

**For Immediate Release:**

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**NRV Recovery Ecosystem Project to Receive \$2.1 Million in Grant Funds to Address Opioid Addiction**

*New and expanded programs with agencies in the New River Valley will be tapped to address the impacts of opioid addiction and associated concerns such as transportation, housing, prevention and treatment strategies, recovery and harm reduction, as well as delivering education in schools and to the general public.*

**FAIRLAWN, VA (June 23, 2023)** The New River Valley Regional Commission will be coordinating a collaborative regional opioid abatement program with Montgomery County serving as the fiscal agent for NRV Recovery Ecosystem project. Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski counties and the City of Radford in the New River Valley partnered in the development of the proposal. Each locality provided substantial matching funds from their Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) direct allocation equating to \$1.2M of local funds for a program total of \$3.3M when combined with the grant funds.

Sherri Blevins, Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors, on the county's willingness to serve as fiscal agent, "Just as we did in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Montgomery County welcomes the opportunity to once again serve our citizens and regional partners as the grant recipient on behalf of this significant project. We are looking forward to collaborating with our neighboring local governments and regional agencies as we come together to address this challenge in our communities."

A unique aspect of the New River Valley Recovery Ecosystem program is the oversight and integration across prevention, treatment, recovery and harm reduction measures intentionally coordinated with an approach to develop structural changes to root out the disease and support wellness across the region. In addition, the NRV Regional Commission's executive director, Kevin Byrd, notes opportunities for the region. "As we did during the pandemic response, our agency will deliver administrative support to the regional team assembled for this unique program that will help ensure residents and employers in the New River Valley have the greatest opportunity to thrive in a globally competitive economy."

Not every element of this proposal is new, but its integration of local government, service providers, criminal justice institutions, and program evaluation has been well-honed in the New River Valley. As Giles County Administrator, Chris McKlarney highlights, "Giles County sees the OAA funding as an important resource to continue work addressing opioid addiction through our FOCUS programs and specifically the highly successful and unique drug court recovery fitness program. Integrating this resource to support our citizens toward successful recovery is key to improving life for them and their families." The development of this proposal is deeply rooted in a long-held collaborative framework between local government and service providers in the region. Local governments committed their direct opioid abatement allocations as match to this program and several service providers are delivering in-kind staffing support.

Jason Ballard, Virginia House of Delegates member who serves on the OAA Board was instrumental in connecting the team to appropriate staff and resources in development the proposal, "As a legislator who represents a large portion of the New River Valley, and as an appointed member of the Opioid Abatement Authority, I have seen first-hand the impact that opioid misuse and addiction have had on our communities. I remain very supportive of the collaborative county application and appreciative of the funding that has been awarded. I look forward to seeing our region put this investment to good use in changing the lives of citizens within the New River Valley and beyond."

The work ahead, like the proposal development itself, will be implemented by many organizations and individuals and is intended to support and connect our community to strengthen well-being and address the impacts of addictions and the underlying factors that create addiction risks to individuals and communities.

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### **About New River Valley Regional Commission**

The New River Valley Regional Commission is one of 21 planning districts in Virginia whose commissions are chartered under Virginia law. The organization encompasses the counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski, and the City of Radford. The purpose of the Planning District Commission is to promote regional cooperation, to coordinate the activities and policies of member local governments, and to provide planning assistance to local governments.

