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

Project Sponsor: RenewAll, Huntington, WV

Project Name: RenewAll Cultural Wealth Hub (Project Summary provided in Attachment B.)

Release Date: July 18, 2024

Proposal Due Date: August 15, 2024

Selection Date: August 29, 2024

Contract Period: August 29, 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 August 29, 2024 for an estimated contract start date of August 29, 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; **Anticipated costs \$75,000**. 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: RenewAll

Project Name: RenewAll Cultural Wealth Hub

Project Description: Creation of a social and entrepreneurial space representing the industrial history of the Central City with a museum, vendor space, and cultural events venue. Total costs estimated at \$1.5 MM with creation of 44 permanent positions.

Full project summary provided in Attachment B.

TA Requested

- Market study and updated business plan for the industrial history museum and social enterprise operations. Note: A business plan has been completed which includes preliminary market assessment information.
- Financial structuring with expertise in Historic Tax Credits and available solar or energy efficiency tax credits/grants or opportunities, including direct pay Energy Tax Credits. Development of financial projections and related revisions to existing business plan.
- Preparation of Benefits Schedule for Historic Tax Credits.
- Capital raise support, including assistance with tax credit syndication and direct pay Energy Tax Credits.
- Completion of the Part II application for Historic Tax Credits to the National Park Service and support for the syndication of the tax credits. Note that the Building is listed as a Contributing Structure in a pending Historic District designation application. The district is anticipated to be approved in the early Fall.
- Accessioning and exhibit design planning to ensure the museum follows best practices of collection management, has well-designed systems, and is strategically prepared for the next five years of exhibits

Attachment B

Summary Information

Lead Contact: Lauren Kemp

Applicant Organization: RenewAll

Address: 610 14th St W; Huntington, West Virginia 25704

Phone: (412) 735-9492

Email: lauren@renewallhuntington.org

Community Information

1. **Communities targeted by this application (municipality(ies), county(ies), and census tract(s)):** Project Location: West Virginia, Cabell County, Huntington, Tract 9,10,11

The West Huntington Neighborhood is the location of RenewAll’s Cultural Wealth Hub. The neighborhood has a population of 5,390 people, with a minority rate of 10.7%. West Huntington is comprised of three Census Tracts characterized as low-to-moderate income. The Median Household income is \$27,554.00, 1.7 times lower than the State of WV Median Household Income.

2. **Service area of applicant (note if different than above, or note same):** The broader service area includes the Tri-State Area defined by the Huntington-Ashland MSA, small businesses and customers travel from around the region to Huntington.
West Virginia: Cabell, Wayne, Putnam
Kentucky: Boyd, Carter, Greenup
Ohio: Lawrence
3. **Community Development Strategy(ies):** RenewAll's strategies include downtown development, heritage tourism development, and housing to prepare, receive, and direct new investments to projects in the West Huntington Neighborhood.

RenewAll works as a social enterprise to jump-start real estate projects that enhance the community investment system in the West Huntington Neighborhood, home of the Central City Commercial District. RenewAll is a manifestation of the community working toward a shared vision, which started 30 years ago with volunteer associations and grew with the creation of a community task force. The community leadership's efforts to bring attention to the potential development and preservation of the area laid a strong foundation, and RenewAll brings a fulltime effort to achieve the vision. RenewAll’s work aims to improve neighborhood livability factors and ecosystems for economic development, provide individuals with outlets for creativity and pathways to participate, develop community leadership, create social capital, and generate additional resources to lessen the reliance on government-led change. RenewAll’s services and activities build networks to generate social capital and convert it into new resources.

RenewAll has operated since August 2020 after publishing the 14 STW District Plan funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and local partners. The plan called for the threads of identity, place, and economy to be combined in catalytic projects and collaborative partnerships to leverage new resources for the Central City District. RenewAll has worked to activate the District Plan and history of community engagement with programming to promote entrepreneurship in alignment with regional

efforts, volunteer opportunities, and social enterprise real estate projects. RenewAll was awarded an ARC POWER TA and USDA Rural Development Grant to test the feasibility of the Cultural Wealth Hub and develop construction Drawings. In 2023, RenewAll used Benedum Foundation funds to study residential property due to concerns about adjacent vacant houses limiting potential investment in businesses and commercial property. Now RenewAll seeks to activate the investment system in West Huntington with its cornerstone commercial real estate project, the Cultural Wealth Hub, and artist-to-entrepreneur programming to grow the commercial district.

Project Information

4. Proposed Projects (list up to 3):

- I. **Name of Project, address:** RenewAll Cultural Wealth Hub; 610 14th Street West, Huntington, WV 25704
 - **Size in Sq Ft.:** 7,000 sq. ft.
 - **Total anticipated Project Cost \$:** \$1,500,000
 - **Financing identified/anticipated, list source and dollar amount or note 'None':** No match has been secured; Local Grants planned/applied for: 150,000
 - **Project description:** The Cultural Wealth Hub will serve as a social and entrepreneurial space, representing the industrial history of Central City with a museum, vendor space, and cultural events venue. The location will help develop the Appalachian Heartland Highway region as a destination for heritage tourism and attract talented individuals to contribute to the development of the neighborhood.

RenewAll is built upon community engagement and placemaking efforts to revitalize the economically distressed West Huntington Neighborhood. In 2018, the National Endowment for the Arts provided Huntington with an “Our Town” creative placemaking grant to support a longterm strategic plan for the district focusing on community design, public art, branding, and other steps to enliven the Central City commercial district as a destination for arts, culture, and heritage. RenewAll is the facilitator of the 14 STW District Plan, taking the initiative started by the city in 2012 and transforming it into a strategic organization offering dynamic programming to serve the community and lead the revitalization efforts.

RenewAll has deep connections to established organizations, including Heritage Farm Museum & Village and Coalfield Development Corporation, and their support has accelerated the Cultural Wealth Hub project. In 2023, RenewAll purchased the property at 610 & 608 14th Street West with financing from People’s Bank leveraged by a creative mix of grants and donations.

The Cultural Wealth Hub is designed to be a flexible space for artists and small businesses to connect with the community. The main building features a ground floor and mezzanine level; booth spaces for small businesses supported by a central register will occupy the ground floor, and the mezzanine will be utilized as a local artist-led gallery space. The current outdoor space is a grey vacant lot and will be transformed into a welcoming green space. A sheltered area provides a covered space for food trucks, a stage for live music, or better vendor access to load merchandise. The Central City Museum connects the industrial history of 14th Street West to the arts and cultural district campaign articulated in the District Plan. A significant benefit of the museum for the local business district is the ability to serve as a tourism information center. Together, these elements create a social enterprise supporting over 65 small businesses and emerging entrepreneurs.

- **Community Impact (quantify/provide estimates):** RenewAll will create four jobs directly responsible for the hub space's management and programming; one will be an FTE Salary, and the others will be PTE Hourly jobs to cover the operating hours. RenewAll estimates that the project will create or retain 40 FTE jobs by supporting local businesses as vendors in the space and helping 15 emerging entrepreneurs start businesses in the first five years of operations. The project's catalytic effect will result in over \$10M invested in the district through new private development projects and public investment in infrastructure. We hope to inspire at least two other homegrown developers to take on building projects in the district in the next five years.

When the Cultural Wealth Hub reaches total programmatic capacity, we estimate serving 65 small businesses and entrepreneurs annually.

RenewAll, from our early experience serving emerging artists and makers as entrepreneurs, has found that at least half have been underemployed or from a marginalized community, including persons in recovery, persons of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and persons earning an income below the poverty threshold.

- **Name(s) of project sponsors, developer, and/or business owner, if identified:** RenewAll is the sponsor as the owner of the property and business operations. As a nonprofit organization, we would be open to partnering with a business as a tenant or developer to leverage other sources of income or financing for the project.
- **Technical Assistance Needed (refer to Attachment A, page 5, for TA requested in this RFP):** RenewAll's construction project is shovel-ready but needs funding and financing to start the renovations. To this end, RenewAll requests technical assistance to create the funding stack, including developing a pro forma and raising capital. RenewAll received a grant to create a business plan and construction drawings, which include a full project manual with all technical specifications and complete drawings. The business plan was used to leverage the initial financing to purchase the building and needs to be enhanced to demonstrate the capacity to repay the investment. The renovation phase financing would require an expanded business plan to explain how the operations can support the repayment.

Due to the unique activity of the local history museum, RenewAll would also like to request technical assistance from an expert to develop an accession plan and exhibit design consultant. Accession planning is critical because it sets priorities for collections, and limited space is available for display and storage. This type of expertise will help professionalize the collection management and attract additional grants for the museum by demonstrating alignment with best practices for the industry. RenewAll has four highly qualified volunteers interested in cataloging and developing the collection. However, we need a strategy so that the contributions can advance our long-term goals with the museum.

5. **Clean Energy Focus:** After purchasing the property, RenewAll entered into a contract with Solar Holler to replace the roof and add a solar system with support from the Solar Finance Fund. The 27 KW System installed with net metering will produce 33,170 kWh annually for a 99% offset of electric energy, avoiding 7,000 kg CO2 per year calculated by an online tool. Solar Holler provided the system size and annual production based on historical electric usage.

The project includes improving an outdoor space with trees and landscaping to absorb heat and stormwater and lessen the urban heat island effect. The area is partially gravel and partially concrete and prone to flooding in moderately heaving rain events.

6. **Applicant Capacity:** RenewAll has taken steps to build capacity for the project, including participation in the Downtown Appalachia Working Group and Appalachian Investment Framers and 80% completion of the Grow America (National Development Council) Economic Development Finance Professionals Certificate program. RenewAll's Executive Director will be the primary staff person engaged with the projects, with support from the Social Enterprise Hub Manager when needed. RenewAll's Board of Directors has been highly engaged in the project's development and has supported it with expertise and financial resources.

Part of RenewAll's 2021 ARC POWER TA Grant included community engagement activities to show demand for the project. RenewAll hosted two seasons of Makers Market Events (8 events), where artists and makers popped up for the day. RenewAll used this opportunity to ask the community questions. The rapid dot and open-ended questions showed interest in certain events, new businesses, reasons for visiting the area, and other information about the frequency of visits and time of day. Generally, the community feedback showed interest in new food and drink activities, community movie nights and live music, and shopping in the district to spend time with family and friends and discover unique and historic items. RenewAll worked with artist and entrepreneur Jennifer Reis to develop the Art Activation Initiative, which broadened the Makers Fair's engagements by creating the Art Advisory Committee, dedicating space to a temporary gallery, and setting benchmarks for the program's development. The Art Advisory Committee meets quarterly to develop exhibit themes and collaborative events and comprises artists from different backgrounds and disciplines. Based on the Art Activation report, RenewAll has taken steps to build and realign the management structure of the consignment business and museum and art programming to one staff position, the Social Enterprise Hub Manager.

The first articulation of the Cultural Wealth Hub was in the 14 STW District Plan, funded by an NEA Our Town Grant, which was developed over a two-year campaign with two public meetings and numerous outreach efforts with the local businesses and neighbors. The City of Huntington supports RenewAll with an annual contribution and a variety of technical assistance, including grant writing support, and recently completed a Senior Wellness Center Development (\$3M) and renovation to the Gazebo Park (\$450K).