

Outreach Teams

Each team will be made up of anywhere from five to 25 people. **As this is not an immediate post-disaster response, the opportunity is available to individuals who have not undergone HFI Reservist training.**

First time participants will complete the Hope Force International application process prior to their involvement

Travel & Costs

Volunteers are responsible for their own travel expenses. **The cost per day is \$30/ volunteer (food & lodging) plus \$200 materials donation.**

Trips are scheduled regularly throughout the year. Please contact us for specific dates. **Open dates can be requested by church groups and will be accommodated if at all possible.**

Accommodations are dormitory style housing.



Come Join Us!

For More Information:
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Appalachia Outreach

War,
West Virginia

Our Mission

As a non-profit organization dedicated to disaster response, Hope Force International (HFI) works to alleviate suffering caused by disasters and chronic human need at home and abroad. With over 1,300 trained Reservists on call for disaster response, HFI is mobilizing the global Christian community into compassionate action on behalf of those in need. The organization is comprised of individuals who are committed to utilizing their expertise to inspire, equip, and mobilize volunteers into areas of crisis.

Our Vision

Beginning in 2009 HFI chose to focus our time and resources on the chronic poverty in McDowell County of West Virginia. Our goal is to inspire hope through practical acts of love and tangible assistance. With the help of HFI Reservists and other volunteers we plan to offer assistance to families to create dry and safe dwellings. Our desire is to offer aid that doesn't inadvertently promote a spirit of dependency and poverty.



Background

Southern West Virginia, located in the heart of Appalachia, is a mountainous region with a colorful and complex history. From the 1920's through the 1950's, the area was fueled by coal mining money. Even at the beginning of the coal mining industry, when the companies shipped families in to work and live in these hills, communities became dependent upon the company for everything – their livelihood, their homes, even the groceries they bought at the Company store.



The Company built the infrastructure of the coal camps, providing everything to support the workforce. By owning nearly all the land in the county, coal companies controlled what businesses came to the area, and essentially only allowed support businesses for mining. The economy was wholly dependent upon coal.

Over the past four decades, the coal companies pulled out of southern West Virginia, leaving in their wake, fragmented, declining communities. McDowell County in particular lost more than three-fourths of its population over the past 50 years.

At least 67% of the homes in McDowell county lack any type of wastewater systems and are using "straight pipes" directly into the streams. Many areas do not have public water available and must "cart" their water from various spouts in the county. The infrastructure is failing and the topography does not lend itself to traditional wastewater systems. Most of the areas houses, remnants of former coal camps, are dilapidated and continue to lack basic amenities.

The coal mined from this county built the infrastructure of this state, yet when the mines closed, those in McDowell County felt forgotten by the state. Those who reside in the "Free State of McDowell" are a proud people but have lost their sense of hope.



Objectives

We will assist and empower the people of West Virginia, as opposed to just "doing it all" for them. Families will be asked to have able family members work alongside HFI volunteers. As well, those served will be required to contribute financially [on a sliding scale] to materials purchased, giving them a sense of ownership in the project. Through word and deed, we seek to be a "ministry of presence" and action to those who face these suffocating needs.

Serving in West Virginia is an opportunity for volunteers to grow in their own spiritual lives as well. By working alongside those impoverished in our won country, we want to show volunteers that they can be God's hands in producing positive change.

Hope Force strives to provide life-changing experiences for volunteers while increasing awareness in the Christian community about West Virginia's plight.

