

Phase 1 Technical Assistance Project Narrative

As the lead institution for the Phase 1 Technical Assistance grant, the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) plans to engage in a series of planning and analysis activities that ensure the coalition has the information and insights necessary to develop effective, tailored programs that are responsive to the needs of their participants. OEWD will additionally make subawards to coalition members that support planning activities and the development of partnerships and outreach networks necessary for the success of their projects.

The COVID-19 pandemic had an indelible impact on the space requirements and commuting patterns within the San Francisco office core that persists to this day. A key foundation for supporting its recovery will be understanding the implications of these changes, both to the mix of industries that locate downtown, as well as to the employee-serving businesses throughout the downtown core. In order to fully understand the new economic context in which businesses and employees will operate, we will need insight and analysis from on the ground.

Unlike most economic analyses and competitiveness studies, this analysis cannot make projections about the future based on what has come before. Instead, as part of the Phase 1 Technical Assistance grant, OEWD will engage office industry representatives – employers, brokers, building owners, architects of office spaces, investors, etc.- to glean information about what businesses will continue to inhabit downtown, who those businesses employ, and how those businesses will operate. This analysis will produce:

- an inventory of the types of businesses that have left downtown, as well as the types of businesses that remain and how their space occupancy requirements have changed
- analysis of changes to skill and educational requirements by businesses locating downtown
- insights into the potential for new uses and growth opportunities within downtown offices
- assessment of changes to commute patterns and how those changes are likely to impact office serving businesses, as well as public transportation and other public infrastructure requirements
- Inventory of ground level vacancies and underutilized ground floor space

With these insights, the coalition will have the information that it needs in order to understand what industries and business types it intends to target for support in its' projects, specifically aimed at expanding existing small and medium sized enterprises, developing workforce opportunities with downtown businesses, and at developing the next generation of entrepreneurs. As these target industries and businesses are identified, OEWD, along with the coalition members, will also engage in a series of surveys, interviews, and focus groups to understand tools and resources that these businesses need in order to thrive. Likewise, OEWD will engage in a research project comprised of primary research through focus groups of key neighborhood constituencies, including the downtown workforce, to find out what types of activations they are interested in and would support. OEWD will also engage with key property owners to understand what program elements would be necessary to garner their participation in the ground floor activation program. Additionally, the study will review comparable strategies implemented in other cities in order to pinpoint the kind of activations that will be most compelling and realize the greatest “draw” to downtown by employees and visitors alike. Stakeholder outreach in Phase

1 will inform the coalition how to build their Phase 2 Projects to the specifications necessary, in order to realize the maximum impact.

Throughout Phase 1 and the entirety of the grant, OEWD will play a convening role in order to support the coalition members and other key partners in successfully developing and implementing their Phase 2 projects. OEWD will facilitate a series of working groups in order to bring coalition members together in order to share strategies, needs, and challenges with one another, as well as cultivate a collaborative approach in which coalition members can leverage the strengths of one another to create more successful projects. Likewise, OEWD will support coalition members to identify, engage, and foster new connections with organizations that represent groups who have been excluded in the past, so that they may partner and develop their projects in a way to respond to the needs of these communities. This support would effectively increase access to opportunities and shared benefits by disadvantaged communities in the Bay Area.

Finally, as required by the Build Back Better Regional Challenge, OEWD will hire a Regional Competitiveness Officer who will coordinate regional competitiveness efforts throughout the life of the grant and convene coalition members and other key partners in order to support "bottom up" regional competitiveness efforts. This position will support coalition members and key partners in maintaining productive relationships and effective program delivery. This position will also serve as a liaison between the regional coalition and EDA, and will coordinate outcome tracking and reporting efforts.