



APPLI

Appalachian Learning Initiative

The background of the cover is a photograph of a large steel arch bridge spanning a river valley. The sun is setting behind the bridge, creating a warm, golden glow. A bird is seen in flight in the sky above the bridge. The bridge's structure is a complex lattice of steel beams. The valley below is filled with dense green trees and a river flows through it.

Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2022

November 2022

Appalachian Learning Initiative
Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2022

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Letter from the Executive Director

The Appalachian Learning Initiative (APPLI, pronounced like “apply”) has had an exciting and busy first year! We have launched a new website, opened and operated six social media channels, created and premiered ten informational videos, recommended 38 books across five reading lists, and created over 900 infographics. In addition to original content, we have worked with several community partners to provide infographic and written content, including the Community Access National Network and ADAP Advocacy Association. We have informed readers about issues related to adult educational attainment, health outcomes, and access to public health and social services in the 13-state Appalachian Region and beyond.



We have also mourned the passing of our dear friend and Board of Directors member, Eddie Hamilton, after a prolonged battle with cancer. Eddie was a powerful voice of advocacy for Persons Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and a living compendium of knowledge about public health policy. As a Founder Member of APPLI’s Board, Eddie served as the guiding force behind the formation and direction of the organization, and his support for me and APPLI will be sorely missed.

As we embark on our second year, APPLI will continue to conduct research on adult literacy and numeracy, public health issues, and access to public services in Appalachia. We will also work to expand our portfolio of projects to include more programs designed to engage people across the nation to advocate for more targeted funding for adult literacy and numeracy educational efforts, for greater access to public health and social services, and for better state- and federal-level funding for infectious disease surveillance across Appalachia.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to everyone who has supported APPLI in our first year, including the amazing members of our Board of Directors, Dr. Matt Cox and Michael McKenna, our phenomenal design team, McLean Fahnestock and Ryan Klassa, and my team of close friends and personal advisors that includes Wesley Sullivan, Erik Kosman, Michael Gilley, Bob Joneson, and Mike Bishop, without whose guidance I would be lost. To those who have followed us on social media and worked to share our message, without your support, we would not have grown so quickly or have reached as many people. For that, I am sincerely thankful. I hope to see everyone in the new year, as APPLI continues to grow.

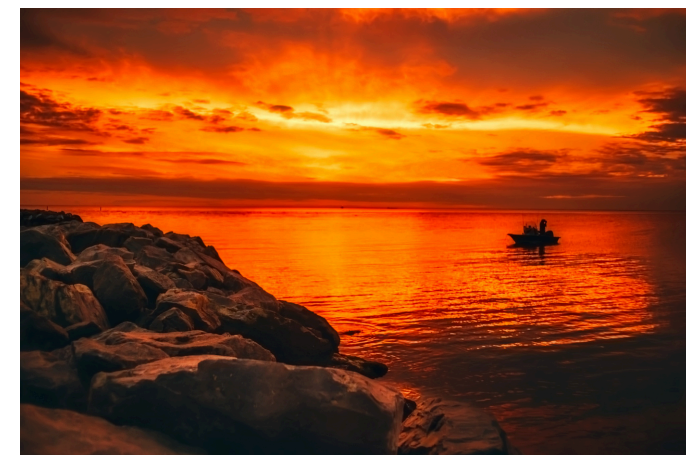
A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Marcus J. Hopkins". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Marcus J. Hopkins
Founder & Executive Director

Our Mission

APPLI's mission is to work toward a world in which every adult living in Appalachia, and across the United States, has equitable access to:

- Free or low-cost educational opportunities to improve their ability to read and perform basic mathematics
- Information about public health and infectious diseases that is timely, accurate, and easy to understand
- High-quality, affordable, and accountable healthcare and social services to improve their quality of life



APPLI believes that all people have the fundamental right to robust, equitable, and accessible education, healthcare, and social services regardless of:

- Race, ethnicity, or national origin
- Sex (including gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation)
- Disability
- Age
- Religious beliefs (or lack, thereof)
- Income
- Health status

Our Impacts



900

Over 900 infographics created and released

38

38 books recommended

10

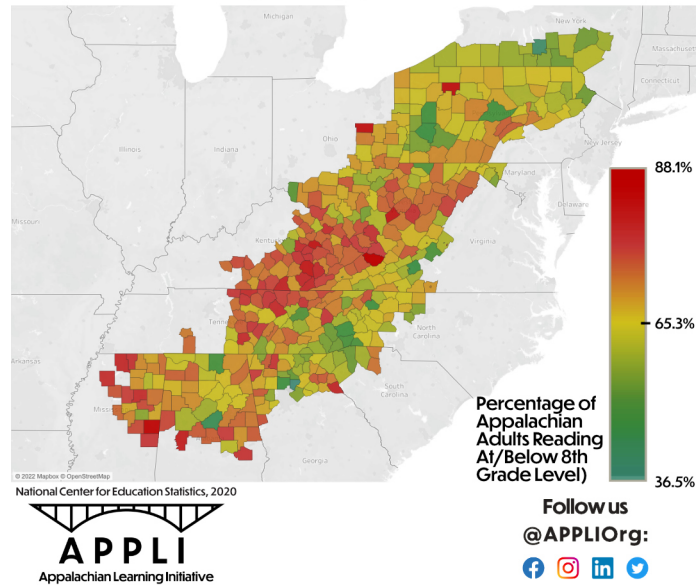
10 informational videos created and premiered

In our first year of operation (2022), the Appalachian Learning Initiative has:

- Created 906 infographics, including 888 state- and county-level and 18 public health infographics
- Recommended 38 books across 5 reading lists
- Created 10 informational videos since September 2022
- Operated six social media channels that have gained over 500 followers
- Launched a new website in July 2022
- Launched a monthly newsletter in September 2022

Our Research

Appalachian Learning Initiative Adult Literacy in Appalachian Counties



Adult Literacy

In 2022, the Appalachian Learning Initiative conducted in-depth research on the topic of adult literacy in the 13-state, 423-county, and 8-independent Virginia city Appalachian Region.

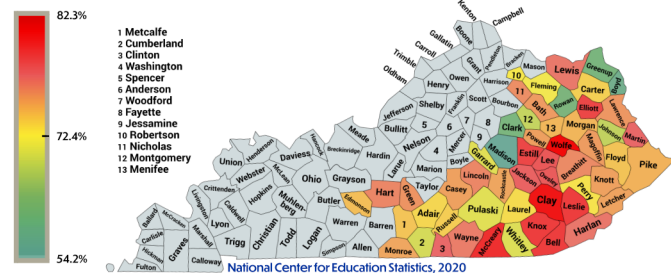
APPLI's data is derived from the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)—a worldwide study originally created in 2008 by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Develop (OECD) that measures cognitive and workplace abilities and proficiencies in adults aged 16-65

across 24 countries. Our findings indicate that 65.1% of Appalachian adults read at or below an 8th Grade level, that adult literacy rates are higher (meaning that the percentage of adults reading at or below an 8th Grade level is lower) in counties with higher median incomes and where state universities are located, and that rates of adult literacy are lowest (meaning that the percentage of adults reading at or below an 8th Grade level is higher) in central and southwestern Appalachia.

Adult literacy rates in the central Appalachian counties located in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia range from a high of 52.9% of adults reading at or below an 8th Grade level in Putnam County, WV, to a low of 88.1% of adults in McDowell County, WV.

In counties where coal mining is (or was) the primary driver of local economies (high coal dependency - above 30% of total incomes), particularly in West Virginia and Kentucky, adult literacy rates are generally lower compared to counties where dependence is lower than 10%.

Appalachian Learning Initiative Percentage of Appalachian Adults in Kentucky Who Read At or Below an 8th Grade Level



APPLI is building solutions



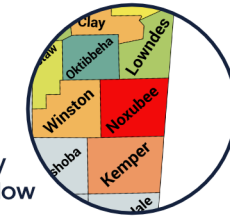
Our Research (Cont.)

Appalachian Learning Initiative Noxubee County, Mississippi Population: 10,942



86.1%

of Noxubee County adults read at or below an 8th Grade level



72.1% of Noxubee County residents are Black and are disproportionately impacted by literacy issues

44.5% of Noxubee County residents live below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level

31.8% of Noxubee County adults have not graduated high school

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National Center for Education Statistics, 2020



In southwestern counties located in Alabama and Mississippi, adult literacy rates range from a high of 42.4% of adults reading at or below an 8th Grade level in Shelby County, AL, to a low of 86.1% of adults in Noxubee County, MS.

Black Appalachians living in these counties are significantly and disproportionately impacted by adult literacy deficiencies. In counties where Black Appalachians compose 30% of more of the county's population, adult literacy rates are likelier to be lower.

Adult literacy rates in Appalachia are highly correlated with higher rates of poverty. In general, in Appalachian counties where the percentage of adults reading at or below an 8th Grade level is high, so too are the percentages of adults who have not completed high school, the percentage of residents who earn 150% or less of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and the percentage of residents who rely upon the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for nutrition assistance services.

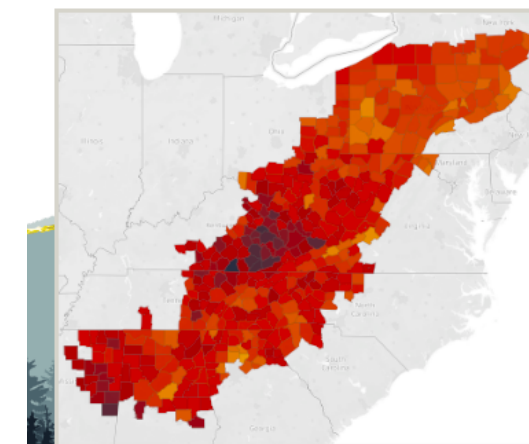
As APPLI moves into 2023, we will continue our research in the adult literacy space and work to increase our reporting on the availability of educational services.

Poverty in Appalachia

An average of 30.5% of Appalachians earn below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Rates of poverty are higher in central Appalachia in Kentucky and West Virginia.

Poverty rates are also high in southwestern Appalachia, particularly in Alabama and Mississippi.



American Community Survey, 2020



Our Research (Cont.)

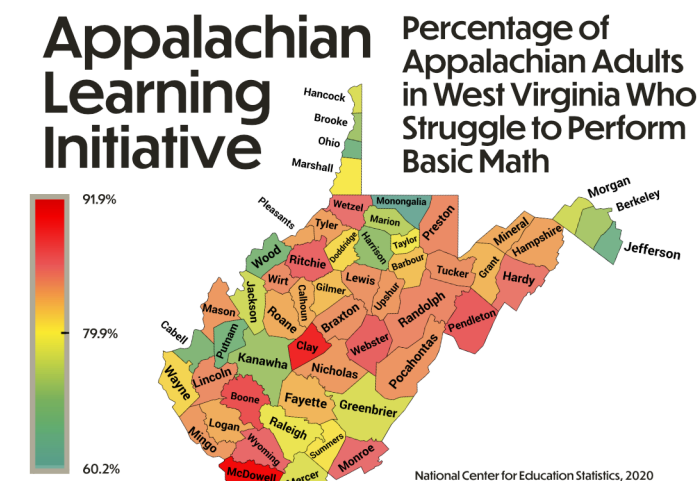
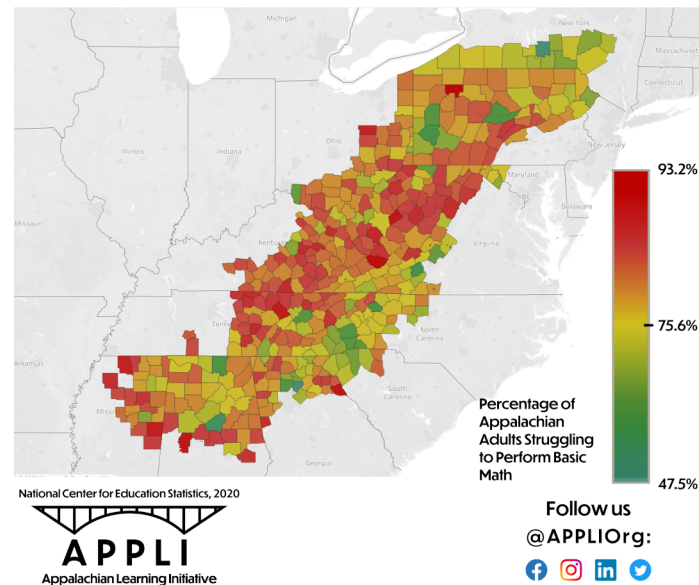
Adult Numeracy

In 2022, the Appalachian Learning Initiative conducted in-depth research on the topic of adult numeracy in the 13-state, 423-county, and 8-independent Virginia city Appalachian Region.

APPLI's data is derived from the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)—a worldwide study originally created in 2008 by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Develop (OECD) that measures cognitive and workplace abilities and proficiencies in adults aged 16-65 across 24 countries.

Our findings indicate that 74.6% of Appalachian adults struggle to solve math problems with more than three steps, that adult numeracy rates are higher (meaning that the percentage is lower) in counties with higher median incomes and where state universities are located, and that rates of adult numeracy are lowest (meaning that the percentage is higher) in central and southwestern Appalachia.

Appalachian Learning Initiative Adult Numeracy in Appalachian Counties



APPLI is building solutions



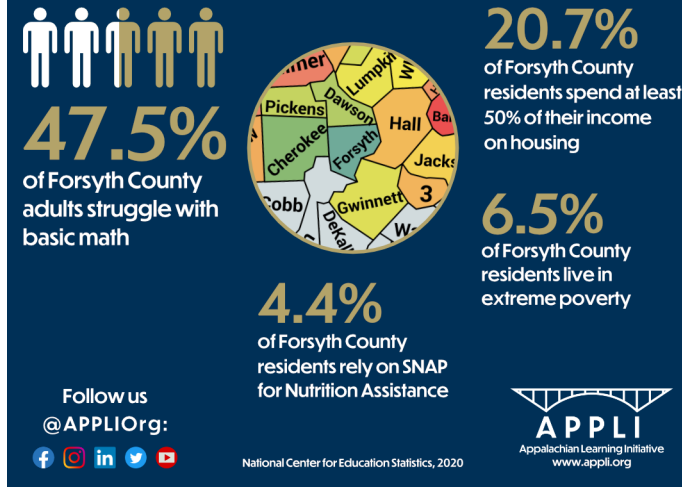
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Adult numeracy rates are lowest in the central Appalachian counties located in Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia. The percentages of adults who struggle to solve basic math problems range from a low of 62.9% in Madison County, KY, to a high of 91.9% in McDowell County, WV.

Again, in counties where coal mining is (or was) the primary driver of local economies (high coal dependency - above 30% of total incomes), particularly in West Virginia and Kentucky, adult numeracy rates are generally lower compared to counties where dependence is lower than 10%.

Our Research (Cont.)

Appalachian Learning Initiative Forsyth County, Georgia Population: 211,300

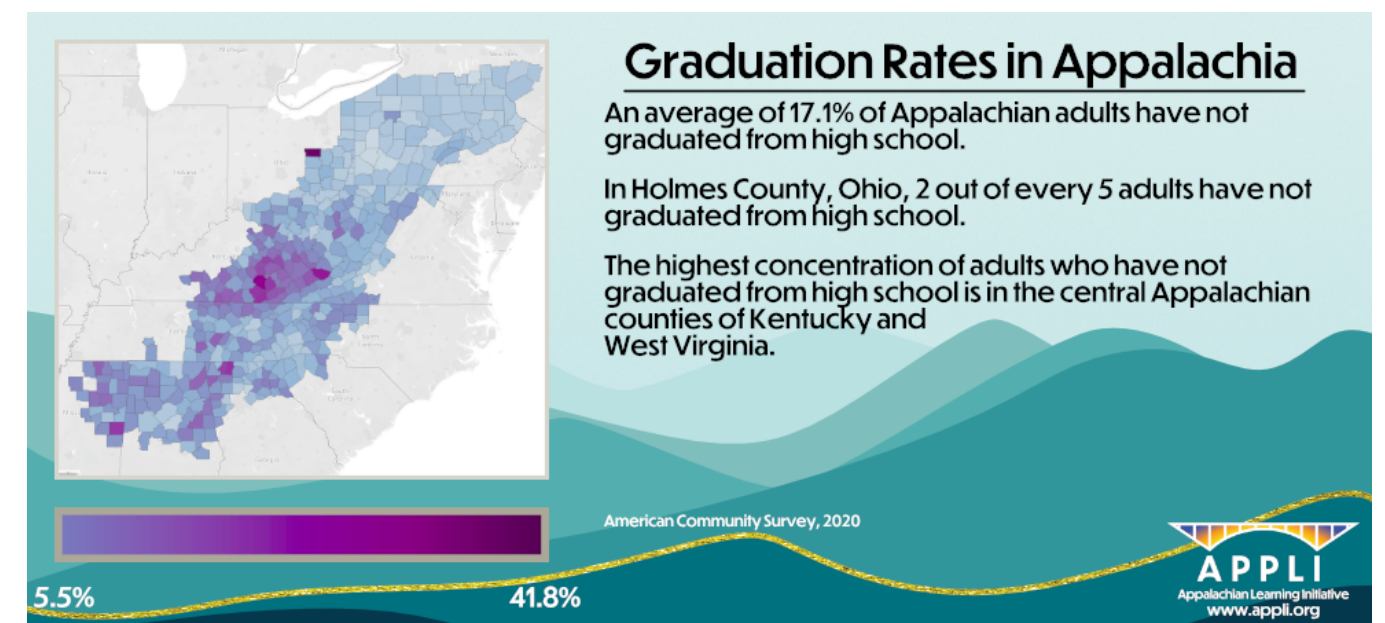


Adult numeracy rates are higher in the southeastern Appalachian counties located in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The percentages of adults who struggle to solve basic math problems is lowest in Forsyth County, GA, with just 47.5% of Appalachian adults struggling with innumeracy.

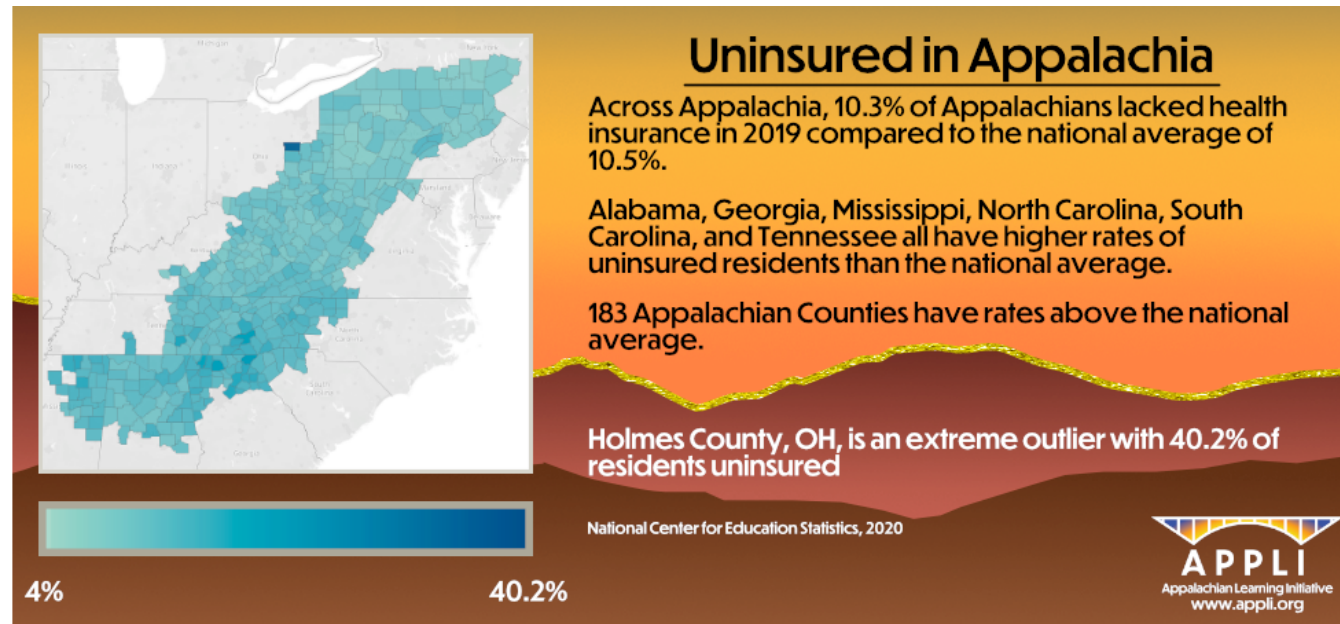
As with adult literacy, adult numeracy rates in Appalachia are highly correlated with higher rates of poverty. In general, in Appalachian counties where the percentages of adults struggling with basic math are high, so too are the percentages of adults who have not completed high

school, the percentage of residents who earn 150% or less of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and the percentage of residents who rely upon the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for nutrition assistance services.

As APPLI moves into 2023, we will continue our research in the adult numeracy space and work to increase our reporting on the availability of educational services.



Our Research (Cont.)



Public Health

In 2022, the Appalachian Learning Initiative conducted in-depth research on various measures of public health in the Appalachian Region, including health insurance coverage, rates of adult obesity and diabetes, and incidence, prevalence, and mortality rates of various chronic health conditions, including HIV, Viral Hepatitis, and different types of cancer.

Our findings indicate that specific measures of health, including adult smoking rates, drug overdose deaths, adult obesity, adult diabetes, and Viral Hepatitis incidence are highest in the central Appalachian counties located in Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

Across Appalachia, the percentage of adults who smoke ranges from a low of 13% in Forsyth County, GA, to a high of 36% in Lee County, KY. In the aforementioned central Appalachian counties, the percentage of adults who smoke ranges from ~25% to 36%.

Similarly, rates of adult obesity higher in the central Appalachian counties. Across Appalachia, the percentage of adults who struggle with obesity ranges from a low of 27% in Tompkins County, NY, and Forsyth County, GA, to a high of 48% in Kemper County, MS. Comparatively, in virtually every central Appalachian county, at least 34% of adults struggle with obesity. These counties are more likely to be rural, which increases reliance upon personal vehicles, compared to urban and suburban settings where it is reasonably safe to walk to and from amenities.

Our Research (Cont.)

Barriers to Care and the Social Determinants of Health

APPLI is dedicated to increasing access to public health services in the Appalachian Region. In order to do so, we are working to engage, educate, and empower Appalachians about public health statistics, the barriers to accessing healthcare services, and how the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) contribute to health outcomes across the region.

We work to accomplish educate visitors by developing easy-to-understand infographics that provide these data and information in plain language that is easily digestible. In November 2022, APPLI launched the Public Health section of its website (<https://www.appli.org/public-health>). This page provides a brief overview of these topics and incorporates the various public health infographics we have developed to explain key concepts.

As APPLI moves into 2023, we will work to further expand our website to include state- and county-specific public health data, as well as points of contact to increase opportunities for advocacy to increase public health resources across the region.



Healthcare System

Quality of Care
Health Coverage
Provider Availability
Provider Cultural Competency
Provider Linguistic Competency

Social Determinants of Health



Financial Reporting



Statement from the Board of Directors

As of November 11th, 2022, in Fiscal Year 2022, the Appalachian Learning Initiative received income totaling \$400.00 and had expenditures totaling \$5,762.44. As is the case with many first-year organizations, the entirety of the APPLI's expenditures were provided out-of-pocket by our Founder &

Executive Director, Marcus J. Hopkins. As a result, no new debt has been assumed by APPLI. These expenditures supported the formation of the organization, the purchasing of software licenses, the development of web, video, and graphic design assets, and the purchasing of equipment to develop said assets.

APPLI's Executive Director currently operates on a volunteer capacity and accepts no salary for his work.

In November 2022, APPLI will launch its first fundraising campaign, including our first dedicated donation campaign on Giving Tuesday 2022 (November 29th, 2022), and will begin applying for grants to support its programmatic efforts in 2023.

Donations

As of November 11th, 2022, the Appalachian Learning Initiative received \$400.00 in donations from its Founder & Executive Director, Marcus J. Hopkins.

Expenditure Totals by Category

Category	Total
Operational	\$315.80
Office	\$708.24
Transportation	\$0.00
Software & Licenses	\$3,016.13
Utilities	\$0.00
Equipment	\$1,722.27
Total	\$5,762.44

What's Ahead in 2023

After a successful first year of operations, the Appalachian Learning Initiative will continue to provide keen insights on the issues of adult education and public health in Appalachia's 423 counties and 8 independent Virginia cities.

The PIAAC has been conducting its latest round of adult assessments in 2022 and data from those should begin to trickle out slowly in 2023 prior to the release of the finalized data in 2025. During this period, APPLI will continue to refine and update data related to population, demographics, educational attainment, and other indicators selected by the National Center for Education Statistics to accompany and put into context the findings of the PIAAC assessments.

In addition to our research and reporting on adult literacy and numeracy, APPLI will further expand our research and reporting in the public health sector, focusing primarily on the accessibility, affordability, and quality of healthcare services in the region. We will further expand our work in reporting surveillance data on infectious diseases, specifically HIV and Viral Hepatitis as central Appalachia is currently experiencing syndemic levels of incidence and prevalence.

In 2023, APPLI will launch our public services programming by providing information about the accessibility and utilization of social services programs, including SNAP, the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program, Medicaid enrollment, and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) program.



Our largest program in 2023 will be the development and publication of a first-of-its-kind HOPWA Directory. The HOPWA Directory will be an online database will include program contacts, eligibility and registration requirements, and grievance policies for every HOPWA jurisdiction in the United States—something that has been sorely lacking. For

more information about The HOPWA Directory, please refer to the one-pager included on Page 14.

APPLI will begin actively raising funds in November 2022, including a dedicated request for donations on Giving Tuesday 2022 and a focus on applying for grants to support our programming efforts in 2023.

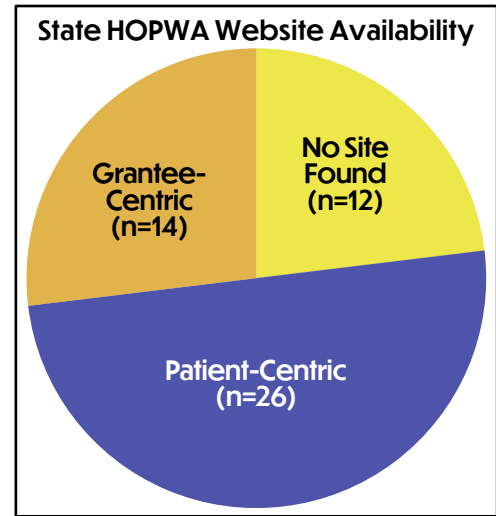


A Patient-Centric National Directory

Background

The HOPWA program was created in 1992 under the AIDS Housing Opportunity Act to address the critical housing needs of lower-income Americans living with HIV and their families (AIDS Housing Opportunity Act, 1992). This Act situated the HOPWA program in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), making it one of the only HIV-related services and assistance programs situated outside of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). It is also the only program dedicated to the housing needs of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

One of the most vital parts of maintaining one's health is stable and affordable housing. Since the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, researchers found that Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) who had stable housing fared better than those who did not. Current research has found that PLWHA who have unstable housing are less likely to achieve and maintain viral suppression—a key component of both fighting HIV in the person and fighting the spread to other people—and are less likely to maintain sufficient levels of CD4+ t-cells to combat opportunistic infections. Lack of access to stable housing also increases the likelihood that PLWHA will contract opportunistic infections from exposure to the elements, from the inability to quarantine during disease outbreaks, and from a lack of access to healthy foods and living conditions.



How the HOPWA Directory Will Help Patients

The HOPWA Directory will be a first-of-its-kind, patient-centric online national directory developed by the Appalachian Learning Initiative (APPLI, pronounced like "apply"). The Directory will provide patients across the United States with:

- HOPWA Services
- Eligibility criteria
- Application processes
- Contact information
- Waitlist information
- Grievance processes.
- Regular reporting about HOPWA funding and services
- Information about other HIV-related services

The HOPWA Directory aims to demystify the HOPWA Program for patients, caseworkers, and grantees, alike, giving every stakeholder the ability to compare and contrast the provision of services across jurisdictions.

Implementation

Work will begin on the HOPWA Directory in Q1 2023 with the initial outreach and data collection process, database and website design, and stakeholder surveying to secure community buy-in and ensure that the Directory we produce is patient-centric, robust, and, most importantly, accurate and easy to use.

The HOPWA Directory will launch to the public in January 2024.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS

Funding by the Levels

2018 HOPWA Budget	2018 Spending Per Eligible Person
\$351.5M	\$684.03



For PLWHA, finding useful information about the HOPWA program, much less how to apply and qualify for HOPWA services is incredibly difficult. The majority of information available about the program, in general, and about local grantees, specifically, is geared not toward the PLWHA who most need the services,

but toward the grantees who might provide those services.

Of the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, just half of those jurisdictions have websites that provide client-centered information and just eight provide substantive enough information for potential clients to apply. There is currently no comprehensive directory of HOPWA program providers (or "grantees"), the services they provide, the eligibility requirements, the application processes, or waitlist periods.

