

Livable Communities in Appalachia

2013 Technical Assistance & Implementation Announcement

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are combining resources to work with Appalachian communities that face development-related challenges.

This partnership aims to assist Appalachia in promoting economic development while helping traditional downtowns thrive and improve the quality of life for community residents.

ARC, EPA, and USDA will provide direct technical support to a small group of interested communities. The technical support will be based on the goals and strategies described in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities 2011 publication [Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities](http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/2011_11_supporting-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf), available at http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/2011_11_supporting-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf. These include:

- Promoting rural prosperity by creating a diverse and competitive local economy;
- Investing in rural town centers, traditional Main Streets, and existing infrastructure in order to create places that are economically vibrant, healthy, and walkable;
- Expanding transportation choices so that everyone - including elderly, disabled, and low-income residents - can safely get around;
- Expanding housing choices so that the range of community members can afford housing and transportation expenses.

ARC, EPA, and USDA have committed up to \$250,000 towards technical assistance and implementation in up to five Appalachian communities. The \$250,000 will be used to develop action plans and provide small cash-grants for first-step implementation efforts.

To see last year's Livable Communities Action Plans, please go to the following website: http://www.arc.gov/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=408.

Please note that while last year's action plans did not revolve around a specific theme, this year's partnership is focused on Local Food Systems.

Food Systems a Highlighted Theme

Within the context of these Livable Communities approaches, this year's selected communities will have an interest in developing local food systems as a means of promoting economic competitiveness and economic diversification. Special attention will be given to applicants who are in the "start-up" phase in developing a vibrant local food economy.

How to Apply

Communities in the ARC-defined Appalachia region should submit a letter of interest, no more than two pages, describing the needs and goals of the community as they pertain to the description above.

Communities submitting applications are also required to seek the support from their ARC-recognized Local Development District or, alternatively, a local university or community college.

The selection process will take into account:

- Community interest in the area of food systems, including the production and distribution of healthful local food as a means of boosting economic competitiveness and economic diversification.
- The potential to address the community's development challenges through the strategies described above;
- Support from community leaders and community members;
- Interest on the part of the Local Development District (LDD), or, alternatively, a local university or community college, in playing an active role in the technical assistance and potentially replicating such efforts in other communities;
- Potential for the community to receive public or private investments to implement strategies identified through the technical assistance program;
- The extent of social and economic needs of the Appalachian community as measured by per capita market income, poverty rate and unemployment rate;

The letter of interest should indicate a primary point of contact and, if possible, other members of the community who will participate in the technical assistance process. A primary point of contact in the community's LDD, or, alternatively, a local university or community college, should also be indicated.

Letters of interest may be submitted via email to Wilson Paine at wpaine@arc.gov **no later than October 18, 2013**. Questions about this solicitation may be addressed to Wilson Paine at wpaine@arc.gov or to Ed Fendley at Fendley.Ed@epa.gov.