

Request for Proposals
Evaluation and Learning Partner for the “Community Resilience Collaborative”

Key Application Timeline

- Deadline for submission: October 9, 2026 via email to k.loudin@wvhub.org
- Estimated contract dates: November 2, 2026 - June 30, 2028

Background

Established in 2009, The West Virginia Community Development Hub (The Hub) has led West Virginia’s community development field for 17 years, working alongside rural communities to strengthen local leadership, build partnerships, and advance community-driven economic development projects. Anchored by the belief that residents are the experts in their communities, The Hub equips local leaders with the skills, relationships, and resources needed to envision and implement positive change. In our role as a regional intermediary, The Hub connects community leaders, local governments, nonprofits, and economic development partners across West Virginia and Central Appalachia to reduce barriers to investment and opportunity. Since its founding, The Hub has supported more than 100 communities across seven states, helping them each to chart a unique path toward locally-driven economic development and leverage more than \$100 million in outside funding for projects.

Building on this experience, The Hub—in partnership with ReImagine Appalachia, Mountain Association, and Appalachian Voices—is launching the **Community Resilience Collaborative**, a multi-state initiative designed to strengthen civic infrastructure, entrepreneurship, and community resilience across 18 Appalachian communities that are recovering from economic disruption and natural disasters.

While the multi-state Community Resilience Collaborative is supported primarily through a Trust in Practice award by The Allstate Foundation, The Hub has also secured funding for the specific program model being implemented in West Virginia (titled “Accelerate WV”) via the More Perfect Foundation, and has a pending application for funding with the Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) Disaster Supplemental Grant Program. Rather than conducting separate evaluations for each funding source, The Hub is implementing one integrated evaluation framework—the Community Resilience Collaborative evaluation—that satisfies reporting and evaluation requirements from funders and partners while generating practical knowledge and best practices about effective community development strategies across the region.

The Hub seeks an experienced external evaluation partner to support the design and collaborative implementation of the evaluation framework between Fall 2026 and Summer 2028. The ideal partner will bring expertise in mixed-method evaluation, survey methodology, civic infrastructure or social capital research, community-based participatory evaluation, and developmental evaluation approaches.

The purpose of this request is to solicit proposals from qualified individuals or institutions interested in supporting the West Virginia Community Development Hub as an external evaluation and learning partner.

Scope of Work

The selected individual or institution will provide the following services:

1. Evaluation Design Feedback. Provide strategic guidance during final refinement of the community collaborative framework. Responsibilities include:
 - Build understanding of coaching framework, timeline, and implementation plans across the Allstate partners and the 18 participating communities
 - Review the draft evaluation framework and timeline and provide recommendations on the research design, methodology, and plan for implementation
 - Recommend approaches for integrating qualitative and quantitative findings, including through the use of participatory research methods
 - Provide recommendations regarding technical tools, data management, confidentiality, and ethics where appropriate
2. Survey Design and Implementation. Support development and implementation of program surveys measuring participant and community outcomes. Responsibilities include:
 - Co-design baseline and post-program surveys with The Hub staff
 - Refine survey instruments measuring:
 - Civic participation, trust and belonging, community optimism, disaster preparedness and resilience, entrepreneurship and economic opportunity
 - Develop survey administration protocols
 - Support survey deployment and response monitoring
 - Clean and analyze survey datasets
 - Produce summary reports comparing baseline and follow-up findings
3. Civic Infrastructure Landscape Analysis. Develop an assessment methodology for understanding changes in civic infrastructure within participating communities. Potential approaches may include:
 - Network analysis, stakeholder mapping, civic participation indicators, organizational ecosystem analysis, community leadership mapping, other evidence-based methodologies proposed by the evaluator
 - Deliverables should include:
 - Civic Infrastructure Assessment methodology
 - Baseline analysis
 - Final comparative analysis
 - Interpretation of findings for practitioner audiences
4. Program Outcomes Analysis. Conduct an independent analysis of Community Resilience Collaborative outcomes using multiple data sources. The evaluator will work with The Hub staff to analyze:
 - Participant and community outcomes, including unintended results, themes, or connections
 - Lessons learned and best practices for disaster resilience, community readiness, and recovery
 - Methods may include:
 - Mixed-method analysis, interviews, focus groups, Ripple Effects Mapping, document review, observation findings provided by program staff, other methodologies proposed by the evaluator
5. Learning Partnership and Technical Advising. Serve as a learning partner alongside implementation partners.
 - Participate in quarterly learning meetings with implementation partners,
 - help interpret interim findings,
 - recommend course corrections during implementation, and
 - ensure the evaluation supports continuous learning rather than only end-of-project reporting.

Specific deliverables will include:

Fall 2026

- Evaluation design review and recommendations
- Design + creation of survey instruments
- Survey implementation
- Consultation and recommendation for civic infrastructure assessment methodology

Winter 2026–2027

- Baseline survey analysis
- Implementation of civic infrastructure landscape analysis
- Presentation of initial findings to project partners

Spring–Summer 2027

- Participation in program observations, partner learning sessions as requested
- Support with mid-program evaluations

Winter 2027–Summer 2028

- Final survey analysis
- Final civic infrastructure landscape analysis
- Program outcomes analysis
- Executive summary of findings
- Final evaluation report suitable for multiple funders and stakeholders

Desired Qualifications

Preference will be given to applicants with experience in one or more of the following:

- Community development or rural economic development research
- Civic engagement or civic infrastructure research
- Disaster resilience research
- Entrepreneurship ecosystem evaluation
- Multi-site or multi-state evaluations
- Participatory evaluation methods
- Program evaluation
- Mixed-method research
- Experience working in Appalachia or other rural regions (preferred)

Project Timeline

The anticipated evaluation period is November 2026 through June 2028, with major activities aligned to the program implementation timeline. Approximate milestones include:

Timeline	Activity
Nov–Dec 2026	Evaluation design refinement
Dec 2026–Feb 2027	Baseline data collection including survey implementation and civic infrastructure assessment
Feb–Dec 2027	Ongoing analysis and technical support
Jan–Mar 2028	Final data collection
Apr–Jun 2028	Final analysis and reporting

The Hub anticipates working collaboratively with the selected evaluator throughout the project and expects regular check-ins to review progress and emerging findings.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Demonstrated understanding of the project
- Experience conducting comparable evaluations
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed methodology
- Qualifications of project personnel

- Ability to collaborate and communicate findings effectively
- Cost and overall value

Conditions

- This contract will be supported through grant funding. The Hub reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, negotiate scope and budget with selected applicants, or cancel this solicitation if the circumstances warrant.
- The Hub makes every effort to pay contracts within 30 days of receipt of invoice. Contracts may be cancelled with 30 days notice in writing from either party.

Questions About the Project

Questions about the project can be emailed to Katie Loudin at k.loudin@wvhub.org by the deadline of September 18, 2026. The Community Resilience Collaborative will publish a Frequently Asked Questions document with responses on The Hub's website at wvhub.org. Responses to questions will also be sent via email no later than September 28, 2026.

RFP Response Submission Process

Interested individuals and/or institutions are invited to submit the following materials in PDF form via email to Katie Loudin (k.loudin@wvhub.org) by **October 9, 2026**.

- Letter summarizing qualifications, interest in the project, and relevant project experience
- A summary of the individual or institution's approach to collaborative partnerships, as well as participatory research and evaluation design, implementation, and analysis.
- A brief description of the planned approach to this project, including activities, milestones, methodology and research platforms (eg. for conducting surveys).
- Qualifications of project personnel, including resumes or CVs.
- Examples of past projects that demonstrate relevant experience.
- Proposed budget (October 2026 - April 2028) including personnel, supplies, materials, and travel.

Responses will be accepted until October 9, 2026. A selection will be made in October 2026. The Hub anticipates work will commence with the selected external evaluation and learning partner around November 2, 2026. The budget for this scope of work should not exceed \$125,000.

