

# Community Foundation of the New River Valley

## *Aging in Place Leadership Team*

Southwestern Virginia

### Challenge

By 2030, the population of New River Valley residents ages 65 and older will double, while in rural areas the population under 25 will decline, leaving an insufficient tax base to support an aging population. Nearly 60 percent of the region's housing stock is more than 30 years old and is inaccessible to those experiencing declining mobility. With 1 in 10 seniors living in poverty, most lack the resources to move to nursing facilities or make simple modifications that would allow them to remain in their homes.

### Innovation

Innovations include a home modification program for low-income seniors and a regional Time Bank allowing residents to give and receive basic services. Private homebuilders and community development financial institutions are also working with the team to develop housing for low-income seniors, including \$6 million of public and private investment to date and new employment opportunities for the region.

The Community Foundation of the New River Valley was a core partner in the New River Valley Livability Initiative, a 3-year regional planning process funded through the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Upon completion in 2013, the Foundation initiated a partnership with the New River Valley Regional Commission to spearhead implementation of the plan's goals and strategies. Among the plan's most significant findings were impending demographic changes. To address these challenges, the foundation worked with its partner organizations to form the Aging in Place Leadership Team. Through a series of regional meetings, the partners identified six essential action items to meet the plan's goals. For each of the action items, the partners identified a lead organization and specific roles for other agencies. By spreading out responsibility while pursuing a shared strategy, each participant contributes, feels accountable, and shares in success. Partners recognize that aging-related issues span geographic boundaries, and share a commitment to the regional approach. Moreover, by identifying specific, achievable goals the group is able to celebrate successes frequently, encouraging engagement.

### Public Sector Partners

The Town of Blacksburg, Montgomery County, and the Virginia Tech Center for Gerontology

### Other Partners

New River Valley Regional Commission, the New River Valley HOME Consortium, the Agency on Aging, and Habitat for Humanity

