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## Strategic Plan Highlights

*In 2002, MACED completed strategic planning that involved board, staff and regional stakeholders in a participatory process to identify the directions for our work over the next five years. The process included research, interviews and environmental scanning and analysis to ensure we had the information necessary to make good choices about our work.*

MACED works with people in Kentucky and Central Appalachia to improve the quality of life by creating economic opportunity, strengthening democracy and supporting the sustainable use of natural resources.

### Our Analysis

MACED recognizes the Appalachian region reflects real opportunities and serious challenges. Our approach builds from the assets in the region and seeks to understand and address the root causes of problems that people and communities face.

While many traditional indicators of conditions in the region have improved over the last 15 years, the number of children in poverty remains too high; the available economic opportunities too few; the level of education attainment too low; and environmental problems too many. The region is also one of natural beauty; possesses a strong sense of cultural identity; experiences pockets of successful entrepreneurship; and reflects elements of real community-based change.

The challenge that MACED faces is to develop concrete short and long-term programs that build from the assets of the region and address the root causes of the problems while helping those who need it most.

### Our Vision and Commitment

We envision an Eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia where people have a better overall quality of life due to greater access to economic opportunity, active

participation in community decision-making and the sustainable use of natural resources.

This means a time . . . when strong economies provide access to real economic opportunity for all . . . when diverse people and organizations are able to participate freely, actively and effectively in civic life and the development of their communities . . . when our environment is clean, cherished and better protected. In our vision, MACED is an effective, collaborative and strategic organization working to address systemic challenges that face Appalachian communities through creative and concrete solutions.

MACED is committed . . . to learning from and building the skills, capacity and assets of the individuals, organizations and communities we work with to create change . . . to being good partners and collaborators, pursuing excellence in our work and encouraging excellence in others . . . to equitable and open access, particularly for low-income people to key assets—economic, natural, individual and community—that are necessary ingredients of healthy communities.

### Our Focus

Our strategic planning process clarified several imperatives that will have direct impact on our work over the next five years. MACED will seek to:

- Focus on communities in need and/or where clear opportunities to make an impact exist;
- Be strategic in our work through research, evaluation and learning;
- Increase our success at achieving our goals by communicating and building partnerships with other development efforts; and
- Strengthen our organizational systems and capacity to achieve our goals.

## Our Work: The Next Five Years

MACED recognizes that many of the central issues that face the region are interconnected and this requires solutions that are similarly interrelated. As MACED cannot address all of the issues that face the region, we have identified leverage points that make a difference on several levels.

### Strategy

MACED's emerging work rests on four interrelated core strategies:

**Create economic opportunity**—Building the financial assets of individuals, institutions and communities.

**Build capacity**—Building the capacity of individuals and institutions in eastern Kentucky to be more effective in their development efforts.

**Impact public policy**—Informing decision-makers and the public by documenting and sharing lessons from our and other development efforts.

**Demonstrate innovation**—Demonstrating innovative development efforts that make a real difference.

### Goals

These strategies relate directly to our goals for the next five years.

**1) Improve the quality of life for low-income individuals by building their financial assets and enhancing their economic opportunities.**

MACED seeks to grow the financial assets of individuals and remove barriers to economic opportunity, particularly for low-income people. MACED will expand our business development lending, develop start-up funds, engage in micro-enterprise development and increase our technical assistance efforts.

**2) Build the skills, leadership abilities and collaborative potential of individuals, institutions and communities.**

MACED seeks to strengthen the capacity of organizations and institutions to be more effective in their efforts. MACED will initiate an organizational capacity building initiative aimed at providing organizations with community and organizational development skills and expertise through consulting and training.

**3) Develop, identify and educate the public and decision-makers about policy alternatives that support community based economic development activities and strengthen communities.**

MACED seeks to educate the public and decision-makers with information that supports stronger communities. Through direct research and collaborations, MACED will identify policy leverage points and conduct educational activities. MACED will continue its sustainable forestry efforts by focusing on defining policies that support the economic potential of sustainable forestry.

### Organizational Development

Over the next five years, MACED knows we must strengthen our organization to achieve these ambitious program goals. To achieve these program goals, MACED will:

- Strengthen and diversify our financial base;
- Develop an ongoing evaluation and research component to strengthen our programmatic efforts;
- Enhance our board and staff development systems and structures; and
- Develop a clear communication strategy that effectively shares with key stakeholders MACED's mission, work and impact.

Many thanks to our numerous funding partners, without whom this work would not be possible. For a complete version of our strategic plan, please contact MACED at 859-986-2373.

