

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name:** Economic Development Administration (EDA or the Agency), U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC).
- **Notice of Funding Opportunity Title:** FY 2021-2023 Economic Development Research and Evaluation (R&E) and National Technical Assistance (NTA) programs, jointly known as RNTA.
- **Announcement Type and Date:** FY 2021-2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) announcement publishing EDA's application submission requirements and review procedures for applications received under EDA's R&E and NTA programs, authorized under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 3121 *et seq.*) (PWEDA). **Effective date: 04/02/2021.**
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** EDA-HDQ-RNTA-2021-2006892
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.312, Economic Development – Research and Evaluation and 11.303, Economic Development – National Technical Assistance.
- **Dates:** There are no submission deadlines under this NOFO. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until the termination of this NOFO or publication of a superseding RNTA NOFO. All applications will first undergo a technical review by EDA and will undergo a full merit review upon successfully passing technical review. Please see section E.2 (p. 24) of this NOFO for complete information on EDA's review process.
- **Applicant Submissions:** Applicants are advised to carefully read the application and submission information provided in section D (p. 11) of this announcement.
- **Eligible Applicants:** Pursuant to section 3(4) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122(4)) and 13 C.F.R. § 300.3 (Eligible Recipient), eligible applicants for and recipients of EDA RNTA investment assistance include: a District Organization; an Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; a State; a city or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; an institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; a public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State; a private individual; or a for-profit organization.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** EDA provides strategic investments on a competitive merit basis to support economic development, foster job creation, and attract private investment in economically distressed areas of the United States. Under this NOFO, EDA solicits applications from applicants in order to provide investments that support research and technical assistance projects under EDA's R&E and NTA programs. Grants and cooperative agreements made under these programs are designed to leverage

existing regional assets and support the implementation of economic development strategies that advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities.

EDA may make changes or additions to this NOFO. All changes will be communicated on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT
Research and Evaluation and National Technical Assistance

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A. Program Description

1. Overview and Program Information

The EDA mission is to lead the Federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. Through its RNTA programs, EDA works towards fulfilling this mission by funding research, evaluation, and national technical assistance projects that promote competitiveness and innovation in distressed rural and urban regions throughout the United States and its territories. Such projects will support the DOC Strategic Plan (2018-2022) and the EDA Learning Agenda by providing analysis that supports evidence-based policy making consistent with the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (the Evidence Act).¹

While EDA regularly evaluates the impacts and outcomes of its various programs, including EDA's RNTA programs, the Evidence Act and subsequent implementation guidance create a more formal framework for developing learning agendas across the federal government. Competitive proposals under this NOFO will help EDA fulfill or refine its learning agenda.

Under this NOFO, EDA solicits applications for investments that support research, evaluation, and national technical assistance projects under EDA's Research and Evaluation (R&E) and National Technical Assistance (NTA) programs². This section provides detailed information on the two programs to which this NOFO applies.

a. R&E Program

Through the R&E program, EDA supports the development of tools, recommendations, and resources that shape Federal economic development policies and inform economic development decision-making. R&E program investments provide critical, cutting-edge research and best practices to regional, state, and local practitioners in the economic development field, thereby enhancing understanding and implementation of economic development concepts throughout the country.

R&E investments may be awarded to:

- Evaluate success of economic development programs, policies, and strategies for improving economic outcomes, including the priority research projects listed in the forthcoming EDA Learning Agenda;
- Research and evaluate topics or issues to improve the understanding of economic development principles, strategies, and concepts;
- Improve understanding of the causes of economic distress, entrenched poverty, underserved areas or populations, and distressed communities and provide effective strategies or recommendations for addressing the causes thereof;

¹ 115 Public Law 435, 132 Stat. 5529 (January 14, 2019).

² EDA publishes separate NOFO announcements for its other programs, including Planning, Local Technical Assistance, Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance, University Centers, Build to Scale, and Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms. For more information see www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities/ and www.grants.gov. Additional information about EDA's programs is available through EDA staff and available at www.eda.gov.

- Develop innovative tools, measures and widely applicable data sets for studying economic development outcomes, principles, and policies; or
- Perform other activities determined by EDA to be appropriate under the R&E program.

Examples of R&E projects include:

- **Innovation Index 2.0** – <http://www.statsamerica.org/ii2/> – Provides practitioners an easy-to-compare method of assessing the innovation capacity of their region by providing the composite index of innovation inputs and outputs built upon data from five areas: human capital, business dynamics, business profile, employment and productivity, and economic well-being.
- **Measuring Distress** – <http://www.statsamerica.org/distress> – This tool provides practitioners a fast, simple way to calculate whether a county, region, or neighborhood may meet EDA eligibility thresholds for unemployment and income.
- **Urban Institute: Understanding Impact** – This project will first conduct a program evaluation of infrastructure and non-infrastructure EDA grants from 2010 – 2019. Using the knowledge from this evaluation, Urban Institute will produce a series of policy briefs highlighting important findings and develop an immersive narrative microsite that supports EDA’s mission.

Please note that these examples are informational and in no way limit the range of potential proposed projects.

b. NTA Program

EDA’s NTA program supports a small number of projects that provide technical assistance at a national scope. These projects support best practices among communities trying to solve problems related to economic development goals. By working in conjunction with its national technical assistance partners, EDA helps States, local governments, and community-based organizations to achieve their highest economic potential. The NTA program supports activities that are beneficial to the economic development community nationwide and includes, but is not limited to, outreach, training, and information dissemination. It can also provide assistance with implementation of economic development best practices and proven techniques.

NTA investments may be awarded to:

- Determine the causes of excessive unemployment, underemployment, low per capita income, outmigration, or other economic distress-related problems throughout the nation;
- Formulate and implement economic development tools, models, and innovative techniques that will alleviate or prevent conditions of economic distress;
- Formulate and implement economic development programs to increase regional and national capacity;
- Evaluate the effectiveness and economic impact of programs, projects, and techniques to alleviate economic distress and promote economic development;
- Disseminate information about effective programs, projects, and techniques that alleviate conditions of economic distress and promote economic development;
- Assess, market, and establish business clusters and associations; or

- Perform other activities determined by EDA to be appropriate under the NTA program.

Examples of NTA projects include:

- **Smart Power, Inc.** – <https://decommissioningcollaborative.org/> – This project provided technical assistance to Nuclear Closure Community (NCC) stakeholders across the country to increase their capacity for economic recovery after Nuclear Power Plant closures. It resulted in the development of a lessons learned and best practices report and a new educational website for stakeholders.
- **Rural Innovation Initiative** – <https://ruralinnovation.us/rural-innovation-initiative/> – This program selects communities to receive intensive technical assistance as they execute an innovation hub strategy: an economic development model that works to educate and train local residents in digital skills, employ them in new economy jobs, and empower them to launch the startups that will drive their digital economy.
- **US Cluster Mapping Initiative** – <http://www.clustermapping.us/> – Used by governments, economic developers, and businesses to understand and shape the competitive landscape for a wide range of industries, allowing each region to craft an approach to upgrade its performance based on its own unique assets and relative strengths.
- **Small Scale Manufacturing and Place-Based Economic Development** – <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/> – This program supports planning and place-making activities with local government leaders, job-seeking residents and business leaders through economic development planning activities, expanding opportunities for small scale manufacturing and revitalizing neighborhoods.
- **National Association of Development Organizations: “Stronger CEDS, Stronger Regions”** – <https://www.nado.org/stronger-ceds-stronger-regions-resource-archive-2/> – This program provides customized trainings and technical assistance to Economic Development Districts (EDDs) and other regional partners to amplify EDA’s message about the tremendous value and potential of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) to support broader regional economic and community development goals.

Please note that these examples are informational and in no way limit the range of potential proposed projects.

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

2. EDA Investment Priorities

All projects considered for EDA funding under this NOFO must be consistent with at least one of EDA’s Investment Priorities. EDA’s Investment Priorities can be found at <https://www.eda.gov/about/investment-priorities.htm>. EDA’s website will be updated on January 15, April 15, June 15, or September 15 of each year if there are any revisions to these Investment Priorities.

Additionally, EDA may post to the agency’s website, <https://www.eda.gov/programs/rnta/>, specific programmatic funding priorities that EDA wishes to fund under this NOFO.

3. Statutory Authorities for EDA’s Programs

The statutory authority for the RNTA programs is section 207 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3147). Applicant eligibility and program requirements are set forth in EDA’s regulations at 13 C.F.R. chapter III, and all applicants must address these requirements³. Specific requirements for the RNTA program are at subpart A of 13 C.F.R. part 306.

B. Federal Award Information

1. What Funding is Available Under this Announcement?

EDA was appropriated \$1.5 million for the R&E program and \$1 million for the NTA program pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260, Title 1 of Division B—Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2021) and its accompanying Explanatory Statement.⁴

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

The typical award amounts set out below are provided as contextual information and may prove useful for planning purposes. Actual amounts awarded may be higher or lower depending on the nature of the proposed project and the availability of funds. Applications for funding of activities related to existing awards may compete with applications for new awards.

In recent years, the average size of R&E and NTA investments has been approximately \$350,000, and investments generally range from \$200,000 to \$500,000. Historically, EDA has funded approximately five R&E projects and three NTA projects per year. EDA anticipates making similar awards in FY 2021-2023, subject to availability of funds.

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

Subject to the availability of funds, EDA may award grants or cooperative agreements to eligible applicants to help support economic development project-based activities. EDA will award a cooperative agreement on a case-by-case basis if substantial agency involvement is required. For

³ EDA’s regulations are accessible at the U.S. Government Publishing Office website at <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse.7> Under “Browse” select “Title 13 – Business Credit and Assistance,” click “Go,” and follow the link to parts “300-399.”

⁴ In the Explanatory Statement, EDA’s NTA program is included as part of EDA’s suite of Technical Assistance programs along with EDA’s Local Technical Assistance and University Center programs. Collectively these Technical Assistance programs were appropriated \$10 million of which EDA anticipates allocating \$1 million to the NTA program. Information regarding available funding for the Local Technical Assistance and University Center programs may be found on www.grants.gov and www.eda.gov.

a cooperative agreement, the nature of EDA’s “substantial involvement” (to be included in the terms and conditions of the award) will generally be collaboration between EDA and the recipient on the scope of work. However, other possible examples of EDA’s “substantial involvement” may include, but are not limited to: (i) authority to halt immediately an activity if detailed performance specifications are not met; (ii) stipulation that the recipient must meet or adhere to specific procedural requirements before subsequent stages of a project may continue; (iii) involvement in the selection of key recipient personnel; and (iv) operational involvement and monitoring during the project to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

EDA anticipates a twelve (12) to eighteen (18) month project period for investments funded under this NOFO, subject to the availability of funds, EDA policy, and satisfactory performance under the award. Applicants should ensure that their proposal and budget clearly specify how they will complete the scope of work within this timeframe. A typical project period begins with an initial kickoff meeting between the recipient and EDA staff to discuss project scope and to ensure that all parties are in agreement as to the project plan. After the initial meeting, the recipient generally will be required to submit a final work plan to EDA staff for review and approval. Progress and financial reports and project work will be submitted to EDA based on the dates agreed to during the initial meeting and as outlined in the Specific Award Conditions.

The recipient will be expected to submit a draft report to EDA at least 60 days before the end of the project period for EDA’s review. This report should concisely communicate key project information and should provide a high-level overview of activities undertaken, detail lessons learned during the project period, and outline the expected and actual economic benefits of the project. Based on the Agency’s review, EDA may request technical and substantive revisions to the draft report. If these revisions are incorporated and the draft report is ultimately approved by EDA, EDA may approve publication of a final report and the recipient will brief EDA senior management on research methods and report results.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants⁵

Pursuant to PWEDA, eligible applicants for and eligible recipients of EDA investment assistance under this NOFO 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;
- e. Public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State⁶;

⁵ See 42 U.S.C. § 3122(4)(B) and 13 C.F.R. § 300.3.

⁶ For projects that are national or regional in scope, EDA may, in its sole discretion, waive the requirement that a non-profit organization or association demonstrate it is acting in cooperation officials of a political subdivision of a State. See 42 U.S.C. § 3147(a)(3) and 13 C.F.R. § 306.3(b).

- f. Private individual⁷; or
- g. For-profit organization⁸.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

EDA encourages cost sharing, and applications that include matching funds may be more competitive than those that do not. Generally, the amount of an EDA award may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the project. However, for RNTA awards, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development (Assistant Secretary) has the discretion to establish a maximum investment rate of up to 100 percent where the project: (i) merits, and is not otherwise feasible without, an increase to the investment rate; and (ii) will be of no or only incidental benefit to the eligible recipient⁹.

If an Applicant is requesting an EDA investment rate of greater than 50 percent, the applicant must provide the basis for the request. Applicants must clearly and in detail describe their justification for the request within their Budget Narrative in accordance with section D.2.b.i(4) (p. 15).

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

In the application review process, EDA will consider as a competitiveness factor the amount of the matching share funds as provided in section E.1 (p. 20). Documented in-kind contributions may provide the required non-Federal share of the total project cost. All in-kind contributions must be eligible project costs and meet applicable Federal cost principles and uniform administrative requirements as set forth in 2 C.F.R. part 200. Examples of in-kind contributions can include space, equipment, or services¹⁰. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact EDA via the email address listed in section G (p. 28) of this NOFO to determine how in-kind contributions may be utilized to satisfy the matching share requirement for their respective project concept and application.

⁷ A private individual means a natural person unrelated to any business or non-profit organization he or she may own or operate in his or her name. Further, EDA will apply the requirements of 2 C.F.R. part 200 to applicants and recipients who apply as individuals under this NOFO. See also 2 C.F.R. § 25.110(b) (Exempting individuals who apply for or receive agency awards or direct subawards from the requirements of the unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)).

⁸ Per 2 C.F.R. § 200.101(c), EDA will apply subparts A through E of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards to for-profit entities.

⁹ See 42 U.S.C. § 3144(c)(3); 13 C.F.R. § 301.4(b)(4).

¹⁰ See section 204(b) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144(b)).

D. Application and Submission Information

This NOFO employs a two-step application process: (1) the Concept Proposal and (2) the Full Application. **EDA will only review Full Applications submitted by applicants who first submitted a Concept Proposal. Any Full Application received from an applicant that did not submit a Concept Proposal will be deemed ineligible and not considered for funding.**

1. Address to Request Application Package

For the Concept Proposal, applicants may use the optional template available at <https://eda.gov/programs/rnta/resources/>. For the Full Application, applicants may obtain the application package electronically at www.grants.gov (Grants.gov). To accommodate accessibility requirements, applicants may request a paper application by contacting EDA using the contact information in section G (p. 28) of this NOFO. Full Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov using the link that EDA will provide with its response to the Concept Proposal.

Applicants are advised to carefully read the submission information provided in section D (p. 11) of this NOFO.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

a. Concept Proposal

In order to be considered for funding, applicants must submit a slide-deck that does not exceed 10 slides in the format below. The presentation deck must be submitted as a PowerPoint file and should address the items identified in the outline below and in the template referenced in section D.1 (p. 11).

Concept Proposal Deck Structure
Slide 1: Organization Information
Slide 2: Economic Development Need
Slide 3: Strategic Approach
Slide 4: Alignment with EDA's and RNTA's Mission
Slide 5: Feasibility of Deliverables and Timeline
Slide 6: Feasibility of Budget
Slide 7: Impacts and National Perspective
Slide 8: Organizational / Applicant Capacity and Personnel
Slide 9: Cross Collaboration with Partners
Slide 10: Sustainability, Scalability, and Dissemination

b. Full Application

Full Applications will only be accepted electronically through Grants.gov at the link that EDA will provide with its response to Concept Proposals. Applicants are advised to carefully read the submission information provided in section D (p. 11) of this NOFO. Any Full Application

received from an applicant that did not submit a Concept Proposal will be deemed ineligible and eliminated from the competition without further review.

The preferred electronic file format for attachments is Adobe portable document format (PDF) and, where appropriate, Microsoft Excel; however, EDA will accept Microsoft Word-formatted electronic files.

Applicants are advised that they must complete the registration process prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov. Even though an applicant may be able to view and download an application, if the applicant has not correctly completed the Grants.gov registration process, the applicant will not be able to submit the application electronically for EDA’s review. See section I (p. 31) for details of the Grants.gov registration process.

A complete Full Application includes all required documents as set forth below. Full Applications that do not contain all required forms listed in each part or that fail to adhere to the instructions in this NOFO, may be considered incomplete and may not be considered for funding. Additional application materials not requested under this NOFO will not be reviewed or evaluated.

All documentation and data submitted as part of the Full Application package should be current as of the date of application submission.

All application forms submitted through Grants.gov must be signed electronically by an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR); see section I.2 (p. 32) of this NOFO for information on AOR requirements. See also sections D.7 (p. 19) of this NOFO for important information on submitting your application.

Applications must include the following documents:

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

¹¹ Only certain types of eligible entities are required to submit organization documents, and the documentation required varies by eligible entity type. See Section D.2.b.ii(2)(a) (p. 16).

Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation (if applicable)¹²

i. Project Design and Substance

Document
Executive Summary
Project Narrative
Applicant Capacity and Project Management
Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan
Schedule of Major Milestones and Deliverables
Resumes of Key Personnel
Matching Share Documentation (as applicable)

The application must clearly articulate the overall goals of the project, the specific and distinct Scope of Work and concrete activities that will be accomplished under it, specifically **addressing whether the applicant is applying for R&E funds or for NTA funding**. The application also must demonstrate each applicant’s capability to implement the proposed activities in accordance with the requirements of this NOFO. Applications will be evaluated based on the Evaluation Criteria outlined in section E (p. 20). **Applicants should carefully adhere to the word or page limits specified for each section of the application.** Pages beyond the specified page limit for each section may not be read or considered.

(1) Executive Summary

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

(2) Project Narrative

The Project Narrative should address all activities that will be undertaken using the funds requested under this NOFO, a summary of how these activities support the overall project’s goals, and a clear vision for the final report. All applicants also must state which EDA Investment Priority(ies) their proposed project aligns with and clearly describe how.

The Project Narrative may not exceed **12-single sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins**. Within the Project Narrative, applicants should address the following elements as relevant to their specified type of project proposal (R&E or NTA):

If applying for an R&E investment the applicant must address the following sub-criteria:

- Justification for why the proposed project will provide a specific benefit to the Nation’s economic development community;
- Description of how the proposed project is original and innovative, and will add to the body of knowledge supporting decisions made on economic development;
- Description of how the project will promote better understanding of economic development research, policy, and implementation;

¹² Applicants that currently do not have and never have had an ICR agreement with a Federal agency are not required to submit this documentation and may elect to adopt a *de minimis* ICR. See Section D.2.b.ii(2)(b) (p. 17).

- Description of how the proposed project will increase understanding of economic development principles;
- Explanation of how the proposed project supports EDA’s mission to lead the Federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing and supporting American regions for growth and success in the global economy; and
- Clear plan for ensuring products/services produced by the project will remain available to the economic development community, and updated as necessary, without continued EDA financial support.

If applying for an NTA investment the applicant must address the following sub-criteria:

- Description of the technical assistance that will be provided to stakeholders;
- Description of how the proposed project increases the economic development capacity of individuals, firms, or communities;
- Discussion of how the project will stimulate economic development in distressed regions;
- Explanation of how the proposed project supports EDA’s mission to lead the Federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing and supporting American regions for growth and success in the global economy; and
- Clear plan for ensuring products/services produced by the project will remain available to the economic development community, and updated as necessary, without continued EDA financial support.

(3) Applicant Capacity and Project Management

A **separate section** on applicant capacity (whether an organization or private individual), including project management experience, should address the applicant’s ability to perform all activities that will be undertaken using the funds requested under this NOFO, a summary of how these activities support the overall project’s goals, and a clear vision for the final deliverables, including the required report.

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

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

governance structure of the project and should be as specific as possible regarding roles and responsibilities.

(4) Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan

A separate budget narrative must be created and submitted to describe the costs associated with each line item on the Form SF-424A. There is a sample budget template in Appendix C that applicants may use. Supporting documentation listing the components of these categories must be included. The budget narrative should include the following:

- A personnel plan listing all positions proposed to be charged to the project whether as Federal or non-Federal costs. The personnel plan must include the position titles, salaries, percentage of time dedicated to the project, and amount of salary charged to the project for each staff member assigned to the project. The sum of all salaries charged to the project must equal the amount on the “Personnel” budget line item on Form SF-424A. The personnel plan should provide a description of how the personnel will carry out the proposed plan, including the adequacy and previous performance of the proposed team to carry out project activities.
- A description of the source, nature, and amount of all non-EDA funds for the project. As described in section C.2 (p. 10), all non-EDA funds must be committed to the project, available as needed, and not conditioned or encumbered in any way that would preclude their use consistent with the purpose of the project. Applicants must also attach documentation (e.g., commitment letter from the source) confirming non-EDA (matching or cost share) funding.
- As described in section C.2 (p. 10), if the applicant is requesting a federal share higher than 50% of the total project costs, then the applicant must provide a detailed justification as a part of the Budget Narrative as to why the project (a) merits, and is not otherwise feasible without, such an increase to the EDA investment rate; and (b) will be of no or only incidental financial benefit to the recipient.

(5) Schedule of Major Milestones and Deliverables

Applicants must submit a schedule detailing the expected start and end date of all major milestones and deliverables described in the Project Narrative. The schedule should be outlined in months (e.g., “One month from award...”), such that an evaluator could easily discern in how many months the Applicant could start the project from the date of project award, in how many months each of the key project milestones and deliverables will be accomplished from the date of project award, and the anticipated number of months after the date of project award that the project will be completed, generally not to exceed the 18-month award period. Applicants should incorporate preparation of the final report and presentation into the project timeline and period of performance.

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

(6) Resumes of Key Personnel

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

(7) Matching Share Documentation (as applicable)

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

ii. Forms and Supporting Documentation

(1) Forms

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

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

(2) Supporting Documentation

Applications must include the following documentation, as applicable, depending on a given project’s primary service area and the type and history of each applicant organization.

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

(a) Organizational Documentation

Each applicant and co-applicant must provide documentation that supports each applicant’s or co-applicant’s **organizational status as an eligible entity** where applicable (section C.1 (p. 9) of this NOFO) (e.g., articles of incorporation, certificates of good standing, bylaws).

- States, Indian tribes, cities or other political subdivisions of States, and institutions of higher education that are 100% publicly-controlled are not required to submit organizational documentation.

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

(b) Copy of Current, Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

If indirect costs are included in the budget, the applicant must include documentation to support the indirect cost rate it is using (unless claiming the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below).

For most applicants, this will entail the submission of a copy of its current, approved, and negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). The maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which EDA will reimburse a recipient shall be the lesser of the (1) line-item amount for the Federal Share of indirect costs contained in the EDA approved budget for the award, or (2) Federal Share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on either (a) the indirect cost rate approved by EDA (or applicable cognizant Federal agency), provided that the cost rate is current at the time the costs were incurred and provided that the rate is approved on or before the award end date, or (b) other acceptable documentation as indicated below.

If the applicant does not have a current or pending NICRA, it may propose indirect costs in its budget; however, the applicant must prepare and submit an allocation plan and rate proposal for approval within 90 days from the award start date (unless claiming the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below). See 2 C.F.R. part 200 Apps. III, IV, V, VI, VII for guidance. The allocation plan and the rate proposal shall be submitted to EDA's Office of Regional Affairs (or applicable cognizant Federal agency). If the applicant chooses to pursue this option, it should include a statement in its Budget Narrative that it does not have a current or pending NICRA and will submit an allocation plan and rate proposal to EDA or the applicant's cognizant Federal agency for approval.

In accordance with 2 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 or an Indian tribe that receives less than \$35 million in direct federal funding per year, discussed below). No documentation is required to justify the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate; however, an applicant electing to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent must include a statement in its Budget Narrative that it does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate and is electing to charge the de minimis rate.

Note if the applicant is a State or local unit of government (or a Tribe) that receives less than \$35,000,000 in direct Federal funding per year it may submit any of the following:

- i. A Certificate of Indirect Costs from DOI or EDA;
- ii. Acknowledgment received from EDA and Certificate of Indirect Costs in the form prescribed at 2 C.F.R. pt. 200, app. VII;

- iii. Cost Allocation Plan approved by a Federal agency (note that cost allocation plans or indirect cost rates approved by state agencies are not acceptable); or
- iv. NICRA.

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

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable¹³, applicants are required to: (i) be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting their application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in their application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. EDA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements, and if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time EDA is ready to make an award, EDA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Recipients will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. parts 25 and 170.

4. Submission Dates and Times

There are no application deadlines under this NOFO. EDA plans to accept applications on a rolling basis between FY2021-2023 or until the publication of a new RNTA NOFO. EDA may cancel or withdraw the NOFO at any time, and all funding is subject to the availability of funding.

a. Concept Proposal

A Concept Proposal is **mandatory**; EDA will only review Full Applications submitted by applicants who submitted a Concept Proposal. Concept Proposals must be submitted via email to rnta@eda.gov.

b. Full Application

Full Applications will only be accepted electronically through www.grants.gov (Grants.gov) at the link that EDA will provide with its response to Concept Proposals. EDA will not accept paper (hard copy), facsimile or email transmissions of applications.

¹³ Individuals who apply for or receive agency awards or direct subawards are exempt from the requirements of the unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)). See 2 C.F.R. § 25.110(b).

5. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under this 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 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 areas¹⁴. To find out more about a State’s process under EO 12372, applicants may contact their State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC). Names and addresses of some States’ SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget’s home page at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf>. Question 19 of Form SF-424 allows applicants to demonstrate compliance with EO 12372.

6. Funding Restrictions

EDA Investment assistance may not be used to start or expand a private business.

In general, EDA does not reimburse pre-award project costs. Applicants that are in need of such reimbursement should work closely with the EDA representative for their State 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 EDA or DOC be held responsible for application preparation expenditures, which are distinguished from pre-award project costs.

7. Other Submission Requirements

a. Means of Submission

Concept Proposals must be submitted via rnta@eda.gov. In its response to concept proposals received, EDA will provide the Grants.gov link to submit a Full Application. FULL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED THROUGH GRANTS.GOV. EDA will not accept paper, facsimile, or email transmissions of applications for this program except in cases of documented systems issues as described in section I (p. 31) of this NOFO. The preferred electronic file format for attachments is Adobe portable document format (PDF); however, EDA will accept electronic files in Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel. Note that the Grants.gov registration is a multi-stage process that involves a number of steps, including validation, verification, and registration through other websites such as sam.gov. See section I (p. 31) of this NOFO. Please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html> for resources and guides on the Grants.gov registration process.

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

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

validation process may take 24 to 48 hours to complete. Applications that contain errors will be rejected by Grants.gov and will not be forwarded to EDA for review. The applicant must correct the error before Grants.gov will accept and validate the application.

Please see section I (p. 31) of this NOFO for more detailed instructions and information on the requirements for submitting applications electronically via Grants.gov.

E. Application Review Information

Throughout the review and selection process, EDA, at its sole discretion, may request from applicants written clarification or corrected or missing documents and require that applicants provide such clarifications or corrections in order to continue to be considered for an award under this NOFO. 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 rejection of your application. EDA may ask applicants to clarify application materials, objectives, and work plans, or modify budgets or other specifics as necessary to comply with Federal requirements.

1. Evaluation Criteria

a. Concept Proposal

Concept Proposals will be reviewed against the following nine criteria on a “Completely Addresses”, “Somewhat Addresses”, or “Does not Address” scale. Concept Proposals received under both the R&E and NTA programs will be scored competitively against other Concept Proposals received for the same program using the following common criteria:

Summary of Criteria	Completely Addresses	Somewhat Addresses	Does not Address
Economic Development Need			
Strategic Approach			
Alignment with EDA’s and RNTA’s Mission			
Feasibility of Deliverables and Timeline			
Feasibility of Budget			
Impacts and National Perspective			
Organizational/Applicant Capacity and Personnel			
Cross Collaboration with Partners			
Sustainability, Scalability, and Dissemination			

All applicants that submit a complete Concept Proposal will receive a letter from EDA notifying them of the review results. Based on the results of these reviews and EDA’s option to encourage a project—based on discretion provided through the Evaluation Factors listed above—the letter from EDA will encourage or discourage the development of a Full Application by the applicant. Even though a Full Application may be discouraged, an applicant is not precluded from submitting a Full Application. However, by discouraging the development of a Full Application based on the Concept Proposal, EDA intends to convey its lack of programmatic interest in the proposed project to save the applicant the time and expense of preparing a Full Application that is unlikely to be selected for award.

If EDA encourages an applicant to submit a Full Application, EDA is not obligated to select that project for award and cannot guarantee that the project will receive funding. Applicants must submit a Full Application through Grants.gov to be considered for funding.

Applicants can expect to receive a response to their Concept Proposal approximately 30 days after EDA receives the Proposal.

b. Full Application

To apply for an award under this announcement, an eligible applicant must submit a completed Full Application to EDA in accordance with section D (p. 11) of this NOFO. Applications that do not meet all requirements or that exceed the word/page limitations set forth in section D.2.b (p. 11) of this announcement may be considered non-responsive and may not be considered for review.

An Investment Review Committee (IRC) comprised of at least three Federal employees will be formed to review applications. The review panel will evaluate applications using the evaluation criteria identified below.

The following criteria apply to all applications, unless criteria are specifically stated to be for R&E or for NTA. Please read the criteria carefully. The number of points that can be earned for each category of criteria is listed below, with 100 points the maximum total that can be earned. All projects applying for EDA funding through this NOFO should clearly articulate and have a logical nexus to supporting EDA’s Investment Priorities¹⁵ and specific programmatic funding priorities that EDA wishes to fund under this NOFO.

Summary of Criteria
Organizational or Applicant Capacity and Personnel
Strategic Approach
Feasibility of Budget and Financial Match
Feasibility of Deliverables and Timeline
Sustainability, Scalability, and Dissemination

¹⁵ EDA’s Investment Priorities can be found at <https://www.eda.gov/about/investment-priorities.htm>. The priorities may be updated from time to time; any future revisions will be reflected on EDA’s website on January 15, April 15, June 15, or September 15 of each year.

Organizational or Applicant Capacity and Personnel (15 Points)

- Ability of the applicant to carry out the proposed work and achieve success based on the education, experience, and professional accomplishments of each organization and all key personnel;
- Qualified personnel that, as a group, demonstrate project management expertise, as well as demonstrated success in all aspects of the scope of work;
- Quality of the partnerships and extent of partnership commitments;
- Appropriateness, quality, and availability of any facilities, materials and resources to be used in implementing the proposed plan; and
- Verifiable quality of past performance on similar projects; applicants may be asked to provide references to substantiate this information.

R&E specific-criteria:

Expertise of the applicant in the various subject matter necessary to implement research on performance measurement, metrics, and economic development and to deliver practical, sound recommendations.

NTA specific-criteria:

Expertise of the applicant in the various subject matter necessary to deliver technical assistance to applicable regions across different organizational and issue types including: (a) business and industry; (b) business and industry intermediaries and/or consortia; (c) State and/or local government leaders; (d) regional and/or local economic development; (e) secondary, post-secondary, and adult education; (f) regional and/or local workforce development; and (g) organized labor and/or community-based organizations.

Strategic Approach (30 Points)

- The extent to which the applicant describes how the proposed project fits within one or more of EDA’s Investment Priorities; and
- The extent to which the applicant describes how the proposed project fits within one or more RNTA programmatic areas of emphasis (see [R&E examples](#) and [NTA examples](#)).

R&E specific-criteria:

- Extent to which the proposed project will provide a specific benefit to economic development practitioners;

- Extent to which the proposed project is original and substantially contributes to the existing body of knowledge to support decisions made in economic development;
- Demonstrates that the project will support, promote, and improve understanding of economic development research, policy, and implementation; and
- Supports EDA’s mission to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing and supporting American regions for growth and success in the global economy.

NTA specific-criteria:

- Compelling description of how the project will provide technical assistance to stakeholders and how the stakeholders will benefit from the provision of the technical assistance;
- Demonstrates how the proposed project will increase capacity of individuals, firms, or communities;
- Ability of the proposed project to stimulate economic development in distressed regions;
- Strength of proposed project to increase understanding of economic development principles; and
- Supports EDA’s mission to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing and supporting American regions for growth and success in the global economy.

Feasibility of Budget and Financial Match (15 points)

- Strength of the proposed management plan to achieve the project goals and manage partner organizations and project staff;
- Completeness of a proposed schedule and budget, including the extent to which appropriate targets, metrics, and milestones are clearly defined;
- Strength of proposed financial match including documented commitments;
- Identification of how Federal funds will be used and how financial match will be used; and
- Strength of partnership collaboration and interest in the concept as demonstrated by willingness of partners to contribute resources (i.e., amount of match contributed, financial or otherwise).

Feasibility of Deliverables and Timeline (15 points)

- Strength of the timeline to work toward key milestones and dates, measure progress toward well-defined targets, and the likelihood that metrics and milestones will be met;

- Proposed plan to work with Federal Project Manager and Federal Project Management Team; and
- Extent to which challenges and risks are identified and mitigation strategies are proposed.

Sustainability, Scalability, and Dissemination (15 points)

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

Cross-Collaboration with other RNTA partners and grantees (10 Points)

- Proposed plan to work collaboratively, where feasible and practicable, with RNTA partners, stakeholders, and other grantees; and
- Clear explanation of how the proposed project fits with, compliments, or adds to/strengthens previously funded projects under the RNTA portfolio and the broader national EDA “portfolio”.

2. Review and Selection Process

a. Review for Eligibility and Completeness (Technical Review)

EDA staff will initially conduct an eligibility and technical completeness review (the “Technical Review”) of all Concept Proposals and Full Applications received. Concept Proposals or Full Applications received from ineligible entities will not be considered for funding. Concept Proposals that do not address all required elements in the slide-deck as described in section D.2 (p. 11) of this NOFO may be deemed non-responsive, and the proposing organization may not receive a link to submit a Full Application (see section E.1.b (p. 21)). Full Applications that do not contain all forms and required documentation listed in section D.2.b (p.11) of this NOFO may be deemed non-responsive and excluded from further consideration. EDA expects all applicants to complete and include all required forms and documentation. However, EDA, in its sole discretion, may determine that an omission is curable and therefore may continue its consideration of the application despite the deficiency.

b. Investment Review Committee (IRC)

Merit reviewers will evaluate the Concept Proposal against the evaluation criteria enumerated in section E.1 (p. 20) of this NOFO. Each Concept Proposal will be reviewed by at least three merit reviewers. Merit reviewers may include, but are not limited to, DOC and EDA personnel.

An IRC, comprised of at least three federal employees, will evaluate Full Applications against the evaluation criteria in section E.1 (p. 20) of this NOFO. Full Application scores will be determined by each panelist on an individual basis, and the average of the individual ratings will produce a panel score. Based on its consideration of the evaluation criteria, the IRC will prepare a priority order of funding recommendations for the EDA Grants Officer. R&E and NTA projects will be evaluated independently of each other based on the evaluation criteria of the specific program.

c. Due Diligence

If the IRC recommends a Full Application, the applicant still may have to complete certain due diligence requirements. EDA may request that the 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 Full 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.

d. Grants Officer's Decision

Full Applications recommended by the IRC and deemed fully compliant with applicable rules and regulations will be forwarded to the EDA Grants Officer under this NOFO. The Grants Officer has been delegated the authority to make the final decision on whether to fund a Full Application and may select a project for funding that differs from the IRC's recommendations based on any of the following five (5) Selection Factors or use these five Selection Factors to break a tie for applications that are otherwise considered equal in merit:

- i. A determination that the selected application better meets the overall objectives of the R&E and NTA program (*See* section A.1 (p. 5) of this NOFO);
- ii. The ability of a project to start quickly;
- iii. The extent to which the selection of the application, alone or in the context of other applications, supports EDA's compliance with appropriations law requirements and report language guidance;
- iv. The applicant's performance under previous awards including whether the grantee submitted required performance reports and data; or
- v. The availability of program funding.

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

3. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) Review

EDA, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS). *See* 41 U.S.C. § 2313.

Each applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. EDA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.205.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Federal Award Notification

If an application is selected for funding and the applicant successfully and timely completes all due diligence requirements, the expectation is that the EDA Grants Officer will issue the grant 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) described in section F.2 (p. 26), below.

EDA will provide Form CD-450 electronically via the award package to the AOR listed on the applicant's Form SF-424. The applicant's AOR must sign and return the Form CD-450 without modification within 30 days of the date of EDA's signature on the form. By signing Form CD-450, the applicant agrees to comply with all award provisions.

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 electronically in writing to the applicant's AOR. 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.

EDA will apply the Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (ST&Cs) applicable on the date of the award. The ST&Cs may be accessed at the following website: http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/default.htm.

EDA will apply the Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements dated December 30, 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>.

3. Reporting

a. Financial, Performance, and Impact Reports

All recipients are required to submit financial, performance, and impact reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant award, generally no less than semi-annually. All project progress and financial reports must be submitted to the applicable EDA program officer in an electronic format to be determined at the time of award.

Recipients will be required to track and submit performance data on EDA-sponsored outputs and resulting outcomes, semi-annually and annually, respectively, as described in paragraph 2.D.iii. As part of its administration of this program, EDA may conduct program evaluations. If so, recipients of grants under this program may need to furnish performance data to evaluators, including but not limited to EDA staff and outside parties contracted by EDA. EDA may also, for research purposes linked to improving economic outcomes, choose to share data with other Federal partners, including but not limited to statistical agencies.

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 subawards¹⁶ 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 sub-awards over \$25,000. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. part 170, which can be accessed at <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=40023e1db665ebc89de0d086aaabf96a&mc=true&node=pt2.1.170&rgn=div5>.

c. Government Performance and Results Act

EDA will require additional data on activities, outputs, and actual impact of the funded investment, in part to fulfill the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). EDA anticipates that recipients will be expected to track their engagement activities within the scope of work, with project beneficiaries, and other project stakeholders. EDA further anticipates recipients will be expected to collect data, using surveys of beneficiaries or clients if

¹⁶ 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.

necessary, on the outputs and outcomes of their activities, such as the number of strategic plans or economic development tools developed, the number of new business partnerships formed, or the range of new capabilities acquired. EDA plans to collect this information using Forms ED-916 (Semi-annual Program Outputs Questionnaire for EDA grantees), ED-917 (Annual Capacity Outcomes Questionnaire for EDA Grantees serving clients), and ED-918 (Annual Capacity Outcomes Questionnaire for EDA Grantees). For more information, please refer to <https://www.eda.gov/performance/gpra>.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

For additional information on the R&E and NTA programs please email RNTA@eda.gov. EDA's website at www.eda.gov contains 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

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, which are now controlling, only State recipients are expressly exempt from this prohibition. Local governments and Indian Tribes may also take advantage of the exemption in two narrow circumstances: (i) if they are required (by statute, for example) to follow the State's procurement rules in full and without exception; or (ii) if they are required to follow a specific State procurement rule that creates an explicit conflict with the prohibition in 2 C.F.R. § 200.319(a) (i.e., there is a statute that requires or permits the local government or Indian Tribe to award the final procurement to the same contractor that developed the draft specifications). Absent one of these two scenarios, the local government or Indian Tribe must comply with the prohibition. Applicants are encouraged to contact the EDA email address listed in section G (p. 28) of this NOFO with any questions regarding application of this regulation.

4. Certifications Required by Annual Appropriations Acts for Corporations and for Awards over \$5 Million

As discussed in section D.3 (p. 18), 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.

5. 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).

6. EDA's Non-relocation Policy

Should an application be 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. Applicants are reminded that EDA or the DOC's Office of Inspector General also may conduct an audit of an award at any time.

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:

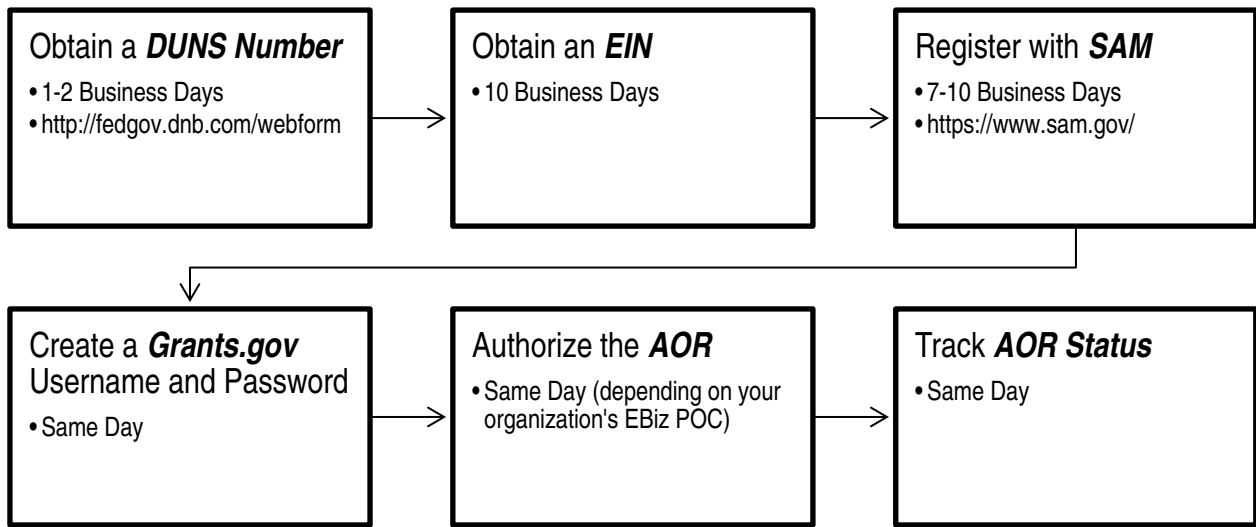
- Navigate to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>;
- Click “Search for Opportunity Package”;
- In the “Funding Opportunity Number” field, enter “**EDA-HDQ-RNTA-2021**”;
- Click “Search”;
- Click “Apply”;
- Enter your email address (if you would like to receive updates 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.¹⁷ 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](http://www.grants.gov) provides the following notice with respect to form field limitations and special characters: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

¹⁷ If applying as an individual, please follow these instructions: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/individual-registration.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 (p. 28) of this announcement to inquire if EDA is in receipt of the applicant's submission.

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

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 (p. 28) of this NOFO. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with

Grants.gov. Please note that problems with an applicant's computer system or equipment are **not** considered systems issues. Similarly, an applicant's failure to, e.g., (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered AOR submits the application, or (iii) notice receipt of an email message from Grants.gov are **not** considered systems issues. A Grants.gov systems issue is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. In the event of a confirmed systems issue, EDA reserves the right to accept an application in an alternate format.

Applicants should access the following link for assistance in navigating Grants.gov and for a list of useful resources: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>. If you do not find an answer to your question under the "Applicant FAQs," try consulting the "Grants Online User Guide" at https://www.grants.gov/help/html/help/Get_Started/Get_Started.htm or contacting Grants.gov by email at support@grants.gov or telephone at 1-800-518-4726. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except on Federal holidays.

Appendix A
Full Application Checklist

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

Requirement	Location
<input type="checkbox"/> All required forms (ED 900A, SF424, SF424A, CD511, SFLLL)	Section D.2.b (p. 11)
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Summary (500 words or less)	Section D.2.b.i (p.13)
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Narrative (may not exceed 12-single sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins)	Section D.2.b.i(2); (p. 13)
<input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Applicant Capacity and Project Management (may not exceed 5-single sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins)	Section D.2.b.i(3) (p. 14)
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan	Section D.2.b.i(4) (p. 15)
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule of Major Milestones and Deliverables	Section D.2.b.i(5) (p. 15)
<input type="checkbox"/> Addenda (including resumes of key personnel; organizational documentation, if applicable; and a copy of a current, approved indirect cost rate agreement, if applicable)	Section D.2.b.i(6) (p.15) Section D.2.b.ii(2)(a) (p. 16) Section D.2.b.ii(2)(b) (p. 17)
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of Matching Share	Section D.2.b.i(7) (p. 16)

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

Budget Template

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

Gantt Chart

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