Agenda

Program Overview
- Presenters
- Application Numbers

Technical Review
- Common mistakes

Merit Review
- Program Alignment
- 6 Evaluation Criteria

Next Steps
- Feedback
- Future Funding Opportunities
$25M Competition

238 applications

Total Federal Share Requested: $141 M

Funded 44 grantees = $29M

18% grant rate
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Technical Review

- **Match** – short on match
- **Commitment letters** – missing or unclear
- **Eligibility** – must meet criteria
- **Letters of Support** – must be from a political subdivision of a state
- **CEDS alignment** – failed to mention CEDS or CEDS-equivalent
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**Program Alignment**

Common Issues:

- Focusing on small business development vs. innovative ecosystem development.
- Addressing COVID impacts.

Example: Applicant’s SOW wasn’t specific on how selected beneficiaries and using technical assistance provided through this award aligned with SPRINT’s goal of growing innovative, tech-driven businesses that will respond to the economic, health or safety risks created by the pandemic.
Project Support and Connectivity

Common Issues:

• Project teams that lacked diverse constituencies with a long-term commitment to innovation or growing stronger regional entrepreneurial ecosystems.

• Unclear on role of project partners in achieving grant goals.

Example: Applicant didn’t highlight how project partners would be used in grant or how they connected to region or through CEDS alignment.
Engagement and Diversity

Common Issues:

- Not enough outreach or engagement to underrepresented populations.
- Project didn’t incorporate strategies to promote inclusive regional ecosystem.

Example: Applicant addressed this section as an afterthought and not a project strength. Should include comprehensive engagement strategies.
Economic and Innovation Impact

Common issues:
• Failed to demonstrate how the project will enhance the capacity of the region to create jobs, foster regional innovation, and/or attract private investment.

• Lack of, or unclear metrics to show economic impact to the region

Example: Proposed solution did not directly respond to problem as stated in the project narrative.
Assets and Infrastructure

Common issues:
- Unclear understanding of the existing competitive strengths, assets in the region or how they can be leveraged for the scope of work.
- Did not address project’s sustainability after the award period has ended.

Example: Fails to demonstrate a clear understanding of the specific region and how to leverage its assets and infrastructure.
Resilience and Recovery

Common issues:

• Did not clearly promote economic recovery as demonstrated through metrics and outcomes.

• Did not clearly identify barriers to be eliminated.

• Unclear link to how program will expand and accelerate technology-based economic development for the region.

Example: Applicant’s expected outcomes were not clearly spelled out or unreasonable or missing correlation with the Covid-19 pandemic.
Project Feasibility

Common issues:
- Unclear ability to execute proposed project.
- Budget having unallowable proposed costs to deliver the project.
- Are costs reasonable compared to other applications with a similar scope of impact?

Example: Insufficient description of the momentum behind the project and discrepancies between budgets listed on the application documents (i.e. SF-424, SF-424A, and Budget Narrative) resulted in unclear ability to execute the proposed project.
**Tips for Grant Writing**

- Start conversations with partners early – gain a clear understanding of what your region's needs are
- Have an external partner read your full proposal (including budget) for clarity
- Check your math across your entire application (SF-424, SF-424a, Budget Narrative)
- Use the tools and resources (checklists, webinars, budget template, videos, etc.)
- Ask us!
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Next Steps

1. Watch Debrief Webinar

2. Read your proposal in its entirety

3. Evaluate application for strengths & weaknesses

4. Set up 1:1 Feedback with OIE

Tips:
- Look for the common mistakes noted here
- Don’t skip over your budget
- Invite leadership to the feedback session

oie@eda.gov
Other Funding Opportunities

EDA
U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

• www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities

Build to Scale

• Venture & Capital Challenges
• $38M available for FY 2021

STEM TALENT CHALLENGE

• $2M available for FY 2021
Thank you!

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