



Dear Tribal Leaders,

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is committed to strengthening Tribal sovereignty and self-governance and will be hosting a Tribal Consultation on March 9, 2023. EDA frequently works with Tribal Nations to help advance their vision for economic opportunity and seeks input on new economic development assistance programs. Our goal is the fulfillment of federal trust responsibilities and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations, the cornerstones of government-to-government policymaking and in furtherance of [Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments \(November 6, 2000\)](#) and [Presidential Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships](#).

PURPOSE OF CONSULTATION

EDA is seeking input regarding the design and implementation of two new programs authorized as part of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022: the Regional Technology and Innovation Hub Program (Tech Hubs) and the Distressed Area Recompete Pilot Program (Recompete Pilot Program) as well as input on Disaster Supplemental Funding. EDA intends to release Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) for all three in the Spring of 2023.

EDA also seeks specific consultation on an issue in the Recompete Pilot Program where the statutorily required dataset for Tribes does not exist and how to equitably account for Tribal populations in light of that constraint.

Background

President Biden signed into law the [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023](#) which appropriated \$1.6 billion* to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) for Fiscal Year 2023 programming. Within that funding, [EDA has been appropriated:](#)

- \$500 million* for infrastructure and other long-term economic recovery efforts for areas impacted by natural disasters in 2021 and 2022; and
- \$500 million for [Tech Hubs](#)
- \$200 million for the [Recompete Pilot Program](#)

Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs (Tech Hubs):

The Tech Hubs program is an economic development initiative to drive technology and innovation-centric growth that leverages existing R&D strengths and technology demonstration and deployment capacities (public and private) within a region to catalyze the creation of good jobs for American workers at all skill levels equitably and inclusively.

The Tech Hubs program was enacted as part of the [CHIPS and Science Act of 2022](#) (as the Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs program), and Congress appropriated EDA \$500 million for it as part of the FY 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Bill.

**includes funding for administration and oversight*

Tech Hubs program aims to drive high-potential innovation and economic growth in regions across the United States to establish and strengthen our leadership in a broad array of industries of the future.

This new authority allows EDA to:

- designate Tech Hubs,
- award funding for Tech Hubs strategy development (i.e., planning and capacity building), and
- award funding for Tech Hubs strategy implementation (i.e., projects), subject to constraints and targets outlined in detail in the full text of the statute.

On February 14, 2023, EDA issued a Tech Hubs Request for Information (RFI) [in the *Federal Register*](#) to solicit public input about the program design, structure, and evaluation of the Tech Hubs program. Further details regarding this RFI can be found on [EDA's Tech Hubs website](#).

We welcome any design suggestions our Tribal partners might have for the Tech Hubs Program. During the consultation, EDA will provide a presentation on the statutory requirements of the Tech Hubs Program.

Disaster Supplemental:

With the Disaster Supplemental funding, EDA will release a NOFO under which EDA will award investments in regions experiencing severe economic distress or other economic harm resulting from Hurricanes Ian and Fiona, and of wildfires, flooding, and other natural disasters occurring in calendar years 2021 and 2022. The projects will need to be consistent with EDA's Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) authority. EAA is intended to be flexible and responsive to the economic development needs and priorities of local and regional stakeholders, including those seeking assistance recovering from Federally declared disasters.

EAA funds can be awarded to assist a wide variety of activities related to disaster recovery, including economic recovery strategic planning grants, and public works construction assistance. It is a flexible resource that responds adaptively to pressing economic issues and is well-suited to help address challenges faced by regions recovering from natural disasters. Through EAA, EDA can support both the development of disaster recovery strategies and the implementation of recovery projects identified with those strategies, including infrastructure improvements and by capitalizing revolving loan funds (RLFs).

During the consultation, EDA will provide a presentation on the statutory requirements of the Disaster Supplemental so Tribal leaders will know whether they are eligible to apply. We welcome feedback regarding this new program, and the design and implementation of any future disaster supplementals.

Recompete Pilot Program:

The Recompete Pilot Program will invest in persistently distressed communities across the country to create and connect workers to, good jobs—and make a discernible, long-run economic impact in these communities. The Recompete Pilot Program specifically targets areas with low labor participation, particularly by those considered in the prime ages for sustained employment (ages 25-54)—otherwise known as an area with a high prime-age employment gap—and strives to make targeted interventions to spur economic activity in such areas.

On February 23, 2023, EDA issued a Recompete Pilot Program RFI in the [Federal Register](#) to solicit public input about the program design, structure, and evaluation of the Recompete Pilot Program. Further details regarding this RFI can be found on [EDA's Recompete Pilot Program website](#).

We welcome any design suggestions our Tribal partners might have for the Recompete Pilot Program. During the consultation, EDA will provide a presentation on the statutory requirements of the Recompete Pilot Program.

EDA is specifically interested in receiving input from Tribal leaders regarding how to handle a statutory requirement in the Recompete Pilot Program enabling legislation that directly impacts Tribes. Under the statutory authority, the maximum amount a Tribe could receive for an implementation grant is determined by a formula. That formula calculates the “Tribal prime-age population” based on the following.

Tribal prime-age population is equal to the sum obtained by adding:

“(i) the product obtained by multiplying—

- (I) the total number of individuals ages 25 through 54 residing on the Tribal land of the Tribal government; and
- (II) 65; and

(ii) the product obtained by multiplying—

- (I) the total number of individuals ages 25 through 54 included on the membership roll of the Tribal government; and
- (II) 35”

See 15 U.S.C. 3722b(j)(9).

The data EDA is required to use by law, however, does not exist as the law cites to “data provided by the applicable Tribal government to the Department of the Treasury under the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund programs under title VI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 801 et seq.).” Without that data, EDA is unable to determine the maximum amount allowable under the formula. There is a statutory minimum for implementation grants of \$20 million, so the floor is clear. However, the statute relies on data that EDA does not have access to in order to determine a maximum grant amount.

EDA also wants to be cognizant of any extra burden it may impose on a Tribe necessary to resolve this issue. EDA would appreciate Tribal insights on how best to overcome this structural issue effectively with a view towards minimizing additional burdens.

- Should EDA provide Tribes an opportunity to submit the missing data on a case-by-case basis to EDA?
- Should EDA use another data source as a proxy?

INFORMATION ON CONSULTATION

EDA hopes to consult with Tribal Leaders or their direct proxies. Other Tribal organizations are welcome to view and listen to the presentations in a non-participatory role.

The consultation will be held via Zoom

- March 9, 2023, at 3:00- 4:30pm EST
- Please use this link to pre-register:
<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltdChpjMjHpQf5d44Kft9E-kmpf42xiY>

This will be conducted via a virtual platform through which participants may provide live written comments. Participation via written channels and the platform’s chat capabilities is highly encouraged.

EDA has also established an email address and phone number for participants to provide additional feedback. Some questions received will be addressed specifically during the live event. All questions and comments will be reviewed and considered.

- Please send written questions and comments via email to: EDAconsultations@eda.gov
- Please leave any phone voice messages at: 202-482 5479
- These platforms will be available until March 23, 2023.

**includes funding for administration and oversight*

Your comments will inform EDA's development and implementation of the Tech Hubs, disaster supplemental, and Recompete Pilot Programs, as well as any future disaster supplementals. These Tribal consultations are not for press purposes.

As the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Development and Chief Operating Officer, we are responsible for, and committed to, ensuring that EDA's programs and resources are meeting the needs of our stakeholders. We are also committed to the President's economic agenda to support place-based economic development to unlock economic opportunity for all families and communities which includes maintaining and strengthening ties to Tribal Nations across the country.

We look forward to participating in these forums and we hope that you will be able to join us. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Type text here



Alejandra Y. Castillo

Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development



Dennis Alvord

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Development and Chief Operating Officer

The U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) mission is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting competitiveness and preparing the nation's regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA makes investments in economically distressed communities to create jobs for U.S. workers, promote American innovation, and accelerate long-term sustainable economic growth.