January 25, 2024

Mr. Brandon McBride
Executive Director
Appalachian Regional Commission
1666 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009-1086

Dear Mr. McBride:

Please find enclosed the State of West Virginia's Fiscal Year 2024 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Annual Strategy Statement. This document outlines our intended use of ARC funds and is consistent with the requirements set forth in Section 5.4 of the ARC Code.

If you should have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact James Bush, ARC State Program Manager, at 304-558-2234.

Sincerely,

Jim Justice
Governor

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

FY 2024

ANNUAL STRATEGY STATEMENT

for the

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

Jim Justice, Governor

Prepared by the

**West Virginia Department of
Economic Development**

FY 2024 West Virginia ARC Strategy Statement

Introduction

The ARC Annual Strategy Statement is a one-year implementation plan for working towards the goals and principles outlined in the four-year State Development Plan. It includes information on the state's targeted investments for ARC funds, specific strategies for ARC-designated distressed counties, information on the state ARC program (funding guidelines, ineligible projects, solicitation and review process), and overall state strategies that are aligned with the ARC strategic plan.

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a regional economic development agency that represents a unique partnership between 13 states and the federal government. The Commission is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair who is appointed by the President. Each year Congress appropriates funds for Commission programs, which ARC allocates among its member states. The Appalachian states include all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

The West Virginia ARC Program is administered through the Community Advancement and Development (CAD) Division within the West Virginia Department of Economic Development (WVDED).

Federal, State, and Local Partners

The West Virginia ARC program works closely with several federal partners, particularly with water, sewer, and facility improvement projects: the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development; the Department of Housing and Urban Development; the Economic Development Administration; and the Environmental Protection Agency. State partners include the Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council; the Department of Environmental Protection; Department of Health and Human Resources; Department of Tourism; and the Division of Highways. Other partners include the National Main Street Center and the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

A critical local partner are the 11 Regional Planning and Development Councils (regional councils) that cover all 55 counties in the state. The regional councils act as project administrators for ARC construction projects and assist local governments in developing projects and submitting applications for funding.

West Virginia ARC Funding Priorities for FY 2024

Funding priorities for the FY 2024 West Virginia ARC program include:

- basic infrastructure such as water and wastewater **(high priority)**
- abandoned and vacant buildings, particularly in relation to downtown revitalization or brownfields reuse **(high priority)**
- industrial and commercial site development **(high priority)**
- tourism and outdoor recreation **(high priority)**
- workforce development
- technical assistance and capital to businesses and entrepreneurs
- forestry, energy, and technology

The Governor reserves the right to recommend projects outside of the priorities listed above as needed to respond to special economic opportunities or unanticipated community and economic needs. Recommended projects outside of the priorities listed above must still be consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in West Virginia's 4-year ARC Development Plan and ARC's Strategic Plan.

Economic Opportunities

West Virginia has a wealth of natural amenities, marking it as one of the prime outdoor tourism destinations east of the Mississippi. The state's proximity to major east coast population centers makes it ideally positioned for tourism growth and development in future years. This potential has been enhanced recently with the designation of the nation's newest national park, the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, and the state has recently enacted the Tourism Development Act Tax Credit that will spur more private investment in outdoor recreation and tourism destinations. The Hatfield-McCoy Trail System is an award-winning system of off highway vehicle trails that has seen 21 consecutive years of growth in rider permits. Finally, the state has seen a growing number of new micro and craft breweries, fine-dining establishments, and distilleries that will increase spending activity and leverage already established adventure tourism options such as whitewater rafting and trail riding.

The state has taken advantage of ARC funding to spur critical investments and support for tourism development in the state. The West Virginia Recreational Economies Initiative, an ARC area development project funded in FY2022, will provide technical assistance services and loan capital to tourism and recreation-based businesses across the state. Another ARC project targets the Upper Kanawha Valley region of the state with planning and business support services for outdoor recreation-based businesses. Other ARC grants have invested in trail construction and development in the state as well as supporting the development of recreation-based tourism surrounding the Monongahela National Forest.

Economic Challenges

- **Lack of adequate infrastructure:** There is a critical need for investment in infrastructure such as water, sewer, and broadband. The American Society of Civil Engineers has given the state a D in its infrastructure report card, noting a $1.4 billion total need for investment in drinking water over the next 20 years and $3.3 billion in total wastewater need. The lack of broadband inhibits not just business and e-commerce development but affects quality of life, health, and education in the state.
- **Need for redevelopment:** West Virginia has suffered substantial out-migration and population loss. The West Virginia Economic Outlook for 2020-2024, published by West Virginia University, notes that the state's population has declined by nearly 51,000 people since 2012. This has resulted in widespread abandonment of buildings and structures across the state as well as brownfields from formerly operating industries. The challenge now is long-term redevelopment in local communities and addressing abandoned structures that represent eyesores and threats to public safety.
- **Lack of flat land:** West Virginia's rugged terrain lends itself to tourism development but not to industrial and commercial recruitment. As compared to its neighboring states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, the state has fewer developable sites, limiting its ability to attract business and industrial investment. Continued development of location-ready sites with adequate infrastructure is much needed across the state.

ARC Distressed Counties

In accordance with Section 7.5 of the ARC Code, the West Virginia ARC program is fully committed to providing resources in ARC-designated distressed counties so that residents "are better able to address problems, realize opportunities, and effectively participate in setting the course of their future development." **Projects located in ARC-designated distressed counties, particularly water and sewer projects, will receive the highest priority for West Virginia ARC funding.**

For FY 2024, West Virginia has 18 distressed counties. Those counties are Barbour, Boone, Braxton, Calhoun, Clay, Fayette, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, Nicholas, Roane, Summers, Upshur, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, and Wyoming. Of these counties, 5 are core distressed counties: Calhoun, Clay, Lincoln, McDowell, and Webster. These 5 counties have always been designated by ARC as distressed since the designations began in 1983. Developing viable and strategic projects in these core distressed counties is a particularly high priority for the West Virginia ARC program.

The following table, derived from the Economic Development Capacity Index recently developed by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and Argonne National Laboratory, lists the FY 2024 distressed counties in West Virginia across 5 economic development capacity areas:

	Economic Development Capacity Areas				
County	Human Capital	Financial	Industry	Infrastructure	Institutions-Partnerships
Barbour	Limited	Limited	Limited	Low	Low
Boone	Limited	Limited	Elevated	Low	Elevated
Braxton	Moderate	Elevated	Elevated	Limited	Limited
Calhoun	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Low	Low
Clay	Low	Limited	Limited	Low	Moderate
Fayette	Moderate	Limited	Elevated	Low	Limited
Lincoln	Limited	Limited	Limited	Low	Low
Logan	Limited	Limited	Elevated	Low	Limited
McDowell	Low	Limited	Limited	Low	Moderate
Mingo	Low	Limited	Moderate	Low	Limited
Nicholas	Moderate	Limited	High	Low	Limited
Roane	Limited	Limited	Elevated	Low	Limited
Summers	Limited	Limited	Elevated	Limited	Low
Upshur	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Low	Limited
Webster	Limited	Limited	Limited	Low	Moderate
Wetzel	Moderate	Moderate	High	Limited	Moderate
Wirt	Limited	Limited	Elevated	Low	Low
Wyoming	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Low	Limited

The index measures the capacity of counties in terms of human capital (indicators related to workforce composition, quality of life, education attainment), financial (indicators related to access to capital for small businesses, access to banks, local government financial health), industry (indicators related to industry diversity and business creation), infrastructure (indicators related to the quality of transportation, access to clean water, broadband, and green space), and institutions/partnerships (indicators related to local government capacity, experience with grants, nonprofits and cultural organizations). The index is composed of a total of 53 indicators across all 5 capacity areas, and capacity areas are scored from low (capacity is well below the national average) to high (capacity is well above the national average).

As seen in the table, infrastructure has the highest number of low scores, and no county scored above limited in that category (limited is the next score above a low score). The findings from the index underline the importance of infrastructure investment in distressed counties.

Special Objectives and Strategies for ARC-Designated Distressed Counties

Specific objectives and strategies to address economic and community improvement in distressed counties include the following:

Objective: Build community and regional capacity to plan and implement economic and community development initiatives.

Strategies:

- Assist communities in organizing for economic and community improvement by developing local community leadership and structures
- Link local community leaders and stakeholders to outside resources
- Promote planning, analysis, and assessment activities that provide communities with knowledge of local economic assets and strategies to move forward
- Support small but visible steps and improvements that communities can make that spur further momentum and progress in redevelopment
- Establish regular networking and convening of community leaders and public officials from distressed counties

Objective: Provide basic infrastructure such as water and wastewater facilities necessary for economic development.

Strategies:

- Work with federal, state, and local agencies in planning, prioritization, and development of infrastructure projects that promote community revitalization and economic diversification
- Make strategic investments that leverage federal, state, and local support for the construction or improvement of basic public infrastructure
- Identify and develop industrial and commercial sites in distressed counties

Objective: Promote the creation of comprehensive entrepreneurial support systems for current and future entrepreneurs, including education, technical assistance, and access to capital.

Strategies:

- Support educational opportunities for high school students and adults in entrepreneurship and business creation
- Develop business education, coaching, and technical assistance services to entrepreneurs and businesses

Objective: Promote downtown revitalization.

Strategies:

- Increase the ability of communities to address dilapidated and abandoned buildings and brownfield sites
- Link local towns to regional tourism and outdoor recreation opportunities such as motorized, non-motorized, and water trails
- Improve the ability of local towns to convert abandoned landmark buildings into productive economic and civic assets
- Increase the self-sufficiency of local towns through identifying and expanding local services and goods that can replace services and goods purchased outside the community
- Implement local business visitation programs to uncover obstacles to economic development and encourage a healthier entrepreneurial climate
- Develop activities, amenities, and assets that attract people downtown
- Increase the ability of local towns to brand and market themselves
- Promote initiatives such as community gardens, public markets, greenways, and historic preservation that increase community pride and spur local efforts for community improvement

West Virginia ARC Program and USDA Rural Partners Network

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Partners Network is a program that provides technical assistance to selected networks of counties that are working to improve their economic and community conditions. The assistance includes placing federal staff on the ground in the county networks to help communities to develop projects and identify federal programs to help fund the projects.

In West Virginia, there are two Rural Partner Networks: The Pioneer Network (Braxton, Calhoun, Clay, Gilmer, Nicholas, Roane, Webster, and Wirt Counties) and the Southern WV Network (Boone, Fayette, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, Monroe, Raleigh, Summers, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties). At least 15 ARC distressed counties are included within both networks. The WV ARC State Program Manager works closely with the leadership and staff of the Rural Partners Network and serves on the state steering committee that oversees both networks.

ARC Funding Streams

ARC has different funding streams or programs that require different application processes and guidelines. What is generally known as area development is the ARC funding that is allocated annually to each of the 13 ARC states. The states set their own priorities and application process for area development funds.

Other ARC funding streams include ARC POWER, INSPIRE, and ASPIRE. These are separate from the area development funding and have different application processes and guidelines. More information on POWER, INSPIRE, and ASPIRE can be found at www.arc.gov. The information outlined below is specifically for the West Virginia ARC area development funds.

Project Solicitation, Review, and Selection Process

General Information

- As stated above, the highest priority for West Virginia ARC funds are infrastructure projects (water and sewer) located in ARC-designated distressed counties
- Information on the West Virginia ARC program, including application instructions and forms, can be found online at www.wvcad.org/resources, under the Appalachian Regional Commission heading
- Keep in mind that the ARC is an economic development agency, and therefore funding requests must focus on economic and community development—conservation, social services, police and public safety, and cultural activities are generally not funded
- Eligible applicants include public entities, non-profit organizations, and non-profit educational and medical facilities. Individuals and for-profit businesses are not eligible for ARC assistance
- The West Virginia ARC program has no funding limits for construction or non-construction projects. However, applicants should be aware that funds are limited and are advised to contact the ARC State Program Manager before submitting an application
- ARC non-construction projects are funded for up to two years but may be extended beyond that time depending upon project performance or unforeseen developments
- Research projects are generally not funded
- All ARC projects are subject to federal regulations at 2 CFR 200. Applicants need to be aware of these requirements. All ARC funded construction projects are also subject to federal environmental review requirements and Davis-Bacon regulations.

Ineligible Activities

The following activities are ineligible for West Virginia ARC funding:

- Projects related to the general operation of state and local governments, including construction or improvements to city halls and courthouses, upkeep of state or local government buildings, and general government expenses such as staff and payroll
- Political activities of any kind

Interested applicants and grantees should also review the ARC Project Guidelines located at www.arc.gov (use the search function to locate the document).

Application Process

The Community Advancement and Development Division (CAD) of the West Virginia Department of Economic Development (WVDED) manages the ARC program. Technical assistance for the ARC program is available from staff during normal business hours, before and during the application process. CAD accepts applications usually one time per year by releasing a funding notice to the public describing the process and deadline for applications. The funding notice is sent directly to all of the Local Development Districts in the state, which is forwarded to the LDD's member units of local government. In addition, previous applicants to the program and any interested parties that have contacted our office regarding the ARC program are also notified about release of the funding notice. Interested members of the public may contact our office to be placed on our mailing list for email notification.

At the discretion of CAD, an additional funding notice may be released during the same year depending upon the availability of funds. CAD will also occasionally solicit applications from eligible applicants at any time during the year to address an urgent or unexpected need or to ensure timely obligation of available funds.

ARC approval of projects is a two-step process: applicants apply to the states for review and approval and only those projects approved by the state are forwarded to ARC for final review and approval. Applicants and interested parties need to be aware of the application process and funding priorities for each ARC state, which can be different from state to state.

Application Process Timeline for FY2024 (tentative)

ARC Application Opened: October 2023
Application Deadline: March 2024
State recommendations announced: June 2024
Submission of Applications to ARC Headquarters: June 2024

Distressed Counties Priority

In reviewing and recommending projects for funding, the State of West Virginia will consider the status of the county or counties that make up the project area of an application. **Projects that are in ARC-designated distressed counties will receive higher priority in the review process.**

The review criteria are as follows:

Threshold Criteria

All applications are initially screened to determine if they meet the thresholds for funding consideration. The screening process determines the following:

a) <u>ARC Eligibility</u>: All projects recommended to the Commission for final approval must demonstrate that they will contribute to the achievement of one of the Commission's strategic goals and that the project relates to one or more of the goals, objectives, and strategies set forth in the state's development plan and strategy statement.

b) <u>Project Readiness</u>: All projects recommended to the Commission for final approval must provide reasonable assurance of the availability of matching funds for the project scope of work.

c) <u>Project Approach</u>: All projects recommended to the Commission for final approval must demonstrate a scope of work that is realistic and viable.

d) <u>Project Effectiveness</u>: All projects recommended to the Commission for final approval must demonstrate the ability of the applicant to manage the project effectively and contain detailed outcome measurements by which grant expenditures may be evaluated.

Applications determined to be eligible, complete, and feasible, and evidence a reasonable assurance that matching funds are or will be secured, proceed to the competitive review.

Competitive Review Criteria

Projects will be competitively reviewed, and all recommendations will be packaged together and submitted to the Governor for approval. Projects will be evaluated based on the following key strategic criteria:

a. <u>Degree of Need</u>: Projects in ARC-designated distressed counties and distressed areas will receive higher priority. Multi-county projects that include ARC-designated distressed, and clearly demonstrate how those distressed counties will directly benefit from the project activities, will also receive high priority.

b. <u>Targeted Priority</u>: Projects that address one or more of the targeted investment priorities outlined at the beginning of this strategy statement will receive higher priority.

c. <u>Investment Impact</u>: Projects that demonstrate strong economic development impacts, provide long-term capital improvements for economic development, or enhance already existing economic and community development efforts will receive higher priority. Strategic characteristics of a project that increase investment impact include the following:

Infrastructure projects that:

- Facilitate economic development (such as by serving commercial customers, providing needed infrastructure for commercial and industrial sites, or leveraging private sector investment)

- Serve critical community facilities such as schools, community health facilities, community centers, 4-H Camps, etc.
- Target existing population centers and downtown areas (infill strategy)
- Are located along an ARC highway corridor
- Increase the capacity of a water or wastewater system to serve more customers in the future
- Incorporate energy-efficiency features such as installing energy-efficient equipment or projects specifically addressing inflow and infiltration (I & I)
- Provide wastewater facilities that protect environmental resources tied to economic development

Non-infrastructure projects that:

- Focus on enhancing economic development in a community or region
- Address a compelling and documented need that hinders economic development or community quality of life
- Provide benefits on a continuing rather than a temporary basis
- Increase local collaboration or regional partnerships
- Strengthen the ability of local communities to undertake economic and community development activities through planning, technical assistance, and other activities

d. <u>Investment Linkage:</u> Projects that demonstrate how they complement existing community and economic development efforts, plans, and strategies in the project area will receive higher priority.

Projects that incorporate more of the competitive review criteria identified above will more likely be recommended for funding, based upon the amount of funds available. Recommendations are then sent to the Governor for approval. Projects that are recommended by the Governor are then sent on to ARC headquarters for final review and approval by the Commission. The WVDO reserves the right during the review process to modify the scope of work, activities, and expected outcomes for any application for ARC assistance, and to increase or decrease the amount of funds being requested. Any such modifications will be negotiated with the applicant.

State Matching Requirements and Assistance Limits

ARC participation costs will be limited to 50 percent of project costs, with the following exceptions:

- Projects located in designated Distressed Counties or Local Access Road Projects (except in Competitive Counties) may be funded up to 80 percent of the eligible project costs.

- Projects located in designated At-Risk Counties may be funded up to 70 percent of the eligible project costs.

- Statewide projects may be funded up to 70 percent of the eligible project cost.

- ARC assistance is limited to 30 percent of eligible costs for projects located in a designated Competitive County.

Multi-county projects (not statewide) may be funded as follows:

- If there is a distressed county in a project:

  - and at least half the counties are distressed, the project may be funded at up to 80% of project costs;
  - and at least half the counties are in some combination of distressed and at-risk, ARC assistance can be the higher of 70% of project costs or the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project; and
  - but fewer than half the counties are distressed, ARC assistance can be the higher of 50% of project costs or the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project.

- If there is no competitive county or attainment county in a project, and at least half the counties are at-risk, the project may be funded at up to 70% of project costs.

All other projects shall be funded at the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project; except that the portion of a project, which is attributable to an attainment county in a project not including a distressed county, shall be considered ineligible for ARC assistance and may not be considered for matching purposes.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the ARDA of 1965 as amended, all projects for which approval is requested under the Area Development Program must be supported by a demonstration that they will contribute to the achievement of one or more of the Commission's strategic goals, except that the state may request, in accordance with Section 303 of the ARDA, approval of a project or projects without such supporting demonstration to take advantage of special development opportunities or to respond to emergency economic distress.

West Virginia FY2024 ARC State Strategies

West Virginia's ARC FY2024 state strategies are listed below. Each strategy is aligned with the goals and objectives of the ARC Startegic Plan, Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity 2022-2026. All projects requesting assistance from the West Virginia ARC program must match one of the state strategies listed below to receive consideration for funding.

ARC Goal 1: Building Appalachian Businesses. Strengthen and diversify the Region's economy through inclusive economic development strategies and investments in entrepreneurship and business development.

ARC Objective 1.1: Provide financing, technical assistance, and other support for entrepreneurship and small business development in the Region.

State Strategy 1.1.1: Support initiatives that provide training, assistance, and other services to entrepreneurs for the creation and expansion of businesses.

State Strategy 1.1.2: Increase access to capital for entrepreneurs and businesses.

State Strategy 1.1.3: Promote downtown redevelopment through support of programs such as Main Street and local business retention and expansion efforts.

State Strategy 1.1.4: Support export strategies to connect start-up and established businesses with external and global markets.

ARC Objective 1.2: Pursue economic and enterprise development strategies that grow existing industries, support economic diversification, and advance economic prosperity at the regional level.

State Strategy 1.2.1: Support planning and implementation activities that identify and capitalize upon emerging economic opportunities and sectors in the state.

ARC Objective 1.3: Enhance the competitiveness of the Region's manufacturers.

State Strategy 1.3.1: Provide training opportunities for small- and medium-sized businesses for competitive improvement.

ARC Objective 1.4: Promote export strategies to connect start-up and established businesses with external and global markets.

State Strategy 1.4.1: Assist small- and medium-sized businesses to locate and access markets for their products, with emphasis on export training and assistance that will enable them to participate in the international marketplace.

ARC Goal 2: Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem. Expand and strengthen community systems (education, healthcare, housing, childcare, and others) that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.

ARC Objective 2.1: Develop and support educational programs and institutions from early childhood through post-secondary that provide the building blocks for skills development and long-term employment success.

State Strategy 2.1.1: Support local and regional initiatives to better prepare students, out-of-school youths, and adults for post-secondary-level training.

State Strategy 2.1.2: Support literacy, lifelong learning, and dropout prevention initiatives.

State Strategy 2.1.3: Provide funding for educational and workforce development strategies that increase science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills in students.

ARC Objective 2.2: Invest in workforce development programs and strategies informed by industry talent needs and designed to allow workers to simultaneously earn, learn, and advance along a career pathway.

State Strategy 2.2.1: Support planning and implementation activities that improve workforce readiness for current and future employment needs.

State Strategy 2.2.2: Assist efforts to increase business competitiveness and retention in the state through workforce training and certification programs.

State Strategy 2.2.3: Encourage youth and student opportunities for work and community service experiences, including internships, mentorships, leadership development, and job shadowing.

ARC Objective 2.3: Develop a network of employment supports to help Appalachians enter and remain in the workforce.

State Strategy 2.3.1: Develop and support training and job-placement programs for individuals recovering from substance use disorders.

State Strategy 2.3.2: Promote efforts that increase access to quality childcare to support workforce recruitment and retention.

State Strategy 2.3.3: Invest in innovative housing initiatives that support economic development or improve local community livability and quality of life.

ARC Objective 2.4: Expand access to high quality healthcare as well as programs and services that support overall mental and physical health, for workers and their families.

State Strategy 2.4.1: Enhance community-based healthy living initiatives that address diabetes, obesity, substance use disorders and other conditions that constitute barriers to workforce participation and community quality of life.

State Strategy 2.4.2: Improve medical facilities and infrastructure to increase access to high-quality health care in underserved areas and improve public health.

> **ARC Goal 3: Building Appalachia's Infrastructure**. Ensure that the residents and businesses of Appalachia have access to reliable, affordable, resilient, and energy efficient utilities and infrastructure in order to successfully live and work in the Region.

ARC Objective 3.1: Ensure the availability of quality, affordable basic infrastructure to meet the needs of the residents and businesses of Appalachia.

State Strategy 3.1.1: Provide support for the improvement or expansion of basic infrastructure such as water, wastewater, and storm water systems to increase community quality of life and facilitate economic development.

State Strategy 3.1.2: Work with localities and regional organizations to support the planning, assessment, and prioritization of basic infrastructure needs to ensure greater efficiency and coordination of infrastructure investments.

State Strategy 3.1.3: Support technical assistance services and programs that improve the efficiency and long-term operations of local water and wastewater systems.

State Strategy 3.1.4: Provide training, consultation, and implementation support for local leaders and regional organizations to build their capacity to address infrastructure challenges.

ARC Objective 3.2: Ensure that all Appalachians have access to quality and affordable telecommunications and broadband services.

State Strategy 3.2.1: Make strategic investments in high-speed telecommunications infrastructure to increase local and regional connectivity and access.

State Strategy 3.2.2: Encourage and support the innovative use of telecommunications in education, health care, business, government, and infrastructure initiatives.

State Strategy 3.2.3: Assist planning, analysis, and training activities that increase broadband access, adoption, and deployment in the state.

ARC Objective 3.3: Support proactive efforts to adopt alternative energy strategies and bolster energy infrastructure.

State Strategy 3.3.1: Assist local and regional energy efficiency efforts to enhance their economic competitiveness and sustainability.

ARC Objective 3.4: Complete the Appalachian Development Highway System and invest in innovative intermodal transportation systems to connect businesses and residents within the Region with global opportunities

State Strategy 3.4.1: Assist federal and state efforts in solving design problems and moving ADHS sections to the construction phase.

State Strategy 3.4.2: Support local access road projects that result in economic development, provision of essential services, or community revitalization.

State Strategy 3.4.3: Invest in improvements to transportation facilities such as rail, inland ports, and airports that increase economic development and access to markets.

State Strategy 3.4.4: Support the development of transportation corridors (highway, rail, and waterway) that increase access to markets outside the Appalachian region.

State Strategy 3.4.5: Support the planning and development of intermodal transportation facilities.

ARC Objective 3.5: Support construction of business development sites and public facilities and the adaptive reuse of obsolete and/or unsafe properties to stimulate economic and community development.

State Strategy 3.5.1: Invest in the development and improvement of industrial sites, commercial and industrial parks, and shell buildings that will spur economic development.

State Strategy 3.5.2: Support planning, assessment, and redevelopment efforts that target vacant and dilapidated buildings.

State Strategy 3.5.3: Assist with the reclamation and redevelopment of brownfields and mine-impacted sites to convert them to productive economic and community uses.

ARC Goal 4: Building Regional Culture and Tourism. Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by preserving and investing in the Region's local, cultural heritage, and natural assets.

ARC Objective 4.1: Invest in the development of vibrant Appalachian downtowns and provide support for Appalachian placemaking.

State Strategy 4.1.1: Leverage support for downtown redevelopment efforts that will enhance local and regional tourism and outdoor recreation initiatives.

ARC Objective 4.2: Invest in economic and community development initiatives that preserve and promote Appalachian communities' vibrant arts, cultural, and heritage traditions.

State Strategy 4.2.1: Support efforts to identify, assess, and mobilize regional assets, including natural, cultural, and structural assets and resources that can be utilized for economic growth and diversification.

ARC Objective 4.3: Preserve and expand Appalachia's natural resources to increase outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors and support sustainable economic growth.

State Strategy 4.3.1: Promote the development of outdoor recreation trails and facilities that enhance economic development opportunities.

State Strategy 4.3.2: Support planning, assessment, and implementation activities that improve and expand upon the state's natural, historical, and cultural assets for economic development and growth.

ARC Goal 5: Building Community Leaders and Capacity. Invest in the capacity of local leaders, organizations, and communities to address local challenges by providing technical assistance and support to access resources, engage partners, identify strategies and tactics, and conduct effective planning and project execution.

ARC Objective 5.1: Develop, support, and empower community leaders that are representative of local communities, inclusive in their approach, and focused on long-term, innovative strategies and solutions.

State Strategy 5.1.1: Encourage and support the training and development of local and regional community leadership.

ARC Objective 5.2: Build capacity of community organizations and local development districts to effectively access and manage funding, administer programs, and execute projects through implementation.

State Strategy 5.2.1: Provide support to regional planning and development councils in the state that will improve their ability to plan, implement, and complete projects and provide services to local governments and organizations.

State Strategy 5.2.2: Support planning, analysis, and technical assistance activities for local and regional organizations and units of government to capitalize on economic development opportunities and assets, address critical needs, or improve community quality of life.

ARC Objective 5.3: Invest in developing the capacity of communities to build ecosystems where government, non-profits, businesses, and philanthropic partners coalesce around a shared vision for economic and community prosperity and collaborate to implement that vision.

State Strategy 5.3.1: Promote and support regional partnerships and initiatives for economic development.