

## **WEST VIRGINIA FIRST FOUNDATION**

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### **West Virginia First Foundation Approves \$20 Million Funding Commitment for Groundbreaking Addiction Recovery Project**

**WEST VIRGINIA (DECEMBER 9, 2024)** – The West Virginia First Foundation (WVFF) Board of Directors has approved a funding commitment for an innovative, outcomes-based addiction recovery project - the Appalachian Continuum of Care for Overdose Reduction Network (ACCORN) project.

The ACCORN project, in collaboration with local and national partners, is part of the ARPA-H HEROES program, a federal initiative that ties funding to measurable outcomes in addressing critical health challenges. With an initial \$15 million investment from ARPA-H, the program challenges community stakeholders to contribute the next \$30 million, ensuring long-term sustainability and enhanced community impact.

While WVFF's \$20 million commitment marks a significant step forward, the next phase involves submitting a formal application to the federal government for approval and funding. Final decisions are expected in early 2025.

#### **About ACCORN**

The ACCORN initiative is designed to initially implement a comprehensive system of care in Boone, Cabell, Fayette, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Putnam, Raleigh, and Wayne counties. These counties, covering a population of more than 585,000, were selected based on their high rates of overdose and significant need for comprehensive interventions. While the focus begins with these 10 counties, the ultimate goal is to develop a scalable, outcomes-based model that can be replicated across West Virginia and beyond. The program has the potential to serve as a blueprint for addressing addiction and recovery challenges nationwide, leveraging lessons learned in West Virginia to inform similar efforts across the country.

WVFF's funding commitment will be used to conduct needs assessments to identify gaps in existing services, develop and implement tailored response plans, expand wrap-around services (including MAT), counseling, and housing assistance and track and measure progress through data-driven analysis of overdose rates.

Funding for years two and three will be contingent on the project meeting its first-year objectives, ensuring accountability and a clear return on investment for the state's communities.

**Jonathan Board, WVFF Executive Director**, underscored the broader benefits of the project. “Through WVFF’s funding, this initiative will not only initially address critical needs in 10 counties, nearly one third of the population of the state of West Virginia, but also generate a statewide needs assessment. This data will give us a clearer picture of where resources are most needed, allowing for strategic planning that benefits all West Virginians. By focusing on outcomes and scalability, we’re setting a precedent for impactful, data-driven solutions.”

**Matthew Harvey, WVFF Chairman of the Board**, emphasized the project’s scalability and potential impact. “This innovative approach to addiction prevention and recovery is the first of its kind, bringing together evidence-based strategies and community collaboration in a way that has never been done before. By investing in ACCORN, we are setting a national precedent, demonstrating how focused, strategic funding can create a sustainable impact and serve as a model for addressing the opioid crisis nationwide.”

Updates on the project’s progress and federal review will be shared in early 2025.

For more information on ARPA-H, visit <https://arpa-h.gov/>. For more information on the specific measurements and requirements associated with WVFF’s funding, see attached.

**About West Virginia First Foundation:** The West Virginia First Foundation (WVFF) is a nonprofit organization established to address the opioid crisis and its lasting impact across the state. Created under the terms of the West Virginia First Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), WVFF was designed to receive and distribute opioid settlement funds. Guided by the principles outlined in the MOU, the Foundation operates as a private 501(c)(3) entity to support prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction efforts. Through strategic funding and community collaboration, WVFF is committed to creating sustainable solutions that improve the health and well-being of all West Virginians. For more information, visit [wvfirst.org](http://wvfirst.org).