



ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES

A Pathway to Prosperity



Learning Theme 5 – Momentum, Momentum, Momentum

The E Communities initiative in Appalachia developed over about 3.5 years. In reality, the work of building a more entrepreneurial community and a stronger entrepreneurial ecosystem takes even longer. Given that, it is important to celebrate early successes and to celebrate often over time. Those celebrations – and lifting up the promise and impact of entrepreneurs in a community – are what keep people engaged and energized for the work ahead.

The partners to the E Communities initiative recognized the need to create momentum and capitalized on it in several ways. Both the WV Hub and Rural Action created a focus on entrepreneurial “wins” in their newsletters. Dan Taylor, lead coach in WV, developed a partnership with local media and wrote articles focused on the E Communities work. All three state partners developed mini-grant opportunities for their communities. These mini-grants provided small amounts of money to support the E teams in various ways – some used the resources for marketing or signage. One of the more creative and long-lasting uses of mini-grant funds was in Logan, Ohio where they combined community investment dollars with support from the local school system to hire a Business Coordinator. You can learn more about Logan’s journey [here](#).

Building Momentum

This learning theme includes a wide range of stories captured by our partners that describe momentum and serve to celebrate success. Collectively, they tell a different side of the impact story than can be captured in metrics reported in a grant application such as:

- 212 businesses served
- 93 businesses improved
- 16 communities served and improved
- 32 businesses created

These stories put a human face on the work and serve to energize leaders and community partners.