

Redwood Region RISE Semi-Annual Report

January – June 2025 (Q1 & Q2)

Redwood Region RISE: Aligning regional action with statewide goals to create quality jobs, support environmental stewardship, and uplift communities through key sectors.

1. At a Glance: Redwood Region Economic Trends

Economic Landscape

California's economy faces challenges in 2025—despite [strong growth in 2024](#), the state now confronts a [\\$12 to 20 billion budget deficit](#), rising unemployment, [job losses](#), and [declining labor force participation](#), creating particular difficulties for rural communities through budget cuts and reduced federal support. Against this backdrop of economic uncertainty, the Redwood Region, rich in natural resources and Tribal leadership, is working to break historical boom-bust cycles by fostering a resilient, inclusive, sustainable economy.

RRRISE's Role in Regional Transformation

[Redwood Region RISE \(RRRISE\)](#), as part of the [California Jobs First](#) Initiative, advances triple bottom line economic development—integrating equity, sustainability, and economic growth—through a Collective Impact Model grounded in inclusive governance, shared goals, and results-based accountability. Guided by a Theory of Change (see next page) and supported by Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems, RRRISE aims to drive sustainable investment and quality job growth in four sectors:

- **Arts, Culture, and Tourism:** Grow the creative economy by expanding cultural infrastructure and building networks with partners and arts organizations.
- **Health and Caregiving:** Address workforce shortages and care access through strategic coordination and training to serve rural, and underserved communities.
- **Renewable and Resilient Energy:** Advance clean energy careers and infrastructure while building capacity for microgrids and community-led energy solutions.
- **Working Lands and Blue Economy:** Revitalize forests, fisheries, ports, and farms through regenerative approaches while connecting communities and producers to strengthen markets.

→ Learn more and explore collaboration opportunities at bit.ly/Redwood-RISE.

2. Introduction

This first Semi-Annual Report highlights the activities and progress of the Redwood Region RISE Collaborative from January to June 2025. It offers an overview of early implementation milestones, governance developments, and investment decisions. Through this and future reports, we aim to provide partners and the public with clear, data-informed insights into our shared work advancing economic development, equity, and climate resilience.

Key Accomplishments Overview

- **Economic Development**

- Awarded \$9M from California Jobs First Catalyst funding to a strategically balanced portfolio of pre-development stage initiatives.
- Sector Investment Coordinators (SICs) finalized “Activation Plans” detailing 18-month regional growth strategies for strategic sectors, while deepening project cataloging and phasing work initiated through Catalyst applications and the [Projects Map](#).
- Released RFP for Sector Investment Coordinator-Capacity Support & Workforce Development Coordinator role, received five strong proposals.
- Hosted Collaborative and Leadership meetings to facilitate regional collaboration.
- Facilitated Collaborative feedback for sector development activities.
- Continued planning for upcoming November 5th in-person convening.

- **Equity**

- Engaged Tribal and priority community partners to expand participation and reduced barriers to applying for Catalyst and Tribal Investment Initiative funds.

- **Climate**

- Funded multiple Catalyst projects that advance renewable energy, land stewardship, and climate-resilient careers across the region.
- Supported Bioeconomy, Clean Energy, and green AgTech projects to pursue additional California Jobs First funding.

- **Overall Impact**

- *Governance:* Strengthened organizational alignment through monthly leadership meetings across key groups: Equity Council, Tribal Table, Voting Block, Sector Investment Coordinators, Economic Development Finance Working Group, and Convening Team. Updated the [Governance Model](#), mobilized resources for Collaborative Sustainability planning, and launched the Catalyst After-Action Review to formalize sub-granting policies and resource allocation procedures.
- *Advocacy:* Briefed state and regional representatives on Regional Roadmap priorities and represented the Redwood Region in state forums including CALED and the California Stewardship Network.
- *Communications:* Improved [RRRISE website](#), launched [Resource Toolkit](#) and [Projects Map](#), maintained [newsletters](#) and [LinkedIn](#) with enhanced engagement strategy, and developed the first Semi-Annual Progress Report (this report).

3. Progress Report January – June 2025

The progress report is organized according to RRRISE's Theory of Change ([open visual here](#)), documenting progress in four key areas: *Economic Development, Equity, Climate, and Overall Impact*. Each section reflects how coordinated regional action is addressing structural challenges and advancing toward shared goals—supporting investment readiness, community empowerment, and long-term resilience.

Economic Development	
Q1-2 Goal	Key Accomplishments
1. Shared agenda setting	
Finalize Sector Activation Plans	Sector Activation Plans Development and Implementation - After collaboration with (preliminary) Sector Advisory Councils, community leaders, sector experts, peers across the state, and the Regional Convener, Sector Investment Coordinators presented draft Activation Plans to RRRISE Collaborative Bodies (Equity Council, Tribal Table, and Voting Member Block), receiving consensus recommendations and collaboration pathways that were incorporated into final state submissions. - The finalized Sector Activation Plans build on Regional Plan Part 2 to provide a strategic framework for implementing strategies that address sector-specific workforce barriers through tailored tactics and tasks, serving as living documents for continued refinement and operationalization throughout the Implementation phase.
Revise Roadmap	Regional Roadmap Revision and Public Engagement – Following a Public Comment period, RRRISE released a Revised Regional Roadmap in May 2025, and established a semi-annual revision schedule.
2. Build regional networking, partnerships, and trust	
Build connections between regional interest holders	Quarterly Collaborative Meetings and Regional Engagement – Redwood Region RISE held Quarterly Collaborative meetings on March 27 and June 27, 2025, providing spaces for work and progress updates, shared learning, and (inter)regional networking and collaboration. March meeting: Catalyst funding updates, Implementation phase administrative updates including the California Jobs First State Blueprint and Tribal Funding, and governing body reports. June meeting: New "sector-focused" format, showcasing strategic regional efforts, Sector Investment Coordinators' use of Activation Plans, Collaborative Bodies' support for implementation strategies, and Catalyst Initiatives, resulting in new participant connections and increased interest in CCRP communications, in particular the newly launched Projects Map.
	Economic Development Finance Capacity Building – RRRISE's Economic Development Finance (EDF) Working Group held bimonthly meetings, including sector-focused expert sessions co-hosted by Sector Investment Coordinators. These sessions brought together field experts and facilitated networking, idea sharing, and connections to potential funding sources across various sectors, building participants' capacity to pursue state and federal funds, philanthropy, and other revenue sources.

Redwood Region RISE Semi-Annual Report January – June 2025 (Q1 & Q2)

	Sector Advisory Group Development and Coordination – Sector Investment Coordinators developed preliminary Advisory Council rosters to meet sector-based appointment goals. While most groups await full development and Voting Member Block approval, Coordinators secured ongoing Activation Plan feedback through regular meetings with assembled members and experts. The process strengthened collaborative pathways between Tribal Table and Equity Council partners in sector activities, while monthly Office Hours with the Regional Convener (CCRP) provided informal support to coordinators.
	Enhanced Coordination and Governance – The Executive Committee (representing the Tribal Table, Equity Council, and Voting Member Block) took a steering role to guide alignment on governance decisions, particularly during the Catalyst Predevelopment Funds process. Enhanced coordination was facilitated through monthly Leadership Team meetings with the Economic Development Finance Working Group, Sector Investment Coordinators, and the Convening Team, as well as essential regional partners like the K16 Collaborative.
Strengthen regional collaboration through strategic engagement	Resource Toolkit, Partner Directory, and Projects Map Launched – RRRISE launched a comprehensive Resource Toolkit with Roadmap materials such as animation and sector-strategy videos, as well as funding resources, a Public Media Gallery, Partner Directory, the “Humans of the Redwoods” storytelling series, and a Projects Map showcasing Roadmap-aligned economic development initiatives.
	Regional Newsletter Communications and Engagement – RRRISE distributed bimonthly newsletters (recent edition here) in English and Spanish to Collaborative members and external audiences including community partners, investors/funders, and policymakers. The newsletters track regional progress, highlight partnerships, and share success stories. Between January–June, 12,700+ newsletters were distributed with a 70% open rate and 8.0% click rate.
	Enhanced Social Media Presence and Regional Networking – RRRISE launched a LinkedIn account in May 2025 to amplify Collaborative work and engage regional, state, and federal partners. Initial results show promising engagement: 1,560+ impressions, 140 clicks, 83 reactions, and 14.5% engagement rate.
	Press Release and Media Coverage – RRRISE distributed its Press Release announcing (preliminary) Catalyst Awardees. Media coverage between January – June 2025 included articles in Humboldt-based news outlets the Lost Coast Outpost and the Redheaded Blackbelt, Lake County-based Lake County News, Del Norte County-based Del Norte Triplicate, an OpEd in Eureka Times Standard by College of the Redwoods President Dr. Keith Flamer, and the California Business & Economic Development’s Tribal announcement, including our region’s Scotts Valley Energy Corporation award of \$1M.
3. Unlock the potential of new and “unlikely” partnerships	
Fostering collaboration	Connecting & Strengthening New Partnerships – The RRRISE Collaborative’s 10 Catalyst Initiatives demonstrate how regional partnerships drive regional economic resilience across Sustainable Forestry & Fiber; Tribal Energy Sovereignty; Food Systems; “Grow Your Own” Health Workforce; and Culture & Placemaking. Most Catalyst projects fully embraced the regional collaboration model, bringing many partners together across county lines for the first time through RRRISE engagement. RRRISE is providing technical assistance plans to provide partnership coaching to support these emerging collaborations.

	Preliminary Development of “Collective Impact Model” – With the launch of its Operational Plan, RRRISE began developing its Collective Impact Model to transform fragmented local efforts into coordinated action that accelerates community–desired projects from vision to investment readiness. Anchored by the Convening Team, the model will align Sector Investment Coordinators’s Activation Plans with governance decisions to reflect community needs. This structured approach aims to build the organizational capacity and collaborative infrastructure necessary to secure significant funding and execute projects at scale across the region. Briefing Elected Officials – Fiscal agent North Edge Financing organized briefings for policymakers (Board of Supervisors, State/Federal Representatives) to socialize the Regional Roadmap, and provide regular progress updates on RRRISE’s work.
4. Invest in developing concepts and moving them towards funding proposals	
Seed promising initiatives in key industry sectors	Catalyst Fund Application and Selection Process – RRRISE prioritized developing competitive regional proposals by offering comprehensive technical assistance with initial focus on priority communities, including early project design support, grant writing mentors, Sector and Finance Experts, Q&A sessions, and tailored support from Tribal Table and Equity Council Facilitators to help promising concepts overcome barriers. After 30 community scorers evaluated all 66 proposals and Collaborative Bodies and Sector Investment Coordinators provided recommendation letters on finalists, Voting Members expanded the initial top 25 portfolio to ensure regional equity, established minimum funding thresholds (\$1.8M for Tribal-led projects, \$1M per county), and selected the final 10 initiatives (and their collaborators) totaling \$9 million. Advancing Catalyst Projects–And Beyond – By June 2025, all 10 Catalyst initiatives contracted with North Edge and began implementation with monthly oversight from Sector Investment Coordinators and the Regional Convener, ensuring alignment with Sector Activation Plans for integrated regional impact. Coordinators also continue to engage all non-funded applicants and previously identified projects, serving as connective tissue to link project leaders with expertise, partners, and funding opportunities.
5. Help organizations seed investment in key sectors	
Develop engagement and TA structure to start implementing Activation Plans	• Tribal Capacity Building Contract – The Tribal Table contracted with Lorna McLeod to provide technical assistance for grant development, funding proposals, and youth leadership development while strengthening Tribal capacity to advance community-identified economic development priorities and position Tribal-led initiatives for investment and implementation. • Catalyst Sector Investment Coordinator RFP – RRRISE released an RFP for a consultant to provide Capacity Support and Workforce Development through August 2026 across the four key sectors, working closely with Sector Investment Coordinators. Services will include project assessment, organizational capacity building, workforce model development, and industry data enhancement to strengthen regional economic development efforts.

Equity	
Q1-2 Goal	Key Accomplishments
1. Invest in leadership and capacity building initiatives for priority communities	
Strengthen engagement of priority communities	Equity Council Governance and Capacity Building – Following fall 2024 work developing an accessible Catalyst scoring rubric and supporting the recruitment of 30 community scorers, the Equity Council welcomed a new facilitator in Q1 of 2025 and accomplished the following: • Participated in monthly Leadership Meetings as part of the Executive Committee to steer collaborative implementation efforts and governance. • Submitted formal feedback letters on Catalyst proposals and recommendations to strengthen equitable granting processes. • Provided Activation Plan feedback and Advisory Council recommendations. • Engaged legal counsel to comprehensively review RRRISE's governing framework when governance concerns emerged, strengthening equity throughout the Collaborative's processes. The Council plans to present a transition motion to the Voting Block in Q3 2025 and finalize its revised charter by September.
	Tribal Table: Coordinating & Supporting Indigenous Leadership – The Tribal Table established itself as a growing advocacy and collaboration platform for Native Communities in the Redwood Region: • The new Tribal Table Facilitator convened 5 regular meetings through May 2025 and conducted in-person visits, building consistent engagement. • Participated in monthly Leadership Meetings as part of the Executive Committee, providing consensus recommendations on Catalyst funding decisions. • Facilitated partnerships with Humboldt Area and Wild Rivers Community Foundation's Redwood CORE Hub for California Jobs First Tribal Grant applications, explored inter-Tribal energy partnerships, and met with the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco on economic development opportunities. • Initiated grants & scholarships database development to improve Tribal youth funding access. • Selected a Youth Leadership and Tribal Business Development consultant to provide year-round programming strengthening future Tribal leadership and business growth through professional development, organizational planning, and resource networking.
2. Name and begin to dismantle barriers to meaningful partnership	
Improve accessibility and inclusion	Enhanced Accessibility & Inclusion in Catalyst Fund Process • The Voting Member Block used trust-based philanthropy models and technical assistance strategies to help reduce barriers to applying for Catalyst funding • Technical assistance provided for applicants from priority communities through Grant Writing Mentors and Sector/Finance Experts, providing strategic feedback and funding guidance. • The Convening Team worked with a team of TA experts to facilitate 65+ technical assistance appointments across several rounds and collected information on which applicants used technical assistance and its efficacy, through a question on the application form. The Equity Council conducted outreach to recruit diverse project scorers, advised on visual and language accessibility and project pitch formats, and helped craft an easy-to-use scoring rubric.

- The Tribal Table continued to facilitate inter-Tribal partnerships, and shared funding resources.
- The final portfolio selection allocated over 70% of funding supporting priority and disinvested community-led initiatives.

3. Build allyship and supportive relationships around BIPOC and Priority Community initiatives

Develop
support
networks

Building Support Networks Through Facilitation & TA – Between January – June 2025, RRRISE built and strengthened support networks for priority community initiatives by connecting leaders with technical assistance providers, collaborators, and resources. The Sector Investment Coordinators (SICs) played a central role in advancing Catalyst Program goals through strategic coordination and direct support:

- SICs offered strategic sector-focused technical assistance to potential Catalyst applicants.
- Provided targeted outreach to Catalyst grantees beginning in April, offering sector-aligned guidance on scopes of work, reporting, and work plan development.
- Worked with the Convening Team to develop and facilitate training sessions to onboard Catalyst grantees and introduce technical assistance channels.
- Initiated formation of Sector Advisory Councils, recruiting diverse members aligned with Equity Council recommendations to strengthen implementation guidance and regional collaboration
- Actively supported EDF Working Group’s Expert Session planning, including presenter outreach for industry-focused sessions.
- SICs continue building connective, sector-based networks in the region while providing TA support to proponents of the 50+ Catalyst proposals that weren’t selected for this specific Catalyst funding to assess other funding sources and partnering avenues. Their support includes: continued outreach and encouragement for Projects Map and project portfolio inclusion; tracking and follow-ups to facilitate interactions with meaningful outcomes; and the Health and Caregiving SIC team launching an external newsletter highlighting their work and sharing sector-relevant information.

Sector & Finance Expertise to Support Organizational Capacity –

- The [EDF Working Group](#) facilitated four Expert Sessions between February–May 2025, attracting 102 total attendees across topics including rural venture capital, grant writing, startup accelerators, and Arts, Culture, and Tourism financing. Additionally, the Working Group provided targeted technical assistance to help four applicants strengthen their Catalyst proposals by developing capital strategies, identifying complementary funding sources, and optimizing financial structures. The EDF Working Groups’ Facilitators work closely with and advise the Sector Investment Coordinators on finance development matters.
- Sector Investment Coordinators (SICs) conducted three in-person convenings to reflect on shared challenges, sectoral data trends, and outreach strategies. SICs participated in joint sessions with the Greater Sierra Region to explore inter-regional alignment opportunities.
- The SICs integrated Equity Council and Tribal Table recommendations into Sector Activation Plans, with the Equity Council offering to co-develop engagement best practices and provide guidance on creating inclusive spaces for priority communities. The Coordinators incorporated Tribal Table guidance emphasizing deeper, place-based collaboration with Tribal Councils and schools to build long-term workforce pathways in each sector.
- Sector Investment Coordinators Initiated early coordination pathways for collective implementation efforts and worked directly with Catalyst Project leads to develop comprehensive work plans aligned with the Regional Roadmap and Activation Plans.

Climate	
Q1-2 Goal	Key Accomplishments
1. Help direct investment into initiatives that promote low-carbon investment, increase resilience	
Advance climate-focused projects	Climate-Related Projects Funded through Catalyst in Renewable and Resilient Energy Sector: - Red Hills Bioenergy Facility and Central Wood Processing Plant (Scotts Valley Energy Corporation) [\$345,316.40] - Pinoleville Solar Port Installation & Renewable Energy Workforce Development (Pinoleville Pomo Nation) [\$450,000.00] - GRID Workforce Training Tiny Home Construction and Renewable Energy Systems (Building Lives By Building Structure Hoopa) [\$331,702.00] - Middletown Rancheria Community RISE Project (Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians) [\$500,000.00] <i>Proposed Outcomes:</i> → Training ~100 workers from Tribal Lands in solar installation and renewable energy trades → Improved clean energy access, resilience, and grid independence in Tribal communities
	Climate-Related Projects Funded through Catalyst in Working Lands and Blue Economy Sector: - Connecting Local Mass Timber to Regional Housing and Building Needs (Mad River Mass Timber) [\$500,000.00] - Developing a Climate Forward Workforce & Innovation Pipeline for Forest and Community Resilience (Forest WRX Alliance) [\$718,988.66] - Career Pathways: Fire, Forest, Fish & Facilities (Rural Resilience Partnership) [\$1,127,936.08] - Fire Lines & Fiber Bioregions: A Regional Wool Industry Cluster (Kaos Sheep Outfit) [\$607,855.70] - North Coast Food System Network (North Coast Growers' Association) [\$1,806,574.10] - Hmong Meat Processing Facility (Hmong Association of Crescent City) [\$500,000.00] - Redwood Corridor SEEDS Network (North Coast Opportunities) [\$450,000.00] <i>Proposed Outcomes:</i> → Training hundreds in natural resource careers that reduce fire risk & improve landscape health → Creating revenue and jobs from climate-friendly products and expanded markets → Improving regional value chains and building entrepreneurial capacity
	Cross-Sector Climate Initiatives – RRRISE funded projects incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) within the Catalyst portfolio to scale local innovation and drive climate solutions: - Carving a Legacy: Tribal Traditions, Woodworking, and Workforce Development (Blue Lake Rancheria) [\$740,907.00] - Redwood Corridor SEEDS Network (North Coast Opportunities) - Career Pathways: Fire, Forest, Fish & Facilities (Rural Resilience Partnership)

Overall Impact	
Q1-2 Goal	Key Accomplishments
1. Data-driven, results-based accountability on shared goals via Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)	
Develop data-driven, results based accountability on shared goals via Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL).	Progress on Shared Goals Tracking – RRRISE has initiated the development of a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) model to independently assess progress and inform strategic decisions about the Collaborative's future structure and operations. This Semi-Annual Report represents one of the outcomes-based deliverables designed to track alignment with shared goals using the Theory of Change framework. RRRISE's Sector Investment Coordinators, Tribal Table, Equity Council, as well as Catalyst Projects leaders utilize dedicated progress reports for regular reporting, with MEL insights informing transition planning for the post-funding period.
	Operational and Programmatic Challenges and Adaptive Changes – During this reporting period, RRRISE faced the dual challenge of launching implementation-phase activities while finalizing Catalyst contracts and Activation Plans. Key hurdles included coordinating across multiple governance bodies, ensuring timely input and approvals, and supporting partners with varying levels of capacity. In response, the Collaborative invested in adaptive strategies—strengthening communication through regular Leadership Team meetings, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and expanding technical assistance to better support Tribal and priority community participation.
2. Organizational Development	
Establish effective collaborative structures	Strategic Alignment and Coordination – The Executive Committee strengthened its strategic function, steering alignment across RRRISE's governance bodies and guiding key decisions during the Catalyst awarding and contracting processes. Monthly meetings enabled coordinated input from the Equity Council, Tribal Table, and Voting Member Block, supporting consistent integration of equity, Tribal sovereignty, and regional balance into early-stage implementation efforts.
	Voting Member Block: Navigating Conflict-of-Interest; Bylaws and Procedures in Action – The Voting Member Block operationalized its bylaws during the Catalyst selection process, activating clear procedures for addressing conflict-of-interest and decision-transparency. Members recused themselves where appropriate, demonstrating the value of RRRISE's codified governance framework in supporting trust-based, community-led funding decisions at scale.

5. Looking Ahead

As RRRISE enters the second half of 2025, the Collaborative is focused on deepening implementation and laying groundwork for long-term sustainability. Sector Investment Coordinators will advance sector priorities, and draft Project Portfolios. Key next steps include:

1. *Industry support and growth:*
 - a) **Arts, Culture, and Tourism:** Establish quarterly public reporting sessions starting in August 2025 and form a Regional Branding Advisory Group by July 2025 to develop strategic recommendations for regional identity and tourism marketing. Concurrently, the team will create a Project Mutual Aid Network for resource sharing between sector projects and begin developing advocacy materials for use at industry events.
 - b) **Health and Caregiving:** Create an asset map of existing healthcare pathways and pipeline programs starting in February 2025, along with coordinating meetings between workforce pipeline programs and employers throughout the region for curriculum alignment. Additionally, the team will begin encouraging equitable representation from priority populations in healthcare education programs and start designing trauma-informed, culturally relevant training programs by July 2025.
 - c) **Renewable and Resilient Energy:** Conduct a regional energy workforce gap analysis and needs assessment to identify training program requirements, scheduled for Q2 2026. Concurrently, the plan calls for establishing a regional coordinating body for clean energy initiatives by Q3 2025 and finalizing/piloting a low-voltage electrician training program by Q4 2025, with focus on Tribal members and underrepresented communities.
 - d) **Working Lands and Blue Economy:** Establish four sector-specific networks, host quarterly roundtables for collaboration, launch a central online platform for partner engagement, and facilitate the creation of regional branding and marketing campaigns for Redwood Region products in collaboration with the Arts, Culture, and Tourism sector. On August 21, 2025 the first sector-specific, in-person networking opportunity for projects representing food, fiber, and farm will be held in Ukiah.

Supporting projects and jurisdictions to pursue relevant public and private finance options (capital stacking and braiding, grant writing), and connecting supportive state and national players to industry development work being done in-region.

2. *Convening:* operationalizing the Collective Impact Model (including Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning [MEL] framework), as well as continuous improvement of governance and collaborative decision-making.

Guided by its [Theory of Change](#), Redwood Region RISE remains committed to inclusive economic development, climate resilience, and equity through coordinated regional action.