



COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: August 05, 2025

ITEM TITLE, PRESENTER: Approval of Subgrant Agreement with the National Association of Counties Research Foundation (NACoRF) – Rural Leaders for Economic Mobility (RLEM) Initiative
Presented by Talia Hansen, Economic Development Manager

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the subgrant agreement with the National Association of Counties Research Foundation to support San Juan County's participation in the RLEM Initiative and authorize the Commission Chair to sign the agreement.

SUMMARY

San Juan County has been selected to participate in the Rural Leaders for Economic Mobility (RLEM) initiative and awarded a \$50,000 subgrant through the National Association of Counties Research Foundation, in partnership with the Gates Foundation. The funds will support a county-led community engagement process to address economic mobility through improved collaboration and long-term planning. This includes hosting workshops, stakeholder engagement, youth sessions, and systems alignment meetings.

This agreement formalizes our role as the local partner and administrative lead on the project. The work will be managed through the Economic Development Department, with a technical consultant supporting facilitation, outreach, and reporting. The grant period runs from July 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026.

HISTORY/PAST ACTION

Commissioner Harvey and County Administrator Mack McDonald initially began the process for San Juan County to join the Rural Leaders for Economic Mobility (RLEM) initiative with the goal of developing a cross-sector strategy to improve economic opportunity, particularly in historically underserved areas. As part of the application, the County submitted a comprehensive plan identifying key barriers to mobility, especially those affecting Native residents, and committed to a partnership-driven approach aligned with other local initiatives.

In the foundational work we completed the first phase to gather preliminary and analyzed data to develop an informed strategic direction that helps us better communicate with and understand the needs and voices of a large sector of our population. The effort will also complement the Wildcat Funds initiative. The second phase will directly inform San Juan County's long-term economic development

strategy in four core focus areas: business development, workforce access, housing stability, and infrastructure alignment.

This subgrant formalizes that momentum and supports the launch of community-led implementation activities under the leadership of the Economic Development Department.

FISCAL IMPACT

This is a \$50,000 planning grant that will be managed within the Economic Development Department. The first \$25,000 will be released upon signature of the agreement, submission of ACH/W9, and invoice. The second \$25,000 will be released after expenditure of initial funds and submission of interim narrative and financial reports. Funds are allocated for consultant services, event coordination, transportation, AV installation, and community engagement efforts.