# *POWER Initiative Evaluation: Factors and Results of Project Implementation*

AN EXPANSION OF FINDINGS FROM YEAR 1

September 2020 | Year 2 Final Report

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Prepared under Contract
PW-19412-18 for:

Appalachian Regional Commission

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## Acknowledgements

The authors at Chamberlin/Dunn LLC are grateful for the many people who supported the continued evaluation of the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative. We would like to recognize implementers of the evaluated projects for their time, participation, and willingness to share their perspectives. We are grateful to the state-level and foundation personnel who provided their perspective to inform the evaluation's design. We thank the staff and leadership of the Appalachian Regional Commission, especially the Research & Evaluation team, communications staff, and the POWER Coordinators who provided vital perspective, guidance, and insight both during design phases and throughout both years of evaluation. This evaluation would not have been possible without their contributions.

# Executive Summary

Since 2015, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) has funded more than 240 projects[1] under the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative to empower Appalachian communities to create more vibrant, diverse, and sustainable economies. To understand successes, challenges, and lessons learned through implementation, as well as to examine early results of POWER projects, ARC secured Chamberlin/Dunn (C/D) as third-party evaluator beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019.

In this second year of evaluation (FY20), the team collected data through surveys, document review, and interviews[2] on projects that were classified as:

- New, not previously evaluated, and awarded before February 2019
- Closed Technical Assistance (TA) and Planning, not previously evaluated
- Connected to substance use disorder (SUD) and the recovery ecosystem
- Operating in counties with high concentrations of POWER projects
- Multistate partnerships

Additionally, C/D conducted a survey on the early impacts of COVID-19 on grantee projects, organizations, and communities approximately one month into the pandemic.

## Key Findings from the Year 2 Evaluation

**1. Though overall implementation themes from Year 1 were confirmed, nuances by activity type are present within themes. As projects mature, distinctions may become more pronounced, and there is likely more grantees can learn from similar projects.**

Data collected in Year 2 confirmed the implementation themes from Year 1, including the overarching finding that projects share successes, challenges, and lessons learned across type. (The analysis of multistate projects also did not reveal substantially different themes from those shared by grantees operating projects within individual states.)

Rethemed for this report, crosscutting themes include:

Successes and Factors
- Partnership development
- Experience/reputation
- Telling the story
- Community buy-in
- Tailored programming
- Capitalizing on external focus

Challenges and Factors
- Delays
- Lack of resources
- Participant reluctance
- Partner capacity/commitment
- Internal staffing/capacity

However, with the combining of Year 1 and Year 2 data, nuances emerged by project activity grouping.[3] This evaluation report delves into those details and offers activity type-specific findings and recommendations. See Lessons Learned from Implementation.

[1] The funded project count is as of FY20 (September 2020) and does not include 51 new projects awarded in October 2020 (FY21).
[2] Data collection methods varied by evaluation component. See About the Evaluation.
[3] The evaluation team recategorized projects by their primary activity focus for the purposes of this analysis. See POWER Project Categorization.

*Success themes that emerged by activity grouping:*


**Partnership Development**

Ensuring the right mix of skills, services, connections, and resources for the study or the implementation tasks at hand. The types of partners cited as most critical to achieving project objectives varied based on activity type but usually included a wide range of stakeholders.

**Telling the Story**

To varying degrees based on challenges within the activity type, a way to overcome reluctance from a potential recruit or entrepreneur so they could see themselves reflected in the project's success stories. This was also a method to build employer buy-in and excitement for the potential impacts of successful projects. In some cases, it included successfully communicating the need for and value of new initiatives, such as the lack of access to capital and the resulting opportunities that addressing the need might provide.

**Tailored Programming**

Adapting programs or services based on discovered needs. For workforce/training, it included individual career plans and discussions with employers about skill need; for other projects, it meant meeting entrepreneurs and small business owners where they were, even when skills were lower than anticipated. For economic asset projects, it included assessing capacity and readiness to determine how strategies could be adapted to a local context.

**Experience/Reputation**

Knowledge of the subject matter (especially noted in TA and loan fund projects), and utilizing reputation to secure a "seat at the table" and/or recruit interest and buy-in. For higher education, this theme was noted in the context of leveraging prior experience with large grants and complex programs. For sector-based, capital access, and entrepreneurship projects, it sometimes included local credibility and trust building, particularly in introducing new ideas and initiatives to community members.

**Community Buy-in**

Growing interest and directly engaging leaders. For TA, this was the ability to gain and maintain momentum even during a planning phase. For workforce/education, entrepreneurship, and sector-based development, this related to the ability to introduce new sectors that may be unfamiliar or emerging for a community.

**Capitalizing on External Focus**

Leveraging other issues being discussed among state policymakers or in the broader culture, including, at times, the ability to turn negative events into opportunities to rethink strategies and take risks with new initiatives. For example, food and agriculture grantees reported increased emphasis on farmers markets and local food systems when COVID-19 disrupted supply chains, which became a call to action for these grantees and partners.

*Challenge themes that emerged by activity grouping:*


**Delays**

Frequently related to construction or renovation-related reviews, studies, and permissions. This theme also included navigation of grantee and partner procurement processes and other steps such as certification for loan development projects.

**Participant Reluctance**

Hesitation on the part of trainees, entrepreneurs, farmers, and organizations to rethink local economies and opportunities. This theme included overcoming some risk-aversion at the community and individual levels regarding the viability of different industries, career paths, and capital development strategies.

**Internal Staffing/Capacity**

Challenges due to timing, project demands, and required skillsets. TA projects noted the short timeframes of their studies and the need to gather stakeholders across sometimes large distances in rural areas. Some grantees reported that certain project staff skillsets, like entrepreneur TA and coaching, were difficult to find, particularly when they wanted a local candidate with a strong community network. Recovery-focused grantees also discussed shortages of health care staff, recovery peer coaches, and other positions needed to deliver innovative strategies for ecosystem development and SUD response.

**Lack of Resources**

For training projects, lacking wraparound services for participants, including transportation and child care, and other costs of participation, including opportunity costs of attending training. For ecosystem projects, both entrepreneurial and recovery, this sometimes referred to the lack of ecosystem organizations in smaller, more rural communities. This challenge also relates to lack of funding, both for unexpected costs and for required funding match for projects that grantees identified but for which they found few other organizations willing to invest (e.g., some tourism and community asset development).

**Partner Capacity/Commitment**

In workforce/education, sometimes related to employers overestimating their ability to absorb candidates, and sometimes related to fulfilling match funding commitments. Grantees of all types noted the importance of memos of understanding (MOUs) and other legacy documents, especially in the event of leadership changes at partner organizations. This was particularly challenging in complex multi-partner projects, such as certain entrepreneurship projects that relied on partners to deliver a wide range of services and training. In certain cases, such as with food systems projects being implemented where other sector-based strategy projects were occurring, it also included the need to connect and collaborate with organizations operating seemingly related, but tangential, projects.

**2. High concentrations of POWER projects do not appear to have widespread adverse effects on implementation, especially with ARC's increased requirements for applicants to demonstrate alignment with existing programs and priorities.**

Many grantees, even those who reported some adverse effects, reported beneficial impacts of the presence of multiple projects simultaneously or in succession. Some interviewed grantees strongly encouraged ARC to continue to tie application points and funding to grantees who can demonstrate collaboration and coordination within and across regions. Grantees cited evidence of ARC improving in this area through enhanced requirements for coordination and alignment in the POWER request for proposals.

A conservative analysis of networks of these grantees, partners, and match-funders of 111 projects[4] in high-concentration counties revealed about 500 organizations involved in implementation or match funding and more than 700 unique grantee-to-partner relationships.

**3. Grantees took steps to adapt to COVID-19 but reported significant concerns for their organizations and communities.**

About 100 grantees with open projects responded to an April 2020 survey of perceptions of impact. They indicated major concerns about the viability of local businesses, short- and long-term economic impacts of the pandemic, community health, and ability of residents to meet basic needs. Concerns were less severe, but still present, for their ability to stay within projected timelines, logistics of carrying out activities as planned, and ability to meet outputs and outcomes, as well as the financial health of their organization, ability to deliver services, and ability to maintain operations. (ARC has responded to these needs and concerns with grant modifications, resources, and funding.) Needs and concerns did not substantially differ by project type, organization type, or organization size.

[4] Projects with the same project number but multiple suffixes were combined into a single count.

## YEAR 2 POWER EVALUATION FINDINGS

1. Though overall implementation themes from Year 1 were confirmed, nuances by activity type are present within themes. As projects mature, distinctions may become more pronounced, and there is likely more grantees can learn from similar projects.

2. High concentrations of POWER projects do not appear to have widespread adverse effects on implementation, especially with ARC's increased requirements for applicants to demonstrate alignment with existing programs and priorities.

3. Grantees took steps to adapt to COVID-19 but reported significant concerns for their organizations and communities.

4. Closed projects have achieved early results, but achievement varies by measure.

5. At present, it is too early to determine if there are any connections between project activity type and achieving outputs/outcomes (i.e., at present it cannot be concluded that one project type is more or less likely to meet targets).

**4. Closed projects have achieved early results, but achievement varies by measure.**

At the time of closeout, 81 closed projects[5] had reached a combined 128,600 beneficiaries, including students, workers, patients, businesses, communities, and other participants, and projects had improved over 90,000 of these beneficiaries. This is the case even though nearly half (47 percent) of closed projects are comparatively shorter-term Technical Assistance and Planning projects that are typically focused on the creation of plans and reports, and projects have up to three years to achieve outcomes. Beneficiaries served and improved include:

- Students: 70,544 served, 66,893 improved
- Participants: 38,900 served, 14,302 improved
- Workers/trainees: 8,570 served, 1,742 improved
- Patients: 4,990 served, 4,990 improved
- Businesses: 4,687 served, 3,383 improved
- Households: 326 served, 204 improved
- Communities: 319 served, 257 improved
- Organizations: 258 served, 41 improved

Collectively, as of closeout, grantees had met or exceeded targets for serving and improving participants, businesses, patients, students, and workers/trainees (although the latter two were difficult for some grantees to achieve by closeout). Added together, projects also met or exceeded targets as of closeout in:

- Businesses created: 942 businesses, 223 percent of target
- Jobs retained: 3,407 jobs, 251 percent of target
- Jobs created: 4,325 jobs, 149 percent of target
- Revenues increased, export: $28.0 million in revenue, 140 percent of target
- Revenues increased, non-export: $20.5 million in revenue, 118 percent of target
- Programs implemented: 13 programs, 118 percent of target
- Communities improved, 257 communities, 118 percent of target
- Linear feet of broadband fiber: 191,663 linear feet, 104 percent of target
- New visitors (days) attracted: 4,000 visitors, 100 percent of target
- Acres of space: 246 acres, 98 percent of target

Collectively, as of closeout, projects fell short of targets for: numbers of households and organizations served, plans/reports created, square feet established, and new visitors–overnight (outputs), as well as organizations improved, private investment leveraged, and telecom sites developed (outcomes), although many grantees met targets individually, and grantees have up to three years post-closeout to achieve outcomes.

[5] Ten projects representing two grant numbers were combined into two for reporting purposes (PW-18458 and PW-18794). Output and outcome numbers included in this report are at the time of closeout; however, projects typically have up to three years after closeout to measure outcomes.

**5. At present, it is too early to determine if there are any connections between project activity type and achieving outputs/outcomes (i.e., at present it cannot be concluded that one project type is more or less likely to meet targets). There is opportunity to continue to examine patterns as more projects close, and as more have been closed for three or more years.**

This report provides descriptive analysis of output and outcome achievement by output/outcome category and project activity type. However, as of this report, only 81 projects are officially closed (with 47 being TA projects) and only seven have been closed for at least three years (six are TA projects). At present, the small number of closed projects by type (other than TA projects) limits analysis of patterns of achieving outputs and outcomes by project type. As additional projects close and have been closed for longer time periods, patterns may become more apparent, including additional connections between implementation themes and project results.

## Recommendations for ARC

**Continue to gather implementation experiences, ensuring opportunities for sharing of lessons learned overall and by activity type.** ARC already incorporates peer learning opportunities into applicant and grantee convenings and has disseminated implementation evaluation findings to stakeholders in multiple settings. There is likely additional opportunity for intentional sharing through panels of grantees implementing similar types of activities; small-group TA calls with activity-specific challenges and lessons learned, using this report's findings by activity group as a guide; and, when in-person convenings resume, continuing opportunities for grantees to self-select into grant activity groups for semi-structured in-person discussions.

**Provide technical assistance to applicants and new grantees for planning regarding timelines, especially for projects that involve construction, renovation, and/or working with federal, state, and large public entities.** As found in Year 1 and confirmed in Year 2, projects that require studies and approvals, zoning changes, accreditation steps, work with another agency, or other administrative steps frequently take longer than grantees anticipate. ARC may benefit from additional analysis of the typical duration of each of these steps and an examination of the actual performance period (with any amendments) of POWER projects that include these elements.

**As additional projects close, consider calculating POWER's target return on investment (ROI) and actual ROI, and continue to monitor achievement by project type, to help provide applicants with guidelines on setting aggressive but realistic targets**. Some federal agencies offer figures, for example, on their expected average investment per job created or worker served. Although not the only method by which applicants should establish outputs and outcomes, such a calculation could help ARC further refine expectations and communicate results. This may be especially important for projects serving students or workers/trainees, as those appear to be among the most difficult metrics to achieve at a project level as of project closeout.

Considerations and recommendations for grantees, based on lessons learned by activity type, are provided in POWER Project Categorization.

In addition, two interim reports in Year 2 focused on Technical Assistance (TA) projects and recovery ecosystem projects. Recommendations from those reports are as follows:

**Continue to fund TA projects.** Nearly every TA grantee interviewed described impacts related to the TA grant, including greater preparation for future projects, valuable vetting of ideas, and development of organizational knowledge and capacity.

**Strengthen communication around implications of a TA grant for implementation.** A few TA grantees funded in earlier years expressed frustration that the linkage between funded TA projects and implementation projects was not clearer. They noted the need for more clarity in ARC's perception of the relationship between TA and implementation.

**Continue to offer specific feedback to TA grantees to assist in creating successful implementation applications.** Some TA grantees would welcome more specific feedback during and after the TA project process and during the implementation application period on how to transition the TA project into a funded implementation project.

**Consider continuing to offer POWER funding specifically for grantees focused on SUD and SUD-related issues.** Interviewed grantees talked about the value of receiving POWER funding, in some cases noting they lacked access to any other funding source to connect recovery with economic opportunity and address this significant need in their communities. The partnership and program models, and the lessons learned from these grantees, are rich sources of information for future implementation projects.

**Offer focused support and continued opportunities for SUD-related grantees to collaborate.** About half of the SUD-related grantees mentioned other POWER grantees as implementation partners or important components of their recovery ecosystem. Further, some grantees mentioned the importance of intentional collaboration for building the SUD ecosystem, particularly as the topic grows in focus nationwide. Many grantees noted the value of ARC convenings, and leadership, as well as making connections. ARC may consider offering opportunities specifically for the SUD ecosystem to share ideas and best practices.

**Consider tracking metrics of recovery in future SUD-related projects.** Grantees with a direct focus on SUD-connected populations and/or SUD recovery activities typically reported the capacity to measure various indicators of recovery, including relapse, justice system involvement, and measures of personal wellbeing; indeed, several reported doing so for other publicly funded projects. Although the data sometimes lag, ARC is in a unique position to examine the connections between recovery as it is broadly defined, and interventions designed to increase economic opportunity and wellbeing.

## Year 3 Evaluation

In FY21, the evaluation will examine the changes that have occurred throughout Appalachia as a result of POWER funding. The evaluation team will gather evidence from project staff and beneficiaries regarding their definitions of desired change and their stories of the most significant changes observed. The evaluation will also include a refreshed analysis of the outputs and outcomes of closed projects, linking results to implementation findings as possible. Finally, grantees with open projects will again be surveyed about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# POWER Initiative Evaluation: Factors and Results of Project Implementation

*An Expansion of Findings from Year 1*

September 2020

# Introduction

## About the POWER Initiative

The Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative "targets 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."[6] Since 2015, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) has awarded 242 projects over $195 million in POWER funding to help empower communities to create more vibrant, diverse, and sustainable economies. POWER projects have touched 350 coal-impacted counties in 13 states across Appalachia.[7]

Based on interviews with ARC federal and state staff, grantees, project partners, and other stakeholders throughout Appalachia, six foundational principles appear to guide POWER's investment and implementation:

1. Economic transformation requires investment in a wide variety of interconnected strategies.
2. Economic transformation requires building the capacity of organizations to work together to identify and act on local and regional needs.
3. Economic transformation requires partnerships, collaborations, and shared learning both within and across states and regions.
4. Organizations and communities need financial support to plan and develop strong foundations for future work.
5. Appalachia is a collection of diverse communities and regions, and so projects must be driven by local needs informed by state and regional priorities.
6. POWER's transformative aims require learning, flexibility, and adaptability, from both the funder and project implementers.

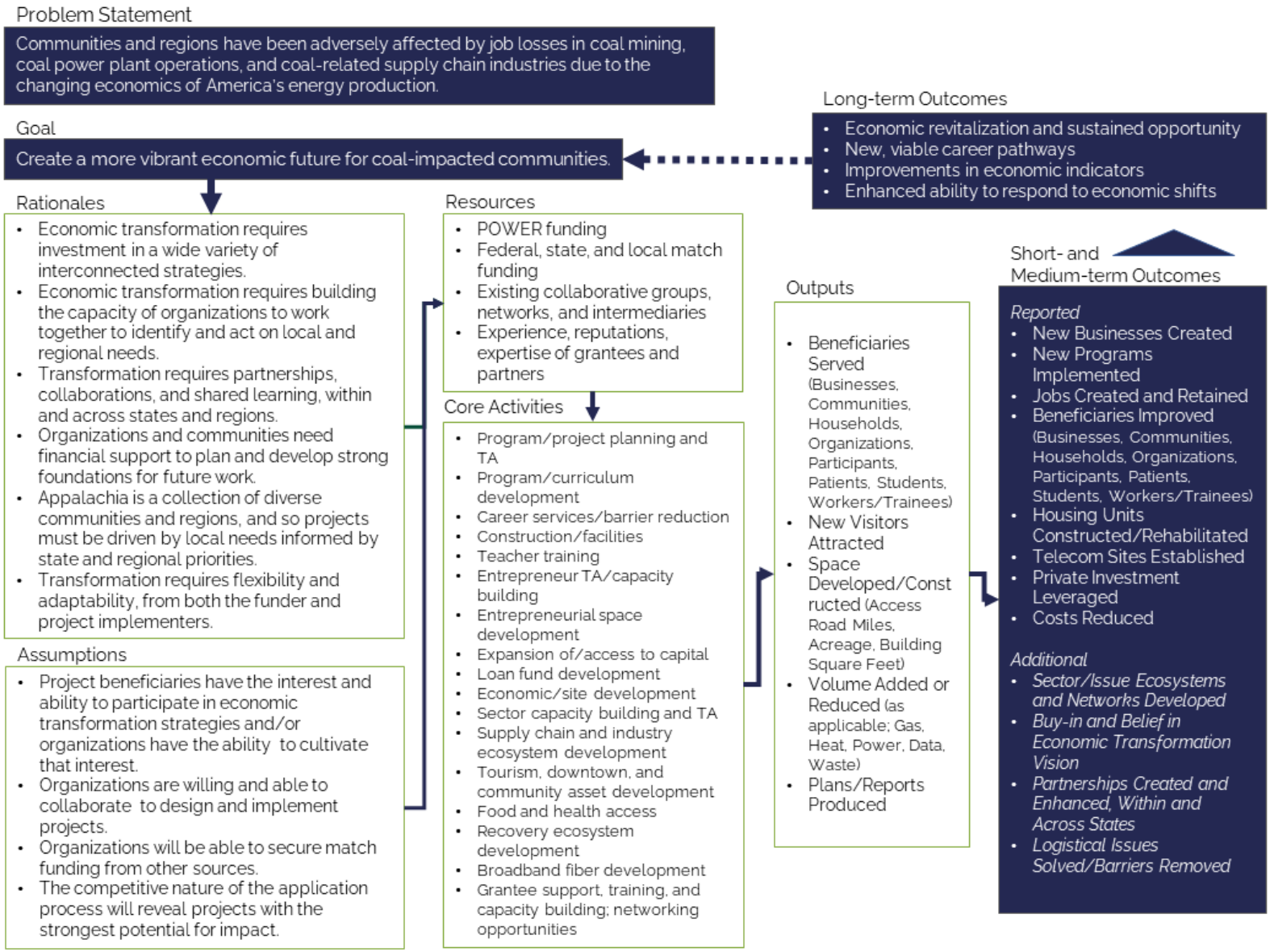
POWER's goal of creating a more vibrant economic future for coal-impacted communities is achieved through nine related, overarching, and often intertwined groups of activities:[8]

- Technical Assistance, Research, and Planning
- Workforce Training/Education
- Entrepreneurship
- Capital/Investment Access
- Sector-Based Cultivation and Diversification
- Economic Asset Development
- Food and Agriculture
- Healthcare Access and Disease Prevention
- Broadband and Telecommunications

In addition, ARC provides grantee support, training, and networking opportunities in pursuit of stronger project proposals, greater capacity for grant management, and increased likelihood that project results will be achieved. See Figure 1. POWER's Logic Model.

[6] https://www.arc.gov/arcs-power-initiative/
[7] Ibid
[8] These categories were created by the C/D evaluation team to report commonalities and lessons learned within this report, with the objective of providing the most useful information to grantees as possible. More description of how projects were assigned to categories is provided in the POWER Project Categorization section.

***Figure 1: POWER Initiative Logic Model***



# About the Evaluation

## Purpose and Objectives

This report is the culmination of two consecutive years of implementation and outcomes evaluation of the POWER Initiative. The evaluation was designed to help ARC and stakeholders learn from project successes and challenges; identify technical assistance needs; and report on the early results of investments made with POWER funds. A Year 1 (Fiscal Year 2019) Report was issued in October 2019. This Year 2/FY20 evaluation built on the FY19 evaluation with three areas of focus:

1. Implementation evaluation of high-priority topics, including projects focused on building recovery ecosystems to combat impacts of substance use disorder (SUD); community capacity in "high-concentration" counties (those in which ten or more POWER projects have been implemented); and multistate projects.
2. Implementation evaluation of new projects and projects not previously evaluated.
3. Outcomes evaluation of the early results of closed POWER projects.

## Evaluation Components

For each component, the Chamberlin/Dunn (C/D) evaluation team worked with ARC staff to identify evaluation topics and questions. This Year 2 report focuses primarily on topics 2 and 3—implementation evaluation of new projects and projects not previously evaluated (results of which were then combined with findings from Year 1 to create themes by activities/areas of focus), as well as a review of closed POWER project results.

Overarching evaluation questions for Year 2 included:

- To what extent are POWER grantees progressing toward their stated performance outputs and outcomes?
- To what extent are there common characteristics among grantees across POWER project categories? If there are common characteristics, what are they?
- What factors appear to contribute to a) strong performance, b) improved performance, and c) lagging performance? To what extent does this differ for projects being implemented across multiple states?
- What technical assistance could ARC provide to improve performance?
- Given POWER grant performance and grantees' experiences, are there better ways for ARC to measure, monitor, and evaluate grantee success in the future?
- What short-term results have closed POWER projects achieved, and how might results differ across project types or selected outputs and outcomes?

Year 2 data collection and analysis included document review and in-person[9] or telephone interviews of 75 grantees not evaluated in Year 1, including 37 technical assistance (TA) projects (roughly 73 percent had completed their projects at the time of the interview), as well as 38 projects that began implementation between March 2018 and February 2019 (17

[9] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions, only six grantees could be interviewed in person during Year 2, and the remaining interviews were rescheduled to occur virtually.

projects[10] specifically focused on the recovery ecosystem/substance use disorder and 21 other new implementation projects). In addition, an online survey was conducted for projects being implemented in counties with 10 or more POWER projects ("high-concentration counties"). Finally, Year 2 analysis also included review of projected versus actual outputs and outcomes for 81[11] projects identified as closed. Data collection sources and methods included:

**1. Document review** of project narratives, approval memos, stated outputs and outcomes, and quarterly reports submitted to ARC through its online portal, ARCnet.

**2. Interviews** used a semi-structured inquiry process with interview protocols[12] developed in collaboration with ARC staff.

**3. Online surveys:** one planned survey of project personnel implementing in counties with a high concentration of POWER projects included questions about the extent to which that concentration might have led to challenges or benefits,[13] and a separate survey of open projects in April 2020 examined the early impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on projects, organizations, and communities.

**4. Output and outcome** data extracted from ARCnet for projects identified by ARC staff as closed as of July 2020.

Data collected through interviews was analyzed using a general inductive approach, which is particularly useful in drawing clear links between research questions and objectives and data collection results. Emerging themes were developed through a review of qualitative data and from information obtained through document review. Data collected in both Years 1 and 2 were combined, and the evaluation team placed evaluated projects into activity groupings using processes described in the next section. Then, data components collected for each project were reviewed within each activity grouping by placing keywords into an analysis matrix until themes emerged, and then recategorizing keywords as necessary. The final step of the analysis was for each member of the evaluation team to review the analysis matrix, collaboratively adding contextual details and revising any theme categorizations as necessary. For project output and outcome analysis, the evaluation team identified and reviewed projected outputs and outcomes against actuals, excluding any outputs or outcomes that had actual results reported but no projected results. Appendix A provides more information about quantitative and qualitative data analysis methodology.

[10] Two additional implementation grantees who had been evaluated in Year 1 also were interviewed for the recovery ecosystem-focused component.
[11] Ten grants with the same project number (PW-18458, 18458-IM-A, 18458-IM-B, 18458-IM-C, 18458-IM-D, 18458-IM-E, 18458-IM-G, 18458-IM-H and PW-18794, PW-18794-IM-B) were combined into two.
[12] Similar but separate interview protocols were developed for each additional component: TA projects, projects focused on the recovery ecosystem, and other new implementation projects.
[13] Results of the survey were released in a separate report in January 2020.

## Evaluation Notes and Limitations

While the C/D team worked closely with ARC to ensure the methodology was appropriate to answer all evaluation questions, as with all studies of this type, certain limitations should be noted.

The evaluation was primarily an implementation evaluation, as only about one-third of all projects were considered officially closed[14] during the Year 2 evaluation period. As such, this evaluation only covers project outcomes and outputs from a limited standpoint (namely, reviewing output and outcomes reported by closed project grantees). Year 3 of the POWER evaluation will focus more on early project impacts.

In addition, the 163 POWER projects included in the sample for evaluation interviews were at various stages of implementation during evaluation—some projects had just begun, some were in the middle of implementation, and some were drawing to a close or closed. As such, conclusions drawn about project implementation may not be valid for all projects of that type.

Because the evaluation utilized primarily qualitative methods, it also has standard limitations associated with qualitative analysis, including the influences of the evaluators' personal experience and knowledge. C/D employed techniques to minimize these limitations to the extent possible, including application of a standard, semi-structured interview protocol for all projects in each segment of the evaluation, regardless of type;[15] use of the same trained, four-person interview team over both years; and a large sample size of projects interviewed.

Finally, because data were gathered through a semi-structured inquiry process, frequencies reported for the "successes and challenges" tables in the report indicate the number of grantees for which the experience or perception was specifically mentioned. A lack of response should not be interpreted to mean an experience or perception was absent from, or did not apply to, a project. Rather, it simply indicates the factor was not affirmed through the data collection and analysis process.

A full description of limitations, and techniques employed to address limitations, is provided in Appendix A.

[14] Past the period of performance and with closeout metrics collected and validated.
[15] Interview questions were customized for each segment of the evaluation (e.g., questions for Implementation projects were slightly different than questions for TA projects), but within the evaluation segment, questions were applied uniformly (e.g., within the evaluation of Implementation projects, the questions were the same for workforce and community capacity projects).

# Lessons Learned from Implementation

## Success and Challenge Themes Across Projects

### POWER Project Categorization

By design, POWER projects commonly include multiple, related strategies and activities serving a variety of beneficiaries, but ARC formally categorizes each POWER project in one of eight broad categories,[16] with additional types and subtypes.

As of FY20, C/D interviewed 163 unique POWER projects[17] representing all formal categories. **These interviews reconfirmed the overarching Year 1 theme that projects share broad themes of success and challenge across type.** However, through topic-specific analysis, identification of activity categories for the COVID-19 survey, and the combining of FY19 and FY20 evaluation data, the evaluation team detected nuances within categories based on certain activities. For example, projects focused on food and agriculture tended to have similar factors of success, challenges, and lessons learned, regardless of their broader category assignment; projects focused specifically on capital access and investment (often within the larger category of Business Development) experienced common successes and challenges.

After recognizing these similarities and distinctions, the evaluation team elected to use POWER project descriptions, progress reports, and results of semi-structured interviews to group evaluated POWER grantees by primary activity or topic focus, as opposed to reporting themes based on the formally assigned POWER categories.

**The purpose of this exercise was not to create a new typology of POWER projects**; rather, the intent was to distill reported successes, challenges, and lessons learned into groupings that maximize the utility and actionability of evaluation findings for ARC and for current and future project implementers.

The evaluation team classified each POWER project into one of nine activity groupings, based on the main focus for the project, recognizing many projects could reasonably be categorized in multiple groupings (e.g., projects placed in the Food and Agriculture category may also include support for entrepreneurial activities, a separate group). Following classification, the evaluation team conducted a second review of assignments to identify areas of disagreement, and reassigned projects as applicable. A thematic analysis of interview results was conducted for each activity category to create successes and challenges for each grouping, as well as identifying recommendations and lessons learned. During the thematic analysis for each focus area, project assignments within focus areas again were reviewed and adjusted as necessary.

[16] Asset-Based Development; Business Development; Civic Entrepreneurship; Community Development; Education & Workforce Development; Health; Research & Evaluation; and State and Local Development District (LDD) Administration.
[17] Based on project number. Multiple projects with the same project number (e.g., renewals or expansions) are considered a single project. In total, the team has evaluated 176 project numbers. With deduplication, 163 unique interviews have been conducted.

The table below provides a description of the nine activity groupings for this evaluation report, as well as the number of evaluated grantees in each.

***Table 1: Project Activity Groupings***

**Technical Assistance, Research, and Planning (n=42)**
Support for planning, feasibility analysis, and research for later larger-scale project implementation

**Education and Workforce Development (n=42)**
Creating or enhancing facilities and programs for workforce training; career services for those in recovery; and teacher professional development

**Entrepreneurship (n=16)**
Generating interest in and building general entrepreneurial capacity or spaces

**Capital/Investment Access (n=15)**
Building capacity for effective investment and fund development, and loan funding to grow new and existing businesses

**Sector-Based Cultivation and Diversification (n=13)**
Sector-specific focus on capacity building, including facilities construction, technical assistance, and support for sector-related entrepreneurship

**Food/Agriculture (n=12)**
Within the food and agriculture sectors, building new business growth, supply chains, and food ecosystems, and increasing food access

**Economic Asset Development (n=12)**
Developing existing economic assets for community improvement, including for tourism, downtown revitalization, and reuse of existing sites

**Health Access and Disease Prevention (n=6)**
Increasing healthcare access through the creation or renovation of facilities and growing the healthcare workforce, as well as research to address opioid use

**Broadband and Telecommunications (n=5)**
Building infrastructure necessary to improve broadband connectivity in primarily rural communities

## Implementation Themes

Year 2 evaluation data confirmed an overarching finding from FY19, that projects share many successes and challenges regardless of type. Rethemed for Year 2, they include:

Successes and Factors

- Partnership development
- Experience/reputation
- Telling the story
- Community buy-in
- Tailored programming
- Capitalizing on external focus

Challenges and Factors

- Delays
- Lack of resources
- Participant reluctance
- Partner capacity/commitment
- Internal staffing/capacity

Table 2 provides a summary of the appearance of these themes by activity group. Grantees also continued to highlight the importance of ARC's convenings, assistance, and flexibility to their project's success.

*Table 2: Common Successes and Challenges by Project Activity Grouping*[18]

| | TA & Research | Work-force | Entrepre-neurship | Capital Access | Sector Div. | Food & Ag | Asset Dev | Health Access | Broad-band |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Successes and Factors** | | | | | | | | | |
| Partnership development | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ |
| Experience/reputation | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | | ♦ | | |
| Telling the story | | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | | ♦ | |
| Community buy-in | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | | | | |
| Tailored programming | | ♦ | ♦ | | | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | |
| Capitalizing on external focus | ♦ | | | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | | | |
| Effective plan development | ♦ | | | | | | | | |
| Community functionality/excitement | | | | | | | | | ♦ |
| **Challenges and Factors** | | | | | | | | | |
| Delays | | ♦ | | | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ |
| Lack of resources | | ♦ | ♦ | | | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | |
| Participant reluctance | | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | | | |
| Partner capacity/commitment | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | | | | |
| Internal staffing/capacity | ♦ | | ♦ | ♦ | | ♦ | | | |
| Inertia | ♦ | | | | | | | | |

[18] A lack of affirmation does not necessarily indicate an absence of the theme.

Within each of these themes are both commonalities and nuances by project activity.

### *Successes and Factors*

**Partnership Development** 

Ensuring the right mix of skills, services, connections, and resources for the study or the implementation tasks at hand. The types of partners cited as most critical to achieving project objectives varied based on activity type but usually included a wide range of stakeholders.

**Experience/Reputation** 

Knowledge of the subject matter (especially noted in TA and loan fund projects), and utilizing reputation to secure a "seat at the table" and/or recruit interest and buy-in. For higher education, this theme was noted in the context of leveraging prior experience with large grants and complex programs; for sector-based, capital access, and entrepreneurship projects, it sometimes included local credibility and trust building, particularly in introducing new ideas and initiatives to community members.

**Telling the Story** 

To varying degrees based on challenges within the activity type, a way to overcome reluctance from a potential recruit or entrepreneur so they could see themselves reflected in the project's success stories. This was also a method to build employer buy-in and excitement for the potential impacts of successful projects. In some cases, it included successfully communicating the need and the value of new initiatives, such as the lack of access to capital and the resulting opportunities that addressing the need might provide.

**Community Buy-in** 

Growing interest and directly engaging leaders. For TA, this was the ability to gain and maintain momentum even during a planning phase. For workforce/education, entrepreneurship, and sector-based development, this related to the ability to introduce new sectors that may be unfamiliar or emerging for a community.

**Tailored Programming** 

Adapting programs or services based on discovered needs. For workforce/training, it included individual career plans and discussions with employers about skill need; for other projects, it meant meeting entrepreneurs and small business owners where they were, even when skills were lower than anticipated. For economic asset projects, it included assessing capacity and readiness to determine how strategies could be adapted to a local context.

**Capitalizing on External Focus** 

Leveraging other issues being discussed among state policymakers or in the broader culture, including sometimes the ability to turn negative events into opportunities to rethink strategies and take risks with new initiatives. For example, food and agriculture grantees reported increased emphasis on farmers markets and local food systems when COVID-19 disrupted supply chains, which became a call to action for these grantees and partners.

### *Challenges and Factors*

**Delays** 

Frequently related to construction or renovation-related reviews, studies, and permissions. This theme also included navigation of grantee and partner procurement processes and other steps such as certification for loan development projects.

**Lack of Resources** 

For training projects, wraparound services for participants, including transportation and child care, and other costs of participation, including opportunity costs of attending training. For ecosystem projects, both entrepreneurial and recovery, this sometimes referred to the lack of ecosystem organizations in smaller, more rural communities. This challenge also relates to lack of funding, both for unexpected costs and for required funding match for projects that grantees identified but for which they found few other organizations willing to invest (e.g., some tourism and community asset development).

**Participant Reluctance** 

Hesitation on the part of trainees, entrepreneurs, farmers, and organizations to rethink local economies and opportunities. This theme included overcoming some risk-aversion at the community and individual levels regarding the viability of different industries, career paths, and capital development strategies.

**Partner Capacity/Commitment** 

In workforce/education, sometimes related to employers overestimating their ability to absorb candidates, and sometimes related to fulfilling match funding commitments. Grantees of all types noted the importance of MOUs and other legacy documents, especially in the event of leadership changes at partner organizations. This was particularly challenging in complex multi-partner projects, such as certain entrepreneurship projects that relied on partners to deliver a wide range of services and training. In certain cases, such as with food systems projects being implemented where other sector-based strategy projects were occurring, it also included the need to connect and collaborate with organizations operating seemingly related, but tangential, projects.

**Internal Staffing/Capacity** 

Challenges due to timing, project demands, and required skillsets. Technical Assistance (TA) projects noted the short timeframes of their studies and the need to gather stakeholders across sometimes large distances in rural areas. Some grantees reported that certain project staff skillsets, like entrepreneur TA and coaching, were difficult to find, particularly when they wanted a local candidate with a strong community network. Recovery-focused grantees also discussed shortages of health care staff, recovery peer coaches, and other positions needed to deliver innovative strategies for ecosystem development and SUD response.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on themes, early results, and lessons learned by project activity grouping.

## Technical Assistance, Research, and Planning Projects

Just over one-quarter (26 percent, n=42) of evaluated projects were Technical Assistance (TA), Research, and Planning projects.[19] Typically, these projects were designed to examine or support the development of future, larger-scale projects. Technical Assistance grants tend to have smaller budgets than implementation projects—on average, TA projects received just over $86,000 in POWER funding[20] with shorter timelines (an average of 14 months).

Evaluated projects fell into five subcategories of focus:

**Program/Project Planning** (48%, n=20): Planning for specific projects or programs, such as workforce training programs and specific, pre-identified sector strategies. These projects often included feasibility studies and technical assistance in developing project plans and identifying funding sources (including POWER implementation funds).

**Economic/Site Development** (19%, n=8): General planning around economic development (including economic diversification) strategies or ways in which existing sites or economic assets could be used. These projects often included data analysis (such as market demand), feasibility studies, and economic development strategic plans.

**Broadband/Telecommunications Planning** (14%, n=6): Planning for improving broadband and telecommunications access. These projects typically were feasibility studies.

**Research/Data Aggregation** (12%, n=5): Gathering data elements to provide information such as mapping employers or sectors within an industry or service providers for individuals in recovery.

**Grant Writing** (7%, n=3): Assistance to obtain POWER funding for a planned project.

### Successes + Factors

- Effective plan development
- Community buy-in
- Partnership development
- Experience/reputation
- Capitalizing on external focus

### Challenges + Factors

- Internal staffing/capacity
- Inertia
- Partner commitment

### Lessons Learned

- Recognize the value of TA grants.
- Plan for logistics that may be more challenging than anticipated.
- Engage communities early in the process.
- Identify funding sources for implementation as early as possible.

[19] These projects typically also had a "TA" designation (suffix) on their POWER project numbers.
[20] In later rounds of POWER funding, TA projects began to be capped at $50,000.

## Technical Assistance Project Successes and Challenges

Technical Assistance grantees shared five common successes and three main challenges:

| | |
|---|---|
| Successes and Factors | **Effective plan development** (57%, n=24) Creation of in-depth feasibility, strategic, or research plans that positioned grantees for next steps.<br>*"The financial feasibility study was successful and effective." (Economic/Site Dev.)* |
| | **Community Buy-in** (55%, n=23) Growing interest in the project by making in-person connections with communities to directly engage leaders and key stakeholders through the research and planning process.<br>*"The consultants spent a lot of time in [the communities], meeting with not only the planning district folks, but also some of the broadband providers, local communities, industrial development folks." (Broadband/Telecommunications Planning)* |
| | **Partnership Development** (50%, n=21) Bringing longstanding or new partners into the planning process, including a diversity of collaborators, such as business/industry; community and nonprofit organizations; government; education; and others. These types of collaborations were particularly important for planning projects that may require community or political support for future implementation.<br>*"Everyone from the business community to the education community, municipalities, etc., each one had a seat. We had representatives from multiple agencies that worked really well together. We were very pleased with the diversity in the group." (Economic/Site Development)* |
| | **Experience/Reputation** (48%, n=20) Utilizing the organization's, partners', or external consultants' knowledge, experience, and reputation to demonstrate understanding and build support for the future project.<br>*"We've had 20+ years of experience working with dislocated coal workers, so we already had a background of understanding. We knew the area, and we already had developed partnerships." (Grant Writing)* |
| | **Capitalizing on External Focus** (31%, n=13) Leveraging national, regional, state, or community interest to engage new partners and maintain community and political interest.<br>*"There was an openness to diversification that wasn't being captured in the region. We found…a large public interest in economic development diversification strategies and a desire to understand which sectors are viable." (Program/Project Planning)* |
| Challenges and Factors | **Internal Staffing/Capacity** (45%, n=19) Insufficient staff or staff time allotted to address unanticipated time commitments, usually associated with complications in logistics and scheduling when working across multiple partners and regions and within the relatively short timeframes of TA projects.<br>*"When you're trying to convene multiple partners with a year of TA, trying to coordinate all these different people and meeting together, a year is a tight window." (Economic/Site Development)* |
| | **Inertia** (38%, n=16) An implementation-related delay in moving forward with a planned project, due to lack of action, funding, prioritization, or urgency.<br>*"We identified our action goals and things that needed to be done, but there's been no movement on the project since its completion." (Economic/Site Development)* |
| | **Partner Commitment** (24%, n=10) Less involvement than anticipated from prospective partners or community members.<br>*"When we first put this together, there was hesitancy on the part of several to even do it; there is a slight lack of interest among partners to see this fulfilled." (Research/Data Aggregation)* |

## Considerations and Grantee Lessons Learned

**Recognize the value of TA grants.** Taking the time to complete a TA project can be useful, particularly for potential endeavors that may be large or multi-state or presently ill-defined or lacking community support. However, if external consultants are hired (particularly those from outside the community), ensure they are willing to work locally and make connections within the region. Several TA grantees recommended involving a committee of partners and community stakeholders in the search for external consultants to make sure they are the right fit.

**Plan for logistics that may be more challenging than anticipated.** While TA grants may seem straightforward, it may take longer than anticipated to convene stakeholders and glean active participation, particularly for projects that involve multiple partners or stakeholders; multiple states or counties; or groups that do not have a history of collaboration. Also, even though TA grants are relatively short, grantees may want to anticipate and plan for challenges such as staff turnover (internally) or leadership changes (particularly with external partners).

**Engage communities early in the process.** Grantees that reported the most success with building buy-in, obtaining stakeholder participation, and building a path to implementation were those that started building community awareness of projects as early as possible in the process. These grantees made connections through local partners and engaged local leadership (such as county commissioners, elected officials, and other influential individuals) at the beginning of the planning process. Early community engagement also helped identify any potential pitfalls or "red flags" to address prior to moving into implementation.

**Identify funding sources for implementation as early as possible.** Lacking the ability to move a project forward into implementation was a source of frustration for some grantees; this was often a result of not having adequate funding. Grantees who tended to be more successful in moving to implementation used part of the TA project to identify diverse and sustainable funding models (potentially including POWER implementation funding, but not solely based on POWER), and/or built relationships with potential funders to diversify sources of support.

## Workforce Training/Education

Just over one-quarter (26 percent, n=42) of evaluated projects were identified as Workforce Training or Education. Typically, these projects focused on designing or enhancing training programs to serve students and workers needing retraining; career services for individuals in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD); construction of facilities or renovation of buildings that would house education and training programs; and professional development for K-12 teachers.

The average amount of POWER funding awarded was $1.3 million, and the average project timeline was 33 months.[21]

Evaluated projects fell into four subcategories of focus:

**Program/Curriculum Development** (55%, n=23): Designing new curricula or programs to train students and displaced or incumbent workers in in-demand jobs and career pathways, as well as to increase participants' opportunities to earn certificates, degrees, and certifications.

**Career Services/Barrier Reduction** (24%, n=10): Primarily, working with individuals in recovery from SUD and typically including employability skills training and job placement assistance and follow-up, as well as recovery coaching and other wraparound services.

**Construction/Facilities** (17%, n=7): Construction or significant renovation to facilities designed to offer training and education programs for in-demand careers.

**Professional Development** (5%, n=2): Training K-12 teachers to better prepare students for STEM and entrepreneurial careers.

### Successes + Factors

- Partnership development
- Telling the story
- Tailored programming
- Community buy-in
- Experience/reputation

### Challenges + Factors

- Lack of resources
- Delays
- Partner commitment
- Participant reluctance

### Lessons Learned

- Involve implementation partners in project and grant development from the beginning.
- Ensure partners clearly understand their commitments to projects.
- For recruitment, hire locally if possible and tailor messaging to individuals and communities.
- Consider mechanisms for vetting participant skills and interest prior to program placement.
- Anticipate that construction and renovation projects may take longer than planned.

[21] Combines timelines and dollar amounts for projects with the same project number but different suffixes (PW-18755-IM-A and PW-18755-IM-B; PW-18923-IM and PW-18923-IM-R1).

## Workforce Training/Education Successes and Challenges

Grantees shared five common successes and four main challenges:

| | |
|---|---|
| Successes and Factors | **Partnership Development** (83%, n=35) Creating and enhancing partnerships within communities, particularly with businesses and employers but also with institutions of higher education, K-12, and, particularly for career services-focused projects, nonprofit and wraparound-services organizations.<br>*"We're not just designing innovative facilities, we're building ecosystems. I've been working with developers and community mental health agencies but also the broader community players, elected officials, area development districts, to facilitate these ecosystems." (Career Services/Barrier Reduction)* |
| | **Telling the Story** (69%, n=29) Using media attention, advertising, and word-of-mouth from successful participants to address participant reluctance, build employer buy-in, and increase recruitment.<br>*"Word-of-mouth has been a big [success factor]; we're starting to get feedback from folks and interest." (Program/Curriculum Development)* |
| | **Tailored Programming** (55%, n=23) Recognizing and aligning with the unique needs of communities and employers, and individualizing programming for participants to increase retention and completion.<br>*"Every individual that we work with has an individual career plan, so we ask what is their long-term goal, then we reach out to employers who can meet that person's needs…we have to recognize the individuality not only of the people we place, but also the employers." (Career Services/Barrier Reduction)* |
| | **Community Buy-In** (40%, n=17) Focusing on common goals within a community to grow interest in retraining and education programs, particularly in industries or sectors that may be new for communities.<br>*""[Our project] has given the community, region, and university a vision to coalesce around and has created a visible 'buzz' around the manufacturing community." (Construction/Facilities)* |
| | **Experience/Reputation** (36%, n=15) Building on prior experience or successful programs to develop new or enhanced curricula. Particularly for higher education institutions, leveraging existing management, accountability, and tracking systems.<br>*"In our experience as service providers in this area, we've had numerous federal and state grants. …We've gained the trust of those laid off in industry." (Program/Curriculum Development)* |
| Challenges and Factors | **Lack of Resources** (55%, n=23) A combination of lack of available and high-quality jobs, particularly in rural areas; lack of funding to offset additional participant costs (e.g., for stipends or wraparound services); and unexpected costs associated with equipment and construction.<br>*"Overall, it's the challenges that come from living in a rural area. How do people get to the training in a rural area…and other [barriers] we encounter being in a rural area." (Program/Curriculum Development)* |
| | **Delays** (48%, n=20) Timeline issues, frequently caused by construction or renovation requirements, such as environmental reviews or processes with the basic state or federal agency, navigating partner processes for procurement, hiring, etc., particularly in working with government or higher education entities; and difficulties obtaining desired equipment in a timely manner.<br>*"The planning of the grant initially didn't really expect that some of the planning and equipment purchasing and donations and stuff would take as long to get in place…it's a slow process with these companies. They have to…track things down, get involved with our procurement." (Program/Curriculum Development)* |

| | |
|---|---|
| Challenges and Factors (continued) | **Partner Commitment** (40%, n=17) Managing anticipated partners who become less involved than anticipated, including employers not following through with hiring participants; partners not providing anticipated match funding; or leadership or staffing changes resulting in priority changes.<br>*"When we first started talking about this and getting things going, a lot of employers would say yes, I want to meet with [participants], but then they found out they actually had to hire [participants] and said they weren't ready." (Career Services/Barrier Reduction)* |
| | **Participant Reluctance** (33%, n=14) Addressing recruitment challenges coming from communities' or participants' reluctance to embrace economic diversification and new skill acquisition; participants' inability to participate in training due to needing wages or lack of access to other services; or, for career services projects, helping potential participants get past the stigma often associated with SUD.<br>*"When we talk about prospective jobs for cyber and IT, we have to be forward thinking, and it can be a hard sell when workforce development activities are ahead of actual jobs." (Program/Curriculum Development)* |

### Considerations and Grantee Lessons Learned

**To the extent possible, involve implementation partners in project and grant development from the beginning.** Training program and curriculum development, particularly in projects that involve multiple postsecondary institutions and/or multiple employer partners, may encounter challenges during program implementation based on different hiring and accreditation systems; timelines for implementation; lack of internal capacity for grants management; and potentially competing priorities for program completion versus the desire for quick hiring. Partners collaborating to conduct pre-implementation research and planning may alleviate misunderstandings or delays with intentional conversations about these potential misalignments. In addition, partners such as workforce agencies may be able to help identify and mitigate potential barriers to participant recruitment and retention, such as access to wraparound services, particularly for individuals in recovery, and funding for those services.

**Ensure that partners (particularly employers) clearly understand their commitments to projects.** Some grantees experienced challenges with anticipating or assuming that employer partners would hire participants; however, in some cases, grantees reported employers were more supportive of the project in theory than in practice, or the employers had overestimated the number of participants they might be able to engage. As part of project development, grantees may benefit from creating conservative estimates of individuals that each employer may hire; building in cushion for fewer hires than anticipated; and, particularly for projects in the recovery ecosystem, ensuring that employer partners understand any follow-up or supportive services that the grantee may offer to support the employer partner.

**For recruitment, hire locally if possible and tailor messaging to individuals and communities.** Workforce Training/Education grantees, particularly earlier recipients of POWER, sometimes were surprised at the extent to which potential beneficiaries were reluctant to or disinterested in participating in education or training programs. Grantees that reported more success with recruitment used a combination of local, on-the-ground

marketing, including bringing in individuals from the communities to assist in location-specific marketing and marketing at community-based locations such as libraries and workforce agencies; digital and social media; and word-of-mouth from successful participants. Some grantees also expressed success in reaching target communities or audiences by hiring from within that community or hiring an individual with existing knowledge and relationships in that community.

**Consider mechanisms for vetting participant skills and interest prior to program placement.** While training programs focused on computer programming, medical coding, and cybersecurity (for example) may be in demand or in growing demand in the region, programs of this nature may not be the right fit for all potential beneficiaries. As such, grantees and partners, particularly higher education institutions and employer partners, may consider building in costs for interest and aptitude screening prior to program placement.

**Anticipate that construction and renovation projects may take longer than planned.** As with many construction-related projects of other types, Workforce Training/Education grantees noted that processes such as environmental surveys, working through a basic federal or state agency, procuring construction contractors (e.g., situations when construction contractors all bid higher than anticipated), and other steps typically took more time than anticipated, delaying construction timelines and, in some cases, delaying plans for beginning education or training activities. Additionally, some higher education institution grantees, particularly those for whom POWER was the largest grant they had received, identified that necessary processes may not be in place for meeting requirements for Basic Federal Agency (BFA) reporting, for larger equipment purchases, etc. Grantees may benefit from engaging with their BFA as early as possible, as well as conducting pre-implementation research, including connecting with partners that may have expertise in these areas, to identify the types of construction-related reviews that may be needed and the extent to which systems are in place for managing other requirements.

## Entrepreneurship

About 10 percent of evaluated grantees (n=16) focused specifically on entrepreneurship as a business and community development strategy. Most grantees assisted entrepreneurs in building capacity from the early stages of business creation, such as TA in creating business plans, through later stages including business growth. Two grantees focused on developing entrepreneurial spaces (makerspaces or incubators).

The average amount of POWER funding awarded was $1.2 million and the average project timeline was 38 months.[22] Note that this category excludes grantees primarily focused on providing mechanisms for entrepreneurs to gain access to capital (included in the Capital/Investment Access group) and those focused on entrepreneurship as part of larger sector strategies (included in the Sector-Based Cultivation and Diversification or other specific sector strategies sections).

Evaluated projects fell into two subcategories of focus:

**Technical Assistance/Capacity Building** (87.5%, n=14): The primary area of focus for most entrepreneurship grantees. Technical assistance and capacity building included workshops and one-on-one assistance for potential entrepreneurs in developing business plans; pitch plans for investors; and financial plans and budgets. Some grantees also included assistance for new and existing entrepreneurs in business growth, such as social and digital marketing; making new connections; and demonstrating value to potential new investors. Technical assistance and capacity building also included TA for communities in building entrepreneurial ecosystems.

**Building Entrepreneurial Spaces** (12.5%, n=2): Projects focused on putting mechanisms in place to support entrepreneurial spaces (including makerspaces and business incubators) to grow businesses and innovation.

### Successes + Factors

- Community buy-in
- Partnership development
- Experience/reputation
- Telling the story
- Tailored programming

### Challenges + Factors

- Partner capacity/commitment
- Lack of resources
- Participant reluctance
- Internal staffing/capacity

### Lessons Learned

- Prepare for the need to change mindsets.
- Plan for a wide variety of entrepreneurial needs.
- Prepare for resource challenges.

[22] Combines timelines and dollar amounts for projects with the same project number but different suffixes (PW-18777-IM-A and PW-18777-IM-C1; PW-18918-IM and PW-18918-IM-C1; PW-18939-IM, PW-18939-IM-R1, and PW-18939-IM-R2).

## Entrepreneurship Project Successes and Challenges

Grantees shared five common successes and four main challenges:

| | |
|---|---|
| Successes and Factors | **Community Buy-in** (88%, n=14) Building buy-in that entrepreneurship is a viable career path, as well as developing pipelines of future entrepreneurs.<br>*"[The project] has created an environment that has encouraged younger leaders to become engaged in [entrepreneurship] and community development." (TA and Capacity Building)* |
| | **Partnership Development** (75%, n=12) Creating and solidifying partnerships to support entrepreneurial ecosystems and build connections; ensuring the right partners are in place to meet the needs of entrepreneurs.<br>*"Where I've seen it be most successful is where you've had good collaboration. An organization like ours…has experience with entrepreneurs and linking them up, but it's the local university that's embedded in that small community that has a stake in that success…it's the Main Street organization that is trying to revitalize the …community." (TA and Capacity Building)* |
| | **Experience/Reputation** (63%, n=10) Capitalizing on experience in building entrepreneurial ecosystems, particularly in making inroads into communities that may be new to entrepreneurship or resource-lacking.<br>*"We're a pretty seasoned organization working in this sector. We were taking a base of experience we already had and applying it to a new sector." (TA and Capacity Building)* |
| | **Telling the Story** (56%, n=9) Utilizing partners, media, and word-of-mouth to build excitement about entrepreneurship projects and address risk-aversion or reluctance.<br>*"[Former] clients [who were successful] tell our story best." (Space Creation)* |
| | **Tailored Programming** (56%, n=9) Recognizing that potential and current entrepreneurs may be at differing levels of readiness and tailoring services to meet the needs of those communities and participants.<br>*"Most small businesses have some [specific] barrier that needs to be torn down. Once you can do that, they can be successful." (TA and Capacity Building)* |
| Challenges and Factors | **Partner Commitment** (56%, n=9) Less involvement than anticipated from prospective partners often due to capacity or staffing changes, which can be particularly challenging for entrepreneurship due to the widely varying needs of participants and the reliance on partners to meet those needs.<br>*"Key leaders left, and there has been this recurring pattern of having to regroup and restart the process." (TA and Capacity Building)* |
| | **Lack of Resources** (56%, n=9) Particularly in more rural communities, the lack of entrepreneurial ecosystems and resources to support entrepreneurs, especially lack of access to capital.<br>*"Our largest hurdle at present time is helping our clients secure necessary capital." (Space Creation)* |
| | **Participant Reluctance** (50%, n=8) Dealing with risk-aversion, the sense that entrepreneurship is not a stable career path, and lack of knowledge necessary to move into the entrepreneurial space.<br>*"The mindset is really a challenge—getting people to see themselves as business owners." (TA and Capacity Building)* |
| | **Internal Staffing/Capacity** (44%, n=7) Challenges finding TA or coaching support with broad enough knowledge bases to meet the varying needs and skill levels of participants; staff capacity to tailor programming and provide localized services that often require extensive time commitments.<br>*"We did not fully appreciate the amount of [TA] and handholding that would be needed through this process…[nor] how much help people would need to get across the finish line." (TA and Capacity Building)* |

## Considerations and Grantee Lessons Learned

**Prepare for the need to change mindsets.** Entrepreneurship-focused grantees noted that, particularly in smaller and more rural communities, entrepreneurship may not be widely viewed as a viable option, resulting in challenges with building community interest and recruiting potential entrepreneurs. Strategies for addressing these challenges include identifying local partners and champions for entrepreneurship; building relationships with potential entrepreneurial pipelines (particularly education providers); and utilizing word-of-mouth and success stories to highlight successful entrepreneurs from within the target communities or other similar communities.

**Plan for a wide variety of entrepreneurial needs.** Grantees expressed surprise at the widely varying needs of existing and potential small businesses, which required a broad swath of expertise to address. (Needs ranged from creating business plans to making effective investor pitches to changing marketing strategies to digital and social media, and varied based on the level of need and experience). Grantees suggested including partners with different areas of expertise; hiring staff with the skills and flexibility to address these differing needs; and recognizing that entrepreneurship capacity building and TA work may take more time than anticipated.

**Prepare for resource challenges.** Grantees with experience developing entrepreneurship capacity and ecosystems in larger or more urban areas particularly noted challenges associated with the lack of resources, including access to capital or investors, access to mentors, and existence of space or potential space for entrepreneurial activities. Prior to grant application and implementation, grantees may benefit from analyzing resources and gaps in target communities, as well as ways they might leverage their own experience and that of partners to address those gaps.

## Capital/Investment Access

About nine percent of evaluated grantees (n=15) were focused on access to capital or investment, designed to grow new and existing businesses as well as build community capacity for attracting funding and making effective investment decisions. The average amount of POWER funding awarded was just over $842,000; the average project timeline was 33 months.

Evaluated projects fell into three subcategories of focus:

**Capacity Building** (47%, n=7): Working with communities and potential investors to build capacity to attract funding, as well as to make wise investment decisions. While the ultimate goal of these projects was to provide capital, typically the main focus was building knowledge, understanding, and skill that would result in better investing, better likelihood of funding, and more awareness of funding opportunities.

**Loan Funding (Start-Up/Entrepreneur Focus)** (33%, n=5): Providing or supporting opportunities for risk/venture capital and loans specifically focused on start-up businesses and entrepreneurs. As with loan funds, many of these projects also offered technical assistance to participants.

**Loan Funding (Not Start-Up Focused)** (20%, n=3): Offering loan funding and gap financing for businesses (often existing small or medium size businesses as opposed to start-ups); some projects focused on specific industry sectors (e.g., healthcare or manufacturing), while others were more generally focused. Many projects also offered technical assistance or training for beneficiaries.

### Successes + Factors

- Experience/reputation
- Partnership development
- Community buy-in
- Capitalizing on external focus
- Telling the story

### Challenges + Factors

- Participant reluctance
- Internal staffing/capacity
- Partner commitment

### Lessons Learned

- Prepare for the need to change mindsets.
- Heavily involve the community and leverage community-based connections.

## Capital/Investment Access Successes and Challenges

Grantees shared five common successes and three main challenges:

| | |
|---|---|
| Successes and Factors | **Experience/Reputation** (73%, n=11) Because investment often requires a deep level of trust and knowledge of the community, utilizing name or reputation of the organization or partners to garner interest and recruit participants.<br>*"We were an existing lender known in the community…when marketing to coal-impacted counties, people were familiar with us. Our history of performance was a factor. People check references when they are looking for a loan, and we do what we tell them we will do." (Loan Funding—Start Up/Entrepreneur Focus)* |
| | **Partnership Development** (67%, n=10) Working with partners to develop inroads in communities, grow areas of service, and recruit potential new investors and beneficiaries, including businesses and entrepreneurs.<br>*"I'm proud of the partnerships. [Our members] said it was the relationships they had built across the tristate [that was most valuable from the project]. Prior to this I don't think there was much collaboration between investors in [these states]." (Capacity Building)* |
| | **Community Buy-In** (67%, n=10) Increased understanding of the value of investment for diversification, development, and entrepreneurship as part of a larger economic development strategy, as well as developing trust within communities for investment projects.<br>*"Getting into the communities and being able to be alongside property owners, developers, those involved in the process has added to the credibility of this project…" (Capacity Building)* |
| | **Capitalizing on External Focus** (47%, n=7) Particularly for loan projects, leveraging growing awareness and demand for access to capital and diversification to grow interest in the project and support participant recruitment.<br>*"There is a desperate hunger for access to credit [in the region], and this project has helped to develop some resources for that." (Loan Funding—Not Start-Up Focused)* |
| | **Telling the Story** (40%, n=6) Utilizing successful participants (businesses, developers, and entrepreneurs) to tell the story and recruit additional beneficiaries.<br>*"Word-of-mouth and networking [have contributed to success]. We've had a lot of success with people referring other people to us." (Capacity Building)* |
| Challenges and Factors | **Participant Reluctance** (40%, n=6) Challenges in identifying potential investors (especially those that have previously had negative experiences with investing in the region) or getting potential investors to follow through, as well as dealing with risk-aversion associated with start-up and incurring debt.<br>*"Investor apathy is a threat. It takes a long time for investments to mature. At least half of companies are likely going to fail. It's hard to stomach." (Capacity Building)* |
| | **Internal Staffing/Capacity** (40%, n=6) Addressing the wide variety of skillsets often necessary in this line of work, as well as recognizing that investors and entrepreneurs may need a level of technical assistance not previously anticipated, and having the staff capacity to overcome that challenge.<br>*"The skillset we're looking for in a founding CEO is a bit of a unicorn—someone who understands community development finance and philanthropy and capital raising, but also someone who is an entrepreneur [and] excited by the start-up phase." (Capacity Building)* |
| | **Partner Commitment** (33%, n=5) Anticipated partners not participating as fully as originally anticipated or unexpectedly pulling support for aspects of the project.<br>*"At the last minute, several leads of [the bank] decided there was no demand in the region for a CDFI and they wouldn't support it." (Loan Funding—Not Start-Up Focused)* |

## Considerations and Grantee Lessons Learned

**Prepare for the need to change mindsets.** As with grantees focused on entrepreneurship, some grantees focused on capital access identified challenges associated with risk aversion and a sense that entrepreneurship was not a viable path for residents. These grantees found that demonstrating success (e.g., loans being paid back successfully) and word-of-mouth marketing about the project could help mitigate challenges. Additionally, grantees working to build capacity for investors sometimes had to grow understanding that investment focus regionally appropriate to Appalachia may be different than "what's done on the coasts" or in larger urban areas. Conducting pre-implementation research on specific needs and capital-based community interests may also be helpful in driving culture shifts.

**Heavily involve the community and leverage community-based connections.** Related to the first lesson learned, grantees reported that many communities in Appalachia may be risk-averse or previously had negative experiences in investment, particularly in funding start-ups or entrepreneurs. Many grantees were successful in building community buy-in and interest for the project by involving a variety of community stakeholders, including businesses, community leaders, education providers, and community organizations. Further, many successful grantees had long-standing relationships in the communities, which helped to build trust; for those that did not, finding partners in the area with those relationships was key.

## Sector-Based Cultivation and Diversification

About eight percent of evaluated grantees (n=13) had a sector-based focus (other than food and agriculture or tourism), which included providing technical assistance and capacity building for diversification and growth in a sector; supporting entrepreneurial activities within that sector; or supporting construction, equipment, and training to grow that sector. The average amount of POWER funding awarded was just under $975,000; the average project timeline was 32 months.

Evaluated projects fell into three subcategories of focus:

**TA Delivery/Capacity Building** (62%, n=8): Technical assistance and support to grow businesses in a variety of specific sectors, as well as building capacity (including through funding opportunities such as mini-grants) in these areas.

**Facilities/Equipment** (23%, n=3): Funding for building renovation and equipment purchases to facilitate job growth in specific sectors.

**Start-Up/Entrepreneurship** (15%, n=2): Support for start-up activities (including a business incubator and social enterprise) in specific sectors.

### Successes + Factors

- Partnership development
- Community buy-in
- Experience/reputation
- Capitalizing on external focus
- Telling the story

### Challenges + Factors

- Participant reluctance
- Partner commitment
- Delays

### Lessons Learned

- Identify partner roles and commitments early and in writing, and plan for the unexpected.
- Capitalize on state and regional priorities to build buy-in and excitement

## Sector-Based Cultivation and Diversification Successes and Challenges

Grantees shared five common successes and three main challenges:

| | |
|---|---|
| Successes and Factors | **Partnership Development** (85%, n=11) Building sector capacity through new and enhanced partnerships, particularly with a variety of entities, including business and industry, education, economic and workforce development, government, and nonprofit.<br>*"The network built between businesses and regional support agencies is a success that will live beyond the grant cycle." (TA/Capacity Building)* |
| | **Community Buy-In** (77%, n=10) Creating excitement in the community for new or diversified industry opportunities, as well as growing the ability of businesses to sustain these efforts.<br>*"Public policy discussions…have been fostered by the project. Businesses are making long-term improvements to their operations…[including] incumbent workforce training and an approach of 'grow your own' talent." (TA/Capacity Building)* |
| | **Experience/Reputation** (69%, n=9) Using organizational, staff, and partner experience and relationships within the community and with stakeholders to generate buy-in, particularly for new industries.<br>*"[We have] a history and relationships with manufacturers in our…communities because we have a good reputation." (TA/Capacity Building)* |
| | **Capitalizing on External Focus** (31%, n=4) Building off regional, state, or community focus to grow participation and excitement for the project.<br>*"This project is part of the overall [city's] strategy to diversify the economy…supportive political and community leadership have been instrumental." (Facilities/Equipment)* |
| | **Telling the Story** (31%, n=4) Generating interest through media attention, as well as utilizing successful businesses for word-of-mouth referrals to boost participation.<br>*"The companies were happy [with the services], so we made connections with businesses [in other states] through them. They worked to make contact with other companies." (TA/Capacity Building)* |
| Challenges and Factors | **Participant Reluctance** (38%, n=5) Difficulty recruiting businesses often due to skepticism (particularly for new industries), risk aversion (particularly for entrepreneurship), or lack of trust.<br>*"We're working in some of the most depressed areas economically in the country, and the people that work in these areas and have businesses, they can be apprehensive." (TA/Capacity Building)* |
| | **Partner Commitment** (38%, n=5) Responding to lower-than-anticipated partner participation; partners withdrawing at the last minute; and/or partners' roles being insufficiently defined.<br>*"The [employer partner] backed out at the 11th and a half hour, after all other components were in place." (Facilities/Equipment)* |
| | **Delays** (38%, n=5) Challenges with meeting initially planned timelines, due to contracting or hiring requirements (often with partners) or needing more time to acquire or get equipment in place than anticipated.<br>*"A lot of times we had to spend money getting the equipment to where it was functioning the way it was built to function, and that took a lot more work than we expected." (Entrepreneurship)* |

**Identify partner roles and commitments early and in writing, and plan for the unexpected.** Because sector diversification and capacity-building projects typically require partners from many areas, including business and industry, education, nonprofit, and government, and many of these partnerships may be new, grantees indicated it is important to ensure partners are aware of their roles and expectations early in project implementation. Delineating roles in writing is also crucial, as well as discussing processes, policies, and procedures (such as hiring procedures, accreditation requirements, etc.) that may differ across partners and could cause delays in processes and implementation.

**Capitalize on state and regional priorities to build buy-in and excitement.** Sector diversification projects are often focused on topics that may be new to a community, such as bringing in advanced technology for manufacturing or shifting focus to entirely new industries (like energy efficiency or forest products). As such, sector diversification and capacity building projects may experience challenges recruiting businesses and participants, because they may face skepticism or lack of awareness. Grantees that were more successful in addressing these challenges typically leveraged regional, state, or local priorities to garner buy-in, as well as leaning on partners with trusted relationships in the community (or on their own experience and reputation). Further, as with entrepreneurship projects, grantees often were able to utilize word-of-mouth from companies that had positive experiences to recruit additional businesses to the project.

## Food and Agriculture

Seven percent of evaluated grantees (n=12) were focused on the food and agriculture industry sectors. Within this group, five grantees aimed to build entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial businesses (through technical assistance, development of incubators, assisting in accessing capital, etc.), and another five were focused on building the food/agriculture ecosystem and supply chain. Finally, two grantees' main focus was improving access to healthy food (while at the same time building opportunities for farmers, growers, and food suppliers). The average amount of POWER funding awarded was just over $1.02 million; the average project timeline was 33 months.

Evaluated projects fell into three subcategories:

**Entrepreneurship/New Business Growth** (42%, n=5): Technical assistance and capacity building, as well as the development of new spaces (including business incubators and commercial kitchens) to support entrepreneurship and new business creation and growth in the food/ag sector.

**Supply Chain/Ecosystem** (42%, n=5): Creating partnerships and linkages across the sector, including linking farmers and growers with food suppliers and offering opportunities for growth into new and larger markets.

**Food Access** (17%, n=2): Growing opportunities within the food and agriculture sector, culminating in the creation of food sheds or hubs that offer increased access to healthy food in food deserts.

### Successes + Factors

- Partnership development
- Telling the story
- Capitalizing on external focus
- Tailored programming

### Challenges + Factors

- Participant reluctance
- Internal staffing/capacity
- Lack of resources
- Delays

### Lessons Learned

- Build buy-in through local partners, word-of-mouth, and capitalizing on existing momentum in food and agriculture.
- Research the existence of other food and agriculture initiatives in the region, prior to implementation.

## Food/Agriculture Successes and Challenges

Grantees shared four common successes and four main challenges:

| | |
|---|---|
| Successes and Factors | **Partnership Development** (75%, n=9) Building partnerships to create localized connections and address resource shortages, as well as leverage areas of expertise. In turn, creating new opportunities and connections for farmers and food producers.<br>*"Prior to this project, we were individual organizations working in our worlds…we may not have the exact system yet, but we're going in a direction where we can effectively make change in Central Appalachia in a way that individually we would never have been able to do alone." (Supply Chain/Ecosystem)* |
| | **Telling the Story** (50%, n=6) Utilizing participants, particularly farmers, to tell the story of the ways in which the program has been beneficial as a mechanism for building trust, support, and participation.<br>*"Offering a wide variety of workshops and getting the name out there has been helpful. The workshops have drawn more participants than expected, and these participants have helped market the facility as well as converted clients." (Entrepreneurship)* |
| | **Capitalizing on External Focus** (50%, n=6) Taking advantage of state, regional, or community-based support for food and agriculture-related initiatives, including farmers markets, "buy local" initiatives, and addressing food deserts.<br>*"Over the past 5-7 years, there has been a push to support local farmers and engage with agricultural opportunities." (Supply Chain/Ecosystem)* |
| | **Tailored Programming** (42%, n=5) Identifying the specific food and agriculture-related focus of a community, as well as varying skills, knowledge, and comfort levels, and being flexible enough to change programming to meet community needs.<br>*"We are very conscientious about doing everything community-led or farmer-led. I think it's helpful for folks to see our organization and the team and the project be about, what do* you *want to do." (Supply Chain/Ecosystem)* |
| Challenges and Factors | **Participant Reluctance** (67%, n=8) A combination of challenges related to moving away from focus on traditional industries to food and agriculture, as well as needing to build trust and relationships with farmers.<br>*"Farmers are very insular—they don't [always] like to work with other people. Sometimes the culture is, we'll meet with you but if you ask us to work together too much… [we're not interested]." (Supply Chain/Ecosystem)* |
| | **Internal Staffing/Capacity** (58%, n=7) Because these types of projects often involved multiple communities and many areas of focus, ensuring that staff capacity is adequate to address the many components, as well as the need to build buy-in with participants.<br>*"We've had to go through a new hiring process for one of our coordinators…that's always the issue—staffing." (Supply Chain/Ecosystem)* |
| | **Lack of Resources** (42%, n=5) Acknowledging the relative lack of resources to support food and agriculture endeavors, which may lead to a sense of competition if efforts are not coordinated with other organizations and projects in the communities.<br>*"[When the project started], some larger farms saw [us] as a competition…but this was overcome by building relationships." (Food Access)* |
| | **Delays** (25%, n=3) Slowdowns to timelines, due to external process requirements or logistics taking more time than anticipated.<br>*"It took us longer to get up and running than expected; more effort than expected." (Entrepreneurship)"* |

**Build buy-in through local partners, word-of-mouth, and capitalizing on existing momentum in food and agriculture.** Many food and agriculture grantees mentioned the value of leveraging regional- or community-level interest to identify a specific area of focus within food and agriculture (e.g., addressing food deserts; building "buy local" initiatives), as well as utilizing local partners with longstanding relationships in the food supply chain to build trust. Additionally, grantees found success in having successful participants present to, or reach out to, potential participants to build interest.

**Research the existence of other food and agriculture initiatives in the region, prior to implementation.** Some food and agriculture grantees noted a lack of resources for activities like building food incubators and entrepreneurial ecosystems in the food and agriculture industry. As such, they also felt that in some cases, without the proper levels of pre-planning partner identification and mapping similar initiatives, their work may be seen as competing with broader entrepreneurship efforts. However, grantees that were able to identify complementary initiatives early in the process (or even prior to implementation) often were able to connect networks and partnerships that addressed feelings of "siloing" or isolation that may have existed in the past and move past the sense of competition into collaboration.

## Economic Asset Development

Seven percent of evaluated grantees (n=12) were focused on developing existing economic assets for community improvement, including downtown revitalization projects, building tourism opportunities, and reuse of existing sites. The average amount of POWER funding awarded was just over $1.3 million; the average project timeline was 43 months.[23]

Evaluated projects fell into three subcategories of focus:

**Tourism** (58%, n=7): Development of existing assets and identification of new assets to support tourism as a mechanism to grow and support new and existing businesses and increase economic development opportunities.

**Other Community Assets** (25%, n=3): Community capacity and development projects, including reuse of existing sites and space development.

**Downtown Revitalization** (17%, n=2): Development of downtown assets, often as part of a larger economic and community development strategy.

### Successes + Factors

- Partnership development
- Experience/reputation
- Tailored programming

### Challenges + Factors

- Delays
- Lack of resources

### Lessons Learned

- For projects that include construction or renovation, prepare for a longer timeline than anticipated.
- As much as possible, identify external agency or partner processes that may be burdensome or create time constraints.

### Economic Asset Development Successes and Challenges

Grantees shared three common successes and two main challenges:

| | |
|---|---|
| Successes and Factors | **Partnership Development** (58%, n=7) Developing new and strengthening existing partnerships, which were valuable for building visibility and excitement for projects, as well as enhancing community-based leadership.<br>*"Strong new partnerships with the architect, city, construction firm, and developers have been created." (Downtown Revitalization)* |
| | **Experience/Reputation** (58%, n=7) Capitalizing and building on work the organization had already done, as well as the organization's or partners' connections to the communities. Experience was particularly identified as valuable for projects focused on developing tourism or revitalization strategies and others requiring heavy community buy-in.<br>*"We have an amazing team that is purposely transdisciplinary (health, arts, education, economic development…), and that's been really useful for looking at things through multiple lenses" (Downtown Revitalization)* |
| | **Tailored Programming** (33%, n=4) Adapting approaches while staying focused on the overall goals of the project, particularly to recognize differing levels of community readiness and awareness, especially for tourism-related projects.<br>*"There were obvious differences in what…was needed by county or region [in terms of support]." (Tourism)* |

[23] Combines timelines and dollar amounts for projects with the same project number but different suffixes (PW-18611-IM and PW-18611-IM-R1; PW-18728-IM-A and PW-18728-IM-B; PW-18794-IM, PW-18794-IM-B, PW-18794-IM-R1, and PW-18794-IM-R2; and PW-18895-IM-A and PW-18895-IM-B).

| | |
|---|---|
| Challenges and Factors | **Delays** (67%, n=8) Timeline challenges primarily associated with construction or renovation projects, but in some cases also related to working with multiple partners and in multiple communities.<br>*"These construction projects had much more significant environmental clearance issues than normal for community development and construction projects…we weren't prepared for the environmental and funding barriers we had." (Tourism)* |
| | **Lack of Resources** (42%, n=5) Difficulties associated with the relative lack of funding opportunities for these types of projects, as well as a lack of human capital in the primarily rural areas in which many of these projects are implemented.<br>*"There is a bit of cognitive dissonance in the region relative to diversifying the economy or getting more mines to open. [Government officials] have given mixed signals to communities, and communities are resource-strained and cannot afford to do both." (Other Community Assets)* |

### Considerations and Grantee Lessons Learned

**For projects that include construction or renovation, prepare for a longer timeline than anticipated.** As with many construction-related projects, Economic Asset Development grantees noted that required processes, including environmental surveys or working through a basic agency (federal or state), typically took more time than anticipated, delaying project implementation. Economic Asset Development grantees may benefit from engaging with their basic agency as early as possible, as well as conducting pre-implementation research to identify the types of reviews and other process requirements that may be needed (as noted below).

**As much as possible, identify external agency or partner processes that may be burdensome or create time constraints.** Related to the first lesson learned, Economic Asset Development grantees in particular identified external organizational processes as some of the biggest challenges to their timelines and ability to move the project forward. Because Economic Asset Development projects may include construction (thus requiring linkages with a basic federal or state agency, as well as other agencies responsible for components such as zoning, highways, etc.), in addition to including multiple types of partners, attempting to map out the processes and requirements upfront may help identify potential challenges. In addition, new grantees implementing Economic Asset Development projects may particularly benefit from connecting with more experienced grantees who have overcome these challenges.

## Healthcare Access and Disease Prevention

Four percent of evaluated grantees (n=6) were focused on improving access to healthcare and preventing disease, including through construction or renovation of hospitals, recovery facilities, and an optometry school, as well as growing community healthcare opportunities and research to address opioid use. The average amount of POWER funding awarded was just over $1.6 million; the average project timeline was 25 months.[24]

Evaluated projects fell into two subcategories of focus:

**Construction/Renovation** (67%, n=4): Construction or renovation projects to create new or expanded healthcare-related access and opportunities (including a school of optometry; a hospital; and facilities to support individuals with substance use disorder).

**Other** (33%, n=2): Two grantees were focused on other topics, including expanding healthcare access by growing a cadre of community healthcare workers and conducting research on opioid use to create evidence-based interventions.

### Successes + Factors

- Partnership development
- Telling the story
- Tailored programming

### Challenges + Factors

- Delays
- Lack of resources

### Lessons Learned

- For projects that include construction or renovation, prepare for a longer timeline than anticipated.

### Healthcare Access and Disease Prevention Successes and Challenges

Grantees shared three common successes and two main challenges:

| | |
|---|---|
| Successes and Factors | **Partnership Development** (83%, n=5) Creating new relationships or enhancing existing relationships with other medical centers, including Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers; and particularly for health projects focused on SUD, partnerships with nonprofit service organizations, government, and economic and workforce development.<br>*"We've had good partnerships with county government…area development [districts] have helped us [as well]." (Construction/Renovation)* |
| | **Telling the Story** (50%, n=3) Utilizing media and participants to generate interest in the project; healthcare projects that experienced delays found the attention to communications particularly important in keeping up community interest.<br>*"We brought in a grant communications person…[who] keeps the media abreast of what's going on. With those updates…it's easier to keep the buzz in the community going." (Construction/Renovation)* |
| | **Tailored Programming** (50%, n=3) Individualizing services based on the needs of the patient, client, or community.<br>*"Part [of the success] is meeting the client where they are in terms of their goals and then helping them to expand that while they're here, making sure we're addressing specific concerns." (Construction/Renovation)* |

[24] Combines timelines and dollar amounts for projects with the same project number but different suffixes (PW-18587, PW-18587-C1, and PW-18587-C2).

| | |
|---|---|
| Challenges and Factors | **Delays** (83%, n=5) Timeline challenges primarily associated with construction or renovation projects, but in some cases also related to accreditation or institutional review board processes.<br>*"We were accepted, but the [Basic Federal Agency's] process is a lot longer before we can begin construction." (Construction/Renovation)* |
| | **Lack of Resources** (42%, n=5) A dearth of resources in the healthcare realm, including funding and wraparound services for SUD recovery efforts, and in some cases, qualified staff.<br>*"Finding the right people has definitely been the biggest challenge." (Other)* |

### Considerations and Grantee Lessons Learned

**For projects including construction or renovation, prepare for a longer timeline than anticipated.** All but one Healthcare Access and Disease Prevention project reported delays, and most were associated with construction challenges. As noted in other sections of the report, construction that required processes including environmental surveys or working through a basic federal or state agency typically took more time than anticipated, delaying implementation. As with any construction-focused project, Healthcare Access and Disease Prevention grantees may benefit from engaging with their basic agency as early as possible, as well as conducting pre-implementation research to identify the types of reviews that may be required.

## Broadband Infrastructure

Three percent of evaluated grantees (n=5) were focused on providing the infrastructure necessary to improve broadband connectivity in rural communities. The average amount of POWER funding awarded was just over $1.1 million; the average project timeline was 32 months.

All projects were categorized as **Fiber Construction** (100%, n=5): Construction and installation of fiber to support broadband connectivity in rural communities.

### Successes + Factors

- Community functionality/excitement
- Partnership development
- Tailored programming

### Challenges + Factors

- Delays

### Lessons Learned

- Consider applying for a TA grant (or other mechanism to support pre-implementation research).
- Anticipate and build in cushion for delays.

### Broadband Infrastructure Successes and Challenges

Grantees shared two common successes and one main challenge:

| | |
|---|---|
| Successes and Factors | **Community Functionality/Excitement** (80%, n=4) Enhancing the functionality of communities through increased broadband access, including faster connections and heightened ability for both businesses and households to conduct activities necessary for daily life. In addition, excitement among community members for the possibilities introduced by better broadband access.<br>*"We are an economically distressed county…broadband will have a long-term effect in boosting our economy. We are laying the groundwork for years to come and plan to be a part of the progress of economic growth." (Fiber Construction)* |
| | **Partnership Development** (40%, n=2) Expanding partnerships (including with internet service providers) to allow for more and better connections within the community.<br>*"I think it's the partnerships…it's expanded some of those things we're able to do. It's the partnerships and being able to make connections with private and nonprofit entities that are working on the broadband problem and being able to connect and really see some outcomes." (Fiber Construction)* |
| Challenges and Factors | **Delays** (80%, n=4) Timeline challenges associated with construction project requirements or bidding processes taking longer than anticipated.<br>*"As far into [the grant timeline] as we are, we are just doing the engineering now. Because of the construction, we have to have a Basic Federal Agency (BFA)…anytime you have a BFA that isn't part of the project, it adds to the level of angst and paperwork and time that it takes…" (Fiber Construction)* |

**Consider applying for a TA grant (or other mechanism to support pre-implementation research).** Technical Assistance grantees that focused on broadband (discussed in the section on TA, Research, and Planning projects) indicated the value provided by feasibility research made possible through the TA grant. This research also allowed assessment of community interest and existing assets and growing buy-in through community engagement, as well as the opportunity to engage with internet service providers and other community stakeholders pre-project.

**Anticipate and build in cushion for delays.** As with many construction-related projects, broadband projects typically encountered delays because processes, including working with a basic federal or state agency, and having required environmental reviews completed, took longer than anticipated. Broadband-focused grantees may benefit from engaging with their basic agency as early as possible in the process, as well as conducting pre-implementation research (as noted in the previous lesson learned) to identify the types of reviews that may be needed.

## Additional Lessons Learned: Recovery Ecosystem Projects

Within the POWER suite of projects, some grantees elect to focus specifically (although not necessarily exclusively) on building recovery ecosystems and addressing challenges associated with substance use disorder (SUD). From March to May 2020, the C/D evaluation team conducted interviews with 19 POWER grantees that ARC staff identified as SUD-related.

The 19 projects evaluated included funding for a variety of components, such as:

- Workforce and economic development-related activities including job coaching and career placement and expanding the number of recovery-friendly workplaces
- Recovery-supportive services, including housing and transportation assistance, recovery and peer coaching, and mental health support
- Construction, renovation, or equipment for facilities to build capacity for addiction treatment services, including short- and long-term residential and detox services
- Recovery-supportive human capital development, including licensure or certification to increase the number of people qualified to work with individuals with SUD
- Technical assistance and research related to finding gaps in the ecosystem and offering evidence-based solutions

The evaluation team issued a separate, standalone report of SUD-related implementation findings. Findings regarding the 19 projects are also incorporated in the previous sections of this report under their other areas of focus; however, these projects share two specific lessons learned:

**Connect early with employers and utilize other resources (such as chambers of commerce) to make employer connections.** Several grantees mentioned being somewhat surprised at the level of challenge in building buy-in with employers, often due to the stigma associated with SUD. Grantees that were beginning to see success typically had worked to connect with a few "champion" employers (those who may already be hiring individuals in recovery), even prior to the grant. Some grantees were able to utilize these champions to make connections with other employers and demonstrate successes in hiring individuals in recovery. Further, some grantees talked about the value of connecting with other organizations, including economic development authorities and chambers of commerce, to help build those supportive ecosystems.

**Recognize resource differences in highly rural versus more populated areas, and plan early when moving into rural areas.** Grantees noted the most significant gaps in the full range of recovery-supportive services are typically present in rural areas, which lack the population necessary for certain supportive infrastructure. Grantees with phased projects often reported starting in places with more treatment facilities, assistive services, and funding. They also reported the need to identify partners and staffing in rural areas earlier than they did, and to lay significant groundwork for buy-in within rural communities. Some grantees noted that working in rural communities requires deliberate physical presence (rather than working remotely), necessitating planning and resource allocation.

# Other Factors of Project Implementation

The evaluation team explored grantee perceptions related to two[25] additional, potential factors of implementation: the effect of high concentrations of POWER projects in counties, primarily in Central Appalachia, and the early effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Evaluators found:

**The presence of 10 or more POWER projects in a county does not appear to have widespread adverse effects on implementation, especially with ARC's requirements for applicants to demonstrate alignment with existing programs and priorities.**

Many grantees, even those who reported some adverse effects, also reported beneficial impacts of the presence of multiple projects simultaneously or in succession. Impacts included building momentum; shifts in community culture that were more welcoming to new strategies; and excitement from new investment. The few who did report negative impacts noted challenges were typically specific to a community and were often focused on rapidly "staffing up" in the early years of POWER.

Some interviewed grantees encouraged ARC to continue to tie application points and funding to grantees who can demonstrate collaboration and coordination within and across regions. They noted that there is a continued risk of a sense of competition, especially when large amounts of funding are involved, and that capacity and expertise has grown to allow organizations to specialize; in other words, these grantees encouraged other organizations to seek out local expertise rather than extending their own missions beyond what might be realistic. Grantees cited evidence of ARC improving in this area through enhanced requirements for coordination and alignment in the POWER request for proposals.

A conservative analysis of networks of these grantees, partners, and match-funders of 111 projects[26] in high concentration counties revealed about 500 unique organizations involved in implementation or funding and 700 distinct grantee-to-partner relationships.

**Grantees took steps to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic but reported significant concerns for their organizations and communities.**

About 100 grantees with open projects responded to a voluntary survey in early April 2020. They indicated major concerns about the viability of local businesses, short- and long-term economic impacts of the pandemic, community health, and ability of residents to meet basic needs. Concerns were less severe, but still present, for their ability to stay within projected timelines, logistics of carrying out activities as planned, and their ability to meet outputs and outcomes, as well as the financial health of their organization, ability to deliver services, and ability to maintain operations. (ARC has responded to these needs and concerns with grant modifications, resources, and funding.) Needs and concerns did not substantially differ by project type, organization type, or organization size.

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[25] The team also conducted interviews with grantees and partners on several multistate projects, to determine whether there were unique successes, challenges, or lessons learned based on the multistate structure. Interviews did not reveal substantial, apparent differences from other multi-partner projects; therefore, those projects are included in their appropriate activity grouping in the previous section.

[26] Projects with the same project number but multiple suffixes were combined into a single count.

## POWER Implementation in High-Concentration Counties

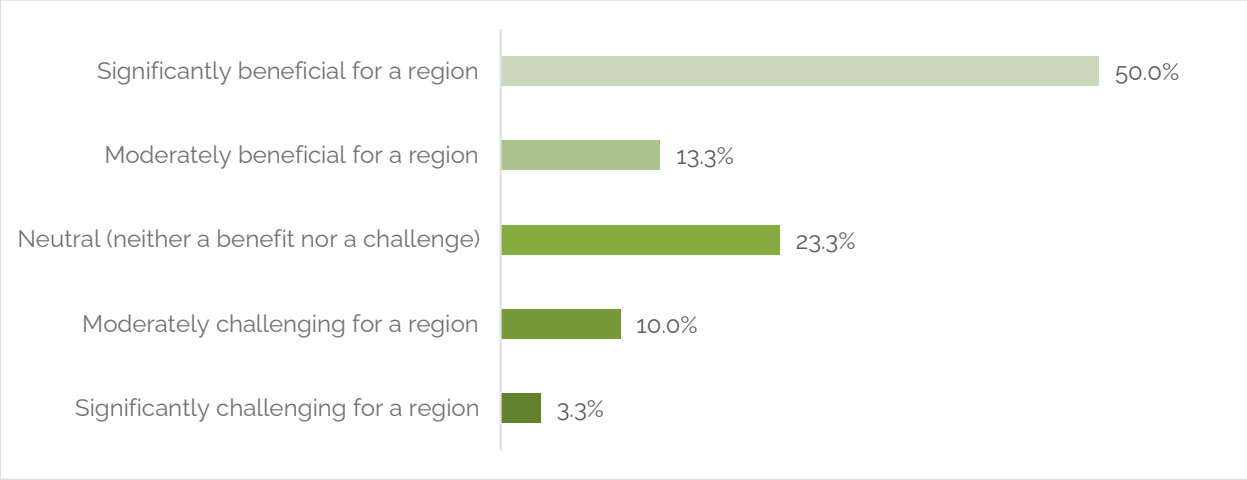
During the FY19 evaluation, a minority of interviewed grantees, particularly in counties in Central Appalachia, noted challenges associated with community capacity (lack of human and financial resources) and difficulties in recruiting beneficiaries due to what they perceived as competition with other organizations. Some of these grantees noted the influx of POWER and other funding into these areas and speculated on whether this might be exacerbating some of the challenges. Although these challenges were noted by a relatively small number of grantees, the evaluation team and ARC staff determined this to be a topic of interest for the Year 2 evaluation, particularly to identify whether there might be opportunities for ARC to better facilitate collaboration in these regions.

### Survey Results

In January 2020, the evaluation team fielded a survey designed to obtain more information about the potential effects of high concentrations of POWER projects, both positive and negative. The survey was sent to project staff for projects approved as of February 2019 and operating in counties in which 10 or more POWER projects had been awarded. The survey link was sent to 70 organizations operating 85 projects in these counties, with 33 responding (for a response rate of 47 percent). Respondents were asked their perceptions of whether high concentrations of projects were beneficial or challenging in specific counties of implementation, in various aspects of project implementation, and overall.

Based on survey results, grantees tended to be more likely to feel that high concentrations of POWER projects and funding were beneficial for a region overall. To illustrate, just under two-thirds of respondents (63 percent) felt the high concentration was significantly (50 percent) or moderately (13 percent) beneficial, and only 13 percent felt that high concentrations were moderately (10 percent) or significantly (three percent) challenging.

***Figure 2: Impact of High Concentration on a Region Overall***



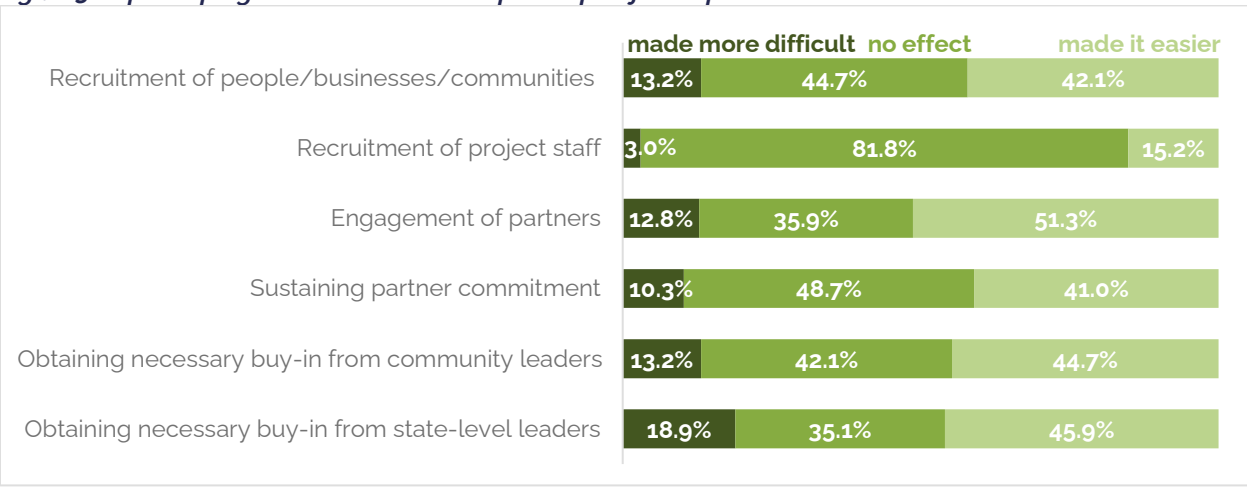

In all, only nine unique respondents (27 percent) reported any negative impacts of high concentrations of POWER projects (whether overall, in project implementation aspects, or in a particular county of implementation).

- Four reported high concentrations having significant (n=1) or moderate (n=3) overall challenges for a region.
- Three reported experiencing challenges in at least one aspect of implementation but reported overall positive (n=2) or neutral (n=1) effects of high concentrations of POWER.
- Two reported challenges in at least one county of implementation but reported overall significant positive impacts of high concentrations and only positive or neutral effects on specific aspects of implementation.

Most respondents felt that a high concentration of projects either made various aspects of implementation easier or had no effect on implementation. Just over half of respondents (51 percent) felt that a high concentration made engaging partners easier, and only 13 percent felt that it was made more difficult. Over 40 percent of respondents found other aspects of implementation made easier by a concentration of POWER projects: 46 percent felt it made obtaining buy-in from state-level leaders easier; 45 percent found obtaining buy-in from community leaders easier; 42 percent felt it made participant recruitment easier; and 41 percent found it made sustaining partner commitment easier. The vast majority (82 percent) felt that a high concentration of projects had no effect on staff recruitment, and over 40 percent felt it had no effect on partner commitment (49 percent); participant recruitment (45 percent); and obtaining community buy-in (42 percent).

Although under 20 percent of respondents in any category felt that a high concentration of POWER projects had a negative impact, 19 percent did feel that it made obtaining state-level buy-in more difficult. Participant recruitment, engagement of partners, and obtaining buy-in from community leaders were each viewed as more difficult by 13 percent of respondents.

***Figure 3: Impact of High Concentration on Aspects of Project Implementation***




In open-ended responses, respondents indicating that high concentrations were beneficial noted increased collaboration in the region (with some indicating that this type of collaboration had not existed prior to POWER). Others felt that the concentration increased

resources in the region, particularly when resources were pooled and thus could improve the scalability and overall impact of projects.

In contrast, the minority of respondents who felt that high concentrations were challenging expressed concerns about: work being siloed and a lack of coordination across projects; community confusion and fatigue that created challenges in staff and beneficiary recruitment; and obtaining partner match funding.

### Grantee Interviews

Based on survey results, five grantees were selected for follow-up interviews (those that had expressed that high concentrations were moderate to significant challenges within specific project aspects or overall). In follow-up interviews, three of five grantees expressed they felt challenges had been mitigated over time, particularly by increasing collaboration. As one grantee noted, "Having more POWER grants has forced people to work together in ways they haven't before." Another grantee shared, "[Having the funding] is more beneficial than not—we don't have a lot in these small towns, so it's good to have other partners who know what we're doing."

However, three grantees whose projects were focused on entrepreneurship did note particular challenges in this area. "There [is] a finite [number] of entrepreneurs and businesses, and they were getting inundated with training requests…everybody was doing some kind of similar training." Another grantee noted, "In all honesty, there's a point at which it's like, OK, everyone is going to develop this many entrepreneurs…and you're [wondering], how many entrepreneurs per capita [is it feasible] to have?"

All three of these grantees expressed the high importance of collaboration to mitigate perceptions of competition and fatigue, as well as to tailor services based on each organization's strengths (and then connect with others to fill in gaps), particularly in entrepreneurial development. As one grantee shared, "[It's important] to know what you're good at and then reach out [to others]…try to play to your strengths and your partner strengths and not do it all yourself." Another grantee agreed, stating, "Everyone had similar experiences…[the] lesson learned is that we need to spend more time on the front end of our grants reaching out to partners."

Grantees (both interviewed grantees and survey respondents) suggested that ARC could continue to mitigate challenges associated with initiative fatigue and competition by continuing to coordinate conversations (particularly those focused on specific sectors, industries, or project activities, as well as based on regions or communities) to promote collaboration. Additionally, some grantees suggested that ARC could assist in identifying community- or state-based organizations or foundations that are well-aware of activities in the region to assist in coordination and planning, particularly in high-concentration counties.

## Early Impacts of COVID-19

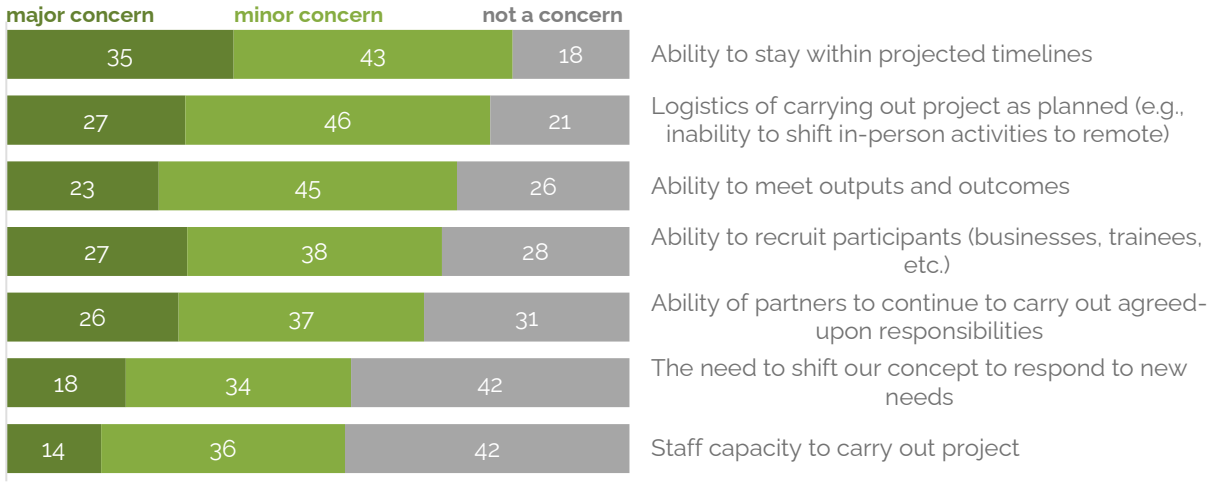
At the request of ARC, the C/D evaluation team conducted an online survey in late March/early April 2020 to assess the initial impacts of COVID-19 on POWER projects, grantees, and the communities in which they operate. The survey link was distributed via email to 158 grantees with open POWER projects, yielding responses from 98 grantees (a response rate of 62 percent).

This section includes results of the online survey, as well as feedback obtained from grantees during Year 2 evaluation interviews, as interviews for eight recovery ecosystem-related projects and 21 new implementation projects (those that begun in late 2018 or early 2019) were conducted from April to June of 2020.[27]

### Project-Related Concerns

Specifically related to POWER project implementation, the items of greatest concern to survey respondents early in the pandemic were the ability to stay within projected timelines (81 percent concerned); the logistics of carrying out the project as planned (78 percent concerned), and the ability to meet outputs and outcomes (72 percent concerned).

***Figure 4: POWER Survey Respondent COVID-19 Project-Related Concerns***




Of the 29 grantees interviewed from April to June, all but five specifically expressed some level of concern about COVID-19, including its potential impact on their projects, as well as potential impacts on Appalachian communities. For projects, grantees noted concerns about loss of momentum; the impact of school closures on timelines, as well as the ability to place individuals once they completed training; the short- and long-term effect that the pandemic would have on investor and funding behavior; and the ability to stay on track with construction and infrastructure projects, given that those projects already often have timeline challenges due to additional processes and regulations. For example:

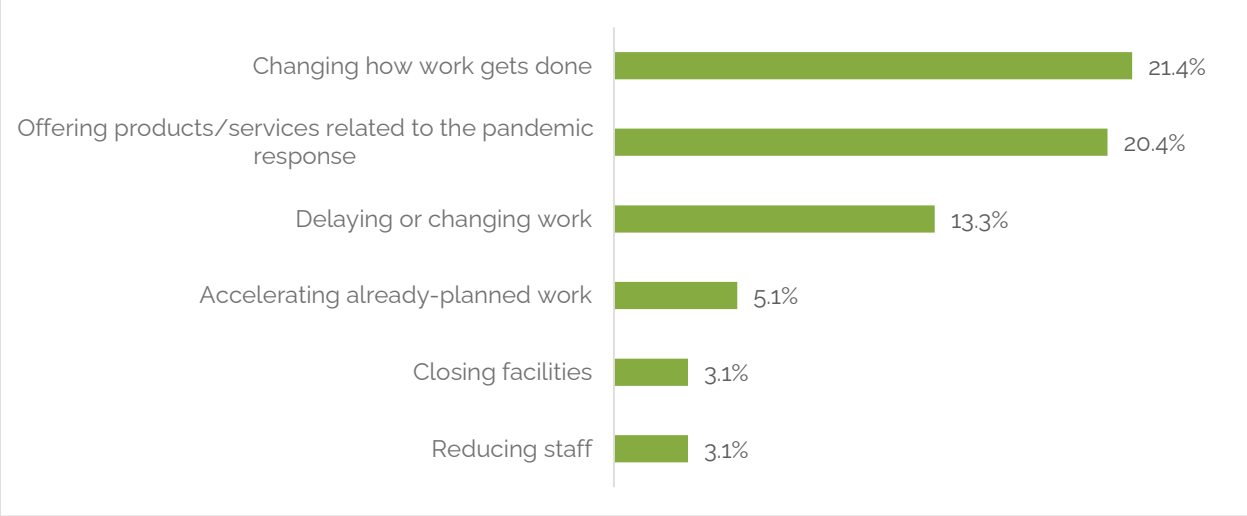
[27] While the C/D interview protocols did not specifically ask about the impacts of COVID-19 on grant implementation, many grantees noted COVID-19 as a challenge.

- *"[We're not at all on track with outputs and outcomes] because of COVID. We had to shut down altogether because of the [stay-at-home order]. We had a tremendous amount of momentum from publicity…but that stalled. [We also had to shut down manufacturing] during that period, so the whole process of where we would be was set back significantly."* (Sector-Based Cultivation and Diversification grantee)
- *"We were well on our way until the spring…we were planning on having…high school students graduate with an apprenticeship certification, and of course that couldn't happen because of the closure of schools."* (Workforce Training/Education grantee)
- *"We're rethinking strategies in terms of recruiting people…there are so many businesses laying off now, we're very fearful that many [will] continue for quite a while. [For] the recruitment piece, being able to say here's a job at the end of this waiting for you is huge, and so now it's going to be more challenging in that regard."* (Workforce Training/Education grantee)
- *"Although we had a lot of new prospects [for fund formation] in the pipeline, [COVID] has caused a shock to investor psychology, so our projects are sitting still."* (Capital Access/Investment grantee)
- *"We had a couple of contract crews that shut down; they didn't want to work. It's created a challenge in doing design work; standing in someone's yard and they want to know why we're not in quarantine."* (Broadband grantee)

### Changes to Services

Nearly three-quarters of survey respondents (73 percent) reported adding or changing services to meet community needs in response to COVID-19. The largest number of grantees reported changing how work gets done (21 percent), with 20 percent offering products or services directly related to the pandemic response and about 13 percent delaying or changing planned work.

***Figure 5: POWER Survey Respondent COVID-19 Changes to Services***




Though most interviewed grantees expressed concerns related to COVID-19, two grantees focused on Food and Agriculture noted that COVID had resulted in some accelerated implementation; two other grantees specifically indicated that they felt their organization's

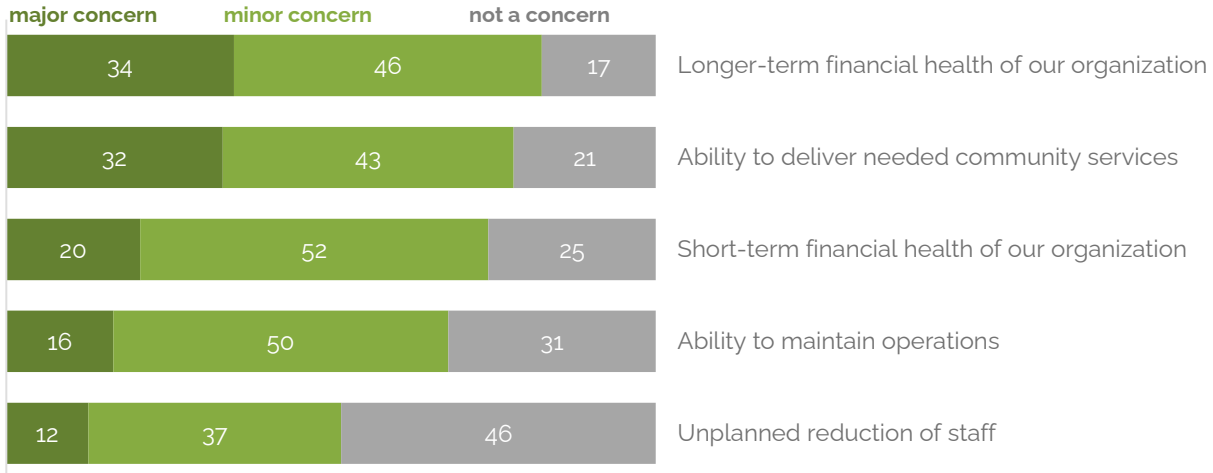
work (overall and through POWER) uniquely positioned them to support individuals and their communities. For example:

- *"Direct-to-consumer markets have exploded during this time. Before we were lucky to get $15K–$20K in a month, but now with COVID, we're doing that in a week. This shift in prioritizing local food may continue…and the COVID emergency has pulled us together even tighter as a group."* (Food and Agriculture grantee)
- *"One of the stores opened six weeks early…after COVID hit, to respond to the grocery store needs of this county that otherwise didn't have one."* (Food and Agriculture grantee)
- *"Right now, the biggest risk is COVID, the biggest risk we've seen in our lives, and there will be some companies, if they're not well-positioned, they will have the potential for going out of business…but we're trying to position individuals to take advantage of opportunities. We have to make sure the right pieces are in place to weather this risk and any risk that will happen."* (Sector-Based Cultivation/Diversification grantee)
- *"In our region, a lot of those people who lost their jobs to COVID aren't going to go back to the same positions. COVID has really ramped up the urgency [for the type of work we are doing], making sure we get good data about jobs, translate that data into responses and programming, and get that out in front of people."* (Workforce Training/Education grantee)

### Organization-Level Concerns

With regards to the potential impacts of COVID-19 on their organizations, most survey respondents expressed major or minor concerns about all aspects of organizational health. Most significantly, respondents were concerned about long- and short-term financial health of their organization (82.5 percent and 74 percent reporting these as major or minor concerns, respectively), as well as the ability to deliver needed community services (78 percent concerned). Respondents were least concerned about unplanned reductions in staff (52 percent concerned).

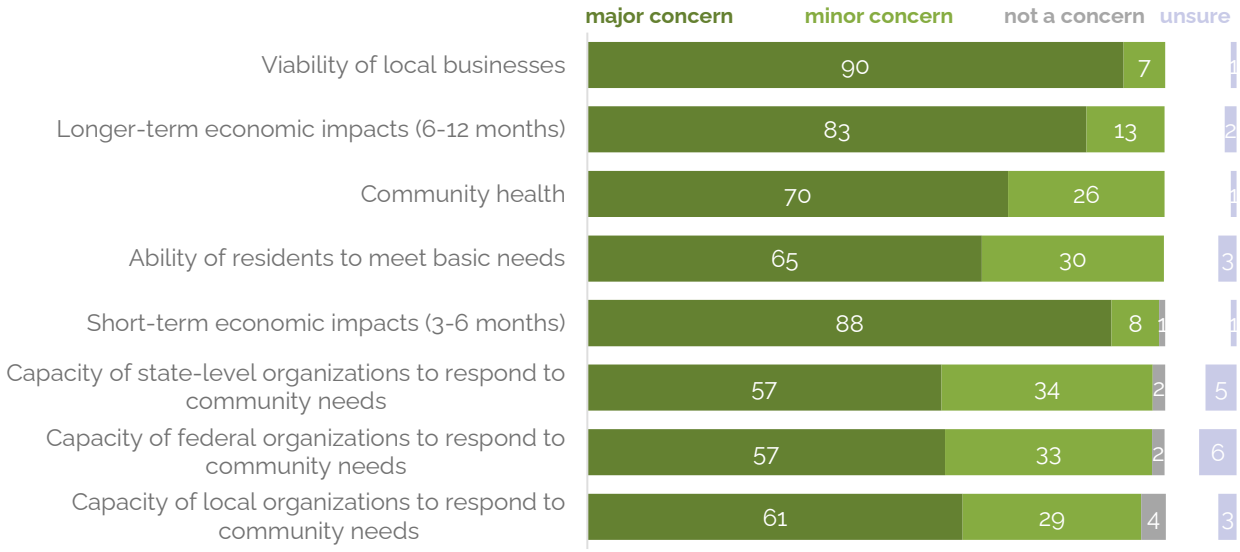
***Figure 6: POWER Survey Respondent COVID-19 Organization-Level Concerns***



## Community-Level Concerns

On the survey, all respondents (100 percent) who rated a level of concern (those selecting major, minor, or not a concern) were concerned about the viability of local businesses; the longer-term economic impacts of COVID-19; community health; and the ability of residents to meet basic needs. All but one to two respondents were concerned about short-term economic impacts (99 percent concerned); the capacity of state-level organizations to respond to community needs (98 percent concerned); and the capacity of federal organizations to respond to community needs (98 percent).

***Figure 7: POWER Survey Respondent COVID-19 Community-Level Concerns***




Some grantees interviewed in April through June expressed specific community-level concerns, beyond their project implementation. These included concerns about the pandemic's impact on the health of individuals in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD), and whether the stress of the pandemic would contribute to increases in SUD, as well as the extent to which federal and state funding priorities would shift; the extent to which investment in Appalachia could continue; and the extent to which already limited capacity would be further challenged. For example:

- *"We've seen alcohol sales go up substantially and recovery houses aren't accepting people from corrections, and corrections isn't transitioning people into recovery. We're going to have to change the way we did business, like after 9/11."* (Workforce Training/Education grantee)
- *"When you look at COVID, our first need is to raise the capital, and funding and financing priorities are now shifting…CDFIs and institutions across the region are now facing daily challenges for their existence, and we need them to persevere and adapt."* (Capital Access/Investment grantee)
- *"With COVID the state will likely be reanalyzing and reprioritizing [funding]…the reduced revenue footprint to the state and what that means to non-bond-backed capital dollars remains to be seen."* (Workforce Training/Education grantee)

- *"There will be [long-term] negative impacts…we just don't know what they are yet. It's going to be the loan dollars that we won't be able to get out. The recession or worse—people aren't going to want to take on debt."* (Capital Access/Investment grantee)

### Additional COVID-19-Related Data Collection Plans

The C/D evaluation team will with ARC staff to field a follow-up survey related to COVID-19 in October 2020. The survey results will be analyzed and compared against the spring 2020 survey to identify the extent to which concerns have abated, grown, or changed, as well as additional feedback from POWER grantees related to project implementation and community-based efforts.

# Results of POWER to Date

*"[This project] is providing hope for one of the most impoverished areas of the country. This has been a transformational project…it's been incredibly uplifting, and the people of the area have been really empowered. They believe now that they can do this."*
Workforce Training/Education Grantee

## POWER Project Results

This section examines the results of 81 formally closed projects,[28] defined as past the period of performance and with closeout measures. Analysis focuses on results (outputs and outcomes) at the time of project closeout; however, projects typically have up to three years after closeout to achieve outcomes, and one to three years after closeout to achieve some outputs. Thus, results in this section, particularly outcomes, should be considered preliminary. The analysis revealed three main findings.

**Closed projects have achieved early results, but achievement varies by measure.**

At the time of closeout, 81 closed projects[29] had reached a combined 128,600 beneficiaries, including students, workers, patients, businesses, communities, and other participants, and projects had improved over 90,000 of these beneficiaries. This is the case even though nearly half (47 percent) of closed projects are comparatively shorter-term Technical Assistance and Planning projects that are typically focused on the creation of plans and reports, and projects have up to three years to achieve outcomes. Beneficiaries served and improved include:

- Students: 70,544 served/66,893 improved
- Participants: 38,900 served/14,302 improved
- Workers/Trainees: 8,570 served/1,742 improved
- Patients: 4,990 served/4,990 improved
- Businesses: 4,687 served/3,383 improved
- Households: 326 served/204 improved
- Communities: 319 served/257 improved
- Organizations: 258 served/41 improved

Collectively, as of closeout, grantees had met or exceeded targets for serving and improving participants, businesses, patients, and students and workers/trainees (although the latter two were difficult for some grantees to achieve by closeout).

[28] Ten projects representing two grant numbers were combined into two for reporting purposes (PW-18458 and PW-`18794). This figure does not include canceled projects.
[29] Ten projects representing two grant numbers were combined into two for reporting purposes (PW-18458 and PW-18794). Output and outcome numbers included in this report are at the time of closeout; however, projects typically have up to three years after closeout to measure outcomes.

Added together, projects also met or exceeded targets in:

- Businesses created: 942 businesses, 223 percent of target
- Jobs retained: 3,407 jobs, 251 percent of target
- Jobs created: 4,325 jobs, 149 percent of target
- Revenues increased, export: $28.0 million in revenue, 140 percent of target
- Revenues increased, non-export: $20.5 million in revenue, 118 percent of target
- Programs implemented: 13 programs, 118 percent of target
- Communities improved, 257 communities, 118 percent of target
- Linear feet of broadband fiber: 191,663 linear feet, 104 percent of target
- New visitors (days) attracted: 4,000 visitors, 100 percent of target
- Acres of space: 246 acres, 98 percent of target

When combined, closed projects fell short of final targets at project closeout for the following measures: numbers of households and organizations served, plans/reports created, square feet established, and new visitors–overnight (outputs), as well as organizations improved, private investment leveraged, and telecom sites developed (outcomes).

**Achievement of targets related to workers/trainees, students, and leveraged private investment appear to be most difficult to achieve by project closeout.**

Achievement of results at the time of closeout varied among projects, even when collective totals exceeded targets. Of the 15 output and outcome categories measured in at least five closed projects, at closeout: five were met collectively and in at least 75 percent of projects with that metric; one was not met collectively but was met in at least 75 percent of projects; eight were met collectively but not met in at least 75 percent of projects by closeout; and one was neither met collectively nor met by at least 75 percent of projects by closeout. See Table 3.

A lag in metrics achievement is likely in large part due to the nature of the outcomes; grantees are given up to three years after project closeout to meet outcomes, as it may take longer than the life of the project for full creation of businesses and jobs, as well as for students and workers to obtain credentials or employment.

This may be particularly true for improving students and workers/trainees. While grantees met targets as of closeout when all outputs and outcomes were summed across projects, overachievement in some projects compensated for shortfalls at close in others. Between 44 and 63 percent of grantees with these metrics did not achieve targets as of closeout, the highest of all output and outcomes categories. At the time of project closeout, students and workers may be still enrolled in training or credentialing programs; thus, they can be counted as served (for an output), but cannot yet be counted as improved (for an outcome).

*Table 3: Status of Collective Achievement and Individual Projects Meeting Targets at Close*

| Metric | Met Collectively | Met by at least 75% of Projects at close |
|---|---|---|
| Businesses served (n=29) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Businesses improved (n=29) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Participants served (n=14) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Participants improved (n=13) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Communities served (n=25) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Plans/reports created | – | ✓ |
| Students improved (n=8) | ✓ | – |
| Workers/trainees served (n=8) | ✓ | – |
| Workers/trainees improved (n=8) | ✓ | – |
| Students served (n=9) | ✓ | – |
| Businesses created (n=22) | ✓ | – |
| Jobs created (n=28) | ✓ | – |
| Jobs retained (n=14) | ✓ | – |
| Communities improved (n=25) | ✓ | – |
| Leveraged private investment (n=26) | – | – |

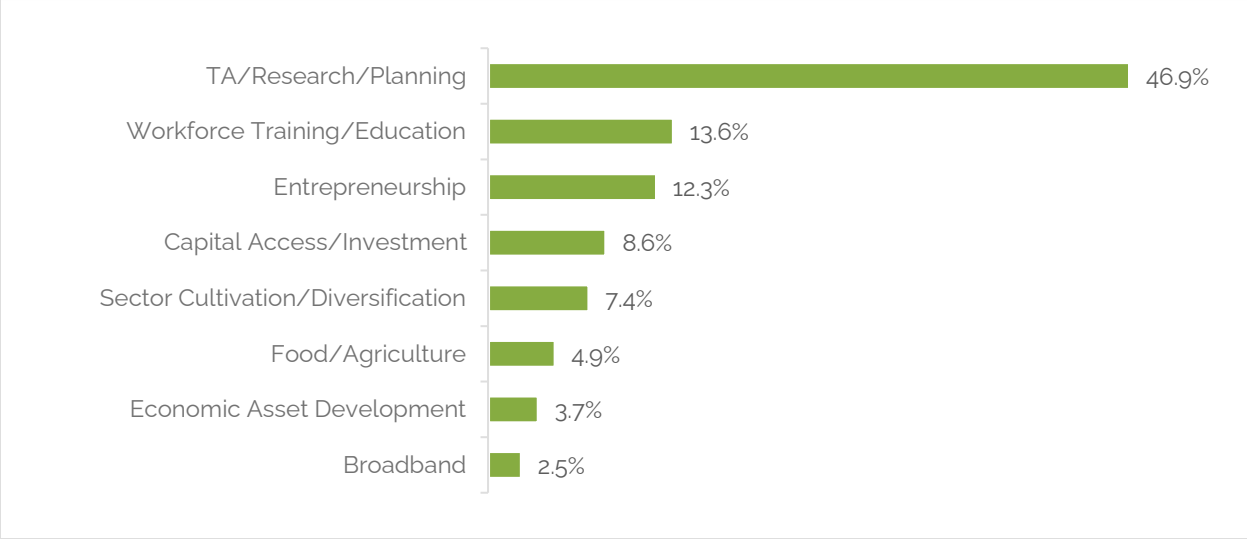
**At present, it is too early to determine if there are any connections between project activity type and achieving outputs/outcomes (i.e., at present it cannot be concluded that one project type is more or less likely to meet targets). There is opportunity to continue to examine patterns as more projects close, and as more have been closed for three or more years.**

This report provides descriptive analysis of output and outcome achievement by output/outcome category and project activity type. However, as of this report, only 81 projects are officially closed (with 47 being TA projects) and only seven have been closed for at least three years (six are TA projects). At present, the small number of closed projects by type (other than TA projects) limits analysis of patterns of achieving outputs and outcomes by project type. As additional projects close and have been closed for longer time periods, patterns may become more apparent, including additional connections between implementation themes and project results.

## Overall Project Performance

Nearly half of the 81 closed projects were Technical Assistance (TA), Research, and Planning projects (47 percent), 14 percent were Workforce Training/Education projects, and 12 percent were Entrepreneurship projects.

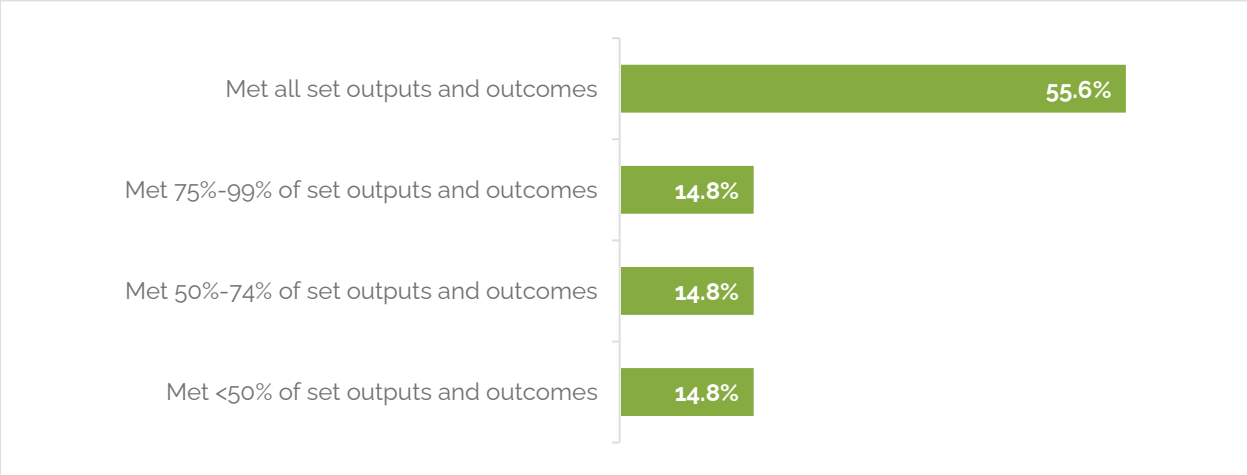
***Figure 8: Closed Projects by Activity Grouping***




Of the closed projects, over half (56 percent, n=45) met targets at closeout for all outputs and outcomes (for example, if the project had six total outputs and outcomes, it met targets for all six). Of these 45 projects, about 78 percent were TA, Research, and Planning projects.

The remaining 36 projects did not meet targets for all outputs and outcomes as of closeout; however, 15 percent (n=12) met targets for 75-99 percent of outputs and outcomes (e.g., if the project had four total outputs and outcomes, it met targets for at least three). Another 15 percent met targets for 50-74 percent of outputs and outcomes, while 15 percent met targets for less than half. Four projects did not meet targets for any outputs and outcomes as of closeout (two TA projects and one each in Workforce Training/Education and Economic Asset Development).

***Figure 9: Percent of Closed Projects Meeting Set Outputs and Outcomes at Project Close***



## Outputs

POWER aims to create transformational change in coal-impacted areas of Appalachia. As such, it is likely still too early to measure the broader and lasting impact of POWER projects on aspects such as community and leadership development and economic diversification, as well as the longer-term effects of infrastructure projects. However, at the time of this report, there were 81 projects (about one-third of funded projects) that were marked as closed and had actual outputs and outcomes reported. Over 80 percent of the closed projects were included in evaluation interviews in either Year 1 or Year 2 (82 percent, n=67). Closed projects were awarded over $41.7 million in POWER funding.

In terms of outputs, at the time of closeout, the 81 projects served nearly 130,000 beneficiaries[30] (including businesses, communities, households, organizations, participants, patients, students, and workers). As of closeout, closed projects had met (within 95-100 percent of target) or exceeded output targets in six of the eight categories of **beneficiaries served**. Combined, projects served:

- 70,544 students (195 percent of target)
- 38,900 participants (728 percent of target)
- 8,570 workers/trainees (191 percent of target)
- 4,990 patients (99 percent of target)
- 4,687 businesses (121 percent of target)
- 319 communities (98 percent of target)

Closed POWER projects also met or exceeded targets related to **space redeveloped or constructed** in two of three categories and **visitors attracted** in one of two categories:

- 191,663 linear feet of fiber for broadband (104 percent of target)
- 4,000 new visitors (days) attracted (100 percent of target)
- 246 acres of space redeveloped (98 percent of target)

Combined, closed projects fell short of reaching targets for households served (326 of 950, 34 percent of target), organizations served (201 of 258, 78 percent of target); plans/reports created (177 created, 78 percent of target), square feet established (162,094 established, 71 percent of target), and new visitors–overnight (0 reported, 0% of target). However, projects have up to three years to achieve some outputs, including those that are paired with outcomes (e.g., students served, which is paired with students improved; workers/trainees served, which is paired with workers/trainees improved), as well as those that may take longer than the life of the project to achieve (e.g., new visitors–days or new visitors–nights).

[30] Because figures were summed across projects, some beneficiaries may be double counted.

*Table 4: Closed POWER Project Outputs: Planned vs. Actual*

| | Output | Planned | Actual | % (Planned vs. Actual) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beneficiaries Served | Businesses served (n=29) | 3,865 | 4,687 | 121% |
| | Communities served (n=25) | 326 | 319 | 98% |
| | Households served (n=2) | 950 | 326 | 34% |
| | Organizations served (n=3) | 258 | 201 | 78% |
| | Participants served (n=14) | 5,347 | 38,900 | 728% |
| | Patients served (n=1) | 5,060 | 4,990 | 99% |
| | Students served (n=9) | 36,211 | 70,544 | 195% |
| | Workers/trainees served (n=8) | 4,493 | 8,570 | 191% |
| Products Created | Plans/reports created (n=45) | 227 | 177 | 78% |
| Space Developed/ Constructed | Acreage (n=1) | 250 | 246 | 98% |
| | Linear feet (n=1) | 184,800 | 191,663 | 104% |
| | Square feet (n=2) | 228,015 | 162,094 | 71% |
| Visitors Attracted | New visitors – days (n=1) | 4,000 | 4,000 | 100% |
| | New visitors – overnights (n=1) | 9,900 | 0 | 0% |

## Outcomes

This section discusses reported outcomes for closed projects, as of the time of closeout; however, projects typically have up to three years to achieve outcome targets. At the time of this report (September 2020), only seven projects had been closed for at least three years, and six of the seven projects were TA projects (which typically are shorter-term planning projects and thus generally do not have outcomes targets, only outputs). As such, it is important to note that outcome discussions in this section (including meeting or not meeting targets) should be considered preliminary only.

At project close, the 81 closed POWER projects had improved over 90,000 beneficiaries[31] (businesses, communities, households, organizations, participants, patients, students, and workers). At the time of closeout, closed projects had met (within 95-100 percent of target) or exceeded outcome targets for **beneficiaries improved** in seven of eight categories:

- 66,893 students improved (189 percent of target)
- 14,302 participants improved (375 percent of target)
- 4,990 patients improved (99 percent of target)
- 3,383 businesses improved (165 percent of target)
- 1,742 workers/trainees improved (100 percent of target)
- 257 communities improved (118 percent of target)
- 204 households improved (100 percent of target)

Closed POWER projects have leveraged nearly $367 million in private investment, as well as creating over $48.5 million in increased revenue (export and non-export sales). At the

[31] Because figures were summed across projects, some beneficiaries may be double counted.

time of close, closed projects had exceeded targets in two of three **funding/revenue** categories, including:

- Over $28 million in revenues increased–export sales (140 percent of target)
- Over $20.5 million in revenues increased – non-export sales (118 percent of target)

Closed POWER projects have created or retained more than 8,600 jobs and businesses. At the time of close, projects had exceeded targets in all categories related to **positions or products created or retained**, including:

- 4,325 jobs created (149 percent of target)
- 3,407 jobs retained (251 percent of target)
- 942 businesses created (223 percent of target)
- 13 programs implemented (118 percent of target)

***Table 5: Closed POWER Project Outcomes: Planned vs. Actual***

| | Outcome | Planned | Actual | % (Planned vs. Actual) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beneficiaries Improved | Businesses improved (n=29) | 2,050 | 3,383 | 165% |
| | Communities improved (n=25) | 217 | 257 | 118% |
| | Households improved (n=1) | 204 | 204 | 100% |
| | Organizations improved (n=3) | 255 | 41 | 16% |
| | Participants improved (n=13) | 3,816 | 14,302 | 375% |
| | Patients improved (n=1) | 5,060 | 4,990 | 99% |
| | Students improved (n=8) | 35,421 | 66,893 | 189% |
| | Workers/trainees improved (n=8) | 1,741 | 1,742 | 100% |
| Funding/ Revenue | Leveraged private investment (n=26) | $419,777,321 | $366,610,879 | 87% |
| | Revenues increased–export sales (n=1) | $20,000,000 | $28,033,111 | 140% |
| | Revenues increased–non-export sales (n=3) | $17,371, 700 | $20,511,945 | 118% |
| Positions/ Products Created or Retained | Businesses created (n=22) | 422 | 942 | 223% |
| | Jobs created (n=28) | 2,903 | 4,325 | 149% |
| | Jobs retained (n=14) | 1,355 | 3,407 | 251% |
| | Programs implemented (n=3) | 11 | 13 | 118% |
| Space Developed/ Constructed | Telecom sites (n=1) | 2 | 1 | 50% |

## Project Performance by Activity Grouping

There were no discernible patterns of achieving set outputs and outcomes as of closeout by project activity grouping (as defined for this evaluation report; see POWER Project Categorization). Further, determining patterns by grouping is made more challenging by small *n* sizes (less than ten) for most activity groups.

TA projects were the most likely to achieve targets in all set outputs and outcomes; however, most TA projects did not set outcomes (only outputs), and outputs typically were number of plans or reports created. Six of 10 Entrepreneurship projects met all set outputs and outcomes by closeout, but three met less than 75 percent. Just over one-quarter of Workforce Training/Education programs met all set outputs and outcomes at close, but just over one-quarter met less than half. In future years, when more projects have closed and reported actual outputs and outcomes, it may be more useful to analyze percentage of targets met by POWER category, activity grouping, or some combination thereof.

***Table 6: Closed POWER Projects: Percentage Meeting Targets by Activity Grouping***

| Activity Grouping | Percentage of Targets Met (Outputs + Outcomes) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 100% | 75-99% | 50-74% | <50% |
| TA/Research/Planning (n=38) | 89.5% | 0.0% | 2.6% | 7.9% |
| Workforce Training/Education (n=11) | 27.3% | 9.1% | 36.4% | 27.3% |
| Entrepreneurship (n=10) | 60.0% | 10.0% | 20.0% | 10.0% |
| Capital Access/Investment (n=7) | 28.6% | 42.9% | 14.3% | 14.3% |
| Sector Cultivation/Diversification (n=6) | 0.0% | 50.0% | 16.7% | 33.3% |
| Food/Agriculture (n=4) | 0.0% | 50.0% | 50.0% | 0.0% |
| Economic Asset Development (n=3) | 0.0% | 33.3% | 33.3% | 33.3% |
| Broadband (n=2) | 0.0% | 50.0% | 0.0% | 50.0% |

## Project Performance by Selected Output or Outcome

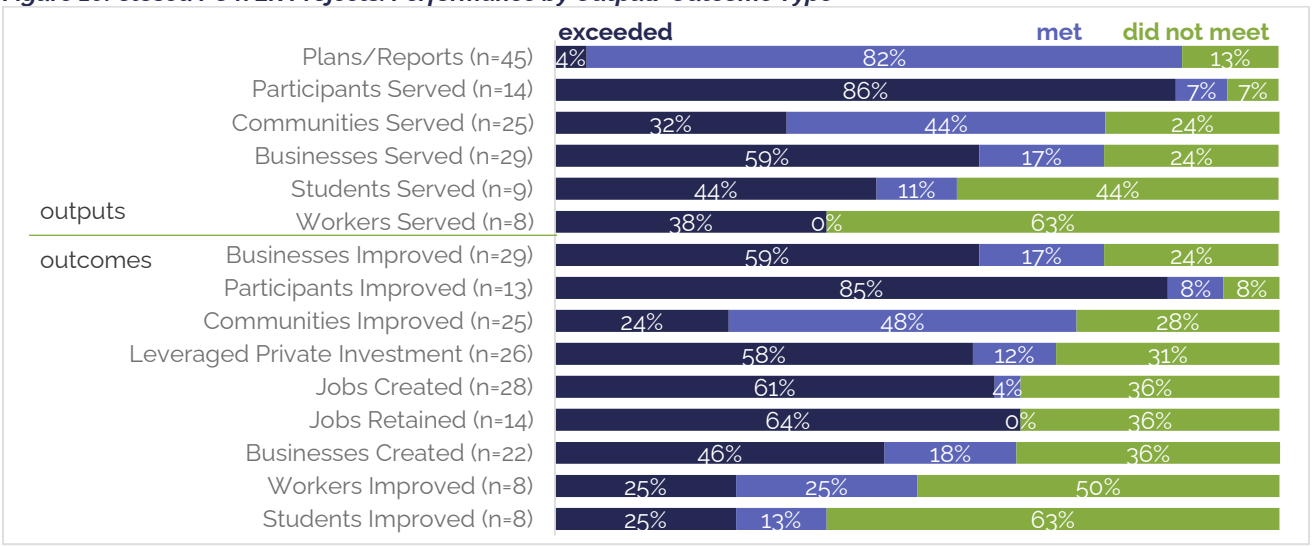
The evaluation team also reviewed the extent to which outputs or outcomes were likely to be met at the time of close (limiting analysis to those selected by at least five projects). This section examines outputs or outcomes and the percentage of projects selecting them that exceeded (achieved more than 100 percent of target); met (achieved 95-100 percent of target); or did not meet (achieved less than 95 percent of target) targets as of closeout. As previously noted, this analysis focuses on achievement at the time of close; projects typically have up to three years after completion to achieve outcomes.

Grantees were most likely to meet or exceed targets in Participants Served (93 percent)/Improved (92 percent), as well as the output of Plans/Reports (87 percent). Over three-quarters of grantees met or exceeded output targets in Businesses Served and Communities Served (76 percent each), and over 70 percent met or exceeded outcome targets in Businesses Improved (76 percent) and Communities Improved (72 percent).

Taken collectively, grants with the outputs and outcomes of Students Served/Improved and Workers Trainees Served/Improved met overall targets for these measures. At an individual grant level, however, these were the output/outcome targets least likely to have been met by grant closeout. This apparent contradiction is explained by the fact that a few grantees far exceeded their targets at closeout; however, taken individually, just 56 percent

of grantees met targets at closeout for Students Served, 37.5 percent met targets for Workers/Trainees Served, 37.5 percent of grantees met outcome targets for Students Improved, and just half of grantees met targets for Workers Improved. It may take longer for grantees to achieve targets for workers/trainees and students because they may still be pursuing credentials or participating in training at closeout. Similarly, over three-quarters of grantees did not meet outcomes in Jobs and Businesses Created, Businesses Served, and Jobs Retained. These components may also take longer to achieve than the life of the grant. As more grants have been closed for three or more years, it will become important to examine the extent to which these outcomes have been achieved.

***Figure 10: Closed POWER Projects: Performance by Output/Outcome Type***



# Recommendations and Conclusions

## Recommendations for ARC

The evaluators have observed ARC's responsiveness to recommendations and findings from the Year 1 evaluation and interim reports and discussions in Year 2. The Year 2 evaluation did not reveal substantially different implementation themes for grantees overall than were reported in Year 1, including the continued importance of ARC's flexibility and partnership; its willingness to connect grantees to assistance and resources (including in response to the COVID-19 pandemic); and the information and networking opportunities through convenings, workshops, and other events.

Recommendations from the Year 2 evaluation include:

**Continue to gather implementation experiences, ensuring opportunities for sharing of lessons learned overall and by activity type.** ARC already incorporates peer learning opportunities into applicant and grantee convenings and has disseminated implementation evaluation findings to stakeholders in multiple settings. There is likely additional opportunity for intentional sharing through panels of grantees implementing similar types of activities; small-group TA calls with activity-specific challenges and lessons learned, using this report's findings by activity group as a guide; and, when in-person convenings resume, continuing opportunities for grantees to self-select into grant activity groups for semi-structured discussions.

**Provide technical assistance to applicants and new grantees for planning regarding timelines, especially with construction, renovation, and projects that involve working with federal, state, and large public entities.** As found in Year 1 and confirmed in Year 2, projects that require studies and approvals, zoning changes, accreditation steps, work with a basic agency, or other administrative steps frequently take longer than grantees anticipate. ARC may benefit from conducting additional analysis, and offering peer-sharing, of the typical duration of each of these steps and an examination of the actual (with amendments) performance period of POWER projects that include these elements.

**As additional projects close, consider calculating POWER's target and actual return on investment, and continue to monitor achievement by project type, to help provide applicants with guidelines on setting aggressive but realistic targets**. Some federal agencies offer figures, for example, on their expected average investment per job created or worker served. Although not the only method by which applicants should establish outputs and outcomes, such a calculation could help ARC further refine expectations and communicate results.

Considerations and recommendations for grantees, based on lessons learned by activity type, are provided in POWER Project Categorization.

In addition to this Year 2 report, two interim reports were created during FY20, one focused on Technical Assistance (TA) projects, and the other focused on projects working with individuals in recovery and making efforts to enhance the recovery ecosystem. Recommendations for ARC from the interim reports include the following.

*Related to TA Projects*

**Continue to fund TA projects.** Nearly every TA grantee interviewed described impacts related to the TA grant, including greater preparation for future projects, valuable vetting of ideas, and development of organizational knowledge and capacity.

**Strengthen communication around implications of a TA grant for implementation.** A few TA grantees funded in earlier years expressed frustration that there was not a clearer linkage between funded TA projects and implementation projects. They noted the need for more clarity in ARC's perception of the relationship between TA and implementation.

**Continue to offer specific feedback to TA grantees to assist in creating successful implementation applications.** Some TA grantees would welcome more specific feedback during the TA project process, as well as after the process and during the implementation application period, on how to transition the TA project into a funded implementation project.

*Related to Recovery Ecosystem Projects*

**Consider continuing to offer POWER funding specifically for grantees focused on SUD and SUD-related issues.** Interviewed grantees talked about the value of receiving POWER funding, in some cases noting they lacked access to any other funding source to connect recovery with economic opportunity and address this significant need in their communities. The partnership and program models, and the lessons learned from these grantees, are rich sources of information for future implementation projects.

**Offer focused support and continued opportunities for SUD-related grantees to collaborate.** About half of the SUD-related grantees mentioned other POWER grantees as implementation partners or important components of their recovery ecosystem. Further, some grantees mentioned the importance of intentional collaboration for building the SUD ecosystem, particularly as the topic grows in focus nationwide. Many grantees noted the value of ARC convenings and leadership, as well as making connections. ARC may consider offering opportunities specifically for the SUD ecosystem to share ideas and best practices.

**Consider tracking metrics of recovery in future SUD-related projects.** Grantees with a direct focus on SUD-connected populations and/or SUD recovery activities typically reported being able to measure various indicators of recovery, including relapse, justice system involvement, and measures of personal wellbeing; indeed, several reported doing so for other publicly funded projects. Although the data sometimes lag, ARC is in a unique position to examine the connections between recovery as it is broadly defined, and interventions designed to increase economic opportunity and wellbeing.

## Conclusions

It is the opinion of these authors that data saturation has been reached for POWER implementation themes, and those themes are likely to carry through to future years. However, the Year 2 analysis reveals distinct lessons learned by project activity type, which may be a way for applicants and new grantees to recognize the applicability of evaluation findings to their varied experiences. It also offers a way for ARC to consider segmenting grantees for additional peer discussions, grantee panels, technical assistance resources and topics, and other inquiry. (In Year 3, for example, the follow-up COVID-19 survey will again explore differences in perceptions and impact by types of activities implemented.)

Through initiatives like POWER, Appalachia has begun to see diversified economic opportunity, new businesses created, and a more highly trained workforce, reflected in the outputs and outcomes already achieved by closed projects. COVID-19 and its economic, organizational, and project-level impacts likely will continue to shape Appalachian communities and grantee and partner organizations in ways difficult to predict. It may increase the need for ARC to continue its pattern of flexibility, adaptability, and assistance for all projects and especially for those working toward outputs and outcomes for students and workers/trainees, which have been challenging for projects to meet even during times of relative economic growth. (ARC has already responded to grantee needs with additional funding, technical assistance, resources and data, and project amendments.)

The uncertainty and economic impacts experienced in 2020 will also likely elevate the importance of the theme of "telling the story" of change that has been made possible through POWER, to maintain the hope and momentum grantees have described as both a success of POWER and an important factor of continued success.

In Fiscal Year 2021, the evaluation will examine such changes that have resulted from POWER-funded projects. The evaluation team will gather evidence from project staff and beneficiaries regarding their definitions of desired change and their stories of the most significant changes observed. The evaluation will also include a refreshed analysis of the outputs and outcomes of closed projects, linking results to implementation findings as possible. Grantees with open projects will again be surveyed about the COVID-19 pandemic to estimate its impacts from a field perspective, understand how grantees are adapting their organizations and project activities, and identify how ARC can continue to leverage POWER and other initiatives to promote the economic transformation of Appalachian communities.

# Appendix

A. Implementation Analysis Methodology
B. Interview Protocols and Survey Questions
C. Grantees Evaluated in Years 1 and 2
D. Projects Not Included in Year 1 or 2 Evaluation
E. ARC Definitions of POWER Outputs and Outcomes

# Appendix A

## Implementation Analysis Methodology

### Evaluation Questions and Data Collection Methodology

This report is the culmination of two consecutive years of implementation evaluation of the POWER Initiative. The evaluation was designed to help ARC and its stakeholders learn from program implementation successes and challenges; identify technical assistance needs; and report on the early results of investments made, to date, with POWER funds. A Year 1 (FY19) Report was issued in October 2019. The Year 2 (FY20) evaluation built on the Year 1 evaluation and included three components and areas of focus:

1. Conduct implementation evaluation of high-priority topics, including projects focused on building recovery ecosystems to combat impacts of substance use disorder (SUD); community capacity in "high-concentration" counties (those in which ten or more POWER projects have been implemented); and multistate projects.[32]
2. Conduct implementation evaluation of new projects and projects not previously evaluated.
3. Evaluate the early results of closed POWER projects.

Overarching evaluation questions for Year 2 included:

- To what extent are POWER grantees progressing toward their stated performance outputs and outcomes?
- To what extent are there common characteristics among grantees across POWER project categories? If there are common characteristics, what are they?
- What factors appear to contribute to a) strong performance, b) improved performance, and c) lagging performance? To what extent does this differ for projects implementing across multiple states?
- What technical assistance could ARC provide to improve performance?
- Given POWER grant performance and grantees' experiences, are there better ways for ARC to measure, monitor, and evaluate grantee success in the future?
- What short-term results have closed POWER projects achieved (outputs and outcomes), and how might results differ across project types or selected outputs and outcomes?

[32] Results of the recovery ecosystem analysis were included in a separate report issued to ARC in May 2020. Results of the Central Appalachia/capacity analysis were included in an interim survey report issued to ARC in January 2020, as well as a partnership mapping tool released and presented to ARC in September 2020. The multistate project interviews confirmed themes found in Year 1, but themes identified were not substantially different from other large, multi-county, or multi-partner projects. As such, no interim report was released, but results are incorporated into this report as relevant for themes within activity groupings.

Year 2 data collection and analysis efforts included document review and in-person or telephone interviews of 75 grantees not evaluated in Year 1, including 37 Technical Assistance (TA) projects (roughly 73 percent had completed their projects at the time of the interview), as well as 38 projects that began implementation between March 2018 and February 2019 (17 specifically focused on the recovery ecosystem/SUD and 21 other new implementation projects). Data collection sources and methods included:

1. **Document review** of project narratives, approval memos, stated outputs and outcomes, and quarterly reports submitted to ARC through its online portal, ARCnet.

2. **Interviews** used a semi-structured process with interview protocols developed in collaboration with ARC staff.

3. An **online survey** of projects being implemented in high-concentration counties included questions about the extent to which projects had encountered capacity-related or other challenges associated with a high concentration of POWER projects.[33]

4. **Output and outcome** data extracted from ARCnet for projects identified by ARC staff as closed as of July 2020.

**Document review**

The evaluation team gathered information, primarily available through ARCnet, to get a general sense of the purpose of the grant; definitions of grant success through stated outputs and outcomes, as well as through project narratives; and descriptions of implementation efforts, which typically included successes and challenges to date. Where available, evaluators also reviewed information provided about implementation partners. Data analyzed through document review was used to prepare for interviews, as well as to help categorize projects into activity groupings for this report (described in the POWER Project Categorization section of this appendix).

**Semi-structured interviews**

During telephone calls or while on-site, evaluators used predesigned interview protocols to conduct semi-structured interviews. The evaluation team created interview questions designed to help answer overarching evaluation questions. The first draft of interview questions was shared with key ARC POWER staff. Based on conversations with ARC staff, interview questions were then revised for clarity, resulting in the final interview protocols. Interview protocols were shared with grantees prior to telephone or on-site discussions. The full set of semi-structured interview questions is provided in Appendix B.

**Online surveys**

Grantees were asked to respond to two voluntary online surveys, one focused on perceptions of the impact of high concentrations of POWER projects on implementation and capacity, and the other focused on perceptions of early impacts of COVID-19. The evaluation team developed an initial set of questions for each survey, based on discussions with key ARC staff. The ARC staff then reviewed the questions, and the evaluation team

[33] Results of the survey were released in a separate report in January 2020.

edited the questions based on ARC feedback. Questions for each survey are provided in Appendix B.

## Project Selection

For the Year 2 evaluation, the C/D evaluation team worked with ARC staff to identify grantees to include in various interview sets (technical assistance, recovery ecosystem, multistate, and new implementation projects).

First, for **Technical Assistance** (TA) projects, C/D identified all POWER projects with the "TA" suffix in their project numbers (e.g., PW-18617-TA) or any other projects identified as TA by ARC staff and then eliminated four projects that had already been interviewed during Year 1, resulting in 41 projects. After discussion with ARC staff, one project was eliminated from consideration because it had been cancelled. For three other projects, due to staff turnover at grantee organizations (the three projects had been closed for several years and staff associated with the projects had left the organizations), it was not possible to schedule interviews. This resulted in 37 TA projects selected for interviews. All TA project interviews were conducted by telephone in January and February of 2020.

For projects associated with the **recovery ecosystem**, C/D worked with ARC staff, including staff members specializing in recovery ecosystem projects, to identify projects that primarily aimed to serve individuals in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD), whether through constructing or renovating facilities or providing coaching and job assistance; projects conducting research around SUD and SUD intervention and prevention; and projects aiming to build the recovery ecosystem. This resulted in 20 projects identified for recovery ecosystem-related interviews (18 new projects and two that had been interviewed in Year 1). However, one project was unavailable for interview despite multiple scheduling efforts, resulting in 19 projects interviewed for the recovery ecosystem portion.

**Multistate projects** were selected by reviewing the list of projects interviewed in Year 1 and selecting projects representing a variety of POWER project categories, as well as multiple states across the ARC region. In addition, the evaluation team reviewed notes from Year 1 to identify projects with successes, challenges, or lessons learned that the team felt might be particularly useful, as well as projects working with multiple partners across states. To be selected, a project must have included at least three states. As a result of the process, five multistate grantees were selected for interviews. After conducting the telephone interviews, the evaluation team asked grantees for referrals to partners. Four partners associated with two multistate projects also participated in telephone interviews.

To classify **"high-concentration"** projects, ARC staff identified counties in which at least 10 POWER projects were being (or had been) implemented. Then, using data in ARCnet, the evaluation team identified project numbers associated with these counties, resulting in 70 unique grantees implementing 85 POWER projects identified. These grantees were sent the link to the online survey. Based on survey results, five grantees were selected for additional interviews to delve into survey responses. These grantees were selected because they were among the few respondents indicating that high concentrations of projects created challenges either in some counties, in some project-related areas, or overall.

Finally**, new implementation** projects were projects that began implementation in the second half of 2018 (July or later) through February 2019. February was identified as the cutoff date so that grantees would have been implementing their projects for at least a year at the time of evaluation. This process identified 22 projects; however, one grantee was unable to participate in an interview, resulting in 21 projects evaluated.

Once projects had been identified for inclusion in the evaluation, projects were then identified for site visits; in-person visits in lieu of calls; or telephone calls. The evaluation team followed the processes detailed in the next section to determine whether grantees were selected for full site visits; in-person interviews, or telephone interviews.

**Site Visits**

For Year 2, the evaluation team intended to focus in-person visits on projects focused on the recovery ecosystem/SUD, with the aim of interviewing both grantees and partners, as possible, to gain a better understanding of the nuances associated with this topic. The C/D evaluation team looked to identify recovery ecosystem-focused projects that:

- Represented implementation in various states across the ARC region (to obtain geographic diversity)
- Would be at least one year or nearly one year into project implementation at the time of the evaluation
- Included various areas of focus within the recovery ecosystem, such as construction or facilities renovation; career coaching; and recovery-based support (including recovery coaching, mentoring, wraparound services, etc.)
- Represented multiple POWER project categories (e.g., Education and Workforce Development, Asset-Based Development, Health, etc.)

Using the listed criteria, 11 grantees were selected by the C/D evaluation team for visits in January, March, and April. However, only six projects received full site visits (all conducted in January 2020), due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Full site visits included on-site interviews with grantee staff (one or more individuals who were involved with implementing the grant), as well as interviews with grant partners, as available. If feasible and applicable, the evaluation team also toured grant implementation sites.

**Phone Calls**

Grantees selected for telephone interviews participated in a 45- to 60-minute interview with the evaluation team, with one or more grantee staff (and in some cases, grantees included partners as well) responding to interview questions. Grantees interviewed by telephone (or in the case of one SUD/recovery ecosystem-focused project, videoconference), included:

- 37 TA grantees in January and February 2020
- 13 SUD/recovery ecosystem-focused grantees in March to May of 2020
- 5 multistate grantees in April 2020 (as well as separate interviews with 4 partners)
- 5 "high-concentration" grantees in May 2020
- 21 new implementation grantees in May and June of 2020

## Data Analysis and Reporting Methods

This section describes data analysis and reporting methods for interim reports completed during FY20, as well as this final report. Across all report types, qualitative data components collected through document review and interviews were analyzed using a general inductive approach, which is particularly useful in drawing clear links between research questions and objectives and data collection results. Quantitative data (including closed-ended survey responses to scaled questions and outputs and outcomes data) were analyzed descriptively, using crosstabs and disaggregation as necessary and useful.

### Interim Reports

#### High-Concentration Counties

The C/D evaluation team released an interim report in January 2020 related to implementation in high-concentration counties (*Effects of High Concentrations of POWER Projects on Implementation)*. This report utilized data gathered through an online survey sent to 70 organizations implementing 85 POWER projects in high-concentration counties (those where at least 10 POWER projects were being implemented), which included primarily closed-ended questions about perceptions of the extent to which high concentrations of projects were associated with benefits or challenges for a region overall; for specific aspects of project implementation; and within specific counties. Individual-record-level results of the survey were downloaded and, using descriptive analysis, frequencies of responses (counts and percentages) were identified. Crosstabulations were created by POWER project category and by state to identify any differences in these categories.

A main finding of the survey was that a high concentration of POWER projects was not perceived to have adverse effects for most grantees; on the contrary, most respondents saw the presence of a high concentration of POWER projects to be beneficial. After discussion with ARC staff, it was determined that the evaluation team would move forward with telephone interviews of five survey respondents that indicated some level of challenge associated with high concentrations of projects (as well as providing their organization's name and agreeing to be contacted about survey results).

During telephone interviews with the five grantees, the evaluation team took verbatim notes. After the interviews were completed, the team discussed the results of interviews, finding that in most cases, grantees felt that challenges associated with high project concentrations either had been addressed (through additional collaborations) or that challenges were, in their perceptions, less related to high concentrations of POWER projects and more related to economic depression or other issues specific to the county or region. As such, after discussion with ARC staff, the evaluation team elected not to pursue additional interviews, nor to release an interim report. Instead, themes from those interviews are interwoven into successes, challenges, and lessons learned included in this final report.

#### Technical Assistance (TA) and SUD/Recovery Ecosystem-Focused Projects

Two additional interim reports focused on special topics were released in 2020: *Successes, Challenges, and Early Impacts of POWER Initiative Technical Assistance Projects* in March and *POWER Projects with Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Components: Early Implementation*

*Findings* in May. For these reports, after each set of interviews was completed (in January and February for TA projects and March, April, and May for SUD projects), the evaluation team created a comprehensive file with general data components gathered through interviews and document review, including project start and end date; project description (both from the official project approval and the grantees' own words); dollars awarded; and counties and states of implementation. In addition, raw, verbatim notes from interviews were reviewed to identify themes by placing keywords, phrases, and direct quotes into an analysis matrix until themes emerged, as well as to allow for crosstabulation of results by project and project type. Once all interview notes had been reviewed and keywords and quotes placed into the analysis matrix, preliminary themes were again reviewed and revised as necessary, until the final set of themes was determined. Once the matrix, with key themes and supporting keywords, phrases, or quotes was finalized, the evaluation team conducted a final review of raw notes to ensure that all data was appropriately captured.

The evaluation team presented the results of both interim reports to ARC POWER staff and used additional feedback from those presentations to inform this final report.

**Multistate Projects**

As with other evaluation components, the evaluation team took verbatim notes for interviews conducted with multistate projects and partners. Once the interviews were complete, the evaluation team collaboratively reviewed and discussed the notes, verbally identifying key themes. While the evaluation team found that key themes from the Year 1 evaluation were validated through the interviews, the themes did not differ from findings related to other large, multi-county, or multi-partner projects. After discussion with ARC, it was determined that an interim report was not necessary. Instead, findings from the five grantee interviews (and four partner interviews) are interwoven into successes, challenges, and lessons learned included in this final report.

### Special Report

At the request of ARC staff, the evaluation team developed a survey designed to assess the initial impacts of COVID-19 on POWER projects. The survey was developed using an online tool, and a link was then provided to POWER project coordinators, who emailed the link to grantees and invited them to respond to the voluntary survey. The survey link was distributed to 158 grantees.

Record-level results of the survey were downloaded and, using descriptive analysis, frequencies of closed-ended responses (counts and percentages) were identified. Crosstabulations were created by POWER project category; organization type and size; and state of project implementation. Open-ended question responses were analyzed using a general inductive approach, identifying keywords and placing them into an analysis matrix to generate themes. Results of the survey were released in April 2020 in an interim report (*Initial Impacts of COVID-19 on POWER Projects, Grantees, and Communities)*.

### Final Report

For this final report, the evaluation team combined the analysis matrix created from Year 1 interviews with analysis matrices created for the TA project and SUD/recovery ecosystem

project interim reports. In addition, the evaluation team conducted a review (using the same methodology described in the Interim Reports section) to create an analysis matrix for new implementation grantees interviewed in Year 2 (as no interim report was issued for them). Once all 163 unique projects had been combined into a comprehensive matrix, the evaluation team re-reviewed general information about grantees, as well as keywords, phrases, and quotes, to categorize them into activity groupings, described in the next section.

**POWER Project Categorization**

While POWER projects belong to one of eight broad categories[34] (with additional types and subtypes), through conducting 163[35] POWER evaluation interviews over the course of two years, as well as interactions with ARC staff and POWER grantees at POWER convenings, the evaluation team detected commonalities both across categories in terms of area of project focus, as well as nuances within categories based on certain activities. For example, projects focused on food and agriculture tended to have similar factors of success, challenges, and lessons learned, regardless of their broader category assignment. Projects focused specifically on capital access and investment (often within the larger category of Business Development) experienced common successes and challenges.

After recognizing these similarities and nuanced findings, the evaluation team elected to use POWER project descriptions, progress reports, and results of semi-structured interviews to categorize evaluated POWER grantees into activity groupings, as opposed to reporting themes based on the broader POWER categories. It is important to note that the purpose of this exercise was not to create a new typology of POWER projects; in fact, POWER projects by design often span economic transformation strategies. Instead, the intent was to distill reported successes, challenges, and lessons learned in the most useful and actionable way possible for ARC and current and future grantees and project implementers.

POWER projects were uniquely classified into one of nine activity groupings, based on the evaluation team's identification of the main concentration area for the project, recognizing that many projects could potentially span multiple areas (for example, projects placed in the Food and Agriculture category may include support for entrepreneurial activities, etc.). After projects were classified into activity groups, the evaluation team conducted a second review of assignments, identifying any areas of disagreement, and reassigned projects as applicable.

Once projects had been assigned to activity groupings, the evaluation re-reviewed previously identified themes (and associated keywords, phrases, and quotes), revising themes as necessary to create final themes for this report. During the thematic analysis for

[34] Asset-Based Development; Business Development; Civic Entrepreneurship; Community Development; Education & Workforce Development; Health; Research & Evaluation; and State and LDD Administration.

[35] As of the end of Year Two, a total of 176 project numbers have been evaluated, including projects with duplicated numbers. With deduplication, 163 unique interviews have been conducted.

each focus area, project assignments within focus areas again were reviewed and adjusted as necessary. If needed, the evaluation also re-reviewed documents (including approval documents and progress reports), as well as raw notes from interviews, to ensure that all data components were appropriately captured. Finally, once the analysis matrices for all activity groupings were complete and themes identified, the evaluation team reviewed the themes once more to ensure clarity and agreement.

**Output and Outcome Analysis**

Year 2 analysis also included a review of projected versus actual outputs and outcomes for 81[36] closed POWER projects. The C/D team coordinated with ARC staff to identify projects closed or considered closed as of July 2020. ARC staff provided the evaluation team with an export from ARCnet that included general project information, as well as proposed and actual outputs and outcomes for each project. The evaluation team excluded any outputs or outcomes for which actual results were reported, but no proposed results were provided (so as not to skew reviews of percentage of targets met vs. proposed).

To identify overall (collective) project performance, the evaluation team totaled numbers reported for each proposed output and outcome and each actual output and outcome. Projects with separate outputs and outcomes but having the same project number were considered as a single project.

The evaluation team used descriptive analysis techniques to identify the percentage of projects meeting or exceeding targets set for proposed outputs and outcomes. "Exceeding target" was defined as achieving more than 100% of the anticipated target (e.g., if the project anticipated serving 100 students but reported serving 120, the result of 120% was considered "exceeding target"). "Meeting target" was defined as achieving at least 95% but not more than 100% of target. "Not meeting target" was defined as achieving less than 95% of target. To identify the percentage of projects meeting or exceeding total outputs and outcomes set, the evaluation team totaled the number of outputs and outcomes set (to create a denominator) and identified the number of outputs and outcomes meeting or exceeding target (to create a numerator). For example, if a project identified three outputs and three outcomes, the project's denominator was 6 (3+3). If the project met or exceeded two outputs and met or exceeded one outcome, the project's numerator was 3 (2+1). The project then would be placed in the "met 50%–74% of set outputs and outcomes" category (3/6 = 50%).

Finally, for analysis of performance within individual outputs and outcomes, the evaluation team totaled the number of projects selecting that output or outcome and then calculated the number of projects that exceeded (above 100% of target); met (95%–100% of target) or did not meet (below 95% of target) each output or outcome. For example, if eight projects selected Students Served and four projects met targets, the result would be 50% (4/8) of projects meeting target.

[36] 10 grants with the same project number (PW-18458, 18458-IM-A, 18458-IM-B, 18458-IM-C, 18458-IM-D, 18458-IM-E, 18458-IM-G, 18458-IM-H and PW-18794, PW-18794-IM-B) were combined into two.

## Limitations

As with any implementation evaluation using primarily qualitative data collection and analysis methods, this evaluation has several limitations that should be considered when reading and applying this Year 2 final report. Limitations are as follows:

### Implementation and early results only

Because the evaluation was designed to focus on implementation and utilized primarily qualitative data collection and analysis methods, as well as descriptive quantitative data analysis, by design it does not rigorously analyze project outcomes or impact. As such, while it may be interpreted that grantees perceive or have seen evidence of early impacts, causation should not be interpreted from this evaluation.

### Varying timelines

The POWER projects reviewed for this evaluation were (by design) at varying stages of implementation (beginning, middle, nearing closure, or closed) at the time they were interviewed. As such, grantee perspectives provided for this evaluation, particularly for those interviewed at the beginning or middle stages of implementation, may be different from what their perspectives would have been at closure. In addition, because grantees were at various stages of implementation, conclusions drawn and themes about grantee implementation may not be valid or generalizable for all grantees.

### Partial and biased findings

Qualitative and perceptual research and analysis methods are, by nature, partial and biased. To attempt to address this limitation, the evaluation triangulated data collected through multiple sources, including quarterly reports and semi-structured interviews, as well as through post-interview discussions within the evaluation team and with ARC staff. Where partners were interviewed along with grantees themselves, the evaluation team triangulated information collected from these partners against information collected from the grantees.

### Selection bias

Selection bias is common in any form of design that does not involve random sampling or random assignment. The evaluation team included 87 POWER grantees and four multistate partners in this evaluation. While the evaluation team employed a pre-defined method to identify interviewed grantees (described in the Project Selection section of this Appendix) in an attempt to ensure that grantees were the right fit to answer implementation study questions, selection bias may still be present. Further, grantees were required to participate in the evaluation interviews as a condition of receiving POWER funds. While this requirement reduces the possibility of non-response, it also introduces the potential for participants to feel pressured to speak favorably about project implementation and the funder (ARC). To try to mitigate this, the evaluation team informed interview participants that their feedback would be confidential in the case of discussing challenges (while challenges may be associated with grant projects, comments would not be associated with individual interview participants) or anonymized in the case of feedback about ARC. Neutral, negative,

and sometimes critical feedback from a wide variety of grantees and partners supports the notion that grantees felt comfortable to share their experiences, both positive and negative.

### Convenience sampling (for surveys)

The two online surveys conducted (for COVID-19 impact perceptions and high-concentration county perceptions) used convenience sampling, where a link was sent out to grantee organizations and the organizations could elect to participate. As such, survey results included in this report represent only the perspectives of those responding to the survey (response rates for both surveys are included in this report) and may not be generalizable to all POWER grantees.

### Researcher interview bias

Although a semi-structured interview protocol was used for each telephone and on-site interview, it is possible that an individual researcher's methods for asking initial or follow-up questions may have inadvertently introduced bias into responses. To attempt to mitigate this issue, the evaluation team reviewed the interview protocol questions collaboratively prior to conducting any interviews. The same protocol was used for all interviews. Four evaluation team members covered all interviews and shared notes in a common system. The evaluation lead, Dr. Molly Chamberlin, completed monthly and final quality reviews of all notes and conclusions. Where necessary, evaluation team members met to discuss any issues associated with carrying out the interview protocol and adjust interviewing techniques as needed. In addition, evaluation team members reviewed findings and interpretations collaboratively, as discussed in the next section on researcher extrapolation bias.

### Researcher extrapolation bias

Analysis conducted within an interpretative analytical framework is threatened by the fact that researcher interpretation is personal and may go beyond what is present in and supported by actual data. As described in the Data Analysis and Reporting Methods section of this Appendix, indeed the evaluation team employed its own interpretations of data collected through multiple methods, including using POWER-specific findings coupled with findings and experiences of evaluations previously conducted by the team. To mitigate researcher extrapolation limitations, the evaluation team individually reviewed and analyzed raw data collected through interviews; identified themes were collaboratively discussed and refined as a team; and evaluators introduced and discussed any contradictory evidence for themes as it arose. However, recommendations and lessons learned that were identified through this evaluation may not be suitable for all POWER grantees.

# Appendix B

## Interview Protocols

### Technical Assistance Projects

1. Please tell us about your project, specifically:
    - What did it aim to accomplish?
    - What is/was the geographic scope of the TA or plan?
    - What organizations or entities are/were involved and why (e.g., partner organizations, employers, community organizations, etc.)?
    - Were any organizations/entities less involved than you anticipated?
    - Did you bring any additional organizations or entities into the process? If so, why?
    - How do you see the project complementing other development initiatives?
2. Do you feel the TA/planning project was successful? Why or why not?
3. What aspects of the TA/planning process worked well?
4. What internal factors contributed to this?
    - (Consider: characteristics of your organization; internal leadership or staffing; internal systems or processes; implementation partners, etc.)
5. What external factors contributed to this?
    - (Consider: changes in the economy, characteristics of the community, changes in state or regional leadership, changes in the regulatory environment, etc.)
6. What did not go well in the TA/planning process?
7. What internal factors contributed most to this?
    - (Consider: characteristics of your organization; internal leadership or staffing; internal systems or processes; implementation partners, etc.)
8. What external factors contributed most to this?
    - (Consider: changes in the economy, characteristics of the community, changes in state or regional leadership, changes in the regulatory environment, etc.)
9. How might you have designed the process differently, knowing what you know now?
10. What have been the impacts that you've seen from your project?
11. What, if any, assistance from ARC have you found valuable? Why?
12. What, if anything, would you suggest ARC change about how they support grantees?
13. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the project?

### SUD/Recovery Ecosystem Projects

1. Please tell us about your project, specifically:
    - What is it about and who does it serve?
    - In what locations is implementation occurring?
2. Please tell us how you see your project fitting into the recovery "ecosystem," including:
    - What other organizations or entities are involved in project implementation (e.g., partner organizations, employers, community organizations, etc.)?
    - Please describe their roles and involvement.

- How do you see the project complementing other economic or community development initiatives?
- What other organizations or entities would you like to see involved that have not been (due to capacity; they do not exist in your area; they have not traditionally been involved in these types of projects, etc.)

3. Broadly, how do you define success for your project (beyond the selected outputs and outcomes)?
    - To what extent do you feel your selected output/outcomes are appropriate for projects focused on substance use disorder?
4. Are your outputs and outcomes where you expect them to be at this stage of implementation? Why or why not?
5. What are you most proud of having accomplished at this point in your project?
6. What internal factors have contributed most to your success?
    - (Consider: characteristics of your organization; internal leadership or staffing; internal systems or processes; implementation partners, etc.)
7. What external factors have contributed most to your success?
    - (Consider: changes in the economy, characteristics of participants, characteristics of the community, changes in state or regional leadership, changes in the regulatory environment, etc.)
8. What have been the biggest challenges that you've faced?
9. What internal factors have contributed most to these challenges?
    - (Consider: characteristics of your organization; internal leadership or staffing; internal systems or processes; implementation partners, etc.)
10. What external factors have contributed most to these challenges?
    - (Consider: changes in the economy, characteristics of participants, characteristics of the community, changes in state or regional leadership, changes in the regulatory environment, etc.)
11. How have you communicated about your project to the broader community or region? (e.g., public events, press or media attention, etc.)
12. How, if at all, have you interacted with other POWER grantees?
13. What have been the impacts that you've seen to date?
14. What unanticipated successes or benefits have occurred as a result of the project?
15. What aspects of this project do you feel will last beyond the grant?
16. What do you anticipate might be the biggest risk to the project having a lasting impact in the region?
17. What, if any, assistance from ARC have you found valuable? Why?
18. What, if anything, would you suggest ARC change about how they support grantees?
19. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your POWER project?

## High-Concentration County Projects

Note that interviews for high-concentration projects were tailored slightly for each interview, based on that grantee's initial survey response.

1. *For projects reporting challenges in one or more counties:* What about the high concentration had a negative effect in that county?

2. *For projects reporting challenges in an implementation area:* What about the high concentration made [*implementation area*] more difficult?
3. *For projects reporting overall challenges:* What about the high concentration created challenges in the region?
4. If you were to begin implementation today, do you feel any of these things would still be a challenge?
5. What, if anything, might ARC do to help ensure POWER is beneficial, or at least neutral, on a community?
6. What lessons or experiences could you pass on to other grantees to facilitate better collaboration?
7. Anything else to share on this topic?

## Multistate Projects

1. Can you please tell us about your partners—who they are, where they were located, and their roles in your project:
    - Sub-awardees
    - Other key partners integral to implementation
    - Consultants
2. How did you find and select your partners?
3. At what stage of project development did you engage each partner?
4. How long had you worked with each partner prior to your project?
5. To what extent, and in what way, was each partnership formalized? (e.g., MOU, contract)
6. What, if anything, did you learn from this process about finding, selecting, and establishing partnerships in a project like this?
7. How, if at all, did partners interact with each other? (looking for methods, frequency of collaboration)
8. To what extent did the interaction of partners contribute to achievement of outputs and outcomes?
9. Were any partners added or removed?
    - What led to the changes?
10. Did roles and responsibilities change in any other way throughout the project?
    - What led to the change?
11. What, if anything, did you learn about managing multiple partners on a project like this?
12. What worked well about your partnership(s)?
    - What do you feel contributed to the elements that worked well?
13. What was challenging about your partnerships?
    - What do you feel contributed to the elements that were challenging?
14. What special kind of support, if any, do you feel ARC should offer grantees operating large, multistate projects?
15. What kind of support, if any, did you find beneficial?
16. Is there anything else you would like to see ARC do differently related to these kinds of large, multistate projects?

17. Is there anything else you would like to share with us, especially related to partnerships and collaboration in large, multistate grants, that we haven't already covered?
18. Could you please identify the best contacts at each of your partner organizations? We are going to select a few to speak with.
    - Would you be willing to either tee up an introductory email, and/or would it be acceptable for us to copy you on the correspondence, so they know it is legitimate communication? We have a brief summary of the purpose of the interview that we can send for you to include in communication.

## Multistate Partners

1. Tell us a little bit about you, your organization, and how you/your organization became involved in the project.
2. How did you work with other partners both within your state and across state lines?
3. To what extent do you feel the organizational structure of the project worked well?
4. Did anything about your working relationship change over time? If so, why?
5. What about the partnership worked well?
6. Where might there have been opportunity for changes or improvement?
7. Are there any lessons you learned from the experience that you would pass on to other partners starting on large-scale projects?
8. Anything else you would want us or ARC to know?

## New Implementation Projects

1. Please tell us about your project, specifically: purpose, target individuals, geography of implementation, and partners involved.
2. Are your outputs and outcomes where you expect them to be at this stage of implementation?
3. Beyond those outputs and outcomes, how do you define success for your project?
4. What are you most proud of having accomplished at this point in your project?
    - (Consider: characteristics of your organization; internal leadership or staffing; internal systems or processes; implementation partners, etc.)
5. What external factors have contributed most to your success?
    - (Consider: changes in the economy, characteristics of participants, characteristics of the community, changes in state or regional leadership, changes in the regulatory environment, etc.)
6. What have been the biggest challenges that you've faced?
7. What internal factors have contributed most to these challenges?
    - (Consider: characteristics of your organization; internal leadership or staffing; internal systems or processes; implementation partners, etc.)
8. What external factors have contributed most to these challenges?
    - (Consider: changes in the economy, characteristics of participants, characteristics of the community, changes in state or regional leadership, changes in the regulatory environment, etc.)
9. How have you communicated about your project to the broader community or region? (e.g., public events, press or media attention, etc.)
10. How, if at all, have you interacted with other POWER grantees?

11. How might you have designed your program differently, knowing what you know now?
12. What have been the impacts that you've seen to date?
13. What unanticipated successes or benefits have occurred as a result of the project?
14. What aspects of this project do you feel will last beyond the grant?
15. What do you anticipate might be the biggest risk to the project having a lasting impact in the region?
16. What, if any, assistance from ARC have you found valuable? Why?
17. What, if anything, would you suggest ARC change about how they support grantees?
18. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your POWER project?

## Survey Questions

### High-Concentration Counties

1. **Please indicate which of the following states are or were served by your POWER project(s), including any that were in the original plan but didn't end up being included once the project was implemented. Choose all that apply.**
    - Kentucky
    - Ohio
    - Pennsylvania
    - Tennessee
    - Virginia
    - West Virginia
2. **Did the presence of a high concentration of POWER projects have a positive effect on the ability to implement your POWER project(s) in any of the following Kentucky/Ohio/Pennsylvania/Tennessee/Virginia/West Virginia counties?** (Choose all that apply)
    - *[Multiple choice high-concentration Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia counties]*
3. **Did the presence of a high concentration of POWER projects have a negative effect on the ability to implement your POWER project(s) in any of the following Kentucky/Ohio/Pennsylvania/Tennessee/Virginia/West Virginia counties?** (Choose all that apply)
    - *[Multiple choice high-concentration Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia counties]*
4. **In your experience, what effect did the presence of multiple POWER projects have on the following aspects of project implementation in Kentucky/Ohio/Pennsylvania/Tennessee/Virginia/West Virginia? (made it easier, had no effect, made it more difficult, not applicable for our project)**
    - Recruitment of people/businesses/communities to participate in our project
    - Recruitment of project staff
    - Engagement of partners
    - Sustaining partner commitment
    - Obtaining necessary buy-in from community leaders
    - Obtaining necessary buy-in from state-level leaders

5. **Overall, has it been your experience that a high concentration of POWER projects operating simultaneously in a region is:**
    - Significantly beneficial for a region
    - Moderately beneficial for a region
    - Neutral; neither a benefit nor a challenge
    - Moderately challenging for a region
    - Significantly challenging for a region
6. **Please add any comments or explanation to your answer selections, or provide other thoughts you would like to share on this topic.**
7. **All responses will be kept strictly confidential and will be seen only by the Chamberlin/Dunn evaluation team. Anything shared with ARC will be summarized to protect anonymity. For purposes of analysis and additional study, please provide your POWER project number(s) and/or name(s) and your organization.**

## Perceptions of Early Impacts of COVID-19

1. **Name of your organization _____**
2. **In which state(s) does your organization have a physical location?**
    - *[Multiple choice ARC states]*
    - Other state _____
3. **In which state(s) is your organization currently implementing one or more POWER projects?**
    - *[Multiple choice ARC states]*
4. **Which of the following best describe the types of activities your organization is implementing under POWER? (choose all that apply)**
    - Broadband implementation
    - Business development/services
    - Community capacity development (e.g. leadership)
    - Construction
    - Economic asset development (e.g., tourism, downtown, etc.)
    - Health services/assets
    - Loan fund/equity fund
    - Training/education
    - Other infrastructure development (e.g., water, electric, gas)
    - Other _____
5. **Has your organization added or changed services in order to meet community needs in response to COVID-19?**
    - No
    - Yes (please explain) _____
6. **To what extent do you feel the following are concerns for your POWER project, as a result of COVID-19? (Major concern, minor concern, not a concern)**
    - Ability to stay within projected timelines
    - Ability to meet outputs and outcomes
    - Ability to recruit participants (businesses, trainees, etc.)
    - The need to shift our concept to respond to new needs
    - Staff capacity to carry out project
    - Logistics of carrying out project as planned (e.g., inability to shift in-person activities to remote)

- Ability of partners to continue to carry out agreed-upon responsibilities
- Other major concerns for your POWER project, as a result of COVID-19, if any:_____

7. **To what extent do you feel the following are concerns for your organization, more broadly, as a result of COVID-19? (Major concern, minor concern, not a concern)**
    - Ability to maintain operations
    - Ability to deliver needed community services
    - Unplanned reduction of staff
    - Short-term financial health of our organization
    - Longer-term financial health of our organization
    - Other major concerns for your organization, as a result of COVID-19, if any:_____
8. **To what extent do you feel the following are concerns for Appalachia, as a result of COVID-19? (Major concern, minor concern, not a concern)**
    - Short-term economic impacts (3-6 months)
    - Longer-term economic impacts (6-12 months)
    - Viability of local businesses
    - Ability of residents to meet basic needs
    - Community health
    - Capacity of local organizations to respond to community needs
    - Capacity of state-level organizations to respond to community needs
    - Capacity of federal organizations to respond to community needs
    - Other major concerns for Appalachian communities, as a result of COVID-19, if any:_____
9. **How would you describe the impact of COVID-19 that you've seen for the following groups: (Major impact, minor impact, no impact)**
    - Small businesses
    - Medium to large businesses
    - Displaced workers
    - Community organizations
    - Students/trainees
    - General public
    - Other group experiencing major impact, if any _____
10. **How would you rate your organization's capacity to conduct the work specifically related to your POWER grant remotely?**
    - Can conduct all work remotely
    - Can conduct some work remotely
    - Can conduct little work remotely
    - Cannot conduct any work remotely
11. **If your organization can conduct little to no work remotely, what is the primary barrier to remote work?**
    - N/A—we can conduct some or all work remotely
    - Nature of the work
    - Limited access to broadband
    - Other (please specify)

12. **Of the following ways ARC might support grantees during this time, which would have the greatest positive impact on your organization? (choose up to 3)**
    - Accelerating reimbursement of grant funds
    - Advancing grant funds
    - Extending project implementation timelines
    - Providing data, research, or information related to the impact of COVID-19
    - Connecting to federal, state, and local organizations that are responding to the pandemic
    - We do not need any of these at this time
    - Other _____
13. **How else can ARC best support communities and/or grantees at this time?**
14. **What else should ARC know about what is happening at your organization or in your community as a result of COVID-19?**
15. **Which of the following best describes your organization type?**
    - State government
    - Local government (e.g., county, city/town, special district, etc.)
    - Higher education
    - Nonprofit organization
    - For-profit organization
    - Other _____
16. **How many full-time equivalent employees are employed at your organization?**
    - 1–10
    - 11–25
    - 26–50
    - 51–100
    - 100+

# Appendix C

## Grantees Evaluated in Years 1 and 2

The appendix lists the thematic category in which each grantee was placed for the Year 2 report, as well as the year of implementation evaluation and (for Year 2 evaluations) the component or specific area of focus (see Appendix A for more detail on grantee selection processes and components).

(Codes for POWER Project Category: ABD = Asset-Based Development; BD = Business Development; CD = Community Development; CE = Civic Entrepreneurship; EWD = Education & Workforce Development; H= Health; R&E = Research & Evaluation; SLA = State & LDD Administration)

### Technical Assistance, Research, and Planning

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y2 TA | PW-18499-I-TA | The EdVenture Group | Grant-Writing Assistance for CODE: Creating Opportunities, Diversifying Economy Project Proposal | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 TA | PW-18507-I-TA | National Association of Counties Research Foundation | Stronger Economies in Coal-Reliant Places | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 TA | PW-18511-I-TA | Youngstown State University | Advanced Manufacturing Innovation & Commercialization Center | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 TA | PW-18617-I-TA | West Virginia Development Office | Hobet Strategic Plan | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y2 TA | PW-18632-I-TA | West Virginia Connecting Communities Inc | Linking Trails and Communities to Spawn Economic Growth and Wellness: The Southern West Virginia Bike Trail Network | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y2 TA | PW-18634-I | PA Department of Community & Economic Development | Pennsylvania POWER Initiative Supplemental Consolidated Technical Assistance | SLA – State Admin. Grant |
| Y2 TA | PW-18654-I-TA | Rural Action | Appalachian Ohio Solar Supply-Chain Initiative | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y2 TA | PW-18655-I-TA | Webster County Economic Development Authority | Central WV ATV Trail System Feasibility Study | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18670-I-TA | WV Community Development Hub | Economic Diversification Mentoring for Innovation Accelerating Strategy | CE – Com. Capacity |
| Y2 TA | PW-18674-I-TA | Reconnecting McDowell, Inc. | Reconnecting McDowell | BD – Bus. Incubator |
| Y2 TA | PW-18688-IM | Region 1 – Planning and Development Council | Coalfields Cluster Mapping Initiative | R&E – Research/Eval |
| Y2 TA | PW-18713-I-TA | UMWA Career Centers, Inc. (UMWACC) | ARC POWER TA Grant Application Development | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |
| Y2 TA | PW-18720-I-TA | Region 4 Planning and Development Council | UKV Revitalization Plan | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y2 TA | PW-18730-I-TA | Williamson Health and Wellness Center | Healthy Workforce Initiative: Workforce Empowerment and Opioid Recovery Center | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 TA | PW-18780-I-TA | Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, Inc. | I-68 Regional Economic Partnership | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y2 TA | PW-18781-I-TA | Appalachian Voices | Southwest Virginia Renewable Energy and Economy Project | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y2 TA | PW-18782-I-TA | Virginia Coalfield Coalition, Inc | Virginia Coalfields Telecommunications Planning Grant | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y2 TA | PW-18783-I-TA | Northwest PA Regional Planning and Development Commission | Northwest PA Broadband Assessment | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y2 TA | PW-18784-I-TA | Armstrong County Industrial Development Council | Armstrong County 2017 POWER Technical Assistance | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y2 TA | PW-18785-I-TA | Grayson LandCare, Inc. | Blue Ridge Plateau Abattoir Regional Partnership | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18795-I-TA | Career Online HS: A Learning Strategy for Appalachian Communities | Jobs for the Future | EWD – Adult Ed. |
| Y2 TA | PW-18798-I-TA | Workforce Initiative Association | Coal Business United Resource Network (Coal BURN) Real-Time Insights for Real-Time Actions | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18799-I-TA | Unlimited Future | Beefing Up the Local Food Economy | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y2 TA | PW-18802-I-TA | Alabama Center for Sustainable Energy (ALCSE) DBA ENERGY ALABAMA | Alabama Advanced Energy Economic Impact Report (AAEEIR) | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |
| Y2 TA | PW-18927-I-TA | Eastern Kentucky PRIDE, Inc. | Restoring PRIDE in Kentucky's Appalachia | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y2 TA | PW-19038-I-TA | Southern Appalachian Labor School | Entrepreneur Coalfield Alternative Opportunity (ECAO) | EWD – Adult Ed. |
| Y2 TA | PW-19330-I-TA | Mayland Community College | Redeveloping Coal Impacted Communities within the Appalachian Region: The Role of Community Colleges in Entrepreneurial Training and the Opioid Crisis | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |
| Y2 TA | PW-19331-I-TA | Piedmont Triad Regional Council | Dream. Career. Academy. Workforce Development Training and Education Hub Plan | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |
| Y2 TA | PW-19335-I-TA | SEDA – Council of Governments | Central PA Rural Broadband Coverage and Feasibility Study | CD – Com. Infrastructure |
| Y1 IMP | PW-19336-I-TA | West Virginia Geological & Economic Survey | State of West Virginia Broadband Development Hub | CD – Com. Infrastructure |
| Y2 TA | PW-19341-I-TA | National Coal Heritage Area Authority | Tug Fork River Water Trail Access Plan | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y2 TA | PW-19357-I-TA | Pennsylvania Environmental Council | Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and PA Wilds Loop - Feasibility Study | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y2 TA | PW-19378-I-TA | Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College | Creative Capital Investment Assessment: Southeastern Kentucky | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y2 TA | PW-19384-I-TA | Region II Development Council, Inc. | Appalachian Heartland Highway Initiative | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y2 TA | PW-19392-I-TA | Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement | Benefit U: An Entrepreneur's Guide to Financial, Health Insurance & Retirement Solutions | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 TA | PW-19433-I-TA | Carr Creek Alumni Association | The Magic of Carr Creek: A Community Revitalization Project | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y2 TA | PW-19451-I | Dunkirk, City of | Dunkirk/Chautauqua County Power Plant Redevelopment Alternatives and Feasibility Analysis | ABD – Sector-Based Strategies |
| Y2 TA | PW-19457-I-TA | Lawrence County, Tennessee | Lawrence County Broadband Feasibility Study | CD – Com. Infrastructure |
| Y2 TA | PW-19458-I-TA | Vinton County Commissioners | Broadband Infrastructure Improvement - Vinton & Meigs County | CD – Com. Infrastructure |

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y2 TA | PW-19459-I-TA | Lewis County Fiscal Court | Lewis County Broadband Strategic Plan and Feasibility Study | CD – Com. Infrastructure |
| Y2 TA | PW-19478-I-TA | The Industrial Commons | Planning for a Textile and Furniture Circular Economy | R&E – Research/Eval |
| Y2 TA | PW-19696-I-TA | Isothermal Planning and Development Commission | WNC Works: Recovery to Careers | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |

Workforce Training/Education

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 IMP | CO-18306 | Appalshop, Inc. | Mines to Minds: Southeast Kentucky High Tech Workforce Training | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18600-IM | EKCEP | TechHire Eastern Kentucky (TEKY) Initiative | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18612 | Marion County | Marion County Regional Center for Higher Education Phase II & III | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18614-IM | Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education | EntreEd K-14: Every Student Every Year | EWD – Ed. Achvt/Attainment |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18616-IM | Southwest VA Community College | REDI Center for Dislocated Coal Miners | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18642-IM | Southwest VA Community College | Southwest Virginia Regional Cybersecurity Initiative | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18657-IM | Industrial Development Authority | Virginia Emerging Drone Industry Cluster Project | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18726-IM | Hocking College | Appalachia RISES | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18741-IM | Bevill State Community College | Bevill State Community College POWER 2017 | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18755-IM-A PW-18755-IM-B | West Alabama Chamber Foundation, Inc. | WAW's 2020 Initiative Construction | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18773-IM | Washington Greene County Job Training Agency | Transitioning from Black to Blue | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18790-IM | Big Sandy Community & Technical College | Eastern Kentucky Coal County Transformation | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18791-IM | UMWA Career Centers, Inc. | New Start Retaining Initiative for Dislocated Coal Industry Workers | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18801-IM | Mountain Empire Community College | Power Linemen Career Education at Mountain Empire (PLCEME) | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18916-IM | Bluefield State College | Center of Excellence in Manufacturing Education (CEME) at Bluefield State | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18920-IM | PRIDE Community Services | BuildJobs Initiative | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18923-IM PW-18923-IM-R1 | Morehead State University | Shaping Our Appalachian Region Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (SOAR STEM) | EWD – Teacher Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18926-IM | Washington Greene County Job Training Agency | ARCODE Initiative | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18928-IM | Pierpont Community & Technical College | Powering Up the Aerospace Workforce in Coal-Impacted Communities in West Virginia | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 IMP | PW-18940-IM | Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College | Southeast Kentucky Revitalization Project | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18943-IM | Youngstown State University | Excellence Training Center – an Advanced Manufacturing Training and Education Center | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-19124-IM | Hazard Community & Technical College | Intergenerational Training Center | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19332-IM | Community College of Beaver County | TEAMing Up to Build Pathways to Jobs | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19333-IM | Golden Triangle Planning & Development District, Inc. | East Mississippi Power Initiative 2018 | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19334-IM | Keystone Community Education Council | Northwest Pennsylvania Diversifying the Regional Economy | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19343-IM | AL Community College System | Alabama S.T.R.O.N.G.-Skills Training to support Real Opportunities for New job Growth | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19368-IM | Marshall University Research Corporation | Creating Opportunities for Recovery Employment (CORE) | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19369-IM | Ohio University | Appalachian Recovery Project: An Ohio Opioid Workforce Initiative | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19382-IM | BridgeValley Community and Technical College | Workforce Construction, Telecommunications, & Energy (CCE) Training Center | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-19397-IM | Hazard Community & Technical College | Welding Technology | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19406-IM | The Center for Rural Development | Community Oriented Access to Learning (COAL) | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19462-IM | Fletcher Group, Inc. | Recovery, Hope, Opportunity and Resiliency—RHOAR | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19464-IM | Morgantown Sober Living Inc. | Reintegrate Appalachia: Job Creation and Workforce Development for West Virginians Impacted by Substance Use Disorders | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19468-IM | Eastern Kentucky University | Kentucky's Appalachia Aviation Maintenance Technician Training | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19470-IM | Housing Development Alliance, Inc. | Hope Building | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19475-IM | East Kentucky Advanced Manufacturing Institute, Inc. | eKAMI Workforce Development Program | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19482-IM | West Alabama Chamber Foundation, Inc. dba West Alabama Works | Power2 Expand Initiative | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19483-IM | Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (C.E.P.), Inc. | Eastern Kentucky Addiction Recovery & Training (eKART) | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19485-IM | Fahe Inc. | Second Chance Employment | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19706-IM | Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers, Inc. | TROSA's Expansion to Forsyth County, North Carolina | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19716-IM | Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board | R.O.P.E.S. Recovery Opportunities and Pathways to Employment Success | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19731-IM | KCEOC Community Action Partnership, Inc. | Workforce Training Center | EWD – Career/Tech Ed. |

Entrepreneurship

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 IMP | PW-18599-IM | New River Gorge Regional Development Authority | New River Gorge Region – Developing an Entrepreneurial Economy | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18606-IM | Hatfield McCoy Regional Recreation Authority | Southern Coalfields Sustainable Tourism & Entrepreneurship Program | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18610-IM | Ohio University | Leveraging Innovation Gateways and Hubs Toward Sustainability (LIGHTS) | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18622-IM | MACED | Economic Transition for Eastern KY (ETEK) Initiative | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18626-IM | Shoals Business Incubator | Shoals Shift | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18685-IM | Innovation Works, Inc. | Revitalization of Southwest PA Coal-Impacted Communities through Innovation and Entrepreneurship | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18700-IM | Fahe | Appalachia HEAT Squad | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18729-IM | Center for Rural Entrepreneurship | Building Entrepreneurial Communities | CE – Com. Capacity |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18777-IM PW-18777-IM-C1 | Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission (SPARC) | The Alleghenies Entrepreneurial Ecosystem | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18793-IM | West Virginia Healthy Kids and Family Coalition | Growing Social Enterprises and Healthy Communities | ABD – Sector-Based Strategies |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18918-IM PW-18918-IM-C1 | Ohio University | Social Enterprise System II | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18921-IM | Southern Research Institute | The Prosperity Fund | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18925-IM | Buckeye Hills Regional Council | Innovation Gateway Network of Appalachian Ohio | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18939-IM PW-18939-IM-R1 PW-18939-IM-R2 | Launch TN | Launch TN's Entrepreneurial Education & Workforce Development | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18941-IM | Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College | Selling to the World Initiative | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19376-IM | Innovation Works | Western PA Small Business Services for Coal-Impacted Communities | BD – Bus. TA |

## Capital/Investment Access

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 IMP | PW-18497-IM | Natural Capital Investment Fund, Inc. | Growing Triple Bottom Line Small Businesses in Coal Impacted Communities in Central Appalachia | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18635-IM | RAIN Source Capital | Appalachian Angel Investor Network | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18699-IM | Center for Rural Health Development | WV Rural Health Infrastructure Loan Fund | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18786-IM | Woodlands Community Lenders | Financing Entrepreneurship in Randolph, Barbour, and Tucker Counties | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y1 IMP Y2 SUD | PW-18789-IM | Fahe | UPLIFT Appalachia Recovery | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18792-IM | Virginia Community Capital | New Economy Loan Fund | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18800-IM | Kentucky Highlands Investment Corp. | Kentucky Highlands Employment and Financial Training Program | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18919-IM | Community Ventures Corporation | Community Ventures – Build Appalachia Loan Fund | CD – Com. Revitalization |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18922-IM | Appalachian Partnership, Inc. (APEG) | Appalachian Ohio – Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Formation | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19352-IM | Lawrence Economic Development Corporation | Building Technical Capacity for Angel Investment in the Tri-State Region of Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19370-IM | Natural Capital Investment Fund | Downtown Appalachia Redevelopment Initiative (REDI) | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y1 IMP | PW-19395-IM | WV Community Development Hub | Mountain State Capital: Filling the Critical Venture Capital Gap in West Virginia | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19399-IM | Virginia Community Capital, Inc. | Impact Appalachia: A Market-Making Fund for Central Appalachia | BD – Access to Capital |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19432-IM | People Incorporated Financial Services | New Market Tax Credit Project Growth in Appalachia | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19465-IM | Appalachian Investors Alliance | Appalachian Investors Alliance – Angel Investing in Coal Communities | BD – Access to Capital |

## Sector-Based Cultivation and Diversification

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 IMP | PW-18317-I | Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission (SAPDC) | Export Promotion for the Mining Equipment Supply Chain | BD – Export Dev. |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18620-IM | Randolph County Development Authority | Hardwood Cluster Manufacturing Expansion Project | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18714-IM | Southwestern Pennsylvania Corporation | Southwestern Pennsylvania Economic Gardening Initiative | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18740-IM | Marshall University Research Corp. | Appalachian Hatchery | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18778-IM | Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc. | The Heart of Appalachia Economic Transition Project | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18779-IM | West Virginia University Research Corp. | Manufacturing Value Stream for Shale | BD – Bus. TA |

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 IMP | PW-18817-IM | Huntington Municipal Development Authority | Polymer Technology Center of Huntington (P-TeCH) Project | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18924-IM | Alfred State College | Biorefinery Development and Commercialization Center | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y1 IMP | PW-19338-IM | Catalyst Connection | PA MAKES: Mini-Grants for Small Manufacturers | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19359-IM | Appalachian Artisan Center, Inc. | Troublesome Creek Stringed Instruments Company No Go | ABD – Sector-Based Strategies |
| Y1 IMP | PW-19371-IM | West Virginia Forest Products Cooperative, Inc. | West Virginia Forest Products Cooperative | BD – Bus. Incubator |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19373-IM | Mountain BizCapital, Inc. dba Mountain BizWorks | Growing Outdoors: Expanding the Outdoor Gear Manufacturing Sector | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19466-IM | Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED) | Supplier Education Economic Development (SEED) Program Expansion | BD – Bus. TA |

Food and Agriculture

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 IMP | CO-18305 | Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development | Local Food Supply Chain Development in Eastern Kentucky | ABD – Sector-Based Strategies |
| Y1 IMP | CO-18307 | Williamson Health and Wellness Center | Health Innovation and Food Hub | BD – Bus. Incubator |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18601-IM | Appalachian Sustainable Development | The Central Appalachian Food Enterprise Corridor | ABD – Sector-Based Strategies |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18690-IM | Marshall University Research Corp. | Sprouting Farms | ABD – Sector-Based Strategies |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18707-IM | Town of Unicoi | Unicoi – Mountain Harvest Kitchen Incubator & Entrepreneurial Training Program | BD – Bus. Incubator |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18847-IM | Canaan Valley Institute | Sustainable Jobs Initiative | EWD – Workforce Training |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18917-IM | Natural Capital Investment Fund, Inc. | Growing Food System Capacity and Scaling Economic Impact in Central Appalachia | ABD – Sector-Based Strategies |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18942-IM | Fayette County Community Action Agency | Southwestern Pennsylvania Development of a Local Food Shed | ABD – Sector-Based Strategies |
| Y1 IMP | PW-19372-IM | Southwest North Carolina Economic Development Commission | WNC Farmers Market Value-Added Manufacturing & Training Center | BD – Bus. Incubator |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19467-IM | Grow Ohio Valley, Inc. | Agribusiness Development in the Upper Ohio Valley | ABD – Sector-Based Strategies |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19471-IM | Appalachian Sustainable Development | Seed-to-Sale: Strengthening the Central Appalachian Food Corridor | ABD – Sector-Based Strategies |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19474-IM | WV Food & Farm Coalition | Geographic Food and Agriculture Systems Development | ABD – Sector-Based Strategies |

Economic Asset Development

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 IMP | CO-18311-I | Friends of Southwest Virginia | RESOURCE FULL: A Consortium Approach to Workforce and Economic Development in Southwest Virginia | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18590-IM | University of Kentucky Research Foundation | Downtown Revitalization in the Promise Zone | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18594-IM | Pennsylvania Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship, Inc. | Nature Tourism Cluster Development in the PA Wilds | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18611-IM PW-18611-IM-R1 | Bluewell Public Service District | Mercer County Regional Airport Development and Diversification Initiative | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18727-IM | Appalachian Wildlife Foundation | Appalachian Wildlife Center – Infrastructure | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18728-AM PW-18728-BM | Friends of Southwest Virginia | Building Appalachian Spring: Growing the Economy of Southwest Virginia through Outdoor Recreation | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18771-IM | SEDA – Council of Governments | Central PA Asset-Based Economy: Adaptive Reuse of Coal-Impacted Recreation as an Economic Engine | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18794-IM PW-18794-IM-B PW-18794-IM-R1 PW-18794-IM-R2 | City of Whitesburg | Whitesburg Daniel Boone Hotel Stabilization | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18895-AM PW-18895-BM | Region 4 Planning & Development Council | Linking Trails and Communities to Spawn Economic Growth – The Southern WV Bike Trail Network | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y1 IMP Y2 SUD | PW-19342-IM | Coalfield Development | SEED-LIFT: Social Enterprise and Economic Diversification – Leveraging Investment for Transformation | CD – Com. Revitalization |
| Y1 IMP | PW-19379-IM | Appalachian Wildlife Foundation | Appalachian Wildlife Center – Wastewater | ABD – Arts-Culture-Tourism |
| Y1 IMP | PW-19402-IM | LENOWISCO Planning District Commission | Project Intersection Site Development | BD – Bus. Site Dev. |

## Healthcare Access and Disease Prevention

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y2 SUD | PW-18587-I PW-18587-C1 PW-18587-C2 | National Institute on Drug Abuse | ARC/National Institutes of Health Interagency Agreement on HIV, HCV, and Opioid Overdose | H – Health Promotion/Disease Prevention |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18609-IM | University of Pikeville | Kentucky College of Optometry | H – Healthcare Access |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18787-IM | Marshall University Research Corp. | Sustainable Employment for Community Health Workers in Coal-Impacted Communities | H – Healthcare Access |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19472-IM | WestCare Kentucky, Inc. | WestCare Kentucky/Judi Patton Center for Families | H – Healthcare Access |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19710-IM | Twin Lakes Center, Inc. | Twin Lakes Center Expansion | H – Healthcare Access |
| Y2 SUD | PW-19719-IM | Pikeville Medical Center, Inc. | Director of Grant Development (Children's Hospital) | H – Healthcare Access |

## Broadband and Infrastructure

| Eval Year | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name | POWER Project Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 IMP | PW-18678-IM | Erwin Utilities | Erwin Utilities – Temple Hill & Bumpus Cove Broadband | CD – Com. Infrastructure |
| Y1 IMP | PW-18756-IM | Somerset County | Somerset County Fiber Extension Project | CD – Com. Infrastructure |
| Y1 IMP | PW-19315-BM | Volunteer Energy Cooperative | Volunteer Energy Cooperative IoT Innovation Ecosystem Project | BD – Bus. TA |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19411-IM | Youngsville Television Corporation | NWPA Regional Broadband Deployment Initiative | CD – Com. Infrastructure |
| Y2 IMP | PW-19473-IM | Duck River Electric Membership Corp. | Duck River EMC's East Loop Fiber Optic and Smart Grid Project | CD – Com. Infrastructure |

# Appendix D

## Projects Not Included in Year 1 or Year 2 Evaluation[37]

| Project Type | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| Asset-Based Development – Arts-Culture-Tourism | PW-18458-EM | Portsmouth Murals Inc. | Portsmouth Floodwall Murals Digital Access Project |
| | PW-19477-TA | Marshall University Research Corporation | Craft Beer and Spirit Trail |
| | PW-19479-TA | Friends of Southwest Virginia | Building POWERful Economic Diversity and Sustainability within Appalachian Communities |
| | PW-19699-TA | Friends of the Cheat, Inc. | Mountaineer Trail Network: Preston County Pilot Trail Plan |
| | PW-19705-TA | Mayland Community College | Creation of Pinebridge Development Strategic Plan |
| | PW-19725-IM | Rural Action, Inc. | Asset-based Entrepreneurship: Trails, Towns and Tourism in the Appalachian Ohio Economy |
| | PW-19726-IM | Eastern Kentucky PRIDE | Restoring Pride in Kentucky's Appalachia-Phase II |
| Asset-Based Development – Energy | GA-19314 | Franklin County | Renewable Power Water Infrastructure Project |
| Asset-Based Development – Sector-based Strategies | PW-18496-IM PW-18496-IM-R1 | Coalfield Development Corporation | Appalachian Social Entrepreneurship Investment Strategy |
| | PW-19469-IM | North Carolina State University (NCSU) | EmPOWERing Mountain Food Systems |
| | PW-19481-TA | New River Gorge Trail Alliance | Linking Trails and Communities to Spawn Economic Growth and Wellness: Expanding the Southern West Virginia Bike Trail Network |
| | PW-19686-IM | WV Regional Technology Park Corp | Broadband Infrastructure to Augment Educational and Industry Cluster Development at the West Virginia Regional Technology Park |
| | PW-19721-IM | Sprouting Farms, Corp | Integrating Agri-Development Centers in Central Appalachia |
| Business Development – Access to Capital | PW-18458-HM | Erwin Utilities | Cool & Connected Downtown Erwin Entrepreneurs Business Grant |
| | PW-19709-IM | Appalachian Community Capital | Opportunity Appalachia |
| Business Development – Business Incubator | PW-19680-IM | Venango County Economic Development Authority | Venango County Business Innovation Center and Fiber Optic Expansion |
| | PW-19713-IM | Clearfield County | North Central PA Launchbox & Innovation Collaborative |
| | PW-19714-IM | Appalachian Headwaters | Appalachian Beekeeping Collective Diversification and Expansion (ABCDE) Project |
| | PW-19715-IM | Bridgeway Capital, Inc | Bridgeway Capital: Western Pennsylvania Entrepreneur Diversification Program |
| | PW-19723-IM | East Tennessee State University | Create Appalachia Arts & Technology Economic Development Initiative |
| Business Development – | PW-18711-I-TA | Round the Mountain: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Network | Grant-Writing Assistance for "A Bolder Brew, a Brighter Bouquet: Strengthening the Craft Beverage Cluster Across Southwest Virginia" |

[37] Based on list of approved or pending projects sent by ARC in March 2020.

| Project Type | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| Business Site Development | PW-19707-IM | Opportunity Alabama, Inc. | Creating Opportunity for Alabama (COAL) Initiative |
| Business Development – Business Technical Assistance | CO-18314 | Rural Action, Inc. | Emerging Opportunities in Social Enterprise Development |
| | PW-18706-I-TA | Randolph County Development Authority | Hardwood Industry Cluster Strategic Plan |
| | PW-18788-IM | WV Regional Technology Park Corp. | Green Mining Model Business Program |
| | PW-19674-IM | Erwin Utilities | Northern Unicoi County Broadband Project |
| | PW-19698-TA | Appalachian Voices | Taking a Proven Energy Model to Scale |
| | PW-19700-TA | Wayne County Economic Development Authority (WCEDA) | Bio Based Manufacturing |
| | PW-19701-TA | tecBRIDGE, LLC | Enhancing Northeastern Pennsylvania's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem |
| | PW-19702-TA | Fay-Penn Economic Development Council | Fayette County Multi-Tenant Spec Building Feasibility Study |
| | PW-19708-IM | Southwestern Pennsylvania Coalition | Shale POWER |
| | PW-19711-IM | WVHTC Foundation | 3 Steps to Start Up |
| | PW-19720-IM | Advantage Valley | FASTER WV -- Fostering Advantages for Startups & Entrepreneurial Resurgence in WV |
| | PW-19729-IM | Shawnee State University | LIGHTS-INC |
| Business Development – Entrepreneurship Education | PW-18580-I-TA | Southern Research Institute | Fostering Entrepreneurial Activity in Coal Impacted Communities in Alabama |
| Civic Entrepreneurship – Organizational Capacity | PW-18982-I | Oak Ridge Associated Universities | Technical Assistance Support for POWER Grantees |
| Community Development – Community Facility | PW-18458-FM | Town of Jonesville | Cool & Connected – Jonesville |
| | PW-18458-GM | Town of Pennington Gap | Cool & Connected – Pennington Gap |
| Community Development – Community Infrastructure | PW-18458-I | US Environmental Protection Agency | Cool & Connected Broadband Program |
| | PW-18458-BM | Williamson Health & Wellness Center, Inc. | Downtown Wi-Fi Access in Williamson, WV |
| | PW-18458-CM | Haleyville, City of | Haleyville Cool & Connected |
| | PW-19337-I-TA | Buckeye Hills Regional Council | U.S. 33 Corridor Broadband Feasibility Project |
| | PW-19460-TA | North Carolina Department of Information Technology | Broadband Feasibility Study for Telehealth Deployment in Western North Carolina |
| | PW-19461-IM | Bland County | Bland County Broadband Deployment |
| | PW-19672-TA | Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc. | Washington Electric Cooperative Broadband Feasibility Study |
| | PW-19675-IM | BARC Electric Cooperative | BARC Rural Economic Development via Broadband |
| | PW-19677-IM | Tioga County | Northern Pennsylvania Broadband Connectivity Project |
| | PW-19678-IM | French Broad Electric Membership Corporation | FBEMC Broadband Deployment to Rocky Fork State Park and Surrounding Area |
| | PW-19679-IM | TOMBIGBEE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC | Northwest Alabama Revitalization |

| Project Type | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| | PW-19681-IM | Buckeye Rural Electric Cooperative | Buckeye Rural Electric Cooperative: Southeast Ohio Broadband Backbone |
| | PW-19682-IM | Holston Electric Cooperative | Holston Electric Cooperative Rural Broadband |
| | PW-19683-IM | City of Erie | Erie, Pennsylvania Broadband Deployment |
| | PW-19684-IM | Southern Tier West RP&DB | Southwest NY Wireless Broadband Project |
| | PW-19685-IM | Southern Tier Network Inc | Creating a Diverse, Redundant and Resilient High Capacity Fiber Network |
| Community Development – Community Revitalization | PW-18458-AM | Zanesville, City of | Zanesville Cool & Connected Broadband Program |
| | PW-18458-DM | Bluefield, City of | Bluefield – Cool & Connected |
| | PW-19712-IM | Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky | The ReVitalize, ReInvest and ReDevelop (R3) Appalachia Initiative |
| Community Development – Transportation | PW-19396-I-TA | Growth Partnership for Ashtabula | Rail and Port Transportation Strategic Plan |
| | PW-19480-TA | North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission | Regional Freight & Mobility Plan for Coal Impacted Communities in North Central PA |
| Education & Workforce Development – Career and Technical Education | CO-18304 | Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. | UNLEASHING THE POWER OF THE I-WAY: Capacity Building for Economic Development Professionals |
| | PW-18770-IM | Maysville Community and Technical College | KY-WV Regional Drone Technology Workforce Project |
| | PW-18864-I | American Association of Community Colleges | Industry-Informed Infrastructure in Appalachian Colleges |
| | PW-19717-IM | Washington State Community College | RAMTEC Appalachia |
| | PW-19724-IM | The EdVenture Group, Inc. | Simulated Workplace Entrepreneurship Education Pathway |
| | PW-19728-IM | East Tennessee Development District | Workforce Development and Re-employment Opportunities |
| Education & Workforce Development – Teacher Training | PW-19727-IM | The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education | Fostering Self ESTEAM in Appalachia's Emerging Workforce |
| Education & Workforce Development – Workforce Training | PW-18914-I-TA | KVC Health Systems, Inc. | KVC Health Systems College |
| | PW-19484-IM | Northeast State Community College | Advancing Aviation Technology Project |
| | PW-19697-TA | Whitley County Fiscal Court | Patriot Drug Treatment and Rehabilitative Center |
| | PW-19718-IM | Eastern Gateway Community College | Tri-State Gateway to Growth Training Center |
| | PW-19722-IM | Southwest Virginia Community College | SWCC Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Center |
| Health – Clinical Services | PW-19732-IM | Mountain Comprehensive Care Center | Big Sandy Healthy Workforce Project |
| Health – Health Promotion/ Disease Prevention | PW-19476-TA | Center for Rural Health Development | Creating a More Vibrant Economy for Coal-Impacted Counties in West Virginia |
| Health – Healthcare Access | PW-19704-TA | Partners in Health Network, Inc. | Enhancing the Economic Impact of Rural Hospitals and Health Centers |
| Research & Evaluation | PW-18673-I | West Virginia University Research Corporation | Economic Analysis of Coal Industry Ecosystem in Appalachia |

| Project Type | Grant Number | Grantee Name | Project Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| | PW-18705-I | Downstream Strategies | Strengthening Economic Resilience in Appalachian Communities |
| | PW-19673-TA | Rockwood Electric Utility | Rockwood Electric Utility Smart Grid Technology Plan |
| | PW-19687-TA | Trumbull County Planning Commission | Trumbull County Broadband Feasibility Study |
| | PW-19688-TA | Greene County Board of Commissioners | Greene County Rural Broadband Coverage and Feasibility Study |
| | PW-19689-TA | Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission | South-Central Pennsylvania Broadband Infrastructure Assessment |
| | PW-19703-TA | LENOWISCO Planning District Commission | Technology Innovation Analysis for Rural Water Systems |
| State & LDD Administration | PW-18477-I | Kentucky Department for Local Government | Kentucky Power Initiative Supplemental Consolidated Assistance Grant |
| | PW-18625<br>PW-18625-C1<br>PW-18625-C2 | NC Department of Commerce | North Carolina POWER Initiative Supplemental Consolidated Technical Assistance |
| | PW-19075<br>PW-19075-C1 | VA Department of Housing & Community Development | VA DHCD Administrative Costs for Appalachian Spring POWER Project |

# Appendix E

## ARC Definitions of POWER Outputs and Outcomes

**Outputs**

| Metric Name | Definition |
|---|---|
| Access Road Miles | The length of the access roads constructed as part of the project, in miles or decimals of miles. |
| Acreage | The number of acres impacted by an ARC site development or reclamation project, such as the number of acres graded and prepared for development at an emerging industrial park, the number of acres open to future development, or the number of acres remediated in a reclamation project. |
| Businesses Served | The number of businesses served by an ARC project. For infrastructure projects, this includes either the number of non-residential entities *with access to* new service (e.g., water, sewer, gas line, or telecommunications) or improved service (e.g., improvements in health or safety, compliance with environmental quality, improved water pressure). For business development projects, this includes businesses receiving technical assistance or participating in training, entrepreneurship, export, or other business development and improvement programs. |
| Communities Served | The number of communities served or impacted by an ARC project, including projects that address planning, civic participation, infrastructure, educational opportunities, and community capacity. For consolidated technical assistance grants, the number of communities served is the number of projects submitted by state ARC program offices. |
| Data—Megabits per Second (Mbps) | The data transfer capacity of a telecommunications/broadband network, in megabits per second. This includes the data transfer capacity of a new network, or the increase in data transfer capacity of an existing network due to renovation, new equipment, or other improvements. This measure may be expressed in decimals. |
| Data—Terabytes (TB) | The fixed data storage capacity of a server room or data center, in terabytes. This measure may be expressed in decimals. |
| Gas—Million Cubic Feet (MMCF) | The fixed storage capacity of a gas pipeline or gas system, in millions of cubic feet. This measure may be expressed in decimals. |
| Gas—Million Cubic Feet per Day (MMCFD) | The flow capacity of a gas pipeline or gas system, in millions of cubic feet per day. This includes the flow capacity of a new gas pipeline or system, or the increase in flow capacity of an existing gas pipeline or system due to renovation, new equipment, or other improvements. This measure may be expressed in decimals. |
| Heat—Million BTU (MMBTU) | The fixed heating capacity of an energy system, including a gas system, in millions of British Thermal Units (BTUs). This measure may be expressed in decimals. |

| Metric Name | Definition |
|---|---|
| Heat—Million BTU per Day (MMBTUD) | The capacity of heat flow generated, transmitted, consumed, or conserved by an energy system, including a gas system, in millions of British Thermal Units (BTUs) per day. This includes the heat flow capacity of a new combined heating and power (CHP) system. It also includes the increase in heat flow capacity of an existing HVAC system or the reduction in heat consumption by a facility due to renovation, new equipment, energy efficiency measures, or other improvements. This measure may be expressed in decimals. |
| Households Served | The number of households served by an ARC infrastructure project. This includes either the number of households *with access to* new service (e.g., water, sewer, gas line, or telecommunications), or improved service (e.g., improvements in health or safety, compliance with environmental quality, improved water pressure). |
| Linear Feet | The number of linear feet of pipe, wire, cable, trails, etc. to be constructed or installed. |
| Million Gallons (MG) | The fixed storage capacity of a water tank or sewage lagoon, in millions of gallons. This measure may be expressed in decimals. |
| Million Gallons per Day (MGD) | The flow capacity of a water or sewer system, in millions of gallons per day. This includes the flow capacity of a new water or sewage treatment plant, or the increase in flow capacity of an existing plant due to renovation, new equipment, or other improvements. This measure may be expressed in decimals. |
| New Visitors – Days | The number of new daytime visitors to a tourism destination times the number of days they visit, within one year of project implementation. |
| New Visitors – Overnights | The number of new overnight visitors to a tourism destination times the number of their overnight stays, within one year of project implementation. |
| Organizations Served | The number of organizations served by an ARC project, including hospitals, schools, churches, non-profits, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies (use when number of businesses or households does not apply). |
| Participants Served | The number of individual participants served or targeted by an ARC project (use when patients, students, or worker/trainee measures do not apply). This can include the number of attendees at a meeting, workshop, or conference. For example, the number of individuals participating in a planning process; participating in a leadership program; or the number of individuals attending health promotion activities. |
| Patients Served | The number of unique patients receiving clinical services one or more times as a result of an ARC health project. For equipment projects, report the number of unique patients served by that equipment during the project period and one year after the equipment is deployed. For health projects that do not provide clinical services (such as health promotion activities), use the measure "participants served." |

| Metric Name | Definition |
|---|---|
| Plans/Reports | The number of plans or reports developed as a result of an ARC project. This could include strategic plans, master plans, concept plans, or plans for infrastructure improvements or new programs, as well as research reports, feasibility studies, etc. This measure is often paired with the outcome "Programs Implemented," since a program or specific activity is often implemented as a result of a planning process. |
| Power—Kilowatt-Hours (kWh) Per Year | The capacity of power flow generated, transmitted, distributed, consumed, or conserved by an energy system; in kilowatt-hours per year. This includes the flow capacity of a new power plant or new power line. It also includes the increase in power flow capacity of an electric grid or the reduction in power consumption by a facility due to renovation, new equipment, energy efficiency measures, or other improvements. This measure may be expressed in decimals. |
| Power—Kilowatts (kW) | The fixed power generating capacity of an energy system, including a renewable energy system, in kilowatts. This measure may be expressed in decimals. |
| Square Feet | The number of square feet constructed or improved by an ARC project, such as the square footage of a renovated community center, a newly constructed parking lot, a reconfigured interior space, etc. |
| Students Served | The number of students served by an ARC education project, measured during the project period, when possible (e.g., the number of students served by a science and technology program in a given semester or year). For projects that are not fully operational during the project period, the measurement time period may be extended up to three years after the project end date. Projects that expand existing programs count only the additional number of students served. |
| Waste—Tons per Day Reduced/Reused/Recycled (TPD) | The flow capacity of waste reduced, reused, or recycled by a waste processing facility. This includes the flow capacity of a new waste-to-energy plant, or the increase in flow capacity of an existing landfill or recycling center due to renovation, new equipment, or other improvements. This measure may be expressed in decimals. |
| Waste—Tons Reduced/Reused/Recycled | The number of tons of waste reduced, reused, or recycled at a landfill, brownfield site or recycling center; within one year of project implementation. |
| Workers/Trainees Served | The number of worker/trainees served by an ARC training project, measured during the project period when possible. For example, the number of worker/trainees the project will be able to enroll in a new workforce education program. For projects that are not fully operational during the project period, the measurement time period may be extended up to three years after the project end date. Projects that expand existing programs count only the additional number of workers/trainees that the project will be able to serve. |

## Outcomes

| Metric Name | Definition |
|---|---|
| Businesses Created | The number of new businesses created as a result of an ARC project. This measure is used for business development projects such as entrepreneurship training, value-added agriculture, access to capital, and business incubation programs (including seed accelerators). This measure should only be used to measure new business creation, not the number of existing businesses recruited or otherwise relocated from other areas. The grant applicant should estimate how many new businesses will be created within three years of the project end date. |
| Businesses Improved | The number of businesses with a measurable improvement as a result of an ARC project. For new service infrastructure projects, the output (served) is the number of non-residential entities with access to the infrastructure service while the outcome (improved) is the number of non-residential customers that are connected to the infrastructure service. For improved service projects (e.g., improvements in health or safety, compliance with environmental quality, improved water pressure), all non-residential customers served are also considered improved. For business development projects, the grant applicant and ARC project manager must agree on what constitutes "measurable improvement" and a method for measuring the degree of improvement must be provided. For each project this number is always a subset of, or the same as, the "businesses served" output measure. |
| Communities Improved | The number of communities with a measurable improvement as a result of an ARC project, including projects that address planning, civic participation, infrastructure, educational opportunities, and community capacity. For community capacity projects, this is the number of communities with enhanced capacity. This measure should also be used for consolidated technical assistance grants. The grant applicant and ARC project manager must agree on what constitutes "measurable improvement" and a method for measuring the degree of improvement must be provided. For each project, this number is always a subset of, or the same as, the "communities served" output measure. |
| Costs Reduced | The amount of costs reduced as a result of project activities, within one year of project implementation. For example, small business technical assistance may help a business streamline and cut costs, or an energy-efficiency program may help to reduce energy costs, through a renegotiated flat fee for energy use or through a reduction in kilowatt hours used. See the output measure "energy capacity." |
| Households Improved | The number of households with measurable improvement as a result of an ARC project. For new service infrastructure projects, the output (served) is the number of households with access to the infrastructure service while the outcome (improved) is the number of residential customers that are connected to the infrastructure service. For improved service projects (e.g., improvements in health or safety, compliance with environmental quality, improved water pressure), all residential customers served are also considered improved. For each project, this number is always a subset of, or the same as, the "households served" output measure. |

| Metric Name | Definition |
|---|---|
| Housing Units Constructed/Rehabbed | The number of housing units constructed or rehabilitated as a part of an ARC housing or community development project. |
| Jobs Created | The number of jobs created (direct hires, excluding construction jobs) as a result of an ARC project, measured during the project period and up to three years after the project end date. Part-time and seasonal jobs should be converted to full-time equivalents and rounded up to whole numbers. Note: for infrastructure projects, employers must provide letters stating their intention to create a specific number of new jobs; for non-infrastructure jobs, grant applicants should estimate the number of jobs that will be created by the organizations expected to benefit from the project. |
| Jobs Retained | The number of jobs retained as a result of an ARC project. These are existing jobs that would be lost or relocated if the ARC project were not undertaken. Note: for infrastructure projects, employers must provide letters explicitly stating the number of jobs at risk, due to relocation or loss of competitiveness, without the project. Existing jobs benefitting from an infrastructure upgrade cannot be counted as jobs retained. For non-infrastructure projects, grant applicants should estimate the number of existing jobs that would be at risk, due to relocation or loss of competitiveness, without the ARC-funded project. |
| Leveraged Private Investment (LPI) | The dollar amount of private-sector financial commitments, outside of project costs that result from an ARC project, measured during the project period and up to three years after the project end date. Note: for infrastructure projects, businesses must provide letters stating their intention to make a specific level of investment if the project is funded; for non-infrastructure projects, grant applicants should estimate the dollar value of investments that will be made by the company or companies that will benefit from the project. |
| Organizations Improved | The number of organizations with a measurable improvement as a result of an ARC project, including hospitals, schools, churches, non-profits, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies (use when number of businesses or households does not apply). The grant applicant and ARC project manager must agree on what constitutes "measurable improvement" and a method for measuring the degree of improvement must be provided. For each project, this number is always a subset of, or the same as, the "organizations served" output measure. |

| Metric Name | Definition |
|---|---|
| Participants Improved | The number of participants with a measurable improvement as a result of an ARC project (use when patients, students, or worker/trainee measures do not apply, as with a leadership program or planning process). If outcomes are not achieved or cannot be measured within three years after the project is completed, the number of participants that complete or attend all or a required number of components of the project activity may be substituted. For example, the number of participants that attend at least four out of the five community workshops offered. The grant applicant and ARC project manager must agree on what constitutes "measurable improvement" and a method for measuring the degree of improvement must be provided. For each project, this number is always a subset of, or the same as, the "participants served" output measure. |
| Patients Improved | The number of unique patients expected to benefit from an ARC health project. Because it is usually assumed that all patients served by a health project receive some benefit from it, the numbers for "patients served" and "patients improved" are usually the same. However, if the grant applicant can perform clinical measurement of health outcomes, the outcome number may be lower than the output number. For example, if 30 obese patients participate in an exercise program and 25 are expected to lower their BMI by a certain percentage, the output could be recorded as 30 patients served and the outcome as 25 patients improved. |
| Programs Implemented | The number of new programs, or the number of ongoing activities related to a defined goal, which are implemented as a result of an ARC project. If possible, use with other measures that indicate the results of the project, such as students, workers, participants, etc. |
| Revenues Increased: Export Sales | The increase in revenue in export sales realized by a business as a result of an ARC project, within three years of the project end date. |
| Revenues Increased: Non-Export Sales | The increase in revenue in domestic (non-export) sales realized by a business as a result of an ARC project, within three years of the project end date. |
| Students Improved | The number of students who obtain a job in the field for which they were specifically trained; the number that receive a diploma, certificate, or other career credential; or the number of students who successfully complete a course or unit of study and/or graduate to the next grade or level necessary to continue their education. When outcomes occur after the project period, the number of students improved may be counted up to three years beyond the project end date. For programs where final outcomes are achieved after three or more years, the number of students improved may be counted by an alternative benchmark, such as the number of students completing a skill, grade, or level, or continued enrollment for the project period. For each project, this number is always a subset of, or the same as, the "students served" output measure. |

| Metric Name | Definition |
|---|---|
| Telecom Sites | The number of new telecom services installed as a result of an ARC project. This diverse measure includes, but is not limited to, new telemedicine sites, new wi-fi hotspots, a new wireless router or computer lab at a high school, new fiber run to an industrial site, a new antenna used to provide broadband service, etc. |
| Workers/Trainees Improved | The number of workers/trainees with improved skills that enable them to obtain employment or to enhance their current employment. For example, the number of workers or trainees obtaining a new job; getting higher pay or a better position; or receiving a certification, measured during the project period when possible. When outcomes occur after the project period, the number of workers or trainees improved may be counted up to three years beyond the project end date. For programs where outcomes are achieved after three or more years, the number of students improved may be counted by an alternative benchmark, such as completion of a skill, level/course, or continued enrollment for the project period. For each project, this number is always a subset of, or the same as, the "workers/trainees served" output measure. |

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