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 Good Jobs Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) (ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO).

- **Announcement Type and Date:** ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO publishing EDA's application submission requirements and application review procedures under EDA's Economic Adjustment Assistance 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-ARPGJ-2021-2006964

- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.307, Economic Adjustment Assistance

- **Dates:** The deadline for application submission is **11:59 pm Eastern Time on January 26, 2022**. Proposals or applications received after the above deadlines will not be reviewed or considered. See section E of this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO regarding EDA's review process and section G of the NOFO for EDA's contact information.

- **Eligible Applicants:** Pursuant to section 3(4) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122(4)(A)) and 13 C.F.R. § 300.3 (Eligible Recipient), eligible applicants under this NOFO 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, including labor unions, acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State.

  Under this NOFO, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for-profit entities, including for-profit institutions of higher education. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.

- **Funding Opportunity Description:** Subject to the availability of funds, EDA is issuing this NOFO for qualified organizations to form sectoral partnerships. These partnerships will work collaboratively to grow regional economies and their associated workforces by building training programs that meet the existing and emerging skills needs of employers and that help workers enter quality jobs and advance along their chosen career path. Although not required, EDA encourages efforts to reach historically underserved populations and areas, communities of color, women, and other groups facing with labor market barriers such as persons with disabilities, disconnected youth, individuals in recovery, individuals with past criminal records including justice-impacted and reentry participants, serving trainees participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and veterans and military spouses.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

FY 2021 EDA American Rescue Plan Act Good Jobs Challenge
Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. Good Jobs Challenge Program Description 4

1. Overview and Program Information 4
2. EDA Investment Priorities 15
3. Statutory Authorities for EDA's Programs 15
4. How Does EDA Interpret Resilience? 16

B. Federal Award Information 16

1. What Funding Is Available Under this Announcement? 16
2. What Type of Funding Instrument Will Be Used to Make Awards? How Long Will a Project's Period of Performance Be? 17

C. Eligibility Information 18

1. Eligible Applicants 18
2. Applicable Disaster Declaration and Responsiveness to the Coronavirus Pandemic 18
3. Cost Sharing or Matching 18

D. Application Submission Information 19

1. Address to Request Application Package 19
2. Content and Form of Application Submission 19
3. AOR Requirement and File Formats 25
4. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) 25
5. Submission Dates and Times 25
6. Intergovernmental Review 26
7. Pre-award Costs 26
8. Other Submission Requirements 27

E. Application Review Information 27

1. Review and Selection Process 27
2. Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) Review 30

F. Federal Award Administration Information 31

1. Federal Award Notification 31
2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements 31
3. DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions 31
4. DOC Pre-Award Notification Requirements 32
5. Reporting 32

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts 33

H. Other Information 33

1. Right to Use Information 33
2. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure 33
3. Notice of Government-Wide Procurement Restriction 34
4. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions 34
5. Certifications Required by Annual Appropriations Acts for Corporations and for Awards over $5 Million 34
6. EDA's Non-Relocation Policy 35
7. Audit Requirements 36
8. Non-Discrimination and Equal Access by Those with Past Criminal Histories 36
9. Fraud Awareness Training 36

I. Instructions for Application Submission via Grants.gov 36

1. Register Early and Submit Early. 37
2. AOR Requirement 38
3. Field Limitations and Special Characters 38
4. Verify That Your Submission Was Successful 38
5. Grants.gov Systems Issues 39

A. Good Jobs Challenge Program Description

1. Overview and Program Information

a. Overview

EDA's mission is to lead the Federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions, States, and Tribes for growth and success in the worldwide economy. Through this American Rescue Plan Act Good Jobs Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO), EDA aims to assist communities and regions impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has caused, and continues to cause, economic injury to U.S. communities and regions in devastating and unprecedented ways.

For the purposes of this NOFO:

- "Sectoral partnership" is defined as a partnership of employers from the same industry who join with other strategic partners to train and place workers into high-quality jobs that the employers need filled and intend to fill through the partnership. The strategic partners can include: government, education (including community and technical colleges), training organizations, economic development organizations, workforce development organizations, unions, labor management partnerships, industry associations, employer-serving organizations, and/or community-based organizations. A sectoral partnership is focused on one specific industry and one or more specific roles within that industry.
    - The lead entity of a sectoral partnership is referred to in this NOFO as a "Backbone Organization." The Backbone Organization serves as an intermediary across all the partners in the sectoral partnership and must be an EDA eligible applicant.
- "Regional workforce training system" is defined as a system that fosters and supports sectoral partnerships. A mature regional workforce training system will include a lead entity and multiple sectoral partnerships, each with their own Backbone Organization, training provider, and industry partners. The lead entity (e.g., a state government, municipal government, state workforce board, local workforce board) coordinates across and supports the sectoral partnerships within its system. A regional workforce training system may also include other entities that support across multiple sectoral partnerships (e.g., a community-based organization that supports recruiting for all of the sectoral partnerships). In a region that does not yet have a regional workforce training system, interested partners are encouraged to join together to apply for funding under this NOFO to develop such a system. Interested parties would include a convener (e.g., a state government, municipal government, state workforce board, local workforce board) who is an eligible EDA applicant as well as entities interested in forming sectoral partnerships (e.g., employers, training providers, unions, community-based organizations).
    - The lead entity of a regional workforce training system is referred to in this NOFO as a "System Lead Entity." The System Lead Entity must be an EDA eligible applicant.

Figure 1 offers a visualization of how different entities work together in a sectoral partnership and Figure 2 gives an illustrative example of a regional workforce training system.

Figure 1 – Visualization of a Sectoral Partnership

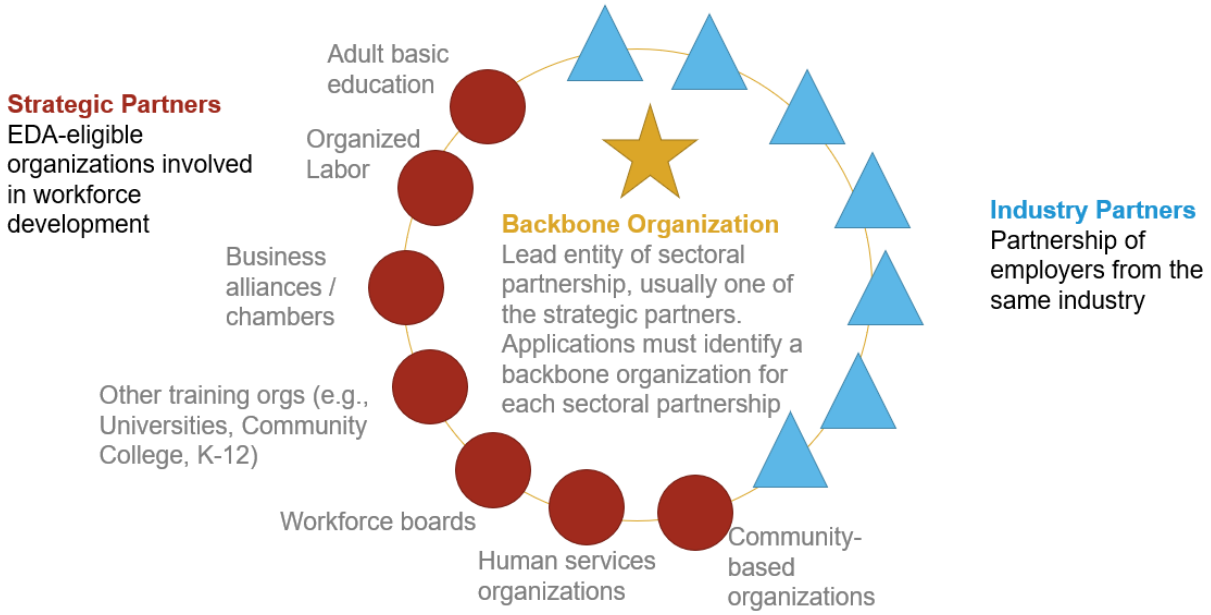
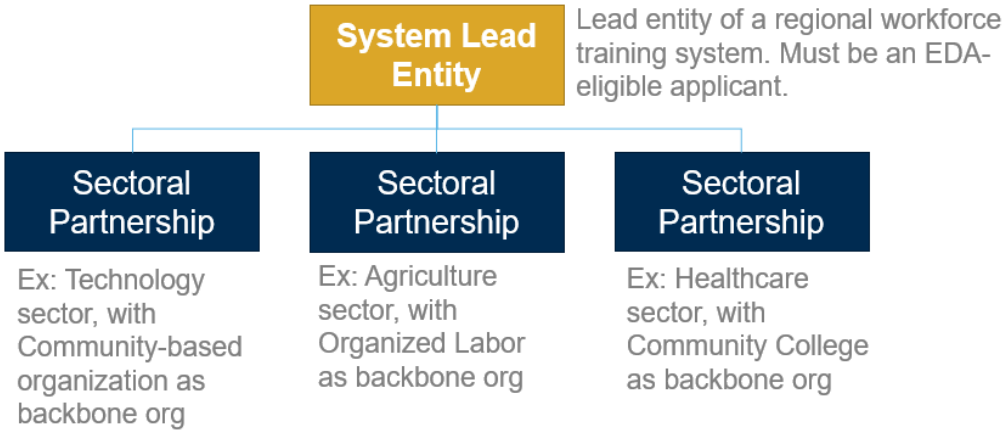


Figure 2 – Illustrative Example of a Regional Workforce Training System



This ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO is designed to help get Americans back to work by investing in (1) developing and strengthening regional workforce training systems that support sectoral partnerships, (2) designing sectoral partnerships, and (3) implementing sectoral partnerships that will lead to high-quality jobs. The goal of regional workforce training systems is to create and support effective training programs that will connect the in-demand and

emerging skills needs of employers with qualified workers and help workers find and keep quality jobs[1] and advance along their chosen career path.

This program is designed to get Americans back to work and increase wage growth, as well as develop demand-driven systems that will continue to support Americans in securing and retaining quality jobs. Successful applicants will include proactive employer engagement and mobilization and employer commitments to hire (see Section A.1.b.v. below).

Regional workforce training systems and sectoral partnerships funded under this NOFO should connect employers in an industry with key regional stakeholders, including State, Tribal, and local governmental entities, economic development organizations, workforce development boards,[2] Career OneStops, employer-facing organizations and employer associations, education and training providers, community-based organizations (CBOs) (including faith-based organizations), worker-serving organizations (WSOs), labor unions, and/or other key stakeholders with responsibilities in advancing the goals of the sectoral partnerships. The system or partnership should be led by a System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization, respectively (see section A.1.b.ii below), serving as an intermediary that has convening power in the region and the capacity to coordinate engagement and collaboration across all necessary stakeholders.

EDA encourages sectoral partnerships to address populations with labor market barriers such as persons with disabilities, disconnected youth, individuals in recovery, individuals with past criminal records including justice-impacted and reentry participants, serving trainees participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and veterans and military spouses. EDA also encourages partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, or Minority-Serving Institutions.

EDA recognizes that in many circumstances having adequate, modernized facilities is a critical component of a successful workforce training program that responds to industry needs today and into the future. As such, equipment costs, expenses related to securing adequate space (e.g., rent, leases), and other non-construction capital expenses are allowable expenses under this program. Building-based construction projects (i.e., any activity that disturbs the ground or modifies a structure) are not eligible under this NOFO. To the extent that a workforce training project is focused only on a building-based construction project or the success of the system or partnership depends on the construction of a new facility, EDA encourages eligible entities to apply under

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[1] A "quality job" is defined as a job that exceeds the local prevailing wage for an industry in the region, includes basic benefits (e.g., paid leave, health insurance, retirement/savings plan),and/or is unionized, and helps the employee develop the skills and experiences necessary to advance along a career path. "Prevailing wage" is defined by the Department of Labor as "the average wage paid to similarly employed workers in a specific occupation in the area of intended employment."

[2] The purpose of workforce development boards is to convene State, regional, and local workforce system and partners to: (a) enhance the capacity and performance of the workforce development system; (b) align and improve the outcomes and effectiveness of Federally-funded and other workforce programs and investments; (c) through these efforts, promote economic growth; (d) engage public workforce system representatives, including businesses, education providers, economic development, labor representatives, and other stakeholders to help the workforce development system achieve the purpose of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); and (e) assist to achieve the State's strategic and operational vision and goals as outlined in the State's WIOA plan.

the ARPA Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) NOFO (that was published separately[3]), while following the principles laid out in this Good Jobs Challenge NOFO in that application. If a workforce training project develops or expands a regional workforce training system or sectoral partnership and there is a related, complementary construction project, EDA encourages applicants to submit the system or partnership project under this Good Jobs Challenge NOFO and the complementary construction project under EDA's EAA NOFO.

Additionally, the use of project funds to make equity or hybrid investments in businesses is not an allowable cost; neither EDA funds nor matching share may be used for such purposes.

If an applicant has inadvertently applied to the incorrect NOFO, or if a Good Jobs Challenge application is not selected, EDA in its discretion may move one or more of the proposed projects to another NOFO under which it is eligible.

In EDA's experience with post-disaster recovery, the most effective rebuilding efforts are based on long-term regional development or redevelopment strategies that leverage Federal funding in coordination with state, local, and private sector resources. For this reason, EDA encourages the submission of applications based on long-term, regionally oriented, coordinated, and collaborative economic development or redevelopment strategies that foster economic growth and resilience.

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. Applicants who are unsure whether their proposed project is eligible under this NOFO should contact EDA at the email address listed in section G.

EDA may make changes or additions or cancel the ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO at any time. All changes will be communicated via Grants.gov.

b. ARPA Good Jobs Challenge

As noted above, regional workforce training systems and sectoral partnerships connect, convene, and coordinate a variety of stakeholders across a region, which can include the following entities or those with similar functions (as appropriate to the region): State, Tribal, and local governmental entities, economic development organizations, workforce development boards, employers, employer-facing organizations and employer associations, educational institutions and training providers, labor-management partnerships, CBOs, WSOs, and labor unions. Sectoral partnerships help train workers with the skills needed for in-demand jobs and thus support communities' abilities to attract employers and support start up organizations.

Sectoral partnerships are effective because: they are carefully built to include *all* necessary partners before workforce solutions are designed; they cut across traditional economic development, workforce, education, and social services system silos; they are targeted to in-

[3] Workforce construction projects may also be funded under the Build Back Better Regional Challenge, Indigenous Communities, and Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation NOFOs.

demand sectors with high-quality jobs; and they consider the economic realities of a regional industry in assessing workforce demand and training needs.

In addition, effective regional systems and partnerships have a System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization, respectively, that serves as the intermediary between all stakeholders and works to ensure programs get implemented, meet employer needs, are leading to long-term positive outcomes for workers and their communities, and meet agreed-upon milestones.

For example, a manufacturing trade association may bring multiple employers with common job openings that require similar skill sets together with a local training provider, labor management partnership, and community college or a group of community colleges in the region. Together, they may form a sectoral partnership to jointly develop and implement training programs to prepare workers to meet those needs. The sectoral partnership may also include one or more community-based organizations that provide wrap-around services (e.g., childcare, transportation) to support the workers during training. The partner businesses participate in the recruitment of the individuals to enroll in the training program and commit to hiring and retaining the workers who successfully complete the program.

Similarly, an existing sectoral partnership might tailor and expand an existing successful skills training program to serve other regions or industries or to target specific sets of workers facing systemic inequities or barriers to employment. Other examples might involve a union working with an employer or group of employers to create or scale a Registered Apprenticeship or an employer-led partnership that provides a work-and-learn model where workers can continue to work as they develop new skills. Training should teach foundational principles as well as applied knowledge, should be applicable to more than one employer as much as practicable, and should help workers advance along a career path.

EDA is cognizant that various regions or various industries within a region have different needs with respect to regional workforce training systems. One region may need to build and design a new sectoral partnership, while another region may have the various component parts of an effective partnership but may need to link those components in an integrated fashion. A third region may have an existing sectoral partnership that functions well and is ready to move forward with implementation projects or to expand the partnership to other regions or to support other industries and occupations or skill needs within an industry.

The ARPA Good Jobs Challenge is designed to meet the needs of businesses and workers in each type of region and help develop or strengthen dynamic regional workforce training systems and the sectoral partnerships they implement. EDA anticipates funding the following three phases of regional workforce training systems/sectoral partnerships, as applicable to regional needs, under the Good Jobs Challenge NOFO:

- **System Development** funding to help a System Lead Entity establish and develop a regional workforce training system comprised of multiple sector partnerships,
- **Program Design** funding for sectoral partnership(s) to identify the skills needed by industry and workers, develop the skills training curriculum and materials, and secure technical expertise needed to train workers with the skills needed by businesses, including providing professional development and capacity-building to trainers and educators, and

- **Program Implementation** funding to deliver workforce training and wrap-around services that place workers into quality jobs through a new or expanded sectoral partnership(s).

Note: the applicant for Program Design and Program Implementation may be the System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization, as is appropriate for the specific situation.

EDA plans to make an award to a System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization to fund the System Development, Program Design, and/or Program Implementation requirements of the system, as appropriate. The idea behind the ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO is to support the needs of an applicant's identified system and/or partnership(s) through a single integrated award. The System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization may make subawards as necessary and as approved by EDA. The following paragraphs provide additional information on the types of projects EDA is seeking to support.

i. Regional, Industry, and Occupation Focus; Benchmark Approach to Funding

A regional workforce training system may focus on the skills needs of a region or multiple regions in one or more industries or occupations within that region or regions. For purposes of this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO, an occupation has the same meaning as a "worker role," defined as a workplace need of a region, an industry, or employer that requires specific training or skills and that creates a career pathway for a worker (e.g., a skilled machine technician, registered nurse). The size and scope of a given workforce training system and/or sectoral partnership can vary significantly based on the needs of the employers and workers in a region and the focus of the workforce training system and/or partnership itself.

The size of award available under this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO will depend on the proposed geographic, industry, and occupation coverage of a given regional system or partnership, and applicants should justify their budget requests by reference to those factors. Each application should identify a System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization that is an Eligible Applicant with convening power in the region and the capacity to coordinate all necessary regional system or partnership stakeholders (see section A.1.b.ii below for more details on the characteristics of System Lead Entities and Backbone Organizations). EDA anticipates making an overarching award to each successful System Lead Entity (on behalf of a regional workforce training system) or Backbone Organization (on behalf of a sectoral partnership) and then approving the release of award funds over the period of performance based on successful completion of specific applicant-proposed benchmarks that will be clearly identified in the award as the organization moves through System Development, Program Design, and/or Program Implementation, as applicable to the particular award. Applicants should submit one application to simultaneously request funding for as many phases (System Development, Program Design, and/or Program Implementation) as necessary.

The following examples are designed to help explain how EDA anticipates awarding funds and implementing benchmarks:

- Region A has identified a group of employers across three industries that have similar needs for skilled workers. Region A also has many of the resources of a successful

regional workforce training system, but those resources need to be linked and coordinated to help the worker, employers, and others in the region to identify or develop the skills adjacency to develop a pipeline of workers for in-demand jobs. For Region A, System Lead Entity A might submit an application that proposes specific steps for linking various existing resources together and focusing the system on those three industries and employer-identified worker roles within those industries.

EDA may approve an overarching award in the amount of $20 million to System Lead Entity A based on the coverage of the regional workforce training system. System Lead Entity A would be able to access a specific amount of the overarching award for System Development activities related to successfully linking existing workforce resources together to develop an effective regional workforce training system. Once System Lead Entity A has met award-specified benchmarks related to System Development, the entity could access funds for Program Design activities to create sectoral partnerships specific to the identified industries and worker roles. Once System Lead Entity A has met award-specified benchmarks related to Program Design, the entity would be able to access Program Implementation funds to implement those sectoral partnerships, including through subawards to Backbone Organizations, to support training that leads to jobs and funding for wrap-around services for the program participants.

- Region B is relatively small geographically and has one main industry that needs trained workers. Similar to Region A, Region B has some components of a successful regional workforce training system, but those components need to be linked and coordinated. For Region B, System Lead Entity B might submit an application that proposes a new structure for linking existing system components and developing a work-and-learn program that gathers employer and regional needs related to worker roles and develops a skills training program in conjunction with local educational institutions that allows workers to continue in their jobs while they complete a program to train them for needed roles.

  EDA may approve an overarching award in the amount of $8 million to System Lead Entity B, which would be able to access a specific amount of the overarching award to accomplish System Development benchmarks related to establishing the structure for the regional system. Once System Lead Entity B has met System Development benchmarks related to regional system structure, the entity could access funds for Program Design activities, such as developing the sectoral partnership with education and training organizations specific to the identified industry and worker roles. Once System Lead Entity B has met award-specified Program Design benchmarks, the entity would be able to access Program Implementation award funds to implement the sectoral partnership.

- Region C has an existing regional workforce training system coordinated by System Lead Entity C that is working well. Neighboring Regions D and E request System Lead Entity C's assistance in tailoring the system to their regions' needs. System Lead Entity C submits an application that proposes strengthening and expanding Region C's system as well as supporting the workforce training needs of Regions D and E.

  EDA may approve an overarching award in the amount of $20 million to System Lead Entity C. While System Lead Entity C is not requesting funds for System Development,

before System Lead Entity C can access Program Design funds, it must demonstrate it already has System Development standards in place of sufficient quality to move to Program Design. Once System Lead Entity C has met award-specified Program Design benchmarks related to expanding the system to Regions D and E, System Lead Entity C may access Program Implementation funds to recruit workers and implement the broader-reaching sectoral partnerships, including wrap-around services. As part of Program Implementation, System Lead Entity C may subaward funds to Backbone Organizations supporting sectoral partnerships in Regions D and E.

- Region D has existing Backbone Organization D that runs a successful sectoral partnership that trains and places about 200 workers into quality jobs each year. Region D believes with additional resources they will be able to scale their partnership to train 500 workers each year and place them into quality jobs. Backbone Organization D submits an application for funds for additional trainers, leased facilities, equipment purchase, childcare, transportation, and coaching services to expand its existing sectoral partnership program to be able to train additional workers each year.

  EDA may approve an award in the amount of $10 million to Backbone Organization D. While Backbone Organization D is not requesting funds for System Development or Program Design, before Backbone Organization D can access Program Implementation funds, it must demonstrate it already has the System Development and Program Design standards in place of sufficient quality to move to Program Implementation.

ii. System Lead Entities and Backbone Organizations

The System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization for each regional workforce training system and sectoral partnership, respectively, is an essential element to the success of the system. A System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization serves as an intermediary that organizes and works with employers, training participants, employees, government agencies, and other organizations to solve problems within sectors and help grow sectors by developing trust and a base of knowledge about the organizations and businesses, as well as available public and private resources.

In a mature regional workforce training system, a System Lead Entity supports multiple sectoral partnerships, and each of those sectoral partnerships is convened by its respective Backbone Organization. The System Lead Entity supports and facilitates connections between the Backbone Organizations.

An effective System Lead Entity will have most or all the following characteristics:

- Convening power in the region;
- Committed support of the executive leadership from the region and buy-in from appropriate stakeholders (e.g., a governor, mayor or chief executive of a jurisdiction, chief executives of major employers, heads of labor unions, presidents of two- and four-year institutions of higher education, etc.);

- Relationships and credibility with key players in the workforce ecosystem, including employers, governmental entities, state or local workforce development boards, educational institutions, labor organizations, and worker-serving organizations;
- A proven track record of coordinating across sectors and partners and of driving stakeholders to successful action;
- Ability to translate various sectors' objectives and key concerns to other sectors;
- Strong fundraising capabilities; and
- Dedicated full-time employee(s) focused on addressing regional workforce issues to support regional economic development.

An effective Backbone Organization will have most or all the following characteristics:

- Convening power in the region;
- Committed support of the executive leadership from the region and buy-in from appropriate stakeholders (e.g., a governor, mayor or chief executive of a jurisdiction, chief executives of major employers, heads of labor unions, presidents of two- and four-year institutions of higher education, etc.);
- Relationships and credibility with the key industry leaders within the sector and strong knowledge of the industry and its needs;
- Relationships and credibility with key players in the workforce ecosystem, including employers, governmental entities, state or local workforce development boards, educational institutions, labor organizations, worker-serving organizations;
- A proven track record of coordinating across the sector and of driving stakeholders to successful action;
- Strong fundraising capabilities or connection to a system with strong fundraising capabilities; and
- Dedicated full-time employee(s) focused on addressing the industry's workforce issues to support the industry's economic growth.

iii. Regional Workforce Training Systems and Sectoral Partnerships

Regional workforce training systems contain multiple sectoral partnerships representing important industries within a region. Each sectoral partnership is a collaboration of stakeholders in a region brought together by a Backbone Organization to jointly address specific workforce needs of that sector's employers. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, any of the following kinds of organizations: State, Tribal, and local governmental entities, economic development organizations, state or local workforce development boards, Career OneStops, employers, employer-facing organizations and employer associations, education and training providers like community colleges, community-based organizations (CBOs) (including faith-based organizations), worker-serving organizations (WSOs), labor unions, and/or other key stakeholders with responsibilities in advancing the goals of the sectoral partnerships.

The purpose of these partnerships is to implement strategies that meet employers' workforce needs, advance the skills and employment prospects of workers and jobseekers, grow regional economies, and increase employment in resilient and high-quality jobs. The key to effective partnerships is that they include a representative group of employers that are from the same

industry or have a similar workforce need and are meaningfully engaged in the development of the system and/or partnership.

iv. Training Models

There are several different skills training models that have proved to be effective if the fundamental characteristics we have described in previous sections are in place. However, in all models, a key component is upfront employer engagement and mobilization, and employer commitments to hire workers (see Section A.1.b.v below).

Models may differ in the type of worker skills training they provide and will differ based on the sectors or occupations that the trainings are aligned to. Examples that meet the interests of this Good Jobs Challenge – to develop and strengthen regional partnerships and systems and train workers with in-demand skills that lead to well-paying, high-quality jobs – include:

- **Skills Training Programs**: Programs that train workers with the foundational skills needed for in-demand, quality jobs and prepare workers for employment that provides career pathways after completion of the program.
- **Registered Apprenticeship Model**: These programs combine paid on-the-job training under the direction of a mentor with classroom instruction and result in an industry-recognized credential certifying occupational proficiency.
- **Other Work-and-Learn Models**: For example, a worker is conditionally hired for a specific training period and earns wages while receiving on-the-job training in foundational skills as well as applied concepts. After successful completion of the training period, the worker is officially hired as a full-time employee.
- **Certification or Credentialing Programs**: Programs in which participants obtain an industry-recognized certificate or certification and/or a license recognized by the State involved or the Federal Government.

Programs may target unemployed or underemployed workers or incumbent workers with opportunity for increased wages through targeted upskilling.

v. Employer Leadership

One of the primary goals of the Good Jobs Challenge is to get Americans back to work with good, quality jobs. To that end, EDA is seeking applications that have firm employer commitments to hire. The employer commitment may come in different formats. Some examples include:

- **Work-and-Learn, including Registered Apprenticeships:** See descriptions above.
- **Conditional Hire:** Employer hires worker on the condition of successful completion of the training program and demonstration of skill acquisition.
- **Employer Commitments:** Employers commit to hiring a specific number of workers who successfully complete the training program provided through the regional workforce training partnership.

In addition to these commitments, employers should be leading partners in the sectoral partnership and drive the sectoral partnership's agenda. While sectoral partnerships contain a

broad-based team of partners and are a "team effort" made up of education, worker groups, workforce development, and economic development leaders who collaborate to support the partnership, the partnership should focus on responding to the industry's needs. This requires strong leadership from employers. Business leaders should define the priorities and be integrally involved in crafting the solutions (as opposed to providing input only). Employers define their skills needs and the priorities for addressing them; these needs may be linked to joint competitiveness needs that they face and wish to resolve. Employers and the other partners should all commit resources to identify and solve the problems.

vi. Example Activities and Desired Outputs and Outcomes

The ARPA Good Jobs Challenge will provide funding to develop, strengthen, and expand regional workforce training systems and sectoral partnerships that place workers into in-demand jobs to support vibrant, innovative economies and economic growth. Proposed projects may aim for some or all of the following activities, outputs, and outcomes, or others, as appropriate, considering each proposed project's regional, sectoral, and economic contexts.

- Establishing, strengthening, or expanding sectoral partnerships or regional workforce training systems to provide workers with good jobs and employers with skilled workers.
- Funding and staffing for the System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization to carry out key functions outlined in section A.1.b.ii of this NOFO.
- Working with employers and other stakeholders to identify in-demand occupations and skills and securing employer commitments to hire workers who successfully complete skills training, including earning relevant industry-sought credentials.
- Making the information on in-demand occupations, the local training programs aligned to those occupations, and the funding/support opportunities to workers to afford the training programs easily accessible for job seekers.
- Developing processes to translate employers' needs for worker skills into training models and to identify skills that could be useful to employers that they are not currently using, helping employers to adopt a more high-wage, high-skill workforce strategy.
- Developing and executing outreach and recruitment plans to secure workers, particularly from underserved populations, to participate in the skills training program to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the targeted industry.
    - These plans should be developed in partnership with stakeholders from target populations, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, or Minority-Serving Institutions.
    - Although not required, EDA encourages efforts to reach historically underserved populations and areas, communities of color, women, and other groups facing labor market barriers such as persons with disabilities, disconnected youth, individuals in recovery, individuals with past criminal records, including justice-impacted and reentry participants, serving trainees participating in the SNAP, TANF, and WIC, and veterans and military spouses.
- Developing systems and processes to measure and track key outcomes and metrics of skills training program.
- Delivering quality skills training that places workers into quality jobs.
- Delivering technical assistance for employers on skills-based hiring practices to reduce bias, improve return on investment, and promote people-centered practices.

- Working with employers to adopt high-wage, high-skill workforce strategies.
- Securing and offering wrap-around services for workers to participate in skills training programs (e.g., transportation, childcare, career coaching/navigation services).
- Leveraging federal and non-federal funds to expand reach.

All awardees should produce concrete, measurable impacts for workers in the region (e.g., employer commitments to hire, job placements, wage gain). These metrics should also be broken down by demographics in order to track progress against equity goals.

c. CEDS Alignment

Each project funded under this NOFO must be consistent with the region's current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or an equivalent EDA-accepted regional economic development strategy that meets EDA's CEDS or strategy requirements. Applications will need to detail how the proposed project will support the economic development needs and objectives outlined in the CEDS or equivalent strategy and provide a copy of this planning document, either by attaching the document to the application or providing a web link for the document. In addition, applicants 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. Applicants 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 with the application in order to facilitate interagency coordination and avoid duplication of resources.

2. EDA Investment Priorities

All projects considered for EDA funding under this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge 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 and may be considered more competitive as a result. EDA's Investment Priorities are located 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.

3. Statutory Authorities for EDA's Programs

The statutory authority for this program is section 209 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (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".

4. How Does EDA Interpret Resilience?

All projects considered for EDA funding under this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO must be consistent with EDA's Recovery and Resilience Investment Priority. In terms of economic development, for EDA resilience is broadly defined as the ability of a community or region to anticipate, withstand, and bounce back from various disruptions to its economic base. These disruptions can be caused by a variety of things, including a downturn in the national or local economy as a result of the pandemic. Enhancing resilience in the face of the pandemic, especially in light of the ongoing impacts of natural disasters and a changing climate, is a multi-dimensional effort emphasizing engagement and support from all aspects of the community, including economic development practitioners. Some examples include:

- Efforts to broaden the industrial base or local sectoral specialization with diversification initiatives (e.g., moving away from a local or regional economy overly dependent on one industry that might be susceptible to downturns caused by the pandemic);
- Enhancing business retention and expansion programs to strengthen existing high-growth sectors and industries;
- Comprehensive planning efforts that involve extensive engagement from the community to define and implement a collective vision for economic recovery; and
- Training for workers in problem-solving skills, that enable nimble operation in both crisis and non-crisis times.

Resilience (within the context of economic development) is strengthened when it includes methods and measures to mitigate the potential for future economic injury, promote a faster "up-time" for economic anchors (e.g., key businesses and/or industries), and strengthen local and regional capacity to troubleshoot and address vulnerabilities within the regional economy. As noted above, to be competitive under this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO, application submissions must explicitly incorporate resilience principles. Additional information about this subject is available at https://www.eda.gov/ceds/content/economic-resilience.htm.

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 $3 billion in appropriated funds, this NOFO specifically allocates $500,000,000 for the Good Jobs Challenge.

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.

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. 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.

EDA anticipates making approximately 25 to 50 awards under this ARPA Good Jobs NOFO and scaling awards as appropriate to the proposed geographic, industry, and worker role coverage of a given regional system.

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: Subject to the availability of funds, EDA may award grants or cooperative agreements to eligible applicants. 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, including administering sub-awards to other eligible entities supporting the project. 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; and (iii) operational involvement and monitoring during the project to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Because EDA intends to release award funds to recipients only after the recipient has successfully completed specific applicant-proposed benchmarks identified in the award (see Section A.1.b.i), EDA anticipates that most awards will be cooperative agreements.

Period of Performance: Under the Good Jobs Challenge, the project period of performance depends on the nature of the project for which the grant or cooperative agreement is awarded. Because of the need for recipients to meet identified benchmarks to proceed through project phases, EDA expects projects to range in duration from 24 months to 36 months. EDA will work closely with award recipients to accommodate their projected timelines within reason and allowances of regulations and grant policies, though EDA will prioritize programs that are able to place workers into quality jobs within 24 months of the award. 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 all activities under the award must be completed and all funds disbursed no later than September 30, 2027.**

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for investment assistance 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, including labor unions, acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.[4]

2. Applicable Disaster Declaration and Responsiveness to the Coronavirus Pandemic

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#).

EDA has further determined that due to the pervasive nature of the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, any project that would address those impacts by creating or retaining jobs or increasing the economic diversity or resiliency of a region is eligible for funding. For example, an infrastructure project that creates new jobs in a region is responsive to the requirement that the funds be spent to respond to "economic injury as a result of coronavirus."

3. Cost Sharing or Matching

EDA generally expects to fund 100% of eligible project costs, given the extent of the economic impact and in accordance with the agency's statutory authority under section 703 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3233). As discussed in section E.1, however, applications that can demonstrate committed non-EDA resources to leverage grant funds will be preferred for award. Applicants are ***strongly encouraged*** to work with EDA regarding methods of encouraging outside leveraging.

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[4] See section 3 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122) and 13 C.F.R. § 300.3. EDA, at its sole discretion, may waive this cooperation requirement for certain projects of a significant regional or national scope. 13 C.F.R. § 301.2.

D. Application Submission Information

All submissions under this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO are subject to the below review process.

An applicant **must submit a complete application**, as detailed in section D.2 of this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO, to be considered for funding. EDA may seek additional information or documentation from the applicant to clarify information presented in the application. EDA also may, in its sole discretion, continue review of any application with minor defects or errors, while the applicant supplies the missing information. Please see section E of this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO for more information on EDA's review and selection process.

EDA strongly encourages applicants to consult with EDA using the contact information in section G to discuss whether their project is in alignment with EDA's Investment Priorities as well as EDA's eligibility requirements, property standards, and other requirements outlined in this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO. This consultation is limited to clarification of technical matters involving the proposed project, project alignment with EDA's mission and EDA's Investment Priorities, and all other relevant and publicly available information relating to general technical matters.

1. Address to Request Application Package

An electronic version of the application for this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO may be obtained at Grants.gov using Funding Opportunity Number "EDA-HDQ-ARPGJ-2021-2006964". To accommodate applicants' accessibility requirements, a paper version of the application may be obtained by contacting the email address listed in section G of this NOFO. Please see section I below for instructions on submitting an application though grants.gov.

All applicants must apply through Grants.gov unless they request and receive authorization to submit a paper application package by contacting EDA at the email address listed in section G.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

A complete Application will include two main elements: a Project Narrative and Standard Application Forms. In addition, applicants, at their option, may submit Optional Supporting Documentation as described below.

a. Project Narrative

A Project Narrative of no more than 15 total pages (12-point font, 1-inch margins). **Material beyond the 15th page will not be read or considered**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a clear and concise narrative that includes a compelling justification for the project, including a clearly defined regional workforce need or gap, how the proposed project will uniquely meet that need, and the expected outcome(s) that will result from the proposed projects. Lengthy applications will not receive greater consideration.

Project Narratives must address the following areas:

Section 1: Project Description and Overview

Section 1a: Provide an executive summary that includes a project title, identifies the relevant regional workforce training system and/or sectoral partnership, and provides a summary of no more than 250 words.

Section 1b: Identify and describe the System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization for the regional workforce training system or sectoral partnership (see section A.1.b.ii for more details on the characteristics of System Lead Entities and Backbone Organizations).

Section 2a: Employer Leadership and Commitments

Sectoral partnership success will be measured by how many quality jobs training participants obtain with employer partners and their wages and wage growth. Any workforce solution funded will clearly devise a method for ensuring employment for its participants.

Describe employer leadership and commitments already in place or that are anticipated. For any such leadership or commitment, EDA will expect to see documentation of the commitment before advancing a project between System Development and Program Design phases. If applicable, describe how the System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization will identify additional employers to participate in the partnership's work. Applicants applying for Program Design and/or Program Implementation funds (but not System Development funds) should append documentation of the employer commitments to their applications.

Please explain how employers were or will be involved in the creation of the training programs and how they will participate in the implementation, evaluation, and ongoing refinement and improvement of them. Please also explain how employers were or will be active in the creation of recruitment requirements and the strategy for recruitment and/or the selection of training participants. Please also explain how entities that provide worker perspectives (labor unions, community organizations, etc.) will be involved in these activities. Applicants should include data and associated documentation from the employer(s) that show the number of committed job placements.

Section 2b: Other Stakeholders and Partnerships

Describe all relevant stakeholders for the system and/or partnership, including specific details on the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. Include letters of support from core sectoral partners, including labor union partners.

Section 3: Regional Description

Provide a description of the project's location and region, including its primary service area, and the key industry or industries. Also include the most significant and difficult-to-meet skills needs in the region and target participants served.

Address how the proposed development or strengthening of the partnership or system will be consistent with the region's or regions' CEDS.

Section 4: Impacts of the Regional Workforce Training System

Section 4a: Specify which one or more of the following components the project proposes:

- **System Development** to establish a new regional workforce training system,
- **Program Design** to strengthen or expand an existing sectoral partnership(s) and/or create new sectoral partnership(s), or
- **Program Implementation** to implement a sectoral partnership(s).

For proposals that include System Development, describe how the proposed project will capitalize on specific opportunities facing the region and/or tackle structural challenges. I.e., what is the problem you are trying to solve? For proposals that include Program Design or Program Implementation, describe the regional workforce training system that is already in place and how the proposed project will address local employers' workforce needs.

The applicant also should identify the factors that contribute to the region's workforce training strengths and challenges (e.g., workforce resources, existing and emerging industries, other regional assets).

Section 4b: Explain how the proposed project would meet EDA's Recovery and Resilience investment priority, which all American Rescue Plan Act projects are expected to meet. You also may explain in this space how the proposed projects will meet any of EDA's other investment priorities.

Section 4c: Describe the number and type of jobs expected to be available to workers who successfully complete the training as well as the projected wages, wage growth, benefits, and/or union membership of those jobs. Discuss how you will leverage available resources to support system development efforts and/or sectoral partnership implementation. Include data that validate estimates provided or, if data are not yet available, describe how you will collect data to validate estimates provided.

Section 4d: Explain why the proposed partnership or system is achievable. Do you have examples of where this or similar solutions have been implemented before? If the partnership is completely new, what research and groundwork have you done that leads you to believe your outcomes are achievable?

Section 4e: Describe the target demographics of participants and specific stakeholder groups that will be impacted by the solution and explain the rationale for how participants are targeted. Provide an estimate of how many people, organizations, employers and/or communities will be impacted by the project either directly or indirectly.

Section 5: Funding Request and Program Design and Implementation

Section 5a: Provide an estimated funding request for the proposed partnership(s) or system. As noted above in section A.1.b.i, EDA plans to award funds under this ARPA Good Jobs NOFO in proportion to the proposed geographic, industry, and worker role coverage of a given regional system. While there are no maximums for any particular phase or combination of phases that can be requested, the following estimates can help guide your funding request. EDA estimates:

- Approximately $1 million may be required for System Development to establish a regional workforce training system.
- Approximately $2 million may be required for Program Design to design an employer-driven skills training program and make the capacity building investments necessary to enable its implementation, including securing the needed capital (e.g., equipment, leased space) per region, industry, and worker role.
- Between approximately $2 million and $7 million may be required for Program Implementation to implement an employer-driven skills training program per region, industry, and worker role.

Proposals may be developed to serve multiple regions, industries and worker roles. A regional workforce training system may support multiple sectoral partnerships.

Please see sections A.1.b.i and B.1 above for additional guidance on articulating and justifying your funding request. Applicants should include costs in their proposal to cover expenses to track and measure key metrics of their program. Expenses may include staff resources and systems. Metrics that will need to be tracked and reported may include the following: number of workers participating in program broken down by key demographics, number of workers who complete the program broken down by key demographics, number of workers placed into jobs broken down by key demographics, average wages of job placements, average wage growth of job placements, retention of workers placed, amount spent on wraparound services, and total average cost spent per worker.

Section 5b. Describe anticipated System Development, Program Design and Program Implementation projects. Anticipated Program Design and Program Implementation projects should connect to the funding request under Section 5a. Depending on the needs of the region and the current status of existing workforce training efforts, these projects might include:

- The development of outreach and recruitment plans for employers.
- The development of outreach and recruitment plans for workers, including plans to reach diverse and underserved communities.
- The development of training models and curricula.
- Purchase of necessary equipment to support and expand existing workforce training projects.

Section 5c. Identify any anticipated barriers to worker participation and how you plan to mitigate the impact of those barriers. Describe any wrap-around services that will be provided to workers to ensure they are able to participate in employer-driven skills training programs (e.g., transportation, childcare, coaching/navigation services) and how you will ensure the program is sustainable, including any support provided to workers after completion of the training (e.g., job placement support, etc.).

b. Standard Application Forms

The following application forms must be submitted by the proposed System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization that will receive and administer the award if selected:

- Form SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance).
- Form SF-424A ((Budget Information Non-Construction Programs).
- One Budget Narrative that identifies and justifies how funds in each line item of the budget (Form SF-424A) will be used to support the proposed project. The Budget Narrative should not repeat information provided in the funding request (section 5a of the Project Narrative) but should only provide additional detail needed to understand the amounts allocated to each budget line item. Total costs described in the narrative total should match the total project costs listed in both the SF-424 question 18 line g and SF-424A ("Totals").
- Form ED-900A (Additional EDA Assurances for Construction or Non-Construction Investments).
- Form CD-511 (Certification Regarding Lobbying).
- Form SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities), if applicable. Form SF-LLL is only required if the applicant has retained a registered lobbyist in conjunction with the proposed project.
- If the System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization is a non-profit organization that is not an institution of higher education: a copy of the institution's articles of incorporation, bylaws, and a current certificate of good standing.

c. <u>Optional</u> Supporting Documentation

As noted above, EDA recognizes that regions have different needs with respect to regional workforce training systems (i.e., one region may need to design and organize a system from the ground up, while another region may have an existing system). Therefore, applicants ***<u>may (but are not required to)</u>*** submit supporting documentation to appropriately supplement the Project Narrative. Such supporting documentation will not count against the Project Narrative page limit, but applicants should clearly label supporting documentation and make clear to EDA which section of the Project Narrative any supporting documentation is designed to supplement. For instance, an applicant ***<u>may (but is not required to)</u>*** submit:

- A memorandum of understanding or agreement (MOU or MOA) between the stakeholders to supplement Section 2 of the Project Narrative.

- A documented process to gather skills needs from employers and translate these needs into effective training models and a demonstrated ability to implement these skills training programs (e.g., past experience, sample training curriculum) to support Section 4 of the Project Narrative.
- Existing workforce training curricula to support Section 4 of the Project Narrative.

These examples are illustrative only; applicants ***may (but are not required to)*** submit other appropriate supporting documents as well.

d. Copy of Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

If indirect costs are included in the project 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). For most applicants, this will entail the submission of a copy of its current, approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). The maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which EDA will reimburse a recipient is 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) the Federal Share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on either (a) the indirect cost rate approved in the NICRA, provided that the NICRA 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 must 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 CFR § 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) rate and is electing to charge the de minimis rate.

Note that 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 the Department of the Interior (DOI) or EDA;
ii. Acknowledgment received from EDA 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 <u>not</u> acceptable); or

iv. NICRA.

3. AOR Requirement and File Formats

All relevant forms must be signed electronically by the applicant's Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR); please see section I.2 of this NOFO for information on AOR requirements. The preferred electronic file format for attachments is Adobe PDF; however, EDA will accept electronic files in Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, or Microsoft Excel formats. EDA will not accept paper, facsimile, or email transmissions of applications except as described below in section D.5.b. Please refer to important information on submitting your application provided in section D.5.

All documentation and data submitted should be current and applicable as of the date submitted. Applicants are encouraged to contact EDA for technical assistance before submitting an application. EDA staff members are available to provide applicants with technical assistance regarding application requirements. Additionally, EDA may contact the applicant to clarify application materials received.

Finally, EDA may request a particular project be re-scoped to fit within budget and timing constraints. **Note that all projects must be completed by September 30, 2027 and that this deadline cannot be extended**.

4. 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; (iii) make certain certifications (see also section H.5 of this NOFO), and (iv) 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. **System Lead Entities or Backbone Organizations do not need to be registered in SAM by the Application deadline, but their SAM registration must be complete before EDA may make an award under this NOFO**. 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. Recipients will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. parts 25 and 170.

5. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for submission of complete Applications is **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on January 26, 2022**. Applications received after that deadline will not be reviewed or considered. See section E of this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO regarding EDA's review process.

All American Rescue Plan Act Funds must be expended by September 30, 2027, and therefore, no grants may be extended beyond that date. EDA may cancel or withdraw the ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO at any time.

a. Electronic Submission.

Applications will be accepted 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 ARPA Good Jobs Challenge 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 a complete 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).

6. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge 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.[5] 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.

7. Pre-award Costs

In general, EDA does not reimburse pre-award project costs. Applicants that need such reimbursement should work closely with EDA to determine if their pre-award costs may be considered for reimbursement. In order for contracted pre-award costs to be eligible for reimbursement, the applicant must competitively procure services pursuant to the Federal government's procurement procedures. All pre-award costs are incurred at an applicant's own risk and will be considered for reimbursement, in EDA's sole discretion, only if an applicant receives an award and such costs are approved by EDA in writing. Under no circumstances will

[5] As provided for in 15 C.F.R. part 13.

EDA or DOC be held responsible for application preparation expenditures, which are distinguished from pre-award project costs.

8. 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, title verification, documentation of the value of in-kind contributions, evidence that all funding is available and committed to the project, or documentation required for environmental or legal compliance. 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, in its discretion, make changes or additions to this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO. All changes will be communicated on Grants.gov.

E. Application Review Information

Throughout the review and selection process, EDA reserves the right to seek clarification in writing from applicants whose applications are being reviewed. This may include reaching out to applicants and proposing they seek funding under a different EDA program or other Federal financial assistance program under which they may be more competitively assessed. EDA may additionally ask applicants to clarify application materials, objectives, and work plans, or modify budgets or other specifics necessary to comply with Federal requirements. EDA will screen submitted materials to verify that all required forms are complete and all required documentation is included. Complete applications that do not contain all elements listed in section D.2 will not be reviewed.

1. Review and Selection Process

a. Merit Review

All complete applications will be reviewed by at least three individuals and scored against the Merit Review criteria below. EDA anticipates funding approximately 25 to 50 awards to the highest scoring projects after application of selection factors described in section E.1.b below.

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.

- **Development of Key Plans to Support Regional Workforce Training System or Sectoral Partnership (15 points)** –The applicant will be evaluated on plans for or the demonstration of:
    - Regional system development, including the process to gather skills needs from employers and translate these needs into effective training models and a demonstrated ability to implement these skills training programs.

- Training model and development specific to industries and worker roles. If the proposal is for Program Design or Program Implementation, this evaluation will include the strength of the existing system or sectoral partnership.
- Employer commitment to participate in the system and hire workers for high-quality jobs.
- Skill-based hiring training for employers in the system.
- How the applicant proposes to leverage other funds.
- Worker and employer outreach and recruitment.
- Wrap-around services to support worker participation in the skills training program.
- Measurement and tracking of key outcomes and metrics.
- The project's alignment with EDA's Investment Priorities.

- **System Lead Entity's or Backbone Organization's capacity (15 points)** – The System Lead Entity's or Backbone Organization's ability to:
  - *Convene Necessary Stakeholders:* Must submit commitment letters from each stakeholder in system and articulate what role they will fill, including executive sponsor.
  - *Track Record of Success:* Provide documented evidence (including outcomes data) of coordinating across sectors/partners and driving them to action.
  - *Fundraising Plan and Track Record:* Outline how it will leverage other funds for this program and past fundraising experience.
  - *Ability to reach underserved workers:* Outline how it intends to reach a diverse set of underserved workers, as well as past outreach, recruiting, and service experience.
  - *Staffing Plan:* Outline staffing plan and include biographies for key team members.

- **Workers Served and Job Placements expected (15 points) –** Expected number of workers served and job placements during grant period based on partnerships with community-based organizations, worker-serving organizations, and employers, specifically:
  - Details about the jobs employers are committing to hire workers into (e.g., wages, benefits, union membership).
  - Projected number of individuals recruited for program with target demographic breakdown.
  - Projected number of individuals who successfully complete program with target demographic breakdown.
  - Projected number of individuals placed in quality jobs with target demographic breakdown.
  - Projected number of quality job placements committed by employers.
  - Projected wages for jobs.
  - Size of credibly-projected income gains for workers and number of new quality jobs.
  - Projected training cost per worker (inclusive of provision of comprehensive wrap-around services).

- **Employer partnerships (10 points)** – Employer partnerships secured or plans to secure employer partnerships to develop a community-driven model that will lead to job placements. Provide details on the type of training program they are building, what employers will be committing to the system (e.g., skills need data, job placement commitments) and what benefits they will receive from the partnership/system (e.g., skills-based hiring training, access to qualified workers, portable industry-recognized credentials). Must submit letters from each employer from which there is a commitment. The number and quality of employer commitments will be evaluated in the context of the stage of development of the partnership/system.

- **Identification of Regional Needs (10 points) –** The application will be reviewed from a worker skills training perspective and based on how the project will address these needs, including:
    - Assessment of region's economic state (e.g., level of distress, unemployment) and employer hiring needs (e.g., in-demand industries, vacancies, and worker roles).
    - Identification of specific existing or employer-projected needs of specific employers, who are engaged in the regional workforce training system.
    - Proposed plan for how project will address these needs by providing quality jobs.

- **Regional investment and sustainability (10 points)** – Availability and commitment of State and local government, philanthropy, and industry investment to support the ongoing sustainability of the system after the lifecycle of the grant, e.g., the amount of local leverage that will augment the federal award, and the project's alignment with and integration into other public or private investments currently ongoing or planned for the community and region. Sustainability also includes the applicant's plan for providing on-going support for participants after completion of the training (e.g., job placement support, etc.).

- **Feasibility (10 points)** – The likelihood that plans and forecasted workers served and job placements will be completed in the grant period within budget.

- **Equity (15 points)** – The extent to which the application articulates a plan for ensuring that the project's benefits are shared across all affected communities and fairly between employers and workers. This includes the extent to which the application demonstrates the ability to serve trainees that benefit from federal and state programs like SNAP, TANF, and WIC. Although not required, EDA strongly encourages efforts to reach historically underserved populations and areas, communities of color, women, and other groups facing labor market barriers such as persons with disabilities, disconnected youth, individuals in recovery, individuals with past criminal records including justice-impacted and reentry participants, serving trainees participating in the SNAP, TANF, and WIC, and veterans and military spouses.

b. 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.

c. Grants Officer's Decision

The most highly ranked applications will be forwarded to the Grants Officer, who 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 most highly ranked applications based on any of the following Selection Factors or use these Selection Factors to break a tie for applications that are otherwise considered substantially equal in merit:

i. The extent to which the application meets the overall objectives of section 2 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3121);
ii. The extent to which the project is resilient to future pandemics or other sudden and severe economic dislocations, as defined in section A.4 (e.g., closures of major local employers, climate change), and resilience is integrated into the project scope of work;
iii. To promote broad and equitable access to EDA assistance, the amount of EDA funding the applicant has received in the current or prior three federal fiscal years under any EDA Notice of Funding Opportunity;
iv. The applicant's performance under previous Federal financial assistance awards, including whether the grantee submitted required performance reports and data;
v. The availability of program funding;
vi. Whether the project supports communities negatively impacted by the downturn in the coal economy;
vii. The extent to which the project supports EDA's goals of geographic balance in distribution of program funds, project types, organizational type (to include smaller and rural organizations) and the overall portfolio;
viii. The extent to which the application articulates a plan for ensuring that the project's benefits are shared across all affected communities and the extent to which the application demonstrates the capacity to account for the unique needs of historically underserved populations and areas; and
ix. The relative economic distress of the area.

The Grants Officer's final decision must be consistent with EDA's and DOC's published policies. Any time the Grants Officer makes a selection that differs from the rank score, the Grants Officer will document the rationale for the decision in writing.

2. Federal Awardee Performance and 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 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, EDA will apply the DOC ST&Cs applicable on the date of award. The DOC ST&Cs may be accessed at: 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 subawards[6] 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.

c. Government Performance and Results Act

Internal EDA Evaluation: As a condition of the grant award, 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 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-915 (Public Works, Economic Adjustment Infrastructure and Revolving Loan Fund Investments) 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.

Third Party Evaluation: As a condition of a grant award, grantees are required to participate in an EDA-funded third-party evaluation, if undertaken by EDA. The evaluation may include an

[6] 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.

implementation assessment across grantees, an impact and/or outcome analysis of all or selected sites/components within or across grantees, and/or a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. Conducting an impact analysis could involve random assignment (which involves random assignment of eligible participants into a treatment group that would receive/have received program services or into control group(s) that would not/has not received program services or program services). EDA may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation. As a part of the evaluation, as a condition of award, grantees must agree to: (1) make records available to an evaluation contractor or contractors on participants, employers, and funding; (2) provide access to program operating personnel, participants, and operational and financial records, and any other relevant documents to calculate program costs and benefits; and (3) in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the assignment of participants to program services, including the possible increased recruitment of potential participants; and (4) follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor(s) under the direction of EDA.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For questions concerning this ARPA Good Jobs Challenge NOFO, or more information about EDA programs, you may contact GoodJobsChallenge@eda.gov. EDA's website at http://www.eda.gov provides additional information on EDA and its programs.

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 EDA at the email address 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.4, 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.

8. Non-Discrimination and Equal Access by Those with Past Criminal Histories

Consistent with certifications made during the SAM registration process, grant recipients must administer skills training programs funded under this NOFO in compliance with Federal statutes related to non-discrimination. Further, recipients must not discriminate against participants in skills training programs funded under this NOFO with past criminal records including justice-impacted and reentry participants.

9. Fraud Awareness Training

Consistent with 2 CFR part 200, in signing a financial assistance award, Recipient personnel responsible for managing the Recipient's finances and overseeing any contractors, sub-contractors or sub-grantees, will be required to complete the training PowerPoint entitled "Compliance with EDA Disaster Assistance Program Requirements" and return the signed Certificate of Training Completion to EDA as instructed by the Agency. Further, Recipient will be required to monitor award activities for common fraud schemes and report suspicious activity to EDA and the Office of Inspector General.

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-ARPGJ-2021-2006964";
- 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

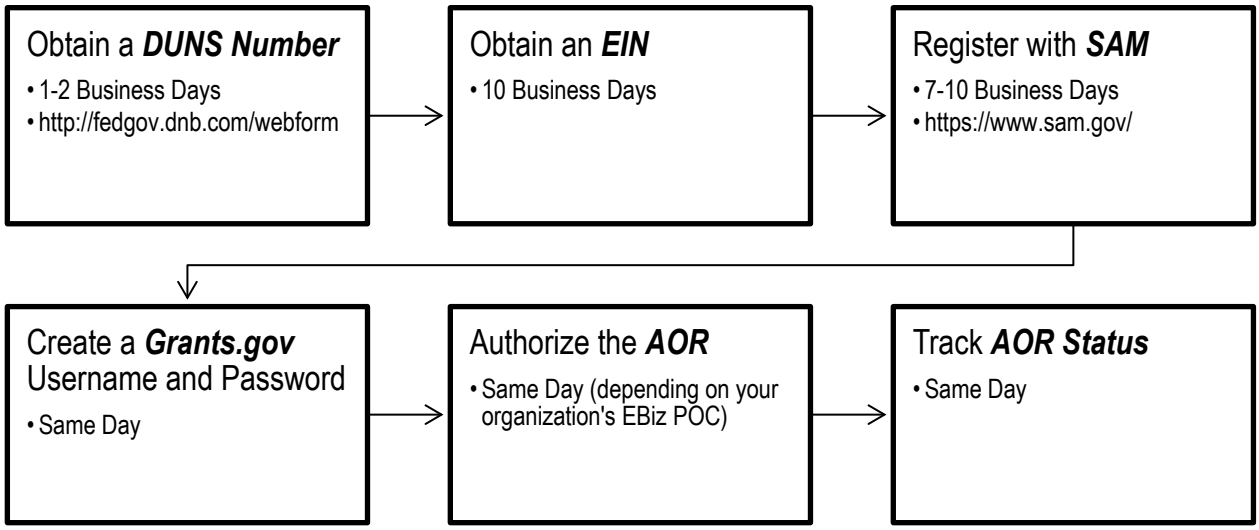
- Follow the instructions provided on the Grants.gov website and on each webpage to complete and submit your application.

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.

2. 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.

3. Field Limitations and Special Characters

Please be advised that 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.

4. 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 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 Grants.gov

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.

5. 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.