

Major Victory for West Virginia Working Families!

At a time of national outcry for a long-overdue increase in the minimum wage, West Virginia took the lead by increasing its minimum wage from \$7.25/hour to \$8.75/hour by 2016. This huge victory for those struggling to make ends meet meant a pay increase for over 125,000 workers of over \$156 million by 2016.



Raise the Wage Activist
Jamie Gudiel

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy led the Raise the Wage coalition and worked closely with legislative leadership to give West Virginia workers an honest wage for a hard day's work. In West Virginia, about 90% of workers impacted by the increase are over age 20 and, on average, they earn about half of their family's total income. One in five workers who benefits has children.

Raising the minimum wage is one step in the work against income inequality. To understand how we got to such an imbalanced wage world, the WVCBP hosted a screening of Robert Reich's "Inequality for All" film at the State Culture Center in January.



Reversing the Resource Curse: West Virginia Future Fund



the
futurefund
A brighter future for West Virginia

In March 2014, the West Virginia legislature passed a bill to create the West Virginia Future Fund, a first step toward setting aside some of the state's vast resource wealth into an account for the future, when West Virginia energy resources are depleted.

While this is great news for the state, the law, as passed, needs strengthening. Several triggers were inserted into the legislation that make it difficult for money to start flowing into the fund, including tying the WV Future Fund to a specific balance in the state's Rainy Day Fund.

Fixing the West Virginia Future Fund can ensure it takes revenue from a nonrenewable source and turns it into a renewable source of permanent wealth so future generations benefit from the state's rich natural resources. If properly funded, after fiscal year 2020, it would pay out dividends or interest income to fund a range of activities, including education, workforce development, economic development and diversification, infrastructure improvements, and tax relief.

In the fall, the WVCBP joined Senate President Jeff Kessler to form the Southern Coalfields Organizing and Revitalizing the Economy (SCORE) initiative. Members held their first listening tour at the Raleigh County Commission on Aging. SCORE's goal is to give Southern West Virginia much-needed opportunities to diversify the economy and strengthen its families and communities.

The WVCBP continued its work with the Multi-State Shale Research Collaborative, releasing a report on employment and the human impacts from drilling in the Marcellus Shale, focusing on Wetzel County.



Expanding Mental Health Care

At the end of the year, acting on a recommendation based on WVCBP research, the state Department of Health and Human Resources changed its rules so that independent, licensed clinical social workers could bill Medicaid for providing behavioral health services. This expansion will provide more mental-health professionals who can provide care, especially to the state's poorest residents.

Budget Battles

In May 2014, the WVCBP and the Our Children Our Future campaign led the effort to fully restore funding cuts to family-support programs that Governor Tomblin vetoed in March 2014. The governor reversed course and signed legislation restoring the cuts, and the House of Delegates, with a vote of 90-0, supported it unanimously.

The governor's original veto would have cost important family-support programs in the state over \$1 million in FY 2015 and could have jeopardized over \$14 million in leveraged federal and private funds.

Governor's Taskforce

The WVCBP was a proud contributor to Governor Tomblin's Taskforce on Early Childhood Development which released its findings and first report in 2014. WVCBP staff provided data to the taskforce and made two presentations to its members.

The WV Early Childhood Planning Task Force was created by Governor Tomblin in May 2013 to produce a Development Plan for Early Childhood in West Virginia. The plan will "define the components, priorities and costs of a quality early childhood system and strategies for its implementation and governance."

First Budget Breakfast

January started out with a polar vortex followed by the chemical spill into the Elk River, all at the beginning of the 2014 Legislative Session, creating a challenging start to the year.

In the midst of it all, the WVCBP held its first Budget Breakfast at the Charleston Marriott. While not everyone was ready to drink the coffee, about 100 people, including state legislators, came to hear about "West Virginia's Fiscal Outlook: Moving Forward or Moving Back." Staff plans to make this an annual event providing a preview of the governor's proposed budget and what it means for the state's working families and children. The event raised \$15,000 for the WVCBP.

Race Matters in Appalachia



The WVCBP was proud to be a lead partner for the Race Matters in Appalachia Summit, held in November 2014. The two-day event brought hundreds of concerned citizens together to have

a dialog about racial equity in the state. Using the ground-breaking film "Cracking the Codes" as a guide, the event blended facilitated break-out sessions with presentations from national leaders about the ongoing need for conversation and understanding about the challenges we still face as a community.

Speakers included Dr. Gail Christopher, vice president for policy and senior advisor at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; Mike Wenger, senior fellow at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; and Dustin Washington, director of the Community Justice program with the American Friends Service Committee.



Dr. Gail Christopher

Over 20 organizations and foundations contributed to the success of the event, along with the talents of 14 trained facilitators to guide attendees through powerful dialogue and story sharing.

Outreach and Advocacy

In 2014 the WVCBP was featured in 165 stories in 40 local and national media outlets including the *New Yorker*, the *Denver Post* and the *Washington Post*. Additional coverage appeared in the state's weekly newspapers and on local radio and television stations.

The 2015 Kids and Families Day in January featured the world premiere of "The First 1,000 Days: Investing in WV Children When it Counts." Produced by West Virginia Public Broadcasting, the film looks at early childhood development and successful programs that are helping low-income West Virginia families. It features advocates for these families, including our very own Ted Boettner.



News stories and op-ed topics included the increase in the state's minimum wage, the restoration of funding for family programs, proposed paid sick days for West Virginia workers, the taxation of the state's energy resources, the progress of the Affordable Care Act, and the level of poverty in West Virginia, especially among its children.

The WVCBP continued its weekly "Budget Beat" and also expanded its following on Twitter and Facebook. Facebook likes grew by 25% from 2013 to 2014 and WVCBP Twitter followers increased by almost 70%.

The #EvidenceCounts blog had an active year full of immediate analysis on important issues of the day. The year started out with a flurry of information on the benefits of raising the minimum wage in West Virginia, as well as what the West Virginia Future Fund could do for economic development and diversification. We kept readers up-to-date on the impact of the Affordable Care Act in reducing the number of uninsured in the state and reminded policymakers that giving the tobacco tax a long-overdue increase would ease many budget woes while decreasing the state's high rate of tobacco use. Income inequality and how it's affecting the number of West Virginians living in poverty was a regular topic, as were many recommendations on how to lift the state's most vulnerable people to a higher standard of living.

2014 Major Publications

- The Governor's FY 2015 Budget: Doing Less with Less
- Assessing the Impact of Shale Drilling: Four Community Case Studies
- Restoring Budget Cuts Will Help More Children and Families
- Stemming the Retirement Crisis: West Virginia Voluntary Retirement Accounts
- Keeping Families Healthy: West Virginia Earned Sick Days and Family Medical Leave
- State of Working West Virginia 2014: Economic Recovery and Transition in the Mountain State

West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy

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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.

Our Vision

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

OCOF Policy Workshops and Policy Symposium

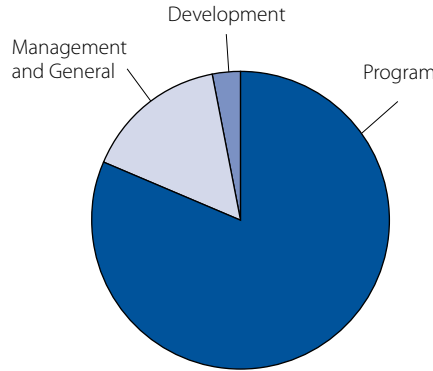


The WVCBP was an organizing partner in the Our Children Our Future (OCOF) policy workshops and symposium in 2014. Four workshops were held throughout July allowing people to attend from every corner of the state. In September, the WVCBP was the lead organizer of the two-day Policy Symposium at the Culture Center at the state Capitol attended by over 400 people. The

event included a welcome from Senator Mike Hall and other state leaders, policy break-out sessions throughout the day and an evening candidate forum.

Over 20 policy proposals were presented at the policy workshops and symposium on issues ranging from providing Earned Sick Days to the state's workers to increasing West Virginia's tobacco tax to providing unemployment compensation for victims of domestic violence.

Expenditures



General Program	\$319,567
Management and General	\$60,034
Development	\$11,951
Total	\$391,552

2014 Funders

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy thankfully acknowledges the following foundations and organizations who financially contributed to its work in 2014:

W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Service Employees Union International 1199, Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation, National Association of Social Workers - WV, Sisters of St. Joseph Charitable Fund, American Friends Service Committee, West Virginia Kids Count, Partnership for Elder Living, Stoneman Family Foundation, West Virginia AFL-CIO, West Virginia Primary Care Association, West Virginia Counseling Association, West Virginia Licensed Professional Counselors Association, West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families Coalition, West Virginians for Affordable Health Care, WV FREE, Kanawha Institute for Social Research and Action, West Virginia Women's Commission, Communications Workers of America, West Virginia Council of Churches, West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, American Federation of Teachers-WV, West Virginia Alliance for Sustainable Families, Alliance for Children, West Virginia Community Voices, and the West Virginia Education Association.



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