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U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo Announces \$3 Billion Investment in America's Communities

Historic investment from President Biden's American Rescue Plan represents the largest economic development initiative in decades

Communities across the country will be able to apply for funding immediately

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo announced that the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) will implement a series of programs, collectively called **Investing in America's Communities**, to equitably invest the \$3 billion it received from President Biden's American Rescue Plan Act to help communities across the country build back better. The EDA investment is the largest economic development initiative from the Department of Commerce in decades.

"President Biden's American Rescue Plan delivered direct relief to the American people and was the first step to energizing the American economy following the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic," said Secretary Raimondo. "Now, its medium-term investments will allow communities around the country not only rebuild but reimagine their economy for the future."

"With an emphasis on equity, EDA's investments made possible by the American Rescue Plan will directly benefit communities that have been denied full access to economic prosperity and who have been disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus pandemic," Secretary Raimondo continued. "We will work with local communities across the country on innovative new approaches to ensure that we can increase American competitiveness by strengthening our workforce, businesses, and communities and build back better in regions across the country."

Investing in America's Communities, was launched today with six Notices of Funding Opportunity:

- Build Back Better Regional Challenge (\$1 billion)
- Good Jobs Challenge (\$500 million)
- Economic Adjustment Assistance Challenge (\$500 million)
- Indigenous Communities Challenge (\$100 million)
- Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Grants (\$750 million)
- Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks Grants (\$90 million)

As part of the six programs, the Department of Commerce and EDA, working with President Biden's Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities, is making a *Coal Communities Commitment*, which allocates \$300 million in American Rescue Plan funds to coal

communities. This investment will ensure that they have the resources to recover from the pandemic and will help create new jobs and opportunities, including through the development or expansion of a new industry sector.

The American Rescue Plan funding empowers EDA to build upon its greatest strength—flexible funding to support community-led economic development—and provide larger, more transformational investments across the nation. Under the American Rescue Plan, EDA will make grants to state and local governmental entities, institutions of higher education, not-for-profit entities, unions, and Tribes. EDA is not authorized to provide grants to individuals or for-profit entities.

FACT SHEET: For more information about how EDA is investing in America’s communities, click here.

EDA’s [Investment Priorities](#), the first of which is equity, were announced by the Biden Administration on April 14. They provide an overarching framework for all of the EDA’s grants, including the investments that will be made under the American Rescue Plan.

Notices of Funding Opportunity for each program will be released shortly. Please visit www.eda.gov/ARPA for the latest news and announcements about EDA’s American Rescue Plan programs.

About the U.S. Economic Development Administration (www.eda.gov)

The mission of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting competitiveness and preparing the nation’s regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA invests in communities and supports regional collaboration in order to create jobs for U.S. workers, promote American innovation, and accelerate long-term sustainable economic growth.

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Fact Sheet
Investing in America's Communities
The Economic Development Administration's American Rescue Plan Programs
July 22, 2021

Today, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) is announcing \$3 billion in funding opportunities to invest in distressed and underserved communities impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. This historic investment, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, will support bottom-up, middle-out economic development focused on advancing equity, creating good-paying jobs, helping workers to develop in-demand skills, building economic resilience, and accelerating the economic recovery for the industries and communities hit hardest by the coronavirus pandemic.

EDA investments made under the American Rescue Plan will support the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment not just to build the American economy back to where it was before the pandemic, but to build back better and stronger. With these investments, communities across the country, including those historically left behind and left out, have the opportunity to excel. EDA will invest in infrastructure, innovation, and workforce training to create good-paying American jobs and strengthen our nation's global economic competitiveness.

Today, EDA is announcing its **Investing in America's Communities** programs:

- Build Back Better Regional Challenge (\$1 billion)
- Good Jobs Challenge (\$500 million)
- Economic Adjustment Assistance Challenge (\$500 million)
- Indigenous Communities Challenge (\$100 million)
- Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Grants (\$750 million)
- Statewide Planning, Research and Networks Grants (\$90 million)

Commerce and EDA, working with President Biden's Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities, are also making a *Coal Communities Commitment*, allocating \$300 million in American Rescue Plan funds (10 percent of the total EDA American Rescue Plan programs) to coal communities. This unprecedented investment in the economic development and diversification of these communities, which have powered America for more than a century, will ensure they have the resources to recover from the pandemic and will help create new jobs and opportunities, including through the development or expansion of new industry sectors.

To meet this commitment, EDA will allocate \$100 million from the *Build Back Better Regional Challenge* and \$200 million of *Economic Adjustment Assistance Challenge* to support coal communities.

EDA's **Investing in America's Communities** will:

- **Build Back Better by Investing in All of America:** As communities begin to recover from the economic crisis, EDA is uniquely positioned to support broad-based, equitable, community-led economic development. Utilizing funds from the American Rescue Plan, EDA will launch a \$1 billion *Build Back Better Regional Challenge*. This program will capitalize on American ingenuity and American workers by providing a transformational investment to 20 to 30 regions across the country to revitalize their economies. The challenge will invite regional coalitions to apply for funding to implement three to eight projects aligned with a cohesive regional development strategy, totaling \$25 million-\$75 million, and up to \$100 million. These regions will have the opportunity to accelerate recovery and inclusive economic growth by developing new industries or expanding existing ones through planning, infrastructure development, workforce training, innovation and commercialization, access to capital, and more.

EDA will allocate an additional \$500 million provided by the American Rescue Plan for *Economic Adjustment Assistance Challenge*. This is EDA's most flexible program and will award grants to hundreds of communities across the country to support efforts to plan, build, innovate, and put people back to work through projects tailored to meet local needs.

Additionally, EDA is committing \$300 million across its American Rescue Plan programs to coal communities. EDA's *Coal Communities Commitment* will help ensure that these communities are supported as they recover from the pandemic and create new jobs and opportunities, including through the creation or expansion of a new industry sector. EDA will meet this commitment by allocating \$100 million from the *Build Back Better Regional Challenge* and \$200 million of *Economic Adjustment Assistance Challenge*.

- **Get Americans Back to Work:** The coronavirus pandemic has devastated the economic well-being of workers across the country. From big cities to small towns, Americans—particularly women, people of color, and low-wage workers—have faced economic insecurity and job loss. While the economy is showing signs of significant growth, there are still more than seven million fewer jobs in the United States than there were before the pandemic. EDA's American Rescue Plan programs will get Americans back to work in good-paying jobs. From investing in worker training, to supporting manufacturing, to funding infrastructure projects, all six programs will put Americans back to work in communities across the country.

EDA's *Good Jobs Challenge* addresses the structural barriers that American workers face head-on. The program will help to ensure that workers can develop in-demand skills that lead to good jobs and long-term careers. EDA will allocate \$500 million to invest in building and strengthening regional workforce training systems and sector-based partnerships, with a focus on programs targeted at women, people of color, and historically underserved communities. EDA's grantees will help workers complete training programs, including Registered Apprenticeships, and secure good-paying jobs by providing the wrap-around services that they need to succeed, like childcare and transportation. This program will encourage community organizations, training providers, and unions to partner with employers to create the talent pipeline to meet industry needs for today and the future and create concrete pathways for American workers to secure good-paying jobs.

- **Support Underserved Communities:** The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated the inequalities that exist across and within our communities. Supporting underserved communities is fundamental to EDA's work, and the Investing in America's Communities programs will pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity by focusing on populations and underserved communities that have been denied full access to economic prosperity. The flexibility of funding

and wide range of programs are designed to meet communities where they are in their economic development process. That could mean supporting planning projects to develop an economic vision for the future, breaking ground to develop the infrastructure needed to house industries or providing workforce training. EDA recently updated its [investment priorities](#), the overarching framework that informs how EDA evaluates applications; equity is at the top of these priorities and every application will be reviewed through this lens.

Through the *Indigenous Communities Challenge*, EDA will allocate \$100 million specifically for Indigenous communities, which were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. EDA will work hand-in-hand with Tribal Governments and Indigenous communities to develop and execute the economic development projects they need to recover from the pandemic and build economies for the future. Indigenous communities are also encouraged and eligible to apply to all of EDA's other programs.

- **Accelerate the Recovery of Our Hardest-Hit Communities:** EDA is focused on revitalizing the industries that have been hardest hit by the pandemic, including the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries. \$750 million of American Rescue Plan funds will be allocated to accelerate the recovery of the travel and tourism sector and the communities that rely on the industry. EDA will distribute \$510 million in *State Tourism Grants* that will be dispersed quickly to address the immediate needs of the tourism industry by investing in marketing, infrastructure, workforce, and other projects to rejuvenate safe leisure, business, and international travel.

In addition, through *Regional Tourism Grants*, EDA allocates \$240 million for competitive grants to further invest in infrastructure, workforce, or other projects to support recovery and resilience in the communities hardest hit by disruptions in the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors.

- **Plan for a Resilient Future:** Building back better means developing equitable and resilient local economies that can withstand future economic shocks. EDA will allocate \$59 million in *State Planning* grants to support this effort. Similarly, EDA has allocated \$31 million for *Communities of Practice* and *Research* grants to evaluate implementation by EDA and its grantees and extend technical assistance to support EDA's ability to work with and build capacity with new and existing grantees.

Through the implementation of these programs, EDA will play a central role in the economic recovery and growth of our nation as we work to build back better from the coronavirus pandemic. EDA will lead America's economic development agenda and will promote innovation and competitiveness; provide opportunities for all Americans to thrive; and foster broad-based, equitable, and sustainable growth and prosperity in our economy.

Notices of Funding Opportunity for each challenge will be released shortly. All EDA American Rescue Plan funds must be awarded by September 2022.

We encourage all Americans to visit www.eda.gov/ARPA for more information on how to participate. Assistance is also available via our social media platforms, including [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). Under the American Rescue Plan, EDA may make grants to state and local governmental entities, institutions of higher education, not-for-profit entities, and Tribes. EDA is not authorized to provide grants to individuals or for-profit entities.

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