



READY Local Governments Training Program

Federal Fiscal Year 2026 Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA) for Training Participation

This notice of solicitation of applications (NOSA) announces an opportunity to apply to participate in the Appalachian Regional Commission's *READY Local Governments* training program. This NOSA provides an overview of the training program and the specific requirements needed to complete and submit an application.

The deadline for applications under this announcement is **Friday, July 31, 2026**, no later than **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)**. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

Questions about this NOSA can be emailed to READYLG@yourstrategicconsultant.com.

Appalachian Regional Commission Overview

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), established through the [Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965](#), is an economic development entity representing [a partnership of federal, state, and local governments](#). ARC's footprint spans [423 counties](#) across [13 states](#). This 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. [Learn more about ARC.](#)

ARC Strategic Investment Goals

Local government entities that apply for *READY Local Governments* will be asked how their work addresses one or more of ARC's five strategic investment goals. Learn more about ARC's strategic investment priorities at arc.gov/strategicplan.

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Basic Information

Entity Name:	Appalachian Regional Commission
Program Title:	<i>READY Local Governments</i> Training Program
Announcement Type:	Initial
Number of Organizations to be Selected:	Up to 60 local government entities
Program Details:	Organizations will be selected to receive virtual training on federal grant application and management principles. Organizations that successfully complete the training program will be eligible to apply for up to \$50,000 in ARC funding for capacity building projects.
Entity Contact Information:	Ready@arc.gov

Key Dates

NOSA Release Date:	June 25, 2026
Application Portal Opens:	June 25, 2026
Pre-Application Webinar:	July 9, 2026 (10:00 a.m. ET) - Register Here
Application Portal Closes:	July 31, 2026 (5:00 p.m. ET)
Applicants Notified of Selection:	Week of September 7, 2026
Participant Announcement:	September 2026
Training Program Dates:	<p>Group A: Tuesdays, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. ET. September 29-December 1, 2026.</p> <p>Group B: Thursdays, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. ET. October 8-December 10, 2026</p> <p><i>(Participants will select either Group A or B).</i></p>

Executive Summary

READY Appalachia provides direct skill-building, resource development, and funding to support four key pillars of economic development in the Appalachian Region: local governments, local development districts (LDDs), nonprofit organizations, and community foundations. The overall initiative helps communities, organizations, and individuals obtain the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to strengthen their local economies. Offerings include training and funding access, with special emphasis on serving Appalachia’s most economically distressed counties and areas. The purpose of the *READY Local Governments*

program is to train Appalachian municipal staff and/or elected officials (using an entirely virtual, cohort-based learning format) in federal grant application and grants management principles for the purpose of strengthening infrastructure, business and workforce development, and other long-term solutions to grow the region's economy. Local government entities that successfully complete the requirements of the training program will be eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$50,000 from ARC to address the internal capacity needs of the organization.

Eligibility

Before beginning the application process for the training program, please ensure that your local government is eligible by checking the requirements below. Organizations that apply are limited to only submitting one (1) application under this announcement.

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply:

An eligible "local government" for the purposes of this program means a borough, city, county, municipality, parish, town, township, or federally recognized Indian tribe in the [423-county Appalachian Region](#).

Local governments serving economically [distressed counties and areas](#) are encouraged to apply.

Additionally, local government entities with limited resources, those in remote areas of the region, and those ARC has not worked with before, are encouraged to apply.

To be eligible for selection the applicant must submit a letter from the local government entity's highest-ranking official (e.g., Mayor, County Commissioner, City Manager, etc.) **with their application**, confirming the entity's intent to participate in the program and commitment to the attendance and participation requirements as described in the NOSA. Applicants must upload this letter within the application platform (i.e., the letter will not be accepted through other means) and applications without this letter will be disqualified.

Ineligible Organizations

The following entities are **not** eligible to apply:

- Local public authorities (including any public housing agency under the United States Housing Act of 1937);
- Special districts;
- School districts;
- Intrastate districts;
- Councils of government (such as local development districts), whether or not incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under state law, and;
- Any other agency or instrumentality of a multi-state, regional, or intrastate government.

The entity types listed in this section have the same meaning as they do for federal grant regulations (called the “Uniform Guidance”). See [2 CFR 200.1 “Local Government.”](#)

***Note: Local governments that participated in (i.e., were selected for) prior *READY Local Governments* rounds are ineligible to apply and will be disqualified.**

Eligible Participants

Each local government is **required to have two participants** in the training program.

- **Primary Participant:** A staff member or elected official who works or will work on grant application and/or grants management as a part of their work for the local government entity.*
- **Secondary Participant:** A staff member, elected official or other individual selected at the discretion of the local government. Local governments are encouraged to examine their internal abilities to meet their communities’ economic needs when determining the Secondary Participant.

*ARC suggests that the Primary Participant be an individual with a leadership role in the local government entity, but this is not a requirement and will not affect application scoring. ARC also suggests that both individuals be those with some grant management-related job responsibilities at the entity.

The training program requires the participation of two participants from up to 60 local government entities, or 120 total participants. Having two participants from each entity helps solidify the effects of the training through the whole organization and sustainability of its impact over time. Eligibility to apply for a *READY Local Governments* grant upon completion of the training program is conditional upon meeting the attendance requirements described in the [Training Program Attendance and Grant Eligibility section below](#).

Strategic Consulting Partners is assisting ARC with administration of this program. If you have any questions about eligibility, please contact the Strategic Consulting Partners application support center at READYLG@yourstrategicconsultant.com.

Training Program Attendance and Grant Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for the grant, both training program participants must commit to active participation in the training sessions and one-to-one consultations, and to completing assignments promptly. Organizations are expected to have a 100% participation rate from both individuals for the training sessions, one-to-one consultations, and follow-up consultation. Automatic disqualification from the grant program may result if any of the following occur:

- Either the primary or secondary participant misses more than one of the seven virtual training sessions.
- Either the primary or secondary participant misses any of the two one-to-one consultations.
- Either the primary or secondary participant misses the follow-up consultation. Participants must contact their instructor to discuss any anticipated absences.

Applicants must verify their ability to commit to these expectations before applying.

If selected for the training program, participants will be able to request reasonable accommodations as needed when they confirm their participation.

ARC reserves the right to expand, modify, adjust, or deny participation in the program, at its sole discretion, when it advances the policy goals, priorities, and/or represents the best use of ARC resources.

Program Description

READY Local Governments is comprised of two components: a training program, followed by a grant program. This Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA) is for participation in the training program. A separate application for the grant program will be provided to eligible participants who have completed the training program. Acceptance into the training program is not a grant agreement nor a guarantee of grant funding; ARC will evaluate each eligible grant application upon receipt to determine whether the application may be funded.

Training Program

The *READY Local Governments* Training Program is a nine-week training program through which participants will learn and improve their skills in matters related to federal grant application and management skills, helping them to foster economic development in their communities.

Training content will include a variety of pre- and post-award topics related to federal grants. A full description is provided in the [Curriculum section below](#). The sessions will focus on principles that apply broadly across federal grant opportunities rather than focusing on any one particular grant opportunity. This training program is intended for staff or elected officials who directly work on grants on behalf of the local government and for local governments interested in building their skillset related to federal grants, with an intention of applying for these opportunities in the future.

The training program offers seven sessions over a nine-week period that will be taken in sequence by all the local government participants together, split in two large groups. During the large-group session, participants will break out into small cohorts to complete activities and for discussion. During two weeks of the program (weeks 4 and 8), organizations will attend a one-to-one consultation with their instructor in lieu of a group session. Each week, participants will complete assignments related to the topics covered in the sessions.



Cohort Structure

All *READY Local Governments* training program participants will complete a virtual, nine-week "Federal Grant Lifecycle" course. Participants can choose between Tuesday or Thursday sessions, and will be organized into cohorts of up to six local government entities (two participants per organization).

Group A

September 29 - December 1, 2026

Tuesdays from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. ET

One three-hour session for seven weeks, with one hour of assignments per session. Two one-hour, one-on-one consultations during weeks four and eight.



Cohort 1



Cohort 2



Cohort 3



Cohort 4



Cohort 5

Group B

October 8 - December 10, 2026

Thursdays from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. ET

One three-hour session for seven weeks, with one hour of assignments per session. Two one-hour, one-on-one consultations during weeks four and eight.



Cohort 6



Cohort 7



Cohort 8



Cohort 9



Cohort 10

The course materials and assignments will be actionable, tool-based, and grounded in real-life situations faced by local government entities. The sessions are interactive and encourage participants to engage with the course content through immediate application of the tools and materials within their governments. The course will include a review of relevant case studies and scenarios with opportunities for further discussion and application during the one-to-one consultations.

Approximately one month following the completion of the course, each entity will have one additional follow-up consultation with their instructor to discuss their experience with the program, application of the content taught within the course, any existing or anticipated challenges, future planning, and plans to pursue the *READY Local Governments* grant from ARC. The organization may choose to focus on any of these themes during their consultation. Attendance is required at the follow-up consultation by both the primary and secondary course participants in order to be eligible for the grant program. More details on each of these elements is provided in the [Course Overview section below](#).

Grant Program

Upon successful completion of the training program (e.g., completing all the participation requirements and assignments), the second component of *READY Local Governments* includes an opportunity for eligible participants to apply for an ARC grant. This grant award, up to \$50,000 for each local government entity, will be an organizational capacity-building grant for the organization itself, with optional match commitment. Projects can focus on a capacity need identified during the training component. **Only the types of projects in the**

Organization-Focused Section of the [ARC Community Resources and Skill-building Project Guidance](#) will be considered eligible projects for the grant program (construction projects are not allowed). Applicants should review the prior link to ascertain eligible projects.

A separate application process will be published for the grant program and is limited to local government entities that successfully complete the training program. Although no grant match is required, applicants are encouraged to reference any potential match as part of the eventual grant application. Including any match in a project as part of the grant application will not affect the competitiveness of your eventual grant application. The instructors and consultants for the training program will not participate in the grantmaking and selection process for the ARC grant portion of the program. Those local government entities that successfully complete the training program can anticipate applying for grant funding during early 2027, with grant awards finalized by summer 2027.

Course Overview

The training program consists of completing a virtual nine-week cohort-based (small group) course. During the course, participants will learn in virtual sessions, complete weekly assignments, and engage in one-to-one consultations.

The course will consist of:

- Pre- and post-course surveys
- Seven cohort-based virtual training sessions
- Approximately one hour of assignments each week
- Two one-hour one-to-one consultations with the instructor as part of the nine-week course
- One one-hour follow-up consultation approximately one month following the completion of the nine-week course

Course Schedule

The *READY Local Governments Training Program* will be offered September 29, 2026 through December 10, 2026 with Thanksgiving week off. **The total time commitment for the training program is estimated to be 35 hours.**

Applying entities will be given the opportunity to select between two dates and times for the module-based session, or to indicate if they have no preference:

Group A:
Tuesdays, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. EST
from September 29-December 1, 2026*

Group B:
Thursdays, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. EST
from October 8-December 10, 2026*

*Please note: the Week 1 session **only** will last 3 hours and 15 minutes.

Week	Format	Activity	Schedule	Length
Week 1	Cohort-based training	Module-Based Session	Set day/time	3 hours and 15 minutes
Week 2	Cohort-based training	Module-Based Session	Set day/time	3 hours
Week 3	Cohort-based training	Module-Based Session	Set day/time	3 hours
Week 4	One-to-One	Consultation	Scheduled by org**	1 hour
Week 5	Cohort-based training	Module-Based Session	Set day/time	3 hours
Week 6	Cohort-based training	Module-Based Session	Set day/time	3 hours
Week 7	Cohort-based training	Module-Based Session	Set day/time	3 hours
Week 8	One-to-One	Consultation	Scheduled by org**	1 hour
Week 9	Cohort-based training	Module-Based Session	Set day/time	3 hours
Post Course*	Follow-up	Consultation	Scheduled by org**	1 hour

*The follow-up consultations will occur approximately one month post course.

**Participating organizations will schedule their one-to-one consultations within an identified time frame based upon availability and the instructor’s schedule.

Virtual Training Sessions

Throughout the nine-week course, participants will meet as outlined above in the course schedule within their assigned cohort for seven virtual training sessions. Each group session is scheduled for three hours, consisting of instruction, interactive dialogue through break-out groups, and peer-to-peer learning. Sessions will be led by an experienced instructor and will offer opportunities for group sharing among the cohort participants to build community and to allow for peer engagement and increased learning. Only the registered participants can participate in the virtual training sessions on behalf of the municipality. The 60 local governments selected will be organized into small groups (cohorts) with no more than six local governments (12 participants) per cohort. Participants will remain in their cohort throughout the course, enabling networking and fostering relationships and thought sharing partnerships. Generally, participants will break out of the larger virtual session into their cohorts for discussion and activities based on the material just covered.

Course Assignments

Participants will engage in approximately one hour per week of assignments in the form of suggested readings, thought exercises, the drafting of sample plans, and the utilization of course materials and tools to implement theory into practice. One-to-one consultation

sessions may be utilized to review assignments and provide additional support to further participant understanding and the practical application within their organization.

One-to-One Consultations

Participants will complete two one-to-one consultations with their course instructor during the nine-week training program. The one-hour consultations are tailored to the specific goals of each participating entity. The purpose of the one-to-one consultations is to apply and implement the learnings from the virtual sessions and provide personalized support, review of implemented tools, and specific feedback. Organizations will schedule the one-to-one consultations within an identified time frame based upon their availability and the instructor's schedule during weeks 4 and 8 of the training program. Only the registered participants can attend or participate in the consultations.

Follow-Up Consultation

One follow-up consultation is offered approximately one month following course completion and is mandatory to attend for both participants in order for the entity to be eligible to apply for the grant. The consultation will focus specifically on the organization's concept for the upcoming ARC grant opportunity, or can focus on the entity's implementation of course concepts, future plans, and troubleshooting any issues. The follow-up consultation will be scheduled prior to conclusion of the nine-week training program.

Computer Requirements

Virtual training sessions, one-to-one consultations, and follow-up consultations will be offered using the Zoom application and are best viewed on a tablet or computer rather than a smartphone. Participants will be asked to join with video and audio; therefore, access to a webcam is required. Participants should plan to join the training sessions and all consultations in an environment where they are free from distractions and interruptions. Course assignments may include reviewing digital articles, podcasts, videos and surveys. Homework will not require a special subscription, nor will it be pay-to-access content.

Course Curriculum

The course curriculum will provide local government staff and elected officials with high-quality, actionable skill development in several topics related to the financial management and audit readiness of grants, leveraging federal grants for economic success, and integrating artificial intelligence (A.I.) into federal grant workflows ethically, safely, and effectively. The curriculum is tailored to local governments serving Appalachian communities. Subject matter experts are engaged in curriculum development to ensure timely and relevant course content that is applicable to local governments growing their abilities to better meet their communities' economic needs. The curriculum aligns with best practices in the full federal grant lifecycle and provide resources and templates to help local governments apply those best practices.

Participants will complete the entire training described below:

Course Title: Federal Grant Lifecycle

WEEK 1, SESSION 1: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND FEDERAL GRANT READINESS

SESSION OVERVIEW:

This session introduces local government (LG) participants to the foundational elements of identifying projects that are viable for federal funding. Participants will explore how to assess community needs, align projects with federal priorities, and evaluate whether a concept is realistically positioned for federal grant competitiveness. The session emphasizes early-stage decision-making, including project readiness, stakeholder alignment, preliminary cost considerations, and awareness of cross-cutting federal requirements such as environmental review, labor standards, and domestic preference provisions. Participants will gain tools to distinguish between strong project ideas and grant-ready initiatives.

SESSION OUTCOME:

Participants will be able to identify and prioritize projects that are strategically aligned and realistically positioned for successful federal funding.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, LG participants will know how to:

1. Assess project readiness for federal funding opportunities.
2. Conduct a needs assessment supported by data and planning documents.
3. Align project concepts with federal priorities and eligibility requirements.
4. Identify early compliance considerations that may affect project feasibility.
5. Prioritize projects based on competitiveness and implementation capacity.

WEEK 2, SESSION 2: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTIFYING FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

SESSION OVERVIEW:

This session focuses on refining project scope and evaluating federal funding opportunities through a structured go/no-go decision-making framework. Participants will learn how experienced grant writers assess Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs), analyze eligibility and evaluation criteria, and determine whether a project is competitive and realistically implementable. Particular emphasis will be placed on matching funds, leveraging strategies, and assessing internal abilities/resources before committing to an application. Participants will examine how scope clarity, match feasibility, compliance implications, and timeline constraints influence both competitiveness and long-term project success.

SESSION OUTCOME:

Participants will be able to evaluate federal funding opportunities strategically and make informed go/no-go decisions based on scope, match readiness, competitiveness, and compliance considerations.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, LG participants will know how to:

1. Refine a project's scope to align with federal eligibility and evaluation criteria.

2. Analyze NOFO requirements to identify competitiveness factors and hidden constraints.
3. Assess match requirements and structure compliant match strategies.
4. Apply a structured go/no-go framework to determine pursuit viability.

WEEK 3, SESSION 3: Federal Grant Application Development and Submission Strategy

SESSION OVERVIEW:

This session will review core proposal components, including project narratives, budgets, performance measures, stakeholder coordination, and required federal forms. Emphasis is placed on aligning the narrative with the budget, addressing evaluation criteria, and integrating compliance awareness. The session will also address the importance of external engagement throughout the grant process, including coordination with local and state-level entities, and other regional stakeholders both before and after submission to ensure alignment and compliance. Through applied exercises, participants will practice strengthening narrative clarity, documenting need, incorporating stakeholder commitments, and preparing compelling, evidence-based applications.

SESSION OUTCOME:

Participants will be equipped to prepare competitive federal grant applications and understand how stakeholder engagement can reinforce competitiveness during the review process.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will know how to:

1. Develop persuasive narratives aligned with federal evaluation criteria.
2. Align scope, budget, and performance measures.
3. Integrate compliance awareness into application strategy.
4. Complete required federal forms and attachments accurately.
5. Avoid common application mistakes and inconsistencies.
6. Coordinate appropriately with external stakeholders before and after submission to ensure the provision of complementary services that align with local and state efforts.

WEEK 4: ONE-TO-ONE CONSULTATION #1

WEEK 5, SESSION 4: FEDERAL GRANT MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE – PART I: AWARD ADMINISTRATION

SESSION OVERVIEW:

This session introduces participants to the administrative and compliance responsibilities that begin once a federal grant is awarded. Participants will review grant agreements, understand award conditions, and become familiar with reporting obligations, documentation requirements, and communication expectations with federal agencies. The session emphasizes internal controls, recordkeeping systems, and understanding Uniform Guidance requirements as they apply to ongoing grant administration.

SESSION OUTCOME:

Participants will understand the administrative structure required to manage a federal award responsibly and in compliance with federal regulations.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will know how to:

1. Interpret federal grant agreements and award conditions.
2. Establish compliant documentation and reporting systems.
3. Understand ongoing progress and final reporting requirements.
4. Implement internal controls consistent with federal standards.
5. Recognize common compliance risks during post-award administration.

**WEEK 6, SESSION 5: FEDERAL GRANT MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE – PART II:
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING**

SESSION OVERVIEW:

This session addresses one of the most complex areas of federal grant compliance: procurement and contracting. Participants will review federal procurement standards, cost and price analysis requirements, contract types, and documentation expectations under the Uniform Guidance. The session also addresses labor standards, domestic preference requirements, environmental sequencing, and other cross-cutting federal mandates that affect procurement and project delivery. Practical examples will illustrate common compliance pitfalls and corrective actions.

SESSION OUTCOME:

Participants will understand how to conduct procurement and contracting activities in full compliance with federal requirements.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will know how to:

1. Apply federal procurement standards to goods and services.
2. Conduct and document cost and price analysis.
3. Distinguish between contractors and subrecipients.
4. Integrate labor, environmental, and domestic preference requirements into procurement.
5. Avoid procurement errors that can result in audit findings or disallowed costs.

WEEK 7, SESSION 6: FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT READINESS

SESSION OVERVIEW:

This session focuses on financial compliance under federal grants. Participants will examine cost allowability, allocability, reasonableness, reimbursement procedures, documentation standards, and audit requirements. The session addresses Uniform Guidance financial provisions, common reimbursement errors, match documentation, and preparation for monitoring or audit reviews. Emphasis is placed on preventing financial missteps that can result in disallowed costs or repayment.

SESSION OUTCOME:

Participants will be able to manage federal grant funds responsibly and prepare for monitoring and audit review.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will know how to:

1. Apply federal cost principles to grant expenditures.
2. Prepare accurate and compliant reimbursement requests.
3. Maintain documentation sufficient for monitoring and audit.
4. Understand match tracking and financial reporting obligations.
5. Identify financial risks that could jeopardize funding.

WEEK 8: ONE-TO-ONE CONSULTATION #2

WEEK 9, SESSION 7: LEVERAGING FEDERAL GRANTS FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

SESSION OVERVIEW:

The final session synthesizes concepts from the full grant lifecycle and focuses on ensuring long-term success after the period of performance ends. Participants will examine how compliance, performance, financial management, project implementation, and documented outcomes influence future competitiveness. The session explores strategic sequencing of grants, leveraging prior awards, building agency credibility, and institutionalizing grant management systems. Participants will develop action steps to strengthen their organization’s ability to pursue new opportunities to enhance or expand their project; manage requirements around documenting and assessing project data; and sustain successful outcomes of their project.

SESSION OUTCOME:

Participants will understand how to use federal grant experience to build long-term competitiveness and secure additional opportunities to sustain their project.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will know how to:

1. Evaluate organizational abilities to maximize federal grant funding to meet goals.
2. Develop a strategy for sequencing and leveraging federal grants.
3. Use performance and compliance history to strengthen future applications.
4. Institutionalize grant management systems for sustainability.
5. Position their organization for long-term success.

Course Evaluations

A pre-course survey will be used to collect baseline data for evaluation purposes. A post-course survey will be carried out immediately following course completion. This survey will be utilized to analyze skills, knowledge, and the overall participant experience and satisfaction with the course. Course evaluations will be confidential and serve the sole purpose of improving the *READY Local Governments* program. Participant answers to surveys will be anonymous and will not impact a participant’s current or future relationship with ARC.

Application Content and Format

The application for the *READY Local Governments Training Program* will be accessible through an application portal on a web browser. Applicants will complete the application by responding to the questions directly on the application portal. Questions will be in the form

of multiple-choice, drop-down menu options, ratings of skill areas, and short answer questions. The application has six main sections to be completed by the applying organization: Eligibility Quiz, Local Government Information, Needs Assessment, Community Impact, Participant Information, and Signature and Agreement.

The Eligibility Quiz section will help determine an organization's eligibility for participation in the *READY Local Governments* training program. Applicants should be prepared to confirm the organization is an eligible local government entity (see [Eligibility section](#) for a definition) located within [the Appalachian Region](#), and the organization is committed to participating fully in the program, having the approval to apply from the entity's highest ranking official. Any negative response to these questions within the eligibility quiz will deem the applicant ineligible to apply and will end the application.

After successful completion of the eligibility quiz, applicants will be asked to provide information about their organization in the Organizational Information section. To complete this section, applicants should have access to information about the organization's legal name, address, Tax ID number, as well as the structure and size of the organization. This section will also ask questions related to the organization's budget and revenue sources.

The Needs Assessment section will ask the applicant about existing plans, practices, and structures that the organization has in place related to federal grant application and management, organizational capacity challenges, and skill levels related to the topics of the training program. Applicants will also be asked to provide information about how participation in this training program will help the organization address their existing identified capacity challenges.

Community Impact is the next section an applicant will complete. This section will ask applicants to provide information on their alignment with ARC's investment priorities, outcomes and outputs tracked by the organization currently, and how the organization has worked with ARC or other federal granting agencies in the past.

Data for both participants from the applying organization will be collected in the Participant Information section. This will include name, title, contact information, experience, and availability to participate in the training.

Finally, the applicant will attest that the application contents are valid and true to the best of their knowledge by providing their name and confirmation of agreement in the Signature and Agreement section of the application prior to submitting the application. As described above, applicants are required to upload a letter from the applying entity's highest-ranking official confirming the entity's intent to apply for this program. The letter must be uploaded within the application platform and applications without this letter will be disqualified.

Applicants can obtain a PDF version of the application questions upon request by emailing READYLG@yourstrategicconsultant.com.

Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Application Portal

The application portal will open on **June 25, 2026 and close on July 31, at 5:00 p.m.**

ET. Applications must be received no later than July 31 at 5:00 p.m. to be considered for this opportunity.

[The application portal link is here.](#)

Faxed, mailed, or emailed applications will *not* be accepted. Late submissions will *not* be accepted.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

The second component, the *READY Local Governments* grant program, will require applicants to comply with the following:

- Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) at SAM.gov before submitting the grant application;
- Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number in their grant 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 is under consideration by ARC.

Before making a grant award, ARC will consider available information on the applicant, including in SAM.gov, 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. Applicants excluded in SAM.gov from receiving federal financial assistance, or that are otherwise determined by ARC in its sole discretion to be an inappropriate recipient of federal financial assistance based upon the review of risk, will not receive the *READY Local Governments* grant. Similarly, based upon the review of risk ARC may impose specific requirements on the grantee for carrying out the federal grant. See 2 CFR § 200.208

Submission Instructions

- Provide all information requested in the application. The applicant may use the Save function to save their work and return to the application at a later time.
- Address all eligibility criteria and provide complete responses to all questions.
- Submit your application to ARC via the [online application portal](#) no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on Friday, July 31, 2026. **Faxed, mailed, or emailed applications will *not* be accepted. Late submissions will *not* be accepted.**

Supported Browsers

The application portal supports the following browsers:

- Google Chrome (latest version recommended)
- Microsoft Edge (latest version recommended)
- Mozilla Firefox (latest version recommended)
- Safari (latest version recommended)

Troubleshooting | Contact Us

Please email READYLG@yourstrategicconsultant.com for additional assistance.

Pre-application Webinar

An informational, pre-application webinar will take place via Zoom on Thursday, **July 9, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. ET. Register [HERE](#).**

The webinar will guide applicants through this NOSA and the application process, as well as answering frequently asked questions (FAQs). If you are unable to attend, the webinar will be recorded and posted on arc.gov, as well as emailed to registered participants. **Participants must register first to receive a link to the recorded webinar by email for later viewing.**

Submission Dates and Times

NOSA Release Date:	June 25, 2026
Application Portal Opens:	June 25, 2026
Pre-Application Webinar:	July 9, 2026 (10:00 a.m. ET) (Register here).
Application Portal Closes:	July 31, 2026 (5:00 p.m. ET)
Applicants Notified of Selection:	Week of September 8, 2026
Participant Announcement:	September 2026
READY Local Governments Training Program:	Courses will run for nine weeks from approximately September 28 through December 11, 2026.

Application Review Information

Assessment Criteria

Participants selected for this training program will be assessed through a competitive application process.

Considerations for selection include the following:

- Local government entities that serve economically [distressed counties and areas](#).
- Local government entities that demonstrate limited resources and organizational abilities to sufficiently meet communities' economic needs.
- Local government entities that can clearly articulate how the training program will assist them in addressing barriers related to federal grant application and management.
- Local government entities poised to benefit from federal grant opportunities that relate to [ARC's Investment Priorities](#).

- Local government entities that have not previously received ARC funding or participated in its programming.
- The local government entities that demonstrate how their goals align with [ARC's Investment Priorities](#).
- The local government's commitment to participation in the duration of the nine-week training program with two participants representing the local government.
- The local government's commitment to implement recommendations and strategies learned during the training program to better meet their communities' economic needs.

Review and Selection Process

An ARC review panel, composed of ARC staff and state partners, will review and score applications based upon eligibility and the assessment criteria noted above. Up to 60 of the top scoring local governments will be recommended for participation in the training program. The list of recommended participants will be reviewed by ARC's federal office and ARC State Program Managers to finalize the list of selected organizations for participation in the program.

Selection Notices

Applicants will be notified of selection for their organization to participate in the training program by email during the week of September 8, 2026. Selected organizations must provide a timely response to a participation confirmation survey provided in the selection email by the date requested in the email. Selected and confirmed participating organizations will be announced in September 2026. Selection and confirmation of participation in the training program does not indicate that a grant award has been made or will be made to an organization. Upon successful completion of the training program, participants will be eligible to apply for an ARC grant of up to \$50,000. A separate application process will be published for the grant program, accessible only to those organizations that successfully complete the training program. A grant will not be awarded until it is approved by the ARC Federal Co-Chair and a grant agreement has been signed with ARC.

Applicants deemed ineligible, or that are not selected to participate in the training program, will be notified of their status by email during the week of September 8, 2026. If additional space becomes available (e.g., if a selected local government withdraws or declines to participate), eligible local governments that were not originally selected for the training program may be offered a spot. Applicants are encouraged to remain attentive to their email inboxes for this reason until the participating local government entities are announced by ARC.

General Disclosures

Publication of this NOSA does not obligate ARC to provide any specific training or award any grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds for the *READY Appalachia* initiative. Training and grants in the *READY Appalachia* initiative will be made only to the extent that funds are available and at the sole discretion of ARC. Applicants intending to contract with a specific individual, consulting group, or organization with ARC

funding must have and use a competitive procurement policy that conforms to procurement standards specified in [2 CFR 200.317-327](#).

This NOSA does not commit ARC to make any specific selection for the training program or for an award. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this NOSA, ARC reserves the right to select entities for training, award grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts to communities or regions that best meet the requirements of the NOSA. ARC solely reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received in response to this NOSA; to negotiate with selected applicants; or to cancel in part or in its entirety this NOSA if it is in the interest of ARC to do so.

ARC will not reimburse any costs associated with the preparation or submittal of an application in 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.

Grants awarded under the *READY Appalachia* initiative are subject to the provisions of the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965 as amended, 40 USC 14101 et. seq. (ARDA), the Appalachian Regional Commission Code, and other terms and conditions set forth in the grant agreement.

ARC records of its doings and transactions are made available for public inspection pursuant to ARDA and its Open Records Policy. Applicants must identify and mark all confidential and/or proprietary documents they deem appropriate to submit with their application.

Reference to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by ARC, its employees, members, officers, agents, successors in interest, or contractors. Applicants' and participants' use of any product, good, web platform or application, process, or service in connection with the *READY Appalachia* initiative will be at their sole discretion. ARC assumes no legal liability or responsibility whatsoever for applicants, participants, or contractors' use of any product, good, web platform or application, process, or service in connection with the *READY Appalachia* initiative.