

Local Technical Assistance and University Center Programs

What is the Technical Assistance Program?

EDA administers the University Center Economic Development program, the Local Technical Assistance program. These two programs help promote economic development and alleviate unemployment, underemployment, and outmigration in distressed regions.

What does the University Center Economic Development Program do?

Institutions of higher education have extensive resources, including specialized research, outreach and technology-transfer and commercialization capabilities, as well as recognized faculty expertise and sophisticated laboratories. The EDA-supported University Center (UC) program is specifically designed to marshal the resources located within colleges and universities to support regional economic development strategies in regions of chronic and acute economic distress. The UCs, which EDA considers long-term partners in economic development, are required to devote the majority of their funding to respond to technical assistance requests originating from organizations located in the economically distressed portions of their service regions.

What does the Local Technical Assistance Program do?

The Local Technical Assistance program helps analyze the feasibility of potential economic development projects, such as an industrial park or a high-technology business incubator. Feasibility studies are an effective tool for determining whether the market will support a particular activity or site. Local Technical Assistance can prevent costly mistakes and misguided investments, such as costly infrastructure improvements to support obsolete industries. Targeted market feasibility studies can help communities overcome these hurdles and identify tomorrow's higher-wage employers. Because of these feasibility studies, many communities have subsequently received funding under EDA's Public Works or Economic Development Assistance programs, or other federal and state programs, to implement those projects.

What criteria are used in determining which projects receive Local Technical Assistance?

- Benefit areas of severe economic distress
- Lead to near-term generation or retention of private sector jobs
- Document strong local support in terms of financial commitment, public and private leadership involvement

What criteria are used in determining which projects receive the University Center designation?

- Focus on areas with significant economic distress
- Address the economic development needs of the area
- Complement, rather than replicate, the efforts of other technical assistance providers in the area
- Furnish evidence that the sponsoring institution will provide significant financial and nonfinancial support for the activities of the proposed University Center

How do I get more information on how to apply?

The Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) is available at www.eda.gov/ffo.htm. To discuss any project proposals in further detail, contact your EDA Regional Office.

