



North Carolina Appalachian Regional Commission Area Development Pre-Application

Pre-Application Guidelines

The Appalachian Regional Commission

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a federal-state partnership that promotes economic development across 423 counties in the 13-state Appalachian region, which stretches from western New York to northern Mississippi. The Commission includes the governors of the states in the region and a Federal Co-Chair appointed by the President. ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia. Each year, Congress provides funding that ARC uses to support projects aimed at strengthening the economy and improving the quality of life for people living in Appalachia.

ARC Strategic Plan

A comprehensive strategic planning process involving federal, state, and local officials and citizens resulted in the ARC Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2026-2030¹, which focuses investments under these five general goals. Pre-applications must directly address at least one of the ARC Investment Goals.

1. **Business Development** – Strengthen entrepreneurship and small business growth, attract and retain industries, and expand regional markets.
2. **Workforce Development** – Build career pathways, support education and training, and provide employment supports, including recovery-to-work programs.
3. **Infrastructure** – Improve basic utilities, broadband access, energy systems, and complete the Appalachian Development Highway System to attract businesses and enhance quality of life.
4. **Tourism & Outdoor Recreation** – Leverage cultural assets and natural resources to grow tourism and recreation-based economies.

¹ The ARC Strategic Plan FY 2026-2030 is under review by the Office of Management and Budget and has not received full approval by the Commission. ARC Strategic Investment Goals listed in this document are draft versions and subject to change.

5. **Community Resources & Skill-Building** – Provide technical assistance, training, and planning resources to local leaders and development districts to strengthen economic resilience.

North Carolina Targeted Investment Priorities

Governor Stein will utilize resources provided by the ARC to advance North Carolina's economic development goals in Western North Carolina. Aligned with Governor Stein's priorities, ARC resources will be used to: strengthen the workforce, support businesses, and empower communities while supporting the region to become more resilient as a result of Hurricane Helene.

NC ARC Investment Priorities:

- Projects that enhance long-term infrastructure commitments that allow for commerce and creation and retention of jobs,
- Projects that support local government infrastructure resiliency, with an emphasis on enhancing economic development opportunities,
- Projects that enrich 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, and
- 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 substance use disorder.

Funding and Match Guidance

The state has set a general guideline that ARC assistance will not exceed \$700,000 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 \$1,000,000 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. The Program reserves the right to reduce the requested funding amount in order to allocate available resources efficiently and effectively.

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 NC ARC counties will be computed based on the average of the eligible financing level for the counties involved.

Please use this match calculator to determine percentages: <https://www.arc.gov/resource/match-rate-calculator/>. Note all matching funds must be secured by July 2026.

County Economic Status in Appalachian North Carolina, Fiscal Year 2026

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

Pre-applications for the 2026 Federal Fiscal Year will be accepted beginning March 2nd, 2026. Please email pre-applications in PDF form to the NC ARC Program Manager at arc@commerce.nc.gov (detailed submission instructions below). **Pre-applications must be received by 5:00pm on April 17th, 2026.** 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 program questions please contact the NC ARC office via arc@commerce.nc.gov

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. 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 “NC ARC Pre-Application – Organization Name” in the subject line.

APPLICANT INFORMATION (all information required. Incomplete applications will not be considered)

Agency/Organization	
Primary Project Contact Name and Title	
E-Mail	
Telephone	
Mailing Address, City, State, Zip Code	
UEI# *For more information on the UEI# visit: https://sam.gov/entity-registration	

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title		
Amount of ARC Requested		
Project Type	CONSTRUCTION	NON-CONSTRUCTION
Planning or Implementation	IMPLEMENTATION	PLANNING

ADDITIONAL PROJECT CONTACTS

Please add contact name, title, email, and phone number for any additional individuals that will require access to this application in order to formally submit through the [ARC Pathways](#) grant management system (this includes COG staff, consultants, etc.). If there is not enough space below please provide an additional

attached page with this information.

NAME	TITLE	EMAIL	PHONE

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	Macon	Madison	McDowell
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 36 months*.

Start Date:

End Date:

*All construction projects should select a 36 month (3 year) project period.

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 lists the sources of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds. There is a 2,000 character limit.

BUDGET FORM

Type	Source	Planning & Operations	Construction & Renovation	Equipment	Total		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

***The “authorized representative” for an ARC application is the individual who is legally empowered by the applicant organization to sign, certify, and submit the grant application and related documents.**

*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.