



**Herbert
Henderson
Office *of*
Minority
Affairs**

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Executive Director

Jill Upson, MBA

Executive Assistant to the Director

Open

Part-Time Administrative Assistant

Rojen Morris

On this thirty-first day of December, 2023, this annual report is hereby submitted to the Governor of West Virginia, the Honorable James C. Justice, III and the members of the Joint Select Committee on Minority Issues of the West Virginia Legislature. As part of the public domain, this report also serves the purpose of informing all agency stakeholders and interested members of the public of the activities and goals of the Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs.

This report is available in electronic format at:
<https://minorityaffairs.wv.gov>



Message from the Executive Director December 31, 2023

While the year 2023 allowed most agencies and partner organizations to return to pre-pandemic operations, new challenges have emerged in minority communities and statewide as a result of the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. Median household income has rebounded slightly to \$52,460, however, that is still below the higher 2016 level of \$61,170. Pricing inflation has further added to the economic challenges of West Virginia's minority population and has been expressed in the cost of childcare having been identified as a major issue during HHOMA's statewide listening tour. *(See full report in index).*

Existing education disparities were also exacerbated by pandemic school closures. Fourth-grade math scores decreased by six (6) points while eighth-grade math scores decreased by twelve (12) points for West Virginia students during the 2021-2022 school year. In reading, fourth-graders saw a decline of eight (8) points, while eighth-graders declined by six (6) points. Some parents of minority students have chosen to exercise the use of their child's education funding to participate in the HOPE Scholarship program which families can use for tuition, curriculum, and other qualifying educational expenses. Black, Latino, Asian, Native-American, and Pacific Islander students represent 8.49% of all scholarship participants.

As we did in 2023, the Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs will continue to serve, inform, educate, and collaborate with targeted populations throughout the year ahead. It has been an honor to serve as your executive director since December 2018 and I look forward to taking on new challenges and opportunities as our work moves forward in 2024. Thank you to all who have traveled with us for part or all of this journey.

Sincerely,



Jill Upson, MBA
Executive Director

SPONSORSHIPS

When sponsorship requests are received for minority affairs programs and activities in West Virginia, funds, when available, are allocated to community organizations. Some of HHOMA's 2023 sponsorships include:

Aspire Achievement Project

3rd Annual Community Celebration

Breast & Body Health

Vickie Winans Gospel Event

Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission

Annual MLK Day Ecumenical Service, Symbolic March, and Bell Ringing Ceremony

Multifest 33

Multi-Cultural Festival of West Virginia

People of Worth

Martinsburg-Berkeley Juneteenth Jubilee Breakfast

West Virginia Women's Commission

The Fannie Lou Hamer Story live stage play

West Virginia Human Rights Commission

Governor's Annual Civil Rights Day

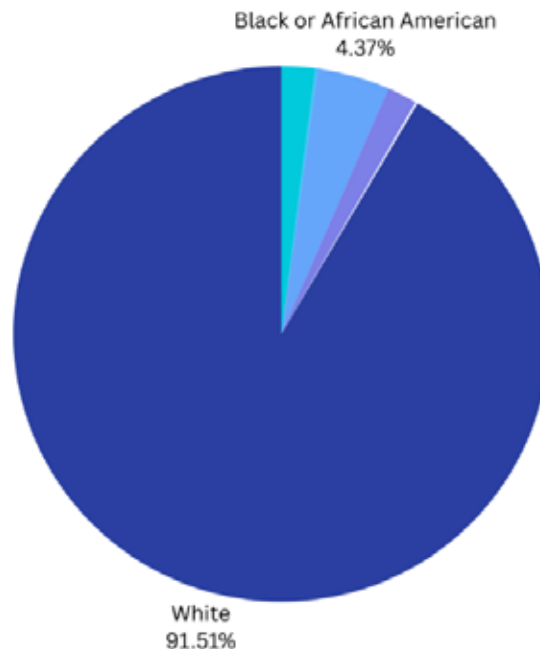
2023 HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY

Director Upson continued her work as a member of the HOPE Scholarship board of directors. She has advocated for inclusion of historically underrepresented students. The most recent data shows the following statistics by race.

HOPE SCHOLARSHIP Recipients by Race

■ Hispanic ■ American Indian or Alaska Native
■ Black or African American ■ Asian
■ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ■ White



Race	# of Recipients	% of Recipients	WV Population*
Hispanic	47	2.02	2.10
American Indian or Alaska Native	4	0.17	0.30
Black or African American	102	4.37	3.70
Asian	42	1.80	0.90
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	3	0.13	< 0.50
White	2,135	91.51	91.20
Total	2,333	100.00	98.20

*West Virginia general population racial breakdown according to 2022 U.S. Census estimates.

Note: U.S. Census population estimates include 2.2% of population as "Two or More Races" which is not factored into Hope demographic data.



MARCH

- HHOMA announced and began receiving applications for performers and vendors to participate in the 2023 Juneteenth celebration at the Capitol.
- Director Upson focused on Women's History Month with events and workgroups with the West Virginia Women's Commission including Women's and Gilrs' Day at the Legislature.

APRIL

- Director Upson continued to work on the Marshall University Minority Health Institute Advisory Board.
- Director Upson compiled and contributed listening tour data to the Broadband Workforce Development Plan. The full broadband digital equity plan can be viewed here: <https://internetforallwv.wv.gov/plans/>

MAY

- HHOMA sponsored the live production of the Fannie Lou Hamer Story held at the WV Culture Center. Ms. Hamer was a champion of voting rights in the United States during the civil rights era.
- HHOMA sponsored the Aspire Community Celebration held at Magic Island in Charleston.
- Director Upson continued to work on the WVU Extension Services Visiting Committee under the leadership of Dean, Dr. Jorge Atilles.

JUNE

- HHOMA launched a Hispanic outreach initiative in partnership with WV Press Association which included Latino Night each month during the Dirty Birds baseball season.
- The agency's largest event of the year, the annual Juneteenth celebration, was held on June 17th and featured local and national talent.
- Director Upson delivered opening remarks to teachers attending the Black History summer teaching institute at the Greenbrier. This summer program for educators is a part of the Carter G. Woodson Lyceum of Marshall University.



JULY

- Director Upson hosted Asian American sculptor, Ai Qiu Hopen, of Sutton, West Virginia, at the Capitol to present her prototype for the Women's Suffragist Memorial monument to be placed on Capitol grounds.
- A press release announcing the 2023 Minority Business Expo was sent out and vendor applications opened.

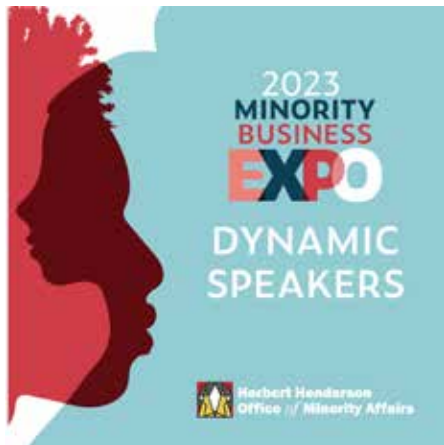
AUGUST

- Director Upson continued her work on the West Virginia Commission for America's 250th Birthday (Semiquincentennial) Celebration in WV.
- Director Upson was honored to serve as a presenter at the Human Rights Commission's Governor's Civil Rights Awards ceremony.



SEPTEMBER

- Director Upson continued to work on the West Virginia Broadband Workforce Council
<https://broadband.wv.gov/2843-2/>
- Director Upson was a panelist at Health Equity & Workforce Development Roundtable hosted by UniCare.



OCTOBER

- Director Upson made several television and radio appearances to promote the fall Minority Business Expo at the Charleston Coliseum & Convention Center.
- HHOMA hosted the Minority Business Expo, featuring speakers, business resources, and business owners.

NOVEMBER

- Serving as chair of the Martin Luther King Jr. State Holiday Commission, Director Upson hosted the annual MLKC retreat to finalize 2024 MLK contests, awards, and remembrance activities.

DECEMBER

- Director Upson closed out an eventful year by preparing annual reports, budgets, and calendars for agencies, boards, and committees that she leads or chairs.



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Engagement Report

July 1, 2023

Engagement Report

By Jill Upson, MBA

Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs, Executive Director

West Virginia Women's Commission, Executive Director

West Virginia American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Listening Tour

Engagement Report

The West Virginia statewide American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) listening tour launched in August 2021 to hear community needs and how the state's ARPA allocation could help. Each stop on the listening tour consisted of morning roundtable discussions with local leaders followed by public forums in the evening where community members received information and shared their ideas and concerns.

The local leaders invited to the morning roundtable discussions included the state senators, state delegates, county commission, mayor, city manager, city council, development authority, and Chamber of Commerce. Topics of discussion at all sessions included COVID-19 pandemic-related challenges, greatest needs in the community, potential impact of funding, sustainability, and pooling of resources. After each morning and evening session, the attendees were invited to complete an intake form to document their suggestions. The number one need identified in almost every county was the expense associated with the removal of dilapidated structures. The full feedback of top priority needs that were obtained from the forms collected is detailed below.



Community Feedback

Greatest Need by Rank	Category
Abandoned/Dilapidated/Blighted Structures	Infrastructure
Public Service District Water lines; Sewer improvements	Infrastructure
Broadband Expansion	Infrastructure
Wastewater Facility Upgrades	Infrastructure
Aid To Small Businesses - Retail	Loans/Grants
Affordable Childcare	Socioeconomic Disadvantage
Workforce Training	Negative Economic Impact
Affordable Housing	Socioeconomic Disadvantage
Playgrounds	Capital Investment
Park Improvements	Capital Investment
Community Gardens	Capital Investment
Wellness Centers / Recreation Projects	Capital Investment
Resurface Courts (Pickleball, Basketball)	Capital Investment
Sanitation Equipment	Loans/Grants
Increase Tourism	Recovery
Mental Health Services	Public Health
Expanded Medicaid	Socioeconomic Disadvantage
Youth Programs	Socioeconomic Disadvantage
School Consolidation	Capital Investment
Minority Entrepreneurship Training	Socioeconomic Disadvantage
Inclusive Hiring for Infrastructure Projects	Socioeconomic Disadvantage
Healthy Produce / Grocery / Food Desert	Socioeconomic Disadvantage
EMS / Ambulance / Volunteer Fire Departments (VFD)	Revenue Replacement
Replace Lost Wages	Socioeconomic Disadvantage
Educational Disparities	Socioeconomic Disadvantage
Drug Treatment	Public Health
Services for Homeless	Socioeconomic Disadvantage
Health Department Funding	Public Health
Radio Towers / Cell Towers	Infrastructure
9-1-1 Call Center	Capital Investment

HHOMA 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

County Visited	Population	Median Household Income	White	Black	Latino	Asian
Brooke	22,559	\$51,210	96.0%	1.6%	1.2%	0.6%
Hancock	29,095	\$52,062	94.4%	2.7%	1.8%	0.5%
Ohio	42,425	\$51,516	92.6%	3.7%	1.4%	0.9%
Marshall	30,591	\$52,371	96.8%	1.0%	1.1%	0.6%
Wetzel	14,442	\$47,611	97.6%	0.6%	1.2%	0.4%
Monongalia	105,822	\$56,466	89.8%	3.8%	2.5%	3.7%
Marion	56,205	\$55,094	93.7%	3.3%	1.5%	0.6%
Preston	34,216	\$55,755	96.6%	1.8%	1.5%	0.4%
Taylor	16,705	\$52,823	96.6%	1.3%	1.0%	0.5%
Tucker	6,762	\$49,808	98.1%	0.4%	1.1%	0.3%
Barbour	15,465	\$42,260	95.7%	1.4%	1.3%	0.3%
Berkeley	122,076	\$68,101	86.3%	8.3%	5.9%	1.3%
Jefferson	58,979	\$86,711	88.0%	6.4%	7.0%	1.8%
Morgan	17,063	\$56,616	95.8%	1.2%	2.2%	0.6%
Mineral	26,938	\$57,345	94.3%	2.9%	1.1%	0.6%
Hampshire	23,093	\$50,890	96.5%	1.4%	1.7%	0.3%
Grant	10,976	\$47,224	97.1%	1.3%	1.7%	0.3%
Hardy	14,299	\$46,592	93.2%	3.6%	4.5%	0.9%
Pendleton	6,143	\$46,506	95.1%	2.5%	1.6%	0.3%
Randolph	27,932	\$47,343	95.7%	2.1%	1.1%	0.5%
Pleasants	7,653	\$58,433	96.0%	1.8%	1.3%	0.3%
Tyler	8,313	\$50,601	97.1%	0.5%	0.9%	0.8%
Wood	84,296	\$50,231	95.5%	1.3%	1.5%	0.6%
Ritchie	8,444	\$45,184	97.6%	0.5%	1.2%	0.3%
Doddridge	7,808	\$58,750	94.7%	2.9%	0.8%	0.5%
Harrison	65,921	\$54,124	95.1%	2.0%	1.9%	0.7%
Lewis	17,033	\$45,345	97.3%	0.7%	1.4%	0.4%
Gilmer	7,408	\$45,870	83.5%	12.4%	6.7%	0.8%
Wirt	5,194	\$49,441	97.1%	0.6%	0.9%	0.4%

Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table>

Appendix B: References

¹**Federal Reserve Economic Database (FRED)**

<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MEHOINUSWVA672N>

²**National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**

https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/WV?cti=PgTab_OT&chort=1&sub-MAT&sj=WV&fs=Grade&st=MN&year=2022R3&sg=Gender%3A%20Male%20vs.%20Female&sgv=-Difference&ts=Single%20Year&sfj=NP

³**HOPE Scholarship Annual Report**

<https://hopescholarshipwv.com/Portals/HopeScholarship/content/Documents/Reports/Hope%20Scholarship%2022-23%20Annual%20Report.pdf?ver=b00P-zWfqfcR8bu4OzkZdg%3d%3d>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Office of the Governor
Commerce Communications
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Department of Commerce
WV Small Business Administration
West Virginia Human Rights Commission
Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission
West Virginia Treasury
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources



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