

APPALACHIAN
sustainable
DEVELOPMENT

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Appalachian Sustainable Development announces \$2.25 million dollar IMPACT grant award from Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia

DUFFIELD, Va. - Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia has awarded Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) an IMPACT grant of \$2.25 million to help build ASD's innovative agriculture campus in Bristol, Virginia. ASD and the Wellspring Foundation will be holding a check presentation on Tuesday, September 17 at the site of ASD's campus at 17444 Singingwood Lane, Bristol, Virginia. The presentation will start at 11 a.m. ET.

The IMPACT grant supports the Wellspring Foundation's mission to enhance the health and wellbeing of residents in Washington, Grayson, Russell and Smyth counties. The IMPACT (Investing in Meaningful Projects Advancing Community Transformation) grant is designed for organizations requesting either a one-time or multi-year disbursement of funds for projects totaling more than \$25,000.

"We are pleased to partner with Appalachian Sustainable Development and others on such an important project," said Marvin Gilliam, Chair of the Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia Board of Directors. "The creation of a regional agricultural campus that will support our area's biggest industry, create jobs, and provide training opportunities aligns with all the areas of interest at the Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia. It's an honor to be able to provide support to a project of this magnitude that will have a transformational impact on our region."

Sean McMurray, Executive Director of Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia adds, "The work Appalachian Sustainable Development does in supporting our region's food and agricultural system is tremendous. Their commitment to innovation, collaboration and building on our region's abundant agricultural history through economic development and community building is inspiring. The work they intend to do at this new campus will be instrumental in propelling our region forward."

In September 2022, ASD purchased 17+ acres in Bristol, Va., immediately off of Interstate 81, to begin developing a campus that will champion agriculture by teaching people how to grow in ways that are more innovative, efficient, sustainable, profitable, and just.

“This campus will be an agricultural hub that supports new agriculture and food businesses, more efficient and successful farms, and a stronger regional workforce,” said Kathlyn Terry-Baker, ASD’s CEO. “We are so grateful that the Wellspring Foundation shares our vision for what this campus can do to improve community health, and build more economic and workforce opportunities using the # 1 industry in this region: agriculture. Their generous gift enables us to get started now!”

ASD anticipates the new campus will create 200 new jobs within the first five years, draw 2,000 visitors a year, and generate \$2 million annually in revenue. This site will be home to 3 primary facilities:

- An 8,000 square-foot food hub. ASD’s original food hub (built in 2000) will continue to operate in Scott County, but has reached capacity. With its proximity to I81, this second location will enable food and farm businesses in Washington County to access markets of a variety of scales. The food hub will be an additional node on ASD’s distribution network, which currently include sites in Huntington, WV, eastern KY, and Hillsville, VA.
- An approximately 4,000 square-foot workforce development hub to support our workforce development program, which provides paid, on-the-job training for individuals with barriers to employment.
- A 10,000 square-foot business development hub. This facility will house training classrooms and entrepreneur work space, while also serving as the office for ASD staff.

The project will also include multiple research and demonstration sites to teach people how to grow food and other agricultural products while also serving as a local connection with higher education. The location of this campus makes it accessible for producers and agricultural/food businesses in a wide geographic region who will benefit from connection to a host of different markets and training opportunities.

The first phase of the project, funded in large part by the Wellspring Foundation’s generous grant, will be the construction of critical campus infrastructure and the construction of ASD’s second food hub. Weather permitting, ASD plans to break ground in the fourth quarter of 2024.

About Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia

Established in the fall of 2021, the Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia exists to enhance the health and wellbeing for the Virginia residents of Washington, Grayson, Russell and Smyth counties by cultivating goal-oriented partnerships. For more information, visit www.wellspringva.org.

About Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD)

Growing a stronger Appalachia through agriculture. That’s what drives ASD’s commitment to build a thriving regional food and agriculture system that benefits every Appalachian. Since 1995, ASD has been working to provide hope and make a difference for the people who call the region home. What began as opportunities for struggling tobacco farmers to grow fruits and vegetables has become lasting solutions to regional challenges that impact workforce development, agriculture education, food access, economic development, and resource conservation. To further expand that work, ASD is now developing a destination agriculture campus where innovation meets agriculture in Washington County, Virginia. To learn more about ASD, visit: <https://asdevelop.org>.

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