



Opportunity Appalachia

Bringing jobs, business support, and investment to Central Appalachian communities



Opportunity Appalachia: Evaluation Report



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Executive Summary

In its first year, Opportunity Appalachia set a goal to select 15 projects within Opportunity Zones from the Appalachian region in Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia to participate in the program. The program was supported by a \$1,000,000 POWER grant from the Appalachian Regional commission (ARC) with additional support from the Benedum Foundation. It projected to bring \$7.5M of new Opportunity Fund capital to targeted Opportunity Zone communities and create 720 new jobs. Opportunity Appalachia operated under the direction of a Steering Committee made up of regional and national organizations, including three lead state partners: Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth (APEG)-formerly OhioSE, Opportunity Southwest Virginia/UVA, and The West Virginia Community Development Hub.

After a planning period-which included state planning meetings held between August through December 2019, the program officially began in December 2019 with a launch webinar informing interested applicants about how their community could obtain financial and technical assistance through Opportunity Appalachia. Shortly after, lead state partners held their own outreach events in January 2020 in the three target states that included presentations, speakers, and local and regional sponsors and collectively attracted over 350 attendees. The program application period was January 13 through March 2, 2020. Lead state partners recommended projects from their state based on the applications that were received, and the Steering Committee made the final approval for acceptance into the program.

In the year-long effort, selected projects received technical assistance and support as they prepared for investor outreach, which included a two-day Investor Convening where each project was given the opportunity to pitch their project to pre-vetted investors. Technical assistance support averaged \$46,800 for projects and ranged between \$15,000 and \$69,500.

Opportunity Appalachia received strong interest in the program as 56 project proposals from 42 project sponsors were received. Sixteen projects were approved in March 2020; six projects were chosen in Ohio, and five projects were chosen in both Virginia and West Virginia. Before the grant ended, a sixth West Virginia project was added using remaining funds from another project, for 17 total projects.

Investor outreach began in May 2020 and included release of the Opportunity Appalachia project portfolio, follow-up calls with interested investors, a 2020 Fall/Winter update with information on The Opportunity Exchange portal to view project prospectus, and a Save the Date announcement for the Investor Convening.

The Investor Convening was held virtually on February 23-24, 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. The event had over 150 attendees across more than 15 states, which included 15 project leads, Steering Committee members, partners, and private and non-private investors. One project lead decided their project was not ready to be pitched and did not participate in the pitch session. Technical assistance continued through August 2021 when the grant ended, but conversations for capital raise and support for projects continue.

Evaluation for the program began in May 2021 and resulted in a 62.5% survey response rate for project leads, 42.5% for technical assistance providers, and 33% for investors. Interviews were conducted with six project leads, six technical assistance providers, and one investor. Interviews were also conducted with Steering Committee members, including lead state partners, Opportunity Appalachia program manager-Ray Daffner, and Appalachian Community Capital President & CEO-Donna Gambrell.

Though program management considered pausing program activities in the middle of the pandemic, COVID did not stop progress. It certainly caused some modifications, particularly with the heavy reliance on Zoom and other technology when in-person meetings and site visits could not take place. An ARC POWER grant extension was approved to help address challenges that COVID brought to Opportunity Appalachia. However, investor interest remained strong, and seven out of eight investors who responded to the investor survey said that COVID did not affect their decision to invest in projects in any way.

The addition of project videos, produced by RiffRaff Arts Collective in West Virginia, turned out to be one of the best parts of the Investor Convening among everyone who was surveyed and interviewed. Those videos are still being used by project leads and program partners in the promotion of Opportunity Appalachia projects and were not originally part of the Investor Convening plan.

The Investor Convening received a lot of positive feedback as project leads thought the event was useful, worthwhile, and were very appreciative of the experience. Steering Committee members felt that the event turned out well, especially having to make changes and adaptations in switching to a virtual platform. Presentations were rated as informative and relevant by all project leads and most investors. Project leads felt the guidance materials and practice sessions prepared them for their project pitch. Regardless of whether the pitch led to funding conversations with investors, the event brought enhanced exposure to projects. Survey results showed that investors are interested in attending another Investor Convening if given the opportunity.

Nearly all project leads were satisfied with Opportunity Appalachia and would recommend the program to those who are interested in the future. They were very appreciative of the support that they received from technical assistance providers which they might not have otherwise had access to.

The flexibility of Opportunity Appalachia was beneficial to the project leads as they could adjust their proposed projects along the way. However, major project changes often affected the involvement of technical assistance providers in terms of scope of work, budget, and timeline for the project. Seventy percent of surveyed technical assistance providers did not have any challenges in meeting their proposed budget.

Communication between the project lead and the technical assistance provider was key. Overall, technical assistance providers felt that their role in Opportunity Appalachia was clearly defined, but the level of satisfaction in working with project leads varied across projects. The number of Opportunity Appalachia projects that the technical assistance provider took on, experience level of the technical assistance provider, experience level of the project lead, and the extent to which a project was clearly defined all affected satisfaction with technical assistance provided. Project leads rated their technical assistance providers a nine out of ten. There were several ratings as high as ten out of ten, but also some ratings as low as five and three.

As with any first-year program, there were some suggestions for future improvement. Technical assistance providers suggested further documenting project readiness and making sure there is a clear vision in selection of projects for Opportunity Appalachia. Investors are also interested in whether a project has an experienced developer identified. Technical assistance provider contracts referenced the timeline, scope of work, and budget for each project. But there was a need to have a clear procedure and reminders about revising those items when there were changes made to projects. Some technical assistance providers were confused or unclear with the process to request modifications.

Project leads wanted more connections to other projects. They appreciated the check-in calls hosted by Appalachian Community Capital (ACC) where projects would report progress and challenges but wanted more opportunities to learn from each other. It was also suggested to have an Opportunity Zone expert available to consult with all projects as needed, so it is not an additional expense for projects to hire someone.

The most frequently mentioned suggestion for improvement was changing the way investors met with project leads during the Investor Convening. Having designated appointments might have led to a higher participation rate. Other suggestions for program improvement are noted in this report.

As a result of Opportunity Appalachia, seven projects are anticipated to be financed in 2021-2022 and are anticipated to collectively raise \$106.8M. Micronic Technologies, a Virginia project, has already raised \$3M in phase one. Another six projects, collectively seeking \$125.6M in funding, are likely to be financed. These 13 projects are projected to create 1,121 jobs. Eight out of 10 surveyed project leads say that they have financial commitments underway, and 50% of projects have raised at least some capital working towards their goal.

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Overview

Opportunity Appalachia was designed to provide technical assistance across three states to both develop community strategies and structure investable transactions and create prospectus and pitch decks targeting Qualified Opportunity Fund (QOF) investors. The program was projected to bring \$7.5 M of new Opportunity Fund capital to 15 targeted opportunity zone communities, structuring investments in 15 businesses and real estate projects that support strategies for economic restructuring and diversification and creating 720 new jobs - 10% which are dedicated to workers graduating from addiction recovery programs.

What are Opportunity Zones?

According to the IRS, "A qualified opportunity zone (QOZ) is an economically distressed community where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Localities qualify as QOZs if they have been nominated for that designation by a state, District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory and that nomination has been certified by the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury via his delegation of authority to the Internal Revenue Services (IRS)."

QOZs are an economic development tool designed to spur economic development and job creation in distressed communities.

The first set of QOZ designations, covering parts of 18 states, were designated in April 2018. QOZs have been designated to cover parts of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories. QOZs were added to the tax code by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in December 2017.

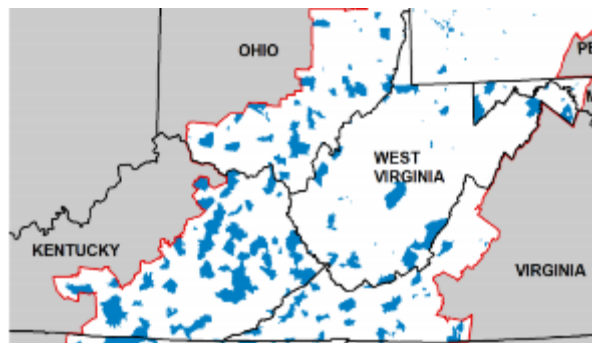
Source:

<https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions>

Investment priorities included projects focusing on downtown development/redevelopment, manufacturing, IT, healthcare, education, food systems, clean energy, heritage tourism, and recreation. Opportunity Appalachia selected 17 projects in rural Central Appalachia in the states of Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia. In this year-long effort, technical assistance was provided to each project and was estimated to be between \$30,000 to \$70,000, with an average of \$50,000 per project. After several months of receiving technical assistance, projects pitched their projects at a virtual Investor Convening.

Collectively, these 17 projects proposed to bring over 1,800 jobs to rural communities and attract over \$235 million in financing. Of the selected projects, six came from West Virginia, five came from Virginia, and six came from Ohio. Overall, Opportunity Appalachia received 56 Opportunity Zone project proposals submitted by 42 project sponsors. Of which, 24 project proposals were in West Virginia, 23 were in Ohio, and 9 were in Virginia.

The program is supported by a \$1,000,000 POWER grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission ([ARC](#)) with additional support from the [Benedum Foundation](#).



The map above shows targeted OZ communities:

- Appalachian Ohio
- Southwest Virginia
- West Virginia

(Excludes ARC competitive Counties)

"I think it's a great program that helps communities focus on pulling together good projects and getting them ready to be funded. And whether it's Opportunity Zone investors or competing for federal ARPA [American Rescue Plan Act] funds, the access to technical assistance was a big deal. For instance, engineering, design, finance- it's critical, and it's something that's sorely needed in rural communities. We don't have the same kind of creative partners that exist in the urban areas, so I think that's a really big benefit of the program."

-Ohio Mayor Tom Johnson on how Opportunity Appalachia affects Ohio and the Appalachian region

Rural opportunity zones are at a distinct disadvantage in attracting financing as they have

- 1) Fewer resources to enable them to develop community strategies and package transactions to potential investors
- 2) Investment opportunities that often provide lower rates of financial return than do faster growing cities

This report includes evaluation in primarily three areas:

1. Three State Opportunity Appalachia Steering Committee: Comprised of the following six regional and national organizations:

- Program Manager and serving as lead: Appalachian Community Capital (ACC) - A 26 member CDFI lending intermediary whose members and their affiliates manage over \$1 billion in assets supporting economic development across Appalachia
- Lead State Partners - Lead Community Development State Partners:
 - Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth (APEG) - The lead regional economic development organization in Eastern and Southern Ohio working in a 25-county area, supported by Jobs Ohio (OhioSE was APEG- their name changed in 2020)
 - Opportunity Southwest Virginia / UVA – Wise pilots the way for 19 counties and scores of communities in Southwest Virginia to support economic and community development efforts to create thriving entrepreneurial communities that accelerate progress for both new and established ventures
 - West Virginia Community Development Hub (The WV Hub) - The leading community development organization in West Virginia has worked with over 40 small communities across the state
- National Technical Assistance Providers:
 - Main Street America
 - Coastal Enterprises - CCML



2. Project teams consisting of team-lead-owner, developer, City representative and technical assistance provider team members
3. Investors– Qualified Opportunity Funds, New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Community Development Entities, Historic Tax Credit investors, banks, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), equity investors, others.

For the purpose of this evaluation, work consisted of reviewing the following:

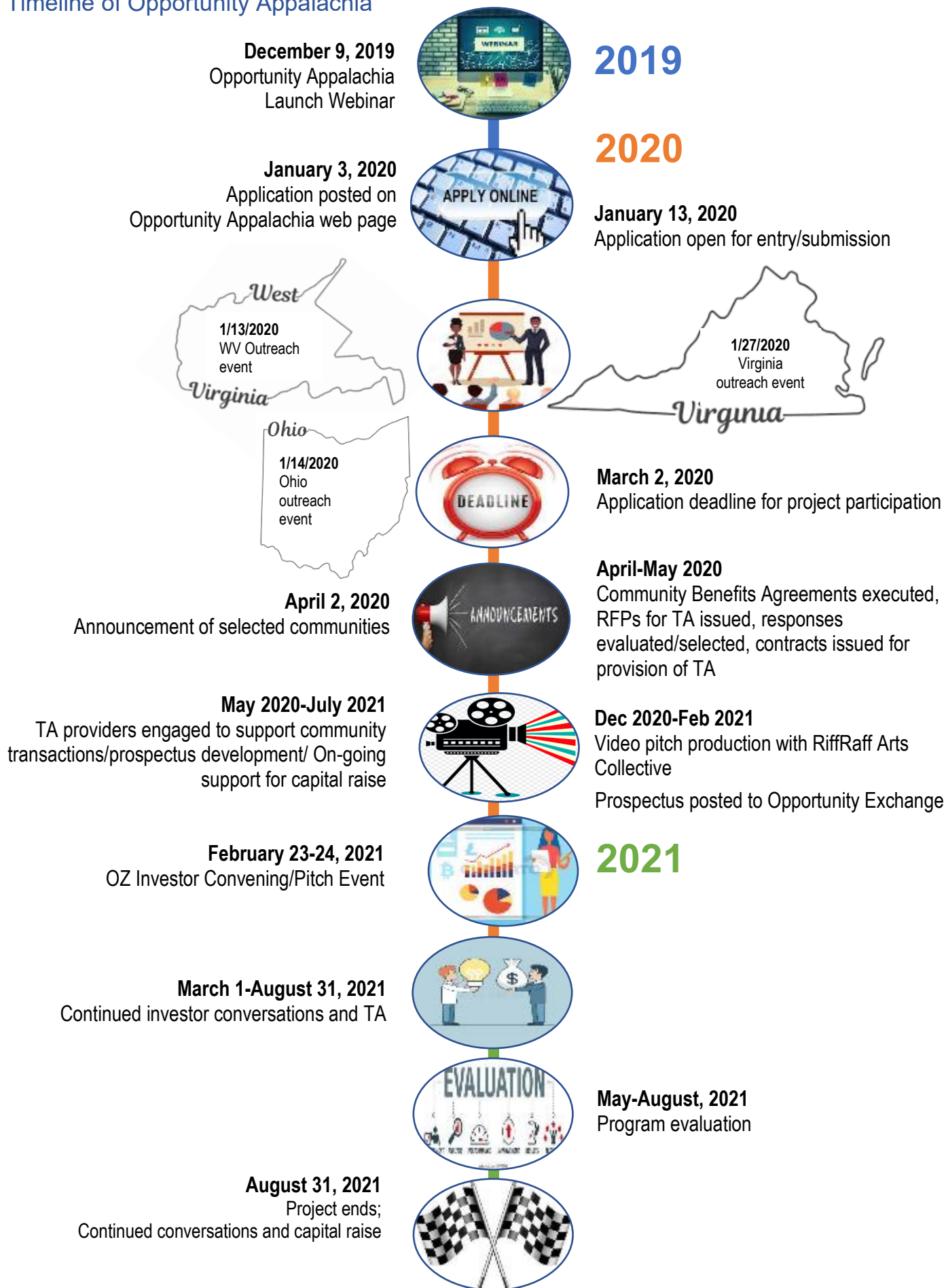
- Promotion/community outreach for the program and Opportunity Zones
- Application process for Technical assistance provision and Technical assistance provider selection
- Application and selection process for projects
- Technical assistance for projects
- Investor Convening
- Follow-up technical assistance and investment activities

Goals of the evaluation:

- Survey 16 project leads and conduct follow-up interviews with approximately eight. *Another project was added using remaining funds in West Virginia well after the Investor Convening while the evaluation was taking place, so only 16 projects were contacted for evaluation.*
- Survey 30 investors and conduct follow-up interviews with approximately five to eight
- Survey 40 technical assistance providers and conduct follow-up interviews with approximately three to five

Grant funded work for Opportunity Appalachia ends with the end of the grant on August 31, 2021. This report reflects efforts until August 1, 2021, in evaluation efforts conducted by Midwest Evaluation and Research.

Timeline of Opportunity Appalachia



Steering Committee

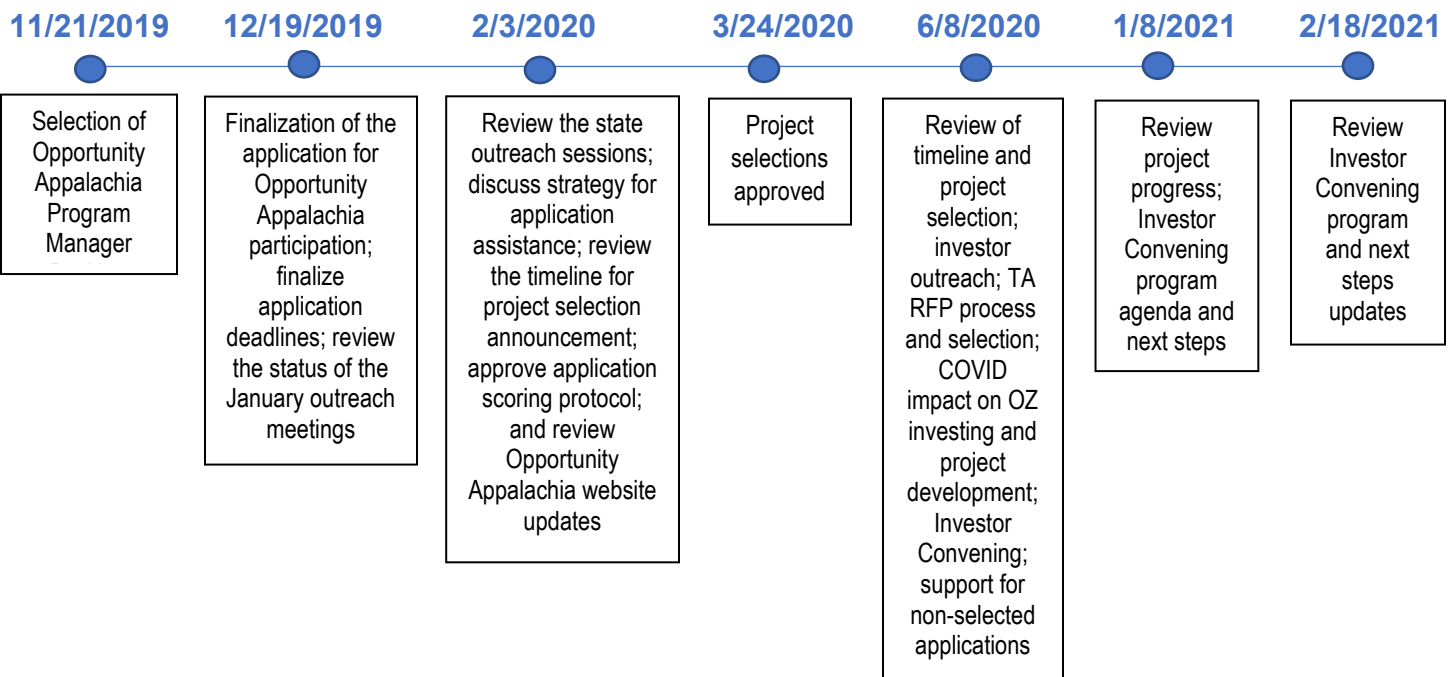
The Opportunity Appalachia Steering Committee was a group that helped lead the overall program with national and state lead partners. They helped steer the project across the three states, ensuring all states stayed on track and sought to build a sense of community across the three states. The Steering Committee met to review and approve all program activities including program launch, community outreach, application and selection process, and technical assistance provision (including helping connect projects with technical assistance providers outside of the state as needed).

Steering Committee meetings with significant program milestones are outline below.

“We gave state teams great flexibility and let them decide how they wanted to administer the program. All of them were part of the Steering Committee, so when they came together and talked about the projects, each state representative got to hear from the others about [things like how] they were choosing projects and what challenges they faced.”

-Donna Gambrell, Appalachian
Community Capital

Steering Committee Meetings



State Planning Meetings

Two to three State Planning Meetings were held in each state with focus on project implementation steps including outreach, target audience identification, and review of the community selection process. Meetings were convened and led by the Opportunity Appalachia Steering Committee member in each state. Additional Opportunity Appalachia Steering Committee meetings were held to review all program activities including launch, community outreach, application and selection process, technical assistance provision, investor outreach, project timeline, and grant reporting.

Summaries of state planning meetings

Ohio

Ohio was led by APEG. Ohio had previously held a state-wide opportunity zone outreach event where activities are on-going in urban centers but lacked traction in rural Southern Ohio. Ohio's first state meeting focused on targeted Southern Ohio outreach and included the following community leaders in addition to APEG; Governor's Office of Appalachia, Ohio Development Services Agency, Ohio University, Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Ohio Valley Regional Development Council, and OMEGA Regional Council.

- Ohio state planning meetings/conference calls:
 - Held in Marietta, OH
 - August 28, 2019
 - December 5, 2019

Virginia

Virginia engaged LOCUS Impact Investing, who works to create greater community impact with their clients, to lead state-wide Opportunity Zone outreach efforts. This partnership focused on targeting technical assistance in rural Southwest Virginia and leverage the state-wide initiative. Community partners include UVA-Wise, VA Department of Housing and Community Development, LENOWISCO Planning District Commission, Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, Thomson Charitable Foundation, City of Wise, People Inc, and Coalfields Economic Development Authority.

- Virginia state planning meetings/conference calls:
 - Held in Abingdon, VA
 - September 25, 2019
 - November 5, 2019
 - November 20, 2019

West Virginia

West Virginia had never held such a comprehensive state-wide Opportunity Zone outreach event nor had it ever developed a state-wide Opportunity Zone strategy. The West Virginia planning team worked with the West Virginia Development Office and U.S. Senators Capito and Manchin to support state-wide outreach and education for Opportunity Zones in West Virginia. Led by The West Virginia Hub, other partners included WV Municipal League, West Virginia Development Office, New River Gorge Development Authority, Advantage Valley, City of Huntington, City of Charleston, WV Forward, WV Brownfields Center, West Virginia University, and Benedum Foundation.

- West Virginia state planning meetings/conference calls:
 - Held in Charleston, WV
 - October 2, 2019
 - November 26, 2019

Appalachian Community Capital (ACC) provided significant on-going participation/support for state planning and outreach.

Outreach

Community Project Outreach

A one-hour program launch webinar was held on December 9, 2019 for attendees to:

- Learn about new financial support and technical assistance available to develop Opportunity Zone transaction in their community
- Learn about new assistance to bring Opportunity Zone financing to rural Appalachia and identify Opportunity Zone investors within the region
- Learn how their community, project, or business can access this new support

The webinar was designed to answer questions about Opportunity Appalachia and how communities, projects, or businesses could participate. A total of 180 participants attended the webinar.



The target audience for the webinar included: Community leaders, local economic developers/Local Development Districts, real estate developers, business owners, investors, banks, business support organizations, universities/community colleges, and philanthropy organizations.

State Outreach Events

Each state team held an outreach event in their state to attract participants to Opportunity Appalachia. Each outreach event had their own presentations, speakers, and local and regional sponsors, but goals of the events were focused around:

- familiarization with Opportunity Zones and the Opportunity Appalachia program
- challenges and strategies of Opportunity Zone projects
- attracting investments for projects and businesses
- identifying top priority needs for projects
- developing a strong application for the Opportunity Appalachia program

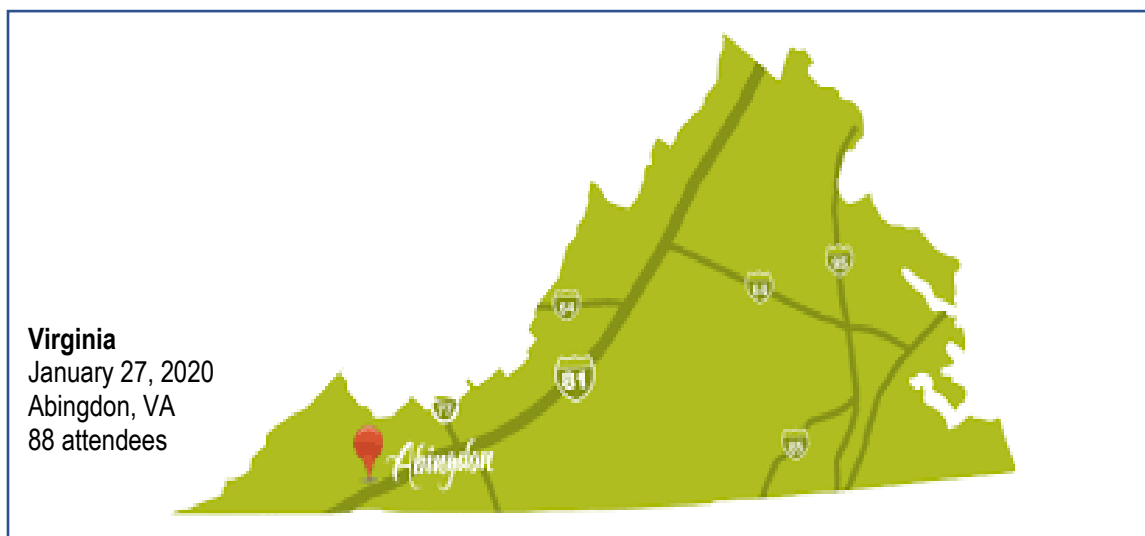
Dates and Locations of State Outreach Events



West Virginia
January 13, 2020
Bridgeport, WV
186 attendees



Ohio
January 14, 2020
Marietta, OH
100 attendees



Virginia
January 27, 2020
Abingdon, VA
88 attendees

Investor Outreach

Investors were the other key players in Opportunity Appalachia. Not only did the program help project leads advance their projects with funding and technical assistance support, but investor outreach was another important component to helping connect projects with potential funding.

In May 2020, an announcement of the 16 Opportunity Appalachia portfolio projects was sent to 25 QOFs, NMTC CDEs, and other investors. Over 10 follow-up calls with interested investors took place resulting in 10 Opportunity Appalachia project introductions. The Steering Committee assessed investor interest in the new COVID environment and it determined investor interest remained strong for the project portfolio. In addition, a 2020 Fall/Winter update with information on the Opportunity Exchange portal for prospectus posting was sent out to investors. Lastly, a Save the Date announcement was sent for the Investor Convening to be held on February 23 - 24, 2021.

Eligibility and Selection

Eligibility for Opportunity Appalachia Projects

Organizations eligible to apply for Opportunity Appalachia included:



- for-profit project sponsors including developers and businesses
- multi-county regions
- counties
- municipalities
- economic and community development organizations (e.g., Main Street organizations)
- other non-profit organizations
- educational institutions

"We've really relied on our state partners for due diligence. They know these communities well."

-Ray Daffner,
Program Manager, on outreach
and selection for Opportunity
Appalachia

Communities outside of Opportunity Zones were welcome to participate in Opportunity Appalachia projects, particularly for projects that are part of regional development efforts. However, projects identified for support from Opportunity Appalachia had to be located in Opportunity Zones in Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Eligible counties: all counties in the Appalachian portions of Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia were eligible, except for ARC designated economically Competitive counties

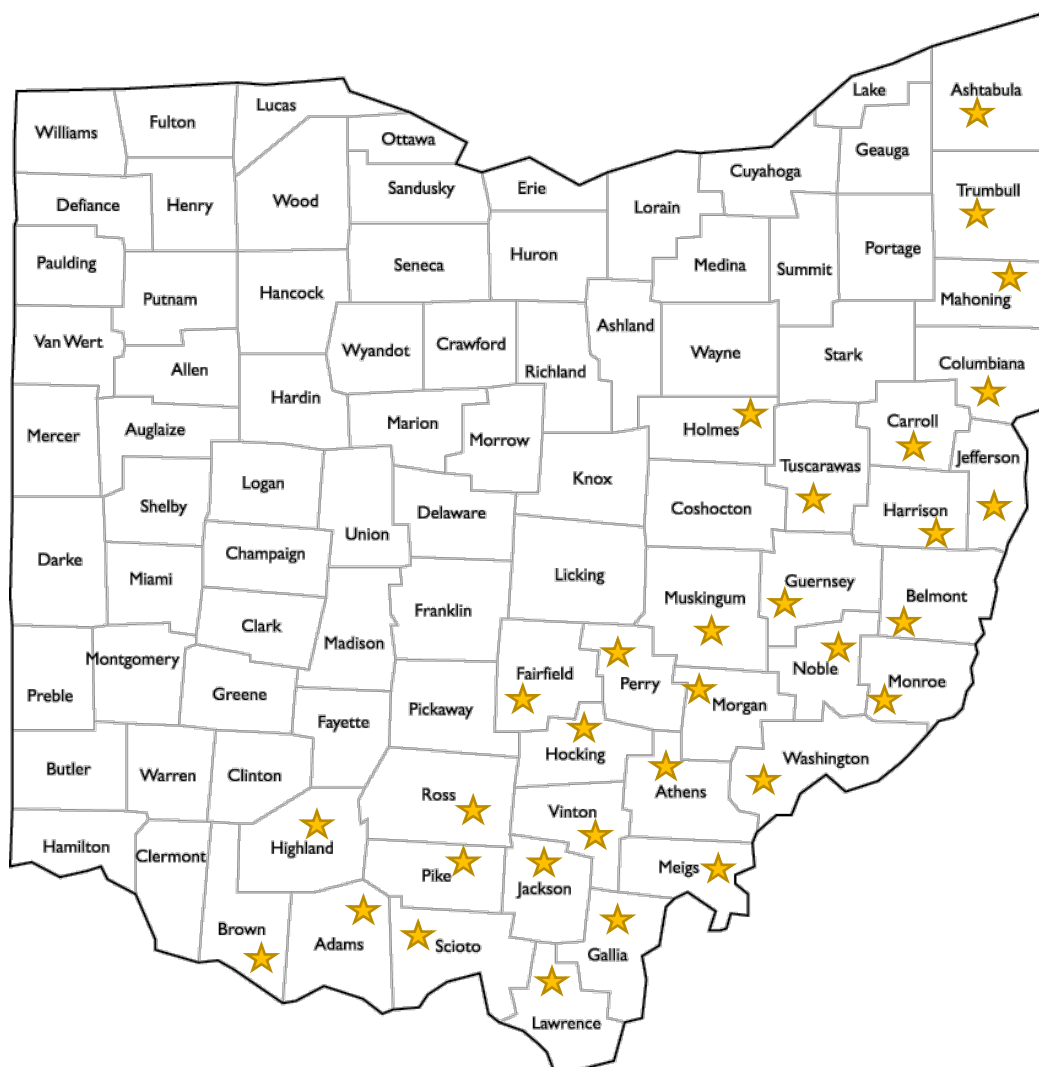
Community Benefits Agreement and Match Requirement

Projects selected to participate in Opportunity Appalachia were required to sign a Community Benefits Reporting and Matching Funds Agreement, which can be found in Appendix E. Execution of agreements took place between April 3 and May 6, 2020. As part of the agreement, projects were to report community impacts to Opportunity Appalachia and provide \$5,000 of matching support that could either be in-kind from community leads or members, developers, and business owners or through a cash contribution to the prospectus development and project activities.

Eligible Counties: Ohio Map



Adams
 Ashtabula
 Athens
 Belmont
 Brown
 Carroll
 Columbiana
 Gallia
 Guernsey
 Harrison
 Highland
 Hocking
 Holmes
 Jackson
 Jefferson
 Lawrence
 Mahoning
 Meigs
 Monroe
 Morgan
 Muskingum
 Noble
 Perry
 Pike
 Ross
 Scioto
 Trumbull
 Tuscarawas
 Vinton
 Washington



A yellow star ★ represents the county eligible for Opportunity Appalachia in the state.

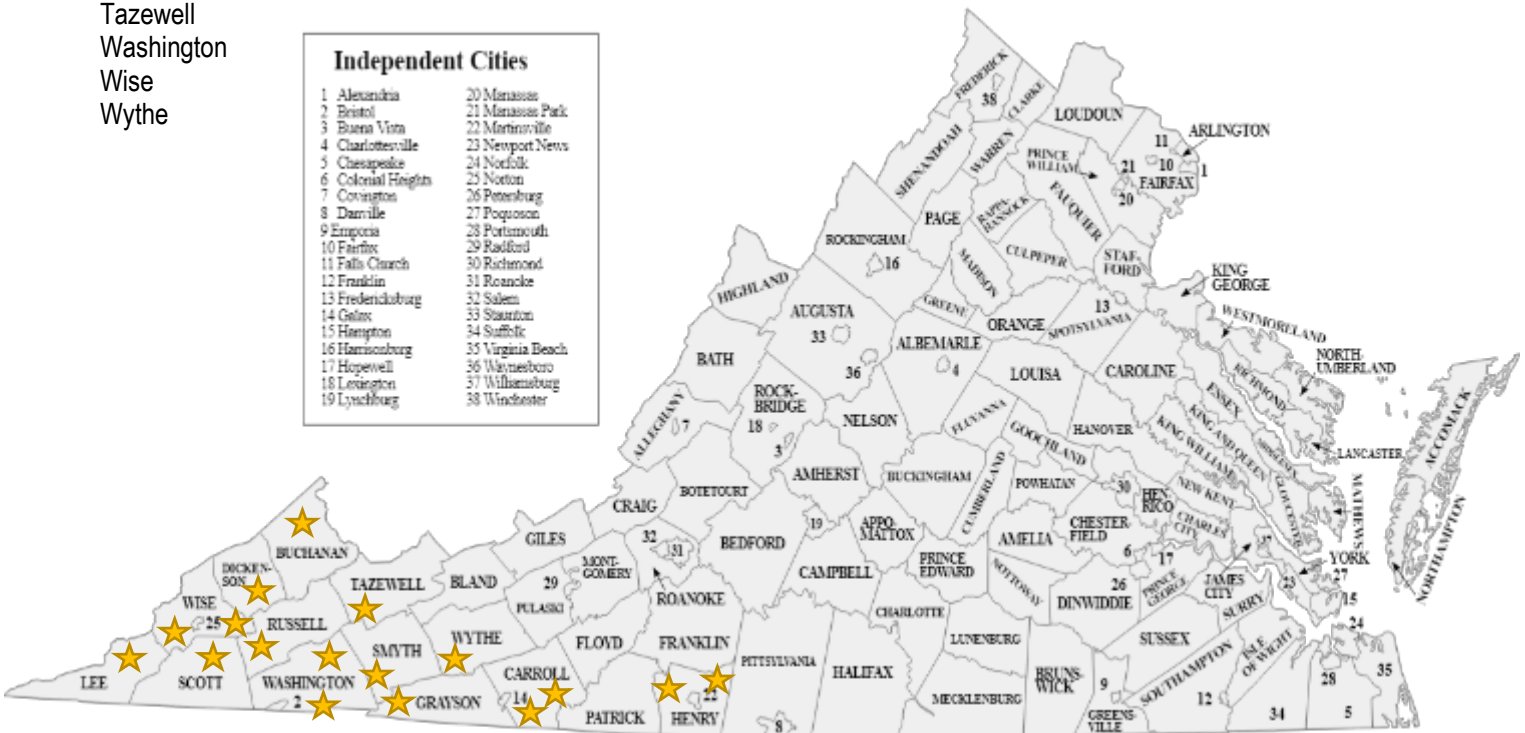
Eligible Counties: Virginia Map



Buchanan
Carroll
Dickenson
Grayson
Henry
Lee
Russell
Scott
Smyth
Tazewell
Washington
Wise
Wythe

Virginia Independent Cities:
Bristol (Washington County)
Galax (Carroll County)
Martinsville (Henry County)
Norton (Wise County)

Independent Cities	
1 Alexandria	20 Manassas
2 Bristol	21 Manassas Park
3 Buena Vista	22 Martinsville
4 Charlottesville	23 Newport News
5 Chesapeake	24 Norfolk
6 Colonial Heights	25 Norton
7 Covington	26 Petersburg
8 Danville	27 Poquoson
9 Emporia	28 Portsmouth
10 Fairfax	29 Radford
11 Falls Church	30 Richmond
12 Franklin	31 Roanoke
13 Fredericksburg	32 Salem
14 Galax	33 Staunton
15 Hampton	34 Suffolk
16 Harrisonburg	35 Virginia Beach
17 Hopewell	36 Williamsburg
18 Lexington	37 Winchester
19 Lynchburg	38 Winchester



A yellow star ★ represents the county eligible for Opportunity Appalachia in the state.

Eligible Counties: West Virginia Map



Berkeley
Boone
Cabell
Greenbrier
Hampshire
Hancock
Harrison
Jackson
Kanawha
Marion
Marshall
Mason
Mercer
Mingo
Monongalia
Monroe
Morgan
Nicholas
Ohio
Raleigh
Randolph
Summers
Taylor
Tyler
Upshur
Wayne
Wetzel
Wood
Wyoming



A yellow star ★ represents the county eligible for Opportunity Appalachia in the state.

Provision of Technical Assistance

After projects were selected by the Steering Committee, applicants were matched with technical assistance providers. Technical assistance support was provided on contract by experienced business and development partners. It was anticipated that support would range from \$30,000-\$75,000 for each applicant with an average of \$50,000 per applicant. To date, nearly \$600,000 in technical assistance expenditures have been disbursed by Opportunity Appalachia. The range of support ended up being \$15,000-\$69,500 with an average of \$46,800. If applicants did not specify technical assistance support organizations, Opportunity Appalachia recommended and helped connect selected projects with organizations for consideration.

Types of technical support provided by the Opportunity Appalachia program include:

- development of investment prospectus
- preparation of pro forma financial projections
- structuring of project financing
- market research / demand assessment
- operations planning
- identification of project developers / business operators
- outreach for project finance / OZ investors

In each community / state, there were capable partners that could be engaged to support OZ activities at the local level. Local OZ communities could select these local partner organizations to provide technical assistance for their OZ efforts, select other capable and vetted regional or national organizations, select the Lead State Partners or National Technical Assistance Providers, or some combination thereof.

National Technical Assistance Providers:



Main Street America: With a network of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, Main Street America Works to successfully transform communities and revitalize local economies



Coastal Enterprises-CCML: This leading national rural CFFI had deployed over \$1.3 billion in financings directly and through CEI Capital Management (CCML) it's New Markets Tax Credit CDE affiliate

RFQ and RFP for TA Providers

All technical assistance providers were required to submit a request for qualifications (RFQ) to Appalachian Community Capital (ACC) who reviewed submissions and notified accepted eligible technical assistance providers for the program.

RFQ response included:

1. Cover Page: contact name, company name, address, contact name including phone and email
2. Description of organization and summary of expertise, including relevant web links (business web site, LinkedIn, etc.). Recommended length: 1-2 pages
3. Description of relevant expertise proposed to be provided through the Opportunity Appalachia program to projects in OZ communities. For example: market assessment, financial structuring, prospectus development, etc. Recommended length: 1-2 pages
4. Bios of individuals providing technical assistance
5. Sample client list of entities receiving similar service. Please include dates for provision of service.
6. References of clients receiving similar services. At least three references, with contact information including email and phone

A request for proposal (RFP) process followed after RFQ submissions were vetted to ensure qualifications were met.

Opportunity Appalachia Project Portfolio

Ohio

20 Federal Place, Youngstown, OH. \$34M redevelopment of 330,000 SF historic downtown mixed use/community facilities, 62 units affordable housing. Project Sponsor: City of Youngstown.

TA Team: Steadfast City, Scarlett Oak Capital.

Canal Warehouse Restoration, Chillicothe, OH. \$8M project. 40,000 SF, historic project, mixed use-retail, event, community facility. Project Sponsor: City of Chillicothe.

TA Team: Sunday Creek Horizons, Thomas P Miller & Assoc.

Hotel Swisher, Somerset, OH. \$3.2M historic boutique hotel, 15 rooms, meeting space.

Project Sponsor: Village of Somerset. **TA Team:** The Clay Christensen Group, LOCUS, Schooley Caldwell, HVS.

Zanesville Gateway Project 9118, Zanesville, OH. No clear project(s)/developer identified. Project Sponsor: City of Zanesville.

TA Team: Sunday Creek Horizons, Thomas P Miller & Assoc, MKSK Studios.

Morgan County Improvement Corporation, McConnelsville, OH. 22 Loft Style Apartments, \$4.5M.

TA Team: Sunday Creek Horizons, Thomas P Miller & Assoc.

Green Industrial Manufacturing Ecosystem Inc. (GIME), Struthers, OH. \$1.5M project. 6,000 SF. Mixed use-office, IT, clean room.

TA Team: KO Consulting.



Virginia

Blue Ridge Plateau Initiative, Fries, VA. \$11.5 M project. 9,600 SF, sheep derivation/med products facility.
TA Team: Matson Consulting, Merrik & Company, Advanced Regenerative Manufacturing Institute.

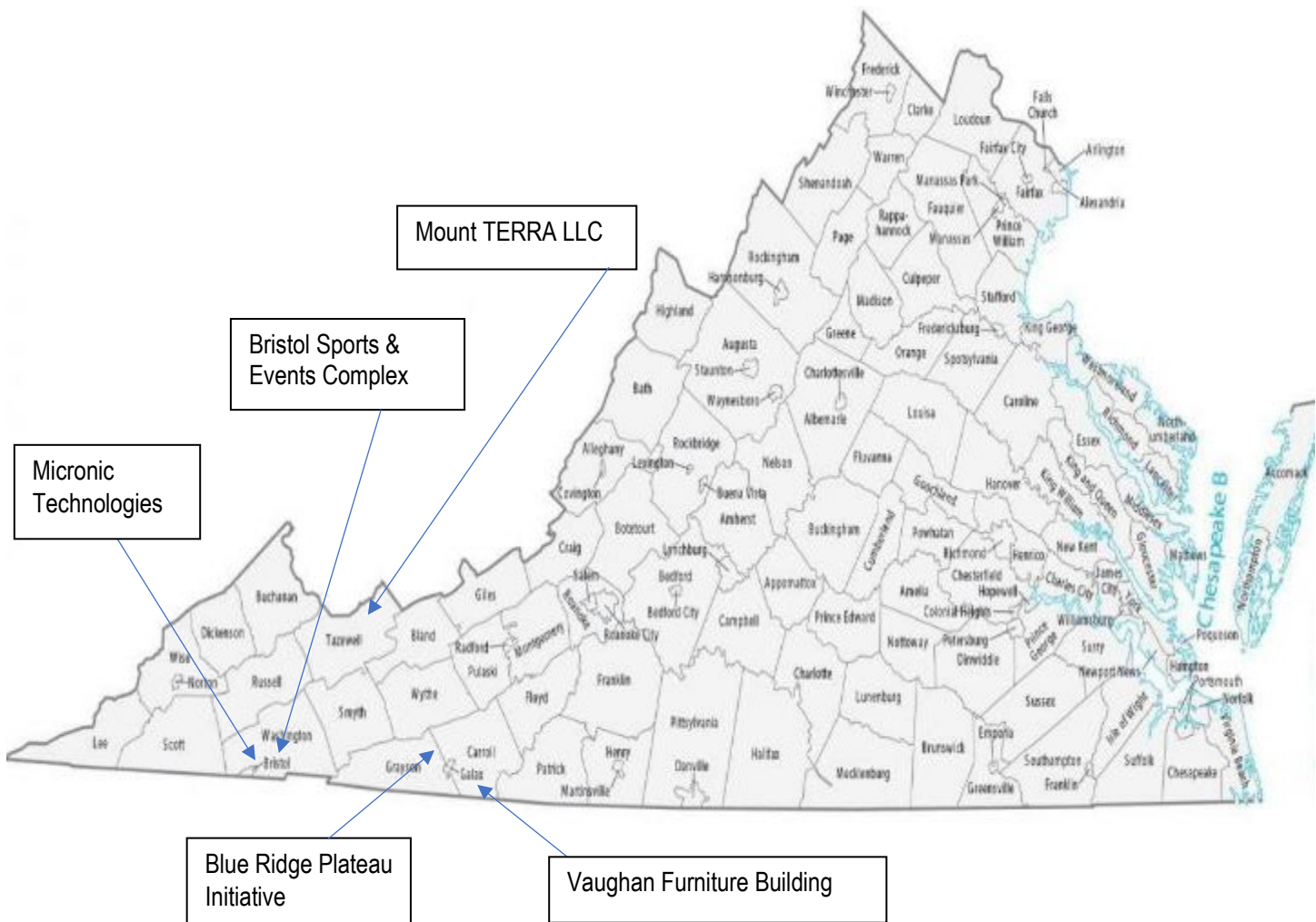
Bristol Sports and Events Complex, Bristol, VA. \$15.6M project. 90,000 SF event and training facilities.
TA Team: People Incorporated Financial Services, Thrasher Engineering, Synergy Sports Advisors.

Micronic Technologies, Bristol, VA. Water treatment technology company
TA Team: Genedge, Bear Technologies, PSP.

mount TERRA LLC, Bluefield, VA. \$4 M. Two projects, 30,000 SF, mixed use and residential/hotel.
TA Team: LOCUS Impact and Thrasher Engineering.

Vaughan Furniture Building, Galax, VA. \$92M project. 4000,000 SF, historic building, mixed use with retail, office, residential. Project Sponsor: City of Galax.

TA Team: Summit Design and Engineering, Opportunity Virginia / LOCUS, National Main Street Center.



West Virginia

Cohen Building, Grafton, WV. \$10M project. 33,000 SF community facility/private business.

TA Team: People Incorporated Financial Services, Thrasher Engineering, CohnReznick.

Prichard Revitalization, Huntington, WV. \$36M project. 141,000 SF, 98-room residential project, affordable housing. Project Sponsor: City of Huntington. **TA Team:** National Development Council.

Staats Building, Charleston, WV. \$6.6M project. Historic downtown building, 16 residential units, 10,000 SF ground floor retail.

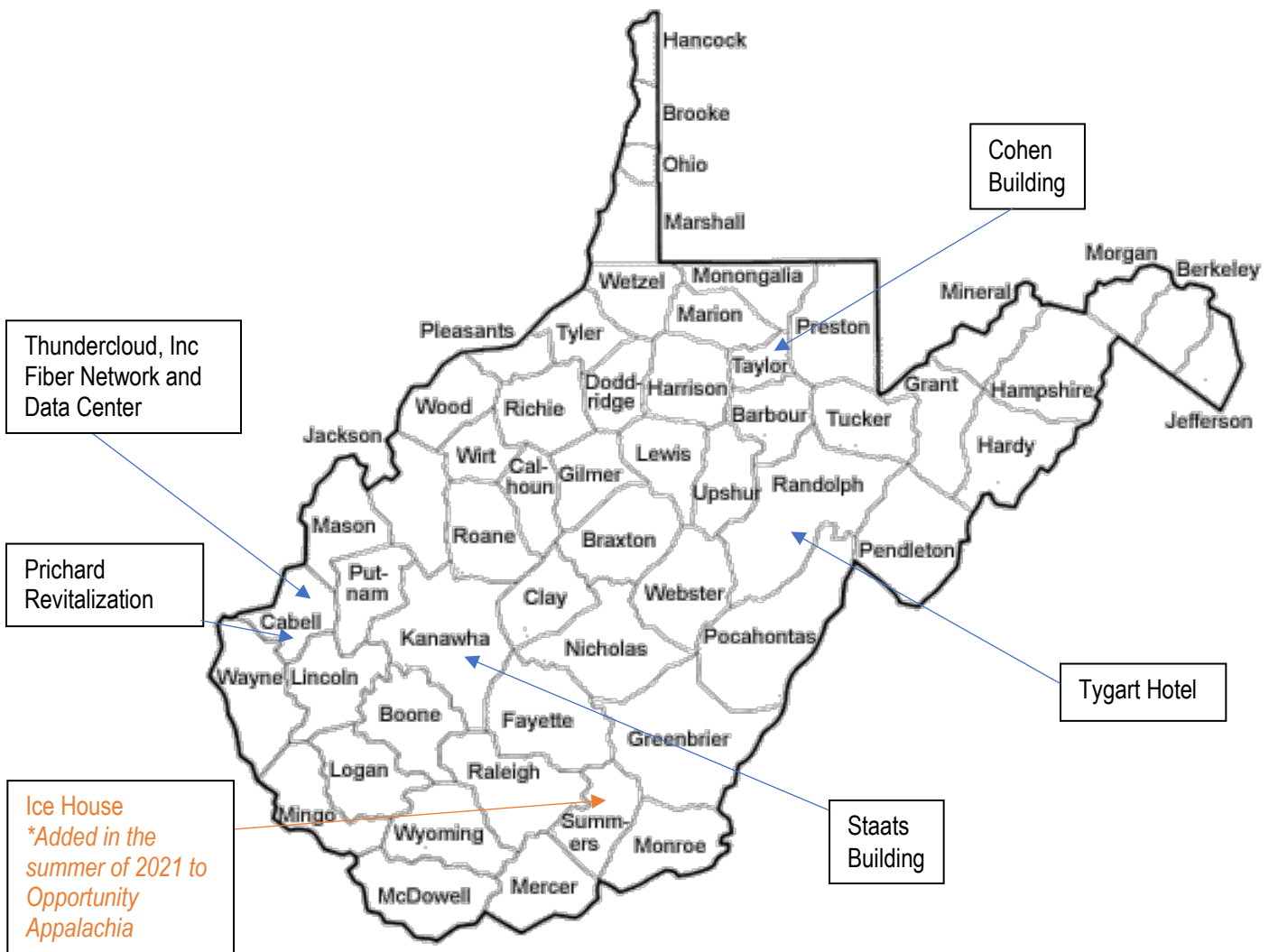
TA Team: National Development Council, ZMM Architects, Terrell Ellis & Assoc.

Thundercloud, Inc, Fiber Network and Data Center, Huntington, WV. \$21M project/ IT infrastructure, telehealth, economic development.

TA Team: Blue Ridge Advisory Services Group, Center for Business and Economic Research – Marshall University Research Corporation.

Tygart Hotel, Elkins, WV. \$14 M project, 55 room historic hotel. Project Sponsor: Woodlands Development Group, local CDC.

TA Team: The Mills Group, Steptoe Johnson, HVS.



Note: all arrows on state maps are to identify the county and are not necessarily the exact location of each project

The Opportunity Exchange

One of the benefits to the Opportunity Appalachia selected project teams was the opportunity to list their projects on The Opportunity Exchange. The Opportunity Exchange is a web platform that hosts project prospectuses on a curated platform to support investor review of projects. Opportunity Appalachia is one of 13 community partners among 29 states and counting featured on The Opportunity Exchange.

The site is free to access once an account is created. Opportunity Appalachia project descriptions including planned uses for the project, information about the project sponsor, financing information, and social impacts are available to view. Videos that were created for each project and were shown at the Investor Convening are available on The Opportunity Exchange.



THE OPPORTUNITY
EXCHANGE

Access The Opportunity Exchange here:

[The Opportunity Exchange:
https://www.theopportunityexchange.com/O
ppAp/profile/](https://www.theopportunityexchange.com/OppAp/profile/)

Other Media Mentions

Opportunity Appalachia was selected as a Forbes Opportunity Zone 20 Catalyst which designated the program as a top national example of community-focused efforts to revitalize distressed communities using the new Opportunity Zone investment tool. Forbes and the Sorenson Impact Center partnered to debut the list in December 2019.

Projects were featured in articles such as the ones below:

- Ohio project: [Proposal Unveiled to Give \\$34M Makeover to 20 Federal - Business Journal Daily | The Youngstown Publishing Company](#)
- WV projects: [Meeting Modern Demands \(wvexecutive.com\)](#)
- VA projects: <https://www.virginiabusiness.com/article/opportunity-appalachia-hopes-to-match-investors-projects/>

Investor Convening

The Investor Convening was held as a virtual event, due to COVID-19 restrictions, on February 23 - 24, 2021 highlighting Opportunity Zone communities and projects. Timing of the event was based on project readiness.

The Investor Convening was designed to link portfolio projects to potential investors. Pre-vetted national Impact investors and Opportunity Funds (QOFs) with compatible interests, local Opportunity Zone investors in targeted communities, Federal grant makers, lenders (banks and CDFIs), and New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) CDEs were among those invited to attend. The event included speaker presentations, panels, pitches from 15 project leads selected in Opportunity Appalachia, and private virtual rooms for investor meetings. [The Opportunity Exchange](#) hosted project prospectus on a curated platform to support investor review pre-event.

One national investor noted *"the ability of Opportunity Appalachia to pre-vet projects and provide high quality technical assistance has increased investor interest in communities that would otherwise have been overlooked."*

-New York City based investor

The Federal Reserve Banks of Richmond and Cleveland co-hosted the Investor Convening.



The Council of Development Finance Agencies ([CDFA](#)) served as the Conference Manager.

Fifteen sponsors were secured and included the Federal Reserve Banks of Richmond and Cleveland, Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, West Virginia Development Office (WVDO) / West Virginia Small Business Development Center (WV SBDC), JobsOhio, CohnReznick, and other federal, state, and local partners.



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Day one began at 1:00 PM Eastern and ended at 4:40 PM, and Day two began at 1:00 PM Eastern and ended at 5:00 PM. There was a registration fee of \$75 for community or general participants and \$250 for investors/funders, with no charge to Opportunity Appalachia project teams.

There were over 150 attendees across more than 15 states at the event as reported by ACC - which included 15 project leads in Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia, Steering Committee members, partners, and 40 private and non-profit investors. An agenda of the two-day event can be found in Appendix F.

Preparation for The Investor Convening

A conference prep meeting was held for all project participants and technical assistance providers for the Investor Convening on January 12, 2021. Project leads also had the opportunity to participate in three pitch practice sessions on February 17, 18, and 22 leading up to the Investor Convening. A pitch guidance document, which can be found in Appendix G, was provided to project leads to prepare them for their pitch presentation for the Investor Convening. At these practice sessions, recommendations for pitch improvements were provided by Opportunity Appalachia senior team members, and project revised pitches and re-presented on the later practice dates.

Evaluation Methods

An evaluation proposal was submitted by Midwest Evaluation and Research to Appalachian Community Capital (ACC) in March 2021. Work began with a kickoff meeting on May 6, 2021 to discuss the plan for evaluation. The goal of the evaluation was to survey 16 project leads, 30 investors, and 40 technical assistance providers and interview around eight project leads, five to eight investors, and three to five technical assistance providers.

Three surveys were used in the evaluation of Opportunity Appalachia.

Project Lead Survey

- The project lead survey was the most thorough and asked about the project lead's experience with Opportunity Appalachia including: level of satisfaction with the program, challenges-including COVID, capital raised and funding sources, satisfaction of technical assistance, knowledge of technical assistance items (such as market assessment, feasibility assessment, etc.), use of The Opportunity Exchange, the Investor Convening including the video that was produced for their project, and the visibility of Opportunity Appalachia.

Technical Assistance Provider Survey

- The Technical Assistance Provider survey asked about the clarity of the technical assistance provider role in Opportunity Appalachia, challenges faced, communication with project lead(s), effects of COVID, financial support to provide requested services, unmet needs, and suggestions to improve the technical assistance provider experience.

Investor Survey

- The Investor Survey asked about outreach for Opportunity Appalachia, visibility of the program, The Opportunity Exchange, the Investor Convening including the videos that were produced for each project, what information was missing from project pitches, and follow-up with projects since the Investor Convening.

Distribution of surveys

Surveys were sent by email, via SurveyMonkey links, to project leads, technical assistance providers, and investors by the Opportunity Appalachia Program Manager on June 14, 2021. The Program Manager had been in contact with each of these participants in Opportunity Appalachia, so it was more likely the email would be opened and responded to from a familiar email address, rather than from the evaluator. A reminder email was sent by the Program Manager the following week, then the evaluator began sending email reminders every week or so to increase survey responses, after obtaining a list of email addresses from the Program Manager. Project leads, technical assistance providers, and investors received about seven total emails in attempts to take the evaluation survey. The cutoff for survey responses was August 6, 2021.

Follow-up interviews

Follow-up interviews were conducted through Zoom with project leads, technical assistance providers, and investors who indicated on their survey that they would be willing to participate. Everyone who was interviewed was assured anonymity so no opinions that were shared are linked to names, organizations, or projects in this report (outside of providing current project status), unless specifically asked for a direct quote that would be linked to their name. The evaluator asked permission to record all interviews and assured that no one outside of the evaluation team would have access to the recording.

Interviews with Steering Committee Members, State Lead Partners, and Other Partners

Interviews were also conducted with Steering Committee Members including State Lead Partners, Opportunity Appalachia program management, and other partners.

Ohio: OhioSE-was APEG (name change in 2020)

West Virginia: The WV Hub

Virginia: UVA Wise

Other partners: Coastal Enterprises, Appalachian Regional Capital, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, National Main Street Center

Program Manager: Ray Daffner

President & CEO of Appalachian Community Capital: Donna Gambrell

Evaluation Response

The Project Lead Survey had a **62.5%** response rate. **4 out of 6** project leads responded from Ohio, **2 out of 5** responded from Virginia, and **4 out of 5** responded from West Virginia.

The Technical Assistance Provider survey had a **42.5%** response rate. **6 out of 6** technical assistance providers responded from Ohio projects, **5 out of 5** responded from Virginia projects, and **5 out of 5** responded from West Virginia projects. Most projects had more than one technical assistance provider, but at least one responded that represented all 16 projects in Opportunity Appalachia at the time of the evaluation.

The Investor Survey had a **33%** response rate as 10 Investors responded to the survey.

Interviews were conducted with 6 project leads, 6 technical assistance providers, and 1 investor.

Challenges of COVID-19

“An overriding element here, of course, is this happened in the middle of COVID. So, I think the overlay I would put on this is it's remarkable that this much got accomplished in the middle of a pandemic. The fact at one point we thought we should even put the whole thing on pause- this is a bad time to do it. But people said ‘no, let's move forward, we can do these things remotely.’”

-Ray Daffner, Opportunity Appalachia Program Manager

The Steering Committee noted in their 10/31/2020 grant report that COVID significantly impacted their thinking and evaluation of the Opportunity Appalachia program.

This related to:

- The project portfolio is an important part of the economic recovery effort in Central Appalachia
- Through numerous investor conversations, it was determined that investor interest remained strong for the project portfolio
- Anticipated increased contribution of public investment to support project portfolio
- The Investor Convening event was held virtually which resulted in significant logistical challenges
- An ARC POWER grant extension was approved to help address challenges

Impact of COVID-Comments from Project Leads

“Everything slowed down and there was no face-to-face [interaction].”

“I think besides the obvious ones in terms of face-to-face meetings, COVID's been pretty huge. The biggest challenge was lenders clamped down on their lending ability.”

“The project team having to meet remotely was a challenge. Building tours were difficult because of COVID protocols. There were inconveniences throughout, but nothing that stopped the project from moving forward.”

“Some face-to-face meetings were not possible but shifting to conference calls and Zoom meetings overcame the initial difficulty.”

“As a project focused primarily on renovation, we faced increases in cost estimates for construction and delays in scheduling appropriate time for detailed quotes from potential construction companies. However, with more people leaving their traditional jobs than ever before, we are confident this project presents an unforeseen opportunity- that more people will be willing to start the types of businesses that we hope to incubate in our facility.”

“Given Zoom meetings and email availability along with phone conversations, I felt the challenges were minimal.”

“COVID only really affected our ability to present the project to groups in person and gain financial support.”

“COVID-19 pretty much brought our project to a stop last fall. We weren't able to reach people and at that point, we were where we are now- working on leverage lenders. All of the local lenders were so overwhelmed that they didn't even want to talk to us. That was the largest challenge.”

“It's a hotel and hospitality project and trying to find investors in a time of COVID for a project like that is challenging. So, it has slowed things down, but I would say that the project is still on track- just with a longer time frame.”

“Not quite sure...still evaluating this. It's hard to tell what was a direct effect due to COVID.”

Impact of COVID-Comments from Technical Assistance Providers

3 of 17 TA providers noted minimal impact.

"We prefer to meet with clients in-person. We find it more effective. However, the utilization that leverage technology to reduce distance was quite effective. On balance, I would say COVID had little impact on our ability to provide productive TA."

"Minor impacts around the challenges of virtual versus face-to-face connections and delivery models, and the time it took to adjust to the virtual model"

"We were all getting used to Zoom real fast as the project got up and running. Online video consultations and meetings were absolutely essential to getting the work done. I can't image trying to do that without that technology."

9 of 17 said COVID did not have an impact

3 of 17 said COVID had a negative impact, **1 of 17** said COVID had a positive impact

"It made on-site assistance difficult. Because I wasn't able to meet with collaborators regularly, it made communication and coordination more difficult."

"I had definitely planned to visit at least two of the projects and never got to do so. It's always easier to provide TA when you have seen the projects up close and are able to establish a real in-person relationship with the project sponsors."

"Moving projects forward became very difficult for a time."

"I think everyone's comfort level with Zoom and video calls increased during the pandemic. So, our work was made slightly easier. Since we aren't located in the same area as our project, being able to easily connect with people made our work process smoother."

"This concept was put together well before COVID. I have a lot of respect for being able to shift gears to make this totally virtual."

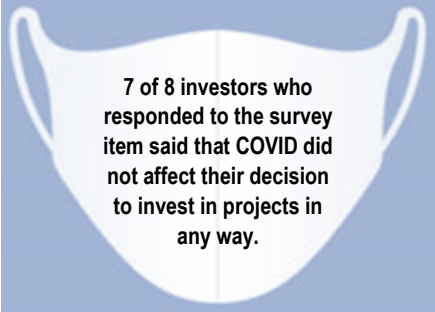
-TA provider on Opportunity Appalachia

1 TA provider skipped this item

A noted challenge due to COVID was the lack of face-to-face interaction. In some small communities, broadband is not always strong. In addition, a lot of the population is in the older demographic. Zoom was sometimes a challenge for someone not familiar with today's technology. But it did cut travel cost. At the same time, trust through relationship building also somewhat suffered.

Impact of COVID on Investors

60% of surveyed investors said they would prefer to attend an investor convening in-person rather than virtually if COVID was not a factor.



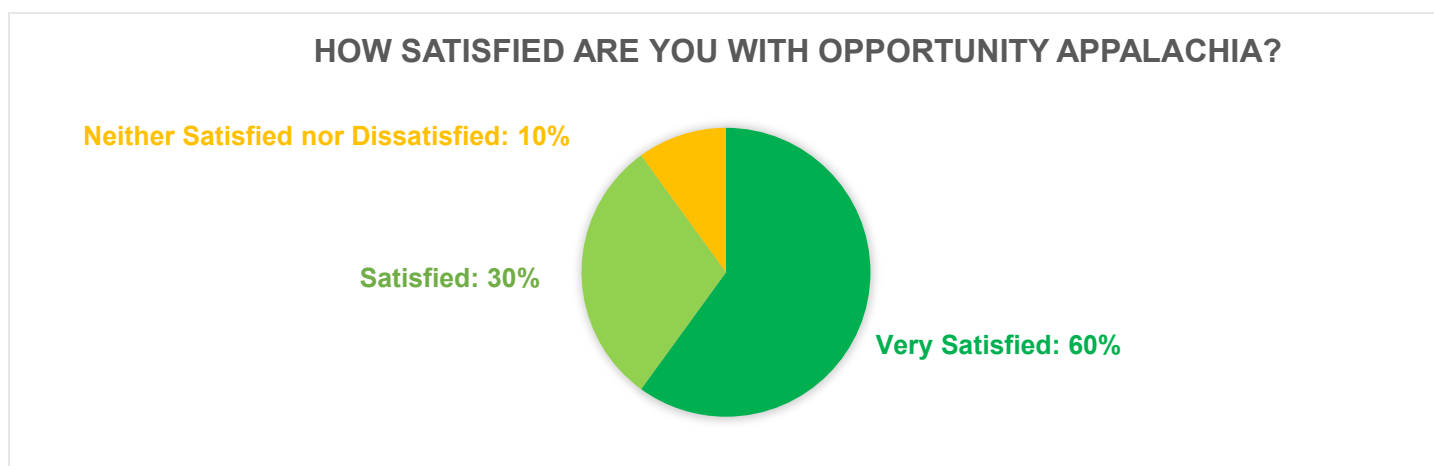
7 of 8 investors who responded to the survey item said that COVID did not affect their decision to invest in projects in any way.

Project Lead Summary and Main Findings

A total of 10 project leads responded to the Project Lead Survey equaling a 62.5% response rate. Among those who responded, four were in Ohio, two were in Virginia, and four were in West Virginia.

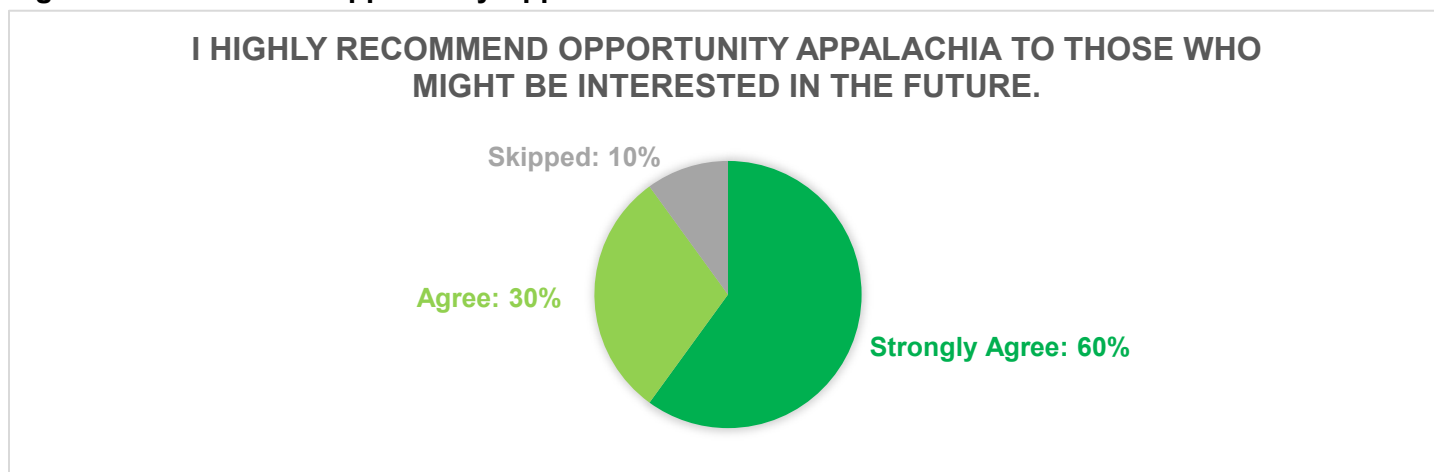
Overall, project leads were satisfied with Opportunity Appalachia and were very appreciate of everything that came with their participation in the program. Everyone who responded to the Project Lead Survey would highly recommend the program. To no surprise, project leads felt that one of the biggest challenges that they share is finding necessary funds for their project. These smaller communities struggle with their geographic location and in result, leverage lending.

Figure 1: Overall Satisfaction with Opportunity Appalachia



6 out of 10 project leads were very satisfied with Opportunity Appalachia. Another **3 out of 10** were satisfied, and **1 out of 10** was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Figure 2: Recommend Opportunity Appalachia



9 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that they would highly recommend Opportunity Appalachia to those who might be interested in the future. One project lead skipped this item.

What project leads said about Opportunity Appalachia:

"I think it's a great effort. I think it's very productive in that. It's intentionally designed to be responsive to local projects and local priorities- project specific priorities I should say, and it wasn't a cookie cutter capacity building initiative. Rather, we were able to tailor it to our project and kind of where we are in ways that I think worked very well."

"My experience was absolutely positive. I'm very appreciative to have been a part of this. I was appreciative to learn about the other projects that were in this program, the challenges they were going through, the financial challenges, the supply and demand challenges. If I had to put it, 90% awesome, 10% some slight improvements needed."

"I think it was put together really well. They accomplished what they set out to accomplish which was highlighting these projects in Appalachia, which is typically, you know, an overlooked area. But it's primed for development or re-development, and they did that. They delivered on everything. They delivered on the support that they said they would. There isn't anything that they didn't do that they said they were going to do."

"Thank you very much to Opportunity Appalachia for helping out this whole project because this experience has really been invaluable and has allowed us to put the fine tuning on what it is we are doing. It has brought a level of professionalism and expertise to us that we would probably have not had access to otherwise."

Financial Commitments

50% of surveyed project leads have raised at least some capital working towards their goal.

80% of surveyed project leads said they have financial commitments underway.

Project leads on financing and funding challenges:

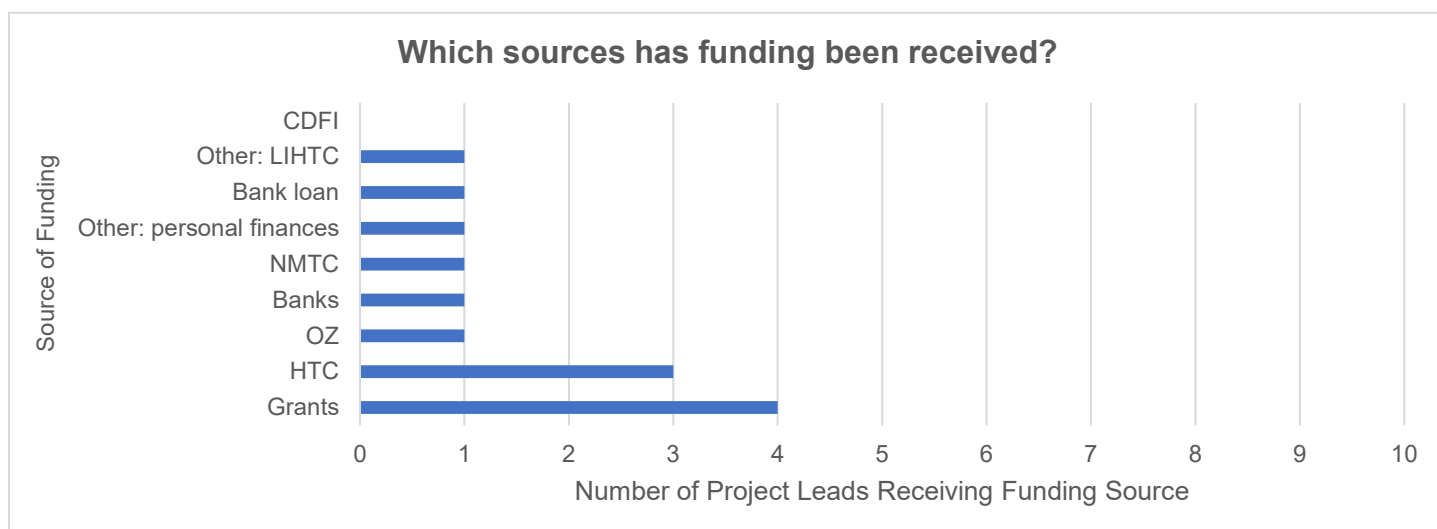
"Leverage lending- that's been the biggest challenge through all of this. Our geographic location makes it very difficult, we're a small area outside of three large areas that also have opportunity zones. So, we're the only project in the area, and we don't have local banks large enough to invest, besides one who we are currently in talks with."

"I would be funded if I had a dollar for every time I heard 'if your project was anywhere else, it would be funded.'"

"The single biggest issue that we face with this project is that we can't give the returns that bigger international or nationwide investors who are looking at 12%, 15%, 20% returns. We just can't provide that in West Virginia. I mean, we could, but not with the constraints that we were given under the Opportunity Zone funding analysis. So honestly, we even backed away and tried our very hardest to really analyze this program and see how this could benefit not only this project but if it could be something that could work for other buildings. I just don't see that happening in Appalachia. We're talking with banks based out of New York and you could do this project and invest the same amount of money and receive a 15-20% return. I don't think we could afford a 10% or a 12% return here or anywhere in Appalachia really."

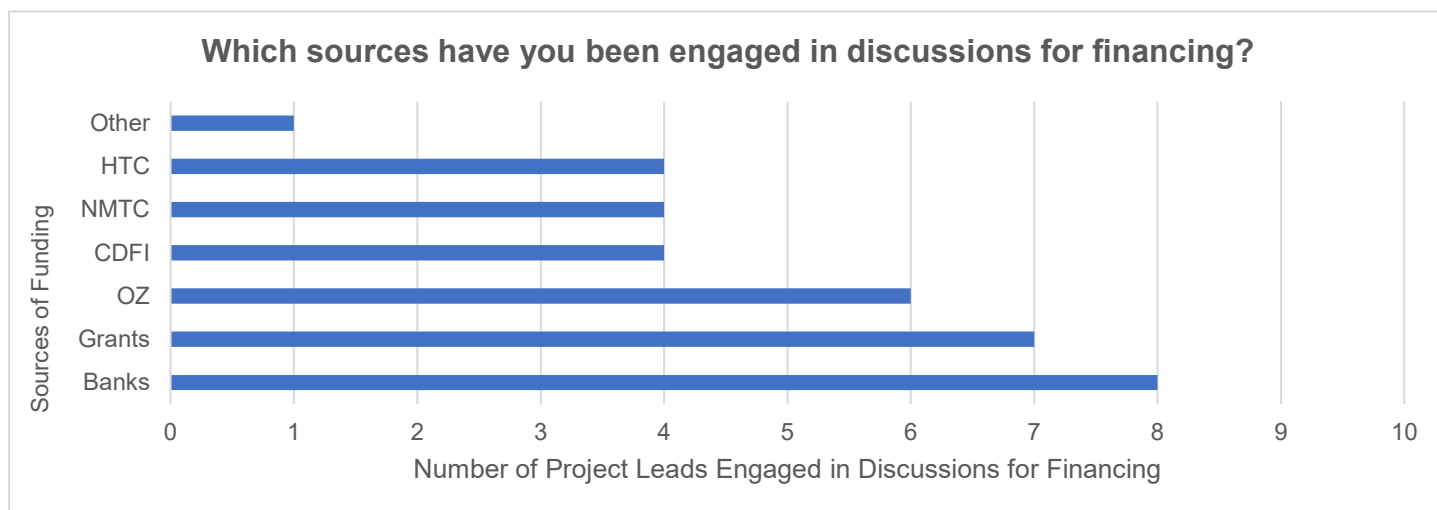
The graphs below show the sources of funding that project leads have received and the sources in which they have been engaged in discussions for financing.

Figure 3: Sources of Funding Received



4 of 10 project leads receiving funding through grants. **3 of 10** have received funding through HTC. **1** project lead has received funding through OZ, banks, NMTC, personal finances, bank loans, or LIHTC.

Figure 4: Sources Engaged in for Discussions for Financing



8 out of 10 project leads have been engaged in discussions with banks. **7 out of 10** have been in discussions for grants, and **6 of 10** have been in discussions for OZ financing. **4** project leads have been involved in funding discussions with CDFI, NMTC, and HTC investors, and **1** has been involved in other discussions.

Technical Assistance

Overall, project leads rated their technical assistance providers a **9 out of 10**. When technical assistance providers were requested by project teams themselves, ratings were slightly higher (rating of 9 versus 8) compared to when Opportunity Appalachia connected technical assistance providers to teams.

"We're 100% satisfied. All three TA providers have been great and brought invaluable information that we would not have otherwise."

"Given the complexities involved, effective communication was required and, thankfully the TA providers hung with us throughout."

"We're very satisfied. Both groups provided exactly what we needed. They had the financial expertise and industry experience that we needed to tie everything together."

"I think everyone did a great job. I don't really have any complaints about anyone really. Everyone was timely; they were timely in their communications. Everyone was really great they cared about the project and moved it forward. My only dissatisfaction is that I have not received a final deliverable."

"No challenges with the TA providers. Highly competent and very pleased with this very professional team."

"The selection process resulted in the award going to highly qualified consultant team that we would not have otherwise identified. Thanks to the OA process, we have a highly competent TA team of people on this process. Extremely satisfied."

Project leads indicated that the process of finding the right technical assistance provider for the job might be improved by seeking additional references and samples of previous work or interviewing potential technical assistance providers.

"The process was sufficient. However, I would have sought additional references and/or related work completed from the consulting groups."

"We interviewed the potential providers to see if our needs could be met, and then the selections were made."

"I think probably requiring an in-person interview as a requirement with TA providers would have made things a little easier and would have been beneficial. From the time you apply to the time everything got awarded, the project had already changed. If changes could have been discussed in a roundtable of interviews with potential TA's, that could have changed who we chose."

Some project leads noted communication issues and other challenges with their technical assistance providers. COVID-19 may have had an impact on communication as in-person meetings were limited and there was a heavy reliance on technology, such as Zoom, to hold meetings.

"The quality of work, timeframe, and communication was not as expected."

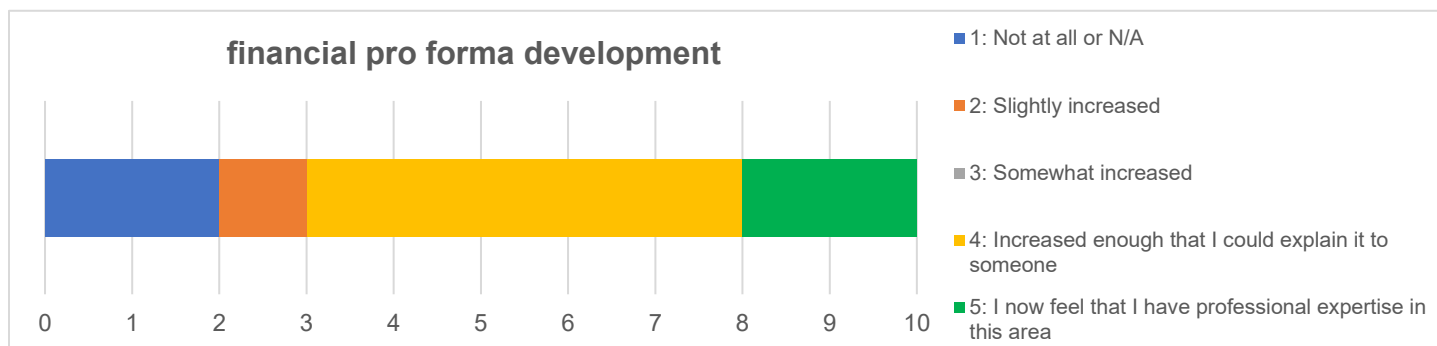
"Our originally assigned TA team had a difficult time understanding the scope of our project, and our team was expected to do the bulk of the work. If we had the expertise to do the work ourselves, we couldn't have requested assistance. So, it was a frustrating back and forth [process]. When we were reassigned to our requested TA team, the process became much more smooth from our perspective."

"Our TA provider lacked experience and appeared overwhelmed. Multiple corrections within written information were necessary."

Technical Assistance Item Familiarity Among Project Leads

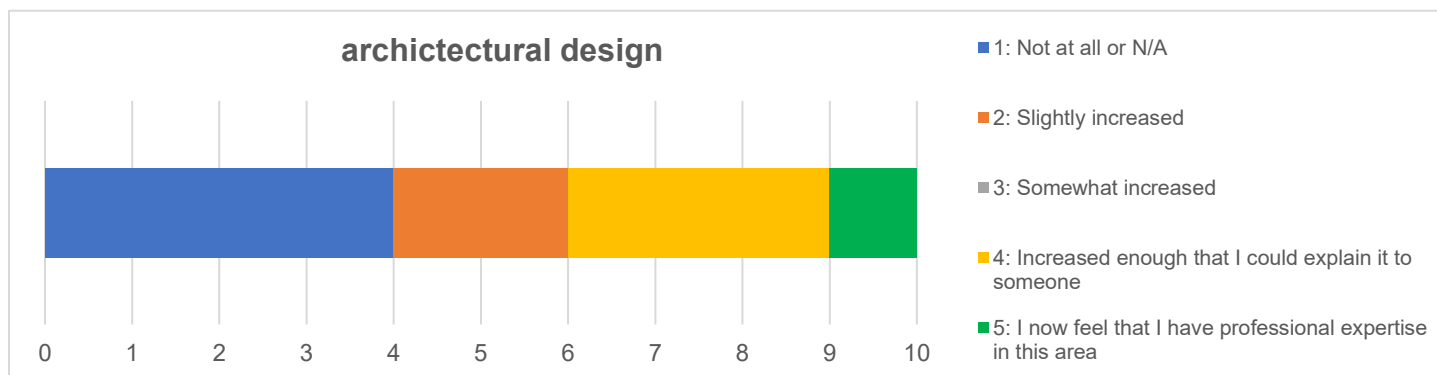
Technical assistance received in Opportunity Appalachia helped to address significant knowledge gaps among project leads. The Technical assistance items that project leads rated on their survey indicated at least a slight increase in familiarity and knowledge among all eight surveyed items (business development, financial pro forma development, financial structuring of transaction, market assessment, feasibility assessment, developer identification, architectural design, and capital raise). The biggest increase in familiarity was in financial pro forma development, and the smallest increase was in architectural design.

Figure 5: Project Lead Familiarity with financial pro forma development



Average rating: 3.4, indicating familiarity somewhat increased, but project leads overall aren't familiar enough to explain it

Figure 6: Project Lead Familiarity with architectural design

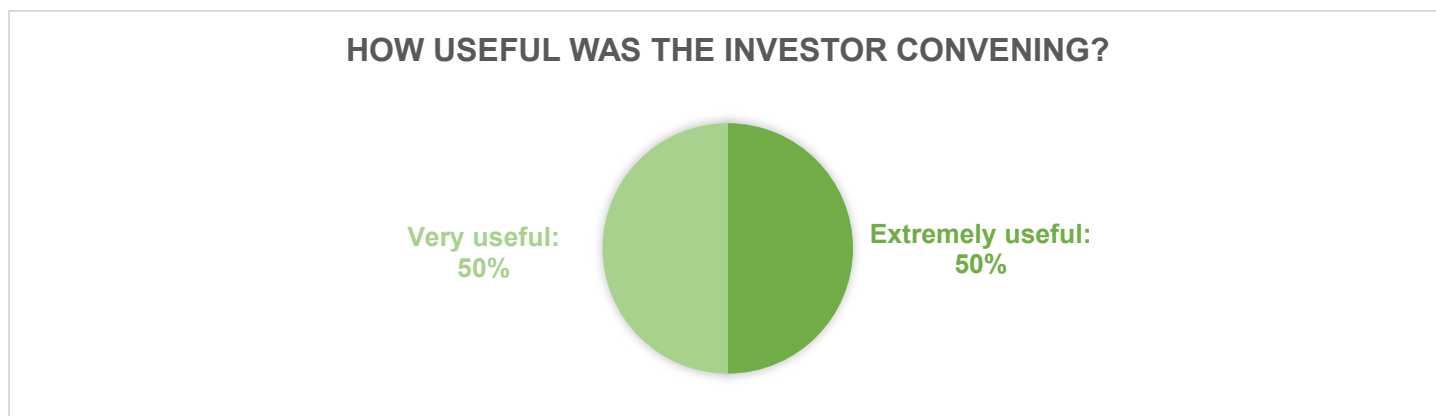


Average rating: 2.5, indicating a slight increase in familiarity with architectural design among project leads

Investor Convening

All project leads who responded to the survey thought the Investor Convening was a useful and worthwhile event whether or not their project connected with investors through the event.

Figure 7: Usefulness of the Investor Convening



5 out of 10 project leads felt that the Investor Convening was extremely useful. The other half thought it was very useful.

Project Leads on The Investor Convening:

"The Investor Convening sessions helped me answer some questions I didn't even know I had."

"Shout out to the Opportunity Appalachia team for the preparation and practice sessions. This provided a wonderful opportunity for OZ."

"Opportunity Appalachia did amazing work!"

"The convening was an excellent two-day program"

"It was a great, no pun intended, opportunity to talk to folks and get the project out there. I'm super appreciative."

-Project lead about Opportunity Appalachia

Project exposure was greatly enhanced due to the event and The Opportunity Exchange. Presentations at the Investor Convening were rated as relevant and informative. Most project leads felt that they were given enough time to pitch their project and were given adequate information about what should be included in the pitch. Most project leads also felt that the practice session was necessary to prepare them for the Investor Convening.

No session was attended by all of the project leads on either day who responded to the survey and were present at the event. Attendance averaged around 60% each day for those project leads. The online format made it easy to jump on and off sessions compared to an in-person event.

The biggest area of improvement noted was around the meetings held with investors. Because of the platform for the event, these obviously had to take place through Zoom break-out rooms. There were 15-minute slots where investors could sign up to speak to project leads. Bad connections, uncertainty with how the meetings were supposed to work, and lack of attendance were mentioned as difficulties.

Other suggestions from project leads for improving the Investor Convening include:

- being able to control your own PowerPoint slides
- record the pitches ahead of time and allow for Q&A afterwards

- have designated times to sign up to meet with investors
- share contact information of investors to allow for contact after the Investor Convening
- better communication
- cluster projects by genre during pitch sessions

Project Video

Project videos were rated **9.2 out of 10** by project leads. Half of the respondents rated their project video 10 out of 10, and the lowest rating was 8 out of 10. All project leads felt adequately prepared to shoot their project video. They felt they had clear expectations of what to include and thought working with the production team was an easy process.

Having the project video was one of the best parts of Opportunity Appalachia according to project leads, and all ten surveyed project leads are currently using their video or have plans to use it to promote their project.

“We got a lot more interest in the project, but no solid investors coming forward [from the Investor Convening]. Probably the best thing to come out of it was exposure of the project to a bigger audience, and the materials that were generated to help us with that were also very helpful—particularly the video. They produced a video for each of the projects, and that’s been just a great piece to have on hand.”

-Project Lead



10 out of 10 project leads indicated that they are currently, or certainly plan on using their project video to promote their project.

The following comments are from project leads about how they are using their project video:

“We will be using the project video as we continue to seek financing for the project.”

“The video is featured prominently on our website, and we provide a link to it as part of our prospectus.”

“It was used for presentations to each city councilman, and it will be used in the future for public presentations.”

“We’ve used it on social media.”

“We’ve used it with local governments, community people, and people within the local schools of veterinary medicine and extension services.”

“I send it to new people and organizations I am discussing the project with.”

“We use it as a marketing piece and on our website.”

“I include it in all conversations with investors, but do not know if they actually viewed it.”

“I certainly will but have not yet.”

Visibility of Opportunity Appalachia

Based on survey results (representing 63% of project leads), it appears that the visibility of Opportunity Appalachia could be improved. However, this was the first year of the program, so there is a great likelihood that the visibility has already increased. There is great value in adding visibility outside of the region to attract a bigger network of resources and support, such as additional investors, technical assistance providers, or program partners.

Half of the project leads who responded to the survey did not think the program was visible locally. Taking a closer look at the data, responses varied per state. Virginia project leads did not know whether the program was visible locally. A majority of Ohio project leads felt that the program was not visible locally. And West Virginia project lead responses were split evenly about whether the program was visible locally.

Summary of Program Improvements from Project Leads

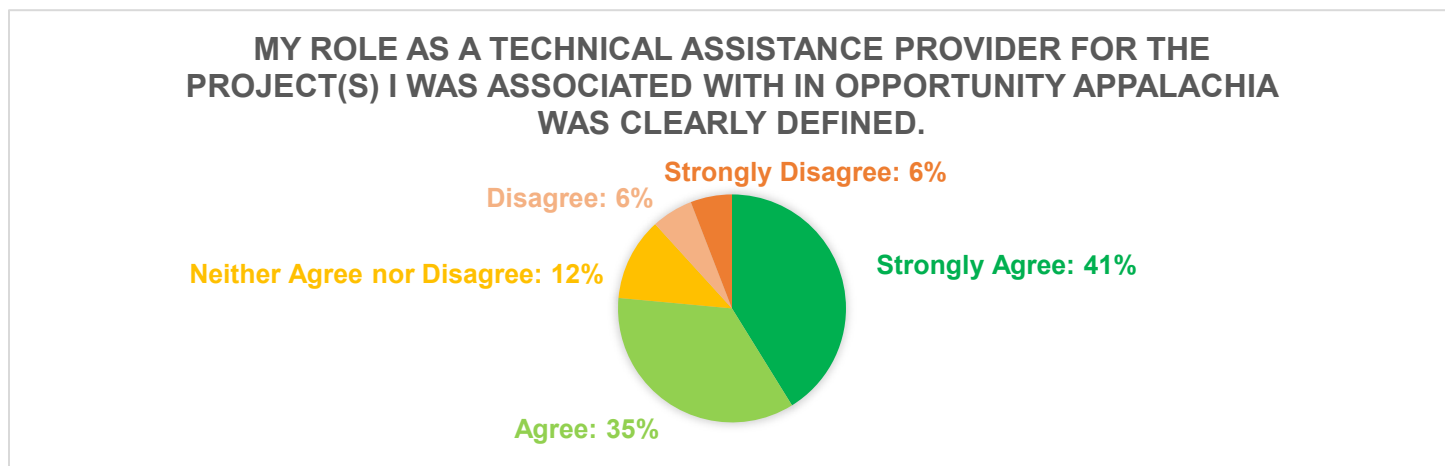
Some suggested improvements about Opportunity Appalachia from the project lead perspective include:

- Incorporate mentors into the program, particularly for less experienced project leads, but also to be able to learn from each other. There were scheduled meetings where project leads would share their experiences, but more of that was desired.
- Have someone who is an OZ expert consult on all projects as needed to answer questions and provide guidance
- Have site visits to help program staff really understand the community and the overall vision of the project beyond the project application
- Allow for more media within the project videos-still images, different angles of the community, etc.

Technical Assistance Provider Summary and Main Findings

Because the needs of each technical assistance provider varied so much across projects, each technical assistance provider had a unique experience with Opportunity Appalachia. A majority of technical assistance providers felt that their role was clearly defined. **16 of 17** technical assistance providers responded that they could briefly explain Opportunity Appalachia to someone if asked, confirming that they received enough information about the program and how they would be involved.

Figure 8: Clearly Defined Role



13 of 17 technical assistance providers strongly agreed or agreed that their role was clearly defined in Opportunity Appalachia. **2 of 17** neither agreed nor disagreed, and **2 of 17** disagreed or strongly disagreed.

It seemed like the biggest struggle that affected their overall experience was ever changing timelines and scopes of work for projects. The less defined the project was, the more difficulties technical assistance providers faced. Opportunity Appalachia offered a fair amount of flexibility with projects, so that effect was felt to some degree on technical assistance providers. One technical assistance provider described the process as having a lot of problem solving and discovering along the way, which sums up the experience quite well.

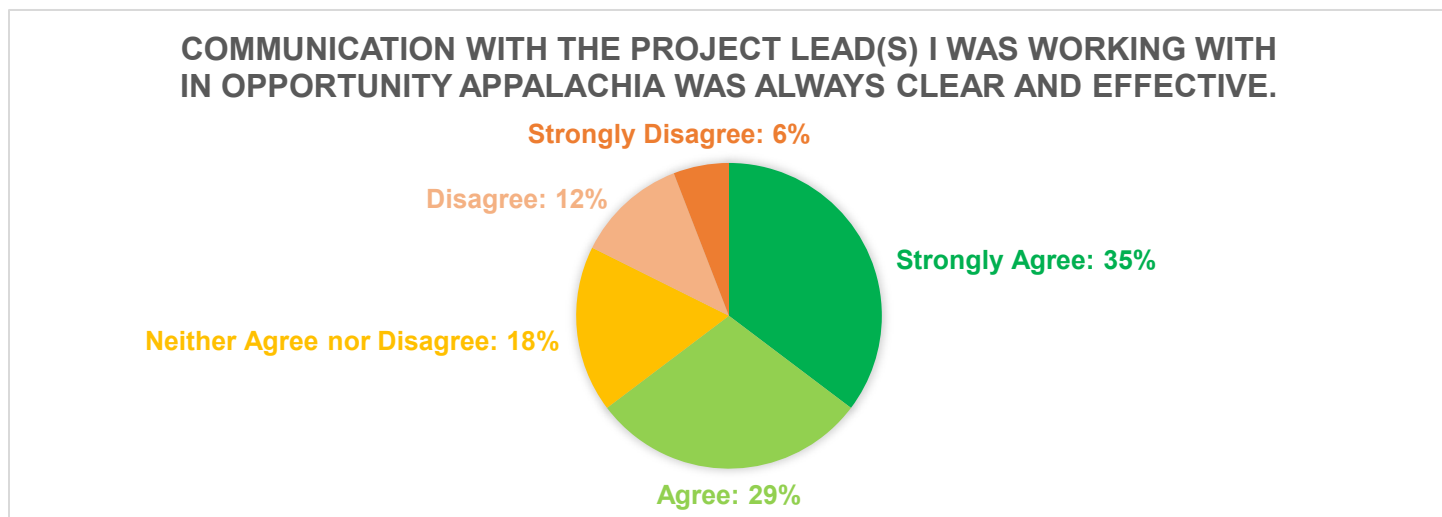
"I would definitely say the flexibility of Opportunity Appalachia and all projects being at different stages of readiness affected our ability to do our job."

-TA Provider

Another TA provider noted that there needed to be more clarity about the point at which each project was at. It was easy to assume that projects were further along than they really were. Therefore, challenges varied per project.

There were a few instances of difficulties with communication in working with project leads, though over half of the surveyed technical assistance providers had no communication issues.

Figure 9: Communication with Project Leads



11 out of 17 technical assistance providers strongly agreed or agreed that communication with the project lead(s) that they were working with in Opportunity Appalachia was always clear and effective. **3 out of 17** technical assistance providers neither agreed nor disagreed, **2 out of 17** disagreed, and **1 out of 17** strongly disagreed.

All technical assistance contracts referenced a timeline for the project, scope of work, and budget which were proposed by the technical assistance provider, with contracts subsequently executed. Of the technical assistance providers who responded to the survey:

- 64% (or 11 of 17) did not have any challenges in achieving their proposed scope of work
- 48% (or 8 of 17) did not have challenges in achieving their proposed timeline
- 70% (or 12 of 17) did not have any challenges in achieving their proposed budget
 - 3 of 17 said that Opportunity Appalachia financial support was not adequate to provide the requested services

Summary of Suggestions for Improvement

- Make it clear at the time of the contract what procedure should be followed if the scope of work or timeline needs to be adjusted and how that relates to payments upon deliverables
- Document project readiness: identify where projects are at in the development process and make that clear to technical assistance providers
- Be responsive to the community, not just the grant; trust that the communities are experts in the area

“At times, it felt like the plan was being built while it was being flown. But I loved working with the communities, and I think they enjoyed working with me, too. We had good TA provider relationships and learned a lot in this process. We got to see the strengths and weaknesses of project developments.”

-TA Provider on overall experience with Opportunity Appalachia

Investor Summary and Main Findings

Responses to the Investor Survey were not as thorough compared to the Project Lead Survey and the Technical Assistance Provider Survey. Several questions got skipped by many investors. A total of 10 investors responded to the survey resulting in a response rate of 33% of investors who attended the Investor Convening. And fewer investors were willing to be interviewed to talk about their experience with Opportunity Appalachia. One suggestion might be to send evaluation surveys to investors earlier as several months passed since the Investor Convening and other outreach occurred.

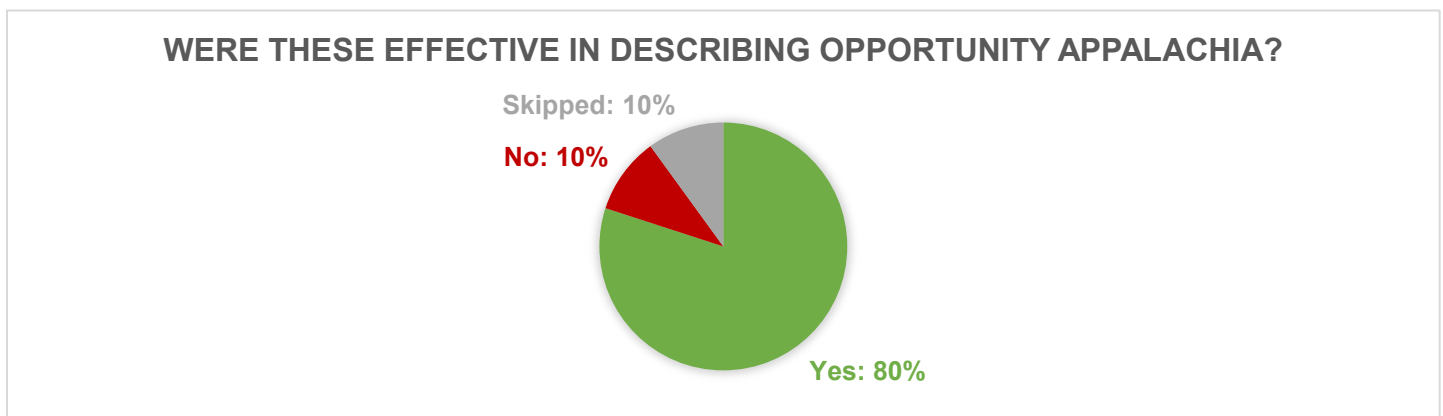
Outreach

Of the investors who responded, **8 out of 10** felt that the outreach was effective. Seven investors felt that outreach attracted them to Opportunity Appalachia projects. Five said that outreach encouraged them to reach out about the projects to either Opportunity Appalachia program managers or the project leads. And only four felt that the outreach was influential in their decision to attend the Investor Convening.

"I thought the promotion was effective as I received several email blasts and person emails from leadership."

-Investor on outreach for Opportunity Appalachia

Figure 10: Effectiveness of Outreach



8 out of 10 investors felt that investor outreach for Opportunity Appalachia was effective, and **1 out of 10** skipped this item.

The Opportunity Exchange

Half of the investors were aware of The Opportunity Exchange before attending the Investor Convening, and it was rated favorably in being easy to use. Three investors felt the site was very effective in displaying project details to interest them in potential investment, and another three said it was somewhat effective. One investor thought the site was very effective in displaying project details. The prospectus was the most viewed material among those who responded to the survey, and project videos were the least viewed on The Opportunity Exchange.

The Investor Convening

Of the investors who both responded to the survey and attended the Investor Convening, the kinds of projects that investors were most attracted to were:

- Historic tax credit projects (because that is what one investor's business focuses on)

- High-impact commercial real estate projects
- Shovel-ready construction projects
- CRA eligible projects

Investors stated in the survey that they would have liked to see a better understanding and more consistent presentation of financial information and that there is an actual developer attached to the projects in the pitch presentations. One investor responded to the open-ended item asking what information was not presented that they needed to know: “developer experience-many small profits are attempting first time development projects with limited experience or financial capability.” Three said ‘no’ when asked from the investor perspective if there was anything that he/she would change about Opportunity Appalachia including the Investor Convening. The rest of the respondents skipped that item.

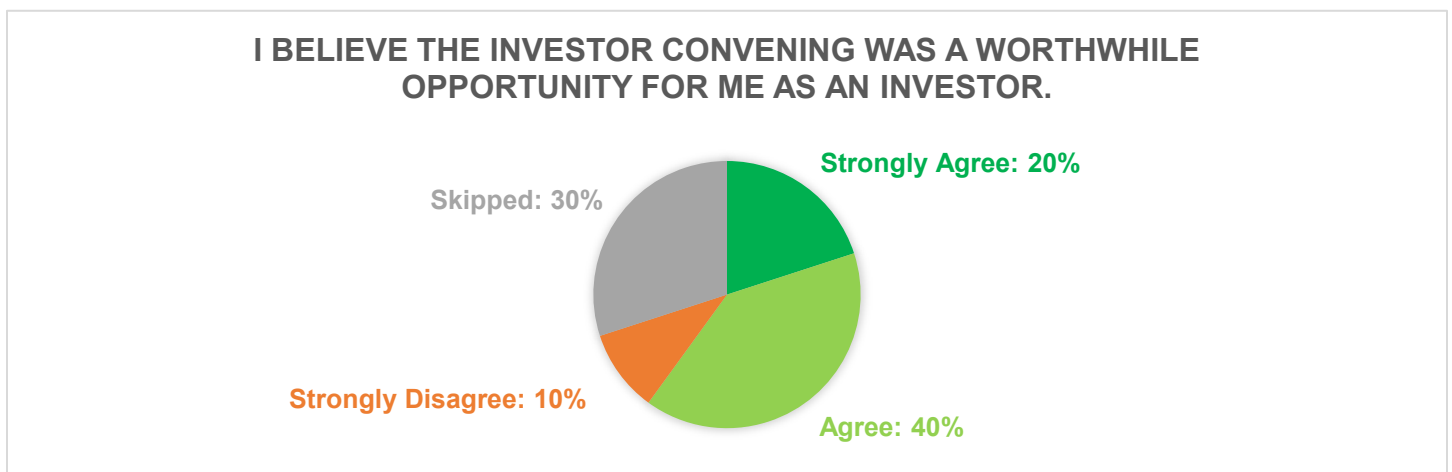
3 of 10 surveyed investors said that they have had meetings with Opportunity Appalachia project leads to discuss potential investments. One investor decided not to invest in a project because it was too small for the company’s current investor base. Three investors said that they have not decided whether to pursue investments, but some have not worked out for various reasons for one of those investors. There was an additional investor who tried to invest in a project but said the project sponsor was unresponsive in following up after a second call.

Similar to the project leads, attendance at the Investor Convening sessions varied per session. Investors either strongly agreed or agreed that the program presentations were useful. The most attended session was ‘The State of Opportunity Zones and Investor Education’ held on the first day and was attended by all seven investors who responded to the survey. There were no issues reported in receiving adequate instructions on how to access the virtual event, and investors felt that technology was well utilized including how to schedule meetings with project leads. Investors felt that they received adequate information about the projects seeking investments in Opportunity Appalachia.

“The convening was well organized.”
-Investor

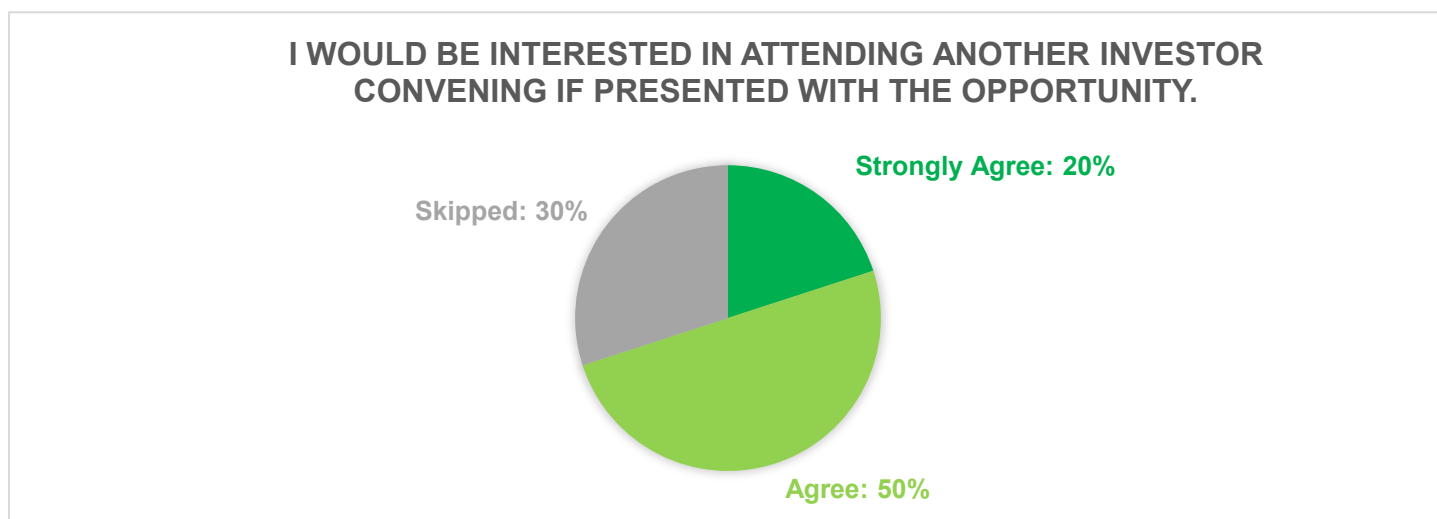
Of everyone who responded to the item, nearly all investors felt that the Investor Convening was a worthwhile experience and 7 of 10 who responded said they would be interested attending another Investor Convening.

Figure 11: Worthwhile Opportunity



6 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that the Investor Convening was a worthwhile opportunity for them. **1 out of 10** investors strongly disagreed, and **3 out of 10** skipped this item.

Figure 12: Interest in Attending Another Investor Convening

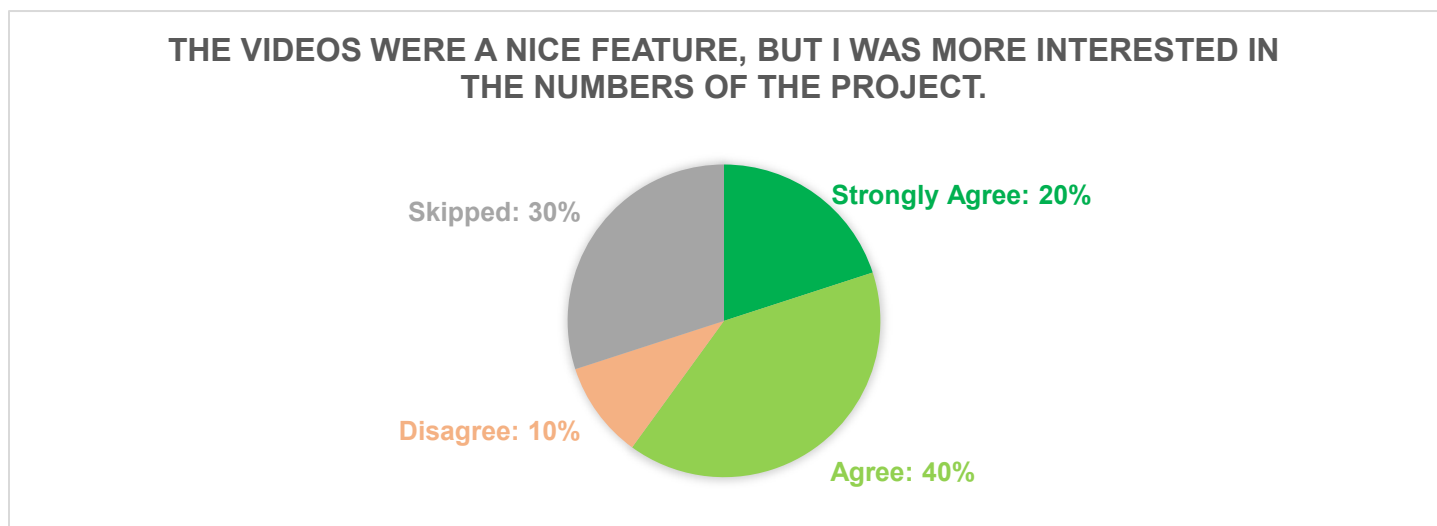


7 out of 10 Investors strongly agreed or agreed that they would be interested in attending another Investor Convening. **3 out of 10** skipped this item.

Project Videos

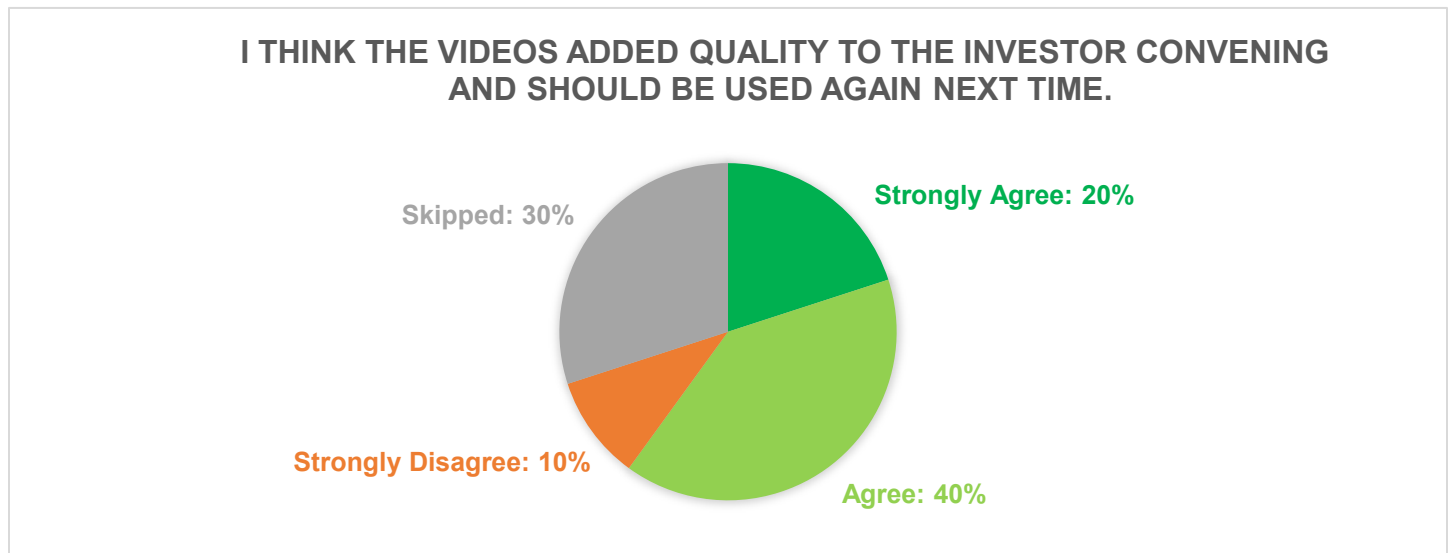
Half of the investors said that the project videos made them more interested in the projects. 60% of investors strongly agreed or agreed that the videos were a nice feature to the Investor Convening, but they were more interested in the financial aspect of the projects.

Figure 13: Interest in Numbers



6 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that the videos were a nice feature, but they were more interested in the numbers of the project. **1 out of 10** investors disagreed, and **3 out of 10** skipped this item. However, 60% of investors also felt that the videos should be used again for future Investor Convenings.

Figure 14: Quality Added to Investor Convening



6 out of 10 investors thought that the project videos added quality to the Investor Convening and should be used again next time. **1 out of 10** investors strongly disagreed, and **3 out of 10** skipped this item.

Summary of Suggestions for Improvement

COVID did not seem to have an impact on whether investors decided to invest in any Opportunity Appalachia projects. Of the little feedback that was received, investors wanted to see a better understanding of the financial side of the project and consistency in the presentations. Investors also look for whether a developer is involved in the project and the experience of the developer.

Steering Committee, including State Teams, and Partners Summary and Main Findings

Steering Committee

There were no suggested areas of improvement for the Steering Committee. Members felt that they met at an adequate frequency and were engaged. Information was appropriately shared with all members to allow input.

"I thought that the frequency was appropriate, and I think also importantly, it was not like once a month we would meet regardless of what needs to be done. It was sort of appropriately aligned with the decision points and the planning points in the process that enabled us to be able provide inputs at the right times as the initiative was planned and different sections of it were executed."

-Opportunity Appalachia Partner and Steering Committee Member

Outreach

The outreach experience varied by state. The Ohio State Team did not have a lot of time to advertise as they would have liked. Because they were late coming to the program after Kentucky backed out, they were unable to watch for budding projects in the state. The Virginia State Team would prepare contingency plans for possible turnover and would have possibly added another partner to their team. The West Virginia State team reported having a very positive experience with their outreach event. One thing that West Virginia did differently than other projects was offer coaching to everyone who was applying for Opportunity Appalachia. Coaching involved routine check-ins with projects and providing additional support beyond standard program communications, which continued for those who were selected for the program.

Other Steering Committee members and Opportunity Appalachia partners suggested broadening program outreach, including reaching out to more financial institutions.

Selection

Two of the three state teams felt that it was just really hard to tell from the applications which projects were ready for Opportunity Appalachia. However, the rating sheet took that into account to help with selection. There were instances of applicants not adequately answering items on the application, causing them to receive lower scores. But state teams did not feel that the application was limiting to the information that was provided. It was up to the applicant about how much detail was provided. One state team felt that they needed to broaden their internal selection team to help them see beyond the community side of the project. Overall, there was a representation of both smaller and larger communities selected for the program.

Technical Assistance

Satisfaction with technical assistance varied across the states. Again, technical assistance providers seemed to struggle with different preparedness across projects. More defined projects had clearer needs, goals, and expectations. A project lead's experience also played a factor in technical assistance.

"I don't think there's anything that we should have provided that they didn't get. What I do think the TA's struggled with was just the different preparedness with some of the principles they were working with. I think some of the project leads were at different levels of development, different levels of sophistication as it related to kind of what they had access to and what they thought through, and their level of experience. So, I'm sure the TAs were seeing apples to oranges. The projects were so varied and so different, so I don't know to what extent some of the TA's might have had trouble pulling information from the project leads. I'd say our TAs had quite different experiences based upon who their project leads were. I think if we restricted it too much to where you had to have a management team together and have to have a little bit of funding and done a feasibility funding or something, there would have been several of them that wouldn't have made the cut. So, we have to be careful not to restrict it too much."

-Opportunity Appalachia Partner on Technical Assistance Providers

Investor Convening

The project videos were the favorite aspect of the Investor Convening for the Steering Committee and program partners. There was a suggestion that the pitch be part of the project video in the future to make things run smoother. Technology seemed to be effective, aside from the meetings between investors and project leads held in breakout rooms through Zoom. Relationship building and social networking were limited with the virtual environment, but COVID-19 restrictions did not allow for an in-person event. However, the event gathered over 150 people across more than 15 states which included 15 project leads, Steering Committee Members, program partners, and around 40 private and non-private investors. With all of the limitations and changes that COVID brought, everyone agreed that the event was successful.

"The videos were critical and were a great balance hearing from the project lead and then having that more introductory to seeing everything and hearing different voices from the project. The videos were a great tool to share with others. There were hopeful and impactful projects within those communities, and the videos really communicated that in a really strategic and important way. Being able to send those videos really multiplied the impact. It wasn't just a one-time presentation."

-Opportunity Appalachia Partner

Summary of Suggestions for Improvement

- Have a practice session for those involved in hosting the Investor Convening
- Better organization of the breakout rooms for meetings between investors and project leads
- Consider having the project pitch included in the project video
- To make the technical assistance providers jobs easier, make sure projects have a clear vision of what they need and what they want to accomplish
- Consider more program outreach and additional partnerships
- Increase investor engagement
- Have consistency in communications about the Investor Convening-all messages coming from the same person during normal business hours to eliminate questioning of legitimacy and include everyone on the lead state partner teams so they have access to those communications
- Build a better sense of community across the three states; have more check-ins or a dashboard to let everyone know where everyone was at; share struggles to allow other projects to learn from each other
- Just because the grant ends in August 2021, do not let that be the last contact with projects
- Have more interactions with projects to let them know why they are not attracting investor interest-potentially a technical assistance component

Biggest lessons learned

The Opportunity Appalachia team identified the following items that were published on The Opportunity Appalachia website as the biggest lessons learned in the first year of the program.

1. Stay close to the community – our program Steering Committee is composed of leading development groups in the target states with strong local relationships, which were essential to both assess local capacity, and to address challenges as projects progressed.
2. Investor participation is a full contact sport – Our ongoing outreach, institutional partnerships, and vetted portfolio provided both visibility and credibility for projects in rural communities often overlooked by the investor community.
3. Fill the gap – We worked with a group of 40 for-profit and non-profit TA providers through an RFQ process to support high quality multi-disciplinary teams to address the identified needs required to move each project forward.
4. Rethink / re-strategize when needed – when several projects hit roadblocks, we worked with communities and their TA teams to rethink the opportunity, which sometimes resulted in projects with additional sources of equity (e.g., NMTC), or downsized and phased projects that better fit available cash flows.
5. Focus on impact – when in doubt, keep the eye on the goal; transformative projects that catalyze change in low wealth communities. Using impact as our north star enabled decision making that cost effectively used / reprogrammed our resources – and identified additional resources - for maximum community benefit.

Conclusion and Findings

Taking into consideration this being the first year of Opportunity Appalachia and having to navigate through the challenges that COVID brought, the program had a lot of successful elements.

Outreach: The program launch webinar, held in December 2019, had 180 participants, and the three state outreach events attracted over 350 attendees collectively. The number of project proposals was significantly higher than the number of projects that Opportunity could select for the first year run as 56 project proposals from 42 project sponsors were submitted.

Investor outreach started early in the program with the announcement of the selected projects. Follow-up calls and project introductions for interested investors took place along with periodic updates on The Opportunity Exchange, along with a Save the Date announcement for the Investor Convening. A majority of investors felt that outreach was effective in describing Opportunity Appalachia. And it is likely that the visibility has increased since the start of the program, especially having been selected by Forbes as a Top 20 Opportunity Zone Catalyst in December 2019.

Participant Satisfaction: Nine out of 10 project leads were either very satisfied or satisfied with Opportunity Appalachia, and everyone who responded to the survey item said they would recommend the program to those who might be interested in the future.

Technical Assistance: Project leads rated technical assistance providers a 9 out of 10 and were appreciative of the support in which they might not have otherwise had if not for Opportunity Appalachia. Survey responses indicate at least a slight increase in technical assistance-related knowledge among project leads. The biggest increase was familiarity with financial pro forma development.

Technical assistance providers' experience with the program varied by state based on a few factors: the number of Opportunity Appalachia projects that they were involved with, communication with project leads, role changes, project lead and technical assistance provider experience, and how defined projects were in terms of readiness. Among those surveyed, it was less of a problem of technical assistance providers having a clearly defined role and more of an issue with one of the factors listed above. Nearly 65% of surveyed technical assistance providers agreed that communication with project leads was always clear and effective.

Impacts of COVID-19: COVID also played a factor in having to rely on technology for communication, rather than having in-person interactions and opportunity for site visits. However, over half of the surveyed technical assistance providers said that COVID had minimal or no impact on their ability to provide services to their assigned projects. Investors also said that COVID did not have an impact on their decision to invest in Opportunity Appalachia projects.

Investor Convening: The Investor Convening received high praise from project leads and investors who thought it was a useful and worthwhile event. It offered enhanced exposure to the projects in Opportunity Appalachia, in addition to The Opportunity Exchange platform. Project leads felt prepared for their project pitch and were given adequate information and guidance through practice pitch session opportunities. Over 150 people attended the Investor Convening from across the country, and

"This is a very important, well managed and focused effort to provide deep technical assistance to Appalachian communities in opportunity zones. The tone was modest, honest, respectful of all of the challenges the communities have. The tone wasn't patronizing as developing projects often are. OA meets people where they are to work effectively with them. This was a great experience."

-Project Lead

"We enjoyed working with Opportunity Appalachia, Appalachian Community Capital, and our project team. It seemed to provide some real value to our client."

-TA Provider

"Of course, this would have been better in-person. But I thought it was a very well-organized event."

-Investor on the Investor Convening

sessions were rated favorably by nearly everyone surveyed. All surveyed investors who responded to the survey item said they would be interested in attending another Investor Convening.

Project Videos: The project videos, which were added to the Investor Convening as a result of COVID, were considered one of the best parts of the Investor Convening, and really multiplied the impact of the projects. All surveyed project leads are currently using their project's video or have plans to do so in promoting their projects.

"A project like this is funded for a period of time and it ends. I think what one needs is an ongoing capacity to be highlighting and communicating that there are projects like that in these places and trying to connect investors and other stakeholders to know that they are there and to help make that distance shorter so that they're able to learn about them more easily and build relationships. And obviously, preferably build financial relationships over time, but also TA and other kinds of relationships. Think about this as an on-going capacity instead of a one-time initiative."

-Steering Committee member

This evaluation report outlined the success and areas to consider for improvement gathered from those involved in Opportunity Appalachia. Key suggestions for improvement are listed below.

From Project Leads:

- Have more opportunities for project leads to learn from each other, either through mentoring or more virtual gatherings
- Consider having a dedicated Opportunity Zone expert to consult on all projects as needed to answer questions
- Share investor contact information (once permissions are given) to allow for contact beyond the Investor Convening
- Have designated time slots to sign up for meetings with investors at the Investor Convening

From TA Providers:

- Have a clear procedure (and possibly remind TA providers of it periodically) about how to report necessary changes in the scope of work or timeline and how it relates to payment-the flexibility allowed in the program was beneficial for project leads to make changes to their projects as needed, but was seen as a hurdle to some TA providers
- Be able to clearly identify project readiness to TA providers

From Investors:

- Ensure project leads have adequate understanding of the financial side of the project
- Make sure it is clear whether an experienced developer is involved in the project
- Increase visibility of the program

From the Evaluator:

- Survey and interview earlier and at multiple points in the program-waiting several months after events take place can make it hard for those being surveyed or interviewed to remember key details
- Survey participants during state outreach events and the Investor Convening

Having the success that this project did, working through the challenges that COVID brought to the world, should be considered a major success. Seven projects are anticipated to close on \$106M in financing in 2021-2022 and are expected to create more than 745 jobs in coal-impacted communities. Another six projects are likely to be financed at \$143M, creating over 200 additional jobs.

Appendix A: Opportunity Appalachia Project Summaries

Hotel Swisher – Village of Somerset – Somerset, OH

Equity Seeking: \$500,000

Total Project Size: \$3.2M

Square Footage: 12,500 sq. ft.

Project Sponsor: The Somerset Village

Project Description: Hotel Swisher is privately owned through Hotel Swisher Limited/ Michelle Robinson. Hotel development began in 2016 when MARSwisherLTD purchased the historic property for the purposes of restoration and renovation into a boutique style hotel. The Hotel will house 15 rooms with one as an extended stay suite, retail space, 850 s.f. meeting room with breakout space, fitness center, coffee and wine bar, rooftop deck, and 850 s.f. of leasable retail space. The Hotel will be a limited service, upscale property with a focus on exceptional service, and is a cornerstone of an active economic development strategy for the Village that is focusing on developing the community for its residents and visitors alike with a focus on 'walkability.' Hotel Swisher will fulfill the need for tourism and business lodging in Somerset, Ohio, located in Perry County, Ohio as well as the surrounding region. Somerset is a gateway to the southeastern region that boasts some of Ohio's most significant wooded landscapes offering a wide variety of outdoor recreation, historic, and cultural opportunities.

Video Summary: <https://vimeo.com/512442300>



Preservation Hall Canal Warehouse Restoration – City of Chillicothe – Chillicothe, OH

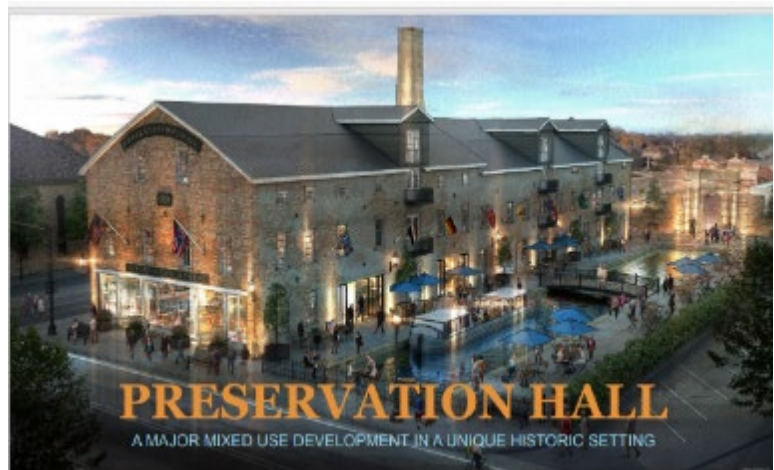
Equity Seeking: \$2M

Total Project Size: \$8M

Square Footage: 40,000 sq. ft.

Project Sponsor: City of Chillicothe

Project Description: The Canal Warehouse is a historic warehouse at the intersection of Main and Mulberry Streets in downtown Chillicothe, Ohio, United States. Although it is currently in need of rehabilitation, the warehouse has been recognized as a leading example of canal-related architecture; and few warehouses built for the Ohio and Erie Canal survive in comparable condition. The Canal Warehouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. Additionally, it lies within the boundaries of the Chillicothe Business District, a historic district that was added to the National Register in 1979. Plans have already been drawn up for the space and are for mixed use development. Project elements include a restaurant and bar, tavern or speakeasy-located in the basement level of Preservation Hall, Canal Market-consisting of 9 to 12 market stalls, and coworking offices-located on the third floor.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/511861128>

Zanesville Gateway Project, 9118 – City of Zanesville – Zanesville, OH

Equity Seeking: \$10M

Total Project Size: \$10,000,000

Square Footage: 100 Acres

Project Sponsors:

- Zanesville-Muskingum County Port Authority
- City of Zanesville
- Zanesville Community Improvement Corporation
- Muskingum County Land Reutilization Corporation
- Muskingum Growth Partnership

Project Description: The Zanesville Gateway Project (ZGP) possesses all of the necessary requirements for any type of development to occur. There are three projects.

Project 1: Gateway Corridor: residential and commercial development in the core of the district; additional industrial development near the rail lines and I-70, and rebuilding of a historic minority community. Project 2: housing need. Project 3: Putnam Promenade-rebuild a micro-enterprise neighborhood, residential core with mixed use development along the riverfronts.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/511856896>

20 Federal Place – City of Youngstown – Youngstown, OH

Equity Seeking: \$750,000

Total Project Size: \$34,539,501

Square Footage: 333,000 sq. ft.

Project Sponsor: City of Youngstown

Project Description: Built in 1926 as a luxury department store by Strouss-Hirschberg Company, this 332,000 building occupies a prominent site on the city's West Federal Street, the city's principal retail district. This redevelopment would create a premier mixed-use building in a downtown market that has seen significant investment over the last ten years. Strouss-Hirschberg was the city's last remaining downtown department store when it closed in the 1980s and converted to office use. It is currently owned by the City of Youngstown and leased to a call center and similar office uses, a food court, and a limited number of retail outlets. The exterior of the building retains its architectural integrity and continues to evidence the high quality of design and materials characteristic of the mid-1920s. The Strouss-Hirschberg Building, now 20 Federal Place, has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1986 and remains one of the city's most imposing and significant historic properties. The City believes that the current uses of the building do not represent its highest and best use and seeks to identify a developer or team of developers capable taking full advantage of historic tax credits—both Federal and State, Opportunity Zone tax incentives, and other incentives available to private investors but unavailable to a municipality.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/512722253>

Green Industrial Manufacturing Ecosystem (GIME) Development – Green Industrial Manufacturing Ecosystem Inc. – Struthers, OH

Equity Seeking: \$500,000

Total Project Size: \$1.75M

Square Footage: 6,000 sq. ft.

Project Sponsors:

- CASTLO, Community Improvement Corporation
- GIME, INC (Green Industrial Manufacturing Ecosystem)
- K.O. Consulting, LLC

Project Description: Green Industrial Manufacturing Ecosystem (GIME) was founded in 2020 to create a regional ecosystem in the Mahoning Valley of socially responsible manufacturing businesses. Located in the Mahoning Valley, GIME develops property for industrial use, assists manufacturing startups, and offers supportive services to its members. We are developing a diverse array of pipeline projects, including, regenerative agriculture utilizing the creation of a localized fiber shed, a bottling facility for local breweries, CBD oil extraction, and hemp waste product research and development. The Green Industrial Manufacturing Ecosystem (GIME) will generate income on sub- leasing space to ecosystem businesses, and/or in conjunction with providing business contract services, centralized server management services, R&D, generating equity on business interests in the ecosystem, potentially raising capital/debt for production equipment for a bio-medical business, having bio-refinery equipment to process hemp feedstock from other businesses in the ecosystem to sell it on the market. The relevance of this strategy for the Qualified Opportunity Zone Business Fund (QOZBF) is that any income can be reinvested in the business and looked at as capital gain at the ten-year mark to generate a higher return and value to investors.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/512720648>

22 Loft-Style Apartments – Morgan County Improvement Corporation – McConnellsville, OH

Currently Seeking: \$500,000 state/public investment

Total Project Size: \$4.5M

Square Footage: approx.. 18,000 sq. ft.

Project Sponsor: Morgan County Improvement Corporation (MCIC)

Project Description: Rehabilitate the historic Stanbery Building, located in McConnellsville, Ohio. This project involves the construction of 22 loft-style apartments and AirBnB loft rentals on the second and third floors, rented at market rate. This project will address a community need for new, quality housing and serve as part of a catalytic downtown revitalization effort that is ongoing in Appalachian Ohio.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/511859707>

Vaughan Furniture Building – City of Galax – Galax, VA

Equity Seeking: \$17,231,000

Total Project Size: \$92,459,000

Square Footage: 400,000 sq. ft.

Project Sponsor: City of Galax

Project Description: The mixed-use redevelopment of this anchor building will create a vibrant new landmark destination for Galax and the region. It is anticipated that 85,400 SF will be developed as apartments/condominiums; 82,200 SF as a hotel with a small conference center adjoined by a 27,300 SF "industrial look" performance space/ballroom and a 15,800 SF restaurant; 81,800 SF as a business incubator including an incubator kitchen; 51,500 SF as indoor recreation; 30,400 SF as retail space; and will include a 27,900 SF 3-story interior open-air atrium. The Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development completed a preliminary report in May 2019 which jump-started local interest in redevelopment of the property. A more complete feasibility study will be completed by February 19, 2021 by a consultant team made up of staff from Summit Design & Engineering Services, LOCUS Impact Investing, and the national Main Street Center. This study will include an analysis of existing conditions and a preliminary architectural plan and cost estimate assembled by Summit planners, engineers, and architects; a market study researched by the team; a historical analysis/eligibility determination for the State/National Registers of Historic Places and Historic Tax Credits by Main Street America staff (already determined to be eligible); and development and operational pro formas assembled by LOCUS Impact Investing. The building has had Phase I and II environmental assessments done and has come back clean.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/511459555>

Micronic Technologies – Micronic Technologies – Bristol, VA

Equity Seeking: \$750,000

Total Project Size: \$750,000 (raised \$3M in Series 1, seeking Series 2)

Project Sponsor: Micronic Technologies

Project Description: Billions of gallons of industrial water are used daily, with >90% of it not reused. Driven by environmental, economic, and regulatory pressures, industry is fully embracing Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD). Currently evaporator systems are the only viable solution to treat and reuse contaminated wastewater, especially to achieve ZLD, where wastewater is reused with minimal discharge. Traditional evaporators are energy intensive, costly, and technically challenging. The ZLD market is \$8B and growing at 8%. Micronic Technologies, a women-founded and led small business, is commercializing a patented wastewater concentration technology, Tornadic One-Pass™ (TOP™) to address the ZLD market. Third party testing has validated >99% removal of total dissolved solids, total suspended solids, bacteria, metals, pharmaceuticals, and nano waste that meets the ZLD market objective; at 50% less capital and operating costs than the competition. Micronic settled its Series Seed preferred equity round in October 2020, with the Pearl Fund (an Opportunity Zone Investment Fund), Center for Innovative Technology, and CAV Angels. Along with Virginia Tobacco and USDA grant funds, Micronic will place its TOP™ demo system in the field to secure sales in 2021 to be followed with a unit to field at EPA's test and evaluation facility in Cincinnati, and a Series A round.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/512739174>

Pathogen Free Sheep Production/Farming – Blue Ridge Plateau Initiative II – Fries, VA

Equity Seeking: \$2.2M

Total Project Size: \$11.5M

Square Footage: 9,600 sq. ft.

Project Sponsors:

- New England Ovis (NEO)
- Blue Ridge Plateau Initiative (BRPI)

Project Description: For 15 years, New England Ovis (NEO) has set the gold standard for producing SPF sheep, verified free of over 50 pathogens, and recognized across the bioresearch community as the World's Healthiest Sheep. In



contrast, the closest SPF competitor has eliminated 9 pathogens from their sheep. To meet growing demand for these animals, plans are underway in cooperation with the BPRI to expand NEO SPF operations to SW VA. With the onset of applied regenerative medicine and strict standards of safety that recommend SPF ADM, higher value market opportunities for ADM sales are rapidly developing. Given the growing market demand and high prices for safe and healthy animal tissue, NEO is strategically situated to expand and fill the needs of large-scale biomanufacturing of organs, tissues, and cell and gene therapies. As the result of a long term established relationship and staunch support of the Blue Ridge Plateau Initiative, NEO has committed to expanding SPF production operations to SW VA, leveraging Central Appalachia's sustainable competitive advantage. The global regenerative medicine market (RMM) is projected to register a CAGR of 32.2% from a reported \$7.37B in 2017 to \$39.33B by 2023 (<http://hitechnewsdaily.com/2019/08/regenerative-medicine-market>). The RMM requires the highest quality Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) Animal-Derived Material (ADM). A \$3T annual market for Halal Bioproducts exists and SPF sheep are considered the most desired source.

Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/511467853>

Bristol VA Sports/Multi-Use Facility Project – Bristol Sport Complex and Events – Bristol, VA

Equity Seeking: \$6.5M

Total Project Size: \$15.6M

Square Footage: 90,000 sq. ft.

Project Sponsors: Synergy Sports

Project Description: The proposed 90,000 square foot facility will be home to a variety of indoor sports and community programming resulting in significant local job creation and community space/ activities. The facility offers six courts with a variety of uses, leasable space (media, retail, etc.), a fitness center/walking track, conference rooms/team rooms, and outdoor fields, courts, and splash pad.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/513119962>

Virginia Ave Warehouse, Virginia Ave Boutique Hotel – mount TERRA LLC – Bluefield, VA

Equity Seeking: \$700,000

Total Project Size: \$4M

Square Footage: 29,000 sq. ft.

Project Sponsors: mountTerra

Project Description: Two projects-mixed use and residential/hotel. This project is to renovate/preserve a historic 1900's two-story warehouse located on main street Bluefield VA, into a multi-use facility with modern improvements and businesses to better serve today's society. The property will house a Community marketplace, Community Workspace, Hair Care Academy and Salon and potential to lease Retail Space. This project will also renovate a historic school building in downtown Bluefield, VA, into a stylish, short-term apartment style complex with modern amenities to better serve tourism and travelers.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/512749246>

Prichard Revitalization – City of Huntington – Huntington, WV

Equity Seeking: \$2M

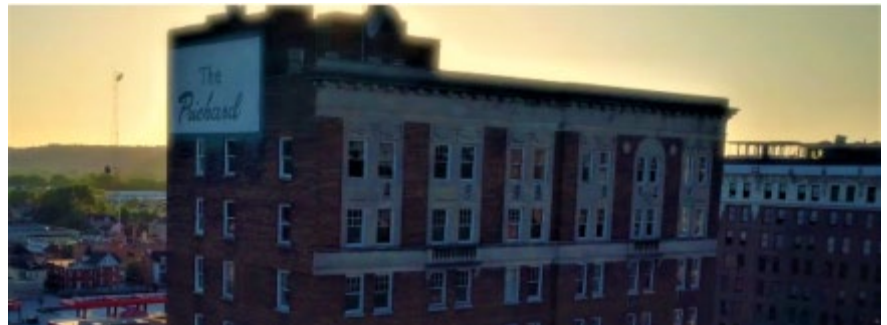
Total Project Size: \$36M

Square Footage: 141,000 sq. ft.

Project Sponsors:

- City of Huntington
- Huntington Municipal Development Authority
- Cornerstone Community Development Corporation
- Winterwood Development

Project Description: Cornerstone CDC has partnered with Winterwood Development to completely restore the historic Hotel Prichard, to provide affordable senior housing and community-supporting commercial development in partnership with regional anchor institutions. The Prichard is investment-ready with ~90% of financing secured and will be shovel-ready for construction in Summer 2021. The 141,000 square foot former hotel will undergo a complete rehabilitation and restoration meeting state and federal Historic Tax Credit standards, for 98 units of one & two bedrooms of affordable senior housing on floors 3-13, and innovative, community-serving commercial and retail in 35,000 net square feet on the first two stories. The first two stories will include an innovative, new "Center for Geriatric Excellence" to serve senior citizens in both the Prichard and the surrounding community with health and wellness services backed by regional health institutions Mountain Health Network, Marshall University, and Hospice serving the region.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/512432164>

Staats Building Project – Crawford Holdings, LLC – Charleston, WV

Equity Seeking: \$3M

Total Project Size: \$6.6M

Square Footage: 30,000 sq. ft.

Project Sponsors:

- Crawford Holdings LLC.
- Advantage Valley
- Charleston Area Alliance
- Charleston Urban Renewal Authority
- United Bank
- Charleston Main Streets
- WV Brownfield
- Preservation Alliance of West Virginia
- West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office

Project Description: The redevelopment will greatly impact the area by creating a more vibrant community, deliver rental housing units identified as a great need in both qualitative and quantitative studies, and save a very important historic structure. 1st floor: 10,000 sf, open space, indoor farmer's market-style venue with multiple local, regional, and statewide goods with a particular focus on fresh food and West Virginia value added products (quilts, furniture, honey, pottery, and other goods provided by local artisan coops and businesses). Discussions with local businesses, artisan coops, and other entrepreneurs, as well as market studies conducted by the developers, lend to this plan. Currently, demand is high, and supply is low for business storefronts in the Elk City Historic District, and the developers have had to turn down prospective clients based on this fact. This project would remedy this problem. 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors: develop as 1- and 2-bedroom apartments, catered to various incomes, maximizing the space in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties; approx. 7,000 sf per floor. Funds from this grant request will allow Crawford to determine exactly how many units may be placed in the space, according to Department of Interior historic standards



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/511447114>

Tygart Hotel – Woodlands Development Group – Elkins, WV

Equity Seeking: \$4,200,000

Total Project Size: \$14,200,000

Square Footage: Not Listed

Project Sponsor: Woodlands Development Group

Project Description: The former grand hotel of Elkins built in 1907, Woodlands acquired the historic Tygart Hotel in 2018 with plans to restore it to a boutique hotel and restaurant primarily serving recreational visitors to the region. Final redevelopment plans for hotel in process. Financing scheduled to close Q2 2021, redevelopment to start Q3 2021. The renovated boutique Tygart Hotel and restaurant has the potential for over 50 rooms and will primarily serve recreational visitors to the Region's many attractions. Redevelopment plans have been drafted, a comprehensive market study completed, sources for financing committed, and community support secured.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/511435481>

Cohen Building Project – Unleash Tygart, Inc. - Grafton, WV

Funding Seeking: \$6,097,435

Total Project Size: \$10,100,000

Square Footage: 33,000 sq. ft.

Project Sponsor: Unleash Tygart, Inc.

Project Description: The completed Cohen project will be a mixed-use facility that provides space for both nonprofit and for-profit entities seeking to start or expand services to Taylor County. Many community development strategies will be employed through the success of this program including downtown development, historic property revitalization, healthcare, education, clean energy, and heritage tourism. Further, the space will offer collaborative work and meeting space; an existing deficit in our community that has been identified but not directly addressed. The Cohen building project is located in the Historic District of downtown Grafton, West Virginia in OZ census tract 9646. Communities targeted by this project include the City of Grafton as well as the outlying communities throughout Taylor County.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/511416302>

Thundercloud Fiber Network and Data Center – Thundercloud, Inc. – Huntington, WV

Equity Seeking: \$9M

Total Project Size: \$20M

Project Size: 84,240 Fiber Miles connecting a 9-county region

Project Sponsor: Thundercloud Inc.

Project Description: Thundercloud, Inc. is looking for impact investors to spur economic development in the nine-county region in West Virginia through increased access to broadband infrastructure. Thundercloud intends to construct and operate a world-class open-access fiber-optic network. Thundercloud's open-access infrastructure will target internet service providers to service the residential community, businesses, schools, non-profit organizations, and governmental entities. Our principal product will be a robust, fault-tolerant Dark Fiber infrastructure, or "Middle Mile Infrastructure", with a service range of from 100 Megabit per second to 40 Gigabit per second. Thundercloud's open-access, fiber network infrastructure will support or make it possible for local ISPs to provide high-quality last-mile services to the residential community, businesses, schools, non-profit organizations, and governmental entities. This will allow Thundercloud to combat poverty and community deterioration, advance education, and promote health throughout the region. Thundercloud's fiber network will provide broadband, the most scalable and reliable level of service to a largely underserved region. Adequate broadband will give rural residents direct access to telehealth, e-commerce, education, and employment but also allow local markets to expand their market reach and foster industry growth and efficiencies.



Video summary: <https://vimeo.com/511464297>

Hinton Ice House– New River Gorge Regional Development Authority – Hinton, WV

Total anticipated financing needs: \$2M

Project Size: 10,000 sq. ft.

Project Sponsor: New River Gorge Regional Development Authority

Project Description: The Hinton Ice House project will renovate and reopen the historic building in Hinton's commercial district.

The project has arisen out of a partnership formed between the City of Hinton and the New River Gorge Regional Development

Authority (NRGRDA) to address the necessary environmental remediation of the Ice House property prior to its renovation. Ownership of the property was transferred from the City of Hinton to the NRGRDA in 2019 for the purpose of completing its redevelopment. As the property is undergoing environmental remediation, NRGRDA intends to utilize existing planning documents related to the building and the broader revitalization of Hinton to identify the highest and best use(s) for the Ice House building and manage the redevelopment of the property toward these uses and goals. The building will provide space for commercial use and for workforce training activities hosted by private, public, and nonprofit organizations. Renovation of the Ice House will help provide an anchor site for the broader revitalization of Hinton's commercial and downtown districts.



*All info in the project descriptions above was obtained
from pitch deck materials posted on The Opportunity Exchange.*

Appendix B: Status of all Opportunity Appalachia Projects

(as of June 30, 2021 Steering Committee Report)

Following the Investor Convening, **7 of the 16** Opportunity Appalachia Projects were identified as highly likely to be financed. An additional six projects are likely to be financed, and the remaining three are either not likely to be financed or uncertain at this time.

Highly likely to be financed:

Project	Location	Financing Status	Project Description	Project Status to Date
Hotel Swisher	Somerset, OH	Likely to be financed in 2021	\$3.2M boutique hotel, 15 rooms, meeting space, create 12 jobs	Pitch deck, prospectus, hotel renderings and business plan received. Interest from Appalachian Growth Capital (Ohio CDFI) and local QOF investor in financing project.
20 Federal Place	Youngstown, OH	Likely to be financed in 2022	\$34M project. 330,000 SF historic building, mixed-use/community facilities, 62 units affordable housing, create 500 jobs	Phase 1 activities completed for prospectus, financial model, and drawings. RFP issued by City to select developer. Investor meetings/outreach has occurred with several large +\$1B NMTC Funds.
Micronic Technologies	Bristol, VA	Likely to be financed in 2021	Water treatment technology company, create 6 jobs	Raised \$3M in OZ Series 1 financing from Pearl Fund (NY). Seeking \$750,000 in Series 2 round. Work is continuing with TA provider to support follow-on 2021 capital raise with Pitch Deck and Prospectus.
Tygart Hotel, Woodlands Development Group	Elkins, WV	Likely to be financed in 2021	\$14M project, 55 room historic hotel, create 57 jobs	Project activities are underway. NMTC allocation committed (\$12.5M), in discussion with HTC investors and leverage lenders, architectural design underway. Hotel manager identified.
Cohen Building, Unleash Tygart	Grafton, WV	Likely to be financed in 2021	\$10M project. 33,000 SF community facility/private business, create 65 jobs, anchor local technology company tenant	NMTC allocation of \$8M identified; leverage lender identified. Project TA activities completed including design and final prospectus.
Staats Building	Charleston, WV	Likely to be financed in 2021	\$6.6M project. Historic downtown building, 16 residential units, 10,000 SF ground floor retail, create 30 full time jobs	Financial projections / prospectus completed; design work underway. Discussion with OZ investors, NMTC CDEs, and HTCs in progress.
Pritchard Revitalization	Huntington, WV	Likely to be financed in 2021	\$36 M project. 141,000 SF, 98-room residential project, affordable housing, create 75 jobs.	TA provider prepared financials for housing/mixed-use project using HTC/NMTC financing. NMTC proposal declined by developer and project will proceed as LIHTC/HTC financed project.

Potential to be financed:

Project	Location	Financing Status	Project Description	Project Status to Date
Canal Warehouse	Chillicothe, OH	Financing Possible	\$8M project. 40,000 SF, historic project, mixed use- retail, event, community facility, create 12 jobs.	Market Study and Feasibility Assessment received from TA provider. Materials not completed. Strong HTC/NMC project possibility with excellent downtown potential and nearby compelling tourism destinations.
22 Loft Apartments	McConnelsville, OH	Might proceed to financing	\$4.5 M project, 18,000 SF, 22 loft apartments, create 25 jobs	Market Study, Feasibility Study, construction costs and draft prospectus received from TA provider.
Green Industrial Manufacturing Ecosystem	Struthers, OH	Might proceed to financing	\$1.75M project. 6,000 SF. Mixed-use: office, IT, clean room.	Revised Scope of Work underway with new/internal TA provider. Tenants identified.
Vaughan Furniture	Galax, VA	Financing uncertain due to project size	\$92M project. 400,000 SF, historic building, mixed-use with retail, office, residential.	Phased development likely required. VA DHR approved listing on Historic Register. Phase 1 historic application underway. Engineering assessment completed and has precluded certain building uses, preliminary floor layouts underway, market assessment, feasibility study and prospectus completed.
Bristol Sports Complex	Bristol, VA	Financing possible	\$15.6M project. 90,000 SF, event and training facilities, creates 235 jobs.	Feasibility assessment completed. Discussions with regional developer, regional sports facility group, and City to identify suitable location. NMTC CDE interested in supporting project.
mount Terra	Bluefield, VA	Financing possible	\$4M-two projects. 29,000 SF, mixed-use and residential / hotel.	Project design and financials completed. Additional support needed for project development and capital raise. Projects are components of community revitalization now underway.

Uncertain or unlikely to be financed projects:

Project	Location	Financing Status	Project Description	Project Status to Date
Zanesville Gateway	Zanesville, OH	Unlikely to proceed to financing		Phase 1 materials including market assessment received. No clear project(s)/developer yet identified.
Blue Ridge Plateau Initiative	Fries, VA	Financing uncertain	\$11.5M project. 9,600 SF, create 23 jobs. Sheep derivation / med products facility	Business plan completed, investment prospectus under development
Thundercloud Fiber Network	Huntington, WV	Financing uncertain	\$21M project. IT infrastructure, telehealth, economic development. Create 300 jobs.	Project business plan complete. Project financing will be from: \$2.4M ARC POWER grant (received), \$2.4 State of WV (approved), WVEDA loan (pending), or other public grantors.

New project added to portfolio:

Project	Location	Financing Status	Project Description	Project Status to Date
Ice House	Hinton, WV	Financing uncertain	\$2M project. The project will renovate and reopen a 10,000-sf historic building in Hinton's commercial district through a partnership between the City of Hinton and the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority. Create 5-12 permanent jobs, 10-15 construction jobs.	TA to be provided includes Mentorship for project development, engineering assessment, architectural, Phase II Environmental Assessment of building interior, and feasibility study.

The Prichard Revitalization project in West Virginia had an unused balance of \$17,000 of TA funds due to the decision to move in a different financing direction and use LIHTC funding and not NMTC/HTC funding. The WV lead state partner, The WV Hub, requested use of these funds to support a community in the original applicant pool, Hinton, WV. The Hinton community submitted an updated project proposal, which was accepted by the Opportunity Appalachia Steering Committee. Subsequently, an RFP for TA for the Ice House in Hinton, WV was issued. Downtown Appalachia-a WV program operated by the WV Brownfield Assistance Center and NCIFund-was selected to provide the requested TA. The contract has been executed and TA activities are underway.

Appendix C: Project Application

Project applications for Opportunity Appalachia were due on March 2, 2020 and were to be submitted using an online application form. Narrative responses were limited to 2,500 characters unless otherwise noted.

Sections of the application are recreated below.

Summary Information

Lead Contact: _____
Applicant Organization: _____
Address: _____
Phone: w _____ m _____
Email: _____

1. OZ communities targeted by this application (municipality(ies), county(ies) and OZ census tract(s):
2. Service area of applicant (note if different then above, or note same):
3. Community Development Strategy(ies):
(for example: downtown development, manufacturing, IT, healthcare, education, food systems, clean energy, heritage tourism and recreation, addiction treatment and recovery, or describe other strategies)
4. Proposed OZ Projects (list up to 3):
 - I. Name of Project, address, OZ census tract
 - Size in Sq Ft.
 - Total anticipated financing need \$:
 - Financing already identified, list source and \$ or note 'None':
 - Project description: Provide URL link if available.
 - Community Impact (quantify / provide estimates):
(for example: the creation of quality jobs with good pay and benefits (# of jobs, pay rates, benefits provided), jobs with training and advancement opportunities, jobs accessible to unemployed / underemployed persons, project supports community economic diversification, creates vibrant places for follow-on investment, other impacts ...)
 - Name(s) of project sponsors, developer, and/or business owner, if identified:
 - Technical Assistance Needed: (e.g., business plan development, financial pro forma development, financial structuring of transaction, market assessment, feasibility assessment, developer identification, architectural drawings, capital raise, ...)
5. Applicant Capacity: What is the relationship of the applicant to the community? How has the community demonstrated its support of the project(s)? Describe the applicant's capacity for completing or overseeing project activities:
6. Provision of Technical assistance: The types of technical support to be provided by the Opportunity Appalachia program include: development of investment prospectus, preparation of pro forma financial projections, structuring of projecting financing, market research / demand assessment, identification of project developers and business operators, feasibility assessment, outreach for project finance / OZ investors, and other types of support. This support will be provided on contract by experienced business and development partners. It is anticipated that support of \$30,000 - \$75,000 will be provided for each OZ applicant, averaging \$50,000 per applicant. The Scope of Work timeline for provision of technical support is anticipated to be 6 – 12 months, from March 2020 to March 2021, with capital raise activities beginning in Q3 2020 – Q1 2021.

Applicants may choose to use technical assistance providers offered by Opportunity Appalachia or may work with technical assistance providers they have identified.

a) Amount in \$ of Technical Assistance support requested / anticipated from Opportunity Appalachia, or state 'Unknown \$'.

Please complete either b) or c), below. No preference is given in the Opportunity Appalachia selection process to either 6(b) or 6(c).

b) If known, please provide name(s) and contact information of Technical Assistance provider(s) you prefer to support the above project activities.

Name 1 – contact name, company name, address, email, phone, URL

Name 2 – contact name, company name, address, email, phone, URL

Name 3 – contact name, company name, address, email, phone, URL

Note: Each TA provider must complete the Request for Qualifications, see Appendix III, to be eligible to provide TA for this program. If your OZ project is selected to participate in Opportunity Appalachia, proposals from Technical Assistance providers will be required, which will be reviewed for adequacy.

c) Technical Assistance providers have not yet been identified. The Applicant requests Opportunity Appalachia identify / recommend suitable technical support organizations.

____ (check)

7. Match Requirement:

Applicants selected to participate will be required to provide \$5,000 of matching support. This matching support can either be in-kind from community leads or members, developers and business owners, or through a cash contribution to the prospectus development and related activities.

If selected to participate in the Opportunity Appalachia program, our community commits to provide \$5,000 of cash or in-kind matching support for this effort. ____ (initial)

8. Attestation:

Date of Submission: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Appendix D: Selection of Projects

Each State Team formed a selection team to score applications received in their state. Applications were reviewed between March 3 and April 1, 2020. Recommended projects were presented to the Steering Committee where projects were officially approved and announced on April 2, 2020.

The following information was collected on the scoring sheet:

Summary Information

Applicant Organization, State: _____

Project Name(s): _____

Reviewer: _____

Total Score: _____ (total individual scores. Highest score: 60)

Requested \$ TA: _____ (note N/A if specific \$ not requested)

Recommended \$ TA: _____ (note specific \$ level, \$0, or 'uncertain/unsure')

The following rating scale was used to score each item:

Rating Scale									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Does not demonstrate/demonstrates to a limited degree			Reasonably demonstrates			Strongly demonstrates/excellent			

- Rating of 1-3: does not demonstrate the area to be rated/demonstrates to a limited degree
- Rating of 4-6: reasonably demonstrates the area to be rated
- Rating of 7-10: strongly demonstrates the area to be rated/excellent

Table 1: Scoring of Projects

Area to be rated:	To receive the highest score:	Additional details about what to look for when rating:
Community strategy(ies) and engagement	Applications should clearly identify an existing community strategy(ies) and highlight community engagement/support for the project(s) to receive higher scores.	Applicants can focus on one or more strategies, including those identified in the Opportunity Appalachia program summary such as: downtown development, manufacturing, IT, healthcare, education, food systems, clean energy, heritage tourism and recreation, and addiction treatment and recovery. Applicants can reference community plans, municipally approved plans, regional development plans, blueprints, community meetings, charettes, approvals by public bodies, engagement of diverse populations, etc.
Identified priority project(s)	Applicants that have identified specific investment opportunities will score higher in the review process. Selection will not favor the number of potential OZ projects but will focus on the quality of the identified projects/investments. Overall, is the project description complete and thorough?	<p>For example, did the applicant provide project specifics?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Square feet of the project • Money needed • Has any financing been identified? • For real estate projects, are specific uses provided: mixed use, housing, commercial? • Have tenants/anchor tenants been identified? <p>For operating businesses, is the business description complete? Are customers identified? Is the need for financing presented (building, equipment, inventory, product development, marketing support, etc.)?</p>
Community Impact	Projects that have significant community and economic development outcomes will score higher in the review process.	Community outcomes that will be prioritized include: the creation of quality jobs with good pay and benefits, jobs with training and advancement opportunities, jobs accessible to unemployed/underemployed persons, projects that support community economic diversification, projects that create vibrant places and/or promote follow-on investment in the target communities, and impact among diverse populations served including those in addiction recovery. Outcomes should be quantified.
Capacity & Track Record	Applicants and/or project sponsors that have the capacity and track record to support the identified projects(s) will score higher in the review process.	What is the applicant's history of success? Have developers (private, non-profit, or public) been identified? Have business owners/operators (private, non-profit, or public) been identified?
Suitability for OZ investment <i>This item was only to be scored and discussed by the full steering committee-not by state partners.</i>	Applications with investable project(s) will score higher in the review process.	Applications with investable project(s) will score higher in the review process. Is the project investable? Does the project require private equity? Will the project result in capital gains for investors? Is there an exit strategy for the QOF investor; a return of capital? Or is the project better suited for public grant support (ARC, EDA, USDA, CDBG, state, etc.)?
Identify existing community resources and identify gaps	Applications which describe a clear need for TA support from Opportunity Appalachia in order to close resource gaps will score higher in the review process.	Will the requested TA help move the project forward to financing?

Appendix E: Community Benefits Reporting and Matching Funds Agreement

COMMUNITY BENEFITS REPORTING and MATCHING FUNDS AGREEMENT

THIS COMMUNITY BENEFITS REPORTING AND MATCHING FUNDS AGREEMENT (“Agreement”) is made and entered into as of April 2, 2020 (the “Effective Date”), by APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY CAPITAL (“ACC”), and (“Project Sponsor”).

RECITALS

- A. Whereas ACC manages the Opportunity Appalachia program.
- B. Opportunity Appalachia will provide technical assistance to support the development and financing of (“Opportunity Zone Project”) presented by Project Sponsor.
- C. Project Sponsor will track community outcomes resulting from the proposed Opportunity Zone Project, should the project successfully receive financing.
- D. Project Sponsor will provide \$5,000 in matching contribution to project activities.

Accordingly, the parties agree as follows:

AGREEMENT

Section 1. Definitions. The following terms will have the following meanings in this Agreement:

- (a) “Low-Income Community” means any population census tract satisfying the definition of Low-Income Community under the Opportunity Zone program including any population census tract if (1) the poverty rate for such tract is at least 20%, or (2) (a) in the case of a tract not located within a metropolitan area, the median family income of such tract does not exceed 80% of statewide median family income, or (b) in the case of a tract located within a metropolitan area, the median family income for such tract does not exceed 80% of the greater of statewide median family income or the metropolitan area median family income;
- (b) “Low-Income Person” means any individual having an income, adjusted for family size, of not more than: (1) for metropolitan areas, 80% of the area median family income; and (2) for non-metropolitan areas, the greater of (a) 80% of the area median family income or (b) 80% of the statewide non-metropolitan area median family income;
- (c) “FTE” means number of Full-Time Equivalent employment positions of at least 35 hours per week;
- (d) “Permanent FTE Job” means number of jobs that are at least 24 months in duration and involves at least FTE hours; non-FTE employees can be combined to equal FTE hours.
- (e) “Predevelopment or Construction FTE Job” means number of jobs that are fewer than 24 months in duration and results from the development or construction of the Project; non- FTE employees can be combined to equal FTE hours.
- (f) “Quality Jobs” means the number of jobs providing living wages (as defined by the MIT Living Wage calculator) and which provide benefits such as health insurance, vacation, retirements, training and advancement.
- (g) “Accessible Jobs” means number of jobs created or retained that are available to Low-Income Persons, residents of LICs, people with lower levels of education, and people who face other barriers to employment such addiction recovery and formerly incarcerated persons.

- (h) “Commercial Goods or Services” means the provision of commercial goods or services to residents of Low-Income Communities or Low-Income Persons (e.g., access to retail, grocery, restaurants, or pharmacies, etc.), and the number of these persons served.
- (i) “Community Goods or Services” means the provision of quality community goods or services for residents of Low-income Communities or Low-Income Persons (e.g., healthcare, social services, educational, cultural, etc.), and the number of these persons served.
- (j) “Financing Minority Businesses” means financing Minority/Women-owned, Minority/Women-controlled businesses, including developers, project-sponsors or contractors/subcontractors that are Minority-Owned or Minority-Controlled.
- (k) “Housing Units” means number of units, percent of affordable units (defined as for persons with income below 80% of Area Median Income), and the extent of housing opportunities for Low-Income Persons or residents of Low-Income Communities.
- (l) “Community Outcomes” means the benefits or changes to the targeted community that result from the Opportunity Zone Project activities.

Section 2. Community Benefit Reporting.

- (a) The parties hereby agree and acknowledge that as a condition of receiving technical assistance from the ACC Opportunity Appalachia program, the Project Sponsor shall use all reasonable efforts to facilitate a significant community impact, should project financing be obtained.
- (b) In the event the Opportunity Zone Project receives financing, Project Sponsor shall annually (or at other suitable intervals upon request of ACC) report Community Outcomes to ACC Opportunity Appalachia for a minimum period of three years.
- (c) Community Outcomes that are reported shall at a minimum address all items noted in Section I, above, as appropriate.

Section 3. Matching Contribution. The Project Sponsor shall provide \$5,000 in matching contribution during the course of provision of technical assistance from Opportunity Appalachia.

- (a) Matching contribution may be provided in the following manner: cash contribution through purchase of services for related activities and/or improvements to the project site/facility; in-kind contribution including time contributed by community members, project partners, local officials, and development groups.
- (b) The Project Sponsor shall report this matching contribution to ACC Opportunity Appalachia before the completion of technical assistance activities, specifying the source and value of each matching contribution for up to \$5,000.

Section 4. Term. The Project Sponsor shall comply with the terms and conditions of this Agreement including providing updated data on Community Outcomes and Matching Funds, as requested by ACC from time to time.

Section 5. Representations and Warranties. Project Sponsor hereby represents and warrants as follows:

- (a) Project Sponsor has authority to enter into this Agreement and carry out the actions and responsibilities contemplated hereunder.
- (b) The execution, delivery, and performance by Project Sponsor of this Agreement has been duly authorized and are valid and binding.

Section 6. Entire Agreement. This Agreement contains the entire agreement of the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof, and any representation, inducement, promise or agreement between the parties with respect to the subject matter of this Agreement that is not embodied herein shall be null and void and of no further force or effect.

Section 7. Amendment. This Agreement may not be modified, amended or otherwise altered except by written agreement executed by ACC and Project Sponsor.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this Community Benefits Agreement is hereby duly executed as of the Effective Date.

By: Appalachian Community Capital

Name: _____

Title: _____

By: Project Sponsor

Name: _____

Title: _____

Appendix F: Investor Convening Agenda

Day 1:

Session	Session Info	
Welcome & Opening Remarks	The opening session will bring us together to understand capital challenges facing communities in Appalachia and how we are collectively working to implement new financing solutions.	
The State of Opportunity Zones & Investor Education	What have we learned about Opportunity Zones in the last three years? This panel will also provide an overview of Qualified Opportunity Zone Fund (QOF) structures used for different project types.	
Project Pitch Sessions	Each community will present their project for 10 minutes, and then there will be opportunities to schedule private meetings at the end of the day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohen Building Project, Grafton, WV • Micronic Technologies, Bristol, VA • Staats Building Project, Charleston, WV • 20 Federal Place, Youngstown, OH <p>(15 minute break)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thundercloud Fiber Network and Data Center, Huntington, WV • Vaughan Furniture Building, Galax, VA • Hotel Swisher, Somerset, OH • Bristol Sports Complex and Events, Bristol, VA
Closing Remarks	Reflections on the day's conversations	
Private Meeting with Project Sponsors-Cocktail Hour	Investors will have the opportunity to sign up for 15-minute private virtual sessions with individual projects and communities.	

Day 2:

Session	Session Info	
Welcome	The second day of the Opportunity Appalachia Investor Convening opens with a look at the day's events, a reminder of lessons from Day 1, and a focus on the importance of engaging a diversity of financing partners in OZ transactions.	
Insights from OZ Investors	A variety of different investors who are engaging in building Qualified Opportunity Funds, including banks and corporations, venture capitalists, and impact investors, to name a few. Who are they and how can you engage them to consider investments in your community? During this session, a roundtable of investors will discuss their approaches, what motivates them, and the type of investments they are considering in local Opportunity Zones.	
Project Pitch Sessions	Each community will present their project for 10 minutes, and then there will be opportunities to schedule private meetings at the end of the day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canal Warehouse Restoration, Chillicothe, OH • mount TERRA Redevelopment, Bluefield, VA • Green Industrial Manufacturing Ecosystem, Inc, Struthers, OH • Morgan County Improvement Corp, McConnelsville, OH
Public Investors and Opportunity Zones	Public agencies will join the conversation to discuss how they are participating in and supporting OZ projects.	
Project Pitch Sessions	Each community will present their project for 10 minutes, and then there will be opportunities to schedule private meetings at the end of the day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tygart Hotel, Elkins, WV • Zanesville Gateway Project 9118, Zanesville, OH • Prichard Revitalization, Huntington, WV
Investing in Appalachia - What We've Learned	Our closing discussion will feature leaders from Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia sharing their thoughts about developing projects, raising capital, investing in communities, and increasing economic development opportunities for the Appalachian region.	
Private Meetings with Project Sponsors- Cocktail Hour	Investors will have the opportunity to sign up for 15-minute private virtual meetings with individual projects and communities.	

Appendix G: Investment Pitch Guide

Pitching for an investment is part art and part business acumen. A pitch should mimic a great business plan in structure and flow but be told as a story. It ultimately depends on your style of presentation, but the most straightforward delivery is always the easiest on both parties. Some elements of a pitch can include:

1. Cover Page with logo - start with WHY you are doing this. The Opportunity Appalachia video of your project can present your why.
2. Statement and magnitude of the problem - what is the problem, how are you addressing it? The Opportunity Appalachia video of your project can present the problem description.
3. Product/service - what is your project/product, how does it address the problem? The project video can introduce the product and service.
4. Community Impact - our investors are mission focused, so be sure to discuss the services to be provided to the community, quality jobs to be created, etc.
5. Market overview and competitive landscape - how big is the market (total addressable market) and what niches do you intend to exploit? Who else is out there, what do they look like, and how will you win against them? Who is going to buy your product, why will they buy it, how much will they pay, what is their ROI, e.g., the customer value proposition.
6. Business model / marketing plan / sales plan - how will you make money, how will you get your message to your market, how will you sell to them? Note: if yours is a real estate project with you as the landlord and you have tenants lined up, just provide those details; this is sufficient for your marketing/sales plan.
7. Financials- how much \$ do you need, how will you use it, what are the projected returns, and how and when does an investor get their money back? Present Sources and Uses on a slide. Present simple Income Statement on a slide.
8. Team - why is yours the right team to win in the marketplace, why should the investor trust you?
9. Summary and thanks with contact information
10. Time - and time for Q&A. You may want to leave time for 1 or 2 questions at the end. Many folks say Q&A is the most important part of a pitch. You have 10 minutes for your pitch, which includes your video. So, you could time yourself for a 5 – 6-minute pitch, plus the 3 min video intro, and allow for 1-2 minutes of questions. Or you may want to only use 2 min - 2 ½ min of the video intro and a 6 min pitch. It's your pitch to organize!

What not to do!

- Don't have two people give the presentation. Two speakers dilute the message, breaks the engagement, and distracts the audience.
- Don't run long. Time yourself, practice with an audience. Being efficient with investors' time shows maturity and respect. Otherwise, you will lose their engagement (and we will cut you off).

What to do

You want your audience focused on you, not reading your slides. Some presenters like more slides, some people like less. Have ~5 slides for 1 minute to 1.5 minutes of talk per slide. Include only the relevant, salient facts in the slides that make your case most truthfully and appropriately. Do not put prose in your slides, just bullet point the talking points – 5x5x30 is the rule: five bullet points of five words each in 30-point font.

Make sure you describe the project / product. IF YOU CAN'T DESCRIBE YOUR PROJECT / PRODUCT IN ONE SENTENCE, START OVER. The first mistake most people make is focusing 90% on the project/product and 10% on the market, competition, business model, financial projections, and exit strategy. Investor's foremost desire, once they understand your product, is to know you understand how to run the business, compete, make money, and return capital – and in our case have community impact. It is not about what you want to tell them, it is about what they want to hear. Strive for elegance in simplicity. In the investor's mind complexity is not a barrier-to-entry for fast followers, it a barrier-to-entry for investors.

Raising capital is a relentless pursuit of credibility. Be respectful, be intelligent, be truthful, be succinct, keep it simple, and get to the point. You need to illustrate the BIG picture in the form of a story with a logical flow that the investor can relate to. Use simple graphics and charts that are easy to understand to explain your project/venture whenever possible.

Investors genuinely care and want to help you. Remember, you are pitching to folks that are experts in some sort of business or industry. Treat them with the respect they are due. Q&A is the MOST important part of the pitch – so encourage them to sign up for the 'Cocktail Hour' at the end of the day to have questions answered.

Final Thoughts We recommend watching Simon Sinek's TED talk:

http://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action.html. It will change your concept of sales and marketing....and raising capital, which is essentially marketing and selling shares of your company!

Practice delivering this presentation in the mirror and time yourself. If you don't like your presentation, no one else will.

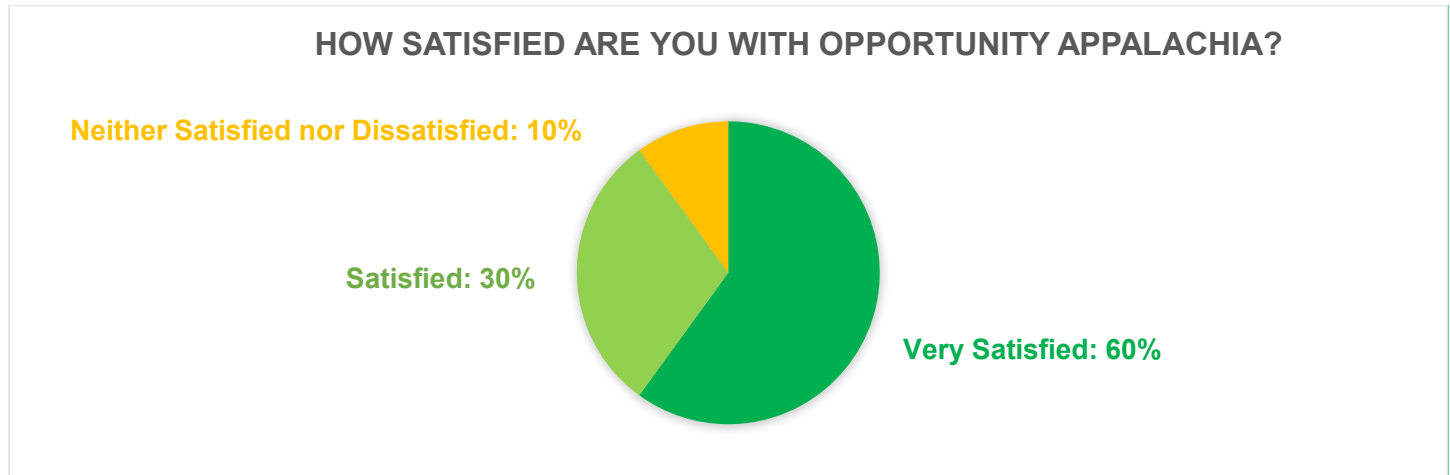
Good luck!

Opportunity Appalachia - Used and revised with the permission of The Angel Capital Group

Appendix H: Full Project Lead Survey Results

A total of 10 project leads responded to the Project Lead Survey equaling a **62.5%** response rate. Among those who responded, four were in Ohio, two were in Virginia, and four were in West Virginia.

Figure 1: Overall Satisfaction with Opportunity Appalachia



6 out of 10 project leads were very satisfied with Opportunity Appalachia. Another **3 out of 10** were satisfied, and **1 out of 10** was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance Provider Ratings

Project leads were asked to rate technical assistance providers on a scale of 1 - 10, where 1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = neutral, and 10 = very satisfied.

Technical assistance from providers that the project team requested:

- Of those who responded to the survey and the question was applicable, **the average rating was 9.0** with 10 being the highest rating and 5 being the lowest rating. This question was responded to by nine total project leads and was not applicable to two.

Technical assistance from providers that Opportunity Appalachia connected the project team with:

- Of those who responded to the survey and the question was applicable, **the average rating was 8.0** with 10 being the highest rating and 3 being the lowest rating. This question was responded to by seven total project leads and was not applicable to two.

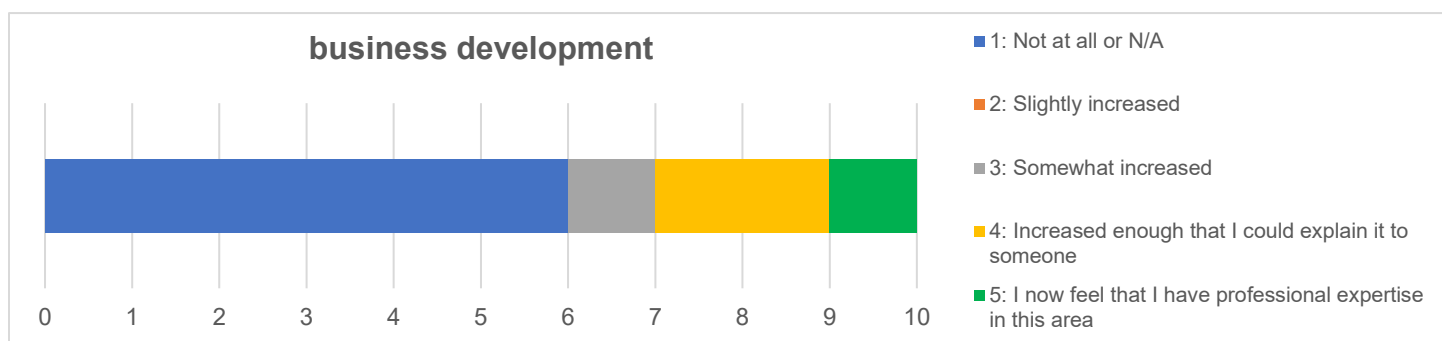
Technical Assistance Item Familiarity of Project Leads

Project leads were asked to rate their familiarity with items related to technical assistance since the start of Opportunity Appalachia using a 1 - 5 scale as shown below. A total of 10 project leads responded to these items.

Rating scale for Technical Assistance items:

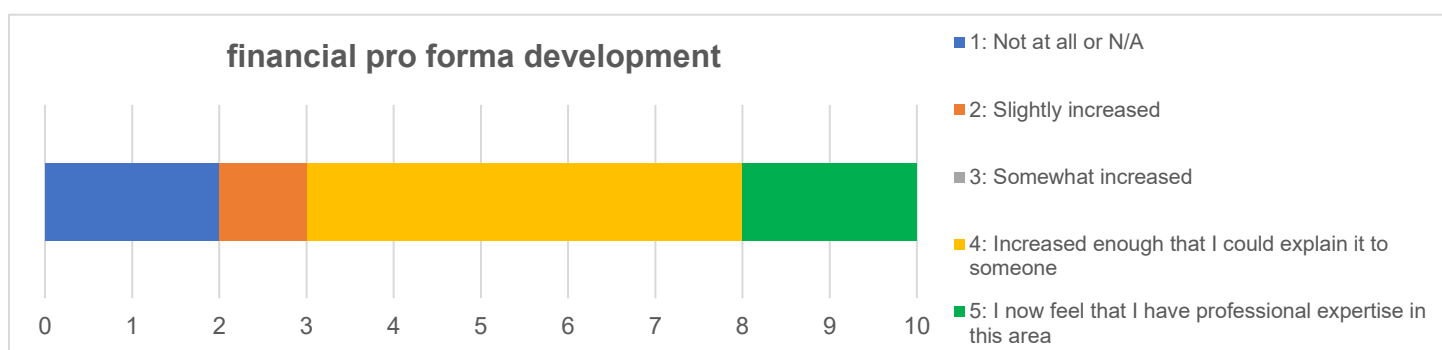
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all or Not applicable: I already consider myself an expert	Slightly increased	Somewhat increased my familiarity, but I don't understand it enough to explain it to someone else	Increased enough that I could explain it to someone	I know feel that I have professional expertise in this area

Figure 2: Project Lead Familiarity with business development



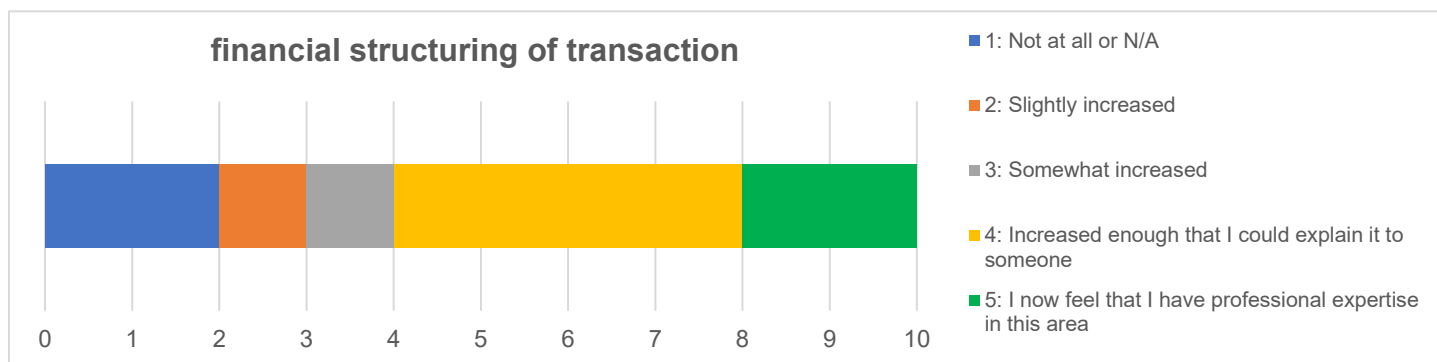
Average rating: 2.3, indicating a slight increase in familiarity with business development among project leads

Figure 3: Project Lead Familiarity with financial pro forma development



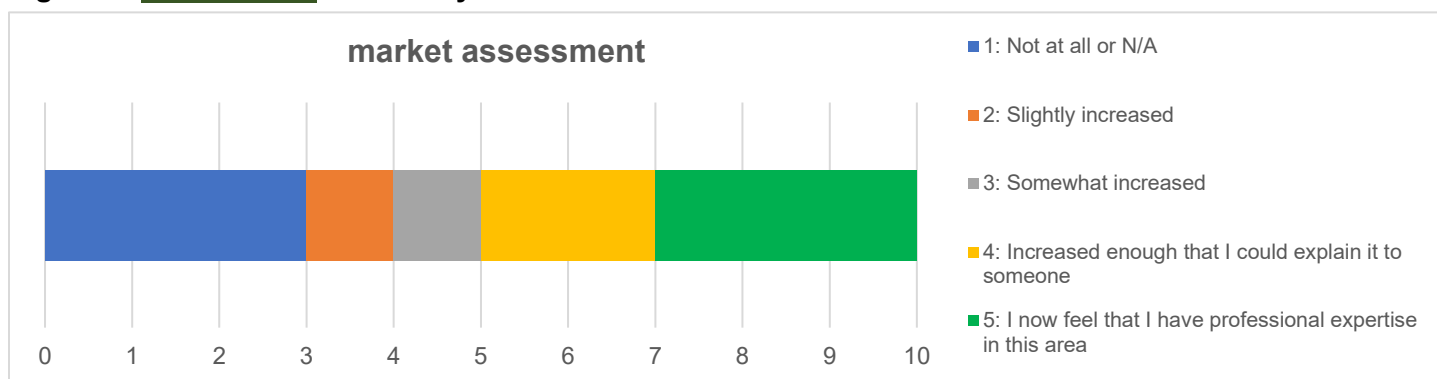
Average rating: 3.4, indicating familiarity somewhat increased, but project leads overall aren't familiar enough to explain it

Figure 4: Project Lead Familiarity with financial structuring of transaction



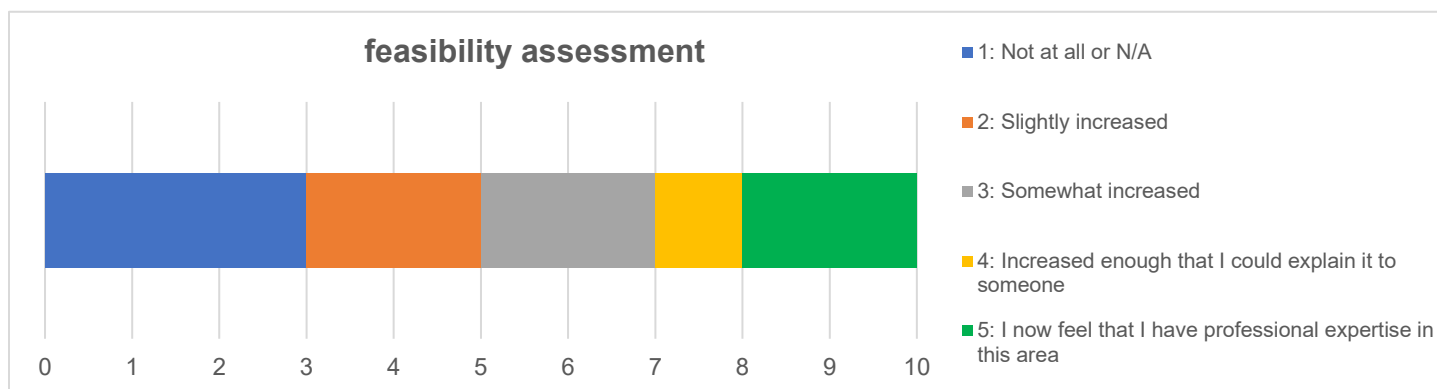
Average rating: 3.3, indicating familiarity somewhat increased, but project leads overall aren't familiar enough to explain it

Figure 5: Project Lead Familiarity with market assessment



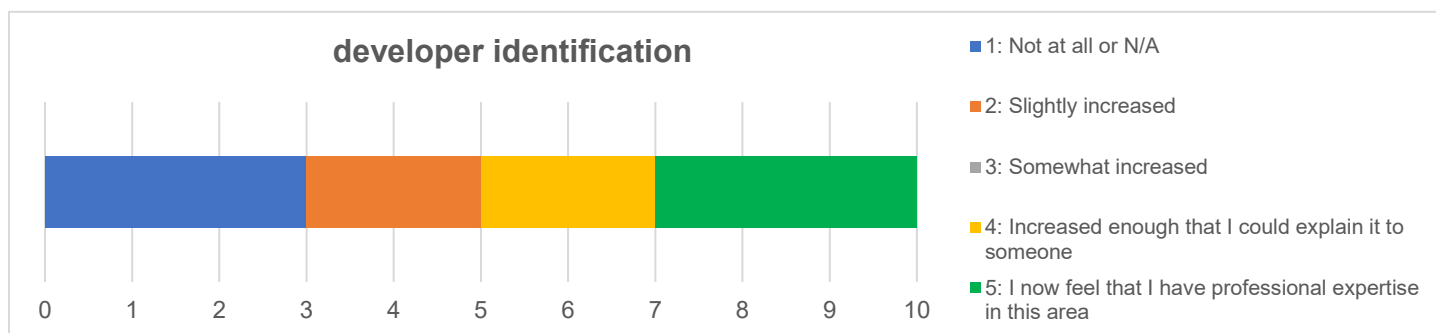
Average rating: 3.1, indicating familiarity somewhat increased, but project leads overall aren't familiar enough to explain it

Figure 6: Project Lead Familiarity with feasibility assessment



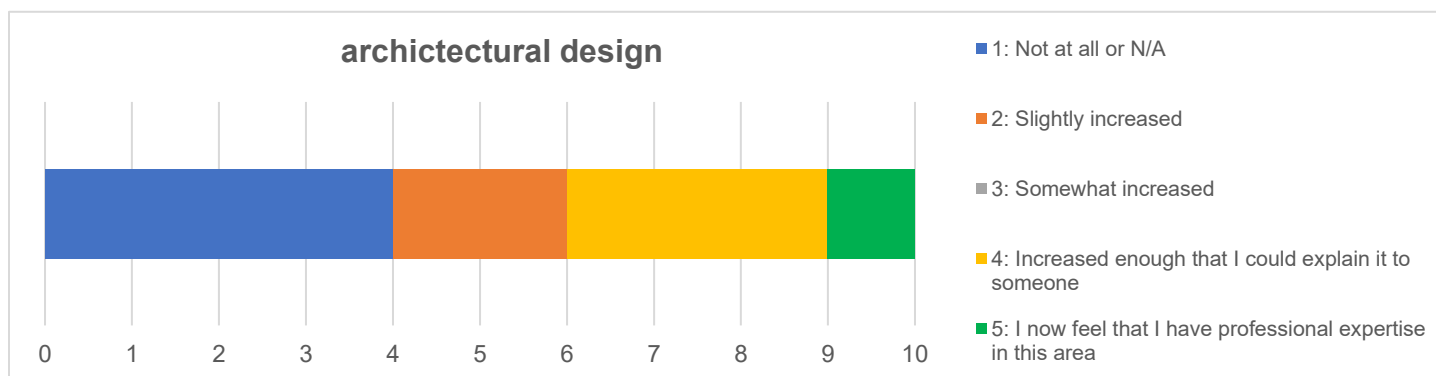
Average rating: 2.7, indicating a slight increase in familiarity with feasibility among project leads

Figure 7: Project Lead Familiarity with developer identification



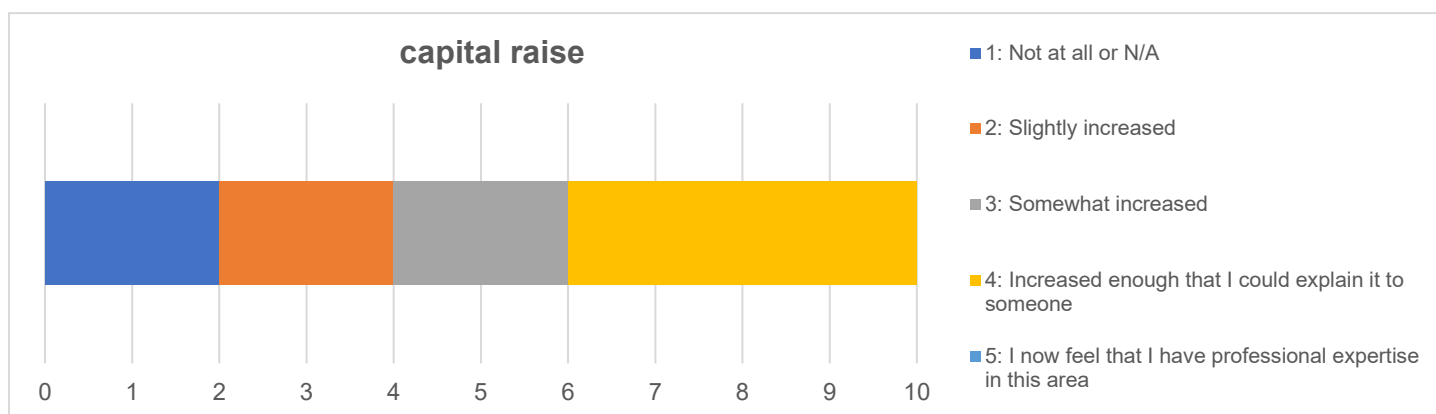
Average rating: 3.0, indicating familiarity somewhat increased, but project leads overall aren't familiar enough to explain it

Figure 8: Project Lead Familiarity with architectural design



Average rating: 2.5, indicating a slight increase in familiarity with architectural design among project leads

Figure 9: Project Lead Familiarity with capital raise



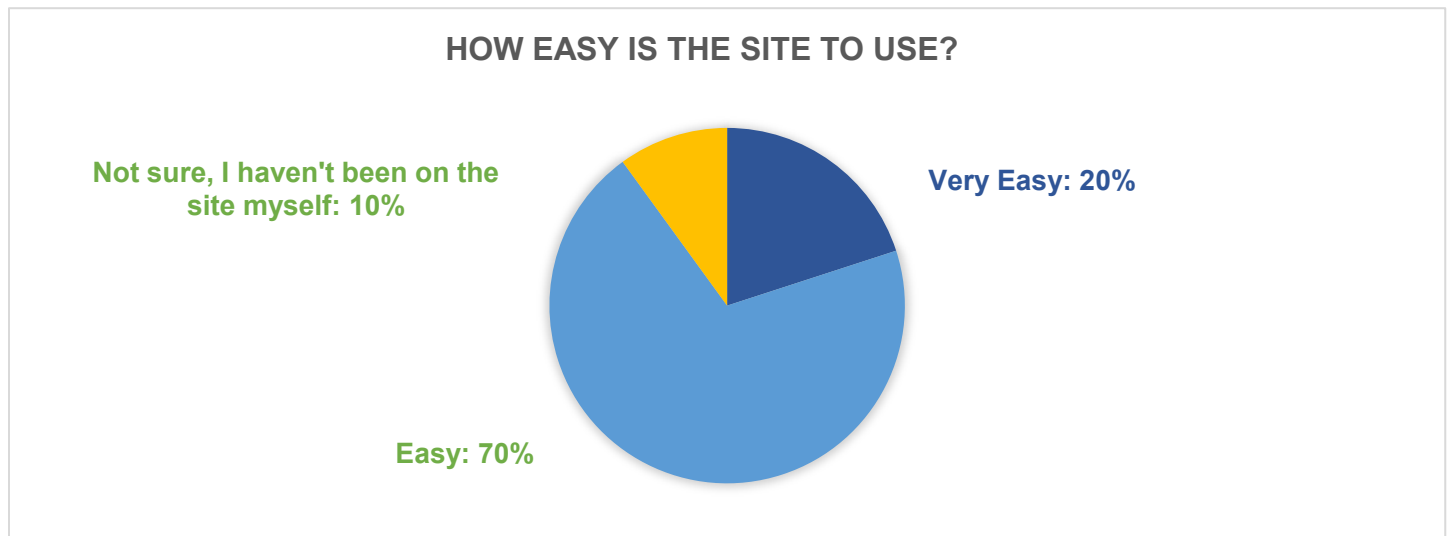
Average rating: 2.8, indicating a slight increase in familiarity with capital raise among project leads

The Opportunity Exchange

Project leads were asked about awareness of The Opportunity Exchange, ease of use, and effectiveness for their projects. A total of 10 project leads responded to these items.

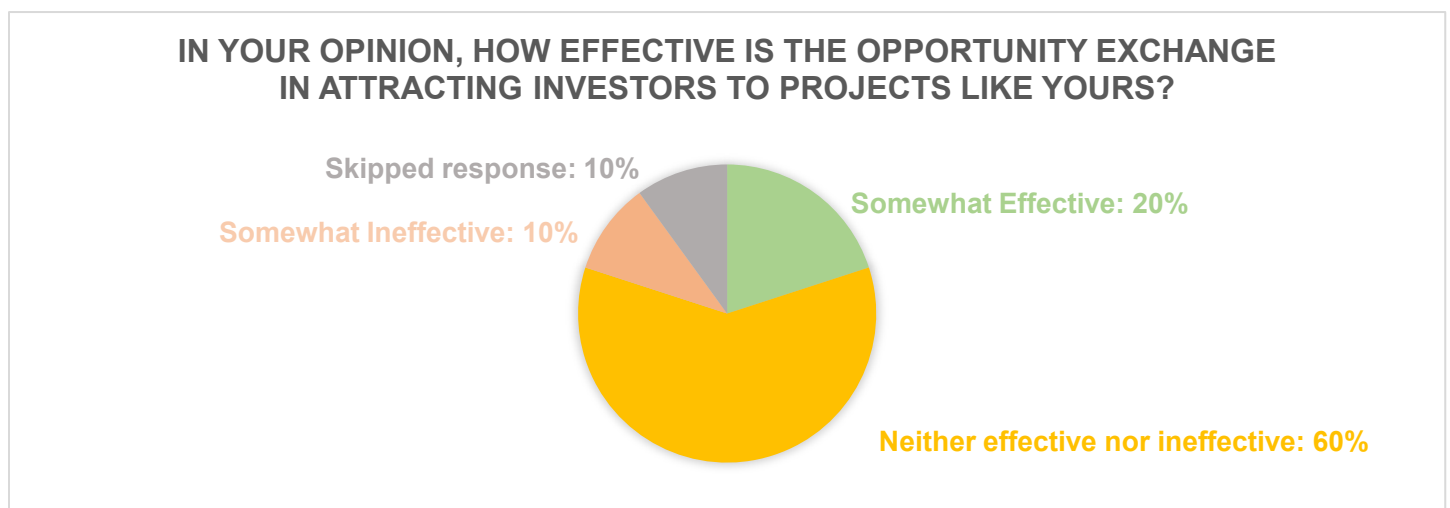
0 out of 10 project leads were familiar with The Opportunity Exchange prior to Opportunity Appalachia.

Figure 10: Ease of Using The Opportunity Exchange



7 out of 10 project leads thought The Opportunity Exchange was easy to use. **2 of 10** thought it was very easy, and **1** project lead had not been on the site.

Figure 11: Effectiveness of The Opportunity Exchange



6 out of 10 project leads felt that The Opportunity Exchange was neither effective nor ineffective at attracting investors to projects like theirs.

Investor Convening

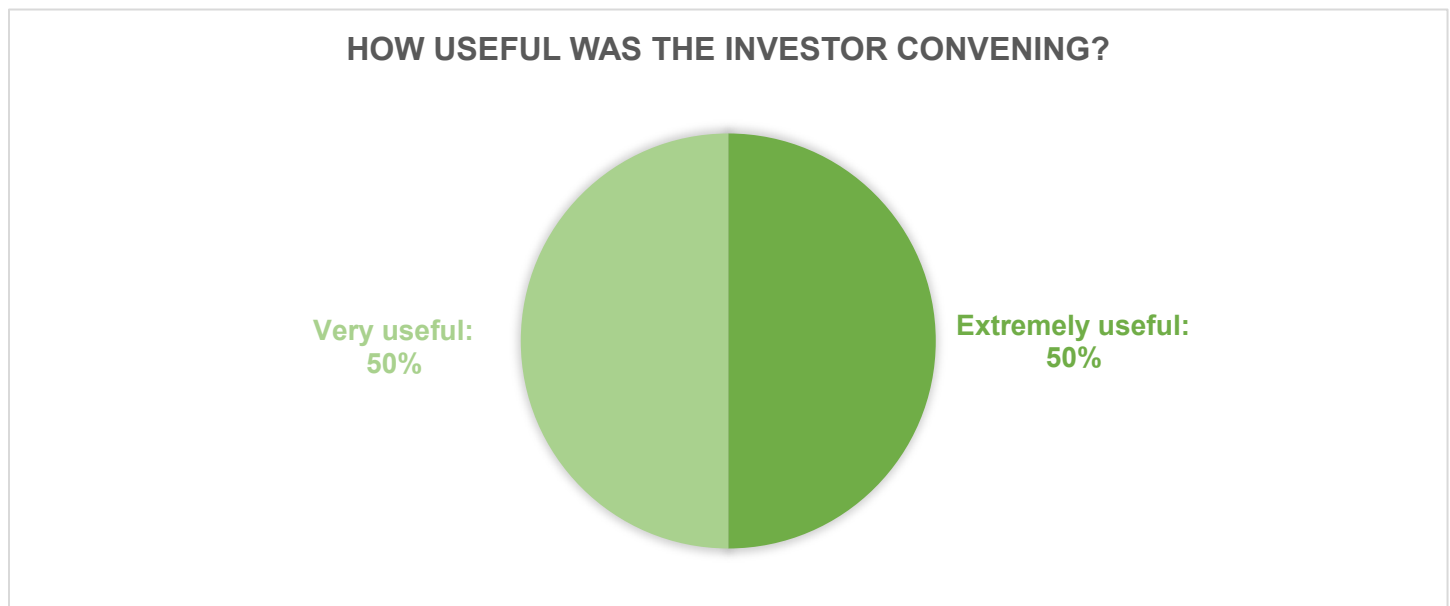
Preparedness

Project leads were asked to rate how prepared they felt for the Investor Convening on a scale of 1 - 10, where *1 = not prepared at all*, *5 = neutral*, and *10 = fully prepared*.

Project leads rated their level of preparedness as **8.5 out of 10**. The lowest rating was 7 and the highest rating was 10. One project lead did not respond to this item.

Usefulness of the Investor Convening

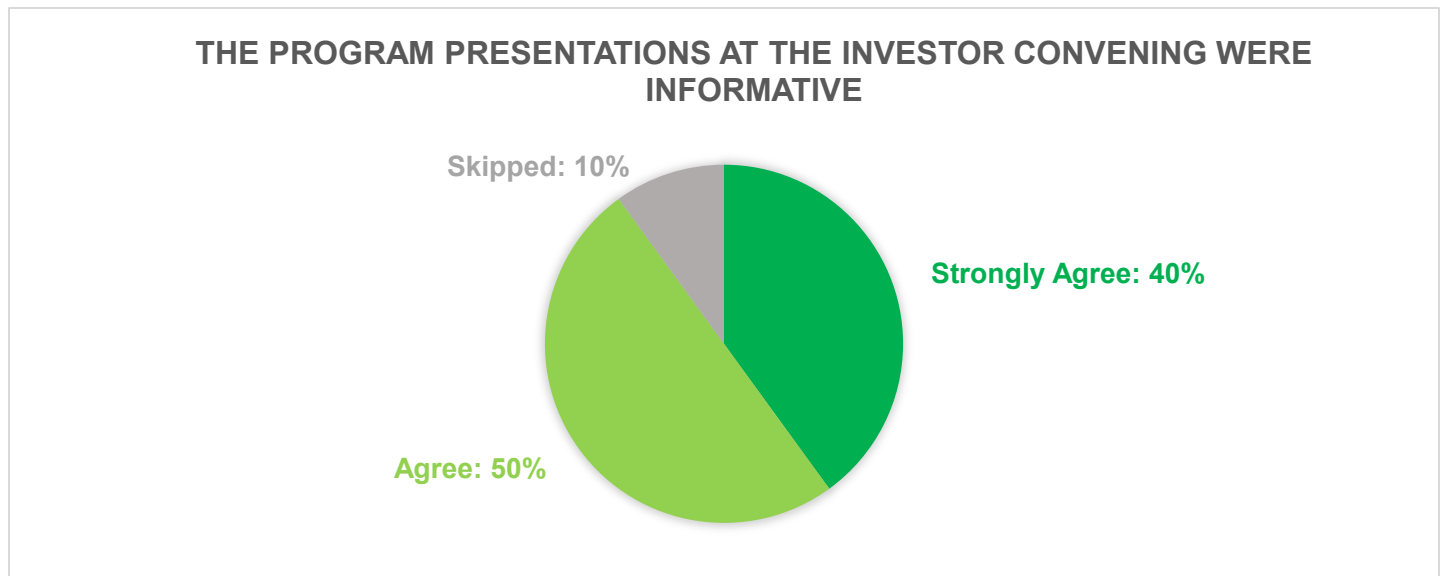
Figure 12: Usefulness of the Investor Convening



5 out of 10 project leads felt that the Investor Convening was extremely useful. The other half thought it was very useful.

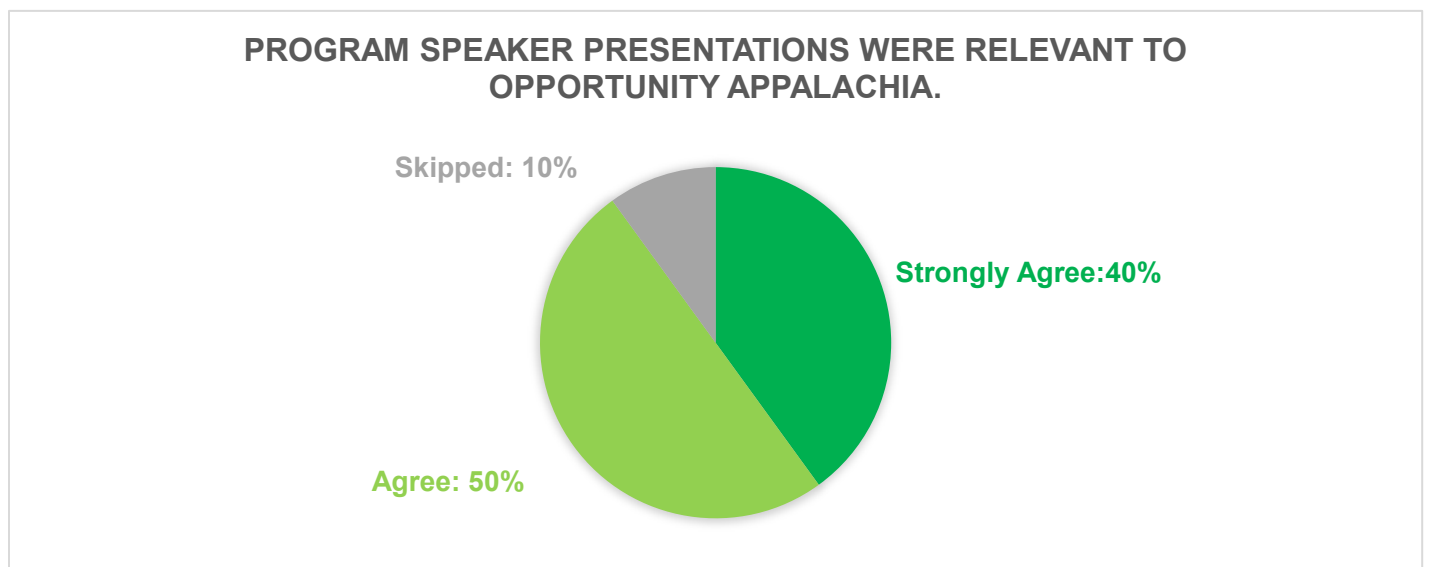
Other aspects about the Investor Convening

Figure 13: Program Presentations



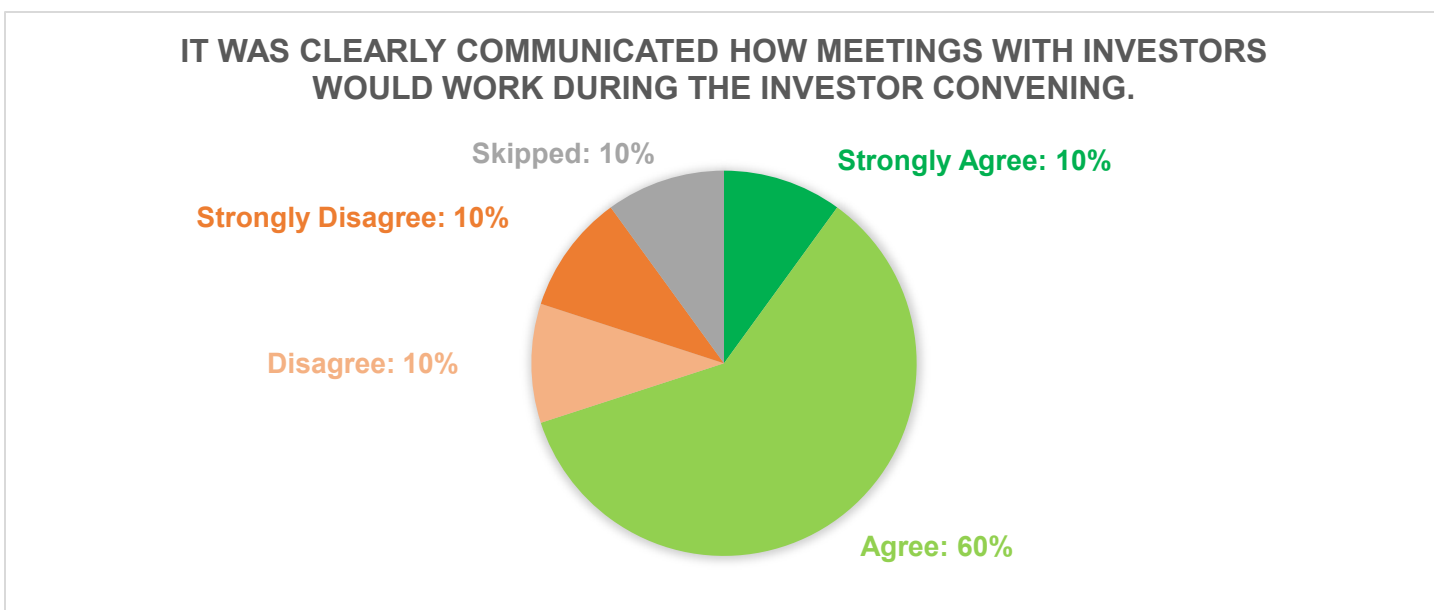
9 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that the presentations at the Investor Convening were informative. **1** project lead skipped this item.

Figure 14: Relevancy of Speaker Presentations



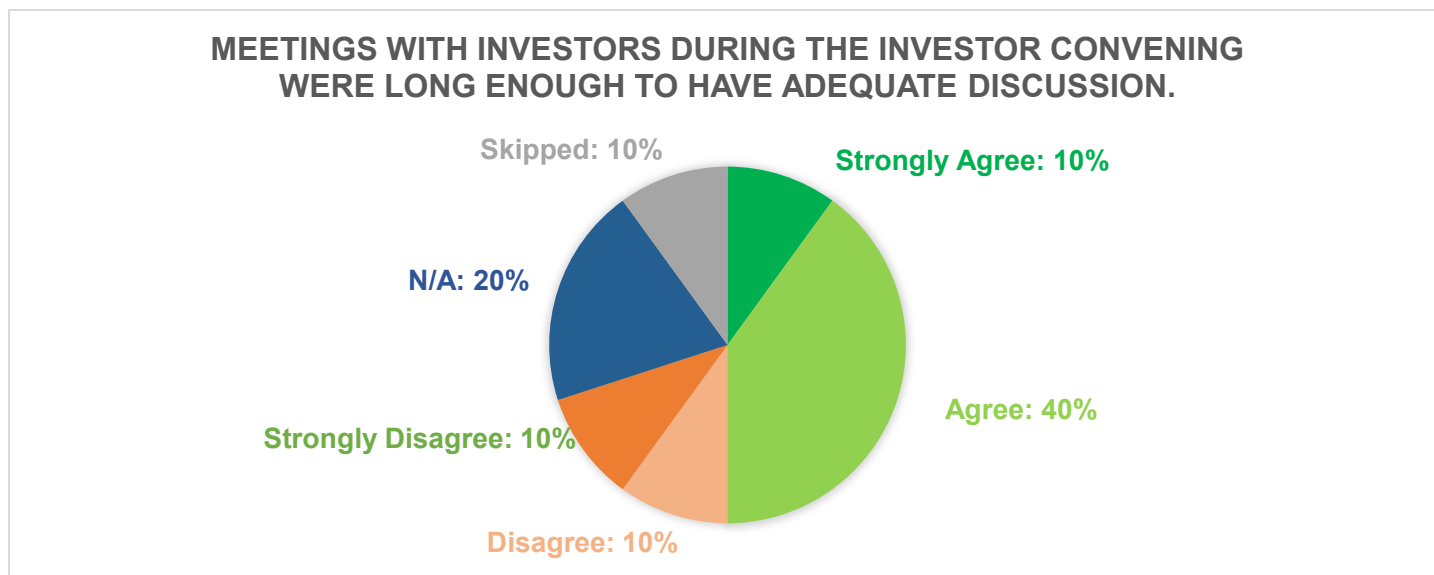
9 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that program speaker presentations were relevant to Opportunity Appalachia. **1** project lead skipped this item.

Figure 15: Communication about Investor Meetings



7 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that it was clearly communicated about how meetings with investors would work during the Investor Convening. **2 out of 10** project leads either strongly disagreed or disagreed, and **1** project lead skipped this item.

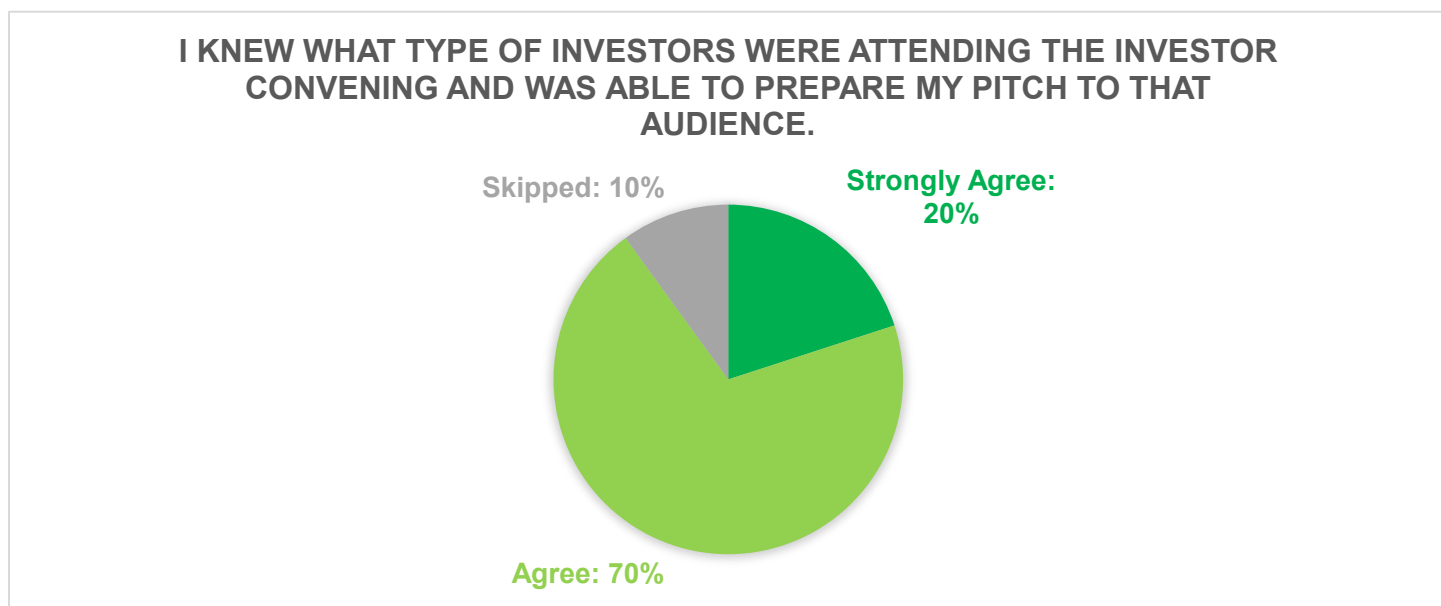
Figure 16: Length of Investor Meetings



5 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that meetings with investors during the Investor Convening were long enough to have adequate discussion. **2 out of 10** strongly disagreed or disagreed. **2 out of 10** responded that the item was not applicable, indicated that they did not meet with an investor, and **1** project lead skipped this item.

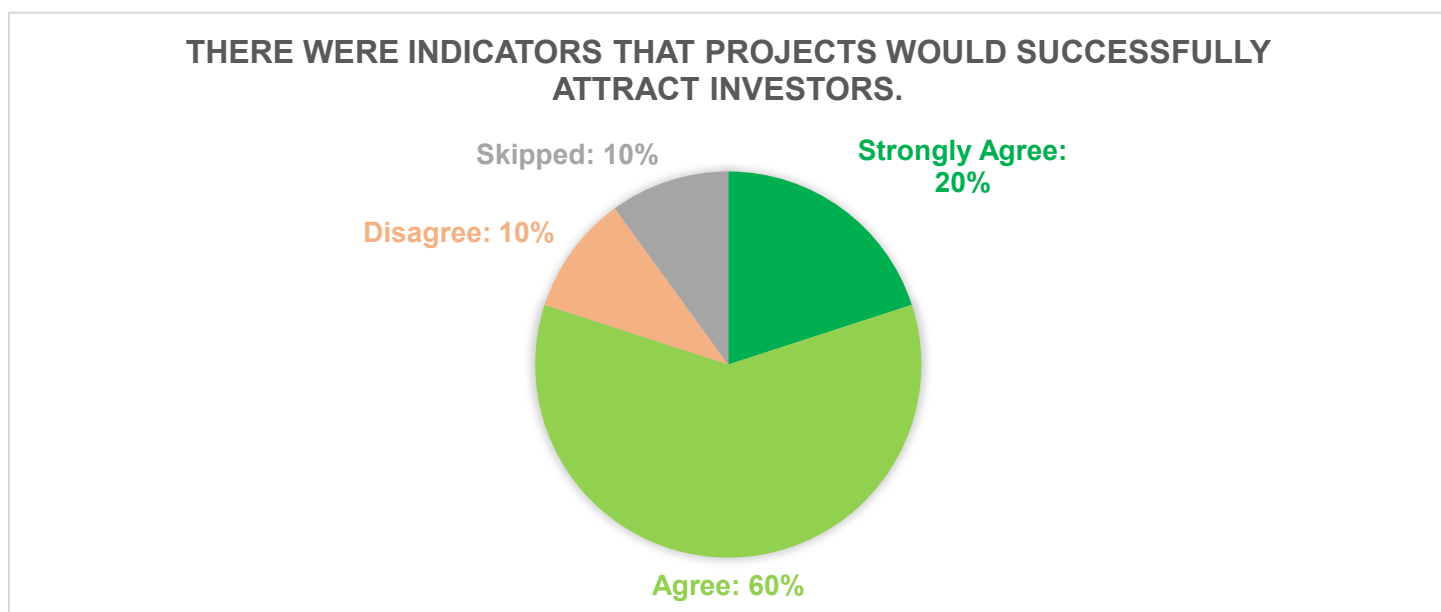
OA Response: This part of the program did not work effectively as only four or five investors signed up for these meetings. One project lead attempted to meet with an investor but was unable to get into the session. Another project lead had investors sign up for meetings but did not show up.

Figure 17: Types of Investors Attending the Convening



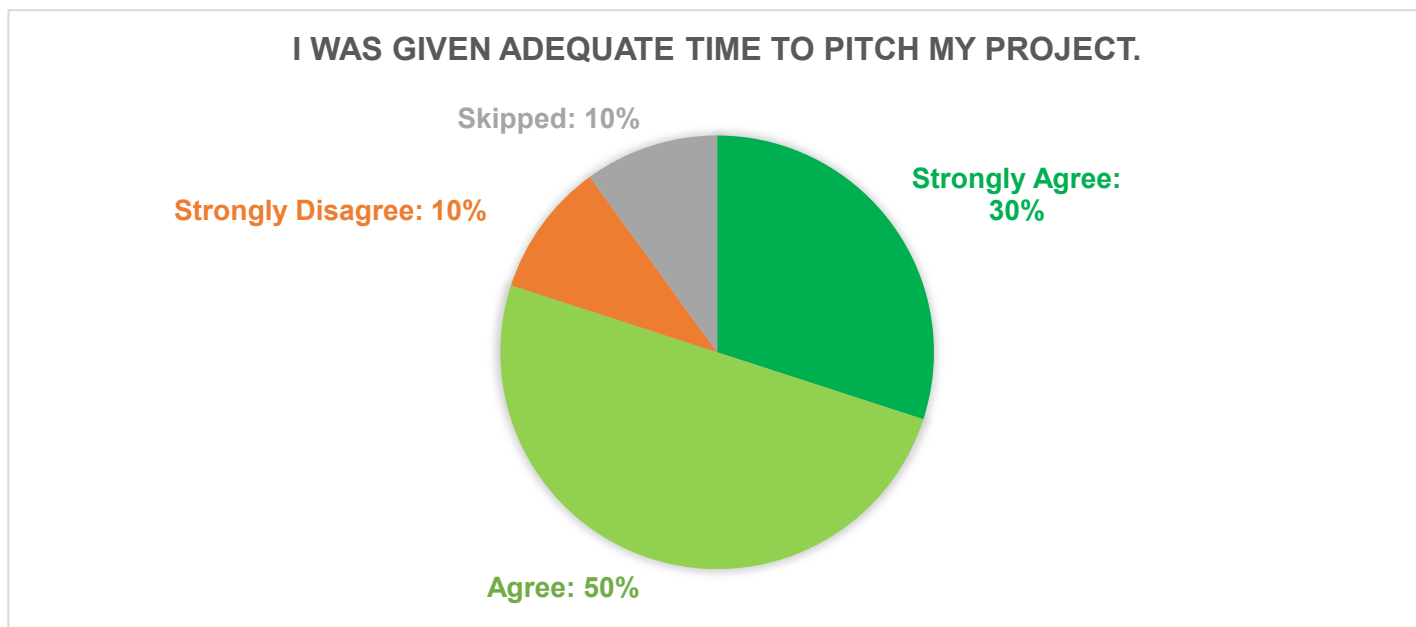
9 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that they knew what type of investors were attending the Investor Convening and were able to prepare their pitch to that audience. **1** project lead skipped this item.

Figure 18: Indicators of Successfully Attracting Investors



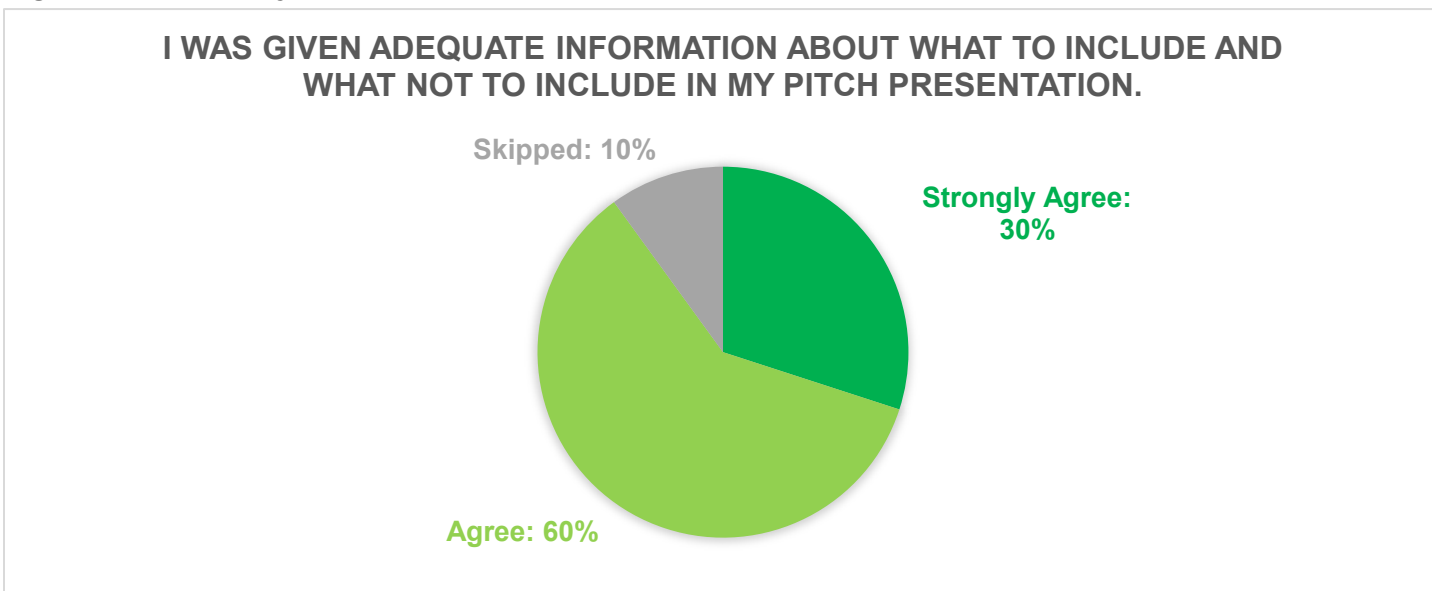
8 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that there were indicators that projects would successfully attract investors. **1 out of 10** project leads disagreed, and **1** project lead skipped this item.

Figure 19: Adequacy of Time for Pitch



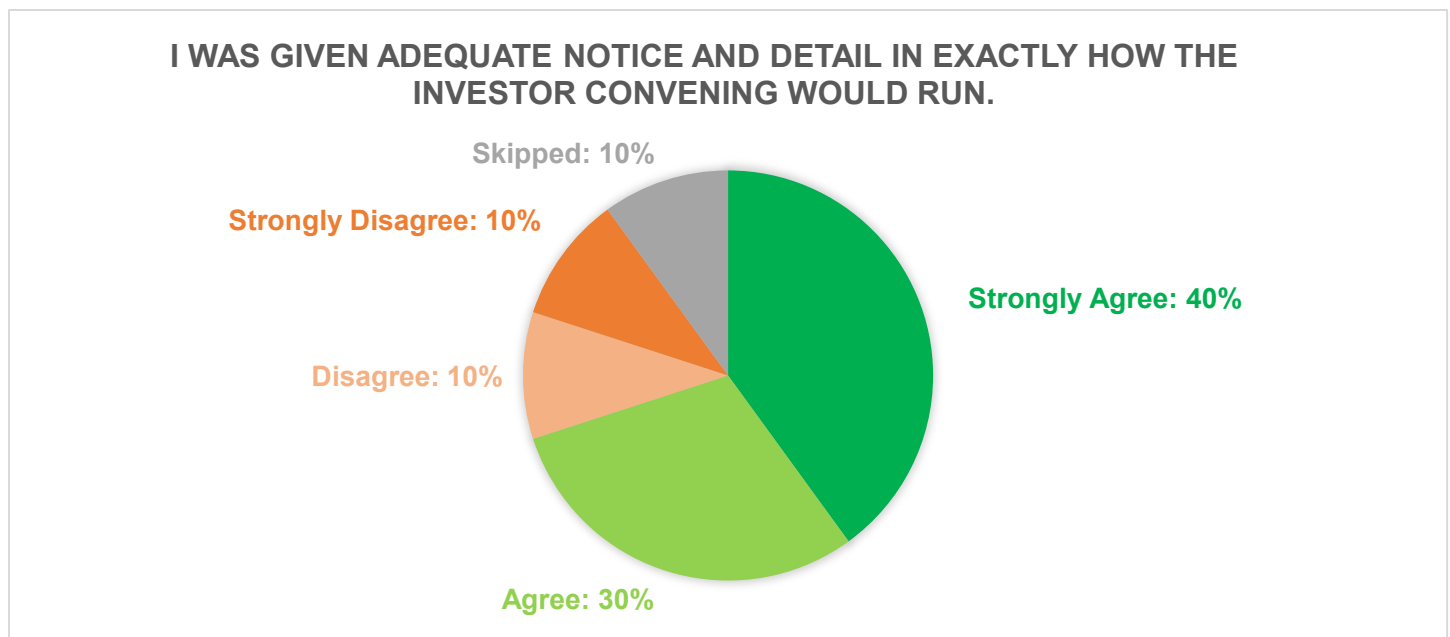
8 out of 10 projects leads strongly agreed or agreed that they were given adequate time to pitch their project. **1 out of 10** project leads strongly disagreed, and **1** project lead skipped this item.

Figure 20: Adequacy of Information to Include in Pitch



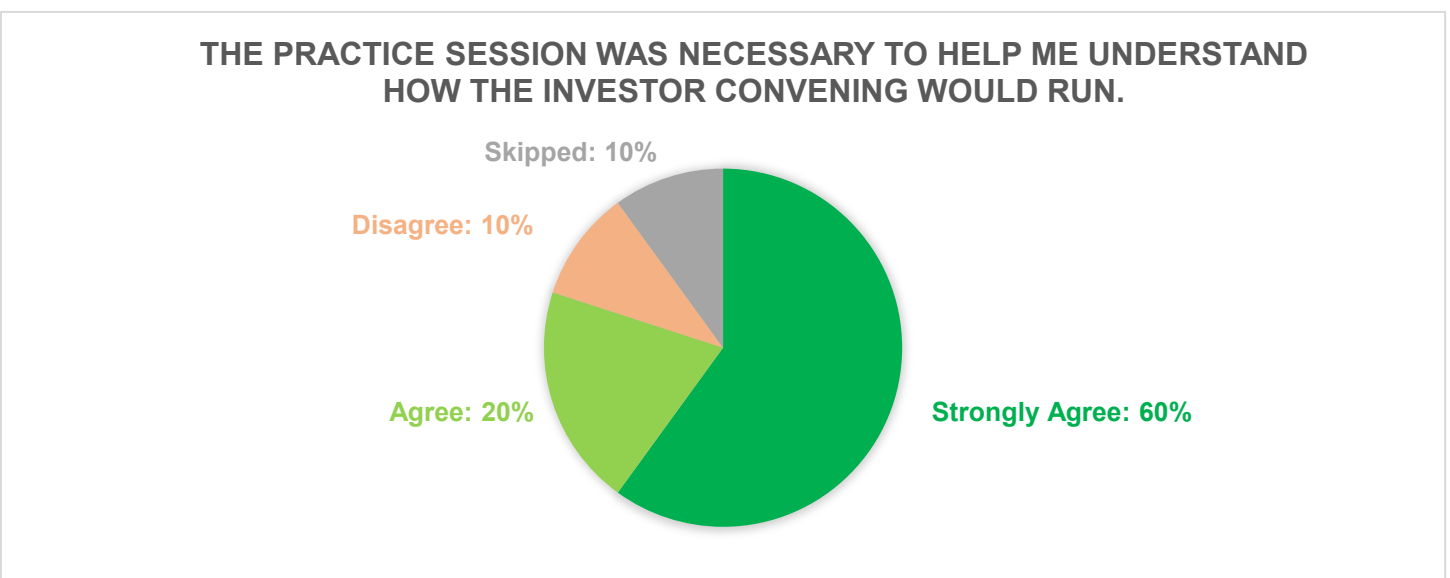
9 out of 10 project leads strongly agree or agree that they were given adequate information about what to include and what not to include in their pitch presentation at the Investor Convening. **1** project lead skipped this item.

Figure 21: Adequacy in Notice and Detail of Investor Convening



7 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that they were given adequate notice and detail in exactly how the Investor Convening would run. **2 out of 10** project leads strongly disagreed or disagreed, and **1** project lead skipped this item.

Figure 22: Practice Session



8 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that the practice session was necessary to help them understand how the Investor Convening would run. **1 out of 10** project leads disagreed, and **1** project lead skipped this item.

Attendance of Investor Convening Sessions

Project leads were asked to indicate which sessions that they attended at the Investor Convening in addition to their project pitch session. One project lead did not pitch at the Investor Convening and skipped these items.

The figures below represent attendance of the nine project leads who attended the Investor Convening.

Figure 23: Day 1 Welcome and Opening Remarks

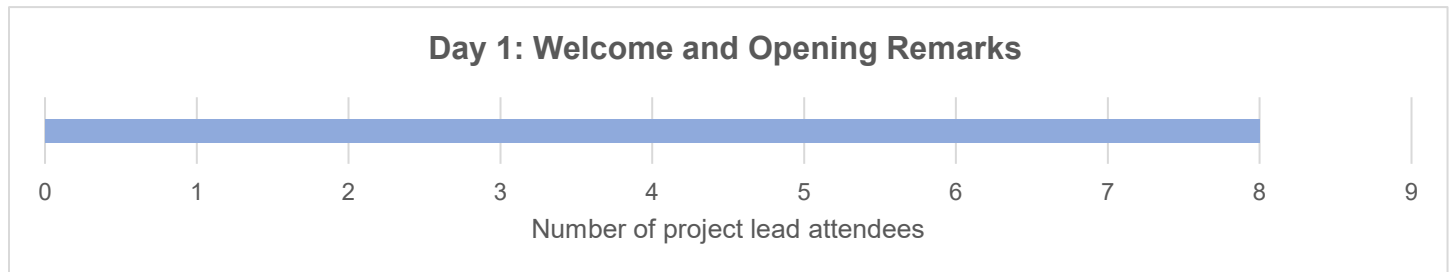


Figure 24: The State of Opportunity Zones and Investor Education

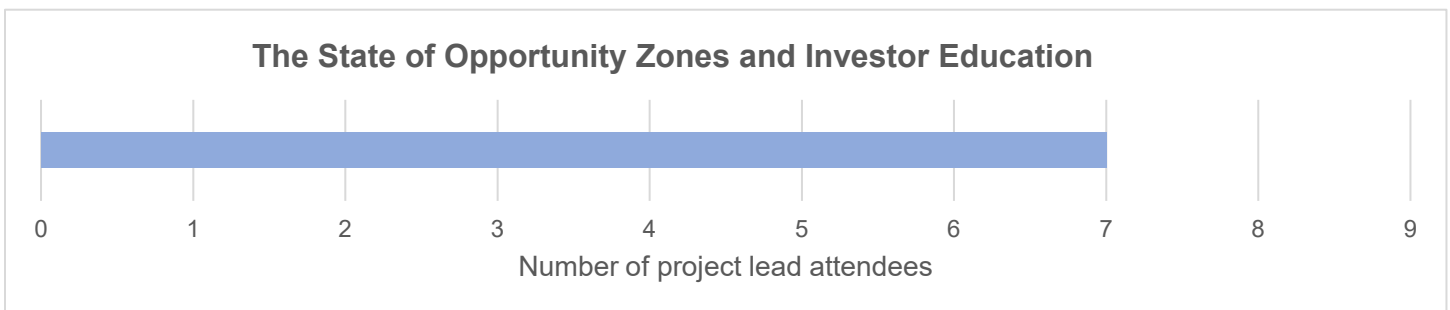


Figure 25: Day 1 Closing Remarks

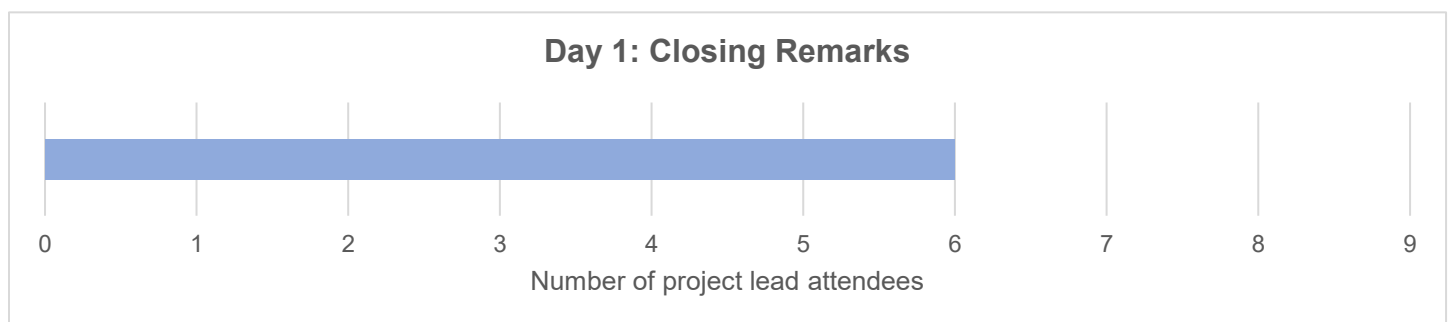


Figure 26: Private Investor Meetings with Project Sponsors Day 1



Figure 27: Day 2 Welcome and Opening Remarks

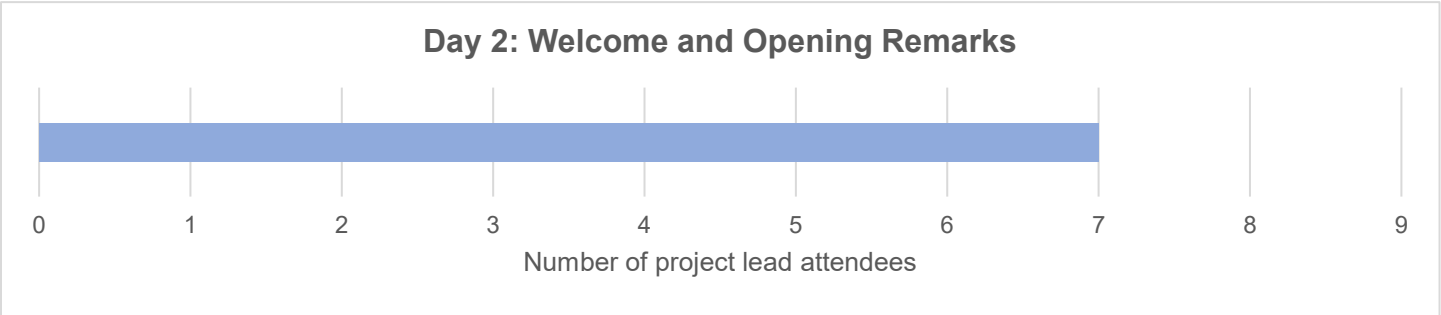


Figure 28: Insights from Investors

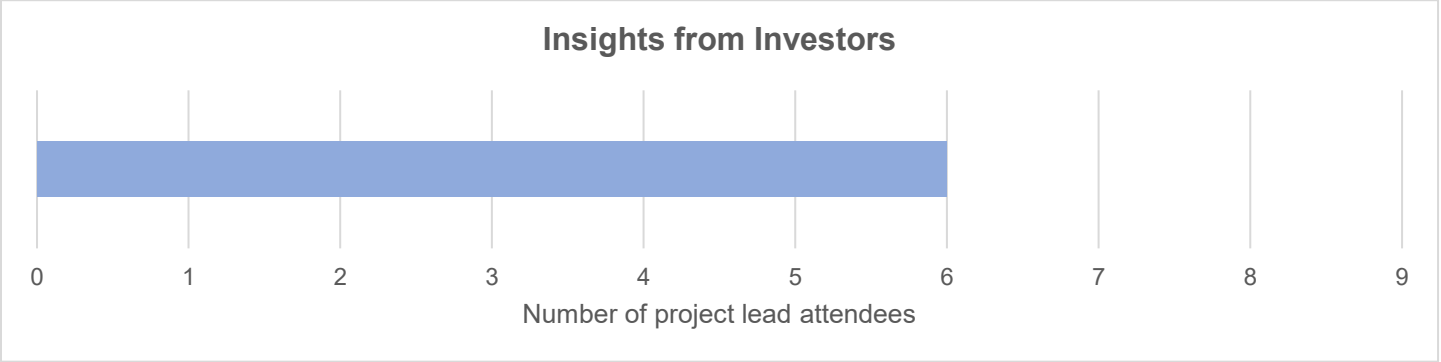


Figure 29: Public Investors and Opportunity Zones

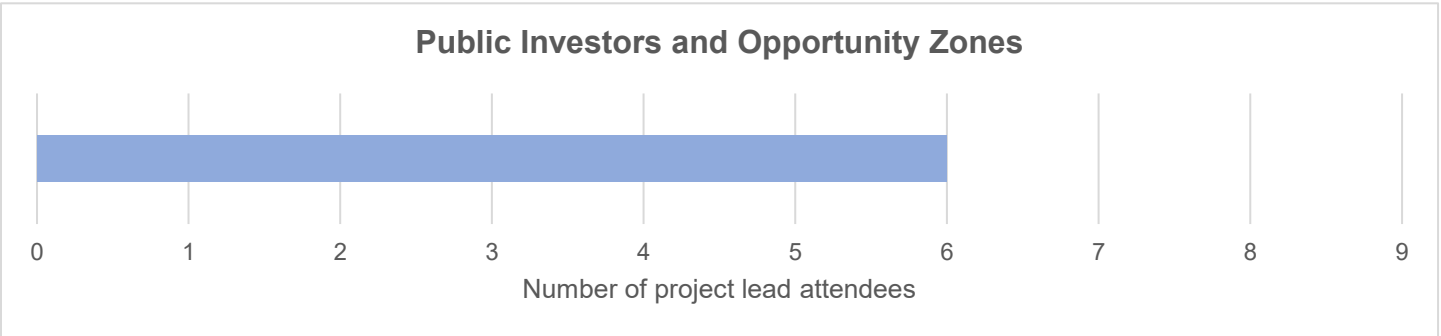


Figure 30: Investing in Appalachia - What We've Learned

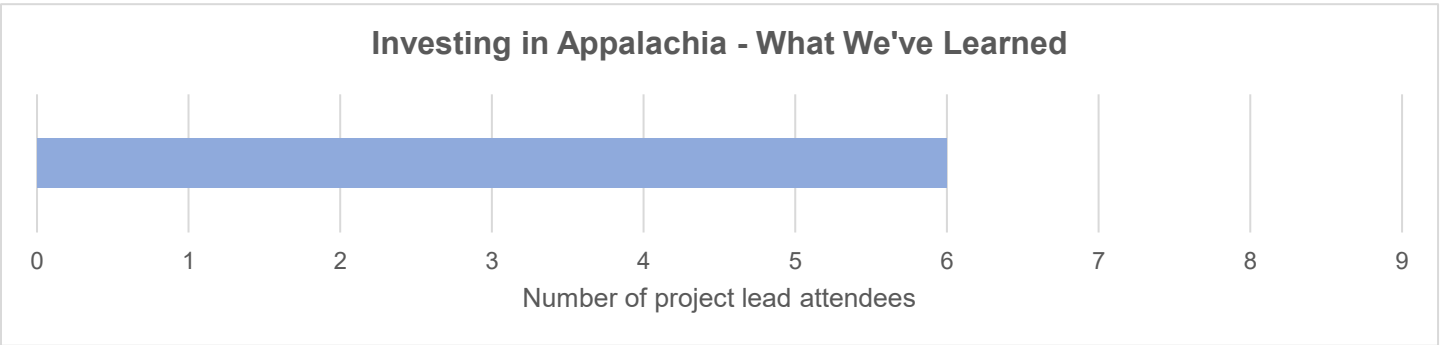


Figure 31: Private Investor Meetings with Project Sponsors Day 2

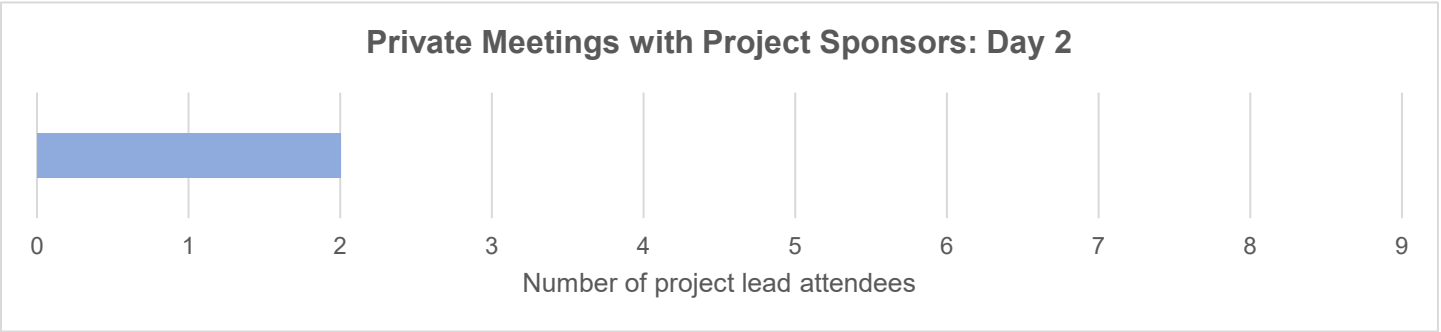
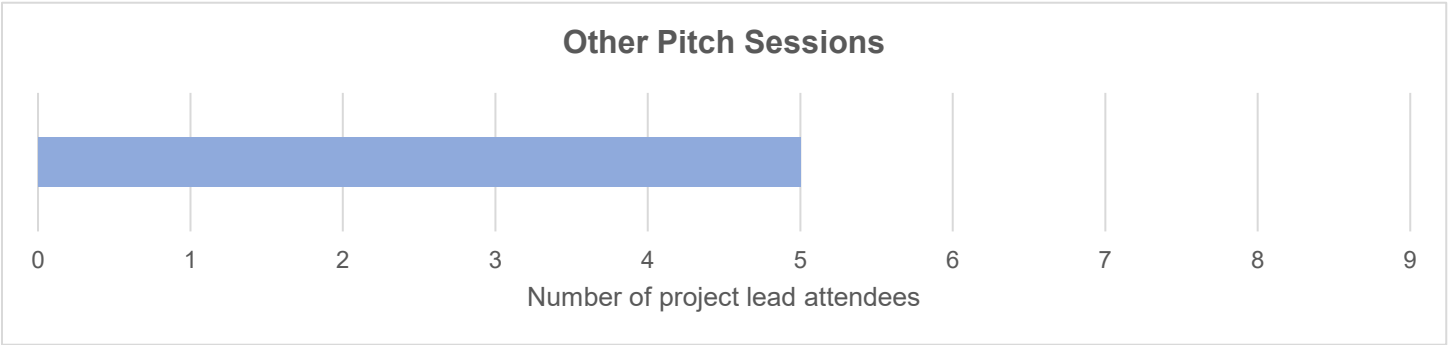


Figure 32: Other Pitch Sessions



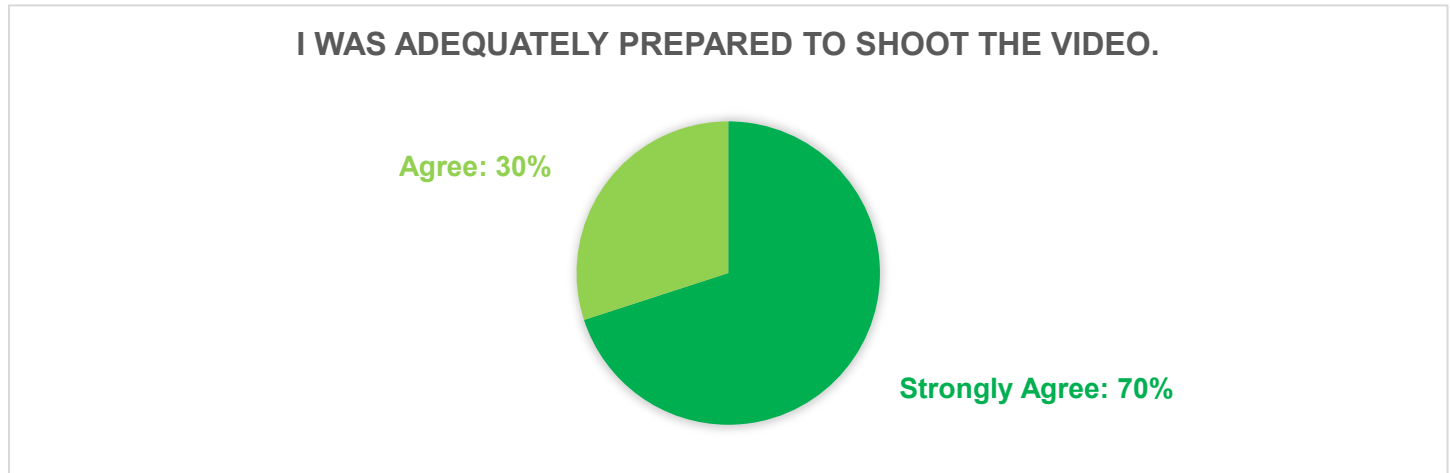
Project Videos

Project leads were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with their project video on a scale of 1 - 10, where 1 = *very dissatisfied*, 5 = *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, and 10 = *very satisfied*.

5 out of 10 project leads rated their video a 10. The average rating of satisfaction with their project video was 9.2. The highest rating was 10, and the lowest rating was 8.

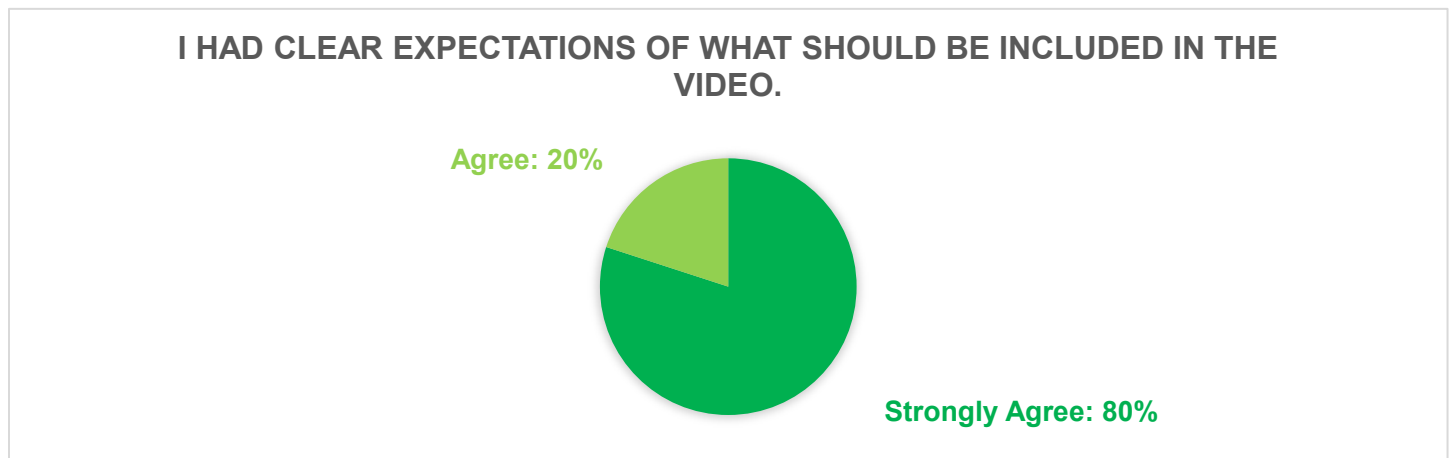
Production of Project Video

Figure 33: Preparedness to Shoot the Video



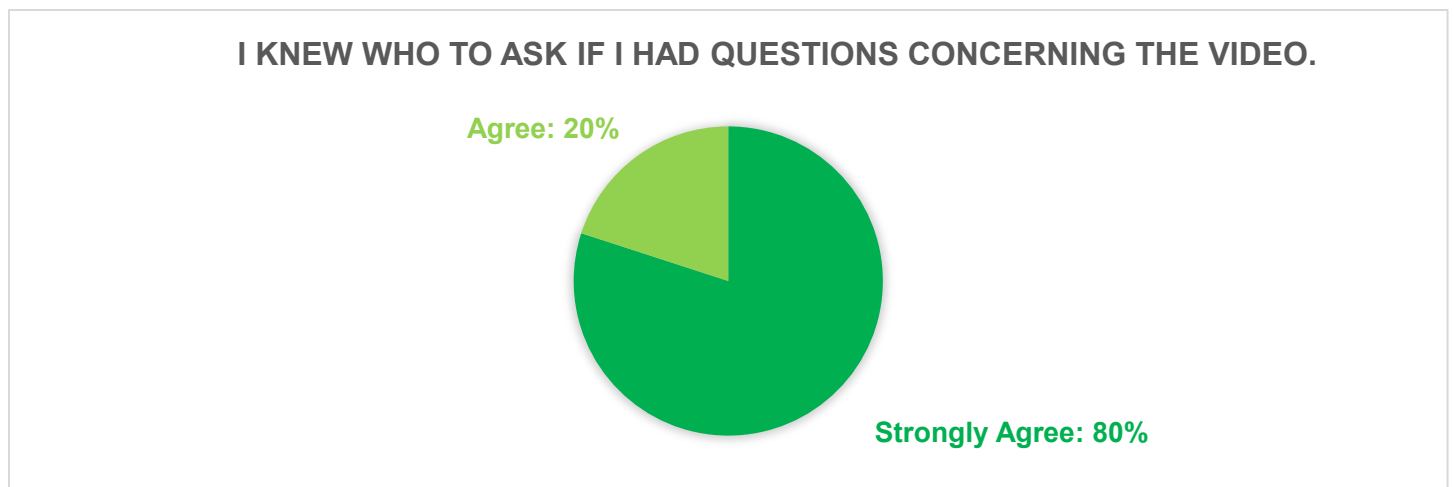
10 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that they were adequately prepared to shoot their project video.

Figure 34: Clear Expectations



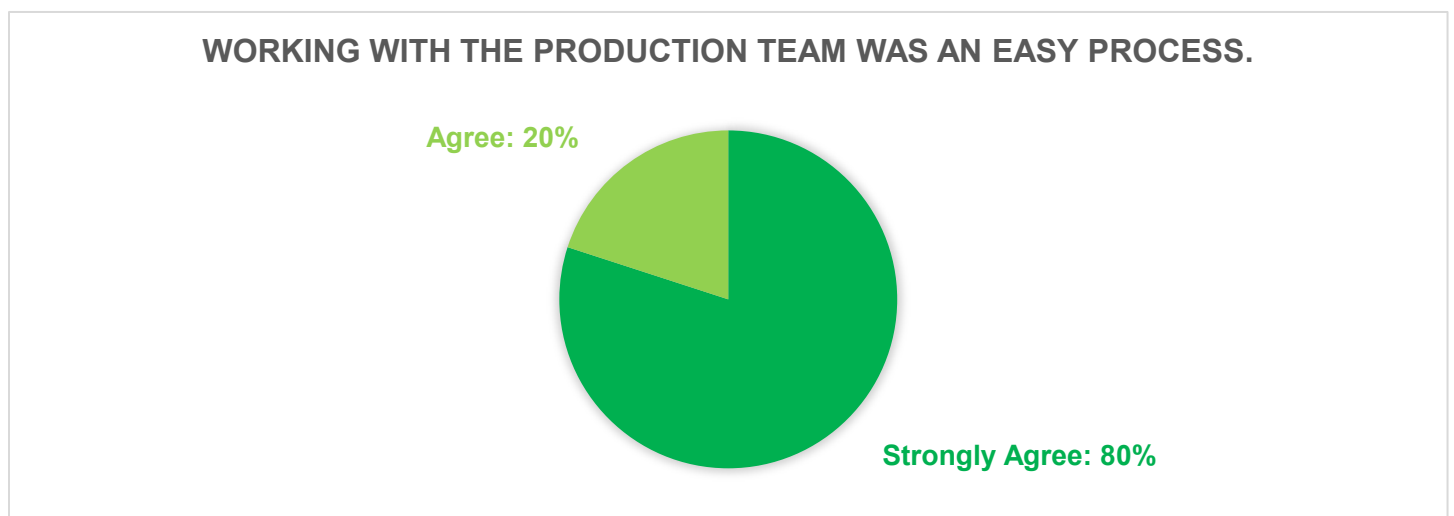
10 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that they had clear expectations of what should be included in their project video.

Figure 35: Questions Concerning the Video



10 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that they knew who to ask if they had questions concerning their project video.

Figure 36: Production Team

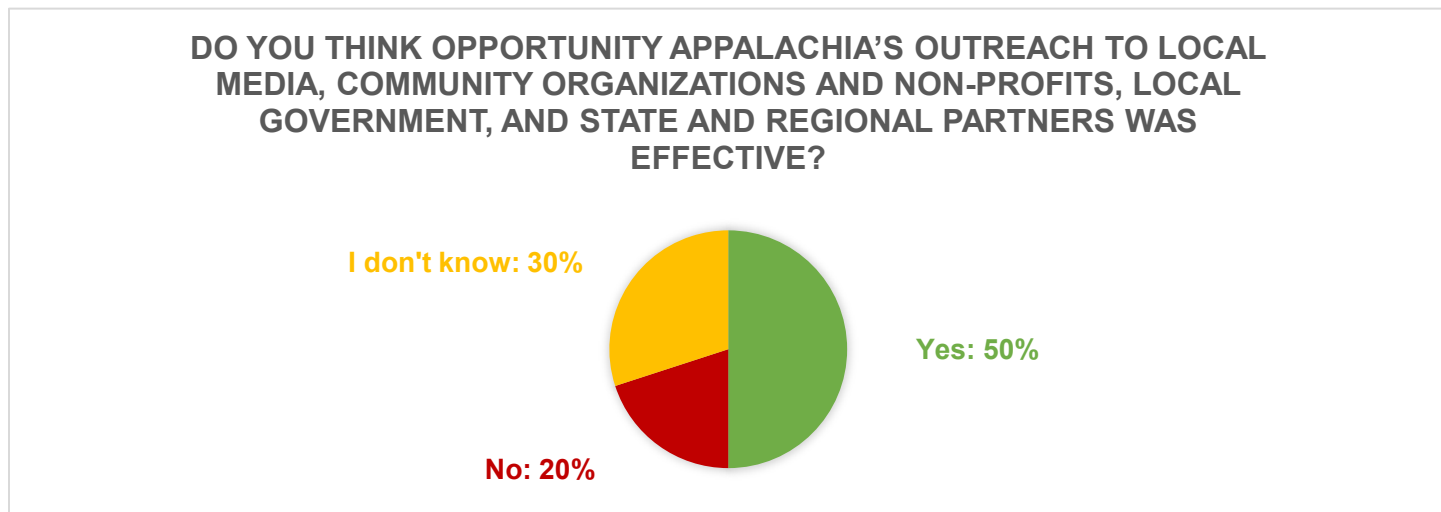


10 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that working with the production team to create their video was an easy process.

Visibility of Opportunity Appalachia

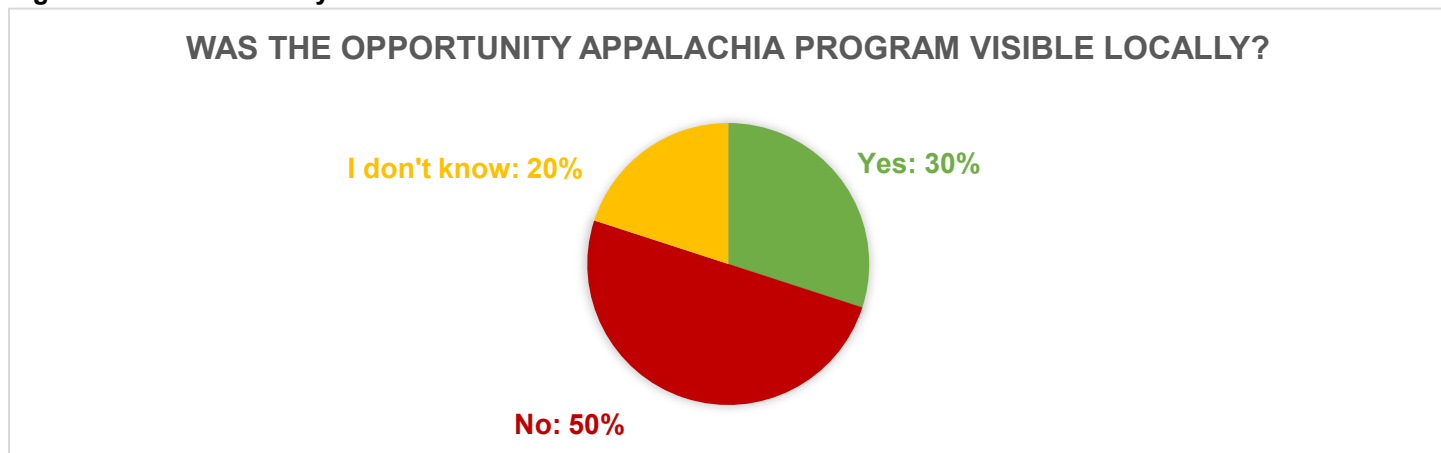
Opportunity Appalachia was promoted at the state level and through Appalachian Community Capital. Project leads were asked to rate how visible they felt the program was locally, regionally, and nationally.

Figure 37: Effectiveness of Outreach



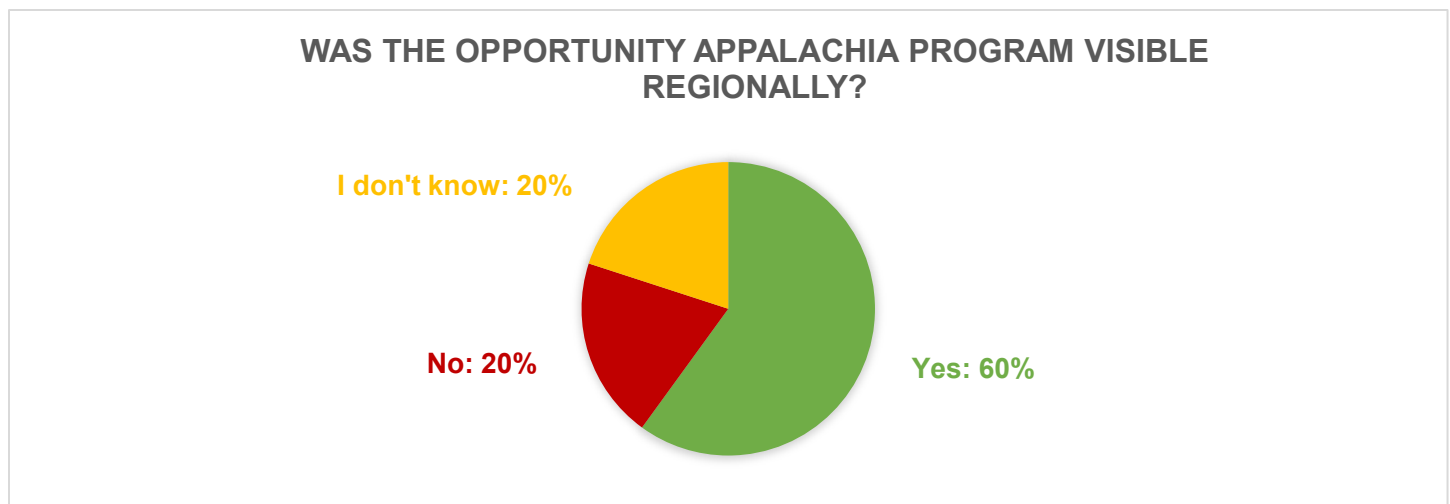
5 out of 10 project leads felt Opportunity Appalachia's outreach approach to local media, community organizations and non-profits, local government, and state and regional partners was effective. **2 out of 10** project leads felt outreach was not effective, and **3** project leads did not know.

Figure 38: Local Visibility



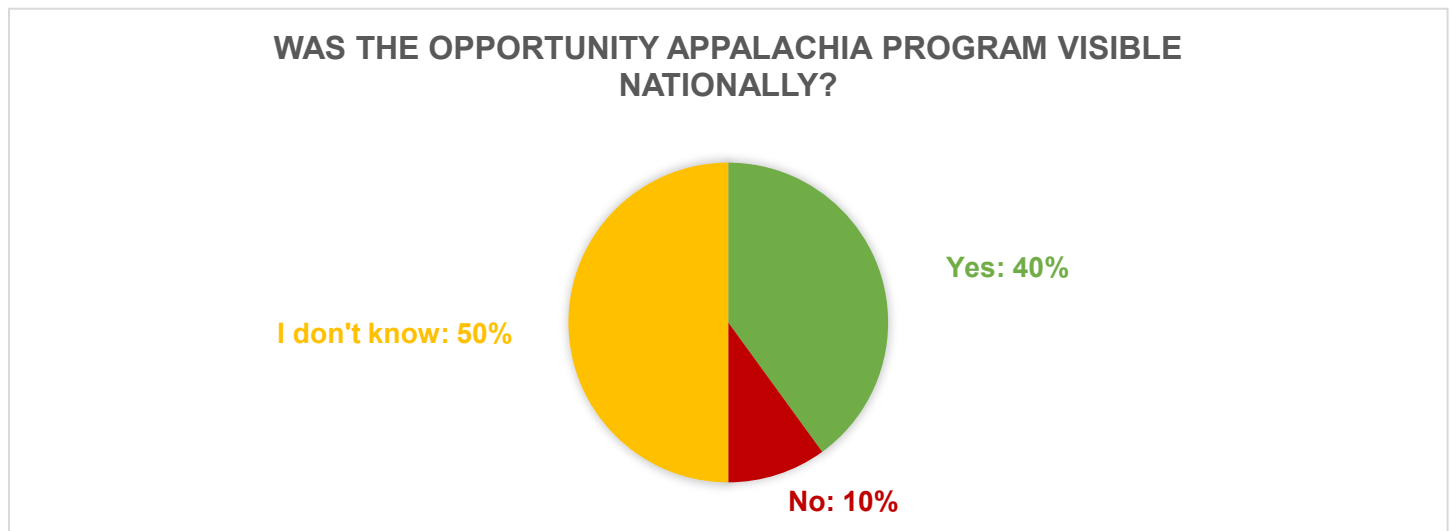
5 out of 10 project leads felt that that the Opportunity Appalachia program was not visible locally. **3 out of 10** project leads felt it was visible locally, and **2** project leads did not know.

Figure 39: Regional Visibility



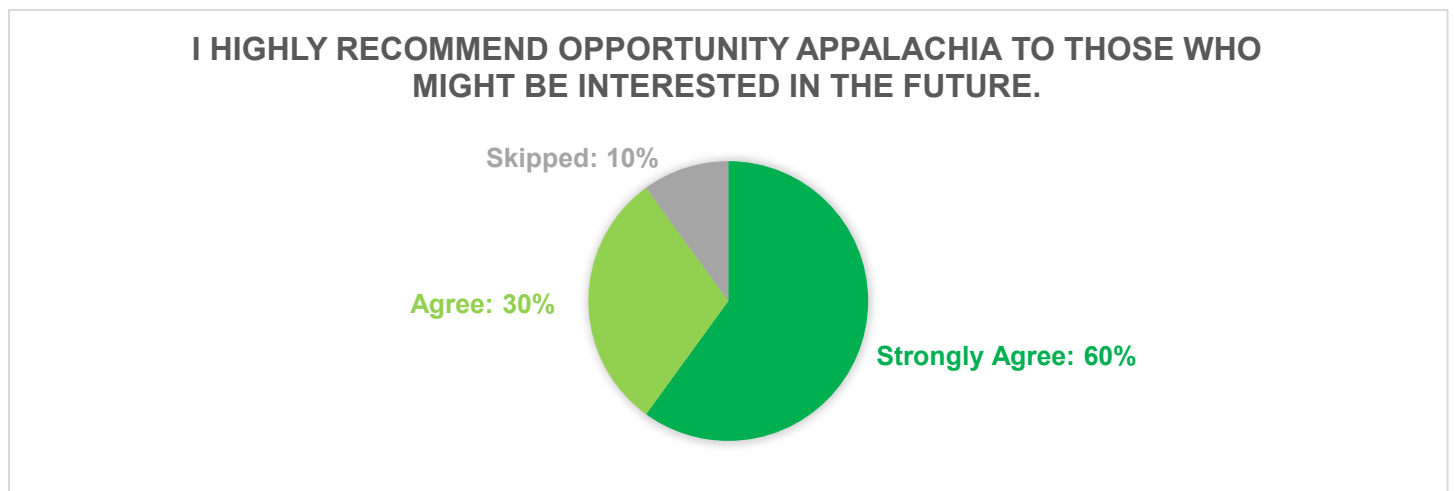
6 out of 10 project leads felt that the Opportunity Appalachia program was visible regionally. **2 out of 10** project leads felt that it was not visible locally, and **2** project leads did not know.

Figure 40: National Visibility



4 out of 10 project leads felt that the Opportunity Appalachia program was visible nationally. **1 out of 10** project leads felt that it was not visible nationally, and **5** project leads did not know.

Figure 41: Recommend Opportunity Appalachia



9 out of 10 project leads strongly agreed or agreed that they would highly recommend Opportunity Appalachia to those who might be interested in the future. **1** project lead skipped this item.

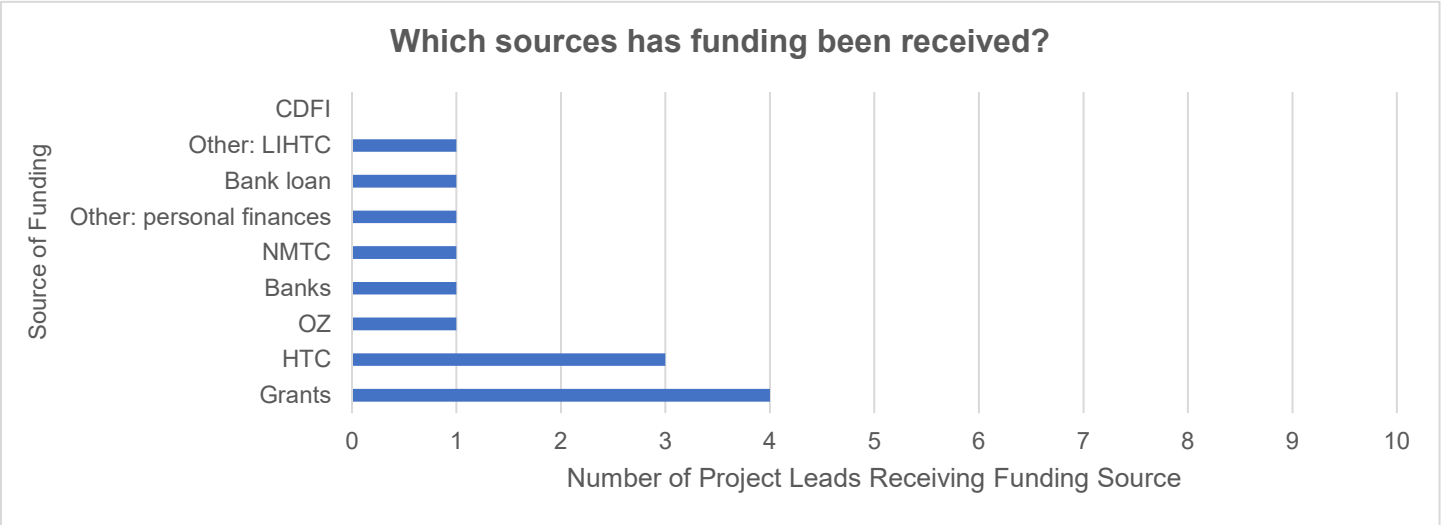
Financial Status

50% of the project leads who responded to the survey have raised at least some capital working towards their goal.

8 out of 10 project leads said they have financial commitments underway.

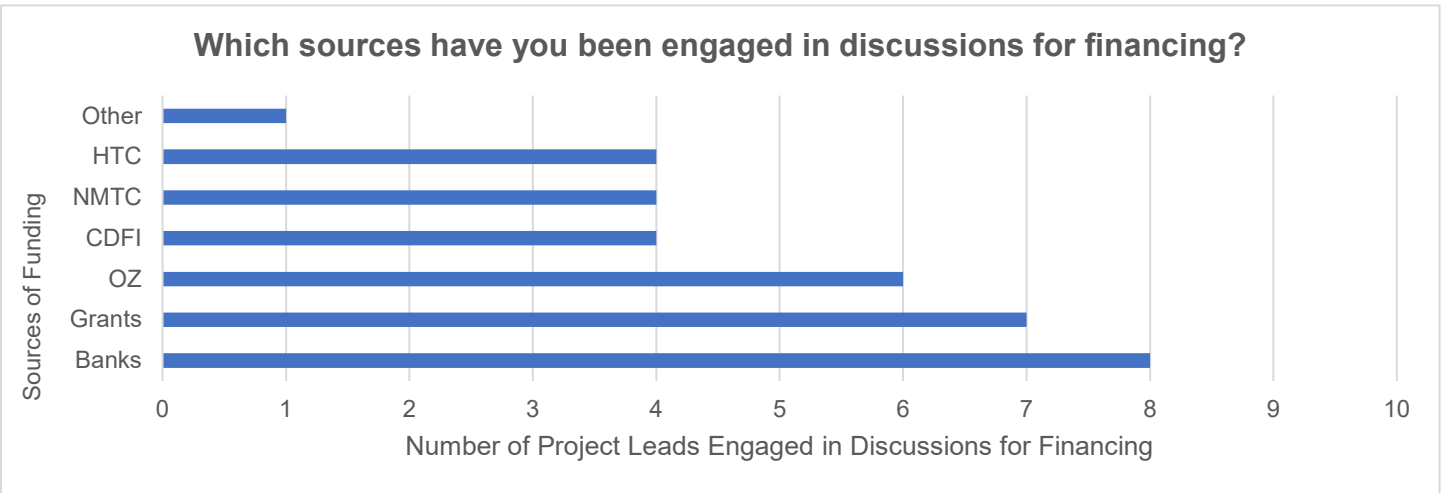
Project leads were asked which of the following sources they have received funds. The graphs below show the sources of funding that project leads have received and the sources in which they have been engaged in discussions for financing.

Figure 42: Sources of Funding Received



4 of 10 project leads receiving funding through grants. **3 of 10** have received funding through HTC. At least **1** project lead has received funding through OZ, banks, NMTC, personal finances, bank loans, or LIHTC.

Figure 43: Sources Engaged in for Discussions for Financing



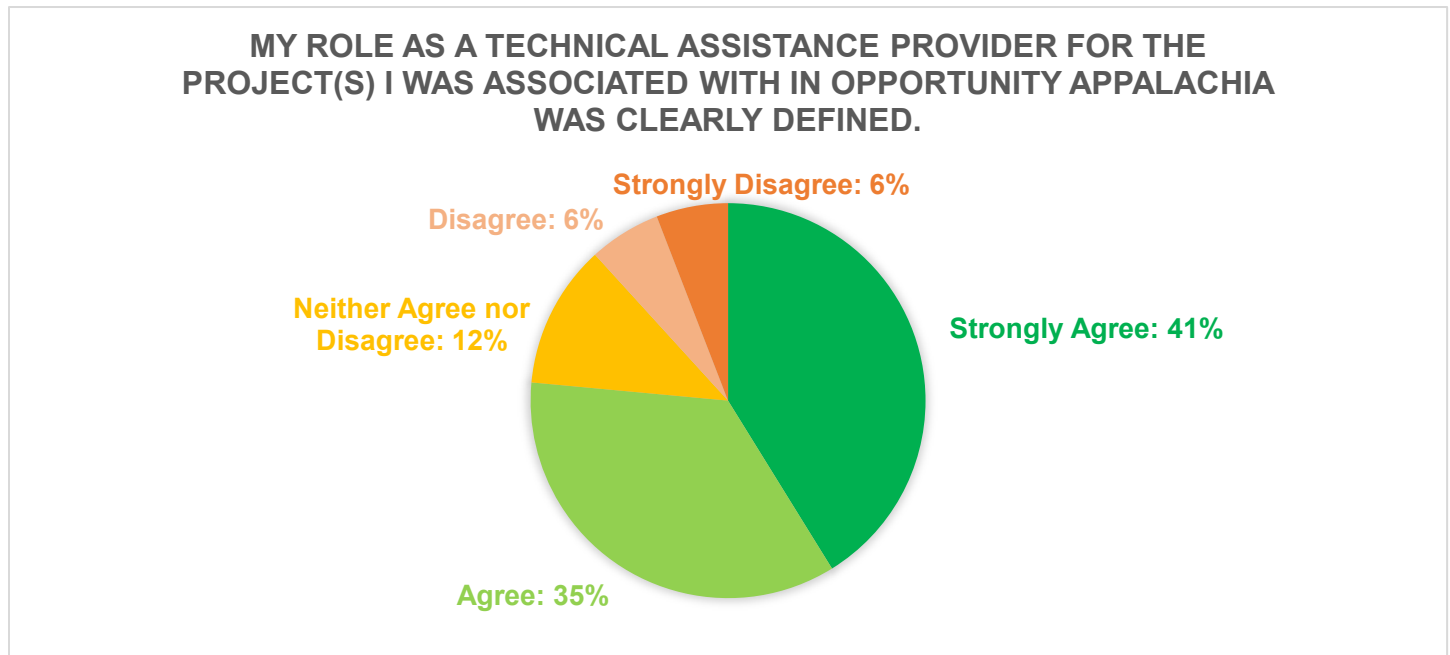
8 out of 10 project leads have been engaged in discussions with banks. **7 out of 10** have been in discussions for grants, and **6 of 10** have been in discussions for OZ financing. Fewer than **4** project leads have been involved in discussions for CDFI, NMTC, HTC, or other financing.

Appendix I: Full Technical Assistance Providers Survey Results

17 technical assistance providers responded to the survey that ranged in topics from their role being clearly defined, communication with project leads, challenges with meeting deliverable deadlines, and payment. Some technical assistance providers worked on multiple projects, and most projects had more than one Technical assistance provider. There was at least one technical assistance provider response for **6 of 6** Ohio projects, **5 of 5** Virginia projects, and **5 of 5** West Virginia projects. The response rate for the survey was **42.5%**.

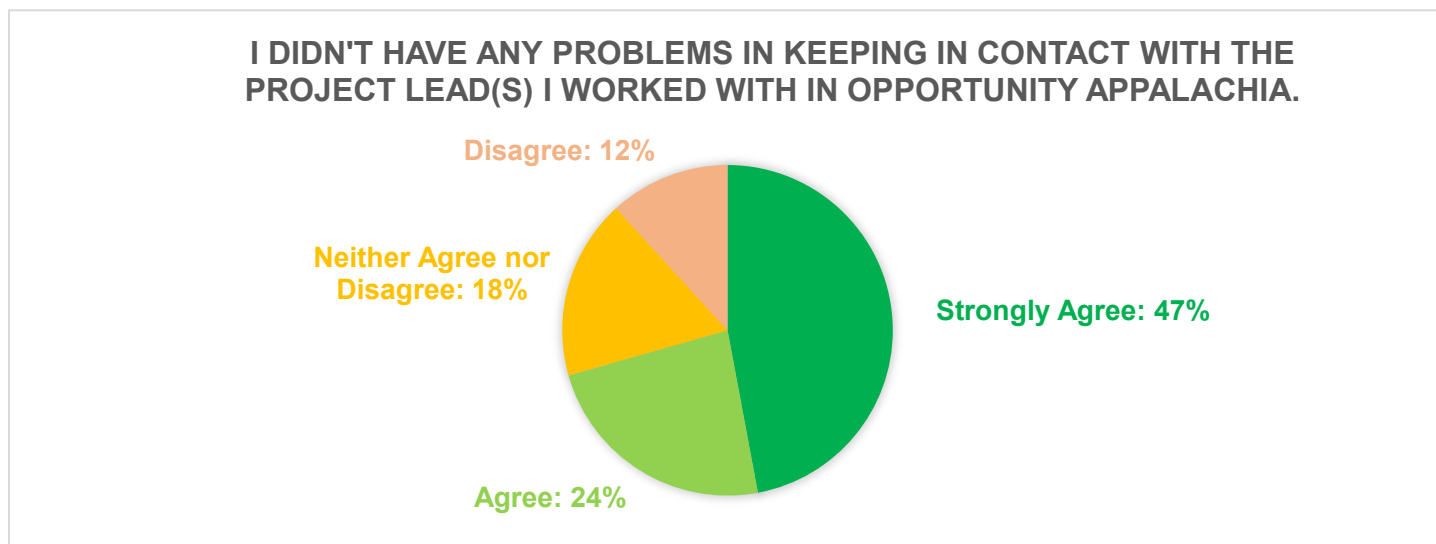
Role in Opportunity Appalachia

Figure 44: Clearly Defined Role



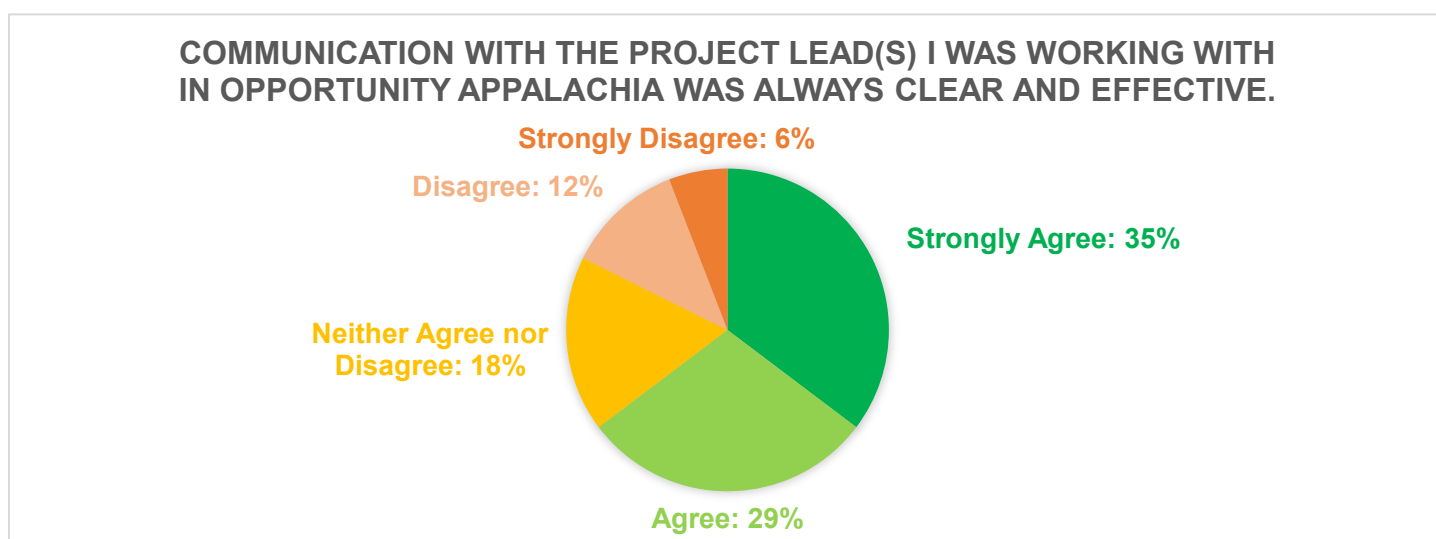
13 of 17 technical assistance providers strongly agreed or agreed that their role was clearly defined in Opportunity Appalachia. **2 of 17** neither agreed nor disagreed, and **2 of 17** disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 45: Keeping in Contact with Project Leads



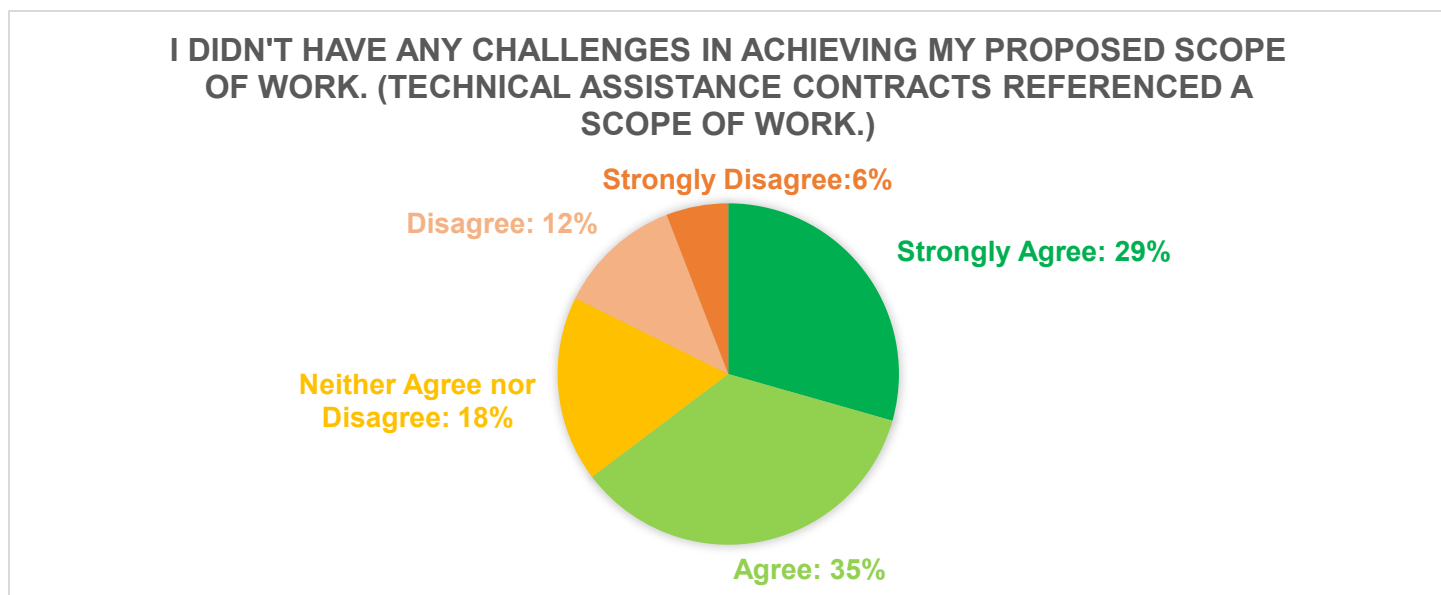
12 out of 17 technical assistance providers said that they didn't have any problems keeping in contact with the project lead(s) that they worked with in Opportunity Appalachia. **3 out of 17** technical assistance providers neither agreed nor disagreed, and **2 out of 17** said that they experienced problems.

Figure 46: Communication with Project Leads



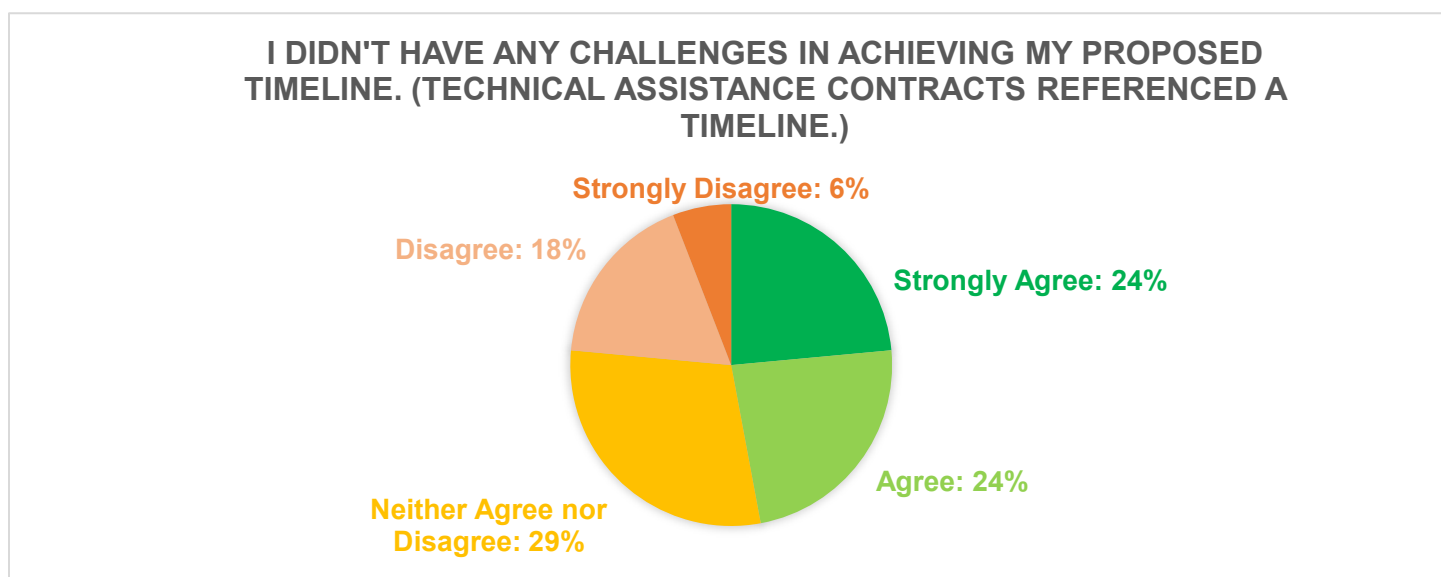
11 out of 17 technical assistance providers strongly agreed or agreed that communication with the project lead(s) that they were working with in Opportunity Appalachia was always clear and effective. **3 out of 17** technical assistance providers neither agreed nor disagreed, **2 out of 17** disagreed, and **1 out of 17** strongly disagreed.

Figure 47: Achieving Proposed Scope of Work



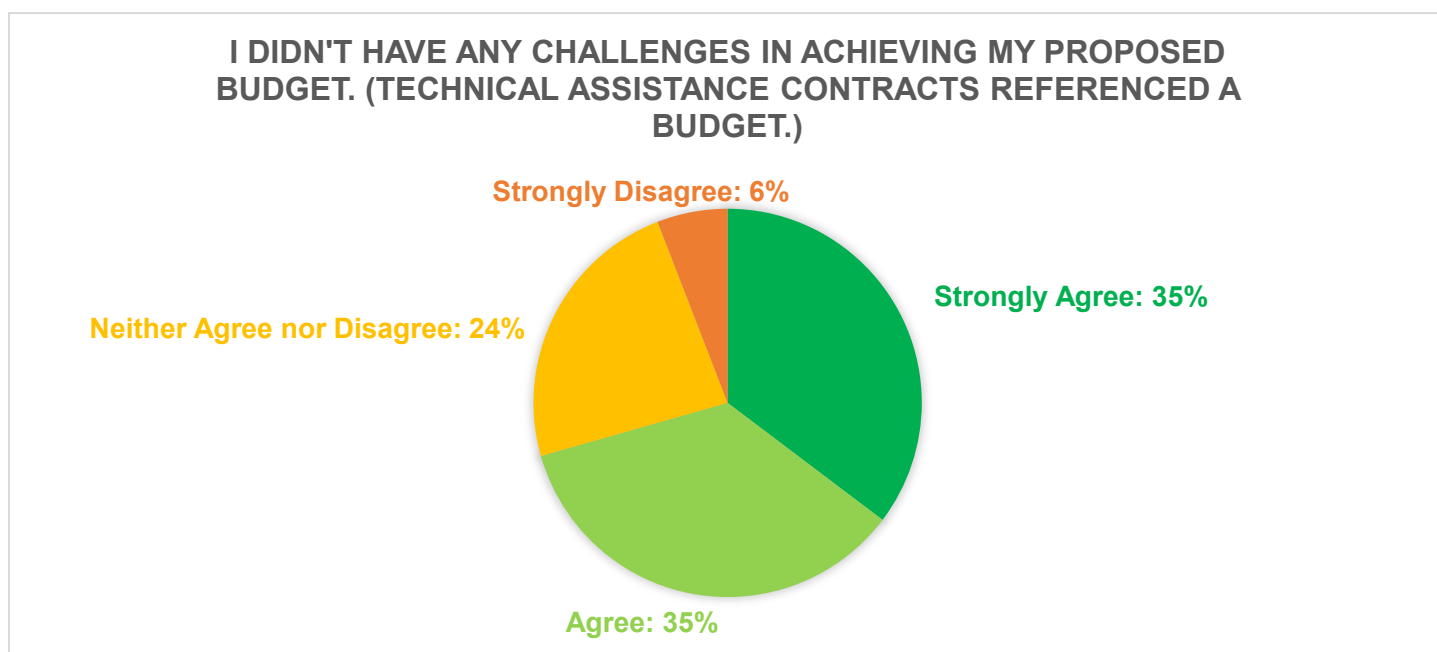
11 out of 17 technical assistance providers strongly agreed or agreed that they didn't have any challenges in achieving their proposed scope of work. **3 out of 17** neither agreed nor disagreed, **2 out of 17** disagreed, and **1 out of 17** strongly disagreed.

Figure 48: Achieving Proposed Timeline



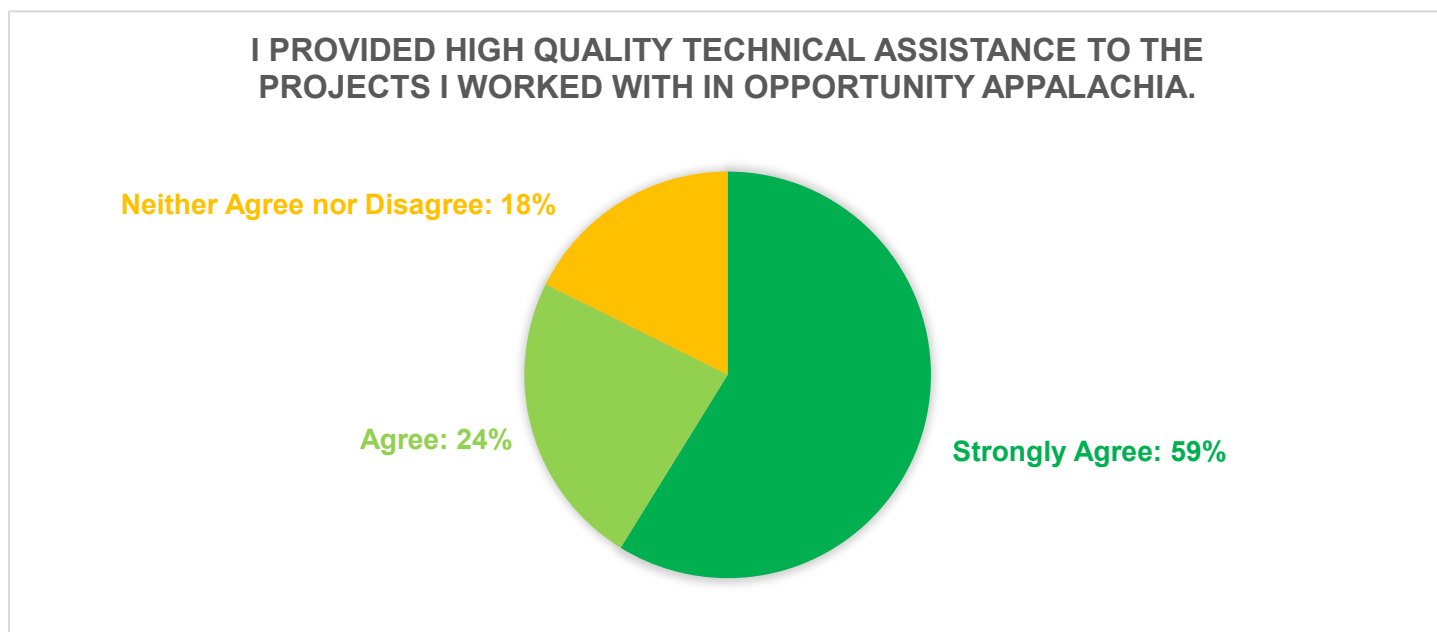
8 out of 17 technical assistance providers strongly agreed or agreed that they didn't have any challenges in achieving their proposed timeline. **5 out of 17** neither agreed nor disagreed, **3 out of 17** disagreed, and **1 out of 17** strongly disagreed.

Figure 49: Achieving Proposed Budget



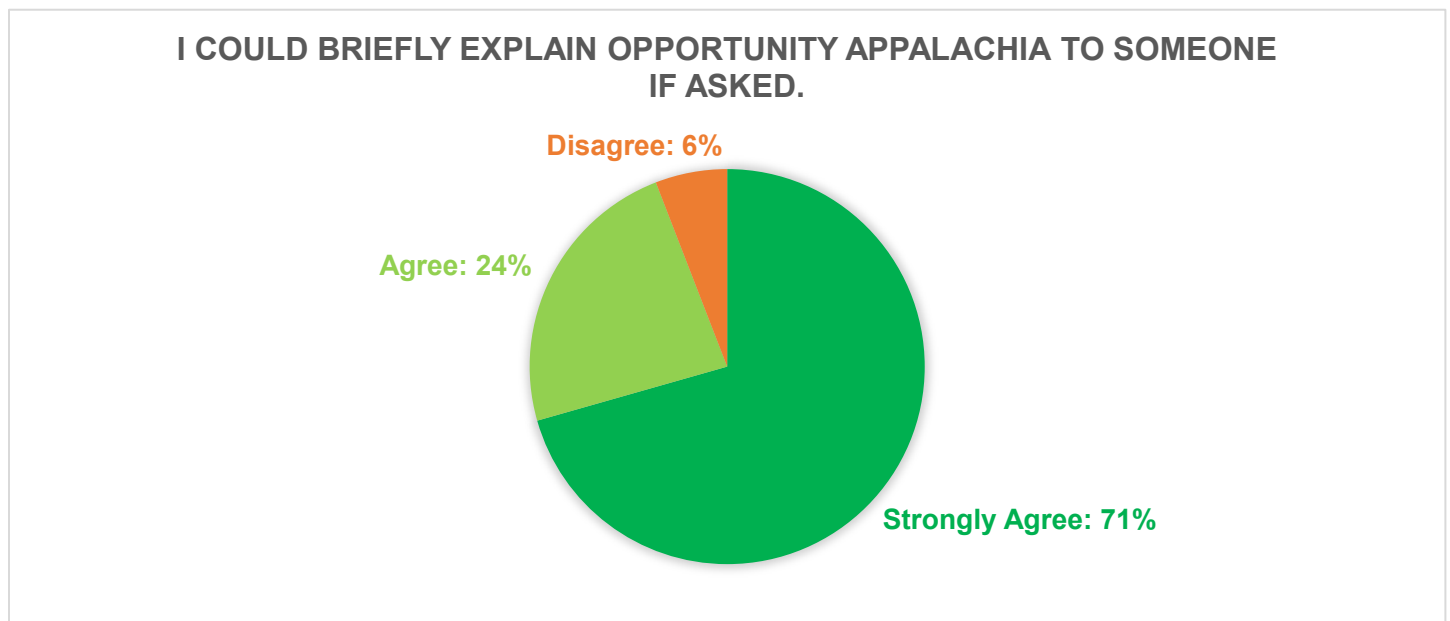
12 of 17 technical assistance providers strongly agreed or agreed that they didn't have any challenges in achieving their proposed budget. **4 of 17** neither agreed nor disagreed, and **1 of 17** strongly disagreed.

Figure 50: Provided Quality Technical Assistance



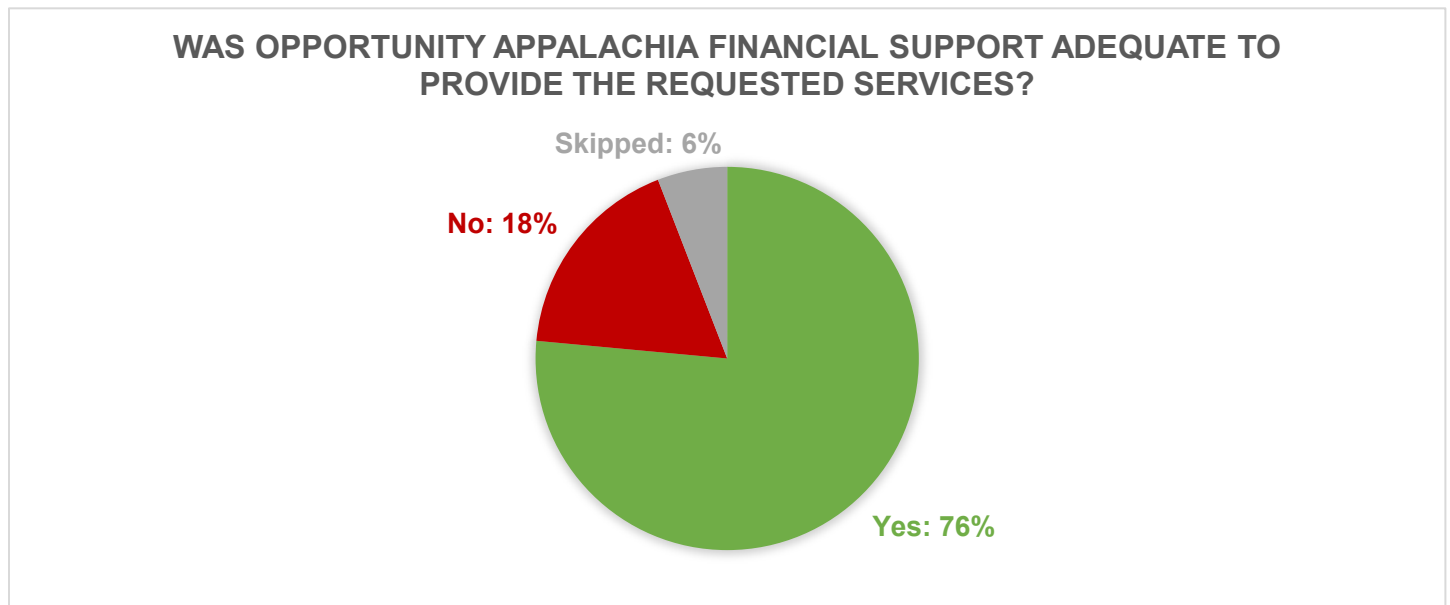
14 out of 17 technical assistance providers strongly agreed or agreed that they provided high quality technical assistance to the project(s) that they worked with in Opportunity Appalachia. **3 out of 17** neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 51: Briefly Explain Opportunity Appalachia



16 out of 17 technical assistance providers strongly agreed or agreed that they could briefly explain Opportunity Appalachia to someone if asked. **1 out of 17** technical assistance providers disagreed.

Figure 52: Adequacy of Financial Support



13 out of 17 technical assistance providers said that the Opportunity Appalachia financial support was adequate to support the requested services. **3 out of 17** said financial support was not adequate and **1 out of 17** skipped this item.

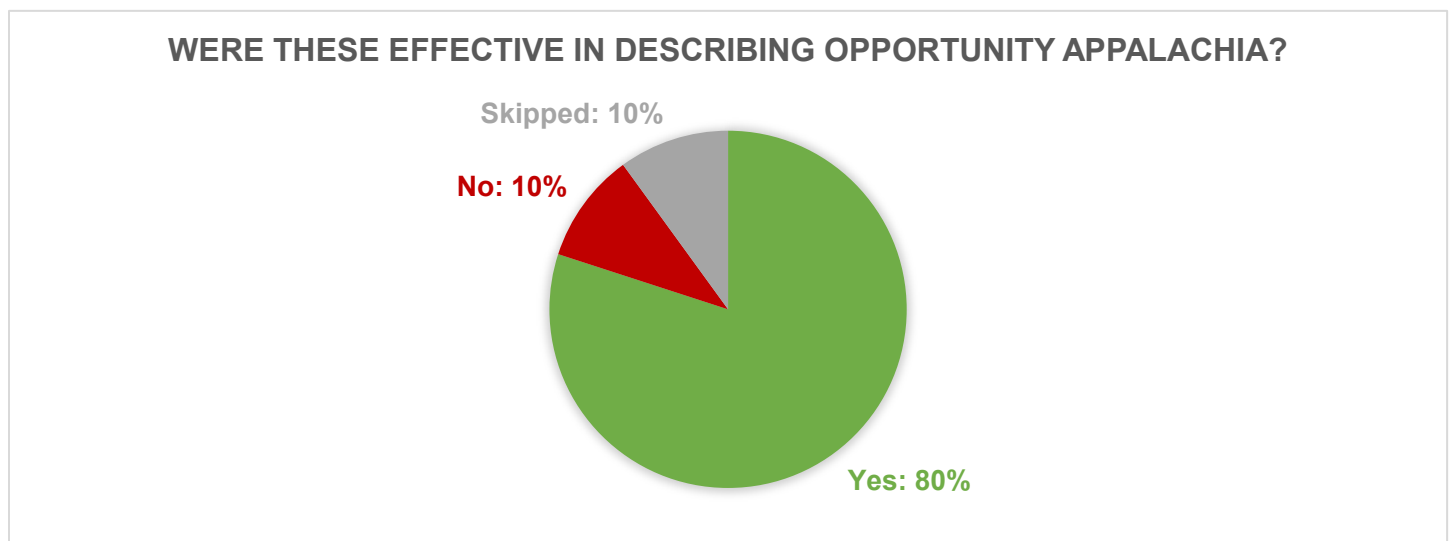
Appendix J: Investor Survey Results

The Investor Survey gathered survey data on outreach effectiveness, The Opportunity Exchange platform, the Investor Convening, and the project videos shown at the Investor Convening. A total of 10 investors responded to the survey resulting in a response rate of 33% of investors who attended the Investor Convening. An additional investor declined the survey due to a low level of engagement with the program that was not sufficient enough to provide any level of informed insight.

Outreach

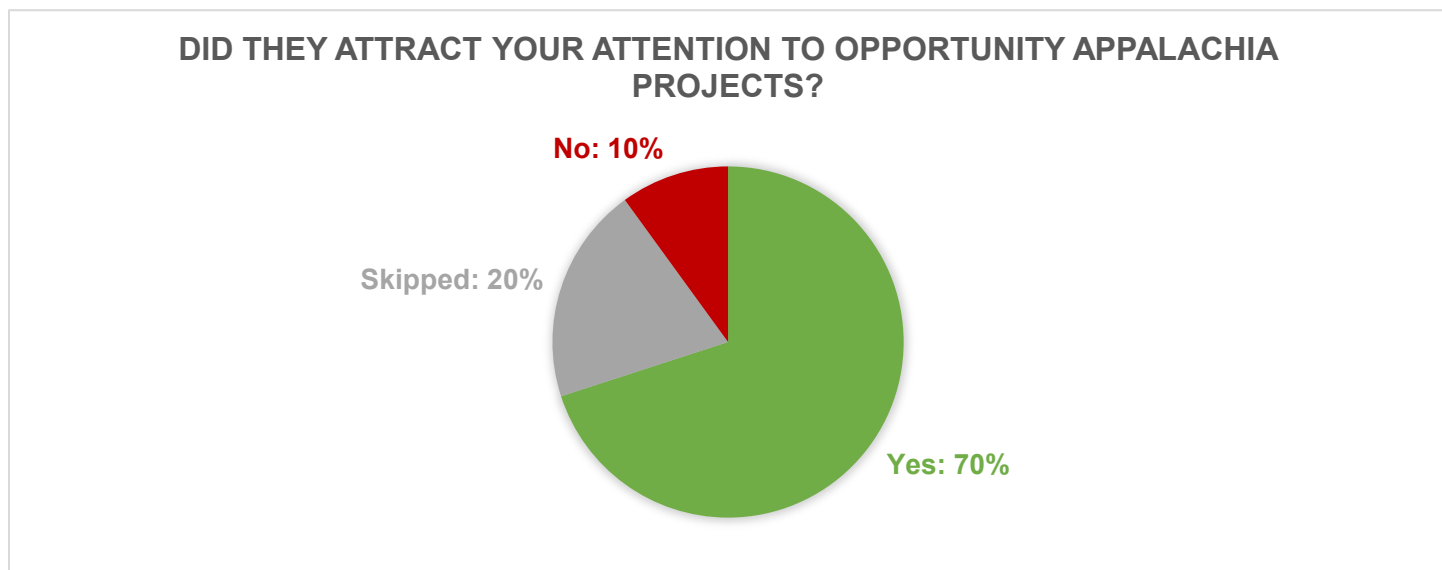
Investor outreach efforts included: May 2020 announcement of the 16 Opportunity Appalachia portfolio projects, follow-up calls and project introductions for interested individuals; a 2020 Fall/Winter update with information on The Opportunity Exchange portal for prospectus posting; and a Save the Date announcement for the Investor Convening.

Figure 53: Effectiveness of Outreach



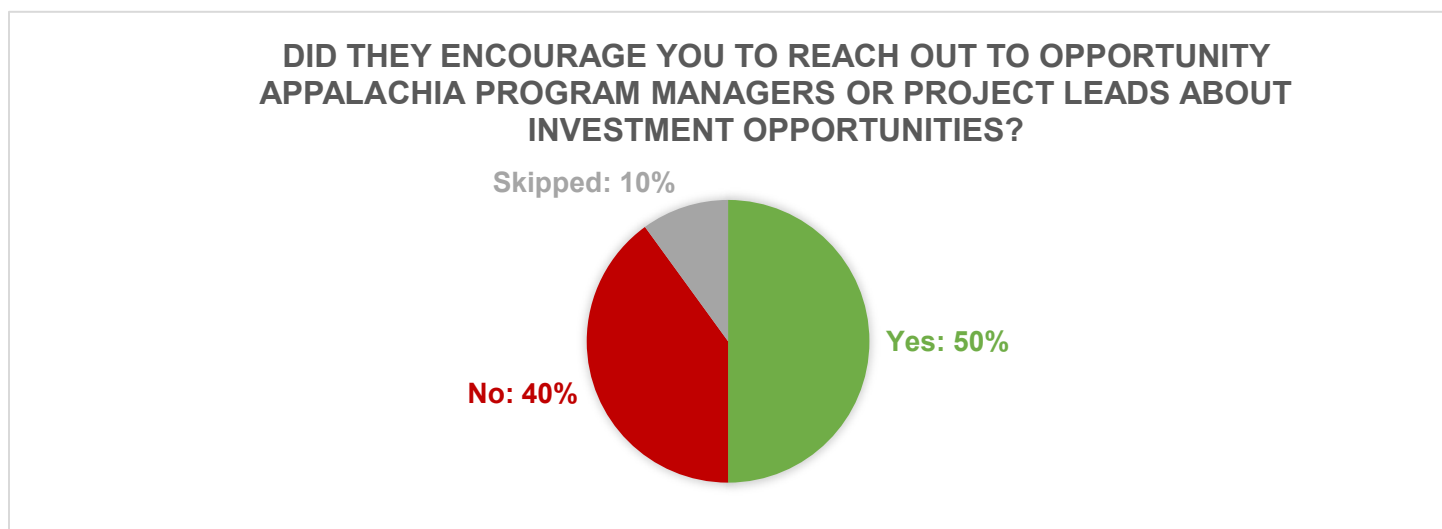
8 out of 10 investors felt that investor outreach for Opportunity Appalachia was effective, and **1 out of 10** skipped this item.

Figure 54: Attraction to Opportunity Appalachia



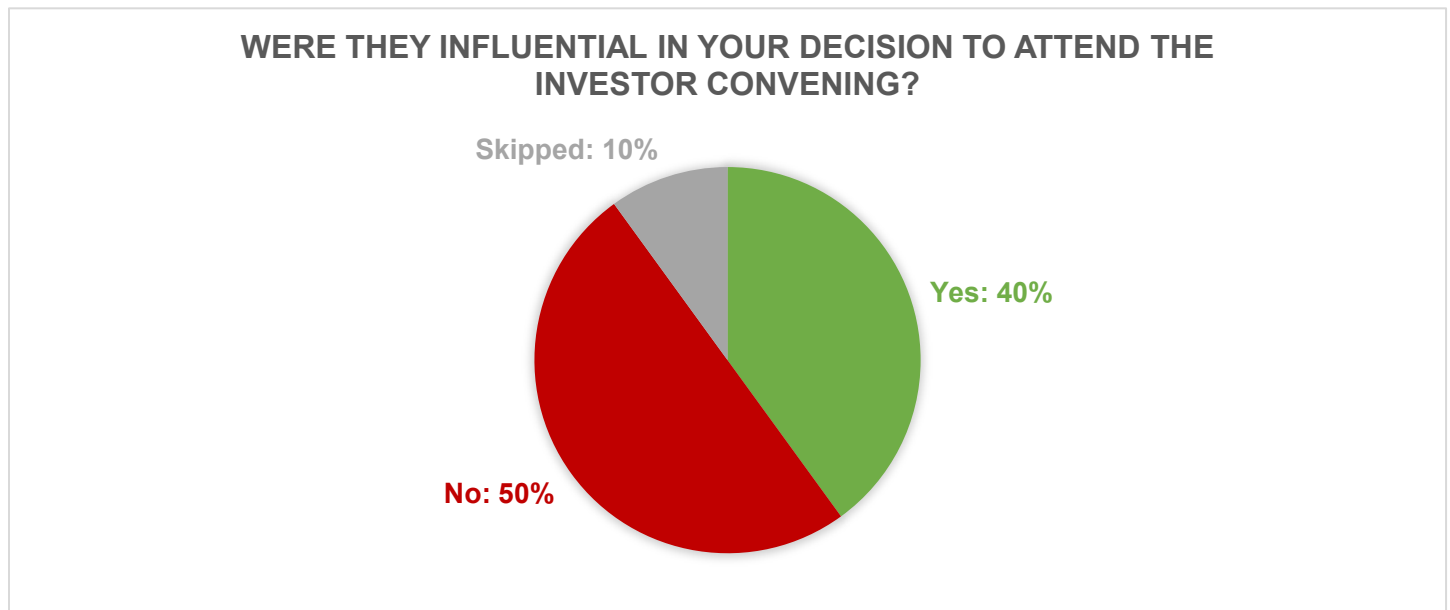
7 out of 10 investors said that outreach for Opportunity Appalachia attracted them to program projects, and **2 out of 10** skipped this item.

Figure 55: Encourage Reaching Out



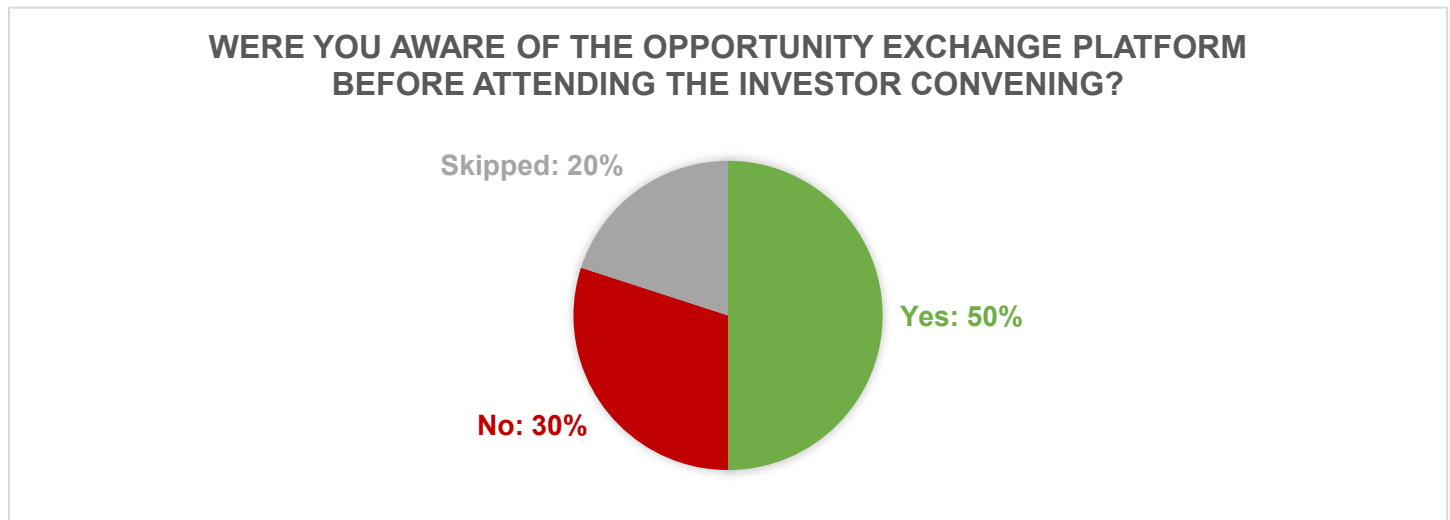
5 out of 10 investors said that Opportunity Appalachia outreach encouraged them to reach out to program managers or project leads about investment opportunities, and **1 out of 10** skipped this item.

Figure 56: Influential in Attending the Investor Convening



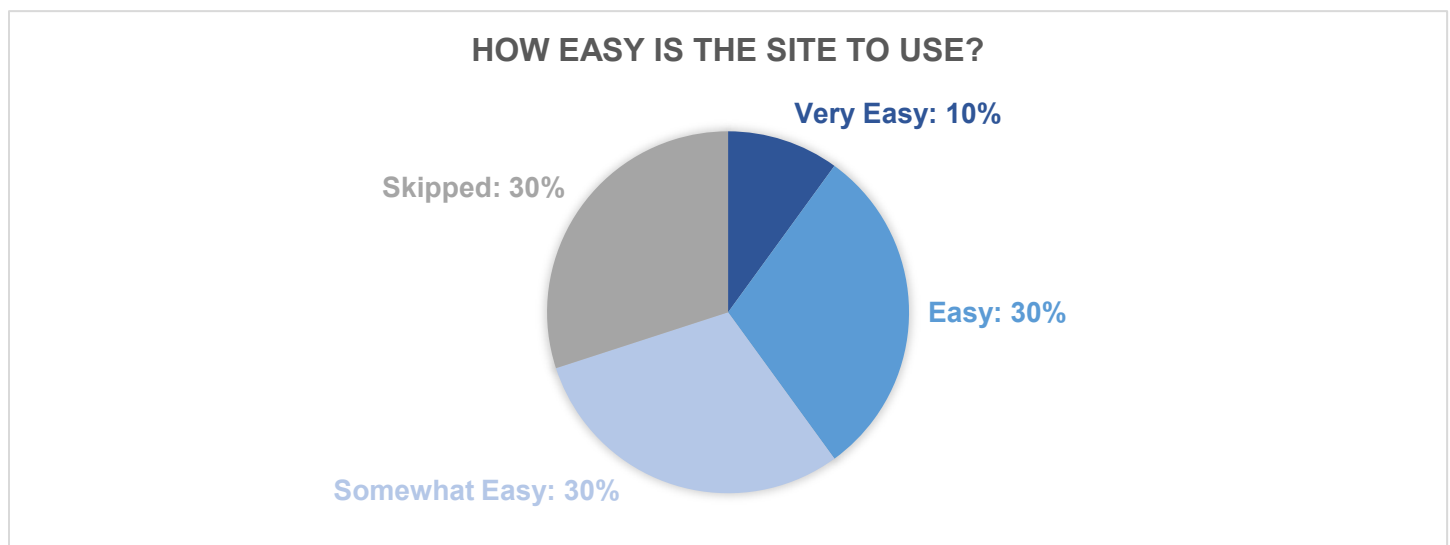
4 out of 10 investors felt that Opportunity Appalachia outreach was influential in their decision to attend the Investor Convening, and **1 out of 10** skipped this item.

Figure 57: Awareness of The Opportunity Exchange



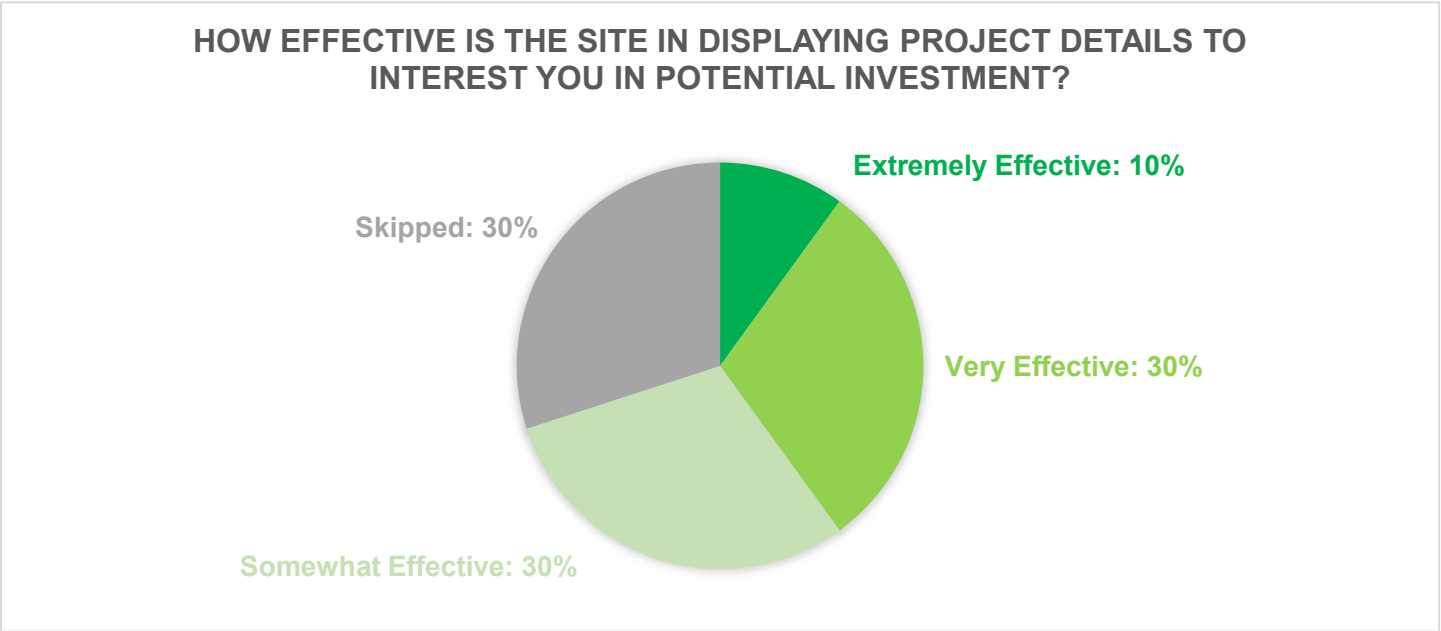
5 out of 10 investors were aware of The Opportunity Exchange platform before attending The Investor Convening, and **2 out of 10** skipped this item.

Figure 58: Ease of Use



4 out of 10 investors felt that The Opportunity Exchange was very easy or easy to use. **3 out of 10** investors felt it was somewhat easy to use, and **3 out of 10** skipped this item.

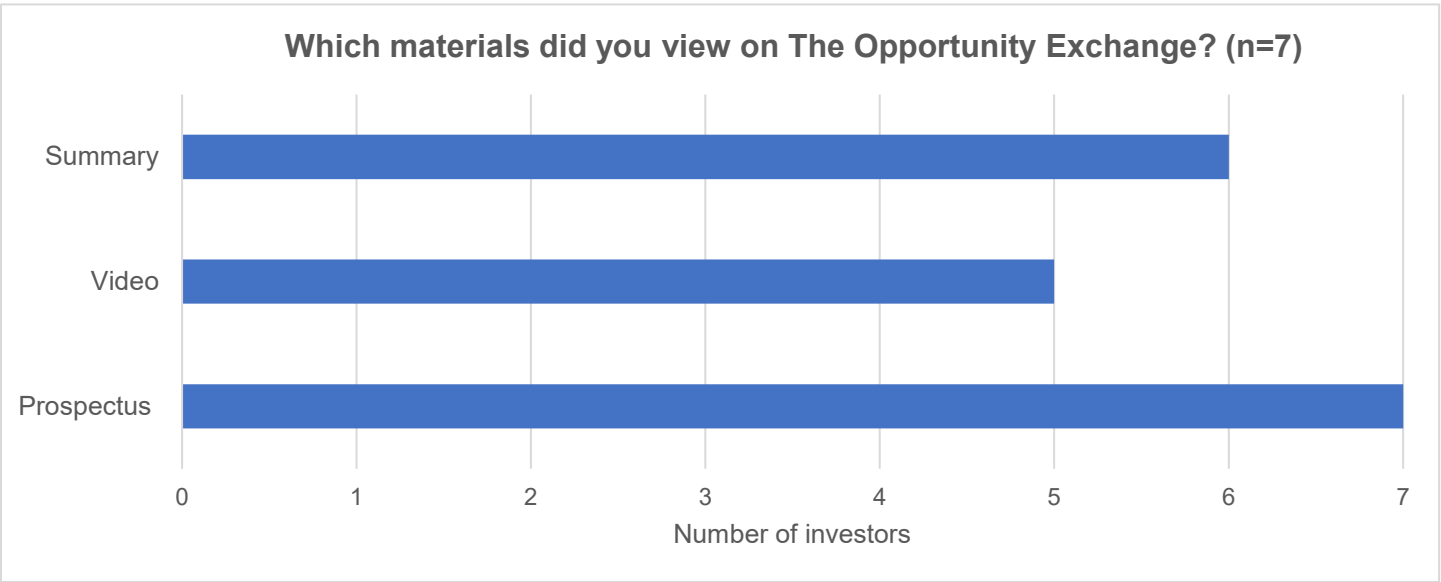
Figure 59: Effectiveness in Displaying Project Details



4 out of 10 investors felt that The Opportunity Exchange was very effective or effective in displaying project details to interest them in potential investment. 3 out of 10 investors felt that it was somewhat effective, and 3 out of 10 skipped this item.

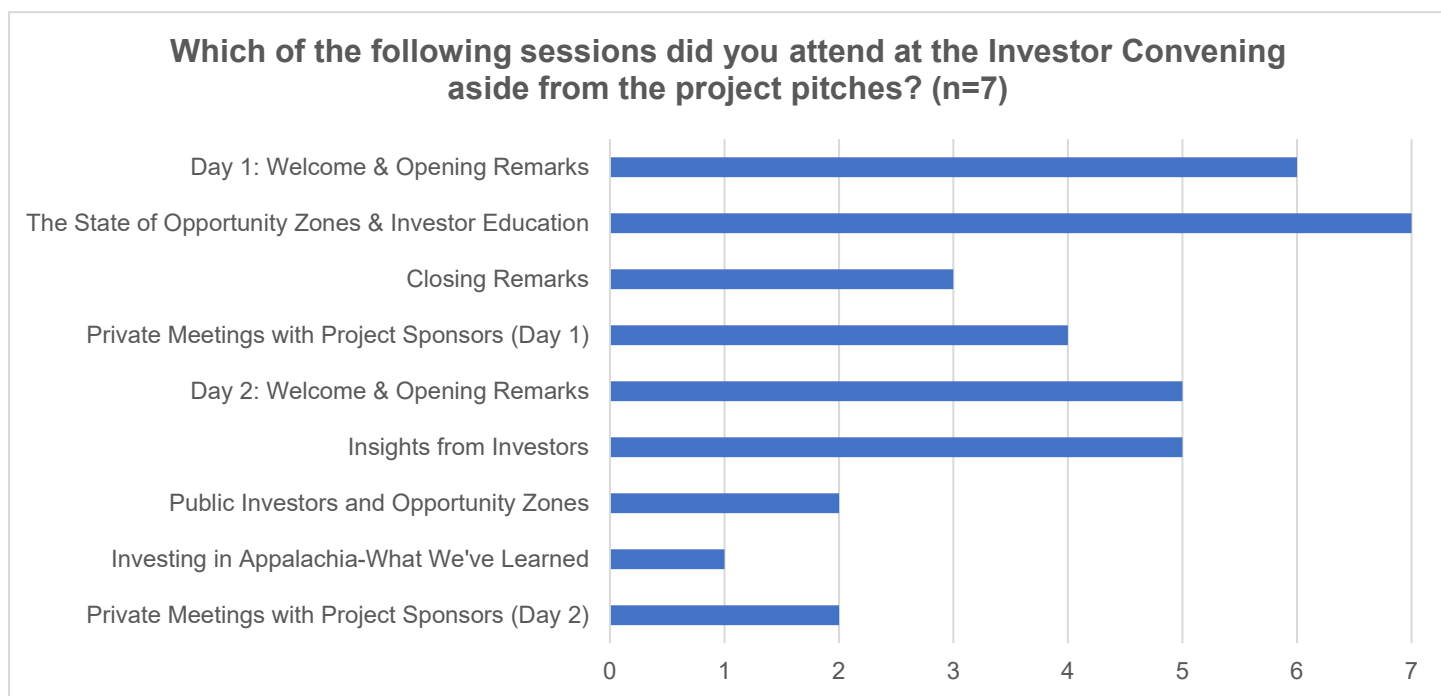
Investors were asked to indicate if they viewed the project summary, video, or prospectus on The Opportunity Exchange. Figure 60 shows the results for the seven investors who responded to the item. Three investors skipped this item.

Figure 60: Materials Viewed



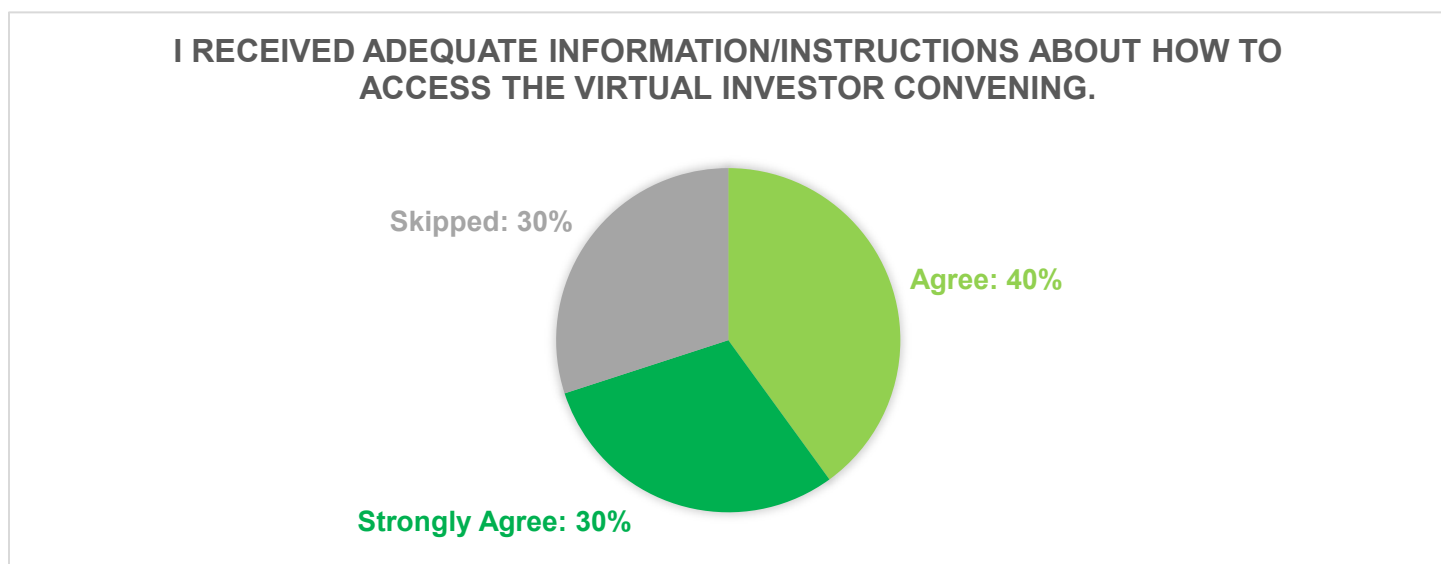
Investor Convening

Figure 61: Sessions Attended



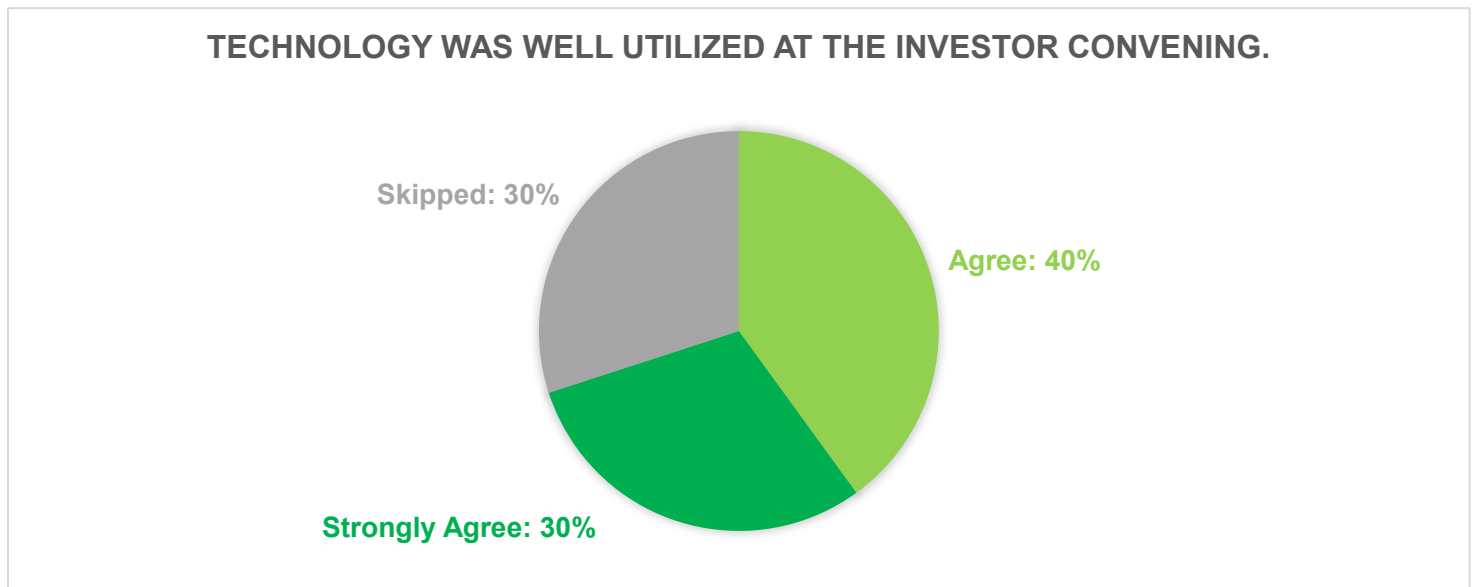
Investors were asked to rate aspects of the Investor Convening and the project videos.

Figure 62: Accessing the Investor Convening



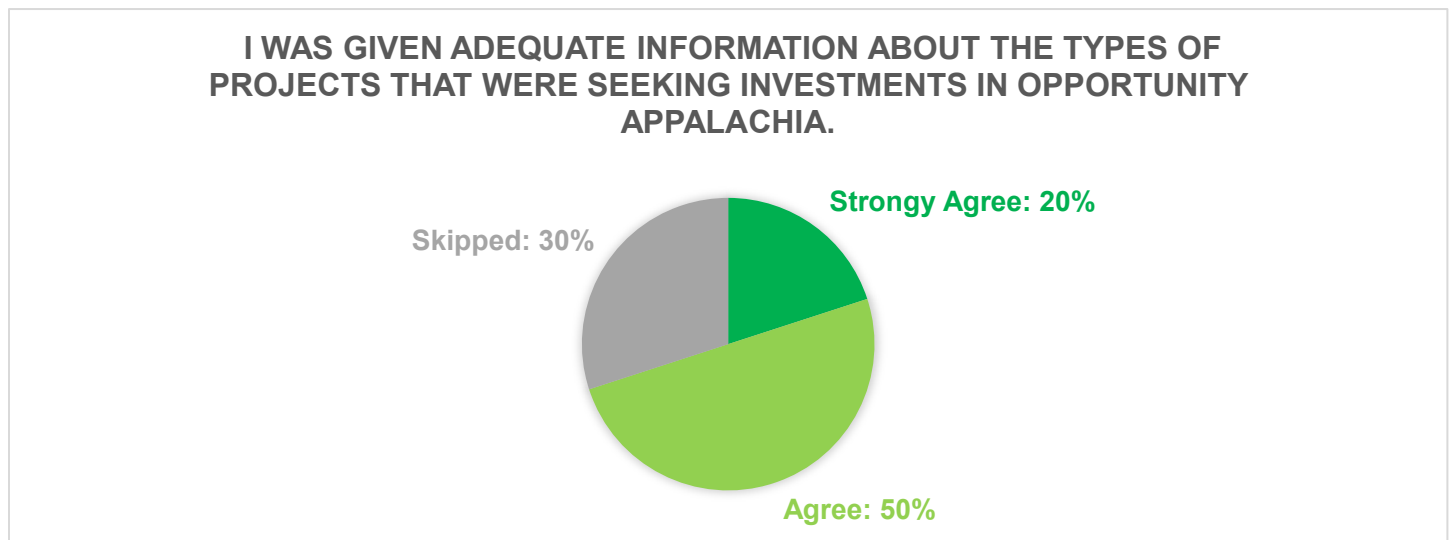
7 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that they received adequate information and instructions about how to access the virtual Investor Convening. **3 out of 10** investors skipped this item.

Figure 63: Technology Utilization



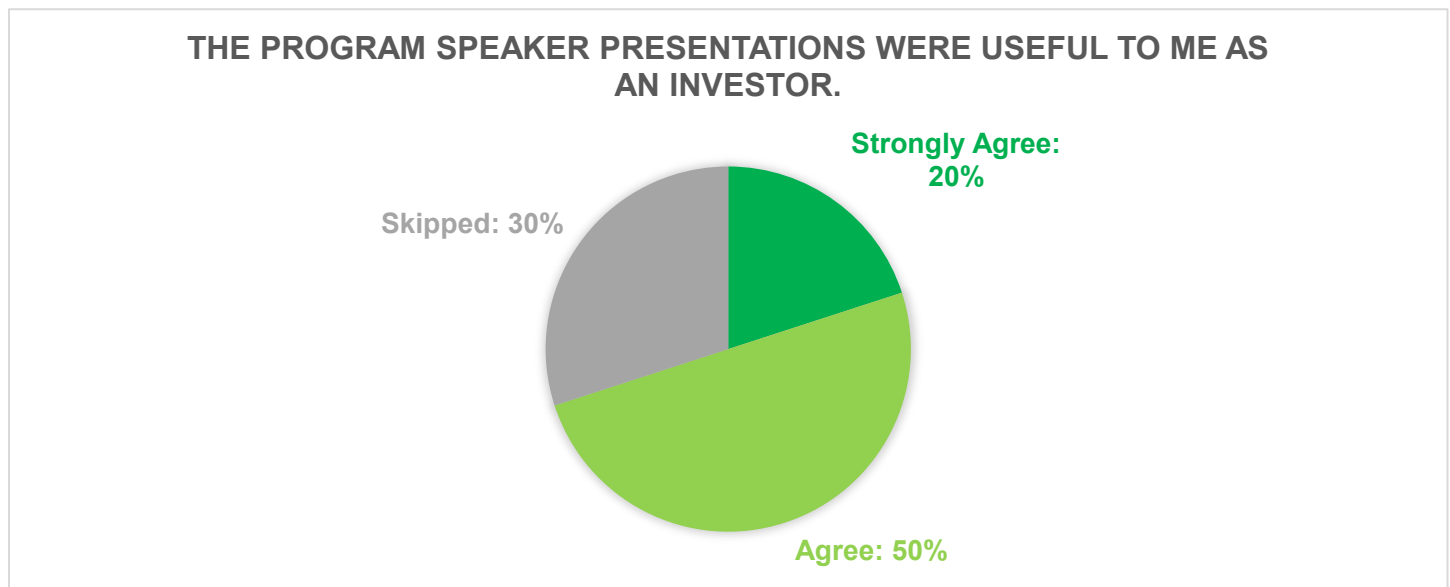
7 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that technology was well utilized at the Investor Convening. **3 out of 10** investors skipped this item.

Figure 64: Type of Projects Seeking Investment



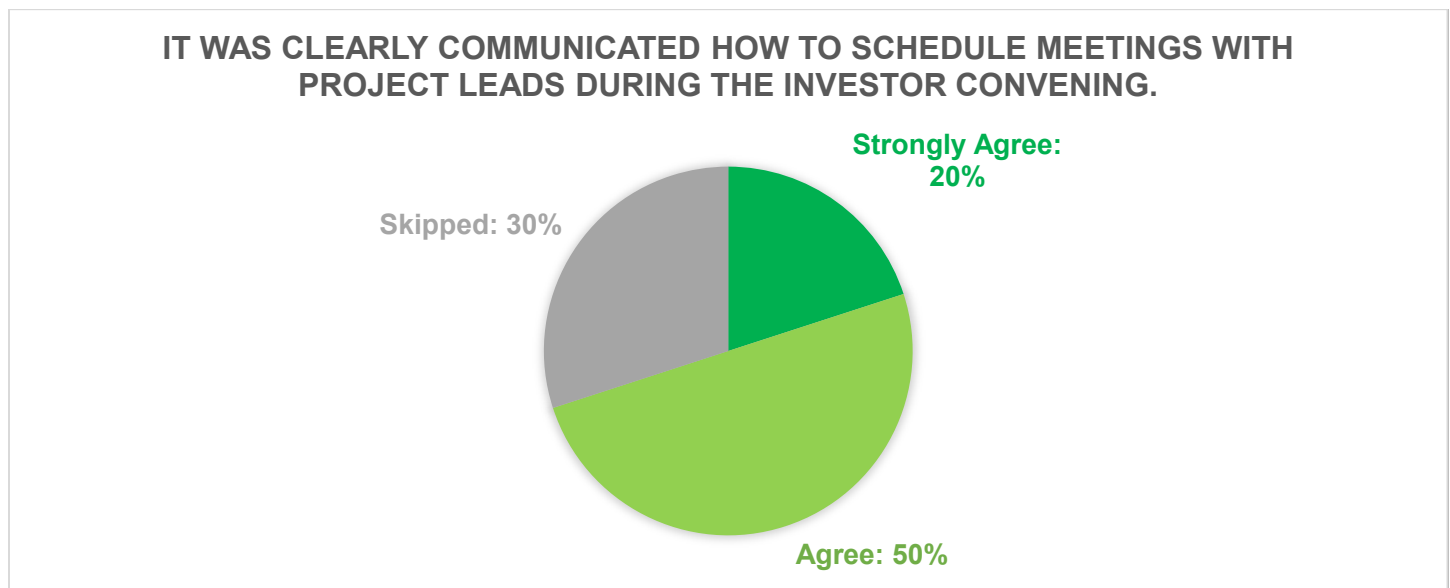
7 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that they were given adequate information about the types of projects that were seeking investments in Opportunity Appalachia. **3 out of 10** investors skipped this item.

Figure 65: Speaker Presentations



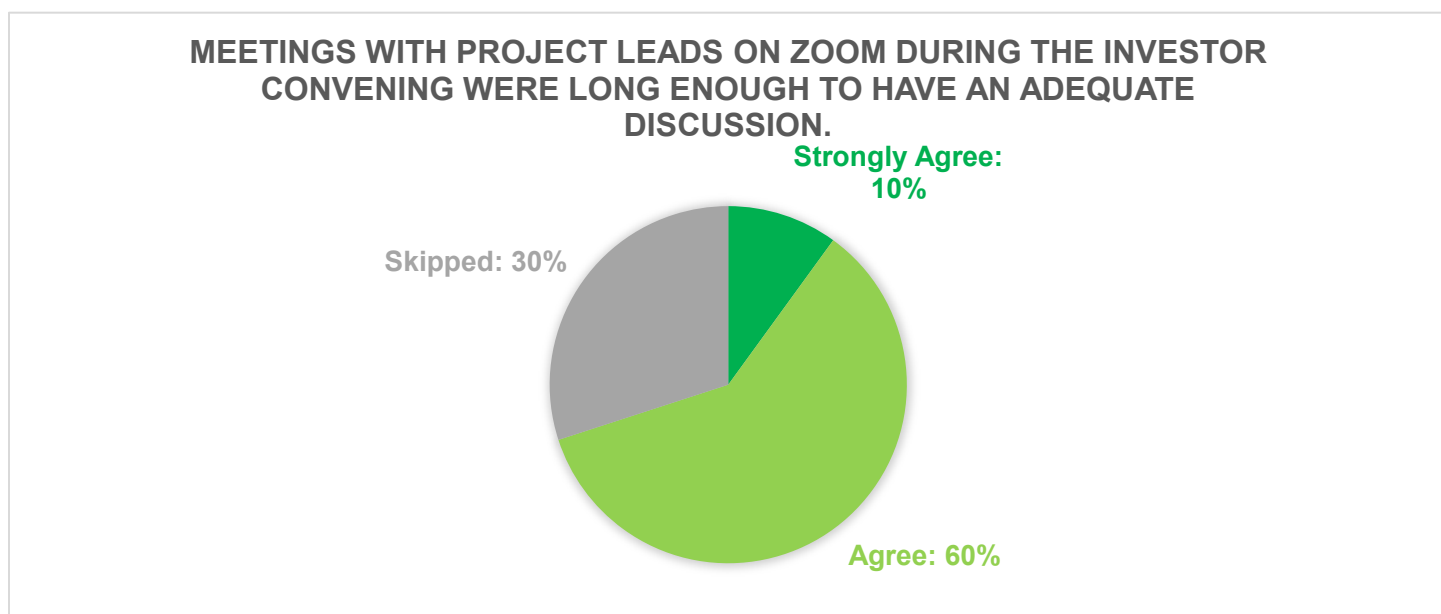
7 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that the program speaker presentations were useful to them as an investor. **3 out of 10** investors skipped this item.

Figure 66: Scheduling Meetings with Project Leads



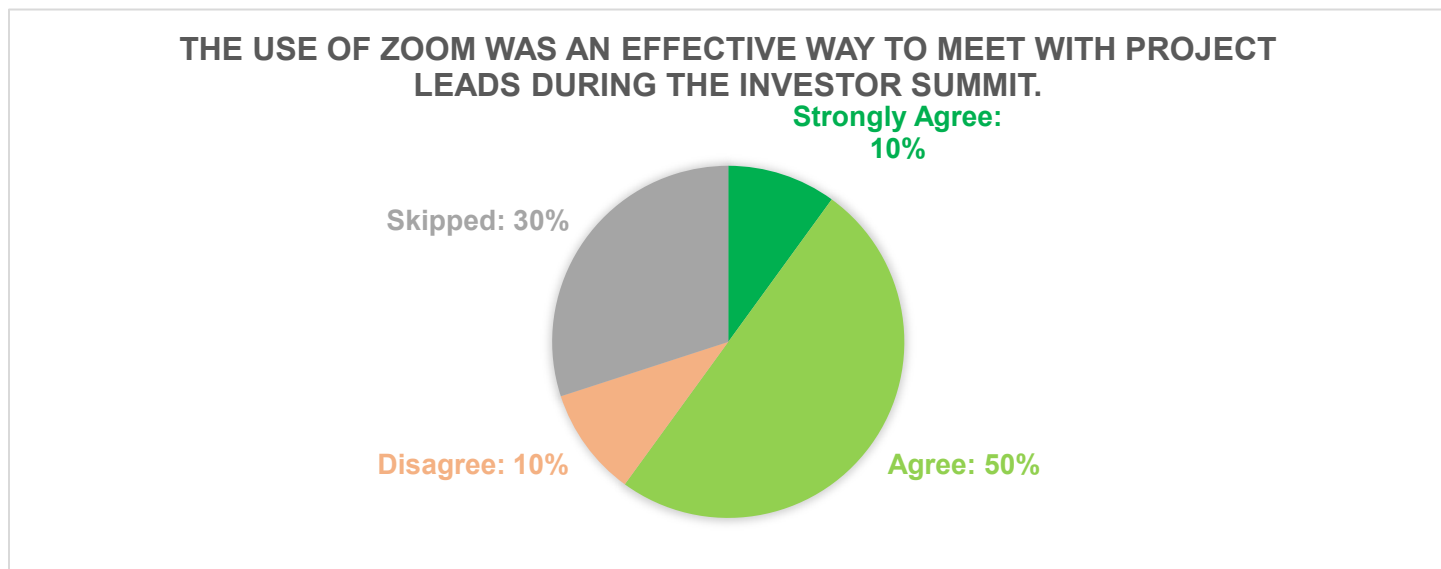
7 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that it was clearly communicated how to schedule meetings with project leads during the Investor Convening. **3 out of 10** investors skipped this item.

Figure 67: Length of Meetings



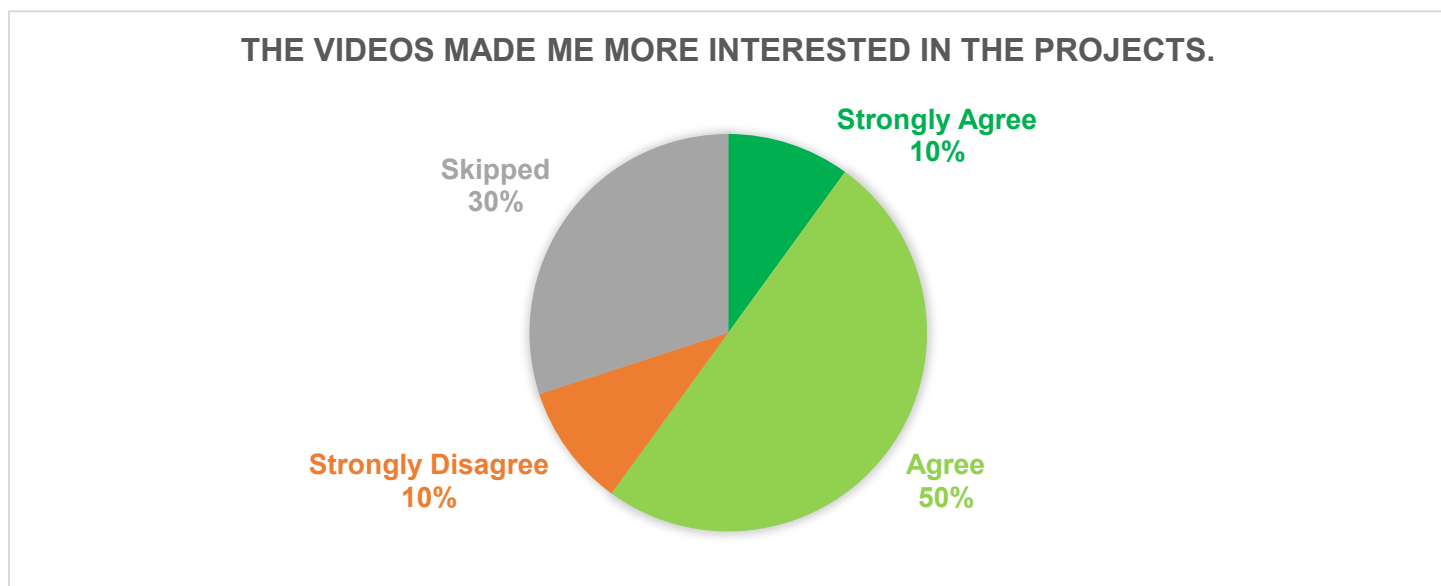
7 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that meetings with project leads on Zoom during the Investor Convening were long enough to have an adequate discussion. **3 out of 10** investors skipped this item.

Figure 68: Use of Zoom for Meetings



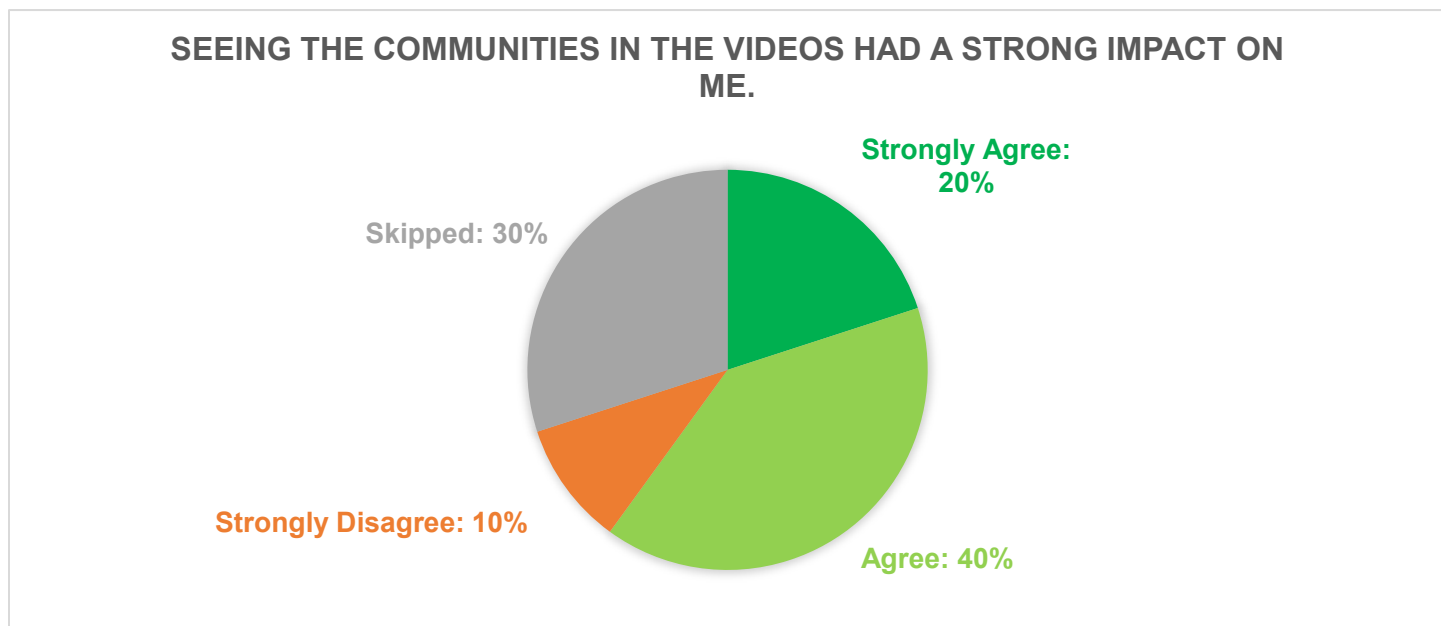
6 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that the use of Zoom was an effective way to meet with project leads during the Investor Convening. **1 out of 10** investors disagreed, and **3 out of 10** skipped this item.

Figure 69: Interest in Projects



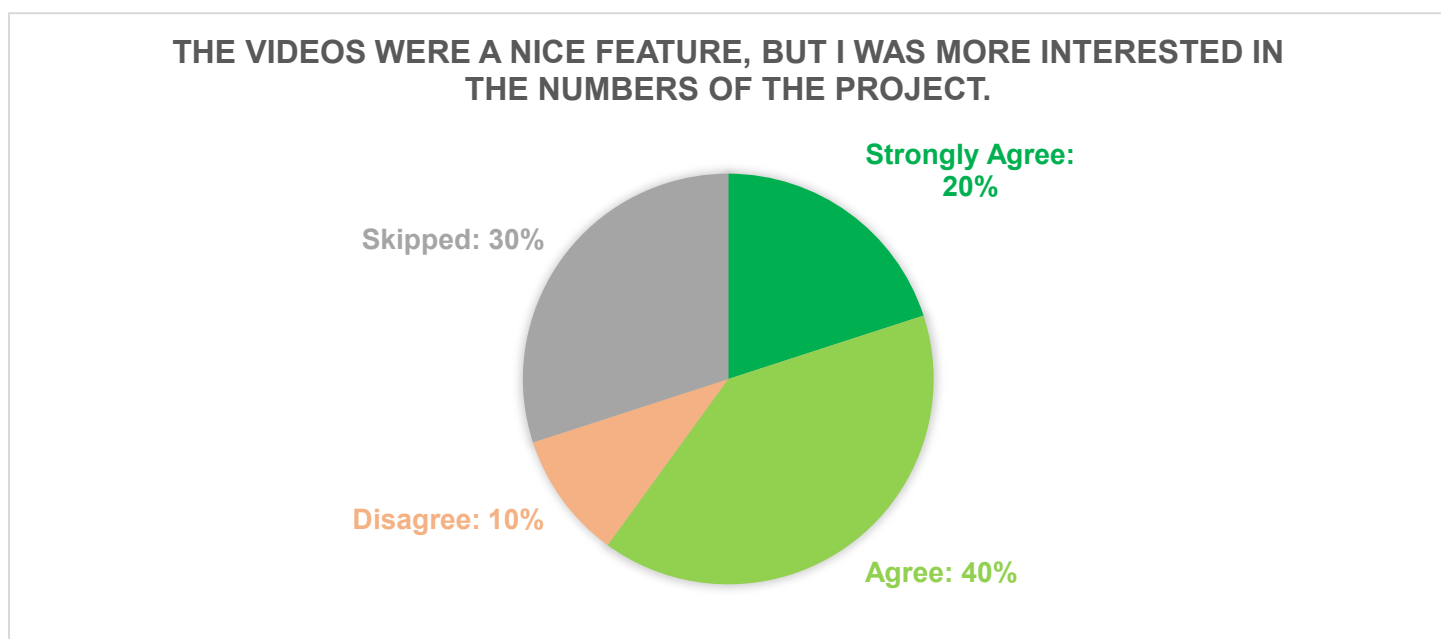
6 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that the project videos made them more interested in the projects. **1 out of 10** investors strongly disagreed, and **3 out of 10** skipped this item.

Figure 70: Impact of Videos



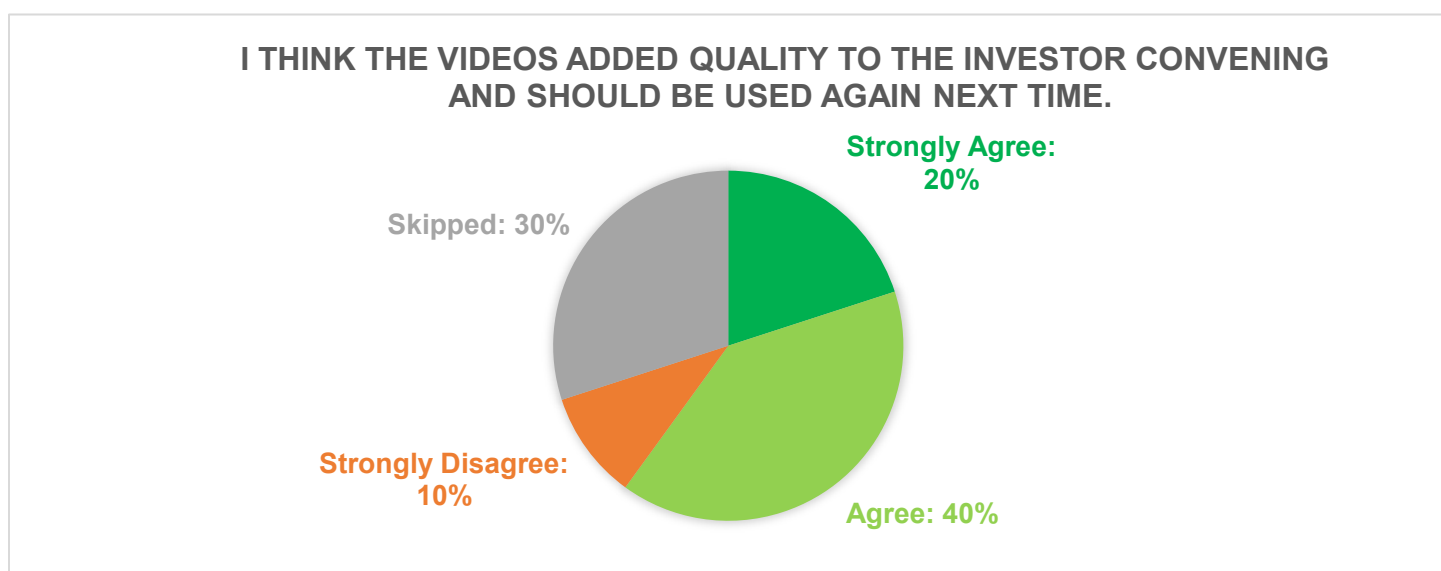
6 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that seeing the communities in the project videos had a strong influence on them. **1 out of 10** investors strongly disagreed, and **3 out of 10** skipped this item.

Figure 71: Interest in Numbers



6 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that the videos were a nice feature, but they were more interested in the numbers of the project. **1 out of 10** investors disagreed, and **3** skipped this item.

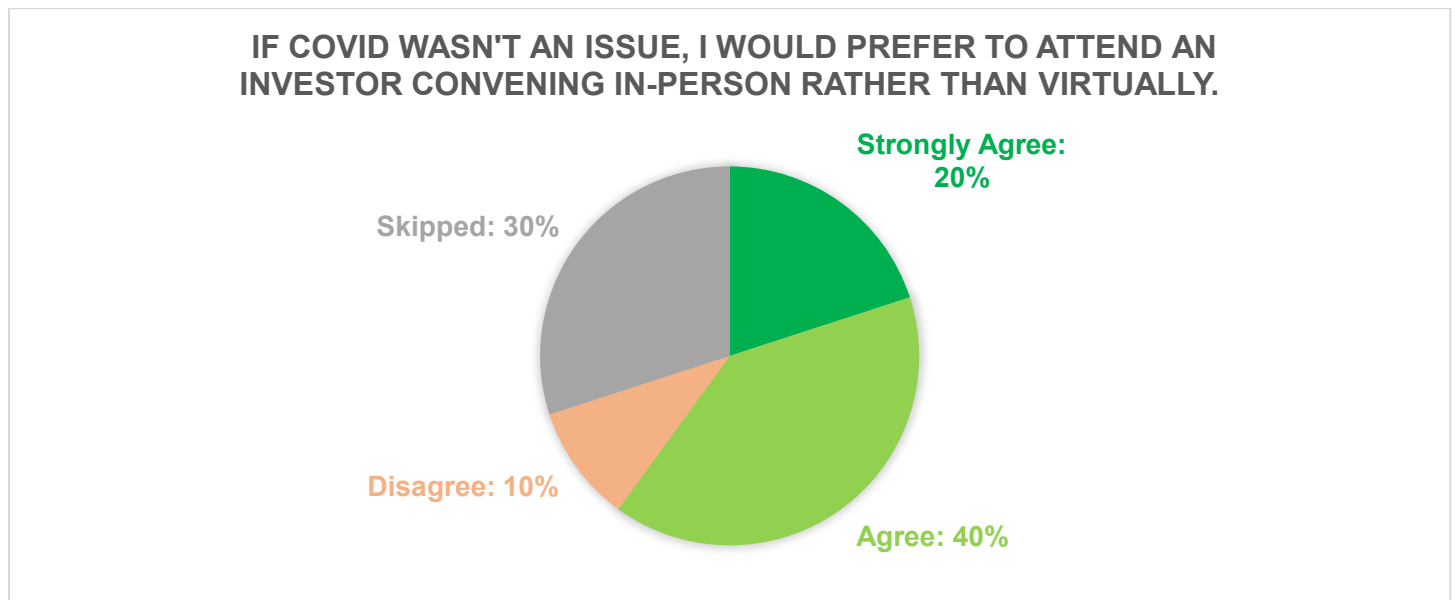
Figure 72: Quality Added to Investor Convening



6 out of 10 investors thought that the project videos added quality to the Investor Convening and should be used again next time. **1 out of 10** investors strongly disagreed, and **3 out of 10** skipped this item.

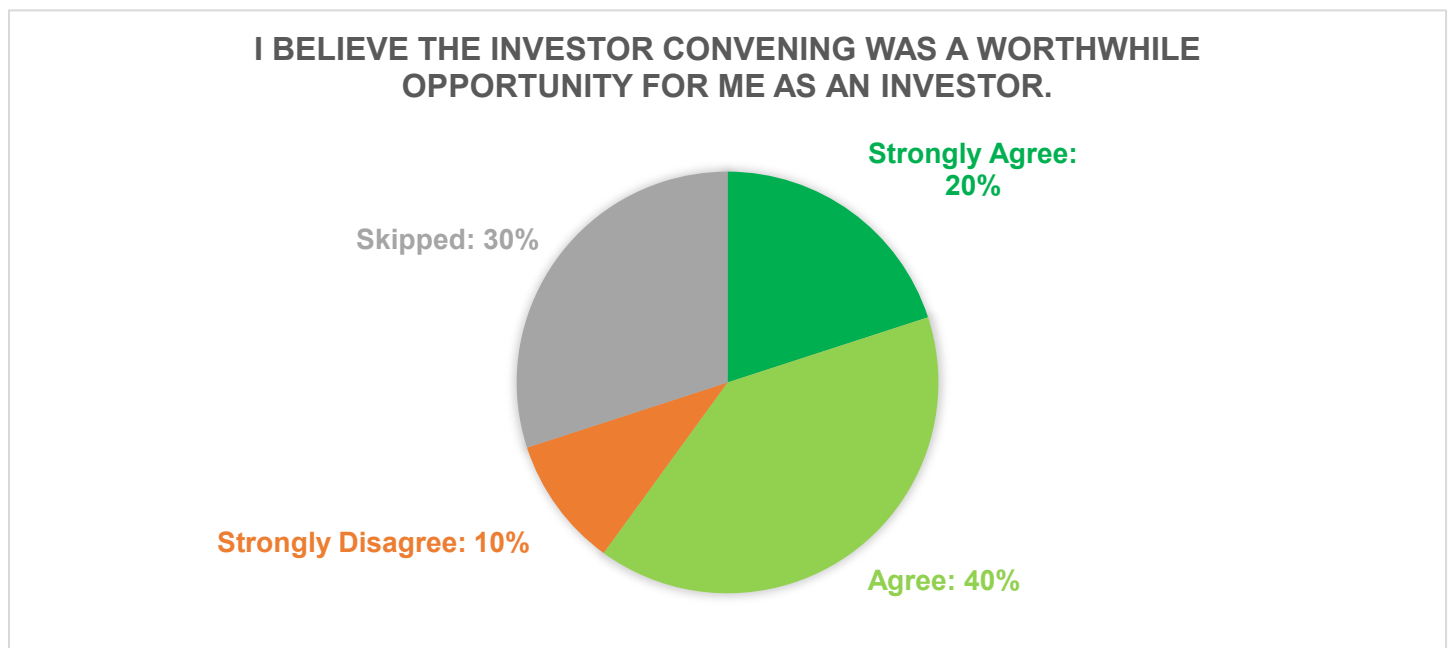
Overall Interest

Figure 73: Format Preference for Attendance



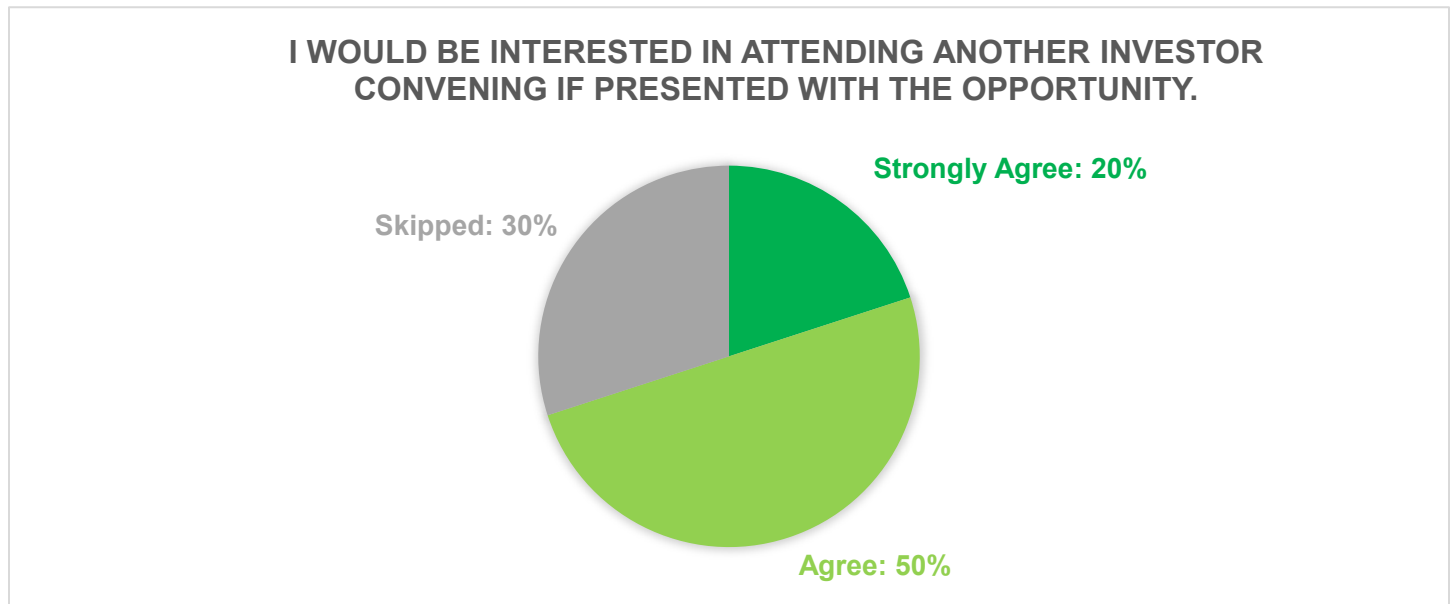
6 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that if COVID wasn't an issue, they would prefer to attend an in-person Investor Convening rather than virtual. **1 out of 10** investors disagreed and preferred the virtual format, and **3 out of 10** skipped this item.

Figure 74: Worthwhile Opportunity



6 out of 10 investors strongly agreed or agreed that the Investor Convening was a worthwhile opportunity for them. **1 out of 10** investors strongly disagreed, and **3 out of 10** skipped this item.

Figure 75: Interest in Attending Another Investor Convening



7 out of 10 Investors strongly agreed or agreed that they would be interested in attending another Investor Convening. **3 out of 10** skipped this item.

Appendix K: Project Lead Q & A

Project leads were given open-ended questions to respond to on their survey. Interviews allowed for clarification when needed on responses provided in surveys. Topics include non-COVID challenges, milestone moments from participating in the program, selection of technical assistance providers, challenges faced when working with technical assistance providers, the Investor Convening, and suggestions for improvements in the future.

Aside from any direct effects of COVID-19, what other challenges did you face?

"It was difficult to get deal structuring and partnership agreement advice. Structuring for Opportunity Zone tax benefits were also not done (tax accounting assistance)."

"The scale of the building redevelopment makes the project a challenge in general: large floor plate, high cost, historic building- all of these components of the project make it a challenge."

"Challenges with next steps beyond the pitch. New to community redevelopment in real estate."

"Our primary challenges lay in finding the right team of people who could assist us in sourcing the information needed. We faced a stumble early in our project when our original TA team was not able to provide the resources and tools needed and had to reset in February to solidify a new TA team that could see the project through to completion."

"Our consulting firm for our projects were inexperienced and lacked some areas of follow-through and follow-up. Overwhelmed possibly?"

"Our project is a fairly new concept in the development of broadband "backbone" infrastructure. So, one challenge is getting groups to understand the term 'open access' and what [our] role is in bringing improved broadband infrastructure to the state. Broadband is mostly a for-profit industry, so for [us] to be a non-profit, it puts a different spin on our goals and financials."

"This is a major and complex project with cutting edge science in reference to regenerative medicine and the production of sheep that are free of 53 pathogens commonly found in animals. This has required specialized technical assistance from technically sophisticated consultants and explorations into a rapidly developing market for animal derived materials for human treatments. Fortunately, we've had the expertise "in house" to guide the technical assistance. But, throughout, it has been a series of collaborations across a number of months first to agree upon a basic understanding of the technologies involved and then exploration of market potentials. We were starting with an ongoing business, New England Ovis, and the need to move the operation to SW Virginia to meet the rapidly growing demand for the animals. The biological sophistication required is daunting."

What were some milestone moments for you in Opportunity Appalachia?

"The Investor Convening pitch didn't lead to an investment, but it helped sharpen the message used to close a single investor. I think the process gave confidence in the project. Assistance from the project manager was a key driver and [our TA provider] really helped the owner get her mind around how to market the project to investors."

"Technical assistance selection; developing prospectus; developer solicitation; developer tours; developer identification (currently two identified). Upcoming milestones will be project scoring, developer selection, bid award."

"This all started from a vision, so having the proforma, schematics and pitch deck were all milestones. Also, exposure via the Convening."

"The Investor Convening pitch was a great moment and opportunity in this process."

"The Investor Convening pitches were of great value and assistance along with the other portions when we were able to speak to OZ investment groups. Given the timeline for the pitch, I had to quickly learn several areas of possibilities for funding sources and uses. This led me to other consulting groups more familiar with grants, tax credits, OZ investment, and so on."

"Meetings with our team to select technical assistance providers. Reaching agreement on specific tasks to be completed with the technical assistance providers. Staying in constant touch guiding the technical assistance providers to produce required information for business plans and implementation strategies. Maintaining contact with state and local officials and gaining their support."

What could have made you feel more prepared for the Investor Convening?

"The early issues with our assigned TA team set us back in terms of preparedness. If we'd had a different team, or perhaps more clarity in what the TA was doing versus what was expected of us, we would have walked in more prepared."

"For me, I would have started sooner...reviewed other projects in greater detail in order to have a better understanding of the actual information to create a fair and accurate presentation."

"If I would have not gone into the practice session before the Investor summit actually happened, I would not have known how the summit would have been technically ran. It wasn't clearly communicated how breakouts would work. Beyond having our own presentation put together, the actual technical aspects of how this thing would be ran and put together was not shared. So, we had to directly ask those questions in the practice session."

"I wasn't able to give my speech the way I wanted to. And the other thing was that they asked another person to flip the slides for us and it was extremely frustrating, especially with the delay and getting them to go forward or back. It just made the presentation very frustrating. I recognize COVID affected things, but if they ever do something like that again, I recommend they record the speeches and take questions afterwards. There's no reason to do a live presentation for something like that when people spent weeks preparing for it- just let them record their three minutes and then submit it and then try and do a Q&A afterwards."

"My final slideshow at the Investor Convening was not the right one. It was one of the original drafts. I sent a final slide show well within the timeframe that I was asked."

Is there anything you would change about the project videos?

"I don't recall having the questions that they were going to ask. So, they did a good job of sort of what to expect, but I just wish I would have known what questions they were going to ask so I could have been a little bit more prepared on my end. But overall, it went really well."

"I would incorporate other media content into it. They shot new video for the whole thing. They could have used photographs, add in other video drone shots or other things to weave into the video to have a little broader visual capture of the community. Plus, it was February when they did it, so whatever the day and the weather was what you got."

What came out of the Investor Convening?

"A polished sales pitch"

"Breadth of knowledge about OA projects, particularly in my state"

"Contacts and confidence"

"We have one interested investor. This was our first experience at an Investor Convening, so the knowledge gained was very useful."

"I gained a lot of valuable experience in the process of searching for funding sources. There were several projects I personally reach out to in order to gain additional insight."

"It was a healthy process for the developer."

"I got some contacts and had some conversations with some folks afterwards."

What do you need as a follow-up to the Investor Convening?

"CDFI interest"

"Periodic check in. There was a flurry of activity initially, and we hope that doesn't disappear."

"More one-on-one mentoring"

"Really helping me with next step phase of like what to expect. What I should be pursuing in this at this point and then this point? [The process] is new to me so a little bit more, I guess handholding, but not doing the work for me. Just guiding me on what I need to do next. For example, I have some other predevelopment needs and I'm kind of just hearing different things from other people like 'oh okay, so that's what I need.' Even some other projects pitches. We did get together and do a follow up all of us from Opportunity Appalachia and that was awesome because I got to hear things that they did or next steps. But it would be so good to sit down with someone who could kind of walk me through that, and like I said, not do the work for me necessarily, but just guide me."

"It would have been nice to have contact information (name, email, phone numbers) of any investors that attended. I've tried to follow-up with investors that scheduled to sit in with me but didn't show up and can only find a LinkedIn profile."

Do you have any other feedback that you would like to share?

"Ray was amazing. He helped at every level."

What suggestions do you have to improve Opportunity Appalachia?

"If they have the capacity to have others who are willing to help mentor some of the project leads, especially if they're new to it. Maybe pairing us up. Having groups or a format where we can just check in on each other, have little meetings periodically to encourage each other, and then we could actually work through some things together. That way we're not all alone. We could probably work through and come up with some solutions before it even gets to having to ask Ray (the program manager)."

"The one thing that I think would have been a tremendous help that I would love to see OA do is actually have somebody who (as best as they can) truly understand OZ's and make that person available to the OA participants. So even our TA team who has been in this world for years and they're great, but whenever we started talking about how OZs could play into a project that we already had structured as a new market tax credit project, there was nobody to go to and say, 'how do these things work together?' And we learned that this is a world full of consultants that are super expensive that are happy to jump on projects but can also burn a project's budget very quickly. So, it would be invaluable for OA to have one professional that would be available to all OA participants to ask questions and receive some guidance."

"It seems to me that you should schedule interview meetups instead of just have an open slot that someone could show up or not show up. That's pretty loosey-goosey, so I would say put more pressure on the investors to commit to scheduled conversations."

"I think it would have been helpful to have deeper touch points with funders that could have helped structure packages that meet their needs. You could also lock in funding commitments upfront and then have [investors] select which ones they want to get into."

"Sometimes communication that got sent via email would get lost in the shuffle of what needed to be read and what needed to be done- usually extremely long emails."

"I think [the Investor Convening] would have been better if the projects were clustered by genre, because then if investors were interested in real estate particular to hotels, they could have had a separate panel particular to retail. I felt since we were the only [type of project that we were], it would have been nice to not be grouped in with everyone else."

"I understand that this would be a lot, but even for Opportunity Appalachia staff to have come out and visited the project or had a better understanding of where we were located and what we were trying to do, would have been great. I would have loved to have a site visit."

Appendix L: Technical Assistance Provider Q&A

Aside from COVID, what challenges did you face working with the projects?

Two TA providers stated that there weren't any challenges. The remaining 11 TA provider's feedback is as follows.

"The client did not have ownership and therefore easy direct access to the properties."

Role change

"There were minor changes associated with the project company and changes of company participant roles as the project progressed."

"Our firm was not the original technical advisor for this project but was requested early in 2021 after the project sponsor felt the original firm was not providing value. The timeline we had to work with was therefore shortened compared to other TA teams, which presented some slight roadblocks in achieving the goals stated per the timeline provided."

Communication

"Timeliness of getting information from the project to complete the associated work."

"Communication was lacking."

"The ability to meet face-to-face with the myriad of players needed to coordinate product and financing outcomes. Although Zoom helped, on-site meetings with assistance providers and potential financing providers was hampered."

"Challenges on each project were unique. Communication was an issue, scope changes/team roles were an issue, the client not making up their mind was also an issue."

"The property owner did not always respond in a timely manner causing some delays in our end product."

Project Complexity

"The scale of the building and its conditions made it hard to estimate the potential costs of adapting and improving the building for future uses."

"It's a large, complicated project. The amount of work to do it correctly was sizable, but it was worth it."

"Multiple elements of the project are still developing and remain unresolved, particularly with respect to financing."

Other Challenges:

"The community non-profit who owned and was leading the hotel revitalization, and the private sector developer on the project were collaborative but did not take advantage of the OA resources offered, as they were effectively pursuing capital stacks that did not require our help."

“Scope creep. We fulfilled the outlined scope of work to the client’s satisfaction, but three months after completion, OA informed us that they thought there were holes in the business plan and prospectus. Our issues seem to stem from a misunderstanding regarding the business model for the project sponsor, and their business plan has different aspects than a typical business plan. The business model is completely different from [that type] of provider.”

“The projects that we worked on were ill-defined and in need of different forms of technical assistance than the OA grants allowed. This has caused significant issues with our team getting paid- a frustrating and insulting situation.”

- **OA Response:** OA modified several TA contracts’ Scope of Work upon the request of the project sponsor and TA team. If this TA provider requested modifications that were supported by the project sponsor, OA would have approved. In some cases, OA withheld payment pending requests to address completeness of submitted materials: market studies, prospectus, pro forma, etc.

Was there anything that you needed (information, resources, communication, etc.) but didn’t get that would have helped you do your job better?

Survey responses indicated that the technical assistance providers’ experience varied. Factors that might be of influence include: the number of OA projects taken on at one time and the complexity of the requested technical assistance. Eight TA providers responded ‘no’ that there was not anything that they needed. One technical assistance provider said, “OA representatives did a very good job in setting expectations and providing what was needed to meet those expectations.” Feedback received from technical assistance providers is as follows:

“Being able to visit the interior of the spaces that were to be renovated would have resulted in a more complete product. Their space that was accessible was being used for storage, so it made it difficult to perform our assessment and design duties. We did have some record data that we were able to utilize and of the level of detail that was expected, we were able to complete the scope of work.”

“A clear path for utilization of Opportunity Zone financing was a challenge due to lack of existing QOFs and the size and capacity of the localities.”

“Expectations about specific work product were not laid out clearly at the beginning of the grant period.”

- **OA Response:** Each TA provider submitted a proposal outlining their Scope of Work, timeline, and budget which was incorporated into a contract with deliverables that they executed.

Do you have any suggestions for improving the technical assistance process (e.g., proposal development and selection, technical assistance contracting with Opportunity Appalachia, technical assistance provision/milestone achievement to project, payment process with OA, or other areas)?

A majority of technical assistance providers skipped this question. Four simply said ‘no.’ One stated, *“I think the newness of the program and the use of OZ financing, the TA provided by Opportunity Appalachia was adequate.”*

“I was not aware of any TA from the state provider, which was also new to the process.”

“As a subcontractor, the payment process has been less than ideal. We are still waiting on a final payment, but our work ended.”

“Expectations from OA should be clearly defined in either a revised scope or contractual document.”

- **OA Response:** Each TA provider submitted a proposal outlining their Scope of Work, timeline, and budget which was incorporated into a contract with deliverables that they executed.

"Many small communities need pre-development dollars that are not tied to a specific project, but are rather tied to project organization, land acquisition, and market opportunity assessments."

"The slowness in the process of our invoices was problematic."

The remaining feedback from technical assistance providers was obtained through interviews. Technical assistance providers were contacted by email to schedule a Zoom meeting to further discuss their responses to some of the survey items and their overall thoughts on Opportunity Appalachia.

Would you say you had clearly defined deadlines?

"Because every TA provider provided different services, I think it's hard to set clear deadlines and expectations for everyone. But I had great communication with all of my state's program managers and Ray Daffner about where the projects were and if it's not going to be a certain deadline, why not? And being flexible about that."

"We knew what we needed to do. It was a lot of discovery and problem solving, but I suspect that's a strength of ours. There wasn't a time where I felt unbalanced, or I didn't know what to do. It was really smooth."

"I think the RFP we received was pretty detailed, and I went back to that multiple times to go through and make sure we were doing the right thing- always looking back at the goal of the project. I think the project did grow to be more than [what was outlined], so that was the only thing that was unclear- what were we supposed to be doing."

One TA provider thought that expectations were "laid out in a laissez faire sort of way" and it seemed to be different project to project. *"Expectations weren't specific and the relationship between the funder and the community was never explained to us."*

- **OA Response:** Expectations were different from project to project, as each project required different services. Each TA provider submitted a proposal outlining their Scope of Work, timeline, and budget which was incorporated into a contract with deliverables that they executed.

"Our contract expires on July 30th, but there was some pressure for us to get things finished before then. That's not how a contract works. You can't expect people to turn stuff in early just because you're going on vacation. In addition, one other thing that would improve the program is taking a meeting or conference call going through the contract just to make sure everyone is on the same page. It doesn't matter if you're the biggest firm in the world. If whoever is handling the project just sends the contract off to their legal but doesn't really read the benchmarks or scopes in it, you're not going to be on the same page."

Payment-Were you satisfied with the payment process of 'payment upon deliverable completion'?

"Yes, I think the payment process seemed to seem to work fairly well. I've worked on a lot of different grant programs and this one was probably on the better side of most."

One TA provider was not satisfied with the payment structure. *"It didn't cover the cost of our staff, especially when we weren't paid in full for any of our [TA] projects. It wasn't enough pay to incentivize. The project funder had more involvement in the scope of work, and they were so far ahead of what the project needs right now. We can't get that work done when it's further down the line, so it feels like we're essentially working for free."*

"It was a big project that took a lot of time, so I feel it was adequate from a CDFI kind of standpoint. I know for us it was obviously a profit loss because we spent too much time. But it's been great, so I don't know if it's fair to offer way more for a project that's going to take long or if you need to require prep the city and the sponsor to be like if it goes for a year longer you may want to think about negotiating with the TA group. The next time we will do a better job of estimating how much this will take, so a part of its on us."

Overall feedback from the technical assistance provider perspective:

One TA provider said there were noticeable difference in terms of readiness between projects.

"I imagine that my opinion on project readiness is different than someone else's opinion on project readiness. You know for me; I'm coming from the world of new market tax credits and so project readiness for me means that you are ready to start building your building in two months. Whereas project readiness for someone else might mean you have the idea, and you have an idea of where the funding is coming from. So, I think it would probably be beneficial to identify where projects are at in the development process, maybe by a checklist so it's a 'do they have X, Y, and Z' and you know each project is measured at the same 'X, Y, and Z'? That would be helpful. I just don't feel like even my project [where I was the TA provider] should not have gone to the Investor Convening. It was not ready. They just had to make a lot of guesses. It just was too early in the development process. But we didn't want to give up an opportunity that someone is giving us to present about this project. Yeah, so I don't know, it's a tightrope walk because I don't want to misrepresent what the project is, but then again, we had so little information. At that point we were making stuff up and I found that to be the case with many of the projects that I watched. I actually followed up with a couple of them thinking that they were further along in the development process and found that that was misrepresented in the presentations."

"It helps to have a full-time staff member dedicated to the project. So, I'm able to call that person any time and they're not having to shift gears."

"The number one challenge I have in my state in particular is sourcing leverage for a new market tax credit project. Basically, that means we have to find between \$3 - \$5 million of money from most likely a commercial bank, and they have to participate within the complicated and messy new market tax credits, which they don't like to do. So, the number one thing that OA could do to going forward to help me make projects get done in the future, is provide a larger amount of allocation and allow it to be used as leverage number. However, I understand that [providing larger allocations would limit the ability to help other projects], but I think it's sort of pointless to go through these steps of development unless you know there is a realistic opportunity at the end to actually get the project done. The fact that the money was all too spread out was a challenge for me, and I needed more in one project. So perhaps just having a more realistic hard line to what projects will and will not actually work out would be a better way for OA to decide who's getting money. For example, we didn't have any sort of financial pro forma proof of development included in that application. So, like there was nothing to indicate we were serious about this project. Besides what you could say on a piece of paper."

"I had a challenge helping projects in this that had a lack of developer experience. Opportunity Appalachia was open pretty much to anyone to apply, whether they had heard of Opportunity Zones, New Market Tax Credit, etc. Some projects that I helped with TA didn't have experience as a developer and walking into this world as a layman is very difficult and just won't work. So perhaps you should be able to show you have experienced developers on your team going forward and document what that experience is. We need to document readiness. So, document your seriousness for this project. One way to do that- what money have you put into the project? Not your time, not you know, not in-kind donations. What of your dollars have been put in a problem? I found one project struggled to meet the matching requirement for the grant. They, you know, had no skin in the game. Also, we were able to use in-kind as part of that match requirement, which I just didn't feel was okay because they ended up saying you know, how do you value your time? That's something that I think is difficult to do. So, document your skin in the game, document your developer experience, and perhaps you should have a developed, experienced developer on your team."

"The project team was great. The people side has been really great, and also, I love urban cities and urban centers. So, this big project was really fun to dive into because it has a lot of history. The people that we talked to, like stakeholders, had really passionate answers and were really excited about the process and the possibilities. That makes it so exciting if it works out and really happens."

-TA provider

“Going forward, if OA has another allocation of funding that they're able to go and sub allocate, I suggest that they choose less projects. Maybe top five, or maybe top two from each state or something and put more time and resources into those top tier projects and by default you'll automatically end up with projects that are more ready and have a stronger development team.”

“Overall, I think it was run really well. I thought that people that you had speaking were pretty great. Having those videos made it so much better.”

-TA Provider on the Investor Convening

“I would reach out to TA providers before you open the application period and ask if they know of any projects right now, that are coming like you know, rising stars in their area and then actively recruit people to apply. I think that would be important to getting a better-quality project. I'm not sure if this is their goal, you know. Is it OA's goal to pull projects out of the woodwork, or is it their goal to help projects get done and that's the big difference? So, if it's their goal to get projects out of the woodwork, then the recruitment technique would not be effective. But if their goal is to get a project done, then they should be talking with local people before they open up the application process.”

“I think OA should probably stay in its lane. Perhaps this could be partnered with new market tax credits going forward, I think that's something that we've seen. This is a really powerful program to combine the resources of both new markets and Opportunity Zones together. If we're finding a \$300,000 project, then sure, Opportunity Zones is the resource we need to use. But it seems as though that for the projects that really came out for this program are those \$5 million plus projects that would become New Markets projects, so perhaps that this funding should be advertised for both. Or it should be if they want it to be an opportunity zone program, then they need to say this needs to be an Opportunity Zone project.”

“I think maybe just looking overall at scoping and having that flexibility on potential added scope or length of time to revisit the fees.”

“The amount of TA wasn't enough.”

“Projects need to be more thoroughly vetted. They need to be at the financial development phase and should be shovel-ready projects.”

Two technical assistance providers suggested that Opportunity Appalachia needs to be responsive to the community, not just the grant. Another suggestion was to trust that the communities are experts in their communities. One project noted not being able to do all that they wanted with Opportunity Appalachia and were to focus on just one building when additional work could have greatly benefited the community as a whole. For example, one TA provider mentioned the downfalls of focusing all your attention on a boutique hotel, but having visitors look out the window only to see dilapidated buildings.

TA comments about the Program Manager:

“He was great to work with. He was always very responsive and gave good guidance. He was a good partner in the project to work with.”

“Ray was always really easy to get ahold of if we had any questions which was really nice.”

Only one TA provider noted that the project manager *“wasn't the right person for the job and complicated the process.”* Communication and deadlines were sometimes noted as being last minute.

Appendix M: Investor Q&A

Do you have any comments about Opportunity Appalachia?

"Fantastic Job!!"

"I did try to attend one [meeting with a project lead] and the fellow that I was meeting with had bad internet connection, so it was a terrible conversation- it was breaking up the entire time." The investor noted receiving enough contact through the event to be able to reach back out to projects after the Investor Convening.

"The problem with OA is that the ideal investor doesn't have time to go to a conference about OA presentations at all. The ideal investor is a local high net worth individual who's busy doing a million other things. So, by nature of the beast, the investors that you get at these convenings are people coming from the new market tax credit world or institutions like CDF, and we don't have a lot of power in helping opportunity zones get projects get done. We have a lot of resources and connections to provide, but the investor who needs to be at this conference or presentation or whatever, is not going to commit to coming. What they will do is respond to a great connection that is made as a result of something like this. So, perhaps, I find out about a project that I know would be perfect for my investor in Bristol, TN and I send it to them that way. I just don't think it's geared toward the right investor."

Appendix N: State Teams, Steering Committee Members, and Other Partners Q & A

Do you think the Steering Committee met enough to accomplish your goals?

Everyone agreed that the Steering Committee met at the right frequency, members were engaged, and information was presented to make informed decisions. The following comments are from Steering Committee members.

“Sometimes you get on Steering Committee calls and there’s not enough work that has been done in between times, so you’re really losing time. But it looked like there had been plenty of work done in between to make them productive.”

“The meeting on the decision points was the crucial way to roll this because we all have such busy schedules that they were very attentive to that and the project.”

“They would share documents ahead of time walk us through them they were very deliberate in sharing information giving us time and creating space for feedback.”

Would you change anything about outreach for the program?

From the state teams:

“We were late coming to the game because another state backed out, so we didn’t really have time to ‘socialize it.’ We didn’t have momentum to build on, and we hadn’t been on the watch for budding projects in the region. So, if we were to have the opportunity to do this again, we would start stronger much earlier to be certain that all stake holders in the region knew about this program.” -Ohio State Team

“Our turnout was really good. I think I would have gotten another partner or two involved, and I wouldn’t have thought about that except for when we lost our Economic Development Director, and we were single threaded with her, so I had to pick up. So, I think I would have gotten another one of our team members involved and another partner involved that we work with so if that happened again, we would have a contingency plan and that continuity of engagement.” -Virginia State Team

“We had prominent national speakers, great attendance, and great feedback from the outreach event.” -West Virginia State Team

From other Steering Committee Members and Partners

“From what I observed, I think it seemed that that deliberation was there, and the intentionality was there.”

“I can answer from an ARC perspective. We would likely broaden our outreach to our participants especially given the geographical scale. It wasn’t all 13 states, 420 counties, it was limited, and I think we would engage a little bit more from an outreach perspective.”

“I’m interested, if we do this again, in more outreach to financial institutions. I think the second panel on the second day [of the Investor Convening] I believe, had a lot of representation from financial institutions. And I would have liked to link that to some of that opening panel as well and invited more of them to participate. Credit unions, community banks, regional banks, national banks- I’m sure they were invited, but I think there was opportunity for our inner-agency folks (CDC, OCC, and Federal Reserve to do outreach that didn’t ‘violate’ any of our regulatory functions.”

Would you change anything about the selection process? Did the application provide adequate information to select project?

"Some of the applications for projects were in the very beginning stages and didn't have partnerships established. The score sheet made it rather easy to choose which were ready to take the next step."

"I think one of the challenges with the program is it's really hard to tell from the submittals- the application process, who was really ready to undertake a project that would be fundable. If we could go back in time, we would try to figure out a way to sniff that out better."

"This came about when Opportunity Zone projects were still in very early stages, and it was concurrent with those projects being developed and they were not significantly gelled. Looking at the other projects, other project pitches and learning more about the other states projects, I feel like ours were on par with some of the others."

"I think the application was just brief and hard to tell [who was ready]."

"For most of them we just didn't have those personal relationships with the projects, we were like 'here great news go.' We had not been, nor had any of our partners, been involved with the development of those conversations, so what we don't know if that's just the way we feel with those early Opportunity Zone projects, maybe everyone felt that way and sometimes I feel like we just didn't know what we were doing."

"I think we had some applicants that didn't adequately answer some of the questions, so we certainly provided feedback to our applicants that were vague. So, I don't know if I would have changed our process, our guidelines, or the application. Nothing really stands out. I don't think the application was limiting at all. I believe the problems we had were all applicant related, just some of the applicants not expounding on certain things that they needed to. So, we had a lot of going back and forth. We actually denied or put down at the bottom of the list a couple of applicants that we just couldn't get information from."

"I would recommend going forward if we could beef up outreach to those private business investment opportunities, so we have equal number to the community projects. I think we had two private company projects, one was broadband/data center in West Virginia, and one was Micronic Technologies in Virginia. If we did the Investor Convening again, we might possibly separate those out because they were so different than the other projects. It just felt like to me that those stuck out as being different and I'm not sure if they were looked at differently by investors in the same way."

"We were really kind of fuzzy internally about the types of projects that could be supported by this multi-state program. Opportunity Appalachia was looking for multiple types of OZ projects, so buildings, businesses, those kinds of things. But I think, generally, we had a clear understanding of how it related to building development and were able to wrap our heads around that and understand the support that was needed for that. I think when we were ranking them, it was hard for us not to preference the building projects because we really understood how they could be best served by the program."

"We would have broadened the selection team in our state to include people with other expertise. We got the community side of it, but there should have been some other folks that were involved."

"We did get pushback from partners because none of the projects that we selected were from southern West Virginia in the southern coal fields. People were upset about that. So, it felt like it was kind of geographically distributed- no projects went below capital district. Some were northern and southern. If I had to do it again, I would have said no place should get two projects."

How did you balance choosing projects in small towns who had less resources and greater need compared to larger cities who had more resources, but more capacity?

"From our vantage point, I thought there was a nice balance, actually, in the sort of breadth of the projects. There were some smaller and larger communities. It didn't seem like there was an inappropriate focus on one or the other. It seemed like there was opportunity for small towns and the medium sized towns and smaller cities to participate and to make it through the

process. There was a nice diversity of projects in the final group. One of the things we talked about in terms of the timing of the Investor Convening was that there were a couple of projects that were already starting to raise money, and if the Investor Convening would have been in June, it would have been too late for them. But then if it had been in January, it would have been too early for a bunch. So, there was a bit of a conversation there that had more to do with the timing and where folks were in their life cycle of project development and fundraising. It would have been interesting to have two tracks in the future—one track would be less experienced or smaller or have a higher social impact and maybe less potential return on investment.”

“By the nature of the program, I think rural communities were always going to be represented. But I do think there was attention paid to that from all the state partners and the national steering committee members. In putting the program and partners together, we were really thinking about the various angles different organizations brought to that question. I’d say there was a good balance.”

Is there anything that you think TA providers needed, but didn’t receive looking back?

There were a few instances of communication struggles with TA providers in West Virginia. One of the suggestions was to better explain who the state team is, how they fit into the equation, and maybe those difficulties wouldn’t have happened.

“We had one TA with the project that is advancing the most out of St. Louis, these guys are amazing, and it was obvious that they did it all the time. We lack depth and strength in the region of technical assistance providers anyway and one technical assistance provider covered five projects and they did not complete the projects adequately. Again, Opportunity Zones are new but developing proformas aren’t new and I wish we had had more choices and if we were to do this again we need time to do some outreach ourselves to other organizations at least within the state if not nationally to find better assistance for our projects.”

“I think it was crystal clear what the expectations were, and it was all spelled out in the agreements. My feeling is that I don’t know that our projects knew what they needed, or they would have been doing it. So, the technical assistance was supposed to come in and say okay so now we need to do this this and this, they were to guide those projects through it instead of saying go ahead and do this and give it to us.”

What did you think about the Investor Convening?

“I thought the technology, and in having done this in other events, was really strong and it was clear how things were going to work. The speakers and presentations were spot on. I think we needed more investors at the table. I think we had higher hopes that they would engage and that video productions were the ticket. Having everyone pitch those live in a virtual event or even in person would have not been as powerful as those videos were, and I must say that I think we should do this virtually again if we have the opportunity to do so. I think we would have had a lot less participation if we were to try to go ahead with an in-person event for this first round. We got more people from across the United States to the event because it was virtual. I think we could get even more people now that we know what we’re doing and now that we know what that virtual outcome was, I think we could make it a lot more powerful would we do it again.”

“I think what we’re really trying to do is get more investors to participate. I think the virtual setting kind of eliminates the travel barriers which would probably mean that we would get more participation. But the caveat would be we need the presenters to have fundable projects and every state ran into that. We really had a tough time narrowing this down and unfortunately, I think what we did was we picked some projects that put a good write up together in two pages, but they just weren’t ready.”

“[Taking] what I had seen in the states when they did their [outreach] meetings, Ohio had a couple of people who did practice pitches. What I noticed was quite a few had difficulties with the financials, and that’s part of the problem. I honestly didn’t see a lot of that at the Convening. I thought there was a lot of improvement with people understanding the financial picture and

who they were talking to. You're not talking to a group of economic development people who are sitting back. You are talking about people who are investors and you've got to speak that language. So, I think there was great prep work in that."

"I wish there was a way at the end [of the Convening] where you could leave the last couple of sessions if you weren't selected for an Investor's Convening conversation. It kind of felt like you were on left out at the playground. That last piece was kind of awkward and off putting for those people who had not been selected for a conversation with an investor. I think if that could have been done privately in some way, or behind the scenes and not so publicly, I think that would have been better. Or, during the time that we were all hanging out on Zoom there was actual content so that people didn't notice if some folks were coming in and out."

"I want to say that those presentations- almost every single one of them gave me hope. As an Appalachian and somebody who works in the region, you have to have that spark plug in the community- taking the project and working really hard. It definitely came through on both the presentations and the videos."

-Opportunity Appalachia partner

"I thought the presentations were fantastic. I think that getting representation from each of the states is very important at the highest level possible."

"I thought, as these things go, obviously, it would have been great to do it in person. But I thought the platform worked very well. It was easy to go on and off and know what was going on to navigate. But the one part that was less a technology issue, each day after the pitches was an opportunity for investors to have a one-on-one. The technology to be able to do that I think worked really well, but that fact that the project to be able to do that was really valuable. My sense was that on the first day, there was more take up on that than the second day. And it was a little unclear to me whether that was because people were worn out by the end of the second day or if it was the nature of those pitches and the nature of the investors on the call. But I know the facilitator said at one point that there were a lot of slots and people hadn't signed up and I think understanding why that was would be worth knowing."

"They did a good job being able to pivot to a virtual event. I think there were a lot of factors that were out of everyone's control that they tried to manage. I think that those meetings [between investors and project leads]- the concept was good, and it wasn't that execution wasn't good, but I'm not sure how well the technological format suited that kind of meeting."

"I didn't really get the information about what that was going to look like or what the expectations from me would be [having also been part of a technical service provider team]. There was a 45-minute session where folks could break out into groups, and the way they hosted it was to have everyone kind of stay in the room and there were the breakouts. If you were in the main room, it was clear that you weren't going to a breakout. But wasn't clear if you weren't in the right breakout room or if you were going to get one- maybe just wasn't much pick-up. Communication about expectations and an understanding around what we were supposed to do and potential happenings in that session would have been helpful to know more so we wouldn't feel so lost in that section."

"It was a unique platform. I loved the music playing to give you a feel of culture of the area, and I really liked the energy of the moderator/MC over the event. I think that virtual platforms present a lot of opportunities to be intuitive around how people look for information and how they understand where you're moving to next. I find you have to be almost over communicative in virtual platforms because there's so many different digital literacy levels and people need to be reminded consistently of what to click next and where they need to go. And then when you have folks moderating panels, I personally would have been grateful to have a practice session beforehand to understand what the platform was going to be and who was going to be doing what- what I needed to present, even knowing how we wanted to introduce the panelists. I think I depended upon the people being able to go to the platform to pull up the bios, but I wasn't really clear if they're going to be able to do that or not. I think orientations with the folks who were panelists or moderators actually would have been beneficial and helped with some of the chemistry, too, in the event."

Was there enough detail in the information provided about how the Investor Convening would run?

"I just think information would have been sent earlier would have been helpful. They were still doing dress rehearsal the day before. That whole planning could have been better."

"Information about how the technology would work, who was scheduled to pitch when, how the after hours, how you signed in, came from different people at all hours of the day. [As a state team], we were worried project leads would think some of the emails were spam and were receiving messages about how to access the Investor Convening."

- **OA Response:** OA had challenges with the conference manager meeting deadlines and, at times, providing unclear guidance.

How did the meetings between investors and project leads go?

"They were only 15 minutes. Had that been in person, they would have been in a bar over a glass of wine talking about it. Doing it virtually in Zoom rooms was not effective. No one was interested after all of the sessions. The bulk of the work has been follow-up with investors because the investors wanted additional information, a lot of back and forth."

"This could be a thing to be changed. I remember us saying it was a waste of time. Some people signed up and didn't show up. It was a COVID adaptation that didn't work. It would have been better if there had been at the end of both days a debrief with the investors to hear their questions, concerns, and shared that back out with the projects instead of with the one on one."

"I don't think there was enough interaction with project leads, and I don't know if it was confusion, lack of investors, lack of interest from the investors in the projects, or if they just didn't want to have those conversations then. I have heard about interest that has come late post convening from different investors. Just because you got into the program, and you got technical assistance doesn't mean you have an investable project. It just means you are ahead that much more because you've received this technical assistance. Maybe what we need is more interaction with all of the projects that went through the program to say this is why you're not investable this is why people aren't calling you."

What did you think about the project videos?

"The videos themselves were fantastic and we actually used two of them for our economic forum. They were perfect. I thought they were professionally done, and they raised the professionalism of the entire event. Without those professionally done videos, I don't think the Convening itself would have been nearly as polished and professional."

"They made beautiful videos, but if they could have had the projects pitch in the videos rather than live pitch it would have solved a lot of problems. Would have looked sleek."

"At ARC [Appalachian Regional Capital] there were a lot of people who couldn't participate, so we sent around them around. They looked at the video it was the same kind of reaction- 'this is really amazing.' Whoever did the videos they did a really great job. Whoever prepped the teams did a fantastic job."

"They impacted me. The presentations were the numbers piece of it and the videos were showing the community and the people who work there. That was the emotional piece of it that tugged at the heart string."

-Opportunity Appalachia Lead State Partner
on the project videos

"The video was the best money ever spent. I mean Riffraff just tore it in half; they were amazing. We're still tapping in; I send those videos quite frequently. Quite frankly, that's one of the things that I think this project did an exceptional job at but probably didn't realize how much of a jewel they had- in not only the videos but the platforms that accompanied the videos through The Opportunity Exchange. Those platforms are amazing, and they provide a lot of that technical information on the project. I think it would have been nice to drop in a link to The Opportunity Exchange and drive people to that site to learn more details and get some of those technical questions answered."

-Opportunity Appalachia partner on the project videos

What are your big lessons learned if you were to replicate Opportunity Appalachia?

Partner perspective:

"I think that if we could find ways of having communities and project leads have conversations with TA's early in the process that could help strengthen the pipeline and potentially the quality of the applications."

Opportunity Appalachia project partners agreed that *"the idea of the convening and The Opportunity Exchange platform videos need to be evergreen. One needs an ongoing capacity to highlight and communicate that there are projects like this in these places. Having connections to rural regions is really valuable."*

"It would have been really interesting to potentially have two tracks in the next version [of the program]. One track would be less experienced or smaller, or frankly, have a higher social impact and maybe less potential return on investment from a finance perspective. But by, sort of shaking those out, one could not only engage a broader set of types of investors but help to sort of acquaint them with [their desired focus, such as financial return]."

"At the very least, it would be useful to list the second-tier projects so they could have gotten some notice [among potential investors]."

Was there anything you think could have been done to build a better sense of community across the three states in Opportunity Appalachia?

"There could have been more opportunity for those leading the various projects to know where the other projects were in terms of progress because I think these projects are so complicated, and it's hard to keep the momentum when you might have to course correct. I think to build a sense of community around participation in this project, they could have had more checkpoints or some kind of dashboard to let everybody know where everybody was. I feel like there was a good variety of projects and progress along the way for folks that hit a bunch of roadblocks at the beginning and were not as far along as they'd like to be. I think some kind of collective understanding of the progress and the roadblocks people were hitting I think would kind of help the positivity and the confidence around their own project."

"I felt like most of the players who needed to be at the table were there across different states."

"Our regions are different, but many of our rural regions share very similar challenges and some opportunities for how we think about growing economic mobility and opportunity in our regions. Having the connection between rural regions is very valuable."

-Opportunity Appalachia Partner on building a sense of community

"Personally, I don't feel that there is any sense of community across the three states. Also thinking about the projects, there was a hotel project [in our state] and another in another state. No connections were made between states. In the beginning when [Steering Committee] meetings were in person, excitement about the program was different. It seemed like everyone wanted the better sense of community across the three states. When things went virtually, it just didn't go as far as it could. Each state kind of did their own thing. Each lead in each state is all different. Like, the Virginia lead is from the community college, the Ohio lead is from a more industrial development organization and The West Virginia team works in comm development-very different types of organizations. That probably made a difference also."

Appendix O: Q&A with Donna Gambrell and Ray Daffner:

Donna Gambrell serves as the President and CEO of Appalachian Community Capital. Ray Daffner served as Program Manager for Opportunity Appalachia. Donna and Ray were interviewed separately to get their thoughts on the program.

Are there certain types of projects that you think are more successful or are a better fit for Opportunity Appalachia having seen a successful run of the program?

"Well, we certainly have seen that there is a lot more development and redevelopment underway than I think people assumed, especially of historic downtown districts- eco tourism sites, for example, which would consist of hotels. I would have loved to have seen, and I think this is not so much a flaw in the Opportunity Appalachia initiative or even in Appalachia, but I think greater consideration within the Opportunity Zone guidelines that would provide greater participation by operating businesses. I think one thing that I would have liked to have seen more of is the operating businesses in Appalachia. Just because of the way the initiative is designed, it was really more favorably focused on redevelopment projects and commercial real estate; and that doesn't mean necessarily that those projects are more successful than operating businesses. ...When we looked at the projects [selected], only a couple were operating businesses...The commercial real estate businesses were, in many cases, much further along, had greater support, more interest by investors, etc." -Donna

Looking back, do you think the number of projects was the right number to start out with this being the first year?

"I think that was just the right number. I think the fact that we had something like 57 projects initially that people were looking at and that they could get it down to 15. We were thrilled to get that 15 because more than that, I think, would have been more difficult to handle. Keep in mind, this was a new initiative. It was, in many ways, a pilot program. So, there were things that even we were learning along the way and were having to pivot or change course. So, I think it was really the right number." -Donna

"I don't think we could have picked anymore. It was really at our limit for capacity. I think any more would have required more operational support and budget revisions for more staffing support. In terms of types of projects, I would have liked more operational projects- operating businesses as opposed to real estate. I think we had three operating businesses: -Micronics, the farm business-Blue Ridge, and the telecommunications project- Thundercloud. It would have been nice to have four or five of these." - Ray

Was there anything missing in the program that you'd want to incorporate if you do it again?

"As much as we made a point of this, I would have still liked to have seen a greater emphasis on things like energy efficiency built into the projects. If I had to change one thing, it would be [making that a requirement at the outset], or at least requiring an explanation of why energy efficiency or renewable energy [features] could not be incorporated in those projects. The other thing is that we really strove for diversity in these projects, not only in the locations and the types of projects, but also, we wanted to be sure that in these communities that there was also racial minority representation- women representation as well. I think we did very well on the women representation... however, we only had one minority developer, I would have liked to have seen a couple more. It would have been nice to have seen more racial diversity as well." -Donna

In your opinion, what went particularly well with Opportunity Appalachia?

"I co-wrote a paper not too long ago about what makes a successful CDF collaboration, and we talked about the mission being aligned, people committed to the work, being able to speak candidly about problems when they arose, the willingness to resolve those problems right away rather than having them linger... open communication. All of those things you saw [in Opportunity Appalachia]. With this particular project, the fact that you had three different states represented within the Steering Committee [with a] variety of different people from universities, from economic development councils, from community-based hubs in West Virginia and everybody seemed to work well together, and the communication was flowing. You also had a strong project director in Ray who managed the day-to-day operation in a way that I think was really just extraordinary. Clearly, you've got three states, 16 projects, and you needed somebody who was going to be focused and be willing to follow up in each of those cases, but also be willing to say 'hey, wait a minute you're moving too slow' or 'you're not doing the right thing here' or 'you need to be thinking about some other options if this isn't working.' You needed somebody to be the nudger if you will, and I think he just did an excellent job. He was just really good at helping people think through the next steps. I think it's an extraordinary skill. Not everybody can do that and still have people respect you and like you." - Donna

"I think it was critical and we were close to these communities, and our Steering Committee really helped us with that. Contact with investors is really important. We did a lot of outreach, and I think that was beneficial." -Ray

How successful was investor outreach? Do you think you reached the right types of investors?

"I think that Appalachia is one of those regions where still there is a bias, if you will, amongst some investors about 'well there's probably not much going on there or why would we want to invest.' But I think we did a really good job of reaching out to the investors long before the convening. We had worked with them almost a year before the convening actually took place, and Ray and I were very specific in who we wanted to reach out to. So, these were going to be investors that we knew were already aligned with the mission. So, I think the legwork that we did beforehand was good. I think that we reached out to the right investors. As successful as the virtual Investor Convening was, what was missing were investors on the ground, in-person who could actually interact with the project sponsors face to face and or who could visit the sites and actually see it. The videographer did a great job in highlighting the projects in those three-minute clips, but there's nothing like seeing a project up close. It was less of a missed opportunity- it was just the reality of COVID. We simply could not have people there in-person. But perhaps it did prevent a larger number of investors from participating." -Donna

Were you happy with the number of investors involved in OA?

"Well, I think we had 40 investors at the Investor Convening, so I think we're pretty happy with that. When we send out our notice to investors that we selected 16 projects, we received 10-12 emails and calls back saying 'could you introduce us?' Investors would list the projects they wanted to be introduced to, and then we also held calls, they said 'could you talk us through this portfolio?' Again, given we're in middle of COVID, that was May 2020. We used a lot of relationships to do that and relationships that our Steering committee had, relationships that project sponsors had, and relationships that Donna and myself have. We also used the visibility of this project receiving the award from Forbes as an OZ. But I think there clearly is more work to be done around investor outreach and investor relationships. I think we could have put more time and effort into cultivating it further, and I'm thinking of five or six investor groups that we could have done even more follow up. So maybe expanding that as in the scope of work for the program. But you know, some of the TA providers are really good on the investor side as well, while some had more limited background with investors. It just depends on what they were hired to do." -Ray

Do you think a clear timeline was presented to TA providers for deliverables and enough background info on OA so it was clear of what was asked of them?

"Well, each contract had a very specific timeline, and when TA providers submitted proposals, those proposals had timelines. For a practical point of view, you know sometimes it can be difficult to adhere to those timeline projections. But you obviously want to update your timeline if you're running late. Some contractors might have been too busy to do that. In some cases, projects were slow in getting materials back to the TA providers. In other cases, TA providers were slow in undertaking activities. A timeline is always an important part of TA provision, and I think there were challenges in meeting timelines from all perspectives.

Sometimes we did not approve payments because there was not adequate progress made and there were TA providers who I'm sure were uncomfortable with that. But that's why you have a contract with people. You're able to say, 'well, you didn't do milestone one and two and three; you invoiced us for milestone one and two and three, but could you please show us where these things were accomplished.' Right now, we're making partial payments as needed, and that doesn't always endear yourself to contractors, but it seems like that's an effective way to manage contracts." -Ray

Were there any challenges working with any of the TA providers?

"Some were great, some were absolutely fantastic. There was one group that was in over their heads- they did not have a skill set to manage their projects. There was another project group where there were many providers working together and the coordination wasn't straightforward. It required a lot of conference calls between all the parties. So, I think there are some instances where it was a challenging process, and there were other instances where very complex work got done at a very high-quality level and very efficiently." -Ray

One of the overall themes I've heard is that all projects seemed to be at different stages of readiness. Did that create any challenges?

"Yeah, it sure did, and I think in the big picture there's just nothing you can do about that. You just have to develop a program that's flexible enough to address projects at those different stages, so you know some projects just needed some financial structuring help, other projects needed some market research and some architectural design work. In a few cases, projects needed concept development. I think there are a couple of projects that might have been a little too early stage which we were aware of that when they were accepted- when the state recommended that they participate. We said, 'well, this is a little bit of an experiment' and there were other projects where we said 'no, these are too early stage, and they're not a good fit for us.' Instead, why don't these communities work with the Main Street program to first envision what they want to do.

The application submission period was interesting because we opened it prior to holding the three state [outreach] meetings, and then we kept the submission period open past those three state meetings as well. We could have had a longer submission period, but unless we had a nine-month submission period it wouldn't really have helped projects that weren't ready get ready because it's a lengthy process to get a project ready. So, I think we could have had multiple application rounds. So, there would be a round one where we select the first group of projects that were ready and come back a year later and do a round two. That's actually what we're envisioning doing if we get funded to do this again." -Ray

Would you change the application process, materials or the rating/selection tool?

"No, because I think for folks that have been involved in community economic development, they know that you can start projects all at the same place at the start line and they still end up in different places at the finish line. I mean, nothing is uniform, and no project moves at the same pace as all the others. So, it was not surprising that even at the end of it when we had the convening that you had projects at different places. Some project sponsors were able to secure funding pretty quickly, others were still working with their TA providers. So that that was not a surprise at all to me.

The application process was really so thorough. I think the steering committees came together and worked hard to make sure that they had good viable projects that could be offered for consideration, 15 to 16 projects at the end of the day. I think it was a rigorous process, and I don't think that there would be anything that I would change. Frankly, I think the rigor was necessary, and

the message was clearly delivered and well received that while you may not have gotten in that first tranche [of selected projects], that didn't mean that your project was bad..." -Donna

"We really rely a lot on our state partners. So, I think the reason we didn't feel a need to do interviews [in the application process], and I don't and wouldn't in the future is because we really rely on our project partners. They know these communities. I think the process was pretty robust. You need a good concept, but how is it going to move the community forward? It was also helpful to have our two national partners ask the hard questions. You might have a state partner who thought there was a great project in the community, but the national partner would have a different view and perspective and add a lot of value to the analysis." -Ray

How do you think the Investor Convening went? Did you get the turnout that you were wanting?

We had these private virtual meetings set up with investors that did not work that well. I'd be surprised if more than four projects had private virtual meetings. I think the panels were interesting panels. People said they thought they were interesting. I would have liked to have seen more participation by communities that were not in our program. I think it would have broadly benefited communities. We could have used some additional ways to market / bring in attendees that were not one of our 16 projects. We had 160 people there, but I think there's a couple other things we could have done to get more folks there. Regarding length of program, it didn't seem like it was too long, I think the timing worked - two afternoons. You know, there was certainly a downside to not being in person because of all the relationships and discussions you get to have in person. I think that that's clearly a shortcoming. Would we have got 160 people to come in person?? I don't know. Maybe we would have. I think at the time the convening concluded people were generally pretty happy with it. There were a few logistical changes. I recollect there was a suggestion that we should have had Donna as our host and not have it outsourced to a third-party group CDFA. Our third-party group could have undertaken all the logistics, but we could have the visible host someone central to our program." -Ray