



# Appalachian Regional Commission Overview

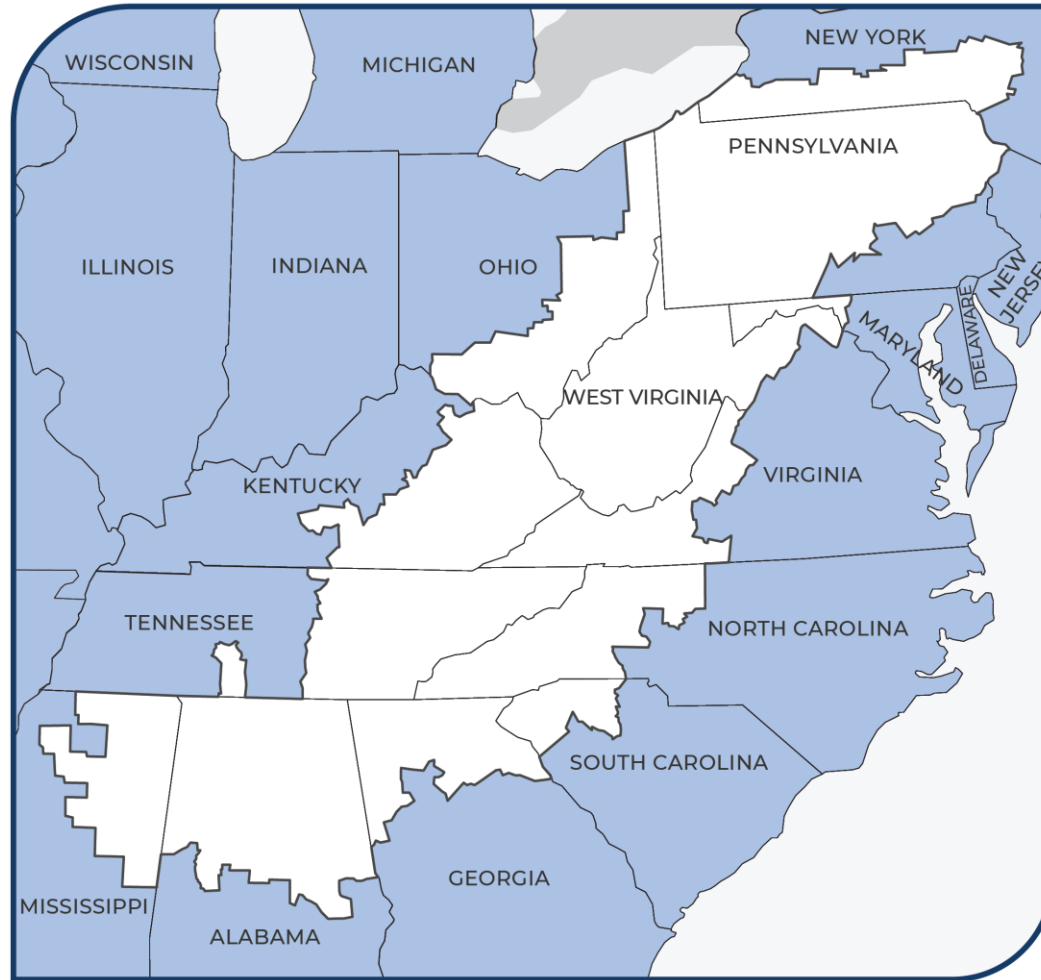


# Appalachian Regional Commission



- Created in 1965
- Federal, state and local government partnership
- 13 states
- 423 counties
- 206,000 square miles
- 26 million people
- 74 area development districts

# Appalachian Regional Commission



## ARC VISION STATEMENT

Appalachia is a region of great opportunity that will achieve **socioeconomic parity** with the nation

## ARC MISSION STATEMENT

To innovate, partner and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia

# Unique Structure

## Federal

- Federal Co-Chair appointed by the President
- Federal Office Staff

## State

- State Co-Chair Representing State Interests
- State Governors/Alternates
- State Program Managers
- LDDs

## Commission

- Executive Director
- Commission Staff



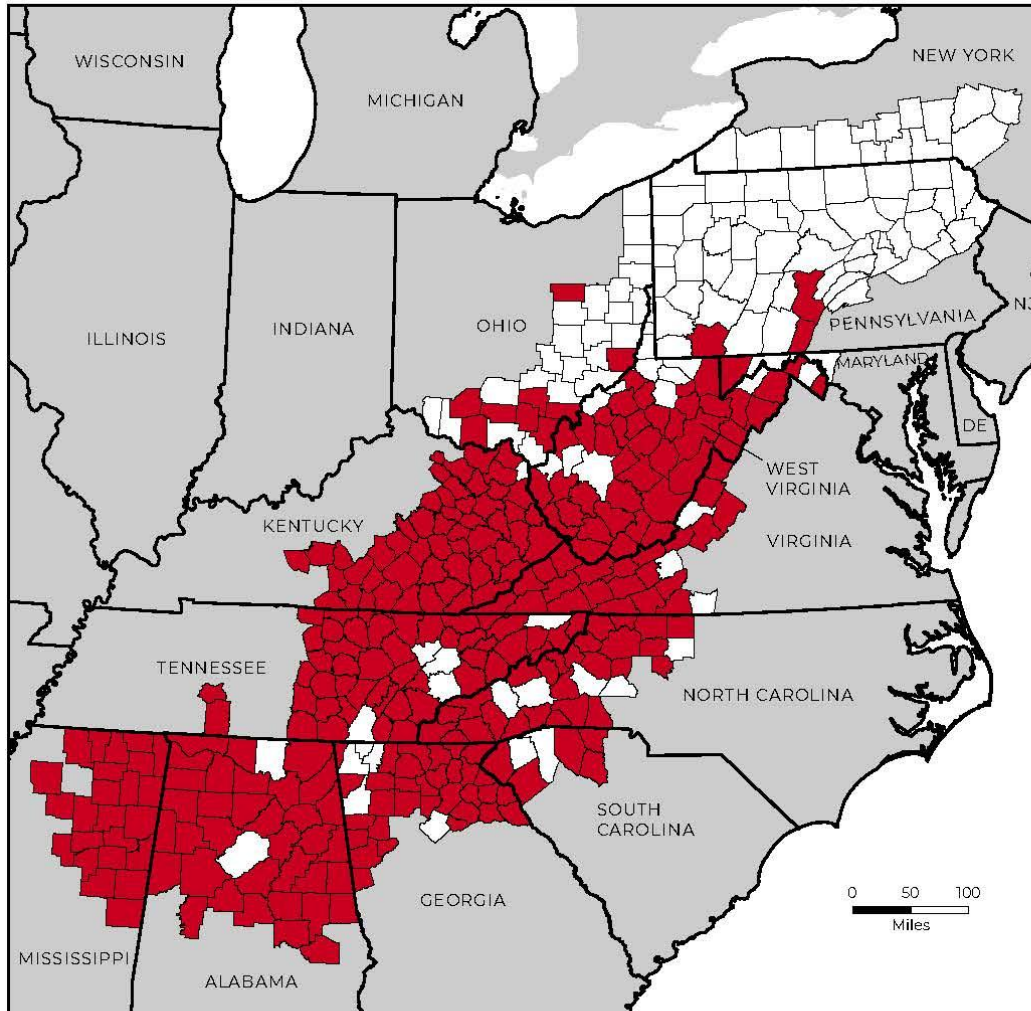
Appalachian  
Regional  
Commission

# High-Poverty Counties in the Appalachian Region

(Counties with Poverty Rates At Least 1.5 Times the U.S. Average)

**1960**

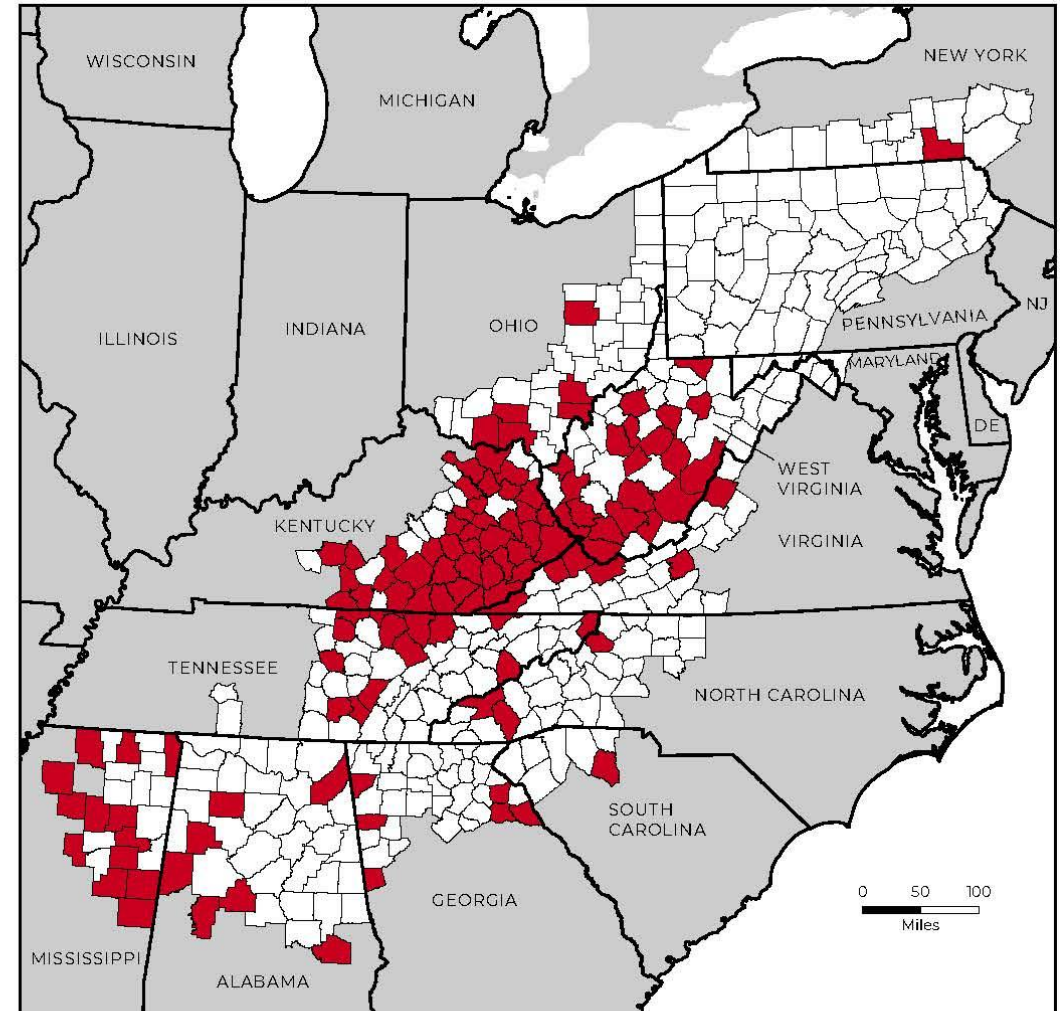
297 High-Poverty Counties



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1960 Census

**2019-2023**

119 High-Poverty Counties

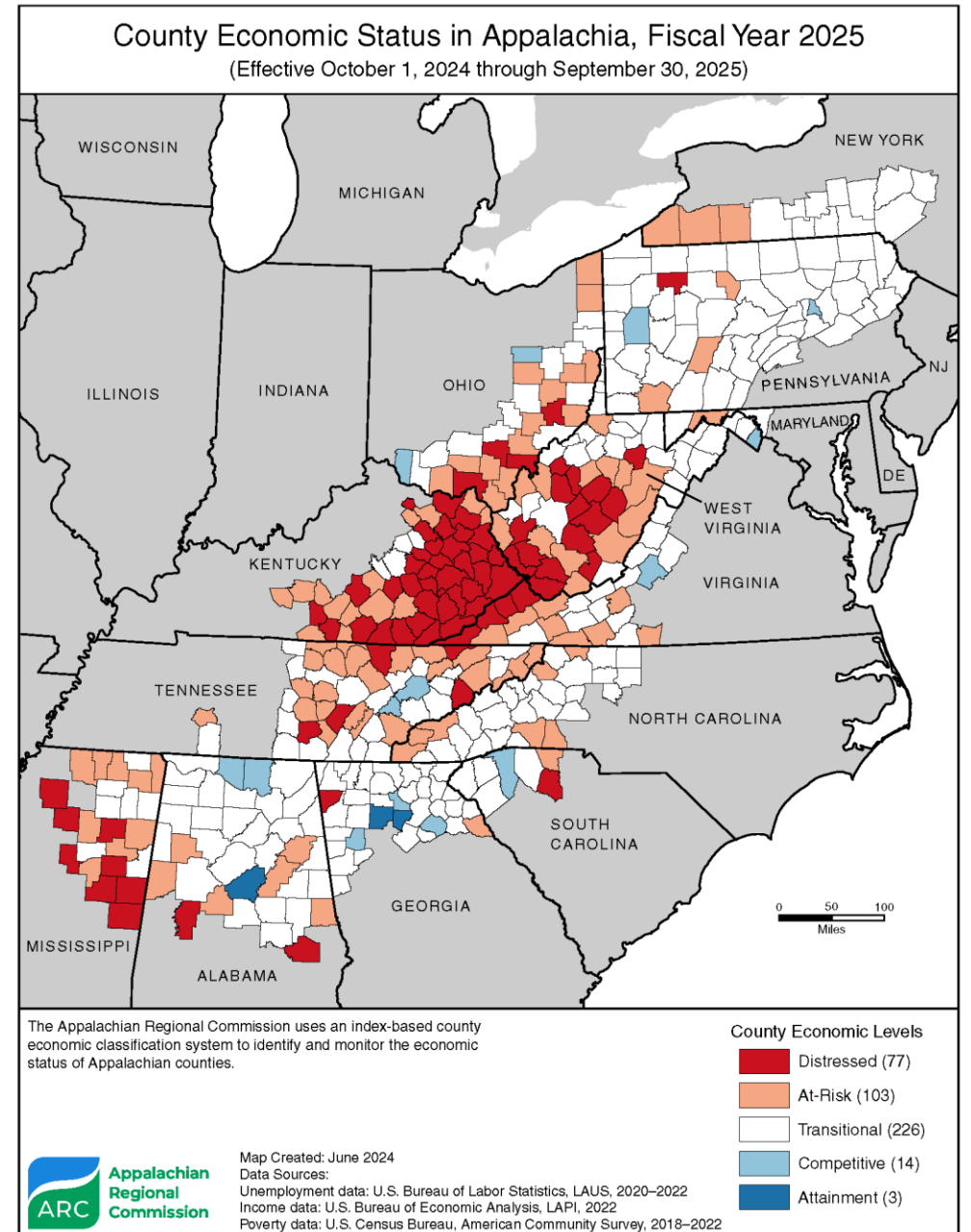


Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2019-2023

# County Economic Status, FY 2025

## ARC's five county economic status designations

- **Distressed:** The most economically depressed counties, ranking in the worst 10% of the nation's counties
- **At-risk:** Counties at risk of becoming distressed
- **Transitional:** Counties transitioning between at-risk and competitive status.
- **Competitive:** Counties able to compete in the national economy but don't rank in the highest 10% of the nation's counties.
- **Attainment:** The economically strongest counties, ranking in the best 10% of the nation's counties.



# ARC's Strategic Goals



**Building Appalachian Businesses**



**Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem**



**Building Appalachia's Infrastructure**



**Building Regional Tourism and Culture**



**Building Community Leaders and Capacity**





## GOAL 1

# Building Appalachian Businesses

**Strengthen and diversify the Region's economy through inclusive economic development strategies and investments in entrepreneurship and business development.**

**Objective 1.1:** Provide financing, technical assistance, and other support for entrepreneurship and small business development in the Region.

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





## GOAL 2

# Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem

**Expand and strengthen community systems (education, healthcare, housing, childcare, and others) that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.**

**Objective 2.1:** Develop and support educational programs and institutions from early childhood through post-secondary that provide the building blocks for skills development and long-term employment success.

**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.

**Objective 2.3:** Develop a network of employment supports to help Appalachians enter and remain in the workforce.

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



Effective January 20, 2025, any statements outlined in *Appalachia Envisioned: ARC's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan* that reference "diversity, equity and inclusion" and "green energy" are no longer applicable.

## GOAL 3

# Building Appalachia's Infrastructure

**Ensure that the residents and businesses of Appalachia have access to reliable, affordable, resilient, and energy efficient utilities and infrastructure in order to successfully live and work in the Region.**

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

**Objective 3.2:** Ensure that all Appalachians have access to quality and affordable telecommunications and broadband services.

**Objective 3.3:** Support proactive efforts to adopt alternative energy strategies and bolster energy infrastructure.

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

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



## GOAL 4

# Building Regional Culture and Tourism

**Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by preserving and investing in the Region's local, cultural heritage, and natural assets.**

**Objective 4.1:** Invest in the development of vibrant Appalachian downtowns and provide support for Appalachian placemaking.

**Objective 4.2:** Invest in economic and community development initiatives that preserve and promote Appalachian communities' vibrant arts, cultural, and heritage traditions.

**Objective 4.3:** Preserve and expand Appalachia's natural resources to increase outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors and support sustainable economic growth.



Effective January 20, 2025, any statements outlined in *Appalachia Envisioned: ARC's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan* that reference "diversity, equity and inclusion" and "green energy" are no longer applicable.

## GOAL 5

# Building Community Leaders and Capacity

**Invest in the capacity of local leaders, organizations, and communities to address local challenges by providing technical assistance and support to access resources, engage partners, identify strategies and tactics, and conduct effective planning and project execution.**

**Objective 5.1:** Develop, support, and empower community leaders that are representative of local communities, inclusive in their approach, and focused on long-term, innovative strategies and solutions.

**Objective 5.2:** Build capacity of community organizations and local development districts to effectively access and manage funding, administer programs, and execute projects through implementation.

**Objective 5.3:** Invest in developing the capacity of communities to build ecosystems where government, non-profits, businesses, and philanthropic partners coalesce around a shared vision for economic and community prosperity and collaborate to implement that vision.



# Area Development: ARC's Base Funding Program

# Area Development Basics

- Area Development is **formula-driven** and state-led
- ARC provides the **framework** for all State Programs
- ARC works in partnership with State Partners and LDDs to provide a variety of **technical assistance** offerings
- ARC **administers all non-construction grants and manages the BA program** in the administration of construction grants

# State Information Annual Strategy Statement and 4-Year Plan

## Appalachian States

The [Appalachian Region](#) includes 423 counties across 13 states. As part of [ARC's unique structure](#), every investment is made in partnership with state leadership. This enables flexible community- and state-driven project development as well as opportunities to advance regional initiatives and model practices.

Learn more about the ARC program in each state, including contact information, state-specific stats, ARC impact data, state strategies and more.



Alabama



Georgia



Kentucky



Maryland



Mississippi



New York

**Goal 1: Kentucky's Investment in Building Appalachian Businesses** through entrepreneurial and business development strategies that include expansion of **tourism, manufacturing, and AgriTech** in Kentucky's ARC region.

**Goal 2: Kentucky's Investment in Workforce Ecosystems** through education and technical training programs for workers in Appalachian Kentucky. Also, assisting the region in **accessing quality health care and preventative programs** that result in better health outcomes, as well as supporting a healthy workforce.

**Goal 3: Kentucky's Investment in Community Infrastructure** through maintenance and expansion of Kentucky's ARC Region's **water and wastewater systems and broadband and telecommunication** systems.

**Goal 4: Kentucky's Investment in Regional Cultural and Tourism** by focusing on **infrastructure assets for Kentucky's mountain trail systems** and value-added tourism opportunities highlighting Kentucky's natural assets, historical sites, and heritage.

**Goal 5: Kentucky's Investment in Building Community Leaders and Capacity** by creating leadership development opportunities to **spark entrepreneurship** and cultivate dynamic young leaders to stay and invest in the region.





# KENTUCKY

STATE PROFILE | FISCAL YEAR 2024  
(OCTOBER 1, 2023–SEPTEMBER 30, 2024)

## FISCAL YEAR 2024 INVESTMENT SNAPSHOT



**\$32.3M** ARC INVESTMENT



**\$26.2M** PROJECT MATCH



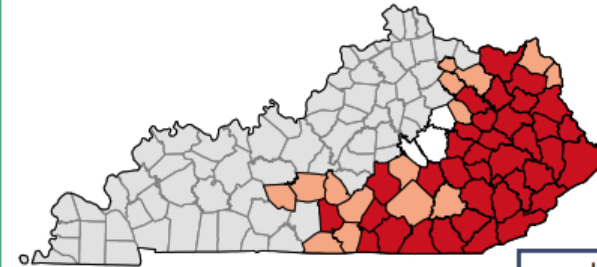
**\$58.6M** TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT

**45** PROJECTS

**2,638** STUDENTS AND WORKERS TRAINED AND EDUCATED

**4,497** HOUSEHOLDS/BUSINESSES SERVED WITH INFRASTRUCTURE

## FY 2024 COUNTY ECONOMIC STATUS IN KENTUCKY



### Levels of Economic Status

- Distressed County
- At-Risk County
- Transitional County
- Competitive County
- Attainment County
- Non-Appalachian County

## FISCAL YEAR 2024 INVESTMENT PRIORITIES



### COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

**\$16.4M**

invested in Kentucky to ensure access to reliable and affordable broadband, clean water and updated wastewater systems, highways, and more



### WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEM

**\$12.8M**

invested in Kentucky to expand community systems that will help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance their careers



### COMMUNITY LEADERS & CAPACITY

**\$1.5M**

invested in growing the capacity of local leaders, organizations, and communities to address challenges and create opportunities in Kentucky



### ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES

**\$1.7M**

invested in entrepreneurship and business development to strengthen the economy and to preserve local history, culture, and natural assets in Kentucky

# Kentucky State Partners and Key ARC Contacts

## Governor's ARC Representative:

**Matt Sawyers**, Commissioner  
email: **Matt.Sawyers@ky.gov**

Kentucky Department for Local  
Government  
100 Airport Road, Third Floor  
Frankfort, KY 40601

## Interim ARC State Program Manager:

Whitney Mendiondo, Interim ARC  
Program Manager  
email: **Whitney.Mendiondo@ky.gov**

Kentucky Department for Local  
Government  
100 Airport Road, Third Floor  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
502.892.3476

# Kentucky's Area Development Districts

EDMONSON, HART, METCALFE, MONROE,  
Barren River Area Development District  
270.781.2381 - <http://www.bradd.org>

FLOYD, JOHNSON, MAGOFFIN, MARTIN, PIKE,  
Big Sandy Area Development District  
606.886.2374 - <https://bigsandy.org/>

CLARK, ESTILL, GARRARD, LINCOLN, MADISON, NICHOLAS, POWELL,  
Bluegrass Area Development District  
859.269.8021 - <http://www.bgadd.org>

FLEMING, LEWIS, ROBERSTON,  
Buffalo Trace Area Development District  
606.564.6894 - <http://www.btadd.com>

BELL, CLAY, HARLAN, JACKSON, KNOX, LAUREL, ROCKCASTLE,  
WHITLEY,  
CUMBERLAND VALLEY AREA DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT  
606.864.7391 - <HTTP://WWW.CVADD.ORG>

BOYD, CARTER, ELLIOTT, GREENUP, LAWRENCE,  
FIVCO Area Development District  
606.929.1366 - <http://www.fivco.org>

BATH, MENIFEE, MONTGOMERY, MORGAN, ROWAN,  
Gateway Area Development District  
606.780.0090 - <http://www.gwadd.org>

BREATHITT, KNOTT, LEE, LESLIE, LETCHER, OWSLEY, PERRY, WOLFE,  
Kentucky River Area Development District  
606.436.3158 - <http://www.kradd.org>

ADAIR, CASEY, CLINTON, CUMBERLAND, GREEN, MCCREARY, PULASKI,  
RUSSELL, WAYNE,  
Lake Cumberland Area Development District, Inc.  
270.866.4200 - <http://lcadd.org>

# Competitive Grant Initiatives



# ARC Signature Initiatives



**Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies**

Through ARISE, ARC aims to drive large-scale, regional economic transformation through multi-state collaborative projects across Appalachia.



**Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems Initiative**

ARC's INSPIRE Initiative addresses the substance use disorder (SUD) crisis in Appalachia by creating or expanding recovery ecosystems that will lead to workforce entry or re-entry.



**Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization Initiative**

ARC's POWER Initiative targets federal resources to communities affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations and coal-related supply chain industries.



**Appalachian Regional Energy Hub Initiative**

The Appalachian Regional Energy Hub Initiative is a funding opportunity to support the development and implementation of a regional energy hub.

For a complete list of ARC's grant programs, see <https://www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/>

# Program and Project Details

Found on the ARC website and within current NOSAs.



## Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative Federal Fiscal Year 2025—Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA) for Project Grants

### (I) NOSA Basic Information

This Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA) provides a program overview and explains the requirements for eligible applicants to apply for grant funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) INSPIRE Initiative (Assistance Listing Number 23.002). This INSPIRE NOSA is new for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025.

NOSA release date	January 13, 2025
Application portal opens	January 13, 2025 <a href="#">Portal link located here.</a>
Virtual pre-application webinar	February 4, 2025 Register for webinar <a href="#">here.</a>
In-person grant application workshops	Register for in-person "Getting the Grant" workshops <a href="#">here.</a>
Letter of intent (LOI) due	February 14, 2025 by 5 p.m. ET <a href="#">Submit using this form.</a>
Grant applications due	March 10, 2025 by 5 p.m. ET <a href="#">ARC cannot accept late applications.</a> <a href="#">Submit via this portal.</a>
Awards announced	Fall 2025

[Learn more about INSPIRE](#) on ARC.gov.

Email [SUD@arc.gov](mailto:SUD@arc.gov) if you have questions related to this NOSA or INSPIRE.

The funding that may be made available through this NOSA is subject to the enactment of full-year Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations by the United States Congress. Thus, at the time of issuance of this NOSA, the ARC does not have the requisite budget authority to make awards.

Any selection of applications or issuance of awards under this NOSA will be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

### Executive Summary

ARC's INSPIRE Initiative offers federal grant funding for projects that build or expand community support systems (also known as [recovery ecosystems](#)) to help Appalachians in substance use disorder (SUD) recovery obtain or maintain employment. In FY 2024, ARC made available up to \$13 million in federal funding<sup>1</sup> for the INSPIRE Initiative. The amount of FY 2025 funding available is subject to the availability of appropriated funds, any other legislative action, or policy priorities. Applicants can request up to \$500,000 for implementation projects or \$100,000 for planning projects. See pages 7-14 for more details.

<sup>1</sup> See 40 U.S.C. 14703.

# Applicable to all ARC Grant Programs

## **Eligible Grantees include:**

- Local development districts (LDDs)
- 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 nonprofit organizations or associations

## **Eligible Projects must:**

- Target counties within the Appalachian Region as indicated by the Appalachian Development Act of 1965
- Advance and Align with ARC/State Goals

## **Federal Requirements and ARC Policy:**

- ARC Code (including regulations on applicant match)
- Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 200 (“2 CFR Part 200”)

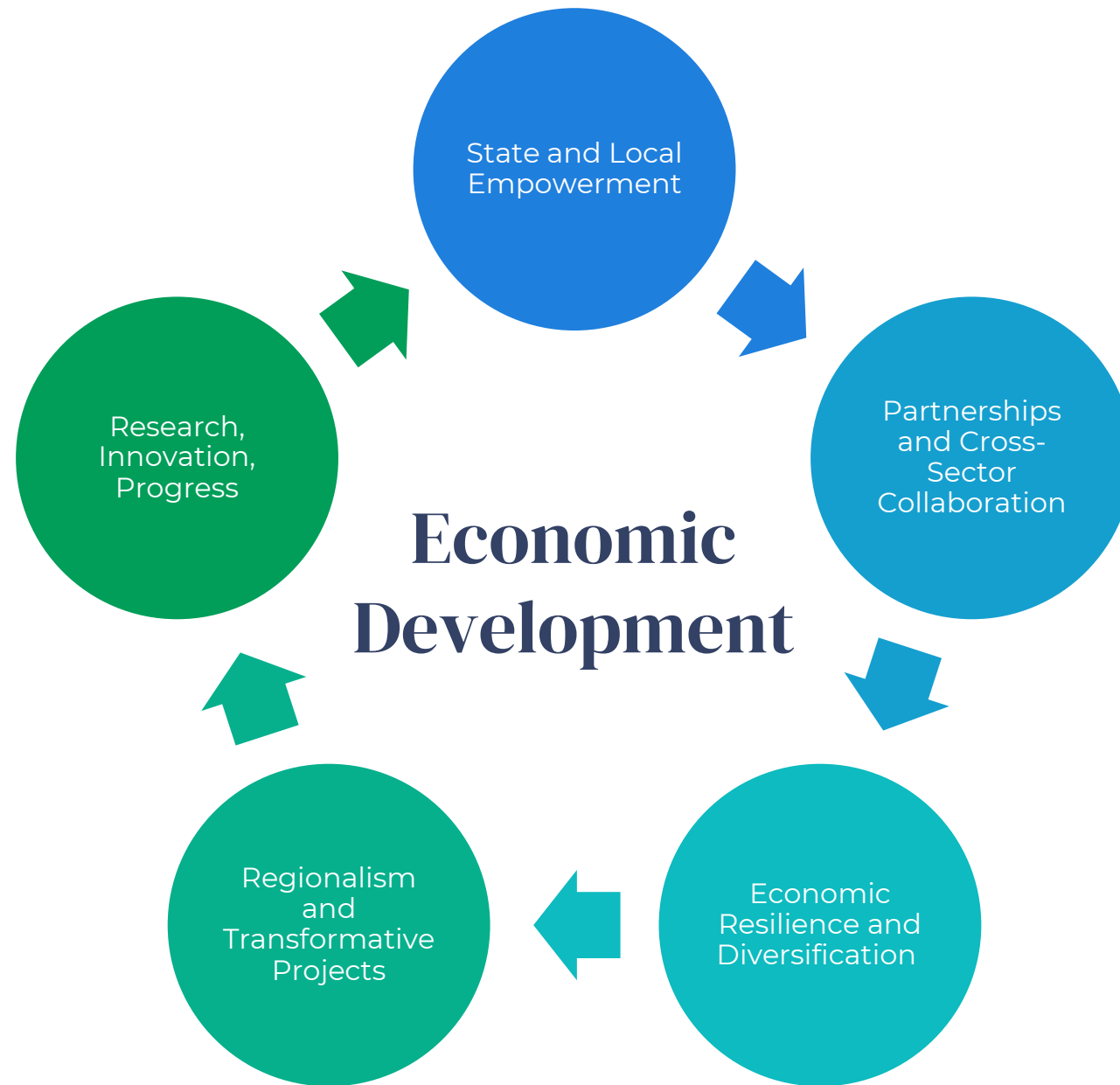
# Laying the Groundwork: What Makes a Strong ARC Proposal



# The "Economic Development Lens"

ARC places high-value on projects wherein the correlation with **economic development** is clear and made prominent.

All proposals are considered from the perspective of **economic development** and reviewed using this lens.



# ARC Project Fundamentals

## Strategic

Project aligns with the goals of the community and regional plans

## Impactful

Project has specific performance targets aimed at helping Appalachia economically prosper

## Collaborative

Project engages partnerships to achieve common or aligned goals

## Sustainable

Project has a plan for maintaining the program or asset after the grant period has ended

# Project Type Guidance

## Natural and Cultural Heritage Assets Projects

This document provides specific guidance for **natural and cultural assets projects**. 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 investments in natural and cultural heritage asset development assist Appalachian communities in leveraging the Region's rich cultural and environmental resources sustainably for job creation and local economic growth. Supported projects can involve a wide range of both construction and non-construction activities, from strategic planning and hospitality training to technology implementation and recreational trail and facility construction.

ARC generally categorizes natural and cultural heritage asset development activities under Goal 4 of its strategic plan.

**Examples of eligible natural and cultural heritage asset development projects include, but are not limited to:**

- Developing a comprehensive tourism strategic plan to identify and connect existing assets, explore business growth opportunities, and prioritize future investments.
- Creating a network of arts, crafts, or food tourism trails (activities could include research and data collection, site documentation, web portal and visitor itinerary development, etc.).
- Expanding or improving an existing regionally connected trail system (examples of improvement activities could include enhancing trail access and trailheads as well as installing parking areas).
- Conducting market analysis and business planning to assess the financial viability of a tourism-related construction project.
- Developing a tourism-based entrepreneurship training program to improve artisans' business and marketing skills.
- Implementing innovative technologies that create new visitor experiences.

**ARC's Policy for the Development of Travel and Tourism Projects**

# ARC Partner Programs





## Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC)

## Local Food Local Places (LFLP)

- Partnership with DOL, in collaboration with the DRA and the NBRC
- WORC is a competitive workforce grant program funded and reviewed by DOL with no match requirement
- Funding targeted exclusively to entities within the ARC region
- ARC provides technical assistance post-award for WORC grantees in the region
- [www.arc.gov/WORC](http://www.arc.gov/WORC)

Partnership of the EPA, ARC, and USDA, Forest Service

Technical assistance opportunity (no associated funding)

Focus: Helps communities create a Local Action Plans for Growing Outdoor Rec Economies

Example Priorities from Local Action Plans:

- Connecting downtown to local natural assets
- Developing outdoor recreation-based entrepreneurship
- Building year-round outdoor recreation amenities

<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities>

Partnership of the EPA, ARC, and Superfund Program

Technical assistance opportunity (no associated funding)

Focus: Helps communities create a Local Action Plans for Growing Local Food Economies

Example priorities from LFLP include:

- Farmers' markets
- Improving access to local food
- Commercial kitchens/food hubs

<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places>

# Other ARC Programs, Activities, and Areas of Interest

# Academies and Institutes

<https://www.arc.gov/academies-and-institutes/>



## **Appalachian STEM Academy**

Middle and High Schools Students/Teachers

Application Window: Early Winter



## **Appalachian Entrepreneurship Academy**

High Schools Students

Application Window: Early Winter



## **Appalachian Collegiate Research Initiative**

College Students

Application Window: Early Winter



## **Appalachian Leadership Institute**

Appalachians interested in community/economic development

Application Window: Spring

# Research and Evaluation

Publicly  
Accessible

Regional  
Insight and  
Awareness

Multipurpose  
Data with a  
Broad Scope

Information to  
Support Data-  
Driven Decision  
Making

GIS Data and  
Mapping

Evaluations of  
ARC's  
Investments

Contractual  
Opportunities  
for Outside  
Firms

- Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS)  
<https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-development-highway-system/>
- Local Development District (LDD) Program
- J-1 VISA Waiver Program <https://www.arc.gov/j-1-visa-waivers/>



# Connect with ARC



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[instagram.com/ARCgov](https://instagram.com/ARCgov)



[linkedin.com/company/appalachian-regional-commission](https://linkedin.com/company/appalachian-regional-commission)



**In the Region**

[arc.gov/newsletter-signup](https://arc.gov/newsletter-signup)



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# Website Walk-Thru for Applicants

[www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov)