

RNTA 2012 application instructions

Applicants may access the application package for this competitive solicitation at Grants.gov.

Applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov.¹ Your electronic submission will receive a date and time stamp at Grants.gov and be processed after it is fully uploaded. The time it takes to completely upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors, including the size of the application, the speed of your Internet connection, and the time it takes Grants.gov to process the application.

Register early and submit early. In order to submit an application through Grants.gov, applicants first 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 early and not wait until the approaching deadline date before logging on, registering, reviewing the application instructions, and applying. Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found at http://grants.gov/applicant/organization_registration.jsp.

AOR requirement. Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. As part of the registration process, you will be required to 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 application is submitted by an AOR. If the application is submitted by anyone other than your organization's AOR, it will be rejected and cannot be considered for the competition. Note that a given organization may designate multiple individuals as AORs for Grants.gov purposes.

Before beginning the application process, please review fully the application instructions for this funding opportunity at Grants.gov and in this FFO. The following instructions will allow applicants to access step-by-step instructions for accessing, completing, and submitting an application at Grants.gov. You can access the FFO and instructions as follows:

1. Ensure that you have installed a compatible version of Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer, as incompatible versions of Adobe Acrobat Reader may cause errors. See <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>.
2. Go to www.grants.gov.
3. Select "Apply for Grants" from the left-hand menu.
4. Select "Download a Grant Application."
5. Enter "2012RNTA" as the Funding Opportunity Number and click on "Download Package."
6. Click on the "download" link under "Instructions and Applications" and a new window should pop up. In the new window, click on "Download Application Instructions" to review the instructions posted on Grants.gov and "Download Application Package" when you are ready to begin the application.

¹ Applicants may only submit their applications via email in case of a Grants.gov systems issue as described in section IV.C. of the applicable FFO. In the absence of such a systems issue, emailed applications may be deemed non-responsive. Non-responsive applications will not receive consideration for funding.

Field limitations and special characters. Please be advised that Grants.gov provides the following notice with respect to form field limitations and special characters:

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

Grants.gov 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 application package for more detail.

Do not use special characters (example: &,-,,%/,#) within the 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 application may be rejected.*

In EDA's experience, use of apostrophes (') in file names and fillable fields of required forms has resulted in issues. Accordingly, please apply early and periodically check the status of your application to make sure it has been validated, and use file naming conventions that do not negatively affect your 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 move 'Attachments' to the 'Optional Documents for Submission' box in the application package, and clearly indicate in the form field that the information is included as an electronic file. Please see Grants.gov's "Submit Application FAQs" at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/submit_application_faqs.jsp for more information.

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 email 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 emails from Grants.gov over the two business days following receipt of an application: 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. **Because it can take up to two business days after Grants.gov receives an application for applicants to receive email notification of an error, applicants should time their submissions to allow for application correction and resubmission by the competition deadline.** Applicants that choose to submit on or close to the competition deadline are advised that they may not receive email notification of an error until after the competition deadline and, in this case, will not have an opportunity to resubmit their application. Applicants will receive a third email once EDA has retrieved their applications.

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, log on to Grants.gov and click on the "Track My Application" link from the left-hand menu. For a successful submission, the application must be received and validated by Grants.gov, and have an agency tracking number assigned. If the date and time received is later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 2, 2012, your

application is late. If your application has a status of "Received," then it is still 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. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/submit_application_faqs.jsp.

Grants.gov systems issues. If you experience a Grants.gov "systems issue" (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before the closing date for this competitive solicitation, please (i) print any error message received; and (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. *Please note:* problems with computer systems at the applicant organization are not considered systems issues. Similarly, an applicant's failure to complete the required registration, ensure that an AOR submits the application, or 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 and both of which can be verified by Grants.gov.

Alternative method of submission in case of www.grants.gov systems issues. If you experience a Grants.gov systems issue affecting submission as defined above, you may email the complete application package to i6@eda.gov only if the following requirements are met: The applicant organization must have communicated with Grants.gov and attempted to resolve the systems issue. The applicant's email to i6@eda.gov must contain the case number provided by Grants.gov in response to the applicant's systems issue communication, a synopsis of the systems issue, and the reason the systems issue could not be resolved.

Please note that use of the alternative method **does not** extend the competition deadline. EDA must receive the complete application package by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 2, 2012. Please note that sending the email does not guarantee that EDA will receive the application package by the competition deadline. EDA is not responsible for features of applicant systems, such as security and file size constraints, that may delay EDA's receipt of email.

EDA will not accept an emailed application unless the applicant has demonstrated a Grants.gov systems issue as described above. EDA reserves the right to obtain confirmation from Grants.gov regarding the occurrence of a systems issue before accepting an emailed application.