



# GOVERNOR MURPHY, NJEDA ANNOUNCE PARTICIPATION IN FOUR COALITIONS APPLYING TO THE U.S. EDA BUILD BACK BETTER REGIONAL CHALLENGE

## *NJEDA to Host Public Information and Idea Gathering Session on September 21, 2021*

TRENTON, N.J. (September 16, 2021) – Governor Phil Murphy and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) today announced the NJEDA’s participation in four regional coalitions preparing applications for the U.S. Economic Development Authority (U.S. EDA) [Build Back Better Regional Challenge \(BBBRC\)](#). The Challenge is a federal grant program to help communities adopt and implement transformational, industry-based economic development strategies that strengthen economic diversity and resiliency in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The four coalitions that NJEDA has joined focus on regional industry clusters that are part of Governor Murphy’s [Stronger and Fairer Economic Plan](#), including biomanufacturing, clean energy, aviation, and smart ports.

**The NJEDA will host a public information and idea gathering session on the Build Back Better Regional Challenge at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 21, 2021.** Representatives of for-profit businesses, non-profit organizations, and government entities are all encouraged to attend to learn more about the challenge. In addition, the NJEDA will be seeking input on potential priority projects that could be included in the four coalition applications.

### **Join the information session**

here: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_84JFnsqSTBGV\\_hGP4-qPuA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_84JFnsqSTBGV_hGP4-qPuA).

“As we build toward a stronger, fairer recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that we keep our eyes to the future and identify industry-based strategies that will drive long-term, equitable growth,” said Governor Phil Murphy. “The Build Back Better Regional Challenge is a

fantastic opportunity to engage New Jersey’s innovative thinkers and industry leaders to craft projects that will not only help us bounce back from the impacts of COVID-19, but also lay the foundation for long-term success.”

“Governor Murphy and President Biden have made tackling the COVID-19 pandemic and supporting a strong, equitable recovery a top priority. The Build Back Better Regional Challenge is a unique opportunity for New Jersey to bolster our industry clusters to better address the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and identify a slate of transformational economic development initiatives,” said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan. “Aviation innovation, biomanufacturing, clean energy, and smart ports are all sectors that Governor Murphy has identified as priorities because of their potential to drive transformative economic growth and job creation. The NJEDA is proud to partner with thought leaders and industry innovators throughout New Jersey to support high-impact applications in these sectors.”

The Build Back Better Regional Challenge is a federal program that will fund projects that create high-quality jobs, increase wages, and revitalize communities in places that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications must be centered around developing or growing a regional industry cluster, with a long-term transformational vision and a plan for execution. More information about the Challenge is available at <https://eda.gov/arpa/build-back-better/>.

Applicants for the Challenge act as a regional coalition with one lead entity per application. Eligible coalition members include government entities, nonprofits, and higher education institutions. For-profit entities cannot be a primary coalition applicant, but can participate as “coalition partners” offering industry expertise, commit to investment or job creation related to the industry cluster, and formally express support for the coalition’s application.

The application process for the Build Back Better Regional Challenge takes place in two phases. Applications for Phase 1 are due October 19, 2021. During this phase the U.S. EDA will select 50 to 60 winners to receive planning grants of up to \$500,000. Winners will use these planning grants to support the preparation of the coalition’s Phase 2 application, which is due March 15, 2022. During Phase 2, the U.S. EDA will choose 20 to 30 winners to receive implementation grants of \$25 to \$100 million.

The NJEDA is supporting four applicant coalitions focused on aviation innovation, biomanufacturing, clean energy, and smart ports.

The **aviation innovation coalition** is focused on smart aviation and aerospace in South Jersey, including Advanced Air Mobility (AAM), Advanced Air Cargo, and Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS). The coalition is considering infrastructure construction projects, including a vertiport and droneport; airspace planning; workforce training programs; microgrants for underrepresented youth to develop aviation innovations and businesses; and curricula for regional high schools and colleges focused on UAS and AAM. This coalition is led by Atlantic County and the Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA). Individuals and organizations interested in sharing project ideas or joining the aviation innovation coalition should reach out to [AviationBBBRC@njeda.com](mailto:AviationBBBRC@njeda.com) by noon on September 28.

In addition to leading this applicant coalition for the Build Back Better Regional Challenge, the ACEA was recently designated by the Governor’s Office to be New Jersey’s applicant for the

U.S. EDA's [Statewide Planning Grant](#), a grant of up to \$1 million for economic development planning efforts. ACEA's plans for the grant focus on planning and feasibility studies around advanced aviation, which will complement the projects included in the aviation innovation coalition's Build Back Better Regional Challenge application.

“Aviation is a growing industry in South Jersey that has massive potential to drive statewide economic growth and job creation,” said ACEA President Lauren Moore. “We are thrilled to have Governor Murphy and the NJEDA’s support for our application for the Build Back Better Regional Challenge. We have a clear vision for building a broad, inclusive aviation innovation ecosystem in South Jersey and the State’s support for our application for this grant program and the Statewide Planning Grant will be crucial to securing the funds we need to bring these ideas to life.”

“Aviation has a strong track record of success driving economic expansion and job growth in Atlantic County and throughout South Jersey,” said County Executive Dennis Levinson. “The application coalition for the Build Back Better Regional Challenge is in the process of preparing a forward-thinking, comprehensive series of proposals that will build on our success to ensure long-term, equitable growth throughout South Jersey. We are proud to have Governor Murphy’s backing and look forward to working with the NJEDA and other experts in the community and industry to prepare a successful application that allows us to execute on our vision for the future of aviation in Atlantic County.”

The **biomanufacturing coalition** is focused on advanced manufacturing of pharmaceuticals and developing new, more efficient ways to produce medicines to reduce reliance on foreign drug manufacturing and shorten supply chains to help patients. The coalition is also working on training an expanded workforce on new and unique manufacturing processes, enabling digital design of products and processes, accelerating pharmaceutical product and manufacturing process development, and developing real time quality assurance processes.

This coalition is led by Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and will leverage existing physical, educational, and talent assets in the Northeast corridor, including the NJ BioScience Center, the New Brunswick Innovation HUB, BioCentriq at New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), major research institutions, community colleges, and major biopharma companies with headquarters in New Jersey. Individuals and organizations interested in sharing project ideas or joining the biomanufacturing coalition should reach out to [BiomanufacturingBBBRC@njeda.com](mailto:BiomanufacturingBBBRC@njeda.com) by noon on September 28.

“New Jersey’s history of leadership in medicine and biomanufacturing runs deep and leveraging our existing ecosystem will be crucial to ensuring a speedy and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Antonio M. Calcado, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Rutgers. “We are proud to have Governor Murphy’s support and excited to work with the NJEDA and many other leaders in New Jersey’s life sciences ecosystem to prepare a strong Build Back Better Regional Challenge application that sets us on the path to recovery from COVID-19 and long-term success.”

The **clean energy coalition** is building on the Murphy Administration’s historic investments in decarbonizing New Jersey’s economy by expanding New Jersey’s clean energy sector –

specifically offshore wind, clean transport, energy storage, and smart grid technologies. The coalition is considering infrastructure projects, workforce training, and business acceleration efforts to support the manufacturing supply chain for clean energy.

The coalition is led by Rowan University and includes multiple other higher education partners and thought leaders in the clean energy space. Individuals and organizations interested in sharing project ideas or joining the clean energy coalition should reach out to [CleanEnergyBBBRC@njeda.com](mailto:CleanEnergyBBBRC@njeda.com) by noon on September 28.

“Clean energy is not only crucial to fighting climate change, but it is also a strong driver of innovation, economic growth, and job creation,” said Ali A. Houshmand, president, Rowan University. “Governor Murphy understands the interconnectedness of the two and deserves great praise for his leadership on this subject, particularly his Energy Master Plan and his commitment to the New Jersey Wind Port. We are proud to have the NJEDA and Governor Murphy’s support our application for the Build Back Better Recovery Program, which will set the stage for New Jersey to continue our growth as a leader in clean energy.”

The **smart ports regional coalition** is focused on optimizing ports in the greater Newark area to expand regional economic impact and spur large-scale job creation. The coalition will focus on innovative transportation systems, including industry projects of advanced technologies for freight movement, clean energy, data analytics and secured IT systems, supply chain improvements, workforce development, facility design, and an on-line property marketplace for off-port related businesses. These projects will be guided by principles of equity and social and environmental justice.

**This coalition is led by the City of Newark in partnership with New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). Additional coalition partners include Port Newark Container Terminal (PNCT), Invest Newark, and North Jersey Transportation Authority. Individuals and organizations interested in sharing project ideas or joining the smart ports coalition should reach out to [SmartPortsBBBRC@njeda.com](mailto:SmartPortsBBBRC@njeda.com) by noon on September 28.**

“Port Newark is a major hub for regional, national, and international economic activity, and it supports hundreds of thousands of jobs that range from high tech to service to the trades to labor and more,” noted Newark Mayor Ras A. Baraka. “The projects that will be undertaken by this coalition will be catalysts for job creation and sustainable, long-term economic growth while also making a substantial and positive environmental impact, all of which are in accord with Governor Murphy’s economic strategies.”

**NJIT President Joel S. Bloom added, “As the State of New Jersey’s public polytechnic university and a partner with the City of Newark, NJIT will bring broad and deep expertise in the technological and innovative aspects to the coalition. The projects will be central to the operation of Port Newark and to growing its regional economic impact. New Jersey transportation and other regional port systems will also benefit through the establishment of a center for transportation innovation, commercialization and tech transfer. We are proud to have Governor Murphy and the NJEDA’s support for these important initiatives.”**

The NJEDA is hosting a public information session about the Build Back Better Regional Challenge program and the four applicant coalitions the NJEDA is supporting at **9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 21, 2021**. The program will include an overview of the Build Back Better Regional Challenge program and presentations from each of the coalitions about their vision and the types of projects they are considering. Representatives of for-profit businesses, non-profit organizations, and government entities are all encouraged to attend to learn more and provide input.

#### **Join the information session**

here: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_84JFnsqSTBGV\\_hGP4-qPuA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_84JFnsqSTBGV_hGP4-qPuA).

In addition to attending the information session, the NJEDA is also encouraging individuals, organizations, and businesses to submit one-page project idea summaries to the relevant applicant coalition by noon on September 28. Ideas for aviation innovation projects should be sent to [AviationBBBRC@njeda.com](mailto:AviationBBBRC@njeda.com); ideas for biomanufacturing projects should be sent to [BiomanufacturingBBBRC@njeda.com](mailto:BiomanufacturingBBBRC@njeda.com); ideas for clean energy projects should be sent to [CleanEnergyBBBRC@njeda.com](mailto:CleanEnergyBBBRC@njeda.com); and ideas for smart ports projects should be sent to [SmartPortsBBBRC@njeda.com](mailto:SmartPortsBBBRC@njeda.com).

#### **About the New Jersey Economic Development Authority**

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) serves as the State's principal agency for driving economic growth. The NJEDA is committed to making New Jersey a national model for inclusive and sustainable economic development by focusing on key strategies to help build strong and dynamic communities, create good jobs for New Jersey residents, and provide pathways to a stronger and fairer economy. Through partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, the NJEDA creates and implements initiatives to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life in the State and strengthen New Jersey's long-term economic competitiveness.

**To learn more about NJEDA resources for businesses call NJEDA Customer Care at 609-858-6767 or visit <https://www.njeda.com> and follow @NewJerseyEDA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).**

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