



Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative:
Federal Fiscal Year 2018–
Request for Proposals (RFP) for Project Grants

Executive Summary

RFP release date: February 1, 2018
Proposal due date: May 1, 2018 (90 days after release date) Cycle 1
 July 27, 2018 (180 days after release date) Cycle 2

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is publishing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit applications for grants under the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative for Federal Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) funding.

The POWER Initiative is a congressionally funded initiative that targets federal resources to help communities and regions that have been affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries due to the changing economics of America's energy production.

POWER supports efforts to create a more vibrant economic future for coal-impacted communities by cultivating economic diversity, enhancing job training and re-employment opportunities, creating jobs in existing or new industries, and attracting new sources of investment.

This RFP is organized to provide a general overview of the POWER Initiative, as well as the specific requirements needed to complete a POWER FY18 grant application.

Additional background information on the POWER Initiative and a complete list of projects that have been funded under this effort is available at:
<https://www.arc.gov/funding/POWER.asp>.

- A. ARC OVERVIEW 2**
- B. POWER FY18 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION..... 2**
 - 1. POWER Initiative Overview 2
 - 2. POWER 2018 Grants 3
 - 3. POWER Priorities, Objectives, and Funding Principles 4
- C. POWER 2018 AWARD INFORMATION 8**
 - 1. Availability of Funding..... 8
 - 2. Period of Performance 9
- D. POWER 2018 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION 9**
 - 1. “Coal-Impacted Communities”: Documentation of Economic Impact..... 9
 - 2. Eligible Applicants 10
 - 3. Cost Sharing or Matching 10
 - 4. Project Team Composition 11

E.	POWER 2018 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	12
	1. Request a POWER 2018 Application	12
	2. Content and Form of POWER 2018 Application	12
	3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM).....	13
	4. Submission Dates and Times	13
	5. Application Submission Instructions.....	13
	6. Funding Restrictions.....	14
F.	POWER 2018 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION	14
G.	POWER 2018 AWARD ADMINISTRATION	14
H.	ARC AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION.....	15
I.	GENERAL DISCLOSURES.....	15

A. ARC OVERVIEW

ARC is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local government. Established by an act of Congress in 1965 through the Appalachian Regional Development Act 40 U.S.C. § 14101-14704 (ARDA), ARC is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair, who is appointed by the president. Local participation is also provided through multi-county local development districts. ARC serves a 205,000 square-mile region of 25 million people that includes all of West Virginia and parts of twelve other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.¹

B. POWER FY18 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. POWER Initiative Overview

POWER is a congressionally funded initiative that targets federal resources to help communities and regions that have been affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries due to the changing economics of America's energy production and the coal economy.² POWER supports efforts to create a more vibrant economic future for coal-impacted communities by cultivating economic diversity, enhancing job training and re-employment opportunities, creating jobs in existing or new industries, and attracting new sources of investment.

In order for coal-impacted communities to diversify their local and regional economies successfully, POWER prioritizes targeting federal resources to projects and activities that:

¹ A map of the ARC Region can be found [here](#).

² The “coal economy” is a term that reflects the complete supply chain of coal-reliant industries. This includes, but is not limited to: coal mining and coal-fired power plants, along with related transportation, logistics, and supply chain manufacturing.

- Will produce multiple economic development outcomes, such as promoting regional economic growth and diversification, new job creation, and re-employment opportunities for displaced coal-economy workers;
- Are specifically identified under state, local and/or regional economic development plans; and
- Have been collaboratively designed by diverse state, local and regional stakeholders.

POWER seeks to align and leverage complementary federal, state and other economic development resources, targeting assistance through competitively awarded grants to partnerships anchored in coal-impacted communities. By aligning and leveraging multiple resources (federal, state, local, non-profit and private sector), POWER solicits and prioritizes the selection of projects that integrate multiple economic development systems and resources in support of implementing existing economic development strategic plans.

2. POWER 2018 Grants

The POWER FY18 grant competition will be structured in two cycles:

Cycle 1 deadline: May 1, 2018.

Cycle 2 deadline: July 27, 2018.

Up to 70% of available POWER FY18 funds will be awarded in Cycle 1. The remaining POWER FY18 funds will be awarded in Cycle 2.

Applications received in Cycle 1 will be reviewed and scored. Top-scoring projects will be selected for funding. Applications not selected for funding in Cycle 1 will be returned to the applicant, and can be revised and resubmitted for consideration in Cycle 2.

All applications submitted for Cycle 2 will be reviewed and scored, including new applications and any resubmitted applications from Cycle 1. Top-scoring projects will be selected for funding.

As total available POWER funding for FY18 is limited, interested applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a project proposal by the earlier deadline.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their state ARC program managers (see <https://www.arc.gov/about/StateProgramManagers.asp>), their Local Development District (see <https://www.arc.gov/about/LocalDevelopmentDistricts.asp>) and ARC program specialists (email POWER@arc.gov for guidance) for additional information about the POWER FY18 application submission requirements as well as for assistance in completing the applications.

Prior to submission of the application, applicants should contact the state alternate(s) of the state in which the project's activities and impacts are located. See <https://www.arc.gov/about/GovernorsARCRepresentatives.asp> for the complete list.

In addition to the requirements described in this RFP and online at <https://www.arc.gov/POWER>, all applications must also meet the general requirements for ARC funding and be consistent with ARC's strategic plan, *Investing in Appalachia's Future: ARC's Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia's Opportunities 2016-2020*.

3. POWER Priorities, Objectives, and Funding Principles

This section contains information describing the POWER 2018 priorities, objectives, and funding principles. Potential applicants should review this information carefully before submitting a proposal.

Background on ARC's Strategic Investment Goals

As described in ARC's strategic plan, *Investing in Appalachia's Future*, the Commission has identified five investment goals to advance its vision and mission and to guide its work over the next five years. These goals reflect consensus among local, state, and federal partners on the most critical investment opportunities in Appalachia. While the investment goals are distinct, they are also interdependent, with progress on one goal often requiring investment in another. All applications must address one or more of these goals:

- **Goal 1, Economic Opportunities:** Invest in entrepreneurial and business development strategies that strengthen Appalachia's economy.
- **Goal 2, Ready Workforce:** Improve 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.

POWER Investment Priorities

The POWER Investment Priorities build upon the ARC's Strategic Investment Goals and are summarized and described in ARC Resolution 764. As adopted by ARC and its state partners, ARC Resolution 764 requires that the focus of ARC's POWER Initiative for FY18 will remain on investments that are regional, strategic, and transformational and that maximize the economic revitalization of coal-impacted communities and regions. Investments shall continue to be focused, in general, on four areas:

- **Building a Competitive Workforce**
- **Enhancing Access To and Use of Broadband Services**

- **Fostering Entrepreneurial Activities**
- **Developing Industry Clusters in Communities**

Project ideas that do not fit the above list of POWER investment priorities will be considered for funding, but all applications will be scored on their ability to address one of these priority areas.

Below are some examples of project activities that target a POWER investment priority. Applications that address these activities should consider the following guidance:

Building a Competitive Workforce

- **Strengthening the healthcare sector, and working to improve health conditions that affect economic vitality.** Projects should be designed to respond to recent data on regional health and economic conditions, by encouraging community collaboration, mobilizing investment targeted to healthcare enterprises, and supporting initiatives that address health in a community development context.
- **Strategies to increase the number of adults with at least a high school diploma or equivalent.** While ARC has made a substantial investment in workforce-development training programs, low educational attainment is still a barrier to those programs for working-age adults and the lack of a high school credential continues to be a barrier to participation in workforce development training. Proposed projects addressing GED attainment and other strategies that lead to the awarding of recognized high school equivalency credentials may be considered for POWER funding.

Enhancing Access to and use of Broadband Services

- **Broadband** is a critical infrastructure component needed by all segments of the community: for business development, for educational purposes, for health care services and to help rural areas compete with more densely populated areas.

Fostering Entrepreneurial Activities

- **Impact investment funds.** Impact investments are made with the intent of generating a measurable social or environmental return as well as a financial return. Proposed POWER projects that leverage private impact investment fund support are encouraged to apply for POWER funding.

Developing Industry Clusters in Communities

- **Supporting small manufacturing companies for product and market diversification and expansion.** Project activities in this area should be designed to help communities cultivate an environment where new and existing manufacturers create well-paying jobs through increased private

investment and acceleration of the resurgence of manufacturing. Examples include but are not limited to supply chain improvements, bringing connectivity and interoperability to the factory floor, export assistance, energy efficiency improvements, and improved access to capital for the Region's small and mid-sized manufacturers.

POWER FY18 funding will continue to target coal-impacted communities. Proposed projects should demonstrate direct or indirect coal-impacts as a threshold criteria for POWER funding consideration. In addition, communities that can demonstrate that they did not receive POWER funds in FY16 and FY17 in proportion to the community's coal-impacts as demonstrated in the data will be given a priority for funding.

Please note that current POWER grantees are eligible to apply for FY18 POWER funds. Applications should include an expansion of geography or increased scope of work with an existing concept or a proposal with a new concept. ARC POWER technical assistance grant recipients from FY16 and FY17 that have developed an implementation project may apply for FY18 POWER implementation funding.

POWER Technical Assistance Grants

In addition to POWER implementation grants, funds are available in FY18 for technical assistance projects to assist communities and regions in developing plans and strategies for transforming their economic structures:

- **Technical Assistance to Develop New Projects.** FY18 POWER technical assistance grants are available to assist communities and regions in developing plans and strategies for transforming their local economies. Technical assistance grant applicants should not assume that FY18 POWER funding will be available for implementation of the plans and strategies developed through FY18 technical assistance grants. POWER technical assistance applicants should identify other potential sources of federal, state, local or private sector funding if a full FY18 POWER implementation grant application cannot be submitted on or before July 27, 2018.
- **Technical Assistance Support for Current POWER Projects.** FY18 technical assistance grants will be available to help currently funded POWER Projects develop strategies to assure success and sustainability beyond the current term of the ARC POWER grant.

Regional and Multi-State Focus on Jobs and Businesses

Applications for POWER Initiative funding are strongly encouraged to have a regional and/or multistate focus supported by state and local planning, be large in scale and be targeted to economic restructuring. The applications should show evidence of collaboration and leverage. Proposed POWER Initiative projects should also be out-

come driven and should contribute to the creation of jobs and businesses and should include one or more of the following as their primary outcomes:

- **Jobs created:** New, high-quality jobs that did not exist in the locale prior to the activity.
- **Jobs obtained:** Workers are assisted in securing employment in existing high-quality jobs; may involve training and other services.
- **Businesses created:** Any new business started in the locale, both those started by local entrepreneurs and start-ups and new facilities located in the community by existing businesses.

POWER Objectives

The primary objective of POWER FY18 grants is be to invest in economic and workforce development projects and activities that will produce one, or any combination, of the following outcomes:

- **Economic Diversification** – Diversify the commercial and industrial bases of local and regional economies;
- **Job Creation** – Create jobs in new and/or existing industries;
- **Capital Investment** – Attract new sources of job-creating investment (both public and private); and
- **Workforce Development and Reemployment Opportunities** – Provide a range of workforce services and skills training, including paid work-based learning opportunities, resulting in industry-recognized credentials for high-quality, in-demand jobs.

Applicants are encouraged to leverage a variety of program resources from multiple sources, both public and private, in order to enhance the ability of coal-impacted communities and regions to successfully address these POWER objectives.

POWER Funding Principles

In order to maximize the impact of ARC investments on the economic transition in coal-impacted communities, ARC will give preference to proposals under this RFP that successfully address the following factors:

- **Large-Scale Projects** – To maximize impact and minimize administration costs, projects should be large in scope with budgets that, in many cases, are expected to range from \$400,000 to \$1.5 million. Applications for smaller or larger dollar requests will also be considered.
- **Include Assessment and Planning** – Communities receiving money for activities should have a well-articulated analysis of why and how the local and regional economy has been negatively impacted by the downturn in the coal industry and demonstrate how the proposed effort adds value to a larger, more long-term vision and action plan being implemented in the

Region. The project idea should build upon existing regional priorities such as Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS).

- **Targeted to Economic Restructuring** – Applicants must have assessed their assets and opportunities and have formulated a plan that focuses on restructuring the economy (e.g. sector strategies, entrepreneurial development) and identifies both short-term (1-2 years) and long-term (3 years and beyond) anticipated outcomes.
- **Collaborative** – POWER 2018 funds are intended to help leverage program funds from multiple sources (both public and private). Project proposals should have multiple stakeholders engaged in project implementation from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, and from multiple disciplines; there should be evidence of strong input and engagement of the broader community in planning and project design.
- **Evidence of Leverage** – Investments should demonstrate community and regional commitment to the proposed project by combining ARC resources with other public, private, and philanthropic resources.
- **Outcome-driven** – Applicants should define specific output and outcome measures, demonstrate how the project is designed to achieve those outcomes, and commit to capturing and sharing those measures over the life of the investment. Given the urgency in addressing needs in coal-impacted communities and regions, anticipated outcomes for both the short- and long-term should be clearly articulated.
- **Regional Focus** – Targeted areas should be regional, defined minimally as multi-county, with potential investment amounts scaled upward as the size and complexity of the region increases to include multi-state areas.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply the POWER FY18 Priorities, Objectives and Funding Principles creatively and vigorously to their proposed projects. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to contact ARC program staff, ARC state alternates and ARC state program managers for specific guidance pertaining to the eligible use of POWER funds.

C. POWER 2018 AWARD INFORMATION

1. Availability of Funding

POWER 2018 grant funds are available as follows:

- ARC is making **\$20 Million** available for POWER project grants under the Appalachian Area Development Program, authorized by the Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA) of 1965, as amended. If Congress provides additional POWER funding in a full-year appropriation for ARC, the Commission expects to make additional funding available for awards under this RFP.
 - On average, ARC expects to make individual grant awards ranging between **\$400,000–\$1.5 Million** for each project it awards within the congressionally

- defined Appalachian Region. Specific award guidelines may vary by type of project. Applications for smaller or larger dollar requests will be considered.
- ARC reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with the applicants that have been selected to receive awards, which may include requesting that the applicant remove or adjust certain proposed costs.
 - Projects must serve and benefit a portion of the Appalachian region as defined by the ARDA of 1965, as amended. The Appalachian Region includes certain counties in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and all of West Virginia. If projects extend beyond the ARC region only that portion that is within the Region is eligible for ARC funding. A map of the Appalachian Region is available online at <https://www.arc.gov/POWER>.
 - ARC may also choose to make awards via cooperative agreements.

ARC will not be held responsible for proposal or application preparation costs. Publication of this RFP does not obligate ARC to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds.

2. Period of Performance

Applicants can determine the required time period necessary to meet the objectives of their projects. The period of performance for awards under POWER 2018 may be up to three years (36 months) if warranted by the size and scope of the project.

D. POWER 2018 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. “Coal-Impacted Communities”: Documentation of Economic Impact

Eligible POWER projects must be located within and targeted to communities or regions that have been recently impacted, or can reasonably demonstrate that they will be impacted in the near future, by coal-mining or coal-power plant employment loss, or employment loss in the supply-chain industries³ of either. Ongoing transitions in the United States energy sector generate outcomes that may impact, or have already impacted, different communities at different points in time.

Complete applications for a POWER 2018 grant must provide appropriate third-party economic and demographic statistics for the applicable community or region in order to document the extent to which contractions in the coal economy have negatively impacted the community or region. Applicants may use data that are available online at <https://www.arc.gov/POWER> and from other sources to demonstrate community and regional impacts of coal economy transitions.

³ Examples of supply chain industries include, but are not necessarily limited to, manufacturers of mining equipment and parts for coal-fired power plants and transportation companies that carry coal.

In some instances, inclusion of a region in a particular dataset may be adequate documentation of coal-impact. If a particular region is not included in these referenced datasets, the applicant will need to cite the data source used to demonstrate impact. Economic indicators, labor market analyses, official announcements made by local and regional industries and firms, demographic, and industry data are strong sources of data to demonstrate these impacts. Applicants are encouraged to provide data (median income, coal mine closures, etc.) from federal sources that may include, but are not limited to, the following sources:

- Department of Commerce
 - Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), <http://www.bea.gov/>
 - U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>
- Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), <http://www.bls.gov/>
- Energy Information Administration (EIA), <https://www.eia.gov/>
- Department of the Interior
 - Mine Safety Health Administration (MSHA), <http://www.msha.gov/OpenGovernmentData/OGIMSHA.asp>
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), American Indian Population and Labor Force Reports <http://www.bia.gov/WhatWeDo/Knowledge/Reports/index.htm>.

2. Eligible Applicants

Eligible ARC applicants are:

- 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.

In addition, ARC has additional geographic eligibility requirements. To be eligible for ARC funding, applicants must propose to serve and benefit a portion of the Appalachian Region as defined by the ARDA of 1965, as amended. A map and a description of the ARC Region can be found online at: <https://www.arc.gov/POWER>.

3. Cost Sharing or Matching

Under POWER 2018, applicants for an ARC grant must demonstrate a matching share from non-ARC sources that is identified and forthcoming to the project. Matching

sources may be non-federal, other federal⁴, or a combination of sources. The maximum share of ARC assistance is determined by the ARC classification of the county or counties served by the proposed activity. Applicants may request up to 80 percent of the total project cost when the county served by a project has been designated as economically “distressed” according to ARC’s FY18 classification. A table summarizing ARC’s economic designations and the maximum ARC share for each Appalachian county can be found online at: <https://www.arc.gov/POWER>.

To determine the match rate for an ARC multi-county project, special matching rules apply:

1. If there is a distressed county in the project and:
 - a. At least half of the counties are distressed, the project may be funded at up to 80% of project costs;
 - b. At least half of the counties are some combination of distressed and at-risk, ARC assistance can be the higher of 70% of project costs or the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project;
 - c. Fewer than half the counties are distressed, ARC assistance can be the higher of 50% of project costs or the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project.
2. If there is no competitive county or attainment county in a project, and at least half the counties are at-risk, the project may be funded at up to 70 percent of project costs.
3. All other multi-county projects shall be funded at the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project (i.e., 80 percent, 70 percent, 50 percent, 30 percent, or 0 percent); except that the portion of a project that is attributable to an attainment county in a project that does not include a distressed county shall be considered ineligible for ARC assistance and may not be considered for matching purposes.

4. Project Team Composition

Per the priorities and funding principles described previously, applicants are expected to assemble new or existing partnerships of community and economic development stakeholders to serve as members of a project team, which may include partners that are not eligible for ARC funding but are integral to a proposed project’s success.

For purposes of application eligibility, it is not a requirement for each member of a project team to be located in a coal-impacted community; however, proposed projects must accrue benefits in coal-impacted communities. Any eligible member of a given project team may serve as the primary/lead applicant, and recipient, of ARC POWER grant awards.

⁴ In general, ARC is able to accept other federal dollars as a matching contribution. However, some federal sources and some specific projects may have limitations on the use of other and/or total federal funding. Prospective applicants are recommended to consult with ARC staff prior to submission if planning to use other federal funds as match.

Overall project team membership can comprise, but is not limited to, the following types of organizations:

- economic development organizations;
- local governments;
- planning organizations and development districts;
- labor unions and labor-management apprenticeship programs;
- state and local workforce agencies;
- institutions of higher education, including (but not limited to) community colleges and other job training and adult education providers;
- not-for-profit and community-based organizations including community action agencies that provide supportive services and human services providers; and
- chambers of commerce, industry and trade associations, local and regional business owners, and other representatives from the private sector.

E. POWER 2018 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Request a POWER 2018 Application

The electronic POWER 2018 application will be available on March 1, 2018. Applicants may access the application electronically online at: <https://power.arc.gov>.

2. Content and Form of POWER 2018 Application

POWER 2018 grant applications follow ARC's standard application policies and procedures.

Application narratives are limited to 10 pages, single-spaced in length. The types of information requested by ARC include: strategic rationale of the project; demonstration of collaborative partnerships; project sustainability; applicant capacity, and measurable impact. In addition, a detailed project budget is required.

Applications from organizations that received a previous POWER award must also include documentation of the impact of the original POWER funds.

Supportive documents and completion of federal forms will be required after the application has been selected for funding.

Additional ARC project application requirements and guidance are described in detail at the ARC POWER home page (<https://www.arc.gov/POWER>).

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

As required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, applicants are required to:

- A. Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting their application (SAM now encompasses the Central Contractor Registration (CCR));
- B. Provide a valid Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, a unique entity identifier, in their application; and
- C. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they have an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency.

4. Submission Dates and Times

The POWER FY18 grant competition will be structured in two cycles:

- Cycle 1 deadline: May 1, 2018.
- Cycle 2 deadline: July 27, 2018.

Applications must be completed and submitted by the appropriate deadline to be considered for funding. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit by the earlier deadline as **up to 70%** of the POWER funding will be awarded to projects in Cycle 1.

5. Application Submission Instructions

After March 1, 2018, POWER 2018 project applications (and related attachments) can be submitted electronically via the POWER Initiative Portal available at: <https://power.arc.gov>.

NOTE: This online application portal has been established for POWER 2018 project **applications** only.

Prior to submission of the application, every applicant should contact the state alternate(s) and state program managers impacted by the project proposal. The state officials will ensure that the proposals are in alignment with their state economic development priorities.

Neither facsimile nor email transmissions of applications will be accepted.

After an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process during which the application may be accepted or rejected due to errors, incomplete information, or ineligible applicant and/or service area. Be advised that it may take several days for the validation process to be completed and that the process may not begin until after the application deadline. Applications found to be missing required information or to contain critical errors will not be reviewed or evaluated.

6. Funding Restrictions

POWER 2018 grant awards funded in part or in whole with ARC program funds are subject to the same program funding restrictions of other ARC grants. Additional program information is available at: <https://www.arc.gov/POWER>.

F. POWER 2018 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

POWER applications will first be reviewed by the state alternate(s) in which the project's activities and impacts are located. This initial review will ensure that the project's scope of work is strategic and compatible with the state's existing economic development priorities.

ARC program staff and state representatives will jointly review and score applications based on the criteria set out in this document. Reviewers will consider the extent to which the application addresses ARC's strategic investment goals, investment priorities, objectives, and funding principles, and the degree of documented recent coal impact on the economy of the region to be served.

ARC reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with applicants that have been selected to receive awards, which may include requesting that the applicant remove or adjust certain proposed costs. Additionally, ARC may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information pertaining to any aspect of the application. ARC also reserves the right to reject an application where information is uncovered that raises a reasonable doubt as to the applicant's ability to successfully fulfill the objectives and requirements of the grant award.

ARC, under its complete and sole discretion, may select for award some, all, or none of the applications received under this competitive solicitation. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the ARC federal co-chair and the respective state representative(s). The award decision of the ARC Federal Co-Chair and the respective state representative(s) is final.

G. POWER 2018 AWARD ADMINISTRATION

General management and administration requirements are contained in the [ARC Grant Administration Manual for Non-Construction Grant Agreements](#). Administration of ARC awards is also subject to the same regulations, restrictions, and requirements as other federal awards. These include, but are not limited to, administrative requirements and cost principles, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), past performance and non-compliance, restrictions on making awards to corporations convicted of felony criminal violations and unpaid federal tax liabilities, environmental and historic preservation, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Recipients of non-construction grants must adhere to ARC reporting requirements as identified in the [ARC Grant Administration Manual for Non-Construction Grant Agreements](#). However, ARC reserves the right to change the reporting time periods and, depending on the nature of the project, may request additional relevant data.

Grants involving construction will require the use of a basic agency to administer the funds, and grantees will be subject to the reporting requirements of that agency. Partnerships submitting applications involving construction, renovations, restoration, and other similar activities are strongly encouraged to contact their ARC state program managers (see <https://www.arc.gov/about/StateProgramManagers.asp>) and ARC program specialists for guidance on securing a basic agency.

H. ARC AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

ARC strongly encourages interested applicants to contact ARC state program managers and ARC staff with any questions they have about the POWER Initiative in general, as well as with any specific questions they have about the use of agency funds to support projects in their communities and regions. Applicants with additional questions may submit these to POWER@arc.gov.

I. GENERAL DISCLOSURES

FY18 POWER Initiative awards will be made only to the extent that funds are available. Publication of this RFP does not obligate ARC to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds. Applicants intending to contract with a specific individual, consulting group, or organization with ARC funding must have a competitive procurement policy in place.

This RFP does not commit ARC to award a contract, or to procure, or to contract for services or supplies. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the RFP, ARC reserves the right to award grants, cooperative agreements or contracts to communities or regions that best meet the requirements of the RFP, and not necessarily to the lowest cost proposers. ARC solely reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses received as a result of this request; to negotiate with all qualified sources; or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP if it is in the interests of the ARC to do so.

Please note that ARC will not reimburse for any other costs associated with the preparation of a response to this RFP. Any ARC contracts awarded to work directly with consultants or consulting organizations will likely be a FIRM FIXED-PRICE CONTRACT or a cooperative agreement. Consultants and consultant teams that are legally barred from receiving federal contracts or contract payments will not be considered for work with communities or regions under this RFP.

–End–