



Community  
Education  
Group

**2022 Executive Summary**



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# Letter from our Founder

A. Toni Young

Dear friends and colleagues,

I have been reflecting on what drives the **Community Education Group** (CEG) to continue our work and broaden our service throughout Appalachia. Of course, the critical driver for our team is our commitment to healthcare access, poverty alleviation, and job training.

I live in a region where up to twenty percent of our neighbors and family live in poverty. That's **1 in 5 people. It's unacceptable.**

When explaining the urgency of the public health crisis intertwined with and exacerbated by poverty in the Appalachian region, I often use the analogy of a train. But this isn't a scenic tourist train; **this is a high-speed coal-powered train barreling through our towns, heading for a disaster.**

**We need your continued support to keep the Appalachian region moving forward.**

The lack of an educated workforce and job training is a critical fact holding Appalachia's economy back.

In addition, our community suffers from limited resources, and studies show a heavier-than-average reliance on mining jobs, leading to lower incomes and health disparities.

Many of our families have been impacted by the opioid crisis, losing countless across the Appalachian region. We have witnessed pharmaceutical companies make fortunes, knowingly complicit in the extreme risks associated with addiction.

The opioid tragedy that has gripped our communities continues at an alarming rate. **Today, we are experiencing an epidemic of opioids and polydrug use, with Fentanyl surging among young people and other narcotics.**

Appalachia has one of the **nation's highest incidence rates of Hepatitis C and other infections due to reusing needles and being exposed to sexually transmitted diseases**, often due to lack of access to care. All are preventable health conditions that Appalachians experience at higher rates than the rest of the country.

Through our monthly **West Virginia Statewide Stakeholder Coalition**, we've continued to mobilize the region's leaders, policymakers, healthcare experts, and community-based organizations (In 2023, WVSSC will be expanded to the Appalachian region and will be renamed The Appalachian Partnership Consortium).

We walk the halls of the state legislature in Charleston, advocating for legislative change. As a result, this past spring, we got closer than ever to overturning the opioid treatment program moratorium (rest assured, we'll finish the job in 2023!).

**We provide guidance and support to over 50 organizations across the country with our CDC Foundation partnership to increase access to more than 50,000 HIV self-testing kits.**

In 2023, Community Education Group will begin construction on four buildings in the West Side of Charleston. **We seek funding to renovate and launch new workforce development and expand community engagement.**

Lastly, our policy team plans to monitor and advise on the implementation and distribution of the **hundreds of millions of dollars from the opioid settlement funds. These funds will reach people in all 13 states of Appalachia.**

We will keep you informed as we learn how best to invest the settlement funds back into the community where they are most needed.

We can only do this work with your support and in partnership with our local partners, government agencies, business sponsors, and the philanthropic community.

I'm incredibly proud of what we've all accomplished in a tough year. **Please consider joining the CEG community and making a year-end, tax-deductible charitable donation to support our work.**

Thank you once again for all your support. I wish you and your family a healthy and fulfilling 2023.



All my best,

A. Toni Young

# CEG Mission

The Community Education Group's work includes providing access to healthcare, public education, and job training, plus securing financial investments to underserved rural communities and community-based organizations in West Virginia and Appalachia.

Our focus is to improve access by providing leadership and advocacy to scale resources and funding to combat the syndemic cluster of widespread disease and public health crises, including HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, opioid addiction, and substance use disorder.

Our vision is that no matter where you live, what you do, or who you are, everyone has access to life-affirming resources for themselves and their families.



1,000,000+

CONDOMS  
DISTRIBUTED



50,000+

HIV RAPID TESTS  
PROVIDED



100+

CHAMPS TRAINED  
AND DEPLOYED



10,000+

SYRINGES  
DISTRIBUTED



\$1,000,000+

INVESTMENTS TO  
LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS



25+

YEARS OF  
EXPERIENCE

# CEG Vision 2023

A decade of being there in the communities who need us most, through all the political and socioeconomic changes in this region, the chaos of COVID, and the rise of homelessness that seemed unthinkable just a few short years ago.

## CEG Call to Action

*With more than 30 years of advocating for vulnerable communities, I have long urged the administration and Congress to designate an entity such as the CDC Office of Rural Health. I applaud Congressional leaders for joining the rural healthcare cause by establishing an Office of Rural Health at the CDC in the FY 2023 appropriations bill. No matter where Americans live, whether in rural, urban, suburban, or tribal communities, we all deserve access to affordable healthcare.*

A. Toni Young

# CEG Community Response



Leeanna Marks, RN, and Medical Assistant Hazel Davis of CEG's community health partner Health Right.

*Thanks to CEG, we can now reach rural areas where a lack of services and transportation are the biggest barriers to people getting the healthcare services they need. CEG makes it easy to get the COVID booster, flu vaccines, Hep-C and HIV screenings, and overall health checks possible.*

Laura Jones, MSW and Executive Director of Milan Puskar Health Right.



# CEG Programs Public Health Access

## Community Health and Mentorship Program Service (CHAMPS)

CEG is leading an effort to train people in long-term substance use recovery, re-entry, or other programs to become Community Health Workers focused on COVID-19 vaccination, education, and disease prevention efforts. The CHAMPS program is funded by the W.Va. Dept. of Health and Human Resources and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

## The Community Capacity Project: Supporting HIV Self-Testing

Funded by the CDC Foundation, CEG is designing and leading a technical assistance and capacity-building program to support **53 community-serving organizations** that distribute over **10,000 HIV self-testing kits**.

## VAX FACTS: Prioritizing Populations Disproportionately Affected by COVID- 19

CEG assists COVID-19 vaccination efforts and helps address vaccine hesitancy in four at-risk, rural West Virginia counties (Braxton, Nicholas, Upshur, and Webster Counties). In addition, CEG will reach nearly **100,000 households** with educational information to address vaccine hesitancy. The W.Va. Department of Health and Human Resources funds VAX Facts.



# Community Education Group Building Expansion Project

In 2023, we'll open the **Community Education Group Center (Center)** in Charleston's West Side. **We seek funding to renovate the Center and launch new workforce development and training programs to secure generational change through job preparedness.**



CEG Center building under construction.



# West Virginia Statewide Stakeholder Coalition (WVSSC)

**WVSSC** comprises more than **50 stakeholders** across the state that meet and participate in strategic conversations around HIV, Viral Hepatitis, and substance use disorder while building a more robust network of partners to combat the behavioral and risk factors that made the syndemic. In 2023, this group will expand to include representation from all **13 states of Appalachia**, under the name Appalachian Partnership Consortium.



CEG Community Health Fair

# Appalachian Partnership Fund



## Appalachian Partnership Fund (APF)

Through CEG's strategic grantmaking initiative, the Appalachian Partnership Fund, we raised more than **\$1 million**. Then CEG, in turn, invested in **22 non-profits** serving West Virginia and the region's most vulnerable and rural populations. Their efforts addressed **COVID-19 and the HIV, Viral Hepatitis, and Substance Use Disorder syndemic**.

To date, the grantees have been responsible for providing more than **4,000 COVID-19 vaccination shots** across West Virginia, reaching some of the state's most rural communities and African American/Black residents in Charleston.

## Appalachian Fund Timeline and Community Distribution Results

- APF awardees served over **53,222 clients** across West Virginia.
- provided more than **4,046 COVID-19 vaccinations**.
- more than **6,843 COVID-19 tests** (501 positives).
- more than **2,296 HIV tests** (35 positives).
- more than **2,149 HCV tests** (207 positives).
- more than **1,796 influenza vaccinations**.

# We Are Appalachia

**We Are Appalachia** seeks to promote, enhance, and protect the distinctive generational culture of the **423 Appalachian counties**. CEG strongly believes that understanding and considering Appalachian culture when allocating resources, programming, and investment in the region, particularly in sectors such as tourism, economic development, and workforce development, will positively affect the health, economic, and environmental outcomes in Appalachia.

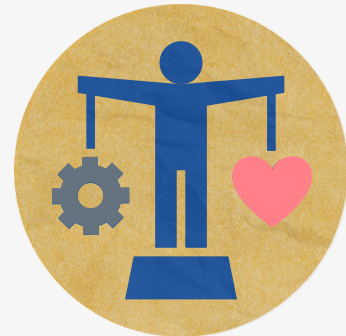


Appalachia region in blue

# Policy, Research, and Legislation

**The CEG Research and Evaluation Team** is dedicated to reducing disparities to improve the health of disadvantaged populations.

- CEG is working to increase the awareness of the Appalachian culture, the economy, workforce issues, education, and health in the Appalachian region.
- We inform policies and programs that seek to improve the health of people in Appalachia, as well as the nation at large.
- CEG core research areas: HIV and clinical trials, HIV vaccines, Black women and PrEP, rural community health, PrEP uptake and MAT.





# Black in Red Podcast

**BLACK IN RED**, is a new podcast and video docuseries dedicated to increasing health literacy, public policy awareness, and community engagement among Black Americans living in rural and conservative (“red”) parts of the country.

The goal of BLACK IN RED is to **educate and inform Black people (as well as their health providers and allies) around issues of rural health**, harm reduction, and emerging health trends and challenges faced by Black communities.

The Community Education Group produces the Black in Red Podcast with host A. Toni Young.

## **Black and Red list of episodes (YouTube)**

@communityeducationgroup3604

1 **[COVID, Coal, & Climate Change](#)**

2 **[The Power of Pharmacies](#)**

3 **[The Rise of Omicron](#)**

4 **[A Delegate's Response](#)**

5 **[Minding Your Mental Health](#)**

6 **[How State Legislatures Addressed The Pandemics](#)**

CEG

# Media Highlights

AP



Charleston  
Gazette-Mail

The Dominion Post

yahoo!  
finance

The Atlanta  
Journal-Constitution

The New York Times



CBS  
NEWS



The Washington Post

HOUSTON★CHRONICLE

*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

CEG

# Social Media Highlights

Instagram



Twitter



Facebook



Youtube



LinkedIn







CEG

# Appalachian Partnership Fund Grantees

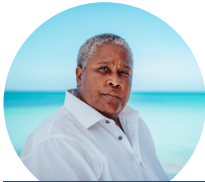
## West Virginia

- Milan Puskar Health Right
- West Virginia Health Right
- Beckley Health Right
- Good Samaritan Free Health Care
- Shenandoah Community Health
- Covenant House
- Community Connections, Inc.
- Wheeling Health Right
- The Martinsburg Initiative
- The Healing House
- Bright Futures Now
- Anchor Medical, LLC
- Jefferson County Community Ministries
- Cabell County EMS
- The General Federation of Women's Clubs
- Reset Incorporated
- Cabell-Huntington Health Department

## broader Appalachia

- Virginia Rural Health Association
- North Carolina AIDS Action Network
- Maryland Rural Health Association
- AHEC West
- Allies for Health + Wellbeing
- Cempa Community Care

# CEG Staff



A. Toni Young



Lee Storrow



Sarah Diamond  
Burroway



Dr. Danielle  
Hollar



Vaughn Taylor-  
Akutagawa



Caroline  
Chukwu



Ashlei Cooper



Brandon Morales

# CEG Staff



Tricia  
Christensen



Lovina John



Abhishek  
Shankar



Kelli Keith



Trey Harvey



Jason Lucas



Xaviera Casal



Hailie Arnold

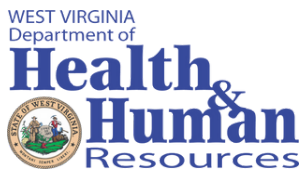


Betty Rowe  
Prichard



Victoria Roberts

# CEG Fund





Community  
Education  
Group

**Building stronger communities  
one project at the time**



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[communityeducationgroup.org](http://communityeducationgroup.org)



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