

REGENERATING EMPLOYMENT + ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ALONG THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER CORRIDOR

EDA Recompete Plan + Strategy Development Grant Overview

Submitted October 4, 2023

This **Recompete Plan + Strategy Development Grant** proposes to serve the Santa Cruz River Corridor's 16,439 unemployed prime-age individuals and their households through a culturally-responsive continuum of training and services for job placement and creation; strategies to diversify and strengthen the business ecosystem; and the development of equitable and sustainable infrastructure leveraging \$50M to create income streams generating ROI for future, person-centered work. The plan and grant were submitted by a coalition of local governments, with Santa Cruz County being the lead applicant for Phase 1.

[The EDA Distressed Area Recompete Pilot Program](#) (EDA Recompete Pilot Program) will invest \$200 million in persistently distressed communities to create and connect people to good jobs. This program will create renewed economic opportunity by targeting areas where prime-age (25-54 years) employment significantly trails the national average, with the goal to close this gap through large, flexible investments. EDA will deploy funding through a two-phase competition (\$20-50 million awards for communities/labor markets accepted to participate in Phase 2).

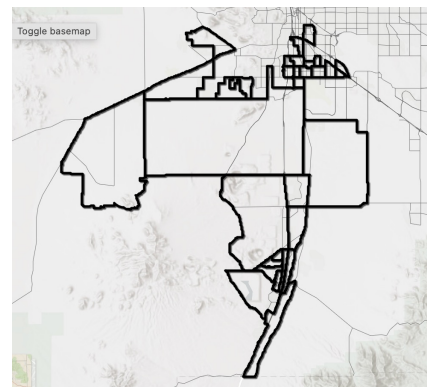


ELIGIBLE AREAS SNAPSHOT

	<i>Total Corridor</i>	<i>Santa Cruz County</i>	<i>Tracts in Pima/Tucson</i>
Persons	163,000	47,463	111,251
Prime-age persons	51,743	16,114	35,629
Prime-age unemployed	16,439	4,780	11,659
PAEG rate	32%	30%	33%

Table 1: Employment + Income: Prime Age Population for Eligible Areas

Source: US EDA, 2023 – Prime Age Unemployment Eligible Census Tracts



Eligible areas targeted in the proposed plan include **all of Santa Cruz County** and specific tracts in southern Pima County and the City of Tucson.

Figure 1: Recompete Plan Census Tracts in the City of Tucson and Pima County

	 Barriers	 Needed Support
Prospective Employees	Employment skills + economic stability (stable, affordable housing, health services, education access)	Paid training/certifications; child + elder care; reliable transport; wraparound services
Existing Employers (seeking to fill jobs)	Qualified applicants with basic + business English, math, digital and technical skill readiness	Accessible, continuum of training pathways for basic to technical skills acquisition
Small Businesses + Entrepreneurs	Access to capital, digital upskilling, financial + innovation know-how	Digital skills; broadband access; character-based loan fund; business coaching/TA
Service Providers + Government	Sufficient employers to engage in cross-sector supports for transferable skill sets	Flexible financial resources to provide wraparound supports + resources to scale

Table 2: Employment Barriers + Needs in the Santa Cruz River Corridor

Source: Interviews with 26 sets of community stakeholder groups + local govts, Aug-Sep 2023

REGIONAL PRIORITIES



Figure 2: Strategic Priorities Identified by Santa Cruz River Corridor Stakeholders

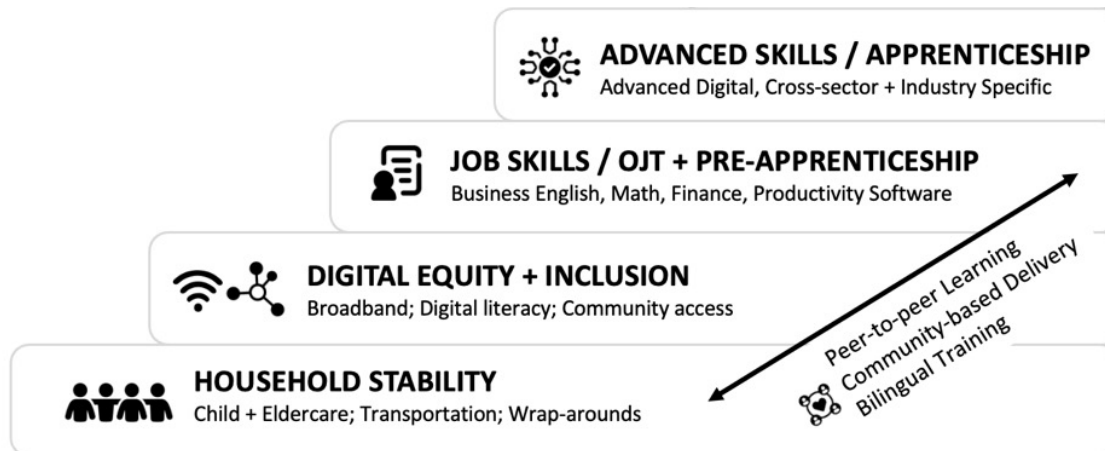


Figure 3: Continuum of Employment Skills and Support Infrastructure

The Recompete Plan seeks to invest in **people and place-based infrastructure** through three regional priorities identified by the coalition and 26 community stakeholder groups who participated in plan. These three strategic priorities 1) counter job displacement and 2) connect people to quality jobs with household sustaining wages in sustainable industries. The proposed strategy will provide a continuum of employment skills and support infrastructure that addresses the specific needs of industries forming the backbone of the regional economy

RECOMPETE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES



Figure 4: Recompete Plan Proposed Investment Areas/Projects

\$50M
Recompete
Phase 2
Request

If the Plan is approved the coalition will apply for \$50 million in Phase 2 implementation funding.

Pandemic response and recovery efforts seeded effective collaborations that are bridging access to services for vulnerable, hard to reach populations through community-based infrastructure. Recent cross-jurisdictional efforts to address poverty, justice reform, equitable access to early childhood education, homelessness prevention, affordable housing and digital access have funneled over \$70 million into game-changing investments to be leveraged along with EDA funding to address the prime age employment gap along the Santa Cruz River Corridor.

The proposed Recompete Plan investment projects build on existing assets and address the three strategic priorities through person-centered  and community infrastructure  needs identified by regional stakeholder groups.

For a more complete description and proposed outcomes.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT + PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNER TYPE	CONFIRMED PARTNERS WITH LETTER OF SUPPORT
 Local Governments	Santa Cruz County, Pima County, City of Tucson (coalition applicants) Pascua Yaqui Tribe; Town of Sahuarita, AZ; City of Nogales, AZ
 Leveraged Financing	Southern AZ Sports Film and Tourism Authority; Tucson IDA; Groundswell Capital; Lincoln Institute; Arizona Commerce Authority
 Employers/Industry Associations	Fresh Produce Assn; Greater Nogales-Santa Cruz County Port Authority; Martinez Group; Nogales-Santa Cruz County Chamber of Commerce; Tucson-Metro Chamber; Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Ascent Aviation Services; Unisource/Tucson Electric; AMARG
 Education + Training	Tucson Electrical Joint Apprenticeship & Training Program (Union); JobPath; Pima Community College; Arizona State University; AZ Cyber Initiative
 Community (CBOs)	La Linea; Mat Bevel Co.; Nogales Community Development (CDFI); Sunnyside Foundation; Tubac Community Center Foundation
 Environmental	Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Area; The Nature Conservancy; Borderlands Restoration Network, Tucson Clean and Beautiful

Table 2: Thirty-two Confirmed Partners for Recompete Plan and Grant Implementation

\$500,000

Strategy
Development
Request

The coalition has requested \$500,000 to prepare for implementation of Phase 2.

The Strategy Development Grant funding request for \$500,000 includes

1. Recompete Plan Coordinator
2. Policy integration and planning work
3. Property inventories to identify properties for climate resilient improvements
4. Regional linear parks strategy
5. Needs assessment to identify job seeker needs and community assets

THEORY OF CHANGE

DRAFT 10.11.23 v2

PRIORITIES

Programs.

Participants

**EDA Recompete Pilot Program Applicants:
Santa Cruz County (lead), Pima County, City of Tucson**

Short

OUTCOMES

Medium

Long (CONDITIONS)

Industry Reinvestment
Business Development +
Apprenticeships and On the
Job Training to
Reinvest and Fill Quality
Jobs in Existing Industries

Industries served: Produce, Logistics,
Small Business; Manufacturing,
Aviation Technology, Construction
Trades, Nature-based Restorative
Econ (NBRE) (including Tourism and
Wineries), Health Care; Community
Based Orgs (CBOs)

Establish equitable governance coalition
+ structures coordinated with
Recompete Program Coordinator, w/
proportional “by and for”
representation

Needs assessments to ID: 1) job seeker
needs and community supports for
technical skills and work-based learning
pathways supporting industry-specific
and cross-sector jobs; 2) Forward Cities
E3 (Equitable Entrepreneurial
Ecosystem)

ID sites for training/apprenticeship
center(s)/costs of rehabilitating or
constructing

Regional structures
enable SCC to enter into
administrative economies
of scale supporting
DOL/WIOA/DOJ funded
employment

Apprenticeship programs
deployed and program
site/s monitor who
benefits + where for
program improvement

Job training for existing
industry (fill + create
jobs)

Culturally responsive
peer learning +
contracting opps

Services and benefits
align to remove
barriers

Regional Climate Resiliency
to Counter Job
Displacement
and Create Quality Jobs in
the Regenerative Economy

Industries served: Small Bus +
Entrepreneurship, Construction
Trades, Nature-based Restorative
Economy (NBRE), Health Care;
Community Based Orgs (CBO)

Needs inventory of public + private
(housing/residential + commercial)
properties in need of rehabilitation

Develop RFP for linear parks system with
integration of wildlife corridors that
restore land and link and leverage
existing assets throughout Santa Cruz
and and Pima County to promote retail
and tourism industries

Journeymen and local
contractors build + rehab
residential + commercial
+ public properties to
climate resilient
standards

Public assets are
connected to NBRE green
job opportunities +
accelerators

The region creates
affordable, climate
resilient infrastructure
(green storm
infrastructure,
renewable energy) +
housing

The region conserves
and connects public
land assets to local
NBRE employment
enhancing tourism
base

Digital Equity and Inclusion
to Counter Job Displacement
and Increase Quality
Digital Jobs in the Region

Industries served: Produce, Logistics,
Small Bus + Entrepreneurs, Bi-national
Manufacturing, Construction Trades,
Nature-based Restorative Economy
(NBRE); Health Care; CBOs

Develop broadband access plan including
middle mile off-ramp, underserved
+ unserved populations identified in
BEAD and Pima Office of Digital Inclusion

Digital experimentation
spaces co-housed in
existing public and
community facilities

Digital equity access for
underserved and
unserved

Entrepreneurs, CBOs
build opportunities in
regenerative + digital
economy; established
industries innovate with
emerging tech

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