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Wheeling Heritage Receives \$75k in Support Through Opportunity Appalachia

WHEELING, W.Va. – June 22, 2022 – Wheeling Heritage was recently selected by Opportunity Appalachia to participate in a program to bring jobs, business support and investment to Central Appalachia.

Wheeling Heritage was awarded a grant of up to \$75,000 providing technical assistance for the development of the Blue Church, one of Wheeling's best examples of pre-Civil War Greek Revival architecture. Receiving technical assistance through Opportunity Appalachia will provide pre-development work that positions the building to be repurposed as a food and beverage concept with live music, or as a 500-person entertainment venue.

This project will boost the economic vitality of East Wheeling, one of Wheeling's most popular residential urban neighborhoods. Estimated costs for this project are \$6 MM with creation of 140 jobs, including construction jobs.

"Wheeling Heritage is incredibly excited to be a part of the Opportunity Appalachia cohort and receive access to these predevelopment funds," said Betsy Sweeny, director of heritage programming for Wheeling Heritage. "So often with challenging historic properties, we think putting a 'for sale' sign out front will be enough to turn something old into something new. The reality, however, is that most empty historic properties require in-depth study and analysis to determine how to make their rehabilitation financially viable. The Opportunity Appalachia funds will allow us to work with the specialized consultants to study the market to determine the best use for this building and create a financial model that will illustrate how to bring that use to life."

Opportunity Appalachia received 75 applications for technical assistance from across Central Appalachia, which includes Southeast Ohio, East Tennessee, Western North Carolina, Southwest Virginia and West Virginia, representing projects with anticipated costs of over \$369 million and requested technical assistance worth more than \$3.7 million.

The organization selected 34 projects to participate in a program to bring jobs, business support and investment to Central Appalachia. The projects selected are proposed to create more than 1,700 jobs and attract over \$177 million in financing to develop manufacturing facilities, downtowns, community centers, health, wellness and childcare centers, food and agricultural facilities, hotels and retail enterprises in downtown and rural areas across Central Appalachia.



To learn more about Wheeling Heritage and The Blue Church project, visit wheelingheritage.org/project/blue-church/

About Wheeling Heritage

[Wheeling Heritage](http://wheelingheritage.org) is a catalyst for the revitalization of Wheeling. Through historic preservation, community development, and the arts, we help to tell Wheeling's story and shape its future. We seek to improve the quality of life in Wheeling by preserving and investing in our city, collaborating with others, and engaging the citizens of Wheeling in our work.