

# **Request for Proposals**

## ***University Economic Development Association***

### **ABOUT UEDA:**

Established in 1976, the University Economic Development Association has been working to bring together higher education institutions, private sector businesses, non-profits, government organizations, and community economic development stakeholders to create local and regional economic opportunity. Our membership represents those at the leading edge of modern economic development thinking and practice. UEDA serves its members by promoting knowledge and practice in the realms of talent, innovation, and place as drivers of regional prosperity.

### **PURPOSE**

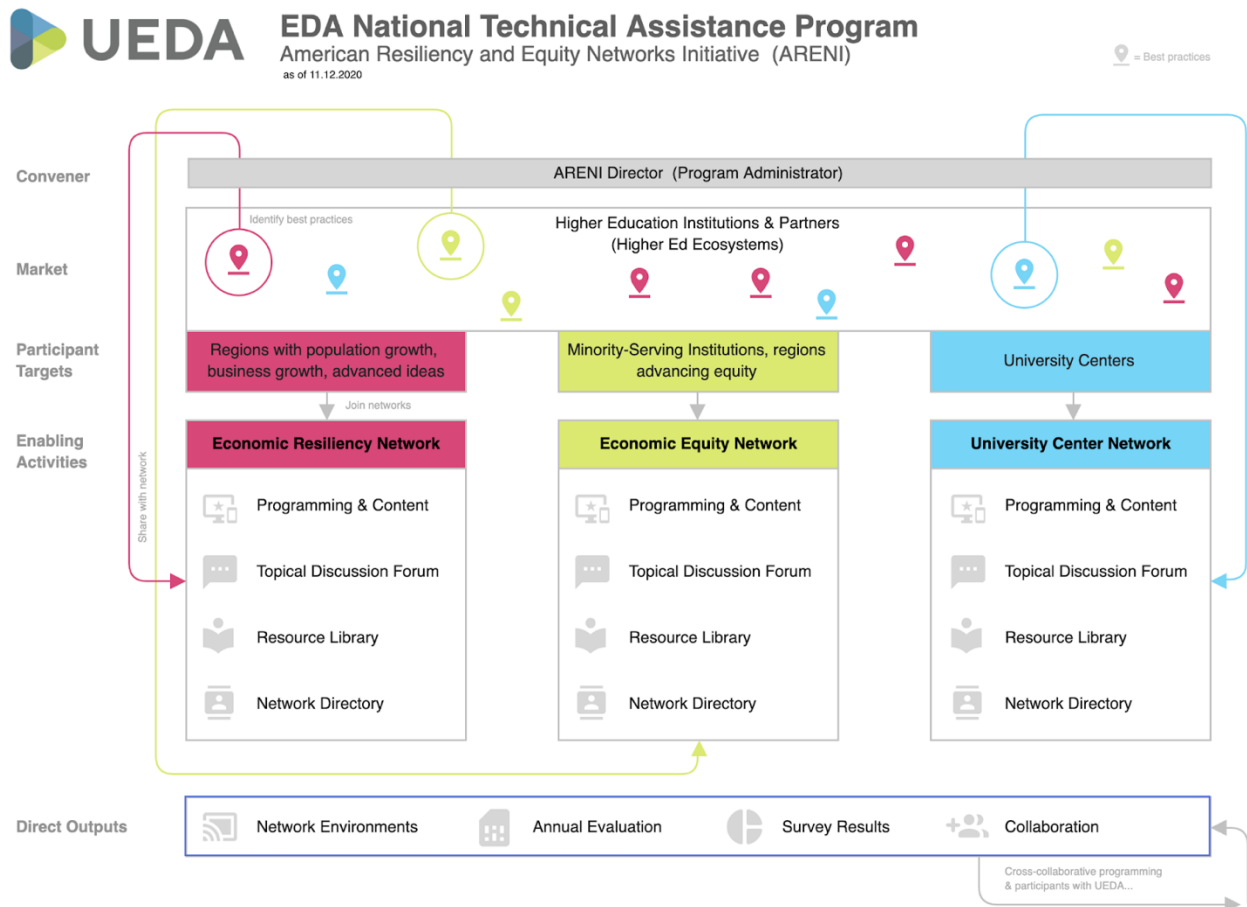
In partnership with Virginia Tech (VT), has been funded by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to develop national networks focused on addressing economic resiliency and equity and convene EDA University Centers to advance regions. Elevating these ideas to a national level, alongside collaborative discussions, will provide learning opportunities and resource-sharing for regions looking for additional ways to tackle these issues.

This American Resilience & Equity Networks Initiative (ARENI) provides a structure for region-to-region collaboration on resilience and equity issues and EDA's University Centers through regular convenings, online forums, and resource libraries. Using UEDA's existing criterion for identifying best practices in higher education economic development, methods will be identified and then evaluated by an Advisory Council on originality, scalability, sustainability, impact, and replicability in other regions. Those methods that favorably meet the criteria will be elevated to present to the appropriate network.

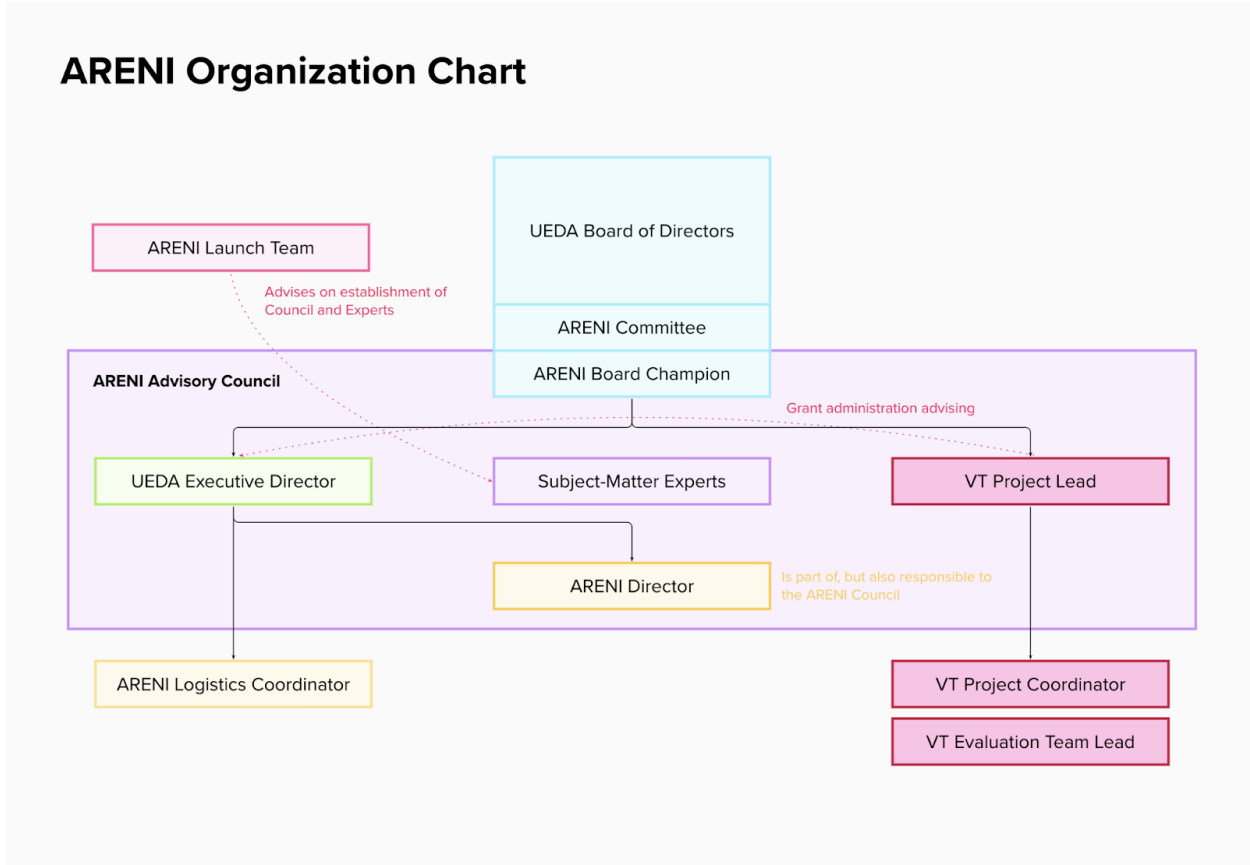
Networks are groups of economic development practitioners interested in a common topic (resiliency, equity, etc.). These networks meet regularly to share regional challenges, work to identify solutions, and collaborate on resources that seek to address the regional challenges. These networks also collaborate in online forums, where participants can share more granular conversations, challenges, and resources. For those appropriate methods, ARENI will develop webinar programming to introduce the concept to broad audiences. Additionally, UEDA has three existing networks (Talent, Innovation, and Place) that will collaborate with ARENI on cross-network/topic collaboration as network leadership meets regularly with each other.

ARENI will also create an in-person event that will serve as a central, annual forum for discussing economic development resiliency and equity. This event will showcase leading commentary in these areas with opportunities for audience members to engage with each other.

ARENI will a) establish networks for resiliency, equity, and University Centers; b) identify and elevate diverse, successful projects, initiatives, and resources in these areas; c) recruit participants from the economic development community of practice, to include diverse higher education institutions and regional ecosystem partners; d) connect and collaborate with participants around best practices within the networks; e) establish opportunities for cross-promoting ideas and opportunities within UEDA existing programming, including networks and ecosystems; and f) provide an evaluation of the ability of this model and the topics discussed to inform systemic, institutional and ecosystem practice in a way that responds to and advances goals as identified in EDA policy priorities, and informs new policy direction, as applicable.



## ARENI Organization Chart



## SCOPE OF SERVICES

UEDA is requesting proposals for a contract for a logistics/IT/programming support organization to manage communication for the ARENI networks. The Logistics Coordinator (LC) will establish the infrastructure in the UEDA membership platform for the network discussion forums. The LC will also coordinate all technical aspects of the project, including developing resource libraries, logistics for convenings and events, and pathways for engagement with network content. The LC will also coordinate and execute general marketing of ARENI to support the ARENI Director in outreach and attraction efforts for best practices and participants. This contractor will work in close collaboration with the ARENI Director, UEDA Executive Director, association management staff, and event management staff to support the ARENI infrastructure and deliverables. The LC will report to the UEDA Executive Director and will be expected to provide necessary reporting and updates to the UEDA Executive Director and occasional updates to the UEDA Board Executive Committee. This project and associated contract will run from the start of the contract date to June 30, 2024 with a total budget not to exceed \$150,000.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Administration:

- Setup ARENI network infrastructure in a CRM System using UEDA's existing CRM platform (Member365), website, virtual event system, and email communication systems.
- Determine network outreach needs
- Plan and execute marketing strategy
- Develop branding and communications guidelines for network
- Participate in ARENI convenings, planning meetings, ARENI Council meetings, and other meetings, as requested by the UEDA Executive Director and ARENI Director

#### Membership Engagement:

- Develop and maintain network membership platform using UEDA's existing membership platform (Member365)
- Design and distribute communications

#### Partnership Development:

- Assist Director with the development of a new member recruitment strategy
- Support with the development of a marketing strategy and communication materials

#### Meetings & Events (in-person):

- Responsible for managing the registration and any non-content logistical aspects of the event.
- Create and send digital invites to attendees
- Manage onsite logistics and planning
- Develop materials and signage for meeting
- Update website content
- Responsible for managing event budget
- Work with event planner on logistics
- Participate in any volunteer committee planning meetings

#### Annual Event (in-person)

- Manage onsite logistics planning and execution
- Develop materials and signage for meeting
- Update website content
- Responsible for managing event budget
- Work with event planner on logistics
- Participate in any volunteer committee planning meetings

#### Webinars & Virtual Events:

- Manage webinar setup and day-of execution
- Develop graphics and materials for meeting promotion
- Develop marketing materials including flyers and email invites
- Manage communications to participants
- Responsible for managing event budget, if needed

#### Marketing & Communications:

- Create marketing materials
- Design and distribute emails and newsletters
- Design and update website
- Draft press releases
- Manage social media outreach

#### Resources Development:

- Provide design assistance as needed
- Implement taxonomies and manage the resource database infrastructure

#### Reporting & Evaluation:

- Provide regular activity reporting to UEDA and VT as required by the funding agency. This includes recording and documentation of time and effort, if requested.
- Design overarching grant reporting templates and dashboards
- Design final report
- Provide design support, as needed
- Manage event and marketing budgets

### **REQUIREMENTS**

#### Applicants must demonstrate:

- Experience in either nonprofit, association or federal grant program logistics management
- Experience in event coordination
- Strong technical experience using CRM, email, website development, and other communications systems
- Communications and design capabilities
- Creativity and solutions-focused
- Strong attention to detail
- Experience working with higher education institutions, economic development professionals, and federal agencies
- Will need to provide proof of liability insurance of at least \$1 million and to list UEDA as additional insured

### **SUBMISSIONS**

#### Applicants shall address the requirements as noted by submitting:

- Cover Letter
- Capacity Statement including identification of project personnel/team
- Work Plan including identification of key milestones and deliverables
- Estimate of project budget timeline not to exceed \$150,000
- A project timeline that aligns with the Work Plan and budget
- References

## **EVALUATION**

The following will be considered in evaluating each proposal:

- Completeness of response to the RFP requirements (incomplete responses may be rejected)
- Proven experience in areas identified
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience within higher education institutions, economic development organizations and federal agencies
- References

## **TIMELINE**

- RFP Released: Sept. 3, 2021
- Q&A Period: Sept. 3 - Oct. 1, 2021
- Submissions Due: October 15, 2021
- Selection of Contractor: November 5, 2021
- Contract Start Date: December 1, 2021
- Contract End Date: June 30, 2024

For this opportunity, please limit responses to no more than 5 pages. Submit to Rebecca Robinson via email by October 15, 2021 with the email subject “UEDA Economic Accelerator Logistics”