



# Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative

## Federal Fiscal Year 2024—Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA) for Project Grants

This notice of solicitation of applications (NOSA) for project grants provides a general overview of the INSPIRE Initiative, as well as the specific requirements needed to complete a grant application.

<b>NOSA release date</b>	<b>January 8, 2024</b>
<b>Application portal opens</b>	<b>January 22, 2024</b> Portal link located <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Letter of intent (LOI) due</b>	<b>February 16, 2024</b>
<b>Virtual pre-application workshop</b>	<b>February 8, 2024</b> Register for workshop <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Getting the Grant workshops</b>	Register for in-person workshops <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>ARC grant writing office hours</b>	January 25, 2024 - Register <a href="#">here</a> . February 1, 2024 - Register <a href="#">here</a> . February 22, 2024 - Register <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Grant proposal due</b>	<b>March 8, 2024 by 5 PM ET</b>
<b>Awards announced</b>	<b>September 2024</b>

The closing date for receipt of applications under this announcement is March 8, 2024. ARC must receive final applications no later than 5 PM Eastern Time (ET).

Further guidance on submission can be found at <https://www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/sud/>.

Questions can be emailed to [SUD@arc.gov](mailto: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 206,000-square-mile region of 26.1 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 to present 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 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 dozens of experts at the local, state, and federal level. On May 13, 2019, ARC announced the formation of the Substance Use Disorder Advisory Council (SUDAC), currently a 22-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 regional Recovery-to-Work Listening Sessions, the SUDAC 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 SUDAC, visit the [ARC website](#).

Experts and community leaders consistently state that for persons in recovery from SUD, having stable and meaningful employment 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 regional community empathy, energy, and expertise, 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 notice of solicitation of applications (NOSA) to receive grant proposals under this announcement. In FY23, ARC made available up to \$13 million in federal financial assistance to help Appalachian communities and regions that have been affected by the substance abuse crisis through the INvestments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative. ARC will be accepting INSPIRE applications in FY24 consistent with funding levels available through the Congressional appropriations process. Final funding levels in this program may be subject to change based on the enactment of the annual appropriations bill, any other legislative action, or policy priorities. ARC reserves the right to adjust the amounts awarded in INSPIRE based on the final appropriations, other relevant legislative developments or policy priorities. 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 substance use disorder (SUD) models and practices, and resources in support of implementing existing economic development strategic plans that create pathways to employment for those in SUD recovery.** For a list of evidence-based resources and guidelines from the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), visit the [SAMHSA website](#).

In addition to the requirements described in this NOSA, 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's Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia's Opportunities 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.

## 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 substance use disorder (SUD). Projects are encouraged to support the post-treatment-to-employment continuum, such as the following, among others:

- 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
- Initiatives designed to coordinate or link SUD recovery services and employment training

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 the establishment of clearly defined career pathways in training programs that accommodate continued employment growth. [See INSPIRE Award Summaries by State](#) for more information on the types of activities that have been funded by the INSPIRE initiative.

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 drugs, see the [National Institute on Drug Abuse's website](#).

The INSPIRE Initiative targets the recovery-to-work continuum; applications are encouraged to focus on the SUD recovery ecosystem as it is defined in this NOSA while also addressing the complex needs, barriers, and leverage points of this continuum. For a catalog of ideas related to the continuum, see [this list](#) generated by the SUDAC 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; utilize prevention-focused SUD activities that reduce future substance use or misuse and engage individuals in health and economic community-oriented activities;
2. 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 practitioners, faith-based entities) to assist people in recovery with maintaining their recovery as they enter or reenter the workforce;
3. Create, expand, or leverage workplace programs and policies that support employees in recovery from SUD;
4. 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;
5. Deliver support services to assist employers and industry in meeting current and/or future workforce challenges to support the SUD recovery ecosystem;
6. Develop and implement plans for strengthening partnerships/coalitions/consortiums with the addition of new partners (local, state, regional);
7. 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;

8. 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);
9. Align and integrate SUD plans, programmatic activities, and strategies with existing state, regional, or community health and economic development strategies; and
10. Develop an ecosystem, through capacity building of health and workforce activities, to strengthen community interventions and enhance coordination of the SUD recovery-to-work model.

## 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 and **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 must have established partnerships and networks (see [SUD ecosystem visual](#) for ideas on potential partners in this work), 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.**

Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Organizations with linkages to various stakeholders, which may include employers, social services, treatment/recovery services, criminal justice organizations, 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 must 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 future 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);
- Identifying, through workforce modeling, gap analysis, or other research-based practices, the current workforce gaps and challenges and/or 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 include the following:

- Local development districts (LDDs)
- Indian tribes or a consortium of Indian tribes
- States, counties, cities, or other political subdivisions 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

**Note:** ARC does not award grants to individuals or for-profit entities.

## Ineligibility

Please note that current INSPIRE, and other ARC SUD grantees, are eligible to apply for INSPIRE FY 2024 funds only if the applicant's scope of work is new and does not overlap with a current open INSPIRE or other ARC SUD focused grant. For grantees with awards scheduled to be completed before October 1, 2024, new applications should include an expansion of geography, increased scope of work with an existing concept, or a proposal with a new concept. In their application, current or previous grantees must provide a thorough status update on their existing project(s) as well as demonstrate sufficient organizational capacity to administer multiple awards.

## Criteria for Implementation Grants

Final applications are scored based on the required criteria below and their respective points.

In scoring the applications, ARC will consider how well the applicant provided detailed information for each section. Examples include the following:

- In the Community Needs section, did the applicant include data on the number of overdoses or individuals experiencing SUD, current employer needs, or future workforce demands?
- In the SF-424A and budget narrative, do the numbers across columns and line items add up correctly?
- Did the applicant provide sufficient information for each requested line item in the budget narrative?

Additionally, ARC is looking to see if the applicant successfully used storytelling and data to craft a compelling implementation grant proposal that demonstrates how they plan to build, improve, and/or expand their SUD recovery-to-work ecosystem.



Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
<b>A. Executive Summary</b>	Section 1	Points
Use the required INSPIRE Fiscal Year 2024 <a href="#">Executive Summary template</a> to provide information on project goals and strategies, the project’s purpose, key activities, and applicant information. See <a href="#">template on the ARC website</a> .		Required
<b>B. Implementation Grant Template</b>		Required Up to 5 pts
Complete the application using the fillable grant template located <a href="#">here</a> .		
<b>C. Statement of Need</b>	Section 2	Up to 25 pts
Describe the service area.		1
List ARC counties impacted by project, why this population was selected, and how the applicant plans to recruit this population.  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 <a href="#">ARC website</a> .		1
Describe the target population.  An applicant’s proposal must target youth (ages 15–24) and/or adults (e.g., displaced workers, unemployed, underemployed, grandparents, etc.) in order to reduce future and/or current use, economic impacts of SUD, and associated harms within the region, with the ultimate goal of assisting individuals to enter or reenter the workforce.  Whether your project targets adults and/or youth, the overall program design must tie back to workforce entry or reentry.		4
Describe the community needs as they pertain to the expansion, creation, or improvement of a recovery ecosystem.  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 on the <a href="#">INSPIRE website</a> , from <a href="#">Appendix 5</a> of this NOSA, or from other sources to demonstrate community and regional impacts of substance use in their region.		5
Describe the business needs 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.		5

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
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.  <i>Note:</i> Applicants must provide appropriate third-party economic and demographic statistics, including persistent poverty and unemployment rate data for the applicable community or region (for example, census tract or county), in order to document the extent to which the local economy has been negatively impacted. If data for this section is non-existent or hard to obtain for your project territory, news articles from pertinent websites are acceptable.		5
<b>D. Project Description</b>	Section 3	Up to 36 pts
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.		
Provide a description of the applicant's organizational mission and work. Connect the mission of the organization to the priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative. (See <a href="#">Program Description</a> 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 <a href="#">Program Description</a> for the list of 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, 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. If appropriate or		5

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
available, include documentation from organizations that provide wraparound services for those in recovery expressing a need for the provision of services for the target population. <i>Note:</i> If data for this section is non-existent or hard to obtain for your project territory, news articles from pertinent websites are acceptable.		
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.  Describe how the proposal aligns with the needs of businesses and organizations that provide wraparound services for those in recovery.		5
Provide a work plan and timeline. Required: <a href="#">Appendix 4: Workplan and Timeline</a>		3
Submit at least three letters of engagement from partners.  Per the priorities and funding principles described previously, applicants are expected to assemble new or existing partnerships of community, health, and/or 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. Applications should demonstrate the existing involvement of the state or local government agencies responsible for behavioral health and workforce development or, alternatively, a clear plan to secure such involvement. Overall project team membership can be composed of, but is not limited to, the following types of organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development organizations</li> <li>• Local governments</li> <li>• Planning organizations and Local Development Districts (LDDs)</li> <li>• Labor unions and labor-management apprenticeship programs</li> <li>• State and local workforce agencies</li> <li>• Institutions of higher education, including (but not limited to) community colleges and other job training and adult education providers</li> <li>• Not-for-profit and community-based organizations, including community action agencies that provide supportive services and human services providers</li> <li>• Chambers of commerce, industry and trade associations, local and regional business owners, and other representatives from the private sector</li> </ul>		6

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
<b>E. Projected Outputs and Outcomes</b>	Section 4	Up to 13 pts
<p>See <a href="#">Appendix 7: Logic Model and Performance Measures</a>.</p> <p>Short- and medium-term results should 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. See Appendix 7 for a logic model that provides examples of outputs and outcomes for a SUD project.</p> <p>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 are anticipated to continue benefiting the workforce and the economy five years after the end of the project. See Appendix 7 for a logic model that provides examples of long-term benefits for a SUD project.</p> <p>Outcomes to be achieved by the end of the grant period must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses served (output) and improved (outcome).</li> <li>• Workers/trainees served (output) and improved (outcome) or students served (output) and improved (outcome).</li> <li>• Additionally, other performance measures for this grant type should be identified.</li> </ul> <p>Please see ARC’s approved <a href="#">performance measures</a> for a list of measures suitable for use.</p>		
<b>F. Strategic Alignment</b>	Section 5	Up to 6 pts
<p>ARC Strategic Plan</p> <p>Explain how your project aligns with the goals of the ARC Strategic Plan and the strategy statements of the state(s) in which you will be operating.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity—ARC’s Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia’s Opportunities 2022–2026</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>		3

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
ARC State Plan(s)  To find information on all 13 ARC state strategy statements, visit the <a href="#">ARC website</a> . 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.		3
<b>G. Budget and Budget Narrative</b>	Section 6	Up to 5 pts
<p><b>Required – <a href="#">SF-424, 424A, 424B</a></b>  <b>Required – <a href="#">Appendix 1: Budget Narrative</a></b>  <b>See <a href="#">Appendix 8: Tips for Completing Your Budget</a></b></p> <p>All items included in the budget and budget narrative must be correctly totaled and must align with the applicant's description of the project. The budget and budget narrative must list the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds, as well as the status of match funds (confirmed, pending, etc.).  <b>Resources listed as match should be confirmed or accessible by July 12, 2024.</b></p> <p>Submit a required budget Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) that lists the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds. All items in the budget narrative must reflect the level of detail requested in the proposal. A PDF of this form is located on the <a href="#">ARC website</a>. Form instructions may be downloaded from <a href="#">Grants.gov</a>. See <a href="#">Appendix 8</a> for additional tips on how to complete the SF-424 and SF-424A.</p> <p>Provide a budget narrative that includes a detailed explanation of expenditures by the line items listed on the SF-424A. For example, include purpose of travel and supply/equipment lists. Describe expenses in the 'Other' line item, if applicable. A template for the narrative is located <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>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.)</p>		
<b>H. Feasibility</b>	Section 7	Up to 5 pts
Ensure there is consistency between the project activities and the proposed budget. Personnel, work plan, timeline, and budget must align with project description and activities.		

<b>Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects</b>		
<b>I. Organizational Capacity</b>	Section 8	Up to 5 pts
Demonstrate the project team’s qualifications to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including but not limited to the project team’s expertise and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal grant regulations; and established organizational policies, procedures, and systems.		
<b>J. Additional Required Forms</b>	Section 9	Required
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">ARC MOU</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">SF-424</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">SF-424A</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">SF-424B</a></li> </ol>		
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

## Criteria for Planning Grants

Final applications are scored based on the required sections below and their respective points.

In scoring the applications, ARC will consider how well the applicant provided detailed information for each section. Examples include the following:

- In the Project Description section, did the applicant include a strategy on how they plan to research, assess, and/or analyze workforce entry or reentry for individuals affected by SUD?
- In the SF-424A and budget narrative, do the numbers across columns and line items add up correctly?
- Did the applicant provide sufficient information for each requested line item in the budget narrative?

Additionally, ARC is looking to see if the applicant successfully used storytelling and data to craft a compelling planning grant proposal that demonstrates how they plan to research assets, barriers, and SUD and workforce activities at the local, state, or regional level with the goal of building a SUD recovery-to-work ecosystem.

Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects		
<b>A. Executive Summary</b>	Section 1	Required
Complete the required <a href="#">Executive Summary template</a> , providing project goals and strategies, the project's purpose, key activities, and applicant information. See <a href="#">template on the ARC website</a> .		
<b>B. Planning Grant Template</b>		Required
Complete the application using the fillable grant template located <a href="#">here</a> .		Up to 3 pts
<b>C. Project Description</b>	Section 2	Up to 24 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 INSPIRE priorities that are applicable to your request. (See <a href="#">Program Description</a> for the list of priorities.)		3
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).		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

<b>Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects</b>		
<b>D. Strategic Alignment</b>	Section 3	Up to 4 pts
Provide an explanation of how your project aligns with the goals of the ARC strategic plan, <a href="#">Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity—ARC’s Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia’s Opportunities 2022–2026</a> . Describe how the project makes an impact towards furthering these goals.		2
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 on the <a href="#">ARC website</a> .		2
<b>E. Project Outputs</b>	Section 4	Up to 2 pts
See <a href="#">Appendix 7: Logic Model and Performance Measures</a> for additional guidance on ARC performance measures.  Demonstrate how pursuing the outlined scope of work will help facilitate the formulation of a potential implementation project. Include a 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.		
<b>F. Work Plan and Timeline</b>	Section 5	Up to 3 pts
<b>Required – <a href="#">Appendix 4: Workplan and Timeline</a></b>  Provide a detailed work plan and timeline of the project.		



Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects		
<b>G. Budget and Budget Narrative</b>	Section 6	Up to 4 pts
<p><b>Required – <a href="#">SF424, 424A, 424B</a></b>  <b>Required – <a href="#">Appendix 1: Budget Narrative</a></b>  <b>See <a href="#">Appendix 8: Tips for Completing Your Budget</a></b></p> <p>All items included in the budget and budget narrative must be correctly totaled and must align with the applicant's description of the project. The budget and budget narrative must list the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds, as well as the status of match funds (confirmed, pending, etc.). Resources listed as match should be confirmed or accessible by July 12, 2024.</p> <p>Submit a required budget Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) that lists the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds. All items in the budget narrative must reflect the level of detail requested in the proposal. A PDF of this form is located on the <a href="#">ARC website</a>. Form instructions may be downloaded from <a href="#">Grants.gov</a>. See <a href="#">Appendix 8</a> for additional tips on how to complete the SF-424 and SF-424A.</p> <p>Provide a budget narrative that includes a detailed explanation of expenditures by the line items listed on the SF-424A. For example, include purpose of travel and supply/equipment lists. Describe expenses in the 'Other' line item, if applicable. A template for the narrative is located here.</p> <p>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).</p>		
<b>H. Organizational Capacity</b>	Section 7	Up to 5 pts
<p>Demonstrate the project team's qualifications to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including but not limited to the project teams' expertise and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal grant regulations; and established organizational policies, procedures, and systems.</p>		
<b>I. Feasibility</b>	Section 8	Up to 5 pts
<p>Ensure there is consistency between the project activities and the proposed budget.</p> <p>Ensure that the work plan, timeline, budget, and personnel resources match with the project description and expected outputs of the project.</p>		

Scoring Matrix for Planning Projects		
J. Additional Required Forms	Section 9	Required
1. <a href="#">ARC MOU</a> 2. <a href="#">SF-424</a> 3. <a href="#">SF-424A</a> 4. <a href="#">SF-424B</a>		
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>

## Cost Sharing or Matching

Under this NOSA, applicants for an ARC INSPIRE Initiative grant must demonstrate a matching share from non-ARC sources that is identified as available and applicable 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 (distressed, at-risk, transitional, competitive, and attainment). Applicants may request up to 80% of the total project cost when the county, or all counties, served by a project has/have been designated as economically “distressed” according to ARC’s FY24 classification. A table summarizing ARC’s five economic designations and the maximum ARC share for each Appalachian county can be found [on the ARC website](#). For additional tips on how to calculate your match, [see this video](#) (video applies to both POWER and INSPIRE match funding requirements).

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.

<b>Letter of intent due</b>	<b>February 16, 2024</b>
<b>Grant proposal due</b>	<b>March 8, 2024</b>
<b>Awards announced</b>	<b>September 2024</b>
<b>Grantee start date</b>	<b>October 1, 2024</b>

## Letter of Intent

Applicants are required to submit a one-page letter of intent (LOI) in portable document format (PDF) to [SUD@arc.gov](mailto:SUD@arc.gov) by 5 PM Eastern time on February 16, 2024. An LOI is required for both implementation grant applications and planning grant applications. The [LOI template](#) is located on the [INSPIRE 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. Between the applicant's LOI submission and the final application submission, ARC reviews LOIs for significant issues, such as an applicant being ineligible for an INSPIRE grant. If there are significant issues, ARC will attempt to contact the applicant. Applicants who do not hear from ARC during this period should proceed with submitting a final application.

Submitted applications for INSPIRE FY24 funding that substantially differ from the information included in 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 state(s) impacted by the project proposal.**

You are also required to reach out to your state program manager to solicit their feedback on your application and/or program design, and, most importantly, to ensure your proposal is in alignment with your state's Appalachian economic development priorities. A list of ARC state program managers can be found on [the ARC website](#), or in the ARC Agency Contact Information section below. See Appendix 5 for additional information on resources/entities available to you in your state (e.g., State Offices of Rural Health, Rural Health Associations) that can provide grant writing support, partnership development, letters of support, and other forms of technical assistance (each state varies in the degree to which they can provide assistance).

**Note:** Submission of the LOI does not replace or satisfy the requirement that applicants must contact the appropriate state program managers. When submitting your LOI to the [SUD@arc.gov](mailto:SUD@arc.gov) email, please also copy your respective state program manager.

## Applications

Applications for both implementation and planning grants are limited to 50 pages; this total includes both the narrative and the uploaded attachments. Applicants must provide a comprehensive narrative that addresses all the criteria and priorities noted in this NOSA. The narrative must be limited to 15 pages, single spaced, in 12-point font size.

Applicants must use the application narrative templates located in [Appendix 6](#) of this NOSA to write their final application.

### Applications must meet the following criteria:

1. Applicant must meet eligibility requirements.
2. Applicant must submit all required documentation and templates for submission. See scoring matrixes for implementation and planning grant requirements.
3. Eligible applicants may not submit more than one application.
4. Application must meet the ARC cost-share matching requirement for the proposed service area.
5. Applicant has contacted ARC state program manager(s).
6. A letter of intent (LOI) must be submitted to ARC. Submission instructions:
  - Submit as PDF to [SUD@arc.gov](mailto:SUD@arc.gov) by February 16, 2024 at 5 PM Eastern Time (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.
7. **Applications must be uploaded via an application portal no later than 5 PM ET on March 8, 2024;** the portal will not be made available to the public after this time. For information on how to access the portal, visit the [ARC INSPIRE Initiative webpage](#), or navigate to the [Reviewer portal](#) directly. 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
8. Further guidance on submission can be found on the [ARC INSPIRE Initiative webpage](#).

### Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

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;
- Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) 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.

Applicants must register for a UEI at SAM.gov. 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 (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 8, 2024, at 5 PM Eastern Time. **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, ineligible applicant, and/or ineligible 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 may 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; ARC's Open Records Policy; 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 manager of the states impacted by the project proposal. These state officials will ensure that your proposal is 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](mailto:SUD@arc.gov).

Contact information for ARC's state program managers can be [found here](#) and below:

Alabama	Crystal Talley – <a href="mailto:crystal.talley@adeca.alabama.gov">crystal.talley@adeca.alabama.gov</a>
Georgia	Annaka Woodruff – <a href="mailto:annaka.woodruff@dca.ga.gov">annaka.woodruff@dca.ga.gov</a> and Brittany Pittman – <a href="mailto:brittany.pittman@dca.ga.gov">brittany.pittman@dca.ga.gov</a>
Kentucky	Scott Sharp – <a href="mailto:scott.sharp@ky.gov">scott.sharp@ky.gov</a>
Maryland	Dave Cotton – <a href="mailto:david.cotton@maryland.gov">david.cotton@maryland.gov</a>
Mississippi	Andrea D. Rose – <a href="mailto:arose@mississippi.org">arose@mississippi.org</a>
New York	Kyle Wilber – <a href="mailto:kyle.wilber@dos.ny.gov">kyle.wilber@dos.ny.gov</a>
North Carolina	Olivia Collier – <a href="mailto:ocollier@nccommerce.com">ocollier@nccommerce.com</a>
Ohio	Julia Hinten – <a href="mailto:julia.hinten@development.ohio.gov">julia.hinten@development.ohio.gov</a>
Pennsylvania	Jennifer Lench – <a href="mailto:jlench@pa.gov">jlench@pa.gov</a>
South Carolina	Sara Pincelli – <a href="mailto:spincelli@sccommerce.com">spincelli@sccommerce.com</a>
Tennessee	Jill White – <a href="mailto:Jill.White@tn.gov">Jill.White@tn.gov</a>
Virginia	Tamarah Holmes – <a href="mailto:tamarah.holmes@dhcd.virginia.gov">tamarah.holmes@dhcd.virginia.gov</a>
West Virginia	James Bush – <a href="mailto:james.e.bush@wv.gov">james.e.bush@wv.gov</a>

## General Disclosures

INSPIRE Initiative awards will be made only to the extent that funds are available. Publication of this NOSA does not obligate ARC to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds. This NOSA does not commit ARC to make any specific award. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the NOSA, ARC reserves the right to award grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts to communities or regions that best meet the requirements of the NOSA. 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 NOSA if it is in the interests of ARC to do so.

**Note:** The Appalachian Regional Commission will not reimburse any other costs associated with the preparation of a response to this NOSA. 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 NOSA.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Required Budget Narrative

Visit the ARC website for a [budget narrative template \(required for applicant use\)](#). Please note there is a separate sheet in this template for INSPIRE applicants.

### 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 Budget Narrative section of the application narrative. Also, provide a current version of the NICRA.
2. Pursuant to grant regulations, 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.

### Appendix 3: Subrecipient vs. Contractor Determinations and Subrecipient Monitoring

- If necessary for your proposal, see subsequent guidance identifying subrecipients vs. contractors: [Code of Federal Regulations—Subrecipient and Contractor Determinations](#)

- This link provides an explanation of requirements for entities that make subawards: [Code of Federal Regulations – Requirements for Pass-Through Entities](#)

## Appendix 4: Workplan and Timeline Template

- [Workplan and Timeline template](#) **(required for applicant use)**.

## Appendix 5: SUD Recovery-to-Work Resources

- [Resource guide](#)

## Appendix 6: Final Application Narrative Templates

- [6\(A\): Implementation template](#) **(required for Implementation applicant use)**.
- [6\(B\): Planning template](#) **(required for Planning applicant use)**.

## Appendix 7: INSPIRE Logic Model and Performance Measures

- [Logic Model and Performance Measures](#)

## Appendix 8: Tips for Completing your Budget

- [Budget Tips](#)