



Crawford County
PLANNING

20 ANNUAL 25 REPORT

Advancing Crawford Inspired



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2025 Strategic Retreat

On August 14, Crawford County Planning (CCP) convened at French Creek Coffee and Tea Co. for a planning retreat. CCP crafted new vision and mission statements, planned the 2026 budget for the Commission, and prioritized upcoming Bold Moves.

WELCOME

from the Planning Commission Chair



Serving as Chair of the Crawford County Planning Commission is a privilege and responsibility I never take lightly. Our Commission includes seven dedicated volunteers who are passionate about creating a vibrant, resilient, and welcoming county that reflects the hopes and desires of those who call it home, both now and in the future.

In 2024, we saw our shared vision of *Crawford Inspired* begin to emerge. The plan's priorities, from improving housing and expanding recreation to strengthening workforce development and modernizing infrastructure, are guiding real projects we can see and feel the impact of countywide. Whether celebrating ribbon cuttings, improving curb appeal, or strengthening partnerships, our municipalities are working together to achieve a shared vision of prosperity.

I am continually inspired by the collaboration between our Planning Commission, Planning Office staff, and the many civic leaders, businesses, and organizations who share our commitment to progress. Whether it was coordinating to improve the safety of our roadways through a Safety Action Plan, promoting outdoor recreation and heritage through the dedication of the George M. Hummer County Forest, or promoting

the preservation of our open space and agricultural roots, every step we've taken has been grounded in our mission: to make Crawford County an even better place to live, work, and thrive.

The year ahead will challenge us to think bigger and with more agility. By implementing data-driven tools, a network of partnerships, and an invigorated spirit of progress, we will continue to put *Crawford Inspired* to work. This plan will never sit on a shelf; it will help us build our future together in visible, lasting ways.

Thank you to the Board of Commissioners, whose continued support for our mission makes it possible to effect change in our communities, my fellow Planning Commissioners, the incredible staff, and most of all, the citizens of Crawford County. Your ideas, energy, and belief in what is possible drive us forward. Together, we can achieve the inspired future our community deserves.

Jessica Hilburn

2025 Commission Chair

Crawford County Planning Commission

A Recap of Our

CRAWFORD INSPIRED GOALS

PEOPLE

Our community's greatest asset lies in its people — their skills, talents, and aspirations. When we invest in education, healthcare, and workforce development, we enhance our human capital. An engaged and healthy population contributes to economic growth, innovation, and social cohesion.

PLACES

Our places — whether historic landmarks, beautiful parks, or vibrant neighborhoods — hold the essence of our community's identity. By enhancing these places, we honor our heritage and create a sense of identity. When residents and visitors connect with these spaces, they feel rooted and proud.

PROSPERITY

Prosperous communities are robust and resilient. They have stable infrastructure, flourishing businesses, access to quality education, skill-building opportunities, and the natural environment. It's our vision to make Crawford County thrive.

2025 Highlights

YEAR IN REVIEW

Program Implementation & Bold Moves

Starting out 2025 with a clear vision for the County's future, Crawford County Planning embraced *Crawford Inspired* as its guiding document.

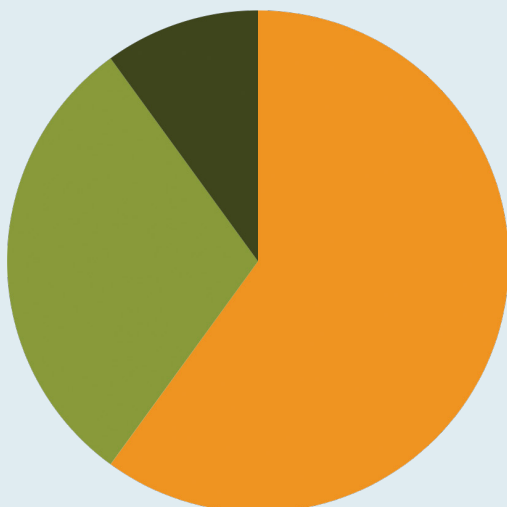
Our Community Development Division secured a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission to support precision machining workforce programs operated by our partners at Crawford Tech and Allegheny

College through ALIC @ Bessemer. We also advanced our comprehensive plan by awarding another round of *Crawford Inspired* Mini-Grants to local municipalities and non-profits that share our vision for a better Crawford County. Additionally, we assisted 18 households with home repairs through our Whole Home Repair Program and helped train five students in construction trades through the Workforce and Retention Program. Finally, we continued administration of the Community Development Block Grant for the County, as well as for the cities of Meadville and Titusville, and Vernon Township.

The Community Planning Division was similarly busy. We worked with the Board of Commissioners to establish a policy to create an Act 152 Blight Demolition Fund, and we finalized the Crawford County Safety Action Plan aimed at enhancing roadway safety. Additionally, with support from a Peer Grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, we conducted a feasibility study for a proposed Countywide Outdoor Recreational Coordinator position. However, our most significant achievement was the adoption and enactment of a countywide Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, which is designed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public by promoting good land use practices across Crawford County.

COUNTYWIDE SALDO

On October 20, 2025, the countywide Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) took effect following its adoption in April 2025. The SALDO affects municipalities that do not have their own SALDO or those that choose to rescind their ordinance for the County's. By the end of 2025, 51% of municipalities were adhering to the countywide SALDO.



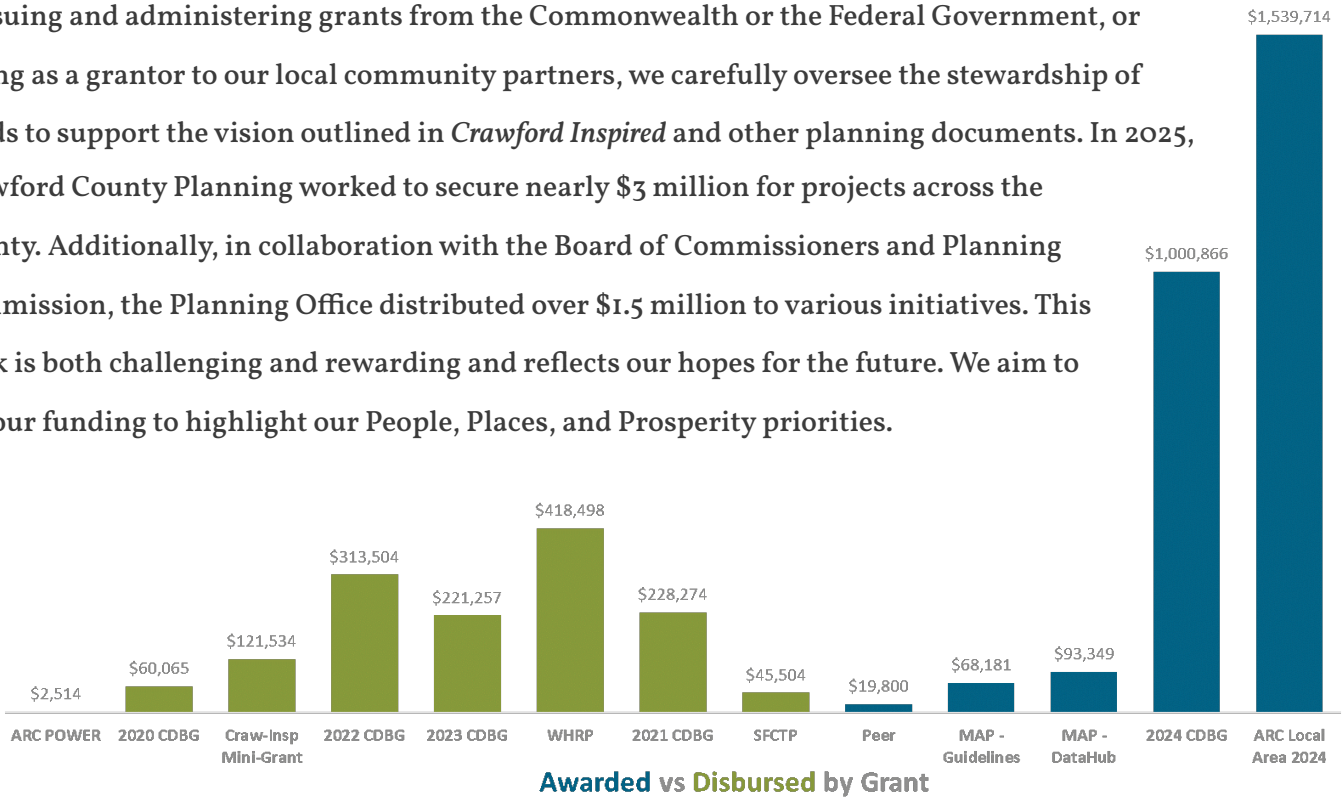
■ Eastern (60) ■ Central (30) ■ Western (10)

7 SALDO applications filed between October 20 and December 31.

- (Left) 60% of SALDO applications are for projects in the Eastern District of Crawford County.
- 57% of project locations have been classified as Natural Resource or Rural Residential character areas by their applicants.

Funding Summary

Grant funding constitutes a major portion of Crawford County Planning’s budget. Whether pursuing and administering grants from the Commonwealth or the Federal Government, or acting as a grantor to our local community partners, we carefully oversee the stewardship of funds to support the vision outlined in *Crawford Inspired* and other planning documents. In 2025, Crawford County Planning worked to secure nearly \$3 million for projects across the County. Additionally, in collaboration with the Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission, the Planning Office distributed over \$1.5 million to various initiatives. This work is both challenging and rewarding and reflects our hopes for the future. We aim to use our funding to highlight our People, Places, and Prosperity priorities.



District & Community Engagement

Crawford County Planning is fortunate to work with partners who challenge, inspire, and support us as we strive to bring our shared vision of the county’s future to life. Our list of community partners is not exhaustive, and we would be remiss not to acknowledge the municipalities that make up the County. Fifty-one separate local governments serve their residents daily, and we are proud to stand alongside them. We could not accomplish our goals without those municipalities and the partners listed below.

OUR 2025 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- ALIC @ Bessemer
- Allegheny College
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
- CoreConnect Community Broadband
- Crawford Heritage Community Foundation
- Crawford Tech
- Economic Progress Alliance of Crawford County
- Meadville Community Revitalization Corporation (MCRC)
- Northwest Commission
- Oil Region Alliance
- PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED)
- PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR)
- PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- PennDOT
- Penn-Northwest Development Corporation
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council

Measuring Progress

OUTCOMES & METRICS

What Are Our Metrics?

How do we measure progress made in 2025? Through *Crawford Inspired*, Crawford County Planning set anticipated outcomes and metrics to ensure we are moving the needle on our objectives. These established metrics are outlined below.

 <p>One Thousand in One Decade</p>	 <p>Ready to Work Labor Force</p>
 <p>Community Prosperity</p>	 <p>Recreation for All</p>
 <p>Enhance Community Character</p>	 <p>Healthy Hearts and Homes</p>

To learn more about the Crawford Inspired outcomes and metrics for success, visit www.crawfordinspired.com.

Our 2025 Efforts Toward These Metrics

Partnered with Allegheny College students to develop a blight inventory survey.




Adopted and enacted a countywide Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.




Received an ARC Local Area Development Grant to kickstart the LIFT program.



Conducted a Safe Streets for All process to create a Safety Action Plan for the County.



Sought engineering firm for demolition of vacant nursing facility in Cambridge Springs.



Submitted a C2P2 grant to DCNR to create a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.



Conducted final round of Mini-Grant awards, totaling \$75k in local investments.



Conducted a feasibility study for a countywide park and recreation entity.



Submitted grant to continue a countywide owner-occupied housing repair program.



Received two MAP grants to develop a Blight Inventory and Advisory Guidelines.



And in CDBG, we moved forward with the following construction projects:

- Ed Myer Sports Complex parking improvements (Titusville)
- Sheide Park electrical improvements (Titusville)
- Stone Memorial Library exterior rehab (Conneautville)
- Water Street stormwater improvements (Meadville)
- Central Fire Station roof replacement (Meadville)



Communication, Outreach, & **COALITION BUILDING**

Connecting with Crawford County

With the addition of a communications specialist and a data analyst in May 2025, the Crawford County Planning Office communicated with citizens, municipalities, and professionals in exciting new ways.

Communication efforts expanded in the second half of 2025 as Isabella Sager, communications specialist, developed a new brand identity and crafted social media strategies for Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Crawford County Planning improved communication with the public through the optimization of electronic newsletters on the Planning Office's Constant Contact platform, resulting in a 12% increase in click rate and a 56% increase in email open rate compared to the previous year.

Rachel Gillette, data analyst, is responsible for crafting systems and reports that make the Planning Office operations more productive and communicate key impacts to stakeholders and the public. In the summer and fall of 2025, systems were created to track and report progress in the LIFT grant program, streamline

in-house operations, and continue to build transparency into planning projects and initiatives such as the new countywide SALDO and the creation of a countywide park and recreation entity.

Crawford, Connected 2025

191,900 views on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn

208 new followers on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn



On Meta channels, content interactions (e.g., likes, shares, comments) **increased by 87% with 2,438 total interactions.**

167 posts were published on Meta channels, sharing educational messaging and information about events and announcements.



193% increase in posts from last year

Planning Coalitions Update

In 2025, the Crawford County Planning Commission realigned its structure by sunsetting existing committees and taking a new approach to form coalitions around the major features of *Crawford Inspired*. These coalitions' missions are to strategically tackle targets set by the plan's Bold Moves and make tangible headway on those initiatives.

2025 saw the coalitions accomplish work toward developing a young professional and family attraction program (Resident Attraction & Workforce Development Coalition), steer the process of the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator Feasibility Study (Parks, Recreation, & Natural Resources Coalition), and promote and provide input on the Crawford County Safety Action Plan outcomes and strategy for implementation (Countywide Systems & Services).

Coalition chairs, who are members of the Planning Commission, worked with the Planning Office to bring in outside stakeholders and facilitate community input to ensure the ongoing success of each venture. Our flexible, goal-oriented coalitions work to implement the comprehensive plan strategically, sustainably, and holistically.

OUR PLANNING COMMISSION COALITIONS



OUR 2026 PRIORITIES

We established nine community priorities in the *Crawford Inspired* comprehensive plan for the next 10 years. These priorities guide us in shaping the community residents want to see in Crawford County's future. Our 2026 initiatives revolve around these priorities and are organized into the categories of People, Places, and Prosperity.

PEOPLE

We will invest in our people through programs to attract and retain residents. In collaboration with the Northwest Commission, Crawford County will seek funding for a new resident attraction initiative to encourage remote workers to move to Crawford County. We will also continue our partnership with Allegheny College and Crawford Tech to connect workers to family-sustaining jobs via the Local Industry Fundamental Training (LIFT) program. This initiative will assist both institutions in purchasing precision machining training technology and equipment to position Crawford County as a leader in precision machining trades employment.



PLACES

By connecting with and enhancing the wonderful places that make Crawford County feel like home, we will work to improve our existing housing stock through a housing repair program, establish Community Character Area guidelines to preserve the integrity of our places, and pursue a Circuit Rider to coordinate local recreation amenities, along with developing a Countywide Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. We will also develop and implement a Blight Inventory to help Crawford County and its partners identify and remove blighted structures that diminish our great places and present unsafe and unhealthy hazards to residents.

PROSPERITY

Securing prosperity will involve refining the administration of our Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) and providing training to local municipalities in Act 247 administration. These actions will help foster more consistent countywide oversight of land use. We will also continue to assist local municipalities with infrastructure maintenance such as transportation, stormwater management, and drinking water and sewage systems through administrative and grant-funded support.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

With 10 Whole Home Repair projects closed in 2025, Crawford County Planning has made strides to transform the region's housing stock. Deteriorating houses became healthy homes with electrical upgrades, roof repairs, and window and door replacements.

(Right) A home in Cambridge Springs received a critical roof repair, ensuring the building's structural integrity.





From the former **DIRECTOR**

As I step away to explore a new professional challenge, I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the people and communities of Crawford County. Service as your Planning Director has been an honor and a privilege. As we reflect on the progress made in 2025, I am incredibly proud of what our team, partners, and residents have accomplished together, and I am confident that the best days for Crawford County lie ahead.

Over the past year, we have turned our vision into action. With the official adoption of *Crawford Inspired*, the County entered a new era of planning, one grounded in collaboration, creativity, and measurable results. From expanding trails and improving parks to revitalizing blighted properties and strengthening local businesses, the work underway is already enhancing the quality of life across both our municipalities and rural landscapes. These achievements are a testament to the dedication of the Planning Office staff, the volunteer members of the Crawford County Planning Commission, and the many public, private, and nonprofit partners who share a commitment to this place. Together, we secured funding to initiate the Local Industry Fundamental Training (LIFT) Program, advanced the creation of a countywide park and recreation entity, and launched the highly successful *Crawford Inspired* Mini-Grant Program — putting resources directly into the hands of communities ready to act.

Looking forward, the momentum is strong. The year ahead will bring a countywide blight inventory, deeper municipal partnerships, advisory guidelines to promote consistency with *Crawford Inspired*, and the Planning Office's new role as an enforcement agent for the County's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, helping communities grow and change with intention.

Just as important as the initiatives themselves are the people who carry them forward. The staff of the Crawford County Planning Office exemplifies professionalism, technical excellence, and a deep commitment to public service. Their thoughtful approach to planning, responsiveness to municipalities, and ability to translate big ideas into practical outcomes have set a high standard for the work ahead. I leave knowing that Crawford County's planning efforts are in exceptionally capable hands.

Crawford County's unique character is its greatest asset, and the commitment of its people is its greatest strength. Together, you will continue moving the needle, ensuring Crawford County remains a place we are all proud to call home today and one that will inspire generations to come.

Thank you for trusting me all these years.

Zachary Norwood
Planning Director
2017-2025



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