

**Press Release**  
For Immediate Publication

## **Steering Team Working to Create WV Non-Profit Association**

In West Virginia, the non-profit sector of our economy employs more than twice as many people as the entire mining industry. And until the Marcellus Shale natural gas boom, it was the fastest growing sector of our economy, with job growth in the non-profit sector significantly outstripping job growth in the for-profit sector. One out of every ten jobs in West Virginia are in the non-profit sector. There are currently more than 8,000 non-profit corporations in West Virginia, ranging from tiny volunteer-run organizations with almost no budget to large non-profit hospitals employing thousands.

Despite these facts, the state is one of only four in the nation that does not have some kind of non-profit association to provide support for non-profits and help them build their capacity. West Virginia has a statewide disc golfers association, but not a non-profit association.

That is about to change. The West Virginia Grantmakers Association (WVG), in partnership with the WV Community Development Hub, has begun implementation of a business plan for the creation of a statewide non-profit association.

“West Virginia has been talking about forming a non-profit association for 30 years,” said Paul Daugherty, WVG President. “During this past year, we, the WV Grantmakers in partnership with the WV Hub, decided to take action to develop an effective and results oriented association to serve the diverse needs of the non-profit community in West Virginia.”

Daugherty adds, “The creation of this association will serve as a professional support organization lead by non-profit leadersto advance the ethical practices, community impact, and collaborations among valuable organizations that serve communities across the state.”

WVG and the Hub proposed developing the business plan, and the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation stepped forward to provide funding. The plan was developed by Barbara Wyckoff, of DYNAMICA Consulting. Through a series of seven forums around the state, numerous conference calls and an electronic survey, more than 250 non-profits provided input on how they would like a non-profit association to function and what services they would like to see provided. In addition, Wyckoff and representatives of WVG and the Hub participated in a number of conference calls with successful non-profit associations around the country as well as the National Council of Non-Profits. A 12-person advisory team representing a wide variety of WV non-profits provided input on drafts of the plan as it was developed.

West Virginia Grantmakers continue to provide leadership as the plan moves toward implementation. Wyckoff recommended that the non-profit association be housed under the wing of another organization because it would not immediately be financially sustainable, and WVG has agreed to be that organization.

Kent Spellman, executive director of the Hub, said that the WVG is the perfect organization to lead this initiative. “Grant making foundations have a vested interest in building strong non-profits with the capacity to be effective and accountable. Their willingness to nurture the non-profit association as it takes off will be critical to its success,” he said. He added that the Hub’s involvement in the creation of the association resulted from the realization that a great deal of the on-the-ground work of improving communities is done by the non-profit sector.

The implementation is being overseen by a nine-member steering team comprised of three WVG Board members, three Hub Board members and three non-profit representatives. The team’s first meeting in September began the implementation planning, and a second meeting on Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, brought the steering team together with Diana Bucco, President of the Forbes Fund, to learn about the Greater Pittsburgh Non-Profit Partnership, a regional association of non-profit organizations.

Bucco’s work along with a team of non-profit leaders in the Pittsburgh community has resulted in the Greater Pittsburgh Non-Profit Partnership growing from a grassroots effort to now 350 members from a nine county region in Southwestern Pennsylvania. She shared her experiences during the meeting on their successes, challenges, and learning experiences to aid the WV team in having a successful start.

Steering Team members include Susan Adkins of the Carnegie Hall, Inc., John Ballengee of United Way of Central West Virginia, Michelle Foster of KISRA, Susie Nelson of Community Foundation of the Ohio Valley, Amy Owen of the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation, Greg Raber of The ARC of Harrison County, B. David Rogers of Mission WV, Tres Ross of the Ross Foundation, and Stephanie Yu of Volunteer WV.

Initially, the steering team is focusing on three areas of work: resource development, organizational development, and development of benefits and services for association members. The team will also be developing job descriptions for a part-time staff, which they expect to hire as soon as adequate resources are secured.

WVG and Hub staff will provide logistical support for the steering team. WVG will act as fiscal agent for any funding the association receives.

For information on the non-profit association, or to provide input on the formation of the association, contact Paul Daugherty, WVG President, at 304-692-9883 or by email at [president@wvgrantmakers.org](mailto:president@wvgrantmakers.org); or Kent Spellman, Hub executive director, at 304-566-7332 or by email at [k.spellman@wvhub.org](mailto:k.spellman@wvhub.org).