

Kentucky Highlands Promise Zone

Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation

Population Size:

199,682

Lead Organization:

Kentucky Highlands
Investment Corporation
(KHIC)

Implementation Partners:

KY Cabinet for Economic
Development • University of
KY Community & Economic
Development Initiative of KY •
Operation UNITE • The
Center for Rural Development
• PRIDE • Southern Tier
Housing Corp. • East KY
Concentrated Employment
Program • Eastern KY
University Center for Economic
Development,
Entrepreneurship and
Technology • Grow Appalachia
• Partners for Education at
Berea College • Kentucky
Campus Compact/
AmeriCorps VISTA •
Federation of Appalachian
Housing Enterprises

Kentucky Highlands Promise Zone Mission

With the Promise Zone designation, partners will engage the communities in a collaborative, comprehensive process aimed at improving the overall quality of life in the region. KHIC and its partners will employ a number of principles in carrying out activities, including that efforts must be: community-driven; inclusive of all types of talents, underrepresented populations, and all types of organizational leadership; building on the region's assets; collaborative with leadership across private, public and non-profit sectors; comprehensive and integrated; community-based but regionally-focused; linked to and informing of all partners; implemented sustainably; and focused on continuous improvement.

About Kentucky Highlands

The Promise Zone includes the counties of Bell, Clay, Harlan, Knox, Leslie, Letcher, Perry, and six of the eight census tracts in Whitley County. The Zone's overall poverty rate is 30.41%. Four of the eight counties have a county-wide poverty rate above 30%, with the highest in Clay County at 36.54%. There are individual census tracts in the Promise Zone where the poverty rate exceeds 50%. In fact, only eight of the 58 census tracts in the Zone have a poverty rate under 20%.

Promise Zone Leadership

KHIC intends to build upon its 45-year track record of successful economic and community development to concentrate resources in a targeted manner. KHIC will coordinate and manage the resources, and partner with local, state and federal governments; the non-profit sector; education entities; law enforcement; and, private sector investment. KHIC developed a successful methodology for targeted development in implementing the Kentucky Highlands Empowerment Zone and Stronger Economies Together. KHIC is confident that the processes and investment that the Promise One partners will bring will yield measurable returns in jobs created, increased tax base, decreased government spending on social programs, technology improvements, crime reduction and private investment. Of equal importance will be the immeasurable returns in terms of self-sufficiency, self-esteem and community well-being.



Kentucky Highlands Promise Zone

Promise Zone Goals

The Kentucky Highlands Promise Zone functions as a strategic plan compiled from sixteen different listening sessions held in each county with adults and youth residents. From these sessions, ten goals emerged. An abbreviated list of these goals follows.

- **Build a Sustainable Regional Economy**
- **Collaborate to Increase Communications / Connectivity**
- **Diversify Economic Base**
- **Education: Enhance Pre-K and Assure Access to Post-Secondary Education and Workforce Training/Adult Education**
- **Assure Access to Critical Health Services**
- **Increase Access to Affordable Energy Efficient Housing**
- **Expand Access to Transportation**
- **Revitalize Downtowns**
- **Increase Recreation, Arts, Community Engagement**
- **Expand and Engage Pool of Community Leaders**

These goals will take collaboration among partners. To support his work, six working committees have been formed.

These working committees include:

- **Agriculture and Healthy Foods**
- **Communication**
- **Economic Development**
- **Education**
- **Healthcare**
- **Housing**

The purpose of these working committees is threefold. First, to plan collaboration among partners; second, to use the strategic plan as a roadmap for community-driven progress; and third, to focus efforts for securing funding and implementing ideas and programming. A lead partner has been identified for each working committee to coordinate the efforts of all applicable partners in addressing the ten goals.