



Send Relief
Appalachia





Contact Information

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Welcome to the City of Ashland, Kentucky

 Ashland
A Proud Past • A Bright Future







Meeting Needs, Changing Lives

Send Relief works with churches and volunteers to meet needs and change lives in communities within the U.S. and around the world.

By offering help and hope to the most vulnerable in collaboration with missionaries, local ministries and churches, your gifts and efforts through Send Relief have a long-term impact.

With Send Relief's help, churches and partners like you receive resources and training to be the hands and feet of Jesus to communities in crisis, refugees, human trafficking survivors, those affected by natural disasters and vulnerable children and families.

Ministry Centers

Send Relief ministry centers deliver compassion ministry within local communities while providing mission trips and training opportunities for churches all over the country. The goal of ministry centers is twofold: serve communities well and encourage others to do the same.

All over North America, Send Relief ministry centers actively assess community needs, develop ministry strategies, deliver ministry and provide opportunities for others to go on mission.



Community Snapshot

Forming the backbone of the eastern United States, the Appalachian Mountains stretch from the southern part of New York to northern Georgia and Alabama.

- While the entire region lags economically, the central Appalachian area, encompassing eastern Kentucky and parts of Tennessee and West Virginia, has consistently experienced the worst economic performance for decades.
- Residents, well acquainted with hardship, experience increasing unemployment while poverty and drug abuse rates soar, causing the region to lag significantly behind the rest of the country.
- These endemic issues fuel generational cycles of poverty.
- **34%** of households earn less than **\$25,000** annually
- **23%** of the households are considered under the poverty threshold

Over 50% of the households in the greater Ashland area are rural

- **89%** claim to believe in God, yet **91%** are unchurched.



Thirteen counties are considered “at risk,” meaning they rank between the worst **10%** and worst **25%** of all counties in the United States for unemployment rates and income data.

- Most of Kentucky’s Appalachian counties — **38** — are considered “distressed.” They fall in the lowest **10%** of counties nationwide.

Appalachia had a population of 25.7 million in 2019, a 1.8% increase over mid-2010.

- Though two subregions have experienced growth, most of the region has lost population and its overall growth is slower than the national average of **6%**.
- Minorities make up a small but growing share of Appalachia’s population. The region’s population is **19%** minority, while the national rate is **39.9%**. **9.9%** are Black, **5.4** Hispanic/Latinx, and **3.9%** are other.

Source: <https://www.arc.gov/appalachias-population/>

Before the pandemic began, many young adults ages 18 to 34 years were disadvantaged in Appalachia.

- Nearly one in four of those ages **18 to 24** were experiencing poverty, with income below **\$25,926** for a family of two adults and two children.

- This poverty rate is higher than for any other age group in Appalachia.
- While some individuals in this age group may have low incomes because they are in training programs or college, the high poverty rate also reflects a lack of employment opportunities for young adults in the region—particularly in rural counties where nearly one in three young people is living in poverty.

One-sixth of adults ages 26 to 34 in the region lacked health insurance and this share exceeded 25% among young adults in 79 Appalachian counties—predominantly in South Central and Southern Appalachia.

- In fact, 26-to-34-year-olds were the only Appalachian age group less likely to have health insurance than their peers living elsewhere in the United States.

<https://www.prb.org/resources/appalachias-strengths-and-vulnerabilities-before-covid-pandemic-new-report-offers-benchmark/>

Appalachia Ministry Center Snapshot

Ministries

Strengthen Communities

Care for Refugees

Protect Children and Families

Respond to Crisis

Fight Human Trafficking

Mobilization Opportunities



“The drug Epidemic and the lack of great job opportunities that will keep young people in the area and draw new people are of great concern,” says Rob Allen, the Appalachia Ministry Center director. “Our community is made up of blue-collar workers. The people here are very kind and friendly. Most would identify as Christian but probably haven’t set foot in a church since they were children.”

Appalachia Ministry Center

Located in Ashland, Kentucky, at the convergence of Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia, the Appalachia Ministry Center helps rural communities end the cycle of poverty.

- Reacting to these challenging conditions, they stepped up their efforts to help residents by distributing food and providing for needs throughout the central Appalachian region.
- The Appalachia Ministry Center works from two massive warehouses. One is a converted gymnasium with a large kitchen, offices and rooms for overnight guests.
- The other, a 24,000 square foot warehouse, serves as a base or central point to respond to disasters.
- As the primary facility for supplies and resources, the center assists Southern Baptist Disaster Relief teams in times of crisis and serves the other Ministry Centers across the nation.

The center can stage, store and send vehicles filled with supplies and food into communities in need.

“We have had great success in food packing events that have allowed us to engage individuals from several states and many churches to pack meals that have been used in many different ministry opportunities,” Rob explained.

He calls it an “evolving ministry” that comes “alongside” churches in the community, working to build great relationships with local partners in Ashland and throughout Appalachia.

“Through connections with churches, schools, government and business leaders and the community, we’ll build a ministry that is designed around and for this area, not based on what we think the area needs. In that regard, the ministry will evolve as needs change,” he says



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—Rob Allen

History of the Appalachia Ministry Center

The Appalachia Ministry Center began as a movement when Southern Baptists stepped up to help residents in the area. Send Relief opened the Ashland-based Appalachia Ministry Center as its central location to help those in need in the region.

In 2018, the first initiative took place when volunteers packed more than 150,000 meals for distribution. Rob reached out to churches in the region and beyond for volunteers and people responded.

While leveraging partnerships and resources to meet needs and ultimately see churches equipped to be on mission, the Appalachian Ministry Center addresses other needs such as literacy and education, medical and dental care, job training, and opioid addiction recovery.

They desire to help equip the church to be the source of hope in any given community in each area of the region.

“Currently, we are working on garden projects to do training and equipping on the property and in the community to connect with families. We currently have three working wells—not American wells—wells we have had brought here from overseas—the type they would experience on overseas trips. We have plans to add one additional well this next year. Our first teams hope to start traveling in 2023.”

—Rob Allen





Appalachia Ministries

Future Ministry Plans

- Strengthen Communities: Expand Community Outreach Initiatives
- Protect Children and Families: Foster Care

Vision

The Appalachia Ministry Center's vision for the future is to evolve into a hub for different vulnerable populations.

Rob explains, "We would like to see our ministry center foster children who are aging out of the system. We would like to be a place where these children could come and learn life skills and job skills to help them be better prepared to launch out on their own." The center would also like to connect the children with a mentor from one of the local churches to help them on their journey.

The Appalachia Ministry Center would also like to use its greenhouse (currently under construction) to help people in active recovery.

"Gardening is very relaxing, and it assists in the recovery process," says Rob. "It gives people in recovery something to do and it provides the structure they need to transition from recovery back into active life."

Through the greenhouse initiative, they would like local churches to work alongside people in recovery or those in need to provide much-needed relational connections.

"The more relationships someone has in active recovery, the better their chances for a successful recovery," Rob adds.

Get Involved

One of the most powerful ways to show the most vulnerable the love of Christ is by taking steps toward them. By helping churches be the hands and feet of Jesus, Send Relief supports and provides opportunities for those who desire to respond directly to these needs in lasting, meaningful ways while sharing the hope of the gospel.

Give

Your gift provides critical, immediate help to families and communities that need it most. Give today to provide practical care and share the love of Jesus.

[Click here or scan the QR code to give](#)



Contact

Connect with the Send Relief Ministry Center closest to you for pre-planned service opportunities that multiply your impact by pairing you with other local teams.

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Serve

Participate in various compassion opportunities by taking a mission trip and vision tour to a ministry center around North America. Mission trips can include apartment outreach, food pantry ministry, after-school programs, sports ministry, canvassing, prayer walking, homeless ministry, physical labor, serving at-risk families and university campus ministry. The trip also includes aspects of training and equipping so you can learn how to connect and serve the international and refugee communities in your cities.

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