



Economic Development Administration (EDA)

Good Jobs Challenge FAQ

(As of December 14, 2021)

This document will be updated as we receive additional questions about this opportunity.

Applicant Conferences (Office Hours)

- Thursday, December 9, 2021, from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Eastern (register [here](#))
- Monday, December 13, 2021, from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Eastern (register [here](#))

Due Date

- Proposals are due Monday, December 20, 2021, by 8:00 p.m. Eastern

Questions about the RFP? Please contact:

- Chief Program Officer – Michelle Rafferty (mrafferty@nationalfund.org)
- Director of Development – Andrea Kippur (akippur@nationalfund.org)
 - The National Fund will respond in writing to all questions submitted by December 13, 2021; questions and answers will be shared with all prospective applicants, including those posed during the applicant conferences.

Quick Links

[Good Jobs Challenge RFP](#)

[EDA Website](#)

[National Fund Website](#)

Good Jobs Challenge

Q1. What industries will be considered?

The National Fund plans to target one or all of the following industries, with the final selection dependent on the focus of the collaboratives selected through this RFP: healthcare, construction and skilled trades, and manufacturing. The National Fund selected these industries to align with the expertise, employer partnerships, and experience of the majority of our regional workforce collaboratives. These industries also offer employment opportunities that meet EDA's definition for a good job.

Q2. Are sites allowed to join the National Fund application or will the National Fund wait for a potential award before selecting partners? Is the National Fund encouraging collaboratives to apply on their own?

Given the level of specificity required to fully answer many of the questions included in the Good Jobs Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the National Fund determined our application will be far more competitive if it describes the targeted regions and partners. Federal rules require grantees to competitively procure any subgrantee(s). While this can happen either before or after the grantee submits its proposal to EDA, the grantee should name specific partners in its proposal only if they have already been procured.

The National Fund released its RFP on December 3, 2021, to select interested and qualified regional workforce collaboratives by the first week of January. The National Fund will then work with selected subgrantees to further develop the proposal prior to submission by January 26, 2022. Regional collaboratives that plan to submit a proposal directly to EDA remain eligible to also respond to the National Fund's RFP for subgrantees.

Q3. Is a match required?

EDA does not require match or leveraged funds as a condition of an award, but both are highly encouraged. The National Fund will expect selected grantees to provide a letter of commitment that identifies and describes cash and in-kind resources that can be leveraged to deliver the proposed project. Further, the ability to secure match resources is an evaluation factor for the National Fund's RFP.

Q4. Is there a specific format for the submission to the National Fund by December 2021? **Additional information added on 12/14/21 in response to follow-up questions received at the applicant conference.****

Microsoft Word or PDF are both acceptable, as all materials should be submitted electronically to the National Fund's general email address (info@nationalfund.org) and cc'd to Abby Wood, program manager, at awood@nationalfund.org.

Please limit your response to no more than three (3) single-spaced pages in total. In recognition that applicants may be using existing language and documents to respond to the RFP, applicants may exceed this page limit if it reduces the burden of preparing a proposal. We are anticipating brief responses, and bullet points are acceptable for submission. You may attach or include a link to existing reports or content if it responds direct to the question(s) in the RFP. Please ensure any attached reports or content do not exceed an aggregate total of the equivalent of 10 single-spaced pages. If this limit is exceeded, the National Fund will only consider the first 10 pages in its evaluation of the proposal.

In an attempt to further streamline this process, we have developed applicant questions to assess current capacity, existing employer relationships, and activities already

underway for each collaborative. The National Fund does not require or expect applicants to develop and propose initiatives. The National Fund is using the RFP to evaluate applicant readiness to participate in a Good Jobs Challenge grant opportunity.

The National Fund aims to select multiple applicants that demonstrate they have the existing capacity and employer relationships to implement one or more sector partnership training programs, and we do not seek to exclude qualified and competitive applicants. Responses are also directly aligned with information requested by EDA and will assist the National Fund in creating its proposal.

Q5. How many sites are you going to include in the proposal? What amounts are you thinking?

The National Fund anticipates selecting multiple collaboratives but has not identified a firm targeted number of sites to include in its proposal. The National Fund will base the number of sites on the volume and quality of proposals it receives, as well as the capacity of the National Fund and network to successfully implement a multi-site Good Jobs project.

The National Fund anticipates requesting a grant amount from EDA that will enable it to award three (3) year grants of up to \$900,000 to \$1,800,000 to each selected regional collaborative.

Prior to submission of its proposal to EDA, the National Fund will work with selected subgrantees to develop a budget that aligns with the proposed outputs and outcomes in each region. The National Fund will base the total budget request on the number of regions and industries to be targeted.

Q6. Are there any precluding issues that would keep us from being part of the application with the National Fund?

If a collaborative is not currently in the National Fund network, they will need to seek membership and meet all network criteria in order to qualify for a grant. The National Fund will consider these applicants to be eligible if they can demonstrate how they will meet the below criteria prior to the start of the EDA grant period (late summer 2022). Please see [membership FAQ](#) for more information. The National Fund typically requires new collaboratives to wait three months before they can receive funding, but the National Fund is waiving that requirement for this RFP.

Criteria

- Collaborative with a signed National Fund 2020–2024 Collaborative Agreement.
- An organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and exempt from taxation under Section 501(a) or if the Collaborative is not a 501(c)(3) organization, the collaborative must designate an organization to receive the funds.
- Employ a current site director or interim site director with active search for permanent director underway.

Q7. Can new National Fund collaboratives apply for the Good Jobs Challenge?

Yes, the National Fund is waiving the standard three-month waiting period for funding opportunities for new collaboratives. See also response to Q9.

Q8. I am not a member of the National Fund network, can I apply?

Yes, the National Fund is opening this opportunity up to collaboratives outside of its network in order to promote a full and open competition for potential federal funds. Collaboratives outside of the network must be able to meet the same specific criteria as our members. See also response to Q9.

Q9. Can a collaborative apply for more than one funding opportunity?

Yes. All eligible collaboratives are encouraged to apply. You may receive funding for more than one opportunity, but we try to ensure a mix of recipients where possible.

Questions Added After December 8, 2021

Q10. What qualifies as an industry/sector partnership?

In the NOFO, the EDA defines a sectoral partnership as: a partnership of employers from the same industry who join with other strategic partners to train and place workers into high-quality jobs that the employers need filled and intend to fill through the partnership.

The strategic partners can include: government, education (including community and technical colleges), training organizations, economic development organizations, workforce development organizations, unions, labor management partnerships, industry associations, employer-serving organizations, and/or community-based organizations. A sectoral partnership is focused on one specific industry and one or more specific roles within that industry.

Q11. How will the National Fund evaluate proposals if the applicant describes industry partnerships of different readiness levels?

The National Fund will award up to 40 points to each applicant for their description of existing industry partnerships or other employer relationships. The National Fund will base its evaluation on the strongest industry partnership or set of employer relationships presented by the applicant. For example, if an applicant has both a five-year old industry partnership in healthcare that is highly active and a brand-new effort in manufacturing that is in the planning stages, the National Fund will base its score on the description of the healthcare partnership and will not penalize the applicant for including information on the manufacturing effort.

The National Fund encourages applicants to include information on industry or employer partnerships in all of the target industries as it will inform the future direction and scope of its proposal to EDA. The National Fund will work with selected subgrantees to determine the final focus of its proposal to EDA; based on responses received, it may be advantageous and strategic to include newly formed partnerships in its proposal.

Q12. Do you anticipate dollars for training?

Yes. The EDA expects selected grantees to train unemployed or underemployed workers through sector partnerships and connect them to quality jobs. The National Fund plans to submit a project budget that includes funds for training, wraparound services, project management, as well as costs related to systems change efforts and the management of employer partnerships or collaboratives. The National Fund will develop its project budget collaboratively, after subgrantees are selected.

Q13. Please clarify the available funding amount. Is the \$900,000 – \$1,800,000 range annual or a total to be distributed over the course of the entire grant period?

It is the total to be distributed over the course of the entire grant period. The National Fund anticipates making grants of up to \$300,000 to \$600,000 *per year* to each selected subgrantee in the event it is awarded a grant from EDA.

Questions Added After December 13, 2021

Q14. Do you envision the National Fund also getting dollars out of this? Will this be part of the application?

Yes, the National Fund plans to include costs related to program management, capacity building, provision of technical assistance, third-party evaluation, coordination of data reporting and evaluation efforts, expansion of existing National Fund strategies or tools to new industries or solutions, as well as associated operating and administrative costs. The National Fund may identify additional necessary cost as it further develops the proposal budget.

Q15. Does the application need to include potential numbers to serve?

No – due to the need for an expedited process, the RFP will assess current capacity, existing employer relationships, and activities already underway for each collaborative. The National Fund will work with selected subgrantees to identify the number of job seekers to be served, as well as other outputs and outcomes, in January. Please note the EDA has not set a minimum or maximum target for the number to be served.

Q16. The grant focuses on regions. How confident is the National Fund, as a national entity, in its eligibility to apply to this grant?

Eligibility guidelines shared via the NOFO and during information calls with the EDA do not preclude national-focused entities from applying. Further, the National Fund submitted a question directly to EDA regarding eligibility and they indicated that: “Eligible entities for this funding opportunity are listed in section C.1 of the NOFO. All entities that are eligible are listed here, and as long as you are from an organization that qualifies under this list, then you are eligible to apply as a system lead entity or backbone organization.”

Section C.1. of the NOFO lists the following eligibility entities and the National Fund is a private non-profit organization.

- a. District Organization;
- b. Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes;
- c. State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions;
- d. Institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or
- e. Public or private non-profit organization or association, including labor unions, acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.

The National Fund is confident that as a group that supports multiple regions, it has a strong case for this opportunity. The four-solution framework of the National Fund, and emphasis on job quality and systems change, makes it more likely we can achieve sustainable results even after the grant is spent.

Q17. Other entities in our region are also applying for the Good Jobs Challenge. How aligned should our applications or work be? Could the National Fund application supplement our own organization’s application or one in our region?

The National Fund is committed to working with selected grantees and other collaboratives to determine how to best position and support multiple applications from a single region. Ideally, we will have the ability to explain in our proposal to EDA how our proposed project will complement or supplement other regional proposals.

This could be achieved by demonstrating the projects will target different industries or different occupations. We may also demonstrate the value of more than one regional project by explaining how the National Fund’s focus on advancing racial equity and inclusion through job quality, systems change, co-investment and training efforts will yield different outcomes than another project focused more exclusively on training alone. The National Fund will also provide letters of support or commitment to other applicants proposing to serve the same region(s), outlining our intention to coordinate efforts in order to maximize impact and avoid duplication.

Q18. Do applicants have to explain how their work is aligned with their region's CED?

The EDA has stated: each project funded under the Good Jobs Challenge must be consistent with the current [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#) or [equivalent](#) EDA-accepted regional economic development strategy for the region or regions served by the proposed project. However, the National Fund is not requiring applicants to describe this alignment in their response to the RFP.

Please note that, if selected, the National Fund will need your assistance to (1) describe how the proposed Good Jobs program aligns with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in your region and (2) obtain at least one letter of support from either your local economic development agencies and/or a local unit of government. Prior to submitting the proposal to EDA, the National Fund will need selected applicants to find their local CEDS plan and identify one or more priorities the Good Jobs project will support.

Selected subgrantees will have the opportunity to discuss this further in January with the National Fund.