



Downtown Revitalization in Southeast Kentucky

The Downtown Revitalization Project is a three year, Appalachian Regional Commission funded effort taking place in the Promise Zone, a cluster of 8 counties in southeast Kentucky. This region of the state has been heavily impacted by a transitioning economy, with dramatic effects on energy sector workers, their families and the communities they call home. The Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK) at the University of Kentucky is the lead technical assistance provider for this project. The services CEDIK offers are designed to assist communities in creating a downtown that incorporates art, culture, design and the authentic experience of the community.

Investment

Communities in the Promise Zone who participate in this project are able to access funding to **implement** their plans to revitalize their downtown.

Regional Network Coordinator

Shane Barton is the regional coordinator for the Downtown Revitalization Project. He works **one-on-one** with the communities on specific plans, and serves as a **connector** to the support offered through CEDIK. (Shane.Barton@uky.edu)

Overview of the Project



Partners



Project funded by:



Contact CEDIK to learn more: cedik@lsv.uky.edu

Establish Downtown Network

First Impressions Program

FI is a structured community assessment program that enables communities to learn about the first impression they convey to outsiders. It offers a fresh perspective on the appearance, services and infrastructure of each community. Volunteer teams undertake unannounced, one-day visits, record their observations, and give constructive feedback to the community. CEDIK staff shares the results with each community, along with strategies for addressing the feedback.

Networking and Mentoring Program

Shane Barton serves as the regional coordinator for this project, working one-on-one with stakeholders on community-specific issues. He also works to network stakeholders across communities, so that they can learn from one another throughout the three year project and beyond. Learning from one another and sharing best practices is an inexpensive and valuable way to connect people and resources and avoid duplicative and competitive efforts.

Engage Local Businesses and Youth

Business Retention and Expansion Program

BR&E is a volunteer-based program that engages stakeholders to examine the local business situation, interpret the information collected, and purposefully plan to strengthen the ability of the community to understand local business needs and to positively respond. BR&E participants organize a planning committee; identify local business participants, conduct interviews, and respond to opportunities that result from the interviews. CEDIK staff shares the results with each community, along with strategies for responding to the needs identified.

Youth Engagement

This program seeks to equip youth with the civic engagement and development skills needed for them to engage as change agents in their community. The youth learn about walkability and assessment, along with other elements of community design. If your community does not have an existing youth program interested in developing these skills, CEDIK will partner with an appropriate organization to establish one.

Align Public Private Partnerships

Establish Community Foundations and Strategies to Attract Philanthropic Investment

Public-private partnerships and private investment are critical pieces to a resilient, less-reliant region. The Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky (FAK) is assisting communities to create community foundations and to provide technical support around increasing giving and promoting philanthropy as an alternative to relying on public funds. FAK is working one-on-one with each of the communities and the region to create community foundations and to develop strategies to attract philanthropic investments from both outside the community but particularly from within.

Enhance the Downtown's Sense of Place

Downtown Design and Public Space

A critical component to increasing foot traffic in a downtown is both the visual appeal and walkability of the area. Vibrant streetscapes are social places that support and encourage multiple uses. Communities complete downtown assessments of parking, traffic calming measures, lighting, facades, store fronts, public/open space use, signage, sidewalks, and accessibility. Communities identify how they want their public spaces to look, feel, and be, and envision streetscapes that would encourage people to spend more time downtown and revisit frequently.

Creative Placemaking

CEDIK staff assist in infusing the arts and creative placemaking into revitalization strategies for each of the downtowns. The creative placemaking portfolio may include performance-and visual art, arts learning opportunities for all ages, and/or community-based initiatives that reflect on the heritage and culture of the community. Participating communities will be supported through a series of local workshops and learn about accessibility of arts, arts programs, and effective public space design to ultimately integrate and build their ideas.

Determine the Downtown Market & Assist Businesses

Small Town Merchant Program

Independent retailers and restaurants are the heart and soul of small towns and main streets across Kentucky. Successful retailers build vibrant downtown destinations, but they face unique challenges ranging from inventory control, advertising, merchandising and staffing, to big box competition. The Kentucky SBDC will work to deliver the Small Town Merchant Program which provides targeted, relevant guidance that local business owners can put to use immediately.

GrowKY

GrowKY provides a suite of high-end, high-speed technical assistance and business resources to companies that have grown beyond the startup phase and need access to information and decision-making tools typically only available to larger companies. One of the objectives of this proposal is to implement GrowKY, and in some instances à la carte GrowKY services to businesses within the service region, ie. high-level market research or GIS mapping (market intelligence).