



Transportation Projects

This document provides specific guidance for **transportation projects** per ARC's Strategic Plan Goal 3.4. Applications may involve multiple activities as part of a single project; ARC encourages applicants to review the specific guidance for each type of activity included in an application.

All application guidance is grounded in the goals and principles of [ARC's current strategic plan](#), which emphasize strategic focus, collaboration, sustainability and measurable impact in ARC investments.

ARC investment in **transportation projects** targets Appalachia's inland waterways and ports, roadways, recreation trails, railways, bridges, airports, pipelines and more to improve safety and economic competitiveness. Ultimately, investments in transportation projects aim to link Appalachia's residents, businesses, and communities with each other, the nation, and indeed the world while improving accessibility, public safety and climate resilience, creating jobs, and delivering a more equitable future.

Infrastructure investments and integrated economic development plans offer some of the largest returns on investment for economic and community prosperity. While there may be some components of **transportation projects** that align with any one of ARC's strategic goals, transportation projects are generally categorized under Goal 3 of its strategic plan.

Examples of eligible transportation projects include, but are not limited to:

- Innovative projects in the areas of advanced technology and transportation modalities e.g., strategic development plans for incorporating new aviation technology, programs to build and test automated vehicle design, commercial space transportation, etc.
- Port, dock, and other boat launch-site improvements to bolster trade and tourism and serve the local economy.
- Hanger construction to expand airport capacity.
- Warehouse expansion and material-handling improvements for rail, port, and barge.
- The creation of new transit or rail lines to expand service and coverage, or extending preexisting lines, to link to new or redeveloped industrial sites and other major points of trade, industry, or commerce.
- Rail upgrades, replacing aged and deteriorated infrastructure components including rail spurs, lines, rail cars etc. to improve system safety, efficiency, and resiliency.
- Equipment purchases that will facilitate new or on-going operations as well as improve the safety and efficiency of system, machine, or process.
- Research, planning, feasibility studies, and related non-construction activities to identify and assess opportunities for future project implementation.

ARC's Local Access Road (LAR) Program

ARC has a separate program that utilizes various sources of funding for local access road projects that are administered and managed by US and State DOTs. There are guidelines and application requirements that are specific to LAR projects. Please see <https://www.arc.gov/local-access-road-program/> for more information.

Key Principles of ARC Transportation Investments

As outlined in ARC's strategic plan, activities should be strategic, sustainable, collaborative, and impactful.

More Information

For general guidance on how to develop a complete and competitive application for ARC project funding, all applicants should refer to the application framework and instructions detailed in the [Checklist for ARC Non-Construction Project Applications](#) form or the [Checklist for ARC Construction Project Applications](#) form, as appropriate, available in the applicant resources section of our website.

Applicants should also consult their ARC State Program Manager*, their state's Appalachian Development Plan* and Annual Strategy Statement* for additional information.

*This information can be found [HERE](#) by navigating to the page and clicking on the appropriate state link.

Strategic:

- Applicants should consider how proposed projects will address problems to existing systems or take advantage of unmet need or opportunity.
- Project proposals should indicate a strong familiarity with data on related and comparable transportation systems, devices, and related materials (coverage, costs, impact, etc.), number of households and businesses served and improved in a service area, industry expansion and impacts on employment, planned developments – any factor that demonstrates a project’s need or demand.
- Project design considers other regional infrastructure systems and is part of an integrated approach to improve the safety, efficiency, and expanse of transportation systems in Appalachia.
- Project design should reflect awareness of the links between adequate transportation infrastructure, commerce and trade, as well as general economic development opportunities.
- Project proposals need to demonstrate a strong technical understanding of the design, cost, and schedule of the transportation project.

Sustainable:

- Projects should be designed to become self-sustaining after the ARC grant period has closed. Applicants need to consider how the project will be maintained after ARC funds are used and address other factors that could affect sustainability.
- Qualified staff and on-going financial resources are imperative to project sustainability and need to be well documented in the project narrative through an asset management plan.
- Applicants should assess whether ARC investment in the project could be used to effectively leverage more resources from state or federal programs, private foundations, or public and private enterprises.

Collaborative:

- ARC encourages the consideration of public-private partnerships in the development and delivery of transportation improvements.
- Any community or group that has interest in or will benefit from a proposed project are natural partners and should be offered a role in project planning.
- Some partners may participate in the project’s financing, implementation, or administration, and may be brought in as partners through contract or procurement. Examples include engineering firms providing preliminary budget reports, planning districts, county boards, businesses, organizations, and institutions that will benefit after the project is completed.

Impactful:

- All project proposals should include performance targets. Applicants should refer to ARC’s Guide to Performance Measures at <https://www.arc.gov/resource/guide-to-arc-project-performance-measures/> for information on determining appropriate project measures.
- All measures must be trackable. Applications should include an estimate of appropriate performance measures that will be achieved within three (3) years of the project’s completion. Current impacts are reported at the time of project close-out.
- Typical efficiency, output, and outcome measures for transportation projects include specific infrastructure calculations (i.e., # of linear feet to be installed) businesses and jobs created or retained, leveraged private investment (LPI), communities served and improved. If job creation/retention or LPI dollars are part of the performance targets, letters from affected businesses are required.

Other Considerations

- Costs associated with transportation projects are often higher than anticipated and delays in obtaining necessary materials are frequent. These contingencies should be factored into the project budget and schedule and anticipated as likely challenges.
- Projects intended to increase a system’s resiliency to natural disaster, security breach, staff turnover, unexpected economic downturn, or other crisis must pair general benefits (i.e., reducing the likelihood of negative impacts) with clear ARC Performance Measures as described under the Impactful section.

Basic Agency Requirements (For Construction Projects Only)

ARC does not administer any construction projects, including those involving transportation. ARC operates in partnership with federal and state agencies under an MOU to manage federal construction grants throughout the region.

It is the applicant's responsibility to secure a letter from the appropriate federal or state agency, known as a basic agency letter, indicating their willingness to administer ARC funds for any proposed infrastructure project. A list of eligible basic agencies can be found at <https://www.arc.gov/basic-agency-partners/>.

Grantees are encouraged to reach out directly to their basic agency to ensure the proposed implementation scope and schedule is acceptable to the basic agency prior to submitting the construction grant application.

Additional Resources

- Research Report: Freight, Trade, and Economic Development <https://www.arc.gov/report/network-appalachia-freight-trade-and-economic-development/>
- Research Report: Traffic Safety in Appalachia <https://www.arc.gov/report/traffic-safety-in-appalachia/>
- Research Report: Access in Appalachia <https://www.arc.gov/report/transportation-access-in-appalachia/>
- Intermodal Transportation Program Spotlight <https://www.arc.gov/freight-management-intermodal-transportation/>
- ARC's Current Strategic Plan <https://www.arc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Appalachia-Envisioned-ARC-Strategic-Plan-FY-2022-2026.pdf>
- ARC Applicant Resources <https://www.arc.gov/applicant-resources/>
- Information Specific to ARC States <https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-states/>