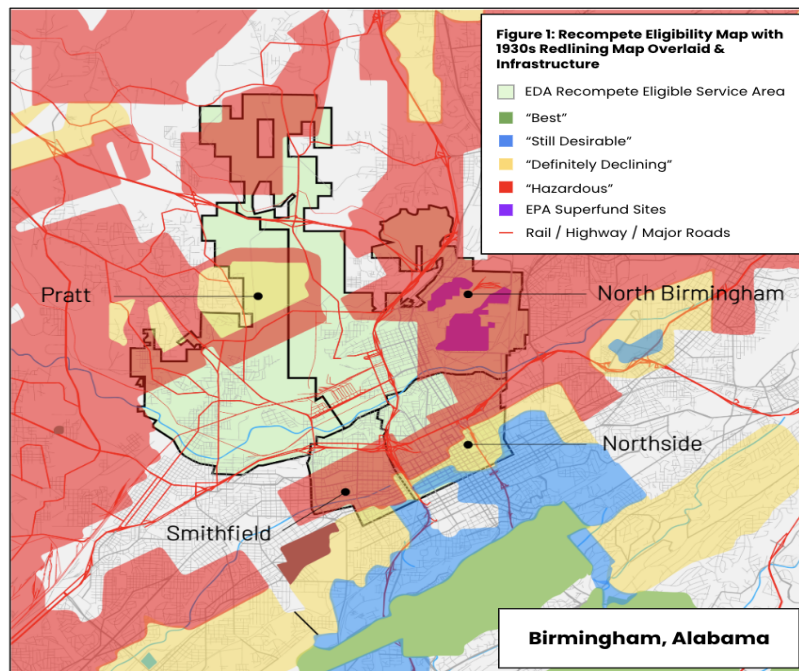




I. Executive Summary

The City of Birmingham, Alabama, submits its application *Reinvest Birmingham* for the Recompete Pilot Phase 2 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Program on behalf of four persistently distressed communities in Birmingham: North Birmingham, Northside, Pratt, and Smithfield (see Figure 1). Our communities have been working to transform their under-resourced neighborhoods into sustainable communities for decades. The early 20th century forged racial inequality and segregation into the city's fabric, along with environmental injustices in the redlined, predominantly Black communities of North Birmingham, Northside, Pratt, and Smithfield ([doi.org](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jurimig.2019.01.001)) ([Washington Post](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2019/01/01/redlining-in-birmingham/)). **Figure 1** illustrates how our four target neighborhoods were determined by the federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation in the 1930s to be "hazardous" (in red) or "declining" (in yellow), which heavily discouraged investments in these areas. This legacy continued into the 1960s through "white flight." As a result, Birmingham was once the most segregated city in the country. We have selected this contiguous cluster of 19 Census tracts as our Recompete Service Area since they face the most need in the region as demonstrated by the highest prime age employment gap (PAEG), largest population, and lowest median income with glaring disparities compared to the city center ([Recompete Eligibility Map](#)). In one Census tract alone, there is a 67.19 PAEG, with many Census tracts above 20 PAEG. **Although North Birmingham, Northside, Pratt, and Smithfield have experienced significant challenges as persistently distressed communities, EDA's investment can ensure they flourish again by connecting people to good jobs through equitable and sustainable interventions.** We anticipate that associated benefits from the Recompete Program will extend to additional Birmingham residents beyond the Service Area.

A. Investment Thesis: In a Service Area marked by a legacy of disinvestment, racism, and industrial pollution (including an EPA Superfund site in North Birmingham), *Reinvest Birmingham* stands as a transformational initiative that will break the cycles of poverty and hopelessness by connecting people to good jobs. *Reinvest Birmingham* believes that



robust partnerships with employers, educational institutions, and non-profit providers can reduce the prime-age employment gap (PAEG) by increasing employment rates and median wages in the City of Birmingham. *Reinvest Birmingham* has prepared a comprehensive and complementary set of interventions that address long-standing barriers in resident access to good jobs. Our component projects are designed to directly address long-term challenges through sustainable solutions that provide in-demand workforce training for at least 2,650 prime age individuals with access to 5,300 good jobs (see accompanying Consolidated Letters of Commitment), along with a comprehensive strategy to increase career exposure and work-based learning opportunities for Birmingham City Schools (BCS) students – who represent the next generation of prime age adults.



B. Prime-Age Employment Gap (PAEG): Our Service Area includes 13,062 employed among a 19,620 prime-age population, amounting to a 66.58% employment rate and an 11.81 PAEG ([Recompete Eligibility Map](#)). The unemployment rate of Black residents in Birmingham (10.4%) is nearly three times that for White residents (3.7%), and more than two times (4.6%) the national level. With 84% Black residents in Jefferson County, Birmingham as the county seat is deeply impacted by this unemployment gap ([St. Louis Fed](#)).

C. Educational Attainment: Only 17.5% of Black residents in the City of Birmingham have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 55.6% of White residents ([Census.gov](#)). This represents a 38.1% gap in Black-White educational attainment (bachelor's degree or higher). The Black-White educational attainment gap in the City of Birmingham is nearly three times (2.7x) than the national level ([Zip Atlas](#)).

D. Poverty Level: Nearly seven out of 10 (66.6%) Black households in Jefferson County are on SNAP benefits, compared to nearly three out of 10 (28.4%) White households ([St. Louis Fed](#)). Thirty-two percent of Black residents in the City of Birmingham live below the poverty level, compared to only 17.2% of White residents, representing a gap of 14.9% ([St. Louis Fed](#)). This is compared to 21.7% (Black residents) and 10.3% (White residents) at the national level, representing a gap of 11.4% ([St. Louis Fed](#)). Both poverty levels and the race gap in the City of Birmingham are elevated compared to national levels. Only 18% of residents in the Service Area are employed within the city ([U.S. Child Care Deserts](#)). Opportunity gaps exist across various industries for jobs, particularly for Black residents. There are 192,290 jobs in the City of Birmingham as of Q1 2023. In the next five years, jobs within the City of Birmingham are expected to increase by 1.6%, nearly one percentage point less than projected national growth ([CHMURA](#)).

II. Component Projects

Reinvest Birmingham's Component Projects work in concert to address the key barriers to employment, so that Service Area residents can obtain good-paying jobs. Each component project will follow a "train the trainer" philosophy, equipping each cohort to not only succeed, but to help others obtain similar expertise. In this way, we ensure good outcomes over the long-term.

Component Project 1: Workforce Training Center. Description: The vision of the Workforce Training Center (WTC) is to connect residents to good jobs in the Birmingham area. Led by Lawson State Community College, an HBCU, the WTC will provide targeted workforce development through a hub-and-spoke model and will help train job seekers for the skills and credentials employers need. In particular, we will engage prime-age workers where they live, leveraging centrally located training and multipurpose assets inside the Service Area. The "hub" of the WTC will be initially located at the Alabama Workforce Training Center (AWTC) before migrating to the Smithfield Social Innovation Center, beginning construction in 2026. This approach is intentionally flexible by design to include many workforce training options to meet the demand of 5,310 new jobs committed by Birmingham-area employers. **Activities:** Our training and education Recompete partners will scale up and target their ongoing workforce training programs to focus on Service Area residents. After consulting with employer and educational partners in preparation for the Phase 2 application, we've developed a Career Pathway Trajectory that involves multiple training partners and touches on many of the most pressing workforce needs. **Outcomes:** We anticipate that, over the five years of the program, 1,500 Service Area residents will be hired and/or receive a new credential in an in-demand skill area. **Partners:** AIDT, Central Six Alabama Works!, Birmingham City Schools, Birmingham Public Library, Ed Farm, Innovate AL, Birmingham Promise. **Budget estimate:** \$7.9 million. **K12 Strategy and Outcomes:** The WTC, Birmingham City Schools (BCS), and Birmingham Promise will work to: Expand key partnerships across skilled trades, manufacturing, and digital/cyber skills; increase the number of middle and high school students who access pre-apprenticeship and work based-learning opportunities.



Component Project 2: Connect Birmingham: Transportation Access to Good Jobs (Connect).

Description: To address residents’ lack of transportation access to employment, we will expand the existing microtransit Birmingham On-Demand service zones and consolidate fixed bus routes. The Service Area expansion will enhance access to jobs across the city and new Recompete workforce training sites. The City of Birmingham, Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority, and Birmingham Department of Transportation will collaborate with a microtransit contractor to achieve several new initiatives to better meet the transportation needs of Service Area residents, including:

- The consolidation of the 23 N. Birmingham and 40 Fairmont lines into one line with 4 buses and shorter headways
- Microtransit expansion zones across the Service Area (N. Birmingham, Pratt, Northside, and Smithfield)

Outcomes: Ultimately, we expect 25,300 Service Area Residents will access microtransit services as a result of this initiative. **Partners:** City of Birmingham, Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority, Birmingham Department of Transportation, microtransit contractor. **Budget:** \$2 million. **K12 Strategy and Outcomes:** Connect’s improvements to transportation routes will result in increased K12 Birmingham City Schools student access to workforce training opportunities.

Component Project 3: Childcare Center of Excellence. Description: Inadequate childcare services represent a significant challenge in our Service Area, preventing many from taking advantage of educational and employment opportunities. We propose to create a Childcare Center of Excellence that combines high quality, affordable childcare with career training and pathways for educators, which allows us to:

- Increase total childcare seats in the Service Area
- Increase access to accessible and quality childcare that serves infants through First Class Pre-K. Half (50%) of the Center’s seats will be affordable, leveraging such assets as YMCA subsidies, federal assistance, and other childcare subsidies.
- Create a workforce pathway model that provides professional support, training, and credentialing to those currently in, and entering, the Early Childhood Education sector.

This hub-and-spoke model will engage the prime-age unemployed directly where they live by leveraging centrally located multipurpose assets inside the Service Area, including the Pratt City Library, the North Birmingham Library, and the Smithfield Library. The hub will migrate to the Smithfield Social Innovation Center, beginning construction in 2026. This approach is intentionally flexible to address the childcare needs of Service Area residents. **Activities:** The Center will train new small childcare providers in a Childcare Accelerator program with business and childcare skills, and provide ongoing Training and Technical Assistance courses for new and current providers. **Outcomes:** The Childcare Center of Excellence will serve an estimated 158 children through the five years of the grant. **Partners:** The following partners will oversee implementation: the City of Birmingham, YMCA, Women’s Foundation of Alabama, and Childcare Resources. The following will provide support services where appropriate - Central Six Alabama Works!, Prosper Birmingham, Birmingham Promise, BBA, Alabama Workforce Training Center, Jefferson State, Watco, and ACIPCO. **Budget estimate:** \$3.9 million. **K12 Strategy and Outcomes:** Increase in Birmingham City Schools students who access childcare training and enter into the childcare workforce; increase the number of children attending affordable, high quality infant care up through pre-Kindergarten, setting them up to read at grade level by Grade 3.

Component Project 4: Black Business Entrepreneurship Center (BBEC). Description: Our vision is to equitably connect and create good jobs through the establishment of a Black Business Entrepreneurship Center. In the short term, the BBEC will be temporarily located at the Birmingham Financial Center (505 20th



Street, Birmingham 35203). In the longer term, the BBEC will be located in the Smithfield Social Innovation Center and eventually extend beyond it in a hub-and-spoke model. To address the racial disparity in business ownership, the city and its Recompete partners are developing a one-stop shop for Black entrepreneurs to get connected to training programs, mentorship, business owner-toolkits, etc. to help them matriculate to the next step in their business journey. The BBEC connects Black entrepreneurs to capital and procurement opportunities, as well as resources for business development and supportive services. This work builds on the VITAL pledge, which reported the city’s utilization of diverse firms and also challenged corporate and institutional leaders to publicly assess their diversity spending. **Outcomes:** The BBEC is working toward the following outcomes:

- Increase in Black business revenue (as measured by such metrics as: increases in the number of contracts awarded; increases in the amount of revenue attributable to new contracts; increase in the aggregate percentage of Black business revenue in Birmingham)
- Grow Black businesses with good jobs (as measured by such metrics as: increase in Black businesses that pay a living wage; increase in Black businesses that offer skills training and career advancement; increases in owner salary)

Partners: Regions Bank, Birmingham Business Resource Center, Birmingham Urban League, Urban Impact, Creed63, Penny Foundation, REV Birmingham, Rebirth Community Corporation, City of Birmingham, and Prosper. **Budget:** \$5.5 million. **K12 Strategy and Outcomes:** Increases in Black Birmingham City Schools students employed by local Black businesses.

Component Project 5: Governance. Description: The City of Birmingham is deeply committed to demonstrating effective governance in the proposed project. As such, a formal governance structure will be established to ensure disparate voices of community members, institutional members, and business and corporate partners are heard throughout the project period. The goal is to increase transparency; ensure the project remains nimble and adaptable to changing circumstances; and reflect the needs of all stakeholders. The Birmingham Recompete effort is committed to a collaborative model of governance. **Budget:** \$5 million.

III. High Level Overview of Deliverables and Key Milestones: To address the barriers to good jobs, Reinvest Birmingham will:

- **Workforce Training:** Provide Career Pathway Training & Placement services for prime age residents through the WTC, as well as Workforce training for K12 students in Birmingham beginning in Year 1
- **Connect:** Launch microtransit zones in North Birmingham and Pratt/Ensley by the end of Year 1
- **Childcare Center of Excellence:** Create a workforce pathway for childcare workers through training, networking, and Early Childhood Education credentialing
- **Black Business Entrepreneurship Center:** Establish a Physical Front Door/relaunch the Digital Front Door for Black entrepreneurs in Birmingham; house one-stop-shop for COB business licensing; launch HBCU Inventor Accelerator
- **Governance:** Establish an Executive Board and support team to provide governance for project

IV. Regional assets, sustainable partnerships and potential commitments: Reinvest Birmingham draws on a rich supply of regional assets as well as generous commitments from local partners who are committed to the project’s success. Reducing PAEG and increasing access to good jobs in the region is crucial for the growth and prosperity of our community. Our partners are dedicated to ensuring that unemployed and underemployed individuals receive the training and wrap-around services and support needed to obtain meaningful employment. The list below summarizes a selection of the commitments, and please see the



accompanying Letters of Commitment for a list of partners and resources committed to Reinvest Birmingham.

Employers: **Altium Packaging Company, Birmingham Airport Authority, American Lumber Inc., Primordial Ventures, Coca-Cola Bottling Company United, and Consolidated Pipe** have committed to interviewing and strongly consider hiring qualified candidates within the Service Area and tailoring their hiring practices to focus on qualified candidates. Altogether, local employers have pledged to create 5,310 jobs for Birmingham residents. These companies will evaluate minimum eligibility qualifications for job openings and consider participation in the BBA's Inclusive Procurement Council (IPC), dedicated to sourcing and hiring diverse candidates. **Birmingham Waterworks** commits to hiring from the Service Area, and **PS Logistics** will participate in Service Area hiring events and continue participation in BBA's IPC. **Alabama Power** will continue partnerships with the city and Birmingham Promise's program connecting high school students with internships and Prosper Birmingham's inclusive economic initiatives. **Seven Recompete partners** (Regions Bank, Creed63, Birmingham Urban League, Urban Impact, Penny Foundation, Birmingham Business Resource Center, and Rebirth Community Corporation) have committed to the establishment, operations, training, mentorship, and sustainability of a **Black Business Entrepreneurship Center (BBEC)** to equitably create and connect people with good jobs in the four Service Area communities. The **BBEC** will provide a nexus for collaboration and knowledge-sharing to assist Black businesses with starting, staying, and succeeding, and providing a satellite one-stop shop for the city's improved licensing and permitting processes.

Community-based organizations: **Central Six Alabama Works!** will convene employers in their network to the relevant workforce training and programming proposed in the Recompete Plan, and help connect job seekers in Birmingham's Service Area. **BBA** and **Prosper Birmingham** commit to working with the city as key conveners of anchor employers, educational programs, and training institutions to create curriculum and programs relevant to the training centers and share job training and upskilling opportunities with job seekers in their networks. **Prosper Birmingham** commits to supporting the efforts to connect Black-owned businesses to opportunities through Recompete partners. **BBA** will explore expanding its Network Navigator program to connect small businesses to resources and will explore engaging BBA's Business Advisory Services program to provide small businesses with complementary consulting through the BBEC.

Government: The **City of Birmingham's Department of Innovation & Economic Opportunity** runs the Building Opportunities for Lasting Development (BOLD) funding initiative to provide resources to nurture talent and establish an infrastructure that supports the growth of women, minority, and disadvantaged small businesses. **The Housing Authority of the Birmingham District (HABD)** is collaborating with COB on a \$50M Choice Neighborhood investment, an initiative in the Smithfield-College Hills-Graymont neighborhood focusing on senior, low-income, and mixed-income housing, creating green spaces, and improving access to training and career mobility. These partners are also collaborating on the \$10.8M EDA Good Jobs Challenge Award to support good jobs in the health sector. Our Recompete plan builds upon and complements the Good Jobs grant, but does not duplicate efforts. The **Alabama Legislature** supported affordable childcare and workforce development through the passage of the Childcare Tax Credit (HB358), which the Childcare Center of Excellence will leverage upon the Senate and governor's approval.

Childcare Partners: **Childcare Resources** will expand its Financial Assistance Program to offset a portion of childcare costs for eligible families in the Service Area who earn too much to qualify for state childcare subsidies and expand its technical assistance program to support childcare providers/those interested in starting a childcare center in the Service Area. **The YMCA** will work with key partners to construct a childcare center in an easily accessible location within the Service Area.



Business Centers/Workforce Development Organizations: **Salvation Army Education and Workforce Development Center, WorkFaith Birmingham, and AIDT** provide no-cost workforce training programs, which include: CTE, job-readiness, skills-building, and apprenticeship programs. **Training Providers:** **The Salvation Army** will extend the reach of its existing job-readiness courses to reach the Service Area. It will add in-demand courses, more frequent classes, and additional instructors to continue to meet employer and resident needs. It will collaborate with other educational partners (e.g., Lawson State) and key employers to continue to create industry-relevant programming and training. **AIDT** will provide workforce training to prime-age unemployed residents of the Service Area to upskill them to compete for and obtain the 5,310 new jobs committed by at least 22 employers available in or near the Service Area over the next five years. The **Birmingham Public Library (BPL)** will provide access to libraries and facilities, workforce development programming and wraparound services, and refer job seekers in the target Service Area to the *Reinvest Birmingham* Recompete workforce training providers.

Education: **Lawson State** will continue programs serving unemployed/underemployed individuals, including training in construction skills, advanced manufacturing, and soft skills training. **HBCU CARES** will extend/recruit Service Area residents to its Academics and Industry Pipeline Programs to enroll participants in industry-relevant apprenticeships. **Birmingham Promise** will scale its existing internship program to provide 300 high school students with career exploration and paid internships with local employers. **Central Six Alabama Works!** will expand the Worlds of Work to serve an additional 2,000 8th and 12th graders annually, focusing on career exploration in high-demand sectors; and will expand its Model Manufacturing program into BCS with a target goal of reaching 300 students in the program by Q4 of 2026. **Ed Farm** will provide 125 students with digital skills training at North Birmingham Library community space. **BCS:** Implement dual enrollment (with Lawson State) Career Technical Experience (CTE) for 11th/12th graders at Jackson-Olin High School.

V. Component Projects Interaction: Reinvest Birmingham is a comprehensive effort to enable prime-age residents to develop in-demand skills and connect to good jobs. But job training on its own is not enough. Our Component Projects have been designed to complement each other so that the most significant barriers to rewarding employment are removed as much as possible. CP2: Connect Birmingham: Transportation Access to Good Jobs, and CP3: Childcare Center of Excellence, will support the strategic goals and outcomes of the Workforce Training Center (CP1) by removing barriers to participation in workforce training programs and the labor market for parents and those without a car and/or access to reliable transportation. These initiatives are the result of extensive discussions about the gaps that families face, and where local services fall short in serving them. Ensuring that participants have access to transportation and childcare services will increase the likelihood that individuals within these communities can attend and participate in available trainings. The availability of childcare is also a significant factor in reducing the prime-age employment gap. In 2022, 85,000 Alabama families did not have access to childcare; addressing this gap would increase labor force participation by 3%, adding 66,000+ people to the labor force (wفالabama.org). This crucial support will continue after they complete the program; our vision is to offer WTC trainees sustainable access to affordable childcare once they are placed into jobs. CP1 also has a natural connection to CP4: Black Business Entrepreneurship Center, as the skills and credentials obtained through this project will serve as needed infrastructure to effectively implement and sustain CP4. To provide effective oversight of Reinvest Birmingham, CP5: Governance has been designed to provide accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to the needs of trainees, employees, and employers.

VI. Equity, Inclusivity, Accessibility, and Diversity: Engaging underserved populations within North Birmingham, Northside, Pratt, and Smithfield is our top priority, as evidenced by our existing and future commitments to equity, inclusivity, accessibility, and diversity outlined below. While many of the organizations



included as Recompete partners have historical commitments to equity in the four communities, this is the first time that they have come together in a unified effort. For example, the city hosted a workshop where we received input from approximately 25 residents, employers, community-based organizations, and education institutions. Jimmie Coleman, the North Birmingham Neighborhood Association President and President of the Birmingham Citizens Advisory Board (CAB), attended and strongly supported our approach. Multiple city organizations and Community-Based Organizations are united in support of this application. The city's Department of Innovation & Economic Opportunity (IEO) will manage Recompete activities. IEO's new Office of Business Diversity & Opportunity provides small businesses, especially MWDBEs, with a seat at the economic development table. The city's Division of Social Justice and Racial Equity (SJRE), launched the Academy of Civic Engagement (ACE) program. ACE prepares residents to be involved in community affairs, resulting in an ownership of community action, services, and leadership. SJRE also stewards the Birmingham Women's Initiative, established by Mayor Woodfin, to improve the lives of women and children.

There are four city-led Implementation Committees that focus on each community and are composed of residents who were involved in the development of community-level plans created by the city's Department of Planning, Engineering, and Permits. The city meets with the active committees monthly to discuss implementing the framework plan goals. Community associations, composed of neighborhood association presidents, elect representatives to the CAB, which meets monthly at City Hall and has advisory power over several city activities. The city's Community Resource Division attends all CAB meetings and liaises directly with community associations and neighborhood representatives in each Service Area. As part of our Phase II Implementation, our Recompete Plan Coordinator (RPC), Recompete Community Champions (RCC), and Community Engagement Officer will utilize these existing forums and convene additional engagement sessions and workshops in the Service Area to reach historically underserved residents in the four communities. As evidence of strong community support, we have received Letters of Support from entities representing underserved communities, businesses, and/or workers (see Letters of Support).

VII. Climate and Environmental Responsibility: Reinvest Birmingham's activities are aimed to reduce inequalities in income, opportunity, education, and social services. And studies have shown that reduced inequality leads to better environmental outcomes, as people in supportive and empowered environments are more likely to have the means, knowledge, and time to address problems of air, water, and natural resources in their communities ([Scientific American](#)).

The entire Recompete Service Area suffers from a legacy of disinvestment, racism, and industrial pollution, with North Birmingham designated as a EPA Superfund site ([epa.gov](#)). Land use decisions (industrial areas and the rail network) led to fragmented neighborhoods lacking adequate amenities and services ([Internet Archive](#)) and without equitable access to good jobs (see Figure 1) ([University of Chicago](#)) ([Harvard](#)). In addition to environmental contamination and poor air quality, North Birmingham ([RMets](#)) ([Oxford Academic](#)) is ranked in the 90th to 100th percentile for particulate matter (PM25) ([Internet Archive](#)). Pratt was deeply impacted by a deadly tornado in 2011 ([AJPH](#)) ([ASCE Library](#)), displacing more than 8,200 residents. Over 2,200 structures were destroyed in Pratt (83% of the damage across Birmingham). One of the costliest tornadoes on record, residents were largely left to rebuild without federal assistance ([Alabama News Center](#)). Twelve years later, vacant lots are plentiful, and many homes remain unbuilt.

VIII. Longer Term Project Outcomes, Deliverables, and Milestones: Reinvest Birmingham has outlined outcomes that are both ambitious and achievable. Component Project activities in Years 1-5 will work cohesively toward the following outcomes:

- At least 2,500 Service Area residents complete training (CP1)
 - Milestones: 500 prime-age trainees in Years 1-5



- At least 1,500 Service Area residents (30%) hired out of the 5,310 new jobs committed by employers in the Birmingham area over the next five years (CP1)
 - Milestones: 300 hired in Years 1-5
- Microtransit to support approximately 25,300 residents in the Service Area (CP2)
 - Milestones: Assess ridership of microtransit each quarter
- 158 children receive high quality early childhood education per year (CP3)
 - Milestones: 100% of new seats reserved for WTC families
- One-year job retention is >80% (CP1)
 - Milestones: measure progress each quarter
- Of those hired, >60% of Black individuals (CP1)
 - Milestones: measure quarterly and yearly results
- Of those hired, >50% of women who have secured gainful employment (CP1)
 - Milestones: measure quarterly and year results
- Birmingham students provided with workforce development opportunities and a chance to grow their skills and entry to the workforce
 - Milestones: 4,000 8th and 12th graders in World of Work programming; 300+ students at Jackson-Olin High School have access to work-based learning opportunities; 300 BCS students participate in Model Manufacturing Program
- For the Black Business Entrepreneurship Center (CP4), we will measure success through increased Black business revenue, contract sizes and amounts, the number of new jobs created; and the number of certified disadvantaged businesses
 - Milestones: increase in the number of Black-owned businesses; increase in prime age employment provided by Black-owned businesses in Service Area

Reinvest Birmingham’s transformational impact will continue well beyond the five-year project period. A proactive and responsive approach to workforce training and business growth, supported by fundamental changes in local transportation and childcare options, will establish a foundation of empowerment as residents see genuine change.

IX. Work Conducted Between Phase 1 and Phase 2: The period between Recompete Phase 1 and Phase 2 has been a productive time of honing our strategy and deepening our understanding of the needs of Service Area residents, students, employers, and partner organizations. As a result, our project has evolved from its initial description in the Phase 1 application. The changes are described below:

1. **CP1:** In the Phase 2 planning for CP1, extensive conversations with Birmingham employers, educators, and skills providers helped to refine and hone our skills training strategy. The WTC will have a particular emphasis on three key industries (construction, advanced manufacturing, and digital skills) while still offering training options in high-demand areas like Project Management, HVAC, Class A driver’s license, remedial education, and soft skills that are crucial in today’s workplace.
2. **CP2:** The original idea for CP2 was to scale the rideshare transportation program to connect residents to good jobs. Phase 2 planning has resulted in “Connect Birmingham” which will drive ambitious new initiatives to better meet the transportation needs of Service Area residents, including the consolidation of existing bus routes and incorporation of “microtransit” services (on-demand routes) that gives local residents more flexible and convenient options.
3. **CP3:** This component project was originally envisioned as “wrap-around services,” which was a general description of the need for a variety of support services for residents in the Service Area, particularly transportation and childcare. Because CP2 is already focused on transportation access, Recompete stakeholders developed a more focused approach solely devoted to the complex problem of childcare.



Childcare challenges extend in numerous directions, from lack of access and lack of affordability for parents, to low pay and lack of career options for childcare workers. Extensive discussions of these issues led to the idea of a Childcare Center of Excellence. The goal of the Center is to offer affordable, top-quality childcare services and early learning opportunities for 158 infants through First-Class Pre-K. At the same time, training and technical assistance programs that provide skills and credentials will help develop the workforce capacity of local providers, ranging from aspiring entrepreneurs and independent home-based providers to large and established childcare centers.

- 4. **CP4:** Planning for Phase 2 of CP4, the Black Business Entrepreneurship Center, has energized the Black business community in Birmingham and helped to define a new and ambitious vision for growth. As one example, the March 21, 2024, Birmingham Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Convening represented the first-ever gathering of the city’s Black business owners, with 42 organizations represented.
- 5. **CP5: Governance:** The Phase 1 application did not fully address governance structure, so we created a new Component Project (CP5), to formally outline plans for project governance.
- 6. **K12 initiatives:** In addition to the five Component Projects, Reinvest Birmingham is putting particular focus on the students in the Birmingham City Schools (BCS). We seek to increase the number of 12th grade apprenticeship-style work-based learning opportunities through a pre-apprenticeship program at Jackson-Olin High School. BCS along with Birmingham Promise, Central Six Alabama Works!, and the Academy of Craft Training will be part of this effort.

X. Additional Explanation to Address Evaluation Criteria

Leadership and Governance – The City of Birmingham has the authority to represent and act on behalf of its incorporated neighborhoods. All four Service Area communities involved in this project are within its jurisdiction. The city’s Department of Innovation & Economic Opportunity (IEO) will steward and facilitate strategy development activities. Historically, the city’s Economic Development department focused solely on business recruitment, expansion, and retention. During his first term, Mayor Woodfin expanded the city’s focus on Economic Development, launching IEO, providing people-centric economic activities and traditional industry-focused development. The Department houses the Office of Business Diversity & Opportunity, designed to give small businesses, particularly Minority, Women, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, a seat at the table. IEO also focuses on real estate management, city-owned commercial properties, data analytics and special projects, sports, entertainment, and workforce development. IEO also runs the Building Opportunities for Lasting Development (BOLD) funding initiative to provide resources to nurture talent and establish an infrastructure that supports the growth of women, minority, and disadvantaged small businesses.

Project governance will be maintained through a formal governance structure to ensure diverse voices of community members, institutional members and business and corporate partners are heard throughout the project period. To ensure the success of Reinvest Birmingham, the city will employ a multifaceted approach that focuses on transparency, collaboration, and a strong dedication to diversity and inclusion. Our approach is centered around six principles: **1) Transparent Governance:** Regular project updates, milestones, and financial reports will be published. A dedicated online portal will be available to citizens and stakeholders for updates on project initiatives. **2) Collaborative Coordination:** This task force coordinates planning and communication among Reinvest Birmingham partners. Regular meetings, workshops, and open forums are organized to collaborate and gain input from all stakeholders. **3) Inclusive Decision-Making:** Outreach programs implemented, and diversity encouraged within the project’s decision-making bodies. Project outcomes will reflect the rich tapestry of Birmingham’s population. **4) Community Engagement:** Birmingham will engage the community in decision-making processes for the project through town hall meetings, public hearings, and digital platforms. Community input shape the project’s direction, and the city encourages diverse representation in decision-making bodies. **5) Accountability and Evaluation:** Performance metrics



and KPIs will track progress and impact. An oversight committee of experts and community representatives will review effectiveness and suggest improvements. **6) Continuous Improvement:** The city will seek best practices from similar initiatives and implement regular evaluations and feedback to adapt to changing circumstances. For effective governance, Birmingham will prioritize transparent reporting, collaborative coordination with stakeholders, diversity and inclusion, community engagement, rigorous accountability mechanisms, and ongoing improvement.

The city has an extensive track record of securing and distributing federal, state, and private grant funds, including U.S. Treasury’s American Rescue Plan Funds (SLFRF) (Emergency Rental Assistance I & II funds); National Community Reinvestment Coalition GROWTH Fund (\$25 million for affordable housing across the city); Birmingham Promise (\$10 million upfront from the city and matches from Vulcan Value Partners’ \$5 million); Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama (\$1 million); Protective Life Co. (\$1 million); Alabama Power Company (\$2 million); America’s Promise Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (\$6 million to fill the growing tech talent gap); and the Good Jobs Challenge from the EDA (\$10.8 million). COB is prepared to channel \$300,000 in American Rescue Plan funds to hire contractors as interim staff.

Experience and Qualifications of Leadership: Coreata Houser will serve as RPC at the outset of the grant, providing leadership for all Reinvest Birmingham activities. Mr. Houser currently serves as the Deputy Director of Birmingham Mayor’s Office in the Department of Innovation & Economic Opportunity. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Tuskegee University, and his Master’s degree in Information Engineering and Management from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. RPC: While Mr. Houser will serve in the role initially, a permanent RPC will be hired after the award is made. The RPC is the primary administrative staff member for the Recompete program. The RPC reports directly to the Executive Board and will be a 1.0 FTE. The RPC convenes public, private, educational, and civic leaders to facilitate bottom-up, middle-out competitiveness; maintains communication among the city, coalition, Service Area, and EDA to enable and accelerate collaboration and support; and ensures funding and other assistance provided by EDA and other partners are effectively coordinated and braided within communities. The RPC is responsible for implementing large-scale projects that grow economic opportunity and access to good jobs. RCC: Two RCCs will assist the RPC in liaising directly with Service Area residents. The RCC will assist the RPC in serving as the central coordinator across the Service Area. The RCC establishes and maintains communication among Recompete partner organizations and Service Area residents, and helps the RPC ensure EDA funding is effectively coordinated and braided within the Service Area, leveraging existing assets and commitments by partners. Recompete Program Navigator: Two individuals will be hired as Recompete Program Navigators, assisting trainees through career pathways and in accessing childcare and transportation. Community Engagement Officer: This 1.0 FTE role organizes town halls, community workshops, and feedback sessions, which acknowledges the importance of community engagement and the role of various stakeholders, reinforcing the principle of equity throughout the project. Grant Administration Officer: This 1.0 FTE role administers the post-award details of the Phase 2 grant including grant expenditures, reporting, meetings with EDA officials, and maintaining documentation and records.

The RPC, RCN, and Community Engagement Officer will be active in existing forums such as four city-led Implementation Committees which meet regularly to develop community-level plans created by the city’s Department of Planning, Engineering, and Permits, as well as community associations composed of neighborhood association presidents that have advisory power over several city activities. The RPC, RCN, and Community Engagement Officer will also convene additional engagement sessions and workshops in the Service Area to reach historically underserved residents.