



Mr. John Edmond, Regional Representative  
Economic Development Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Seattle Regional Office  
Jackson Federal Building  
915 Second Avenue, Room 1890  
Seattle, WA 98174-1001

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**RE: FY 2021 American Rescue Plan Act Build Back Better Regional Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity EDA-HDQ-ARPBBS-2021-2006976- Phase 2**

Dear Mr. Edmond:

I write this letter in support of the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (LVGEA) and the Southern Nevada Build Back Better Coalition's grant proposal.

Established in 1986, The Asian Chamber of Commerce (ACC), formerly known as the Pacific and Asian Chamber of Commerce of Nevada was formed to serve and represent the professional and business interests of Nevada's growing Asian Pacific Americans. The ACC is a conduit of business opportunities and a broker of information and resources for Asian-Pacific American entrepreneurs.

The economic impacts of COVID-19 hit the Asian American community hard. According to a September 2020 report by the Guinn Center, national data revealed that the unemployment rate for African Americans, Latinos and Asians is higher than that that for whites. The report also found that people of color were hit disproportionately as the shutdown of businesses affected some sectors, like retail, tourism and gaming more than others. Further, in the accommodation and food services sector, which were greatly affected by the pandemic in Nevada, Asians accounted for 16% of total employment (but comprise only ten percent of the population) and Asians were overrepresented in frontline industries in Nevada where they account for 10.8 percent of the Nevada workforce, but 14.0 percent of the workforce in frontline industries.

It is anticipated that tens of thousands of jobs will not return to the hospitality sector. It is also expected that growth of manufacturing jobs in the Las Vegas area are expected to grow by 6.6% between 2020-2025 and an additional 4,500 jobs will be added (GOED, 2022). Opportunities offered in the manufacturing industry, as well as the greater opportunities for skill obtainment and advancement within the industry, will assist Southern Nevada in reducing long-

term inequities by recruiting manufacturing firms to the region and developing workforce in those communities that have been hit hard by economic downturns.

During the Phase 2 application process, the Asian Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with the Urban Chamber of Commerce and Latin Chamber of Commerce (Tri-Chambers) created a process to engage with and gather feedback from community members on inclusion strategy to ensure the benefits of the cluster are equitably shared across all affected communities. Focus groups were held (one with leads from the Asian Chamber), and input was gathered from 120 members of underserved communities. It was important to us the plan be created directly by people in our community to ensure no one is unequally affected in the future. The Tri-Chambers designed the process to promote maximum community input. Calls for participation were led through coordinated marketing efforts of the Tri-Chambers, their public relations firms, outreach coordinators, as well as public entities engaged with the Regional Plan. Focus groups were led and facilitated by culturally and technically competent chamber representatives who worked directly with participating members of our community. This public feedback was documented and directly informed the plan.

### Commitment

Recognizing that the region is embarking on a new market, an investment in the Tri-Chambers who provide economic development support to underserved business communities will be made. The Asian Chamber commits to the following activities as part of the Tri-Chamber effort:

- To adequately prepare the Tri-Chambers for the regional push in advanced manufacturing, staff of the Chambers will participate in professional development activities to promote the Tri-Chambers' ability to provide technical support and guidance for businesses seeking assistance in this field.
- The Tri-Chambers will be responsible for working with Project Component Leads to coordinate informational sessions, making a concentrated effort to notify underserved business owners of project details, including anticipated timelines, projected budgets, and bidding expectations for interested contractors pursuing subawards. These outreach activities will be coordinated by the Tri-Chambers with involvement of community partners who were identified during focus group activities, as appropriate.
- Tri-Chambers will ensure efforts requiring support from vendors, recruiters, media outlets, and translators whose specialties focus on diverse populations are included.

- Sessions will be hosted in accessible event spaces and will be accompanied by localized materials (i.e., Spanish, Filipino, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese), as determined necessary by the Tri-Chambers.
- We will regularly report metrics which will include the number of staff who have participated in development activities, the number of businesses assisted with topics related to advanced manufacturing initiatives, and a summary of outreach activities related to the Regional Challenge grant.

We believe this plan means a real opportunity for the region's leaders to work together to eliminate inequities and this grant can offer pathways for the next generation of underserved students, workforce, and entrepreneurs through education, certification, training, and capital investments, as well as real opportunities within the development process. With the proper tracking and accountability of these efforts, we believe the results will build on themselves as completed infrastructure projects create additional pathways to equitably support Southern Nevada's diverse population.

Sincerely,

Sonny Vinuya  
President  
Las Vegas Asian Chamber of Commerce  
702 281-0062