

#1
Collector: Web Link 1
Started: Monday, November 07, 2016 6:40:27 PM
Last Modified: Monday, November 07, 2016 8:43:34 PM
Time Spent: 02:03:06
IP Address: 50.106.137.66

Q1: Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu.
Linwood Alive, Inc.

Q2: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community?
Yes, I have definitely seen a positive impact

Q3: Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
This grant gave us the opportunity to move forward as a group with legal help as well as the chance to determine the direction we wanted to go with an unbiased facilitator.

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?
Yes,

Please briefly explain your response:
Helped bring community together and get input all parties.

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?
Respondent skipped this question

Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?
Yes, we had some problems we didn't anticipate.

If yes, please explain what issues you encountered and what adjustments were made.
It took longer than expected to put together bylaws and get everybody's input.

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity? Please check all that apply
Local leadership skills were enhanced.
We learned a lot from outside experts that will benefit our community in the future.
We improved our ability to keep records and evaluate our progress.
Local citizens were engaged and we built social capital.
Other way(s) community capacity was increased (please specify):
It allowed us the time to get together as a group with an unbiased facilitator to put our priorities on paper.
Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January?  
Yes

Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January?  
No, the folks who were involved in our Flex-E-Grant project are no longer available.

#2  
Collector: Web Link 1  
Started: Tuesday, November 08, 2016 8:34:49 AM  
Last Modified: Tuesday, November 08, 2016 8:47:26 AM  
Time Spent: 00:12:36  
IP Address: 73.161.81.24

Q1: Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu.  
Collaborative for 21st Century Appalachia

Q2: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community?  
Yes, I have definitely seen a positive impact

Q3: Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
One of the values of this project is that it created a resource tool that continues to be available to assist communities in harnessing cultural heritage as a means for destination tourism

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?  
Yes

Please briefly explain your response:
Our findings indicate that initiatives in heritage tourism - (1st) create a sense of pride in the community itself, and then (2nd) provide a mechanism for sharing those cultural artifacts with tourists

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?  
Careful planning and having partners engaged before the start of the project was important for us

Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?
Yes, we had some problems we didn't anticipate.

**If yes, please explain what issues you encountered and what adjustments were made.**

Despite solid planning up front, there always seemed to be hitches in the implementation - in part simply because it was 6-8 months after the grant was written. Sometimes the situation and the people changed in that time.

Q7: **In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity?**

Please check all that apply

Local leadership skills were enhanced.
Local citizens were engaged and we built social capital.

Other way(s) community capacity was increased (please specify):

With a number of our flex-e-grant there were tangible products left behind. This comment relates to #9 below - there is no place for comment there - we have not had a grant for 5 years. It would not be easy to pull people together.

Q8: **Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January?**

Yes

Q9: **Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January?**

No, the folks who were involved in our Flex-E-Grant project are no longer available.

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**Q1:** Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu.

Town of Addison

**Q2:** Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community?

Yes, I have definitely seen a positive impact

**Q3:** Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
The Baker’s Island Recreation Area (B.I.R.A.) is located adjacent to downtown Webster Springs and is an integral part of recreation, tourism and community activities in Webster Springs. Unfortunately, prior to the Flex e Grant projects, B.I.R.A. suffered from many problems. The electrical system to the pavilions and for hook-ups for festival venders was in shambles and posed a safety hazard. Parking spaces were limited and traffic often overflowed into areas designated for sports fields and other uses, causing damage to those facilities. Poor drainage on the baseball field led to field conditions that resulted in several games being postponed or cancelled. Restrooms and pavilions were in poor repair. In short, all the facilities were inadequate and poorly maintained. The townspeople were overwhelmed by the seemingly impossible job of re-making the area into a useable and attractive community park. The Baker’s Island master plans (part I & II), funded by Flex-e-Grants, led the community down the path of re-imagining what could be and re-building the area into a gem that has been the pride of the community.

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?
Yes,

Please briefly explain your response:
Quality of life for area residents was improved in many ways. The new facilities have been used regularly by citizens of all ages, helping improve physical fitness and increasing participation in outdoor activities. In addition, the park has helped attract more visitors to the area, leading to improved economic conditions for local businesses. Also, a beautiful and functional park gave citizens renewed pride in their town.

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?
Community meetings where people could gave their input and become part of the process, rather than just hearing about what “someone else” was planning to do. Having the large project of renovating the park broken up into several smaller projects and then publicizing each small project as it was finished. The momentum seemed to build with each small project that was completed, which brought attention and additional funding to the overall park renovation.

Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?
Yes, we had some problems we didn't anticipate.

If yes, please explain what issues you encountered and what adjustments were made.
Not so much unanticipated problems, as having to be flexible as things didn't always happen exactly as we planned. Sometimes, funding for a lower priority project became available before a higher priority project, so things didn't always happen in the order we anticipated. We had planned for a publicly owned camping facility to be built on adjacent property near the old train depot. A private individual who owns property next to the depot liked the idea and developed a private campground there. The result was the same (new camping facilities near the park), just not how we initially imagined it. *** As a footnote, the Bakers Island Recreation Area was devastated in the flood on June 23 2016. While many of the new facilities which were done after the Flex e Grants were built to withstand flooding, many of the older facilities were destroyed. Significant work and countless volunteer hours have been put into cleaning up and repairing facilities. The park was closed from June - November, but has been re-opened recently on a limited basis. Much repair work remains to be done.

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity? Please check all that apply:

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Local citizens were engaged and we built social capital. We improved our ability to plan for needed change. Local leadership skills were enhanced. We were able to improve the relationship between local government and community members by working together.

Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January? Yes

Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January? Probably if we can find a day when folks are available.

Q1: Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu.
Wyoming Co. EDA

Q2: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community? Yes, I have definitely seen a positive impact

Q3: Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
We have had several Flex-E-Grants that have built off of one another. We initially received a Flex-E-Grant to fulfill a strategic plan for Wyoming County. Inside of the Strategic Plan, we found that there was a potential need for a Planning Commission. So we applied for a Flex-E-Grant for the formation and community outreach of a Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is the sustainable part of all of our Flex-E-Grants that keep them all moving forward. We have since did community workshops in each of the three municipalities for "needs assessments" to incorporate into our Wyoming County Comprehensive Plan, a cooperation with the WVU Land Use Law Clinic. We are very proud of the success of our Flex-E-Grant projects and look forward to continued partnerships in the future.

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents? Yes

Please briefly explain your response:
These plans have allowed the communities to come together as one, to make common goals, to make their communities a better place to live, work, and play.
Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?

If you provide food, people will be more likely to come to meetings! It is hard to get new people involved and engaged in the process. With our Flex-E-Grant, the Planning Commission gave people a "new" purpose and therefore we were able to get some new faces involved in the process. We are very pleased with the amount of support and partnerships that have come out of our Flex-E-Grant experiences.

Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?

Yes, we had some problems we didn't anticipate.

If yes, please explain what issues you encountered and what adjustments were made.

With a couple of our Flex-E-Grants, they were delayed due to getting a specific date that was good for everyone, or because trainings had to be rescheduled. We were able to request an extension and was always able to complete all tasks and reporting by the deadlines for the projects.

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity? Please check all that apply:

- Local leadership skills were enhanced.
- The project forced us to establish an ongoing organization or group focused on sustaining our progress.
- We were able to improve the relationship between local government and community members by working together.
- We learned a lot from outside experts that will benefit our community in the future.
- We improved our ability to keep records and evaluate our progress.
- We improved our ability to plan for needed change.
- Local citizens were engaged and we built social capital.

Other way(s) community capacity was increased (please specify):

I feel that we have met all of the above with our FlexE-Grant projects. Thanks to the Flex-E-Grant, we have been able to provide all of these opportunities to our community. Thank you!

Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January?

Yes

Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January?

Probably, if we can find a day when folks are available.
Q1: Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu. City of Shinnston

Q2: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community?
Yes, I have definitely seen a positive impact

Q3: Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
The City of Shinnston previously participated in initiatives which allowed for increased community capacity including Blueprint Communities, ON TRAC and HUB Cap. While engaging in these activities, community surveys were conducted. One need identified by citizens was a community center where community activities could take place. In 2010, the City received a Flex-E Grant which was used to help fund an architectural plan for the community building. During the process developing this plan, the architect held meetings with community leaders, project partners and interested individuals. A great deal of information was gathered and a plan was delivered. The 2011 Flex-E grant was used to bring in a consultant to train community members in how to develop a Capital Campaign and how to market the Community Building Project. Marketing materials were produced during this time. Because the City was actively pursuing a Community Building, the City was able to obtain funding to acquire two properties adjacent to the City-owned proposed Community Building site and the funding also covered demolition of three structures. After deciding the original design would be too costly for the City’s current resources, the City has worked with the architect to develop a design which will cost approximately one-half of the original estimate. Currently, the City is working with the WVU School of Business. Two teams of students there will each develop a business plan for the building as the City continues to pursue this important project.

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?
Yes

Please briefly explain your response:
As a result of pursuing this project, one major dilapidated large structure has been removed from the downtown. Although the City felt it could not afford the original plan for the community building, enthusiasm continues as we pursue the scaled-back version. Community members have learned a great deal about how to launch a community campaign when the Community Building project is put back on the front burner. The site has been secured. The original design project was valuable in setting realistic costs and the community conversations were invaluable in setting realistic goals for the building.

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?
Being able to access outside expert consultants and letting them engage with the public to establish clear objectives worked very well.
Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?
Yes, we had some problems we didn't anticipate.

If yes, please explain what issues you encountered and what adjustments were made.
The specific Flex-E Grant projects went off very well without problems, however, looking at the bigger Community Building Project, we did not have a realistic idea of the cost of building the structure in relation to the resources of Shinnston. Also, the economic recession that occurred during this time made us less confident that we could get people and corporations to contribute to the cost of the Community Center.

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity?
Please check all that apply:
- Local citizens were engaged and we built social capital
- We improved our ability to plan for needed change.
- We improved our ability to keep records and evaluate our progress.
- We learned a lot from outside experts that will benefit our community in the future.
- Local leadership skills were enhanced.
- We were able to improve the relationship between local government and community members by working together.

Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January?
Yes

Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January?
Probably, if we can find a day when folks are available.

#6
Collector: Web Link 1
Started: Monday, November 14, 2016 1:54:56 PM
Last Modified: Monday, November 14, 2016 2:07:42 PM
Time Spent: 00:12:46
IP Address: 69.43.11.83
The City was able to use the funding to expand the original site plan and to raze existing structures to allow for the construction of the community center. While the scope of the project has been reduced, the City is still actively pursuing its construction. The knowledge received from working through a marketing and capital campaign for the project is valuable to not only this project, but future City endeavors.

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents? Too soon to tell.

Please briefly explain your response:
The community center has not yet been constructed.

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)? Having access to professional expertise for the capital campaign and development of marketing materials.

Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)? Yes, we had some problems we didn't anticipate.

If yes, please explain what issues you encountered and what adjustments were made.
The original scope of the project was deemed too large and too expensive and required that we "go back to the drawing board" in the literal sense and scale back the project.

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity? Please check all that apply
- Local citizens were engaged and we built social capital
  - We improved our ability to plan for needed change
  - We learned a lot from outside experts that will benefit our community in the future

Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January? Yes

Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January? Probably, if we can find a day when folks are available
Q1: Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu.
Summers County Commission

Q2: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community?
Yes, I have definitely seen a positive impact

Q3: Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
Our 2008 grant was utilized to hire a consultant to help our local steering committee develop a business and operations plan for the John Henry Historical Park. The resultant plan offered three different scenarios for the park's operation based on the level of its development and anticipated visitation at each level of development. Based on the level of current and anticipated future financial resources, the steering committee determined that the park should be developed based on Scenario 3 of the plan. Under this scenario, the Park would feature a walking trail system, the John Henry Statue, and a series of educational kiosks interpreting the John Henry legend and other aspects of the Great Bend Tunnel's construction. Scenario 3 also suggested that the park was be open year round and the major overhead expenses relate to grounds keeping should be borne by existing county personnel with support from local volunteers. Development has proceeded based on Scenario 3 and a formal opening of the park is being projected for spring 2017. The park has been open to visitors throughout its construction. While no traffic counters have been utilized, observers living near the park regularly report seeing one to two dozen vehicles or more on-site daily. Further, volunteers working on various projects in the park routinely speak with visitors passing through and report that the majority are from out of state and have specifically planned to visit the park while passing through the county to other destinations. While again, no studies have been undertaken, it must be assumed that these visitors are making a positive economic impact on the county and its residents from their purchase of gasoline, food, and souvenirs while here.

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?
Yes

Please briefly explain your response:
I believe that the project has had both a direct and an indirect impact on the quality of life of local residents. The direct impact has come from local residents' use of the walking trail system in the park which contributes toward improving their physical condition and general health. The in-direct impact results from the taxes paid by out of state park visitors on their purchases while in the county. Here, these taxes paid by out of state visitors help supplement local taxes paid thus helping to keep local tax bills as low as possible.

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?
The new plan that was developed resulted in an increase in attendance of planning meetings and had the added benefit
of energizing the steering committee and focusing its planning efforts in a way that maximized the use of our scarce resources.

Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)
No, everything went as planned

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity? Please check all that apply
We were able to improve the relationship between local government and community members by working together
Local leadership skills were enhanced.
We learned a lot from outside experts that will benefit our community in the future.
We improved our ability to plan for needed change.
Local citizens were engaged and we built social capital.

Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January?
Yes

Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January?
Probably, if we can find a day when folks are available.

Q1: Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu.
Calhoun Co. Commission

Q2: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community?
Yes, I have definitely seen a positive impact

Q3: Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
We've seen improvement in a number of areas. First, we have conducted three successful events at the park and have grown them each year. After this year's event we surveyed participants. 100 percent of respondents had a positive experience at the park, are likely to return the site, and would recommend it to others. Secondly, we have seen local capacity improve. There is now a working group at the park that is taking increasing responsibility for event management and park decisions. Communication has improved among project stakeholders and there is genuine enthusiasm for the park's progress. Park visibility is also increasing. An ongoing survey of amateur astronomers across
the 12 state ARC region shows that almost 30% of respondents have now heard of the park and plan to visit it in the future.

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?
Too soon to tell

Please briefly explain your response:
I would say "too soon", but we are trending towards a definitive "yes." We are starting to see economic impacts and, as entrepreneurial and recreational opportunities increase, we expect those impacts to grow. The desire to protect park resources has led to a consideration of basic zoning and land use controls which may also improve local conditions. The improvements in local capacity and leadership should carry over to other areas of decision making as well.

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?
Quarterly visits, monthly phone conferences, and regular working group meetings have all contributed to our success. Our partnership with WVU, Fairmont, and the LDD has also been very important. It also helped that we have gradually increased the scale of events every year, growing them in concert with improvements in local capacity.

Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?
Yes, we had some problems we didn't anticipate.

If yes, please explain what issues you encountered and what adjustments were made.
Weather has been an issue - we did not anticipate rescheduling an event because of a hurricane. We've learned some small lessons, like to check for home football games before scheduling a star party. Capacity issues were a challenge at first, but these have been improving steadily over the past few years.

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity? Please check all that apply:

- Local citizens were engaged and we built social capital
- We improved our ability to plan for needed change.
- We improved our ability to keep records and evaluate our progress.
- We learned a lot from outside experts that will benefit our community in the future.
- Local leadership skills were enhanced.
- The project forced us to establish an ongoing organization or group focused on sustaining our progress.
- We were able to improve the relationship between local government and community members by working together.

Other way(s) community capacity was increased (please specify):
Hope is hard to measure, but it is important in these communities. I see hope now. The Fairmont students are emerging as future leaders for the state and the region (one project alumnus is already working in state government). Over time they will, I think, help further build capacity at the local level. As we link the park project to the local school, we should increase local capacity development in a more direct way.
Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January?
Yes

Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January?
Yes, we could get together pretty easily.

Q1: Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu.
Wyoming Co. EDA

Q2: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community?
Yes, I have definitely seen a positive impact

Q3: Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
Blending a survey of visitors with community workshops reinforced identified needs for new development in WYCO. The plans were integrated with a county comprehensive planning effort that was also underway simultaneously.

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?
Too soon to tell,

Please briefly explain your response:
I have not seen implementation of the plans that were created. In my experience, providing a vision for communities allows for gradual implementation. The plans were phased in order to work towards implementation.

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?
Providing food and refreshments at meetings. Revisiting community members for review of plans and providing revisions.
Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?
No, everything went as planned.

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity?
Please check all that apply
Local citizens were engaged and we built social capital.
We improved our ability to plan for needed change.
We improved our ability to keep records and evaluate our progress.
We were able to improve the relationship between local government and community members by working together.

Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January?
Yes

Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January?
Probably, if we can find a day when folks are available

Q1: Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu.
4-H Camp Caesar (multiple projects)

Q2: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community?
Yes, I have definitely seen a positive impact

Q3: Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
Our grants have been geared toward making improvements to our community based facilities, we have completed a life and health safety assessment for the buildings in relation to the current codes. Next we developed a master plan for improvements using the life and safety plan. Utilizing this information we were able to complete an economic impact study, thus outlining how our facility directly impacts our community with jobs, tourism and community activities. Taking this information we completed a Preliminary Engineering study focusing on five specific projects and tying cost and man hours for each one. In the latest grant we used these components to create a marketing plan for the capital campaign which encompassed all the information.
Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?

Yes

**Please briefly explain your response:**
The answer is yes, but the full benefits have not been reaped at this time, but every step we inch closer to the goal, ensures the continuance of our campus, thus directly benefiting the community.

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?

The grant opportunity promotes discussion and solutions to the questions on sustaining our facility. The facility's board of directors engage consultants and other professionals on learning what the necessary steps are to achieve the goal. Without these grant opportunities we would just be hoping for a solution without any way of funding the efforts.

Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?

Yes, we had some problems we didn't anticipate.

**If yes, please explain what issues you encountered and what adjustments were made.**

No grant has ever gone as exactly written. The difficulties are with the $10,000. dollar cap. This is a twofold problem, one if a bidding firm researches on line the flex-e- grant program they know the dollar amount, thus their bids will edge right up to that dollar figure, or the work needing to be completed exceeds the dollar amount and we must work with the firm to create a good will gesture to complete the task. In rural West Virginia, I think we often misjudge what the total costs for a project will entail and find it difficult to secure three bids for the grant proposal.

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity? Please check all that apply

The project forced us to establish an organization or group focused on sustaining our ongoing progress.
We learned a lot from outside experts that will benefit our community in the future.
We improved our ability to keep records and evaluate our progress.
We improved our ability to plan for needed change.

**Other way(s) community capacity was increased (please specify):**

I think we learn to respect and treasure the natural and man-made structures that represent our past history. The assumption that all locations have the vast beauty we are surrounded with is erroneous and can be fatal for a community.

Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January?

Yes
Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January?
Yes, we could get together pretty easily.

Q1: Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu.
High Rocks (multiple projects)

Q2: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community?
Yes, I have definitely seen a positive impact.

Q3: Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
The projects allowed for High Rocks to more effectively serve young people in West Virginia, providing leadership and educational opportunities that ultimately improve the community overall through the engagement of young people.

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?
Yes

   Please briefly explain your response:
   Yes, the projects allowed for the community to be more engaged with High Rocks as an organization and be informed of what opportunities were available through the organization.

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?
Investment from the organization and staff members in the project goals.

Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?
No, everything went as planned.

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity?
Please check all that apply
   We improved our ability to keep records and evaluate our progress
   Local citizens were engaged and we built social capital.
Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January?
Yes

Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January?
No, the folks who were involved in our Flex-E-Grant project are no longer available.

Q1: Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu.
Wyoming Co. EDA

Q2: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community?
Yes, I have definitely seen a positive impact

Q3: Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
It helped with developing community leadership through Dale Carnegie Training, the Planning Commission has used this program to write and develop the original strategic plan, and has helped us write a Comprehensive Plan and community “needs assessments” for Pineville, Mullens, and Oceana.

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?
Yes

Please briefly explain your response:
Helped to focus existing resources, moving community plans toward a common goal.

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?
Helped consolidate all the good ideas into a common strategy.

Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?
No, everything went as planned.

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity?
Please check all that apply:
Local citizens were engaged and we built social
We improved our ability to plan for needed change.
We improved our ability to keep records and evaluate our progress.
We learned a lot from outside experts that will benefit our community in the future.
Local leadership skills were enhanced.
The project forced us to establish an ongoing organization or group focused on
sustaining our progress.
We were able to improve the relationship between local government and community
members by working together.

Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January?
Yes

Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January?
Probably, if we can find a day when folks are available.

Q1: Please select your Flex-E-Grant project from the drop down menu.
Doddridge County EDA

Q2: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant supported project(s), do you think the project(s) has had a positive impact in your community?
I am not sure what the impact will be from the project

Q3: Please briefly describe what was accomplished and how the project(s) improved local community conditions.
We mapped heritage assets across four counties, then branded the area and developed a tourism website and print templates.

Q4: In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?
Too soon to tell

Please briefly explain your response:
We have the website live, but have not yet printed the print materials. Building on tourism related assets will not usually show immediate results. We still have parts of the plan to implement, such as site development in the four counties.

Q5: Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?
Leveraging the FEG $ with a mix of WVU Extension, WVU MPA capstone project, AmeriCorps and private sector.

Q6: Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?
No, everything went as planned.

Q7: In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity?
Please check all that apply:
We were able to improve the relationship between local government and community members by working together.
We learned a lot from outside experts that will benefit our community in the future.
We improved our ability to plan for needed change.

Q8: Would you be willing to talk with the consultants about your Flex-E-Grant experience during a site visit to your community sometime in December or January?
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Q9: Would it be possible to pull together members of your local project team to have a 2 hour discussion about your Flex-E-Grant project sometime in December or January?
Probably, if we can find a day when folks are available.
**Open Ended Comments from Survey Respondents:**

**In your opinion, did the project(s) directly or indirectly result in a better quality of life for local residents?**

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<thead>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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The City was able to use the funding to expand the original site plan and to raze existing structures to allow for the construction of the community center. While the scope of the project has been reduced, the City is still actively pursuing its construction. The knowledge received from working through a marketing and capital campaign for the project is valuable to not only this project, but future City endeavors.
The City of Shinnston previously participated in initiatives which allowed for increased community capacity including Blueprint Communities, ON TRAC and HUB Cap. While engaging in these activities, community surveys were conducted. One need identified by citizens was a community center where community activities could take place. In 2010, the City received a Flex-E Grant which was used to help fund an architectural plan for the community building. During the process developing this plan, the architect held meetings with community leaders, project partners and interested individuals. A great deal of information was gathered and a plan was delivered. The 2011 Flex-E grant was used to bring in a consultant to train community members in how to develop a Capital Campaign and how to market the Community Building Project. Marketing materials were produced during this time. Because the City was actively pursuing a Community Building, the City was able to obtain funding to acquire two properties adjacent to the City-owned proposed Community Building site and the funding also covered demolition of three structures. After deciding the original design would be too costly for the City's current resources, the City has worked with the architect to develop a design which will cost approximately one-half of the original estimate. Currently, the City is working with the WVU School of Business. Two teams of students there will each develop a business plan for the building as the City continues to pursue this important project.

We have had several Flex-E-Grants that have built off of one another. We initially received a Flex-E-Grant to fulfill a strategic plan for Wyoming County. Inside of the Strategic Plan, we found that there was a potential need for a Planning Commission. So we applied for a Flex-E-Grant for the formation and community outreach of a Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is the sustainable part of all of our Flex-E-Grants that keep them all moving forward. We have since did community workshops in each of the three municipalities for "needs assessments" to incorporate into our Wyoming County Comprehensive Plan, a cooperation with the WVU Land Use Law Clinic. We are very proud of the success of our Flex-E-Grant projects and look forward to continued partnerships in the future.

The Baker's Island Recreation Area (B.I.R.A.) is located adjacent to downtown Webster Springs and is an integral part of recreation, tourism and community activities in Webster Springs. Unfortunately, prior to the Flex e Grant projects, B.I.R.A. suffered from many problems. The electrical system to the pavilions and for hook-ups for festival venders was in shambles and posed a safety hazard. Parking spaces were limited and traffic often overflowed into areas designated for sports fields and other uses, causing damage to those facilities. Poor drainage on the baseball field led to field conditions that resulted in several games being postponed or cancelled. Restrooms and pavilions were in poor repair. In short, all the facilities were inadequate and poorly maintained. The townspeople were overwhelmed by the seemingly impossible job of re-making the area into a useable and attractive community park. The Baker's Island master plans (part I & II), funded by Flex-e-Grants, led the community down the path of re-imagining what could be and re-building the area into a gem that has been the pride of the community.

One of the values of this project is that it created a resource tool that continues to be available to assist communities in harnessing cultural heritage as a means for destination tourism. This grant gave us the opportunity to move forward as a group with legal help as well as the chance to determine the direction we wanted to go with an unbiased facilitator.
Did you experience any difficulties or set-backs in implementing your Flex-E-Grant project(s)?

<table>
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<th>Difficulties</th>
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<td>No grant has ever gone as exactly written. The difficulties are with the $10,000 dollar cap. This is a two-fold problem, one if a bidding firm researches on line the flex-e-grant program they know the dollar amount, thus their bids will edge right up to that dollar figure, or the work needing to be completed exceeds the dollar amount and we must work with the firm to create a good will gesture to complete the task. In rural West Virginia, I think we often misjudge what the total costs for a project will entail and find it difficult to secure three bids for the grant proposal.</td>
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<td>Weather has been an issue - we did not anticipate rescheduling an event because of a hurricane. We've learned some small lessons, like to check for home football games before scheduling a star party. Capacity issues were a challenge at first, but these have been improving steadily over the past few years.</td>
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<td>The original scope of the project was deemed too large and too expensive and required that we &quot;go back to the drawing board&quot; in the literal sense and scale back the project.</td>
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<td>The specific Flex-E Grant projects went off very well without problems, however, looking at the bigger Community Building Project, we did not have a realistic idea of the cost of building the structure in relation to the resources of Shinnston. Also, the economic recession that occurred during this time made us less confident that we could get people and corporations to contribute to the cost of the Community Center.</td>
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<td>With a couple of our Flex-E-Grants, they were delayed due to getting a specific date that was good for everyone, or because trainings had to be rescheduled. We were able to request an extension and was always able to complete all tasks and reporting by the deadlines for the projects.</td>
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<td>Not so much unanticipated problems, as having to be flexible as things didn't always happen exactly as we planned. Sometimes, funding for a lower priority project became available before a higher priority project, so things didn't always happen in the order we anticipated. We had planned for a publicly owned camping facility to be built on adjacent property near the old train depot. A private individual who owns property next to the depot liked the idea and developed a private campground there. The result was the same (new camping facilities near the park), just not how we initially imagined it. *** As a footnote, the Bakers Island Recreation Area was devastated in the flood on June 23 2016. While many of the new facilities which were done after the Flex-e Grants were built to withstand flooding, many of the older facilities were destroyed. Significant work and countless volunteer hours have been put into cleaning up and repairing facilities. The park was closed from June-November, but has been re-opened recently on a limited basis. Much repair work remains to be done.</td>
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<td>Despite solid planning up front, there always seemed to be hitches in the implementation - in part simply because it was 6-8 months after the grant was written. Sometimes the situation and the people changed in that time.</td>
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It took longer than expected to put together bylaws and get everybody's input.
Thinking about your Flex-E-Grant project(s), what seemed to work well as you engaged with others to implement your project(s)?

Leveraging the FEG $ with a mix of WVU Extension, WVU MPA capstone project, AmeriCorps and private sector.

Helped consolidate all the good ideas into a common strategy.

Investment from the organization and staff members in the project goals.

The grant opportunity promotes discussion and solutions to the questions on sustaining our facility. The facility's board of directors engage consultants and other professionals on learning what the necessary steps are to achieve the goal. Without these grant opportunities we would just be hoping for a solution without any way of funding the efforts.

Providing food and refreshments at meetings. Revisiting community members for review of plans and providing revisions.

Quarterly visits, monthly phone conferences, and regular working group meetings have all contributed to our success. Our partnership with WVU, Fairmont, and the LDD has also been very important. It also helped that we have gradually increased the scale of events every year, growing them in concert with improvements in local capacity.

The new plan that was developed resulted in an increase in attendance of planning meetings and had the added benefit of energizing the steering committee and focusing its planning efforts in a way that maximized the use of our scarce resources.

Having access to professional expertise for the capital campaign and development of marketing materials.

Being able to access outside expert consultants and letting them engage with the public to establish clear objectives worked very well.

If you provide food, people will be more likely to come to meetings! It is hard to get new people involved and engaged in the process. With our Flex-E-Grant, the Planning Commission gave people a "new" purpose and therefore we were able to get some new faces involved in the process. We are very pleased with the amount of support and partnerships that have come out of our Flex-E-Grant experiences.

Community meetings where people could give their input and become part of the process, rather than just hearing about what "someone else" was planning to do. - Having the large project of renovating the park broken up into several smaller projects and then publicizing each small project as it was finished. The momentum seemed to build with each small project that was completed, which brought attention and additional funding to the overall park renovation.

Careful planning and having partners engaged before the start of the project was important for us.

In what ways do you think the Flex-E-Grant project(s) impacted local community capacity?

I think we learn to respect and treasure the natural and manmade structures that represent our history. The assumption that all locations have the vast beauty we are surrounded with is erroneous and can be fatal for a community.

Hope is hard to measure, but it is important in these communities. I see hope now. The Fairmont students are emerging as future leaders for the state and the region (one project alumnus is already working in state government). Over time they will, I think, help further build capacity at the local level. As we link the park project to the local school, we should increase local capacity development in a more direct way.
I feel that we have met all of the above with our Flex-E-Grant projects. Thanks to the Flex-E-Grant, we have been able to provide all of these opportunities to our community. Thank you!

With a number of our flex-e-grant there were tangible products left behind. This comment relates to #9 below - there is no place for comment there - we have not had a grant for 5 years. It would not be easy to pull people together.

It allowed us the time to get together as a group with an unbiased facilitator to put our priorities on paper.
Appendix 4 – Site Visit Project Descriptions and Protocol

Brief Description of Projects Participating in Site Visits

Organization: Camp Caesar – 4-H Clubs of Webster County
Project Numbers: 10-ARC-P0058, 12-ARC-P078, 13-ARC-P009, 14-ARC-P020
Project Summary:
Multiple projects to build organizational capacity and develop specific plans for improvements at Camp Caesar 4-H Camp in Webster County. Projects were focused on making improvements to the community-based facilities. These included: the completion of a life and health safety assessment for the buildings in relation to current codes, the development of a master plan for improvements using the finding for the life and safety assessment, the completion of an economic impact study outlining how the facility directly impacts the community with jobs, tourism, and community activities, and the development of a marketing plan for use in a capital campaign effort for improving the organization’s facilities.

Organization: Calhoun County Commission
Project Name: Calhoun County Night Sky Initiative
Project Number: 14-ARC-P006
Project Summary:
The project involved collaboration with the University of Tennessee, Fairmont State University, West Virginia University, and local leaders. The project conducted a two-day design workshop and night-sky event at Calhoun County Park and created a preliminary design concept for the park site. The design includes proposed shower and rest room facilities, lodging, and viewing areas. In addition, a small amount of funds were set-aside to help develop local leadership: one representative from the Calhoun County Park Board attended the Brushy Fork Institute in September, 2014.

Organization: City of Shinns
to
Project Name: Community Center Stakeholder Input and Technical Assistance for Capital Campaign
Project Numbers: 11-ARC-P018, 12-ARC-P062, and 13-ARC-P050
Project Summary:
This project built upon previous flex-e-grant projects to create a much-needed asset in an isolated community, largely through the initiative of the residents of the small city. Created a fundraising plan for a capital campaign that will create a community center in the city. Completed capital campaign plan, including case statement, campaign logo, and database of prospective donors, timeline, naming opportunities for the building, policies and procedures for gift acceptance, gift range chart, and campaign checklist.
**Organization:** Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia  
**Project Name:** Country Roads Cook-Off Toolkit  
**Project Number:** 11-ARC-P076  
**Project Summary:**  
Through a collaborative process, developed tools, including a manual and facilitation guide, for communities to identify and monetize local cuisine that can be marketed at fairs and festivals. Project activities included developing a toolkit for communities to assist with identifying and monetizing their cultural heritage assets. The project applicant contracted with consultants to develop and write the toolkit, which includes 3 parts:  
1. Culinary heritage Toolkit to identify and brand unique local cuisine that can be marketed at fairs and festivals, as well as other venues;  
2. Facilitation Guide for local community leaders to use in leading the cultural heritage asset mapping process; and  

**Organization:** Doddridge County Economic Development Authority  
**Project Name:** Regional Economic Development through Heritage Tourism  
**Project Number:** 14-ARC-PO18  
**Project Summary:**  
The project completed a heritage tourism assessment of the 4-county region, including strategies and recommendations for developing tourism in the region. The project developed a task force (principally the county economic development authorities) to represent the region and also developed a partnership with the West Virginia University Masters of Public Administration Program. That partnership resulted in collaboration with two students from that program and development of a Heritage Tourism Assessment of Best Practices report that includes practices within and outside the state.

**Organization:** High Rocks Educational Corporation  
**Projects Name:** Organizational Development for Information Technology, Management System Development.  
**Project Numbers:** 10-ARC-P0027, 13-ARC-P028, 14-ARC-P024  
**Project Summary:**  
Various projects focusing on individual and organizational capacity building. One project focused on raising self-esteem and awareness for six (6) young girls in the Richwood area of Nicholas County. Activities included planning and developing the Arts and Beautification Festival in Richwood and participation in Martin Luther King Day activities. The girls also received academic enrichment and mentoring for career and life preparation, and participated in the New Beginnings camp held at High Rocks in the summer where they took academic as well as life improvement courses. Two additional projects focused on developing and updating information technology management systems for the organization, as well as training staff on the use of the data systems.

**Organization:** Linwood Alive  
**Project Name:** Linwood Alive, Strategic Plan
Project Number: 14-ARC-15-A

Project Summary:
The project culminated with the development of a strategic planning for the Town of Linwood, West Virginia. Linwood Alive held two Board training and development sessions and two strategic planning sessions. The training sessions covered the responsibilities of servicing on a nonprofit board, including fiduciary duties, the importance and role of governance and the purpose of bylaws. The strategic planning sessions focused on identifying the assets in the community and how to capitalize on the identified assets. A five year strategic plan for the community was developed with identified short and longer term goals and strategies. In addition, a website was developed for Linwood Alive.

Organization: Step by Step, Inc.
Project Name: West Virginia Community Center Support Network
Project Number: 12-ARC-P024

Project Summary:
Development of a peer support network among community based centers in rural West Virginia in order to share best practices and strategies for addressing common challenges. The project outcome was a completed strategic plan for the West Virginia Community Center Support Network. The network was created by the applicant organization in 2010 to develop community centers for support of families and children in isolated and low-income areas, and included community groups from 6 different communities. The strategic planning process included all 6 of the community groups participating in community needs assessments regarding emergency/storm relief and 5 of the groups participating in an ADA accessibility needs assessments for current facilities.

Organization: Summers County Commission
Project Name: John Henry Historical Park Marketing Plan Development
Project Number: 11-ARC-P004

Project Summary:
The project developed a fundraising toolkit that contains a CD of electronic files for print-ready production of the new park logo, letterhead, envelopes, pledge cards, brochure templates, and lists of potential funding sources for development of the park. The project also developed a website (www.johnhenrypark.com) to provide information about the park and to provide a means for individual donations. The project was managed by a voluntary steering committee composed of 11 community members. Development of the John Henry Park will provide a much-needed asset in an ARC-designated distressed county that will strengthen heritage and outdoor recreation tourism in the area.

Organization: Wyoming County Economic Development Authority
Project Name: Community Planning for Recreation and Heritage Tourism in Pineville, WV and surrounding areas
Project Number: 14-ARC-PO49

Project Summary:
The project supported conducting an assessment of existing heritage, recreation, and tourism-related resources in Pineville and the surrounding area in Wyoming County,
designated by ARC as an at-risk county. The project activities included 2 community meetings and a survey to gather public input into a recreation and heritage tourism plan for the Pineville area of Wyoming County. The project contracted with West Virginia University to complete the plan. This project reinforced an overall effort in this at-risk county to develop a comprehensive plan encompassing the entire county. This effort was led by the county planning commission, which was created by a Flex-E-Grant project several years ago. The results of the recreation and heritage tourism plan will be incorporated into the comprehensive plan.

**Organization:** Town of Addison  
**Project Name:** Baker's Island Master Plan - Part 2  
**Project Number:** 10-ARC-P0012  
**Project Summary:**  
The project is the second phase of a long-range master plan to develop Baker's Island in the town of Addison. The second phase consisted of working with consultants to gather information to help guide the town in seeking funding and completing action steps outlined in the overall master plan. The focus was on developing a campground on Baker’s Island along with other improvements on the island that will attract tourism to Webster Springs.

**Protocol for Site Visits**

Review the Flex-E Grant assessment project with site visit participants

- Review objectives of the FEG assessment with those participating in site visit.
- Review FEG assessment process and steps.

**Site Visit Interview Questions**

1. **Tell me a little about the FEG project.**
   a. Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?
   b. Overall, what worked really well?
   c. Overall, what could have been improved?

2. **What was the catalyst for your FEG project?**
   a. Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?
   b. To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project success?

3. **Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?**
   a. Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those persons involved?
b. Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved implementation?

4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   a. If so, how were those issues addressed?

5. To what extent was the project supported by local government?
   a. How important is it to have the support of local government?

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
   a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
   a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
   a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
   b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability?

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
   a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?

10. How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?

11. Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals?
    Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.
    a) How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?

12. What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?

13. Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?
Appendix 5 - Site Visit Interview Responses

Organization: 4-H Camp Caesar
Project Name: Training Board Development, 4-H Camp Plan, Economic Impact Study, Engineering Report for Capital Improvements
Project Numbers: 10-ARC-P0058, 12-ARC-P078, 13-ARC-P009, 14-ARC-P020
Present: Betsy Morris – Camp Caesar and Mike Hall – Webster County Extension Agent
Date of Site Visit: Tuesday, January 24, 2017

1. Tell me a little about the FEG project.
   - Completion of life and health safety assessment for buildings on campus.
   - Completion of master plan.
   - Completion of economic impact study and related materials.

   a. Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?
      - Yes, both participants were actively involved from the start to completion.

   b. Overall, what worked really well?
      - Strong leadership with vision.
      - Strategic and comprehensive approach.
      - Producing strategic goals.

   c. Overall, what could have been improved?
      - Trying to find resources in rural WV.
      - Getting 2 bids is extremely difficult and time consuming for such a small amount of money.

2. What was the catalyst for your FEG project?
   - Facilities needs and opportunities.

   a. Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?
      - No, not necessarily. It was more or an opportunity.

   b. To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project success?
      - Invaluable having community members involved in the process and development of deliverables.

3. Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?
   - Yes, assessment and planning were all components of the project.

   a. Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those persons involved?
      - Yes, it was very important to have everyone understand the goals and desired outcomes of the project.

   b. Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved implementation?
      - N/A
4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   - Since Camp Caesar is first and foremost a 4-H Camp, there were requirements to adhere to regarding certain conditions and perceptions and some minor “ownership” issues.
   - Misconceptions in the community that the camp has a large amount of money.
   a. If so, how were those issues addressed?
      - Clear communication and compromise.
      - Transparency about financial situation of the camp.

5. To what extent was the project supported by local government?
   - Governed by Camp Caesar Volunteer Board of Directors and Forward Progress Committee (advisory committee).
   - No local government was involved in the project. No financial support was provided by local government.
   a. How important is it to have the support of local government?
      - For this particular project, not that important.

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
   - Yes, outside expertise was used to facilitate the development of tools and deliverables related to the assessment, plan and impact study.
   a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?
      - The project could not have been completed without the assistance of outside expertise.
      - Played a part in growing our local capacity.

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
   - Yes, internal (Board of Trustees) and external (Forward Progress Committee).
   a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?
      - Yes, there are the decision-makers and connectors to funding.

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
   - As a 501 (c) (3) with extensive history (over 75 years), there was already capacity for record keeping and reporting. Project evaluation was limited to the deliverables produces as part of the FEG funding.
   a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
      - It would have been more difficult without the existing capacity and history of the organization.
   b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability?
      - N/A

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
   - Camp Caesar is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization with extensive history (over 75 years).
a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?
   • No

10. How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?
   • Community primary.
   • Social secondary.

11. Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals?
   Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.

   How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?
   • Built Capital primarily.
   • Political Capital and Human Capital secondary.

12. What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?
   • Vision is critical.
   • Planning comprehensively and systemically.
   • Champion/s to drive the project forward.
   • Continuity of people.
   • Working together.
   • Relationship with funders.

13. Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?

   Worked well:
   • Timeline is easy to follow and process is clear.
   • If you follow the PowerPoint Presentation, it is easy to prepare application.

   Could be improved:
   • Getting three (3) bids is challenging in rural communities. Eats up time, energy and is often times impossible to get.
   • Timelines for application and receipt of funding could be improved.
1. Tell me a little about the FEG project.
   - Appalachia After Dark: Emerging Opportunities in Night Sky Conservation and Development.
   - Focus on economic development opportunity with environmental sustainability and STEM focus.

   a. Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?
   - Tim was actively involved from the beginning and served as a “catalyst” for the project by proposing the ideas from the “darkness” asset identified in the ARC research study.
   - Catherine became involved during FEG process.

   b. Overall, what worked really well?
   - Environmental sustainability and STEM focus.
   - Hospitality and openness of community.
   - Research opportunity for University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
   - Focus on an at-risk community.
   - Engaging amateur astronomers.
   - Remote area with close access.
   - Working with community folks in Calhoun County.

   c. Overall, what could have been improved?
   - Difficult to build local capacity with limited funding and support.
   - Too few people with tools to effectively solve problems.
   - Many stakeholders are retired, older community members – need to engage younger stakeholders for growth and sustainability.
   - Changing minds about how to do things – being innovative and doing things differently.
   - Need to continue creating good experiences for stakeholders (inside and outside the area).
   - Park is lacking in some basic “infrastructure” things (i.e., hotel/accommodations, restroom facilities, cell phone/internet service, etc.). Infrastructure needs further developed.
   - Need additional training and capacity building in hospitality/tourism, diversity, entrepreneurship, etc.

2. What was the catalyst for your FEG project?
   - Developed from University of Tennessee, Knoxville’s work with ARC in research project focusing on rural communities, including Calhoun County, WV. (Strategies for Economic Improvement in Appalachian Distressed Rural Counties).

   a. Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?
   - An opportunity that was “accidentally” discovered during asset mapping exercises with another ARC project.
b. To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project success?
   - Extremely important.
   - Local volunteer park board has been active since the beginning
   - More neutral and inclusive Advisory Committee was developed to guide the project. The Committee consists of members from the volunteer park board, local schools, City of Grantsville, Calhoun County, LDD, etc.

3. Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?
   - Project is in early stages of development, but yes, adequate planning has been occurring and will continue throughout the course of implementation.
   a. Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those persons involved?
      - Again, project is in early stages. To the degree possible, clear goals and steps have been identified to date.
   b. Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved implementation?
      - There is a lack of local capacity which may require additional planning and/or capacity building efforts along the course of implementation.

4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   - Lack of local capacity, experience and history to do this type of community development work.
   - Local ability to initiate and manage FEG.
   a. If so, how were those issues addressed?
      - Still trying to address local capacity issues. Sent individual to Brushy Fork Institute for leadership development, but difficult to get people interested in these leadership development/capacity building opportunities.
      - University of Tennessee assisted/took the lead on FEG management in order to meet FEG requirements and demonstrate/teach local stakeholders these skills.

5. To what extent was the project supported by local government?
   - County government was instrumental in seeking FEG support, with persuasion from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
   - Local volunteer park board has been active since the beginning
   - More neutral and inclusive Advisory Committee was developed to guide the project. The Committee consists of members from the volunteer park board, local schools, City of Grantsville, Calhoun County, LDD, etc.
   a. How important is it to have the support of local government?
      - In this particular project, most important.

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
   - University of Tennessee, Knoxville (policy and planning, project management, and grant writing/reporting).
   - Fairmont State University (architecture and design)
   - West Virginia University (Capacity building and leadership development)
a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?
• Project would not have been initiated or continued without assistance from outside expertise.

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
• Initially, the University of Tennessee stakeholders were the sole keeper of “vision” for this project. Currently, members of the local Advisory Committee are beginning to take on that role.

a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?
• As the local Advisory committee continues to assume the role, there is greater likelihood that the project will influence change.

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
• University of Tennessee, Knoxville is currently providing record keeping and reporting services. Local capacity needs to be built in this area for future FEG and other grant record keeping and reporting.
• Project evaluation currently has been limited to the deliverables produced related to the project. No ongoing evaluation framework has been developed at this time.

a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
• It is important and local capacity needs to be further developed in this regard.

b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability?
• Currently no impact related to success and sustainability, but future ability for success and sustainability depends heavily on developing this capacity at the local level.

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
• Calhoun County and Advisory Committee.

a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?
• Local Advisory Committee.
• Has been a slow process building local capacity for the project.
• Ownership issues still need to be clearly resolved locally.

10. How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?
• All of the above. But capacity is coming along at a slower pace.
• Individual and organizational capacity development has been the primary outcome of the project to date.

11. Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals?
Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.

   How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?
• Natural and Cultural primarily.
• Human and Social secondary.
• Built on the cusp as implementation occurs.
• Political on the cusp as additional funding and resources are leveraged.

12. **What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?**
   • Taking an individual focus on each community is most important. Find out what works best for each local community and work with where they are and what they have. Not “one size fits all.”
   • Flexibility.
   • Sustained and equitable partnerships over time.
   • Vision to lead the project.
   • Local leaders or champion/s.
   • Determination and sustained commitment.
   • Community involvement and input along the way.
   • Capacity or ability to assess and increase needed capacity.
   • Building and sustaining trusting relationships.
   • Engaging youth and developing new leadership.

13. **Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?**

    Worked well:
    • James is a huge asset – a “stand up guy”
    • Being flexible to meet diverse community needs.
    • Clear process, application, and reporting.

    Could be improved:
    • Provide a bridge to implementation funding and support – maybe a phase 2 FEG
Organization: City of Shinnston, WV  
Project Name: Community Center Stakeholder Input and Technical Assistance for Capital Campaign  
Project Number: 11-ARC-P018, 12-ARC-P062, and 13-ARC-P050  
Present: Debra Herndon, City of Shinnston, Amy Haberbosch Wilson, City of Shinnston, AJ Hammond, City of Shinnston  
Date of Site Visit: Friday, January 20, 2017

1. Tell me a little about the FEG project.
   - Projects all related to demolition of vacant and blighted structure in downtown and the development of a multi-purpose community center.
     a. Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?
        - Debra has been actively involved in the project from beginning to present.
        - Several FED targeted various aspects of the project over time.
     b. Overall, what worked really well?
        - Teamwork and community engagement was a strength.
        - Received good input throughout the entire project.
     c. Overall, what could have been improved?
        - Options for location of facility was limited, but could have more deeply explored alternate options for locating the facility.
        - A site visit from the WVDO during the grant process might have been helpful.

2. What was the catalyst for your FEG project?
   - Identified in the Blueprint Communities process and related strategic plan.
     a. Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?
        - Local Senior Center had some funding ($100,000) that they wanted to co-invest with the City to develop a community center.
     b. To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project success?
        - Absolutely critical throughout the project.

3. Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?
   - Yes, project was initially identified in City of Shinnston Blueprint Communities plan.
   - Two versions of the facility were designed – a “full scale” version and a “scaled down” version.
     a. Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those persons involved?
        - Yes, goals and steps were clear for all stakeholders and community through ongoing community engagement and input activities.
     b. Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved implementation?
        - N/A
4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   • No, the purpose of the FEG was well defined, clear and direct.

   a. If so, how were those issues addressed?
      • N/A

5. To what extent was the project supported by local government?
   • Completely – The City of Shinnston leadership and council directed the project.

   a. How important is it to have the support of local government?
      • In this project, it was absolutely necessary to have local government (City of Shinnston) actively involved in the project.

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
   • Yes, architectural drawings of the facility and property were developed by outside experts.
   • Cost estimates for full scale and scaled down versions of the facility were provided by WVU.

   a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?
      • Provided visuals for imagining the facility. Also provided accurate costs associated with developing and paying for the new facility.

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
   • Yes, City of Shinnston leadership and Council.

   a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?
      • Yes, by being the decision-makers in the community.

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
   • Yes, previous grant management experience was helpful.

   a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
      • Record keeping was simple.
      • Evaluation was limited to production of deliverables (community input, architectural renderings, cost analysis from WVU, etc.

   b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability
      • N/A

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
   • City of Shinnston leadership and Council.

   a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?
      • N/A

10. How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?
• All of the above!
  o Individuals – seniors and community members.
  o Organization – developed and strengthened partnerships, Council learned a great deal from the experience.
  o Community – community-based project development.
• City of Shinnston further developed skills in grant writing and management and soliciting outside expertise (architects, WVU, etc.).

11. Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals?  

Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.

b) How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?  
• Human and Social primarily.
• Culture as a secondary.

12. What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?  
• Common vision.
• Community involvement and input.
• Ability to pull it all together in a plan.
• A bridge from planning to action (implementation).
• Follow-through.
• Need active community to help with the work.
• Having key people in place to move the project forward (small communities lack the staff/people capacity to get projects finished).

13. Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?

Worked well:
• Grant is simple and clear.
• Reporting is direct.
• James is accessible and helpful.

Could be improved:
• Need funding or connections to funding for implementation costs beyond FEG support.
• A site visit from the WVDO during the grant process might have been helpful.
Organization: Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia

Project Name: Country Roads Cook-Off Toolkit

Project Number: 11-ARC-PO76 and 13-ARC-PO14

Present: Allen Arnold – Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia and Melody Urbanic – Café Cimino

Date of Site Visit: Monday, January 23, 2017 (Phone conference call was held as interviewees were unable to meet in person during the scheduled site visit time period)

1. Tell me a little about the FEG project.
   a. Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?
      • Both participants were actively involved from the beginning (cast iron/cook off).
      • Emphasis on economic development by selling cultural heritage.
      • Create opportunities for “ordinary folks” to create local businesses
      • Blending of culinary heritage and heritage tourism.

   b. Overall, what worked really well?
      • Had a strong person who "championed" efforts and helped build consensus.
      • A strong team to follow through on tasks.
      • Outside influence and expertise.
      • Built on preexisting efforts. “You can’t dream about something totally outside your experience”.
      • Made small course corrections along the way.
      • Supporting the development of “cottage industries”.

   c. Overall, what could have been improved?
      • Delayed in getting money after initial application resulted in having to address changes in landscape, partners, etc.
      • Postpones some of the work (development of cookbook).
      • Made course corrections and adjustments along the way, but turned out better after all.

2. What was the catalyst for your FEG project?
   a. Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?
      • More of an opportunity to support economic development in the state, targeting an initial community to start and then expand over time.

   b. To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project success?
      • Very important, especially useful as the project grew.

3. Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?
   • Yes, required ongoing planning and course corrections over time.

   a. Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those persons involved?
      • Yes, it helped keep everyone on the same page as the project grew.

   b. Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved implementation?
      • N/A … more “streamlined” or timely receipt of funding would have been helpful, but overall no issues here.
4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   - Yes, delay in receipt of funding required team to address changing landscape and turnover of people.
   a. If so, how were those issues addressed?
      - “Rolled with the flow” - being patient and address issues as they presented.

5. To what extent was the project supported by local government?
   - A lot of grassroots effort, but was supported by Mayor of Calhoun County, Convention and Visitor Bureaus, Extension Agents, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Education to a smaller extent.
   a. How important is it to have the support of local government?
      - Fairly important for this project.

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
   - Yes, there was significant value in bringing outside expertise to the project.
   a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?
      - Yes, consultants and experts were used for planning, facilitation, community engagement, development of project deliverables, etc.

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
   - Yes, Melody Urbanic was champion with vision.
   - Allen Arnold was champion as well.
   a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?
      - Yes, the ability to mobilize the team and communities through leadership.

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
   - Record keeping was easy due to previous record keeping and reporting experiences with other projects.
   - Evaluation was not a major part of the project, other than the actual development of project deliverables and final FEG reporting.
   - FEG reporting is fairly easy and direct.
   a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
      - Already had capacity, if not, it may have been more challenging, but still, FEG is straightforward and simple.
   b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability?
      - N/A

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
   - Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia
a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?
   • Local teams and groups were launched as part of the project.

10. How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?
   • Individual development through being a part of the process.
   • Community development through team work and collaboration.

11. Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals?
   Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.
   c) How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?
      • Cultural and Human primary.
      • Social secondary.
      • Financial last as ultimate goal of economic development.

12. What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?
   • Vision and goals.
   • Trust in self and others (social capital).
   • Champion/s to move work forward.
   • Grassroots organizing.
   • Ability to market and sell concepts.
   • Ability to fundraise and “tell the story”.
   • Civic engagement.
   • Promotion and communication of the project to the community.
   • Ability to connect to other successful events, efforts, etc.

13. Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?

Worked well:
   • FEG program is well organized.
   • James is helpful and easy to access.

Could be improved:
   • Shorter timeline between application and receipt of funding.
   • Connection to continued funding and other support beyond FEG.
**Organization:** Doddridge County Economic Development Authority (EDA)  
**Project Name:** Regional Economic Development through Heritage Tourism  
**Project Number:** 14-ARC-P018  
**Present:** Herk Connor - Doddridge County EDA, Steve Parks - Ritchie County EDA, J. Eric Peters - Tyler County Development Authority, and Jennifer Welt - AmeriCorps/Vista  
**Date of Site Visit:** Friday, January 20, 2017

1. **Tell me a little about the FEG project.**  
   - Opportunity to bring partners together in four (4) county region to develop resources to build and support heritage tourism in the area.

   a. **Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?**  
      - All present were involved from the beginning.  
      - All four (4) historical societies and all EDA’s involved in project.  
      - Opportunity to explore regional economic development through heritage tourism.

   b. **Overall, what worked really well?**  
      - Asset mapping.  
      - Team work to arrive at common vision.  
      - WVU support with planning and facilitation.  
      - Outside “tourism” expert from Southwest Virginia helped with planning and visioning.

   c. **Overall, what could have been improved?**  
      - More involvement from the historical societies in each of the four (4) counties.  
      - Need a large investment from the state for tourism development.

2. **What was the catalyst for your FEG project?**  
   - Locally driven by EDA’s to address opportunity for economic development through heritage tourism.

   a. **Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?**  
      - More of an opportunity than a need.

   b. **To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project success?**  
      - Broader community was not involved beyond the EDAs and historical societies. This may have been a factor that contributed to success (not getting stalled, not having to get consensus from four (4) distinct communities, etc.

3. **Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?**  
   - Extensive planning occurred.

   a. **Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those persons involved?**  
      - Yes, an important step in the process.

   b. **Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved implementation?**  
      - No, adequate planning was integral to project success.
4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   - Many assets in the counties are in the hands of outside parties and are privately owned.
   - Lack of resources to participate and implement (i.e., facilities are not “visitor ready”, lack of hospitality training for local businesses, etc.).

   a. If so, how were those issues addressed?
   - Still not adequately addressed.

5. To what extent was the project supported by local government?
   - Very important, all four county EDAs were actively involved and played leadership roles in the project.

   a. How important is it to have the support of local government?
   - For this project, very important!

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
   - Yes, WVU and tourism expert from Southwestern VA.

   a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?
   - Provided planning and facilitation services.
   - Provided neutral “outside” guidance.

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
   - Yes, EDA directors and AmeriCorps member.

   a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?
   - Yes, all in leadership positions in each respective county.

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
   - Capacity for record keeping already existed within the EDAs and historical societies.
   - Proof of deliverables served as “evaluation” (i.e., plan, website, printed materials, app creation, etc).

   a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
   - Not too important for this project.

   b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability?
   - N/A

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
   - Local EDAs is each of the four (4) counties.

   a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?
- Project committee made up of members of the EDAs and historical societies in each of the four (4) counties.
- The committee still continues to meet and explore ways to implement the plan.

10. How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?
- Not so much community capacity due to lack of broader community involvement. Although the plan, when implemented, will help build community capacity for economic development through heritage tourism.
- Organizational and individual capacity was strengthened through the project.

11. Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals?
*Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.*

**How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?**
- Asset mapping process helped to “uncover” some capitals in the community (natural, built, and political).
- Increased financial capital will be realized in the longer term with the focus of the project being on economic development through heritage tourism.

12. What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?
- Instill vision for the future.
- Address capacity issues (which are critical and complex) – building capacity in local people and organizations will lead to community development.
- Bring new people to the table – engage the community.
- Broadband is needed for new economy – web-based cottage industries.
- Civic infrastructure is missing in most rural communities. Need support in developing this to be successful in community development.
- Youth involvement is crucial.

13. Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?

**Worked well:**
- Grant is simple and clear
- Reporting is simple and clear

**Could be improved:**
- Need funding or connections to funding for implementation costs beyond FEG support.
- Need support to develop civic infrastructure – citizen engagement.
Organization: High Rocks Educational Corporation
Project Name: High Rocks Community Action Project – 10-ARC-P0027
Project Number: 10-ARC-P0027, 13-ARC-P028, 14-ARC-P024
Present: Sarah Riley – High Rocks Educational Corporation
Date of Sit Visit: Wednesday, January 25, 2017

1. Tell me a little about the FEG project.
   • Initially, focus on building leadership capacity in young people. This is still primary mission of High Rocks, but FEG support focus has changed.
   • More recent focus on organizational capacity building.
     a. Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?
        • Yes, actively involved for many years with High Rocks.
     b. Overall, what worked really well?
        • Investment in organizational capacity – specifically technology solutions and support.
        • Would not have had funding for capacity building otherwise.
        • Provided the ability to build internal systems and train staff on those systems.
        • IT services from professional with world class technology skills.
     c. Overall, what could have been improved?
        • More transparency and communication with FEG decision makers.

2. What was the catalyst for your FEG project?
   • Need for organizational growth and systems development.
     a. Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?
        • Organization is connected to the community and helps build community capacity, so yes, indirectly.
        • Investments in the organization’s “back office” ultimately strengthens the community.
        • Organization is driven by a community Board made up of community residents, leaders, etc. and a youth advisory Board made up of program participants in the community.
     b. To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project success?
        • For these particular projects, not as useful or necessary. However, the overall community impact is valuable.

3. Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?
   • Yes, organizational development is part of ongoing plan.
     a. Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those persons involved?
        • Yes, clear project goals and steps were needed to assure project success.
     b. Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved implementation?
        • N/A
4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   - Internet access in remote location.
   - Low level of technology literacy of staff.
   - Difficult to keep up with technology advances and refinements.
   
a. If so, how were those issues addressed?
   - Continuous training on new systems.
   - Currently working with Internet providers to assure appropriate bandwidth is available at facilities.

5. To what extent was the project a supported by local government?
   - Early investments from County Commission, but not recent and not related to the FEG project.
   - There is a local investment from other stakeholders (donors, volunteers, etc.), but not local government specifically.
   
a. How important is it to have the support of local government?
   - Not so important for these particular organizational development projects.

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
   - Yes, IT/Technology support.
   - Graphic design support.
   - In-kind support from local partners.
   
a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?
   - Valuable expertise from outside was key to project success.

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
   - Young people/program participants continuously “push the vision forward”.
   - Diversity and leadership of staff and commitment to development and improvement.
   
a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?
   - Yes, absolutely! Internal and external leadership working together to create change and improve systems.

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
   - Yes, internal capacity already exists due to amount of grants managed by the organization.
   - Project evaluation was limited to the deliverables produced by the project.
   
a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
   - Important but not a challenge due to previously grant management history and experience.
   
   b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability?
   - N/A

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
   - The organization, High Rocks Educational Corporation, was already in place.
a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?

- N/A

10. How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?

- Individual, organizational, and community equally.

11. Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals? 

*Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.*

**How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?**

- Human Capital primarily.
- Social Capital as a ripple effect.
- Financial as an indirect since upgraded organizational systems can be related to ability to leverage additional funding.
- High Rocks as an organization touches on all seven capitals in its broader programs and services provided to participants and communities.

12. What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?

- Strong social capital.
- Clear vision among participants.
- Need young people actively involved.
- Community involvement and leadership.
- Infrastructure to support ideas and innovation.
- Investments in nonprofit infrastructure and capacity.
- Support of what works well.

13. Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?

**Worked well:**

- James Bush
- Support to do capacity building which would normally not be able to do.
- Organizational development/capacity building support.

**Could be improved:**

- Improve personal relationships with grantee from “upper level” of Development Office.
- Expectations for small amount of money can be unrealistic.
- Create a learning community to share what is working and what is not.
- More transparency on how funding decisions are being made and more feedback on applications, especially those not funded.
- Consider using organizations and communities funded with FEG funding as experts to assist other communities/organizations in their applications and/or projects.
1. **Tell me a little about the FEG project.**
   - Strategic Planning project for town of Linwood, WV.
     a. **Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?**
        - Terry was actively involved from the beginning of the project to present.

     b. **Overall, what worked really well?**
        - Tool to bring the community together.
        - Getting ideas and common vision from participants.
        - Actual plan was developed and is being used to develop the community.
        - Ability to leverage additional funding from plan (i.e., $50,000 for sidewalk development).

     c. **Overall, what could have been improved?**
        - Sometimes difficult to get people to participate in planning meetings.
        - Offering food attracts people to meetings.
        - More promotion and development of promotional pieces would have been helpful.

2. **What was the catalyst for your FEG project?**
   - Community need to have diverse ideas together in a structured plan.
     a. **Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?**
        - Yes, there was a need to bring diverse stakeholders together to develop a common vision and shared goals.

     b. **To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project success?**
        - Absolutely necessary for project success. This is a community-driven plan.
        - Brought people together to express ideas and vision for the future of the community in a neutral process.

3. **Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?**
   - The planning process was initiated through this project with FEG support. There was no previous planning prior to this project.
     a. **Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those persons involved?**
        - It was important for everyone to be on the same page. The facilitator of the process helped with creating an environment where people felt comfortable sharing their ideas and working together for the betterment of the community.

     b. **Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved implementation?**
        - N/A
4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   - N/A
   a. If so, how were those issues addressed?
   - N/A

5. To what extent was the project supported by local government?
   - No support from local government. Linwood is unincorporated and Pocahontas provided no financial support.
   - This project was driven at the grassroots level.
   a. How important is it to have the support of local government?
   - For this particular project, it was not very important.

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
   - Yes, an outside neutral facilitator was used to guide the process, facilitate meetings, and develop the community plan.
   - An expert in Board Development was also used to train new Board members on roles and responsibilities of a Board member, development of by-laws, etc.
   a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?
   - Both the facilitator and trainer were keys to our projects success. Each brought outside, neutral expertise and guidance to the project.

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
   - Terry was and still is the champion for the project. Implementation is now the key focus.
   a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?
   - Yes, having good relationships with stakeholders in the community is extremely important.

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
   - Record keeping and report was easy to learn and do. No formal expertise in record keeping or reporting, but was not difficult to learn.
   - Evaluation was limited to the project deliverables (strategic plan and Board Training),
   a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
   - N/A
   b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability?
   - N/A

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
   - New organization being developed – Linwood Alive.
a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?
- New organization being developed – Linwood Alive. Board development training was an important part of this project.

10. How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?
- Community first then organization second.

11. Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals?
Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.

How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?
- Human first with building skills of the Board.
- Social second with collaboration and plan development/implementation.

12. What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?
- Solidarity in cause – common vision and goals.
- Giving everyone a job (tasks) creates ownership and buying.
- Responsibly plan in comprehensive approach.
- Be ready to answer or help answer “what is in it for me?”
- Ongoing and active communication.
- Community engagement and involvement.

13. Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?

Worked well:
- James is accessible.
- Very clear and direct application and reporting.
- Ability to hire outside expertise creating a neutral environment.

Could be improved:
- Allow food at meetings as it creates interest and participation.
1. Tell me a little about the FEG project.
   - Informal conversations lead to identifying need and value of getting staff and other stakeholders from small, rural community centers together to network, share, and learn from one another.
   - To prevent the various centers from having to “recreate the wheel” on processes, tools, development of services, etc.

   a. Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?
      - All participants were actively involved in the project from beginning to end.

   b. Overall, what worked really well?
      - Getting the communities mobilized and engaged in the project
      - Ability to select consultants and/or other experts to assist with project deliverables.
      - FEG is flexible and can cover a good deal of things needing paid for throughout the project.

   c. Overall, what could have been improved?
      - All went well locally. Refer to questions 13 for recommendations for FEG improvements.

2. What was the catalyst for your FEG project?
   a. Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?
      - Need and opportunity to create a “center network” was identified by the various centers involved in the project.

   b. To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project success?
      - Incredibly important since the focus was on various community centers serving small, rural areas.

3. Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?
   - Yes!

   a. Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those persons involved?
      - Detailed planning and collaboration was happening from the start of the project to the end.

   b. Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved implementation?
      - N/A

4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   - Limited funding resources are always a challenge.
   - Leadership/staff turnover throughout the course of the project.
Flooding and damage from summer storms was a challenge to overcome, particularly regarding timelines – required more time to regroup.

a. If so, how were those issues addressed?
- Learning to be creative and “weave” various funding sources to make larger impact.
- Constantly replacing leaders/staff as they departed.
- Being patient and addressing issues as they presented.

5. To what extent was the project supported by local government?
- None directly, local government was not involved in this particular project. It was driven by “grassroots/ volunteer efforts”.
- Used local school buses on a few occasions, but paid for that use.

a. How important is it to have the support of local government?
- Not for this particular project.

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
- Not this project, but valuable in other projects and efforts.

a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?
- N/A

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
- Yes, there were “champions” that moved the project forward. Others built on the initial ideas and helped move the project even further.

a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?
- Yes, there were 2 years of sharing resources, ideas, processes, tools, etc. across various community centers.

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
- Yes, previous experience with other grants (vista, afterschool programs, etc.) were valuable in record keeping and reporting.
- Evaluation was limited to identifying project deliverables. There was not an extensive evaluation.

a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
- Yes, if not had this already, it would have required developing new skill sets.

b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability?
- N/A

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
- Step by Step was the leader in crating and sustaining change.

a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?
- No, organization and systems were already in place.
10. How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?
   - Developed individual capacity to work together.
   - Developed organizational capacity which ultimately impact community capacity.
   - Realized that centers were not alone and that there were others to share and help problem solve.

11. Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals?
   Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.

   How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?
   - Human and Social Capital primarily
   - Cultural and Built secondary.

12. What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?
   - Common and shared vision and well defined goals.
   - Broad community buy-in and voice.
   - Being open to addressing local needs.
   - Multi-year funding and/or support.
   - Patience – change happens slowly.
   - Determination and resilience.
   - Follow through.
   - Physical facility for meeting and sharing.
   - Field trips to learn from peers in other communities.
   - Continued focus on how to move the needle for those residents who want to stay in the area.

13. Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?

   Worked well:
   - Grant application is direct and easy to complete.
   - Reporting is direct and fairly easy.

   Could be improved:
   - Definition of what it means to be considered “distressed/at-risk/transitional” - maybe more focus on the community level (hot spots) as opposed to the county level for this designation.
   - Ability to use FEG funding for stipends and/or honorariums for local residents to be more actively involved in projects (i.e., gas cards, gift cards, payment for their time, etc.).
   - Offer technical assistance at the end of FEG funding to help identify and/or access implementation funding to continue the project through completion.
   - Length of time it takes to get funding may lead to loss of momentum and/or change in leadership and project goals.
1. Tell me a little about the FEG project.
   a. Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?
      • Yes – provided grant administration, project leadership, facilitation of meetings, input
during sessions.
   b. Overall, what worked really well?
      • Hiring consultant with fund raising experience to guide local steering team was key.
      • Consultant kept team focused and developing a plan that outlines target markets, provided
“how to” advice, and collateral materials to support the project.
   c. Overall, what could have been improved?
      • Having more people involved in the steering committee and overall project.
      • Wage requirements hindered the project (i.e., cap of $15,000 was challenging).

2. What was the catalyst for your FEG project?
   • The project was driven by the need to develop a plan to generate funds needed to construct
and promote the John Henry Historical Park.
   a. Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?
      • The project originated from the community (local steering committee members) as a need
for funding to construct the park.
   b. To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project
success?
      • Very necessary – community members (steering committee) lead the project from start to
present.
      • Vision of steering committee/community members was driving force.

3. Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?
   • Yes, E.L. Robinson let the development of the master plan and initial cost estimates for
the park. This information served as “baseline” in developing the fundraising plan.
   a. Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those
persons involved?
      • Yes, the consultant worked with the committee to determine goals for the project, what
was expected from the consultant and the committee, and the anticipated deliverables from
the project.
   b. Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved
implementation?
      • No, the master plan was already in place.
4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   - There were no barriers – the project was well conceived from the master plan.

   a. If so, how were those issues addressed?
      - N/A

5. To what extent was the project supported by local government?
   - Full support from Summers County Commission – they adopted a resolution that supported the project and guaranteed the required local match.

   a. How important is it to have the support of local government?
      - The park is county-owned, so there would be no project without local support from Summers County Commission.

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
   - Yes, consultant was very important.

   a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?
      - Could not have carried out the project without the support of consultant.

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
   - Yes, local historian Bill Dillon and Rick were appointed to lead the project by the county commission. Bill Dillon lead public relations’ efforts and Rick Moorefield let construction efforts.

   a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?
      - To a degree, Mr. Dillon was respected from passion and historical knowledge and Rick was respected for planning skills. However, both were challenged by community members and other stakeholders at times to build consensus on various aspects of the project.

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
   - Yes, internal experience was helpful.
   - Rick scheduled meetings, recorded minutes and next steps, and reported to FEG in required documents.

   a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
      - Not as much as other grants, it was straightforward
      - Minutes for meetings was provided in timely manner
      - Evaluation was the plan deliverable, No further impact evaluation was required

   b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability?
      - N/A for this project.

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
   - The JHHP steering committee was charged with implementation of the fund raising plan.

   a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?
• Yes, the steering committee developed an agreement with a local individual to implement the fund raising plan that was developed

10. **How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?**

• Project participants were all local community residents and leaders within the community (churches, nonprofits, etc.).

11. **Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals?**

*Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.*

**How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?**

• Initially rooted in financial capital – developing a fund raising plan to generate funding for the park.
• Secondary human and social capital was developed – utilizing a diverse group of community individuals and organizations to accomplish the mutual goal of producing a fund development plan for the park.
• All seven capitals are impacted in some way of another through the broader project.

12. **What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?**

• People tend to be “response oriented” as opposed to being proactive.
• Long range planning is important.
• Having a champion – a person or entity to carry the torch and keep the project on the “front burner” and to rally the troops.
• Having a collective vision among all stakeholders.
• Persistence over time to follow through.
• Catalytic momentum.
• Incremental steps and successes along the way.
• Community buy-in and communication on progress.
• Leveraging and managing many funding sources for a project.

13. **Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?**

**Worked well:**

• James Bush accessibility and knowledge of grant allowances/disallowances.
• Flexible funding and relatively easy application and reporting.
• FEG has specific targets and is straightforward.
• Paperwork is clear and simple.

**Could be improved:**

• Wage requirements for construction.
• Getting three (3) bids is challenging.
• Need funding or connections to funding for “bricks and mortar – building costs”.
Organization: Wyoming County Economic Development Authority (EDA)
Project Name: Community Planning for Recreation and Heritage Tourism in Pineville, WV and Surrounding Areas
Project Number: 14-ARC-P049
Present: Christy Laxton - Wyoming County EDA and David Lord - Southern WV Community and Technical College
Date of Site Visit: Wednesday, January 18, 2017

1. Tell me a little about the FEG project.
   a. Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?
      • Christy – project manager and grant support.
      • David – active on the planning team.

   b. Overall, what worked really well?
      • Community involvement.
      • WVU – Peter Butler – mapping support.
      • Food provided at meetings brings people to the table.

   c. Overall, what could have been improved?
      • Getting new people involved is needed – catching the attention of new people is important for future efforts.

2. What was the catalyst for your FEG project?
   • Build upon previous efforts.
   • Logical next steps to what had already been completed.

   a. Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?
      • Yes, continuation of previous community planning efforts.

   b. To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project success?
      • Very important.
      • Had 25-30 people attend each meeting.
      • Would not have been successful without participation of the community.

3. Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?
   • Yes, the project was a continuation of previous planning efforts over time.

   a. Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those persons involved?
      • Yes, building upon previous planning efforts.
      • Common vision was built upon, and further developed in each of the three communities (Pineville, Oceana, and Mullins).
      • SWOT was conducted as part of the project.
      • Had 1,100 responses to online survey – excellent response.

   b. Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved implementation?
      • N/A
4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   - People’s perception that we keep planning and planning and don’t get to implementation.
   - Lack of FEG support for implementation costs.

   a. If so, how were those issues addressed?
   - Ongoing communication with community and clarity of project goals.

5. To what extent was the project supported by local government?
   - Completely – EDA and other local government support (BOE, County Leadership, etc.) was important for project success.

   a. How important is it to have the support of local government?
   - Project would not have happened without support of local government.
   - Connections and relationships among local community and residents is important to project success.

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
   - Yes, WVU – Peter Butler and support from landscape architecture department was invaluable.

   a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?
   - Provided expertise in planning, engagement, etc.

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
   - Yes, the local EDA provided project management and leadership.

   a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?
   - Yes, the EDA is a change agent in the local community and its good reputation was important for project success.

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
   - Already had capacity from grants management and reporting experience over the years.
   - Project evaluation consisted of final report and related deliverables.

   a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
   - May have been a little more challenging if not already had experience and systems in place.

   b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability?
   - N/A

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
   - EDA and partner organizations
   - Planning commission was also actively involved.

   a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?
   - Already in place (EDA, planning commission, and other community partners)
10. How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?
   • Primarily community capacity with organization and individual being secondary

11. Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals?

*Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.*

**How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?**
   • Social - community involvement and artist collaboration.
   • Built – street scape project.
   • Natural – beautification assets, water, and trails.
   • Cultural – focus on local heritage.
   • Financial – leveraging other funds to implement the plan.

12. What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?
   • Vision and common goals.
   • Leadership.
   • Engaged community.
   • Consistent and dedicated people.
   • Implementing “early wins” to demonstrate success.
   • Fudging for implementing plans that are developed.

13. Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?

**Worked well:**
   • James Bush is a good resource.
   • Grant is simple and clear.
   • Reporting is simple and clear.

**Could be improved:**
   • Getting three (3) bids is challenging and almost impossible in rural communities with the minimal funding from FEG.
   • Need funding or connections to funding for implementation costs beyond FEG support (supplies, construction, etc.).
Organization: Town of Addison
Project Name: Baker's Island Master Plan – Part 2
Project Number: 10-ARC-P0012
Present: Gary Weir - Webster County EDA, Don McCourt – Mayor of Town of Addison, Kent Walker – Webster County EDA Board, Angie Cowger – Local Business and Property Owner, and Sue Talbott – Webster Springs Main Street
Date of Site Visit: Tuesday, January 24, 2017

1. Tell me a little about the FEG project.
   - Continuation of phase 1 Master Plan for Baker’s Island (supported by FEG).
   a. Were you actively involved from the beginning to the end? In what way?
      - All participants were actively involved in master plan phase 2 development and implementation.
   b. Overall, what worked really well?
      - Well known park for recreation, movies, music, celebrations, etc.
      - Park gets a lot of use from community and visitors.
      - Continuous attention to Baker’s Island.
      - Continuously get broad community input.
      - Ability to leverage matching/implementation funding.
   c. Overall, what could have been improved?
      - Some tasks/strategies happen in different order than identified in the plan due to funding opportunities, changes in stakeholders, etc., but that is typical in this type of planning effort.

2. What was the catalyst for your FEG project?
   - Opportunity in the community. Baker’s Island has been used by the community for decades, do building on this history was a logical next step.
   a. Did your FEG project originate from within the community to meet a community need?
      - Community opportunity as opposed to need.
   b. To what extent was the involvement of community members useful and necessary to project success?
      - Extremely important! Community members have been actively involved since the start of the project and will continue to be actively involved.

3. Was the project adequately planned prior to implementation?
   - Yes … this is phase 2 of Master Plan development. Phase 1 was also supported by FEG funding.
   a. Were project goal and steps necessary to achieve success clear and understood by those persons involved?
      - Yes, phase 1 provided that level of detail and clarity.
b. Would more attention to planning prior to receiving the FEG have improved implementation?
   - N/A

4. Did you experience any issues or local conditions that made it difficult to carry out the FEG project?
   - No, just some of the tasks/strategies happened in a different order than was identified in the initial plan.
   a. If so, how were those issues addressed?
      - N/A

5. To what extent was the project a supported by local government?
   - Webster County EDA was heavily involved, as was the mayor’s office.
   a. How important is it to have the support of local government?
      - For this project, very important. The property is owned by the Town and therefore required active participation from Addison stakeholders.

6. Was the project informed by outside expertise (knowledgeable experts from outside the community)?
   - Yes, an outside architectural firm was used for plan development.
   - Used internal facilitation of community input.
   a. If so, how did that contribute to project success?
      - Significant in preparing the final plan document – phase 2 Master Plan.

7. Was there consistent local leadership from someone who had a vision for the desired change?
   - Yes, EDA and Mayor’s office providing continuous leadership and facilitation of community input activities.
   a. Did leadership have the means to influence the change?
      - Yes, local government was active in holding the vision and influencing change for the project.

8. Was there capacity for record keeping and project evaluation?
   - Previous experience with FEG program and other grant funds provided the needed levels of capacity for record keeping and reporting activities.
   - Project evaluation was limited to the development of the plan deliverable.
   a. Was capacity for record keeping and evaluation important?
      - It was helpful to have had previous grant and FEG experience.
   b. How did any lack of capacity in these areas inhibit success and sustainability?
      - N/A

9. Was there a community system or organization that could sustain changes achieved?
   - EDA leveraged grant and administer the project, ultimately sustaining changes.
• City of Addison facilitated community input throughout the project, and continues to do so today.

a. Did the project require the creation of some type of ongoing process or effort to sustain what was accomplished?
• N/A

10. How did the project build on and/or increase community capacity (as contrasted to increasing capacity of a single organization or individuals)?
• All of the above, but primarily community capacity. Individual capacity second and organizational capacity third.

11. Did your project increase community wealth within one or more of the seven capitals?
Review the seven capitals (Community Capitals Framework handout) and identify contributions to community wealth as a result of the project.

How did the FEG project contribute to wealth creation in the community?
• Built and Social primarily.
• Cultural and Natural secondary.
• “Success breeds success”.

12. What steps are most important or critical in achieving successful outcomes in rural areas?
• Having a strong vision and goals.
• Community involvement.
• Hope of the future.
• People willing to work together and overcome differences.
• Community pride.
• Early wins and showing results.
• Flexibility.
• Compromise.
• Continuously asking “is this good for the community?”

13. Regarding the Flex E Grant program, what worked well and what could be improved?

Worked well:
• James Bush is accessible and great to work with.
• Simple process.
• Fairly flexible with categories.
• Not very prescriptive.

Could be improved:
• Getting three (3) bids is challenging in rural communities.
• Need funding or connections to funding for implementation costs beyond FEG support
• More consistency with timelines.