Section 4 Fuels the Growth of a Social Enterprise
Revitalizing Appalachia

Southern West Virginia has been hit hard by the economic downturn in the coal industry. Some areas in the region have grappled with poverty for decades, compounded by unemployment, an opioid epidemic, and a high incarceration rate. Some communities lack even basic infrastructure, and housing is dilapidated and in short supply.

Coalfield Development Corporation was launched in 2010 to push back against this tide through job training and community investment. The group was founded by volunteers who knew it would take a bold and innovative effort to address the deep, multi-generational challenges facing the region.

Section 4 grants and Enterprise’s ongoing support have been essential for Coalfield Development to build the expertise and capacity they need to develop multi-family affordable housing in highly distressed communities in southern West Virginia. Since its founding, the organization has professionalized and scaled up operations dramatically. Coalfield now employs 22 staff, creating jobs, opportunities and affordable homes in Wayne, Lincoln, and Mingo counties.
Section 4 Funds Help Grow the Local Economy and Create New Opportunities

Section 4 funding and support from Enterprise have helped Coalfield Development grow into a not-for-profit social enterprise that manages multiple mission-driven businesses. These include Revitalize Appalachia, which develops a construction-trained workforce to rebuild or tear down abandoned structures, and Rewire Appalachia, which trains young people and former coal miners in solar and broadband installation. Altogether, Coalfield Development has created more than 40 on-the-job training positions, more than 200 professional certification opportunities, redevelopment of more than 200,000 square feet of dilapidated property, and attracted over $8 million of new investment to the region.

A 2016 Section 4 grant helped Coalfield Development create a long-term organizational plan to manage its continued expansion, grow its revenue, and to create or preserve affordable homes for 51 low-income Appalachian families.

Section 4 Recipient Spotlight

Coalfield Development Corporation

Enterprise: A Partner from the Start

Enterprise, a longstanding Coalfield Development partner, has provided technical assistance on a number of real estate and job creation projects as the organization has grown. Enterprise has supported Coalfield on building and preserving rural rental housing and rehabilitating historic buildings in communities like Hamlin, Wayne and Fort Gay, W. Va. Enterprise also provided training to help Coalfield integrate Enterprise’s sustainable Green Communities standard into their building program. Supported by Enterprise’s technical assistance and Section 4 grants, Coalfield Development has successfully scaled up its operations and generated a 70 percent increase in revenue.

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In 2016, Section 4 funded staff salaries as they worked to create 27 new affordable homes and rehabilitate 24 existing affordable housing, as well as support the development of an organizational plan to cement Coalfield Development as an anchor organization in southern West Virginia.

Benefiting from access to higher education, on-the-job training, and mentorship, locals create better lives for themselves and their families.

Thirty-five participants have completed or are working towards degrees in higher education and 35 new full-time jobs have been created.

Development and rehabilitation of dilapidated homes and businesses create economic stability for residents, while also generating jobs and other economic benefits for the community.

Fifty-one new or rehabilitated affordable homes create an estimated $4.8 million in wages and contribute an estimated $2.8 million in taxes and local government revenue during construction.

Coalfield Development Corporation is based in West Virginia’s Congressional District 3, where:

- 21% of people live in poverty
- 30% of renters pay more than 30% of their income on rent
- 8.4% of civilians are unemployed

From the American Community Survey 2015 data