

Southern Colorado Economic Development District - SCEDD

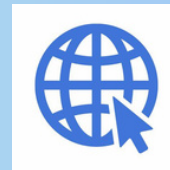


Every February Prowers County hosts the High Plains Snow Goose Festival click on the above photo for more information regarding this amazing event celebrating nature in our beautiful region!

THIS EDITION

HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE?

[WWW.SCEDD.COM](http://www.scedd.com)



- LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- COLORADO BROADBAND WORKFORCE INITIATIVE
- SCALE UP PROGRAM/SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES
- FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

From the Desk of Leslie Mastroianni

2025 promises to be an exciting and productive year for the Southern Colorado Economic Development District (SCEDD). Late in 2024, the US Economic Development Administration was reauthorized by Congress for the first time in 20 years. This reauthorization allows the EDA to continue its legacy of promoting American innovation and competitiveness by providing grants and support to communities across the country. EDA's investment priorities provide a framework to ensure its efforts contribute to local efforts to build, improve, or better leverage economic assets that allow regional economies to prosper and become more resilient. EDA's investment priorities are:

- Critical Infrastructure
- Workforce
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Economic Recovery Resilience
- Manufacturing

As an Economic Development District, SCEDD models its work plan closely to EDA Investment Priorities. In 2025, the SCEDD work plan includes:

- **Small Business Development.** SCEDD recently kicked off the pilot cohort of the Scale Up program – a program geared toward lifting up small businesses who have gone through the trials and triumphs of starting a business and are now looking for ways to grow and maintain sustainability. In conjunction with the number of professionals across our region who have a passion for mentoring small businesses, we will continue to hold Business Resource Fairs in several communities as well as fleshing out our Digital Library.
- **Workforce Development.** Tracy and Leslie are members of the Colorado Broadband Workforce Core Working Group whose aim is increasing awareness of career opportunities in the telecommunication and construction fields. The group is also developing and supporting training and job placement programs in Colorado. The development of a pilot program is underway in southwest Colorado, and we hope to bring this model to our region soon.

- **Broadband.** Our work continues to expand high-speed internet to all corners of our economic development district. The Colorado Broadband Office Capital Project Fund (CPF) grant funded five projects currently underway. Once complete, 3,701 previously unserved or underserved locations in our district will have access to broadband. These five projects translate into over \$36 million in projects and, impressively includes nearly \$8 million in private investment to stretch grant dollars. SCEDD has an additional five projects pending that will be funded in part by federal Broadband Equity, Accessibility, and Deployment (BEAD) funds. Round two of BEAD applications for funding closes February 27 and SCEDD has five additional projects for which we are seeking funding.
- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs).** The CEDs is a locally based, regionally driven economic development process and document that engages a range of stakeholders throughout our region. The CEDs is the foundation of SCEDD's work and results in a strategy that provides a framework for economic development efforts. Every five years, SCEDD facilitates the planning process and, with stakeholder input, compiles the strategy that drives our efforts. Due in part to the geographic size of our region, CEDs planning and compilation can be a lengthy process, and we anticipate kicking off the process in early summer of 2025.

To view the current CEDs document encompassing 2021-2025- [CLICK HERE](#)

Our work is focused on supporting the economic development efforts of our local governments and partners in our region. This support comes in many ways – providing technical assistance to procure federal state and local resources, providing grant administration support, assisting with developing plans and strategies, and sometimes taking the lead on initiatives that are multi-county in nature. All of our work, however, is done to complement the tremendous efforts made by our partners in southern Colorado.

BROADBAND WORKFORCE

Colorado has more than \$1 billion in state and federal funding to improve internet, bringing thousands of high-quality jobs and careers in telecom for Colorado residents over the next few years.

The jobs needed are in telecommunications, construction, engineering and technicians. The Colorado Broadband Office (CBO) collaborates with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), other state agencies, industry partners, universities and high schools, labor unions, and nonprofit organizations to create workforce training curriculums and programs and find and inform potential workers.

Check out these videos In [English](#) and [Spanish](#) to learn more and please share this information in your counties.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SCALE UP PROGRAM

During 2024, SCEDD hosted Business Resource Fairs in Lamar (*Prowers County*), Ordway (*Crowley County*), Pueblo West (*Pueblo County*), Rocky Ford (*Otero County*), and Walsenburg (*Huerfano County*). Over 50 small business owners and community leaders attended these outreach events to receive information on how to start and grow your business.

We had over 60 Subject Matter Experts attend to provide information and share their expertise with attendees.

During 2025, SCEDD will be planning and hosting Business Resource Fairs in the following areas:

- May - Custer County
- June - Kiowa County
- July - Lake County
- August - Las Animas County
- September - Chaffee County
- October - Bent County
- November - Baca County

If you are interested in participating in a Business Resource Fair as a small business owner or a Subject Matter Expert, please contact Tracy Gutierrez at tracy@scedd.com.



The **Scale Up Program** has officially launched and this unique program is serving businesses from throughout the SCEDD region.

This opportunity provides businesses with access to resources and business mentors, to assist them in growing their business, developing a strong customer base, and thus positioning them for future success and prosperity.

Serving southern Colorado since 1965, SCEDD is proud to serve a 13-county region.

The organization's staff and Board of Directors is responsible for maintaining and up-to-date CEDS, ensuring the eligibility of member counties to apply for EDA funding assistance.

SCEDD also provides a number of other services for its member counties, in response to the ever-changing needs and opportunities for the region.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Please contact the appropriate staff member for your county for more information:

Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers

Contact Lisa Schlotterhausen, lisa@scedd.com
719-545-8680, Extension 3

Chaffee, Custer, Huerfano, Lake, Pueblo

Contact Tracy Gutierrez, tracy@scedd.com
719-545-8680, Extension 2

Southern Colorado Economic Development District is now the **Regional Grant Navigator** for Pueblo, Huerfano and Las Animas counties.

In addition to the opportunities available through the **Regional Grant Navigator Program**, additional funding opportunities available to the counties served by SCEDD include:

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is open through February 24, 2025.**
 - Eligible uses of funding include: acquisition, design/engineering, construction/reconstruction, rehabilitation installation of public improvements or public facilities.
- **Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) is open February 12-March 12, 2025.**
 - Geared towards rural counties and communities to fund plans, construction, programs, and capacity building for economic development and resilience projects that create or retain jobs.
- **USDA Rural Business Development Grant applications must be submitted by February 28 at 4:30 p.m.**
 - Visit the [USDA website](#) and select "Colorado" for additional details.

Please contact Lisa or Tracy with your inquiries to your respective county if you are interested in applying or would like to discuss further.

