



Photo by Renee Rosensteel



BENCHMARKS FOR A

# Healthy Local Economy

**We are helping communities become more attractive, healthy, and resilient.**

**Celebrating Healthy West Virginia** (CHWV) is a program from West Virginia Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease that provides communities of any scale an effective framework to evaluate their progress in key quality of life metrics.

The 80 CHWV benchmarks are designed to measure community progress in meeting a diverse mix of policy, systems and environmental priorities.

Taken together, these benchmarks help to make West Virginia communities thriving places where people want to live, learn, work, eat, and play.



CELEBRATING  
**HEALTHY**  
**WEST VIRGINIA**

Celebrating Healthy West Virginia benchmarks contribute to a healthier workforce, generate local economic opportunities, and support tourism asset development.



Photo by Andrew Forron

# Places to play are setting the pace.

Celebrating Healthy West Virginia physical activity focused benchmarks not only increase the health of our workforce, they help create assets that improve the quality of life for residents and provide opportunities to increase recreation based tourism.

From complete streets, accessible trails, parks, green spaces, and safe places to play, these priorities can be leveraged to impact many community goals.

**More trails. Closer to home.** Good for tourism. Good for business. Good for our state's health!

## CHWV COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

### Fayetteville–Silver 2020

Public health savings and tourism revenues combined create healthy local opportunities! Working with WV Trails, Active Southern WV, and WVU Extension, CHWV estimates the annual combined local economic impact for the **Wolf Creek Trail System** could be more than a \$6M annually.

Mountain biking tourism revenue: **\$5,700,000**

+

Combined healthcare savings: **\$384,563**

(mountain biking, hiking, running)  
**\$6,084,563**  
**Annual Economic Impact!¹**

## TOURISM FAST FACTS

West Virginia has approved over **\$280 MILLION** in new investment through the Tourism Development Tax credit program.

West Virginia has more than **5000+ MILES** of non-motorized trails.

## WEST VIRGINIA'S WIN-WIN MOMENT!

If only 1% of the people who live within 5 miles of existing trails walked for 1 hour each week, West Virginia would realize **\$17.3M IN HEALTH BENEFITS!²**

Every mile of trail results in **\$14,000** in annual direct outdoor recreation tourism spending, that's more than **\$70M ANNUALLY IN WV!³**



CHWV COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

**Morgantown–Bronze 2020**

Based on Mon River Trails usage alone, rail-trail communities in the Morgantown area see approximately **\$3,280,000 in health savings annually.**<sup>2</sup>



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# Locally grown opportunities.

COVID-19 demonstrated clearly that access to healthy locally produced food is vital for sustaining a healthy workforce, strengthening cultural connections and improving community resilience.

Celebrating Healthy West Virginia Benchmarks create business opportunities for local producers and recognize communities who are building robust local food ecosystems. They encourage support for farmers markets, community gardens, farm to school, programs to help those most in need gain access to healthier food, and more.

**“I do think that the application process is good in the way it helps you self-evaluate where you are as a community”**

– Dana DeJarnett, Health Promotion Coordinator at Berkeley Medical Center; Gold County 2020, Silver County 2021, Gold City 2019

**BENCHMARK FAST FACTS**

**48**

improve workforce health & wellness

**20**

increase recreation assets & activities

**16**

support improved tourism opportunities

**15**

grow local food access & opportunities



CHWV COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

**Berkeley County–Gold 2020**

*Farmers markets and Agritourism are thriving in Berkeley County and creating additional revenue opportunities for local producers.*

**Berkeley County by the numbers from the USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture:**  
Market Value of Products Sold: **\$25,909,000**  
Number of farms: **946**  
Sell directly to consumers: **10%**

**FARMERS MARKET FAST FACTS<sup>4</sup>**

In 2021, more than **49,000** people visited a WV farmers market each week spending an average of **\$12.75** per visit.

**\$342,088** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits were spent with local producers at a WV farmers market in 2021.

The Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Index<sup>SM</sup> shows top-performing counties across the U.S. had incomes nearly **\$4,000 HIGHER** and GDP almost **\$10,000 HIGHER** than the national average.<sup>5</sup>



## Imagine your West Virginia community as a national leader and role-model in building healthier places.

Achieving CHWV's benchmarks improves your community's quality of life and reduces healthcare costs. Combined they make your community more attractive to people and businesses.

Through the evaluation process, communities will gain valuable insights on where to focus energy, build community collaboration, and identify additional opportunities to move initiatives forward.

By taking steps to create a healthier community through participation in the CHWV program, you are leading the way in making our state an even greater place to live, learn, work, eat, and play.



To learn how your community can participate visit [celebratinghealthywv.com/apply](https://celebratinghealthywv.com/apply)

**References:** 1: Based on West Virginia University Extension Service study (Eades, D and Arbogast, D. 2019. *Economic Impacts of Mountain Biking and Bike Trail Events and Festivals in West Virginia.*) and Oregon Health Savings Calculator for population/minutes per week: 2%/120 biking, 2%/60 running or jogging, 44%/30 walking on local trails; 2: *Assessing the Cost Effectiveness of a Community Rail-Trail in Achieving Physical Activity Gains.* Abildso, C. G., Zizzi, S. J., Selin, S., & Gordon, P. M. (2012). *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 30(2), 102-113; 3: ITHIM calculation from WV Trail; 4: <https://www.wvfarmers.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2021-Census-Results-Handout-1.pdf>; 5: <https://www.bcbs.com/the-health-of-america/articles/healthy-communities-mean-better-economy>

### CHWV COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

## Greenbrier County – Gold 2020 Wheeling – Silver 2020

*Celebrating Healthy West Virginia recognition opens new doors for our communities.*

The City of Wheeling and Greenbrier County leveraged their CHWV recognition to become one of only 10 counties and 10 cities nationwide as a Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge community resulting in a **\$100,000 grant** to further improve their communities.

**“This recognition has been a good thing ... we did mention it in our application to the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge ... So, it might've given us a little more clout being recognized as a leader who engaged with our community in healthy ways.”**

– Greenbrier County Health Alliance

### CELEBRATING HEALTHY WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITIES:

#### 2022:

- Berkeley County  
*Jessica G. Wright Health Equity Award*
- Kanawha County  
*Community Innovation Award*

#### 2021:

- Beckley
- Berkeley County
- Fayetteville
- Morgantown
- Putnam County

#### 2020:

- Greenbrier County
- Martinsburg
- Mingo County
- West Hamlin
- Wirt County
- Huntington
- Wheeling