WEST VIRGINIA FORWARD
A BLUEPRINT TO HELP ENGINEER WEST VIRGINIA’S ECONOMIC FUTURE.

WEST VIRGINIA FORWARD BEGAN AS A COLLABORATION AMONG WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY, THE WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND MARSHALL UNIVERSITY.

NOW A LARGER, STATEWIDE EFFORT — ALL FUNDED THROUGH PRIVATE DONATIONS — WEST VIRGINIA FORWARD IS TEAMING UP WITH MORE PARTNERS AND EXPERTS AND TAKING ACTION TO DRIVE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

Through a data-driven, nonpartisan assessment of opportunities mapped by independent management company McKinsey & Company, this blueprint aims to advance West Virginia’s:

WORKFORCE / BUSINESS CLIMATE / EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES / COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT / MANUFACTURING AND ENERGY SECTORS / CYBERSECURITY / ENTREPRENEURSHIP / INFRASTRUCTURE

West Virginia Forward is elevating valuable resources and aligning statewide efforts to spring ideas to action.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
BUILD ON EXISTING ASSETS
GROW AND DIVERSIFY INTO NEW SECTORS
DISCOVER DISRUPTIVE TRENDS
CONSIDER OUR REGIONAL IMPACT
FIND QUICK WINS
LARGE-SCALE PRIORITIES

GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION REQUIRE A BUSINESS-FRIENDLY CLIMATE.
Maintain West Virginia as one of the top states for the cost of doing business.
Improve West Virginia’s workforce participation.
Strengthen our talent pipeline.
Find long-term solutions to ensure industrial electricity costs remain low.
Add value to West Virginia’s raw materials. Rather than shipping our natural gas or timber out of state, we must create manufacturing opportunities here.

AN EVOLVING WORKFORCE NEEDS A STRONG EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING.
Continue to amplify efforts in STEM education, training and research at all educational levels.
Offer customized technical training.

NEW INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS HELP US SOLVE REGIONAL CHALLENGES.
Continue to reinvent ourselves, creating startups and embracing an entrepreneurial mindset.
Continue statewide collaboration to promote tourism and draw in new visitors using adventure sports and promoting second-home ownership.
Work together to help curb the opioid epidemic through a holistic approach.

2018 INITIAL ACTION ITEMS

→ FINDING COMMON SENSE, BIPARTISAN AND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO BRING OUR PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX ON INVENTORY, MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT IN LINE WITH THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE COUNTRY.

→ CREATING A SITE READINESS PROGRAM TO SHOW POTENTIAL INVESTORS WEST VIRGINIA IS READY FOR BUSINESS.

→ EXPANDING STRATEGIC TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES AND SHOWCASING THE BEST OF WEST VIRGINIA.

→ IMPROVING THE WEST VIRGINIA DEVELOPMENT OFFICE’S ABILITY TO DIVERSIFY AND GROW THE ECONOMY THROUGH STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS.

→ ENCOURAGING THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE TO CONTINUE USING WEST VIRGINIA FORWARD AS A RESOURCE, GAINING TRACTION TOWARD BIPARTISAN, LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS.

* ADDITIONAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY MCKINSEY & COMPANY’S FINDINGS WILL BE ADDRESSED IN THE SECOND HALF OF 2018.