

# Frequently Asked Questions About the Accelerate R2 Network Challenge

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## 1. ELIGIBILITY

### a. Who is eligible to apply for funding?

The following entities are eligible recipients under the Accelerate R2 Network Challenge:

1. a State;
2. an Indian tribe;
3. a city or other political subdivision of a State;
4. an entity whose application is supported by a State or a political subdivision of a state and that is—
  - i. a nonprofit organization,
  - ii. an institution of higher education,
  - iii. a public-private partnership,
  - iv. a science or research park,
  - v. a Federal laboratory, **or**
  - vi. an economic development organization or similar entity; **or**
5. a consortium of any of the immediately aforementioned entities.

EDA has promulgated [regulations](#) that provide additional guidance on eligibility.<sup>1</sup> For-profit entities that are demonstrably institutions of higher education, parties to public-private partnerships, science or research parks, Federal laboratories, and economic development organizations or similar entities are eligible for funding; however, EDA strongly encourages for-profit entities to read these FAQs and the NOFO carefully. Note that EDA is **NOT** authorized to provide grants to individuals under this Program.

### b. Are there other statutes and policy requirements that I need to know and that will impact these awards?

Yes; as indicated in the [NOFO](#), EDA award recipients must comply with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (“Uniform Guidance”) as found in 2 C.F.R. part 200, the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, and the Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements. In addition, recipients must comply with applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations and policies governing this program. These include but are not limited to laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, religion, or sex.

### c. In order to apply as a nonprofit organization must I be legally organized as a 501(c)(3)?

No; however, because EDA has adopted the definition of nonprofit organization as set forth in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at §200.70, any entity applying as a nonprofit must provide information that the organization is: (1) operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization.<sup>2</sup>

### d. What is a public-private partnership and what documents should I submit to EDA to demonstrate my eligibility?

EDA defines a public-private partnership as a relationship formalized by contractual agreement between a public agency and a private-sector entity that reasonably defines the terms of collaboration in the delivery

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<sup>1</sup> 13 C.F.R. §§ 312.3 (2017).

<sup>2</sup> 13 C.F.R. § 312.3 (2017) (referencing 2 C.F.R. § 200.70 (2017)).

and financing of a public project.<sup>3</sup> EDA will typically review agreements for items such as the purpose and objectives of the partnership, the binding/contractual nature of the relationship, the duties and responsibilities of each party, and the duration of the agreement. The scope of the relationship documented in the agreement may be limited to the proposal set forth in a given partnership's grant application or may encompass a broader program, initiative, or other set of activities or goals. In most cases, a letter of support from a public entity alone, without additional documentation demonstrating a formal, binding relationship between the parties, will likely be found insufficient to establish eligibility under this entity category. EDA reserves the right to request additional information from applicants to establish eligibility, as necessary. Applicants with further questions concerning these documentation requirements should contact EDA's Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE).

**e. How should organizations submit an application under a public-private partnership?**

Organizations that plan to apply as a public-private partnership (PPP) may submit their application in one of four ways:

1. The private entity that is party to the PPP submits an application on behalf of the PPP that includes the contractual agreement establishing the PPP, and that clearly documents the roles and responsibilities of each member of the PPP.
2. The public entity that is party to the PPP submits an application on behalf of the PPP that includes the contractual agreement establishing the PPP, and that clearly documents the roles and responsibilities of each member of the PPP.
3. The PPP submits an application as a single entity if:
  - a. the PPP is an established entity, independent of the parties to the PPP and with its own organizational structure and clearly defined management team; and
  - b. the application includes the contractual agreement establishing the PPP, and clearly documents the roles and responsibilities of each member of the PPP.
4. If the public and private partners are equally involved in the management and/or carrying out of the grant, then the entities of the PPP should submit as co-applicants. The application should include the contractual agreement establishing the PPP, and clearly document the roles and responsibilities of each member of the PPP.

See Question 1(d) of this document for additional guidance on establishing a PPP through a formalized contractual agreement.

Note that regardless of the approach taken to submitting an application, each party to the PPP will be considered jointly and severally liable for fulfilling the terms of the award, including post-award grant reporting and all documentation requirements.

**f. What is an economic development organization (EDO) and what documents should I submit to EDA to demonstrate my eligibility?**

EDA defines an EDO as an organization whose primary purpose is to support the economic development of a community or region.<sup>4</sup> In order to demonstrate eligibility status under this category, EDA will look to the organization's Articles of Incorporation, Charter, Resolutions, Bylaws, and/or other documents that may be relevant to establish the primary purpose of the organization. Applicants are encouraged to submit all relevant documentation to EDA for evaluation. EDA reserves the right to request additional information from

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<sup>3</sup> 13 C.F.R. § 312.3 (2017).

<sup>4</sup> 13 C.F.R. § 312.3 (2017).

applicants to establish eligibility, as necessary. If applicants have further questions concerning these documentation requirements, they should contact OIE.

- g. My organization has not yet formed, or we have formed, but the organization is not yet registered in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) or on Grants.gov. May the organization still apply for a grant under this NOFO?**

In order to be considered for funding, applicants must submit a complete application package by **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, March 11, 2020** which includes demonstrating eligibility and Grants.gov registration. As a result, EDA strongly encourages applicants who are in the process of forming, or have formed but are not yet registered on Grants.gov, to do so **as soon as possible**. Full application registration requirements include obtaining a unique entity identifier (commonly referred to as the Data University Numbering System or DUNS number) and an active registration in SAM.gov, a process that can take up to **10 business days**. For further details, see Section D.8 of the [NOFO](#) and <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>.

- h. Will any previous grants that EDA awarded my organization affect my organization's competitiveness for the Accelerate R2 Network Challenge?**

Past and current recipients of EDA awards are eligible to apply for the Accelerate R2 Network Challenge. However, unsatisfactory performance under prior Federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding, and the Grants Officer may take into consideration past performance on previous awards when making award selections.

## **2. CO-APPLICANTS**

- a. How do you determine who the co-applicant is and what forms are they required to submit?**

If the other entities in question will be partnered with the lead applicant in the management and/or carrying out of the grant, then that entity may be considered a co-applicant. For assistance identifying co-applicants, please reach out to OIE. See Question 6(a) of this document or Section G of the [NOFO](#). Co-applicants are generally required to submit the same forms that the primary applicant must provide. See Section D.2 and Appendix C of the [NOFO](#) for specific requirements and a comprehensive checklist of the documents required for all co-applicants. All co-applicants must meet the eligibility requirements described above.

- b. EDA expects to make either a) a single award for a nationwide R2 Network, or b) two awards, one for a nationwide Response Network and one for a nationwide Resiliency Network. Are co-applicants eligible to apply for any of these options?**

Yes, co-applicants are eligible and encouraged to apply for an award for a nationwide R2 network or for a nationwide Response Network or Resiliency Network. EDA views co-applicants as a way to leverage diverse industry expertise and stakeholder partnerships.

- c. What if my organization plans to engage a third party that is not a co-applicant to perform a portion of the project activities? Is the third party considered a co-applicant?**

If your organization intends to enter into an agreement with a third party to accomplish a portion of a project's activities, then the third party is not considered a co-applicant. Third parties must be retained pursuant to an open and free competitive process that is in compliance with the Uniform Guidance.

**d. Are applicants limited to submitting one application?**

There is no limit to the number of applications an organization may submit; however, applicants should clearly indicate that they are submitting multiple different applications addressing either creating a nationwide R2 network or a standalone network addressing either disaster response or disaster resiliency efforts, rather than changes to a previously submitted application. Note that EDA plans to make one or at most two awards under the Accelerate R2 Network Challenge.

**3. FUNDING AND BUDGET**

**a. The NOFO discusses a maximum amount for an EDA grant, but can applicants apply for less than that amount?**

Yes, an applicant can apply for less than the maximum amount stated in the [NOFO](#). EDA encourages applicants to develop compelling applications that efficiently use federal dollars.

**b. Are grant amounts allotted by year or for the entire project period?**

The total Federal grant awarded (up to \$1,000,000 for a nationwide R2 Network; or two awards, one for a nationwide Response Network and one for a nationwide Resiliency Network, each of which may be up to \$700,000) is based on the entire project period, not per year.

**c. What can be considered in-kind contributions?**

In-kind contributions provided by the applicant may be used to meet the required non-Federal share of the total project costs. In-kind contributions consist of non-cash contributions directly related to the proposed project, and typically include items such as space, equipment, or services. The market value of space can be used as in-kind contribution for the life of the project. All itemized valuations of any in-kind matching funds should be included in the Budget Narrative. All in-kind contributions must be eligible project costs and otherwise allowable under the Uniform Guidance and will be evaluated by EDA in accordance with these requirements.

**d. How do you determine allowable expenses that can be charged to the award?**

Allowable costs incurred are subject to [2 C.F.R. 200, Subpart E](#). If applicants have questions concerning whether a particular cost is allowable, they should contact OIE.

**e. Is there a limitation on the amount of indirect costs I may claim?**

Indirect costs are allowed based on the rate approved by your cognizant agency or as otherwise allowable under the Uniform Guidance; EDA requires copies of the applicant's or co-applicant's currently approved indirect cost rate agreement or agreements, if any, at the time of application. If applicants are new to the Federal grant process, or do not have a current indirect cost rate, we encourage them to discuss this process with OIE POC well before the end of the application window. See Question 6(a) of this document or Section G of the [NOFO](#).

**f. What is the minimum match required?**

Applicants must provide a minimum of one-to-one (i.e. 50 percent) in matching share. Applicants must demonstrate that this matching share (cash, in-kind, or a combination of cash and in-kind contributions) is available, unencumbered, and committed to the project. Applicants should also consider the nature and source of the matching share, as funds from Federal sources often cannot be considered as matching

funds for other Federal projects. The budget narrative, SF-424A, and commitment letters should clearly and consistently document the total project budget and should delineate and substantiate matching share, both cash and in-kind, including appropriate valuations.

**g. What is required for a Commitment Letter?**

A Commitment Letter must demonstrate that matching share (whether cash or in-kind) referenced in the SF-424, SF-424A, Project and Budget Narratives, and elsewhere in the application will be available, unencumbered, and committed at the time of the award and that is signed by the authorized representatives of the respective organization providing the matching funds (e.g., the applicant, co-applicant, or third-party organization). Where an application relies on multiple organizations for matching share, multiple Commitment Letters—one from each organization providing match—are required. Commitment Letters do not count towards the Budget Narrative's 4-page limit; these letters can be uploaded as attachments in Grants.gov.

**h. May unrecovered indirect costs count towards the required matching share?**

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.306(c), unrecovered indirect costs may only be applied toward the matching share with EDA's prior approval, and therefore applicants seeking to apply unrecovered indirect costs to the matching share should seek EDA's guidance early in the application process.

**i. Are matching funds subject to grant usage restrictions?**

Non-Federal matching funds are governed by the same principles and requirements as the Federal/EDA funds.<sup>5</sup>

#### **4. LETTER OF INTENT AND FULL APPLICATION**

**a. How will Letters of Intent and Full Applications be reviewed?**

Letters of Intent and Full Applications will be reviewed based on the process and evaluation criteria outlined in Section E of the [NOFO](#).

**b. Is a Letter of Intent required?**

No, a Letter of Intent is not required, but it is *strongly encouraged* so that program staff can provide feedback on an applicant's eligibility and on whether proposed activities align with the goals and objectives of the Accelerate R2 Network Challenge, thereby allowing applicants to avoid incurring the cost of preparing Full Applications that are inconsistent with the program's goals and objectives. If EDA encourages an applicant to submit a Full Application, EDA is not obligated to select that project for and cannot guarantee that the project will receive funding. Applicants must submit a Full Application through Grants.gov to be considered for funding.

**c. When is the deadline for submission and where do I submit the application package?**

The Letter of Intent must be received by EDA via email at [OIE@eda.gov](mailto:OIE@eda.gov) no later than **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, January 8, 2020**. Full Applications should be submitted electronically via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) (Grants.gov) and must be received by **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, March 11, 2020**. EDA will not accept paper, facsimile or email transmissions of applications for this program

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<sup>5</sup> See Subpart E of the Uniform Guidance.

except as provided in Section D.8.i of the [NOFO](#). Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

**d. Where can I access the most up-to-date State Single Point-of-Contact (SPOC) list related to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs”?**

The most recent list is available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SPOC-February-2019.pdf>. Note that “States that are not listed on [the Intergovernmental Review (SPOC List)] page have chosen not to participate in the intergovernmental review process, and therefore do not have a SPOC. If you are located within a State that does not have a SPOC, you may send application materials directly to a Federal awarding agency.”<sup>6</sup>

**e. How many State Single Point-of-Contacts (SPOCs) do I need to contact?**

If an applicant or co-applicant’s primary location is in a State that participates in the intergovernmental review process established by Executive Order 12372, EDA requires the following documentation:

State does not participate	No documentation required
State participates; this grant program not subject to review	Documentation (e.g., a State executive order, a signed letter from the SPOC) showing that this grant program is not subject to review
State participates; this grant program is subject to review	Documentation (e.g., a signed letter from the SPOC) with comments indicating that this project was not selected for review, or if the comment period has expired or the comments were not received, a copy of the applicant’s request for comments

**f. How many letters demonstrating that the application is supported by a State or a political subdivision of a State are necessary?**

Generally, only one letter will be necessary so long as the letter demonstrates that the applicant’s or co-applicant’s application is supported by a State or a political subdivision of a State (e.g., counties, municipalities) where the applicant is primarily located (consistent with the location described in the applicant’s Project Narrative and Questions 14 and 16 of the SF-424). Examples of authorities who may indicate such support include State and local executive branch officials (e.g., State governors, State cabinet members, mayors or other municipal executives) and State and local legislators (e.g. State legislators, city councilpersons). Support from Federal officials, including but not limited to members of the United States Congress, does not meet this requirement. If, however, the applicant or co-applicant is a State, an Indian tribe, or a city or other political subdivision of a State, this requirement does not apply.

**5. AWARD NOTIFICATION**

**a. When and how will applicants be notified?**

All applicants should expect to receive grant award notification approximately 60 days from the Full Application deadline as set forth in the [NOFO](#). OIE will notify applicants via email using the email addresses provided for the authorized representative and application point-of-contact on the SF-424 form.

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<sup>6</sup> Office of Management and Budget, Intergovernmental Review (SPOC List), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SPOC-February-2019.pdf>.

## **6. CONTACT US**

### **a. What is the easiest way to contact the Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE)?**

If you require additional information, please contact OIE by email at [ois@eda.gov](mailto:ois@eda.gov) or by phone at (202) 482-8001.