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DRAFT

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (“RFP”) FOR OPPORTUNITY APPALACHIA:
Program Support Services – coaching and conference management**

Release Date: May 20, 2024
Proposal Due Date: May 24, 2024
Selection Date: May 28, 2024
Contract Period: May 28, 2024 – December 31, 2025

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Opportunity Appalachia –

Program Support Services for Coaching and Conference Management

I. Overview of Request for Proposals

Appalachian Community Capital (ACC) seeks contractual support for specified Opportunity Appalachia program support including coaching and conference management services.

The contractor will report to the Senior Advisor for Opportunity Appalachia. The requested Scope of Services is noted in Attachment A, and includes:

- Oversight of up to eight Opportunity Appalachia coaches, in partnership with the Opportunity Appalachia management team.
- Development and management of an Appalachian Small Developers Conference, in partnership with the Opportunity Appalachia management team.
- Other related support services.

Entities interested in providing these program services should respond by the Proposal Due Date to oa@acc1.org. Proposals will be evaluated on contractors' qualifications, expertise, track record, Scope of Work, and budget/timeline.

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 will soon announce selection of 31 projects to participate in the 2024 program. The selected projects propose to create over 1,300 jobs and attract over \$270M in financing to develop and expand downtown development, housing, mixed used, and recreation projects in Central Appalachia, which includes portions of Ohio, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and all of West Virginia.

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.

As project technical assistance is completed, investor connections will be made between projects and 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, US Bank, M&T Bank, Dogwood Health Trust, and the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

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 – Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia



IV. Project Timeline

It is anticipated that the contractor will be selected in May 2024 for an estimated contract start date of May 28, 2024 through December 31, 2025.

V. Instructions to Submit a Proposal

Contractors seeking to provide services should submit the items listed below.

- Scope of Work 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.
- Timeline for Scope of Work, with deliverable milestones.
- Biography/resume for all staff noted in proposal.
- Organizational Background and/or references.

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

VI. Proposal Evaluation

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

- Qualifications, expertise, track record, and staff bios.
- Scope of Work and Timeline
- Budget

Attachment A

Opportunity Appalachia

Requested Scope of Services: Coaching and Conference Management

Program Services Requested

- Oversight and support for up to eight Opportunity Appalachia coaches, in partnership with the Opportunity Appalachia management team.
 - May include planning for quarterly Best Practice webinars focusing on topics such as project structuring, financing, public-private partners, and other topics.
- Development and management of an Appalachian Small Developers Conference, in partnership with the Opportunity Appalachia management team. The conference will enable Opportunity Appalachia participants to learn about best practices from small developers and other partners both from within the Region and across the country.
 - The conference is anticipated to be an on-site event with up to 120 attendees.
 - The conference will be held in the Appalachian Region.
 - The conference is anticipated to take place in Q4 2024.
- Other services, potentially including access to and management of a virtual communications platform for participating Opportunity Appalachia projects, with access to supporting technical assistance information.