



# *READY Nonprofits Training Program*

**Federal Fiscal Year 2025**

## **Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA) for Training Participation**

This notice of solicitation of applications (NOSA) announces an opportunity to apply to be a participant in the Appalachian Regional Commission's *READY Nonprofits* training program. This NOSA provides an overview of the training program and details the specific requirements needed to submit an application.

The deadline for applications under this announcement is **February 28, 2025**. ARC must receive final applications no later than **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)**.

Questions can be emailed to [READY@yourstrategicconsultant.com](mailto:READY@yourstrategicconsultant.com).

### **Appalachian Regional Commission Overview**

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a regional economic development entity that represents a partnership between federal, state, and local governments. 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 206,000-square-mile region of 26.4 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.

ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia to help the region achieve socioeconomic parity with the nation. ARC funds projects that address the five investment priorities identified in its [strategic plan](#):

1. Building Appalachian Businesses
2. Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem
3. Building Appalachia's Infrastructure
4. Building Regional Culture and Tourism
5. Building Community Leaders and Capacity

Annually, ARC provides funding for approximately 600 projects in the Appalachian Region that support business development, education and job training, telecommunications, infrastructure, community development, housing, and transportation. These projects create thousands of new jobs, improve local water and wastewater systems, train the region's workforce, assist local communities with strategic planning, and provide entrepreneurial assistance to emerging businesses. Additional information about ARC can be found at [www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov).

# Table of Contents

Basic Information .....	4
Key Dates .....	4
Executive Summary .....	4
Eligibility .....	5
Eligible Applicants .....	5
Eligible Participants .....	6
Ineligible Organizations .....	6
Training Program Attendance and Grant Eligibility .....	6
Program Description .....	7
Training Program .....	7
Grant Program .....	7
Program Participation   Requirements .....	8
Course Overview .....	8
Course Schedule .....	9
Virtual Sessions .....	9
Assignments .....	9
One-to-One Consultations .....	10
Follow-Up Consultations .....	10
Computer Requirements .....	10
Curriculum   Course Options .....	10
Course Option 1: Board Development .....	10
Course Option 2: Financial Management .....	11
Course Option 3: Fundraising .....	12
Course Option 4: Marketing/Communications .....	12
Course Option 5: Programs/Operations .....	13
Course Option 6: Human Capital .....	13
Course Option 7: Grant Writing and Management .....	14
Course Option 8: Strategic Planning .....	15
Course Preference and Virtual Class Scheduling .....	15
Program Format   Cohorts and Instructor .....	16
Course Evaluations .....	16
Application Contents and Format .....	16
Submission Requirements and Deadlines .....	17

Application Portal .....	17
Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) .....	17
Submission Instructions .....	18
Supported Browsers.....	18
Troubleshooting   Contact Us.....	18
Pre-application Webinar .....	18
Submission Dates and Times .....	19
Application Review Information .....	19
Assessment Criteria .....	19
Review and Selection Process.....	20
Award Notices.....	20
General Disclosures.....	20

## Basic Information

<b>Entity Name:</b>	Appalachian Regional Commission
<b>Program Title:</b>	<i>READY Nonprofits</i> Training Program
<b>Announcement Type:</b>	Initial
<b>Number of Organizations to be Selected:</b>	Up to 75 nonprofit organizations
<b>Program Details:</b>	Organizations will be selected to receive training on nonprofit management principles. Organizations that successfully complete the training program will be eligible to apply for up to \$25,000 in funding.
<b>Program Contact Information:</b>	<a href="mailto:READY@yourstrategicconsultant.com">READY@yourstrategicconsultant.com</a>

## Key Dates

<b>NOSA Release Date:</b>	January 15, 2025
<b>Application Portal Opens:</b>	January 15, 2025 (11:00 a.m. ET) <a href="#">Apply Here</a>
<b>Pre-Application Webinar:</b>	February 11, 2025 (10:00 a.m. ET) <a href="#">Register Here</a>
<b>Application Portal Closes:</b>	February 28, 2025 (5:00 p.m. ET)
<b>Applicants Notified of Selection:</b>	Week of April 28, 2025
<b>Participant Announcement:</b>	May 2025
<b>Training Program Dates:</b>	June 23, 2025 – September 23, 2025

## Executive Summary

[READY Appalachia](#) provides direct technical assistance and funding to support four key pillars of economic development in the region: Appalachian local governments, local development districts (LDDs), nonprofit organizations, and community foundations. The purpose of the *READY Nonprofits* program is to train Appalachian nonprofit executives and their staffs in nonprofit management principles, specifically in board development, financial management, grant writing and management, fundraising, marketing/communications, human capital/human resources, programs/operations, and strategic planning. This initiative is focused on executive officers of Appalachian nonprofit organizations and their staff and/or board members.

Through this initiative, ARC will support nonprofit organizations in the Appalachian Region in improving their internal capacities, which will later help them leverage other resources to

improve quality of life and foster economic development in their surrounding communities. Organizations that serve Appalachia's most underrepresented communities, including [economically distressed counties](#) and historically underserved populations, are encouraged to apply.

The *READY Nonprofits* program is comprised of two components. The first is a training program in which participants learn and improve their skills related to nonprofit and grant management. The second is a grant program sponsored by ARC through which participants will apply the lessons learned by going through the complete life cycle of a grant award made by ARC. This grant award, with up to \$25,000 available for each entity, will be a capacity-building grant for the organization itself, which can focus on needs identified during the training component. The grant opportunity is limited to entities that have successfully completed the training program. Organizations participating in the grant program are encouraged to commit to the applicable funding match, though they are not required to.

The *READY Nonprofits* training program has three objectives:

1. Train Appalachian nonprofit organization executives, as well as their staffs and board members, to develop greater in-house capacity and become more sustainable and organizationally sound, according to their needs, enabling them to better serve their communities and advance economic prosperity in Appalachia.
2. Address the challenges faced by underserved communities by prioritizing economic development-related organizations in these communities for participation in the program.
3. Support the most underserved and low-capacity nonprofit organizations in Appalachia and those that provide underserved populations with crucial services and which contribute most significantly to economic development.

## Eligibility

Before beginning the application process for the training program, please ensure that your nonprofit organization is eligible. Organizations that apply are limited to submitting only one application under this announcement.

### Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply (both criteria must be met):

- Public or private nonprofit organizations or associations, including labor unions; and
- Entities that serve communities in Appalachia

Nonprofit organizations serving the following groups are encouraged to apply:

- [Distressed counties](#)
- Entities serving historically underserved populations

Additionally, lower-capacity nonprofit organizations, those in remote areas of the region, and those ARC has not worked with before are encouraged to apply.

## Eligible Participants

Each nonprofit organization must have two participants:

- **Primary participant:** Nonprofit executive director (or equivalent)
- **Secondary participant:** Staff, board, or committee member (left to the discretion of the organization depending on their goals in participating in the program).

The training program has space for two participants from up to 75 nonprofit organizations, or 150 total participants. The primary participant must be the executive director, or equivalent, and the secondary participant can be a staff, board, or committee member, left to the discretion of the organization depending on their goals in participating in the program. Having two participants from each nonprofit ensures permeation of the effects of the training through the whole organization and sustainability of the impact over time. Eligibility to participate in the subsequent *READY Nonprofits* grant program will depend on the continuous attendance and participation of both participants from each organization.

If you have any questions about your eligibility, please contact the Strategic Consulting Partners application support center at [READY@yourstrategicconsultant.com](mailto:READY@yourstrategicconsultant.com).

## Ineligible Organizations

The following entities are **not** eligible to apply:

- For-profit organizations
- Institutions of higher education or major hospital systems
- Organizations that do not serve communities in the Appalachian Region, as defined by the Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA), 40 USC 14102(a)(1). A map of the Appalachian Region is available [online](#).
- Organizations that meet the criteria for *READY Appalachia's* other three learning tracks: local development districts (LDDs), local governments, and community foundations.

## Training Program Attendance and Grant Eligibility

To be eligible for the grant, training program participants must commit to active participation in the training sessions. Both the primary and secondary participants must be actively engaged in all program activities. Organizations are expected to have a 100% participation rate from both individuals for the training sessions, one-to-one consultations, and follow-up consultations. Automatic disqualification from the grant program will result if any of the following occurs:

- Either the executive director or the secondary participant misses more than 1 of the 5 virtual training sessions
- Either the executive director or the secondary participant misses any of the one-to-one consultations
- Either the executive director or the secondary participant misses any of the follow-up consultations
- Either the primary or secondary participant has more than one no-show (absence without notifying the instructor prior) throughout the program

ARC reserves the right to expand, modify, adjust, or deny participation in the program, at its sole discretion, when it advances the policy goals, priorities, and best use of ARC resources.

## Program Description

*READY Nonprofits* is comprised of two components: a training program followed by a grant program. This Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA) is for participation in the training program. A separate application for the grant program will be provided to eligible participants who have completed the training program.

## Training Program

The *READY Nonprofits* training program is a seven-week training program through which participants will learn and improve their skills in matters related to nonprofit and grant management skills, helping them to leverage other resources to improve quality of life and foster economic development in their surrounding communities.

Training program participants have eight course options:

1. Board development
2. Financial management
3. Grant writing and management
4. Fundraising
5. Marketing/communications
6. Human capital (human resources)
7. Programs/operations
8. Strategic planning

Each participating nonprofit organization will choose one of the eight courses to complete during the program. Please see the [course options](#) to learn more.

This seven-week program (five weeks of virtual cohort-based training sessions and two weeks of one-to-one consultations) will include a combination of five sessions with small group discussions and instruction within their cohort, two one-to-one consultations led by an instructor with expertise in the course topic, and weekly assignments. (See [schedule](#) here.)

Course materials and assignments will be actionable, tool-based, and grounded in real-life situations faced by nonprofits. Participants engage with the course content through immediate application of the tools and materials to their organizations. The course will include a review of relevant case studies and scenarios. Opportunities for further discussion and application will be available during the one-to-one consultations.

Three months following the completion of the course, each nonprofit organization will have two additional follow-up consultations to discuss their experience with the program, application of the content taught within the course, any existing or anticipated stumbling blocks, future planning, and plans to pursue an ARC grant.

## Grant Program

Upon successful completion of the training program, the second component of *READY Nonprofits* includes an opportunity for eligible participants to apply for an ARC grant. This grant award, up to \$25,000 for each nonprofit organization, will be an organizational capacity-building grant for the organization itself, with optional match commitment. Projects can focus on a capacity need identified during the training component (note: construction projects will not be allowed). To see what types of projects are eligible for the later grant

opportunity, nonprofits may view [ARC's Guidance for Capacity-Building Projects](#). The section that applies to this grant opportunity is the Organizational Capacity-Building Section. Only these types of projects will be considered eligible projects for the grant program. A separate application process will be published for the grant program, which is limited to nonprofit organizations that successfully complete the training program. Although no grant match is required, organizations are encouraged to reference any potential match as part of the eventual grant application. Including any match in your project as part of the grant application will not affect the competitiveness of your eventual grant application. The instructors and consultants for the training program will not participate in the grantmaking and selection process for the ARC grant portion of the program.

## Program Participation | Requirements

The *READY Nonprofits* training program requires two participants from up to 75 nonprofit organizations, for a total of 150 participants. One of the two participants must be the executive director (or equivalent) of the nonprofit. The second participant could be a staff member, board member, or committee member left to the discretion of the organization depending on their goals in participating in the program. For example, the second participant could be a development officer, financial administrator, board president or other board member, operations or programs officer, human resources (HR) manager, or another relevant individual. This method provides flexibility when it comes to the priorities or focus areas of the organization, while also ensuring the greatest permeation of the effects of the training through the organization and sustainability of its effects over time. The participation of two individuals from each organization as described above is a requirement of the program. (See [Eligible Participants](#).)

Attending virtual sessions and one-to-one consultations is critical to the program's success and must be considered for ARC's grant award. Both participants must attend at least four of the five sessions and all the one-to-one consultations. Please see [this section](#) for more specific information on the attendance policy. In addition, participants will complete the required weekly assignments outside of virtual sessions. **ARC strongly encourages both participants to attend all virtual training sessions and one-to-one consultations and promptly complete all assignments to derive the most value from the program.** In total, participants will dedicate 20 hours of time over a seven-week period (from approximately June 23, 2025 – September 23, 2025) to complete the training program. Applicants should verify their ability to commit to these expectations before applying. (See [Course Schedule](#).)

## Course Overview

The training program consists of completing a virtual seven-week cohort-based course. During the course, participants will learn in virtual sessions, complete weekly assignments, and engage in one-to-one consultations.

Each course will consist of the following:

- Pre- and post-course surveys (see [Course Evaluations](#))
- Five cohort-based virtual training sessions
- One hour of assignments each week, outside of course time
- Two one-hour, one-to-one consultations with the instructor as part of the seven-week course



- Two one-hour, follow-up consultations occurring three months following the completion of the seven-week course

## Course Schedule

The *READY Nonprofits* training program will be offered June 23, 2025, through September 23, 2025, with exact dates and times to be determined based on participant and instructor availability and courses selected by applicants. **The total time commitment for the training program (to include assignments outside of course time) is estimated to be 20 hours.**

Week	Format	Activity	Schedule	Length
Week 1	Cohort-based training	Opening Session	Set day/time	1.5 hours
Week 2	Cohort-based training	Module-Based Session	Set day/time	2 hours
Week 3	One-to-One	Consultation	Scheduled by org**	1 hour
Week 4	Cohort-based training	Module-Based Session	Set day/time	2 hours
Week 5	One-to-One	Consultation	Scheduled by org**	1 hour
Week 6	Cohort-based training	Module-Based Session	Set day/time	2 hours
Week 7	Cohort-based training	Summary Session	Set day/time	1.5 hours
<b>Post Course*</b>	Follow-up	Consultation	Scheduled by org**	1 hour
<b>Post Course*</b>	Follow-up	Consultation	Scheduled by org**	1 hour

\*The follow-up consultations will take place three months after the course ends.

\*\*Participating organizations will schedule their one-to-one consultations within an identified time frame based upon their availability and the instructor's schedule.

## Virtual Sessions

Throughout the seven-week course, participants will meet as outlined in the [course schedule](#) within their assigned cohort for five virtual training sessions. Each session is scheduled for one and a half or two hours, consisting of instruction, interactive dialogue through break-out groups, and peer-to-peer learning. Sessions will offer opportunities for group sharing among the cohort participants to build community, allow for peer engagement, and increased learning.

## Assignments

Participants will engage in one hour per week of additional assignments in the form of suggested readings, thought exercises, the drafting of sample plans, and the use of course materials and tools to implement theory into practice. One-to-one consultations may be spent reviewing assignments and garnering additional support to further participant understanding and the practical application within their organization.

## One-to-One Consultations

Participants will complete two one-to-one consultations with their course instructor during the seven-week training program. Consultations are an hour in length and are tailored to the specific goals of each participating nonprofit organization. The purpose of the one-to-one consultations is to apply and implement the learnings from the virtual sessions and provide personalized support, review of implemented tools and specific feedback. Organizations will schedule their one-to-one consultations within an identified time frame based upon their availability and the instructor's schedule. Only the registered participants can attend or participate in the consultations.

## Follow-Up Consultations

Two follow-up consultations will take place three months after the course is completed. The first follow-up consultation (mandatory for all) will focus on concepts from the course to provide additional support, feedback and coaching to participants as they apply course content within their organizations. The second follow-up consultation (mandatory only for those who plan to apply for the grant) will focus specifically on the organization's concept for the upcoming grant opportunity. Follow-up consultations will be scheduled prior to conclusion of the seven-week training program.

## Computer Requirements

Virtual sessions, one-to-one consultations, and follow-up consultations will be offered using the Zoom application and are best viewed on a tablet or computer rather than a smartphone. Participants will be asked to join with video and audio; therefore, access to a camera is required. Assignments may include reviewing digital articles, podcasts, videos and surveys. All of the assignments will be free and easily accessible; they will not require payment or a special subscription.

## Curriculum | Course Options

The program curriculum will provide nonprofit executives and their staff and boards with high-quality, actionable skill development. Each participating nonprofit organization will choose one of eight courses to complete during the program: board development, financial management, grant writing and management, fundraising, marketing/communications, human capital (human resources), programs/operations, or strategic planning. The courses will be specific to nonprofits serving Appalachian communities. Subject matter experts (SMEs) have developed these courses to ensure up-to-date and relevant course content that is applicable to nonprofits growing their capacity. The curriculum will align with best practices from the Standards for Excellence Institute and will provide resources and templates used by industry leaders to build organizational capacity.

Participants will complete training in one of the following eight course options.

### Course Option 1: Board Development

*Course Overview:* The course on board development for nonprofits is designed to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to cultivate effective and high-performing boards within the nonprofit sector. Participants will explore fundamental principles of governance, ethical responsibilities, recruitment, onboarding, and the roles and responsibilities of board members. Emphasis will be placed on fostering a culture of accountability and navigating the unique challenges faced by nonprofit boards. Through case

studies, interactive discussions, and practical exercises, participants will learn strategies for effective board leadership, enabling them to contribute to the strategic direction and long-term success of their nonprofit organizations.

*Course Outcome:* The course will equip participants with skills and knowledge to build and sustain boards that are not only compliant with legal and regulatory requirements but also poised to actively support and advance the mission of the nonprofit they serve.

*Course Objectives:* At the conclusion of this course, participants will know how to do the following:

- Explore roles and responsibilities of board and staff
- Implement board self-assessment to identify areas for improvement and set annual goals
- Create a board recruitment and development plan
- Examine the importance of strategic planning
- Understand the responsibilities of fiduciary oversight
- Assess board committee structure for effective governance
- Review core components of effective bylaws and board structure

## Course Option 2: Financial Management

*Course Overview:* The course on financial management for nonprofits is designed to equip participants with the essential skills and knowledge necessary to effectively navigate the unique financial landscape of nonprofit organizations. Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of financial reports and how to facilitate discussions and presentations to the board, funders, and stakeholders. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of financial transparency, accountability, and compliance with regulatory frameworks, enabling participants to confidently manage financial resources, make informed decisions, and demonstrate fiscal responsibility. This course is designed so participants can engage in practical case studies, hands-on exercises, templates, and discussions that bridge concepts with real-world applications.

*Course Outcome:* By the end of the course, participants will have acquired the skills and confidence to navigate the financial complexities of nonprofit organizations, ensuring the sustainability and success of their missions and long-term success.

*Course Objectives:* At the conclusion of this course, participants will know how to do the following:

- Develop and understand meaningful financial reports for the board and funders
- Develop proficiency in nonprofit financial fundamentals
- Develop a culture of financial transparency and accountability
- Align financial strategies with organizational goals
- Assess financial risks and make informed decisions

### Course Option 3: Fundraising

*Course Overview:* The course on fundraising for nonprofits offers a comprehensive exploration of strategies and techniques to create a sustainable path to consistent, diverse fundraising to support their organizational missions. Covering a diverse range of fundraising methods including grants, individual donations, corporate partnerships, and events, this course provides a holistic understanding of the fundraising landscape for nonprofits. Participants will delve into the art of donor relations, cultivating long-term relationships and leveraging technology and social media to amplify their fundraising efforts. Practical insights into crafting compelling fundraising campaigns, measuring impact, and adapting to evolving donor trends are integral components of the curriculum.

*Course Outcome:* At the course's conclusion, participants will be equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to develop robust and sustainable fundraising strategies, fostering the financial health and resilience of their nonprofit organizations.

*Course Objectives:* At the conclusion of this course, participants will know how to do the following:

- Create a 12-month fundraising plan
- Evaluate the success and impact of fundraising initiatives through the use of data analytic tools to assess performance
- Conduct an environmental scan to analyze factors influencing donor behavior, the economic climate, and emerging trends in philanthropy
- Explore ethical considerations and legal regulations associated with fundraising
- Define the board's role in successful fundraising

### Course Option 4: Marketing/Communications

*Course Overview:* The course on marketing and communications for nonprofit organizations is designed to equip participants with essential skills and strategies to effectively promote their missions and engage with diverse stakeholders—both internal and external. The course helps participants develop an understanding of how to craft a compelling and branded narrative that engages and grows their community of supporters.

The course will focus on practical aspects of planning and implementing marketing, fundraising, and crisis communication plans. Participants will explore various media channels, including digital platforms and traditional media, and learn to tailor communication strategies to different audiences. Emphasis will be placed on using storytelling, social media, and visual content to enhance engagement and build meaningful connections with donors, volunteers, and the community.

*Course Outcome:* Participants will be equipped with the knowledge and tools to elevate the visibility, credibility, reputation, and impact of their nonprofit organizations through content creation, strategic marketing, public relations, and communications practices.

*Course Objectives:* At the conclusion of this course, participants will know how to do the following:

- Understand fundamental marketing and communication concepts for nonprofit organizations
- Create a communication plan by applying marketing and communication principles
- Understand successful communication strategies
- Explore the significance of effective storytelling and visual communication in the nonprofit sector, recognizing how these elements contribute to building a compelling narrative

## Course Option 5: Programs/Operations

*Course Overview:* The programs and operations course for nonprofits offers a strategic exploration of the essential skills and principles necessary to effectively plan, implement, and optimize programs within mission, vision, and value-driven organizations. Participants will delve into key aspects of the program design, monitoring, and evaluation, gaining insight into best practices for aligning programmatic activities with the overarching goals and mission of a nonprofit. The course covers operations management, addressing logistical and administrative functions critical to sustaining nonprofit operations, such as budgeting, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement. It will also focus on strategic program development and scaling, emphasizing the integration of data-driven decision-making and the use of technology to enhance efficiency. Participants will explore techniques for assessing program impact, measuring outcomes, and adapting strategies based on evolving needs and community dynamics.

*Course Outcomes:* Participants will be equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to manage the programs/operations aligned with the unique challenges and opportunities present in the nonprofit sector, fostering organizational resilience and mission accomplishment.

*Course Objectives:* At the conclusion of this course, participants will know how to do the following:

- Explore and refine their mission, vision, and value statements
- Understand program evaluation models and setting key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Create a comprehensive budget and resource allocation plan
- Investigate the challenges and opportunities in nonprofit operations
- Understand the role of budgeting, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement as it pertains to effective program operations

## Course Option 6: Human Capital

*Course Overview:* The course on human capital and human resource management for nonprofits will explore the unique challenges and opportunities in managing personnel within the context of mission-driven organizations. Participants will delve into the fundamental principles of human resource management, covering key topics such as

recruitment, onboarding, employee relations, performance management, succession planning, and legal compliance specific to the nonprofit sector. Participants will focus on strategic human resource planning, emphasizing alignment with the organization's mission and goals. They will explore techniques for effective leadership development, team development, staff training, and conflict resolution, fostering an understanding of how human resource management can be a strategic asset in achieving the nonprofit's objectives.

*Course Outcome:* The course will equip participants with the skills needed to attract and retain top talent, foster a positive organizational culture, and navigate the complexities of human resources (HR) functions within the constraints of nonprofit budgets. Participants will gain a holistic understanding of HR management principles tailored to nonprofit organizations, positioning them to contribute to the development of a motivated and high-performing team within their respective nonprofits.

*Course Objectives:* At the conclusion of this course, participants will know how to do the following:

- Recall key concepts such as legal compliance, recruitment strategies, and employee relations by applying it to a case study
- Explore the unique challenges and opportunities of HR management in nonprofits, understanding how the organizational mission and values influence HR strategies
- Use HR management principles by developing a recruitment and onboarding plan for a nonprofit position
- Evaluate the impact of HR policies on organizational culture and performance
- Apply the understanding of strategic HR management by developing a comprehensive HR strategy for a nonprofit organization

## Course Option 7: Grant Writing and Management

*Course Overview:* The grant writing and management course for nonprofit organizations is designed to empower participants with the skills and knowledge needed to secure and effectively manage federal grants for their organizations. Participants will review the intricacies of federal grant writing, covering key components such as needs assessment, project design, budget development, key performance indicators (KPIs), and proposal submission. Through applicable exercises and case studies, participants will gain hands-on experience in crafting compelling grant applications that align with their nonprofit's mission, fostering the essential skills needed to successfully navigate the competitive federal grant landscape. The course also reviews federal grant management, addressing critical aspects of post-award activities. Participants will explore strategies for establishing effective federal grant management systems, tracking program outcomes, and ensuring compliance with federal grant requirements. Emphasis will be placed on building strong relationships with grantors, effectively communicating project impact, and addressing challenges that may arise during the federal grant implementation phase.

*Course Outcome:* Participants will be well-equipped to not only secure federal grants for their nonprofit but also to manage the entire federal grant lifecycle efficiently.

*Course Objectives:* At the conclusion of this course, participants will know how to do the following:

- Evaluate best practices and strategies for federal grant management
- Evaluate the various components of successful post-award activities
- Develop a comprehensive federal grant management plan for a specific project within their nonprofit organization
- Craft a comprehensive federal grant proposal for a relevant project within their organization
- Practice implementing a needs assessment, integrating an organizational project, and developing a project budget

## Course Option 8: Strategic Planning

*Course Overview:* The strategic planning course for nonprofit organizations is designed to provide participants with a thorough understanding of the principles and practices of strategic planning. Participants will learn how to conduct an environmental scan to assess internal and external factors affecting an organization, set strategic goals, and develop action plans for successful implementation.

*Course Outcome:* Participants will learn how to lead and implement a strategic planning process that engages the board, staff, and the community to drive results.

*Course Objectives:* At the conclusion of this course, participants will know how to do the following:

- Understand the importance of strategic planning to increase impact and fundraising
- Understand the Balanced Scorecard model and rationale for use in holistic strategic planning
- Identify core competencies and strategic elements (unique differentiators, target market, assess competitors)
- Assess organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT)
- Identify the data needed to evaluate current performance and potential future direction
- Identify capacity-building priorities to attract and manage growth
- Set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals to drive action and accountability

## Course Preference and Virtual Class Scheduling

Participants will be selected to participate in one of eight available seven-week [course options](#). When submitting an application, applicants will indicate their preference for the courses that best fit their organization's capacity-building challenges. The application asks for organizations to prioritize their course preference based on their identified capacity challenges and rated skill level. Participants will complete the course with other nonprofit organizations in cohorts of up to five organizations.



Once selected for the program, participants will be further surveyed around their availability. The course will follow a schedule with a consistent day/time. Once confirmed, days and times will remain the same for the duration of the seven-week course (with the exception of the one-to-one consultations, which will be scheduled individually with each participating organization).

## Program Format | Cohorts and Instructor

The 75 selected nonprofit organizations will be organized into cohorts to take each course, with no more than five nonprofit organizations (10 participants) per cohort. Participants will remain in their cohort throughout the course, enabling networking, fostering relationships, and building thought-sharing partnerships.

Nonprofit organizations will be assigned to a cohort based on course preference. In the application process, nonprofit organizations will rank the course selections to indicate their preference and skill levels in the subject areas. If a course is particularly popular, it may require multiple cohorts. In this case, nonprofit organizations will be organized into cohorts based on organization size and then by similar issues or opportunities they hope to address in their communities.

An experienced instructor will conduct virtual sessions. Participants are expected to lead one-to-one consultations, with the instructor providing customized consultation, answering questions, and ensuring the application of course learnings.

## Course Evaluations

A pre-course survey will be used to collect baseline data for evaluation purposes. A post-course satisfaction survey will be carried out immediately following course completion. This satisfaction survey will be used to analyze skills, knowledge, and the overall participant experience with the course. A second post-course evaluation will be distributed six months following the conclusion of the grant program. This final evaluation follows both course completion and the post-grant program to determine any longer-term impacts of the full program, including the course and grant program. Course evaluations will be confidential and serve the sole purpose of improving the *READY Nonprofits* program. Participant answers to surveys will not impact a participant's current or future relationship with ARC.

## Application Contents and Format

The application for the *READY Nonprofits* training program will be accessible through an application portal on a web browser. Applicants complete the application by responding to the questions directly on the application portal. Questions are in the form of multiple-choice, drop-down menu options, ratings of skill areas, and short answer questions. The application has six main sections to be completed by the applying organization: Eligibility Quiz, Organizational Information, Mission Impact, Organizational Needs Assessment, Participant Information, and Signature and Agreement.

**Eligibility Quiz:** This section determines an organization's eligibility for participation in the *READY Nonprofits* training program. Applicants should be prepared to confirm the organization is a public or private nonprofit organization or association, the organization serves communities within the ARC region, and the organization is committed to participating fully in the program. Additionally, the following types of organizations are **not**



eligible to apply: major hospital systems, institutions of higher education, local development districts, local governments or community foundations. Organizations will be asked to confirm their status as part of the eligibility quiz. Applicants deemed ineligible based on their responses to the eligibility quiz will be ineligible to apply and the application will end (see [eligibility criteria](#)).

**Organizational Information:** Applicants whom the quiz deems eligible are asked to provide information about their organization in the Organizational Information section. To complete this section, applicants should have access to information about the organization's legal name, address, tax ID number, and the structure and size of the organization. This section will also ask questions related to the organization's budget and revenue sources.

**Mission Impact:** This section asks applicants to provide the organization's mission and vision statements, services offered, details about who the organization serves, alignment to [ARC's investment priorities](#), outcomes and outputs tracked by the organization currently, and how the organization has worked with ARC in the past.

**Organizational Needs Assessment:** This section asks the applicant about existing plans, practices, and structures that the organization has in place, organizational capacity challenges, and skill levels related to the topics of the training program. Applicants are asked to provide course preferences (see [Course Options](#)) and information about how participation in this training program will help the organization address their existing identified capacity challenges.

**Participant Information:** Data for both participants from the applying organization is collected in the Participant Information section. This includes name, title, contact information, experience, and availability to participate in the training (see [Eligible Participants](#)).

**Signature and Agreement:** Finally, the applicant is asked to attest that the application contents are valid and true to the best of their knowledge by providing their name and confirmation of agreement in the Signature and Agreement section of the application prior to submitting the application.

Applicants can view a PDF version of the application [here](#).

## Submission Requirements and Deadlines

### Application Portal

The application portal will open on **January 15, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. ET** and close on **February 28, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. ET**.

Access the application portal link [HERE](#).

### Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

The second component, the *READY Nonprofits* grant program, will require applicants to comply with the following:

- Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) at [SAM.gov](#) before any federal funds are awarded to the applicant;

- Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number in their grant 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 a plan is under consideration by ARC.

Before making a grant award, ARC will consider available information on the applicant, including in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov), 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](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-200/subpart-200.206). Applicants excluded in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) from receiving federal financial assistance, or those who are otherwise determined by ARC in its sole discretion to be an inappropriate recipient of federal financial assistance based upon the review of risk, will not receive the *READY Nonprofit* grant. Similarly, based upon the review of risk, ARC may impose specific requirements on the grantee for carrying out the federal grant.

## Submission Instructions

- Access the application portal link [HERE](#).
- Provide all information requested in the application.
- Address all [eligibility criteria](#) and provide complete responses to all questions.
- Complete and submit your application to ARC via the [online application portal](#) no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on February 28, 2025. **Faxed, mailed, or emailed applications will not be accepted.**
- Once you begin the application, you will be able to navigate forward and backward through the questions. You will be able to save your work and continue at another time. The application portal will prompt you to enter your email address to send you an email with a link to access and finish the application
- All fields with an asterisk are required, and incomplete applications will not be eligible for consideration.
- Once the application is submitted, no further changes can be made.

## Supported Browsers

The [application portal](#) supports the following browsers:

- Google Chrome (latest version recommended)
- Microsoft Edge (latest version recommended)
- Mozilla Firefox (latest version recommended)
- Safari (latest version recommended)

## Troubleshooting | Contact Us

Please email [READY@yourstrategicconsultant.com](mailto:READY@yourstrategicconsultant.com) for additional assistance.

## Pre-Application Webinar

An informational pre-application webinar will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday, February 11, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. ET**. [Register Here](#)

The webinar will walk applicants through the application portal process and answer frequently asked questions (FAQs). If you are unable to attend, the webinar will be recorded and posted on the [ARC READY Nonprofits website](#), as well as emailed to registered participants. [Participants must register first](#) to receive a link to the recorded webinar by email for later viewing.

## Submission Dates and Times

<b>NOSA Release Date:</b>	January 15, 2025
<b>Application Portal Opens:</b>	January 15, 2025 (11:00 a.m. ET) <a href="#">Apply Here</a>
<b>Pre-Application Webinar:</b>	February 11, 2025 (10:00 a.m. ET) <a href="#">Register Here</a>
<b>Application Portal Closes:</b>	February 28, 2025 (5:00 p.m. ET)
<b>Applicants Notified of Selection:</b>	Week of April 28, 2025
<b>Participant Announcement:</b>	May 2025
<b>READY Nonprofits Training Program:</b>	Courses will run for seven weeks from approximately June 23, 2025, through September 23, 2025.

## Application Review Information

### Assessment Criteria

Participants selected for this training program will be assessed through a competitive application process.

Considerations for selection include the following:

- Nonprofits that serve [distressed counties](#) and historically underserved populations
- Nonprofits that demonstrate limited capacity
- Nonprofits that can clearly articulate how the training program will assist them in addressing identified organizational capacity barriers
- Nonprofits applying for ARC's *READY Nonprofits* training program who are new to ARC and its programming
- Nonprofits that align with [ARC's established investment priorities](#)
- Nonprofits that commit to participate in the duration of the seven-week training program with two participants representing the organization
- Nonprofits that commit to implement recommendations and strategies learned during the training program within the organization

## Review and Selection Process

An ARC review panel, composed of ARC staff and state partners, will review and score applications based upon eligibility and the [assessment criteria](#) noted above. Up to 75 of the top scoring organizations will be recommended for participation in the training program. The list of recommended participants will be reviewed by ARC's federal office and State Program Managers to finalize the list of selected organizations for participation in the program.

## Award Notices

Applicants selected to participate in the training program will be notified by email during the week of April 28, 2025. The selection email will contain a confirmation survey. **Selected applicants who choose to participate must respond to the confirmation survey by the date requested.** Selected and confirmed participating organizations will be announced in May 2025. Selection and confirmation of participation in the training program does not indicate that a grant award has been made or will be made to an organization. Upon successful completion of the training program, participants will be eligible to apply for an ARC grant, up to \$25,000. A separate application process will be published for the grant program, accessible only to those organizations that successfully complete the training program. A grant will not be awarded until it is approved by the ARC Federal Co-Chair and a grant agreement has been signed with ARC.

Applicants who are deemed ineligible or who are not selected to participate in the training program will be notified of their status by email during the week of April 28, 2025. If additional space becomes available (for example, if a selected organization withdraws), eligible organizations that were not originally selected for the training program may be offered a spot.

## General Disclosures

Publication of this NOSA does not obligate ARC to provide any specific training or award any grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds for the *READY Appalachia* initiative. Training and grants in the *READY Appalachia* initiative will be made only to the extent that funds are available and at the sole discretion of ARC. Applicants intending to contract with a specific individual, consulting group, or organization with ARC funding must have and use a competitive procurement policy that conforms to procurement standards specified in [2 CFR § 200.317-327](#).

This NOSA does not commit ARC to make any specific selection or award. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this NOSA, ARC reserves the right to select entities for training, award grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts to communities or regions that best meet the requirements of the NOSA. ARC solely reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received through this request; to negotiate with selected applicants; or to cancel in part or in its entirety this NOSA if it is in the interest of ARC to do so.

ARC will not reimburse any costs associated with the preparation or submittal of an application in response to this NOSA. 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 NOSA.

Grants awarded under the *READY Appalachia* initiative are subject to the provisions of the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965 as amended, 40 USC 14101 et. seq. (ARDA), the Appalachian Regional Commission Code, and other terms and conditions set forth in the grant agreement.

ARC records of its doings and transactions are made available for public inspection pursuant to ARDA and its Open Records Policy. Applicants must identify and mark all confidential and/or proprietary documents they deem appropriate to submit with their application.

Reference to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favor by ARC, its employees, members, officers, agents, successors in interest, or contractors. Applicants' and participants' use of any product, good, web platform or application, process, or service in connection with the *READY Appalachia* initiative will be at their sole discretion. ARC assumes no legal liability or responsibility whatsoever for applicants, participants, or contractors' use of any product, good, web platform or application, process, or service in connection with the *READY Appalachia* initiative.