

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name:** Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)
- **Notice of Funding Opportunity Title:** FY 2021 EDA University Center Economic Development Program Competition
- **Announcement Type and Date:** Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) dated April 5th, 2021.
- **Funding Opportunity Numbers:**
 - **Chicago Regional Office:** EDA-CHI-TA-CRO-2021-2006893
 - **Philadelphia Regional Office:** EDA-PHI-TA-PRO-2021-2006894
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.303, Economic Development – Technical Assistance
- **Dates:** The deadline for receipt of applications is Friday June 4, 2021. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. Applications only will be accepted electronically through www.grants.gov (Grants.gov). Applicants are advised to carefully read the application and submission information provided in section D of this NOFO.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** This NOFO announces the availability of funding for EDA’s FY 2021 University Center Economic Development Program Competition. This program funds technical assistance provided by an accredited institution of higher education or a consortium of accredited institutions of higher education that is focused on one or more of the following program focus areas: advancing regional commercialization efforts, advancing high-growth entrepreneurship, cultivating innovation, encouraging business expansion in a region’s innovation cluster(s), developing a high-skilled regional workforce, and increasing the resiliency of a region. EDA solicits competitive applications from accredited institutions of higher education and from consortia of accredited institutions of higher education that are located in and have programs targeting only geographic areas served by EDA’s Chicago and Philadelphia Regional Offices:

Chicago Regional Office	Serves: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Muscatine and Scott counties in Iowa
Philadelphia Regional Office	Serves: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, and West Virginia

- **Eligible Applicants:** An accredited institution of higher education, including a community college, junior college, or a consortium of accredited institutions of higher education is eligible to apply for and to receive funding under the University Center Economic Development Program. *See* section C.1 of this NOFO.
- **Award Notification:** Subject to the availability of funding, successful applicants should expect to receive awards within approximately 75 calendar days from the application closing date and times set out in this NOFO. Awards will have an initial funding period of twelve months (as part of a five-year period of performance) with an estimated start date on or about September 1, 2021. *See* section F.1. of this NOFO for award notification information.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

<u>A. Program Description</u>	<u>5</u>
1. Overview	5
2. EDA Investment Priorities	8
3. Statutory Authority for the University Center Program	9
<u>B. Federal Award Information.....</u>	<u>10</u>
1. What funding is available under this announcement?	10
2. What type of funding instrument will be used to make awards and how long will a project’s period of performance be?	10
3. Post-Approval Requirements	10
<u>C. Eligibility Information.....</u>	<u>11</u>
1. Eligible Applicants.....	11
2. Cost Sharing or Matching	11
<u>D. Application and Submission Information.....</u>	<u>12</u>
1. Address to Request Application Package	12
2. Content and Form of Application Submission.....	13
3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM).....	23
4. Submission Dates and Times	23
5. Intergovernmental Review.....	24
6. Funding Restrictions	24
7. Other Submission Requirements.....	25
<u>E. Application Review Information</u>	<u>26</u>
1. Evaluation Criteria	26
2. Review and Selection Process	28
3. Federal Awardee Performance & and Integrity Information System (FAPIS) Review ..	29
<u>F. Federal Award Administration Information.....</u>	<u>29</u>
1. Federal Award Notification	29
2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	30
3. Reporting.....	30
<u>G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts.....</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>H. Other Information</u>	<u>31</u>
1. Right to Use Information	31
2. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure	32
3. Notice of Government-Wide Procurement Restriction.....	32

4. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions	33
5. EDA’s Non-Relocation Policy.....	33
6. Audit Requirements	33
7. Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	33
8. Certifications Requires by Annual Appropriations Acts for Corporations and for Awards over \$5 Million.....	34
<u>I. Instructions for Application Submission via Grants.gov</u>	34
1. Register early and submit early.....	35
2. Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) requirement.....	35
3. Field limitations and special characters.	35
4. Verify submission was successful.	35
5. Grants.gov Systems Issues.....	36

A. Program Description

1. Overview

EDA's mission is to lead the Federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for economic growth and success in the worldwide economy. EDA fulfills this mission through strategic investments and partnerships that create the conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life by expanding the capacity of individuals, firms, and communities to maximize the use of their talents and skills to support innovation, lower transaction costs, and responsibly produce and trade valuable goods and services. The achievement of economic development potential results in regional economic ecosystems that foster globally competitive regions throughout the United States. The economic ecosystem is a multifaceted concept that links together a highly networked regional talent pool, innovation infrastructure (including both tangible and non-tangible types), research and science support systems, and a culture of collaboration sustained by institutions focused on advancing mutual gain for the public and the private sector.

Innovation is the key to greater productivity and global competitiveness, resulting in the creation of new and better jobs, a more resilient economy, and the attainment of national economic goals. Regional collaboration is essential for economic recovery and advancement because regions encompass the centers of growth and competition in the new global economy. Regions achieve greater results because of the presence of diverse economic agents and, more often than not, clusters of services and industry.

Quite simply, regions that work together will fare better than those that do not. Infusing more innovation and collaboration into America's regions has the potential to help communities create and retain higher-wage and sustainable jobs, leverage the flow of private capital, and strengthen America's ability to compete in the global marketplace.

EDA recognizes that institutions of higher education are critical players in the development of vibrant economic ecosystems. Universities are sources of significant economic development assets—such as faculty, staff, students, research and proof of concept centers, laboratories, and high-speed broadband networks—that can support regional economic growth. In addition, universities create significant knowledge spillovers and possess broader and deeper networks of expertise that can assist innovators and entrepreneurs. Potential university-based support for economic growth includes the commercialization of research, the conversion of intellectual property and ideas into products and services, and the support of regionally-owned strategies that support business expansion and job creation. Additionally, universities facilitate environments conducive to trade and global exports by providing services for businesses to connect to international markets.

The purpose of EDA's University Center Economic Development Program (also referred to in this announcement as the University Center program) is to enable institutions of higher education and consortia of institutions of higher education to establish and operate University Centers specifically focused on using university assets to build regional economic ecosystems that support innovation and high-growth entrepreneurship, resiliency and inclusiveness. University Centers collaborate with other EDA partners, such as Economic Development Districts (EDDs) by providing expertise and technical assistance to develop, implement, and support regional strategies that result in job creation, high-skilled regional talent pools, and business expansion in

a region’s innovation clusters.¹ Expertise and technical assistance may address, for example, workforce training programs, applied research centers, technology commercialization, feasibility studies, market research, economic impact analyses training, and other technical assistance to help communities foster vibrant economic ecosystems.

Since FY 2004, EDA has administered the University Center program as a competitive multi-year program. As presented in the table below and contingent upon availability of appropriations, EDA will hold University Center program competitions in two of its six regional offices on a rotating basis.

FY 2021 (this competition)	Chicago Regional Office Philadelphia Regional Office	Serves: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Muscatine and Scott counties in Iowa Serves: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, and West Virginia
FY 2022 (next competition)	Atlanta Regional Office Seattle Regional Office	Serves: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee Serves: Alaska, Arizona, American Samoa, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nevada, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Republic of Palau, and Washington
FY 2023	Austin Regional Office Denver Regional Office	Serves: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas Serves: Colorado, Iowa (excluding Muscatine and Scott counties), Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming

EDA does not anticipate creating or funding any additional University Centers outside of this competitive solicitation unless a University Center grantee withdraws from the program or does not perform to EDA’s satisfaction. In such cases, the appropriate EDA regional office may choose to hold an intervening competition.

EDA encourages the submission of applications that will create and nurture regional economic ecosystems through science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skill development,

¹ For purposes of this NOFO, EDA defines clusters as geographic concentrations of firms, workers, and industries that do business with each other and have common needs for talent, technology, and infrastructure. Clusters are essentially networks of similar, synergistic, or complementary entities that are engaged in or with a particular industry sector; have active channels for business transactions and communication; share specialized infrastructure, labor markets, and services; and leverage the region’s unique competitive strengths to stimulate innovation and create jobs. Clusters may cross municipal, county, and other jurisdictional boundaries.

workforce training opportunities, applied research and development, technology commercialization, and targeted activities that cultivate entrepreneurship and improve regional economic development. A regional economic ecosystem supports innovation clusters through three main components:

- A highly networked inclusive regional talent pool, with specialized expertise relevant to the region's innovation clusters (including connections along the supply chain and across disciplines so that researchers, academics, investors, suppliers, and entrepreneurs can efficiently share ideas and best practices);
- A support system for turning discoveries into marketable goods and services, including business counseling, incubation programs, and proof-of-concept centers; and
- Innovation infrastructure (which includes both tangible and non-tangible types) necessary to support innovation and resiliency such as education, workforce development, and financial infrastructure.

In addition, EDA encourages University Center program applications that:

- Align with the DOC Strategic Plan², with a focus on advancing STEM skills and capabilities, supporting workforce training opportunities in accordance with the needs of local and regional employers, and/or enhancing manufacturing capacities within the region;
- Benefit distressed communities³ by linking these communities to larger, more vibrant regional economies, including rural-urban linkages;
- Present a clear plan for collaborating with and assisting other EDA investment partners, recipients, and stakeholders, including Economic Development Districts (EDDs) and Indian Tribes;
- Encompass regional, Statewide, and multi-State programs, and create synergies within EDA's Public Works, Economic Adjustment Assistance, and Partnership Planning programs;
- Offer services within a well-defined geographic region in the States and territories covered by the Chicago and Philadelphia Regional Offices, and provide a full range of economic development research and technical assistance services to EDA regional partners; and
- Tailor services to the region's needs and each sponsoring institution's (or consortium's) strengths.

² <https://www.commerce.gov/about/strategic-plan>

³ Distress, as delineated in the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 3121 *et seq.*), may exist in a variety of forms, including high levels of unemployment, low income levels, large concentrations of low-income families, and significant declines in per capita income because of large numbers (or high rates) of business failures, sudden major layoffs or plant closures significantly adversely affecting a region's economic base, military base closures, natural or other major disasters, depletion of natural resources or reduced tax bases, or substantial loss of population because of the lack of employment opportunities. *See* 13 C.F.R. § 301.3.

EDA will strive to avoid funding duplicative services among selected University Centers.

University Center applicants should demonstrate how they will integrate their programs across their respective institutions and regional stakeholders in order to increase the impact of programs that support economic development. Applicants should also demonstrate a record of success in fostering higher-skill, higher-wage private sector job creation, as well as the ability to engage the private sector and leverage other sources of financial support.

Please note that applicants will be required to identify a program focus of the proposed EDA-supported University Center. See section D.2.a.i of this NOFO for additional details.

2. EDA Investment Priorities

All projects considered for EDA funding under this NOFO must directly support one or more of EDA's Investment Priorities current as of the date of this NOFO. These are:

- a. **Recovery & Resilience:** Projects that assist with economic resilience (including business continuity and preparedness) and long-term recovery from natural disasters and economic shocks to ensure U.S. communities are globally competitive.
- b. **Critical Infrastructure:** Projects that establish the fundamental building blocks of a prosperous and innovation-centric economy and a secure platform for American business, including physical (e.g., broadband, energy, roads, water, sewer) and other economic infrastructure.
- c. **Workforce Development & Manufacturing:** Projects that support the planning and implementation of infrastructure for skills-training centers and related facilities that address the hiring needs of the business community -- particularly in the manufacturing sector -- with a specific emphasis on the expansion of apprenticeships and work-and-learn training models. Also includes projects that encourage job creation and business expansion in manufacturing, including infrastructure-related efforts that focus on advanced manufacturing of innovative, high-value products and enhancing manufacturing supply chains.
- d. **Exports & FDI:** Primarily infrastructure projects that enhance community assets (e.g., port facilities) to support growth in U.S. exports and increased foreign direct investment—and ultimately the return of jobs to the United States.
- e. **Opportunity Zones:** Planning and implementation projects aimed at attracting private investment – including from Opportunity Funds – to grow businesses and create jobs in Census tracts that have been designated as Opportunity Zones. This includes targeted projects located within an Opportunity Zone; projects that, while not located within an Opportunity Zone, have a clear intent of benefitting nearby Opportunity Zone(s); and regional projects that encompass an area containing at least one Opportunity Zone with a clear intent of benefitting that Opportunity Zone. Opportunity Zones are designed to spur economic development by providing tax benefits to investors. For more information on Opportunity Zones and Opportunity Funds, see <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions> (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210108012059/https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-askedquestions>).

3. Statutory Authority for the University Center Program

EDA's authorizing statute is the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 3121 *et seq.*) (PWEDA). The specific authority for the University Center Economic Development Program is section 207 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3147), which authorizes EDA to make grants for the establishment of University Centers. EDA's regulations at 13 C.F.R. parts 300–302 and subpart B of 13 C.F.R. part 306 set forth the general and specific regulatory requirements applicable to the University Center program. EDA's regulations are codified at 13 C.F.R. chapter III and are accessible at <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse>. Scroll down to find Title 13, then click on Chapter III. Likewise, PWEDA is available on the U.S. Government Publishing Office's (GPO's) website at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2016-title42/pdf/USCODE-2016-title42-chap38.pdf>.

B. Federal Award Information

1. What funding is available under this announcement?

For FY 2021, EDA has allocated approximately \$7.4 million to the University Center program (\$2.5 million for the first year of awards under this competition) under funding appropriated through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260). Annual awards for the University Centers selected in past years generally have been in the range of \$80,000 to \$200,000 each, and each participating region has generally made 8 to 10 awards. The Chicago and Philadelphia Regional Offices may choose to fund awards under this competition outside of these ranges. Subject to the availability of funding at the time of award, the funds allocated to the University Center program are anticipated to be available until expended.

2. What type of funding instrument will be used to make awards and how long will a project's period of performance be?

Under this competitive solicitation, EDA may, subject to the availability of funds, award grants to selected University Centers. The awards will have a five-year period of performance, with an initial funding period of one year. The selected University Centers will not have to compete for the second, third, fourth, and fifth years of funding. **Funding beyond the initial year will be dependent upon the availability of funds and upon the recipients' satisfactory performance and progress in achieving milestones and program goals as determined by EDA and expressed in writing.**

3. Post-Approval Requirements

In accordance with 13 C.F.R. § 306.7, EDA will conduct a performance evaluation of each University Center within three years after the initial start date of the award. EDA may conduct an additional performance evaluation prior to the end of the five-year award. The goal of these performance evaluations is to assess the University Center's contribution to providing technical assistance, conducting applied research, meeting program performance objectives, and disseminating project outcomes in accordance with the scope of work funded during the period of performance.

This performance evaluation will include the participation of at least one other University Center on a cost-reimbursement basis as part of the required peer review process.

Two weeks before the recipient's scheduled peer review, the University Center must provide EDA with an abstract of its original proposal, a copy of its presentation on the University Center's performance, and any relevant papers or work product for dissemination to the peer reviewer(s). The recipient should be prepared to respond to questions about their presentation and engage in a discussion about areas of weakness, best practices, and opportunities for further engagement with other EDA stakeholders.

Recipients may also be occasionally asked to participate in various events, including conferences, meetings, and webinars, during the period of performance to share best practices and discuss the program's challenges and opportunities. The topics for these events may not be limited to accomplishments and program progress. Recipients shall provide EDA with an electronic copy or links to recorded webinars of any presentations suitable for posting on EDA's website.

As part of the required progress reports (*see* section F.3. of this NOFO), recipients will be required to provide an overview of how activities of the University Centers are fulfilling the needs of their target regions. For example, University Centers could identify how their activities result in a change in per capita income or help assist businesses, or they may submit a summary of their technology commercialization activities. Recipients are required to comply with all terms and conditions of the award, including specific award conditions required by EDA.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

An accredited institution of higher education, including a community college or junior college, or a consortium of accredited institutions of higher education is eligible to apply for and to receive funding under the University Center Economic Development Program. *See* section 3(12) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122(12)) and 13 C.F.R. § 300.3. A university-affiliated research institution also is eligible to apply for and to receive funding under this NOFO, provided it demonstrates (e.g., through a letter or other documentation from the university president or chancellor) that it maintains the full and integral support of the university with respect to its economic development activities. For applicants applying as a consortium, one accredited institution of higher education must be identified as the lead applicant that would have primary responsibility to EDA and to the other members of the consortium for implementing an award. An organization that is affiliated with and directed by an accredited institution of higher education and that is in good standing may partner with an accredited institution of higher education or consortium to participate in a proposed project.

Pursuant to this NOFO, EDA is soliciting applications from accredited institutions of higher education and from consortia of accredited institutions of higher education to operate University Centers in (and have programs targeting) only the following geographic areas served by the Chicago and Philadelphia Regional Offices:

Chicago Regional Office	Serves: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Muscatine and Scott counties in Iowa
Philadelphia Regional Office	Serves: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, and West Virginia

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Generally, the amount of an EDA award may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the project.⁴ Projects may receive an additional amount that may not exceed up to 30 percent of the total project cost, based on the relative needs of the Region in which the project will be located, as determined by EDA.⁵ In addition, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic

⁴ *See* section 204(a) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144) and 13 C.F.R. § 301.4(b)(1).

⁵ *See* section 204(a) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144) and 13 C.F.R. § 301.4(b)(1).

Development has the discretion to establish a maximum EDA investment rate of up to 100 percent where the project (i) merits and is not otherwise feasible without an increase to the EDA investment rate; or (ii) will be of no or only incidental benefit to the recipient.⁶ Additionally, EDA’s regulations provide discretion to establish a maximum EDA investment rate of up to 100 percent for projects of Indian Tribes.⁷

In-kind contributions may provide the required non-Federal share of the total project cost and can consist of contributions directly related to the proposed project, such as space, equipment, services, or forgiveness or assumptions of debt.⁸ Funds from other Federal financial assistance awards are considered matching share funds only if authorized by statute, which may be determined by EDA’s reasonable interpretation of the statute.⁹

EDA will fairly evaluate all in-kind contributions, which must be eligible in accordance with Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance). The applicant must show that the matching share will: (i) be committed to the project for the project period, (ii) be available as needed, and (iii) not be conditioned or encumbered in any way that may preclude its use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance.¹⁰ 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 to substantiate the availability of the matching funds.

Applicants are *strongly* encouraged to work with the appropriate EDA representative listed in section G of this NOFO to determine how in-kind contributions can be utilized to satisfy the matching share requirement for their respective project concept and application.

D. Application and Submission Information

An applicant **must submit a complete application**, as detailed in section D.2 of this NOFO, to be considered for funding. EDA may seek additional information or documentation from the applicant to clarify information presented in the application. Please see section E of this NOFO for more information on EDA’s review and selection process.

EDA strongly encourages applicants to consult with the appropriate EDA representative listed in section G of this NOFO to discuss whether their project is in alignment with the requirements outlined in this NOFO. This consultation is limited to clarification of technical matters involving their proposed project, project alignment with EDA’s mission and Investment Priorities, and all other relevant and publicly available information relating to general technical matters.

1. Address to Request Application Package

An applicant may obtain the appropriate application package electronically at <https://www.grants.gov/>. Applicants in areas served by the Chicago Regional Office may search for this funding opportunity on Grants.gov using Opportunity Number “**EDA-CHI-TA-CRO-2021-2006893**”, while applicants in areas served by the Philadelphia Regional Office may search

⁶ See section 204(c)(3) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144) and 13 C.F.R. § 301.4(b)(4)

⁷ See 13 C.F.R. § 301.4(b)(5).

⁸ See section 204(b) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144).

⁹ See the definition of “Local Share or Matching Share” at 13 C.F.R. § 300.3.

¹⁰ See 13 C.F.R. § 301.5.

for this funding opportunity on Grants.gov using Opportunity Number “**EDA-PHI-TA-PRO-2021-2006894**”. All components of the appropriate application package may be accessed and downloaded (in a screen-fillable format) at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html>.

Applicants are advised that they must complete the registration process prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov. Registration is not required for an applicant to access, view, or download the application package. *Even though an applicant may be able to view and download an application, if the applicant has not correctly completed the Grants.gov registration process, the applicant will not be able to submit the application electronically for EDA’s review.*

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

A complete application includes all required documents outlined below in Table 1. All relevant forms must be signed electronically by the applicant’s Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR); please see section I.2 of this NOFO for information on AOR requirements. The preferred electronic file format for attachments is Adobe PDF and, when appropriate, Microsoft Excel; however, EDA will accept electronic files in Microsoft Word. EDA will not accept paper, facsimile, or email transmissions of applications. Please refer to important information on submitting your application provided in section I of this NOFO.

All documentation and data submitted should be current and applicable as of the date submitted. Applicants are encouraged to contact the appropriate EDA representative listed in section G of this NOFO for technical assistance regarding application requirements. Additionally, EDA may reach out to the applicant to clarify application materials received.

An application that does not have all of the required components may be considered incomplete and not receive further consideration. *See* section E of this NOFO for information regarding application review.

Table 1: Required Application Documentation
Project Design and Substance Information
Project Narrative
Applicant Capacity and Project Management
Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan
Matching Share Commitment Letters
Resumes of Key Project Staff
Forms and Supporting Documentation
Form SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance)
Form SF-424A (Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs)
Form CD-511 (Certification Regarding Lobbying)
Form SF-LLL (Disclosure Regarding Lobbying) (if applicable)
Form ED-900 (General Application for EDA Programs)

Form ED-900A (Additional EDA Assurances for Construction or Non-Construction Programs)
State Single Point-of-Contract (SPOC)/Executive Order 12372 Compliance Documentation (if applicable)
Organizational Documentation (if applicable)
Indirect Cost Rate Documentation (if applicable)

a. Project Design and Substance

This section provides additional details on project design and subject documentation.

Table 2: Project Design and Substance Documentation	
Document	Number
Project Narrative	One per application
Applicant Capacity and Project Management	One per application
Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan	One per application
Project Sustainability	One per application
Resumes of Key Project Staff	One resume for each key staff member under the application
Matching Share Commitment Letters	One per matching share source

i. Project Narrative

All applicants must provide a Project Narrative of no more than ten (10) total pages with margins no less than one-half inch (0.5”) using Times New Roman font of size twelve (12) points in order to be considered for funding. **Material beyond the tenth page will not be read or considered.** The Project Narrative must provide for a five-year scope of work and for a timeline for implementation during the five-year period of performance. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a clear and concise narrative that includes a compelling justification for the project and the expected outcome(s) that will result from the proposed project. Lengthy applications will not receive greater consideration. *A competitive application will contain the following elements in the Project Narrative:*

- **Cover page and Executive summary:** Includes a project title and a summary of no more than 250 words (note: this may be published on EDA’s website if your application is selected for funding).
- **Description of Service Region:** Identifies the primary service area, along with a description of the communities or regions to be served, and the communities’ or region’s needs and opportunities.
- **Geographic Service Region:** Define the geographic service region of the University Center. For purposes of this competition, a region is defined as “an economic unit of human, natural, technological, capital or other resources, defined geographically.” Geographic areas comprising a region need not be contiguous or defined by political boundaries but should constitute a cohesive area capable of undertaking successful economic development. *See* the definition of “Region” in 13 C.F.R. § 300.3.
 - Please include a map outlining your service region.

- If your service region includes a geography smaller than an entire state, please provide county level FIPS codes for the applicable geographic service region.
- **Industries and Regional Strategies:** Describe the service region’s industries and existing regional economic development strategies. Applicants should identify linkages between the regional strategies and the proposed University Center’s activities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to support any claims with independent, third-party data, regional strategy plans, and existing impact studies.
- **Economic Ecosystem:** Describe the current state of the geographic service region’s economic ecosystem, including the regional talent pool, innovation infrastructure, and support systems to facilitate commercialization of research and technology transfer, as well as the connections between economic ecosystem components and regional economic development strategies. Identify the proposed University Center’s measurable activities that will assist the proposed service area in filling economic ecosystem gaps and achieving regional economic development goals that are part of the regional strategy or strategies.
- **Partnerships:** List existing and potential partnerships with regional economic development stakeholders (e.g., regional planning organizations, Economic Development Districts), trade/export related entities (e.g., U.S. export assistance centers), and other relevant entities associated with the academic institution, and describe ongoing activities. Provide specific examples of the partnerships and the specific activities to be carried out by this partnership during the period of performance.
- **Targeted Beneficiaries:** As noted above, EDA strongly encourages University Centers that benefit distressed communities to link these communities to larger, more vibrant regional economies. The applicant should identify the targeted beneficiaries of the proposed University Center and clearly describe the logical connection between the intended outcomes and the program activities in the proposed geographic service region. Describe, using specific examples, how the proposed program will positively impact the targeted beneficiaries in the proposed geographic service region.
- **Project Timeline:** Applicants must submit a detailed five-year timeline for project implementation that includes significant project benchmarks to gauge program success and accomplishments.
- **Program Focus:** Identify one or more program focus areas of the proposed EDA-supported University Center:
 - *Regional commercialization efforts*
 - *Advancing high-growth entrepreneurship*
 - *Cultivating innovation*
 - *Encouraging business expansion in a region’s innovation cluster(s)*
 - *Developing a high-skilled regional workforce*
 - *Increasing the resiliency of a region.*

If the University Center will have more than one program focus, applicants should clearly indicate the anticipated percentage of time devoted to each focus. Applicants that are current or former EDA-funded University Centers are encouraged to demonstrate how the proposed program is different from or builds upon the previously funded University Center program. Competitive applications will identify how the proposed University Center will support regional economic resiliency and inclusiveness.

- **Project Fit with EDA Investment Priorities:** Applicants must address one or more of the EDA Investment Priorities in accordance with section A.2 of this NOFO. It is not necessary to demonstrate that the project address all EDA Investment Priorities. Applicants should address the Investment Priorities for which there is a clear fit.
- **Scope of Work:** No more than one page linked to the project’s purpose and key milestones, including deliverables that clearly indicate the specific activities that are part of the scope of work.

Table 3: Scope of Work Components
Overview of Scope of Work
Specific Activities
Anticipated Economic Impacts and Benefits

Overview of Scope of Work
Present an overview of the scope of work, explaining how the proposed scope of work will address the specific economic ecosystem gaps identified in paragraph D.2.a.i above.

Specific Activities
<p>Describe specific activities to be undertaken by the University Center during the period of performance, including but not limited to providing technical assistance, conducting applied research, and disseminating information about, and the results of, the University Center’s economic development activities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. For purposes of the University Center program, “technical assistance” includes all economic development activities whether undertaken at the request of an entity outside of the sponsoring institution (or consortium) or directly by the applicant or co-applicants. b. Conducting applied research means the direct use of research to address a specific challenge, meet a specific need, or solve a specific problem experienced by innovators, entrepreneurs, economic planners, and cluster-based industries. c. Disseminating information about the activities of the University Center includes: (1) informing the University Center’s target audience of available assistance; (2) publicizing research findings and best practices; and (3) demonstrating to EDA how measurable economic development outcomes will be realized during the period of performance. <p>EDA-sponsored University Centers engage in various activities to support the economic ecosystem of a region, including targeted commercialization of research, workforce development, and business counseling services. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to:</p>

- Coordinating with regional economic development organizations, such as Economic Development Districts, to support the development and implementation of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS);
- Assisting communities in identifying and defining their workforce talent pool and entrepreneurial capacity related to growing innovation clusters and growth strategies through strategic and sustainable economic development planning efforts;
- Supporting or accelerating technology commercialization and entrepreneurship by assisting in licensing and patenting activities;
- Supporting new product development by using student and faculty expertise and university laboratories and equipment to develop prototypes;
- Assisting entrepreneurs in the establishment of companies to commercialize technology or innovative products and services;
- Assisting existing businesses in increasing productivity and quality, streamlining operations, and cutting costs through the introduction or extension of advanced manufacturing, quality management, and other processes and techniques;
- Supporting business development strategies and enhancing profitability through marketing and sales techniques, new product development analyses, and identification of new markets (including international markets);
- Supporting the regional talent pool through workforce development, professional and leadership development, and core business training; and
- Assisting communities in addressing financial challenges through innovative financing techniques.

These examples are informational only and in no way limit the range of potential proposed activities.

Anticipated Economic Benefits

The applicant should also identify the anticipated economic impacts and benefits to the University Center’s service region, in particular the previously identified economically distressed regions and the target audience. Anticipated benefits may include, but are not limited to:

- Economic impacts of projects assisted as measured by direct, indirect, and induced output, jobs, and income;
- Longitudinal economic impacts over a defined period of at least three years after the University Center assistance is provided to the service region, including identified economically distressed regions;
- Investments of private sector capital;

- The percentage of University Center clients initiating action as a result of the technical assistance provided by the University Center;
- The percentage of University Center clients that achieve the anticipated results;
- Any activities that result in measurable outcomes leading to increased innovation, entrepreneurship, emerging and growing clusters, sustainable economic development practices, and improved resilience to natural or other disasters; and
- Activities that create or enhance inclusive networks supporting innovation, transfer of knowledge, and entrepreneurship.

ii. Applicant Capacity and Project Management

All applicants must provide a statement describing Applicant Capacity and Project Management capabilities. This should not exceed one (1) page with margins no less than one-half inch (0.5”) using Times New Roman font of size twelve (12) points in order to be considered for funding.

A competitive application will:

- Discuss the sponsoring institution’s (or consortium’s) capacity and experience in successfully operating economic development technical assistance programs, especially those focused on regional commercialization, entrepreneurship, and innovation cluster and infrastructure development. Applicants are encouraged to document specific results of past economic development activities and programs.
- Identify other organizations in the proposed service area that provide potentially complementary or duplicative services.
- Outline the processes or strategies the proposed University Center will follow to maximize coordination and interaction with relevant entities, such as District Organizations, Indian Tribes, Councils of Governments, Regional Planning Commissions, and other University Centers, to minimize duplication of services and provide services not currently available. The proposed University Center may also consider engaging with technical assistance and/or membership organizations such as the Educational Association of University Centers (EAUC) and the University Economic Development Association (UEDA).
- Outline the processes or strategies for coordinating economic development efforts among private and public institutions in the proposed service area.
- Outline the processes or strategies for coordinating and accessing key resources of the sponsoring institution (or consortium) to support economic development efforts.
- Discuss past performance in administering economic development technical assistance projects.
- Applicants also should provide an additional two-page summary description of all personnel performing for the applicant under the proposed project.

iii. Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan

The *Budget Narrative* should specifically address each budget line item (including both the Federal share and matching non-Federal share) and the Narrative total should match the total project costs listed in both the SF-424 question 18 line g and SF-424A (“Totals”) for the five-year period of performance.

- Non-Federal Share: The Budget Narrative should include itemized descriptions and valuations of any in-kind matching funds. The activities within the scope of work that are being completed with in-kind matching funds should be clearly identified. The non-Federal share, whether in cash or in-kind, is expected to be paid out at the same general rate as the Federal share; however, if the Budget Narrative proposes otherwise, applicants must also include information that clearly indicates what project elements the matching share funds will support and explain why deviation from paying out at the same general rate is required for the project to be implemented.
- Successful applicants under this NOFO must follow the applicable Federal procurement rules when selecting or entering into any vendor contracts.
- Applicants may use the optional budget spreadsheet available at <https://www.eda.gov/programs/university-centers/applicant-resources/>, to supplement the narrative.

The *Staffing Plan* must list all positions that will be charged to the Federal and non-Federal portion of the budget for each year of the five-year period of performance.

- The staffing plan must include position titles, maximum annual salaries, percentage of time dedicated to the project, and the total amount of annual salaries that would be charged to the project. The total amount of annual salaries that would be charged to the project must be consistent with the amount reflected on the “Personnel” budget line item on the Form SF-424A for each project year.
- Applicants may use the optional staffing plan spreadsheet available at <https://www.eda.gov/programs/university-centers/applicant-resources/>.

iv. Project Sustainability

Applicants must describe the sustainability of the proposed project beyond the period of performance by identifying:

- Sources of funding or a revenue model that supports proposed activities beyond the period of performance, without future EDA funding; and
- Additional resources and partnerships that will continue to support the project beyond the period of performance.

v. Resumes of Key Personnel

Applicants must attach the resumes of key project staff, each of which should not exceed two (2) pages in length. Resumes should be compiled and uploaded together as one PDF file. Pages outside of the 2-page limit will not be considered during review of the application.

vi. Matching Share Documentation (as applicable)

Applicants must submit commitment letters or equivalent documents that demonstrate that *all matching funds* (whether cash or in-kind) from *all sources* (i.e., any applicant, any co-applicants, and any other sources of matching funds) referenced in the application will be *unencumbered, unrestricted, and committed at the time of award* and that are *signed by authorized representatives* of the sources of the matching funds. Authorized Organizational Representatives (AOR) must have the authority to execute documents and to obligate and expend funds on behalf of their respective organizations.

b. Forms and Supporting Documentation

i. Forms

Applications must include the following documents, either per applicant or per application, as noted:

Form	Description	Number
ED-900	General Application for EDA Programs	One per application
ED-900A	Additional EDA Assurances for Construction or Non-Construction Investments	One per applicant
SF-424	Application for Federal Assistance	One per applicant
SF-424A	Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs	One per application
CD-511	Certification Regarding Lobbying	One per applicant
SF-LLL	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)	One per applicant
SPOC	State Single Point-of-Contract (SPOC)/Executive Order 12372 Compliance Documentation (if applicable)	One per application

Special Instructions for Completing Form ED-900

The following modifications to the general application instructions for Form ED-900 apply to this competition and should be observed. *Applicants are advised to read carefully as the following elements have been waived.*

In general, certain sections of Form ED-900 (described below) require project information that may be included in the applicant’s Project Narrative. To avoid redundancy, the applicant may make the following notation “See Project Narrative” (a cross-reference to the corresponding Project Narrative section is strongly encouraged) in the response boxes corresponding to these sections.

- **Section B.3 of Form ED-900.** Applicants under this NOFO are not required to submit a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) referenced in section B.3 of Form ED-900. Applicants should type “Not required for a UC” in the box following the “If Yes” statement.

- **Non-governmental applicants** must complete section F of Form ED-900 and include all documentation required in that section except that applicants are **not** required to submit a resolution of (or letter signed by an authorized representative of) a general-purpose political subdivision of a State acknowledging that the applicant is acting in cooperation with officials of such political division (section F.3). Notwithstanding the applicant’s self-designation, EDA may determine that public universities in certain States should be treated as “governmental” even if the universities utilize nonprofit organizations to structure their relationship with Federal grant agencies.

Special Instructions for Form SF-424A

Applicants must submit Form SF-424A for the entire five-year period of performance. In addition, applicants **must attach five separate itemized budgets**—including columns reflecting the Federal, non-Federal cash, non-Federal in-kind, and total amounts allocated to each budget line item—for each of the five years in the period of performance. Each of the five budgets should have equal total amounts for the Federal portion. Applicants should use the budget categories identified in “Section B – Budget Categories” of Form SF-424A, with sub-categories and explanations as necessary. The allowability of costs under a Federal award is determined in accordance with the provisions of subpart E (“Cost Principles”) of the Uniform Guidance. Generally, allowable costs include salaries, supplies, and other expenses that are necessary, reasonable, and allocable for successful completion of the scope of work.

Special Instructions for a Consortium of Applicants – Complete Application Example

If the applicant is a consortium, each member institution of the consortium must submit the following: Forms SF-424, CD-511, and SF-LLL. For example, if a consortium of three institutions of higher education submitted an application package, a complete application package would consist of:

- Three Forms SF-424 (one for each consortium member);
- One Form SF-424A;
- Three Forms CD-511 (one for each consortium member);
- Three Forms SF-LLL, if applicable (one for each consortium member only if the relevant consortium member expended funds on lobbying costs);
- One Form ED-900;
- Three Forms ED-900A (one for each consortium member); and
- One Project Narrative and other required attachments.

ii. Supporting Documentation

Applications must include the following documentation, as applicable, depending on a given project’s primary service area and the type and history of each applicant organization.

Documentation	Number
Organizational Documentation (if applicable)	For each applicant, depending on entity type
ICR Documentation (if applicable)	For each applicant

1. Organizational Documentation

Each applicant and co-applicant must provide documentation that supports each applicant's or co-applicants' *organizational status as an eligible entity* where applicable (section C.1 of this NOFO) (e.g., articles of incorporation, certificates of good standing, bylaws).

- Institutions of higher education that are 100% publicly controlled are not required to submit organizational documentation.
- Organizations affiliated with and directed by an accredited institution of higher education must submit documentation that demonstrates their status, as determined by EDA. For example, a nonprofit organization should submit the organization's articles of incorporation, bylaws, current certificate of good standing, and a copy of the most recent IRS Form 990 (Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax) (without attachments or schedules).

2. Copy of Current, Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

If facilities and administration (F&A) costs (sometimes referred to as indirect costs) are included in the budget, the applicant must include documentation to support the F&A rate it is using.

For most applicants, this will entail the submission of a copy of its current, approved and negotiated F&A rate agreement (F&A Agreement). Subject to the limitation on F&A costs set out in section D.6. below (i.e., F&A costs may amount to no more than 20 percent of the total project cost), the maximum dollar amount of allocable F&A costs for which EDA will reimburse a recipient shall be the lesser of (i) the line-item amount for the Federal share of F&A costs contained in the EDA-approved budget for the award, or (ii) the Federal share of the total allocable F&A costs of the award based on either (a) the cost rate approved by EDA (or applicable cognizant Federal agency), provided that the cost rate is current at the time the costs were incurred and provided that the rate is approved on or before the award end date, or (b) other acceptable documentation as indicated below.

If the applicant does not have a current or pending F&A Agreement, it may propose indirect costs in its budget; however, the applicant must prepare and submit an allocation plan and rate proposal for approval within ninety days from the award start date. *See* 2 C.F.R. part 200 Apps. III, IV, V, VI, and VII for guidance. The allocation plan and the rate proposal shall be submitted to EDA's Office of Regional Affairs (or applicable cognizant Federal agency). If the applicant chooses to pursue this option, it should include a statement in its Budget Narrative that it does not have a current or pending F&A Agreement and will submit an allocation plan and rate proposal to EDA or the applicant's cognizant Federal agency for approval.

If the applicant does not have a current F&A Agreement, the applicant may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs subject to the exceptions of 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f). The applicant should include a statement in its Budget Narrative that it does not have an F&A Agreement and it is electing to charge the *de minimis* rate.

If the applicant is a State or local unit of government (or a Tribe) that receives less than \$35 million in direct Federal funding per year, it may submit any of the following:

- i. Certificate of F&A Costs from EDA
- ii. Acknowledgment received from EDA and Certificate of F&A Costs
- iii. Cost Allocation Plan approved by a Federal agency; or
- iv. A negotiated F&A Agreement.

iii. Program Income

If the operation of the University Center is expected to generate program income as defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.80, such amounts must be accounted for in the project budget and must be added to those budget line items pertaining to direct program delivery. Unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions applicable to a specific award, program income must be added to funds committed to the project and must be used to further eligible program activities before expiration of the five-year period of performance. *See also* 2 C.F.R. § 200.307.

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, applicants are required to: (i) be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting their application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in their application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. EDA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements, and if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time EDA is ready to make an award, EDA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant. Recipients will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. parts 25 and 170. (The guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. parts 25 and 170 can be found at the U.S. Government Publishing Office website at <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse>. Under “Browse” select “Title 2 – Grants and Agreements,” then click “Go” and follow the link to parts “2-199.”) Note that SAM now encompasses the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) and that the unique entity identifier is commonly the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Numbers. The recipient must keep their SAM registration current.

4. Submission Dates and Times

The closing date for receipt of applications for funding under the FY 2021 University Center Economic Development Program competition is June 4, 2021. The closing time for all applications submitted electronically via www.grants.gov ([Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)) is 11:59 p.m. ET (10:59 p.m. CT) on June 4, 2021. The date and time that an application will be deemed to be electronically received will be determined in accordance with the electronic submission instructions provided at [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) for this NOFO. *See* sections D.7.a. and I of this NOFO for information regarding electronic submissions. **Applications received after the applicable closing date and time will not be considered for funding.**

In addition, please note the following:

- EDA will not accept any unsolicited changes, additions, revisions, or deletions to applications after the submission deadline.
- Throughout the review and selection process, EDA reserves the right to seek clarification from applicants whose applications are being reviewed and considered.
- Applicants may be asked to clarify objectives and work plans and modify budgets or other specifics necessary to comply with Federal requirements and provide supplemental information required by the agency before award. The Chicago or Philadelphia Regional Office may contact an applicant after review of all applications for the purpose of determining whether a proposed project can be completed with a modified scope of work acceptable to EDA or for a smaller budget than that proposed if EDA is unable to fund the full amount requested.
- *See* section E. of this NOFO for application review and selection information.

5. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under this NOFO are subject to the requirements of Executive Order (EO) 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs,” if a State has adopted a process under EO 12372 to review and coordinate proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development (commonly referred to as the “single point of contact review process”). All applicants must give State and local governments a reasonable opportunity to review and comment on the proposed Project, including review and comment from area-wide planning organizations in metropolitan areas. To find out more about a State’s process under EO 12372, applicants may contact their State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC). Names and addresses of some States’ SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget’s home page at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf> (or similar website as updated). Question 19 of Form SF-424 allows applicants to demonstrate compliance with EO 12372.

6. Funding Restrictions

As required under 13 C.F.R. § 306.6(d), at least 80 percent of funding under a University Center program award must be allocated to direct costs of program delivery. Accordingly, regardless of the rate identified in an applicant’s indirect cost rate agreement with its cognizant Federal agency, the F&A costs chargeable to the Federal award (if any) for each project year shall not exceed 20 percent of the Federal award for that year. In addition, EDA is limiting the amount of unrecovered indirect costs that may be included as part of the matching share to 20 percent of the total project costs, less the amount charged to the Federal award.¹¹ For example, if the total project costs are estimated to be \$100,000 and the Federal award amount is \$50,000 (50 percent grant rate), a maximum of \$20,000 in F&A costs, allocated between the EDA share and the local share, may be included in the indirect cost line item of the proposed budget, and no more than \$10,000 may be charged to the Federal award.

Construction activities are not allowable under this competition and may not be charged to the EDA funds of the project or provided as matching share.

¹¹ Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.306(c), unrecovered indirect costs may be included as part of cost sharing or matching only with the prior approval of the Grants Officer.

7. Other Submission Requirements

a. Means of Submission

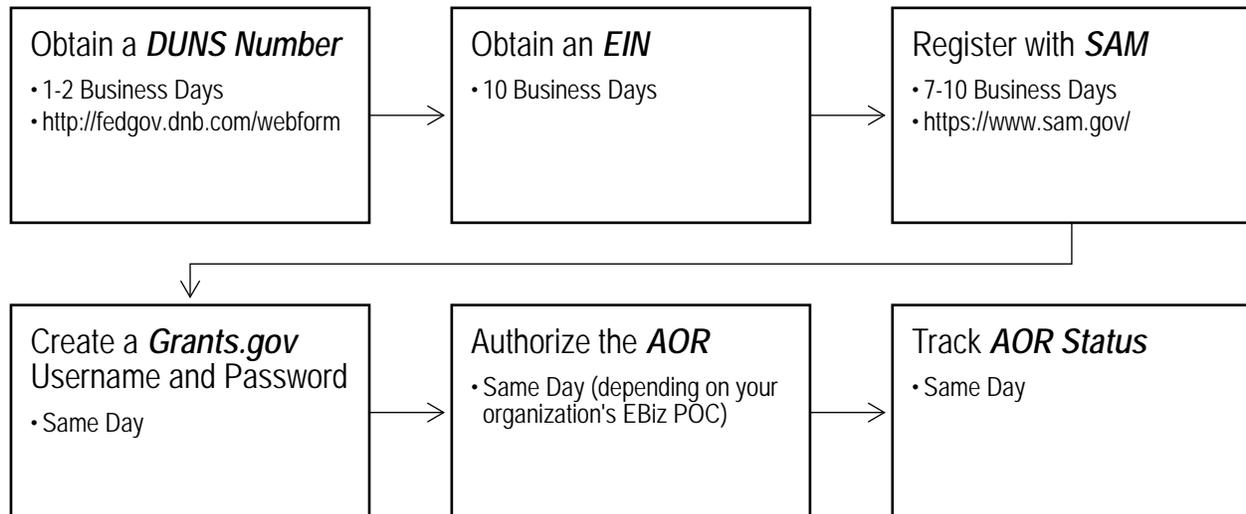
FULL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED THROUGH GRANTS.GOV. EDA will not accept paper, facsimile, or email transmissions of applications for this program except in cases of documented systems issues as described in section I of this NOFO. The preferred electronic file format for attachments is Adobe portable document format (PDF); however, EDA will accept electronic files in Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or Microsoft Excel. *Note that the Grants.gov registration is a multi-stage process that involves a number of steps, including validation, verification, and registration through other websites such as sam.gov. See section I of this NOFO. Please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html> for resources and guides on the Grants.gov registration process.*

Once an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process through Grants.gov during which the application may be accepted or rejected by the system. *Please be advised that the validation process may take 24 to 48 hours to complete. Applications that contain errors will be rejected by Grants.gov and will not be forwarded to EDA for review. The applicant must correct the error before Grants.gov will accept and validate the application.*

Please see section I of this NOFO for more detailed instructions and information on the requirements for submitting applications electronically via Grants.gov.

b. Pre-Submission Registration

Before submitting a Full Application under this NOFO, each applicant must both register with Grants.gov and register its Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) with Grants.gov. Applicants should note that this process can be lengthy, requires interaction with multiple organizations not affiliated with EDA, and requires confirmation at each step.



Applicants already may have completed one or more of the steps set forth in the above flowchart, which depicts an example of how the pre-submission registration process generally flows (e.g., applicants may have already registered with Grants.gov, in which case they do not need to re-register). However, note that *applicants that have not completed any of the above steps may*

require 23 or more business days to complete the required steps serially. Grants.gov is a centrally managed Federal grants portal, and changes or updates to the process outlined above may occur after the publication of this NOFO. Prospective applicants should visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> to ensure that they follow the most up-to-date instructions.

E. Application Review Information

Throughout the review and selection process, EDA, at its sole discretion, may request from applicants written clarification or corrected or missing documents and require that applicants provide such clarifications or corrections in order to continue to be considered for an award under this NOFO. EDA will provide applicants a reasonable amount of time to provide any additional documentation. Failure to provide complete and accurate supporting documentation in a timely manner when requested by EDA may result in the rejection of your application. EDA may ask applicants to clarify application materials, objectives, and work plans, or modify budgets or other specifics as necessary to comply with Federal requirements.

1. Evaluation Criteria

EDA will evaluate applications based on the following core evaluation criteria, with each criterion weighted as indicated:

Summary of Criteria
Project Alignment with EDA Investment Priorities
Applicant Capacity
Responsiveness to NOFO

Project Alignment with EDA Investment Priorities (25%)
The proposed project’s alignment with one or more of EDA’s current Investment Priorities in accordance with section A.2. of this NOFO.
Applicant Capacity (35%)
The capacity of the applicant to execute the required tasks successfully, as assessed by the extent to which the applicant addresses the following equally weighted factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Demonstrates the ability to foster job creation and promote private investment in the regional economy; ii. Indicates the feasibility of the proposed project; iii. Describes how the results of the proposed project will be sustainable and durable; and iv. Demonstrates its organizational capacity, including its past experience in operating technical assistance programs.
Responsiveness to NOFO (40%)
The application’s responsiveness to the objectives of this NOFO, specifically the extent to which the applicant addresses the following equally weighted factors:

- i. Proposes to provide service to a well-defined geographic area and to benefit distressed communities in that area. Competitive applications will address the economic development needs, issues, and opportunities of a defined area within the Chicago Regional Office's or Philadelphia Regional Office's respective geographic service areas and demonstrate that the proposed project will offer coverage to that area, including to distressed communities.
- ii. Describes the proposed technical assistance, applied research, and dissemination of information activities and explains how they will foster regional economic ecosystems. Competitive applications will identify one or more program focus area and articulate how the proposed activities will enhance regional commercialization efforts, advance high-growth entrepreneurship, cultivate innovation, encourage business expansion in a region's innovation cluster(s), develop a high-skilled regional workforce, and/or increase the resiliency of a region. Applicants are strongly encouraged to describe the proposed activities as specifically as possible, particularly with regard to how they will help to advance regional economic development goals.
- iii. Describes how proposed activities will drive regional economic development strategies and priorities and provide unique services and value to the defined geographic area. Priority will be given to applicants that clearly explain how their proposed activities will advance existing regional economic development strategies and priorities by maximizing coordination with and leveraging the array of local, tribal, State, regional, Federal, and private sector economic development efforts occurring in the region.
- iv. Extent to which the proposed University Center leverages other university assets that support regional economic ecosystems and demonstrates the commitment and support (financial and nonfinancial) of the university's leadership. Priority will be given to applicants that clearly demonstrate how the proposed project relates to the expertise of their staff and academic programs and explain how they will leverage other university assets (such as economic analysis divisions, GIS capabilities, planning specialists, research centers, and commercialization or technology transfer offices) to support high-growth entrepreneurship, job creation, and business expansion in the region's innovation clusters.
- v. Degree to which the proposed University Center will engage EDA stakeholders and partners. Priority will be given to applicants that identify activities that will benefit other EDA investment partners and stakeholders (e.g., EDDs, Indian Tribes, regional planning organizations). These projects may include technical assistance to EDA stakeholders; training; technology commercialization; feasibility studies; data collection and analysis; specialized business counseling, incubation programs, and proof-of-concept centers; market and economic impact analysis to strengthen the implementation and realization of regional strategic plans; and short- and long-term intergovernmental and public/private sector planning efforts that help communities foster vibrant economic ecosystems.
- vi. Extent to which the proposed University Center has outlined measurable activities and outcomes associated with the scope of work. Priority will be given to

applicants that clearly describe the metrics they will track and how economic impact will be measured.

vii. Proposes to sustain success beyond the period of performance, including by:

- (1) Demonstrated sustainable funding sources or likelihood for the project to succeed and be sufficient for ongoing activities;
- (2) Adequacy of the plan to continuously identify needs and opportunities; and
- (3) Strength of partnerships, level of commitment, and potential to take advantage of new opportunities to maintain the region's competitiveness.

2. Review and Selection Process

a. Review for Eligibility and Completeness (Technical Review)

EDA staff in the Chicago and Philadelphia Regional Offices will conduct an eligibility and technical completeness review (Technical Review) of all applications received by the above stated deadline (*see* section D.4. of this NOFO). EDA expects applicants to complete and include all required forms and documentation. **Applications that do not contain all forms and required documentation listed in section D.2. of this NOFO may be deemed non-responsive and excluded from further consideration.** However, EDA in its sole discretion reserves the right to consider timely and otherwise complete applications that may contain non-substantive technical deficiencies. Applicants that are ineligible for EDA funding will be informed that they are ineligible.

b. Investment Review Committee (IRC)

The Chicago and Philadelphia Regional Office each will convene an Investment Review Committee (IRC) that consists of at least three Federal employees to discuss and evaluate each application forwarded from the Technical Review to determine the extent to which it meets the evaluation criteria set out in section E.1. of this NOFO (Merit Review). The IRC will forward to the Grants Officer, in order of priority, all applications that it reviewed and recommend those that it determined merit consideration for funding.

c. Grants Officer's Decision

Applications recommended by the IRC and deemed fully compliant with applicable rules and regulations will be forwarded to the Regional Director, who is the Grants Officer under this announcement. Each Regional Director has been delegated the authority to make the final decision on whether to fund an application and may select a project for funding that differs from the IRC's recommendations based on any of the following selection factors:

- i. The application meets the overall objectives of section 2 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3121);
- ii. Economic distress of the region;
- iii. Financial and management capability of the applicant;
- iv. Availability of program funding;
- v. Geographic balance in distribution of program funds and EDA's portfolio;
- vi. Balance of diverse project types in the distribution of program funds;

- vii. Balanced funding for a diverse group of organizations, to include smaller and rural organizations, which may form part of a broader consortium to serve diverse populations and areas within the regional office's territory;
- viii. The applicant's performance under previous Federal financial assistance awards (if applicable), including whether it submitted required performance reports;
- ix. The likelihood that the proposed project will achieve its stated results and catalyze additional resources;
- x. The probability that a project will start promptly and create jobs quickly; and
- xi. Whether the project will enable communities to become more diversified and more economically prosperous.

The Regional Director's final decision must be consistent with EDA's and the DOC's published policies.

3. Federal Awardee Performance & and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) Review

EDA, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS). *See* 41 U.S.C. § 2313.

Each applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.

EDA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.205.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Federal Award Notification

a. Award Notification

If an application is selected for funding, the EDA Grants Officer will issue the financial assistance award (Form CD-450). By electronically signing Form CD-450, the recipient agrees to comply with all award provisions. EDA will provide Form CD-450 via email through Grants Online, an electronic grants management system. The email will provide the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) listed on the applicant's Form SF-424 with instructions on how to create an account with Grants Online in order to view and sign the award. The recipient must electronically sign the Form CD-450 without modification within 30 days of the date that EDA authorizes the award. Failure to accept the CD-450 during this timeframe may result in the Grants Officer unilaterally withdrawing the award and deobligating the funds.

If an applicant is awarded funding, neither DOC nor EDA is under any obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award or to make any future awards. Amendment or renewal of an award to increase funding or to extend the period of performance is at the discretion of DOC and EDA.

EDA will notify unsuccessful applicants in writing. The regional office will retain unsuccessful applications in accordance with EDA's record retention schedule.

b. Unsuccessful Competition

On occasion, competitive funding opportunities or competitive panels produce less than optimum results, such as a competition resulting in the receipt of no applications, a competition resulting in the receipt of only unresponsive or unqualified applications, or too few highly rated applications. In these circumstances, EDA shall take the most time- and cost-effective approach available that is in the best interest of the Federal Government. This includes (1) re-competition, (2) re-paneling, or (3) formal negotiation.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

a. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements

Recipients of an EDA award will be bound by the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) as set forth in 2 C.F.R. part 200. See a copy of these regulations at: https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=e8f373d20a04b2c838a4cec419785088&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl.

b. DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions

EDA will apply the Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (ST&Cs) applicable on the date of the award. The ST&Cs may be accessed at the following website: http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/default.htm.

c. DOC Pre-Award Notification Requirements

EDA will apply the Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements dated December 30, 2014, 79 Fed. Reg. 78,390. The Pre-Award Notice may be accessed at the Government Printing Office (GPO) website at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

3. Reporting

a. Financial, Performance, and Impact Reports

All recipients are required to submit financial, performance, and impact reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant award, generally no less frequently than semi-annually. All project progress and financial reports must be submitted to the applicable EDA program officer in an electronic format to be determined at the time of award.

b. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over \$25,000. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. part 170, which can be accessed at:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=40023e1db665ebc89de0d086aaabf96a&mc=true&node=pt2.1.170&rgn=div5>

c. Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)

EDA may require additional data on activities, outputs, and actual impact of the funded investment, pursuant to the GPRA up to nine years after the grant award, and as specified under the terms and conditions of the EDA award. For example, recipients may be expected to continuously track their engagement activities within the scope of work, other beneficiaries, and project-related stakeholders. They may also be expected to collect data on the outputs and impacts of their activities, such as the number of beneficiary strategic plans developed, the number of new business partnerships formed, or new capabilities acquired using surveys of beneficiaries or clients. EDA will specify the data collection techniques and reporting mechanisms to be used.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For questions concerning this solicitation, contact the appropriate EDA representative listed below. For more information about EDA programs, you may contact the appropriate EDA representative found on EDA’s website at <https://www.eda.gov/contact/>.

Chicago Regional Office

FY 2021 University Center Program Competition
Economic Development Administration
Chicago Regional Office
230 S. Dearborn St., Suite 3280
Chicago, IL 60604

Designated Contact:
Robin Bush, rbush@eda.gov

Philadelphia Regional Office

FY 2021 University Center Program Competition
Economic Development Administration
Philadelphia Regional Office
900 Market Street, Room 602
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Designated Contact:
Chivas Grannum, cgrannum@eda.gov

H. Other Information

1. Right to Use Information

The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in

conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

2. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure

Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants in accordance with applicable law.

3. Notice of Government-Wide Procurement Restriction

The general rule for Federal financial assistance is that contractors that develop draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids, or requests for proposals are prohibited from competing for the final procurement. Before the Uniform Guidance took effect, pursuant to the DOC grant regulations at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24, the prohibition applied to institutions of higher education, hospitals, nonprofits, and commercial and international organizations but did not apply to States, local governments, or Indian Tribes. However, under 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.319 and 200.317 which are now controlling, only State recipients are expressly exempt from this prohibition. Despite this change, local governments and Indian Tribes may also take advantage of the exemption in two narrow circumstances: (i) if they are required (by statute, for example) to follow the State's procurement rules in full and without exception; or (ii) if they are required to follow a specific State procurement rule that creates an explicit conflict with the prohibition in 2 C.F.R. § 200.319(a) (i.e., there is a statute that requires or permits the local government or Indian Tribe to award the final procurement to the same contractor that developed the draft specifications). Absent one of these two scenarios, the local government or Indian Tribe must comply with the prohibition. Applicants are encouraged to contact the EDA representative listed for their state in section G. of this NOFO with any questions regarding application of this regulation.

4. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions

Unsatisfactory performance under prior Federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding. Failure to comply with any or all of the provisions of an award may have a negative impact on future funding by the DOC (or any of its operating units) and may be considered grounds for any or all of the following actions: (1) establishing an account receivable, (2) withholding payments to the recipient under any DOC awards, (3) changing the method of payment from advance to reimbursement only, (4) imposing other specific award conditions, (5) suspending any active DOC awards, and (6) terminating any active DOC awards.

5. EDA's Non-Relocation Policy

Applicants are advised that if an application is selected for award, the recipient will be required to adhere to an award condition relating to EDA's non-relocation policy as follows:

In signing this award of financial assistance, Recipient attests that EDA funding is not intended by the Recipient to assist its efforts to induce the relocation of existing jobs within the U.S. that are located outside of its jurisdiction to within its jurisdiction in competition with other U.S. jurisdictions for those same jobs. If EDA determines that its assistance was used for those purposes, EDA retains the right to pursue appropriate enforcement action in accord with the Standard Terms and Conditions of the Award, including suspension of disbursements and termination of the award for convenience or noncompliance, which may include the establishment of a debt requiring the Recipient to reimburse EDA.

For purposes of ensuring that EDA assistance will not be used to merely transfer jobs from one location in the United States to another, each applicant must inform EDA of all employers that constitute primary beneficiaries of the project assisted by EDA. EDA will consider an employer to be a "primary beneficiary" if (i) the employer is specifically named in the application as benefitting from the project, and the applicant estimates that the employer will create or save 100 or more permanent jobs as a result of the investment assistance (if the jobs in question were originally located in a smaller community, EDA may extend this policy to the relocation of 50 or more jobs); or (ii) the employer is or will be located in an EDA-assisted building, port, facility, or industrial, commercial, or business park constructed or improved in whole or in part with investment assistance prior to EDA's final disbursement of funds.

6. Audit Requirements

Single or program-specific audits shall be performed in accordance with the Uniform Guidance (*see* 2 C.F.R. part 200, Subpart F, "Audit Requirements"). The Uniform Guidance requires any non-Federal entity (i.e., nonprofit organizations, including nonprofit institutions of higher education and hospitals, States, local governments, and Indian Tribes) that expends Federal awards of \$750,000 or more in the recipient's fiscal year to conduct a single or program-specific audit in accordance with the requirements set out in the Uniform Guidance. Applicants are reminded that EDA or the DOC's Office of Inspector General also may conduct an audit of an award at any time.

7. Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The U.S. Department of Justice has issued revised regulations implementing Title II of the ADA (28 C.F.R. part 35; 75 Fed. Reg. 56,164 (Sep. 15, 2010), as amended by 76 Fed. Reg. 13,285

(Mar. 11, 2011)) and Title III of the ADA (28 C.F.R. part 36; 75 Fed. Reg. 56,236 (Sep. 15, 2010), as amended by 76 Fed. Reg. 13,286 (Mar. 11, 2011)).

8. Certifications Required by Annual Appropriations Acts for Corporations and for Awards over \$5 Million

As discussed in section D.3, all applicants are required to be registered in SAM before applying under this NOFO. SAM requires registering entities to certify compliance with all limitations imposed by annual appropriation acts. For corporations, this certification includes that the corporation:

- a. Was not convicted of a felony criminal violation under a Federal law within the preceding 24 months, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; and/or
- b. Does not have any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

For financial assistance awards in excess of \$5 million, this certification includes that the entity:

- a. To the best of its knowledge and belief, has filed all Federal tax returns required during the three years preceding the certification;
- b. Has not been convicted of a criminal offense under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and/or
- c. Has not been notified, more than 90 days prior to certification, of any unpaid Federal tax assessment for which the liability remains unsatisfied, unless the assessment is the subject of an installment agreement or offer in compromise that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service and is not in default, or the assessment is the subject of a non-frivolous administrative or judicial proceeding.

I. Instructions for Application Submission via Grants.gov

The most up-to-date instructions for application submission via Grants.gov can be found at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>. To begin, complete, and submit your application, follow these steps:

- Navigate to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>;
- Click “Get Application Package”;
- In the “Opportunity Number” field, applicants in areas served by the Chicago Regional Office should enter Opportunity Number “EDA-CHI-TA-CRO-2021-2006893” while

applicants in areas served by the Philadelphia Regional Office should enter Funding Opportunity Number “EDA-PHI-TA-PRO-2021-2006894”.

- Click “Search”;
- Under the “Actions” column, click the “Apply” link that corresponds to this opportunity;
- Enter your email address (if you would like to receive updates from Grants.gov; regarding this grant opportunity) or check the box that indicates you do not wish to provide it, then click “Submit”;
- Choose to apply using Workspace by clicking “Login to Apply Now”; and
- Follow the instructions provided on the Grants.gov website and on each webpage to complete and submit your application.

For detailed step-by-step guidance on how to create a workspace, complete an application, and submit a workspace package, see the Grants.gov Online User Guide. Navigate to www.grants.gov and select “Apply for a Grant with Workspace” located in the banner or see https://www.grants.gov/help/html/help/Applicants/Apply_for_Grants.htm.

1. Register early and submit early.

To submit an application through <http://www.grants.gov/> (Grants.gov), an applicant must register for a Grants.gov user ID and password. This process can take three to five business days or as long as four weeks if all steps are not completed correctly. Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>. Organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their SAM registration, which includes the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database, up-to-date through sam.gov or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov.

2. Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) requirement.

Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. As part of the registration process, you will register at least one AOR for your organization. AORs registered at Grants.gov are the only officials with the authority to submit applications at Grants.gov so please ensure that your organization’s application is submitted by an AOR. If the application is submitted by anyone other than your organization’s AOR, it will be rejected by the Grants.gov system and cannot be considered by EDA. An organization may designate multiple individuals as AORs for Grants.gov purposes.

EDA will not accept late submissions caused by Grants.gov registration issues, including CCR and AOR issues.

3. Field limitations and special characters.

Please be advised that [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) provides the following notice with respect to form field limitations and special characters: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

4. Verify submission was successful.

Applicants should save and print evidence of an electronic submission made at Grants.gov. Applicants can expect to receive multiple emails regarding the status of their submission. Since

email communication can be unreliable, applicants must proactively check on the status of their application if they do not receive email notifications within a day of submission.

An applicant should expect to receive two initial emails from Grants.gov: the first will confirm receipt of the application, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to EDA or has been rejected due to errors. Because it can take up to two business days after Grants.gov receives an application for applicants to receive email notification of an error, applicants should time their submissions to allow for application correction and resubmission by the applicable funding cycle deadline. Applicants will receive a third email once EDA has retrieved their applications.

Please do not submit multiple copies of the same application package. Applicants should save and print both the confirmation screen provided on the Grants.gov website after the applicant has submitted an application and the confirmation email sent by Grants.gov when the application has been successfully received and validated in the system. If an applicant receives an email from Grants.gov indicating that the application was received and subsequently validated, but does not receive an email from Grants.gov indicating that EDA has retrieved the application package within 72 hours of that email, the applicant may contact the applicable regional office representative listed in section G of this NOFO to inquire if EDA has received the applicant's submission.

It is the applicant's responsibility to verify that its submission was timely received and validated successfully at Grants.gov. To see the date and time your application was received, navigate to <https://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Track My Application" link under the "Applicants" tab. For a successful submission, the application must be received and validated by Grants.gov, and an agency tracking number assigned. If your application has a status of "Received" it is awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will change to "Validated" or "Rejected with Errors." If the status is "Rejected with Errors," your application has not been received successfully. For more detailed information on why an application may be rejected, please see "Encountering Error Messages" at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/encountering-error-messages.html> and "Frequently Asked Questions by Applicants" at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>.

5. Grants.gov Systems Issues.

If you experience a Grants.gov systems issue (i.e., a technical problem or glitch with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before the deadline, please (i) print any error message received; (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at (800) 518-4726 for immediate assistance; and (iii) contact EDA using the contact information in section G of this NOFO prior to the deadline for receipt of applications. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. Please note that problems with an applicant organization's computer system or equipment are **not** considered systems issues. Similarly, an applicant's failure to, for example, (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered AOR submits the application, or (iii) notice receipt of an email message from Grants.gov is **not** considered a systems issue. A Grants.gov systems issue is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. If a systems issue is confirmed, EDA reserves the right to

accept an application in an alternate format; however, all applications must be received by the deadline. Late applications will not be accepted.

Applicants should access the following link for assistance in navigating Grants.gov and for a list of useful resources: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>. The following link lists “Frequently Asked Questions by Applicants”:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>. If you do not find an answer to your question there, try consulting the “Applicant User Guide” at https://www.grants.gov/help/html/help/Get_Started/Get_Started.htm or contacting Grants.gov by email at support@grants.gov or telephone at (800) 518-4726. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except on Federal holidays.