



Dear Tribal Leaders,

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) will host a Tribal Consultation on September 25, 2025. In hosting this Tribal Consultation, EDA aims to advance federal trust responsibilities and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations, as well its responsibilities pursuant to EDA's reauthorization in the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024¹ and [Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments \(November 6, 2000\)](#).

Purpose of Consultation

EDA works with Tribal Nations to help advance their visions for economic opportunity. As required by EDA's reauthorizing statute, EDA is seeking input regarding the development of an EDA Tribal Economic Development Strategy ("Strategic Plan").² The Strategic Plan will define priorities and serve as a shared roadmap for tackling critical areas of improvement and strengthening EDA's stewardship of public funds.

Additionally, EDA seeks to engage Tribal Nations and communities to better understand and access programs that support economic development in Tribal communities by connecting with Indian Tribes, Tribal leaders, Tribal businesses, and citizens in Tribal communities.

Background

On January 4, 2025, the [Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024](#) was signed into law. It reauthorized EDA and required EDA, not later than 1 year after the date of enactment, to initiate a Tribal consultation process to develop, and not less frequently than every 3 years thereafter, update, a strategic plan for Tribal economic development for EDA. EDA must submit the Strategic Plan to Congress.

EDA's reauthorization statute also codified five investment priorities, which are set out below and provide an overarching framework to ensure EDA's grants support local efforts to build, improve, or better leverage economic assets that allow businesses to succeed and regional economies to prosper. The investment priorities are important to all applicants for EDA assistance, including Tribal applicants, as competitive grant applications must respond to the evaluation criteria specified in the relevant funding announcement, including at least one of the investment priorities. Supporting Tribes developing applications that are responsive to the statutory investment priorities will be a key element of the Strategic Plan.

As noted above, EDA's five statutory investment priorities are:

1. **Critical Infrastructure:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that support development of public facilities, including basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, or telecommunications infrastructure.
2. **Workforce:** Economic Development planning or implementation projects that –
 - a. Support job skills training to meet the hiring needs of the area in which the project is to be carried out and that result in well-paying jobs; or
 - b. Otherwise promote labor force participation.
3. **Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that –
 - a. Support the development of innovation and entrepreneurship-related infrastructure;
 - b. Promote business development and lending; or

¹ Pub. L. No. 118-272, Jan. 4, 2025

² Pub. L. No. 118-272, 138 Stat. 2992, 3192 (sec. 2227), codified at 42 U.S.C. § 3198

- c. Foster the commercialization of new technologies that are creating technology-driven businesses and high-skilled, well-paying jobs of the future.
4. **Economic Recovery Resilience:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that enhance the ability of an area to withstand and recover from adverse short-term or long-term changes in economic conditions, including effects from industry contractions or economic impacts from natural disasters.
5. **Manufacturing:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that encourage job creation, business expansion, technology and capital upgrades, and productivity growth in manufacturing, including efforts that contribute to the competitiveness and growth of domestic suppliers or the domestic production of innovative, high-value products and production technologies.

Specific Questions for Which EDA is Requesting Input

EDA invites Tribal leaders and their designees to provide comments and input regarding the development of the Strategic Plan, including responses to the following questions:

1. What are some concerns you have or factors EDA should consider in creating a Strategic Plan?
2. What are some effective ways EDA can use to communicate with Tribal stakeholders?
3. What resources should EDA provide to ensure Tribal communities receive timely and accurate access to information and services?
4. How can EDA help Tribes develop projects that are more responsive to the agency's five statutory investment priorities and therefore more competitive for EDA assistance?
5. How should EDA partner with Tribal communities to ensure the agency responds to Tribal economic development challenges and catalyzes private investment in Indian Country?
6. What factors should EDA consider, and what metrics can EDA track, to ensure all decisions are data and evidence based?

Information on Consultation

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

The consultation will be held via Teams on Thursday, September 25, 2025, at 3:00pm to 4:00pm EDT

- Please use this link to join the video call: [Join the meeting now](#)
- You may also dial in to the meeting by phone by calling: +1 253-292-3452

This will be conducted via a virtual platform through which participants may provide live written comments.

Participation via written channels and the platform's chat capabilities is highly encouraged.

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


- Please send written questions and comments via email to: EDAconsultations@eda.gov
- These platforms will be available until October 25, 2025.

Your comments will inform EDA's development and implementation of EDA's Tribal Economic Development Strategic Plan. This Tribal consultation is not for press purposes.

As the Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, I am responsible for, and committed to, ensuring that EDA's programs deliver for communities across the country.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ben Page". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ben" and last name "Page" clearly distinguishable.

Ben Page
Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development

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