

# Executive Summary

Event Title: The Impacts of Opioid Addiction on the Rural Workforce

Date: May 31, 2023

**Moderator(s):** Ashley Moore - Workforce Analyst, Office of Workforce Investment, ETA; Amy Ambrose – Workforce Analyst, Office of Workforce Investment, ETA

**Speaker(s):** Kellie Kubena, USDA Rural Health Liaison, USDA Rural Development  
Carol Wetuski, Program Development Specialist, USDA Rural Development

Lauren Wood, MPH, Health Program Manager, Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

Lottie Ryans, Director of Workforce & Literacy Initiatives, First Tennessee Development District

Jennifer Jones, Recovery Program Manager -Ballad Health | PEERhelp Program

BJ Gott, Director of Operations, RiteScreen

The Office of Workforce Investment (OWI), in collaboration with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and the First Tennessee Development District and its partners, presented on how opioid addiction has impacted the rural workforce and what resources are available to support recovery through the workforce system.

Kellie Kubena and Carol Wetuski from the US Department of Agriculture presented on the USDA programs that support rural communities with substance use, workforce development, and economic development. The team also provided an overview of the *Rural Workforce Innovation Network (RWIN)* which is a forum for public and private partners to help increase access to workforce opportunities across rural America. The Appalachian Regional Commission's Lauren Wood provided insight on the *Investments Supporting Partnerships In Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative* that addresses the substance use disorder (SUD) crisis across Appalachia by creating or expanding a recovery ecosystem that will lead to workforce entry or re-entry.

Last, Lottie Ryans from the First Tennessee Development District (FTDD), a Department of Labor Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities (WORC) grantee, and their partner organizations spoke from a local viewpoint on the impact of substance use in their rural communities and how FTDD, through collaborative efforts with their many partners, support individuals in recovery while in the workplace.

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