

Chapter 4: COVID-19 economic recovery and resiliency plans

COVID-19 Pandemic economic recovery

The COVID-19 Pandemic created an economic shock across the district. The initial wave began in March 2020. For the first six months, business closures, quarantines, border closings, and critical care facilities hitting capacity limits created major economic stresses on almost every industry within SCEDD.

Infections and Deaths

According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, *Colorado Covid-19 Data*, the SCEDD region saw 39,525 infections since the onset of the Pandemic. Deaths numbered 696 and are based on the county of residence.

A vast majority of these infections and deaths were seen in the first 6 months of the pandemic. The district's public health departments and regional health centers became the epicenter for the efforts to combat the spread of the virus. Essential workforces throughout the district continued to provide services to communities to ensure access to food, water, and other essentials.

COVID CASES / DEATHS / DUE TO COVID		
	Cases	Deaths
Colorado	592,372	7,041
Baca	341	4
Bent	1554	22
Chaffee	1879	25
Crowley	2223	18
Custer	243	5
Fremont	6739	66
Huerfano	471	18
Kiowa	99	3
Lake	874	1
Las Animas	1348	14
Otero	2117	68
Prowers	1324	24
Pueblo	20313	428
SCEDD Region Total	39525	696

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Industry and Economic Effects

The largest economic effects caused by COVID-19 were disruptions to local businesses, prolonged unemployment, and supply lines. Business closures hit Main Streets across the region. Restaurants, bars, theaters, event centers, and the tourism industries were hit the hardest due to the requirements to close their doors at the peak of Spring Break 2020. Continued social distancing requirements and other public health orders lasted into the fall causing many of these businesses to close permanently. Local officials did what they could by allowing eateries to serve customers outside to assist with their survival. Take-out and changes to liquor laws also helped some businesses survive.

Unemployment rates skyrocketed to over 12% across the district in April and May 2020. Federal and state unemployment claims were at a record high. While many businesses began to reopen in the fall of 2020, others found it hard to bring back employees. Further, unemployment for many counties in the SCEDD region still remains above 6%. The continued lack in workforce

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and increased wages, [which](#) creates [higher](#) overhead, [plagues](#) businesses big and small.

The final major COVID [disruption](#) in the [district](#) was to regional supply chains and production. One of the hardest hit industries was the ranching industry, which saw huge supply and demand swings [during](#) the first year of the [pandemic](#). [Distribution](#) networks and processing facility closures caused [additional](#) issues with supply chains. Manufacturing and other sectors saw long delays [in the shipping](#) of specialized parts [and receiving](#) services. This was even more evident for parts [shipped](#) in or out of the United States. These disruptions made many businesses [work towards using regional suppliers to ensure/lessen the probability that](#) production came to a standstill.

COVID-19 [economic recovery federal appropriations](#)

From the onset of the pandemic, [the](#) U.S. Congress has passed five major appropriation laws that provided [direct](#) funding for [the economic and](#) other recovery efforts to combat the effects of the COVID19 pandemic. These include the *Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act*, the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*, *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act*, *Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act*, and the *American Rescue Plan Act* accounting for over **\$4.49 trillion** in new budgetary resources.

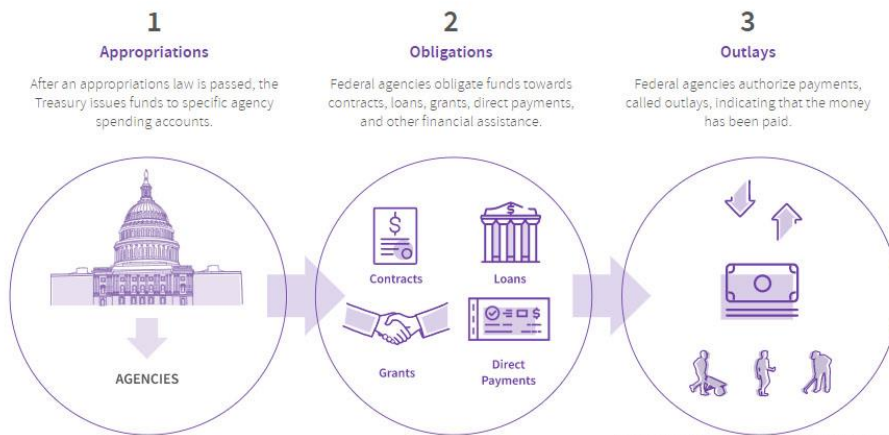
This CEDS update is timely. [Over](#) the past [eight](#) months SCEDD has identified \$500 million in critical and eligible projects, programs, and policies for these funds across the region. These Economic Implementation Strategies ([EIS](#)) as defined in Chapter 7, [as](#) well as [the](#) detailed, individual [county projects, programs and policies](#) lists included in Appendix A, [identify](#) numerous priorities for the next 5 years for these funds.

Due to the size and scope of the COVID-19 Federal Appropriations, SCEDD expanded its recovery efforts to ensure every economic aspect of [the district](#) was accounted for even if it was outside of the traditional projects funded by the EDA. [These projects include:](#) workforce housing, education, health care, [and](#) recreation. [The district](#) chose to develop a holistic approach to ensure all aspects of rebuilding of our [district](#) were accounted for over the next [five](#) years.

The [district's](#) economic recovery will be directly link to its ability to access these funds as they are redistributed across [federal and state agencies](#). [The](#) following flow chart from USASpending.gov [data lab](#) illustrates how these [appropriations](#) are redistributed to [agencies, states, and finally](#) spent by our local governments and nonprofits.

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The Process of COVID-19 Supplemental Spending



SCEDD has been tasked with working on securing funding obligations for the various economic projects, programs, and policies identified in this CEDS update, but also to assist with technical assistance on reporting and project management for our local government partners.

Resiliency plans

Over the course of the development of this CEDS update, the total need and Economic output of the region has been documented for the next five years. As future economic shocks occur across the [district](#), there are several major regional economic resiliency projects that [may](#) set [new](#) national standards on how to rebuild a resilient economic recovery and help to limit future disruptions caused by unforeseen disasters. While the projects listed below only represent a fraction of the overall need, [they have](#) significant regional impacts. These impacts are described in detail in Chapter 7 - Economic Implementation Strategies. Implementation of these projects can create regional resiliency by building capacity or providing critical backbone infrastructure to allow exponential growth in the region.

- The Arkansas River Valley Conduit
- Surface transportation innovation corridor
- Southern Colorado and New Mexico outdoor corridor
- Arkansas River outdoor recreation
- Southern Colorado film corridor and film festival
- Regional electric transmission lines (Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, and Prowers Counties)
- Expansion of drug and mental health treatment centers

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- Development of workforce housing
- Expansion in debt and equity capital
- SCEDD Broadband Implementation Office
- Reactivation of dormant passenger and freight rail corridors
- Implementation of Chaffee County Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- Water and wastewater upgrades
- Regional airport development
- Creation of entrepreneurial ecosystems