

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 30, 2026

The Honorable John A. Squires
Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office
600 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: Request for Comments on Community Outreach Office Locations in the Southeast Region

Dear Director Squires:

We write in response to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)'s Request for Comments regarding the location selection for a new Community Outreach Office in the Southeast Region. We strongly recommend that the USPTO locate a new Community Outreach Office in the North Carolina Research Triangle.

The Unleashing American Innovators Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-328) requires the USPTO to establish at least four Community Outreach Offices throughout the United States by the end of 2027. The USPTO is ahead of schedule, opening one office in Durham, New Hampshire in collaboration with the University of New Hampshire, one in Salt Lake City, Utah in collaboration with the University of Utah, and another in Bozeman, Montana in collaboration with the Montana State University. The geographic diversity of these locations is a testament to USPTO's process of site selection so far.

As the USPTO evaluates potential locations for additional Community Outreach Offices, it has emphasized the importance of placing them within innovation ecosystems that can expand access to intellectual property resources, support innovators, and educate prospective inventors. The Research Triangle, anchored by Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill, represents one of the most dynamic and collaborative innovation hubs in the United States and is exceptionally well-suited to advance these objectives.

The Research Triangle is home to leading research universities, including North Carolina State University, Duke University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. These institutions produce world-class research, educate new leaders in their fields, maintain robust technology transfer pipelines, and cultivate a steady stream of startups across biotechnology, information technology, advanced manufacturing, and other fields. The Research Triangle also contains a large number of innovative companies in a wide variety of IP-intensive industries that strengthen this ecosystem, serving as one of the largest research parks in the country and a magnet for both established firms and emerging ventures.

Locating a Community Outreach Office in the Research Triangle would directly advance the USPTO's mission to broaden participation in the intellectual property system. The region's

diverse population, including students, first-time inventors, rural entrepreneurs from surrounding counties, and veterans, would benefit significantly from increased access to in-person education, pro bono resources, and technical assistance.

Moreover, North Carolina's central geographic position within the Southeast and robust transportation infrastructure enhances accessibility for a wide multi-state population. A Research Triangle-based office would complement the USPTO's existing regional outreach efforts while extending its reach into fast-growing innovation corridors across the Carolinas and neighboring states.

The Research Triangle meets many of the criteria that the USPTO has emphasized in its search, with a proven track record of translating academic research into commercial success. Establishing a Community Outreach Office in the North Carolina Research Triangle would maximize the USPTO's impact by situating resources where innovation is already thriving while expanding access to potential innovators.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation and for your continued leadership in strengthening America's innovation ecosystem. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional information or facilitate connections with regional stakeholders.

Sincerely,



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



Thom Tillis
United States Senator