



**To:** Members of the GSFA Board of Directors  
**From:** Barbara Hayes, Chief Economic Development Officer  
**Date:** November 2, 2021  
**Re:** Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF)

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### **SUMMARY**

AB 162, Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) Program was signed by the Governor in September and is currently moving through an accelerated rule-making process. The program makes available \$600 million for regional planning and associated project implementation and will be jointly overseen by the Labor and Workforce Agency, Governor's Office of Planning and Research and Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development.

#### CERF Program Vision:

- Promote a sustainable and equitable recovery from the economic distress of COVID-19 by supporting new plans and strategies to diversify local economies and develop sustainable industries that create high-quality, broadly accessible jobs.
- Support communities and regional groups in producing regional roadmaps for economic recovery.
- Align and leverage state investments (High Road Training Partnerships, infrastructure investments, community capacity building programs), federal investments (EDA Building Back Better Regional Challenge, infrastructure investments), and philanthropic and private-sector investments to maximize recovery efforts.

### **Phase 1 - Regional Planning Grants - \$65-\$75 Million**

The state will be divided into 13-15 regions. Each region will receive \$5 million for regional planning, which shall include:

1. Development of localized integrated recovery and transition plans with actionable research and consultation from expert institutions.
2. Creation of holistic investment strategy that addresses disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 by diversifying the economy. Strategies should complement or expand on plans such as Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS).
3. Embedded local coordinator to facilitate ongoing engagement, partnership, and relationship-building activities with stakeholders.

**Phase 2 – Regional Implementation Grants - +\$500 Million**

Projects in Phase 1 will be eligible for funding in Phase 2.

Regional collaboratives should be inclusive planning groups that include representation from key stakeholder groups. Those groups that are eligible to apply include:

- Non-profit organizations
- District organizations of an EDA-designated Economic Development District
- Higher education institution or consortium of higher education institutions
- Indian Tribe or consortium of Indian Tribes

**Key dates:**

Late November 2021	Draft guidelines for Planning Grants released
December 2021	Informational webinar
January 2022	Planning Grant solicitation released
February 2022	Draft guidelines for Implementation Grants released
March 2022	Planning Grant finalists selected and grants awarded
June 2022	Implementation Grant solicitation released
October 2022	Begin awarding Implementation Grants
June 2024	Funds must be encumbered
October 206	Funds must be expended

**RECOMMENDATION**

While local governments are not currently included in the eligible list of organizations that can lead a regional collaborative, they must be included in the regional collaborative as a key stakeholder. Be aware of which organization is leading your regional collaborative and ensure county leadership (elected, CAO, planning, economic development) is involved.

Identify and champion key projects that may have long-term regional impact on your economic development efforts, particularly those that may be included in Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). In addition, consider:

- Broadband – particularly in areas where utility undergrounding is occurring
- Economic development-related infrastructure investment
- Innovative biomass utilization projects (where appropriate)

**Attachments**

- Community Economic Resilience Fund Overview
- Map of Proposed Regions