Interweaving Equity in Place-based Economic Development Programs

An early analysis of equity within the Build Back Better Challenge Awardees

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ABOUT ECONOMIC GROWTH INSTITUTE:

The Economic Growth Institute leverages the University of Michigan and other public/private resources, research, technologies, and expertise to foster innovation and equitable economic growth. EGI has provided innovative economic development programming and applied research for almost 40 years.

New Growth Innovation Network
POWERING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES

ABOUT NEW GROWTH INNOVATION NETWORK:

The New Growth Innovation Network (NGIN) is a knowledge, insight, and innovation hub, supporting economic development practitioners to advance inclusive economic growth in their region. Established in 2018, NGIN is a nonprofit organization focused on closing structural opportunity gaps to ensure that economically disenfranchised people of color, women, and neglected geographies are a core part of regional economic growth and prosperity. NGIN works to drive systemic change through the NGIN community of practitioners, its platform of insights, and innovations..

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COMPLEMENTARY BBBRC PROJECTS

This report is complemented by two additional research projects and the Building Better Regions community of practice. Brookings Metro and the Purdue Center for Regional Development are leading their respective research, while RTI and SSTI are leading the community of practice.

BROOKINGS METRO

Brookings Metro is a nonprofit collective dedicated to nonpartisan research aimed at improving policy and governance at local and national levels. They partnered with the EDA to conduct in-depth case studies of coalition efforts. The team advanced the field of economic development policy and practice through a series publications and events that document and disseminate early lessons, outcomes, and replicable models from the BBBRC. Their reports can be viewed here.

PURDUE CENTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) is a group at Purdue University partnering with regional leadership in pursuit of finding methods of equitable and sustainable economic development. PCRD is conducting a three-year project to collect both primary and secondary data from the BBBRC coalitions and capture stories of the coalitions' progress. This data will help PCRD to document best practices and to create tools and recommendations for further equitable economic development policy.

RTI INTERNATIONAL

RTI is an independent nonprofit research institute that partners with entities ranging from the U.S. government to universities to commercial industries in order to answer questions aimed at improving the human condition. The RTI team utilizes a multidisciplinary approach to offer scalable solutions and reliable data that assists clients on whatever level they require. RTI is the lead organization in the Community of Practice supporting the BBBRC coalitions, Building Better Regions.

SSTI

SSTI is a national nonprofit offering comprehensive information and services based on science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship. They have been functioning since 1996 and are a nationwide network of practitioners and policymakers. SSTI specializes in identifying best practices and analyzing the trends and policies that affect the innovation economy while building connections between public, private, and nonprofit organizations. SSTI is serving as the strategic partner in the Community of Practice.

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The values and approaches to equitable growth are at the forefront of public discourse, both in growing support and opposition in recent years. However, in the midst of this, local economic development leaders are actively advancing equity by successfully integrating it into their organizations, programs, and communities.

One specific federally-funded program, the Build Back Better Regional Challenge, is both spurring and supporting these efforts in equitable place-based economic development. This approach at the federal level is a departure from more traditional, top-down economic development strategies, encouraging localities to take the lead and ownership in their economic trajectory. Additionally, BBBRC emphasizes equity and engaging local communities, especially with underserved and underrepresented populations, in economic development programs. Historically, economic development programs often only informed underserved and underrepresented communities, at best, or completely failed to engage, at worst. The design of BBBRC seeks to alter the blueprint for economic development through interweaving equity in place-based programs.

The Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) is a recent innovative place-based economic development competition within the Economic Development Administration (EDA). It was designed and launched to significantly advance regional economic development through simultaneous investments in multiple development projects to reduce challenges to growth (such as halted or restricted progress due to lack of investment in complementary initiatives like infrastructure or workforce) and lead to increased resiliency, innovation, and inclusive equitable outcomes. The program intentionally sought to interweave equity, both in the program design and decision processes, as all federal agencies have recently elevated it as a key priority.

Through the BBBRC, the 21 awarded coalitions advance equitable place-based program development, coalition structures, and project activities. The research team gathered data for this report through interviews and program documentation with the goal of understanding the common and unique practices between coalitions. This comparative approach allows us to document the multiple approaches to equity and identify key themes between the coalitions. For this project, the research team did not have a static definition of equity, but instead centered how coalitions were defining equity and its components.

The integration of equity is evident within BBBRC through three areas:

- **Equity in place-based program development:** Understanding how BBBRC coalitions tell the story of their region and engage the community in this process;
- **Equity in the coalition structure:** Assessing governance approaches to embed and prioritize equity within the broad-based coalitions; and
- **Equity in project activities:** Identifying how equity is integrated into project activities

Interweaving Equity **EDA BBBRC Program** → *Place-Based Program Development* → *Coalition Structure* → *Project Activities*
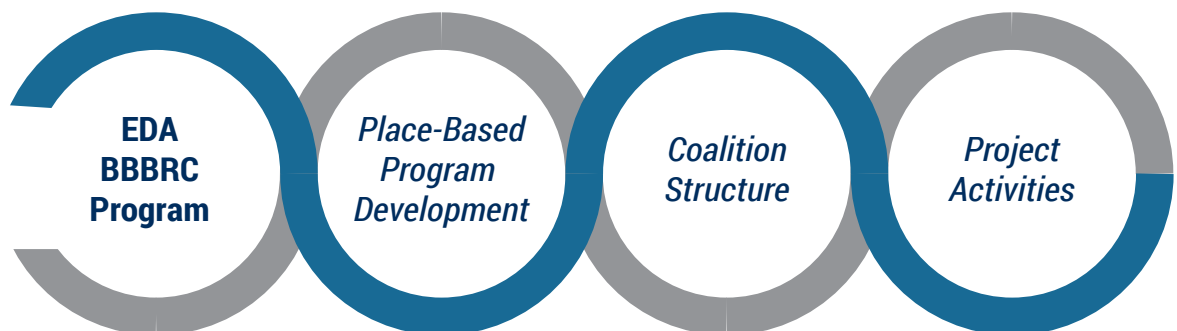
In *Place-Based Program Development*, equity emerges through 1) the definition of local narratives, 2) the acknowledgement of historical marginalization and harm, and 3) the spectrum of community engagement to ownership. Defining the local narrative provides the foundation for program development. A detailed and holistic understanding of the region ensures the program can actively address current inequalities and opportunity gaps. The data from BBBRC demonstrates a diverse approach to defining opportunity gaps and thus where equitable interventions are needed. Coalitions also were working to rebuild trust and foster collaborative relationships with communities that have experienced harm and marginalization from past economic development programs. Alongside this, BBBRC coalitions are engaging the community in economic development in new ways compared to past large-scale federal programs. We provide a framework for the *Continuum of Community Engagement* as a starting point for identifying mechanisms for community engagement.

Coalitions exhibit equity within the *Coalition Structure* in three primary ways: community-engaged decision making, unique equity approaches, and dedicated capacity. Community-engaged decision making builds upon the community engagement continuum by looking for specific decision-making structures after coalitions received funding. In equity approaches, the research details three avenues through which coalitions started the journey of prioritizing equity - grassroots approaches,

workforce development approaches, and systemic approaches. Finally, the capacity dedicated for the work of equity prioritization varied between the coalitions and included creating specific projects, funding coalition-level positions, collective integration into all staff job duties and descriptions, and/or creating equity committees.

Equity in *Project Activities* within the BBBRC coalitions is evident through project outreach activities and the communities they seek to serve. Project outreach is an interactive, cyclical process, starting with general information about the opportunities for engagement, moving into broad-based outreach. Then many coalitions discussed significant investment into one-on-one navigation and outreach by dedicating capacity and funding to walk alongside potential participants. Finally, a few coalitions discussed moving into responsive outreach where they were beginning to change aspects of their projects and outreach methodologies based on community feedback.

While BBBRC coalitions and their projects are still in the beginning stages of their multi-year funding, there are early indicators of success for many in integrating equity through multifaceted approaches. Equity prioritization is complex and efforts occur at multiple levels. While these findings are specific to BBBRC, implications span the broader economic development landscape. By elevating how equity is integrated in these three areas, BBBRC coalitions provide a roadmap of leading practices of economic inclusivity and resiliency.
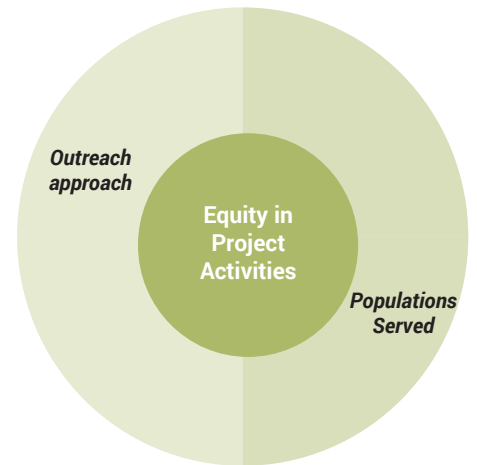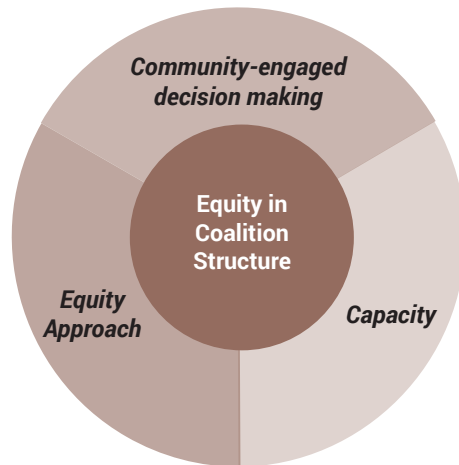
Introduction

The values and approaches to equitable growth are at the forefront of public discourse, both in growing support and opposition in recent years. However, in the midst of this, local economic development leaders are actively advancing equity by successfully integrating it into their organizations, programs, and communities.

One specific federally-funded program, the Build Back Better Regional Challenge, is both spurring and supporting these efforts in equitable place-based economic development. Place-based economic development utilizes unique local assets, such as geography, institutions, industrial and occupational composition, history, and population, as a foundation for growth and also empowers local leaders in making changes for their region, with support from external funding.[1] This approach at the federal level is a departure from more traditional, top-down economic development strategies, encouraging localities to take the lead and ownership in their economic trajectory. Additionally, BBBRC emphasizes equity and engaging local communities, especially with underserved and underrepresented populations,[2] in economic development programs. Historically, economic development programs often only informed underserved and underrepresented communities, at best, or completely failed to

engage, at worst.[3] The design of BBBRC seeks to alter the blueprint for economic development through interweaving equity in place-based programs.

The Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) is a recent innovative place-based economic development competition, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and launched in 2021 to spur economic growth and resiliency following the outbreak of COVID-19. With a once-in-a-generation investment of $1 billion, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) designed and launched BBBRC to significantly advance regional economic development through simultaneous investments in multiple development projects to reduce challenges to growth (such as halted or restricted progress due to lack of investment in complementary initiatives such as infrastructure or workforce) and lead to increased resiliency, innovation, and inclusive equitable outcomes. The program intentionally sought to interweave equity, both in the program design and decision processes, as all federal agencies have recently elevated it as a key priority.[4]

Across the country, 529 applications were submitted to the BBBRC for initial funding. The BBBRC program was a competitive model, with two stages, to further encourage local and

Interweaving Equity   **EDA BBBRC Program** — *Place-Based Program Development* — *Coalition Structure* — *Project Activities*

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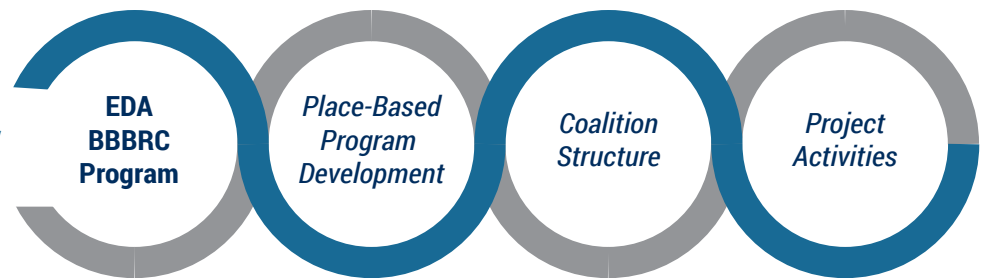
1 Barca et al. "The Case for Regional Development Intervention: Place-Based Versus Place-Neutral Approaches," Journal of Regional Science 52, no. 1 (2012): 134-152, doi: 10.1111j.1467-9787.2011.00756;
Feldman et al. "Place-Based Economic Development: Creating Growth in the Heartland," Heartland Forward, July 2023, https://heartlandforward.org/case-study/place-based-economic-development/
2 Across the nation, local programs have integrated communities into economic development for years (for examples of these, please see the "New Governance" or "Community Economic Development" (CED) models referenced below); however, the intersecting priorities of equity, community engagement, and place-based economic development from a federal-funding level are new. For more information on the history of New Governance and CED models, please see Shaffer et al., 2006, Boothroyd & Davis, 1993, Salamon, 2011, and Bingham, 2005.
3 Traditional economic approaches are predicated on a free market paradigm, which holds that there is little to no need for governmental intervention in institutional discrimination, instead asserting the market itself will solve the problem (Logan, 2023). However, this model fails to account for systemic racism and the persistence of bias in the wider population and even the potential ways that markets do benefit from discrimination (Logan, 2023).
4 President Joe Biden's Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government in 2021 as well as a list of all equity-related executive orders as documented by the Department of Commerce.

regional collaboration. From the initial applicants, 60 were selected for Phase I funding, which provided $500,000 to further develop their coalition.[5] A "coalition" is a collection of regional partners that worked together to apply for BBBRC, who are united by shared goals in economic development and a governance structure.[6] The EDA designed this two-phase approach to lower barriers to entry for organizations that may have otherwise lacked the institutional capacity to compete under Build Back Better. In 2022, the final 21 coalitions were selected and received awards ranging from $25 million to $65 million.[7] Throughout this competitive process, equity was a priority and integrated into decision making both within the coalitions and EDA. This research report provides a first look into how the 21 BBBRC coalitions are currently prioritizing and integrating equity. The report is intended for economic development leaders as well as funders of programs like these, and while the findings are specific to BBBRC, the implications for economic development programs are broad.

Through the Build Back Better program, the 21 awarded coalitions advance equitable place-based program development, coalition structures, and project activities. The integration of equity is evident within BBBRC through three areas:
- **Equity in place-based program development:** Understanding how BBBRC coalitions tell the story of their region and engage the community in this process;
- **Equity in the coalition structure:** Assessing governance approaches to embed and prioritize equity within the broad-based coalitions; and
- **Equity in project activities:** Identifying how equity is integrated into project activities.

Methodology
The research team approached this project with a participant-centered lens with the goal of understanding the common and unique practices between coalitions. This comparative approach allows us to document the multiple approaches to equity and identify key themes between the coalitions. For this project, the research team did not have a static definition of equity, but instead centered how coalitions were defining equity and its components.

Terminology Limitations

The research team acknowledges that any terminology, when applied to a broad segment of people, is flawed. The phrase "underserved" was the most common catch-all term used by BBBRC coalitions when referring to local underserved, underrepresented, minority, or historically excluded populations or communities (see page 24 for a detailed breakdown). It is important to note the context of this word, which places the action and agency on the one doing the serving and identifies the group being served as passive receivers of services. Thus, while this report utilizes this imperfect term of "underserved," we acknowledge its significant limitations and the implied power imbalance between those serving and those being served.

Please see the appendix for more information on theoretical influences on this project. The data informing these findings are from early interviews with coalition leaders, program applications, progress reports, and similar supplemental materials. Coalition leaders include executives, project directors, and program managers at state and local government, tribal organizations, community development fund institutions, higher education institutions such as universities and community colleges, community-based organizations, and industry intermediaries like Chamber of Commerce foundations and associations, to name a few. These leaders come from an array of backgrounds ranging from professional government staff, program managers of existing economic development programs, faculty at universities, and non-profit staff. For this research, the team conducted semi-structured interviews with 40 BBBRC leaders from the 21 coalitions during July 2023 to November 2023 and used thematic qualitative analysis to identify the key findings. These interviews occurred nine to twelve months after coalitions received their full award. On average, the coalitions were funded for five years (see timeline on page 10). All percentages presented in this report are based on the 21 coalitions that received the second phase larger implementation award, thus a finding of 67% would indicate that 14 of the coalitions expressed

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5   See Brookings Metro report on key learnings from the 60 Phase 1 finalists.
6   For more information, please see the FAQs on EDA's website.
7   For a more detailed overview of this process, please see Brookings Metro's report.

that theme or demonstrated evidence of an activity. Overall, this report provides insight into on-the-ground activities and highlights how equity emerged in common ways among the coalitions. It does not include program-level performance appraisals or evaluations of equity work since data was collected in the first year of implementation of multi-year programs, which is a limitation of this study. These findings provide insights on the common approaches evident between coalitions during their first year of implementation which can help other regions learn from early successes of the BBBRC coalitions. Forthcoming reports from this team will dive deeper into documenting

approaches that lead to more equitable outcomes of these multi-year coalitions. This research is complemented by Brookings Metro and their recent compendium report that share broad-based early learnings from these coalitions on place-based economic development strategies. Additionally, RTI International and NGIN have captured leading practices that are emerging in inclusive industry cluster development in their new report. This report's findings add to this growing body of literature on equitable place-based economic development.

Background

The aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic downturn elevated and underscored the socioeconomic inequities long present in American society. The crisis, alongside the rising recognition of racial inequities in 2020, highlighted the deep disparities in health, income, and access to opportunities across different communities and sparked intensifying focus on the need for systemic change to address these inequalities.[8] The BBBRC program is a comprehensive effort to foster economic recovery while also addressing socioeconomic inequities and regional disparities. Through a "place-based" approach, this EDA program addresses unique regional needs while also leveraging its assets and strengths.

BBBRC is a program housed within EDA, the nation's only federal agency dedicated exclusively to economic development. The agency stands at the intersection of multiple policy domains ranging from infrastructure and public works, disaster recovery efforts, revolving loan funds, innovation, and entrepreneurship, planning activities, and more. Originally conceived in the 1965 Public Works and Economic Development Act, the agency leverages partnerships, authorities, and resources to address economic disruptions, long-term

economic growth strategies, and accelerate capacity building for local, state, and federal stakeholders through grant-making and program management.

Today, the agency's core mission is centered on three primary goals:[9] creating an ecosystem that promotes economic activity by improving and expanding public infrastructure; promoting job creation through increased innovation, productivity, and entrepreneurship; and empowering local and regional communities experiencing chronic high unemployment and low per capita income to develop private sector business and attract increased private-sector capital investment. To fulfill these goals, EDA takes a place-based approach and its investments typically adhere to the following progression:[10] 1) assess local conditions; 2) identify resources and inputs; 3) identify outputs; and finally 4) outline and measure short and long-term outcomes.

In 2021, with the transition to President Biden's administration and subsequent passage of ARPA, EDA was tasked with implementing new programming to accelerate the nationwide economic recovery effort. Simultaneously, EDA implemented these new priorities in alignment with new White House

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8 For example, the rise of the information economy has exacerbated inequities in rural communities (see CORI, 2023). Research documents that Native American populations do not have the same access and opportunities for economic mobility and were among the groups that were most severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic (see Beyer, 2022).
9 For more information, see EDA's site.
10 For more information about EDA's theory of change, please reference their logic model here.

executive orders, such as Executive Orders 14035: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce and 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.[11]
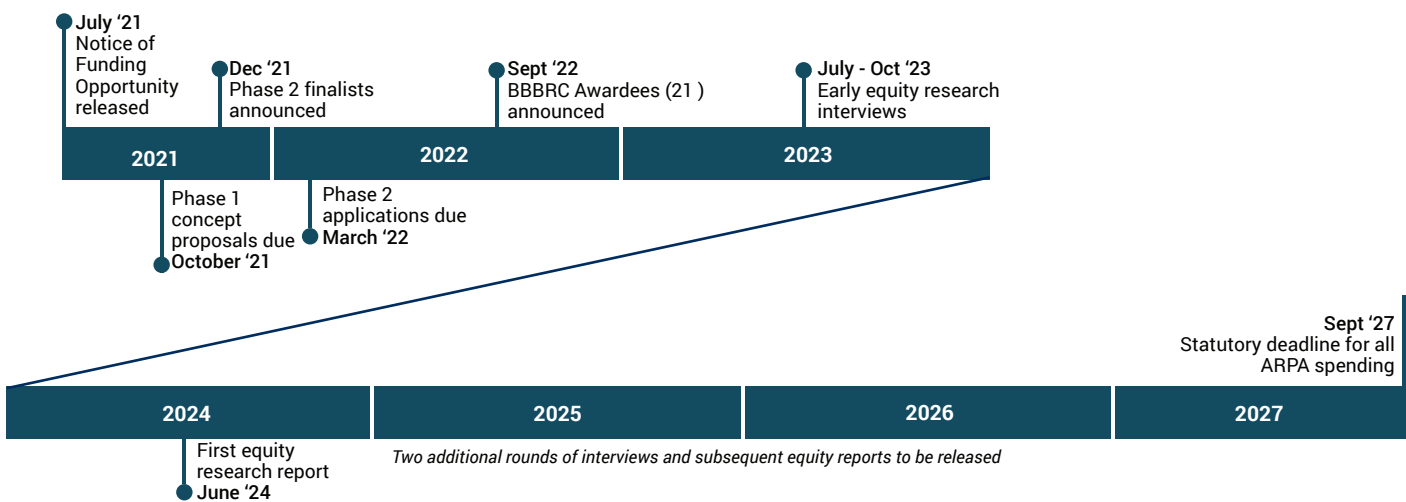
Under ARPA,[12] EDA was charged with investing $3 billion of supplemental funding through a combination of infrastructure, workforce development, travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation programs, tribal investments, and traditional economic development programs, such as Economic Adjustment Assistance and planning and research programs. Of those, $1 billion was dedicated to fund the Build Back Better Regional Challenge. Through this program, EDA seeks to build regional competitiveness, resiliency, and foster equitable economic growth through ensuring opportunities are accessible to all Americans, particularly underserved communities.

In July 2021, EDA invited eligible organizations to submit a concept proposal outlining their vision for establishing or expanding a regional industry through its BBBRC Notice of Funding Opportunity.[13] Through this initial phase ("Phase 1"), 529 coalitions submitted an application, and, of these, 60 coalitions were selected as "finalists" and provided a $500,000 grant for Phase 2. During Phase 2, these resources supported the coalitions to prepare their expanded applications from December 2021 - March 2022 to further detail their "transformational projects that benefit their respective geographic regions and are aligned around a holistic approach to building, strengthening, or scaling a strategic industry or industries."[14] This phased approach is increasingly common with significant funding investments (i.e. EDA's Tech Hubs and NSF Engines), though learnings about managing these complex processes are still emerging.[15] The 21 awardees were announced in the Fall of 2022 and represent a diverse mixture of industries and geographies, all seeking to prioritize equity in their coalition. (see graphic below for a timeline of the BBBRC competition as well as interviews). Most coalitions were funded for about four years, and this report was informed by interviews conducted early in their multi-year implementation. Additional ride-along research with subsequent reports will continue during the next two years.

The size of awards and funded projects under the BBBRC are substantial, aiming to solve a "chicken and egg" problem of regional growth by simultaneously funding complementary initiatives. Total awards ranged from $25 million to $65 million with a median award of $49 million. Broadly, the key industries fostered through the coalitions include advanced mobility and aerospace (4 coalitions), biotechnology and health

TIMELINE OF THE BUILD BACK BETTER REGIONAL COMPETITION

July '21
Notice of Funding Opportunity released

Dec '21
Phase 2 finalists announced

Sept '22
BBBRC Awardees (21) announced

July - Oct '23
Early equity research interviews

2021 **2022** **2023**

Phase 1 concept proposals due
October '21

Phase 2 applications due
March '22

Sept '27
Statutory deadline for all ARPA spending

2024 **2025** **2026** **2027**

First equity research report
June '24

Two additional rounds of interviews and subsequent equity reports to be released

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11 The historical background on EDA is available here as well as the Department of Commerce's documentation of equity-related Executive Orders.
12 For more information on all ARPA investments, please click here.
13 The full NOFO can be viewed here.
14 ibid.
15 Please see Brookings Metro's recent reports for an overview of the learnings emerging from both the application process and initial launch of the BBBRC coalitions.

(5), clean energy (3), indigenous financing (1), natural resources and agriculture (4), and next generation manufacturing (4).

Within each coalition is a strong cross-sectoral partnership through which two to nine aligned projects are executed to catalyze growth in their regional selected industry. With a total of 123 projects across the BBBRC program, these projects fit into one of six categories: accelerating innovation in emerging technologies, helping workers access new jobs opportunities and job training, increasing new business growth and entrepreneurial activity, building enabling infrastructure projects, helping small and mid-sized businesses adopt new processes and enter new markets, and supporting

coalition governance. The coalitions serve a mixture of rural and urban communities with projects benefiting 801 counties across 24 states. Of these, 236 are fully rural counties and 136 persistent poverty counties. For more detail on the coalitions, please visit EDA's website.

BBBRC COALITIONS

Accelerate NC - Life Sciences Manufacturing

Advanced Pharmaceutical Manufacturing (APM) Cluster

Alaska Mariculture Cluster

Appalachian Climate Technologies Coalition (ACT Now)

Biofabrication Cluster

Building Central Florida's Semiconductor Cluster for Broad-Based Prosperity

Fresno-Merced Future of Food (F3)

Georgia AI Manufacturing

Global Epicenter of Mobility (GEM)

H2theFuture

Heartland Robotics Cluster

Mountain Plains | Regional Native CDFI Coalition

New Energy New York

Oklahoma Biotech Innovation Cluster

Oregon Mass Timber Coalition

South Kansas Coalition

Southwestern Pennsylvania New Economy Collaborative

St. Louis Tech Triangle

Tulsa Regional Advanced Mobility (TRAM) Corridor

West Texas Aerospace and Defense Manufacturing

Western New York's Advanced Manufacturing Cluster

Equity in Place-Based Development

EDA's place-based investment strategy emphasizes cross-sector collaboration and reliance on regions to identify their local assets and needs. The BBBRC program seeks to fund transformational economic development coalitions that shift the trajectory of the region and its residents. Thus, the development of these local coalitions is a key area that equity emerges through: 1) local narratives, 2) acknowledgement of historical marginalization and harm, and 3) the spectrum of community engagement to ownership.

LOCAL NARRATIVES

As part of their development, the BBBRC coalitions self-define and identify their regions, their assets, and their needs. Based on the grant materials and interviews, BBBRC coalitions exhibit significant diversity in their approaches and use of data, indicating the flexibility and unique nature of creating a *local narrative* as they seek to particularize equity for their region. These narratives informed the development of the coalitions and its program offerings.

Acknowledgement of Historical Harm

Equity in Place-Based Program Development

Local Narratives

Community Engagement

The defining of a "place" provides an important opportunity to integrate equity into a coalition. Local narratives, or how a coalition tells its regional story, is a key sphere of equity. As with all narratives, what story is told (and how) is indicative of the values and priorities of the community. Stated another way, the quantitative and qualitative data content of the local narratives has implications for whose story is told,

DEFINING THE COMMUNITY

While data is a critical component of understanding the community, there are also important process questions, as highlighted by the Urban Institute,[1] in building the definition of "community."[2] The questions include:

- How would you define the community you are working with? How does your definition differ from how community members define their community?
- What historical factors are at play when working with this community?
- Has the community worked with policymakers or practitioners before? In what capacity?
- What is the community's perception of policymakers and practitioners?
- What are the social dynamics and internal power differentials in the community? What inequities does the community face? Who are the leaders and influential organizations (see sidebar on page xx for more information on identifying leaders)?
- How will this work affect your partner's operations and ability to serve the community?
- What are your partner's capacities and limitations?
- If you are working with multiple partners/communities, how may their priorities and interests intersect or differ? How do you plan to reconcile differences?
- These questions can provide the necessary foundation in identifying and defining the local communities and are helpful to use by practitioners as they seek to collect data and define the "community" for their program.

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1 Shakesprere et al. "Fostering Partnerships for Community Engagement." Community Voices and Power Sharing Guidebook, Urban Institute, October 2021, https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/104935/fostering-partnerships-for-community-engagement_0.pdf

2 These questions assume some level of distance between the "community" and the leaders of the coalition, which may not be accurate for all coalitions. However, no one organization or person can completely represent or comprehensively understand the perspectives of their community without some engagement and conversation.

DATA TYPE	DEFINITION	%
Demographics	Racial, gender, and/or ethnic composition	76%
Industry opportunity disparities	Disparities in economic opportunities between populations	62%
Poverty Rates	Poverty rates, or other data such as SNAP benefit receipts related to poverty	57%
COVID-19 Impacts	Deleterious effects that Covid-19 had on the region, both economically and in terms of public health, often disproportionately based in non-white populations	52%
Unemployment/ Labor Force Participation	Employment statistics	52%
Historical Context	Historical context of their region, such as impacts of mono-extractive economies or racism within the region	48%
Regional Qualitative Context	A narrative approach presenting a holistic picture of a region's assets, events, or evolution of industries	43%
Educational disparities	Inequitable rates of high school and/or higher education attainment	38%
Underserved community indicators	Federally-identified indicators of "underserved" such as community distress indicators or other federal benchmarks	33%
Geographic disparities	Lack of access to digital or physical infrastructure	33%
Environmental impacts	Data on environmental impacts and health disparities due to industrial activity. Examples include impacts on drinking water and air quality from large-scale farming runoff, or the disproportionate negative health outcomes present in black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities	29%
Income or wage disparities	Inequities in the earnings based on gender, race, ethnicity, and/or geographic location	24%
Health outcome disparities	Disparities in health impacts on a population	19%
Housing market challenges	Data on restrictive or underdeveloped housing markets	14%
Availability of local jobs	The lack of local jobs and factors that push workers outside of the region to find jobs	10%

and whose might be left out. For example, median wage income can provide a high-level data point, but adding further fidelity by gender, race, ethnicity, and/or geography provides a more inclusive picture of the potential differences in wealth across a region for different populations. This is an intersectional[16] presentation of data sources, which means that this data takes into account the overlapping effects of social identities and offers a more holistic understanding of a coalition's region. Overall, the data provides the foundation for the "place-based" nature of the program development, informing which local

DATA USE IN BBBRC APPLICATIONS	%
Less than 4 indicators	14%
5-7 indicators	24%
8-11 Indicators	52%
12+ Indicators	10%

assets are utilized and likewise, which challenges and/or inequalities are addressed through the BBBRC program.

16 Intersectionality is a concept developed in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a civil rights scholar, to highlight how race, gender, and other identities intersect. Intersectionality underscores the complex and interconnected nature of identities, particularly in the context of discrimination and oppression. It recognizes that individuals occupy multiple social positions and belong to various groups, and these intersecting identities can lead to unique and compounded experiences of privilege or disadvantage.

In BBBRC, coalitions used data to provide the context of their region and justify the investment needed to shift the local economic trajectory. In program applications, the coalitions utilized a combined total of 157 indicators (an average of 7.5 per coalition) to tell their story. Nearly two-thirds of the BBBRC coalitions provided more than eight distinct indicators to help EDA understand their local narrative. With place-based investments, it is critical for local leaders to conceptualize and tell a cohesive and comprehensive story of the region and its residents beyond broad statements of need. This data-dive also later provides the foundation for metrics and understanding if coalitions are "moving the needle."

From the BBBRC applications, we identified 15 different types of data utilized by coalitions (see table on page 13 for data and definitions). The diversity of data indicators highlights the significant variations in how inequalities are conceptualized and who it can benefit from equitable and inclusive priorities. Every region has a unique set of opportunity gaps to be addressed through place-based programs. Equity efforts should not be confined to solely demographic indicators, but must dig deeper into the intersectional nature of disparities within a region.

Regional Equity Strategy
Another common theme that emerged as coalitions shared their local narrative were currently active regional efforts in equity, prior to the development of their BBBRC coalition. Some coalitions were embedded within broader ecosystem efforts in

EQUITY & PLACE-BASED PROGRAMS

As place-based programs, BBBRC coalitions conceptualized and defined their industry clusters as equity priorities in their region. This diverges from top-down programs which stipulate specific equity goals and target populations served (such as 10% served will be Hispanic). Additionally, it created a diversity of equity approaches within the BBBRC coalition portfolio.

Underlying this place-based approach is EDA's theory of change, which emphasizes that localized strategies are more likely to be successful, impact the critical communities in local regions, and lead to broader inclusion of all communities, regardless of history or demographics.

strategic equity plans. For example, one coalition's regional strategy (pre-BBBRC) elevated "inclusive economic growth as the 'north star' for the region's development." Another coalition shared about scholarships for all graduating seniors to local community colleges or technical schools as a local effort to increase equitable opportunities for all communities.

For other coalitions, the BBBRC grant is the launching point for a collaborative, broad-based regional equity strategy, and the funding provides the impetus for new capacity and/or reimagined partnerships to emerge. One coalition shared, "We have this group of new folks that had never been connected to the ecosystem that we have been building for 40 years." Another coalition shared that

Key Takeaways for Local Practitioners

- Defining your region from an equity perspective necessitates evaluating your area and its many dimensions. Take time to dive into the data and know the story of your region from many perspectives. For example, go beyond high-level wage data to look for differences (and disparities) among gender, race, and/or geography. Talk to community leaders from different lived-experiences to understand how they see and experience your region. Equity within a region has many definitions and a deep dive into data can help you tell your unique local story.

- Utilize resources such as NERDE, National Equity Atlas, Policy Map, Headwaters Economics, or Stats America to compile robust data on your region.

- Additional resources are available within the Building Better Regions Community of Practice.

Key Takeaways for Funders

- Regions are in different places with their regional equity strategy and thus expectations of growth and outcomes should be place-based.

there are many strong local projects in equity and their goal is to elevate all programs and not duplicate efforts.

No matter the starting point, BBBRC coalitions are interweaving equity. This finding underscores the diversity of launching points for the coalitions in prioritizing equity. At this time, the coalition projects have not progressed enough to determine if these existing efforts have any significant impacts on the BBBRC coalitions but our future research will further investigate this.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HISTORICAL MARGINALIZATION & HARM

Historically, underrepresented and underserved communities have been excluded from economic growth and opportunity.[17] Recognition of historical marginalization and harm from policies and programs that were exclusionary is also part of an equitable approach to Place-based Program Development. As the BBBRC coalitions are seeking to fundamentally shift the current economic landscape with new industry clusters, understanding the historical context is a critical aspect of embedding equity. This acknowledgement provides the foundation for future development - both in understanding current practices or approaches to avoid and, equally important, what needs to still be repaired from previous programs or actions. Restorative justice practices emphasize the need to acknowledge past harm and restore conditions to how they were before the harm occurred,[18] while also identifying and uplifting the assets and strengths within the community. Transformative justice practices highlight the need to stop perpetuating harm and transform systems so that violence and harm no longer occur in the first place.[19] Both frameworks are useful when considering rebuilding trust and fostering collaborative relationships with communities that have experienced harm from federal or state actors. Within the BBBRC coalitions, 48% identify and acknowledge harmful historical practices as a component of their equity work in either their applications or during interviews.

Key Takeaways for Local Practitioners

- Engage with social workers and community leaders engaged in trauma-informed care and restorative justice practices as you seek to reconcile past harmful policies and/or practices (note: calling out past harm without a plan for restoration can be more harmful).

- Building trust is a slow process and will extend beyond the boundaries of grants such as BBBRC. Efforts to re-build trust must be rooted in long-term collective regional growth and flourishing, not simply transactional relationships related to program outcomes (i.e., engaging with underserved communities solely to reach target population goals). As you engage with a wide range of community-based organizations (CBOs), begin with small projects and continue to build from there. As decisions are made about the next steps, engage the community representatives in the actual decision-making, and not just in data collection or gaining access to target populations.

- Recognize that capacity building for leaders in underrepresented communities is a critical lever for continued success.

- Resource: Hicks, Mari, Rita Soler Ossolinski, Haruka Braun, Ian Snyder, and Aliza Wasserman. "Roadmap to Repair: A Guide to How Cities Can Acknowledge and Address the History of Harm to Indigenous Peoples, Rebuild Trust and Repair Relationships." National League of Cities, 2022, https://www.nlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/REAL-MAG-Roadmap-Repair-Report.pdf

Key Takeaways for Funders

- Be patient with funding and outcomes. Historically, practices that prioritize speed and short-term outputs are the kinds of practices that have led to breaking the trust in the first place.

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17 See footnotes on pages 7, 9, and 16 as well as literature on the impacts of policies such as redlining and the disparate impacts of the building of the interstate highway system for further reading on the inequity of traditional economic growth models
18 Suzuki, M., & Jenkins, T. (2023). Apology−forgiveness cycle in restorative justice, but how? International Review of Victimology, 29(2), 259-276. https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1177/02697580221079994;
Vaandering, Dorothy (2014) Implementing restorative justice practice in schools: what pedagogy reveals, Journal of Peace Education, 11:1, 64-80, DOI: 10.1080/17400201.2013.794335
19 Mia Mingus. "Transformative Justice," The Digital Abolitionist, Accessed November 5, 2023. https://www.thedigitalabolitionist.com/transformative-justice.

This recognition took many forms, with coalition leaders expressing:

- "Meeting our goals will require time to build relationships and trust with underserved populations and communities, who with a history of being left out of economic opportunities are often skeptical of new opportunities."

- "And so, when you think about historically excluded, that in some ways makes you feel there's the intent of justice, almost righting wrongs that have happened in the past, being very intentional about making sure that we are including the diverse voices that perhaps have been missing in our economy, in our development of our economy, actually developing the work. We should make sure that we are including everyone in here."

- "We know that the industry in the 100 plus years that we've been producing [commodity]… it has not been a terribly equitable landscape. The jobs, which are incredibly high-paying, both the middle-skill and high-skill jobs have been restricted to the overwhelming majority white male-dominated industry."

- "[This program] will help clean up some of the unjust messes left by this extractive economy over the decades. And [it] will show people that it's been an absolute untruth that we've been fed to think that we can only have a clean environment or jobs, we can't have both. And we deserve both."

- "I think there are several axes of equity as it relates to this project across the programs. Obviously, [city name] and the community here in particular has a very complicated history with racial equity…. and ongoing attempts to revitalize and recreate some of that dynamic entrepreneurial community that thrived about a century ago. And then, as well, the other big characteristic of [the city] is the relationship and affiliation with tribal entities. So [the city] is the gathering place of three of the tribes that were forcibly removed. [The state] was Indian territory prior to statehood. So that is a complex legacy as it relates to inclusion

and power, but also economic development and opportunity as well"

These statements demonstrate both an acknowledgement of the harm and/or marginalization communities have experienced as well as the intent to change how communities are engaged within the coalitions today. The effect of the legacies of past discriminations and exclusion must be acknowledged and addressed for meaningful, authentic, and lasting partnerships to develop with underserved and underrepresented communities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The phased approach of BBBRC was designed to foster collaboration among a diverse set of regional partners, including community leaders who represent the many populations benefiting from expected outputs and outcomes. As coalitions developed and identified the boundaries of their region and partnerships, the engagement of the communities impacted by the projects (referenced in this report as "the community") was also a key component.[20] Historically, economic development programs have not included equitable community engagement processes.[21] The interweaving of equity through community engagement is groundbreaking within the economic development field[22] and should be celebrated. Community engagement is part of an equitable process because it shifts programs from doing things for a community ("for" disempowers communities by keeping power and authority outside of the community) to doing things with or by the community.[23] The scope and identity of the communities who benefit from the projects within the BBBRC coalitions are broad and all of them intentionally include underrepresented and underserved populations.
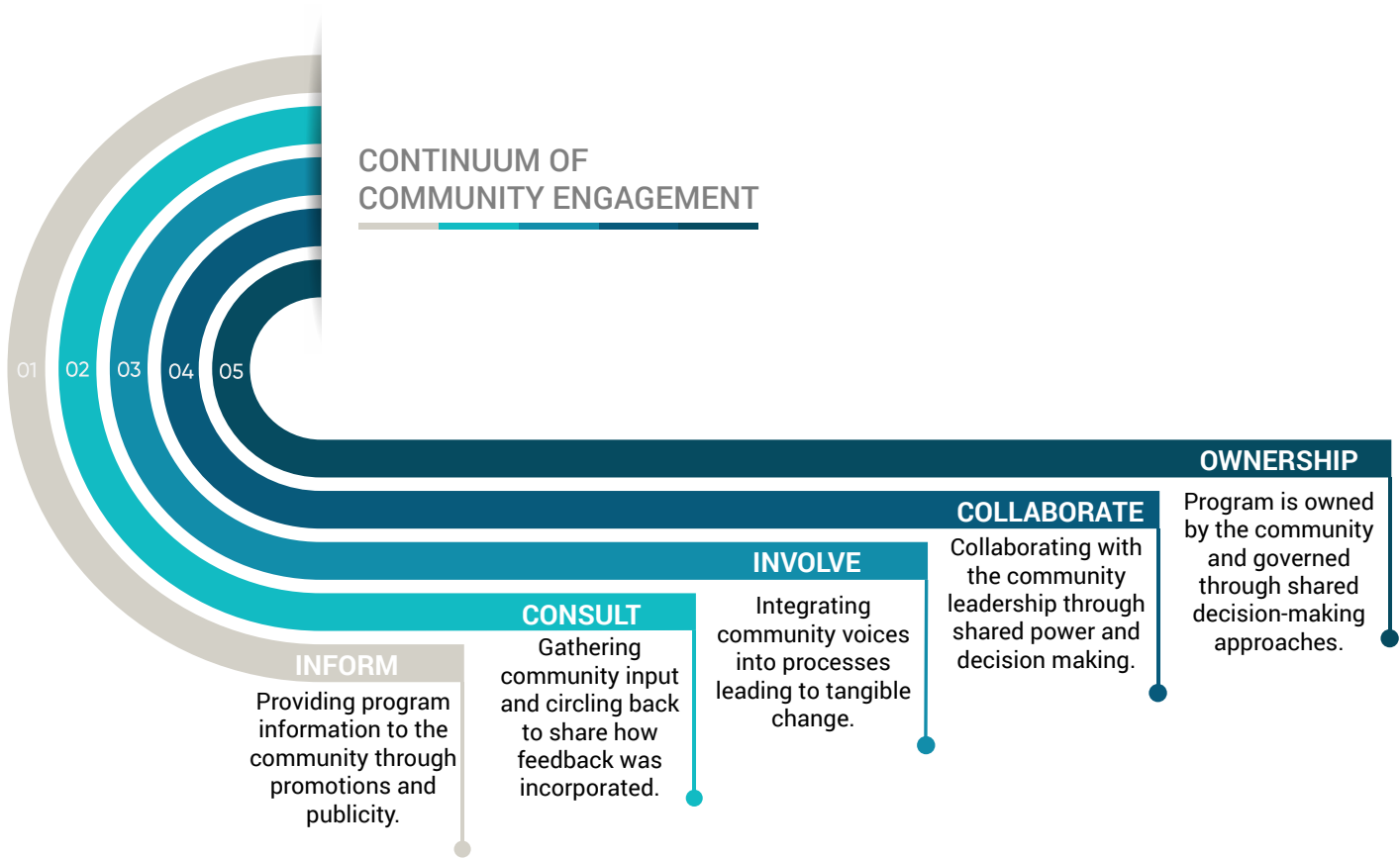
Community engagement is best understood as a continuum, with each phase corresponding with differing goals, mechanisms of engagement, and

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20 This definition of community is intentionally broad as each region is unique in the defining of its various communities. Defining the local "communities" is a process itself as highlighted in the sidebar on pages 12 and 18. While some coalitions identify as the community, the need for engagement in a diversity of perspectives is still paramount for all as no community is homogenous

21 Most traditional economic development efforts focus on programs and policies and the impact on the market (supply and demand), not the engagement of community in the development of these (Schragger, 2010).

22 While "community economic development" (see footnote #2) has been part of the economic development and policy scholarship fields for many decades, it has not been institutionalized consistently into federal programs. The intersection of equity within the practitioner field is still developing and best practices are still emerging compared to more traditional economic development approaches of technology-based development or market-based approaches to development.

23 Kligman, Linda. "Sparking Creativity: Workplace Applications of Restorative Practices." IIRP Presidential Paper Series, no. 3 (2021). https://www.iirp.edu/images/pdf/IIRP_Sparking_Creativity.pdf

CONTINUUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

INFORM
Providing program information to the community through promotions and publicity.

CONSULT
Gathering community input and circling back to share how feedback was incorporated.

INVOLVE
Integrating community voices into processes leading to tangible change.

COLLABORATE
Collaborating with the community leadership through shared power and decision making.

OWNERSHIP
Program is owned by the community and governed through shared decision-making approaches.

resource allocation. Based on several models of community engagement,[24] the research team designed the above graphic (*Continuum of Community Engagement*), which identifies the many stages of engagement that allow for comparison analysis across all 21 coalitions, but can also be instructional for how a coalition operates internally.

The continuum starts with the *Ignore* stage during which communities are uninvolved in economic development programs and its benefits. This stage is included within the continuum as it represents the historical marginalization experienced by many underserved communities. Any movement on the continuum beyond the *Ignore* stage are foundational steps in advancing equity and equitable outcomes in communities that have been historically underserved and underrepresented in economic development opportunities. During the *Inform* stage, program leaders reach out to the community with the goal of proactively sharing information about the program and ways to be involved. Within the *Consult* phase,

program leaders create feedback mechanisms for the communities to provide input and then later circle back to share how feedback was incorporated into the program. When consulting with the community, program leaders are demonstrating the value of community input and their interest in the community's perspective. Next, the *Involve* stage pulls the community into the program through involvement in the decision making process, and program leaders recognize the value of the community input and it causes them to proactively change how programming is developed or implemented. During the *Collaborate* stage community leaders are elevated into leadership roles and models of shared decision making are utilized. Finally, through *Ownership*, the program is fully owned by the community through a democratic model of decision making and there is a co-created bridge between the governance of the program and the community. Community ownership, while the strongest integration of populations served within a program, requires significant time and capacity within communities and it is, at times, not immediately

24 González, Rosa. "The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership." *Facilitating Power*, 2020, https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/facilitatingpower/pages/53/attachments/original/1596746165/CE2O_SPECTRUM_2020.pdf?1596746165
"IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation" *International Association for Public Participation,* 2018 https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf
"Principles of Community Engagement." Book. NIH Publication ; No. 11-7782. [Washington, D.C.]: Dept. of Health & Human Services, National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Clinical and Translational Science Awards, 2011.
"From Community Engagement to Ownership: Tools for the Field" *National Association of Climate Resilience Planners (NACRP),* 2020, https://resilientca.org/projects/b4d14297-6ed1-444d-bd47-712ededfc976/

feasible due to historical disinvestment and lack of opportunity to develop capacity. The goal for community engagement should be locally identified and developed, alongside ever-increasing levels of robust community engagement. Regardless of the BBBRC's coalitions current stage, a continual emphasis for most is the continued intentional and equitable capacity building for communities. For this report, we have adopted the continuum to understand the different ways that coalitions engage with communities. The degree to which a community is engaged can depend significantly on the expertise of the leaders as well as the capacity of the community leaders.

The research team assessed coalitions within this continuum based on the interviews and program documentation and in comparison to one another. For example, coalitions who solely referenced creating information materials were within the *Inform* stage. This stage encompasses outreach strategies that serve as a one-way line of communication: sending information out to target communities, but not yet implementing mechanisms for feedback in the decision-making processes. Those sharing about community meetings were within the *Consult* stage. This category also included coalitions who have consulted with minority-owned businesses and demonstrated commitment to learning from equity & inclusion advisory boards, but do not yet have structures in place to directly integrate in part into the decision-making process. For instance, one

coalition expressed their commitment to integrating community feedback: "So I think that piece still has to be figured out – is there a single repository for community feedback that we're gathering and reacting to? We have a lot of touch points and vehicles to hear the feedback. If we can find an effective way to collate it and index it and respond to it, then it'll be a powerful tool." When specific mechanisms for informing decision making were highlighted, these coalitions were within the *Involve* stage. Examples include the creation of decision-making equity councils, subcontracting with community-based organizations for specific parts of projects, and implementing focus groups.

The *Collaborate* stages were those who demonstrated significant commitment to shared decision making with members of their underserved communities. For example, some coalitions dedicate specific seats on their governance team to community representatives, or others identify a significantly-funded coalition partner being a part of the community they are serving. In the *Ownership* stage, these coalitions expressly state they are part of the community they are serving. For example, one coalition shared their priority was to ensure their whole community has the opportunity to engage in the supply chains already established in many other parts of the country. They shared "Bringing our [community's] talent and our suppliers into [the industry] is the largest surge of diversity that sector has ever had, simply because of the type of community we are and our success

IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY LEADERS

Community engagement is a component of BBBRC and this raises a key question of defining the community and its leaders. While each region has its own unique considerations, "community leaders" can be identified through five different approaches:[1]

- A positional approach identifies people who are formal leaders of organizations, such as churches, schools, government, or social organizations.

- A reputational approach asks community members to identify who is knowledgeable about the local area, its history, and its people and can provide insight on how decisions impact everyone. Through this method coalition leaders are seeking to see who emerges as a leader by reputation.

- The opinion leadership approach asks the community the question "Where do you look for advice and information?" and identifies leaders through the influence of their opinion.

- A decision making approach evaluates who is actively participating in formal decision-making at current meetings or workgroups by looking at sources such as meeting minutes, media sources, or public records.

- The social participation approach evaluates social and services organizations and their leaders.

1 Warner, L. & Galindo-Gonzalez, S. "Identifying Key Community Leaders to Assess Extension Programming Needs." EDIS, October 24, 2023, doi: 10.32473/edis-wc164-2014

Berardi, M. & Brennan, M. "Identifying Local Power Structures to Facilitate Community Development." *PennState Extension*, October 23, 2023. https://extension.psu.edu/identifying-local-power-structures-to-facilitate-community-development

Boone, E. J. et al. "Developing Programs in Adult Education: A Conceptual Programming Model." *Waveland Press*, 2002.

in building stairways, ladders to social mobility and economic mobility in the region."

None of the BBBRC coalitions were solely in the *Ignore* or *Inform* phase during their application stage, which is notable given the historical exclusion of underserved communities in economic development programs. Twenty-four percent of the 21 coalitions were within *Consulting* stages of community engagement, 38% in *Involve*, 24% in *Collaborate*, and 14% *Community Ownership* in their application stage. The presence of community engagement beyond *Informing* in all coalitions demonstrates the BBBRC program is elevating and prioritizing equity.

As discussed more below, the coalitions are continuing to progress through this continuum through increasingly intentional and structured avenues of community engagement. It must be noted that the relatively compressed time frame between the Phase 1 awards and the Phase 2 application deadline (about three months - see timeline on page 10) presented challenges in community engagement as this is a time-intensive process, often with significant trust-building needed. One coalition sought to mitigate these challenges, sharing "We structured a lot of the grant to be open-ended with contractual work built into our budget so that we could delay actually selecting who is going to be doing the work or getting the funding. And we could build in more time to develop that trust in that relationship with our community so that they could gather with their community and consult and be able to articulate what it is that they want to see with the industry developing."

Another key consideration in community engagement is the capacity of the community, especially those who have been harmed by historical divestment. One coalition pointed to the vital role of capacity building for underserved communities by sharing, "When we talk about equity, we really have to talk about it in terms of infrastructure to deliver it. It's about capacity – are the partners that you've invited to the table supported to be at the table? It's one thing to say, 'Hey, let's think about non-traditional partners.' It's another to say, 'Can they participate at the same level as your well-funded, privately funded, white-led organization?' And the answer is: not often. And so if we're not investing in that, then you can set the table, but it's still creating inequities."

Key Takeaways for Local Practitioners

- It is never too late or too early to engage the community. If a lot has been decided outside of the community, bring them in as soon as you can. If you are still exploring a potential opportunity, reach out to community organizations and leaders now to introduce the opportunity to them, gauge their interest and concerns, assess how they can be a part of the design and decision making process. Work to develop structures that institutionalize community engagement both in the informal as well as formal decision making.

- Relationship building and trust building takes time. Therefore, start as early as possible.

- Being seen in the community matters. Show up at community events, celebrations in the community, etc. Don't just invite community leaders to your offices - go meet them where they are.

- Informal interactions can be just as, if not more important, than the formal one - relationships are not just about decision making, but understanding the "why" behind a leader's or organization's work. Spending time outside formal structures is a great way to build trust and understanding of your community organizations.

Key Takeaways for Funders

- Accept that program leaders will not have all the answers on community engagement at the outset. Be willing to accept and even step into a collaborative space to assist in the process.

- Help make connections - local funders, especially, can play a huge role in making introductions, convening different types of stakeholders, and helping collaborations move along.

- Make investments in BIPOC leaders and organizations to build their capacity, as structural barriers may have kept them from being engaged in meaningful ways.

- Allow time for significant relationship building and trust building, especially in communities that have been harmed in the past (and/or continue to face barriers/harms to this day).

Equity in Coalition Structure

The structural components of the coalitions are a critical aspect of equity. As many coalitions shared, governance is a key area of continued learning and needed resources.[25] However, even in the early stages of the grant, BBBRC coalitions are making strides to interweave equity within their structure. Equity within the coalition structure emerged in the following ways: community-engaged decision making, unique equity approaches, and dedicated capacity.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED DECISION MAKING

The decision-making process is a key area of equity integration within a coalition. The governance structures of the coalitions vary broadly[26] and each developed their own structure. Within our analysis, we specifically focused on how coalitions shared decision-making power with community leaders from underserved or underrepresented communities that are intended to benefit from the BBBRC projects. For this analysis, "community leaders'' are defined as those directly representing or serving the communities who will benefit from the BBBRC projects in their region. Often these are community-based organizations (or CBOs), but other nonprofits or institutions can also serve in this role if they are embedded within the community.

Engagement in decision making, or collaborative decision-making goes beyond a seat at a "table" and provides avenues for both influence and meaningful change. This is because underserved community leaders, who historically have not been part of large-scale economic development programs, are empowered to take action and make changes they know are needed and are most impactful for their communities. Collaborative decision making embraces a multidimensional process of extensive collaboration, cooperation, and active participation from a variety of stakeholders. Moreover, it acknowledges the inherent power dynamics within a group and provides an avenue for its equitable distribution. The stages in the *Continuum*

of *Community Engagement* provide insights on the different degrees to which community leaders can be involved and empowered. While this type of decision-making approach doesn't immediately guarantee equitable outcomes, the inclusive approach alters the trajectory of who makes decisions and which communities and priorities are centered and served.

In understanding how coalitions are approaching decision making, we again utilize the *Continuum of Community Engagement* as a framework for analysis as we reviewed program documents and interviews. Many of the coalitions were still launching when we interviewed them, but several had executed or were planning to execute governing boards, steering committees, and/or advisory boards.

From the initial coalition development to implementation, 10% of coalitions progressed from *Consult* (14%) to *Involve* (43%) Those moving into the *Involve* stage demonstrated the solidifying of key partnerships to advance equity goals and/or creating formalized feedback processes from the community to the governing body. The coalitions

25 Bailey A. & I. Estabrooke. "Goals of Coalition Governance." Building Better Regions, RTI, March 22, 2024, https://www.buildingbetterregionscop.org/blogs/goals-of-coalition-governance/.
Wilkinson, J. & I Estabrooke. "A Community of Practice's Focus on Governance for Place-Based Economic Development Initiatives." Building Better Regions, RTI, December 20, 2023, https://www.buildingbetterregionscop.org/blogs/a-community-of-practices-focus-on-governance-for-place-based-economic-development-initiatives/.
26 ibid.

moving from *Involve* to *Collaborate* (5%) expressed that the additional time since their application allowed them to build trust with communities to solidify the governance roles and structures that would work for the community. One coalition shared that the short time frame of the competition cycle did not leave enough time for thoughtful community trust-building; however, they were excited about their progress post-award, sharing, "The amount of evolution that this relationship has had is just staggering and just so impressive." Overall, coalitions are continuing to evaluate how they can progress in the continuum, based on their community's needs and capacity. This is a significant and laudable change in how federal economic development programs are structured and advances the goals of equitable outcomes for federal investments.

EQUITY APPROACH

Coalitions discussed their approach to interweaving equity in a variety of ways. This diversity in approach is an important takeaway from the BBBRC coalitions - equity work in regions often begins from different places, but all of it is rooted in common goals of inclusivity and equity. From a research standpoint, these differences are integrated in our methodology through a social constructivism approach (meaning there is validity in the varied experiences and searching for commonalities between these). Thus, the research team did not look for one equity approach, but instead looked for common themes between coalitions. Based on interview and program data, three commonalities emerged for equity approaches: *grassroots approaches, workforce approaches*, and *systemic approaches*. These approaches are not mutually exclusive; however, they indicate the primary way that coalitions are prioritizing equity.

EQUITY APPROACHES	%
Grassroots approaches	14%
Workforce approaches	19%
Systemic approaches	67%

Grassroots approaches are those developed based on significant input directly from the underserved communities, and equity is equated with directly serving the needs identified by the community. Coalitions discussed this through a heavy emphasis on "ground up approaches." For example, one coalition emphasized that in the past, development in the region "was done to us and not with us." A *grassroots approach* looks beyond community outreach, and instead centers decision-making power directly in the community itself. It involves conscious effort in capacity building and cultural competence, empowering organizations embedded in the communities that have been doing the work and will be doing the work long after the duration of these grants have ended.

Workforce approaches are those developed by coalitions that utilize workforce development as the primary method to implement equitable changes into their region. This was evidenced through coalitions directing the research team to workforce projects for interviews or coalition leaders focusing primarily on workforce components in the interview. For example, one coalition developed a strategy centered on equitable job creation, job training, education access, and transportation options for underrepresented groups. Another coalition describes their component project as "industry-driven, equipped to support the career success of historically excluded populations, and infused with technological and instructional innovation." These approaches position the field of workforce development as the hinge point upon which equitable change can happen in a region.

Finally, *systemic approaches* include coalitions focused primarily on broad-based systemic change to advance equity. *Systemic approaches* are the most common approach, yet there was still significant diversity within this category. Coalitions within this approach advanced equity in three different ways: working from within the system, introducing a new paradigm for how work is done, or a combination of both through changing internal systems as well as introducing new paradigms (see table below). For example, one coalition is focused on internal system changes, pushing for equal access in the advanced manufacturing field as well as their procurement structure. Another coalition is taking the more hybrid approach, both focusing on internal system changes

SYSTEMIC APPROACHES DETAIL	%
Working from within the system	29%
Introducing a new paradigm	29%
Both within the system & paradigm shift	43%

and introducing new paradigms sharing, "we're thinking about opportunities for economic mobility, I think, across the projects and interests. Sometimes that might be a policy question. Sometimes that might be an actual investment. Sometimes that might be looking at things differently on how we do outreach." In contrast, another coalition is pushing for a total paradigm shift, citing the fact that "part of equity work is to recenter based on systems change from an equity lens, which has to do with change at the deepest level, which is values and culture. And those values and culture are in place for all of these leaders. So it's the only way we know how to create from because it's normal. It's centered." Although these approaches differ, they all embody a systemic approach where conditions need to change from a top-down level in order to foster equitable growth in communities.

These approaches indicate the primary method through which a coalition began a discussion of equity, but these categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, workforce development projects were part of many coalitions with a primarily grassroots or systemic approach. Additionally, many systemic approaches also included strong efforts in community engagement or ownership. Overall, the many types of *Equity Approaches* highlight the significant diversity in how to prioritize equity. This finding elevates the need and opportunity for regions to define an equity approach for their community and its residents.

CAPACITY

A critical question for all coalitions, and economic developers broadly, is the ability to dedicate capacity for equity work. As highlighted by New Growth Innovation Network, equity and inclusion requires three C's: commitment, capacity, and capital.[27] Establishing inclusive, equitable ecosystems necessitates significant cross-sectoral commitment, capacity from leaders and personnel, as well as capital investments. The BBBRC coalitions are tackling capacity in a myriad of ways based on what they shared in interviews and program documents. While some coalitions are using multiple approaches for building capacity, this "capacity" data point indicates the primary capacity allocated, as identified by the coalition.

Nineteen percent actively integrate the tasks and responsibilities of equity prioritization and needed equity capacity into all positions (*collective integration*). Interestingly, of this group of coalitions, almost all are also within a community-ownership phase of community engagement. Additionally, these coalitions are usually ones that already had extensive experience with equitable processes and approaches, and thus are further along in identifying mechanisms to dedicate equity capacity, such as staff training in inclusive facilitation and/or braiding funding streams from multiple projects to support these efforts.

Among the coalitions, the two most common approaches to dedicating equity capacity are through either *project-level responsibility* (29%) or dedicated *coalition-level personnel* (29%). Project-level capacity indicates that the coalition as a whole is relying primarily on one project to dedicate capacity for equity and inclusion strategies. Coalition-level personnel were personnel at the governance level of the coalition who had dedicated capacity to lead efforts in equity and inclusion across all projects.

Finally, 20% of coalitions discuss *committees* as the primary means for equity capacity allocation. However, these committees diverged on their structure and authority. Equity committees serve in an advisory capacity for 10% of the coalitions. For a separate 10% of the coalitions, the equity-focused committee has decision-making power.

EQUITY CAPACITY	%
Component Project Level	29%
Coalition-level Personnel	29%
Collective Integration	19%
Committee: Advisory	10%
Committee: Decision making	10%

The variety of mechanisms for capacity commitment highlights two findings: 1) coalitions are seeking to create capacity in many ways and 2) they are still determining what works best for their region and what is most effective for their equity priorities.

27 Ghosh, Swati. "Inclusive Community and Economic Development in Small and Midsize Cities." *New Growth Innovation Network*, 2021, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/642be352b7e32754901e4ed6/t/6580a2417cbc9414934716b4/1702928963417/RWJF+Final+Report+-+Final+Public+Version+FINAL.pdf

Equity in Project Activities

Each coalition includes two to nine aligned projects that simultaneously launch new economic development ecosystems within their region. For many coalitions, projects were just launching when we interviewed them and thus learnings are limited at this time. For this report, we evaluated how coalitions are conducting outreach as well as the identifying the specific communities they are seeking to serve.

PROJECT OUTREACH TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

A key priority of the BBBRC program is the integration of local populations into regional economic development, especially those that have historically been excluded. Thus, the engagement and targeted services for historically marginalized communities is a critical component of BBBRC coalitions and the types of outreach to engage these communities as participants in projects (such as training programs, entrepreneurial service programs, and more) are a vital aspect of equitable practices.
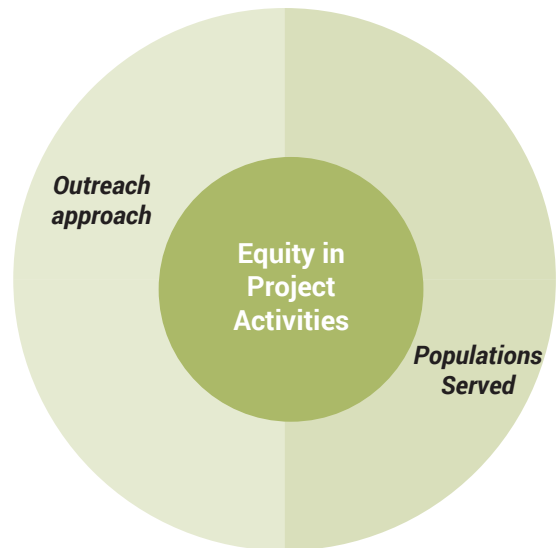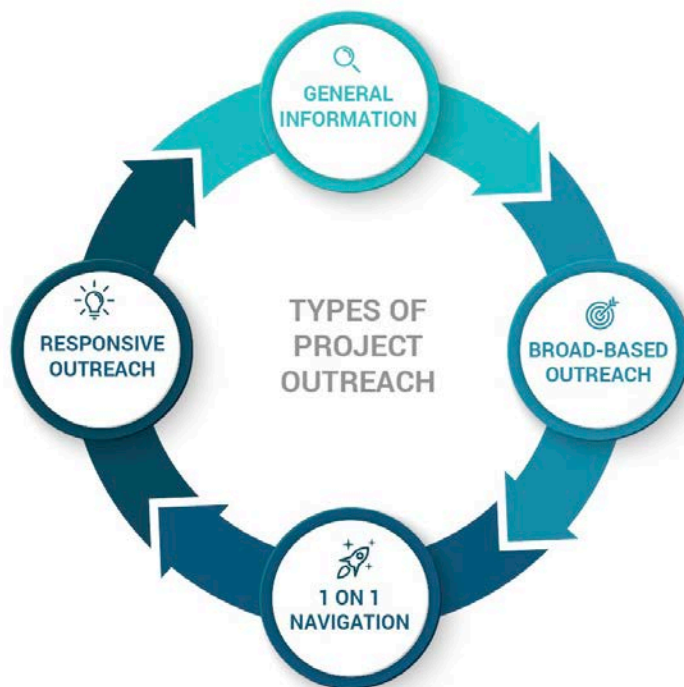
The BBBRC coalitions discussed a diverse array of project outreach approaches, which is an interactive, cyclical process. The first stage of project outreach includes *general information* about the project and included billboards, websites, social media, mailers, and more. The next stage of project outreach is *broad-based outreach*, during which project teams begin on-the-ground outreach such as attending community events and meetings, hosting community events, and creating more navigational material for communities to access.

Next, some coalitions discussed significant investment into *one-on-one navigation*, which included creating navigator staff positions and/or dedicating significant funds to community-based organizations (CBOs). Community-based organizations are ones embedded in the community, meaning the staff and leaders are from the community, offices are located in the community, and residents are involved in identifying both issues and solutions.

Finally, a few coalitions discussed moving into *responsive outreach* where they were beginning to change aspects of their projects and outreach methodologies based on community feedback. BBBRC coalitions, on average, were in between broad-

based outreach and one-on-one navigation, as many were still launching projects when we engaged with them. As the projects progress, we will continue to dive into what approaches are most fruitful as well as key challenges.

COMMUNITIES SERVED AND ENGAGED

The BBBRC program is benefiting 801 counties, of which 106 are home to largely underserved populations, 236 are fully rural, 136 are persistent poverty counties, across 24 states. For this research, our team sought to understand in more detail who the coalitions are directly serving, based on their self-identified metrics. Findings in this section are based solely on written reports - the progress reports and Grant Administration Plans - submitted to EDA. We began our analysis by looking specifically at the "Metrics" section of these reports, and then widened our scope to the entirety of the documents so as to capture all relevant information on populations served by the coalition's projects.

Communities Served
To analyze the populations served at a high level, we developed thematic categories for all identified communities served. From our review of language in project documentation, ten overarching categories were created:
•   Minority racial and ethnic groups
•   Minority-owned business entities,
•   Low-income groups and workers (including frontline workers, displaced workers, underemployed individuals and unemployed individuals),
•   Rural populations,
•   Women,
•   Veterans/military populations,
•   Youth/individuals in need of upskilling (including students, recent graduates, and those without high school or college degrees),
•   Immigrant populations (including migrant workers and refugees),
•   Justice-involved populations, and
•   Persons with disabilities.
The table on page 25 outlines the percent of coalitions that mention each of these populations. Other specific populations that were mentioned once or twice, but not frequently enough to warrant a separate category, including: people in recovery, unhoused individuals, and LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Terminology

Overall, in discussing underserved and underrepresented communities, there were four common terms utilized by coalitions: underrepresented, disadvantaged, historically excluded communities, and underserved. This variety in language underscores the diversity and localized approach in how communities are identifying the populations they are serving. It is important to note that the coalitions were likely influenced by the language used in the EDA's Notice of Funding Opportunity document, which most commonly used the terms "historically excluded populations, racial minorities, and women" as well as singular mentions of "disadvantaged communities" and "rural and underserved communities."
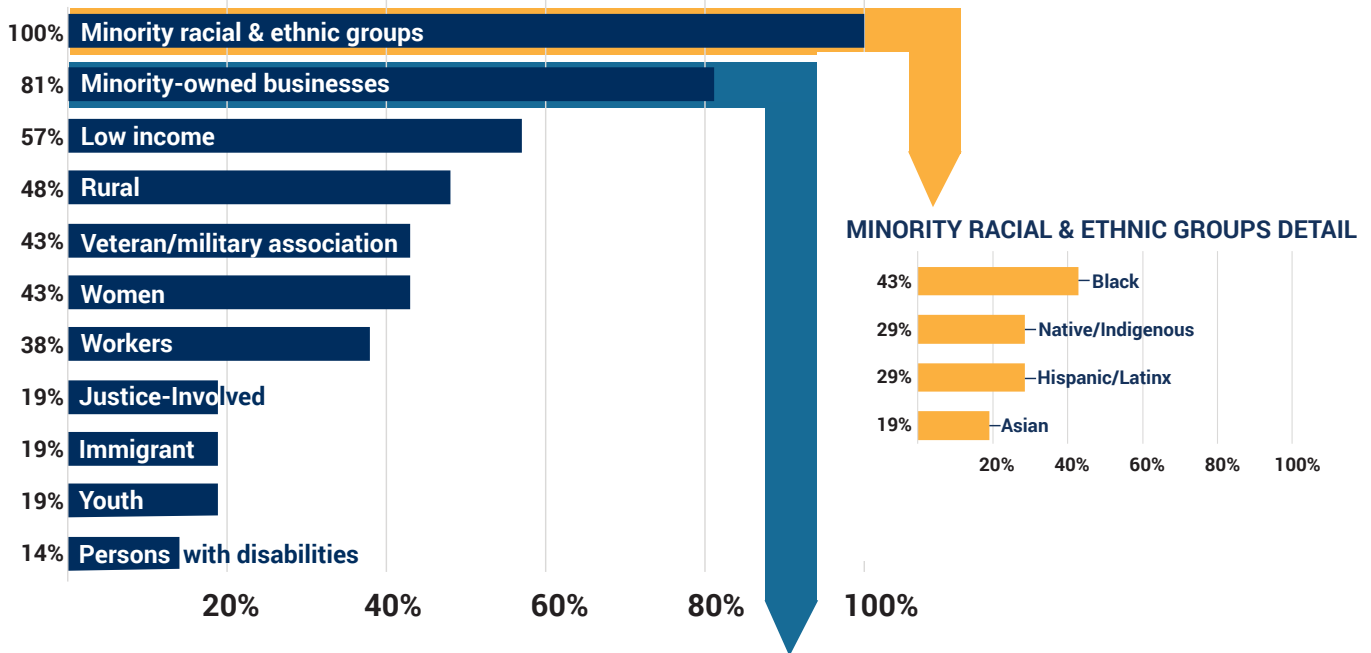
TERMINOLOGY FOR POPULATIONS SERVED
Most commons terms to describe populations engaged related to equity

"Underrepresented" 10%

"Disadvantaged" 10%

"Underserved" 52%

"Historically Excluded Communities (HEC)" 28%
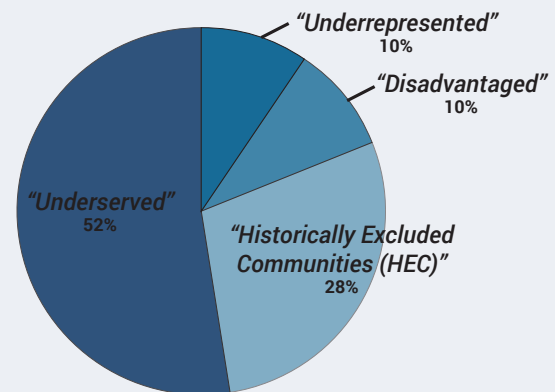
The two largest communities served are minority racial and ethnic groups and minority-owned business entitites. Minority racial and ethnic populations was mentioned by all the coalitions, with 67% further specifying more detail on racial or ethnic populations, represented in the charts on page 25.

The "minority-owned businesses" category refers to any specific mentions of marginalized business ownership, including: minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, Black-owned, Native-owned, Latinx/Hispanic-owned, veteran-owned, and LGBTQIA+ owned. While all the coalitions discussed serving small business entities, small producers, or small and medium-sized businesses, 81% coalitions mentioned minority-owned businesses, and 57% further specified which business and entrepreneur
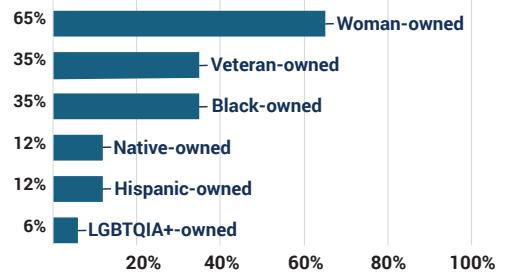
POPULATIONS SERVED BY BBBRC COALITIONS

Population	Percent
Minority racial & ethnic groups	100%
Minority-owned businesses	81%
Low income	57%
Rural	48%
Veteran/military association	43%
Women	43%
Workers	38%
Justice-Involved	19%
Immigrant	19%
Youth	19%
Persons with disabilities	14%

MINORITY RACIAL & ETHNIC GROUPS DETAIL

Group	Percent
Black	43%
Native/Indigenous	29%
Hispanic/Latinx	29%
Asian	19%

MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS DETAIL

Group	Percent
Woman-owned	65%
Veteran-owned	35%
Black-owned	35%
Native-owned	12%
Hispanic-owned	12%
LGBTQIA+-owned	6%

populations they are planning to support.

The variety in these data highlight the diversity of communities and populations that are intended to be served through the BBBRC coalitions and their projects. As many projects are still developing final metrics and data collection mechanisms, the research team will continue to update and evaluate these communities served throughout the program.

Conclusion

Through place-based federal investment, 21 BBBRC coalitions are integrating equity into economic development. From this early research, three leading practices emerge on how coalitions are approaching equity: equity in place-based program development, equity in the coalition structure, and equity in project activities.

Equity in place-based program development, which is how BBBRC coalitions tell the story of their region and engage the community in this process, is further detailed in this report through how coalitions define their local narratives, acknowledge historical marginalization and harm in their region, and their engagement with the community in the development of the coalition.

Equity in the coalition structure is evident through community-engaged decision making, the diversity of equity approaches, and the capacity dedicated to equity prioritization.
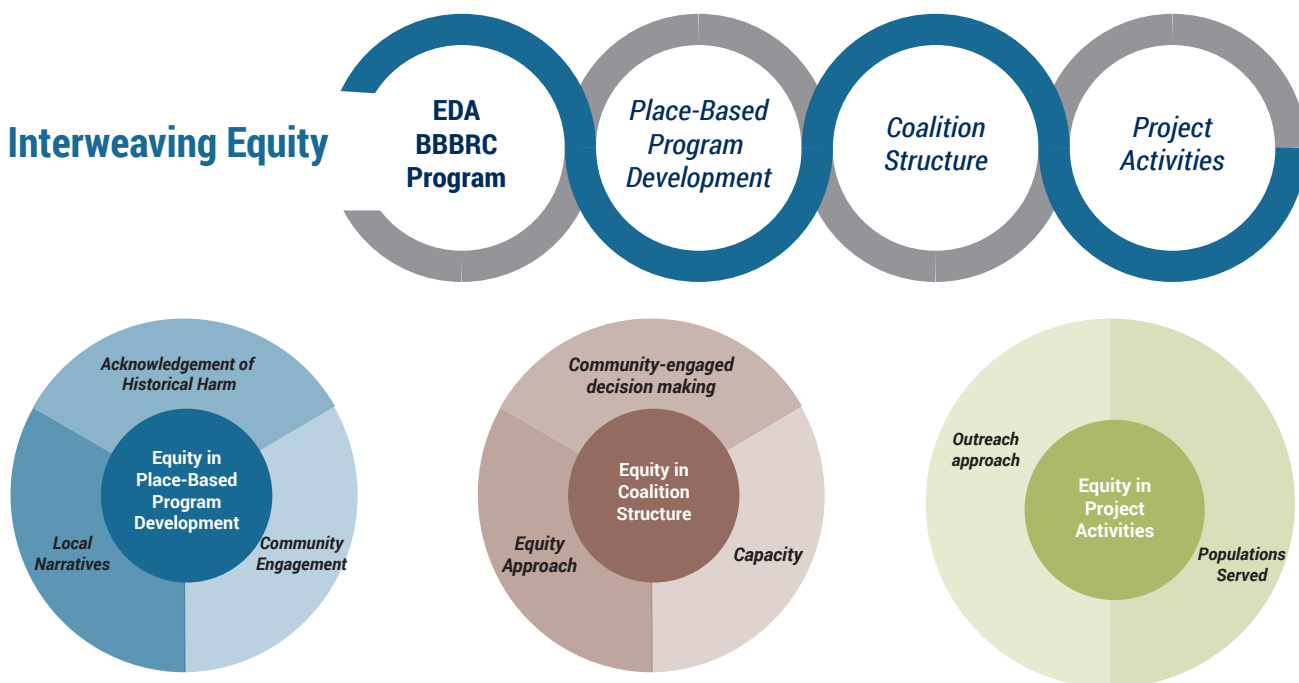
Finally, equity is integrated in project activities through outreach to underserved communities, and the report provides detailed descriptors of the

different communities identified by the BBBRC coalitions.

Two of these spheres align with the recent work by the National Economic Research and Resilience Center in the Introduction to the Access, Process, and Outcome Framework for Equity in Economic Development (2023). That report's "Process," defined as the fair and intentional involvement and inclusion of all stakeholder groups in economic development decisions affecting their communities, are embedded with this report's discussion of decision making in equity in the *Coalition Structure*. Additionally, the concept of "Access," which is the assurance that all community members, especially underserved populations, benefit from opportunities, broadly mirrors aspects in this report's section on *Project Activities*.

Throughout all these areas of equity integration, there is diversity and variation in how coalitions are approaching equity and their previous experience and skill sets to support their efforts. Prioritizing equity requires advanced skill sets in community

Interweaving Equity

EDA BBBRC Program → *Place-Based Program Development* → *Coalition Structure* → *Project Activities*

Equity in Place-Based Program Development
- Acknowledgement of Historical Harm
- Local Narratives
- Community Engagement

Equity in Coalition Structure
- Community-engaged decision making
- Equity Approach
- Capacity

Equity in Project Activities
- Outreach approach
- Populations Served

engagement, inclusive and equitable facilitation, strategic planning, trust-building, and more. Developing these skills requires both capacity and funding, as well as support from funders, program leaders, and partners. Communities of practices, such as the one led by RTI International, are vital in helping to build the needed infrastructure to support this work.

Additionally, the funding from EDA can provide the impetus for much of this work, however, many of the results are intangible and difficult to measure (therefore often outside the bounds of traditional funding streams). Some coalition leaders highlighted braiding funding to support holistic equitable practices when activities do not fit within EDA statutory guidelines. These specific activities will be further delineated in subsequent research, but it is an important note at this early stage. Additionally, while the diversity between the coalitions in approaching equity is exciting and laudable, it also raises questions for how to evaluate the outcomes of equity prioritization. While the goal is for equity be centered,

how can we provide appropriate space for place-based diversity, while also ensuring accountability for equity?

Overall, BBBRC is providing a platform to elevate leading practices in equity prioritization within the field of place-based economic development. Through the coalitions, a model of place-based equitable program development and implementation is emerging that tailors interventions to specific community assets, challenges, and needs. This is evidenced through equity in program development, coalition structure, and project activities, and BBBRC takes an innovative step forward in fostering equitable economic opportunities and building sustainable resiliency. While there is still much to discover and learn as these programs continue to implement and evolve in the next several years, there are promising indicators for equitable outcomes and impacts from the BBBRC coalitions.

Appendix

Methodology

The research team approached this project with a participant-centered lens utilizing theories of social constructivism (Creswell 2013). The goal of this project is to document the many approaches to equity and identify key themes between the coalitions. For this project, the research team did not have a static definition of equity, but instead centered how coalitions were defining equity and its components. Our foundational assumption is that equity is a holistic concept that includes a critical evaluation of approaches, policies, and beliefs. Equity work focuses on shifting "how" work is done, as many approaches have historically marginalized and/or harmed underserved and underrepresented populations.

With this foundation, our primary research question was "how are coalitions conceptualizing their work in equity?" The data informing the findings are from early interviews with coalition leaders, program applications, initial progress reports, and similar supplemental materials. Coalition leaders include executives, project directors, and program managers at state and local government, tribal organizations, community development fund institutions, higher education institutions such as universities and community colleges, community-based organizations, industry intermediaries like Chamber of Commerce foundations and associations, among others. These leaders come from an array of backgrounds ranging from professional government staff, program managers of existing economic development programs, faculty researchers at universities, and non-profit staff.

For this research, the team conducted semi-structured interviews with 40 BBBRC leaders from the 21 programs from July 2023 to November 2023. Semi-structured interviews include a standardized question list for all coalitions as well as questions arising in the interview based on the participants' responses. The research team wrote memos after each interview to capture immediate themes. To analyze the interview and program documentation data, the research team used thematic qualitative analysis to identify the key findings. This type of analysis utilizes "coding" of the data, which is a systematic analysis of qualitative data by grouping together similar data points to identify patterns. The codebook used for the analysis was developed based on common themes from post-interview memos, EDA program structure, conversations with program staff, and a literature review of intersectionality, feminist economics, queer theologies, and more. The research team coded both descriptive concepts (such as communities served) as well as interpretative concepts (such as equity approaches). Once the initial round of coding was completed, the research evaluated an entire code to develop final code categories and related counts. For example, once "Capacity," the data was reviewed to identify categories for types of capacity. This resulted in a final four types of "capacity" dedicated within each coalition.

Once coding and case summaries were completed, the codes were counted and cross-tabulated with other codes to identify broad categories of findings. All percentages presented in this report are based on the 21 coalitions, thus a finding of 67% would indicate that 14 of the coalitions expressed that theme or activity.

This methodology intentionally centers the experiences of the BBBRC coalitions. Part of the internal work of equity and inclusion within our research team is undoing elitism through decolonizing our methodologies (Thambinathan and Kinsella 2021) and elevating the knowledge and learnings from many sources. The role of this research team is to use social science methodologies to aggregate and synthesize the knowledge into digestible and data-based findings. We are not gatekeepers of this knowledge but instead part of the broader community of information gatherers, storytellers, and meaning makers. Our goal is for this research to help leaders and community members recognize their experiences within a broader data context - both quantitative numbers and qualitative theories and narratives. As social scientists, we are effective aggregators of data, but we are not the owners of each person's unique knowledge or experiences. These findings are informed directly by the experiences of the BBBRC leaders prioritizing equity as well as the local and national equity and justice advocates. Our team acknowledges that our work is only possible because of theirs.

Appendix

The research team is a mixture of practitioners and scholars who recognize their privilege in educational background, organizational affiliation, and their ability to attain financial support for this research. The team is deeply grateful to all the BBBRC leaders for sharing their time and stories to support this work. Additionally, the team acknowledges how this work is informed by scholarship in indigenous theory, feminist theory, economic theory, Critical Race Theory, intersectional theory, queer theory, Tribal Critical Systems Theory, standpoint theory, and more.

Finally, the research team recognizes that equity work is not confined to grant program borders and should also include considerations of economic mobility, health equity, environmental equity, homeownership, wealth building, and more. Moreover, economic equity is only one piece of the broader puzzle. To truly move the needle, political and cultural change are equally necessary to level a fundamentally unequal economic playing field. This report provides insight into on-the-ground activities but does not include program-level performance appraisals or evaluation. Forthcoming reports from this team will eventually dive deeper into approaches that lead to more equitable outcomes. The development and broad-based learnings from these coalitions are captured by Brookings Metro in their recent reports. Additionally, the leading practices in inclusive industry clusters are still emerging and documented by RTI International and NGIN in their new report. This report's findings add to this growing body of literature on equitable place-based economic development.

Equity Resources

These are a few of the many resources available to support equity in workforce development programs. Each resource is linked below and includes the abstract or executive summary for reference. If you have additional resources to share, please email Dr. Sarah Crane at sarahrcr@umich.edu.

Elevating Equity in Economic Development: An Inclusive Recovery Toolkit
Jessica L. Gonzalez Martinez, Betsey Suchanic, Deirdre Shaw, M. Yasmina McCarty
New Growth Innovation Network, 2023
This toolkit is intended to support regional economic development leaders in elevating equity within their organization, planning and CEDS development, and strategy and implementation as they approach recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Economic Development Districts (EDDs) and similar regional entities have a unique role to play in planning for and achieving inclusive economic development for their regions. This toolkit is based on insights from the Inclusive Recovery Initiative.

Equitable Change: An Intermediary's Guide to Measuring for Equity
Sarah Bennett and Caroline D'Andrea
Jobs for the Future, 2023
Intermediaries work to improve, vertically align, and systematize the components of career pathways. They are also crucial actors in centering racial equity within pathways work—as advocates, designers, and accountability partners. In these roles intermediaries analyze data within a given program as well as across secondary, postsecondary, and work systems to reveal trends and areas for greatest impact. In this brief, intermediaries participating in the Building Equitable Pathways community of practice share metrics they prioritize when determining if and how their pathways work successfully, resulting in more equitable outcomes.

Equitable Community Planning Toolkit
Fourth Economy, 2023
The Fourth Economy Equitable Community Planning Toolkit is the result of ongoing research, and contains resources developed to help leaders progress through their equitable planning goals and actions. It includes information on how communities across the United States are rising to meet the equity imperative, as well as tools to apply promising practices and systems change processes in your community. There is a growing interest and momentum in equitable community planning. The toolkit is designed for communities who may be at the beginning stages of equity planning as well as those where equity coalitions, groups, plans, and actions are well underway.

Equity Language Guide
National Recreation and Park Association, 2021
Developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), this guide includes content from leading language guides, as well as resources from multiple organizations, associations, researchers and more. It is meant to reflect terminology most applicable to parks and recreation and related professions; however, it is not an all-encompassing equity glossary.

Equity Toolkit
Beloved Community Mind Trust, 2023
This Racial Equity toolkit is brought to you by Beloved Community, a racial equity and economic equity consulting firm focused on supporting organizations, schools, and workplaces in developing sustainable plans and strategies for operationalizing diversity, equity and inclusion. We believe that Change requires social impact + economic impact. What would it look like if we – as people and the organizations we lead – all made a commitment to an equitable life for everyone? If we understood the root causes of inequity and could identify the ways that we – schools, non-profits, businesses, and government could play a role in building a more equitable community?

Equity vs. Equality: What's the Difference?
Milken Institute School of Public Health, George Washington University, 2020
While the terms equity and equality may sound similar, the implementation of one versus the other can lead to dramatically different outcomes for marginalized people.

Exploring Racial Economic Equity in Workforce Development
Prosperity Now, 2020
In our Exploring Racial Economic Equity in the Workforce Development report, the Racial Wealth Divide Initiative (RWDI) provides tools and approaches to help practitioners achieve racial economic equity goals that enable underserved, marginalized and excluded community members of color to earn living wages, accumulate assets and build wealth. By retooling programs to shift power and leverage privilege to change the institutions, systems and structures we are in, RWDI has distilled emerging promising practices that address interlocking social, economic and political barriers by considering the contributing factors, naming the problem and designing programs, policy and advocacy for equity.

Job Quality Toolkit
National Institute of Standards and Technology, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023
An outgrowth of a three-year partnership with the U.S.

Department of Commerce (DOC) and U.S. Department of Labor to support various workforce excellence initiatives, the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP) led the effort to develop a Job Quality Toolkit, a menu of vetted strategies and actions for leaders and their workforces to collaboratively choose from to increase the quality of jobs offered. The Baldrige Excellence Framework® served as a foundation for the easy-to-use toolkit that is intended for organizations of all kinds—but especially for those that are small and medium sized.

Inclusive Community and Economic Development in Small & Midsized Communities
Swati Gosh
New Growth Innovation Network, 2021
Uplifting racial equity in small and midsize cities (defined as population 50,000 – 500,000) cannot be an endeavor of just a few individuals or organizations. Undoing decades of systemic racism and embedding new policies and structures that prevent harm in the future requires cross-sector collaboration between development professionals, city and community leaders, businesses, and myriad other stakeholders. Through generous funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, NGIN built a practitioner-led exploration of why the fields of community development and economic development struggle to collaborate and whether uniting these two practices might elevate community voice and uplift racial equity in small and midsize cities.

Introduction to the Access, Process, and Outcome Framework for Equity in Economic Development
National Economic Research & Resilience Center at Argonne National Laboratory, 2023.
This research brief introduces the Access, Process, and Outcome (APO) framework, which provides a common understanding for practitioners across the diverse field of economic development. This framework elucidates the underlying drivers that can influence outcomes, either positively through intentional investment and action, or negatively through neglect, oversight, or exclusion. By employing the APO framework, users can collectively work towards achieving equitable outcomes in economic development, ensuring that all individuals and communities have fair and equal access to opportunities, that the processes are inclusive and just, and that the outcomes are equitable for all stakeholders.

Sparking Creativity: Workplace Applications of Restorative Practices
Linda Kligman
International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2019
Businesses that embrace restorative practices have the advantage of creating intentional workplaces where it is safe to innovate. Studies have shown that diverse perspectives, shared learning, and experimentation are factors that spur innovation. In a restorative work environment, high support is provided to learn and grow, raise concern, and try new things.

With high levels of inclusion and energy, restorative practices can help establish group norms, manage expectations, and develop essential interpersonal skills for collaboration. The author draws on Keith Sawyer's research in group creativity and Sunnie Giles's studies that scaffold leadership skills to support global innovation, and shares stories that help translate theory into practice. Examples from the International Institute for Restorative Practices depict principles, habits, and team builders that illustrate how restorative practices can spark creativity. The power of connections, conversations, and collaboration explicitly creates an innovative participatory work culture.

The Language of Racial Economic Equity
Jobs for the Future, 2023
The words we use every day can perpetuate and exacerbate inequality, but they can also educate, empower, and drive positive change. That's why we've been examining our use of language and reevaluating how to describe the people our work centers on. Our latest thinking appears in JFF's Language Matters Guide. JFF's Center for Racial Economic Equity—whose mission is to disrupt occupational segregation and eradicate the Black-white wealth gap—has developed this companion guide to dig deeper into language about race and Black people. It offers a foundation for understanding the impact that words and phrases pertaining to race can have on Black people and on efforts to promote racial economic equity.

The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership
Rosa González of Facilitating Power, 2019.
The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership charts a pathway to strengthen and transform our local democracies. Thriving, diverse, equitable communities are possible through deep participation, particularly by communities commonly excluded from democratic voice & power. The stronger our local democracies, the more capacity we can unleash to address our toughest challenges, and the more capable we are of surviving and thriving through economic, ecological, and social crises. It is going to take all of us to adequately address the complex challenges our cities and regions are facing. It is time for a new wave of community-driven civic leadership. Leaders across multiple sectors, such as community-based organizations, local governments, philanthropic partners, and facilitative leaders trusted by communities, can use this spectrum to assess and revolutionize community engagement efforts to advance community-driven solutions.

Understanding Good Jobs: A Review of Definitions and Evidence
William J. Congdon, Molly M. Scott, Batia Katz, Pamela Loprest, Demetra Nightingale, and Jessica Shakesprere
Urban Institute, 2020
Now more than ever, many Americans find their employment and financial status precarious and their prospects for upward mobility limited. This paper aims to add to the discussion

on how to promote workers' economic mobility through improving job quality. Definitions of what constitutes a "good job" vary—including adequate wages, benefits, stable schedules, worker protections, positive work environments, potential for advancement, and other features. In this report, we examine definitions and evidence on good jobs, with a focus on elements of jobs that might support economic mobility. We develop a framework for defining good jobs, drawing from different definitions of job quality in the literature. Then we use this framework to organize a review of the evidence on links between elements of good jobs and worker well-being, focusing on elements of jobs that might support worker mobility. We find that job quality definitions vary significantly in their complexity. There is evidence indicating relationships between job elements and worker well-being (variously defined), though the depth and conclusiveness of research vary in important ways. Research connecting job elements to economic mobility is more limited. This report is part of a larger effort to examine the ways additional research and data can support understanding of the role of job quality in worker mobility.

Wealth Building
Results for America
Economic Mobility Catalog
Wealth is distributed extremely inequitably in the United States, with the top 10 percent of households holding nearly 76 percent of wealth, compared to the bottom 50 percent of American households, which hold about 1 percent of wealth. Strategies to increase wealth for lower-income households include subsidized savings programs and renter and shared-equity programs.

Overcoming Economic Barriers to Racial Healing and Equity
National Civic Review, 2021
For centuries, people of color in the United States have been denied equal access to resources and opportunities. From the forcible displacement of Indigenous people, to the enslavement and exploitation of Black Americans, to

the historic and present-day exclusion of immigrant groups and exploitation of people of color in the workforce, inequity is created and sustained in U.S. economic policies and practices.

U.S. Department of Commerce Equitable Data Playbook
Information on equitable data basics, program data systems, supporting applicants and grantees with data, program mointorting data, and involving communities in program data decisions.

Goals of Coalition Governance
Building Better Regions, 2024
Recent federal American competitiveness initiatives, such as the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Build Back Better Regional Challenge, are designed to harness innovation and talent across the country through transformative, place-based economic development investments. These programs focus on supporting innovation and economic development in regional ecosystems across the nation, reaching many communities that have not historically received significant federal investment. Coalitions consist of nonprofits, institutes of higher education, industry partners, local governments, and other organizations that work together to execute initiatives, develop strategic plans, and advocate for the region.

Developing Inclusive Clusters
Building Better Regions and New Growth Innovation Network, 2024

This new report offers insights into developing inclusive clusters, offering examples from industry clusters supported by the Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge, underscoring the need for a balanced approach that fosters economic growth while ensuring equitable participation and benefits for all.

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