



ARC APPLICATION GUIDANCE

Healthcare Access 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 **healthcare access development** or include **healthcare access development 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 healthcare access projects helps Appalachian communities improve the availability of affordable, high-quality healthcare services to residents, particularly those in Health Professional Shortage Areas and areas with significant health disparities. ARC-supported projects typically focus on developing the physical infrastructure, workforce, and organizational capacity needed to establish sustainable healthcare enterprises. ARC generally categorizes these activities under [Goal 2](#) of its strategic plan; however, other goals may be relevant.

Examples of eligible healthcare access projects include, but are not limited to:

- Constructing or renovating clinic facilities
- Establishing rural medical residency training sites
- Performing recruiting and retention efforts aimed at nurses, dentists, counselors, or community health workers
- Implementing telehealth technology to provide mental healthcare services
- Providing business technical assistance for healthcare enterprises
- Conducting training for professionals and paraprofessionals working in the prevention and treatment of opioid (and other substances) use disorders

Key Principles of ARC Healthcare Access Investments

As outlined in ARC's strategic plan, activities should be strategic, collaborative, sustainable, and impactful.

Strategic:

- Applicants should consider how proposed projects align with local and regional healthcare plans, such as community health needs assessments.
- Project proposals should indicate a strong familiarity with data on local health factors and health outcomes, and offer a prioritized response to the community's most urgent health needs.
- Project design should reflect awareness of the links between community health and economic development opportunity. For example, projects could locate new healthcare enterprises in walkable downtown areas, or propose ways to link healthcare services to schools or farmers markets.

Collaborative:

- Applicants should assess how existing programs (public, private, or nonprofit) are responding to high-priority health issues identified in the proposal, and describe how the proposed project fills a gap. They should also consider mutually beneficial ways to work with these potential partners.

Sustainable:

- Projects should be designed to become self-sustaining after the ARC grant period has closed. Applicants need to consider how the project would continue to deliver services after ARC funds are used, and address other factors that could affect sustainability.
- Applicants should assess whether ARC investment in the project could effectively leverage more substantial resources from state or federal programs, private foundations, or public and private health insurance payers.

Impactful:

- All project proposals should include substantial performance targets. When considering targets, applicants should also consider the impacts that proposed healthcare access activities can have in terms of employability, job creation, and business enterprise.
- Applicants should refer to the [Guide to ARC Project Performance Measures](#) for information on determining appropriate project measures. Typical outcome measures for healthcare access projects include trainees with improvements (e.g., certifications); students with improvements (e.g., academic degrees or job placements); patients with improvements; jobs created or retained; and leveraged private investment.
- For measurement purposes, individuals served by a clinical provider of some kind (doctor, dentist, therapist, nurse, PA, etc.) should be counted as “patients.” For projects that do not provide clinical services (such as health promotion events), the measure “participants served” should be used. Some projects may include both of these measures.
- As an economic development organization, ARC does not require grantees to track clinical measures; however, these measures can be powerful indicators of program impact, and grantees who are able to include them in the performance measurement framework are encouraged to do so.

Other Considerations

- In general, ARC does not fund the direct provision of social services such as those offered by human services agencies or charity organizations. Proposals to provide services of this type will be scrutinized as to how the project supports ARC’s economic development mission, and on performance targeting strength and program sustainability. Applicants might instead consider developing alternative project approaches in the context of fostering healthcare access, job training, or enterprise development.
- Projects focused on healthcare workforce development in academic settings (such as universities or community colleges) should also consider ARC performance measurement guidance for education and workforce training programs.

Helpful Resources

- ARC Research Report (2017): [Health Disparities in Appalachia](#)
- County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Program Website: [County Health Rankings](#) (county-level data on health factors and health outcomes)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website: [Data and Statistics](#) (county-level data on health conditions)
- Rural Health Information Hub (RHInfo) Website: www.ruralhealthinfo.org (includes data and toolkits useful in the development and implementation of programs and services in rural communities)