



U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

TIPS for EDA PUBLIC WORKS and ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE APPLICATIONS from the DENVER REGIONAL OFFICE

The Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs (together known as PWEAA) share common eligibility and application criteria. This document provides background information on these programs, tips for applying for funding, as well as resources and contacts that can help you with your grant application.



PUBLIC WORKS: Empowers distressed communities to revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure (e.g., roads, water/wastewater, broadband) to support new industry, business expansion, and economic diversification as well as generate or retain long-term, high-paid, skilled private sector jobs and investments. Example project types: water and sewer main construction and water and wastewater plant capacity upgrades.



ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE: Assists distressed communities in designing and implementing strategies to adjust or bring about change to an economy. This program focuses on areas that have experienced or are under threat of serious structural damage to the underlying economic base like those resulting from a natural disaster or industry restructuring. Example project types: feasibility studies, recovery coordinators, and revolving loan funds.

MEET ELIGIBILITY: In order to be eligible for PWEAA funding, your organization must be an eligible entity and meet the distress criteria – all described below.

- **Eligible Entities** – A state, a political subdivision of a state, district organization (Economic Development District), Indian tribe, institution of higher education, or a non-profit acting in coordination with a political subdivision of a state.
- **Distress Criteria** – Economic distress criteria¹ must be met for PWEAA investments, or the region must fall under a “special need”:
 - an unemployment rate that is, for the most recent 24-month period for which data are available, at least one (1) percentage point greater than the national average unemployment rate; or
 - per capita income that is, for the most recent period for which data are available, eighty (80) percent or less of the national average per capita income; or
 - a “special need” (certain unemployment or economic adjustment issues, such as a [presidentially-declared disaster](#), loss of a major employer, or projects located in Opportunity Zones, as determined by EDA). Please refer to the [PWEAA Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO) for a complete list of “special need” options.

ALIGN WITH YOUR COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: Proposals must be consistent with a locally-developed Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) or equivalent document. To find the CEDs for your region, visit statsamerica.org/ceds.



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CONTRIBUTE GRANT MATCH: Projects for EDA assistance usually require at least a 50 percent readily available and unencumbered match from eligible non-federal sources to demonstrate strong local commitment for the project. In rare circumstances, match can be reduced, depending on the level of economic distress and/or special need (i.e. disaster impacts). Instructions for justifying a higher grant rate are provided in the published NOFO.

ADDRESS INVESTMENT PRIORITIES: Projects must address one or more of the priorities listed below. For more information on each investment priority, visit www.eda.gov/about/investment-priorities.

- Equity
- Recovery & Resilience
- Workforce Development
- Manufacturing
- Technology-Based Economic Development
- Environmentally-Sustainable Development
- Exports & Foreign Direct Investment

POSITION YOUR APPLICATION FOR COMPETITIVENESS:

1. **Effectively address the creation and/or retention of high-quality jobs.** Contact your local Economic Development Representative early to discuss your project and anticipated job and private investment impacts. Business beneficiaries will need to commit to and sign off on the job creation/retention and private investment.
2. **Document that you as the applicant can or will leverage other resources, both public and private.** Have your matching funds secured prior to applying. Include a letter with your application that details where the matching funds are coming from, the specific match dollar amount, and any conditions or encumbrances on the funds. While in-kind match is accepted, cash match improves the competitiveness of the project.
3. **Demonstrate capacity to start the proposed project promptly, to use funds quickly and effectively.** Make sure your estimated costs are accurate, defensible, and described in a budget narrative. Work with professionalsⁱⁱ to help determine your project costs and project timeline.
4. **Provide a clear scope of work that includes a description of specific, measurable project outputs.** Tell your story! Use the narrative sections in the ED 900 form provided with the application to paint a picture of your local economy—what are the local business conditions and needs, and how will the project respond to those needs and enable your community to build a stronger and more resilient economy?
5. **Align with EDA's investment priorities.** Download the PWEAA NOFO and the grant application at www.grants.gov and review it to ensure you are addressing application evaluation criteria and submit all requested documents. Addressing one investment priority well, is better than listing seven weak priorities.

OTHER TIPS:

- Include local, regional, and state partners in your project planning, and when appropriate, ask for letters of support from these partners to include with your application. If you are a non-profit entity, you will need a letter of support from your City Council or County Commission to apply for funding.
- Ensure that your organization has a DUNS number, an up-to-date [SAM](http://www.sam.gov) (System of Award Management) registration, and is registered with www.grants.gov to apply for funding.
- If your community has been impacted by a layoff or disaster event, prepare a one-page narrative statement linking impacts from the event and how the proposed project responds to those impacts.
- There are EDA funded [Economic Development Districts](http://www.eda.gov/economic-development-districts) (EDD) throughout the region that have expertise in grant writing and administration. Reach out to your region's EDD early for assistance with the grant application materials, and if needed, for help administering the grant.
- You, as the applicant, determine the geographic project area, which can be defined by counties or census tracts where the project will be located and where the high-paid, high-skilled jobs will be created or retained.



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIVES: Your local Economic Development Representative (EDR) from the Denver Regional Office (DRO) can assist you through the grant process. Contact your EDR early to discuss your project, find out which EDA program may be the best fit, and what funding is available.

Trent Thompson, **Colorado, Utah**
(303) 844-5452 • tthompson@eda.gov

Steve Castaner, **Eastern Iowa, Eastern and Central Missouri**
(573) 590-1194 • scastaner@eda.gov

Alex Smith, **Western Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota**
(720) 402-7686 • asmith1@eda.gov

Kirk Keysor, **Montana and Wyoming**
(406) 599-9795 • kkeysor@eda.gov

Mark Werthmann, **Nebraska, Kansas, Western Missouri**
(913) 894-1586 • mwerthmann@eda.gov



DENVER REGIONAL OFFICE:

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At EDA, we understand that some communities need help developing a plan and figuring out where to start their economic development efforts. Others need critical infrastructure supporting business expansion. Still others need help building ecosystems to translate innovations into jobs. It's a continuum, and EDA helps communities at every point along the way – from planning to public works. To check out all of EDA's programs, visit our website at www.eda.gov.

ⁱ Find out if your region meets EDA's distress criteria at: <https://www.statsamerica.org/distress/distress.aspx>. The project region is determined by the applicant and is made up by the counties or Census Tracts where the project will be located and where the high-skilled, high-wage jobs will be created or retained.

ⁱⁱ All procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition. In order to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals must be excluded from competing for such procurements.