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CFA-SUPPORTED COALITIONS IN BIRMINGHAM AND EL PASO RECEIVE RECOMPETE DESIGNATION FROM THE U.S DEPT. OF COMMERCE

Birmingham, AL and El Paso, TX: Coalitions in Birmingham, Alabama and El Paso, Texas have been selected as finalists of the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) [Recompete pilot program](#). This is the most competitive program in EDA's history with only 10% of over 200 applicants recognized as finalists. The [Community Funding Accelerator](#) (CFA) supported both cities' coalitions in the application process and will continue to provide assistance as they apply for \$20 to \$50 million in funding in phase 2 of the program.

CFA played a pivotal role in the success of both Birmingham and El Paso's coalitions by facilitating engagement of various local partners. This collaboration is key to tackling regional challenges, focusing on strengthening K-12 education and workforce pathways, thereby readying the community and creating robust talent pipelines for future jobs. CFA's contribution was not just limited to partnerships; CFA also provided deep technical assistance and expert grant writing support, critical elements in development and submission of their successful applications.

The Recompete program invests in economically distressed communities across the U.S., generating quality jobs, strengthening workforce pathways, and creating renewed economic opportunity for communities where prime-age employment falls well below the national average. As Recompete finalists, the coalitions in Birmingham and El Paso will be invited to apply for phase 2 funding, which awards 4-8 winning communities an average of \$20-\$50M in federal funding. Additionally, they will have access to EDA-provided technical support to strengthen their plan.

Birmingham's Reinvest Northwest initiative focuses on creating significant employment opportunities for prime-age unemployed residents in underprivileged neighborhoods. It plans to set up local service centers providing job training, childcare, and transportation. The project also includes enhancing student opportunities in apprenticeships and internships, and establishing a Black Business Entrepreneurship Center (BBEC) to mentor Black entrepreneurs. The coalition is aiming for \$20M in federal funding to back these initiatives.

The El Paso Borderplex Region Workforce Recompete Initiative aims to bridge job access gaps for the city's underserved. It will transform workforce challenges by promoting social mobility via short-term technical training in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT. The program will create industry-specific training curricula, provide extensive support services, encourage community participation, and engage businesses. It will also assist in job placements for prime-age workers and their families. Further, the initiative will collaborate with employers to develop and improve career pathways for high school students, offering internships and apprenticeships with existing and new regional companies. El Paso will apply for \$50M in federal funding in phase 2 of the program to support this work.

"Birmingham's strength is its people. The CFA has assisted our team in strengthening partnerships, facilitating open dialogue between community partners, and helped to lay a foundation for collaborative methods designed to bring resources to our people and communities." Sarah McMillan, Manager of Workforce and Talent Development, City of Birmingham.

"We appreciate the technical assistance, thought leadership and support CFA provided, and especially for traveling to El Paso and facilitating our coalition through the ideation process." Leila Melendez, CEO of El Paso Workforce Solutions Borderplex.

CFA will provide further planning and implementation support to both coalitions as they work towards phase 2 of the Recompete program, furthering the cities' ambitious goals in building strong K-12 and workforce pathways, equitable economic development, and more.

[The Community Funding Accelerator](#) (CFA) helps underserved communities [access competitive federal grants](#). With a focus on K-12 education and workforce pathways, CFA identifies relevant grant opportunities, builds coalitions, and provides deep technical assistance to submit winning applications. CFA also supports implementation to create innovative education and workforce solutions in communities across the U.S. The CFA pilot is led by [Delivery Associates](#), a public sector consulting firm.