

CHAPTER 7: EDA Program Criteria & Regional Project Inventory

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the EDA is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness preparing regions for growth and success in the global economy. The overall guiding principle is to improve the conditions for economically distressed areas of the country.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

A summary of EDA programs is listed below:

- **Economic Adjustment Program** predominantly supports three types of grant activities for strategic planning, project implementation, and revolving loan funds. Activities may include creation/expansion of strategically targeted business development and business financing programs, construction of infrastructure improvements, and industry research and analysis.
- **Short-term Planning Grants** assist in economic development planning and implementation, multi-jurisdictional efforts, and programs designed to create and retain permanent jobs and increase incomes.
- **Technical Assistance Program** grants often support feasibility studies on potential projects such as industrial parks and business incubators, or for the development of revitalization or tourism plans.
- **Public Works Program** supports locally developed projects targeting long term economic self sufficiency. Examples of past projects include infrastructure investments that improved or provided water or sewer facilities, rail spurs, and technology related infrastructure.

EDA Investment Guidelines

The EDA has identified investment priorities and guidelines to evaluate and compare applications. Applications for project funding are evaluated on their ability to meet or exceed the following investment guidelines:

- Be market-based and results driven.
- Have strong organizational leadership
- Advance productivity, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- Look beyond immediate economic horizon; anticipate economic changes, and diversifies the local and regional economy.
- Demonstrate a high degree of commitment by exhibiting high degree of matching funds, leadership and support at the local level, and cooperation.

Eligibility

Each EDA regional office determines project eligibility, but it is generally based upon an averaged 24 month unemployment rate and per capita income (PCI). The grant rate is the maximum percent of funding for a project that is provided by federal grant. Table 7.1 shows where the EDA has determined grant rate eligibility of counties in the Southwestern Wisconsin Region. In our region, Grant, Lafayette, Richland, and Iowa Counties are eligible for up to 50% funding. Green County is not eligible for funding at this time unless declared a federal disaster area.

Table 7.1 EDA Grant Rate Eligibility

Maximum Grant Rate	Distress Criteria	County Eligibility
80%	Federally Declared Disaster Area	
80%	24 month unemployment rate of at least 225% of the U.S. average and PCI of no more than 50% of the U.S. average	
70%	24 month unemployment rate of at least 180% of the U.S. average and PCI of no more than 60% of the U.S. average	
60%	24 month unemployment rate of at least 150% of the U.S. average and PCI of no more than 70% of the U.S. average	
50%	Projects in all other eligible areas; 24 month unemployment rate of at least one percentage point above the U.S. average or PCI of no more than 80% of the U.S. average	Grant, Lafayette, Richland, Iowa

Source: U.S. Economic Development Administration, <http://www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/Application.xml>

Southwestern REGION PROJECT INVENTORY RESULTS & ASSESSMENT

Each year, SWWRPC distributes a Project Inventory Survey to gather information about future projects at the local level pertaining to planning, community and economic development, and capital and public works improvement. The questionnaire asks communities to provide a list of economic development projects for the next three years. The project information provides insight into the needs of communities within the region. Table 7.2 lists all the projects submitted for this CEDS Annual Report.

A total of 96 projects are listed in Table 7.2 Iowa County has the most projects with 25. Grant has 22 projects followed by Richland with 2. Eight projects were regional in nature. The projects generally break out into the following categories:

Development /Redevelopment – Commercial, Downtown, TIF:	4.3%
Transportation:	54.7%
Community Facilities :	14.7%
Industrial/Business Park Development/Redevelopment:	4.2%
Utility Projects (water, sewer, electric, or stormwater):	10.5%
Planning	4.2%
Business Assistance/Development (RLF, Entrepreneurs):	7%

100.0%

Project Scoring Criteria

Each project listed in Table 7.2 will be assessed and categorized using a set of criteria developed by staff from another RPC in Wisconsin. The purpose of the criteria, scored out of 60 points, is to assist the Commission in targeting resources where they will be most beneficial and in line with EDA funding guidelines. A project's score does not necessarily dictate what projects the Commission will concentrate on for a given year. It may be the case that, after looking at higher scoring projects in a given year, they all may have the resources to move forward with little SWWRPC involvement. In this case, Commission resources would be more effectively spent on lower scoring projects that provide economic benefits but lack the resources to move forward. Projects were scored based on information provided on the project inventory forms; thus submitted projects without all items provided may have

received a lower score than if all fields had been completed. Table 7.2 presents projects by community and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation project in the region. The regionally focused projects are at the end of the table.

Potential Regional Initiatives

The CEDS Strategy Committee, in cooperation with SWWRPC Staff, has developed several regional projects they believe are valuable to improving the regional economy. As these projects are in early stages of development, they are listed here to guide future actions taken by the Committee, with the hope that some will reach the point where they are ready to pursue EDA funding. Potential regional initiatives, as identified in 2009, are listed below:

- Entrepreneurial Programming; Marketplace for Kids model
- Bio-Digesters/renewable energy projects
- Business Incubators, Regional feasibility study to determine best location or need

Table 7.2 2009-10 Community Projects Within the Region