

READY

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



Appalachian
Regional
Commission

THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

(ARC) is an economic development partnership entity of the federal government and 13 state governments focusing on 423 counties across the Appalachian Region. ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia to help the Region achieve socioeconomic parity with the nation.

ARC's "READY Appalachia: A Community Capacity-Building Initiative" provides direct technical assistance and funding to support four key pillars of economic development in the Region: Appalachian local governments, local development districts (LDDs), nonprofit organizations, and community foundations. The READY Local Governments training program is designed to help local governments in the Appalachian Region better apply for, manage, leverage, and implement federally funded projects to invest in infrastructure, business and workforce development, and other long-term solutions to improve the lives of residents.

The curriculum was created in partnership with GrantWorks and CO.STARTERS to provide a nine week virtual cohort-based training at no-cost to participants. While the content has been developed with local governments in mind, it is relevant to many types of organizations doing important economic development work in grant application development.



COURSE 2

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT +
FINDING FUNDING**



AS YOU ARRIVE...

(10 minutes)

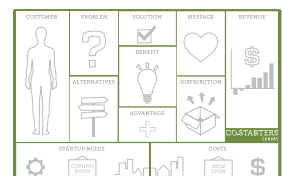
Building on your course and fieldwork from last week, please make note of the following so you are fully prepared for today's session.

1. After talking with your local team, what are the top three projects ranked in order of priority? List them below.

2. What did you learn through your conversations with local stakeholders? What did they see as the most pressing community needs or opportunities?

3. Review your completed CO.STARTERS Canvas of your project. Has anything changed in the past week? If so, make updates.

CO.STARTERS Canvas



RESEARCHING FEDERAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

(45 minutes)

You've identified an important project that addresses an ongoing need in your community. But there's just one problem: you lack the local resources to make it happen.

You know there are federal grants available for this type of work, but where do you even start?

REGISTER FIRST AT SAM.GOV

Before you can really start the research process, you need to make sure you have an active account set up in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

Registering on SAM.gov is a prerequisite for individuals, businesses, and organizations that want to apply for federal grants or engage in other activities with the U.S. government. It helps streamline processes, ensure eligibility, and promote transparency and accountability in government transactions.

TIP:

Download the “Entity Registration Checklist” to help you gather all the relevant information prior to starting the registration process.

TIP:

Consider creating or using an email address that is not tied to a specific person, like `grants@citytown.gov` and set up forwarding or share credentials with relevant people. This can help with consistency and not make your accounts person-dependent.

Every local government should be registered in SAM.gov. Although it is time consuming to do and must be renewed yearly, registering with SAM.gov makes you eligible to get federal money. You’ve got to do it if you want to get a grant!

The steps to register are as follows:

1. Go to the SAM.gov website.
2. Click on the “Create a User Account” button. Provide an email address and create a password.
3. Follow the prompts to complete your account setup. Verify your email address and provide basic information.
4. Log in to SAM.gov and enter information about your local government entity. This includes details such as the official name, address, and Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) for the entity.
5. Get assigned a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) —a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned to registering entities by SAM.gov. Make sure to make note of this number. You’ll need it later.
6. Enter core data, specifying the type and size of the local government entity, and provide other relevant details.
7. Provide financial information, including banking details for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) purposes.
8. Review all entered information, ensure accuracy, and submit the registration.
9. Wait for processing. SAM.gov will need some time to process and activate your account. This process can take several weeks, so it’s best to start the registration well in advance of any grant application deadlines..

GETTING STARTED WITH GRANTS.GOV

Once you are registered with SAM.gov, the best place to start searching for grant opportunities is `grants.gov`—the central website for finding and applying for federal government grants.

`Grants.gov` lists all the funding opportunities in one place, eliminating the need to go to each agency website individually to find funding opportunities.



Some of the great things about grants.gov include the following:

Robust Search Capabilities: Grants.gov provides extensive search and filter functionalities, allowing users to customize their searches based on keywords, funding opportunity numbers, agencies, or categories. This makes it easier to find relevant grants and narrow down options.

Notifications and Alerts: Users can set up notifications and alerts to stay informed about new grant opportunities, changes to existing opportunities, and other relevant updates. This feature ensures that users are aware of potential funding opportunities in a timely manner.

Always Up-to-Date: Grants.gov is the official government platform for federal grants. Using this centralized and authoritative source ensures that applicants are accessing accurate and up-to-date information directly from federal agencies.

To register:

1. Go to the grants.gov website.
2. Click on “Register” in the top navigation bar.
3. Scroll down and click on the “Get Registered Now” button to begin the registration process.
4. Create an account by filling in the required fields.
5. Review the information you entered and submit the registration form.
6. Verify your email address.
7. Select “Add Organization Applicant Profile” and fill out the organization fields (including UEI) to add your local government to the account.
8. Use your newly created username and password to log in to your grants.gov account.
9. Complete your applicant profile by providing additional information to enhance your local government’s profile.
10. If applicable, the AOR (Authorized Organizational Representative) will need to complete a confirmation process.
11. Start searching for grants!

ACTIVITY: Accounts for SAM.gov + grants.gov

Do you already have accounts set up with SAM.gov and grants.gov? If you didn’t set them up yourself, who else would know if your local government is already registered? Take notes below. Getting set up in these systems will be part of your fieldwork this week.

TIPS FOR USING GRANTS.GOV

Once you are registered with grants.gov, you're ready to start looking for those grant opportunities!

Because the database is comprehensive and contains all funding opportunities available from the federal government, it's easy to get overwhelmed. A couple tips can help you make the most of your searches:

TIP:

The most important filter to always use is "Eligibility," which selects your local government type. This will weed out anything that you'd automatically be disqualified from applying for.

Understand how the search function works. How you enter keywords will affect what turns up. Make sure you enter the words correctly to optimize results.

Get specific. Know the parameters of your project and hone in on your search criteria. The narrower you can be, the better. Don't waste time looking at opportunities not relevant to you.

Do lots of searches. Use different search parameters to see what turns up. Try searching one set of criteria at a time, changing only one or two variables to see what else you find.

Look at past grants. An interesting feature of grants.gov is that it includes historical grants as well as active ones. Reviewing past ones can help you learn what agencies did before and who got them. Some grants may be offered year-to-year, and historic grants can help you know what to watch for in the next year.

Set alerts. After configuring your search criteria, you can save your search so you can easily come back to it. Additionally, once a search is saved, you can subscribe to email notifications for that search and be informed when new opportunities arise.

Stay informed. Subscribe to grants.gov notifications and newsletters to stay informed about updates, new opportunities, and changes to the platform. This ensures that you are aware of relevant information in a timely manner.

Check regularly. New opportunities are added daily! Make it a habit to check back regularly—at least weekly if not more often—to make sure you don't miss relevant grants.

Once you are registered with grants.gov, you're ready to start looking for those grant opportunities!



ACTIVITY: Searching in grants.gov

As we go through the *Search Key for grants.gov* resource together, take notes here of at least 3 keyword searches you should try in order to find grants for your project.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Search Key for grants.gov

Keyword	Description	Strategy
IP-ED	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	Search for grants related to special education and disability services.
Q1234	Community Development Block Grant	Search for grants related to housing and community development.
...

FINDING GRANTS ON AGENCY WEBSITES

In addition to grants.gov, many federal agencies have their own websites where they list grant opportunities and provide detailed information about their programs. A few tips can help you make the most of your searches on agency websites:

Get familiar with agency investment priorities. Agencies often have a section of their website dedicated to outlining their specific investment priorities and the type of projects they tend to fund. Understanding their priorities before looking for grant opportunities can help you determine whether the agency funds the types of projects you are looking for and help you spend your time more wisely.

Look for the grants or funding section. Many of the websites have specific sections or tabs on their website related to grants, funding, or assistance programs. These sections are likely to contain information about current grant opportunities, application procedures, eligibility criteria, and deadlines.

Check the news. Agencies regularly publish announcements on their websites about new grant opportunities. These announcements will likely be posted under the News section and will tell you where to go for further information.

Subscribe. Some agencies offer subscription services or newsletters that allow users to receive updates on new grant opportunities directly via email. Subscribing to these services can help you stay informed about the latest funding opportunities from a particular agency.

UNDERSTANDING FEDERAL AGENCIES

(25 minutes)

A **federal agency** is an organizational unit within the executive branch of the United States government that is tasked with carrying out specific functions and responsibilities as defined by law. These agencies are created by Congress through legislation and operate under the authority of the president of the United States. Each agency has a particular focus—such as defense, health, or the environment. They make rules, enforce them, and run programs that directly affect people. Congress gives them money through the budget process to carry out their work.

THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR AND APPROPRIATIONS

The federal fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30. Each year, Congress is expected to pass appropriations bills (plans for how money will be given to the federal agencies) by this time to make sure they have the funds needed to do their jobs. But sometimes, if Congress hasn't figured it out by then, they use temporary funding plans to keep the money flowing until they sort out the official budget. These backup measures prevent any gaps in funding and keep things running smoothly.

AN OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL AGENCIES + PARTNERS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Federal agencies that often have grants available for local governments include those focused on community development, public safety, infrastructure, and various social services. Some of the most common federal agencies that provide grants to local governments are:

Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC): ARC provides funding and support for economic development initiatives in the Appalachian region, focusing on projects that enhance infrastructure, workforce development, and economic growth. Their goal is to foster community resilience across Appalachia.

Department of Agriculture (USDA): USDA provides grants for rural development projects, agricultural initiatives, and community facilities in rural areas. Their goal is to help farmers grow the agricultural industry.

Department of Education: The Department of Education offers grants to support education-related programs, research, and initiatives at different levels, including K-12 and higher education. Their goal is to ensure that all Americans have access to a quality education.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): HHS provides grants for various health and social services programs that local governments may be involved in, such as community health clinics and social welfare initiatives. Their goal is to enhance the health and well-being of Americans.

TIP:

Grants given by the USDA are often a combination of grant and loan. While loans have to be paid back, they usually have terms set at over a 40 year period with low interest rates (1-2%).



Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): HUD offers grants to local governments for community development, affordable housing, and programs aimed at addressing homelessness. Their goal is to ensure that all Americans have access to safe and affordable housing.

Department of Justice (DOJ): DOJ offers grants to support various criminal justice, law enforcement, and public safety programs. Their goal is to maintain law and order, protect people's rights, and ensure a fair and just legal system.

Department of Transportation (DOT): DOT provides grants for local transportation infrastructure projects, including roads, bridges, and public transit. Their goal is to make sure that transportation is safe, efficient, and reliable.

Department of Labor (DOL): DOL provides various grants to local governments to support workforce development, employment programs, and initiatives that enhance labor market conditions. Their goal is to improve the well-being of American workers.

Economic Development Administration (EDA): A division of the Department of Commerce, EDA provides funds for a variety of economic development projects aimed at fostering job creation, attracting private investment, and enhancing the economic well-being of distressed communities. Their goal is to spur economic growth through job creation and capital investment.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): The EPA provides grants for local environmental projects, pollution control, and sustainability efforts. Their goal is to protect the environment and conserve natural resources.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): A division of the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA offers grants to support local emergency management, disaster preparedness, and response efforts. Their goal is to help people and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the impacts of disasters and emergencies.

While this list is not exhaustive, it should be apparent that many of the needs local governments have can be funded by federal grants.

ACTIVITY: Federal Agencies

In your cohorts, discuss which federal agencies might have funding available for your three priority projects. Why do you think they are the best fit?

TIP:

Some federal agencies have regional offices to make themselves more accessible to local communities. Get to know yours. In fact, Executive Order 12372, issued in 1982, was intended to ensure that when the federal government planned programs, it talked with state and local governments to get their input. This was to avoid conflicts, coordinate better, and make federal programs more efficient. Failure to connect with your local office could impact the success of your funding applications.

ALL ABOUT “NOFOS”

(30 minutes)

You’ve done your search and it looks like you may have found a match! What should you do next?

TIP:

If you see the term NOFA (Notice of Funding Announcement), NOSA (Notice of Solicitation of Applications), or FOA (Funding Opportunity Announcement), it’s essentially the same thing as a NOFO.

TIP:

Federal agencies may also issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in order to help them with an initiative. While similar to a grant, they are slightly different.

RFPs ask for organizations to propose their own methodology and price to accomplish a project. The agency then figures out which project holistically is the best fit.

RFQs ask for a submission of qualifications to complete the work, i.e., their capability to perform. The scope of work and price are negotiated after the selection is made.

The answer is simple. Read the **NOFO—Notice of Funding Opportunity**.

A “NOFO” is a notice that announces the availability of funding for a particular project or program. It provides information on who can apply, what the requirements are, and when the deadline is. Essentially, it outlines all the details you need to know about the funding opportunity and how to pursue the grant. While the specific format may vary, common parts of a NOFO include:

Title and Overview: There will be a clear and concise title for the funding opportunity, as well as a brief overview or summary of the program or project.

Funding Agency Information: It will provide the name of the funding agency and any relevant details about the agency’s mission or goals.

Program Description: This section contains a detailed explanation of the purpose and objectives of the funding opportunity, including information on the expected outcomes and impact of the proposed projects.

Eligibility Criteria: The NOFO will clearly state who is eligible to apply for the funding, along with any specific qualifications or requirements for potential applicants.

Application Instructions: You’ll be given step-by-step guidance on how to prepare and submit an application. It will outline all required documentation, formats, and any specific instructions. Details will be provided on how and where to submit the application.

Funding Details: The NOFO will state the total amount of funding available, the potential range of award amounts for individual projects, and the duration of the funding period.

Timeline and Deadlines: Along with the application submission deadline, it will usually provide a timeline for the entire grant cycle.

Review and Selection Process: It will provide an overview of how applications will be reviewed and evaluated, including criteria for selecting successful proposals.

Reporting Requirements: It will outline reporting obligations for awardees, including frequency and format of required reports.

Contact Information: The NOFO typically gives the names and contact details of individuals or offices that can provide additional information or clarification regarding the funding opportunity.

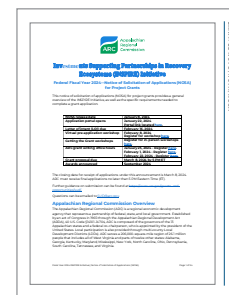
Attachments or Appendices: They will explain any additional documents or forms that applicants need to include or reference.



ACTIVITY: Read a NOFO

In your cohorts, take a minute to review the *Example NOFO*. Jot down any questions you have in the space below. Then, discuss your questions in the group, leveraging the expertise of your Grant Professional to fully understand the NOFO.

Example NOFO



DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

(20 minutes)

So, how do you ultimately know if you qualify for a grant?

STUDY THE NOFO

You guessed it: read the NOFO.

It will clearly state qualifying information. Criteria outlined may include:

- Type of organizations/applicants (for example, nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, state or local governments, tribal entities, individuals, or educational institutions)
- Geographic location
- Target population
- Financial status (for example, size of organizational budget or income thresholds)

Remember, if your application doesn't meet the basic minimum requirements, you'll automatically be disqualified.

OTHER ELIGIBILITY FACTORS TO CONSIDER

But just because you are technically eligible doesn't necessarily mean it's the right grant for you. You also need to consider:

- **Will it give you enough money to complete the project?**
Grant awards come in different sizes. If the amount being given isn't enough to cover the project and you can't raise the balance, then it's probably not the right opportunity.

TIP:

If you still aren't clear on whether you are eligible, never assume or guess. If you don't know, take advantage of the posted opportunities to learn more. Send an email with your questions. Join webinars. There are a variety of ways to get additional information.

- **Can you meet the timeline for the application?**
Crafting a quality grant application takes time. If you don't have sufficient time to complete the application, it's better to wait for another opportunity.
- **Will you be able to deliver on the stated timeline for completing the project?**
You need to take into consideration not only the application timeline, but also the amount of time being given for completing the project. If the amount of time isn't sufficient for your needs, you shouldn't waste your energy.
- **Do you have the capacity to execute?**
Getting the grant is often the easy part. Administering it and completing the project within the guidelines can require a lot of a local government. Make sure you have the capacity to execute the project if you get the grant. The last thing you want is to fall short in some regard, and jeopardize future grants.
- **Can you raise the match?**
Almost all federal grants require a local match and will outline what is required in the NOFO. If you don't have a plan for where to get those funds, you may need to wait for a different opportunity.
- **Will it actually help you complete the project and accomplish your local goals?**
Lots of opportunities will be posted for grants you could technically go for. But if they don't clearly align to local priorities and goals, you could potentially waste precious time and resources that could better be put to use elsewhere. Make sure grant opportunities are aligned to your local needs. If they aren't, keep looking.

Grant Checklist

GRANT OPPORTUNITY #1	
DEADLINE	DEFINITION
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Does it meet the deadline? □ Will you have enough time to craft a quality application?
How long does it take to submit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Can you meet the deadline for the application? □ Will you have enough time to craft a quality application?
How long does it take to complete?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Can you meet the deadline for the application? □ Will you have enough time to craft a quality application?
How long does it take to complete and submit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Can you meet the deadline for the application? □ Will you have enough time to craft a quality application?
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ACTIVITY: Grant Opportunity Checklist

In your cohorts, review the *Grant Opportunity Checklist* provided. You'll be working on this in the coming week to identify opportunities that align with your priority projects.

MATCHING FUNDS 101
(20 minutes)

TIP:
While typically a match cannot come from a federal source, in some rare cases, it is allowable. The NOFO will outline which sources are eligible.

Very rarely will a grantor fund the full amount for a project. One way they can ensure there is local support (commitment/buy-in) is by requiring some sort of “match” for the grant. This match is typically required to come from a non-federal source and can take one of two forms.



KINDS OF MATCHES

The most common type of match is a **cash match**—a direct project expense you or a non-federal partner provides as your contribution to the project.

Sometimes, a match can be an **in-kind match**—land, materials, services, space, utilities, equipment, or technical assistance provided by your organization or donated by a non-federal third party specifically for the project.

While a cash match is always allowed, in-kind matches vary depending on the opportunity. The NOFO will outline any match stipulations.

MATCHING SOURCES

Matches can be secured from a variety of contributors. Some common sources include:

Local Government: You can actually contribute the match yourself! Whether you utilize existing tax revenue or issue municipal bonds to raise capital for the matching funds, as long as the dollars are local, you can make the match yourself.

Private/Family/Community Foundations: These non-governmental entities are required by law to invest their money for public-benefit purposes. If your project aligns with their giving priorities, they can be a tremendous resource to get the match necessary to secure a federal grant.

Corporations: Although some businesses establish their own foundations and give grants, others support community causes through corporate giving programs. Particularly if there are businesses who will benefit from your proposed project, consider approaching them about contributing a match. It's a fantastic opportunity for a public/private partnership!

Part of determining the feasibility of going after a federal grant is ensuring you can provide the local match. Before you even begin the application process, you must have a plan.

TIP:

While the amount of the match is predetermined, you don't have to get all the funds from one source. Consider pairing multiple sources to raise the matching funds required.

ACTIVITY: Matching Funds

For your identified priority project, think of 3 potential matching sources and make notes below.

Match	Request?	Why them?

SELECTING THE BEST GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

(15 minutes)

Even if the answer is yes to everything on the checklist, you'll do well to keep a couple additional things in mind in order to focus on the very best opportunities.

CONSIDER THE FUNDER'S PERSPECTIVE

So far we've looked at opportunities from your local perspective. But, there is one more important consideration to make: the goals of the funder. Would this be a good investment for them?

Federal grants are federal investments of our tax dollars. We all want to see a good return on our investment. Above all, the agency has a responsibility to make sure those dollars are invested wisely for the benefit of the American people.

How do you know if your project is a good investment? Use the rubric in the NOFO to score yourself to see how you do! This can help you determine if it is worth applying and if you're competitive enough to actually secure the grant.

UNDERSTAND THE COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Competition is high for federal grants. In fact, on average only about 20% (that's 1 in 5) of all grant applications submitted are actually funded. You want to make sure your project is a true fit. If you aren't competitive, you're wasting your time.



CONNECT TO EXISTING PLANS

Tying a project to existing regional plans—like economic plans, transportation plans, and comprehensive growth plans—can significantly enhance a local government’s competitiveness for a federal grant. A couple reasons are worth noting:

Priority Alignment: By aligning your project with existing regional plans, you demonstrate a clear connection to broader strategic objectives, making your proposal more appealing to federal agencies that prioritize projects with regional relevance.

Comprehensive Approach: Federal agencies like projects that tackle multiple issues. Regional plans typically take a comprehensive approach to development, considering various interconnected factors such as transportation, housing, environmental sustainability, and economic development. By tying your project to these plans, you showcase a holistic understanding of the community’s needs.

Community Backing: Regional plans often involve extensive collaboration with local stakeholders, including businesses, community organizations, and residents. Federal agencies often look for projects that have community backing and are likely to have a lasting positive impact.

Less Risk: Using existing regional plans as a foundation makes your project seem less risky. It shows you’ve done your homework and increases confidence in your project’s success.

Solid Evidence: Regional plans come with a lot of data. Using this data in your proposal gives your project a stronger, evidence-based case.

Efficiency and Collaboration: Regional plans emphasize collaboration and efficiency by coordinating efforts across different sectors and jurisdictions. Highlighting how your project leverages existing collaborations and promotes efficiency can make your proposal stand out as a cost-effective and coordinated initiative.

TIP:

Cooperation strategies with neighboring municipalities can help you work together to stack funding from multiple sources for maximum impact. You can each go for different grants to achieve regional aims.

ACTIVITY: Plans + Collaborative Partnerships

Take a minute to think about your identified projects. Do they fit in with any regional plans? Do any of the problems you are solving also affect neighboring municipalities? Is there an opportunity to work together? Take notes here.

FIELDWORK

- Make sure your local government is set up in both SAM.gov and grants.gov.
- Search for relevant grant opportunities on grants.gov and agency websites using the key words you identified. Be sure to use the tips we covered in this session to turn up the best results. Complete the *Grant Opportunity Checklist* for three potential opportunities that fit with your identified local needs.
- Identify 3 federal agencies whose priority funding areas align with local needs. Sign up to receive news and notifications from these agencies to help you stay in the loop about funding opportunities.
- If relevant, pull your regional plan and figure out how your project ties into existing priorities.
- If relevant, reach out to neighboring municipalities to begin conversations about collaborating on one of your priority projects. Are there ways to stack funding for maximum impact?
- Choose a grant opportunity and project to focus on moving forward. Update your *CO.STARTERS Canvas* for that project.

Grant Checklist

GRANT OPPORTUNITY	
Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is this a local, state, or federal agency? What is the agency's mission? What are the agency's priorities? What are the agency's funding areas? What are the agency's funding priorities? What are the agency's funding opportunities?
Agency website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the agency's website up-to-date? Is the agency's website easy to navigate? Is the agency's website accessible? Is the agency's website secure? Is the agency's website mobile-friendly? Is the agency's website user-friendly?
Agency contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the agency's contact information up-to-date? Is the agency's contact information easy to find? Is the agency's contact information accessible? Is the agency's contact information secure? Is the agency's contact information mobile-friendly? Is the agency's contact information user-friendly?
Agency funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the agency's funding information up-to-date? Is the agency's funding information easy to find? Is the agency's funding information accessible? Is the agency's funding information secure? Is the agency's funding information mobile-friendly? Is the agency's funding information user-friendly?
Agency funding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the agency's funding opportunities information up-to-date? Is the agency's funding opportunities information easy to find? Is the agency's funding opportunities information accessible? Is the agency's funding opportunities information secure? Is the agency's funding opportunities information mobile-friendly? Is the agency's funding opportunities information user-friendly?

CO.STARTERS Canvas



Keyword search is comprised of two components: words and operators.

WORDS

There are two types: **single word** (e.g. *water*) or **phrases** (containing multiple words, e.g. *water conservation*). Phrases may or may not be surrounded by double quotes.

OPERATORS

Operator	Description	Example
“ “	Exact phrase: To search for an exact phrase match	“ <i>water conservation</i> ” This searches for opportunities that contain the exact phrase of <i>water conservation</i> .
OR or	This is the default conjunction operator. If there is no operator between two words, this operator is used. The operator links two words and if either or both of the words exist then it displays them in the results. This is equivalent to a union of sets.	<i>water conservation</i> This searches for opportunities that contain <i>water</i> , <i>conservation</i> , or <i>both</i> .
AND or &&	The operator finds results where both words exist.	Example 1: <i>space</i> AND <i>flight</i> Example 2: “ <i>water conservation</i> ” AND “ <i>habitat restoration</i> ” This searches for opportunities that contain <i>space</i> and <i>flight</i> (Example 1) or <i>water conservation</i> and <i>habitat restoration</i> (Example 2).
NOT or !	Exclude opportunities that contain the word after this operator. This is equivalent to a difference using sets. Note: The NOT operator cannot be used with just one word or exact phrase.	<i>habitat</i> NOT “ <i>water conservation</i> ” This searches for opportunities that contain <i>habitat</i> but not <i>water conservation</i> .
+	Require that the word or exact phrase after the operator exists.	+ <i>water conservation</i> This searches for opportunities that must contain <i>water</i> and may or may not contain <i>conservation</i> .
-	Exclude opportunities that contain the word or exact phrase after the operator.	“ <i>water conservation</i> ” - “ <i>habitat restoration</i> ” This searches for opportunities that contain <i>water conservation</i> but not <i>habitat restoration</i> .
?	To perform a single character wildcard search. This looks for words that match with the single character replaced.	te?t This searches for opportunities that contain a word such as <i>tent</i> , <i>test</i> , or <i>text</i> .
*	To perform a multiple character wildcard search. This looks for zero or more characters.	test* This searches for opportunities that contain a word such as <i>test</i> , <i>tests</i> , or <i>tester</i> .



Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative

Federal Fiscal Year 2024—Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA) for Project Grants

This notice of solicitation of applications (NOSA) for project grants provides a general overview of the INSPIRE Initiative, as well as the specific requirements needed to complete a grant application.

NOSA release date	January 8, 2024
Application portal opens	January 22, 2024 Portal link located here .
Letter of intent (LOI) due	February 16, 2024
Virtual pre-application workshop	February 8, 2024 Register for workshop here .
Getting the Grant workshops	Register for in-person workshops here .
ARC grant writing office hours	January 25, 2024 - Register here . February 1, 2024 - Register here . February 22, 2024 - Register here .
Grant proposal due	March 8, 2024 by 5 PM ET
Awards announced	September 2024

The closing date for receipt of applications under this announcement is March 8, 2024. ARC must receive final applications no later than 5 PM Eastern Time (ET).

Further guidance on submission can be found at <https://www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/sud/>.

Questions can be emailed to SUD@arc.gov.

Appalachian Regional Commission Overview

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local government. Established by an act of Congress in 1965 through the Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA), 40 U.S. Code §14101–14704, ARC is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chairperson, who is appointed by the president of the United States. Local participation is also provided through multi-county Local Development Districts (LDDs). ARC serves a 206,000-square-mile region of 26.1 million people that includes all of West Virginia and parts of twelve other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

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Background

The Appalachian Region (the Region) has been disproportionately impacted by the issue of substance use. Across decades, substance names have changed, but the individual and cumulative community-level impacts have compounded and continue to present an impediment to socioeconomic and personal growth. Substance use disorder (SUD) prevention and treatment in the Region have been extensively explored and described through research studies, funded community-based intervention programs, sponsored conferences, and publications. One theme that consistently emerges is that individuals with SUD encounter numerous barriers to entering the Region's workforce, which can have a negative impact on workforce participation rates and economic development, with consequences that span generations.

While new funding streams are important to effectively address the substance use crisis, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC, the Commission) has heard from Appalachian leaders regarding the need to better coordinate funds and to focus on an important goal: to assist individuals in recovery to access an organized set of SUD recovery services while pursuing training and education necessary to obtain, or maintain, employment (particularly regional demand-driven jobs and high-demand occupations that offer family-sustaining wages).

The Commission's work in this area is guided by dozens of experts at the local, state, and federal level. On May 13, 2019, ARC announced the formation of the Substance Use Disorder Advisory Council (SUDAC), currently a 22-member volunteer advisory group of leaders from recovery services, healthcare, law enforcement, economic development, private industry, education, state government, and other sectors. By drawing on their own experiences as well as community insights gathered during ARC's six regional Recovery-to-Work Listening Sessions, the SUDAC developed recommendations for ARC to consider as part of a strategic plan to build and strengthen recovery ecosystems in Appalachian communities. For more information on the SUDAC, visit the [ARC website](#).

Experts and community leaders consistently state that for persons in recovery from SUD, having stable and meaningful employment is an important component of successfully maintaining recovery. The Commission carefully considered what role it could most effectively play to address the challenge of helping individuals in recovery obtain and maintain employment. Building on decades of successful experience in engaging regional community empathy, energy, and expertise, ARC pursued a process to define the elements needed to create community recovery ecosystems that could achieve the stated goal. In addition, ARC pursued a process to target resources to assist communities to organize an appropriate mix of services and interorganizational agreements. This effort was titled Recovery to Work. The following reports, as well as additional background information, are available on the ARC website:

- [The Report of Recommendations: Appalachian Regional Commission's Substance Abuse Advisory Council](#) (published September 2019)
- [Final Report: Appalachian Regional Commission Recovery-to-Work Listening Sessions December 2018–April 2019](#) (published July 2019)

Executive Summary

The Commission is publishing this notice of solicitation of applications (NOSA) to receive grant proposals under this announcement. In FY23, ARC made available up to \$13 million in federal financial assistance to help Appalachian communities and regions that have been affected by the substance abuse crisis through the INvestments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative. ARC will be accepting INSPIRE applications in FY24 consistent with funding levels available through the Congressional appropriations process. Final funding levels in this program may be subject to change based on the enactment of the annual appropriations bill, any other legislative action, or policy priorities. ARC reserves the right to adjust the amounts awarded in INSPIRE based on the final appropriations, other relevant legislative developments or policy priorities. For additional information on the INSPIRE Initiative, visit the [ARC website](#).

The INSPIRE Initiative seeks to align and leverage complementary federal, state, and other resources that provide assistance through competitively awarded grants to partnerships anchored in Appalachian communities. **By aligning and leveraging multiple resources (federal, state, local, nonprofit, and private sector), ARC solicits and prioritizes the selection of projects that integrate multiple economic development systems, evidence-based or promising substance use disorder (SUD) models and practices, and resources in support of implementing existing economic development strategic plans that create pathways to employment for those in SUD recovery.** For a list of evidence-based resources and guidelines from the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), visit the [SAMHSA website](#).

In addition to the requirements described in this NOSA, all applications must also meet the criteria for ARC funding and be consistent with ARC's updated strategic plan, *Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity—ARC's Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia's Opportunities Fiscal Years 2022–2026*. The INSPIRE Initiative focuses primarily on Goal 2.

- 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.

Program Description

The INSPIRE Initiative makes funding available for projects that address the substance use crisis by creating or expanding a recovery ecosystem that will lead to workforce entry or reentry for individuals in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD). Projects are encouraged to support the post-treatment-to-employment continuum, such as the following, among others:

- Investments in healthcare networks and partnerships that support substance use recovery, as well as behavioral health professionals and employers
- SUD recovery-focused job training programs
- Initiatives designed to coordinate or link SUD recovery services and employment training

The recovery ecosystem, within the context of building and strengthening economically resilient communities in Appalachia, is a complex linkage of multiple sectors, including but not limited to recovery communities, peer support, health and human services, faith

communities, criminal justice, public safety, housing, transportation, education, and employers. The goal of the recovery ecosystem is to help individuals in recovery access the support services and training they need to maintain recovery and successfully obtain sustainable employment.

Projects that invest in workforce training should stress the potential for individuals in recovery to enter or reenter the workforce, or maintain employment, with a special emphasis on employment retention.

This can be accomplished through basic and advanced training, hard and soft skills development, “upskilling,” and the establishment of clearly defined career pathways in training programs that accommodate continued employment growth. [See INSPIRE Award Summaries by State](#) for more information on the types of activities that have been funded by the INSPIRE initiative.

The INSPIRE Initiative embraces a broad definition of SUD. Substances that can lead to substance use disorder, use, or misuse include opioids, stimulants, and alcohol, among others. For a federally recognized list of commonly used drugs, see the [National Institute on Drug Abuse’s website](#).

The INSPIRE Initiative targets the recovery-to-work continuum; applications are encouraged to focus on the SUD recovery ecosystem as it is defined in this NOSA while also addressing the complex needs, barriers, and leverage points of this continuum. For a catalog of ideas related to the continuum, see [this list](#) generated by the SUDAC during their 2019 convening.

Successful applications should demonstrate how the proposal addresses the following priorities to develop or expand a recovery ecosystem, and how this can enable and support an individual’s successful entry or reentry into the public and private workforce, while also addressing economic, workforce, and health-related impacts within the ARC region:

1. Provide industry-specific training, job placement, and/or support activities to individuals affected by SUD to offer them a competitive advantage that could help to stabilize them and their families; utilize prevention-focused SUD activities that reduce future substance use or misuse and engage individuals in health and economic community-oriented activities;
2. Create or expand linkages between workforce development organizations, training providers, organizations that provide post-SUD treatment wraparound services, businesses, local/state court systems (e.g., pre-trial diversion, drug courts), and other partners (e.g., mental health practitioners, faith-based entities) to assist people in recovery with maintaining their recovery as they enter or reenter the workforce;
3. Create, expand, or leverage workplace programs and policies that support employees in recovery from SUD;
4. Develop and expand industry partnerships that build and sustain the grant applicant’s organizational capacity; leverage available resources; and establish community-based approaches for addressing SUD workforce challenges and industry needs as they pertain to workforce entry and reentry;
5. Deliver support services to assist employers and industry in meeting current and/or future workforce challenges to support the SUD recovery ecosystem;
6. Develop and implement plans for strengthening partnerships/coalitions/consortiums with the addition of new partners (local, state, regional);
7. Identify and assess SUD and behavioral health community needs, including the need for direct recovery services, employer engagement opportunities, the

community's capacity to support the provision of services, and input from those in recovery on service delivery;

8. Identify and reduce barriers to the SUD recovery-to-work ecosystem, including but not limited to transportation, housing (e.g., transitional or recovery housing), childcare (to support engagement or reengagement in the workplace), and other support services (e.g., criminal record expungement);
9. Align and integrate SUD plans, programmatic activities, and strategies with existing state, regional, or community health and economic development strategies; and
10. Develop an ecosystem, through capacity building of health and workforce activities, to strengthen community interventions and enhance coordination of the SUD recovery-to-work model.

Grant Types and Amounts

Implementation Grants

The Appalachian Regional Commission expects to make implementation awards in amounts up to \$500,000 for each project it awards within the congressionally defined Appalachian Region. In addition to programmatic delivery, applicants can request funding to support minor construction incidental to their proposed projects (e.g., new painting, electricity modifications or accessories, expanding square footage, building recovery beds); however, these will be thoroughly reviewed for appropriateness and **applications with substantial construction components will not be funded**. Applicants can also determine the required time period necessary to meet the objectives of their projects. The period of performance for awards under this funding announcement may be up to three years (36 months) if warranted by the size and scope of the project.

Applicants will need to address all components noted in this document's section titled [Criteria for Implementation Grants](#).

Implementation Grants: Eligible Activities

Throughout the Region, organizations have developed and implemented successful models for creating recovery ecosystems and building recovery capital, including a focus on entry or reentry into the workforce for individuals recovering from SUD. The purpose of the INSPIRE Initiative is to support implementation or expansion and replication of these best practices. These types of projects have strong cross-sector engagement that results in the creation, improvement, or expansion of a recovery community.

As all applicants must have established partnerships and networks (see [SUD ecosystem visual](#) for ideas on potential partners in this work), it is necessary to emphasize and describe the involvement of multiple stakeholders and how that involvement will lead to workforce entry or reentry for individuals in SUD recovery.

Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Organizations with linkages to various stakeholders, which may include employers, social services, treatment/recovery services, criminal justice organizations, local/state court systems, educational institutions, training providers, vocational supports, workforce development boards, chambers of commerce, and business development agencies, among others as appropriate;
- Peer support systems, if other funding sources, such as private or federal health insurance reimbursement, are not available (e.g., peer recovery specialists, 24/7 access to peer support services);

- Health/behavioral health networks that support SUD recovery (e.g., federally qualified health centers; SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery private and nonprofits; local or state departments of health and human services; mental health; public health; substance use; public safety/criminal justice);
- Job and vocational skills training programs (e.g., classroom, on-the-job) that have a demonstrated focus on serving those in recovery and incorporate recovery services with appropriate evaluation measures;
- Recovery-to-work transportation, housing, and childcare solutions (if other local or state funding sources are not available);
- Liaison positions that educate and strengthen collaboration and participation among employers and reduce stigma associated with employer engagement and willingness to hire and/or retain those in SUD recovery;
- Workforce development agencies;
- Supportive services such as temporary housing (e.g., recovery housing, transitional housing), income support, and soft and hard skills development;
- Evaluation of project and program outcomes, including but not limited to proposed funding activities and recovery ecosystem practices and policies (applicants may utilize universities or colleges, contractors, or other appropriate partners for this effort); and
- Innovative pilot concepts designed to address the economic impacts of the substance use crisis in Appalachia.

Planning Grants

In addition to implementation grants, planning grants in amounts up to \$50,000 each are available to assist communities and regions in the Appalachian Region to develop plans and strategies for expanding or creating a recovery ecosystem. The period of performance for planning grants may be up to 18 months if warranted by the scope of the project.

Applicants must address all components noted in this document's section titled [Criteria for Planning Grants](#) when designing a planning project. The focus of these grants is to assist entities with projects that will be implemented in the near future (or after the planning grant ends); hence, a planning grant must not include activities such as the delivery of a program or services. Applicants must address how a planning project will lead to the expansion, creation, or improvement of a recovery ecosystem, including the provision of a program and services.

Planning grant applicants should not assume that ARC funding will be available for future implementation of the plans and strategies developed.

Planning Grants: Eligible Activities

Planning grants will provide support to grantees to explore activities that could be implemented in their region and to develop a plan to expand or create a recovery ecosystem. Activities may include the following:

- Developing strategies/plans for strengthening partnerships/coalitions/consortia with the addition of new partners;
- Conducting community needs assessments, including input from those in recovery (in addition to exploring the need for direct recovery services, the assessment should explore the community's infrastructure to support this effort, including housing, transportation, and social services);
- Identifying, through workforce modeling, gap analysis, or other research-based practices, the current workforce gaps and challenges and/or future workforce demands within the community, state, or region to inform current and future recovery-to-work activities;

- Developing short-term/long-term training and employment readiness and retention plans (which may include metrics for credentialing in high-demand occupations and wage progression);
- Developing education programs for employers about human resource policies, positive supervisory practices, and development of methods to organize and use employee peer support services to support employer engagement in this ecosystem;
- Developing service delivery and sustainability plans; and
- Evaluating SUD recovery-to-work programs, policies, and practices that build on emerging, promising, and/or evidence-based practices in the field.

Eligibility Information

Eligible applicants for ARC's INSPIRE Initiative grants include the following:

- Local development districts (LDDs)
- Indian tribes or a consortium of Indian tribes
- States, counties, cities, or other political subdivisions of a state, including a special purpose unit of a state or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions
- Institutions of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education
- Public or private nonprofit organizations or associations

Note: ARC does not award grants to individuals or for-profit entities.

Ineligibility

Please note that current INSPIRE, and other ARC SUD grantees, are eligible to apply for INSPIRE FY 2024 funds only if the applicant's scope of work is new and does not overlap with a current open INSPIRE or other ARC SUD focused grant. For grantees with awards scheduled to be completed before October 1, 2024, new applications should include an expansion of geography, increased scope of work with an existing concept, or a proposal with a new concept. In their application, current or previous grantees must provide a thorough status update on their existing project(s) as well as demonstrate sufficient organizational capacity to administer multiple awards.

Criteria for Implementation Grants

Final applications are scored based on the required criteria below and their respective points.

In scoring the applications, ARC will consider how well the applicant provided detailed information for each section. Examples include the following:

- In the Community Needs section, did the applicant include data on the number of overdoses or individuals experiencing SUD, current employer needs, or future workforce demands?
- In the SF-424A and budget narrative, do the numbers across columns and line items add up correctly?
- Did the applicant provide sufficient information for each requested line item in the budget narrative?

Additionally, ARC is looking to see if the applicant successfully used storytelling and data to craft a compelling implementation grant proposal that demonstrates how they plan to build, improve, and/or expand their SUD recovery-to-work ecosystem.

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
A. Executive Summary	Section 1	Points
Use the required INSPIRE Fiscal Year 2024 Executive Summary template to provide information on project goals and strategies, the project's purpose, key activities, and applicant information. See template on the ARC website .		Required
B. Implementation Grant Template		Required Up to 5 pts
Complete the application using the fillable grant template located here .		
C. Statement of Need	Section 2	Up to 25 pts
Describe the service area.		1
List ARC counties impacted by project, why this population was selected, and how the applicant plans to recruit this population. Projects must serve and benefit a portion of the Appalachian Region as defined by the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, as amended. If projects extend beyond the ARC region, only that portion within the region is eligible for ARC funding. For a list of ARC states and counties, visit the ARC website .		1
Describe the target population. An applicant's proposal must target youth (ages 15–24) and/or adults (e.g., displaced workers, unemployed, underemployed, grandparents, etc.) in order to reduce future and/or current use, economic impacts of SUD, and associated harms within the region, with the ultimate goal of assisting individuals to enter or reenter the workforce. Whether your project targets adults and/or youth, the overall program design must tie back to workforce entry or reentry.		4
Describe the community needs as they pertain to the expansion, creation, or improvement of a recovery ecosystem. Provide appropriate third-party economic and demographic statistics, including the age-adjusted mortality rate related to opioid and other drug overdose deaths and other relevant information for the applicable community or region in order to document the extent to which the local economy has negatively impacted the community or region. Applicants may use data available on the INSPIRE website , from Appendix 5 of this NOSA, or from other sources to demonstrate community and regional impacts of substance use in their region.		5
Describe the business needs including but not limited to the following: an overview of open jobs across in-demand industry sectors; employment status and education level of the residents residing in the project's service area; and gaps in skill sets and training.		5

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
Identify the economic and workforce-related challenges to workforce participation in the proposed service area.		4
Identify the gap(s) in behavioral health services, training, and provision of support services, including wraparound services and the community's capacity to create a recovery ecosystem to respond to these gaps and connect these responses to the priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative. <i>Note: Applicants must provide appropriate third-party economic and demographic statistics, including persistent poverty and unemployment rate data for the applicable community or region (for example, census tract or county), in order to document the extent to which the local economy has been negatively impacted. If data for this section is non-existent or hard to obtain for your project territory, news articles from pertinent websites are acceptable.</i>		5
D. Project Description	Section 3	Up to 36 pts
The funds available throughout this initiative are intended to help leverage program funds from multiple sources (both public and private). Project proposals must have multiple stakeholders engaged in project implementation from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, and from multiple disciplines. There must be evidence of strong input by and engagement of the broader community in planning and project design, as well as a clear understanding of each partner's role in the proposed project. Applicants must describe community and regional commitment to the proposed project by combining ARC resources with other public, private, and philanthropic resources.		
Provide a description of the applicant's organizational mission and work. Connect the mission of the organization to the priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative. (See Program Description for the list of priorities.) Describe the project's primary purpose, main activities, and expected deliverables.		7
Explain how the proposed elements of your project meet the needs of both the target population and businesses. (See Program Description for the list of priorities).		5
Include the names of the workforce development organizations, training providers, and organizations that provide wraparound services for individuals in recovery. Explain how the organizations and providers are strategically positioned to support the services and activities that will help to expand or create a recovery ecosystem.		5
Explain how the project will assist employers in meeting their workforce and business needs, including how the target population will acquire the necessary training and skills in order to be placed in appropriate and in-demand employment opportunities. Provide documentation from local businesses or business groups expressing a need, or provide labor market analyses conducted by federal or state sources. If appropriate or		5

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
<p>available, include documentation from organizations that provide wraparound services for those in recovery expressing a need for the provision of services for the target population.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> If data for this section is non-existent or hard to obtain for your project territory, news articles from pertinent websites are acceptable.</p>		
<p>Explain how the project expands or creates linkages between workforce development organization(s), training providers, and organizations that provide wraparound services for individuals in recovery.</p> <p>Describe how the proposal aligns with the needs of businesses and organizations that provide wraparound services for those in recovery.</p>		5
<p>Provide a work plan and timeline. Required: Appendix 4: Workplan and Timeline</p>		3
<p>Submit at least three letters of engagement from partners.</p> <p>Per the priorities and funding principles described previously, applicants are expected to assemble new or existing partnerships of community, health, and/or economic development stakeholders to serve as members of a project team, which may include partners that are not eligible for ARC funding but who are integral to a proposed project's success.</p> <p>Cross-sector collaborations should include health, behavioral health, criminal justice, education, employers, faith-based organizations, etc. Existing community substance use coalitions should be engaged, where possible. Applications should demonstrate the existing involvement of the state or local government agencies responsible for behavioral health and workforce development or, alternatively, a clear plan to secure such involvement. Overall project team membership can be composed of, but is not limited to, the following types of organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development organizations • Local governments • Planning organizations and Local Development Districts (LDDs) • Labor unions and labor-management apprenticeship programs • State and local workforce agencies • Institutions of higher education, including (but not limited to) community colleges and other job training and adult education providers • Not-for-profit and community-based organizations, including community action agencies that provide supportive services and human services providers • Chambers of commerce, industry and trade associations, local and regional business owners, and other representatives from the private sector 		6

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
E. Projected Outputs and Outcomes	Section 4	Up to 13 pts
<p>See Appendix 7: Logic Model and Performance Measures.</p> <p>Short- and medium-term results should include both outputs (e.g., delivered products, services, trainings, or participants served) and outcomes (e.g., workforce/employer/participant accomplishments, changes, or improvements) anticipated as a result of the project. See Appendix 7 for a logic model that provides examples of outputs and outcomes for a SUD project.</p> <p>Applicants must clearly identify the anticipated long-term benefits to the participants, employers, and communities served by the grant, explaining how the activities and investments made under the grant are anticipated to continue benefiting the workforce and the economy five years after the end of the project. See Appendix 7 for a logic model that provides examples of long-term benefits for a SUD project.</p> <p>Outcomes to be achieved by the end of the grant period must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses served (output) and improved (outcome). • Workers/trainees served (output) and improved (outcome) or students served (output) and improved (outcome). • Additionally, other performance measures for this grant type should be identified. <p>Please see ARC's approved performance measures for a list of measures suitable for use.</p>		
F. Strategic Alignment	Section 5	Up to 6 pts
<p>ARC Strategic Plan</p> <p>Explain how your project aligns with the goals of the ARC Strategic Plan and the strategy statements of the state(s) in which you will be operating.</p> <p>See Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity—ARC's Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia's Opportunities 2022–2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 		3

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
ARC State Plan(s) To find information on all 13 ARC state strategy statements, visit the ARC website . If a project includes ARC counties from more than one state, applicants need to demonstrate how the proposed project aligns with each ARC state plan, specifically how the project supports a ready workforce.		3
G. Budget and Budget Narrative	Section 6	Up to 5 pts
<p>Required – SF-424, 424A, 424B Required – Appendix 1: Budget Narrative See Appendix 8: Tips for Completing Your Budget</p> <p>All items included in the budget and budget narrative must be correctly totaled and must align with the applicant's description of the project. The budget and budget narrative must list the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds, as well as the status of match funds (confirmed, pending, etc.). Resources listed as match should be confirmed or accessible by July 12, 2024.</p> <p>Submit a required budget Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) that lists the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds. All items in the budget narrative must reflect the level of detail requested in the proposal. A PDF of this form is located on the ARC website. Form instructions may be downloaded from Grants.gov. See Appendix 8 for additional tips on how to complete the SF-424 and SF-424A.</p> <p>Provide a budget narrative that includes a detailed explanation of expenditures by the line items listed on the SF-424A. For example, include purpose of travel and supply/equipment lists. Describe expenses in the 'Other' line item, if applicable. A template for the narrative is located here.</p> <p>If the budget includes personnel or contractual expenses (cash or in-kind resources), estimate the number of hours/days and hourly rate (or portion of FTE and salary) for the time that is expected to be spent on the proposed project by key personnel, contractors, or consultants. (After a grant is awarded, all time should be tracked by actual hours worked for each individual.)</p>		
H. Feasibility	Section 7	Up to 5 pts
Ensure there is consistency between the project activities and the proposed budget. Personnel, work plan, timeline, and budget must align with project description and activities.		

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
I. Organizational Capacity	Section 8	Up to 5 pts
Demonstrate the project team's qualifications to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including but not limited to the project team's expertise and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal grant regulations; and established organizational policies, procedures, and systems.		
J. Additional Required Forms	Section 9	Required
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ARC MOU 2. SF-424 3. SF-424A 4. SF-424B 		
Total		100

Criteria for Planning Grants

Final applications are scored based on the required sections below and their respective points.

In scoring the applications, ARC will consider how well the applicant provided detailed information for each section. Examples include the following:

- In the Project Description section, did the applicant include a strategy on how they plan to research, assess, and/or analyze workforce entry or reentry for individuals affected by SUD?
- In the SF-424A and budget narrative, do the numbers across columns and line items add up correctly?
- Did the applicant provide sufficient information for each requested line item in the budget narrative?

Additionally, ARC is looking to see if the applicant successfully used storytelling and data to craft a compelling planning grant proposal that demonstrates how they plan to research assets, barriers, and SUD and workforce activities at the local, state, or regional level with the goal of building a SUD recovery-to-work ecosystem.

Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects		
A. Executive Summary	Section 1	Required
Complete the required Executive Summary template , providing project goals and strategies, the project's purpose, key activities, and applicant information. See template on the ARC website .		
B. Planning Grant Template		Required
Complete the application using the fillable grant template located here .		Up to 3 pts
C. Project Description	Section 2	Up to 24 pts
Describe the applicant's mission and work, including target population and ARC counties served by the project.		3
Explain the scope of work, steps, methods, and intended results of the project.		4
Demonstrate a strong rationale in support of the INSPIRE priorities that are applicable to your request. (See Program Description for the list of priorities.)		3
Provide an explanation of how the project leverages or contributes to existing efforts to assess or plan for workforce entry and reentry for individuals affected by SUD. If no efforts exist, explain and provide documentation (e.g., documented gaps or efforts noted in a Chamber of Commerce report or local economic development plan).		4
Explain how project staff and partners reflect the community their proposed project is intended to benefit/impact.		3
Identify how data and/or information will be collected and used to demonstrate the degree to which project activities will be accomplished.		4
Explain how the outcomes of this project will be used to transition to project implementation.		3

Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects		
D. Strategic Alignment	Section 3	Up to 4 pts
Provide an explanation of how your project aligns with the goals of the ARC strategic plan, Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity—ARC's Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia's Opportunities 2022–2026 . Describe how the project makes an impact towards furthering these goals.		2
Provide an explanation of how your project aligns with the strategy statements of the states in which you will be operating. Information on these strategy statements can be located on the ARC website .		2
E. Project Outputs	Section 4	Up to 2 pts
See Appendix 7: Logic Model and Performance Measures for additional guidance on ARC performance measures. Demonstrate how pursuing the outlined scope of work will help facilitate the formulation of a potential implementation project. Include a discussion of where and how the potential funding could be found beyond the ARC INSPIRE Initiative. Include a description of how project stakeholders envision the proposed project transforming and furthering the long-term community and economic development of the project region.		
F. Work Plan and Timeline	Section 5	Up to 3 pts
Required – Appendix 4: Workplan and Timeline		
Provide a detailed work plan and timeline of the project.		

Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects		
G. Budget and Budget Narrative	Section 6	Up to 4 pts
<p>Required – SF424, 424A, 424B Required – Appendix 1: Budget Narrative See Appendix 8: Tips for Completing Your Budget</p> <p>All items included in the budget and budget narrative must be correctly totaled and must align with the applicant's description of the project. The budget and budget narrative must list the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds, as well as the status of match funds (confirmed, pending, etc.). Resources listed as match should be confirmed or accessible by July 12, 2024.</p> <p>Submit a required budget Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) that lists the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds. All items in the budget narrative must reflect the level of detail requested in the proposal. A PDF of this form is located on the ARC website. Form instructions may be downloaded from Grants.gov. See Appendix 8 for additional tips on how to complete the SF-424 and SF-424A.</p> <p>Provide a budget narrative that includes a detailed explanation of expenditures by the line items listed on the SF-424A. For example, include purpose of travel and supply/equipment lists. Describe expenses in the 'Other' line item, if applicable. A template for the narrative is located here.</p> <p>If the budget includes personnel or contractual expenses (cash or in-kind resources), estimate the number of hours/days and hourly rate (or portion of FTE and salary) for the time that is expected to be spent on the proposed project by key personnel, contractors, or consultants. (After a grant is awarded, all time should be tracked by actual hours worked for each individual).</p>		
H. Organizational Capacity	Section 7	Up to 5 pts
<p>Demonstrate the project team's qualifications to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including but not limited to the project teams' expertise and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal grant regulations; and established organizational policies, procedures, and systems.</p>		
I. Feasibility	Section 8	Up to 5 pts
<p>Ensure there is consistency between the project activities and the proposed budget.</p> <p>Ensure that the work plan, timeline, budget, and personnel resources match with the project description and expected outputs of the project.</p>		

Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects		
J. Additional Required Forms	Section 9	Required
1. ARC MOU		
2. SF-424		
3. SF-424A		
4. SF-424B		
Total		50

Cost Sharing or Matching

Under this NOSA, applicants for an ARC INSPIRE Initiative grant must demonstrate a matching share from non-ARC sources that is identified as available and applicable to the project.

Matching sources may be non-federal, other federal, or a combination of sources, including in-kind sources. The maximum share of ARC assistance is determined by the ARC classification of the county or counties served by the proposed activity (distressed, at-risk, transitional, competitive, and attainment). Applicants may request up to 80% of the total project cost when the county, or all counties, served by a project has/have been designated as economically “distressed” according to ARC’s FY24 classification. A table summarizing ARC’s five economic designations and the maximum ARC share for each Appalachian county can be found [on the ARC website](#). For additional tips on how to calculate your match, [see this video](#) (video applies to both POWER and INSPIRE match funding requirements).

To determine the match rate for an ARC multi-county project, special matching rules apply:

1. If there is a “distressed” county in the project and:
 - a. at least half of the counties are “distressed,” the project may be funded at up to 80% of project costs.
 - b. at least half of the counties are 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.
 - c. 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.
2. 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.
3. All other multi-county projects shall be funded at the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project (i.e., 80%, 70%, 50%, 30%, or 0%); except that the portion of a project that is attributable to an “attainment” county in a project that does not include a “distressed” county shall be considered **ineligible** for ARC assistance and may not be considered for matching purposes.

Application and Submission Information

Grant applications follow ARC's standard application policies and procedures.

Letter of intent due	February 16, 2024
Grant proposal due	March 8, 2024
Awards announced	September 2024
Grantee start date	October 1, 2024

Letter of Intent

Applicants are required to submit a one-page letter of intent (LOI) in portable document format (PDF) to SUD@arc.gov by 5 PM Eastern time on February 16, 2024. An LOI is required for both implementation grant applications and planning grant applications. The [LOI template](#) is located on the [INSPIRE website](#).

Briefly identify contact information, and describe the scope of the proposed project, key partners, geographic scope, and funding request amount. Once receipt of the LOI is confirmed, the ARC state program managers of each state impacted by the proposal will be notified of your intent to apply, and your LOI will be forwarded to them. Between the applicant's LOI submission and the final application submission, ARC reviews LOIs for significant issues, such as an applicant being ineligible for an INSPIRE grant. If there are significant issues, ARC will attempt to contact the applicant. Applicants who do not hear from ARC during this period should proceed with submitting a final application.

Submitted applications for INSPIRE FY24 funding that substantially differ from the information included in the received LOI will be disqualified during the review process.

Prior to the submission of the final application, every applicant is required to contact the ARC state program managers of the state(s) impacted by the project proposal.

You are also required to reach out to your state program manager to solicit their feedback on your application and/or program design, and, most importantly, to ensure your proposal is in alignment with your state's Appalachian economic development priorities. A list of ARC state program managers can be found on [the ARC website](#), or in the ARC Agency Contact Information section below. See Appendix 5 for additional information on resources/entities available to you in your state (e.g., State Offices of Rural Health, Rural Health Associations) that can provide grant writing support, partnership development, letters of support, and other forms of technical assistance (each state varies in the degree to which they can provide assistance).

Note: Submission of the LOI does not replace or satisfy the requirement that applicants must contact the appropriate state program managers. When submitting your LOI to the SUD@arc.gov email, please also copy your respective state program manager.

Applications

Applications for both implementation and planning grants are limited to 50 pages; this total includes both the narrative and the uploaded attachments. Applicants must provide a comprehensive narrative that addresses all the criteria and priorities noted in this NOSA. The narrative must be limited to 15 pages, single spaced, in 12-point font size.

Applicants must use the application narrative templates located in [Appendix 6](#) of this NOSA to write their final application.

Applications must meet the following criteria:

1. Applicant must meet eligibility requirements.
2. Applicant must submit all required documentation and templates for submission. See scoring matrixes for implementation and planning grant requirements.
3. Eligible applicants may not submit more than one application.
4. Application must meet the ARC cost-share matching requirement for the proposed service area.
5. Applicant has contacted ARC state program manager(s).
6. A letter of intent (LOI) must be submitted to ARC. Submission instructions:
 - Submit as PDF to SUD@arc.gov by February 16, 2024 at 5 PM Eastern Time (ET).
 - Once receipt of LOI is confirmed, it will be forwarded to the respective state program managers. **Note:** This step does not satisfy the requirement that applicants must contact state program managers.
 - Submitted applications for funding that substantially differ from the information included on the received LOI will be disqualified during the review process.
7. **Applications must be uploaded via an application portal no later than 5 PM ET on March 8, 2024;** the portal will not be made available to the public after this time. For information on how to access the portal, visit the [ARC INSPIRE Initiative webpage](#), or navigate to the [Reviewer portal](#) directly. The applicant is required to submit **two separate PDF files**:
 - PDF 1: The [Executive Summary](#)
 - PDF 2: All other application materials and required forms combined into one PDF
8. Further guidance on submission can be found on the [ARC INSPIRE Initiative webpage](#).

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants are required to comply with the following:

- Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before any federal funds are awarded to the applicant;
- Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number in their application; and
- Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they have an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency.

Applicants must register for a UEI at SAM.gov. Before making an award, ARC will review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (see 41 U.S.C. 2313).

An applicant may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.

ARC will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.206.

Submission Dates, Times, and Instructions

All applications are due March 8, 2024, at 5 PM Eastern Time. **Faxed or mailed applications will not be accepted.**

After an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process during which the application may be accepted or rejected due to errors, incomplete information, ineligible applicant, and/or ineligible service area. Be advised that it may take several days for the validation process to be completed and that the process may not begin until after the application deadline. Applications found to be missing required information or to contain critical errors may not be reviewed or evaluated.

Funding Restrictions

Treatment services are restricted to behavioral health services, including post-SUD treatment wraparound services, to assist those in recovery with maintaining their recovery as they enter or reenter the workforce.

Indirect Costs

See [Appendix 2: Indirect Cost Rates](#).

Application Review Information

Applications will first be reviewed by the ARC alternates/state program managers of the states in which the project's activities and impacts are located. This initial review will ensure that the project's scope of work is strategic and compatible with the state's existing economic development priorities. Upon completion of the initial review, ARC will engage a joint team of experts to review and score applications based on the criteria set out in this document.

ARC reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with applicants that have been selected to receive awards, which may include requesting that the applicant remove or adjust certain proposed costs.

Additionally, ARC may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information pertaining to any aspect of the application. ARC also reserves the right to reject an application where information is uncovered that raises a reasonable doubt as to the applicant's ability to successfully fulfill the objectives and requirements of the grant award.

ARC, in its complete and sole discretion, may select for award some, all, or none of the applications received under this competitive solicitation. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the ARC federal co-chair and the respective state ARC official(s). The award decision of the ARC federal co-chair and the respective state ARC official(s) is final.

Award Administration

General management and administration requirements for non-construction projects are contained in the [ARC Grant Administration Manual for Non-Construction Grant Agreements](#). Administration of ARC awards is also subject to the same regulations, restrictions, and requirements as other federal awards. These include but are not limited to uniform administrative requirements and cost principles at 2 CFR §200, as currently updated; ARC's Open Records Policy; past performance and non-compliance; restrictions on making awards to corporations convicted of felony criminal violations and unpaid

federal tax liabilities; environmental and historic preservation; and national policy requirements, including but not limited to those protecting free speech, religious liberty, public welfare, the environment, and prohibiting discrimination, e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Recipients of non-construction grants must adhere to ARC reporting requirements as identified in the [ARC Grant Administration Manual for Non-Construction Grant Agreements](#). However, ARC reserves the right to change the reporting time periods and, depending on the nature of the project, may request additional relevant data.

ARC Agency Contact Information

Prior to submission of the application, every applicant is required to contact the state program manager of the states impacted by the project proposal. These state officials will ensure that your proposal is in alignment with their state Appalachian economic development priorities. State program managers also serve as a resource regarding any questions applicants have about the INSPIRE Initiative in general or about the use of agency funds to support projects in their communities and regions. Applicants with additional questions may submit them to SUD@arc.gov.

Contact information for ARC’s state program managers can be [found here](#) and below:

Alabama	Crystal Talley – crystal.talley@adeca.alabama.gov
Georgia	Annaka Woodruff – annaka.woodruff@dca.ga.gov and Brittany Pittman – brittany.pittman@dca.ga.gov
Kentucky	Scott Sharp – scott.sharp@ky.gov
Maryland	Dave Cotton – david.cotton@maryland.gov
Mississippi	Andrea D. Rose – arose@mississippi.org
New York	Kyle Wilber – kyle.wilber@dos.ny.gov
North Carolina	Olivia Collier – ocollier@nccommerce.com
Ohio	Julia Hinten – julia.hinten@development.ohio.gov
Pennsylvania	Jennifer Lench – jlench@pa.gov
South Carolina	Sara Pincelli – spincelli@sccommerce.com
Tennessee	Jill White – Jill.White@tn.gov
Virginia	Tamarah Holmes – tamarah.holmes@dhcd.virginia.gov
West Virginia	James Bush – james.e.bush@wv.gov

General Disclosures

INSPIRE Initiative awards will be made only to the extent that funds are available. Publication of this NOSA does not obligate ARC to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds. This NOSA does not commit ARC to make any specific award. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the NOSA, ARC reserves the right to award grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts to communities or regions that best meet the requirements of the NOSA. The Appalachian Regional

Commission solely reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses received as a result of this request; to negotiate with all qualified sources; or to cancel in part or in its entirety this NOSA if it is in the interests of ARC to do so.

Note: The Appalachian Regional Commission will not reimburse any other costs associated with the preparation of a response to this NOSA. Consultants and consultant teams that are legally barred from receiving federal contracts or contract payments will not be considered for work with communities or regions under this NOSA.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Required Budget Narrative

Visit the ARC website for a [budget narrative template](#) (required for applicant use). Please note there is a separate sheet in this template for INSPIRE applicants.

Appendix 2: Indirect Cost Rates

For more information about indirect cost rates, visit the [electronic Code of Federal Regulations](#).

Applicants must use one of the following indirect cost rates:

1. If you have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), provide an explanation of how the indirect costs are calculated in the Budget Narrative section of the application narrative. Also, provide a current version of the NICRA.
2. Pursuant to grant regulations, any organization that does not currently have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those entities described in Appendix VII to 2 CFR §200, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% based on modified total direct costs, as defined in 2 CFR §200. **No documentation is required to justify the 10% de minimis indirect cost rate**, which may be used indefinitely. However, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs and may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If you choose this option, this methodology must be used consistently for all federal awards until such time as you choose to negotiate for an indirect cost rate, for which you may apply at any time. (See 2 CFR §200.414[f] for more information on use of the de minimis rate.)

Modified Total Direct Cost Rate Definition

Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) refers to all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award).

MTDC **excludes** equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000.

Appendix 3: Subrecipient vs. Contractor Determinations and Subrecipient Monitoring

- If necessary for your proposal, see subsequent guidance identifying subrecipients vs. contractors: [Code of Federal Regulations—Subrecipient and Contractor Determinations](#)

- This link provides an explanation of requirements for entities that make subawards: [Code of Federal Regulations – Requirements for Pass-Through Entities](#)

Appendix 4: Workplan and Timeline Template

- [Workplan and Timeline template](#) (required for applicant use).

Appendix 5: SUD Recovery-to-Work Resources

- [Resource guide](#)

Appendix 6: Final Application Narrative Templates

- [6\(A\): Implementation template](#) (required for Implementation applicant use).
- [6\(B\): Planning template](#) (required for Planning applicant use).

Appendix 7: INSPIRE Logic Model and Performance Measures

- [Logic Model and Performance Measures](#)

Appendix 8: Tips for Completing your Budget

- [Budget Tips](#)

GRANT OPPORTUNITY #1

OVERVIEW
 Agency:
 Title:
 Funding Opportunity Number:
 Deadline for Applications:
 Total Amount Available:
 Number of awards anticipated:
 Award amounts:

- CHECKLIST**
- Are we a qualifying entity?
 - Will it give us enough money?
 - Can we meet the timeline for the application?
 - Will we be able to deliver on the stated timeline for completing the project?
 - Do we have the capacity to execute?
 - Can we raise the match?
 - Will it actually help us complete the project and accomplish our local goals?

GRANT OPPORTUNITY #2

OVERVIEW
 Agency:
 Title:
 Funding Opportunity Number:
 Deadline for Applications:
 Total Amount Available:
 Number of awards anticipated:
 Award amounts:

- CHECKLIST**
- Are we a qualifying entity?
 - Will it give us enough money?
 - Can we meet the timeline for the application?
 - Will we be able to deliver on the stated timeline for completing the project?
 - Do we have the capacity to execute?
 - Can we raise the match?
 - Will it actually help us complete the project and accomplish our local goals?

GRANT OPPORTUNITY #3

OVERVIEW
 Agency:
 Title:
 Funding Opportunity Number:
 Deadline for Applications:
 Total Amount Available:
 Number of awards anticipated:
 Award amounts:

- CHECKLIST**
- Are we a qualifying entity?
 - Will it give us enough money?
 - Can we meet the timeline for the application?
 - Will we be able to deliver on the stated timeline for completing the project?
 - Do we have the capacity to execute?
 - Can we raise the match?
 - Will it actually help us complete the project and accomplish our local goals?



