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Dear Friends,

It is such an exciting time for Generation West Virginia! Just over a year ago I came on board, and what an eye-opening and rewarding experience it has been. As a lifelong West Virginian, I have personally identified with the needs of young people in small West Virginia communities. In many ways, this year has been a time of reset and refocusing. We remain—and will always be—committed to the mission of attracting, retaining, and advancing young people in the Mountain State.

As you will see in our first ever Impact Report, we have recovered and redesigned our programming in a post-COVID world to speak to the needs of young West Virginians.

In 2020, like so many things in this world, NewForce became completely virtual, and our instructors and students are thriving in this new setting. The Fellowship will begin accepting applications for Cohort 6 in the New Year, with a focus on supporting young people’s growth and development in their careers and in West Virginia. We have also rolled out a brand new tool for young West Virginians: the Career Connector, which supports both young people in finding fulfilling careers, and employers in finding West Virginians for their workforce.

You will also see that we are growing—and fast! Much of that growth is made possible through our role as a key partner in the ACT Now Coalition. We joined several other leaders across the state to apply for the Economic Development Administration’s Build Back Better Regional Challenge. I’m proud to share that we were one of 21 recipients of this award nationwide. Generation West Virginia is leading this coalition’s workforce development efforts and working with partners across the state to transform the workforce training, placement, and retention systems for West Virginians.

I encourage you to take a look at how our programs are having an impact on young West Virginians and their ability to stay, and thrive, here in the state. There is a lot to celebrate in these pages, but there is always more work to be done. I assure you that there will be even more to celebrate in the future.

Onward!

Alex Weld
SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS

Generation West Virginia has also received federal grants through a competitive process from the following agencies:

- United States Economic Development Administration
- United States Department of Labor
- Appalachian Regional Commission
What We Do

West Virginia is one of the few states in the nation with a declining population. In confronting this reality, one thing is very clear: The state’s future depends on its ability to become an ideal destination for young people to live, work, and thrive.

Generation West Virginia is the statewide organization dedicated to attracting, retaining, and advancing young people in the Mountain State. We achieve this by:

- Connecting young people to jobs and opportunities in the Mountain State
- Providing accessible programs and educational tools that empower and inspire young leaders
- Developing and sustaining an activated, diverse network of young people
- Identifying and communicating the priorities, motivations, and needs of the next generation of West Virginians

How We Do It

Generation West Virginia supports young people in creating meaningful, long-lasting communities and careers in the Mountain State. Our work is carried out through the following programs and initiatives:

Our Work

- NewForce
- GWV Fellowship
- Career Connector
- The Network
- Broadband
About NewForce
NewForce is a six-month, fully remote, tuition-free coding school. We train people with no prior coding experience, prepare them for their first tech job, and connect them with open, entry-level software development jobs here in the Mountain State.

We’re building a tech economy in West Virginia that works for everyone. NewForce students are people from all different backgrounds—teachers, fast food workers, house painters, and accountants, just to name a few. We run two cohorts a year, with Cohort 5 and Cohort 6 being our groups for 2022.

85
WVians trained in software development as of 2022

97%
of participants graduated from our program

86%
of our graduates work in software development within six months of graduating

93%
of Cohort 5 graduates have chosen to stay in WV

$58,000
is the average starting salary for Cohort 5 graduates
Prior to joining Cohort 5 with NewForce, I had no sustainable career path. I worked for the State Coroner’s Office, transporting remains for autopsy. Before that, I had been a corrections officer, a mail processor and an EMT.

I had a passion for technology since my youth, but always felt that it was too late to break in to the industry. Growing up watching the tech boom happen, and not even having a computer at home, it felt unreachable.

After a friend completed an earlier NewForce cohort, I saw the positive changes it afforded him in his life, and how much happier he was. He convinced me that it wasn't too late to join the tech industry.

I rekindled my dream and applied. I was accepted as a member of Cohort 5, and I am now celebrating 7 months as a Software Engineer with a telecom billing software company. I'm happier than I've ever been professionally, I have stability, and I'm doing work that impassions me. I'm a completely different person than I was a year ago when I began NewForce, and I owe everything to this wonderful program."

— Stephen Powers, Cohort 5
Software Engineer 1 at Rev.io
Hurricane, WV
About the GWV Fellowship

The GWV Fellowship is a nine-month program designed to help emerging and mid-career professionals find their footing in the Mountain State. These young West Virginians learn from leaders throughout the state as they participate in virtual and in-person sessions designed around professional development and adventure in Almost Heaven.

1,093
hours of time dedicated to community service by the 2022 Fellows

100% of 2022 Fellows reported that they intended to stay in WV following their Fellowship year

24% increase in salary following program participation across all cohorts

2022 Retreat Locations

Fayetteville
Glade Springs
Tucker County
Morgantown

Workshop + Skill Building Topics

- Planning for critical conversations
- Personal branding
- How to set, organize and meet goals
- Identifying and utilizing strengths
- The power of networks
- The art of storytelling
- Projects that make an impact

Special Thanks to our 2022 Guest Speakers

WVU Career Services, Tucker County CVB, WV Botanical Garden, Nellie Rose Textiles, Thrasher Group, The Art of Seth, WV Development Hub, Jeff Pierson Illustration
"The Fellowship helped me stay in West Virginia and further establish my career while honing my leadership skills (and building new relationships). It’s easy to move to a bigger city or a bigger state, but life becomes more meaningful when you stay and choose to create a positive impact that will mean something to you, your kids, and, one day, your grandkids."

-Kalyn Obiozor-Dorey
Huntington, WV
Class of 2022

"I’m a Generation West Virginia Fellow and NewForce graduate, and both programs have helped me establish my career and make new connections. The Fellowship broke me out of my routine and led me to experience parts of West Virginia I didn’t know existed. I’m committed to West Virginia because Appalachia is more than just my home...it’s who I am."

-Barry Griffith
Dunbar, WV
Class of 2022
About the Career Connector

The Career Connector—introduced in the fall of 2022—serves two needs. The first: West Virginia’s businesses need help finding and recruiting young talent. The second? Young professionals are leaving our state in search of good jobs. Through the Career Connector, we provide job seekers with resources like interview and resume prep, along with a job board filled with interesting opportunities submitted by employers located throughout the state.

The Career Connector serves as a workforce development hub that connects West Virginia job seekers and employers in order to increase access to opportunity in the Mountain State.

Here's how it works:

Statewide Job Board

For young WVians looking to make the next step in their careers, our statewide job board is the first stop. For employers, the first job post and all paid internship posts are always free. We leverage our network to help foster important connections.

Job Readiness Resources

We provide job readiness support like interview and resume prep, as well as a Resume Bank. Young professionals on the job hunt are invited to submit their resume to us. When a position opens up that fits their experience and career goals, they’ll get an alert.

A Better Way to Hire in the Mountain State

Employers can now utilize the full strength of GWV’s statewide network of young people to expand their search, reduce hiring costs, and find tailored, quality candidates.
We’re using a three-pronged approach to help connect West Virginians to their communities and exciting opportunities.

Here’s how it works:

**The Network Webinar Series**
This series showcases opportunities or valuable knowledge that is important to West Virginians as they continue to grow and thrive in the state. The series kicked off in October with an outdoor recreation career jumpstart opportunity called West Virginia READY by Stewards and Americorps.

**The Resource Library**
The resource library was created as a space for our audience to share their knowledge on specific topics. In 2023, we will begin posting guest blogs from West Virginians across the Mountain State. It will also house our past webinars. These can be accessed by anyone, anywhere, via our website.

**The Events Calendar**
We’re combatting the popular complaint “There’s nothing to do in West Virginia.” Our statewide events calendar showcases exciting opportunities happening in every region of the state, and allows audience members to view or submit their own events.
BROADBAND

About our Broadband Work
When it comes to broadband, West Virginia is one of the least-connected states in the nation, and there are more opportunities than ever to leverage federal resources to bring broadband internet to remote, underserved areas. At Generation West Virginia, we help communities overcome barriers to broadband access and start enacting tangible change. GWV provides wrap-around technical assistance and support in navigating the process, including grant writing, strategic planning, and partnership development tailored to local needs.

We strengthen the work that’s happening in communities by filling in capacity gaps and facilitating partnerships across the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

$45.47 million in broadband funding secured for local communities, through our grant writing and support
30,498 households now connected to broadband through our support

“Regional Optical Communication (ROC) is a 19-county consortium focused on the planning and collaboration to improve broadband within the region. The benefit of having the team of experts from Generation West Virginia as a driving force in laying the foundation for broadband connectivity implementation by utilizing their planning, coordination and funding prowess has been immeasurable. We believe success breeds success, and we’re excited to continue our collaborative efforts with GWV and tackle the task of mimicking the accomplishments in our initial 19 counties throughout the entire state of West Virginia.”

—John Tuggle PE PS
Executive Director
Region 4 Planning and Development Council
MEET THE 2022 TEAM!

Executive Director
Alex Weld

Director of Impact
Nathalie Oates

Broadband Coordinator
Natalie Roper

Fellowship Director
Melanie McIntire

NewForce Program Director
Jordan Castelloe

NewForce Lead Instructor
Tommy Spurlock

NewForce Junior Instructor
Sarah Brooks

Employer Partnership Manager
Mary Lu Adams

Operations and Program Coordinator
Katharina Fritzler

Communications and Outreach Manager
Olivia Sauvageot
MEET THE 2022 BOARD!

Chair  
Anna Adkins

Vice Chair  
Jade Irving

Secretary  
Candace Nelson

Treasurer  
Jay Williams

Past Chair  
Monika Eckard

Kel Cecil

Christina Dalton

Brian Dayton

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