

**WV Community Development Hub's Request for Proposals: Evaluation and Learning
Partner for the "Community Resilience Collaborative"**

Submitted Questions and Responses

Please see responses to submitted questions, below. Certain questions covering similar topics have been combined or paraphrased where appropriate. Please reach out to Emma Byrne (ebyrne@wvhub.org) if you have additional questions. Thanks!

1. Could you provide a list of the 18 participating communities and identify which implementation partner(s) will be working with each community?

Implementation Partner	State	Participating Communities	Community Support Program Name/ Model
West Virginia Community Development Hub	West Virginia	Calhoun County Spencer (Roane County) Glenville (Gilmer County) Wheeling (Ohio County) Moundsville (Marshall County) Salem (Harrison County) West Union (Doddridge County) Hundred (Wetzel County)	Accelerate WV
Mountain Association	Kentucky	Allen (Floyd County, KY) Wayland (Floyd County, KY) McDowell (Floyd County, KY) Fleming-Neon (Letcher County, KY) Beattyville (Lee County, KY)	
Appalachian Voices	Virginia and North Carolina	Todd (Watauga/Ashe Counties, NC) Swannanoa (Buncombe County, NC) Keokee (Lee County, VA) Pound (Wise County, VA) Dante (Russell County, VA)	Community Strong (VA) Resilience Ambassadors (NC)
RelImagine Appalachia	N/A. Will not provide direct coaching		

2. Who are the other implementation partners mentioned in number 5 under Scope of Work in the RFP?

The implementation partners are The WV Community Development Hub, Mountain Association, Appalachian Voices, and RelImagine Appalachia.

3. Can you provide more detail on the governance of initiative, and, in particular, what role you anticipate or envision any steering committee or other governance group of funding

and/or implementation partners playing in the evaluation? What engagement do you expect the evaluation team to have with the broader set of funding and other implementation partners?

The implementation partners have established a Memorandum of Understanding, which outlines each partner's responsibilities in support of program and grant evaluation. While The Hub staff will serve as the lead for the evaluation and manage the relationship with the external Evaluator, each implementation partner will support evaluation efforts by providing data, supporting evaluation design and administration. An evaluation committee is being established with representatives from each implementation partner, and the Evaluator will engage with this committee as necessary.

4. Is there a draft theory of change for the Community Resilience Collaborative? If so, are you able to share?

We do not have a theory of change for the Collaborative. Theories of change for each organization or coaching model, if they exist, will be shared with the Evaluator during the evaluation period.

5. Would you be able to share the existing draft Community Resilience Collaborative evaluation framework and timeline with prospective applicants to help inform proposed methodologies and budgets?

Drafted deliverables of the evaluation process include:

- Conduct a comparative analysis of the different coaching and community development models being utilized across the Trust in Practice implementation partners, including conducting interviews and observations with practitioners and community participants.
- Collect a variety of data (formal/informal, qualitative and quantitative) to measure changes in participant sentiment regarding trust, belonging, agency, hope/optimism, and disaster preparedness, including pre- and post-surveys.
- Collect a variety of data to document community outcomes (intended and unintended), including participatory research methods such as Ripple Effect Mapping.
- Conduct a civic infrastructure landscape analysis of participating communities; reflect changes in civic engagement and infrastructure during program implementation, as well as how the civic infrastructure landscape may impact community outcomes.
- Identify and share case studies, best practices, and lessons learned for supporting economic resilience in flood- or disaster-impacted communities, including replicable approaches.

The timeline will be constructed with Collaboration partners to ensure data collection can be completed with minimal burden to community members while maximizing milestone moments within the program over the performance period.

6. **What materials will be available to the selected evaluator at project initiation, including the draft evaluation framework and timeline referenced in the RFP, existing or draft survey instruments, community or participant rosters, program implementation plans, prior data collected from participating communities, and documentation of the coaching framework?**

These materials will be made available to the Evaluator at the time of project initiation or soon thereafter, depending on timeline and needs.

7. **What are the expectations for the evaluation and learning partner in terms of in-person meetings with implementation partners and the communities in which the collaborative is active?**

While many of the methods outlined in the evaluation draft can be conducted remotely, we anticipate that the Evaluator should participate in certain activities in-person, such as community meetings, in-person group sessions, or participatory evaluation activities such as Ripple Effects Mapping. However, the evaluation design and travel plan will be finalized in consultation with the selected Evaluator. As such, we encourage proposals to include a general travel budget with suggestions for which methods would be best conducted in person. Additionally, The Hub staff are prepared to conduct or coordinate in person evaluation activities with implementation partner staff to reduce travel costs for the Evaluator.

8. **Is The Hub open to a model in which surveys, interviews, focus groups, and other appropriate data collection are conducted remotely where feasible, rather than through separate visits to each participating community? Are there specific activities The Hub expects to occur in person versus virtually?**

We expect that some research, survey, and evaluation activities will be conducted remotely and some in-person. A specific plan will be developed in collaboration with the selected Evaluator. It is possible that a plan can be developed for data collection to be implemented by Collaborative implementation partners and sent to the evaluator for synthesis and analysis. Proposals need to account for data collection, gathering, and the burden on partners who are also executing programmatic goals.

9. **Does this budget cap include travel and materials, or is travel reimbursed separately?**

The budget cap should include all travel and materials.

10. **The RFP describes the evaluation period as November 2026 through June 2028, but the submission instructions request a proposed budget for October 2026–April 2028. Should the proposed budget cover all activities through June 30, 2028?**

The timeline shifted slightly between draft and posting. The proposal should cover activities for the time period of November 2026 to June 2028.

11. **Where could we look to learn more about the Community Resilience Collaborative and the work that the implementation partners will be conducting over the next 2 years?**

The Community Resilience Collaborative (CRC) is the title for a project that brings together four organizations, called implementation partners, all working in community development in the central Appalachian region who won a \$1 million [Trust in Practice Award](#) from [Allstate](#) and the [Aspen Institute's Alliance for Social Trust](#). The Evaluator will support a model analysis during the evaluation period, and information on each partner can be found via their websites. While the four implementation partners have worked collaboratively within the region and may have existing relationships with the participating communities, the CRC is a new initiative and partnership. More can be read about the CRC [here](#) under the "West Virginia Community Development Hub" heading.

12. What is the launch date for the Collaborative? When did it start, and when does it end? What, if any, other key touchpoints or milestones have already been identified? (convenings, reports, etc.)

The four implementation partners within the collaborative began sharing information and collaborating informally over the past several years, as communities within our respective service footprints were impacted by disasters, specifically severe flooding. This informal collaboration was formalized in May 2026, when the Community Resilience Collaborative was awarded the Trust in Practice grant. Since launching, the implementation partners have finalized a memorandum of understanding and aligned on a general program timeline, the initial evaluation timeline and design, and the evaluator RFP process.

13. The RFP describes a multi-state Community Resilience Collaborative involving The Hub, ReImagine Appalachia, Mountain Association, and Appalachian Voices across 18 Appalachian communities, but also references a West Virginia-specific program model ("Accelerate WV"). Does this evaluator role cover all 18 communities across all four partner organizations, or is it scoped to West Virginia's communities specifically?

As part of the Community Resilience Collaborative, three implementation partners will be directly coaching communities within their service footprints (see question #1). The Evaluator role covers all 18 communities. The eight communities coached by The Hub in West Virginia will be participating in an existing and proprietary community coaching model called "Accelerate."

14. For the program outcomes analysis, does The Hub anticipate a minimum level of evaluator-led primary qualitative data collection—for example, a specified number of interviews, focus groups, or Ripple Effects Mapping sessions—or should proposers recommend the mix and scale of qualitative methods they believe is appropriate within the available budget?

A specific plan will be developed in collaboration with the selected Evaluator, and we encourage Evaluators to recommend what they think is appropriate within the project scope, budget, and timeline.

15. Have you selected the 18 communities, and what is the timeframe of coaching support?

Yes, the 18 communities have been selected. Because some communities have previous relationships with the implementation partners, their support may have started months or years ago. The timeframe for community support within this grant is May 2026 to April 30, 2028.

16. How did you all choose the 18 communities who are a part of the Community Resilience Collaborative? What commonalities do they have? Is there a leadership team for each community?

Each of the implementation partners conducting community development and coaching work selected the participating communities using their own internal processes. Some communities have previously worked with the applicable implementation partners, while others are working together for the first time. While more commonalities may exist, each of the selected communities, at a minimum, has been impacted by a disastrous flooding event, is seeking support for community-driven economic development and disaster preparedness, and has a group of committed residents, sometimes organized into a leadership team, who will support this work. All communities are rural with similar challenges of local leadership capacity being limited, histories of extraction-based economies, and current economies in transition.

17. Can you briefly describe what is consistent or unified about the approach(es) being implemented by the 18 communities in the Collaborative? Conversely, to what extent do you anticipate that each community will develop a distinct approach?

Each of the implementation partners utilize different models for and activities within their community-centered approaches. Part of the Evaluator's role will be to articulate and analyze the components of these different models, as well as the communities' experience and results within the different approaches.

18. During the grant period, what programming do the communities participate in? What are the opportunities for collaboration and connection, and are there goals for establishing a support system among the participating communities?

Key activities include trust- and leadership-skill workshops for community teams; facilitated listening sessions to engage a broad cross-section of residents and surface shared priorities; technical assistance to identify and advance investment-ready projects; and small, visible community projects that generate early "wins" and apply trust-building skills in practice. These projects may include creative placemaking, volunteer-led recovery efforts, or early-stage infrastructure or economic initiatives. Teams will work alongside local governments, emergency managers, and regional partners to co-create disaster and economic resilience plans grounded in lived experience. This approach intentionally shifts decision-making away from top-down systems toward residents as empowered civic leaders shaping priorities and investments in their communities

While the approach to establishing a support system may be different across the different implementation partners, peer networking and sharing is a key component of The Hub's model. For example, participating communities attend in-person group sessions with the opportunity to learn from each other, share strategies for addressing challenges or pursuing goals, and offer support through common challenges.

19. Can you provide additional materials describing the specific strategies, programs, or activities intended to be part of the Community Resilience Collaborative?

These materials will be made available to the Evaluator after contract award in order to articulate and analyze each partner's community coaching model.

20. After the Collaborative ends, what level of involvement or continued support will the Hub offer these communities?

Each of the implementation partners will continue to support the communities according to their model, capacity, and resources. At The Hub, for example, we operate with a core value of "commitment" meaning that, after a community has participated in a coaching program, our team continues to look for opportunities to support their projects, connect the team with resources, and offer direct capacity support. Community teams will have actionable plans that should guide their work beyond the end of the formal program.

21. By the end of the Collaborative, what would success look like for an individual community? For the collaborative as a whole?

While each coaching model may contain different program deliverables for participating communities, some overarching success criteria include:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of applicable climate risks and vulnerabilities, and relevant disaster resilience strategies, as well as community-driven economic development strategies
- Specific and relevant plans for improving each community's disaster resilience and supporting their economic recovery
- Increased access to the resources, funding, and technical assistance providers to support with disaster recovery and resilience
- Strengthened interpersonal trust among residents; increased leadership development and volunteerism
- Increased trust as a result of collective action, stronger relationships across difference, and greater confidence in influencing local decisions
- Increased readiness and capacity to attract and sustain public and private investment because communities' have the trust, readiness, and civic infrastructure required to move projects from idea to implementation.

For the Collaborative as a whole, success criteria include::

- Deeper understanding of components, deliverables, and results of various community coaching models and shared learning between implementation organizations
- Iterative and cumulative analysis of and learning about how community coaching and trust-building activities can support lasting civic capacity in flood-impacted Appalachian communities, as well as best practices and applicability in future disaster preparedness or recovery scenarios.

22. What evaluation efforts are you all already doing or have you done in the past? Have you worked with an external evaluation consultant before? What brings you to be looking for a new consultant?

In the past, The Hub has, for example, worked with The Aspen Institute's Community Strategies Group as a learning partner that has helped us distill best practices, articulate ways of operating, and contextualize The Hub's work within the field of rural community and economic development. The Hub has also participated in the Trust for Civic Life's national community surveys, released in 2025 and 2026 [here](#), which provide important insights for understanding trust, agency, and belonging in rural contexts. We anticipate the selected Evaluator to operate as a learning partner in a similar way, while also serving in a more formal role in terms of evaluation design, administration, and analysis.

While we have worked with short term consultants or contractors for past evaluations, the nature and evaluation scope of this grant requires the support of an external evaluator that can meet the needs of all partners within the Collaborative while bringing the necessary expertise and rigor to the project.

23. What do you appreciate about your relationships with prior or current consultants? What makes those relationships work well for you?

We appreciate partners who understand that relationships are foundational to our work, who can be flexible while maintaining timelines and deliverables, and who will plan appropriately so that when our work in disaster-impacted, often rural and under-resourced communities may require shifts and changes, the evaluation project will maintain momentum, integrity, and ultimately be completed successfully. We work well in collaboration and with thought partners who can see patterns and trends in complexity. An unwavering commitment to advancing Appalachia and its people are a must!

24. Do you already have an established framework for evaluating the dynamics you are seeking to understand or would the evaluator propose such a framework with the collaborative?

We have a draft framework including model analysis, program observations, interviews, and surveys. We are also open to recommendations from the selected Evaluator.

25. Does The Hub anticipate that the baseline and final civic infrastructure landscape analyses will produce a distinct assessment for each of the 18 participating communities, or may the evaluator propose an approach that combines community-level data with regional or cross-community analysis and/or more intensive assessment of selected communities?

We anticipate that the data will be combined for a regional or cross community analysis.

26. For purposes of baseline and follow-up survey planning, what populations does The Hub anticipate surveying?

Survey respondents may include members of participating community teams, partner organizations, TA providers, community residents, business owners, elected officials, and other community stakeholders. Survey participants may include those engaged directly (i.e. member of community leadership team) or indirectly (resident of participating community) in activities related to the Collaborative.

27. Approximately how many individuals do you anticipate being eligible for the baseline and follow-up surveys across the 18 communities?

While we are open to recommendations for respondent numbers in terms of statistical significance, we estimate between 25-50 respondents from each community.

28. Will The Hub and implementation partners maintain participant/contact lists and distribute survey invitations and reminders through their existing relationships with participating communities, or should the evaluator anticipate responsibility for respondent recruitment, scheduling, and/or direct survey administration?

The Hub and implementation partners will work with the Evaluator to collaboratively identify the target audience and manage recruitment for survey respondents. We encourage recommendations for best practices and methods for this work within the proposal. The Evaluator will be responsible for survey administration and any related database or software requirements, with support from implementation partners, as necessary.

29. To what extent will Hub staff/coaches be able to devote hours to help execute the evaluation?

The Hub has committed several staff members to support this project, including substantial time from our Director of Impact, who will serve as the lead point of contact and help coordinate the evaluation between implementation partners and the external Evaluator. The Director of Impact and other partner staff may be able to execute some of the in-person evaluation needs, as necessary.

30. Is a baseline survey analysis a requirement or are you open to other methods that would capture change over time?

The external Evaluator will be invited to review and provide feedback and/or suggested changes on the initial drafted evaluation before finalization and implementation, including the planned baseline survey. The Collaboration is open to methods that would capture change over time, especially as community teams are all in various places within their program curriculum and sequencing.

31. The RFP asks for us to explain our approach to collaborative partnerships. Are you asking how we evaluate collaborative partnerships or how we engage with clients in partnership?

We are asking about how the Evaluator engages with clients in partnership, especially in the context of the multi-partner Collaborative.

32. Does The Hub have expectations regarding the depth or type of civic infrastructure analysis—for example, formal social network analysis—or is the evaluator expected to recommend the approach based on the existing evaluation framework and project needs?

We are open to recommendations from the Evaluator. Our goal is to map the landscape of civic infrastructure across communities using a blend of self-assessment from community members and publicly available data or a tool like the “Mapping the Modern Agora” project (see question #33). We want the analysis to be useful to the communities and illustrate strengths, gaps, and opportunities, but it is not the primary focus of the project. We are open to a strategy that meets the needs of our communities.

33. For the Civic Infrastructure Landscape Analysis, is there existing baseline data, prior civic-mapping work, or related community assessment data to build from, or should the evaluator design this methodology from scratch? Relatedly, is any program or participant data already being collected that the evaluation would draw on, or does data collection begin at contract start?

We are inspired by the “Mapping the Modern Agora” project at the SNF Agora Institute [here](#). There is no participant data already being collected beyond what is publicly available.

34. There is no universal definition of “civic infrastructure.” Does The Hub/ implementation partners have an existing definition, theory of change, conceptual framework, indicator set, or funder required measures for civic infrastructure that the selected evaluator should use or refine?

We agree! While working with communities, The Hub uses an asset-based community development approach with community leadership teams. During this process, communities identify their strengths and assets using Flora and Flora’s Community Capitals Framework. This initial community self-assessment is a powerful tool in the planning process.

From this, a civic infrastructure analysis could be completed that combines the county-level data from the Agora project with the team self-assessments that identify civic infrastructure strengths, gaps, and opportunities locally. Civic infrastructure, defined in the Agora project, are “the places where people gather, deliberate, and act together”—or “the public places that foster public discourse and public action.”

35. What timeframe are you interested in focusing the Civic Infrastructure Landscape Analysis on?

We would like to note any changes, or plans for change, among the community teams over time, primarily from Fall 2026 to Spring 2028. The final timeframe and methods will be determined in collaboration with the Evaluator.

36. We note your interest in participatory evaluation methods. What is your desired level of participation from the community in the evaluation? (e.g., community is informed, consulted, involved, collaborated with, or deferred to?) And what has been communicated to Collaborative participants about their expected participation in evaluation activities?

One goal of the evaluation is to capture both the intended and unintended outcomes of the communities' participation in structured coaching programs, and this goal informs our suggestion to include participatory evaluation methods (eg. Ripple Effects Mapping) in the evaluation. The community participants have not received any specific information about how they will participate in the evaluation process, and all methods will be finalized in collaboration with the Evaluator.

It is important to note that our community members are volunteers, many with full-time jobs and other responsibilities. They step up into leadership because they want their communities to be better. Primary design questions will lie with the partner organizations and the coaches who connect regularly with their community members. We are open to collaboration from community members and welcome feedback to strengthen the project while recognizing that full evaluation planning and integration may be a burden while they are also active in their coaching program.

37. When will you learn if the pending application for funding with the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Disaster Supplemental Grant Program is awarded? How, if at all, will that influence the scope of the evaluation and learning work?

The EDA has not provided a specific timeline for notification of funding; however, we are estimating that notification will come by December 2027. The EDA funding would change the scope of program activities slightly but not the number of participating communities or timeline. The Evaluator would need to account for the possibility of those programmatic changes. Additionally, we will prepare a program evaluation report to identify best practices in disaster recovery and community readiness for the EDA.

38. The RFP makes clear that the evaluation will satisfy reporting and evaluation requirements from multiple funders and partners. Could the Hub provide additional details on specific reporting expectations, metrics, or logic models that the evaluator will be expected to manage or accommodate? What (if any) specific measures has the Hub already committed to including in baseline and final analyses?

The Hub staff will manage meeting reporting requirements for the multiple grants supporting this project and will work directly with the Evaluator to ensure that the evaluation design satisfies the evaluative goals. The Evaluator will be responsible for ensuring that evaluation activities and deliverables are completed within the agreed upon deadlines. Implementation partners have signed an MOU that outlines expectations for their support of the evaluation process. It is our goal that the learnings from this project will be published and shared beyond the reporting expectations outlined by the funders, and that the Evaluator will support and enable this vision.

39. Does the HUB have interest in a university research and learning partner for this work or are you envisioning more of a short-term consultant?

We are open to an Evaluator based within or outside a university setting. We anticipate that a university-based evaluator may have access to helpful resources, such as software for survey design and administration.

40. Would there be potential for the external evaluator to also play a partner role?

Yes. We envision that the Evaluator will be working as a close member of the team, potentially as a partner. This project is about trust-building—not only within communities, but among the Collaboration as well!