

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name:** Economic Development Administration (EDA or the Agency), U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC).
- **Federal Funding Opportunity Title:** FY 2024 Good Jobs Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) (FY24 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO).
- **Announcement Type and Date:** FY24 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO publishing EDA’s application submission requirements and review procedures under EDA’s Economic Adjustment Assistance program, as authorized by the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 3121 *et seq.*) (PWEDA).
- **Effective date:** July 29, 2024.
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** EDA-HDQ-FY2024GJC
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.307, Economic Adjustment Assistance
- **Dates:** The deadline for application submission is **4:59 pm Eastern Time on September 27, 2024**. Proposals or applications received after the above deadlines will not be reviewed or considered. See section E of this Good Jobs Challenge NOFO regarding EDA’s review process and section G of the NOFO for EDA’s contact information.
- **Eligible Applicants:** Pursuant to section 3(4) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122(4)(A)) and 13 C.F.R. § 300.3 (Eligible Recipient), eligible applicants under this NOFO include a(n):
 - (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD);
 - (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions;
 - (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association, including labor unions, acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. Individuals and for-profit entities are not eligible for funding under this NOFO.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** Subject to the availability of funds, EDA will support regional workforce training systems in designing and implementing activities for established sectoral partnerships that meet the existing and emerging skills needs of employers and that train and place program participants into good jobs. These systems will help to grow regional economies and their associated workforces and must advance technology-based industries that fortify the economic and national security of the United States.

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A. Good Jobs Challenge Program Description

EDA's mission is to lead the Federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness by preparing American regions, States, and Tribes for growth and success in the worldwide economy. Through this Fiscal Year 2024 Good Jobs Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (FY 2024 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO), EDA will support regional workforce training systems in designing and implementing activities for established sectoral partnerships that place program participants in good jobs and advance industries in the federal key technology focus areas. \$25 million will be awarded through this FY24 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO. EDA anticipates awarding approximately between 5-8 grantees with awards ranging from \$1 million to \$8 million. This NOFO aims to fortify the economic and national security of the United States and advance the competitiveness of the applicant's region.

1. Definitions

This NOFO uses the following terms:

“Backbone organization” is defined as the award recipient and lead entity of a sectoral partnership that serves as the intermediary across all partners in the sectoral partnership.

A **“good job”** is defined as a paid position of regular employment that aligns with the Good Jobs Principles. The Good Jobs Principles include jobs that ensure all workers are paid a stable, predictable living wage, receive basic benefits (e.g., paid leave, health insurance, retirement/savings plan), have safe working conditions, have the ability to form and join unions and engage in protected, concerted activity without fear of retaliation, and have equitable opportunities and tools to progress to future good jobs.

“Key Technology Focus Areas” as defined by 42 U.S.C. § 19107 are:

- Artificial intelligence, machine learning, autonomy, and related advances;
- High performing computing, semiconductors, and advanced computer hardware and software;
- Quantum information science and technology;
- Robotics, automation, and advanced manufacturing;
- Natural and anthropogenic disaster prevention or mitigation;
- Advanced communications technology and immersive technology;
- Biotechnology, medical technology, genomics, and synthetic biology;
- Data storage, data management, distributed ledger technologies, and cybersecurity, including biometrics;
- Advanced energy and industrial efficiency technologies, such as batteries and advanced nuclear technologies, including but not limited to for the purposes of electric generation; and
- Advanced materials science, including composites 2D materials, other next generation materials, and related manufacturing technologies.

“Occupation” or “Job” is defined as a worker role that meets the needs of a region, an industry, or employer that requires specific training or skills and that creates a career pathway for a worker (e.g., a skilled machine technician, registered nurse).

“Sectoral partnership” is defined as a partnership of employers from the same industry that join with other strategic partners to collaboratively design sector strategies that train and place workers into good jobs that the employers need filled and intend to fill through the partnership. The strategic partners can include: government, education institutions (including community and technical colleges¹), training organizations, economic development organizations, workforce development organizations, unions, union federations, worker-serving organizations, labor management partnerships, industry associations, employer-serving organizations, faith-based organizations, and/or community-based organizations. A sectoral partnership is focused on one specific industry within an identified economic region and one or more specific roles within that industry. See Figure 1 for a visualization of how different entities work together in a sectoral partnership.

“Tech Hub” is defined as a consortium, designated by EDA, to strengthen the country’s economic and national security, and global competitiveness by enabling the industries of the future to start, grow, and remain in regions across the United States. A listing of these designations can be found on the EDA website.²

¹ See Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs (DAPIP) for information reported to the U.S. Department of Education directly by recognized accrediting agencies and state approval agencies. <https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home>

² “2023 Tech Hubs Designees.” U.S. Economic Development Administration. [2023 Tech Hubs Designees and Strategy Development](#)

Figure 1 – Visualization of a Sectoral Partnership



2. Program Overview

EDA will support sectoral partnerships that train and place workers in good jobs and advance industries in key technologies that fortify the economic and national security of the United States and advance the competitiveness of the applicant’s region. To satisfy that objective, EDA anticipates making approximately 5-8 awards to backbone organizations totaling up to \$25 million for training design and implementation. These awards will range from \$1 million to \$8 million. To compete for these awards, this NOFO requires applicants to propose sectoral partnerships that advance a key technology focus area (KTFA). Sectoral partnerships affiliated with a Tech Hub designee will be given benefits of that designation in this NOFO in both the merit evaluation of applications and as a selection factor. Further, awards from this NOFO will prioritize sectoral partnerships that include worker voice in design and execution through partnerships with labor unions or worker-serving organizations, and will prioritize aiding workers in fields impacted by changes in technology, and supporting their transition into good jobs.

EDA is committed to equitable economic development. EDA will prioritize sectoral partnerships that reach historically underserved populations and areas, communities of color, women, and other groups such as persons with disabilities, disconnected youth, individuals in recovery, individuals with past criminal records including justice-impacted and reentry participants, individuals participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and veterans and military spouses. EDA also encourages partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, or Minority-Serving Institutions.

a. This NOFO solicits proposals for the design and implementation of training for established or emerging sectoral partnerships.

Sectoral partnerships create and support training programs that connect the in-demand and emerging skills needs of employers with qualified workers and help workers find and keep good jobs that advance their chosen career path. Sectoral partnerships are effective because: they are carefully built to include *all* necessary partners before workforce solutions are designed; they cut across traditional economic development, workforce, education, and social services system silos; they target in-demand sectors with good jobs; and they consider the economic realities of a regional industry in assessing workforce demand and training needs.

The purpose of these partnerships is to implement strategies that meet employers' workforce needs, advance the skills and employment prospects of workers and jobseekers, grow regional economies, and increase employment in resilient and good jobs. The key to effective partnerships is that they include a representative group of employers that are from the same industry or have a similar workforce need and are meaningfully engaged in the development of the system and/or partnership.

For example, a manufacturing trade association may bring multiple employers with common job openings that require similar skill sets together with a local training provider, workforce development board(s), union, and community college or a group of community colleges in the region. Together, they may form a sectoral partnership to jointly develop and implement career pathways and training programs to prepare workers to meet those needs. The sectoral partnership should also include one or more community-based organizations that connect to targeted populations and provide wraparound services (e.g., childcare, transportation, and healthcare, including behavioral healthcare) to support the workers during training. The partner businesses participate in the recruitment of individuals to enroll in the sectoral partnership's training program and commit to hiring and retaining the workers who successfully complete the program.

Similarly, an existing sectoral partnership might tailor and expand a successful skills training program to serve other regions or industries or to target specific sets of workers facing systemic inequities or barriers to employment. Other examples might involve a labor union working with an employer or group of employers to create or scale a Registered Apprenticeship Program or an employer-led partnership that provides a work-and-learn model where workers can continue to work as they develop new skills. Training should teach foundational knowledge as well as skills. The training offered should be applicable to more than one employer as much as practicable and should help workers advance along a career path.

Finally, the activities of the sectoral partnerships should be well aligned with a region's broader economic development strategy or other place based economic development strategies in a region. It should focus on hiring from local populations and prioritize pathways to good jobs for historically disadvantaged groups. Applicants should propose only one sectoral partnership in their applications.

b. Sectoral partnerships funded by this NOFO must be led by a backbone organization.

A backbone organization is an essential element to the success of a sectoral partnership. A backbone organization serves as an intermediary that organizes and works with employers, training participants, worker-serving organizations, employees, government agencies, and other organizations to solve problems within sectors and help grow sectors by developing trust and a base of knowledge about the organizations and businesses, as well as leveraging available public and private resources. Backbone organizations ensure that strategies are developed and that programs get implemented, meet employer needs, produce long-term positive outcomes for workers and their communities, and meet agreed-upon milestones.

Backbone organizations funded under this NOFO should connect employers in an industry with key regional stakeholders, including State, Tribal, and local governmental entities, economic development organizations, workforce development boards, American Jobs Centers, employer-facing organizations and employer associations, education and training providers, community-based organizations (CBOs) (including faith-based organizations), worker-serving organizations (WSOs), labor unions or federations, and/or other key stakeholders with responsibilities in advancing the goals of the sectoral partnerships.

An effective backbone organization will have most or all the following characteristics:

- Convening power in the region;
- Committed support of the executive leadership from the region and buy-in from appropriate stakeholders (e.g., a governor, mayor or chief executive of a jurisdiction, chief executives of major employers, heads of labor unions, presidents of two- and four-year institutions of higher education, executive leadership of community organizations representing underserved populations in the industry and/or that face barriers to the labor market, etc.);
- Relationships and credibility with key players in the workforce ecosystem, including employers, governmental entities, state or local workforce development boards, educational institutions, and/or labor organizations, community-based organizations representing underrepresented populations in the industry and/or those that face barriers in the labor market, and/or labor organizations;
- A proven track record of coordinating across the sectors and partners and of driving stakeholders to successful action;
- Ability to translate various sectors' objectives and key concerns to other sectors;
- Strong fundraising capabilities; and
- Dedicated full-time employee(s) focused on addressing regional workforce issues to support regional economic development.

c. Awards made from this NOFO will support activities related to program design and program implementation. Activities to support the establishment of new sectoral partnerships are not eligible for awards from this NOFO.

The FY 24 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO is designed to support established sectoral partnerships in designing workforce strategies and job training that are responsive to industry needs. In addition, sectoral partners may sponsor apprenticeships, design and deliver training, administer wraparound supports for program participants throughout their training, and

ultimately support program completers with placement into a job. EDA anticipates funding activities related to:

Program/Training Design: funding for a sectoral partnership to identify the skills needed by industry and workers, develop the skills training curriculum and materials, and secure technical expertise needed to train workers with the skills needed by businesses, including providing professional development and capacity-building to trainers and educators, and

Program/Training Implementation: funding to deliver workforce training and wraparound services that place workers into good jobs through a new or expanded sectoral partnership.

EDA plans to make awards to backbone organizations to fund the Program Design, and/or Program Implementation requirements of the system, as appropriate. EDA anticipates awarding approximately between 5-8 grants ranging from \$1 to \$8 million. The size of award available under this FY24 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO will depend on the proposed geographic, industry, and occupation coverage of a given regional system or partnership, and applicants should justify their budget requests by reference to those factors. Awards will be made through a single integrated award. The backbone organization may make subawards as necessary and as approved by EDA.

Awards available under this FY 24 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO are intended to support well-organized and coordinated workforce development and sectoral partnerships. EDA expects that the backbone organization is prepared to design training in partnership with employers and/or begin program implementation upon receipt of any award. Such lead entities or backbone organizations funded by this FY 24 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO will have:

- Identified necessary stakeholders and defined their roles and responsibilities in the prospective sectoral partnership;
- Established and developed processes for management of all potential subawardees in the sectoral partnership;
- Regularly convened and substantially engaged key stakeholders in the planning process;
- Established a plan to provide wraparound services to participants- specifically identifying the services (childcare, healthcare, transportation, etc.) applicants reasonably anticipate that participants will need to complete their participation and provided plans to work with community-based organizations, local government, and other key partners to deliver this work effectively to program participants. Plans should describe how providers will deliver these services quickly and equitably and avoid slower, ad-hoc approaches that could negatively impact participants recruitment, retention, and completion;
- Adopted a shared vision that is supported by documentation from key stakeholders as appropriate to the regional training system;
- Demonstrated ability and capacity to collect and report data on outcomes for program participants;
- Demonstrated capacity to engage employer sponsors and regional workforce system partners in an organized, consistent way to meet the needs of the region;

- Provided support to an industry with growing labor demand or gaps in labor supply, including industries funded by the Administration’s Investing in America agenda;³
- Provided training and placement activities for the historically disadvantaged groups in the local population; and
- Demonstrated capacity to engage with labor unions or worker-serving organizations.

The following examples are designed to help explain how EDA anticipates awarding funding. Note that awards available under this FY 24 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO will not support activities related to the planning and early creation of sectoral partnerships. Activities of this nature would include costs related to identifying key stakeholders, and initial planning activities.

Example 1: Region A has identified a group of employers across an industry. The backbone organization in Region A has already assembled key stakeholders in the region and identified labor shortages that are holding back industry growth. With this funding, the backbone organization will make subawards or contracts, as appropriate, to training providers that lead to placement into jobs and wraparound services for program participants. EDA may approve an award to the backbone organization for training program design and training implementation activities in the amount of \$5 million total – \$1.5 million for training design and \$3.5 million for program implementation.

Example 2: Region B has already designed training that is aligned to industry needs in several in-demand occupations. Through EDA funding, they will be able to meet unmet demand for this training for a longer period. EDA may approve an award for program implementation activities in the amount of \$3 million to expand training.

EDA recognizes that in many circumstances having adequate, modernized facilities is a critical component of a successful workforce training program that responds to industry needs today and into the future. As such, equipment costs, expenses related to securing adequate space (e.g., rent, leases), and other non-construction capital expenses are allowable expenses under this program. In addition, costs to install equipment, which may require minor building modifications, may be allowable with prior EDA approval. For example, costs to install electrical wiring to make equipment operable, or costs to adequately ventilate a space to support the use of the equipment, may be allowable. However, if approved, such costs may require compliance with laws and regulations relating to Federally financed construction projects, including environmental requirements. In addition, if funded, the recipient and any subrecipients must comply with the Davis-Bacon Act, as amended (40 U.S.C. §§ 3141–3144, 3146, 3147; 42 U.S.C. § 3212). See Environmental and Historic Preservation Documentation in section D.2.c.vi of this NOFO.

Unless related to equipment installation, costs for any activity that disturbs the ground or modifies a structure are not eligible under this NOFO. To the extent that a workforce training

³ “Investing in America.” The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/invest/>

project is focused only on a building-based construction project or the success of the system or partnership depends on the construction of a new facility, EDA encourages eligible entities to apply under EDA’s Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance NOFO. If a workforce training project develops or expands a regional workforce training system or sectoral partnership and there is a related, complementary construction project, EDA encourages applicants to submit the system or partnership project under this FY 2024 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO and the complementary construction project under EDA’s Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance NOFO.⁴

d. Awards made from this NOFO may support a diverse range of training models.

There are several different skills training models that have proved to be effective if the fundamental characteristics we have described in previous sections are in place.

Models may differ in the type of worker skills training they provide and will differ based on the sectors or occupations that the trainings are aligned to. Examples that meet the interests of this Good Jobs Challenge – to develop and strengthen regional partnerships and systems and train workers with in-demand skills that lead to good jobs – include:

- **Registered Apprenticeship Programs:** These programs combine paid on-the-job training under the direction of a mentor with classroom instruction and result in an industry-recognized credential certifying occupational proficiency. Registered Apprenticeship Programs are industry-vetted, approved, and validated by either the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship or a recognized State Apprenticeship agency.⁵
- **Skills Training Programs:** Programs that train workers with the foundational skills needed for in-demand, good jobs and prepare workers for employment that provides career pathways after completion of the program. These include career and technical education programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels as well as adult education programs, and other programs offered at community and technical colleges. This NOFO will support program participants that are placed into jobs by the end of the period of performance.
- **Pre-apprenticeship Programs:** Programs that are designed to assist individuals who do not currently possess the minimum academic credentials or skills requirements for selection into a Registered Apprenticeship Program to meet the minimum selection criteria established in a program sponsor’s apprenticeship standards and which maintains at least one documented partnership with a Registered Apprenticeship Program.
- **Other Work-and-Learn Models:** These programs include those when a worker is conditionally hired for a specific training period and earns wages while receiving on-the-job

⁴ “Fiscal Year 2023 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (PWEAA) Application Submission and Program Requirements.” U.S. Economic Development Administration. <https://www.eda.gov/funding/funding-opportunities/fiscal-year-2023-public-works-and-economic-adjustment-assistance>

⁵ Elements of a quality pre-apprenticeship program are described in DOL ETA Training Employment Notice 23-23 (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/ten-23-23>). More information about Pre-Apprenticeship can be found at: <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/explore-pre-apprenticeship>. More information about Registered Apprenticeship Programs can be found at: <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/registered-apprenticeship-program>

training in foundational skills as well as applied concepts. After successful completion of the training period, the worker is officially hired as a full-time employee.

- **Certification or Credentialing Programs:** Programs in which participants obtain an industry-recognized certificate or certification and/or a license recognized by the State involved or the Federal Government.
- **Labor Management Training Program:** Programs that are sponsored or developed jointly by labor and management through collective bargaining in accordance with applicable law.

What all models have in common is demonstrated track records of success in other contexts and the opportunity for employers to make strong commitments to hiring in the context of the program. Programs may target unemployed and/or underemployed workers as well as incumbent workers with opportunity for increased wages through targeted upskilling. All models should include access to wraparound supports to support successful completion of training and placement into good jobs.

e. Awards made from this NOFO will have strong employer engagement and commitments that result in the placement of participants in good jobs.

One of the primary goals of the Good Jobs Challenge program is to provide training to Americans that results in good jobs. To that end, EDA is seeking applications that have firm employer commitments to hire and will be holding grantees accountable to meeting or exceeding those commitments. The employer commitment may come in different formats. Some examples include:

- **Work-and-Learn, including Registered Apprenticeships:** See descriptions above.
- **Conditional Hire:** Employer hires workers on the condition of successful completion of the training program and demonstration of skill acquisition.
- **Employer Commitments:** Employers commit to hiring a specific number of workers who successfully complete the training program provided through the regional workforce training partnership.

In addition to these commitments, employers should be leading partners in the sectoral partnership and contribute significantly to the sectoral partnership's agenda. While sectoral partnerships contain a broad-based team of partners and are a "team effort" made up of education, community, and worker serving organizations, workforce development, and economic development leaders who collaborate to support the partnership, the partnership should focus on building a program that is supportive of the industry's workforce needs. Doing this successfully requires strong leadership and engagement from employers. Employers should help to define the priorities and be integrally involved in crafting the solutions (as opposed to providing input only). Employers should define their skills needs and suitable responses for addressing them. Employers and the other partners should all commit resources to identify and solve the problems.

The Department of Labor has developed a map that spotlights existing programs where labor and employers have collaborated to develop and administer training. Many of these

programs offer training in industries and occupations relevant to the key technology focus areas of this NOFO. Applicants may find [this map](#) useful to identify potential sectoral partners.⁶

f. Awards made through this NOFO will provide skills for and connect unemployed or underemployed workers to good jobs in existing and emerging industries that do not necessarily require a four-year degree.

According to the United States Department of Labor, in the year 2022, about 7 out of 10 jobs were in occupations that did not require a 4-year degree to obtain the job. Some of these jobs are expected to pay higher than average wages. These jobs may include roles like health information technologists and medical registrars, computer numerically controlled tool programmers, and forest fire inspectors and prevention specialists.⁷ Awards made through this NOFO should also provide workers with the ability to advance in their skills and career through their training and their placement into a good job. This means that their job provides opportunities for promotion and advancement within their organization or access to additional training and education.

Awards can also aid workers in fields that are impacted by changes in technology, supporting their transition into good jobs. Innovation driven by new technologies, from artificial intelligence to advanced energy and industry efficiency technology has the potential to create new jobs but may also cause disruption for incumbent workers. This NOFO will prioritize serving workers who may be underemployed or unemployed due to a technological shock, ensuring they benefit from the technological shock, and ensuring they benefit from technological growth in their region. This can include incumbent worker training allowing them to continue employed in their current company. It also can include training to prepare workers at the risk of layoff to transition to good jobs in other companies in their area. Sectoral partnerships supported by this NOFO can create structures that bring together companies that may need to lay off workers and companies interested in training and hiring those workers into new growth careers.

g. Job training provided through this NOFO must lead to placement in jobs that align with the Good Jobs Principles.

It is imperative that job training leads to placement into good jobs. A good job provides workers and their families with stability, security, and dignity. Access to good jobs is foundational to an equitable economy. That's why the Departments of Commerce and Labor published their Good Jobs Principles.⁸ These eight principles create a framework for workers, businesses, labor unions, advocates, researchers, state and local governments, and Federal agencies for a shared vision of job quality. Applicants must demonstrate that the education and training supported by this NOFO leads to jobs that align with these principles The Job Quality

⁶ "Introducing the High Road to the Middle Class Map." U.S. Department of Labor Blog. <https://blog.dol.gov/2023/07/13/introducing-the-high-road-to-the-middle-class-map>

⁷ "10 Growing Jobs That Pay Well and Don't Need A 4-Year Degree." U.S. Department of Labor Blog. <https://blog.dol.gov/2023/11/14/10-growing-jobs-that-dont-need-a-4-year-degree>

⁸ Good Jobs Principles. U.S. Department of Commerce and U.S. Department of Labor. <https://www.dol.gov/general/good-jobs/principles>

Toolkit is an actionable tool that applicants may find useful when assessing and improving the quality of jobs supported by awards made through this NOFO.⁹

h. Awards made through this NOFO will prioritize sectoral partnerships that advance technologies advancing economic and national security.

Through this NOFO, EDA will support the advancement of technology-based industries that are responsive to societal, national, and geostrategic challenges. Examples of these industries include those that are in the key technology focus areas (KTFAs) as established by and updated pursuant to the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022.¹⁰ Strong applications will have sectoral partnerships that advance an industry in a KTFA. For example:

Region A has a well-developed life sciences manufacturing cluster. Significant investment in life sciences manufacturing has come into the region bringing thousands of new jobs. Products in life sciences manufacturing require specialized training because they are produced in standardized and regulated production facilities to ensure product integrity. Many of these jobs do not require a bachelor's or advanced degree and many early career salaries pay a family sustaining wage in the region. Region A, having already formed a sectoral partnership in this industry, is looking to advance the biotechnology, medical technology, genomics, and synthetic biology key technology focus area.

Region B has made significant investment in advanced packaging semiconductor manufacturing. These semiconductors are highly specialized and support the defense and aerospace industry. The region has made investments in high-quality, skills-based, rapid credentialing programs with a community college that will upskill workers who are paid low wages for jobs in the semiconductor industry. Region B is aiming to advance the high-performance computing, semiconductors, and advanced computer hardware and software key technology focus area.

Region C is investing in the offshore wind industry. The offshore wind industry relies on employees in skilled trades like welding and construction. Offshore wind power is generated through the use of wind turbines. Region C will need a labor supply of welders to expand the industry. In partnership with a registered local labor union, Region C will use a Registered Apprenticeship model to train welders in this industry. Region C is aiming to advance the advanced energy and industrial efficiency technologies key technology focus area.

Region D is investing in robotics and autonomy. The demand for autonomous technology has led to a need for mechatronics technologists and technicians who operate, test, maintain, or adjust robotics. The region is proposing an earn- and- learn model for training in these occupations as well as wraparound supports such as public transportation support to help participants access training. Region D is advancing the robotics, automation, and advanced manufacturing key technology focus area.

⁹ "Job Quality Toolkit." U.S. Department of Commerce. <https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2022-08/Job-Quality-Toolkit.pdf>

¹⁰ 42 U.S.C. § 19107(c), (e).

Region E is investing in predictive healthcare technologies and healthcare information technology (IT). To advance that industry, the region needs more non-traditional pathways. This region proposes a healthcare sectoral partnership that will support the training of radiologic and biological technicians. Region E is aiming to advance the biotechnology, medical technology, genomics, and synthetic biology key technology focus area.

The sectoral partnerships proposed in an application must advance an industry in a KTFA. The sectoral partnerships may train participants for a wide range of jobs in those industries. Applicants will need to identify their industry's associated KTFA and explain how the sectoral partnership advances that KTFA.

Further, the activities supported by this NOFO may enhance projects funded by President Biden's Investing in America agenda, which spans the American Rescue Plan, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS for America, and Inflation Reduction Act. Applicants that are recipients of funding relating to the Investing in America agenda may use funds available from this NOFO to enhance projects that align to the KTFAs.

i. Tech Hub designees are provided a benefit of designation through this FY 24 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO.

The Tech Hubs Program aims to strengthen U.S. economic and national security with investments in regions across the country that have the potential to become globally competitive in the future. EDA designated Tech Hubs by assessing whether applicants had the assets, resources, and capabilities to emerge as globally competitive in a particular technology area within 10 years.¹¹ The benefits to designation applies to any designated Tech Hub as of the date of this NOFO's application deadline (see section D.4). Sectoral partnerships affiliated with a Tech Hub designee will be given benefits of that designation in this NOFO in both the merit review (see section E.1) and as a selection factor (see section E.2.c.). Further note that other sectoral partnerships aligned with the key technology focus areas (KTFAs) but unaffiliated with Tech Hubs may also apply. For instance, applicants that support workforce development efforts in regions hosting CHIPS Incentives Program semiconductor manufacturing clusters may be able to demonstrate strong alignment with economic and national security goals and key KTFAs.

3. Example Activities and Desired Outputs and Outcomes

This NOFO supports projects that lead to the following outcomes:

- Increase in employment rate for the proposed region;
- Wage gains for program participants;
- An increase in underrepresented populations in industry (for example, women in construction, people of color in information technology, and persons with disabilities in science and engineering professions); and

¹¹ "2023 Tech Hubs Designees." U.S. Economic Development Administration. [2023 Tech Hubs Designees and Strategy Development](#)

- Increase in production of key technologies that fortify the economic and national security of the United States.

Proposed activities, outputs, and outcomes may exist for a project based on the proposed project's regional, sectoral, and economic contexts. These may include but may not be limited to the following:

- Developing and delivering quality skills training that places workers into jobs that provide working conditions aligned with the Good Jobs Principles;
- Staffing for the backbone organization to carry out key functions outlined in section A.2 of this NOFO;
- Developing and executing outreach and recruitment plans to secure workers, with emphasis on those from underserved populations, to participate in the skills training program in the targeted industry;
 - These plans should be developed in partnership with stakeholders from underserved populations, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, or Minority-Serving Institutions, or community-based organizations, unions, vocational rehabilitation service providers, or national nonprofits that represent these populations to the greatest extent possible.
- Reaching historically underserved populations and areas, communities of color, women, and other groups facing labor market barriers such as persons with disabilities, disconnected youth, individuals in recovery, individuals with past criminal records, including justice-impacted and reentry participants, serving trainees participating in the SNAP, TANF, and WIC, and veterans and military spouses;
- Identifying and recruiting workers that are underemployed, unemployed, or at the risk of layoff due to technological transition, and training and placing these workers in good jobs in advanced technology sectors as defined under the KTFAs;
- Working with employers and other stakeholders, including education and training providers, labor unions, and workers, to identify in-demand occupations and skills and securing employer commitments to hire workers who successfully complete skills training, including earning relevant industry-sought credentials;
- Making the information on in-demand occupations, the local training programs aligned to those occupations, and the funding/support opportunities to workers to better afford the training programs easily accessible for job seekers;
- Developing processes to translate employers' needs for worker skills into training models and to identify skills that could be useful to employers that they are not currently using;
- Working with employers to adopt high-wage, high-skill workforce strategies;
- Developing systems and processes to measure and track key outcomes and metrics of skills training program;
- Securing and offering wraparound services for workers to participate in skills training programs (e.g., transportation, childcare, career coaching/navigation services, healthcare or behavioral healthcare);

- Delivering technical assistance for employers on skills-based hiring practices to reduce bias, improve return on investment, and promote people-centered practices;
- Partnering with employers, unions, and workers to ensure that jobs are safe, healthy, and accessible and built with input from workers and representatives;
- Engaging employers, unions, worker-serving organizations, and workers to establish long-term training partnerships to transition workers from jobs impacted by technological change and advances; and
- Leveraging Federal and non-Federal funds to expand reach.

All awardees should produce concrete, measurable impacts for workers in the region (e.g., employer commitments to hire, job placements, wage gain) within the period of performance. These metrics should also be broken down by demographics of participants.

4. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for this program is section 209 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (PWEDA) (42 U.S.C. § 3149).

B. Federal Award Information

1. What Funding Is Available Under this Announcement?

Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law 118-42), Congress provided \$25 million for the Good Jobs Challenge program. Publication of this announcement does not obligate DOC or EDA to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds. The granting of any award is subject to the availability of funds at the time of award as well as to DOC priorities at the time of award. Neither DOC nor EDA will be held responsible for application preparation costs. If an applicant is awarded funding, neither DOC nor EDA is under any obligation to provide any future funding in connection with that award or to make any future award(s). Amendments or renewals of an award to increase funding or to extend the period of performance are at the sole discretion of DOC and EDA.

EDA anticipates making approximately 5 to 8 awards ranging from \$1 million to \$8 million under this FY 2024 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO. EDA will scale awards as appropriate to the proposed geographic, industry, and worker role coverage of a given regional system. While there is no maximum amount of funding that can be requested for any phase or combination of phases, the following estimates can help guide your funding request. An applicant could request, for example:

\$2 million for Program Design to design an industry-driven skills training program and make the capacity building investments necessary to enable its implementation, including securing the needed capital (e.g., equipment, leased space) per region, industry, and worker role.

\$6 million for Program Implementation to implement an industry-driven skills training program per region, industry, and worker role.

This example is only for illustrative purposes. EDA will evaluate funding requests based on the criteria outlined in section E.1.

2. What Type of Funding Instrument Will Be Used to Make Awards? How Long Will a Project’s Period of Performance Be?

a. Funding Instrument

Funding Instrument: Subject to the availability of funds, EDA will award grants to eligible applicants.

b. Period of Performance

Period of Performance: The project period of performance depends on the nature of the project for which the grant is awarded. Because of the need for recipients to meet identified benchmarks to proceed through project phases, EDA expects projects to range in duration from **24 months to 36 months**. EDA will work closely with award recipients to accommodate their projected timelines within reason and allowances of regulations and grant policies, though EDA will prioritize programs that are able to place workers into good jobs within 24 months of the award. EDA expects that all projects will proceed efficiently and expeditiously, and EDA encourages applicants to clearly document how quickly they will be able to start and complete the proposed project scope of work.

C. Eligibility Information

To be considered for funding under this NOFO, applicants must meet the eligibility requirements in this section.

1. The applicant must be an Eligible Applicant.

Eligible applicants¹² for investment assistance include a(n):

- District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD);
 - Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes;
 - State¹³, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions;
 - Institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education;
- or

¹² See section 3(4) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122) and 13 C.F.R. § 300.3.

¹³ Under section 3(10) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122), the term “State” includes any State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

- Public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.¹⁴

Under this FY 2024 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO, EDA is not authorized to provide grants to individuals or to for-profit entities, and such requests will not be considered for funding.

2. The applicant must meet Cost Share or Matching requirements.

a. Investment Rate

With limited exceptions, cost share is required for projects funded under this NOFO. Generally, the EDA investment rate (percentage of the total project costs) will be 50 percent, but EDA may fund up to 80 percent of total project costs based on the relative needs of the region. Table 1 below sets forth the maximum allowable investment rate depending on the economic distress of the region:

TABLE 1: Maximum Allowable Investment Rate Based on Economic Distress of Region

Projects located in regions in which:	Maximum allowable investment rates (percentage of total project cost)
(A) The 24-month unemployment rate is at least 225% of the national average, or	80
(B) The per capita income is not more than 50% of the national average;	80
(C) The 24-month unemployment rate is at least 200% of the national average; or	70
(D) The per capita income is not more than 60% of the national average	70
(E) The 24-month unemployment rate is at least 175% of the national average; or	60
(F) The per capita income is not more than 65% of the national average	60
(G) The 24-month unemployment rate is at least 1 percentage point greater than the national average;	50

¹⁴ This may include labor unions to the extent they can provide proof that they are organized as and operating as a non-profit organization. Also, under 13 C.F.R. § 301.2(b), EDA, at its sole discretion, may waive this cooperation requirement for certain projects of a significant regional or national scope.

(H) The per capital income is not more than 80% of the national average.	50
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For projects subject to a Special Need, as outlined in section C.3.b below, EDA will determine the maximum allowable investment rate, not to exceed 80 percent of total project costs, based on the actual or threatened overall economic situation of the region in which the project is located. In addition, EDA’s regulations allow an investment rate of up to 100 percent for Indian tribes, for a State or political subdivision of a State that can document that it has exhausted its effective taxing and borrowing capacity, or for a non-profit organization that can document that it has exhausted its borrowing capacity.

b. Documentation of Cost Share or Matching

See section D.2.b.iii for information on how to document cost share or matching.

3. The applicant must meet the EDA Distress Criteria.

To be eligible for funding under this NOFO, an applicant must propose a project that meets EDA’s distress criteria. Applicants must self-define the appropriate region geographically. The geographic area comprising a region need not be contiguous or defined by political boundaries but should constitute a cohesive area capable of undertaking self-sustained economic development.

There are several ways to meet the distress criteria requirement.

Option 1: The proposed project is located in a region that meets EDA’s economic distress criteria. Applicants must provide third-party data that clearly indicate that the relevant region is subject to one (or more) of the following economic distress criteria:

- (i) an unemployment rate that is, for the most recent 24-month period for which data are available, at least one percentage point greater than the national average unemployment rate;
- (ii) per capita income that is, for the most recent period for which data are available, 80 percent or less of the national average per capita income; or
- (iii) a “Special Need,” as determined by EDA. Applicants may find EDA-funded tools useful in characterizing economic development need in their region.¹⁵

Option 2: The proposed project is located in an Economic Development District (EDD) that is located in a region that does not meet EDA’s economic distress criteria, and

¹⁵ “Find Grant Resources.” U.S. Economic Development Administration. <https://www.eda.gov/resources/find-grant-resources>

EDA determines the proposed project will be of substantial direct benefit to a geographic area within the EDD that meets EDA’s economic distress criteria.

Option 3: The proposed project will be located in a geographic area of poverty or high unemployment that meets EDA’s economic distress criteria but which is located in a region that overall does not meet EDA’s distress criteria.

EDA will review and evaluate documentation submitted by the applicant to determine eligibility. EDA will reject any documentation of eligibility that the agency determines is inaccurate or incomplete, which may cause the application to be rejected. EDA reserves the right to request additional documentation or information from the applicant to make an eligibility determination. The proposed project must meet EDA’s distress criteria as of the date EDA receives a complete application. However, if an award has not been made within six months of that date, EDA will then re-evaluate the project to determine continued eligibility for investment assistance. If the project no longer meets EDA’s distress criteria, the project will no longer be considered.

Below are further details on economic distress criteria. See also 13 C.F.R. § 301.3(a).

a. Unemployment Rate & Per Capita Income

For economic distress levels based upon per capita income requirements, EDA will base its determination upon the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) published by the U.S. Census Bureau. For economic distress levels based upon the unemployment rate, EDA will base its determination upon the most recent data published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), within the U.S. Department of Labor. For eligibility based upon either per capita income requirements or the unemployment rate, when the ACS or BLS data, as applicable, are not the most recent Federal data available, EDA will base its decision upon the most recent Federal data from other sources (including data available from the Census Bureau and the Bureaus of Economic Analysis, Labor Statistics, Indian Affairs, or any other Federal source determined by EDA to be appropriate). If no Federal data are available, an applicant must submit to EDA the most recent data available from the State. The required State data must be for the region where the project will be located, the geographic area where substantial direct project benefits will occur, or the geographic area of poverty or high unemployment, as applicable. Applicable 2-digit state and 3-digit county FIPS codes are required. See section D.2.b.viii.

b. “Special Need”

As defined by EDA, “special need” includes meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Closure or restructuring of industries or the loss of a major employer essential to the regional economy as defined by:
 - a public announcement of an impending closure or restructuring of a firm expected to occur within four (4) years of review of an application submission; or
 - an actual closure or restructuring of a firm within the 24 months prior to submission of an application, resulting in sudden job losses; and

- such threatened or actual closure results in sudden job losses meeting the following dislocation criteria:
- For regions with a population of at least 100,000, the threatened or actual dislocation is 500 jobs, or one percent of the civilian labor force (CLF), whichever is less;
- For regions with a population up to 100,000, the threatened or actual dislocation is 200 jobs, or one percent of the CLF, whichever is less;
- Substantial out-migration or population loss;
- Underemployment, meaning employment of workers at less than full-time or at less skilled tasks than their training or abilities permit;
- Military base closures or realignments, defense contractor reductions-in-force, or Department of Energy defense-related funding reductions;
- Natural or other major disasters or emergencies. A region that has received one of the following disaster declarations is eligible:
 - A Presidentially declared disaster (declared under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 5121 et seq.)); or
 - A Federally declared disaster (pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1861a(a)); the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. § 1961); or the Small Business Act, as amended (Pub. L. No. 85- 536, 15 U.S.C. § 631 et seq., 72 Stat. 384 (1958)). Applicants must demonstrate a clear nexus between the needs created by the declared disaster and the proposed project.
 - Extraordinary depletion of natural resources or other impact attributable to a new or revised Federal regulation or policy that will have a significant impact on a community's ability to prevent an extraordinary depletion of natural resources. For example, in the case of a Federal fishing regulation designed to promote and sustain a community and its fishery in the long-term, EDA could quickly help a coastal community respond to any short-term economic dislocations.
- Communities undergoing transition of their economic base as a result of changing trade patterns;
- A project located in a persistent poverty county or high-poverty area;
 - For purposes of determining Special Need, the term "persistent poverty county" means any county that has had 20 percent or more of its population living in poverty over the past 30 years, as measured by the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses and the most recent Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.
 - The term "high-poverty area" means any census tract with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent as measured by the 2016–2020 5-year data series available from the American Community Survey of the Census Bureau. One available tool to obtain this information can be found at <https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=31e10881bd1040b7b0ae685559917509>.

- The project is located in an Energy Transition Community for regions experiencing transitions away from nuclear, biomass, or coal. See section C.3.c. below for required documentation.
- Communities experiencing energy transitions, including coal, nuclear, or biomass closure communities;
 - To be eligible under this special need, applicants must provide appropriate third-party economic and demographic statistics, such as those described below in section C.3.c below, to document the extent to which contractions in the energy economy have negatively impacted, or can reasonably demonstrate that they will negatively impact, the community or region.
 - In general, for past energy economy contraction events, EDA will consider applications for projects in communities and regions where the “event” (e.g., closure of a coal mine or a coal-fired power plant, closure of various energy economy supply chain businesses, etc.) took place within 1-15 years prior to the application submission date.
- Other Special Need. The area is experiencing other special or extraordinary economic adjustment needs, as determined EDA.
- Assistance to Energy Transition Communities.
- Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC).

c. Data Sources

Applicants may use the following Federal data resources to demonstrate that the project meets the distress criteria. This is not an exhaustive list, and it is intended as a reference.

- U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, <http://www.bea.gov>;
- U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau- American Community Survey (ACS): <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS): <http://www.bls.gov/>;
- U.S. Department of Labor, Mine Safety Health Administration: <https://www.msha.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration (EIA): <https://www.eia.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)- American Indian Population and Labor Force Reports: <http://www.bia.gov/>
- StatsAmerica: <http://www.statsamerica.org>
- US Nuclear Regulatory Commission: <https://www.nrc.gov>
- Argonne National Laboratory- National Economic Resilience Data Explorer (NERDE): <https://www.anl.gov/dis/national-economic-resilience-data-explorer-nerde>

For communities experiencing energy transitions, including coal, nuclear, or biomass closure communities, if Federal data is not available, applicants may consider demonstrating the negative impacts of coal, nuclear, and biomass power plant closure(s) using data including but

not limited to local/regional economic indicators, labor market analyses, official announcements made by local and regional industries and firms, and demographic and industry data.

In regions that will be impacted in the future by coal, nuclear, or biomass power plant closure(s), applicants must provide documentation demonstrating that the region will be negatively impacted in the future by such closure(s). Such documentation may, but is not required to, take the form of an announcement of future closure and should be substantiated to the extent possible by third-party data sources as listed above.

4. Other Criteria

a. The project must align with the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Each project funded under this FY 2024 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO must be consistent with the region’s current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or an equivalent EDA-accepted regional economic development strategy that meets EDA’s CEDS or strategy requirements. Applications will need to detail how the proposed project will support the economic development needs and objectives outlined in the CEDS or equivalent strategy and provide a copy of this planning document, either by attaching the document to the application or providing a web link for the document. In addition, applicants should indicate if other Federal funds have been secured or requested to support any portion of the project for which an EDA investment is proposed. Applicants should describe how the EDA investment will complement, leverage, or otherwise align with other public and private investments to accomplish the planned deliverables and outcomes. Where other Federal funding may be involved in the project, the applicant should provide the Federal program name and contact information with the application to facilitate interagency coordination and avoid duplication of resources. More information on the development of CEDS can be found here.¹⁶ CEDS reports can be found here.¹⁷

b. The project must align with EDA’s Investment Priorities¹⁸

EDA evaluates all project applications to determine the extent to which they align with EDA’s investment priorities. EDA’s investment priorities provide an overarching framework to ensure its grant investments portfolio contributes to local efforts to build, improve, or better leverage economic assets that allow businesses to succeed and regional economies to become more resilient.

c. The project must align with EDA’s Equity Investment Priority.

Consistent with Executive Orders 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government*, and 14091, *Further Advancing*

¹⁶ “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). United States Economic Development Administration. <https://www.eda.gov/resources/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy>.

¹⁷ “CEDS Resource Library.” Stats America. <https://www.statsamerica.org/ceds/Default.aspx>.

¹⁸ “Investment Priorities.” U.S. Economic Development Administration. <https://www.eda.gov/funding/investment-priorities>.

Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, and EDA's Equity Investment Priority, EDA expects projects to advance equity to underserved populations to the extent practicable. In this context, EDA is seeking projects that directly benefit: 1) one or more traditionally underserved populations, but not limited to women, Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders; or 2) underserved communities within geographies that have been systemically and/or systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic prosperity such as Tribal Lands, Persistent Poverty Counties, and rural areas with demonstrated, historical underservice. A more detailed definition of what constitutes an underserved population and a listing of persistent poverty counties may be found under the Equity heading here.¹⁹

A successful project will articulate which populations or communities will benefit (as noted above and <https://www.eda.gov/funding/investment-priorities>) and include a plan for inclusive community engagement in the project and ensuring that the economic benefits of the project will be shared by all communities in the project region, including any underserved community. It should articulate the communities affected, barriers those communities may face in accessing benefits of the project, contemplated outreach efforts, and other planned steps to address identified barriers, as appropriate.

D. Application Submission Information

1. Obtaining an Application and Electronic Submission through EDGE

To be eligible for funding, an applicant must obtain, complete, and timely submit a complete application electronically through the Economic Development Grants Experience (EDGE) at sfgrants.eda.gov.

Ensure that your organization and any required individuals are registered with required systems as soon as possible. **Before submitting an application under this NOFO, each applicant must register its organization with EDGE.** Applicants should note that this process can be lengthy, requires interaction with multiple organizations (*e.g.*, SAM.gov), and requires confirmation at each step. Applicant organizations that have not previously completed any of the above steps may require three to four weeks to accomplish these tasks due to system processing requirements. EDA strongly encourages prospective applicants to begin the pre-submission process as early as possible in the application period.

Applicants may be asked to clarify objectives and work plans and modify budgets or other specifics as necessary to comply with Federal requirements and provide supplemental information required by the agency before award. Regardless of any such requests, unallowable costs or expenses that are included in any application materials will not be funded. All expenses and activities must conform to the terms and conditions of the award.

As part of the registration process, you will register one Authorized Representative for your organization, however, multiple points of contact may be registered or added by the lead applicant to the application workspace to view or work on completing the application. The

¹⁹ Id.

Authorized Representative will be the only official with the authority to submit applications. The required electronic file format for attachments is text-searchable Portable Document Format (PDF) and, where appropriate, Microsoft Excel. All documentation and data submitted should be current and applicable as of the date submitted.

EDA intends to review each application expeditiously after receiving the complete application.

a. Verification of Submission

Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made through EDGE. Applicants, specifically the Authorized Representative submitting the application and materials, will receive a time and date-stamped email from EDGE confirming the submission and receipt of the application and other required documents.

b. Alternatives to Submission through EDGE

Applications will only be accepted electronically through **EDGE** at sfgrants.eda.gov. However, to accommodate applicants’ accessibility requirements, a paper version of the application may be obtained by contacting GoodJobsChallenge@eda.gov. EDA also will provide the requestor with the application in an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, compact disc, or other accessible format.

2. Content and Form of Application

An applicant must submit a complete application to be considered for funding. EDA may seek additional information or documentation from the applicant to clarify information presented in the application. EDA also may, in its sole discretion, continue review of any application with minor defects or errors, while the applicant supplies the missing information.

a. Application Forms

The following application forms must be submitted by the proposed backbone organization that will receive and administer the award if selected:

Application Forms
<p>Required Forms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Narrative • Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan • Matching Share Commitment Letters (One Per Match Source) • SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance) • SF-424A (Budget Information Non-Construction Programs) • CD-511 (Certification Regarding Lobbying) • Letters of Commitment from Sectoral Partnership Members and Employer Partners • List of FIPS codes in the Project Service Area

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distress Criteria Data
<p>Conditionally Required (If Applicable)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State/Local Government Support (required for non-profit applicants) • SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) • State Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC)/Executive Order 12372 Compliance Documentation (If applicable, for each participating State in primary service area) • Organizational Documentation (if applicable, see section D.2.c.iv) • Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation • Environmental and Historic Preservation Documentation, including Certification Clause (Appendix A to Environmental Narrative)
<p>Optional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation to Support Project Narrative • Budget and Staffing Plan Template • Evidence of Membership in a Tech Hub

The paragraphs that follow describe the expectations for each of the application forms.

b. Required Forms

i. Project Narrative

A Project Narrative of no more than 15 total pages (12-point font, 1-inch margins). **Material beyond the 15th page will not be read or considered.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a clear and concise narrative that includes a compelling justification for the project, including a clearly defined regional workforce need or gap, how the proposed project will uniquely meet that need, and the expected outcome(s) that will result from the proposed projects. Lengthy applications will not receive greater consideration.

Project Narratives must address the following areas:

Section 1: Project Description and Overview

Provide an executive summary that includes a project title, identifies the sectoral partnership, and provides a summary of no more than 250 words.

Section 2: Description of Sectoral Partnership

This section should identify the backbone organization and explain why it is well equipped to lead the sectoral partnership. (See section A.2.b. for more details on the characteristics of backbone organizations). In this section:

- Identify and describe **ONE** sectoral partnership;

- Using Figure 1 in section A.1 of this NOFO as a guide, describe all relevant stakeholders for the system and/or partnership, including specific details on the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder;
- Explain how the backbone organization will meet the characteristics of an effective backbone organization in A.2.b;
- Explain how the described sectoral partnership will sufficiently execute the proposed project; and
- Explain how the sectoral partnership will advance worker-centered sector strategies that engage workers, worker organizations, or labor management partnerships; employers; workforce development entities; training entities; and community organizations to create strong and sustainable sectoral partnerships.

Applicants should include letters from sectoral partnership members that articulate their role and support in the sectoral partnership. For more information on these letters, see section D.2.b.vii.

Section 3: Employer & Worker Partnerships and Commitments

This section should explain how employers and labor representatives (labor unions, community organizations, etc.) were or will be involved in the creation of the training programs. In this section:

- Describe employer leadership and commitments already in place;
- Describe steps the sectoral partnership will take to maintain and monitor employer commitment;
- Describe how employers and labor representatives will participate in the implementation, evaluation, and ongoing refinement and improvement of training programs; and
- Explain how employers and labor representatives were or will be active in the creation of recruitment requirements and the strategy for recruitment and/or the selection of training participants.

Applicants should include data and associated documentation (employer commitment letters) from the employer(s) that show the number of committed job placements at the time of application. Further, this documentation must describe how the jobs for which the participants will be placed align with the Good Jobs Principles in section A.2.g. For more information on these letters, see section D.2.b.vii.

Section 4: Sectoral Partnership Readiness

This section should articulate the sectoral partnerships' readiness to enter design or program implementation upon receipt of a potential award. This description should:

- Describe the vision for the partnership and how that vision is communicated across the partnership;
- Describe how the sectoral partnership meets the characteristics of a well-organized and coordinated partnership as outlined in A.2.c;
- Describe how the backbone organization governs the sectoral partnership including its efforts to ensure regular engagement with key stakeholders;

- Description of the sectoral partnership’s capacity to engage employer sponsors in an organized and consistent way to meet the needs of the region; and
- Explain how the project will be able to design training and deliver training within 1 year of award.

Section 5: Regional Impacts

This section should:

- Describe the project’s location and region, including its project service area. The project service area must include FIPS Codes;
- Identify the key industry or industries affected by the sectoral partnership;
- Identify the most significant and difficult-to-meet skill needs in the region that will help advance the industry and target underserved communities;
- Address how the proposed project will be consistent with the region’s or regions’ CEDS;
- Explain how the proposed sectoral partnership will advance the industry in the region and aligns to the region’s economic development strategy;
- Identify at least one key technology focus area (KTFA) that the sectoral partnership is aiming to advance;
- Explain how the sectoral partnership advances the key technology focus area(s) (KTFA);
- If the project’s location is geographically in a region designated as a Tech Hub by EDA and the proposed sectoral partnership is aiming to align with and advance the Tech Hub’s strategy:
 - Describe how the proposed project will align with and advance the Tech Hub’s strategy and place participants in good jobs within the award period of performance; and
 - Provide evidence of the applicant’s membership in the Tech Hub’s consortium;
- Describe how the sectoral partnership aligns with existing workforce development efforts in the region and how the proposed project will address local employers’ workforce needs;
- Discuss the factors that contribute to the region’s workforce training strengths and challenges (e.g., workforce resources, existing and emerging industries, other regional assets);
- Explain how the proposed project would meet EDA’s investment priorities including the equity investment priority; and
- Describe how the sectoral partnership and its stakeholders, for example, State and local government, philanthropy, and industry will support sustainability of the system after the lifecycle of the grant.

Section 6: Project Description

This section should:

Specify which one or more of the following phases the project proposes:

- **Program/Training Design:** funding for a sectoral partnership to identify the skills needed by industry and workers, develop the skills training curriculum and materials, and secure technical expertise needed to train workers with the skills needed by businesses, including providing professional development and capacity-building to trainers and educators, and/or
- **Program/Training Implementation:** funding to deliver workforce training and wraparound services that place workers into good jobs through a new or expanded sectoral partnership.

Describe anticipated Program Design and Program Implementation projects. Anticipated Program Design and Program Implementation projects should align with the funding request under Section 7 of the narrative. Depending on the needs of the region and the status of existing workforce training efforts, these projects might include:

- The development of outreach and recruitment plans for workers, including plans to reach diverse and underserved communities;
- The development of training models and curricula; and/or
- Purchase of necessary equipment to support and expand existing workforce training projects.

Section 7: Funding Request and Program Design and Implementation

This section should:

Provide an estimated funding request for the proposed partnership(s). While there are no maximums for any phase or combination of phases (program design and/or program implementation) that can be requested, the following estimates can help guide your funding request. Further note that EDA anticipates making approximately 5-8 awards ranging from \$1 million to \$8 million. An applicant could request, for example:

\$2 million for Program Design to design an employer-driven skills training program and make the capacity building investments necessary to enable its implementation, including securing the needed capital (e.g., equipment, leased space) per region, industry, and worker role.

\$6 million for Program Implementation to implement an employer-driven skills training program per region, industry, and worker role.

The request above is only for illustration. EDA will evaluate requests based on the criteria outlined in section E.1. Please see section A.2.c. for additional guidance on the program design and program implementation activities that may be funded. See also section D.6 for activities that are not allowable and may not be funded.

In addition, applicants should include costs in their proposal to cover expenses to track and measure key metrics of their program. Grantees will need to maintain rosters of program participants along with their demographics and sufficient identifying information. Metrics that will need to be tracked and reported may include the following number of workers participating in program broken down by key demographics, number of workers who complete the program broken down by key demographics, number of workers placed into jobs broken down by key demographics, average wages of job placements, average wage growth of job placements,

retention of workers placed, amount spent on wraparound services, and total average cost per worker.

Section 8: Projected Impacts

This section should:

Provide a projected analysis of the impact that the project will have on the region over the period of performance. Include the following projections for the proposed project along with data that validates estimates provided, or if that data is not yet available, provide a description of how you will collect data to validate estimates provided.

- For each job for which participants may be trained and subsequently placed:
 - Name and target jobs served by the sectoral partnership; and
 - Project the number of participants employers are committing to hire along with the following information for each job: job title/occupation, wages, benefits;
 - Describe how the job meets the Good Jobs Principles described in section A.2.g. These principles include 1) recruitment and hiring; 2) benefits; 3) diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; 4) empowerment and representation; 5) job security and working conditions; 6) organizational culture; 7) pay; and 8) skills and career advancement. **Applicants MUST focus on pay and benefits and at least one other Good Jobs Principles.** The Job Quality Toolkit is an actionable tool that applicants may find useful when assessing and improving the quality of jobs supported by awards made through this NOFO; and²⁰
 - Explain how the jobs proposed would be good jobs in the context of the project's region.

- For the sectoral partnerships activities provide the following:
 - Projected number of individuals enrolled in the program with target demographic breakdown;
 - Projected number of individuals who successfully complete training program; and
 - Projected number of participants placed into good jobs. Provide this projection both as a total and in quarterly increments over the proposed period of performance.

- Explain why the proposed partnership and the projections provided are ambitious yet achievable. Do you have examples of where this or similar solutions have been implemented before? If the partnership is recently formed, what research and

²⁰ “Job Quality Toolkit.” US Department of Commerce.
<https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2022-08/Job-Quality-Toolkit.pdf>

groundwork have you done that leads you to believe your outcomes are achievable?

The data must be clearly presented in the narrative. The tables below may be used to structure your response when describing the jobs in your sectoral partnership and their wages, benefits, and other details that align with the Good Jobs Principles. The use of the tables below is optional, but strongly recommended.

TABLE 2: Sectoral Partnership Occupations Template

Name of Occupation	Number of Employer Commitments Per Job	Projected Wages	Benefits
Welder	50	\$30 per hour	Health, retirement, sick days, vacation days

TABLE 3: Total Enrollments, Completions, and Placements Template

Total Enrollments	Total Completions	Total Placements into Good Jobs
500	450	400

TABLE 4: Quarterly Progress Towards Placements Template

YEAR 1				YEAR 2			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
0	0	50	100	150	200	300	400

Section 9: Ensuring Participant Access & Success

This section should:

- Identify any anticipated barriers to worker participation and how you plan to mitigate the impact of those barriers;
- Describe any wraparound services that will be provided to workers to ensure they are able to participate in employer-driven skills training programs (e.g.,

transportation, childcare, coaching/navigation services) and how you will ensure the program is sustainable, including any support provided to workers after completion of the training (e.g., job placement support, etc.);

- Clearly identify the provider of wraparound supports and their inclusion in the sectoral partnership, identifying any anticipated agreements to ensure quick, equitable, and cost-effective delivery of services when needed;
- Describe how the grantee will continuously evaluate the barriers to participant success in the program and reevaluate offerings of wraparound supports;
- Describe the target demographics of participants and specific stakeholder groups that will be impacted by the solution and explain the rationale for how participants are targeted; and
- For any target demographics identified, describe how recruitment, training, and support activities will be differentiated to support the unique needs of those groups.

ii. Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan

Applicants must provide a detailed budget narrative document (Word document or PDF) that identifies and justifies each budget line item (including both the Federal share and matching non-Federal share). The narrative total should match the total project costs listed in both the SF-424, Question 18, Line g (“TOTAL”) and the appropriate totals fields of the SF-424A. As part of the budget narrative, **applicants also must submit a detailed staffing plan** that lists all positions that would be charged to the Federal and non-Federal portions of the budget for each year of the period of performance.

The budget narrative should include an itemized list of the matching share sources (consistent with the match commitment letters from each source of match), the total match contribution per each matching share source, and whether the match is cash or in-kind.

Each line item in the budget narrative should clearly indicate:

- the budget category (from the SF-424A) to which the line item corresponds;
- a description of the intended use of funds for each line item; and
- if any matching share is allocated to a given line item, a citation to the one or more commitment letters that documents each relevant matching organization’s commitment to provide the matching share of the given line item.

In addition to providing a stand-alone narrative budget document, applicants may use the optional budget and staffing plan template available at <https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/american-rescue-plan/good-jobs-challenge/program-resources#resources> to supplement the budget narrative. See section D.2.d.ii.

Recipients generally must expend non-Federal share, whether in cash or in-kind, at the same general rate as the Federal share. However, if the applicant’s budget narrative proposes otherwise (e.g., if the project’s implementation depends on a higher proportion of Federal share expenditure upfront), the applicant must clearly explain why project implementation requires different expenditure rates.

TIP – See these examples of how to identify costs in the budget narrative:

- For curriculum-related costs:
 - Contractual costs for purchasing training software, estimated at \$250 per student per year for two years, for 50 students, totaling \$25,000 over the period of performance.
 - Supplies costs for purchasing textbooks, estimated to be \$200 per student per year for two years, for 50 students, totaling \$20,000 over the period of performance.
- For participant support costs:
 - Contractual costs for career counseling, estimated at \$100 per session for 3 sessions per student during the project, for 50 students, totaling \$15,000 over the period of performance.

The budget narrative should include specific, itemized valuations of all project costs, including any in-kind matching funds (which, for personnel costs, should be supported by the staffing plan). Each cost should be placed in the appropriate budget category. For example, costs for an “event” consisting of contracts for services, supplies, space, and local transportation will need to be categorized under separate budget categories, as appropriate (even though they relate to the same event). In addition, each cost and each contractual effort need to be described adequately.

The “Other” category should only be used for costs that cannot be categorized as personnel, fringe benefits, supplies, equipment, contractual, or indirect costs.

The budget narrative should also clearly explain how each line-item cost ties into specific element(s) of the proposed scope of work.

TIP – See these examples of how to explain each line item’s connection to the scope of work:

- Training software is necessary to implement the robotics curriculum described in the scope of work.
- These event-related supplies and contractual costs (e.g., space rental; printed materials; and event security costs) are for program launch events in the project service area, to engage program participants and disseminate technical information concerning the following elements of the scope of work: [describe in detail].

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 Form SF-424A for each project year.

Applicants should include costs in their proposal to cover expenses to track and measure key metrics of their program.

iii. Matching Share Commitment Letters

For **all matching funds** (whether cash or in-kind) from **all sources** (*i.e.*, applicant, subrecipients, and any third-party sources), applications must include commitment letters or equivalent documents that demonstrate, to the satisfaction of EDA, that the matching funds (whether cash or in-kind) referenced in the application will be unencumbered, unrestricted, and committed at the time of award. **The match commitment letters must be signed by a person with the authority to commit funds on behalf of the contributing/donor organization.** In other words, if any entity besides the applicant will be donating match, please obtain and submit a match letter from that entity.

In-kind contributions may be used for the required matching share and must consist of contributions directly related to the proposed project, such as services, equipment, or space. An in-kind contribution is a non-monetary contribution. Goods or services offered free or at less than (discounted) the usual charge can be considered an in-kind contribution and still require a signed letter of commitment. EDA will fairly evaluate all in-kind contributions, which must be eligible project costs and which must meet applicable Federal cost principles and uniform administrative requirements. As with other match sources, a commitment letter is required for both applicant-provided and third-party sources of in-kind match.

For all sources of in-kind match, the letter should include details on what the in-kind contribution will consist of and an itemized valuation. Match letters simply stating an in-kind match amount without providing a description and an itemized valuation will be deemed insufficient. Each item of in-kind match must be categorized appropriately within the budget (*e.g.*, contractual costs, equipment costs, supplies costs, etc.).

TIP: See these examples of how to state valuations for in-kind match:

- 40 hours of consulting time during the project, at \$100 hourly rate, for a total in-kind contribution of \$4,000 across the period of performance.
- 1,000 square feet of donated event space valued at \$2,000 per event for six events over the course of the project, for a total in-kind contribution of \$12,000 across the period of performance.
- 10 3D printers valued at \$4,000 per printer, for a total in-kind contribution of \$40,000 across the period of performance.

Each matching share commitment letter must:

- be from the entity making the contribution (*e.g.*, from the applicant or from the third-party match source). Applicants cannot pledge match that is contributed/donated by a third-party entity unless a match letter is signed by an authorized representative of that entity;
- state whether each element of the match contribution is cash or in-kind;

- **IF IN-KIND, PROVIDE A VALUATION AND DESCRIPTION FOR EACH ELEMENT OF IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS;**
- confirm that the contribution is from a non-Federal source or from a Federal source that is explicitly authorized by statute to be used as matching share; and
- reflect, to EDA’s satisfaction, that the match is committed, unencumbered, and available as needed.

A provider of matching share, whether cash or in-kind contributions, may not serve as a contractor under the award for which it provides matching share.

Funds from other Federal financial assistance awards can serve as matching share funds only if authorized by statute, which may be determined by EDA’s reasonable interpretation of the statute. Applicants should indicate if other Federal funds have been secured for, or have been requested to support, any portion of the project for which an EDA investment is proposed. Applicants should describe how the EDA investment will complement, leverage, or otherwise align with other public and private investments to implement the project. Where other Federal funding may be involved in the project, the applicant should provide the Federal program name and contact information with their application to facilitate interagency coordination and avoid duplication of resources. Note that consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.306, not all sources of Federal funding may be allowed as match, and applicants shall raise any concerns as early as possible with the EDA contacts listed in section G.

Please note that all project funds, including match or cost share, are subject to the funding restrictions set forth in section D.6. All costs must be allowable under 2 C.F.R. part 200. Additionally, recipients generally must expend non-Federal share, whether in cash or in-kind, at the same general rate as the Federal share. However, if the applicant’s budget narrative proposes otherwise (*e.g.*, if the project’s implementation depends on a higher proportion of Federal share expenditure upfront), the applicant must clearly explain in the budget narrative why project implementation requires different expenditure rates.

Finally, any proposed use of unrecovered indirect costs as match must conform to the requirements of 2 C.F.R. § 200.306(c).

- iv. **SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance)**
- v. **SF-424A (Budget Information Non-Construction Programs)**
- vi. **CD-511 (Certification Regarding Lobbying)**
- vii. **Sectoral Partner and Employer Commitments**

This application requires letters of commitment for members of the sectoral partnership and employer partners. Letters should be formatted as business letters addressed to the lead entity of the sectoral partnership. Letters of Commitment for Sectoral Partnership members must clearly name the organization and describe their role in the organization at a minimum. The letter must be signed by the chief executive officer or equivalent role in the organization. Letters of Commitment from employer partners must include the specific number of workers to hire and identify occupations that support the industry. Further, this documentation must describe how the

jobs for which the participants will be placed align with the Good Jobs Principles in section A.2.g. A letter expressing generalized support would be insufficient.

viii. Project Service Area and FIPS Codes

Applicants **MUST** identify their proposed primary service area(s) by county or counties. **Counties should be identified by both name and 5-digit FIPS codes.** See 2020 State, County, Minor Civil Division, and Incorporated Place FIPS Codes available at <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files/2020/demo/pepest/2020-fips.html>.

Please find an optional spreadsheet template at: <https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/american-rescue-plan/good-jobs-challenge/program-resources#resources>.

ix. Distress Criteria Data

Applicants must submit data that demonstrates that the project service area meets the distress criteria as outlined in section C.3.

c. Conditionally Required Forms (If Applicable)

i. State/Local Government Support

Under 13 C.F.R. § 301.2, an applicant that is a non-profit organization must include in its application a resolution passed by (or a letter signed by) an authorized representative of a general purpose political subdivision of a State, acknowledging that it is acting in cooperation with officials of such political subdivision.

ii. SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities)

A form SF-LLL is required if an applicant has retained a registered lobbyist in conjunction with the proposed project.

iii. State Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC)/Executive Order 12372 Compliance Documentation

If a project’s primary service area is located within one or more States that participate in the intergovernmental review process established by Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs,” an applicant must submit documentation demonstrating compliance with that State’s or those States’ processes. See section D.5 “Intergovernmental Review” of this NOFO. The current list of participating States and their Single Points of Contact (SPOC) can be found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SPOC-list-as-of-2023.pdf>. Each State may participate for all or a subset of Federal grant programs. EDA strongly encourages applicants to contact SPOCs early in the application period to determine the relevant State’s or States’ processes.

Based on the applicant’s State, EDA requires the following documentation:

State does not participate	No documentation required—check SF-424 box 19(c).
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State participates; this grant program not subject to review	Documentation (e.g., a State executive order, a letter from the SPOC) showing that this grant program is not subject to review—provide the documentation as an attachment to the application, check SF-424 box 19(b).
State participates; this grant program subject to review	Documentation (e.g., a letter from the SPOC) with comments or indicating that this project was not selected for review, or, if the comment period has expired or comments were not received, a copy of the applicant’s request for comments (e.g., email)—provide the documentation as an attachment to the application, check SF-424 box 19(a).

iv. Organizational Documentation

Depending on the type of organization, an applicant may need to provide documentation that supports its organizational status as an eligible entity:

- States, Federally recognized Indian tribes, cities or other political subdivisions of States, and institutions of higher education that are 100% publicly controlled are not required to submit organizational documentation.
- Nonprofit organizations, including unions, must submit documentation that demonstrates their status as nonprofit organizations. This must include articles of incorporation, bylaws, and certificate of good standing, or equivalent. It may also include proof of tax-exempt status.
- Nonprofit or for-profit tribal entities may need to submit similar documentation that demonstrates the entity is wholly owned by and operated for the benefit of the tribe.
- Other entities, including institutions of higher education that are not 100% publicly controlled, must provide documentation that demonstrates their organization type.

Regardless of entity type, EDA reserves the right to request documentation or additional proof of organizational status.

v. Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation

If indirect costs are included in the project budget, the applicant must include documentation to support the indirect cost rate it is using (unless claiming the 15 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below²¹). For most applicants, this will entail the

²¹ Along with other controlling law, awards made under this NOFO will be governed 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, as updated and revised by the final rule published in the Federal Register on April 22, 2024 (89 FR 30046). Among other changes, the revised regulations increase the de minimis indirect cost rate from 10% to 15% of modified total direct costs.

submission of a copy of its current, approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). The maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which EDA will reimburse a recipient is the lesser of the (i) line-item amount for the Federal share of indirect costs contained in the EDA approved budget for the award, or (ii) the Federal share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on either (a) the indirect cost rate approved in the NICRA, provided that the NICRA 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 NICRA, it may propose indirect costs in its budget; however, the applicant must prepare and submit an allocation plan and rate proposal for approval within 90 calendar days from the award start date (unless claiming the 15 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below). See 2 C.F.R. part 200 Apps. III, IV, V, VI, VII for guidance. The allocation plan and the rate proposal must be submitted to EDA by contacting the agency contacts in section G or submitting to the 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 NICRA and will submit an allocation plan and rate proposal to EDA or the applicant's cognizant Federal agency for approval.

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), an applicant that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, 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)). No documentation is required to justify the 15 percent de minimis indirect cost rate; however, an applicant electing to charge a de minimis rate of 15 percent must include a statement in its Budget Narrative that it does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate and is electing to charge the de minimis rate.

Note that if the applicant is a State or local unit of government that receives less than \$35,000,000 in direct Federal funding per year, it may submit any of the following:

- A NICRA;
- a Certificate of Indirect Costs from the Department of the Interior (DOI) or EDA;
- an acknowledgment received from EDA and Certificate of Indirect Costs in the form prescribed at 2 C.F.R. pt. 200, app. VII; or
- a Cost Allocation Plan approved by a Federal agency (note that cost allocation plans or indirect cost rates approved by state agencies are not acceptable).

vi. Environmental and Historic Preservation Documentation

If any project equipment, whether funded by EDA or provided as match, may require minor modifications to structures, e.g., removal of drywall or installation of wiring, applicants must provide environmental information. An environmental narrative that details required components may be accessed in EDA's website at: https://www.eda.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/07_Environmental-Narrative-Template-and-Application-Certification-Clause.docx. The documentation should reflect whether the component project is categorically excludable or should be a draft environmental assessment or environmental impact statement, as funded by the technical assistance award. Applicants should consult with agency contacts listed in section G of this NOFO to ensure the appropriate documentation is prepared. This includes filling out the environmental narrative and the Certification Clause found on Appendix A to the environmental

narrative. This Certification Clause must be completed separately and signed by the applicant's authorized representative.

Each application will be reviewed by EDA for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. During the NEPA review process, applicants may be instructed to contact the designated State and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO/THPO) if the project is subject to the requirements under the National Historic Preservation Act (54 USC 300101 et seq.), provide approvals from other governmental agencies, or provide more detailed environmental information. EDA, after compliance with requirements for consultation with Federally recognized Indian Tribes, may require applicants to participate in Tribal consultation, as necessary. The implementing regulations of NEPA require EDA to provide public notice of the availability of project-specific environmental documents, such as environmental impact statements, environmental assessments, findings of no significant impact, and records of decision, to the affected public.

d. Optional Documents

i. Documentation to Support Project Narrative

As noted above, EDA recognizes that regions have different needs. One region may have a backbone organization already providing training and seeking to expand an existing training program. Another region may have a strong relationship with employers and be looking to begin design of their training program. Therefore, applicants *may (but are not required to)* submit supporting documentation to appropriately supplement the Project Narrative. Such supporting documentation will not count against the Project Narrative page limit, but applicants should clearly label supporting documentation and make clear to EDA which section of the Project Narrative any supporting documentation is designed to supplement. For instance, an applicant *may (but is not required to)* submit:

- A memorandum of understanding or agreement (MOU or MOA) between the stakeholders to supplement Section 2 of the Project Narrative.
- A documented process to gather skills needs from employers and translate these needs into effective training models and a demonstrated ability to implement these skills training programs (e.g., past experience, sample training curriculum) to support Section 6 of the Project Narrative.
- Existing workforce training curricula to support Section 6 of the Project Narrative.

These examples are illustrative only; applicants *may (but are not required to)* submit other appropriate supporting documents as well.

ii. Budget and Staffing Plan Template

In addition to providing a stand-alone budget narrative and staffing plan, as required by section D.2.b.ii, applicants also may use the optional budget and staffing plan template available at <https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/american-rescue-plan/good-jobs-challenge/program-resources#resources> to supplement the required budget narrative and staffing plan.

iii. Evidence of Membership in a Tech Hub

An application that is associated with a Tech Hub may receive a benefit to designation. See section A.2.i. To receive that benefit, the project must be located geographically in a region designated as part of the Tech Hub Consortium, and the proposed sectoral partnership must align with and advance the Tech Hub's strategy. The applicant must also submit evidence of membership in the Tech Hub. This should be a letter from the Consortium Lead or Regional Innovation Officer of the Tech Hub. The letter must state that the project is located in the geographic boundary of the Tech Hub, that the project advances the work of the Tech Hub, and that the backbone organization is a member of the Tech Hub consortia. This letter will be evaluated as part of the review process.

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, applicants are required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting an application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in the application; (iii) make certain certifications (see also section H.7 of this NOFO), and (iv) 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. Backbone organizations should begin registration in SAM by the Application deadline. **SAM registration must be complete before EDA may make an award under this NOFO.** 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 the 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.

4. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for the receipt of an application is **4:59PM Eastern Standard Time on September 27, 2024.** Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. 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 through EDGE. EDA will not accept any unsolicited changes, additions, revisions, or deletions to applications or supporting documents after the submission deadline.

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 States 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 OMB's website at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf>. Question 19 of Form SF-424 allows applicants to demonstrate compliance with EO 12372. See also section D.2.c.iii.

6. Funding Restrictions

In general, EDA does not reimburse pre-award project costs. For pre-award procurement costs to be eligible for reimbursement, the applicant must competitively procure services pursuant to the Federal government's procurement procedures. All pre-award costs are incurred at the applicant's own risk and will be considered for reimbursement, in EDA's sole discretion, only if an applicant receives an award and such costs are approved by EDA in writing. Under no circumstances will EDA or DOC be held responsible for application preparation expenditures, which are distinguished from pre-award project costs.

It is DOC policy that funds may not be used to pay for management fees in excess of costs or profits, unless statutorily authorized. Funds may not be used, directly or indirectly as an offset for other funds, to support or oppose collective bargaining. Additionally, the following use of project funds, whether provided by EDA or match sources, are not allowable costs under this NOFO:

Payments to Supplement Private Employer's Wage Expenses. Project funds cannot be used to reimburse employers for the training of existing employees or used to subsidize a private employer's wage expenses.

Payments to Program Participants. Project funds cannot be provided as cash payments to participants of training programs.

Subsidies to Participant Firms. Project funds cannot be used to subsidize a non-eligible entity's operating costs or to pay private employers directly. This means that project funds may not be passed or transferred to companies being served by the applicant organization, nor may they be used to subsidize such companies' expenses that are unrelated to program activities, including general operating expenses.

Advertising & Marketing. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.421(b) and (d), the costs of promotional items and memorabilia, including models, gifts, and souvenirs as well as the costs of advertising and public relations designed to promote the applicant are not allowable. However, certain costs related specifically to recruiting participants and conducting program outreach (e.g., social media ads, press releases, flyers, etc.) may be allowable.

Cloud Service Credits: Credits to be distributed to companies (*i.e.*, startups and individuals) being served by the applicant organization are not allowable costs and thus are not an allowable source of matching share.

Construction Costs: Any activity that disturbs the ground or modifies a structure that is not related to the installation and operation of equipment cannot be purchased with award funds or provided as match.

Funds to Contractors that Provide Cash or In-Kind Match: Unless exempted by 2 C.F.R. § 200.317, contractors that develop draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids, or requests for proposals are prohibited from competing for the final procurement. For instance, a professional engineer or architect who prepared the Preliminary Engineering Report for an EDA application would be excluded from bidding on the same work under the award. See Notice of Government-Wide Procurement Restriction, section H.5.

Costs Related to Establishing the Sectoral Partnership: Activities of this nature that are unallowable include costs related to identifying key stakeholders, establishing procedures for managing subawardees, and initial planning activities.

7. EDGE Systems Issues

If you experience a systems issue with EDGE (*i.e.*, a technical problem or glitch with the webpage) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before a deadline, please (i) print any error message received; (ii) email the help desk at GrantHDSupport@eda.gov; and (iii) contact EDA at oiie@eda.gov. Please be sure to track your issue using a case number given to you by the help desk regarding their communications with EDGE. Please note that problems with an applicant's computer system or equipment are not considered systems issues. Similarly, an applicant's (i) failure to complete the required registration, (ii) failure to ensure that a registered Authorized Representative submits the application, or (iii) failure to receive a notice receipt of an email message from EDGE are not considered systems issues. An EDGE issue is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of the website itself, such as the temporary loss of service due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. In the event of a confirmed systems issue, EDA reserves the right to accept an application in an alternate format.

Applicants should go to sfgrants.eda.gov and click on the Resources page for assistance in navigating EDGE and for a list of useful resources.

E. Review and Selection Process

1. Criteria—Merit Review

All complete applications will be reviewed by at least three individuals and scored against the Merit Review criteria below. EDA anticipates making approximately 5 to 8 awards to the highest scoring projects after application of selection factors described in section E.2.c. below.

The number of points that can be earned for each category of criteria is listed below, with 105 points the maximum total that can be earned.

Strength of Sectoral Partnership- 15 points

To award points, reviewers will assess:

- The extent to which the applicant meets the characteristics of an effective backbone organization as outlined in A.2.b;

- The extent to which the members of the sectoral partnership have convened necessary stakeholders to execute the project;
- The extent to which the sectoral partnership meets the characteristics of an effective sectoral partnership, as outlined in A.2.a.
- The extent to which stakeholders represent and include the interests of members of the sectoral partnership (workers, employers, worker-serving organizations, workforce development entities, labor unions, and community organizations);
- The extent to which the applicant included worker voice in designing the sectoral partnership;
- The extent to which stakeholders adequately support the project proposal; and
- The level of commitment of stakeholders to the project’s vision, projects, and outcomes.

Strength of Employer Partnerships- 10 points

To award points, reviewers will assess:

- The extent to which the applicant has identified and engaged necessary employers in the sectoral partnership;
- The adequacy of commitments from the employers in comparison to projected job placement goals;
- The alignment of the employer commitments and whether the jobs in which participants will be placed have working conditions aligned with the Good Jobs Principles (pay and benefits and at least one other Good Job Principle); and
- The adequacy of the sectoral partnership’s efforts to preserve that commitment over the period of performance for the grant. Note that a strong employer commitment will identify occupations that support the industry and will include the specific number of workers it will hire. A mere letter from the employer expressing generalized sentiments of support but lacking these details is insufficient.

Readiness of Sectoral Partnership- 15 points

To award points, reviewers will assess:

- The applicant’s identification of an industry of focus for the sectoral partnership;
- The extent to which the local job needs identified relate to that industry;
- The applicant’s identification of training opportunities to be supported with this project;
- The extent to which the sectoral partnership is able to demonstrate that they are well-organized and coordinated based on the criteria listed in A.2.c.; and
- The applicant’s ability to begin training design within 6 months of award and the delivery of training no later than 1 year of award.

Regional Needs & Alignment- 15 points

As noted above, it is **required** that the project advances at least one key technology focus area (KTFA). To assess the alignment of the proposed project, reviewers will award points based on:

- The extent to which the project meets the regional needs of the primary service area;
- The identification of at least one key technology focus area that the sectoral partnership is aiming to advance;
- The extent to which the project aligns with at least one key technology focus area;
- The extent to which the project advances the key technology focus area;
- The extent to which the project benefits workers subject to any technology, energy, or trade shocks in the region; and
- The extent to which the project aligns with the region's CEDS, existing workforce development efforts in the region, and EDA's Investment Priorities including the equity priority.

Tech Hubs Benefit of Designation- 5 points

To award points, reviewers will assess:

- The extent to which the project aligns and advances a Tech Hubs designee's strategy;
- Evidence that the project benefits an area in the Tech Hub designee's geographic area; and
- Evidence that the backbone organization of the sectoral partnership is a part of the Tech Hub's consortium.

Project Impact & Feasibility- 20 points

To award points, reviewers will assess:

- The extent to which the proposed project aligns with the Good Jobs Principles;
- The extent to which the projects identified will lead to the success of the project based on its project outcomes;
- The extent to which the projects align with the proposed budget for the project and are reasonable and cost effective (including cost per placement or participant); and
- The extent to which the required data projections in Section 8 of the narrative, Projected Impacts are reasonable, defensible, ambitious, and achievable based on the proposal.

Regional Investment and Sustainability- 10 points

To award points, reviewers will assess:

- The extent to which State and local government, philanthropy, and industry investment commit to support the ongoing sustainability of the system after the

lifecycle of the grant, e.g., the amount of local leverage that will augment the Federal award, and the project's alignment with and integration into other public or private investments currently ongoing or planned for the community and region.

Equity- 15 points

To award points, the reviewer will assess:

- The extent to which the application articulates a plan for ensuring that the project's benefits are shared across all affected communities and equitably between employers and workers;
- The extent to which the application demonstrates the ability to identify, recruit, train, and place participants of disadvantage particularly those that benefit from Federal and state programs like SNAP, TANF, and WIC;
- The extent to which a project identifies, recruits, trains, and places historically underserved populations and areas including but not limited to:
 - communities of color,
 - women,
 - persons with disabilities,
 - disconnected youth,
 - individuals in recovery,
 - individuals with past criminal records including justice impacted and reentry participants, and
 - veterans and military spouses; and
- The extent to which the project offers differentiated and tailored approaches to recruitment, training, and supports for historically underserved populations and/or participants of disadvantage.

2. Review and Selection Process

a. Investment Review Committee (IRC)

EDA will sort the resultant scores into tiers of similarly scored applications, and top tiers will advance to a second level review by an IRC of at least three reviewers who did not participate in the initial scoring. The IRC will review the applications collectively using the same criteria listed in section E.1. Based on this group evaluation, and subject to any due diligence (see section E.2.b below), the IRC will provide a list of top-ranked applications to the Selection Official.

b. Due Diligence

EDA may request that an applicant submit additional documents and information to allow EDA to fully evaluate compliance with applicable rules and regulations. Applicants that do not provide the additional information and supporting documentation in a timely fashion or who are deemed not to be in compliance with applicable requirements will receive notification that their application was not successful.

c. Selection Official's Decision

Top-ranked applications provided by the IRC that are also deemed compliant with applicable requirements will be forwarded to the Selection Official, who has the authority to make the final decision on whether to fund an application. The Selection Official may select a project for funding that differs from the most highly ranked applications based on any of the following Selection Factors. The Selection Official may also use these Selection Factors to break a tie for applications that are otherwise considered substantially equal in merit:

- Responsiveness to this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO);
- The extent to which the application meets the overall objectives of section 2 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3121);
- To promote broad and equitable access to EDA assistance, the amount of EDA funding the applicant has received in the current or prior three Federal fiscal years under any EDA Notice of Funding Opportunity;
- The applicant's performance under previous Federal financial assistance awards, including whether the grantee submitted required performance reports and data;
- The availability of program funding;
- The distribution of program funds, project types, organizational type (to include smaller and rural organizations) and EDA's overall portfolio of awardees;
- The extent to which the application articulates a plan for ensuring that the project's benefits are shared across all affected communities and the extent to which the application demonstrates the capacity to account for the unique needs of historically underserved populations and areas;
- The relative economic distress of the area;
- The extent to which the project supports the advancement of at least one key technology focus area (KFTA) and the furtherance of national security and economic objectives;
- The extent to which a project or portfolio of projects aligns with and advances the Tech Hubs' strategies;
- The extent to which the project includes worker representation;
- The extent to which the project may target unemployed, underemployed workers, and/or incumbent workers impacted by technological trade, or energy transitions; and
- The cost effectiveness of the proposal.

The Selection Official's final decision must be consistent with EDA's and DOC's published policies. Any time the Selection Official makes a selection that differs from the rank score, the Selection Official will document the rationale for the decision in writing.

3. Review of Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov

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 system 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. § 200.206.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Federal Award Notice

If an applicant successfully and timely completes all due diligence requirements and the application is selected for funding, EDA will notify the successful applicant in writing. This notice is not an authorization to begin work, however; work should not be undertaken until the award is signed by EDA and the applicant's authorized representative, as discussed below.

The EDA Selection Official will issue the award (Notice of Award), which is the authorizing financial assistance award document and includes Specific Award Conditions and the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (DOC ST&Cs), as described in section F.2.b, below.

By accepting the Notice of Award, the applicant agrees to comply with all award provisions. EDA will provide the Notice of Award to the applicant's authorized representative through EDGE. The applicant's authorized representative must review and accept the Notice of Award without modification within 30 calendar days of the date of receipt.

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 award(s). 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 to the applicant's authorized representative. EDA will retain unsuccessful applications in accordance with EDA's record retention schedule.

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. On April 22, 2024, the Office of Management and Budget issued a final rule to revise these regulations, effective October 1. These new regulations apply to all awards made under this NOFO.

b. DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions

For all projects, EDA will apply the DOC ST&Cs applicable on the date of award. The DOC ST&Cs may be accessed at: <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>.

Recipients of DOC financial assistance are obligated to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities, in Federally assisted programs or activities. Recipients are obligated to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in their Federally assisted education or training programs or activities.

All applicants must comply with all applicable Federal labor and employment laws, including but not limited to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the National Labor Relations Act, which protects employees' right to bargain collectively and engage in concerted activities for the purpose of workers' mutual aid or protection.

c. DOC Pre-Award Notification Requirements

DOC will apply the Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements effective December 26, 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. Reporting Type, Frequency, and Format

All recipients are required to submit financial, progress, and impact reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant award, generally no less 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 subawards²² 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 subawards over \$30,000. See 2 C.F.R. part 170.

²² A first-tier subaward means an award provided by the recipient to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out as part of a Federal award.

c. Performance Reporting and Evaluation

- i. **Internal EDA Evaluation:** As a condition of the grant award, EDA will require additional data on activities, outputs, and actual impact of the funded investment, in part to fulfill the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). EDA anticipates that recipients will be expected to track their engagement activities within the scope of work, with project beneficiaries, and other project stakeholders. EDA further anticipates recipients will be expected to collect data, using surveys of beneficiaries or clients if necessary, on the outputs and outcomes of their activities, such as the number of strategic plans or economic development tools developed, the number of new business partnerships formed, or the range of new capabilities acquired. EDA plans to collect this information using Forms ED-915 (Public Works, Economic Adjustment Infrastructure and Revolving Loan Fund Investments) ED-916 (Semi-annual Program Outputs Questionnaire for EDA grantees), ED-917 (Annual Capacity Outcomes Questionnaire for EDA Grantees serving clients), and ED-918 (Annual Capacity Outcomes Questionnaire for EDA Grantees). For more information, please refer to <https://www.eda.gov/performance/gpra>.
- ii. **Third-Party Evaluation:** As a condition of a grant award, grantees are required to participate in an EDA-funded third-party evaluation, if undertaken by EDA. The evaluation may include an implementation assessment across grantees, an impact and/or outcome analysis of all or selected sites/components within or across grantees, and/or a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. Conducting an impact analysis could involve random assignment (which involves random assignment of eligible participants into a treatment group that would receive/have received program services or into control group(s) that would not/has not received program services or program services). EDA may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation. As a part of the evaluation, as a condition of award, grantees must agree to: (1) make records available to an evaluation contractor or contractors on participants, employers, and funding; (2) provide access to program operating personnel, participants, and operational and financial records, and any other relevant documents to calculate program costs and benefits; and (3) in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the assignment of participants to program services, including the possible increased recruitment of potential participants; and (4) follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor(s) under the direction of EDA.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For questions concerning this FY24 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO, or more information about EDA programs, you may contact GoodJobsChallenge@eda.gov. Include in the subject line: GJC NOFO FY2024” for ease of response. EDA’s website at <http://www.eda.gov> provides additional information on EDA and its programs.

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. Disclosure of Information

For the purpose of achieving rigorous program evaluations, all applications (including those not selected for funding) may be shared with EDA staff, outside parties contracted by EDA for the purposes of evaluation, and other Federal agencies.

3. Freedom of Information Act Disclosures

EDA may publish any applications it receives, including any supporting documentation, on its website or through other means.

In addition, 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. 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 C.F.R. § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

4. NOFO Changes Communicated on Grants.gov

EDA may make changes or additions to this NOFO. All changes will be communicated on Grants.gov. It is recommended that applicants set up a Grants.gov account and subscribe to this funding opportunity in order to be notified of any updates or changes. DOC or EDA may cancel, modify, or withdraw this NOFO at any time. EDA is not obligated to make any Federal award or commitment as a result of this announcement.

5. 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. 2 C.F.R. § 200.319. For instance, a professional engineer or architect who prepared the Preliminary Engineering Report for an EDA application would be excluded from bidding on the same work under the award. Under a revised 2 C.F.R. § 200.317 which applies to Federal financial assistance under this NOFO, only State and now Indian Tribe recipients are expressly exempt from this prohibition. However, local governments 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 EDA at the email address listed in section G with any questions regarding application of this regulation.

6. 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 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 award(s); (3) changing the method of payment from advance to reimbursement only; (4) imposing other specific award conditions; (5) suspending any active DOC award(s); and (6) terminating any active DOC award(s).

7. 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.

8. Requirements for Recipients with More than \$10 Million in Federal-Wide Funding

As required by appendix XII to 2 C.F.R. part 200, a recipient with more than \$10 million in Federal-wide funding must maintain the currency of information reported to SAM that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (formerly FAPIIS) about civil criminal, or administrative proceedings.

9. EDA's Non-Relocation Policy

If an application is selected for award, the recipient will be required to adhere to a specific award condition relating to EDA's non-relocation policy as follows:

In signing this award of financial assistance, Recipient(s) 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. In the event that 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 material 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 disbursements of funds.

10. Audit Requirements

Single or program-specific audits shall be performed in accordance with the requirements contained in the Uniform Guidance (see 2 C.F.R. part 200, Subpart F, "Audit Requirements"). The Office of Management and Budget recently increased the single audit threshold from \$750,000 to \$1 million in regulations effective October 1, 2024. Thus, any recipient or subrecipient under this NOFO that expends \$1,000,000 or more during its fiscal year in total Federal awards must have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year in accordance with subpart F.

11. Non-Discrimination and Equal Access by Those with Past Criminal Histories

Consistent with certifications made during the SAM registration process, grant recipients must administer skills training programs funded under this NOFO in compliance with Federal statutes related to non-discrimination. Further, recipients must not discriminate against participants in skills training programs funded under this NOFO with past criminal records including justice--impacted and reentry participants.

12. Fraud Awareness Training

Consistent with 2 C.F.R part 200, in signing a financial assistance award, Recipient personnel responsible for managing the Recipient's finances and overseeing any contractors, sub-contractors or sub-grantees, will be required to complete the training PowerPoint entitled "Compliance with EDA Program Requirements" and return the signed Certificate of Training Completion to EDA as instructed by the Agency. Further, the Recipient will be required to monitor award activities for common fraud schemes and report suspicious activity to EDA and the Office of Inspector General.

13. Office of Inspector General Rights and Responsibilities

The DOC Office of Inspector General (OIG) seeks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's programs, including deterring and detecting fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement. The OIG accomplishes this mission primarily through investigations, audits, and inspections of Department activities, including grants, cooperative agreements, loans, and contracts.

a. Disclosures

Recipients of financial assistance originating from the U.S. Department of Commerce, including EDA, shall timely disclose, in writing, to the OIG and awarding agency, whenever, in connection with the award, performance, or closeout of this grant or sub-award thereunder, the recipient has credible evidence that a principal, employee, agent, or sub-recipient has committed:

(i) A violation of Federal criminal law involving fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, or gratuity violations found in Title 18 of the United States Code; or

(ii) A violation of the civil False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733).

b. Reporting

The OIG maintains a hotline to receive allegations of fraud, waste, or abuse. To report such allegations, please visit <https://www.oig.doc.gov/Pages/Hotline.aspx>. Upon request, the OIG will take appropriate measures to protect the identity of any individual who reports misconduct, as authorized by the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. Reports to the OIG may also be made anonymously.

c. Whistleblower Protection

Recipients, sub-recipients, and employees working on this grant award will be subject to the whistleblower rights and remedies established under 41 U.S.C. § 4712.

An employee of a recipient or sub-recipient may not be discharged, demoted, or otherwise discriminated against as a reprisal for disclosing information that the employee reasonably believes is evidence of: gross mismanagement of a Federal contract or award; a gross waste of Federal funds; an abuse of authority (i.e., an arbitrary and capricious exercise of authority that is inconsistent with the mission of NTIA or the U.S. Department of Commerce or the successful performance of a contract or grant awarded by NTIA or the Department) relating to a Federal contract or award; a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; or a violation of a law, rule, or regulation related to a Federal contract (including the competition for or negotiation of a contract) or grant.

The recipient or sub-recipient shall inform its employees and contractors, in writing, in the predominant language of the workforce or organization, of employee whistleblower rights and protections under 41 U.S.C. § 4712, as described above and at <https://www.oig.doc.gov/Pages/Whistleblower-Protection-Program.aspx>.