WNC Futures Factory

EDA Grant Award

Board of Commissioners

September 1, 2026

Background

- **June 4, 2025**, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) published their FY2025 Disaster Supplemental Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
  - Made $1.4 Billion available nationally for communities with declared disasters in calendar years 2023 and 2024
  - This NOFO included Western North Carolina for T.S. Helene
- **August 19, 2025,** Board of Commissioners approved a reallocation of Article 46 tax funds to support match for the grant application and adopted Resolution No. 25-08-16 allowing the county to be a co-applicant in grant
- **January 28, 2026**, Land of Sky, AB Tech (Lead Recipient) and Buncombe County (Co-Recipient) entered into a MOU to participate in the grant opportunity and submitted a proposal for the "WNC Futures Factory" in response to the EDA NOFO

***NC General Statute 115D-15.1 c: Acquisition and Construction**

- Provides authority to community colleges and county government to negotiate terms for construction among other activities.

Next Steps and Request

Next Steps

- Staff will execute grant agreement and work with AB Tech to develop a subrecipient agreement and work towards project milestones

Request for Board Action

- Authorize the County Manager to accept the Notification of Award and the terms of the Economic Development Administration grant agreement and enter into supporting agreements to implement project.

Grant Application

WNC Futures Factory Project Scope

- Build a 70,000 square foot workforce training and innovation center
  - AB Tech will program the workforce training center
  - An implementation partner for the innovation center will be selected through a competitive procurement process
- Support regional recovery from T.S. Helene by boosting economic opportunity, reskilling workforce, and repositioning our manufacturing base
- Partner with six universities in the North Carolina system, six regional community colleges, and industry partners



Notification of Award

Timeline for Notification of Award

- Announced July 27, 2026
- Grant Agreement received August 6, 2026
  - Lead Applicant: AB Tech
  - Co-applicant: Buncombe County
- Agreement must be signed by applicants by September 6, 2026
  - County Manager required to sign Acknowledgment of Grant
  - Kicks off 60-day Special Conditions Time period

Funding Award

	Awarded
Federal Share (EDA)	$29,219,755
AB Tech (Article 46)	$5,000,000
North Carolina (State Improvement Capital Fund)	$3,195,785
Total	$37,415,540

Special Conditions and Grant Construction Periods

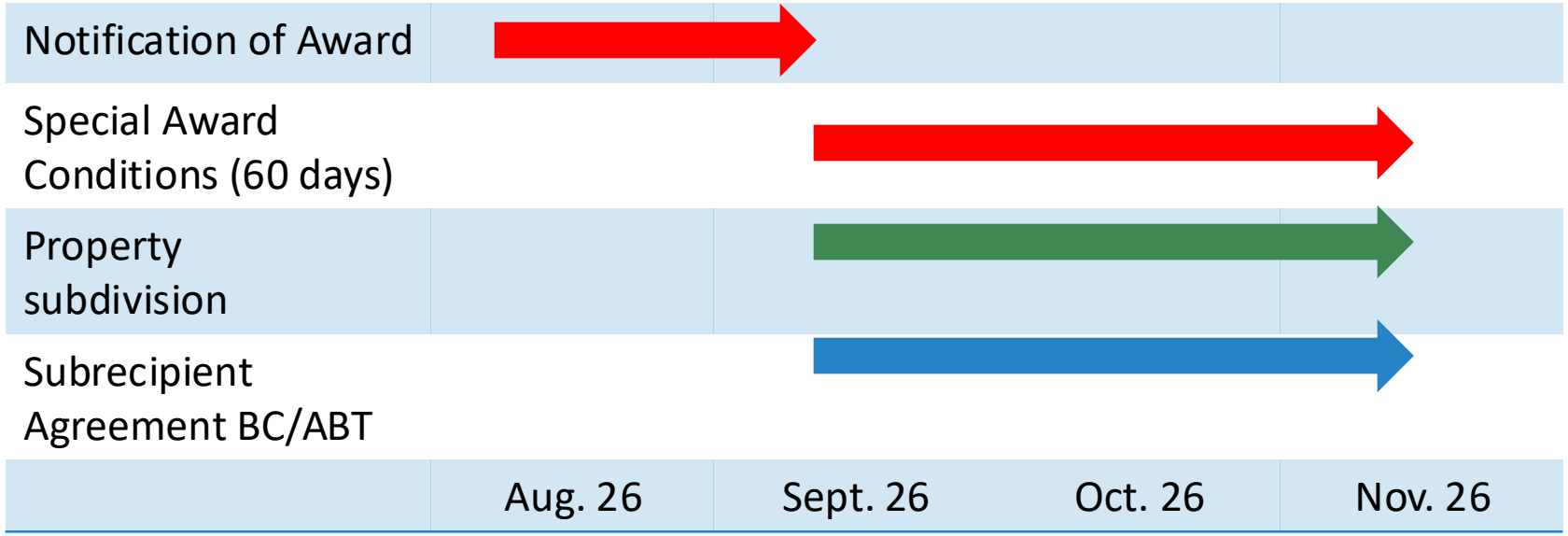
Special Conditions (60-Day period)

- Transfer of 13.18 acre parcel from Biltmore Farms to AB Tech
  - Will require survey and subdivision of property
  - No expenditure of funds permitted until this step is completed

Grant Construction Period (52-Month performance period)

- 24 months for design from date of award notification
- 48 months for construction from date of award notification
- 52 months for project completion and close out from date of award notification

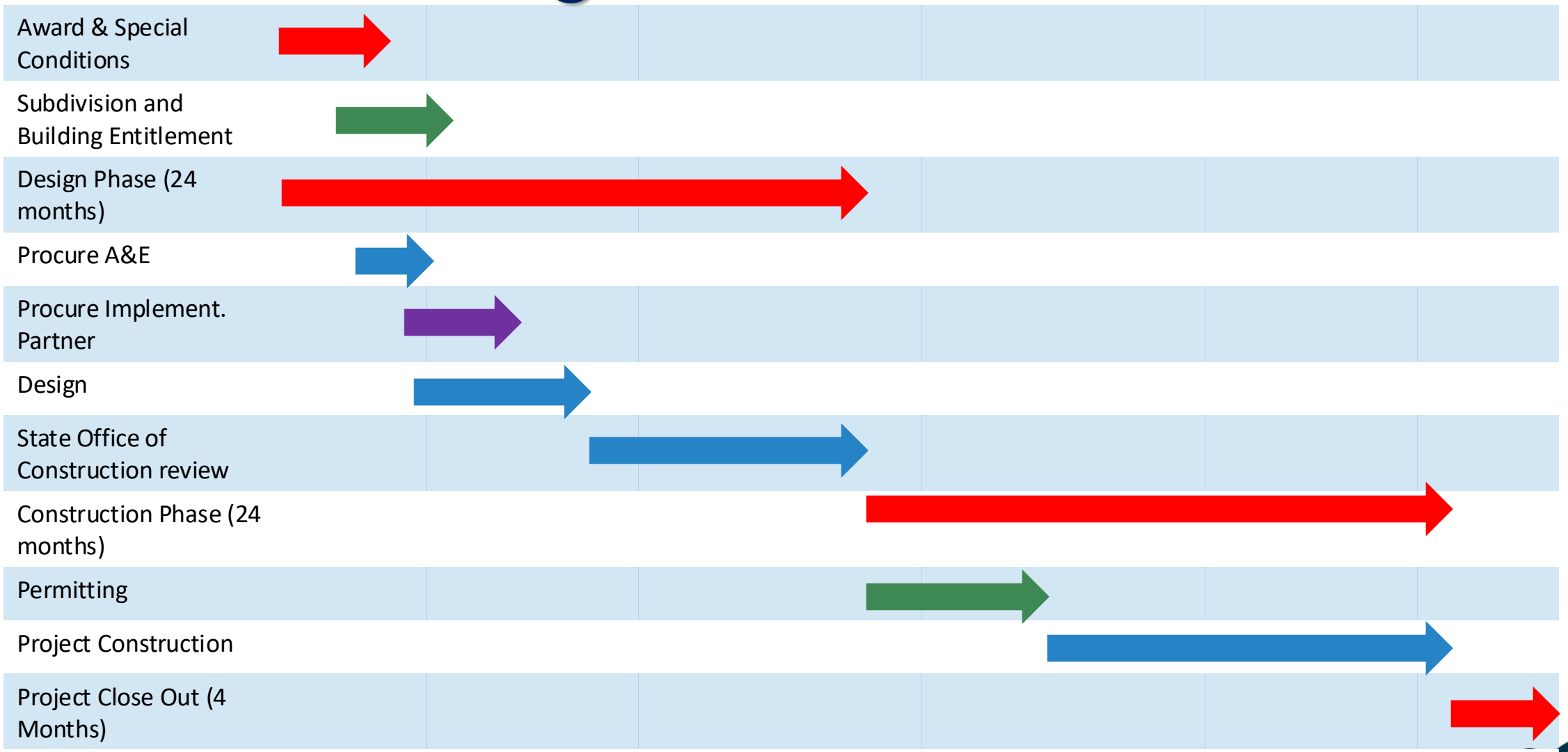
Award and Special Conditions Timeline



Roles & Responsibilities

- **Land of Sky**
  - EDA Grant Management
  - Primary point of contact for EDA
  - Participant in all procurements
- **AB Tech**
  - Lead Applicant
  - Programming of workforce space
  - Lead procurement of innovation operating partner
  - Participant in construction-related procurement(s)
- **Buncombe County**
  - Co-Applicant
  - Construction Management
    - Lead procurement of Architecture and Engineering and Construction
    - Provide Construction Management Services
    - Financial management of related project expenses
  - Participant in procurement of innovation partner
  - Compliance with State Office of Construction design review

Estimated Design and Construction Timeline



Grant Follow Up Time Period

- For construction awards, recipients must report job creation/retention and private investment leverage at three, six, and nine years after an EDA investment

Next Steps and Request

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Request for Board Action

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