

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: December 5, 2023

Date Submitted: October 23, 2023

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Edward J. Dixon County Administrator
Justin Stiell, Growth Management Director

Subject: Approval of a Resolution Ratifying Staff Submission of a Grant Application to the Florida Department of Commerce's Rural Infrastructure Fund Seeking Funds to Create an Arts and Cultural Map and Story Board and to Partner with the ARPC.

Statement of Issue:

This item is presented to the Board for approval of a Resolution Ratifying Staff Submission of a Grant Application to the Florida Department of Commerce's Rural Infrastructure Fund Seeking Funds to Create an Arts and Cultural Map and Story Board and to Partner with the ARPC.

Background:

The Rural Infrastructure Fund (RIF) is a reimbursement grant program within the Florida Commerce Department (Commerce), created to facilitate the planning, preparing, and financing of infrastructure projects in rural communities, which will encourage job creation, capital investment, and the strengthening and diversification of rural economies. The Florida Legislature appropriated \$25 million in federally funded State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to the Rural Infrastructure Fund Statewide Program.

Eligible uses of funds include:

- Improvements to public infrastructure for industrial or commercial sites;
- Upgrades to or development of public tourism infrastructure;
- Improvements to inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action.
- Project planning and preparation grants for infrastructure feasibility studies, design and engineering activities, or other infrastructure planning and preparation activities.

The maximum award is \$300,000.00 for planning grants with no match requirements for applicants that are designated rural areas of economic opportunity.

Applications were due no later than November 6, 2023, and requires the local government authorizing official to sign applications or approval for staff to submit such application.

Arts and Cultural Economic Sector - According to the ARPC, an arts and cultural-based economy can enhance local and regional efforts to diversify the rural economies throughout the Apalachee Region, generate revenue, improve the quality of life, and attract visitors and investment to our area. Rural areas often feature various arts and culture industries and events, which, with some assistance, can become productive economic sectors and drivers. In addition to stimulating substantial employment, arts enterprises are highly entrepreneurial, readily available in many of the Region's communities, and attract visitors to the area.

With adequate data, information, planning, and funding, the arts create a highly desirable quality of life that draws business and knowledge workers to further stimulate the economy. Leveraged correctly, arts and cultural assets attract businesses, investment, and people. Mapping cultural assets along with other community assets such as employment centers, educational institutions, and transportation nodes and corridors can also provide insight into advantageous smart growth locations where arts and culture investments can be strengthened and/or concentrated and identify new economic drivers.

The ARPC would like to partner with the County to begin this regional project in Gadsden County. The Commerce RIF grant opportunity allows for such projects, especially those that strengthen and diversify the local economy. The ARPC has provided the attached proposal (Attachment #1) which provides additional information on the regional project and economic indicators.

Analysis:

Staff reviewed the ARPC proposal and the County's current needs and potential projects, and based on the time needed to complete an application for an allowable project feel that this project would benefit Gadsden County and its citizens by 1) creating a map of Gadsden's current arts and cultural assets that can help strengthen and diversity the local economy by nurturing an arts and culture economic sector; 2) identifying and promoting the County's current and potential arts and culture assets; and, 3) develop a storyboard to preserving Gadsden's rich history and heritage. Proposed outreach in the community will mine stories and history from citizens that could be lost to the history books if not preserved.

The \$300,000.00 RIF funds being requested for Gadsden County will allow the County to partner with the ARPC for the following activities with strong County involvement and approval of all deliverables. Below are the two major activities with tasks that will be completed by the ARPC if funds are awarded.

#1 Research and Data:

1. Compile relevant data from existing resources, e.g., FDOT road map, Competitive Florida Community Asset Map, etc.
2. Local Leadership Input - Hold individual meetings with the leadership team of Gadsden County and each of its municipalities to provide a briefing on the project and gather information and input.

3. Citizens Input - Hold Public Meetings in each of the County's municipalities to provide a briefing on the project to the Public and gather input from citizens.
4. Storyboard – Include a storytelling component as a method to gather, preserve, and integrate stories of the history of Gadsden County.

#2 Mapping

1. Create a map and storyboard of Gadsden's Arts and Cultural Assets utilizing compiled data and research. The map will overlay at a minimum:
 - The Florida Trails Systems
 - Historical Designations and Landmarks
 - Other relevant and important features, such as Talquin Forest Tracks, Lake Talquin, and Pat Thomas Eco-Tourism Park.

Due to the timing of Board meetings, deadlines to submit agenda items, and time needed to complete the application and to submit it timely to the Florida Commerce by the November 6th deadline, staff prepared the attached RIF application sought the Chairman's signature and submitted the application timely to Florida Commerce. In the event the Board does not ratify these actions, staff will resend the application.

If the Board does approve these actions, then staff are seeking Board approval of a Resolution (Attachment 2) Ratifying Staff Submission of a Grant Application (Attachment 3) to the Florida Department of Commerce's Rural Infrastructure Fund Seeking Funds to Create an Arts and Cultural Map and Story Board and to Partner with the ARPC, and the Chairman's Signature on the Grant Application.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact with this agenda item.

Options:

1. Approve Resolution Ratifying Staff Submission of a Grant Application to the Florida Department of Commerce's Rural Infrastructure Fund Seeking Funds to Create an Arts and Cultural Map and Story Board and to Partner with the ARPC and authorize the Chairman to sign all related documents.
2. Disapprove.
3. Board direction.

County Administrator's Recommendation:

Option 1.

Attachments:

1. APRC Regional Proposal
2. Resolution
3. RIF Application



An arts and cultural-based economy can enhance regional efforts to diversify the rural economies throughout the Apalachee Region, generate revenue, improve the quality of life, and attract visitors and investment to our area. Rural areas often feature various arts and culture industries, which, with some assistance, can become productive economic sectors. In addition to stimulating substantial employment, arts enterprises are highly entrepreneurial, readily available in many of the Region’s communities, and attractive to tourists. With adequate planning and funding, the arts create a highly desirable quality of life that draws business and knowledge workers to further stimulate the economy.

Leveraged correctly, arts and cultural assets attract businesses, investment, and people. The Apalachee Region is largely composed of rural areas and smaller municipalities, which often have serious challenges in competing with their larger urban cousins to achieve these kinds of successes. As such, the Apalachee Regional Planning Council proposes the development of a Regional Arts and Cultural Asset Map, to further aid in abilities for strategic planning and economic development through an arts-based economy. The mapping will begin in Gadsden County, and expand throughout the Region as the project continues. Once the inventory is conducted, the data will be analyzed in spreadsheets and spatially through the use of GIS mapping. Spatially mapping cultural assets will identify areas where arts and cultural resources are concentrated and areas where they are sparse. Mapping cultural assets along with other community assets such as employment centers and transportation nodes and corridors can also provide insight into advantageous smart growth locations where arts and culture investments can be strengthened and/or concentrated.

The Regional Arts and Cultural Asset Map is a foundational step in Arts and Cultural Planning throughout the Apalachee Region. The objective is to incorporate and safeguard cultural and artistic heritage within the framework of economic development initiatives. This entails designing, planning, and executing strategies that seamlessly integrate cultural and artistic elements. The roadmap developed will be instrumental in creating a thorough Regional Arts and Culture Plan. This plan is vital for upholding the essential role of arts and culture in defining the identity of the Apalachee Region.

Overall, this tool will allow for a better understanding of the cultural and creative value of specific community resources, enabling the Region to plan and implement a vision that fully leverages its rich arts and cultural ecosystem. In addition, the resulting data will be useful for increasing tourism and business promotion, as well as leveraging funding for community planning purposes.

In 2022, nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences generated \$151.7 billion in economic activity—\$73.3 billion in spending by the organizations, which leveraged an additional \$78.4 billion in event related spending by their audiences. The impact of this economic activity is far reaching, supporting 2.6 million jobs, generating \$29.1 billion in tax revenue, and providing \$101 billion in personal income to residents.



REGIONAL ARTS & CULTURAL ASSET MAP – PROJECT COMPONENTS

RESEARCH & DATA

- Compile existing data (Apalachee Online, Competitive Florida Community Asset Maps, etc.)
- Gather data from local governments.
- Conduct several public workshops throughout the Region to gather data from citizens
- Include a story telling component – a method of gathering, preserving, and integrating stories of the history of the Region

MAP DEVELOPMENT

- Create Regional Arts & Cultural Asset Map utilizing all compiled data
- Overlay Florida Trail Systems
- Overlay Historical Designations (Federal, State, and Local)

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

- Continue to develop partnerships with the various stakeholders of the Region, ensuring a wide scope of knowledge regarding the needs and challenges of the arts and culture ecosystem.



86%
say arts and culture is "important to their community's quality of life and livability."

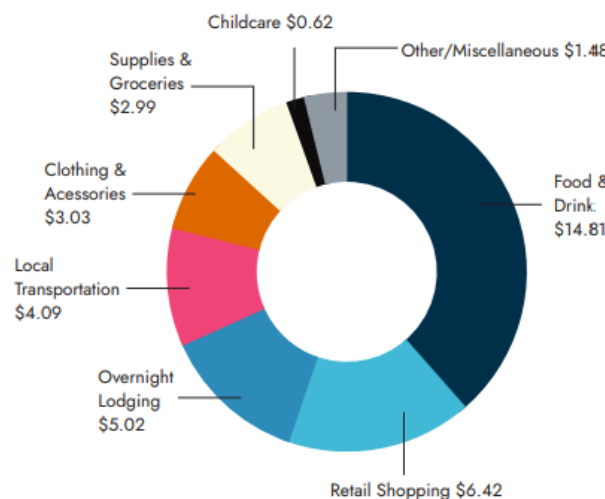
77%
Percent of nonlocal audiences who said the primary purpose of their visit was to attend that cultural event.

51%
Percent of locals who would have traveled to a different community to attend a similar cultural activity if the one they were attending was unavailable.

88.7%
of attendees at BIPOC and ALAANA organizations agreed, "This activity or venue is inspiring a sense of pride in this neighborhood or community."
(National average = 88.5%)

Vibrant arts communities attract visitors who spend money and help local businesses thrive. They also keep resident spending money local—vital income for local merchants.

Average Per Person Audience Expenditure: \$38.46



\$38.29 per person spending by attendees at BIPOC events

\$38.46 national average spending at all events

Social Impact

Beyond its economic and financial impacts, arts and culture provides social contributions that benefit the wider community, such as neighborhood pride and cultural identity.



79% believe arts and culture is "important to their community's businesses, economy, and local jobs."

89% of arts attendees agreed the activity or venue they were attending was "a source of neighborhood pride for the community."

86% of arts attendees said they would "feel a sense of loss if that activity or venue was no longer available."

86% of arts attendees felt it important that future generations also be able to have that cultural experience.

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RESOLUTION NO. 2023-042

**A RESOLUTION OF GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA;
RATIFYING AND APPROVING STAFF SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE'S RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND SEEKING
FUNDS TO CREATE AN ARTS AND CULTURAL MAP AND STORY BOARD AND TO
PARTNER WITH THE ARPC, AND THE CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE ON THE GRANT
APPLICATION**

WHEREAS, the Florida Rural Infrastructure Fund (RIF) Grant program is made available to Florida units of government to provide funding to facilitate the planning, preparing, and financing of infrastructure projects in rural communities which will encourage job creation, capital investment and the strengthening and diversification of rural economies. The RIF program is intended to facilitate access of rural communities to infrastructure funding programs, such as those offered by the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant, United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development, and the United States Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration.

WHEREAS, the Florida legislature provided \$25 million in funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 for eligible projects.

WHEREAS Gadsden County is eligible to make application and has an eligible project, mapping of arts and cultural assets to help strengthen and diversify the local economy,

WHEREAS Gadsden County desires to seek \$300,000.00 in RIF grant funds to partner with the ARPC to create an arts and cultural map and storyboard of Gadsden's rich history and heritage and to support and grow and arts and cultural economic sector.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA, hereby

1. Approves staff submittal of a RIF application to the Florida Department of Commerce seeking \$300,000.00 to partner with the ARPC to create Gadsden County Arts and Cultural Map and Storyboard of the County's history and heritage.
2. Approves and ratifies the Chairman's signature on the grant application document.

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED, in regular session by the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners on this _____ day of _____, 2023.

GADSDEN COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Attest:

Clerk

Chair



Florida Rural Infrastructure Fund Program

Application for Funding

Applicant: Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners

(Name of Applicant)

Project Title: Regional Arts & Cultural Asset Map

(Name of Project)

State Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Application Date: November 6, 2023

Mailing Address: Florida Commerce
Bureau of Small Cities and Rural Communities
107 East Madison Street – MSC 400
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-6508

Telephone: (850) 717-8405

Web: <http://www.FloridaJobs.org/RIF>

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Part I – Applicant Profile

Applicant Contact Information:

Entity Name: Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners		
Street Address: 9 East Jefferson Street		
Mailing Address (if different): PO Box 1799		
City: Quincy	Zip Code: 32353-1799	County: Gadsden
Main Telephone: 850.875.8650	Main Facsimile: N/A	Federal ID Number: 59-6000616

Chief Elected Official: Kimblin E. NeSmith, J.D.	Title: BoCC Chair
Telephone: (850) 875-8650	Facsimile:
E-mail Address: Knesmith@gadsdencountyfl.gov	

Chief Financial Officer: Nichols Thomas	Title: Clerk of the Court
Telephone: 850-875-8601	Facsimile:
E-mail Address: ClerkofCourt@gadsdenclerk.com	

Applicant Project Contact: Melissa Franklin	Title: ARPC Communications Coordinator
Street Address: 2507 Callaway Road Suite #100	
City: Tallahassee	Zip Code: 32303
Direct Telephone: 850.312.5016	Facsimile:
E-mail Address: mfranklin@arpc.org	

Application Preparer Information

Preparer's Name: Apalachee Regional Planning Council		Organization Preparing Application: <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government <input type="checkbox"/> Private Company <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional Planning Council	
Street Address: 2507 Callaway Road Suite #100			
City: Tallahassee		State: FL	Zip Code: 32303
Telephone: 850.488.6211		Facsimile:	
E-mail Address: mfranklin@arpc.org			

Consultant Information (if applicable)			
Consultant's Name:		<input type="checkbox"/> Private Company <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Planning Council	
Street Address:			
City:		State:	Zip Code:
Telephone:		E-mail Address:	

Demographics and Area Data		
U.S. Congressional District Number: 2	Florida Senate District Number: 3	Florida House District Number: 8
Total Population: 43,826 Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Source Date: 2021	Unemployment Rate: 4.0% Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Source Date: 2021	Poverty Rate: 24.2% Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Source Date: 2021

Indicate what RIF grant category is being applied for: <input type="checkbox"/> Total Project Participation Grant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Planning and Preparation Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Preclearance Review Grant
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Indicate the total amount of RIF funding being requested: \$299,257.56		
If the proposed project is located in a Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO), indicate which one: (See list of RAOs in application instructions.)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Northwest RAO <input type="checkbox"/> South Central RAO <input type="checkbox"/> North Central RAO		
If applying for Panhandle Specific Appropriation funds, please indicate the County in which the project is located:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Calhoun County <input type="checkbox"/> Jackson County <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gadsden County <input type="checkbox"/> Liberty County <input type="checkbox"/> Holmes County <input type="checkbox"/> Washington County		
Answer the following questions by clicking on the correct check box.		
Historic Preservation Will the project impact a building, public improvement, or planned open space that is 50 or more years old? If yes, include the documentation specified in the application instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Interlocal Agreement Will project activities require an interlocal agreement? If yes , the interlocal agreement(s) must be included.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Regulatory Action Are improvements being made in this project to inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action that prohibits economic or community growth? If yes , include a copy of the letter citing the regulatory action.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Catalyst Site Is the project related to preclearance review and also located within a catalyst site as defined in Section 288.061, Florida Statutes? If yes , include a map showing the boundary of the catalyst site and the project boundary within.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Comprehensive Plan Is the proposed project consistent with the applicant's Comprehensive Plan? The project must be consistent in order for the project to be funded through the RIF program and supporting documentation must be included with the application.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Part II – Project Description and Timeline

Project Description

Describe the proposed project in no more than three sentences:

This project focuses on the development of a Regional Arts and Cultural Asset Map, starting initially in Gadsden County and progressively expanding throughout the nine-county Apalachee Region as the project continues. This project is vital for upholding the essential role of arts and culture in defining the identity of Gadsden County and the surrounding Apalachee Region and fostering an arts-based economy in rural communities. By the conclusion of the proposed project, staff will have mapped all existing arts and cultural resources in Gadsden County and will have identified opportunities for creating and augmenting arts-based economic development initiatives to invite new capital investment, like local business development.

Clearly summarize the proposed project as outlined in the application instructions.

Project Background

An arts and cultural-based economy can enhance local and regional efforts to diversify the rural economies throughout the Apalachee Region, generate revenue, improve the quality of life, and attract visitors and investment to our area. Rural areas often feature various arts and culture industries and events, which, with some assistance, can become productive economic sectors and drivers. In addition to stimulating substantial employment, arts enterprises are highly entrepreneurial, readily available in many of the Region’s communities, and attract visitors to the area.

With adequate data, information, planning and funding, the arts create a highly desirable quality of life that draws business and knowledge workers to further stimulate the economy. Leveraged correctly, arts and cultural assets attract businesses, investment, and people. Mapping cultural assets along with other community assets such as employment centers, educational institutions, and transportation nodes and corridors can also provide insight into advantageous smart growth locations where arts and culture investments can be strengthened and/or concentrated and identify new economic drivers. The key project milestone is the creation of an online, interactive Arts and Cultural Assets Map.

This outcome can be achieved through the following set of tasks, which are divided across two deliverables. The deliverables and associated tasks are outlined below:

Deliverable 1: Research and Data

Task 1: Compile relevant data from existing resources, e.g., FDOT road map, Competitive Florida Community Asset Map, Apalachee Online, etc.

Task 2: Local Leadership Input - Hold individual meetings with the leadership team and Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to provide a briefing on the project and gather information and input.

Task 3: Citizens Input - Hold Public Meetings throughout Gadsden County to provide a briefing of the project to the Public and gather input from citizens.

Task 4: Stakeholder Directory – Compile names and contact information for all relevant arts-based and/or economic development organizations that will be key in fostering a rural arts-based economy.

Deliverable 2: Mapping

Task 1: Create a map of Arts and Cultural Assets utilizing compiled data and research. The map will overlay (at a minimum):

- The Florida Trails Systems: Shared Use Non-Motorized (SUN) Trails, Greenways, and Blueways
- Historical Designations and Landmarks
- Existing arts spaces, parks, farmers markets, galleries, theatres, or other places where people gather
- Downtown and commercial corridors
- Florida Main Street-designated communities
- Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) zones
- Central Business District overlays
- State and federal recreation areas
- Other relevant items, as requested by local stakeholders during Deliverable 1

Proposed Timeline

Task/Activity Description	Task/Activity Duration	Deliverable
Deliverable 1, Task 1 Compile existing data: Apalachee Online, Competitive Florida, etc.)	4 months	- Base map of existing data in shapefile format
Deliverable 1, Task 2 Local Leadership Input - Hold individual meetings with the leadership team and Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to provide a briefing on the project and gather information and input.	8 months	- Summary of local leadership input
Deliverable 1, Task 3 Citizens Input - Hold Public Meetings to provide a briefing of the project to the public and gather input from citizens.	4 months	- Copy of meeting agendas - Copy of sign-in sheets - Summary of public input from meetings
Deliverable 1, Task 4 Stakeholder Directory – Compile names and contact information for all relevant arts-based and/or economic development organizations that will be key in fostering a regional arts-based economy.	2 months	- Copy of Stakeholder Directory
Deliverable 2, Task 1 Arts & Cultural Asset Map	6 months	- Map of arts and cultural assets with various layers in shapefile format

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Part III – Economic Narrative

Provide a summary of the project’s economic benefit, long-term viability, and potential local or regional economic impact. The summary should include a description of the current and anticipated economic conditions of the area.

An arts and cultural-based economy can enhance regional efforts to diversify the rural economies throughout the Apalachee Region, generate revenue, improve the quality of life, and attract visitors and investment to our area. Rural areas often feature various arts and culture industries, which, with some assistance, can become productive economic sectors. In addition to stimulating substantial employment, arts enterprises are highly entrepreneurial, readily available in many of the Region’s communities, and attractive to tourists. With adequate planning and funding, the arts create a highly desirable quality of life that draws business and knowledge workers to further stimulate the economy.

Leveraged correctly, arts and cultural assets attract businesses, investment, and people. The Apalachee Region is largely composed of rural areas and smaller municipalities, which often have serious challenges in competing with their larger urban cousins to achieve these kinds of successes. As such, the Apalachee Regional Planning Council proposes the development of a Regional Arts and Cultural Asset Map, to further aide in abilities for strategic planning and economic development through an arts-based economy. The mapping will begin in Gadsden County and expand throughout the Region as the project continues. Once the inventory is conducted, the data will be analyzed in spreadsheets and spatially through the use of GIS mapping. Spatially mapping cultural assets will identify areas where arts and cultural resources are concentrated and areas where they are sparse. Mapping cultural assets along with other community assets such as employment centers and transportation nodes and corridors can also provide insight into advantageous smart growth locations where arts and culture investments can be strengthened and/or concentrated. This mapping will be a tool for economic strategy by local communities in partnership with ARPC and other economic development organizations.

Moreover, ARPC will use this project to start a regional dialogue around fostering an arts-based economy and, through partnerships that exist with Tallahassee-based arts entities, will work to extend Tallahassee expertise and resources to the surrounding area for a wider economic footprint. In pursuit of this goal, ARPC and Gadsden County intend to partner via subcontracts with Knight Creative Communities Institute (KCCI), Council on Culture and Arts (COCA), Thomasville Arts Center, Gadsden County Development Council (GCDC), Florida Main Street communities, and other local entities. In the bigger picture, ARPC staff is working on connecting these organizations, along with ARPC member local governments, through the establishment of a new, non-profit, regional arts organization to ensure the long-term sustainability of this initiative and creation of a forum for dialogue and collaboration. Organizations that have experienced much success in the realm of arts-based economic strategies, including Thomasville Arts Center, are providing guidance for our area so that we can achieve momentum and economic vitality through the arts.

Describe the proposed project’s potential for enhanced job creation and/or increased capital investment, including but not limited to the following information:

- **The nature of the business activities which will be conducted at the site of, or which relate to the project.**
- **Description of the capital investment in real and personal property – do not include product inventory.**

The Arts and Cultural Asset Map is a foundational step in Arts and Cultural Planning throughout the Apalachee Region. The objective is to incorporate and safeguard cultural and artistic heritage within the framework of economic development initiatives. This entails designing, planning, and executing strategies that seamlessly integrate cultural and artistic elements. The roadmap developed will be instrumental in creating a thorough Regional Arts and Culture Plan. This plan is vital for upholding the essential role of arts and culture in defining the identity of the Apalachee Region. Overall, this tool will allow for a better understanding of the cultural and creative value of specific community resources, enabling Gadsden County and the surrounding region to plan and implement a vision that fully leverages its rich arts and cultural ecosystem. In addition, the resulting data will be useful for increasing tourism and business promotion, as well as leveraging funding for community planning purposes.

Describe the level of public and private commitment to the project. Include the extent of local expenditures for construction, use of local firms or resources, or purchase of local equipment or materials which have or will have ripple effects on the area’s economy.

The project is intended to spark renewed capital investment in the area but will not involve any known local expenditures during the proposed project timeline.

Part IV – Project Budget

Provide a breakdown of the total budget for the proposed project, including both RIF funding and other sources of funding.

ACTIVITY/TASK	RIF FUNDS	OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	TOTAL
Deliverable 1	\$150,143.79	\$0	\$150,143.79
Deliverable 2	\$149,113.77	\$0	\$149,113.77
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL	\$299,257.56	\$0	\$299,257.56

Provide an explanation of how the total infrastructure costs for the proposed project were estimated.

No infrastructure costs are required for this project. The proposed budget includes line items for consulting service subcontracts, travel, and staff time needed to complete all proposed deliverables.

Part V – Sources and Uses of Non-RIF Funds

Source	Amount Contributed	Type (Loan, Grant, Local Government Funds, Donated Land, or Other Funding)
N/A	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
Totals	\$	

Part VI – Participating Party Information (if applicable)

Complete and attach a [Participating Party Information Form](#) for each entity creating or retaining jobs as a result of this project.

Part VII – Application Authorization

I, the undersigned chief elected official or authorized representative of the applicant, certify that to the best of my knowledge:

- a. This application is in all respects fair and submitted in good faith without collusion or fraud;*
- b. If selected through this application process, the recipient will work in good faith and in partnership with the Department of Commerce to manage its grant in a timely and accurate manner;*
- c. The information in this application is accurate; and,*
- d. The undersigned is duly authorized to bind the entity represented in this application.*

Signature of Chief Elected Official or Designee

Signature:

Typed Name and Title: Kimblin E. NeSmith, J.D., Gadsden County BoCC Chair

Date: November 6, 2023

If signed by a person other than the chief elected official, a signature authorization must be included.

Signature of Application Preparer if not an employee of the Applicant

Signature:



Typed Name and Title: Melissa Franklin, ARPC Communications Coordinator

Name of Firm or Agency: Apalachee Regional Planning Council



Florida Rural Infrastructure Fund Program

Application Instructions

Part I – Applicant Profile

The application profile must reflect the requested information about the applicant, including demographics, area data, and the person who prepared the application.

Application Category

There are three categories of RIF grants that applicants can request funding for. Indicate which category is being applied for:

Total Project Participation Grants

To facilitate access to and maximize the use of state, federal, local, and private resources, grants may be awarded for up to 75 percent (75%) of the total infrastructure project costs, or up to one hundred percent (100%) of the total infrastructure project cost for a project located in a rural community as defined in s. 288.0656(2), F.S., which is also located in a fiscally constrained county as defined in s. 218.67(1), F.S., or a rural area of opportunity as defined in s. 288.0656(2), F.S.

Eligible uses of funds include:

- Improvements to public infrastructure for industrial or commercial sites;
- Upgrades to or development of public tourism infrastructure;
- Improvements to inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action.

Authorized infrastructure may include the following public-private partnership facilities:

- storm water systems;
- telecommunications facilities;
- roads or other remedies to transportation impediments;
- other physical requirements to facilitate economic development activities in the community.

Project Planning and Preparation Grants

Grants may be awarded for up to \$300,000 for feasibility studies, design and engineering activities, or other infrastructure planning and preparation activities. Grants awarded under this category may be used in conjunction with Total Project Participation grants.

Preclearance Review Grants

To enable rural communities to access the resources available under the Expedited Permitting – Preclearance Review Process (Section 403.973(18), Florida Statutes), grants may be awarded for surveys, feasibility studies, and other activities related to the identification and preclearance review of land which is suitable for preclearance review. Grant application criteria includes the extent to which administrative and consultant expenses are minimized.

Maximum award amounts and local funds match requirements:

- Projects located outside a RAO - \$75,000 with 50 percent local funds match;
- Projects located within a RAO - \$300,000 with no local funds match required; and
- Projects located within a catalyst site (as defined in Section 288.0656, Florida Statutes) - maximum amounts same as above, depending on RAO status. However, the local funds match requirement may be waived pursuant to the process in Section 288.06561, Florida Statutes, for projects outside an RAO.

Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO)

If the proposed project is located in a RAO, indicate which one.

- *Northwest Rural Area of Opportunity:* Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Wakulla, and Washington counties, and the area within the city limits of Freeport and Walton County north of the Choctawhatchee Bay and intercoastal waterway. To learn more about the Northwest RAO region, please contact [Opportunity Florida](#).
- *South Central Rural Area of Opportunity:* DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties, and the cities of Pahokee, Belle Glade, and South Bay (Palm Beach County), and Immokalee (Collier County). For more information about the South Central RAO region, please contact [Florida's Heartland Regional Economic Development Initiative, Inc.](#)
- *North Central Rural Area of Opportunity:* Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Putnam, Suwannee, Taylor, and Union counties. For more information about the North Central RAO region, please contact [North Florida Economic Development Partnership](#).

Historic Preservation

Answer "Yes" if any project activity will result in one of the following:

- Direct physical changes to a structure 50 or more years old, such as demolition (partial or complete), rehabilitation, restoration, remodeling, renovation, expansion, or relocation
- Direct physical changes to public improvements 50 or more years old, such as stone curbs or brick streets
- Direct physical changes to a planned open space 50 or more years old, such as a park or plaza
- Project activities occurring within 100 feet of a structure, public improvement, or planned open space 50 or more years old
- Project activities occurring in a Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

If this question is answered "Yes," proceed as follows:

- Contact the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) during the application planning process. Properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places must be designed in accordance with the recommended approaches in the ***Secretary of the Interior's Standards or Rehabilitation Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*** (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service). This publication and technical assistance may be obtained from the SHPO, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250.
- Provide original photographs to SHPO that can be used to determine the historical/architectural significance of the property. Photographs must show each side of the structure and general views of the property in its surroundings; they should be identified by street address and keyed to the service area map. If potentially significant historic properties are identified, SHPO will recommend the appropriate approach.

- Provide the following documentation:
 - The location/address;
 - The construction date;
 - The activity affecting the historic property; and
 - The results of any pre-application discussions with SHPO regarding the potential impact of the proposed project on historic properties

Interlocal Agreements

Indicate whether or not activities will require an interlocal agreement. If activities will take place, or services will be extended or provided, outside of the local government applicant’s jurisdiction, include an interlocal agreement signed by the chief elected officials, or legally designated individuals of the jurisdictions, that specifies:

- The units of local government (parties involved);
- The purpose of the interlocal agreement;
- A delineation of the cooperation between the parties involved;
- A description of the activities and the service area(s);
- The amount of funds being committed (and associated terms); and
- A statement that the project is not inconsistent with the local comprehensive plans of all involved jurisdictions.

Regulatory Action

If the proposed project will address inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action that prohibits economic or community growth, the application must include a copy of the letter citing the relevant regulatory action.

Catalyst Site

If the proposed project is related to preclearance review and is also located within a catalyst site as defined in Section 288.061, Florida Statutes, the application must include a map showing the boundary of the catalyst site and the project boundary within.

Comprehensive Plan

The proposed project must be consistent with the applicant’s comprehensive plan and the application must include documentation to support this consistency.

Part II – Project Description and Timeline

Project Description

Provide a narrative description of each proposed activity. Applications proposing more than one activity should include a description for each activity.

Each description should include the following minimum information:

- Quantity of the activity
- If funds from other sources are being used, describe how the funds will be used
- Location of the activity within the applicant's jurisdiction
- Cost of the activity
- A list of any major permits, comprehensive plan amendments, zoning changes, or similar approvals required
- For infrastructure projects, an indication of who will own and maintain the infrastructure once completed

In addition to describing the location of the project, the applicant must provide a project map, which, at a minimum, shows:

- A scale;
- A north arrow;
- The boundaries of the applicant's jurisdiction;
- The specific location of the project activity within the applicant's jurisdiction;
- The applicant's administration building, from which it will be managing the project; and
- Street names and other identifying landmarks within the jurisdiction.

Project Timeline

Outline each step of the project, from grant award to closing out the agreement. Provide an estimate of how long each step of the process will take, in months, and the associated activity/task deliverable.

Part III – Economic Narrative

Describe the proposed project's economic benefit, long-term viability, and potential local or regional economic impact. The summary should include a description of the current and anticipated economic conditions of the area. Describe the project's potential for enhanced job creation or increased capital investment, including but not limited to, the following information:

- (1) The nature of business activities which will be conducted at the site of, or which relate to, the project, and
- (2) A description of the capital investment in real and personal property, not including product inventory.
- (3) Describe the level of public and private commitment to the project. Include the extent of local expenditures for construction, use of local firms or resources, or purchase of local equipment or materials which have or will impact on the area's economy.

Part IV – Project Budget

Complete the budget table included in the application based on the type of activity being applied for. If funds from another source are being used to

assist with a particular activity, those funds should be listed separately from the requested RIF funds.

Applicants must also detail how they determined the total estimated costs associated with the project and upload all documentation used to make the determination. The written explanation should detail how the proposed budget is reasonable and appropriate considering the scope, substance, and duration of the proposed project. There is no specific format for providing budget assumption documentation, but it should clearly correspond with the type of activities and their associated costs entered in the budget table. The documentation should also demonstrate that the applicant has carefully considered the financial aspects of the project and has a solid rationale for the amount of RIF funding being requested.

Part V – Sources and Uses of Non-RIF Funds

Identify any additional sources of funding that will be contributed to the project. Additionally, include documentation that the funds are available for use, such as an award letter, and that they have been contributed to this project, such as a resolution or minutes from a council or commission meeting. If an application has been submitted, but not yet awarded, for other non-RIF funds, include a copy of the application. Please note: all other funds must be available for use prior to award of RIF funding.

Part VI – Participating Party Information (if applicable)

Complete a Participating Party Information Form for each entity creating or retaining jobs as a result of this project and upload them as part of the application. Participating Party Information Form available for download from www.FloridaJobs.org/RIF

Part VII – Application Authorization

The application certification statement must be signed by the applicant's chief elected official. Any other signatory must be accompanied by a letter of signature authority signed by the chief elected official.

Supporting Documentation Summary

- Communications with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), if applicable
- Interlocal Agreements, if applicable
- Letter citing regulatory action, if applicable
- Catalyst Site Map, if applicable
- Comprehensive Plan documentation
- Project Map

- Cost Estimate documentation
- Documentation of other sources of funding
- [Participating Party Information Forms](#) for each Participating Party, if applicable
- Letter of signature authority signed by chief elected official, if applicable