UNIVERSITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Request for Proposals

American Resiliency & Equity Network Initiative (ARENI)
ARENI Director

Posted on: November 3, 2021

Responses due: 5:00 PM EST, December 15, 2021

1.0 Background

1.1 About the University Economic Development Association

Established in 1976, the University Economic Development Association (UEDA) is the cornerstone membership organization representing higher education, private sector and community economic development stakeholders. UEDA works to expand economic opportunity in our communities by leveraging research, community resources, campus planning, talent development, and technology commercialization. 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.

Mission
UEDA serves its members by promoting knowledge and practice in the realms of talent, innovation, and place as drivers of regional prosperity.

Vision
UEDA, and its members, will be the leaders in advancing regional economic engagement fueled by higher education.

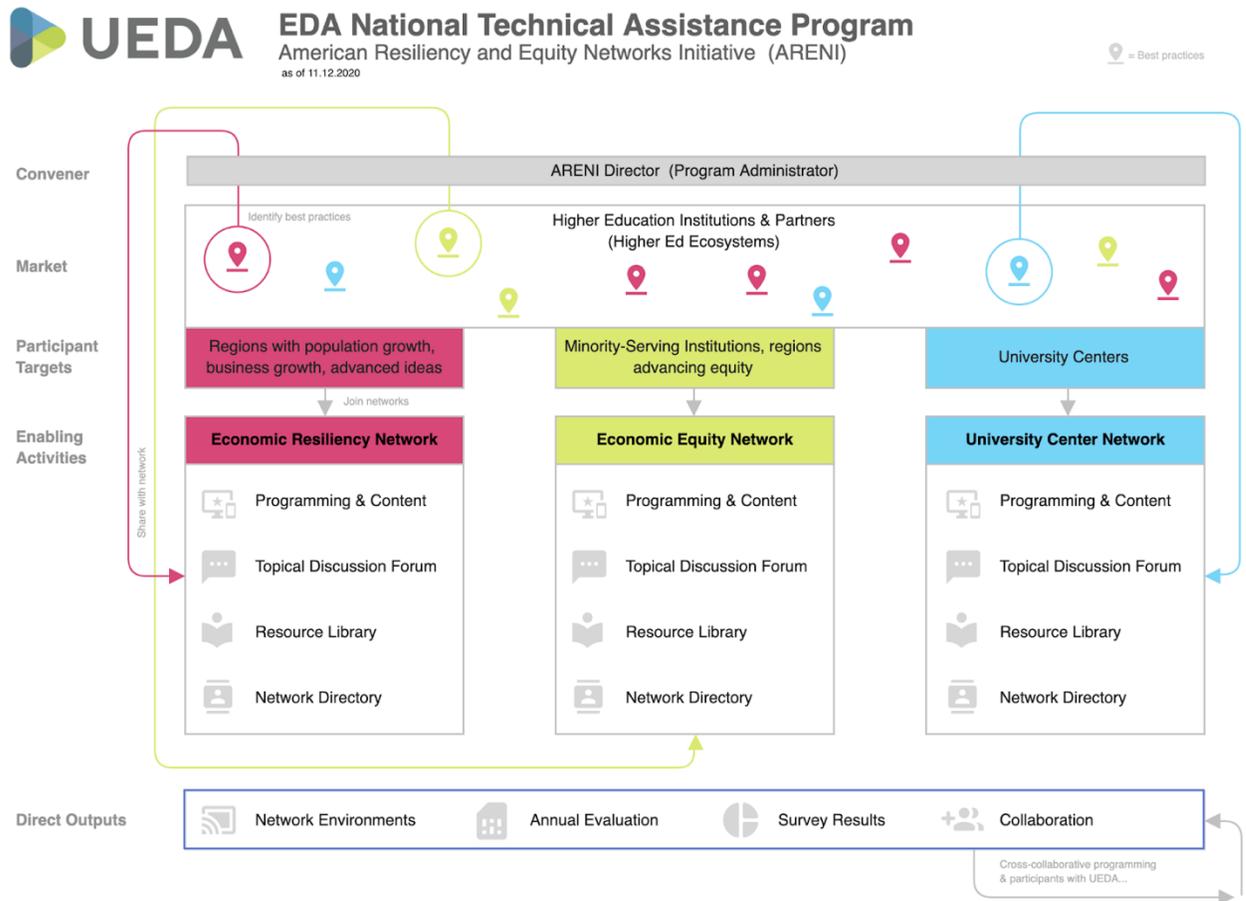More information is available at www.universityeda.org.

1.2 About ARENI

In partnership with Virginia Polytechnic and State University (Virginia Tech or VT), UEDA 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.
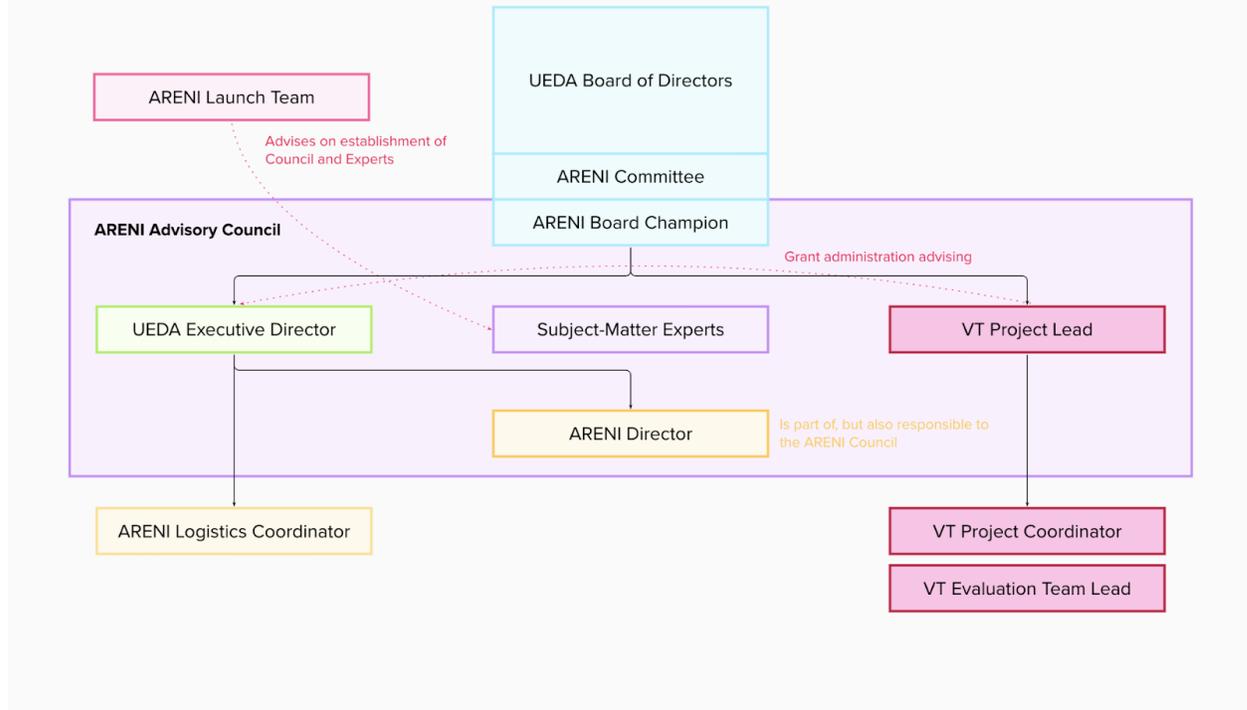
Networks are groups of economic development practitioners interested in a common topic (resiliency, equity, etc.). These networks meet regularly to share regional challenges, work to identify solutions, and collaborate on resources that seek to address the regional challenges. These networks also collaborate 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 concepts to broader audiences. Additionally, UEDA has three existing Affinity networks (Talent, Innovation, and Place) that will collaborate with ARENI on cross-network/topic collaboration as network leadership meets regularly with each other. Collaboration will also occur with other similar organizations.

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 organizations, projects, initiatives, and resources in these areas; c) recruit participants from the economic development communities of practice, to include diverse higher education institutions, economic development organizations, 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.

UEDA
EDA National Technical Assistance Program
American Resiliency and Equity Networks Initiative (ARENI)
as of 11.12.2020

= Best practices

Convener	ARENI Director (Program Administrator)		
Market	Identify best practices	Higher Education Institutions & Partners (Higher Ed Ecosystems)	
Participant Targets	Regions with population growth, business growth, advanced ideas	Minority-Serving Institutions, regions advancing equity	University Centers
	Join networks		
Enabling Activities	**Economic Resiliency Network**	**Economic Equity Network**	**University Center Network**
	Programming & Content	Programming & Content	Programming & Content
	Topical Discussion Forum	Topical Discussion Forum	Topical Discussion Forum
	Resource Library	Resource Library	Resource Library
	Network Directory	Network Directory	Network Directory

Share with network

Direct Outputs	Network Environments	Annual Evaluation	Survey Results	Collaboration

Cross-collaborative programming & participants with UEDA...

ARENI Organization Chart

2.0 Scope of Work

UEDA is seeking, as a result of the RFP, a person or organization with leadership delivered by one person, to serve as the ARENI Director (AD). The AD will direct and execute on recruitment, programming, and execution of ARENI, to include, at a basic level:

- Identification, coordination, and assembly of best practices and programming in the areas of economic equity, economic resiliency, and University Centers.
- Identification, coordination, and assembly of participants for the ARENI Networks.

This contractor will work in close collaboration with the UEDA Executive Director, association management staff, Logistics Coordinator and event management staff to support the ARENI project and deliverables. The AD 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. The ARENI Council will provide strategy support for targeting initiatives,participants and programming themes. The AD will then develop outreach strategies to bring people and ideas to ARENI. 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 $290,000. This is a contract position and not an offer of employment. The contractor will be subject to follow all federal guidelines in accordance with EDA grant funding used for this grant.

2.1 ARENI Director Responsibilities
UEDA will select a representative to serve as the ARENI Director. This person's responsibilities will include, but not limited to:

Administration
- Establish networks and recruit participants
- Determine strategic goals of the network and drive achievement
- Manage the initiative's network, resources, and participants
- Survey, report, and evaluate the project's successes and challenges
- "Own" the participant and programming data

Membership Engagement
- Develop engagement strategy
- Outreach to potential members
- Organize and facilitate regular connections and communication to network members

Partnership Development
- Seek out new partners that align with the strategic goals of ARENI and support the attraction of best practices and people to the project
- Develop new member recruitment strategy with consultation from Logistics
- Serve as primary outreach contact for partnerships, including organization outreach

Meetings & Events (in person)
- Participate in regular ARENI Administration and Council meetings, as appropriate

Annual Event (in person)
- Lead the content planning by identifying theme, goals, and session topics
- Identify topics and speakers
- Facilitate meetings, coordinate speakers, and manage the guest experience
- Provide follow-up information to participants
- Track goals and outcomes of meetings, manage the guest experience
- Recruit sponsors

Webinars & Virtual Events
- Identify topics and speakers
- Facilitate meetings, coordinate speakers, and manage the guest experience
- Recruit sponsors
- Provide follow-up information to participants
- Track goals
- Full ramp-up target is to have one webinar per topic (equity, resiliency, UC) each per month

Marketing/Communications
- Develop content for materials, emails, and newsletters, with consultation from the Logistics Coordinator

Resource Development
- Identify topics of interest
- Identify research opportunities
- Identify and compile resources
- Establish guidance and taxonomy for the online resource directory
- Owner of the participant and programming data

Reporting & Evaluation
- Develop KPIs and goals for networks
- Track goals, accomplishments, in accordance with the reporting requirements
- Gather required data for reports
- Develop surveys
- Support development of quarterly progress reports with VT
- Draft final grant report
- Facilitate Evaluation Team

Financial Management
- Maintain overall budget for ARENI

3.0 Proposal Responses

Individuals and firms are welcome to apply for the ARENI Director scope of work, however one person must be identified as the ARENI Director. UEDA welcomes proposals from contractors to provide the identified services. Please follow the directions below for proposal development.

3.1 Crafting a Proposal

All proposals submitted must be in the format outlined below. Submissions should be no more than 10 letter-size pages, single-spaced in readable 12-point font size. Appendixes are permissible and should not count towards this limit, but please include only necessary support information, or direct UEDA to online resources, where appropriate, to limit paper waste.

Questions may be submitted to UEDA Executive Director, Tim Hindes, in writing to tim.hindes@universityeda.org with the subject line of "ARENI Director RFP Questions". Questions about this RFP must be made in writing by 5:00 PM EST November 15, 2021.

3.2 Proposal Format

Please use the format below to submit your proposal. At a minimum, please address the questions listed below and other items addressed in the Scope of Work within each section of your response. Proposals should be prepared simply and economically providing a straightforward, concise description of capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content.

Introduction
Please give a brief overview of your proposal and an abstract of your approach.

Section 1: Introduction of Project Team
Provide an introduction to you, your firm, or your organization providing a response. Do you have any diversity certifications as a business? Include brief bios for any team members, and their experience/alignment with ARENI's topics/scope. As an appendix, please include the resume for the person serving in the role of ARENI Director. Please also share why your experience is the optimal experience for ARENI success. Describe any connections you have to partners/organizations aligned with topics addressed by ARENI. Please be explicit.

Section 2: Approach to Scope of Work

Please share how you will address the scope of work? What sort of project management skills/resources do you have in place or plan to put in place to manage the scope? Describe your approach/reaction to each section of the scope and identify how you plan to address the support needs of each section.

Section 3: Aligned Experience
Describe your experience with coalition building. What tactics have you used, or would you use, to form engaging experiences? What technology have you used in leading/participating in coalition-building that helped attract and retain participation? What experience do you have in sponsorship/development to support the sustainability of ARENI? Have you worked on any other EDA-funded grant projects? How does your work/experience align/intersect with higher education? with economic development? with equity initiatives? with regional resiliency? with University Centers? Please share two references.

Section 4: Project Timeline & Budget
Please share a project activity timeline, as well as a budget that corresponds with the timeline. Please include any commentary to help the review team understand milestones, deliverables, and expenses. Please include your billable rate.

Conclusion
Please provide a 300-word summary of your proposal.

Appendix
Please provide any support materials for your proposal. Include the resume/cv of the proposed ARENI Director. Please keep other materials brief, with links to online resources to conserve paper.

3.2 Submission Process
UEDA requests one (1) electronic copy of the proposal be submitted to be considered.

A PDF copy of the proposal should be submitted to tim.hindes@universityeda.org with the subject "ARENI Director RFP Response."

All proposals should be received no later than 5:00 PM EST, December 15, 2021.

Offerors who submit a proposal in response to this RFP may be required to give an oral presentation of their proposal to UEDA. This will provide an opportunity for the Offeror to clarify or elaborate on the proposal but will in no way change the original proposal. UEDA will schedule the time and location of these presentations. Oral presentations are an option of UEDA and may not be conducted. Therefore, proposals should be complete.

3.3 Review Process
The following timeline will be targeted for the purposes of adequate review and approval of proposals:

November 3, 2021	RFP released
December 15, 2021	Proposals due to UEDA headquarters (by 5:00 PM EST)
December 2021	UEDA review team to review proposals and candidate interviews
January 2022	UEDA presents recommendations to UEDA board of directors for approval
By January 2022	UEDA notifies all applicants of proposal status

Questions about this RFP must be made in writing to UEDA via email at tim.hindes@universityeda.org by 5:00 PM EST November 15, 2021.

3.4 Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by UEDA using the following criteria (in order of priority):

- Quality of products/services offered and suitability for the intended purposes
- Qualifications and experiences of Offeror in providing the goods/services
- Specific plans or methodology to be used to provide the Services
- Cost (or Price)

3.5 Other Considerations

UEDA is not responsible for time reimbursement pertaining to the development of a proposal in response to this solicitation.

This request for proposals, responses to questions and any documentation relevant to this RFP will be located online In the news section of our website. Any responses to questions, as well as any amendments to this request for proposals will be posted to this section of the website. Respondents are responsible for checking this resource to ensure the most up-to-date information is included as part of their response.

UEDA reserves the right to negotiate with proposing organizations.

4.0 ATTACHMENT A

SAMPLE TERMS AND CONDITIONS
ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS 1-9 apply to and will be used on all contracts.

1.   **ADDITIONAL GOODS AND SERVICES:** UEDA may acquire other goods or services that the supplier provides other than those specifically solicited. UEDA reserves the right, subject to mutual agreement, for the Contractor to provide additional goods and/or services under the same pricing, terms and conditions and to make modifications or enhancements to the existing goods and services. Such additional goods and services may include other products, components, accessories, subsystems, or related services newly introduced during the term of the Agreement.

2.   **AUDIT:** The Contractor hereby agrees to retain all books, records, and other documents relative to this contract for five (5) years after final payment. UEDA, its authorized agents, and/or State/Federal auditors shall have full access and the right to examine any of said materials during said period.

3.   **AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS:** It is understood and agreed between the parties herein that UEDA shall be bound hereunder only to the extent of the funds available or which may hereafter become available for the purpose of this agreement.

4.   **CANCELLATION OF CONTRACT:** UEDA reserves the right to cancel and terminate any resulting contract, in part or in whole, without penalty, upon 60 days written notice to the Contractor. In the event the initial contract period is for more than 12 months, the resulting contract may be terminated by either party, without penalty, after the initial 12 months of the contract period upon 60 days written notice to the other party. Any contract cancellation notice shall not relieve the Contractor of the obligation to deliver and/or perform on all outstanding orders issued prior to the effective date of cancellation.

5.   **CONTRACT DOCUMENTS:** The contract entered into by the parties shall consist of the Request for Proposal including all modifications thereof, the proposal submitted by the Contractor, the written results of negotiations, the UEDA Standard Contract Forms, all of which shall be referred to collectively as the Contract Documents.

6.   **IDENTIFICATION OF PROPOSAL EMAIL:** UEDA will only be accepting electronic submission of proposals. All submissions must be submitted to tim.hindes@universityeda.org. Your submission will be confirmed by email within 24 hours. It is the responsibility of the offeror to make sure their proposal is delivered on time. Attachments must be smaller than 1000MB in order to be received by the UEDA. Proposals may NOT be hand delivered.

7.   **NOTICES:** Any notices to be given by either party to the other pursuant to any contract resulting from this solicitation shall be in writing via email.

8.   **SEVERAL LIABILITY:** UEDA will be severally liable to the extent of its purchases made against any contract resulting from this solicitation. Applicable entities described herein will be severally liable to the extent of their purchases made against any contract resulting from this solicitation.