EDA Assistance to Coal Communities 2018
Frequently Asked Questions
(FAQ)

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been prepared to complement the official Assistance to Coal Communities 2018 (**ACC 2018**) Notice of Funding Availability (NOFO) released as part of the FY18 EDAP NOFO on **Monday, July 2, 2018** [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735]. Interested applicants are encouraged to refer to both the funding announcement and this FAQ for detailed information about ACC 2018 topics, including applicant eligibility, eligible program activities, and application preparation and submission procedures.

The questions and answers summarized in this document are organized by general topic area. Please refer to the table of contents, below.

NOTE: *This FAQ may be updated occasionally as new, additional questions are received. Please refer to the ACC 2018 home page (www.eda.gov/coal) for FAQ updates and other important program information.*

Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC) 2018 FAQ – Table of Contents

A. ACC 2018 Funding Availability

1. How much FY18 ACC funding is available?

Subject to the availability of funds, EDA has approximately $30 million in FY18 appropriations available for ACC. Publication of these FAQs does not obligate Department of Commerce (DOC) or EDA to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds.

2. Is the total $30 million available for application on a nationwide basis, or should applicants submit projects for consideration by EDA's regional offices?

Interested applicants must apply for an ACC 2018 grant through their EDA regional office. Information about which states are covered by each of EDA's six regional offices is available on the EDA web site: www.eda.gov/contact.

Additional information about the ACC 2018 proposal and application development, submission, and selection procedures are discussed under Sections D and F, below.

B. ACC 2018 Eligibility Criteria

1. Where can ACC 2018 funds be used?

Applicants must propose a project located in or substantially benefitting a community or region that meets EDA distress criteria. Please see Section C.3. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735], "Economic Distress Criteria."

In addition, ACC 2018 projects must also be located within and targeted to communities or regions that have been impacted, or can reasonably demonstrate that they will be impacted ("coal-impacted communities and regions"), by coal mining or coal power plant employment loss, or employment loss in relevant supply chain industries.[1] See Section C.3.j. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735], "Special Need Criteria."

2. What if a coal-impacted community or region does not meet EDA's Economic Development Assistance Programs (EDAP) unemployment rate and per capita income economic distress criteria? Does EDA provide alternative means by which these could still qualify as eligible for ACC funding?

Applicants may also be eligible for ACC 2018 funding under EDA's "Special Need" criteria. EDA "Special Need Criteria" are summarized under Section C.3. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735]:

"For the purposes of determining eligibility based on a "Special Need", an applicant must provide current and appropriate economic and demographic statistics for the applicable Region

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[1] Examples of supply chain industries include, but are not necessarily limited to, manufacturers of mining equipment and parts for coal-fired power plants and transportation companies that carry coal.

to support the identified Special Need. EDA will base its Special Need eligibility determination on whether the proposed project meets the specific requirements outlined below or, in cases where specific thresholds are not identified, on whether the data and information provided by the applicant presents a compelling case that the Region meets the Special Need criteria, as defined by EDA.

Designation of the project region as a "Qualified Opportunity Zone" is included among the Special Need eligibility criteria. The complete list of Special Need criteria is found on pp. 16-17 of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735].

NOTE: Applicants and their respective communities and regions deemed to be eligible for EDA funding under these Special Need criteria must still also meet the criteria for coal-impacted communities and regions as described above in order to be deemed eligible by EDA for ACC assistance.

3. Will EDA target or prioritize the investment of ACC 2018 funds for multi-jurisdictional regions?

Yes. The EDA funding principles for ACC 2018 funds are summarized under Section A.3.b. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735], These include projects designed to produce a multi-jurisdictional impact that strive to produce economic diversification and job creation on a multi-jurisdictional basis. Among other factors, such projects will be prioritized for selection and funding. "Multi-Jurisdictional" is a term that can include, but is not limited to:

- Multiple communities within a county;
- Multiple counties within a region;
- Multiple regions within a state; and
- Multiple regions in two or more states.

4. What entities are eligible to apply for an ACC 2018 grant?

EDA will accept grant applications from eligible applicants, as described below. If an application is submitted by a group of co-applicants, each co-applicant must individually meet EDA eligible applicant criteria. Further, the application should include information that clearly specifies how the co-applicants will work together and which portions of the scope of work each co-applicant is responsible to manage.

Eligible Applicants
1. **District Organization;**
2. **Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes;**
3. **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;**
4. **Institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education;**
5. **Public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.**

5. Do EDA requirements stipulate that a grant applicant must be located in the project community or region in order to be eligible for project funding?

No. An applicant that meets any of the eligible applicant criteria described under the previous answer is eligible to apply and may be considered for an EDA grant award. With respect to EDA's geography-based eligibility requirements (Economic Distress including Special Need, and Coal Impact), the key factor is the location of the project itself. For construction projects (including design and engineering), the project must be located within an eligible Region. For non-construction projects, the investment's scope of work must primarily benefit an eligible Region and stakeholders from that eligible area must be directly engaged.

6. My organization recently received a grant from EDA (which may have included an FY15 or FY16 POWER grant, or an ACC 2017 grant); will this affect our eligibility for an ACC 2018 grant?

No; any current or past recipient of an EDA award is eligible to apply under this competition, but past performance under previous Federal awards is a consideration in the selection process. See also Section E.2.b. ("Grant Officer's Decision") of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735] for additional information.

C. ACC 2018 Eligible Use of Funds

1. What activities are eligible for ACC 2018 funding?

ACC 2018 grants will be made under the authority of EDA's EAA program. Under ACC 2018, EDA prioritizes the submission of applications for implementation projects. All such projects must be consistent with the region's current EDA-accepted Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or equivalent EDA-accepted regional economic development strategy to be considered for award. EDA ACC 2018 grants can also be used to support ACC strategic planning activities [2] that develop, update or refine a CEDS or an equivalent planning document. Contact your regional EDA ACC point of contact (POC) for additional information on eligible activities. See Section G below, "EDA ACC Questions and Points of Contact."

Project activities that can be eligible for ACC 2018 grant awards include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting the creation of new businesses and jobs in a variety of industry sectors, including, but not limited to advanced manufacturing, agriculture, energy, information technology, health care, telecommunications, tourism and recreation, transportation, and cultural and natural assets.

- Implementing local and regional job creation and growth and economic diversification strategies targeted towards affected workers and businesses.

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[2] See 13 C.F.R. § 307.3.

- Strengthening or developing existing or emerging industry clusters.[3]

- Developing business incubator programs.

- Enhancing access to and use of broadband services to support job growth through business creation and expansion.

- The development of economic development diversification strategies in accordance with EDA CEDS criteria.[4]

- Facilitating access to private capital investment and providing related capacity building and technical assistance, such as effective utilization of capital investment for business development and job creation.

- Facilitating and promoting market access for goods and services created and manufactured by businesses in the impacted community/region.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their EDA regional ACC program POC for specific guidance pertaining to the eligible use of program funds. See Section G below.

2. **Can ACC awards be used to finance construction activities?**

Yes, construction activities are eligible for ACC 2018 funding and may be awarded by EDA.

3. **Can ACC 2018 grant awards be used to support multi-year projects and activities?**

Per Section B.2. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735], EDA expects that all projects will proceed efficiently and expeditiously, and EDA encourages applicants to clearly document how quickly the applicant will be able to start and complete the proposed work. All construction projects are expected to be completed within five years from the date of award.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss the anticipated timing of project commencement and completion with their EDA regional office. See Section G below.

D. ACC Application Procedures: Proposals and Complete Applications

1. **What are the steps I need to follow to apply for an ACC 2018 grant?**

As with EDA's other EDAP programs, all ACC 2018 submissions are subject to the agency's two-phase review process.

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[3] Industry clusters are networks of interconnected firms and supporting institutions in a common geographic region. Clusters also are generally defined by and benefit from shared labor pools, infrastructure and markets.

[4] CEDS Content Guidelines: https://www.eda.gov/ceds/

Phase 1, Project Proposal

Applicants may first submit a project proposal for <u>review and consideration</u>. Please refer to Section D.2.a. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735] regarding the forms that are required for a complete proposal. Complete proposals will be reviewed in accordance with responsiveness criteria described in Section E.1.a. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735].

Applicants whose proposals are deemed by EDA to be responsive to the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735] may submit a complete application and proceed to Phase 2, as described directly below.

Phase 2, Complete Project Application

Please refer to Section D.2.b. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735] regarding the forms that are required for a complete application. Complete applications will be reviewed in accordance with merit review criteria as described in Section E.2. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735].

NOTE: For expediency, an applicant may submit a complete application as outlined in Section D.2.b. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735], either <u>in lieu of</u> ***or*** <u>concurrent with</u> a proposal. The submission will still proceed through EDA's two-phase review process described below. This option is described further under Question D9 below. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their EDA regional ACC 2018 POC for additional information (See Section G below).

2. Submission Options

<u>NOTE:</u> EDA strongly encourages applicants to submit their proposals and any subsequent applications electronically via Grants.gov (www.grants.gov). However, EDA will also accept hard copy (paper) submissions if these are mailed according to the following guidance as provided under the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735].

Applicants have the following options for the submission of both project proposals and any complete applications:

- **Electronic Submissions**
  - Applicants can locate the funding opportunity on Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) using Funding Opportunity Number "**EDAP2018**."
  - All components of the ACC 2018 proposal and application packages are identical to those required under EDAP, and may be accessed and downloaded (in a screen-fillable format) at: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

- o The preferred electronic file format for attachments is Adobe portable document format (PDF); however, EDA will accept electronic files in Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or Microsoft Excel.

- **Hard Copy Submissions:**
  - o Applicants that choose to submit hard copies of their complete ACC 2018 project proposals and any subsequent complete applications must include **one original** and **two copies** of the complete application package (including **all required signatures**, as applicable).
  - o Hard copies submitted to EDA must be mailed with delivery confirmation that indicates the application package has been received in the applicable EDA regional office.
  - o Complete information describing the requirements pertaining to the hard copy submission of proposals and complete applications is found under Section D.4.a.ii ("Paper Submissions") of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735].
  - o Applicants may obtain the FY18 EDAP application package electronically at Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) using Funding Opportunity Number [**EDAP2018**].
  - o Eligible applicants may also request a paper/hard copy of both a proposal package and a complete application package by contacting the applicant's EDA regional office. See Section G below.

3. **How will we know that our proposal has been received? Will we be able to check the status of our proposal?**

Electronic Submissions: Upon the applicant's successful submission of a complete proposal, www.grants.gov will generate a confirmation page with a project proposal number. Applicants can use this number to check the status of their proposal.

Hard Copy Submissions: EDA strongly encourages applicants who submit hard copies of their ACC 2018 proposals to transmit these packages via any delivery company that provides tracking information, including:

- United States Post Office Certified Mail (https://www.usps.com/ship/insurance-extra-services.htm)
- United Parcel Service (https://www.ups.com/WebTracking/track?loc=en_us)
- Federal Express (https://www.fedex.com/apps/fedextrack/?action=track)
- DHL (http://www.dhl-usa.com/en.html)

In addition, EDA also strongly encourages applicants to contact their regional ACC 2018 POC to confirm that the regional office has received the applicant's hard copy submission and to subsequently obtain the status of their proposal/application. See Section G below.

4. **What should applicants do if they have questions as they prepare their ACC 2018 proposals and applications?**

Applicants are encouraged to contact their EDA regional office with any questions or requests for technical guidance pertaining to ACC 2018 proposal and application requirements. Refer to

Section G below. EDA regional office contact information is also available on the EDA web site: www.eda.gov/contact.

5. **Are costs directly associated with preparing an ACC 2018 grant proposal and/or complete application eligible for reimbursement?**

No, direct costs associated with the preparation of an ACC 2018 proposal and/or complete application are not eligible for reimbursement.

6. **What are the submission deadlines for ACC 2018 proposals and applications?**

ACC 2018 proposals and applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible in FY18.**

7. **What if we need to edit our proposal after it has been submitted?**

If you need to reopen your project proposal submission, contact your EDA regional ACC 2018 POC, as specified under Section G below.

8. **What if the applicant's region overlaps the jurisdictional boundaries of multiple EDA Regional Offices?**

Under these circumstances, potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the EDA regional office(s) with jurisdiction over the geographic location of the proposed project to discuss the most practical approach to the development and submission of a project proposal. See Section G below.

9. **Does EDA facilitate an expedited review process for project proposals and applications?**

Yes, it is possible for applicants to work with their EDA regional office partners to combine their proposal and application under one submission. Per Section D.2. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735] ("Content and Form of the Proposal or Application Package"); however, as noted, the applicant's submission **will still proceed through EDA's two-phase review process. If an applicant submits an application in lieu of or concurrent with a proposal package, the regional office POC must first make a Phase I determination regarding the applicant's submission before moving to Phase II, the application phase, if a responsive determination is made.**

10. **Does my proposal (as opposed to my full application) need to include letters of support or letters demonstrating matching funds?**

No, applicants are not required to include these types of letters as part of the proposal submission package. Applicants that are asked to submit a complete ACC 2018 application will be required to include support letters, along with other documentation as specified under the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735].

11. We have already submitted an EDAP application to our EDA regional office. Is it possible for our application to be considered for ACC funding instead?

It may be possible that this outcome can be accommodated; however, given that there are application requirements specific to ACC 2018 funding, the applicant may need to amend and/or resubmit the proposal and application. If your organization has already submitted an EDAP application to your EDA regional office, and you would now prefer for your project to be considered for ACC 2018 funding, you are advised to immediately contact your regional Economic Development Representative (EDR) to initiate this discussion. EDA regional office contact information is available online at the following link: www.eda.gov/contact.

E. ACC Cost-Sharing or Match Requirements

1. Do ACC 2018 projects have a matching fund requirement?

ACC 2018 match requirements are outlined in Section C.2. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735] ("Cost Sharing or Matching"). Nearly all ACC 2018 awards will require the applicant to provide matching funds. However, as with EDA's other Economic Development Assistance Programs, there are very narrow exceptions to this requirement. See Section C.2. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735] for further information.

2. What are the eligible sources of matching funds that applicants can use for purposes of an ACC project?

EDA will accept cash or in-kind contributions to meet the required matching share so long as the match is considered eligible in accordance with EDA regulations at 13 C.F.R. Part 301 Subpart D and with applicable guidelines as laid out 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at §200.306.

Regardless of the source or sources of project match contributions (either cash or in-kind), each applicant "must provide documentation to EDA demonstrating that the matching share is committed to the Project, will be available as needed and is not or will not be conditioned or encumbered in any way that may preclude its use consistent with the requirements of the Investment Assistance."[5] In order to meet these requirements, applicants may submit for each source of matching share, a commitment letter or equivalent document signed by an authorized representative of the organization providing the matching funds. Additional documentation may be requested by EDA in order to substantiate the availability of the matching funds.

Certain Federal funds can also qualify as eligible sources of match so long as this use is specifically identified under a given program's authorizing statute, and which may be determined by EDA's reasonable interpretation of the statute. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their EDA regional office partners to discuss their specific match contribution questions. See Section G below.

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[5] 13 C.F.R. § 301.5.

F. ACC Application Selection and Award

1. **How will applicants be notified to submit a full application? How will final award notices be made?**

Applicants should expect written notification from EDA as to whether the Proposal Review Committee (PRC) has found their proposal to be responsive or not to the criteria for ACC 2018 funding within 30 days of receipt of their complete proposal. If the applicant's proposal is deemed responsive, EDA will inform the applicant that it may submit a complete application for review by EDA's Investment Review Committee (IRC). See Section E.1 and 2 of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735] for further information regarding the IRC review process.

Applicants should expect written notification from EDA regarding the outcome of the IRC evaluation process within 60 days of EDA's receipt of their **complete application**. See Section E.1.b. ("Phase II: Investment Review Committee") of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735] for further information.

2. **How will EDA evaluate ACC 2018 proposal and application submissions?**

Program staff from EDA will review ACC project proposal and application submissions according to the criteria outlined under Section E. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735] ("Proposal and Application Review Information").

NOTE: ACC proposals and applications will be evaluated as a discrete subset of other EDAP submissions that are received by EDA's regional offices, and will not otherwise compete with non-ACC EDAP proposals and applications for consideration and selection for award.

3. **The FY18 EDAP NOFO describes average ranges of grant award amounts for EDA ACC 2018 projects. Can applicants apply for amounts that are not within these ranges?**

Yes. The FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735] establishes a general priority to support large-scale economic development projects, along with average grant amounts within a certain dollar range that EDA anticipates awarding. However, these ranges do not represent hard-and-fast limits (either minimum or maximum) to the total grant amount that an applicant may apply for, or otherwise receive.

Note- while there is no minimum or maximum total grant amount under the ACC 2018 competition, the maximum Federal share per project will generally depend on the relative need of the area in which a project is located. See Section C.2. of the FY18 EDAP NOFO [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=306735], "Cost Sharing or Matching," for further information.

4. **Does EDA plan to officially issue ACC 2018 grant awards on a specific date?**

EDA will accept and evaluate ACC proposals and applications on a rolling basis, contingent upon the availability of ACC 2018 funds. EDA will announce ACC 2018 grants in similar fashion, on an ongoing basis as applications are selected for award, and subject to the availability of ACC 2018 funds.

G. EDA ACC 2018 Questions and Points of Contact (POC)

ACC 2018 inquiries can be directed to the following ACC POC in each EDA Regional Office:

EDA Regional Office	Regional ACC POC	Email	Phone Number
Atlanta	Pam Farmer	PFarmer@eda.gov	404-730-3026
Austin	Jessica Falk	JFalk@eda.gov	512-381-8168
Chicago	Robin Bush	RBush@eda.gov	312-789-9750
Denver	Kirk Keysor	KKeysor@eda.gov	406-599-9795
Philadelphia	Tracey Rowan	TRowan@eda.gov	304-533-4497
Seattle	Brian Parker	BParker2@eda.gov	206-220-7675