



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Commerce Receives EDA Grant to Grow Opportunities for Oklahoma Communities**

**Oklahoma City** – The Oklahoma Department of Commerce (Commerce) was recently awarded a \$1 million grant through the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). The purpose of the grant is to provide support and funding to Oklahoma communities to increase economic development opportunities throughout the state, particularly in rural communities. The application for the grant will become available on Dec. 1, 2021, and remain open until Jan. 7, 2022.

“Oklahoma is rich with strong communities and dedicated workers,” said Brent Kisling, Commerce Executive Director. “Where we sometimes hit hang-ups with economic development projects are with the availability of sites and the capacities of available sites. If a company is looking to expand its operations, it wants to do that quickly. This grant will help Oklahoma communities have a better understanding of what sites they have, what those sites may be lacking and what they are a good fit for.”

More than half of the grant will be awarded to communities for site and infrastructure evaluations. Commerce will make 28 awards of up to \$24,000 each to local economic development organizations (EDOs) or consortiums of EDOs to participate. Only communities with a full-time economic development staff person will be eligible to apply. If a group of communities opt to form a consortium, one of the communities in the group will need to meet this requirement and would serve as the lead applicant for the group.

The grant awards will allow local EDOs to:

- Identify available sites capabilities
- Identify what industries sites can support
- Identify quantified site gaps and limitations
- Conduct competitive capability assessments
- Make recommendations for investment in infrastructure gaps

Additionally, the grant will fund an interactive site location panel which Commerce will use at domestic and international trade shows and in business recruitment meetings, as well as a site location app for communities to promote their sites.

Finally, the grant will allow Commerce to create an online training platform which will be a valuable tool for rural Oklahoma communities, allowing them to receive customized economic development training on-demand and without the need for travel. This platform will be key in Commerce's efforts to launch a new comprehensive program that focuses on community-level economic development training to improve Oklahoma's competitiveness, ability to respond to Requests for Proposals, and capacity for local EDOs. The training platform is estimated to launch in the second quarter of 2022.

"Commerce is committed to building capacity for economic development at the local level to benefit rural Oklahoma," said Nicole Boyles, Commerce Director of Grants & Regional Partnerships. "This grant will give Oklahoma communities access to the data they need to get a clear view of their competitive advantages and help them tailor their marketing strategies to target the right types of companies for their area. Commerce will continue to work with these communities – helping them capitalize on the data they receive and connecting them with other possible funding sources for infrastructure upgrades."

The grant application will be available on Dec. 1, 2021 on the Commerce website, [www.okcommerce.gov](http://www.okcommerce.gov).

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