



Program Manager for Opportunity Appalachian Initiative

Issued: September 1, 2021

Responses Due: October 15, 2021, 5:00pm EST

Selection: November 1, 2021

Contract Period: November 1, 2021 – October 31, 2023

I. Overview

Appalachian Community Capital (ACC) seeks to contract with a qualified Program Manager to oversee the expanded operations of Opportunity Appalachia (OA). The OA program will continue to provide targeted support for downtown and rural development, building entrepreneurial communities where local business can thrive, and creating quality jobs for residents helping to revitalize local economies and address the Covid downturn. The selected contractor will work closely with the program Steering Committee and Senior Advisor to shape the effort over the course of 24 months beginning in November, 2021 and concluding October, 2023. The Program Manager will report to the President & CEO, ACC.

Opportunity Appalachia is a +\$3M program that is anticipated to:

- Support ~40 development projects
- Provide \$2.25M in direct technical assistance
- Raise over \$400M of new investment for targeted communities

As currently envisioned, the scope of work involves:

- Facilitating Steering Committee to shape the planning and implementation processes for OA, including determining a formal process for community participation and management of an application process
- Assisting the Steering Committee outreach / promotion of activities in targeted communities through regional workshops and conferences
- Community / project selection and participation
- TA provider outreach, selection, participation, and oversight of TA provision
- Investor outreach including targeted communications, meetings, associated conferences and convenings, web site, ...
- Assisting with the development of prospectus and pitchbooks
- Oversight of communications and PR including web site and related technology infrastructure.

- Issuing and providing management oversight of all contracts
- Grant management tasks, including ensuring compliance with all funder grant agreements (Appalachian Regional Commission, US Treasury CDFI Fund, others), monitoring budget activities, and preparation of progress reports.

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

II. Background

Central Appalachia lacks robust capacity to develop real estate projects in several asset classes including community facilities, mixed use, and commercial, limiting economic opportunity in the Region. This capacity is particularly constrained outside of the leading micropolitans. While there exists a strong backbone of housing development organizations in the Region, few of these groups engage in broader development activities. In addition, in select communities nascent CDC activity is being undertaken by CDFIs such as Woodlands Development Group, NCIFund, Fahe and others.

In counterpoint to this broad gap in capacity, many rural communities are ready to move promising projects forward, having received substantial support for community visioning and strategy development through programs and partners which include: VA-DHCD, WV-Hub, WVDO, Governors' Office of Appalachia (OH), NC Department of Commerce, TN-DECD, local development districts, Main Street programs, and others.

Providing targeted support for downtown and rural development presents an opportunity to build entrepreneurial communities where local business can thrive, creating quality jobs for residents – both permanent and construction jobs - helping to address the Covid downturn and revitalize local economies.

The ACC Opportunity Appalachia (OA) program has demonstrated the demand and need for technical assistance (TA) services for development projects in Central Appalachia. In a 75-day window in the Spring of 2020, over 55 projects were identified in a three-state region. Sixteen of these projects were selected for participation in the OA program, which are now seeking over \$235M in financing and anticipate creation of over 1,800 local jobs. Outreach to regional and national investors - including multiple NMTC, HTC, OZ investment funds, and CDFIs - has resulted in interest in financing the majority of the 17 participating projects.

More on the Opportunity Appalachia is available at:

- [ACC/oa-program/](#)
- [The Opportunity Exchange/](#)
- [Vimeo](#)

An expanded program serving a broader geographic region with a larger pool of TA resources is clearly needed to continue development activities in Central Appalachia, and help address economic challenges resulting from the Covid epidemic.

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 the expanded Opportunity Appalachia program

OA will serve the Appalachian portions of five states - NC, OH, TN, VA, and WV – and will work with existing organizations (public, private, and non-profit) to identify promising projects and provide needed development services. OA will contract with in-region and national providers for TA services, and will seek to build the capacity of local organizations such as CDFIs, municipal/county economic development agencies, local development districts, and others.

A key element of the OA program will involve the leadership of state and local partners. In each state, a lead state partner will work with local communities to identify suitable high impact development projects with strong local leadership and a high likelihood of success. These lead state partners will form the OA Steering Committee providing oversight for all project activities (see listing, below). In addition, national partners with development expertise in similar communities will serve on the Steering Committee (ex. Main Street America and Coastal Enterprises). In all cases, Lead State Partners will work closely with state economic development agencies, municipalities local development districts, CDFIs, non-profits and elected officials to undertake their activities.

Technical Assistance services will be provided by in-region service providers and national organizations. Given the scope of the proposed activities it is anticipated that the following TA services will be provided: design/architectural, engineering, market assessment, business

planning, financial structuring, prospectus development, and capital raise support. Opportunity Appalachia has already identified and vetted 40 qualified service providers through a RFQ process, and OA will engage additional TA groups to expand services to new geographies as needed.

These activities will prioritize ARC-designated Distressed Areas and counties, ARC At-Risk areas and counties, Persistent Poverty communities, rural areas, OZ and NMTC census tracts. Priority will also be placed on projects that create jobs for those in addiction recovery, the long-term unemployed resulting from impacts in the decline in the coal industry, and minorities and women.

Projected Impact: The \$3M OA program expansion is anticipated to:

- Support ~40 development projects
- Provide \$2.25M in direct technical assistance
- Raise over \$400M of new investment
- Create over 3,000 quality permanent and construction jobs, prioritizing:
 - Persons in addiction recovery
 - Long-term unemployed resulting from impacts in the decline in the coal industry
 - Minorities and women
- Increase investment in Minority / Women - Owned Business Enterprises

About the OA Steering Committee

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

Project Manager and Applicant

- Appalachian Community Capital (ACC), a 23-member CDFI intermediary whose members and their affiliates manage over \$1 billion in assets supporting economic development in Appalachia.

Lead State Partners – will undertake outreach to targeted communities

- NC - Mountain BizWorks. A leading CDFI in Western NC builds a vibrant and inclusive entrepreneurial community by helping businesses start, grow, and thrive, engaging community leaders across a 24-county region. Supported by US-EDA, USDA, US Dept of Treasury, state funders, and philanthropy.
- OhioSE - The lead regional economic development organization in Eastern and Southern Ohio working in a 25-county area, supported by JobsOhio - State of Ohio.
- TN - University of Tennessee, Office of Outreach and Economic Development. Manages statewide programs, provides seed investments, and supports public-private partnerships with community development leaders.
- VA - UVA Wise / Opportunity Southwest Virginia. 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. Supported in part by VA Dept of Housing and Community Development.
- WV - West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center. Works across 34 counties and is the lead partner in the WV Downtown Appalachia Redevelopment Initiative which seeks to revitalize

small WV communities through provision of technical support and project financing, in partnership with the WV HUB and NCIFund. Supported by the State of WV and philanthropy.

National Partners

- 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 (CEI) – will provide technical support for financial structuring of transactions. This leading national rural CDFI has deployed over \$1 billion in financings directly, through CEI Capital Management its New Markets Tax Credit CDE affiliate, and a Qualified Opportunity Zone Fund (QOF) CEI-Boulos.

III. Scope of Work

A. Facilitating Steering Committee Meetings

The OA Steering Committee will meet regularly over the life of the program. At these sessions, the Program Manager will assist the committee in finalizing program 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. Community selection and participation

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

C. Promoting the OA program

The Program Manager will support the Steering Committee's coordination of state outreach meetings where community stakeholders will gather to learn about the OA program, to share information about and discuss investable projects, and to determine the best strategies to bring these projects to the attention of investors. Meetings will 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 prospectus and pitchbooks

The Program Manager will provide support to local communities 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) 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 community applicants and technical assistance providers

The relationship between applicant and TA provider is an essential component of a successful project. The Program Manager 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 Program Manager will prepare and manage the contracts for consultative services related to OA Activities, including but not limited to impact assessment, IT, web design, PR / Communications, and conference planning, and program evaluation.

G. Helping to coordinate investor outreach meetings and convenings

Investor outreach will occur through both an Investor Convening event, and outreach and support from the Steering Committee and TA providers. The Program Manager 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 Program Manager will also play a key role working with the Steering Committee and contractors in planning and holding a major convening of national investors and other stakeholders where investment-ready communities will pitch their projects and host site visits.

H. Performing grant management tasks

The Program Manager 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 OA Steering Committee will select contractors through a competitive process based on the following criteria:

- 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;
- Strong investor relationships with relevant parties; and
- Expertise in development finance /tax incented real estate finance including NMTC, HTC,

Opportunity Zones requirements, CDFIs, and TIFs.

Note: individuals and organizations are eligible to respond.

V. Program Timeline

It is anticipated that the contractor will be selected by November 1, 2021 for estimated contract start date of November 1, 2021 through September 30, 2023.

VI. Instructions to Submit a Proposal

Applicants and entities seeking to provide these services should submit the following in one PDF document:

- Narrative (3 pages) describing:
 - Background and qualifications related to this scope of services
 - Experience leading projects or initiatives and how this prior work will inform this initiative
 - Approach to program management
- Budget that defines level of effort (FTE), deliverables, rates and proposed payment schedule. Please note that the program budget for this scope of services over the 24-month period is \$225,000, excluding travel expenses with no benefits. This engagement is anticipated to require one .75 FTE position.
- Biography/resume
- Three references from current or prior clients / employers, including name, title, organization, contact information, and a brief description of the relevant work performed.

Note: individuals and organizations are eligible to respond.

Please submit responses via email **in one PDF document** by October 15, 2021 at 5:00pm EST to Ms. Donna Gambrell at dgambrell@acc1.org. Questions may be submitted in writing via email by no later than October 10, 2021 at 5:00pm EST to dgambrell@acc1.org.