

# 2023 STEM TALENT CHALLENGE

*Notice of Funding Opportunity*

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U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

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*Office of INNOVATION and*  
**ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

## Executive Summary

<b>Federal Awarding Agency Name</b>	U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)
<b>Funding Opportunity Title</b>	2023 STEM Talent Challenge
<b>Announcement Type</b>	2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) publishing EDA’s application submission requirements and application review procedures for the STEM Talent Challenge, as authorized by section 30 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980, as amended (15 U.S.C. § 3723)
<b>Funding Opportunity Number</b>	EDA-STEMTALENT-2023
<b>Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s)</b>	11.023 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Talent Challenge Program
<b>Key Dates</b>	The application deadline is <b><u>11:59 P.M. EASTERN TIME ON JUNE 12, 2023</u></b> . Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. Applications will only be accepted electronically through <a href="https://sfgrants.eda.gov">sfgrants.eda.gov</a> (EDGE). Please carefully read the application and submission information provided in section D.2. (p.13) of this NOFO for full details.
<b>Funding Opportunity Description</b>	EDA’s Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship is seeking applications from eligible applicants to create and implement innovative science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) work-based learning models (such as Registered Apprenticeships) 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.
<b>Cost Sharing and Matching</b>	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.3. (p. 12) of this NOFO.
<b>Eligible Applicants</b>	Eligible applicants for EDA financial assistance under this NOFO include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A State;</li> <li>• An Indian tribe;</li> <li>• A city or other political subdivision of a State;</li> <li>• An entity whose application is supported by a State, a political subdivision of a State, or a native organization and that is— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a nonprofit organization,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ an institution of higher education,</li> <li>○ a public-private partnership,</li> <li>○ a science or research park,</li> <li>○ a Federal laboratory, or</li> <li>○ an economic development organization or similar entity; or</li> <li>● A consortium of any of the aforementioned entities.</li> </ul> <p>EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals under this Program. Applications from individuals will not be considered for funding.</p>
<b>Informational Webinar</b>	<p>EDA plans to conduct an informational webinar for this NOFO and expects to make available scheduling information and a link to a recording at <a href="https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/stem-challenge">https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/stem-challenge</a>.</p>
<b>Award Notification</b>	<p>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.</p>

**FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT  
2023 STEM Talent Challenge Program**

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## **A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

### **1. Overview**

Entrepreneurs, especially technology entrepreneurs, flourish in healthy ecosystems. Technology-based economic development (TBED) grows these ecosystems in which entrepreneurs can start and scale technology-driven businesses, which in turn create high-skill and high-wage jobs, economic opportunity, and the industries of the future. EDA's Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE) awards grants through the STEM Talent Challenge to foster science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) talent pipelines within these ecosystems, ultimately advancing the growth of connected, innovation-centric economies that enable innovation and accelerate technology commercialization to increase global competitiveness.<sup>1</sup>

As these regional innovation economies scale across the country, America has benefited from growth in jobs requiring sophisticated STEM skills. High-skilled human capital is proving essential to the growth and expansion of these regional technological ecosystems; however, U.S. employers—especially younger, leaner firms, which include many innovative and technology-focused startups—have struggled to fill jobs in these fields. 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 increasingly instrumental in meeting the urgent demand for a STEM-capable workforce.

To meet these demands, section 30 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (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, informed by committed employers seeking to fill quality jobs to enable regions to establish and strengthen U.S. leadership in the industries of the future.

### **2. Program Information**

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 critical, emerging technologies and transformative industries such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, semiconductor fabrication, advanced manufacturing and robotics, space exploration and commerce, broadband expansion, bioscience, quantum information science, climate technologies, the built environment, 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

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<sup>1</sup> See 15 U.S.C. §3723.

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, production, and deployment of critical, emerging technologies and the needs of transformative industries and should include an on-the-job component. Training models are not tied to existing industry definitions and can include any combination of work-based and classroom learning. EDA encourages experimentation with training models that aim to increase placements into good jobs—especially experimentation that builds evidence for models that not only aim for but also result in job placements.

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 or analogous entities, based on the specific context of the applicants' respective regional innovation economy. Projects should be closely tied to the needs of the regional innovation economy and its employers 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 goal of increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM fields, and applicants should plan to collect and measure demographic information about trainees as well as its own staff and leadership. Applicants should include in their proposed outcomes projected placement of program participants into quality jobs in STEM fields<sup>2</sup>.

### **i. 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 industries with potential for new, STEM-centric, quality jobs and to expand and empower the innovation economy workforce with a focus on employer engagement. Examples include:

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<sup>2</sup> A "quality job" is defined as a job that exceeds the local prevailing wage for an industry in the region, includes basic benefits (e.g., paid leave, health insurance, retirement/savings plan), and/or is unionized, and helps the employee develop the skills and experiences necessary to advance along a career path. "Prevailing wage" is defined by the Department of Labor as "the average wage paid to similarly employed workers in a specific occupation in the area of intended employment."

- assessing and forecasting current and future talent needs and developing collaborative, work-based programs with regional employers, entrepreneurs, innovators, and the organizations that support them;
- building a highly skilled STEM workforce and connecting it to technical opportunities that foster professional development and provide continuing advanced skills training to meet employer demand;
- securing and offering wrap-around services for workers to participate in skills training programs (e.g., transportation, childcare, and career coaching/navigation services);
- establishing durable collaborations among entrepreneurs, industry leaders and employers, educational organizations, established corporations, economic or workforce development organizations, labor unions, and the public sector to develop access to skilled workers and demand-driven workforce pipelines for the innovation economy;
- partnering with innovative employers, training providers, and/or workforce organizations to develop a strategy to develop or otherwise lead to a Registered Apprenticeship program that meets the standards set by Department of Labor; and
- placing job seekers, including those from underserved populations, into immediate quality job openings with regional employers in need of STEM talent, increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM fields.

EDA encourages efforts to reach historically underserved populations and areas, communities of color, women, and other groups facing labor market barriers such as persons with disabilities, disconnected youth, individuals in recovery, individuals with past criminal records, including justice-impacted and reentry participants, serving trainees participating in the SNAP, TANF, and WIC, and veterans and military spouses. 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.

### **3. Desired Outputs and Outcomes**

Proposed projects should aim for all the following outputs and outcomes:

#### **i. 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. Programs, wherever possible, should contain some or all components of the Registered Apprenticeship model (business involvement, structured on-the-job training, related instruction, rewards for skill gains, and culmination in a national occupational credential). 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.

While important to the development of a future workforce, general education programs such as those found in K-12 curriculums are not encouraged, unless part of a broader strategy in a STEM readiness program.



EDA will prioritize programs that aim to place workers into quality jobs during the period of performance of the award.

### **ii. Increase Regional Capacity to Hire in Innovative Industries**

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 technology startups and innovative companies with high growth potential to hire locally and to decrease the costs and lead time of 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.1 (p. 10) of this NOFO for eligibility information regarding the STEM Talent Challenge.

### **iii. Increase Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility 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 willing to demonstrate commitments to hiring program participants and to promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in their workplace. See section A.4. (p. 9) for more information about EDA's Equity Investment Priority.

## **4. Equity Investment Priority**

Consistent with Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government, and EDA's Equity Investment Priority, EDA expects projects to advance equity to underserved populations to the extent practicable. In this context, EDA is seeking projects that directly benefit: (1) one or more traditionally [underserved populations](#), including but not limited to women, Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders or (2) underserved communities within [geographies](#) that have been systemically and/or systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic prosperity such as Tribal Lands, [Persistent Poverty Counties](#), and rural areas with demonstrated, historical underservice.

A successful project will articulate which populations or communities will benefit (as noted above and at <https://www.eda.gov/funding/investment-priorities>) and include a plan for inclusive community engagement in the project and ensuring that economic benefits of the project will be shared by all communities in the project region, including any underserved communities. Your explanation should address the communities affected, barriers those communities may face in accessing benefits of the project, contemplated outreach efforts, and other planned steps to address identified barriers, as appropriate.

## **5. Statutory Authority**

The statutory authority for the STEM Talent Challenge is section 30 of Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. § 3723).

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

### **1. Available Funding Under this Announcement**

Funding in the total amount of \$4,500,000 has been appropriated for grants authorized by section 30 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980, consisting of \$2,000,000 pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022<sup>3</sup> and \$2,500,000 pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023.<sup>4</sup>

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 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 \$500,000. This funding must 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. 32) of this NOFO for award notification information. EDA anticipates awards will typically have a period of performance of 24 months with an estimated start date of November 1, 2023.

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. 32).

## **C. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. Eligible Applicants**

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

- a State;
- an Indian tribe;

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<sup>3</sup> Pub. L. 117-103, division B, title 1, 136 Stat. 49 (March 15, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Pub. L. 117-328, division B, title 1 (December 29, 2022).

- a city or other political subdivision of a State;<sup>5</sup>
- an entity whose application is supported by a State, a political subdivision of a State, or a native organization and that is—
  - a nonprofit organization,
  - a public-private partnership,<sup>6</sup>
  - an institution of higher education
  - a science or research park,
  - a Federal laboratory, or
  - an economic development organization or similar entity,<sup>7</sup> or
- a consortium of any of the aforementioned entities.<sup>8</sup>

EDA is not authorized to provide assistance to individuals or other entity types that are not eligible under this NOFO, and such requests will not be considered for funding.

If an organization is currently implementing a prior-year EDA STEM Talent Challenge award and submitting an application to the 2023 STEM Talent Challenge under this NOFO, EDA will not consider that application for award unless all activities under the existing award, including but not limited to final reporting requirements, are completed and submitted to EDA prior to November 1, 2023.

## 2. Definitions

Under the STEM Talent Challenge, lead applicants may choose to partner with co-applicants, subrecipients, or contractors, which can all potentially serve as federally funded partners under the grant (meaning part of the federal budget requested in the application would go to these partner entities).

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<sup>5</sup> A “political subdivision of a State” is a unit of government created by and under the authority of a higher level of government. For example, counties, cities, etc.

<sup>6</sup> For purposes of the STEM Talent Challenge, EDA defines a public-private partnership (PPP) 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. Organizations that plan to apply to this NOFO as a PPP may structure their applications in one of four ways: (1) The private entity that is party to the PPP applies on behalf of the PPP that includes the contractual agreement establishing the PPP, and that clearly documents the roles and responsibilities of each member of the PPP; (2) The public entity that is party to the PPP applies on behalf of the PPP that includes the contractual agreement establishing the PPP and that clearly documents the roles and responsibilities of each member of the PPP; (3) The PPP applies as a single entity if the PPP is an established entity, independent of the parties to the PPP and with its own organizational structure and clearly defined management team; and the application includes the contractual agreement establishing the PPP, and clearly documents the roles and responsibilities of each member of the PPP; or (4) If the public and private partners are equally involved in the management and/or carrying out of the grant, then the entities of the PPP should submit as co-applicants. The application should include the contractual agreement establishing the PPP and clearly document the roles and responsibilities of each member of the PPP.

<sup>7</sup> For purposes of the STEM Talent Challenge, EDA defines an economic development organization as an organization with a primary purpose to support the economic development of a community or region. To evaluate an organization’s eligibility as an economic development organization or similar entity, EDA will look to the organization’s Articles of Incorporation, Charter, Resolutions, Bylaws, and 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.

<sup>8</sup> A consortium is two or more eligible entities jointly applying for an award as co-applicants.

Applications may also include unfunded project partners (meaning they would not receive federal funds from this grant); please note the following definitions for help determining a partner's legal classification under this grant. Before disbursing any program funds, a case-by-case determination must be made as to whether the partner or party receiving the funds has the role of subrecipient or contractor, pursuant to factors listed in 2 CFR § 200.331, ("Subrecipient and contractor determinations").

#### **i. Subrecipients**

To be considered a subrecipient, an organization must be an eligible entity under this NOFO (see section C (p.10)). A subrecipient is an entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity (i.e., the lead applicant) to carry out part of a Federal award, but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such award. Subrecipients generally carry out a portion of project activities on behalf of the applicant or co-applicant(s). Additional documentation may be required for each potential subrecipient. Please note: When deciding between applying as a co-applicant or relying on subrecipients to perform part of the scope of work, EDA prefers subrecipients.

#### **ii. Co-applicants**

Each co-applicant must be an eligible entity under this NOFO (see section C (p. 10)); generally, co-applicants jointly manage and implement the scope of work of an award. Co-applicants have a significant role in the project scope of work. Co-applicants are generally required to submit the same forms that the primary applicant must submit. See section D (p. 13) and Appendix B for specific application requirements and a comprehensive checklist of the documents required for all co-applicants. Co-applicants of an application that is awarded funding will be considered "co-recipients."

#### **iii. Contractors**

Contractors are entities that receive a contract, defined as a legal instrument by which a recipient or subrecipient purchases property or services needed to carry out a project or program under a Federal award (for definition of "contractor" see 2 CFR § 200.1). Contractors do not have to meet eligibility requirements under this NOFO; however, all contracts (including with contractors listed in application materials) must be procured in accordance with the procurement standards at 2 CFR §§ 200.317-327. Please note: contractors that receive federal funds under a STEM Talent Challenge award cannot provide match or cost share for the same award.

### **3. Cost Sharing or Matching**

A minimum one-to-one (1:1) match is required for STEM Talent Challenge awards. 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. **Matching share greater than the 1:1 requirement will be accepted but is not necessary to qualify for funding and WILL NOT MAKE AN APPLICATION MORE COMPETITIVE.** EDA in its sole discretion may agree to reduce the matching share prior to, at, or during an award to no lower than 1:1.

Applicants must provide documentation (e.g., a signed letter, resolution, MOU, etc.) to show that all matching share is committed, whether provided by the applicant or a third party. For full details on what is included and allowed to meet match requirements, see section D.2. iii.c) (p. 18).

#### **4. 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. See section D.8. (p. 24). 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. Next, 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 Package**

An applicant must submit a complete application, as detailed in section D.2. ii (p. 14) of this NOFO, to be considered for funding. EDA intends to review each application within 60 days after receiving the complete application. EDA may request additional documentation or information from the applicant to make an eligibility determination. EDA will reject any documentation that the agency determines is inaccurate or incomplete, which may cause the application to be rejected.

#### **2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

An applicant must obtain, complete, and submit an application electronically through the Economic Development Grants Experience (EDGE) at [sfgrants.eda.gov](https://sfgrants.eda.gov). EDA will not accept paper, facsimile, or email transmissions of applications except as provided below. In order to obtain and submit an application through EDGE, an applicant must register for an EDGE account at [sfgrants.eda.gov](https://sfgrants.eda.gov). As part of the registration process, you will register one Authorized Representative for your organization, however, multiple points of contact may be registered or added by the lead applicant to the application workspace to view or work on completing the application. The Authorized Representative will be the only official with the authority to submit applications. The required electronic file format for attachments is text-searchable Portable Document Format (PDF) and, where appropriate, Microsoft Excel.

##### **i. Verify that your Submission was Successful**

Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made through EDGE. Applicants, specifically the Authorized Representative submitting the application and materials, will receive a time and date-stamped email from EDGE confirming the submission and receipt of the application and other required documents.

Applicants should save and print both the confirmation screen provided on EDGE after the applicant has submitted an application and the confirmation email sent when the application has been successfully submitted.

It is the Applicant's responsibility to verify that its submission was timely received and submitted successfully through EDGE.

**a) Alternatives to Submission through EDGE**

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 [ois@eda.gov](mailto:ois@eda.gov) or via phone at (202) 482-8001.

**ii. List of Required Documents**

All STEM Talent Challenge applications must include the following documents to be considered for funding (also, see Appendix B for application checklist):

Project Design and Substance
Project Narrative
Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan
Matching Share Commitment Letters
State/Local Government Support (if applicable, depending on your organization type)
Letters from Employers (optional)
Letters from Project Partners (optional)
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) <sup>9</sup>
Organizational Documentation (if applicable, depending on your organization type) <sup>10</sup>
Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation (if applicable)
Project Service Area and FIPS Codes

**iii. Project Design and Substance**

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, depending on your organization type)	One per application
Letters from Employers	Optional
Letters from Project Partners	Optional

<sup>9</sup> Only certain States participate in the SPOC compliance process. See section D.3. ii.a) (p. 20).

<sup>10</sup> Only certain types of non-public eligible entities are required to submit organization documents, and the documentation required varies by eligible entity type. See Appendix B.

## a) Project Narrative

All applicants must provide a Project Narrative of **no more than ten (10) total pages with margins no less than one-half inch (0.5") using Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman, or a similar font of size no less than eleven (11) points to be considered for funding. MATERIAL BEYOND THE TENTH PAGE WILL NOT BE READ OR CONSIDERED.** Any appendices will not be considered in scoring. 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 or knowledge, the proposed project's approach to meeting this need, and the expected outcomes that will result from the proposed project. Lengthy applications will not receive greater consideration.

Project Narratives must address the following areas:

### 1) Section 1: Project Description and Overview

#### a. Section 1a: Executive Summary

Provide an **executive summary** of no more than 250 words that includes a **project title** and that identifies the **applicant's name** and the **type of eligible applicant** listed in Section C (p. 10) of this NOFO (including if the applicant is a public-private partnership). EDA may publish this executive summary, including but not limited to on its or other websites and via social media.

#### b. Section 1b: Vision, Mission, Goals, Roles

What are your organization's **vision and mission** for this project? What are its program **goals**? Describe the **roles** you currently play in the innovation ecosystem, and how those roles enable you to achieve those goals. How are you positioned to support a technology entrepreneurship ecosystem by strengthening its STEM talent pipeline? Will other organizations be involved in this work and if so, what roles and responsibilities will they have? Please include any funded partners' organizational type, formal relationship, and unique entity identifier (UEI) number (e.g., 501(c)(3) non-profit, subrecipient, UEI: ABC12345).

### 2) Section 2: Regional Innovation Resources and Talent Needs

#### a. Section 2a: Project Service Area

Describe the project's **location** and **region**, including its **primary service area**, the communities or regions served (e.g., assets, financial and business resources, workforce, and infrastructure), 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.

### **b. Section 2b: Needs Assessment**

What are the unmet skilled STEM worker needs of your service area's employer base? You may substantiate your region's need through formal or informal assessments. A formal needs assessment may be completely or partially contained in your respective regional [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#), while an oral survey of the region's employers may be an informal needs assessment. Describe the approach and methodology used to assess these unmet STEM worker needs and to determine the need for this particular project.

## **3) Section 3: Proposed Solution and Scope of Work**

### **a. Section 3a: Problems and Solutions**

What problems are you trying to solve? What are your proposed solutions? To what extent do your solutions align with any of EDA's investment priorities?<sup>11</sup> Describe in detail how the solutions align with specific regional opportunities or tackle structural challenges.

### **b. Section 3b: Achievability**

Explain how achievable the solution is. For example, has the idea already been piloted in the area? Do you have examples of where this or similar solutions have been implemented before? If the solution is completely new, what research has been done that leads you to believe the outcomes are achievable? How will the project prepare participants for employment in the industries or businesses driving innovation in the project's region? To what extent have those businesses committed to hiring your project's clients?

### **c. Section 3c: Impacted Groups**

What specific stakeholder groups will the solution serve and impact? How will you target participants? Provide an estimate of how many people, organizations, and communities will be impacted by the project either directly or indirectly, and indicate to what extent, if any, you expect the solution to serve and benefit historically underserved your populations and increase the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of regional innovation economy.

### **d. Section 3d: Scope of Work (1 page)**

Applicants must submit no more than 1 page as the scope of work for the project. What **activities** will you undertake? What **milestones** and **deliverables** indicate positive progress, i.e., substantiate your performance? The scope of work should include work performed by the applicant, any subrecipient(s), any co-applicant(s), and any unfunded project partner(s), and should outline roles and responsibilities. The scope of work should align with and support claims made in the project narrative and the budget narrative. If EDA selects your project, EDA may incorporate this section into the award.

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<sup>11</sup> U.S. Econ. Dev. Admin., Investment Priorities, <https://www.eda.gov/funding/investment-priorities>.



#### **4) Section 4: Collaboration**

##### **a. Section 4a: Partnerships**

What is your current partner network? Include former, current, or future partnerships or working relationships with public and private entities at the national, State, regional, and local level that will be working on this project. Briefly describe each entity and their specific roles and responsibilities. How effective were past collaboration efforts? Partners should include regional innovators and employers who are looking for STEM-capable talent to fill quality jobs.

##### **b. Section 4b: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA)**

How will you reach out to new and diverse stakeholders and program participants? How will you aim to reach historically underserved populations and areas, such as those listed in section A.4. (p. 9). How will this project promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in STEM fields and in the region? How will you engage stakeholders from target populations, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, or Minority-Serving Institutions?

#### **5) Section 5: Measurable Goals and Impacts**

Outline evidence- and data-based anticipated goals, including outputs and outcomes. Anticipated goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timebound (SMART), and the application should indicate 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, number of job seekers enrolling in Registered Apprenticeships, STEM skills trained, etc. **Job placement of program participants into quality jobs in the STEM-related fields of study should be included as a goal for all projects.** Include benchmarks to communicate both base-level goals that adhere to the SMART framework, as well as stretch goals.

##### **a. Section 5a: Data Infrastructure**

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.

#### **6) 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.

##### **b) Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan**

Applicants must provide a clear budget narrative that identifies and justifies each budget line item (including both the federal share and matching non-federal share). The narrative total should match the total project costs listed in both the SF-424, Question 18, Line g (“TOTAL”) and the appropriate totals fields of the SF-

424A. **The budget narrative should include an itemized list of the matching share sources, the total match contribution per each matching share source, and whether the match is cash or in-kind.** The budget narrative should include itemized valuations of any in-kind matching funds (which, for personnel costs, should be supported by the staffing plan). Applicants may use the optional budget and staffing plan template available at <https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/stem-challenge> to supplement the budget narrative. Each line item in the budget narrative should clearly indicate:

- a. the budget category (from the SF-424A) to which the line item corresponds;
- b. a description of the intended use of funds for each line item; and
- c. if any matching share is allocated to a given line item, a citation to the one or more commitment letters that documents each relevant matching organization's commitment to provide the matching share of the given line item.

Recipients generally must expend non-federal share, whether in cash or in-kind, at the same general rate as the federal share. However, if the applicant's budget narrative proposes otherwise (e.g., if the project's implementation depends on a higher proportion of federal share expenditure upfront), the applicant must clearly explain why project implementation requires different expenditure rates.

As part of the budget narrative, applicants also must submit a staffing plan that lists all positions that would be charged to the federal and non-federal portions 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.

### c) **Matching Share Commitment Letters**

Applicants must submit commitment letters or equivalent documents for **all matching funds** (whether cash or in-kind) from **all sources** (i.e., applicant, co-applicants, subrecipients, and any third-party sources of matching funds) that are **SIGNED BY AN AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE** of the contributing organization. (Authorized Representatives must have the authority to execute documents and to obligate and expend funds on behalf of their respective organizations.)

Each matching share commitment letter (whether from the applicant or a third party) must:

1. state whether the contribution is cash or in-kind;
2. if in-kind, provide a valuation and description for in-kind contributions;
3. state whether the contribution is from a non-federal source or from a federal source that is explicitly authorized by statute to be used as matching share; and
4. state that, at the time of award, the matching share:
  - a. is **committed** to the project,
  - b. will be **available** as needed, and
  - c. is **neither conditioned nor encumbered** in any way that would preclude its use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance.

A provider of matching share, whether cash or in-kind contributions, may not serve as a contractor under the award for which it provides matching share. Match documentation should include a quantitative valuation and note whether the contribution is cash or in-kind. Funds from other federal financial assistance awards can serve as matching share funds **only** if authorized by statute, which may be determined by EDA's reasonable interpretation of the statute.

In-kind contributions may be used for the required matching share and must consist of contributions directly related to the proposed project, such as services, equipment, or space. An in-kind contribution is a non-monetary contribution. Goods or services offered free or at less than (discounted) the usual charge can be considered an in-kind contribution and still require a signed letter of commitment. EDA will fairly evaluate all in-kind contributions, which must be eligible project costs and which must meet applicable federal cost principles and uniform administrative requirements. As with other match sources, a commitment letter is required for both applicant-provided and third-party sources of in-kind match, as provided in section C.3. (p. 12). This letter should include details on what the in-kind contribution will consist of and a valuation (e.g., 40 hours of consulting time at \$100 hourly rate for a total in-kind contribution of \$4,000 across the period of performance). As noted above, contractors receiving EDA funding under this grant cannot provide in-kind (or cash) match.

Please note that all project funds—both federal funds and matching funds—are subject to the funding restrictions set forth in section D.8. (p. 24). Additionally, recipients generally must expend non-federal share, whether in cash or in-kind, at the same general rate as the federal share. However, if the applicant's budget narrative proposes otherwise (e.g., if the project's implementation depends on a higher proportion of federal share expenditure upfront), the applicant must clearly explain in the budget narrative why project implementation requires different expenditure rates.

#### **d) State/Local Government or Native Organization Support**

Applicants who are a non-public entity (e.g., non-profits, private institutions of higher education) must submit 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 communities served by this project. Letters should be signed by executives from the State, political subdivision of the State, or the native organization. Examples of authorities who may indicate such support include State and local executive branch officials (e.g., State governors, State cabinet members, mayors, city managers, city finance directors, county executives, or other municipal executives), State and local legislators (e.g., State legislators, city councilpersons), or native organizations.

Support from federal officials, including but not limited to members of the United States Congress, does not meet this requirement. Other examples of organizations that do NOT meet this requirement include letters from non-profits, chambers of commerce, public universities, etc.

If an applicant or co-applicant is a State, an Indian tribe, a city or other political subdivision of a State, or an institution of higher education that is 100% publicly controlled, this requirement does not apply.

### e) Optional Letters from Employers

Applicants can include letters from employer partners to further show that their project is likely to be successful and to result in quality jobs for program participants. These letters could reflect an employer's commitment to serving as a work-and-learn partner and/or to hiring program completers and should be specific about the employer partner's role in the project. While not required, the inclusion of these documents shows that a project is needed by regional employers and could help applicants score more favorably in merit review.

### f) Optional Letters from Additional Project Partners

Applicants may include letters from unfunded project partners to show that the project is supported by key organizations who will inform the development of or otherwise support the project. Such partners might include community workforce organizations, Registered Apprenticeships, labor unions, wraparound service providers, and others. While not required, these documents may show that a project has strong support and a relevant network and is likely to result in positive outcomes for program participants.

## 3. Forms and Supporting Documentation

### i. Forms

Applications **must** include the following documents, either per applicant, per co-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. EDA may consider applications that do not include the required Addenda incomplete or non-responsive and may exclude them from further review.

Documentation	Number
SPOC Compliance (if applicable)	For each participating State in primary service area
Organizational Documentation (if applicable)	For each applicant, depending on entity type
ICR Documentation (if applicable)	For each applicant
Project Service Area and FIPS Codes	One per application

**a) SPOC Compliance**

If the proposed project is covering a service area in a State that has adopted a process under Executive Order (EO) 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs,” the applicant must give State and local governments a reasonable opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project, including review and comment from area-wide planning organizations in metropolitan areas. Applicants with a project service area that is within a participating State(s) **must** submit documentation demonstrating compliance with that State’s or those States’ processes. To ensure compliance, applicants should reach out to their State’s Single Points of Contact (SPOC) to understand that State’s specific processes. See section D.7. (p. 24) “Intergovernmental Review” of this NOFO for further detail. EDA strongly encourages applicants to contact SPOCs early in the application period to determine the relevant State’s or States’ processes.<sup>12</sup> Based on the applicant’s State, EDA requires the following documentation:

State does not participate	No documentation required—check SF-424 box 19(c).
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—provide the documentation as an attachment and check SF-424 box 19(b).
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—provide the documentation as an attachment and check SF-424 box 19(a).

**b) Organizational Documentation**

Each non-public applicant and co-applicant must provide documentation that supports each applicant’s or co-applicants’ **organizational status as an eligible entity**, depending on the type of organization:

- 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<sup>13</sup> or similar entities must provide documentation that demonstrates their organization’s status as the relevant entity type as discussed in section C (p. 10).
- Entities applying as public-private partnerships must submit documentation of their contractual relationship. See the discussion of documentation for public-private partnerships in footnote 6 to section C (p. 10).

<sup>12</sup> EDA strongly encourages applicants with any questions about SPOC compliance (i.e., intergovernmental review) to contact the respective State’s SPOC representative listed in the SPOC list as linked in section D.3. ii.a) (p. 24).

<sup>13</sup> EDA strongly encourages applicants that may be eligible under this entity category to contact the representative listed in section G of this NOFO (p. 34) with any questions regarding eligibility.

- 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.

Regardless of entity type, EDA reserves the right to request documentation or additional proof of organizational status.

### **c) Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation**

If indirect costs are included in the budget, the applicant must include documentation to support the indirect cost rate it is using (unless claiming the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below). The applicant must submit a copy of its current, approved, and negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA), if it wishes to rely on the NICRA. The maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which EDA will reimburse a recipient will 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 calendar days from the award start date (unless claiming the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below). See 2 C.F.R. part 200 Apps. III, IV, V, VI, VII for guidance. The allocation plan and the rate proposal shall be submitted to [EDA\\_Indirect@ibc.doi.gov](mailto:EDA_Indirect@ibc.doi.gov) (or the 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.

In accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414(f), an applicant that does not have a current negotiated or provisional NICRA, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (subject to the exceptions of § 200.414(f)). 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 that receives less than \$35 million in direct federal funding per year it may submit any of the following:

- Negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA);
- A Certificate of Indirect Costs from the Department of the Interior (DOI) or EDA (<https://www.eda.gov/grant-resources/grantee-guidance/indirect-costs/how-to>);
- An acknowledgment received from EDA and a Certificate of Indirect Costs in the form prescribed at 2 C.F.R. part 200, app. VII; or
- A Cost Allocation Plan approved by a federal agency (note that cost allocation plans or indirect cost rates approved by State agencies are not acceptable).

#### d) Project Service Area and FIPS Codes

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 2020 State, County, Minor Civil Division, and Incorporated Place FIPS Codes available at <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files/2020/demo/popest/2020-fips.html>.

Please find an optional spreadsheet template at <https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/stem-challenge>.

#### 4. 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 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.<sup>14</sup>

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

In accordance with 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 (UEI) in the application (UEI is also required for subrecipients); (iii) make certain certifications (see *also* section D.9. i (p. 25) of this NOFO), and (iv) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they have an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. 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.

#### 6. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for the receipt of **an application** is **11:59 PM EASTERN TIME ON JUNE 12, 2023**. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. **Applications** will only be accepted electronically through **the Economic Development Grants Experience (EDGE)** at [sfgrants.eda.gov](https://sfgrants.eda.gov). Applicants are advised to carefully read the submission information provided in section D (p. 13) of this NOFO. 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 through EDGE. See section

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<sup>14</sup> As specified in 40 CFR § 1506.6(b).

D.8 (p. 24) of this NOFO for information regarding electronic submissions. **APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER THE APPLICATION DEADLINE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING.** EDA strongly suggests that applicants submit applications substantially before the deadline. In addition, please note the following:

EDA will not accept any unsolicited changes, additions, revisions, or deletions to applications or supporting documents 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. See section E (p. 26) of this NOFO for application review and selection information.

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. Applicants should **SAVE AND PRINT WRITTEN PROOF** of an electronic submission.

**LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED** for any reason, including but not limited to late submissions caused by issues with EDGE or SAM. See sections D.8 (p. 24) and H.7. (p. 36) of this NOFO for more information on electronic submissions. In situations described in this subsection, applications must have email or facsimile 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 or postmarked, as applicable, by the application deadline WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.**

## 7. Intergovernmental Review

If the proposed project is covering a service area in a State that has adopted a process under Executive Order (EO) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," the applicant must give State and local governments a reasonable opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project, including review and comment from area-wide planning organizations in metropolitan areas. To find out more about a State's process under EO 12372, applicants may contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC). Names and addresses of some States' SPOCs are listed at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf>. Question 19 of Form SF-424 allows applicants to indicate compliance with EO 12372; however, note that applicants must supply as part of their application packages documentation that supports the answer provided to Question 19 (i.e., that demonstrates compliance). See section D.3. ii.a) (p. 21) for additional details to meet this requirement.

## 8. Funding Restrictions

The following activities are not allowable, and associated costs are not allowable costs, under any STEM Talent Challenge award. Such costs may not be charged to the federal share or to the matching share of an award.



- **Construction:** Construction activities are not allowable, except in limited circumstances related to equipment installation. For the purposes of an award made pursuant to this NOFO, construction includes any activity that disturbs the ground or modifies a structure. The purchase of equipment and equipment-related installation in a facility may be considered allowable but only to the extent that such equipment and any related installation is used to support another eligible activity under the award.
- **Equity Investments & Loans:** The use of funds to make equity investments or issue debt is not an allowable cost. Neither federal nor matching share funds may be invested in startups or other companies, whether through equity, debt, hybrid, or another mechanism.
- **Subsidies to Participant Firms:** Award funds may not be passed or transferred to companies being served by the applicant organization, nor may they be used to subsidize such companies' expenses that are unrelated to program activities, including general operating expenses. Neither federal nor matching share funds may be used for such costs.
- **Advertising & Marketing:** In accordance with 2 CFR §§ 200.421(b) and (d), the costs of promotional items and memorabilia, including models, gifts, and souvenirs as well as the costs of advertising and public relations designed to promote the applicant are not allowable. However, certain costs related specifically to recruiting participants and conducting program outreach (e.g., social media ads, press releases, flyers, etc.) may be allowable.
- **Cloud Service Credits:** Credits to be distributed to companies (i.e., startups and individuals) being served by the applicant organization are not allowable costs and thus are not an allowable source of matching share.

Additionally, it is DOC policy that award funds may not be used to pay for management fees in excess of costs or profits, unless statutorily authorized.

#### i. Payments to Program Participants

STEM Talent Challenge funding may fund wages or stipends for program participants for their participation in work-and-learn programs. These costs should be proportionate to a program's overall budget, clearly valued based on numbers of anticipated enrollments, and tied to projected job placement outcomes. While some costs related to incumbent worker training are allowed, STEM Talent Challenge funds cannot be used to reimburse employers for the training of existing employees.

### 9. Other Submission Requirements

#### i. Pre-Submission Registration

**ENSURE THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION AND ANY REQUIRED INDIVIDUALS ARE REGISTERED WITH REQUIRED SYSTEMS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** Before submitting an application under this NOFO, each applicant must register its organization with EDGE. **Applicants should note that this process can be lengthy, requires interaction with multiple organizations (e.g., SAM.gov), and requires confirmation at each step. Applicant organizations that have not previously completed any of the above steps may require three to four weeks to accomplish these tasks due to system processing requirements.** EDA **STRONGLY ENCOURAGES** prospective applicants to begin the pre-submission process as early as possible in the application period.

For more information about:

- **How to register your organization with SAM.gov (or how to renew your organization's registration)**, visit SAM.gov's [Getting Started with Registration page](#);
- **How to check an organization's current SAM.gov registration status**, visit SAM.gov's [Check Entity Registration Status page](#); and
- **How to create an EDGE account**, visit [sfgrants.eda.gov](http://sfgrants.eda.gov).

The hyperlinks to (i.e., the URLs of) these resources are up-to-date as of the date of publication of this NOFO, but please note that EDA does not control these systems, and they may change without notice. If you encounter problems or questions that are not answered by the pages linked above, please visit the respective system's entry page (e.g., [SAM.gov](http://SAM.gov)) and navigate to its respective "Help," "Support," or similar section.

## 10. EDGE Systems Issues

If you experience a systems issue with EDGE (i.e., a technical problem or glitch with the webpage) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before a deadline, please (i) print any error message received; (ii) email the help desk at [GrantHDSupport@eda.gov](mailto:GrantHDSupport@eda.gov); and (iii) contact EDA at [oe@eda.gov](mailto:oe@eda.gov). Please be sure to track your issue using a case number given to you by the help desk regarding their communications with EDGE. Please note that problems with an applicant's computer system or equipment are not considered systems issues. Similarly, an applicant's (i) failure to complete the required registration, (ii) failure to ensure that a registered Authorized Representative submits the application, or (iii) failure to receive a notice receipt of an email message from EDGE are not considered systems issues. An EDGE issue is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of the website itself, such as the temporary loss of service 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 go to [sfgrants.eda.gov](http://sfgrants.eda.gov) and click on the Resources page for assistance in navigating EDGE and for a list of useful resources.

## E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Throughout the review and selection process, EDA, at its sole discretion, may seek clarification, including but not limited to written clarifications and corrected or missing documents, from applicants whose applications are being reviewed and considered and require that applicants provide such clarifications or corrections to continue to be considered for an award under this NOFO. EDA will provide applicants a reasonable amount of time to provide any additional documentation. An applicant's failure to provide complete and accurate supporting documentation in a timely manner *when requested by EDA* may result in the removal of that application from consideration. EDA may ask applicants to clarify application materials, objectives, and work plans, or modify budgets or other specifics as necessary to comply with federal requirements. EDA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

## 1. Evaluation Criteria

Applications under this NOFO will be reviewed against the following seven equally weighted criteria. Merit Reviewers will respond to one prompt for each criterion by indicating the extent to which they agree with the statement as it applies to an application, from “strongly disagree” (1 point) to “strongly agree” (5 points):

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Applications will be scored competitively using the following criteria:

Summary of Criteria
Strength of Regional Partnerships and Assets
Proposed Solution
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
Measurable Goals and Impacts
Continued Impacts
Budget and Staffing
Alignment with STEM Talent Challenge Goals

### i. Strength of Regional Partnerships and Assets

Do necessary partners such as employers and training providers support the project's main functions? How clearly does the proposal define those key partners' roles? How is the proposed project connected to STEM industry leaders and businesses driving innovation in the region? Is there a clearly defined need of these innovative businesses for employees with the skills this project will impart to its trainees? Does the proposed project connect training providers (e.g., Registered Apprenticeships) or trainees with employers in need of the skilled employees? Are these identified partnerships likely to place people into high-wage, quality jobs?

**Consider the above as you determine the extent to which you agree with the following statement:**

**The project includes employers and training providers who are active, committed partners with clearly defined roles that will increase trainee placement into high-quality jobs.**

### ii. Proposed Solution

Under this criterion, consider whether the proposed solution is clearly stated and aligned with community or region's needs. Does the proposed solution effectively leverage assets in the primary service area? Does the solution align with the opportunity, and is the proposed solution achievable (or can substantial progress be made)? Does the application clearly identify target participants and how those participants will be reached? To what extent does the solution incorporate components of the Registered Apprenticeship model (business involvement, structured on-the-job training, related instruction, rewards for skill gains, and culmination in a national occupational credential)? Does the solution align with the needs of these participants? Does the solution align with any of EDA's investment priorities?

**Consider the above as you determine the extent to which you agree with the following statement:**

**The proposed solution is achievable, aligned with the opportunity, and meets the needs of its target participants and population.**

**iii. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**

Under this criterion, consider the extent to which the project will ensure that project benefits are shared across all affected communities. Plans should address and mitigate systemic barriers to ensure full participation of these communities and stakeholders from target populations. EDA strongly encourages efforts to include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, or Minority-Serving Institutions, in addition to historically underserved populations, such as women, Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and other groups facing barriers such as persons with disabilities, individuals in recovery, individuals with past criminal records including justice-impacted, veterans and military spouses, and any underserved communities within geographies that have been systemically and/or systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in economic prosperity. Will the project likely have a positive impact on promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility among STEM fields and in the project's region? Will it 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)?

**Consider the above as you determine the extent to which you agree with the following statement:**

**The proposed project includes a clear and realistic plan that, if executed, would engage, serve, and benefit an inclusive group of stakeholders and trainees or other program participants.**

**iv. Measurable Goals and Impacts**

Under this criterion, consider whether the solution has clear goals against which to measure the project's success, including measuring impact on historically underserved populations and areas. Proposed goals should be measurable, reasonable, and achievable during and beyond the grant period. Are the goals baselined, and does the applicant clearly indicate the likelihood of achieving each goal? I.e., are primary goals (e.g., the number of participants entering into a work-based learning agreement or Registered Apprenticeship) and stretch goals (the number of jobs created as a result of this program) identified, explained, and differentiated? Does the applicant explain the level of effort required to realistically achieve each level of each goal? 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.

**Consider the above as you determine the extent to which you agree with the following statement:**

**The project goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) and, if achieved, would advance placement into high-quality jobs in the STEM-related field of training.**

#### **v. Continued Impacts**

Under this criterion, consider the likelihood that the investment will continue to deliver impact. If the project fills an ongoing STEM talent or skill need within the regional innovation economy, how will the applicant continue to fill this need after the term of the grant? If the project fills a temporary need, how will the services evolve to continue to support STEM workers and the employers that need STEM talent? How will the applicant identify and deliver these evolved services after the term of the grant? You may consider whether the proposed partners enhance the sustainability of the project, the financial plan to sustain the project beyond the award, and whether the plan is feasible based on evidence provided in the application.

**Consider the above as you determine the extent to which you agree with the following statement:**

**The proposed project will continue to strengthen the regional economy’s STEM workforce development pipeline after the grant period, whether with future financial support or by becoming realistically self-sustaining.**

#### **vi. Budget and Staffing**

Under this criterion, consider the budget narrative and staffing plan proposed in the application. Do the operations and management capacities and experiences of the applicant organization(s) and team demonstrate the ability to execute the proposed project successfully? Do the budget narrative and staffing plan 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 does not make an application more competitive.*

**Consider the above as you determine the extent 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 and the applicant organization and team have the operations and management capacities to execute the proposed project successfully.**

#### **vii. Alignment with STEM Talent Challenge Goals**

Evaluate criterion based on whether the application aligns with the STEM Talent Challenge goal to “drive regional innovation by building STEM-capable talent” and on the quality and clarity of the application’s responses to the prompts in this NOFO. What are the identified talent needs of the region and its innovative businesses? Is the project likely to fulfill these needs, and will it result in high-wage, high-skilled jobs in high-growth industries and industries of the future? How clearly is the need defined and substantiated, and how likely will this project meet that need?

**Consider the above as you determine the extent to which you agree with the following statement:**

**The application conveys a clear narrative that addresses the prompts in this NOFO and that aligns with the STEM Talent Challenge goal to “drive regional innovation by building STEM-capable talent.”**

## **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.

### **i. 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 by the application deadline. Applications received from ineligible entities will not be considered for funding. Applications that do not contain all forms and required documentation listed in section D.2. (p. 13) of this NOFO may be deemed non-responsive and excluded from further consideration. EDA expects all applicants to complete and include all required forms and documentation. However, EDA, in its sole discretion, may determine that an omission is 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. Technical Review will be conducted separately for each application for each competition.

### **ii. Merit Review**

Merit Reviewers will evaluate applications against the evaluation criteria in section E.1. (p. 27) 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, aggregate, and group 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.

### **iii. Grant’s Officer Decision**

The most highly ranked applications under this NOFO will be forwarded to the Grants Officer, which will be the Director of OIE. 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 30 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980, as amended (15 U.S.C. § 3723);
2. the extent to which the selection of the application, alone or in the context of other applications, supports EDA’s compliance with appropriations law requirements and report language guidance;
3. the ability of a project to start quickly, realistically achieve project goals, and catalyze additional resources;
4. the comparative financial or management capacity of the applicant;
5. the applicant’s performance under previous federal financial assistance awards, including whether the awardee submitted required performance reports and data;
6. for previous grantees, the extent to which the application builds upon and creates synergies with previously funded work;

7. 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
8. the availability of program funding;
9. the extent to which the project supports EDA's goals of balance in distribution of program funds within the overall STEM Talent Challenge and EDA portfolio, including geographic balance (including but not limited to geographic diversity among urban and rural states and diversity among regions of the United States), project type balance, sectoral focus balance (including but not limited to advanced wood products; advanced manufacturing; artificial intelligence; bioscience; commercial space; energy; marine energy; nanotechnology; telecommunications, including broadband; etc.), and organizational type balance (including but not limited to organization size and stage of development);
10. the extent to which any budget flaws or legal issues in the application may impact an applicant's ability to execute the project or achieve the desired impacts; and
11. The extent to which the project demonstrates support from and involvement with regional stakeholders, e.g., private, public, and non-profit entities, civil rights and equity-focused organizations, community-based organizations, civil society and consumer-focused groups, labor unions and worker organizations, workforce boards, economic development organizations, schools, community colleges, neighborhood and housing associations, and communities that stand to benefit.

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

#### **iv. 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 may 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 to be not in compliance with applicable rules and regulations will receive notification that their application was not successful.

### **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 (currently \$250,000 but periodically adjusted), EDA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (formerly 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

Under this NOFO, 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 (Notice of Award), which is the authorizing financial assistance award document and includes the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (DOC ST&Cs) and Specific Award Conditions as described in section F.2 (p. 32).

By accepting the Notice of Award, the applicant agrees to comply with all award provisions. EDA will provide the Notice of Award to the applicant's Authorized Representative through EDGE. The applicant's Authorized Representative must review and accept the Notice of Award without modification within 30 calendar days of the date of receipt. **Failure to sign and return the Notice of Award during this timeframe may be considered grounds for appropriate enforcement action pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 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 awards. 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

Recipients of an EDA award will be bound by the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) as set forth in 2 C.F.R. part 200.

For all projects, DOC will apply the DOC ST&Cs applicable on the date of the award. The DOC ST&Cs may be accessed at the following website: <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>. Recipients of DOC financial assistance are obligated to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities, in Federally assisted programs or activities.

DOC will apply the Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements effective December 26, 2014, 79 Fed. Reg. 78,390. The Pre-Award Notice may be accessed at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

### 3. Reporting

#### i. Financial, Performance, and Impact Reports

All recipients are required to submit progress reports and financial status reports generally no less than semi-annually, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant award. In addition, all 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 STEM Talent Challenge, EDA may conduct program evaluations. If so, **EDA may share performance data with evaluators and** recipients of grants under this program may need to furnish performance data to evaluators, including but not limited to EDA staff and outside parties contracted by EDA. EDA may also, for research purposes linked to improving economic outcomes, choose to share data with other federal partners, including but not limited to statistical agencies.

## **ii. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006**

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at [www.FSRS.gov](http://www.FSRS.gov) on all sub-awards over \$30,000. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 CFR part 170.

## **iii. 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).

Award recipients must submit Outputs Questionnaires (Form ED-916) to EDA on a semi-annual basis during the period of performance or as otherwise directed by EDA. The first Outputs Questionnaire must be submitted to EDA six months after the date the period of performance starts. The Outputs Questionnaire must be submitted to EDA every six months thereafter through the end of the Period Performance, or any portion thereof if applicable, or as otherwise directed by EDA.

Award recipients must submit Outcomes Questionnaires (Form ED-917) to EDA on an annual basis for a total of five years after the date the period of performance starts. The first Outcomes Questionnaire must be submitted to EDA one year after the date the period of performance starts. The Outcomes Questionnaire must be submitted to EDA at the end of every year thereafter for a total of five years, or as otherwise directed by EDA.

For more information, please refer to <https://www.eda.gov/performance/>.

## **4. 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 (formerly 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: [oe@eda.gov](mailto:oe@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. Disclosure of Information**

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.

### **3. Freedom of Information Act**

EDA may publish any applications it receives, including any supporting documentation, on its website or through other means.

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.

#### **4. 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. 34) of this NOFO with any questions regarding application of this regulation.

#### **5. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions**

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

#### **6. EDA's Non-Relocation Policy**

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) attests that EDA funding is not intended by the Recipient to assist its efforts to induce the relocation of existing jobs within the U.S. that are located outside of its jurisdiction to within its jurisdiction in competition with other U.S. jurisdictions for those same jobs. If 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. NOFO Changes Communicated on Grants.gov**

EDA may make changes or additions to this NOFO. All changes will be communicated on Grants.gov. It is recommended that applicants set up a Grants.gov account and subscribe to this funding opportunity ("EDA-STEMTALENT-2023") in order to be notified of any updates or changes. DOC or EDA may cancel, modify, or withdraw this NOFO at any time. EDA is not obligated to make any federal award or commitment as a result of this announcement.

## **8. 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 (OIG) also may conduct an audit of an award at any time.

## **9. Office of Inspector General Rights and Responsibilities**

The DOC OIG seeks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's programs, including deterring and detecting fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement. The OIG accomplishes this mission primarily through investigations, audits, and inspections of Department activities, including grants, cooperative agreements, loans, and contracts.

### **i. Disclosures**

Recipients of financial assistance originating from the U.S. Department of Commerce, including EDA, shall timely disclose, in writing, to the OIG and awarding agency, whenever, in connection with the award, performance, or closeout of this grant or sub-award thereunder, the recipient has credible evidence that a principal, employee, agent, or sub-recipient has committed:

(i) A violation of federal criminal law involving fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, or gratuity violations found in Title 18 of the United States Code; or

(ii) A violation of the civil False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733).

### **ii. Reporting**

The OIG maintains a hotline to receive allegations of fraud, waste, or abuse. To report such allegations, please visit <https://www.oig.doc.gov/Pages/Hotline.aspx>. Upon request, the OIG will take appropriate measures to protect the identity of any individual who reports misconduct, as authorized by the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. Reports to the OIG may also be made anonymously.

### iii. Whistleblower Protection

Recipients, sub-recipients, and employees working on this grant award will be subject to the whistleblower rights and remedies established under 41 U.S.C. § 4712.

An employee of a recipient or sub-recipient may not be discharged, demoted, or otherwise discriminated against as a reprisal for disclosing information that the employee reasonably believes is evidence of: gross mismanagement of a federal contract or award; a gross waste of federal funds; an abuse of authority (i.e., an arbitrary and capricious exercise of authority that is inconsistent with the mission of EDA or the U.S. Department of Commerce or the successful performance of a contract or grant awarded by EDA or the Department) relating to a federal contract or award; a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; or a violation of a law, rule, or regulation related to a federal contract (including the competition for or negotiation of a contract) or grant.

The recipient or sub-recipient shall inform its employees and contractors, in writing, in the predominant language of the workforce or organization, of employee whistleblower rights and protections under 41 U.S.C. § 4712, as described above and at <https://www.oig.doc.gov/Pages/Whistleblower-Protection-Program.aspx>.

### 10. Certifications Required by Annual Appropriations Acts for Corporations and for Awards over \$5 million

As discussed in section D.9. i (p. 25), 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.

**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. 27). 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	# of 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 trainees entering into Registered Apprenticeships # of trainees completing Registered Apprenticeships # of employer partnerships established # hiring and networking activities
Outcome	# of job placements # of 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

### PUBLIC ENTITIES: For States, Indian tribes, Cities, Other Political Subdivisions of States, and Institutions of Higher Education That Are 100% Publicly-Controlled

The following checklist table is meant to assist applicants that are States, Indian tribes, cities, other political subdivisions of States, and Institutions of Higher Education that are 100% publicly-controlled (including consortia of one or more of these types of entities). As set forth in section D.1. (p. 13) 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 that are not 100% publicly-controlled, public-private partnerships, science or research parks, Federal laboratories, or economic development or similar organizations. For these organizations, see Appendix B (p. 40) of this NOFO.

Document Checklist for State, Indian tribe, City, Other Political State Subdivision, and Institutions of Higher Education That Are 100% Publicly-Controlled Applicants/Co-Applicants		
Document	Title/Description/Reference	Checklist
<b>Project Narrative</b>	See section D.2. iii.a) (p. 15)	<i>One per Application</i>
<b>Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan</b>	See section D.2. iii.b) (p. 17)	<i>One per Application</i>
<b>Matching Share Commitment Letters</b>	See section D.2. iii.c) (p. 18)	<i>One per match source</i>
<b>Form SF-424</b>	Application for Federal Assistance	<i>One per Applicant or Co-applicant (not needed for subrecipients)</i>
<b>Form SF-424A</b>	Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs	<i>One per Application</i>
<b>Form CD-511</b>	Certification Regarding Lobbying	<i>One per Applicant or Co-applicant (not needed for subrecipients)</i>
<b>Form SF-LLL</b>	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)	<i>If applicable, one per Applicant or Co-applicant (not needed for subrecipients)</i>
<b>SPOC/EO 12372 Compliance Documentation</b>	See section D.3. ii.a) (p. 21) and <a href="https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf">https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf</a> (if applicable)	<i>If applicable, one per State served</i>
<b>Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation</b>	See section D.3. ii.c)(p. 22)	<i>One per Applicant</i>
<b>Project Service Area and FIPS Codes</b>	See section D.3. ii.d)(p. 23). Add as an attachment to the SF-424	<i>One per Application</i>
<b>Letters from Employers (Optional)</b>	See section D.2. iii.e) (p.on page 20)	<i>If applicable, per Application</i>
<b>Letters from Project Partners (Optional)</b>	See section D.2. iii.f) (p. 20)	<i>If applicable, per Application</i>



**NON-PUBLIC ENTITIES: For Nonprofit Organizations, Institutions of Higher Education That Are Not 100% Publicly-Controlled, 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 that are not 100% publicly-controlled, 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. 13) of this NOFO, all documents are required for a complete application.

<b>Document Checklist for Nonprofit Organization, Institutions of Higher Education That Are Not 100% Publicly-Controlled, Public-Private Partnership, Science or Research Park, Federal Laboratory, and Economic Development or Similar Organization Applicants/Co-Applicants</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Title/Description/Requirements</b>	<b>Checklist</b>
<b>Project Narrative</b>	See section D.2. iii.a) (p. 15)	<i>One per Application</i>
<b>Budget Narrative and Staffing Plan</b>	See section D.2. iii.b) (p. 17)	<i>One per Application</i>
<b>Matching Share Commitment Letters</b>	See section D.2. iii.c) (p. 18)	<i>One per match source</i>
<b>State/Local Government Support</b>	See section D.2. iii.d) (p. 19)	<i>One per Application</i>
<b>Form SF-424</b>	Application for Federal Assistance	<i>One per Applicant or Co-applicant (not needed for subrecipients)</i>
<b>Form SF-424A</b>	Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs	<i>One per Application</i>
<b>Form CD-511</b>	Certification Regarding Lobbying	<i>One per Applicant or Co-applicant (not needed for subrecipients)</i>
<b>Form SF-LLL</b>	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)	<i>If applicable, one per Applicant or Co-applicant (not needed for subrecipients)</i>
<b>SPOC/EO 12372 Compliance Documentation</b>	See section D.3. ii.a) (p. 21) and <a href="https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf">https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf</a> (if applicable)	<i>If applicable, one per State in the project's service area</i>
<b>Organizational Documentation</b>	E.g., certificates of good standing, articles of incorporation, bylaws, establishing authorities; see section D.3. ii.b) (p. 21)	<i>If applicable, per Applicant or Co-applicant (not needed for subrecipients)</i>
<b>Public Private Partnership Documentation</b>	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 6.	<i>One per Application</i>
<b>Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation</b>	See section D.3. ii.c) (p. 22)	<i>One per Applicant</i>
<b>Project Service Area and FIPS Codes</b>	See section D.3. ii.d) (p. 23). Add as an attachment to the SF-424	<i>One per Application</i>
<b>Letters from Employers (Optional)</b>	See section D.2. iii.e) (p. 20)	<i>If applicable, per Application</i>
<b>Letters from Project Partners (Optional)</b>	See section D.2. iii.f) (p. 20)	<i>If applicable, per Application</i>