



## News Release

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### **Economic Development District Training Program Graduates 10 Participants: Pilot Program Serves Five State EDA Southwest Region**

**Washington, DC** – The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation is pleased to announce that 10 attendees of its first-ever one-year Economic Development District Training Program, funded by the Austin Regional Office of the U.S. Economic Development Administration, have successfully completed the program which involved hands-on training and workshops, as well as site visits to learn about innovative and successful economic development projects at other EDDs across the Southwest EDA Region as well as in the EDA Chicago Region.

“Economic Development Districts provide crucial support to communities, helping to spearhead local economic development plans and projects,” said Jorge Ayala, Regional Director for EDA’s Austin office. “EDA is proud to support NADO’s training program and congratulates the ten graduates. We look forward to watching and learning how this program impacts their work at EDDs in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.”

The graduates were recognized during NADO’s 2016 Annual Training Conference, *Taking a Stand for Regional Development*, which occurred October 15 – 18 in San Antonio, Texas. EDA Austin Regional Director Jorge Ayala introduced the group; the ceremony was attended by Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Jay Williams as well as leadership from the other EDA regional offices and headquarters in Washington, DC. The ten participants in the program were:

- Amanda Adaire, Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (Lonoke, AR)
- Virginia Belew, Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission (Midland, TX)
- Monique Boulet, Acadiana Planning Commission (Lafayette, LA)
- Ron Garza, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (McAllen, TX)
- Tiffany Goolsby, South Central Council of Governments (Mesilla, NM)
- Kyle Ingham, Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (Amarillo, TX)
- Jeremy Ragland, Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District (Harrison, AR)
- Michael Ryburn, South Western Oklahoma Development Authority (Burns Flat, OK)
- Evan Williams, Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments (Gallup, NM)
- Vickie Williamson, Ark-Tex Council of Governments (Texarkana, TX)



2016 EDA Austin Emerging Leaders Class, left to right: Kyle Ingham, Panhandle RPC (TX); Michael Ryburn, South Western Oklahoma Development District; Jorge Ayala, EDA Austin; Vickie Williamson, Ark-Tex COG (TX); Evan Williams, Northwest New Mexico COG; Ron Garza, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (TX); Tiffany Goolsby, South Central Council of Governments (NM); Virginia Belew, Permian Basin RPC (TX); Monique Boulet, Acadiana Planning Commission (LA); Amanda Adaire, Central Arkansas PDD; and Jeremy Ragland, Northwest Arkansas EDD.

“The NADO Research Foundation thanks Regional Director Ayala and his staff in the EDA Austin Office for their foresight in understanding the value of educating future EDD leaders today, and for supporting the program which allowed participants to experience real-time learning as all training workshops were conducted at other EDDs,” said NADO Research Foundation Executive Director Joe McKinney.

The NADO Research Foundation and the EDA Austin Regional Office are thrilled to announce that the program will continue for another three years, with the goal of bringing three more groups of emerging leaders through the training program. Information about the next round will be available on NADO’s website ([www.nado.org](http://www.nado.org)) by the end of 2016.

“We received nearly three times the number of applications we could accommodate for the first year, indicating strong demand among EDDs in the Austin Region for professional and leadership development, said McKinney. “We are confident that the next three classes will be as competitive as the first round and that future curriculum will help EDD planners and project coordinators grow into future executive directors of EDDs”.

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Founded in 1967, the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) provides advocacy, education, networking, and research for the national network of 540 regional development organizations. NADO members provide professional, programmatic and technical assistance to over 2,300 counties and 15,000 municipalities. The NADO Research Foundation is NADO’s 501(c) (3) nonprofit affiliate. The Research Foundation provides professional development training, research and peer networking services. The Research Foundation examines new and innovative practices in regional development, strives to improve the organizational and professional capacity of regional development organizations and their partners, and bridges the communications gaps between policy makers, practitioners and the public. This project is made possible with support from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Austin Regional Office, under award # 08-88-04985.

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