

Module 2 – Before You Apply For an EDA Grant

Slide 1: Welcome

- Hello, and welcome to this presentation on steps to take before you apply for an EDA grant.
- In this presentation we will discuss several things that you will want to consider to better evaluate if your project is a good candidate for EDA funding.
- We will also discuss the role of EDA’s Economic Development Representatives and Economic Development Districts in developing applications.

Slide 2-3: Where do I Start?

- If you are new to EDA’s programs, we recommend that you visit our website at www.eda.gov. EDA’s website has detailed information about many of the topics mentioned in this presentation that may be helpful to you.
- If you are considering EDA funding for your project, a great place to start is by reviewing the Notice of Funding Opportunity, or NOFO.
- You can search for EDA NOFOs on Grants.gov, or you can visit EDA’s website, eda.gov/funding-opportunities.
- EDA provides separate NOFOs for different grant programs. Each NOFO provides information on the EDA program, including:
 - Types of projects EDA intends to fund,
 - What types of applicants are eligible,
 - How much cost sharing is required, and
 - The timeline to apply.
- Applicants are encouraged to read through the entire NOFO as early as possible to learn the goals of the program and to know what is required for a complete and competitive application.

Slide 4-5: Economic Development Representatives

- Once you have had a chance to read through the NOFO, we recommend that you reach out to the EDA Economic Development Representative, or EDR, that covers your region. Economic Development Representatives are field-based EDA staff that provide information on EDA programs, walk applicants through forms and requirements if needed, and provide feedback and technical assistance on potential projects. They work closely with communities and stakeholders throughout their region and are plugged-in to economic development considerations and needs specific to the region. EDRs have relationships with federal, state, and local stakeholders that can be leveraged to support communities.
- Reach out to your EDR early in the process so that they can help determine whether your project could be a fit for EDA funding, and which EDA program might be most appropriate.

- You may find contact information for your regional Economic Development Representative in the NOFO document, or by visiting <https://www.eda.gov/contact/>.

Slide 6: Economic Development Districts

- EDA works with local communities in part through its partnership with Economic Development Districts, or EDDs: organizations that provide planning, technical assistance, and other support for regionally-based economic development initiatives. The governing body of each EDD must be broadly representative of the principal economic interest of the region and is typically comprised of representatives of local government (for example, municipalities and counties), private companies, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, regional nonprofits, economic development organizations, and other key stakeholders appropriate to the region.
- EDDs build relationships with economic development leaders and serve as the “eyes and ears on the ground” for EDA, providing EDA with insight into regional economic development priorities and helping applicants identify projects that may be a good fit for EDA funding.
- While not every region has an EDA-funded Economic Development District, where there is a local EDD applicants are encouraged to reach out and develop a relationship so that they may take advantage of the advice and technical assistance that EDDs may provide.
- One primary role of EDDs is to develop and maintain a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, or CEDS. A CEDS is a plan for regional economic development designed to build capacity and guide economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region. We strongly encourage applicants to contact their local EDD and get a copy of the most recent CEDS to ensure that their project is consistent with the CEDS. To find your Economic Development District, please visit <https://eda.gov/resources/directory/>
- If there is not an EDA-funded Economic Development District in your area, reach out to your EDR.

Slide 7-8: Eligibility

- Before beginning an application, you should ensure that both your organization and your project are eligible for EDA funding.
- With respect to applicant type, eligible applicants are listed in each NOFO. Please note that this list may differ depending on the specific NOFO – for example, only Tribes and nonprofits serving specific indigenous communities are eligible under EDA’s Indigenous Communities NOFO. If you are unsure whether your organization qualifies as eligible for funding under a NOFO please contact your EDR.
- Under the American Rescue Plan Act NOFOs, EDA cannot award grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or for-profit entities.

- With respect to project-specific eligibility requirements, projects must also be eligible due to economic distress. Under EDA’s regular programs this is defined as high unemployment, low per capita income, or other defined Special Need. For NOFOs associated with the American Rescue Plan Act, economic injury from the coronavirus pandemic constitutes a “Special Need,” and eligibility may be established on that basis.
- Under EDA’s American Rescue Plan Act programs, “projects that address the impacts of the economic injury by creating or retaining jobs or increasing the economic diversity or resiliency of a region” are eligible for funding. For example, an infrastructure project that creates new jobs in a region is responsive to the requirement that the funds be spent to respond to “economic injury as a result of coronavirus.” In other words, this means that applicants for American Rescue Plan Act funding do not have to provide any specific economic distress data for their region. If a project will create new jobs in the region or increase the economic diversity or resiliency of the region, EDA has determined that the project addresses the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Slide 9-10: Economic Development Impact/Ineligible Projects

- Applicants should be able to demonstrate the economic impacts to their region that will result from completing their project. The impacts may vary depending on the nature of the project, but should generally help create jobs, increase capacity for economic development, foster business expansion, attract private investment, and/or facilitate resilience to future economic disasters.
- EDA does not support any investment relating to community development activities, such as swimming pools, zoos, casino or other gaming establishments, projects that support general governmental or public safety functions, and golf courses. While these may be important amenities or projects in some communities, they are not eligible for EDA funding.
- If you are unsure whether your project is considered economic development or community development, please contact your EDR.

Slide 11: Matching Funds

- Typically, EDA NOFOs require applicants to provide matching funds that can be used for project activities to share the cost between EDA and the applicant.
- Each NOFO will specify the percentage of the project budget that must consist of matching funds. You will need to ensure that the amount of matching funds for your project is consistent with the NOFO under which you are applying.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to start the process of locating suitable matching funds as soon as possible, as this process may take time. The matching share can be either in cash or in-kind. EDRs should be engaged early in the process so that they can help you to determine whether your matching funds are eligible for use in an EDA project, and that you have a sufficient amount of matching funds given the total cost of your project.

Slide 12: Investment Priorities

- Proposed projects must address at least one of EDA's current investment priorities. These are referenced in the NOFO and can be found on EDA's website.
- Current EDA investment priorities are: Equity, Recovery and Resilience, Workforce Development, Manufacturing, Technology-Based Economic Development, Environmentally-Sustainable Development, and Exports and Foreign Direct Investment.
- Investment priorities are one of several criteria EDA uses to select projects, so if your project does not seem to fit within a current Investment Priority or respond to the NOFO's goals, then your application is probably not competitive.

Slide 13: Conclusion

- This concludes our presentation on what to consider before applying for EDA funding. We hope that this presentation was helpful.
- For additional information, please reach out to your EDR. Thank you for viewing this presentation, and for your interest in EDA.