Appalachian Regional Commission

Program Guidelines   September 2016

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Section I – Introduction

A. General

These guidelines provide guidance to Local Development Districts (LDDs) and to potential sponsors of projects for funding requested from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) (Refer to Exhibit I) and assist in preparing applications for funding. In addition to general information on technical assistance contacts, this document provides a detailed statement of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's policies for ARC projects (including categories of eligible projects), and instructions for completing the application.

The seven Local Developments Districts (Refer to Exhibit II) are key agencies in the project development and review process in Pennsylvania. They provide technical assistance to local project sponsors and prepare priority lists of recommended projects for consideration by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) in its preparation of the annual ARC State Strategy. All potential projects sponsors should contact the appropriate LDD identified on page 7 prior to preparing the project summary or application. The project proposal package should be completed in close consultation with the LDD.

The LDD will identify a basic federal or state-administering agency for the proposed project, if applicable. Potential project sponsors should be aware that all projects must:

- Implement a specific strategy for addressing one of the five goals in ARC's Strategic Plan.

- Demonstrate consistency with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Appalachian Regional Commission's State Development Plan and any appropriate LDD or regional planning documents. The LDD or DCED's Center for Strategic Partnerships can provide further information concerning these strategies and plans and their relationship to specific project proposals.

B. Eligibility

Following are examples of eligible projects that may be considered for funding if the activity is listed as a priority in the Pennsylvania Annual State Strategy Statement. Eligible projects include but are not limited to:

1. Technical assistance projects that:

    a. Provide services to a community or region to enhance business development.

    b. Meet the criteria for immediate, permanent job creation/retention or strategic plan implementation.

2. Infrastructure development including site preparation, water, sewer, broadband, or other needed improvements.

3. Local Access Roads.

4. Local government assistance projects providing for service consolidation, management assistance or any other arrangements directed to more effective delivery of programs and services.

5. Development of business incubator or multi-tenant facilities.

6. Destination or asset-based tourism.

C. General Program Requirements

All ARC assisted projects must:

1. Relate to one goal, objective, and strategy set forth in the approved State Appalachian Development Plan.

2. Provide reasonable assurance that the project maximizes all available federal and non-federal funds prior to seeking ARC resources.

3. Provide reasonable assurances that the project is consistent with applicable state and/or federal plans, policies, and regulations.

4. Be signed by the Governor or his designee.

5. Provide reasonable assurance of the availability of non-federal shares of projects costs where matching funds are required.

6. Provide reasonable assurance of management capacity to effectively carry out the project or program.

7. Contain detailed output and outcome measures by which project performance may be evaluated.

8. All applicants must be not-for profit entities and must work with one of the LDDs in the region and/or the Center for Strategic Partnerships. No ARC grants will be awarded to a for-profit entity.

Section II – The Application Process

A. General

The application process begins with submission of a Project Summary to the appropriate Local Development District or directly to the Center for Strategic Partnerships. Following a review of the Project Summary, a request for a complete application may be issued.

To assist the Commission with the project evaluations required by the Appalachian Regional Development Act and the Code, all applications for ARC assistance must provide the following information and explanations:

1. **Goals and Objectives** – Relate to one goal, objective and strategy set forth in the approved State Appalachian Development Plan.

2. **Purpose and Rationale for the Project** – Describe the principle purpose and rationale (need) for the project and the problems or issues the project addresses.

3. **Project Description** – Provide a detailed description of major project activities, including:

   a. **For a non-construction project** – Identify parties who will complete each activity, and provide a projected timeline for completion.

   b. **For a construction project** – Describe the scope of work and provide an estimated completion date along with identification of a Basic Federal Agency that agrees to manage the project on behalf of ARC.

4. **Relation to Other Local/Regional Activities** – Describe how the project meets the priorities of local and regional community or economic development plans. Describe efforts to coordinate the project with other area economic development activities.

5. **Geographic Area** – Identify and describe the geographic area to be served.

6. **Current and Future Economic Value** – Identify the number of employers or households to be served, the number of existing employees, projected number of jobs to be created, and the amount of funds committed by the private sector (if applicable). If possible, describe how the project will assist future economic development in the area.

7. **Benefits and Performance Measures** – All ARC projects must have documented output and outcome performance measures. Estimated measures are included in the project applications and actual measures are reported in the project closeouts. Every ARC project must have at least one output measure and one outcome measure by using the following definitions:

   a. Output measures are the activities or deliverables that will be accomplished as a result of a grant. outputs are generally describes as deliverables or milestones in a work plan or timeline. Outputs include things like the number of workers trained, square feet developed, or a new day visitors to a facility. Output sare generally accomplished during the life of the grant.

   b. Outcome measures are the measurable impacts or results of the work of the grant. Examples of outcomes include businesses created, costs reduced, jobs created, jobs retained, leveraged private investment (LPI), programs implemented, and telecom sites. Outcomes sometimes occur after the completion of the grant.

8. **Funding Need** – Detail the need for ARC funding and identify each funding source for the project.

B. Application Submission and Approval Procedures

1. All applications are initially screened to determine funding eligibility. The screening process assesses consistency with the Commission's five goals and strategies. This screening begins with submission and review of a Project Summary.

2. Completeness, readiness, need, prioritization and feasibility of the project are the determining factors in assessing proposals.

3. When recommending a particular project, the state also considers whether the project improves on a continuing basis the opportunities for employment, the average income or economic and social development of the area served.

4. Subsequent project status reports are submitted in accordance with ARC grant policies.

C. Application Evaluation Criteria

1. When evaluating and selecting projects for ARC assistance, Pennsylvania:

    a. Looks favorably at projects generating business formation and job creation;

    b. Supports projects that enhance the entrepreneurial vitality of the state.

    c. Seeks efforts that exhibit a high level of local and regional support.

D. Procedures

Contact the Local Development District in the project area to receive:

1. A copy of the PA ARC State Strategy and Development Plan,

2. Assistance developing the project summary and subsequent proposal, and

3. Technical assistance in completing necessary federal forms.

E. Limitations and Penalties

1. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania expects an ARC grant recipient to contribute its own resources to a project to the extent it is able to do so and aggressively seek additional non-ARC funding assistance.

2. Matching funds must be identified by amount and source with assurances that such funds are available.

3. Pennsylvania's ARC participation costs will generally be limited to 50 percent of project costs, with some exceptions as detailed in the PA ARC State Strategy.

F. Contact Information

Program inquiries should be directed to:

PA Department of Community & Economic Development
Center for Strategic Partnerships
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street, 4th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0225

Telephone: (717) 214-5395

Exhibit I

Appalachian Regional Commission Program

The Appalachian Regional Commission is thirteen state regional economic development agencies representing a unique partnership of federal, state, and local government. Grassroots participation is provided through consultation with multi-county planning and development organizations and Local Development Districts (LDDs) to support development of Appalachia's human and community infrastructure. The Appalachian region within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania consists of fifty-two counties served by the seven LDDs.

ARC funds are leveraged with other federal, state and local money to provide a broad array of small business assistance to the Appalachian region. The priorities for investment of ARC resources are deter-mined essentially to accomplish five long-term strategic goals for Pennsylvania's economy.

ARC Goals

Goal 1: Economic Opportunities
Invest in entrepreneurial and business development strategies that strengthen Appalachia's economy.

Goal 2: Ready Workforce
Increase the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents to work and succeed in Appalachia.

Goal 3: Critical Infrastructure
Invest in critical infrastructure—especially broadband; transportation, including the Appalachian Development Highway System; and water/wastewater systems.

Goal 4: Natural and Cultural Assets
Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by leveraging the Region's natural and cultural heritage assets.

Goal 5: Leadership and Community Capacity
Build the capacity and skills of current and next-generation leaders and organizations to innovate, collaborate, and advance community and economic development.

Exhibit II

Local Development Districts and the counties each serves:

Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance
1151 Oak Street
Pittston, PA 18640
570-655-5581; Fax 570-654-5137
(Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, Wayne)

North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission
651 Montmorenci Avenue
Ridgway, PA 15853
814-773-3162; Fax 814-772-7045
(Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, Potter)

Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission
312 Main Street
Towanda, PA 18848
570-265-9103; Fax 570-265-7585
(Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wyoming)

Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission
395 Seneca Street
Oil City, PA 16301
814-677-4800; Fax 814-677-7663
(Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Warren)

SEDA-COG
201 Furnace Road
Lewisburg, PA 17837
570-524-4491; Fax 570-524-9190
(Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder, Union)

Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission
3 Sheraton Drive
Altoona, PA 16601
814-949-6500; Fax 814-949-6505
(Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, Somerset)

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Two Chatham Center, Suite 500
112 Washington Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15129
412-391-5590; Fax 412-391-9160
(Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Washington, Westmoreland)

Exhibit III

Project Summary
(Maximum two pages)

Project Title: *Descriptive title of the project*

Project Grantee: *Applicant's legal name*

County(ies) Served: *Name and economic status (e.g., transitional, distressed) of each county in the service area*

Basic Agency: *Administering agency (construction projects only)*

Goal/Strategy: *Primary ARC goal and state strategy the project will address*

Purpose: *One-sentence statement describing the purpose of the proposed project.*

Funding:

	Amount	**%**	**Source**
ARC	$_____	_____%	Area Development, Distressed Counties
Federal	$_____	_____%	RD Grant
State	$_____	_____%	CDBG
Local	$_____	_____%	RD loan = $_____ grantee = _____.
Private	$_____	_____%	(Foundation grant; in-kind, etc.)
Total	**$_____**	**100 %**	

Project Description: (one–two paragraphs maximum) *Describe major activities to be conducted. The description should address who, what, when, where, and how for each major activity.*

Strategic Rationale: (one paragraph maximum)

- *Identify the problems and/or opportunities the project will address.*
- *Explain the critical circumstances that compel the project to be funded by ARC.*
- *Describe how the project supports a regional strategy or plan.*

Collaborative Partnerships: (one paragraph maximum) *Identify local, regional and/or state partnerships that will support the project.*

Project Sustainability & Capacity: (one paragraph maximum)

- *Describe your capacity to undertake the proposed activity by describing previous experience with a similar activity.*
- *Explain how the project will be sustainable once ARC support is no longer available.*

Impact Measures: *Identify quantifiable output and outcome measures, consistent with ARC guidance (include any leveraged private investment resulting from the project).*

Congressional and Legislative Districts of: