

Georgia[®] Department of 
Community Affairs

The Georgia Appalachian Regional Commission Program
2019 Strategy Statement

I. Georgia and the Appalachian Regional Commission

As a member state of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), Georgia participates in providing technical assistance and area development funding to its 37 counties spanning the northern third of the state. Our state plan for responsible investment of Georgia's community and economic development funds provides guidance to communities and organizations seeking funding for projects meeting the goals of the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Georgia's ARC Leadership and Technical Resources

Governor Nathan Deal serves as Georgia's Commission member, and Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Christopher Nunn serves as his alternate. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs manages the administration of our state's ARC program. In addition to the ARC program manager, the Department of Community Affairs provides field representatives with specific knowledge of the ARC program and goals to each of the five regions in Georgia's ARC service area.

Georgia's 37 ARC counties are served by five Regional Commissions, all of which act as partners with the Department of Community Affairs, providing technical and project-development assistance for local governments and other eligible organizations. These local development districts include:

Atlanta Regional Commission serves three ARC counties: Cherokee, Douglas, and Gwinnett

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission is completely within Georgia's ARC service area and serves 13 counties: Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, and White

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission serves four ARC counties: Barrow, Elbert, Jackson and Madison

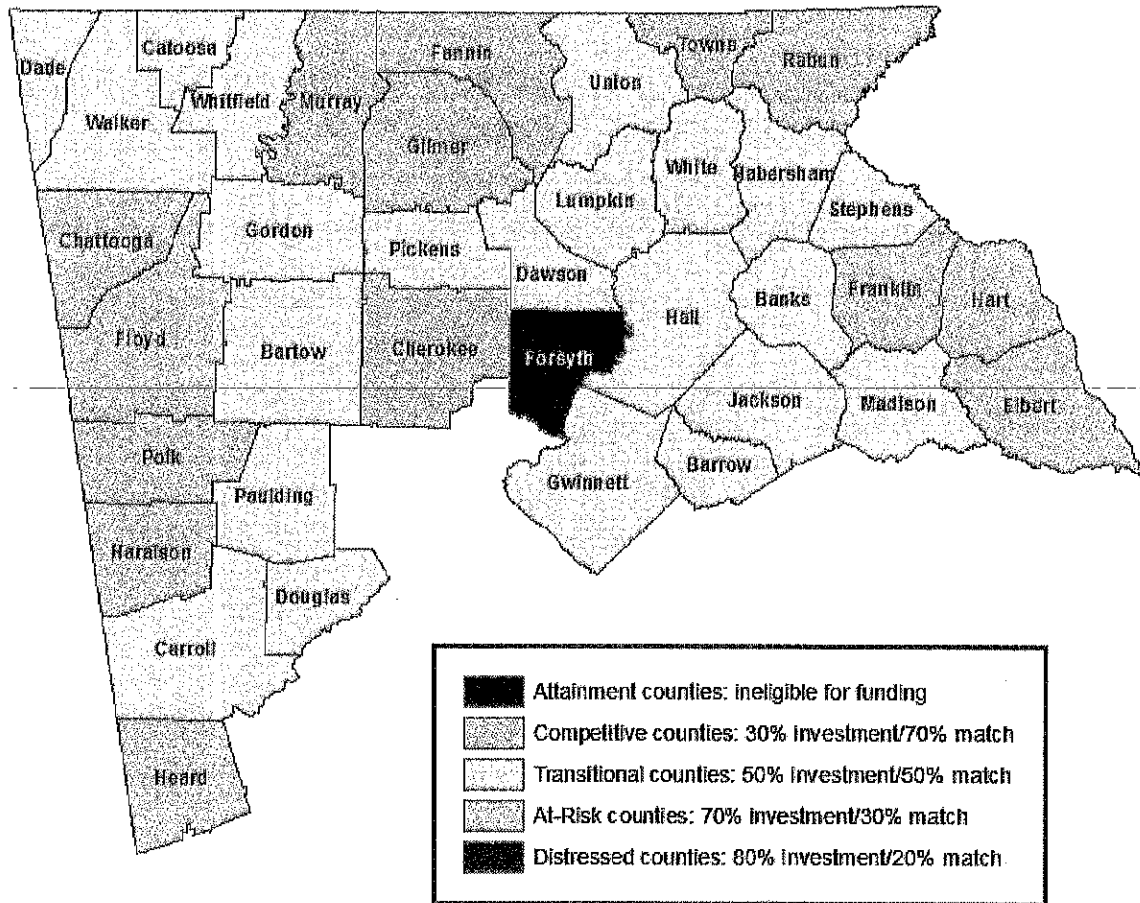
Northwest Georgia Regional Commission is completely within Georgia's ARC service area and serves 15 counties: Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Haralson, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Walker and Whitfield

Three Rivers Regional Commission serves two ARC counties: Carroll and Heard

Appalachian Regional Commission

Georgia County Designations

FY 2019



Source: Appalachian Regional Commission, 2018
Effective October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019

Georgia County Designations

Each year, the Appalachian Regional Commission ranks counties based on national data for three economic indicators—three-year average unemployment rate, per capita market income, and poverty rate. This data determine county economic status, which governs the level of investment ARC aims to make into projects in each county. Georgia's county designations are highlighted on the map on the preceding page.

Other Partners

In addition to administering Georgia's ARC program, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) provides community and economic development financing, housing financing and technical assistance for community development throughout the state. The ARC program leverages the expertise of all other programs and resources, specifically including:

- Office of Downtown Development and Main Street program
- Georgia's PlanFirst and WaterFirst programs (reward planning and implementation excellence)
- Community Development Block Grant program

Georgia's ARC program also works closely with other state agencies, including:

- Georgia Environmental Finance Authority
- Georgia Department of Agriculture
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Georgia Department of Public Health
- Technical College System of Georgia
- The University System of Georgia

Our primary federal partners include USDA and HUD. DCA is always seeking additional partners to meet the goals of ARC, the State of Georgia, and the communities we serve.

II. Appalachian Regional Commission Strategic Plan and Investment Goals, 2016-2020

In November 2015, the Appalachian Regional Commission approved a new strategic plan to guide the Commission's economic and community development efforts in

Appalachia from fiscal years 2016 through 2020. The plan outlines five strategic goals supporting ARC's vision and mission.

ARC Vision

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

ARC Mission

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

ARC 2016–2020 Strategic Investment Goals

Goal 1: Economic Opportunities

Invest in entrepreneurial and business development strategies that strengthen Appalachia's economy

Goal 2: Ready Workforce

Improve the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents to work and succeed in Appalachia

Goal 3: Critical Infrastructure

Invest in critical infrastructure—especially broadband; transportation, including the Appalachian Development Highway System; and water/wastewater systems

Goal 4: Natural and Cultural Assets

Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by leveraging the Region's natural and cultural heritage assets

Goal 5: Leadership and Community Capacity

Build the capacity and skills of current and next-generation leaders and organizations to innovate, collaborate, and advance community and economic development

III. State Investment Goals

The number one priority of Governor Nathan Deal's administration has been job creation. Keeping with the goals of the Appalachian Regional Commission, Georgia will give ARC funding preference to those projects that promote job growth, such as:

- Infrastructure or other business development activities that support industry location or expansion in Georgia's Appalachian region:
 - Water and sewer projects to support new or expanding industry
 - Transportation projects that continue to expand accessibility in and to the Appalachian region
 - Technology projects that will facilitate/expand communications access to businesses, downtown areas, and underserved regions of Appalachia
- Activities that support entrepreneurship and economic development, especially those promoting new product and technology development:
 - Business incubation or business mentoring/coaching services
 - Activities that assist the citizens of Appalachia access higher-paying jobs
 - Activities that assist businesses make use of new technology; especially those activities that will result in job creation

IV. Georgia's ARC Investment Priorities

Georgia's Appalachian region is rich in cultural, natural, and historic resources. The region is mostly rural, offering natural beauty, a distinct cultural heritage, and relative close proximity to metropolitan Atlanta, which is the leading economic driver in the state. The region's population centers offer a variety of opportunities for economic growth.

Our investment priorities seek to address the challenges of Appalachia and improve the quality of life for all residents by tapping into the region's economic potential. Specific priorities include:

- **Workforce Development** – Georgia's technical college and university systems include seven technical colleges and four universities located in Georgia's Appalachian Region. Additionally, many communities have developed College and Career Academies to target skill development at the high school level. These institutions are instrumental in developing the skills and knowledge needed in a 21st century workforce. Activities that enhance access to educational opportunity and workforce skills through apprenticeships, mobile learning, work-study, and partnerships among school systems and employers are eligible for ARC funding.

- **Local food economies** – Georgia’s rich agriculture base provides enormous opportunity to cultivate local food production economies that benefit the health and wealth of small communities across Appalachia. The rise in popularity of farmers’ markets, farm-to-table restaurants, and small, sustainable, organic agriculture provides significant new opportunities for agriculture business.
- **Tourism product development** – Georgia’s Appalachian Region boasts mountains, whitewater, biking trails, the Appalachian Trail and multiple adventure opportunities as well as the scenic beauty and small town charm that attract young entrepreneurs and retirees alike. Georgia’s Wine Trail has proven that agritourism is a successful business model that benefits business owners, the community, and a greater region. Many small Appalachian towns have historic and cultural assets that, with planning and investment, can provide positive returns on investment.
- **Healthcare delivery in rural areas** – Advanced technology and innovation have changed our healthcare service delivery models, affording new opportunities to more effectively serve rural populations. The health and well-being of Georgia’s citizens remains a top concern for our state. Georgia’s ARC communities can play a role in innovative healthcare methods and serve as a model for the rest of the state and region.

V. Challenges in Georgia’s Appalachian Region

Home to more than 3 million people, Georgia’s Appalachian region, like so many rural areas, is less competitive economically. In turn, this hinders progress in community development, educational outcomes, and health outcomes. The Department of Community Affairs aims to improve the health, education and quality of life for Georgia’s Appalachian residents by using ARC funds to address these specific challenges:

- **Above-average unemployment and lack of skilled workforce:** Georgia continues to recruit manufacturers and other industries to the Appalachian region, and we seek to provide these citizens with appropriate educational and training opportunities to find work in these sectors.
- **Suboptimal Infrastructure:** Georgia has invested in basic community infrastructure and will continue to do so to maximize job creation efforts. Some communities have built-out industrial parks but need help with additional infrastructure to encourage development. Local governments seek best practices for cleaner, more efficient water and sewer infrastructure. Rural Georgia also has significant technology needs in order to maximize economic potential.

- **Organizational Capacity/Leadership:** Small, rural governments generally have fewer professional staff members to “do the work,” and fewer citizens volunteers upon whom they may rely. Additionally, communities must address the challenge of delivering necessary services to a wide-spread population. Training and leadership development for smaller communities remains a critical need.

VI. The Department of Community Affairs seeks to address the goals of the Appalachian Regional Commission, the State of Georgia, and the communities we aim to serve in a responsible and fair manner. Accordingly, our program adheres to the following policy guidelines:

- Maximum ARC investment amount is \$600,000. The maximum investment amount may be waived by the Governor at his discretion.
- Priority is given to projects that are “ready-to-go,” meaning that projects are encouraged to secure other necessary funding before submitting an application.
- Eligible applicants include:
 - Local governments
 - Development Authorities
 - Non-profit organizations (must provide adequate certification of status)
 - Educational institutions
 - Public healthcare institutions
 - Public-private partnerships are eligible, but applicant must be a public entity or non-profit entity
- Each proposal is scored according to the following criteria:
 - Consistency with Appalachian Regional Commission goals and strategies
 - Consistency with Georgia Department of Community Affairs’ investment requirements and objectives, which include:
 - Project supports community objectives outlined in a comprehensive local or regional plan
 - Local government applicants are current on service delivery strategy requirements to receive funding
 - Local government and development authority applicants are current on all required reporting with the state
 - Economic impact within the community and region
 - Return on investment via economic or community development standards
 - Projects must include measurable outputs and outcomes consistent with federal performance measure requirements.

- Projects that are identified as strategies in larger local or regional strategic plans should indicate their ability to meet goals in said plans
- Innovation – some projects may be untested in Georgia, and therefore may not be addressed in a regional or local planning document; the review committee will give proper consideration to innovative applications that address priorities within the ARC Strategic Plan.

Construction Projects

- Construction projects should have preliminary commitment of jobs and a preliminary engineering report prior to request for funding.
- In the case of tourism-related construction projects, credible forecasts for increased commercial activity must be included.
- DCA or the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority will serve as the Registered State Basic Agency for the administration of construction projects. (GEFA will administer water/sewer projects and DCA all others that qualify as construction). DCA may grant an exception to this policy only in the case where another federal agency participating in the project is willing to administer ARC funds.
- ~~Projects must obtain all reviews and approvals pertaining to federal financing PRIOR to project start dates. These include, but are not limited to:~~
 - Environmental assessments
 - Wage and labor rate approvals
 - Procurement approvals
 - Contractor approvals
- Organizations seeking ARC funding for construction projects will be strongly advised of time constraints associated with federal financing. All activities associated with construction projects must adhere strictly to these requirements.

Non-construction or Operating Projects

- ARC funding is limited to start-up costs and two years of operation costs
MAXIMUM.
- No project is guaranteed more than one year of support.
- Projects requesting start-up funds should identify sources of funding to continue the project upon cessation of ARC investment, or indicate a plan for cultivating future funding.
- In most cases, operating proposals should indicate an 18-month initial start-up phase. New projects generally meet unexpected delays, and this 18-month

window can help alleviate the need to extend a project to meet its initial objectives.

- Any project seeking continuation funding (second or third year) should contact Georgia's ARC office at least one month prior to the pre-application deadline to discuss additional funding. These projects must provide evidence of satisfactory performance in meeting first-year objectives in order to be considered for any additional funding.
- ARC will serve as the administering agency for all non-construction projects.

Ineligible Activities

Georgia's ARC program does not generally fund the construction of schools, places of worship or government buildings.

General Information

Pre-applications for funding are required and may be submitted at any time. All application materials are available at: www.dca.ga.gov/arc.

- Projects that are approved by the Governor will be sent on to ARC for final review and approval. Georgia will notify those communities/organizations that are approved; although the date for these approvals will vary.
- Georgia's ARC program accepts applications on a quarterly basis. Our Fiscal Year 2019 due dates are:
 - October 12, 2018
 - January 11, 2019
 - April 12, 2019
 - July 12, 2019