

APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY CAPITAL

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PROGRAM SPONSORS



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

Project Sponsor: Wellsburg Urban Renewal Authority, Wellsburg, WV

Project Name: The Bell Buildings (Project Summary provided in Attachment B.)

Release Date: June 24, 2022

Proposal Due Date: July 22, 2022

Selection Date: July 29, 2022

Contract Period: August 1, 2022 – February 28, 2023 (or later)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Technical Assistance for Opportunity Appalachia Projects

I. Overview of Request for Proposals

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

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

- Architectural and engineering,
- Market research/demand assessment,
- Development of investment prospectus, preparation of pro forma financial projections, structuring of projecting financing,
- Feasibility assessment,
- Identification of project developers and/or business operators,
- Investor outreach for project finance/investment,
- And other types of support.

Entities interested in providing Technical Assistance must complete the Request for Qualifications RFQ, as noted on the [Opportunity Appalachia](#) webpage and found [here](#). Proposals will be evaluated on contractors' qualifications (per the RFQ), expertise, track record, Scope of Work, budget/timeline, and other project requests.

II. 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 investment to rural and downtown communities. Investment priorities include projects focusing on downtown development, manufacturing, IT, healthcare, education, food systems, clean energy, heritage tourism, and recreation.

The program recently announced selection of 34 projects to participate in the program to bring jobs, business support, and investment to Central Appalachia. The selected projects propose to create over 1,600 permanent and 190 construction jobs and attract over \$177M in financing to develop textile manufacturing facilities; downtown development; community centers; health, wellness, and childcare centers; food and agricultural facilities; hotels; and retail enterprises in downtown and rural areas across Central Appalachia.

These proposed projects are signals of the growing investment potential in our rural and downtown communities in Central Appalachia. Opportunity Appalachia will work closely with private investors, banks, Community Development Financial Institutions, New Markets Tax Credits investors, Historic Tax Credit Investors, and Federal agencies to highlight participating communities and access financing for transactions.

Once project technical assistance is completed, a highly visible Investor Convening event will be held in early 2023 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.

The program is supported by the Appalachian Regional Commission, the US Department of Treasury CDFI Fund, Truist, Goldman Sachs, and the Dogwood Health Trust.

III. About the Appalachian Region

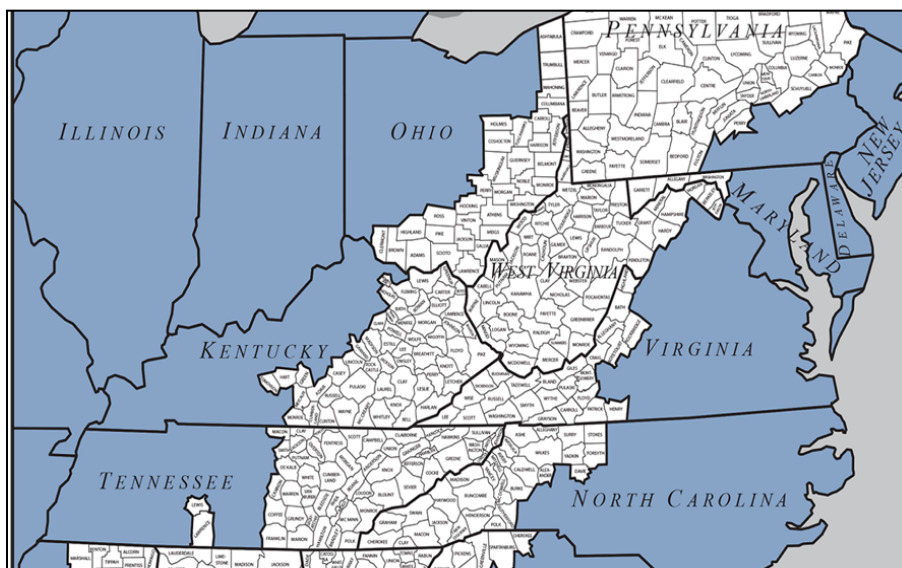
The Appalachian Region, as defined in ARC's authorizing legislation, is a 205,000 square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, 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.

Target geography

Central Appalachia – North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia



IV. Project Timeline

It is anticipated that the contractor will be selected by July 15, 2022 for an estimated contract start date of July 15, 2022 through February 28, 2023.

V. Instructions to Submit a Proposal

Contractors seeking to provide the full suite of TA services should submit the items listed below. It is expected that one proposal should include all requested services, which may mean that multiple entities are providing services, with one identified lead contractor.

- 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. Payment Schedule to be based on deliverables / outcome milestones.
- Timeline for Scope of Work, with deliverable milestones.
- Biography/resume for all staff noted in proposal (or provided in RFQ response).
- 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 response).

Please submit responses via email in one pdf attachment by Proposal Due Date to Kathryn Coulter Rhodes oa@acc1.org.

VI. Proposal Evaluation

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

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

Attachment A

Requested Scope of Services

Project Sponsor: Wellsburg Urban Renewal Authority

Project Name: The Bell Buildings

Project Summary provided in Attachment B.

TA Requested

1. Market Assessment and options for positioning of property.
2. Structural Engineering Report, Adaptive Reuse Plan, Architectural Design. To include mixed-use with residential on Floors 2 and 3. Expertise with historic structures required.
3. Financial structuring to include "Resource Roadmap" identification of public and private financing sources, and provision of grant-writing support. Expertise with Historic Tax Credits required. Expertise with crowdfunding and public / private partnerships preferred.
4. Financial Pro Forma development.
5. Solicitation for Developer. Assistance with developer review, selection and contracting or property sale.

Note: Property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Structural Analysis and preliminary financial projections have been completed.

Attachment B

Summary Information

Lead Contact: Alex Weld

Applicant Organization: Wellsburg Urban Renewal Authority

Address: 70 Town Square, Wellsburg, WV 26070

Phone: (304) 723-8968

Email: alexcweld@gmail.com

Community Information

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

The municipality is Wellsburg, WV, located within Brooke County, which is part of the Weirton-Steubenville MSA, a region for which downtown Wellsburg could be a destination location. Census tract: 0314.01

2. Service area of applicant (note if different than above, or note same): same
3. Community Development Strategy(ies): Downtown development is the community development strategy for this application. Downtown Wellsburg was once a bustling community with numerous glass factories, various mills and factories, and a robust downtown district. Wellsburg endured a 61% population drop over the past 90 years, which led to many vacant buildings throughout downtown. In 2012, the City of Wellsburg initiated a series of strategic steps to eliminate blight, as well as identify and promote downtown development. The city created the Wellsburg Urban Renewal Authority (URA), a community-led organization, to spearhead these revitalization efforts. The URA and City contracted with the Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic at the WVU College of Law to prepare a comprehensive plan which highlights the need for redevelopment in the city. The comprehensive plan, which was created with community support, specifically identifies this project as a priority project for the city. The Needs Assessment lists the need for “apartment above businesses, especially in the downtown area, and adaptive reuse of commercial and industrial buildings.” In the Action Plan, the City and its URA are tasked with reducing the number of dilapidated and abandoned buildings in downtown, enabling City redevelopment of abandoned structures, and encouraging diverse housing options. Another goal in this plan is to improve infrastructure, with specific mention of “the Town Square and surrounding areas of downtown.” In 2018, the URA and partner organizations, Downtown Wellsburg, Wellsburg Chamber of Commerce, and county EDA conducted a visioning session, with over 60 residents in attendance. At that meeting, the community identified “dilapidated downtown buildings” as the top challenge for downtown Wellsburg currently. When asked what they hoped for in ten years, the top response was “more activities in Town Square.” Finally, in the URA’s Redevelopment Plan, adopted in November 2019 with community support and listening sessions, the organization outlines 14 key properties for redevelopment. The properties for this proposed project are on that list. The URA and City have undertaken significant downtown infrastructure improvements, strategic planning and community partnerships to revitalize the community. This project is an important piece of our community's revitalization.

Project Information

4. Proposed Projects (list up to 3):

- I. **Name of Project, address:** The Bell Buildings, four contiguous buildings at 7th and Charles Streets, which were recently acquired by the Wellsburg URA:

67 - 7th St. (Suite A): two floors; 1,880 SF (plus basement: approx. 1,880 SF)

67 – 7th St. (Suite B): two floors; 2,415 SF (plus basement: approx. 1,297 SF)

75 – 7th St.: two floor; 1,686 SF (plus basement: approx. 843 SF)

701 Charles St.: three floors; 2,943 SF (plus basement: approx. 1,023 SF)

- **Size in Sq Ft.:** 20,791
- **Total anticipated financing need \$:** 4,000,000
- **Financing identified/anticipated, list source and dollar amount or note 'None':**
\$10,000 - Wellsburg URA; \$5,000 - City of Wellsburg

- **Project description (include url link if available):**

The Bell Properties are the main redevelopment priority of the City of Wellsburg. The City's Urban Renewal Authority (URA) acquired the properties in 2019 for \$1,000 after years of discussions with the former property owners. These properties are located in the center of Wellsburg's historic downtown business district. They sit along Wellsburg's Town Square, a pedestrian thoroughfare and central gathering place for community events. The buildings are across the Square from the City Building, County Courthouse, and County Building. The URA is seeking pre-development support in order to successfully market these properties to developers. The buildings are two- and three-story structures, built in the late 1800s. They were once fully occupied structures, with first-floor retail and office and housing in the upper floors. They are now vacant except for one tenant.

It is not the URA's intent to exchange or realize any financial gain through these properties. Rather, as a part of our mission to identify and address the high level deficits and unutilized/underutilized assets of our community, it is our hope to partner with Opportunity Appalachia to support the pre-development needs of these structures in order to determine best use and market these properties to a developer who will rehab these properties back into productive use.

So far, the Wellsburg URA has received funds from Downtown Appalachia, WV Brownfields FOCUS, and the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley for this project. In total, \$20,000 of funds were awarded, which went to a structural analysis of the properties. The structural analysis (which can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/2y7xf5b>) was an important first step in identifying the overall stability and redevelopment potential of the properties. With this structural analysis, we now feel confident that this proposed pre-development support will be exactly what we need to get these properties marketed and redeveloped.

- **Community Impact (quantify / provide estimates):**

The Bell Properties are priority projects for the City of Wellsburg and its URA because of the potential community impact their redevelopment would bring. They are centrally located in the hub of downtown Wellsburg, right across the street from the municipal and county buildings, and in the center of the business district. They are ideally suited for mixed-use redevelopment with first-floor retail and upper-floor housing and office space.

The URA has worked with a specialist at the WVU Extension Office, who determined the renovation of these properties are estimated to generate \$3.9 million in sales, support 23 jobs directly, and generate \$1.3 million in labor income. Small business and rental activity will provide ongoing economic benefits to the region. Total impacts from retail, restaurant, and rental activities are estimated to generate \$898,000 in local sales and support 13 jobs and \$369,500 in labor income.

This project will leverage other investments currently happening in downtown Wellsburg. The Brooke County Commission is investing \$12.3 million for a project just a block away from the Bell Buildings. The project, expected to be completed in 2023, will create a Judicial Annex for the entire county, which will increase traffic to the area. The City of Wellsburg is also investing in the area, with renovations to the City Building, which is directly across Town Square from the Bell Buildings. The City is also working with contractors to have the area's water lines replaced and to have the streets repaved, two important improvements for potential development in downtown. Private development includes bed and breakfast, which is currently under construction just one block away, as well as the rehabilitation of a vacant storefront into a coffee shop just a few buildings away.

The reuse of the Bell Buildings will also address important community needs, particularly housing and jobs through entrepreneurship. The buildings' upper floors would be ideal downtown apartments. According to a survey from HUD, in West Virginia, single-family home prices increased by 23% from 2019 to 2020. As housing affordability becomes more challenging, and as downtown living becomes more popular, the redevelopment of these upper floors into apartments will support the needs of Wellsburg's residents' access to housing. This development would also support entrepreneurs. With a lack of usable retail space, it is difficult for small business owners to find a storefront.

- **Name(s) of project sponsors, developer, and/or business owner, if identified:**

The Wellsburg URA, which is made up of community members and City officials, has been actively involved in this project since 2019, and will continue to lead the project's pre-development activities. Alex Weld, who is vice-chair of the URA, will continue to spearhead this project. Alex is the executive director of Generation WV and former executive director of Wheeling Heritage. She is also the former manager of downtown Wheeling's Main Street program. She brings experience in project management -- particularly in downtown redevelopment -- which will help guide this project's success. So far, the Wellsburg URA has successfully written proposals and received funds from Downtown Appalachia, WV Brownfields FOCUS, and the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley. In total, \$20,000 of funds were awarded, which went to a structural analysis of the properties. The structural analysis was an important first step in identifying the overall stability and redevelopment potential of the properties. This study helped the URA begin a conversation with Cozza Enterprises, a Pittsburgh-based developer, who is interested in redeveloping the properties. However, without the pre-development work outlined in this proposal, it has been difficult for these developers to see the full potential and return on investment in these properties. The URA has also been in contact with small business owners, including Gina's Cupcakes and Biond Beauty, both woman-owned local businesses, who would be interested in opening storefronts in the space if it were developed.

- **Technical Assistance Needed:**

For this proposal, we have reached out to consultants, discussed this project, and built out a strategic package of TA support that will be ideal for this project's successful redevelopment.

1. Assessment of Demographic and Employment Trends, Real Estate Market Assessment - Urban Partners - \$10,000
2. Structural Engineering Report, Adaptive Reuse Plan, Financial Pro Forma Development - Thrasher Engineering - \$45,000
3. Creation of a "Resource Roadmap," leveraging resources and providing and grant-writing support for redevelopment - Sustainable Strategies - \$15,000

- **Describe the connection to other proposed projects listed on this form (if applicable):** N/A

5. **Clean Energy Focus:** The URA is committed to making this project sustainable and energy efficient. Thrasher Engineering will perform a cost/benefit analysis early in design to determine at what levels each of the following will be incorporated into the final solution:

Increase insulation value of exterior envelope (roof, walls, windows) above current code level – this will reduce energy load on the building in both heating and cooling seasons;

Energy Efficient Equipment - high efficiency HVAC systems with occupancy sensors for temperature control and carbon monoxide monitoring to set ventilation rates and reduce outside air volumes when occupancy is low;

High efficiency lighting – LED lighting with occupancy and daylight sensors to adjust light levels during the day when natural light is available;

Solar array on the roof – analyze sun exposure and run cost/benefit analysis for this location

6. **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 role and capacity for completing or overseeing project activities: The Wellsburg URA, made up of community members, was created by Wellsburg City Council in December 2011 finding that "blighted" areas exist in the city and that redevelopment of such areas is necessary for the city's revitalization. In November 2014, the City of Wellsburg adopted a comprehensive plan which highlighted the need for redevelopment in the city. In June of 2018, the URA, in collaboration with city officials, Downtown Wellsburg, Wellsburg Chamber and Brooke County Economic Development Authority members, engaged a professional to conduct an evening community visioning event hosted at the Brooke County Public Library. The event was very well attended with approximately 60 members of the community attending. Very early in the Visioning Session participants identified the area between 6th and 12th streets in downtown Wellsburg as the priority focus for Wellsburg's redevelopment. The properties identified with this project came up as a significant location and need for redevelopment. Additionally, many organizations have bought-into this project, particularly the WV Brownfields Assistance Center. The URA has successfully received funding through the BAC's Downtown Appalachia program, as well as a FOCUS grant. The Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley also granted the URA funds for this project, as they felt it is important to downtown Wellsburg's revitalization. The strategic partnership of the Brownfields Office and the Downtown Appalachia Redevelopment Initiative were vital, as they led to the analysis of the properties and ultimately conveyance from the legacy ownership heirs to the URA. Alex Weld, who is vice-chair of the URA, will continue to spearhead this project. Alex is the executive director of Generation WV and former executive director of

Wheeling Heritage. She is also the former manager of downtown Wheeling's Main Street program. She brings experience in project management -- particularly in downtown redevelopment -- which will help guide this project's success. Without the URA's strategic partnerships and leadership, these properties were destined to languish, along with downtown revitalization efforts.