



Redwood Region
RISE

Redwood Region RISE Regional Roadmap Overview



California's Redwood Region

Tribal Lands, Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino Counties

A Product of Redwood Region RISE | The California Center for Rural Policy at Cal Poly Humboldt | June 2025

Redwood Region RISE: Forging a Collaborative Path to Economic Prosperity

California Jobs First's *Regional Investment Initiative* is a state-wide program that is distributing \$426 million to seed regional economies that are equitable, climate-forward, and create high-quality jobs in sustainable sectors that are desirable to communities.

Redwood Region RISE (Resilient Inclusive Sustainable Economy) is the name of our region's initiative, which includes Tribal Lands, Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino Counties. A regional collaborative of 150+ seated members with over a thousand residents from across the Redwood Region, our goal is to implement our 10-year Regional Economic Roadmap with fair strategies to invest in making our communities more resilient, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable.

Current Economic Landscape

As tech industry growth created wealth in other parts of California, the Redwood Region stagnated. Today, many families in the region struggle with big city costs on small town pay while the wealth gap widens. People of Color and individuals with disabilities are hit hardest, facing significantly higher poverty and health risks than their counterparts throughout California. **We need a bold new vision to develop the Redwood Region as a healing place where everyone belongs with stable jobs, accessible healthcare, and a flourishing natural environment. Together, we work towards a future where anyone can thrive.**

RRRISE Goals:



Establish an inclusive, data and community-driven 10-year roadmap (actionable investment guide) for the Redwood Region:

- ◆ Center voices of often-excluded communities in economic growth
- ◆ Create a shared agenda for action and name priorities for investment



Fund and implement our 10-year community-driven Regional Roadmap to build a future integrating economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social equity:

- ◆ Focus on four key sectors aligned with regional strengths, emphasizing renewable energy and climate resilience
- ◆ Support equitable broadband, housing, and food security initiatives
- ◆ Focus on workforce development and entrepreneurship, and improve infrastructure for long-term growth



Adopt a collective impact model:

- ◆ Align organizations on shared purpose and leverage catalytic partnerships for tangible results
- ◆ Strengthen organizational capacity and empower priority communities
- ◆ Enhance leadership opportunities and remove participation barriers



Explore ways to transform RRRISE into a **sustainable regional support organization**:

- ◆ Connect individuals and organizations, offering expertise, resources, and technical assistance
- ◆ Secure and attract funding by elevating regional opportunities to investors
- ◆ Inspire policy action on critical enablers



Learn More at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

A Data-Driven Regional Roadmap

Between 2022–2024, the RISE Collaborative produced a Regional Roadmap which provides a comprehensive, community- and data-driven snapshot of our region and plan for transitioning to an inclusive and sustainable economy over the next 10 years (and beyond!). Part 1 provides an overview of the Redwood Region's economy, key industries, labor force characteristics, climate resilience, and public health issues that impact communities' well-being. In Part 2, over 150 community members and organizations came together to create key strategies for RISE's four target sectors and their key enablers.

Target Sectors	Key Enablers
Arts, Culture, and Tourism	Broadband
Health and Caregiving	Entrepreneurship
Renewable and Resilient Energy	Food Security and Access
Working Lands and Blue Economy	Housing
	Infrastructure and Transportation
	Workforce Development

To download the full report or learn more about Redwood Region RISE, go to bit.ly/RISE-roadmap.

The RRRISE Collaborative envisions a Redwood Region where priority communities are valued and funded partners in workforce and economic development, where strategic investment drives sustainable growth, and where equity-forward projects accelerate progress. Through innovation, shared agenda setting, and regional collaboration, we're building economic development capacity to deliver tangible results for our region, creating a climate-resilient, thriving future for generations to come.



➔ Next Steps

◆ Download the Roadmap at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

Key Takeaways

- ◆ The Redwood Region contains some of California's **most rural and remote areas with many rich natural landscapes**. Our region has the longest stretch of coastline of any other region, with 379 miles in total, as well as Clearlake, the largest natural lake in California. We have globally significant redwood forests as well as one of the largest geothermal areas in the world.
- ◆ As one of the most rural and remote regions in the state, The Redwood Region is culturally diverse. With 33 federally and non-federally recognized Tribal Nations, **we are home to the largest number of Indigenous communities**, as well as a growing Latinx population. **The region is aging and faces housing shortages in more urban areas despite the decline in the overall population.**
- ◆ According to the California Jobs First's definition, **over 95% of the Redwood Region qualifies as a "disinvested". To ensure funds reach communities that need it most, RISE identified "priority communities": community members facing severe and interconnected hardships like poverty, disability, lack of access to household or community resources, and/or lack of economic or educational opportunities.** These challenges are intensified by the high cost of living on rural wages, which adds to the financial strain on families. This greatly impacts BIPOC communities as well as people who live in deeply rural communities.
- ◆ The Redwood Region's **economy has long been shaped by boom-and-bust cycles**, such as logging, commercial fishing, and, more recently, the cannabis industry. While there is a need to move beyond extracting and exporting in unsustainable ways, **the region's main strength remains its natural resources and productive landscapes.**
- ◆ Our region's strengths include the potential for offshore wind, sustainable forestry, **Indigenous-led initiatives, and a history of local food production and regenerative agriculture.**

Learn More at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

Redwood Region Overview

6%



Of California's
Total Landmass

<1%



Of the State's
Total Population

323,952



Total Residents



14

Incorporated
Municipalities

33



Federally and Non-federally
Recognized Tribes that have been
collectively identified

67.7%



Of the population is
white and Non-Hispanic

19%



Of the population is
Hispanic and Latino

2.4%



Of the population is American
Indian and Alaska Native

41



Median Age of our
Population (4 Years Older
than the State Median)

➤95%

Of our Region is a "Disinvested" Community, According to
the California Jobs First Definition

Our Region's Key Sectors



Arts, Culture,
and Tourism



Health and
Caregiving

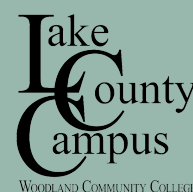


Renewable and
Resilient Energy



Working Lands
and Blue Economy

Colleges and Universities



➔ Next Steps

- ◆ Get additional data and key metrics about this topic at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap
- ◆ Help shape the future of our regional economy. Utilize these insights in your grant applications, policymaking, and economic development strategies: bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

**Humans of
the Redwoods****Hoopa Valley, CA: Overcoming Stigma for Justice-Involved
Individuals and Rural Communities Banding Together**

Pliny McCovey, born and raised in Hoopa Valley, carries the strength of his cultural heritage while navigating the challenges of rural life. Now working in workforce development in Eureka, he's deeply connected to both his community and the evolving local labor market.

"It's literally one of the most beautiful places on this planet. I truly believe that."

Pliny reflects on the natural beauty of Hoopa and the deep ancestral connection the Hoopa Tribe has to their lands. However, the remoteness of the region poses challenges, particularly with accessing essential services like transportation and healthcare.

"We need to continue to provide opportunities for workers so the economy can continue to circulate and grow here."

Pliny's work focuses on helping those facing employment barriers. He emphasizes the importance of building a local workforce to keep economic benefits within Humboldt County, rather than outsourcing jobs to other regions.

"It's literally a different world compared to those areas... we've learned to band together when necessary."

Pliny is passionate about small, rural communities uniting to create lasting change and ensuring local voices are heard across the state.



**To read the full story, [click here](#)
or scan the QR code.**

“

**I think that now is the
time where our small
communities need to
start working together.**

—Pliny McCovey



RISE's strategy is rooted in the belief that collaborative efforts can drive transformative change. Across our rural region, many of our government, private, nonprofit, and Tribal organizations are small and stretched thin. By working together, we are breaking down silos, surfacing, and addressing the capacity challenges we all face. Here is an overview of key insights on how our region can strengthen partnerships and build up organizational capacity, particularly for our priority communities. These insights will inform implementation efforts and strategic investments in the coming years, as outlined in the Regional Roadmap Part 2.

Key Takeaways

- ◆ Limited funding and people being stretched thin make it hard for the Redwood Region to pursue opportunities and manage programs effectively. **There are few community organizing groups and environmental justice organizations.**
- ◆ **The region's 33 Tribes** are leaders in creating opportunities and managing resources sustainably, but they **are often not included early enough** in planning decisions, leaving little room for collaboration.
- ◆ County and Tribal plans focus on traditional industries like agriculture and forestry, as well as tourism and renewable energy. **There are critical infrastructure needs, such as broadband, water, and transportation, that require investment.** Developing a skilled workforce is a common priority across regional economic development plans.
- ◆ There is a need for more efficient ways to find funding and technical support, including grant writing. **Creating a regional economic development entity is recommended.**

Outreach and Engagement Strategies



Learn More at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

Organizations and Assets Serving Economic and Community Development Interests

Throughout our outreach efforts, RISE identified different types of organizations and entities that play a role in fostering economic development across our region. Listening sessions and surveys revealed key insights, issues, and current capacities of current and potential partners for future economic prosperity.

In our outreach we identified:

33



Federally and Non-federally Recognized Tribes

19



Active Chambers of Commerce



5

Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs)



1 CSU Campus (Cal Poly Humboldt) + 3 Community Colleges



2

Environmental Justice Organizations



Key Labor Organizations



3

Workforce Development Boards

Plus Numerous:



Government Agencies



Grassroots & Community Based Organizations



Philanthropic Organizations



Trade Associations

The Bottom Line

Because the Redwood Region is so rural, many workers and organizations are wearing multiple hats, which prevents them from being able to carry out equitable economic development strategies effectively. Additionally, Tribal communities are not sufficiently included in planning processes, and there are critical infrastructure and funding gaps that need to be addressed. Because the Redwood Region is in such a unique setting, we require our own model and design to break down silos and create intentional partnerships across our region. The Regional Roadmap outlines strategies to collaborate in more effective, inclusive ways moving forward.

➔ Next Steps

- ◆ Download the Roadmap at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap
- ◆ Leverage these insights to advocate for increased organization capacity.

**Humans of
the Redwoods****Crescent City, CA: Keyara Helps Organize Del Norte's First Pride Event in Crescent City for a More Inclusive Place to Work and Live**

Keyara Olson, a 26-year-old transgender woman, loves Crescent City's natural beauty but finds its social isolation and lack of opportunity challenging. Del Norte's first Pride event gives her hope for a more inclusive future.

"It's a great place for tourists. It's just not a good place for opportunity."

While Crescent City boasts stunning rivers, forests, and coastlines, Keyara describes the town as "behind the times," making it difficult to find safe spaces where she can be herself.

"There aren't any accessibility options around here."

As a trans-woman with autism, Keyara faces barriers to employment, working online as a contractor but struggling to find fulfilling job opportunities locally.

"The whole point of Pride is to show the community that we are here."

Despite the challenges, Keyara is actively involved in organizing Crescent City's first Pride, with the goal of fostering acceptance and reducing discrimination in the community.



To read the full story, [click here](#)
or scan the QR code.

“

Del Norte is a great place to visit. It's just not always a good place for opportunity. We've got to play to our strengths to make this a more attractive place to invest in.

—Keyara Olson



Here's an overview of the big picture of the region's economic well-being, cost of living, and the mix of industries. It highlights key trends in economic growth, cost of living, and employment rates, highlighting their effects on equity, sustainability, and resilience in our region. These insights will inform the strategic investments in the coming years, as outlined in the Regional Roadmap Part 2.

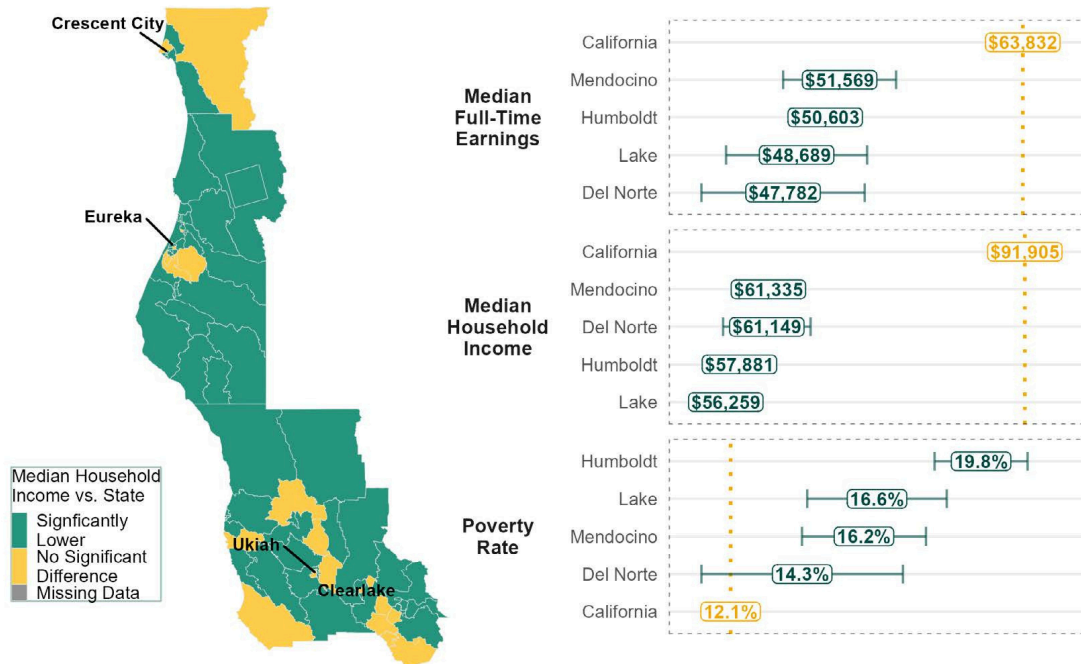
Key Takeaways

- ◆ The Redwood Region's **economic growth has lagged behind the Bay Area** and other (urban) areas in the state, **resulting in low GDP growth over the past decade.**
- ◆ Median incomes are low, and poverty rates are much higher than the state average. **With fewer high-wage jobs and a comparatively high cost of living, median-income households struggle to get ahead.**
- ◆ While housing costs are lower than statewide averages, they are much higher than similar rural areas. With factors such as an **older housing supply, frequent wildfires destroying thousands of homes, and not enough skilled construction workers, the lack of housing truly is a crisis in our region.**
- ◆ The region has **experienced major shocks and shifts** over the past decades from **natural disasters** (droughts, landslides, flooding, earthquakes, catastrophic wildfires), **economic disruptions** (the 2008 recession), **policy changes** (e.g., Proposition 64, cannabis legalization), and events like the **COVID-19 pandemic.**
- ◆ **Residents of Color** are particularly affected by all economic challenges and disruptions, **experiencing much higher poverty rates compared to their peers** in other parts of California.

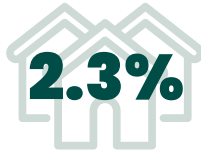


Learn More at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

Indicators of Economic Wellbeing (2018–2022)



1/3
Households lack access to internet



2.3%
Rental vacancy rate, highlighting housing scarcity



97%
Share of median family of 4's income spent on monthly expenses



72%
Of businesses in the region have <5 employees

"When it comes to living expenses, we are definitely living paycheck to paycheck and honestly, just anything we get our hands on goes directly to bills"

The Bottom Line

Communities in the Redwood Region are facing economic challenges characterized by sluggish growth and high poverty rates. The region grapples with a combination of low median incomes and high living costs. Lack of affordable housing and broadband access also puts people in the region at a disadvantage. This impacts working families and residents of Color the most, who experience higher poverty rates compared to their peers across California. Our Regional Roadmap identifies 10 strategic areas of investment, which will strengthen the Redwood economy.

Next Steps

- ◆ Download the Roadmap at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap and utilize these insights in your grant applications, local policy, and economic development strategies.
- ◆ Help diversify and strengthen our regional economy. Advocate for our region and use these insights to drive your economic development strategies: bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

Humans of the Redwoods

Humboldt County, CA: Despite Suffering From Cannabis Industry Fallout, Kathy Finds a Supportive Community in Humboldt

Kathy Perri once thrived during the peak of Humboldt's cannabis industry. But after legalization, her livelihood was taken away, and she now struggles with housing and financial stability. Despite these challenges, she finds strength in the support of her local community.

"I always had money... I didn't have to worry about that."

Kathy remembers the family-friendly atmosphere of working in cannabis, where she could bring her children and live comfortably. But the industry's downturn drastically changed her circumstances.

"I never thought I'd end up like this. Ever."

Now juggling two part-time jobs and relying on disability, Kathy finds herself on the waiting list for housing, navigating the harsh reality of homelessness in Humboldt County.

"I love the diversity... we're all a bunch of weirdos."

Despite these struggles, Kathy finds solace in the Jefferson Community Center, where inclusivity and acceptance help her feel at home.



To read the full story, [click here](#)
or scan the QR code.

“

I never thought I'd be in this situation, especially at my age. But I don't think I'll ever move—no matter how much more I could make elsewhere. This is where I'm happy.

—Kathy Perri



Here's an overview of key climate and environmental issues in the region and their related impacts on people and communities, particularly sea level rise on the coast and inland wildfires. Read about potential sources of resilience, environmental activism, and leadership in the region, and how these insights have informed Redwood Region RISE's strategic 10-year plan. These insights will inform the strategic investments in the coming years, as outlined in the Regional Roadmap Part 2.

Key Takeaways

- ◆ The region is threatened by **higher levels of groundwater and surface-water contamination, air pollution from wildfires, and lead exposure in children** than other regions in the state.
- ◆ The region's coastline, especially Humboldt Bay, is at **high risk of rising sea levels**. Up to 100 feet of shoreline across some coastal areas is anticipated to be lost. Sea level rise will likely damage infrastructure, disrupt maritime industries, and complicate redevelopment efforts.
- ◆ Rising temperatures, droughts, and wildfires have **severe economic and health impacts** on inland communities, particularly low-income ones. Lake, Del Norte, and Humboldt Counties face the highest risk.
- ◆ There is a **critical need for investment in water delivery and waste disposal infrastructure** to address environmental justice concerns.
- ◆ There is a **lack of comprehensive data on greenhouse gas emissions**, hindering efforts to plan and implement clean energy and emissions-reduction projects.

Current Advocacy Efforts

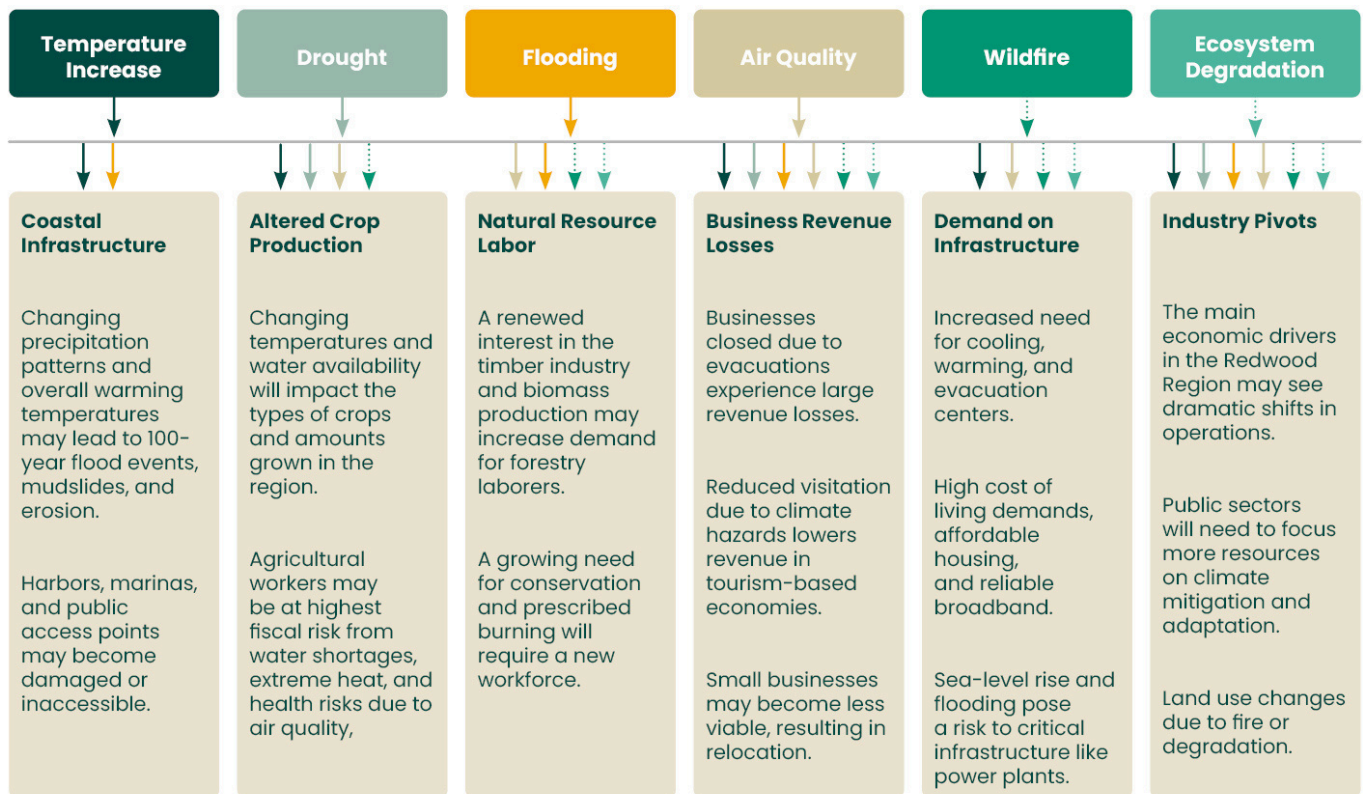
- ◆ **Traditional Ecological Knowledge:** Tribes are integrating traditional knowledge in projects like the Klamath River Restoration to restore salmon habitats and developing renewable energy initiatives such as Blue Lake Rancheria's microgrid and Scotts Valley's biomass-to-energy.
- ◆ **Environmental Education:** Programs engage Tribal youth in restoration efforts while preserving cultural heritage, such as the Yurok Condor Program and Eel River restoration.
- ◆ **Grassroots Activism:** Groups like EPIC and the North Coast Environmental Center promote conservation, such as EPIC's ancient forest defense.
- ◆ **Education:** Colleges like Cal Poly Humboldt and Mendocino College prioritize environmental studies and community engagement.



Learn More at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

CLIMATE OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS IN THE REDWOOD REGION

Economic Risks and Losses Related to Climate Change on the Redwood Region



The Bottom Line

The Redwood Region faces significant climate and environmental challenges, impacting both its people and communities. Despite these challenges, several organizations in our region, particularly the Tribes, are leaders in environmental stewardship and solutions to climate change. Environmental stewardship is a driving value in our Regional Roadmap.



Next Steps

- ◆ Help drive environmental stewardship and inclusive solutions to climate change. Advocate for our region and join us in building a thriving, climate-forward economy today: bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

Here is a look at the social factors affecting health and the inequalities in the region, linking them to the economic and environmental conditions that impact health. With many sobering trends on the current state of our region's public health, we recognize the vital relationship between public health and healthcare systems, and the overall well-being of our communities. These insights will inform the strategic investments in the coming years, as outlined in the Regional Roadmap Part 2.

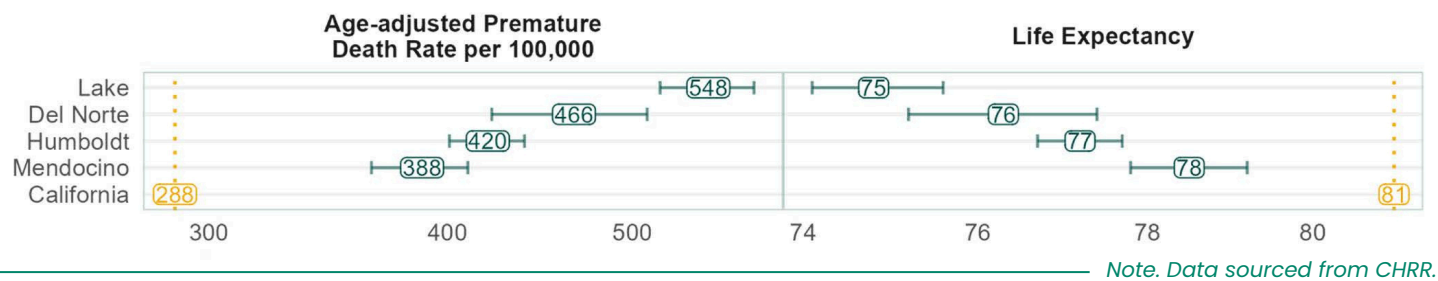
Key Takeaways

- ◆ The Redwood Region has **lower life expectancy** than the state average from many causes, including cancer, drug overdoses, respiratory diseases, heart disease, and suicides.
- ◆ Major immediate risk factors contribute to health disparities. **Higher rates of smoking** (almost double the state average in adults 18–54), **substance abuse** (with significantly higher drug overdose rates and excessive drinking), and **increased percentages of driving deaths involving alcohol** are seen in our region than in other regions in the state.
- ◆ The region faces complex social issues that impact health, such as **significantly higher rates of homelessness, poverty, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and social isolation**, as well as significant **gaps in educational attainment and college readiness**. These challenges disproportionately impact vulnerable communities in the region.
- ◆ Residents face **barriers to accessing healthcare**, with professionals shortages and delays in accessing primary care, mental health, and dental health. This impacts all residents in our region, but low-income and mentally ill individuals experience greater delays.
- ◆ Environmental hazards like **pollution and wildfires** further increase health problems, especially for at-risk populations.
- ◆ **Poor access to healthy food** due to poverty and lack of transportation contributes to poor health outcomes.



Learn More at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

Premature Death and Life Expectancy (2018 – 2020)



Across the region, life expectancy at birth is significantly lower, and age-adjusted premature deaths per 100,000 significantly higher, than the statewide average.

“Lack of fresh food impacts wellness in a place where accessible medical treatment is already a challenge.”

The Bottom Line

The Redwood Region faces many severe health challenges. Mortality rates for cancer, drug overdoses, respiratory diseases, and suicide are higher than the state average. Social and economic disparities, including high levels of disability, poverty, low education, and social isolation, disproportionately affect marginalized groups. Our Regional Roadmap takes a holistic approach to improving not only our industries but also the quality of life for all who call the Redwood Region home.

➔ Next Steps

- ◆ Fund assessments, training pipelines, and retention strategies.
- ◆ Support telehealth and new service delivery models.
- ◆ Invest in childcare and shared service hubs.
- ◆ Fund solutions tackling social determinants of health.
- ◆ Support resources for coordinating health initiatives and advocating rural policies.

Get additional data and key metrics about this topic at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap



**Humans of
the Redwoods****Ukiah, CA: Michael of Mendocino Encourages More Nursing Programs to Create Extensive and Affordable Healthcare**

Michael Curl, diagnosed with carpal tunnel at 19, has faced challenges in navigating workplace accessibility and accessing specialized care in rural Mendocino. Despite these struggles, he envisions a future with improved transportation and healthcare options for those with special needs.

“I was basically just stuck out there... mostly just alone with my thoughts.”

Growing up in isolated Round Valley, Michael’s lack of reliable transportation cut him off socially and continues to affect him during carpal tunnel flare-ups, where even everyday tasks become difficult.

“If you can’t use your hands... I’m going to wait here all day until someone can get home.”

Michael’s experience highlights the critical need for accessible transportation and healthcare services in rural communities, especially for individuals with disabilities.

“I think the local schools need to provide nursing programs so people can go into healthcare themselves.”

Michael advocates for expanding local healthcare and public transportation to better serve Mendocino’s diverse needs, creating a more inclusive future.



To read the full story, [click here](#)
or scan the QR code.



Sometimes the only solution for good health care is to leave the area completely. I’d love to see local schools provide more nursing programs, offering opportunity for people in the region and creating more accessible healthcare for all of us.

—Michael Curl



The Redwood Region's economic landscape is defined by four key industry clusters: Arts, Culture, and Tourism; Health and Caregiving; Renewable and Resilient Energy; and Working Lands and Blue Economy. Each of these clusters contributes uniquely to our region's growth, sustainability, and potential for the development of family-sustaining careers. These insights will inform the strategic investments in the coming years, as outlined in the Regional Roadmap Part 2.

**Key Takeaways****Arts, Culture, and Tourism**

- ◆ **Key Sectors:** Lodging, Parks, Historic Sites, and other Attractions, Performing Arts, Food and Beverage.
- ◆ **Strengths:** Natural wonders and cultural events drive tourism, showing resilience and growth potential.
- ◆ **Opportunities:** Scenic and sightseeing transportation is underdeveloped, Converting growth into family-sustaining jobs while maintaining low-carbon goals.
- ◆ **Focus:** Leverage arts and culture workforce for community-building and cross-sector collaboration, emphasizing equitable access and opportunities for BIPOC individuals.

**Key Takeaways****Health and Caregiving**

- ◆ **Key Sectors:** Hospitals, clinics, behavioral health, dental care, social care.
- ◆ **Strengths:** Aligns with goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and offers family-sustaining jobs.
- ◆ **Opportunities:** Attracting, training, and retaining skilled professionals to meet growing demands.
- ◆ **Focus:** Meets critical health and social care needs, expected to grow faster than the industry average.

**Key Takeaways****Renewable and Resilient Energy**

- ◆ **Key Sectors:** Offshore wind energy development, smaller scale energy efficiency, and distributed renewable projects as well as supporting industries such as utilities, construction, and repair and maintenance.
- ◆ **Strengths:** High projected job growth, high wages, aligning with environmental goals.
- ◆ **Opportunities:** Developing career pathways and addressing labor shortages in construction trades.
- ◆ **Focus:** Ensure the benefits of offshore wind are shared broadly and provide resources to historically underrepresented communities in the development process.

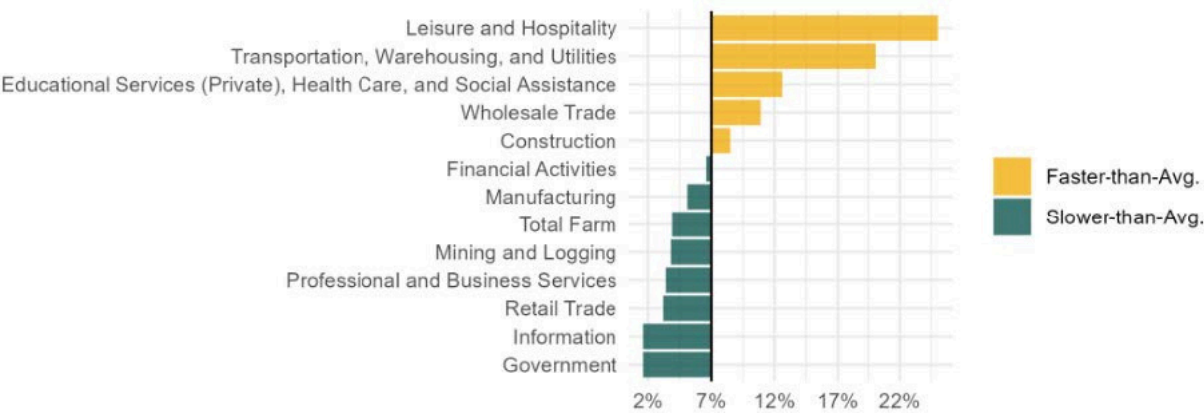
**Key Takeaways****Working Lands and Blue Economy**

- ◆ **Key Sectors:** Wine grapes in Lake and Mendocino, diverse livestock in the north, commercial fishing and aquaculture across the coastal counties, cannabis, and forestry.
- ◆ **Strengths:** Diversified and traded cluster, stable timber production, increasing market values.
- ◆ **Opportunities:** GHG emissions, low wages, and inadequate worker protections.
- ◆ **Focus:** Innovate to increase incomes and transition to sustainable forest management.



EQUITABLE **INDUSTRY GROWTH** IN THE REDWOOD REGION

Potential Rate of Job Growth for Major Economic Sectors (2020–2030)



Note. Data sourced from California Employment Development Department (EDD). Overall employment growth is projected to be 7%.

Industry Cluster Analysis Summary

	Wages	Climate & Environmental Impact	Outlook
Agriculture and Blue Economy	Low	High	Stable
Wood Products	High	High	Stable
Arts, Culture, Tourism	Low	Low	Growth
Renewable and Resilient Energy	Potential for High Wages	Potential for Low Impact	Development Opportunity
Health and Caregiving	High	Low	Growth



Next Steps

◆ Join us in boosting the growth of these industries within our region. Prioritize funding, economic strategies, and policies that support these industries. Find more in-depth insights at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

**Humans of
the Redwoods****Crescent City, CA: Poua of Del Norte on the Hmong Community,
the Housing Market, and Motherhood**

Poua Vang, a member of the Hmong community, entrepreneur, and mother, sees potential for Crescent City's development but feels small-town resistance to growth. She is working with the Hmong Association to bring a much-needed meat processing plant to the area, while also seeking more family-friendly opportunities.

"The redwoods are my backyard and the ocean is my front yard, so I'm right in between."

Despite Crescent City's natural beauty and tight-knit community, Poua feels the lack of educational opportunities and activities for children is limiting its potential as a place for families to thrive.

"We are working with them... so they understand that this is really the land of opportunity."

Poua is helping her local Hmong community access available resources while advocating for a meat processing facility to meet the needs of ranchers and religious traditions.

"It feels like home... but Crescent City just does not have the growth that we really need for our family."

Poua envisions Crescent City becoming more than a retirement town, but she's considering moving for the sake of her children's education and future.



To read the full story, [click here](#)
or scan the QR code.



“

I tell people, well, the redwoods are my backyard and the ocean is my front yard. I love it here. But the opportunities are few and far between. That's why we're pushing so hard to get this Hmong meat processing facility off the ground.

—Poua Vang

Here is a snapshot of labor and workforce dynamics in the region, including occupations, wages, and how recent economic and tech changes are affecting it. It also highlights challenges that make it hard to access high-quality jobs and training programs. These insights will inform the strategic investments in the coming years, as outlined in the Regional Roadmap Part 2.

Key Takeaways

- ◆ The Redwood Region has **lost many jobs in traditional industries** like forestry, agriculture, and manufacturing. As a result, men and other workers with less education, who usually work in these industries, are less likely to be part of the workforce compared to the state average.
- ◆ Workers in our region have a hard time progressing in their careers. While wages for younger workers and those with less education are similar to state averages, **wages for more educated and experienced workers are lower**, which is a common issue in rural areas across California.
- ◆ There is a **clear and ongoing demand for good-paying jobs in healthcare, teaching, and skilled trades** like electricians, plumbers, carpenters, and automotive service technicians. Jobs in key roles like management, truck driving, and accounting—which are important for all industries in the Redwood Region—are also in high demand.
- ◆ Most family-sustaining job growth is in occupations that do not require a bachelor's degree, so relevant training programs are available locally. However, **not enough people are completing these programs to meet the demand for workers**, especially in fields like nursing, counseling, teaching, and skilled trades.
- ◆ **High school graduates in the region are less prepared for secondary training** compared to the state average, which indicates a critical barrier to success in postsecondary training programs available.



Learn More at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

HOW'S THE **LABOR MARKET** IN THE REDWOOD REGION?

Employment Concentration and Change Since 2001 (2001, 2022)



Note. Data sourced from IMPLAN.

The Bottom Line

The Redwood Region is facing significant economic challenges due to job losses in traditional industries, low workforce among men and less-educated workers, and low wages for more educated and experienced workers. There is a strong demand for well-paying jobs in healthcare, teaching, and skilled trades, but local training programs are not graduating enough students to meet the region's demand. High school graduates are also less prepared for further education compared to state averages, making it harder for them to succeed in training programs. Our Regional Roadmap seeks to address these challenges, and improve conditions for priority communities in our workforce.

➔ Next Steps

- ◆ Join us in transforming the labor market into a vibrant and innovative workforce that's essential for our evolving economy. Use the insights to advocate for educational opportunities and fund economic strategies that support our region's workforce: bit.ly/RISE-roadmap

Looking ahead, the Redwood Region RISE Collaborative will collaborate to implement the targeted strategies outlined in our Roadmap. These strategies, shaped by data analysis and community insights, will guide us in fostering inclusive and sustainable economic development. We will work closely with industry leaders and community representatives to identify and prioritize key projects, investments, and capacity-building efforts. Our focus will include enhancing workforce development, forging collaborations both within and beyond the region, and ensuring that all communities benefit from these investments.

While the Redwood Region faces challenges from climate change and economic disparities, it also boasts unique strengths and opportunities. Join Redwood Region RISE's community-led efforts to create a sustainable and inclusive future where everyone has access to stable jobs, quality healthcare, and a thriving environment. Advocate for our region, share our key insights, and help drive investment to enable climate-forward regional growth that empowers our communities.

➔ Next Steps



Learn More

- Download the Roadmap and get additional data and key metrics at bit.ly/RISE-roadmap



Advocate for the Redwood Region

- Leverage these insights to advocate for Redwood Region's priority communities' access to quality jobs and essential resources.
- Utilize the data gathered in our Regional Roadmap in your grant applications, local policy, and economic development strategies: bit.ly/RISE-roadmap



Invest in the Redwood Region

- Support RRRISE's community-led initiative to create sustainable, quality jobs. Your investment can drive regional growth and empower workers. **Join us in building a thriving, inclusive economy today:** bit.ly/RISE-invest



CCRP. (2025). Redwood Region RISE Regional Roadmap
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