

ANNUAL REPORT FY 2026

Be Wild. Be Wonderful.



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Message from Our Director

Greetings from Morgantown and the CAHS School of Sport Sciences!

This year was one of significant growth and momentum. We strengthened partnerships across multiple sectors, expanded our network of Organizational Partners, and continued to engage leaders from education, healthcare, public health, parks and recreation, business, and community organizations. Together, these partners are helping advance opportunities for physical activity and healthy living throughout West Virginia.

One of our major accomplishments was the continued implementation of the WV Physical Activity Plan. Through statewide presentations and national collaborations, we shared West Virginia's successes and highlighted the value of cross-sector partnerships in creating healthier communities. We also expanded the ActiveWV 2030 "Plan in Action" initiative, showcasing examples of how organizations and communities are turning the Plan's recommendations into meaningful action.

The Center also continued to lead several important statewide initiatives. Through the CDC-funded WV Healthy Schools in Action program, we worked with schools to strengthen policies, practices, and environments that support student health and wellness. Through the CDC-funded WV BeHealthy initiative, we partnered with communities and organizations to promote healthy eating and active living while addressing chronic disease prevention. In addition, support from the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health helped advance implementation of the Plan and expand the Mountaineer Mile initiative in schools and communities across the state. Together, these efforts are helping create healthier environments where West Virginians live, learn, work, and play. We also laid the groundwork for future initiatives, including a West Virginia Physical Activity Report Card, expanded school and community wellness efforts, and new opportunities for community engagement.

As we look ahead, the Center remains focused on building sustainable partnerships, increasing statewide impact, and securing resources that support schools, communities, and organizations working to improve health through physical activity. The foundation established through ActiveWV 2030 and our many collaborators, including the WV Physical Activity Plan Advisory Board, positions us well for continued success. As I prepare for retirement from West Virginia University, I am especially grateful for the opportunity to have served as Director of the Center for ActiveWV. The accomplishments highlighted in this report reflect the dedication of countless partners, colleagues, students, and community leaders who share a commitment to improving the health and well-being of West Virginians.

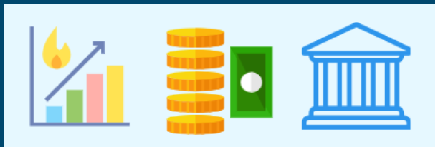
Thank you for your continued partnership and support as we work together to build a healthier, more active West Virginia.

With gratitude,
Eloise Elliott, PhD
Director, Center for ActiveWV
Ware Distinguished Professor





1.



\$1.4 Million in External Funding Last Year

Through three funded projects, the Center's team secured continued funding from CDC and the WV Department of Health. In the last four years, the Center's team has brought in over \$5 million in external funding reaching nearly every county in the state with service, research, or health promotion projects.

2.

Expanded reach on the web, and through social media

Our website - <https://activewv.org> - got a major update this year and we expanded our efforts to show how community members are putting the WV Physical Activity Plan into action.

A social media campaign focused on these "plan in action" success stories reached over 143,000 WV residents and generated over 500,000 impressions in Spring of 2026!



3.

Sustained Impact Across the State

This year, we intensified our efforts in a smaller number of counties to enhance our impact. Instead of working with new partners, we expanded funding and technical support to partners in 11 counties with a track record of success.

In addition, we helped our community partners secure over \$300k in additional funds



Center for ActiveWV

— Celebrating Community Partnerships in Action —

★ Building a Healthier West Virginia Since 2010 ★



The Center for ActiveWV works to improve the physical activity levels of West Virginia adults and children through collaboration, research, policy, and practice. The West Virginia Physical Activity Plan began with the 2010 WV Physical Activity Symposium, which brought together more than 250 professionals from across sectors and regions. Today, the Center continues to advance ActiveWV 2030 and share local impact through The Plan in Action success stories.

Since 2010



statewide
partnership
building

250+



professionals
at the founding
WV Physical Activity
Symposium

10



sectors
represented in the
WV Physical Activity
Plan

17+



organizational
partners listed on
the Center for
ActiveWV website

4



featured
success stories
spotlighted
below

Statewide



collaboration across
schools, healthcare,
universities, and
communities



1. Partnership Legacy

- Began with the 2010 WV Physical Activity Symposium in Charleston.
- Built awareness and support for a statewide strategic plan for physical activity.
- Connects partners where West Virginians live, work, and play.



2. The Plan in Action

- Success stories span 10 sectors across the West Virginia Physical Activity Plan.
- Highlights practical community-based solutions and cross-sector collaboration.
- Shows how local partnerships create environmental and systems change.



3. Spotlight: Bike West Liberty University

- Installed 27 bike racks.
- Created a bike club and groundwork for a mountain bike club.
- Launched the "Bike West Lib" app to share routes.
- Promoted active transportation and campus health.



4. Spotlight: Roane General Hospital

- 100+ individuals impacted.
- Generated \$5,000 in local economic impact.
- Launched a Mountaineer Mile program.
- Expanded trail access, signage, and safe, lighted walking paths.



5. Spotlight: Timberwood Elementary

- 350 students impacted.
- 1 gym upgraded.
- New PE equipment expanded access to multiple sports and activities.
- Strengthened structured physical activity, teamwork, and skill development.



6. Spotlight: Walking Contest Straley Elementary & Princeton Middle

- 12,156,243 steps taken by participants.
- 6,078 miles walked.
- 44 faculty/staff members impacted.
- Demonstrated how friendly competition can promote daily movement.



From statewide planning to local success stories,
community partnerships are helping West Virginians
move more and live healthier lives.



Our Work in Communities: Summaries of Funded Projects

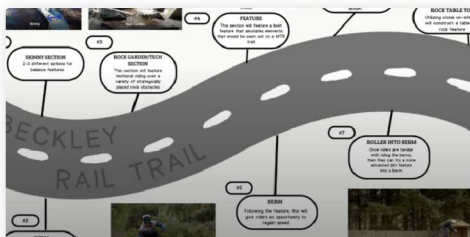
(July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026)

Be ActiveWV Grant Program (WV Department of Health, Bureau for Public Health, Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease) - Year 7

- In our 7th year of partnering with our colleagues in the Bureau, we Funded 12 community partners for a total of \$109,000 and we conducted a substantial social media campaign in the Spring to promote success stories related to the WV Physical Activity Plan.
- Funded projects focused on improving pedestrian and bike infrastructure, enhancing quality of school physical activity programming, and developing new sites for walking a "Mountaineer Mile".
- In total, these projects, and the social media success stories generated based on previous projects, reached over 150,000 WV citizens across the Mountain State ! Check out some examples here: <https://activewv.org/wvpap/the-plan-in-action/>

Sector-Related Success Stories

Read success stories about the Community Recreation, Fitness and Parks sector from the West Virginia Physical Activity plan!



**Community Recreation,
Fitness, and Parks Highlight:
Beckley Rail Trail Skills Park
| City of Beckley**



**Community Recreation,
Fitness, and Parks Highlight:
Cowen Bike Park | Town of
Cowen**



**Community Recreation,
Fitness, and Parks Highlight:
Enhanced Bike Access |
Pendleton County**

Healthy Schools in Action, Year 3

Be Wild. Be Wonderful. Be Active.

WV Healthy Schools in Action

— Year in Review | July 2025–May 2026 —



West Virginia Healthy Schools in Action (WVHSIA) is a statewide school health initiative led by the WVU Center for Active West Virginia through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent and School Health. Since its launch, the project has generated more than \$1 million in funding support to help schools and districts strengthen policies, practices, programs, and partnerships that promote student and staff health. Guided by the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child framework, WVHSIA combines school health assessment and action planning with free online professional development, practical teaching tools and resources, implementation funding, and ongoing technical assistance. Mercer County serves as the project's priority local education agency, while statewide expansion efforts extend supports to schools and districts across West Virginia.



\$1M+

Total funding support generated



100%

of Mercer County Schools engaged in WVHSIA planning, support, and implementation efforts



29

Kanawha County schools registered to participate



2

primary schools supported through the Mercer County Summer Food Service Program



250+

Participants at Bluefield Primary family/community event



250+

Participants at Princeton Middle family/community event



1. School Health Infrastructure

- Strengthened school health infrastructure in Mercer County.
- Supported principals, wellness leads, and district administrators with School Health Index completion, action planning, budget development, and implementation planning.
- Maintained progress through staff transitions and varying levels of school readiness.



2. Professional Learning & Capacity Building

- Expanded professional learning through online modules, webinars, workshops, presentations, and partner events.
- Topics included the WSCC model, school health assessment, data-informed decision-making, staff wellness, classroom physical activity, physical education/CSAP, early childhood health and nutrition, and action-plan development.



3. Physical Activity & Student Programming

- Advanced classroom and school-day physical activity through Active Academies, Run Clubs, Walking Classroom exploration, and FitnessGram use by Mercer County PE teachers.
- Supported visible student, family, and community programming.
- Included a high school student-athlete leadership summit focused on leadership, positive youth sport, and healthy social and emotional environments.



4. Nutrition, Well-Being & Inclusion

- Supported summer meals at two primary schools and food distribution partnerships addressing food insecurity.
- Expanded emotional well-being efforts through the national Emotional Well-Being Learning Collaborative and youth leadership opportunities.
- Promoted inclusive and equitable physical activity by examining access for individuals with disabilities in rural communities.



5. Statewide Expansion & Partnerships

- Expanded participation statewide, including growth in Kanawha and Monroe Counties.
- Launched and activated the WVHSIA State Advisory Coalition.
- Leveraged partnerships with Mercer County Schools, Active Southern West Virginia, Mountaineer Food Bank, university partners, mental health organizations, early childhood networks, and disability-focused organizations.
- Support from the Sisters of St. Joseph Health Foundation and Pallottine Foundation helped extend capacity for



6. Evaluation, Visibility & Sustainability

- Improved communication and visibility through website enhancements, an interactive map, school success stories, and outreach materials.
- Strengthened evaluation and continuous improvement using school assessments, district and student data, implementation tracking, success stories, and applied research.
- Reinforced the value of flexible timelines, sustained technical assistance, and strong district leadership.

Be Wild, Be Wonderful, Be Healthy - a CDC collaborative project - Year 3 (aka, "HOP")

In the 8 participating counties, the grant team focused on equipping community leaders to champion walkability through the implementation of a walk audit microcredential training, the provision of multiple on-site walk audit trainings, and hands-on mentorship in walk audit leadership.

We supported the Town of Clay in securing a \$110,400 Safe Streets for All (SS4A) planning grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to Develop a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan to reduce roadway fatalities and improve safe travel for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Additional funds were secured by partners in Sutton (\$20,000), Madison (\$50,000), and Clay (\$84,000) to support changes to physical activity infrastructure and to enhance healthy food access.

Significant efforts were also put into assisting with 3 community walk audits in Braxton and Calhoun Counties, and supporting the implementation of a walkability project in Burnsville.

We also expanded our collaboration with Extension to train 4 additional Family and Community Development agents (in Pleasants, Jackson, Marion, Harrison, and Monongalia counties) so they can bring HOP strategies into their communities.

The evaluation team interviewed 4 Early Childhood Education directors and staff in 3 counties to identify ways to expand healthy foods and physical activity offerings through policy, systems, and environment changes and presented the findings to approximately 25 people at the WV Head Start Association 2026 Summer Training event in June. Procedures and strategies for engaging with the GO-NAPSAAC assessment and tools were provided, alongside incentives for teachers.



HOP Participating Counties



ActiveWV 2030: The WV Physical Activity Plan (WVPAP, 2nd Edition)

The WV Physical Activity Plan, **ActiveWV 2030**, provides strategies and tactics across every societal sector to facilitate a state-wide promotion of healthy physical activity levels for West Virginians

- You can access the full plan here: [ActiveWV 2030](#)

Five Priority Areas for the WV Physical Activity Plan

1. Increase structural capacity
2. Enhance public awareness through social marketing
3. Engage community members to enhance social and built environments
4. Advocate for policy change
5. Promote multisector collaboration

The 10 Societal Sectors Involved in the Plan

1. Business and industry
2. Community Recreation, Fitness, and Parks
3. Education
4. Faith-Based Settings
5. Healthcare
6. Media and Communications
7. Military
8. Public Health
9. Sport
10. Transportation, Land Use, and Community Design

Using the sector-specific tactics and strategies outlined in the plan, we and our partners intend to increase the physical activity levels of all WV citizens, to meet or exceed the national physical activity recommendations, and to therefore improve the health and quality of life of West Virginians. Check out our progress from this year on the next page!



OUR VISION

To increase the physical activity levels of both children and adults in our state to meet or exceed the national physical activity recommendations (2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans) and to, therefore, improve the health and quality of life of all West Virginians.

Social Media Engagement

Since 2019, we have worked to expand our reach with social media including Facebook & Instagram. We regularly share success stories of our partners doing amazing work out in many WV communities.

WVU MOUNTAINEER MILE

Join Miss Morgantown and West Virginia Physical Activity Plan Ambassador Elizabeth "Lizzie" Romanek for our second Mountaineer Mile!



MAY 8, 2026
4:00 PM

WVU Evansdale Rec Fields
Morgantown, WV

Be Wild. Be Wonderful.
beActive.

West Virginia **Healthy Schools in Action.** **Quality Physical Education**

Positive Impact
540+ Staff
800+ Students

Enhancing Physical Education
Through curricular improvements or new equipment, schools are encouraging more movement. These improvements keep the students engaged and the staff motivated!

Bluefield Intermediate School
Bluefield Middle School
Mercer County Early Learning Center

   **Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies, Brighter Futures.**

Mission
Cultivate a culture of wellness within West Virginia's educational landscape

Year 1 Outcomes
Completed Health Assessments
12.5% → 100%
Developed Action Plan
58% → 100%

This project uses the "Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community" model

A comprehensive framework for addressing health in schools

This is a cooperative project in 21 states with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Facebook Followers	655	770	874	1,331	1,473	1496	1500	1700
Instagram Likes	--	203	367	478	528	524	542	587



Center For ActiveWV



@BeActiveWV



www.activewv.org



Our Mission

The overarching goal of the Center for ActiveWV is to provide an effective statewide physical activity framework that will promote sector input and collaboration, facilitate physical activity research among multidisciplinary teams, and guide state and local policy and practice.

Center Team Members

Director

Eloise Elliott, PhD (retiring June 2026)

Leadership Team

Sean Bulger, EdD

Sam Zizzi, EdD

Emily Murphy, PhD

Project Managers

Leanne Watson, PhD (Healthy Schools)

Angela Watkins, MS (Healthy Schools)

Samantha Moyers-Kinsella, PhD (HOP)

Udday Datta, PhD (HOP)

Graduate Assistants

Treanor Lee

Funding

	Approximate Funding (annual)
Be ActiveWV Grant	\$220,000
CDC High Obesity Grant	\$750,000
CDC Healthy Schools in Action Grant with supplemental funding from the Pallottine and Sisters of St. Joseph Foundations	\$430,000
Total External Funding in the Center (FY26)	\$1,400,000

Funding Partners

WV Division of Health
Promotion
and Chronic Disease

Sisters of St. Joseph
Pallotine Foundation

US Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention



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