



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PROGRAM SPONSORS



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

Project Sponsor: Town of Clifton Forge, VA

Project Name: 608 Main Street (Project Summary provided in Attachment B.)

Release Date: July 26, 2024

Proposal Due Date: August 22, 2024

Selection Date: September 5, 2024

Contract Period: September 5, 2024 – February 28, 2025 (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](#) TA provider webpage. 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 8 projects to participate in the program to bring jobs, business support, and investment to Central Appalachia. The selected projects propose to create over 280 jobs and attract over \$27M in financing to develop and expand food business hubs; outdoor recreation; childcare centers; regional airport facilities; and hotels; in downtown and rural areas across East Tennessee and Southwest 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, Dogwood Health Trust, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, US Bank, and M&T Bank.

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 by September 5, 2024 for an estimated contract start date of September 5, 2024 through February 28, 2025.

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 \$70,000**. Payment Schedule to be based on deliverables / outcome milestones.
 - *Please note:* to reduce administrative burdens and management costs, OA requires a maximum of 3 invoices per contract (the first may be a retainer/deposit totaling no more than ~20% of the contracted amount. Payments are made based upon satisfactory completion of deliverables and approval by the project sponsor.
- 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 with anticipated deliverable and associated invoicing schedule
- Requests from project sponsors

Attachment A

Requested Scope of Services

Project Sponsor: Town of Clifton Forge

Project Name: 608 Main Street

Project Description: Rehabilitation of the former furniture company building to serve as the Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society's museum space on the ground floor and apartments above. Total costs estimated at \$2 MM with creation of 2 jobs.

Full project summary provided in Attachment B.

TA Requested

- Existing conditions structural assessment
- Solar energy feasibility consultation to determine the viability of solar panels on the roof of the building
- Schematic drawings for the proposed uses of the building
- Pending Item: Support to update the existing business plan for the C&O Historical Society. Note: this item is pending execution of a purchase option agreement between the C&O Historical Society and the building owner (the Town). The proposed scope of work should include this business plan update and related cost, and Opportunity Appalachia may execute a contract revision to include the item in the chosen contractor's scope of work.

Attachment B

Summary Information

Lead Contact: Chuck Unroe

Applicant Organization: Town of Clifton Forge

Address: 547 Main St, Clifton Forge, VA 24422

Phone: (540) 863-2599 (o); (908) 528-6772 (m)

Email: cunroe@cliftonforgeva.gov

Community Information

1. **Communities targeted by this application (municipality(ies), county(ies), and census tract(s)):** The project itself is located in the Town of Clifton Forge, located in Alleghany County, Virginia. It is located in QCT #704 which is a Color QCT Qualified Tract. The Town of Clifton Forge, according to the Appalachian Regional Commission, is a distressed area.
2. **Service area of applicant (note if different than above, or note same):** The Town of Clifton Forge (applicant) primarily serves residents within Town limits
3. **Community Development Strategy(ies):** This project incorporates the following Community Development Strategies: Housing, downtown development, and heritage tourism and recreation.

Housing:

- There has been an established need for more housing in Alleghany County – particularly market-rate housing, housing for students, and housing for seniors. 608 Main Street offers the opportunity for second floor housing. The layout can accommodate two large apartments. This will help to fill the gap in the housing market and respond to current market demands for housing in a walkable area (downtown Clifton Forge).

Downtown development:

- Blight in downtown Clifton Forge: Blight can have an immensely negative impact on a community's identity, tourism, and even sense of pride. Additionally, blight can contribute to lower property values of adjacent properties. Blighted buildings can be economically costly for small towns. The redevelopment of this property will help reduce the amount of overall blight in downtown.
- A lack of development in Town: Closely tied to the blight concern, there has been limited development in the downtown area in recent years. The hope is that the development of this property will serve as a catalyst for future development in the heart of Clifton Forge.
- Rehab of historically significant buildings: Downtown Clifton Forge has a number of historically significant buildings, which are prime for redevelopment/utilization of historic tax credits and would help to celebrate and preserve the history of Clifton Forge. 608 Main Street, according to Mike Pulice with DHR, can likely be included as a contributing building in the historic district through a simple administrative process that the Project Team is currently exploring.

Heritage tourism & recreation:

- The Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Historical Society is the most likely tenant of 608 Main Street. They are currently in need of a new retail/demonstration space, expanded archive storage capacity, and a shared meeting space. The C&O Historical Society is a non-profit corporation

dedicated to interpreting the American Railway experience using C&O Railway's history through drawings, documents, and artifacts which the Society collects, preserves, and makes available to as broad an audience as possible. The Society was organized in January 1969 with the first publication of a monthly newsletter, and in 1975 was incorporated as a non-profit organization

Project Information

4. Proposed Projects (list up to 3):

- I. **Name of Project, address:** 608 Main Street, Clifton Forge, VA 24422

This property was recently purchased by the Town of Clifton Forge and is directly across the street from Town Hall, in the heart of downtown Clifton Forge. It is also located within the Clifton Forge Commercial Historic District. The two-story brick building at 608 Main Street was built in 1940 and has a shed roof, utilitarian detailing, an inset second-story front balcony, and an aluminium storefront. This building used to be an annex for a local furniture company on one side and a car dealership shop on the other. Currently, this building is vacant.

- **Size in Sq Ft.:** 6,000 sq. ft.
- **Total anticipated Project Cost \$:** \$2,000,000
- **Financing identified/anticipated, list source and dollar amount or note 'None':** None
- **Project description:** The project is located at 608 Main Street in Clifton Forge, VA. The building is a 2-story brick building that was built in 1940 and sits in the heart of downtown directly across from Town Hall. In an effort to kickstart development in the downtown core and begin to work towards removing blight that has been a continual challenge for the Town, the Town of Clifton Forge pursued a grant from the Alleghany Foundation to purchase the building in July 2023. The Town is currently working with Hill Studio on a market analysis to understand what the market will support in a space like this, as well as engagement with potential stakeholders. Through this process, the Town and Hill Studio has identified the C&O Historical Society as the most likely tenant. The C&O Historical Society is in need of a new retail space, a museum exhibit space, more archive storage, and a shared meeting space. The C&O Historical Society has also expressed interest in managing two apartments on the second floor of the building.

The vision and primary goal of the Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society is to collect, conserve, restore, index, archive, and make available materials relating to the history of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway to as wide an audience as possible. These materials are to be used to interpret the American railway experience through Chesapeake & Ohio's historical experience, using data, photographs, drawings, publications, small artifacts, and full-size railway rolling stock. Currently the Historic Society has seven paid staff members, including:

- Financial Administrator (administrative & financial);
- Publication Composition and Design/Archives Manager;
- Customer Service Coordinator;
- Shipping & Customer Service;
- Heritage Center Docent/Interpreter;
- Heritage Center Interpreter;
- Facilities Management Coordinator.

In addition, the Historical Society relies heavily on volunteers.

The scope of this funding application is to allow the Town to hire a structural engineer to conduct a preliminary structural engineering assessment, assess the feasibility of solar for the building, assist the C&O Historical Society with their business plan for expansion, develop architectural drawings for the proposed new building use, assist the Town and Historical Society in identifying and securing additional funding for implementation, and prepare a strategic plan for the development of the entire 600 block of Main Street.

- **Community Impact (quantify/provide estimates):** The development of 608 Main Street in Clifton Forge has the ability to provide the following community impacts:
 - Housing: Addition of two (2) apartments to the Town's housing inventory.
 - Downtown spaces: Addition of approximately 4,400 square feet of 1st-level retail, museum, archive storage, and meeting space in downtown Clifton Forge for the C&O Historical Society.
 - Job Creation and Economic Development: The establishment of a new retail and archive storage space may create 1-2 additional job opportunities within the society itself, as well as in related sectors such as tourism, hospitality, and retail. This can have a positive impact on the local economy by providing employment opportunities and contributing to the town's overall economic development.
 - Tourism and Cultural Heritage Promotion: The C&O Historical Society serves as a focal point for preserving and showcasing the history of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, a vital part of the region's heritage. By offering a retail space, the society can attract tourists interested in rail history and boost visitor numbers to Clifton Forge. This influx of tourists can benefit local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and shops, stimulating economic growth in the area.
 - Educational Opportunities: The archive storage space can serve as a valuable resource for researchers, historians, and students interested in studying the history of the C&O Railway and its impact on the region. Access to primary source materials and historical documents can enrich educational programs in local schools and universities, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Clifton Forge's history among residents and visitors alike.
 - Community Engagement and Events: The retail space can host events, workshops, and exhibitions related to the C&O Railway, providing opportunities for community engagement and interaction.
 - Preservation of Local History: The archive storage space will facilitate the preservation and conservation of historical artifacts, documents, photographs, and memorabilia related to the C&O Railway. By ensuring the long-term protection of these materials, the society contributes to the preservation of Clifton Forge's rich cultural heritage for future generations to learn from.
- **Name(s) of project sponsors, developer, and/or business owner, if identified:** Applicant: Town of Clifton Forge
Sponsor: Town of Clifton Forge and the Alleghany Foundation. The Town of Clifton Forge owns 608 Main Street, and was provided funding by the Alleghany Foundation for acquisition of the building.
Business owner: The Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society.
- **Technical Assistance Needed (refer to Attachment A, page 5, for TA requested in this RFP):**
 - Structural assessment of 608 Main Street.
 - Business plan development for the Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society.
 - Solar energy feasibility consultation.
 - Architecture and engineering drawings for the proposed new use of the building.
 - Identification of funding opportunities for construction/implementation.

- Strategic planning for the development of the entire 600 block.

5. **Clean Energy Focus:** The Project Team would like to conduct a solar energy feasibility consultation throughout this process to determine whether the building is appropriate for solar power. If deemed feasible, the design team will incorporate solar into the design concept. If not feasible, the design team will determine other design features to reduce energy loads, such as additional insulation, double- or triple-paned windows, rainwater harvesting, etc.
6. **Applicant Capacity:** The Town of Clifton Forge is the applicant, and this effort is led by Town Manager Charles Unroe. The Town owns 608 Main Street, where this project is located. In terms of capacity, the Town has managed numerous grants, including two active grants specific to this building/project. The Town also has a hired consultant who assists with grant management and reporting on an hourly basis.

Multiple stakeholders have been engaged already throughout this process, including Clifton Forge Main Street, Inc., the Alleghany Foundation, the Clifton Forge School of the Arts, the C&O Historical Society, and multiple business and property owners. There is an immense amount of support for this project, and a strong desire for the rest of the 600 block to be developed.

The Town has wanted to take an active role in the revitalization of downtown Clifton Forge, and the Town envisions that these properties are the perfect place to start. The expectation is that development of this property will serve as a catalyst for future development in downtown. Already, this project has initiated interest in the adjacent property (an old service station) by a local business owner to open a bakery, small eatery, or tasting room.