



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PROGRAM SPONSORS



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (“RFP”) FOR  
OPPORTUNITY APPALACHIA  
OZ PROJECT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

**Release Date: June 22, 2021**

**Proposal Due Date: July 2, 2021**

**Selection Date: July 5, 2021**

**Contract Period: July 5 – August 15, 2021**

## **Request for Proposals:**

### ***Technical Assistance for Opportunity Appalachia OZ Projects***

#### **I. Overview of Request for Proposals**

Appalachian Community Capital (ACC) seeks contractual support for specified Technical Assistance for Opportunity Zone project development.

The Technical Assistance contractor will report to the Project Director of Opportunity Appalachia. The requested Scope of Services is noted in Attachment A, and may involve:

- development of investment prospectus, preparation of pro forma financial projections, structuring of projecting financing,
- market research
- demand assessment, operations planning, identification of project developers / business operators
- architectural and design
- outreach to OZ investors / public and private project finance
- other types of assistance.

Entities interested in providing Technical Assistance must complete the Request for Qualifications RFQ, as noted on the [Opportunity Appalachia](#) web page.

Proposals will be evaluated on contractors' qualifications (per the RFQ), expertise, track record, Scope of Work, budget/timeline, and OZ project requests.

#### **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 recently announced selection of 16 projects to participate in the program to bring jobs, business support, and investment to Central Appalachia. The selected projects propose to create over 1,800 jobs and attract over \$365M in financing to develop manufacturing facilities, downtown development, tech business, agricultural facilities, hotels, broadband deployment, and retail enterprises in federally designated Opportunity Zones.

These proposed projects are particularly important at this challenging time as local economies look to restart once public health concerns resolve. Opportunity Appalachia will work closely with both private investors and Federal agencies that have prioritized support for Opportunity Zone (OZ) communities, an essential component of our national economic recovery.

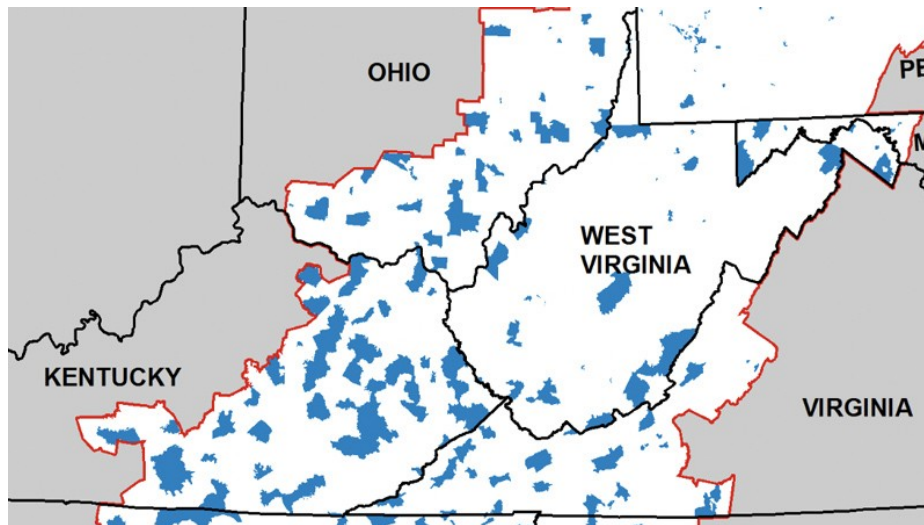
Once project technical assistance is completed, a highly visible OZ Investor Convening event will be held in late 2020 that will target both local and pre-vetted national investors, as well as

federal and state funders. A curated web-based platform hosting prospectus / pitch decks will also be made available to facilitate investor due diligence.

Opportunity Appalachia is a [Forbes Opportunity Zone 20 Catalyst](#), which designates the Opportunity Appalachia program as a top national example of community-focused efforts to revitalize distressed communities using the new Opportunity Zone (OZ) investment tool.

The program is supported by a POWER grant from the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) with additional support from the [Benedum Foundation](#).

### *Central Appalachian Opportunity Zones – Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia*



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

### **III. Project Timeline**

It is anticipated that the contractor will be selected by June 30, 2021 for an estimated contract start date of June 30, 2021 through August 15, 2021.

### **IV. Instructions to Submit a Proposal**

Contractors seeking to provide these services should submit the following:

- Scope of Work (max 3 pages) describing proposed activities to be undertaken as requested in Attachment A, with identified staffing (lead and support) for each work element.
- Budget that defines deliverables, rates and proposed payment schedule including indirect costs. **A Not to Exceed cost for the full engagement must be provided. Costs not to exceed \$75,000.**
- Timeline for Scope of Work, with deliverable milestones

- Biography/resume for all staff noted in proposal (or provided in RFQ)
- References from current or prior clients, including name, title, organization, contact information, and a brief description of the relevant work performed (or provided in RFQ).

Please submit responses via email in one pdf attachment by Proposal Due Date to Ray Daffner [oa@accl.org](mailto:oa@accl.org).

## **V. Proposal Evaluation**

ACC will select contractors through a competitive process based on the following criteria.

- Qualifications (per the RFQ), expertise, track record, and staff bios.
- Scope of Work and Timeline
- Budget
- Requests from OZ project sponsors

**Attachment A**  
**Requested Scope of Services**

**Project Sponsor:** New River Gorge Development Authority (NRGDA)

**Project Name:** Ice House, Hinton WV

Project Summary provided below.

**TA Requested:**

- Engineering study of the building, Architectural study and drawings
- Mentorship and Technical Assistance for NRGDA as project developer.
- Other activities as needed.

# Opportunity Appalachia

Application for Participation - Summary

# Opportunity Appalachia

Application for Participation – Application Form

*Bringing Opportunity Zone investment to Central Appalachian coal-impacted communities, creating new jobs and businesses that support sustainable growth.*

### Program Partners:



Revised Application Submitted June 10, 2021

### Summary Information

Lead Contact: Jina Belcher

Applicant Organization: New River Gorge Regional Development Authority

Address: 200 Main Street, Beckley, WV 25801

Phone w 3042548115 m

Email: jbelcher@nrgrda.org

*Note: Narrative responses to each question are limited to 2,500 characters unless otherwise noted.*

1. OZ communities targeted by this application (municipality(ies), county(ies) and OZ census tract(s):  
Note: See Appendix I for a list of eligible counties.

**This project is located in the city of Hinton, West Virginia in Summers County, and within Census Tract #54089000700, also known as *Census Tract 7*. The population of this census tract, which covers 0.8 square miles, is 1,702 within 774 households. Approximately 15% of the population is below the poverty line with per capita income at \$22,108 and the median household income at \$36,479.**

2. Service area of applicant (note if different then above, or note same):  
**Same**

3. Community Development Strategy(ies):  
(for example: downtown development, manufacturing, IT, healthcare, education, food systems, clean energy, heritage tourism and recreation, addiction treatment and recovery, or describe other strategies)

**This project will focus on the redevelopment of a historic building in the commercial district of Hinton’s downtown. The building will serve as a hub of community and commercial activity alongside the redevelopment of adjacent properties and within the broader redevelopment of Hinton’s historic downtown and riverfront districts.**

**Hinton’s location at the confluence of 3 rivers fosters both Historic and Recreational Tourism. The existing historic district is the commercial and professional core of the town. This project will benefit from the success of another historic structure, the Freight Depot, located directly adjacent to the Ice House, which was brought back to life through similar renovations and now hosts weddings, reunions, parties, meetings and much more. We feel it is important to preserve and highlight these gems, and leverage our assets. And on the other side of the tourism coin, Recreational Tourism. Hinton and Summers County already host activities on and around the rivers 75% of the year. In the summer months, and into the early fall, there are fishing tournaments almost every weekend, attracting anglers and their families. Multiple fishing and outdoor outfitters can fulfill all the needs of the entire family, whether it is serving sportsmen or visitors to the two nearby State Parks and the downtown Water Park. Building on these attractions would allow for the Freight Depot and a Community Learning and Event Space to bring more commerce to the shops and lodging of downtown Hinton.**

**NRGRDA and the City of Hinton intend to make use of an array of existing planning documents that have been prepared to help guide economic and community development efforts in Hinton, including:**

- Maps of local trails systems
- City of Hinton Redevelopment Master Plan map (2015)
- Hinton Historic District Master Plan (2007)
- Hinton Tourism Business Opportunity Assessment Report (2018)
- Hinton Recreation and Tourism market analysis (2017)
- Hinton Ice Factory Studies (2016)
- Summers county Shine Plan (2011)
- Sustainable Tourism Design as a Strategy for Economic Development (2014)
- Value to the Nation – Fast Facts – Bluestone lake (2019)
- WV Hub – Blueprint communities – Hinton Report (2013)

**Many of these planning documents focus on outdoor recreation and tourism as anchor industries for the revitalization of Hinton. The Ice House project fits squarely into these parameters and NRGRDA will provide these documents to its technical assistance team as informative and foundational resources for their work. Additionally, the recent redesignation of the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve is expected to bring additional attention and visitors to all the gateway communities surrounding the New River Gorge, which should add to the relevance and effectiveness of these plans.**

4. Proposed OZ Projects (list up to 3):
  - I. Name of Project, address, OZ census tract  
**Hinton Ice House**  
**508 Commercial Ave.**  
**Hinton, Summers County, West Virginia**  
**Census Tract #54089000700, aka *Census Tract 7***
  - Size in Sq Ft. **10,000 SF**



- Total anticipated financing need \$: **\$2,000,000**
  - Financing already identified, list source and \$ or note 'None':
    - **EPA Targeted Brownfields Remediation Grant - \$530,784**
      - ✦ **\$442,320 from EPA**
      - ✦ **\$88,464 from NRGRDA**
    - **Property Purchase by City of Hinton in 2015 - \$30,000**
  - Project description: Provide url link if available.
 

**The Hinton Ice House project will renovate and reopen the historic building in Hinton's commercial district. The project has arisen out of a partnership formed between the City of Hinton and the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA) to address the necessary environmental remediation of the Ice House property prior to its renovation. Ownership of the property was transferred from the City of Hinton to the NRGRDA in 2019 for the purpose of completing its redevelopment. As the property is undergoing environmental remediation, NRGRDA intends to utilize existing planning documents related to the building and to the broader revitalization of Hinton to identify the highest and best use(s) for the Ice House building and manage the redevelopment of the property toward these uses and goals.**
  - Community Impact (quantify / provide estimates):
 

(for example: the creation of quality jobs with good pay and benefits (# of jobs, pay rates, benefits provided), jobs with training and advancement opportunities, jobs accessible to unemployed / underemployed persons, project supports community economic diversification, creates vibrant places for follow-on investment, other impacts ...)

**The renovation of the Hinton Ice House is expected to provide immediate and long-term impacts within Hinton and to the greater Hinton area. The building will provide space for commercial use and for workforce training activities hosted by private, public, and nonprofit organizations. Renovation of the Ice House will help provide an anchor site for the broader revitalization of Hinton's commercial and downtown districts. Renovation of the building is expected to provide 10-15 jobs during the remediation and construction phases and from 5-12 full time jobs when the building is completed and operational, depending on seasonal activities. The range of these estimates is largely dependent on the end use(s) of the Ice House building, which is to be determined through the findings of this technical assistance.**
  - Name(s) of project sponsors, developer, and/or business owner, if identified:
 

**New River Gorge Regional Development Authority**
  - Technical Assistance Needed: (eg business plan development, financial pro forma development, financial structuring of transaction, market assessment, feasibility assessment, developer identification, architectural drawings, capital raise, ...)
- Opportunity Appalachia can help provide: Mentorship for project development; a feasibility study for the project which would include: Use Cases, rehab cost estimates, capital stack & financial structing (sources and uses), and pro forma operating financials as landlord; an engineering assessment; and an architectural assessment of the building which includes simple layout and artist rendering of frontage.**
- This assistance will be coupled with technical assistance being provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through its Targeted Brownfields Remediation program, which will provide a market analysis and feasibility study for end use of the property.**

5. Applicant Capacity: What is the relationship of the applicant to the community? How has the community demonstrated its support of the project(s)? Describe the applicant's capacity for completing or overseeing project activities:

**NRGRDA works in four counties of southern West Virginia, including Summers County, to initiate, facilitate and support community and economic development efforts. Its three primary focuses are business retention and expansion, new business attractions, and the support of business and entrepreneurs in the region. NRGRDA's partnership with the City of Hinton will utilize the existing stakeholder groups involved in Hinton's redevelopment planning and will engage additional stakeholders and economic development partners. The City Manager has sought out and administered over a million dollars in grant money to redevelop the City's Historic District. NRGRDA has a proven track record of administering and completing economic development projects throughout the region through its management of grants, state and federal and economic development funds.**

6. Provision of Technical Assistance:

The types of technical support to be provided by the Opportunity Appalachia program include: development of investment prospectus, preparation of pro forma financial projections, structuring of projecting financing, market research / demand assessment, identification of project developers and business operators, feasibility assessment, outreach for project finance / OZ investors, and other types of support. This support will be provided on contract by experienced business and development partners. It is anticipated that support of \$30,000 - \$75,000 will be provided for each OZ applicant, averaging \$50,000 per applicant. The Scope of Work timeline for provision of technical support is anticipated to be 6 – 12 months, from March 2020 to March 2021, with capital raise activities beginning in Q3 2020 – Q1 2021.

Applicants may choose to use technical assistance providers offered by Opportunity Appalachia or may work with technical assistance providers they have identified.

a) Amount in \$ of Technical Assistance support requested / anticipated from Opportunity Appalachia, or state 'Unknown \$'.

**We have identified a need for \$60,000 in technical assistance to get the project to an "investment ready" stage. NRGRDA requests \$30,000 in technical assistance from the Opportunity Appalachia program and can commit to provide the remaining balance for the necessary TA either through its own unrestricted funds or through additional sources yet to be identified or confirmed.**

Please complete either b) or c), below. No preference is given in the Opportunity Appalachia selection process to either 6(b) or 6(c).

b) If known, please provide name(s) and contact information of Technical Assistance provider(s) you prefer to support the above project activities.

Name 1: Contact name: **Ray Moeller**

company name: **Downtown Appalachia Redevelopment Initiative**

address: **West Virginia Water Research Institute, NRCCE Building**

**385 Evansdale Drive, Room 201**

**PO Box 6064**

**Morgantown, WV 26506**

email: **Raymond.Moeller@mail.wvu.edu**

phone: **(304) 293-0390**

url: **<https://wvbrownfields.org/icons/downtown-appalachia-redevelopment-initiative/>**

Name 2 – contact name, company name, address, email, phone, url

Name 3 – contact name, company name, address, email, phone, url

Note: Each TA provider must complete the Request for Qualifications, see Appendix III, to be eligible to provide TA for this program. If your OZ project is selected to participate in Opportunity Appalachia, proposals from Technical Assistance providers will be required, which will be reviewed for adequacy.

- c) Technical Assistance providers have not yet been identified. The Applicant requests Opportunity Appalachia identify / recommend suitable technical support organizations. \_\_\_\_  
(check)

7. Match Requirement:

Applicants selected to participate will be required to provide \$5,000 of matching support. This matching support can either be in-kind from community leads or members, developers and business owners, or through a cash contribution to the prospectus development and related activities.

If selected to participate in the Opportunity Appalachia program, our community commits to provide \$5,000 of cash or in-kind matching support for this effort. AD (initial)

8. Attestation:

Date of Submission: 6/3/21

Name: Andrew Davis

Title: Special Projects Coordinator

Organization: NRGRDA