



FOUNDATION FOR
APPALACHIAN OHIO



Growing Home Fellowship

From Vision to Impact | 2023 - 2025

Local outcomes of the Growing Home Fellowship in Appalachian Ohio

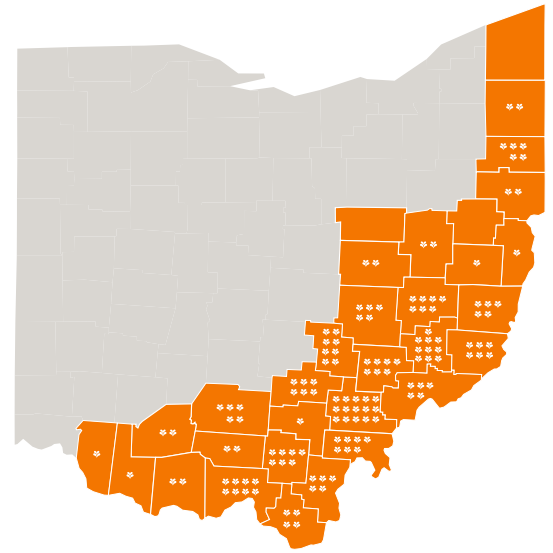
Leadership for a Flourishing Appalachian Ohio

Initial local outcomes of the Growing Home Fellowship 2023 - 2025

Across Appalachian Ohio, a visionary cohort of more than 100 educators are stepping into meaningful leadership roles that extend far beyond the classroom as part of FAO's Growing Home Fellowship.

These emerging leaders are actively contributing to the vitality of their communities, serving more than 80 nonprofit organizations in 29 counties. In addition, approximately 25 fellows currently serve on the boards or committees of civic clubs, nonprofits, community foundations and local governments.

Through their work, Fellows are advancing the Pillars of Prosperity — FAO's holistic vision for a flourishing Appalachian Ohio — by addressing core areas of opportunity: Arts & Culture, Community & Economic Development, Education, Environmental Stewardship, and Health & Human Services.



Growing Home Fellows per county



Arts & Culture

Fellows are enriching local culture and creativity through accessible arts programming:

- **12+ community arts workshops** delivered through the *Art Affects* initiative at local libraries.
- **Establishment of a dedicated art studio** near Jasper Elementary School, offering ongoing classes for area youth.
- **50+ children** engaged through the annual Carol Hammond Children's Theatre arts camp.
- **50+ bowls handcrafted and donated** via *Create to Donate* workshops to support community fundraising.
- **Ongoing planning for a community museum and visiting artist events** in partnership with local creatives.
- **Supporting the clean-up and preservation** of a historic Quaker meeting house.



Carol Hammond Children's Theatre arts camp



Jasper Elementary School art classes



Community & Economic Development

Fellows are creating vibrant, resilient local economies through entrepreneurship, placemaking and philanthropy:

- **Planning underway for a one-day manufacturing camp**, connecting youth and recent graduates with local employers.
- **Beautification projects in Owensville**, including spring flower planting and municipal website improvements.
- **Leading downtown revitalization across communities** like *Our Town Coshocton*.
- **Strategic support for a comedy night fundraiser and expanded grant outreach** through the Harrison County Community Foundation.
- **Ongoing involvement with United Way** through grant writing and fundraising committee roles.



Education

Fellows are empowering youth and strengthening educational connections across communities:

- **Vendor fees from a farmers market initiative** are supporting increased access to literacy in Perry County, sponsoring a child's books for five years through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library of Ohio.
- **Creation of a hope-based curriculum** leading to early-award scholarships for a classroom of at-risk eighth-grade students.
- **Development of a self-guided historical walking tour** in Frankfort, engaging community voices and local leaders.
- **100+ third-grade students** participated in hands-on Ag School Days field trips.
- **26+ organizations featured in the Give & Gather Service Showcase**, promoting community volunteerism.
- **Over 40 youth participating in the Jackson Youth Volleyball League**, now entering its second season.
- **12+ fellows involved in scholarship review committees** through FAO and local organizations, including three fellows working with the Lucasville Kiwanis Club.





Environmental Stewardship

Fellows are preserving and celebrating the region's natural resources:

- **Conservation efforts focused on the Eastern Hellbender** with Friends of Scioto Brush Creek.
- **Trail maintenance and signage improvements** at Dysart Woods, an important old-growth forest, and Raven Rocks through Captina Conservancy. More than 500 monthly visitors recorded at Raven Rocks via trail counter installations.
- **Noble County Community Garden enhanced** with raised garden beds adopted by local homeschool students.
- **Native prairie grass restoration project underway** in Guernsey County.
- **Fellow engagement in environmental education advisory work** with Rural Action.



Health & Human Services

Fellows are ensuring essential needs are met through people-centered service:

- **Continued operation of the Loads of Hope laundry service** for families and individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **Shoes and socks provided to children across four school districts** through collaboration with local Kiwanis Clubs.
- **Development of community gardens or farmers markets** in Hocking, Belmont, Noble and Perry counties.
- **Support for food pantries across five counties:** Athens, Gallia, Guernsey, Jackson and Perry.
- **Development of a backyard farm kit program** in Ross County.
- **Introduction of a mobile produce distribution initiative** in Morgan County, in collaboration with local farmers.
- **Expansion of Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry**, now providing over 5,200 meals in Guernsey and Tuscarawas counties.



SPOTLIGHT: Cultivating hope by addressing food insecurity

The Growing Home Fellows, young leaders rooted in their communities, are at the forefront of efforts to reduce food insecurity — building solutions that are both immediate and lasting.

In Perry, Morgan, Lawrence, Jackson and Harrison counties, fellows are developing and leading Fill the Freezer campaigns. Through this program, local residents donate protein purchased at county fair livestock sales to "fill the freezers" of local food pantries, ensuring that more neighbors have access to healthy, nourishing meals year-round.



In Hocking, Belmont, Noble and Perry counties, community gardens and farmers markets are taking shape under their guidance. These efforts not only provide fresh produce but also create spaces where community grows — connecting people to their food, their land and each other.

Fellows are also strengthening food pantries in Athens, Gallia, Guernsey, Jackson and Perry counties, helping ensure families have consistent access to essential resources close to home.



In Ross County, one fellow has launched a program to supply backyard farm kits, giving families the tools and knowledge to grow their own food and build greater self-sufficiency — right from their own yards.

Morgan County is home to a new mobile produce distribution initiative, made possible through partnerships between fellows and local farmers. Fresh fruits and vegetables are now reaching families who may have otherwise gone without.



And in Guernsey and Tuscarawas counties, fellows have expanded the Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry program. Through this work, over 5,200 meals have been shared with families, reflecting the power of community and the strength of local giving.

"I feel like I'm truly putting down roots in my community, not just through the physical garden, but through the relationships and shared goals we're developing together."

— TEIARA SALING, NOBLE COUNTY GROWING HOME FELLOW



Community foundation engagement

Growing Home Fellows are actively shaping the future of philanthropy in Appalachian Ohio through leadership roles with the following community foundations

- Harrison County Community Foundation
- Jackson County Community Foundation
- Lawrence County Community Foundation
- Ludowici Community Foundation
- Marietta Community Foundation
- Morgan Community Fund
- Noble County Community Foundation
- Community Foundation for Perry County
- Tri-State Trillium Foundation

Through their work across sectors, the Growing Home Fellows are cultivating leadership, strengthening local assets and ensuring a flourishing Appalachian Ohio.



Looking ahead

JUNE 25 Daylong, in-person grant-writing workshop for fellows, taught by Gwynn Stewart, assistant professor of community development with Ohio State University Extension. Caldwell, Ohio. The normal \$150 course registration fee is waived for fellows.

SEPT. 6 Growing Home Fellowship Fall gathering at Pritchard Laughlin Civic Center in Cambridge, Ohio.

TBD 0 Virtual webinar with Kaleigh Cox on implementing the Science of Hope in the classroom.

TBD 0 Fall retreat with working group consisting of fellows, selected affiliates and local leaders to develop a toolkit for deploying the Science of Hope in a community development context.

Stay tuned! We are currently developing a promotional video on the Growing Home Fellowship program.

Mark your calendars!

Our next pitch competition is

Saturday, September 6, 2025

at the Pritchard Laughlin
Civic Center in Cambridge



**Watch the spring
pitch competition!**





About the Growing Home Fellowship

In 2023, we began piloting the Growing Home Fellowship, a public-private partnership to attract, retain and prepare emerging community builders and leaders committed to ensuring Appalachian Ohio flourishes.

The program launched with an inaugural class of 121 fellows – 18- to 35-year-olds who work with our region's K-12 population, the "Classroom to Community Cohort." They are classroom educators, student support service providers, and behavioral and educational programming partners, representing 29 of Appalachian Ohio's 32 counties. Half of these emerging community builders and leaders were already living in Appalachian Ohio, and half chose to make our communities their home.

In exchange for committing to live, work and volunteer in our region for five years, the fellows receive a financial stipend, and, through FAO, access to a leadership program that includes service, skill development, curated support, mentoring and more – all designed to advance their success and fuel their journeys for decades to come.

The Growing Home Fellowship pilot is funded through a public-private partnership, with federal funding from the U.S. Department of Education and private funding made possible by generous donors to the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio.

Special thanks to Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine who, through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Program, appropriated funds through the Ohio Department of Higher Education to fund this pilot program. The program is being sustained by private donors, including an anonymous donor, Ken Taylor of Ohio CAT and gifts to FAO's *I'm a Child of Appalachia*® Fund. Service projects led by the fellows are implemented with support from the *Friends of FAO Fund*.

Watch – and be inspired – by leaders who have given their time, expertise and encouragement to our Growing Home Fellows.



18-35

year-olds who work with our communities' K-12 population

29 of 32

of our region's counties are served by Growing Home Fellows

100+

fellows are currently serving in our Classroom to Community cohort

100%

of fellows serve their communities with pride and love for the region

