



## FYI: Department of Commerce Announces Investing in America's Communities Funding Opportunities

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo [recently 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. Investing in America's Communities includes six Notices of Funding Opportunity. Details on each are below.

These programs might provide good opportunities for regional centers of excellence in optics and photonics around the country.

- [Build Back Better Regional Challenge](#) (\$1 billion)
  - The [Build Back Better Regional Challenge](#) is designed to assist communities nationwide in their efforts to build back better by accelerating the economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and building local economies that will be resilient to future economic shocks. The \$1 billion Build Back Better Regional Challenge will provide a transformational investment to 20-30 regions across the country that want to revitalize their economies. These regions will have the opportunity to grow new regional industry clusters or scale existing ones through planning, infrastructure, innovation and entrepreneurship, workforce development, access to capital, and more. [LEARN MORE.](#)
- [Good Jobs Challenge](#) (\$500 million)
  - EDA's American Rescue Plan [Good Jobs Challenge](#) aims to get Americans back to work by building and strengthening systems and partnerships that bring together employers who have hiring needs with other key entities to train workers with in-demand skills that lead to good-paying jobs. Through the Good Jobs Challenge, EDA is allocating \$500 million to collaborative skills training systems and programs. EDA encourages efforts to reach historically underserved populations and areas, communities of color, women, and other groups facing labor market barriers such as persons with disabilities, disconnected youth, individuals in recovery, individuals with past criminal records, including justice impacted and reentry participants, serving trainees participating in the

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and veterans and military spouses. [LEARN MORE.](#)

- [Economic Adjustment Assistance Challenge](#) (\$500 million)
  - EDA's American Rescue Plan [Economic Adjustment Assistance program](#) makes \$500 million in Economic Adjustment Assistance grants available to American communities. The Economic Adjustment Assistance program is EDA's most flexible program, and grants made under this program will help hundreds of communities across the nation plan, build, innovate, and put people back to work through construction or non-construction projects designed to meet local needs. A wide range of technical, planning, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and public works and infrastructure projects are eligible for funding under this program. [LEARN MORE.](#)
- [Indigenous Communities Challenge](#) (\$100 million)
  - Through the [Indigenous Communities program](#), EDA is allocating \$100 million in American Rescue Plan funding specifically for Indigenous communities, which were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. This program is designed to support the needs of Tribal Governments and Indigenous communities. EDA will support these important partners to develop and execute economic development projects that they need to recover from the pandemic and build economies for the future. A wide range of technical, planning, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and public works and infrastructure projects are eligible for funding under this program. [LEARN MORE.](#)
- [Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Grants](#) (\$750 million)
  - Through the [Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation program](#), EDA is focused on accelerating the recovery of communities that rely on the travel, tourism and outdoor recreation sectors. \$750 million of EDA's American Rescue Plan funds are allocated to support the following efforts:
    - State Tourism Grants: \$510 million in non-competitive awards to help states quickly invest in marketing, infrastructure, workforce and other projects to rejuvenate safe leisure, business and international travel.
    - Competitive Grants: \$240 million to help communities that have been hardest hit by challenges facing the travel, tourism and outdoor recreation sectors to invest in infrastructure, workforce or other projects to support the recovery of the industry and economic resilience of the community in the future.

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- [Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks Grants](#) (\$90 million)
  - Building back better means investing in projects that will promote equity and develop local economies that will be resilient to future economic shocks and climate change.

Through the [Statewide Planning, Research & Networks program](#), EDA is supporting states in planning efforts by allocating \$59 million for Statewide Planning Grants. In addition, the program will allocate \$31 million for Research and Networks Grants to invest in research that assesses the effectiveness of EDA's programs, and provides support for stakeholder communities around key EDA initiatives. [LEARN MORE.](#)