Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative

Federal Fiscal Year 2022—Request for Proposals for Project Grants

This request for proposals (RFP) for project grants provides a general overview of the INSPIRE Initiative, as well as the specific requirements needed to complete a grant application.

RFP release date	**January 24, 2022**
Application portal opens	**February 7, 2022** **Portal link located here**
Pre-application workshop	**February 24, 2022** **Register here**
Letter of intent due	**March 3, 2022**
Grant proposal due	**March 24, 2022**
Awards announced	**August 1, 2022**

The closing date for receipt of applications under this announcement is March 24, 2022. ARC must receive applications no later than 5 PM Eastern Time (ET).

Further guidance on submission can be found at www.arc.gov/SUD.

Questions can be emailed to SUD@arc.gov.

Appalachian Regional Commission Overview

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local government. Established by an act of Congress in 1965 through the Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA) 40 U.S. Code §14101–14704, ARC is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chairperson, who is appointed by the president of the United States. Local participation is also provided through multi-county local development districts (LDDs). ARC serves a 205,000-square-mile region of 25 million people that includes all of West Virginia and parts of twelve other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

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Background

The Appalachian Region (the Region) has been disproportionately impacted by the issue of substance use. Across decades, substance names have changed, but the individual and cumulative community-level impacts have compounded and continue presenting an impediment to socioeconomic and personal growth. Substance use disorder (SUD) prevention and treatment in the region have been extensively explored and described through research studies, funded community-based intervention programs, sponsored conferences, and publications. One underlying theme that consistently emerges is that individuals with SUD encounter numerous barriers to entering the region's workforce, which can have a negative impact on workforce participation rates and economic development, with consequences that span generations.

While new funding streams are important to effectively address the substance use crisis, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC, the Commission) has heard from Appalachian leaders regarding the need to better coordinate funds and to focus on an important goal: to assist individuals in recovery to access an organized set of SUD recovery services while pursuing training and education necessary to obtain, or maintain, employment (particularly regional demand-driven jobs and high-demand occupations that offer family-sustaining wages).

The Commission's work in this area is guided by several experts at the local, state, and federal level. On May 13, 2019, ARC announced the formation of the Substance Abuse Advisory Council (SAAC), a 24-member volunteer advisory group of leaders from recovery services, healthcare, law enforcement, economic development, private industry, education, state government, and other sectors. By drawing on their own experiences as well as community insights gathered during ARC's six recent regional Recovery-to-Work Listening Sessions, the SAAC developed recommendations for ARC to consider as part of a strategic plan to build and strengthen recovery ecosystems in Appalachian communities. For more information on the SAAC, visit the ARC website.

Experts and community leaders consistently state that for persons in recovery from SUD, having a job is an important component of successfully maintaining recovery. The Commission carefully considered what role it could most effectively play to address the challenge of helping individuals in recovery obtain and maintain employment. Building on decades of successful experience in engaging the empathy, energy, and expertise within communities, ARC pursued a process to define the elements needed to create community recovery ecosystems that could achieve the stated goal. In addition, ARC pursued a process to target resources to assist communities to organize an appropriate mix of services and interorganizational agreements. This effort was titled Recovery to Work. The following reports, as well as additional background information, are available on the ARC website:

- *The Report of Recommendations: Appalachian Regional Commission's Substance Abuse Advisory Council* (published September 2019)
- *Final Report: Appalachian Regional Commission Recovery-to-Work Listening Sessions December 2018–April 2019* (published July 2019)

Executive Summary

The Commission is publishing this request for proposals (RFP) to solicit applications for grants under this announcement. The INvestments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative makes available up to $10 million in federal resources to

help Appalachian communities and regions that have been affected by the substance use crisis. For additional information on the INSPIRE Initiative, visit the ARC website.

The INSPIRE Initiative seeks to align and leverage complementary federal, state, and other resources that provide assistance through competitively awarded grants to partnerships anchored in Appalachian communities. By aligning and leveraging multiple resources (federal, state, local, nonprofit, and private sector), ARC solicits and prioritizes the selection of projects that integrate multiple economic development systems, evidence-based or promising SUD models and practices, and resources in support of implementing existing economic development strategic plans that create pathways to employment. For a list of evidence-based resources and guidelines from the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, visit the SAMHSA website.

In addition to the requirements described in this RFP, all applications must also meet the criteria for ARC funding and be consistent with ARC's updated strategic plan, *Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity—ARC Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2022–2026*. The INSPIRE Initiative focuses primarily on Goal 2.

- Goal 2: Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem
  — Expand and strengthen community systems (education, healthcare, housing, childcare, and others) that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.

Goals of this plan reflect consensus among local, state, and federal partners on the most critical investment opportunities in Appalachia.

Program Description

The INSPIRE Initiative makes funding available for projects that address the substance use crisis by creating or expanding a recovery ecosystem that will lead to workforce entry or reentry for individuals in recovery from SUD. Projects are encouraged to support the post-treatment-to-employment continuum, which could include investments in healthcare networks and partnerships that support substance use recovery, as well as behavioral health professionals and employers; SUD recovery-focused job training programs; and initiatives designed to coordinate or link SUD recovery services and employment training, among others.

The recovery ecosystem, within the context of building and strengthening economically resilient communities in Appalachia, is a complex linkage of multiple sectors, including but not limited to recovery communities, peer support, health and human services, faith communities, criminal justice, public safety, housing, transportation, education, and employers. The goal of the recovery ecosystem is to help individuals in recovery access the support services and training they need to maintain recovery and successfully obtain sustainable employment.

Projects that invest in workforce training should stress the potential for individuals in recovery to enter or reenter the workforce, or maintain employment, with a special emphasis on employment retention. This can be accomplished through basic and advanced training, hard and soft skills development, "upskilling," and establishing clearly defined career pathways in training programs that accommodate continued growth.

The INSPIRE Initiative embraces a broad definition of SUD. Substances that can lead to substance use disorder, use, or misuse include opioids, stimulants, and alcohol, among others. For a federally recognized list of commonly used and problematic drugs, visit drugabuse.gov. The initiative targets the recovery-to-work continuum; applications are

encouraged to focus on the SUD recovery ecosystem as it's defined in this RFP while also addressing the complex needs, barriers, and leverage points of this continuum. For a catalog of ideas related to the continuum, see the list generated by the Substance Abuse Advisory Council during their 2019 convening.

Successful applications should demonstrate how the proposal addresses the following priorities to develop or expand a recovery ecosystem, and how this can enable and support an individual's successful entry or reentry into the public and private workforce, while also addressing economic, workforce, and health-related impacts within the ARC region:

1. Provide industry-specific training, job placement, and/or support activities to individuals affected by SUD to offer them a competitive advantage that could help to stabilize them and their families;
2. Utilize prevention-focused SUD activities that reduce future substance use or misuse and engage individuals in health and economic community-oriented activities;
3. Create or expand linkages between workforce development organizations, training providers, organizations that provide post-SUD treatment wraparound services, businesses, local/state court systems (e.g., pre-trial diversion, drug courts), and other partners (e.g., mental health) to assist people in recovery with maintaining their recovery as they enter or reenter the workforce;
4. Create, expand, or leverage workplace programs and policies that support employees in recovery from SUD;
5. Develop and expand industry partnerships that build and sustain the grant applicant's organizational capacity; leverage available resources; and establish community-based approaches for addressing SUD workforce challenges and industry needs as they pertain to workforce entry and reentry;
6. Deliver support services to assist employers and industry in meeting current and/or future workforce challenges to support the SUD recovery ecosystem;
7. Develop and implement plans for strengthening partnerships/coalitions/consortiums with the addition of new partners (local, state, regional);
8. Identify and assess SUD and behavioral health community needs, including the need for direct recovery services, employer engagement opportunities, the community's capacity to support the provision of services, and input from those in recovery on service delivery;
9. Identify and reduce barriers to the SUD recovery-to-work ecosystem, including but not limited to transportation, housing (e.g., transitional or recovery housing), childcare (to support engagement or reengagement in the workplace), and other support services (e.g., criminal record expungement); and
10. Align and integrate SUD plans, programmatic activities, and strategies with existing state, regional, or community economic development strategies.

Grant Types and Amounts

Implementation Grants

The Appalachian Regional Commission expects to make implementation awards in amounts up to $500,000 for each project it awards within the congressionally defined Appalachian Region. In addition to programmatic delivery, applicants can request funding to support minor construction incidental to their proposed projects (e.g., new painting, electricity modifications or accessories, expanding square footage, building

recovery beds); however, these will be thoroughly reviewed for appropriateness. Please note that applications with substantial construction components will not be funded. Applicants can also determine the required time period necessary to meet the objectives of their projects. The period of performance for awards under this funding announcement may be up to three years (36 months) if warranted by the size and scope of the project.

Applicants will need to address all components noted in this document's section titled Criteria for Implementation Grants.

Implementation Grants: Eligible Activities

Throughout the region, organizations have developed and implemented successful models for creating recovery ecosystems and building recovery capital, including a focus on entry or reentry into the workforce for individuals recovering from SUD. The purpose of the INSPIRE Initiative is to support implementation or expansion and replication of these best practices. These types of projects have strong cross-sector engagement that results in the creation, improvement, or expansion of a recovery community.

As all applicants should have established partnerships and networks, it is necessary to emphasize and describe the involvement of multiple stakeholders and how that involvement will lead to workforce entry or reentry for individuals in SUD recovery. Elements may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Organizations with linkages to various stakeholders, which may include employers, social services, treatment/recovery, criminal justice, local/state court systems, educational institutions, training providers, vocational supports, workforce development boards, chambers of commerce, and business development agencies, among others as appropriate;
- Peer support systems, if other funding sources, such as private or federal health insurance reimbursement, are not available (e.g., peer recovery specialists, 24/7 access to peer support services);
- Health/behavioral health networks that support SUD recovery (e.g., federally qualified health centers; SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery private and nonprofits; local or state departments of health and human services; mental health; public health; substance use; public safety/criminal justice);
- Job and vocational skills training programs (e.g., classroom, on-the-job) that have a demonstrated focus on serving those in recovery and incorporate recovery services with appropriate evaluation measures;
- Recovery-to-work transportation, housing, and childcare solutions (if other local or state funding sources are not available);
- Liaison positions that educate and strengthen collaboration and participation among employers and reduce stigma associated with employer engagement and willingness to hire and/or retain those in SUD recovery;
- Workforce development agencies;
- Supportive services such as temporary housing (e.g., recovery housing, transitional housing), income support, and soft and hard skills development;
- Evaluation of project and program outcomes, including but not limited to proposed funding activities and recovery ecosystem practices and policies (applicants may utilize universities or colleges, contractors, or other appropriate partners for this effort); and
- Innovative pilot concepts designed to address the economic impacts of the substance use crisis in Appalachia.

Planning Grants

In addition to implementation grants, planning grants in amounts up to $50,000 each are available to assist communities and regions in the Appalachian Region to develop plans and strategies for expanding or creating a recovery ecosystem. The period of performance for planning grants may be up to 18 months if warranted by the scope of the project.

Applicants will need to address all components noted in this document's section titled Criteria for Planning Grants when designing a planning project. The focus of these grants is to assist entities with projects that will be implemented in the near future (or after the planning grant ends); hence, a planning grant must not include activities such as the delivery of a program or services. Applicants must address how a planning project will lead to the expansion, creation, or improvement of a recovery ecosystem, including the provision of a program and services.

Planning grant applicants should not assume that ARC funding will be available for implementation of the plans and strategies developed.

Planning Grants: Eligible Activities

Planning grants will provide support to grantees to explore activities that could be implemented in their region and to develop a plan to expand or create a recovery ecosystem. Activities may include the following:

- Developing strategies/plans for strengthening partnerships/coalitions/consortia with the addition of new partners;
- Conducting community needs assessments, including input from those in recovery (in addition to exploring the need for direct recovery services, the assessment should explore the community's infrastructure to support this effort, including housing, transportation, and social services);
- Identification, through workforce modeling, gap analysis, or other research-based practices, to understand current workforce gaps and challenges and/or anticipation of future workforce demands within the community, state, or region to inform current and future recovery-to-work activities;
- Developing short-term/long-term training and employment readiness and retention plans (which may include metrics for credentialing in high-demand occupations and wage progression);
- Developing education programs for employers about human resource policies, positive supervisory practices, and development of methods to organize and use employee peer support services to support employer engagement in this ecosystem;
- Developing service delivery and sustainability plans; and
- Evaluating SUD recovery-to-work programs, policies, and practices that build on emerging, promising, and/or evidence-based practices in the field.

Eligibility Information

Eligible applicants for ARC's INSPIRE Initiative grants are the following:

- Local development districts (LDDs)
- Indian tribes or a consortium of Indian tribes
- States, counties, cities, or other political subdivision of a state, including a special purpose unit of a state or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions
- Institutions of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education
- Public or private nonprofit organizations or associations

Ineligibility

Please note that applicants with current open Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) SUD grants are not eligible to apply for funding under the INSPIRE Initiative. However, if the applicant has a current POWER grant that is not concentrated on SUD activities, the applicant may apply for this funding opportunity. **Applicants may not receive concurrent funding under Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities (WORC), POWER, and INSPIRE for SUD-related projects.**

Criteria for Implementation Grants

Applications for implementation grants must meet the (below) criteria and can earn up to 100 points based on the following elements:

A.	Executive Summary	Submit required form.
B.	Statement of Need	Up to 27 points
C.	Project Description	Up to 36 points
D.	Projected Outputs and Outcomes	Up to 16 points
E.	Strategic Alignment	Up to 6 points
F.	Budget and Budget Narrative	Up to 5 points
G.	Feasibility	Up to 5 points
H.	Organizational Capacity	Up to 5 points
I.	Required Forms: ARC MOU, SF424, SF424A, and SF424B	Submit required forms.

Applicants must have a well-articulated analysis of why and how the local and regional economy has been negatively impacted by the substance use crisis in their region, and they must demonstrate how the proposed effort adds value to a larger, more long-term vision and action plan being implemented in the Appalachian Region. Applicants must describe how their proposal meets an unmet need, is a complement to existing initiatives (if applicable), and is not duplicative of any ongoing efforts in the project area.

Applications MUST address all the following elements.

Executive Summary (required form)

- Provide up to a one-page executive summary of project goals and strategies, purpose, key activities, strategic alignment, collaborative partnerships, organizational capacity, and performance measures. Visit the ARC website for an Executive Summary template.

Statement of Need (up to 27 points)

- Describe the service area.
- List ARC counties impacted by the project.
- Projects must serve and benefit a portion of the Appalachian Region as defined by the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, as amended. If projects extend beyond the ARC region, only that portion within the Region is eligible for ARC funding. For a list of ARC states and counties, visit the ARC website.
- Describe the target population, why this population was selected, and how the applicant plans to recruit this population. **Note**: An applicant's proposal must target youth (ages 15–24) and/or adults (e.g., displaced workers, unemployed, underemployed, grandparents, etc.) in order reduce future and/or current

substance use, economic impacts of SUD, and associated harms within the region, with the ultimate goal of assisting individuals to enter or reenter the workforce. **Note**: Whether your project targets adults and/or youth, the overall program design must tie back to workforce entry or reentry.

- Describe community needs as they pertain to the expansion, creation, or improvement of a recovery ecosystem.
- Applicants must provide appropriate third-party economic and demographic statistics, including the age-adjusted mortality rate related to opioid and other drug overdose deaths and other relevant information for the applicable community or region in order to document the extent to which the local economy has negatively impacted the community or region. Applicants may use data available at the INSPIRE Initiative page of the ARC website and from other sources to demonstrate community and regional impacts of substance use in their region. Describe the needs of businesses, including but not limited to the following: an overview of open jobs across in-demand industry sectors; employment status and education level of the residents residing in the project's service area; and gaps in skill sets and training.
- Identify economic and workforce-related challenges to workforce participation in the proposed service area.
- Identify any gaps in behavioral health services, training, employment, and provision of support services, including wraparound services for those in recovery, available in the service area. Explain your community's capacity to create a recovery ecosystem to respond to these gaps and connect these responses to the priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative. **Note**: Applicants must provide appropriate third-party economic and demographic statistics, including persistent poverty and unemployment rate data for the applicable community or region, in order to document the extent to which the local economy has been negatively impacted.
- Identify any anticipated challenges related to COVID-19 that may affect or hinder program delivery and the planning process.

Project Description (up to 36 points)

- The funds available throughout this initiative are intended to help leverage program funds from multiple sources (both public and private). Project proposals must have multiple stakeholders engaged in project implementation from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, and from multiple disciplines. There must be evidence of strong input by and engagement of the broader community in planning and project design, as well as a clear understanding of each partner's role in the proposed project.
- Applicants must describe community and regional commitment to the proposed project by combining ARC resources with other public, private, and philanthropic resources.
- To possibly receive full points for each section, applicants must address **all** the following elements within their proposal:
  — Provide a description of the applicant's organizational mission and work. Connect the mission of the organization to the seven priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative. (See the section titled Program Description for the list of priorities.) Describe the project's primary purpose, main activities, and expected deliverables.
  — Explain how the proposed elements of your project meet the needs of both the target population and industry as described in the seven priorities. (See the section titled Program Description for the list of priorities.) Identify by name the workforce development organization(s), training provider(s), and

organization(s) that provide wraparound services for individuals in recovery as well as any employers and other partners who will participate in the proposed project. Additionally, describe each partner's role in the proposed project.

— Explain how the organization(s), provider(s), employer(s), and other partner(s) are strategically positioned to support the services and activities that will help to expand or create a recovery ecosystem.

— Explain how the proposed project will assist employers in meeting their workforce and business needs, including how the target population will acquire the necessary training and skills in order to be placed in appropriate and in-demand employment opportunities.

— Provide documentation from local businesses or business groups expressing a need, or provide labor market analyses conducted by federal or state sources. Additionally, include documentation from organizations that provide wraparound services for those in recovery expressing a need for the provision of services for the target population.

— Explain how the project expands or creates linkages between workforce development organization(s), training provider(s), organization(s) that provide wraparound services for individuals in recovery, employer(s), and any other partner(s).

— Develop a work plan and timeline:
  ▪ List the project deliverables.
  ▪ Provide a timeline for each deliverable.
  ▪ Identify key personnel who will execute each deliverable.

— Describe how the proposal aligns with the needs of businesses and organizations that provide wraparound services for those in recovery.

- Submit at least three letters of engagement from partners who will participate in the proposed project.
  — **Note on partnerships**: Per the priorities and funding principles described previously, applicants are expected to assemble new or existing partnerships of community and economic development stakeholders to serve as members of a project team, which may include partners that are not eligible for ARC funding but who are integral to a proposed project's success.

- Cross-sector collaborations should include health, behavioral health, criminal justice, education, employers, faith-based organizations, etc. Existing community substance use coalitions should be engaged, where possible.

- Overall project team membership can be composed of, but is not limited to, the following types of organizations:
  — Economic development organizations
  — Local governments
  — Planning organizations and local development districts (LDDs)
  — Labor unions and labor-management apprenticeship programs
  — State and local workforce agencies
  — Institutions of higher education, including (but not limited to) community colleges and other job training and adult education providers
  — Not-for-profit and community-based organizations, including community action agencies that provide supportive services and human services providers
  — Chambers of commerce, industry and trade associations, local and regional business owners, and other representatives from the private sector

Projected Outputs and Outcomes (up to 16 points)
- Short and medium-term results include both outputs (e.g., delivered products, services, trainings, or participants served) and outcomes (e.g.,

workforce/employer/participant accomplishments, changes, or improvements) anticipated as a result of the project. The logic model that provides examples of outputs and outcomes for a SUD project is available at the [ARC website](#).

- Applicants must clearly identify the anticipated long-term benefits to the participants, employers, and communities served by the grant, explaining how the activities and investments made under the grant continue to benefit the workforce and the economy five years after the end of the project. The logic model that provides examples of long-term benefits for a SUD project is available at the [ARC website](#).
- Outcomes achieved by the end of the grant period must include the number of individuals who obtain new or improved employment opportunities (e.g., internships/apprenticeships, part-time positions, full-time positions, etc.) and retain employment for a period of time that is appropriate for the project and employment opportunity.
- Outcomes achieved by the end of the grant period must include the following:
  — Businesses served (output) and improved (outcome).
  — Workers/trainees served (output) and improved (outcome) and/or students served (output) and improved (outcome).
  — Additionally, other performance measures for this grant type should be identified.

Strategic Alignment (up to 6 points)

- Explain how your project aligns with the goals of the ARC Strategic Plan and the strategy statements of the states in which you will be operating.
  — See *Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity—ARC Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2022–2026*, Goal 2: Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem: Expand and strengthen community systems (education, healthcare, housing, childcare, and others) that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.
- To find information on all 13 ARC state strategy statements, visit the [ARC website](#).
- If a project includes ARC counties from more than one state, applicants need to demonstrate how the proposed project aligns with each ARC state plan, specifically how the project supports a ready workforce.

Budget and Budget Narrative (up to 5 points)

See Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample Budget Narrative Template.
- All items included in the budget and budget narrative must align.
- All items included in the budget and budget narrative, including personnel, equipment, and minor construction, must align with the project as described.
- All items in the budget narrative must reflect the level of detail requested in the proposal.
- Provide a detailed budget that lists the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds.
- Provide a budget narrative that includes a detailed explanation of expenditures by the line items listed on Standard Form (SF) 424A. Include purpose of travel and supply/equipment lists, and describe expenses in the 'other' line item, if applicable.
- If the budget includes personnel or contractual expenses (cash or in-kind resources), estimate the number of hours/days and hourly rate (or portion of FTE and salary) for the time that is expected to be spent on the proposed project by key personnel, contractors, or consultants. (After a grant is awarded, all time should be tracked by actual hours worked for each individual.)

- Submit Standard Form 424A. (A PDF of the form is located on the ARC website.)
- Submit a detailed budget narrative.

Feasibility (up to 5 points)

- Ensure there is consistency between the project activities and the proposed budget.
- Ensure that the work plan, timeline, budget, and personnel resources match the project description and expected outputs of the project.

Organizational Capacity (up to 5 points)

- Demonstrate the project team's ability to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including, but not limited to, the project teams' qualifications and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal grant regulations; and organizational policies, procedures, and systems.

Additional Required Forms

Submit the following required forms (located on the ARC website in PDF).

- ARC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Application for Federal Assistance (SF424)
- Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF424A)
- Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF424B)

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
A. Executive Summary	Section 1	Points
Provide up to a one-page executive summary of project goals and strategies, purpose, key activities, and applicant information. See here for template.		Required
B. Statement of Need	Section 2	Up to 27 pts
Describe the service area.		1
List ARC counties impacted by project.		1
Describe the target population.		3
Describe the community needs as they pertain to SUD.		6
Describe the business needs.		5
Identify the economic and workforce-related challenges to workforce participation in the proposed service area.		4
Identify the gap(s) in behavioral health services, training, and provision of support services, including wraparound services and the community's capacity to create a recovery ecosystem to respond to these gaps and connect these responses to the priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative.		5
Identify/describe COVID-19 challenges.		2
C. Project Description	Section 3	Up to 36 pts

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
Provide a description of the applicant's organizational mission and work. Connect the mission of the organization to the seven priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative. (See Program Description for the list of priorities.) Describe the project's primary purpose, main activities, and expected deliverables.		7
Explain how the proposed elements of your project meet the needs of both the target population and businesses. (See Program Description for the list of seven priorities.)		5
Include the names of the workforce development organizations, training providers, and organizations that provide wraparound services for individuals in recovery. Explain how the organizations and providers are strategically positioned to support the services and activities that will help to expand or create a recovery ecosystem.		5
Explain how the project will assist employers in meeting their workforce and business needs.		5
Explain how the project expands or creates linkages between workforce development organization(s), training providers, and organizations that provide wraparound services for individuals in recovery.		5
Provide a work plan and timeline.		3
Submit at least three letters of engagement from partners.		6
D. Projected Outputs and Outcomes	Section 4	Up to 16 pts
E. Strategic Alignment	Section 5	Up to 6 pts
ARC Strategic Plan		3
ARC State Plan(s)		3
F. Budget and Budget Narrative.	Section 6	Up to 5 pts
See Appendices Appendix 1: Sample Budget Narrative Template.		
G. Feasibility	Section 7	Up to 5 pts
Personnel, work plan, timeline, and budget consign with project description and activities.		
H. Organizational Capacity	Section 8	Up to 5 pts

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
Demonstrate the ability for the project team to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including, but not limited to, the project teams' qualifications and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal grant regulations; and organizational policies, procedures, and systems.		
I. Required Forms	Section 9	Required

1.   ARC MOU
    2.   SF424
    3.   SF424A
    4. SF424B		

Total		100

Criteria for Planning Grants

Applications for planning grants must meet the minimum criteria and can earn up to 50 points, based on the following elements:

A.	Executive Summary	Submit required form.
B.	Project Description	Up to 25 points
C.	Strategic Alignment	Up to 6 points
D.	Project Output	Up to 2 points
E.	Work Plan and Timeline	Up to 3 points
F.	Budget and Budget Narrative	Up to 4 points
G.	Organizational Capacity	Up to 5 points
H.	Feasibility	Up to 5 points
I.	Required Forms: ARC MOU, SF424, SF424A, and SF424B	Submit required forms.

Applicants must have a well-articulated analysis of why and how the local and regional economy has been negatively impacted by the substance use crisis in their region. Applicants must also describe how their proposal meets an unmet need, is a complement to existing initiatives (if applicable), and is not duplicative of any ongoing efforts in the project area.

Executive Summary (required form)

- Provide up to a one-page executive summary of project goals and strategies, purpose, key activities, strategic alignment, collaborative partnerships, and performance measures. Visit the ARC website for an Executive Summary template.

Project Description (up to 25 points)

- Provide a description of the applicant's mission and work, including target population and ARC counties served by the project.
- Provide an explanation of the scope of work, steps, methods, and intended results of the project.

- Demonstrate a strong rationale in support of the seven INSPIRE priorities. (See the section titled Program Description for the list of priorities.)
- Provide an explanation of how the project leverages or contributes to existing efforts to assess or plan for workforce entry and reentry for individuals affected by SUD. If no efforts exist, explain and provide documentation (e.g., documented gaps or efforts noted in a Chamber of Commerce report or local economic development plan).
- Explain how project staff and partners reflect the community their proposed project is intended to benefit/impact.
- Identify how data and/or information will be collected and used to demonstrate the degree to which project activities will be accomplished.
- Provide an explanation of how the outcomes of this project will be used to transition to project implementation.

Strategic Alignment (up to 6 points)
- Provide an explanation of how your project aligns with the goals of the ARC strategic plan, *Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity—ARC Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2022–2026*. Describe how the project makes an impact towards furthering these goals.
- Provide an explanation of how your project aligns with the strategy statements of the states in which you will be operating. Information on these strategy statements can be located is on the ARC website.

Projected Output (up to 2 points)
- Demonstrate how pursuing the outlined scope of work will help facilitate the formulation of a potential implementation project. Include discussion of where and how the potential funding could be found beyond the ARC INSPIRE Initiative.
- Include a description of how project stakeholders envision the proposed project transforming and furthering the long-term community and economic development of the project region.

Work Plan and Timeline (up to 3 points)
- Provide a detailed work plan and timeline of the project.

Budget and Budget Narrative (up to 4 points)
- All items included in the budget and budget narrative, including personnel, equipment, and minor construction, must align with the project as described.
- All items in the budget narrative must reflect the level of detail requested in the proposal.
- Provide a detailed budget that lists the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds.
- Provide a budget narrative that includes a detailed explanation of expenditures by the line items listed on Standard Form (SF) 424A. Include purpose of travel and supply/equipment lists, and describe expenses in the 'other' line item, if applicable.
- If the budget includes personnel or contractual expenses (cash or in-kind resources), estimate the number of hours/days and hourly rate (or portion of FTE and salary) for the time that is expected to be spent on the proposed project by key personnel, contractors, or consultants. (After a grant is awarded, all time should be tracked by actual hours worked for each individual.)
- Submit Standard Form 424A. (A PDF of the form is located on the ARC website.)
- Submit a detailed budget narrative. See Appendices
- Appendix 1: Sample Budget Narrative Template.

Organizational Capacity (up to 5 points)

- Demonstrate the ability for the project team to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including, but not limited to, the project teams' qualifications and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal grant regulations; and organizational policies, procedures, and systems.

Feasibility (up to 5 points)

- Ensure there is consistency between the project activities and the proposed budget.
- Ensure that the work plan, timeline, budget, and personnel resources match with the project description and expected outputs of the project.

Additional Required Forms

Submit the following required forms (located on the ARC website in PDF).

- ARC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Application for Federal Assistance (SF424)
- Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF424A)
- Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF424B)

Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects

Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects		
A. Executive Summary	Section 1	Required
Provide up to a one-page executive summary of project goals and strategies, purpose, key activities, and applicant information. See template provided at www.arc.gov/SUD		
B. Project Description	Section 2	Up to 25 pts
Describe the applicant's mission and work, including target population and ARC counties served by the project.		3
Explain the scope of work, steps, methods and intended results of the project.		4
Demonstrate a strong rationale in support of the seven INSPIRE priorities that are applicable to your request. (See Program Description for the list of priorities.)		4
Explain how the project leverages or contributes to existing efforts to assess or plan for workforce entry and reentry for individuals affected by SUD. If no efforts exist, explain and provide documentation.		4
Explain how project staff and partners reflect the community their proposed project is intended to benefit/impact.		3
Identify how data and/or information will be collected and used to demonstrate the degree to which project activities will be accomplished.		4
Explain how the outcomes of this project will be used to transition to project implementation.		3

Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects		
C. Strategic Alignment	Section 3	Up to 6 pts
Explain how your project aligns with the goals of the ARC Strategic Plan and describe how the project makes an impact towards furthering these goals.		3
Explain how your project aligns with the strategy statements of the states in which you will be operating.		3
D. Project Outputs	Section 4	Up to 2 pts
E. Work Plan and Timeline	Section 5	Up to 3 pts
F. Budget and Budget Narrative	Section 6	Up to 4 pts
G. Organizational Capacity	Section 7	Up to 5 pts
Demonstrate the ability for the project team to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including, but not limited to, the project teams' qualifications and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal grant regulations; and organizational policies, procedures, and systems.		
H. Feasibility	Section 8	Up to 5 pts
Personnel, work plan, timeline, and budget consign with project description and activities.		
I. Additional Required Forms	Section 9	Required
1. ARC MOU 2. SF424 3. SF424A 4. SF424B		
Total		**50**

Cost Sharing or Matching

Under this RFP, applicants for an ARC INSPIRE Initiative grant must demonstrate a matching share from non-ARC sources that is identified as accessible and available to the project.

Matching sources may be non-federal, other federal, or a combination of sources, including in-kind sources. The maximum share of ARC assistance is determined by the ARC classification of the county or counties served by the proposed activity. Applicants may request up to 80% of the total project cost when the county, or all counties, served by a project has been designated as economically "distressed" according to ARC's Fiscal Year 2022 classification. A table summarizing ARC's economic designations and the maximum ARC share for each Appalachian county can be found on the ARC website.

To determine the match rate for an ARC multi-county project, special matching rules apply:

1. If there is a distressed county in the project and:
    a. at least half of the counties are distressed, the project may be funded at up to 80% of project costs.
    b. at least half of the counties are some combination of distressed and at-risk, ARC assistance can be the higher of 70% of project costs or the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project.
    c. fewer than half the counties are distressed, ARC assistance can be the higher of 50% of project costs or the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project.
2. If there is no competitive county or attainment county in a project, and at least half the counties are at-risk, the project may be funded at up to 70% of project costs.
3. All other multi-county projects shall be funded at the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project (i.e., 80%, 70%, 50%, 30%, or 0%); except that the portion of a project that is attributable to an attainment county in a project that does not include a distressed county shall be considered ineligible for ARC assistance and may not be considered for matching purposes.

Application and Submission Information

Grant applications follow ARC's standard application policies and procedures.

Letter of intent due	**March 3, 2022**
Grant proposal due	**March 24, 2022**
Awards announced	**August 1, 2022**

Letter of Intent

Applicants are required to submit a one-page letter of intent (LOI) in PDF format to SUD@arc.gov by March 3, 2022. A letter of intent (LOI) is required for both implementation applications and planning grant applications. The LOI template is located on the ARC website. Briefly identify contact information, and describe the scope of the proposed project, key partners, geographic scope, and funding request amount. Once receipt of the LOI is confirmed, the ARC state program managers of each state impacted by the proposal will be notified of your intent to apply, and your LOI will be forwarded to them.

Submitted applications for INSPIRE Fiscal Year 2022 funding that substantially differ from the information included on the received LOI will be disqualified during the review process.

Prior to the submission of the final application, every applicant is required to contact the ARC state program managers of the states impacted by the project proposal. It is also highly encouraged that you reach out to your state program manager to solicit their feedback on your application and/or program design, and most importantly ensure your proposal is in alignment with your state's Appalachian economic development priorities. A list of ARC state program managers can be found the ARC website.

Note: Submission of the LOI does not replace or satisfy the requirement that applicants must contact the appropriate state program managers.

Applications

Applications are limited to 50 pages; this total includes both the narrative and the uploaded attachments. Applicants must provide a comprehensive narrative that

addresses all of the criteria and priorities noted in this RFP. The narrative must be limited to 15 pages, single spaced, in 12-point font size.

Only applications that meet the following criteria will be scored:

1. Applicant must meet eligibility requirements.
2. Applicant can only submit one application per eligible applicant.
3. Application must meet the ARC cost-share matching requirement for the proposed service area.
4. Applicant has contacted ARC state program manager(s) **to notify state(s) of the intent to submit an LOI and application to ARC.**
5. A letter of intent (LOI) must be submitted to ARC. Submission instructions:
   — Submit as PDF to SUD@arc.gov by March 3, 2022, at 5 PM (ET).
   — Once receipt of LOI is confirmed, it will be forwarded to the respective state program managers. **Note**: This step does not satisfy the requirement that applicants must contact state program managers.
   — Submitted applications for funding that substantially differ from the information included on the received LOI will be disqualified during the review process.
6. Application must be uploaded via an application portal no later than 5 PM (ET) on March 24, 2022. The application portal will be made available to the public no later than 5 PM (ET) on February 7, 2022. For information on how to access the portal, visit the ARC INSPIRE Initiative webpage on February 7, 2022, after 5pm ET, or directly navigate to the portal located here. The applicant is required to submit **two separate PDF files**:
   — PDF 1: The Executive Summary
   — PDF 2: All other application materials and required forms combined into one PDF
7. Further guidance on submission can be found on the ARC INSPIRE Initiative webpage.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

As required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 and Title 2, Section 25, of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR §25), applicants are required to comply with the following:

- Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before any federal funds are awarded to the applicant. SAM now encompasses the Central Contractor Registration (CCR);
- Provide a valid Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number in their application; and
- Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they have an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency.

Links to register for SAMS and DUNS respectively are available at www.arc.gov/SUD. Before making an award, ARC will review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313).

An applicant may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.

ARC will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.206.

Submission Dates, Times, and Instructions

All applications are due March 24, 2022, at 5 PM (ET). **Faxed or mailed applications will *not* be accepted.**

After an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process during which the application may be accepted or rejected due to errors, incomplete information, or ineligible applicant and/or service area. Be advised that it may take several days for the validation process to be completed and that the process may not begin until after the application deadline. Applications found to be missing required information or to contain critical errors will not be reviewed or evaluated.

Funding Restrictions

Treatment services are restricted to behavioral health services, including post-SUD treatment wraparound services, to assist those in recovery with maintaining their recovery as they enter or reenter the workforce.

Indirect Costs

See Appendix 2: Indirect Cost Rates.

Application Review Information

Applications will first be reviewed by the ARC alternates/state program managers of the states in which the project's activities and impacts are located. This initial review will ensure that the project's scope of work is strategic and compatible with the state's existing economic development priorities. Upon completion of the initial review, ARC will engage a joint team of experts to review and score applications based on the criteria set out in this document.

ARC reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with applicants that have been selected to receive awards, which may include requesting that the applicant remove or adjust certain proposed costs.

Additionally, ARC may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information pertaining to any aspect of the application. ARC also reserves the right to reject an application where information is uncovered that raises a reasonable doubt as to the applicant's ability to successfully fulfill the objectives and requirements of the grant award.

ARC, in its complete and sole discretion, may select for award some, all, or none of the applications received under this competitive solicitation. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the ARC federal co-chair and the respective state ARC official(s). The award decision of the ARC federal co-chair and the respective state ARC official(s) is final.

Award Administration

General management and administration requirements for non-construction projects are contained in the ARC Grant Administration Manual for Non-Construction Grant Agreements. Administration of ARC awards is also subject to the same regulations,

restrictions, and requirements as other federal awards. These include but are not limited to uniform administrative requirements and cost principles at 2 CFR §200, as currently updated; Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); past performance and non-compliance; restrictions on making awards to corporations convicted of felony criminal violations and unpaid federal tax liabilities; environmental and historic preservation; and national policy requirements, including but not limited to those protecting free speech, religious liberty, public welfare, the environment, and prohibiting discrimination, e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Recipients of non-construction grants must adhere to ARC reporting requirements as identified in the ARC Grant Administration Manual for Non-Construction Grant Agreements. However, ARC reserves the right to change the reporting time periods and, depending on the nature of the project, may request additional relevant data.

ARC Agency Contact Information

Prior to submission of the application, every applicant is required to contact the state program managers of the states impacted by the project proposal. The state officials will ensure that the proposals are in alignment with their state Appalachian economic development priorities. State program managers also serve as a resource regarding any questions applicants have about the INSPIRE Initiative in general or about the use of agency funds to support projects in their communities and regions. Applicants with additional questions may submit them to SUD@arc.gov.

General Disclosures

INSPIRE Initiative awards will be made only to the extent that funds are available. Publication of this RFP does not obligate ARC to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds. Applicants intending to contract with a specific individual, consulting group, or organization with ARC funding must have a written competitive procurement policy in place that complies with federal procurement standards in 2 CFR §200.

This RFP does not commit ARC to make any specific award. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the RFP, ARC reserves the right to award grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts to communities or regions that best meet the requirements of the RFP. The Appalachian Regional Commission solely reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses received as a result of this request; to negotiate with all qualified sources; or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP if it is in the interests of ARC to do so.

Note: ARC will not reimburse any other costs associated with the preparation of a response to this RFP. Consultants and consultant teams that are legally barred from receiving federal contracts or contract payments will not be considered for work with communities or regions under this RFP.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample Budget Narrative Template
Visit the ARC website for a budget narrative template (recommended for applicant use, but not required). **Please note this template is only an example, and should be modified to fit activities described in your proposal.**

Appendix 2: Indirect Cost Rates

For more information about indirect cost rates, visit the [electronic Code of Federal Regulations](#).

Applicants must use one of the following indirect cost rates:

1. If you have a **Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)**, provide an explanation of how the indirect costs are calculated in the Match and Budget Evaluation section of the application narrative. **Also, provide a current version of the NICRA.**
2. Pursuant to revised grants regulations that became effective on November 12, 2020, any organization that does not currently have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those entities described in Appendix VII to 2 CFR §200, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of **10% based on modified total direct costs**, as defined in 2 CFR §200. **No documentation is required to justify the 10% de minimis indirect cost rate**, which may be used indefinitely. However, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, and may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If you choose this option, this methodology must be used consistently for all federal awards until such time as you choose to negotiate for an indirect cost rate, for which you may apply at any time. (See 2 CFR §200.414[f] for more information on use of the de minimis rate.)

Modified Total Direct Cost Rate Definition

Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) refers to all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award).

MTDC **excludes** equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

Appendix 3: Subcontractor vs. Contractor Determinations

If necessary for your proposal, linked below you will find guidance on what information is needed in a subaward vs. contractor agreement:

- [Code of Federal Regulations—Subrecipient and Contractor Determinations](#)
- [Legal Updates Volume 4—Subaward Contract Distinction](#)
- [Legal Updates Volume 10—Subaward Agreements](#)
- [Legal Updates Newsletter—Procurement](#)