

**“Supporting Rowan County’s Long-term Planning Process in the Areas of
Human Health, Economy, and Environment”**

Sub-Contract Grantee
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Final Report Narrative

Title of Project: Supporting Rowan County's Long-term Planning Process in the Areas of Human Health, Economy, and Environment

Grant Period: February 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

Grantee Name: Morehead State University

Project Director: April Haight

Description of Project:

This project built on the 'community indicators project', which was developed by the 2011 ATP class at Morehead State University. The 2012 ATP class compiled data on 16 of these indicators. The reports generated by these classes included indicators related to human health, economics, and environment. The 2013 class has used these indicators to focus on helping to improve our community's human health, environment, and economy. The 2013 class conducted research and met with community partners to gain knowledge and a better understanding of the causal factors that account for the persistent distress of our community and service region, as they relate to the above indicators.

After listening and engaging with guest speakers from the community, the students discussed potential project focuses and which areas to conduct further research. Each student conducted a detailed literature review on a specific area related to human health, environment, and economy, based on needs expressed by the speakers. The literature reviews were used to select an emphasis for the class project that best fit the current needs of the community that were expressed by the class presenters. The students selected parks and recreational asset inventory and survey as the focus project because outdoor recreation impacts the community's human health, environment, and economy.

Based on their research there is a strong connection between parks and recreational assets, and three indicators selected (human health, economy, and the environment). In addition, the City of Morehead's long-term planning community forum rated improvements in outdoor recreation opportunities in the top 3 issues to be addressed in the Morehead-Rowan County long range. As a result, the students' project focused on providing a better understanding of the current outdoor recreation assets. In addition, the students researched issues related to outdoor

recreation from both an applied and scholarly perspective, with the goal of examining how they can tie together to improve the quality of life for citizens living and working in Morehead-Rowan County.

The students found that very little outdoor recreation information was available for the community. However, the students were able to generate an asset inventory after extensive reviews of websites, pamphlets, and talking to a variety of community members. The students were surprised at the amount of outdoor recreation resources that were available to the community. One of the students in the course was a lifelong resident of the Rowan County. This student was only aware of about half of the outdoor recreational opportunities.

In addition, the partners, who wanted to improve the outdoor recreation opportunities, had little knowledge of the existing assets with in the community. This conclusion was reinforced by the pilot survey results. Overall, the survey results from the two small samples suggest that local parks are safe, clean, and well-lit, but also that some equipment may be in poor condition and that people would like more options and amenities. Survey results also indicated that some people did not know about all of the amenities available in a particular facility.

Activities:

The 2013 class worked with several community partners to better understand the causal factors of poor human health, economy, and environment in relationship to recreational assets. As in the past years, the students worked with NewCity Morehead as the primary community partner. Other community partners included Sustainable Morehead, Inc., Northeast Kentucky Area Health Education, City of Morehead Parks and Recreation, Morehead Tourism, and Rowan County Health Coalition. These partners met with the students to provide background information and needs of each organization. The direct communication with the community partners are summarized in the table below.

Community Partner/Representative	Dates and locations of meetings	Topics of discussion
Dr. Christine Emrich Morehead State University	8/21 in class	Discussed the ATP and past student projects. (45 minutes)
Dr. Anthony Weaver Northeast Kentucky Area Health Education	9/11/13, in class	Provided back ground information on the health issues facing Appalachia Kentucky. (1 hour)

Dana Quisenberry Rowan County Health Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 9/18/13 and 10/9/13, in class b. Between 9/23/13 and 10/16/13. c. January 2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provided information on the community issues related to health. She focused on obesity and illegal drug use. (3 hours) b. Students corresponded with Dana via emails and phone to discuss in greater detail possible projects centered on illegal drug use. (1.5 hours) c. One of the students shared the project outcomes with the Dana. Dana requested a copy for the Rowan County Health Coalition.
Dr. Bob Albert Chair, NewCity Morehad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. October 2013 b. 10/16/13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Corresponded with students by email about distributing the pilot survey to NewCity board member. (1 hour) b. Dr. Albert distributed the pilot survey to the NewCity board members for completion. Seven board members completed the survey.
NewCity Morehead, Inc.	9/18/13 and 11/20/13 at Morehead Conference Center	Two students attended the NewCity Morehead, Inc. meetings. (2 hours)
Sustainable Morehead, Inc.	10/14/2013 at the United Methodist Church	One student attended the Sustainable Morehead, Inc. meeting. Recreational trails were the focus of the meeting. (1.5 hours)
Carolyn Franzini, Sustainable Morehead, Inc.	11/2/13 to 11/20/13, phone and email	Two students worked with Carolyn Franzini to edit the pilot survey, distribute electronically to the Sustainable Morehead, Inc. board members, and obtain feedback on the survey. Only 5 surveys were completed. (3.5 hours)
Park and Recreation Director David Morris and City Planner Joe Parson	10/16/13, in class	David Morris and Joe Parson provided in depth information about the Parks and Recreation resources, partnerships, and funding. They also discussed future plans and needs (which included more activities for elderly, new pool, and more fields). (1.5 hours)
Joy Brown, Director of Morehead Tourism	10/23/13 to 11/20/13, email	Students obtained addition information about the trail town initiative. (1.5 hours)

The 2013-2014 project focus was to meet with community leaders to identify a range of community needs, which resulted selecting the area of health and outdoor recreation. Students undertook to (1) research peer-reviewed articles and investigate real-world examples pertaining to human health, environmental, and economic aspects of community quality of life; (2) develop and pilot a community needs survey focused on local human health, environment, and economic issues; (3) interview a variety of local leaders about these issues, including obtaining their feedback on our survey instrument; and (4) produce a project report that can be readily utilized by local leadership to inform their ongoing long-range planning efforts. The activities related to the focus are below.

- 1) Met with a variety of local leaders to identify and discuss this issue.
 - a. Dr. Anthony Weaver, Northeast Kentucky Area Health Education, provided an overview of the health issues of the Appalachian region in Kentucky.
 - b. Joy Brown, Director of Morehead Tourism, provided feedback and answered questions via emails.
 - c. Dana Quisenberry, Chair of the Rowan County Health Coalition, provided an overview of the efforts of the Rowan County Health Coalition.
 - d. Joe Parson, City Planner, and David Morris, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided a detailed overview of the Parks and Recreation resources, activities, and use.
 - e. Carolyn Franzini, Chair of Sustainable Morehead, Inc. provided feedback on the pilot survey development and the survey that was piloted.
- 2) Research peer-reviewed articles and investigate real-word examples pertaining to human health, environmental, and economic aspects of community quality of life.
 - a. Literature reviews were completed on childhood obesity, impacts of parks on community health, water quality and flooding, community demographic and population distribution, and major regional health concerns and causes.
 - b. Students completed annotated bibliography of their research, which included the course textbook 'Uneven Ground'.
 - c. Students completed a two page summary of research.
- 3) Develop and pilot a community needs survey focused on local human health, environment, and economic issue.
 - a. The students obtained permission to modify a parks and recreation survey that was developed by Active Living Coalition.
 - b. The students developed a consent letter of participation for the survey.

- c. The students completed Collaborative Instructional Training Initiative online training and submitted an Institutional Review Board protocol forms.
 - d. The students piloted the survey with the NewCity Morehead and Sustainable Morehead, Inc committee members.
 - e. The students analyzed and modified the survey.
- 4) Produce a project report that can be readily utilized by local leadership to inform their ongoing long-term planning efforts.
- a. A report was produced and submitted to NewCity Morehead, City council members, Mayor Perkins, Sustainable Morehead, Inc., Morehead Tourism, Rowan County Health Coalition, and Daniel Boone Rails to Trails.

Project Outcomes:

Poster Presentations:

- School of Public Affairs, Morehead State University (December 11, 2013)
- ARC Appalachian Teaching Project meeting in Washington, D.C. (December 6-7, 2013)
- Posters at the Capitol, Frankfort, KY (February 27, 2014)

Oral Presentations:

- School of Public Affairs, Morehead State University (November 25, 2013)
- ARC Appalachian Teaching Project meeting in Washington, D.C. (December 6, 2013)
- Sustainable Morehead, Inc. (March 25, 2014)
- Morehead City Council (February 17, 2014)

Link to Morehead State University video featuring students work at the Posters at the Capitol --

<https://m.flickr.com/#/photos/msu1887/sets/72157641623669075/>

Other Outcomes:

1. Perform research on the status of our community's economic, environmental, and human health and analyze this information in the context of scholarly literature and ongoing community planning efforts.
 - a. Students were orientated to the Appalachian Regional Commission website.
 - b. Students were provided sample articles.
 - c. Students were provided with a copy of the community members' input on the draft components of the long-term planning documents.

- d. Each student was required to conduct research (literature reviews and interviews) outside of class time.
 - e. Students attended two NewCity Morehead, Inc. and one Sustainable Morehead meetings.
 - f. Speakers from the Rowan County Health Coalition, Parks and Recreation, and Northeast Kentucky Area Health Education presented to the class.
2. Conduct Interviews with identified community leaders on these topics.
 - a. Students interviewed 7 community leaders.
 3. Develop and pilot a community needs survey.
 - a. Students modified a recreational survey from the Active Living Research website.
 - b. Students piloted survey with two community groups (Sustainable Morehead, Inc. and NewCity Morehead).
 - c. The pilot survey was piloted for readability, participants' time, and appropriateness. The focus was not for results.
 - d. Students edited the survey based on feedback from survey participants and discussions with Carolyn Franzini.
 4. Provide project results and useful recommendations to our community partners to aid their ongoing planning efforts aimed at helping our community to become more sustainable and economically competitive.
 - a. The students presented at a City of Morehead Council meeting, at the request of Carolyn Franzini, who is the chair of Sustainable Morehead, Inc. and City Council member.
 - b. A report was submitted to City council members, Mayor Perkins, Sustainable Morehead, Inc., Morehead Tourism, Rowan County Health Coalition, and Daniel Boone Rails to Trails.

Problems Encountered:

As a new course instructor, I encountered problems implementing the student project. I have highlighted the problems with a brief description and how the problems would be addressed in the future RAPP 300: Seminar in Regional Issues I.

1. **Partner selection.** As in the past, NewCity Morehead, Inc. was listed as the primary partner for the proposal. NewCity Morehead had recently created a community fund, with outdoor recreation as a priority area. NewCity Morehead interest in funding outdoor recreation provided an excellent connection between the students' project and community partner. However, NewCity Morehead is primarily a planning organization. Through the students' research and meetings with other community leaders, the students identified other potential partners with whom they could engage in applied

projects. The greatest interest and input came from Rowan County Health Coalition, Sustainable Morehead, Inc, and City of Morehead (Council Members, Morehead Tourism, and Parks and Recreation). As a result, a new community partner has been selected for the 2014-15 ATP proposal.

2. **Student Schedules.** Student schedules were difficult to coordinate with the primary community partner's regularly scheduled meetings. The 2014-15 proposal has selected a new community partner with whom they can meet on a more flexible and regular basis. This will make it easier for the students to actively engage with the community partner outside of class time.

3. **Course Syllabus.** The course syllabus will clearly state the students' requirement to meet with community partner(s) outside of class time. In addition, the course syllabus will be rearranged to allow for more time to work on the community project. These two changes will increase the amount of community engagement by the RAPP 300 students.

Despite the problems encountered, the ATP project was a great opportunity for the students. The problems encountered this past year will be used to enhance to the students project and community partnership building for the 2014-15 proposal.

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

The 2014 class will build upon the 2013 class work. Outdoor recreation has become a focus issue of many organizations within our community, such as, Morehead Tourism, Daniel Boone Rails to Trails, City of Morehead, Rowan County Health Coalition, and Sustainable Morehead. One of these community partners will serve as the next primary partner.

The outdoor recreation asset inventory and pilot survey provides essential information needed to move forward. Better promotion and greater use of outdoor recreation assets have been identified as community needs. The community will benefit from addressing these needs. Outdoor recreation opportunities will have an impact on our community's health and economic development.

The students identified the following recommendations for future classes:

- Continue to work with community organizations to more effectively promote and market opportunities for outdoor physical activities.
- Revise the pilot survey based on our recommendations.
- Investigate alternative ways to distribute the survey to a larger audience.

- Identify good examples of parks and recreational facilities in other communities to use as models for our community.
- Examine additional indicators of community health for a group of communities with varying levels of health disparities in order to be able to compare our community with others.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Budget:

- Dr. Christine Emrich's time was used to meet the \$1,500 match requirement. In addition, the University covered the students' travel insurance.
- Travel -- \$3,931.58 was spent on travel (mileage, hotel, subway, and food).
- Supplies -- \$68.42 was spent on basic supplies for the project.

Attachments (in PDF format):

Include such items as the following:

- Poster
- Final report submitted to community partners
- Student reflection
- Photo of students at Washington, D.C. and Posters at the Capitol in Frankfort, KY