

RWFI BACKGROUND

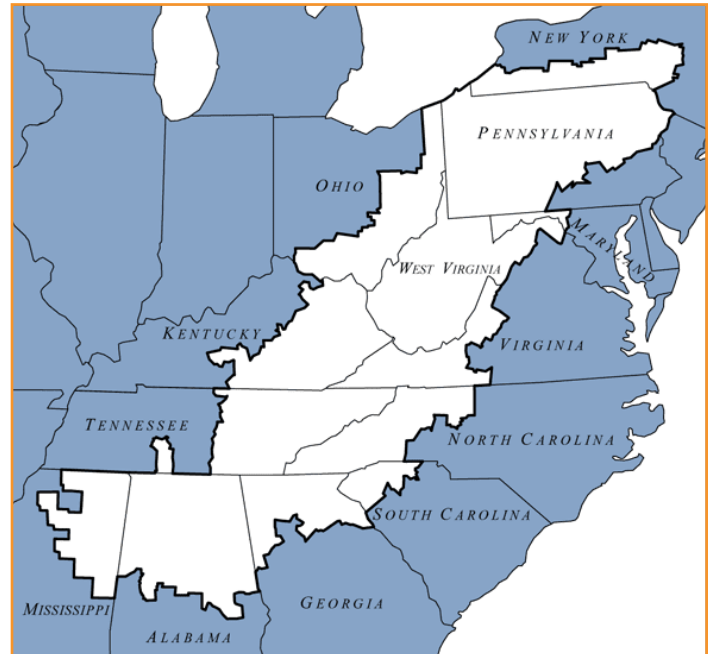
REGIONAL WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

The NETL Regional Workforce Initiative (RWFI)

is a platform for engagement and collaboration with stakeholders who have a critical role in deploying U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) energy and advanced manufacturing technological research investments and breakthroughs. Launched in 2017, the RWFI works to catalyze these investments into long-term economic development, workforce advancement, and job opportunities. Through strategic partnerships that align with the mission and goals of DOE and NETL, the initiative is driving regional and national economic growth through strategic partnerships. With a focus on NETL technologies in coal, oil, natural gas, carbon capture, rare earth metals and manufacturing, the RWFI is working to prepare the highly skilled technical workforce needed to support economic competitiveness and sustained job growth.

The Appalachian region:

- Is historically critical for U.S. energy production with a significant amount of energy and manufacturing jobs.
- Has been adversely affected by changes in energy extraction and related manufacturing activity and has historically struggled with economic and workforce development opportunities.
- Will continue to be a strategically important area for coal, oil, and natural gas energy extraction as well as related technologies in advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, supercomputing and carbon capture technologies.
- Is uniquely primed for enduring jobs and economic growth powered by advancements in NETL research and innovations in energy and advanced manufacturing technologies.



To date, the RWFI has engaged with over 800 regional and national stakeholders from more than 400 institutions and organizations across academic, industrial, governmental and nongovernmental organizations and has helped catalyze over \$2 million in funding to the region. The RWFI engages primarily through participation in regional stakeholder meetings (including hosting periodic stakeholder meetings with NETL staff and researchers), a monthly RWFI E-Note newsletter, the NETL RWFI website, and a bimonthly NETL RWFI webinar series, which has garnered over 2,000 registrants since its inception. More than 300 individuals subscribe to the NETL Regional Workforce E-Note, a monthly email-based communication that provides regional stakeholders information about upcoming grant opportunities related to energy and advanced manufacturing innovation, workforce and economic development topics, and other resources.

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**Catalyzed over \$2.5M in energy/advanced manufacturing
workforce & economic development funding**

WWW.NETL.DOE.GOV/RWFI



U.S. DEPARTMENT
of ENERGY

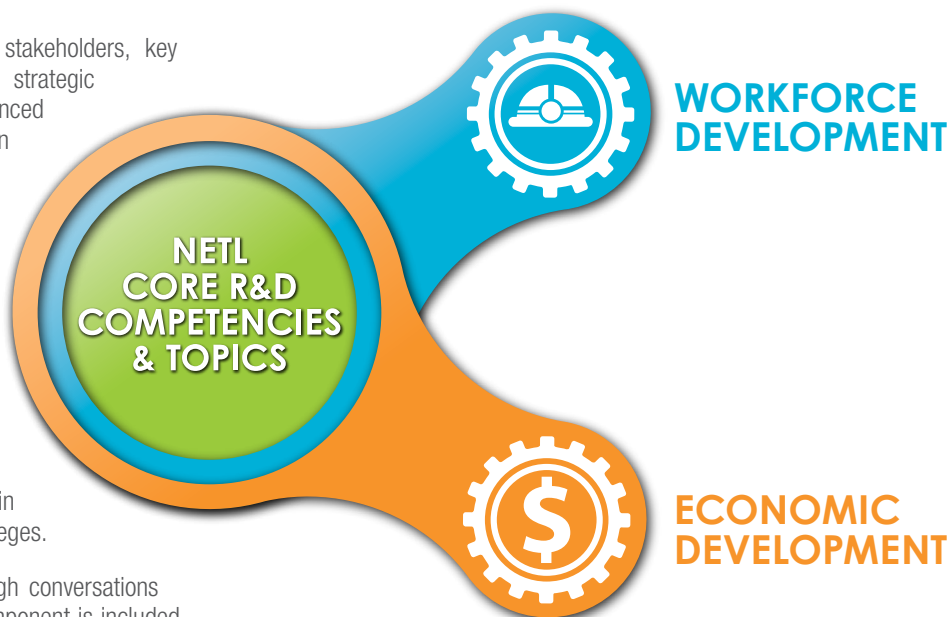


Beyond establishing a broad regional network of stakeholders, key outcomes from the RWFI include the creation of strategic regional partnerships focused on energy and advanced manufacturing research commercialization, innovation and deployment, economic development and workforce advancement.

Activities include collaborative efforts with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) by participating in and sharing subject matter expertise at ARC-funded regional meetings and conferences, hosting a meeting with NETL and ARC federal co-chair, and working together to identify funding opportunities for regional stakeholders and future collaborative efforts. In one example, the RWFI hosted a pilot workshop focused on entrepreneurship in energy and manufacturing with regional community colleges.

The RWFI Workforce Workplan was developed through conversations with the ARC and ARC regional stakeholders. This component is included in some DOE funding opportunities wherein the technology is at a late-stage technology readiness level or near eventual commercialization, which allows an awardee's workforce development plans to be observed and technology development needs to be matched with future workforce development opportunities, and this information can be shared with educational and workforce development efforts, both in the Appalachian region and the nation. This low-effort activity is expected to result in important outcomes, as one of the most consistent issues around advanced technology is having a workforce sufficiently trained for the new advances in energy and manufacturing technologies. Workforce readiness is a critical component of DOE- and NETL-funded technology deployment, as well as increasing opportunities for job and workforce growth fueled by those technological advances.

In 2020, collaborative efforts among with the RWFI, ARC and NETL, resulted in the Advanced Welding Workforce Initiative — a partnership to invest approximately \$1 million in education and training for advanced technical workers in Appalachia.



RWFI also maintains strategic partnerships with The Tri-State Energy and Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Consortium formerly known as Shale Net. TEAM has 19 higher education institutions, 14 workforce boards, 12 economic development entities, 12 private industry entities (some of which are networks with hundreds of members) and eight intermediary entities across parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Rounding out the list of RWFI strategic partners is the Appalachian regional network of Manufacturing Extension Partnerships and the Appalachian Regional Manufacturing Initiatives Workforce and Education groups, comprising the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation members — America Makes, Advanced Robotics Manufacturing, Rapid Advancement in Process Intensification Deployment, and the Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation. Together, these strategic partners represent a significant portion of the federal and nonfederal regional efforts focused on energy and manufacturing workforce and economic development.

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