

MUNICIPAL HOME RULE PROGRAM

City/Town of Bluefield

2025
PROGRESS
REPORT

WV Municipal Home Rule Board
1900 Kanawha Blvd. E
Bldg. 1, Ste. W-300
Charleston, WV 25305
MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov
304.558.3356

Rev. 08.01.24

West Virginia State Code §8-1-5a (m) provides:

“Commencing December 1, 2015, and each year thereafter, each participating municipality shall give a progress report to the Municipal Home Rule Board and commencing January 1, 2016, and each year thereafter, the Municipal Home Rule Board shall give a summary report of all the participating municipalities to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.”

The Municipal Home Rule Board has developed this standard format for Home Rule Program participating municipalities to prepare and submit their respective Annual Progress Reports. The intent of this standard format is to gather and compile information in a consistent, easily understood, and efficient manner that will be used to develop a concise and practical summary report to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.

Annual Progress Reports must be submitted electronically as an individual file in PDF format no later than the close of business on the first business day of December, by emailing to WV Municipal Home Rule Board at MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov.

A. General Information		
Name of Municipality: City of Bluefield		
Certifying Official: Ron Martin	Title: Mayor	
Contact Person: Cecil Marson	Title: City Manager	
Address: 200 Rogers Street		
City, State, Zip: Bluefield, W. Va. 24701		
Telephone Number: 304-327-2401 Ext. 2406	Fax Number: 304-327-8670	
E-Mail Address: cmarson@bluewv.org		
2020 Census Population: 9,658		
B. Municipal Classification		
<input type="checkbox"/> Class I	<input type="checkbox"/> Class II	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class III
<input type="checkbox"/> Class IV		
C. Attest		
I hereby confirm that I am the authorized official for this municipality and certify that the information submitted herein and attached hereto is true and accurate and that this report addresses each and every initiative included in the original Home Rule Pilot Program Plan Application for this municipality and any subsequent amendments, if applicable.		
Ron Martin		
Type Name of Certifying Official	Signature of Certifying Official	Date

Please use this page to report progress on each **non-tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application and Amendment(s). Each non-tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

Initiative: Authorization of code enforcement to issue citations immediately and streamlined condemnation process
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> ?
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? May 16, 2015
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The ability to issue citations and the increasing awareness of the public that Code Enforcement has the ability to issue citations has led to more voluntary cooperation especially in the area of property maintenance. Residents and businesses that are cited have demonstrated that they would prefer to resolve the violations quickly rather than to deal with a citation and in addition to resolving the problem. Compliance has greatly increased when citations are issued and followed up in a short time. Along with compliance, we have increased Code Enforcement permit revenue, municipal license revenue and B&O revenue as contractors have been compelled to be in compliance.</p> <p>The streamlined condemnation/demolition process has allowed the city to move much more quickly in addressing dilapidated and oftentimes uninhabitable structures/homes. We have used the process to encourage residents to either rehabilitate their properties or to relocate into housing, which is safer and more sanitary.</p>
<p>LESSONS LEARNED - In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>City code enforcement officers have found this tool to be extremely helpful in dealing with repeat violators. It also has given officers the ability to stop violators who "play the game" of getting a summons, waiting the time out, and waiting again for the code enforcement department to call again. This tool has given neighbors a better piece of mind that problem properties will be dealt with in a timelier manner.</p>

Please use this page to report progress on each **non-tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application and Amendment(s). Each non-tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

<p>Initiative: Implementing a Municipal Land Bank</p>
<p>Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/>?</p>
<p>Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? May 26, 2015</p>
<p>If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).</p>
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The City created a municipal land bank, a land reuse agency pursuant to W, Va, Code§ 31-18E-1, et seq. The land bank has accepted donations from property owners in the past, and this year has purchased approximately 50 parcels from the auditor, as part of the tax sale process. Plans are being developed to work with other state and federal agencies to use many of those parcels to replace existing HUD housing with homes distributed throughout the community. The City is also working with developers to build median income/affordable housing on some of those properties. Sixty parcels were committed as an in-kind contribution for a multi-million-dollar federal housing development grant. The former nursing home, mentioned in past reports, is the subject of a pending grant to locate an in-patient treatment program for substance abuse victims and provide some primary care services.</p> <p>The land bank has applied for a FHFA grant to build affordable housing on property donated to the land bank by the city. The application is pending, but the prospects for receiving the grant are favorable.</p>
<p>LESSONS LEARNED – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>Having a land bank which can accept, transfer and develop property in the city, has helped address blight, improve neighborhoods and provided a path forward to better, more affordable housing for the city.</p>

Please use this page to report progress on each **tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application. Each tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

Initiative: B&O Tax Reduction and Retail Sales Tax Implementation
Was this tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> or N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? October 11, 2016
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s). N/A
<p>REVENUES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting revenue amounts and revenue categories realized; revenue amounts and revenue categories reduced; net revenue gain; and, any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The implementation of the sales tax has resulted in revenue of \$1,400,000 in fiscal year ending June 2025. So, notwithstanding the reduction in B&O taxes, made as a condition of implementing the sales tax, overall revenues have increased.</p>
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting projects, improvements, programming, etc. realized through the implementation of this revenue initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>Much of the sales tax is collected by out-of-state retailers, related to mail orders. So, the city is able to capture revenue which helps to replace the B&O tax historically paid by local retail establishments, which have closed for one reason or another. At the same time B&O revenue has continued to increase.</p>
<p>LESSONS LEARNED – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p>

Please use this page to report progress on each **tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application. Each tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

Initiative:
Was this tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> or N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted?
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).
REVENUES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting revenue amounts and revenue categories realized; revenue amounts and revenue categories reduced; net revenue gain; and, any metrics used to track performance.
SUCCESSSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting projects, improvements, programming, etc. realized through the implementation of this revenue initiative and any metrics used to track performance.
LESSONS LEARNED – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.