



## Appalachian Teaching Project 2020 Fellowship

### Background and Overview

The Appalachian Teaching Project (ATP) provides 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 the Appalachian Regional Commission (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.

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, 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 provided through multi-county local development districts. ARC invests in activities that address the five goals identified in the Commission's strategic plan: Economic Opportunities, Ready Workforce, Critical Infrastructure, Natural and Cultural Assets, and Leadership and Community Capacity. Each year, ARC funds several hundred investments in the Appalachian Region in areas such as business development, education and job training, telecommunications, infrastructure, community development, housing, 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.



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

The Fellow works under the supervision of ARC's planning and research director. He or she is mentored by a staff program analyst, and works in close coordination with the Commission's communications division. He/she develops a library of case studies based on interviews with ARC grantees to determine project outcomes, investment impact, and best practices from recently completed ARC grant investments. The Fellow may also conduct other relevant work as needed and in coordination with the planning and research director.



## Timeline

The application period for the ATP Fellowship will be announced prior to the annual ATP conference. ARC will work closely with the ATP organizers and participating faculty to make them aware of this opportunity ahead of the conference. **Deadline for submission of all nominated students is February 14, 2020** with ARC selection of the Fellow made by March 20, 2020. The Fellow is expected to complete a minimum of ten weeks and maximum of twelve weeks of work between May 1 and August 31, 2020 dependent upon his/her school schedule.



## Qualifications and Eligibility

Applicants are eligible if they have participated in the ATP program and attended the ATP conference in at least one of the three 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, 2018, or 2019 to be eligible to apply for the Summer 2020 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. Please review the Fellow position description for more details about the position's responsibilities and requirements.

## Research Focus

Prior to commencing the Fellowship, the Fellow will receive orientation information on ARC programs and activities to prepare for the position's primary project, assisting ARC with development of a library of "best practice" case studies of Commission 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 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 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. This may be through an all-staff presentation or through division debriefs. ARC will consider suggestions from the Fellow on additional innovative ways to share the findings at the completion of the Fellowship. To add value to the Fellowship learning experience, the Fellow will also meet with ARC staff to learn about all areas of Commission operations and will be invited to attend on-site presentations and meetings.

## Funding and Payment

The Fellow will be paid at the rate of a NF-7, step 1 equivalent (taxes and other statutory deductions will be made, as applicable) during the Fellowship. He/she will be paid directly from ARC (rather than through the nominating institution).

For the Summer 2020 Fellowship, ARC will offer a modest housing stipend to help offset the cost of housing in the D.C. metro area. The Fellow must submit to ARC within 30 days of the end of the Fellowship a copy of documentation that substantiates payments for housing made. If the Fellow does not incur any housing expenses during the Fellowship (i.e., he/she resides with a friend or family



member at no cost), no reimbursement or stipend will be available. ARC will not be responsible for finding housing for the Fellow. Students may inquire about housing through their school, or research options such as housing available through local/regional universities (including American, Catholic, Georgetown, George Washington, Howard, Trinity, and Virginia Tech), and intern housing vendors such as Washington Intern Housing Network and Washington Intern Student Housing (WISH).

ARC will provide the Fellow a public transportation subsidy (up to the IRS maximum) in the form of SmartBenefits for each month of the Fellowship. ARC will not provide any benefits beyond those required by federal, state, or local law. The selected Fellow is considered an intermittent employee.

## Nomination and Approval Process

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 Friday, February 14, 2020 to ARC Research and Evaluation Director Kostas Skordas via email at [kskordas@arc.gov](mailto: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 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: 1.) What unique experiences and skills did you develop during your relevant ATP course that will best prepare you to be a successful ARC Fellow? 2.) How will this ARC fellowship benefit your career aspirations? 3.) 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. An ARC committee will review all applications and recommend a Fellow candidate to the ARC executive director for final approval by March 20, 2020.

For questions or more information, please contact Kostas Skordas at (202) 884-7720 or [kskordas@arc.gov](mailto:kskordas@arc.gov)