



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PROGRAM SPONSORS



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

**Project Sponsor:** Camp Grier, Old Fort, NC

**Project Name:** Grier Lodging Project (Project Summary provided in Attachment B.)

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Release Date:</b>      | <b>August 18, 2022</b>                                  |
| <b>Proposal Due Date:</b> | <b>September 2, 2022</b>                                |
| <b>Selection Date:</b>    | <b>September 9, 2022</b>                                |
| <b>Contract Period:</b>   | <b>September 9, 2022 – February 28, 2023 (or later)</b> |

## 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 September 8, 2022 for an estimated contract start date of September 8, 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](mailto: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:** Camp Grier

**Project Name:** Grier Lodging Project

Project Summary provided in Attachment B.

### TA Requested

- Architectural design
- Business plan development, prospectus development and support for capital raise
- Financial structuring of the transaction for New Markets Tax Credits

## Attachment B

### Summary Information

**Lead Contact:** Jason McDougald

**Applicant Organization:** Camp Grier

**Address:** 985 Camp Grier Rd., Old Fort, NC 28762

**Phone:** (828) 668-7793

**Email:** jason@campgrier.org

### 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.  
  
Old Fort, NC, McDowell County, NC. Census Tract 9708
2. Service area of applicant (note if different than above, or note same): same
3. Community Development Strategy(ies): The Camp Grier Project aligns with the McDowell County tourism development master plan commissioned by the McDowell Tourism Development Authority (TDA) in 2020. This plan, which was completed in 2021, has been formally endorsed by McDowell County and the Town of Old Fort. The TDA Master Plan identifies tourism assets such as public lands, rivers, and outdoor recreation opportunities that can generate significant economic returns and social benefits to county residents and local communities. Federal public lands make up more than 30% of the total land area of McDowell County. For the last four years Camp Grier, through its G5 Trail Collective Program, has been working with the USFS and leaders in McDowell County to design and plan a 42-mile trail expansion on public lands surrounding the town of Old Fort. The plan was approved for construction by the USFS last fall and, thanks to a grant from the Dogwood Health Trust, the first six miles of trail and a 105 space parking area will be open to the public in June 2022. A trail development effort on this scale is unparalleled on public lands in Western North Carolina and will serve to significantly grow the outdoor recreation economy in the town of Old Fort. Camp Grier, through Opportunity Appalachia support and the support of impact investing partners, will provide multiple lodging options for outdoor recreation visitors. Camp Grier is partnering with Eagle Market Street Development Corporation (EMSDC), a non-profit community development corporation, to grow the outdoor recreation economy in Old Fort equitably. EMSDC recently purchased a 2,500 sqft building in downtown Old Fort that will be used as a small business incubation hub. EMSDC is also under contract for a 60,000 sqft space that will be mixed used retail and light manufacturing. EMSDC will be able to support tired commercial rental rates that can encourage local entrepreneurship and local business development who can take advantage of the growing outdoor economy in the coming years. The new trails will attract recreation based tourism to the region, the lodging project, described in this application, will give visitors a place to stay to enjoy this new outdoor infrastructure, and finally, the EMSDC project will serve to give them a place to shop, dine, and gather in the town of Old Fort. Each project (trail, lodging, commercial) is grounded in equity, inclusivity, and social impact and work together for a sustainable outdoor recreation economy.

### Project Information

4. Proposed Projects (list up to 3):
  - I. **Name of Project, address:** Grier Lodging Project, PO Box 490, 985 Camp Grier Rd., Old Fort, NC 28762

- **Size in Sq Ft.:** 75,000
- **Total anticipated financing need \$:** 20,000,000
- **Financing identified/anticipated, list source and dollar amount or note 'None':** none
- **Project description (include url link if available):**

Camp Grier (a 501-c3 nonprofit organization), in collaboration with Slater Old Fort Properties LLC and SLS Group LLC, are creating a non-profit/social impact outdoor recreation hub that will be used to support an equitable outdoor recreation economy in Old Fort. This Hub will contain light commercial space, camping and van spaces, long-term rental housing, short-term rental lodging, and provide direct access to a 100+ mile trail complex within walking and riding distance of downtown Old Fort.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QIXhCpj3IEBWj\\_4qb7\\_allcaKtwPADGc/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QIXhCpj3IEBWj_4qb7_allcaKtwPADGc/view?usp=sharing)

The town of Old Fort is in the beginning stages of a redevelopment renaissance that is being driven by a recently approved 42-mile multi-use trail network on USFS lands surrounding the town. This trail expansion is being spearheaded by Camp Grier's G5 Trail Collective program in collaboration with Eagle Market Street Development Corporation (EMSDC) and West Marion Community Forum (WMCF). Both EMSDC and WMCF are black led community development nonprofits working to develop people, property, and community in McDowell County. EMSDC has purchased a 2,500 sqft small business incubation space slated to open in summer 2022 and is under contract for a 60,000 sqft mixed-use commercial real estate asset within the town limits of Old Fort. This collaboration is causing many in the outdoor industry (Outside Business Journal and Blue Ridge Outdoor Magazine) to call Old Fort the "Next Great Trail Town".

The overarching goal of this partnership, formally called the Catawba Vale Collaborative, is to develop public recreation assets on a scale to impact the health and economy of the local community and position local residents, specifically communities of color, with the tools and resources to take advantage of the new economy through entrepreneurship, business development, and targeted outreach. The Camp Grier/Slater Development will work with the Catawba Vale Collaborative to continue this equitable community development initiative to recruit, train, and equip members of underrepresented communities for businesses and leadership positions in this new outdoor recreation economy.

Partnership Press:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DHhE5mTWCKne0yRIHgoP9O6YbgSyfwHwlxrxDf7fKrl/edit?usp=sharing>

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

Old Fort, and the work being done by the Catawba Vale Collaborative, represent a new model for the development of the outdoor recreation economy in rural small towns. Old Fort is unique and perfectly situated to take advantage of the outdoor recreation economy. The town is located just minutes from more than 70,000 acres of public USFS lands, even sharing a border with these public lands in many places. These public lands have a low trail density and other outdoor recreation assets like native trout streams, miles of gravel roads, and thousands of feet of relief that drops from 5,000 ft on the Blue Ridge Parkway to 1,300 feet in downtown Old Fort. The town is also uniquely positioned on a major interstate artery, I-40, that connects 25 million people to the town in a half day's drive.

The Camp Grier/Slater development project will create approximately 30 full and part-time jobs at competitive (\$20+ an hour) wages in the hospitality, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries. The project will also provide long term rental housing opportunities for local employees in the Old Fort community. Finally, the project will help transform what was traditionally a primarily manufacturing based economy into one that is more diverse and

resilient to changes in market sectors.

Early estimates of economic impact have been calculated using the following formula:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/186PdOGmCEWV4feZfljtLiZD78U-KeG\\_K/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/186PdOGmCEWV4feZfljtLiZD78U-KeG_K/view?usp=sharing)

This estimate was created in 2020 and did not factor in Camp Grier's lodging project or the commercial real estate development project by EMSDC. Including these assets makes the town of Old Fort a destination location that will draw visitors from a broader geographic radius. If we expand our capture area to a half day's drive (4 hours) we can increase our potential market to 25 million potential annual visitors resulting in the following economic impact estimates:  
25 million potential visitors X .33 (number of people who used a trail in the last 12 months) X .03 (conservative capture rate for Old Fort) X \$107.59 (conservative average spending rate per visitor day and overnight) = \$26.6 million of direct consumer spending in Old Fort annually.

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

Owners:

Camp Grier- non-profit 501-c3

Slater Old Fort Properties, LLC (impact investment partners)

SLS Group, LLC (impact investment partners)

Site Planning:

SiteWorks Studios

Engineering:

Environmental- Quible and Associates

Civil- Brooks Engineering

Sewer/Septic- Land Resource Management, Walker Ferguson

Geo-Tech- Gentry Geo-Technical

Surveying- Wes Cole

Architectural and Construction TBD

Legal:

SchellBray- Ed Cheney (non-profit Camp Grier)

<https://schellbray.com/attorneys/edward-t-cheney/>

Project CFO/Finance:

Mark Goldstein <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ashevillebff>

Marketing and Branding:

Homestead Studios- Eric Piper <https://homestead-studio.com/>

▪ **Technical Assistance Needed:**

Technical Assistance funds from Opportunity Appalachia will be used to identify a financial expert with commercial real-estate development experience to create a pro-forma financial model for the development and advise on project financing options. Technical Assistance funds will also be used to provide legal counsel to both the non-profit entity and the social impact investment LLCs. Finally, funds will be used for architectural and pre-construction estimation work for the cabins, commercial, and long term housing space. Camp Grier and the Slater LLCs have invested over \$2 million in public trail development and property acquisition to date. The team has also invested



extensively in site planning and engineering work to date to move the project forward. The site planning team has been working since fall 2021 to design and visualize the development concept. The engineering team is currently on-site doing pre-construction civil, environmental, and geo-technical assessments that will help inform and refine the site-plan further. The Camp Grier/Slater team also recently contracted with Eric Piper of Homestead Studios to begin the marketing and branding process. While the properties will be owned by three separate entities they will be co-branded and co-marketed under the Camp Grier name. This marketing and branding process is expected to be complete early summer 2022. The development team is also receiving initial proposals from architectural and construction firms to begin the process of selecting a team for the next phase of pre-construction design and planning.

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

5. **Clean Energy Focus:** This project will endeavor to ensure that all energy efficient measures are taken during the development process. Both Camp Grier and the impact investment team value stewardship of our natural resources and strive to connect people of all backgrounds to the outdoors through this project. The development team will look at all Clean Energy features available to the project including solar and energy efficiency design elements.
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: Camp Grier has generated considerable community support for the outdoor recreation economy in Old Fort and McDowell County. Jason McDougald, Executive Director of Camp Grier, serves on the McDowell County Tourism Development Authority and McDowell Chamber of Commerce Boards and works extensively with elected officials at both the county and town level to promote and strengthen the outdoor recreation economy. Mr. McDougald also serves on the leadership team of the Catawba Vale Collaborative which is a partnership between Camp Grier, Eagle Market Development Corporation, West Marion Community Forum, the US Forest Service, and UNC Chapel Hill to grow the outdoor recreation economy equitably. The community has demonstrated its support for growing the outdoor recreation economy through investing public and private funds. Both McDowell County and the town of Old Fort are financial supporters of Camp Grier's G5 Trail Collective program investing \$40,000 in permitting, planning, and maintenance of existing trails. The McDowell Tourism Development Authority and the McDowell Chamber of Commerce are also significant financial supporters of outdoor recreation development through their support of the G5 Trail Collective. The TDA and Chamber have given more than \$60,000 since 2019 to support the G5's trail development and maintenance efforts. Finally, West Marion Community Forum through its People on the Move Old Fort program granted Camp Grier/G5 \$75,000 in 2019 for the initial trail permitting efforts making the Old Fort trail project the only black led trail project in the country. Camp Grier and the Slater Impact Investment team have significant capacity to see this project to completion. This capacity has been demonstrated in the project to date through the acquisition of approximately 150 acres by the Slater family and their Slater Old Fort Properties, LLC and SLS Group, LLC. Camp Grier has also demonstrated capacity to attract and manage significant non-profit investment and move projects from concept to reality through the G5 Trail Collective program and the formal partnership with the US Forest Service. Camp Grier and the Slater Family have invested more than \$2 million to date for trail planning and trail construction on public land, property acquisition, site planning, and engineering. Both the Slater Family and Camp Grier have the significant capacity to manage this project to completion and work with the community to leverage the outdoor economy.

