

## WSU News

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# WSU, South Kansas in the running for up to \$75 million in EDA awards

By Strategic Communications



- The U.S. Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge focuses on economic development.
- Wichita State University was awarded \$500,000 in Phase 1 funding with an opportunity for up to \$75 million in Phase 2.
- Wichita State and South Kansas will use the funds to drive adoption of smart manufacturing technologies.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration recently awarded Wichita State University and South Kansas \$500,000 to Build Back Better with the potential opportunity for a Phase 2 award of \$25-75 million.

The Build Back Better Regional Challenge will provide \$1 billion in American Rescue Act funding to invest in America's communities. This historic investment supports bottom-up economic development focused on advancing equity, creating good-paying jobs, helping workers to develop in-demand skills, building economic resilience, and accelerating the economic recovery for the industries and communities hit hardest by the coronavirus pandemic.

The \$500,000 Phase 1 grant, which was awarded to 60 regions out of pool of 529 applicants, will help the South Kansas region mature its cluster and prepare for the greater Phase 2 funding, which will be awarded to 20-30 regions in 2022.

"The Build Back Better Regional Challenge aims to supercharge local economies and increase American competitiveness around the globe," said Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo. "The outpouring of interest in this program shows the demand for the Build Back Better agenda and the desire to not only create good-paying jobs, but also strengthen our country's economic resiliency for years down the road."

Wichita State's application, which included multiple national and global partners, focuses on driving adoption of smart manufacturing technologies. The vision for South Kansas is to empower equitable adoption of productivity enhancing emerging technologies for sustainable precision manufacturing competitiveness and profitability.

"As Kansas works to diversify and build its economy, Wichita State has made it a priority to support and drive those efforts," said Dr. Rick Muma, Wichita State president. "This EDA award and the possibility for further funding is important in our efforts to help small- and mid-sized businesses in our state grow through advanced manufacturing and digital transformation initiatives."

Wichita State's current industry partners and initiatives will serve as a powerful agent in driving prosperity for the state.

"The collective convening power of Wichita State, South Kansas Coalition partners, and industry leadership will make it easier to adopt advanced manufacturing initiatives by drawing manufacturing leaders into an existing ecosystem of technology, industry, and academia," said Debbie Franklin, WSU's associate vice president for Strategic Initiatives.

If awarded, Phase 2 will provide funding for the following types of activities:

- Small- and medium-sized companies' additive manufacturing adoption strategy
- Expansion of semiconductor testing and evaluation facilities for U.S.-based semiconductor manufacturing
- Resiliency of smart manufacturing
- Industry and entrepreneurial cyber manufacturing convening
- Workforce expansion: construction project for National Center for Aviation Training Advanced Manufacturing Training and Research Building

The proposal was prepared by and awarded to WSU Strategic Initiatives.