

Press Release

Redwood Region RISE (Resilient Inclusive Sustainable Economy)



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*** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ***

Redwood Region RISE Awarded \$14 Million in Catalyst Pre-Development Funding Through California Jobs First

Funds to Jumpstart Economic Development Projects in Rural Northern California

Arcata, CA, March 19, 2024 – [Redwood Region RISE](#) (Resilient Inclusive Sustainable Economy) has officially been awarded \$14 million in Catalyst pre-development funding. As one of the 13 “California Jobs First” regions—and especially as a rural region comprising **Tribal Lands and Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino Counties**—the Catalyst funding will help us bridge the gap between planning and implementing our regional economic development strategies and investments. These funds will enable the Redwood Region to develop [ready-to-go projects](#) that can compete for funding opportunities from federal, state, and private sources.

Community-Led, Climate-Forward Future

The news came last week when [Governor Newsom announced](#) the \$182 million Catalyst Funds awards to jumpstart the [Regional Investment Initiative \(RII\)](#), and the creation of a California Jobs First Council and operational plan focused on streamlining the state’s economic and workforce development programs “to create more quality jobs, faster”. The Council and operational plan intend to guide the state’s investments in economic and workforce development to create more family-supporting jobs and prioritize industry sectors for future growth.

“For rural and under-capitalized regions like ours, getting projects ready for implementation is often held up by the expense and workload of the pre-development phase. After a year of figuring out our planning and governance structure for Redwood Region RISE, this next phase will be where the rubber hits the road and we start to move some funding to those projects that will have the best chance to receive implementation funds from the state, or that will be attractive to other funding agencies.”

— Susan Seaman, Program Director, AEDC (RRRISE’s Fiscal Agent)

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The awarded \$14 million Catalyst Funds include up to \$2 million for Collaborative’s operations, up to \$1.5 million towards Sector Investment Coordinators, up to \$1.5 million towards grant administration and compliance, and—arguably most importantly—up to \$9 million for project pre-development activities. It is important to note that Redwood Region RISE still needs to contract with the State before these funds are available. The Employment Development Department (EDD) expects these contracts to be executed around May 2024, after which these funds will be available to reach our communities in the Redwood Region.

A 10-Year Grassroots Vision

California Jobs First’s Regional Investment Initiative is a \$600 million state-wide program designed to promote a sustainable and equitable recovery from the economic distress of COVID-19. Redwood Region RISE is one of the 13 Regional Collaboratives in the State working together to bring good, quality jobs to our region – Tribal Lands and Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino Counties. In our efforts, we actively center the experiences and empower voices of the [priority communities](#) that don't always participate in or benefit from economic development planning processes.

Our Collaborative—a broad coalition of close to a thousand community members and organizations—is working together to surface local and regional needs and opportunities through dedicated [Tribal](#), [Local](#), and [Sector Planning Tables](#), an [Equity Council](#) and a community-endorsed [Voting Member Block](#). We’re currently midway through our Planning Phase, at the end of which, in September 2024, we will present a *10-year strategic vision* that identifies regional investments to make a positive impact on and create good job opportunities for our communities, ensure sustainable economic growth (diversify our economies), and get us closer to California’s goals for a carbon-neutral future.

How Can You Get Involved?

We invite you to join our public Collaborative Zoom meetings, every last Thursday of the month between 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. These gatherings are a great way to stay informed on Redwood Region RISE’s progress, dive into key research findings for our region through our Data Walks, and share your knowledge and feedback with our group. To learn more and join these meetings, [visit our website](#). We hope to see you there! If you have a project idea you think will make a difference for communities in our region, make sure to log it in our [Project Inventory Form](#). We are excited to work with and learn from you. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to ccrp@humboldt.edu.

[The California Center for Rural Policy \(CCRP\) at Cal Poly Humboldt](#) serves as Redwood Region RISE’s Regional Convener, [North Coast Opportunities \(NCO\)](#) and [True North Organizing Network \(TNON\)](#) are our Community Engagement & Outreach partners, and the [Arcata Economic Development Corporation \(AEDC\)](#) is our Fiscal Agent.

For more information, visit our website bit.ly/Redwood-RISE

Join our [mailing list](#) to stay updated on our progress.

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