

# **FEDERAL PROGRAMS** **For Communities** **In Economic Transition**

A number of federal programs provide grants, loans, and technical assistance for community-based economic development projects. The following programs, while not an exhaustive list, are frequently used by coal-affected communities. While few of these programs specifically target these communities, many support the types of projects that transitioning communities often pursue—from entrepreneurship and workforce development to mine land reclamation and infrastructure development.

*Programs and their requirements are subject to change, so please check department websites for current information. The Just Transition Fund last updated this list on September 30, 2021.*

## **Categories**

**Economic Development: General**

**Economic Development: Sector-specific**

**Capital And Investment**

**Broadband and Infrastructure**

**Planning and Governmental Assistance**

**Mine Land Reclamation and Remediation**

**Workforce Development**

# Economic Development: General

## Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce And Economic Revitalization

### Appalachian Regional Commission

Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) funding is distributed through the Appalachian Regional Commission for economic and workforce development projects in communities impacted by changes in the coal economy. Funds may be used for a range of projects that promote regional economic growth and diversification, new job creation, and re-employment opportunities for coal-economy workers. Eligible applicants include community-based organizations, public and private nonprofits, educational institutions, local development districts, and local and state governments.

## American Rescue Plan Programs

### Economic Development Administration

The Economic Development Administration has made \$3 billion in funding available across six funding opportunities: the Build Back Better Regional Challenge; the Good Jobs Challenge; Economic Adjustment Assistance; Indigenous Communities; Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation; and Statewide Planning, Research and Networks. Two of these programs—the Build Back Better Regional Challenge and Economic Adjustment Assistance—have a total of \$300 million in funding set aside for coal-impacted communities (called the “Coal Communities Commitment”). Eligible applicants vary by opportunity.

## Community Economic Development Program

### Department of Health and Human Services

The Community Economic Development Program provides grants for projects that use sustainable business development to meet the economic needs of low-income individuals and families. Funds may be used for a range of economic development projects, such as business incubators, shopping centers, manufacturing businesses, and agricultural initiatives. Eligible applicants include private, nonprofit community development corporations (including faith-based organizations) and Tribal and Alaskan Native organizations.

## Community Development Block Grants

### Department of Housing and Urban Development

Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) include a range of programs that provide federal funds to state and local governments for development projects. Funds may be used for affordable housing, public facilities and improvements, public services, and economic development. While eligible activities and applicants vary by program, all projects must primarily serve low- and moderate-income populations.

## Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant

### Department of Agriculture

The Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program provides zero-interest loans to local utilities, which passes the funds through to local businesses for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. Funds may be used for a range of projects, including business incubators, workforce training costs, and technical assistance. Eligible applicants include former Rural Utilities Service borrowers, nonprofit utilities eligible to receive assistance from the Rural Development Electric or Telecommunication programs, and current borrowers from the Rural Development Electric or Telecommunication programs.

## Rural Community Development Initiative Grants

### Department of Agriculture

The Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) Grants supports housing, community facilities and community and economic development projects in rural areas. Funds may be used to provide training and technical assistance to improve these projects. Eligible applicants include public entities, nonprofits, and qualified for-profit organizations.

## Assistance to Coal Communities / Economic Adjustment Assistance

### Economic Development Administration

Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC) is housed within the Economic Adjustment Assistance program as a specific funding allocation for projects addressing coal-related economic impacts. The funding is intended to assist locally-driven efforts to communities and regions severely impacted by the declining use of coal through activities and programs that support economic diversification, job creation, capital investment, workforce development and re-employment opportunities. *Note: In 2021-2022, the Economic Adjustment Assistance program is one of the six American Rescue Plan funding opportunities.*

# Economic Development: Sector-specific

## Local Foods, Local Places

### Environmental Protection Agency

Local Foods, Local Places provides technical assistance to support locally led, community-driven projects related to sustainable agriculture and food systems. Projects must create economically vibrant main streets and neighborhoods, boost economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses, and improve access to healthy, local food. Eligible applicants include local governments, Indian tribes, and nonprofits.

## Rural Energy for America Program

### Department of Agriculture

The Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) provides loans and grants to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. Funds may be used for a range of renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements. Eligible applicants include agricultural producers and small businesses in rural areas with 50,000 or fewer inhabitants.

## Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program

### Department of Agriculture

The Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program provides grants to organizations that provide technical assistance to rural microentrepreneurs and microenterprises, as well as loans for organizations to establish rural microloan revolving funds. Eligible applicants include nonprofits, federally-recognized tribes, and institutions of higher education.

## Our Town

### National Endowment for the Arts

Our Town provides grants for projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes. Funds may be used for a range of projects that promote arts engagement, cultural planning, design, and artist and creative industry support. Eligible applicants include local governments and qualified nonprofit organizations. At least two organizations, one of each type, must form a partnership in order to apply.

## Build to Scale

### Economic Development Administration

Build to Scale provides several grants for technology-based economic development initiatives. Funding is available through themed competitions, where participants propose projects that promote economic development through innovation. Eligible applicants include state and local governments, Indian tribes, nonprofits, higher education institutions, public-private partnerships, and other entities.

## Rural Business Development Grants

### Department of Agriculture

The Rural Business Development Grants program supports projects that provide technical assistance and training for small rural businesses. Eligible applicants include government entities, nonprofits, higher education institutions, federally-recognized tribes, rural cooperatives, and other entities.

## **Business Loan Program**

### **Small Business Administration**

The Small Business Administration (SBA) provides a range of loan programs for small businesses. These loans are made through lenders, who receive financial guarantees, guidelines, and other assistance from the SBA. Eligibility requirements vary by lender and loan programs.

## **Local Energy Action Program Pilot**

### **Department of Energy**

The Local Energy Action Program (LEAP) Pilot provides technical assistance to help communities access the economic and environmental benefits of clean energy and clean energy manufacturing. The program is open to low-income, energy-burdened communities that are experiencing either direct environmental justice impacts or direct economic impacts from a shift away from historical reliance on fossil fuels.

# Capital And Investment

## CDFI Program

### Department of the Treasury

The CDFI Program offers grants to invest in and build the capacity of community development financial institutions (CDFIs). Funds may take the form of loans, grants, equity investments, deposits, and credit union shares, as well as technical assistance grants to build CDFIs' organizational capacity. Eligible applicants include certified CDFIs as well as CDFIs on the path to certification (for technical assistance grants).

## New Markets Tax Credit

### Department of the Treasury

The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) program uses tax credits to incentivize community development and economic growth in distressed communities. Community development entities (CDEs) provide federal tax credits to investors in exchange for their financial investment, which is used to promote local business in low-income communities. Eligible applicants include CDEs certified by the CDFI Fund.

## Intermediary Relending Program

### Department of Agriculture

The Intermediary Relending Program provides low-interest loans to intermediaries that re-lend to businesses in rural communities. Funds may be used to make loans financing a variety of local business projects and costs. Eligible intermediaries include nonprofits, cooperatives, federally-recognized tribes, and public agencies.

# Broadband and Infrastructure

## ReConnect

### Department of Agriculture

ReConnect provides grants and loans for broadband infrastructure projects in communities without high-speed internet access. Funds may be used for construction or improvement of buildings, land, and other facilities, as well as other select costs. Eligible applicants include nonprofits, for-profits, LLCs, cooperative or mutual organizations, units of state or local governments, territories/possessions, and Indian tribes.

## Community Connect

### Department of Agriculture

Community Connect provides grants for broadband projects in rural areas lacking high-speed internet access. Funds may be used for construction, acquisition, or leasing of facilities, spectrum, land, or buildings, and to provide free broadband service to essential community facilities. Eligible applicants include nonprofits, for-profits, federally-recognized tribes, and most state/local government entities.

## Distance Learning & Telemedicine

### Department of Agriculture

The Rural Telemedicine & Distance Learning program provides grants for projects that help rural communities use telecommunications for education and health care activities. Funds may be used for telecommunications equipment, educational programming, and technical assistance. Eligible applicants include nonprofits, for-profits, federally-recognized tribes, most state/local government entities, and consortia of eligible entities.

## Rural Broadband Access Loans & Loan Guarantees

### Department of Agriculture

The Rural Broadband Access Loans & Loans Guarantees program funds broadband infrastructure projects in unserved rural areas. Funds may be used for the construction, improvement, and acquisition of broadband facilities, as well as the leasing of certain facilities. Eligible applications include non-profits, cooperatives, limited dividend and mutual associations, federally-recognized tribes, and for-profit businesses (corporations, LLCs).

## Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans & Loan Guarantees

### Department of Agriculture

The Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans & Loan Guarantees program finances the building of telecommunications infrastructure, including broadband infrastructure, in rural areas. Loans and loan guarantees may be used to finance telecommunications expansions, construction, acquisitions, and refinancing. Eligible applicants include entities providing telephone service in rural areas less than 5,000 people, including state and local governments, federally-recognized tribes, cooperatives, nonprofits, and limited dividend or mutual associations.

## National Tribal Broadband Grant Program

### **Bureau of Indian Affairs**

The National Tribal Broadband Grant program provides funding for feasibility studies to expand or deploy broadband in tribal communities. Funds may be used for service and engineering assessments, cost estimations, and other costs related to determining broadband feasibility. Eligible applicants include federally-recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

## Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program

### **National Telecommunications and Information Administration**

The Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program supports projects that expand broadband access on tribal lands. Funds may be used for a range of projects related to broadband deployment, telehealth, distance learning, broadband affordability, and digital inclusion. Eligible applicants include tribal governments, tribal colleges, tribal organizations, and other entities.

## Healthcare Connect Fund

### **Federal Communications Commission**

The Healthcare Connect Fund provides subsidies for high-capacity broadband connectivity to health care providers (HCPs) and encourages the formation of state and regional broadband HCP networks. Funds may be used for telecommunications and broadband services, as well as network equipment and (for consortia applicants) the cost of network facilities. Eligible applicants include public and nonprofit HCPs, including consortia of HCPs.



# Planning and Governmental Assistance

## Distressed Cities Technical Assistance

### Department of Housing and Urban Development

The Distressed Cities Technical Assistance (DCTA) program provides technical assistance to improve fiscal health and build administrative capacity for units of general local government that are economically distressed and have been recently impacted by a natural disaster. The program offers a range of assistance designed to improve financial management, build program capacity, and improve internal processes. Eligible applicants include local governments in areas meeting criteria for economic distress, natural disaster impacts, and population size.

## Rural Economic Development Innovation Initiative

### Department of Agriculture

The Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) provides technical assistance to help rural towns and regions create and implement economic development plans. Participating communities receive two years of free technical assistance, which is provided by external partners with expertise across a range of economic development areas. Rural communities and regions are selected through a competitive application process.

## Energy Storage for Social Equity Technical Assistance Program

### Department of Energy & Pacific Northwest National Laboratory

The Energy Storage for Social Equity Technical Assistance Program provides a range of community-centered energy storage analyses—including valuation, grid services, system resilience, and equity—to measure the relationship between storage investments and community benefit outcomes. The program offers assessments on energy storage feasibility, design, application, operations, and maintenance in support of disadvantaged communities.

# Mine Land Reclamation and Remediation

## Brownfields Grants

### Environmental Protection Agency

Brownfields includes a range of grant programs that provide funding for brownfields remediation and development. Grants are available for costs related to assessment, cleanup, revolving loans, environmental job training, technical assistance, training, and research. Eligible applicants vary by program but generally include local governments, Indian tribes, and nonprofits.

## Brownfields Technical Assistance, Training, and Research

### Environmental Protection Agency

The Brownfields Technical Assistance, Training, and Research program includes a range of technical assistance opportunities and resources related to brownfield remediation and development. The program commissions the development of new technical assistance resources, many of which are accessible, and funds direct technical assistance to communities.

## Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization

### Department of the Interior

The Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization (AMLER) program provides funding to six states and three Indian tribes with the highest number of unfunded, high-priority abandoned mine lands: Alabama, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe, and the Crow Tribe. Each state re-grants this funding for projects that remediate abandoned mine land sites for economic and community development uses. Eligible applicants and projects vary by state.

# Workforce Development

## Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities

### Department of Labor

Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) provides grants for projects that address the employment and training needs of local and regional workforces in Appalachia and the lower Mississippi Delta. Funds may be used for a range of workforce development activities in these regions. Eligible applicants include state and local governments, regional organizations, independent school districts, higher education institutions, tribal governments, Indian tribes, public/Indian housing providers, and nonprofits.

## Re-Employment Support and Training for the Opioid Related Epidemic

### Department of Labor

Re-Employment Support and Training for the Opioid Related Epidemic (RESTORE) provides grants to address the employment needs of women affected by the opioid crisis. Funds may be used to provide employment training, career services, and support services to women who have been directly or indirectly affected by the crisis, as well as to establish partnerships with key stakeholders. Eligible applicants include state governments, “outlying area” governments, Tribal governments and organizations, state or local workforce development boards, and nonprofit organizations.