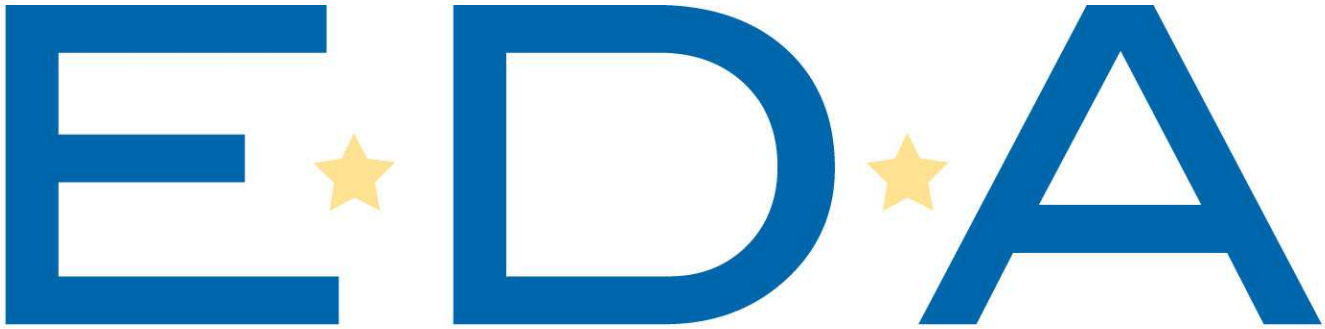
STEM TALENT CHALLENGE PROGRAM

Notice of Funding Opportunity



U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Office of **INNOVATION** *and*

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Executive Summary

Federal Awarding Agency Name	U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce
Funding Opportunity Title	FY 2021 STEM Talent Challenge Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Announcement Type	This NOFO publishes EDA's application submission requirements and application review procedures for the STEM Talent Challenge, authorized by section 28 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980, as amended (15 U.S.C. § 3723). Effective date: August 12, 2021
Funding Opportunity Number	EDA-HDQ-OIE-2021-2007015
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s)	11.023 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Talent Challenge Program
Key Dates	The deadline for receipt of applications is **11:59 P.M. EASTERN TIME ON OCTOBER 12, 2021.** Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. Applications will only be accepted electronically through www.grants.gov (Grants.gov). Applicants are advised to carefully read the application and submission information provided in section D (p. 6) of this NOFO.
Funding Opportunity Description	EDA is seeking applications from eligible applicants to create and implement innovative science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) work-based learning models that complement their respective region's innovation economy. The STEM Talent Challenge seeks to develop or expand regional workforce capacity to support high-growth, high-wage entrepreneurial ventures, industries of the future (which usually includes industries that leverage emerging technologies), and other innovation-driven businesses that have a high likelihood of accelerating economic competitiveness and job creation in their respective regions and in the United States.
Cost Sharing and Matching	Applicants must provide matching share equal to at least 50 percent of the total project cost; i.e., applicants must match each dollar requested with at least one dollar of applicant match. *See* section C.2 (p.5) of this NOFO.
Eligible Applicants	Eligible applicants for EDA financial assistance under this NOFO include: • A State; • An Indian tribe; • A city or other political subdivision of a State; • An entity that is— · a nonprofit organization, · an institution of higher education, · a public-private partnership,

	· a science or research park, · a Federal laboratory, or · an economic development organization or similar entity; and has an application that is supported by a State, a political subdivision of a State, or a native organization; or • A consortium of any of the eligible applicants listed above. EDA is not authorized to provide assistance to individuals under this Program. Applications from individuals will not be considered for funding.
Informational Webinar	EDA plans to conduct an informational webinar for STEM Talent Challenge and expects to make available scheduling information and a link to a recording at http://www.eda.gov/oie/.
Award Notification	Subject to the availability of funding, successful applicants should expect to receive award notification approximately 90 - 120 days from the application deadline set forth in this NOFO.

Full Announcement Text
2021 STEM Talent Challenge Program

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Overview and Background

EDA's Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship is committed to furthering technology-based economic development initiatives that accelerate high-quality job growth, create more economic opportunities, and support the future of the next generation of industry-leading companies. To advance these goals, EDA awards grants through the Build to Scale Program to develop and support regional innovation initiatives that help to build regional economies through scalable, technology-driven startups as described in the EDA-administered portions of Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. § 3720-3723) (Stevenson-Wydler).

As these regional innovation initiatives scale across the country, America has benefited from growth in jobs requiring sophisticated science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills. High-skilled human capital is proving essential to the growth and expansion of these regional technological ecosystems; however, U.S. employers have struggled to fill jobs in these fields, and younger or leaner firms, like many innovative startups, are especially hard hit by this challenge. An increasing number of jobs that require STEM skills do not require a bachelor's degree, and other education and training pathways—such as Registered Apprenticeships, fellowships, and other work-based learning models—are becoming instrumental in meeting the urgent demand for a STEM-capable workforce.

To meet these demands, section 28 of Stevenson-Wydler (15 U.S.C. § 3723), authorizes EDA to carry out a grant program to implement and scale STEM Talent development programs that meet the needs of regional innovation economies, employers, and industries of the future.

2. Program Information

STEM Talent Challenge

The STEM Talent Challenge *aims to build STEM talent training systems to strengthen regional innovation economies.* This competition seeks applications from eligible applicants that are creating and implementing STEM talent development strategies that complement their region's innovation economy, particularly as such strategies relate to emerging, transformative sectors and future industries such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, advanced manufacturing and robotics, space exploration and commerce, bioscience, quantum information science, green products, processes and buildings, and aqua- and agricultural technologies.

The STEM Talent Challenge is designed to help communities with implementing programs that align with the assessed needs of the region and its innovative businesses. Projects should implement or scale STEM competency-based work-and-learn education and training models that are directly connected with the needs of employers in a regional economy. These needs should be evaluated, through a formal or informal needs assessment, meant to determine the types of skills needed by the drivers of regional innovation, including innovative businesses that employ STEM talent. Projects should be responsive to these assessed needs and should clearly indicate how workers will be prepared for employment.

Training should prioritize STEM skills tied to the use of emerging, transformative sectors and the needs of future industries and should include an on-the-job training component. Training models are not tied to existing industry definitions and can include any combination of work-based and classroom learning; experimentation and innovation are encouraged.

Applicants should leverage partnerships with local and regional innovation leaders, including technology centers, business incubators and accelerators, community colleges, and STEM industry leaders such as technology startups, advanced manufacturers, life science businesses, and other similar entities. Projects should be closely tied to the needs of the regional innovation economy and should aim to build a talent pipeline for entrepreneurs, startups, and other innovation leaders, as well as place new employees into immediate job openings.

Applicants should have, or have a plan to build, community-based partnerships that connect training and employment with those from underserved populations, with the ultimate goal of increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM fields.

Example Activities

The STEM Talent Challenge will provide funding to implement and expand new work-and-learn models to increase the STEM-capable workforce across the nation's growing regional innovation economies. Competitive applications will clearly communicate how they will develop or expand regional STEM workforce capacity to support high-growth, high-wage entrepreneurial ventures, industries of the future, and other innovation-driven businesses, and how they will accelerate economic competitiveness and job creation in their respective regions and in the United States.

Projects should aim to identify opportunities in high-growth potential sectors, and to expand and empower the innovation economy workforce, including by:

- Engaging regional entrepreneurs, innovators, and the organizations that support them to assess and forecast current and future talent needs and to develop collaborative solutions with work-based programs;
- Building highly skilled talent and connecting it to highly technical opportunities that foster professional development and provide continuing advanced skills training to develop the technical and scientific workforce that regional innovation initiatives need;
- Strengthening collaboration among entrepreneurs, industry leaders and employers, educational organizations, established corporations, economic and/or workforce development organizations, and the public sector to enable better access to skilled workers and to develop demand-driven workforce pipelines for the innovation economy; and
- Placing new employees into immediate job openings with regional employers in need of STEM talent.

Applicants should demonstrate how they will leverage regional strengths, capabilities, and competitive advantages and should avoid the duplication of already existing initiatives within the applicant's organization or by other organizations or consortia in the relevant region.

Desired Outputs and Outcomes

Proposed projects may aim for some or all of the following outputs and outcomes or others, as appropriate, considering each proposed project's regional, sectoral, and economic contexts.

A. STEM Work-Based Learning and Training

Projects should focus on an interdisciplinary approach and utilize training models that provide workers with the experience and skills they will need to succeed on-the-job and in real-world applications. These may include, but are not limited to, innovative industry-driven Registered Apprenticeships, fellowships, internships, and other cooperative employer-educator partnerships, and are not limited to existing industry definitions—experimentation and innovation is encouraged. Training should clearly align with the talent needs of those driving innovation in the region and should result in job placement for the participants in high-wage employment in high-growth industries.

B. Increase Regional Innovation Capacity

Projects should increase the capacity of those driving innovation in the region by connecting regional innovation stakeholders and employers with workforce and talent development leaders or training providers. Programs should emphasize enabling the region's fast-paced technology startups and innovative companies to hire locally and decrease their costs and lead time to filling positions, allowing them to grow their teams and scale their businesses faster. Traditional workforce development programs may not have the expertise or networks to accomplish this – organizations that normally do not identify as workforce development organizations, but are driving regional innovation through worker training are encouraged to apply. These may include, but are not limited to eligible applicants that are business incubators and accelerators, digital economy training organizations, and venture development organizations. Please see section C (p. 4) of this NOFO for eligibility information regarding the STEM Talent Challenge.

C. *Increase Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in STEM*

Projects should focus on enabling all members of a community to have equitable access to and participate in the innovation economy. Projects should seek to provide historically underserved and underrepresented communities with access to training and other tools to succeed. Project outcomes should include placement of program participants in well-paying, quality jobs in the STEM-related industry in which they receive training. Applicants should have relevant employer partners who are committed to hiring program participants and to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in their workplace.

3. Statutory Authority for the STEM Talent Challenge

The statutory authority for the STEM Talent Challenge is section 28 of Stevenson-Wydler (15 U.S.C. § 3723).

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Available Funding Under this Announcement

Funding in the amount of $2,000,000 has been appropriated for grants made under the STEM Talent Challenge pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.[1] The funding periods and funding amounts referenced in this NOFO are subject to the availability of funds at the time of award as well as to U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) and EDA priorities at the time of award. DOC and EDA will not be held responsible for application preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not obligate DOC or EDA to make any specific grant award or to obligate all or any part of available funds.

The maximum federal share of each STEM Talent Challenge award is $250,000. This funding should be used for program implementation during the period of performance.

2. Type of Funding Instrument Used; Period of Performance

Under this NOFO, EDA may award grants to eligible applicants to support project activities. Periods of performance are dependent on the type of project and the scope of work of the grant award. *See* section F (p. 23) of this NOFO for award notification information. Anticipated awards typically will have a period of performance of 24 months with an estimated start date of February 1, 2022.

EDA expects all projects to proceed efficiently and expeditiously, and EDA expects applicants to document clearly in their applications a reasonable and appropriate timeline that includes the start and completion dates of the proposed scope of work. As a condition of their respective award, recipients will be required to provide timely periodic progress reports and performance data as set forth in section F (p. 23).

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applications for and eligible recipients of EDA investment assistance under this NOFO include:

- a State;
- an Indian tribe;
- a city or other political subdivision of a State;
- an entity that is—
    - a nonprofit organization,
    - an institution of higher education,
    - a public-private partnership,[2]

[1] Public Law 116-260, Title 1 of Division B, 134 Stat. 1182 (December 27, 2020).

[2] For purposes of the STEM Talent Challenge, 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 and financing of a public project. 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. A letter of support from a public entity alone, without additional documentation demonstrating a formal, binding relationship between the

- a science or research park,
- a Federal laboratory, or
- an economic development organization or similar entity,[3]

  and that has an application supported by a State, a political subdivision of a State, or a native organization; or
- a consortium of any of the above-mentioned eligible applicants.

EDA is **not** authorized to provide assistance to individuals under this NOFO, and such requests will not be considered for funding.

Organizations that are or plan to be operating within the period of performance of a previously-awarded STEM Talent Challenge grant as of February 1, 2022 are not eligible for award under this NOFO.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

a. General Requirement

The minimum required match for the STEM Talent Challenge is 1:1. Applicants must demonstrate AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION a matching non-federal share of at least 50 percent of the total project cost; i.e., for every dollar of federal funds requested, applicants must demonstrate a commitment of at least one dollar of matching share.

Applicants must demonstrate, by submitting from each source of matching share a commitment letter or equivalent document signed by an authorized representative of that organization, that matching share will, at the time of award:

- be committed to the project for the period of performance,
- be available as needed, and
- not be conditioned or encumbered in any way that may preclude its use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance.

parties, will 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 that have further questions concerning these documentation requirements should contact the representative listed in section G (p. 25) of the NOFO.

[3] For purposes of the STEM Talent Challenge, EDA defines an economic development organization as an organization whose primary purpose is to support the economic development of a community or region. 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 applicants to establish eligibility, as necessary. If applicants have further questions concerning these documentation requirements, they should contact the representative listed in section G (p. 25) of the NOFO.

b. In-Kind Matching Share

In-kind contributions may be used for the required matching share. In-kind contributions must consist of contributions directly related to the proposed project, such as personnel costs, services, equipment,[4] or space. EDA will evaluate all in-kind contributions to ensure they are eligible project costs and meet applicable federal cost principles and uniform administrative requirements.[5] Applicants are strongly encouraged to work with the appropriate EDA representative listed in section G (p. 25) of this NOFO to determine how in-kind contributions may be utilized to satisfy the matching non-federal share requirement based upon the project concept and how in-kind contributions may be valued.

c. Prohibition on Matching Share Providers Serving as Contractors

A provider of matching share, including an entity providing cash or in-kind contributions, may not serve as a contractor under an award for which it provides matching share. Thus, an entity providing matching share may not be paid with award funds to provide goods or services to the award recipient. In contrast, a provider of matching share may serve as a subrecipient under an award for which it provides matching share.

3. Certain Prohibitions on Use of Award Funds

Construction activities are not allowable costs under the STEM Talent Challenge and may not be charged to the EDA funds of the project or provided as matching share, except in limited circumstances. For the purposes of an award made pursuant to this NOFO, construction includes any activity, including the installation of equipment, that disturbs the ground or modifies a structure. Additionally, the use of project funds to make equity, debt, or hybrid investments in businesses is not an allowable cost; neither EDA funds nor matching share may be used for such purposes.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application

An electronic version of the application may be obtained at https://www.grants.gov/ (Grants.gov). To accommodate applicants' accessibility requirements, a paper version of the application may be obtained by contacting EDA's Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE) via email at oie@eda.gov or via phone at (202) 482-8001.

2. Content and Form of Submission

An applicant may obtain the appropriate application package electronically at https://www.grants.gov/ (Grants.gov). Applicants may search for this funding opportunity on Grants.gov using Funding Opportunity Number "EDA-HDQ-OIE-2021-2007015." All components of the application package may be accessed and downloaded via https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html. Applicants are advised that they must complete a 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

[4] The purchase of equipment and certain equipment installation may be eligible, but only to the extent that such costs support another eligible activity. Note, however, that as provided in section C.3 (p. 6), construction costs, including the installation of equipment that disturbs the ground or modifies a structure, are not allowable cost under the STEM Talent Challenge.

[5] *See* 2 CFR § 200.306 (Cost sharing or matching).

Grants.gov registration process, the applicant will not be able to submit the application electronically for EDA's review. See section I (p. 28) for details of the Grants.gov registration process.

Applications must include the following documents:

Project Design and Substance
Project Narrative
Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan
Matching Share Commitment Letters
State/Local Government Support (if applicable)
Forms and Supporting Documentation
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)
State Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC)/Executive Order 12372 Compliance Documentation (if applicable)[6]
Organizational Documentation (if applicable)[7]
Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation (if applicable)[8]

a. Project Design and Substance/Proposal

Document	Number
Project Narrative	One per application
Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan	One per application
Matching Share Commitment Letters	One per match source
State/Local Government Support (if applicable)	One per application

The proposal must clearly articulate the overall goals of the project, the specific and distinct Scopes of Work, and concrete activities that will be accomplished under it. The proposal must also 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.1 (p. 17). **Applicants should carefully adhere to the page limits specified for each section of the proposal.** Pages beyond the specified page limit for each section may not be read or considered.

[6] Only certain States participate in the SPOC compliance process. *See* section D.2.b.ii.1) (p. 11).

[7] 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) (p. 11).

[8] Applicants that currently do not have 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.3) (p. 12).

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.

Applicants are advised to carefully read the instructions contained in this NOFO and in all forms contained in the application. It is the sole responsibility of each applicant to ensure that a complete application is received by EDA.

i. Project Narrative

The Project Narrative should address all activities that will be undertaken using funds requested under this NOFO and summarize how these activities support the overall project's goals. The Project Narrative may not exceed **10-single sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a clear and concise narrative that includes a compelling justification for the project and articulates a clearly defined regional STEM talent gap, based on business and industry demand for certain skills and/or knowledge, how the proposed project will uniquely meet this need, and the expected outcome(s) that will result from the proposed project. A competitive application will contain the following elements in the Project Narrative:

Section 1: Program Description and Scope of Work

Section 1a: An **executive summary** that includes the *project title*, identifies *the name of the applicant* as well as the *type of eligible applicant* listed in Section C.1 (p. 4) of this NOFO (including if the applicant is a public-private partnership), and provides a *project summary* of no more than 250 words (note: the executive summary may be published on EDA's website and via press release if the application is selected for funding).

Section 1b: A **scope of work** of no more than one page linked to the project's purpose and *key milestones*, including *deliverables*.

Section 2: Regional Innovation Resources and Talent Needs

Section 2a: Provide a description of the project's location and region, including its primary service area, a description of the communities or regions served (e.g., assets, financial and business resources, workforce, and infrastructure), a description of the target participants served and stakeholders leveraged, and the communities' or region's assets and opportunities. The location and region should directly correspond to Questions 14 and 16 of the SF-424. If the applicant expects impacts beyond the noted region, the applicant should note the region of expected impact. Additionally, applicants must identify their proposed primary service area(s) by county or counties. Counties should be identified by both name and 5-digit FIPS codes. See https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files.2019.html.

Section 2b: Describe the industry or industries at the forefront of innovation in the region and the need for STEM-capable talent for these industries. This description should include a well-documented need for the project, as determined from a formal or informal needs analysis, which is directly tied to the needs of employers in the region. An example of a formal needs analysis could include reviewing the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). An example of an informal needs analysis could

include a verbal survey conducted of the region's employers. The methods of this needs analysis, and how the need for this project was determined, should also be briefly addressed in this section.

Section 3: Proposed Solution

Describe how the solution will fulfill the talent needs described in Section 2 of the Project Narrative. Describe the solution in detail. Explain how feasible the solution is. Explain how the project will prepare participants for employment in the industries or businesses driving innovation in the project's region and how the development of this talent will allow these businesses to grow. Describe how the solution aligns with EDA investment priorities at https://www.eda.gov/about/investment-priorities.htm.

Section 4: Partners and Program Outreach

Section 4a: Describe any former, current, or future partnerships/working relationships with public and/or private entities at the national, state, regional, and/or local level that will be working on this project. Provide a brief description of each entity and specific detail on the roles and responsibilities of these collaborators including effectiveness of past collaboration efforts.

Section 4b: Outline how outreach will be conducted for new and diverse stakeholders and program participants. How will this project promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM fields and in the region?

Section 5: Measurable Goals and Impacts

Outline evidence- and data-based anticipated goals, including outputs and outcomes. Anticipated goals should be discussed in terms of the SMART framework—specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timebound—and the application should speak to why and how these goals were selected. Example goals and impacts could include number of partnerships, number of businesses served, new hires placed, incumbent workers upskilled, business owners and entrepreneurs served, new hire training activities, incumbent worker training activities, talent pipeline development activities, STEM skills trained, etc. Include benchmarks to communicate both base-level goals that adhere to the SMART framework, as well as stretch goals. Of note: applicants selected for funding must employ a data and client management system to track their metrics in a machine-readable format; applicants should include a description of their respective systems and, if no such system exists, should include their acquisition and implementation in the project narrative and budget.

Section 6: Sustainability Plan

Provide a sustainability plan for post-federal award, including anticipated challenges, potential barriers, a forecast of post-award period operations, and a specific plan to become self-sustaining once grant funds have been expended.

ii. Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan

All applications must include a Budget Narrative that may not exceed **4-single sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins**. Applications must include a clear Budget Narrative that identifies and justifies how funds in each line item of the budget will be used to support the proposed project and that links each line item to its relevant matching share commitment letter. The Budget Narrative

should specifically address each budget line item (including both the federal share and matching share) and the narrative total should match the total project costs listed in both Form SF-424, Question 18, Line g ("TOTAL") and the appropriate totals fields of Form SF-424A. The Budget Narrative should include itemized valuations of any in-kind matching funds (which, for personnel costs, should be supported by the Staffing Plan). Each line item in the budget narrative should clearly indicate:

- A description of the intended use of funds for each line item;
- The budget category (using the categories from Form SF-424A) to which the line item corresponds;
- The federal share allocated to the line item;
- The matching share allocated to the line item; and
- If any in-kind matching share is allocated to a given line item, a citation to the one or more commitment letters that documents the commitment of resources.

The matching share, whether in cash or in-kind, is expected to be paid out at the same general rate as the federal share; however, if the applicant's Budget Narrative proposes otherwise, applicants must also include information that clearly indicates what project elements the matching share funds will support and explain why deviation from paying out at the same general rate is required for the project to be implemented.

As part of the Budget Narrative, applications must also include a Staffing Plan that lists all positions that would be charged to the federal and matching shares of the budget for each year of the period of performance. The Staffing Plan must include position titles, maximum annual salaries, percentage of time dedicated to the project, and the total amount of annual salaries that would be charged to the project. The total amount of annual salaries that would be charged to the project must be consistent with the amount reflected on the "Personnel" budget line item on the Form SF-424A for each project year.

iii. Matching Share Commitment Letters

Applications must include commitment letters or equivalent documents that demonstrate that all **matching share 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**[9] of the sources of the matching funds.

iv. State/Local Government, Native Organization Support

If the applicant is a nonprofit organization, an institution of higher education, a public-private partnership, a science or research park, a Federal laboratory, or an economic development organization or similar entity, the application must include one or more resolutions or letters that demonstrate that the application is supported by one or more States, political subdivisions of a State (e.g., counties, municipalities), or native organizations that encompass all or a substantial portion of the region that would be served under the proposed project. **Support from Federal officials, including but not limited to members of the United States Congress, does not meet this requirement**. Examples of authorities that may indicate such support include State and local executive branch officials (e.g., State governors, State cabinet

[9] Authorized representatives must have the authority to execute documents and to obligate and expend funds on behalf of their respective organizations.

members, mayors or other municipal executives), State and local legislators (e.g., State legislators, city councilpersons), or native organizations. 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.

b. Forms and Supporting Documentation

i. Forms

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

Form	Description	Number
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

ii. Supporting Documentation

Applicants must also submit the following Addenda to the proposal in PDF format. Applications that do not include the required Addenda may be considered incomplete and/or non-responsive and may not be reviewed.

1) SPOC Compliance

For projects with primary service areas located within one or more States that participate in the intergovernmental review process established by **Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs,"** applications must include documentation demonstrating compliance with that State's or those States' processes. *See* section D.6 (p. 15) "Intergovernmental Review" of this NOFO. The current list of participating States and their Single Points of Contact (SPOC) can be found at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf. Each State may participate for all or a subset of federal grant programs. EDA strongly encourages applicants to contact SPOCs early in the application period in order to determine the relevant State's or States' processes. If an application's primary service area encompasses one or more participating States but that application does not include documentation of compliance with each participating State's process, that application will be rejected without further review. Based on the applicant's State, 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 subject to review	Documentation (e.g., a signed letter from the SPOC) with comments or indicating that this project was not selected for review, or, if the comment period has expired or comments were not received, a copy of the applicant's request for comments

2) Organizational Documentation

Each applicant and co-applicant must provide documentation that supports each applicant's or co-applicants' **organizational status as an eligible entity** where applicable (see section C.1 (p. 4) of this NOFO). Regardless of entity type, EDA reserves the right to request documentation or additional proof of organizational status.

- 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, including articles of incorporation, certificates of good standing, bylaws, and, if applicable, proof of tax-exempt status.
- Applicants applying as (a) institutions of higher education that are not 100% publicly-controlled, (b) science or research parks, (c) Federal laboratories, or (d) economic development organizations[10] or similar entities must provide *documentation* that demonstrates their organization's status as the relevant entity type.
- Entities applying as public-private partnerships must submit documentation of their contractual relationship. *See* the discussion of documentation for public-private partnerships in footnote 2 to section C.1. (p. 4).

3) Indirect Cost Rate Documentation

If indirect costs are included in the budget, the applicant must include documentation to support the indirect cost rate they are using (unless claiming the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below). The applicant must submit 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 (i) line-item amount for the federal share of indirect costs contained in the EDA approved budget for the award, or (ii) federal share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on either (i) 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 (ii) 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 ninety days from the award start date (unless claiming the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below). *See* 2 CFR 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). The applicant 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.

[10] EDA strongly encourages applicants that may be eligible under this entity category to contact the representative listed in section G**Error! Reference source not found.** of this NOFO (p. 25) with any questions regarding eligibility.

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) rate and is electing to charge the de minimis rate.

If 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 it may submit any of the following:

- A Certificate of Indirect Costs from the Department of the Interior (DOI) or EDA;
- Acknowledgment received from EDA and Certificate of Indirect Costs in the form prescribed at 2 CFR pt. 200, app. VII;
- 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
- NICRA.

c. Application Checklist

Before submitting an application, please ensure that the following documents are included in your submission.

☐ All required forms (Forms SF424, SF424A, CD511, and SFLLL, as applicable)[11]
☐ Project Narrative (may not exceed **10-single sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins)**
☐ Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan (may not exceed **4-single sided, 8.5x11-inch pages, with a minimum 12-point font and 1-inch margins)**
☐ Matching Share Commitment Letters
☐ State/Local Government Support, if applicable
☐ Supporting Documentation (including SPOC compliance, organizational documentation, and indirect cost rate documentation, if applicable)

3. Environmental and Historic Preservation Requirements

Applications will be reviewed by EDA in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), depending on the nature and specific elements of each given application. During the NEPA review process, applicants may be instructed to contact the designated State and/or Tribal Historic

[11] This includes separate copies of each of these forms, as applicable, for co-applicants. Form SF-LLL is only required if the applicant has retained a lobbyist in conjunction with seeking federal assistance under this funding opportunity.

Preservation Officer (SHPO/THPO), provide approvals from other governmental agencies, or provide more detailed environmental information. EDA, after compliance with requirements for consultation with federally-recognized Tribes, may require applicants to participate in Tribal consultation, as necessary. The implementing regulations of NEPA require EDA to provide public notice of the availability of project-specific environmental documents, such as environmental impact statements, environmental assessments, findings of no significant impact, and records of decision, to the affected public.[12]

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

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, applicants are required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting an application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in the application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they have an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. EDA may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements, and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the EDA is ready to make an award, EDA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant. Recipients will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR parts 25 and 170.

5. Submission Dates and Times

The closing date and time for receipt of applications for funding under this NOFO is **11:59 P.M. EASTERN TIME** on October 12, 2021 (the "Application Deadline").

Applications submitted electronically via https://www.grants.gov/ (Grants.gov) must be received by the Application Deadline. The date and time that an application will be deemed to be electronically received will be determined in accordance with the electronic submission instructions provided at Grants.gov. *See* section I (p. 28) of this NOFO for information regarding electronic submissions. **Applications received after the Application Deadline will not be considered for funding.**

In addition, please note the following:

- EDA will not accept any unsolicited changes, additions, revisions, or deletions to applications after the submission deadline.
- Throughout the review and selection process, EDA reserves the right to seek clarification from applicants whose applications are being reviewed and considered.
- Applicants may be asked to clarify objectives and work plans and modify budgets or other specifics as necessary to comply with federal requirements and provide supplemental information required by the agency before award.

[12] As specified in 40 CFR § 1506.6(b).

Applicants are strongly encouraged to start early and not to wait until near the application deadline before logging on and reviewing the instructions for submitting an application through Grants.gov.

6. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under this NOFO are subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," if a State has adopted a process under Executive Order 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 that are primarily located in a participating State must give State and local governments a reasonable opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project. To find out more about a State's process under Executive Order 12372, applicants may contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC). Names and addresses of some States' SPOCs are listed at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf. Question 19 of Form SF-424 allows applicants to indicate compliance with Executive Order 12372; however, note that **applicants must supply as part of their complete application documentation demonstrates compliance**.

7. Funding Restrictions

Construction activities are not allowable costs under the STEM Talent Challenge and may not be charged to the EDA funds of the project or provided as matching share, except in limited circumstances. For the purposes of an award made pursuant to this NOFO, construction includes any activity, including the installation of equipment, that disturbs the ground or modifies a structure. Additionally, the use of project funds to make equity, debt, or hybrid investments in businesses is not an allowable cost; neither EDA funds nor matching share may be used for such purposes.

8. Other Submission Requirements

a. Means of Submission

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED THROUGH GRANTS.GOV. EDA will not accept paper, facsimile, or email transmissions of applications for the program except as described in section I.5 (p. 30) of this NOFO. The preferred electronic file format for attachments is Adobe portable document format (PDF) and, where appropriate, Microsoft Excel; however, EDA will also accept Microsoft Word-formatted electronic files. 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. Please visit https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-training.html for resources and guides on the Grants.gov registration process.

Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at www.grants.gov. If problems occur, the applicant is advised to (a) print any error message received; and (b) call the www.grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for assistance. The Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (except for Federal holidays). Applicants can also contact Grants.gov via email at support@grants.gov.

EDA, in its sole discretion, may pre-approve in writing submission via an alternate method (e.g., email) due to a systems issue at Grants.gov only insofar as any such systems issue is beyond the control of the applicant. However, any submission via this alternate method must be received before the deadline. **Late applications will not be accepted for any reason**, including but not limited to late submissions caused by issues with Grants.gov, SAM, or AOR registration.

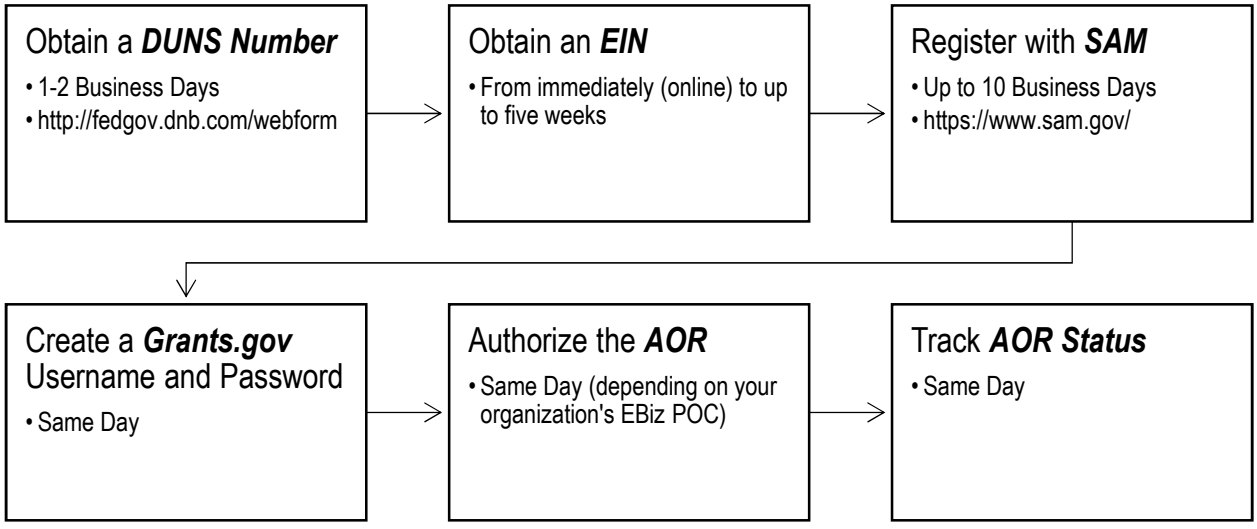
In situations described in this subsection, applications must have email receipt timestamps no later than the Application Deadline or must be postmarked or the equivalent on or before the Application Deadline. **An application that is not timestamped by the Application Deadline will not be reviewed.**

Once an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process through Grants.gov during which the application may be accepted or rejected by the system. Please be advised that the validation process may take 24 to 48 hours to complete. Applications that contain errors will be rejected by Grants.gov and will not be forwarded to EDA for review. The applicant must correct the error before Grants.gov will accept and validate the application.

Please see section I (p. 28) of this NOFO for more detailed instructions and information on the requirements for submitting the applications electronically via Grants.gov.

b. Pre-Submission Registration

Before applying to a competition 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 outside of 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.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated against the following six equally-weighted criteria by awarding between 1 and 7 points under each criterion.

Strength of Regional Partnerships and Assets

Evaluate criterion based on the extent to which the project's main functions are supported by necessary entities, such as employers and training providers, and whether the roles of key partners are clearly defined. Please consider the extent to which the project is connected to STEM industry leaders and those businesses driving innovation in the region, as well as whether there is a clearly-defined need by these innovative businesses for skilled employees. Please also consider whether or not the project would connect training providers and/or trainees with employers in need of the skilled employees and whether the partnerships identified are likely to produce jobs.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

The project is supported by and connected to a diverse group of partners that will help in reaching planned outcomes to upskill participants, place participants in job openings, and/or create talent pipelines for the future. The project's partners should include employers in the industry of focus that are committed to hiring program participants.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

The project's partners have clearly defined roles and the main functions of the project are supported by partner entities as necessary.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Alignment with STEM Talent Challenge Program Goals

Evaluate criterion based on whether the application aligns with the STEM Talent Challenge goals to "drive regional innovation by building STEM capable talent" as well as any of EDA's other investment priorities. Please consider the defined talent needs of the region and its innovative businesses, whether the project is likely to fulfill these needs, and whether the talent development of the project will result in high-wage, high-skilled jobs in high-growth industries and industries of the future.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

The project aligns with the STEM Talent Challenge goals to "drive regional innovation by building STEM capable talent" as well as any of EDA's other investment priorities.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

The need for this project is clearly defined, and the project would be likely to fulfill the need for skilled workers of the region and its innovative employers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Promotes Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Evaluate criterion based on whether the project would likely have an impact on promoting diversity, equity and inclusion among STEM fields and in the project's region. Please consider whether the project will actively encourage and solicit participation from an inclusive group of regional stakeholders that might benefit from participation including newly formed entities, rival existing participants and underrepresented or unconnected populations and organizations across socioeconomic and geographic categories.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

The project is likely to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion among STEM fields and in the project's region.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

The application contains a plan to engage an inclusive group of regional stakeholders and program participants

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Measurable Goals and Impacts

Evaluate criterion based on whether the solution is aligned with the opportunity and the proposed solution is achievable and/or substantial, measurable progress can be made during the period of performance and beyond. Proposed goals should highlight the impact on the project's regional innovation economy and should include both base-level goals, such as the number of participants entering into a work-based learning agreement, and stretch goals, such as the number of jobs created as a result of this program. A submission that does not describe measurable goals or does not include elements of the plan relating to feasibility may score less than a submission that includes goals and benchmarks for the proposed approach that are clear and realistic.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

The base-level project goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound and further the innovation ecosystem of the identified region(s).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

The project has well-defined goals related both to participant engagement and success as well as the impact on the regional innovation economy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Project Sustainability and Adaptability

Evaluate criterion based on whether the project is likely to be able to sustain activities once grant funds are expended. Please consider the application's sustainability plan and whether it seems likely that the project will obtain funding from other sources, as well as the ability of the project to be adapted to fit possible future sources of funding. Take into consideration the likelihood of the project to receive future financial or programmatic support from non-federal sources.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

The project is likely to be able to sustain activities once grant funds are expended and has a fully developed sustainability plan.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

The project is likely to be adapted as necessary to obtain future funding.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Budget and Staffing Plan

Evaluate the criterion based on the budget narrative and staffing plan proposed in the application. You may consider the operations and management capacities and experiences of the applicant organization(s) and team, and whether they demonstrate the ability to execute the proposed project successfully. You may also consider the proposed project's budget narrative and staffing plan to determine if they reasonably and realistically correspond to the costs and activities necessary for the successful execution of the proposed project. Providing more than the required matching share should not inherently make an application more competitive.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

The application clearly identifies the financial, human, and programmatic resources that will support the successful execution of this proposed project.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

The applicant organization and team have the operations and management capacities to execute the proposed project successfully.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Review and Selection Process

Throughout the review and selection process, EDA reserves the right to seek clarification from applicants whose applications are being reviewed. EDA may ask applicants to clarify application materials, objectives, and scope of work, or modify budgets or other specifics necessary to comply with federal requirements.

a. Review for Eligibility and Completeness (Technical Review)

EDA staff will initially conduct an eligibility and technical completeness review (the "Technical Review") of all applications received to assess whether the application meets the requirements of D.2 (p. 6). Applications received from ineligible entities will not be considered for funding. Additionally, applications

that do not contain all forms and required documentation listed in section D.2 (p. 6) of this NOFO may be deemed non-responsive and excluded from further consideration. However, EDA, in its sole discretion, may determine that an omission is a non-substantive technical deficiency if it can easily and quickly be rectified and therefore may continue its consideration of the application despite the deficiency.

b. Merit Review

Merit Reviewers will evaluate applications against the evaluation criteria in section E.1 (p. 17) of this NOFO. Each application will be reviewed by at least three Merit Reviewers. Merit reviewers may include but are not limited to, DOC and EDA personnel, and other federal and non-federal subject matter experts. EDA, in its sole discretion, may use a statistical technique to normalize and aggregate Merit Reviewers' quantitative evaluations (i.e., scores) and may consider qualitative Merit Reviewer evaluation information. For each competition, the most highly ranked applications will be recommended to the Grants Officer as the applications that merit consideration for EDA funding.

c. Due Diligence

If an application is selected, 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 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 that 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

The most highly ranked applications will be forwarded to the Grants Officer under this announcement, which will be EDA's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional Affairs (DAS/RA) or the DAS/RA's delegate. The Grants Officer has been delegated the authority to make the final decision on whether to fund an application and may select a project for funding that differs from the most highly ranked applications based on any of the following Selection Factors or use these Selection Factors to break a tie for applications that are otherwise considered substantially equal in merit:

1. the extent to which the application meets the overall objectives of Section 28 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980;
2. the ability of a project to start quickly, realistically achieve project goals, and catalyze additional resources;
3. the financial or management capability of the applicant;
4. the applicant's performance under previous federal financial assistance awards, including whether the awardee submitted required performance reports and data;
5. the extent to which the application leverages complementary public or private sector programs or policies, including but not limited to those operated or managed by the Federal Government;
6. the availability of program funding;
7. the extent to which any technical deficiencies or any budgetary or legal issues in the application may impact an applicant's ability to execute the project or achieve the desired impacts;

8. the extent to which the project supports EDA's goals of geographic balance in distribution of program funds (including but not limited to diversity of urban and rural states), project types, and award activities; or
9. the extent to which the application articulates a plan for ensuring that the project's benefits are shared across all communities and the extent to which the application demonstrates the capacity to account for the unique needs of historically underserved areas and populations.

The final decision of the Grants Officer must be consistent with this NOFO and applicable law. There is no appeal process for denied applications.

3. Awards in Excess of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold

Before making a federal award with a total amount of federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, EDA 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 CFR § 200.206.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

Subject to the availability of funding, EDA expects to notify applicants of its decision in writing approximately 90 – 120 days after the Application Deadline. If an application is selected for funding, the EDA Grants Officer will issue a signed grant award (Form CD-450), which is the authorizing financial assistance award document and includes the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions and Specific Award Conditions.

By signing Form CD-450, the applicant agrees to comply with all award provisions. EDA will provide Form CD-450 via email through Grants Online or its successor electronic grants management system. The email will provide the authorized representative with instructions on how to create an account with Grants Online to view and sign the award. The applicant must sign and return the Form CD-450 without modification within 30 days of the date of EDA's signature on the form. **Failure to sign and return the Form CD-450 during this timeframe may be considered grounds for appropriate enforcement action pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.339 ("Remedies for noncompliance"), INCLUDING AWARD TERMINATION.**

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 provide written notice to all applicants informing them whether their application was selected for funding. EDA will retain unsuccessful applications in accordance with EDA's record retention schedule.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

a. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit 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 CFR part 200. These regulations may be accessed at: https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl.

b. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions

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

c. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements

EDA will apply the DOC 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: https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2014/12/30/2014-30297/department-of-commerce-pre-award-notification-requirements-for-grants-and-cooperative-agreements.

3. Reporting

a. Financial, Performance, and Impact Reports

Recipients are required to submit progress reports and financial status reports in accordance with the terms of the award, generally no less frequently than semi-annually. In addition, recipients will be required to track and submit performance data on EDA-sponsored outputs and resulting outcomes, semi-annually and annually respectively. All reports must be submitted in electronic format as specified in the terms of the award. As part of its administration of the program, EDA may conduct program evaluations. If so, recipients 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 awards to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All recipients are required to report to the

Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over $30,000. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 CFR part 170 for more information.

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 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/.

d. Information Sharing

For the purposes of achieving rigorous program evaluations, all applications (including those that are not selected for funding) may be shared with EDA staff, outside parties contracted by EDA for the purposes of evaluation, and other federal agencies.

e. Requirements for Recipients With More Than $10 Million in Federal-wide Funding

As required by appendix XII to 2 CFR part 200, a recipient with more than $10 million in federal-wide funding must maintain the currency of information reported to SAM that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently FAPIIS) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

For questions concerning this NOFO, you may contact the EDA Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship:

- Email: oie@eda.gov
- Phone: (202) 482-8001

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 CFR § 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. § 552), may be found at 15 CFR 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 NOFO may be subject to requests for release under FOIA. 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 CFR § 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. In accordance with 2 CFR §§ 200.317 and 200.319, only State recipients are expressly exempt from this prohibition; States must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-federal funds. 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 CFR § 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 applicable EDA representative listed in section G (p. 25) of this NOFO with any questions regarding application of this regulation.

4. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions

Unsatisfactory performance under prior federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding. Failure to comply with any or all of the provisions of an award may have a negative impact on future funding by DOC (or any of its operating units) and may be considered grounds for any or all of the following actions: (1) establishing an account receivable; (2) withholding payments to the recipient under any DOC award(s); (3) changing the method of payment from advance to reimbursement only; (4) imposing other specific award conditions; (5) suspending any active DOC award(s); and (6) terminating any active DOC award(s).

5. Restrictions Governing Making Grants to Corporations Convicted of Felony Criminal Violations and/or Unpaid Federal Tax Liabilities

As discussed in section D.4 (p. 14), all applicants are required to be registered in SAM before applying under this NOFO. SAM requires registering entities to certify compliance with all limitations imposed by annual appropriation acts. For corporations, this certification includes that the corporation:

> (a) Was not convicted of a felony criminal violation under a Federal law within the preceding 24 months, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; and/or
>
> (b) Does not have any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

For financial assistance awards in excess of $5 million, this certification includes that the entity:

> (a) To the best of its knowledge and belief, has filed all Federal tax returns required during the three years preceding the certification;
>
> (b) Has not been convicted of a criminal offense under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and/or
>
> (c) Has not been notified, more than 90 days prior to certification, of any unpaid Federal tax assessment for which the liability remains unsatisfied, unless the assessment is the subject of an installment agreement or offer in compromise that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service and is not in default, or the assessment is the subject of a non-frivolous administrative or judicial proceeding.

6. EDA's Non-Relocation Policy

Applicants are advised that 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) attest 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 cause, 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 merely to 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 OMB Uniform Guidance (*see* 2 CFR part 200, Subpart F, "Audit Requirements"). The OMB Uniform Guidance requires any non-federal entity (e.g., nonprofit organizations, including nonprofit 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 OMB 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-OIE-2021-2007015";
- click "`Search`";
- under the "`Actions`" column, click the "`Apply`" link that corresponds to the competition to which you wish to apply (i.e., the STEM Talent Challenge Program);
- enter your email address (if you would like to receive updates from Grants.gov regarding this NOFO) 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

To submit a complete application through https://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. To avoid delays, EDA strongly recommends that applicants start early before logging in, registering, reviewing the application instructions, and applying. Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found at

https://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 SAM registration, which includes the CCR database registration, up-to-date through sam.gov or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov.

2. AOR Requirement

Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. As part of the registration process, you will register at least one AOR for your organization. AORs registered at Grants.gov are the only officials with the authority to submit applications at Grants.gov; please **ensure that your organization's application is submitted by an AOR**. **IF THE APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED BY ANYONE OTHER THAN YOUR ORGANIZATION'S AOR, IT WILL BE REJECTED BY THE GRANTS.GOV SYSTEM AND CANNOT BE CONSIDERED BY EDA.** Note that a given organization may designate multiple individuals as AORs for Grants.gov purposes.

3. Field Limitations and Special Characters

Please be advised that Grants.gov provides the following notice with respect to form field limitations and special characters: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html.

4. Verify That Your Submission Was Successful

Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at Grants.gov. Applicants can expect to receive multiple emails regarding the status of their submission. Since email communication can be unreliable, applicants must proactively check on the status of their application if they do not receive email notifications within a day of submission.

EDA requests that applicants kindly refrain from submitting multiple copies of the same application. 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 within 72 hours of that email, the applicant may contact the representative listed in section G (p. 25) 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 Grants.gov, and an agency tracking number must be assigned. 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 about 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. 25) 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: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html. The following link lists "Frequently Asked Questions by Applicants": https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html. If you do not find an answer to your question there, contact Grants.gov by email at support@grants.gov or telephone at (800) 518-4726. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except on federal holidays.

APPENDIX A EXAMPLE OUTPUT AND OUTCOME MEASURES

Applications for all competitions under this NOFO will be evaluated on their approaches to measuring their stated goals including activities, outputs, and outcomes. See, e.g., section E.1 (p. 17). Applicants are encouraged to consider a broad range of relevant output and outcome measures in developing their proposed scope of work. For each output or outcome measure identified, why the metric was chosen or identified should be included. Examples of such output and outcome measures include the following:

Program Activities	Metrics
Output	# recruitment and outreach activities # of trainees recruited for training # of trainees completing training # of trainees entering into work-based learning # of trainees completing work-based learning # of employer partnerships established # hiring and networking activities
Outcome	# of job placements # businesses served Average wage at placement # trainees who retain employment for 90 days # positions filled for employer partners

APPENDIX B OPTIONAL CHECKLIST-STYLE GUIDE FOR REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR APPLICATION

1. For States, Indian Tribes, Cities, and Other Political Subdivisions of States

The following checklist table is meant to assist applicants that are States, Indian tribes, cities, and other political subdivisions of States (including consortia of one or more of these types of entities). As set forth in section D.2 (p. 6) of this NOFO, all documents are required for a complete application.

Note that this list **DOES NOT APPLY** to nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, public-private partnerships, science or research parks, Federal laboratories, or economic development or similar organizations. For these organizations, see Appendix B2 (p. 33) of this NOFO.

Document Checklist for State, Indian Tribe, City, and Other Political State Subdivision Applicants/Co-Applicants				
Document	**Title/Description/Reference**	**Checklist**		
Project Narrative	*See* section D.2.a.i (p. 8)	*Application*		
Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan	*See* section D.2.a.ii (p. 9)	*Application*		
Matching Share Commitment Letters	*See* section D.2.a.iii (p. 10)	*Source 1*	*Source 2*	*etc.*
Form SF-424	Application for Federal Assistance	*Applicant 1*	*Applicant 2*	*etc.*
Form SF-424A	Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs	*Application*		
Form CD-511	Certification Regarding Lobbying (if applicable)	*Applicant 1*	*Applicant 2*	*etc.*
Form SF-LLL	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)	*Applicant 1*	*Applicant 2*	*etc.*
SPOC/EO 12372 Compliance Documentation	*See* section D.2.b.ii.1)D.2.b.ii.1) (p. 11) and https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf (if applicable)	*State 1*	*State 2*	*etc.*
Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation	*See* section D.2.b.ii.3) (p. 12)	*Applicant 1*	*Applicant 2*	*etc.*

2. For Nonprofit Organizations, Institutions of Higher Education, Public-Private Partnerships, Science or Research Parks, Federal Laboratories, Economic Development or Similar Organizations

The following checklist table is meant to assist applicants that are nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, public-private partnerships, science or research parks, Federal laboratories, or economic development or similar organizations (as well as consortia that include one or more of these types of entities). As set forth in section D.2 (p. 6) of this NOFO, all documents are required for a complete application.

Document Checklist for Nonprofit Organization, Institution of Higher Education, Public-Private Partnership, Science or Research Park, Federal Laboratory, and Economic Development or Similar Organization Applicants/Co-Applicants				
Document	**Title/Description/Requirements**	**Checklist**		
Project Narrative	*See* section D.2.a.i (p. 8)	*Application*		
Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan	*See* section D.2.a.ii (p. 9)	*Application*		
Matching Share Commitment Letters	*See* section D.2.a.iii (p. 10)	*Source 1*	*Source 2*	*etc.*
State/Local Government Support	*See* section D.2.a.iv (p. 10)	*Application*		
Form SF-424	Application for Federal Assistance	*Applicant 1*	*Applicant 2*	*etc.*
Form SF-424A	Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs	*Application*		
Form CD-511	Certification Regarding Lobbying (if applicable)	*Applicant 1*	*Applicant 2*	*etc.*
Form SF-LLL	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)	*Applicant 1*	*Applicant 2*	*etc.*
SPOC/EO 12372 Compliance Documentation	*See* section D.2.b.ii.1)D.2.b.ii.1) (p. 11) and https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf (if applicable)	*State 1*	*State 2*	*etc.*
Organizational Documentation	E.g., certificates of good standing, articles of incorporation, bylaws, establishing authorities; *see* section D.2.b.ii.2) (p.12)	*Applicant 1*	*Applicant 2*	*etc.*
Public Private Partnership Documentation	If applicable, documentation defining the public private partnership which contains details of the agreement, including roles and responsibilities, and is signed by all parties. See the discussion of documentation for public-private partnerships in footnote 7 to section C.1	*Application*		
Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation	*See* section D.2.b.ii.3) (p. 12)	*Applicant 1*	*Applicant 2*	*etc.*