



Broadband Non-Construction Projects

This document provides specific guidance for **Broadband Non-Construction projects**, per ARC's Strategic Plan Goal 3.2. Applications may involve multiple activities as part of a single project; ARC encourages applicants to review the specific guidance for each type of activity included in an application.

All application guidance is grounded in the goals and principles of ARC's current strategic plan and incorporate project fundamentals which emphasize strategic focus, collaboration, financial and operational sustainability, and measurable impact in ARC investments.

ARC invests in projects that promote the productive and strategic use of broadband and other telecommunications infrastructure to increase connectivity and strengthen economic competitiveness. Planning/feasibility studies and implementation investments in broadband infrastructure have helped reduce the Region's isolation and spur economic activity.

Generally, ARC categorizes broadband-related projects under Goal 3 of its strategic plan; however, broadband activities may be components of projects under other goals. While **Non-Construction Broadband Projects** might derive from a goal that is based on broadband infrastructure, specific goal classification will vary depending on scope, purpose, and intended impact of project activities.

Examples of non-construction project broadband activities include, but are not limited to:

- Feasibility studies, market analysis or preliminary engineering reports to determine the viability of a broadband project
- Open-access network planning – developing plans to build fiber networks that can be leased by internet service providers (ISP's)
- Installation of wireless equipment into an industrial park or campus to supply the bandwidth necessary for growth
- Downtown Wi-Fi projects
- Upgrades to existing network equipment to boost bandwidth, speeds, reliability, etc.

Non-Construction Broadband Projects may involve multiple activities as part of a single project. ARC encourages applicants to review the specific guidance for each type of activity included in an application. Applicants must demonstrate the potential impact of their proposed projects and provide a clear and detailed budget and implementation plan.

ARC encourages applicants to consider how their projects can leverage other funding sources and resources to maximize the impact of their investments. Projects that demonstrate collaboration and partnerships with other organizations and stakeholders will receive priority consideration.

Key Principles of ARC Non-Construction Broadband Investments:

ARC project activities should be strategic, financially and operationally sustainable, collaborative, and impactful.

Strategic:

More Information

For step-by-step guidance on how to complete a comprehensive application for ARC funding consideration, all applicants should refer to the framework and instructions detailed in the [Application Template for ARC Non-Construction Projects](#), available in the [applicant resources](#) section of our website.

Applicants should also consult their [ARC State Program Manager](#) prior to completing an application to understand state-specific requirements and processes as well as their state's [Appalachian Development Plan and Annual Strategy Statement](#) for additional information.

- Summarize the problems and/or opportunities the project will address, explain the critical circumstances that compel the project to be funded by ARC, and describe how the project supports a regional strategy or plan.
- Project should not duplicate existing programs or initiatives.

Sustainable:

- Depending on the project activity, applicants should explain how the project will be maintained after grant funds are used. Identify the departments or organizations responsible for project activities and describe their capacity to handle project management.

Collaborative:

- Any community or group that has interest in or will benefit from a proposed project are natural partners and should be offered a role in project planning.
- Identify all project partners, including local, regional, state and federal entities that will support the project, and any service providers.

Impactful:

- How will the project benefit the community and/or businesses and residents?
- Provide quantifiable output and outcome measures consistent with ARC's Guide for Performance Measures which can be accessed here <https://www.arc.gov/resource/guide-to-arc-project-performance-measures/>. Examples of suitable measures could include the number of businesses expected to be impacted by a downtown WiFi project, the number of plans to be produced

Other Considerations:

- In accordance with federal procurement rules, all services related to non-construction must be competitively bid.
- The grantee must retain an ownership interest in all grant-funded equipment or materials developed as part of the project (Wireless Access Points, engineering documents, feasibility studies, etc.).
- Contractors that are hired to plan and design a project are prohibited from bidding on the project's implementation.
- ARC Code states: ARC grant assistance shall not be used for projects that promote unfair competition between businesses with the same immediate service area.

Additional Resources:

- ARC's Grant Compliance Guide <https://www.arc.gov/resource/grant-compliance-guide/>
- National Broadband Resource Hub <https://www.broadbandhub.org/>