

ARC Shale Power Mini-Grant Program

Technical Assistance Program

MINI-GRANT AWARDEE REQUIREMENTS

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SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Introduction

The ARC Shale Power Mini-grant Program is a grant program funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission, administered through Catalyst Connection, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) of southwestern Pennsylvania, in partnership with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), West Virginia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WVMEP), Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OHMEP) and JARI. The ARC Shale Power Mini-grant program is designed to assist coal-impacted communities' response to negative economic factors by diversifying and growing small and medium sized manufacturers (SMMs) through strategic efforts to build capacity and improve efficiencies through technical assistance and business support. The objective is support to small and medium sized manufacturers (SMMs) seeking to expand business and create and retain jobs in the burgeoning shale gas and downstream manufacturing sectors. For additional information on Catalyst Connection and partnering Centers visit: <https://www.catalystconnection.org/arcshalepowernetwork/>

B. Program Eligibility

Applicants requesting mini-grant assistance through this program must meet all of the criteria listed below to be eligible for funding consideration:

- Be a privately held small to medium sized manufacturer located within ARC's Appalachian region of Pennsylvania, Ohio or West Virginia.
https://www.arc.gov/appalachian_region/CountiesinAppalachia.asp . Small and medium sized manufacturers are defined as those having less than 500 employees per location, and registered in D&B with a manufacturing NAICS code that begins with 31-33 or a testing laboratory, with NAICS code 541380.
- Have completed a technical assessment and assistance process by Catalyst Connection, OHMEP, WVMEP or JARI
- Have a clearly defined and ready advanced technology, business improvement or business development project which aligns with the recommendations resulting from the technical assessment and assistance process that will allow applicant to enter or expand work in the shale and petrochemical sectors.
- Provide at least a 50% match to total project cost. Applicants must be able to cover the total project costs until grant reimbursement is issued. Grant reimbursement requires an invoice accompanied by payment documentation equivalent to the total project costs including match. Vendor invoices with corresponding cancelled checks documenting payment are required for reimbursement.
- Initiate the project no earlier than February 1, 2020 and complete implementation with company payment of the total project costs by December 31, 2021
- Participate in post-award survey (currently an annual MEP Client Questionnaire) to collect information on project status, economic impacts, and other information as requested.

Grant funds are for the implementation of Advanced Manufacturing Technology (AMT) or improvement processes leading to increased competitiveness in the burgeoning shale gas and downstream manufacturing sectors. AMT is the use of new process/materials to do things faster, cheaper and with higher quality results. This can include technologies for continuous improvement and leveraging access to high-speed internet to reach new customers or markets, receive orders, collaborate on new designs, share

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information, track orders, and/or monitor equipment and productivity. It can also include technologies to manage risks such as cyber threats as well as disruptive technologies such as additive manufacturing.

The following are examples of the types of projects which are not eligible for grant funding:

- Projects which are solely focused on training, instead of project implementation.
- Purchase of equipment (items with a value > \$5,000 and a useful life of longer than one year).
- Purchase of marketing/advertising and/or relocation services.

C. Funding Availability and Matching Requirements

- Applicants may request a grant up to **50%** of the total advanced manufacturing technology project cost from a minimum of \$1,000 to a maximum of \$5,000.
- The amount and source of matching funds shall be detailed within the application and be allowable expense. Any change to the project scope post-award must have prior written approval of Catalyst Connection. **In addition, a post award decrease in the total project budget may result in a proportional decrease in grant award in order to maintain the minimum 50% match requirement.**
- Committed match must be from state or private funding sources. Other federal grant dollars are not allowable match to this ARC grant.
- Awards will be made on a first come, first served basis with priority given to first time applicants from communities with significant economic impacts from changes in the coal industry.
- Once funds have been depleted, applications will be placed on a waiting list for consideration on a first come first serve basis should additional funds become available.
- Only one mini-grant assistance award per eligible company or organization will be made during the mini grant cycle from February 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021.

D. Eligible Uses

- Mini-grant funds are intended specifically for projects arising out of the assessment and technical assistance provided as part of this program.
- Mini-grant dollars may be used to support direct, project-related consulting costs, contracted services, software purchases, supplies, and one-time costs related to the implementation of advanced manufacturing technology or process improvement.
- Costs must be allowable, directly allocable to this project, and reasonable.

Mini-grant dollars **cannot** be used to:

- Purchase equipment
- Support recurring costs related to connectivity
- Support internal salary costs of the applicant
- Replace existing grant funds received by the applicant or support costs already paid for by another government grant (duplicate funding)
- Pay for travel
- Support indirect costs
- Support other costs prohibited by ARC, state or federal law (for example: Lobbying, Advertising or Relocation costs)

The project must be completed and fully paid for by **December 31, 2021**

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SECTION II – THE APPLICATION PROCESS

A. Application Submission

- **Point of Contact** – The point of contact must be able to answer questions regarding applicant or project eligibility or application completion. Interested applicants should contact their MEP or participating economic development organization either by phone or through the website at <https://www.catalystconnection.org/arcshalepower/>
- **Project Assessment** – it is required the project be the result of a Project Assessment by a participating Business Advisor or Consultant.
- **PDF Format** – Applications must be submitted electronically as one pdf file to their participating MEP or economic development organization.
- **Deadline** – Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis starting February 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021 or until all funds are obligated whichever is sooner. Applications received by the close of business on the first Monday of the month will be considered during the next round of application reviews. Application reviews will be held monthly starting February 15, 2020 at which time all applications received by the close of business one-week prior (February 7) will be reviewed. Review rounds will continue until all funding is awarded. After which, applications will be placed on a waiting list for consideration.

B. Contents of the Application

All applications must include the following components:

- Application Form signed by both the applicant and the participating MEP or economic development organization.
- Completed Project Assessment by a participating MEP or economic development organization.
- Detailed Project Proposal/ scope of work (Objectives / goals; Tasks/ implementation plan; Vendor bids / identification process; Risks; Estimated Impacts / ROI)
- Detailed Budget/Cost Proposal – Pay particular attention that the budget detail adds up to what is reflected in the application budget summary. Vendor bid data process should be included along with other supporting documentation.
- An estimate of the economic impacts and the Return on Investment (ROI) of the project

C. Application Review and Approval Process

- Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed to ensure that the parameters for eligibility are met and that all required application components are included.
- Applicants submitting incomplete applications will be asked to resubmit. Consideration of their project request may be delayed depending on the timing of application resubmission.
- Applications will be reviewed by Catalyst Connection on a monthly basis with approval from Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. Other subject matter experts may advise as appropriate.
- In some cases, the applicant may be asked to provide clarification and/or to submit additional documentation in support of its application. The extent of the information required and the timeliness of response will determine whether the project can be considered within the current application round or if the applicant will need to reapply in a future round.

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D. Award Criteria

All eligibility criteria must be met.

Applicant requirements include:

1. Must be a privately held small or medium sized manufacturing company in good standing with the federal government and the state (less than 500 employees per location, NAICS code begins with 31-33 or 541380)
2. Located in the Appalachia ARC region of southwestern Pennsylvania, Ohio or West Virginia counties of: Ohio (Belmont, Gallia, Jefferson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Scioto, Washington); Pennsylvania (Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland) and West Virginia (Brooke, Doddridge, Hancock, Harrison, Marion, Marshall, Monongalia, Ohio, Pleasants, Preston, Ritchie, Taylor, Tyler, Wetzell, Wood)
3. Company has not received an ARC mini grant during this grant period.

Project requirements include:

1. A clearly defined project allowing for company growth, increased use of advanced manufacturing technology or continuous process improvement, in the burgeoning shale gas and downstream petrochemical manufacturing sectors.
2. Competitive bidding process for selection of vendors that will need to be documented by the Manufacturer applicant. In addition, vendors cannot be related to the Manufacturer applicant and a certification is required.
3. Project is a direct result/link to a project assessment, and/or Plan.
4. Implementation timeline between February 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021 – the project must be completed and fully paid for by the company by **December 31, 2021**
5. Reasonable budget that includes required match of 50%. Grant requests cannot exceed \$5,000. Grant must be less than 50% of total allowable project costs.

E. Post-Approval Process

- Applicants will receive written notification of application status within 30 days of the application deadline.
- Award notifications will include additional instructions and details on next steps and contractual requirements.
- Any changes in project specs, scope of work, timeline, budget and/or match will require written approval of the project sponsor and Catalyst Connection. **A post award decrease in the project budget may result in a proportional decrease in grant award in order to maintain the minimum 50% match requirement.**

F. Disbursement of Funds

- Mini-grant awards are paid on a reimbursement basis following completion of the project and the applicant's submission of satisfactory documentation of paid expenses (W-9, vendor invoices and corresponding cancelled checks) equivalent to the total project budget/costs.
- Requests for payment and supporting documentation shall be submitted via your economic development project sponsor for review and processing.

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G. Reporting and Record Keeping Requirements

- Awardees are responsible for complying with all state and federal rules regarding the maintenance of appropriate contractual and accounting documentation. These files must be maintained and available for review by the state, auditors, the project sponsor, and/or fiscal agent upon request.
- Awardees are responsible for keeping their MEP or Economic Development Organization sponsor updated as to the status of the project and shall report any issues at once.
- Awardees are required to participate in post project impact surveys (currently annual MEP Client Questionnaire) to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the results of the implemented projects, which may include, but are not limited to, jobs created/retained, new/retained sales, cost savings, new/retained customers, increased community access to broadband, and success stories.

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SECTION III – Contact for Manufacturers

Contact for more information:

Catalyst Connection

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Email: treed@catalystconnection.org

Website: <https://www.catalystconnection.org/arcshalepower/>

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ARC Shale Power Mini-grant Guidelines 1-29-20