



# Regional Plan Part 1

Latest revision: May 2025



**California's Redwood Region**  
Tribal Lands, Del Norte, Humboldt,  
Lake, and Mendocino Counties



Cal Poly Humboldt.

**A Product of Redwood Region RISE**  
The California Center for Rural Policy  
at Cal Poly Humboldt

# Acknowledgments

This report was made possible by funding from the California Jobs First *Regional Investment Initiative* and in-kind support from Cal Poly Humboldt.

The California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) would specifically like to thank:

- ✓ Redwood Region RISE Collaborative Members and Redwood Region community members who generously gave their time and energy to provide input to this report.
- ✓ Collaborators who contributed to the report, especially our convening partner, North Edge Financing, formerly known as AEDC, as well as Community Outreach and Engagement Lead North Coast Opportunities (NCO), and True North Organizing Network (TNO).
- ✓ ThinkPlace US and Ursula Bischoff, Bischoff Consulting.
- ✓ Contributors Chico State Enterprises and Sierra Business Council.
- ✓ CCRP Staff: Dawn Arledge, Rhiannon Crimmins, Nino Dzotsenidze, Leoni Fohr, Alisha Hammer, Amanda Peçanha Hickey, Schuyler Kirsch, Sydney Lyons, David Narum, Nick Ortiz, and student researchers Giovanni Calabrese and Andreas Christoforidis.
- ✓ Redwood Region RISE Photography from Amy Kumler
- ✓ Dr. Michael E. Spagna, Interim President, Cal Poly Humboldt.
- ✓ Connie Stewart, Executive Director of Initiatives, Cal Poly Humboldt.
- ✓ Cal Poly Humboldt Sponsored Programs Foundation.

**As of April 2025, the U.S. Economic Development administration has formally accepted Redwood Region RISE's Regional Plan Part 2, alongside the other 12 Jobs First regional plans, as Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies, allowing communities across California to accelerate local economic investment.**

CCRP. (2025). Redwood Region Regional Plan Part 1  
California Center for Rural Policy at Cal Poly Humboldt



The California Center for Rural Policy at Cal Poly Humboldt is a research and policy center committed to informing policy, building community, and promoting the health and well-being of rural people and environments.

[ccrp.humboldt.edu](http://ccrp.humboldt.edu)

# Executive Summary

Originally released in June 2024 and revised in May 2025, this report provides a baseline snapshot of the current state of the Redwood Region's economy, key industries, labor force characteristics, climate resilience, and public health issues that impact community well-being. Key metrics throughout the report enable tracking of the region's progress toward building an inclusive, climate-forward economy. This foundational report, known as Regional Plan Part 1, set the stage for a community-driven Regional Roadmap to guide equitable and sustainable economic growth and resilience. Building on this foundation, Regional Plan Part 2 (released in September 2024 and revised in May 2025) outlines development strategies for key sectors and enabling industries, and recommends investments to advance strategic goals—growing sustainable industries and aligning inclusive workforce strategies with thriving wage opportunities. Together, Parts 1 and 2 comprise the Redwood Region's Regional Roadmap.

## California Jobs First and Redwood Region RRISE (RRRISE)

In September 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom enacted Senate Bill 162, establishing a \$600 million California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative. While some aspects of the initiative's funding and structure have evolved, its core ambition remains unchanged: to create high-quality, accessible employment opportunities and strengthen regional resilience to climate change and other global disruptions impacting California's diverse economies.

California Jobs First facilitated the formation of Jobs First "Collaboratives" across 13 regions in California, including the Redwood Region Resilient Inclusive Sustainable Economy (RRRISE) Collaborative, which encompasses Tribal Lands, Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino Counties. The Collaborative includes a broad

spectrum of partners, including labor, business, local government, education, environmental justice, and community organizations.

Anchoring Redwood Region RISE Collaborative's efforts is its Convening Team, made up of Fiscal Agent North Edge Financing (formerly Arcata Economic Development Corporation [AEDC]) and the California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) at Cal Poly Humboldt. During the Planning Phase, the Convening Team collaborated closely with outreach partners North Coast Opportunities (NCO) and True North Organizing Network (TNON).

As of May 2025, the Collaborative has signed partnership letters with over 150 member organizations and actively engages well over 1,000 residents. The Collaborative works to create a region characterized by stable employment, accessible healthcare, and a thriving natural environment. Building on this report, RRRISE since developed Regional Plan Part 2, which is now being operationalized and implemented to guide investment in sectors and industries that prioritize equity, sustainability, access to quality jobs, and economic resilience and competitiveness.

## RRRISE's Approach

Throughout the process of convening the Collaborative and developing Regional Plan Part 1 and 2, RRRISE embraced a commitment to "meeting communities where they are," engaging hundreds of residents through listening sessions, surveys, and community events to surface local priorities and shape a shared vision for equitable regional development.

The Collaborative is guided by three core principles: 1) honoring the wisdom of those historically excluded from economic planning; 2) centering lived experience in investment decisions; and 3) embracing nontraditional approaches to economic development.



## Regional Plan Part 1 Findings

### Economic and Social Challenges

The remote and rural Redwood Region covers 6% of California's landmass, extending 320 miles from Lake County to Del Norte's northern border. Renowned for its natural resources and diverse landscapes, the region has a population of 323,952 residents, including a significant Hispanic/Latino population and 33 Tribal Nations.

The Redwood Region faces significant economic challenges, including the decline of such traditional industries as timber and fishing, and the collapse of the cannabis market. Rising living costs, scarce affordable housing, and limited training opportunities exacerbate these challenges, particularly for remote rural areas and communities of color. Due to a lack of diversification, the region is also grappling with an aging population, youth exodus, labor shortages, and economic vulnerabilities.

Historic rural disinvestment patterns have had a significant impact on the region, and capacity and infrastructure challenges emerged as themes throughout conversations with residents and community leaders. The lack of organizations and professionals to carry forward the work and the sizable burden of updating critical infrastructure in a region with few incorporated municipalities, diffuse rural and remote populations, and historic disinvestment constitutes a major challenge that inhibits progress on economic development initiatives. Concerns over grid capacity, utility rates, and service coverage are growing more dire and urgent.

### Aligned Goals and Strategies

Existing comprehensive economic development strategies (CEDs) speak to growing business opportunities, jobs, and development projects in the Blue Economy, Green Economy, Tourism, and Renewable Energy sectors. Whereas all

plans emphasize support for small businesses and entrepreneurs, the focus of those recently completed in Del Norte and Mendocino Counties was also on building capacity and resilience of rural and Tribal communities, in particular through investments in broadband and transportation. The region is therefore currently investing in digital equity, offshore wind initiatives, and youth career pathways to foster future economic growth, among other shared visions for prosperity.

### Health Disparities

The Redwood Region exhibits significant health disparities, with elevated mortality rates resulting from high smoking rates, substance abuse, and mental health issues. These disparities are driven by socioeconomic determinants such as poverty, limited education, and environmental hazards. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach targeting at-risk populations, including people of color, LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, those with disabilities, and isolated older adults.

### Priority Sectors for Economic Growth

There is a high degree of alignment and agreement across the region on key sectors and opportunities for growth, documented through review of existing CEDs, previous industry cluster analysis, and of surveys and listening sessions conducted with members of a wide range of relevant organizations. Based on these research activities, RRRISE identified four priority sectors for economic growth:



Arts, Culture, and Tourism



Health and Caregiving



Renewable and Resilient Energy



Working Lands and Blue Economy

These sectors draw on historic strengths (particularly with respect to natural resources and tourism), comparative advantage, and clear market signals indicating directions for sustainable and inclusive growth. Cross cutting industries like construction trades are highlighted as high potential areas for investment.

## Labor Market Analysis

The labor market analysis for the Redwood Region revealed shifts from traditional industries to healthcare, government, and services, highlighting the need for specialized training in high-demand fields. The region faces challenges in career awareness, training alignment, support services, and K-12 preparation. Addressing these challenges requires expanding earn-and-learn models, employability skills training, flexible training programs, and digital literacy upskilling.

## Input From Priority Communities

Direct feedback from priority communities calls attention to their need for stable jobs with livable wages, relevant skill-development opportunities, sufficient community resources to meet basic housing, transportation, child/family care and healthcare needs, and meaningful work structured in ways that fulfill the reasons they choose to live and work in the region—despite sometimes facing and enduring significant challenges. People in priority communities spoke about the impacts of trauma, violence, discrimination and exclusion, and the importance of connection, social safety, the experience of

being valued, and the desire to simply meet basic needs while being able to choose a career path structured so as to honor the many reasons they call the region home.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

The Collaborative's SWOT analysis provides detailed context and understanding of the drivers behind the data, which were derived from hundreds of listening sessions and participatory research exercises. Highlighted are the region's strengths—traditional knowledge and indigenous cultures, entrepreneurial spirit, and connection to land and natural resources. Challenges include low capacity, geographically isolated communities, and infrastructure constraints. Opportunities lie in diversifying into renewable energy, investing in infrastructure, and developing robust career pathways through university-industry partnerships.

## Looking to the Future

The Redwood Region must transition to regenerative natural resource management, make considerable investments in infrastructure, and address social determinants of health in order to enhance resilience. Empowering Tribal Nations, building local capacity, bridging social capital, and piloting community wealth-building strategies will be transformative. Leveraging new sources of capital will catalyze this Regional Roadmap, unlocking the Redwood Region's potential for an inclusive and sustainable future.



## Summary of the Region's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

### S trengths

- ◆ The remaining stands of globally significant, old-growth redwood forest are predominantly located in their namesake region—sequestering millions of tons of carbon while drawing over a million visitors to the region each year.
- ◆ The original inhabitants of the region still live on their ancestral lands, preserving thousands of years of traditional knowledge and best ecological practice with respect to land and forest management.
- ◆ Land ethic: The region's unique social history continues to foster a culture of deep connection to and reverence for its lands and waters. The region excels at eco-innovation and has a strong sustainability ethos.
- ◆ The region possesses two- and four-year universities that are proactively engaged in creating pathways for young residents to realize career aspirations and in providing re-training initiatives.



### W eaknesses

- ◆ An economy composed largely of non-tradable sectors, not (yet) driven by major, globally competitive industries. Historic reliance on sale of primary commodities.
- ◆ Small private sector (esp. Del Norte).
- ◆ Low diversification makes the region vulnerable to boom-and-bust cycles.
- ◆ Prevalence of historic and childhood trauma, high incidence of mental health issues and related disabilities, insufficient care facilities and behavioral health workforce. Social isolation and alienation; remote and disconnected communities. Poor mental health outcomes disproportionately impacting disinvested communities.
- ◆ High attrition rate from the workforce at prime age; high disability rate at prime age, likely related to the above.
- ◆ The region experiences high levels of poverty, driven in part by low labor force participation and low wages. Exacerbating poverty is the region's high cost of living and scarcity of critical, enabling services (e.g., healthcare and housing). High rates of poverty disproportionately impact disinvested communities, including people of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQIA2S+ individuals.
- ◆ Institutions exhibit chronic low capacity, lack of key institutional partners to advance economic development initiatives, and nascent or absent collaboration on key issues facing the region due to lack of capacity.
- ◆ Aging, obsolete infrastructure creates vulnerabilities in water delivery, transportation, energy, communications, and other crucial systems. Degraded waste sites jeopardize drinking water and fisheries.
- ◆ The housing crisis is severe on the North Coast. Outdated stock is associated with high incidences of lead poisoning in children.



## Opportunities

- ◆ Restoring forest health is a major job-creation opportunity for the region, climate-adaptation opportunity for the state, and carbon-sequestration opportunity for the world. Natural resource and ecosystem restoration careers are thus a major opportunity.
- ◆ A recent feasibility study found three call areas along the Redwood Region to be viable for offshore wind development, which is already underway in Humboldt Bay.
- ◆ Regionally, a unified focus on four key areas for economic development and diversification: Arts, Culture, and Tourism; Health and Caregiving; Renewable and Resilient Energy; and Working Lands and Blue Economy. Construction needs in these sectors coupled with urgent needs for infrastructure updates and housing development drive the promise of building- and trades-based industries in the priority clusters.
- ◆ The region's need for medical professionals presents an economic development opportunity with the promise to deliver thriving wage careers for Redwood Region residents.

## Threats

- ◆ Catastrophic wildfires have enormous economic, health, and social impacts with impacted inland jurisdictions perpetually in "recovery mode." Wildfires play a major role in and are potentially the leading regional source of greenhouse gas emissions.
- ◆ Sea level rise puts key coastal assets at risk. Extreme heat events are predicted to become more frequent and severe in inland areas. The area's fog belt may decline.
- ◆ Natural disasters: Communities in the region are also frequently recovering from earthquakes and tsunamis. Flooding is an issue.
- ◆ The rising cost of essentials and rising incomes in urban areas push young people and skilled workers out of the region.
- ◆ A shifting regulatory environment and burdensome regulations hinder infrastructure development. Public funding opportunities are delivered inaccessibly, perpetuating cycles of disinvestment.
- ◆ Artificial intelligence and automation put lower wage workers in various fields at risk of displacement.



## CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Figures</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Redwood Region RISE</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Redwood Region Overview</b>	<b>24</b>
Brief Economic and Social History of the Redwood Coast	25
Disinvestment in the Region	27
The Redwood Region Today	29
Overview of Regional Assets and Opportunities	30
<b>Chapter 2. Partner Mapping</b>	<b>33</b>
Community Readiness for California Jobs First	34
Attributes of Collaborative Partners	35
Overview of Outreach and Engagement Efforts	39
Environmental Scan: Organizations and Assets Serving Economic and Community Development Interests	42
Overview of Current Economic Development Plans and Strategies	50
<b>Chapter 3. Economic Analysis</b>	<b>54</b>
Economic Well-Being and Cost of Living	55
Unequal Development in the Region	61
Industry Composition and Trends	65
Major Employers and Economic Drivers	66
Economic Shocks and Shifts—Sources of Disparity and of Resilience	67
Economic Development Opportunities	71
Introducing Key Sectors	74
<b>Chapter 4. Climate Analysis</b>	<b>76</b>
Environmental Risks for Communities	77
Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions	83
Current and Anticipated Impacts of Climate Change on the Redwood Coast	88
Impacts on Disinvested Communities	91
Environmental Leadership in the Region	93



## CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 5. Public Health Analysis</b>	<b>95</b>
Conceptual Framework	96
Health Disparities on the Redwood Coast	96
Proximate Risk Factors	99
Impacts of Disinvestment on Community Health	102
Climate and Environments Impacts on Community Health	111
<b>Chapter 6. Industry Cluster Analysis</b>	<b>114</b>
Methodology	115
Overall Potential Job Growth for Major Industry Sectors, Redwood Region	116
Agriculture and Blue Economy	117
Wood Products	123
Arts, Culture, and Tourism	126
Renewable and Resilient Energy, Enabling Industries	128
Health and Caregiving	132
Summary of Cluster Alignment with RRRISE Goals and Outlook	133
<b>Chapter 7. Labor Market Analysis</b>	<b>135</b>
Major Trends in the Labor Market	136
Wage Disparities and Equity Considerations	140
Workers At Risk of Displacement	141
Barriers to Workforce Participation	143
Projected Workforce Development Needs in High-Growth Living Wage and Family-Sustaining Occupations	143
Potential Gaps in Local Education and Training	146
Industry-Specific Labor Standards that Meet High-Road Priorities	152
<b>Chapter 8. SWOT Analysis</b>	<b>154</b>
SWOT Methodology	154
The Region's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats	156
Target Industries SWOT Analysis	174
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>185</b>
A. Glossary of Terms	185
B. Partnership Survey	188
C. Industry Cluster Methodology	196
<b>References</b>	<b>197</b>

## FIGURES

<b>Figure I.1.</b> Key Data Sources	19
<b>Figure I.2</b> Redwood Region RISE Planning Phase Flow Chart	20
<b>Figure 1.1</b> Redwood Coast Region and Population (2017–2021)	25
<b>Figure 1.2</b> Age Distribution (2007–2021)	26
<b>Figure 1.3</b> Low-Income or Disadvantaged Communities as Designated by California Jobs First	28
<b>Figure 2.1</b> Desired Role in Collaborative	35
<b>Figure 2.2</b> Regional balance of RRRISE Partners (11/2023)	36
<b>Figure 2.3</b> Sectoral Balance of RISE Partners (11/2023)	36
<b>Figure 2.4</b> Strength of Connections Among Organizational Types	37
<b>Figure 2.5</b> Annual Budget of Organizations	37
<b>Figure 2.6</b> Employed Full Time Staff	38
<b>Figure 2.7</b> Capacity of Partner Organizations	38
<b>Figure 2.8</b> Barriers Experienced by Partner Organizations	39
<b>Figure 2.9</b> Outreach and Engagement Strategies	40
<b>Figure 2.10</b> Redwood Region RISE Planning Phase: Breakdown of Outreach and Engagement Activities	40
<b>Figure 2.11</b> Tribal Recipients of Grants for RISE Participation	42
<b>Figure 2.12</b> Redwood Region RISE: Existing Entities and Engagement to Date	43
<b>Figure 2.13</b> Redwood Region Strategic Economic Development Plans, (2014–2023)	51
<b>Figure 2.14</b> Redwood Region Industries in County Plans (2018–2025)	52
<b>Figure 3.1</b> Change in Economic Output Measured by Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per Capita, (2001–2021)	55
<b>Figure 3.2</b> Indicators of Economic Well-being (2018–2022)	56
<b>Figure 3.3</b> Monthly Cost of Living for a Family of Two Full-Time Working Adults and Two Children as a Ratio of Labor Income (2017–2021)	57
<b>Figure 3.4</b> Regional Housing Data	58
<b>Figure 3.5</b> Number of New and Renewed Fair Access to Insurance Requirement (FAIR) Plan Policies in Lake County by Year	58
<b>Figure 3.6</b> Householders Without Internet Access (2017–2021)	61
<b>Figure 3.7</b> Intraregional Variation in Poverty Rates (2018–2022)	62
<b>Figure 3.8</b> Measures of Rurality (2010)	63
<b>Figure 3.9</b> Disaggregated Poverty Rates (2018–2022)	64
<b>Figure 3.10</b> Ethnic Composition of High Poverty Areas, from PolicyLink’s Equity Atlas	65
<b>Figure 3.11</b> Number of Businesses by Size Category, Redwood Region Counties, Third Quarter, (2022)	66
<b>Figure 3.12</b> Major Employers in the Redwood Region	66
<b>Figure 3.13</b> Redwood Region Unemployment Rate (1990–2023)	68
<b>Figure 3.14</b> Change in Total Employment by County (February 2020–April 2020)	68
<b>Figure 4.1</b> CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Indicators (2023)	78
<b>Figure 4.2</b> Impaired Waterways Map	80

## FIGURES

<b>Figure 4.3</b> Groundwater Threats	81
<b>Figure 4.4</b> Emissions by Sector	84
<b>Figure 4.5</b> CARB Mandatory Reporting Facilities in the Redwood Region (2020)	85
<b>Figure 4.6</b> Major Sources of GHG Emissions, Air, Water, and Hazardous Waste from Potential Growth Clusters, Emissions (kg) per Job	86
<b>Figure 4.7</b> Average Annual Carbon Net Flux by County (Years 2001–2009 to 2011–2019)	87
<b>Figure 4.8</b> Forest Land Carbon Stock in Northern California (2010–2019)	87
<b>Figure 4.9</b> Economic Risks and Losses Related to Climate Change on the Redwood Coast	90
<b>Figure 4.10</b> Populations at Risk of Adverse Impacts from Climate Change	92
<b>Figure 4.11</b> Climate Impacts on Vulnerable Populations	92
<b>Figure 5.1</b> Premature Death and Life Expectancy (2018–2020)	97
<b>Figure 5.2</b> Premature Death and Life Expectancy by Race and Ethnicity (2018–2020)	97
<b>Figure 5.3</b> Disability Rates (2017–2021)	98
<b>Figure 5.4</b> Disability Rates by Race or Ethnicity (2017–2021)	98
<b>Figure 5.5</b> Smoking Rates (2011–2022)	99
<b>Figure 5.6</b> Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Rate per 100,000 (2017–2022)	100
<b>Figure 5.7</b> Car Crashes or Deaths Involving Alcohol Use	101
<b>Figure 5.8</b> Answers to the Question “Have you ever seriously thought about committing suicide?” (2011–2022)	102
<b>Figure 5.9</b> Total Counted Homeless per 100,000 Population by Continuum of Care (2016–2020)	103
<b>Figure 5.10</b> Homeless Public School Children (2011–2014 and 2016–2018)	103
<b>Figure 5.11</b> Disaggregated Poverty Rates (2017–2021)	104
<b>Figure 5.12</b> Proximate Risk Factors by Income Range (2011–2021, Binge Drinking 2011 – 2015)	105
<b>Figure 5.13</b> Proximate Risk Factors by Loneliness, Age 65+ (2019–2020)	106
<b>Figure 5.14</b> Householders Living Alone, Percent of Households (2017–2021)	106
<b>Figure 5.15</b> Health Professional Shortage Areas and Scores (2023) <sup>80</sup>	108
<b>Figure 5.16</b> Comparative Analysis of Demographic Disparities in Health Factors (2011–2022)	111
<b>Figure 5.17</b> Blood Lead Levels, Children 5 and Under	112
<b>Figure 6.1</b> Potential Rate of Job Growth for Major Economic Sectors (2020–2030)	116
<b>Figure 6.2</b> Employment Trends and Location Quotients, Identified Industry Clusters	117
<b>Figure 6.3</b> Intraregional Agriculture Specialization, Percent of Total Market Value Produced	118
<b>Figure 6.4</b> Agriculture and Blue Economy Cluster Performance	119
<b>Figure 6.5</b> U.S. Commodity Market Price Signals, Producer Price Index Adjusted to 2013 = 100	120
<b>Figure 6.6</b> Redwood Region Cannabis Production and Statewide Prices	121
<b>Figure 6.7</b> Redwood Region Commercial Fish Landings and Market Value	122
<b>Figure 6.8</b> Redwood Region Lumber Production and Market Value	124



## FIGURES

<b>Figure 6.9</b> Wood Products Cluster Performance	125
<b>Figure 6.10</b> Arts, Culture, and Tourism Industries Performance	127
<b>Figure 6.11</b> RRE Enabling Industries Performance	129
<b>Figure 6.12</b> Health and Caregiving Industries Performance	132
<b>Figure 6.13</b> Industry Cluster Analysis Summary	134
<b>Figure 7.1</b> Employment Concentration and Change Since 2001 (2001, 2022)	137
<b>Figure 7.2</b> Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) and Unemployment Rate, Prime Age Adults	138
<b>Figure 7.3</b> Main Reason Not Working, Prime Age Adults	139
<b>Figure 7.4</b> Hourly Wage by Education and Age	140
<b>Figure 7.5</b> Median Wage by Race/Ethnicity and Educational Attainment (2020)	141
<b>Figure 7.6</b> Workforce Demographics (Left) and Percent Breakdown of All Projected Jobs Created (Right) from (2020-2030)	142
<b>Figure 7.7</b> Top Projected Living Wage Openings Requiring Postsecondary Education or Training, Projected Openings per Year	145
<b>Figure 7.8</b> Out-of-Field Teachers	147
<b>Figure 7.9</b> Educational Attainment, Population 25 Years or Older (2017-2021)	148
<b>Figure 7.10</b> K-12 Math and Reading Proficiency by Socioeconomic Status (2017-2019)	148
<b>Figure 7.11</b> High School Graduation Rates and College Preparedness (2017-2021)	149
<b>Figure 7.12</b> Mendocino College (MC), College of the Redwoods (CR) and Woodland Community College (WCC) Average Program Completion per Year from Academic (Years 18/19 to 22/23)	150
<b>Figure 7.13</b> Cal Poly Humboldt Average Program Completion per Year from Academic (Years 18/19 to 22/23)	151
<b>Figure 8.1</b> Monthly Data Walks and Presentations	155
<b>Figure 8.2</b> Five Capitals Framework for Sustainability	155
<b>Figure 8.3</b> SWOT Analysis - Human and Intellectual Capital	156
<b>Figure 8.4</b> Innovation Index Ranking Among Similarly Rural U.S. Counties	159
<b>Figure 8.5</b> SWOT Analysis - Social and Relational Capital	161
<b>Figure 8.6</b> SWOT Analysis - Physical Capital	165
<b>Figure 8.7</b> SWOT Analysis - The Natural Environment	170
<b>Figure 8.8</b> SWOT Analysis - Financial Capital	172
<b>Figure C.1</b> Criteria for Identification of Specialized and Resilient Industry Clusters	196

## Acronyms

### Acronym

### Definition

**AB**

Assembly Bill

**ACE**

Adverse Childhood Experiences

**ACS**

American Community Survey

**ADU**

Accessory Dwelling Unit

**AEDC**

Arcata Economic Development Corporation

**AI**

Artificial Intelligence

**AIAN**

American Indian and Alaska Native

**BARHII**

Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative

**BIPOC**

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

**BLL**

Blood Lead Levels

**CalEPA**

California Environmental Protection Agency

**CARB**

California Air Resources Board

**CBO**

Community-based Organization

**CCC**

California Community College

**CCRP**

California Center for Rural Policy

**CDC**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**CDFI**

Community Development Finance Institutions

**CDFW**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

**CDPH**

California Department of Public Health

**CEDS**

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

**CERF**

Community Economic Resilience Fund

## Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
CHIS	California Health Information Survey
CHRR	County Health Rankings & Roadmaps
CoC	Continuum of Care
CORE	Climate & Community Resilience
CPH	Cal Poly Humboldt
CR	College of the Redwoods
CSU	California State University
CTE	Career Technical Education
DUI	Driving Under the Influence
EDA	Economic Development Agency
EDC	Economic Development Corporation
EDD	Economic Development District
EDD	Employment Development Department
EDDI	Evaporation Demand Drought Index
EDF	Economic Development Finance
EDFC	Economic Development & Financing Corporation
EIE	Environmental Insights Explorer
EV	Electric Vehicle
FAA AIP	Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Improvement Program
FAIR	Fair Access to Insurance Requirement
GHG	Greenhouse Gases



## Acronyms

### Acronym

### Definition

**HAF+WRCF**

Humboldt Area Foundation and Wild Rivers Community Foundation

**HCWDB**

Humboldt County Workforce Development Board

**HHS**

Health and Human Services

**HML**

Humboldt, Mendocino, and Lake Counties

**HPSA**

Health Provider Shortage Area

**HUD**

Department of Housing and Urban Development

**ICLEI**

Local Governments for Sustainability

**IRR**

Index of Relative Rurality

**LQ**

Location Quotient

**LUST**

Leaking Underground Storage Tank

**LVN**

Licensed Vocational Nurse

**MBF**

Mile Board Feet

**MHI**

Median Household Income

**MMIWG2**

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People

**NAICS**

North American Industry Classification System

**NCIRWMP**

North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

**NCRP**

North Coast Resource Partnership

**NorCal**

Northern California

**NoRTEC**

Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium

**PIT**

Point-In Time

## Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
<b>PUMA</b>	Public Use Microdata Area
<b>PUMS</b>	Public Use Microdata Sample
<b>QCEW</b>	Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages
<b>RII</b>	Regional Investment Initiative
<b>RISE</b>	Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Economy
<b>RN</b>	Registered Nurse
<b>RRE</b>	Renewable and Resilient Energy
<b>RREDC</b>	Redwood Region Economic Development Commission
<b>RRRISE</b>	Redwood Region Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Economy
<b>SBA</b>	Small Business Administration
<b>SBDC</b>	Small Business Development Center
<b>SMEDD</b>	Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
<b>SWRCB</b>	State Water Resources Control Board
<b>TIMS</b>	Traffic Incident Management System
<b>USDA</b>	United State Department of Agriculture
<b>USGS</b>	United States Geological Survey
<b>WANB</b>	Workforce Alliance of the North Bay
<b>WCC</b>	Woodland Community College
<b>WIOA</b>	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

# 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. While some aspects of the initiative’s funding and structure have evolved, its core ambition remains unchanged: to create high-quality, accessible employment opportunities and strengthen regional resilience to climate change and other global disruptions impacting California’s diverse economies.

The RII investment established Jobs First Collaboratives in 13 regions across California. Redwood Region RISE (RRRISE) serves Tribal Lands and the counties of Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino, with broad representation from labor,

business, local government, and education, environmental justice, community organizations, and more. The Collaboratives were tasked with developing Regional Roadmaps, including sector strategies and recommended investments for their respective regions.<sup>1</sup>

This report, 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:

<b>Introduction</b>	Description of Redwood Region’s California Jobs First Collaborative: Redwood Region RISE.
<b>Overview of the Region</b>	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.
<b>Partner Mapping</b>	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.
<b>Economic Analysis</b>	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.

<sup>1</sup> 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](#)].



<b>Climate Analysis</b>	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.
<b>Public Health Analysis</b>	Overview of health disparities, proximate risk factors, and their economic and environmental drivers.
<b>Industry Cluster Analysis</b>	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.
<b>Labor Market Analysis</b>	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.
<b>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis</b>	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 this 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 Planning Phase 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).

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

## 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> “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.

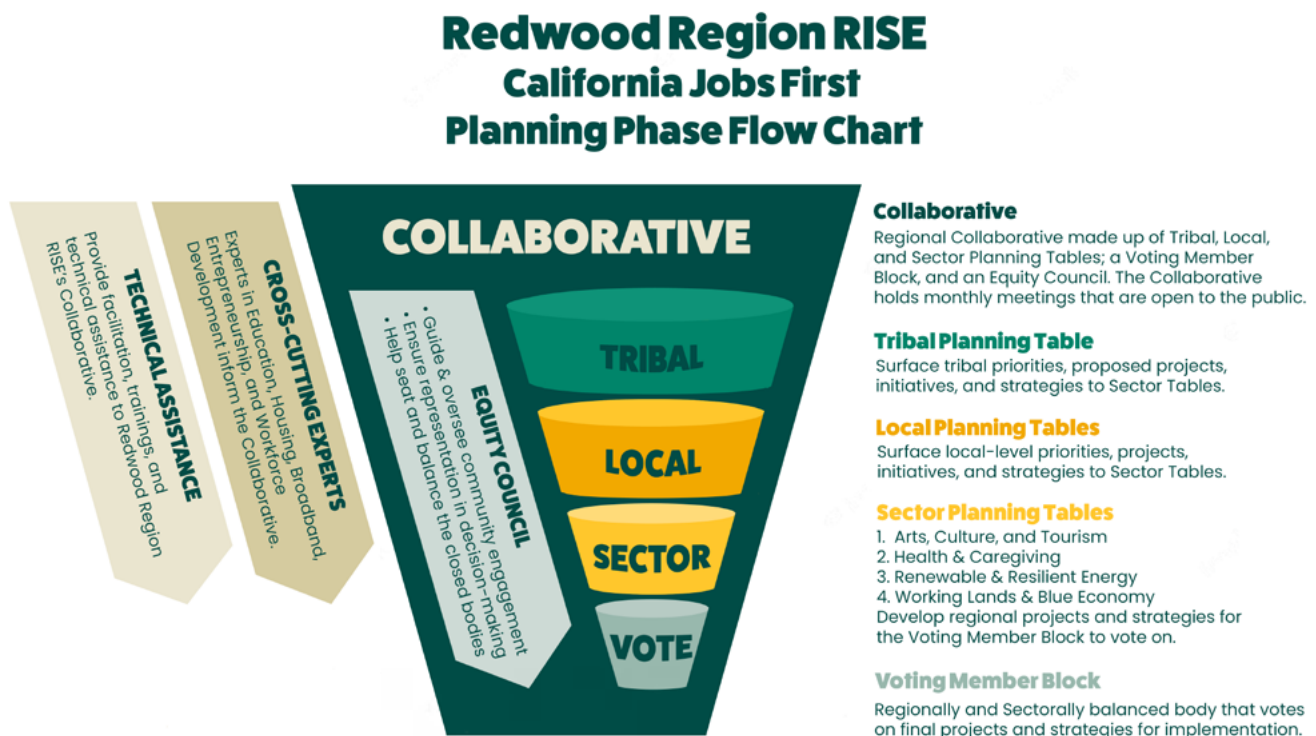
Redwood Region RISE launched in February 2023, committing to lead an inclusive, diverse, transparent, and accountable regional planning process and to include and honor community voices that do not always participate in or benefit from economic development planning processes. The following principles 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 is documented in Regional Plan Part 2. 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.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter 2 Partner Mapping describes how these were identified.