

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

Program Guidelines | November 2019



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Section I – Introduction

A. Overview

Each year in Pennsylvania, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) provides funding for numerous projects in the Appalachian Region in a wide range of program areas. The projects funded in the program areas create thousands of new jobs, improve local water and sewer systems, increase school readiness, training, assist local communities with strategic planning and provide technical support to emerging businesses.

Pennsylvania will look favorably at projects where there are new business start-ups and job creation, as well as those projects that will enhance the community and economic vitality of the state. When approving a particular project, ARC will also consider whether the project will improve, on a continuing rather than a temporary basis, the opportunities for employment and the average level of income or economic and social development of the area served by the project.

B. 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 Pennsylvania Annual ARC State Strategy. All potential projects sponsors should review the Pennsylvania Annual ARC State Strategy and contact the appropriate LDD identified on page 8 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 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.

C. Eligibility

1. Eligible ARC Applicants:

- Local Development Districts;
- Indian Tribes or a consortium of Indian Tribes;
- States, counties, cities or other political subdivision 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 non-profit organizations or associations

2. **Eligible Projects and Activities**

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

- a. Technical assistance projects that:
 - i. Provide services to a community or region to enhance business development.
 - ii. Meet the criteria for immediate, permanent job creation/retention or strategic plan implementation.
- b. Infrastructure development including site preparation, water, sewer, broadband, or other needed improvements.
- c. Local Access Roads.
- d. Local government assistance projects providing for service consolidation, management assistance or any other arrangements directed to more effective delivery of programs and services.
- e. Development of business incubator or multi-tenant facilities.
- f. Destination or asset-based tourism.
- g. Leadership and Community Capacity-Building
- h. Community and Workforce Development Services

D. General Program Requirements

Applicants for ARC funding should contact their Local Development District to receive technical assistance in the preparation and submission of project applications.

All ARC assisted projects must:

1. Relate to one goal, objective, and strategy set forth in the approved Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 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 project 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.

E. Administration of Construction and Infrastructure Projects by a Basic Federal Agency

Basic Federal Agencies (BFAs) have experience managing federally funded construction, infrastructure and Local Access Road Projects. Applicants should contact their Local Development District to identify an appropriate BFA for their proposed project.

F. Nondiscrimination

No assistance shall be awarded to an applicant under this program unless the applicant and the project user certifies that it is in compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to: (1) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (2) Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. §§1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; (3) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. §794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (4) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (5) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-255), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (6) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (7) §§523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. §§290 dd-3 and 290 ee 3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (8) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. §§3601 et seq.), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; (9) any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and, (10) the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.

Section II – The Application Process

A. General

The application process begins with submission of an ARC Project Summary to the appropriate Local Development District or directly to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). The ARC Project Summary template may be obtained from the Local Development District or DCED. Following a review of the ARC Project Summary, DCED may issue a request for a full application.

To assist the ARC 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. **Project Title** – Provide a descriptive title for the project
2. **Project Sponsor/Applicant** – Legal name of applicant
3. **County(ies) to be Served** – Name, economic status (e.g. transitional, distressed) and census tract(s) within each county in the service area of the proposed project.
4. **Basic Federal Agency/Registered State Basic Agency** – Administering agency (for construction and/or infrastructure projects only)
 - a. Specify the date when an application/form was filed with this agency to administer the proposed project

5. **Goals and Strategies** – Relate to one goal primary ARC goal, objective and strategy set forth in the approved Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Appalachian Development Plan.
6. **Purpose for the Project** – Describe the principle purpose for the proposed project
7. **Project Budget and Funding Request** – Detail the budget for the ARC request, specifying the amount, sources of match funding and percentage to be applied to the cost of the ARC project.
- 8a. **Attach a Preliminary Project Cost Estimate** (for construction and infrastructure projects) with a description of all major construction components and the projected cost by line item. Include details, such as linear feet to be constructed, square footage to be built, acreage served etc.
- 8b. **For Local Access Road projects**, indicate the date if ARC has previously provided funding for the existing roadway
9. **Project Description** – Provide a detailed description of major project activities, including:
 - a. **For a non-construction project** – Identification of parties who will complete each activity, and provide a projected period of performance to include a timeline for completion.
 - b. **For a construction project** – Describe the scope of work with a detailed workplan identifying parties who will complete each activity and a projected period of performance to include an estimated start and completion date.
10. **Strategic Rationale** – Describe any problems, opportunities, or local demand that the project will address and how these issues impact the community, to include, but are not limited to:
 - What would compel ARC to fund the project?
 - How the project will support a local/regional community or economic strategy or plan, and assist future economic development in the area.
 - Describe efforts to coordinate the project with other area economic development activities.
 - Identify the number of employers or households to be served.
 - Summarize local labor market data indicating High Demand Occupations and the projected number of jobs to be retained or created by the proposed project.
 - Detail what leveraged private investment has been committed as a result of the proposed project (if applicable).
11. **Collaborative Partnerships** – Identify local, regional and/or state partnerships that will support the project.
12. **Project Sustainability and Capacity:**
 - Describe the applicant’s capacity and experience to undertake the proposed activity
 - Identify the organization or agency that will own and provide maintenance for the improvements made with ARC funding.
 - Explain how the project will be sustained once the ARC grant term has expired

13. **Benefits and Performance Measures** – All ARC projects must have at least one output measure and one outcome measure which adheres to the following definitions:
 - a. Output measures are the activities or deliverables that will be accomplished as a result of the grant. Outputs are generally described as deliverables or milestones in a work plan or timeline. Outputs include things like the number of workers trained, square feet developed, businesses served, communities served or new day and overnight visitors to a facility. Outputs are generally accomplished during the life of the grant.
 - b. Outcome measures are the quantifiable impacts or results of the grant activities. Examples of outcomes include communities improved, businesses improved or created, costs reduced, jobs created, jobs retained, leveraged private investment (LPI), programs implemented, and telecom sites established. Outcomes sometimes occur after the completion of the grant.
14. **Congressional and Legislative Districts of:** *(list name and district number represented)*.

B. Application Submission and Approval Procedures

1. All applications are initially screened to determine funding eligibility. The screening process assesses consistency with ARC's five goals and strategies. This screening begins with submission and review of an ARC 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, Pennsylvania also considers whether the project improves on a continuing basis, the opportunities for employment as well as, the average income or economic and social development of the area served.

C. Application Evaluation Criteria

1. When evaluating and selecting projects for ARC assistance, Pennsylvania:
 - a. Looks favorably at projects generating business formation, job retention 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 Plans, ARC Guidance on Performance Measures, ARC County Economic Status and Match Rates and the ARC Project Summary Template;
2. Assistance in developing the ARC Project Summary and subsequent proposal, and
3. Technical assistance in completing necessary federal forms.

E. Limitations and Penalties

1. 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 will be available during the project performance period.
3. Pennsylvania's ARC participation costs will generally be limited to 50 percent of project costs, with some exceptions as detailed in the Pennsylvania Annual 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 comprised of 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 determined 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

49 Ridgmont Drive
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
570-265-1500; 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)