



Central Appalachia Food and Ag Systems Working Group

Vision

The [Appalachia Funders Network](#) and the [Central Appalachian Network \(CAN\)](#) are working together to strengthen the region's capacity for agricultural and food system development by connecting funders and practitioners across Central Appalachia. Concretely, we have formed a joint Working Group (FASWG) to achieve the following:

- Strengthen relationships between grantmakers and practitioners working in agriculture and local food systems
- Foster deep cross-sector learning and analysis within specific sub-regions and across the region
- Increase resources within the region targeted at creating stronger agriculture and local food systems
- Enhance the connectivity and capacity of the region's key agriculture and food system actors

Our Values

We support agriculture and food systems that are environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive, economically just, and that improve rural livelihoods, public health, and economic resilience in our region's communities.

Current Work

In 2015-2016, our collective efforts are focused on a set of Central Appalachian sub-regions where CAN members and grantmakers are already moving work on the ground. A successful USDA Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) grant brought \$250,000 in federal resources to match existing investments in Appalachia's food system, supporting the shared analysis and collective strategies developed by FASWG members in four sub-regions: Appalachian Ohio, SW Virginia and NE Tennessee, Eastern Kentucky, Northeastern West Virginia. Funders and practitioners participating in the Working Group also come together across Central Appalachia to share best practices and learn from one another. This happens through regular phone calls and face-to-face meetings and convenings. By bringing together the analysis, lessons, and strategies developed in each sub-region, we are better able to understand the leverage points and prioritize actions that can accelerate food systems development across the entire region.

Focus Areas

This working group serves as a collaborative space to share learning across the region, establish best practices, and explore potential opportunities. Our current areas of interest include:

- Local food production and value chains
- Food entrepreneurship and business development
- Food security, food access, nutrition, and health
- Food system capacity-building
- Agroforestry and non-timber forest products
- Fiber farming
- Agritourism
- Climate and natural resources

For More Information

Funders: Contact the Appalachia Funders Network at appalachiafundersnetwork@gmail.com

Practitioners: Contact the Central Appalachian Network at can@cannetwork.org