STEM Talent Challenge

FY 2023 Informational Webinar

www.eda.gov/funding/programs/stem-challenge

Topics to be Covered

- Program Eligibility & Funding
- Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE) Basics
- STEM Talent Challenge Origins and Design
- Program Goals and Implementation
- How to Apply
- Previous Grantee Highlights
- Frequently Asked Questions

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Eligible Entities

- Cities, counties, states, other political subdivisions of a state, and Native American tribes
- Non-profit organizations
- Public-private partnerships
- Federal Laboratories or science/research parks
- Institutions of higher education
- Economic Development Organizations
- A consortium of the aforementioned

NOFO Section C.1

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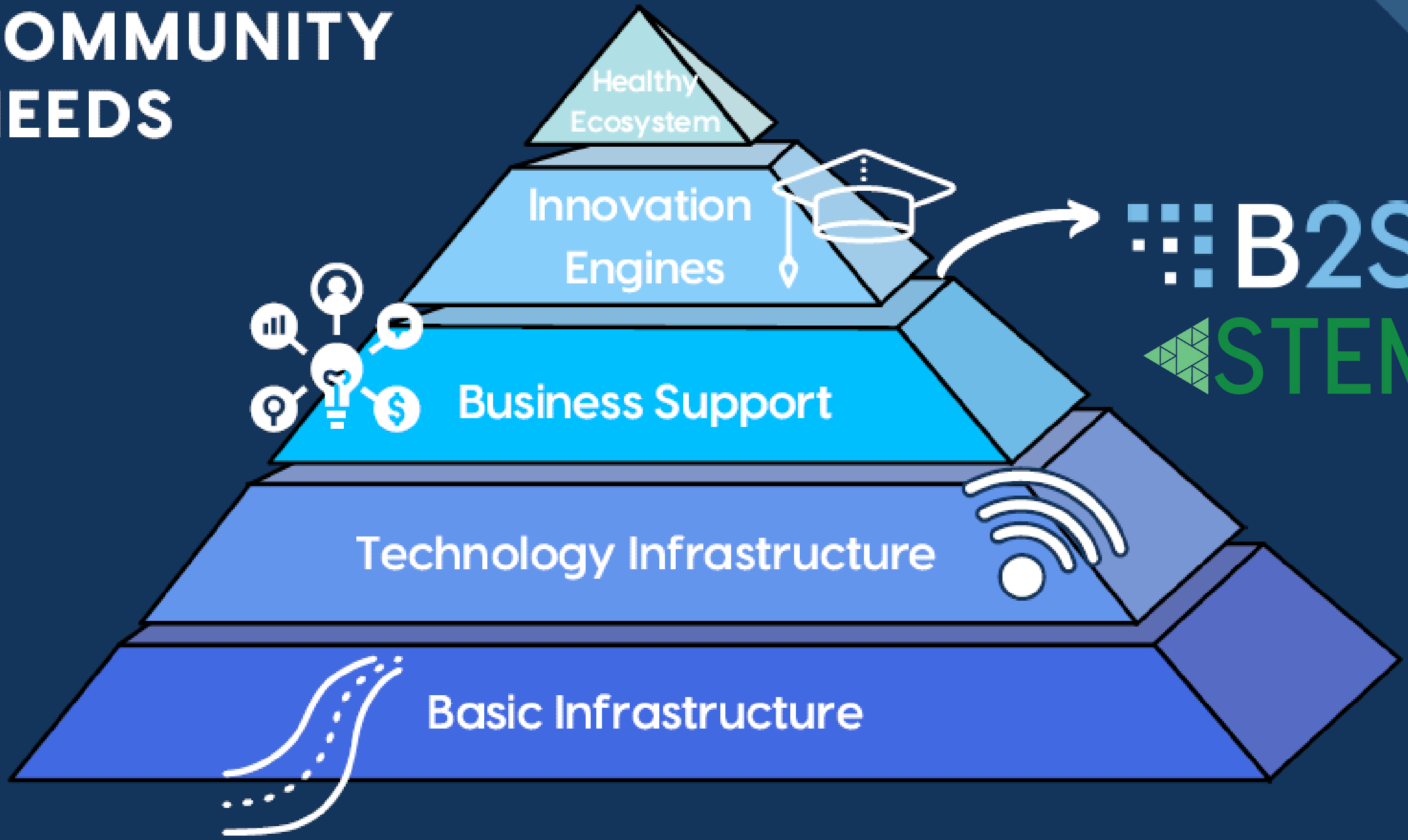
Funding Specifics

- A total of $4.5 million has been appropriated for this year's challenge ($2 million from FY 22 appropriation and $2.5 million from FY 23 appropriation)
- **Applicants may request up to $500,000** for program implementation

A 1:1 (50% of total project budget) minimum match is required

NOFO Section B.2

COMMUNITY NEEDS



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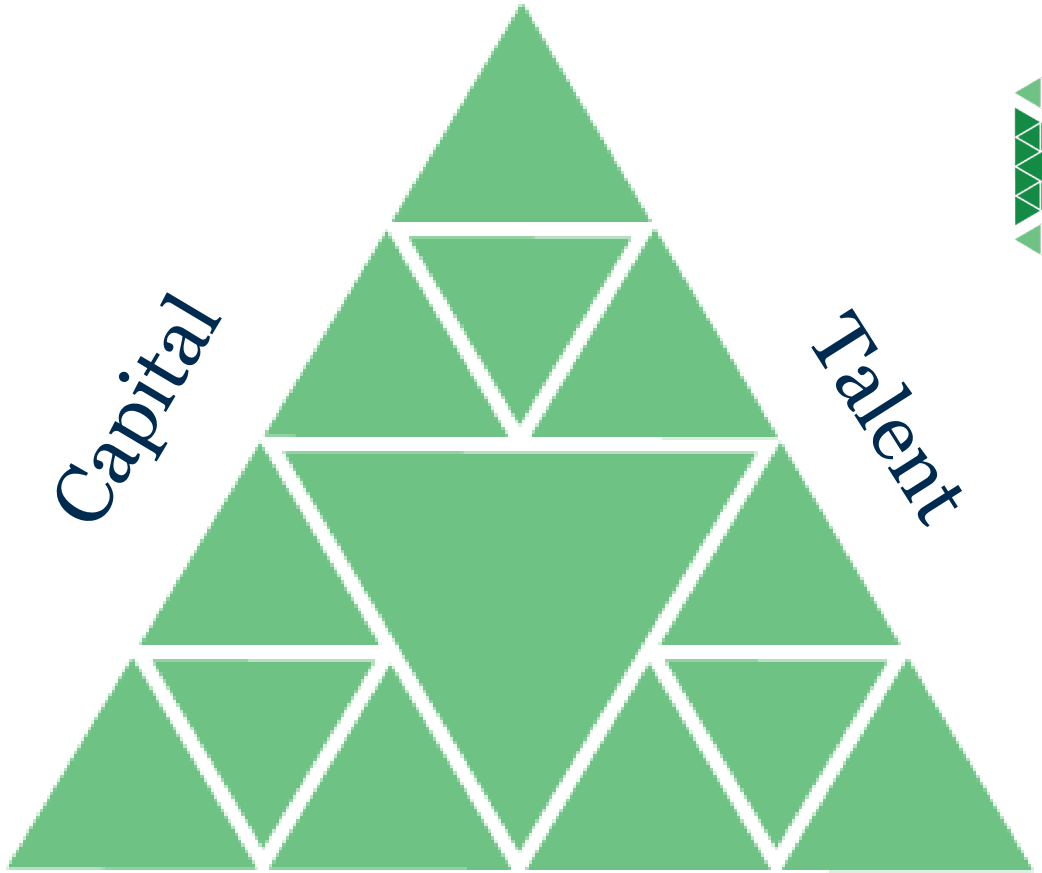
INNOVATION NEEDS



STEM TALENT CHALLENGE

Build to Scale

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STEM TALENT CHALLENGE

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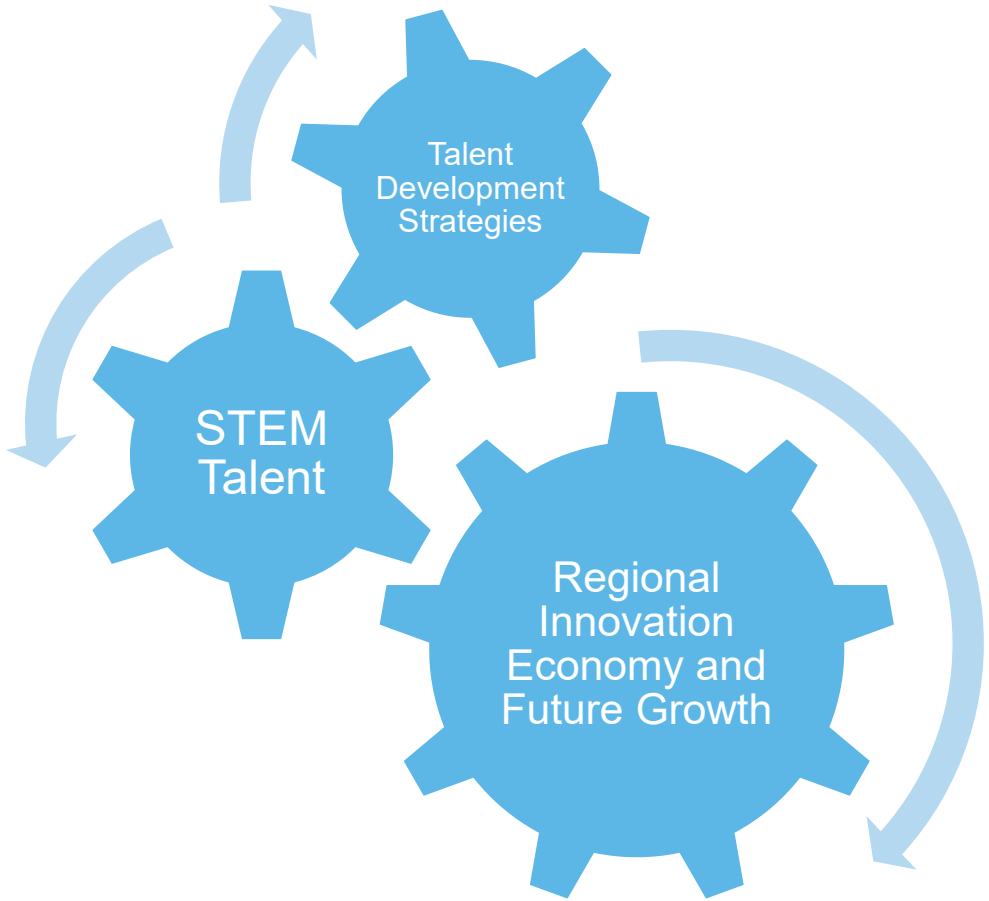

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Pre-application Needs Assessment

- Needs assessment should show that regional businesses have an immediate need for skilled workers to fill quality jobs
- Needs assessment can be formal or informal - a formal needs assessment could be CEDS or equivalent planning document; informal could be a survey conducted of area employers, potentially documented by targeted letters of support

Projects should be responsive!

Training development should be clearly tied to regional employer needs

NOFO Section D.2.iii.a.2.b

Program Goals

Proposed projects should aim for the following outputs

STEM Work-Based Learning and Training

- Projects should include training models that provide workers with the experience and skills they need to succeed in real-word job situations
- These could include Registered-apprenticeships, fellowships, internships, etc. but are not limited to existing industry definitions - Experimentation and innovation are encouraged

Training should clearly align with the talent needs of those driving innovation in the region and should **result in job placement** for participants in **high-wage employmen**t in **high-growth industries**

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Increase Regional Innovation Capacity

- Projects should increase regional innovation capacity by connecting innovative employers in the region with workforce and talent development leaders or training providers
- Projects should enable region's technology startups and innovative companies to hire locally, grow their teams, and scale their businesses faster

Increase Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in STEM

- Projects should focus on enabling all members of a community to have equitable access to and participate in the innovation economy
- Projects should seek to provide historically underserved and underrepresented communities with access to training and other tools to success.
- Applicants should have relevant employer partners who are willing to demonstrate commitments to hiring program participants and to promoting DEIA in their workplace

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How to Apply

The basics on how to submit an application and how it will be scored

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Challenge Timeline

- **April 11, 2023** – FY 23 STEM Talent Challenge Applications Open
- **June 12, 2023** – Applications Close
- **Summer 2023** – Application Review and Award Selection
- **Summer - Fall 2023** – Awards Announced
- **November 1, 2023** – FY 23 Awarded Projects Begin

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Electronic Submission

- **All applications** must be submitted through www.sfgrants.eda.gov (EDGE)
- Registration with EDGE is required
- SAM.gov registration (and a UEI) is necessary to register with EDGE
- You will register one Authorized Representative for your organization; this will be the only official who has authority to submit applications
- The required electronic file format for attachments is PDF and, where appropriate, Microsoft Excel

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Applications must consist of a (maximum) **10-page project narrative**, **budget narrative**, a **series of standard forms**, and **additional supporting documents**

See NOFO for complete application requirements.

https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/stem-challenge

Application Components

PROJECT DESIGN AND SUBSTANCE	FORMS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS
Project Narrative	SF-424
Budget Narrative & Staffing Plan	SF-424A
Matching Share Commitment Letters	CD-511
State/Local Government Support (if applicable)	SF-LLL
(Optional) Letters from Employers	SPOC, Org Docs, NICRA (if applicable)
(Optional) Letters from Project Partners	Project Service Area and FIPS Codes

See NOFO for more information on these components

NOFO Section D.2.ii

Project Narrative Format

- Section 1: Project Description and Overview
  - 1a. Executive Summary – (max) 250 words
  - 1b. Vision, Mission, Goals, Roles
- Section 2: Regional Innovation Resources and Talent Needs
  - 2a. Project Service Area
  - 2b. Needs Assessment
- Section 3: Proposed Solution and Scope of Work
  - 3a. Problems and Solutions
  - 3b. Achievability
  - 3c. Impacted Groups
  - 3d. Proposed Scope of Work

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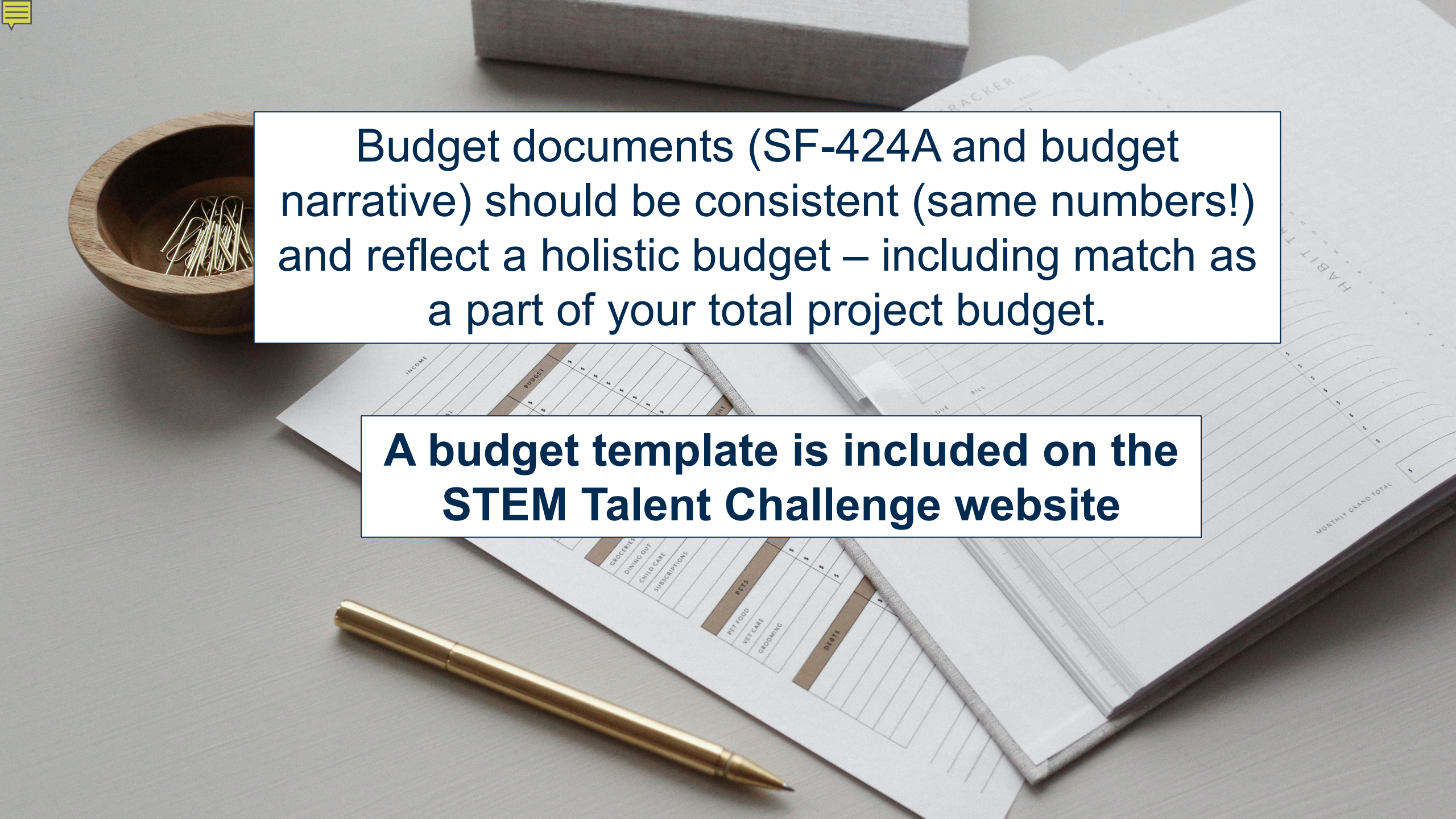
Project Narrative Format (Continued)

- Section 4: Collaboration
  - 4a. Partnerships
  - 4b. Outreach
- Section 5: Measurable Goals and Impacts
  - 5a. Data Infrastructure
- Section 6: Sustainability Plan

NOFO Section D.2.iii.a.1

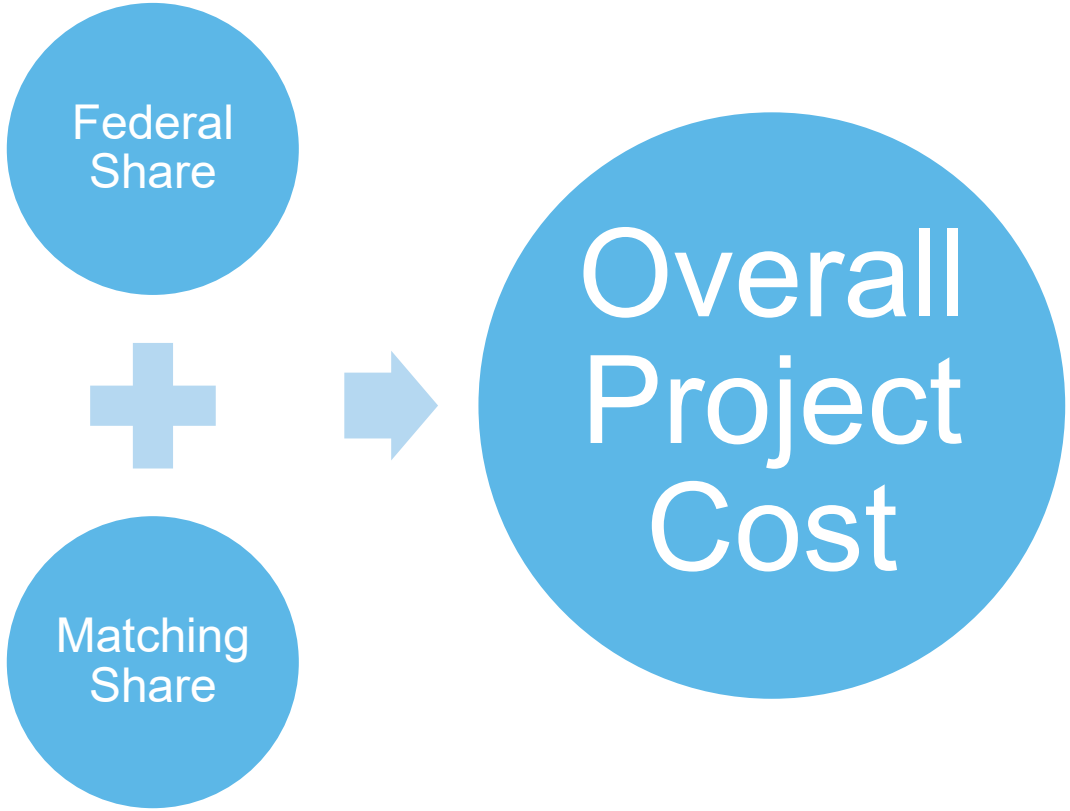


Budget documents (SF-424A and budget narrative) should be consistent (same numbers!) and reflect a holistic budget – including match as a part of your total project budget.

A budget template is included on the STEM Talent Challenge website

Match Requirements

1:1 Funding Match is required



NOFO Section D.2.iii.c

Funds must be **committed** to the project for the period of performance, **available** as needed, and **not be conditioned or encumbered** in any way
Applicants must show that funds are available at the time of application by including signed Commitment Letters from ALL SOURCES of match

Government Support Letters

- Required if applicant is a non-profit organization, non-public institution of higher education, public-private partnership, science or research park, Federal lab, or EDD
- Must include one or more letters or resolutions showing that the application is supported by one or more states, political subdivisions of a state (i.e. city, county), or native organizations that will be served under the proposed project

NOFO Section D.2.iii.d

Project Service Area and FIPS Codes

- Applicants must identify their proposed primary service area(s) by county or counties.

Counties should be identified by both name and 5-digit FIPS codes

- See 2020 State, County, Minor Civil Division, and Incorporated Place FIPS Codes available at https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files/2020/demo/popest/2020-fips.html.
- List of FIPS Codes should be uploaded as an attachment to the SF-424

NOFO Section D.3.ii.d

Letters from Employers

- Applicants *can* include letters from employer partners to further show that their project is likely to be successful and to result in quality jobs for program participants

- These letters could reflect an employer's commitment to serving as a work-and-learn partner and/or to hiring program completers

- While *optional*, letters and/or committed jobs from employers can show that a project is needed by regional employers and *could* help an application score more favorably in merit review

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Evaluation Criteria

- Applications under this NOFO will be reviewed against the following seven criteria. All criteria are scored on a 5-point scale

Summary of Criteria
Strength of Regional Partnerships and Assets
Proposed Solution
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
Measurable Goals and Impacts
Continued Impacts
Budget and Staffing
Alignment with STEM Talent Challenge Goals

NOFO Section E.1

Previous Grantee Highlights

University City Science Center – Philadelphia, PA

Building an Understanding of Lab Basics (BULB)

UCSC utilized STEM Talent Challenge funding to expand their BULB pilot program, a combination of hands-on training and work-based learning, designed to prepare participants for careers in the Biotech Industry.

The program launched in July 2021. As of 9/30/2022 the program has served 48 participants, engaged 19 companies, and resulted in 9 jobs.

Howard Community College – Columbia, MD

A Response to the Cyber Workforce Demand in Central Maryland

Howard Community College expanded its cybersecurity work-and-learn program to reach new employers and participants, particularly those from underrepresented populations. The program included customized training packages combining certification with hands-on work-based learning through apprenticeships and internships.

The program launched in February 2021. As of 9/30/2022 the program has placed 52 students into internships and apprenticeships.

Rung for Women – St Louis, MO

Women in Geospatial Careers

Rung for Women has partnered with Maryville University and Greater St. Louis, Inc. to help meet the needs of employers utilizing geospatial technology. Training consists of the hands-on Geospatial Analyst program, which is backed by employers providing commitment to hire graduates.

The program began in February 2022, and as of 9/30/2022, 3 (of 4) geospatial graduates have been placed in target careers.

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Frequently Asked Questions

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What has changed from the previous challenge?

- Maximum funding request has doubled from $250,000 to $500,000
- Submission is now through EDGE rather than Grants.gov
- All projects should aim to accomplish all three program goals (STEM work-based learning and training, increase regional capacity to hire in innovative industries, increase DEIA in STEM fields)
- Focus on job placement outcomes; employer letters (including commitments to hire) are now encouraged

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My organization received a previous year EDA STEM Talent Challenge Grant. Are we eligible to apply again?

- Organizations who received awards under previous STEM Talent Challenge competitions are eligible to apply for this year's challenge if they will have completed all activities – including final reporting – of the previous award prior to November 1, 2023 – the start date of the new award.

Can this funding be used to directly support program participants, such as through participant wages or stipends?

- Yes, just as in the FY21 competition, STEM Talent Challenge funding can be used to directly support program participants through incentive methods such as wages or stipends.
- Funding can also be spent on **wraparound services**, such as childcare, transportation, and other costs associated with attending training. Costs associated with housing (i.e., rent, utilities, etc.) are generally not allowed.

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How much match is required, how should it be documented, and is there a benefit to "over-matching"?

- A minimum 1:1 match is required for all applications. This means that for ever $1 of federal funding requested, you must bring $1 of matching funds, either cash or in-kind
- Matching funds should be documented through a commitment letter **even if all match is coming from the applicant**. These letters should include the numeric value of the contribution and a valuation for any in-kind contributions (i.e., how you got the value you listed). They should also state that the funds are committed, available, and unencumbered.
- Applicants are allowed to bring more match than the minimum if this is needed for the project, but there is no benefit in scoring to bringing more than the required match

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For additional questions, reach out to us at oie@eda.gov and visit www.eda.gov/funding/programs/stem-challenge

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