



Request for Proposals

April 20, 2021

Innovative Mine Land Reclamation and Economic Development Projects

The Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition is seeking applications from interested businesses, organizations, government agencies, or individuals for grants and technical support for innovative coal mine land reclamation projects. The Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition is a group of leading organizations in the Appalachian Just Transition movement: Appalachian Voices in Virginia, Coalfield Development Corporation in West Virginia, and Rural Action in Ohio, with technical assistance from Downstream Strategies, based in West Virginia. We partner with coal-impacted communities in Appalachia and engage state and regional development agencies to identify post-coal mine reclamation and reuse projects with the potential to drive positive economic and social impacts.

The Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition envisions a robust movement centered around innovative coal mine reclamation and land restoration that supports the growth of a mature restoration economy. We work with community partners throughout Central Appalachia to secure and leverage funding to implement innovative projects. Our goals are to: (1) fund innovative reclamation projects, (2) increase capacity to support innovative mine reclamation, and (3) support a regional “community of practice” that exemplifies the Coalition’s Vision of Innovative Mine Reclamation. Read more about the Coalition at <https://reclaimingappalachia.org/>.

Appalachian states, including Alabama, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, have received funding from the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) through the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Pilot program to provide grants to local communities, businesses, and nonprofits to rehabilitate AML and restore the land to productive economic use. Learn more: <https://www.osmre.gov/resources/grants.shtm>

In May of 2021, we will award mini grants to projects on abandoned mine lands (AML) in Central Appalachia. The grant award will consist of start-up funds as well as project technical and planning assistance from Downstream Strategies. Applicants are encouraged to ask for between \$3,500 and \$12,000 in start-up funds. The grants are

intended to provide resources and support to turn viable land reuse concepts into fundable projects.

Funding Priorities

Ideal projects will:

- Improve sites on or adjacent to unreclaimed AML features
- Have nascent ideas that are:
 - 1) consistent with the potential project area's economic development strategy or other economic and community development planning process, and
 - 2) in need of additional support or capacity
- Produce innovative expansions to existing projects/programs
- Include both a reclamation and economic development component (which could be implemented in two different project phases)
- Embody the Coalition's Vision of Innovative Mine Reclamation (see below)

Read about the projects funded in the 2020 program here:

<https://reclaimingappalachia.org/2020-mini-grant-projects/>

Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition's Vision of Innovative Mine Reclamation

Projects should be representative of the Coalition's Vision of Innovative Mine Reclamation, which emerges from the principles of sustainable development, Just Transition, and restoration ecology, and takes a fully integrated, systems-level approach to ecosystem restoration while supporting the creation and growth of sustainable economic enterprise. Grounding principles of this approach include:

- Recognition of the intrinsic and monetary value of an ecosystem's ability to produce clean water;
- Site-appropriate practices and technologies that generate wealth from a landscape and support the system's long-term ability to sustain development and ecosystem restoration;
- Consideration of a "do no harm" approach to earthmoving and construction;
- Integration of post-clean up land uses with local planning that is created through participation and rooted in community need;
- Creation of local jobs that are safe, pay a living wage, create accessible pathways for "upward mobility," and provide a unifying force for surrounding communities; and
- Model best practices that support the regional movement to rebuild sustainable economies and transform the liabilities of the past into assets for the next generation in Central Appalachia.

Eligibility

Site eligibility

The project must take place on or adjacent to an unreclaimed Priority 1, Priority 2, or Priority 3 AML features. If you are unsure what this means or whether your site is eligible, please contact us at jjames@downstreamstrategies.com for free assistance in determining site eligibility.

Applicant eligibility

Applicants should be state and local governments, economic development organizations, nonprofits, local communities, non-government organizations, and businesses or individuals that would be willing to find community or government partners.

If awarded the grant, applicants must be willing to:

- 1) Join at least three regular Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition calls to provide progress updates and communicate regularly with Downstream Strategies and Appalachian Voices. Calls are typically held Tuesdays at noon but the Coalition will work to accommodate grant recipients' schedules.
- 2) Submit a viable proposal for Pilot funding to your state agency in collaboration with and with support from the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition;
- 3) Present an overview of your project during a regional webinar;
- 4) Develop a project profile (approximately 1 page) for the Coalition's 2020 report with support from the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition.
- 5) Engage with the Innovative Mine Reclamation community of practice, through outlets such as the Innovative Mine Reclamation listserv, and regional calls or meetings.

Deadlines and Application Requirements

By **Friday, May 21, 2021**, submit:

- A summary of the project that describes what the project is, why it is needed, and potential community/social, economic, and environmental impacts it may have.
- Estimated AML Pilot project costs, if known, for both reclamation and economic development components. The Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition can help estimate reclamation costs and refine economic development project costs.
- Project location and its relationship to an AML site, including a map (a Google Maps screenshot is acceptable).
- A description and budget of how you will spend \$3,500-\$12,000 in start-up funds. We prefer to award funds for organizational staff time or hiring for additional consultation or technical assistance services, but other kinds of support infrastructure will also be considered.

Grantees will be notified of the award by May 28. Initial project planning and idea development will occur in the month of June with more extensive project proposal development completed during June and July.

Mini grant proposals should be submitted to Joey James at Downstream Strategies at jjames@downstreamstrategies.com

Questions?

Contact Joey James at Downstream Strategies: jjames@downstreamstrategies.com
<https://reclaimingappalachia.org/>