

Introduction

In September 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 162 into law, establishing the \$600 million California Jobs First’s Regional Investment Initiative (then known as Community Economic Resilience Fund [CERF]) program. The aim of the Regional Investment Initiative (RII) is creating high-quality, accessible jobs and helping build resilience to the effects of climate change and other global disruptions impacting the state’s diverse regional economies. The RII investment supported the creation of Jobs First Collaboratives in 13 regions across California.

Redwood Region RISE (RRRISE) comprises Tribal Lands and the counties of Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, and Del Norte, with representation from a wide variety of community partners including labor, business, local government, education,

environmental justice, community organizations, and more. The Collaboratives are tasked with developing regional roadmaps, including sector strategies and recommended investments for their respective regions.¹

Regional Plan Part 1 provides a baseline snapshot of the current state of the region’s economy, including key industries, labor force characteristics, climate resilience, and public health issues that impact communities’ well-being. Throughout the report, key metrics are highlighted to provide focal areas to enable the region to track its progress towards creating an inclusive, climate-forward economy.

The report is structured as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Introduction | Description of Redwood Region’s California Jobs First Collaborative: Redwood Region RISE. |
| Overview of the Region | Review of the region’s economic history and diverse communities: This chapter includes information on historic disinvestment in the region and descriptions of the key assets and strengths that may be leveraged for inclusive growth. |
| Partner Mapping | A snapshot of the region’s “people power”: Institutions and organizations positioned to influence the creation of an inclusive economy. This chapter was co-authored with Bischoff Consulting. |
| Economic Analysis | Key indicators of macroeconomic health including basic information on growth, productivity, and inequality, and importantly, socioeconomic conditions in the region. Chico State Enterprises contributed to this chapter. |

¹ See Press Release, 3/8/2024 “California Jobs First: State Launches First of its Kind Council to Create Thousands of More Jobs Across all Regions” [Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, [ref](#)].

| | |
|--|--|
| Climate Analysis | Climate projections and their implications for communities across the region. Sources of greenhouse gas emissions and environmental contaminants. This chapter highlights areas of vulnerability as well as opportunities for adaptation and building resilience. This chapter was co-authored by the Sierra Business Council. |
| Public Health Analysis | Overview of health disparities, proximate risk factors, and their economic and environmental drivers. |
| Industry Cluster Analysis | Information on the industries currently driving the economy and their prospects for delivering job growth, living wages, and productivity into the future. Chico State Enterprises and Professor Robert Eyler of Sonoma State University provided data and guidance for this chapter. |
| Labor Market Analysis | An in-depth look at the region's current labor force, with consideration for living and family-sustaining wage jobs, opportunities for priority populations, and training needs. |
| Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis | This chapter details the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The analysis, along with the baseline metrics included throughout, prepares the Collaborative to create sector and community development strategies in Part 2 of the Regional Roadmap (forthcoming, August 2024). |

A Note on Data and Methodology

The California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP), Convener for Redwood Region RISE, is a community-based participatory research center at Cal Poly Humboldt. Committed to research and policy that can be used to improve the lives of rural people in California, the Center specializes in participatory and mixed methods approaches. Its methods are tailored to the study of rural populations, environments, and their interactions. CCRP utilized a mixed methods approach to create the report. Both quantitative and qualitative data sources were utilized.

CCRP used a variety of public data sources to prepare this report. Figure I.1 offers an overview of primary data sources. Detailed information on specific data sources and methodological notes can be found accompanying each data visualization and in Figure I.1. The research team worked with the Collaborative's outreach and engagement partners to conduct 144 listening sessions with professionals from organizations in

California Jobs First key partner groups—labor, economic development agencies, community-based organizations, workforce entities and more—as well as with residents from priority communities who have experienced economic marginalization and barriers to employment (355 individuals, interviewed by 22 partner organizations including outreach leads).

Outreach and engagement partners North Coast Opportunities (NCO) and True North Organizing Network's (TNON) assisted with research efforts, conducting listening sessions with communities of color, federally and non-federally recognized Tribal Nations, immigrants, individuals with disabilities, LGBTQIA2S+ communities, and other underrepresented groups across the region. Qualitative data from these efforts appear throughout the report, but especially in the Partner Mapping and SWOT chapters. Data from listening sessions were analyzed using qualitative data processing software ATLAS.ti.

Figure I.1. Key Data Sources

| Economic and Labor Market Data | Public Health Data | Environmental Data |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) ◆ IMPLAN ◆ The California Employment Development Department (EDD) Industry and Occupation Projections ◆ Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The California Health Information Survey (CHIS) ◆ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHRR) Analytic and Trends Data ◆ The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) County Health Status Profiles ◆ Kidsdata.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ CalEnviroScreen 4.0 ◆ California Air Resources Board (CARB) |

Potential Data Limitations in Rural Areas

Small sample sizes and high statistical uncertainty: Small sample sizes in rural areas often produce higher levels of statistical uncertainty—a challenge that is exacerbated with subsets of populations such as disinvested communities.² Importantly, the inability to detect disparities between two groups in rural data sources with high uncertainty does not confirm the absence of such disparities.

Response bias: Differences may occur between populations that respond to surveys and those that do not, leading to nonresponse bias.³ Furthermore, factors like limited broadband access could similarly affect survey responses across various instruments. Therefore, publicly available data sources might have gaps or inaccuracies that do not fully capture or fairly represent reality.

² In many of the data visualizations presented throughout the body of this report and its appendices, this statistical uncertainty is represented by horizontal bars (i.e., confidence intervals) that represent the level of confidence associated with a statistical estimate. Larger confidence intervals indicate greater uncertainty about an estimate. Estimates that describe populations that represent a smaller share of the overall population generally have lower confidence levels.

³ “Response bias” occurs when survey (or interview) respondents provide inaccurate or false answers. “Nonresponse bias” occurs when respondents and nonrespondents of a survey or interview differ in an area relevant to the research at hand, leading to biased results. Nonresponse can happen because people are either not willing or not able to participate in the data-gathering exercise. Although methodological approaches can correct for this type of potential bias (the Census Bureau applies such methods), these methods are imperfect and, in extreme cases, can lead to unreliable estimates. For instance, during the pandemic in 2020, factors such as socioeconomic status were found to significantly influence the probability of nonresponse in the American Community Survey, leading the Census Bureau to withhold one-year 2020 data.

Redwood Region RISE

Redwood Region Resilient Inclusive Sustainable Economy (RRRISE) is the name of the Redwood Region's California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative. Throughout the report, the designations "RRRISE" and "the Collaborative" are used interchangeably to refer to this region's initiative.

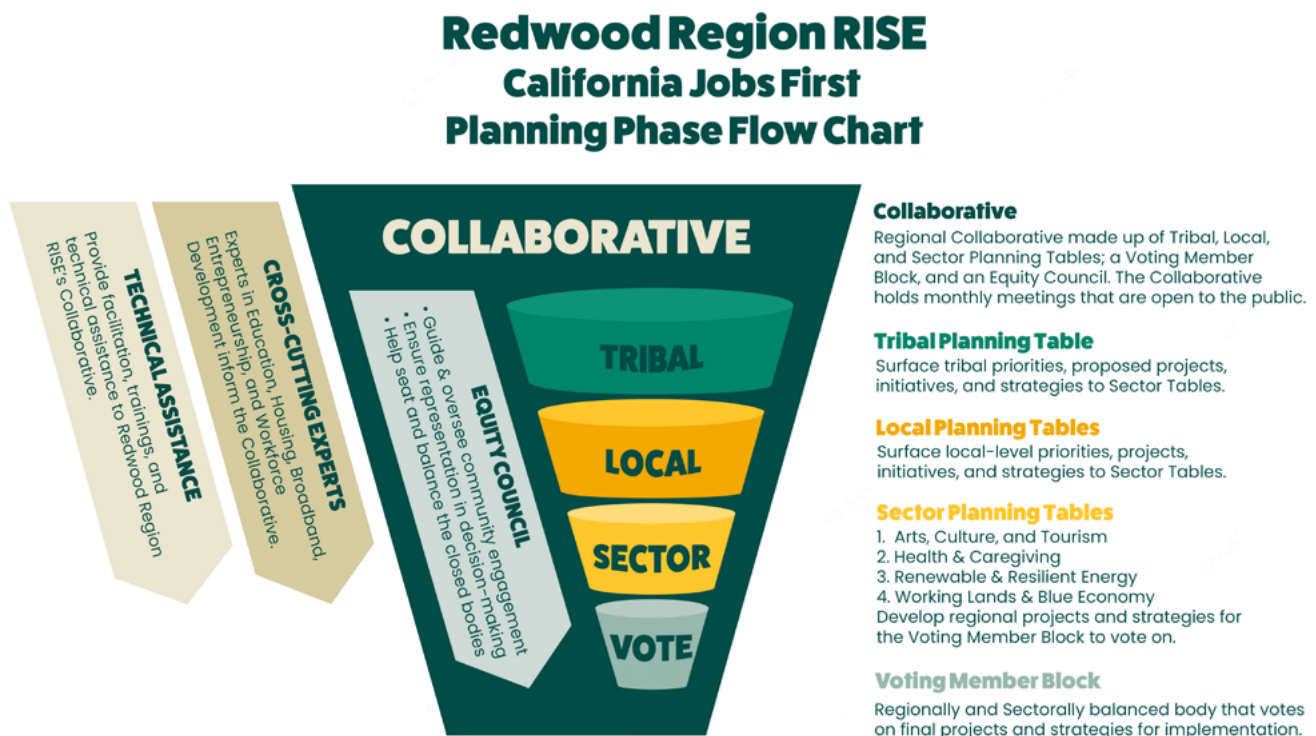
Redwood Region RISE launched in February 2023, committing to lead an inclusive, diverse, transparent, and accountable regional planning process and to include and honor community voices that do not always participate in or benefit from economic development planning processes. The following principles guide the Collaborative's

work: 1) honor the wisdom of individuals who have in the past been marginalized in economic development planning; 2) create and allow space for individuals with lived experience to drive the prioritization of investments; and 3) encourage and accept nontraditional approaches within the economic development planning sphere.

Collaborative Governance

With guidance from a governance task force formed by the Collaborative for this purpose, RISE created a governance structure with five primary bodies focused both on decision-making and planning in Phase 1.

Figure I.2 Redwood Region RISE Planning Phase Flow Chart



The **Tribal Planning Table** is open to all Tribal residents in the Redwood Region and was created in April 2023 following consultation with Tribal Councils across the region. Thirteen Tribal Nations attend intermittent meetings whose focus is surfacing the diverse range of Tribal priorities, economic development strategies, and proposed projects and investments, in addition to liaising with other Tribal partners in the region and preparing for the Tribal Funding Opportunity. Tribal Planning Table priorities are brought up to the Sector Planning Tables and reported back to the broader Collaborative.

Local Planning Tables were created to give the individual counties in RRRISE space to discuss sub-regional priorities, provide local support to communities as they develop projects and plans, and align regional efforts with local CEDS processes.

Sector Tables represent the region's key industries: 1) Arts, Culture, and Tourism; 2) Health and Caregiving; 3) Renewable and Resilient Energy; and 4) Working Lands and Blue Economy. Each Sector Table is led by one or more Sector Coordinators working with 20–50 members. The Sector Tables develop strategies that are informed by data research, reflective of community priorities, and aligned with California Jobs First goals.

Serving as the **Executive Body** is a regionally balanced, community-endorsed Voting Block with up to 44 representatives from 11 required partner groups. All federally and non-federally recognized Tribes in the region may become members. The **Voting Block** is the primary decision-making body of the Collaborative and is responsible for organizational development and guidance in decision-making.

Voting Block Community Endorsement Process

After four months of outreach, engagement, and partner mapping, RRRISE launched a process for seating its Voting Member Block. Dedicated seats were apportioned; one for each partner category in each county, and then every Tribe was invited to sign on as a voting member. The outreach and engagement team did additional presentations at Tribal Councils across the region to make those nations aware of the opportunity to participate as decision makers.



The Collaborative assisted in identifying organizations that had not yet been mapped or contacted to be added as prospective candidates in each category. Once the crowdsourced inventory of organizations in each category was as complete as possible, the convening team created endorsement forms for each subregion and circulated these to the subregion's interest holders. Partners were permitted to forward the form's link to their constituents, who could endorse for their respective communities, and forms were available on the Redwood RISE site as well. Over 600 individuals were directly invited to endorse an organization in each category to represent their subregion.

Once organizations were identified, the Convening team onboarded members to the Voting Block. Several seats were not able to be identified due to the small numbers of organizations in the region and capacity constraints. The roster was sent to the Equity Council for review and recommendation in December 2023.

Up to 24 nominated **Equity Council** members representing priority communities act as an advisory group to the Collaborative. Led by a chair and co-chair, the Council has been meeting independently and reporting to the Collaborative every month since November 2023. Often referred to as Redwood Region RISE's "moral compass,"

the Equity Council guides and oversees the community-engagement process, ensures representation in decision-making, helps seat and balance the Collaborative's formal bodies, and provides general guidance on embedding equity best practices across the Collaborative's work.



The RRRISE Planning Phases:

1. Setting the table for broad-based, community-driven planning and socializing regional data. Identifying key regional priorities.
2. Formally seating the Collaborative's governing bodies.
3. Organizational development, including development of bylaws, charters, work plans, and strategy.
4. Consensus building and approval of the Regional Roadmap.

Phase 1

Since its launch in February 2023, the Collaborative has met monthly to share updates, discuss progress, and provide opportunities to learn from each other. A staple at these meetings are "Data Walks" intended to guide the Collaborative's understanding of the region, allow the community to ground-truth quantitative findings, encourage community dialogue, and inform strategic regional thinking within and beyond California Jobs First.

Phase 2

In May 2023, the Collaborative convened a Task Force to explore governance models and create a structure for itself. This Task Force established five primary bodies: a Voting Member Block (executive leadership council of the Collaborative); an Equity Council; a Tribal Planning Table; Local Planning Tables; and four Sector Planning tables.⁴ The Task Force also identified a cadre of experts to focus on cross-cutting issues like housing, entrepreneurship, and broadband.

Phase 3

Between April-June 2024, the Collaborative established processes and procedures to ensure effective decision-making, accountability, and strategic alignment. This phase involved the development of bylaws and work plans; helping define roles, responsibilities, and operational procedures for Collaborative participants.

Phase 4

In Summer 2024, the Collaborative will be engaged in strategy-formation exercises to further articulate a 10-year vision for inclusive economic growth and diversification in the region. This work will be documented in Regional Plan Part 2, forthcoming. Together, Regional Plan Part 1 and Regional Plan Part 2 form the Regional Roadmap for RRRISE.

The Collaborative will continue to facilitate inclusive discussions, workshops, and feedback sessions to gather input, address concerns, and build a shared vision for the future. By actively involving affected parties in the decision-making process, the Collaborative aims to create a ground-truthed Regional Roadmap with broad-based support that can serve as a unifying framework for action and investment in the region in the years ahead.

⁴ Chapter 2 Partner Mapping describes how these were identified.