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Final Internship Report for Summer 2016
Economic Development Administration
Washington, D.C.
Legislative Internal Affairs Division Intern

This summer I was the Legislative Internal Affairs Division (LIAD) intern for the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) in Washington, D.C. EDA is a small, young organization: it is made up of only 40 people and just had its 50th Anniversary last year, but what it lacks in size, it makes up for in efficiency and outreach. EDA operates out of its headquarters located in Washington D.C. and out of six regional offices in Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, Denver, Philadelphia, and Seattle. The federal government allocates \$246.5 million annually for EDA to distribute through one of its six grant programs: Public Works, Economic Adjustment Assistance, Planning Assistance, Technical Assistance, Research and Evaluation, and Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms. Only local and state governments, universities, and non-profits are eligible to apply for EDA grants and all proposed projects must help create or retain jobs or foster innovation that attracts regional commercialization. The regional offices help applicants through the application process and evaluate the success of the projects while headquarters is in charge of the approval process, grant distribution, public affairs, and external and intergovernmental affairs. Aside from its grant programs, EDA also works closely with the U.S.' top economists to develop practical economic development strategies, as well as with the Department of State and the Organization of American States (OAS) to share these practices with countries around the world. Since 2009, EDA investments generated an additional \$24.2 billion in private investment and grants made between 2000 and 2004 have created an additional 344,283 jobs during the nine-year period following the award.

As the LIAD intern under Dr. Barrett Haga, my tasks mostly involved internal and public affairs. My primary responsibilities on a regular day were writing grant summaries which would be sent to Congressmen and used by the Public Affairs Division to write press releases. Writing the grant summaries was really interesting because I got to see who EDA was investing in, what the projects consisted of, and what the anticipated outcomes would be. I also sat in on most of Dr. Haga's daily meetings and conference calls. Apart from my daily tasks, I got to work on some really interesting projects exclusively assigned to interns and because I was Dr. Haga's personal intern and had the most regular contact with him, I led the intern teams.

The first project we undertook involved critiquing Texas' bid to host the America's Competitiveness Exchange (ACE) in spring 2017, a conference organized by EDA and started by Dr. Haga which brings together the economic development officials of countries around the world, with a special emphasis on American countries, to view the economic potential of the region hosting ACE and hopefully form economic partnerships. The intern team critiqued the sites, speakers, and logistics of Texas' bid and then presented our findings to the decision-making committee consisting of representatives from the Department of State, the Organization of American States, and the Department of Commerce. It was nerve-racking but also a magnificent opportunity. The other important project we undertook was writing the speech the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional Affairs, Tom Guevara, was delivering in the Mexico United States Entrepreneurship Innovation Council (MUSEIC), held in August in Tijuana, Mexico. It was tremendous responsibility but also a really good experience.

I learned so much this summer thanks to my internship with EDA. I have a greater understanding of the United States' approach to economic development, national and international bureaucracy, and professional relationship building. I now know that U.S. economic development

strategies center around clusters and clustermapping which involves identifying a region's economic sectors and combining and growing the already existing sectors rather than creating new ones. This ensures that regions are playing to their strengths. It also became very evident to me during the course of my internship that the rest of the world, especially less developed countries, are really hesitant to adopt the United States' economic development strategies and for this reason EDA works closely with OAS and other international organizations such as the World Bank and the UN to promote the international adoption of their strategies. I actually got to sit in on Tom Guevara's meeting with World Bank representatives in which he tried to persuade the World Bank to promote cluster mapping as a best practice in order for other countries to follow suit.

Lastly, thanks to this internship, I realized that I could really enjoy a career in economic development and I gained skills that I know I will use in the future such as communication, interpersonal, time management, and collaboration skills. Working at EDA headquarters, I knew that I was contributing to our nation's development. It would be great to contribute to such meaningful work in the future.