



FY 2025 Pre-Application

North Carolina Appalachian Regional Commission

FY 2025 Pre-Application Guidelines

The Appalachian Regional Commission

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a regional economic development agency representing a unique partnership of federal, state, and local government. The Commission is composed of the governors of 13 Appalachian states and a Federal Co-chair, who is appointed by the President. Grassroots participation is provided through multi-county local development districts with boards made up of elected officials, businesspeople, and other local leaders. Each year, Congress appropriates funds that ARC allocates among the Appalachian states. The governors consulting with local development districts (LDD) draw up state Appalachian development plans. When the plans meet final approval, funds are released to implement ARC projects that are consistent with the state plan. The broad objective of these projects is to provide the basic building blocks that enable Appalachian communities to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life.

ARC Strategic Plan

A comprehensive strategic planning process involving federal, state, and local officials and citizens resulted in, [Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity – ARC Strategic Plan 2022-2026](#), which focuses investments under these five general goals:

1. **Building Appalachian Businesses:** Strengthen and diversify the Region's economy through inclusive economic development strategies and investments in entrepreneurship and business development.
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.
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.
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.
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.

****Pre-applications must meet one of the ARC Goals defined in the Strategic Plan****

North Carolina Targeted Investment Priorities

Governor Cooper will engage the resources provided by the ARC to attract more jobs, improve higher educational attainment rates, and support investments that improve the region's health status. The state will utilize ARC resources to provide technical assistance and when appropriate financial investments in the 31 ARC counties, with a special emphasis on those areas of persistent and severe economic distress.

Governor Cooper will utilize ARC resources to support the region's ability to respond to the challenges of the 21st century workplace and keep pace with advances in technology. ARC investments in NC will be used to enhance economic opportunity in the region. The Governor believes that economic development requires leadership, planning, and action. Therefore, it is critical for communities in the region to have access to ARC resources that will allow them to prepare for and then compete for economic development. All ARC investments in NC will assist communities moving towards economic success and support efforts to create more equity across the region.

The NC ARC Program will also support the implementation of the [First in Talent: Strategic Economic Development Plan for North Carolina](#). In July of 2021, the North Carolina Department of Commerce released the Economic Development Strategic Plan for the State of North Carolina. The plan, titled First in Talent, recognizes that investing in North Carolina's workforce is the key to building a more prosperous and resilient economy for all North Carolinians.

NC ARC Investment Priorities:

- Projects that enhance long-term infrastructure commitments that allow for commerce and creation and retention of jobs,
- Enrichment of partnerships between local industries, k-12 schools, and community colleges to expand and enhance workforce development opportunities to ensure a pipeline of skilled workers in the region,
- Efforts that support local school systems' ability to enhance STEAM and STEM education opportunities, as well as project-based learning and creative thinking skills development,
- Projects that spur economic activity in the health care sector and improve the quality of health care services in rural communities throughout the region; while supporting local efforts to tackle health care challenges, specifically the growing opioid crisis, and;
- Encourage project design and development to specifically target Distressed Counties and Areas that will help improve economic conditions.

- Support the strategic deployment of digital infrastructure that promotes conditions that allow firms to effectively conduct business and individuals to access educational opportunities, particularly in the wake of COVID-19.

NC ARC Investment Opportunities (Project Types)

Overview Governor Cooper is focused on ensuring that all North Carolinians are better educated, healthier and have more money in their pockets. The Governor will utilize ARC resources to make investments in projects throughout the region that will enable communities and the region to ensure they are prepared and ready to compete for economic development.

Governor Cooper will utilize the resources provided by the ARC to make focused investments that will further support the region's ability to be prepared and compete for economic development.

The following are examples of types of projects Governor Cooper would like to support with ARC resources. (Examples are listed by ARC Strategic Investment Goals.)

Goal 1 – Building Appalachian Businesses

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

Examples of potential projects include shared-use kitchens, co-package plants, small business incubators, regional agriculture markets, community loan funds, industry cluster development, small business plan competitions, and small business mentorship programs

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.

Examples of potential projects include STEM and STEAM Education programs, career pathway program development, health care training programs, rural health care clinics, college access programs, employment supports, and workforce development programs.

Goal 3 – Building Appalachia's Infrastructure

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

Examples of potential projects include downtown Wi-Fi, broadband fiber deployment, access roads, water and sewer projects that result in job creation and/or retention, industrial site development, and transportation planning.

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.

Examples of potential projects include local food and farm programs, downtown streetscape projects, downtown revitalization, regional craft and art trails, tourism development, establishment of gateway community programs, regional tourism development, and outdoor recreation economy planning and development.

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.

Examples of potential projects include regional planning projects, community economic development planning, local leadership development training, youth leadership development, and community engagement programs.

Funding and Match Guidance

The state has set a general guideline that ARC assistance will not exceed \$1,000,000 for construction projects and \$300,000 for non-construction projects. Funding will constitute no more than 50% of the total project cost. However, special consideration will be given to infrastructure projects in distressed and at-risk counties. Selected projects may request up to \$1,500,000 in ARC funding. Special consideration may also be given to non-construction projects with an emphasis on workforce development and education with an allowable funding amount up to \$500,000. The level of ARC funds requested for projects in designated competitive counties may not exceed 30% of the project cost unless justification is provided to meet exceptions in the ARC Code.

To comply with Congressional instructions, the matching requirements in multicounty projects will vary, depending on the designated economic status of the counties involved. Multicounty projects serving fewer than the 31 counties will be computed based on the average of the eligible financing level for the counties involved.

County Economic Status in Appalachian North Carolina, Fiscal Year 2025

Economic Status	County
Distressed	-
At-Risk	Alleghany, Cherokee, Cleveland, Graham, Rutherford, Swain, and Watauga
Transitional	Alexander, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Davie, Forsyth, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Stokes, Surry, Transylvania, Wilkes, Yadkin, and Yancey
Competitive	-
Attainment	-

Pre-Application Submission

The North Carolina ARC Program invites pre-applications from eligible applicants. A pre-application must be received in order to be invited to submit a full application. Eligible applicants are local development districts, Indian tribes, states, counties, cities, institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations located in or serving in the Appalachian Region of North Carolina are eligible for funding. North Carolina has 31 counties which encompass the region that include the following: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Davie, Forsyth, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, McDowell, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Stokes, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin, and Yancey.

Pre-applications for the 2025 Federal Fiscal Year Fall Funding Round will be accepted beginning March 1st, 2024. Please email pre-applications in PDF form to the NC ARC Program Manager at arc@commerce.nc.gov (detailed submission instructions below). **Applications must be received by 5:00pm on April 15th, 2024.** Electronic applications are required. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Applications and other resources are available at the following website:

<https://www.nccommerce.com/about-us/divisions-programs/rural-economic-development/appalachian-regional-commission#documents>

For questions, please contact Olivia Collier, ARC Program Manager at ocollier@commerce.nc.gov, or by phone at (919) 814-4656.

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Application Instructions: All required fields must be filled in completely and accurately.

Once all application fields are completed you must save the application form to your computer prior to e-mailing. **Applications must be received by 5:00pm on April 15th, 2024.** Pre-Application should be submitted via e-mail to the attention of:

Appalachian Regional Commission Program
NC Department of Commerce
arc@commerce.nc.gov

Please include "FY 2025 Pre-Application–Organization Name" in the subject line

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Agency/Organization	
E-Mail	
Telephone	
Mailing Address, City, State, Zip Code	
Project Contact Name and Title	

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title	
Amount of ARC Requested	
Project Type	CONSTRUCTION NON-CONSTRUCTION

COUNTIES SERVED BY THE PROJECT (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

Alexander	Alleghany	Ashe	Avery	Buncombe
Burke	Caldwell	Catawba	Cherokee	Clay
Cleveland	Davie	Forsyth	Graham	Haywood
Henderson	Jackson	McDowell	Macon	Madison
Mitchell	Polk	Rutherford	Stokes	Surry
Swain	Transylvania	Watauga	Wilkes	Yadkin
Yancey				

Local Development District (Check all that apply)
<https://www.ncregions.org/regional-councils/>

High Country Council of Governments	Foothills Regional Commission	Land of Sky Regional Council
Piedmont Triad Regional Council	Southwestern Commission	Western Piedmont Council of Governments

PROJECT PERIOD: List the proposed start and ending dates for the project, not to exceed 24 months.

Start Date:

End Date:

ARC INVESTMENT GOAL:

All projects must address at least one of the ARC Investment Goals. Please select which goal your project will support:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT. Description of major activities to be conducted under grant proposal. The description must address who, what, where, when and how for each major activity. There is a 2,000-character limit.

PROJECT BENEFITS: What measurable results will your project achieve? Describe the expected outputs and outcomes for this project. Describe how this project will help move the community/region towards economic success. ARC has specific standards for how project benefits must be reported. See [Guide to ARC Performance Measures](#) to accurately describe projected project outcomes. There is a 2,000-character limit.

Ex. If a water and sewer extension will connect to 10 new businesses the project benefit performance measures would be presented like this:

___ Linear Feet – The amount of linear feet of water and sewer line will be installed.

___ businesses served/___ businesses improved – 9 businesses would be improved by connection to these new utilities.

BUDGET NARRATIVE: Provide a detailed budget narrative that provides an explanation of anticipated expenditures for the line items that will be included in the budget. Describe what the ARC and matching funds will be used for and how this will lead to project success. List the sources and amounts of all non-ARC matching funds. There is a 2,000 character limit.

BUDGET FORM

Type	Source	Planning & Operations	Construction & Renovation	Equipment	Total	Percent*	Status of Funds
State:							
Local :							
In-Kind :							
Federal Funds: (ARC, EPA, USDA, CDBG, etc.)							
	ARC						
Other Funds:							
TOTAL							

*At time of full application submittal applicant must demonstrate that ARC match guidelines are met.

Signature of Authorized Representative*

Name

Title

Date

*Digital Signature Instructions:

1. You will be prompted to "Configure Digital ID for Signing." Select "Create a New Digital ID"
2. "Select Destination of the new Digital ID" then select "Save to File"
3. Enter your information as you would like to appear on your digital ID
4. Create a password for your new Digital ID
5. When prompted to "Sign with Digital ID", select the ID you just created.
6. Enter password and click "Sign"
7. Save your completed and signed document. Then follow the submission instructions.