

EDA Statewide Planning Grant

House Commerce Committee Testimony 3/30/21

Prepared by: Nate Formalarie, ACCD Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives

This grant was made available by the US Economic Development Administration – as part of the American Rescue Plan. The grant was non-competitive, so we had to apply with our intended use for the money, but states were not competing against each other for these funds.

As part of this grant, ACCD and the Administration are looking to contract with a third-party consultant. While the state currently works with a consultant on ARPA related funding – that work is focused on program eligibility and ensuring compliance with the US Treasury’s Final Rule in how funds can be spent.

This work will be different in that it is assessing programs that have already been approved, fit with in the US Treasury’s final rule guidelines, and are already underway. The analysis will be around three main areas:

- **Recent Past:** Develop a current picture of all the economic development work that has been done to-date with federal funds, as well as review the economic and workforce development programs, policies, and initiatives implemented by the State prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to assess the State’s priorities and ensure alignment moving forward, to include recommendations for additional program areas and/or funding needs for the state’s ongoing recovery.
- **Present:** With the close of the legislative session and ARPA funded programs continuing to launch, we want to be able to analyze those programs in real time and work to optimize the State’s economic recovery program portfolio and ensure that if there are any gaps in the program portfolio, they can be addressed.
- **Future:** Develop a strategy and methodology to measure the impact of federal ARPA funding that will help the State support the sustainability of economic recovery efforts in the years ahead. This will stand to ensure dollars are spent well, and determine what programs may be best suited to continue funding once the influx of federal cash goes away.

The intent is to have a third-party independent consultant help ACCD with the analysis of the full breadth of programs and initiatives -- and provide recommendations to make sure leadership in ACCD and the Administration have a sound assessment of the work being done, its effectiveness, and ideas for continuing it long term.

ACCD does plan to engage regional partners throughout the state as well as the legislature both during the analysis phase of this work – and in implementing any recommendations that may ultimately result from the work done with the consultant.

ACCD is often asked, how do we know the impacts of all of these various programs being created and how can we be assured there is not duplication and that all these programs are working together? This planning grant is delivering the resources to commit to doing the hard work of assessment and to move forward in an optimized manner in the years ahead.

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