BUILDING BETTER PLACES TRAINING

for communities dealing with growth & change

WHEN
February 10-12th, 2026

WHERE
Grand Junction Convention Center
Grand Junction, CO

APPLICATION DEADLINE
Wednesday, Oct 15th, 2025

VIEW WEB FORM HERE
or visit: bit.ly/BBP_26

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community builders

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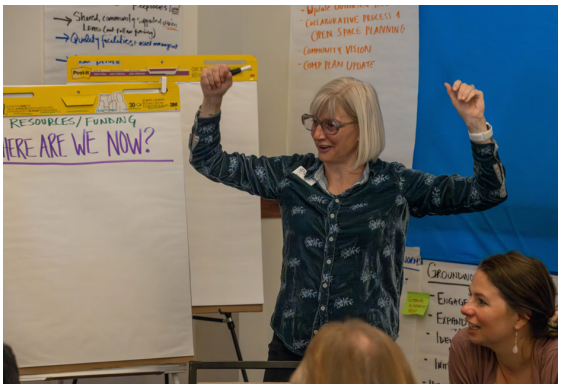
THE 2026
BUILDING BETTER PLACES TRAINING



ABOUT

Community Builders' Building Better Places (BBP) trainings bring together teams of local leaders from small cities, towns, and rural areas to understand and address key community challenges. This year's training dives into innovative approaches to community economic development that respond to existing and emerging challenges. Each team will explore practical ways to use place-based economic strategies that fit their community.

BBP trainings blend shared learning with facilitated action planning that supports leadership teams to move forward to address key economic transitions and needs in their communities, enhance civic leadership ability, and shape more livable and sustainable places. Over three days, Community Builders (CB) will guide community teams to identify actionable steps for identifying local assets, leveraging resources, and investing in place-based economic solutions.

BBP will follow CB's proven, award winning training model, which focuses on building buy-in, clarity, direction, and commitment from teams of local leaders from up to seven communities. Each community team (6-8 persons) will work with a dedicated facilitator to create a clear community action plan that identifies both short and long-term next steps to accomplish a specific community project or goal. Teams will come away with a plan of action taking into account current opportunities and practical strategies.

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AGENDA

DAY 1
HALF DAY

PRIORITIES

Teams will gain alignment around **key challenges and opportunities,** and build direction on **shared priorities** to focus on moving forward. Teams will discuss:

- Developing a successful planning/policy framework
- Understanding barriers to progress
- Clarifying team priorities and direction
- Best practices for building better places

DAY 2
FULL DAY

STRATEGIES

Teams will develop **strategies to advance their priorities**, including addressing barriers to progress and positioning for funding, implementation, or assistance opportunities. Teams will discuss:

- Case studies from peer communities
- Overcoming barriers
- Engaging your community
- Connecting priorities to implementation resources
- Pursuing funding

DAY 3
HALF DAY

ACTIONS

Teams will work together to **develop a detailed action plan** outlining key next steps, roles, and resources to advance the strategies identified in BBP. Teams will discuss:

- Keys to project implementation
- Near-term action steps
- Key roles, responsibilities and timeframes
- Sustaining progress and momentum

COST

VALUE	When a team is selected to attend the Building Better Places training, the cost of their lodging, most meals, and all workshop fees are covered - a value of over $12,000 per team.
TEAM COST	As a non-profit organization, Community Builders fundraises to cover these costs, but asks that community teams contribute $1,200 towards the training to ensure buy-in from participants. Teams are also responsible for their travel to the training and dinners.
SUPPORT	If this cost-share is prohibitive for your community, please contact us to discuss options. Communities will **not** be asked to submit fees until their application is accepted.
COMMITMENT	Once selected via the competitive process, teams are expected to demonstrate committment to a productive BBP event and attend the training with the team members listed in the application.

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WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

In an informative, intensive, and energetic three day process, an expert facilitator will guide your community team through strategic exercises to:

- Develop shared understanding of key needs and challenges
- Build commitment around shared goals and strategies
- Learn from case studies of successful strategies in similar communities
- Clarify key barriers to progress and opportunities to overcome them
- Connect goals and strategies to sustainable funding
- Develop effective outreach and engagement strategies to build community capacity, support, and political will
- Create a practical action plan to take home

"They empower and enable a community to find solutions for themselves versus having a solution thrust upon them from an outside consultant."
- Russ Forrest,
Vail Town Manager

"Through BBP, we laid the groundwork for the Colorado River Valley Economic Development Partnership, creating long-term benefits for our communities and driving positive change across our region"
- Alicia Gresley, CRVEDP

Thinking about applying?

Reaching out is a great first step. We're excited to talk through your ideas and questions. Please contact Marissa Mommaerts at (970)-384-4364 or marissa@communitybuilders.org

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TEAM COMPOSITION

The Building Better Places Training is open to cities, towns, counties, and tribal governments and counties across Colorado. It is designed for smaller cities (up to ~100K), towns and rural areas, and particularly targets areas with higher needs and limited resources and capacity. Teams may have a local or regional focus. BBP is particularly suited for communities that are dealing with significant growth and change. Up to seven teams of eight local leaders will be selected to participate.

Creating a strong team is critical to a successful application and your team's composition is also key to developing the partnerships that will enable progress. Teams should include a broad range of perspectives that reflect the diversity of your community and include both established and emerging local leaders.

All teams should have one high-level City or County staff person and one elected official. In addition, teams should include diverse perspectives, as shown in the list to the right, which includes several types of representation to consider in building a well-rounded team.

Local Government
Elected and Appointed Officials, City/County Managers, Planners, Public Works

Real Estate, Development and Investment Professionals
Developers, Realtors, Local Lenders

Business and Economic Development
Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations, Downtown Development Authority, Main Street Programs

Community Development and Civic Organizations
Housing, Youth/Education, Civic Organizations, Community College

Community Voices
Housing, Youth/Education, Emerging Leaders, and Civic Organizations

SELECTION CRITERIA

TEAM COMPOSITION
Selection of a strong team with several members in decision making/ leadership roles as well as a diversity of other voices and perspectives.

NEED & IMPACT
Demonstration of specific challenges your community would like to address and the potential for the BBP training to help you get there.

COMMITMENT
Commitment of your jurisdiction to the outcomes of the training and a local commitment to advancing livability and economic development.

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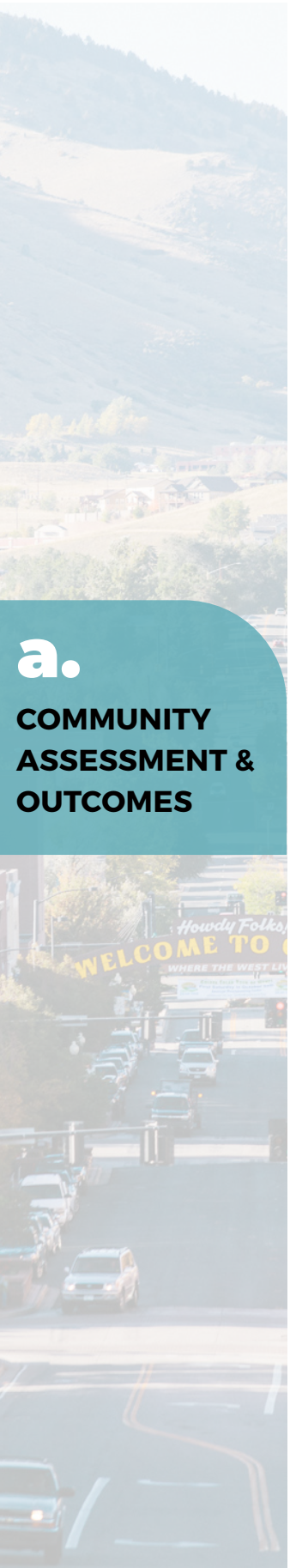

APPLICATION + INSTRUCTIONS

To apply, submit **one** application per community team. A complete application will consist of the following items:

a.	Community Assessment and Outcomes	**b.**	Team Participants	**c.**	Supporting Materials

Each team should discuss and complete the following questions. It is most effective when teams discuss the questions and fill out the answers as a group. The team leader can also compile input from other team members to complete the questions. Please submit your application through this **online application form** (also available at **bit.ly/BBP_26**) **OR in PDF format** to marissa@communitybuilders.org no later than **Wednesday, October 15th.**

a. COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT & OUTCOMES

1. Community Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges: Briefly describe the specific challenge(s) your community is facing that the team could make progress on during the BBP training. Please describe what you have done to-date to address your issue. What obstacles are you facing?

Opportunities: What opportunities do you see for progress through participation in BBP? Is there a particular plan, strategy, project or initiative that BBP can help move forward?

2. Barriers to Progress

At this stage, what do you consider to be the greatest challenges or barriers to implementing or making progress on identified opportunities? Please rank the following (1 = least important, 5 = most important)

Lack of clarity on vision and direction		Lack of local funding	
Need for updated / better plans or strategies		Lack of outside funding	
Outdated policies		Lack of political buy-in or alignment	
Lack of staff or organizational capacity		Lack of community engagement or support	
Difficulty prioritizing projects or initiatives		Need for regional coordination	
Need for better coordination and collaboration		Insufficient leadership or leadership capacity	

Other *(please describe other barriers you would like to address below):*

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3. Priority Topics and Issues

To help our team tailor your training experience, please rank the following local issues / topics in order of their importance / interest to your team. (1 = least important, 5 = most important)

Economic diversity		Strengthening local businesses	
Market and economic trends		Sustaining workforce	
Financing tools and mechanisms		Workforce housing	
Redevelopment and revitalization strategies		Community placemaking	
Capital planning and investment		Community engagement	
Asset-based planning			

Other *(please describe other priority topics and issues you would like to address below):*

4. Desired Outcomes

Describe what is most important for your team to accomplish through the BBP training.

b. TEAM PARTICIPANTS

5. Team Composition

Please include the following information for up to eight team members, starting with the team lead/primary contact. Provide your answers via **google form**, spreadsheet, or PDF. In addition, provide a brief description of your team's composition and the roles and perspectives represented.

Informational List to Include (for each team member):

1. Name
2. Organization and Title
3. Location
4. Email
5. Phone

c. SUPPORTING MATERIALS

6. Supporting Materials

Required: Please include a letter of commitment from the team lead. Additional letters from other participating organizations or jurisdictions strengthen your application.

Optional: You are welcome to include any reports, plans, project proposals, or other supporting materials you feel are relevant to your application.