

The Eastern Kentucky Runway

Executive Summary

Residents of Appalachian Kentucky understand well the challenges facing their hometowns, and they are justifiably skeptical of others offering to fix their problems. Often, the results of grand promises fail to materialize at all, or — as in the opioid epidemic — the promised cure is a poison pill. Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) was founded on the principle that true solutions will need to be homegrown, and creative strategies are needed to overcome systematic, regional barriers. SOAR proposes the *Eastern Kentucky Runway Recompete Plan* to bridge the gaps for individuals in the prime age employment gap (PAEG) in twelve of the most coal-impacted counties in Appalachian Kentucky: Bell, Floyd, Johnson, Magoffin, Martin, Pike, Harlan, Leslie, Knott, Letcher, Perry, and Knox. The proposed investment will support the construction of two new healthcare training facilities spearheaded by the region's largest employers — Pikeville Medical Center (PMC) and Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH); creation of a social enterprise accelerator supporting business formation and deploying new capital through a revolving loan fund; technology transfer; and a collaborative support network that connects participants to training programs and employers. The Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Recompete Pilot program presents the perfect opportunity to break the cycles of generational poverty for thousands of residents and prove a model for closing Eastern Kentucky's PAEG for generations to come.

Overall Vision and Strategy

Many people in the heart of Appalachian Kentucky are hungry to launch their futures, but, unlike many other regions in the country, they do not have a long enough runway to build the momentum required for takeoff. Many of their barriers are connected to the overall level of economic distress. The average per capita income for the project service territory is \$21,855,¹ which is 53% of the national average (\$41,261) and 65% of the state average (\$33,515). Living on the edge of survival means any unexpected event can crash dreams. Many dedicated people and organizations are doing the slow, necessary work to reshape lives or uplift neighbors. However, the resources available are either spread thin or mired in bureaucratic limitations, especially in light of barriers faced by people in the prime-age employment gap (PAEG).

Based on American Community Survey (ACS) data and the EDA Recompete eligibility methodology, the average PAEG for these counties is approximately 28%. To reach parity with the national prime-age employment rate, an estimated 33,680 new workers aged 25 – 54 must find employment. Community partners overwhelmingly stated that the most significant barriers to employment are limited childcare, transportation, and housing. The 12 project counties contain 88 total childcare centers. An estimated 15,812 children under five years old live in these counties, which calculates to about 180 children per childcare center. Nationally, this number is closer to 45 children per childcare center.² Childcare cost burden is also

¹ Census.Gov QuickFacts

² <https://tinyurl.com/y9wxtfpu>; <https://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables/pop1.asp>

higher in these 12 counties, averaging 47% of household income compared to 31% for Kentucky and 19% for the rest of the country.³ With limited public transportation options and the average cost of owning/leasing a vehicle costing more than \$6,000 annually,⁴ transport is a significant barrier to employment for PAEG individuals. The geography of the region makes the cost of infrastructure like water, sewer, and broadband higher and reduces the area suitable for housing construction, especially multiunit developments, driving up cost and pricing PAEG individuals out of the market.

Traditional economic development strategies have not resulted in regional progress,⁵ so the *Eastern Kentucky Runway* proposes an innovative, holistic, and forward-looking approach. To start, people who are currently disconnected from the workforce need the skills and support to transition back into a job. The proposal includes projects to provide both technical and mentorship support to help people navigate the complex landscape of training programs, wraparound services, and job applications. SOAR will work to connect participants to jobs both with regional employers and union apprenticeships as well as providing support for people applying to remote jobs. Digital careers are important because the number of job seekers far outweighs the number of openings in the regional job market. Between February 2023 and January 2024, 8,491 total unique jobs were posted in the 12-county service territory. Of these 8,491 unique postings, 77% (6,528) were lower-wage, entry-level positions, which most likely would not provide family-sustaining wages, benefits, or pathways to promotions. With an estimated 2,359,235 fully remote and unique jobs posted in the United States between January 2023 and 2024,⁶ remote work training offers an emerging strategy to bridge the gap between the number of job seekers and available jobs until other strategies can foster new businesses and employment opportunities locally.

Part of building that future is making sure people are healthy enough to enjoy it. The difference in natural cause mortality rate for people ages 25 to 54 in rural areas compared to city dwellers was 6% in 1999 but had risen to 43% by 2019.⁷ Healthcare is the fastest growing industry in the region, in part because of needs generated by deepening health disparities. Pikeville Medical Center (PMC) and Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH) currently have nearly 1,000 open positions they cannot fill, so strategic investments in the regional healthcare talent pipeline can create new opportunities for PAEG individuals and fill critical shortages that undermine providers.

And, of course, increasing the number of businesses in the region is also key to long-term economic sustainability. While, historically, regional residents have had to become entrepreneurs out of necessity rather than choice due to the coal industry's decline, we aim to help residents harness this grit and resiliency in a way that addresses the region's most prominent barriers to employment while starting businesses that can hire PAEG individuals in the future.

³ https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/kentucky?year=2023&measure=Child+Care+Centers*

⁴ <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/loans/auto-loans/total-cost-owning-car>

⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/34zsvrrw>

⁶ Collected from 1,189,735 salary counts per Lightcast data

⁷ <https://tinyurl.com/muyu9sc8>

Component Projects

- Management, Equity, and Governance (MEG) — This project includes the Recompete Plan Officer (RPO) and program support staff and will interface with other SOAR teams. The equity advisory board for the Runway program and component project committees will meet regularly to provide project oversight and make recommendations for how to maximize benefits flowing to PAEG individuals by tweaking project delivery and resolving conflicts between project staff and external partners. Project Lead: SOAR
Budget: \$10,182,882.82



- Outreach & Retention (O&R) — This project will serve as the open front door for the *Eastern Kentucky Runway* for PAEG individuals. Its outreach component will leverage three strategies: digital marketing, direct person-to-person connection, and external partner referrals. Aggressive and proactive multi-channel outreach will eliminate barriers like transportation, which could prevent PAEG individuals from enrolling into the program. Once engaged, PAEG individuals will be provided holistic support by peer mentors with similar lived experienced in 1:1 and group sessions to reduce churn and increase the likelihood of workforce re-entry. Peer mentors will meet PAEG individuals where they are, offering flexible assistance navigating complex career decisions based on client needs. Project Lead: SOAR Budget: \$6,755,541.39
- Eastern Kentucky Workforce Training and Support Network (WTSN) — This project will provide professional, centralized training and employment guidance for PAEG clients. Staff will intake clients and develop individualized training and advancement plans, avoiding burdening PAEG individuals with the responsibility of figuring these details out on their own. Accountability coordinators will guide PAEG individuals the entire way through the process, partnering closely with peer mentors to make sure no client falls through the cracks. To further reduce barriers to employment like childcare, housing, and transportation but also to offset other hurdles faced by PAEG individuals like a new ID card, work clothes, tools, or other items needed for career training, a flexible pot of last dollar-in funding will be available to cover these costs. For prioritized marginalized subpopulations like individuals with substance use disorder or justice-involved populations, free criminal record expungement services will be offered as well as an alternative GED diploma courses for those struggling to obtain a traditional GED through standardized testing. Lead: SOAR Budget: \$19,087,380.76
- Appalachian Digital Career Academy (ADCA) — The ADCA will increase access to remote employment for PAEG clients after obtaining in-demand digital skillsets. The 12 project counties lack a steady supply of good jobs available for newly trained PAEG clients. Therefore, to prevent newly trained PAEG

individuals from being forced to leave to find a job after completing training, the ADCA will assist PAEG clients in tapping into the remote job market where nearly 2.5 million positions were available in 2023 with median wages quadrupling per capita wages in the project counties. Staff will tailor support to individual client needs starting with foundational digital skilling and specialized training and support. A robust career support team will build relationships with remote employers and assist participants in finding and succeeding in remote work positions including cover letter formation, resume creation, and LinkedIn profile generation. Project staff will distribute Internet-enabled devices, neutralizing a real barrier to remote work for low-income PAEG individuals. Project Lead: SOAR Budget: \$9,241,632.98

- Eastern Kentucky Social Enterprise Accelerator (SEA) — The SEA seeks to start, scale, and expand regional businesses that directly remove barriers to employment for PAEG individuals. It will provide regional entrepreneurs with targeted technical assistance, physical space, mentorship, and access to capital through a newly established revolving loan fund seeded with EDA funding. The SEA will prioritize project resources for childcare, housing, and transportation-focused businesses as these are the most prominent barriers to employment for PAEG individuals. At a higher level, this project will further cultivate a culture of entrepreneurship and provide the means necessary for homegrown solutions to be created and scaled to solve localized problems. Project Lead: SOAR Budget: \$7,741,889.65
- Future Tech Transfer (FTT) — The project will raise innovation levels in the 12 project counties, driving economic growth in sectors delivering vital services to PAEG individuals. FTT will improve the competitiveness and resiliency of regional firms by getting emerging technologies in the hands of business owners. This project will take a special interest in childcare, housing, and transportation businesses originating from the SEA as these will most directly impact employment outcomes for PAEG individuals. Project Lead: SOAR Budget: \$650,433.59
- ARH Allied Health Training Academy (AHTA) — This construction project will establish the ARH AHTA, which will prepare PAEG individuals for positions in licensed practical nursing (LPNs), medical assisting (MAs), and certified nursing assisting (CNAs). ARH is the region's largest employer, and they currently have 51 positions open in these roles and forecast needing at least 200 more over the next five years. These roles are good fits for PAEG individuals and are gateways into higher-paying healthcare careers available in the project service territory. Project Lead: ARH Budget: \$7,423,196.89
- PMC Healthcare Careers Training Center (HTC) — The HTC will expand PMC's in-house training programs for Operation Room Technicians (ORTs), Medical Office Assistants (MOAs), Medical Assistants (MAs), Registered Behavioral Technicians (RBTs), and Patient Care Technicians (PCTs). Funding will go towards the purchase of a prefabricated building that adds on to PMC's Workforce Innovation Center and will provide classroom and lab space as well as equipment needed by PAEG individuals participating in the programs. This project will result in PMC hiring 12 additional ORTs, 188 MOAs and MAs, 50 PCTs, and 5 RBTs, totaling 255 new full-time jobs to be filled by PAEG clients. Project Lead: PMC Budget: \$2,399,970

Equity

The *Eastern Kentucky Runway Program* will benefit 12 of the most economically distressed counties in the United States. All 12 are considered persistent poverty counties by the EDA and economically distressed by

the Appalachian Regional Commission. The poverty rate is 27% compared to 16% for Kentucky and 13% nationally.⁸ The labor force participation for women in these counties is among the lowest in the country.⁹ The project counties were ground zero for the opioid epidemic, so thousands of people inside the PAEG have a history of substance use disorder. This includes justice-involved populations, as large percentages of PAEG individuals carry a criminal record with them, which prevents them from obtaining a full range of employment opportunities.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the effects of addiction and incarceration are as destabilizing for family members as for the individual.¹¹

These intersecting challenges can compound and prevent even the most diligent people from building stable economic futures. Instead, those in the PAEG are likely to be trapped in generational poverty with no way to escape. The *Eastern Kentucky Runway* bridges gaps in regional resources to help people receive the support they need, especially for groups that are less likely to have the foundations in their personal support systems that would otherwise lend them resiliency. The O&R, WTSN, and ADCA projects are intended to provide both the technical and personal resources that participants may not be able to draw on in their personal lives, while also connecting them to educational and supportive services. The AHTA and HTC will provide new routes to employment in healthcare in addition to bolstering the regional healthcare system and reducing health inequities. The SEA and FTT offer forward looking approaches to removing employment barriers by starting, scaling, and expanding local businesses. The MEG outlines the staffing and governance logistics needed to ensure project benefits are flowing to PAEG clients throughout grant implementation. While the people within the PAEG are facing innumerable challenges, SOAR and its partners will equip them with both the allies and the arsenal of resources needed to overcome anything in their path.

To reduce the barrier of entry into the program, SOAR plans to accept people at risk of entering the PAEG. However, an overarching priority of service policy will triage resources to benefit PAEG individuals and those within specific marginalized subpopulations. SOAR already uses similar policies for existing programs.

Sustainable Partnerships and Commitments

Partner	Role	Description
SOAR	Lead Applicant	\$250,000 in committed cash match
Appalachian Regional Healthcare	Component Project Lead (ATHA)	Building and operating healthcare training facility. \$656,073.89 in-kind + hiring commitments
Pikeville Medical Center	Component Project Lead (HTC)	Expanding HTC to add more training pathways. \$400,000 in committed cash match + hiring commitments

⁸ United States Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

⁹ <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/data/labor-force-participation-rate-by-sex>

¹⁰ <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2023/04/01/criminal-record-job-housing-barriers-discrimination>

¹¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10273571/>

KentuckianaWorks (Code Kentucky)	Sub-awardee (ADCA, MEG)	Supplying Labor Market Intelligence Coordinator for MEG. Primary training provider for ADCA and will develop new training pathways for remote work
SkillUp	Sub-awardee (O&R)	Digital marketing lead
EKCEP	Sub-awardee (WTSN)	Supportive and wraparound service referral partner
Addiction Recovery Care	Sub-awardee (WTSN)	Providing criminal record expungement services and alternative GED diploma courses to PAEG clients with substance use disorder
App. Early Childhood Network	Sub-awardee (SEA)	Childcare subject matter expert and technical assistance provider
Housing Dev. Alliance	Sub-awardee (SEA)	Housing subject matter expert and technical assistance provider; potential employer partner
Foundation for App. Kentucky	Sub-awardee (SEA)	Community foundation offering targeted technical assistance for the Social Enterprise Accelerator
Uni. of Kentucky	Sub-awardee (MEG)	Program evaluation and sustainability analysis

Regional Commitments & Sustainability

Few projects in the history of Eastern Kentucky have garnered the amount of unified buy-in that the *Eastern Kentucky Runway Program* has earned, securing unprecedented levels of support from federal, state, and local government partners. Private sector partners from employers to philanthropy to other nonprofits are fully behind it. The project will have an army of individuals and organizations working to maximize its impact on PAEG individuals during implementation and to make it sustainable past EDA funding.

- Kentucky General Assembly — \$4,000,000 in unencumbered, unrestricted, and committed cash match.
- Craft Philanthropy — \$5,250,000 in unencumbered, unrestricted, and committed cash match.
- Just Transition Fund — \$250,000 in unencumbered, unrestricted, and committed cash match.
- Toyota Tsusho — \$25,000 in unencumbered, unrestricted, and committed cash match.
- Accenture — \$50,000 in-kind support.
- Rye Development — Committed to hiring PAEG clients from the project.
 - The \$1.3 billion Lewis Ridge Pumped Hydro Storage project in Bell County, Kentucky is expected to create over 1,500 jobs in the next 5 years. In March 2024, Rye received an \$81 million Department of Energy Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations grant to bring this project to life.
- Edelen Renewables — Committed to hiring PAEG clients from the project for two announced solar projects in Martin and Knott Counties that are expected to create over 500 jobs.
- Primary Care Centers of Eastern Kentucky — Committed to hiring PAEG clients from the project for open nursing, nurse assistant, medical assistant, clerical, and technician positions.
- Local 248 and the Central Midwest Regional Council of Carpenters — Committed to accepting PAEG workers as apprentices.
- Hazard Community & Technical College — Partnering with ARH on Allied Health Training Academy to develop and deliver new healthcare training curricula.

In addition, SOAR will allow PAEG participants access to aligned SOAR programs offering more resources. These and other resources will be woven into the fabric supporting the *Eastern Kentucky Runway Program* as SOAR continues to use its considerable network to generate sustainability but are not considered match.

- Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development — \$413,300 state contract awarded to SOAR to serve as the official Innovation Hub for Eastern Kentucky. SOAR Innovation assists early-stage founders with ideation, business formation, growth, and access to capital.
- Appalachian Regional Commission POWER Grant — \$1.496 million was awarded to SOAR in October 2023 to further develop the entrepreneurial ecosystem at postsecondary institutions in Eastern Kentucky.
- Department of Labor WORC Grant — \$1.452 million was awarded to SOAR in September 2023 to expand Code Kentucky's basic curriculum to 54 Appalachian Kentucky counties. Prioritized marginalized populations include women, individuals with a history of substance use disorder, veterans, low-income, and undereducated individuals.
- Truist Foundation — \$500,000 was awarded to SOAR in November 2023 to build out a remote employer engagement team as part of the Code Kentucky effort. Dedicating efforts to build relationships with national employers interested in hiring local talent for open remote positions.
- National Digital Inclusion Alliance/National Digital Navigator Corps — \$372,007 was awarded to SOAR in September 2022 to establish the Eastern Kentucky Office of Digital Equity and hire the region's first full-time Digital Navigator, who works with community partners to train underrepresented populations on important digital skills and help prepare them for remote jobs.
- Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission — \$600,000 was awarded to SOAR in September 2023 to form the first ever digital skills training program for inmates with substance use disorder inside the state's largest prison. This program will help qualify inmates for gainful employment upon release.
- United States Department of Agriculture — \$371,985 was awarded to SOAR in November 2023 to provide broadband technical assistance services to Pike County, Kentucky.
- Kentucky Department for Public Health — \$248,619.80 was contracted to SOAR in March 2024 for two years to improve health outcomes around diabetes, obesity, and adult smoking for distressed counties.

Leadership, Governance, and Key Staff

As the lead applicant, SOAR's management team will be responsible for all decision making and for creating accountability structures where project partners deliver stated equity goals and other outcomes. Once Recomplete funding is awarded by EDA, SOAR will move quickly to establish MOUs with all listed project partners. These MOUs will document expectations, timelines, and deliverables for the implementation of projects described in this application. Regular leadership meetings with key partner organizations will be set by SOAR Leadership and overseen by the Recomplete Plan Officer. These meetings will discuss actual progress relative to goals and expectations set by the initial MOU. If a partner veers from agreed upon terms, these meetings will be used to enact group accountability and transparency. What gets inspected, gets respected, and establishing regular performance meetings where activities and outcomes are discussed is the best way to stay aligned and course correct in real time.

- Colby Hall (SOAR Executive Director) — Responsible for overall execution of the *Eastern Kentucky Runway Program*. Colby's background includes five years of climbing the ranks in venture- and private-

equity backed companies. He built sales teams from the ground up and led them to beating budgeted expectations in terms of revenue and recurring revenue. Colby deeply understands the correlation between achieving successful outcomes and process and accountability. Project: MEG

- Joshua Ball (SOAR Chief Operations Officer) — Oversees all SOAR communication, outreach, events, and operations. He is formerly the Director of Strategic Communications at Big Sandy Community and Technical College, the Director of the Eastern Kentucky Distance Learning Initiative (now Teleworks USA), the Director of Public Relations and Marketing at Pikeville Medical Center. Project: MEG
- Keriston Smith (Chief Financial Officer) — Adept financial manager with over 20 years of experience managing financial actions for organizations. Keriston has overseen a clean external audit every year she has been at SOAR. She is responsible for keeping SOAR's financial statements updated, and she will manage all EDA Recompete transactions including disbursements, reimbursements, expense tracking, and documentation. Project: MEG
- Kim Albright (SOAR Operations Manager) — Manages day-to-day operations of SOAR's Office of Digital Equity and assists COO in overseeing other SOAR programs. She was formerly a private sector Regional VP overseeing more than 125 stores and 45,000 associates and held several positions supporting workforce development for underserved populations at EKCEP including Operations Director, TechHire Operations Director, and H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant Operations Director. Project: MEG, ADCA
- Madilyn Jarman (SOAR Grants Program Manager) — She holds a Masters of Public Affairs from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs and previously worked for the State of Texas where she led projects including agency rulemaking and procedure development. Project: MEG
- TBD (Recompete Plan Officer) — Will direct all Recompete activities and will report to SOAR's Executive Director. Will ensure all project activities remain coordinated and on track to meet timelines. Project: All
- Dylon Baker (ARH Assistant Vice President of Workforce) — responsible for overseeing and shaping workforce operations and will oversee the new training program. Project: ATHA
- Ella Jones Strong (HCTC Chief Academic Officer) — Leads the functions of academic programming and will be coordinating with ARH. Project: AHTA
- James Glass (PMC Vice President of Workforce Development/Marketing & Public Relations) — Oversees workforce development initiatives including the Workforce Innovation Center. Project: HTC

Community Leadership & Accountability

To further ensure equity is engrained in this project, an advisory board and project committees will receive regular project updates including activities, outcomes, and outputs. These bodies will make recommendations for any necessary project changes to the SOAR Executive Director based on performance and the needs of PAEG individuals. This advisory board will include representation from project partners, peer mentors, and community stakeholders that serve PAEG individuals such as substance use disorder recovery centers, adult education centers, homeless shelters, small business organizations, state and local government, community action agencies, employers, and community members.

Scope and Work Since Phase I

Between October 2023 and now, SOAR has refined and clarified component project design, including roles of project partners and subgrantees. Component project budget numbers have been updated to reflect regional commitments. Equity and administration components are now in an independent component project. This provides more robust equity and governance structures and satisfies EDA Phase II guidance. Due to staffing changes, SOAR will manage the RLF within the SEA with the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky still providing technical assistance on the project. Additional partners like UPIKE and Whitaker Bank have committed resources to support component projects. The ADCA project now includes digital skills and job application support through an expansion of SOAR's Office of Digital Equity.

Program Timeline¹²	
Year 1, Q1	Hire and train project leadership and admin staff; procedure and operations plan development; CRM set up; set up supplementary office locations; ensure contracts/MOUs finalized; Reach out to potential advisory board members; work with SOAR marketing and communications on initial informational materials; AHTA Design and permitting; HTC vetting/procurement
Year 1, Q2	Remaining staff hiring and training; procedure and operations plan finalization; reporting plan development with University of Kentucky team; website setup; ADCA and SEA curriculum finalization; FTT begin in-state outreach; finalize and launch initial outreach plan; finalize member selection and schedule advisory board/project committee meetings; AHTA bidding and construction begin
Year 1, Q3	O&R launch, WTSN soft launch, ADCA launch, SEA ideation events and recruitment; Construction begins on HTC; AHTA recruitment begins
Year 1, Q4	First SEA cohort begins; Annual staff planning retreat & leadership evaluations; First code Kentucky module complete; AHTA Construction complete
Year 2, Q1	First AHTA cohorts begin (8w, 12m)
Year 2, Q3	Final Code Kentucky Module complete
Year 2, Q4	Construction complete on HTC
Year 3, Q1	First training cohorts begin
Year 4, Q4	Sustainability discussions with state legislators
Year 5, Q1	Leadership plans closeout procedure; Continuation discussions with regional partners
Year 5, Q2	Train staff on closeout procedure; coordinate with UK team for evaluation report data; Outreach winddown
Year 5, Q3	General winddown; transition staff
Year 5, Q4	Closeout; receive evaluation report

Climate and Environmental Responsibility

For generations, has been shaped by energy production. In 2021, the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization ranked the region the second most coal

¹² Quarters representing ongoing operations have been removed from the table.

dependent area in the nation. The decline of the coal industry has had profound consequences for local wages and employment, but recent investments offer and answer for residents wondering about the future of the region. The project service territory is seeing billions invested in solar and pump storage hydropower projects with three commercial-scale developments having been announced within the past year. These private sector partners are committed to this application, and they will need trained workers to fill the thousands of construction and operational jobs projected in the future. Ensuring the local communities reap the direct benefits of these clean energy projects can open a new chapter in the story of energy production in Eastern Kentucky. In the event of significant weather events or natural disasters, the advisory board will evaluate if any adjustments in scope should be requested to better serve program goals in the region.

Overall Impact and Risk Mitigation

This represents cumulative metrics from the component projects.

Outputs (5 years)	
2500 participants across projects	1500 participants into employment
At least 50% of program participants from priority populations	
Outcomes (5 years)	
5% Reduction in the regional PAEG	Estimated \$32,782,500 new wages

No project of this scale is without associated risks. SOAR has developed strategies for major risks and is confident that clear communication with partners will mitigate potential effects on component projects.

Description	Impact	Risk Response	Level
Institutional inertia	Slows or delays change	Active governance, proactive accountability, constant communication, full transparency	High
Hiring delays—Leadership	Slow individual project launch and reduce effectiveness	Post contingent roles to allow more lead time to select candidate; convert existing staff when possible;	High
Hiring delays—project staff	Negatively impact individual project launch and reduce effectiveness	Preparing postings early; leverage partner network for referrals, especially for highly specialized positions; convert existing staff when possible; streamline standard hiring procedures	High
Regional job shortage	Hinders employment outcomes	Project design and selection chosen to allow short-term results and long-term improvement	High
Regional broadband access	Limits digital outreach, access to remote work	Varied, flexible approaches to outreach and service delivery; accounting for staff travel and phone communications when possible	Med
Remote job growth slows	Limits access to remote work	Follow trends closely; build relationship with employers to supply talent; redirect project resources to other projects/strategies	Med