Appalachian Teaching Project Fellow
Position Description

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a federal-state partnership that works to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic and community development and improved quality of life in the Appalachian Region. The Commission consists of a federal co-chair appointed by the president, and the governors of the 13 Appalachian states. The Region consists of 420 counties in those states. ARC awards grants and contracts to nonprofit organizations and units of government within the Region. These grants focus on infrastructure; education and training; civic capacity building and leadership development; entrepreneurship and business development; and health care. Based in Washington, D.C., ARC comprises approximately 50 technical and professional staff supporting grant-making, advocacy, and knowledge-building functions to assist the Appalachian Region.

The Appalachian Teaching Project (ATP) gives college students the opportunity to engage in research projects that address endemic challenges facing Appalachian communities. Led by the Consortium of Appalachian Centers and Institutes, a coalition of Appalachian-studies organizations, the program includes coursework and active research on critical issues facing local communities. Supported by ARC to help build student leadership capacity, ATP teaches real-world leadership skills, taking students out of the classroom and actively involving them in their communities.

To add value to the ATP initiative, ARC provides for a ten-to-twelve week ATP Fellowship work residency at ARC headquarters in Washington, D.C., during the summer semester. The Fellow will gain additional leadership and research skills, insight into ARC strategic investments, and knowledge of interventions that benefit Appalachian communities.

For further information on ARC, visit www.arc.gov.

Position Information

The ATP Fellow will report to ARC’s planning and research director and will be mentored by a staff program analyst who will coordinate his/her work duties and schedule. The Fellow will also work collaboratively with the ARC communications division. The Fellow will assist ARC with development of a library of “best practice” case studies of ARC investments throughout Appalachia. Best practices are programs, activities, or strategies that have been shown to work effectively and produce successful outcomes, as documented with data. Sharing and promoting best practices helps regional leaders adapt new ideas, learn from similar communities, and replicate exemplary models of economic development.

Specifically, the ATP Fellow will: Finalize a sample of ARC grant investments for purposes of further outreach; develop an interview protocol, a survey instrument, and a detailed schedule to gather data in a timely fashion; contact prior ARC grantees to set up phone interviews to discuss the impact and legacy of their ARC grants; write 15–20 case studies (of 400–500 words each); and establish the most appropriate format for reporting and presenting the data. Final interviews and case studies will be given to ARC for dissemination. Where appropriate, images and supporting documentation will help ARC “tell the story” of each case study. The Fellow must present findings to ARC staff at the end of the Fellowship.

During the Fellowship, the Fellow will meet with various ARC staff to learn about all areas of Commission operations. To add value to the Fellowship learning experience, the Fellow will be invited to on-site presentations and meetings.
The ATP Fellow will work closely alongside research staff performing the following duties:

- Developing a list of ARC grantees whose projects have been closed for between one and four years.
- Communicating directly with grantees via email, phone, Skype, or other mechanism to obtain, verify, and validate actual performance metrics and gather information on the outcomes and long-term impact of selected projects.
- Comparing actual reported metrics with proposed measures and final measures, then updating existing files accordingly.
- In cases of outliers, developing a deeper profile or case study of the ARC project based on information provided directly from grantees.
- Updating performance metrics in ARC.net for use in future program evaluations conducted by external reviewers. ARC staff will develop protocol for interviews and follow-up documentation and verification of metrics.
- Reporting this information in the PAR and other venues, including ARC’s budget justification document, as appropriate.

**Requirements and Qualifications**

Applicants are eligible if they have participated in the ATP program and attended the ATP conference in one of the two years immediately preceding the year in which they apply (i.e., the applicant must have participated in the ATP program and attended the ATP conference in December 2017 or December 2018 to be eligible to apply for the Summer 2019 Fellowship).

Although the ATP Fellowship Program is managed by ARC, students must be nominated by their host educational institution’s ATP professor, who can recommend only one student per cycle for consideration.

Applicants must be a current undergraduate or graduate student with education or experience in:

- regional planning
- public administration
- program evaluation
- public policy
- journalism
- anthropology/sociology
- data analysis
- economic development
- geography
- Appalachian studies

Competencies required are:

- Critical thinking
- Analytical ability
- Strong written communication skills, including the ability to quickly and effectively synthesize large amounts of data into meaningful summaries and themes
- Effective business communication skills, including the ability to quickly and effectively build rapport with grantees, partners, and others
- Effective telephone communication skills, including the ability to gather data and information from diverse partners
- Cultural flexibility, including the ability to work effectively with various cultures, social groups, and perspectives
- Proficient use of technology such as Microsoft Office, databases, the Internet

To Apply
The ATP Fellowship application must be submitted by each nominating ATP professor on behalf of his or her student applicant. Applicants and their nominating professors must ensure the following required application materials are submitted no later than January 15 to ARC Planning and Research Director Kostas Skordas via email at kskordas@arc.gov. The nominating ATP professor must supply the following information in one packet:

- A letter of support from the ATP professor specifying how the nominated student is best qualified for the Fellowship. This letter should also include a description of how the Fellowship will benefit the student and how ARC will benefit from the student’s work.

- The student’s resume and statement of purpose answering these three questions in no more than 1,000 words total: What unique experiences and skills did you develop during your relevant ATP course that will best prepare you to be a successful ARC Fellow? How will this ARC fellowship benefit your career aspirations? Outside of the ATP experience, what other knowledge and abilities will benefit you as an ARC Fellow?

Phone interviews may be conducted as part of the selection process. The ARC planning and research director and communications director, along with an ARC committee, will review all applications and recommend a Fellow candidate to the ARC executive director for final approval.

For questions or more information, please contact ARC Planning and Research Director Kostas Skordas at (202) 884-7720 or kskordas@arc.gov