



Appalachian Teaching Project 2022 Fellowship

Background and Overview

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

ARC is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local government. ARC invests in activities that address the goals identified in the Commission's strategic plan. Each year, ARC funds several hundred investments in the Appalachian Region in areas such as business development, education and job training, telecommunications, infrastructure, community development, housing, and transportation. These projects create thousands of new jobs, improve local water and sewer systems, increase worker readiness, assist local communities with strategic planning, and provide technical and managerial assistance to emerging businesses and entrepreneurs.



To add value to the ATP initiative, ARC provides for up to two ATP Fellowship work residencies at ARC during the summer. The Fellow(s) gains additional leadership and research skills, insight into ARC strategic investments, and knowledge of interventions that benefit Appalachian communities.

In 2022 the Fellow(s) will work under the supervision of ARC's Research and Evaluation Director. They are mentored by staff program analysts, and work in close coordination with other ARC staff. They develop a library of case studies based on interviews with prior ARC grantees to determine project outcomes, investment impact, and best practices from recently completed ARC grant investments. The Fellow(s) may also conduct other relevant work as needed.



Timeline

The deadline for ATP Fellowship nominations is February 11, 2022 with selection by March 18, 2022. The Fellow(s) is(are) expected to complete a minimum of ten weeks and maximum of twelve weeks of work between May 16 and August 12, 2022 dependent upon their school schedule.



Qualifications and Eligibility

Applicants are eligible if they have participated in the ATP program and attended the ATP conference in at least one of the two years immediately preceding the year in which they apply (i.e., the applicant must have participated in the ATP program in 2020 or 2021 to be eligible to apply for the Summer 2022 Fellowship).

Although the ATP Fellowship Program is managed by ARC, students must be nominated by their host educational institution's ATP professor, who can recommend up to two students per cycle for consideration.

Research Focus

The Fellow(s) will receive orientation information on ARC programs and activities to prepare for the position's primary project, assisting ARC with development of a library of "best practice" case studies of Commission investments throughout Appalachia. Best practices are programs, activities, or strategies that have been shown to work effectively and produce successful outcomes, as documented with data. Sharing and promoting best practices helps regional leaders adapt new ideas, learn from similar communities, and replicate exemplary models of economic development.



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

The Fellow(s) will present findings to ARC staff at the end of the Fellowship. ARC will consider suggestions from the Fellow(s) on additional innovative ways to share the findings at the completion of the Fellowship. To add value to the Fellowship learning experience, the Fellow(s) will also meet with ARC staff to learn about all areas of Commission operations and will be invited to attend other presentations and meetings.

Funding and Payment

The Fellow(s) will be paid at the rate of a NF-7, step 1, equivalent to the General Schedule (GS pay rate, (taxes and other statutory deductions will be made, as applicable) during the Fellowship. They will be paid directly from ARC (rather than through the nominating institution).

Nomination and Approval Process

The ATP Fellowship application must be submitted by each nominating ATP professor on behalf of their student applicant(s). Applicants and their nominating professors must ensure the following required application materials are submitted no later than Friday, February 11, 2022 to ARC Research and Evaluation Director Kostas Skordas via email at kskordas@arc.gov. The nominating ATP professor must supply the following information in one packet:



- A letter of support from the ATP professor specifying how the nominated student is qualified for the Fellowship. This letter should include a description of how the Fellowship will benefit the student and how ARC will benefit from the student's work.
- The student's resume and statement of purpose answering three questions in no more than 1,000 words total: 1.) What unique experiences and skills did you develop during your relevant ATP course that will best prepare you to be a successful ARC Fellow? 2.) How will this ARC Fellowship benefit your career aspirations? 3.) Outside of the ATP experience, what other knowledge and abilities will benefit you as an ARC Fellow?



Interviews will be conducted as part of the selection process. An ARC committee will review all applications and recommend one or two candidates to the ARC executive director for final approval.

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