

Boosting University Investments in Low-Income Districts

(BUILD) Act

Regional public universities (RPU) are important anchor institutions to promote economic and community development for “**distressed communities**.” These institutions are a critical source of human capital, driving migration to communities and developing a stronger workforce.

What is a distressed community? The bill defines a distressed community as a region 25% below the state or national family income threshold.

H.R. 8688 – Boosting University Investments in Low-Income Communities (BUILD) Act would establish a designation for regional public universities located in distressed communities, making those universities eligible for federal grants to spur economic and community development projects to build stronger, more resilient communities.

This legislation would create a two-part grant program. Universities would be eligible for grants between \$25-50 million over the course of five years to pay for community development projects.

How will the funding help?

- **Address Regional Public Health Challenges:** Build and maintain health clinics accessible to the public on or near the campus of the institution of higher education. It would also provide opportunities to educate, recruit, and train members of the community to become healthcare professionals.
- **Revitalize Infrastructure:** Renovate, construct, or maintain buildings, such as libraries, laboratories, housing for students, museums, theaters, and art centers, that provide community use.
- **Provide Early-Stage Business Seed Money:** Support local entrepreneurs with federal grants to help start a business, grow a current business, or support small business development.
- **Modernize the Broadband Network:** Build and maintain municipal broadband networks and related infrastructure.
- **Strengthen the Workforce:** Partner with industries to develop apprenticeships and create good-paying jobs to help decrease the local unemployment rate.

This legislation would **grant up to \$1.7 billion per year for five years** for this program and could benefit up to **174 public four-year universities** including FOUR California State University institutions in California: Fresno State, Cal State Los Angeles, San Diego State, and Cal Poly Pomona.