



Leave  
No One  
Behind

**State of Maryland**

**2024-2028**

**Appalachian Development Plan**

**Wes Moore, Governor**  
**Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor**



STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
**Wes Moore**

January 26, 2024

Mr. Brandon McBride  
Executive Director  
The Appalachian Regional Commission  
1666 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20009-1068

Subject: State of Maryland 2024-2028 Appalachian Development Plan

Dear Mr. McBride,

I am pleased to submit our Appalachian Development Plan for 2024-2028. This document identifies our priorities for investing Appalachian funds to enhance the economic development potential of Maryland's ARC region. The information is consistent with the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, as amended, and Section 5 of the ARC Code.

We look forward to working with the Commission to assist the people in our ARC counties to build a better future. Please contact Maryland Department of Planning Secretary Rebecca Flora, my ARC alternate, or David Cotton, my ARC Program Manager, if there are any questions concerning this submission.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wes Moore'.

Wes Moore  
Governor

cc: Rebecca L. Flora, Governor's ARC Alternate  
David V. Cotton, ARC Program Manager

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## **Introduction**

In accordance with Section 5.3 of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Code, this document will serve as the state of Maryland's Appalachian Development Plan. The purpose of this plan is to set forth a strategic agenda for Appalachian Maryland, based on the issues and the needs identified within the region, and to define how development projects will be prioritized based on available resources. The implementation of this plan will meet the diverse and dynamic needs of Appalachian Maryland by targeting resources and strategies supported by Governor Wes Moore in accordance with our state goals and ARC's defined goals and objectives.

## **Background**

Appalachia, as defined in the legislation from which the Appalachian Regional Commission derives its authority, is a 206,000 square mile region that follows the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. The Appalachian Region includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states including Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Appalachia is home to more than 26 million people.

The Appalachian Regional Commission was established by Congress in 1965 to support economic and social development in the region. The commission is a unique partnership comprised of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair appointed by the President of the United States. Grassroots participation is provided through local development districts—multicounty organizations with boards made up of elected officials, business leaders, and other local leaders.

In response to the action of Congress, Maryland Governor Spiro Agnew issued an executive order in 1971 creating the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, Inc. (Tri-County Council). The council is a local development district (LDD) serving the three-county region in Appalachian Maryland. It is owned by its member governments of Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties, and provides economic and community development assistance to its partners.

In an era of reduced federal funds for valuable job-creating infrastructure, the Maryland ARC program continues to leverage local, state, and federal funds to implement such projects across the three counties and 24 municipalities of Appalachian Maryland.

Governor Wes Moore is Maryland's representative to the ARC. Governor Moore has appointed Maryland Department of Planning Secretary Rebecca Flora, as his alternate to the commission. David Cotton serves as the Maryland Program Manager. These appointees work with the Tri-County Council, local governments, economic development organizations, state agencies, nonprofits, and higher education to address the needs and priorities of the region.

The Maryland Appalachian Development Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2028 is consistent with ARC's mission to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth throughout the region. The plan focuses on the need to invest in jobs, infrastructure, education, and training while considering the need to protect natural resources and strengthen communities. Implementation of the plan will involve a network of partnerships from the federal, state, and local level involving the resources and work of public, private, and nonprofit entities.

The ARC funds projects through its Area Development Program and Appalachian Development Highway Program. All projects address one or more of the five strategic investment goals identified in ARC's 2022-2026 strategic plan, Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity:

## ARC Strategic Investment Goals

### Building Appalachian Businesses

Strengthen and diversify the region's economy through inclusive economic development strategies and investments in entrepreneurship and business development.

### Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem

Expand and strengthen community systems (education, healthcare, housing, childcare, and others) that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.

### Building Appalachia's Infrastructure

Ensure that the residents and businesses of Appalachia have access to reliable, affordable, resilient, and energy efficient utilities and infrastructure to successfully live and work in the region.

### Building Regional Culture and Tourism

Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by preserving and investing in the region's local, cultural heritage, and natural assets.

### Building Community Leaders and Capacity

Invest in the capacity of local leaders, organizations, and communities to address local challenges by providing technical assistance and support to access resources, engage partners, identify strategies and tactics, and conduct effective planning and project execution.



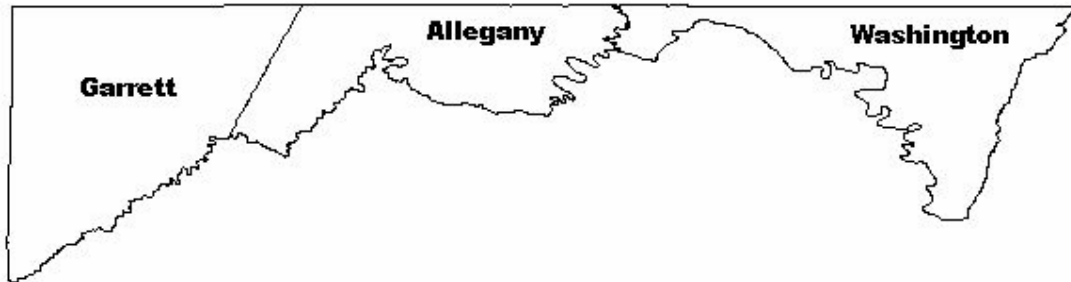
## Appalachia Envisioned

A New Era of Opportunity | ARC Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2022-2026



## Overview of Appalachian Maryland

The Maryland Appalachian region consists of three counties – Garrett, Allegany, and Washington – 24 municipalities, and spans 1,529 square miles.



The ARC has designated Garrett, Allegany, and Washington counties as Transitional for FY24. Transitional counties are those transitioning between strong and weak economies. Transitional counties rank economically between the lowest 25 percent and the highest 25 percent of the nation's counties. Per Commission policy, ARC Research has analyzed the distribution of Distressed, At-risk, Transitional, Competitive, and Attainment counties for Fiscal Year 2025 using the most current data available. Beginning in FY25, Garrett and Washington counties will retain the Transitional classification. However, Allegany County will be reclassified as At-Risk. According to [ARC's County Economic Classification System](#), "At-Risk counties are those at risk of becoming economically distressed. They rank between the worst 10 percent and 25 percent of the nation's counties."

## Population

As of July 2022, the Maryland Department of Planning's State Data Center estimates that the three counties that make up the Appalachian region of Maryland have a total population of 251,436. Historically this region has had one of the slowest rates of growth in the state but has grown in every decade through 2020.

Approximately 62 percent of the region's population is concentrated in Washington County compared to approximately 27 percent in Allegany County, and 11 percent in Garrett County. In the period 2000-2007, rural and exurban areas such as the Western Maryland region benefited from positive net migration. As home prices grew out of reach for many in urban areas, homebuyers moved further out into the exurbs or "third tier" of suburbs to purchase more affordable homes. This trend particularly impacted Washington County, which had an influx of residents from neighboring counties. However, three years later came the collapse in home prices, bursting the housing bubble and resulting in negative effects across the economy. Job losses and reduction in income impacted migration patterns and homeownership.

## **Income**

Based on data from the American Community Survey's Five-Year Estimates 2018-2022, the Median Household Income (MHI) for the United States was \$75,149. The MHI for the state of Maryland during that same period was \$98,461, while the average of the counties MHI's in the western Maryland region was \$58,816 - 75 percent of the state MHI. The MHI in Washington County was \$73,017, in Allegany County \$55,248, and in Garrett County \$64,447, all lower than the national and state MHI.

## **Unemployment**

Maryland's unemployment rate decreased to 1.8 percent in November 2023, which is the lowest rate over a 20-year period in the state. In Western Maryland unemployment rates are 2.3 percent in Allegany County, 1.8 percent in Garrett County, and 2.0 percent in Washington County.

## **Job and Wage Growth**

In Maryland, the total number of jobs working under a wage and salary is 3,135,152 as of October 2023. A breakdown of the data for western Maryland shows jobs in Allegany County at 30,782, Garrett County at 14,543, and Washington County at 69,522. Western Maryland makes up a small percentage of the overall wage and salary population, but trends are moving in a positive direction showing decreased unemployment and increased workforce in the western part of the state.

## **Healthcare**

Appalachian Maryland has a comprehensive medical care system, however, access to that care is limited in many areas. The medical care system includes county health departments, hospitals, community health centers, mental health facilities, emergency care networks, a variety of elderly care programs, and a National Cancer Research Center.

Western Maryland Health System has a clinical affiliation agreement with University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, while Garrett Regional Medical Center has an affiliation with West Virginia University Medicine. In addition, area hospitals are focusing on telehealth initiatives, which include "in home" monitoring services and telehealth services to provide consultations with specialists. In further efforts to provide access to affordable care in Appalachian Maryland, these health systems participate in the ARC J-1 Visa Waiver Program.

In addition to efforts in the region to upgrade facilities and increase access, local colleges are offering new and expanded curriculum to address the shortage of healthcare professionals across the region. Allegany County Board of Education has a premedical concentration program for high school students. Frostburg State University (FSU) recently began a Physician Assistant graduate program.



## Education

The focus at all levels of education is academic excellence and increasing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) with the objective of growing our own workforce and fostering entrepreneurship.

Realizing that local graduates wishing to go to college cannot always afford the tuition, Garrett County has set aside funds that will give every high school graduate in the county the opportunity to attend the local community college tuition free for two years. This will enhance the workforce for the county and surrounding area and help ensure that those in the county who wish to further their education are able.

Allegany County now offers a similar Opportunity Scholarship, which is only available to residents of Allegany County. Tuition subsidies are provided to help support the cost of tuition that is not covered by federal or state aid, and scholarship support. Up to 50 percent of the in-county tuition rate per credit hour is provided through this scholarship fund.

Appalachian Maryland has a strong and responsive network of colleges. Frostburg State University (FSU), the only state university located in Appalachian Maryland, is playing a key role in addressing the education and labor force training needs of the region. Additionally, the University of Maryland System operates a satellite campus in downtown Hagerstown that complements Frostburg's efforts.

In addition to providing a solid college education for traditional students, three community colleges, Garrett College, Allegany College of Maryland, and Hagerstown Community College, are also playing a major role in closing skills gaps and addressing the changing workforce needs. They work directly with FSU as well as the local boards of education to maximize learning opportunities and enhance the region's labor force.



## **Priorities of Appalachian Maryland**

In 2022, ARC approved a strategic plan that sets forth a vision for the future of Appalachia.

With a clear vision, ARC uses its resources, tools, and investments to advance their mission to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth throughout all of Appalachia.

Maryland has built upon the major goals as set forth by ARC and identifies the following priorities for the region.

### **Economic Development**

Governor Moore is focused on creating an economy that is competitive and equitable for working families in every part of the state of Maryland. The Governor understands the unique challenges of economic development and job creation in Appalachian Maryland, and the importance of collaboration and leveraging funding and investments. The Moore administration continues to work to overcome the underlying challenges in the region by developing a highly competent and well-educated workforce for all job seekers including a new generation of workers through education and apprenticeship. Leadership continues to focus on educational and workforce training opportunities to ending child poverty in Maryland. Higher paying jobs, population growth, and ultimately the building of a sustainable tax base will ensure that all of those that want to live in Maryland can do so.

Maryland's ARC Program has proven its commitment to the region by providing funding to FSU for an Office of Regional Development and Engagement. The new office integrates university resources with regional partners in Appalachian Maryland to help communities and companies be competitive and meet the challenges of economic and community development.

Economic development efforts have shifted to attracting information technology, advanced manufacturing, and asset-based development, including cybersecurity, advanced technology and research, biotech, and tourism-related businesses. Improving access and infrastructure for local businesses to regional and national markets is an essential component of the region's economic development strategy. The completion of the Appalachian Development Highway System and critical links with local access roads is an important part of this effort.

Maryland is particularly focused on new approaches to remove barriers for all Maryland Appalachians by leveraging partnerships and expanding critical infrastructure to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for economic growth and job creation. During a time of unique challenges, we are utilizing partnerships and innovation to change the narrative and make a difference.

We are also working to turn challenges into opportunities with support for asset-based development around the outdoor recreation opportunities in the region. There has been recent growth and development of tourism-related businesses with a positive, sustainable, and responsible impact from recreational, historical and heritage attractions, and we will continue to support this important initiative.

## **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure provides the foundation for a healthy economy. Maryland is focused on the long-term health of our economy by continuing to invest in rebuilding our infrastructure across the entire state with an appreciation of the particular needs and challenges of Appalachian Maryland. We are focused on leveraging resources and collaborating with partners to improve infrastructure throughout the rural region. We prioritize projects to develop and support basic infrastructure for community and economic development. We also prioritize projects that promote a balanced transportation system, which will enhance economic growth and investment potential in the region.

With economic development shifts toward attracting information technology and advanced manufacturing plants, new infrastructure is needed. Maryland recognizes that the infrastructure to support such businesses is not adequate in most places, and where it is adequate, it is expensive compared with urban areas of the state. As a result, the focus has been on leveraging resources and collaborating with partners to improve infrastructure such as broadband access.

The Maryland ActNow campaign, in partnership with EducationSuperHighway, reaffirms the Moore-Miller administration's commitment to closing the digital divide by extending broadband internet access to all Marylanders and making it more affordable. The ActNow initiative will deploy more than \$267 million in federal funding to bring high-speed internet access to every Marylander. As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration will assist in closing the remaining gaps in high-speed internet service in the state and expanding digital equity initiatives for Marylanders.

Deploying Maryland ARC Program funding, Allegany and Garrett counties completed the expansion of fiber connections to serve business parks. Garrett County utilized "white space" spectrum to deliver high speed internet to areas that previously were only able to be reached by slow and expensive satellite connections. We continue working together to complete the remaining "last mile" connections.

The completion of Interstate 68 has brought steady, although moderate, increases in growth. This interstate, also known as "Corridor E" in the Appalachian Development Highway System, connected the area with other interstates and made doing business in the area more cost effective.

Understanding the importance of connecting Appalachia to the interstate system and providing access within the region, the Maryland Department of Transportation, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, recently completed a realignment and/or upgrades study for the US 219 north "Corridor N" from Old Salisbury Road, north to Meyersdale, PA.

We are particularly focused on new approaches to remove barriers, leverage partnerships, and expand critical infrastructure to meet the needs of the 21st century for economic growth, job creation, and education throughout the region.

## **Recovery Ecosystem**

The three counties of Appalachian Maryland continue to suffer more from underemployment than unemployment. Governor Moore remains focused on the well-being of Marylanders by ensuring world-class health and recovery systems exist for all and advancing infrastructure to connect all Marylanders to new and existing opportunities.

We have been focused on filling the gaps in the recovery ecosystem, understanding that clinical care, access to employment, transportation, childcare, eldercare, affordable housing, food and other key factors provide the needed foundation to empower those struggling with a substance abuse disorder.

Western Maryland Health System has a 24-hour community-based crisis and service center for those battling opioid addiction. The center provides patients with access to a safe environment outside of the emergency department to receive crisis assessment, intervention, and a connection to resources.

In addition to crisis and emergency treatment, a concerted effort is underway to provide workforce training for patients with opioid and other substance misuse disorders, which includes working with local employers and addressing housing and transportation needs for those in treatment and looking to reenter the workforce.

A local nonprofit, Brooke's House, recently opened a sober living facility in Washington County. Brooke's House provides state-of-the-art treatment and recovery services and resources to help residents move forward to achieve their dreams of living drug-free, productive lives.

## **Education and Workforce Development**

Development of a highly competent and well-educated workforce with the skills desired by existing, new, and relocating businesses is another state priority. The Moore administration continues to focus on educational and workforce training opportunities as a means to ending child poverty in Maryland. Higher paying jobs, population growth, and ultimately the building of a sustainable tax base will ensure that all of those that want to live in Maryland can do so.

State and local economic development teams and local education institutions are coordinating efforts to address the needs of existing and new businesses being recruited to the area. Allegany County has opened a maker community space where people have access to equipment that supports workforce investment, innovation, invention, and creativity along with the availability of structured light manufacturing hands-on training and certification.

The higher education institutions also continue to focus on the importance of education and technology and have worked with the state and local governments to achieve state-of-the-art technologies for much of their curriculum. FSU and the region's three community colleges are playing a key role in addressing the education and labor force training needs of the region. They are incredibly flexible in responding to the needs of the private sector and quick to establish special programs and training. The University of Maryland System operates a satellite campus in downtown Hagerstown that complements FSU's efforts. Within each of the three counties, our community colleges are sharing infrastructure with K-12 schools to create greater opportunities for advanced learning with active learning labs and STEM and robotics programming.

In 2023, nine Maryland nursing programs received \$5.8 million to help address the state's nursing shortage. The FY24 Competitive Institutional Grant funding includes one-year resource grants, multi-year implementation grants, and planning grants to get more students out of the classroom and into the workforce. FSU will not only benefit through increases in enrollment within their established nursing program but will create new programs that will educate geographically underserved nursing students in Appalachian Maryland.

## State Strategic Goals and Objectives

With our established state priorities – economic development, infrastructure, recovery ecosystem, education, and workforce development – we work to integrate our state goals with the ARC goals, and support projects that are consistent with the objectives and strategies as outlined below. We are focused on self-sustaining economic development and job growth while maximizing return on investment and meeting the local needs and priorities across our Appalachian region.

The following includes Maryland’s integration of objectives and strategies to further ARC’s goals.

**ARC Investment Goal 1: Building Appalachian Businesses – Strengthen and diversify the region’s economy through inclusive economic development strategies and investments in entrepreneurship and business development.**

**State Objective 1.1: Support entrepreneurship and business development in the region.**

**State Strategy 1.1.1:** Provide technical assistance and other support services for entrepreneurship and small business deployment in the region.

**State Strategy 1.1.2:** Support efforts to improve access to capital for businesses.

**State Strategy 1.1.3:** Provide the infrastructure to support businesses in the region.

**State Objective 1.2: Prepare for the economic development of the next century and attract new businesses.**

**State Strategy 1.2.1:** Identify areas for development of research and testing facilities for new technology.

**State Strategy 1.2.2:** Facilitate the development of research and testing facilities and workforce training for new technology.

**State Strategy 1.2.3:** Support and promote agritourism, agricultural, and other resource-based businesses based on regional needs and demands.

**State Strategy 1.2.4:** Provide technical assistance and support development of plans and studies.

**State Objective 1.3: Support reinvestment in existing communities throughout the region.**

**State Strategy 1.3.1:** Work in partnership with local jurisdictions to support projects that encourage revitalization and reinvestment.

**State Strategy 1.3.2:** Provide the necessary infrastructure for revitalization and reinvestment.

**State Strategy 1.3.3:** Increase workforce and affordable housing stock.

**State Objective 1.4: Increase international exports from the ARC region.**

**State Strategy 1.4.1:** Provide training and technical assistance for businesses on a regional scale.

**State Strategy 1.4.2:** Develop programs that will assist in marketing and business development on an international level.

**ARC Investment Goal 2:** Building Appalachia’s Workforce Ecosystem – Expand and strengthen community systems (education, healthcare, housing, childcare, and others) that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.

**State Objective 2.1: Support and promote educational programs that will prepare students for jobs in the 21st century.**

**State Strategy 2.1.1:** Expand and support the P-Tech model and K-12 STEM, alongside active learning labs in preparing students for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs.

**State Strategy 2.1.2:** Work with local employers to create and expand apprenticeships and other school to work transition programs.

**State Strategy 2.1.3:** Work to create and support programs directed toward postsecondary access and success.

**State Objective 2.2: Expand partnerships among local schools, colleges, and businesses to support workforce development and improve workforce readiness.**

**State Strategy 2.2.1:** Provide continuing education training in advanced skills for workers in the region.

**State Strategy 2.2.2:** Work with local employers to create and expand apprenticeship programs.

**State Strategy 2.2.3:** Work with local businesses to develop programs that will encourage workers to take advantage of post-secondary education programs.

**State Strategy 2.2.4:** Support training for displaced workers and formerly incarcerated individuals.

**State Objective 2.3: Develop a network of employment supports to help Appalachians enter and remain in the workforce.**

**State Strategy 2.3.1:** Develop workforce training and job placement programs for those entering or reentering the workforce.

**State Strategy 2.3.2:** Support the development of a cohesive system of key services that support access to and retention of employment in the region.

**State Strategy 2.3.3:** Support transportation, childcare, eldercare, affordable housing, and food opportunities for individuals in their reentry to the workforce.

**State Strategy 2.3.4:** Support temporary housing options for patients in recovery programs and returning to the workforce.

**State Objective 2.4: Expand access to high quality healthcare as well as programs and services that support overall mental and physical health for workers and their families.**

**State Strategy 2.4.1:** Support training and education programs for healthcare professionals.

**State Strategy 2.4.2:** Increase access to comprehensive and affordable healthcare.

**State Strategy 2.4.3:** Support programs in innovative public health practices to ensure a ready workforce.

**State Strategy 2.4.4:** Support projects for healthcare prevention and wellness

**ARC Investment Goal 3:** Building Appalachia's Infrastructure – Ensure that the residents and businesses of Appalachia have access to reliable, affordable, resilient, and energy efficient utilities and infrastructure in order to successfully live and work in the region.

**State Objective 3.1: Develop and support basic infrastructure and facilities needed to support community and economic development.**

**State Strategy 3.1.1:** Develop and improve water systems to ensure that residents and businesses have clean water.

**State Strategy 3.1.2:** Develop and improve wastewater systems for residents and businesses.

**State Strategy 3.1.3:** Develop and implement combined stormwater overflow systems to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

**State Objective 3.2: Ensure that all Appalachian Marylanders have access to quality and affordable telecommunications and broadband services.**

**State Strategy 3.2.1:** Increase access to reliable and affordable broadband and cellular service.

**State Strategy 3.2.2:** Develop, support, and maintain infrastructure for broadband and cellular communications.

**State Objective 3.3: Support proactive efforts to adopt alternative energy strategies and bolster energy infrastructure.**

**State Strategy 3.3.1:** Develop sustainable clean energy solutions at a local and regional scale.

**State Strategy 3.3.2:** Develop programs that increase job opportunities, strengthen energy independence, boost business viability, and bolster long-term climate resilience.

**State Strategy 3.3.3:** Provide technical assistance and support development of plans and studies.

**State Objective 3.4: Develop a balanced transportation system, which is supportive of economic growth and investment potential in the region.**

**State Strategy 3.4.1:** Development of a north-south transportation network in the region.

**State Strategy 3.4.2:** Improve secondary and local access highways roads that support primary highway development and yield an integrated network in the region.

**State Strategy 3.4.3:** Support development of key transportation corridors (highway, rail, aviation) that enhance economic opportunity.

**State Strategy 3.4.4:** Support multimodal transportation options.

**State Objective 3.5: Support construction of business development sites and public facilities and the adaptive reuse of obsolete and/or unsafe properties to stimulate economic and community development.**

**State Strategy 3.5.1:** Support investment in development ready sites.

**State Strategy 3.5.2:** Support development of plans and strategies to redevelop and repurpose unused, underutilized, or neglected sites, brownfields, and mine-scarred lands to fuel economic and community development.

**State Strategy 3.5.3:** Support development of technology centers, commercial and industrial sites, healthcare and educational facilities, makerspaces and incubators, and other venues to promote placemaking and boost economic growth.

**ARC Investment Goal 4: Building Regional Culture and Tourism – Strengthen Appalachia’s community and economic development potential by preserving and investing in the region’s local, cultural heritage, and natural assets.**

**State Objective 4.1: Invest in the development of vibrant downtowns and provide support for Appalachian placemaking.**

**State Strategy 4.1.1:** Provide technical assistance and planning support to advance downtown revitalization efforts to drive economic growth and community development.

**State Strategy 4.1.2:** Support regional marketing programs for the travel and tourism industry.

**State Strategy 4.1.3:** Support the development of heritage tourism products linked to state and national byway and heritage area efforts.

**State Objective 4.2: Support and enhance the outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors and support sustainable economic growth.**

**State Strategy 4.2.1:** Support the expansion of responsible outdoor recreation opportunities that will fuel the region’s tourism economy and increase employment opportunities.

**State Strategy 4.2.2:** Assist in development of responsible tourism opportunities related to responsible outdoor recreation.

**State Objective 4.3: Enhance and protect historic and cultural resources.**

**State Strategy 4.3.1:** Support programs to identify, enhance and preserve Maryland’s heritage and cultural resources.

**State Strategy 4.3.2:** Assist in development of responsible tourism opportunities related to historic and cultural resources.

**ARC Investment Goal 5: Building Community Leaders and Capacity – Invest in the capacity of local leaders, organizations, and communities to address local challenges by providing technical assistance and support to access resources, engage partners, identify strategies and tactics, and conduct effective planning and project execution.**



**State Objective 5.1: Strengthen leadership skills and capacity.**

**State Strategy 5.1.1:** Support programs that provide training in leadership development for youth, interested citizens, and community leaders.

**State Strategy 5.1.2:** Support programs that provide management skills to nonprofit organizations.

**State Objective 5.2: Promote collaborative partnerships.**

**State Strategy 5.2.1:** Support groups, meetings and workshops that provide opportunities for cooperation and capacity building.



## Maryland ARC Operations

The ARC Program in Maryland is directed through the Office of the Governor and coordinated by the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Planning, who serves as the Governor's Alternate to the ARC. It is managed by the Director of the Western Maryland Regional Office for the Maryland Department of Planning, who serves as the Maryland ARC Program Manager. The Governor's Alternate works with the Program Manager at the Maryland Department of Planning. The state of Maryland submits projects to the ARC on behalf of Appalachian Maryland's local governments, non-profits, and regional institutions.

The Program Manager works closely with the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, Inc. (Tri-County Council) Maryland's Local Development District (LDD).

The Tri-County Council has operated as the LDD for the Appalachian Regional Commission for over forty years and represents a working partnership of federal, state, and local governments. The Council's primary focus is to solve area-wide problems and encourage regional economic development. The council serves as the regional planning agency for Western Maryland under the guidelines of the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Economic Development Administration. The council also serves as the regional Clearinghouse for transportation projects available through the Maryland Transit Administration, provides technical assistance for grant applications, and sits on the Maryland Broadband Cooperative Executive Board of Directors.

The Program Manager and the LDD meet regularly with potential applicants to provide information to ensure complete applications, confirm eligibility under ARC code, and to ensure projects are consistent with ARC and state strategic goals and strategies.

County and local governments, non-profits and educational institutions are invited to submit ARC applications in February of each year.

Counties develop and rank preliminary project descriptions and submit these to the LDD in the third quarter of the federal fiscal year.

The LDD and the ARC Program Manager review and evaluate the projects submitted by each county and develop a priority list for the Appalachian region.

Projects are evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Consistency with state and federal objectives
- Project scope and cost effectiveness
- Project readiness
- Potential for job growth
- Equitable funding among counties

Beginning in FY25, Garrett and Washington counties will retain their Transitional classification and the required match rate of 50% with a maximum ARC share of 50% for Area Development projects. Allegany County will be reclassified as At-Risk, with a required match rate of 30% and a maximum ARC share of 70% for Area Development projects. The LDD and the ARC Program Manager review the availability/commitment of matching funds for each project.

The Governor's Alternate and the ARC Program Manager review the priority list and evaluate the projects based on consistency with state and federal objectives, project scope and cost effectiveness, project readiness, potential for job growth and equitable funding among counties. The review also includes confirmation of matching funds.

Recommendations are presented to the LDD Board each June for final approval.

In late August eligible projects may apply for funding. All projects that are in a position to accept funding should have applications submitted to the ARC Program Manager no later than November 15th each year.

Approved ARC projects are monitored by the Program Manager and the LDD to assess progress and to identify and resolve any potential problems.

