



SEAGO Region Distress Indicators (as of December 2025)

Economic distress indicators are measures used by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to identify areas eligible for grants. The primary distress indicators used by EDA are the unemployment rate and per capita income. In addition to determining grant eligibility, these indicators are also used for strategic planning. The National Economic Resilience Data Explorer (NERDE) (www.ANL.gov/dis/national-economic-resilience-data-explorer-nerde) makes this data available to help community leaders design strategic recovery and resilience projects. The “Measuring Distress—County Tool” from StatsAmerica (www.StatsAmerica.org/distress) allows users to download regional distress indicators and data profiles with various metrics to better understand local economic challenges.

Unemployment Rate

An area can qualify as distressed if its unemployment rate is at least 1 percentage point higher than the national average for a 24-month period. In the table below, the threshold calculation for unemployment reflects the percentage point difference between the unemployment rate for the regional area and the U.S. figure.

Regionally, only Santa Cruz County qualifies as distressed based on unemployment due to its 24-month rate of 6.39 compared to the U.S. rate of 4.04 as of August 2025. The threshold calculation is 2.35, meaning Santa Cruz’s unemployment rate is 2.35 percentage points higher than the U.S. rate, well above the 1.0 threshold to qualify as distressed. Rates in Graham and Greenlee counties (3.5 and 2.5, respectively) are well below the national rate, and, thus, do not qualify as distressed, while Cochise County’s rate of 4.47 is just 0.43 percentage points higher than the U.S. rate (falling short of the 1 percentage point threshold to qualify as distressed). The SEAGO region, overall, likewise does not qualify as distressed under the unemployment criterion due to its 24-month rate of 4.61 (for a threshold calculation of 0.57, below the 1.0 required to qualify as distressed).

Unemployment rate (24 months ending August 2025)

	24-month Unemployment Rate	Threshold Calculation	Distressed?
United States	4.04	0.00	
SEAGO Region	4.61	0.57	No
Cochise County	4.47	0.43	No
Graham County	3.50	-0.54	No
Greenlee County	2.50	-1.54	No
Santa Cruz County	6.39	2.35	Yes

Source: StatsAmerica, using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data

Per Capita Income

An area can also qualify as distressed if its per capita income is at or below 80% of the national level. EDA primarily considers two measures of income: per capita personal income (PCPI) as reported by U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and per capita money income (PCMI) as reported by U.S. Census Bureau in its American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. The main difference between the two is that PCPI from BEA is a broader measure that includes both money and most in-kind income (e.g., employer health insurance and pension contributions, Medicare, imputed rent for owner-occupied housing, etc.), while PCMI from the Census Bureau is a narrower measure focusing only on cash income to households (i.e., excluding all in-kind benefits). BEA's measure is generally higher due to its broader scope of income sources, while the Census Bureau's measure is more focused on the actual cash flow available to a typical household for daily spending.

BEA PCPI. An area can qualify as distressed if its PCPI, as reported by BEA, is at or below 80% of the national level. In the SEAGO region, only Greenlee County fails to qualify as distressed based on PCPI due to its income of \$57,359 compared to the U.S. PCPI of \$69,810 (the threshold calculation is 82.2, meaning Greenlee County's PCPI is 82.2% of the U.S. level, failing to meet the 80%-or-below threshold to qualify as distressed). All other SEAGO-region counties qualify as distressed under the EDA PCPI guidelines with PCPI levels well below the national level, ranging from a low of \$42,787 in Graham County (61.3% of the U.S. PCPI) to a high of \$53,304 in Cochise (76.4% of the U.S. level). The SEAGO region overall qualifies as distressed under the PCPI criteria due to its PCPI of \$50,749 (for a threshold calculation of 72.7, falling well within the 80.0 or lower required to qualify as distressed).

Per Capita Personal Income (2023)

	BEA PCPI	Threshold Calculation	Distressed?
United States	\$69,810	100.0	
SEAGO Region	\$50,749	72.7	Yes
Cochise County	\$53,304	76.4	Yes
Graham County	\$42,787	61.3	Yes
Greenlee County	\$57,359	82.2	No
Santa Cruz County	\$49,416	70.8	Yes

Source: StatsAmerica, using U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis PCPI data

ACS 5-year PCMI. An area can also qualify as distressed if its PCMI, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in its ACS 5-year estimates, is at or below 80% of the national PCMI. In the SEAGO region, all counties and the region overall qualify as distressed based on PCMI, which ranges from a low of \$25,634 in Santa Cruz County (59.2% of the U.S. PCMI) to a high of \$32,708 in Cochise (75.6% of the U.S. level). PCMI for the SEAGO region overall is \$29,985 (for a threshold calculation of 69.3, well within the 80.0 level or lower required to qualify as distressed).

Per Capita Money Income (2023)

	ACS 5-year PCMI	Threshold Calculation	Distressed?
United States	\$43,289	100.0	
SEAGO Region	\$29,985	69.3	Yes
Cochise County	\$32,708	75.6	Yes
Graham County	\$26,094	60.3	Yes
Greenlee County	\$32,028	74.0	Yes
Santa Cruz County	\$25,634	59.2	Yes

Source: StatsAmerica, using U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey 5-year estimates) PCMI data

Summary

EDA primarily considers the 24-month unemployment rate and per capita income to identify distressed areas eligible for grants. In the SEAGO region, only Santa Cruz County can qualify as distressed based on unemployment. Based on per capita income, however, all counties in the SEAGO region can qualify as distressed considering PCMI (a narrow measure that excludes in-kind benefits). All but Greenlee County can also qualify as distressed under the broader PCPI measure, which includes in-kind benefits (the difference is largely due to higher fringe benefits paid by Freeport McMoRan, the largest employer in Greenlee County and the largest private sector employer in the SEAGO region).

All counties in the SEAGO region (and the region overall) qualify as distressed under at least one of the EDA criteria (24-month unemployment rate, PCMI, or PCPI) while only Santa Cruz County qualifies as distressed under all three. A region needs to meet only one (or more) of the economic distress criteria to potentially qualify for certain EDA grant programs; however, meeting more than one can sometimes favorably impact factors such as the maximum federal investment rate. The following table shows the SEAGO region and county-level qualification under EDA standards for designation as “distressed” in conjunction with grant applications:

SEAGO Region Qualification as Distressed Area

	24-month Unemployment Rate	Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI)	Per Capita Money Income (PCMI)
SEAGO Region	No	Yes	Yes
Cochise County	No	Yes	Yes
Graham County	No	Yes	Yes
Greenlee County	No	No	Yes
Santa Cruz County	Yes	Yes	Yes

Yes = the area is economically distressed under EDA guidelines for the criterion shown; No = the area is not distressed under EDA guidelines for that criterion.