



Request for Proposals

2026 & 2027 Summits

**Host University/Consortia Partner
Request for Proposals**

UEDA ANNUAL SUMMITS

The UEDA Summit brings together experts in leveraging college and university resources for greater economic development and community impact. For more than a decade, content experts across the university-based economic development domain convene annually to share ideas and best practices in regional economic development. Those who attend the annual Summit:

- Examine the cutting-edge practices of colleagues as they compete for [Awards of Excellence](#)
- Build a learning network of colleagues to identify opportunities, develop partnerships, and ultimately tailor and apply best practices to their respective communities and organizations.
- Share success stories and lessons learned with economic development professionals from centers, organizations, colleges, and universities throughout North America.
- Gain the latest strategic insights on the ever-changing and vital roles of colleges and universities in local, regional, national, and international economic development.

The Summit takes place annually in September or October. Previous Summits have taken place in the following locations: 2024 South Bend, IN; 2023 Salt Lake City, UT; 2022 San Antonio, TX; 2021 Savannah, GA; 2020 Digital Summit; 2019 Reno, NV; 2018 Milwaukee, WI; 2017 Long Beach, CA; 2016 Roanoke, VA; 2015 Anchorage, AK; 2014 Santa Fe, NM; 2013 Pittsburgh, PA; 2012 Chattanooga, TN; 2011 Indianapolis, IN; 2010 Reno, NV; 2009 San Antonio, TX; 2008 St. Petersburg, FL. More information about the latest Summit can be found online at www.UEDAAnnualSummit.org.

About UEDA

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.

Mission

To empower inclusive economic ecosystems through knowledge and best practices in the realms of talent, innovation, and place.

Vision

UEDA is for economic development professionals who seek to connect with innovation ecosystem builder partners such as universities, community colleges, and other practitioners to learn best practices, gain recognition for their work, and better communicate their organization's vital impact in building an inclusive economic ecosystem for their community.

UEDA serves more than 600 professionals through our international membership of about 150 (and growing!) institutions and organizations. Our core membership comprises college and university professionals focused on economic development, entrepreneurship, innovation, talent development, and community engagement. Those we serve increasingly include higher education partners in private industry, entrepreneurship, local government, economic development organizations, federal agencies, workforce development, manufacturing, and financial institutions. These organizations and institutions are driving modern economic engagement and providing leadership to their regions and communities every day. In partnership with regional stakeholders, they are working to achieve shared economic and community impact goals. Each stakeholder group brings its own perspective and ideas to UEDA, and the resulting diversity of ideas is vital to our continued success. More information is available at www.universityeda.org.

UEDA Contact Information:

info@universityeda.org

Proposed Dates

The Summit is traditionally held in the months of September or October.

Target Audience

The UEDA Summit brings national experts in leveraging university resources for greater economic development and community impact together. These domain experts work within higher education, the private sector, economic development organizations, government agencies, and research centers. Attendees of the Annual Summit include:

- College and University Presidents and Chancellors
- Deans, Provosts, & Outreach Officers
- EDA Center Directors
- External & Government Affairs Administrators
- Innovation, Commercialization & Technology Transfer Directors
- Officials from Higher Education System Offices
- Economic Developers
- Economic Development Consultants/
Businesses
- Market Development Specialists
- Federal Agency Program Directors
- State and Federal Grant Administrators
- Manufacturing Extension Partnership Directors
- Workforce Development Directors
- Small Business Development Centers

The Summit has seen great growth over recent years. The 2024 Summit in South Bend, IN had nearly 250 attendees participating. The 2025 Summit is expecting more than 300 attendees to gather in Huntsville, AL. Historically, 90% of Summit attendees are UEDA members.

HOST UNIVERSITY/CONSORTIA REQUIREMENTS

UEDA is seeking host universities, or regional teams/consortia, to serve as the host for the 2026 and 2027 UEDA Summits. As an international organization, UEDA strives to showcase global best practices through its Summit and other events. As such, the UEDA board encourages proposals from all regions of North America. Ideally, UEDA would like to work with an organized regional group or consortia containing partner organizations in higher education, economic development organizations, local government, and the private sector.

The main benefits to hosting the UEDA Summit include:

- Showcasing host university's economic development capabilities and success stories to UEDA members and media
- Highlighting and featuring host university leadership in the national spotlight and make presentations to Summit attendees
- Contributing an influx of tourism dollars to the host university's local economy
- Recognition in media press releases, on regular and dedicated UEDA communications, and on the UEDA and Annual Summit websites
- Demonstrate dedication and support of university-related economic development practices

The following sections highlight the responsibilities of the host university/consortia in relation to all aspects of the Summit. While this outline is intended to serve as minimum requirements, UEDA is ultimately seeking host university/consortia partners for the 2026 and 2027 annual Summits that will share in the ultimate success of the conference (two separate contracts / partnership agreements will be awarded).

The local host/consortia is responsible for the following:

- Serving on and providing leadership to the Summit planning committee
- Recommending venues for events and lodging
- Identifying local speakers, university leaders, elected officials, and subject matter experts to participate
- Helping to staff the event, including but not limited to the registration table, session liaisons, ambassadors, activities leads etc.
- Provide local vendor recommendations including catering, bartending, venues, printing, and transportation.
- Fulfilling a minimum sponsorship requirement of \$70,000 (a model that has been working recently is that the host institution/consortia contributes the total sponsorship requirement up front, and then fundraises locally for reimbursement, using Summit sponsorship opportunities to provide value/deliverables)

Host City:

The consortia should have the support of local/regional economic development and tourism professional organizations to support the Summit. Summit participants should have access to affordable lodging options connected to, or within walking distance to the conference area.

The conference area should provide adequate meeting accommodations that are reasonably affordable and offer acceptable viewing, listening, and accessibility that are comfortable for participants. General session areas should be able to accommodate a flexible audience size between 200-300 participants. There should be, at a minimum, three breakout session options that can accommodate an audience of at least 75 people.

Flight transportation to the host city should be accessible by commercial flights. Fewer transfers from a hub city are preferred, but the host community must be accessible by commercial flights.

UEDA desires to have regional flavor throughout the Summit. The host city should provide attraction to a national audience, based on general attributes or unique aspects relative to UEDA members. The host city should provide a natural draw to a national audience. Opportunities should be provided for participants to learn about the host city, in addition to the national and international practices generally discussed at the UEDA Summit. Uncoordinated recreational opportunities should be available to participants choosing to arrive early, or staying after the conference.

Format of Summit

The Summit has historically is a 2.5-day, 2-night conference (Sunday – Tuesday) that features coordinated programming in the form of general sessions, concurrent sessions, networking receptions, and break sessions. Staff will work with the selected host to ensure that the length of the conference is best serving members’ needs. Since this conference represents a diverse, yet unified audience, specialty meetings are requested, at times, prior to or following the conference. These can include regional Economic Development Administration meetings, board meetings or partner organization member briefing sessions.

The Summit also features:

- An exhibit hall where sponsors and exhibitors staff tables, typically during morning and afternoon break sessions and receptions.
- An Awards of Excellence banquet, where top initiatives in university-related economic development are recognized.
- Experiential activities that showcase the host city (tours, dinner at local restaurants, concurrent events to attend, etc.).
- Receptions for guests to network and meet each other.

FINANCIAL GUIDELINES

With a profit-balanced conference budget in mind, the host university is asked to provide leadership in raising a minimum sponsorship amount of at least \$70,000 regionally. UEDA will work to attract sponsorship from national sponsors. In 2024, total Annual Summit sponsorships exceeded \$120,000.

As previously mentioned, in-kind services should also be utilized to maximize the impact of the conference. All in-kind services will support the overall Summit operating budget, and thus, ensure the success of the conference. Proposed in-kind services should be direct line items in the budget and should not include staff time within the requirements outlined above. Typical Summit registration fees are \$800.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

The following information outlines UEDA’s submission process for proposals. Additional program specific information and details may be required as outlined in this Request for Proposals.

Please share a letter of interest and intent by February 5, 2025. Please submit to Jennie Allison at jallison@crec.net with the subject “Summit Hosting RFP.”

Please note that UEDA is not asking for a detailed plan for the Summit. UEDA is looking for creative ideas on how the Summit can be executed in a sustainable and profitable way. Additionally, established relationships, or ideas for partnership are critical. In connecting with any members of a consortia, it is important to note that this is a proposal process and that all final agenda activities are subject to the approval of the Summit Planning Committee and the UEDA Board of Directors.

Selection process & Timeline:

The following timeline will be utilized for the purposes of adequate review and approval of proposals:

November 2024	RFP released
February 5, 2025	Letter of Interest Deadline
February 2025	UEDA presents recommendations to UEDA board of directors for approval
March 2025	UEDA notifies all applicants of proposal status

After Selection

Spring 2025	Site visit to selected partner region by UEDA staff
July 2025	Signed contracts with hotel and MOU with region
Fall 2025	2025 Summit: Location TBD
Spring 2026	Board retreat and stakeholder meetings on site in the partner region