

**Appalachian Regional Commission  
Request for Proposals**

**Appalachian Leadership Institute**

Questions concerning this RFP must be received by email to Jessica Mosley at [LeadershipRFP@arc.gov](mailto:LeadershipRFP@arc.gov) no later than 12:00 p.m. ET on October 12, 2018. ARC reserves the right to not answer questions received after that time.

**Proposals are due on or before 5:00 p.m. ET  
October 19, 2018**

**[LeadershipRFP@arc.gov](mailto:LeadershipRFP@arc.gov)**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**SECTION I: SUMMARY**

**SECTION II: BACKGROUND**

**SECTION III: ROLES OF THE ORGANIZATIONS & COMMISSION**

**SECTION IV: THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**SECTION V: SUBMISSION PROCEDURES**

**SECTION VI: THE REVIEW AND EVALUATION PROCESS**

**SECTION VII: RFP TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

**APPENDIX A: DRAFT PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

## **Section I: Summary**

This Request for Proposals (“RFP”) solicits proposals from organizations within the Appalachian Region, including non-profits, institutions of higher education, and other stakeholders, (“Organizations”) to work in partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission (“ARC”) to create a nationally recognized leadership development program that will prepare state and local leaders to work for future improvements in the region by “thinking and acting regionally.” The Appalachian Leadership Institute (“The Institute”) will include but not be limited to:

- A year-long leadership program aimed at key leaders from the public, non-profit, and private sectors, which will focus on regional leadership, economic development, and other challenges facing rural and Appalachian communities, with sessions located in the region; and
- An active alumni program known to encourage ongoing networking and collective action.

The purpose of this RFP is to assist in the development of programming and content for The Institute. The focus of the leadership program is on regional leadership and topics important to ARC and the region such as business development and expansion, education and workforce preparedness, telecommunications, infrastructure, community development, housing, health and transportation. Program sessions will take place throughout the Appalachian Region and in Washington, DC. ARC will require the Organization to secure prominent speakers on subject matters vital to the region at each of the sessions and at least one cultural outing or business excursion must also be provided at every location. Upon the completion of the program, the participants should possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make a direct and sustainable impact in their community, county, and state.

ARC encourages responders to bring forth innovative ideas that will train local leadership through substantive exercises and learning modules and empower Institute participants to take action towards positively impacting the future of Appalachia with collaborative solutions to our region’s greatest challenges.

ARC is soliciting competitive proposals because it has determined that this process best serves the needs and interest of ARC and the public. As such, all Organizations will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals in response to the RFP, and no Organization or person shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, citizenship status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, or any other factor protected by law in consideration for an award issued pursuant to this RFP. ARC is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and the elimination of all vestiges of discriminatory practices that might exist.

## **Section II: Background**

### **About Appalachia**

The Appalachian Region, as defined in ARC's authorizing legislation, is a 205,000- square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Forty-two percent of the Region's population is rural, compared with 20 percent of the national population.

The Appalachian Region's economy, which was once highly dependent on extractive industries, has become more diversified and now includes larger shares of manufacturing and professional services, among other industries. Appalachia has made significant progress over the past five decades: its poverty rate, which was 31 percent in 1960, had fallen to 17.2 percent over the 2010–2014 period. The number of high-poverty counties in the Region (those with poverty rates more than 1.5 times the U.S. average) declined from 295 in 1960 to 91 over the 2010–2014 period.

These gains have transformed the Region from one of widespread poverty to one of economic contrasts: some communities have successfully diversified their economies, while others still require basic infrastructure such as roads, clinics, and water and sewer systems. The contrasts are not surprising in light of the Region's size and diversity—the Region includes 420 counties in 13 states, extends more than 1,000 miles from southern New York to northeastern Mississippi, and is home to more than 25 million people.

### **About the Appalachian Regional Commission**

In the mid-1960s, at the urging of two U.S. presidents, Congress enacted legislation to address the persistent poverty and growing economic despair of the Appalachian Region. The Appalachian Regional Commission is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local government. Established by an act of Congress in 1965, ARC is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states, as well as a federal co-chair appointed by the President and is subject to Senate confirmation. Local participation is provided through multi-county local development districts.

ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia. ARC funds projects that address the five goals identified in the Commission's Investment Strategy:

1. Economic Opportunities: Invest in entrepreneurial and business development strategies that strengthen Appalachia's economy.

2. **Ready Workforce:** Increase the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents to work and succeed in Appalachia.
3. **Critical Infrastructure:** Invest in critical infrastructure—especially broadband; transportation, including the Appalachian Development Highway System; and water/wastewater systems.
4. **Natural and Cultural Assets:** Strengthen Appalachia’s community and economic development potential by leveraging the Region’s natural and cultural heritage assets.
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.

Each year, ARC provides funding for several hundred projects in the Appalachian Region in areas such as business development, education and workforce preparedness, telecommunications, infrastructure, community development, housing, health, and transportation. These projects create thousands of new jobs; improve local water and sewer systems; increase school readiness; expand access to health care; assist local communities with strategic planning; and provide technical and managerial assistance to emerging businesses.

Additional information about Appalachia and the Appalachian Regional Commission can be found at [www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov).

### **The Appalachian Leadership Institute**

The Appalachian Leadership Institute will focus on promoting action-oriented leadership in the Appalachian Region. Key objectives include, but are not limited to:

- Instilling in leaders the importance of regional action across jurisdictional boundaries, be they municipal, county, or state lines;
- Building awareness of ARC priorities in key areas such as business development, education and workforce preparedness, telecommunications, infrastructure, community development, housing, and transportation;
- Ensuring that those participating in The Institute leave with a body of leadership knowledge and skills that can be applied for community and regional action;
- Developing a strong network of leaders who can work together across the region;
- Promoting action that will make a sustainable difference in the region;
- Case studies during the sessions that pertain to both the opportunities and challenges of the region that can be replicated and avoided in their own communities; and
- Issuance of certificates to participants acknowledging and commending completion of The Institute.

### **Section III: Roles of the Organizations & Appalachian Regional Commission**

Key roles and responsibilities of responding Organizations will include, but not be limited to:

- Collaborate with ARC to guide the work of the Organization;
- When available during sessions, use the resources of universities and colleges in the area by bringing them in as a partner;
- Publicly promote the program in the Appalachian Region as approved by ARC;
- Develop and deliver curriculum, subject to approval by ARC;
- Seek and incorporate program feedback from participants as well as ARC;
- Provide briefings to the ARC staff, and other interested parties, as requested;
- Notify ARC concerning any organizational changes, including significant personnel providing the leadership development programming for ARC;
- Provide quarterly reports for each year of the program until it is closed out; and
- Provide adequate support and accommodate ARC staff members during audits and management assistance visits and coordinate visits to the Organization's premises.

Key roles and responsibilities of the ARC will include, but not be limited to:

- Provide and fund an ARC staff member as a program manager whose job duties will include, but not be limited to:
  - Assist with scheduling to ensure that session dates align with the ARC calendar;
  - Manage the application and selection process for The Institute;
  - Act as the main POC for all Institute participants;
  - Assist with the Washington, DC session, including arrangement of sessions with federal partners and others, as needed; and
  - Attend sessions to oversee progress and manage the overall program.
- Assist in securing speakers for initiative events;
- Build and maintain the website for The Institute;
- Manage hotel selection and logistics for sessions;
- Provide feedback and guidance on program design and related issues; and
- Provide ongoing funding support, subject to satisfactory performance, under any contract resulting from this RFP.

## **Section IV: The Request for Proposals**

### **Submission Requirements**

The proposal narrative should provide the following information:

#### **Program Strategy**

The proposal should describe the Organization's strategy for promoting action-oriented leadership in the Appalachian Region, to include, but not be limited to, the following major components under The Institute umbrella:

- A program aimed at approximately 40 key leaders from the public, non-profit, and private sectors;
- Curriculum and sessions focused on ARC's five investment areas (See Appendix A);
- Case study work that reflects both the opportunities and strategies in the region; and
- Proposed areas of training in leadership skills development.

The narrative should include discussion of content strategies, instructional methods, and linkages between the various program components. Innovative approaches are expected and will be required.

In addition, ARC encourages proposals that incorporate an accredited certificate in an appropriate subject matter that will contribute to a participants' expertise.

#### **Experience and Expertise**

The proposal should describe the Organization's experience in designing and delivering leadership development programming including examples of outcomes and successes. The qualifications of staff/faculty that will be involved in program design and delivery shall also be provided.

#### **Facilities**

The proposal should describe the facilities available to host The Institute. Coordination of meeting logistics will be managed by ARC staff with assistance from the Organization.

#### **Budget/Funding**

The proposal should present a budget for each major component of the initiative, including a breakdown of costs for program management, instructional personnel, and materials.

Given the mission of the program to reach rural and distressed communities, Organizations are encouraged to include funding for program scholarships as part of their budget, which can include commitments for contributions from the Organization or outside sources.

ARC desires to minimize submission of superfluous RFP material. Therefore, responding Organizations are instructed to organize their responses according to the following format:

- The proposal narrative should not exceed 12 typewritten pages tabbed by category. Font must be Times New Roman and can be no smaller than 10 typeset. Two to Three (2-3) pages per section as follows:

Program Strategy

Experience and Expertise

Facilities

Budget/Funding

- Supplemental information or background material, if any, must be restricted to appendices following the narrative placed in chapters. Up to additional ten (10) pages per chapter of supplemental material may be submitted, including curriculum vitae of key personnel and materials from prior leadership development programs.
- Pages should be numbered consecutively and identify the Organization on each.
- Each proposal should be accompanied by a title page specifying the name of the RFP being responded to (“Appalachian Leadership Institute”) followed by a submittal letter signed by an officer of the responding Organization.

## **Section V: Submission Procedures**

**The deadline for submissions in response to this RFP is 5:00 p.m. ET, Friday, October 19, 2018.**

Please submit a PDF copy of your response to [LeadershipRFP@arc.gov](mailto:LeadershipRFP@arc.gov).

Each Organization must submit a complete response (answer every information request) to this RFP, as failure to do so will result in immediate disqualification, and cause the response to not be scored. Further, the response must be signed by an officer of the responding Organization, and the response must include a statement as to the period for which the response remains valid, which must be at least 90 days from the date responses to the RFP are due.

Additionally:

- Telephone or fax responses will not be accepted for this RFP;
- Submissions **MUST** be sent via email;
- Responses or unsolicited amendments will not be accepted after the closing date and time;
- Requests for time extensions past any deadlines will not be considered.

## **Section VI: The Review and Evaluation Process**

The Commission's selection committee ("the Committee") will review and evaluate only the responses that meet the following threshold items:

- The Organization's willingness to explicitly follow the Commission's guidelines in this RFP;
- The experience and qualifications of both the Organization and its staff to be assigned to provide these services, in regard to its described ability to successfully manage The Institute;
- Involvement and accessibility of the Organization's staff to be assigned to these services;
- The Organization's commitment to the Appalachian Region;
- The Organization's location within the ARC thirteen-state region; and
- The Organization's answers to the information requests outlined in "submission requirements" above.

Subsequent to the Committee's evaluation, and at the sole discretion of the Committee, certain Organizations may be selected for interviews. Those Organizations selected will be given not less than seven business days' notice, along with the date, time, and place for these presentations.

Each Organization selected for an interview will be allotted 30 minutes for its presentation, and additional time may be allotted to answer any questions it may pose, to ensure the Organizations are evaluated on the basis of the criteria set forth in this RFP.

ARC may then select the Organization based on the demonstrated competence, experience, knowledge, and qualifications of the Organization, as evaluated and proffered by the committee.

ARC fully reserves the right to make this decision and the Commission's decision on this matter is final.

## **Section VII: RFP Terms and Conditions**

This RFP is for the purpose of soliciting responses from organizations within the Appalachian Region, including non-profits, institutions of higher education, and other stakeholders, qualified to design and deliver a leadership initiative, on a region wide basis, for the Commission.

No claim for adjustment of any provision of the RFP shall be honored after the proposal has been submitted on the grounds that the proposer was not fully informed as the existing conditions or circumstances or any other related matter. However, by this RFP, the Commission has not committed itself to employ an Organization for these services for any or all of the herein-described matters and the board reserves the right to decide such after receipt, review and evaluation of all responses.

Additionally, the Commission reserves the right to:

- Waive or amend any portion of this RFP by written notice to all Organizations;
- Negotiate all elements that comprise the information with the Organization(s) to ensure that the best possible considerations are afforded to all concerned;
- To waive any irregularities;
- Reject any and all responses to this RFP;
- Select Organization(s) for specific purposes or for any combination of specific purposes; and
- Defer the selection of any Organization(s) to a time of the Commission's choosing.

Additionally, ARC will allow and review responses utilizing joint ventures of any two or more Organizations, or sub-contractors by a single Organization, as long as the response clearly:

- Identifies the lead principal who will bear the responsibility for the contract for services with the Commission; and
- Describes its proposed measures of quality control for itself and its joint-venture partners and/or its sub-contractors sufficiently to satisfy the Commission.

### **Warranty and Independence**

Organizations must warrant that no sums or anything of value has been or will be paid directly or indirectly to any officer or employee of ARC such as wages, compensation, or gifts in exchange for acting as officer, agent, employee, subcontractor or consultant to the Organizations in connection with any work compensated or performed.

ARC cannot and does not make any representatives or warranties with regard to the information, data, documentation, and material conveyed in this RFP or otherwise provided by ARC.

Organizations shall conduct their own independent investigations and analysis and make their own assessments, judgments, and decisions regarding this opportunity.

## **Commission, Board and Staff Communication**

Organizations intending to respond to this RFP are prohibited from contacting any member of the Commission or ARC staff with the purpose of influencing the RFP selection process. All RFP related communication should be directed to Jessica Mosley, the contact person, during this process. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disqualification.

## **Period of Contract**

While the contract will be offered for a term of one year, with a renewal option for two one-year terms subject to ARC approval, it is the intent to continue the contract on an ongoing basis, contingent upon, among other things, availability of funds, continued need, and satisfactory performance of services. At all times, the Organization will serve at the will and pleasure of the Commission.

## **Cost of Developing and Submitting Response**

ARC shall not, under any circumstances, be liable or responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by any Organization in preparing and/or submitting a response associated with proposals including, but not limited to, research, investigation, development, preparation, transmittal, or presentation of proposals or any related information, data documentation, and material. All costs and expenses incurred by the proposers in connection with these proposals submitted shall be the sole responsibility of the proposers.

## **Acceptance of RFP Content**

Some of the contents of this RFP and the response submitted may be incorporated by reference in any final contract resulting from this RFP.

## **Facilities**

ARC reserves the right to inspect each Organization's facilities at any time without prior notice.

## **Assignment and Delegation**

Any contract issued pursuant to this RFP is not assignable, nor may be delegated, except with the prior written approval of the Commission.

## **Property**

All responses become the property of the ARC upon receipt. The ARC has the right to use any and all ideas or adaptations of the ideas contained in any response received in this RFP. Selection or rejection of the response will not affect this right.

**Proprietary Information**

If an Organization does not desire certain proprietary information in its response disclosed, the Organization is required to identify all proprietary information in the response, which identification shall be submitted concurrently with the response. If the Organization fails to identify proprietary information, it agrees by submission of its response that all parts of all responses shall be deemed non-proprietary and will become public documents upon completion of the RFP process.

**Governing Law**

The contract created as a result of this RFP and the accepted response will be made under, and shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Draft Program Structure**

*Each Appalachian Leadership Development cohort will meet for 7 in person sessions during the program year. Each session will be 2-4 days. Locations will rotate throughout the region.*

Session I: Orientation & Leadership Skills

Session II: Economic Opportunities

Session II: Ready Workforce

Session IV: Critical Infrastructure

Session V: Natural and Cultural Assets

Session VI: Community Capacity

Session VII: Graduation & Wrap-up (Washington, DC)