

**Request for Proposal (RFP)**  
**Vocational Initiative for Thriving Appalachian Leadership (VITAL)**  
**Lead Project Consultant**  
**Issued by: Fahe**

**Proposal Due Date: October 1, 2024 at 12:00PM (EST)**

**Introduction:**

Fahe, a non-profit organization dedicated to building the American Dream in Appalachia, is seeking a qualified lead project consultant to assist with the Vocational Initiative for Thriving Appalachian Leadership (VITAL) planning project. This initiative, working with six of our Member organizations and other key stakeholders, aims to develop a comprehensive plan to enhance leadership and workforce development across Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

**Project Overview:**

The VITAL planning project, funded by an ARC ARISE planning grant, will leverage the expertise within Fahe's Network and beyond to create a multifaceted, multi-state plan. This plan will address the challenges of attracting and retaining local leaders, developing a strong workforce, and resolving the region's housing crisis. Key activities include regular convenings, listening sessions, creation of individual partner reports, workplans and workbooks, place-based training, and comprehensive reporting. This project is funded through an Appalachian Regional Commission ARISE federal grant award.

The Planning Process will result in a strategy to expand affordable housing by enhancing workforce development and leadership capacity in central Appalachia. The consultant will coordinate meetings with Fahe Members and partners, assess current models, and identify best practices for scalable implementation. They will develop a work plan that fosters collaboration across Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, and draft a final report outlining actionable steps to create career pathways, build leadership pipelines, and strengthen the regional workforce for affordable housing development.

## The scope of work for this project will include:

1. **Organize and Facilitate Regular Convenings:**
  - Explore the workforce development processes of Members that have proved to be successful for a written report on each Member's initiative.
  - Coordinate and lead regular meetings with Fahe Members and partners.
  - Ensure that convenings are productive and aligned with project objectives around workforce development.
2. **Create Training Materials**
  - Develop comprehensive training materials tailored to support leadership development, workforce expansion, and capacity building, incorporating best practices and successful models from Fahe Members and partners.
3. **Coordinate Place-based Training Sessions**
  - The consultant(s) will coordinate and facilitate two place-based training sessions in collaboration with Fahe staff.
4. **Conduct Listening Sessions:**
  - Plan and facilitate listening sessions to gather input from diverse stakeholders across the region related to workforce development practices and the processes of the participants.
  - Document insights and feedback from these sessions to inform the planning process.
5. **Create Final Workplan:**
  - Work with the Fahe Members, staff, and other partners to develop detailed, comprehensive final workplans for Fahe Member participants.
  - Assist in creating workbooks and other training materials for place-based training sessions.
  - Final Report to include replication and implementation of workforce development initiatives.
6. **Support Reporting and Documentation:**
  - Contribute to the compilation of individualized organizational reports and the final comprehensive report.
  - Ensure all sessions and meetings are well-documented and that key insights are captured.
  - Provide grant administrators with quarterly narrative summaries of progress on project as requested

## **Project Timeline:**

### Procurement and Selection:

**September 1 – October 15:** Fahe will outreach to consultants with RFP, receive proposals, conduct evaluation for Consultant Selection and upon selection and acceptance, initiate onboarding process.

**October 1-31, 2024:** Fahe will conduct interviews with consultant candidates and select the final consultant. After acceptance, the contracting process will be completed, and the onboarding process will be initiated. Introduction to the Fahe Members participating and coordination of initial meetings with Members and other project partners to confirm their continued involvement will inform the timeline for next steps.

### Project Kickoff and Design

**November 1-10, 2024:** Organize and conduct a kickoff meeting with the consultant, Fahe staff, Members, and other partners to set expectations, outline the project timeline, and gather input on key design needs.

### Tool and Material Design:

**November 11 - December 31, 2024:** Consultant leads the design of tools and materials for the planning process, with input and confirmation from Fahe staff and facilitators from the Region. Consultant will conduct Listening Sessions and Research (January 1 - March 31, 2025)

### Information Gathering, SWOT Analysis and Workplan Drafting:

**January 1-31, 2025 – February 28, 2025:** Conduct information-gathering sessions with Fahe Members and partners. Consultant will gather any additional research and information needed to supplement the workplans.

**March 1-31, 2025:** Consultant conducts SWOT analysis and other research methodologies and creates the first draft of the final workplans and deliverables for review by Fahe and participating Members.

**April 1 - May 31, 2025 -** Finalizing Workplans and Individualized Organization Plans

### Draft Review and Feedback:

**April 1-30, 2025:** Develop and review draft workplans with Fahe staff and selected Members. Select and coordinate place-based training opportunity for Fahe Members and partners adjacent to planned Member Spring Retreat.

**May 1-31, 2025:** Incorporate feedback and finalize the overall workplan.

### Create Individualized Plans:

**June 1 - July 31, 2025:** Consultant creates tangible workbooks/products based on workplan findings. The consultant will select and coordinate place-based training for Fahe Membership and partners using the developed materials. Consultant collaborates with Fahe staff and Member participants to identify and plan future steps for expanding workforce capacity and implementing recommendations.

**Ongoing:** Conduct research on additional funding sources and programs beneficial for implementing workplan recommendations. Provide program administrators with quarterly narrative summaries of progress on project as requested.

### **Qualifications:**

- Proven experience in facilitation, particularly in community development or non-profit sectors.
- Experience researching, creating, and delivering workplans, resources, and training materials
- Ability to organize and synthesize key takeaways from large discussions
- Comfort with remote and/or cloud-based working tools including Zoom, AI notetakers, Google Workspace, Microsoft SharePoint, etc.
- Experience with federal grant requirements, reporting, and project management
- Strong background in leadership development, workforce training, and/or non-profit housing organizations.
- Excellent communication and organizational skills.
- Ability to work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders.
- Familiarity with the Appalachian region and its unique challenges and opportunities.
- Relevant experience in the Appalachian region and/or rural and economically distressed communities and adequate availability to complete the project scope.

## Proposal Requirements:

Interested facilitators should submit a proposal that includes:

1. **Cover Letter:**
  - Introduction to the Consultant and their relevant experience.
2. **Approach and Methodology:**
  - Detailed description of how the Consultant plans to approach the convenings and listening sessions.
3. **Relevant Experience:**
  - Examples of similar facilitation work completed, including outcomes and client references.
4. **Team Composition:**
  - Bios and/or resumes of the consultant and any team members who will be involved in the project.
5. **Budget:**
  - Detailed budget proposal, including hourly rates and estimated total contribution costs. Please note that travel, lodging, and costs associated with the two place-based trainings will be financed via a federally funded program; procured contract costs are capped according to the approved budget.
6. **Timeline:**
  - Proposed timeline for completing consulting work, including key milestones and projections. All services must be completed by July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. Please note the timeline provided in this RFP.

## Submission Details:

Please submit your full proposal via email to [traviss@fahe.org](mailto:traviss@fahe.org) by October 1, 2024. When submitting, please use the subject line "Fahe ARISE RFP". Proposals should be submitted as a PDF document, using 12-point font, with standard 1-inch margins. Fahe will confirm submissions are received and respond promptly with a timeline for review and final selection.

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

Proposals will be evaluated on a comprehensive 100-point scale based on the following criteria:

- Relevant experience and qualifications. (30 points)
- Understanding of the project scope and objectives. (20 points)
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed approach. (30 point)
- Cost-effectiveness of the proposal. (10 points)
- References and past performance. (10 points)

### **Contact Information:**

For any questions or further information, please contact Travis Witt at [traviss@fahe.org](mailto:traviss@fahe.org) or 859-288-2126.

### **Conclusion:**

Fahe looks forward to collaborating with a consultant who shares our commitment to fostering resilient and thriving communities in Appalachia. Your expertise will be invaluable in helping us gather the insights needed to develop an analysis of workforce systems with a plan for replicating proven workforce development initiatives that addresses the region's most pressing challenges and creates lasting positive impact. Consultant will deliver proposed future steps for expanding workforce capacity and implementing recommendations.

## **Meet Our Partners**

- **Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises — Kentucky**
  - As a purpose-oriented Network of 50+ diverse community-based nonprofits serving the Appalachian states of KY, TN, VA, WV, MD, and AL, Fahe has cultivated the deepest-reaching platform to connect investment to boots-on-the-ground leadership throughout one of the most difficult places to serve in the country. Each of Fahe's Members are staffed by local leaders who understand the need and local capacity of their communities. As Fahe is Member-owned and -governed, when the needs of Members and their communities change, so do Fahe's strategies and priorities. While Fahe is located in and directly serves the Appalachian region, it also focus on advocacy and systems change on a national stage to increase the level of investment in the nations' most underserved communities.
  
- **HOMES, Inc.—Kentucky**
  - HOMES, Inc. has been in existence since 1984 as the Whitesburg Home Repair Program (a home repair service program operated by the Mennonite Central Committee) and East Kentucky Housing Development Corporation (an affordable housing corporation in existence since 1967) merged to provide affordable housing to low-income families in Letcher County, Kentucky, and surrounding counties that have significant needs.
  
- **Housing Development Alliance (HDA)—Kentucky**
  - The idea that became the Housing Development Alliance began in the minds of a group of devout eastern Kentucky women on a mission to help their community. With the help of a grant, they started a local food bank and formed an organization called Hazard-Perry County Community Ministries. In 1994 Scott McReynolds was hired as HDA's Executive Director, and since then, HDA has grown into a multi-faceted and highly respected nonprofit organization. Driven by a strong desire to improve our community, HDA has met the housing needs of over 2,900 people, while providing a much-needed economic boost to the local economy.

- **Hazard Community and Technical College- Kentucky**
  - Hazard Community and Technical College empowers students by providing equitable educational opportunities that lead to student success, rewarding careers, and community enhancement, inspiring hope and transforming lives through progressive educational opportunities. Hazard Community and Technical College is a member of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System serving the needs of Southeastern Kentucky.
  
- **Appalachia Service Project (ASP)—Tennessee**
  - ASP provides one of the most rewarding structured service opportunities in the nation — bringing thousands of volunteers from around the country to rural Central Appalachia to repair homes for low-income families. Since 1969, ASP have made homes warmer, safer, and drier for families and provided transformational service experiences for volunteers. Each year, more than 15,000 volunteers serve with ASP, providing critical repairs for more than 350 families.
  
- **Mountain T.O.P.—Tennessee**
  - Mountain T.O.P provides direct services and organizational support to address severe housing issues in Tennessee. Since inception, Mountain T.O.P. has been driven by the core belief that everyone should have a safe, healthy, decent home. From building entry steps and wheelchair ramps to replacing roofs and re-wiring homes, Mountain T.O.P. is alleviating, with the hope of eliminating substandard housing in seven counties. Since 1975, Mountain T.O.P. has thrived as a strategic community partner, and focuses on reducing substandard housing, supporting lifelong learning and leadership, and promoting overall wellness.
  
- **Knoxville Leadership Foundation (KLF) — Tennessee**
  - Knoxville Leadership Foundation is a charter member of the Leadership Foundations (LF) Global Network which impacts 42 cities around the world. KLF were instrumental in the establishment and development of Leadership Foundations 20 years ago. KLF has been connecting the greatest needs in our city with the resources necessary to see people and communities thrive for over twenty-five years.



- **Open Door Community (formally HOPE, Inc.)—Virginia**
  - Helping Overcome Poverty’s Existence, Inc. (HOPE) was incorporated in 1993 with a primary mission of fulfilling the challenge of its name – to reduce the conditions contributing to poverty in southwest Virginia. Mountain Shelter, Inc. (MSI) was incorporated in 1992 with a primary mission of enabling lower income and disadvantaged families to achieve solutions for sustaining affordable housing. In July 2007, HOPE and MSI merged into one entity and maintained the name HOPE, Inc. A vision to bring about new and creative delivery of services was adopted resulting in a bigger impact on clients and local communities. Open Door Community breaks generational poverty through enhanced food security and housing affordability
  
- **New River/ Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (WDB) —Virginia**
  - The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (WDB) is made up of representatives from regional employers, education, organized labor, community-based organizations, economic development and federally required One-Stop Partners. The WDB also acts as a coordinator/convener for the region’s workforce system to interface with economic development and the business community. The board was formed to facilitate and coordinate workforce initiatives, enabling economic growth and increasing the standard of living of the citizens that reside in ten counties and three cities in Southwest Virginia. NRMWDB seeks to Promote an educated, skilled, technologically competent and adaptable workforce to better serve our communities and future generations.
  
- **Coalfield Development—West Virginia**
  - Coalfield Development seeks to reinforce resilient rural communities with socially, environmentally, and financially thriving economies which create community conditions for all kinds of people to unlock their full potential. This is accomplished by facilitating personal, professional, and academic growth for people facing barriers to employment. Coalfield Development believes in developing the potential of Appalachia through the triple bottom line: people, planet, and profit, rebuilding the Appalachian economy from the ground up and setting the foundation for a stronger, more resilient Appalachia.

- **West Virginia Community Hub (The Hub) —West Virginia**
  - In 2009, The Hub was founded by a small group of passionate, committed community development leaders who saw an opportunity to establish a new, innovative approach to catalyze community growth and transformational change in rural areas of West Virginia. Today, the West Virginia Community Development Hub supports West Virginians with the tools and training they need to lead and spark positive change in their hometowns and across the state. The Hub approach is twofold; Coach volunteer community leadership teams to build sustained development in rural communities and grow the overall community economic development system in West Virginia through collaborative partnerships.
- **West Virginia Women Work – West Virginia**
  - Founded in 2000, West Virginia Women Work strives to help women explore, train, and secure employment in nontraditional occupations, especially the skilled trades. WVWW provides a wide range of technical assistance services for apprenticeship programs, employers, and training providers. WVWW technical assistance includes Best Practices Trainings, diversity recruitment & retention services, and customized workplace training. West Virginia Women Work help organizations create a work environment that promotes inclusion and respect through building authentic partnerships and creating inclusive communities.