



# Press Release

## PRESS OFFICE

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## **SBA Announces Funding Available to Support Regional Clusters, Job Creation**

*Applications accepted beginning July 7 to fund as many as 15 existing clusters*

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Small Business Administration announced today the availability of funding to support economic development and job creation through existing regional clusters. As part of its Regional Cluster Initiative, SBA will accept proposals from local and regional cluster initiatives beginning July 7 for funding of up to \$600,000 per cluster to support up to 15 projects across the country. Proposals should be submitted by the cluster’s coordinating entity.

SBA’s Regional Cluster Initiative focuses on accelerating small business growth and job creation through clusters that leverage and align a region’s economic, business and workforce assets. Regional clusters are networks of organizations and businesses in a geographic area that grow through increased collaboration, efficiency and innovation.

“Clusters bring together many businesses and organizations in a region to maximize the economic strengths of that region, enhancing its ability to compete on a national and global scale,” SBA Administrator Karen Mills said. “SBA is committed to providing both financial and technical assistance resources that can be a catalyst for accelerating a regional cluster’s viability and lead to sustainable economic growth and job creation.”

SBA is launching two programs within its Regional Cluster Initiative: Regional Innovation Clusters (RICs) and Advanced Defense Technologies (ADTs). Prospective offerors for both solicitations may find additional information through the Federal Business Opportunities website ([www.fedbizopps.gov](http://www.fedbizopps.gov)).

Information on the RIC solicitation (SBAHQ-10-R-0021) is available at [https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=7e3fa820644db3b29f99bb14adec6b5b&tab=core&\\_cview=0](https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=7e3fa820644db3b29f99bb14adec6b5b&tab=core&_cview=0).

Information on the ADT solicitation (SBAHQW-10-R-0022) is available at [https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=78cf4bab7dd00d2c2e4754d857ad59ab&tab=core&\\_cview=0](https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=78cf4bab7dd00d2c2e4754d857ad59ab&tab=core&_cview=0). Clusters may apply to only one program.

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*Regional Innovation Clusters*

Successful offerors will receive a one-year contract with an option for an additional year to provide business training, commercialization and technology transfer services, counseling, mentoring and other services that support the growth and development of small businesses in the cluster area and its industries.

SBA will select clusters across the country that meet specified criteria. In each initiative, interested offerors will be asked to demonstrate that they have the partnerships, technical capacity and local assets to support their existing regional cluster.

Regional Innovation Clusters will be assessed on the impact they will have on the region's economic growth, creation of sustainable jobs and the opportunities the cluster provides for small businesses.

*Advanced Defense Technologies*

SBA is working with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to identify areas around the country where regional innovation clusters can help meet critical defense technology needs. Successful offerors that meet specified criteria will receive a one-year contract with an option for an additional year to provide business training, counseling, mentoring, matchmaking, and other services to small businesses that focus on critical DOD technologies.

Areas of high-growth potential critical to DOD include, but are not limited to, advanced robotics, advanced defense systems, power/energy innovations, cyber-security and applied lightweight materials. In each project, interested offerors will be asked to demonstrate that they have the partnerships, technical capacity, and local assets to support developing or existing regional clusters.

Experience working with DOD's Small Business Innovative Research program and defense technology development programs is preferred. Offerors with Defense Security Service Facility Clearances who can hold security clearances and discuss classified material on site are also preferred but not required.

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