

INVENT TOGETHER

INVENTTOGETHER.ORG

RE: Comments in Response to 88 FR 38847 “Request for Comments on Southeast Regional Office and Community Outreach Office Locations,” FR Doc. 2023-12824

Regional offices (ROs)

The purposes of the regional offices, as defined by the UAIA, are to:

- **RO1:** *Better connect patent filers and innovators with the Office, including by increasing outreach activities to individual innovators, small businesses, veterans, low-income populations, students, rural populations, and any geographic group of innovators that the Director may determine to be underrepresented in patent filings;*
- **RO2:** *Enhance patent examiner and administrative patent judge retention, including patent examiners and administrative patent judges from economically, geographically, and demographically diverse backgrounds;*
- **RO3:** *Improve recruitment of patent examiners;*
- **RO4:** *Decrease the number of patent applications waiting for examination; and*
- **RO5:** *Improve the quality of patent examination.*

- 1. Considering the envisioned mission above, what essential services—including outreach, education, customer service, convening space, and employee support—should a regional office provide to achieve the statutory purposes?**

ROs should provide all of the essential services listed in this question and prioritize expanding participation in inventing and patenting by engaging with historically underrepresented communities and by increasing access to resources and information. The resources should include educational material on the patenting process and benefits of patenting and should include a combination of USPTO-generated resources and third-party resources, such as [The Inventor’s Patent Academy](#). The office should disseminate and promote resources through a combination of newsletters/emails, social media, events, and local partners. The office should establish relationships and partner with colleges and universities (especially HBCUs and other MSIs), business development centers (including SBDCs, WBCs, and MBDCs), and accelerators, to educate potential and historically underrepresented inventors on the benefits of IP and how to patent.

- a. Do you prefer to have the services you identified delivered virtually? Why or why not?**

ROs should deliver both in-person and virtual services. While in-person services are essential for building close relationships and establishing trust, providing virtual service options will help ROs reach the most people. In-person programs should be recorded when feasible and made available online to allow people in the region, including those who are working or otherwise unavailable to attend programs live, to benefit from the ROs’ programming and services.



INVENT TOGETHER

INVENTTOGETHER.ORG

b. Do you prefer to have the services you identified delivered in person? Why or why not?

As noted in our response to question (1)(a), ROs should deliver both in-person and virtual services. Recognizing that access to reliable internet is not universal and that in-person programming has social benefits, ROs should deliver services in person. Programs should be conducted at key locations within communities, including HBCUs and other MSIs, other colleges and universities, and business development centers to help ensure that services reach historically underrepresented groups.

2. What types of organizations should the RO pursue relationships and collaborations with to better leverage and scale its services?

ROs should prioritize establishing relationships with organizations that educate and support historically underrepresented inventors and entrepreneurs, including colleges and universities (especially HBCUs and other MSIs), business development centers (including SBDCs, WBCs, and MBDCs), and accelerators. By partnering with these entities, ROs can provide trainings and resources on a local level and ensure that individuals from underrepresented communities have access to the information and support they need to pursue patents. ROs should seek not only to collaborate informally with local organizations but also to establish formal partnerships, using memoranda of understanding when appropriate. ROs should also collaborate and partner with national nonprofits and member associations to leverage their networks and expertise within each region.

Please upload any attachments relating to the RO questions (up to three). Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in ADOBE® portable document, MICROSOFT WORD® format or MICROSOFT EXCEL® formats. (10MB limit per document)

Attachment: TIPA one-pager

Attachment: Invent Together Alliance Overview

Community outreach offices (COOs)

The purposes of the community outreach offices, as defined by the UAIA, are to:

- **COO1:** *Further achieve the purposes described above for the regional offices;*
- **COO2:** *Develop partnerships with local community organizations, institutions of higher education and or research, and businesses to create tailored community-based programs that provide education regarding the patent system; and promote the career benefits of innovation and entrepreneurship; and*
- **COO3:** *Educate prospective inventors, including individual inventors, small businesses, veterans, low-income populations, students, rural populations, and any geographic group of innovators that the Director may determine to be underrepresented in patent filings, about all public and private resources available to potential patent applicants, including the patent pro bono programs.*



INVENT TOGETHER

INVENTTOGETHER.ORG

3. Considering the envisioned mission above, what essential services—including outreach, education, and customer service—should a community outreach office provide to achieve the statutory purposes?

COOs should provide all of the essential services listed in this question and prioritize expanding participation in inventing and patenting. COOs should conduct trainings and provide educational material on the patenting process, the benefits of patenting, and the public and private resources available to prospective inventors, including USPTO resources and third-party resources, such as [The Inventor’s Patent Academy](#). COOs should use their physical offices as a “home base” and deliver services and programming out in communities—meeting people where they are. Being on the ground will create new opportunities to connect with prospective inventors and patent applicants in their own communities and increase access to resources and information.

a. Do you prefer to have the services you identified delivered virtually? Why or why not?

COOs should prioritize delivering services in person in the communities they serve but should offer virtual attendance options and record content when feasible. Virtual attendance options and recordings will allow COOs to share resources and information with a broader population, including those who are working or otherwise unavailable to attend programs live.

b. Do you prefer to have the services you identified delivered in person? Why or why not?

As noted in our response to question (2)(a), COOs should prioritize delivering services in person to develop the trust and rapport that comes with in-person interactions. Moreover, COOs should meet prospective inventors and patent holders where they are at in communities (e.g., colleges and universities, business development centers, accelerators).

4. What types of organizations should the community outreach office pursue relationships and collaborations with to better leverage and scale its services?

COOs should prioritize establishing relationships and collaborating with organizations that support historically underrepresented inventors and entrepreneurs, including colleges and universities (especially HBCUs and other MSIs), business development centers (including SBDCs, WBCs, and MBDCs), and accelerators. Like the ROs, COOs should establish formal partnerships, using memoranda of understanding when appropriate, and collaborate with nonprofits and member associations that provide services and programming in local communities to expand access to resources and information that encourage and equip historically underrepresented communities to invent and patent.

