

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 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).
- **Announcement Type and Date:** ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO publishing EDA’s application submission requirements and application review procedures under EDA’s Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, as authorized by sections 209 and 703 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 3121 *et seq.*) (PWEDA). **Effective date:** July 22, 2021.
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** EDA-HDQ-ARPRN-2021-2006986
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.307, Economic Adjustment Assistance
- **Dates:** There are no application submission deadlines. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until the publication of a new ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO, cancellation of this ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO, or all available funds have been expended.

While EDA encourages eligible applicants to submit their applications as soon as possible, EDA strongly advises eligible applicants to submit complete applications no later than **October 31, 2021** so that EDA can review and process the application in time to achieve the objectives of the grant program. **Submission by October 31, 2021 is not a guarantee of funding.** Any award is subject to the availability of funds. See Section E of this NOFO regarding EDA’s review process.

For Statewide Planning grants, States must accept or reject the grant within 45 days of the date of transmission from EDA of an invitation letter.

- **Eligible Applicants:** Pursuant to section 3(4)(A) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122(4)(A)) and 13 C.F.R. § 300.3 (Eligible Recipient), eligible applicants under the EAA program 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 acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State unless EDA waives the cooperation requirement.

For Statewide Planning grants, eligible applicants are limited to the Governor’s Office, or equivalent, of a State, who may designate an eligible applicant type described above to apply for and administer the award. Under section 3(10) of PWEDA the term “State” includes the fifty States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the 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.

Under its EAA program, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for-profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.

- **Funding Opportunity Description:** Subject to the availability of funds, awards made under this NOFO will help develop coordinated state-wide plans for economic development and data, tools, and institutional capacity to evaluate and scale evidence-based economic development efforts, including through communities of practice and provision of technical assistance among existing and new EDA grantees.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

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A. Program Description

1. Overview and Program Information

The ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO is part of EDA's multi-phase effort to respond to the coronavirus pandemic as directed by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Specifically, this NOFO seeks to build regional economies for the future through two primary avenues: a) Statewide Planning and b) Research and Networks.

a. Statewide Planning

Through grants provided to States, EDA will fund a variety of activities among which the State may choose one or more to fund¹:

- Developing economic development plans that identify new or existing industry clusters that would benefit from specific infrastructure, studies, and/or workforce investments to facilitate rapid expansion of such industry clusters. These plans should facilitate the creation of new, or build upon existing, partnerships that have the potential to expand economic development assets such as Economic Development Districts (EDDs), regional workforce skills, and industry bases to create sustainable forward-looking economies designed to position regions to thrive in a prosperous future. These plans can be designed specifically to facilitate future applications to EDA's ARPA Build Back Better Regional Challenge NOFO, which EDA anticipates releasing at approximately the same time as this NOFO, by at a minimum identifying projects that could promote the establishment or expansion of an industry clusters. For States negatively impacted by the downturn in the coal economy, EDA expects that the plans developed under this activity will specifically address the economic effects of the transition away from coal and expansion or creation of industry clusters to support affected communities. Pre-existing relevant plans that support this activity may be incorporated by reference.
- Bringing together potentially disparate existing local and regional plans, such as Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS), or state and local plans under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), into one holistic and inclusive state-wide plan or a plan that encompasses multiple regions within a state or across state lines including strengthening links between urban and rural areas. Any such plan should adhere to EDA's CEDS guidelines, take into account the needs of all populations, including Tribal, other indigenous communities, or other underserved communities, including rural communities and persistent poverty communities, and consider positive responses to current and long-term market dynamics driving the state's economic well-being and global competitiveness.
- Analyzing the needs of persistent poverty communities and formulating strategies to decrease disparities between these areas and more prosperous areas within a State.

¹ To the extent that a State sub-awards any of these funds, the State is responsible as a "pass-through entity" as provided at 2 C.F.R. § 200.332.

- Facilitating coordination with Tribes or other indigenous communities regarding State, regional, or local planning efforts that intersect with the Tribes' interests and are supported by impacted Tribal communities.
- Hiring disaster recovery coordinators, including possibly extending the terms of disaster recovery coordinators hired by local Economic Development Districts pursuant to EDA's CARES Act funding.
- Supporting statewide broadband data collection and mapping efforts and developing statewide broadband deployment and technical assistance plans.
- Conducting a statewide skills assessment and analysis to help inform workforce development and training needs based on employers' demand for skills, including coordination with the state labor market information agency and the state workforce development board.
- Cataloging state innovation and entrepreneurship assets including mechanisms to access capital and equity financing to support business development and expansion and gaps in access to capital for underserved rural and urban communities.
- Undertaking a statewide supply chain and logistics assessment to increase efficiencies.
- Identifying state assets and economic resources and developing action plans that will benefit the state's economy in a regional and global marketplace.
- Other related activities as approved by EDA.

Statewide Planning grants cannot fund construction, though feasibility studies are permissible provided they fall within the scope of one of the above activities.

Each State must identify in its Statewide Planning application the proposed activities to be undertaken. For Statewide Planning only, EDA will invite States to apply using specific streamlined procedures. Application submission and review information in Sections D and E and Appendix A is therefore inapplicable to Statewide Planning applications.

b. Research and Communities of Practice Challenge

Through Research and Communities of Practice awards, EDA will fund data, tools, and institutional capacity for evaluating and scaling evidence-based economic development efforts and for creating Communities of Practice to connect and provide technical assistance to existing EDA grantees like University Centers, the Revolving Loan Fund network, the Build to Scale network, Economic Development Districts, Tribal partners, and new grantees under the ARPA Build Back Better Regional and Jobs Challenges.

i. Research Program

For Research awards, EDA solicits applications for investments that support research and evaluation projects² related to economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. EDA will support the development of tools, recommendations, and resources that shape Federal economic development policies and inform economic development decision-making. Awards will provide

² This work is similar to the work EDA solicits under its FY 2021-23 Research and Evaluation National Technical Assistance NOFO.

critical, cutting-edge research and best practices to regional, state, and local practitioners in the economic development field, thereby enhancing understanding and implementation of economic development concepts throughout the country. EDA is specifically interested in research projects that will enable real-time research into EDA's ARPA programs, especially those related to the new Jobs Challenge, Build Back Better Regional Challenge, Indigenous Communities NOFO, and travel and tourism programs. See also section D.2 for more detail on the evaluation parameters EDA seeks.

ii. Communities of Practice Challenge

For the Communities of Practice Challenge, EDA seeks to fund nationwide communities of practice that focus on key groups of economic development stakeholders and provide technical assistance to those groups, including developing methods to increase information and practice sharing, strengthening networks, and accelerating economic recovery. As communities and organizations face depleted institutional resources and are stressed with coronavirus-related demands, they have been unable to connect with and learn from peers across the industry to evaluate and nurture strategies needed to rebuild a more equitable and resilient economy. The Communities of Practice Challenge seeks to connect EDA grantees from the below identified groups of stakeholders (cohorts) with others within the same group or possibly also across multiple groups as well as to provide those cohorts technical assistance.

EDA intends to fund awards that specifically support and provide technical assistance to the following three cohorts focused on grantees applying for the following EDA ARPA competitions:

- **Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) Participants** – Under a separate NOFO, the Build Back Better Regional Challenge NOFO, EDA is seeking to fund 20-30 transformational clusters of projects that benefit their respective geographic regions and are aligned around a holistic approach to building and scaling a strategic industry cluster. Led by a lead institution, these regional growth clusters will spur economic diversification and competitiveness through job creation, capacity building, private investment, and more. Although comprised of several distinct projects, each regional growth cluster should be interconnected and work to drive regional economic diversification and competitiveness at a transformational scale within its region. The grantee selected to provide technical assistance for this cohort would be expected to provide technical assistance to the broader group of 50-60 Phase 1 finalists in helping lay the foundation for economic transformation.³ The grantee would also be expected to develop a community of practice for selected BBBRC participants and to continue to provide technical assistance through implementation.
- **Jobs Challenge Grantees** – Under a separate NOFO, the Jobs Challenge NOFO, EDA has designed a program to help get Americans back to work by developing and strengthening regional systems to train workers with in-demand skills. A regional

³ Note that the grantee providing technical assistance to BBBRC participants under this NOFO cannot also be paid as a consultant by finalists selected by EDA under Phase 1 of the BBBRC NOFO nor will they be part of EDA's formal evaluation of any applicant.

employer-driven worker training system should connect and coordinate key regional stakeholders, including state and local governmental entities, workforce development boards, employers, employer-facing organizations, education and training providers, community-based organizations (CBOs), worker-serving organizations (WSOs), labor unions, and sponsors of Registered Apprenticeship Programs and other work-and-learn models. The grantee selected to provide technical assistance for this cohort would help prospective grantees connect to and coordinate with such key regional stakeholders and develop a community of practice for grantees selected under the Jobs Challenge NOFO. The grantee would also be expected to develop a community of practice for selected Jobs Challenge awardees and to continue to provide technical assistance through implementation.

- **Coal Community Grantees** – EDA funds communities negatively impacted by the downturn in the coal economy through many of its programs, including a \$300 million commitment and the annual Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC) funding. The grantee selected to provide technical assistance for this cohort in developing projects eligible for EDA funding, including under the \$300 million ARPA coal commitment, is expected to develop a community of practice for current and prospective coal grantees.

There are other cohorts for which EDA is principally interested in establishing interconnectedness across and between existing or future grantees through the development of communities or networks of practice:

- **Economic Development Districts (EDDs)** – EDA funds a network of nearly 400 EDDs that facilitate regional growth through, among other things, working collaboratively with local partners to draft CEDS.
- **Tribal Partners** – EDA has funded a network of over 50 Tribal partners who similarly work to facilitate local growth by developing and implementing Tribal economic development plans. This grantee would also be expected to provide assistance to tribal entities that have not applied to EDA grant programs before and to help guide tribal entities through EDA’s ARPA competitions.
- **University Centers (UC)** – EDA has funded a network of over 60 UCs to build regional economic ecosystems that support innovation and high-growth entrepreneurship, resiliency, and inclusiveness by providing expertise and technical assistance to economic development stakeholders in their regions such as EDDs, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
- **Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs)** – EDA has funded a network of nearly 800 RLF awards operated by non-profits, universities, states, and local governments.
- **Build to Scale (B2S) Grantees** – EDA’s B2S grantees have over time developed numerous innovative models for commercializing new technologies or establishing investment funds.
- **Other Cross-Cutting/Stakeholder Groups** – EDA supports regional economic development, and there are many different types of groups that are potentially critical to regional economic development ecosystems. To the extent there are additional stakeholder groups not identified above, such as Economic Development Organizations or persistent poverty counties, that are significant in number and critical to healthy economic development ecosystems, EDA will consider applications that seek to support other networks/communities of practice; however, the applicant organization(s) must

connect their mission and their community of stakeholders to foundational economic development principles to demonstrate their level of importance to regional economic development ecosystems.

The Community of Practice Challenge seeks applications to build, launch, and operate a nationwide network supporting one or more of the above-mentioned cohorts designed to:

- establish and strengthen communication and collaboration between and among core groups within a cohort, including building urban-rural linkages;
- develop, organize, and disseminate best practices to accelerate the work and impacts of members across a cohort;
- increase awareness among core groups of stakeholders as well as reach new partners that were otherwise not benefiting from members' work within the cohort;
- support initiatives to address cross-cutting issues such as environmental justice, equity and inclusion, increasing access by underserved communities, communities specially impacted by the downturn in the coal economy, or other areas of emphasis from EDA's Investment Priorities;
- serve as an industry liaison and convener for Federal stakeholders, for instance to distribute grant notifications, research and data, and critical industry requirements; and
- advance economic development in partnership with EDA and the other successful applicants for this challenge.

For the EDD-related Community of Practice only, EDA will also consider applications that would support new or current EDD networks that are co-extensive with EDA's six Regions, so long as those projects would fulfill the programmatic intent described above.

2. Additional Program Information

EDA has determined that the projects solicited under this Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO are inherently in compliance with EDA's requirement that each project be consistent with the region's current CEDS or CEDS-equivalent. This is because activities funded under this NOFO will support effective regional planning. As such, specific discussion of the linkage to a CEDS is not required in applications submitted under this NOFO (including question B.3.a of Form ED-900).

Applications submitted under this NOFO 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. Applications 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 within the application to facilitate interagency coordination and avoid duplication of resources.

Prospective applicants should note that section C sets out eligibility criteria for applications, and only applications meeting the eligibility criteria will be considered. EDA will evaluate and select applications according to the evaluation criteria set forth in section E.

EDA may make changes or additions or cancel the ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO at any time. All changes will be communicated via Grants.gov.

3. EDA Investment Priorities

All projects considered for EDA funding under this ARPA Statewide Planning, Research and Networks NOFO must be consistent with EDA's Recovery and Resilience Investment Priority. Applicants may also demonstrate that a project is consistent with any of EDA's other Investment Priorities. EDA's Investment Priorities can be found at <https://www.eda.gov/about/investment-priorities/>. The priorities may be updated from time to time. Any future revisions will be reflected on EDA's website on January 15, April 15, July 15, or October 15 of each year.

4. Statutory Authorities for EDA's Programs

The statutory authority for the EAA program is section 209 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3149). The statutory authorization of supplemental appropriations for economic disaster recovery activities is section 703 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3233). Additional programmatic authority is provided by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Pub. L. 117-2).

Applicant eligibility and program requirements are set forth in EDA's regulations (codified at 13 C.F.R. Chapter III), and all applicants must address these requirements. EDA's regulations are accessible at the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website at <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse>. Under "Browse," select "Title 13 – Business Credit and Assistance", then "Go", then "300-399".

B. Federal Award Information

1. What Funding Is Available Under this Announcement?

Under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117-2), Congress provided EDA with \$3,000,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022, to "prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus and for necessary expenses for responding to economic injury as a result of coronavirus." Of the funds provided, EDA anticipates awarding \$90,000,000 under this NOFO: \$59,000,000 for Statewide Planning grants and \$31,000,000 for Research and Communities of Practice Challenge awards.

EDA's Regional Offices will award and administer Statewide Planning grants to States (as defined under PWEDA) within each EDA Regional Office's geographic region. EDA's Headquarters Office will award and administer Research and Communities of Practice awards.

Publication of this NOFO 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.

Statewide Planning grants will be for up to \$1 million each. EDA expects Research awards will range from \$200,000 to \$600,000 each. EDA expects Community of Practice Challenge awards will range from \$2 million to \$6 million each.

Depending on demand under this NOFO, EDA may exercise its discretion to adjust the total amount available under this NOFO and other American Rescue Plan Act NOFOs to ensure funds are used to maximum effect or to adjust to unforeseen changes in recovery efforts.

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

Funding Instrument: EDA expects to award grants for Statewide Planning. EDA may award grants or cooperative agreements for the Research and the Communities of Practice Challenge. EDA will award a cooperative agreement on a case-by-case basis if substantial agency involvement is required. For a cooperative agreement, the nature of EDA's "substantial involvement" (to be included in the terms and conditions of the award) will generally be collaboration between EDA and the recipient on the scope of work. However, other possible examples of EDA's "substantial involvement" may include, but are not limited to: (i) authority to halt immediately an activity if detailed performance specifications are not met; (ii) stipulation that the recipient must meet or adhere to specific procedural requirements before subsequent stages of a project may continue; (iii) involvement in the recipient's selection of key personnel; and (iv) operational involvement and monitoring during the project to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Period of Performance: For Statewide Planning grants, EDA expects the period of performance to range in duration from 12 to 24 months. For Research and Communities of Practice awards, the period of performance will depend on the nature of the project for which the grant or cooperative agreement is awarded. Typically, such projects range in duration from 12 to 24 months but, given the current on-going economic conditions, EDA expects some projects may require a period of performance of approximately 48-60 months. 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. **EDA's American Rescue Plan appropriations are available for making awards through September 30, 2022, though performance under the award may extend to no later than September 30, 2027.**

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for Research and Community of Practice Challenge awards include a(n):

- a. District Organization;
- b. Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes;
- c. 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;

- d. Institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or
- e. Public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.^{4, 5}

Eligible applicants for Statewide Planning grants are a Governor’s Office, or equivalent, of a State, or an eligible applicant type described above that is designated in writing by the Governor’s Office. Under section 3(10) of PWEDA the term “State” includes the fifty States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.⁶

2. Applicable Disaster Declaration

EDA has determined that economic injury from the coronavirus pandemic constitutes a “Special Need,” and eligibility may be established on that basis without reference to the other economic distress criteria. This determination of nationwide eligibility for these funds is consistent with the March 13, 2020 emergency declaration for the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic pursuant to the Stafford Act for all states, tribes, territories, local governments, and the District of Columbia (<https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/disaster-declarations#>).

3. Cost Sharing or Matching

Statewide Planning grants will be awarded at a 100% federal grant rate. No matching share is required for Statewide Planning grants.

For Research and Communities of Practice awards, given the extent of the economic impact and in accordance with the agency’s statutory authority under section 703 of PWEDA, EDA generally expects to fund 100% of eligible project costs. Applications that propose matching share, however, may be considered more competitive in the evaluation process. See section E.1 of this NOFO.

Applications that propose matching share 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. To meet these requirements, applications must include for each source of matching share a commitment letter or equivalent document signed by an authorized representative of the organization providing the matching funds.

Documented in-kind contributions may serve as matching share, but they must be eligible project costs and meet applicable Federal cost principles and uniform administrative requirements.

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

⁵ EDA, at its sole discretion, may waive the cooperation requirement for projects of a significant regional or national scope. See 13 C.F.R. § 301.2.

⁶ 42 U.S.C. § 3122.

Examples of in-kind contributions can include space, equipment, or services.⁷ Funds from other Federal financial assistance awards may be considered matching share funds only if authorized by statute, which may be determined by EDA’s reasonable interpretation of the statute.⁸

D. Application Submission Information for Applicants

For Statewide Planning, applications must follow the format prescribed in the EDA invitation letter and accept or reject the grant within 45 days of the date of transmission from EDA. The application submission requirements specified in this section apply only to applications for Research and the Communities of Practice Challenge.

For Research and the Communities of Practice Challenge, applications must include the materials listed in section D.2.a of this NOFO to be considered for funding. EDA intends to review an application expeditiously upon receipt of the **complete application**. EDA may seek additional information or documentation from the applicant to clarify information presented in the application. EDA may also, in its sole discretion, continue review of applications with minor defects or errors, while the applicant supplies the missing information. Please see section E of this NOFO for more information on EDA’s review and selection process.

EDA strongly encourages potential applicants to consult with the appropriate POC listed in section G of this NOFO to discuss whether proposed projects align with EDA’s Investment Priorities, eligibility requirements, and other requirements outlined in this NOFO. This consultation is limited to clarification of technical matters involving proposed projects.

1. Address to Request Application Package

An electronic version of the Research and the Communities of Practice Challenge application may be obtained at Grants.gov using Funding Opportunity Number “EDA-HDQ-ARPRN-2021-2006986”. To accommodate applicants’ accessibility requirements, a paper version of the application may be obtained by contacting the appropriate POC listed in section G of this NOFO.

All Research and Communities of Practice Challenge applicants must apply through Grants.gov unless they request and receive authorization to submit a paper application package by contacting the appropriate POC listed in section G. As noted above, Statewide Planning applicants must follow the application procedures outlined in EDA’s invitation letter.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

The tables in section D.2.a below describe the EDA and Federal grant assistance forms and other documentation required for a complete application for Research and Communities of Practice Challenge applications and may serve as a checklist for applicants in preparing their submissions.

⁷ See Section 204(b) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144) and the definition of “In-Kind Contribution” at 13 C.F.R. § 300.3.

⁸ See the definition of “Local Share or Matching Share” at 13 C.F.R. § 300.3. See also 2 C.F.R. § 200.306.

All relevant forms must be signed electronically by the applicant’s Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR); please see section I of this NOFO for information on AOR requirements. 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 formats. EDA will not accept paper, facsimile, or email transmissions of applications except as described below in section D.4.b. Please refer to important information on submitting your application provided in section D.4.

All documentation and data submitted should be current and applicable as of the date submitted. Applicants are encouraged to contact the appropriate contact listed in section G for technical assistance before submitting an application.

Research and Communities of Practice Challenge applications must include the following documents:

Project Design and Substance
Executive Summary
Project Narrative
Applicant Capacity and Project Management
Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan
Schedule of Major Milestones and Deliverables
Resumes of Key Personnel
Matching Share Documentation (as applicable)
Forms and Supporting Documentation
ED-900A (Additional EDA Assurances for Construction or Non-Construction Investments)
SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance)
SF-424A (Budget Information Non-Construction Programs)
CD-511 (Certification Regarding Lobbying)
SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) (if applicable) ⁹
Organizational Documentation (if applicable) ¹⁰
Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation (if applicable) ¹¹

a. Project Design and Substance

Document
Executive Summary
Project Narrative
Applicant Capacity and Project Management

⁹ Form SF-LLL is only required if the applicant or co-applicant has engaged the services of a registered lobbyist in connection with its proposed project.

¹⁰ Only certain types of eligible entities are required to submit organization documents, and the documentation required varies by eligible entity type. See section D.2.b.ii(1).

¹¹ Applicants that do not have a current ICR agreement with a Federal agency are not required to submit this documentation and may elect to adopt a *de minimis* ICR. See section D.2.b.ii(2).

Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan
Schedule of Major Milestones and Deliverables
Resumes of Key Personnel
Matching Share Documentation (as applicable)

The application must clearly articulate the overall goals of the project, the specific and distinct Scope of Work and concrete activities that will be accomplished under it, specifically **addressing whether the applicant is applying for Research or the Communities of Practice Challenge**.¹² The application also must demonstrate each applicant’s capability to implement the proposed activities in accordance with the requirements of this NOFO. Applications will be evaluated based on the Evaluation Criteria outlined in section E. **Applicants should carefully adhere to the word or page limits specified for each section of the application.** Pages beyond the specified page limit for each section will not be read or considered.

i. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should be a clear, concise, and descriptive summary of the proposed project. This should be no more than 500 words and, if selected for funding, may be used in a public announcement or on EDA’s website.

ii. Project Narrative

The Project Narrative should address all activities that will be undertaken using the funds requested under this NOFO, a summary of how these activities support the overall project’s goals, and a clear vision for the final report. Applications must clearly describe how the proposed project aligns with one or more of EDA Investment Priorities.

The Project Narrative may not exceed **12-single sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins**. Within the Project Narrative, applicants should address the following elements depending on application type:

Applications for Research must address the following sub-criteria:

- Justification for why the proposed project will provide a specific benefit to the nation’s economic development community and economic recovery from the pandemic;
- Description of how the proposed project is original and innovative, and will add to the body of knowledge supporting decisions made on economic development;
- Description of how the proposed project will measure the results of the particular areas of focus from EDA’s ARPA grant competitions such as the Jobs Challenge, Build Back Better Regional Challenge, Indigenous Communities Challenge, and travel and tourism programs;

¹² Note that the grantee providing technical assistance to BBBRC participants under this NOFO cannot also be paid as a consultant by finalists selected by EDA under Phase 1 of the BBBRC NOFO nor will they be part of EDA’s formal evaluation of any applicant.

- Applicants should include the key outcome measures that they will evaluate and their proposed methodology. Applicants should also provide previous evaluation projects they have completed if available.
- Applicants that propose to measure the results of more than one EDA ARPA grant competition should include measures that permit comparisons across competitions, to the extent practicable.
- Description of how the proposed project will promote better understanding of economic development research, policy, and implementation;
- Description of how the proposed project will increase understanding of economic development principles and achieve improved economic development outcomes;
- Description of how the proposed project will support initiatives to address cross-cutting issues such as environmental justice, equity and inclusion, increasing access by underserved communities, communities specially impacted by the downturn in the coal economy, or other areas of emphasis from EDA's Investment Priorities;
- Explanation of how the proposed project supports EDA's mission to lead the Federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing and supporting American regions for growth and success in the global economy; and
- Clear plan for ensuring products/services produced by the proposed project will remain available to the economic development community, and updated as necessary, without continued EDA financial support.

Applications for the Community of Practice Challenge must address the following sub-criteria:

- Description of the Community of Practice(s) that will be established and the systems that will be used to facilitate the Community of Practice;
- Description of how the proposed Community of Practice(s) increases the economic development capacity of the identified stakeholder group(s) and enhances the intended impacts of the cohort they are proposing to support;
- Description of how the grantee is well suited to support the identified Community of Practice(s);
- Discussion of how the proposed project will stimulate economic development in distressed regions;
- Explanation of how the proposed project supports EDA's mission to lead the Federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing and supporting American regions for growth and success in the global economy;
- Clear plan for ensuring products/services produced by the proposed project will remain available to the economic development community, and updated as necessary, without continued EDA financial support;
- Discussion of how the proposed Community of Practice(s) will promote inclusion of historically underserved populations and geographies, advancing equity in access to services provided through grantees funded via EDA's various ARPA competitions; and

- Explanation of the qualifications and relevant expertise of the applicant to successfully develop and sustain a Community of Practice(s).

iii. Applicant Capacity and Project Management

Applications must include a **separate section** on applicant capacity, including project management experience, that addresses the applicant’s ability to perform all activities that will be undertaken using the funds requested under this NOFO, a summary of how these activities support the overall project’s goals, and a clear vision for the final deliverables, including required final reports.

The Applicant Capacity and Project Management section may not exceed **5 single-sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins**. (Note: resumes for key personnel should be included under Resumes for Key Personnel and will not count against the page limitations of this section.) Within the Applicant Capacity and Project Management section, applications should address how the applicant will be able to work collaboratively with Federal partners and economic development organizations, and demonstrate:

- Subject matter expertise in the various aspects of a regional ecosystem including, economic development, workforce development, planning, and others.
- Functional expertise in the major components of the work, including leadership and facilitation of projects related to robust programmatic content, actionable recommendations, and toolkits.
- Experience coordinating with Federal project managers and collaborating with various partners (including a discussion of the extent of participation of government agencies, private sector interests, education providers, non-profits, community and labor groups, workforce boards, utilities, etc.). This competency includes the governance structure of the project and should be as specific as possible regarding roles and responsibilities.

iv. Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan

Applications must include a Budget Narrative that describes the costs associated with each line item on Form SF-424A. There is a sample budget template in Appendix B that applicants may use.

Applications must also include a Staffing Plan listing all positions proposed to be charged to the project whether as federal or non-federal costs. The Staffing Plan must include the position titles, salaries, percentage of time dedicated to the project, and amount of salary charged to the project for each staff member assigned to the project. The sum of all salaries charged to the project must equal the amount on the “Personnel” budget line item on Form SF-424A. The Staffing Plan should provide a description of how the personnel will carry out the proposed project, including the adequacy and previous performance of the proposed team to carry out project activities.

v. Schedule of Major Milestones and Deliverables

Applications must include a schedule detailing the expected start and end date of all major milestones and deliverables (e.g., what data points, what analysis, etc.) described in the Project

Narrative. The schedule should be outlined in months (e.g., “One month from award...”), such that an evaluator could easily discern in how many months the Applicant could start the project from the date of project award, in how many months each of the key project milestones and deliverables will be accomplished from the date of project award, and the anticipated number of months after the date of project award that the project will be completed, generally not to exceed a 48-month award period. Applications should incorporate preparation of the final report and presentation into the project timeline and period of performance.

This is best conveyed through a Gantt Chart. There is a sample Gantt Chart in Appendix B that applicants may use.

vi. Resumes of Key Personnel

Applications must include the resumes of key project staff, each of which should not exceed two pages in length. Resumes should be compiled and uploaded together as one PDF file.

vii. Matching Share Documentation (as applicable)

If matching share is provided, applications must include commitment letters or equivalent documents that demonstrate that **all matching funds** (whether cash or in-kind) from **all sources** (i.e., any applicant, any co-applicants, and any other sources of matching funds) referenced in the application will be *unencumbered, unrestricted, and committed at the time of award* and that are *signed by authorized representatives* of the sources of the matching funds. Authorized representatives must have the authority to execute documents and to obligate and expend funds on behalf of their respective organizations.

b. Forms and Supporting Documentation

i. Forms

Applications must include the following forms, either per applicant or per application, as noted:

Form	Description	Number
ED-900A	Additional EDA Assurances for Construction or Non-Construction Investments	One per applicant
SF-424	Application for Federal Assistance	One per applicant
SF-424A	Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs	One per application
CD-511	Certification Regarding Lobbying	One per applicant
SF-LLL	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable) ¹³	One per applicant

¹³ Form SF-LLL is only required if the applicant or co-applicant has engaged the services of a registered lobbyist in connection with its proposed project.

ii. Supporting Documentation

Applications must include the following supporting documentation, as applicable:

Documentation	Number
Organizational Documentation (if applicable)	For each applicant, depending on entity type
ICR Documentation (if applicable)	For each applicant

(1) Organizational Documentation

Each applicant and co-applicant must provide documentation that supports each applicant's or co-applicant's **organizational status as an eligible entity** where applicable (section C.1 of this NOFO).

- States, 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 must submit documentation that demonstrates their status as nonprofit organizations. This must include articles of incorporation, bylaws, certificate of good standing, and a copy of the most recent (not older than 18 months) IRS Form 990 (Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax) (without attachments or schedules).
- Other entities, including institutions of higher education that are not 100% publicly-controlled, must provide documentation that demonstrates their organization type.

(2) Indirect Costs (if applicable)

If indirect costs are included in the budget, the applicant must include documentation to support the indirect cost rate it is using (unless claiming the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below), as well as details about how the applicant calculated estimated indirect costs (i.e., how the applicant calculated modified total direct costs as defined in the appropriate negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) or at 2 C.F.R. § 200.1, as appropriate).

For most applicants, this will entail the submission of a copy of the applicant's current approved NICRA. The maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which EDA will reimburse a recipient shall be the lesser of the (1) line-item amount for the Federal Share of indirect costs contained in the EDA approved budget for the award, or (2) Federal Share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on either (a) the indirect cost rate approved by EDA (or applicable cognizant Federal agency), provided that the cost rate is current at the time the costs were incurred and provided that the rate 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 days from the award start date (unless claiming the 10 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 shall be submitted to EDA's Office of Regional Affairs (or 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 (unless the applicant is a state or local unit of government that receives less than \$35 million in direct federal funding per year, discussed below). No documentation is required to justify the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate; however, an applicant electing to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent must include a statement in its Budget Narrative that it does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate and is electing to charge the de minimis rate.

Note 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:

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

EDA reserves the right to require District Organizations to submit a cost allocation plan or a full indirect cost rate proposal if, in EDA's judgment, a NICRA is required to verify the District Organization's proposed indirect cost rate.

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; and (iii) 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. 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. Award 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

For Statewide Planning grants, States must accept or reject the grant within 45 days of the date of transmission from EDA of an invitation letter.

For Research and Communities of Practice grants, there are no application submission deadlines.

While EDA encourages eligible applicants to submit their applications as soon as possible, EDA strongly advises eligible applicants to submit complete applications no later than **October 31, 2021** so that EDA can review and process the application in time to achieve the objectives of the grant program. **Submission by October 31, 2021 is not a guarantee of funding.** Any award is subject to the availability of funds.

In addition, please note the following:

- EDA will not accept any unsolicited changes, additions, revisions, or deletions to applications after the submission deadline.
- Throughout the review and selection process, EDA reserves the right to seek clarification from applicants whose applications are being reviewed and considered.
- 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.
- See section E of this NOFO for application review and selection information.

EDA's American Rescue Plan appropriations are available for making awards through September 30, 2022, though performance under the award may extend to no later than September 30, 2027. EDA may cancel or withdraw this ARPA Statewide Planning, Research and Networks NOFO at any time.

a. Electronic Submission

EDA accepts electronic submissions of applications through Grants.gov. EDA will not accept paper, facsimile, or email transmissions of applications except as provided below.

Once an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process through Grants.gov during which the application may be accepted or rejected by the system. Please be advised that the validation process may take 24 to 48 hours to complete. Applications that contain errors will be rejected by Grants.gov and will not be forwarded to EDA for review. The applicant must correct any errors before Grants.gov will accept and validate the application.

Please see section I of this NOFO for more detailed instructions and information on the requirements for submitting applications electronically via Grants.gov.

b. Alternatives to Electronic Submission

If an applicant is unable to submit an application electronically for reasons beyond the control of the applicant, EDA, in its sole discretion, may **pre-approve in writing** submission via an alternate method (e.g., email).

5. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under this ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks 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 whose primary service areas fall within one or more such States must give State 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.¹⁴ 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 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.

6. Other Submission Requirements

After EDA reviews an application, EDA may contact the applicant to request any necessary additional documentation to clarify or substantiate submitted application materials, depending on the type of project proposed. Examples of additional documentation may include, but are not limited to, documentation of the value of in-kind contributions or evidence all funding is available and committed to the project. This additional documentation will be required to ensure the proposed project complies with all applicable rules and regulations prior to EDA’s issuance of an award. EDA will provide applicants a reasonable amount of time to provide any additional documentation. Failure to provide complete and accurate supporting documentation in a timely manner when requested by EDA may result in the denial of an application.

EDA may, at its discretion, make changes or additions to this ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO. All changes will be communicated on Grants.gov.

E. Application Review Information

The application review information in this section applies to Research and Communities of Practice Challenge applications only. Statewide Planning applications will be reviewed by the applicable EDA Regional Office and a maximum of one award will be made for each State.

1. Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria apply to all Research and Communities of Practice Challenge applications. For several, there are general criteria that all projects will be evaluated against as well as specific criteria that apply only to a Research or Communities of Practice project; applicants will be scored against both sets based on their status as a Research or Community of Practice project. Please read the criteria carefully. The number of points that can be earned for each category of criteria is listed below, with 100 points the maximum total that can be earned.

¹⁴ As provided for in 15 C.F.R. part 13.

All projects applying for EDA funding through this NOFO should clearly articulate and have a logical nexus to supporting EDA’s Investment Priorities and specific programmatic funding priorities that EDA wishes to fund under this NOFO.

Summary of Criteria
Organizational or Applicant Capacity and Personnel
Strategic Approach
Feasibility of Budget and Financial Match
Feasibility of Deliverables and Timeline
Sustainability, Scalability, and Dissemination
Cross Collaboration with other EDA and/or other Economic Development Partners

Organizational or Applicant Capacity and Personnel (15 Points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability of the applicant to carry out the proposed work and achieve success based on the education, experience, and professional accomplishments of each organization and all key personnel; • Qualified personnel that, as a group, demonstrate project management expertise, as well as demonstrated success in all aspects of the scope of work; • Quality of the partnerships and extent of partnership commitments; • Appropriateness, quality, and availability of any facilities, materials and resources to be used in implementing the proposed plan; and • Verifiable quality of past performance on similar projects; applicants may be asked to provide references to substantiate this information.
Research-oriented specific-criteria:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise of the applicant in the various subject matter necessary to implement research on performance measurement, metrics, and economic development and to deliver practical, sound recommendations.
Communities of Practice Challenge specific-criteria:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise of the applicant in the various subject matter necessary to develop and sustain a Community of Practice.

Strategic Approach (30 Points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the applicant describes how the proposed project fits within one or more of EDA’s Investment Priorities.

Research-oriented specific-criteria:

- Extent to which the applicant describes how the proposed project fits within one or more Research & Evaluation programmatic areas of emphasis see [examples here](#) and [here](#)).
- Extent to which the proposed project will provide a specific benefit to economic development practitioners;
- Extent to which the proposed project is original and substantially contributes to the existing body of knowledge to support decisions made in economic development;
- Extent to which the proposed project can measure results associated with and isolate best practices within EDA ARPA projects related to equity, climate resilience, or other EDA investment priorities;
- Demonstrates that the project will support, promote, and improve understanding of economic development research, policy, and implementation; and
- Supports EDA’s mission to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing and supporting American regions for growth and success in the global economy.

Communities of Practice Challenge specific-criteria:

- Compelling description of how the project will develop a Community of Practice(s) for an identified stakeholder group(s) and how the stakeholders will benefit from the provision of a Community of Practice, including how the project will maintain connectivity across a potentially geographically dispersed cohort;
- Demonstrates how the proposed project will increase capacity of members of the stakeholder group(s), individuals, firms, or communities and specifically supports the success of EDA ARPA funding;
- Ability of the proposed project to stimulate economic development in distressed regions;
- Ability of the proposed project to identify or promote best practices in equity, climate resilience, or other EDA investment priorities throughout the Community of Practice(s);
- Strength of proposed project to increase understanding of economic development principles; and
- Supports EDA’s mission to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing and supporting American regions for growth and success in the global economy.

Feasibility of Budget and Financial Match (15 points)

- Strength of the proposed management plan to achieve the project goals and manage partner organizations and project staff;
- Completeness of a proposed schedule and budget, including the extent to which appropriate targets, metrics, and milestones are clearly defined;

- Strength of proposed financial match (if any) including documented commitments;
- Identification of how Federal funds will be used and how financial match will be used; and
- Strength of partnership collaboration and interest in the concept as demonstrated by willingness of partners to contribute resources (i.e., amount of match contributed, financial or otherwise).

Feasibility of Deliverables and Timeline (15 points)

- Strength of the timeline to work toward key milestones and dates, measure progress toward well-defined targets, and the likelihood that metrics and milestones will be met;
- Proposed plan to work with Federal Project Manager and Federal Project Management Team; and
- Extent to which challenges and risks are identified and mitigation strategies are proposed.

Sustainability, Scalability, and Dissemination (15 points)

- Demonstrated success in sharing knowledge with groups that do not directly participate in the project;
- Demonstrated success in efficiently taking existing practices to scale within and after the period of the initial funding award;
- Demonstrated success in developing recommendations for how the original funders of a project can utilize additional funding opportunities to maintain and expand project success;
- Strength of proposed dissemination and outreach strategy; and
- Clear plan for ensuring products/services produced by the project will remain available to the economic development community, and updated as necessary, without continued EDA financial support.
- For Community of Practice applicants, the quality of the utility of the proposed outcomes for supporting the success of the Community of Practice and the feasibility of those outcomes.
- For Research applicants, the anticipated utility of the proposed final products for improving outcomes from future economic development projects.

Cross Collaboration with other EDA and/or other Economic Development Partners (10 Points)

- Proposed plan to work collaboratively, where feasible and practicable, with EDA's Research and National Technical Assistance (RNTA) program award recipients (see

<https://www.eda.gov/programs/rnta/>) and/or other EDA partners, stakeholders, and other grantees; and

- Clear explanation of how the proposed project fits with, complements, or adds to/strengthens previously funded projects under the RNTA portfolio and the broader national EDA “portfolio”.

2. Review for Eligibility and Completeness (Technical Review)

EDA staff will initially conduct an eligibility and technical completeness review (the “Technical Review”) of all applications received. Applications received from ineligible entities will not be considered for funding. Applications that do not contain all forms and required documentation listed in section D.2 of this NOFO may be deemed non-responsive and excluded from further consideration. EDA expects all applicants to complete and include all required forms and documentation. However, EDA, in its sole discretion, may determine that an omission is curable and therefore may continue its consideration of the application despite the deficiency.

3. Investment Review Committee (IRC)

An IRC, comprised of at least three evaluators, will evaluate complete applications against the evaluation criteria in section E.1 of this NOFO. Application scores will be determined by each panelist on an individual basis, and the average of the individual ratings will produce a panel score. Based on its consideration of the evaluation criteria and panel score, the IRC will prepare a ranking or other categorization of applications (e.g., fund, don’t fund, carry forward) to assist the Grants Officer Director in making funding decisions. Research and Communities of Practice Challenge will be evaluated independently of each other based on the evaluation criteria of the specific program.

4. 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. If the applicant provides the requested information and supporting documentation in a timely fashion and EDA determines that the project is fully compliant with applicable rules and regulations, the application will be forwarded to the Grants Officer for a final decision and award approval. 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 rules and regulations will receive notification that their application was not successful.

5. Grants Officer’s Decision

Applications recommended by the IRC and deemed fully compliant with applicable rules and regulations will be forwarded to the EDA Grants Officer under this NOFO. The Grants Officer has been delegated the authority to make the final decision on whether to fund an application and may select a project for funding that differs from the IRC’s recommendations based on any of the following Selection Factors or use these Selection Factors to break a tie for applications that are otherwise considered equal in merit:

- i. A determination that the selected application better meets the overall objectives of the RNTA program and Community of Practice goals (*See* section A.1 of this NOFO);
- ii. The ability of a project to start quickly;
- iii. The extent to which the selection of the application, alone or in the context of other applications, supports EDA's compliance with appropriations law requirements and report language guidance;
- iv. The applicant's performance under previous awards including whether the grantee submitted required performance reports and data; or
- v. The availability of program funding.

The Grants Officer's final decision must be consistent with this NOFO and EDA's and DOC's published policies. However, if EDA does not receive satisfactory applications, the Grants Officer may elect not to make any selection.

6. Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIS) Review

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 FAPIS). 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 Notification

If an application is selected for funding the EDA Grants Officer will issue the award (Form CD-450), 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.3, below.

By signing Form CD-450, the applicant agrees to comply with all award provisions. EDA will provide Form CD-450 via the award package to the applicant's authorized representative. The applicant's representative must sign and return the Form CD-450 without modification within 30 calendar days of the date of EDA's signature on the form.

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

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.

3. DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions

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

4. 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>.

5. Reporting

a. Financial, Performance, and Impact Reports

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 subawards¹⁵ 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. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. part 170.

¹⁵ 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. Government Performance and Results Act

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 or other methods, 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-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>. EDA also expects to engage with leading research institutions to perform third-party program evaluations, which will require cooperation between the grantee, organizations within their service area, and the evaluating institution.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For questions concerning this ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO, or more information about EDA programs, you may contact the appropriate EDA representative listed below. Updated contact information can be found on EDA's website at <https://www.eda.gov/contact>. EDA's website at <http://www.eda.gov> provides additional information on EDA and its programs.

For questions related to Research, please contact research@eda.gov. For questions related to the Communities of Practice Challenge, please contact networks@eda.gov. For questions related to Statewide Planning, please contact:

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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. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure

EDA may publish any applications it receives, including any supporting documentation, on its website or through other means. Applicants are advised that any confidential commercial information that should not be disclosed must be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information.

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, Public Information. 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.

3. 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. 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 2 C.F.R §§ 200.319 and 200.317, only State recipients are expressly exempt from this prohibition. Local governments and Indian Tribes 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 the appropriate POC listed in section G with any questions regarding application of this regulation.

4. 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).

5. 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.

6. 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 disbursement of funds.

7. 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 Uniform Guidance requires any non-Federal entity (i.e., non-profit organizations, including

non-profit institutions of higher education and hospitals, States, local governments, and Indian Tribes) that expends Federal awards of \$750,000 or more in the recipient’s fiscal year to conduct a single or program-specific audit in accordance with the requirements set out in the Uniform Guidance.

I. Instructions for Application Submission via Grants.gov

The most up-to-date instructions for application submission via Grants.gov can be found at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>. To begin, complete, and submit your application:

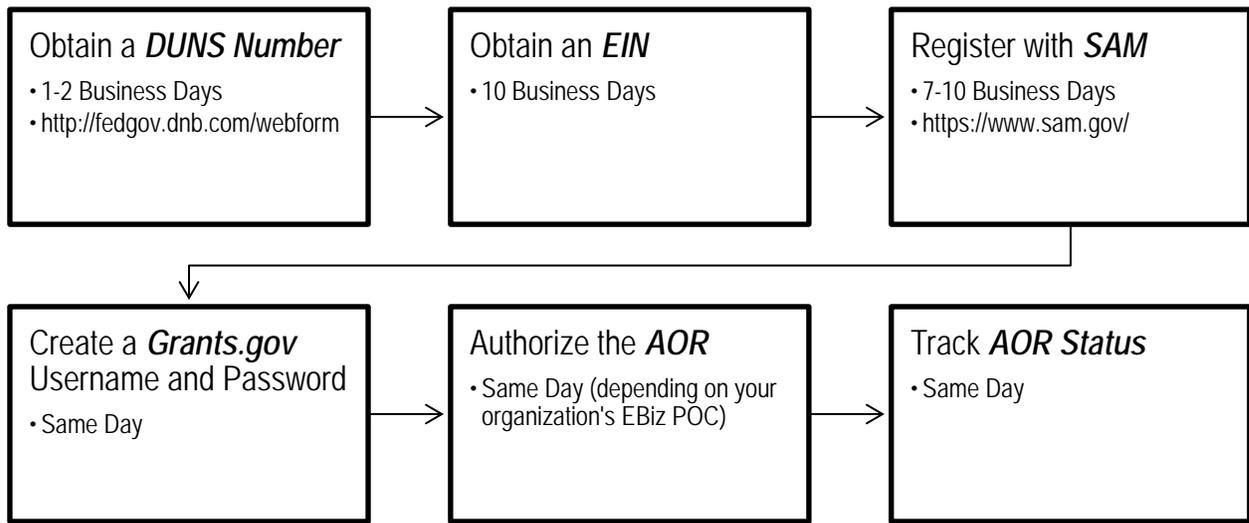
- Navigate to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>;
- Click “Search for Opportunity Package”;
- In the “Funding Opportunity Number” field, enter “EDA-HDQ-ARPRN-2021-2006986”;
- Click “Search”;
- Click “Apply”;
- Enter your email address (if you would like to receive updates from Grants.gov regarding this grant opportunity) or check the box that indicates you do not wish to provide it, then click “Submit”;
- Choose to apply using Workspace by clicking “Login to Apply Now” or choose to download the legacy application package by clicking “Download Package”; and
- Follow the instructions provided on the Grants.gov website and on each webpage to complete and submit your application.

1. Register Early and Submit Early.

In order to submit an application through <http://www.grants.gov/> (Grants.gov), an applicant must register for a Grants.gov user ID and password. Note that this process can take between **three to five business days** or **as long as four weeks** if all steps are not completed correctly. Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>. Please note that organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their System for Award Management (SAM), which includes the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database, registration up-to-date through sam.gov or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov.

a. Pre-Submission Registration

Before submitting a Full Application under this NOFO, each applicant must both register with Grants.gov and register its Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) with Grants.gov. Applicants should note that this process can be lengthy, requires interaction with multiple organizations not affiliated with EDA, and requires confirmation at each step.



Applicants may have already completed one or more of the steps set forth in the above flowchart, which depicts an example of how the pre-submission registration process generally flows (e.g., applicants may have already registered with Grants.gov, in which case they do not need to re-register). However, note that applicants that have not completed any of the above steps may require 23 or more business days to complete the required steps serially. Grants.gov is a centrally-managed Federal grants portal, and changes or updates to the process outlined above may occur after the publication of this NOFO. Prospective applicants should visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> to ensure that they follow the most up-to-date instructions.

b. AOR Requirement

Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. As part of the registration process, you will register at least one Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) for your organization. AORs registered at Grants.gov are the only officials with the authority to submit applications at Grants.gov so please ensure that your organization's application is submitted by an AOR. **If the application is submitted by anyone other than your organization's AOR, it will be rejected by the Grants.gov system and cannot be considered by EDA.** Note that a given organization may designate multiple individuals as AORs for Grants.gov purposes.

2. Field Limitations and Special Characters

Please be advised that [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) provides the following notice with respect to form field limitations and special characters: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

3. Verify That Your Submission Was Successful

Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at Grants.gov. Applicants can expect to receive multiple emails regarding the status of their submission. Since

email communication can be unreliable, applicants must proactively check on the status of their application if they do not receive email notifications within a day of submission.

An applicant should expect to receive two initial emails from Grants.gov: the first will confirm receipt of the application, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to EDA or has been rejected due to errors. It can take up to two business days after Grants.gov receives an application for applicants to receive email notification of an error. Applicants will receive a third email once EDA has retrieved their applications.

EDA requests that applicants kindly refrain from submitting multiple copies of the same application package.

Applicants should save and print both the confirmation screen provided on the Grants.gov website after the applicant has submitted an application, and the confirmation email sent by Grants.gov when the application has been successfully received and validated in the system. If an applicant receives an email from Grants.gov indicating that the application was received and subsequently validated, but does not receive an email from Grants.gov indicating that EDA has retrieved the application package within 72 hours of that email, the applicant may contact EDA using the contact information in section G of this announcement to inquire if EDA is in receipt of the applicant's submission.

It is the applicant's responsibility to verify that its submission was timely received and validated successfully at Grants.gov. To see the date and time your application was received, navigate to <https://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Track My Application" link under the "Applicants" tab. For a successful submission, the application must be received and validated by **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** and an agency tracking number assigned. If your application has a status of "Received" it is awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will change to "Validated" or "Rejected with Errors." If the status is "Rejected with Errors," your application has not been received successfully. For more detailed information on why an application may be rejected, please see "Encountering Error Messages" at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/encountering-error-messages.html> and "Frequently Asked Questions by Applicants" at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>.

4. Grants.gov Systems Issues

If you experience a Grants.gov systems issue (i.e., a technical problem or glitch with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission in a timely manner, please (i) print any error message received; (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at (800) 518-4726 for assistance; and (iii) contact EDA using the contact information in section G of this NOFO. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. Please note that problems with an applicant's computer system or equipment are **not** considered systems issues. Similarly, an applicant's failure to, e.g., (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered AOR submits the application, or (iii) notice receipt of an email message from Grants.gov are **not** considered systems issues. A Grants.gov systems issue is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov 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 access the following link for assistance in navigating Grants.gov and for a list of useful resources: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>. If you do not find an answer to your question under the “Applicant FAQs,” try consulting the “Grants Online User Guide” at https://www.grants.gov/help/html/help/Get_Started/Get_Started.htm or contacting Grants.gov by email at support@grants.gov or telephone at 1-800-518-4726. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except on Federal holidays.

Appendix A
Full Application Checklist

Before you submit your application to EDA, please ensure that the following documents are included in your submission.

Requirement	Location
<input type="checkbox"/> All required forms (ED 900A, SF424, SF424A, CD511, SFLLL)	Section D.2.b.i
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Summary (500 words or less)	Section D.2.a.i
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Narrative (may not exceed 12-single sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins)	Section D.2.a.ii
<input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Applicant Capacity and Project Management (may not exceed 5-single sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins)	Section D.2.a.iii
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan	Section D.2.a.iv
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule of Major Milestones and Deliverables	Section D.2.a.v
<input type="checkbox"/> Addenda (including resumes of key personnel; organizational documentation, if applicable; and a copy of a current, approved indirect cost rate agreement, if applicable)	Section D.2.a.vi Section D.2.b.ii(1) Section D.2.b.ii(2)
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of Matching Share (if any)	Section D.2.a.vii

**Appendix B
Budget Template and Gantt Chart Samples**

Budget Template

Cost Category	Organization
Federal Share (EDA)	
Non-Federal Matching Share	
Total Project Cost	
Federal Grant Rate	
Personnel	
Fringe Benefits	
Travel	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Contractual	
Construction	
Other	
Total Direct Charges	
Indirect Charges (X% Rate Overall)	
Total Project Budget	

Gantt Chart

	Expected Project Period of Performance = 12 Months											
Task/Deliverable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Staffing												
Explore/Data Collections												
Applications/Selection												
Assessments												
Reflection and Preparation												
Publicize and Convene												
Evaluate												
Draft Final Report and Present to EDA												
Financial Closeout Preparation												