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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

for

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

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- **Federal Agency Names**: Economic Development Administration (EDA), Department of Commerce; Employment Training Administration (ETA), Department of Labor; and Small Business Administration (SBA).

- **Funding Opportunity Title**: *The Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge*

- **Announcement Type**: Initial announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) dated May 20, 2011

- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Numbers**: 11.307, Economic Adjustment Assistance; 17.268, H-1B Job Training Grants; 59.007, 7J Technical Assistance Program.

- **Dates**: *Letter of Intent*. Applicants are requested to submit the letter of intent available on http://www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/jobsandinnovationchallenge by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on June 10, 2011. A letter of intent is strongly suggested, but failure to submit a letter of intent will not disqualify an applicant that submits the full application as outlined in this FFO. *See* section V.B of this announcement for more information and instructions.

  Application Submission. The deadline for receipt of applications is July 7, 2011. Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET). <u>Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding</u>. The date and time that an application will be deemed to be electronically received will be determined in accordance with the electronic submission instructions provided at www.grants.gov for this FFO. Applicants are advised to carefully read the application and submission information provided in section V of this announcement.

  Funding Opportunity Description: This FFO announces the availability of funding for the Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge (also referred to in this announcement as the Jobs Accelerator). Regions across the nation can compete for complementary Federal resources that will be targeted to address the gaps and opportunities specific to their self-identified, high-potential industry clusters. The Jobs Accelerator leverages existing financial and technical resources from 16 Federal agencies and bureaus to support the development of approximately 20 high-growth industry clusters selected through a competitive inter-agency grant process. Funds awarded to the winning applicants can be used to achieve measurable outcomes such as commercialization, business formation, expansion of existing businesses, job creation, and exports. Total proposed funding for the Jobs Accelerator is approximately $33 million in direct Federal support from funding agencies, subject to the availability of appropriations. The funding agencies are the Department of Commerce's Economic

Development Administration, the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, and, subject to the availability of appropriations, the Small Business Administration. This collaboration is designed to allow applicants to submit one application to access three complementary Federal sources to comprehensively support cluster development, and applicants must apply for all three funding sources available under this FFO. Awards are expected to range from approximately $1.5 million to $2.2 million per cluster through the three funding agencies, and matching funds are required for a portion of the funding.

- **Informational Session**: For prospective applicants, the EDA, ETA and SBA will hold an information teleconference on June 7, 2011. Please visit the Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge website for the teleconference registration requirements and protocols, http://www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/jobsandinnovationchallenge.

- **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 this FFO. *See* section VII.A of this FFO for award notification information.

- **Designated Contact**: All questions must be submitted via email to JobsandInnovationChallenge@eda.doc.gov.

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

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I. Program Objectives

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

The Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge (also referred to in this announcement as the Jobs Accelerator) is designed to help regions achieve the demonstrated benefits of collaborative, cluster-based regional development. This initiative represents the implementation of Administration policy priorities to accelerate bottom-up innovation in urban, rural and blended geographies, as opposed to imposing one size fits all solutions. The Jobs Accelerator also meets Administration goals for smarter use of existing government resources through reduction of siloed Federal programs and promotion of more coordinated Federal funding opportunities that offer more efficient access to Federal resources.

The objectives of the Jobs Accelerator are to:

- Accelerate the formation of new high-growth businesses and growth of existing businesses;
- Accelerate the creation of high-wage jobs;
- Advance the commercialization of research, including Federally-funded research;
- Support the deployment of new processes, new technologies, and new products to grow sales and create jobs;
- Enhance the capacity of small businesses in the cluster, including small and disadvantaged businesses;
- Increase exports and business interaction with international buyers and suppliers;

- Develop the skilled workforce needed to support growing clusters; and
- Ensure diverse workforce participation in clusters through outreach, training and the creation of career pathways.

B. What are the benefits of cluster-based economic development?

Experience has taught us that building on a region's economic strengths is the most effective strategy for economic development. Clusters are networks of interconnected firms and supporting institutions that accelerate innovation, business formation, and job creation. The Administration recognizes regional innovation clusters (RICs) as building blocks of American competitiveness.[1] RICs provide a globally proven approach for developing regional economic prosperity. The Jobs Accelerator supports the development and implementation of these locally driven economic development strategies by coordinating Federal resources to support the development of self-identified, high-growth clusters and accelerate the benefits of RIC-based economic development, including business formation and expansion, high-wage job growth, increased exports, and higher incomes for all residents.

II. Funding Opportunity Overview

A. The Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge

The Jobs Accelerator is an inter-agency funding opportunity designed by the Taskforce for the Advancement of Regional Innovation Clusters (TARIC), in partnership with other Federal agencies and bureaus. TARIC recognizes that regions can benefit from coordinated, flexible, regionally-customized investments with stronger goals and metrics that link economic development, workforce development, small business development, and the inclusion of historically underrepresented and excluded communities. Through the coordination of Federal resources, the Jobs Accelerator supports the development of self-identified clusters that demonstrate high-growth potential. The participating agencies and bureaus in the Jobs Accelerator intend to offer a combination of funding and technical assistance to approximately 20 clusters in a variety of industries across the United States. Total proposed funding for the Jobs Accelerator is approximately $33 million in direct Federal funding, subject to the availability of appropriations. The combined grant total from the three funding agencies is expected to range from approximately $1.5 million to $2.2 million per cluster, and matching funds are required for a portion of the funding (*see* section IV). In addition, multiple Federal agencies and bureaus are committing technical assistance to provide streamlined support to selected clusters for qualifying projects under current appropriation authority.

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[1] The terms "regional innovation cluster" and "cluster" are used interchangeably for the purposes of this FFO.

B. Participating Agencies

Recognizing that the U.S. Government, through its many Federal agencies and bureaus, has financial and technical 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 RICs. The Federal agencies and bureaus participating in the Jobs Accelerator are:

- Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Department of Commerce
    - Economic Development Administration (EDA)
    - International Trade Administration (ITA)
    - Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)
    - National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP)
- Department of Defense (DoD)
- Department of Education (ED)
- Department of Energy (DOE)
- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Department of Labor
    - Employment and Training Administration (ETA)
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Department of Treasury (Treasury)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- National Science Foundation (NSF)
- Small Business Administration (SBA)

1. Funding Agencies

The EDA, ETA, and SBA (each a Funding Agency, and collectively, the Funding Agencies) are offering funding, subject to the availability of appropriations, for the Jobs Accelerator through separate funding sources. EDA will invest up to $10 million in funds from the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program. ETA will invest up to $20 million from the H-1B Technical Skills Training program. SBA will invest up to $3 million in technical assistance through the 7(j) Technical Assistance Program. The intent of the Jobs Accelerator is to support projects that integrate the different participating agency resources to strengthen the competitiveness of clusters. Funding Agencies intend to make their individual awards to the same approximately 20 clusters selected under this competition.

2. Partner Agencies

Clusters selected for funding may receive specialized technical assistance or other resources from the Partner Agencies (individually, a Partner Agency and collectively, the Partner Agencies), which will offer assistance from existing programs and initiatives,

provided the clusters meet agency-specific eligibility requirements. The section below briefly describes the resources from each Partner Agency. These resources include technical assistance or Federally-funded assets that can be leveraged in the cluster or integrated as a collaborative partnership to strengthen the cluster. Clusters are encouraged to describe how they would take advantage of these resources in the Technical Proposal (*see* section V.D.2). Federal Support Teams, described in section II.C, will work with clusters selected for funding to link them to the resources available from Partner Agencies.

- **DoD** will support this initiative by providing clusters with assistance to facilitate the development of innovative technology to meet DoD operational requirements. Efforts will include:
  (a) The Assistant Secretary of Defense, Research & Engineering (ASD, R&E)/Office of Technology Transition (OTT) will assist technology clusters in identifying appropriate DoD program and technology development organizations with technologies and subject matter expertise to support technology acceleration and transition. ASD, R&E/OTT will facilitate contacts between clusters and DoD Federally Funded Research and Development Centers, University-Affiliated Research Centers, and DoD Laboratories.
  (b) The Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC) will provide clusters with access to a central repository of DoD operational needs and customer information. Through DTIC access sites, cluster members will be able to find information about DoD needs, business opportunities, and points of contact for further information.

- **DOE** will assist by evaluating those clusters attempting to solve specific energy challenges by convening scientific and engineering talent to review such projects to ensure that they meet the stated objectives of the Jobs Accelerator. DOE will also provide selected clusters with information on how to leverage existing DOE resources and technology-specific expertise, and, where applicable, introduce awardees to the appropriate resources at DOE's National Laboratories. DOE believes innovation is essential to America's economic competitiveness. To meet the challenges we face in the energy sector, DOE continues its strong commitment to a coordinated strategy for research and development across the government. To that end, DOE will support efforts in this program to ensure sound science is at the core of their claims; DOE increasingly emphasizes cross-cutting initiatives to link science throughout the department, specifically with energy and national security programs in order to deliver results to the American taxpayer.

- **DOT** will provide technical assistance to winning applicants on the structure of the Federal transportation program, how to best integrate transportation planning efforts with regional cluster activities, and how Federal transportation funding can be aligned with the goals of the RICs.

- **ED** encourages 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, ED encourages 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. ED awards funds to States under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (the Perkins Act) and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998. To successfully leverage funds under, for example, the Perkins Act, the selected regions should develop collaborative relationships with a State and its subrecipients that provide career and technical education, such as local schools, community colleges, and, in some parts of the country, career and technical education centers. Through such collaborations, the selected regions could help ensure that the secondary and postsecondary career and technical programs in their regions provide ready candidates for employment or further job-specific training that would meet the needs of the selected regions in commercializing innovative products and services to be developed under this FFO.

- **EPA** will support selected regions by providing access to technical assistance and, possibly, competitive funding opportunities. EPA will provide additional support through outreach to existing EPA assistance recipients, to help them align their program implementation with those of the regional cluster initiatives, where appropriate. Such support will come from a number of programs/initiatives at EPA. To the extent that investments encourage assessment, cleanup and subsequent reuse of brownfields sites, EPA's network of four Brownfields-oriented technical assistance grantees (the Technical Assistance to Brownfields, or TAB grant program) can be used to help these communities in a variety of brownfields planning and technical assistance activities, including coordinating "visioning" efforts, and convening interested stakeholders related to specific sites—critical first-step pre-development activities. EPA can also make available its Brownfields and Land Revitalization Technical Support Center, which can assist communities involved with preparing brownfields sites for productive reuse, through activities such as evaluating strategies to streamline the site investigation and cleanup process, and reviewing and disseminating information about complex technology options and innovative practices. EPA can also provide staff expertise or leverage its role as a leader in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities (with HUD and DOT) to help economic clusters' partner agencies make more effective and efficient infrastructure and related investments in the communities in which they are collaborating, to improve the environmental, economic, and social outcomes from those decisions. Where appropriate and as resources are available, various technical assistance programs may also be deployed to help local officials in these communities make more informed choices about the built environment associated with the economic clusters. EPA also administers several grant programs oriented toward

coordinating community-level environmental efforts with "green" economic development activities. EPA can help leverage and integrate existing grantees into specific regional cluster initiatives to expand the scope and scale of the environmental drivers for sustainable economic development.

- **HHS**, as part of the Beacon Community Collaborative Agreement Program (Beacon Community Program), will connect selected RICs, where possible, to currently existing sustainable community planning activities. The Beacon Community Program was established in early 2010 to bring communities a new level of health care quality and efficiency. Seventeen communities across the United States were selected to showcase how health information technology can be used to improve health outcomes and reduce the costs associated with healthcare. These cohorts represent small and large regions, urban and rural populations, and each of these communities represents a unique mix of stakeholders, often including regional government leadership, universities, large employers, and large health systems. The program stipulates that its success is predicated upon the collaborative efforts of all of their community stakeholders. Given the collaboration already in place to ensure the success of the Beacon Program, HHS encourages that where possible, RICs partner with Beacon Program awardees to facilitate the sustainable creation of jobs and regional economic growth. In addition, where this collaboration has potential to exist, HHS will provide access to the resources being used in the Beacon Program to support the efforts of the regional innovation cluster.

- **HUD,** as part of the Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities, will connect selected RICs, where possible, to currently existing Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grantees and their efforts to conduct integrated, comprehensive, place-based planning activities that link to land use, transportation, economic development, environment and equity and opportunity goals of regions. In 2010, 45 regions were selected as part of the inaugural cohort of grantees across a range of rural, small, and large metropolitan regions. Each regional planning effort is aligned to a set of six livability principles that form the foundation of the interagency partnership. Core to those efforts is the notion of increasing economic competitiveness and job creation. HUD's linkage to the Jobs Accelerator is an acknowledgement of the importance of regional economic development and place-based policymaking of the Administration and that regional economic prosperity requires regions to strategically link their transportation, housing, land use, workforce and economic development investments. Regions that are Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grantees will be eligible for specialized technical assistance and capacity building to help those regions weave together their regional innovation cluster and place-making strategies to insure that the efforts are sustainable, equitable, and good for the environment. That additional assistance will be provided to the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grantees in order to connect their efforts to selected regions under the Jobs Accelerator initiative in their region.

- **ITA** will provide access to market intelligence, trends, and data and technical assistance on exporting (e.g., identifying high priority export markets, identifying and connecting foreign buyers to the cluster, advising on intellectual property protection in foreign markets, etc.).

- **MBDA**, consistent with its ongoing mission, will support efforts to identify minority-owned businesses for exports and other business opportunities related to the regional clusters selected under the Jobs Accelerator. MBDA will also support efforts to provide strategic business consulting to minority-owned firms to further their competitiveness and growth opportunities leading to job creation in selected regional clusters, as well as to track job creation measures as a result of activities supported by MBDA's staff and its network of business development centers. To leverage funding provided to MBDA's network of business enterprise centers, applicants should consider developing collaborative relationships and partnering with eligible operators of MBDA centers. MBDA centers provide minority-owned businesses strategic business consulting, export assistance, and access to financial and procurement opportunities leading to job creation.

- **NIST MEP** will support selected regions through its network of MEP centers and partners with 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/retained, cost savings, new sales, new investments).

- **NSF** will be pleased to consider Jobs Accelerator awardees for supplemental funding in pertinent NSF competitive award programs if such awardees are currently funded NSF award recipients (such as consortia including Engineering Research Centers, Industry/University Cooperative Research Centers, Partnerships for Innovation, Science and Technology Centers, Nanoscale Science and Engineering Centers, Materials Research Science and Engineering Centers) as lead or as co-applicants. NSF funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering through grants and cooperative agreements to colleges, universities, K-12 school systems, businesses, informal science organizations, and other research organizations throughout the U.S. NSF supports research through existing programs, which can be accessed at the NSF website, www.nsf.gov. Proposals submitted to NSF will be reviewed in accordance with the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide, available at http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf11001/nsf11_1.pdf.

- **Treasury** will support, where relevant and feasible, the selected regions by providing information on the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund's resources and facilitating introductions to CDFI participating in

the Fund's grant and technical assistance programs and to community development entities receiving allocations of New Markets Tax Credit investment authority. A key aspect of Treasury's mission is to create economic and job opportunities by promoting the conditions that enable economic growth and stability at home and abroad. Treasury's CDFI Fund helps promote access to capital and local economic growth in urban and rural low-income communities across the nation through monetary awards and the allocation of tax credit investment authority. These resources advance: economic development (job creation, business development, and commercial real estate development); affordable housing (housing development and homeownership); and community development financial services.

- **USDA** will support RICs through rural economic development programs and technical resources. USDA has loan and grant opportunities for new business development or expansion, revolving loan funds, workforce development, renewable energy, broadband, water and sewer systems, and community facilities, such as libraries and hospitals. In addition, USDA Rural Development has more than 600 offices across rural America that can help provide technical assistance to RICs. USDA also has research programs that could be leveraged for regional innovations, including the Agricultural Technology Innovation Partnership that commercialize USDA Agricultural Research Service-developed technologies and the Small Business Innovation Research program, which provides grants to science-based small business firms to stimulate technological innovation and promote economic growth.

Applicants are expected to describe strong existing public-private partnerships in the Technical Proposal, including existing Federal, State, and local resources (*see* section V.D.2). In addition to the Partner Agency resources described above, applicants are encouraged to propose how they will leverage and align with other Federally-funded assets that are appropriate for the cluster to effect broader economic impact. For further description of Federally-Funded Research & Development Assets, go to the Federal Assets tab at http://www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/jobsandinnovationchallenge.

C. Federal Support Teams

Each cluster selected for funding will have the opportunity to receive support and technical assistance from the Federal Support Team in their region. Federal Support Teams will be made up of Federal staff from regional offices of Funding Agencies and Partner Agencies.

The Federal Support Teams will help to ensure that successful applicants and partners are aware of and can access available Federal resources, such as those for economic development, business development, workforce development, educational resources, and export assistance. An important function of the Federal Support Teams will be to provide coordinated Federal support to clusters, and to identify where processes and requirements can be improved.

D. Inclusive Development

One of the objectives of the Jobs Accelerator is to encourage members of historically underrepresented and excluded communities to participate in and benefit from cluster investments and cluster growth. Historically underrepresented and excluded communities are areas or groups that face some or all of the following socioeconomic challenges: blight; underinvestment; a high concentration of low income or unemployed individuals; high poverty; high unemployment; discrimination in housing, credit, or the labor market; environmental or natural resource degradation; and mass layoffs. The make-up of these communities may vary in different regions, and can include ethnic and racial minorities including Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Black or African Americans, Latinos or Hispanics, Asian-Americans or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders; women; veterans; and persons with disabilities.

The inclusion of historically underrepresented and excluded communities in cluster activities is crucial for not only the direct benefit those communities can receive through new education, training and good job opportunities, but also for the long-term competitiveness of communities, regions, and the nation. As workers increase their skills, they become participants and contributors to regional innovation and competitiveness. These same workers may become entrepreneurs, business owners, and leaders in a sustainable cluster network. In both urban and rural areas, historically underrepresented and excluded communities may be best poised to drive revitalization through drawing on a rich history of entrepreneurship and serving as positive examples to others.

After analyzing the growth of 74 U.S. metropolitan regions in the 1980s, Manuel Pastor at the University of Southern California found that greater equality within regions (measured by poverty reductions in central cities) corresponds with stronger regional economic growth (measured by growth in per capita income).[2] Similarly, a study of 118 metropolitan areas done by Randall Eberts, George Erickcek and Jack Kleinhenz of the Upjohn Institute for the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank showed positive correlations between metropolitan growth and racial inclusion and assimilation of immigrants into the economy mainstream of the community.[3]

Many references to inclusiveness and inclusive development are found throughout this FFO. The intent is to ensure cluster activities leverage all regional resources, generate opportunities for everyone, and lead to sustainable economic growth.

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[2] Manuel Pastor, et al. *Regions that Work: How Cities and Suburbs Can Grow Together* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

[3] Randall Eberts, George Erickcek, and Jack Kleinhenz, "Dashboard Indicators for the Northeast Ohio Economy: Prepared for the Fund for Our Economic Future." Working Paper 06-05 (Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, 2006).

III. Award Information

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

This collaboration offers applicants the opportunity to submit one application to access three funding sources that comprehensively support cluster development. Funding Agencies intend to make their individual awards to the same 20 clusters selected under this competition. Awards will be made only to the extent that funds are available. The funding amounts referenced in this competitive solicitation are subject to the availability of funds at the time of the award. The Funding Agencies will not be held responsible, individually or collectively, for application preparation costs. Publication of this FFO does not obligate the Funding Agencies to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds.

Subject to the availability of funding, three sources of funds are available under this FFO:

- **EDA** is making approximately $10 million available for the Jobs Accelerator 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 grant awards ranging from $250,000 to $1 million per cluster. 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.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/Lawsreg.xml. 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.

- **ETA** is making available approximately $20 million in H-1B Technical Skills Training Grant funds for training and related employment activities to develop a skilled workforce for the cluster. ETA expects to make approximately 20 awards, with individual grant awards of up to $1,000,000. This program is authorized under section 414(c) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 2916a).

- **SBA** intends to make approximately $3 million available for technical assistance support for eligible small businesses through the 7(j) Technical Assistance Program, subject to the availability of appropriations. This program is authorized under section 7(j) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. § 638(j)(l)). SBA expects to make approximately 20 awards, with individual grant awards of up to $150,000.

Applications must propose <u>one project with three distinct activities</u>, with each activity funded separately by the three sources of funds available under this FFO. Applicants cannot request or use multiple funding sources available under this FFO to fund the same activities. For example, the project will propose separate activities for EDA, ETA and SBA funds. The funds for the EDA activities cannot also fund the activities proposed for ETA or SBA funds. Applicants must clearly demonstrate that funds will not overlap across activities.

An application for funds under this FFO must be submitted by an organization or a team of organizations (referred to here as the application team) that is individually or collectively eligible to receive funding from all three Funding Agencies under this FFO. Any application team member that is eligible for more than one funding source may be the recipient of multiple sources of funding. For example, the application team may include:

- One organization that is eligible to receive all three sources of funds because it meets the requirements of all three Funding Agencies and the workforce, business and economic development objectives required in this FFO;
- A team of two organizations, with one organization receiving two sources of funds and the other organization receiving one source of funds; or
- A team of three organizations, where each organization is eligible for a different source of funds.

If awarded, each application team member will be responsible for the source of funds they requested and are eligible to receive. This includes financial management, communicating with the granting agency, and complying with award requirements. The application team members may work with partners to submit an application and perform the Scope of Work, but the application team member remains solely responsible for application completeness and funds received.[4] Each application must be submitted by the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) on behalf of the application team (*see* section V.E). The application team must collectively apply for the three sources of funds available under this FFO. If the application team does not apply for one or more sources of funds available under this FFO, the application will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed.

B. What is the project period?

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

- **EDA**: The project period for economic development assistance through EDA is expected to last up to 24 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

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[4] Please note, as stated in sections IV.A, B and C, EDA permits organizations to apply as a consortium. ETA and SBA require only one grantee organization per application.

the Scope of Work, as determined by EDA and expressed in written notice. EDA expects that all projects will proceed efficiently and expeditiously and encourages investments with demonstrated capacity to be implemented quickly and effectively, accelerating positive economic impacts.

- **ETA**: The project period for H-1B Technical Skills Training Grant funds provided by DOL will be up to 48 months from the date of execution of the award documents. This project period includes all necessary start-up and implementation activities. Applicants should plan to fully expend grant funds during the period of performance while ensuring full transparency and accountability for all expenditures.

- **SBA**: For 7(j) Technical Assistance Program grant funds, awards will be made for a base project period not to exceed 24 (twenty-four) months, subject to the availability of appropriations. SBA may, at its discretion, exercise one additional option year, subject to the availability of funds, and subject to a recipient organization's compliance with the terms of the Small Business Act, applicable regulations, this FFO and the cooperative agreement.

IV. Eligibility Information

A. What are EDA's eligibility requirements?

1. Overview

EDA's mission is to lead the Federal economic development agenda by promoting 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 chronic high unemployment and low per capita income to foster an environment conducive to economic growth and job creation.

EDA's Economic Adjustment Assistance Program is designed to provide distressed communities and regions with comprehensive and flexible solutions to a wide variety of economic impacts. The program helps support local and regional economic development efforts to establish a foundation that builds upon two key economic drivers—innovation and regional collaboration. Innovation is the key to global competitiveness, the creation of new and better jobs, a resilient economy, and the attainment of national economic goals. Regional collaboration is essential for economic recovery and growth because regions are the centers of competition in the new global economy, and those regions whose stakeholders work together will fare better than those that do not. When innovation and collaboration are infused into America's communities and regions, they create and retain higher-wage and sustainable jobs, leverage the flow of private capital, encourage economic development, and strengthen America's ability to compete in the global marketplace. EDA encourages its rural and urban partners around the country to develop initiatives

that advance new ideas and creative approaches to address rapidly evolving economic conditions. The Economic Adjustment Assistance Program under this FFO will help communities and regions understand their current economic situation, plan a way forward, and achieve their economic goals.

2. What are the permitted activities?

Successful applicants may use EDA funds for innovation inputs that foster regional competitiveness or activities determined appropriate by the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development. 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.

The Economic Adjustment Assistance Program is designed to respond flexibly to pressing economic development and recovery issues and challenges faced by regions. Examples of how EDA funding can be used for cluster development might include, but are not limited to, providing funding to any of the following:

- A District Organization (defined in 13 C.F.R. § 300.3) to launch a regional innovation cluster strategy that supports or provides technical assistance to smaller manufacturers to promote the growth of a competitive field within a cluster, stem job losses in manufacturing businesses, support high-growth entrepreneurship, and promote the successful industry diversification of the region's economy;

- A city 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, promote entrepreneurship among historically underrepresented and excluded communities, and helping the cluster identify new markets and facilitate sales and exports of products and services; or

- A university to support technology transfer, deploy new processes, and accelerate the commercialization of research.

EDA funding under this FFO cannot be used for a revolving loan fund or construction.

3. Who is eligible to apply 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.[5]

The eligibility of the 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 applicant applying as a consortium must be: (1) formed in accordance with any 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 submit questions to JobsandInnovationChallenge@eda.doc.gov.

EDA cannot provide assistance directly or indirectly to individuals or to for-profit entities.

Under the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program, EDA may consider funding a project located in a region that, on the date EDA receives the application, meets one (or more) 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).

The following examples help to explain what may constitute a "Special Need":

a) Substantial out-migration or population loss;
b) Underemployment; that is, employment of workers at less than full-time or at less skilled tasks than their training or abilities permit;

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[5] 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).

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.

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 ensure additional project impact. Generally, the amount of EDA assistance may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the project. 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).

The Matching Share requirement 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 audit, and meet applicable Federal cost principles and uniform administrative requirements. Funds from other Federal financial assistance awards are considered matching share funds only if authorized by statute that allows 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. Upon acceptance of an award, what are the post-approval requirements?

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 not be used to 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 will consider 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 benefiting 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. What are ETA's eligibility requirements?

1. Overview

The H-1B Technical Skills Training Grant Program is designed to provide education, training, and job placement assistance in occupations and/or industries that have high-growth potential for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers, and the related activities necessary to support such education, training, and placement activities. H-1B training grants are financed by a user fee paid by employers to bring foreign workers into the United States under the H-1B nonimmigrant visa program.

The program is intended to raise the technical skill levels of American workers so they can obtain or upgrade employment in high-growth industries and/or occupations. Over time, these education and training programs will help businesses reduce their use of skilled foreign professionals permitted to work in the United States on a temporary basis under the H-1B visa program. While the occupations at H-1B skill levels are generally defined as requiring a bachelor's degree or comparable experience, education and training conducted through this program is not limited to skill levels commensurate with 4-year undergraduate degrees, and can include the preparation of workers for employment along career pathways for a broad range of occupations and/or industries in which employers are using H–1B visas to hire foreign workers. For example, a worker with a high school diploma and some college credit could start on an industry-defined career pathway in medical technology which results in a credential and placement in a clinical assistant occupation. The worker could then follow this pathway to progress toward the goal of a more advanced credential and occupation such as medical laboratory technician or medical laboratory scientist.

2. What are the permitted activities?

To meet the legislative intent of training American workers to reduce the need for foreign workers under the H-1B visa program, applicants must design their education and training programs to support industries and/or occupations for which employers are using H–1B visas to hire foreign workers. According to recent data, a wide range of industries and occupations may meet these criteria in local and regional areas

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around the country. Applicants should review the attached list of industries and occupations that are most frequently using H–1B visas to hire foreign workers (See Attachment A). This list is not exhaustive and applicants are advised to also refer to the Foreign Labor Certification Data Center Web site (http://www.flcdatacenter.com/CaseH1B.aspx) for the latest database of occupations approved under H-1B petitions.

Applicants must propose projects that provide job training and related activities that are designed to assist workers in gaining the skills and competencies needed to obtain or upgrade employment in high-growth industries and/or occupations for which employers are using H–1B visas to hire foreign workers as noted above, or along the career pathways for such industries and/or occupations. A career pathway is generally defined as a system of career options which allows opportunities for professional growth and upward mobility. Education and training under this solicitation may not be used for entry-level occupations, but should focus on occupations along the career pathways that require higher skill levels.

ETA will fund a range of training strategies including but not limited to: on-the-job training (OJT); classroom occupational training; contextualized learning; distance learning; and customized training, including incumbent worker training, for particular employers or groups of employers. OJT is distinguished from other types of workplace training, including customized training, by several factors: a) participants are hired and earn wages from employers during training; b) it is based on an individualized training plan that reflects the results of an individual skills assessment and an analysis of job requirements; c) training is conducted in the work setting under the direction of one or more of the employer's supervisory personnel; and d) the employer is paid a reimbursement to cover the extraordinary costs of the training. Attachment B provides further information on how to implement OJT strategies, and grants awarded under this FFO must follow these guidelines if OJT strategies are imposed. Incumbent worker training is defined as training developed with an employer or employer association to upgrade skills training of a particular workforce. It usually takes place in the workplace or after work hours for employees of a specific employer or employer association.

With each type of training strategy, there are a number of activities that applicants can include to ensure that the programs meet participants' needs. All training strategies must: a) target skills and competencies in demand by industries and/or occupations for which employers are using H–1B visas to hire foreign workers, or skills and competencies needed for occupations that are on a career pathway for these industries and/or occupations; b) provide education and training for jobs currently available; and c) whenever possible, result in an industry-recognized credential. ETA encourages applicants to use program models with demonstrated success in serving the eligible participants, especially those with strong program evaluations showing positive impacts on participants.

Further, ETA encourages applicants to target their programs to training and placing the long-term unemployed. These unemployed workers may be near or past the exhaustion of their unemployment insurance benefits or may be discouraged from looking for work. They may need additional assistance to enhance their skills to become re-employed.

In implementing a training program, applicants may propose to use grant funds for a wide range of activities that support the direct education and training of eligible participants including but not limited to the following:

- Cost of training as described in this section;
- Work experience, internships and co-ops;
- Developing math, science or language courses at the post-secondary level that are integrated into the technical skills training;
- Costs related to accrediting employer- and/or industry-recognized credentials;
- Other costs of program development such as using subject matter experts from industry, education, and other areas to assist in curriculum design;
- Developing and implementing articulation agreements with universities and other educational partners that allow for recognition of course credits in exchange for the education and/or training provided;
- Recruitment of eligible participants;
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and competencies;
- Job search and placement assistance, as well as career counseling;
- Scholarships, which may only cover the costs of tuition and other training-related costs including books, tools, and academic fees; and
- Updating or replicating existing industry-recognized curricula to support direct education and training provided through the grant.

Activities that are not directly related to the development and implementation of education, training, and other related services that support high-growth industries and/or occupations for which employers are using H-1B visas are not allowable activities under this grant. Applicants should refer to section VII.C of the FFO for a list of relevant OMB Circulars related to cost principles, administrative and other requirements that apply to this competitive solicitation and to section IV.B.6 for a discussion of costs that are not allowable for H-1B funds under this FFO.

3. **Who is eligible to apply under this announcement?**

For the purposes of this FFO, entities eligible to be the grantee organization for H-1B training funds are: a) business-related nonprofit organizations; b) education and training providers; c) entities involved in administering the workforce investment system established under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act; and d) economic development agencies.

Additionally, if the grantee organization is not itself an entity involved in administering the workforce investment system, the grantee organization is required

to partner with such an entity. Also, regardless of which organization is the grantee, the grantee must partner with at least one employer or a consortium of employers.

Eligible grantees and required partners for this FFO are defined as:

a. Business-related Nonprofit Organizations and Employers

Business-related non-profit organizations include trade or industry associations, such as local Chambers of Commerce and small business federations, and labor organizations. Employers and business-related non-profit organizations may contribute in one or more of the following ways: defining the program goals and activities; identifying skills and competencies; providing resources to support education/training (such as equipment, instructors, funding, internships, or OJT and other work-based learning activities); providing assistance with program design; and, where appropriate, hiring qualified participants who complete grant-funded education and training programs. ETA particularly encourages partnerships that include multiple employers in the industry sector of the cluster and have common workforce needs. Working with multiple businesses across a cluster helps ensure that training prepares workers for a range of employer needs, making participants more employable and giving businesses a stronger employee pool. As stated above, employers are required partners for this FFO; however, an individual business, or group of businesses, is not eligible to be the grantee. Business-related nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply as the grantee.

b. Education and Training Providers

Under this FFO, education and training providers are institutions of higher education as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. § 1001). These "institutions of higher education" include public or other nonprofit educational institutions. Applicants must identify their institution type in section 9 of Form SF-424, *Application for Federal Assistance*. Eligible institutions must be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association that has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. A database of institutions that are accredited by bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education can be found at http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/. Applicants are strongly encouraged to check this website, as DOL will use this database in determining an applicant's accreditation to ensure eligibility.

Community-based organizations that provide training and other workforce development services are also considered to be education and training providers for this FFO. For the purposes of this section of the FFO, community-based organizations are defined as private, nonprofit organizations whose service area is limited to a single sub-State geographic area, such as a neighborhood, city, county, sub-State region or interstate region comprised of multiple sub-State regions (such as Kansas City). Community-based organizations can be key providers of basic skills training, technical skills training, supportive services, and workforce development

services. Community-based organizations generally understand the importance of leveraging resources, engaging employers to better understand their workforce needs and secure employment for their participants, and providing comprehensive supportive services in a manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate, to the extent legally allowed, for workers and training participants.

c. The Workforce Investment System

Public workforce system entities are involved in administering the workforce investment system established under Title I of Workforce Investment Act, and include State and local Workforce Investment Boards and their One-Stop Career Center systems. These types of organizations may participate in the grant activities, such as: 1) understanding and analyzing the need for education and training in the local area including identifying targeted industries, occupations, and hiring needs, as well as populations to be served, and providing relevant sources of data including the workforce investment board's strategic plan, labor market information, and other tools or reports; 2) assessing potential participants for the grant program; 3) identifying and referring candidates for education and training in the grant program; 4) connecting and placing participants with employers that have job openings; and, 5) collecting, tracking, and reporting participant data to ETA.

d. Economic Development Agencies

State, regional, and/or local economic development agencies work closely with employers, understand regional economic needs, are involved in activities that help to generate and retain existing jobs, and stimulate industrial and commercial growth. The role of economic development agencies is to seek out new economic opportunities and retain their existing employer community. Economic development agencies do not create jobs, but support new and existing businesses in doing so. Economic development agencies may support the project by ensuring that there are sufficient economic development programs and incentives in place to assist the businesses in achieving their goals.

All applicants must clearly identify the lead organization that will serve as the grantee for the H-1B training funds and have overall fiscal and administrative responsibility for the grant. The organization that will serve as the grantee and the required partners must all be described in the Technical Proposal.

The grantee organization must be the organization specified in section 8 of Form SF-424, and will be: a) the point of contact with ETA to receive and respond to all inquiries or communications under this FFO and any subsequent grant award; b) the entity with authority to withdraw or draw down funds through HHS - Payment Management System (HHS-PMS); c) responsible for submitting to ETA all deliverables under the grant, including all technical and financial reports related to the project, regardless of which consortium member performed the work; d) the entity that may request or agree to a revision or amendment of the grant agreement or

statement of work; e) the entity with overall responsibility for carrying out the programmatic functions of the grant, as well as for the stewardship of all expenditures under the grant; and f) the entity responsible for working with ETA to close out the grant.

4. **Who is eligible to receive training under this announcement?**

a. Participants Eligible to Receive Training

Applicants may propose projects that focus on providing education and training to incumbent (employed) workers, unemployed workers, including the long-term unemployed, and/or post-secondary students who are pursuing a high-skill occupation. Participants must be at least 18 years of age. Employed workers are not eligible to participate in OJT as outlined in Attachment B. Students may be enrolled full-time or part-time in post-secondary education.

Candidates for education and training funded through these grants should not be at the beginning of a career pathway and should have at least a high school diploma or a GED, as well as some post-secondary education and/or work experience that would allow them to enter the defined career pathway at a later point. Candidates may already have an associate's or bachelor's degree, but they do not necessarily have to possess advanced degrees to be eligible.

b. Veterans Priority for Participants

The Jobs for Veterans Act (Public Law 107-288) requires grantees to provide priority of service for veterans and spouses of certain veterans for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services in any job training program directly funded, in whole or in part, by ETA. The regulations implementing this priority of service can be found at 20 C.F.R. part 1010. In circumstances where a grant recipient must choose between two equally qualified candidates for a service, one of whom is a veteran or eligible spouse, the veterans priority of service provisions require that the grant recipient give the veteran or eligible spouse priority of service by first providing him or her that service. To obtain priority of service, a veteran or spouse must first meet the program's eligibility requirements. Grantees must comply with ETA guidance on veterans' priority. ETA's Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 10-09 (issued November 10, 2009) provides guidance on implementing priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses in all qualified job training programs funded in whole or in part by ETA. TEGL No. 10-09 is available at http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2816.

5. **What is the cost sharing or matching share requirement for ETA funding?**

   a. Leveraged Resources.

   Matching funds under this FFO are not required for funds provided by ETA; however, ETA strongly encourages grantees and their partners to provide leveraged resources under these grants. Leveraged resources expand the scope of the Federal investment and demonstrate a commitment by the grantee and its partners to the project and its long-term sustainability post grant. These funds may be used to support activities, such as supportive services, that are not allowable costs under these grants. Leveraged resources do carry quarterly reporting requirements. The definition of and requirements about leveraged resources are discussed in more detail below. Applicants should note that leveraged resources are **not** listed on the SF-424 or SF-424A; however, the amounts **are** included in the budget narrative.

   b. Definition

   Leveraged Resources are all non-grant resources used by the grantee to support grant activity and outcomes, whether or not those resources meet the standards required for match. All leveraged resources must be expended on costs that are allowable under the OMB Circulars (2 C.F.R. Parts 220, 225, and 230 and 48 C.F.R. Part 31) and used to further grant activity and outcomes. The costs of leveraged resources may be paid for with either Federal or non-Federal funds. Examples of costs that would be considered as leveraged resources are the costs of services provided to grant participants that are funded by another Federal program such as the WIA formula grant program, the provision of child care as a supportive service by a grantee sub-recipient, and the purchase or construction of a structure that will house grant activity that is paid for by the organization using non-Federal resources.

   c. Reporting

   ETA requires that all leveraged resources be reported in grantee quarterly program narrative reports. In addition, some leveraged resources are to be reported on the ETA-9130 Quarterly Financial Report including: 1) all costs of the grant recipient and/or sub-recipients as well as all third party in-kind contributions that would have qualified as match had it been required; and 2) all allowable costs for goods and services provided to grant participants or in support of the grant program which are paid for by the grant recipient and/or sub-recipients using other Federal grant funds. Instructions and the ETA Form 9130 may be found at
   http://www.doleta.gov/grants/financial_reporting.cfm.

   d. Incumbent Worker Salaries

   The portion of an incumbent worker's salaries paid while the worker is participating in incumbent worker training (i.e., paid release time for employees) may be counted as

leveraged resources under these grant. Fringe benefits and other personal benefits cannot be counted as leveraged resources.

e. Form SF-424, Form SF-424A, and the Budget Narrative

Applicants must explain the amount and nature of their leveraged resource commitments in the budget narrative submitted with their application. Do not include leveraged funds amounts on Forms SF-424 or SF-424A. Any amounts entered onto these forms will be considered matching resources and be subject to the requirements at 29 C.F.R. 97.25 or 29 C.F.R. 95.23.

6. Funding Restrictions

All proposal costs must be necessary and reasonable and in accordance with Federal guidelines. Determinations of allowable costs will be made in accordance with the applicable Federal cost principles. Disallowed costs are those charges to a grant that the grantor agency or its representative determines not to be allowed in accordance with the applicable Federal cost principles or other conditions contained in the grant.

a. Indirect Costs

As specified in OMB Circular Cost Principles, codified in the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) and listed in section VII.C.2, indirect costs are those that have been incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective. An indirect cost rate (ICR) is required when an organization operates under more than one grant or other activity, whether Federally-assisted or not. Organizations must use the ICR supplied by the Federal Cognizant Agency. If an organization requires a new ICR or has a pending ICR, the Grant Officer will award a temporary billing rate for 90 days until a provisional rate can be issued. This rate is based on the fact that an organization has not established an ICR agreement. Within this 90 day period, the organization must submit an acceptable indirect cost proposal to their Federal Cognizant Agency to obtain a provisional ICR.

b. Administrative Costs

Under this FFO, an entity that receives a grant to carry out a project or program may not use more than 10 percent of the amount of the grant to pay administrative costs associated with the program or project. Administrative costs could be direct or indirect costs, and are defined at 20 C.F.R. 667.220. Administrative costs do not need to be identified separately from program costs on the SF-424A Budget Information Form. However, they must be tracked through the grantee's accounting system. To claim any administrative costs that are also indirect costs, the applicant must obtain an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement from its Federal Cognizant agency, as specified above.

c. Equipment Costs

As with all costs charged to the grant, the costs of equipment must meet the standards in the applicable Federal cost principles, including that the costs are reasonable and necessary to achieve grant outcomes. While grant funds may be used to purchase equipment that is used for education and training activities provided through the proposed project, applicants are strongly encouraged to use leveraged resources to support these costs to maximize the use of their grant funds for program specific activities. Evidence of efforts to purchase equipment with non-grant funds after the receipt of the grant will be required for approval of the use of grant funds for equipment. DOL will closely review the equipment costs listed in the SF-424A and the Budget Narrative to determine their reasonableness and necessity. DOL reserves the right to negotiate or reject any equipment costs which do not meet these standards.

d. Intellectual Property Rights

The Federal Government reserves a paid-up, nonexclusive and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use for Federal purposes: (1) the copyright in all products developed under the grant, including a subgrant or contract under the grant or subgrant; and (2) any rights of copyright to which the grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership under an award (including but not limited to curricula, training models, technical assistance products, and any related materials). Such uses include, but are not limited to, the right to modify and distribute such products worldwide by any means, electronically or otherwise. Federal funds may not be used to pay any royalty or licensing fee associated with such copyrighted material, although they may be used to pay costs for obtaining a copy which are limited to the developer/seller costs of copying and shipping. If revenues are generated through selling products developed with grant funds, including intellectual property, these revenues are program income. Program income is added to the grant and must be expended for allowable grant activities.

If applicable, grantees must include the following language on all products developed in whole or in part with grant funds:

> "This workforce solution was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The solution was created by the grantee and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This solution is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for non-commercial

purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner."

e. Payments to Participants

For the purposes of grants awarded under this FFO, organizations may only use H-1B funds to pay for the wages of participants in one specific activity, paid work experience. While OJT is an allowable training activity under this FFO, OJT is not considered "work experience" according to the parameters below. For the requirements and parameters relating to using H-1B funds for payments under allowable OJT activities, please see Attachment B. H-1B funds may not be used to pay incumbent worker salaries. H-1B funds may be used to establish internship and co-op programs and place participants in them; however, funds may **not** be used to pay wages or stipends for participants in internships or co-ops.

i. Work Experience

Work experience is defined as a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time, and may be paid or unpaid. Labor standards apply in any work experience where an employee-employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), exists. For more information on the FLSA, applicants may visit http://www.dol.gov/whd.

For work experience, applicants will need to describe how the experience is connected to and supports the education and training activities included in the grant. Grantees have flexibility in the design and implementation of work experience; however, they must meet the following parameters:

- Provide an individual with monitored or supervised work experience in his or her expected career field where the individual has prescribed learning goals and reflects actively on what he or she is learning throughout the experience. These learning goals can include a) academic learning, career development, and skill development, and b) the attainment of credentials in the individual's expected career field;
- Are part of structured programs where the grantee established the criteria for determining who will participate in these programs;
- Are for a set period of time; and
- Relate to training provided through the grant, and help participants prepare for the employment opportunities on which the grant focuses.

f. Use of Funds for Supportive Services

For the purposes of this FFO, grantees may not use grant funds to provide supportive services to individuals who are participating in education and training activities provided through the grant. ETA encourages grantees to leverage other sources of

funding for supportive services, including WIA formula funds.

Payments directly to help support participants' training, such as stipends for the purposes of wage replacement or incentives to participate in training, are not allowable costs under these grants.

C. What are SBA's eligibility requirements?

1. Overview

SBA will participate in the Jobs Accelerator by utilizing the Agency's 7(j) Technical Assistance Program to foster entrepreneurship, attract investment, strengthen competitiveness, and create well paying 21st century jobs among eligible small businesses. SBA's participation furthers the intergovernmental cluster efforts under TARIC. The 7(j) Technical Assistance Program allows SBA to provide, through a grant recipient, key technical and management assistance to eligible small businesses located in areas that can most benefit from the work of regional clusters by providing these clusters with the resources to support small businesses that face the largest challenges.

Any assistance provided by the awardee must be directed toward small businesses eligible for assistance under sections 7(i), 7(j)(10), and 8(a) of the Small Business Act which includes the following (collectively referred to as 7(j) eligible small businesses):

- A socially and economically disadvantaged individual whose firm is a participant in SBA's 8(a) Business Development (8(a) BD) Program;

- A socially and economically disadvantaged individual whose firm need not be a participant in the 8(a) BD Program, but who in good faith self certifies (in writing) that his or her firm could meet the Agency's criteria for 8(a) certification, and that he or she is either a member of a designated group listed in 13 C.F.R. 124.1 03(b);

- A business certified by SBA as a HUB Zone concern;

- A firm located in a high unemployment or low income area, as defined in the U.S. Census Bureau's County and City Data Book and in the Poverty Guidelines issued by HHS; or

- A firm owned by a low-income individual, as defined in under HHS Poverty Guidelines.

2. What are the permitted activities?

The 7(j) Technical Assistance Program delivers funding to organizations that, in turn, will provide technical or management assistance to individuals and enterprises that

are 7(j) eligible small businesses. Funds awarded under the 7(j) Technical Assistance Program may be used to conduct planning and research (including feasibility studies and market research); identify and develop new business opportunities; furnish centralized services with regard to public services and Federal government programs; establish and strengthen business service agencies (including trade associations and cooperatives); and furnish business counseling, management training, and legal and other related services.

Applicants should address how their proposed project will provide at least one of the following services to 7(j) eligible small businesses located within the cluster's area of operations:
- Business training;
- General business counseling;
- Technology transfer counseling;
- Commercialization of existing research and development (R&D) counseling;
- Export readiness counseling; and
- Other services relevant to small businesses.

Applicants should also address how they will link 7(j) eligible small businesses with technology, development and financing opportunities, as well as initiatives to establish mentoring and networking opportunities with seasoned entrepreneurs, to support growth and success of 7(j) eligible small businesses. This may include, but is not limited to, the following services:
- Managing business growth;
- Building customer bases;
- Building networks and partnerships;
- Assisting in market development; and
- Facilitating opportunities for accessing new resources and markets.

3. **Who is eligible to apply under this announcement?**

Under 7(j) SBA may provide financial assistance to public or private organizations to pay all or part of the cost of projects designed to provide technical or management assistance to 7(j) eligible small businesses. Because of the 7(j) eligibility criteria, each 7(j) Technical Assistance provider will be required to determine, document, and report on the eligibility of each recipient of services provided under this grant.

In order to be eligible under this FFO, an applicant must:
- Be a public, private, non-profit, or for-profit entity;
- Have been in existence continually for at least the past three years;
- Have experience dealing with issues relating to 7(j) eligible small business; and
- Demonstrate that it has the capacity to provide assistance to 7(j) eligible small business.

4. Oversight Requirement

A designated Grants Officer Technical Representative (GOTR) at SBA Headquarters will act as the primary agency contact and liaison for an award made under this FFO. The GOTR's responsibilities include conducting site visits and financial and programmatic reviews, coordinating SBA resource partner efforts, and reporting any issues that may arise in connection with the monitoring and oversight of an award recipient, including compliance with the terms of the cooperative agreement.

5. Leveraging of Resources

Applicants selected for awards under this announcement are required to maximize their efforts to leverage SBA funding by working with public and private organizations such as chambers of commerce and trade and industry groups and associations that align federal resources. Applicants must explain how they will work with existing State and local resources and with SBA's partners such as SCORE, Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers, Veterans Business Outreach Centers and the Agency's lending and investing partners and utilize SBA's business development programs, and the Small Business Innovation Research program. Additionally, although matching contributions are not required under the 7(j) Technical Assistance Program, applicants should note the availability of any additional funds and in-kind contributions pledged to their projects in their Technical Proposals.

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. Applications must be submitted electronically. *See* section V.E of this FFO for detailed instructions.

B. Letter of Intent to apply under this FFO

Applicants are requested to submit the letter of intent available on http://www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/jobsandinnovationchallenge by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on **June 10, 2011**. Letters of intent are critical to managing the application review process. A letter of intent is strongly suggested, but failure to submit a letter of intent will not disqualify an applicant that submits the full application as outlined in this FFO.

In the letter of intent, applicants are asked to submit:

- The applicants included in the application team;
- The proposed region for project implementation;
- The proposed cluster of focus; and

- A brief project description.

C. Deadline for receipt of applications

The deadline for receipt of applications is **July 7, 2011** at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding. Electronic submission through www.grants.gov is required. The date and time that an application will be deemed to be electronically received will be determined in accordance with the electronic submission instructions for this FFO provided at www.grants.gov. *See* section V.E of this FFO for detailed information about electronic submissions.

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

Applicants are strongly encouraged to start early and not to wait until the approaching due date before logging on and reviewing the instructions for submitting an application through www.grants.gov. Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at www.grants.gov. If problems occur while using www.grants.gov, the applicant is advised to (i) print any error message received; and (ii) call www.grants.gov at 1 800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. The Funding Agencies may allow more time for application submission due to system problems at www.grants.gov that are beyond the control of the applicant.

D. Content and form of application submissions

A complete application submitted in response to this FFO consists of three separate and distinct parts:

(1)   Required Forms;
(2)   A Technical Proposal; and
(3)   Addenda to the Technical Proposal.

Applications that do not contain all forms listed in each part or all three parts, or that fail to adhere to the instructions in this section, 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 Technical Proposal may not exceed 50 double-spaced pages.

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 submit the following forms at the time of application. The forms should be organized by Funding Agency and included in three separate portable document format (PDF) files. The name file should note the Funding Agency and Required Forms (for example, "SBA Required Forms").

   - Form SF-424 - *Application for Federal Assistance*. One form from *each* application team member for *every* funding source for which the application team member is applying. The SF-424 must clearly identify the application team member that will be responsible for the requested funds and must be signed by an individual with authority to enter into a grant agreement. Upon confirmation of an award, the individual signing the SF-424 on behalf of the application team member shall be considered the authorized representative of the applicant.[6]

     EXAMPLE: Two organizations are partnering to respond to this FFO. A cluster intermediary organization is the application team member applying for SBA funds, and a research institution is the application team member applying for EDA and ETA funds. The application they submit must include three separate Form SF-424 forms: one from the cluster intermediary organization for SBA funding; one from the research institution for EDA funding; and one from the research institution for ETA funding.

   - Form SF-424A - *Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs*. One form for *each* funding source.

     EXAMPLE: An economic development organization and a community college are partnering to respond to this FFO. They seek training funds through ETA, economic adjustment assistance through EDA, and small business support through SBA. Their application must include three separate Form SF-424A forms: one outlining the budget for the training with ETA; a second outlining the budget for the economic adjustment assistance through EDA; and a third outlining the budget for the small business assistance through SBA.

   - Form SF-424B - *Assurances—Non-Construction Programs*. One form from *each* application team member for *every* funding source for which the application team member is applying.

   - Form CD-511 -*Certification Regarding Lobbying*. One form from *each* application team member for *every* funding source for which the application team member is applying.

   - Form SF-LLL—*Disclosure of Lobbying Activities*, if applicable. Applicants may be required to provide certain lobbying information using Form SF-LLL, and to

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[6] Please note, as stated in section IV A, B and C, EDA permits organizations to apply as a consortium. ETA and SBA require only one grantee organization per application.

submit to a background screening using Form CD-346. Please note that, if applicable, one Form SF-LLL must be submitted for each application team member that has used or plans to use non-Federal funds for lobbying in connection with this competitive solicitation.

For applications requesting EDA assistance, the following form is required at the time of application submission, in addition to the forms listed under section V.D.1 above:

- 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:

  - Questions A.2, A.4, and A.6. Please enter "See Project Narrative."
  - Question E.3. Please enter "See Résumés 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. **Technical Proposal**

The Technical Proposal must demonstrate the applicant's capability to implement the proposed activities in accordance with the requirements of this FFO. The length of the Technical Proposal is limited to 50 double-spaced, single-sided 8.5 x 11 inch pages with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Applicants may include Technical Proposal supplemental materials to the end of the Technical Proposal that will not count towards the 50 page limit. Supplemental materials include a map delineating the region, a table of regional population information, organization charts, and communication plans. Any Technical Proposal text beyond the specified page limit will not be read. Applicants should number the pages of the Technical Proposal, beginning with page number 1. The Technical Proposal and any supplemental

materials should be submitted as one Adobe PDF file, and only one Technical Proposal should be submitted per application.

Applications will be evaluated based on the information contained in the Technical Proposal (*see* section VI.A). Applications must propose one project that integrates three distinct activities to be funded separately by the three sources of funds available under this FFO. Together the three activities will reach common cluster development objectives.

The Technical Proposal should be organized into the following sections:
  a. Integrated cluster and region
  b. Cluster needs and opportunities
      i. Economic, business and workforce development needs and opportunities
      ii. Inclusion needs and opportunities
  c. Project Narrative
      i. Integrated project concept
      ii. Scopes of Work, by Funding Agency activity
      iii. Inclusion
      iv. Sustainability
  d. Impact and measurable outcomes, by Funding Agency activity
  e. Qualifications, project management and project feasibility
      i. Competency of Management and Communications
      ii. Inclusive Leadership and Participation

The requirements of what must be included in each component of the Technical Proposal are outlined below. Applicants are expected to cite the source of all data presented throughout the application.

a. Integrated Cluster and Region

This section must provide a clear and comprehensive description of the region and the cluster that will be the focus of the project and demonstrate that it is an established cluster with a competitive advantage and potential for high-growth.

i. *Clear and comprehensive identification of the region.* The application must describe the geographic focus of the project through narrative and data. Regions may be single or multi-jurisdictional, urban, suburban, rural, or a combination of the above. Applicants have the flexibility to suggest geographies based on demonstrated analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative information about where and how the cluster targeted for development operates.[7]

The description should note cities and counties in the region. The applicant should include a map delineating the region within the Technical Proposal (if

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[7] Regions can be non-contiguous (e.g., an "anchor" of the cluster may be in one region with networked assets such as research partnerships with Federal labs or supply chain linkages in other regions).

it does not exceed 50 pages) or as supplemental material at the end of the Technical Proposal. This section should also include a table outlining information on the regional population by race and ethnicity, including: household income; unemployment rate; poverty levels; and education and skill levels of the region's workforce. The table may also include comparison year data (up to ten years) and supportive text to discuss demographic changes in the region. Applicants should note if the data does not match the boundaries of the identified region and briefly explain the reason for the discrepancy. The Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics website is a useful source for this data (http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/). The table should be included within the Technical Proposal (if it does not exceed 50 pages) or as supplemental material at the end of the Technical Proposal.

ii. *Clear and comprehensive identification of the cluster.* The application must fully describe the cluster, identify the applicable industry sector and provide a brief summary of the cluster's development. Data must be provided to demonstrate a concentration of firms in the identified industry sector (including mature and start-up firms), industry-specific infrastructure, and an existing supply chain. Types of evidence to demonstrate a concentration of firms could include location quotients, employment and wage data, business listings or maps to show concentrations of firms, or cluster studies conducted by the applicant or partner organizations in the region.

iii. *Demonstration of assets and competitive advantage.* The application must demonstrate that the region possesses essential assets to support the cluster and a competitive advantage in the identified industry. Evidence that the cluster possesses unique assets and has a competitive advantage may include the number of patents/inventions developed or commercialized by regional development and technology transfer facilities, as well as local companies; number of workers with specified degrees or credentials relevant to the cluster; awards garnered by faculty and students in relevant fields of study; the number of specialized and high-skill training programs related to the cluster; the number of new firms in the cluster capitalized within the past year; and growth in sales, exports or employment of cluster firms compared with other reference area(s).

iv. *Demonstrated Cluster Partnerships.* The application must fully describe active cluster partnerships, including public-private partnerships. Applicants must identify regional accomplishments stemming from these partnerships and demonstrate partners convening to support cluster development. If partners do not actively convene, other evidence must be provided to demonstrate active partnership involvement in supporting the cluster. The following are examples of potential partners in a successful cluster:

- Private sector leaders including large and small firms;
- A cluster intermediary organization, such as an economic development organization, workforce development board, business incubator or accelerator, chamber of commerce, small business development center, or a university-based consortium;
- A major university, Federally funded lab, or privately funded research and development center engaged in technology transfer, commercialization, and entrepreneurship;
- School districts, community colleges, career and technical schools, and non-profits committed to career pathways to prepare workers for jobs in the cluster, including preparing historically underrepresented and excluded workers for higher skill jobs;
- Venture development organizations, venture capital firms, angel investment groups, community lenders, and other institutions focused on expanding access to capital; and
- Private foundations focused on science, business, and innovation.

v. *Demonstrate leveraging of Federal resources.* The application should note Federal partners currently supporting the cluster, including any Partner Agencies listed in section II.C of this FFO. The discussion should include how Federal funds, such as American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) funds or funds from any of the Funding Agencies or Partner Agencies, have been integrated into cluster development over the last two years. If no Federal partners are currently supporting the cluster, the applicant should state and address this. Applicants will not be penalized if these resources are not currently present in the cluster.

vi. *Evidence of effectiveness within regional communities.* The application should describe any existing partnerships to increase the participation of historically underrepresented and excluded communities in the cluster. The application should explain local efforts by partners that have proven successful in removing barriers that create economic disparities in the region, specifically addressing the socioeconomic differences faced, for example, by women, minorities, disadvantaged individuals, veterans, and people with disabilities.

vii. *Evidence that the cluster has high-growth potential.* The application must provide strong, comprehensive evidence that the identified cluster has significant potential to grow and cultivate new jobs, businesses and export opportunities. Applicants must identify targeted occupation(s) and the industry sector on which the project will focus and cite evidence that the industry and/or occupation(s) are high-growth according to one or more of the following factors: (1) projected to add substantial numbers of new jobs to the economy; (2) being transformed by technology and innovation requiring new skill sets for workers; (3) composed of new and emerging businesses that are projected to grow; (4) has a significant impact on the economy overall or on

the growth of other industries and occupations; or (5) forecasts for increased regional, national or international demand for cluster products and outputs. The application should also be clear about the time projections for adding new jobs, sales and exports. Applicants should cite the source of current and projected demand, such as from DOL, State workforce agencies, employers and other relevant sources.

b. Cluster Needs and Opportunities

This section must fully and comprehensively describe the needs and unaddressed opportunities of the cluster. Applicants should respond to all of the sections and sub-sections. If the cluster does not have a need or unaddressed opportunity in one of these areas, the applicant must explain how this area is currently being addressed. Applicants will not be penalized if there is no need or opportunity in some of these areas; however, applicants will be unable to earn the full points for this section if any section or sub-section is not addressed.

i. Economic, Business and Workforce Development Needs and Opportunities

- *Needs or opportunities related to innovation and commercialization.* The application should address any needs or opportunities related to advancing commercialization of research, including Federally-funded research, developing new processes, new technologies, new products, and technology transfer.

- *Needs or opportunities for small business and entrepreneurship.* The application should discuss existing needs faced by entrepreneurs and existing small businesses in the region, including 7(j) eligible small businesses, which inhibit the development of the cluster. This might include barriers to forming businesses, accessing market information, integrating with or supplying to larger companies within the cluster, procuring new technology or reaching collective efficiencies with partners.

- *Needs or opportunities for exporting.* The application should discuss existing needs or challenges related to exporting. This might include barriers faced by existing firms in the cluster, opportunities to reach new markets, needs or opportunities to interact with potential buyers, and identifying export markets.

- *Needs or opportunities for cluster planning, promotion, or partner integration.* The application should identify areas of need related to growing the cluster through attracting or integrating partners, developing relationships to expand employment, sales or exports, assisting the cluster to identify new markets, conduct studies or strategic planning.

- *Needs or opportunities for skilled workers in the cluster.* The application must fully describe the current and projected employment opportunities during the project period in the targeted industry/occupation(s) for which the applicant proposes training, using labor market information, consultation with employers and industry associations for the cluster, or other sources. The skills and credentials required for workers to enter and retain employment in the identified industry/occupation must also be fully described. Applicants must provide evidence showing that there is or will be a gap between the skills that cluster employers need and the skills possessed by the available workforce, and a gap in the training available to the workforce. Applicants must cite evidence that the industry and/or occupation(s) is one for which employers currently seek H-1B visas or is an occupation(s) along a career pathway to an occupation in the relevant industry (*see* Attachment A to this FFO for information on H-1B industries and occupations).

    ii.   Inclusion Needs and Opportunities

- The application should provide a brief discussion of economic disparities in the region, highlighting the socioeconomic differences faced, for instance, by women, minorities, disadvantaged individuals, veterans and people with disabilities. The discussion should focus on identifying the barriers that create those disparities, if those barriers are persistent or accelerating, and how removal of those barriers will help reach larger cluster competitiveness goals and have longer-term impact on the entire region.

c. **Project Narrative**

The Jobs Accelerator offers applicants the opportunity to submit one application to access three funding sources to perform integrated projects that comprehensively support cluster development. This section of the Technical Proposal must first include a description of the integrated project concept followed by the specific activities proposed for each funding source through specific Scopes of Work for *each Funding Agency*. Since awards will be made through three distinct Federal agencies, it is necessary to clearly delineate which activities will be performed using which agency's funds.

    i.   Integrated Project Concept

Applicants must provide a summary that describes the proposed project. The summary should present how the applicant intends to draw on and blend multiple resources to address identified needs and capitalize on opportunities. Applicants should clearly express how the proposed economic, workforce and small business development activities will complement each other in accelerating the cluster's competitiveness.

ii. Scopes of Work, by Funding Agency

Applicants should present a coherent project that demonstrates the applicant's complete understanding of all responsibilities and costs required to implement each phase of the project within the timeframe of the individual Funding Agency performance period.

- Proposed Activity: Describe the proposed activity for each Funding Agency.

  For EDA funds, clearly identify the activities to foster regional competitiveness which may include a wide range of non-construction assistance, such as 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. This description of economic development activities should align with the discussion of the integrated region and cluster in the Technical Proposal (*see* section V.D.2.a).

  For ETA funds, clearly identify the various communities in which outreach will be conducted and the workers who will be targeted through the project; the workers' characteristics, including their education and skill levels and whether they are unemployed, incumbent (current) workers, or students; why the workers are targeted; and the recruitment strategies that will be employed including whether any partner organizations will be responsible for these activities. This description of targeted workers should align with the discussion of the integrated region and cluster in the Technical Proposal, including how the outreach will help address issues raised in the inclusion needs and opportunities subsection (*see* section V.D.2.b).

  For applicants proposing incumbent worker training with ETA funds, clearly identify the specific occupations and skills for which training will occur, explain why these workers need additional training in these skills, and why the employers cannot provide this training with their own resources or with other non-grant resources. Explain the relationship between the makeup of the incumbent workers and issues raised in the inclusion needs and opportunities subsection. Applicants should clearly state what the projected outcome of this training will be (e.g., employment retention, career advancement and/or wage increases).

  For SBA funds, clearly identify the activities which may include assistance 7(j) eligible small businesses such as planning and research (including feasibility studies and market research), identifying and

developing new business opportunities, furnishing centralized services with regard to public services and Federal government programs, establishing and strengthening business service agencies (including trade associations and cooperatives), furnishing business counseling, management training, and legal and other related services.

- Objective: Describe how the activity will address an identified need or opportunity in order to support and/or grow the cluster.

- Activity Leadership & Roles: Note the entity or entities that will oversee activity development and implementation. If multiple groups will be involved in implementation, include a description of tasks to be completed by entity. Activities performed with ETA funds must describe the organization that will serve as the grantee as well as the required partners as defined in section IV.B.3 of this FFO. Partnerships should be documented with "Partner Organization Commitment Letters" as required in section V.D.3 of this FFO.

- Additional Inputs and Partnerships: Identify matching or leveraged funds, existing resources and initiatives, crucial partnerships, and other resources that will support the activity and help meet objectives. Resources may come from Federal, State, and local governments; community-based organizations; philanthropic organizations; or the private sector. If the project will use other leveraged resources, applicants must identify the specific activity/program to be leveraged, the type of leveraged resource (monetary or in-kind contribution), and the amount. The applicant should only note partners that will directly support project implementation and bring specialized value to the project. Partnerships should be documented with "Partner Organization Commitment Letters" as required in section V.D.3 of this FFO. Applicants should emphasize partners that will manage the inclusion of historically underrepresented and excluded communities into the proposed activity. Applicants should review the list of Partner Agencies provided in section II.B of this FFO, identify potential resources and discuss how those could be incorporated into the activity. Applicants should also demonstrate how they will leverage other Federally funded activities (including Recovery Act), if applicable.

- Integrated Work Plan: Applicants must input details from the Scope of Work into an Integrated Work Plan using the suggested template found in Attachment C to this FFO. Applicants may use another format to present this information provided it includes all the required information. The suggested template in Attachment C includes examples of the type of information and level of detail the applicant should include. Information for objectives, resources/inputs, and activities should mirror the Scope of Work and be presented in a few words. Information and instructions on how to complete additional Integrated Work Plan fields (activities outputs,

program outcomes and outcome reporting) is discussed in section V.D.2.d of this FFO. The Integrated Work Plan should be included as an addendum to the Technical Proposal and only one Integrated Work Plan should be submitted with the application.

iii. Inclusion

In this section, applicants should briefly describe how the proposed activities performed with each funding source will help to incorporate historically underrepresented and excluded communities into the cluster and ensure those communities benefit from the long-term opportunities of a growing regional economy. In addition, applicants should briefly explain how the proposed project will address the barriers identified in section b of the Technical Proposal. The applicant should provide examples of when these strategies have been tried in the past, either in the targeted region or elsewhere, impacts of those strategies, and a rationale for why they will be appropriate in the proposed environment.

iv. Project Sustainability

In this section, applicants should fully describe how they anticipate sustaining the success of the proposed activities beyond the period of Federal funding. Activities should be addressed by Funding Agency. Such a plan could include: integrating effective practices into general operations; long-term, broad and deep commitment to sustain the activities and partnerships of the project; securing resources to continue project activities with a different funding source; or other appropriate factors that meet the evaluation criteria and address project sustainability.

d. Impact and measurable outcomes

Applicants should identify clear goals and demonstrate how the proposed activities will have substantial potential for job creation, workforce development, inclusion, and business and economic development. Activity outputs and program outcomes should be presented through a narrative and also entered in the Integrated Work Plan described above (also *see* Attachment C to this FFO). Below is a description of activity *outputs* and program *outcomes*:

- Activity Output: The immediate results of the proposed activity, which may not in-and-of themselves indicate movement towards the larger objective. Applicants must describe activity outputs and the proposed reporting timeframe.[8]

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[8] Since the different funding sources have different performance periods, applicants should include reporting timeframes according to the requirements of each funding source. *See* section IV of this FFO.

- Program Outcome: The medium and long-term changes that reach objectives as the result of the activity. Applicants must describe the program outcomes and how they will be tracked, measured and reported over time.

  EXAMPLE: If an applicant requests funding to train workers to fill skill gaps, an activity *output* could be the number of participants trained. Applicants should clearly state how many participants they intend to train through that activity using the indicated inputs (funding, partners, etc.) and the timeframe in which they will do so. A program *outcome* for worker training activities could be the number of participants that enter and retain employment one quarter after exiting from the program. This helps reach the objective to fill skill gaps and ultimately place workers in employment.

While each Funding Agency identifies 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 should state how each additional metric would correspond with an activity funded by a specific Funding Agency.

Applicants must also describe mechanisms for tracking and reporting on these outcomes. The Integrated Work Plan (Attachment C) includes a column for the Program Outcome Data Source and Reporting. Applicants must briefly describe the system for tracking and reporting all outputs and outcomes – both Funding Agency metrics and those metrics proposed by the applicant. The outcome reporting indicates how the applicant intends to report the information, for example through an annual report. Program outcome reporting may often require gathering baseline data to monitor growth or change. If that is the case, the applicant should include baseline data collection as a data source that will be collected for program outcomes. Finally, the applicant must indicate the unit of measurement for each performance metric (for example, by the cluster, region, specific groups of businesses, or other area/entities).

The following table presents the Funding Agency activity output or program outcome metrics.

Agency Program Output and Outcome Metrics:

Agency/funding Source	Agency Output Metrics	Agency Outcome Metrics
EDA Economic Assistance All recipients of EDA funds are required to submit reports on their activities, which must include at least some of the delineated metrics.	Applicants should propose output metrics based on activities. Metrics may include the number of actions as a result of investments and other applicable economic development metrics.	- Amount of private investment generated. - Total number of jobs created. - Total number of jobs retained.
ETA H1-B Technical Skills Training Applicants must provide projections for each of the metrics listed for each type of individual served (incumbent (employed) workers, unemployed workers, and/or students).	- Total participants served. - Total participants beginning education/training activities. - Total participants completing education/training activities. - Total participants who complete education/training activities that receive a degree, or other type of credential. - Total number of credentials each participant is expected to receive.	- Total participants who complete education/training activities who enter unsubsidized employment (This outcome is not applicable for incumbent, employed workers). - Total participants who complete education/training activities who are placed into unsubsidized employment, who retain an employed status in the first and second quarters following initial placement (this includes incumbent workers who retained their positions or advanced into a new position after the program). - The average wage that participants will earn at placement into unsubsidized employment (this includes incumbent workers who retain their positions or advance into new positions and get wage gains after the program).
SBA 7(j) Eligible Small Business Technical Assistance All recipients of SBA funds are required to submit reports on their activities, which must include at least some of the delineated metrics.	- Number of 7(j) eligible small businesses trained and type of training. - Number of 7(j) eligible small businesses counseled. - Number of 7(j) eligible small businesses assisted in obtaining financing and the amount of that financing. - Number of 7(j) eligible small businesses assisted in exporting. - Number of 7(j) eligible small new firms joining the cluster.	- Increase in number of jobs created. - Increase in number of jobs retained. - Increase in number of new business starts. - Increase in wages. - Increase in revenues. - Increase in new products. - Growth of export sales. - Growth of domestic sales. - Increased number of businesses participating in cluster. - Increased satisfaction of cluster participants. - Increase in technology/product transfer from laboratory to marketplace. - Increase in adoption of new technologies or processes. - Strengthened supply chains. - New patent applications. - Increased venture capital financing. - Market expansion.

Applicants must provide projections for all outcome categories relevant to measuring the success or impact of the activity. The applicant's projected outcomes will be used as the basis for negotiating the outcome objectives for the grant.

Applicants requesting ETA funds must collect participant-level data on individuals who receive education/training and other services provided through the grant. This data will be the basis for reporting against the outcomes listed above as well as additional outcomes that will be defined through reporting requirements. An applicant must collect and report participant-level data from the following categories: demographic and socioeconomic characteristics; services provided; and outcomes achieved. In order to get post-program data, grantees are expected to either obtain data from the State wage records database or re-contact program participants.

Examples of Other Activity Output or Program Outcome Metrics:

Applicants are encouraged to identify additional performance metrics that can be used to assess the impact the funding will have. Applicants should provide relevant and viable performance metrics that align with applicants proposed activities. Applicants are encouraged to present the most relevant output and outcome metrics for their proposed activity. For example, a product commercialization activity may have a very different set of outputs and outcomes compared to a training activity. Applications will not be considered to be stronger simply because they provide a long list of performance metrics. Applicants must provide evidence that metrics will be met, will lead to outcomes related to the purpose of the grant such as increased number of jobs, will be tracked, and will be reported. Additionally, grantees should propose how they will use metrics for continuous program improvement. The following examples highlight some additional metrics that can be used to demonstrate the impact of proposed activities.

- Increase in rates of commercialization, including, if applicable, commercialization of Federally funded research.
- Job creation by 7(j) eligible small businesses and women-, minority-, veteran-, service-disabled veteran-, and tribally-owned businesses and small businesses.
- Number of new businesses created by women-, minority-, veteran-, service-disabled veteran-, and tribally-owned businesses and 7(j) eligible small businesses.
- Increase in sales revenues, from process or product innovations or new product development among existing companies in the cluster.
- Cost savings realized by companies from introduction of new technologies and process innovations.
- Increase in number of 7(j) eligible, women-, minority-, veteran-, service disabled veteran-, and tribally-owned businesses and small businesses engaged in exporting.

- Increase in exports (by dollars and/or volume) and job growth due to exports.
- Increase in the location quotient for the cluster.
- Increase in the number of jobs and employment rates for workers from historically underrepresented and excluded communities, which may include women, minority, veteran, service-disabled veteran, and Native American workers.
- Increase in job training and placement for individuals from historically underrepresented, excluded, low income, and high unemployment communities.
- Decrease in income inequality in the region.
- Decrease in unemployment rates and of disparities in unemployment rates.

e. Qualifications, Project Management and Project Feasibility

i. Competency of Management and Communications.

Applicants should fully describe and demonstrate the competency of each application team member to develop and implement the proposed activities with the funds requested from each Funding Agency and describe the programmatic, administrative, and fiscal capabilities that will enable the successful implementation of the project. Applicants must demonstrate the active involvement of personnel who have a strong commitment to the project and the partnership it encompasses, and show that they will commit staff with demonstrated expertise and success in project management, public-private partnerships, workforce development, small business development, and/or economic development.

The application must fully describe the proposed approach for overall project management and communications, including how each application team member will oversee activities funded by each Funding Agency. Applicants must demonstrate that the project will be implemented through a defined leadership structure and a comprehensive management structure that allows for efficient and effective communication among all levels of the project and across the application team and partner organizations. An organizational chart of all relevant leadership, program, administrative, and advisory positions, and a communications plan must be included as supplemental materials at the end of the Technical Proposal. Applicants may include a separate organizational chart for each Scope of Work (for EDA, ETA and SBA).

ii. Inclusive Leadership and Participation.

The application must fully demonstrate that the cluster leadership, or the consortium of organizations coming together to propose and implement cluster development activities, includes participation from historically underrepresented and excluded communities. This could be through incorporating representative organizations or individuals in the design of

activities and strategies to expand the cluster and ensure the growth benefits a wide range of people in the region. In this section, applicants should describe how this inclusive participation will help reach the goals of expanding cluster opportunities to historically underrepresented and excluded communities as well as bringing new partners into the cluster leadership.

3. **Addenda to the Technical Proposal**

In addition to the Technical Proposal, the applicant must submit the required addenda to the Technical Proposal. Applications that do not include the required addenda will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed. Agency-specific addenda must be compiled and submitted as three separate PDF files by the respective Funding Agency. This includes résumés of key personnel, the budget narrative, matching share commitment letters, partner organization commitment letters, facilities and administrative or indirect cost rate agreement (if applicable), and other agency-specific requirements. Other addenda should be submitted in one PDF file (including the abstract, Integrated Work Plan, application team written agreement, and non-profit requirements, as applicable).

The required addenda to the Technical Proposal are:

- Abstract: Not to exceed two pages, the Abstract will serve as a summary of the proposed project and will be shared publicly in the form originally submitted; therefore, applicants should avoid including proprietary, confidential commercial/business, and personally identifiable information. The Abstract must include the following sections: (a) the project name; (b) the identified region; (c) the identified cluster; (d) a summary of the integrated project and project objectives; and (e) a brief description of the activities to be funded by each funding source.

- Integrated Work Plan: Applicants must input details from the Scope of Work into an Integrated Work Plan using the suggested template found in Attachment C to this FFO. Attachment C and section V.D.2 provide instructions and further information to complete the Integrated Work Plan.

- Résumés of Key Personnel (by Funding Agency): Applicants must provide résumés for key personnel involved in the project. The résumés should state the activity(ies) and corresponding Funding Agency on which the key personnel will be working. Résumés must be a maximum of one page, and information beyond one page will not be considered.

- Budget Narrative (by Funding Agency): The budget narrative must provide a description of costs associated with each line item on each Form SF-424A. The budget narrative must be present for each Funding Agency, and describe each budget line-item over the entire project period. 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 the Scope of Work.

- Matching Share Commitment Letters (for EDA): Each applicant must provide a commitment letter from each applicable matching fund 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 funds, and the amount of matching funds. Letters must be a maximum of one page, and information beyond this length will not be considered.

- Partner Organization Commitment Letters: Applicants must provide one letter from each partner organization outlining the commitment and role of the organization in the proposed project. Each letter should include a short description of the partner, its proposed involvement in activities that would be supported by funds from EDA, ETA or SBA, and confirm the commitment to fulfill their responsibilities during the life of the grant as outlined in the Scope of Work (*see* section V.D.2.b.ii). The Partner Organization Commitment Letter should be consistent with the role of the partners identified in the Scope of Work, including the activities they will help implement, and should identify any leveraged resources that partners will provide to support the project. For application team members requesting ETA funds, *see* section IV.B.3 of this FFO for required partnerships. Each applicant must submit one signed letter of commitment from the partners supporting ETA-funded activities. Partner Organization Commitment Letters must be a maximum of one page, and information beyond one page will not be considered.

- Application Team Written Agreement: If more than one organization is applying for funds under this FFO, the application team must provide a copy of the written agreement signed by each application team member that reflects a binding commitment to undertake the proposed project and perform the roles and responsibilities identified in the Technical Proposal.

- Facilities and Administrative or Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (for EDA and SBA): If and only 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 that the applicant is applying for a Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate Agreement. Applicants that do not have a current Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate agreement negotiated and approved 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 220, "*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 Department of Commerce's Office of Acquisition Management (or applicable cognizant Federal agency) within ninety days from the award start date.

- 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 will be required to provide it. If you have questions regarding this requirement, contact the appropriate regional office listed on the EDA website at http://www.eda.gov/AboutEDA/Regions.xml.

- Non-profit organizations applying for funding must submit the following**,** in addition to all items listed above.
  - o For applicants requesting ETA assistance:
    - 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).
  - o For applicants requesting EDA assistance:
    - 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).
    - 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 and/or commit the organization in the management of an award and/or expend funds. A revised Form CD-346 may be accessed at http://ocio.os.doc.gov/s/groups/public/@doc/@os/@ocio/@oitpp/documents/content/dev01_002454.pdf.

E. Application submission format requirements

Applications must be submitted electronically in accordance with the procedures provided at www.grants.gov. The Funding Agencies will not accept applications transmitted by facsimile, email, courier, or postal mail.

Applicants should not wait until the application closing date to begin the submission process. In order to submit an application through www.grants.gov, applicants first must register for a www.grants.gov user id and password. Note that this process can take

several days. This time should be factored into plans for submission in order to avoid unexpected delays that could result in the rejection of an application. Information about the www.grants.gov registration process can be found at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp. Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. Please note that organizations already registered with www.grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their Central Contractor Registration (CCR)[9] database registration up-to-date and must designate the person submitting the application on behalf of the organization as an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR).

Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. As part of the registration process, you will register at least one AOR for your organization. AORs registered at www.grants.gov are the only officials with the authority to submit applications at www.grants.gov. If the application is submitted by anyone other than your organization's AOR, it will be rejected by the www.grants.gov system and cannot be considered for funding. Note that a given organization may designate multiple individuals as AORs for www.grants.gov purposes. However, applicants must register the individual who is able to make legally binding commitments for the applicant organization as the AOR; this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid submissions.

The following instructions provide step-by-step instructions for accessing, completing, and submitting an application via www.grants.gov:

a) Navigate to the URL www.grants.gov.
b) Select "Apply for Grants" from the left-hand menu at www.grants.gov.
c) Ensure that you have installed Adobe Acrobat Reader 8.1.3 on your computer as other versions of Adobe Acrobat Reader may cause errors, whether those versions are older or newer.
d) Select the link "Download a Grant Application" package.
e) Enter "JobsAccelerator2011" 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 Adobe Acrobat Reader 8.1.3 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 this competitive solicitation and then move this to the "Optional Documents for

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[9] Please note that all applicants must apply for and maintain a current CCR database registration. All applicants must register with the CCR before submitting an application. Step-by-step instructions for registering with CCR can be found at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/org_step2.jsp.

Submission" box. Click on "Attachments" and move this to the "Optional Documents for Submission" box. The Attachments Form allows applicants to attach the Project Narrative and other documents required as attachments under this competition.

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. Save the application package at regular intervals to avoid losing work.

l) Attach the Project Narrative and other required attachments. The preferred electronic file format (for the Technical Proposal and any other required addendums) is PDF.

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 applicant's AOR must be connected to the Internet and will be prompted to enter the appropriate www.grants.gov user id and password in order to electronically submit the application.

Once an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process in which the application may be accepted or rejected by the www.grants.gov system. The process may take 24 to 48 hours to complete. Additionally, once an application is submitted, www.grants.gov may notify the applicant that the application contains an error. In this case, the applicant must correct the error before the system will accept and validate the application and it can be received by EDA on behalf of the funding agencies. EDA will consider the date and time stamp on the validation generated by www.grants.gov as the official submission time.

Verify submission was successful. Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at www.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 Partner Agencies or has been rejected due to errors. Please note that it can take up to two business days after www.grants.gov receives an application for applicants to receive email notification of an error. An applicant will receive a third email once the Funding Agency has retrieved an application.

Applicants should refrain from submitting multiple copies of the same application package. Applicants should save and print both the confirmation screen provided on the www.grants.gov website after the applicant has submitted an application, and the confirmation email sent by www.grants.gov when the application has been successfully received and validated in the system. If an applicant receives an email from

www.grants.gov indicating that the application was received and subsequently validated, but does not receive an email from www.grants.gov indicating that the Funding Agency has retrieved the application package within 72 hours of that email, the applicant may contact JobsandInnovationChallenge@eda.doc.gov to inquire if the Funding Agency is in receipt of the submission.

It is the applicant's responsibility to verify that its submission was received and validated successfully at www.grants.gov. To see the date and time your application was received, log on to www.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 www.grants.gov, and an agency tracking number assigned. If your application has a status of "Received," it is awaiting validation by www.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 www.grants.gov may reject an application can be found at http://e-grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf. Applicants that choose to submit on or close to the deadline are advised that they may not receive email notification of an error until after the deadline, and, in this case, will not have an opportunity to resubmit their application.

Systems issues. If you experience a www.grants.gov "systems issue" (technical problems or glitches with the www.grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission, please (a) print any error message received; and (b) call the www.grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with www.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 AOR submits the application, or (c) notice receipt of an email message from www.grants.gov, are not considered systems issues. A www.grants.gov "systems issue" is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of www.grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by www.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 www.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): http://www.grants.gov/help/general_faqs.jsp. If you do not find an answer to your question under the "Applicant FAQs," try consulting the "Applicant User Guide" or contacting www.grants.gov via email at support@grants.gov or telephone at 1-800-518-4726. The www.grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Withdrawal of Applications: Applications may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before an award is made. Please make the written request to JobsandInnovationChallenge@eda.doc.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. Applicants need to have a strong proposal for each Funding Agency in order to get full points for their application. Evaluation will include review of the Technical Proposal and other materials submitted as addenda to the Technical Proposal. *See* section V.D.2 of this FFO for more details. Applicants must adhere to the page limits outlined in section V.D.2 of this FFO. Additional application materials not requested under this FFO will not be reviewed or evaluated.

Evaluation Criteria	Points
1. Integrated Cluster and Region	25
2. Cluster Needs and Opportunities	15
3. Project Narrative	25
4. Project Impact and Measurable Outcomes	25
5. Qualifications, Project Management and Project Feasibility	10

1. Integrated Cluster and Region (25 points)

Criterion 1 will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant provides clear descriptions and information required in section a of the Technical Proposal (section V.D.2.a of this FFO). Scoring will be based on the extent to which the applicant: clearly describes the geographic focus, or region, of the proposed project through a narrative and data; presents a clear description of the economic cluster that will be the focus of the proposed project activities; describes the cluster's current composition and its development, including evidence of a concentration of firms in the identified industry; demonstrates that the region possesses unique assets to support the cluster and has a competitive advantage in the identified industry; demonstrates existing cluster

partnerships and that partners convene or are otherwise actively involved in cluster development; demonstrates effective use of Federal resources (if applicable); describes effective existing partnerships that aim to increase the participation of historically underrepresented and excluded communities in the cluster; and provides evidence that the identified cluster is high-growth and has significant potential to cultivate new jobs, businesses and export opportunities.   If no Federal partners are currently supporting the cluster, the applicant should state this. Applicants will not be penalized if these resources are not currently present in the cluster.

2. Cluster Needs and Opportunities (15 points)

Criterion 2 will be evaluated based on the extent to which the application includes required information in section b of the Technical Proposal (section V.D.2.b of this FFO) and addresses sections VI.A.2.a and b (described below).   Applicants will be evaluated on the extent to which they address all of the sections and sub-sections. If the cluster does not have a need or unaddressed opportunity in one of these areas, the applicant must explain how this area is currently being addressed. Applicants will not be penalized if there is no need or opportunity in some of these areas; however, applicants will be unable to earn the full points for this section if any section or sub-section is not addressed.

a. Economic, Business and Workforce Development Needs and Opportunities (8 points)

   Applications will be evaluated in this section based on the extent to which the applicant fully identifies cluster needs and/or opportunities related to innovation and commercialization, small business and entrepreneurship (including for 7(j) eligible businesses and entrepreneurs), exports, cluster planning, promotion or partner integration, and fully describes the current and projected employment opportunities during the project period in the targeted industry and/or occupation; and provides evidence of gaps between the skills that employers need, the skills of the available workforce, and gaps in the training available to the workforce.

b. Inclusion Needs and Opportunities (7 points)

   Applications will be evaluated in this section based on the extent to which the applicant identifies economic disparities in the region, highlights socioeconomic differences faced, for instance, by women, minorities, disadvantaged individuals, veterans, and people with disabilities, and demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the barriers that create those disparities, if those barriers are persistent and/or accelerating, and how removal of those barriers will help reach larger cluster competitiveness goals and have longer term impacts on the entire region.

3. Project Narrative (25 points)

Criterion 3 will be evaluated based on the extent to which the application includes required information in section c and sub-sections i-iv of the Technical Proposal (section V.D.2.c of the FFO) and addresses sections VI.A.3.a, b and c (described below).

a. Integrated Project Concept and Scopes of Work (15 points)

This section (VI.A.3.a) will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant presents a coherent and comprehensive Integrated Project Concept (*see* section V.D.2.c.i) that fully integrates three funding sources to reach common objectives and the objectives included in this FFO, and presents a coherent and comprehensive project that demonstrates the applicant's complete understanding of all responsibilities and costs required to implement each phase of the project within the timeframe of the individual Funding Agency performance period.

This section will also be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant presents a clear and well-organized Scope of Work by Funding Agency (*see* section V.D.2.c.ii), explains how proposed activities will address the identified needs or opportunities for the cluster and reach articulated objectives, identifies and explains the roles of the entity or entities that will oversee activity development and implementation, articulates how additional inputs and partnerships will be integrated into the project to help meet objectives, and describes how partners will manage the inclusion of historically underrepresented and excluded communities into the proposed activity.

b. Inclusion (5 points)

Applications will be evaluated in this section (VI.A.3.b) based on the extent to which applicants provide compelling evidence that the proposed activities are appropriate to address the identified barriers, present a coherent and comprehensive program to incorporate historically underrepresented and excluded communities into the cluster, and ensure those communities benefit from the long-term opportunities of a growing regional economy. In addition, applicants will be evaluated on the extent to which they provide examples of how these strategies have been tried in the past, either in the targeted region or elsewhere, the impacts of those strategies, and a rationale for why they will be appropriate in the proposed environment. The applicant should include this information in each of the Scope of Work sections of the Project Narrative, as described in section V.D.2.c.ii of this FFO.

c. Plan for Project Sustainability (5 points)

Applications will be evaluated in this section (VI.A.3.c) based on the extent to which the applicant demonstrates resources to ensure institutional capacity to support the cluster in the long-term, demonstrates strong potential to continue to

develop the cluster without significant future Federal funding, and describes how partnerships and leaders in the region have a deep commitment to support and engage the cluster. The applicant should include this information for each activity in the Scope of Work sections of the Project Narrative, as described in section V.D.2.c of this FFO.

4. **Project Impact and Measurable Outcomes (25 points)**

Criterion 4 will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant documents and provides credible evidence through the Project Narrative and Integrated Work Plan that the proposed activities will lead to quantifiable impacts that benefit the regional economy and will support the cluster, and how well the specific quantifiable outputs demonstrate achievement of identified implementation objectives, and the specific quantifiable outcomes demonstrate achievement of proposed project objectives. In addition, applications will be evaluated on the extent to which applicants present practical and clear tracking and reporting mechanisms for outputs and outcomes for activities funded by distinct Funding Agencies, and present outputs and outcomes which are linked to achieving the objectives identified in this FFO, such as commercialization, business formation, expansion of existing businesses, the development of a skilled workforce, job creation, exports, sustainable and inclusive economic development and global competitiveness. If data for output and outcome measures are not publically available, the applicant must clearly specify how they will collect data on the proposed measures.

The applicant should include this information in the Project Impact and Measurable Outcomes sub-sections of the Scope of Work for each Funding Agency and the Integrated Work Plan, as described in section V.D.2.d of this FFO.

5. **Qualifications, Project Management and Project Feasibility (10 points)**

Criterion 5 will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant addresses sections a and b described below. The applicant should include this information in each of the Qualifications, Project Management and Project Feasibility sections of the Scopes of Work as described in section V.D.2.e.i and ii of the FFO.

a. Competency of Management and Communications (5 points)

Applications will be evaluated in this section (VI.A.5.a) based on the extent to which applications present: a qualified and competent application team; a clear and effective communications plan; and capacity to effectively manage the programmatic, fiscal and administrative aspects of the proposed project.

b. Inclusive Leadership and Participation (5 points)

Applications will be evaluated in this section (VI.A.5.b) based on the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the cluster leadership, or the application

team coming together to propose and implement cluster development activities, includes participation from historically underrepresented and excluded communities by, for example, incorporating representative organizations or individuals in the design of activities and strategies of the cluster. Applications will also be evaluated on the extent to which the applicant presents how inclusive participation will help reach the goals of expanding cluster opportunities to historically underrepresented and excluded communities, as well as bringing new partners into the cluster leadership.

B. Review Process

1. Responsiveness Review

Each Funding Agency will conduct an initial eligibility and responsiveness review of applications submitted and received by the deadline stated in section V.A of this FFO. Each Funding Agency will independently review for its agency-specific requirements. This review will determine if the application satisfies: (a) all requirements for a complete submission (including all required forms and addenda to the Technical Proposal); and (b) agency-specific eligibility criteria (listed by agency in section IV of this FFO). Applications found to be responsive will be forwarded for merit review.

Applications that do not contain all forms and required documentation for a Funding Agency will be deemed non-responsive and excluded from further consideration for any funds under this FFO. EDA's responsiveness review will also include a statutory and regulatory compliance assessment for each responsive application. ETA will conduct this assessment during the final award negotiation.

2. Merit Review Panels

Upon completion of the responsiveness review, Merit Review Panels comprised of officials from the Funding Agencies and Partner Agencies will review and evaluate applications deemed responsive. The Merit Review Panels will evaluate the applications against the evaluation criteria enumerated in section VI.A. The Merit Review Panels will award up to 100 points to each application and forward the 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 Funding Agencies will review the top ranked applications. 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 cluster development and expansion. 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

The agency principals include the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training, and the Associate Administrator for Government Contracting and Business Development of the Small Business Administration. 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,[10] who will review award recommendations and select EDA awards for their respective region. The ETA selecting official will be the ETA Grant Officer. The SBA selecting official will be the Associate Administrator for Business Development.

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 makes a selection out of the recommended order, the selecting official must document the rationale for the decision in writing. Before final selection the selecting official will verify that recommended awards will not violate financial, legal or departmental regulations. An application will be considered ineligible and not considered for an award if an organization: owes an outstanding and unresolved financial obligation to the Federal government; is currently suspended, debarred or otherwise prohibited from receiving awards of contracts or grants from the Federal government; has an outstanding and unresolved material deficiency reported under the requirements of the Single Audit Act or OMB Circular A-133 within the past three years; has had a grant or cooperative agreement involuntarily terminated for cause or non-renewed by SBA for cause; has filed for bankruptcy within the past five years; or proposes to serve as a pass-through and permit another organization to manage the day-to-day operations of the project.

C. Transparency

The agencies and bureaus involved in this initiative are committed to conducting a transparent grant award process and publicizing information about program outcomes. Applicants are advised that the Abstract for all applications will be shared publicly; *see* section V.D.3, Addenda to the Technical Proposal. In addition, applicants are advised that their respective applications and information related to its review and evaluation may be made publicly available, either fully or partially. For further information on how proprietary, confidential commercial/business, and personally identifiable information will be protected *see* section VIII.B, Freedom of Information Act Disclosure. In addition, information about the grant award progress and related results may also be made publicly available.

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[10] EDA's six regional offices are located in Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, Denver, Philadelphia, and Seattle.

Section VII. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notification

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, with the exception of applications for funding from SBA, request a written debrief on their submitted application. A list of successful awardees will be posted on-line on the EDA, ETA, and SBA websites (including the Jobs Accelerator webpage at http://www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/jobsandinnovationchallenge).

Important: Selection of an organization under this FFO does not constitute approval of the application 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. 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.

- ETA may elect to award the H-1B Technical Training Grant funds with or without engaging in discussions with the successful applicant. Should a grant be awarded without discussions, the award will be based on the applicant's signature on the Form SF-424, including electronic signature via E-Authentication on www.grants.gov, which constitutes a binding offer by the applicant.

- SBA applicants selected for awards will receive written notification.

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

a. 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.

b. 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. Indirect costs are not allowed on construction projects under the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program. 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. part 220, *Cost Principles for Educational Institutions (OMB Circular A-21)*; (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.

c. Funding Restrictions

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

Economic Adjustment Assistance Program are provided in 13 C.F.R. part 307, subpart A.

2. **ETA**

a. Administrative Program Requirements

The ETA funds awarded under this FFO will be subject to the following administrative standards and provisions:

    i.   Non-Profit Organizations – OMB Circular A–122 (Cost Principles), codified at 2 C.F.R. part 230, and 29 C.F.R. part 95 (Administrative Requirements);

    ii.   Educational Institutions – OMB Circular A–21 (Cost Principles), codified at 2 C.F.R. part 220, and 29 C.F.R. Part 95 (Administrative Requirements);

    iii.   State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments – OMB Circular A–87 (Cost Principles), codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 225, and 29 C.F.R. Part 97 (Administrative Requirements);

    iv.   Profit Making Commercial Firms – Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) – 48 C.F.R. part 31 (Cost Principles), and 29 C.F.R. Part 95 (Administrative Requirements);

    v.   All grant recipient must comply with the applicable provisions of 20 C.F.R. 667 Subpart F;

    vi.   All entities must comply with 29 C.F.R. Part 93 (New Restrictions on Lobbying), 29 C.F.R. Part 94 (Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)), 29 C.F.R. 95.13 and Part 98 (Government-wide Debarment and Suspension, and drug-free workplace requirements), and, where applicable, 29 C.F.R. Part 96 (Audit Requirements for Grants, Contracts, and Other Agreements) and 29 C.F.R. Part 99 (Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations);

    vii.   29 C.F.R. Part 2, subpart D—Equal Treatment in Department of Labor Programs for Religious Organizations, Protection of Religious Liberty of Department of Labor Social Service Providers and Beneficiaries;

    viii. 29 C.F.R. Part 31—Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Labor—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;

    ix.   29 C.F.R. Part 32—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance;

    x.   29 C.F.R. Part 35— Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the Department of Labor;

    xi.   29 C.F.R. Part 36—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance;

    xii.   29 C.F.R. Part 37 – Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; and

    xiii. 29 C.F.R. Parts 29 and 30—Labor Standards for the Registration of

Apprenticeship Programs, and Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training, as applicable.

b. Other Legal Requirements

ETA notes that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (42 U.S.C. § 2000bb) applies to all Federal law and its implementation. If your organization is a faith-based organization that makes hiring decisions on the basis of religious belief, it may be entitled to receive Federal financial assistance under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act and maintain that hiring practice even though Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act contains a general ban on religious discrimination in employment. If you are awarded a grant under this FFO, you will be provided with information on how to request such an exemption.

c. Other Administrative Standards and Provisions

Except as specifically provided in this FFO, ETA's acceptance of an application and an award of Federal funds to sponsor any programs(s) does not provide a waiver of any grant requirements and/or procedures. For example, the OMB Circulars require that an entity's procurement procedures must ensure that all procurement transactions are conducted, as much as practical, to provide open and free competition. If an application identifies a specific entity to provide services, ETA's award does not provide the justification or basis to allow sole source procurement (i.e., avoid competition) unless the activity is regarded as the primary work of an official partner to the application. Grantees that use sub-grantees are advised that for commercial organizations, the earning of profits is not an allowable cost item. For governmental, non-profit, and public or non-profit educational institutions, earnings above actual costs incurred are to be treated as program income. Any program income earned must be used towards program purposes.

General economic development projects, including revolving loan accounts, do not meet the H-1B requirements for training and development of job opportunities in high-growth industries and occupations. Examples of general economic development that may not meet this standard include but are not limited to infrastructure investments in businesses, increases in inventory, participation in trade shows, revolving loan accounts, new or additional equipment used for purposes other than training activities, capital asset purchases, and other costs not specifically related to increases in actual job opportunities.

d. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

3. SBA

a. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All successful applicants will be required to comply with the requirements set forth in 2 C.F.R. parts 215, 220, 225, and 230, 13 C.F.R. part 143, and OMB Circular A-133 (as applicable); the Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (Form SF-424B); and the terms and conditions set forth in their Notices of Award. In addition, SBA may, from time to time, advise recipients of awards made under this announcement of new legal requirements and/or policy initiatives with which they must agree to comply.

b. Prior Approval

    i. Certain actions on the part of a recipient organization require prior approval by SBA. Where necessary, the recipient must submit written requests for prior approval to the Technical Representative within 30 calendar days prior to taking the proposed action.

    ii. Refer to 2 C.F.R. part 215.25 or 13 C.F.R. part 143.30 for a list of those actions that require prior approval. Note especially that prior approval is required for changes in the scope or objective of the project, changes to the budget, changes in key personnel specified in the application or Notice of Award, and for any plans for contracting with others to perform work covered by the award in the amount of $25,000 or above.

    iii. As noted above, SBA must approve in advance the employment or replacement of all key employees (e.g., managers, directors, technical or subject matter experts, etc.) who will be involved in the performance of the project. The recipient must submit résumés and position descriptions for each key personnel to the Technical Representative for approval prior to the employment of the candidate. Résumés must contain sufficient detail regarding the experience and education of the candidate, as well as a brief description of how the candidate meets other general and special qualifications for the position.

    iv. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. Appendix A, Part 220.18; 2 C.F.R. Appendix B, Part 225.15; or 2 C.F.R. Appendix B, Part 230.15, the recipient must obtain advance approval from SBA before it may use award funds to purchase equipment costing more than $5,000. See 2 C.F.R. part 215.30 through 215.37 or 13 C.F.R. part 143.32 for guidance regarding the property management standards that apply to equipment acquired with Federal funds. Items of equipment costing less than $5,000 are considered supplies rather than equipment and should be identified as such in the recipient's budget. The use of award funds to purchase such items does not require prior approval from SBA.

c. Sub-awards and Contracting

i. The award may not be sub-granted, either in whole or in part, to a third party. The recipient may contract with other parties for the performance of certain project support functions in accordance with the terms of the Notice of Award. However, the recipient must perform a substantial portion of the work under this project utilizing its own staff. In addition, the recipient may not, under any circumstances, contract out the overall administration or day-to-day management of the project to any other party.

ii. The recipient must submit to the Technical Representative copies of proposed contracts for SBA approval when contracting with others to perform work covered by the award when the amount of award funds involved is $25,000 or above.

iii. Within 30 calendar days of the date of the Notice of Award, the recipient must submit for SBA approval copies of all of the procurement policies and procedures that it will follow in carrying out the project. These procedures must identify how the recipient will comply with the requirements of 2 C.F.R. part 215.40 through 215.48 or 13 C.F.R. part 143.36, including the requirements for awarding contracts through full and open competition. Non-competitive contracting may be permitted in limited circumstances only upon a showing of necessity.

iv. When contracting under this award, the recipient must comply with all applicable procurement laws, including the Copeland "Anti-Kickback" Act (18 U.S.C. § 874 and 40 U.S.C. § 276c), the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. § 276a), and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. § 327 et seq.). The recipient also must comply with those Executive Orders and regulatory requirements pertaining to Equal Employment Opportunities (E.O. 11246, E.O. 11375, and 41 C.F.R. part 60) and Debarment and Suspension (E.O. 12549 and E.O. 12689).

v. The recipient shall agree to furnish the GMO and Technical Representative, upon request, with copies of any requests for proposals, invitations for bids, cost estimates, contracts, rental agreements, leases, payment plans, studies, reports, and other documents that pertain to the performance of the project, whether prepared by the recipient or one of its contractors.

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 any 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 agencies and their Offices of Inspector General also may conduct an audit of an award at any time.

D. Required Training for Recipients

Successful applicants under this FFO are required to participate in all EDA, ETA, and SBA training activities related to orientation, financial management and reporting, performance reporting, product dissemination, and other technical assistance training as appropriate during the term of the award. These trainings may occur via conference calls, through virtual events such as webinars, and in-person meetings. Applicants should budget for at least two staff members to attend two in-person training events during the term of the award.

E. Project Evaluation

The Funding Agencies are considering a range of options for evaluation of the outcomes and benefits of the Jobs Accelerator, including evaluation conducted with existing resources at each Agency as well as potential retention of an independent evaluation firm. By accepting any 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.

F. 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 metric outputs and outcomes, as presented in the recipient's Technical Proposal and Integrated Work Plan (*see* section V.D.2).

   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.d. The recipient will be required to submit bi-annual reports.

2. **ETA Reporting Requirements**

   Under this FFO, grantees who receive H-1B technical training funds must satisfy ETA's reporting requirements. Quarterly financial reports, quarterly progress reports, and MIS data must be submitted electronically by the grantee. The grantee is required to provide the reports and documents listed below:

   - Quarterly Financial Reports. A Quarterly Financial Status Report (ETA 9130) is required until such time as all funds have been expended or the project period has expired. Quarterly reports are due 45 days after the end of each calendar year quarter. Grantees must use ETA's Online Electronic Reporting System. Information and instructions will be provided to grantees.

   - Quarterly Performance Reports. The grantee must submit a quarterly progress report within 45 days after the end of each calendar year quarter. The report must include quarterly information about grant activities. Grantees must collect participant-level data on individuals who receive education/training and other services provided through the grant. This data will be the basis for reporting against the outcomes included in the Final Performance Report as well as additional outcomes that will be defined through reporting requirements. An applicant must collect and report participant-level data from the following categories: demographic (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, disability status) and socioeconomic characteristics; services provided; and outcomes achieved. Grantees will be required to report on post-program outcomes for all participants, as well as on post-program follow-up and tracking activities for all participants.

   - Final Performance Report. The last quarterly progress report that grantees submit will serve as the Final Performance Report. This report should provide both quarterly and cumulative information on the grant activities. It must summarize project activities, employment outcomes and other deliverables, and related results of the project, and should thoroughly document the training or labor market information approaches used by the grantee. ETA will provide grantees with formal guidance about the data and other information that is required to be collected and reported on either a regular basis or special request basis.

Applicants must follow Federal guidelines on record retention, which require grantees to maintain all records pertaining to grant activities for a period of not less than three years from the time of final award close-out.

3. SBA Reporting Requirements

All recipients of SBA funds are required to submit reports on their activities. SBA may withhold payment if reports are not received or are deemed inadequate. Failure to report in a timely manner will also be weighed against future applications for grant funding from the same organization and the exercise of any option periods. The reports provided by recipients may be made public. In addition, SBA reserves the right to require recipients to post these reports on their web sites.

Performance Reports

- The recipient must submit quarterly performance reports to SBA. SBA may withhold requested payments if reports are not received or are deemed inadequate. SBA will provide grantees with formal guidance about the data and other information that is required to be collected and reported on either a regular basis or special request basis.

Financial Reports

A Quarterly Financial Status Report SF-425 is required until such time as all funds have been expended or the project period has expired. Quarterly reports are due 30 days after the end of each calendar year quarter.

- The final/4th quarter report is due 90 calendar days after the end of each 12-month budget period. Failure on the part of the recipient to submit an adequate financial report may result in the suspension of continued funding until such time as the inadequacy is addressed to SBA's satisfaction.

Section 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, the Department of Labor, ETA, nor SBA are under any obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award or to make any future award(s). Amendment or renewal of an award to increase funding or to extend the period of performance is at the discretion of 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 C.F.R. part 4, the Department of Labor's implementing regulations at 29 C.F.R. part 70, and the Small Business Administration's record disclosure and privacy regulations at 13 C.F.R. 102, et seq., 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), the Department of Labor, or SBA, and may be considered grounds for any or all of the following actions: (1) establishing an account receivable; (2) withholding payments to the recipient under any Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, or SBA award(s); (3) changing the method of payment from advance to reimbursement only; (4) imposing other special award conditions; (5) suspending any active Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, or SBA award(s); and (6) terminating any active Department of Commerce, or Department of Labor award(s).

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

1. DUNS Numbers 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 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 $25,000 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.

E. Contact Information

Applicants should e-mail all technical questions to JobsandInnovationChallenge@eda.doc.gov, and include in the e-mail a contact name, e-mail address, and phone number. Any Frequently Asked Questions that are developed will be posted on the Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge website at http://www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/jobsandinnovationchallenge. This website also includes information that prospective applicants may find useful, including in-depth materials on regional clusters and workforce development.

Attachment A: H-1B Visa Information

Visit the Department of Labor's Foreign Labor Certification Data Center Web site (http://www.flcdatacenter.com/CaseH1B.aspx) for the latest database of occupations approved under H-1B petitions.

Top 2010 H-1B Visas by North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) Codes, Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Codes, SOC Occupation Titles, and Annual Median Wage

STEM – PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND TECHNICAL SERVICES (NAICS: 54)

SOC CODES	SOC OCCUPATION TITLES	ANNUAL MEDIAN WAGE
11-9041	Engineering Managers	117,000
15-2041	Statisticians	72,820
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	77,020
17-2071	Electrical Engineers	83,110
17-2072	Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	89,310
17-2051	Civil Engineers	76,590
17-2041	Chemical Engineers	88,280
17-2199	Engineers, All Other	89,560
17-1011	Architects, Except Landscape and Naval	72,700
17-2031	Biomedical Engineers	78,860
17-2131	Materials Engineers	83,190
41-9031	Sales Engineers	83,190
19-1021	Biochemists and Biophysicists	82,390
19-1029	Biological Scientists, All Other	66,510
19-2031	Chemists	68,220
19-4021	Biological Technicians	38,700
19-1099	Life Scientists, All Other	63,970
19-1021	Biochemists	82,390
19-2012	Physicists	106,390
19-1022	Microbiologists	66,580
19-2032	Materials Scientists	80,300
19-3011	Economists	86,930
27-1024	Graphic Designers	43,180
27-3031	Public Relations Specialists	51,960

MANUFACTURING (NAICS: 31-33)

SOC CODES	SOC OCCUPATION TITLES	ANNUAL MEDIAN WAGE
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	92,650

11-1011	Chief Executives	160,720
11-2022	Sales Managers	96,790
11-3051	Industrial Production Managers	85,080
13-1111	Management Analysts	75,250
13-1081	Logisticians	67,960
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	75,110
27-1021	Commercial and Industrial Designers	58,060
27-1022	Fashion Designers	64,260
27-1014	Multi-Media Artists and Animators	58,250

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (NAICS: 61)

SOC CODES	SOC OCCUPATION TITLES	ANNUAL MEDIAN WAGE
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Vocational Education	52,200
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	50,510
25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	84,840
25-1124	Foreign Language and Literature Teachers, Postsecondary	56,740
25-1011	Business Teachers, Postsecondary	73,320
25-3099	Teachers and Instructors, All Other	31,540
25-1022	Mathematical Science Teachers, Postsecondary	63,640
25-1032	Engineering Teachers, Postsecondary	85,830
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Vocational	50,770
25-2041	Special Education Teachers, Preschool, Kindergarten	50,950

HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE (NAICS: 62)

SOC CODES	SOC OCCUPATION TITLES	ANNUAL MEDIAN WAGE
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	81,850
19-1042	Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	74,590
29-1069	Physicians and Surgeons, All Other	> 166,400
29-1123	Physical Therapists	74,480
29-1051	Pharmacists	109,180
29-1063	Internists, General	> 166,400
29-2011	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	55,140

SOC Codes	SOC Occupation Titles	Annual Median Wage
29-1122	Occupational Therapists	69,630
29-1111	Registered Nurses	63,750
29-1062	Family and General Practitioners	160,530
29-1199	Health Diagnosing and Treating Practitioners, All	65,220
29-9099	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other	44,670
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	65,090
29-1021	Dentists, General	142,090
29-1065	Pediatricians, General	152,240

INFORMATION (NAICS: 51)

SOC Codes	SOC Occupation Titles	Annual Median Wage
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers	113,720
15-1021	Computer Programmers	70,940
15-1051	Computer Systems Analysts	77,080
15-1031	Computer Software Engineers, Applications	87,480
15-1032	Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software	93,470
15-1071	Network and Computer Systems Administrators (incl. Computer Security Specialists)	67,710
15-1061	Database Administrators	71,550
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	70,070
15-1099	Computer Specialists, All Other (includes Software Quality Assurance Engineers and Testers; Computer Systems Engineers/Architects; Network Designers; Web Developers; and Web Administrators)	77,010
15-1081	Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts	73,250
15-1041	Computer Support Specialists	44,300
15-1011	Computer and Information Scientists, Research	101,570
15-2011	Actuaries	87,210
17-2061	Computer Hardware Engineers	98,820

FINANCE AND INSURANCE (NAICS: 52)

SOC Codes	SOC Occupation Titles	Annual Median Wage

11-3031	Financial Managers	101,190
13-2051	Financial Analysts	71,750
13-1111	Management Analysts	75,250
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	60,340
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	60,610
13-2041	Credit Analysts	57,470
13-2099	Financial Specialists, All Other	58,350

Attachment B: Explanation of and Parameters for On-the-Job Training

Under this FFO, On-the-Job Training (OJT) will follow the definitions and requirements under the Workforce Investment Act section 101(31). Incumbent workers are not eligible for OJT under this FFO. OJT is provided under a contract with an employer in the public, private-nonprofit, or private sector. Through the OJT contract, occupational training is provided for the grant participant in exchange for the reimbursement to the employer of up to 50 percent of the wage rate to compensate for the employer's extraordinary costs of training the individual. The employer pays wages to the participant. The Workforce Investment Act regulations, at 20 C.F.R. 667.264, specifically prohibit grant funds from being spent on payment of wages of incumbent employees. For complete information on the specific Workforce Investment Act parameters for OJT, please refer to Workforce Investment Act regulations 20 C.F.R. 663.700 – 663.710, as well as 20 C.F.R. 663.730.

Applicants will be required to follow the parameters for OJT included in the WIA law and regulations with the following policy exceptions:

- Eligible participants cannot be currently employed by the employer;
- Participant placements may only occur in private for-profit and non-profit sectors (i.e., the grant does *not* allow for public sector placements);
- No placement may be made in agencies providing workers on a temporary basis to employers for which the agency receives compensation from the employer;
- The period of reimbursement should be an adequate length to ensure the participant has acquired the technical skills needed for employment but no longer than 12 months. Individuals may not be co-enrolled in other ETA programs for the purpose of extending OJT beyond 12 months. Twelve months exceeds the average length of time for current WIA OJT activities, so grantees should negotiate contracts with employers that lead to transitioning participants to permanent employment as soon as possible. ETA's expectation is that grantees would establish contracts that may be longer than 12 months; however, the reimbursement for each individual that participates in OJT cannot be longer than 12 months.

Typically, the negotiated reimbursement percentage for OJT under WIA may be as high as 50 percent of the participant's hourly wage. However, for grants awarded under this Solicitation, the negotiated reimbursement percentage may be as high as 90 percent of the participant's hourly wage based on employer size: up to 90 percent of the participant's wage rate for employers with 50 or fewer employees; up to 75 percent of the participant's wage rate for employers with 51 to 250 employees; and up to 50 percent for employers with more than 250 employees. Grantees are also encouraged to negotiate lower rates or variable rates (such as starting at 90 and reducing the subsidy over time) where possible to ensure that the maximum number of participants is served by the project.

Finally, upon receipt of a grant, applicants must develop sound OJT contracts. The contract process sets the ground-rules for an OJT with an employer and assists in making the determination if an employer is eligible to provide an OJT opportunity. The contract must include the Federally required elements of an OJT agreement; however, States, counties or

municipalities may have additional contract requirements. Contracts also outline the terms and conditions that the employer and OJT provider agree to provide for an OJT experience. Contracts with an employer can be set up for a specific period of time but need not necessarily specify the individual trainees to whom they apply. This allows the employer to provide training to more than one trainee. If an employer only has one position or plans to limit the training experience to one employee, then a contract must also include the individual trainee's information. For these grants, contracts must provide that the employer is responsible for documenting skills gained by participants during the training period. It should also include a description of how the reimbursement level was determined. For sample templates and other resources, grantees may access ETA's on-line technical assistance related to an OJT contract at the following web address: https://ojttoolkit.workforce3one.org/page/contracts_and_mods.

Attachment C: Integrated Work Plan Template

All applicants are required to submit an Integrated Work Plan using the following suggested template or a format of their choice. 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 V.D.2.c and d for a detailed description and requirements.

Objective	Resources/ Inputs	Activity	Activity Output (& reporting timeframe)	Program Outcome	Program Outcome Data Source & Reporting
Example: Accelerate the formation of new financial services-focused small businesses.	SBA grant funds (Funding Agency) MBDA Business Center	Technical assistance for 7(j) eligible small and minority-owned businesses	12 months: 50 SMEs receive specialized TA - at least 15 minority owned	20 new businesses participating in the cluster, at least 2 minority owned	Baseline reporting at project initiation (applicant) Annual reporting based on established data source (census)
	EDA grant funds (Funding Agency)	Cluster intermediary outreach to small and minority-owned businesses	12 months: Conducts 40 outreach calls - at least 12 minority owned	200 new jobs created in the cluster	Baseline reporting at project initiation (applicant) Bi- annual reporting based on established data source (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
Example: Train workers to fill financial services skill gaps identified by the cluster	H1-B funds (Funding Agency) Existing community college resources WIA funding to train dislocated workers Software donated by a local bank Outreach by local community-based organization	Initial assessment of participant skill levels Comprehensive case management services to unemployed workers Industry-recognized financial services training course at Community College	Q2: Initiate assessments and case management services Q3: Start enrolling participants Q6: First cohort of participants completes training At the end of 48 mo. 200 total participants served. - 125 unemployed workers served -75 incumbent workers served -160 participants receive degree or credential	150 participants enter employment in the cluster 70 participants retain employment in the cluster 130 participants earn an average or above-average wage in the region	Baseline reporting at project initiation (applicant) Quarterly reports to DOL

Attachment C, continued
Integrated Work Plan Definitions

- **Integrated Work Plan**: Demonstrates how the proposed project concept will produce substantial benefits and meet the objectives of this FFO.

- **Objective:** The proposed solution to an identified need in order to support and/or grow the cluster.

- **Resources/Inputs**: What will be invested in the project (funds, partners, equipment, etc.) to meet the objective. This should include funding sources included in this FFO, as well as leveraged funds if applicable.

- **Activity:** The specific proposed activities or programs for which the inputs will be used.

- **Activity Output:** The immediate results of the investment in this activity, and what will be reported to show successful use of resources/funds.

- **Activity Output Reporting Timeframe**: The period of time to produce the activity output. Since different funding sources have different performance periods, applicants should suggest reporting timeframes according to the requested funding source. Appropriate reporting timeframes are intervals of 12, 24, 36 and 48 months, but the applicant can also suggest other timeframes. The EDA performance period is up to 24 months. The ETA performance period is up to 48 months. The SBA performance period is 12 months, and applicants can propose an additional 12 months.

- **Program Outcome:** The medium and long-term changes that lead to achievement of the objective as a result of the activities.

- **Program Outcome Data Source and Reporting:** How the program outcomes will be tracked, measured and reported over time.