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Notice of Funding Opportunity

Title: Department of Commerce (DOC), Economic Development Administration (EDA)
– FY 2021 American Rescue Plan Act Build Back Better Regional Challenge

Website: <https://eda.gov/arpa/build-back-better/>

Funding: Total: \$1,000,000,000. Maximum awards: \$500K-\$100M, depending on project and phase.

Dates: Phase 1 Concept Proposals Due: October 19, 2021
Phase 2 Full Applications Deadline: March 15, 2022

Summary: Through this American Rescue Plan Act Build Back Better Regional Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (ARPA BBBRC NOFO), EDA aims to assist communities and regions impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has caused, and continues to cause, economic injury to U.S. communities and regions in devastating and unprecedented ways. This ARPA BBBRC NOFO is designed as a two-phase competition to (1) help regions develop transformational economic development strategies and (2) fund the implementation of those strategies that will create and grow regional growth clusters. Such efforts will help regional economies recover from the pandemic and build economic diversity and resiliency to mitigate impacts of future economic disasters as well as benefit regional workforces and residents through creation of high-quality jobs, increased wages, and revitalized communities.

Project Topic Areas:

Through this program, EDA can provide funding to support a wide range of non-construction and construction activities. This includes construction activities for eligible entities such as water and sewer system improvements, industrial parks, shipping and logistics facilities, business incubators and accelerators, brownfield redevelopment, technology-based facilities, food aggregation, processing and distribution centers, wet labs, multi-tenant manufacturing facilities, science and research parks, transportation enhancements, and telecommunications infrastructure (e.g., broadband) and development facilities. This also includes non-construction activities such as design and engineering, technical assistance, economic recovery strategy development, entrepreneurial support, demand-driven workforce training, new academic curricula, market feasibility studies, and the capitalization of revolving loan funds (RLFs).

Funding:

Under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Congress provided EDA with \$3,000,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022, to “prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus and for necessary expenses for responding to economic injury as a result of coronavirus.” Of the \$3 billion in appropriated funds, this NOFO specifically allocates \$1,000,000,000 for regional growth cluster development, with \$100,000,000 of those funds going to communities negatively impacted by the downturn in the coal economy, supporting transitioning away from coal.

EDA anticipates up to \$30,000,000 in total being awarded in Phase 1, in technical assistance grants of up to \$500,000 each. In Phase 2, EDA anticipates funding regional growth clusters with component projects that collectively cost between approximately \$25,000,000 and \$75,000,000, though EDA will consider regional growth clusters above and below these amounts depending on the strength of the application and quality of the individual component projects. EDA anticipates that the cost of individual non-construction and construction component projects within regional growth clusters will range from approximately \$750,000 to



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\$25,000,000, or more if the cluster or project warrants it. Phase 1 technical assistance grants will be awarded at a 100% federal grant rate for a maximum amount of \$500,000. For component projects awarded under Phase 2, EDA generally expects to fund at least 80% and up to 100% of eligible project costs,

Project Requirements:

This ARPA BBBRC NOFO will be administered in two phases:

- In Phase 1, EDA will provide technical assistance grants to approximately 50-60 coalitions (through an eligible entity that serves as a lead institution). These coalitions will be considered “finalists” and the grants will be used by the finalists to prepare more detailed applications for transformational projects that benefit their respective geographic regions and are aligned around a holistic approach to building, strengthening, or scaling a strategic industry or industries.
- In Phase 2, EDA will select 20-30 of the finalist coalitions to receive \$25-75 million (and potentially up to \$100 million) each to fund the collection of projects they identified. The projects will be funded through grants to coalition members.

This ARPA BBBRC NOFO is designed to support clusters in transforming their regional economy through groups of complementary, aligned construction and non-construction projects. The projects should be organized under a singular vision to support industry growth across the region. Interested regions should form regional coalitions, in coordination with private sector partners and other partners, that share a common vision for how significant investment from EDA could catalyze wage growth, increased economic growth, the creation of a new industry, and/or the scaling or growth of existing industries in their region. The identified projects should foster economic growth and competitiveness through job creation, capacity building, and attracting private investment.

Eligible Applicants:

Eligible applicants for investment assistance as a lead institution or a coalition member include a(n): a. District Organization; b. Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; c. State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; d. Institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or e. Public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.