



# Recompete Pilot Program

Phase 1 Evaluation Debrief

# Recompete Pilot Program Vision

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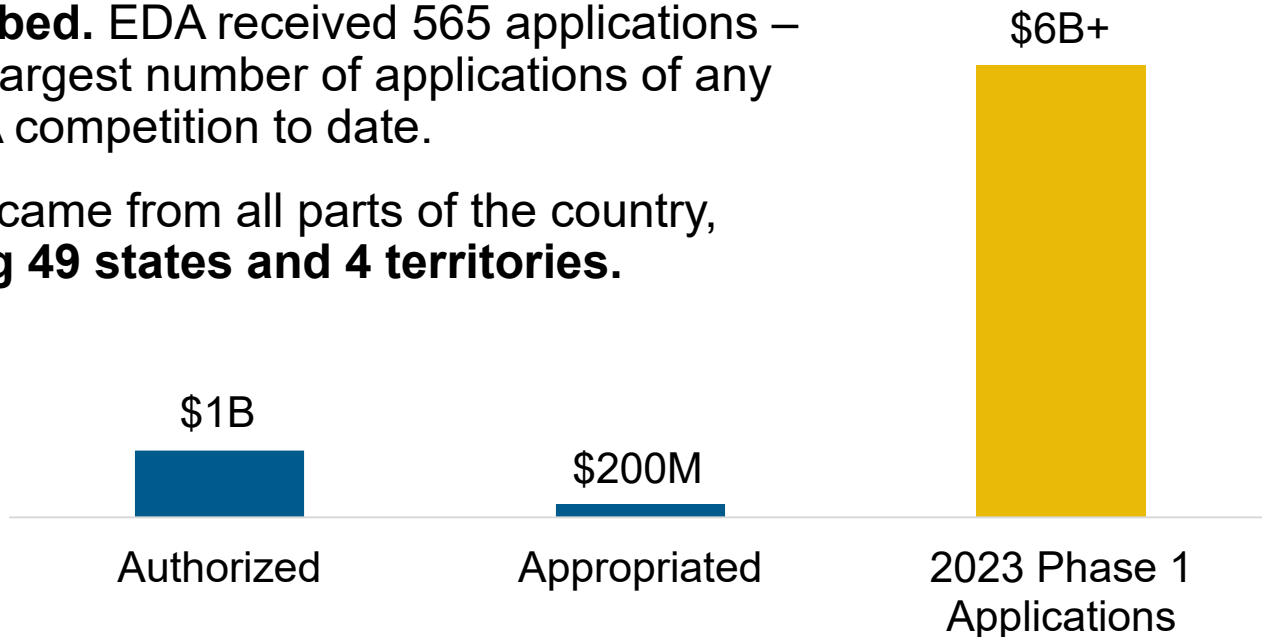
**The Recompete Pilot Program will invest \$200 million in distressed communities across the country.** The program targets areas where prime-age (25-54 years) employment significantly trails the national average.

The funding – deployed through a two-phase competition – provides communities both strategy development planning grants and large, flexible implementation awards.

# Phase 1 Applications

**Phase 1 of the competition was significantly oversubscribed.** EDA received 565 applications – marking the largest number of applications of any national EDA competition to date.

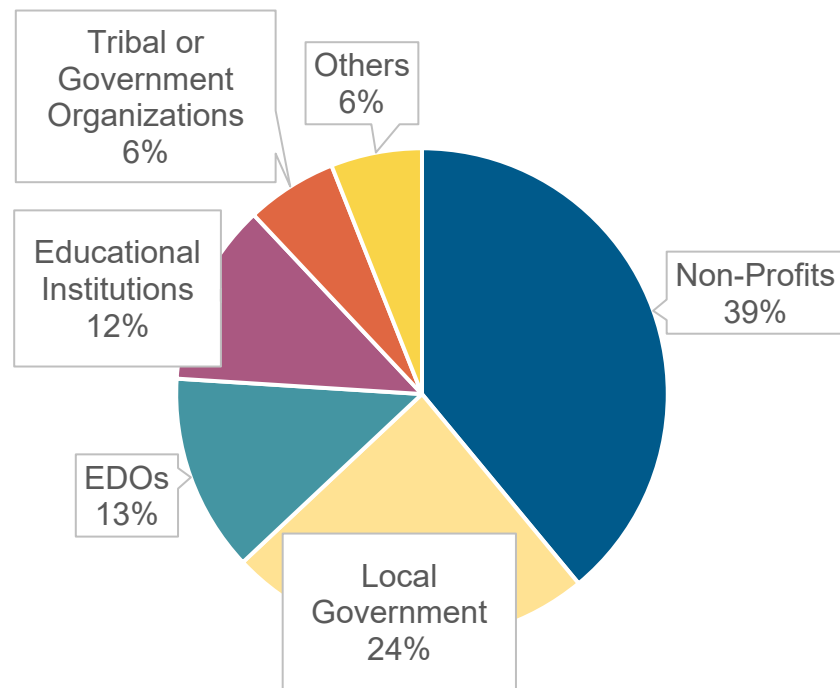
Applications came from all parts of the country, **representing 49 states and 4 territories.**



# Phase 1 Applications

**565 applications (225 Recompete Plans, 340 SDGs) from 392 unique lead applicants:**

- 53 (14%) submitted only applications for Recompete Plan approval;
- 172 (44%) submitted applications for both Recompete Plan approval and Strategy Development Grants; and
- 168 (43%) submitted only applications for Strategy Development Grants.



# Goals for today's debrief

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1. **Review the portfolio of 22 Finalists and 24 Strategy Development Grant awardees selected in Phase 1**
2. Discuss common strengths and weaknesses of applications and opportunities for improvement

# A look at the portfolio



# Snapshot of Recompete Plan Finalists

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**Highly Competitive:** 22 Recompete Finalists selected out of 225 plans submitted – **Reflecting the top 10% of applications in the nation** (15 Finalists also awarded Strategy Development Grants).

**Targeted Investments:** On average, Recompete Finalists' proposed investments target areas with prime age employment rates that trail the national average by more than **10 percentage points** and have an average median household income **one-third** below the national average.

## Of the 22 Finalists:

- **7 Finalists** are focused exclusively in **rural America**
- **5 are led by** or involve **Tribal organizations** as a primary partner
- **7 involve labor** as key partners

## 530+ Quality Letters of Support From:

- ✓ Local elected officials
- ✓ Private sector
- ✓ Higher education and workforce training organizations
- ✓ Community-based and labor organizations

# Major focus areas of Recompete Finalists

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*In their Phase 1 applications, Recompete Finalists previewed projects that would be featured in their Phase 2 Implementation applications.*

**Workforce Training (~\$300 million proposed):** Development and implementation of programs (including apprenticeships and stipends) to connect workers to good jobs

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**Wraparound Services (~\$190 million proposed):** Transportation, child/elder care, counseling, and other supports to ensure residents can meaningfully participate and stay in the labor force

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**Entrepreneurship and Small Business Supports (~\$150 million proposed):** Providing local business owners the skills, resources, and networks needed to thrive

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**Infrastructure Investments (~\$150 million proposed):** Funding to revitalize public infrastructure, commercial corridors, and improve residential wellbeing

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**Governance (~\$80 million proposed):** Resources to sustain local coordination to ensure Recompete Plans are designed by and for the communities they serve



# Snapshot of Strategy Development Grant Awardees

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**Highly Competitive:** 24 Strategy Development Grants selected out of **340** submitted – **reflecting the top 7%** of applications in the nation (15 SDG awardees were also selected as Finalists).

**High Level of Distress:** On average, SDG awardees target areas with prime age employment rates that trail the national average by more than **8 percentage points** and have a median household income **one-third** below the national average.

**Diverse Set of Leads / Partners:** **3** projects are Tribal-led and **5** have Tribal partners; **7** involve labor unions; **7** are led by local government; **8** by a non-profit or public entity; **5** by economic/community development orgs; and **1** by a HBCU.

**Wide Range of Geographies:** **11** are primarily focused on large/mid-sized cities; **3** on Tribal lands; **9** on rural areas; **2** on small towns, and **2** have a mixed geography.

**Targeted Geographic Approach:** The SDG awardees chose service areas with average **prime-age populations (PAP) of ~30,000 people**, far smaller than the EDA norm and **~50% lower** than the PAP of the fully eligible area they could have chosen.

# Goals for today's debrief

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1. Review the portfolio of 22 Finalists and 24 Strategy Development Grant awardees selected in Phase 1
2. **Discuss common strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement based on the Phase 1 evaluation criteria**

# Recompete Finalist Themes

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- **Identified Root Causes:** Finalists identified and explained causes of high PAEG in the service areas (e.g., using historical information, survey research, workforce data, etc.).
- **Place-based Strategy:** Proposals outlined the regional conditions and why the investment strategies proposed make sense for the targeted residents.
- **Focus on Equity:** Recompete Finalists made a point to identify and bring *historically underserved communities and areas* (whether rural, urban or suburban) to the table so benefits will accrue for these residents.
- **Key Partner Engagement:** Recompete Finalists engaged partners from labor unions, industry, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and other groups to create holistic plans for their target regions.
- **Strategic Investment to address PAEG:** Proposed projects and budgets align to the barriers identified and could realistically improve prime-age employment and per capita wages in the area.

# Recompete Plan: 6 Evaluation Criteria

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1. Understanding of regional conditions and needs (15 points);
2. Strength of strategy and quality of potential investments (15 points);
3. Equity, inclusivity, and diversity (15 points);
4. Regional assets (9 points);
5. Targeted geographic approach (9 points); and
6. Partnerships and potential commitments (9 points)

# Understanding of Regional Conditions and Needs

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## App Strengths:

- **Clear evidence of needs**, with historical context, and **indication those needs can be addressed**
- Alignment **between chosen region/service area and identified needs**
- **Specific and targeted population/groups** most impacted, and why

## Common Pitfalls:

- Minimal **analysis of how economic distress shows up in the community** (beyond directly referencing the PAEG and Median Household Income eligibility data)
- **Generalized description of regional conditions and needs**, lacking clarity on "why" distress exists
- While applicants articulated a set of regional conditions and needs, often a lack of rationale behind their relationship to **prime-age employment and wages specifically**

# Strength of Strategy & Quality of Investments

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## App Strengths:

- Clearly explain the **link between the proposed strategy, underlying regional conditions and needs (criteria #1), and local assets (criteria #4)**
- Provided confidence as to **why the proposed projects could be implemented successfully** (e.g., clear evidence of investments working, best practices are represented, track record in the local community)

## Common Pitfalls:

- Little alignment between investments **in a way that constituted a regional strategy**
- Lack of clarity on why proposed investments would be **adopted by the end user, such as businesses or workers** (e.g. demand)
- Few **metrics of success**, or why the **proposed orgs have experience executing** the specific projects identified

# Equity, Inclusivity, and Diversity

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## App Strengths:

- **Strong involvement from groups representing underserved communities** – leading to confidence in the degree to which their voices impacted the Recompete effort
- **High-level budgets reflect equity** narrative from application

## Common Pitfalls:

- Equity **sections/approach minimal or missing**; very few **equity-based goals**
- **Generalized discussion of equity in the application**, without specificity around which underserved communities would be reached through the Recompete effort, and how the strategy was tailored to them
- Equitable approaches discussed in application narrative, however **not reflected in the types of partners at the table** (e.g., through Letters of Support), nor in the requested funding in the **high-level budget**

# Regional Assets

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## App Strengths:

- **Specific assets articulated and aligned with the broader strategy**
- **Assets represent a clear economic starting position** to build the Recompete Plan from (including private sector engagement)

## Common Pitfalls:

- Regional assets are identified, however **lack of a clear link to how they relate to the Recompete effort**
- **Minimal discussion of how assets would be further leveraged or unlocked over time**, through Recompete investment in the proposed strategy – leading to concerns around sustainability beyond the potential funding period



# Targeted Geographic Approach

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## App Strengths:

- Service area represents a **feasible approach to achieving the applicant's goals**, and well aligned with the proposed budget
- **Alignment between all elements of the proposal** (e.g. partners, lead orgs where applicable, needs, target populations, investments) **and service area**

## Common Pitfalls:

- **Weak rationale behind why the applicant chose its Service Area** – i.e., lack of clear economic logic on why the geography was a distinct “place” for discernable impact, e.g.:
  - Too decentralized of a Service Area, raising concerns that **funding will be spread too thin**
  - A Service Area in close proximity to places with minimal economic distress, raising concerns around benefits “leakage”
- **Minimal discussion of potential career pathways of focus**, ensuring residents in the Service Area have pathways to Good Jobs (to the extent possible given regional conditions)

# Partnerships and Potential Commitments

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## App Strengths:

- **Specific partners tied to specific goals** (and even when commitments were not specific, clarity on how the applicant would get more specific in Phase 2)
- **Tangible examples**, specifically from letters, **of how different partners would contribute**
- **Private sector engagement**

## Common Pitfalls:

- **Letters of Support were largely generic, form letters** – while commitments were not expected in Phase 1, the strongest applicants provided letters that reflected each partner's role
- **Minimal justification behind why the Recompete partners** identified were part of the proposal
- While strong partners may have been identified, applications often **lacked representation from specific types of entities that were key parts of their strategies** (e.g., private sector w.r.t. industry-specific strategies)

# Recompete SDG Awardee Themes

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- **Vision that will “move the needle”:** The SDG will clearly further the region’s capacity to raise prime age employment among underserved residents.
- **Commitment to equity:** Evidence that applicant engaged with impacted populations and will pursue strategy development that leads to equitable interventions.
- **Key players at the table:** The identified staff and coalition members have a history of working together in a meaningful way. Letters of support were highly specific and displayed readiness to contribute to SDG effort.
- **Realistic and impactful use of funds:** Proposed budget will raise capacity of lead applicant and generate momentum towards achieving program goals.

# Strategy Development Grants: 4 Evaluation Criteria

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1. Regional conditions assessment and preliminary idea of the assets and potential interventions needed (15 points);
2. Potential of proposed Strategy Development activities (15 points);
3. Organizational and leadership capacity (15 points); and
4. Efficient and appropriate project budget (15 points)

# Regional Conditions, Prelim. Assets/Interventions

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## App Strengths:

- **Clarity around the current state and underlying regional conditions or factors** that led to a high prime-age employment gap (PAEG) and low per capita wages in the Service Area
- **Clear sense of – at a high level – the types of interventions** that would be necessary, and **how a planning grant would improve those future investments**

## Common Pitfalls:

- **Limited analysis of local assets**, and how they could potentially be leveraged in a Recompete effort
- While applicants may have identified preliminary assets and interventions, they were often disjointed and **did not relate to the underlying regional conditions identified**

# Potential of Proposed Strategy Development Activities

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## App Strengths:

- **Clear process, timeline, and goals** of the activities proposed through the SDG
- Confidence the proposed activities would **meaningfully contribute to the long-term regional vision**

## Common Pitfalls:

- Lack of clarity on how proposed Strategy Development activities would contribute to the **region's ability to address prime age employment and per capita wages, specifically**
- Minimal discussion on how the Strategy Development dollars would further the applicant's ability to raise prime age employment **among underserved workers**

# Organizational and Leadership Capacity

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## App Strength:

- **Leadership represented key elements of the region/community**, even if application was on behalf of a single organization
- **Articulation of shared goals and priorities amongst leadership team**, driving confidence that the partners could, with future funding, achieve the goals of Recompete
- Leadership that reflected **equity and diversity** as core values

## Common Pitfalls:

- Lack of compelling rationale on why the **lead applicant and primary partners have the appropriate experience, skills, and credentials** to lead the Recompete effort
- Concerns around the **ability of the partners to garner buy-in from other local entities** (e.g., private-sector, public-sector, philanthropic, etc.), either based on a lack of prior experience, or minimal planning activities related to partnership development
- Minimal experience from the partners involved in **reaching underserved communities**

# Efficient and Appropriate Project Budget

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## App Strength:

- **Baseline level of specificity provided in budget**
- **Personnel, consultants, and contracts** represented **individuals and organizations with the skills and experience** to be successful

## Common Pitfalls:

- Proposed project budget **did not match the goals and activities outlined in the Project Narrative**, leading to concerns around impact of the funds
- **Use of funds deviated from the goals of the program** and did not drive confidence in the applicant's ability to develop a strategy to address prime age employment and wages
- Lack of confidence that the funds would **build the capacity of the lead applicant and its partners** (e.g., budget did not include sufficient resourcing for key roles)



# Questions?



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# Appendix



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# Phase 1 Portfolio – 22 Recompete Plan Finalists (1/2)

Recompete Plan	Lead Applicant	Place
Borderplex Region Workforce Recompete Plan	City of El Paso	El Paso, TX
City of Allentown Recompete Plan*	City of Allentown	Allentown, PA
Closing the Gap Recompete Plan*	Plenty Doors Community Development Corporation	Crow Reservation, MT
Decatur, Illinois' Recompete Plan	Richland Community College	Decatur, IL
East Oakland Partnership Recompete Plan*	Black Cultural Zone Community Development Corporation	Oakland, CA
Grow Milwaukee Recompete Plan*	Northwest Side Community Development Corporation	Milwaukee, WI
Gulf Coast Chambers Network (GCCN) Recompete Plan*	Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Inc.	Various areas in AL, MS, and LA
Lithium Valley Recompete Plan	San Diego Regional Policy and Innovation Center	Imperial County, CA
Newark Builds Newark Recompete Plan	City of Newark	Newark, NJ
North Olympic Peninsula Recompete Plan*	Clallam County	Clallam County, WA
Oasis Expansion Recompete Plan*	Platform for Social Impact	San Juan, PR

\*Receiving both Recompete Plan Approval and SDG

# Phase 1 Portfolio – 22 Recompete Plan Finalists (2/2)

Recompete Plan	Lead Applicant	Place
Prosper Memphis 2030 Recompete Plan	The Memphis Chamber Foundation	Memphis, TN
Reconnecting Canton Recompete Plan*	Stark Economic Development Board, Inc	Canton, OH
Reinvest Northwest: Birmingham Career Accelerator Recompete Plan	City of Birmingham	Birmingham, AL
Santa Cruz River/Sonoran Corridor (I-19) Recompete Plan*	Santa Cruz County	Santa Cruz River Corridor, AZ
South Chattanooga/East Lake Economic Revitalization Recompete Plan*	City of Chattanooga	Chattanooga, TN
Springfield – Holyoke Recompete Plan*	MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board, Inc.	Springfield & Holyoke, MA
St. Claire HealthCare Recompete Plan*	St. Claire Medical Center, Inc.	Eastern KY
The Eastern Kentucky Runway Recompete Plan	Shaping Our Appalachian Region	Eastern KY
The Revitalization of Central Maine Recompete Plan*	Main Street Skowhegan	Central Maine
UWCV: Addressing Economic Distress Recompete Plan*	United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley	Columbus, GA-AL
Wind River Indigenous-based Economy Recompete Plan*	Wind River Development Fund	Wind River Reservation, WY

\*Receiving both Recompete Plan Approval and SDG

# Phase 1 Portfolio – 24 SDG awardees

15 of the SDGs accompany applicants also selected for Recompete Plan Approval (see prior slides). The 9 SDG awardees that are not Finalists are:

Project Title	Lead Applicant	Place
“Where did our people go?” – Alutiiq: Natmen Suupet agellriit? (SDG)	Kodiak Area Native Association	Tribal areas in AK
Accelerate Mississippi Recompete Strategy (SDG)	Mississippi Department of Employment Security	MS (various areas)
Chester Recompete Program (SDG)	City of Chester (PA)	Chester, PA
FAMU Gadsden County Opportunity for All (SDG)	Florida A&M University	Gadsden County, FL
Recompete Rochester (SDG)	RochesterWorks, Inc.	Rochester, NY
Recompete WA State Coastal Counties Initiative (SDG)	Greater Grays Harbor, Inc.	Western WA
Site Readiness and Good Jobs Initiative (SDG)	Fund for Our Economic Future	Cleveland, OH
Springfield Economic Empowerment Project (SDG)	City of Springfield	Springfield, IL
Working for Southeast Arkansas (SDG)	The Alliance for Rural Impact	AR (various areas)