

Wednesday, July 29th – Day 1

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Registration and Breakfast
Salon A/Foyer

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Plenary – Opening Remarks
Salon A/Foyer

Introduction: **Dennis Stripling**, President, DDAA
Speaker: **Erica Anderson**,
Director of Economic and Community Development
Economic and Community Development, Land of
Sky Regional Council

9:15 AM – 10:30 AM

Breakout Track Sessions 1

**How to Fund Housing and Infrastructure in your
Region: Peer Learning**

Swannanoa

This session will examine the financing mechanisms, regulatory frameworks, and planning strategies that shape housing and infrastructure development at the regional level. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how local governments, developers, and community stakeholders can coordinate projects from concept to construction.

Instructors:

Kathy Zook, Appalachian Regional Commission
Program Manager, EastGate RCG

Chasity Schmelzenbach, Executive Director,
Buckeye Hills Regional Council

Gwynn Stewart, Infrastructure and Community
Development Coordinator, Ohio Mid-Eastern
Governments Association

**Understanding the New Workplace Paradigm: HR
Training**

Alexander

This session explores how the modern workplace has evolved and why many employees are experiencing increased stress and burnout. Participants will examine historical workplace trends, research on motivation and productivity,

and the disconnect between productivity growth and employee wellbeing. The session reframes how organizations think about work and introduces a needs-based model for workplace wellness.

Instructors:

Jillian Miles Massey, Talent Development
Consultant, Horizon Point Consulting

Lorrie Coffey, Talent Management Consultant,
Horizon Point Consulting

Beginner – Project Development: *About ARC*

Victoria

This session is intended to introduce newer LDD staff to ARC investment priorities and the key elements that help define all ARC funded projects: strategic, impactful, collaborative, and sustainable. In doing so, ARC staff will provide tips, tricks, and best practices in developing partnerships, incorporating match, and identifying performance measures.

Instructors:

Jaclyn Courter, Program Analyst, ARC

Laura Snell, Regional Program Manager, ARC

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Networking Break

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM

Breakout Track Sessions 2

LDD Track: *Peer Learning*

Swannanoa

When disaster strikes, LDDs are often the ones coordinating their region's response and guiding the long recovery that follows. This session looks at how regional councils can build resilience before a crisis hits and support their communities through the rebuilding that comes after.

Instructors:

Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director, Land Of Sky
Regional Council

Survive! Meeting Existence Needs in the Workplace: *HR Training*

Alexander

This session focuses on the foundational conditions employees need simply to function well at work. Participants will explore how factors such as sleep, stress management, financial wellbeing, and safety influence engagement and performance. The discussion emphasizes how organizations can reduce demotivators and create environments where employees can sustainably meet their basic workplace needs.

Instructors:

Jillian Miles Massey, Talent Development
Consultant, Horizon Point Consulting

Lorrie Coffey, Horizon Point Consulting

Beginner – ARC’s “Build-A-Project”: *About ARC*

Victoria

This session complements and expands upon the preceding one by taking key concepts of ARC project development and applying them in an interactive, workshop-based activity session. Work alongside your peers and ARC staff to create proposal outlines that meet (or exceed!) ARC expectations while exploring new approaches to effective grant writing and different ways to address common application challenges.

Instructors:

Jaclyn Courter, Program Analyst, ARC

Laura Snell, Regional Program Manager, ARC

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Lunch

Salon A/Foyer

1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Breakout Track Sessions 3

LDD Track: *Peer Learning*

Swannanoa

Advanced manufacturing is changing how regional economies grow, and LDDs are well positioned to connect local employers with the resources that

help them stay competitive. This session looks at how development districts can plug into national networks that give manufacturers access to new technology and a skilled workforce.

Instructors:

Jennifer Woods, Industry Initiatives Manager, The Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation (IACMI)

Building the Bridge: Meeting Relational Needs in the Workplace: *HR Training*

Alexander

In this session, participants examine the importance of relationships, communication, and psychological safety in the workplace. Using research on emotional intelligence, bias, and social connection, attendees will learn strategies for building trust, strengthening collaboration, and improving team dynamics. The session highlights how meeting relational needs creates a bridge from basic wellbeing toward a thriving workplace culture.

Instructors:

Jillian Miles Massey, Talent Development Consultant, Horizon Point Consulting
Lorrie Coffey, Horizon Point Consulting

Beginner/intermediate – Best Practices for Managing your Project in Pathways: *About ARC*

Victoria

Designed for day-to-day users, this session focuses on practical tasks participants will perform in ARC's new grants management system, Pathways, including data entry, document uploads, workflow approvals, and reporting. Emphasis is placed on common user scenarios and tips for efficient system use as they primarily pertain to project management and the various roles LDDs take on in the administration of ARC projects.

Instructors:

Jaclyn Courter, Program Analyst, ARC
Laura Snell, Regional Program Manager, ARC

2:25 PM – 2:45 PM

Networking Break

2:45 PM – 4:00 PM

Breakout Track Sessions 4

Artificial Intelligence: Effective Uses in your LDD:

Peer Learning

Swannanoa

In this session, attendees will learn best practices for AI use in Local Development Districts including how to automate workflows, support research efforts, and augment marketing campaigns. Learn how AI can help improve productivity while gaining insights into the limitations of these new tools.

Instructor:

Robert Hiatt, Executive Director, Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments

Thrive! Meeting Growth Needs in the Workplace:

HR Training

Alexander

This session focuses on how organizations can empower employees to grow and perform at their best. Participants will explore topics such as autonomy, flexibility, time management, and meaningful work. By addressing higher-order needs, organizations can unlock motivation, innovation, and long-term engagement.

Instructors:

Jillian Miles Massey, Talent Development Consultant, Horizon Point Consulting
Lorrie Coffey, Horizon Point Consulting

Intermediate – Build America, Buy America

(BABA): About ARC

Victoria

This session will give attendees a clear and practical overview of Build America, Buy America (BABA) requirements for ARC grants. It will cover common challenges and useful strategies, such as tracking supply chains, handling waivers for cost or

availability, and following ARC guidance. Session presenters will explain new ARC processes to address challenges and implementation issues and will also explore BABA compliance with ARC funding vs other federal funding sources. The goal is to help participants understand the basics and gain useful insights for meeting requirements and managing projects effectively.

Instructor:

Frederick Pfaeffle, President and CEO, EPS LLC,
Energy Partners Solutions

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Reception at Pack's Tavern

20 S Spruce St, Asheville, NC 28801

Located in Downtown Asheville's Pack Square Park, the historic Hayes and Hopson Building has stood since 1907, originally built by a local lumber supply company. As demand grew, an additional structure was added in 1912—now home to the main restaurant and bar of Pack's Tavern.

Thursday, July 30th – Day 2

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Registration and Breakfast
Salon A/Foyer

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Plenary – Opening Remarks
Salon A/Foyer

Introduction: **Dennis Stripling**, President, DDAA
Speaker: **Brandon McBride**, Executive Director, Appalachian
Regional Commission

9:15 AM – 10:30 AM

Breakout Track Sessions 5

Financial Resilience and Sustainability: *Peer Learning*
Swannanoa

This session will cover the budgeting tools, revenue strategies, and fiscal planning approaches that local development districts use to maintain long-term financial health. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how to assess financial risk, diversify funding sources, and build reserves that can sustain operations through economic disruption.

Instructor:
Steve Pelissier, Executive Director, South Carolina
Appalachian Council of Governments

The Design Thinking Process: *HR Training*
Alexander

This interactive session introduces design thinking as a tool for solving workplace challenges and improving organizational culture. Participants will learn how to empathize with employees, define problems, generate ideas, and test solutions. The session demonstrates how a structured innovation process can lead to more effective and human-centered workplace strategies.

Instructors:
Jillian Miles Massey, Talent Development Consultant,
Horizon Point Consulting
Lorrie Coffey, Horizon Point Consulting

Intermediate/Advanced – Financial Management: *About*
ARC

Victoria

ARC will delve into best practices for managing finances and maintaining compliance throughout the duration of an award. Learn from ARC staff on how to approach overseeing grant budgets and financial reporting including tracking expenditures against approved budget categories, preparing and maintaining required documentation, and supporting audits.

Instructor:

Michelle Minter, Senior Financial Manager, CORPORATE
F.A.C.T.S.

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Networking Break

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM

Breakout Track Sessions 6

Navigating the Changing Federal Landscape: *Peer Learning*

Swannanoa

This panel will bring together executive directors from regional development districts across the country to share how their organizations are adapting to shifts in federal policy, funding, and program priorities. Moderated by Chelsea Robertson, attendees will hear directly from peers navigating similar challenges and leave with strategies they can apply in their own regions.

Instructors:

Chelsea Robertson, Executive Director, Southern Tier
Central Regional Planning & Development Board

Danna Stansbury, Executive Director, Foothills Regional
Commission

Dennis Stripling, Executive Director, West Alabama
Regional Commission

Mike Matthews, Director of Government Relations, National
Association of Development Districts (NADO)

Capstone Project: Innovate Your Workplace: *HR Training*

Alexander

In this culminating session, participants apply the concepts learned throughout the seminar to develop innovative solutions for their own organizations. Using the design thinking framework, attendees will collaborate to identify

challenges, prototype ideas, and test potential workplace improvements. The session equips participants with practical strategies they can take back and implement in their workplaces.

Instructors:

Jillian Miles Massey, Talent Development Consultant,
Horizon Point Consulting

Lorrie Coffey, Horizon Point Consulting

Advanced – Understanding and Implementing Federal Requirements 2CFR200: About ARC

Victoria

Designed for staff who work directly with ARC grants, this interactive workshop translates federal compliance regulations into real-world practices. Participants will review common compliance scenarios, discuss frequent audit findings, and learn practical tips for staying compliant while managing day-to-day grant activities.

Instructor:

Katie Bernstine, Assistant General Counsel, ARC

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Lunch

Salon A/Foyer

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

GE Aviation Site Visit

401 Sweeten Creek Industrial Park Rd, Asheville, NC 28803

Participants will tour GE Aerospace's Asheville campus, an advanced manufacturing facility producing aerospace components for helicopter engines and fighter jets. Hosted by site leadership, the visit will include a facility overview followed by a guided shop floor tour, with participants divided into small groups to accommodate the production environment. The visit will last approximately two hours. Please note that attendance restrictions apply due to the presence of sensitive defense technology and military hardware on site.
