

# **PRESS RELEASE: APPALRED Legal Aid Awarded 100,000 from AEP Foundation**

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PRESTONSBURG, KY — The American Electric Power Foundation has awarded a \$100,000, two-year grant to AppalReD Legal Aid. The gift is part of the foundation's Delivering on the Dream: Social and Racial Justice grant program, which is a five-year, \$5 million commitment to fund organizations with programs dedicated to advancing social and racial justice in communities American Electric Power serves.

“AEP believes our actions must match our words to ensure equity for our neighbors of color,” said Janelle Coleman, vice president of Community Engagement, Diversity and Inclusion, and president of the AEP Foundation. “The Delivering on the Dream grant program demonstrates our commitment to addressing racism and injustice in the communities we serve. AEP and its Foundation look forward to working with these organizations as we progress toward a brighter future, while advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.”

AppalReD Legal Aid will use the grant to increase access to justice for the economically disadvantaged by providing holistic legal services that make our clients' lives safer and more secure, and ensuring that under-served minority populations impacted disproportionately by poverty are reached and lifted-up by conducting a legal needs-assessment, including a first ever minority needs-assessment. AppalReD Legal Aid's Hazard, Prestonsburg, and Barbourville offices will also conduct outreach events and clinics. The grant will also support a brand new legal reentry attorney position based out of Prestonsburg. Project Renew will focus on the civil legal needs of individuals in Floyd County, KY who are justice-involved or in recovery to assist with reentry and prevention of criminal justice involvement. Project Renew is also supported by a grant from the Floyd County Community Foundation.

Robert Johns, Executive Director of AppalReD Legal Aid, says, "We are honored to receive this award. The name "Delivering on the Dream" is apt as AppalReD Legal Aid has just celebrated our 50th anniversary. AppalReD Legal Aid was founded on the dream that everyone deserves access to justice—no matter their geographic location or the amount of money in their pocket. We are grateful for this opportunity to learn more about the needs of community members who have been rendered nearly invisible by systemic oppression. Finally, we are humbled and hopeful to embark on Project Renew to combat the impact of opioids on children and families in our communities. People can and do recover from addiction. However, success relies not just on the individual but ensuring that they are connected to community resources and have an advocate addressing the structural and legal issues that are critical for recovery."

Video clip available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/AppalRedLegalAid/videos/340749200818596/>





Last updated on December 21, 2021.

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