Frequently Asked Questions

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Submission Requirements

Can an applicant submit more than one application or letter of intent?
No. An entity may only submit one application/letter of intent as the lead applicant/grantee. However, an entity may be a named partner or beneficiary in more than one application and could receive funding (i.e. subgrants) on more than one project. There may also be instances where a parent organization submits more than one application – see next question below.

Can an applicant submit more than one application as a parent organization for its affiliate organizations or act as a fiscal agent for another entity?
There may be instances when a parent organization submits more than one application/letter of intent for more than one of its affiliate entities. This is allowable. An organization may also act as the fiscal agent for more than one entity.

How much detail is needed for the LOI?
The LOI is intended to be a summary or a preview of the proposed project, so less detail is needed in comparison to the application. However, please highlight main project activities you are requesting funding for in the Summary of Project section. Summary of Project should be limited to 1000 characters.

Do we need to have a UEI to submit the LOI?
No, but it will be required to submit the full application.

Can you send our organization a copy of our LOI that was submitted?
Yes. Please contact READY@arc.gov to request a copy of the LOI.

Allowable Costs

How do you define "construction"?
Grants to Grow does not support construction costs, which includes building new, or renovating existing physical structures, including digging and installing new pipe, building new buildings or roads or sidewalks, and rehabilitation of building exteriors. In general, activities that require a building permit often signal construction-related activities.

Can grant funds be used to expand an existing program to new beneficiaries/ communities?
If the expansion of the program proposes to build the capacity of the community/beneficiary, this would be considered an eligible use of grant funds / project idea.

Can a nonprofit organization submit a Grants to Grow application for a project that directly benefits for-profit businesses?
An entity that operates for profit may not directly apply for Grant to Grow funding or receive a subgrant from a primary grantee. However, for-profit entities may bid on open contracts that a grantee may issue per federal procurement regulations.

A Grants to Grow project could include indirect benefits to a for-profit entity, such as projects that include workforce training, small business development, and entrepreneur support.

Is the LOI binding?
The NOSA states in the 'Letter of Intent' section: "Submitted applications for READY Grants to Grow funding that substantially differ from the information included in the received LOI will be disqualified during the review process." Your full application must align with your invited Letter of Intent in terms of project activities, structure, and budget.

Match

Should the match rate be calculated using the county where the applicant is located or the county(ies) that will be served by the project?
Generally, the match rate should be calculated based on the county(ies) being served by the project. However, the project's program priorities (individual, organizational, and/or community capacity building) should also be considered when determining the required match rate. If the project is focused solely on organizational capacity, the match rate will be calculated using the county where the applicant is located. If the project includes community capacity building, the counties that will be served by the project should be incorporated into the match rate calculation. Please refer to ARC's Match Rate Calculator as a helpful resource.

Can we apply match from a grant that began earlier than our proposed Grants to Grow project but addresses components in the proposed scope of work scope?
Only costs incurred during the Grants to Grow project period as indicated on your executed grant agreement with ARC, including costs designated as match, can be applied towards the project.

Can building materials be included in the budget and used as match for construction costs?
No. If there are construction costs included in the match, ARC considers the project to be construction related which is not an eligible Grants to Grow project.

Can ARC funds be used as match for other federal grants?
ARC funding can be used to meet match requirements for other federal grants as long as the other federal agency approves. Additionally, ARC will accept other federal funds as an allowable matching source. Please note that ARC funds cannot be used to match another ARC project.

Is there a limit on the amount of match designated as in-kind?
No.

When calculating our match rate, we noticed the map linked on the Grants to Grow NOSA refers to FY2024 county economic status, but ARC's website references FY25 mapping. Which should be used since we have a county that is classified differently depending on the year?
FY25 designations will apply.

My organization is eligible to apply for a match waiver. The project's service area includes 6 counties, 3 of which are distressed. Does this meet the requirement of serving a majority of distressed counties?

Yes, if the project benefits a service area where at least half or more of the counites are distressed, and the applicant is an eligible entity as stated in the NOSA, it meets the match waiver requirement.

Do the funding ceilings for planning (up to $100,000) and implementation (up to $500,000) projects refer to the total project cost or the grant amount being requested from ARC?

The funding ceilings refer to the grant amount the applicant is requesting from ARC.

Are there tools available to ensure our match rate calculation is accurate?

Applicants may access ARC's Match Rate Calculator as a reference to calculate match requirements. Additional tips for calculating the required match, are shared in this video (video applies to both POWER and READY match funding requirements).

When does match need to be secured and can it be spent throughout the entire period of performance?

Resources listed as match must be confirmed or accessible by June 30, 2025. Grantees must spend all their match during the project's period of performance in order for it to be applied toward the grant project, and not before or after.

Letters of commitment from match sources must include a detailed explanation of match sources and amounts contributed for the implementation of project. Letters of commitment may be submitted at the time of application submission or up until June 30, 2025.

Does ARC accept other federal grants as match?

Yes, ARC will accept other federal funds as match. Applicants should ensure the other federal agency does not restrict their grants from being applied as match.

What are some other sources of matching funds that ARC accepts?

Matching sources may be non-federal, other federal, or a combination of sources, including in-kind sources. The applicant may apply matching funds from their own internal operating budget if applicable, as well from project partners, the public sector (including federal grants) and private sector.

Project Design and Timelines

We are planning to design a new project in Q1 of 2025 with the intention to kick off implementation in Q3/4 of 2025. Should we apply for implementation or planning?

We can't advise on how to sequence your projects, however, proposed projects should include timelines that begin on or after Sept. 1, 2025.

Additionally, planning projects should only include planning-related activities, whereas implementation projects may include minor, time-bound planning activities that assist with implementing a solution to the capacity challenge.

As a reminder, applicants may only submit one application / letter of intent, therefore, applicants must determine their approach of planning versus implementation at the time of submitting the letter of intent.

What if starting in September impacts the ability to successfully complete the project (e.g., winter weather up in the mountains)?
Grants to Grow project timelines should have a start date no earlier than September 1, 2025. Applicants could propose a later start date (e.g., March 2026) to accommodate specific needs. Additionally, once a project is funded and underway, ARC considers no-cost project extensions if additional time is needed to successfully complete a project.

How can I get clarification on if my project idea is eligible for Grants to Grow funding?
In order to be fair to all applicants, ARC cannot provide guidance or feedback on project ideas at this time. However, examples of project ideas are included in the NOSA and the Capacity Building Projects document. The document does not include an exhaustive list of eligible concepts but can be used as a helpful resource to gauge alignment with Grants to Grow projects.

When considering a potential project concept, applicants should consider how the project aims to improve capacity of an organization or community and contributes to the economic development of the Appalachian region through ARC's investment priorities.

Will projects that propose to serve multiple counties be given priority over a project that will serve one county?
No.

It was mentioned that beneficiaries must be known for implementation projects led by intermediaries. Do we need to identify specific organizations by name, or can we identify them more generally?
For an implementation project, applicants should have completed some basic planning components that allow the implementation project to be "shovel-ready". While some minor, time-bound planning activities can occur in an implementation project, applicants should be able to identify specific beneficiaries of the project, explain how they identify as "low capacity", how they support underserved groups/areas, and how they engage in work that advances the economic vitality in their communities. Additionally, implementation projects must include at least three letters of support that demonstrate the need, value, and impact of the proposed project. Obtaining letters of support from identified beneficiaries will help demonstrate need/demand for the project and the value/impact it will have on the organizations and communities served.

While applicants should be able to identify a specific beneficiary at the time of application, it is possible that a beneficiary or group of beneficiaries may be described more broadly in the application and additional beneficiaries could be identified during the period of performance. If a beneficiary or group of beneficiaries

is broadly described in the application, the applicant should still address how the beneficiaries identify as low capacity, support underserved groups/areas, and advance the economic vitality of their communities.

Applicants are not required to identify specific beneficiaries in the letter of intent; however, competitive full applications will be able to identify specific beneficiaries and provide evidence of demand for the project accordingly.

Will ARC approve portions of a proposal for funding or does the proposed project need to be approved in its entirety?
Projects will be reviewed and scored in their entirety and according to the scoring criteria published in the NOSA. Additionally, ARC may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information pertaining to any aspect of the application. 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.

General Information

Our organization and community have been impacted by Hurricane Helene. Is ARC offering accommodations to assist applicants in the grant submission process?
Organizations impacted by Hurricane Helene may request an extension for the letter of intent that is currently due November 1. To request an extension, applicants should email READY@arc.gov or call 202.884.7769 by 5:00 p.m. ET on Friday, November 1, 2024. The request should include the name and address of the lead applicant and a brief (2-3 sentences) rationale for the extension. Please note that complete applications will still be due Friday, February 14, 2025.

Will grantees receive up-front, advance payments to cover anticipated project costs?
In general, ARC operates on a cost reimbursement schedule for allowable incurred costs. However, advance payments may be requested and the advance period should align with the ARC's four-month reporting cycles. Grantees should work with their project coordinators once a grant agreement is issued to discuss the process for requesting advance payments.

Will ARC offer future offerings of the READY "pillar program" for LDD's, local governments, nonprofits, and community foundations?
ARC anticipates launching another round of READY nonprofits in January 2025 and local governments late 2025. There are no plans to announce the other pillar programs, however, future rounds of Grants to Grow are anticipated.

Please watch the pre-application webinar for additional Q&A.