



Patrick Morrisey
Office of the Governor

January 15, 2025

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

Dear Director McBride:

I am pleased to send for your review the State of West Virginia's 2026-2030 Appalachian Development Plan and Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Strategy Statement. The Development Plan and Strategy Statement set forth my goals, objectives, and priorities for the West Virginia ARC program and the needs upon which the goals, objectives, and priorities are based.

Please be advised that the Development Plan and Strategy Statement shall be my plan of record until otherwise notified and are consistent with the Appalachian Regional Commission's Code Section 5.3 and 5.4.

If you should have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact Jennifer Ferrell, ARC State Alternate, at 304-558-2234.

Sincerely,

Patrick Morrisey

Patrick Morrisey
Governor

Enclosure

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

FY 2026

ANNUAL STRATEGY STATEMENT

for the

**APPALACHIAN REGIONAL
COMMISSION**

Patrick Morrisey, Governor

Prepared by the

**West Virginia Division of
Economic Development**

FY 2026 West Virginia ARC Strategy Statement

Introduction

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

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

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

Federal, State, and Local Partners

The West Virginia ARC program works closely with several federal partners, particularly with water, sewer, and facility improvement projects: the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development; the Department of Housing and Urban Development; the Economic Development Administration; and the Environmental Protection Agency. State partners include the Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council; the Department of Environmental Protection; Department of Tourism; and the Division of Highways.

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

ARC Grant Programs

ARC operates several different grant programs, each with its own priorities, timeline, and application process. All of the programs are focused on economic development, which includes providing basic infrastructure such as water, wastewater, site development, job training and workforce development, and business development. The principal grant programs include the following:

Area Development: Area development funds are allocated to each of the 13 ARC states. The states establish priorities for their area development funds as well as the application process and timeline for receiving applications. States must follow the ARC Code and overall ARC Strategic Plan but otherwise exercise considerable flexibility in setting priorities and in establishing the application process. For area development funding, applicants apply to the state where their project is located. Area development funds can support construction, non-construction, and planning activities.

More information on the West Virginia ARC area development program can be found at www.wvcad.org/infrastructure/appalachian-regional-commission.

POWER: POWER is an acronym for Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization. POWER offers grant funding for projects that assist communities and regions that have been affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries. For POWER funding, ARC funds are not allocated to the ARC states; instead, applicants apply directly to ARC. POWER funds can support construction, non-construction, and planning activities. The current priorities of the program include the following:

- **Fostering Entrepreneurial Activities:** project examples include increasing access to capital for small and medium-sized businesses; supporting STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) initiatives; providing business and entrepreneurship education and training.
- **Developing Industry Clusters:** project examples include supporting the development of high-tech manufacturing, coal technology development, and food-based businesses; strengthening tourism and outdoor recreation assets and facilities.
- **Workforce Development:** project examples include job-training; training that leads to a specified credential or advanced degree; increasing labor participation rates through projects that target underemployed workers or recruit and train people who have dropped out of the workforce.
- **Broadband:** project examples include construction and deployment of new broadband and other telecommunications infrastructure.

More information on the ARC POWER program, including a list of all previously awarded grants, can be found at www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/power.

INSPIRE: The Investments Supporting Partnerships In Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative addresses the substance use disorder (SUD) crisis across Appalachia by creating or expanding a recovery ecosystem that will lead to workforce entry or re-entry. Successful projects will support the post-treatment to employment continuum, which could include investments in healthcare networks that support SUD recovery professionals, recovery-focused job training programs, as well as initiatives designed to coordinate, or link, recovery services and training that support the recovery to work ecosystem, among others. For INSPIRE funding, ARC funds are not allocated to the ARC states; instead, applicants apply directly to ARC. INSPIRE funds can only be used for non-construction and planning activities (no construction).

More information on the ARC INSPIRE program, including a list of all previously funded INSPIRE projects, can be found at www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/sud.

ARISE: ARISE (Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies) provides support for multistate regional economic and community development projects throughout the Appalachian Regional Commission region. ARISE projects must be multi-state (projects must benefit 2 or more of the ARC states) and can support construction, non-construction, and planning activities. The goal of ARISE is to support projects that aim at large-scale, regional economic transformation.

Applicants that are requesting ARC ARISE funding for projects that involve West Virginia must show in detail how the project will benefit the state, including measurable project outcomes that will be realized within state boundaries, the amount of funding invested in the state through the project, and specific state-based partners that the applicant is working with.

More information on the ARC ARISE program can be found at www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/arise.

West Virginia ARC Funding Priorities for FY 2026

Funding priorities for the FY 2026 West Virginia ARC area development program include:

- basic infrastructure such as water, wastewater, and stormwater (**high priority**)
- industrial and commercial site development (**high priority**)
- workforce development
- tourism and outdoor recreation

By statute, ARC funds must be used for public benefit. Therefore, ARC funds cannot be used to benefit or improve private property. Requests for water, wastewater, or stormwater projects can only be considered for ARC funding if the utility system is owned by a public entity (local government) or quasi-public entity such as a public service district. Likewise, projects that involve commercial or industrial site development can only be considered for ARC funding if the site is owned by a public, quasi-public, or nonprofit entity. Projects that develop private land or land owned by a for-profit business are not eligible for ARC funding.

For the POWER, ARISE, and INSPIRE programs, West Virginia's priorities include:

- Workforce development
- Energy projects that lead to job/business creation
- Outdoor recreation and tourism development
- Expanding access to capital for business creation and expansion
- Entrepreneurial development and education initiatives
- Increasing access to broadband
- Projects that capitalize upon emerging economic opportunities and sectors in the state

For all of the programs identified above, West Virginia reserves the right to recommend projects outside of the priorities listed above as needed to respond to special economic opportunities or unanticipated community and economic needs. Recommended projects outside of the priorities listed above must still be consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in ARC's Strategic Plan.

Economic Opportunities

West Virginia has a wealth of natural amenities, marking it as one of the prime outdoor tourism destinations east of the Mississippi. The state's proximity to major east coast population centers makes it ideally positioned for tourism growth and development in future years. This potential has been enhanced recently with the designation of the nation's newest national park, the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, designated in 2020. The park preserves over 70,000 acres for activities such as hiking, whitewater rafting, rock climbing, camping, and fishing.

The Hatfield-McCoy Trail System is an award-winning system of off-road vehicle trails in southern West Virginia that has seen 21 consecutive years of growth in rider permits. The system currently has 13 different trails across nine counties. The trails have spurred new business growth in restaurants and lodging facilities.

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

There are also economic development opportunities in key economic sectors in the state such as aerospace, chemical/polymer industry, and agriculture. Data centers represent another opportunity in the state: West Virginia is within a day's drive of half of the U.S. population, including Washington DC and major federal institutions. In the energy sector, West Virginia is a leading producer of coal, which presents opportunities in developing technologies to utilize coal and coal byproducts in construction, manufacturing, and agriculture. In the forest products industry, West Virginia is primed for development: the state ranks third nationally in percentage of forested land and is the second leading hardwood state in the nation.

Economic Challenges

- **Lack of adequate infrastructure:** There is a critical need for investment in infrastructure such as water, wastewater, and storm water. The American Society of Civil Engineers has given the state a D in its 2020 infrastructure report card for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. The West Virginia Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council, in its 2023 Needs Assessment, noted that current funding needs in the state for water and wastewater infrastructure are approximately \$1 billion and \$1.3 billion respectively.
- **Workforce Development:** West Virginia's labor force participation rate is one of the lowest in the nation. Factors driving the low participation rate include the state's aging population, poor overall health indicators such as smoking, heart disease, and obesity, and comparatively low rates of educational attainment (secondary and post-secondary).
- **Lack of flat land:** West Virginia's rugged terrain inhibits the development of land and sites needed for economic development. As compared to its neighboring states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, the state has fewer developable sites, limiting its ability to attract business and industrial investment. Continued development of location-ready sites with adequate infrastructure is much needed across the state.

ARC Distressed Counties

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

For FY 2026, West Virginia has 11 distressed counties. Those counties are Braxton, Calhoun, Clay, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, Roane, Webster, Wirt, and Wyoming. Of these counties, 5 are core distressed counties: Calhoun, Clay, Lincoln, McDowell, and Webster. These 5 counties have always been designated by ARC as distressed since the designations began in 1983. Developing viable and strategic projects in these core distressed counties is a particularly high priority for the West Virginia ARC program.

The following table, derived from the Economic Development Capacity Index recently developed by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and Argonne National Laboratory, lists the FY 2026 distressed counties in West Virginia across 5 economic development capacity areas:

County	Economic Development Capacity Areas				
	Human Capital	Financial	Industry	Infrastructure	Institutions-Partnerships
Braxton	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Moderate
Calhoun	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Low
Clay	Low	Limited	Low	Low	Elevated
Lincoln	Limited	Limited	Limited	Low	Limited
Logan	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Low	Limited
McDowell	Low	Limited	Limited	Low	Moderate
Mingo	Low	Limited	Limited	Low	Limited
Roane	Limited	Limited	Elevated	Limited	Limited
Webster	Limited	Limited	Limited	Low	Limited
Wirt	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Limited	Low
Wyoming	Limited	Limited	Elevated	Low	Moderate

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

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

Special Objectives and Strategies for ARC-Designated Distressed Counties

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

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

Strategies:

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

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

Strategies:

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

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

Strategies:

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

Objective: Promote downtown revitalization.

Strategies:

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

West Virginia ARC Program and USDA Rural Partners Network

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

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

Project Solicitation, Review, and Selection Process

West Virginia Area Development Program

General Information

- As stated above, the highest priority for West Virginia ARC area development funds are infrastructure projects (water and sewer) located in ARC-designated distressed counties and site development.
- Information on the West Virginia ARC program, including application instructions and forms, can be found online at www.wvcad.org/resources, under the Appalachian Regional Commission heading.

- Applicants must keep in mind that the ARC is an economic development program, and therefore funding requests must focus on economic and community development—conservation, social services, police and public safety, and cultural activities are generally not funded.
- Eligible applicants include public entities, non-profit organizations, and non-profit educational and medical facilities. Individuals and for-profit businesses are not eligible for ARC assistance. ARC funds must be used for public benefit and cannot improve private property.
- The West Virginia ARC program has no funding limits for construction or non-construction projects. However, applicants should be aware that funds are limited and are advised to contact the ARC State Program Manager before submitting an application
- ARC non-construction projects are funded for up to two years but may be extended beyond that time depending upon project performance or unforeseen developments
- Research projects are generally not funded
- All ARC projects are subject to federal regulations at 2 CFR 200. Applicants need to be aware of these requirements. All ARC funded construction projects are also subject to federal environmental review requirements, Davis-Bacon regulations, and Build America Buy America requirements.

Ineligible Activities

The following activities are ineligible for West Virginia ARC funding:

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

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

Application Process for Area Development Funds

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

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

ARC approval of area development projects is a two-step process: applicants apply to the states for review and approval and only those projects recommended by the state are forwarded to ARC for final review and approval.

Application Process Timeline for FY2026 (tentative)

ARC Application Opened: January 2026

Application Deadline: March 2026

State recommendations announced: June 2026

Submission of Applications to ARC Headquarters: June 2026

Distressed Counties Priority

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

The review criteria for all area development applications are as follows:

Threshold Criteria

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

- a) ARC Eligibility: All projects recommended to the Commission for final approval must demonstrate that they will contribute to the achievement of one of the Commission's strategic goals and that the project relates to one or more of the goals, objectives, and strategies set forth in the state's development plan and strategy statement.
- b) Project Readiness: All projects recommended to the Commission for final approval must provide reasonable assurance of the availability of matching funds for the project scope of work.
- c) Project Approach: All projects recommended to the Commission for final approval must demonstrate a scope of work that is realistic and viable.

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

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

Competitive Review Criteria

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

- a. Degree of Need: Projects in ARC-designated distressed counties and distressed areas will receive higher priority. Multi-county projects that include ARC-designated distressed, and clearly demonstrate how those distressed counties will directly benefit from the project activities, will also receive high priority.
- b. Targeted Priority: Projects that address one or more of the targeted investment priorities outlined at the beginning of this strategy statement will receive higher priority.
- c. Investment Impact: Projects that demonstrate strong economic development impacts, provide long-term capital improvements for economic development, or enhance already existing economic and community development efforts will receive higher priority. Strategic characteristics of a project that increase investment impact include the following:

Infrastructure projects that:

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

Non-infrastructure projects that:

- Focus on enhancing economic development in a community or region
 - Address a compelling and documented need that hinders economic development or community quality of life
 - Provide benefits on a continuing rather than a temporary basis
 - Increase local collaboration or regional partnerships
 - Strengthen the ability of local communities to undertake economic and community development activities through planning, technical assistance, and other activities
- d. Investment Linkage: Projects that demonstrate how they complement existing community and economic development efforts, plans, and strategies in the project area will receive higher priority.

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

State Matching Requirements and Assistance Limits

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

- Projects located in designated Distressed Counties or Local Access Road Projects (except in Competitive Counties) may be funded up to 80 percent of the eligible project costs.
- Projects located in designated At-Risk Counties may be funded up to 70 percent of the eligible project costs.
- Statewide projects may be funded up to 70 percent of the eligible project cost.
- ARC assistance is limited to 30 percent of eligible costs for projects located in a designated Competitive County.

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

- If there is a distressed county in a project:

- and at least half the counties are distressed, the project may be funded at up to 80% of project costs;
 - and at least half the counties are in some combination of distressed and at-risk, ARC assistance can be the higher of 70% of project costs or the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project; and
 - but fewer than half the counties are distressed, ARC assistance can be the higher of 50% of project costs or the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project.
- If there is no competitive county or attainment county in a project, and at least half the counties are at-risk, the project may be funded at up to 70% of project costs.

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

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

West Virginia ARC FY 2026 State Strategies

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

ARC Goal 1: Business Development. Strengthen Appalachia's economy through investments in entrepreneurship and business development.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARC Goal 2: Workforce Development. Expand and strengthen systems that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.

ARC Objective 2.1: Develop and support educational institutions and employer-driven programs that provide the building blocks for skills development and long-term employment success.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARC Objective 2.3: Develop a network of employment supports to help Appalachians, including those in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD), enter and remain in the workforce.

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARC Goal 3: Infrastructure. Ensure access to reliable, affordable, and resilient infrastructure and utilities to improve residents' quality of life, grow existing businesses and attract new industries to the Region.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARC Objective 3.3: Support activities that enable America's energy dominance through strategies that emphasize affordable, reliable, and domestic energy solutions.

State Strategy 3.3.1: Support planning, development, and implementation efforts that capitalize the state's energy resources and assets for economic growth.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARC Goal 4: Tourism and Outdoor Recreation. Strengthen Appalachia’s economic development potential by investing in revenue-generating tourism assets and outdoor recreation industry growth.

ARC Objective 4.1: Invest in the development of vibrant downtowns to drive revenue for businesses and create job opportunities.

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

ARC Objective 4.2: Invest in economic development initiatives that leverage Appalachian communities’ unique arts and cultural heritage traditions to bolster regional tourism.

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

ARC Objective 4.3: Develop, manage, and expand outdoor recreation assets for visitors and residents to generate revenue and produce employment opportunities.

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

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

ARC Goal 5: Community Resources and Skill-building. Invest in economic development skill-building, training, technical assistance and resources that help Appalachian leaders, organizations, and communities strengthen the regional economy—now and into the future.

ARC Objective 5.1: Invest in economic development skill-building and resources to help local leaders and organizations identify and champion collaborative strategies to address Appalachia’s most pressing economic needs.

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

ARC Objective 5.2: Invest in training and resources that support communities, local governments, and municipalities with strategic planning, preparedness, action planning and implementation for long-term economic vitality.

State Strategy 5.2.1: Support planning, analysis, and technical assistance activities for local and regional organizations and units of government to capitalize on economic development opportunities and assets, address critical needs, or improve community quality of life.

ARC Objective 5.3: Invest in resources and skill-building to help local development districts (LDDs) and state partners implement operational efficiencies and strategic partnerships that advance the regional economy.

State Strategy 5.3.1: Provide support to regional planning and development councils in the state that will improve their ability to plan, implement, and complete projects.