



Appalachian  
Regional  
Commission

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**Worker Displacement  
in Appalachia**

**Proposals are due on or before 5:00 p.m. EDT  
April 12, 2023**

Attention: Logan Thomas  
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## Appalachian Regional Commission Request for Proposals: Worker Displacement in Appalachia

Open date:	March 1, 2023
Questions due:	March 15, 2023
Answers posted on ARC website:	March 22, 2023
Proposal due date:	April 12, 2023
Interview period:	April 24, 2023 – May 5, 2023
Selection date:	May 5, 2023
Contract period:	May 10, 2023 – June 30, 2024

### I. Overview of Request for Proposals

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC or the Commission) invites proposals from qualified researchers and consultants to examine worker displacement in the Appalachian Region (the Region) over the past decade. The work should include analysis of at least the past five iterations of the [Displaced Worker Survey \(DWS\)](#), conducted every two years by the United States Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) as a supplement to the [Current Population Survey \(CPS\)](#). Data from the surveys should provide a nuanced view of worker displacement throughout the Region, including how experiences vary based on geography, industry employed, and worker characteristics.

At the broadest level, the experiences of workers in Appalachia should be compared to those in the non-Appalachian United States. Variation within the Region should also be explored by subregion, metro/rural designation, and Appalachian portions of states. The report should examine trends in the data, and how the experiences of displaced workers have changed over time.

A literature review of research examining worker displacement and employment trends should accompany the quantitative analysis and provide context to the data findings. The last exploration of worker displacement by the Commission [took place in 2005](#). The analysis and methodologies used by researchers in that report should inform the current effort.

The audience for this report includes state and local economic development practitioners, policymakers, and other researchers.

The selected researcher or consultant will work closely with ARC staff in the development of this report. Required deliverables include the following:

- Final report that includes extensive analysis and discussion, as well as compelling visuals (i.e., graphs, tables, maps).
- A standalone executive summary highlighting key findings and takeaways.
- Presentation to ARC leadership and staff upon completion of the report, which may be conducted virtually. A slide deck should also be provided. Contractor should also be open to additional presentations in order to further disseminate findings and inform stakeholders throughout the Region.
- Edited datasets and results of statistical analyses. The files should be clean and easily navigable, and metadata should accompany each.
- Underlying GIS files for all maps included in the report.

## II. Background

### A. About Appalachia

The Appalachian Region, as defined in ARC's authorizing legislation, is a 206,000 square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Forty-two percent of the Region's population lives in rural communities, compared with 19% of the national population.

The Appalachian Region's economy, which was once highly dependent on extractive industries, has become more diversified in recent times and now includes larger shares of manufacturing and professional services, among other industries. Appalachia has made significant socioeconomic progress over the past five decades: Its poverty rate, which was 30.9% in 1960, fell to 14.7% over the 2016–2020 period. The number of high-poverty counties in the Region (those with poverty rates greater than 1.5 times the U.S. average) declined from 297 in 1960 to 117 over the 2016–2020 period. Since the 2011–2015 period, the share of Appalachian adults ages 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher has risen by nearly three percentage points, to 25.4%, in 2016–2020. Additionally, the high school completion rate for the Region is now almost equal to that of the country, after decades of lagging behind.

These gains have transformed the Region from one of widespread poverty to one of economic contrasts. Some communities have successfully diversified their economies, while others still require basic infrastructure such as roads, clinics, and water and wastewater systems. The contrasts are not surprising in light of Appalachia's size and diversity—the Region extends more than 1,000 miles from southern New York to northeastern Mississippi and is home to over 26 million people.

### B. About the Appalachian Regional Commission

The Appalachian Regional Commission is a regional economic development agency serving 423 counties across the Appalachian Region. Established by an act of Congress in 1965, the Commission is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states, as well as a federal co-chair appointed by the president of the United States and confirmed by the Senate. Annually, the group of governors elects one governor to serve as the states' co-chair. To strengthen local participation, ARC works with the Appalachian states to support a network of multicounty planning and development organizations, or local development districts (LDDs), throughout the Region. Seventy-four LDDs cover all 423 counties in the Region. The LDDs help identify needs of local communities, assist with participation in ARC programs, and at times serve as pass-through entities or fiscal agents to local grantees.

ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia. ARC funds projects that address the five goals identified in its strategic plan:

1. Strengthen and diversify the Region's economy through inclusive economic development strategies and investments in entrepreneurship and business development.
2. 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.

3. Ensure that the residents and businesses of Appalachia have access to reliable, affordable, resilient, and energy-efficient utilities and infrastructure in order to successfully live and work in the Region.
4. Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by preserving and investing in the Region's local, cultural heritage, and natural assets.
5. Invest in the capacity of local leaders, organizations, and communities to address local challenges by providing technical assistance and support to access resources, engage partners, identify strategies and tactics, and conduct effective planning and project execution.

Each year, ARC provides funding for approximately 500 projects 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 wastewater systems; increase school readiness; expand access to health care; assist local communities with strategic planning; and provide technical and managerial assistance to emerging businesses.

Additional information about the Appalachian Regional Commission can be found at [www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov).

### III. Scope of Work

The primary goal of the report is to examine worker displacement in the Appalachian Region over the past decade. The past five iterations of the Displaced Worker Survey should serve as the foundation of the work. Data from the 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 DWS supplements should be examined; these supplements cover the experiences of workers during the periods of 2011–2013, 2013–2015, 2015–2017, 2017–2019, and 2019–2021, respectively.

Using data from the DWS supplements, the experiences of displaced workers should be compared based on differences in geography, industry employed, and worker characteristics (e.g., age, race, sex, educational attainment). In particular, the experiences of displaced workers in Appalachia should be compared to those in non-Appalachia. Variation within the Region should also be examined by subregion, metro classification, and Appalachian portions of states.

All questions included in the DWS should be examined. In particular, the specific circumstances of workers' displacement should be analyzed, including tenure on lost job, reason for job loss, and whether they've been re-employed since they lost their job.

The final report should consist primarily of tables and graphs, though a brief narrative should accompany each. An executive summary should highlight key findings. A technical appendix should provide a comprehensive overview of the data sources and methodologies used in the report, including geographic estimation techniques and significance tests.

### IV. Methodology

The successful applicant will develop a detailed methodology to analyze the topics specified in section I, Overview of Request for Proposals, and section III, Scope of Work. The methodology should include the following:

1. **Plan for obtaining all relevant datasets.** The proposal should specify the sources and programs that will be used for accessing the relevant CPS and DWS data.

2. **Plan for estimating Appalachian observations.** Given the limited geographic identifiers in the DWS data, researchers must incorporate additional datasets and estimation techniques in order to identify observations as Appalachian or non-Appalachian. The proposal should identify the procedures that will be used to do so, including how they differ from those used by researchers in ARC's 2005 report.
3. **Variables and framework of analysis.** The proposal should discuss variables in the DWS and how the data will be aggregated and analyzed. Particular emphasis should be given to how the data will be broken down by geography and worker characteristics.
4. **Additional data sources.** If additional data sources are recommended in the proposal, all relevant details should be made clear, including how the inclusion will benefit the overall work.

Proposals can offer additional steps and methodological approaches as needed. The proposal should make clear why the approach is being included and how it will lead to a better overall report.

## V. Technical, Management, and Cost Proposal Contents

### A. Technical Proposal

The narrative should not exceed 12 pages, not including the abstract and accompanying resumes and organizational background materials.

#### *i. Summary Abstract (300 words)*

In this section, provide a brief abstract of the proposal by summarizing the background, objectives, proposed methodologies, and expected outputs and results of the research.

#### *ii. Methodology*

Describe the step-by-step approach or methods intended to accomplish all the tasks specified in this RFP. The proposal should provide a detailed explanation of the datasets and methodologies to be used in all facets of the work. The proposal should identify the points and tasks in this research project that will require participation by ARC staff. Finally, the proposal should identify any difficulties that may be encountered in this project and propose practical and sound solutions to these problems.

#### *iii. Project Work Plan and Milestones*

The proposal should describe the phases into which the proposed work can be logically divided and performed. A schedule of milestones and deadlines should be specified for the completion of various work elements. Regular check-in meetings with ARC staff are also required. Please note: It is the responsibility of the contractor to provide line editing of the final report/deliverable. Contractors should budget accordingly.

#### *iv. Key Personnel*

All personnel taking part in the research must be described in this section. Brief resumes should include the professional classifications (e.g., project director, economist, analyst, consultant, line editor, etc.), education, and relevant experience of key personnel. The selected contractor will be required to furnish the services of those identified in the proposal as key personnel. Any change in key personnel is subject to approval by ARC.

## B. Management Proposal

Resources and capacities related to the planning and management of the research project will be considered as part of the proposal selection process.

### *i. Business Management Organization and Personnel*

Furnish a brief narrative description of the organization, including the division or branch planned to perform the proposed effort, and the authority responsible for controlling these resources and personnel.

### *ii. Staffing Plan*

A staffing plan is required that describes the contractor's proposed staff distribution to accomplish this work. The staffing plan should present a chart that assigns the full time equivalent (FTE) commitment of each staff member to the project's tasks and schedule. In addition, the proposal should include a detailed description of activities for key project-related personnel and anticipated deliverables. Finally, the proposal should identify the relationship of key project personnel to the contracting organization, including consultants and subcontractors.

### *iii. Relevant Prior Experience*

The proposal must describe the qualifications and experience of the organization and the personnel to be assigned to the project. Information provided should include examples of past experience with the specific subject matter and data sources. Please provide examples (links and/or attachments) of the three most similar research reports undertaken by the applicant's organization. If appropriate, provide organization names and addresses, names of contact persons, and telephone numbers for reference.

### *iv. Contract Agreement Requirements*

In this section of the proposal, the contractor should identify any special requirements they want to include in the contract.

## C. Cost Proposal

ARC estimates this effort to cost \$200,000 to \$250,000. However, contractors should estimate their own costs for their analysis. Final contract awarded for this project will be a [firm-fixed-price contract](#). Payments shall be made on a monthly or quarterly schedule (depending on contractor preference). The contract terms shall remain firm during the project and shall include all charges that may be incurred in fulfilling the terms of the contract.

Proposals must contain all cost information, including direct labor costs (consistent with the staffing plan), labor overhead costs, travel, estimated cost of any subcontracts, other direct costs (such as those for databases), total direct cost and overhead, and total cost and fee or profit.

Proposals should include a plan for a kickoff meeting, regular check-in meetings, and a final presentation of key findings and recommendations to all staff. We anticipate these meetings to be conducted virtually. However, proposals should include travel costs, if applicable, for any potential in-person activities such as site visits.

ARC policy on allowable indirect overhead costs for university-based contracts is to permit universities to charge the same rates charged to their own state agencies. ARC will honor indirect rates as suggested by the contractor. However, be aware that a lower indirect rate may be more competitive in the selection process.

## VI. Copyrights

The federal government, through the Appalachian Regional Commission, reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for federal government purposes, any work developed under a contract, grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant, and to use, and authorize others to use for federal government purposes, any copyrights which a grantee, a subgrantee, or a contractor purchases with grant support or contract funds. Such license to use includes but is not limited to the publication of such work on an ARC website and social media. Use of such works for purposes related to Appalachia and the development of Appalachia is generally authorized by ARC to state and local governments in the Appalachian Region and to other public and private not-for-profit organizations serving Appalachia, including the Appalachian local development districts (LDDs).

## VII. Proposal Submission

Proposals are due on or before 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on April 12, 2023. Please send proposals as one PDF to Logan Thomas, Economist, at [lthomas@arc.gov](mailto:lthomas@arc.gov).

Additionally:

- Submissions must be sent via email.
- Responses or unsolicited amendments will not be accepted after the closing date and time.
- Requests for time extensions past any deadlines will not be considered.
- Questions may be submitted to Logan Thomas ([lthomas@arc.gov](mailto:lthomas@arc.gov)) by March 15, 2023. Answers will be posted on the [Contract Opportunities](#) section of the ARC website on March 22, 2023.

## VIII. Evaluation of Proposals

All proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- A complete, clearly articulated, and logical study design that responds to each element of this RFP.
- Technically competent methodology.
- Qualifications and prior research experience in the following:
  - Labor economics and worker displacement
  - CPS and other Census Bureau datasets
  - Analytical methods and estimation techniques similar to those required here
- A credible management proposal for staffing, and the capability to carry out and support the project in a timely fashion.
- Cost effectiveness of the proposal.
- All else being equal, preference will be given to firms and organizations located in or near the Appalachian Region.

It is anticipated that the contractor will be selected by May 5, 2023, for an estimated contract start date of May 10, 2023, and completion date of June 30, 2024.