



University Center Economic Development Program FY 2023 Competition

EDA's University Center Program is a competitively-based partnership between EDA and academic institutions that makes the varied and vast resources of universities available to the economic development practitioner community.



AGENDA

- Program Overview
- Allocation
- Eligibility
- Award Period
- Match Requirements
- Application Documents
- Application Review Criteria
- Review and Submission Process
- Tools and Resources



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The University Center (UC) Program – Enables institutions of higher education to establish and operate programs focused on leveraging university assets to foster regional economic development.

- Builds regional economic ecosystems that support innovation and high-growth entrepreneurship as well as resiliency and inclusiveness.
- Collaborates with other EDA partners by providing expertise and technical assistance to develop, implement and support regional strategies.
- Results in job creation, high-skilled regional talent pools, and business expansion in a region's innovation clusters.



PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

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
- Increasing the resiliency of a region

PROGRAM ALLOCATION

For FY 2023, EDA has allocated approximately \$8.4 million to the University Center program (\$2.4 million for the first year of awards under this competition). These amounts are based on funding levels appropriated through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328).

Divided among 2 Regional Offices

- Austin Regional Office (AURO)
- Denver Regional Office (DRO)

Austin Regional Office	Serves: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas
Denver Regional Office	Serves: Colorado, Iowa (excluding Muscatine and Scott counties), Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

- Accredited Institutions of Higher Education including
 - Tribal Colleges and Universities
 - Community Colleges or Junior Colleges
 - Consortium of Accredited Institutions of Higher Education
- University-Affiliated Research Institutions
- An organization that is affiliated with and directed by an accredited institution of higher education may partner with an accredited institution of higher education or consortium

See Notice of Funding Opportunity for eligibility details.



AWARD PERIOD

Period of Performance:

- Awards will be for a 5-year period of performance (only competing for Year 1)
 - SF-424, SF-424A, Budget Narrative, and Staffing Plan should be for full 5 years

Funding:

- Initial funding period will be for Year 1
- Matching funds for the project must be committed for at least Year 1

Funding beyond the first year will depend on the availability of funds and recipient performance.

MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

Application Matching Requirements

- EDA will fund up to 50 percent of the **total project cost**
- In-kind contributions are allowed
- Other federal funds may be considered match if authorized by statute (requires EDA's prior approval)
- Matching share must: (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
 - Supporting documentation required!
- Local match must be committed at the time the application is submitted. (Only first year match amount required.)

SCOPE OF WORK

Scope of Work Activities

- Applicants must 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.
 - Technical assistance: 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.
 - Applied research: 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.
 - Disseminating information: (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.

***see page 15 -17 of the NOFO for more detail**

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

- Project Narrative

- Required Forms
 - 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 of Lobbying Activities
 - Form ED-900 – General Application for EDA Programs

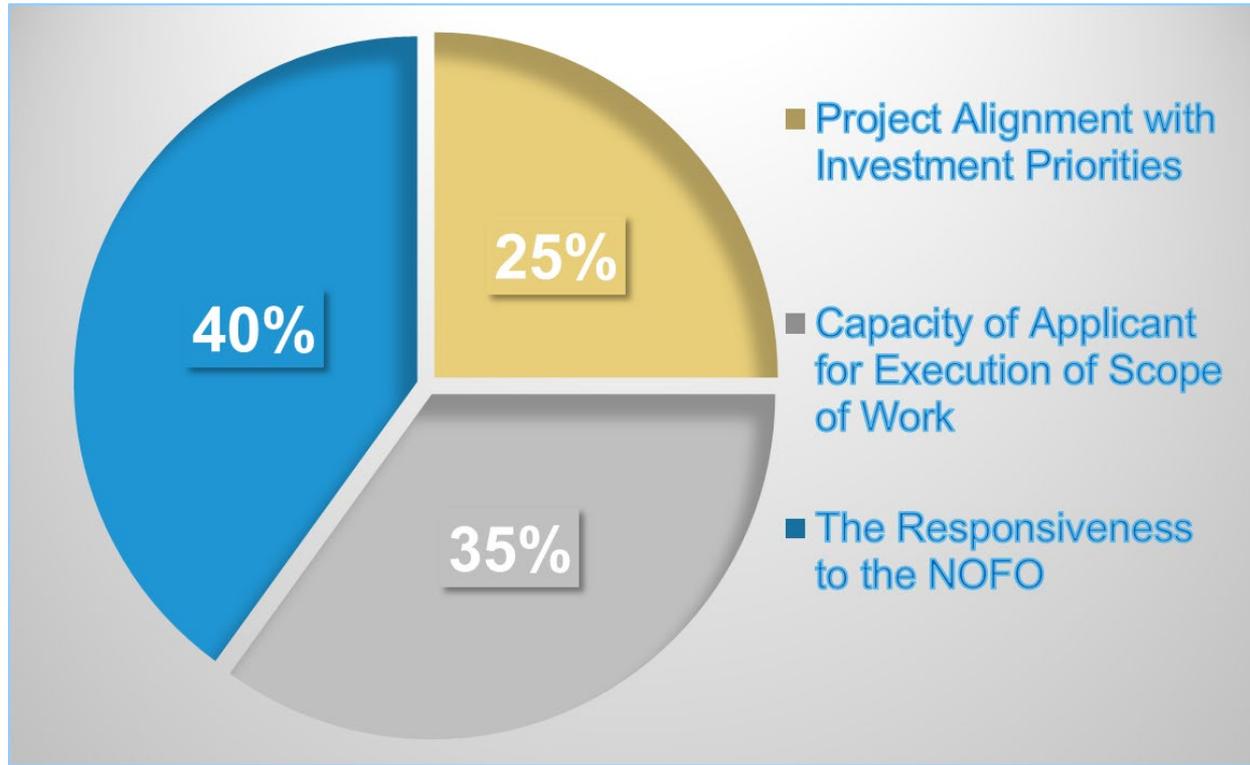
- Other Forms (if applicable)
 - State Single Point-of-Contract (SPOC)/Executive Order 12372 Compliance Documentation (if applicable)
 - Organizational Documentation (if applicable)
 - Indirect Cost Rate Documentation (if applicable)

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

➤ Other Attachments

- Applicant Capacity and Project Management
- Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan
- Project Sustainability
- Resumes of Key Project Staff
- Matching Share Commitment Letters
- Five separate itemized budgets (see Special Instructions for Form SF-424A on p.20 of the NOFO)

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA



#1 ALIGNMENT WITH INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Projects **MUST** address one or more of the following EDA Investment Priorities:

1. **Equity**
2. **Recovery and Resilience**
3. **Workforce Development**
4. **Manufacturing**
5. **Technology-Based Economic Development**
6. **Environmentally-Sustainable Development**
7. **Exports and Foreign Direct Investment**

See complete description of Investment Priorities on EDA's website at

<https://www.eda.gov/funding/investment-priorities>

#2 APPLICANT CAPACITY

Four Equally Weighted Factors:

FOSTERS JOB CREATION AND PROMOTES PRIVATE INVESTMENT

INDICATES FEASIBILITY OF THE PROJECT

DESCRIBES SUSTAINABILITY AND DURABILITY OF RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

DEMONSTRATES ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

#3 RESPONSIVENESS TO PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Successful applicants demonstrate the following:

- Serve a well-defined geographic area and benefit distressed communities within that area
- Provide technical assistance, conduct applied research, and/or disseminate information to foster regional economic ecosystems
- Drive regional economic development and strategies
- Leverage other university assets that support regional economic ecosystems
- Engage EDA stakeholders and partners (e.g., EDDs, Indian Tribes, RDOs)
- Include measurable activities and outcomes
- Plan for sustaining success beyond period of performance

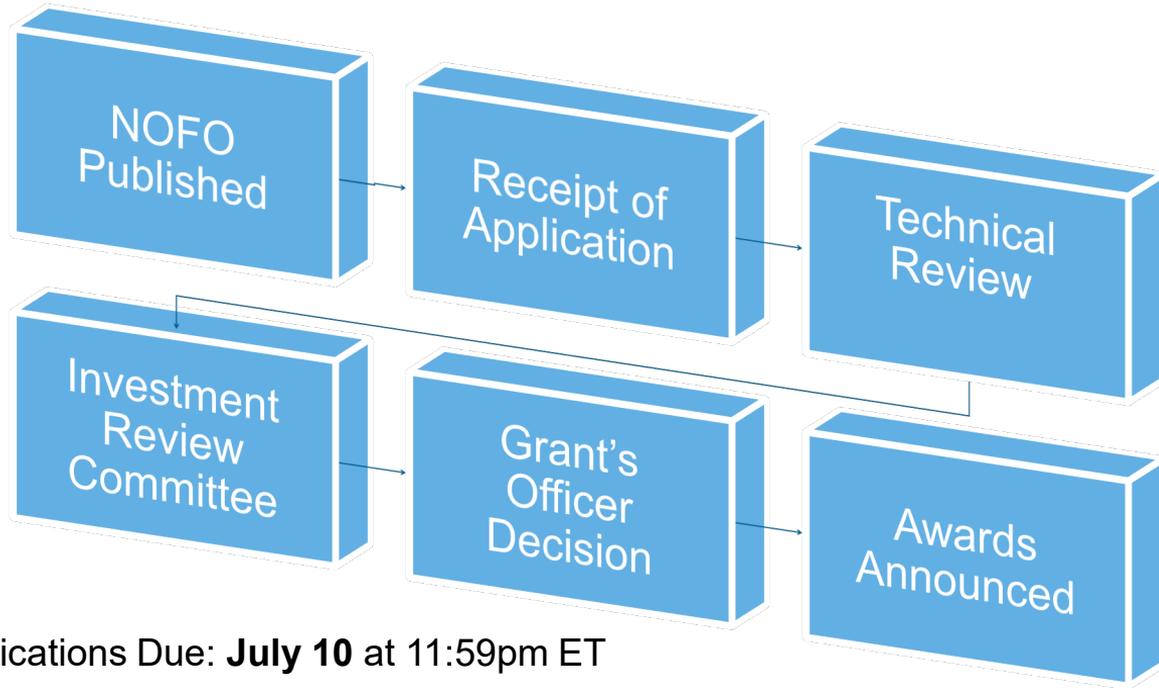
DOCUMENTING PARTNERSHIPS

- One purpose of the UC program is to leverage existing university resources; therefore, describe the institutional systems, information, and expertise available to you.
- Competitive applications document strong partnerships. Partnership letters should identify the role the support organization has in the program and detail contributions.

UC Partners



REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS



Applications Due: **July 10** at 11:59pm ET

Applications must be submitted through EDGE: sfgrants.eda.gov

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

➤ What is EDGE

- **Economic Development Grants Experience**, EDA's new grants management system
 - One-stop stop for applications, co-applicants, EDDs and collaborators for the end-to-end harmonized grant management process
 - Provides a modernized, intuitive, and user-friendly interface for applicants

➤ Accessing EDGE

➤ Three (3) Ways to Access EDGE

1. EDGE Website: <https://sfgrants.eda.gov>
2. Grants.gov: NOFO Synopsis -> Additional Information section
3. EDA Website: <https://www.eda.gov/edge>

➤ EDGE Registration Process

- Self-Register for an EDGE Portal Account at: <https://sfgrants.eda.gov>
- Select Login
- Select 'I Accept' to accept the System Use Agreement
- Select 'Not a Member?' and follow the prompts
- Review Quick Reference Guide [01 How EDA EDGE Portal Self-Registration](#) for step-by-step instructions

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

➤ EDGE Best Practices

1. UEI & CAGE Code are two required fields to self-registration to EDGE
 - If you are having trouble locating UEI or CAGE Code, search SAM: <https://sam.gov/>
2. We strongly encourage the Lead Applicant to invite additional members & collaborators from their organization via the “Application Team” functionality rather than self-registering without being invited.
 - Lead Applicant is whoever selects Apply Now in EDGE
3. When pasting text to fields in the ED-900, it is recommended to paste as plain text to remove special characters. This will avoid any issues with saving and completing the ED-900 in the EDGE Portal.

➤ EDGE Portal Training Resources

- To help with the transition, we have the following resources to guide you as you begin to familiarize yourself to the new EDGE system which can be found on <https://sfgrants.eda.gov> under the Resources tab.
 - Pre-recorded training modules
 - EDGE tutorial videos
 - Quick Reference Guides with step-by-step instructions on how to use the Portal

➤ EDGE Portal Support Center

- For EDGE Portal Account Holders, upon login to <https://sfgrants.eda.gov>, click Support
- For general questions about the EDGE Portal, email granthdsupport@eda.gov
- Questions? Please contact your Economic Development Representative for additional information & assistance!

POST-APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

Performance Evaluation

- 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.
- Goal: 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.
- Will include participation of at least one other UC as part of peer review process on a cost-reimbursable basis – plan your budget accordingly.

Reporting

- Progress reporting
- Financial reporting
- GPRA reporting: <https://www.eda.gov/impact/performance/gpra>

PAST COMPETITION

2018 UC Competition Statistics

	AURO	DRO
Applications	26	29
Awards Made	10	10
Average funding (per year)	\$112,850	\$134,313

REMINDERS AND TIPS

- Read the NOFO in its entirety. Many of your questions can be answered by thoroughly reading the document.
- The project narrative of your application is limited to 10 pages.
- The indirect costs are limited to no more than 20% of the total project costs. No exceptions.
- Notably, any program income must be added to the funds committed to the project, and all funds must be used to further eligible program activities before expiration of the five-year period of performance.
- SAM registration must be up-to-date.
- The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) is the only person who can submit the application in EDGE.
- We recommend submitting your application a week in advance to give yourself plenty of time to address technical and other issues that may arise.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

EDA's University Center page:

<https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/university-centers>

<https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/university-centers/applicant-resources>

Best Practices and Other Resources:

➤ <https://www.eda.gov/sites/default/files/filebase/archives/2016/tools/files/university-centers/Evaluation-of-UC-Best-Practices.pdf>

➤ <https://www.eda.gov/grant-resources/tools>

Best Practices at EDA University Centers

Activities: Support for Start-Ups

- ✓ **Broad Technology Partnerships:** High-impact centers leverage connections and services from many sources to address start-up needs (gaining “economies of scope”).
- ✓ **Map and Engage Communities:** Deliberate engagement of the community in fostering start-ups is critical, especially in regions without strong university connections.
- ✓ **Fill Financial Gaps:** Almost all start-ups need capital, and strong centers either connect these businesses with sources of finance or mobilize financial resources/networks themselves.

Best Practices at EDA University Centers

Underlying Conditions: Leadership & Institution

- ✓ **Leverage all one's resources:** Leveraging university and external resources is an important part of success.
- ✓ **Recognized Leader with Deep Experience:** An experienced leader – especially with off-campus experience – who provides strong intellectual/technical leadership and can build relationships makes a huge difference.
- ✓ **Salient, Client-Facing Institution:** A center that reports to a senior leader in the university and is responsive to external needs is more likely to succeed.

Activities: Support for Local & Regional Communities

- ✓ **Go to the Client:** The best centers spend time in the field and bring their programs directly to their clients, instead of waiting for clients to knock on their door.
- ✓ **Build Your Own Networks:** Caring for and nurturing networks – and drawing clients into these networks – is essential for success (especially in rural areas).

Activities: Support for Existing Businesses

- ✓ **Serving Two Clients through Use of Student Labor:** Well-directed and supervised student contributions can bring cost-effective expertise to meet business needs while also providing valuable work experience for the student.
- ✓ **Understanding Needs:** Assistance must be carefully adapted to the needs of local businesses and the market opportunities they face.

Activities: Support for Entrepreneurs

- ✓ **Well-Matched Mentors:** Experienced mentors (who have started a business themselves) can best provide structured counsel and guidance that addresses the real needs and concerns of new entrepreneurs.
- ✓ **Focused Communities:** Programs focused on certain technologies or sectors, leveraging resources to address specific technical needs, seem to yield significant results.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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UC Program Coordinator



U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION