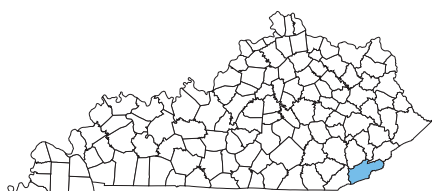


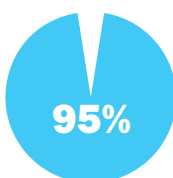
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK AMID A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

HARLAN COUNTY, KY.



DEMOGRAPHICS:

rural county in Appalachia;
ninety-five percent white
population



UNEMPLOYMENT:

declines in coal production
have contributed to **high**
unemployment and poverty;
unemployment
spiked early in
the pandemic



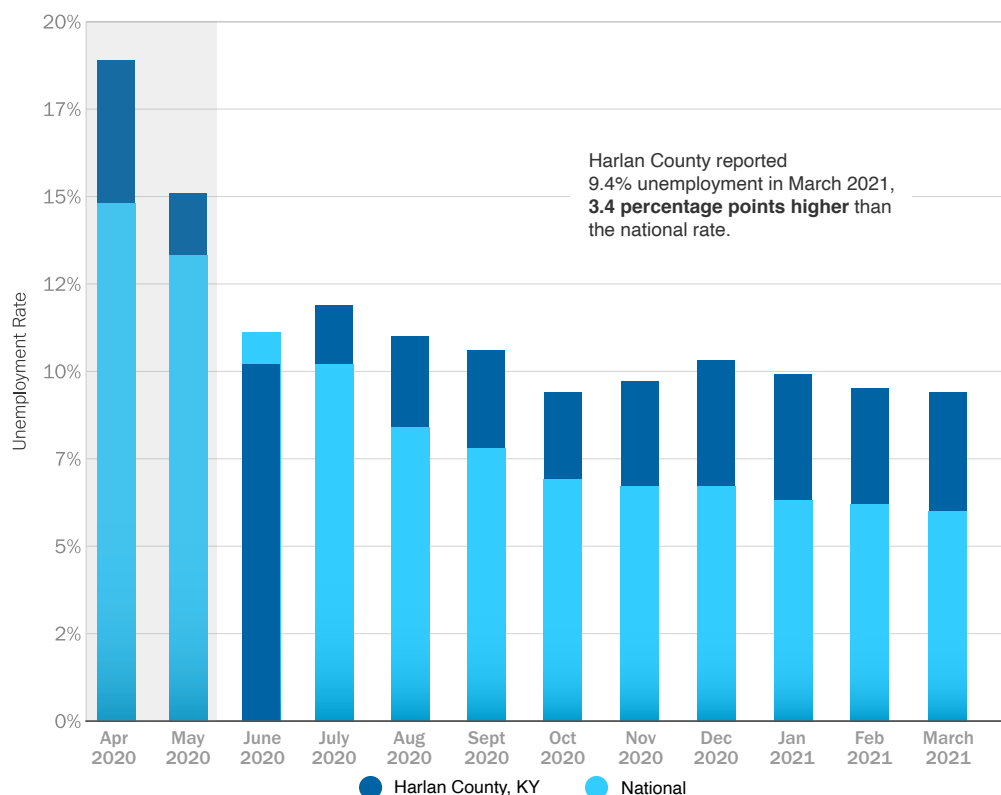
WORKFORCE INITIATIVES:

dislocated worker training;
community college partnerships;
build ready site partnerships;
workforce training programs

PANDEMIC IMPACTS ON COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment in Harlan County remains high despite national reductions

In Harlan County, the pandemic has only served to exacerbate complications in the labor market. In the early months of the pandemic, the unemployment rate in Harlan County rose to nearly 19 percent. However, by summer 2020, unemployment rates looked very similar to those in summer 2019. Despite a few months of recovery, unemployment in Harlan County appears to have reached a plateau with the gap widening between the county and national rates in March 2021.



COUNTY WORKFORCE PRIORITIES

Dislocated Worker Training

Harlan County, Ky. is primarily focused on retraining dislocated workers from the coal industry and offering employment opportunities for local youth through COVID-19 recovery efforts. The county has strong partnerships with local workforce development boards and one priority is identifying creative uses of federal dollars to attract companies to the area that will provide jobs for youth and displaced workers.

Community College Partnerships

Harlan County, Ky. looks to a wide range of partners to advance strategic planning and economic development efforts. The county works closely with community colleges to ensure curricula align with employer needs. For example, in recent years, the community college system designed a new computer numerically controlled (CNC) machinery training program targeting dislocated coal industry workers. Harlan County works with the Center for Rural Development's Developing and Implementing Community Strategies Program (Flex-E Grant) to support these types of strategic planning efforts.

"WE'RE CONCERNED ABOUT LOSING [THE] SKILLED LABORERS, ESPECIALLY IF WE CAN'T FIND MANUFACTURERS WHO COULD BENEFIT FROM LOCATING TO OUR COMMUNITY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS WORKFORCE."

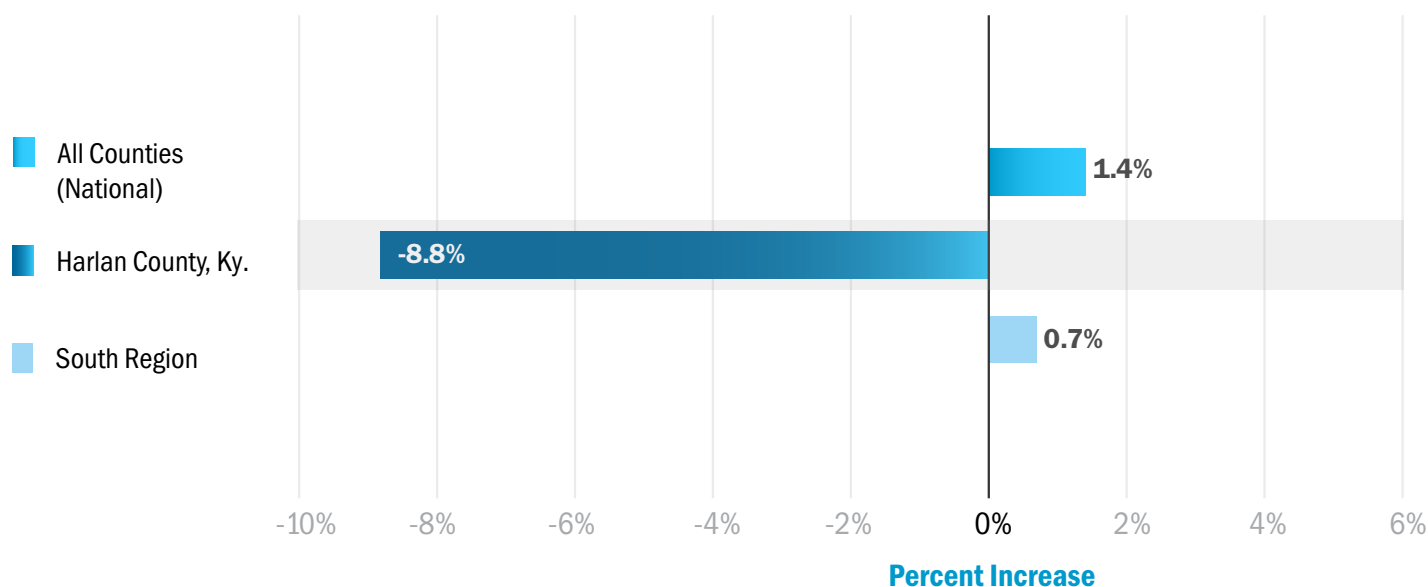
Build Ready Site

Harlan County has also made significant investment to prepare property for new industry. The county has built a new, state-certified Build Ready Site at Harlan County Business Park with the goal of locating new industry which can be well-served by the available, skilled workforce. Harlan County Business Park is a county-owned 140-acre industrial site located in an Opportunity Zone; businesses located therein are eligible for enhanced tax incentives and will be served by water, sewer and natural gas, made possible by public investments.

For more information, see: www.harlancountyeda.com

COUNTIES WORK TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN BUSINESSES

The number of business establishments per capita declined in Harlan County between 2011 and 2018






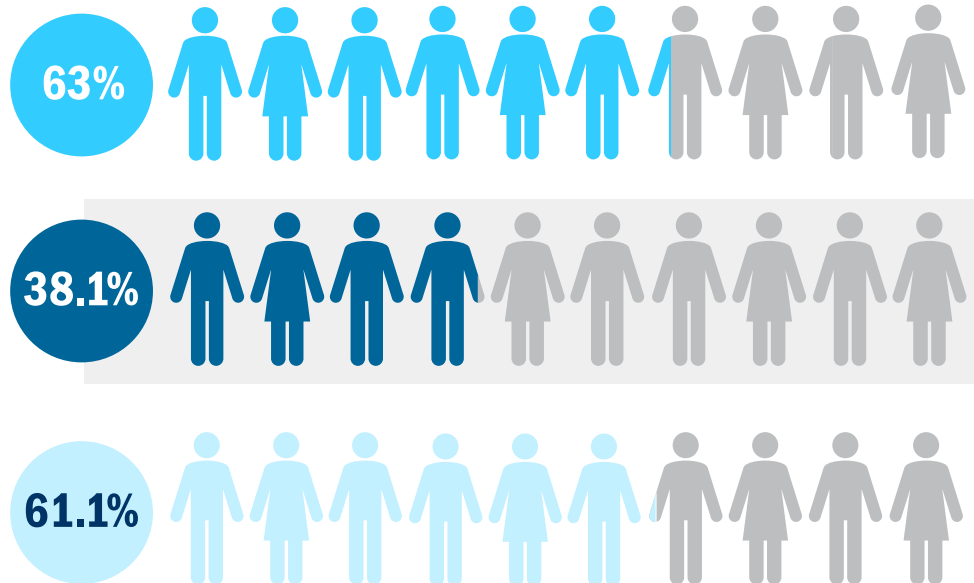
NACo Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau – Business Dynamics Statistics: Establishment Size, 2018; NACo Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau – Population Estimates Program: Population and Housing Units Estimates, 2019.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES BRING INCREASED PARTICIPATION

Labor force participation rate, a measure of working-aged individuals working or seeking work, lags behind national and regional trends in 2019

PERCENT ACTIVE WORKERS

-  All Counties (National)
-  Harlan County, Ky.
-  South Region



NACo Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey: Employment Status for the Population 16 Years and Over, 2019.

“SEVERAL PEOPLE, INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE HAD TO ENTER THE WORKFORCE BECAUSE OF NECESSITY, HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF OUR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP WITH TELEWORKS USA, **CREATING OVER 300 JOBS SINCE 2016.**”

-Colby Kirk, Executive Director, Harlan County Economic Development Authority

NACo would like to thank Harlan County for sharing information on the county's efforts.

This case study was created with support from Walmart as part of the Future of Work, a project that aims to collect data and provide commentary on the new workforce landscape, including the impact of COVID-19 on workplace and workforce policies and practices and key lessons learned that counties should know about rebuilding the workforce in their community in recovery from pandemic and/or recession.

Contact research@naco.org for more information.

¹ Department for Energy Development and Independence. (2013). *Kentucky Coal Facts: 13th Edition*. Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet.

² Sources: Wage growth (2011-2018) comes from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; labor force participation rate, 25-54, median household income, and share of population ages 25-34 with a Bachelor's degree come from the American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2017; changes in the unemployment rate from 2019 to 2020 come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, February 2021; and ratio of population of 65, ratio of population that is Black, and ratio of population that is Hispanic/Latinx comes from the NACo County Explorer, 2019.

