

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor



January 14, 2020

Mr. Charles Howard
Executive Director
Appalachian Regional Commission
1666 Connecticut Avenue Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20009

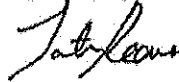
Dear Mr. Howard,

The State of Mississippi respectfully submits the Mississippi Annual Strategy Statement for remainder of Fiscal Year 2020 for the approval of the Appalachian Regional Commission.

The Mississippi Annual Strategy Statement addresses regional, county, and state strategies that we will focus on meeting the goals of the Commission.

I appreciate the diligent efforts of the Commission and look forward to working with you on our 2020 projects and other regional opportunities in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tate Reeves".

Tate Reeves
GOVERNOR



2020 – 2024

Appalachian Regional Commission
Development Plan

State of Mississippi
Governor Tate Reeves

Prepared by
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Anne Hall Brashier, Alternate to ARC
Mike Armour, ARC Program Manager

Introduction

In accordance with Section 5.3 of the Appalachian Regional Commission Code, this document will serve as the Appalachian Development Plan for the State of Mississippi. This plan will outline the strategic agenda for Appalachia in Mississippi, based on economic needs, weaknesses and strengths of the 24-county Mississippi region. This plan will define how development projects will be prioritized based on available resources. The implementation of this plan will address needs and goals of the region by targeting resources and strategies supported by Governor Tate Reeves that meet the defined goals and objectives of the Appalachian Regional Commission.

As required by Section 5.3 of the Appalachian Regional Commission Code, this Development Plan:

- Reflects the Appalachian Regional Commission's strategic plan, goals and objectives, and guiding principles;
- Describes the relationship between economic development in the Appalachian region of Mississippi and the Appalachian Development Highway System Corridors V and X located there;
- Describes Mississippi's Appalachian development and planning organization and coordination process, including the roles of LDDs and citizens;
- Describes methods used to measure the relative financial resources of project applicants, ensure equitable allocation of state contributions for projects to its Appalachian area, and explain the rationale and application of such methods.

Background

Congress established the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in 1965 to address the profound economic and quality of life disparity of the 13 Appalachian states to the rest of the nation. Congress issued a mandate for the Commission to close this socioeconomic gap through advocacy, regional planning, research, and grant-making.

The Commission is comprised of the Governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a Federal Co-Chair who is appointed by the President. The Federal Co-Chair has one vote and the 13 governors, together, have one vote, requiring all matters to be decided by both the Federal Co-Chair and a majority of these Governors. This consensus model ensures close collaboration between the federal and state partners in carrying out the mission of ARC.

ARC is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and houses the Office of the Federal Co-Chairman, the ARC Commission (Executive Director and ARC staff), and the Office of the States' Washington Representative. Governor Tate Reeves is the State of Mississippi's representative to ARC. The responsibility for the administration of the ARC program within Appalachian Mississippi lies with the Appalachian Regional Office (ARO) in Tupelo, which operates as a bureau within the Mississippi Development Authority. Governor Reeves has appointed Anne Hall Brashier as his Alternate to ARC. He also has appointed Mike Armour as the State Program Director.

In Fiscal Year 2020, 6 of the 24 Mississippi ARC counties were distressed, a concentration of distressed counties of 25%.

The Appalachian Region of Mississippi consists of 24 counties:

Alcorn
*Benton
Calhoun
Chickasaw
Choctaw
*Clay
Itawamba
*Kemper
Lee
Lowndes
Marshall
Monroe
*Montgomery
*Noxubee
Oktibbeha
Panola
Pontotoc
Prentiss
Tippah
Tishomingo
Union
Webster
*Winston
Yalobusha.

Distressed counties (FY2020 counties designated as Distressed are marked with an asterisk) are the most economically depressed counties, ranking in the worst 10% of the nation's counties. Current maps and data of County Economic Status can be found at ARC.gov.

Economic Status

Since the creation of the Appalachian Regional Commission in 1965, the 24-county region of Appalachia in Mississippi has seen significant socioeconomic improvement, with Fiscal Year 2020 seeing the lowest concentration of Distressed Counties at 25%. Despite these gains, the Mississippi ARC region remains significantly behind the nation, and other Appalachian areas. Many counties not designated as Distressed still retain Distressed Areas within their boundaries. Socioeconomic indicators show us where Mississippi needs to continue working.

25 percent of Appalachian Mississippi counties remains distressed. Unemployment for the region stands at 5.5 percent. Per capita income has increased to \$35,541, but the region remains 9.5% behind the state as a whole. Mississippi continues to have the lowest per capita income of all 50 states.

Mississippi continues to recover from loss of manufacturing jobs in the region, leaving those people without jobs and without the skills to transition into more advanced and technical economic opportunities. Lack of adequate infrastructure hinders growth and sustainability in the region. Provision of reliable water and wastewater systems is essential for furthering economic development growth. The 24 counties in Appalachian Mississippi still have areas without adequate service.

Technology is key to future development and considered part of infrastructure. Lack of adequate high-speed internet service is a barrier to economic development and competitive educational opportunities. The Appalachian Region of Mississippi suffers from unemployment and under employment. Ensuring access to technology and high-speed internet is key to advancing the educational level and ensuring economic opportunity.

The State of Mississippi plans to address these issues, and others facing Appalachian Mississippi through the Governor's priorities laid out in this plan.

Figure 1: Appalachian Mississippi Population and Income Statistics

County	2018 Population	Population Change (2010-2018)	Population Forecast (2025)	Per Capita Personal Income	2018 Annual Average Wage
Alcorn	36,925	-0.5	39,294	\$36,003	\$36,359
Benton	8,271	-4.9	8,804	\$30,285	\$36,329
Calhoun	14,436	-3.6	14,447	\$33,043	\$30,548
Chickasaw	17,171	-1.5	16,451	\$34,805	\$34,042
Choctaw	8,278	-3.4	7,588	\$33,646	\$43,026
Clay	19,386	-5.7	19,845	\$39,191	\$36,822
Itawamba	23,517	0.4	23,811	\$34,734	\$35,884
Kemper	10,027	-4.1	10,016	\$29,287	\$46,254
Lee	85,202	2.8	92,628	\$41,934	\$39,716
Lowndes	58,930	-1.4	59,412	\$38,498	\$40,810
Marshall	35,451	-4.3	40,325	\$32,341	\$39,636
Monroe	35,564	-3.7	35,962	\$34,664	\$40,442
Montgomery	10,023	-8.0	9,757	\$34,180	\$30,284
Noxubee	10,535	-8.2	10,470	\$32,805	\$32,793
Oktibbeha	49,599	3.9	48,570	\$34,367	\$37,477
Panola	34,178	-1.3	37,297	\$32,496	\$35,964
Pontotoc	31,833	5.9	32,978	\$32,996	\$34,332
Prentiss	25,315	0.3	25,147	\$30,743	\$32,316
Tippah	21,995	-0.9	23,369	\$33,919	\$33,736
Tishomingo	19,454	-0.9	19,865	\$33,559	\$33,228
Union	28,606	5.4	29,560	\$32,242	\$41,177
Webster	9,788	-4.6	10,054	\$38,464	\$33,909
Winston	18,165	-5.4	18,453	\$35,742	\$38,710
Yalobusha	12,392	-1.9	13,808	\$36,729	\$36,572
<i>MS ARC Region</i>	<i>625,041</i>	<i>-0.6</i>	<i>647,911</i>	<i>\$35,451</i>	<i>\$37,407</i>
<i>Mississippi</i>	<i>2,986,530</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>3,227,364</i>	<i>\$37,834</i>	<i>\$39,747</i>

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019; Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Population Projections, 2012; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Local Area Personal Income, 2019; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2019.

Figure 2: Appalachian Mississippi Employment Statistics

County	Labor Force Sep. 2019	Discouraged Workers	Unemployed Workers Sep. 2019	Partially Employed Workers	Total Available Labor	12 Month Unemployment Rate (Oct. 2018 - Sep. 2019)	Unemployment Rate (Sep. 2019)
Alcorn	15,922	51	802	495	1,348	4.4	5.0
Benton	3,117	13	207	128	348	5.7	6.6
Calhoun	6,013	20	320	198	538	4.8	5.3
Chickasaw	6,997	26	409	253	688	5.3	5.8
Choctaw	3,976	13	207	128	348	4.9	5.2
Clay	7,976	39	597	370	1,006	6.7	7.5
Itawamba	10,454	33	525	324	882	4.5	5.0
Kemper	3,456	19	293	182	494	7.5	8.5
Lee	40,854	124	1,943	1,198	3,265	4.2	4.8
Lowndes	25,390	87	1,364	842	2,293	5.1	5.4
Marshall	14,785	58	900	556	1,514	5.3	6.1
Monroe	15,635	57	893	552	1,502	5.2	5.7
Montgomery	4,016	16	246	152	414	5.6	6.1
Noxubee	3,870	20	303	188	511	6.9	7.8
Oktibbeha	23,292	87	1,359	840	2,286	5.3	5.8
Panola	12,924	54	828	512	1,394	6.0	6.4
Pontotoc	14,627	44	690	425	1,159	4.1	4.7
Prentiss	11,475	37	577	356	970	4.7	5.0
Tippah	9,597	32	505	312	849	4.8	5.3
Tishomingo	8,801	30	468	289	787	4.8	5.3
Union	14,177	41	639	394	1,074	3.9	4.5
Webster	3,931	15	230	142	387	5.3	5.9
Winston	7,517	27	427	264	718	5.7	5.7
Yalobusha	5,346	19	294	182	495	5.3	5.5
<i>MS ARC Region</i>	<i>274,148</i>	<i>962</i>	<i>15,026</i>	<i>9,282</i>	<i>25,270</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>5.5</i>
<i>Mississippi</i>	<i>1,289,579</i>	<i>4,614</i>	<i>71,741</i>	<i>44,331</i>	<i>120,686</i>	<i>5.1</i>	<i>5.6</i>

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), 2019; National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research center (NSPARC), Mississippi State University, 2019.

Many economic development successes have been crucial to the future of the people in the Appalachian Region of Mississippi. They are not, however, the end. Much remains to be done, particularly in the distressed counties and areas of our state. Mississippi is working to take advantage of opportunities by utilizing collaborative partnerships. These efforts at federal, state, and local levels are helping Mississippi foster new opportunities in targeted industries like advanced manufacturing, automobile and parts manufacturing, aerospace and aviation, clean energy, metal fabrication and steel, and advanced materials manufacturing.

Governor Tate Reeves has established priorities aligned with the current Strategic Plan for ARC (2016-2020). Each of these goals will be implemented by Mississippi through the objectives and strategies below. Governor Reeves has a goal of economic success for all counties in Mississippi, and he is committed to the betterment of the Appalachian region in Mississippi, and especially, the vision of socioeconomic parity with the region and the nation. Appalachian Regional Commission's mission to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachian Mississippi is reflected in Governor Reeve's priorities to achieve this success in Appalachian Mississippi:

1. Identifying private sector and high wage job creation;
2. Developing a globally competitive workforce through improvements in workforce training and readiness, education initiatives, healthy workforce initiatives, and increased educational achievement;
3. Investing in critical infrastructure including new technologies and improvement of existing resources and transportation;
4. Developing and marketing strategic natural, cultural, and local assets;
5. Supporting Mississippi Works, relevant to Appalachian Mississippi, and increasing efficiency of state and local government.

ARC Investment Goal 1: Economic Opportunities

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

Mississippi Investment Goal 1: Identify private sector and high wage job creation

State Objective 1.1: Diversify and strengthen the economic base

For Appalachia to compete in the global job economy the region must expand efforts to diversify its economic base to provide new employment opportunities. It must also strengthen its existing economic base to maintain and improve existing employment opportunities.

STATE STRATEGY: The Mississippi ARO will particularly support sustainable initiatives in the following areas that show great promise for job creation:

- 1.1.1: Fast-track and help provide infrastructure and workforce incentives to projects that create private sector and high wage jobs.
- 1.1.2: Help connect communities and local developers with economic prospects, particularly in distressed counties.
- 1.1.3: Support initiatives to target and develop critical workforce skills, particularly in distressed counties.
- 1.1.4: Support efforts to promote export trading initiatives.
- 1.1.5: Encourage foreign investment in the region.
- 1.1.6: Encourage formation of business networks and trade groups.
- 1.1.7: Support productivity investments and training processes for business.
- 1.1.8: Support local access road projects that create or retain jobs.
- 1.1.9: Support efforts to develop physical infrastructure along the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway for improved employment opportunities and income growth.
- 1.1.10: Support improvements to airports related to job creation.

State Objective 1.2: Enhance entrepreneurial activity

Small businesses create most new jobs in America. Locally owned businesses also play a key role in creating sustainable local economies and high quality of life.

STATE STRATEGY: The Mississippi ARO will particularly support sustainable initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding:

- 1.2.1: Support initiatives that nurture new and existing business by creating technical assistance networks through business incubators, business associations, and private-sector resources.
- 1.2.2: Support initiatives to develop businesses in the Creative Economy.
- 1.2.3: Support efforts to improve access to investment capital.
- 1.2.4: Support programs that will educate current and future entrepreneurs at K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, and jobs training centers.

State Objective 1.3: Foster the development and use of innovative technology

Information technology, medical technology, nanotechnology, and other emerging technologies hold great promise for high wage job creation. The challenge for rural Appalachia to participate in this movement is lack of access. Local communities should partner with research universities, technology organizations, and federal agencies to help identify, attract, and retain innovative technology industries.

STATE STRATEGY: The Mississippi ARO will particularly support sustainable initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding:

- 1.3.1: Assist in the creation and expansion of telecommunications and computing enterprises.
- 1.3.2: Support efforts to expand and create technology research initiatives at research universities that will lead to job creation in the region.
- 1.3.3: Leverage support for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs from middle school through university.
- 1.3.4: Leverage support for commercialization of new technologies developed by research universities, federal labs, and other sources that will lead to job creation in the region.

ARC Investment Goal 2: Ready Workforce

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

Mississippi Investment Goal 2: Develop a globally competitive workforce through improvements in workforce training and readiness, education initiatives, healthy workforce initiatives, and increased educational achievement

State Objective 2.1: Enhance workforce training

To respond to the challenges and opportunities of the global economy, workers must continually build skills, knowledge, and experience. K-12, community college, and university systems, along with WIN Centers and other publicly supported training programs are critical to the success of this goal.

STATE STRATEGY: The Mississippi ARO will particularly support sustainable initiatives in the following areas:

- 2.1.1: Provide support and incentives to community and junior colleges that provide programs to develop critical workforce skills, both for existing business and industry and targeted new business and industry.
- 2.1.2: Support the integration of skills training and knowledge of workplace requirements across, and into, educational and training curricula.
- 2.1.3: Support innovative ways to re-tool the skills of the region's workforce.

2.1.4: Support the modernization and expansion of workforce training and occupational education programs.

State Objective 2.2: Increase access to quality child care and early childhood education to increase educational attainment of future workforce, and increase workforce participation of child-rearing adults

Access to quality child care and early childhood education enables their parents and guardians to take advantage of job opportunities.

STATE STRATEGY: The Mississippi ARO will particularly support sustainable initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding:

- 2.2.1: Support efforts to increase access to quality child care.
- 2.2.2: Support efforts to improve and expand early childhood education programs offered by the private, public, and faith-based sectors.
- 2.2.3: Support programs that better train child care and early childhood education staff.

State Objective 2.3: Increase educational attainment and achievement

Most jobs in the new economy require High School Diploma or GED and many also require education and/or training beyond high school. Research shows that higher education levels are also associated with better health, longer life expectancies, and higher salaries. Mississippi Appalachia still has significant educational attainment and achievement gaps.

STATE STRATEGY: The Mississippi ARO will particularly support sustainable initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding:

- 2.3.1: Support local and regional efforts to better prepare students, out-of-school youth, and adults for post-secondary level training and education, as well as the workplace.
- 2.3.2: Establish and support dual enrollment processes that allows students to enroll in a community college workforce training program to get marketable skills and help them find jobs.
- 2.3.3: Support programs that improve teacher quality.
- 2.3.4: Support efforts to design and initiate innovative programs aimed at improving classroom teaching, using technology as a teaching tool, and improving student achievement in science, math, engineering, and technology (STEM).
- 2.3.5: Maintain support for and seek expansion of programs that increase college-going and completion rates, such as the Appalachian Higher Education Network.
- 2.3.6: Support dropout prevention programs.

State Objective 2.4: Increase healthy workforce programs and access to healthcare and healthcare professionals.

Healthy workforce programs directly impact worker productivity. Activities and policies that improve the supply and distribution of Appalachia's professional healthcare workforce

(physicians, nurse practitioners, psychologists, dentists, medical technicians, etc.) can help ensure that health care is accessible, comprehensive, and affordable. Many rural communities, particularly in distressed counties, find it difficult to retain healthcare professionals and provide access to citizens.

STATE STRATEGY: The Mississippi ARO will particularly support sustainable initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding:

- 2.4.1: Provide limited start-up incentives to communities establishing sustainable healthy living programs.
- 2.4.2: Promote nutrition education, healthy lifestyles, physical activity, and early screening as means of reducing or eliminating the incidence of health problems, such as obesity, diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.
- 2.4.3: Support local efforts to expand access to healthcare programs and recruit healthcare professionals through the J-1 Visa Waiver Program and other programs.
- 2.4.4: Support educational institutions that identify healthcare needs and train professionals to help meet those needs.
- 2.4.5: Provide gap support to viable primary care systems.
- 2.4.6: Support programs that effectively reduce and eliminate drug and/or alcohol abuse, particularly the Opioid Crisis.

ARC Investment Goal 3: Critical Infrastructure

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

Mississippi Investment Goal: Invest in critical infrastructure including new technologies and improvement of existing resources and transportation

State Objective 3.1: Build and improve infrastructure and transportation systems

Communities must have viable water, wastewater treatment, and basic utility systems, adequate transportation systems, and decent and affordable housing to retain skilled workers. Many communities in Mississippi Appalachia, particularly in distressed counties, struggle to maintain this basic infrastructure. Mississippi Appalachia also contains limited highway miles in the Appalachian Development Highway System. Increasing these miles, particularly in distressed and at-risk counties, will significantly aid development.

STATE STRATEGY: The Mississippi ARO will particularly support sustainable initiatives in the following areas for communities able to show an ability to sustain basic infrastructure over time:

- 3.1.1: Make strategic investments that leverage federal, state, local, and private capital for the development and improvement of water, wastewater, and basic utility systems.

STATE STRATEGY: The Mississippi ARO will particularly support sustainable initiatives in the following areas at the local and regional levels to accomplish the following:

3.1.3: Support planning and construction of intermodal transportation networks.

STATE STRATEGY: The State of Mississippi, through the Governor and his ARC Alternate, will particularly support efforts at the federal level to accomplish the following:

3.1.4: Add miles to the Appalachian Development Highway System in Mississippi Appalachia to support development, particularly in distressed and at-risk counties.

3.1.5: Promote commerce along opened corridors along ADHS

3.1.6: Promote awareness of and use of ADHS to developers and civic leaders

State Objective 3.2: Increase access to new technologies and telecommunications infrastructure

Communities in Mississippi Appalachia, particularly in distressed counties, face serious challenges in taking advantage of new information technology, medical technology, nanotechnology, and other emerging technologies. Changing regulations have also resulted in access issues for rural communities.

STATE STRATEGY: The Mississippi ARO will particularly support sustainable initiatives in the following areas that do not require new and ongoing public funding:

3.2.1: Make strategic investments in new technology infrastructure to increase local and regional access.

3.2.2: Support telemedicine applications for communities.

ARC Investment Goal 4: Natural and Cultural Assets

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

Mississippi Investment Goal: Develop and market strategic natural, cultural, and local assets

State Objective 4.1: Develop and market strategic assets for local economies

A way to strengthen communities and their economies is through identification and development of local assets. These assets may be land-based (energy resources; forests, crops, and livestock; scenic and recreation sites for tourism; natural resource and water assets), transportation and utility based (highways and roads, air, rail, and waterways and ports; gas pipelines; transmission lines; water and wastewater services), workforce based (skill sets, training capacities, work attitudes), cultural and heritage based (arts, crafts,

music; historic assets; ethnic and cultural festivities and mores, and tourist attractions), or any other assets seen as local strengths.

STATE STRATEGY: The Mississippi ARO will particularly support sustainable initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding:

- 4.1.1: Support efforts to institutionalize the capacity to assist communities in identifying local and regional assets for development, including assets in the arts, music, history and other Creative Economy sectors.
- 4.1.2: Support development of strategies to help new and existing businesses capitalize on local assets.
- 4.1.3: Support efforts to maximize the economic benefits of Mississippi Appalachian tourism and crafts industries through regional and cooperative marketing opportunities.

ARC Investment 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

Mississippi Investment Goal: Support Mississippi Works, relevant to Appalachian Mississippi, and promote civic entrepreneurship.

State Objective 5.1: Foster civic entrepreneurship

Mississippi Appalachia must develop next-generation leaders, organizations, communities, and regions to compete in the economy. This challenge is particularly critical to our distressed counties. Capacity-building, leadership development, continuously improving the effectiveness of organizations, persistent strategic planning, and development of regional approaches to problem solving are all components of civic entrepreneurship.

STATE STRATEGY: Support sustainable initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding:

- 5.1.1: Support development of broad-based leadership structures and transformative institutions.
- 5.1.2: Support initiatives that help local governments and other community development organizations become more productive and effective.
- 5.1.3: Support regional approaches to problem solving.
- 5.1.4: Support self-help and other initiatives that engage citizens in assessing, improving, beautifying, and motivating their communities to increase economic development.

ADHS

The Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) has been an important tool in contributing to the economic growth of the Appalachian region of Mississippi. Many large economic investments in the area have been along the ADHS Corridor V. Corridor V and Corridor X have opened areas of new land to development. Access to 4-lane highway is crucial to manufacturers looking to expand and build, and for businesses to get their product to market for reasonable costs and time. ADHS has closed the gap for this area.

The relationship between economic growth and transportation is a major focus for Mississippi. In many Appalachian counties, transportation has been an obstacle in retaining and attracting business and industry. Even with improvements to 4-lane access, the Appalachian region does not have an adequate transportation system to support dynamic economic development. Mississippi ARC continues to partner for improved transportation, building on the success of ADHS, particularly Corridor X and Corridor V.

Mississippi Appalachian Regional Commission Operations

The Mississippi ARC program is led by Governor Tate Reeve's office. Administrative responsibilities and day-to-day operations for the Mississippi ARC program have been assigned by Governor Reeves to the Director of the Appalachian Regional Office (ARO) and State Program Manager, Mr. Mike Armour. Mr. Armour is supported in the day-to-day operations at the regional level by project manager, Ms. Andrea Rose.

Mississippi ARC Program staff work with six planning and development districts in ARC project development, application preparation, and implementation. The Executive Director and staff of Mississippi's ARC PDDs work with their board members, elected officials, citizens, and economic developers to identify needs of local communities.

General Funding Timelines and Procedures

- Generally, Pre-Applications are due by September 30.
- Applications are reviewed and rated by Mississippi ARO staff according to ARC guidelines. Submissions are screened based on criteria below.
- Projects selected for further review go to the Governor who makes final recommendations for full project submissions.
- Proposals which are reserved for funding and invited to submit full applications are usually notified during the last quarter of the year.
- Full ARC project submissions are normally due within 60 days of being called for full application, or the first quarter of the year.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to work with their local PDD for Technical Assistance with Pre-Applications or Full Submissions.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the ARDA of 1965, all projects must demonstrate a contribution to achievement of one or more of the Commission's strategic goals, except that the state may request, in accordance with Section 303 of ARDA, approval

of a project or projects without such supporting demonstration to take advantage of special development opportunities, or to respond to emergency economic distress.

The Mississippi ARO works with ARC to conduct workshops for applicants and grantees. Project applications must include measurable outputs and outcomes that are consistent with and can be measured in accordance to federal and state performance measurement requirements. All projects must track the actual outputs and outcomes for up to three years after project completion. This may be monitored by MDA, ARO, ARC and/or the ARC Office of Inspector General or other federal and state entities.

ARC does not fund general government services. This restriction will not, however, extend to programs operated by local government that provide direct service to residents of Appalachian Mississippi, such as education or health services.

Mississippi does not put a firm dollar cap on amount of funding a participant can request. Funding levels are limited by the ARC Code based on county classification and type of project. The Governor reserves the right to approve or reject the requested amount of ARC funding for the project and does not have to award funds at the maximum funding level.

Funding for operation grants is usually limited to an initial year and one year's continuation if deemed necessary. No project is guaranteed more than one year of support. Generally, ARC funds will be reduced if a second year of funding is approved. Proposals should include a plan for continuation of the program after ARC funds are expended.

ARC participation cost shall be limited to 50% of project costs with the following exceptions:

- Projects located in ARC designated distressed counties may receive a maximum of 80% of project costs, with a corresponding 20% match
- Projects located in ARC designated at-risk counties may receive a maximum of 70% of project costs, with a corresponding 30% match
- ARC assistance for multi-county projects in which at least half of the counties are distressed may be increased to as much as 80% of project costs.
- If at least one, but less than half of counties are distressed, ARC assistance is limited to the highest of 50% or the average percentage applicable to the counties in the project. Multi-county projects may be partly funded from distressed county funds and area development funds based on the number of distressed counties and non-distressed counties identified in the project.

The following criteria will be used to score and rank projects for recommendation to Governor Reeves for consideration:

- Alignment of project with Mississippi Strategies and ARC Investment Goals
- Projects with other federal and state agency funding will be given higher priority
- Strength of overall financial plan for project
- Amount of ARC funds applicant has received to date

- Amount of time since most recent ARC funds received
- Past ARC project performance
- Private investment in the project
- Ratio of local match to ARC funds
- Severity and/or imminence of project need
- Jobs created and/or retained
- Project scope and cost effectiveness
- Proposed performance measures
- Benchmarks, Timelines, Action Plan completeness

Projects will be evaluated based on committed and expected financial resources. Projects with private investment will be scored highest. Projects with secured local, state, or other federal funds will be given higher scores than those with expected or applied for funds. These projects should include letters of commitment from these sources.

Planning and Development Districts in the Appalachian Mississippi:

Northeast Mississippi Planning and Development District

Mrs. Sharon Gardner, Executive Director
 200 East Chambers Drive, Post Office Box 600
 Booneville, MS 38829
 (662) 728-6248

Counties served: **Alcorn, Benton, Marshall, Prentiss, Tippah, and Tishomingo**

Three Rivers Planning and Development District

Mr. Randy Kelley, Executive Director
 75 South Main Street, Post Office Box 690
 Pontotoc, MS 38863
 (662) 489-2415

Counties served: **Calhoun, Chickasaw, Itawamba, Lee, Monroe, Pontotoc, and Union**

Golden Triangle Planning and Development District

Mr. Rudy Johnson, Executive Director
 106 Miley Road, Post Office Box 828
 Starkville, MS 39760
 (662) 324-7860

Counties served: **Choctaw, Clay, Lowndes, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Webster, and Winston**

East Central Planning and Development District

Mr. Mike Blount, Executive Director

280 Commercial Drive, Post Office Box 499
Newton, MS 39325
(601) 683-2007
County served: **Kemper**

North Central Planning and Development District
Mr. Steve Russell, Executive Director
711B South Applegate
Winona, MS 38967
(662) 283-2675
Counties served: **Montgomery and Yalobusha**

North Delta Planning and Development District
Mr. James Curcio, Executive Director
220 Power Drive, Post Office Box 1488
Batesville, MS 38606
(662) 561-4100
County served: **Panola**