



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Entrepreneur in Residence

About Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR)

Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing Eastern Kentucky by promoting economic development, improving quality of life, and creating opportunities for residents. Through partnerships with public and private entities, SOAR leverages regional assets to drive innovation, investment, and sustainable growth. Our mission is to empower communities to transform the economy of Appalachia, creating a vibrant and resilient region.

SOAR Innovation, an initiative within SOAR, supports and nurtures regional entrepreneurs and small businesses through a partnership with the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development's Office of KY Innovation. Together, they work to drive entrepreneurship in Eastern Kentucky, helping businesses grow and scale through targeted resources, mentorship, and access to capital. This collaboration connects startups with the resources necessary to thrive, laying the groundwork for a self-sustaining entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Appalachian region.

Role Overview

An Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR) is a specialized, temporary role, typically held by an experienced entrepreneur, to support SOAR's mission by identifying new market opportunities and fostering the growth of startups. The EIR plays a vital role in building connections, providing mentorship, and guiding startups through essential early-stage challenges such as funding preparation and business scalability. For SOAR and Eastern Kentucky, the EIR will focus on building a foundation for economic growth by promoting innovation, researching market trends, and helping commercialize new ideas.

Key Benefits of the Entrepreneur in Residence Role

The EIR addresses critical barriers that SOAR Innovation clients face, especially access to capital and funding. Through their experience and network, the EIR will:

- **Prepare Startups for Funding:** Assist startups in becoming investor-ready through pitch preparation, business model refinement, and financial planning.

- **Facilitate Access to Capital:** Use established networks to connect startups with investors, grants, and other funding opportunities.
- **Identify Market Opportunities:** Research and evaluate market gaps that align with the region's strengths and SOAR's economic priorities.

Long-Term Goals Supported by the EIR Role

This role is central to achieving SOAR's long-term vision for Eastern Kentucky by:

- Preparing for the region's first \$100 million exit by 2035
- Attracting private venture capital investment
- Supporting the Southeast Kentucky Angel Fund's goal to close a \$1 million fundraising round
- Helping local college students launch high-growth startups

Qualifications

Ideal candidates for the EIR role will have a demonstrated track record of entrepreneurship, fundraising, and startup growth, as well as experience in guiding startups through the early stages of development. Candidates should possess a strong network within the venture capital and funding communities, strategic insight into market identification, and an understanding of economic challenges and opportunities unique to Eastern Kentucky.

Application Instructions

Qualified individuals or entities are invited to submit the following:

1. **Resume/CV:** Detailing relevant entrepreneurial experience, particularly in similar roles supporting early-stage companies.
2. **Statement of Interest:** Explaining your vision for the EIR role in supporting SOAR's mission and fostering growth in the Appalachian region.
3. **References:** Contact information for three professional references familiar with your entrepreneurial background and experience in a mentorship or leadership role.

Submissions are due by Friday, December 6 and all materials should be sent to Joshua Ball, Chief Operating Officer, at joshua@soar-ky.org.

For questions or more information, please reach out to:

Sabrina McWhorter
Director of Business and Innovation
Shaping Our Appalachian Region
sabrina@soar-ky.org
(606) 939-1707