



CONNECT APPALACHIA WEBINAR SERIES

Building Your Local Recovery-to-Work Ecosystem

From partner lists to working systems — a practical session for POWER and INSPIRE grantees, local development districts, and workforce professionals.

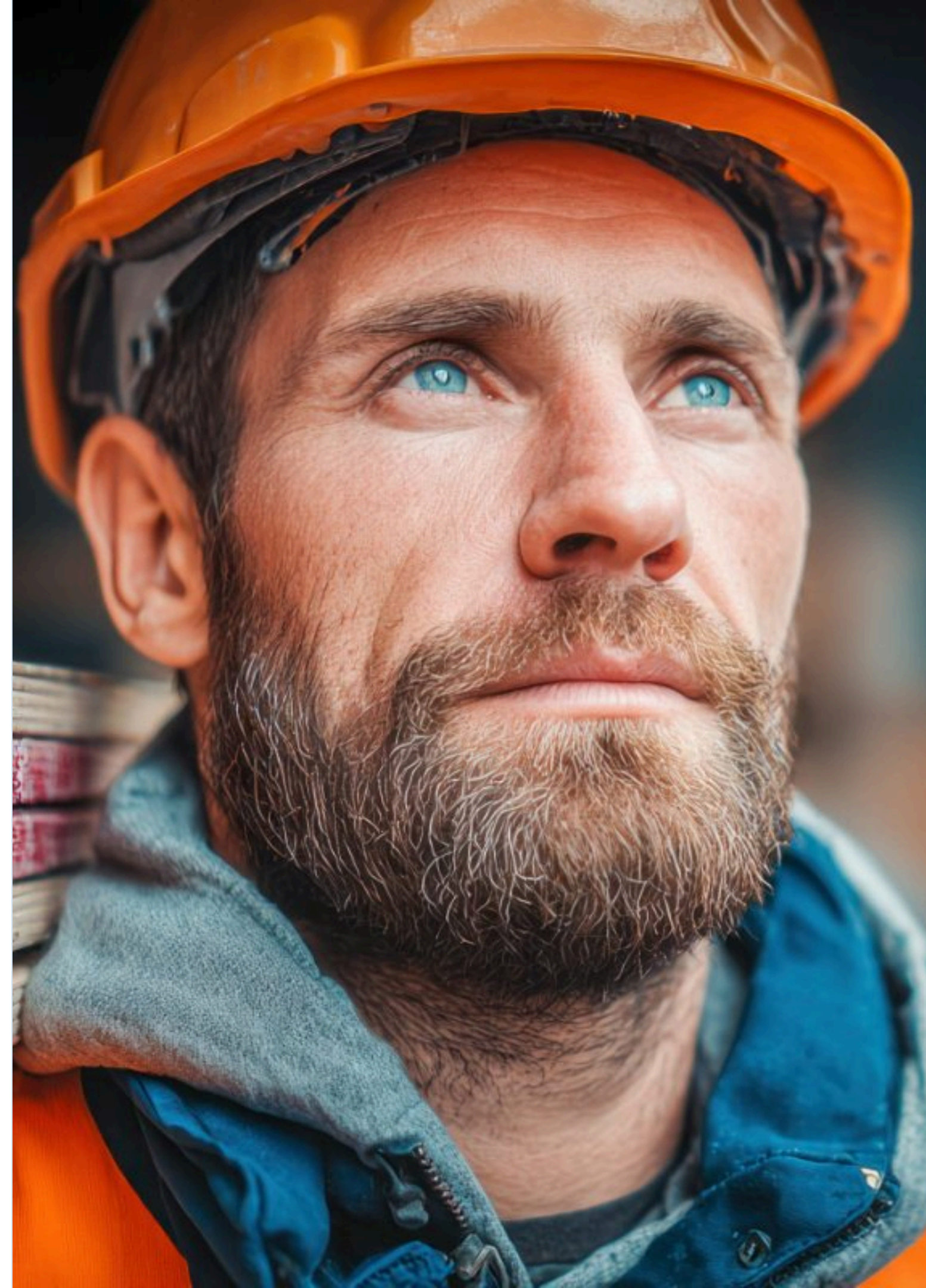
■ June 23, 2026 • 3:00 — 4:00 PM ET

Michael Gilroy

Vice President for
Workforce Development,
Center for Regional Economic
Competitiveness

Deborah “Deb” Harris

Manager, Jobs & Hope
WV and the WV Schools
of Diversion & Transition Reentry
Programs



AGENDA

Sixty minutes, three things to take home

01	35 MIN	02	10 MIN	03	15 MIN
The framework		Case study		Questions	
The Recovery-to-Work Ecosystem Builder’s Guide, the coordinator role, and ecosystem mapping.		Jobs & Hope West Virginia, presented by Deb Harris.		Open discussion. Bring your region’s situation.	

YOU WILL LEAVE WITH

- A step-by-step framework for building a local recovery-to-work ecosystem.
- A practical example of ecosystem mapping in action, from Jobs & Hope WV.
- A clear picture of the local development district’s role as ecosystem coordinator.
- Templates and tools you can use the week after this webinar.

The assets exist. The coordination does not.

Most regions already have treatment providers, recovery housing, training programs, and employers who would hire. What they do not have is a system that connects them. Recovery work happens in silos, and people are lost in the seams between organizations.

“Stakeholders must coordinate efficiently, generally with a regional champion to offer leadership and management.”

ARC, [Addressing Appalachia’s Substance Use Disorder Crisis Through Recovery-to-Work](#) (2021)



Each **red gap** is an unmanaged handoff. Unmanaged handoffs are where people in recovery disappear from the pipeline.

An ecosystem is organizations behaving like one system

THE DDAA FRAMEWORK GIVES PARTNERS THREE JOBS

- 1

Organize regional partners into a continuum of care.
- 2

Engage and support businesses as recovery-to-work partners.
- 3

Facilitate wraparound support for workers in recovery.

“Employment is not only an outcome of recovery, but it is also a contributor to long-term, successful recovery.” — ARC (2021)

WHO HAS TO BE IN THE SYSTEM

Treatment providers	Recovery supports & peers
Recovery housing	Transportation
Training & education	Employers
The workforce system	Econ. & community dev.

ARC’s ecosystem diagram identifies nine categories of organizations that must work together. Labels here are illustrative.

THE COORDINATOR ROLE

Every ecosystem needs a coordinator. The LDD sits at the right altitude.

WHY COORDINATION IS REGIONAL

Community-based

The best solutions are local. Residents and local partners decide what gets done.

Regionalism works

Economic activity does not respect county lines, and neither do commutes to treatment or to work.

Collaboration attracts trust

Broad public and private collaboration, with transparent communication, is what attracts investment.

WHAT THE COORDINATOR ACTUALLY DOES

- Defines the functional region the ecosystem serves.
- Maps regional assets and keeps the map current.
- Forms and staffs the leadership group.
- Manages handoffs no single provider owns.
- Speaks for the ecosystem to funders and the state.

The Builder's Guide turns ecosystem building into five phases

1

Define community recovery and find the right partners

2

Get organized as recovery champions

3

Mobilize employer engagement

4

Formalize wraparound partnerships

5

Identify pathways to sustainability

Self-driven and modular. Each phase carries activities, templates, case studies, and community spotlights from regions across Appalachia. Start at Phase 1, or jump straight to the phase your region needs now.

Start with a vision and the right people, not a program

KEY MOVES

- Inventory who already works on recovery in your region. The landscape is bigger than you think.
- Write your organization's one-sentence vision of a successful regional ecosystem.
- Recruit a leadership team that reflects organizational diversity, not just the usual conveners.
- Build a network map of the partners who can make the vision real.

YOU LEAVE THIS PHASE WITH

A picture of your region's recovery landscape.
A vision statement you can say out loud.
An initial partner outreach list.

FROM THE FIELD

A New York region started from scratch with a handful of motivated champions. A Georgia region built on an existing ecosystem. Both routes work; the Guide profiles each.

Turn a contact list into a leadership team

KEY MOVES

- Convene partners to set a shared definition of success for the region, not for any one agency.
- Complete the ecosystem assessment: strengths, gaps, and opportunities against each goal.
- Assign explicit roles using the stakeholder engagement matrix and support pathways tools.
- Put expectations in writing. Partnership MOUs outlast personalities.

YOU LEAVE THIS PHASE WITH

A shared regional vision of success.

A completed ecosystem assessment.

Named roles for every partner at the table.

FROM THE FIELD

Regions have made this concrete with ally maps (First Tennessee), hub-and-spoke diagrams (Upper Cumberland), and treatment flowcharts (Ohio Valley RDC).

Employers join when you solve their problem

KEY MOVES

- Build a targeted employer list using regional data and partner knowledge, guided by an employer champion.
- Make first outreach personal. State the goal of the initiative in the first paragraph.
- Host business roundtables; let employers hear other employers.
- Connect employers to working tools: recovery-ready certification, tax credits, stigma education, Narcan training, and peer support.

YOU LEAVE THIS PHASE WITH

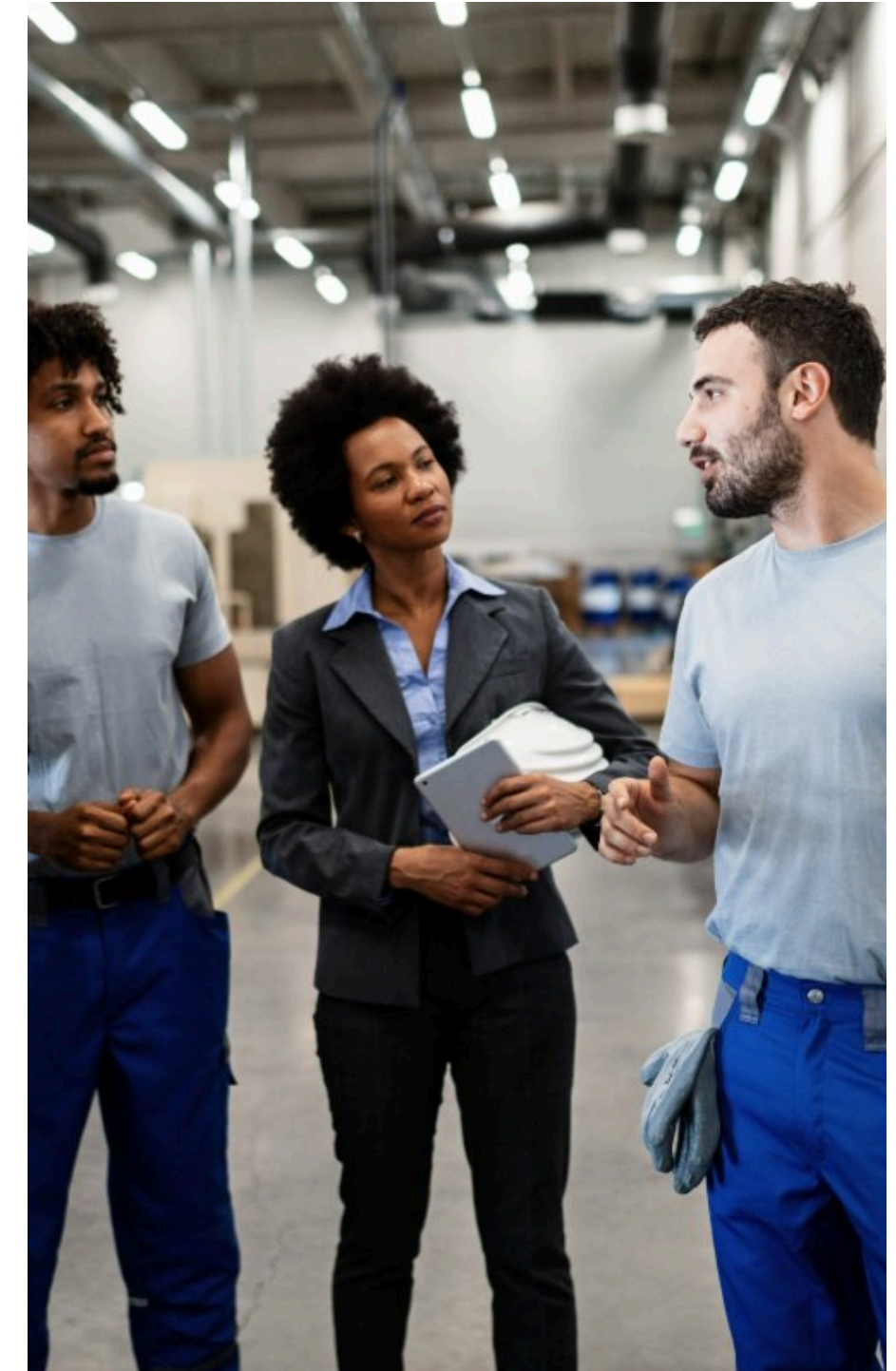
An employer outreach list with owners.

A repeatable outreach and roundtable rhythm.

Employers connected to concrete resources.

FROM THE FIELD

Ohio Valley RDC presented directly to its local SHRM chapter, reaching dozens of HR decision-makers in one room instead of one company at a time.



Wraparound services decide whether placements stick

KEY MOVES

- Inventory the gaps in housing, transportation, child care, legal aid, and continued training.
- Use the stakeholder pathways tool to find connections that can be made today at no new cost.
- Prioritize two to four immediate expansion opportunities with named partners.
- Watch transportation closely. It is the gap regions most often underestimate.

YOU LEAVE THIS PHASE WITH

A wraparound services gap map.
Two to four funded or no-cost connection projects.
A referral path a transition agent can actually use.

FROM THE FIELD

Useful starting points: SAMHSA's community action guide, treatment and housing locators, and the Medicaid HCBS waiver expansion that can reimburse work-related supports.

Sustainability is a funding strategy, not a hope

KEY MOVES

- Run the progress report activity. Document specific gains in employment and recovery outcomes.
- Choose metrics that qualify the region for grants, not just metrics that are easy to count.
- Braid funding streams across agencies rather than depending on a single grant cycle.
- Invest in grant-writing capacity. DDAA offers training built for development districts.

YOU LEAVE THIS PHASE WITH

- A progress report funders can audit.
- A metrics set tied to future funding.
- A pipeline of next-stage opportunities.

FROM THE FIELD

Treat federal and state dollars as catalyst funding, not as the base budget. Plan from day one for what continues after each source is exhausted.

WHAT MAKES PARTNERSHIPS WORK

Five things separate partnerships that work from partnerships that stall

- 1 Right people at the table.** Executives set direction; program leads execute. Both must be in the room.
- 2 Staff who can act.** Coalitions generate ideas, then nobody works them between meetings. Fund the backbone.
- 3 Flexible funding.** Money locked to one program cannot follow the region's real needs.
- 4 Real-time employer signals.** Employers tell the system which jobs and skills matter now, not five years ago.
- 5 Measured impact.** Set metrics, track them, report them. It is what separates high performers from the field.

6 in 10

workers will need skills training
before 2027. Only half can access it.

WEF Future of Jobs (2023)

A partner list is a snapshot. An ecosystem map is a working tool.

The static partner list

- × Goes stale the day it is printed.
- × Lives with one person, in one file.
- × Says who exists, not who has capacity.
- × Cannot support a referral, a report, or a decision.

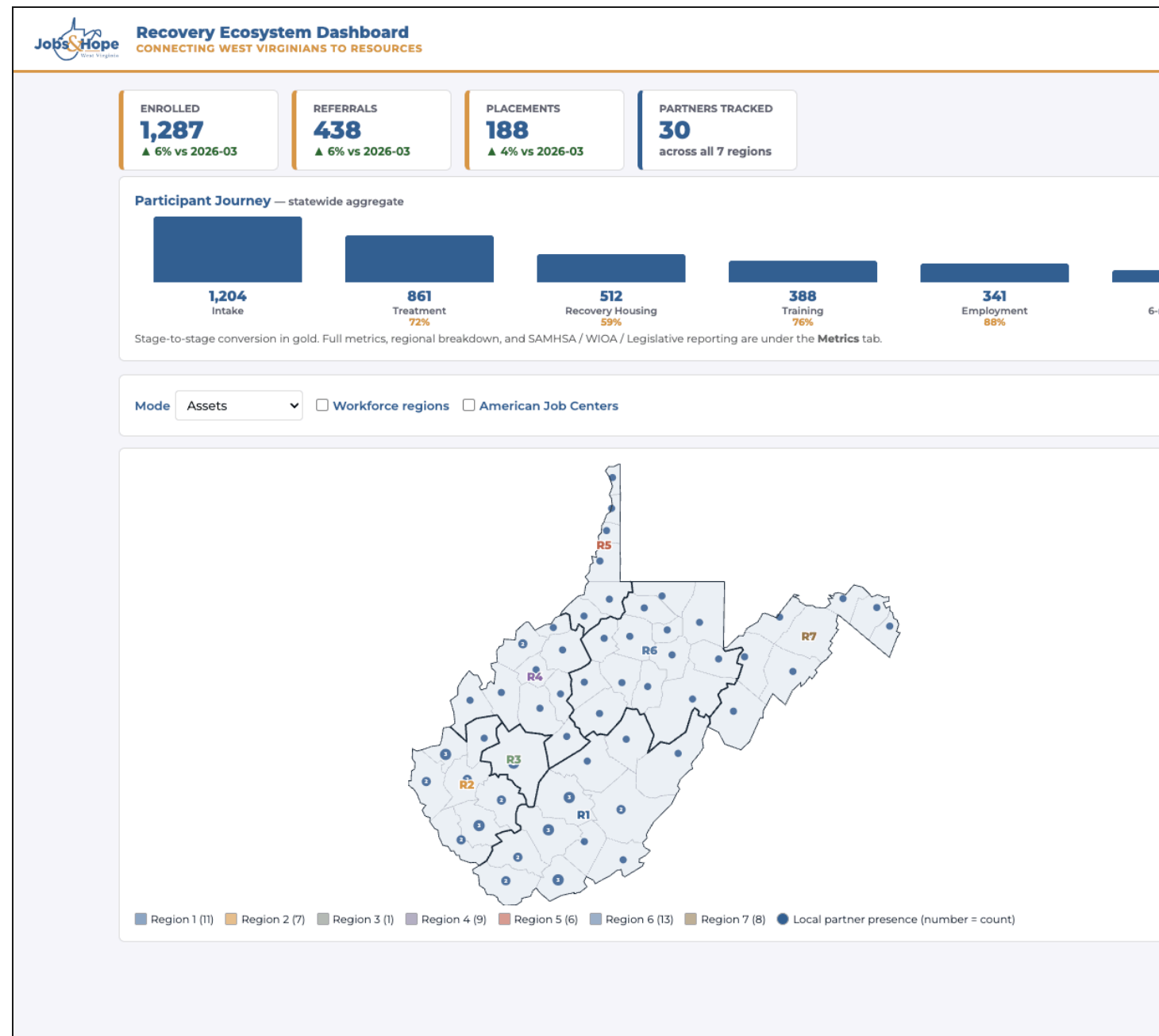
The living ecosystem map

- ✓ Searchable by need, asset type, and geography.
- ✓ Updated by partners on an agreed rhythm.
- ✓ Shows capacity and gaps, county by county.
- ✓ Supports handoffs, oversight, and funder reporting from one dataset.

IN THE FIELD

IN DEVELOPMENT

Jobs & Hope WV is testing what a live ecosystem map looks like



WHAT IT SHOWS

- West Virginia county map overlaid with the seven workforce development regions.
- Ten categories of recovery and workforce assets, searchable and filterable.
- A participant journey funnel: intake through employment and retention at 6 and 12 months.

DESIGN RULES THAT MADE IT POSSIBLE

- Aggregates only. No personal health information anywhere in the tool.
- Small counts suppressed (fewer than 11) to meet 42 CFR Part 2, stricter than HIPAA.
- Language discipline: participants and people in recovery, never cases or addicts.

The software is the easy part. The hard part is a data pipeline dozens of small providers will actually feed.

Start with a spreadsheet, not a software contract

1

Stand up a stakeholder tracker

Partners, asset categories, contacts, capacity, and geography. One sheet, one owner.

3

Set an owner and an update rhythm

The coordinator keeps the data alive. Quarterly verification beats heroic one-time collection.

2

Settle categories and geography first

Your asset taxonomy and regional boundaries are the schema everything else inherits.

4

Buy or build the dashboard last

Move to a mapping tool only after the data flow works on paper.

If a partner will not update a spreadsheet, they will not update a dashboard. Design the collection mechanism before you buy anything.

Jobs & Hope West Virginia



Deborah “Deb” Harris

Manager, Jobs & Hope WV and the West Virginia
Schools of Diversion & Transition Reentry Programs

THE PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

- Statewide recovery-to-work program bridging substance use recovery and employment.
- Organized into seven regions that mirror West Virginia’s workforce development regions.
- Transition agents walk with each participant from referral through employment.
- Delivery partners include Catholic Charities, Good News Mountaineer Garage (~75 vehicles placed a year), the WV Military Authority, and Legal Aid.
- Braided state funding across the Office of Drug Control Policy and the Board of Education.

What is working, and what is still hard

Working

- ✓ A statewide transition agent network that owns the handoffs.
- ✓ A partner delivery model instead of building everything in-house.
- ✓ Employer-facing curriculum and job fairs that meet businesses where they are.
- ✓ An ecosystem dashboard prototype moving partner data out of static lists.

Still hard

- Transportation cost and coverage across a rural state.
- Staffing capacity in a lean state program office.
- Keeping partner and capacity data current across dozens of small providers.
- Sustaining braided funding across separate agency budget cycles.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

Start this summer

1

Download the Recovery-to-Work Ecosystem Builder's Guide and read Phase 1. It is built for self-driven use.

2

Convene your leadership team before the fall grant cycles. Use the Guide's outreach and agenda templates.

3

Stand up your stakeholder tracker. It is the seed of your ecosystem map.

Questions • technical assistance through Connect Appalachia

Michael Gilroy, CREC
mgilroy@crec.net

Deb Harris, Jobs & Hope WV
drharris@k12.wv.us

Brendan Buff, CREC
bbuff@crec.net

