

# WEST VIRGINIA CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY

# 2015 Annual Report



## Giving Working Families a Hand Up

Coming on the heels of an increase in the minimum wage, the WVCBP campaign to strengthen the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) was another win for West Virginia's working families!

Despite strong partisanship, in 2015 Congress voted to make permanent important improvements to the federal EITC. All Republican members of West Virginia's delegation voted to support working families across the country. Without this agreement, 40,000 West Virginians, including 18,000 children, would have fallen deeper into poverty. 131,000 children in 81,000 West Virginia households would have lost some or all of their working-family tax credits, a total of \$77 million. While the improvements were not set to expire until 2017, this proactive step provides economic certainty for families so they can better pay for basic necessities while working for a low wage.

### Pushing Back on Misinformed Policies

The WVCBP successfully fought back on some bad policies as well. In 2015, we helped prevent a full repeal of the state's prevailing wage, passage of a resolution in support of a federal balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and any attempts to roll back Medicaid

Expansion. Additionally, we were able to reduce some of the projected cuts to higher education proposed by the governor's office.

Throughout 2015 the WVCBP monitored legislative discussion to overhaul the state's tax code. Several dangerous proposals were researched such as eliminating the personal income tax.

In response, the WVCBP led the creation of the West Virginia Tax Fairness Coalition.

The coalition released its recommendations in June, from 22 statewide organizations. WVCBP staff was asked to testify before the Select Joint Committee on Tax Reform that met throughout the year.



## OUR VISION

**A prosperous West Virginia where everyone has a meaningful and equitable opportunity to thrive.**

## Help for Coalfield Communities

The WVCBP gathered resolutions of support for President Obama's Power Plus Plan which would assist Appalachian communities struggling with the downturn in the coal industry. In addition, Federal support emerged through the RECLAIM Act with bipartisan support including Congressman Evan Jenkins from West Virginia's 3rd District. Monies from the Abandoned Mines Reclamation Act - \$1 billion - would be dispersed over a five-year period offering job training for displaced coal miners and other community support.

The WVCBP continued its work with the Multi State Marcellus Shale Research Collaborative which includes partners in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and New York. West Virginia's Future Fund and severance tax policies serve as a model for the region and our work was highlighted at conferences and events in Ohio and Pennsylvania.



## Fiscal Year 2016: Our Budget Challenges

In January, the WVCBP held its second annual Budget Breakfast. It featured a panel presentation: Three Perspectives on 2016 State Budget and Beyond with Senate Finance Chairman Mike Hall, Senate Minority Leader Jeff Kessler and Secretary of Revenue Robert Kiss. About 100 people attended the event in Charleston, including legislators, coalition partners, the general public and the media.



## Racial Equity

The Race Matters in West Virginia campaign held mini-summits around the state and launched its own website, **www.RaceMattersWV.net**. In March, the first mini-summit was held in Martinsburg with over 60 people in attendance. In November, community leaders in Lewisburg hosted a Summit on Race Matters to mark the two-year anniversary of the first summit. Over 100 people attended the two-day event which also featured discussion around the film "Cracking the Code." Also in November, WVCBP Executive Director Ted Boettner was asked to moderate a panel at the State Priorities Partnership in Baltimore that brought together representatives from the Black Lives Matter movement and other activists.



## Our New Outreach Staff

In the fall of 2015 the WVCBP hired Tara Martinez as our Policy Outreach Coordinator and Seth DiStefano as our State EITC Campaign Coordinator.

Tara took the lead on several WVCBP campaigns including planning the first-ever West Virginia Summer Policy Institute scheduled for July 2016 at West Virginia Wesleyan University. She also coordinates our coalition work including the Our Children Our Future campaign and Race Matters West Virginia.

The WVCBP was one of just three organizations chosen in the nation to receive funding to start a statewide campaign to bring a state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to West Virginia. In September, Seth came onboard to spearhead this effort and under his leadership a new website was launched. At [www.investinwvfamilies.org](http://www.investinwvfamilies.org) legislators can look at the direct local impact a WV EITC would have on their districts. Seth also started The Invest in Working Families Coalition which had over two dozen members to kick off the 2016 Legislative Session.

In another effort to boost working families, the WVCBP partnered with WV FREE to expand Earned Sick Days and Paid Family Leave in West Virginia.

## WVCBP In the News

The WVCBP was featured in 224 stories in 52 local and national media outlets including the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the Atlanta Journal Constitution and Bloomberg Business. This marked a 35% increase in the number of media stories over 2014. Staff made presentations throughout the year. In May Executive Director Ted Boettner took part in a legislative briefing in Columbus, Ohio sponsored by the Multi-State Shale Research Collaborative and Ohio Assembly members to discuss how states can create permanent natural resource trust funds to ensure long-term benefits from shale drilling.

### The New York Times

Executive Director Ted Boettner had a letter to the editor that appeared in the New York Times on the collapse of the coal-mining industry in West Virginia.

## Our Social Engagement

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
 FB LIKES	379	467	661	828	907
 SUBSCRIBERS	695	737	775	1,153	1,503
 FOLLOWERS	N/A	328	590	1,054	1,131
 MEDIA HITS	135	188	158	165	224



## 2015 Major Publications

- A Tax Cut That Works for Working Families – January
- West Virginia's Prevailing Wage: Good for Business, Good for Workers – January
- The Governor's 2016 Budget: More Austerity, Less Prosperity – March
- Reverse the Curse: Fighting the Boom and Bust of Natural Resource Extraction – May
- Fast Facts: Ending West Virginia's Prevailing Wage Won't Reduce Costs – July
- Fast Facts: "Right-to-Work" Won't Boost West Virginia's Economy – July
- Fast Facts: More Tax Cuts Not What West Virginia Needs to Grow Its Economy – July
- Tax Reform that Protects Roads, Children and Seniors – September
- A Win-Win Marcellus Shale Tax Incentive – September
- Ending Business Personal Property Tax Ineffective Way to Boost West Virginia Economy – October
- Fast Facts: Encouraging Work Key to Reducing Poverty – October
- State of Working West Virginia 2016 – November

# Expenditures

## General Program

\$306,231

## Management & General

\$42,647

## Development

\$12,915

**\$361,793 Total**

## 2015 Funders

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy thankfully acknowledges the following foundations and organizations who financially contributed to its work in 2015:

### FOUNDATIONS:

W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Sisters Health Foundation, Stoneman Family Foundation

### ORGANIZATIONS:

Affiliated Construction Trades Council, American Federation of Teachers - WV, American Friends Service Committee, Center for Responsible Lending, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Communications Workers of America, KISRA, Nagle and Associates, Southwestern District Labor Council, West Virginia AFL-CIO, West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, West Virginia Community Development HUB, West Virginia Education Association, WV FREE, West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families Coalition, West Virginia Humanity Council, West Virginia Kids Count, West Virginians for Affordable Health Care

## West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy

### OUR MISSION

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy's mission is to use research and analysis to advance the well-being of West Virginia communities, and to promote and support the essential role of government in improving the quality of life in the state.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Dr. Renate Pore, President

West Virginians for Affordable Health Care

#### Dr. Karen Kunz, Vice President

WVU Department of Public Administration

#### Jennifer Thacker, Secretary

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Mountain View Solar

#### Daniel Eades

West Virginia University Extension Service

#### Dr. Michelle Foster

Kanawha Institute for Social Research and Action (KISRA)

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Service Employees International Union District 1199

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Partnership of African American Churches

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#### Stephen Smith

West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families Coalition

### STAFF

#### Ted Boettner

Executive Director

#### Seth DiStefano

State EITC Campaign Coordinator

#### Linda Frame

Communications & Administrative Manager

#### Tara Martinez

Policy Outreach Coordinator

#### Sean O'Leary

Senior Fiscal Policy Analyst

#### Betty Rivard

Volunteer

#### Erin Snyder

Health Policy Analyst

#### Brooke Bailey

Summer Research Associate

### COALITIONS

#### Our Children, Our Future

#### Race Matters WV

#### West Virginians United

#### WV Tax Fairness Coalition

#### WV Medicaid Coalition



723 Kanawha Blvd., Suite 300  
Charleston, WV 25301  
304.720.8682  
Info@wvpolicy.org  
**www.wvpolicy.org**

@WVCBP

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