GENERAL INFORMATION

The checklists below are general guidelines that apply to all POWER implementation and planning applications. Applicants applying under the Access-to-Capital and Broadband priorities need to review the additional criteria in Appendices A and B of the RFP. Applications targeting the broadband POWER priority should also refer to the separate "Broadband" priority summary developed by Mark Defalco. This document is not intended to replace any guidance provided in the RFP or by ARC. They are simply aids to help assure that applications are complete, that no required items are omitted. The point values indicated are guidance given to the evaluators who will read and score the applications. They are indicators of relative importance. Areas with higher point values should contain higher levels of detail and the bulk of the application text.

Required ARC and federal forms (ARC MOU, SF424, SF424A, SF424B, SF424C, and SF424D, as applicable) will be completed online in the application system. It is recommended that applicants download and review the forms prior to entering the application system to be sure that all necessary information is available. While forms are not assigned points, applicants may not be able to submit applications electronically until they are completed. Forms with missing or incomplete information could be justification for rejecting applications.

It is recommended that applicants complete the required forms off-line and develop the 15-page narrative first in a word processor. Text can then be copied and pasted into the online application. This will help assure consistency throughout the application as well as avoid typos and other errors. The project narrative must include all elements of the application Outlined below.

PART ONE – IMPLEMENTATION GRANT APPLICATIONS

Confirmed by _____
Contacted by _____
Submitted by _____
Completed by _____
Reviewed by _____

I. Applicant is an eligible ARC grantee. See pages 4-5 of the RFP.
II. State ARC program manager(s) contacted
III. Letter of Intent submitted by April 4.
IV. Project Description – *Up to 15 points*
    a. Project plan summary – *8 points*
        i. Clearly describe all project elements.
        ii. Complex projects may benefit from a visual representation showing the sequence and relationship of the project elements (and partners)
    b. Timeline – *2 points*

Confirmed by _____

        i. Confirm project period is between 12 and 36 months for non-construction activities, up to 48 months if including construction.
        ii. Includes specific deliverables/major activities with time frame for each, specific organization responsible for each.
        iii. Provide key dates: project start (assume October 1, 2022), reporting dates, project end, final report submission, and intermediate and final output and outcome attainment
        iv. Include essential work/milestones that occur outside the requested project period (e.g., personnel recruiting prior to start, use of new facility and outcome attainment after project close) but clearly label or show as outside the project period and not included in budget.

This checklist is meant to be an aid in completing POWER Initiative applications. It may supplement but does not replace the instructions in the RFP or any guidance provided by ARC.

c. Geographic scale – *5 points*
   i. List the state(s) and county(s), include cities and municipalities under their counties if pertinent, for the following:
      1. Where the primary work will take place (e.g., location of facility)
      2. Where the primary outcomes will be obtained (e.g., where participants reside and/or work)
      3. Highlight specific communities/areas of focus if relevant.
   ii. Mention any work and/or impacts planned to extend outside the ARC region parenthetically, briefly, and state that only work and impacts in the ARC region are included in the project and project budget. Do not include incidental impacts.

Completed by _____
Reviewed by _____

V. Coal Impact – 15 points
  a. Impact data – *10 points*: calculated by system
  b. Impact narrative – *5 points*
   i. Tell stories of how the numbers in the data section are impacting the communities, businesses, and individuals in the project service area.

Completed by _____
Reviewed by _____

VI. Rationale – *up to 36 points*
  a. Alignment with ARC strategic plan – 6 *points*
   i. Select one or two ARC Strategic Investment Goals (see RFP p. i), as well as one or more of the POWER Investment Priorities (see RFP pp. 2-3) and discuss in detail. It is not necessary to align with all goals.
   ii. Discuss how the project will include and benefit underrepresented communities. Describe briefly how these communities will be targeted and/or prioritized as relevant.
  b. Alignment with each State plan or other state economic development plans for all states in the project service area – 6 *points*
    Include county, LDD, or other regional plans if relevant. Briefly quote relevant sections of the plans and include a URL or citation.
  c. Direct impact of project on coal-related job losses – 3 *points*
   i. Directly state how your project will address the job loss from the decline in coal
   ii. Show that your proposal is the most effective and/or efficient way to achieve this goal.
  d. Planning and supporting assessments – *4 points*
   i. Attach feasibility studies, business plans, and/or other research and analysis that informed and indicates the likelihood of success of the proposed project and alignment with existing regional economic development priorities cited above.
   ii. Summarize and discuss the attachments and how the information influenced the project design and goals (i.e., outputs and outcomes listed below).
  e. Market analysis – *4 points*
   i. Describe other ongoing or planned activities serving the same communities and/or populations. Emphasize current and recent past ARC-funded projects, particularly other POWER, INSPIRE, and WORC grants. Include even if the project outputs and outcomes are different.
   ii. Show how this project would not duplicate existing efforts, would not compete for the same participants or resources, and would complement other ongoing and planned efforts.

     iii.   Provide evidence that the target populations/businesses/communities want and would take advantage of the project resources or activities. If using a survey, show that likely project participants were among the respondents.

  f.   Project directly addresses needs of project area – 4 *points*

     i.   Demonstrate that this is the most effective and/or efficient way to address the needs cited under "planning and support assessment" above.

     ii.   Restate how your proposal is the most effective and/or efficient way to achieve state/regional economic development goals from above.

     iii.   Describe how the project responds to COVID-19 impacts, if relevant.

  g.   Evidence of local demand – 5 *points*

     i.   Show that beneficiaries and key community stakeholders support, want, and will utilize the activities or products of this project.

     ii.   Discuss the roles that beneficiaries and key community stakeholders played in planning and designing this project.

     iii.   Attach letters of support from beneficiaries and key community stakeholders.

Confirmed by _____   iv.   Confirm that each attached letter is unique, not a form or copy of another's.

  h.   Sustainability of project beyond grant funding – *4 points*

     i.   Describe the plan for sustaining the project financially beyond the life of the grant

     ii.   Include letters from potential future funding sources, business plans, and/or other documentation of future funding adequate to sustain the project.

Completed by _____
Reviewed by _____
VII.   Project Team – *up to 12 points*

  a.   Partnerships – 5 *points*

     i.   In addition to a narrative description of all partners and the role each will play in the project, it may be useful to list partners in table form, indicating the type of organization, role(s) of each, and state where located.

     ii.   If community-based partners are important to your project, consider attaching a map of partner locations and the specific area served by each.

     iii.   Attach letters of engagement with specific descriptions of each organization's role(s) in the project (and confirm that the letters align with the proposal).

Confirmed by _____   iv.   Confirm there is at least one partner in each state served.

  b.   Organizational capacity – *5 points*

     i.   Document the accounting, purchasing/acquisition, and other systems and policies are in place to manage a federal grant.

     ii.   Document personnel with experience managing grants.

     iii.   If managing other ARC or large federal grants,

        1.   Discuss how systems and personnel time are adequate for all current grants along with this new one.

        2.   If you are a current POWER, INSPIRE, or WORC grantee, upload a current status report for your active grant.

  c.   Readiness – 2 *points*

     i.   Clearly state that essential personnel and resources needed for implementation are in place.

     ii.   If any are not in place, provide a realistic timeline for obtaining them (e.g., personnel recruiting, computer upgrades). Include any alternate plans for

proceeding prior to employing key people or obtaining essential resources (e.g., obtain on loan from a partner organization).

Completed by _____
Reviewed by _____

VIII. Projected Outputs and Outcomes– *Up to 10 points*, see the [Guide to ARC Project Performance Measures](#). Provide specific numbers that are realistically optimistic and explain how they were obtained. Discuss return on investment and emphasize how the numbers will be tracked and documented, the methodology. Note that the actual target numbers are half the point value for this section and the methodology for tracking the other half.

(*As several different types of outputs and outcomes are possible under POWER, and most projects will have multiple outputs and outcomes, the following points only exemplify the types of information needed. Each applicant will have to review [ARC guidance](#) to determine which are relevant to their project and enumerate those. It is not necessary to address every possible output and outcome. Provide details about those that are primary to the project and summarize others under "other impacts."*)

  a. Outputs
   i. Number of workers/trainees and/or students projected to be served by the project
   ii. Number of businesses (e.g., companies/employers) served
   iii. Square footage constructed/renovated
   iv. Other project outputs
   v. How/why each of the above numbers/targets were determined
  b. Outcomes
   i. Number of workers/trainees and/or students who obtain new or enhanced (e.g., better pay, better position) employment
      1. Discuss cost per trainee employed, salary (perhaps compared to local averages), potential for advancement, and/or other returns on investment.
      2. Describe how/why this number/target was determined, the system(s) for tracking and documenting trainees into employment and verifying information.
   ii. Number of businesses improved through expansion, increased productivity, and/or efficiency
      1. Discuss cost per business, business savings, projected increased sales/profitability, and/or other returns on investment.
      2. Describe how/why this number/target was determined and the system(s) for tracking and documenting improvements to business.
   iii. Other project outcomes/impacts, return on investment, how goal was determined, and how it will be measured and documented
  c. Other project impacts
  d. Crosswalk between project activities, deliverables and outcomes, needs of target population, and POWER Initiative priorities; a table might be useful and could include a column with the primary implementing partners if relevant.

Completed by _____

Reviewed by _____

IX. Match and Budget – *Up to 12 points*

   a. While the budget and related forms will be complete/entered online via the application system, it is helpful to complete form <u>SF-424a</u> and other budget documents offline first. Be sure to include <u>ALL</u> funds and in-kind contributions on all forms and in all budget discussions.

Confirmed by _____

   b. Confirm ARC funds requested are between $400,000 and $1,500,000, up to $2,500,000 if broadband deployment.

Confirmed by _____

   c. Confirm adequate match for counties being served. Consult with <u>ARC state program manager(s)</u>. – 4 *points*

      i. Multiple, diverse sources of match are better, shows broad-based support.

      ii. Explain how in-kind contributions were valued.

      iii. Attach letters of commitment (or similar documents) from sources, best if signed or certified, must include type of match (e.g., cash, in-kind, loan) and dollar value.

   d. Detailed budget that lists all funds and in-kind contributions, their sources and uses – 4 *points*

   e. Budget narrative – describes the categories on the SF-424a, include <u>ALL</u> funds and in-kind contributions – 4 *points*

      i. Personnel and contractual time must be broken out by number of hours/days and hourly rate (or portion of FTE and salary).

      ii. Indirect costs, if included in budget, determined by Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or de minimis rate of 10% based on modified total direct costs.

   f. Cross-check all application components

      i. All elements of the project description included in all versions of the budget.

      ii. All versions of the budget and the text have the same numbers (subtotals and totals) in all locations.

Confirmed by _____

X. Page limits

   a. Narrative: 15 pages maximum

   b. All attachments combined: 100 pages

      i. Confirm that all attachments are relevant to and necessary for a full understanding of the proposed project.

This checklist was created by Jeffrey H. Schwartz, Ed. D. as a resource for potential ARC POWER applicants. Please contact Jennifer Lench at the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) jlench@pa.gov with any questions.

PART TWO – PLANNING GRANT APPLICATIONS

Confirmed by _____

Contacted by _____

Submitted by _____

Completed by _____

Reviewed by _____

Confirmed by _____

Completed by _____

Reviewed by _____

Completed by _____

Reviewed by _____

I. Applicant is an eligible ARC grantee. See pages 4-5 of the RFP.

II. State ARC program manager(s) contacted

III. Letter of Intent submitted by April 4

IV. Project Description – *Up to 18 points*
   a. Project plan summary – *10 points*
      i. Clearly describe all project elements.
      ii. This is often best presented in a linear fashion, describing activities in the sequence in which they will occur.
   b. Timeline – *3 points*
      i. Confirm project period is not more than 12 months.
      ii. Specify deliverables/major activities with time frame for each, specific organization responsible for each.
      iii. Include project start (assume October 1, 2022), reporting dates, project end, final report submission
   c. Geographic scale – *5 points*
      i. List the state(s) and county(s), include cities and municipalities under their counties if pertinent, for the following:
         1. Where the primary work will take place (e.g., location of facility)
         2. Where the primary outcomes will be obtained (e.g., where participants reside and/or work)?
         3. Highlight specific communities/areas of focus if relevant

V. Coal Impact – 15 points
   a. Impact data – *10 points*: calculated by system
   b. Impact narrative – *5 points*
      i. Tell stories of how the numbers in the data section are impacting the communities, businesses, and individuals in the project service area

VI. Rationale – *up to 31 points*
   a. Alignment with ARC strategic plan – *6 points*
      i. Select one, at most two, ARC Strategic Investment Goals (see RFP p. i), as well as one or more of the POWER Investment Priorities (see RFP pp. 2-3) and discuss in detail. It is not necessary to align with all goals.
      ii. Discuss how the project will include and benefit underrepresented communities. Describe briefly how these communities will be targeted and/or prioritized as relevant.
   b. Alignment with each State plan or other state economic development plans for all states in the project service area. Include county, LDD, or other regional plans if relevant. Briefly quote relevant sections of the plans and include a URL or citation – *6 points*
   c. Addresses needs of project area – *10 points*
      i. Directly state how your project is the best way to identify and address unmet needs brought about by the decline in coal
      ii. Show that your will make progress towards one of the state or regional economic development goals identified
   d. Evidence of local demand – *9 points*

      i. Show that beneficiaries and key community stakeholders support and want this project

      ii. Discuss the roles that beneficiaries and key community stakeholders played in planning this project and will play in designing the implementation stage.

      iii. Attach letters of support from key community stakeholders

Confirmed by _____

      iv. Confirm that each attached letter is unique, not a form or copy of another's.

Completed by _____
Reviewed by _____

VII. Project Team – *up to 11 points*

    a. Partnerships – *4 points*

      i. In addition to a narrative summary or description of all partners and the role each will play in the project, it may be useful to list partners in table form, indicating the type of organization, role(s) of each and state where located

      ii. If community-based partners are important to your project, consider including a map of partner locations and the specific area served by each

      iii. Attach letters of engagement with specific descriptions of each organization's role(s) in the project (and confirm that the letters align with the proposal)

Confirmed by _____

      iv. Confirm there is at least one partner in each state served

    b. Organizational capacity – *5 points*

      i. Document the accounting, purchasing/acquisition, and other systems and policies are in place to manage a federal grant.

      ii. Document personnel with experience managing grants

    c. Readiness – *2 points*

      i. Clearly state that essential personnel and resources needed for implementation are in place.

      ii. If any are not in place, provide a realistic timeline for obtaining them (e.g., personnel recruiting, computer upgrades). Include any alternate plans for proceeding prior to employing key people or obtaining essential resources (e.g., obtain on loan from a partner organization).

IV. Project Output – Up to 13 points -- *The primary output of a planning project is the development of a plan that would qualify for funding under the POWER initiative. Key here is that the application discuss the following:*

    a. How this project will lead to an implementation project, including where additional funds might be obtained for implementation – *10 points*

    b. What stakeholders see as long-term impact on community and economic development of the service area – *3 points*

Completed by _____
Reviewed by _____

VIII. Match and Budget – Up to 12 points

    a. Helpful to complete form [SF-424a](#) and other budget documents offline first. Be sure to include ALL funds and in-kind contributions on all forms and in all budget discussions.

Confirmed by _____

    b. Confirm ARC funds requested are not more than $50,000.

Confirmed by _____

    c. Confirm adequate match for counties being served and match status(e.g., confirmed, pending). Consult with [ARC state program manager(s)](#) – *4 points*

    d. Multiple, diverse sources of match are better, shows broad-based support, ideally with some from the communities being served

    e. Detailed budget that lists all funds and in-kind contributions, their sources and uses – 4 *points*

    f. Budget narrative – describes the categories on the SF-424a, include <u>ALL</u> funds and in-kind contributions – 4 *points*

       i. Personnel and contractual time must be broken out by number of hours/days and hourly rate (or portion of FTE and salary).

      ii. Indirect costs, if included in budget, determined by Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or de minimis rate of 10% based on modified total direct costs.

    g. Cross-check all application components

       i. All elements of the project description included in all versions of the budget

      ii. All versions of the budget and the text have the same numbers (subtotals and totals) in all locations

Confirmed by _____

IX. Page limits

    a. Narrative: 15 pages maximum

    b. All attachments combined: 100 pages

       i. Confirm that all attachments are relevant to and necessary for a full understanding of the proposed project.

This checklist was created by Jeffrey H. Schwartz, Ed. D. as a resource for potential ARC POWER applicants. Please contact Jennifer Lench at the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) jlench@pa.gov with any questions.