

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name:** Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce
- **Notice of Funding Availability Title:** International Engagement Ready Communities Initiative
- **Announcement Type and Date:** Initial announcement of Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) publishing EDA's application submission requirements and review procedures for applications received under EDA's Research and Evaluation (R&E) Program, as authorized by Section 207 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (PWEDA) (42 U.S.C. § 3147). Effective date: May 11, 2017.
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** EDA-HDQ-RNTA-2017-2005262
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.312, Economic Development – Research and Evaluation.
- **Dates:** To be considered timely a completed application must be transmitted and time-stamped at www.grants.gov (Grant.gov) no later than June 12, 2017 at 11:59 pm Eastern Time. EDA will also accept paper submissions. See Section D. of this NOFA for full submission requirements. Any application received after June 12, 2017 at 11:59 pm Eastern Time will be considered non-responsive and will not be considered for funding. This announcement solicits applications for a single research project and it is anticipated that one award will be made. EDA expects to notify the applicant selected under this NOFA by August 7, 2017.
- **Notice of Funding Availability Description:** This initiative will assist communities in attracting more foreign direct investment (FDI) to strengthen their local economies by helping them identify and adopt economic development and workforce best practices related to attracting FDI, and fostering a supportive environment for local exporting communities. Through this funding opportunity, EDA seeks to continue to build on its strong foundation of connecting communities to best practices.
- **Eligible Applicants:** Pursuant to Section 3(4) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122(4)) and 13 C.F.R. § 300.3 (Eligible Recipient), eligible applicants for and recipients of EDA investment assistance include a District Organization; an Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; a State; a 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; an institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education (excluding for-profit institutions of higher education); or a public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT
International Engagement Ready Communities Initiative

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A. Program Description

1. Overview

There is tremendous variability among state and local Economic Development Organizations (EDOs) engaged in foreign direct investment (FDI) and export strategies and promotion. To be more globally competitive, these communities of varied resource abilities must develop a strong regional plan that provide them with a roadmap to attract more FDI and increase international business opportunities for their communities. This initiative will assist communities in attracting more FDI as well as increase export promotion to strengthen their local economies by identifying and applying best practices that use international markets to create domestic jobs.

2. Definitions

Economic Development is the expansion of capacities that contribute to the advancement of society through the realization of individual, firm and community potential.

Economic development is measured by a sustained increase in prosperity and quality of life through innovation, lowered transaction costs, and the utilization of capabilities towards the responsible production and diffusion of goods and services. Economic development requires effective institutions grounded in norms of openness, tolerance for risk, appreciation for diversity, and confidence in the realization of mutual gain for the public and the private sector. Economic development is essential to creating the conditions for economic growth and ensuring our economic future.

EDA distinguishes economic development from economic growth, which is a simple increase in aggregate output. American cities and regional economies are restructuring in light of dramatic global economic integration and increased competition. There is a need to not only lift less prosperous places but to also ensure that the full range of communities can actively achieve their potential. A modern view of economic development requires creating the preconditions or capacities that support creativity, collaborative problem solving and information sharing, and lowering the costs of engaging in innovation.¹

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment made by a company or individual in one country in business interests in another country, in the form of either establishing business operations or acquiring business assets in the other country, such as ownership or controlling interest in a foreign company.²

International engagement strategy in this NOFA is meant to reflect FDI attraction and export promotion plans targeting increased and diversified economic activity for a local or regional community.

¹ <https://www.eda.gov/>.

² www.investopedia.com/terms/f/fdi.asp.

Region and *Regional* in this NOFA is a multi-jurisdictional unit (which may cross political boundaries) based on economic and demographic patterns that cross municipal and state boundaries.

3. Desired Activities and Outputs

EDA seeks to accomplish the following activities and outputs with this award:

- 1) Identify and understand the characteristics of an effective trade and FDI promotion strategy, and the barriers to success at the local and regional level;
- 2) Develop best practice reports;
- 3) Develop cluster specific assessment tool and tool kit training guide;
- 4) Develop a user-friendly applied findings toolkit that communities can use to easily:
 - a) Assess the efficacy of their overall international engagement;
 - b) Identify areas of potential global competitiveness in trade and investment given assets in their respective geographies; and
 - c) Develop and implement an enhanced international engagement strategy that may be incorporated into a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or similar document.

To accomplish these desired outputs, EDA will award a single grant to an eligible grantee that will be responsible for:

- a) Conducting research and documenting successful international engagement strategies to identify “what works” strategies for diverse communities and regions nationwide with the purpose of maximizing the sustainability, transferability, and application of research findings;
- b) Authoring a research paper on statistically significant determinants of successful international engagement strategies. This paper should include empirical-analytical analysis in addition to best practices qualitative case studies of trade and investment strategies in both urban and rural regions. The paper should also include substantial quantifiable data supporting the identified best practices;
- c) Develop and document a global competitiveness assessment tool. This tool should be based on a SWOT analysis of the regional economy and should answer the question as relating to FDI and export strategies and promotion:
 - a. **Strengths** are a region’s relative competitive advantages (e.g., industry supply chains and clusters, extensive port, rail, and broadband assets, specialized workforce skills, higher education levels, collaboration among stakeholders) and often are internal in nature;
 - b. **Weaknesses** are a region’s relative competitive disadvantages (e.g., a risk-averse or change-resistant regional culture, underutilized assets, etc.), also often internal in nature;

- c. **Opportunities** are chances or occasions for regional improvement or progress (e.g., expansion of an applied research lab in the region), often external in nature; and
 - d. **Threats** are chances or occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline if left unaddressed (e.g., several companies in the region considering moving to lower-cost areas of the state), also often are external in nature.
- d) Develop an international engagement strategy framework for use by communities with performance measurement indicators and/or metrics that allows communities to implement in their CEDS while providing them with long term benchmarking abilities. (90 days following implementation), short (6-12 months), medium (12 months – 3 years) run, and long term (3- 5 years).

4. EDA Investment Priorities

a. What is the Research and Evaluation (R&E) Program?

Through the R&E program, EDA supports the development of tools, recommendations, and resources that shape Federal economic development policies and inform economic development decision-making at the local level. R&E program investments provide 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 also regularly evaluates the impacts and outcomes of its various programs as a means of identifying policy and program modifications that will increase the agency's efficiency and effectiveness.

5. Statutory authority for the R&E Program

The authority for the R&E program is listed in Section 207 (42 U.S.C. § 3147) of PWEDA, and 13 C.F.R. part 306, subpart A. EDA's regulations, which will govern an award made under this announcement, are codified at 13 C.F.R. chapter III.

B. Federal Award Information

1. What funding is available under this announcement?

EDA anticipates that the award made under this announcement will involve a nine (9) month project period and plans to allocate up to \$600,000 in two-year FY16 funds appropriated under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113) for this purpose through the R&E program.

The funding periods and amounts referenced in this NOFA are subject to the availability of funds at the time of award as well as to DOC and EDA priorities at the time of award. Neither DOC nor EDA will be held responsible for proposal or application preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not obligate DOC or EDA to award any specific grant or cooperative

agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds. DOC or EDA may cancel or withdraw this NOFA at any time.

2. What type of funding instrument will be used to make awards and how long will a project's period of performance be?

Subject to the availability of funds, EDA anticipates that an award made under this competitive solicitation will be in the form of a cooperative agreement. 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: (1) authority to halt immediately an activity if detailed performance specifications are not met, (2) stipulation that the recipient must meet or adhere to specific procedural requirements before subsequent stages of a project may continue, (3) approval by an appropriate DOC official of substantive provisions of proposed subawards and/or (4) notification of changes to key recipient personnel.

EDA anticipates a nine (9) month project period, subject to the availability of funds, EDA policy, and satisfactory performance under the award. Applicants should ensure that their proposal and budget clearly specify how they will complete the scope of work outlined above within this timeframe. A typical project period begins with an initial kickoff meeting between the recipient and EDA staff to discuss project scope and to ensure that all parties are in agreement as to project terms. After the initial meeting, the recipient generally submits a final work plan to EDA staff for review and approval. Progress and financial reports and project work will be submitted to EDA based on the dates agreed to during the initial meeting and as outlined in the award special terms and conditions.

3. Post-Approval Requirements

The recipient will be expected to submit a draft report in the form of a best practices toolkit to EDA at least 90 days before the end of the project period for EDA's review. This draft report will identify characteristics of an effective trade and FDI promotion strategy as well as the barriers to success at the local and regional level. The draft toolkit will be designed to help local communities assess their current international engagement strategy, their potential optimal international engagement strategy, and gaps between both strategies and include an instructive toolkit guide that communities can use to maximize limited resources dedicated to international engagement. Communities should be able to easily use the final tool to inform their CEDS or similar strategy document. Development of a testable pre- and post- enhanced international engagement strategy performance metrics indicators is also expected in the draft. Based on the agency's review, EDA may request technical and substantive revisions to the draft report and toolkit. If these revisions are incorporated and the draft report is ultimately approved, EDA will then approve publication of a final research report and the recipient will brief EDA senior management on research methods and report results.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Pursuant to PWEDA, eligible applicants for and eligible recipients of EDA investment assistance under this NOFA 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 (excluding for profit 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.³

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Generally, the amount of the EDA cooperative agreement may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the project. However, under this announcement, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development (“Assistant Secretary”) has established a maximum EDA investment rate of up to 100 percent where the project (a) merits, and is not otherwise feasible without, such an increase to the EDA investment rate; or (b) will be of no or only incidental financial benefit to the recipient. See Section 204(c)(3) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144); 13 C.F.R. § 301.4(b)(4).

In the application review process, EDA will consider the nature of the contribution (cash or in-kind) and the amount of the matching share funds. Documented in-kind contributions may provide the required non-Federal share of the total project cost. All in-kind contributions must be eligible project costs and meet applicable Federal Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, which are codified at 2 C.F.R. part 200 200 (Uniform Guidance).⁴ Examples of in-kind contributions can include space, equipment, services, or forgiveness or assumptions of debt. 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.⁵

EDA will fairly evaluate all in-kind contributions, which must be eligible project costs and meet applicable Uniform Guidance. The applicant must show that the matching share will: (i) be committed to the project for the project period, (ii) be available as needed, and (iii) not be conditioned or encumbered in any way that may preclude its use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance.⁶ In order to meet these requirements, applicants may submit for each source of matching share, a commitment letter or equivalent document signed by an

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

⁴ 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.

⁵ See the definition of “Local Share or Matching Share” at 13 C.F.R. § 300.3. See also 2 C.F.R. 200.306.

⁶ See 13 C.F.R. § 301.5.

authorized representative of the organization providing the matching funds. Applications with significant cost sharing may be considered more competitive. Additional documentation may be requested by EDA in order to substantiate the availability of the matching funds.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants may access the application package for this NOFA electronically at www.grants.gov (Grants.gov). Applicants may search for this funding opportunity on Grants.gov using Funding Opportunity Number EDA-HDQ-RNTA-2017-2005262. All components of the appropriate application package may be accessed and downloaded (in a screen-fillable format) at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp.

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. Applicants are advised that they must complete the registration process prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov; however, please note that registration is not required for an applicant to access, view, or download the application package. Even though an applicant may be able to view and download an application, if the applicant has not correctly completed the Grants.gov registration process, the applicant will not be able to submit the application for EDA's review. Alternatively, an applicant eligible for assistance under this announcement may request a paper application package by contacting RNTA@eda.gov. See Sections I. of this NOFA for details of the Grants.gov registration process.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

To be considered complete, an application package must consist of:

- All required forms as described in Section D.2.a. below;
- The Proposal as described in Section D.2.b, which includes an:
 - Executive Summary;
 - Project Narrative;
 - Budget Narrative;
 - Staffing Plan; and
 - Schedule of Major Milestones and Deliverables.
- Addenda to the Proposal documents as described in Section D.2.c, as applicable.

Applications that do not contain all required forms listed in each part, or that fail to adhere to the instructions in this NOFA, may be considered incomplete and may not be considered for funding. Throughout the review and selection process, EDA, at its sole discretion, may request from applicants written clarification or corrected or missing documents and require that

applicants provide such clarifications or corrections in order to continue to be considered for an award under this NOFA.

Applicants are advised to carefully read the instructions contained in this NOFA and in all forms contained in the application package. It is the sole responsibility of each applicant to ensure that a complete application package is received.

a. Required Forms

Applicants must complete and submit the following components of an application package. An application that does not have all of the required components may be considered incomplete and not receive further consideration. See Section E. of this NOFA for information regarding application review.

- 1) One **Form ED-900** – General Application for EDA Programs- sections for R&E – A, C, E and Exhibit B.
- 2) One **Form SF-424** –Application for Federal Assistance from each co-applicant, as applicable.
- 3) One **Form SF-424A** –Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs, per application
- 4) One **Form SF-424B** – Assurances – Non-Construction Programs from each co-applicant, as applicable.
- 5) One **Form CD-511** –Certification Regarding Lobbying from each co-applicant, as applicable.
- 6) One **Form SF-LLL** – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities from each co-applicant, as applicable.
- 7) One **Form ED-900A** – Additional EDA Assurances for Construction or Non-Construction Investments from each co-applicant, as applicable.

b. Proposal Content

The Proposal must clearly articulate the overall goals of the project, the specific and distinct Scopes of Work and concrete activities that will be accomplished under it. The Proposal must demonstrate the applicant/applicants' capability to implement the proposed activities in accordance with the requirements of this NOFA. Applications will be evaluated based on the Evaluation Criteria outlined in Section E. Applicants must carefully adhere to the page limits specified for each section of the proposal. Pages beyond the specified page limit will not be read or considered.

1) Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should provide a general overview of the project, key partners, and a short project timeline. The Executive Summary may not exceed **2 double-sided, 8.5x11inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins**. The executive summary will not count against the page limit described below. Within the Project Narrative, applicants should address the following elements:

2) Project Narrative

The Project Narrative should address all activities that will be undertaken using funds requested in this NOFA, a summary of how these activities support the overall project's goals, and a clear vision for the final research report, toolkit deliverable, and toolkit training guide. The Project Narrative may not exceed **8 double-sided, 8.5x11inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins**. Within the Project Narrative, applicants should address the following elements:

a) Research Methodology

Applicants are encouraged to identify approaches for identifying best practices based in peer reviewed, widely accepted qualitative and quantitative research methods. Findings from research on the impact of assets in furthering a communities' global competitiveness must result in a toolkit that is scalable and transferable to diverse communities across the United States.

At a minimum, the following deliverables are required, and the applicant should identify how they plan to meet each of the requirements. Details about the quantity, level, and depth of each deliverable element is encouraged.

- Data gathering across diverse sample of communities including, but not limited to the municipal, county, state, and regional level to better understand best practices, community asset contributions to global competitiveness (realized or not), and potential toolkit implementation feasibility information;
- Presentation on preliminary data collection and analysis for public consumption;
- Peer-review quality research report on findings from data gathering exercise and preliminary recommendations for communities to enhance their global competitiveness through trade and investment strategies for public consumption; and
- Webinars and in-person presentations highlighting results from peer-reviewed research report.

b) Asset Inventory and Transferable Best Practices Toolkit

Applicants are encouraged to specify what will be included in the toolkit product that will enable communities to easily adopt findings from the research report to improve their investment and

export strategies. The toolkit and its applications must be easy to use, as well as transferable across communities that differ in size, resources, and infrastructure capacity. The segmentation of applied best practices by community type (e.g. major metropolitan area, rural community, community size, or other characteristic) is permissible, but a fully built-out toolkit is required for each community segment. These segmented toolkits may sit in the same portal, document, or tool but each community segment must be able to receive value-add from toolkit adoption. Using the toolkit, economic developers or community leaders should be able to answer the following questions:

- How integrated is my community to global marketplace and how does global integration contribute to the health of my communities' economy?
- What assets do I already have that make my community globally competitive?
- What additional assets would be required to enhance my communities' global competitiveness?
- How to I obtain/maintain a competitive strategic/global position?
- How do I address these competitiveness gaps?

Applicants are encouraged to describe in what form or format the final toolkit will likely be published and how it will be easily accessed by communities. A description of how the toolkit product will be amplified and how training on the toolkit will be made available to communities is required. Additional information on, not only the delivery of training, but also supplemental materials, such as a toolkit guide, user instructions, informational videos, and sample toolkits.

c) Metrics and Indicators for Toolkit Adoption

With the development of research and toolkit products, applicants are encouraged to provide recommended metrics and indicators for communities to use prior to, and after toolkit implementation to gauge the effectiveness of the toolkit's implementation. The purpose of these metrics is to test and demonstrate the effectiveness of toolkit adoption. A plan to collect metrics from diverse communities that do not adopt the toolkit may also be helpful to provide a control group of observations. Metrics collection should be achievable for communities of diverse characteristics and cross-comparable so results can be aggregated and, upon a critical adoption number, statistically significant. This product should include a business process for metrics to be reported by communities to a national partner such as SelectUSA.

d) Project Management

A primary focus of this effort will require outcomes-focused project management of a defensible quantitative and qualitative methodology, the public research report, a user –friendly toolkit, and amplification/training deliverables. Project management will require activities such as:

- Regular coordination with a Federal Project Officer.
- Developing a project plan to meet or exceed milestones including by not limited to:
 - Detailed project plan sign-off by Federal partners (30 days following award);

- o Bi-weekly check-in status calls with interagency partners (EDA, SelectUSA, and Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee)
- o Preliminary data collection and competitiveness analysis (90 days following award);
- o Draft presentation of peer-review quality research report to interagency partners for comment (120 days following award)
- o Final Research Report (150 days following award);
- o Research Report Presentations and Recommendations (270 days following award);
- o Toolkit Draft to Interagency Partners (180 days following award)
- o Final Toolkit Launch (210 days following award);
- o Toolkit Feasibility Testing and Review by diverse sample communities (240 days following award);
- o Toolkit v2.0 Launch incorporating comments and updating all supporting materials (270 days following award);
- o Final Report and Toolkit (v1.0 and 2.0) Training (270 days following award);
- o Transfer of underlying data, all project deliverables, and O&M strategy (Completed by 270 days following award);
- Developing an information collection strategy and community engagement researcher protocol;
- Coordinating Federal Partners as needed for technical guidance and training and amplification efforts;
- Developing and implementing research (methodology, data collection, analysis, and recommendations);
- Developing webinars, in-person trainings, presentations, research paper, toolkit, and impact metrics;
- Other activities that will help keep participating communities engaged throughout the lifespan of this effort;
- Ensuring the desired outcomes of enhancing communities competitiveness through enhanced FDI and trade strategies are achieved; and
- Other activities to be determined, or suggested by the Federal Project Officer.

3) Budget Narrative

A separate budget narrative must be created and submitted to describe the costs associated with each line item (including both the Federal Share and matching Non-Federal share) on the Form SF-424 and the narrative total should match the total project costs listed in both the SF-424 question 18-line g and SF-424A (“Totals”). Supporting documentation listing the components of these categories must be included.

4) Staffing Plan

In addition to the SF-424A and the budget narrative, applicants also must submit a staffing plan listing all positions that will be charged to the Federal and non-Federal portion for the project

period. The staffing plan must include position titles, maximum annual salaries, percentage of time dedicated to the project, and the total amount of annual salaries that would be charged to the project. The total amount of annual salaries that would be charged to the project must be consistent with the amount reflected on the “Personnel” budget line-item on the Form SF-424A for each project year.

5) Schedule of Major Milestones and Deliverables

All Applicants must submit a schedule detailing the expected start and end date of all major milestones and Deliverables described in the Project Narrative and outlined in points under Project Management above. The schedule should be outlined in months, such that an evaluator could easily discern in how many months the Applicant could start 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, not to exceed the 9-month award period. Please note that days following award milestones outlined under the Project Management section are “Completed by” milestone dates and can be met earlier than the “Completed by” date.

c. Addenda to the Proposal

Applicants must also submit the following Addenda to the Proposal in PDF format. Applications that do not include the required Addenda may be considered incomplete and/or non-responsive and may not be reviewed.

1) Resumes of Key Personnel

Applicants must attach the resumes of key project staff, which should not exceed two pages in length (per resume). Resumes should be compiled and uploaded together as one PDF file.

2) Additional Requirements for Non-Profit (if applicable)

In addition to all applicable items listed above, EDA applicants that are non-profit organizations must submit the following:

- A certificate of good standing from the State of its incorporation that is within one calendar year from the date of application submission;
- A copy of the organization’s Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws;
- 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).

3) Copy of Current, Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if Applicable)

If indirect costs are included in the budget the applicant must include a copy of its current Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Agreement or documentation establishing that it has a pending application.

The maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which EDA will reimburse a recipient shall be the lesser of the (i) line-item amount for the Federal share of indirect costs contained in the EDA approved budget for the award, or (ii) Federal share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on the 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.

If the applicant does not have a current or pending ICR Agreement, it may propose indirect costs in its budget; however, the applicant must prepare and submit an allocation plan and rate proposal for approval within ninety days from the award start date. See 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Apps. III, IV, V, VI, VII for guidance. The allocation plan and the rate proposal must be submitted to EDA's Office of Regional Affairs (or applicable cognizant Federal agency). The applicant should include a statement in its budget narrative that it does not have a current or pending ICR Agreement and will submit an allocation plan and rate proposal to EDA or the applicant's cognizant Federal agency for approval.

If the applicant (1) does not have a current ICR Agreement **and** (2) has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, the applicant may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs subject to the exceptions of 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f). The applicant should include a statement in its budget narrative that it does not have a ICR Agreement; it has never received an ICR rate; and it is electing to charge the *de minimis* 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, to the extent applicable, applicants are required to: (i) Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting their application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in their application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they has 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 EDA is ready to make an award, EDA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant. Recipients will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance published at 2 C.F.R. parts 25 and 170 (2014). The guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. part 25 may be located at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part25.pdf> and the guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. part 170 may be located at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part170.pdf>. Note that SAM now encompasses the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), and that the unique entity identifier is commonly the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Numbers. The recipient must keep their SAM registration current.

4. Submission Dates and Times

To be considered timely, a completed application, regardless of the format in which it is submitted, must be transmitted and time-stamped at www.grants.gov no later than June 12, 2017, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. **Any application transmitted or received, as the case may be, after June 12, 2017 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time will be considered non-responsive and will not be considered for funding.**

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 in writing 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 necessary to comply with Federal requirements and provide supplemental information required by the agency before award. EDA may contact an applicant after technical review of all applications for the purpose of determining whether a proposed project can be completed with a modified scope of work acceptable to EDA or for a smaller budget than that proposed if EDA is unable to fund the full amount requested.
- See Section E.2. of this NOFA for application review and selection information.

5. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under this NOFA are subject to the requirements of Executive Order (EO) 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs,” if a State has adopted a process under EO 12372 to review and coordinate proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development (commonly referred to as the “single point of contact review process”). All applicants must give 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. To find out more about a State’s process under EO 12372, applicants may contact their State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC). Names and addresses of some States’ SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget’s home page at https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/grants_spoc. Question 19 of Form SF-424 allows applicants to demonstrate compliance with EO 12372.

6. Funding Restrictions

Construction activities are not allowable under this competition and may not be charged to the EDA funds of the project or provided as matching share.

7. Other Submission Requirements

a. How to Submit an Application

i. Electronic Submissions

EDA strongly encourages electronic submissions of applications through Grants.gov. **EDA will not accept facsimile or email transmissions of applications. An application that is not validated and time-stamped by Grants.gov by the application deadline listed in Section D.4 of this NOFA will not be processed for consideration by EDA.**

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 the error before Grants.gov will accept and validate the proposal or application.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to start early and not to wait until the approaching application deadline before logging on and reviewing the instructions for submitting an application through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). If problems occur while using [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), the applicant is advised to (i) print any error message received; and (ii) call [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. EDA may allow more time for application submission due to a “systems issue” at [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) that is beyond the control of the applicant.

Please see Section I. of this NOFA for more detailed instructions and information on the requirements for submitting an application electronically via Grants.gov.

ii. Paper Submissions

An applicant has the option of submitting a completed paper application via postal mail with delivery confirmation or via courier service. The applicant may download the application package, in a screen-fillable format from http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp, save it electronically, and print it for paper submission.

An original of the complete application must be mailed with delivery confirmation that indicates the application has been physically received at or before 5:00 p.m. ET in the Washington, DC Headquarters Office, as applicable, on June 12, 2017. If your application is received after the deadline, it will be considered late and will not be reviewed by EDA.

Paper applications may be sent to:

Attention: International Engagement Ready Communities Initiative
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Suite 71014
Washington, DC 20230

DOC mail security measures may delay receipt of United States Postal Service mail for up to two weeks. Therefore, applicants that submit paper submissions are advised to use guaranteed overnight delivery services.

For additional information on this NOFA to help answer applicant questions, please reference EDA's website: <https://www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities/>.

b. Additional Information

After EDA reviews your application, EDA may contact you to request any necessary additional documentation to clarify or substantiate submitted application materials. This additional documentation will be required to ensure that 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 your application.

EDA may make changes or additions to this NOFA. All changes will be communicated on Grants.gov.

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria

To apply for an award under this announcement, an eligible applicant must submit a completed application package to EDA in accordance with Section D. of this NOFA. Applications that do not meet all requirements or that exceed the page limitations set forth in Section D. of this announcement may be considered non-responsive and may not be considered by the review panel. A panel comprised of at least three Federal employees will be formed to review applications. The review panel will evaluate applications and rate and rank them using the evaluation criteria identified below, sub-criteria will be weighed equally towards the respective criteria's point total.

a. Strategic Approach (30 pts)

- Documented approach to meeting the elements specified in the Scope of Work as outlined in the Proposal Content section including: Proposed method of conducting research and analysis to develop systemic best practices, credible results, and transferable recommendations. Findings must be transferable to communities of diverse characteristics, such as size, capacity, location, and

demographic composition. Segmentation is permissible to accomplish this (for example by size or industry) but segments must in total represent a broad section of communities in the United States, including:

- Research and analysis to identify transferrable best practices in how communities can leverage their assets to craft transferable and context neutral FDI and trade strategies;
- Final Research Report process and methodology;
- Applied best practices toolkit that allows diverse communities to easily identify where they are globally competitive, where they could potentially competitive, and how to transform potential into realized competitiveness; and
- Products, indicators, metrics, and training on toolkit use.

b. Personnel (20 pts)

- Meet all elements in the Scope of Work identified in the Proposal Content section including:
 - Adequacy of the applicant’s team to carry out the proposed work and achieve success;
 - Qualified personnel that, as a group, demonstrate project management expertise, as well as demonstrated success in all aspects of the scope of work;
 - The education, experience, and professional accomplishments of each organization and all key personnel;
 - Adequacy of the applicant’s team in the various subject matter necessary to engage and collect information from participating regions across different organizational and issue types including: (a) business and industry; (b) business and industry intermediaries and/or consortium; (c) state and/or local government leaders; (d) regional and/or local economic development; (e) secondary, post-secondary, and adult education; (f) regional and/or local workforce development; and (g) organized labor and/or community based organizations;
 - Previous performance of the organizations making up the team, as applicable. Previous performance can be demonstrated by citing prior research in a relevant or similar field, having experience in similar fields, or by other measures that demonstrate expertise in the subject;
 - Quality of the partnerships and extent of partnership commitments; and
 - Appropriateness, quality, and availability of any facilities, materials and resources to be used in implementing the proposed plan.

c. Feasibility of Budget, Deliverables, and Timeline (25 pts)

- Meet the proposed Scope of Work addressing “Project Management” in the Proposal Content section including:
 - 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 including documented commitments (if applicable);
- Identification of how Federal funds will be used and how financial match will be used;
- Strength of partnership collaboration and interest in the concept as demonstrated by willingness of partners to contribute resources (financial or otherwise);
- Strength of the plan to work against key milestones and timeline dates, measure progress toward targets and the likelihood that metrics and milestones will be met;
- Proposed plan to work with Federal Project Manager; and
- Extent to which challenges and risks are identified and mitigation strategies are proposed.

d. Implementation, Training, and Transferability (25 pts)

- Meet the overall goal of constructing and sharing transferable best practices for diverse communities. This includes:
 - Demonstrated success and/or proposed approach to sharing knowledge with regions that do not directly participate in the project;
 - Demonstrated success and/or proposed approach to sustaining and accelerating momentum of a project after completion of the initial funding award;
 - Demonstrated success and/or proposed approach to using project funds to take existing practices to scale within and after the length of the initial funding award; and
 - Demonstrated success and/or proposed approach to developing recommendations for how the original funders of a project can utilize additional funding opportunities to maintain and expand project success.

2. Review and Selection Process

As set forth below, EDA staff will review all applications received to ensure that they are complete and eligible to receive funding.

a. Review for eligibility and completeness

EDA staff will conduct an eligibility and technical completeness review of all applications received by the application deadline. Applications received from ineligible entities will not be considered for funding. Additionally, applications that do not contain all forms and required documentation listed in Section D.2. of this NOFA 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 a non-substantive technical deficiency if it can easily and quickly be rectified or cured, and therefore, may continue its consideration of the application despite the deficiency.

b. Merit Review Panel

Merit Review Panel, comprised of at least three Federal employees, will evaluate the applications against the evaluation criteria enumerated in Section E.1. of this NOFA and award up to 100 points to each application. Application scores will be determined by each panelist on an individual basis, and the average of the individual ratings will produce a panel score. For each competition, the Merit Review Panel will prepare a priority funding order for the applications—based on its consideration of the evaluation criteria—and recommend to the EDA Grants Officer, in such priority order, those applications that merit consideration for EDA funding.

c. Grant Officer's Decision

The Merit Review Panel's recommendations will be forwarded to EDA's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional Affairs ("DAS/RA") or the DAS/RA's delegate. The DAS/RA 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 Merit Review Panel's priority recommendations based on any of the following three (3) Selection Factors or use these four Selection Factors to break a tie for applications that are otherwise considered equal in merit:

- 1) A determination that the selected application better meets the overall objectives of the R&E program (See Section A.4. of this NOFA);
- 2) The ability of a project to start quickly; or
- 3) The applicant's performance under previous awards.

The final decision of the DAS/RA or the DAS/RA's delegate must be consistent with the NOFA and applicable law and regulation. Should the DAS/RA or delegate make a selection that differs from the most highly ranked applications, the DAS/RA or delegate will document the rationale for the decision in writing. However, if EDA does not receive satisfactory applications, the DAS/RA or delegate may not make any selection.

3. Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) 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 FAPIIS). See 41 U.S.C. § 2313.

Each applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems 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. § 200.205.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Under this NOFA, EDA expects to notify applicants of its decision in writing within 60 days of the application deadline. All awards will be made through Grants Online and recipients of the awards are expected to be prepared to manage the award electronically through this system throughout the life of the award. Information regarding accessing this system and setting up accounts will be provided to the applicant after the award.

1. Federal Award Notices

a. Award Notification

If an application is selected for funding the EDA Grants Officer will issue the grant award (Form CD-450), which is the authorizing financial assistance award document. By signing Form CD-450, the recipient agrees to comply with all award provisions. EDA will provide Form CD-450 by mail or two-day delivery to the appropriate business office of the recipient's organization, or electronically via email to the Authorized Organizational Representative listed on the applicant's Form SF-424. The recipient must sign and return the Form CD-450 without modification within 30 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. The regional office will retain unsuccessful applications in accordance with EDA's record retention schedule.

b. Unsuccessful Competition

On occasion, competitive funding opportunities produce less than optimum results, such as a competition resulting in the receipt of no applications, a competition resulting in the receipt of only unresponsive or unqualified applications, or too few highly-rated applications. In the event that these conditions arise, EDA shall take the most time- and cost-effective approach available that is in the best interest of the Federal government. This includes (1) re-competition, (2) re-paneling, or (3) formal negotiation.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all DOC awards apply to this competition. These requirements may be found in the "Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions" (ST&Cs) and are summarized in the "Department of Commerce

Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements,” published in the Federal Register on December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390). The Pre-Award notice may be accessed at the Government Printing Office (GPO) website at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf. The ST&Cs may be accessed at the following website:

http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2031%20March%202017.pdf.

3. Reporting

- a. All recipients are required to submit financial, performance, 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. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards⁷ 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 \$25,000. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. part 170 (2015), which can be accessed at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2015-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2015-title2-vol1-part170.pdf>.
- c. EDA may require additional data on activities, outputs and actual impact of the funded investment, pursuant to the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, as well as specified under the special terms and conditions of the EDA grant award. For example, recipients may be expected to continuously track their engagement activities within the scope of work, other beneficiaries, and project-related stakeholders. They may also be expected to collect data on the outputs and short-term impacts of their activities, such as the number of strategic plans developed or the number of new business partnerships formed, using surveys of beneficiaries or clients if necessary. EDA will specify the data collection techniques and reporting mechanisms to be used.

4. Regulations, Administrative Requirements, and Cost Principles

Specific regulations, administrative requirements, and cost principles govern the use of EDA funds. The general and administrative requirements for EDA awards are set forth in 13 C.F.R. parts 300–302. Specific application and award requirements for the R&E program are set out at 13 C.F.R. part 306. EDA funds may not be used directly or indirectly to reimburse any attorneys’

⁷ 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.

or consultants' fees incurred in connection with obtaining investment assistance pursuant to this competitive solicitation. See 13 C.F.R. § 302.10.

Recipients of an EDA award will be bound by the Uniform Guidance. The Uniform Guidance streamlines the language from eight existing OMB circulars, including Cost Principles (OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A 122), administrative requirements (OMB Circulars A-102 and A 110), and audit requirements (OMB Circular A-133) into one consolidated set of guidance applicable to federal assistance awards. Note that the Uniform Guidance supersedes DOC's Uniform Administrative Requirements set out at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24, and all the aforementioned OMB circulars. Applicants are advised to familiarize themselves with 2 C.F.R. part 200, which may be found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2015-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2015-title2-vol1-subtitleA-chapII.pdf>. Additional information on the substance of and transition to the OMB Uniform Guidance may be found at <https://cfo.gov/cofar/>.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact

For additional information on the R&E program or to obtain a paper application package for this announcement, please email RNTA@eda.gov. EDA's website at www.eda.gov contains additional information on EDA and its programs.

Or by writing to:

Attention: International Engagement Ready Communities Initiative
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Suite 71014
Washington, DC 20230

H. Other Information

1. Right to Use Information

Department of Commerce (DOC) reserves the right to use information contained in applications submitted under this opportunity, as well as all reports and performance data submitted by recipients to undertake an evaluation of its programs, either through its staff or by hiring a third party. 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, Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate confidentiality and nondisclosure 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

The Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552) (FOIA) and DOC's implementing regulations at 15 C.F.R. part 4 set forth the rules and procedures to make requested material, information, and records publicly available. Unless prohibited by law and to the extent permitted under FOIA, contents of applications submitted by applicants may be released in response to FOIA requests. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information." Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected 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, and invitations for bids or requests for proposals are prohibited from competing for the final procurement. Before the Uniform Guidance took effect, pursuant to the DOC grant regulations at 15 C.F.R. Parts 14 and 24, the prohibition applied to institutions of higher education, hospitals, non-profits and commercial and international organizations but did not apply to States, local governments or Indian Tribes. However, under 2 C.F.R. § 200.319 and 200.317 which are now controlling, only State recipients are expressly exempt from this prohibition. Despite this change, 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.

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) 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 special award conditions; (5) suspending any active DOC award(s); and (6) terminating any active DOC award(s).

5. Restrictions Governing Making Grants to Corporations Convicted of Felony Criminal Violations and/or Unpaid Federal Tax Liabilities

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, execution by an applicant of the Representation by Corporations Regarding an Unpaid Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Conviction Under Any Federal Law (see Appendix A) will be required in a format requested by EDA before any award will be made under this NOFA.

6. EDA's Non-relocation Policy

Applicants are advised that should an application be selected for award; the recipient will be required to adhere to a special 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 cause, 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.

8. Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The U.S. Department of Justice has issued revised regulations implementing Title II of the ADA (28 C.F.R. part 35; 75 FR 56164, as amended by 76 FR 13285) and Title III of the ADA (28 C.F.R. part 36; 75 FR 56164, as amended by 76 FR 13286).

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/workspace-overview.html>. In order to begin, complete, and submit your application:

- Navigate to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>;
- Click “Get Application Package”;
- In “Funding Opportunity Number” field, enter EDA-HDQ-RNTA-2017-2005262;
- Click “Search”;
- Under the “Actions” column, click the “Apply” link that corresponds with this opportunity;
- 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”
- Follow the instructions provided on the Grants.gov website and on each webpage to complete and submit your application.
- For detailed step-by-step guidance on how to create a workspace, an application, and submit a workspace package, see the Grants.gov Online User Guide. Navigate to www.grants.gov and select “Apply for a Grant with Workspace” located in the banner or see https://www.grants.gov/help/html/help/Applicants/Apply_for_Grants.htm.

Register early and submit early. In order to submit a proposal/application through www.grants.gov ([Grants.gov](http://www.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. To avoid delays, EDA strongly recommends that applicants start this process as soon as possible before applying. 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 registration for System for Award Management (SAM), which includes the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database, up-to-date through sam.gov or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov.

AOR requirement. Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. As part of the registration process, you will register at least one Authorized Organizational 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 proposal/application is submitted by an AOR. If the proposal/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.

Field limitations and special characters. Please be advised that [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) provides the following notice with respect to form field limitations and special characters:

Are there restrictions on file names for any attachment I include with my proposal/application package?

Please limit file names to 50 characters and do not use special characters (example: &, -, *, %, /, #) in attachment names and application form fields (including periods (.), blank spaces and accent marks) or attach documents with the same name. An underscore (example: my_Attached_File.pdf) may be used to separate a file name. Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your proposal/application may be rejected.

What kind of information can be entered into form fields within my application?

Grants.gov proposal/application packages offer fields to enter a set amount of data. When the limit is reached for a certain field, you will no longer be able to enter data into that field. For every form, there are different limitations to the data that you are allowed to enter (this varies between agency and form). Refer to the agency instructions available for download with the proposal/application package for more detail.

Do not use special characters (example: &,-,*,%,/,#) within the proposal/application form fields including periods (.), blank spaces and accent marks; an underscore may be used. Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your proposal/application may be rejected.

In EDA's experience, use of apostrophes (') in file names and fillable fields of required forms has resulted in proposal/application submission issues. Accordingly, please periodically check the status of your proposal/application to make sure it has been validated, and use file naming conventions that do not negatively affect your proposal/application submission.

If a response exceeds the field limit requirements of any form, including Form ED-900, the applicant is advised to include the response as an attachment to the application. The applicant should check the 'Attachments' box under 'Optional Documents for Submission' in the proposal/application package, and clearly indicate in the form field that the information is included as an electronic file.

Verify 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 proposal/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 proposal/application, and the second will indicate that the proposal/application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to EDA or has been rejected due to errors. Applicants should be aware that it may take up to two business days after Grants.gov receives a proposal/application for applicants to receive email notification of an error. Applicants will receive a third email once EDA has retrieved their proposal/application.

EDA requests that applicants kindly refrain from submitting multiple copies of the same proposal/application package. Applicants should save and print both the confirmation screen provided on the Grants.gov website after the applicant has submitted a proposal/application, and the confirmation email sent by Grants.gov when the proposal/application has been successfully received and validated in the system. If an applicant receives an email from Grants.gov indicating that the proposal/application was received and subsequently validated, but does not receive an email from Grants.gov indicating that EDA has retrieved the proposal/application package within 72 hours of that email, the applicant may contact EDA at the email address listed 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 proposal/application was received, log on to Grants.gov and click on the "Track My Application" link from the left-hand menu. For a successful submission, the proposal/application must be received and validated by Grants.gov, and an agency tracking number assigned. If your proposal/application has a status of "Received," it is awaiting validation by Grants.gov, and has not yet been received by EDA. Once validation is complete, the status will change to "Validated" or "Rejected with Errors." If the status is "Rejected with Errors," your proposal/application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject a proposal/application can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/encountering-error-messages.html>.

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>. The following link lists frequently asked questions (FAQs): <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>. If you do not find an answer to your question under the "Applicant FAQs," try consulting the "Applicant User Guide" 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.

J. **Appendix A. Certifications Regarding Federal Felony and Federal Criminal Tax Convictions, Unpaid Federal Tax Assessments and Delinquent Federal Tax Returns**

As discussed in Part I and Part II below, EDA anticipates the applicable appropriations Act to contain certain funding prohibitions and certification requirements applicable to financial assistance awards issued with appropriated funds. Based on these requirements, the Department of Commerce requires the following certifications from prospective financial assistance award recipients (also referred to below as applicants):

PART I-Certifications from Corporations

None of the appropriated funds made available by relevant appropriations Acts may be used to issue a financial assistance to any corporation that:

- (a) Was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any 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) Has 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 purposes of the below certification, a corporation is defined as an entity that has filed articles of incorporation in one of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, or the various territories of the United States including American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Midway Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. (Note that this includes both for-profit and non-profit organizations.)

The below certification is required for all new financial assistance awards and for all amendments to existing financial assistance awards, that are made to corporations (as defined above) and that are funded with appropriated funds made available to the Department of Commerce pursuant to relevant appropriations Acts. This certification is further required to the extent that other appropriation Acts contain the same or substantively similar prohibitions against the issuance of financial assistance awards to certain corporations.

Instructions: All recipients that are corporations (as defined above) must complete paragraphs (1) and (2) below, which must be signed below by an authorized representative of the corporation. Recipients that are not corporations are not required to complete this representation.

(1) _____ [insert name of corporation] certifies that it is ☐ is not ☐ (check one) a corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under a Federal law within the 24 months preceding the signature date of this Representation.

(2) _____ [insert name of corporation] certifies that it is ☐ is not ☐ (check one) a corporation that has 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.

By: _____
[Typed name and title of the signing individual]
[Typed phone number of the signing individual]
[Typed email address of the signing individual]

Date: _____