Opportunity Appalachia
Program FAQ

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

Table of Contents (Click to jump to Question)

Opportunity Appalachia General FAQ

Which Communities Are Eligible to Apply?
All counties in the Appalachian portions of Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia are eligible, _except_ for ARC-designated _Competitive_ and _Attainment_ counties.

2024 ARC Competitive and Attainment Counties, _which are not eligible_, include:
- Ohio – Clermont and Holmes Counties
- Tennessee – Knox County
- Virginia - Botetourt County
- West Virginia – Jefferson County

Communities that are prioritized include:
- ARC-designated Distressed areas and counties, ARC At-Risk areas and counties
- Persistent Poverty Communities
- Rural communities
- OZs and NMTC census tracts
- Coal Impacted Communities

How Many Projects Will Be Selected?
We anticipate approximately ~30 projects will be selected, or about five per state (KY, NC, OH, TN, VA, WV).

How Much TA Funding Is Available, and How Does the TA Funding Work?
Each project will receive direct Technical Assistance (TA) for contracted amounts between $40,000 - $75,000 per project. Appalachian Community Capital (ACC) will release a request for proposals (RFP) for each project, specifying the services needed. ACC will contract directly with the chosen TA providers and ensure quality deliverables are provided.

What Types of Technical Assistance is Available?
The types of technical support that may be provided by the Opportunity Appalachia program include:

- Development of investment prospectus, preparation of pro forma financial projections, structuring of project financing,
- Market research, demand assessment,
- Architectural and engineering,
- Business plan preparation, operations planning,
- Identification of project developers,
- Investor outreach,
- And more, as relevant

How Do I Participate?
Interested community and economic development leaders, local elected officials, developers, and business owners are invited to attend the outreach event in your participating state (KY, NC, OH, TN, VA, WV) in February and early March. Registration and related resources available on the OA webpage.
- Interested applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to the lead contact in your state prior to completing the application.

Kentucky	Dwain Neeley Vice President of Community Lending Fahe

	dwain.neeley@fahe.org
North Carolina	Christine Laucher Strategic Partnership Manager Mountain BizWorks christine@mountainbizworks.org
Tennessee	Victoria Hirschberg University of Tennessee Assistant Vice President of Research, Outreach and Economic Development victoria@tennessee.edu
Ohio	Katy Farber, Vice President OhioSE katy@ohiose.com
Virginia	Vickie Ratliff Opportunity SWVA Project Lead University of Virginia at Wise vr9a@uvawise.edu
West Virginia	Ray Moeller Economic Redevelopment Specialist Brownfields Assistance Center at West Virginia University raymond.moeller@mail.wvu.edu

The next application round will open on February 8, 2024 and run through April 12, 2024. Applications must be submitted via the Online Application Form here to be considered for program support.

To draft your responses, you may download a PDF of the Application for participation here.

What are the Selection Criteria?

Selection for participation will be made by the Opportunity Appalachia Steering Committee. Applicants will be selected using the following criteria:

1. **Identified community strategy(ies) and engagement**. Applications that clearly identify an existing community strategy(ies) and highlight community engagement/support for the project(s) will score higher in the review process. Applicants can focus on one or more strategies, including those identified in the Opportunity Appalachia program summary such as: downtown development, manufacturing, IT, healthcare, education, food systems, clean energy, heritage tourism and recreation, addiction treatment and recovery. Applicants can reference community plans, municipally approved plans, regional development plans, Blueprints, community meetings, charettes, approvals by public bodies, engagement of diverse populations, etc.

2. **Identified priority project(s).** Applications that have identified specific investment opportunity(ies) will score higher in the review process. Selection will not favor the number of potential projects but will focus on the quality of the identified project(s) / investment(s), including their community impact and suitability for investment.

3. **Community Impact.** Applications with identified projects that have significant community and economic development outcomes will score higher in the review process. Community outcomes that will be prioritized include: the creation of quality jobs with good pay and benefits, jobs with training and advancement opportunities, jobs accessible to long-term unemployed/underemployed persons, projects that support community economic diversification, projects that create vibrant

places and/or promote follow-on investment in the target communities, and impact diverse populations served including those in addiction recovery. Projects that support Minority and Women-Owned Enterprises, including minority developers and TA providers, will also be prioritized.

4. **Capacity and Track Record.** Applications in which Applicants and/or Project Sponsors have the capacity and track record to support the identified projects(s) will score higher in the review process. For example: Have developers (private, non-profit, public) been identified? Have business owners/operators (private, non-profit, public) been identified?

5. **Suitability for investment.** Applications with investable projects will score higher in the review process. For example: Is it likely the requested support from Opportunity Appalachia will result in the development of a transaction that has a return to investors and/or can support anticipated debt service?

6. **Identify existing community resources and identify gaps.** Applications which identify a clear need for TA support from Opportunity Appalachia to close resource gaps will score higher in the review process.

7. **Clean Energy focus.** Projects that include a clean energy component – solar power generation, energy efficiency measures, etc. – will be prioritized.

What is the Timeline?
- February 8 – Application period opens.
- April 12, 5 pm EDT – Application submission deadline.
- End of May – Selected OA projects notified.
- Technical Assistance needs identification: June – July 2024
- Contracting with TA providers: July 2024 – June 2025
- Investor Convening: Q2 2025
- Investor connections and advising with OA: Ongoing

Can I Learn About Past Projects?
Yes! Please explore our previously selected projects from 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 using our searchable database of 58 projects, here. You can view the map of projects and click each project listing to review overviews, project prospectus, pitch decks, and more.

Videos for each project can be found here for 2022-2023 projects and here for 2020-2021 projects.

Who Leads Opportunity Appalachia?
The Opportunity Appalachia Steering Committee is the body that shapes the program and selects projects that move forward in the program. Below are the entities that make up the Steering Committee:

- Program Lead - Appalachian Community Capital (ACC) is the program lead and is supported by Rural Support Partners and Ray Daffner, as Opportunity Appalachia's program manager and senior advisor, respectively. Together, they serve as Opportunity Appalachia's Program Team.
- Lead State Partners - Fahe (KY), Mountain Bizworks (NC), OhioSE, Opportunity Southwest Virginia / UVA – Wise, University of Tennessee Knoxville, West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center
- National Partners – National Main Street America, and Coastal Enterprises Inc.
- Local Partners - LDDs, CDFIs, non-profit development organizations, county EDAs, universities / colleges, …

Who Should I Contact with Questions?

Contact Kathryn Coulter-Rhodes, OA Program Manager with general questions: oa@acc1.org.
Contact the lead state partner in your state for questions about your application.

Kentucky	Dwain Neeley Vice President of Community Lending Fahe dwain.neeley@fahe.org
North Carolina	Christine Laucher Strategic Partnership Manager Mountain BizWorks christine@mountainbizworks.org
Tennessee	Victoria Hirschberg University of Tennessee Assistant Vice President of Research, Outreach and Economic Development victoria@tennessee.edu
Ohio	Katy Farber, Vice President OhioSE katy@ohiose.com
Virginia	Vickie Ratliff Opportunity SWVA Project Lead University of Virginia at Wise vr9a@uvawise.edu
West Virginia	Ray Moeller Economic Redevelopment Specialist Brownfields Assistance Center at West Virginia University raymond.moeller@mail.wvu.edu

Launch Webinar Q&A

January 18, 2024

Showcase Project Questions

Will the Tygart Hotel be ADA-accessible?

Yes

The housing for the Pioneer School Redevelopment -- is it mixed income? or targeted to LMI?

The housing needs assessment determined that market-rate housing was the highest need in the area.
So it will be market-rate housing.

For the Pioneer School Flats: Did Robert (Pioneer School) already know the contractors/ consultants he wanted to use before applying for funds?

Robert: No – I knew none of them. They did a great job and I will reuse some of them on future projects.

OA: More globally, the answer from applicants is mixed - some folks come in knowing who they want to work with, while others are looking for someone. Applicants have the chance to name providers they already know and would like to work with on the application. If an applicant does not already have a provider in mind, OA can do some outreach and match-making to ensure their RFP receives bids.

For the Pioneer School Flats: How do you balance ADA accessibility with historic preservation?
Robert: It's a little tricky in projects that don't include elevators. In our case, we are making all ground-floor apartments ADA-compliant, which meets the standard of 20% of units being ADA-accessible.

For Pioneer School Flats: how did you fundraise for the Pioneer School project?
Robert: In the first round, I used my own contacts. In this round, I had to extend my reach to friends of friends or community contacts. I even went to the Zanesville Chamber President and asked, who has the means and interest to help on a transformative downtown project?

General OA Questions

Are these projects in "distressed" or "at risk" classified areas? Curious if all projects are eligible for similar project support, regardless of ranking.
OA: ARC Distressed, At Risk and Transitional counties/areas are eligible to participate.

Who can apply? Localities? Development Districts?
Applicants to OA can be private developers, businesses, non-profit organizations, social enterprises, municipalities, counties, healthcare organizations, educational institutions, Development Districts, and more.

Are any of these projects utilizing apprenticeships? This could help give people local in the community employment opportunities.
Yes. This is an excellent strategy. For example, the Catawba Vale Innovation Market, film production center is being developed as a workforce development program with the local community college system--Career Tech ED. Other projects have plans that include apprenticeships and workforce training as well.

How are you funding the typical fees for NMTC or other tax credits?
OA can support fee payments, and project sponsors can do so as well.   Fees can also be paid out of financial closing, which is something that can be discussed with the project Technical Assistance team.

Would this funding be available to remodel a building for a nonprofit theater that wants to rent a building and turn it into a theater?
Yes, absolutely

What WV counties are eligible for assistance from OA?
All counties in WV are eligible except for Jefferson County, based on ARC designation.

For housing projects - are the projects only rental or can they be homeownership?
Both types of housing projects are eligible

Do you have any TA providers that could do feasibility studies? Specifically, hotel feasibility studies?

Yes, we have several TA providers on our TA list who have specific expertise in hotel feasibility studies. We also have other TA providers that can conduct market/feasibility studies for a variety of other project types.

Can a TA provider on your list train a local consultant to offer these consulting services in the future?

Likely training local consulting providers would be challenging to undertake, but building local capacity to pursue these types of projects is an important outcome of OA!