



In October 2024, Governor Mike DeWine announced eight projects in Ohio selected by the Appalachian Regional Commission to receive funding to support workforce and economic development in communities impacted by the downturn of the coal industry. Project summaries compiled by the Ohio Department of Development are below. Those with detailed questions about a project should contact the entity receiving the grant. Those with general questions about the grant program should contact Mason Waldvogel, deputy chief of Media Relations for the Department of Development, at mason.waldvogel@development.ohio.gov.

Project Title: *Jefferson County Broadband Connectivity*

Grantee: Jefferson County Board of Commissioners

Award Amount: \$2,500,000

Project Summary: ARC grant of \$2,500,000 to Jefferson County Board of Commissioners in Steubenville, Ohio, for the *Jefferson County Broadband Connectivity* project. This project aims to improve broadband speeds in the townships of Springfield, Ross, Knox, Island Creek, Salem, and Wayne in Jefferson County by establishing public-private partnerships with internet service providers (ISPs) who can provide broadband as a service (BaaS) to project investment areas that do not meet Federal Communications Commission (FCC) benchmarks for broadband internet download and upload speeds. Through these partnerships, these areas will be served with 100/100Mbps symmetrical upload and download speeds. This project will serve approximately 34 businesses, 769 households, and six communities and will improve approximately 26 businesses and 575 households across six communities over the course of the seven-year performance period.

Project Title: *Shawnee State University Advanced Manufacturing Center: An Investment in Our Future*

Grantee: Shawnee State University

Award Amount: \$1,999,092

Project Summary: ARC grant of \$1,999,092 to Shawnee State University in Scioto, Ohio, for the *Shawnee State University Advanced Manufacturing Center: An Investment in Our Future* project. The project aims to strengthen the advanced manufacturing workforce in 10 counties in Southern Ohio and Northeast Kentucky with the renovation of a training center housed at Shawnee State University. It will also fund costs related to Manufacturing on the Move, a K-12 career exploration program designed with local employers to ensure alignment with industry demands so that participants can develop the skills required for employment. This project will serve 3,400 students, improve 3,350 students, serve 12 businesses, improve eight businesses, and renovate 8,700 square feet over the span of three years.

Project Title: *Rising Tides Initiative*

Grantee: Youngstown Business Incubator (YBI)

Award Amount: \$1,795,000

Project Summary: ARC award of \$1,795,000 to the Youngstown Business Incubator (YBI) in Youngstown, Ohio, for the *Rising Tides Initiative*. This project will help position incumbent manufacturers located in Ashtabula, Belmont, Columbiana, Jefferson, Mahoning, Monroe, and Trumbull counties for entry into the microchip, advanced energy, defense, and aerospace industries. Rising Tides will provide existing manufacturers with comprehensive technology education, impactful pilot/demonstration programs, federal research support and other targeted initiatives to

enhance manufacturer competitiveness. Rising Tides will also support emerging companies currently incubating in two regional technology incubators: Youngstown Business Incubator, focused on business software and advanced manufacturing technologies, and BRITE Innovation Center, supporting electric vehicle mobility, battery storage, and grid infrastructure. This project is expected to improve 90 businesses and 180 workers/trainees, create two new businesses and 20 new jobs, and leverage \$9,050,000 in private investment.

Project Title: *Appalachian Educator EmPOWERment Consortium*

Grantee: Ohio Valley Educational Service Center

Award Amount: \$1,750,000

Project Summary: ARC grant of \$1,750,000 to Ohio Valley Educational Service Center in Cambridge, Ohio, for the *Appalachian Educator EmPOWERment Consortium* project. The project will address the teacher shortage facing Southeastern Ohio with the development of an innovative model of teacher education, providing an affordable and accessible pathway to licensure for aspiring teachers. The project will first provide the "right 30" College Credit Plus (CCP) credits in teaching to high school students and facilitate their apprenticeship within member school districts in 12 counties. The high school students will then enroll in community college as an affordable bridge to a four-year institution, where they will complete their bachelor's degree in education and two-year paid apprenticeships in member school districts. The project expects to train and retain 27 qualified educators, who will go on to teach 675 students in Appalachian Ohio.

Project Title: *Building a Skilled Workforce Partnership to Accelerate Methane Reduction in Ohio*

Grantee: Ohio Natural Energy Institute

Award Amount: \$50,000

Project Summary: ARC grant of \$50,000 to Ohio Natural Energy Institute in Pataskala, Ohio, for the *Building a Skilled Workforce Partnership to Accelerate Methane Reduction in Ohio* project. The project will develop a comprehensive training curriculum and strategic implementation plan to address a critical gap in the management of over 19,000 known orphan wells in all 32 Appalachian Ohio counties. The Ohio Natural Energy Institute aims to develop a workforce for orphan well-plugging and methane reduction by training former coal workers and other community members for work in environmental remediation. The initiative aims to alleviate the environmental degradation left by abandoned coal operations, turning potential hazards into opportunities for economic development through environmental restoration. The project will develop an industry-aligned orphan well-plugging curriculum and a strategic plan for transitioning the project into the implementation phase.

Project Title: *Appalachia Forge: Catalyzing Manufacturing Excellence in SE Ohio and WV*

Grantee: Collins Career Technical Center

Award Amount: \$46,900

Project Summary: ARC grant of \$46,900 to Collins Career Technical Center in Chesapeake, Ohio, for the *Appalachia Forge: Catalyzing Manufacturing Excellence in SE Ohio and WV* project. This project will create a strategic plan to develop the K-12 workforce pipeline to meet growing needs in advanced manufacturing and technology industries in seven counties in Southeast Ohio and West Virginia. Collins Career Center is planning to bolster their manufacturing center with upgraded equipment, larger capacity, and educational programs in areas such as mechatronics, robotic welding, and electrical and technology controls. The strategic plan will provide a clear roadmap for implementing an advanced manufacturing and technology program that maximizes impact on students' readiness and industry support.

Project Title: *Connecting Black Heritage, From Enslavement to Settlement in Southern Ohio*

Grantee: Tablertown People of Color Museum

Award Amount: \$40,427

Announcement Date: October 2024

Project Summary: ARC grant of \$40,427 to the Tablertown People of Color Museum in Stewart, Ohio, for the *Connecting Black Heritage, From Enslavement to Settlement in Southern Ohio* project. The project will develop a plan for a Heritage Trail that connects significant Underground Railroad and Black heritage sites across six Southeastern Ohio counties, with the goal of registering the sites with the National Park Service's "Network to Freedom" marker program. The plan also includes development of a virtual tour, displays and exhibits, and digital and print materials that can be used for teaching, training, and hosting events. The project expects to produce one plan, providing a roadmap for implementation that will connect tourists to places, artifacts, and activities in southeast Ohio that authentically represent the story of the Underground Railroad and related Black heritage.

Project Title: *Adena Works: Empowering Tomorrow's Makers*

Grantee: Adena Local School District

Award Amount: \$40,000

Project Summary: ARC grant of \$40,000 to Adena Local School District in Frankfort, Ohio, for the *Adena Works: Empowering Tomorrow's Makers* project. The project aims to create a transformative coalition of stakeholders, manufacturers, and other community entities that will identify the STEM workforce development and training needs of at-risk populations, including underserved, unemployed, substance-use-disorder-impacted, veterans, non-traditional, youth, and homeless populations. As a result of this project, Adena and their partners will develop three plans: a needs assessment to identify local skill gaps, business needs, and workforce and training needs; a sustainability plan to identify strategies for cost efficiencies, leveraging resources, and training demands for a skilled labor workforce; and a strategic plan that will inform a future implementation plan, as well as the development of a manufacturing lab to provide STEM education for these at-risk populations.