

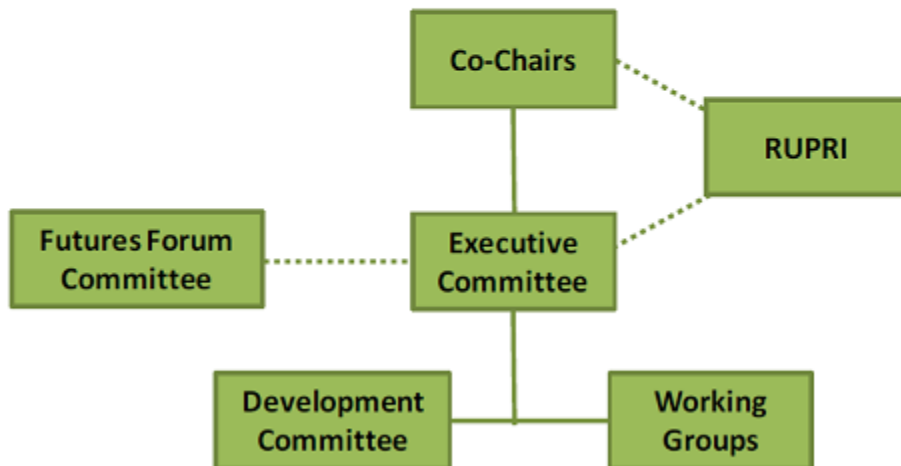


SOAR Executive Committee, Working Groups and Action Plan

Governor Beshear and Congressman Rogers announced the members of the SOAR executive committee and named the chairs of 10 work groups tasked with continuing the work outlined in the SOAR report. The Governor and Congressman also named chairs of committees which will secure long-term funding resources and develop future plans for the initiative. Finally, the leaders released a nine-month plan for advancing the SOAR initiative and named the leadership teams who will move the plan forward.



Interim Organizational Chart



Leadership Teams

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. A 15-member executive committee will oversee design, execution, and funding of SOAR activities and will conduct the search for a permanent executive director. Co-chaired by Governor Beshear and Congressman Rogers, the committee will provide interim governance for the initiative until a permanent structure is established. All SOAR committees will report to this body.

WORKING GROUPS. Ten working groups will be responsible for leading large-scale discussions throughout eastern Kentucky on topics related to the region's economic future and quality of life. These 'listening sessions' – to take place in the spring and summer of 2014 – will be open to businesses, local governments, organizations, and all interested citizens. The information collected during these sessions will be translated into detailed strategies for moving the region forward. Together, the strategies will compose the SOAR program of work to be presented at a regional summit in November.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE. A Development Committee will work with the Executive Committee to build a sustaining resource base for SOAR. The goal will be to create an integrated resource stream from the private, public, and philanthropic sectors to support the permanent SOAR enterprise and to attract world-class leadership in the national search for a founding SOAR executive director. Jean Hale will chair the development committee.

FUTURES FORUM COMMITTEE. Building on the program of work presented at the November SOAR Summit, a committee will work with the new executive director to plan and execute a Futures Forum in the spring of 2015. The Futures Forum Committee will be responsible for framing and advancing the long-term vision of the region. Former Governor Paul Patton will serve as chair of this committee.

STAFF. Chuck Fluharty, president and CEO of the Rural Policy Research Institute, will serve as interim executive director of the SOAR initiative until a permanent executive director is named in September. Fluharty provided assistance to the SOAR Summit planning committee in designing the December 2013 event and has continued to work with the governor and congressman in planning follow-up strategies. A SOAR office has been established in Pikeville.

SOAR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Governor Steve Beshear, chair
Congressman Hal Rogers, chair
Bruce Ayers, Cumberland, president emeritus, Southeast Kentucky
Community and Technical College
Jim Booth, Inez, CEO of Booth Energy
Jean Hale, Pikeville; chair, president and CEO of Community Trust Bank
Rodney Hitch, Winchester, economic development manager for East Kentucky Power
Jim Host, Lexington
Tom Hunter, Washington, D.C., retired executive director, Appalachian Regional Commission
Kim McCann, Ashland, partner/attorney with VanAntwerp, Monge, Jones, Edwards & McCann
Hayley McCoy, Jackson, economic development advocate with Jackson Energy
Bob Mitchell, Corbin, board of directors for The Center for Rural Development
and retired chief of staff for U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers

House Speaker Greg Stumbo, Floyd County, ex officio
Senator Robert Stivers, Clay County, ex officio
Judge-Executive Albey Brock, Bell County ex officio
Judge-Executive Doc Hardin, Magoffin County ex officio

WORKING GROUPS

The 10 working groups will be responsible primarily for content development and public outreach for the next six months. They will develop asset maps on their topic areas, identifying all programs, resources and opportunities. They will build on recommendations made by participants at the 2013 Soar Summit, on the creative work already underway in the region, and on 'listening sessions' that they will conduct throughout eastern Kentucky in the spring and summer.

Agriculture, Community & Regional Foods

Chair: Daniel Wilson, Campton, Wolfe County extension agent for agriculture and natural resources
Charge: To address the emerging opportunities in eastern Kentucky for regional and community foods development, agri-tourism, entrepreneurial agriculture, and mountain agriculture; their possible alignments with a more regionally-focused hospitality industry; and the potential to align regional cooperatives with institutional food purchasers and distribution chains.

Broadband

Chair: Lonnie Lawson, Somerset, president and CEO, The Center for Rural Development
Charge: To address the opportunities for deploying improved and expanded broadband and Internet services, so-called 'middle-mile' core fiber optic cable, and public 'last-mile' networks to

provide eastern Kentucky homes, businesses, schools, hospitals, and governments world-class access, for a globally competitive future.

Business Recruitment

Chair: Greg Jones, Somerset, special project director, Southeast Ky. Economic Development Corp.

Charge: To address the opportunities in regional business attraction and retention, in an effort to expand workforce demand, as coal industry re-structuring continues.

Business Incubation

Chair: Jared Arnett, Pikeville, president and CEO, Southeast Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

Charge: To focus upon regional opportunities to enhance the emerging entrepreneurial ecosystem in eastern Kentucky; to drive innovation at all levels; and to secure investments and program funding necessary for its expression.

Education & Retraining

Chair: Jeff Whitehead, Hazard, executive director of the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program

Charge: To advance the many existing efforts in the region to enhance the lifelong learning continuum, from early childhood through adult learning/retraining, as a “cradle-to-grave” regional commitment. Among other key possibilities, this group will be charged with aligning the region’s many excellent institutions and programs, to add value at their intersection.

Health

Chair: Dr. Nikki Stone, Hazard, dental director/faculty, UK June Buchanan Clinic

Charge: To lift up innovative opportunities to enhance regional access to health care and human services, including suggestions for a significant increase in partnership/collaboration across sectors, institutions, and governments.

This work must include regional attention to the social determinants of health, as well as the unique opportunities offered by technology and non-health-related institutions to improve regional health outcomes.

Infrastructure

Chair: Jack Sykes, Pikeville, chairman of the board, Summit Engineering

Charge: To address all infrastructure needs except broadband, including multi-modal transportation needs, water and wastewater, energy efficiency, housing , as well as regional opportunities to use joint planning and investment strategies at the regional level to lower overall costs and enhance integrated service.

Leadership Development & Youth Engagement

Chair: Jonathan Gay, Morehead, executive director of Morehead State University Innovation and Commercialization Center

Charge: To focus on regional efforts to advance the collective energies of the next generation, including mentoring programs, internships, linked organizational exchanges, etc. This region must focus on all its youth, not only its high achievers and find ways to involve youth and young adults in more creative ways in their communities so that leadership can be learned while doing. Specific attention should be given to coordinating and partnering with all the existing leadership and youth engagement organizations, perhaps around a common SOAR Next-Generation Initiative.

Regional Collaboration & Identity

Chair: Sandy Runyon, Prestonsburg, executive director, Big Sandy Area Development District

Charge: This working group is charged with the thematic integration of all other working groups, as well as the broader challenge of creating a regional identity, identifying strengths and assets, promoting regional goals, and advancing joint opportunities that have been a challenge in the past due to local rivalries, competition, and negative image.

This includes collaboration between local and state governments, grassroots funding, engagement with the private sector, as well as unified branding and marketing, including the need for region-wide organizational promotion. Beyond collaboration in economic development, communication strategies to advance a regional identity, particularly in the next generation, must be addressed.

Tourism, Including Natural Resources, Arts, & Heritage

Chair: Phil Osborne, Lexington, president of Osborne and Associates

Charge: To focus on the amazing opportunities and challenges for tourism in eastern Kentucky, to capitalize upon the rich natural amenities and the huge potential opportunity for economic development and job creation.

Attention should be given to aggressively building upon and promoting the region's arts, culture, and heritage resources; vast scenic beauty; and natural resource-based recreational opportunities, while seeking creation of unifying brands and marketing campaigns at the regional scale. Linkages with community and regional foods and the active engagement of successful artists, youth, and elders will be critical to this work.

2014 Plan of Work

- March
- Governor, Congressman announce SOAR leadership and action plan.
 - SOAR Executive Committee and Working Group chairs hold first meeting.
- April
- Working groups hold organizational meetings and begin public engagement.
 - East Kentucky Leadership Foundation meets, with focus on SOAR.
 - Committees on development and Futures Forum are formed and hold organizational meetings.
- May
- Working groups continue their work, including extensive public engagement.
 - Executive Committee begins discussions of ultimate SOAR governance model. Discussions will continue through summer and involve outreach to public.
- June
- Working group chairs and committees meet jointly to review progress and plan next steps.
- July
- Working groups continue their work, including public engagement.
 - Executive Committee launches national search for SOAR executive director.
 - Executive Committee considers plans for 2014 SOAR Summit.
 - Executive and Development committees discuss funding for near- and long-term. Public engagement continues.
- August
- Working Groups finalize draft reports. Reports include three to five priorities for next three years, plus broader SOAR actions.
 - Executive Committee reviews reports and finalizes interview process.
 - Executive Committee meets to narrow pool for executive director position.
- September
- Executive Committee selects founding executive director.
 - RUPRI develops draft 2015 SOAR Program of Work for regional discussion.
- October
- Executive Committee completes plans for the second annual SOAR Summit, to be held in November 2014.
- November
- The 2014 SOAR Summit is held in Pikeville: working groups will report on their priorities. The new executive director will present the 2015 Program of Work.
 - Governance transfers to permanent institutional structure.