



# 2016 – 2020 Appalachian Regional Commission Development Plan

State of Mississippi  
Governor Phil Bryant

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## 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, current gaps, and strengths of the region. The plan will define how these 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 Phil Bryant that meet ARC's defined goals and objectives.

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 inter-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 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.

The ARC headquarters in Washington, D.C., houses the Office of the Federal Co-Chairman, the ARC Commission (Executive Director and ARC staff), and the Office of the States' Representative. Governor Phil Bryant 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 Bryant has appointed Bobby Morgan as his Alternate to ARC. He also has appointed Mike Armour as the State Program Director.



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 (marked with an asterisk) are the most economically depressed counties, ranking in the worst 10% of the nation's counties.

[https://www.arc.gov/program\\_areas/ARCDesignatedDistressedCountiesFiscalYear2016.asp](https://www.arc.gov/program_areas/ARCDesignatedDistressedCountiesFiscalYear2016.asp)

## **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. Despite these gains, the Mississippi ARC region remains significantly behind the nation, and other Appalachian areas. Socioeconomic indicators show us where Mississippi needs to continue working.

58 percent of Appalachian Mississippi remains distressed. Unemployment for the region stands at 6.2 percent. Per capita income is \$31,176, 9.5% behind the state of Mississippi 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.

While we have seen growth and made strides, much remains to be done. The State of Mississippi plans to address these issues through the Governor's priorities laid out in this plan.

**Figure 1: Appalachian Mississippi Population and Income Statistics**

<b>County</b>	<b>2015 Population</b>	<b>Population Change (2010-2015)</b>	<b>Population Forecast (2020)</b>	<b>Per Capita Personal Income</b>	<b>2015 Annual Average Wage</b>
Alcorn	37,388	0.9	38,711	\$29,182	\$33,526
Benton	8,182	-6.3	8,759	\$26,032	\$32,716
Calhoun	14,717	-1.6	14,543	\$28,526	\$29,196
Chickasaw	17,328	-0.4	16,604	\$31,621	\$30,293
Choctaw	8,299	-2.9	7,809	\$28,882	\$38,835
Clay	20,048	-2.8	19,978	\$34,930	\$33,384
Itawamba	23,609	0.9	23,639	\$30,734	\$33,142
Kemper	9,969	-4.7	10,097	\$28,753	\$34,338
Lee	85,300	2.9	89,871	\$35,429	\$37,182
Lowndes	59,710	-0.1	59,362	\$36,669	\$38,897
Marshall	35,916	-3.3	39,513	\$28,009	\$35,271
Monroe	35,827	-3.1	36,155	\$31,132	\$37,427
Montgomery	10,152	-7.1	10,049	\$31,665	\$28,734
Noxubee	11,043	-4.3	10,698	\$31,395	\$29,107
Oktibbeha	49,800	4.5	48,806	\$29,636	\$35,093
Panola	34,167	-1.6	36,488	\$29,585	\$34,007
Pontotoc	30,908	3.2	32,069	\$29,212	\$31,859
Prentiss	25,459	0.7	25,240	\$27,218	\$30,180
Tippah	22,131	-0.5	23,095	\$29,137	\$30,728
Tishomingo	19,552	-0.2	19,770	\$27,655	\$30,979
Union	28,429	4.8	28,856	\$30,096	\$38,737
Webster	9,899	-3.5	10,067	\$29,984	\$30,160
Winston	18,317	-4.6	18,606	\$31,639	\$33,859
Yalobusha	12,447	-1.8	13,514	\$29,883	\$31,446
<i>MS ARC Region</i>	<i>628,597</i>	<i>-0.1</i>	<i>642,299</i>	<i>\$31,176</i>	<i>\$35,247</i>
<i>Mississippi</i>	<i>2,992,333</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>3,156,054</i>	<i>\$34,431</i>	<i>\$37,642</i>

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015; Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Population Projections, 2012; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Local Area Personal Income, 2014; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2015.

**Figure 2: Appalachian Mississippi Employment Statistics**

County	Labor Force Aug. 2016	Discouraged Workers	Unemployed Workers Aug. 2016	Partially Employed Workers	Total Available Labor	12 Month Unemployment Rate (Sep. 2015 - Aug. 2016)	Unemployment Rate (Aug. 2016)
Alcorn	15,581	130	781	542	1,453	5.5	5.0
Benton	3,030	33	197	137	367	7.3	6.5
Calhoun	6,381	55	332	231	618	5.9	5.2
Chickasaw	7,247	77	455	317	849	7.1	6.3
Choctaw	3,886	35	207	144	386	5.8	5.3
Clay	8,082	109	632	443	1,184	8.7	7.8
Itawamba	10,503	84	508	352	944	5.4	4.8
Kemper	3,619	51	296	208	555	9.1	8.2
Lee	41,039	330	1,990	1,380	3,700	5.1	4.8
Lowndes	24,940	248	1,475	1,027	2,750	6.6	5.9
Marshall	14,590	140	837	582	1,559	6.7	5.7
Monroe	15,592	167	987	688	1,842	6.8	6.3
Montgomery	4,227	45	267	186	498	7.4	6.3
Noxubee	4,030	56	323	226	605	8.8	8.0
Oktibbeha	21,516	200	1,197	832	2,229	5.9	5.6
Panola	13,454	152	898	627	1,677	7.9	6.7
Pontotoc	14,268	107	645	447	1,199	5.1	4.5
Prentiss	11,127	98	587	408	1,093	5.8	5.3
Tippah	9,608	83	498	346	927	5.8	5.2
Tishomingo	8,201	70	422	293	785	5.9	5.1
Union	13,701	96	581	402	1,079	4.7	4.2
Webster	3,875	40	235	164	439	6.9	6.1
Winston	7,179	90	528	369	987	7.6	7.4
Yalobusha	5,009	50	300	209	559	6.5	6.0
<i>MS ARC Region</i>	<i>270,685</i>	<i>2,546</i>	<i>15,178</i>	<i>10,560</i>	<i>28,284</i>	<i>6.2</i>	<i>5.6</i>
<i>Mississippi</i>	<i>1,270,219</i>	<i>12,201</i>	<i>72,437</i>	<i>50,447</i>	<i>135,085</i>	<i>6.2</i>	<i>5.7</i>

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), 2016; National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research center (NSPARC), Mississippi State University, 2016.

Yokohama Tire opened in 2015 in Clay County, Mississippi. The initial phase of the project included capital investment of \$300 million and created 500 jobs, with plans of up to 2,000 jobs when all phases are complete. Recently, the Appalachian region of Mississippi has seen successes as a direct result of initiatives put in place with ARC. Toyota's plant in Union County, Mississippi celebrated their 5-year anniversary in 2016.

These successes are crucial to the future of the people in the Appalachian Region of Mississippi. They are not, however, the end. Much still remains to be done, particularly in the distressed counties of our state. Mississippi is working to take advantage of opportunities by utilizing collaborative partnership. These efforts at federal, state and local level are helping Mississippi create new opportunities in targeted industries such as advanced manufacturing, automobile and parts manufacturing, aerospace and aviation, clean energy, metal fabrication and steel, advanced materials.

Governor Phil Bryant has established priorities aligned with the 2016-2020 ARC Five-Year Strategic Plan, released this year. Each of these goals, will be implemented by Mississippi through the objectives and strategies below. Governor Bryant has a goal of economic success for all counties in Mississippi. He is committed to the betterment of the Appalachian region in Mississippi and 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 Bryant's priorities to achieve this success in Appalachian Mississippi:

1. Identifying private sector and high wage job creation with an emphasis on health care and energy
2. Developing a globally competitive workforce through improvements in workforce training and readiness, early education initiatives, healthy workforce initiatives, increased educational achievement, and reduction of teen pregnancy
3. Investing in critical infrastructure through 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 with an emphasis on health care and energy

### **State Objective 1.1: Diversify and strengthen the economic base.**

For Mississippi Appalachia to compete in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 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, with emphasis on health care and energy projects.
- 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 reduce unnecessary and duplicative government regulation that hinder the start-up and expansion of small businesses.
- 1.2.3: Support initiatives to develop businesses in the Creative Economy.

- 1.2.4: Support efforts to improve access to investment capital.
- 1.2.5: 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 technologies.**

Information technology, medical technology, nanotechnology, and other emerging technologies hold great promise for high wage job creation. The challenge is for rural Mississippi Appalachia to participate in this movement. 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, early education initiatives, healthy workforce initiatives, increased educational achievement, and reduction of teen pregnancy

**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. The 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: Establish a high school/dual enrollment process that allows students on the verge of dropping out of school to enroll in a community college workforce training program to get marketable skills and help them find jobs.

- 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.
- 2.1.3: Support the integration of skills training and knowledge of workplace requirements across and into K-12 educational and training curricula.
- 2.1.4: Support innovative ways to re-tool the skills of the region's workforce.
- 2.1.5: 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.**

Access to quality child care and early childhood education fosters the development of children and enables their parents and guardians to take advantage of job opportunities. Studies show that disadvantaged children particularly benefit from early childhood education and pre-school programs. Many families in Mississippi Appalachia do not have the resources to use or access to such high quality programs.

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.**

The region has made great strides in improving its high school graduation rates. However, most jobs in the new economy require education and 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 to close – both with the rest of the nation and with the ever more competitive world.

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, such as Jobs for Mississippi Graduates.
- 2.3.2: Establish a high school/dual enrollment process that allows students on the verge of dropping out of school 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, such as Teach for America and the Mississippi Teachers Corps.

- 2.3.4: Support efforts to design and initiate innovative programs aimed at improving classroom teaching, using technology better as a teaching tool, and improving student achievement in science, math, engineering, and technology (STEM).
- 2.3.5: Support planning initiatives for pay-for-performance for teachers and establishment of charter schools.
- 2.3.6: Maintain support for and seek expansion of programs that increase college-going and completion rates, such as the Appalachian Higher Education Network.
- 2.3.7: Support dropout prevention programs.
- 2.3.8: Support research and development of programs designed to reduce teen pregnancy.

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

Healthy living programs, such as the “Governor’s Run for Health” program improve quality of life; reduce obesity and other illnesses, and directly impact worker productivity. Community programs that emphasize and encourage healthy living should be promoted. 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, affordable, and tailored to meet the specific needs of communities and regions. 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.

**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 through new technologies and improvement of existing resources and transportation

**State Objective 3.1: Build and improve basic 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.
- 3.1.2: Support continued efforts to expand and upgrade the region's stock of safe, affordable housing.
- 3.1.3: Support programs that help increase home ownership, particularly first-time homeowners.

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

- 3.1.4: 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:

- 3.1.5: Add miles to the Appalachian Development Highway System in Mississippi Appalachia to support development, particularly in distressed and at-risk counties.
- 3.1.6: Promote commerce along opened corridors along ADHS
- 3.1.7: 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 technologies 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: 1. 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 increase efficiency of state and local government

**State Objective 5.1: Adopt energy efficiency strategies to reduce overhead costs.**

In order for communities, school districts, and state agencies to remain viable and function in challenging economic times, efficiencies must be found and implemented to reduce costs. The challenge is to maintain services while reducing overhead. Communities, regional, and state leaders must tackle this challenge head on and be willing to consider technology, program re-engineering, consolidation, and other alternatives to reduce costs.

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

5.1.1: Enhance energy efficiency in public fleets and transportation systems.

**State Objective 5.2: Consolidate non-educational duties of school districts.**

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

5.2.1: Support community led planning initiatives to consolidate centralized human resources, centralized purchasing, centralized transportation and other non-educational duties into central county or regional offices to allow more funds to go toward instruction.

**State Objective 5.3: Foster civic entrepreneurship.**

Mississippi Appalachia must develop strong and wise leaders, organizations, communities, and regions to compete in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. 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:

5.3.1: Support development of broad-based leadership structures and transformative institutions.

5.3.2: Support initiatives that help local governments and other community development organizations become more productive and effective.

5.3.3: Support regional approaches to problem solving.

5.3.4: Support self-help and other initiatives that engage citizens in assessing, improving, beautifying, and motivating their communities.

## **State Objective 5.4: Increase capacity of region through collaboration.**

Individuals from public and private organizations joined university researchers in developing Blueprint Mississippi goals. Governor Phil Bryant's Mississippi Works initiative brought together key business and civic leaders to prioritize the Blue Print Mississippi goals

STATE STRATEGY: Support Mississippi Works goals and objectives relevant to Appalachian Mississippi

5.4.1: Support initiatives targeted by Mississippi Works that align with one or more strategies set forth in the ARC Strategic Plan.

### **ADHS**

The Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) has been an important tool in contributing to the economic growth of the Appalachian region of Mississippi. Both Yokohama and Toyota, two of our largest economic investments in the area, have been along the ADHS Corridor V. Corridor V and Corridor X have opened up areas of new land to development. Access to 4-lane highway is crucial to manufacturers looking to expand and build, 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 the 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.

# Appalachian Development Highway System MISSISSIPPI



**Appalachian Corridor**  
(Status as of September 30, 2015)

Open to Traffic	Not Open to Traffic
Interstate Highway	U.S. Highway
City/Town	Appalachian Region



## **Mississippi Appalachian Regional Commission Operations**

The Mississippi ARC program is led by Governor Phil Bryant's office. Administrative responsibilities and day-to-day operations for the Mississippi ARC program have been assigned by Governor Bryant 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 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 November 1.
- 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 early spring.
- Full ARC project submissions are normally due in spring.
- 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 measureable 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 Bryant 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. Construction projects will include a 5-year pro forma financial projection which has been prepared by a third party.

Northeast Mississippi Planning and Development District

Mrs. Sharon Gardner, Executive Director

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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

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(662) 489-2415

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

Golden Triangle Planning and Development District

Mr. Rudy Johnson, Executive Director

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(662) 324-7860

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

East Central Planning and Development District

Mr. Bill Richardson, Executive Director

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County served: **Kemper**

North Central Planning and Development District

Mr. Steve Russell, Executive Director

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Counties served: **Montgomery and Yalobusha**

North Delta Planning and Development District

Mr. James Curcio, Executive Director

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County served: **Panola**