



Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative

Federal Fiscal Year 2025—Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA) for Project Grants

(1) NOSA Basic Information

This Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA) provides a program overview and explains the requirements for eligible applicants to apply for grant funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission’s (ARC) INSPIRE Initiative (Assistance Listing Number 23.002). This INSPIRE NOSA is new for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025.

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| NOSA release date | January 13, 2025 |
| Application portal opens | January 13, 2025 Portal link located here. |
| Virtual pre-application webinar | January 28, 2025 Register for webinar here. |
| In-person grant application workshops | Register for in-person “Getting the Grant” workshops here. |
| Letter of intent (LOI) due | February 14, 2025 by 5 p.m. ET Submit using this form. |
| Grant applications due | March 10, 2025 by 5 p.m. ET <i>ARC cannot accept late applications.</i> Submit via this portal. |
| Awards announced | Fall 2025 |

[Learn more about INSPIRE](#) on ARC.gov.
Email SUD@arc.gov if you have questions related to this NOSA or INSPIRE.

The funding that may be made available through this NOSA is subject to the enactment of full-year Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations by the United States Congress. Thus, at the time of issuance of this NOSA, the ARC does not have the requisite budget authority to make awards.

Any selection of applications or issuance of awards under this NOSA will be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Executive Summary

ARC’s INSPIRE Initiative offers federal grant funding for projects that build or expand community support systems (also known as [recovery ecosystems](#)) to help Appalachians in substance use disorder (SUD) recovery obtain or maintain employment. In FY 2024, ARC made available up to \$13 million in federal funding¹ for the INSPIRE Initiative. The amount of FY 2025 funding available is subject to the availability of appropriated funds, any other legislative action, or policy priorities. Applicants can request up to \$500,000 for implementation projects or \$100,000 for planning projects. See pages 7-14 for more details.

¹ See 40 U.S.C. 14703.

All project proposals must align with at least one of [ARC's five strategic goals](#). INSPIRE specifically focuses on **Goal 2, Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem**: Strengthening community services to help residents get jobs, stay employed, and advance in their careers.

For more details about INSPIRE's history, check [Appendix 9](#) and visit the [INSPIRE website](#).

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Appalachian Regional Commission Overview

ARC was established through the [Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965](#) to help bring Appalachia into socioeconomic parity with the rest of the nation. ARC is an economic development entity representing a [partnership of federal, state, and local governments](#). ARC's footprint spans [423 counties](#) across [13 states](#). This includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. [Learn more about ARC.](#)

(2) Eligibility Information

Eligible applicants for ARC's INSPIRE Initiative 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

Eligible applicants may submit only one application per organization.

Ineligibility

ARC does not award INSPIRE grants to the following:

- Individuals
- For-profit entities
- Projects serving only Appalachian counties designated as attainment counties ([learn more here](#))
- Applicants with concurrent funding under Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities (WORC), Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER), or INSPIRE for SUD-specific projects
- Projects with substantial construction components (see below under "Funding Restrictions")
- Proposed projects outside of the Appalachian Region

Funding Restrictions

Treatment Restrictions

Treatment services must be for behavioral health services—including post-SUD treatment wraparound services—to help those in recovery maintain their recovery as they enter or reenter the workforce.

Construction Restrictions

ARC will not award INSPIRE grants to projects with substantial construction components (e.g., building renovations, demolition, site preparation). However, ARC *may* consider funding projects involving minor repairs or facility enhancements (e.g., new painting, electricity modifications or accessories, building recovery beds) but only if they are part of a larger project addressing the funding priorities listed on [page 5](#). Applicants should describe proposed minor construction activities in their letter of intent (LOI), due on February 14, 2025 ([see page 8](#) for more details about the LOI).

Cost Sharing or Matching

Applicants must demonstrate a cost share (or a "match") from non-ARC sources:

- Matching funds can be **federal or non-federal contributions, or a combination of both**. They can be cash or in-kind.

- Matching funds **must be allowable under federal grant regulations, 2 CFR 200.306(b)**. They must help you meet the goals of your proposed INSPIRE project.
- Matching funds **must meet the minimum required match amount**, which is determined by the ARC classification of the county or counties served by the proposed activity (distressed – 20%; at-risk – 30%; transitional – 50%; competitive – 70%; and attainment – ineligible). ineligible).
 - [Access a table](#) summarizing ARC’s five economic designations and the match requirement for each Appalachian county.
 - [Use ARC’s match rate calculator](#) to help you determine the required match.
- Matching funds **should be confirmed or accessible by July 12, 2025**.
 - See [Section C, “Budget and Budget Narrative,”](#) in the Scoring Matrices for Implementation and Planning Projects for more information.

(3) Program Description

INSPIRE Initiative funding is made available through the Appalachian Regional Development Act (40 U.S.C. 14703). INSPIRE funding supports projects that create or expand support services and partnerships at the community, state, or regional level to help Appalachians in SUD recovery get a job or stay on the job. The goal of the [recovery ecosystem \(see figure 1\)](#) is to help individuals in SUD recovery access the support services and training they need to stay in recovery and successfully obtain meaningful and sustainable employment.

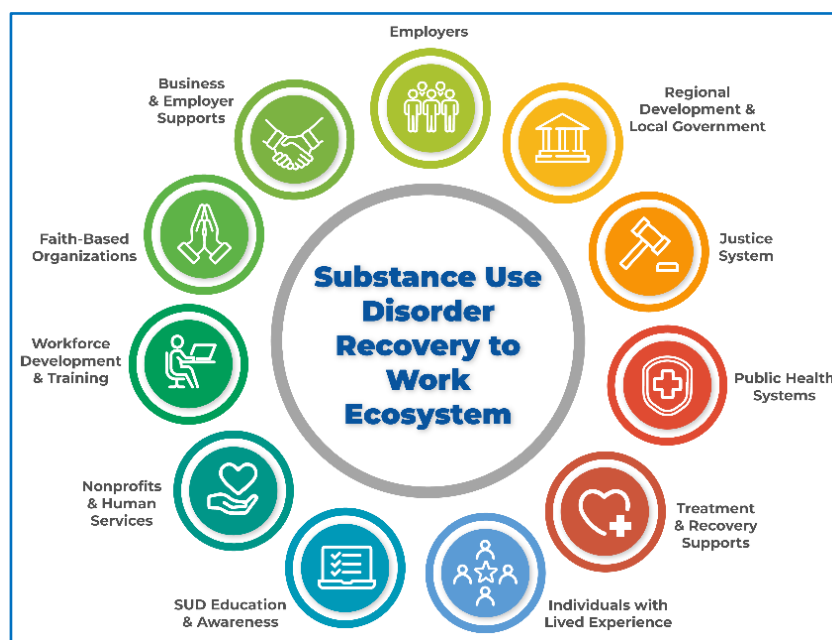


Figure 1 Recovery Ecosystem Diagram

INSPIRE Project Examples & Ideas

ARC encourages INSPIRE project proposals that support individuals in SUD recovery, from the time they leave treatment to when they find meaningful employment. INSPIRE projects that support a recovery ecosystem may include the following:

- Projects that coordinate SUD recovery services and employment training.
- Investments in healthcare networks and partnerships that support SUD recovery. This can also include behavioral health professionals and employers.
- Research and/or evaluation of programs and practices that support sustainable development of a SUD ecosystem and/or the [Recovery Ready Workplace \(RRW\) model](#).

Learn more about the activities ARC has funded through INSPIRE:

- [Read the *INSPIRE Award Summaries by State*.](#)
- Review ARC's INSPIRE [Investments in Action case studies/articles](#).
 - For a catalog of ideas on how to support Appalachians in SUD recovery, see [this list](#) generated by the ARC SUD Advisory Council (2019), as well as the [Recovery to Work Ecosystem Builders Guide](#).

INSPIRE Funding Priorities

Applicants should describe how their project will address one or more of the following INSPIRE priorities, and how, to the extent possible, the project is evidence-based or based on emerging research.

Job Training and Skill Building

This refers to specialized programs that provide skills development, education, and support to help individuals in recovery acquire meaningful employment. These programs are tailored to address the unique challenges faced by those in recovery, such as gaps in work history, stigma, and the need for ongoing support to sustain sobriety. Examples may include:

- Develop or expand vocational training programs specifically tailored for individuals in recovery.
- Incorporate evidence-based practices in job skills training alongside recovery support to improve employment outcomes and sustain recovery.

Prevention Activities

This refers to strategies, programs, and practices aimed at reducing the initiation, misuse, and progression of substance use and minimizing the risk of developing SUD. Prevention efforts target individuals, families, and communities to address risk factors and strengthen protective factors, ultimately fostering environments and behaviors that discourage substance misuse. Examples may include:

- *Build Peer Networks*
 - Introduce programs like peer recovery support services (e.g., certified peer recovery specialists available 24/7) to promote sustained recovery and prevent relapse. [Learn more](#) about emerging and evidence-based practices to build peer support networks.

Workforce Partnerships

This refers to creating and enhancing collaborations among various stakeholders to support individuals in recovery by addressing workforce challenges and fostering sustainable employment opportunities. These partnerships aim to integrate workforce development with SUD recovery services, providing a holistic ecosystem that promotes recovery, economic stability, and community well-being. Examples may include:

- *Collaborate with Industry Partners*
 - Establish partnerships with industry stakeholders to enhance organizational capacity and address workforce challenges associated with SUD.
- *Build Workforce Entry Networks*
 - Strengthen connections between workforce development organizations, training providers, recovery services, businesses, court systems (e.g., drug courts), mental health providers, and faith-based organizations.
 - Facilitate sustained recovery by integrating these networks to support individuals entering or reentering the workforce.
- *Expand Recovery Support Collaborations*

- Develop strategic partnerships with health centers, nonprofits, state and local health departments, and criminal justice networks to enhance the availability of recovery supports and improve outcomes.

Research, Evaluation, and Innovation

This refers to the systematic collection, analysis, and application of information to improve understanding, assess outcomes, and develop new approaches to address SUD effectively as applicants build, expand, and improve their ecosystems. This may include leveraging evidence-based practices and innovative strategies to enhance prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts while driving policy and program improvements. Examples may include:

- *Research and Data Collection*
 - Conduct research and gather data to better understand needs throughout the region, the capacity of the SUD recovery ecosystem, and how communities may best be served by the Recovery-Ready Workforce (RRW) model.
- *Community Needs Assessment*
 - Perform a comprehensive needs assessment to identify service gaps in SUD recovery and behavioral health, as well as opportunities to engage employers and strengthen community capacity. For guidance on community needs assessment see this [website](#).
- *Program Evaluation*
 - Evaluate the success of implemented projects, programs, and recovery practices.
- *Evidence Review:*
 - Conduct a review of the existing evidence to determine if the methods were credible to suggest the findings, and if so, to summarize the evidence-based practices and promising practices
- *Pilot and Evaluate Innovative Solutions*
 - Develop and test innovative strategies to mitigate the economic impacts of the SUD crisis.

Employer Support and Recovery-Ready Workplaces

This refers to workplace frameworks designed to address SUD and foster environments where employees can seek help, recover, and thrive. Examples may include:

- *Develop Recovery-Ready Workplace Programs*
 - Create or enhance policies and initiatives that support employees in recovery and encourage employers to hire individuals in recovery.
- *Employer Support Services*
 - Provide comprehensive services to employers, helping them address workforce needs and integrate recovery-friendly practices into their operations.
- *Employer Liaison Roles*
 - Employ dedicated liaisons to educate and engage employers, facilitating the adoption of the Recovery-Ready Workplace (RRW) model and strengthening collaboration.
- [Learn more](#) about RRW emerging practices and resources.

Local, State, and Regional Partnership

This refers to collaborations among various stakeholders to address the complex challenges associated with prevention, treatment, and recovery from SUD. These partnerships leverage

resources, expertise, and community engagement to create a comprehensive, multi-layered approach to tackling Appalachia’s SUD crisis. Examples may include:

- *Strengthen Coalitions*
 - Expand and formalize partnerships with local, state, and regional organizations to create a unified approach to SUD recovery.
- *Align Recovery with Broader Strategies*
 - Integrate SUD recovery initiatives into broader health and economic development plans at the state and community levels.

Stigma Reduction

This involves strategies and actions aimed at diminishing the negative attitudes, stereotypes, and discrimination faced by individuals with SUD. Stigma can create barriers to seeking treatment, maintaining recovery, and integrating into society. Reducing this stigma is essential for fostering understanding, supporting recovery, and addressing the broader public health impact of SUD. Examples may include:

- *Employer Stigma Reduction Training*
 - Implement evidence-based training programs to reduce stigma among employers, increasing their willingness to hire and retain individuals in recovery.
 - [Access evidence-based information and guides on stigma in the workplace.](#)

Wraparound Services

This refers to a holistic, coordinated approach to care that addresses the multiple and interconnected needs of individuals struggling with SUD. These services go beyond clinical treatment for substance use, integrating various supports to help individuals achieve and sustain recovery while improving their overall quality of life and ability to engage in meaningful employment. Examples may include:

- *Address Barriers to Workforce Participation*
 - Identify and mitigate obstacles to workforce entry, such as transportation, housing, childcare, and legal barriers (e.g., criminal record expungement).
- *Provide Essential Recovery-to-Work Services*
 - Offer comprehensive support services, including transportation, stable housing, childcare, and job skills training (both technical and soft skills), to ensure successful workforce reentry for individuals in recovery.

Learn more about funding restrictions and unallowable costs on [page 3](#).

Design Your INSPIRE Project with Outcomes in Mind

Applicants of **implementation grants** must include the following outputs and outcomes:

- 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.

Applicants of **planning grants** must include the following output:

- Plans/reports including but not limited to the following:
 - Asset mapping
 - Strategic plans/master plans/ concept plans
 - Plans for ecosystem improvements or new programs
 - Research reports
 - Feasibility studies
 - Development of curriculum

Review the [Appendix 7](#) (Logic Model & Performance Measures) (Logic Model & Performance Measures) to better understand how ARC defines these measures, and their application to INSPIRE projects.

(4) Application Contents, Format, and Scoring Criteria

INSPIRE grant applications must align with the following procedures, policies, and deadlines (as detailed in this section).

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Letter of intent due | February 14, 2025, by 5 p.m. ET Use this form for submission. |
| Grant application due | March 10, 2025, by 5 p.m. ET Submit via this portal. |
| Awards announced | Fall 2025 |
| Grant start date | October 1, 2025 |

Letter of Intent

Applicants are required to submit a letter of intent (LOI) [electronically via this form](#) by 5 p.m. ET on February 14, 2025. ARC requires an LOI for both implementation and planning grant applications.

The LOI form requests the following information:

- Contact information
- Brief description and the scope of the proposed project
- Key partners
- Geographic scope (i.e., the states and Appalachian counties impacted by the project)
- Funding request amount

After you submit your LOI by February 14, 2025, the following will occur:

- You will receive an email notification confirming that your LOI has been successfully submitted.
- The [ARC state program managers](#) (in the areas impacted by your proposed project) will receive a copy of your LOI.
- ARC staff will review the LOI to make sure you are eligible for an INSPIRE grant and respond back to applicants with their eligibility to proceed to the final application stage.
 - If there are significant issues with your LOI, ARC will discuss further with you.

If your final application for INSPIRE FY 2025 funding substantially differs from the information included in the LOI, your project will be disqualified during the review process.

State Program Manager Outreach

Before submitting the LOI, every applicant is **required** to contact the ARC state program managers of the state(s) impacted by the project proposal.

- [Find the name and contact information for your state program manager on ARC.gov.](#)

Consider asking your state program manager these questions before submitting your LOI:

- Does this project align with the state’s economic development priorities?
- Do you have suggestions for partners that can strengthen my project?
- Do you have suggestions on my project design?

- What other resources do you recommend I use to make this proposed project more impactful?

See [Appendix 5](#) for information on resources/entities (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. **Note:** Each state varies in the degree to which they can provide assistance.

Implementation Grants

Funding Amount and Period of Performance

- **Funding: Up to \$500,000.**
- **Period of performance:** Up to three years (36 months), if necessary, per the size and scope of the project.
- Applicants must address all components noted in the section titled [Criteria for Implementation Grants](#).

Eligible Activities for Implementation Grants

INSPIRE implementation grants launch, expand, or replicate evidence-based programs that help Appalachians who are in recovery from SUD to enter or reenter the workforce. Applicants must have existing partnerships that support a [recovery ecosystem](#). Applicants need to explain how these partnerships will help individuals in recovery get back into the workforce, build an SUD recovery ecosystem, or develop programs and/or policies that support the [RRW model](#).

Eligible activities include but are not limited to the following:

- **Job Training and Skills:** Develop or expand vocational training programs specifically tailored for individuals in recovery. Incorporate evidence-based practices in job skills training alongside recovery support to improve employment outcomes and sustain recovery.
- **Prevention Activities:** Introduce programs like peer recovery support services (e.g., certified peer recovery specialists available 24/7) to promote sustained recovery and prevent relapse.
- **Peer Support Systems:** Introduce programs like peer recovery support services (e.g., certified peer recovery specialists available 24/7) to promote sustained recovery and prevent relapse.
- **Form, Strengthen, and Expand Workforce Partnerships:** Establish partnerships with industry stakeholders to enhance organizational capacity and address workforce challenges associated with SUD, through connections between workforce development organizations, training providers, recovery services, businesses, court systems (e.g., drug courts), mental health providers, and faith-based organizations. Facilitate sustained recovery by integrating these networks to support individuals entering or reentering the workforce.
- **Data, Evaluation, and Innovation:** Conduct research and gather data to analyze the effectiveness of a SUD recovery ecosystem or the RRW model. Perform comprehensive needs assessments to identify service gaps in SUD recovery and behavioral health, as well as opportunities to engage employers and strengthen community capacity. Collect data to measure the success of implemented projects, programs, and recovery practices, leveraging partnerships with universities or research contractors.
- **Wraparound Services:** Identify and mitigate obstacles to workforce entry. Offer comprehensive support services, including transportation, stable housing, childcare, and

job skills training (both technical and soft skills), to ensure successful workforce reentry for individuals in recovery.

- **SUD Stigma Reduction Programs:** Implement or analyze evidence-based training programs to reduce stigma among employers, increasing their willingness to hire and retain individuals in recovery.
- **Pilot Innovative Programs:** Test new approaches to address the economic impacts of the SUD crisis in Appalachia.

Criteria for Implementation Grants

Scoring Applications

INSPIRE implementation grant applications will be scored based on the criteria in the scoring matrix below. Keep the following questions in mind:

- In the "Community Needs" section, did the applicant include data on overdose rates, SUD cases, employer needs, or workforce demands that demonstrate a need for the proposed activities?
- In the budget (SF-424A and budget narrative), are the financials appropriate and reasonable for the scope of work? Are they accurate and do they add up correctly across all columns and line items?
- Did the applicant give enough detail for each budget item? See ARC's [budget narrative template](#) for an example of the quantity and quality of information needed.

ARC will also assess if the applicant effectively uses storytelling, data, and evidence-based practices to create a strong proposal showing plans to build, enhance, or expand their SUD recovery ecosystem or the RRW model. For resources on data and evidence-based practices, see [Appendix 5](#).

| Scoring Matrix for INSPIRE Implementation Projects | |
|---|--------------|
| A. Executive Summary (<i>Section 1</i>) | Points |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the required INSPIRE Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Summary template to provide information on project goals and strategies, purpose, key activities, and applicant information. See template on the ARC website. | Required |
| B. Implementation Grant Template (<i>Section 2</i>) | Required |
| Complete the application using the fillable grant template located here . | Up to 5 pts |
| C. Statement of Need (<i>Section 2</i>) | Up to 25 pts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the service area. | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List ARC counties impacted by the project, and why these counties were selected. • 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 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your SUD population, and how you plan to recruit this population using evidence and data to support project activities. • An applicant's proposal must target youth (ages 15–24) and/or adults (e.g., displaced workers, unemployed, underemployed, grandparents, etc.) 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 be tied back to the INSPIRE priorities located on page 5. | 4 |

| Scoring Matrix for INSPIRE Implementation Projects | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, in order to document the extent to which the local economy has negatively impacted the community or region. Applicants must demonstrate evidence of the need for this project, and may use data available on the INSPIRE website, from Appendix 5 of this NOSA, or from other sources to reveal impacts of substance use in their region. | 5 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the business needs, including but not limited to: 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 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the economic and workforce-related challenges to workforce participation in the proposed service area. <i>Note:</i> Applicants must provide appropriate third-party economic and demographic statistics, including rate data about persistent poverty and unemployment in the applicable community or region (e.g., census tract or county), in order to document the extent to which the local economy has been negatively impacted by the SUD crisis. If data for this section is non-existent or hard to obtain for your project territory, news articles from pertinent websites are acceptable. | 4 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the gap(s) in behavioral health services, training, and provision of support services. This may include wraparound services and the community's capacity to create a recovery ecosystem as it ties back to the priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative. To measure the strength of your county's ecosystem, refer to the Recovery Ecosystem Index Map. | 5 |
| <p>D. Project Description (<i>Section 3</i>)</p> <p><u>Section Overview:</u> INSPIRE funding is intended to help leverage funds from multiple sources (both public and private). Project proposals must engage multiple stakeholders from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, and from multiple disciplines. There must be documentation 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. Applicants must describe how these partnerships demonstrate community and regional commitment to the project.</p> | Up to 36 pts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 outputs and outcomes, and how, as appropriate, evidence-based practices will be deployed in the project's scope of work. | 7 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline how your project provides a feasible and appropriate approach to address the target population, community, and workforce needs. (See Program Description for the list of priorities). | 5 |

Scoring Matrix for INSPIRE Implementation Projects

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the names of your partners in this project. • Explain how these partners are strategically positioned to support the services and activities in your project’s scope of work, and how they will help to expand or create a recovery ecosystem. | 5 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how the project activities will help employers meet their workforce and business needs. • Describe how the target population will obtain the necessary training and skills through this project 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 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. • <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. Refer to the Eligible Activities section for examples and evidence to build your program. | 5 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Describe how the proposal aligns with the needs of businesses and organizations that provide wraparound services for those in recovery. | 5 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a work plan and timeline. Use the required Appendix 4: Workplan and Timeline. | 3 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit at least three letters of engagement from partners. • Applicants are required to establish partnerships with a diverse range of collaborators to develop a comprehensive recovery ecosystem. This may include partners who aren't eligible for ARC funding but are crucial to the project's success. • Where possible, involve existing community coalitions focused on substance use. • Applications should show the involvement of state or local agencies responsible for behavioral health and workforce development or should have a clear plan to engage them. <p>Project teams may include but are not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development organizations • Local governments • Planning organizations and local development districts (LDDs) • Labor unions and apprenticeship programs • State and local workforce agencies • Higher education institutions (e.g., community colleges, job training, adult education providers) • Nonprofit and community-based organizations (e.g., community action agencies, human services providers) • Chambers of commerce, trade associations, business owners, and other private sector representatives | 6 |

| Scoring Matrix for INSPIRE Implementation Projects | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral health providers, coalitions, champions Public safety Individuals with lived experience Faith-based entities | |
| E. Projected Outputs and Outcomes <i>(Section 4)</i> | 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, training, 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Refer to the eligible activities section in this NOSA, as applicants are encouraged to engage in project activities that improve the evidence base for Recovery-Ready Workforces (RRWs) and SUD ecosystem building. SUD ecosystem building. Outcomes to be achieved by the end of the grant period must include the following: <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 and example definitions of them. See Appendix 7 for a logic model that provides examples of long-term benefits for an INSPIRE project.</p> | |
| F. ARC and State Strategic Plan Alignment <i>(Section 5)</i> | Up to 6 pts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how your project aligns with the goals of the ARC Strategic Plan and the strategy statements of the state(s) where you will be operating. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity—ARC’s Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia’s Opportunities 2022–2026, in particular 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. State strategy statements are available on ARC’s website. | |
| G. Budget and Budget Narrative <i>(Section 6)</i> | Up to 5 pts |
| <p>Required – SF-424, 424A, 424B</p> <p>Required – Appendix 1: Budget Narrative</p> <p>See Appendix 8: Tips for Completing Your Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All items included in the budget and budget narrative must be correctly totaled and must align with the applicant's description of the | |

| Scoring Matrix for INSPIRE Implementation Projects | |
|--|-------------|
| <p>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, 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a required budget Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) that lists the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. • 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. • 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.) Of note, budgets may include costs related to data and evaluation as relevant per 2 CFR §200.455. | |
| H. Feasibility (Section 7) | Up to 5 pts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. | |
| I. Organizational Capacity (Section 8) | Up to 5 pts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Memo of Understanding (MOU) 2. SF-424 3. SF-424A 4. SF-424B | |
| Total | 100 |

Planning Grants

Funding Amount and Period of Performance

- **Funding: Up to \$100,000.**
- **Period of performance:** Up to 18 months if necessary per the size and scope of the project.

- [Applicants must address all components noted in the section titled Criteria for Planning Grants.](#)

Eligible Activities for Planning Grants

INSPIRE planning grants are designed to help eligible organizations develop evidence-based plans for SUD recovery ecosystem programs, which may be implemented in the future. Applicants should explain how their planning project will help them prepare to expand, create, or improve a recovery ecosystem. **Planning grant applicants should not assume that ARC funding will be available for future implementation of the plans and strategies developed.**

Planning activities may include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Creating strategies and plans to strengthen partnerships or coalitions.
- ✓ Conducting community needs assessments with input from people in SUD recovery, and identifying necessary services like housing, transportation, and social support.
- ✓ Using workforce analysis to identify current gaps and future demands to guide recovery-to-work activities.
- ✓ Developing training and employment readiness plans, including metrics for certifications in high-demand jobs and wage growth.
- ✓ Designing educational programs for employers on HR policies, supervisory practices, and peer-support services to boost engagement in the Recovery-Ready Workforce (RRW) model.
- ✓ Creating plans for service delivery and long-term sustainability.
- ✓ Evaluating the SUD recovery ecosystem or RRW model to build on emerging and evidence-based practices.

Criteria for Planning Grants

Scoring Applications

INSPIRE planning grant applications will be scored based on the criteria in the scoring matrix below. ARC will evaluate how thoroughly applicants provide detailed information in each section. For example:

- In the "Project Description" section, does the applicant outline a clear strategy for researching and analyzing the SUD recovery ecosystem and workforce entry or reentry for individuals affected by SUD?
- In the budget section (SF-424A and narrative), are all numbers accurate and correctly totaled?

ARC will also assess whether the applicant effectively uses storytelling, data, and evidence-based practices to create a strong proposal. The proposal should demonstrate plans to research local, state, or regional assets, barriers, and activities related to SUD and workforce development, aiming to build a recovery ecosystem or [Recovery-Ready Workplace \(RRW\)](#) model.

| Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects | |
|--|--------------|
| A. Executive Summary (Section 1) | Required |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the required Executive Summary template, providing project goals and strategies, purpose, key activities, and applicant information. See template on the ARC website. | |
| B. Planning Grant Template (Section 1) | Required |
| Complete the application using the fillable grant template located here . | Up to 3 pts |
| C. Project Description (Section 2) | Up to 24 pts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the applicant's mission and work, including target population and ARC counties served. | 3 |

| Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects | |
|--|-------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the scope of work, steps, methods, and intended results. | 4 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate how the project aligns with any of the INSPIRE priorities. (See Program Description for the list of priorities.) | 3 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Describe how your plan will incorporate or analyze existing evidence about effective strategies to help individuals affected by SUD enter or re-enter the workforce. 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 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the names of your partners in this project. Explain how these partners are strategically positioned to support the activities in your project's scope of work, and how they will help to analyze, expand, or create the RRW model and SUD recovery ecosystem. Explain how project staff and partners reflect the community their proposed project is intended to impact. | 3 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how data and/or information will be collected and used to implement a project in the future or build on the evidence base around RRW and the SUD ecosystem. | 4 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how the products and outcomes of this project may be used to implement a project in the future or build on the evidence base around RRW and the SUD ecosystem. | 3 |
| D. ARC and State Strategic Plan Alignment <i>(Section 3)</i> | Up to 4 pts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an explanation of how your project aligns with the strategy statements of the states in which you will be operating. State strategy statements are available on ARC's website. | 2 |
| E. Project Outputs <i>(Section 4)</i> | Up to 2 pts |
| <p>See Appendix 7: Logic Model and Performance Measures for additional guidance on ARC performance measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required measures for planning grants include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of plans/reports: This could include asset mapping, strategic or master plans, program concepts, ecosystem improvement or evaluation plans, research reports, feasibility studies, or curriculum development. Applicants should explain how completing the proposed work may help set up a future implementation project. They should also discuss potential funding sources beyond the ARC INSPIRE Initiative. Finally, applicants should describe how stakeholders believe the project will contribute to long-term community and economic development in the region. | |

| Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects | |
|--|-------------|
| F. Work Plan and Timeline <i>(Section 5)</i> | Up to 3 pts |
| Required – Appendix 4: Workplan and Timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a detailed work plan and timeline of the project. | |
| G. Budget and Budget Narrative <i>(Section 6)</i> | Up to 4 pts |
| Required – SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B Required – Appendix 1: Budget Narrative See Appendix 8: Tips for Completing Your Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, 2025. 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. Download the form's instructions from Grants.gov. See Appendix 8 for additional tips on how to complete the SF-424 and SF-424A. 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. 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). Of note, budgets may include costs related to data and evaluation as relevant per 2 CFR §200.455. | |
| H. Organizational Capacity <i>(Section 7)</i> | Up to 5 pts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. | |
| I. Feasibility <i>(Section 8)</i> | Up to 5 pts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure there is consistency between the project activities and the proposed budget. Ensure that the work plan, timeline, budget, and personnel resources match with the project description and expected outputs of the project. | |
| J. Additional Required Forms <i>(Section 9)</i> | Required |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ARC Memo of Understanding (MOU) SF-424 SF-424A SF-424B | |
| Total | 50 |

Proprietary Information

Records of ARC's doings and transactions are made available for public inspection pursuant to the [Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965](#) and ARC's Open Records Policy ([ARC Code Section 4.5](#)). Applicants must identify and mark all confidential and/or proprietary documents they deem appropriate to submit with their application.

(5) Application Submission Criteria & Requirements

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

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

Remember:

- ✓ Applicant must meet eligibility requirements ([see page 3](#)).
- ✓ Applicant must submit all required documentation and templates for submission. See scoring matrixes for implementation and planning grant requirements (pages 8–14).
- ✓ Eligible lead applicants may not submit more than one application.
- ✓ Application must meet the ARC cost-share matching requirement for the proposed service area (see page 3).
- ✓ Applicants must submit a [letter of intent \(LOI\)](#) to ARC no later than February 14, 2025, at 5 p.m. ET. See page 6 to review submission instructions.
- ✓ Applicants must contact their state program manager before submitting the LOI.

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants are required to do the following:

- ✓ Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) at SAM.gov before any ARC funds are awarded to the applicant.
- ✓ Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number in their application.
- ✓ Always maintain an active and up-to-date SAM registration while in receipt of an ARC grant award.

Application

Applications must be electronically uploaded to the application portal called Reviewr no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on March 10, 2025. The Reviewr portal will not be made available to the public after this time.

- Applicants are required to submit **two separate PDF files to the portal:**
 - PDF 1: The Executive Summary
 - PDF 2: All other application materials and required forms combined into one PDF

For more information about accessing the portal and submitting an INSPIRE application, you can visit the [INSPIRE website](#) or go directly to the [Reviewr portal](#).

- ! **ARC cannot accept** faxed or mailed applications.
- ! **ARC cannot accept late applications.** If you encounter technical problems on the Reviewr portal, please contact SUD@arc.gov AND use the pop-up chat in the Reviewr platform (bottom right-hand corner) that connects applicants to their technical support team. Note: Applicants who are having issues in the final hours of submission on March 10, 2025, may not get their issues resolved; thus, ARC encourages applicants to submit early to avoid any technical problems.

Application Validation

ARC will check the application to make sure it is complete, accurate, and meets all eligibility requirements. **ARC will reject applications that are missing required information, contain critical errors, and/or fail to demonstrate eligibility.**

(6) Application Review Information

Your INSPIRE application will be reviewed by state and federal partners. It will also be reviewed by external subject matter experts focused on SUD recovery and economic development. Learn more about [ARC's federal-state-local structure](#).

Risk Review

Before awarding a grant, ARC will assess the risk of all INSPIRE Initiative applicants. ARC will check to see if the project will be properly managed, operated, and maintained, in accordance with ARC and federal requirements. See 40 U.S.C. 14322(b), ARC's [Project Guidelines Section 4](#), and 2 CFR § 200.206(b).

As part of the risk assessment, ARC may review information about the applicant in the System for Award Management (SAM) to evaluate the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and performance history with federal grants (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). Applicants can review and comment on their own information in SAM, which ARC will consider when performing this evaluation.

ARC can reject an application if the risk assessment raises concerns about the applicant's ability to meet the grant's objectives and requirements.

(7) Award Notices

If your INSPIRE application is not being considered for funding—ARC will notify you no later than 120 days after the application submission deadline of March 10, 2025.

If your INSPIRE application is being considered for funding—After your application has been reviewed, ARC will inform you that your project is being considered for funding. You will also receive an automated email from ARC's grants management system confirming that ARC staff members are reviewing your application. In this email, you will also receive a project number that ARC has assigned to the application.

- ! **IMPORTANT NOTE: Receiving communication/emails/notifications from ARC does not mean that your INSPIRE project has officially been approved for funding.** There are multiple steps, reviews, and approvals required before final funding approval. Additionally, ARC does not provide pre-award funds, and if an applicant begins project activities before the approved grant start date, they do so at their own risk.

ARC reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with applicants selected to receive awards. As such, ARC may request that you remove or adjust certain proposed costs. ARC may also ask you to adjust objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information related to any aspect of the application.

Funding approval—The ARC Federal Co-Chair and respective state official provide final approval of INSPIRE project funding. An electronic grant agreement must be officially signed before INSPIRE funding is valid.

(8) Post-Award Administration

Please familiarize yourself with ARC's grant administration and management requirements here: [ARC Grant Administration Manual for Non-Construction Grants](#).

Regulations, restrictions, and requirements. ARC awards are subject to the requirements of the [Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, as amended \(40 U.S.C. §§ 14101–14704\)](#), and the [ARC Code](#) (see Chapter 8). They are also subject to many of the same regulations, restrictions, and requirements as other federal grants. These include but are not limited to 2 CFR 200; 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).

Reporting. Recipients of non-construction grants must adhere to ARC reporting requirements, which are detailed in the [ARC Grant Administration Manual for Non-Construction Grants](#). However, ARC reserves the right to change the reporting time periods and, depending on the nature of the project, may request additional data related to project progress and milestones.

General Disclosures

ARC INSPIRE Initiative awards will be made only to the extent that funds are available. Releasing this NOSA does not obligate ARC to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds. Regardless of any other information in this NOSA, ARC reserves the right to award grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts to organizations that best meet the requirements of the NOSA. ARC solely reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses received from this NOSA; to negotiate with all qualified sources; or to cancel this NOSA (any part or all) if it is in the interests of ARC to do so.

Note: ARC will not reimburse any costs associated with preparing a response to this NOSA. Consultants that are legally barred from receiving federal contracts or contract payments may not work with INSPIRE grant recipients 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

Applicants may choose to use a 15% de minimis indirect cost rate or a different indirect cost rate that has been approved by another federal agency. The rate may be applied against the Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) base (see [2 CFR §200.1 "Modified Total Direct Cost \(MTDC\)](#)). Please review [2 CFR §200.414](#) and the budget narrative (above) to determine the appropriate rate and calculation of your indirect costs.

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: Application and Program Development 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](#)

Appendix 9: Background on the INSPIRE Initiative

- [INSPIRE Initiative background](#)