ARC APPLICATION GUIDANCE
Education Projects

For general guidance on how to develop a complete and competitive application for ARC project funding, all applicants should refer to the application framework and instructions detailed in the *Checklist for ARC Non-Construction Project Applications* form or the *Checklist for ARC Construction Project Applications* form, as appropriate, available at www.arc.gov/forms. Applicants should also consult their state's Appalachian Development Plan and Annual Strategy Statement for additional information.

This document provides more specific guidance for applicants whose proposed projects are in the area of **education** or include **education activities**. As projects may incorporate a range of types of development activities or investments, ARC encourages applicants to consider all of the elements of a project's proposed scope of work and refer to any specific guidance for each type of activity included.

All application guidance is grounded in the goals and principles of ARC's 2016–2020 Strategic Plan, which emphasize strategic focus, collaboration, sustainability, and measurable impact in ARC investments.

ARC investment in education enhances individuals' overall educational experience and leads to higher levels of educational attainment and/or achievement in the Appalachian Region. These investments support education programs at any academic level from early childhood through K-12, higher education, and adult education. The intent of these investments is to upgrade, enhance, or expand existing programs or to establish new programs, not to maintain ongoing operations. Supported projects typically focus on programming that enables students to reach higher levels of educational attainment or achievement (e.g., enrollment in, or completion of, higher education; improved test scores; or other related measures that indicate a higher likelihood of success in education and training programs) after completion of the proposed program. Generally, ARC categorizes education under Goal 2 of its strategic plan; however, education activities may be a component of projects under other goals.

Examples of eligible education projects include, but are not limited to:
- Equipment and start-up costs for a new or expanded early childhood education program
- Teacher training to improve instructional ability or to qualify for teaching advanced level or specialty courses
- Technology upgrades for a building, grade level, or institution that will enhance and improve overall instructional effectiveness
- Start-up costs for an innovative reading/basic skills or STEM instructional program

Key Principles of ARC Education Investments
As outlined in ARC's strategic plan, activities should be strategic, collaborative, sustainable, and impactful.
Strategic:
- The subject area and/or grade level(s) of focus should be identified as a specific area of need in economic development plans for the targeted geography.
Collaborative:
- Applicants should describe partnerships with local and regional employers, other educational institutions or agencies, and/or with social service providers if relevant to the proposed program.
- Partnerships should be documented through letters of engagement that specify each individual/organization's role(s) and responsibilities and membership/participation on any relevant steering committees, if applicable (e.g., a curriculum development committee).

Sustainable:
- Proposed projects should have a funding strategy that does not rely solely on grants to maintain operations after the ARC grant period has ended. The funding strategy could include tuition or fees for service, support from local industry, and/or funding from an institution's annual budget.
- Applicants may be asked to submit a business plan that outlines a post-ARC project operations strategy.

Impactful:
- As detailed in ARC's Guidance on Performance Measures, projected outcomes should be an absolute number, not a range or percentage.
- The primary impact or outcome to be measured will be the number of those being educated that demonstrate completion of a meaningful milestone. For early childhood and elementary school programs, that could be the number who achieve a particular benchmark score on a test or other related measure. For higher education programs, it could be continuing enrollment at the end of the project period or beginning the next stage of education, such as graduating high school and beginning postsecondary education.
- In some programs, the primary goal (e.g., postsecondary enrollment) will be obtained after the completion of the ARC project. This is allowable and ARC will accept projections for up to three years beyond the project end date.
- For projects with longer term outcomes, a meaningful intermediate projection should be developed. Examples of intermediate goals include the number of individuals still enrolled and working towards completion of a degree or certificate at the end of the project period, or the number of individuals that have received specific certifications or completed certain portions of the education program.

Other Considerations:
- Proposed education projects should align with existing curricula standards and/or complement other existing programs. For example, a K-12 math enhancement program should be aligned with, and meet, the specified state standards. A new adult basic education program should not be duplicative of other educational programs serving the same population.
- Applicants should provide letters of support from key administrators such as K-12 principals and superintendents; college deans and department chairs; and, where appropriate, development or fundraising offices and foundations that will be tasked with sustaining the program beyond the life of the grant.

Helpful Resources:
- State departments of education, particularly the subject-specific offices
- Regional education service agencies
- Academic and professional association such as the Community Colleges of Appalachia, American Association of Community Colleges, and SkillsUSA
- Social service providers and non-profit organizations serving the targeted communities and/or populations