

Community Leadership Convening

Mountain Wellness Collaborative · October 28, 2026 · The Star City Strand, Prestonsburg, Kentucky

Chronic disease in our mountains
is a cultural condition
with medical symptoms.

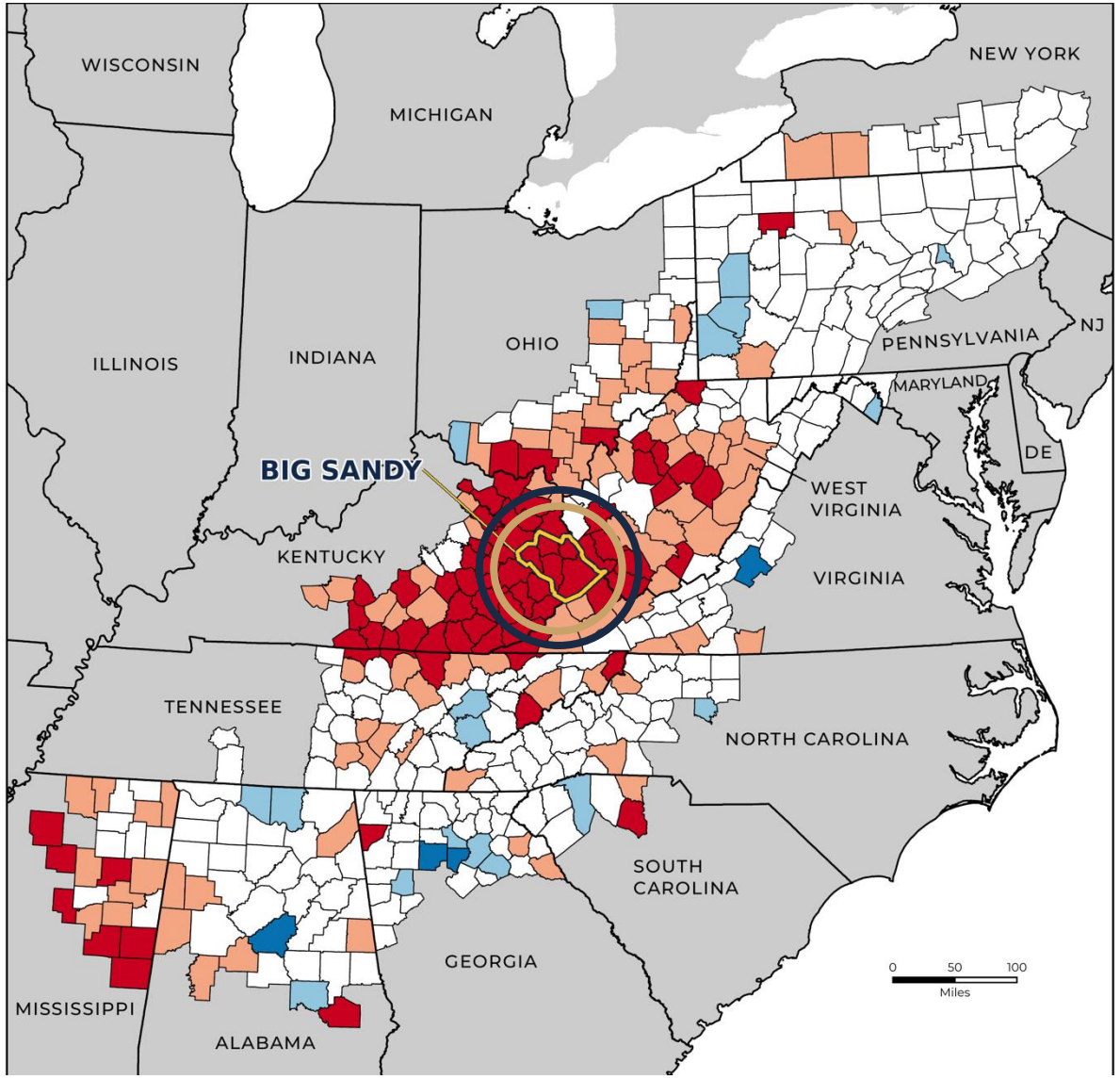
COUNTY ECONOMIC STATUS IN APPALACHIA · FY 2027

We work in the red.

Red = ARC Distressed: the lowest 10 percent of all counties in the United States, economically. Appalachia has 76 of them.

Forty-plus years of these maps, and our corner of the country has never changed color.

This is the map we intend to change.



Source: Appalachian Regional Commission, County Economic Status in Appalachia, Fiscal Year 2027 (effective October 1, 2026).

How we got here

A region already working together

Five counties that have shared programs and grants across county lines for years gave the work a name in May 2026: the Mountain Wellness Collaborative. It belongs to every school, every church, every business, and every family in the Big Sandy.

Kentucky's Rural Health Transformation Program

A five-year federal investment in rural health through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: $212.9 million to Kentucky in year one, built around regional Chronic Disease Innovation Hubs. The Big Sandy was one of the first pilot regions.

The Mountain Wellness Innovation Hub

$3 million for our five counties this year, invested in wellness projects the partners in this room propose and rank. Administered by Martin County Health Department on behalf of the Collaborative. Available now. Not proposed. Not pending.

We are building a…

Collaborative community of care

Food is Medicine

Youth changes culture

Data drives innovation

Everyone at this table has a role

Partners

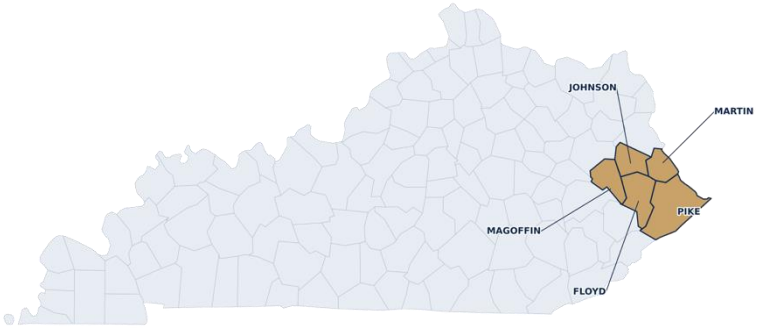
Schools, churches, hospitals and clinics, farms and markets, employers, agencies, and community organizations. You bring the proposals, you rank them, and you carry the work in your communities.

The Collaborative

The regional table where partners and the five county health departments set priorities together. An executive committee of the five county public health directors makes the final selections, with your rankings carrying real weight.

Neutral backbone

Public Health holds the structure steady. Martin County Health Department holds the contract, carries the federal reporting, and answers for every Hub outcome, so partners can focus on the work.



Floyd · Johnson · Magoffin · Martin · Pike

This work is too big for any one of us. It's OURS to share.

How this will work

Three working sessions this fall. Priorities set together. Projects underway after the new year.

MEETING 1

Today, October 28

The Star City Strand, Prestonsburg

Assets and needs

Three topics, 30 minutes each, then switch. Forms at every table, online, and hub@mtnwc.org.

MEETING 2

November 18

Pikeville Overlook Center, 10 to 12

Gaps and opportunities

Everything you told us, brought back to you. Funding guidelines and priorities introduced.

MEETING 3

December 4

Inez Faith Heritage Center, 11:30 to 2 (tentative)

Solutions and collaboration

Gaps and opportunities become actionable plans. Proposals open when the meeting ends.

Proposals due January 6, 4:00 p.m. → Checked against the guidelines and posted for the Collaborative to review → Members who attended at least two meetings rank them → Final selections announced by end of January. Then the work begins.



Be a part of this movement to wellness.

Mountain Wellness Collaborative · hub@mtnwc.org

We intend to build it.
And starting this morning,
we intend to build it with you.

We hope you will join us. We hope you are ready to go to work!

Eric Mills, JD · Martin County Health Department · Mountain Wellness Collaborative