Monday, July 28th – Day 1

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	**Registration and Breakfast** **Jimmy Stewart Room**

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	**Plenary – Opening Remarks** **Jimmy Stewart Room** Introduction: **Dennis Stripling,** President, DDAA Speaker: **Gayle Conelly Manchin,** Federal Co-Chair, Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

9:15 AM – 10:30 AM	**Breakout Track Sessions 1**

Marketing your LDD Using Social Media: *Facilitated Roundtable*

Symphony A

In this session, attendees will learn how to effectively leverage social media platforms to promote the work and impact of their Local Development District (LDD). Participants will explore strategies for building online presence, engaging with the community, and increasing awareness of their economic development initiatives.

Instructors:

Gina Collinsworth, Public Information Coordinator, Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission

Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director, Land of Sky Regional Council

AI & the Workforce: *HR Training*

Symphony B

To what extent are employers and employees utilizing AI and managing AI integration into the HR function? This session explores how artificial intelligence is currently being applied in hiring, onboarding, training, and performance management, and examines the challenges and opportunities that come with incorporating AI tools into HR practices.

Instructor:

Andrea Hodson, Human Resources Consultant

What Makes a Project Suitable for ARC?: *About ARC*

Symphony C

This session will provide attendees with tools to identify and source ARC projects that align with regional priorities and funding opportunities. Participants will also learn key distinctions between competitive programs, area development initiatives, and how state-specific factors influence funding decisions.

Note: ARC sessions will require a laptop. Please bring a laptop with you to this session.

Instructors:

ARC Staff

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM	**Networking Break**
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	**Breakout Track Sessions 2**

Project and Grant Management, From Start to Finish: *Facilitated Roundtable*

Symphony A

This session will guide participants through the entire lifecycle of managing projects and grants, from proposal development to successful implementation. Attendees will gain practical knowledge on how to navigate the complexities of project and grant management to ensure long-term success and accountability.

Instructors:

Jill Charlton, Senior Project Manager, Appalachian Council of Governments

Michelle Hyer, Program Manager, Buckeye Hills Regional Council

Future of Work: *HR Training*

Symphony B

Who are the future workers and what will they need from employers? This session will delve into the changing demographics, expectations, and skillsets of the emerging workforce. Attendees will consider how economic shifts, evolving career pathways, and generational trends are influencing what employees value in the workplace.

Instructor:

Andrea Hodson, Human Resources Consultant

Crash Course: Complex Application Components: *About ARC*

Symphony C

Attendees will gain practical insights into breaking down project budgets by line item using ARC-approved forms to ensure compliance and transparency. The session will also cover how to define and measure project impact in alignment with ARC's performance requirements.

Note: ARC sessions will require a laptop. Please bring a laptop with you to this session.

Instructor:

ARC Staff

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	**Lunch**
	Jimmy Stewart Room

1:00 PM – 2:15 PM	**Breakout Track Sessions 3**

Advocating for Funding at the Federal and State Levels: *Facilitated Roundtable*

Symphony A

In this session, attendees will learn advocacy techniques and best practices for securing federal and state funding for their LDD projects. Participants will walk away with actionable strategies for building relationships with policymakers and effectively pitching their development needs to secure financial support.

Instructors:

Chelsea Robertson, Executive Director, Southern Tier Regional Planning and Development Board

Mirielle Burgoyne, Deputy Executive Director, National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)

Strategies for Staffing: *HR Training*

Symphony B

What recruitment practices help ensure best hire decisions to meet the staffing requirements of your team? This session focuses on practical, effective methods for identifying, attracting, and selecting candidates who align with your organization's needs.

Instructor:

Andrea Hodson, Human Resources Consultant

Overcoming Application Barriers and Project Obstacles: *About ARC*

Symphony C

This session will explore strategies for engaging critical project partners and securing matching funds or braided funding from multiple sources. Participants will also learn how to prepare accurate PERs/cost estimates to meet ARC standards.

Note: ARC sessions will require a laptop. Please bring a laptop with you to this session.

Instructors:

ARC Staff

2:15 PM – 2:45 PM	**Networking Break**
2:45 PM – 4:00 PM	**Breakout Track Sessions 4**

Artificial Intelligence, Best Practices for Public Agencies: *Facilitated Roundtable*

Symphony A

This session will introduce participants to the potential applications of artificial intelligence (AI) in public agencies, focusing on how AI can enhance operational efficiency and decision-making. Attendees will explore best practices for adopting AI technologies to streamline processes, improve service delivery, and support economic development efforts in their regions.

Instructor:

Rachel Burcin, Global Programs Manager, Carnegie Mellon University Robotics Institute

Hybrid Work Teams: *HR Training*

Symphony B

What does it take to get the work done well and effectively with others who work onsite and/or offsite? This session examines the dynamics of hybrid work environments, and the strategies HR professionals and managers can use to support productivity, communication, and collaboration across distributed teams.
Instructor:

Andrea Hodson, Human Resources Consultant

Post-Award Expectations: How to Successfully Prepare for Grant Administration and Management: *About ARC*

Symphony C

Participants will learn how LDDs can expand applicant and grantee capacity. The session will also highlight best practices for record keeping, data tracking, and tackling common audit issues to ensure compliance.

Note: ARC sessions will require a laptop. Please bring a laptop with you to this session.

Instructor:

ARC Staff

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM	**Reception**
	Lobby

Tuesday, July 29th – Day 2

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	**Breakfast** **Jimmy Stewart Room**

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	**Opening Session** **Jimmy Stewart Room** Introduction: **Dennis Stripling**, President, DDAA Speaker: **Jennifer Apicella**, Executive Director, Pittsburgh Robotics Network

9:15 AM – 10:30 AM	**Breakout Track Sessions 5**

Engaging with Public-Private Partnerships – Part 1: *Facilitated Roundtable*

Symphony A

In this first part of a two-part series, participants will explore the foundational elements of establishing and managing successful public-private partnerships (PPPs). Attendees will gain insights into how to align goals, navigate legal and financial considerations, and foster collaboration between the public and private sectors for mutual benefit.

Instructors:

Jill Foys, Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning & Development Commission

Performance Conversations: *HR Training*

Symphony B

Why and how do performance conversations keep your team on track and address performance issues? Participants will learn techniques for delivering effective feedback, setting expectations, and handling difficult conversations in a way that promotes growth and accountability.

Instructor:

Andrea Hodson, Human Resources Consultant

ARC Office Hours: *About ARC*

Symphony C

Attendees will have the opportunity to engage in informal Q&A sessions with ARC staff to clarify program guidelines or application processes. Additionally, participants will be introduced to Pathways, ARC's upcoming Grants Management System (GMS).

Note: ARC sessions will require a laptop. Please bring a laptop with you to this session.

Instructor:

ARC Staff

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM	**Networking Break**
	Jimmy Stewart Room
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	**Breakout Track Sessions 6**

Engaging with Public-Private Partnerships – Part 2: *Facilitated Roundtable*

Symphony A

Building on the first session, Part 2 will dive deeper into the practical strategies for sustaining and scaling public-private partnerships. Attendees will learn how to address challenges, manage expectations, and ensure long-term success through effective communication and ongoing relationship-building.

Instructors:

Jill Foys, Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning & Development Commission

Jennifer Lasser, Director of Workforce and Economic Development, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC)

Jim Denova, Independent Contractor, Education and Economic Development

Fringe Benefit Plans: *HR Training*

Symphony B

What's the one benefit plan that could be introduced or modified in your benefits program? This session encourages HR professionals to evaluate and enhance fringe benefits as a key component of employee retention and satisfaction.

Instructor:

Andrea Hodson, Human Resources Consultant

ARC Office Hours: *About ARC*

Symphony C

Attendees will have the opportunity to engage in informal Q&A sessions with ARC staff to clarify program guidelines or application processes. Additionally, participants will be introduced to Pathways, ARC's upcoming Grants Management System (GMS).

Note: ARC sessions will require a laptop. Please bring a laptop with you to this session.

Instructors:

ARC Staff

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	**Lunch**
	Jimmy Stewart Room
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM	**Site Visit**
	Mill 19

Home to the Catalyst Connection workforce training center, Carnegie Mellon University's Manufacturing Futures Institute (MFI), and the Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing (ARM) Institute, Mill 19 is a former steel mill turned manufacturing laboratory and collaborative workspace. This site visit offers LDDs a firsthand look at cutting-edge manufacturing innovation, workforce development initiatives, and economic revitalization efforts that can inform and inspire regional growth strategies.