

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Names:** Economic Development Administration (EDA), Department of Commerce; Department of Agriculture (USDA); Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC); and Delta Regional Authority (DRA).
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** *The Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge, A Coordinated Initiative to Advance Regional Competitiveness*
- **Announcement Type:** Initial announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) dated March 8, 2012.
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Numbers:** 11.307, Economic Adjustment Assistance; 10.446, Rural Community Development Initiative; 23.011, Appalachian Research Technical Assistance and Demonstration Projects; and 10.773, Delta Regional Authority Rural Business Opportunity Grant.
- **Dates:** The deadline for receipt of applications is May 9, 2012. Applicants are advised to carefully read the application and submission information provided in section V. of this FFO.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** This FFO announces the availability of funding for the Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge (Rural Jobs Accelerator). The goal of the Rural Jobs Accelerator is to promote opportunities for accelerated job creation and community and economic development in rural regions through regional collaboration in numerous high-potential industry clusters, including renewable energy, food production, rural tourism, natural resources, and advanced manufacturing. Many rural regions either possess, or can be linked with, assets fundamental to the growth of existing high-potential industry clusters. The Rural Jobs Accelerator provides resources to support the development of clusters and to assist distressed rural communities in accelerating job creation by leveraging local assets, building stronger economies, and creating regional linkages. Approximately 20 regions will be selected through a merit-based interagency grant process.

Regions across the nation can compete for complementary and coordinated Federal resources that help them mitigate gaps and leverage opportunities by strengthening linkages to self-identified, high-potential industry clusters. Projects must benefit rural communities, but applicants need not be physically located in a rural community. Total proposed funding for the Rural Jobs Accelerator is approximately \$15 million and is provided by the following agencies, subject to the availability of funding: EDA (providing up to \$10 million); USDA's Rural Housing Service (providing up to \$4.3 million); ARC (providing up to \$500,000); and DRA (providing up to \$500,000).

EDA and USDA are collectively referred to as the primary funding agencies (Primary Funding Agencies), and ARC and DRA are collectively referred to as the regional funding partners (Regional Funding Partners).

The Primary Funding Agencies expect to jointly award a maximum of \$715,000 per project. Applicants are required to provide matching funds, and apply for funding from both of the Primary Funding Agencies. USDA will target investments to support technical assistance to develop rural communities' capacity and ability to undertake projects related to housing, community facilities, or economic and community development. EDA will target investments to support projects that create regional linkages by connecting communities with innovation clusters and regional opportunities leading to job creation, expanded markets, and economic growth.

The Regional Funding Partners expect to offer additional funds to projects located in their respective regions. ARC's maximum grant amount per project will be \$100,000. ARC funds may be used for projects that address gaps in a community's entrepreneurial ecosystem and promote the growth and competitiveness of an identified industry cluster. DRA's maximum grant amount per project will be \$250,000. DRA funds may be used to provide technical assistance for business development and economic development planning in rural areas. For guidelines on how to access funding from the Regional Funding Partners, please *see* Appendix C of this FFO for ARC guidelines and Appendix D for DRA guidelines.

- **Award Notification:** Subject to the availability of funding, successful applicants should expect to receive grant awards within approximately 60 days from the application closing date and time set out in section V.B. of this FFO. *See* section VII.A. of this FFO for award notification information.
- **Informational Session:** For prospective applicants, EDA and USDA will hold an information teleconference on March 20, 2012. Please visit the Rural Jobs Accelerator website for the teleconference registration requirements and protocols: www.rurdev.usda.gov/RuralJobsAccelerator.html.
- **Designated Contact:** General questions on the Rural Jobs Accelerator should be emailed to RuralJobsAccelerator@wdc.usda.gov. Agency-specific questions should be directed to the EDA Regional Office representative, the USDA Rural Development State Office representative, the DRA representative, or the ARC representative, as applicable. Detailed contact information is included in Appendix F of this FFO.

THE RURAL JOBS AND INNOVATION ACCELERATOR CHALLENGE
A Coordinated Initiative to Advance Regional Competitiveness

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I. Program Overview and Objectives

A. What are the objectives and activities of the Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge?

The Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge (Rural Jobs Accelerator) is an integrated inter-agency funding opportunity designed to provide rural¹ regions with the resources to plan and implement coordinated, flexible, regionally customized activities capable of helping them capitalize on the benefits of regional innovation clusters. The objectives of the Rural Jobs Accelerator are to:

- (1) Accelerate distressed rural communities' ability to create jobs and strengthen their regional economies; and
- (2) Help rural communities identify and maximize local assets, and connect to regional opportunities and self-identified clusters² that demonstrate high-growth potential.

Recognizing the importance of these objectives, the Taskforce for the Advancement of Regional Innovation Clusters (TARIC)³ and the White House Rural Council developed the Rural Jobs Accelerator so that regions across the nation can compete for catalytic, complementary, and coordinated Federal resources to mitigate the gaps and leverage opportunities specific to their region to advance self-identified, high-potential industry clusters. Resources are being made available through the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) (each a Funding Agency, and collectively the Funding Agencies).⁴

USDA investments through the Rural Jobs Accelerator will support projects that help identify and build regional assets through regional collaboration. USDA activities will include providing technical assistance to develop rural communities' capacity and ability to undertake projects related to housing, community facilities, or economic and community development. EDA's investments will support projects that foster regional linkages between communities and innovation clusters to support job creation, expanded markets, and economic growth. Activities will include connecting markets, supply chains, capital, technology and workforce networks. Projects must benefit rural communities, but applicants need not be physically located in a rural community. Please *see* section IV. of this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) for more information on eligibility criteria and permitted activities.

¹ As defined by USDA, "Rural" and "Rural Area" are: any area other than (i) a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants; and (ii) the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such city or town.

² Clusters are networks of interconnected firms and supporting institutions that accelerate innovation, business formation, and job creation. Clusters emerge as a result of private enterprises taking advantage of a region's assets and strengths in the business environment, and are often supported by intermediaries and other institutions that help provide information and connections.

³ TARIC is a Federal inter-agency body designed to support best practices, engage in joint activities, and share information to develop strong regional economies through clusters.

⁴ Note that throughout this FFO, EDA and USDA are collectively referred to as the primary funding agencies (Primary Funding Agencies), and ARC and DRA are collectively referred to as the regional funding partners (Regional Funding Partners). *See* section II.A. of this FFO.

ARC funds may be used to address gaps in a community’s entrepreneurial ecosystem and promote the growth and competitiveness of an identified industry cluster. DRA funds may be used to assist in the economic development of rural areas by providing technical assistance for business development and economic development planning.

Through the use of these coordinated investments, Rural Jobs Accelerator activities will:

- Accelerate the creation of high-wage jobs;⁵
- Accelerate the formation of new businesses and growth of existing businesses;
- Identify and build assets in rural communities that are crucial to supporting regional economic ecosystems;
- Link rural communities to markets, networks, industry clusters, and other regional opportunities;
- Facilitate the repatriation of jobs back to the United States⁶;
- Support the deployment of innovative processes, technologies, and products;
- Enhance the capacity of small businesses in regional innovation clusters, including small and disadvantaged businesses⁷;
- Increase U.S. exports and business interaction with international buyers and suppliers;
- Develop the skills and expertise of local workforces, entrepreneurs, and institutional partners to support growing clusters; and
- Ensure rural economies are supported by efficiently planned housing and community development.

B. What are the benefits of the Rural Jobs Accelerator?

Rural communities possess many unique assets necessary to participate in their regional economy and often provide the critical resources to foster high-potential industry clusters including renewable energy, food production, rural tourism, natural resources, and advanced manufacturing. However, rural communities are often challenged by relative isolation, low population densities, and scarcity of services and resources. Connecting rural America to industry clusters is crucial not only for the direct benefit rural communities receive through new education, training and high-wage job opportunities, but also for the long-term competitiveness of the wider regional and U.S. economy.

Research and experience have shown that building on a region’s economic strengths is the most effective strategy for economic development. In a 2004 report, Michael Porter identified three ways in which clusters enhance the economic competitiveness of regions: improving productivity; fostering innovation; and facilitating the commercialization of innovation. The same report referenced a study which showed workers in a rural cluster

⁵ High-wage jobs provide wages above the average wage for the region.

⁶ Repatriation is also referred to as “onshoring”, “re-shoring”, or “relocation” of jobs.

⁷ According to SBA, disadvantaged businesses must be owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged. For more information see <http://www.sbaonline.sba.gov/contractingopportunities/owners/glossary/index.html>

earned thirteen percent higher wages on average than employees in non-cluster-based economies.⁸

To sustain a prosperous economy, rural communities must identify and build upon existing assets and traditional strengths, and connect with the larger region. These connections provide opportunities for rural businesses and workers to participate in and contribute to regional innovation and competitiveness. As workers are exposed to technical assistance and new skills they may become entrepreneurs, business owners, and leaders in a sustainable cluster network. Businesses may become integral suppliers to larger producers and help clusters reach new markets. In this way, rural communities draw on their rich history as entrepreneurs to contribute to a regional economic ecosystem that leverages both local and regional assets to fuel economic growth.

II. Participating Federal Agencies and Programs

The participating agencies in the Rural Jobs Accelerator intend to offer a combination of funding and technical assistance to approximately 20 regions across the United States. Participating agencies include Primary Funding Agencies, Regional Funding Partners, and Support Agencies, as defined below. Total proposed funding for the Rural Jobs Accelerator from the Funding Agencies is approximately \$15 million in direct Federal funding, subject to the availability of funds. In addition, multiple Support Agencies have committed to provide streamlined support to selected applicants for qualifying projects under current appropriation authority.

A. Funding Agencies

1. Primary Funding Agencies

EDA and USDA (each a Primary Funding Agency, and collectively the Primary Funding Agencies) are each offering funding, subject to the availability of funding, for the Rural Jobs Accelerator through separate sources. EDA will invest up to \$10 million in funds from the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program and USDA will invest up to \$4.3 million from the Rural Community Development Initiative. All investments are subject to the availability of funds. The combined grant total from the two Primary Funding Agencies is expected to be a maximum of \$715,000 per project. Matching funds are required for both EDA and USDA assistance, *see* section IV.A.4. and section IV.B.4. for more information about matching fund requirements. Primary Funding Agencies intend to make each of their individual awards to the same applicants in the 20 regions selected under this competition. Applicants are not required to be located in a rural area to apply; however, projects must impact rural communities. For further information about eligibility, permitted activities, and maximum project funding amounts *see* section IV.A. for EDA, and Section IV.B. for USDA.

⁸ Porter, M., Ketels, C., Miller, K., & Bryden, R. (2004). Competitiveness in Rural U.S. Regions. Harvard Business School.

2. Regional Funding Partners

ARC and DRA (each a Regional Funding Partner, and collectively the Regional Funding Partners) are each offering up to \$500,000 of additional funding for Rural Jobs Accelerator projects located in their respective regions, subject to the availability of funds.

- **ARC** is making \$500,000 available through the Appalachian Research, Technical Assistance, and Demonstration Projects.
- **DRA** is making \$500,000 available through the Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program.

In general, to be eligible for ARC or DRA funds, a Rural Jobs Accelerator applicant must propose a project located within the ARC or DRA region, as applicable, and propose a distinct scope of work specifically for the funds requested from ARC or DRA. Please note that other eligibility conditions apply and the applicant must submit supplementary application materials directly to ARC or DRA. For complete eligibility and application information for ARC and DRA funding under the Rural Jobs Accelerator, please read carefully Appendix C for ARC funding and Appendix D for DRA funding.

Please also note that applying for ARC or DRA funds is optional. An applicant for the Rural Accelerator Challenge that also is eligible for ARC or DRA funding will not be disqualified if they choose not to pursue these funds.

B. Support Agencies and Federal Support Teams

Recognizing that the U.S. Government has complementary resources that can support the development of vibrant regional economies in which clusters may thrive, TARIC is coordinating an expanded Federal partnership to leverage resources to support rural regions and clusters. Federal agencies and bureaus have committed to support winning Rural Jobs Accelerator applicants. Each applicant selected for funding will have the opportunity to receive assistance from a Federal Support Team made up of Federal staff of Funding Agencies and Support Agencies. The Federal Support Teams will help to ensure that successful applicants are aware of available Federal resources relevant to their project and region. Please see Appendix E. for a list of Federal agencies and bureaus that may participate as a part of the Federal Support Teams.

III. Award Information

A. How much funding is available from the Funding Agencies?

This coordinated, integrated, interagency initiative offers applicants the opportunity to submit one Project Narrative to access multiple funding sources that collaboratively support regional development in rural communities. Funding Agencies intend to make their individual awards to applicants in approximately 20 regions to advance rural cluster development. Awards will be made only to the extent that funds are available. The Department of Commerce, EDA, USDA, ARC, or DRA will not be held responsible (collectively or individually) for application preparation costs. Publication of this FFO

does not obligate the Department of Commerce, EDA, USDA, ARC, or DRA (collectively or individually) to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds.

The Primary Funding Agencies, subject to the availability of funds, are making the following sources of funds available under this FFO:

- **EDA** is making approximately \$10 million available for the Rural Jobs Accelerator to strengthen linkages to advance cluster development leading to job creation, expanded markets, economic growth, and global competitiveness. EDA expects to make approximately 20 non-construction awards, with individual EDA grant awards up to \$500,000. EDA's authorizing statute is the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 3121 *et seq.*) (PWEDA). Under this FFO, EDA will make awards under its Economic Adjustment Assistance Program, which is authorized under section 209 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. §3149). EDA's regulations at 13 C.F.R. parts 300-302 and 13 C.F.R. part 307, subpart A, set forth the general and specific regulatory requirements applicable to the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program. EDA's regulations are accessible at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title13-vol1/pdf/CFR-2011-title13-vol1-chapIII.pdf. Although EDA expects to award grants, EDA may choose to make awards via cooperative agreements based on the anticipated amount of interaction needed between EDA and the recipient during the project period.
- **USDA** is making approximately \$4.3 million available, including \$2.49 million of FY 2011 funding, and approximately \$1.81 million of FY 2012 funding, for competitive grant funds for the Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) Program through the Rural Housing Service (RHS), an agency within the USDA Rural Development mission area herein referred to as USDA. USDA expects to make approximately 20 awards, with individual grant awards up to \$215,000 per cluster or region.

The Regional Funding Partners, subject to the availability of funds, are making the following sources of funds available under this FFO:

- **ARC** expects to make individual grant awards up to \$100,000 for projects located in their geographical area. These funds will be made available through the Appalachian Research, Technical Assistance, and Demonstration Projects.
- **DRA** expects to make individual grant awards up to \$250,000 for projects located in their geographical area. These funds will be made available through the Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program.

B. How do applicants propose one project for multiple sources of funding?

All applications must propose one project with at least two distinct scopes of work that are consistent with the Evaluation Criteria discussed in section VI.A. of this FFO.

Applicants must propose projects that are responsive to:

1. Building Community and Regional Capacity (*see* section VI.A.3) – funded by USDA; and
2. Linking to Regional Clusters and Opportunities (*see* section VI.A.4) – funded by EDA.

Applicants proposing a project within the ARC or the DRA region must propose one project with three distinct scopes of work: one scope of work for USDA, one scope of work for EDA, and one scope of work for ARC or DRA (as applicable).

Applicants cannot use multiple funding sources available under this FFO to fund the same activities. Applicants must clearly demonstrate that funds will not overlap across activities. *See* section IV.A. of this FFO for a complete description of activities that may be supported using EDA funds, section IV.B. of this FFO for a complete description of activities that may be supported using USDA funds, Appendix C. of this FFO for a complete description of activities that may be supported using ARC funds, and Appendix D. of this FFO for a complete description of activities that may be supported using DRA funds.

An application for funds under this FFO must be submitted by an organization that is eligible, or a team of organizations (referred to herein as the Applicant Team) that is collectively eligible, to receive funding from the Primary Funding Agencies under this FFO.

For example, the Applicant Team may consist of two organizations with one organization eligible to receive USDA funds and the other organization eligible to receive EDA funds, and submits one application that addresses the evaluation criteria of both agencies as set forth in this FFO.

For applications seeking ARC or DRA funding, the Applicant Team must include the organization that is applying for the ARC or DRA funding. Please *see* section IV. of this FFO for more information on eligibility criteria and permitted activities.

The following is an example of how organizations could partner to propose one project with distinct scopes of work funded by the Primary Funding Agencies.

Project Example: Value Added Food Processing and Market Expansion.

- **USDA Scope of Work:** A Regional Development Organization (intermediary) receives USDA funding to provide technical assistance to Chambers of Commerce and local Economic Development Organizations (recipients) in rural communities on food labeling requirements. The local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations then provide the information and technical assistance to food processing businesses (beneficiaries) in their communities.⁹

⁹ *See* section IV.B for more information on recipients, intermediaries and beneficiaries under USDA’s RCDI program.

- **EDA Scope of Work:** A State University receives EDA funding to create an interactive map that identifies all the regional assets that can be linked into the broader food processing cluster, including the food processing suppliers/farm cooperatives, processors/manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and consumers. Using the map, the university would assist rural communities in the region (including the rural communities receiving assistance from the USDA scopes of work), in identifying opportunities to develop market expansion strategies to increase exports for firms in the regional food processing cluster.

C. What is the Funding Agency project period?

For each Funding Agency, the project period under this competitive solicitation is:

- **EDA:** The project period for economic development assistance from EDA under this FFO is expected to last up to 3 years (36 months). EDA may consider extending the project period depending upon the availability of funds, satisfactory performance, and satisfactory progress in achieving milestones and program objectives set forth in the scope of work, as determined by EDA and expressed in written notice. EDA expects that all projects will proceed efficiently, and prefers applicants with demonstrated capacity to implement investments expeditiously, to accelerate positive economic impacts from this investment.
- **USDA:** The project period for the RCDI will not exceed 3 years (36 months). If a grantee has an outstanding RCDI grant over 3 years old, as of the application due date in this FFO, it is not eligible to apply for this round of funding.
- **ARC:** The project period for the ARC funds is expected to last up to 3 years (36 months).
- **DRA:** The project period for the DRA funds will not exceed 2 years (24 months).

IV. Eligibility Information

Any Applicant Team member that is eligible for more than one funding source may be a recipient of all funding sources for which that member is eligible.

A. What are EDA’s eligibility requirements and permitted activities?

1. Overview of EDA requirements

EDA’s mission is to lead the Federal economic development agenda by promoting regional and national innovation, collaboration and competitiveness, and preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. In implementing this mission, EDA advances economic growth by assisting communities and regions experiencing high unemployment and low per capita income to foster an environment conducive to economic growth and job creation. EDA’s Economic Adjustment Assistance Program (EAA) is designed to provide investments capable of helping distressed communities and regions implement strategies to support economic growth.

2. Who is eligible to apply for EDA funding under this announcement?

Pursuant to section 3 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122) and EDA's regulation at 13 C.F.R. § 300.3, the following entities are eligible to receive funding assistance from EDA:

- a) District Organizations (as defined in 13 C.F.R. § 300.3);
- b) Indian Tribes or a consortium of Indian Tribes;
- c) States, cities, or other political subdivisions 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) Institutions of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or
- e) Public or private non-profit organizations or associations acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.¹⁰

The eligibility of an organization will be determined by its articles of incorporation, enabling legislation, or as otherwise provided by applicable State and local laws on the formation of the organization. An applying consortium must be: (1) formed in accordance with relevant State or local law and as an entity to which EDA can make a grant, generally as a non-profit organization working with a political subdivision of a State; or (2) comprised exclusively of eligible applicants. If a consortium is not structured as a legal entity independently eligible for EDA funding, the consortium cannot be considered as an applicant, but may function as part of the project under a specific eligible applicant. For questions about EDA eligibility please contact the applicable EDA Regional Office representative listed in Appendix F of this FFO for more information. EDA cannot provide assistance directly or indirectly to individuals or to for-profit entities.

Under EAA, EDA may consider funding a project located in a region that, on the date EDA received the application, contains one or more subdivisions that meet at least one of the following economic distress criteria:

- a) An unemployment rate that is, for the most recent 24-month period for which data are available, at least one percentage point greater than the national average unemployment rate;
- b) Per capita income that is, for the most recent period for which data are available, 80 percent or less of the national average per capita income; or
- c) Has a "Special Need," as determined by EDA (as defined in 13 C.F.R. § 300.3).

"Special Need" may be defined by a variety of criteria, including:

¹⁰ For projects of significant regional scope, EDA may consider waiving the requirement that a non-profit organization demonstrate it is acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State. *See* 13 C.F.R. §§ 301.2(b) and 307.5(b).

- a) Substantial out-migration or population loss;
- b) Underemployment, defined as employment of workers at less than full-time or at less skilled tasks than their training or abilities permit;
- c) Military base closures or realignments, defense contractor reductions-in-force, or Department of Energy defense-related funding reductions;
- d) Natural or other major disasters or emergencies;
- e) Extraordinary depletion of natural resources;
- f) Closing or restructuring of an industrial firm or loss of a major employer or other impact attributable to a new or revised Federal regulation or policy that will have a significant impact on a community to avoid an extraordinary depletion of natural resources; or
- g) Negative effects of changing trade patterns.

For eligibility based on Special Need, the applicant must present appropriate and compelling economic, demographic, or other appropriate statistics to demonstrate the Special Need. The timeframe in which the Special Need occurred should be relevant to the proposed EDA scope of work. There are some “Special Need” items that must have occurred within a specific timeframe, including:

- *Military base closures or realignments, defense contractor reduction-in-force, or Department of Energy defense-related funding reductions* – From the date of the Department of Defense recommends closure, realignment or growth until 5 years after the actual date of closing of the installation or 5 years after the announced realignment or growth actually occurs, unless extended by the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development
- *Natural or other major disasters or emergencies* – 18 months after date of disaster declaration
- *Closing or restructuring of an industrial firm or loss of a major employer or other impact attributable to a new or revised Federal regulation or policy that will have a significant impact on a community to avoid an extraordinary depletion of natural resources* – 12 months prior to the date of application

3. What are EDA’s permitted activities?

In keeping with the objectives of the Rural Jobs Accelerator, EDA will target investments to support projects that create regional linkages by connecting communities with innovation clusters and regional opportunities leading to job creation, expanded markets, and economic growth. Allowable activities may include a wide range of non-construction assistance, including technical assistance, feasibility studies, planning activities, technology or process development, cluster networking, market expansion, and other activities critical for accelerated cluster development leading to job creation, economic growth, and global competitiveness. Applicants should ensure that the scope of work supports the overall Rural Jobs Accelerator objectives.

The EAA is designed to help communities respond flexibly to the pressing economic development and recovery challenges that they face. Examples of applicants EDA might support to assist rural regions develop and strengthen regional linkages may include the following:

- A university, to support technology transfer, assist regional manufacturers to deploy new processes, accelerate the commercialization of research, provide technical assistance to regional businesses, or to support entrepreneurs in high-growth industries; or
- A District Organization, to strengthen a growing cluster through attracting new private-sector partners into the cluster, integrating small businesses into the supply-chain, promoting connections and communication among all cluster partners, developing relationships between the clusters and entities or clusters in other regions, promoting entrepreneurship among historically underrepresented and excluded communities, and helping the cluster identify new markets and facilitate sales and exports of products and services.

4. What is the cost sharing or matching share requirement for EDA funding?

Under this FFO, applicants must demonstrate a Matching Share (as defined in 13 C.F.R. § 300.3) from non-Federal sources that must be available and committed to the project. EDA will give preference to applications with higher Matching Shares to further leverage Federal funds and help maximize the impact of the Rural Jobs Accelerator investments. Generally, the amount of EDA assistance may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the project. However, projects may receive up to 80 percent of total cost, based on the relative needs of the region in which the project will be located, as determined by EDA. *See* section 204(a) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144) and 13 C.F.R. § 301.4(b)(1).

Table 1 sets forth the maximum allowable Investment Rate for Projects located in Regions subject to certain levels of economic distress. In cases where Table 1 produces divergent results (i.e., where Table 1 produces more than 1 maximum allowable Investment Rate based on the Region's levels of economic distress), the higher Investment Rate produced by Table 1 shall be the maximum allowable Investment Rate for the Project.

Table 1: Maximum Allowable Investment Rate for EDA Assistance

| Projects located in regions in which: | Maximum Allowable Investment Rates (percentage) |
|---|--|
| (A) The 24 month unemployment rate is at least 225 percent of the national average, or | 80 |
| (B) The per capita income is not more than 50 percent of the national average; | 80 |
| (C) The 24 month unemployment rate is at least 200 percent of the national average, or | 70 |
| (D) The per capita income is not more than 60 percent of the national average; | 70 |
| (E) The 24 month unemployment rate is at least 175 percent of the national average, or | 60 |
| (F) The per capita income is not more than 65% of the national average; and | 60 |
| (G) The 24 month unemployment rate is at least 1 percentage point greater than the national average, or | 50 |
| (H) The per capita income is not more than 80 percent of the national average | 50 |

Source: 13 C.F.R. § 301.4(b)

The Matching Share requirements may be met through in-kind contributions, consisting of contributions of space, equipment, services, or assumptions of debt. *See* section 204(b) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144). EDA will fairly evaluate all in-kind contributions, which must be eligible project costs, verifiable through clear documentation, and meet applicable Federal cost principles and uniform administrative requirements. Matching Share funds must be used to support the overall purpose of the EDA scope of work. Matching Share claims are subject to audit. Funds from other Federal financial assistance awards are considered Matching Share funds only if a statute authorizes such use, which may be determined by EDA’s reasonable interpretation of such authority. *See* 13 C.F.R. § 300.3. In addition, applicants must provide letters of commitment to demonstrate that the Matching Share is committed to the project for the project period, will be available as needed, and is not or will not be conditioned or encumbered in any way that would preclude its use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance. *See* 13 C.F.R. § 301.5.

5. What are the funding restrictions for EDA funds?

The general and administrative requirements for EDA awards are set forth in 13 C.F.R. parts 300-302. Specific application and award requirements for the EAA are provided in 13 C.F.R. part 307, subpart A. A nonexclusive list of ineligible use of funds is as follows:

- Pass-through grants;
- Funding a revolving loan fund;
- Construction (in any form);
- Salaries for positions involved in construction, renovation, rehabilitation, and any oversight of these types of activities;
- Funding prostitution, gambling, or any illegal activities;
- Grants to individuals;
- Funding a grant where there may be a conflict of interest, or an appearance of a conflict of interest, involving any action by the Agency;
- Paying obligations incurred before the beginning date without prior Agency approval or after the ending date of the grant agreement;
- Purchasing real estate;
- Improvement or renovation of the grantee's, or recipient's office space or for the repair or maintenance of privately owned vehicles; and
- Purchasing vehicles.

B. What are USDA's eligibility requirements and permitted activities?

1. Overview of USDA requirements

Private, nonprofit, including faith-based and community organizations, and public (including Tribal) intermediary organizations may apply for funds that will provide financial and technical assistance to recipients to develop their capacity and ability to undertake projects related to housing, community facilities, or community and economic development.

2. Who is eligible to apply for USDA funding under this announcement?

Qualified private, nonprofit, including faith-based and community organizations, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. Part 16, and public (including Tribal) intermediary organizations apply as intermediaries. The intermediaries work with recipients who must be private nonprofit, including faith-based organizations, community-based housing and development organizations, low-income rural communities, or Federally-recognized Tribes based on the RCDI definitions of these groups. The recipient then provides assistance to beneficiaries who are entities or individuals that receive benefits from assistance provided by the recipient.

The recipient and beneficiary, but not the intermediary, must be located in an eligible rural area. The physical location of the recipient's office that will be receiving the financial and technical assistance must be in an eligible rural area. If the recipient is a low-income community, the median household income of the area where the office is located must be at or below 80 percent of the State or national median household income, whichever is higher. The applicable Rural Development State Office can assist in determining the eligibility of an area. A listing of Rural Development State Offices is included in the Notice. A map showing eligible rural areas can be found at the following link:

<http://eligibility.sc.egov.usda.gov/eligibility/welcomeAction.do?pageAction=RBSmenu&NavKey=property@13>.

The recipients must be private nonprofit, including faith-based organizations, community-based housing and development organizations, low-income rural communities, or Federally recognized tribes based on the RCDI definitions of these groups. Individuals cannot be recipients of USDA funds.

If a grantee has an outstanding RCDI grant over 3 years old, as of the application due date in this FFO, it is not eligible to apply for this round of funding.

3. What are USDA's permitted activities?

Fund uses must be consistent with the RCDI purpose and to support the objectives of the Rural Jobs Accelerator. A nonexclusive list of eligible grant uses includes the following:

- Provide technical assistance to develop recipients' capacity and ability to undertake projects related to housing, community facilities, or community and economic development, i.e., the intermediary hires a staff person to provide technical assistance to the recipient or the recipient hires a staff person, under the supervision of the intermediary, to carry out the technical assistance provided by the intermediary.
- Develop the capacity of recipients to conduct community development programs (e.g., homeownership education or training for business entrepreneurs).
- Develop the capacity of recipients to conduct development initiatives (e.g., programs that support micro-enterprise and sustainable development).
- Develop the capacity of recipients to provide the technical assistance component for essential community facilities projects.
- Assist recipients in completing pre-development requirements for housing, community facilities, or community and economic development projects by providing resources for professional services (e.g., architectural, engineering, or legal).
- Improve recipient's organizational capacity by providing training and resource material on developing strategic plans, board operations, management, financial systems, and information technology.
- Purchase of computers, software, and printers, limited to \$10,000 per award, at the recipient level when directly related to the technical assistance program being undertaken by the intermediary.
- Provide funds to recipients for training-related travel costs and training expenses related to RCDI.

4. What is the cost sharing or matching share requirement for USDA funding?

Matching funds must be in the form of cash or confirmed funding commitments. Matching funds must be at least equal to the grant amount and committed for a period of not less than the grant performance period. These funds can only be used for eligible RCDI activities. **In-kind contributions such as salaries, donated time and effort, real and nonexpendable personal property and**

goods and services cannot be used as matching funds under the RCDI program. Grant funds and matching funds must be used in equal proportions. This does not mean funds have to be used equally by line item. The request for advance or reimbursement and support documentation must show that RCDI fund usage does not exceed the cumulative amount of matching funds used. Grant funds will be disbursed pursuant to relevant provisions of 7 C.F.R. parts 3015, 3016, and 3019, as applicable. Verification of matching funds must be submitted with the application.

The intermediary is responsible for demonstrating that matching funds are available and committed for a period of not less than the grant performance period to the RCDI proposal. Matching funds may be provided by the intermediary or a third party. Other Federal funds may be used as matching funds if authorized by statute and the purpose of the funds is an eligible RCDI purpose. Matching funds must be used to support the overall purpose of the RCDI program. RCDI funds will be disbursed on an advance or reimbursement basis. Matching funds cannot be expended prior to execution of the RCDI Grant Agreement. No reimbursement will be made for any funds expended prior to execution of the RCDI Grant Agreement unless the intermediary is a non-profit or educational entity and has requested and received written Agency approval of the costs prior to the actual expenditure. This exception is applicable for up to 90 days prior to grant closing and only applies to grantees that have received written approval but have not executed the RCDI Grant Agreement. The Agency cannot retroactively approve reimbursement for expenditures prior to execution of the RCDI Grant Agreement.

The applicant will be contacted by the Agency prior to grant award to verify that the matching funds provided with the application continue to be available. The applicant will have 15 days from the date contacted to submit verification that matching funds continue to be available. If the applicant is unable to provide the verification with that timeframe, the application will be considered ineligible. The applicant must maintain bank statements on file or other documentation for a period of at least 3 years after grant closing except that the records shall be retained beyond the 3-year period if audit findings have not been resolved.

The intermediary organization must have been legally organized for a minimum of 3 years and have at least 3 years prior experience working with private nonprofit community-based housing and development organizations, low-income rural communities, or tribal organizations in the areas of housing, community facilities, or as community and economic development.

5. What are the funding restrictions for USDA funds?

A nonexclusive list of ineligible use of funds is as follows:

- Pass-through grants, capacity grants, and any funds provided to the recipient in a lump sum that are not reimbursements.
- Funding a revolving loan fund.

- Construction (in any form).
- Salaries for positions involved in construction, renovations, rehabilitation, and any oversight of these types of activities.
- Intermediary preparation of strategic plans for recipients.
- Funding prostitution, gambling, or any illegal activities.
- Grants to individuals.
- Funding a grant where there may be a conflict of interest, or an appearance of a conflict of interest, involving any action by the Agency.
- Paying obligations incurred before the beginning date without prior Agency approval or after the ending date of the grant agreement.
- Purchasing real estate.
- Improvement or renovation of the grantee's, or recipient's office space or for the repair or maintenance of privately owned vehicles.
- Any other purpose prohibited in 7 C.F.R. parts 3015, 3016, and 3019, as applicable.
- Using funds for recipient's general operating costs.
- Using grant or matching funds for Individual Development Accounts.
- Purchasing vehicles.

Program Examples and Restrictions

The purpose of this initiative is to develop or increase the recipient's capacity through a program of financial and technical assistance to perform in the areas of housing, community facilities, or community and economic development. Strengthening the recipient's capacity in these areas will benefit the communities they serve. The RCDI structure requires the intermediary (grantee) to provide a program of financial and technical assistance to recipients. The recipients will, in turn, provide programs to their communities (beneficiaries). The following are examples of eligible and ineligible purposes under the RCDI program. (These examples are illustrative and are not meant to limit the activities proposed in the application. Activities that meet the objectives of the RCDI program will be considered eligible.)

The intermediary must work directly with the recipient, not the ultimate beneficiaries. As an example: The intermediary provides training to the recipient on how to conduct homeownership education classes. The recipient then provides ongoing homeownership education to the residents of the community—the ultimate beneficiaries. This “train the trainer” concept fully meets the intent of this initiative. The intermediary is providing technical assistance that will build the recipient's capacity by enabling them to conduct homeownership education classes for the public. This is an eligible purpose. However, if the intermediary directly provided homeownership education classes to individuals in the recipient's service area, this would not be an eligible purpose because the recipient would be bypassed.

If the intermediary is working with a low-income community as the recipient, the intermediary must provide the technical assistance to the entity that represents the

low-income community and is identified in the application. Examples of entities representing a low-income community are a village board or a town council. If the intermediary provides technical assistance to the Board of the low-income community on how to establish a cooperative, this would be an eligible purpose. However, if the intermediary works directly with individuals from the community to establish the cooperative, this is not an eligible purpose. The recipient's capacity is built by learning skills that will enable them to support sustainable economic development in their communities on an ongoing basis.

The intermediary may provide technical assistance to the recipient on how to create and operate a revolving loan fund. The intermediary may not monitor or operate the revolving loan fund. RCDI funds, including matching funds, cannot be used to fund revolving loan funds.

The intermediary may work with recipients in building their capacity to provide planning and leadership development training. The recipients of this training would be expected to assume leadership roles in the development and execution of regional strategic plans. The intermediary would work with multiple recipients in helping communities recognize their connections to the greater regional and national economies.

The intermediary could provide training and technical assistance to the recipients on developing emergency shelter and feeding, short-term housing, search and rescue, environmental accident prevention and clean-up program plans. For longer term disaster and economic crisis responses, the intermediary could work with the recipients to develop job placement and training programs, and develop coordinated transit systems for displaced workers.

In accordance with 31 U.S.C. § 1345, "Expenses of Meetings," appropriations may not be used for travel, transportation, and subsistence expenses for a meeting. RCDI grant funds cannot be used for these meeting-related expenses. Matching funds may be used to pay for these expenses. RCDI funds may be used to pay for a speaker as part of a program, equipment to facilitate the program, and the actual room that will house the meeting. RCDI funds can be used for travel, transportation, or subsistence expenses for program-related training and technical assistance purposes. Any training not delineated in the application must be approved by the Agency to verify compliance with 31 U.S.C. § 1345. Travel and per diem expenses will be similar to those paid to Agency employees. Rates are based upon location. Rate information can be obtained from the applicable Rural Development State Office.

Grantees and recipients will be restricted to traveling coach class on common carrier airlines. When lodging is not available at the government rate, grantees and recipients may exceed the Government rate for lodging by a maximum of 20 percent. Meals and incidental expenses will be reimbursed at the same rate used by Agency employees. Mileage and gas reimbursement will be the same rate used by Agency employees. This rate may be obtained from the applicable Rural Development State Office.

C. What are ARC’s eligibility requirements and permitted activities?

The ARC is committing funds to support the objectives of the Rural Jobs Accelerator through its non-highway Area Development programs. ARC eligible activities will address gaps in a community’s or region’s entrepreneurial ecosystem that may limit the growth and competitiveness of an identified industry cluster. Please *see* Appendix C. of this FFO for a description of ARC’s eligibility requirements and permitted activities.

D. What are DRA’s eligibility requirements and permitted activities?

DRA is committing funds to support the objectives of the Rural Jobs Accelerator through the USDA’s Rural Business Opportunity Grant program. This program makes grants available to provide technical assistance for business development and conduct economic development planning in rural areas. Please see Appendix D of this FFO for a description of DRA’s eligibility requirements and permitted activities. USDA Instruction 4283-G is the regulation that administers this program, available at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/SupportDocuments/4284g.pdf>. This FFO should be used for informational purposes only. Please contact DRA directly if you have any questions regarding eligibility or permitted activities. *See* Appendix F of this FFO for DRA contact information.

V. Application and Submission Information

A. How do I obtain an application package?

Applicants may access the application package for this competitive solicitation electronically at www.grants.gov (Grants.gov). *See* section V.D. of this FFO for detailed instructions on application submission. Applicants may also download the USDA-specific application documents and requirements delineated in this FFO from the RCDI website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/rcdi>.

Applicants may also request paper application forms from the Rural Development office in their state for USDA forms, and from the EDA Regional Office. A list of Rural Development State offices and EDA Regional Office contacts is included in Appendix F of this FFO.

B. Deadline for Receipt of Applications

The application deadline date is May 9, 2012. Applicants have the option of submitting their application via CD, paper copy or electronically via Grants.gov. Paper and CD applications must be delivered to the address listed in section V.D.2. of this FFO by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. The deadline for receipt of applications through Grants.gov is May 9, 2012 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

The Funding Agencies will not accept any unsolicited changes, additions, revisions or deletions to applications after the closing date and time have passed. *See* also section VI. of this FFO for application review and selection information.

C. Required Application Forms and Content

To be considered complete, an application package must consist of:

- (1) All required forms;
- (2) Project Description; and
- (3) Addenda to the Project Description.

Applications that do not contain all required forms listed in each part, or that fail to adhere to the instructions in this FFO, will be considered non-responsive and will not be considered for funding. Additional application materials not requested under this FFO will not be reviewed or evaluated. The Project Description may not exceed 25 double-spaced 8.5x11-inch pages with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. For applicants seeking funding from either of the Regional Funding Partners, the Project Description may not exceed 30 double-spaced pages with 12-point font.

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

1. Required Forms

All applicants are required to include the following forms at the time of application submission. The forms should be uploaded as separate Adobe portable document format (PDF) files. Forms are available at Grants.gov. Note that all forms pertaining to the EDA portion of the application will be found under the “Application” tab in the application package generated by Grants.gov, while all forms pertaining to the USDA portion of the application can be found under the “Full Announcement” tab of the Grants.gov announcement of this FFO and **must be inserted as attachments to the application package.**

a) Forms required by EDA and USDA

Each EDA and USDA applicant must submit the following forms. Meaning, each Applicant Team must submit two sets: one set from the organization requesting EDA funds, and one set from the organization requesting USDA funds.

- Form SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance;
- Form SF-424A – Budget Information- Non-Construction Programs;
- Form SF-424B – Assurances – Non-Construction Programs; and
- Form CD-511 – Certification Regarding Lobbying.

b) Forms required by USDA

For applicants requesting USDA assistance, the following forms and information are required at the time of application submission, in addition to the forms listed under section V.C.1.a. The following forms are available on Grants.gov under the “Full Announcement” tab. The USDA forms can be completed electronically but cannot be saved to your

computer. Please print the completed forms, scan, save, and attach them to the application package.

- Form RD-400-4 – Assurance Agreement, for the applicant and each RCDI Recipient
- Form AD-1047 – Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions
- Form AD-1048 – Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion – Lower Tier Covered Transactions
- Form AD-1049 – Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements
- Identify and report any association or relationship with Rural Development employees.
- Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants, OMB No. 1894-0010 Exp. 05/13/2012 (applies only to non-profit applicants – submission is optional)
- Certification Regarding Lobbying

c) Forms required by EDA

For applicants requesting EDA assistance, the following forms are required at the time of application submission, in addition to the forms listed under section V.C.1.a. The following forms are available in the Grants.gov application package.

- Form SF-LLL – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable. Applicants may be required to provide certain lobbying information using Form SF-LLL, and to submit to a background screening using Form CD-346 (for more information on Form CD-346, *see* section V.C.3). Please note that, if applicable, one Form SF-LLL must be submitted for each applicant that has used or plans to use non-Federal funds for lobbying in connection with this competitive solicitation.
- Form ED-900 – EDA Application for Investment Assistance. The applicant should disregard the statement in the “Note on EDA’s Application Process” that advises applicants that EDA will request the listed materials only after a project has been determined to “merit further consideration.” **All sections listed below must be complete at the time of application submission.**

The first page of section A of Form ED-900 contains a list of all EDA programs along with the relevant sections that must be completed to apply under each. For purposes of this FFO, sections, A, B, E and K and Exhibit C of Form ED-900 must be completed.

The following special instructions apply for Form ED-900:

| Form ED-900 Question/Section | Special Instruction |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Questions A.2, A.4, and A.6 | Enter “See Project Description.” |
| Question E.3 | Enter “See Resumes of Key Personnel.” |
| Section K. | Select “no” in response to the question “Are you applying for a Strategy Grant under 13 C.F.R. § 307.3?” |
| Section M. | Select “no” in response to the question “are you applying for construction assistance?” |
| Section N. | Select “no” in response to the question “Is the primary purpose of the EDA investment to accomplish only the design and engineering work required?” |
| Exhibit C. | Each applicant must submit Exhibit C. To submit additional copies of Exhibit C, please print out Exhibit C, complete it, and upload it as an attachment to the application package. |

2. Project Description

The Project Description must demonstrate the applicant’s capability to implement the proposed activities in accordance with the requirements of this FFO. The application will be evaluated based on the Evaluation Criteria outlined in section VI.A. The Project Description must demonstrate how each scope of work will be integrated into an overarching project, and how the scopes of work will reach common objectives.

The full Project Description must include the following components:

a) Executive Summary:

Not to exceed two pages, the Executive Summary will serve as a summary of the proposed project and may be shared publicly in the form originally submitted; therefore, applicants should not include proprietary or confidential commercial or business information or personally identifiable information. The Executive Summary must include the following sections: (a) project name; (b) organizations composing the Applicant Team; (c) identified region and cluster; (d) summary of the integrated project and project objectives; (e) brief description of the scopes of work to be funded by each funding source and the associated performance measures; and (f) summary of how the capacity of the recipients will be improved and the regional strength will be increased.

b) Project Description:

The Project Description should be a detailed description of all activities that will be undertaken by all sources of funds requested under this solicitation.

Within the Project Description, applicants should address all the evaluation criteria, as outlined in section VI.A:

1. Region and Cluster of Focus;
2. Integrated Project Concept/Overview;
3. Building Community and Regional Capacity (USDA scope of work);
4. Developing Regional Links (EDA scope of work);
5. ARC or DRA scope of work (only applicable to applicants seeking funding from ARC or DRA);
6. Project Impact and Measurable Outcomes; and
7. Soundness of Approach.

See section VI.A for more information on each of the evaluation criteria. The length of the Project Description is limited to 25 double-spaced, 8.5 x 11 inch pages with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Applicants may include a map delineating the region at the end of the Project Description, which will not count towards the 25 page limit. Any Project Description text beyond the specified page limit will not be read. Applicants must number the pages of the Project Description, beginning with page number 1. The Project Description should be submitted as one PDF file, and only one Project Description should be submitted per application. NOTE: the page limit described in this section may be increased to 30 pages if the applicant or Applicant Team is also seeking funding from ARC or DRA.

c) **Integrated Work Plan:**

Applicants must input details of proposed activities under each scope of work from the Project Description, as well as expected/estimated impacts of the activities, into an Integrated Work Plan (IWP) using the suggested template found in Attachment A to this FFO. Attachment A to, and section VI.A. of, this FFO provide instructions and further information on how to complete the IWP.

d) Budget Description (by Funding Agency):

A separate budget narrative must be created and submitted to support the scope of work for each separate Funding Agency, and each narrative must provide a description of costs associated with each line item on each Form SF-424A over the project period. Supporting documentation listing the components of these categories must be included. The budget should be dated: Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, as applicable. The budget narrative should include a personnel plan listing all positions that will be charged to the Federal and non-Federal portion of the budget for each year of the applicable project period. The personnel plan must include the position titles, salaries, percentage of time dedicated to the project, and amount of salary charged to the project for each staff member assigned to the project. The sum of all salaries charged to the project must equal the amount on the "Personnel" budget line item on Form SF-424A. The personnel plan should provide a description of how the personnel will carry out the proposed plan, including the adequacy and previous performance of the proposed team to carry out project activities.

3. Addenda to the Project Description

The applicant must also submit the following required addenda to the Project Description. Applications that do not include the required addenda will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed. Addenda should be submitted as PDF files.

The required addenda to the Project Description are:

- **Résumés of Key Personnel (by Funding Agency):** Applicants must attach the *résumés* of key project staff, which generally should not exceed two pages in length (per *résumé*). Applicants also should provide a two-page summary description of all personnel (performing for the applicant) and contractors named in the application. Resumes should be uploaded as one PDF file.
- **Verification of Matching Funds**
 - **Matching Share Commitment Letters (for EDA):** Each EDA applicant must provide a commitment letter from each applicable Matching Share source. Each letter should include a short description of the individual or entity providing the Matching Share, or a portion thereof, the type of Matching Share, and the amount of Matching Share. Letters must be a maximum of one page, and information beyond this length will not be considered. *See* section IV.A. for more information on the Matching Share requirement for EDA funding.
 - **Verification of source and amount of matching funds (for USDA):** Each USDA applicant must provide verification of source and amount of matching funds (i.e., a copy of a bank statement if matching funds are in cash or a copy of the confirmed funding commitment from the funding source). The verification must show that matching funds are available

for the duration of the grant performance period. The verification of matching funds must be submitted with the application or the application will be considered incomplete. *See* section IV.B. for more information on the Matching Share requirement for USDA funding.

- Applicant Team Written Agreement: If more than one organization is applying for funds under this FFO, the Applicant Team must provide a copy of the written agreement signed by each team member that reflects a binding commitment to undertake the proposed project (if selected), and to perform the roles and responsibilities identified in the Project Description. The Agreement must include the project title and list each applicant and the source of funds they are applying for.

- Facilities and Administrative or Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

- For EDA: EDA strongly encourages applicants to direct the majority of funding received under this solicitation to program implementation rather than to facilities and administrative costs.

If facilities and administrative costs (sometimes referred to as indirect costs) are included in the budget, the applicant must include a copy of its current Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate Agreement or documentation establishing that it has a pending application. An applicant that does not have a current Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate Agreement negotiated and approved by the Department of Commerce (or by the applicable cognizant Federal agency) may propose facilities and administrative costs in their budget. However, the applicant must prepare and submit a facilities and administrative cost allocation plan and rate proposal or a negotiated indirect cost rate as required by 2 C.F.R. part 200, “*Cost Principles for Educational Institutions (OMB Circular A-21)*” or 2 C.F.R. part 230, “*Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122)*,” as applicable. The allocation plan and the rate proposal must be submitted to the Department of Commerce’s Office of Acquisition Management (or applicable cognizant Federal agency) within ninety days from the award start date.

Subject to the limitation on facilities and administrative costs (sometimes referred to as indirect costs), the maximum dollar amount of allocable facilities and administrative costs for which EDA will reimburse a recipient shall be the lesser of the: (i) line-item amount for the Federal share of facilities and administrative costs contained in the EDA approved budget for the award, or (ii) Federal share of the total allocable facilities and administrative costs of the award based on the cost rate approved by the Department of Commerce (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. *See* Paragraph 5 (Indirect Costs) of the

Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements (73 FR 7696, February 11, 2008). The applicant should include a statement in its budget narrative if the applicant does not have, or has not applied for, a Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate Agreement.

- For USDA: The indirect cost category in the project budget should be used only when a grant applicant has a Federally negotiated indirect cost rate. A copy of the current rate agreement must be provided with the application.
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (for EDA): Applications for EDA assistance must be consistent with the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy or alternate EDA-approved strategic planning document. *See* section A.3 of Form ED-900, which requires applicants to identify the relevant plan. If EDA does not already have the applicable plan, the applicant must provide a copy of the plan or a functioning hyperlink to where the plan is found online. In addition, the applicant may be required to obtain a letter from the organization that developed the plan to certify that the proposed project is consistent with the strategy. If you have questions regarding this requirement, contact the appropriate EDA Regional Office listed in Appendix F.
- Non-profit organizations: Non-profit organizations applying for funding must submit the following, in addition to all items listed above.
 - For EDA:
 - A certificate of good standing from the State of its incorporation;
 - A copy of the organization's Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws;
 - A copy of the most recent (not older than 18 months) IRS Form 990 Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax (without attachments or schedules);
 - A resolution (or letter) from a general purpose subdivision of a government of a State, acknowledging that the organization is acting in cooperation with officials of that unit of government; and
 - Form CD-346 (Applicant for Funding Assistance) for each key individual of the non-profit, which includes the executive director, project manager, chief financial manager, and any other person or entity who has authority to speak for or commit the organization in the management of an award or expend funds. Form CD-346 may be accessed in the application package on Grants.gov.
 - For USDA: Organization documents, such as a certificate of incorporation and a current good standing certification from the Secretary of State where the applicant is incorporated, and other similar and valid documentation of non-profit status, from the intermediary that

confirms it has been legally organized for a minimum of 3 years as the applicant entity.

- Recipient Information (for USDA): Applicants must provide the following information for each recipient in a single PDF file.
 1. A summary page, double-spaced between items, listing the following for each recipient (this information should not be presented in narrative form):
 - a. Recipient's entity name;
 - b. Complete address (mailing and physical location, if different);
 - c. County where located;
 - d. Number of Congressional district where recipient is located; and
 - e. Contact person's name and telephone number.
 2. Submit evidence that each recipient entity is eligible:
 - a. Nonprofits – provide a current valid letter confirming non-profit status from the Secretary of the State of incorporation or the IRS, a current good standing certification from the Secretary of the State of incorporation, or other valid documentation of nonprofit status of each recipient.
 - b. Low-income rural community – provide evidence the entity is a public body, and a copy of the 2000 census data to verify the population, and evidence that the median household income is at, or below, 80 percent of either the State or national median household income. We will only accept data and printouts from <http://www.census.gov>. The specific instructions to retrieve data from this site are detailed under the “Evaluation Criteria” for “Population” and “Income.”
 - c. Federally recognized tribes – provide the page listing their name from the *Federal Register* list of tribal entities published by the Bureau of Indian Affairs on October 1, 2010 (75 FR 60810) or a subsequent updated list or supplement in the *Federal Register*. If a tribe has been Federally recognized since the last list of Federally recognized tribes was published in the *Federal Register*, appropriate documentation from the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs must be submitted that legally verifies that recognition.

D. Application Submission Requirements

An applicant may obtain the appropriate application package electronically at Grants.gov. All components of the appropriate application package may be accessed and downloaded (in a screen-fillable format) at www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp. The preferred electronic file format for attachments is PDF; however, electronic files in Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or Microsoft Excel will also be accepted. The applicant must complete the Grants.gov registration process to submit applications through

Grants.gov; however, please note that registration is not required for an applicant to access, view, or download the application packages. Alternatively, an applicant may request a paper application package by contacting the applicable EDA Regional Office or USDA Rural Development State Office listed under Appendix F. of this FFO.

1. Electronic Submission

The Funding Agencies encourage electronic submission of applications through Grants.gov. Applicants should not wait until the application closing date to begin the registration and submission process. In order to submit an application through Grants.gov, applicants first must register for a Grants.gov user I.D. and password. Note that this registration process can take between three to five business days or as long as two weeks if all steps are not completed in a timely manner (see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp). Applicants should register as organizations, not as individuals. Please note that organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database registration up-to-date and must designate the person submitting the application on behalf of the organization as an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR). See the discussion of AOR requirements below.

An application that is not validated and time-stamped by Grants.gov by the applicable deadline will not be processed.

Applicants need to be aware that once an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process through Grants.gov in which the application may be accepted or rejected by the system. The validation process may take 24 to 48 hours to complete. Applications that contain errors will be rejected by Grants.gov and will not be forwarded to the Funding Agencies for review. The applicant must correct the error before Grants.gov will accept and validate the application. The Funding Agencies will not accept late applications that were rejected by Grants.gov due to errors. Accordingly, the Funding Agencies strongly suggest that applicants submit their applications at least four to five days before the application deadline to allow the application to be accepted and validated by Grants.gov and to allow time for errors to be corrected. The Funding Agencies will consider the time-stamp on the validation from Grants.gov as the official submission time.

AOR requirement. Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals, and must register at least one Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) for your organization. AORs registered at Grants.gov are the only officials with the authority to submit applications via Grants.gov. If the application is submitted to Grants.gov by anyone other than your organization's AOR, it will be rejected by Grants.gov and cannot be considered the Funding Agencies. **Note: an Applicant Team must submit its application package using the registered AOR for the organization applying for EDA funds.**

The Funding Agencies will not accept late submissions caused by Grants.gov registration issues, including CCR and AOR issues.

The following instructions provide step-by-step instructions for accessing, completing, and submitting an application via Grants.gov. Save the application package at regular intervals to avoid losing work.

- a. Navigate to the URL www.grants.gov.
- b. Select “Apply for Grants” from the left-hand menu at Grants.gov.
- c. Ensure that you have installed a Grants.gov compatible version of Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer. Incompatible versions of Adobe Acrobat Reader may cause errors. Please see compatible versions of Adobe Reader at http://grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp#adobe811.
- d. Select the link “Download a Grant Application” package.
- e. Enter “JIAC2012RURAL” as the Funding Opportunity Number and click on “Download Package.”
- f. Click on the “Download” link.
- g. Click on “Download Application Package.”
- h. Save the application package to your computer or network drive. Note that the application package file can be shared among multiple users; however, each user must have a Grants.gov compatible version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed in order to save changes to the application package.
- i. Click on each of the documents in the “Mandatory Documents” box and, after selecting each one, click on the arrow to move these into the “Mandatory Documents for Submission” box.
- j. In the “Optional Documents” box, click on Form SF-LLL if non-Federal funds have been or are planned to be used for lobbying in connection with a covered Federal transaction, including this competitive solicitation and then move this to the “Optional Documents for Submission” box. If you will submit your application via Grants.gov, also click on “Attachments” and move this to the “Optional Documents for Submission” box. The Attachments Form also allows applicants to attach the Project Description documents, forms, and other documents required as addenda under this competition. Note that if the applicant is not submitting electronically, the Project Description documents and other required forms and addenda all must be printed and submitted in hard copy via a CD or paper.
- k. The application package should pre-populate with all selected forms embedded. Complete all mandatory fields (highlighted in yellow) on the forms. Note that mandatory fields will vary based on the type of applicant and the type of assistance sought. On Form CD-511, type “not awarded yet” in the “project number” field.
- l. Attach the Project Description documents and other required forms and addenda. Note, the mandatory USDA forms can be found on the “Full Announcement” tab, and must be included as attachments to the

- application. The preferred electronic file format for the required attachments is PDF; however, the Funding Agencies will accept electronic files in Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or Excel formats.
- m. When all mandatory fields have been completed, scroll to the top and click on “Check Package for Errors.”
 - n. Click “Save.”
 - o. Click “Save and Submit.” At this point, the registered AOR for the EDA applicant must be connected to the Internet and will be prompted to enter the appropriate Grants.gov user id and password in order to electronically submit the application.

Verify submission was successful. Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at Grants.gov. Applicants can expect to receive multiple emails regarding the status of their submission. Since email communication can be unreliable, applicants must proactively check on the status of their application if they do not receive email notifications within a day of submission. The first email should confirm receipt of the application, and the second should indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the Funding Agencies or has been rejected due to errors. ***Please note that it can take up to two business days after Grants.gov receives an application for applicants to receive email notification of an error.*** An applicant will receive a third email once EDA has retrieved an application from Grants.gov.

Applicants should refrain from submitting multiple copies of the same application package. Applicants should save and print both the submitted application confirmation screen provided on Grants.gov, and the confirmation email sent by Grants.gov when the application has been successfully received and validated in the system. If an applicant receives an email from Grants.gov indicating that the application was received and subsequently validated, but does not receive an email from Grants.gov indicating that EDA has retrieved the application package within 72 hours of that email, the applicant may contact the appropriate person listed in Appendix F. of this FFO to inquire if EDA is in receipt of the submission.

It is the applicant’s responsibility to verify that its submission was received and validated successfully at Grants.gov. To see the date and time your application was received, log on to Grants.gov and click on the “Track My Application” link from the left-hand menu. For a successful submission, the application must be received and validated by Grants.gov, and an agency tracking number assigned. If your application has a status of “Received” it is awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will change to “Validated” or “Rejected with Errors.” If the status is “Rejected with Errors,” your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/submit_application_faqs.jsp.

Systems issues. If you experience a Grants.gov “systems issue” (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission, please (a) print any error message received and (b) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. Please note: problems with an applicant organization’s computer system or equipment are not considered “systems issues.” Similarly, an applicant’s failure to (a) complete the registration, (b) ensure that an EDA applicant’s registered AOR submits the application, or (c) notice receipt of an email message from Grants.gov, are not considered systems issues. A Grants.gov “systems issue” is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to an unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely.

Applicants should access the following link for assistance in navigating Grants.gov and for a list of useful resources:

<http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>. Also, the following link lists frequently asked questions (FAQs):

www.grants.gov/applicants/submit_application_faqs.jsp. If you do not find an answer to your question under the “Applicant FAQs,” try consulting the “Applicant User Guide” or contacting Grants.gov via email at support@grants.gov or telephone at 1-800-518-4726. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

2. Submission through a CD or Paper

Applicants have the option of submitting their completed application on a CD or on paper. Proposals submitted via CD or paper must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on May 9, 2012 at the following address:

Attn: Terry D’Addio
U.S. Department of Agriculture
14th and Independence Avenue SW
Room 6015-S
Washington, DC 20250

Proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope with a cover page labeled “Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Rural Jobs Accelerator,” and include the name of the applicant or the names of the organizations composing the Applicant Team. One original and two copies of the CD or paper submission must be delivered via postal mail or courier service with a postmark or courier service’s time and date stamp on or before the deadline. USDA mail security measures may delay receipt of United States Postal Service mail for up to three weeks. Therefore, applicants that submit via paper or CD are strongly advised to use carriers with guaranteed delivery services and that provide confirmation that indicates the application was delivered by the deadline.

CDs must be labeled with the project name and verified as virus free. **The Funding Agencies will not review any proposals submitted on CDs on which viruses are detected.**

The CD or paper submission must include all the required forms, Project Description documents and addenda for all applicants proposing scopes of work (*see* section V.C. of this FFO for application content requirements).

The applicant may download the appropriate application package in a screen-fillable format from http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp, save it electronically, and upload it onto the CD.

If your application is received after the deadline, it will not be reviewed.

E. Withdrawal of Applications

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before an award is made. Please make the written request to RuralJobsAccelerator@wdc.usda.gov.

VI. Application Review Information

Applications received in response to this FFO will be reviewed and selected in accordance with the following process.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on their ability to satisfy the following core evaluation criteria, with each criterion assigned the points indicated.

1. Region and Cluster of Focus: 15 points
2. Integrated Project Concept/Overview: 10 points
3. Building Community and Regional Capacity: 20 points
4. Linking to Regional Clusters and Opportunities: 20 points
5. ARC or DRA Scope of Work (optional, only for projects in those regions): no assigned points
6. Project Impact and Measurable Outcomes: 20 points
7. Soundness of Approach: 15 points

The following sections describe the evaluation criteria and requirements for the Project Description.

1. Region and Cluster of Focus (15 points)

The applicant must describe the region of focus, including the economic ecosystem, clusters, and the networks and assets that contribute to the region's competitiveness and potential for growth.

The narrative response must:

- a. Clearly describe the geographic region of the proposed project. Regions may be single or multi-jurisdictional areas. Applicants have the flexibility

to define their region based on quantitative and qualitative information about where and how the cluster targeted for development operates.¹¹ The description of the region should include the location of project recipients for the Building Community and Regional Capacity scope of work. Applicants should provide information about areas and sectors of economic distress.

- b. Present a compelling description of the economic ecosystem of the region and the specific cluster that will be targeted by the proposed project. This discussion should identify any specific economic needs and opportunities for growth, and should demonstrate that the region possesses unique assets to support the cluster, and has a competitive advantage in the identified industry. Applicants should include evidence of a concentration of firms in the identified industry sector, available industry-specific infrastructure that support the cluster, and clear leadership at the regional level in organizing and coordinating a region-wide initiative.
- c. Fully describe existing regional partnerships that are directly engaged in supporting the targeted cluster, including a discussion of the extent of participation and effectiveness:
 - Private sector leadership and significant participation in cluster activities;
 - Any and all cluster intermediary organizations, such as an economic development organization, workforce development board, business incubator or accelerator, chamber of commerce, or a university-based consortium;
 - Universities, Federally funded labs, or privately funded research and development centers;
 - Federally funded program or center, such as a Manufacturing Extension Partnership Center (MEP), Small Business Development Center, and Preferred Sustainability Status holders within the Partnership for Sustainable Communities;
 - Venture development organizations, venture capital firms, revolving loan funders, angel investment groups, community lenders, community development financial institutions, and other institutions focused on expanding access to capital;
 - Local and municipal governments, workforce development entities, community colleges, and community-based organizations; and
 - Private foundations focused on economic or community development, science, business, and innovation.

2. Integrated Project Concept (10 points)

Applicants must provide an Integrated Project Concept, which is a narrative summary that describes the proposed project with a maximum of 5 pages.

¹¹ Regions can be non-contiguous (e.g., the cluster “anchor” may be located in one region, with networked assets such as research partnerships with Federal labs or supply chain linkages in other regions).

The narrative response must:

- a. Present how the applicant intends to leverage and utilize multiple resources to meet project objectives, address identified needs and capitalize on opportunities;
- b. Clearly express how the proposed scopes of work will complement each other in accelerating competitiveness in rural regions; and
- c. Describe how the project will promote substantive economic growth, including job creation.

NOTE: Applicants requesting ARC or DRA funds must include the proposed ARC or DRA scope of work in their Integrated Project Concept.

3. Building Community and Regional Capacity (20 points)

The applicant must demonstrate how they will apply USDA funds to improve the recipients' capacity, through a program of financial and technical assistance, as it is related to the RCDI purposes. Capacity-building financial and technical assistance should provide new functions to the recipients or expand existing functions that will enable the recipients to undertake projects in the areas of housing, community facilities, or community and economic development that will benefit the community. The proposed program of financial and technical assistance provided, its delivery, and the measurability of its effectiveness will determine the merit of the application.

Capacity-building financial and technical assistance may include: training to conduct community development programs, e.g., the establishment of minority business entrepreneurs, cooperatives, or micro-enterprises; organizational development, e.g., assistance to develop or improve board operations, management, and financial systems; instruction on how to develop and implement a strategic plan; instruction on how to access alternative funding sources to increase leveraging opportunities; staffing, e.g., hiring a person at intermediary or recipient level to provide technical assistance to recipients.

The narrative response must:

- a. Describe the nature of financial and technical assistance to be provided to the recipients and the activities that will be conducted to deliver the technical assistance;
- b. Explain how financial and technical assistance will develop or increase the recipient's capacity. Indicate whether a new function is being developed or if existing functions are being expanded or performed more effectively;
- c. Identify which RCDI purpose areas will be addressed with this assistance: housing, community facilities, or community and economic development; and
- d. Demonstrate that the applicant has conducted programs of financial and technical assistance and achieved measurable results in the areas of housing, community facilities, or community and economic development in rural areas. Provide the name, contact information, and the type and amount of

the financial and technical assistance the applicant organization has provided to the following for the last 3 years:

- Nonprofit organizations in the rural areas.
- Low-income communities in rural areas (also include the type of entity, e.g., city government, town council or village board).
- Federally recognized tribes or any other culturally diverse organizations.

4. Linking to Regional Clusters and Opportunities (20 points)

The applicant must demonstrate how they will utilize EDA funds to link rural communities to markets, networks, industry clusters, and other regional opportunities and assets to improve the rural regions' competitiveness, repatriate U.S. jobs, foster job creation, retain existing jobs, support innovation, and promote private investment in the regional economy.

The narrative response must:

- a. Describe the proposed scope of work to be implemented by the applicant and how it will link rural regions to the identified clusters and opportunities;
- b. Explain how the proposed scope of work will address an identified need or opportunity to meet project objectives, including supporting innovation and job growth;
- c. Explain how the scope of work will implement goals, objectives or actions identified in a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy or Regional Strategic Plan which addresses priorities specified at a regional scale;
- d. Note the entity or entities that will oversee scope of work development and implementation, and demonstrate that these entities have experience in the proposed activities and achieved measurable results in the areas of regional development and cluster development; and
- e. Demonstrate financial resources to ensure institutional capacity to support the projects in the long-term, without significant future Federal funding.

5. ARC or DRA Scope of Work (n/a points)

For applicants located within ARC or DRA regions that are also requesting funds from the Regional Funding Partners, describe how those funds will be used as an additional component of the project. ARC and DRA funds must be used for an additional scope of work and not duplicate activities funded by EDA or USDA. The ARC or DRA scope of work will be reviewed separately for funding and evaluated by those agencies.

For evaluation under this FFO the narrative must describe how the proposed ARC or DRA scope of work helps to accomplish the objectives of this FFO. All other ARC application and evaluation requirements are more fully set forth in

Appendix C. of this FFO; and DRA application and evaluation requirements are more fully set forth in Appendix D.

NOTE: If an ARC or DRA scope of work is included in the application, the page limit for the Project Description is increased to a maximum of 30 pages, as outlined in section V.C.2.b.

6. Project Impact and Measurable Outcomes (20 points)

Applications funded under this competitive solicitation are expected to identify clear goals and demonstrate potential for substantial benefits to the relevant rural region. While each funding source will identify performance metrics that applicants must track and report, applicants are encouraged to identify additional metrics that can be used to assess the impact of requested funding. Applicants must also describe mechanisms for tracking and reporting on these outcomes.

Applicants are required to submit an IWP as part of their submission package. The IWP is designed to document the key activities that will be supported by a Funding Agency, the anticipated dates these activities will be completed, and the anticipated core impacts that each scope of work is expected to yield in the short-term (during the 3-year project period) and the long-term (within 3 years after project end date). The impacts set forth in the IWP should be forecasts based on each activity undertaken; grantees will be required to report on progress towards reaching these forecasts throughout the life of the project.

Applicants should utilize the Excel-based IWP template available on the Rural Jobs Accelerator website, www.rurdev.usda.gov/RuralJobsAccelerator.html. Each measure should be broken down by funding source (i.e., EDA, USDA, ARC, and DRA), clearly linking proposed funding to specific outcomes. A copy of the IWP template is included as Attachment A to this FFO for reference (note how activities, expected deadlines, and anticipated impacts are separately reported for each funding agency).

All applicants are required to utilize and include the following measures in their IWP to report on anticipated project impacts:

- **Jobs Created during the Project Period**—Applicants should include an estimate of the number of jobs that will be created during the three year project period as a direct result of funding from one of the Funding Partners. Anticipated jobs created should be reported as full time equivalent (FTE) or equivalents which are annualized for the entire project period¹².
- **Jobs Retained during the Project Period**—Applicants should include an estimate of the number of jobs expected to be retained during the three year project period as a direct result of funding from each of the Funding Partners.

¹² FTE employees work a total of 40-hours per week. Part time jobs can be converted to FTE by summing the total part time hours worked per week and dividing by the hourly work week for full-time employees, or 40 hours.

Anticipated jobs retained should be reported as FTEs or equivalents which are annualized for the entire project period.

- **Private Investment Leverage during the Project Period**—Applicants should include an estimate of the amount of private investment that will be leveraged during the three year project period as a direct result of funding from one of the Funding Partners.
- **Businesses Assisted during the Project Period**—Applicants should include an estimate of the number of businesses expected to be assisted during the three year project period as a direct result of funding from one of the Funding Partners.
- **Engagement and Collaboration of Regional Organizations**—Applicants should include an estimate of the number and types of organizations within the region expected to be engaged in the project during the three year project period.
- **Long-term Jobs Created**—Applicants should include an estimate of the number of jobs expected to be created within three years after project completion (within six years from project inception) as a result of funding from one of the Funding Partners. Anticipated long-term jobs created should be reported as FTEs which are annualized for the entire six year period since the original grant award.
- **Long-term Jobs Retained**—Applicants should include an estimate of the number of jobs expected to be retained within three years after project completion (within six years from project inception) as a result of funding from one of the Funding Partners. Anticipated long-term jobs retained should be reported as FTEs which are annualized for the entire six year period since the original grant award.
- **Long-term Private Investment Leveraged**—Applicants should include an estimate of the amount of private investment that will be leveraged within three years after project completion (within six years from project inception) as a result of funding from one of the Funding Partners. Funds reported should reflect the cumulative amount of private investment anticipated to be leveraged for the entire six year period since the original grant award.
- **Long-term Businesses Assisted**—Applicants should include an estimate of the number of businesses that will be assisted three years after project completion (within six years from project inception) as a result of funding from one of the Funding Partners.

Additionally, applicants are encouraged to provide other self-identified measures within the IWP which are specific to their proposed project

activities. Such measures should align with the objectives of the individual project, as well as the overall Rural Jobs Accelerator initiative (as outlined in section I. of this FFO). For example, applicants may consider the following types of measures:

- Cooperation:
 - Number of organizations actively engaged in the cluster (and new ones added to the network);
 - Number of symposia held by the cluster;
 - Number of further cooperative agreements as a result of the supported activity;
- Innovation:
 - Number of new projects developed;
 - Number of education and training activities related to innovation;
 - Number of workshops and seminars related to innovation;
- Workforce Skills:
 - Percentage of employees for which training was provided by this project;
 - Average number of qualified applicants per job;
 - Number of recruitment events at universities and community colleges;
- Business Creation:
 - Number of newly formed businesses as a result of the supported activity;
 - Number of jobs relocated from outside of the U.S. to the region;
- Housing Support:
 - Change in available housing units in supported communities;
- Access to Capital:
 - Amount and number of new equity investments in cluster firms;
 - Amount and number of new loans to cluster firms;
- Market Development:
 - Dollar increase in exports resulting from the project activities.

Applicants should note that the submitted IWP and associated information will form the basis by which selected projects will be monitored. Grantees will be required to submit regular reports to the Funding Partners which document project progress against the scopes of work, deadlines, and short-term measures outlined in the original IWP. Reporting requirements will be outlined in the terms and conditions of the grant award.

Evaluation for this criterion will be based on the following:

- a. Includes specific and quantifiable measures of project impacts that benefit the regional economy and will support the cluster;
- b. Presents measures that are relevant to the proposed scopes of work and objectives;
- c. Presents measures that will help monitor progress towards meeting the objectives of the Rural Jobs Accelerator; and

- d. Presents practical and clear tracking and reporting mechanisms.

7. Soundness of Approach (15 points)

The overall proposal will be considered under this criterion. The narrative response must clearly demonstrate:

- a. The ability to implement the proposed scopes of work based on prior accomplishments has been demonstrated for both Building Community and Regional Capacity and Regional Linkages scopes of work.
- b. The proposed scopes of work are clearly stated and the application has defined how this proposal will be implemented. The plan for implementation is viable for both Building Community and Regional Capacity and Regional Linkages scopes of work.
- c. Cost effectiveness will be evaluated based on the budget in the application for both Building Community and Regional Capacity and Regional Linkages scopes of work. For the Building Community and Regional Capacity activity the proposed grant amount and matching funds should be utilized to maximize capacity building at the recipient level.
- d. The proposal fits the objectives for which applications were invited.

B. Review Process

1. Application and Eligibility Review

Each Funding Agency will conduct an initial application and eligibility review of applications submitted and received by the deadline stated in section V.D. of this FFO. Each Funding Agency will independently review applications to ensure compliance with its agency-specific requirements. This review will determine if the application satisfies: (a) all requirements for a complete submission (including all required forms, documentation of matching funds, and addenda to the Project Description); (b) agency-specific eligibility criteria (listed by agency in section IV of this FFO); and (c) agency-specific requirements for permitted activities. Applications found to be responsive will be forwarded for merit review.

Applications that do not contain all forms and required documentation for a Primary Funding Agency will be deemed non-responsive and excluded from further consideration for any funds under this FFO. Throughout the review and selection process, the Funding Agencies reserve the right to seek clarification in writing from applicants whose applications are being reviewed and considered. The Funding Agencies may ask applicants to clarify objectives and work plans, modify budgets or other specifics necessary to comply with Federal requirements, or provide required supplemental information.

2. Merit Review Panels

Upon completion of the application and eligibility review, Merit Review Panels comprised of Federal employees from the Funding Agencies will review and evaluate applications deemed responsive. Merit Review Panels may also include

experts from Support Agencies. The Merit Review Panels will evaluate the applications against the evaluation criteria enumerated in section VI.A, award up to 100 points to each application, rank the applications by consensus, and forward the applications, evaluation findings, and rankings to the Policy Review and Recommendation Committee.

3. Policy Review and Recommendation Committee

Upon completion of the merit review, the Policy Review and Recommendation Committee composed of senior officials from the Primary Funding Agencies will review the top 30 ranked applications, or approximately 5 per EDA regional office (see Appendix F of this FFO for a list of EDA's regional offices). This Committee will evaluate the applications based on policy factors such as: geographic balance in distribution of program funds; balance of diverse project types in the distribution of program funds; balanced funding for a diverse group of organizations, including smaller and rural organizations that may form part of a broader consortium to serve diverse populations; the availability of funds; the applicant's performance under previous Federal financial assistance awards; and the extent to which the applicant integrates and leverages multiple Federal resources to effectively support rural region and cluster development. For projects based within regions serviced by DRA and ARC, the Policy Review and Recommendation Committee will give additional consideration to projects that fully integrate and leverage the resources provided by these agencies. Based on these combined factors, the Policy Review and Recommendation Committee will recommend approximately twenty applications to the agency principals and selecting officials.

4. Agency Principals and Selecting Officials

Agency principals and selecting officials will work together to make the final award determinations. The agency principals for the Primary Funding agencies are the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development and the Undersecretary for Rural Development of the USDA. The Agency Principals for the Regional Funding Partners are the Federal and States' Co-chairmen of the ARC and the Federal Co-chairman of the DRA.

Selecting officials are authorized to finalize funding decisions and make awards. The selecting officials for EDA are the Regional Directors in EDA's six regional offices, who will review award recommendations and select EDA awards for their respective region. The USDA selecting official will be the Administrator for the Rural Housing Service. The ARC selecting officials will be the Federal and the States' Co-Chairmen. The DRA selecting official will be the Federal Co-Chairman.

Selecting officials may follow the recommendations of the Policy Review and Recommendation Committee, or may consider additional information in making their selections. If a selecting official selects an application that is not included in the set of applications recommended by the Policy Review and Recommendation

Committee, the selecting official must document the rationale for the decision in writing.

C. Transparency

The agencies and bureaus involved in this initiative are committed to conducting a transparent grant award process and publicizing information about investment decisions. Information about the grant award process and related results may also be made publicly available. The Funding Agencies may release a list of Rural Jobs Accelerator applicants including the name(s) of the applicant organization(s), the project name, and the city and state where the applicant is located. Applicants' respective applications and information related to their respective reviews and evaluations may be shared publicly. For further information on how applications may be made publicly available *see* section VIII.B of this FFO.

VII. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notification

Successful applicants should expect to receive grant awards within approximately 60 days from the application closing date and time set out in this FFO, subject to the availability of funding. Applicants selected for awards will be contacted directly before execution of the grant award documents. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by mail or email that their application was not selected for funding, and may request a debrief on their submitted application. A list of successful awardees will be posted on-line on the EDA and USDA websites (including the Rural Jobs Accelerator webpage at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RuralJobsAccelerator.html>).

Important: Selection of an organization under this FFO does not constitute approval of the proposed project as submitted. Before any funds are awarded, the Funding Agencies may enter into negotiations about such items as program components, staffing and funding levels, and administrative systems in place to support implementation of the award. The amount of available funding may require the final award amount to be less than that requested by the applicant. If the negotiations do not result in a mutually acceptable submission, the Grants Officer for the applicable Funding Agency reserves the right to terminate the negotiations and decline to fund the application. The Funding Agencies reserve the right not to fund any application received under this competitive solicitation.

- The EDA selecting official (who also serves as the Grants Officer) will issue the EDA grant award (Form CD-450), which is the authorizing financial assistance award document. By signing the Form CD-450, the recipient agrees to comply with all award provisions. The grant award shall be submitted by postal mail or overnight delivery service to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization and must be signed and returned without modification by an authorized representative of the recipient within 30 days after receipt. In addition, selected applicants will be requested to verify that components of the application have not changed at the time of selection and on the award obligation date, if requested by EDA.

- USDA applicants will be notified of selection by letter. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification by mail. In addition, selected applicants will be requested to verify that components of the application have not changed at the time of selection and on the award obligation date, if requested by the Agency. The award is not approved until all information has been verified, and the awarding official of the Agency has signed Form RD 1940-1, “Request for Obligation of Funds.”
- Upon award notification, the Intermediary will be required to:
 - Execute a Rural Community Development Initiative Grant Agreement
 - Execute Form RD 1940-1
 - Use Form SF 270, “Request for Advance or Reimbursement,” to request reimbursements. Provide receipts for expenditures, timesheets and any other documentation to support the request for reimbursement.

B. Unsuccessful Competition

On occasion, competitive solicitations or competitive panels produce less than optimum results, such as a competition resulting in the receipt of no applications, a competition resulting in the receipt of only unresponsive or unqualified applications, or too few highly rated applications. In the event that these conditions arise, the Funding Agencies shall take the most time- and cost-effective approach available that is in the best interest of the Federal government. This includes (1) re-competition, (2) re-paneling, or (3) formal negotiation.

C. Administrative and National Policies

Award recipients under this FFO are subject to all applicable Federal laws, regulations, and applicable OMB Circulars.

1. EDA Administrative and National Policies

a) 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 special award condition relating to EDA’s non-relocation policy.

For purposes of ensuring that EDA assistance will be used to advance new economic opportunities and not merely 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 considers an employer to be a “primary beneficiary” if the applicant estimates that such employer will create or save 100 or more permanent jobs as a result of the investment assistance, provided that such employer also is specifically named in the application as benefitting from the project, or 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 assistance prior to EDA’s final disbursement of funds. In smaller communities, EDA may extend this policy to the relocation of 50 or more jobs.

b) *Administrative and National Policy Requirements*

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are applicable to the EDA funds under this competitive solicitation. These requirements may be found in the *Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements*, published in the *Federal Register* on February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696). This notice may be accessed at the *Federal Register's* website at www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html.

c) *Uniform Administrative Requirements and Federal Cost Principles*

The uniform administrative requirements for Department of Commerce grants and cooperative agreements are codified at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24, as applicable. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, supplies, and other expenses that are reasonable and necessary for the completion of the scope of work. EDA allowable costs are determined in accordance with the following regulations (incorporated by reference at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24); (i) 2 C.F.R. par 220, *Cost Principles for Education Institutions (OMB Circular A-210)*; (ii) 2 C.F.R. part 225, *Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87)*; (iii) 2 C.F.R. part 230, *Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122)*; and (iv) Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 31.2, *Contracts with Commercial Organizations*, codified at 48 C.F.R. 31.2. Applicable administrative requirements and Federal cost principles are incorporated by reference into the terms and conditions of each EDA award.

2. *USDA Administrative and National Policies*

The intermediary and recipient must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Executive Order 12250 and RD Instruction 7 C.F.R. 1901-E.

The grantee must comply with policies, guidance, and requirements as described in the following applicable OMB Circulars and Code of Federal Regulations:

- a. OMB Circular A-87 (Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian tribal Government);
- b. OMB Circular A-122 (Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations);
- c. OMB Circular A-133 (Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-profit Organizations);
- d. 7 C.F.R. part 3015 (Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations);
- e. 7 C.F.R. 3016 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments);
- f. 2 C.F.R. parts 417 and 180 (Government-wide Debarment and Suspension) (Nonprocurement);

- g. 7 C.F.R. part 3019 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations); and
- h. 7 C.F.R. part 3052 (Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations).

Nondiscrimination Statement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC, 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

3. Grant Amount Determination

In the event the applicant is awarded a grant that is less than the amount requested, the applicant will be required to modify its application to conform to the reduced amount before execution of the grant agreement. The Funding Agencies reserve the right to reduce or withdraw the award if acceptable modifications are not submitted by the applicant within 15 working days from the date the requested modification is made. All modifications must be within the scope of the original application.

4. Other Legal Requirements

a) Lobbying or Fundraising the U.S. Government with Federal Funds

In accordance with Section 18 of the lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (Pub. L. No. 104-65) (2 U.S.C. 1611), non-profit entities incorporated under Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501(c)(4) that engage in lobbying activities are not eligible to receive Federal funds. No activity, including awareness-raising and advocacy activities, may include fundraising for, or lobbying of, U.S. Federal, State or Local Governments (*see* OMB Circular A-122).

b) OMB Circular A-133 Audit Requirements

Single or program-specific audits shall be performed in accordance with the requirements contained in OMB Circular A-133, "*Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations,*" and the related Compliance Supplement. OMB Circular A-133 requires a non-Federal entity (i.e.,

non-profit organizations, including non-profit institutions of higher education and hospitals, States, local governments, and Indian Tribes) that expends Federal awards of \$500,000 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 Circular. Applicants are reminded that the Funding Agencies and their respective Offices of Inspector General also may conduct an audit or an investigation of an award at any time.

D. Project Evaluation

The Funding Agencies are considering a range of options for evaluating the outcomes and benefits of the Rural Jobs Accelerator, including evaluation conducted with existing resources at each Agency as well as potential retention of an independent evaluation form. By accepting funds under this FFO, grantees agree to participate in any such evaluation. Grantees will be expected to make records of their program participation, metrics, underlying data, participants, employers and funding available; and to provide access to program operating personnel and to participants, as specified by any evaluator (whether independent or within one or more of the Funding Agencies), including after the period of operation.

E. Reporting Requirements

All recipients are required to submit financial and performance reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant award.

1. EDA Reporting Requirements

All recipients are required to submit financial, performance, and impact reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant award. The conditions of the grant award will be developed based on the project performance metrics, as presented in the recipient's Project Description and IWP (*see* section VI.A.6).

Award agreements will include additional information on reporting requirements, including requirements for reporting on project progress and project impact and measurable outcomes as outlined in section V.D.2. The recipient will be required to submit annual reports, as well as a final project and financial report. The recipient may also be required to provide qualitative and quantitative data on project progress and best practices, including through learning events or forums.

2. USDA Reporting Requirements

Provide financial status and project performance reports on a quarterly basis starting with the first full quarter after the grant award.

Maintain a financial management system that is acceptable to the Agency.

Ensure that records are maintained to document all activities and expenditures utilizing RCDI grant funds and matching funds. Receipts for expenditures will be included in this documentation.

Provide annual audits or management reports on Form RD 442-2, "Statement of Budget, Income, and Equity," and Form RD 442-3, "Balance Sheet," depending on the amount of Federal funds expended and the outstanding balance.

Collect and maintain data provided by recipients on race, sex, and national origin and ensure recipients collect and maintain the same data on beneficiaries. Race and ethnicity data will be collected in accordance with OMB *Federal Register* notice, "Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity," (62 FR 58782), October 30, 1997. Sex data will be collected in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. These items should not be submitted with the application but should be available upon request by the Agency.

Provide a final project performance report.

VIII. Additional Information and Requirements

A. No Obligation for Future Funding

If an applicant is awarded funding under this FFO, neither the Department of Commerce, EDA, nor the USDA are under any obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award or to make future award(s). Amendment or renewal of an award to increase funding or to extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the governmental entities identified in section IV. of this FFO.

B. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure

The Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) (FOIA), the Department of Commerce's implementing regulations at 15 CFR. part 4 and the USDA's implementing regulations at 7 C.F.R. part 1, subpart A set forth the rules and procedures to make requested material, information and records publicly available. Unless prohibited by law and to the extent permitted under FOIA, contents of applications submitted by applicants may be released in response to FOIA requests.

C. 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 the Department of Commerce (or any of its operating units) or the USDA, 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 its Department of Commerce, or USDA award(s); (3) changing the method of payment from advance to reimbursement only; (4) designating the recipient as high risk; (5) imposing special award conditions, as needed; (6) suspending Department of Commerce or USDA award(s); and (7) terminating Department of Commerce or USDA award(s) in whole or in part.

D. Universal Identifier, and Central Contractor Registration Requirements and Reporting under the Transparency Act

1. DUNS Number and CCR Registration

All applicants for Federal assistance are required to obtain a universal identifier in the form of Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) numbers and maintain a current registration in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. Per the requirements of 2 C.F.R. part 25, each applicant must:

- Be registered in the CCR before submitting an application;
- Maintain an active CCR registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by an agency; and
- Provide its DUNS number in each application or plan it submits to the agency.

Please see also the *Federal Register* notice published on September 14, 2010, at 75 FR 55671.

2. Reporting Under the Transparency Act

All recipients of Federal awards made on or after October 1, 2010, are required to comply with reporting requirements under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Transparency Act) per the requirements of 2 C.F.R. part 170. Generally, all recipients are responsible for reporting sub-awards of \$425,000 or more. In addition, recipients that meet certain criteria are responsible for reporting executive compensation. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements should they receive funding. Please see also the *Federal Register* notice published on September 14, 2010, at 75 FR 55663.

Appendix A. Integrated Work Plan Template

All applicants are required to submit an Integrated Work Plan using the following suggested template or a substantially similar format that provides the types of information requested in the suggested template. The following presents the suggested template, along with examples of the type of information that should be included. Integrated Work Plan definitions follow the template. Please *see* section VI.A.6. for a detailed description and requirements.

| Integrated Work Plan (IWP) Template for Rural Jobs Accelerator | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|------|---------|
| Activity | Activity Completion Date | | Measure | | EDA | USDA | ARC/DRA |
| | | Anticipated Immediate Activity Impacts by Funding Agency | Jobs Created | Anticipated # | | | |
| | | | | Methodology & Definition | | | |
| | | | Jobs Retained | Anticipated # | | | |
| | | | | Methodology & Definition | | | |
| | | | Immediate PI ¹³ Leveraged | Anticipated # | | | |
| | | | | Methodology & Definition | | | |
| | | | Businesses Assisted | Anticipated # | | | |
| | | | | Methodology & Definition | | | |
| | | | Regional Entities Engaged | Anticipated # | | | |
| | | | | Methodology & Definition | | | |
| | | Enter Additional Metric Here | Anticipated # | | | | |
| | | | Methodology & Definition | | | | |
| | | Enter Additional Metric Here | Anticipated # | | | | |
| | | | Methodology & Definition | | | | |
| | | Enter Additional Metric Here | Anticipated # | | | | |
| | | | Methodology & Definition | | | | |
| | | Anticipated Long-Term Activity Impacts by Funding Agency | Jobs Created | Anticipated # | | | |
| | | | | Methodology & Definition | | | |
| | | | Jobs Retained | Anticipated # | | | |
| | | | | Methodology & Definition | | | |
| Immediate PI Leveraged | Anticipated # | | | | | | |
| | Methodology & Definition | | | | | | |
| Businesses Assisted | Anticipated # | | | | | | |
| | Methodology & Definition | | | | | | |
| Regional Entities Engaged | Anticipated # | | | | | | |
| | Methodology & Definition | | | | | | |
| Enter Additional Metric Here | Anticipated # | | | | | | |
| | Methodology & Definition | | | | | | |
| Enter Additional Metric Here | Anticipated # | | | | | | |
| | Methodology & Definition | | | | | | |
| Enter Additional Metric Here | Anticipated # | | | | | | |
| | Methodology & Definition | | | | | | |
| Methodology & Definition should include short summary outlining how the number was calculated and any additional information about the numeric value (for example, about the quality or type of jobs, source of private investment or types of businesses assisted). | | | | | | | |

¹³ Private Investment

Appendix B. RCDI Program Definitions

Agency – The Rural Housing Service (RHS) or its successor.

Beneficiary – Entities or individuals that receive benefits from assistance provided by the recipient.

Federally Recognized Tribes – Tribal entities recognized and eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, based on current notice in the *Federal Register* published by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Tribally Designated Housing Entities are eligible RCDI recipients.

Financial Assistance – Funds, not to exceed \$10,000 per award, used by the intermediary to purchase supplies and equipment to build the recipient's capacity.

Funds – The RCDI grant and matching money.

Intermediary – A qualified private, nonprofit (including faith-based and community organizations), or public (including tribal) organization that provided financial and technical assistance to multiple recipients.

Low-income Rural Community – An authority, district, economic development authority, regional council, or unit of government representing an incorporated city, town, village, county, township, parish, or borough whose income is at or below 80 percent of either the state or national Median Household Income as measured by the 2000 Census.

Recipient – The entity that receives the financial and technical assistance from the Intermediary. The recipient must be a private, non-profit community-based housing and development organization, a low-income rural community or a Federally recognized Tribe.

Regional Collaboration – Multi-jurisdictional areas typically within a State, territory, or Federally-designated Tribal land, but which can cross State, territory, or Tribal boundaries. The Regional Collaboration approach is intended to combine the resources of the Agency with those of State and local governments, educational institutions, and the private and nonprofit sectors to implement regional economic and community development strategies.

Rural and Rural Area – Any area other than (i) a city or town that has a population greater than 50,000 inhabitants; and (ii) the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such city or town.

Technical Assistance – Skilled help in improving the recipient's abilities in the areas of housing, community facilities, or community and economic development.

Appendix C. ARC Eligibility and Submission Guidelines

A. What are ARC's eligibility requirements?

The Appalachian Regional Commission's non-highway programs address three of the four goals identified in the Commission's strategic plan: (1) Increase job opportunities and per capita income in Appalachia to reach parity with the nation; (2) Strengthen the capacity of the people of Appalachia to compete in the global economy; and (3) Develop and improve Appalachia's infrastructure to make the Region economically competitive.

The projects funded in these program areas create new jobs; improve local water and sewer systems; increase school readiness; expand access to health care; assist local communities with strategic planning; and provide technical and managerial assistance to emerging businesses.

ARC supports a variety of activities to promote business development and growth of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Appalachian Region. These activities help diversify the Region's economic base, develop and market strategic assets, increase the competitiveness of existing businesses, foster the development and use of innovative technologies, and enhance entrepreneurial activity. ARC entrepreneurship and business development activities include:

- Giving entrepreneurs greater access to capital, including support for microcredit programs, revolving loan funds, and development venture capital fund;
- Educating and training entrepreneurs through youth education programs and adult training initiatives;
- Encouraging sector-based strategies to maximize the economic strengths of local communities; and
- Providing strategic support for business incubators and other forms of technical assistance.

ARC programs that support entrepreneurship and business development efforts include the Asset-Based Development Initiative, which builds on the foundation of the Commission's 10-year Entrepreneurship Initiative. Elements of an asset-based strategy include support for a region's core natural, cultural, structural, and leadership resources.

B. What are the ARC permitted activities?

Activities eligible for ARC funding under this announcement are limited to those that address gaps in a community's or region's entrepreneurial ecosystem and therefore may limit business development, job growth, and market expansion. Examples of eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

- Support for improving access to capital for new, emerging, or established businesses;
- Programs that help to establish an enabling culture of entrepreneurship, including education for entrepreneurs;

- Establishment of a supportive infrastructure for entrepreneurship, including, but not limited to, improvements to a cluster's access to information technology infrastructure;
- Support for establishment and improvement of local and regional networks, including those devoted to development or organization of cluster-focused assistance programs; and
- Direct technical assistance, including business incubation, export assistance, market expansion, supply chain management, workforce development, or strategic planning.

C. Who is eligible to apply for ARC funds under this announcement?

1. Eligible Applicants:

Community-based organizations, public and private non-profit organizations, educational institutions, Local Development Districts (LDDs), local and state governments.

2. Service Area:

An applicant organization must limit its proposal to a scope of work designed to benefit the Appalachian Region (40 U.S.C. § 14102(a)(1)). Appalachia is defined by the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, as amended to include certain counties in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and all of West Virginia. A list of Appalachian counties can be found at: <http://www.arc.gov/counties>.

D. What is the cost sharing or matching share requirement for ARC funding?

Under this FFO, applicants must demonstrate a Matching Share from other Federal or non-Federal sources that must be available and committed to the project. The share of ARC assistance is determined according to ARC's County Economic Status Classification System. Projects may receive up to 80 percent of total cost, based on the relevant needs of the region in which the project will be located, as determined by ARC. Note that EDA, USDA, DRA, and other Federal Funds being sought under this FFO are ineligible for use as Matching Share for ARC funds.

To determine the match rate for an ARC multi-county project, visit the website www.arc.gov/accelerate. Determine the maximum ARC share for each of the counties within the project's service area (e.g. 80%, 70%, 50%, 30%, or 0%), add the percentages and divide by the number of counties. The resulting number is the maximum allowable ARC share of the project.

The Matching Share requirement may be met through in-kind contributions, consisting of contributions of personnel, space, equipment, or services. ARC will fairly evaluate all in-kind contributions, which must be eligible project costs, verifiable through audit, and meet applicable Federal cost principles and uniform administrative requirements. Funds from other Federal financial assistance awards are allowed only if authorized by statute

that allows such use, which may be determined by ARC's reasonable interpretation of such authority.

E. Verification of Matching Funds

Each applicant must provide a commitment letter from each applicable matching fund source demonstrating that the Matching Share is committed to the project for the project period, will be available as needed and is not or will not be conditioned or encumbered in any way that would preclude its use consistent with the requirements of ARC investment assistance.

Each letter should include a short description of the entity providing the Matching Share, or a portion thereof, the type of matching funds, and the amount of matching funds. Letters should be limited to one page and written on the organization's letterhead.

F. ARC Scope of Work

As identified in section VI.A.5, applicants must clearly identify a distinct scope of work for ARC funds. This scope of work must address gaps in the entrepreneurial ecosystem of a defined community or region within the ARC service area, and help to promote the growth and development of an identified industry cluster. The ARC scope of work must be distinct from EDA and USDA scopes of work. The funds for the ARC scope of work cannot also fund the scopes of work proposed for EDA and USDA funds. Applicants must clearly demonstrate that funds will not overlap across scopes of work.

G. ARC Performance Metrics

Applicants must integrate ARC activities and associated performance measures into the Integrated Work Plan as outlined in section VI.A.6. and Attachment A of this FFO, clearly showing how ARC funds will contribute to the measures listed.

H. ARC Application Submission Guidelines

In order to apply for ARC funds, applicants must send a copy of the Project Description described in section V.C.2 and the forms outlined in section I *below* **directly** to ARC. Applications must be submitted electronically as a PDF attachment to an email, directed to accelerate@arc.gov. ARC will not accept applications transmitted by facsimile nor are we currently accepting applications through www.grants.gov at this time. We will accept a proposal submitted in PDF format on a CD-ROM. For detailed instruction, visit www.arc.gov/accelerate.

I. ARC Forms

All applicants for ARC funds must include the following required forms for ARC, which are available at www.arc.gov/accelerate. Required ARC forms, along with other required application information outlined in section V.C. and this Appendix (Appendix C), should be submitted to accelerate@arc.gov.

- SF-424
- SF-424A
- SF-424B

J. ARC Reporting Requirements

Financial and performance progress reports, submitted by electronic means, are required from each ARC recipient in accordance with the grant agreement. The conditions of the grant award will be developed based on the project performance metrics for the associated ARC scope of work, as presented in the recipient's Project Description and Integrated Work Plan (*see* section VI.A.6 of this FFO). The recipient may also be required to provide qualitative and quantitative data on project progress and best practices, including through learning events or forums.

Other report guidelines can be found in the ARC Grant Administration Manual at <http://www.arc.gov/forms>.

K. Funding Restrictions

Ineligible use of funds:

- Using funds for recipient's general operating costs.
- Purchasing vehicles.
- Purchasing real estate.
- Grants to individuals.
- Construction (in any form).
- Funding a revolving loan fund (RLF).

Any activity otherwise disallowed by ARC's Project Guidelines, found at <http://www.arc.gov/images/newsroom/publications/guidlines/ARCProjectGuidlines.pdf>

Requirements to adhere to applicable administrative requirements and Federal cost principals are incorporated by reference into terms and conditions of each ARC award. Award recipients must follow the OMB circular appropriate for their type of organization. The A-102 Common Rule applicable to ARC projects may be found at: <http://www.arc.gov/publications/AdminReqforGrantstoStateLocalGovts.asp#partA>.

Appendix D. DRA Eligibility and Submission Guidelines

A. Overview

The Delta Regional Authority's rural communities programs address three of the four Congressionally mandated goals of the Authority: (1) Improve basic public infrastructure in distressed or isolated areas of distress; (2) Business development, with emphasis on entrepreneurship; and (3) Job training and employment-related education.

The projects funded through this program have improved local water and sewer systems; developed strategic plans for rural communities; provided entrepreneurship training to countless Delta residents; and provided job training to thousands, many of which have been employed immediately upon completion of training.

For complete DRA eligibility and submission instructions please go to www.dra.gov/econom-devel/accelerator.aspx.

B. What are DRA's eligibility requirements?

The DRA Federal funding program is available only to participating member states, local governments (city and county) and non-profit entities, for projects within the DRA member states' counties and parishes as defined by the Delta Regional Authority Act as amended. A list of DRA member states' counties and parishes can be found at: www.dra.gov/about-us/eight-state-map.aspx. Applicants are not required to be located in a rural area to apply. However, projects must impact rural communities.¹⁴

C. What are the DRA permitted activities?

DRA grant funds may be used to assist in the economic development of rural areas by providing technical assistance for business development and economic development planning. Grant funds may be used for, but are not limited to, the following purposes:

- Identify and analyze business opportunities that will use local rural materials or human resources. This includes opportunities in export markets, as well as feasibility and business plan studies;
- Identify, train, and provide technical assistance to existing or prospective rural entrepreneurs and managers;
- Establish business support centers and otherwise assist in the creation of new rural businesses;
- Conduct local community or multi-county economic development planning;
- Establish centers for training, technology, and trade that will provide training to rural businesses in the utilization of interactive communications technologies to develop international trade opportunities and markets;
- Conduct leadership development training of existing or prospective rural entrepreneurs and managers; or
- Pay reasonable fees and charges for professional services necessary to conduct the technical assistance, training, or planning functions.

¹⁴ Rural communities are defined by USDA as any area other than (i) a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants; and (ii) the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such city or town.

D. What is the cost sharing or matching share requirement for DRA funding?

Under this FFO there is no matching share requirement for DRA funds. However, DRA gives strong consideration to proposals that include matching funds. Note that DRA funds being sought under this FFO are ineligible for use as matching share for EDA, USDA, ARC, or other Federal funds sought under this FFO.

E. DRA Scope of Work

As identified in section VI.A.5 of this FFO, applicants must clearly identify a distinct scope of work for DRA funds. This scope of work must include a description of the proposed project, details of the proposed activities to be accomplished and timeframes for completion of each task, the number of months duration of the project, and the estimated time it will take from grant approval to beginning of project implementation. The DRA scope of work must be distinct from EDA or USDA activities. The funds for the DRA scope of work cannot also fund the scopes of work proposed for EDA or USDA funds. Applicants must clearly demonstrate that funds will not overlap across scopes of work. **See DRA's regulations at 7 C.F.R. 4284.638(a)(2)(iii) or go to www.dra.gov www.dra.gov/econom-devel/accelerator.aspx for additional requirements for the DRA scope of work.**

F. DRA Performance Metrics

All recipients of DRA funds are required to submit quarterly reports on their activities, which must address the progress achieved toward the accomplishments projected in the scope of work.

Performance metrics will be based on the actions proposed in the scope of work. Metrics should reflect the number of actions as a result of the grant investment as well as other appropriate economic development metrics. Applicants must integrate DRA activities and associated performance measures into the Integrated Work Plan as outlined in section VI.A.6. and Attachment A, clearly showing how DRA funds will contribute to the measures listed.

G. DRA Application Submission Guidelines

In order to apply for DRA funds, applicants must send DRA application materials **directly** to DRA. DRA will not accept applications transmitted by facsimile, courier, or postal mail. DRA is not currently accepting applications through www.grants.gov and will accept a proposal submitted through the Accelerate link at www.dra.gov by following these steps:

- Click Accelerate link on www.dra.gov main page;
- Under the heading “*Need to create an account for the DRA Grants site? Sign up here:*” fill in the requested information and click **Create Account**;
- Fill out all documents following instructions provided in the documents; and
- Click **Submit Forms**.

Or, applicants may save application materials as a single PDF file attached to an email and send to accelerate@dra.gov

H. DRA Forms

All forms required by DRA can be found at www.dra.gov, and must be submitted electronically as outlined in section G above. Required forms include:

- SF-424
- SF-424A
- SF-424B

I. DRA Award Notification

DRA will notify award winners by email or by postal mail. Upon approval of a mutually acceptable submission, a grant agreement will be sent to the recipient's business office by the DRA Director of Project Development & Management. The DRA grant agreement must be signed and returned without modification by an authorized representative of the recipient within 30 days after receipt.

USDA Instruction 4284-G is the regulation that administers this DRA grant and is available at www.rurdev.usda.gov/SupportDocuments/4284g.pdf. Requirements to adhere to applicable administrative requirements and Federal cost principles are incorporated by reference into the terms and conditions of each DRA award. Award recipients must follow the OMB circular appropriate for their type of organization.

J. DRA Reporting Requirements

Financial and performance progress reports, submitted by electronic means, are required from each recipient in accordance with the grant agreement. Quarterly report narratives shall include current information and reflect back on the tasks, timeline, and output and outcome measures described in the grant application and also included in the Integrated Work Plan as outlined in section VI.A.6. of the FFO and Attachment A to the FFO. Relevant information should include activities which occurred during the previous quarter, any problems or disruptions which prevented project goals from being met, how the grantee expects to overcome the issues and complete the project on time, and what tasks are expected to occur in the coming quarter. Quarters are divided by the calendar quarter and reports are due to DRA by the 15th of the month following the end of each quarter.

For complete information regarding applying for DRA funds, please go to www.dra.gov/econom-devel/accelerator.aspx.

Appendix E. Rural Jobs Accelerator Support Agencies

The section below briefly describes potential resources from each Support Agency. These resources include assistance of Federally-funded assets that can be leveraged in the region or integrated as a collaborative partnership to strengthen the region. Federal Support Teams, described in section II.B. of this FFO, will work with clusters selected for funding to link them to the resources available from Support Agencies.

- The **Denali Commission** will support winning proposals in Alaska with technical assistance and coordination with Federal, State and local resources. The Commission offers a suite of business and community planning tools and expertise for regions throughout the state of Alaska. Extensive networks with regional organizations and the State of Alaska will be brought together to enhance and strengthen innovation cluster and identify potential partners.

Link to Denali Commission website: www.denali.gov

- The **Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP)** will support winning regions with access to MEP's network of centers and partners and through the agency's scientific and technical resources. MEP centers offer access to market intelligence, trends, and data about manufacturing; outreach assistance to existing manufacturing firms in the region to get them involved in cluster initiatives (particularly small and medium sized manufacturers); technical assistance to companies in targeted clusters to enhance their competitiveness and accelerate growth opportunities (e.g., technology development, sustainability, exports, etc.) leading to job creation; and tracking of performance measures (e.g., jobs created or regained, cost savings, new sales, new investments).

NIST also offers collaborative opportunities with partners in a variety of ways designed to meet a broad spectrum of needs. NIST provides fair and equitable access to both its technical expertise and its designated user facilities. More formal collaborations can include Cooperative Research and Development Agreement, Guest Researcher Agreements, and use of dedicated facilities. More information to begin working with NIST and its dedicated facilities can be found online.

Link to NIST Website: www.nist.gov/public_affairs/factsheet/workwithnist.cfm

- The **Department of Commerce, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)** is committed to equipping the small business and rural communities with the tools and resources they need to protect their intellectual property (IP) and business brands by navigating the U.S. patent and trademark system. The Office recently launched its new IP Awareness Assessment tool and is expanding its pro-bono program nationally that will allow inventors and small enterprises to strategically leverage their products and services to expand business growth – while connecting with legal resources in their communities. The USPTO will support the Rural Jobs Accelerator program specifically by providing IP support to EDA Rural Jobs Accelerator winners and engage clusters selected for funding with external professionals and low-cost patenting and trademark tools – ultimately allowing them to grow their businesses in the marketplace faster.

Link to the USPTO Independent Inventor/Small Business website:

www.uspto.gov/inventors/independent/index.jsp

- The **Department of Education** will encourage the recipients of Federal education funds for career and technical education programs to support the otherwise allowable costs under the Federal education grant of the developing and improving career pathway programs and program of study models that would align with significant employment opportunities that would result from the awards under this FFO. Further, the Department of Education will encourage the recipients of funds for adult education programs to align their programs with, and support the otherwise allowable costs under the Federal education grant related to, such employment opportunities.

Link to U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education

(OVAE) Website: www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html

- The **Department of Energy** will review requests for technical assistance contained in proposals with a renewable energy or energy efficiency component and provide requested assistance based on availability. DOE has the ability to provide a variety of services including analysis, evaluation, and other technical support, that can encourage innovation on the part of manufacturers and other businesses. DOE works with partners at a network of laboratories across the nation to further scientific innovation and energy independence.

Link to DOE's website: www.energy.gov/public-services

- The **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities created a capacity building program in 2011 to support sustainable communities and develop online materials to support work by communities to enhance public engagement including scenario planning, data analysis, Geographic Information System and performance measurement; enhancing the quality and breadth of strategies to improve social equity and inclusion; implementation assistance including infrastructure and affordable housing financing mechanisms; and a special tract focused on the unique capacity building needs of rural, tribal and small town communities.

Link to HUD Website: www.hud.gov/sustainability

- The **Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA)** will provide technical assistance for proposals targeting occupations and/or industries that have high-growth potential for which employers are using H1-B visas to hire foreign workers, and the related activities necessary to support such education, training, and job placement activities. ETA's grants are designed to raise the technical skill levels of American workers so they can obtain or upgrade employment in high-growth industries and/or occupations. ETA will offer resources covering a range of training strategies including but not limited to: on-the-job training; classroom occupational training; contextualized learning; distance learning; and customized training, including incumbent worker training, for particular employers or groups of employers.

Link to ETA website: <http://doleta.gov/business/>

- The **Environmental Protection Agency** will support the selected regions through the E3 (Economy, Energy and the Environment) framework. E3 will support regions that require direct technical assistance and collaborative support at the Federal, state and local levels. E3, created during the Obama Administration, is an up-and-running strategic community-based framework that can be customized by local leaders to meet local needs. The Federal agencies which support the E3 framework include the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership program, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Safety Administration, the Department of Energy's Advanced Manufacturing Office, the Small Business Administration, and soon, the U.S. Department of Agriculture. With the support of these agencies and their constituencies at the local level, E3 brings together technical experts from multiple sources to help tune-up companies within a given cluster or region. E3 tunes-ups improve productivity and resource efficiency so that each participating company spends less money on managing waste and more money to hire and retain workers and invest in new technologies and market.

Link to E3 website: www.e3.gov

- The **Small Business Administration (SBA)** with its partners SCORE, Women Business Centers and Small Business Development Centers stimulates sustained job creation across the United States by providing a foundation for nationwide access to high-quality counseling, training and guidance directly to would-be and in-business entrepreneurs, particularly those in underserved segments and communities where resources to help overcome business skill gaps are not as prevalent.

Link to SBA's Counseling and Training Website:
www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/counseling-training

Appendix F. Contact Information

The **Rural Jobs Accelerator** website at www.rurdev.usda.gov/RuralJobsAccelerator.html contains additional information, including an extensive list of frequently asked questions. The Rural Jobs Accelerator website also includes information that prospective applicants may find useful, including in-depth materials on regional clusters. In addition, you may contact the appropriate EDA Regional Office or USDA Rural Development State Office contact listed below for technical questions.

A. EDA Contact Information

Applicants should direct all technical questions regarding the EDA program to the appropriate EDA Regional Office contact listed below. EDA's website at www.eda.gov contains additional information on EDA and its programs.

| EDA Regional Office Contact: | States Served: |
|--|---|
| Austin Regional Office Mitchell Harrison: (512) 381-8175 | Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas |
| Atlanta Regional Office Lauren Dupuis: (404) 730-3035 | Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee |
| Chicago Regional Office Robin Bush: (312) 353-8143 x146 | Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin |
| Denver Regional Office Jenny Benz: (303) 844-5363 | Colorado, Iowa (excluding Muscatine and Scott counties), Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming |
| Philadelphia Regional Office Ed Hummel: (215) 597-6767 | Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands |
| Seattle Regional Office Shirley Kelly: (907) 271-2272 | Alaska, Arizona, American Samoa, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nevada, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Republic of Palau, and Washington |

B. USDA Contact Information

Applicants should direct all technical questions regarding the USDA program to the appropriate Rural Development State Office contact listed below.

| USDA Rural Development State Office Contacts Note: Telephone numbers listed are not toll-free. | |
|---|---|
| Alabama State Office (334) 279-3400 TDD (334) 279-3495 Allen Bowen | Alaska State Office (907) 761-7778 TDD (907) 761-8905 Merlaine Kruse |
| Arizona State Office (602) 280-8747 TDD (602) 280-8705 Leonard Gradillas | Arkansas State Office (501) 301-3265 TDD (501) 301-3200 Stephen Lagasse |
| California State Office (530) 792-5810 TDD (530) 792-5848 Janice Waddell | Colorado State Office (720)544-2927 TDD (720)544-2976 Jerry Tamlin |
| Connecticut Served by Massachusetts State Office | Delaware and Maryland State Office (302) 857-3627 TDD (302) 857-3585 Denise MacLeish |
| Florida & Virgin Islands State Office Gainesville, FL 32614-7010 (352) 338-3485 TDD (352) 338-3499 Michael Langston | Georgia State Office (706) 546-2171 TDD (706) 546-2034 Jerry M. Thomas |
| Guam Served by Hawaii State Office | Hawaii, Guam, & Western Pacific Territories State Office (808) 933-8317 TDD (808) 933-8321 Alton Kimura |
| Idaho State Office (208) 378-5617 TDD (208) 378-5600 David A. Flesher | Illinois State Office (217) 403-6209 TDD (217) 403-6240 Michael Wallace |
| Indiana State Office (317) 290-3100 (ext. 407) TDD (317) 290-3343 Rochelle Owen | Iowa State Office (515) 284-4459 TDD (515) 284-4858 Karla Peiffer |

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| <p>Kansas State Office (785) 271-2728 TDD (785) 271-2767 Kent Evans</p> | <p>Kentucky State Office (859) 224-7415 TDD (859) 224-7300 Vernon Brown</p> |
| <p>Louisiana State Office (318) 473-7965 TDD (318) 473-7920 Richard Hoffpauir</p> | <p>Maine State Office (207) 990-9124 TDD (207) 942-7331 Ron Lambert</p> |
| <p>Maryland Served by Delaware State Office</p> | <p>Massachusetts, Connecticut, & Rhode Island State Office (413) 253-4300 TDD (413) 253-7068 Daniel R. Beaudette</p> |
| <p>Michigan State Office (517) 324-5208 TDD (517) 337-6795 Christine M. Maxwell</p> | <p>Minnesota State Office (651) 602-7800 TDD (651) 602-3799 Terry Louwagie</p> |
| <p>Mississippi State Office (601) 965-4326 TDD (601) 965-5850 Darnella Smith-Murray</p> | <p>Missouri State Office (573) 876-0976 TDD (573) 876-9480 Clark Thomas</p> |
| <p>Montana State Office (406) 585-2520 TDD (406) 585-2545 Steve Troendle</p> | <p>Nebraska State Office (402) 437-5559 TDD (402) 437-5551 Denise Brosius-Meeks</p> |
| <p>Nevada State Office (775) 887-1222 (ext. 113) TDD 7-1-1 Cheryl Couch</p> | <p>New Hampshire Served by Vermont State Office</p> |
| <p>New Jersey State Office (856) 787-7753 Kenneth Drewes</p> | <p>New Mexico State Office (505) 761-4954 TDD (505) 761-4938 Martha Torrez</p> |
| <p>New York State Office (315) 477-6400 TDD (315) 477-6447 Gail Giannotta</p> | <p>North Carolina State Office (919) 873-2063 TDD (919) 873-2003 William A. Hobbs</p> |

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|---|--|
| North Dakota State Office (701) 530-2029 TDD (701) 530-2113 | Oklahoma State Office (405) 742-1061 TDD (405) 742-1007 Brian Wiles |
| Ohio State Office (614) 255-2391 TDD (614) 255-2554 David M. Douglaz | Pennsylvania State Office (717) 237-2281 TDD (717) 237-2281 Susanne Gantz |
| Oregon State Office (503) 414-3362 TDD (503) 414-3387 Sam Goldstein | Rhode Island Served by Massachusetts State Office |
| Puerto Rico State Office (787) 766-5095 TDD (787) 766-5332 Nereida Rodriguez | South Dakota State Office (605) 352-1145 TDD (605) 352-1147 Doug Roehl |
| South Carolina State Office (803) 253-3425 TDD (803) 765-5697 Jesse T. Risher | Texas State Office (254) 742-9787 TDD (254) 742-9749 Michael B. Canales |
| Tennessee State Office Suite 300 (615) 783-1345 TDD (615) 783-1397 Keith Head | Vermont State Office (802) 828-6033 TDD (802) 223-6365 Rhonda Shippee |
| Utah State Office (801) 524-4326 TDD (801) 524-3309 Debra Meyer | Virginia State Office (804) 287-1577 TDD (804) 287-1753 Kent Ware |
| Virgin Islands Served by Florida State Office | Western Pacific Territories Served by Hawaii State Office |
| Washington State Office (360) 704-7737 Peter McMillin | Wisconsin State Office (715) 345-7615 TDD (715) 345-7610 Brian Deaner |
| West Virginia State Office (304) 284-4886 TDD (304) 284-4836 Janna Lowery | Washington, DC (202) 205-9685 Shirley J. Stevenson |

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| Wyoming State Office Federal Building, Room 1005 (307) 233-6700 TDD (307) 233-6719 Alana Cannon | |
|---|--|

C. ARC Contact Information

David R. Hughes
(202) 884-7740
accelerate@arc.gov

D. DRA Contact Information

Kemp Morgan
(662) 624-8600
kmorgan@dra.gov