

Unlocking Our Potential: A Call for Pre-Development Support for the Appalachian Commons Project at 202 E Market St

Friend,

We invite you to join us in an exciting and transformative endeavor: the pre-development phase of the **Appalachian Commons Project - Commons Project #1** located at **202 E Market St, Johnson City, TN 37601**. This project is poised to become a vibrant, inclusive "third space" and community hub, a beacon for progressive values and a catalyst for social and economic change in downtown Johnson City and throughout Appalachia. Your foundational support in this critical initial stage will enable us to lay the groundwork for a future where community, empowerment, and mutual aid thrive.



The Opportunity: A Strategic Location with Transformative Potential



At the heart of this vision is a unique building at **202 E Market St**, generously offered by owner Joseph Rasch for community use. This two-story structure with a private parking lot presents an unparalleled opportunity to create a multi-faceted community asset. Crucially, the building features **two distinct floors with separate entrances**, allowing for diverse and complementary uses.

The downstairs is an open-floored space ideal for a business or event venue.

Currently "stripped bare," it holds immense

potential to host a wide array of community-centric activities, from music events to educational workshops.

The upstairs will be utilized as a co-working space. This strategic decision aligns directly with our goal to **generate both revenue and community**. This co-working space is specifically envisioned to attract and serve "value-aligned professionals and remote workers in Johnson City and its surrounding towns", fostering a network of like-minded individuals and providing a sustainable income stream for the project.

Our Vision: A "Third Space" for Empowerment and Connection

The Appalachian Commons Project is more than just one building; it's an organization committed to creating a **recovery-friendly, all-ages friendly, and accessible "third space"** in downtown Johnson City. Our core purpose is to **empower underserved communities** by providing them with the means for self-directed programming and advocacy, with a steadfast commitment that **"all programming is accessibility-centered"**.

We aim to:

- **Develop social capital** for the public, offering support across all aspects of life – social, youth and kids, personal finance, professional opportunities, and family-friendly activism.
- Establish **all-ages, recovery-friendly third spaces for entertainment in every downtown area in Appalachia**.
- Foster **community organizing and advocacy** opportunities and social networking.
- **Honor the history** of community organizing and cultural traditions in the Appalachian region.
- Meet the critical need for spaces where individuals can **connect, learn, heal, and build collective power**.

Core Activities: Building Community and Generating Impact

Once operational, the Appalachian Commons Project will host a diverse range of activities, all designed to generate revenue, foster social cohesion, build power, and provide essential resources:

- **Revenue Generation:** The **upstairs co-working space** will be a cornerstone of our financial sustainability, specifically targeting progressive professionals and remote workers in Johnson City. This will be complemented by fundraising initiatives, a merch store, and a sliding scale membership structure.
- **Social Events:** The downstairs will serve as a **dry event venue/third space** for interest-based meet-ups, youth-led programming, arts/culture programming, parenting groups, group therapy, safe consent-based sex-ed programming, and fitness programs.
- **Local Advocacy & Power Building:** The space will be a hub for community organizing, empowering underserved communities, and serving as a restorative justice center for communities and individuals working through difficult issues.
- **Community Wealth Building:** We will facilitate a Community Wealth Building (CWB) incubator, including professional development and opportunities for selling local arts/goods. The co-working space also contributes to **personal wealth building and social capital building outcomes for members**.
- **Popular Education:** Offerings will include education/popular education workshops, a folk school/culture center, a potential Atlas Books/Appalachian Liberation Library pop-up location and ESL/English classes.
- **Mutual Aid:** Providing crucial services like a free store, shower/laundry space, a resource library, a community empowerment resource center, a 3D print shop/resource, and a Resilience Hub, in close partnership with Tri-Cities TN/VA Mutual Aid & Solidarity Network.

Our short-term outcomes include the establishment of these **new value-aligned co-working, recovery-friendly social activity, community organizing, and all-ages friendly third spaces** in downtown Johnson City. We anticipate **improved health/recovery outcomes** for individuals, stronger **self-reported social cohesion**, and **expanded capacity for existing grassroots organizations**.

The Pre-Development Stage: Your Investment in Our Foundation

Before any of these vital activities can commence, we must complete a critical pre-development phase. This initial stage requires significant financial and community investment to ensure the building is safe, functional, and legally secured. **Your support for this stage is paramount to unlocking the full potential of the Appalachian Commons Project.**

Here are the immediate needs that your contribution will address:

“Pre” Pre-Development Stage (Crowdfunding Phase): \$5,400

- **Formalizing Agreements with Owner**
 - **Legal:** We need to secure the support of an attorney who will be able to draft a formal agreement between Appalachian Commons Project and owner Joseph Rasch. **(\$3,000).**
- **Donor/Investor Outreach**
 - We wish to hire an early-career marketing/outreach specialist to support professional development in our community and secure quality marketing collateral to facilitate the next stages of donor/investor outreach, such as website, logo, social media and marketing kit creation **(\$2,000).**
- **Incorporation Fees**
 - While our governance body/structure and paperwork is in place, we still need the funds to file our paperwork **(\$900)**

Pre-Development Architect & Engineering Fees: ~\$75,000

- **Downstairs Infrastructure:** The downstairs is "striped bare and requires **electrical and plumbing work** before it can be operable as a venue. Cosmetic work will also be needed depending on its chosen use. These essential repairs are non-negotiable for safety and functionality.
- **Code-Compliance:** The building is located in Johnson City's historic downtown district and will require special code-compliance measures.
- **Accessibility Consultant:** Our organizational commitment to accessibility-centered programming means that we will seek the advice of an accessibility consultant and get a quote for an ADA-compliant elevator to connect the first and second floors of the building without stairs.

Our collective startup funding goal for this project is approximately ~\$80,400. This initial capital will allow us to solidify cost projections for the construction phase of this project and establish crucial legal/communications frameworks. We are fortunate to have council members

with successful fundraising track records and experience in the funder/investor/developer profession, strengthening our ability to meet this goal.

Join Us: Invest in a Brighter Future for Appalachia

The Appalachian Commons Project is more than a building; it's a commitment to fostering a resilient, empowered, and vibrant community in Johnson City and a model for replication across Appalachia. By investing in our pre-development stage, you are directly contributing to the foundational infrastructure that will enable us to:

- Provide a vital **new value-aligned co-working space in downtown Johnson City**.
- Create a much-needed **recovery-friendly, all-ages friendly "third space"** for connection and entertainment.
- Empower grassroots organizations and marginalized communities.
- Lay the groundwork for **significantly increased community wealth building activities** and real economic outcomes for underserved populations.

Your support now will directly translate into the physical readiness and organizational stability required to transform **202 E Market St** into a thriving hub for community, advocacy, and a radical vision for a more inclusive future. Join us in making this vital project a reality.

If you are able to pledge a financial contribution to this project, [please fill out this form](#). Once we have secured \$5,900 in crowd-funded pledges for this project, we will ask you to donate those funds for the first phase of this project.