



IMPERIAL VALLEY REGIONAL CHAMBER of COMMERCE

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To: U.S. Economic Development Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Suite 71014
Washington, DC 20230

February 9, 2022

Re: Letter of Support for “Cultivating Regional Workforce Development Needs through Equity, Access, and Attainment”

To Whom it May Concern:

I submit this letter on behalf of the Imperial Valley Regional Chamber Commerce in support of the Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation (GYEDC)’s application for the U.S. EDA’s FY 2021 ARPA Good Jobs Challenge to develop a “Cultivating Regional Workforce Development Needs through Equity, Access, and Attainment” regional workforce upskilling program. GYEDC will collaborate with employers and stakeholders in Yuma and Imperial County to benefit a wide region in need of workforce development.

Both Yuma and Imperial Counties face enduring employment barriers caused by skill gaps affecting both potential employees and employers. The regions are home to diverse industry sectors in need of a skilled workforce but the community lacks access to necessary training that has led to two of the nation’s perpetually highest unemployment rates (11.1% and 15.5%, JobsEQ), chronic underemployment, and low per capita personal income in the region. The economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted these numbers, especially as a border community.

The proposed workforce development program will be an invaluable tool for all employers and members of the community, especially Imperial County’s ever growing underserved populations by providing new opportunities. The need for skills and equipment that will support the changing requirements of our industry is a priority and retraining and upskilling our workforce is necessary.

This project is in line with the state’s mission to advance education and workforce development to significantly improve the quality of life throughout the region.

Sincerely,

Bari Smith Bean

Bari Smith Bean
Vice President

