Appalachian Regional Commission

Appalachia Envisioned:
A New Era of Opportunity

Strategic Plan FY 2022–2026

ARC Vision Statement

Appalachia is a region of great opportunity that will achieve socioeconomic parity with the nation.

ARC Mission Statement

Innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia.

Guiding Principles

ARC is committed to innovating, partnering and investing in ways that:

- ✓ Ensure alignment of ARC investments and activities with the articulated goals of impacted communities
- ✓ Address and alleviate persistent economic distress in the Region
- ✓ Seek transformational outcomes for projects, investments and other efforts by leveraging resources, capitalizing on assets and stimulating investment
- ✓ Drive collaboration, including collaboration across boundaries. Collaboration is the core of ARC's work and is reflected in the planning and implementation of ARC projects and investments.
- ✓ Remain flexible to ensure responsiveness to evolving Regional needs and challenges
- ✓ Seek out, disseminate and advance Regional ideas and solutions for Regional challenges
- ✓ Build the capacity of grassroots efforts
- ✓ Actively seek equitable access, participation, and representation for all of ARC's activities and investments
- ✓ Balance the opportunities offered through our unique geography with conservation of our natural and cultural assets and heritage.
- ✓ Encourage economic development efforts that consider environmental impacts.
- ✓ Ensure ARC focus, support, and engagement is inclusive of the entire Region
- ✓ Hold itself, partners, and grantees accountable for achieving performance

Strategic Investment Goals & Objectives

Goal #1: Building Appalachian Businesses

Strengthen and diversify the Region's economy through inclusive economic development strategies and investments in entrepreneurship and business development.

- ✓ **Objective 1.1:** Provide financing, technical assistance, and other support for entrepreneurship and small business development in the Region.
- ✓ **Objective 1.2:** Pursue economic and enterprise development strategies that grow existing industries, support economic diversification, and advance economic prosperity at the regional level.

Goal #2: Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem

Expand and strengthen community systems (education, healthcare, housing, childcare, and others) that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.

- ✓ **Objective 2.1:** Develop and support educational programs and institutions from early childhood through post-secondary that provide the building blocks for skills development and long-term employment success.
- ✓ **Objective 2.2:** Invest in workforce development programs and strategies informed by industry talent needs and designed to allow workers to simultaneously earn, learn, and advance along a career pathway.
- ✓ **Objective 2.3:** Develop a network of employment supports to help Appalachians enter and remain in the workforce.
- ✓ **Objective 2.4:** Expand access to high quality healthcare as well as programs and services that support overall mental and physical health, for workers and their families.

Goal #3: Building Appalachia's Infrastructure

Ensure that the residents and businesses of Appalachia have access to reliable, affordable, resilient, and energy efficient utilities and infrastructure in order to successfully live and work in the Region.

- ✓ **Objective 3.1:** Ensure the availability of quality, affordable basic infrastructure to meet the needs of the residents and businesses of Appalachia.
- ✓ **Objective 3.2:** Ensure that all Appalachians have access to quality and affordable telecommunications and broadband services.
- ✓ **Objective 3.3:** Support proactive efforts to adopt alternative energy strategies and bolster energy infrastructure.
- ✓ **Objective 3.4:** Complete the Appalachian Development Highway System and invest in innovative intermodal transportation systems to connect businesses and residents within the Region with global opportunities.
- ✓ **Objective 3.5:** Support construction of business development sites and public facilities and the adaptive reuse of obsolete and/or unsafe properties to stimulate economic and community development.

Goal #4: Building Regional Culture and Tourism

Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by preserving and investing in the Region's local, cultural heritage, and natural assets.

- ✓ **Objective 4.1:** Invest in the development of vibrant Appalachian downtowns and provide support for Appalachian placemaking.
- ✓ **Objective 4.2:** Invest in economic and community development initiatives that preserve and promote Appalachian communities' vibrant arts, cultural, and heritage traditions.
- ✓ **Objective 4.3:** Preserve and expand Appalachia's natural resources to increase outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors and support sustainable economic growth.

Goal #5: Building Community Leaders and Capacity

Invest in the capacity of local leaders, organizations, and communities to address local challenges by providing technical assistance and support to access resources, engage partners, identify strategies and tactics, and conduct effective planning and project execution.

- ✓ **Objective 5.1:** Develop, support, and empower community leaders that are representative of local communities, inclusive in their approach, and focused on long-term, innovative strategies and solutions.
- ✓ **Objective 5.2:** Build capacity of community organizations and local development districts to effectively access and manage funding, administer programs, and execute projects through implementation.
- ✓ **Objective 5.3:** Invest in developing the capacity of communities to build ecosystems where government, non-profits, businesses, and philanthropic partners coalesce around a shared vision for economic and community prosperity and collaborate to implement that vision.

ARC Roles

To successfully implement its strategic mission, the Commission commits itself to the following critical roles:

Catalyst: ARC seeks to catalyze innovation in the Region by cultivating and supporting new and burgeoning ideas for projects and activities in local communities.

Investor: ARC invests and leverages its resources in projects and activities designed to transform the Region's economy and its communities' well-being.

Capacity-Builder: ARC supports the development of community leaders and overall community capacity to successfully plan, propose and implement innovative projects and initiatives; develops and shares best practices, and conducts outreach and technical assistance to bring new and/or under-resourced groups to the planning table.

Advocate: ARC advocates for Appalachia and develops co-investment partnerships with other organizations at all levels—local, regional, national, and global.

Convener: ARC convenes, or supports convening of, broad and inclusive groups of stakeholders to identify, plan, and implement innovative local solutions for local challenges.

Researcher: ARC conducts research that analyzes key economic, demographic, and quality-of-life factors that affect Appalachia's future development prospects. Research informs best practices, helps ARC leadership and state and local partners target resources effectively, and provides valid data for outside researchers.

Evaluator: ARC evaluates grant implementation and outcomes to assess the extent to which funded projects contribute to ARC's strategic goals, share and replicate best practices, and inform ongoing improvements to ARC programming.

Equity Driver: ARC invests in and supports projects and activities that include intentional strategies to create a more equitable Appalachia.

Coach: ARC provides staff resources to support states and grantees with successful project implementation, including technical assistance, coaching, and problem solving to help overcome barriers to success.

Navigator: ARC assists the Region with navigating the complex federal funding landscape to strategically access and leverage funding to support key projects and initiatives.