



Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative

Federal Fiscal Year 2021—Request for Proposals (RFP) for Project Grants

This RFP provides a general overview of the INSPIRE Initiative, as well as the specific requirements needed to complete a grant application.

RFP Release Date	April 1, 2021
Application Portal Opens	April 9, 2021
Letter of Intent Due	May 17, 2021
Grant Proposal Due	June 18, 2021
Awards Announced	November 2021

The closing date for receipt of applications under this announcement is June 18, 2021. ARC must receive applications no later than 5 PM Eastern Time (ET).

Further guidance on submission can be found at www.arc.gov/SUD.

Questions can be emailed to SUD@arc.gov.

Appalachian Regional Commission Overview

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local government. Established by an act of Congress in 1965 through the Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA) 40 U.S. Code §14101–14704, ARC is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chairperson, who is appointed by the president of the United States. Local participation is also provided through multi-county local development districts (LDDs). ARC serves a 205,000-square-mile region of 25 million people that includes all of West Virginia and parts of twelve other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

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Background

The Appalachian Region has been disproportionately impacted by the issue of substance abuse. Across decades, substance names have changed, but the individual misery and cumulative community-level impacts have compounded and now present an impediment to socioeconomic growth. Substance use disorder (SUD) prevention and treatment in the region have been extensively explored and described through research studies, funded community-based intervention programs, sponsored conferences, and publications. One underlying theme that consistently emerges is that individuals with SUD encounter numerous barriers to entering the region's workforce, which can have a negative impact on workforce participation rates and economic development.

The highly visible opioid crisis has led to a wide range of national and state funding streams for SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery. While these new funding streams are important to effectively address the substance abuse crisis, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC, the Commission) has heard from Appalachian leaders regarding the need to better coordinate funds and to focus on an important goal—assisting individuals in recovery to access an organized set of recovery services while pursuing training and education necessary to obtain, or maintain, employment.

The Commission's work in this area is guided by several experts at the local, state, and federal level. On May 13, 2019, ARC announced the formation of the Substance Abuse Advisory Council (SAAC), a 24-member volunteer advisory group of leaders from recovery services, healthcare, law enforcement, economic development, private industry, education, state government, and other sectors. By drawing on their own experiences as well as community insights gathered during ARC's six recent regional Recovery-to-Work Listening Sessions, the SAAC developed recommendations for ARC to consider as part of a strategic plan to build and strengthen recovery ecosystems in Appalachian communities. For more information on the SAAC, visit the [ARC website](#).

Experts and community leaders consistently state that for persons in recovery from SUD, having a job is an important component of successfully maintaining recovery. The Commission carefully considered what role it could most effectively play to address the challenge of helping individuals in recovery obtain and maintain employment. Building on decades of successful experience in engaging the empathy, energy, and expertise within communities, ARC pursued a process to define the elements needed to create community recovery ecosystems that could achieve the stated goal. In addition, ARC pursued a process to target resources to assist communities to organize an appropriate mix of services and interorganizational agreements. This effort was titled Recovery to Work. Additional background information (including the following reports) is available at www.arc.gov/SUD:

- [The Report of Recommendations: Appalachian Regional Commission's Substance Abuse Advisory Council](#) (Published September 2019)
- [Final Report: Appalachian Regional Commission Recovery-to-Work Listening Sessions December 2018–April 2019](#) (Published July 2019)

Executive Summary

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is publishing this request for proposals (RFP) to solicit applications for grants under this announcement. The INvestments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative makes available up to \$10 million in federal resources to help Appalachian communities and regions that have been affected by the substance abuse crisis.

In an effort to further address the substance abuse crisis in Appalachia, ARC is implementing the INSPIRE Initiative, which will assist in moving individuals from substance abuse treatment to recovery to employment, with a focus on support services that enable and support individual successful entry or reentry into the workforce, thereby creating an employment “recovery ecosystem.”

The INSPIRE Initiative seeks to align and leverage complementary federal, state, and other resources that provide assistance through competitively awarded grants to partnerships anchored in Appalachian communities. By aligning and leveraging multiple resources (federal, state, local, non-profit, and private sector), ARC solicits and prioritizes the selection of projects that integrate multiple economic development systems and resources in support of implementing existing economic development strategic plans.

In addition to the requirements described in this RFP, all applications must also meet the criteria for ARC funding and be consistent with ARC’s strategic plan, [*Investing in Appalachia’s Future: ARC’s Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia’s Opportunities 2016–2021*](#).

As described in its strategic plan, ARC has identified five investment goals to advance its vision and mission and to guide its work through the INSPIRE Initiative. These goals reflect consensus among local, state, and federal partners on the most critical investment opportunities in Appalachia. The INSPIRE Initiative focuses primarily on **Goal 2: Ready Workforce**: Improve the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents to work and succeed in Appalachia.

Program Description

The INSPIRE Initiative makes funding available for projects that address the substance abuse crisis by creating or expanding a recovery ecosystem that will **lead to workforce entry or reentry for individuals in recovery from substance abuse disorder (SUD)**. Projects are encouraged to **support the post-treatment-to-employment continuum**, which could include investments in healthcare networks that support substance abuse recovery professionals; recovery-focused job training programs; and initiatives designed to coordinate or link recovery services and training, among others.

The recovery ecosystem, within the context of building and strengthening economically resilient communities in Appalachia, is a complex linkage of multiple sectors, including but not limited to recovery communities, peer support, health, human services, faith communities, criminal justice, public safety, housing, transportation, education, and employers. The goal of the recovery ecosystem is to help individuals in recovery access the support services and training they need to maintain recovery and successfully obtain sustainable employment.

Projects that invest in workforce training should stress the potential for individuals in recovery to enter or re-enter the workforce, or maintain employment, with a special emphasis on employment retention. This can be accomplished through basic and advanced training, soft skills development, “upskilling,” and establishing clearly defined career pathways in training programs that accommodate continued growth.

The INSPIRE Initiative embraces a broad definition of SUD. Substances that can lead to SUD include opioids, stimulants, and amphetamines, among others. The initiative targets the recovery-to-work continuum; **applications that focus primarily on education, prevention, and law enforcement are discouraged.**

Successful applications should demonstrate how the proposal addresses the following priorities to develop or expand a recovery ecosystem that will enable and support individuals' successful entry or reentry into the workforce and address economic and workforce-related impacts within the ARC region:

1. Provide training, job placement, and/or support activities to individuals affected by SUD;
2. Create or expand linkages between workforce development organizations, training providers, organizations that provide post-SUD treatment wraparound services, businesses, and other partners to assist people in recovery with maintaining their recovery as they enter or reenter the workforce;
3. Develop and expand industry partnerships that build and sustain the applicant's organizational capacity; leverage available resources; and establish community-based approaches for addressing workforce challenges and industry needs as they pertain to workforce entry and reentry;
4. Deliver support services to assist employers and industry in meeting workforce challenges to support the recovery ecosystem;
5. Develop and implement plans for strengthening partnerships/coalitions/consortiums with the addition of new partners;
6. Identify and assess community needs, including the need for direct recovery services, the community's capacity to support the provision of services, and input from those in recovery on service delivery; and
7. Align and integrate plans, programmatic activities, and strategies with existing state, regional, or community economic development strategies.

Grant Types and Amounts

Implementation Grants

The Appalachian Regional Commission expects to make implementation awards in amounts up to \$500,000 for each project it awards within the congressionally defined Appalachian Region. In addition to programmatic delivery, applicants can request funding to support minor construction incidental to their proposed projects.

Applicants can determine the required time period necessary to meet the objectives of their projects. The period of performance for awards under this funding announcement may be up to three years (36 months) if warranted by the size and scope of the project.

Applicants will need to address all components noted in this document's section titled [Criteria for Implementation Grants](#).

Implementation Grants: Eligible Activities

Throughout the region, a number of organizations have developed and implemented successful models for creating recovery ecosystems, including a focus on entry or reentry into the workforce for individuals recovering from SUD. The purpose of the INSPIRE Initiative is to support implementation or expansion and replication of these best practices. These types of projects have strong cross-sector engagement that results in the creation of a recovery community.

Applicants should have established partnerships and networks. It will be necessary to emphasize and describe the involvement of multiple stakeholders and how that involvement will lead to workforce entry or reentry for individuals in recovery.

Elements may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Organizations with linkages to various stakeholders, which may include employers, social services, treatment/recovery, criminal justice systems, and educational vocational training institutions, among others;
- Peer support systems, if other funding sources are not available (e.g., peer recovery specialists, 24/7 access to peer support services);
- Health/behavioral health networks that support SUD recovery;
- Job training programs (classroom, on-the-job) that have a demonstrated focus on serving those in recovery and incorporate recovery services with appropriate evaluation measures;
- Recovery-to-work transportation solutions (if other funding sources are not available);
- Liaison positions that educate and strengthen collaboration among employers;
- Workforce development agencies;
- Supportive services such as temporary housing (e.g., transitional housing), income support, and soft skills development; and
- Innovative pilot concepts designed to address the economic impacts of the substance abuse crisis in Appalachia.

Planning Grants

In addition to implementation grants, planning grants in amounts up to \$50,000 each are available to assist communities and regions in the Appalachian Region to develop plans and

strategies for expanding or creating a recovery ecosystem. The period of performance for planning grants may be up to 18 months if warranted by the scope of the project. Applicants will need to address all components noted in this document's section titled [Criteria for Planning Grants](#) when designing a planning project. The focus of these grants is to assist entities with projects that will be implemented in the near future (or after the planning grant ends); hence, a planning grant must not include activities such as the delivery of a program or services. Applicants must address how a planning project will lead to the expansion or creation of a recovery ecosystem, including the provision of a program and services.

Planning grant applicants should not assume that ARC funding will be available for implementation of the plans and strategies developed.

Planning Grants: Eligible Activities

Planning grants will provide support to grantees to explore activities that could be implemented in their region and to develop a plan to expand or create a recovery ecosystem. Activities may include the following:

- Developing strategies/plans for strengthening partnerships/coalitions/consortia with the addition of new partners;
- Conducting community needs assessments, including input from those in recovery (in addition to exploring the need for direct recovery services, the assessment should explore the community's infrastructure to support this effort, including housing, transportation, and social services);
- Developing short-term/long-term training and employment readiness plans;
- Developing education programs for employers on sample human resource policies, positive supervisory practices, and development of methods to organize and use employee peer support services; and
- Developing service delivery and sustainability plans.

Eligibility Information

Eligible applicants for ARC's INSPIRE Initiative grants are the following:

- Local development districts (LDDs)
- Indian tribes or a consortium of Indian tribes
- States, counties, cities, or other political subdivision of a state, including a special purpose unit of a state or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions
- Institutions of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education
- Public or private nonprofit organizations or associations

Ineligibility

Please note that applicants with current open Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) SUD grants are not eligible to apply for funding under the INSPIRE Initiative. However, if the applicant has a current POWER grant that is not concentrated on SUD activities, the applicant may apply for this funding opportunity. Applicants may not receive concurrent funding under Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities (WORC), POWER, and INSPIRE for SUD related projects. Applicants can apply

for all three funding opportunities but only receive funding for SUD-related projects under one funding initiative.

Criteria for Implementation Grants

Applications for implementation grants must meet the minimum criteria and will be scored on a score up to 100 points, based on the following categories:

A. Executive Summary	Submit required form.
B. Statement of Need	Up to 27 points
C. Project Description	Up to 36 points
D. Projected Outputs and Outcomes	Up to 16 points
E. Strategic Alignment	Up to 6 points
F. Budget and Budget Narrative	Up to 5 points
G. Feasibility	Up to 5 points
H. Organizational Capacity	Up to 5 points
I. ARC MOU, SF424, SF424A, and SF424B forms	Submit required forms

Applicants must have a well-articulated analysis of why and how the local and regional economy has been negatively impacted by the substance abuse crisis in their region, and they must demonstrate how the proposed effort adds value to a larger, more long-term vision and action plan being implemented in the Appalachian Region.

Applicants must describe how their proposal meets an unmet need, is a complement to existing initiatives (if applicable), and is not duplicative of any ongoing efforts in the project area.

Applications must address **all** the following elements:

Executive Summary

- Provide up to a one-page executive summary of project goals and strategies, purpose, key activities, strategic alignment, collaborative partnerships, organizational capacity, and performance measures. See template provided at www.arc.gov/SUD

Statement of Need (Up to 27 points)

- Describe the service area.
- List ARC counties impacted by the project.
- Projects must serve and benefit a portion of the Appalachian Region as defined by the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, as amended. The Appalachian Region includes certain counties in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and all of West Virginia. If projects extend beyond the ARC region, only that portion that is within the Region is eligible for ARC funding. A map of the Appalachian Region is available online at www.arc.gov/SUD.
- Describe the target population, why this population was selected, and how the applicant plans to recruit this population. Note: This initiative targets adults, 18 years of age and older.
- Describe community needs as they pertain to the expansion or creation of a recovery ecosystem.

- Applicants must provide appropriate third-party economic and demographic statistics, including the age-adjusted mortality rate related to opioid and other drug overdose deaths and other relevant information for the applicable community or region in order to document the extent to which the local economy has negatively impacted the community or region. Applicants may use data available online at www.arc.gov/SUD and from other sources to demonstrate community and regional impacts of substance abuse in their region. Describe the needs of businesses, including but not limited to the following: an overview of open jobs across in-demand industry sectors; employment status and education level of the residents residing in the project's service area; and gaps in skill sets and training.
- Identify economic and workforce-related challenges to workforce participation in the proposed service area.
- Identify any gaps in behavioral health services, training, employment, and provision of support services, including wraparound services for those in recovery, available in the service area. Explain your community's capacity to create a recovery ecosystem to respond to these gaps and connect these responses to the priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative. **Note:** Applicants must provide appropriate third-party economic and demographic statistics, including persistent poverty and unemployment rate data for the applicable community or region, in order to document the extent to which the local economy has been negatively impacted.
- Identify any anticipated challenges related to COVID-19 that may affect or hinder program delivery and the planning process.

Project Description (Up to 36 points)

- The funds available throughout this initiative are intended to help leverage program funds from multiple sources (both public and private). Project proposals must have multiple stakeholders engaged in project implementation from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, and from multiple disciplines. There must be evidence of strong input and engagement of the broader community in planning and project design as well as a clear understanding of each partner's role in the proposed project.
- Applicants must describe community and regional commitment to the proposed project by combining ARC resources with other public, private, and philanthropic resources.
- To possibly receive full points for each section, applicants must address **all** the following elements within their proposal:
 - Provide a description of the applicant's organizational mission and work. Connect the mission of the organization to the seven priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative. (See the section titled [Program Description](#) for the list of priorities.) Describe the project's primary purpose, main activities, and expected deliverables.
 - Explain how the proposed elements of your project meet the needs of both the target population and industry as described in the seven priorities. (See the section titled [Program Description](#) for the list of priorities.) Identify by name the workforce development organization(s), training provider(s), and organization(s) that provide wraparound services for individuals in recovery as well as any employers and other partners who will participate in the proposed project. Additionally, describe each partner's role in the proposed project.

- Explain how the organization(s), provider(s), employer(s), and other partner(s) are strategically positioned to support the services and activities that will help to expand or create a recovery ecosystem.
- Explain how the proposed project will assist employers in meeting their workforce and business needs, including how the target population will acquire the necessary training and skills in order to be placed in in-demand employment opportunities.
- Provide documentation from local businesses or business groups expressing a need, or provide labor market analyses conducted by federal or state sources. Additionally, include documentation from organizations that provide wraparound services for those in recovery, expressing a need for the provision of services for the target population.
- Explain how the project expands or creates linkages between workforce development organization(s), training provider(s), organization(s) that provide wraparound services for individuals in recovery, employer(s), and any other partner(s).
- Develop a work plan and timeline:
 - List the project deliverables.
 - Provide a timeline for each deliverable.
 - Identify key personnel who will execute each deliverable.
- Describe how the proposal aligns with the needs of businesses and organizations that provide wraparound services for those in recovery.
- Submit at least three letters of engagement from partners who will participate in the proposed project.
 - **Note on partnerships:** Per the priorities and funding principles described previously, applicants are expected to assemble new or existing partnerships of community and economic development stakeholders to serve as members of a project team, which may include partners that are not eligible for ARC funding but who are integral to a proposed project's success.
- Cross-sector collaborations should include health, behavioral health, law enforcement, education, employers, faith-based organizations, etc. Existing community substance abuse coalitions should be engaged, where possible.
- Overall project team membership can be composed of, but is not limited to, the following types of organizations:
 - Economic development organizations
 - Local governments
 - Planning organizations and development districts
 - Labor unions and labor-management apprenticeship programs
 - State and local workforce agencies
 - Institutions of higher education, including (but not limited to) community colleges and other job training and adult education providers
 - Not-for-profit and community-based organizations, including community action agencies that provide supportive services and human services providers
 - Chambers of commerce, industry and trade associations, local and regional business owners, and other representatives from the private sector

Projected Outputs and Outcomes (Up to 16 points)

- Short and medium-term results include both outputs (e.g., delivered products, services, trainings, or participants served) and outcomes (e.g., workforce/employer/participant accomplishments, changes, or improvements) anticipated as a result of the project. The logic model that provides examples of outputs and outcomes for a SUD project is available at www.arc.gov/SUD.
- Applicants must clearly identify the anticipated long-term benefits to the participants, employers, and communities served by the grant, explaining how the activities and investments made under the grant continue to benefit the workforce and the economy five years after the end of the project. The logic model that provides examples of long-term benefits for a SUD project is available at www.arc.gov/SUD.
- Outcomes achieved by the end of the grant period must include the number of individuals who obtain new or improved employment opportunities (e.g., internships, part-time positions, full-time, etc.) and retain employment for a period of time that is appropriate for the project and employment opportunity.
- Outcomes achieved by the end of the grant period must include the following:
 - Businesses served (output) and improved (outcome)
 - Workers/trainees served (output) and improved (outcome) and/or students served (output) and improved (outcome)
 - Additionally, other performance measures for this grant type should be identified.

Strategic Alignment (Up to 6 points)

- Explain how your project aligns with the goals of the ARC Strategic Plan and the strategy statements of the states in which you will be operating.
 - See [Investing in Appalachia's Future: ARC's Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia's Opportunities 2016–2021](#), Goal 2: Ready Workforce: Improve the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents to work and succeed in Appalachia.
- To find information on all 13 ARC state strategy statements, visit www.arc.gov/appalachian-states.
- If a project includes ARC counties from more than one state, applicants need to demonstrate how the proposed project aligns with each ARC state plan, specifically how the project supports a ready workforce.

Budget and Budget Narrative (Up to 5 points)

- All items included in the budget and budget narrative must align.
- All items included in the budget and budget narrative, including personnel, equipment, and minor construction, must align with the project as described.
- All items in the budget narrative must reflect the level of detail requested in the section.
- Provide a detailed budget that lists the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds.
- Provide a budget narrative that includes a detailed explanation of expenditures by the line items listed on Standard Form 424A. Include purpose of travel and supply/equipment lists, and describe expenses in the 'other' line item, if applicable.
- If the budget includes personnel or contractual expenses (cash or in-kind resources), estimate the number of hours/days and hourly rate (or portion of FTE and salary) for

the time that is expected to be spent on the proposed project by key personnel, contractors, or consultants. (After a grant is awarded, all time should be tracked by actual hours worked for each individual.)

- Submit Standard Form 424A (visit www.arc.gov/SUD)
- Submit a detailed budget narrative.

Feasibility (Up to 5 points)

- Ensure there is consistency between the project activities and the proposed budget.
- Ensure that the work plan, timeline, budget, and personnel resources match with the project description and expected outputs of the project.

Organizational Capacity (Up to 5 points)

- Demonstrate the ability for the project team to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including, but not limited to, the project teams' qualifications and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal grant regulations; and organizational policies, procedures, and systems.

[ARC Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#), [Application for Federal Assistance \(SF424\)](#), [Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs \(SF424A\)](#), and [Assurances for Non-Construction Programs \(SF424B\)](#). (Required Forms)

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
A. Executive Summary	Section	
Provide up to a one-page executive summary of project goals and strategies, purpose, key activities, and applicant information. See template provided at www.arc.gov/SUD		Required form
B. Statement of Need	Section	Up to 27 points
Describe the service area.		1
List ARC counties impacted by project.		1
Describe the target population.		3
Describe the community needs as they pertain to SUD.		6
Describe the business needs.		5
Identify the economic and workforce-related challenges to workforce participation in the proposed service area.		4
Identify the gap(s) in behavioral health services, training, and provision of support services, including wraparound services and the community's capacity to create a recovery ecosystem to respond to these gaps and connect these responses to the priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative.		5
Identify/describe COVID-19 challenges.		2
C. Project Description	Section	Up to 36 points
Provide a description of the applicant's organizational mission and work. Connect the mission of the organization to the seven priorities of the INSPIRE Initiative. (See Program Description for the list of priorities.) Describe the project's primary purpose, main activities, and expected deliverables.		7
Explain how the proposed elements of your project meet the needs of both the target population and businesses. (See Program Description for the list of seven priorities.)		5
Include the names of the workforce development organizations, training providers, and organizations that provide wraparound services for individuals in recovery. Explain how the organizations and providers are strategically positioned to support the services and activities that will help to expand or create a recovery ecosystem.		5

Scoring Matrix for Implementation Projects		
Explain how the project will assist employers in meeting their workforce and business needs.		5
Explain how the project expands or creates linkages between workforce development organization(s), training providers, and organizations that provide wraparound services for individuals in recovery.		5
Provide a work plan and timeline.		3
Submit at least three letters of engagement from partners.		6
D. Projected Outputs and Outcomes	Section	Up to 16 points
E. Strategic Alignment	Section	Up to 6 points
ARC Strategic Plan		3
ARC State Plan(s)		3
F. Budget and Budget Narrative	Section	Up to 5 points
G. Feasibility	Section	Up to 5 points
Personnel, work plan, timeline, and budget consign with project description and activities		
H. Organizational Capacity	Section	Up to 5 points
Demonstrate the ability for the project team to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including, but not limited to, the project teams' qualifications and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal grant regulations; and organizational policies, procedures, and systems.		
I. ARC MOU, SF424, SF424A, and SF424B Forms		Required Forms
Total		100

Criteria for Planning Grants

Applications for planning grants must meet the minimum criteria and will be scored on a score up to 50 points, based on the following categories:

A. Executive Summary	Submit required form.
B. Project Description	Up to 25 points
C. Strategic Alignment	Up to 6 points
D. Project Output	Up to 2 points
E. Work Plan and Timeline	Up to 3 points
F. Budget and Budget Narrative	Up to 4 points
G. Organizational Capacity	Up to 5 points
H. Feasibility	Up to 5 points
I. ARC MOU, SF424, SF424A, and SF424B	Submit required forms

Executive Summary (required form):

- Provide up to a one-page executive summary of project goals and strategies, purpose, key activities, strategic alignment, collaborative partnerships, and performance measures. See template provided at www.arc.gov/SUD.

Project Description (up to 25 points):

- Provide a description of the applicant's mission and work, including target population and ARC counties served by the project.
- Provide an explanation of the scope of work, steps, methods, and intended results of the project.
- Demonstrate a strong rationale in support of the seven INSPIRE priorities. (See the section titled [Program Description](#) for the list of priorities.)
- Provide an explanation of how the project leverages or contributes to existing efforts to assess or plan for workforce entry and reentry for individuals affected by SUD. If no efforts exist, explain and provide documentation (e.g., documented gaps or efforts noted in a Chamber of Commerce report or local economic development plan).
- Explain how project staff and partners reflect the community their proposed project is intended to benefit/impact.
- Identify how data and/or information will be collected and used to demonstrate the degree to which project activities will be accomplished.
- Provide an explanation of how the outcomes of this project will be used to transition to project implementation.

Strategic Alignment (up to 6 points):

- Provide an explanation of how your project aligns with the goals of the ARC Strategic Plan. Describe how the project makes an impact towards furthering these goals.
- Provide an explanation of how your project aligns with the strategy statements of the states in which you will be operating. For more information on these strategy statements, visit www.arc.gov/appalachian-states.

Projected Output (up to 2 points):

- Demonstrate how pursuing the outlined scope of work will help facilitate the formulation of a potential implementation project. Include discussion of where and how the potential funding could be found beyond the ARC INSPIRE Initiative.
- Include a description of how project stakeholders envision the proposed project transforming and furthering the long-term community and economic development of the project region.

Work Plan and Timeline (up to 3 points):

- Provide a detailed work plan and timeline of the project.

Budget and Budget Narrative (up to 4 points):

- All items included in the budget and budget narrative must align.
- All items included in the budget and budget narrative, including personnel, equipment, and minor construction, must align with the project as described.
- All items in the budget narrative must reflect the level of detail requested in the section.
- Provide a detailed budget that lists the sources and uses of ARC funds and all non-ARC matching funds.
- Provide a budget narrative that includes a detailed explanation of expenditures by the line items listed on Standard Form 424A. Include purpose of travel and supply/equipment lists, and describe expenses in the 'other' line item, if applicable.
- If the budget includes personnel or contractual expenses (cash or in-kind resources), estimate the number of hours/days and hourly rate (or portion of FTE and salary) for the time that is expected to be spent on the proposed project by key personnel, contractors, or consultants. (After a grant is awarded, all time should be tracked by actual hours worked for each individual.)
- Submit Standard Form(s) 424A.
- Submit a detailed budget narrative.

Organizational Capacity (up to 5 points):

- Demonstrate the ability for the project team to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including, but not limited to, the project teams' qualifications and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal grant regulations; and organizational policies, procedures, and systems.

Feasibility (up to 5 points):

- Ensure there is consistency between the project activities and the proposed budget.
- Ensure that the work plan, timeline, budget, and personnel resources match with the project description and expected outputs of the project.

ARC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Application for Federal Assistance (SF424), Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF424A), and Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF424B). (Required Forms)

Scoring Matrix for Planning Grants

Scoring Matrix for Planning Grants		
A. Executive Summary	Section	Required form
Provide up to a one-page executive summary of project goals and strategies, purpose, key activities, and applicant information. See template provided at www.arc.gov/SUD		
B. Project Description	Section	Up to 25 Points
Describe the applicant's mission and work, including target population and ARC counties served by the project.		3
Explain the scope of work, steps, methods and intended results of the project.		4
Demonstrate a strong rationale in support of the seven INSPIRE priorities that are applicable to your request. (See Program Description for the list of priorities.)		4
Explain how the project leverages or contributes to existing efforts to assess or plan for workforce entry and reentry for individuals affected by SUD. If no efforts exist, explain and provide documentation.		4
Explain how project staff and partners reflect the community their proposed project is intended to benefit/impact.		3
Identify how data and/or information will be collected and used to demonstrate the degree to which project activities will be accomplished.		4
Explain how the outcomes of this project will be used to transition to project implementation.		3
C. Strategic Alignment		Up to 6 points
Explain how your project aligns with the goals of the ARC Strategic Plan and describe how the project makes an impact towards furthering these goals.		3
Explain how your project aligns with the strategy statements of the states in which you will be operating.		3
D. Project Outputs	Section	Up to 2 points
E. Work Plan and Timeline	Section	Up to 3 points
F. Budget and Budget Narrative	Section	Up to 4 points
G. Organizational Capacity	Section	Up to 5 points
Demonstrate the ability for the project team to undertake/accomplish the proposed scope of work including, but not limited to, the project teams' qualifications and experience managing sizeable grants and federal awards; familiarity with federal		

Scoring Matrix for Planning Grants		
grant regulations; and organizational policies, procedures, and systems.		
H. Feasibility	Section	Up to 5 points
Personnel, work plan, timeline, and budget congn with project description and activities.		
I. ARC MOU, SF424, SF424A, and AF424B	Section	Required forms
Total		50

Cost Sharing or Matching

Under this RFP, applicants for an ARC INSPIRE Initiative grant must demonstrate a matching share from non-ARC sources that is identified as accessible and available to the project. Matching sources may be non-federal, other federal, or a combination of sources, including in-kind sources. The maximum share of ARC assistance is determined by the ARC classification of the county or counties served by the proposed activity. Applicants may request up to 80% of the total project cost when the county, or all counties, served by a project has been designated as economically “distressed” according to ARC’s Fiscal Year 2021 classification. A table summarizing ARC’s economic designations and the maximum ARC share for each Appalachian county can be found online at www.arc.gov/SUD.

To determine the match rate for an ARC multi-county project, special matching rules apply:

1. If there is a distressed county in the project and:
 - a. at least half of the counties are distressed, the project may be funded at up to 80% of project costs.
 - b. at least half of the counties are some combination of distressed and at-risk, ARC assistance can be the higher of 70% of project costs or the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project.
 - c. fewer than half the counties are distressed, ARC assistance can be the higher of 50% of project costs or the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project.
2. If there is no competitive county or attainment county in a project, and at least half the counties are at-risk, the project may be funded at up to 70% of project costs.
3. All other multi-county projects shall be funded at the average percentage applicable to the various counties in the project (i.e., 80%, 70%, 50%, 30%, or 0%); except that the portion of a project that is attributable to an attainment county in a project that does not include a distressed county shall be considered ineligible for ARC assistance and may not be considered for matching purposes.

Application and Submission Information

Grant applications follow ARC's standard application policies and procedures.

Letter of Intent Due	May 17, 2021
Grant Proposal Due	June 18, 2021
Awards Announced	November 2021

Letter of Intent (LOI)

Applicants are required to submit a one-page letter of intent (LOI) in PDF format to SUD@arc.gov by May 17, 2021. An LOI is required for both implementation applications and planning grant applications. The LOI template is available at www.arc.gov/SUD. Briefly identify contact information, and describe the scope of the proposed project, key partners, geographic scope, and funding request amount. Once receipt of the LOI is confirmed, it will be forwarded to the ARC state program managers of each state impacted by the proposal for notification of your intent to apply.

Submitted applications for INSPIRE Fiscal Year 2021 funding that substantially differ from the information included on the received LOI will be disqualified during the review process. Prior to the submission of the final application, every applicant is required to contact the ARC state program managers of the states impacted by the project proposal. The state officials will ensure that the proposals are in alignment with their state Appalachian economic development priorities. A list of all ARC program managers is available at www.arc.gov/SUD.

NOTE: Submission of the LOI does not replace or satisfy the requirement that applicants must contact the appropriate state program managers.

Applications

Applications are limited to 50 pages; this total includes both the narrative and the uploaded attachments. Applicants must provide a comprehensive narrative that addresses all of the criteria and priorities noted in this RFP. The narrative must be limited to 15 pages, single spaced, in 12-point font size.

Only applications that meet the following criteria will be scored:

1. Applicants must meet eligibility requirements.
2. Applicants can only submit one application per eligible applicant.
3. Applications must meet the ARC cost-share matching requirement for the proposed service area.
4. Applicant has contacted ARC state program manager(s).
5. A letter of intent (LOI) must be submitted to ARC. Submission instructions:
 - a. Submit as PDF to SUD@arc.gov by May 17, 2021 at 5 PM (ET).
 - b. Once receipt of LOI confirmed, it will be forwarded to the respective state program managers. **NOTE:** This step does not satisfy the requirement that applicants must contact state program managers.
 - c. Submitted applications for funding that substantially differ from the information included on the received LOI will be disqualified during the review process.

6. Applications must be uploaded via an application portal no later than 5 PM (ET) on June 18, 2021. The application portal will be made available to the public no later than 5 PM (ET) on April 9, 2021. For information on how to access the portal, visit www.arc.gov/SUD on April 9, 2021 after 5pm ET. Applicants will be required to submit two separate pdf files, one is the Executive Summary and the other a pdf file which contains all application materials and required forms.
7. Further guidance on submission can be found at www.arc.gov/SUD.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

As required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 and 2 CFR §25, applicants are required to comply with the following:

- Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before any federal funds are awarded to the applicant (SAM now encompasses the Central Contractor Registration [CCR]);
- Provide a valid Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, a unique entity identifier, in their application; and
- Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they have an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency.

Links to register for SAMS and DUNS respectively are available at www.arc.gov/SUD.

Before making an award, ARC will review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313).

An applicant may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.

ARC will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.206.

Submission Dates, Times, and Instructions

All applications are due June 18, 2021 at 5 PM (ET). **Faxed or mailed applications will not be accepted.**

After an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process during which the application may be accepted or rejected due to errors, incomplete information, or ineligible applicant and/or service area. Be advised that it may take several days for the validation process to be completed and that the process may not begin until after the application deadline. Applications found to be missing required information or to contain critical errors will not be reviewed or evaluated.

Funding Restrictions

Treatment services are restricted to behavioral health services, including post-SUD treatment wraparound services, to assist those in recovery with maintaining their recovery as they enter or reenter the workforce.

Indirect Costs

Applicants must use one of the following indirect cost rates:

- If you have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), provide an explanation of how the indirect costs are calculated. This explanation should include which portion of each line item, along with the associated costs, are included in your cost allocation base. Also, provide a current version of the NICRA.
- Pursuant to revised grants regulations that become effective on November 12, 2020, any organization that does not currently have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those entities described in Appendix VII to 2 CFR §200, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent based on modified total direct costs, as defined in 2 CFR §200.1. No documentation is required to justify the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, which may be used indefinitely. However, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, and may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If you choose this option, this methodology must be used consistently for all federal awards until such time as you choose to negotiate for an indirect cost rate, for which you may apply at any time. (See 2 CFR §200.414[f] for more information on use of the de minimis rate.)

Application Review Information

Applications will first be reviewed by the ARC alternates/state program managers of the states in which the project's activities and impacts are located. This initial review will ensure that the project's scope of work is strategic and compatible with the state's existing economic development priorities. Upon completion of the initial review, ARC will engage a joint team of experts to review and score applications based on the criteria set out in this document.

ARC reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with applicants that have been selected to receive awards, which may include requesting that the applicant remove or adjust certain proposed costs.

Additionally, ARC may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information pertaining to any aspect of the application. ARC also reserves the right to reject an application where information is uncovered that raises a reasonable doubt as to the applicant's ability to successfully fulfill the objectives and requirements of the grant award.

ARC, in its complete and sole discretion, may select for award some, all, or none of the applications received under this competitive solicitation. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the ARC federal co-chair and the respective state ARC official(s). The award decision of the ARC federal co-chair and the respective state ARC official(s) is final.

Award Administration

General management and administration requirements for non-construction projects are contained in the [ARC Grant Administration Manual for Non-Construction Grant Agreements](#). Administration of ARC awards is also subject to the same regulations, restrictions, and requirements as other federal awards. These include but are not limited to uniform administrative requirements and cost principles at 2 CFR §200, as currently updated; Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); past performance and non-compliance; restrictions on making awards to corporations convicted of felony criminal violations and unpaid federal tax liabilities; environmental and historic preservation; and national policy requirements, including but not limited to those protecting free speech, religious liberty, public welfare, the environment, and prohibiting discrimination, e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Recipients of non-construction grants must adhere to ARC reporting requirements as identified in the [ARC Grant Administration Manual for Non-Construction Grant Agreements](#). However, ARC reserves the right to change the reporting time periods and, depending on the nature of the project, may request additional relevant data.

ARC Agency Contact Information

Prior to submission of the application, every applicant is required to contact the state program managers of the states impacted by the project proposal. The state officials will ensure that the proposals are in alignment with their state Appalachian economic development priorities. State program managers also serve as a resource regarding any questions applicants have about the INSPIRE Initiative in general or about the use of agency funds to support projects in their communities and regions. Applicants with additional questions may submit them to SUD@arc.gov.

General Disclosures

INSPIRE Initiative awards will be made only to the extent that funds are available. Publication of this RFP does not obligate ARC to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds. Applicants intending to contract with a specific individual, consulting group, or organization with ARC funding must have a written competitive procurement policy in place that complies with federal procurement standards in 2 CFR §200.

This RFP does not commit ARC to make any specific award. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the RFP, ARC reserves the right to award grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts to communities or regions that best meet the requirements of the RFP. The Appalachian Regional Commission solely reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses received as a result of this request; to negotiate with all qualified sources; or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP if it is in the interests of ARC to do so.

NOTE: ARC will not reimburse any other costs associated with the preparation of a response to this RFP. Consultants and consultant teams that are legally barred from receiving federal contracts or contract payments will not be considered for work with communities or regions under this RFP.