

EDA Assistance to Coal Communities 2017 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been prepared to complement the official Assistance to Coal Communities 2017 (ACC 2017) Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) released as part of the amended FY17 EDAP NOFA on **Monday, June 19th, 2017**. Interested applicants are encouraged to refer to both the funding announcement (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=294771>) and this FAQ for detailed information about ACC 2017 topics, including applicant eligibility, eligible program activities, and application preparation and submission procedures.

The questions and answers summarized in this document are organized by general topic area. Please refer to the table of contents, below.

NOTE: *This FAQ may be updated occasionally as new, additional questions are received. Please refer to the ACC 2017 home page (www.eda.gov/coal) for FAQ updates and other important program information.*

Questions about EDA ACC 2017 can be emailed to the following address: edi@eda.gov.

Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC) 2017 FAQ – Table of Contents

A. The POWER+ Initiative and Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC 2017).....	2
B. ACC 2017 Funding Availability	2
C. ACC 2017 Applicant Eligibility	2
D. ACC 2017 Eligible Use of Funds	4
E. ACC Application Procedures: Proposals and Complete Applications	6
Phase 1, Project Proposal.....	6
Phase 2, Complete Project Application	6
F. ACC Cost-Sharing or Match Requirements	9
G. ACC Application Selection and Award.....	10
H. EDA ACC 2017 Questions and Points of Contact (POC)	11



A. The POWER+ Initiative and Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC 2017)

1. This is not the first time that EDA has made grant funds available to assist coal communities and regions. How does ACC 2017 compare with the POWER+ Initiative?

ACC 2017 represents the third consecutive fiscal year in which EDA has made grant funds available specifically to assist communities and regions negatively impacted by economic contractions in the coal economy. During the previous two competitive funding cycles, EDA made these funds available through the POWER+ Initiative. The ACC 2017 application evaluation and selection priorities and procedures generally reflect those of the POWER+ Initiative. Specific differences to note include the fact that the amount of EDA funds available to assist coal communities under ACC 2017 is twice that amount that was available under the FY16 POWER+ Initiative. Also, ACC 2017 applicants are not required to submit project proposals via the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) online POWER portal, as was the case for EDA POWER applicants in FY16.

For additional information about EDA's ACC 2017 application evaluation and selection priorities and procedures, see Sections C. and D. of this FAQ document, as well as the FY17 EDAP NOFA (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=294771>).

B. ACC 2017 Funding Availability

1. How much ACC FY17 funding is available?

Subject to the availability of funds, EDA has approximately \$30 million in FY17 appropriations available for ACC. Publication of these FAQs does not obligate Department of Commerce (DOC) or EDA to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds.

2. Is the total \$30 million available for application on a nationwide basis, or should applicants submit projects for consideration by EDA's regional offices?

Interested applicants must apply for an ACC 2017 grant through their EDA regional office. Information about which states are covered by each of EDA's six regional offices is available on the EDA web site: www.eda.gov/contact.

Additional information about the ACC 2017 proposal and application development and submission procedures discussed under Sections E. and G., below.

C. ACC 2017 Applicant Eligibility

1. Where can ACC 2017 funds be used?

Applicants must propose a project located in or substantially benefitting a community or region that meets EDA distress criteria. Please see C.3. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#), "EDA Economic Distress Criteria."

In addition, ACC 2017 projects must also be located within and targeted to communities or regions that have been impacted, or can reasonably demonstrate that they will be impacted, by coal mining or coal power plant employment loss, or employment loss in relevant supply chain industries.¹ See Section C.3. [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#), “Additional Requirements Applicable to ACC Applicants.”

2. What if a coal-impacted community or region does not meet EDA’s Economic Development Assistance Programs (EDAP) unemployment rate and per capita income economic distress criteria? Does EDA provide alternative means by which these could still qualify as eligible for ACC funding?

Applicant’s may also be eligible for ACC 2017 funding under EDA’s “Special Need” criteria. EDA “Special Need” criteria are summarized under Section C.3.b. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#):

“For the purposes of determining eligibility based on a “Special Need”, an applicant must provide current and appropriate economic and demographic statistics for the applicable Region to support the identified Special Need. EDA will base its Special Need eligibility determination on whether the proposed project meets the specific requirements outlined below or, in cases where specific thresholds are not identified, on whether the data and information provided by the applicant presents a compelling case that the Region meets the Special Need criteria, as defined by EDA.”

Designation of the project region as a “Promise Zone” is included among the Special Need eligibility criteria. The complete list of Special Need criteria is found on pp. 16-17 of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#).

3. Will EDA target or prioritize the investment of ACC 2017 funds in a specific geographic territory (e.g., multi-county or multi-state region, etc.?)

No. The EDA funding principles for ACC 2017 funds are summarized under Section A.3.b. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) (pp. 8-9). These include projects designed to produce a multi-jurisdictional impact that strive to produce economic diversification and job creation on a multi-jurisdictional basis will be prioritized for selection and funding. “Multi-Jurisdictional” is a term that can include, but is not limited to:

- Multiple communities within a county;
- Multiple counties within a region;
- Multiple regions within a state; and
- Multiple regions in two or more states.

4. What entities are eligible to apply for an ACC 2017 grant?

EDA will accept grant applications from eligible applicants, as described below. If an application is submitted by a group of co-applicants, each co-applicant must individually meet EDA eligible applicant criteria. Further, the application should include information that

¹ Examples of supply chain industries include, but are not necessarily limited to, manufacturers of mining equipment and parts for coal-fired power plants and transportation companies that carry coal.

clearly specifies how the co-applicants will work together and which portions of the scope of work each co-applicant is responsible to manage.

Eligible Applicants

- 1. District Organization;**
- 2. Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes;**
- 3. 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;**
- 4. Institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education;**
- 5. Public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.**

5. Do EDA requirements stipulate that a grant applicant must be located in the project community or region in order to be eligible for project funding?

No. An applicant that meets any of the eligible applicant criteria described under the previous answer is eligible to apply and be considered for an EDA grant award. With respect to EDA’s geography-based eligibility requirements (Economic Distress, Special Needs, and Coal Impact), the determining factor is the location of the project itself.

6. My organization recently received a grant from EDA (which may have included an FY15 or FY16 POWER grant); will this affect our eligibility for an ACC 217 grant?

No; any current or past recipient of an EDA award is eligible to apply under this competition. See also Section E.2.c. (“Grant Officer’s Decision”) of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) for additional information.

D. ACC 2017 Eligible Use of Funds

1. What activities are eligible for ACC 2017 funding?

ACC 2017 grants will be made under the authority of EDA’s EAA program. Under ACC 2017, EDA prioritizes the submission of applications for implementation projects. Projects must be consistent with the region’s current EDA-accepted Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or equivalent EDA-accepted regional economic development strategy to be considered for award. EDA ACC 2017 grants can also be used to support ACC planning through strategy grants² that develop, update or refine a CEDS or an equivalent planning document. Contact your regional EDA ACC point of contact (POC) for additional information on eligible activities. See Section H below. “EDA ACC Questions and Points of Contact.”

Project activities that can be eligible for ACC 2017 grant awards include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting the creation of new businesses and jobs in a variety of industry sectors, including, but not limited to advanced manufacturing, agriculture, energy, information

² See 13 C.F.R. § 307.3.

technology, health care, telecommunications, tourism and recreation, transportation, and cultural and natural assets.

- Implementing local and regional job creation and growth and economic diversification strategies targeted towards affected workers and businesses.
- Strengthening or developing existing or emerging industry clusters.³
- Developing business incubator programs.
- Enhancing access to and use of broadband services to support job growth through business creation and expansion.
- The development of economic development diversification strategies in accordance with EDA CEDS criteria.⁴
- Facilitating access to private capital investment and providing related capacity building and technical assistance, such as effective utilization of capital investment for business development and job creation.
- Facilitating and promoting market access for goods and services created and manufactured by businesses in the impacted community/region.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their EDA regional ACC program POC for specific guidance pertaining to the eligible use of program funds. See Section H below.

2. Can ACC awards be used to finance construction activities?

Yes, construction activities are eligible for ACC 2017 funding and may be awarded by EDA.

3. Can ACC 2017 grant awards be used to support multi-year projects and activities?

Per Section B.2. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#), EDA expects that all projects will proceed efficiently and expeditiously, and EDA encourages applicants to clearly document how quickly the applicant will be able to start and complete the proposed work. All construction projects are expected to be completed within five years from the date of award.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss the anticipated timing of project commencement and completion with their EDA regional office. See Section H below.

³ Industry clusters are networks of interconnected firms and supporting institutions in a common geographic region. Clusters also are generally defined by and benefit from shared labor pools, infrastructure and markets.

⁴ CEDS Content Guidelines: <https://www.eda.gov/ceds/>

E. ACC Application Procedures: Proposals and Complete Applications

1. What are the steps I need to follow to apply for an ACC 2017 grant?

As with EDA's other EDAP programs, all ACC 2017 submissions are subject to the agency's two-phase review process.

Phase 1, Project Proposal

Applicants may first submit a project proposal for review and consideration. Please refer to Section D.2.a. of the FY17 EDAP [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) regarding the forms that are required for a complete proposal. Complete proposals will be reviewed in accordance with responsiveness criteria described in Section E.1. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#).

Applicants whose proposals are deemed by EDA to be responsive to the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) may submit a complete application and proceed to Phase 2, as described directly below.

Phase 2, Complete Project Application

Please refer to Section D.2.b. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) regarding the forms that are required for a complete application. Complete applications will be reviewed in accordance with merit review criteria as described in Section E.2. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#).

NOTE: While an applicant may submit a proposal package as outlined in Section D.2.a. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#), for expediency, an applicant may instead submit a complete application as outlined in Section D.2.b. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) either in lieu of *or* concurrent with a proposal. The submission will still proceed through EDA's two-phase review process described below. This option is described further under Question E9 below. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to contact their EDA regional ACC 2017 POC for additional information (See Section H below).

2. Submission Options

NOTE: EDA strongly encourages applicants to submit their proposals and any subsequent applications electronically via Grants.gov (www.grants.gov). However, EDA will also accept hard copy (paper) submissions if these are mailed according to the following guidance as provided under the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#).

Applicants have the following options for the submission of both project proposals and any complete applications:

- **Electronic Submissions**
 - Applicants can locate the funding opportunity on Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) using Funding Opportunity Number "EDAP2017."
 - All components of the ACC 2017 proposal and application packages are identical to those required under EDAP, and may be accessed and downloaded (in a screen-fillable format) at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

- The preferred electronic file format for attachments is Adobe portable document format (PDF); however, EDA will accept electronic files in Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or Microsoft Excel.
 - **Hard Copy Submissions:**
 - Applicants that choose to submit hard copies of their complete ACC 2017 project proposals and any subsequent complete applications must include **one original** and **two copies** of the complete application package (including **all required signatures**, as applicable).
 - Hard copies submitted to EDA must be mailed with delivery confirmation that indicates the application package has been received in the applicable EDA regional office.
 - Complete information describing the requirements pertaining to the hard copy submission of proposals and complete applications is found under Section D.4.a.ii (“Paper Submissions”) of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#).
 - Applicants may obtain the FY17 EDAP application package electronically at Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) using Funding Opportunity Number [EDAP-2017](#).
 - Eligible applicants may also request a paper/hard copy of both a proposal package and a complete application package by contacting the applicant’s EDA regional office. See Section H below.
- 3. How will we know that our proposal has been received? Will we be able to check the status of our proposal?**

Electronic Submissions: Upon the applicant’s successful submission of a complete proposal, www.grants.gov will generate a confirmation page with a project proposal number. Applicants can use this number to check the status of their proposal.

Hard Copy Submissions: EDA strongly encourages applicants who submit hard copies of their ACC 2017 proposals to transmit these packages via any delivery company that provides tracking information, including:

- United States Post Office Certified Mail (<https://www.usps.com/ship/insurance-extra-services.htm>)
- United Parcel Service (https://www.ups.com/WebTracking/track?loc=en_us)
- Federal Express (<https://www.fedex.com/apps/fedextrack/?action=track>)
- DHL (<http://www.dhl-usa.com/en.html>)

In addition, EDA also strongly encourages applicants to contact their regional ACC 2017 POC to confirm that the regional office has received the applicant’s hard copy submission and to subsequently obtain the status of their proposal/application. See Section H below.

4. Are applicants required to work with regional EDA staff to prepare ACC 2017 proposals and applications?

Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to contact their EDA regional office with any questions or other requests for technical guidance pertaining to the preparation and submission of an ACC 2017 proposal and/or a complete application. Refer to Section H below.

5. Are costs directly associated with preparing an ACC 2017 grant proposal and/or complete application eligible for reimbursement?

No, direct costs associated with the preparation of an ACC 2017 proposal and/or complete application are not eligible for reimbursement.

6. What are the submission deadlines for ACC 2017 proposals and applications?

ACC 2017 proposals and applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. Note the possibility that any ACC 2017 funds that EDA has not obligated as of **October 1, 2017**, may not be available for award in FY18. **Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to apply as early as possible in FY17.**

7. What if we need to edit our proposal after it has been submitted?

If you need to reopen your project proposal submission, contact your EDA regional ACC 2017 POC, as specified under Section H below.

8. What if the applicant's region overlaps the jurisdictional boundaries of multiple EDA Regional Offices?

Under these circumstances, potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the EDA regional office(s) with jurisdiction over the geographic location of the proposed project to discuss the most practical approach to the development and submission of a project proposal. See Section H below.

9. Does EDA facilitate an expedited review process for project proposals and applications?

Yes, it is possible for applicants to work with their EDA regional office partners to combine their proposal and application under one submission. Per Section D.2. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) ("Content and Form of the Proposal and Application Submission"); however, as noted in the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) the applicant's submission **will still proceed through EDA's two-phase review process.**

Applicants who are interested in pursuing this method are strongly encouraged to first discuss this with their EDA regional office partners before simultaneously submitting a project proposal and application. Refer to Section H below."

10. Does my proposal (as opposed to my full application) need to include letters of support or letters demonstrating matching funds?

No, applicants are not required to include these types of letters as part of the proposal submission package. Applicants that are invited to submit a complete ACC 2017 application will be required to include support letters, along with other documentation as specified under the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#).

11. We have already submitted an EDAP application to our EDA regional office. Is it possible for our application to be considered for ACC funding instead?

It may be possible that this outcome can be accommodated; however, given that there are application requirements specific to ACC 2017 funding, the applicant may need to amend and/or resubmit their proposal and application. If your organization has already submitted an EDAP application to your EDA regional office, and you would now prefer for your project to be considered for ACC 2017 funding, you are advised to immediately contact your regional Economic Development Representative (EDR) to initiate this discussion. EDA regional contact information is available online at the following link: www.eda.gov/contact.

F. ACC Cost-Sharing or Match Requirements

1. Do ACC 2017 projects have a matching fund requirement?

ACC 2017 match requirements are outlined in Section C.2. in the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#). Nearly all ACC 2017 awards will require the applicant to provide matching funds. However, as with EDA's other Economic Development Assistance Programs, there are very narrow exceptions to this requirement. See Section C.2. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) for further information.

2. What are the eligible sources of matching funds that applicants can use for purposes of an ACC project?

EDA will accept cash or in-kind contributions to meet the required matching share so long as the match is considered eligible in accordance with applicable guidelines as laid out 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at §200.306.

Regardless of the source or sources of project match contributions (either cash or in-kind), each applicant "must document that the matching share will: (i) be committed to the project for the period of performance, (ii) be available as needed, and (iii) not be conditioned or encumbered in any way that may preclude its use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance. In order to meet these requirements, applicants may submit for each source of matching share, a commitment letter or equivalent document signed by an authorized representative of the organization providing the matching funds. Additional documentation may be requested by EDA in order to substantiate the availability of the matching funds."

Certain federal funds can also qualify as eligible sources of match so long as this use is specifically identified under a given program's authorizing statute, and which may be determined by EDA's reasonable interpretation of the statute. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact

their EDA regional office partners to discuss their specific match contribution questions. See Section H below.

G. ACC Application Selection and Award

1. How will applicants be notified if they are invited to submit a full application? How will final award notices be made?

Applicants should expect written notification from EDA as to whether the Proposal Review Committee (PRC) has found their proposal to be responsive or not to the criteria for ACC 2017 funding within 30 days of receipt of their complete proposal. If the applicant's proposal is deemed responsive, EDA will inform the applicant that it may submit a complete application for review by EDA's Investment Review Committee (IRC). See Section E.1 of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) for further information regarding the IRC review process.

Applicants should expect written notification from EDA regarding the outcome of the IRC evaluation process within 60 days of EDA's receipt of their **complete application**. See Section E.2.a. ("Phase II: Investment Review Committee") of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) for further information.

2. How will EDA evaluate ACC 2017 proposal and application submissions?

Program staff from EDA will review ACC project proposal and application submissions according to the criteria outlined under Section E. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) ("Proposal and Application Review Process").

NOTE: ACC proposals and applications will be evaluated as a discrete subset of other EDAP submissions that are received by EDA's regional offices, and will not otherwise compete with non-ACC EDAP proposals and applications for consideration and selection for award.

3. The [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) describes average ranges of grant award amounts for EDA ACC 2017 projects. Can applicants apply for amounts that are not within these ranges?

Yes. The [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#) establishes a general priority to support large-scale economic development projects, along with average grant amounts within a certain dollar range that EDA anticipates awarding. However, these ranges do not represent hard-and-fast limits (either minimum or maximum) to the total grant amount that an applicant may apply for.

Note- while there is no minimum or maximum total grant amount under ACC 2017 competition, the maximum federal share per project will depend on the relative need of the area in which a project is located. See Section C.2. of the [FY17 EDAP NOFA](#), "Cost Sharing or Matching," for further information.

4. Does EDA plan to officially issue ACC 2017 grant awards on a specific date?

EDA will accept and evaluate ACC proposal and applications on a rolling basis, contingent upon the availability of ACC 2017 funds. EDA will announce ACC 2017 grants in similar fashion, on an ongoing basis as applications are selected for award, and subject to the availability of ACC 2017 funds.

H. EDA ACC 2017 Questions and Points of Contact (POC)

Any inquiries about the ACC Initiative and ACC 2017 grants can be emailed to edi@eda.gov, and can also be directed to the following ACC POC in each EDA Regional Office:

EDA Regional Office	Regional ACC POC	Email	Phone Number
Atlanta	Pam Farmer	PFarmer@eda.gov	404-730-3026
Austin	Jessica Falk	JFalk@eda.gov	512-381-8168
Chicago	Robin Bush	RBush@eda.gov	312-789-9750
Denver	Kirk Keysor	KKeysor@eda.gov	406-599-9795
Philadelphia	Tracy Rowan	TRowan@eda.gov	304-533-4497
Seattle	Brian Parker	BParker2@eda.gov	206-220-7675