

APPALACHIAN 
COMMUNITY CAPITAL

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (“RFP”) FOR OPPORTUNITY
APPALACHIA INITIATIVE**

Release Date: November 1, 2019

**Proposal Due Date: November 15, 2019; 4:00 pm Eastern Standard Time
Responses received after this time will not be considered and will not be
opened.**

Request for Proposals:

Project Director for Opportunity Appalachia Initiative

Open Date: November 1, 2019
Proposal Due Date: November 15, 2019
Selection Date: November 22, 2019
Contract Period: November 25, 2019 – January 30, 2021

I. Overview of Request for Proposals

Appalachian Community Capital (ACC) seeks contractual support for a qualified project director to assist Opportunity Appalachia's Steering Committee, a six-member consortium comprised of regional and national organizations, and local communities, to provide technical assistance to communities in developing sophisticated investment packets geared toward prospective Opportunity Zone (OZ) investors. The selected contractor will work closely with the Steering Committee to shape this effort over the course of 15 months beginning in November 2019 and concluding on January 30, 2021.

The project director will report to the President & CEO, ACC, the project manager for Opportunity Appalachia. As currently envisioned, the scope of work involves the project director overseeing activities of Opportunity Appalachia, including:

- Facilitating sessions with Steering Committee members to shape the planning and implementation processes for Opportunity Appalachia, including determining a formal process for community participation in the program and managing the application process
- Assisting the Steering Committee in promoting the Opportunity Appalachia program to Opportunity Zone communities and investors through outreach activities (e.g., meetings and webinars)
- Assisting with the development of prospectuses and pitchbooks
- Cultivating relationships between successful Opportunity Zone applicants and technical assistance providers
- Issuing and providing management oversight of contracts
- Helping to coordinate investor outreach meetings and convenings
- Performing grant management tasks, including ensuring compliance with the Appalachian Regional Commission grant agreement, monitoring budget activities, and writing progress reports

Proposals will be evaluated on contractors' qualifications, expertise, track record, and creativity and innovation.

II. Background

About Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones (OZ) were established by the U S Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage long-term investments in low-income communities. The tax incentive provides relief to individuals and businesses that have significant capital gains if they elect to invest into Opportunity Funds or Qualified Opportunity Zone businesses.

Federal Opportunity Zones present the Appalachian Region with a unique opportunity to bring investment to areas that have historically struggled to attract investment and resulting development. To maximize this opportunity, the Region must deploy a holistic approach to marketing, business support services, alignment of state laws and local incentives, capital investment and attraction strategies, as well as engagement of community-based development and service partners.

About the Appalachian Region

The Appalachian Region, as defined in ARC's authorizing legislation, is a 205,000 square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Forty-two percent of the Region's population is rural, compared with 20 percent of the national population.

The Appalachian Region's economy, which was once highly dependent on extractive industries, has become more diversified in recent times and now includes larger shares of manufacturing and professional services, among other industries. Appalachia has made significant progress over the past five decades: its poverty rate, which was 31 percent in 1960, had fallen to 16.3 percent over the 2013– 2017 period. The number of high-poverty counties in the Region (those with poverty rates more than 1.5 times the U.S. average) declined from 295 in 1960 to 98 over the 2013–2017 period.

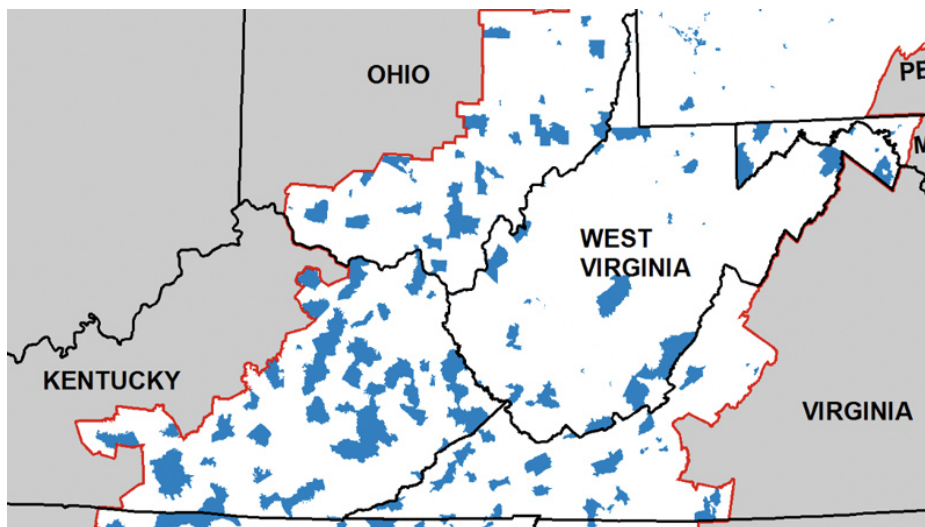
These gains have transformed the Region from one of widespread poverty to one of economic contrasts: some communities have successfully diversified their economies, while others still require basic infrastructure such as roads, clinics, and water and wastewater systems. The contrasts are not surprising considering the Region's size and diversity—the Region extends more than 1,000 miles from southern New York to northeastern Mississippi, and it is home to more than 25 million people.

About Opportunity Appalachia

Opportunity Appalachia will provide technical assistance to develop and structure investable transactions, and it will create investment prospectuses and pitch decks that will be used to bring Opportunity Fund investment to rural coal communities. Investment priorities include projects focusing on downtown development, manufacturing, IT, healthcare, education, food systems, clean energy, tourism, and recreation.

The initiative will bring an estimated \$7.5 million of new private investment to Central Appalachian coal-impacted communities, creating 720 new jobs and 45 new businesses that support strategies for sustainable community growth and help 70 persons in addiction recovery receive workforce training and find employment.

Central Appalachian Opportunity Zones – Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia



158 OZs in Central Appalachian coal-impacted communities in WV, OH and VA.

About the Opportunity Appalachia Steering Committee

Project activities will be overseen by a project Steering Committee, which will act as a project board of directors. The Steering Committee is comprised of the following six regional and national organizations:

Project Manager

- Appalachian Community Capital (ACC), a 20-member CDFI intermediary whose members and their affiliates manage over \$1 billion in assets supporting economic development in Appalachia.

Lead State Partners – lead community development state partners:

- Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth (APEG) – The lead regional economic development organization in Eastern and Southern Ohio working in a 25-county area, supported by Jobs Ohio.

- Opportunity Southwest Virginia / UVA – Wise – Pilots the way for 19 counties and scores of communities in Southwest Virginia to support economic and community development efforts to create thriving entrepreneurial communities that accelerate progress for both new and established ventures.
- West Virginia Community Development Hub – the leading community development organization in West Virginia, has worked with over 40 small communities across the state.

National Technical Assistance Providers

- Main Street America (MSA) will provide market-driven technical support for development of community strategies. With a network of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, MSA works to successfully transform communities and revitalize local economies.
- Coastal Enterprises – CCML, will provide technical support for financial structuring of OZ transactions. This leading national rural CDFI has deployed over \$1.3 billion in financings directly and through CEI Capital Management (CCML) its New Markets Tax Credit CDE affiliate.

III. Scope of Work

A. Facilitating Steering Committee Meetings

The Opportunity Appalachia Steering Committee will meet regularly over the life of the project. At these sessions, the project director will assist the committee in finalizing project timelines for such activities as state preparatory meetings, state outreach meetings, and a community application process. Decisions will be documented, and timelines will be monitored.

B. Determining a formal process for community participation in the program

The project director will work with the Steering Committee to develop formal application process for communities to request participation in the Opportunity Appalachia program. The application will include indicators of community readiness such as: identified community leadership, prioritized community strategies, identified potential transactions, articulated community partnerships, and other factors. The project director will be responsible for managing the administrative process.

C. Promoting the Opportunity Appalachia program

The project director will support the Steering Committee’s coordination of state outreach meetings where community stakeholders will gather to learn about the Opportunity Appalachia initiative, to share information about and discuss investable Opportunity Zone projects, and to determine the best strategies to bring these projects to the attention of Qualified Opportunity Funds. Meetings will also take place with potential investors to provide details about projects and to discern their interest in reviewing and/or investing in these projects. Various forms of communication, such as in-person meetings, webinars and teleconferences, will be utilized.

D. *Assisting with the development of prospectuses and pitchbooks*

The project director will provide support to local Opportunity Zone community and technical assistance partner(s) in their development of community investment prospectuses and pitch books, which will include: 1) robust community development strategies (e.g., entrepreneurship, healthy communities, education strategies, heritage tourism, manufacturing, new energy opportunities) and 2) two or more specific investable transactions to support the identified

strategies. Investable transactions will be financially structured to a point where investor due diligence can begin.

E. *Cultivating relationships between successful Opportunity Zone applicants and technical assistance providers*

The relationship between applicant and TA provider is an essential component of a successful project. The project director will work closely with each partner to ensure the match with local, state, or national technical assistance providers will result in quality service being provided to the community.

F. *Issuing and providing management oversight of contracts*

The project director will prepare and manage the contracts for consultative services related to Opportunity Appalachia, including but not limited to impact assessment, IT, web design, and conference planning.

G. *Helping to coordinate investor outreach meetings and convenings*

Investor outreach will occur through both an Opportunity Zone Investor Convening event, and outreach and support from the Steering Committee and TA providers. The project director will cultivate partnerships with local and national investors and will support the efforts of the Steering Committee and local, state, and national Technical Assistance providers to highlight and promote investable transactions. The project director will also play a key role working with the Steering Committee and contractors in planning and holding a major convening of national impact investors Opportunity Funds, and other stakeholders where investment-ready OZ communities will pitch their projects and host site visits.

H. *Performing grant management tasks*

The project director will oversee the grant management process, including ensuring compliance with the Appalachian Regional Commission grant agreement, monitoring budget activities, and writing progress reports.

IV. Proposal Evaluation

The Opportunity Appalachia Steering Committee will select contractors through a competitive process based on the following criteria:

- Expertise in development finance /tax incented finance;
- Understanding of Opportunity Zones requirements;
- Background and experience in economic development;
- Background and experience working with Appalachian communities;
- Background and experience working with and/or investing in rural and/or economically distressed communities;
- Strong relationships with state and local development partners in the target states; and
- Strong investor relationships with relevant parties.

V. Project Timeline

It is anticipated that the contractor will be selected by November 22, 2019 for estimated contract start date of November 25, 2019 through January 30, 2021.

VI. Instructions to Submit a Proposal

Applicants and entities seeking to provide these services should submit the following:

- Narrative (3 pages) describing:
 - Background and qualifications related to this scope of services
 - Experience launching new projects or initiatives and how this prior work will inform this initiative
 - Approach to project management and proposed milestones to accomplishing this work
- Budget that defines deliverables, rates and proposed payment schedule including indirect costs (please note that the budget for this scope of services over the 18-month period is \$75,000, excluding travel expenses).
- Biography/resume
- Two references from current or prior clients, including name, title, organization, contact information, and a brief description of the relevant work performed

Please submit responses via email by November 15, 2019 at 5:00pm EST to Ms. Donna Gambrell at dgambrell@acc1.org. Questions may be submitted in writing via email by no later than November 8, 2019 at 5:00pm EST to dgambrell@acc1.org.