STEM TALENT CHALLENGE

Informational Webinar
FY 2021 STEM Talent Challenge

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U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

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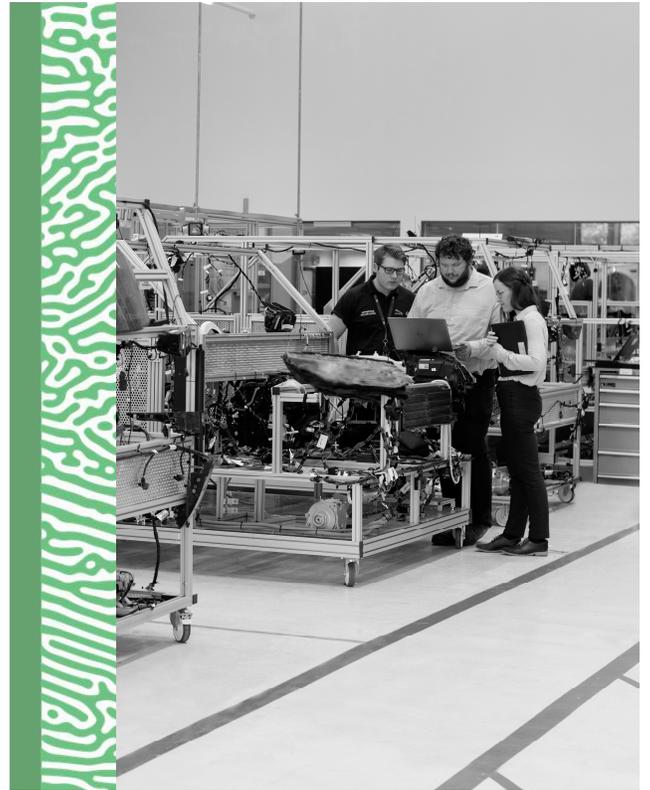
Hello and welcome! Thank you so much for joining us today. This is the informational webinar for the 2021 STEM Talent Challenge, which is powered by the US Economic Development Administration. This is the second year that we have run this challenge, and you will see that the program is similar – but not quite identical – to last year's program. This

webinar is designed to provide a high-level overview; for more complete information, please see the posted Notice of Funding Opportunity or NOFO. This NOFO can be found at eda.gov forward slash OIE forward slash stem.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- Welcome and Intros
- OIE Mission
- Challenge Origins and Design
- Previous Year Highlights
- Program Implementation
- Desired Outputs and Outcomes
- Application Basics
- Frequently Asked Questions

Today I will be covering a variety of topics to provide more information about the STEM Talent Challenge and how to apply. We will begin with a quick welcome, and then I will tell you about the mission of our office – the Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship – or OIE. I will talk about the Origins and Design of the STEM Talent Challenge and talk a little

bit about last year's challenge and how it informed this year's. I'll review the basics of what we are looking for from a program implementation standpoint. I'll go over the desired outputs and outcomes, which I hope will help you focus your projects. Finally, we will talk about what should go in your application, from a technical standpoint. We will conclude by reviewing some Frequently Asked Questions that we hope will help you in the application process.

MEET THE "TEAM"

Carmen Myers-Reed
STEM Program Manager
Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

I'd like to take a moment to again welcome everyone to this webinar and to introduce myself. It's just me, here today, hence the fact that I put team in quotes. I am Carmen Myers-Reed, and I am the Program Manager for the STEM Talent Challenge. I will be overseeing this challenge and will be your primary point of contact for all things related to it. I have been

working with EDA for a little over a year, now, and, prior to that, I served as a program and compliance manager for a non-profit that focused on workforce development and helping job seekers get back to work. At EDA, I oversee this program, as well as providing hands-on experience related to our workforce development investment priority. I started overseeing last year's inaugural STEM Talent Challenge on my third week at work, so it's kind of been my baby ever since. I can't wait to see the kinds of creative applications that we receive this year!

OIE Mission

The Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE) aims to empower communities so that entrepreneurs can launch companies, scale technologies and create the jobs of tomorrow.

OIE was established by the America COMPETES Act of 2010 and is housed within the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

The STEM Talent Challenge is administered out of the Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship – or OIE. Through our grant programs, federal collaboration, and the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, OIE aims to empower communities so that entrepreneurs can launch companies, scale technologies, and create the jobs

of tomorrow. We were established by the America COMPETES Act of 2010 and are housed within the US Economic Development Administration, which is a bureau of the Department of Commerce.

STEM TALENT CHALLENGE

Talent

Capital

Entrepreneurship

To understand the STEM talent challenge, you have to first understand its origins. With our work in OIE running the B2S program for the last 8 years, we have been supporting two sides of this triangle – capital and entrepreneurship – injecting more capital into communities and entrepreneurial ecosystems through our Capital Challenge and helping the

businesses that support entrepreneurs – incubators, universities, accelerators, etc. – through our Venture Challenge. Time and time again, through our work with our grantees, as well as the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, we have heard about the need for qualified talent – particularly in STEM fields. This challenge was born in response to this need. We are looking for projects that not only build STEM talent but that build this talent in a way that is responsive to the talent needs of businesses, allowing them to grow.

Building STEM Talent Training Systems to Strengthen Regional Innovation Economies

APPLICATIONS DUE OCTOBER 12, 2021 at 11:59 PM EST

This is the mission of the STEM Talent Challenge -

Talent
Development
Strategies

STEM
Talent

Regional
Innovation
Economy and
Future
Growth
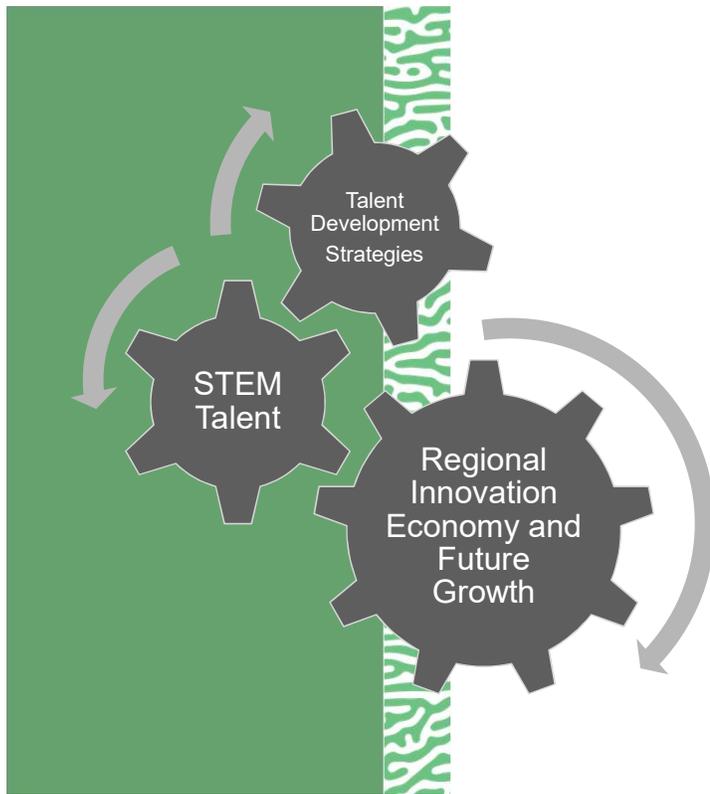
This competition seeks applications from *eligible applicants* that are creating and implementing STEM talent development systems that complement their region's innovation economy

Just to really hit home, we are looking for applications that are creating and implementing STEM talent development systems that complement their region's innovation economy. We are looking for applications where the Talent development strategies, STEM talent, and Region innovation economy all work together. Strong proposals will

demonstrate that the talent created and the means of developing that talent will meet the needs of regional employers looking to fill quality jobs.

Assess & Identify

Conduct needs assessment and identify the need for skilled STEM workers

Implement Programs

Implement programs designed to build STEM talent.

Develop Infrastructure

Develop infrastructure to expand STEM work-and-learn models systems

This Challenge was authorized by Section 28 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Act. The main objectives of this authorization are to assess and identify – that is, to conduct a needs assessment and identify the needs for skilled STEM workers by regional employers. This we are asking applicants to complete before they apply, but, as we will state on a later

slide, this can come in variety of formats. It also authorizes us to implement programs designed to build STEM talent. This is really the central point of this program – implementing innovative programs that train learners in in-demand STEM skills, get them back to work, and help businesses grow. Finally, we are authorized to develop infrastructure to expand STEM work-and-learn models, creating systems that can grow and replicate, sustaining past the point of the federal award.

Previous Year Highlights

Highlights from last year's
challenge and its awardees
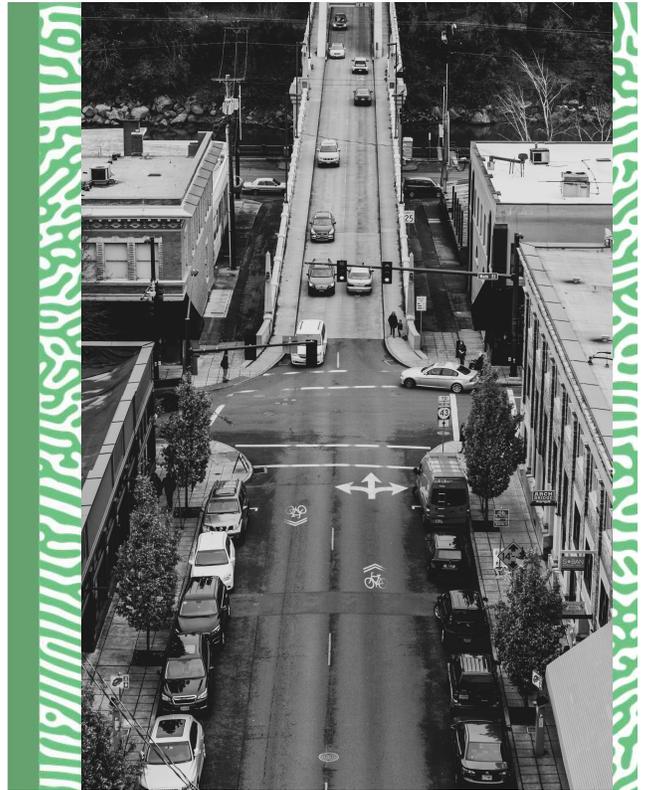
As I said, last year was the first year
that this challenge was offered.
Though it has changed a little bit since
last year, it is still helpful to look at the
inaugural iteration of the challenge and
the programs that were awarded.

The Numbers
Applications Received

76 applications received in total

Applications received from 38 states

7 applications selected for funding

Full $2M Obligated

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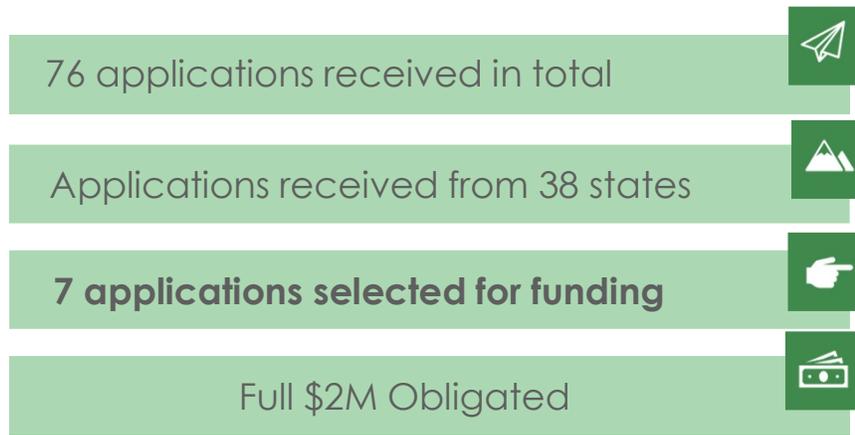
We ran a slightly shorter challenge last year – the application window was 48 days long – and still received 76 applications. These applications came form 38 states and represented all of EDA's regions. We reviewed applications for completeness and then scored them using last year's merit review criteria. After this process, we selected 7 applications for funding,

obligating the full $2M to programs in 7 states.

STEM TALENT CHALLENGE

INAUGURAL COHORT

7 grants totaling **$2M**

$2.3M In community match leveraged

| Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Government	Expanding Frontiers Corp	Howard Community College	Maui Economic Development Board	Ohio University	University City Science Center	University of Michigan
Aeronautics	Space Commerce	Cybersecurity	Renewable Energy, Agriculture, etc.	Advanced Manufacturing	Biotechnology	Advanced Manufacturing

The inaugural cohort for this challenge was extremely competitive, and we had many more highly scoring applications than we could award. The awards we did make were to organizations whose projects were designed to drive regional innovation through the development of STEM-capable talent. The 7 awards made represented a variety of industries and

regions. The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Government's project involves designing and implementing training for community members to prepare them for jobs in the emerging aeronautics industry in the remote Alaskan St. Paul Island. The project builds on a partnership with a manufacturer of automated commercial aircraft to create internship and mentorship opportunities for residents. By training locals to fill existing jobs, the project is building the production and innovation capacity of the region. This two-fold impact is an example of what we hope to achieve with this program – creating employment opportunity for job seekers and allowing industries to expand with the help of the new talent. Maui Economic Development

board is using the funding to scale up the successful STEMworks program, which provides hands-on training for Hawaii residents in seven different focus areas. These focus areas were aligned with their regional comprehensive economic development strategy and are considered vital to Hawaii's growth. These high-wage, high-growth sectors include agriculture, biosciences, and renewable energy. The program involves an innovative training method, which combines challenge-based learning, where student participants compete to develop solutions to the problems faced by industry employer partners, and work-based learning with an internship for challenge winners. The University of Michigan is utilizing award funds to implement their Advanced

Manufacturing Cybersecurity Work-and-Learn program, which is designed to not only train workers, but help fulfill the need in manufacturing companies for cybersecurity knowledge. The program's cybersecurity curriculum is rooted in a manufacturing setting to provide the kind of contextual understanding that is needed by the regional industry leaders.

Eligibility and Funding

What type of entity is eligible for this challenge, and how much funding is available?
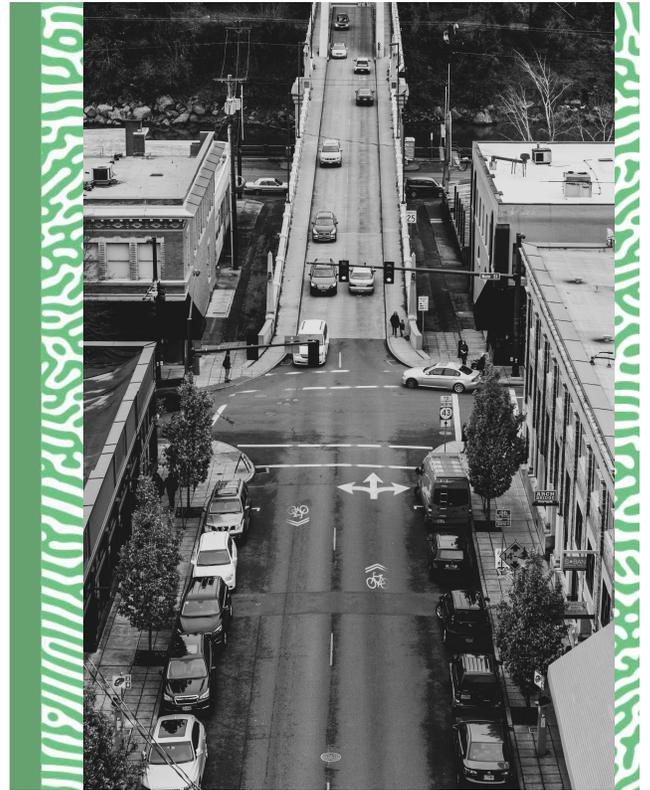
Okay, now let's talk about the logistics of the STEM Talent Challenge. We'll start by going over what type of entity is eligible for this challenge and how much funding is available.

Eligible Entities

1. A **State**;
2. An **Indian tribe**;
3. A **city** or **other political subdivision of a State**;
4. An entity that—
   a. is a **nonprofit organization**, an **institution of higher education**, a **public-private partnership**, a **science or research park**, a **Federal laboratory**, or an **economic development organization**; <u>and</u>
   b. has an application that is **supported by a State or a political subdivision** of a State; or
5. A **consortium** of any of the entities described in subparagraphs (1) through (4).[1]

Individuals are <u>NOT</u> eligible for funding.

For those who are familiar with our Build to Scale program, you may notice that the eligibility is very similar. You can apply if you are a **state**, an **Indian tribe**, a **city or other political subdivision of a state, such as a county.** You can also apply if you a non-profit organization, an institution of higher education, a public private partnership, a science or research

park, a Federal laboratory, or an economic development organization. If you apply as one of these entities, you must also show support by your state or political subdivision. You may also apply if you are a consortium of any of the previously mentioned entities. Please note that individuals were not listed as eligible entities and are not eligible to receive this funding.

Funding Specifics

A total of $2 million has been appropriated for this program

- **Applicants may request up to $250,000**

- This funding must go towards program implementation
- A pre-application needs assessment (formal or informal) should be conducted to determine the needs of regional employers and ensure that program activities align with these needs

Now it is time to talk about the specifics of funding for this challenge. In total, as with last year's challenge, $2 Million has been appropriated for this program. Applicants may request up to $250,000 for the total project period of 24 months. This has changed since last year to allow us to fund more projects, while also eliminating the option for planning funding. Instead,

the full program budget must be spent on program implementation. Prior to application, a needs assessment should be conducted to determine the needs of regional employers and ensure that proposed program activities align with these needs.

Pre-application Needs Assessment

| Formal or Informal	Determine Business Needs	*Projects Should be Responsive*
Formal – CEDS or equivalent Informal – Survey conducted of area employers	The needs assessment should show that regional businesses have an immediate need for skilled workers and should inform the development of relevant skills training	Training development should be tied to regional employer needs

NOFO Section A.2

This pre-application needs assessment is designed to help make sure that projects align with the talent needs of regional employers and that training would have a high likelihood in resulting in good paying jobs. We were not prescriptive on the format of the needs assessment, and it can be formal or informal. An example of a formal assessment may be a regional

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or equivalent document. An informal assessment may be a survey conducted to area employers to determine their talent and skills needs. Regardless of the means of collection, these assessments should show that regional businesses have an immediate need for skilled workers, and this should inform the development of relevant skills training. Projects should be responsive. That is, again, the development of training should be tied to immediate talent needs of regional employers.

Desired Outputs and Outcomes

Proposed projects may aim for *some or all of* the following outputs.
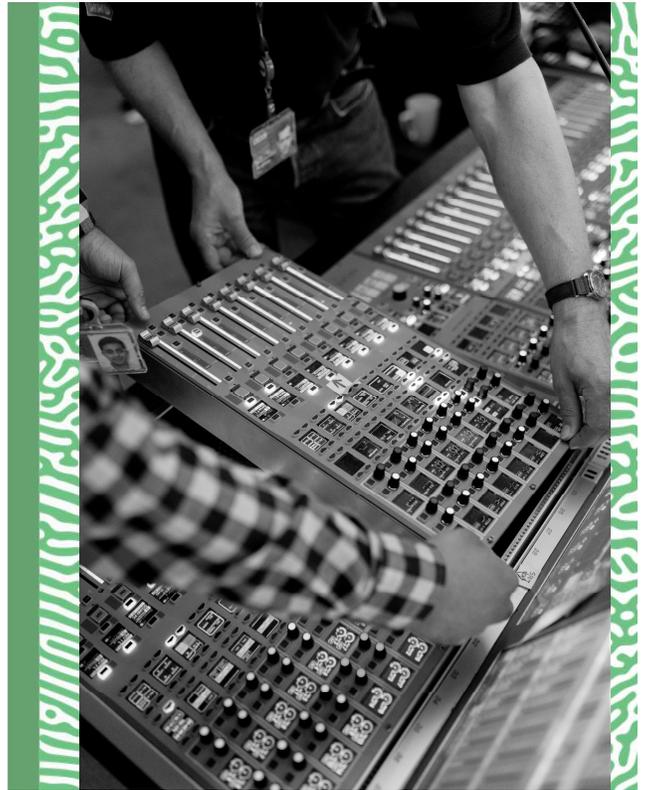
Next, we will talk about the desired outputs and outcomes for this funding. These areas of focus should provide you with guidance as to what we hope to see as results for projects funded in this challenge. Proposed projects may aim for some or even all of the following outputs. Strong proposals will identify both the short and long-term goals of the proposed projects; these

goals will ideally align with the goals listed in the NOFO and on the next three slides. While we do not want to be prescriptive, we hope that this information will provide some guidance on the types of projects we would like to see.

STEM Work-Based Learning and Training

- Training should clearly align with the talent needs of those driving innovation in the region and should result in job placement for the participants in high-wage employment in high-growth industries.

- These models may include innovative, industry-driven apprenticeships, fellowships, internships, and other cooperative employer-educator partnerships, but are not limited to existing industry definitions.

Experimentation and innovation are encouraged.

We are hoping to see projects that develop talent through STEM Work-Based learning and training. As I said when I talked about the needs assessment, training should clearly align with the talent needs of those driving innovation in the region and should result in job placement for the participants in high-wage employment in high-growth industries. The goal of

these projects should be to provide workers with the experiences that they need to succeed on the job. Projects should utilize training models that incorporate work-based learning to provide this hands-on experience. These models may include innovative, industry-driven apprenticeships, fellowships, internships, and other cooperative employer-educator partnerships, but are not limited to existing industry definitions. As I'll say a few times in this presentation, experimentation and innovation are strongly encouraged.

Increase Regional Innovation Capacity

- Projects should focus on connecting regional innovation stakeholders and employers with the workforce and talent development leaders and training providers

- Projects should be driven by the talent needs of those employers at the forefront of innovation

Organizations that are driving regional innovation through worker training are strongly encouraged to apply

NOFO Section A.2.B

We would also like to see projects that increase the innovation capacity of the project's region. On this end, projects should focus on connecting reginal innovation stakeholders and employers with the workforce and talent development leaders and training providers. Projects should truly be driven by the talent needs of those employers at the forefront of

innovation. As we discussed on an earlier slide, we see talent development as a key factor to driving innovation. Without qualified talent, innovation is stalled. We are looking to fund organizations who are driving regional innovation through worker training.

Increase Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in STEM

- Projects should focus on providing equitable access to the innovation economy for all members of the community

- Projects should promote racial equity, seeking to provide those from historically underserved and underrepresented communities with access to training and other tools to success.

NOFO Section A.2.C

Successful projects may also focus on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM. We are looking for projects that focus on providing equitable access to the innovation economy for all members of the community. We would like to see relationships – either new or existing – that will connect those who are traditionally underserved or

underrepresented with those driving innovation in the region. Projects should also aim to promote racial equity and should have strategies to provide those from historically underserved and underrepresented communities with access to training and other tools to success.

Application Basics
Timeline for the selection process,
application content and format

Now we will go over the timeline for
the application and selection process,
and then we will talk about the logistics
of how to apply.

Challenge Timeline

NOFO Released
August 12, 2021

Application window
is open for 61 days

Application Review

Applications will be
reviewed and scored by
multiple reviewers

Applications Due
October 12, 2021

Full Applications are
due by 11:59 PM EST
on October 12, 2021

Award Notification
Winter 2021
Successful applicants
should expect to receive
award notification 90-120
days from the due date

Before we talk about the application itself, I wanted to go over the important dates. As you may know, the NOFO was released on August 12. The application window will be open for 61 days, and applications are due on August 12. This means that a full and complete application must be submitted by 11:59 pm EST on October 12. In fairness to all

applicants, we can not accept late applications or late additions to applications. After this, applications will be reviewed and awardees selected. Applications will go through full technical, merit, and legal review before award. For this reason, it takes us awhile to announce awards, so we don't anticipate selecting or announcing awards until winter 2021. According to the NOFO, we have 90-120 days.

Electronic Submission

- Applications submitted through Grants.gov under the below Funding Opportunity Number:

  - EDA-HDQ-OIE-2021-2007015

- If there are system issues when you submit your application, contact Grants.gov support

NOFO Section D.8.a

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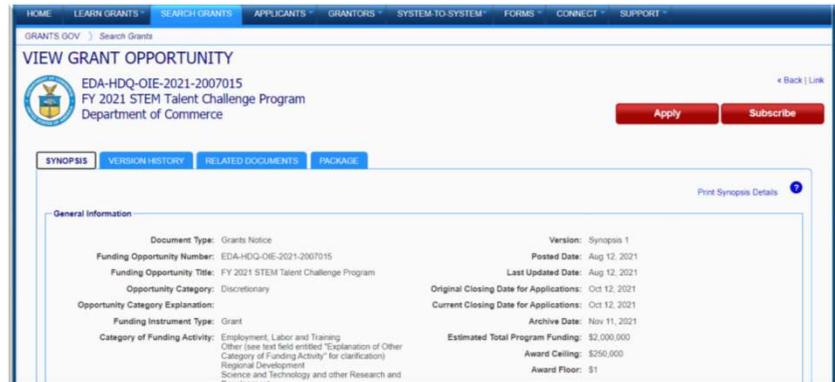
Applications are submitted electronically through Grants.gov. There are instructions in the NOFO for how to do this, but you will search for the funding opportunity number listed on this slide and then select apply. If you have any systems issues when you submit your application, you will need to contact grants.gov support - not EDA. It's not that we don't want to

help – we just can't!

Pre-application Actions

- Obtain DUNS Number (1-2 business days)
- Obtain EIN (10 business days)
- Register for SAM (7-10 business days)
- Create Grants.gov username and password (same day)
- Authorize AOR
- Track AOR status

NOFO Section D.8.b

STEM
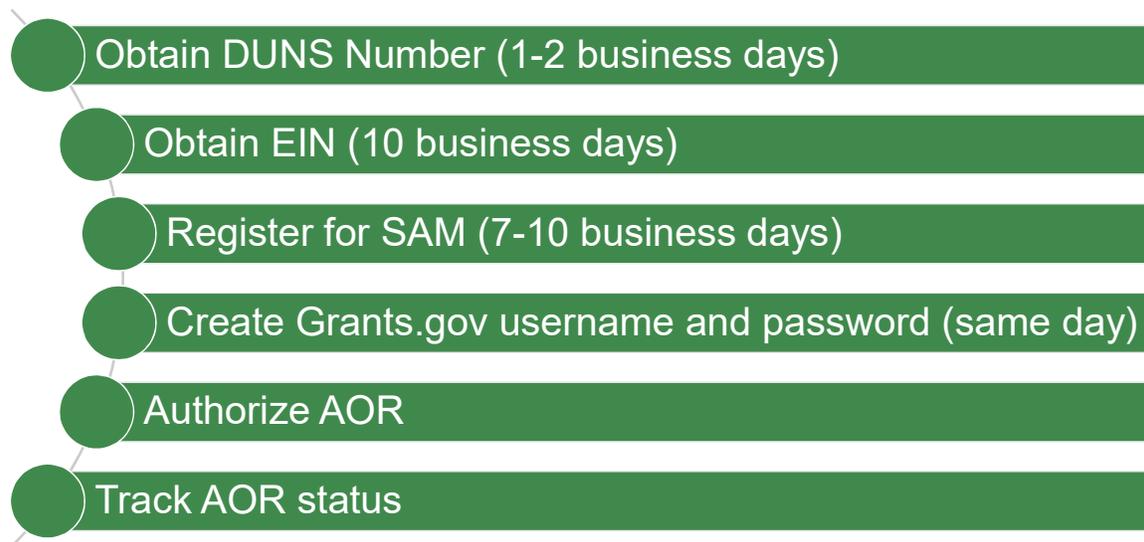
Before you can apply for funding through Grants.gov, you will need to complete a series of actions. These actions can take quite a bit of time, so we recommend that you do not delay in getting started, if this is your organization's first time applying through grants.gov. First, you will need to obtain a DUNS number, if your organization doesn't already have one.

This can take a couple of business days and is required for grants.gov registration. Next, you will need an EIN number, if you do not have one of these. This can take up to 10 business days, and it, too, is required for grants.gov registration. Finally, you will also need to register for SAM.gov, which can take 7-10 business days. SAM registration is also required before you can register on grants.gov. Once you have obtained an EIN, DUNS Number, and registered for SAM, you are ready to create a Grants.gov account! Once you have created an account, you will need to authorized the AOR – or authorized representative – for your organization.

Applications will be evaluated and scored. A **10-page project narrative, 4-page budget narrative**, a **series of standard forms,** and **additional supporting documents** are required.

See NOFO for complete Full Application Requirements.

NOFO Section D.2

Applications will be evaluated and scored by multiple reviewers using standardized review criteria, which we will talk about in a few minutes. A 10-page project narrative and 4-page budget narrative are required. Additionally, the full application includes a series of standard required forms and additional supporting documents, such as letters of support

and commitment. Though we will talk a bit about these items in detail, please see the Notice of Funding Opportunity for more information. This can be found on our website, at eda.gov forward slash oie forward slash stem. We have also placed an optional template for the budget narrative on this site. There is an optional Application Checklist on our site. It can help you ensure that you have included all forms that are required for your organization.

Required Application Components

PROJECT DESIGN AND SUBSTANCE

Project Narrative

Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan

Matching Share Commitment Letters

State/Local Government Support (if applicable)

FORMS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION*

SF-424, SF-424A

CD-511, SF-LLL

SPOC, Organizational Docs, Indirect Cost Rate (if applicable)

See NOFO for more information on these components.

The documents that you will be submitting on Grants.gov fall into two categories: Project Design and Substance, and Forms and Supporting Documentation. The Project Narrative, Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan, and Matching Share Commitment Letters, and State/Local Government Support documentation should all show your project design and

substance, documenting the nature of your project, what the budget looks like, the team that will be executing it, and the partnerships that support it. These documents together should tell a cohesive story about your project and your ability to execute it.

The forms and supporting documentation will include a series of standard forms, which every organization will submit, as well as some additional documentation that is dependent upon your project location and organization type. The SF-424 is the application for federal assistance, and you will include all of the basic information about you and your project. If you are applying with a co-applicant, you will both need to fill out an

SF-424. The SF-424A is the Budget Information form for Non-Construction programs. We have videos about both of these forms on our website under Applicant Resources. These are also linked, if you download the slide. The CD-511 is the Certification Regarding lobbying, where you will attest to any lobbying activities you participated in that were related to the project, if any. If you participated in lobbying activities, you will also need to fill out the SF-LLL.

Depending on what state you live in, you may also need to show that you submitted your project to your state single point of contact. I have linked the SPOC list to this slide, so you can see if this is a requirement for your state. Certain

organizations, including Nonprofits, need to provide organizational documentation, such as a certificate of good standing from your state, articles of incorporation, bylaws, etc. Finally, if you utilize indirect costs that are greater than the de minimis in your budget, you will need to submit your indirect cost rate documentation.

This is all outlined in greater detail in the NOFO, and on the links on this page.

Project Narrative Format

10-single sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins

Project Design and Scope of Work	Executive summary and scope of work; SOW should be no more than one page and should include key milestones and deliverables
Regional Innovation Resources and Talent Needs	Description of project's location and region; explanation of regional industry and the talent needs of its employers
Proposed Solution	Detailed explanation of how the solution will fulfill the regional employer talent needs and how it will prepare participants for employment
Partners and Program Outreach	Describe partners and their roles; outline outreach plan to engage new and diverse stakeholders and promote equity
Measurable Goals and Impacts	Outline anticipated goals, including outputs and outcomes, should be discussed in terms of SMART framework
Sustainability Plan	Provide plan for post-Federal award

NOFO Section D.2.a.i

The format of the project narrative has changed a bit from last year, so please see the NOFO for more details. The first section should describe the Project Design and include the scope of work. An executive summary should be included in the first section, which includes the basic project details and a project summary of no more than 250 words. You will also include a scope of

work of no more than a page, which includes key milestones and deliverables. Next, you will describe the regional innovation resources and talent needs. This will include a description of the project's location and region, including FIPS codes for the service area. You can find the FIPS codes for your region on the Census website, which is linked in the NOFO. This section will also include a description of the industry or industries driving innovation in the region and show a documented need for talent by these industries. This is where you include a description of your needs assessment and its findings. In Section 3, you will talk about your proposed solution, where you will, in detail, describe the solution to the need outlined in the previous section.

Section 4 should show your partners and program outreach, where you describe your current, former, or future partnerships that will be working on this project, including the roles of each partner. You will also outline an outreach plan to engage new and diverse stakeholders, explaining how the project will promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM. Next, you will explain the projects measurable goals and impacts, where you will outline evidence- and data-based anticipated goals, including outputs and outcomes. These should be in the SMART framework. Finally, you will outline your sustainability plan, that is, your plan for the sustainability of this project following the federal award. You should include challenges, barriers, a forecast of

post award operations, etc, and a specific plan for how the project will be sustained.

Application Review Criteria

Regional Partnerships & Assets

Is the project supported by a diverse group of partners that will lead to program goals? Are the main functions of the project supported by partner entities?

Alignment with Program Goals

Does the project align with the goal to "drive regional innovation by building STEM capable talent? Is the need for the project clearly defined?

Promotes DEI

Is the project likely to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in STEM fields and in their region? Does the application contain a plan for how it will engage an inclusive group of stakeholders and participants?

NOFO Section E.1

Once we have ensured that applications are complete and applicants are eligible entities, we conduct a formal merit review of the applications. During this review, each application is reviewed by at least 3 reviewers and scored on 6 criteria. Each criteria has two questions, and reviewers score each question using a 7-point Likert scale. These six criteria

can be found in section E.1 of the NOFO and are outlined on this slide and the next.

The first of the review criteria is Strength of Regional Partnerships and Assets. For this, we will evaluate based on the extent to which the project's main functions are supported by necessary entities, such as employers and training providers, and whether the roles of key partners are defined. Reviewers are asked if the project is supported by a diverse group of partners that will lead to program goals? They are also asked if the main functions of the project are supported by partner entities. Alignment with program goals asks if the project is likely to "drive regional innovation by building STEM capable talent", as well as EDA's other

investment priorities. It also asks reviewers if the need for the project is clearly defined. Because Equity is EDA's number one investment priority, it is important that projects promote Diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM fields, so reviewers specifically score based on this. We also ask reviewers to look for a plan to engage an inclusive group of stakeholders and participants.

Application Review Criteria

Measurable Goals & Impacts

Are the base-level goals specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound? Are these goals related to both participant success & the impact on the regional innovation economy?

Sustainability & Adaptability

Is the project likely to be able to sustain activities once grant funds are expending? Is there a plan? Is the project likely to be adapted as necessary to obtain future funding

Budget & Staffing Plan

Does the application identify the resources that will support project execution? Do the applicant organization and team have the capacity to execute the project?

For measurable goals and impact, reviewers look at whether the solution is aligned with the opportunity, and whether the base-level project goals are SMART and are likely to further the innovation ecosystem of the region by building STEM talent. They are also asked if there are goals related both to participant success – such as

job placement and program completion – and the impact on the innovation economy. For sustainability and adaptability, we look at that sustainability plan, we talked about a few slides ago, and reviewers are asked if the project is likely to be able to sustain activities post-federal award. Does the project seem like it could be adapted as necessary to obtain future funding?

Finally, reviewers take a deep look at the budget narrative and staffing plan, evaluating whether or not the organization seems to have the capacity and experience to execute the project. From the budget and staffing plan, reviewers are asked whether the application clearly identifies the financial, human, and

programmatic resources that will support the successful execution of the project and whether the organization and proposed team seem to have the capacity to execute the project.

Understanding these six criteria and making sure to include information that will help reviewers understand the details of your project can help exponentially as you prepare a competitive application.

Match Requirements

1:1 Funding Match is required

- Applicants must demonstrate **at the time of application** a matching non-Federal share of at least 50% of the total project cost

- This match can be in-kind contributions, but they must directly relate to the project and its outcomes

Federal Share

Non-Federal Share

Overall Project Cost
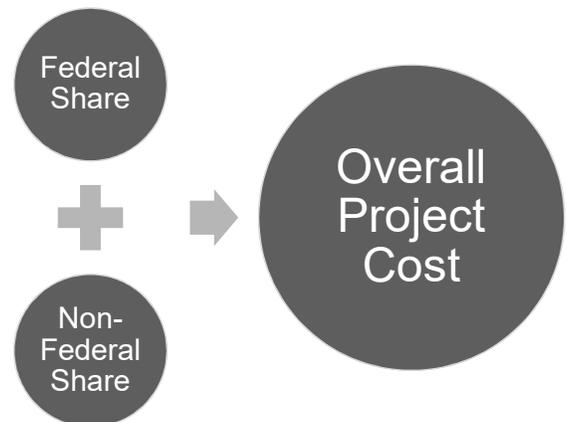
Because of our statutory requirement, a 1:1 funding match is required. Applicants must demonstrate **at the time of application** a matching non-Federal share of at least 50% of the total project cost. This match can be made up of cash or in-kind contributions. However, all in-kind contributions must be directly related to the overall project cost and its

outcomes. You must also include a valuation of any in-kind contributions in both your match commitment letters and budget.

Match Requirements

At the time that the application is submitted, matching shares (whether cash or in-kind) must:

- **Be Committed** to the project for the period of performance
- **Be Available** as needed, and
- **Not be conditioned or encumbered** in any way that may preclude its use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance

Applications should include signed Commitment Letters for all matching funds from **ALL SOURCES** (i.e. applicant, co-applicants, or third-party organizations)

At the time that the application is submitted, matching shares of any type must meet the following three thresholds. They must be committed to the project for the full period of performance, be available as needed, and not be conditioned or encumbered in any way that may preclude their use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance.

Applications should include signed Commitment Letters for all matching funds from **ALL SOURCES** (i.e. applicant, co-applicants, or third-party organizations). These commitment letters should clearly state that the matching funds meet all of the three previously mentioned thresholds. These letters should also be signed by an authorized representative for the organization and should help show that your project has is supported.

Government Support Letters

- Required if applicant is a non-profit organization, institution of higher education, public-private partnership, science or research park, Federal lab, or EDD

- Must include one or more letters to show that the application is supported by one or more States, political subdivision of a State, or native organizations that encompass all or substantial portion of the region that will be served under the proposed project.

Letters from Whom?

- Support from federal officials doesn't meet requirements
- Examples include state and local executive branch officials, state and local legislators, or native organizations

NOFO Section D.2a.iv

STEM

If an applicant is a non-profit organization, a non-public institution of higher education, a public-private partnership, a science or research park, a federal laboratory, or an economic development organization or similar entity, then they must include a letter or resolution that show that the application is supported by one or more states, political subdivisions of a

state (such as a county), or tribal organization. This letter or resolution should encompass all or a substantial portion of the region that would be served under the proposed project. Please note that support from federal officials does not meet this requirement. Examples of authorities that may indicate such support include State and local executive branch officials (ie – state governors, state cabinet members, mayors or other municipal executives), state and local legislators (such as state legislators and city councilpersons), or native organizations. If the applicant is a state, Indian tribe, city, or other political subdivision of a state, this requirement does not apply.

Budget Details

- **Budgets** and **Budget Narratives** should be thought of holistically – this includes match and how it is discussed within your application
- Example: If you are applying for $250,000 in STEM funds, you would be running a (minimum) $500,000 initiative – and budget. The budget should flow seamlessly with your application – with the costs in your budget easily traceable to program activities.

A budget template is included on the STEM Talent Challenge website

You will have to submit your overall budget, which you will use to complete the 424 and 424A forms, and a budget narrative. Budgets and budget narratives should be thought of holistically, that is, you should think of each item as it relates to your total budget, not just the match or the federal share. For example, if you are applying for $250,000 in STEM funds,

you would be running *at least* a $500,000 initiative – and budget. The budget should flow seamlessly with your application, and the costs in your budget should be easily traceable to program activities. To assist you in formulating your budget, we have included a budget template on the STEM Talent Challenge website. You will also want to ensure that all references to your budget in the application match, and that the amount of matching funds that you list in the budget is fully documented by commitment letters.

Innovation and entrepreneurship rely on STEM-capable talent to advance. This challenge seeks to develop that talent, but leaves the "how" up to you. Experimentation is encouraged.

To conclude this section, Innovation and entrepreneurship rely on STEM-capable talent to advance. This challenge seeks to develop that talent, but leaves the "how" up to you. Experimentation is encouraged.

Frequently Asked Questions

Some of the most commonly asked questions about the STEM Talent Challenge

Now, that we have talked about the origins and design of the program, last year's competition, and how to apply, we will go over some frequently asked questions that we hope will assist you in this process.

Can existing programs apply for this funding or is it for new projects only?

- Projects may implement new or expand an existing STEM competency-based work-and-learn models; however, activities and outcomes should closely align with the goals of the STEM Talent Challenge.

- **Iterative, innovative, and unproven models are highly encouraged to apply.**

Read slide. Worth noting, current STEM Talent Challenge grantees are not eligible to apply for this year's funding. However, grantees of other OIE programs, such as SPRINT or B2S are eligible to apply.

How does the STEM Talent Challenge compare to the Good Jobs Challenge?

- The STEM Talent Challenge aims to build STEM Talent Training systems and strengthen regional economies
- It will support **burgeoning, innovation-based economies** by **developing systems** that will **ready workers for future jobs.**
- Under this challenge, the max funding amount is $250,000 and we anticipate that we will make 8 awards

- The Good Jobs Challenge is designed to build and scale larger programs by supporting existing established employers and getting workers into in-demand jobs

The STEM Talent Challenge aims to build STEM talent training systems to strengthen regional innovation economies. The STEM Talent Challenge will help support burgeoning innovation-based economies by developing systems that will ready workers for future jobs. The maximum federal share of each STEM Talent Challenge award is $250,000; EDA

anticipates making approximately eight awards.

The Good Jobs Challenge is designed to help get Americans back to work by investing in (1) developing and strengthening regional workforce training systems that support sectoral partnerships, (2) designing sectoral partnerships, and (3) implementing sectoral partnerships that will lead to high-quality jobs. The Good Jobs Challenge is designed to build and scale larger programs by supporting existing established employers and getting workers into jobs that are in demand now. For the Good Jobs Challenge, EDA has allocated $500,000,000; EDA anticipates making approximately 25 to 50 awards.

For more information, see the STEM FAQ

document for more information

Should projects follow the standards of current industry-recognized apprenticeships?

- Traditional apprenticeship standards can be followed by projects applying for this challenge, but this is **not** a requirement.

- This challenge does not have strict rules governing work-and-learn models, allowing applicants to be creative in their approach.

Another question we've heard is this one - should projects follow the standards of current industry-recognized apprenticeships? Again, the answer to this question is, "no." Traditional apprenticeship standards can be followed by projects applying for this challenge, but this is **not** a requirement. This challenge does not have strict rules governing work-and-

learn models, allowing applicants to be creative in their approach. As we have said throughout this presentation, innovation and experimentation are encouraged. Emily, can you take the next slide?

Is the STEM Talent Challenge funded by the CARES Act or the American Rescue Plan?

- No, the STEM Talent Challenge is not funded by the CARES Act or the American Rescue Plan. It is authorized by Section 28 of Stevenson-Wydler and is funded through its own appropriation.
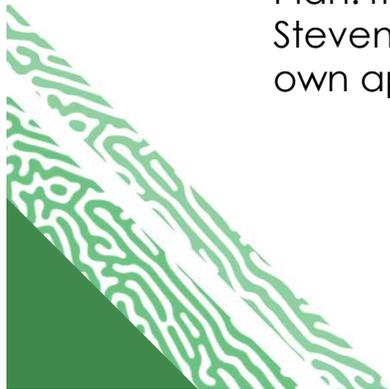
We have also been asked if the STEM Talent Challenge is funded by the CARES Act or the American Rescue PLan or if it is a response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The answer to this question is, again, no - the STEM Talent Challenge is not funded by the CARES Act. It is authorized by Section 28 of Stevenson-Wydler and is funded through its own appropriation. Worth

noting, this program is separate from the Good Jobs Challenge, EDA's other current workforce funding opportunity under ARPA.

Can this funding be used to directly support program participants, such as through apprentice wages or stipends?

- Yes. In contrast to last year, funds from this challenge can be used to pay wages, stipends, or other payments directly to the student or worker

(Read Slide)

Additional Questions?

- Reach out to us via email at oie@eda.gov or visit the website for more resources:

  eda.gov/oie/stem

I want to thank you for taking the time to learn more about the STEM Talent Challenge. We are truly excited about the opportunity of this challenge and of the lasting impacts that it will cause. We look forward to receiving your applications, and hope that this webinar has provided more clarity in that process. Should you have any additional questions, please reach out

to us via email or visit the website for more resources.