Frequently Asked Questions About the FY 2020 Scaling Pandemic Resilience through Innovation and Technology (SPRINT) Challenge

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1. Introduction

a. What is the SPRINT Challenge?

EDA's Scaling Pandemic Resilience Through Innovation and Technology (SPRINT) Challenge is a $25 million national competition that aims to enable regional innovation economies to rapidly address the economic, health, and safety risks caused by the coronavirus pandemic through entrepreneurship and innovation. This program is managed by the Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE) at EDA. OIE strongly encourages potential applicants to review the SPRINT Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and the SPRINT Challenge website at http://eda.gov/oie/sprint.

b. How is the SPRINT Challenge different from other competitions administered by OIE?

The SPRINT Challenge focuses exclusively on the entrepreneurship support communities and regions need to grow innovative, technology-driven businesses that will help respond to the economic, health, and safety risks created by the coronavirus pandemic. For information on EDA's other recovery assistance under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, including the CARES Act Recovery Assistance Addendum to EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance NOFO, please see EDA's website at https://eda.gov/coronavirus/.

c. What statutes and policy requirements impact these awards?

The statutory authority for the SPRINT Challenge is section 209 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (PWEDA), 42 U.S.C. § 3149, which governs EDA's Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program. Applicant eligibility and other requirements for EDA programs are set forth in EDA's regulations at 13 CFR chapter III; specific requirements for the EAA program are at 13 CFR part 307.

Note that the SPRINT Challenge statutory authority is different from other OIE programs, including the Build to Scale program, which is governed by section 27 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980, 15 U.S.C. § 3722, and EDA regulations at 13 CFR part 312. Features of the SPRINT Challenge that differ from other OIE programs include required alignment with a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or similar planning document, higher maximum grant-to-match ratio, and different eligible entity types. See, for example, question 6 related to compliance with the CEDS requirement.

SPRINT Challenge award recipients must comply with applicable requirements of all other federal laws, executive orders, regulations and policies governing this program. These include but are not limited to laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, religion, or sex.

2. Project Suitability

a. What type of activities are allowable?

The SPRINT Challenge is a nationwide competitive financial assistance program designed to support the implementation of projects aligned with the objectives of the SPRINT Challenge NOFO. Subject to the availability of funds, EDA may make awards to eligible applicants to fund eligible projects. Proposed projects should support entrepreneurship and accelerate innovation in their community, region, or combination of regions to address the economic, health, and safety risks caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Funds available under the SPRINT Challenge may not be used for construction purposes (except in limited circumstances related to equipment installation, as approved by EDA) or revolving loan funds. Such uses of funds may not be charged to the EDA funds of the project or provided as matching share.

b. What is the maximum request amount for each corresponding period of performance under the SPRINT Challenge?

Applicants may request up to $500,000 for a 12-month period of performance, or up to $750,000 for an 18-month period of performance.

3. Applicant Eligibility

a. Which types of entities are eligible to apply for funding?

Eligible entity types include:

- District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District;
- Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes;
- State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions;
- Institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or
- Public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.[1]

*Please see Sections D.2.a.iv (p.16) and D.2.b (p.16) of the NOFO for supplemental application requirements for non-profit entities.

b. Are individuals, small businesses, or other for-profit entities eligible to apply?

EDA is not authorized to provide direct financial assistance to individuals, small businesses, or for-profit entities under the SPRINT Challenge. Applications from such entities will not be considered for funding.

[1] See section 3 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122) and 13 CFR § 300.3.

c. Will active and/or previous grants that the federal government awarded my organization affect my organization's eligibility for the SPRINT Challenge?

Unsatisfactory performance under prior federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding.

Applicants that are current recipients of EDA awards and/or CARES Act funding are generally eligible to apply for funding under the SPRINT Challenge. Proposed project activities and outcomes from prior EDA awards and CARES Act funding must be distinct and separate from the project submitted for the SPRINT Challenge. Put differently, awards made under the SPRINT Challenge cannot fund project costs that are charged to other federal funding.

4. Co-Applicants and Sub-Awarding

a. If co-applicants are allowed to submit a SPRINT Challenge application, what are the additional requirements?

In projects where entities have shared decision-making capacity and accountability for carrying out the financial, project management, and performance aspects of the proposal, then co-application may be an option.

Co-applicant organizations must each be eligible entities, as described in Question 3(a) of this document. Please review the FY 2020 SPRINT Challenge Application Checklist listed in Appendix A of this document and here for entity-specific guidance for required submissions.

For further assistance on determining co-applicant eligibility, please reach out to OIE at oie@eda.gov.

b. What differentiates a contractor from a co-applicant?

Co-applicants jointly perform the scope of work of an award. In contrast, contractors provide goods and services for the applicant's use in performing the scope of work of an award. For more information on determining whether a third-party is a contractor, see 2 CFR § 200.330 (Subrecipient and contractor determinations).

Contracts must be procured in accordance with the procurement standards at 2 CFR §§ 200.317-326 of the Uniform Guidance (discussed further below in Question 8a).

c. What differentiates a sub-awardee from a co-applicant?

Co-applicants jointly perform the scope of work of an award. In contrast, sub-awardees carry out a portion of project activities on behalf of the applicant. For more information on determining whether a third-party is a sub-awardee, see 2 CFR § 200.330 (Subrecipient and contractor determinations).

d. Can I include sub-awardees into my application?

Yes. Sub-awardees may be included in the scope of work and budget. For more information on the requirements for sub-awarding, see 2 CFR § 200.331 (Requirements for pass-through

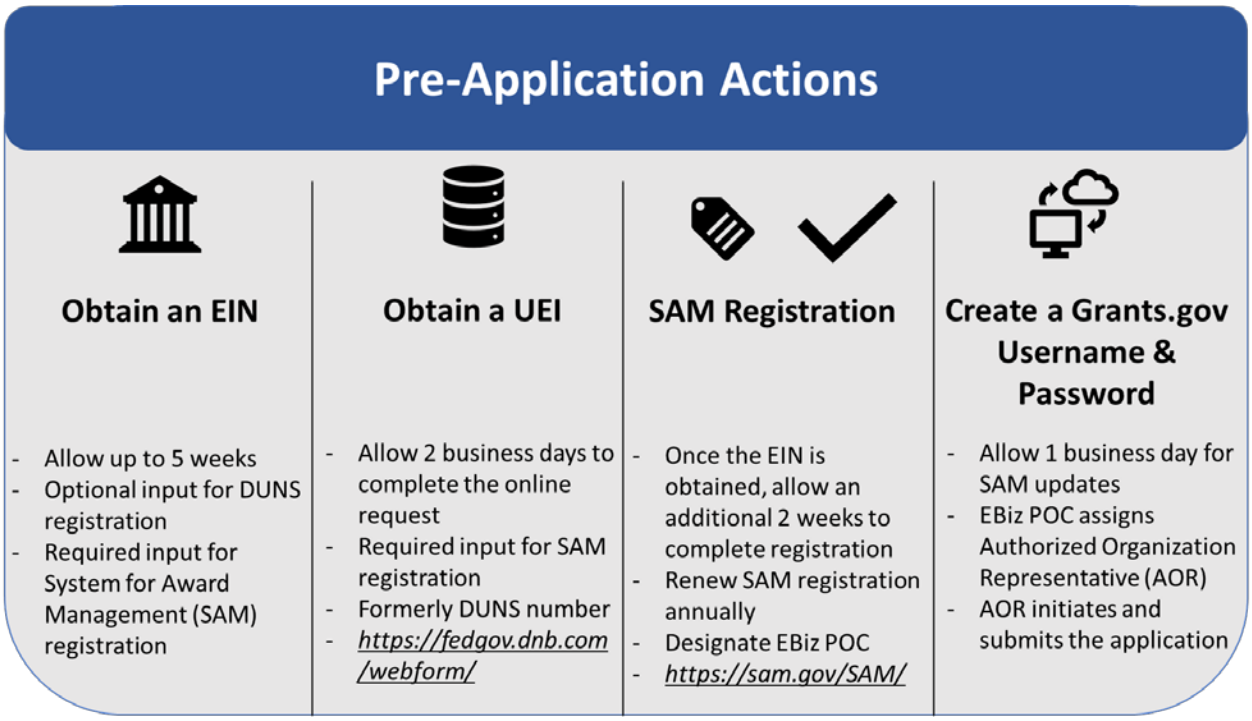
entities). The following table further explains the various roles and obligations of co-applicants, sub-awardees, and contractors.

Table 1: Roles and obligations of co-applicants, sub-awardees, and contractors

	Co-Applicant	Sub-Awardee	Contractor
Needs to complete a full application	✓	✗	✗
May be eligible to receive award disbursements directly from EDA	✓	✗	✗
Must be an eligible entity as described in Question 3(a) of this document	✓	✓	✗
Performs all or a portion of project activities and generally has responsibility for program implementation	✓	✓	✗
Costs incurred may be attributed to the award (as consistent with the award, including the scope of work)	✓	✓	✓

5. Application Submission Guidance

a. What guidance does OIE offer applicants who have not yet formed an organization and/or completed the requirements necessary to complete and submit an application on Grants.gov?



Grants.gov allows for registered organizations to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) to submit the application on Grants.gov. This person will be listed on the application as the primary respondent to inquiries from OIE program staff.

Applying organizations are responsible for maintaining the credentials necessary to designate an AOR. The ability to assign the AOR role in Grants.gov is contingent on credentials that are assigned within SAM.gov. Active SAM registration is required at the time of application and throughout the performance period because non-federal entities are required to have a unique entity identifier (also referred to as a Data University Numbering System or DUNS number) that used to apply for, receive, and report on federal awards.

The technical requirements and systems associated with generating these credentials require confirmation at each step and can be lengthy—especially for organizations without an EIN—and require interaction with multiple organizations outside of EDA. EDA strongly encourages applicants in the process of forming or have formed but are not yet registered on Grants.gov, to do so as soon as possible.

Specific instructions for application submission via Grants.gov are outlined in Section I of the NOFO, p. 28. For technical support on navigating Grants.gov, consult the Grants.gov Frequently Asked Questions Portal, Applicant Training Videos, and/or contact Grants.gov support at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

b. What if I have issues submitting my application on Grants.gov?

EDA strongly encourages applicants to submit applications early and not wait until the application deadline. A high volume of application submissions at once can create system delays.

Complete SPRINT Challenge applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov on or before the deadline of **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, December, 3, 2020** for competition consideration. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding. Please save and print written proof of the submission made at Grants.gov, as a best practice.

Prior to requesting to submit the application via paper, facsimile, and/or email transmissions, please determine whether the request meets rare situations described in Section I.5, p. 31 of the NOFO wherein the EDA would accept an application in an alternate format.

c. Are applicants limited to submitting one application?

The SPRINT Challenge is designed to enhance entrepreneurship and innovation nationwide, making multiple applications from a single applicant unlikely to be competitive. EDA strongly encourages eligible entities to submit only a single application. However, EDA does not discourage applicants from also applying as part of a separate and distinct group of entities, such as a consortium.

d. What are the font size, page length, and/or file type requirements for the narrative portions of the application?

The preferred electronic file format for attachments is Adobe PDF and, when appropriate, Microsoft Excel; however, EDA will accept electronic files in Microsoft Word.

The Project Narrative should contain no more than ten (10) total pages with margins no less than one-half inch (0.5") using Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman, or a similar font of size no less than eleven (11) points. Material beyond the tenth page will not be read or considered. For additional guidance Project Narrative requirements see Section D.2.a.i (p. 14-15) of the NOFO.

The Budget Narrative should follow the formatting guidelines provided above. The suggested page limit is four (4) pages. See Section D.2.a.ii (p.15-16) of the NOFO for additional guidance. Further guidance is provided in Attachment 2 (p. 35-39) of the NOFO, including an optional budget template based on Form SF-424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A).

Please review the FY 2020 SPRINT Challenge Application Checklist listed in Appendix A for full application requirements.

e. How will my application be scored?

Each application will undergo a technical review for eligibility and completeness (see Section E.2.a, p. 22 of the NOFO). If the application passes the technical review, it will be subject to a merit review process where no fewer than three (3) people will review the application for content.

The merit review process will ensure that each application is consistently evaluated across the following six (6) equally-weighted criteria: Project Support and Connectivity; Engagement and

Diversity; Economic and Innovation Impacts; Assets and Infrastructure; Resilience and Recovery; and Project Feasibility. For full descriptions of each criterion, see Section E.1, p. 21 of the NOFO.

6. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Requirements

a. Do all regions have a CEDS?

Projects funded under the SPRINT Challenge NOFO must be consistent with the region's current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) (typically developed by the Economic Development District (EDD) that serves the region) or equivalent EDA-accepted regional economic development strategy that meets EDA's CEDS or strategy requirements.

EDA supports the CEDS Resource Library at http://www.statsamerica.org/ceds/Default.aspx where applicants can determine whether their region is served by an EDD and locate the most recent CEDS. Additional guidance on meeting this statutory requirement is provided in the FY 2020 SPRINT Challenge Application Checklist listed in Appendix A and on the SPRINT Challenge website at http://eda.gov/oie/sprint.

b. May we still apply if our region does not have a CEDS?

Applicants from geographies that are not covered by an Economic Development District are encouraged to reach out to the Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at oie@eda.gov. OIE will help the applicant identify an equivalent EDA-accepted regional economic development strategy.

7. Matching Share Commitment Letters and Letters of Local Government Support

a. What's the difference between a Matching Share Commitment Letter and a Letter of Local Government Support?

Matching Share Commitment Letters document the specific contribution the signatory is making toward the required matching share for the proposed project. Matching share requirements are discussed in Section D.2.a.iii (p.16) of the NOFO. It is important for the Matching Share Commitment Letter to document that the contribution will be unencumbered, available as needed, and committed at the time of award. Matching Share Commitment Letters must be signed by an authorized representative of the organization providing the matching share at the time of the application. As described in Section D.2.a.ii (p.15-16) of the NOFO and Attachment 2 (p. 35-39) of the NOFO, applicants must describe in the Budget Narrative how matching share funds from all sources (including the applicant, as applicable) will be used. See also question 8.c. of this FAQ.

In contrast, the Letter of Local Government Support is a resolution or letter that demonstrates that the applicant is acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State (e.g., a county or municipality) that encompasses all or a substantial portion of the communities served

by the proposed project. A letter of Local Government Support must be submitted by non-profit applicants. This is discussed in Section D.2.a.iv (p. 16) of the NOFO.

b. How many Letters of Local Government Support are necessary if the applicant is a non-profit organization?

Generally, only one letter will be necessary so long as the letter demonstrates that the applicant is acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State (e.g., a county or municipality) that encompasses all or most of the region served by the proposed project. However, for projects spread over a large area, it may be necessary to secure more than one letter to demonstrate that the applicant is acting in conjunction with office with officials of a political subdivision of a State (e.g., a county or municipality) that encompasses all or most of the region served by the proposed project. There is no maximum number of letters that can be included.

8. Financial Compliance

a. What restrictions apply to funding awarded through the SPRINT Challenge?

Neither the Department of Commerce (DOC) nor EDA will be held responsible for application preparation costs.

Funds available under the SPRINT Challenge may not be used for construction purposes (except in limited circumstances related to equipment installation, as approved by EDA) or revolving loan funds; such use of funds may not be charged to the EDA share of project costs or the matching share of project costs.

As with all OIE programs, financial assistance awarded through the SPRINT Challenge cannot be used to provide direct investment in startups or other small businesses. Proposals involving the use of EDA funds to directly capitalize individual businesses and/or entrepreneurs—whether through equity, debt, or hybrid mechanisms—will not be considered.

Lastly, all SPRINT Challenge awards will be subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at 2 CFR part 200, which delineate, among other things, the requirements for eligible expenses, financial management systems, procurement, reports and records, grant closeouts, and audits for non-federal entities.

b. Are grant amounts allotted by year or for the entire project period?

For any specific project, EDA may approve an award amount that is higher or lower than requested and may approve a period of performance that is longer or shorter than originally requested depending on the nature of the proposed project and the availability of funds. The amount of federal funds requested (if approved by EDA) will be allotted for the entire period of performance specified. Due to the urgent need for regional support to accelerate technological innovation and effectively respond to the coronavirus, EDA expects work to begin immediately after an award is made.

c. What qualifies as a financial match?

Because of the economic dislocation caused by the coronavirus, the match requirement for the SPRINT Challenge is generally 80:20 instead of the typical 1:1 match for other OIE competitions. For projects of Indian tribes and very limited other circumstances, EDA may establish a maximum investment rate of up to 100%.

Financial assistance awarded through the SPRINT Challenge can cover up to 80% of total project costs, while the applicant is generally expected to provide the remaining 20% of total project costs, which is referred to as the "matching share" or "Non-federal share". Whether in cash or in-kind, the matching share contribution is to be disbursed at the same general rate as the federal Share, unless otherwise approved by EDA.

For additional guidance on the cost-sharing and satisfying the SPRINT Challenge match requirement, please review Section C.3 of the NOFO (p.11-12).

9. Budget Proposal

a. What guidance does OIE offer applicants unfamiliar with completing a Budget Narrative?

The Budget Narrative section of the SPRINT Challenge application allows for applicants to elaborate on the sources and uses of funds necessary to complete the objectives described in the Project Narrative. A clear Budget Narrative is an integral component of a competitive application.

Among other things, EDA reviews the Budget Narrative for consistency in conjunction with other components of the application; namely, Standard Form -424 (SF-424), SF-424A, the Project Narrative, and any applicable Matching Share Commitment letters.

Also note that under the Personnel category there is an additional chart (the Staffing Plan) with numerical inputs that allow reviewers to assess whether the proposed project has sufficient staff to carry out the work proposed, how much of each person's time will be allocated towards the project, and verify the consistency of those estimates with those described in other areas of the application.

For further guidance on these topics, please review the SPRINT Challenge webpage http://eda.gov/oie/sprint:

b. Is there a specific budget template needed for this application?

An optional budget template attached to the NOFO on Attachment 2, (p. 35) and can also be found at https://www.eda.gov/oie/sprint. Please note, in addition to the Budget Narrative (inclusive of a staffing plan) all applicants must submit the SF-424A form.

c. May SPRINT Challenge applicants request less than the maximum amount of federal share allowed under this grant competition?

Applicants can apply for less than the maximum amount stated in the NOFO and should pursue whatever level of resources needed to be most impactful.

d. Budget Narrative requirements listed in the NOFO in Att. 2 appears to require information that is already recorded on the SF-424A. Is a copy of the SF-424A an adequate substitute?

The Budget Narrative and SF-424A are separate and distinct required documents. The SF-424A identifies the totals per budget line item. The Budget Narrative consists of:

- a budget chart that can be based on the template in Attachment 2,
- a written narrative description of how the funds in each budget category will be used to support the proposed project, and
- a chart that distinguishes the use of federal and non-federal funds across various budget categories over the period of performance.

10. How do applying entities without a current or pending NICRA account for indirect costs in the Budget Narrative?

If indirect costs are included in the budget, applicants must include documentation to support the indirect cost rate they are using as a separate attachment.

Applying organizations may elect to charge a *de minimus* rate of 10% of modified total direct costs upon meeting the following conditions:

- have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate AND
- do not have a current NICRA.

For additional guidance on allocable indirect costs for which EDA will reimburse, please review Section D.2.b.ii.c (p. 18).

11. What is Executive Order 12372?

Executive Order 12372 "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs", which created the Single Point-of-Contact (SPOC) List, allows states to opt into an additional review and coordination process in association with the disbursement of federal funds. See the most up-to-date SPOC list here: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/spoc_1_16_2020.pdf.

12. How do applicants determine whether SPOC compliance documentation is required?

As noted on Form SF-424, additional documentation may be required in accordance with Executive Order 12372. Documentation is required if your state is listed on the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) List found here. Applicants from states that are not listed on the SPOC List do not have to comply with this requirement.

EDA strongly encourages contacting the SPOC early to determine whether the SPRINT Challenge application is subject to additional review in their State, and, if so, how to pursue

compliance. While not required at the time of application, EDA must have documentation affirming SPOC compliance in order to make an award.

13. Contact Us

a. How do I get in touch with OIE?

Please note, to support a fair, national competition, EDA cannot provide strategic advice or partnership development support during the competition. EDA must limit support efforts to administrative and technical concerns about the competition and application process.

If you require immediate support, or have unique technical questions, please contact the OIE - Headquarters by email at oie@eda.gov or by phone at (202) 482-8001. For additional resources to support the SPRINT Challenge funding opportunity, please visit the program website at https://eda.gov/oie/sprint.

Summary of Required Forms and Supporting Documentation

Reference the chart below to determine whether you have provided the required forms and supporting documentation in your application:

Documentation	NOFO Section(s)	Guidance	Required for All Applicants?	Complete?
Form SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance	Section D.2.a.ii (p. 15-16)	Must be filled out in entirety and signed by an authorized representative to be considered. Be sure budget listed here matches the SF-424A and Budget Narrative.	Yes. ➢ Also applies to co-applicants.	
Form SF-424A Budget Information- Non-Construction Programs	Section D.2.a.ii (p. 15-16)	Be sure budget listed here matches the SF-424 and Budget Narrative.	Yes.	
CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying	Section D.2 (p. 13) Section D.2.b.i (p.16-17)	Required for all entities.	Yes. ➢ Also applies to co-applicants.	
SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	Section D.2.b.i (p.16-17)	Required disclosure of certain lobbying activities.	No. Only if any applicant or co-applicant conducts certain lobbying activities.	
State Single Point-of- Contract (SPOC)/ Executive Order 12372 Compliance Documentation	Section D.2.b.ii.a. (p.17-18)	Applies to projects with primary service areas in a participating State. See SPOC List for details.	Yes, if project's primary service area is in a participating State.	
Indirect Cost Rate	Section D.2.b.ii.c. (p.18)	If indirect costs are included in the budget the applicant must provide either: • A copy of a current, approved, and negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA), or • If the applicant elects the 10% de minimis rate, a statement that it has never had a NICRA.	No. Only if indirect costs are included in the budget.	
Articles of Incorporation, Certificates of Good Standing, and Bylaws	Section D.2.b.ii.b. (p.18)	Only applicable to non-profit applicants.	No.	

Resolution or letter demonstrating cooperation with a political subdivision of a State (e.g., a county or a municipality)	Section D.2.b.i (p.16-17)	Only applicable to non-profit applicants.	No.	
Project Narrative (PDF)	Section A.2 (p.5) Section D.2.a.i. (p. 14-15)	Project Narrative of no more than ten (10) total pages with margins no less than one-half inch (0.5") using Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman, or a similar font of size no less than eleven (11) points.	Yes.	
Alignment with Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or EDA-Approved Equivalent	Section C.4 (p.12)	Consists of: - Description of how the project will support the economic needs and objectives outlined in the applicable region's CEDS or equivalent EDA-accepted regional economic development strategy, either in project narrative or through a letter of support from an authorized representative of the relevant Economic Development District (EDD). - Link to the full text of the referent CEDS.	Yes.	
Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan	Section D.2.a.ii. (p. 15-16) Att.2 (p. 36)	Consists of: - budget narrative; and - staffing plan. See optional budget template here.	Yes.	
Matching Share Commitment Letter	Section D.2.a.iii (p. 16)	One (1) letter per entity providing a match (cash and/or in-kind) highlighting specifically the details of the match component. All matching funds must be unencumbered, available as needed, and committed at the time of award. Such letters must be signed by authorized representatives of the sources of the matching funds.	Yes. ➢ No limit on number of letters included.	