



East Oakland Recompete Project Recompete Plan Narrative

Summary

We are pleased to present this proposal to revitalize the persistently distressed area of 13 eligible census tracts in Alameda County, CA, known as East Oakland. Our coalition shares a vision for systemic change through which we will upskill un/underemployed prime age adults (ages 25-65) to transform the area's economy. We have the resources and collective will to make East Oakland a model of equitable economic renewal, fueled by a once-in-a-generation investment. We seek both an EDA Strategy Development Grant and Recompete Plan approval.

East Oakland Economic Context: Divestment and Displacement

Challenge: Residents across the 13 East Oakland eligible census tracts are undergoing a crisis of economic immobility, unemployment and racialized displacement after over four decades of disinvestment. This is illustrated by the significant population of prime-age adults who are concentrated in the region. These populations include:

- **Undocumented immigrants** who make up ~17% of East Oakland's 90,000 residents and who often pursue informal or illicit work and economies.
- **Returning citizens** exposed to disproportionate rates of incarceration, particularly among Black residents who are twenty times more likely to be incarcerated than their White counterparts in Alameda County.
- **Transitional age and opportunity youth** disproportionately destabilized, reliant on public benefits, food/housing insecure, disconnected from vocational training.
- **Veterans and their families**, who returned home after military service without adequate training and resources to launch a new career.

These populations are in need of connection to (1) supportive services, (2) durable workforce and (3) small business development opportunities provided by trusted, locally embedded partners who understand the dynamics of their lives and neighborhoods.

Macro Socio Economic Trends: Several economic and disinvestment trends have led to the context above. Red-lining has made Oakland the fourteenth most segregated city in the US, and subdivided East Oakland geographically with the development of Highway 880 in the 1950s. Targeted predatory lending in the 1990s created high debt burdens among residents in a region where housing costs are nearly double the national average. Most recently, stagnant wages have contributed to a White-Black median income disparity of over \$40,000.

Between 2000 to 2020, East Oakland, once known for its immense racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, experienced a 37% decline in its Black population, a loss of greater than 18,000 Black residents. Today, 45% of Oakland's Black population and 48% of its growing Latine population who live in poverty, remain in East Oakland, where the median household income is 50% lower

than that of Oakland at large. This exodus of people, services, and investment gives rise to unemployment, informal economies, cycles of crime and incarceration *triple* the national average, lack of internet access at triple the statewide average, and low educational attainment. At East Oakland's Castlemont High School, where 99.6% of students are minorities and 88% are economically disadvantaged, only 45% graduate.

Workforce Trends: Like many communities of color, East Oakland was disproportionately impacted by the COVID pandemic. In 2020, unemployment in Alameda County rose from 2.7% to 14%, and still hovers higher than pre-pandemic at 4.4%. In the Recompete eligibility area, labor force participation averages just 61%. To keep pace with the skyrocketing cost of local living, East Oakland's underserved residents must be connected to durable, living-wage career paths. While Oakland's port, one of the busiest in the country, discharges more than 99% of containerized goods moving through Northern California and boasts a rich manufacturing history, many manufacturing jobs, particularly in East Oakland, have been displaced. From 2000 to 2002 alone, the Oakland metro statistical area lost 14,000 manufacturing jobs. Automation driven by nearby Silicon Valley is reshaping roles across transportation, energy, goods movement, and construction, but East Oaklanders do not reap the benefits. Without continuous reskilling tied to mid and high-wage digital and infrastructure-related jobs of the future, residents will continue to be displaced.

Small Business Development Trends: Small businesses play a critical role in the East Oakland economy, given that 92% of the city's businesses employ fewer than 20 employees. More than half of Oakland's businesses are owned by people of color, 48% by women; far exceeding national averages. However, revenues for businesses owned by people of color generated less than 10% of all business revenues for Oakland in 2012, and revenues for women-owned businesses have dropped 25%. Post-pandemic, over 600 county businesses have ceased operations (198 corporations and 456 small businesses). The effects are visible across East Oakland where almost 30% of business addresses are vacant. Whereas in the 1980s, there were approximately 1,000 Black-owned businesses in East Oakland, today there are approximately five. Racial disparities in small business net worth are rampant with Black businesses valued at \$66,431, Latinx valued at \$121,780, and White valued at \$378,606. There is a strong need for small business support and access to modern, secure digital business infrastructure, particularly given the prevalence of local microentrepreneurship.

Proposed Solution: A Three- Pronged Community-driven Approach

Target Population: Our coalition will focus on re-engaging economically disadvantaged and racially marginalized prime-age adults (25-54) from the eligible area who have dropped out of the workforce. We will offer support tailored to meet the needs of key populations such as caregivers, veterans, military spouses, reentering citizens, unauthorized citizens, former foster youth, others experiencing prolonged un/underemployment, and those who may be engaged in

informal or illicit economies. Our coalition partners deeply understand the barriers these individuals face and help to engineer effective solutions.

Three Pillar, Holistic Approach: In the dynamic landscape of the 21st-century job market, a multi-faceted approach is essential to ensure not only employability but also sustainability and growth for East Oakland residents from disadvantaged backgrounds. A three-pillar approach grounds our strategy, catering to the holistic needs of low-income residents while setting them on a trajectory towards economic self-reliance, durable employment, and entrepreneurship.

Pillar	Objective	Key Components
<p><u>Pillar 1</u> Stability through Wraparound Services & Soft Skills Training</p>	<p>To address and mitigate the immediate barriers faced by underserved residents, ensuring they have a stable foundation upon which to build future skills and wealth.</p>	<p>Coordinated case management, service navigation, and soft skills training focusing on residents most impacted by economic inequity from trusted mentors and coaches within the community.</p> <p>Housing Support: Access to stable housing to ensure a safe living environment.</p> <p>Healthcare Services: Access to basic healthcare (physical, dental, mental, and preventive).</p> <p>Childcare Services: Reliable childcare support, enabling parents to participate in training programs.</p> <p>Financial Counseling: Assist with budgeting, managing debt, and building savings.</p> <p>Nutrition and Wellness: Ensure access to nutritious food, promote overall well-being.</p> <p>Mental Health and Counseling: Address trauma, build resilience, psychological support.</p> <p>Access to Broadband: Access to computers, reliable internet, ongoing tech support to build digital literacy foundation.</p>
<p><u>Pillar 2</u> Upskilling into durable emerging tech, & infrastructure workforce pathways</p>	<p>To equip residents with skills that align with durable, living-wage jobs in growth industries,</p>	<p>Leverage the coordinated case management of Pillar 1 to establish a tech and infrastructure work corps benefiting from continuous and progressive upskilling, talent referrals between CBOs and the Peralta Community College ecosystem, living-wage apprenticeships with large employers as well as contract services for local small/micro businesses.</p>

	<p>and ensure their employability and adaptability to increased automation and digitization.</p>	<p>Upskilling Pathways:</p> <p>1) Basic Digital Literacy: Basics of using computers, smartphones, and the internet, word processors, spreadsheets, and presentation software to advance towards formal, culturally-resonant, low-barrier work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Target roles: digital navigator, desktop analyst ● Median Salary: \$25/hr (\$60K annual) ● Lowered Barriers to Entry: Oakland Unvited is part of the Oakland Thrives coalition and has worked with coalition partners to coordinate digital resources across East Oakland K-12 & community colleges. <p>2) Emerging Tech: Cybersecurity, DevOps, Data Analytics and Computer Science:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Target Roles: Business Analyst, Project Manager, Cybersecurity Analyst, Info Security Risk Analyst, Systems Admin. ● Market Demand: Shortage of skilled-labor; 35% anticipated growth rate by 2031. ● Median Salary: \$70,000-\$117,000. ● Low Barriers to Entry: 25% of all workers have an Associate’s degree or GED. <p>3) Emerging Infrastructure: Construction & Clean Energy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Target Roles: Solar / Mesh Wifi Installer, EV Technician, Gas and Electric Utility Technician, Transit Track and Structure Technician, Apprenticed Union Tradeperson. ● Market Demand: Energy workforce added almost 300,000 jobs (+3.8% growth) in 2022; 1.3M new jobs expected by 2030. ● Median Salaries: \$54,000-120,000. Next generation clean energy/infrastructure jobs boost income by 8%-19%. ● Low Barriers to Entry: Only 45% of all workers in clean energy have a GED.
<p>Pillar 3 Small business capacity building & entrepreneurship</p>	<p>To boost small business capacity, equip trained workers to provide digital services to</p>	<p>Support for Small Business Development, to reverse decades of disinvestment and spur entrepreneurship-driven economic development</p> <p>Business Literacy: Basics of starting and managing a business, understanding market dynamics, and legal compliance.</p> <p>Business Technology: Train on digital tools for business</p>

	small businesses, foster entrepreneurial mindset and local economic development	<p>management (e-commerce, online marketing), and connect to talent corps contract services related to cybersecurity, data, web design.</p> <p>Access to Technical Assistance: Connect to needed expertise and professional services at low or no cost, from legal and financial guidance to computer and cybersecurity support. Offers both vital services to small businesses and work experience for newly upskilled individuals.</p> <p>Access to Capital: Connect residents with microfinance institutions, grant programs, and investment opportunities such as the ESO Capital in the Community Fund (\$18M initiative from CA State).</p> <p>Mentorship Programs: Pairing up budding entrepreneurs with seasoned professionals. Innovation Workshops: Platforms for brainstorming, validating, and refining business ideas.</p>
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Expected Outcomes:

Strategy Development: 100 pilot participants with the following outcomes:

- 90% will show a measurable **skills gain** that improves their workforce readiness
- 80% of those enrolled **graduate from a training program**
- 60% of graduates **placed in employment** six months after training completion
- 20% of graduates **enrolled in continuing education** six months after completion

Recompete Plan Implementation Phase: 1000+ participants with similar outcomes:

- 90% will show a measurable **skills gain** that improves their workforce readiness
- 90% will be **connected to stabilization services** and supports
- 80% of those enrolled will **graduate from a training program**
- 70% of graduates **placed in employment** six months after training completion
- 20% of graduates **enrolled in continuing education** six months after completion

Coalition Competitive Advantages:

Grounded in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: All coalition partners have a mission focused on diversity, equity and inclusion, around which Oakland has a long history of activism. The city was chosen to be among the first cohort of five cities to develop local Equity Indicators tools in partnership with the City University of New York with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation.

Funding Multiplier Effect: The below listed coalition partners are in partnership on Rise East, a \$100 million philanthropic initiative aimed at identifying strategies to improve East Oakland Black residents’ connection to work, wealth, health, housing, safety, data, and community power. Key to this place-based strategy is deep partnership between community based

organizations, public and private sectors, and philanthropy. EDA Recompete funding would help match existing philanthropic commitments, anchored by Blue Meridian Partners, thus creating a transformative multiplier effect.

Lead Agency: Black Cultural Zone Community Development Corp: Black Cultural Zone (BCZ), a community-based nonprofit with a budget of \$8M and staff of 40, is uniquely positioned to lead the Recompete Partnership. BCZ has worked since 2014 with a coalition of residents, government, churches, grassroots groups to keep Black residents in East Oakland, and forged a consortium of 40+ organizational partners devoted to building cultural and economic prosperity in the area. By constructing and acquiring affordable housing and commercial space, this trusted community development corp directs funding to community-driven projects, connects residents to events, safe spaces, affordable housing, career services, and entrepreneurial support. This strategy is the focus of [Rise East](#).

BCZ has strong experience deploying public funds and is expanding its model to nine other locations across East Oakland. Through its community development corporation, BCZ has experience layering and leveraging \$170 million for construction and acquisition of affordable housing and commercial space. Grant experience includes an award from the State of California Transformative Climate Communities program establishing BCZ as the Career Navigation Hub for a \$28M effort focused on climate resilience and anti-displacement, a \$3.1M partnership with Mellon Foundation, a \$1.4M partnership with City of Oakland, a \$1 million partnership with the NBA Foundation, an EDA subgrant of \$200K from the City of Oakland, and a \$150K award in CARES Act funding. BCZ's staff and leadership all have lived and professional experience with Recompete target communities.

Backbone: Oakland Thrives: The [Rise East](#) Plan is backboneed by Oakland Thrives, a collective impact partnership of nonprofits, community, and philanthropy anchored by an inter-governmental Joint Powers Authority of Alameda County, City of Oakland, Oakland Unified School District, First 5 Alameda, the Board of Education, and Peralta Community Colleges. This unique combination of philanthropy, grassroots neighborhood leaders, and collaborative governmental involvement is aimed squarely at shifting systems of power toward community-led social and economic interventions that are innovative, proven, and data-driven.

Workforce Development: Our Coalition includes several partners who specialize in workforce development for various occupations and populations and bring key employer relationships:

- **Cypress Mandela Training Center** improves lives by providing pre-apprentice and life skills training in construction along with employment assistance. Offers a free 16-week pre-apprenticeship program that prepares adults for skilled trades jobs in construction.
- **Kapor Center** builds a more equitable tech workforce via research, convening, and funding. Its scope in Oakland spans across K-12 to post secondary to entrepreneurship and venture capital. Convenes Oakland's *Pathways to Tech* workforce development

coalition, comprised of 30+ upskilling partners and 20+ employers. Will also advise on tech-enabled infrastructure and clean energy career paths and engage related partners.

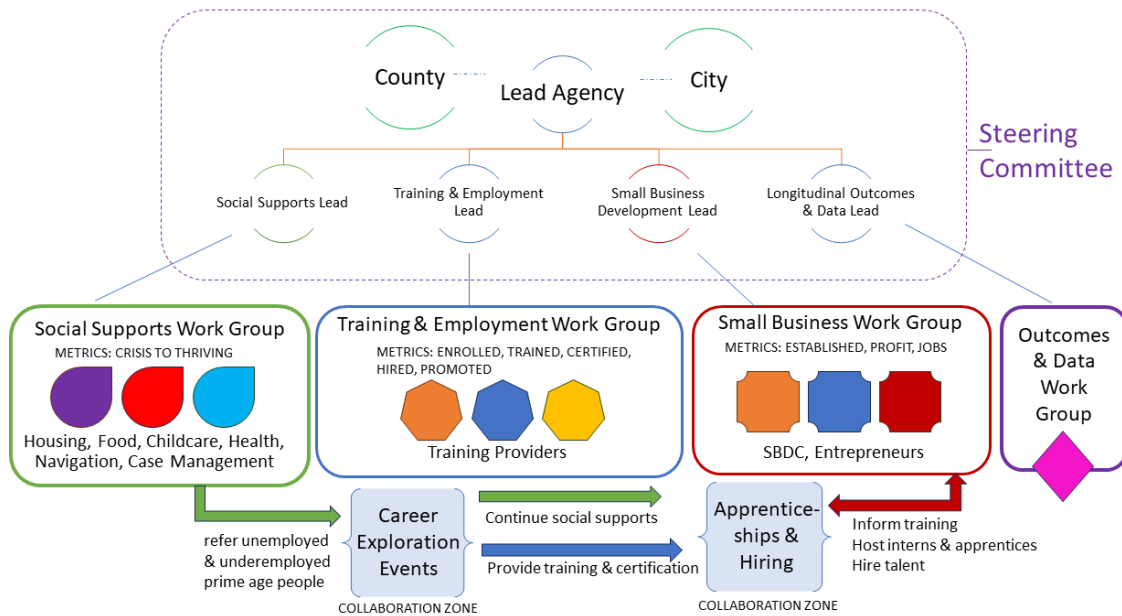
- **NPower Inc.** creates pathways to economic prosperity by launching digital careers for military veterans and young adults from underserved communities. Provides free IT workforce training leading to industry-recognized certification, along with wraparound social support and job placement, for low-income veterans and opportunity youth.
- **Merritt College.** Local community college and leader in post-secondary and career education. Offers a wide range of degrees and certificates. Particularly known for its Cybersecurity and Nursing programs, offering degrees, certificates, and work opportunities in both fields. Nearly half (48%) of students are prime age (25-54).
- **Hack The Hood.** Seeks to diversify the tech industry by providing coding, data science and other tech skill-building educational programs to Black, Latinx, AAPI and Indigenous communities. All programs are grounded in social justice and identity-formation.
- **Tech Exchange.** A Bay Area leader in efforts to close the digital divide, with a mission to ensure that all families have a computer, internet access, and the technology skills necessary to improve and enhance their lives. Programs include multilingual tech support, digital skills classes, and assistance accessing affordable broadband service.
- **Goodwill of San Francisco Bay.** A local and national leader in workforce training for low-income individuals and those with barriers to employment. Provides supported career pathways through skill-building and certification, individualized career services and paid employment in diverse industries.

Small Business Capacity Building: ESO Ventures

ESO Ventures Inc (ESO) is an Oakland-based entrepreneurial support organization equipping people of color to create new jobs and generate revenue in their distressed communities. ESO offers small business capacity-building in the form of subsidized incubation-acceleration training, financial services, and mentorship. ESO is also a licensed commercial lender with a total of \$18M in financial capital and grants from the State of California. They provide low-interest, non-asset backed loans up to \$100K to those whom traditional lenders reject. ESO has served almost 200 Black and Latine entrepreneurs (70% female). Graduates more than double the time spent developing their business, 2 in 3 significantly grow their customer base, and 1 in 3 report revenue growth over 50%.

Governance: BCZ will hire a full-time Recompete Plan Coordinator (RPC). The finalist will have knowledge of and relationships in Oakland, workforce expertise, leadership and project management skills, plus lived experience in an underserved community. The RPC will provide cross-institutional leadership and catalyze strong, lasting partnerships. Work will be organized into three outcome area working groups: (1) Social Supports, (2) Training & Employment, and

(3) Small Business. BCZ will subcontract leadership of each Working Group to a partner organization. The working group leads will serve on a Steering Committee along with the RPC, City and County representatives, and select other leaders who contribute to a high-level view of the project and break down silos. The Steering Committee will meet monthly during the first two years, and may shift to quarterly meetings thereafter. The coalition behind this application will form the core members of these working groups. Each working group lead will recruit relevant subject matter experts and individuals representing key target populations, organize regular forums for discussion, and develop thoughtful written plans for both a pilot during the Strategy Development term and a 5-year Recompete implementation term.



Timeline: Phase 1: Strategy Development | 18 Months | Jan 2024 - June 2025

- **Phase 2: Implementation | 5 years | July 2025 - June 2030**

The first half of Strategy Development will focus on engineering the participant journey with a human-centered design approach and “no wrong door” process for entry. This will require understanding how best to develop universal systems and processes for participant intake, enrollment and outcome-tracking across institutions. **The second half** will train frontline staff and complete the pilot, with partners collaborating to evaluate results and adjust design as needed. **Phase 2** will begin in Summer 2025, over five years, contingent on EDA directives.

High Level Budget Elements Our Project Budget includes:

- \$5,000,000 for Coordinated Wraparound Service Improvement
- \$4,000,000 for Cross Sector Outcomes Tracking
- \$10,000,000 for Training Pathways in Digital Literacy, Emerging Tech, and Infrastructure
- \$3,000,000 for Entrepreneur and Small Business Ecosystem Supports
- \$8,000,000 for Neighborhood Economic Development Initiative