



Appalachian
Regional
Commission



Gayle Conelly Manchin

Federal Co-Chair

Appalachian Regional Commission

Gayle Conelly Manchin was sworn in as the Appalachian Regional Commission's thirteenth federal co-chair on May 6, 2021, becoming the first ARC Federal Co-Chair from West Virginia. Manchin works directly with ARC's 13-member governors—one of whom is appointed annually as States' Co-Chair—their state alternates and program managers, and a network of local development districts. Together they collaborate to build greater community capacity and strengthen economic growth throughout Appalachia, which increases the region's ability to compete nationally and globally.

An alumna of West Virginia University, Manchin worked as an educator in Marion County Schools, served on the faculty of Fairmont State University, and was the director of the university's first Community Service Learning Program. She later directed the AmeriCorps Promise Fellows in West Virginia. Manchin previously served as West Virginia's First Lady and was appointed to serve as a member of the State Board of Education, serving her last two years as president at both the state and national level. She was the chair of the Board for Reconnecting McDowell, Inc., an AFT initiative serving rural West Virginia, is a past president of the Vandalia Rotary Club of Charleston, and is an emeritus member of The Education Alliance. In addition, she served as cabinet secretary for the West Virginia Office of Education and the Arts, and as co-founder of the WV Public Education Collaborative, Manchin served as the Board Chair until her appointment to the ARC.

Manchin believes in the power of partnerships and advocates for collaboration across Appalachia's 13 states. As ARC Federal Co-Chair, her top priorities are to support the creation of greater economic opportunities in the Appalachian Region, increase broadband access and critical infrastructure in all Appalachian communities, and work to restore hope and purpose to lives upended by the opioid crisis, all through a cross-regional, multi-state approach.