



FINAL REPORT

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2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



Prepared for:



Prepared by:



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1. Background and Executive Summary

Sonoma and Mendocino counties share a common reputation for spectacular natural assets, with ample open space, parks, recreational and leisure opportunities that make them statewide and national destinations. Tourism, agriculture, forestry, and manufacturing are primary drivers of the regional economy, along with strong industry-level employment in health care and retail trade. While the counties are rich in natural and tourism assets and resources, challenges must be addressed to ensure vitality and livability for generations to come. Issues such as slowing net in-migration, aging populations, a shrinking labor force, and limited housing affordability, along with climate disasters (fires, drought floods) and the enduring pandemic, are all creating a compelling need for thoughtful and forward-thinking strategic economic resiliency planning and action.

Background

THE SONOMA-MENDOCINO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (SMEDD) is a two-county partnership, created to engage in regional economic development planning in the Sonoma-Mendocino region. Created through a joint powers agreement in 2015, SMEDD has the opportunity to advocate for, incubate, and support policies, programs, and projects where joint planning can accomplish more for the region's development than either county's independent efforts. The District is responsible for overseeing completion and implementation of the Sonoma-Mendocino Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).



What is a CEDS?

A CEDS is a federally-required regional economic development plan that must be completed in order to become eligible for various funding programs under the Economic Development Administration (EDA), an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Inclusion in a CEDS should not be viewed solely as a mechanism for qualifying for federal funding. It should serve as a roadmap for regional economic development in general—linking, leveraging, and aligning local assets and stakeholders to achieve regional goals.

The requirements of the CEDS include:

- 1. Summary Background:** A summary background of the economic conditions of the region.
- 2. SWOT Analysis:** An in-depth analysis of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

3. Strategic Direction and Priority Project

Action Plan: The strategic direction and Priority Project action plan should build on findings from the SWOT analysis and incorporate/integrate elements from other regional plans. The Priority Project action plan should also identify the stakeholder responsible for implementation, timetables, and opportunities for the integrated use of other local, state, and federal funds.

4. Evaluation Framework:

Performance measures used to evaluate the organization's implementation of the CEDS and impact on the regional economy.

EPS has aligned the content of this CEDS with the requirements of the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Guidelines. The CEDS serves to support locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning processes and allow organizations to leverage EDA assistance under its Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs.

2021 CEDS Themes

Early in the CEDS process, the Steering Committee identified four key themes that would anchor the 2021 CEDS, each of which is described below. Additionally, the equity implications of each theme are considered, so that the resulting Priority Projects are structured to create opportunities to improve access to resources and improve outcomes for the region's Black, Latino, Hispanic, and Indigenous populations.

1. Livability

Livability is a broad and multi-faceted term that gets at those qualities that make a place special and desirable and support the day-to-day needs and social wellness of residents and employees. Livability considerations include the following: the availability and affordability of housing; the availability and quality of employment

opportunities; transportation options; access to healthcare, school, childcare, and services; recreation and entertainment opportunities; and shopping options. Livability factors tend to be key drivers of resident and business location decisions.

2. Business and Industry Support

Identifying emerging industries and supporting businesses is a core component of economic development that affects every aspect of life in a region. Healthy industries support businesses and thriving businesses hire and pay employees. Well-paid employees can afford housing and can put energy into other aspects of community life.

3. Environmental Resiliency

Sonoma and Mendocino counties' exceptional natural resources are one of the region's primary strengths. Recent wildfires and the current drought may be just the beginning as have made all recognize the region's vulnerability as it grapples with climate change and associated vulnerabilities. Environmental resilience is a critical and persistent theme that the region must prioritize through continued support of sustainable infrastructure initiatives for multifold benefits. Those benefits could include cost savings (responding to crisis after crisis after-the-fact is costly) as well as the furtherance of economic development objectives, including support of the emerging Green and Blue economies and jobs.

4. Technology, Digital Literacy, and Connectivity

One in 10 households in Sonoma County do not have reliable Internet, and in Mendocino County, that statistic increases to nearly one in five households without reliable Internet. Of even greater concern is that lack of Internet, particularly Broadband Internet, and technology access tends to track with income, making high speed broadband an equity issue that has to

be addressed. This issue is not just about access, it is also about digital literacy and assuring that schools are teaching computer skills and businesses have the resources they require to compete in our digital economy.

Process and Structure of Report

This CEDS describes six Priority Projects that SMEDD will advance in the next five-year period. Project ideas related to the four preceding themes emerged from the SWOT Analysis, the Economic Assessment, and extensive community and stakeholder input. Throughout the process the ideas were refined based on feedback from the Steering Committee, applying “prioritization” criteria. Each component of the process is summarized below and provided in full in the subsequent chapters and appendices. Chapter 2 provides the SWOT Analysis; Chapter 3 presents the Economic Context; Chapter 4 describes the Community Outreach; Chapter 5 focuses on the Strategic Direction and Priority Project Action Plan; and Chapter 6 culminates with detailed descriptions of each of the six SMEDD Priority Project.

Local Community Projects are an important part of the CEDS and are included in detail in **Appendix A**. **Appendix B** provides the full community survey results. **Appendix C** summarizes the input received from the Community Meetings using the Padlet platform, and **Appendix D** offers appreciation and acknowledgment to all who contributed to this process and final document.

SWOT Assessment

A holistic understanding of the internal and external factors affecting economic development in the County is important for informing the strategic direction and priorities for related programs, resources, and advocacy. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities,

and threats (SWOT) analyses were compiled using published reports and data from the background and economic context work. Chapter 2 seeks to organize information related to the region’s economic situation in a way that leads to and supports identification of salient economic development considerations and contributed to the development of potential projects.

Economic Context

Five categories of indicators are used to inform the regional economic assessment, which is used to develop the strategies discussed later in this Implementation Plan. The categories are Demographics; Housing; Employment, Wages, and Productivity; Workforce Preparedness; and Environment and Climate. The Demographics category was added for foundational context. Where appropriate, indicators are compiled and compared across both counties to offer frames of reference for the range of information. The data from each indicator is distilled down to the following conclusions:

- **Demographics:** Social infrastructure (e.g., childcare, senior services, internet access, etc.) is needed to retain young, growing families and support an aging population.
- **Housing:** The lack of housing affordable to the region’s workforce is a threat to the region’s economic and workforce development.
- **Employment, Wages, and Productivity:** Both counties have a high number of relatively low-paying jobs, some of which represent the counties’ fastest growing occupations. The need for upskilling workers and supporting a wider variety of businesses across a broad range of industry sectors in an effort to diversify the economy and improve economic resiliency represent opportunities across the region.
- **Workforce Preparedness:** Increased educational support is needed at the high school and immediate post-high school

levels to ensure young adults are adequately prepared for the workforce with employer-desired qualifications, particularly in the higher-paying health and medical fields and in specialized trades.

- **Environment and Climate:** The region is vulnerable to multiple climate threats and disasters, including wildfires, droughts, and sea level rise/erosion, all of which intensify with climate change and affect the region's livability, tourism economy, and valuable natural resources.

Community Outreach

The CEDS was guided by a Steering Committee, consisting of three SMEDD Board Members, three Sonoma County Economic Development Board staff, and one Mendocino Economic Development & Financing Corporation staff person. Mendocino County was additionally represented by Marie Jones of Marie Jones Consulting who served a dual staff and advisory role throughout the process.

It is important for projects in the CEDS to reflect the interests and priorities of the community and equitably meet the needs of underserved populations. Multiple channels of community outreach were employed to identify top issues of concern to residents and employees of Sonoma and Mendocino counties and to solicit ideas and community feedback for projects.

Community outreach included five focus groups, a community-wide survey, one-on-one interviews, extensive outreach to local jurisdictions, and two community meetings.

- **Focus groups:** Four themed focus groups were convened with subject matter experts in both counties to develop an initial set of project ideas. A special focus group on equity helped the Steering Committee determine how projects could meet the needs of the region's underserved communities.
- **Community Survey:** A digital survey seeking project ideas and feedback was distributed

widely online to residents and employees, receiving 330 responses. The survey was distributed in both English and Spanish through multiple channels.

- **Community Meetings:** Two virtual community meetings were organized and held online via Zoom webinar. The first Community Meetings were facilitated in English with simultaneous, live Spanish translation. The second Community Meeting was facilitated in Spanish. Both meetings were also streamed via Facebook Live. The Community Meetings sought to both share prior input and data and solicit feedback, using a real-time interactive platform called Padlet, which allowed participants to respond to proposed project ideas and offer their own.
- **One-on-One Interviews:** The project team also contacted community leaders and industry experts for direct interviews. The interviews served the dual purpose of supplementing the other forms of community outreach and identifying local community projects.
- **Specific Project Identification through Outreach:** The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB) and Marie Jones Consulting worked with Sonoma County, Mendocino County, cities, unincorporated communities, special districts and tribes to identify and develop projects for future EDA and other federal funding for inclusion in the CEDS (see **Appendix D**). This work identified a wide array of important infrastructure projects including water resiliency projects, climate change adaptation and mitigation projects, and sector specific economic development projects. The project descriptions include a rough estimate of cost, timing, potential project partners and the key outcomes of the efforts. These projects ultimately will be undertaken by the project sponsors and SMEDD's role is purely to include them in the CEDS so that the projects are eligible for future EDA and other federal funding.

The feedback across these multiple channels not only helped initially to identify major concerns and project ideas but also to understand the popularity or feasibility of the proposed projects and find resources and examples of best practices. The feedback helped the Steering Committee refine the list of Priority Projects that SMEDD will support in the next five years.

Project Identification and Prioritization Process

Based on review and consideration of existing studies conducted for Sonoma and Mendocino counties, the prior CEDS, the Economic Context data and analysis, the SWOT analysis, and significant community outreach, several potential projects related to the preceding themes emerged for the Steering Committee's consideration.

To better focus SMEDD's energy in the coming years, the Steering Committee determined that it was very important to be focused and effective and, therefore, had an initial goal of focusing on just a few projects, while building internal capacity and expertise. A range of criteria was used to refine the list of potential projects. A project idea advanced from "potential" to "priority" if it met the following criteria:

- The Project is of benefit to both counties.
- The Project represents the community's priorities.
- The Project is fundable.
- The Project advances identified racial, gender, and economic equity objectives.
- The Project is actionable during the next five years given SMEDD's capacity and would benefit from the limited resources that SMEDD can contribute to the advancement of an agenda around project implementation.

Priority Projects

Applying the criteria above, six Priority Projects to be advanced by SMEDD in the coming five years ended up rising to the top. The six SMEDD Priority Projects relate to workforce housing, childcare, development of the talent pipeline, water management and drought resiliency, industry and economic diversification, and internet/broadband access services.

Action and Implementation Plan

To guide effective implementation of the SMEDD Priority Projects, a detailed work plan will need to be created to guide SMEDD's workflow in the coming years. Indeed, the first task for each project is to formulate such a work plan. The CEDS provides a general list of actions for each Priority Project given a realistic assessment of SMEDD's current capacity to implement the projects.

SMEDD Capacity

Established in 2015, SMEDD is a relatively new district with no dedicated funding and with very limited staffing (1.5 grant-funded positions). Supplemental staff support is largely provided to SMEDD from the Sonoma County Economic Development Board and Mendocino's Economic Development & Financing Corporation. While there is tremendous potential for SMEDD to mature into a more powerful voice for the region, the SMEDD Priority Projects within this CEDS reflect SMEDD's current capacity while leaving the door open for SMEDD to expand staffing and resources. In this context, the Steering Committee indicated that SMEDD is well-positioned to **advocate, collaborate, and facilitate** to advance SMEDD's Priority Projects. While not intended to constrain SMEDD's future role, below are initial ideas for how SMEDD may approach the Priority Projects.

To **advocate** for projects or policies means that SMEDD may:

- Act as representative voice for the two-county region by advancing local and regional policy discussions in support of the selected priority project goals.

To **collaborate** on projects and policies means that SMEDD may:

- Identify and build connections and partnerships, convene stakeholders, and encourage collaborations between agencies, partners, and/or the EDA.

To **facilitate** projects and policies means that SMEDD may:

- Engage in research that supports forward momentum on Priority Projects.
- Collect, track, and share relevant information and resources with partners and the public; serve as a clearinghouse for best practices and regional examples within each priority area.
- Identify and post funding opportunities, including EDA and state grant funding. As staff resources allow, SMEDD may help write and submit grant applications.
- Administer regular surveys to track community priorities and gauge community awareness of SMEDD projects and progress.
- Provide quarterly reporting on the progress of each Priority Project

Implementation Specifics

To guide implementation of the Priority Projects and track progress, the Priority Project descriptions (Chapter 6) provide the next level of detail to support implementation and seek to answer the following questions for each of the six Priority Projects:

- Ongoing vs. One-time: Does the strategy need to be implemented and evaluated each year on an ongoing basis, or does it have a discrete start and end?
- Stakeholders/Partners: Are there stakeholders or partners who are already contributing work in this space and who may be a resource to SMEDD? Are there partners or entities who can take the lead to help implement the work? Are there components of the strategy that could be more effectively/efficiently assigned to stakeholders or partners? The list of stakeholders/partners is not an exhaustive list nor does it represent a commitment on behalf of the agencies and organizations listed.
- SMEDD Board/Staff Commitment: Can this work be accomplished within existing SMEDD staffing resources? Is more support necessary – whether on a temporary contract basis or full time?
- Anticipated Costs/ Resources Needed: Are there implementation costs associated with achieving the Project? Is it a one-time cost, or a recurring cost?
- Funding Sources: What specific entities provide funding for this type of work? Are there applicable grants that should be pursued?
- Evaluation Metrics: How will SMEDD measure progress towards accomplishing the Priority Projects?

With this information, the Priority Projects will serve as a framework and toolkit to help SMEDD accomplish its economic development objectives on behalf of Sonoma and Mendocino counties.

Local Community Projects

In addition to the Priority Projects detailed in this CEDS that will guide SMEDD's work in the next five years, **Appendix A** includes ongoing and planned economic development projects from Sonoma County, Mendocino County, cities, unincorporated communities, special districts, and tribes throughout the region. These local community projects were identified through one-on-one interviews and extensive outreach by Marie Jones of Marie Jones Consulting and Bradley Johnson and Ethan Brown of Sonoma County EDB. A list of these projects and the organizations implementing them is provided in **Table 1**.

These projects are a crucial part of the CEDS in that they reflect local needs and priorities. They reflect a wide array of important infrastructure projects including water resiliency projects, climate change adaptation and mitigation projects, and sector specific economic development projects. The project descriptions include a rough estimate of cost, timing, potential project partners and the key outcomes of the efforts.

SMEDD does not apply for funding for these projects; rather, local jurisdictions and agencies will apply independently and may reference the CEDS as a resource to show how these projects meet and advance regional economic development goals. These projects ultimately will be pursued and implemented by the project sponsors and SMEDD's role is purely to include them in the CEDS so that the projects are eligible for future for federal and state grant funding, especially from EDA.

The project list in Appendix A is not exhaustive. While extensive outreach to the cities, unincorporated communities, special districts, and tribes occurred as part of the CEDS process, not all jurisdictions were prepared or able to submit projects in time for inclusion in this document. SMEDD staff will continue to accept projects as they are identified so that there is a comprehensive list of local community project priorities.

Table 1. Local Community Projects

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Name
Mendocino County	
MC-1	Mendocino County Energy Resiliency Project
MC-2	Innovative Transportation Project
MC-3	Enhance Water Storage Throughout Mendocino
MC-4	Transfer Station Upgrade
Noyo Harbor District	
NHD-1	Noyo Harbor Marina Redevelopment Project – Moring Basin Reconstruction
NHD-2	Implement Recommendations from the Noyo Harbor Community Sustainability Plan
Point Arena	
PA-1	Point Arena Parking Lot
PA-2	Point Arena Roundabout
PA-3	Point Arena Boathouse Visitor Center
PA-4	Point Arena Campground Project
Mendocino City Community Water District	
MCCWD-1	Community Water Feasibility Study
MCCWD-2	Phase II, WWTP Upgrade Project, Recycled Water System
MCCWD-3	Community Water Storage
MCCWD-4	Ocean Outfall Replacement
MCCWD-5	Wastewater Treatment Unit
MCCWD-6	Lift Station Replacement.
MCCWD-7	Collection and Distribution
Coyote Valley	
CV-1	Emergency Fire Egress (Road) & Emergency Preparedness
CV-2	Riverbank Restoration/Stabilization
CV-3	Gas Station/Truck Stop
CV-4	Government/Administration Building
CV-5	Community Park & Housing Development
CV-6	Infrastructure for and Hotel Development
Noyo Center for Marine Science	
NC-1	Noyo Center for Marine Science - Ocean Science Center
NC-2	City of Fort Bragg Seawater Intake Project

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Name
Redwood Valley Community	
RV-1	County Water District infrastructure, including pipes, storage, pumps, and meters.
RV-2	Water Needs Assessment & develop additional, secure water storage capacity
RV-3	Implement projects to mitigate thousands of acres of burned acreage in and around Redwood Valley
RV-4	Redwood Valley Emergency Evacuation Route Improvements - Construct 8 ford crossings of Cave Creek to connect Redwood Valley to Little Lake Valley
RV-5	Purchase land and improvements to the Redwood Valley Calpella Fire District facilities.
RV-6	Procure two (2) Duty Officer Patrol Unit vehicles equipped for Emergency Response for the Redwood Valley Calpella Fire District
RV-7	Purchase Additional Public Safety Equipment for the Redwood Valley Calpella Fire District
RV-8	Water Above-Ground Supply Pipeline from the Ukiah Aquifer to Redwood Valley on the Redwood Rail Trail
RV-9	Redwood Valley Grange Community Project
City of Willits	
CW-1	City of Willits Community Center Rehabilitation
CW-2	City of Willits Photovoltaic System for Wastewater Treatment Plant
CW-3	City of Willits Water Storage Tank Replacement
CW-4	City of Willits Recycle Wastewater Feasibility Study
Mendocino Council of Governments	
MCG-1	Noyo Harbor Multimodal Improvement Project
MCG-2	Brooktrails Second Access
MCG-3	Mobility Solutions in Rural Communities
MCG-4	Orchard Avenue Extension (Phase I and 2)
MCG-5	Rail Trail to Mendocino College
MCG-6	Ukiah Transit Center
Alexander Valley Film Society	
AVFS-1	Alexander Valley Film Society Future Filmmakers Doc Shop
AVFS-2	Alexander Valley Film Society year-long Integrated Media Arts intensive
Becoming Independent	
BI-1	Becoming Independent: Funding the Future of Services
City of Healdsburg	
HBG-1	Extension of SMART to Healdsburg and beyond
HBG-2	Recycled Water Extension Project
HBG-3	Groundwater Well for Water Supply Resilience
Child Care	
CC-1	Childcare Apprenticeship Program

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Name
Dry Creek Rancheria	
DCR-1	Dutcher Creek Hotel
DCR-2	Small Business Park (Dutcher Creek)
DCR-3	Self-Storage Facility
DCR-4	Wetland Mitigation Bank
DCR-5	Affordable Housing
Kashia Band of Pomo Indians	
KBP-1	Berry's Sawmill and Hardware Store Acquisition
KBP-2	The Kashia Center for Abalone and North Coast Research Education and Restorative Aquaculture
KBP-3	The Kashia Family Entertainment Center and Hotel
KBP-4	Kashia Biofuel Production Facility
KBP-5	Sutter Medical Center of Santa Rosa, Chanate Campus Revitalization Project
KBP-6	Kashia Portable Water Desalination Plant
KBP-7	Kashia Hemp Processing Plant
KBP-8	Kashia Permaculture Farm
West County	
WC-1	Replacement of Non-Reinforced Masonry Firehouse - Cazadero
WC-2	Cazadero Park Improvement Project
WC-3	Guerneville Plaza Renovation Project
City of Santa Rosa	
SR-1	Santa Rosa - Childcare Support Program
SR-2	Santa Rosa - Downtown Infill Development
SR-3	Santa Rosa - Roseland Community Benefit District
SR-4	Santa Rosa - Red Housing Fund
SR-5	Santa Rosa Downtown Communications Enhancements
SR-6	Santa Rosa Water: Llano Sewer Trunk Rehabilitation #1 Project
SR-7	Santa Rosa Water: Lower Colgan Creek Restoration Project – Phase 3
SR-8	Santa Rosa Water: Laguna Waste Water Treatment Plant Disinfection Improvements Project
City of Cotati	
COT-1	Cotati Small Business Incubator
COT-2	Santero Way Specific Plan Rezoning
Russian River Flood Control & Water Conservation District	
RR-1	Lake Mendocino Water Source Project
RR-2	Upper Russian River Water Storage Project
RR-3	On-Farm Groundwater Recharge Multi-Benefit Project

Source: Sonoma County EDB and Marie Jones Consulting

2. SWOT Analysis

A holistic understanding of the internal and external factors that speak to the region's unique assets and competitive positioning and that affect economic development in the two-county region is important for informing the strategic direction and priorities identified in the CEDS.

As defined by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), SWOT analysis elements are commonly understood in the following terms:

- **Strengths** are a region's relative competitive advantages (e.g., scenic beauty, tourism activity, robust industry supply chains and clusters, transportation networks, specialized workforce skills, higher education levels, collaboration among stakeholders) and often are internal in nature;
- **Weaknesses** are a region's relative competitive disadvantages (e.g., high housing costs, workforce shortages), also often internal in nature;
- **Opportunities** are chances or occasions for regional improvement or progress (e.g., expansion of a biosciences research lab in the region), often external in nature; and
- **Threats** are chances or occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline (e.g., catastrophic fires and droughts), also often are external in nature.



The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, prepared by Marie Jones Consulting and SMEDD Staff, was informed by prior economic development work and published reports (e.g., the 2016 SMEDD CEDS, the 2011-2016 Sonoma County CEDS, Mendocino County's Move 2030, and the 2020 Sonoma County Economic Recovery Action Plan), data from the background and economic context work, and input from the community through the focus groups and interviews of the CEDS project. This chapter seeks to organize information related to the region's economic situation in a way that leads to and supports identification of salient economic development considerations.

Strengths

Location

- Mendocino and Sonoma counties boast scenic beauty and an attractive climate to residents, growers, and visitors.
- Strategic location near San Francisco and the Bay Area.
- The region's rural character is natural, peaceful, and uncrowded.

Quality of Life and Amenities

- Desirable quality of life for families and retired people.
- Attractions and activities: wineries, coastal and mountain recreation, parks, arts, and events.
- Access to significant outdoor recreation resources.
- High community cohesion and interaction in our "small town" and rural communities.
- Ethos of self-reliance and community support of community members.
- Relatively strong non-profit and government partners with many non-profits focused on providing social services.
- Low crime in some areas.
- Large and active environmental community – constantly striving to be more sustainable through public and private investments.
- Access to post-secondary education – Mendocino College, Santa Rosa Junior College, Sonoma State University, Empire College, trade-sponsored educational programs, and other educational institutions offer affordable degrees in a wide variety of fields.
- Sonoma County has a strong and growing creative arts community – with supportive institutions, multiple performing arts venues, and many individual artists (example: Santa Rosa's ordinance- 2% of business development revenues fund art projects).
- Residents take pride in their communities. Following the fires and pandemic people

came together from across the county to provide assistance and shelter.

- Relatively well-educated with moderate to high shares of residents with some college or an associate's degree and bachelor's degrees and higher.

Business

- Sonoma Clean Power/CCA provides electric service to both counties, placing zero/low-carbon energy sources on the grid, reducing emissions from the power sector.
- High demand for healthy lifestyle-related businesses.
- Growing remote-worker base.
- Some niche, tech/manufacturing and support programs in Sonoma and Mendocino counties.
- Many certified B Corporations.
- Local chambers of commerce, West Business Development Center, Sonoma and Mendocino County Tourism Bureaus, and local tourism organizations have tremendous networks, connecting local businesses, providing supportive resources, and marketing the counties externally and internally.
- Larger employers:
 - Sonoma Clean Power, Sonoma Mountain Village, and generally strong recognition and commitment to sustainability.
 - Kaiser Permanente
 - Adventist Health
 - Buddhist community
 - Schools from K – post-secondary
 - Wine and beer industries.
 - Native American gaming industry which attracts money from outside the region.
 - Ukiah-based Family Medicine Residency Program, UC Davis sponsor.
 - Innovative and high-end grocery (Harvest Ukiah coop, Oliver's Market, Pacific Market, Whole foods, etc.)
 - A wide variety of lodging and hospitality venues

Weaknesses

Quality of Life

- COVID-19 created significant public health and economic losses, including:
 - Loss of lives
 - Loss of jobs disproportionately impacting low-wage and service industries
 - Small businesses closures
 - Evictions
 - Increasing levels of remote work underscore the importance of strengthening broadband infrastructure
- Lack of housing availability and the high cost of housing. Many businesses cannot recruit new employees because they cannot find a place to live.
- Low wages relative to cost of living.
- Overall cost of living is high in Mendocino and Sonoma counties relative to the state, nation, and most benchmarks.
- Inconsistent access to quality, affordable childcare and health care.
- Rural areas lack sufficient population to support basic retail, services and employment opportunities (especially in rural towns).
- Low population density overall (even in larger cities) may be a limiting factor in growth of cultural districts and support of creative businesses.
- Unhoused people and associated impacts on residential and business sectors.
- Rural areas lack access to sufficient broadband and digital infrastructure.
- Rural areas have a lack of access to public transportation.
- Electricity in the region is competitive within California but significantly more expensive for residential, commercial, and industrial users than neighboring western states.

Economy and Business

- Economy is not sufficiently diversified - it may be too dependent on tourism, agriculture and extraction industries. This results in larger downturns and economic insecurity when these sectors are hit by recession.
- Many of our rural communities lack basic business services (banks, retailers, medical, grocery) and have restrictive zoning which limits economic development.
- Inadequate workforce (availability, work readiness and skill level) to meet industry/business needs.
- Inadequate or lack of broadband availability, especially in rural areas.
- Cost of transportation for goods is high, especially to the coast. In some cases, goods cannot be transported to rural and coastal areas.
- Entrepreneurs can be somewhat unsophisticated in how they view their business, market and technology use.
 - Many business owners are not tech-comfortable, much less, tech-savvy. The majority have limited computer/tech capabilities.
 - Many small business owners have limited business skills, especially in areas of finance, management, human resources and marketing.
- Our region has a relatively shallow entrepreneurial ecosystem: many of the qualities of the economy that create an entrepreneurial powerhouse in the Silicon Valley are missing within both counties.
- Shallow labor market and high housing costs – recruits worry when they consider what they will do if the first job does not work out, and some express concern about job opportunities for their spouse, etc.
- Awareness of existing economic development partners and programs is inadequate but improving.

- Corporate income tax rates in California are the highest of all Western states, making the region less appealing for many business sectors.

Climate Change

- Due to climate change, communities and businesses are susceptible to increased fire danger and smoke damage - and the consequential impacts: a heightened sense of insecurity, life-safety concerns, business and life disruptions, health risks, access to electricity during “red flag” events, increased insurance costs, and overall community desirability.
- Some of these factors are increasing housing costs and creating economic opportunities on the coast, as people migrate to the coast to avoid inland climate risks.
- The last several years of drought, particularly in 2020 and 2021, are resulting in crises within the region, affecting businesses, residents, the tourism economy and making the region more susceptible to wildfires.

Culture

- Sacrifices required for high-growth entrepreneurship are not well understood by the community or aspiring entrepreneurs. Most new businesses are lifestyle in nature.
- Communities are resistant to change (e.g., attitudes toward new housing development and density even when recognizing affordability challenge).
- Lack of marketing the region and sharing its economic development story contributes to low awareness among tech entrepreneurs and investors in the Bay Area and nationally.
- Lack of peer group interaction for professionals in their 30s.
- Insufficient large, institutional donor support for the arts.
- There is a common perception that there are not enough cultural and social amenities to retain and attract younger, single residents.

Education

- Not all schools are performing at the national average.
- Insufficient career and technical education (CTE) for K-12.
- Many young people are not exposed to tech/coding at an early enough age. As a consequence, young people who might be perfectly good coders/tech (especially girls and people of color) are type-cast out of a very promising career.
- The share of students in PreK-12 schools is relatively low, and, due to demographic changes, the total number of students is declining faster than any benchmarks.

Demographics

- Declining population numbers in recent years.
- Aging population and declining professional class.
- The largest age cohort is residents over 65 years old, and this group is growing more rapidly than any other.
- Many people are retiring to our communities which is driving up the cost of housing and the need for services.
- Equity issues need to be addressed throughout the district.

Government

- The permitting and regulatory processes in county and municipality governments are seen as overly burdensome, time consuming, and costly.
- California Coastal Commission's restrictions on land use limit the development potential in coastal communities.
- In the past, there has been a perception that the municipalities and county do not always work together in a collaborative manner to address persistent concerns.

Opportunities

Housing

- A growing focus on sustainable housing and diverse housing types (e.g., tiny homes, ADUs, cluster housing, affordable housing), as well as local laws that allow for more flexibility in design and construction of sustainable homes like Mendocino County's Class K Construction Standards, create opportunities for more housing.
- Accessory dwelling units (ADU's, "granny" or "alley" flats) are now permitted by right and many communities also provide free second unit designs. This will increase housing supply and density.
- Higher-density housing development and other "re-imagining" of downtowns as higher density communities is underway due to State mandates.
- Streamlining permitting and development processes would allow the real estate market to become more responsive to demand. Lobbying to address overly burdensome elements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) could be a major game changer.
- Continuing to be on the cutting edge of environmentally sustainable growth and investment will elevate the Sonoma and Mendocino regional brand.
- Some areas have significant artists clusters, and research shows that artist colonization of a community results in economic growth and transformation. Physical venues are important, including music, theater, fine and industrial arts.
- Creating new and expanding existing transportation options will help better connect residents to education, employment, healthcare, and more. Expanding and coordinating connections to the SMART rail could better connect workers, residents and freight from both counties.
- Expanding the 101 would help businesses better connect with the rest of the Bay Area.
- The need to attract more diverse residents and workforce is an opportunity.

Climate Change Mitigation

- Anticipate and proactively plan to mitigate threats, prevent future disasters, and protect the environment.
- Watershed restoration and protection will be critical to a sustainable economy and environment in the future.
- Aggressively promote and aid vegetation management programs in high fire threat areas.

Agriculture

- Cannabis related tourism – appellation contrôlée style branding and management to appeal to a discerning, higher-end market.
- Develop a specialized cannabis training program modeled after the Wine Business Institute at Sonoma State University.
- Mendocino and Sonoma Counties' large agricultural communities could be better connected to local and regional consumers. As a major agricultural center near one of the largest metropolitan areas in the US (the Bay Area), the counties are well positioned to be a leader in regional farm-to-market and locally grown food.

Quality of Life, Community and Serving "Creatives"

- Efforts to attract and support creatives to our region by populating public spaces with public art, creating beautiful downtown creative spaces that include multi-purpose artist workspace, retail space and artist residency programs.
- Various new recreational facilities such as the Fort Bragg Coastal Trail, Findley Center, Park and Recreation District upgrades, CV Starr Aquatic Center, various rails to trails projects.

Education

- Our young people often move away due to a lack of job opportunities in the district. We need solutions that connect and prepare youth for the work world.
- Instruction and education opportunities at post-secondary institutions build on internship programs with business.
- Community colleges located in both counties could coordinate and co-manage post-secondary education and training aligned to the hiring needs of industry.
- Sonoma State University and community colleges could be better integrated with local employers and students through proactive workforce partnerships.
- Establish and promote Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs by leveraging and emulating the successes of organizations such as the Sonoma County CTE Foundation.

Economic Development Organizations

- Economic Development organizations could be technically more advanced and improve the use of the latest technologies to streamline and improve services.
- In this time of an economic recovery, new start-ups will form and others will need assistance to become successful.
- Many community members would support growth of the restorative business sector, which has the potential to be a major job generator for our community and to diversify our economy.
- There are many state and federal programs that support renewable energy generation and storage, but most people are not aware of them.
- Nascent sustainable manufacturing (example: Solectrac is the leading electric tractor manufacturer and based in the region).
- There are currently large populations of residents in the region that are not currently working. These potential workers present an

immediate source of labor pool expansion, if provided with the resources and pathways to reenter the workforce.

- By focusing on economic inclusion, the two counties have the ability to raise up many residents who are currently being left behind in terms of education, housing, employment, and incomes. This will also help foster the next generation of county leaders.
- Better connecting local entrepreneurs with the rest of the Bay Area could provide additional startup capital and other innovation resources.
- As eCommerce disrupts traditional retail systems, it presents opportunities for redevelopment of retail properties and for makers, growers, wineries, and craftspeople to sell products online to a global market.

Threats

Business

- E-commerce from larger out of area businesses.
- Job displacement resulting from automation of low-wage, low-skill jobs that are prevalent in the region.
- Absentee landlords do not maintain buildings in some central business districts, resulting in higher vacancy rates and inadequately maintained buildings and storefronts.
- Impact of rising costs and other economic pressures on small hospitals with emergency rooms, especially in non-urbanized areas of the region.
- As the region focuses on creating necessary housing and business opportunities, agricultural and natural areas must also be protected. Nature is at the heart of what makes this region special. The potential threat of growth on the natural environment can be reduced by focusing new growth on targeted corridors, redeveloping existing properties, targeting denser development in urban cores, prioritizing TODs, and other intentionally sustainable strategies.

- A lack of broadband access in some areas of the region threatens the ability of businesses to grow and for residents to participate in the global economy.
- Changing federal immigration policies are creating significant uncertainty for businesses to access the seasonal international labor market.
- Without creating higher wage jobs and industry sectors, many local workers will continue to earn below a living wage.

Agriculture

- Cannabis legalization may result in large outside corporations displacing small, family-owned enterprises.
- Migration of cannabis producers to lower-cost locations, such as the Central Valley, after legalization.
- Loss of historical fruit production, due to lower cost produce from out of the US and the loss of our ag workforce.
- The potential impacts of cannabis on water availability also remains largely unknown.
- Because of current U.S. labor regulations, opportunities for targeted training in the growing cannabis industry are limited.

Climate Change

- Environmental threats due to climate change abound, including sea level rise, changes in temperature and weather events (heat or precipitation).
 - Impacts of climate change on agriculture – temp and precipitation changes, drought, early and late freezes, etc.
 - Sea level rise risks to many of our harbors.
 - Climate is impacting our forests and fisheries. Reduced fog and rain are impacting redwood forests, significant loss of habitat and warming waters decreasing populations of fish, abalone etc.
 - Water availability issues due to drought and sea level rise (impacts water diversion in rivers on the coast).

- Destructive wildfires are likely to become more frequent/seasonal, and increasingly threaten the built environment.
 - Local air quality is impacted, creating a public health concern.
- While the impacts of natural disasters occur swiftly, it takes years for communities to fully recover.

Housing and Quality of Life

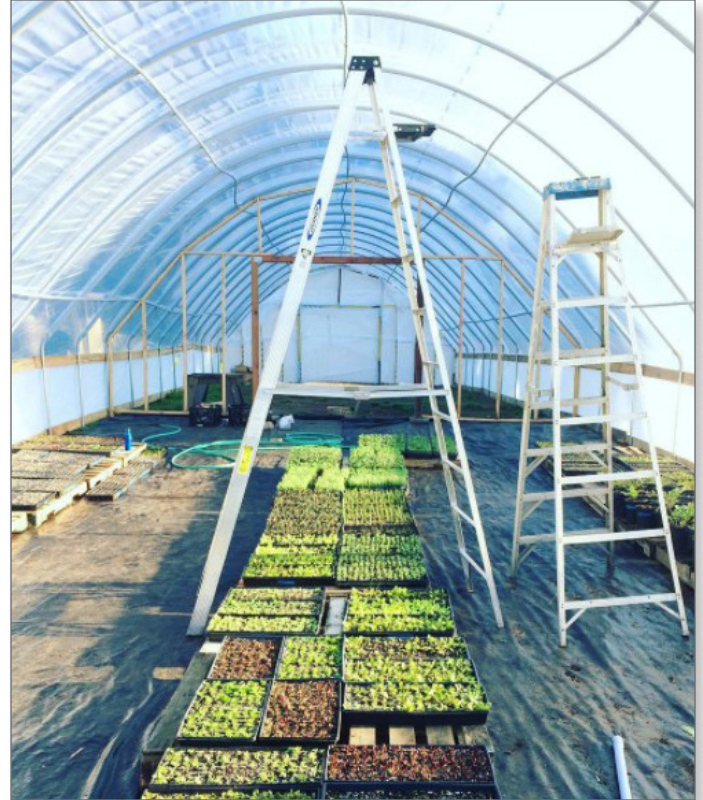
- If the region does not build enough affordable housing and housing units in total, economic growth will slow. Many lower-income residents will be forced to relocate, many who lost homes in the fires will leave, and the county will face even greater labor shortages – especially among critical service workers in healthcare, education, and other areas. Long-term, this could create fiscal and social instability throughout the county, along with numerous other repercussions.
- If persistent permitting and regulatory concerns are not addressed, the cost of development will rise, preventing reinvestment in local communities and driving away many younger families and new businesses.
- Without the attraction and retention of younger workers and families, an aging population could create significant imbalances in the local economy – with rising demand for services and fewer people available to provide them.
- The rising share of homes used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use takes thousands of housing units off the market when they are in the greatest demand.
- Changing federal immigration policies are creating significant uncertainty for non-citizens and their families, who make up a large share of the regions and California's population.
- The region has inadequate resources and capacity to address peak COVID-19 events and to support recovery

- Hospitals are “safely-staffed” but workers are fatigued.
- Rural areas of the counties faced initial challenges with availability and distribution of vaccines and COVID tests.
- The resistance to vaccination in some communities has contributed to increased COVID Delta Variant infections and breakthrough cases of persons already vaccinated, slowing the battle against the spread of the pandemic and delaying recovery.

3. Economic Context

There are five categories of economic indicators presented in this chapter, which are used to set an economic context baseline and inform the regional economic assessment. The five categories include: Demographics; Housing; Employment, Wages, and Productivity; Workforce Preparedness; and Environment/Climate. The economic assessment is used to track trends over time (many of the metrics included in this chapter were included in the 2016 CEDS) and to inform the Priority Projects presented in **Chapter 6**. High-level findings from the five categories are summarized:

- **Demographics:** Social infrastructure (e.g., childcare, senior services, internet access, etc.) is needed to retain young, growing families and support an aging population.
- **Housing:** The lack of housing affordable to the region's workforce is a threat to the region's economic and workforce development.
- **Employment, Wages, and Productivity:** Both counties have a high number of relatively low-paying jobs, some of which represent the counties' fastest growing occupations. The need for upskilling workers and supporting a wider variety of businesses across a broad range of industry sectors in an effort to diversify the economy and improve economic resiliency represent opportunities across the region.
- **Workforce Preparedness:** Increased educational support is needed at the high school and immediate post-high school levels to ensure young adults are adequately prepared for the workforce with employer-desired qualifications, particularly in the higher-paying health and medical fields and in specialized trades.



- **Environment and Climate:** The region is vulnerable to multiple climate threats and disasters, including wildfires, droughts, and sea level rise/erosion, all of which intensify with climate change and affect the region's livability, tourism economy, and valuable natural resources.

While the CEDS takes a regional approach to overall economic development, data indicators are pulled for Sonoma and Mendocino counties separately to better target projects or actions and so that each county can use the data in its own way. Underlying data points and comparisons are discussed in the following sections.

Demographics

The demographic composition of each county is fundamental to understanding the overall economic picture. An analysis of population, households, age distribution, and racial/ethnic composition within the two counties provides a baseline for comparison and insight into region- and generation-specific needs. **Table 2** shows that Sonoma County is 5.5 times as populous as Mendocino, and collectively the region supports over half a million people. In both Mendocino and Sonoma counties, family population is around 75 percent of the total population. Over time, the number of households have grown in each county, but due to the aging population, are predicted to decrease in Mendocino County over the next few years and increase at a slower rate in Sonoma County.

Table 3 and **Figure 1** examine how the populations of Sonoma and Mendocino counties have changed over the last decade. Each county has experienced positive growth overall in the past 10 years, despite declines in population in the last several years, due, in part, to major wildfire events.

Figure 1 highlights how Sonoma's population peaked in 2016 and then began to decrease in 2017. Mendocino County's population began to decline in 2019. These trends can be attributed, at least in part, to the significant fires the region faced around this time period.

Table 3. County Populations over Time

Year	Mendocino County	Sonoma County	Two-County Region
2011	87,681	485,026	572,707
2012	87,780	487,296	575,076
2013	88,101	490,318	578,419
2014	88,512	494,652	583,164
2015	88,847	497,925	586,772
2016	89,009	502,151	591,160
2017	89,243	501,330	590,573
2018	89,455	499,085	588,540
2019	89,310	494,171	583,481
2020	88,615	492,485	581,100
Total % Increase ('11 - '20)	1.07%	1.54%	1.47%

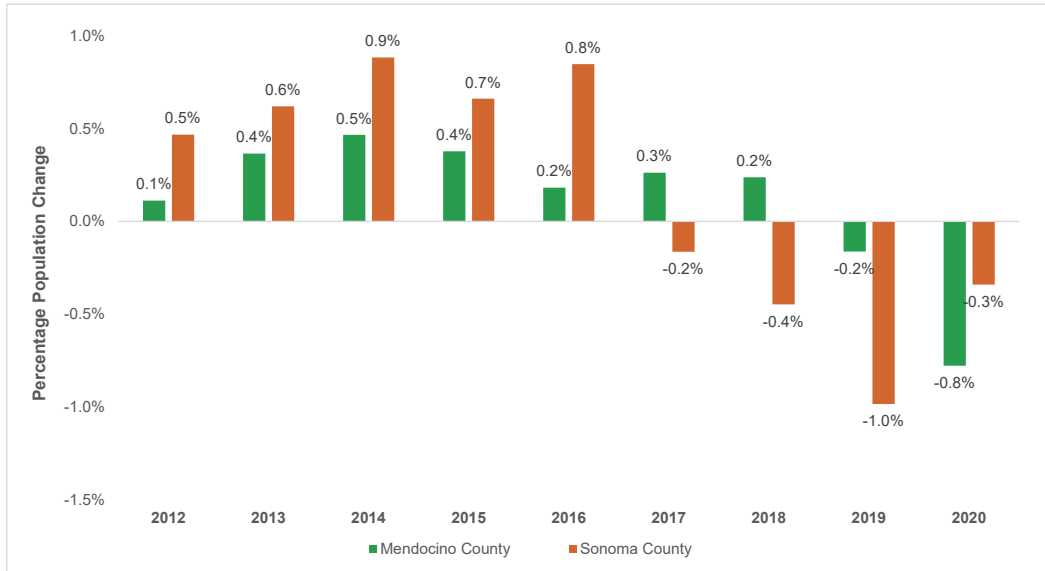
Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2020 data.

Table 2. Demographics Summary

Indicator	Mendocino County		Sonoma County		Two-County Region
	#	%	#	%	
Population (2020)					
Total Population	88,615	15.2%	492,485	84.8%	581,100
Household Population	86,843	15.3%	481,564	84.7%	568,407
Household Size	2.46		2.57		2.55
Family Population	65,894	15.1%	369,353	84.9%	435,247
Households					
2000	33,266	16.2%	172,403	83.8%	205,669
2010	34,945	15.8%	185,825	84.2%	220,770
2020	35,356	15.9%	187,233	84.1%	222,589
2025	35,117	15.7%	188,462	84.3%	223,579
Median Age					
2010	41.6		39.8		40.7
2020	43.2		41.1		42.2

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2020 data.

Figure 1. County Population Changes Over Time

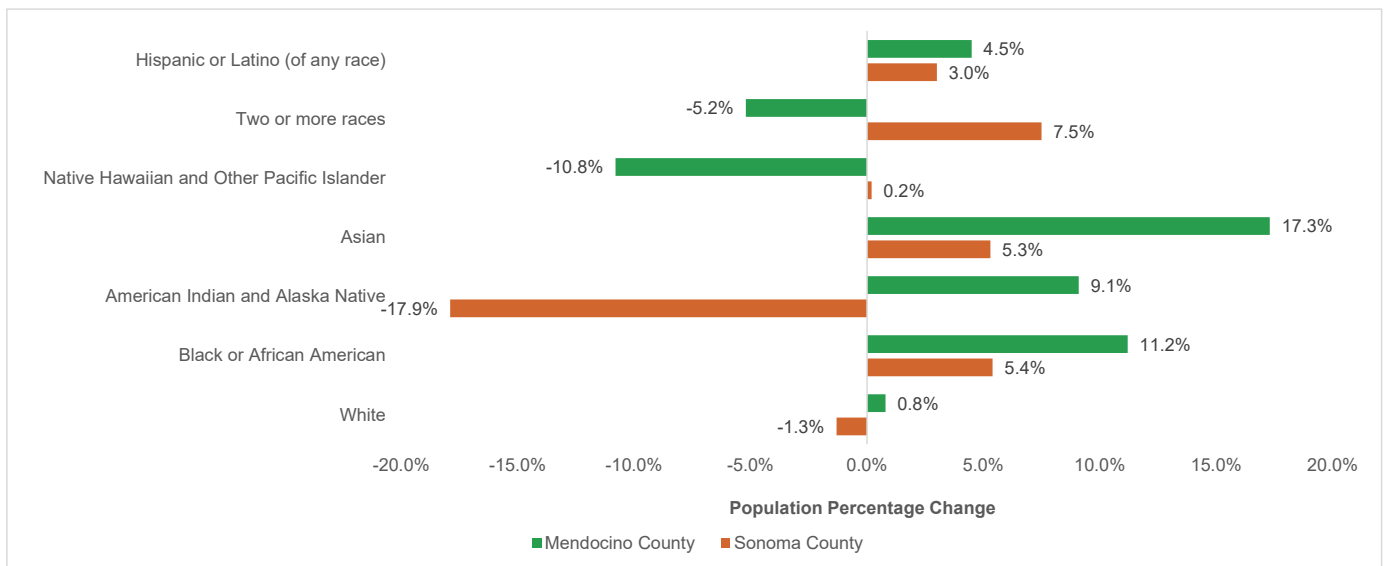


Source: EMSI.

Incorporating a race/ethnicity perspective, **Figure 2** highlights that the most significant changes in Mendocino County since the 2016 CEDS occurred with the increase of Asian (17 percent), Black or African American (11 percent), and American Indian and Alaska Native (9 percent). Sonoma County’s largest increases occurred among Two or more races (8 percent), Black or African American (5 percent) and Asian (5 percent). Additionally, Sonoma County saw the largest decrease to their American Indian and Alaska Native population (18

percent), while Mendocino’s most significant loss was to the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population (11 percent). In terms of ethnicity changes, the Hispanic or Latino population has grown by more than three percentage points in both counties over the decade, and now makes up a quarter of the population in each. While California as a whole has a larger share of Hispanic or Latino population, Sonoma and Mendocino have seen larger proportional growth than the state.

Figure 2. Population % Change by Race/Ethnicity, 2016 to 2019



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05.

Looking at total population by generation, **Table 4** and **Figure 3** reveal that both counties' have similar shares of distribution across the six categories. In the region overall, the population skews older, with approximately one third (32 percent in Sonoma County; 35 percent in Mendocino County) categorized as Baby Boomer or Silent & Greatest generations (aged 56 or older). Another commonality is that the Millennial generation follows the Baby Boomer generation in population share, at around 20 percent.

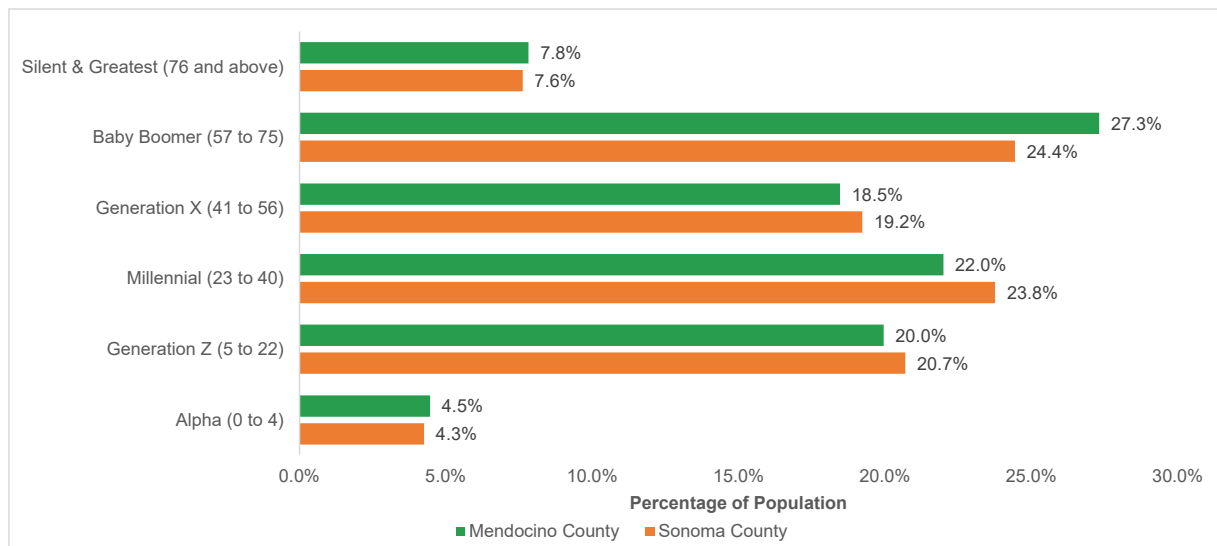
Table 4. Population Summary by Generation

Generations and Ages ¹	Mendocino County		Sonoma County	
	Count	%	Count	%
Alpha (0 to 4)	3,952	4%	20,964	4%
Generation Z (5 to 22)	17,680	20%	101,906	21%
Millennial (23 to 40)	19,488	22%	117,020	24%
Generation X (41 to 56)	16,361	18%	94,690	19%
Baby Boomer (57 to 75)	24,203	27%	120,348	24%
Silent & Greatest (76 and above)	6,931	8%	37,557	8%
Total	88,615		492,485	

¹ Ages calculated as of 2020.

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2020 data.

Figure 3. Generational Compositions by County



Source: EMSI.

In **Table 5**, income is revealed as a diverging indicator between the two counties, with Sonoma County posting significantly higher incomes across each of the three data points. Additionally, poverty rates in the two counties vary greatly, with Mendocino County's rate of 17.8 percent nearly doubling Sonoma County's rate of 9.2 percent. As a point of comparison, the poverty rate across all of California is 13.4 percent.

Looking at the share of households with no internet access, Mendocino County doubles Sonoma County, while Sonoma County has nearly three times as many households in this category overall. The uninsured population is also higher in Mendocino County (9 percent) compared with Sonoma County (6 percent).

Figure 4 and **Figure 5** examine the flows of migration for each county. In Mendocino, people most commonly move to the county from Sonoma, Lake or Sacramento counties. Two counties in Oregon also contribute to inbound migrations. On the outbound migration side, Sonoma and Lake are again top counties, along with King County, Washington. From a net perspective, Mendocino County gains the most migrations from Sonoma County and loses the most to Lake County.

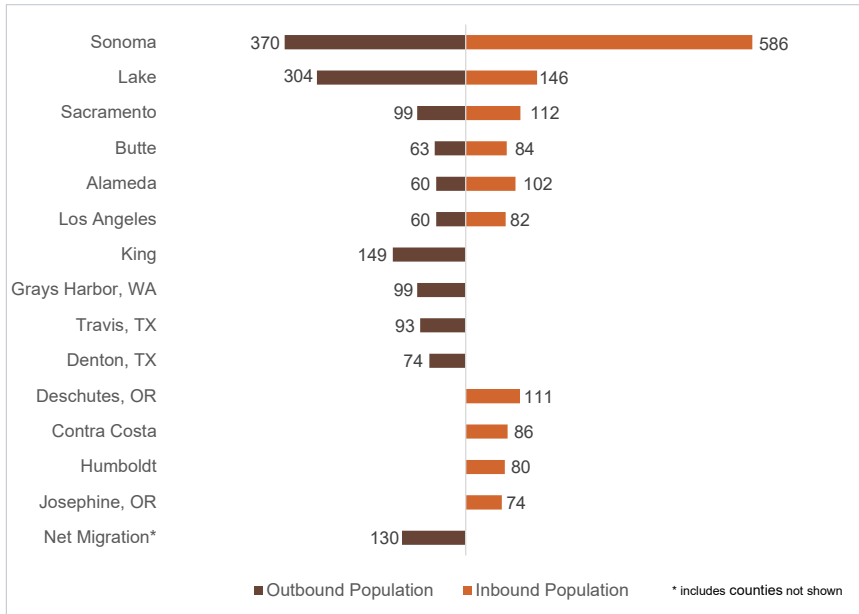
In Sonoma, people are moving into the county most from southern counties including Marin, San Francisco, and Alameda. People are also commonly moving out of the county to Marin, Lake and Sacramento counties. On a net basis, Sonoma has gained the most in population from Marin County, and parallel to Mendocino County, loses most outbound population to Lake County. While the cause for migration is not revealed with this data, it could be hypothesized that outbound migration from Mendocino County to places like Washington and Texas may be driven by a desire to escape fire threats and higher costs of living. In Sonoma County, because the most significant migration is to nearby counties that also have fire threats and high costs of living (although less high), these factors may be less of a driving force.

Table 5. Income, Internet, and Insurance by County

Indicator	Mendocino County	Sonoma County
Income (2020)		
Per Capita Income	\$29,752	\$42,408
Median Household (HH) Income	\$53,841	\$83,165
Average Household Income	\$74,477	\$111,140
% in Poverty	17.8%	9.2%
Internet Access (2019)		
HHs with No Internet Access		
Count	5,446	14,943
% of Total	16%	8%
No Health Insurance (2019)		
Under 19	911	3,415
19-34	2,519	10,883
35-64	3,884	15,273
65+	99	613
% of Total	9%	6%

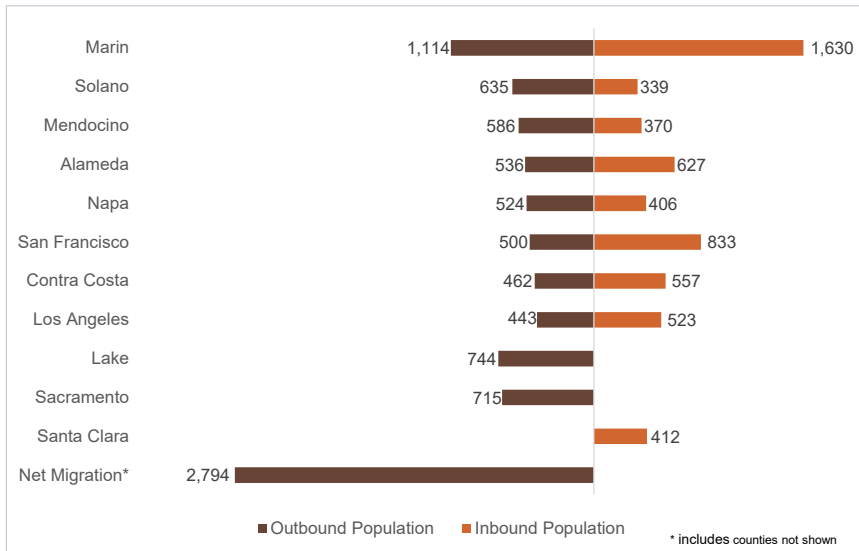
Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019 and 2020 data; ACS 2019 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701 (Poverty data).

Figure 4. Mendocino County Top Outbound and Inbound Migrations



Source: EMSI.

Figure 5. Sonoma County Top Outbound and Inbound Migrations



Source: EMSI.

KEY FINDINGS

Social infrastructure (e.g., childcare, senior services, internet access, etc.) is needed to retain young, growing families and support an aging population.

Populations in both counties are growing, but primarily among the older cohorts as the population ages. At the same time, in-migration has slowed, due in part to increasingly severe wildfires and drought which threaten the region's livability.

- Mendocino County's population increased 1.1 percent between 2011 and 2020, compared with 1.5 percent in Sonoma County. (Table 2) However, both counties experienced negative net migration in 2018 (negative 130 in Mendocino County and negative 2,794 in Sonoma County). (Figure 4, Figure 5)
- In both counties, the population is aging. The "Baby Boomer" and the "Silent and Greatest" generations (57 years and older) account for more than one-third of the population, followed by the Millennial generation (23 to 40 years old). (Figure 3) This is consistent with a national trend in aging demographics.
- The availability of social infrastructure affects the livability of a region, and in Mendocino County, 16 percent of households lack Internet access compared with 8 percent in Sonoma County. (Table 5)
- The preceding data suggest an opportunity to expand and enhance the region's social infrastructure to improve quality of life and accessibility of services for all residents but particularly to attract and retain families. This may include childcare services, Internet access, or healthcare access and facilities.

Housing

Housing indicators evaluate inventory, production, and affordability across the two counties. Housing is a crucial economic indicator as it directly affects livability, and through that, workforce availability and retention. Key takeaways from the data include the following insights:

- Both counties are on the less affordable side, with Mendocino County slightly more affordable than Sonoma County.
- Most renters in the region are cost-burdened, and owner households with a mortgage also represent a sizable proportion of the cost-burdened population.
- Affordable housing unit production in Mendocino County has been fairly evenly distributed across income levels over the years, but, more recently, has been dominated by the above moderate-income housing level. In Sonoma, unit production has been significantly less distributed, with above moderate-income housing becoming a larger and larger share of permits over time.

Table 6 highlights that both counties are primarily composed of owner-occupied housing markets, with similar splits between owner and renter tenure. The Housing Affordability Index measures the financial ability of a typical household to purchase an existing home in the area, with 100 representing “an area that on average has sufficient household income to qualify for a loan on a home valued at the median home price”.¹ A number above 100 indicates housing is more affordable for the average household while a number below 100 suggest homes are less affordable. The index numbers show that both counties are on the less affordable side, with Mendocino County slightly more affordable than Sonoma County.

Table 6. Housing Units and Costs, 2020/2021

Item	Mendocino County	Sonoma County
Housing Tenure		
Owner Occupied	53%	56%
Renter Occupied	33%	34%
Vacant	14%	9%
Housing Costs		
Median Home Value	\$389,943	\$622,802
Average Home Value	\$476,629	\$717,396
Housing Affordability Index	79	77
Median Rent		
Studio	\$971	\$1,462
1 Bedroom	\$1,005	\$1,658
2 Bedroom	\$1,325	\$2,179
3 Bedroom	\$1,859	\$3,084
4 Bedroom	\$2,247	\$3,553

Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2020 data, California Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2021 data.

For renter households, median rent numbers can be translated to annual income requirements for affordability. In order not to be cost-burdened, a household should not pay more than 30 to 35 percent of its income towards housing costs. Tripling the median rent numbers reveals that households in Mendocino County would need to be earning at least \$34,956 in annual income to afford a studio and at least \$80,892 for a four bedroom, without being cost burdened. In Sonoma, these annual income figures would range from \$52,623 to \$127,908, depending on bedroom count. **Table 7** illustrates actual cost-burdened rates across each county by household type. The table shows that most renters in the region are cost burdened, which translates to 14 percent of total households in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. More surprisingly, the data also shows that owner households with a mortgage represent a sizable proportion of the cost-burdened population. In Mendocino

¹ Bell, Jennifer. “Housing Affordability Index in the United States.” Arcgis.com, July 2019, www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=a1263c2dcdf2464bbb7906821038eb2f.

County, this category makes up 12 percent of total households, and in Sonoma County, it accounts for 16 percent.

Figure 6 through **Figure 9**, and **Table 8** look at each county’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation, or RHNA, production progress, including all cities and unincorporated areas. According to the Bay Area Association of Governments (ABAG), “as part of RHNA, the California Department of Housing and Community Development, or HCD, determines the total number of new homes the Bay Area needs to build—and how affordable those homes need to be—in order to meet the housing needs of people at all income levels”.²

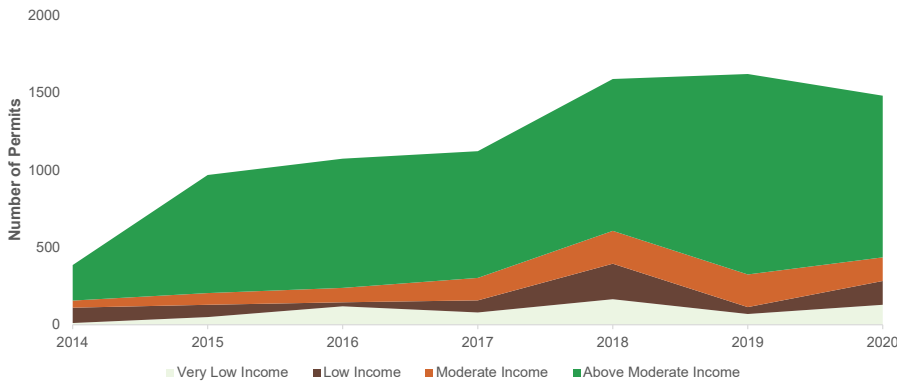
Table 7. Cost-Burdened Households by Tenure

Household Type	Mendocino County		Sonoma County	
	Count	% Cost-Burdened ¹	Count	% Cost-Burdened
Renter HH	12,533	54%	69,602	54%
Owner HHs with a Mortgage	10,611	49%	77,955	38%
Owner HHs with No Mortgage	10,000	15%	38,438	15%

¹ Cost-burdened defined as paying more than 30 percent of income towards housing expenses.

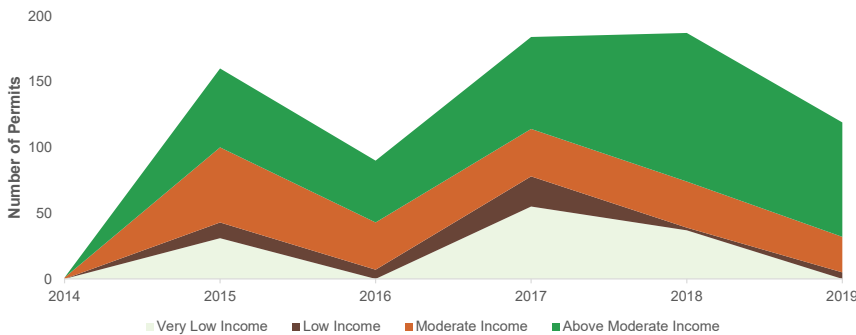
Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019 data.

Figure 6. RHNA Cycle Permits by Affordability by Year, Sonoma County



Source: California Housing and Community Development (HCD)

Figure 7. RHNA Cycle Permits by Affordability by Year, Mendocino County

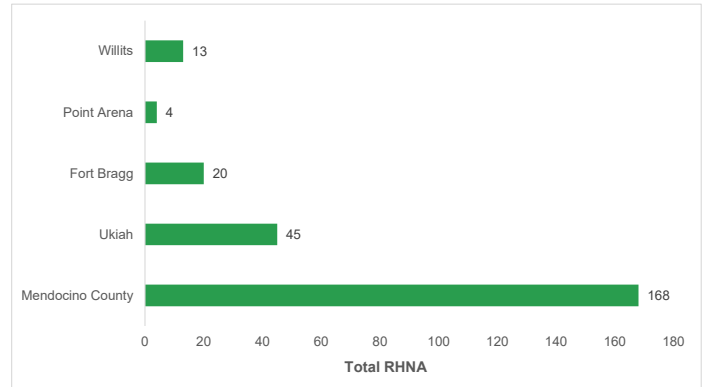


Source: California Housing and Community Development (HCD)

² “RHNA - Regional Housing Needs Allocation.” RHNA - Regional Housing Needs Allocation | Association of Bay Area Governments, 24 May 2021, abag.ca.gov/our-work/housing/rhna-regional-housing-needs-allocation

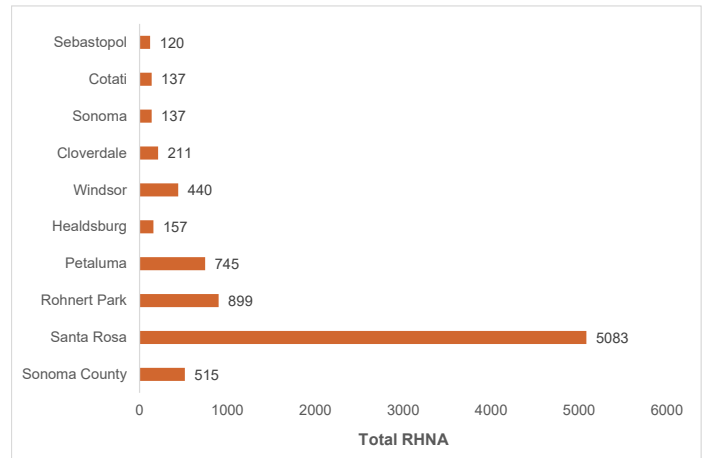
HCD’s data shows that unit production in Mendocino County had been distributed across income levels over the years, but, more recently, has been dominated by the above moderate-income housing level (**Figure 6**). In Sonoma, unit production has been significantly less distributed, with above moderate-income housing becoming a larger and larger share of permits over time (**Figure 7**). In terms of location of unit production, more RHNA units have been produced outside of cities in Mendocino County, while the opposite is true in Sonoma County (**Figure 8** and **Figure 9**). Mendocino County’s 5th RHNA cycle ended in June of 2019, and over its five years the county was able to achieve and exceed their production targets for every income category, most significantly within the moderate-income band (**Table 8**). Sonoma County’s cycle still has a year and a half to go, and while the county has exceeded its production target at the above moderate-income level, approximately 1,400 permits, or nearly 75 percent, are still needed at the lowest income level.

Figure 8. 5th Cycle Total RHNA Units by Jurisdiction, Mendocino County



Source: California Housing and Community Development (HCD)

Figure 9. 5th Cycle Total RHNA Units by Jurisdiction, Sonoma County



Source: California Housing and Community Development (HCD)

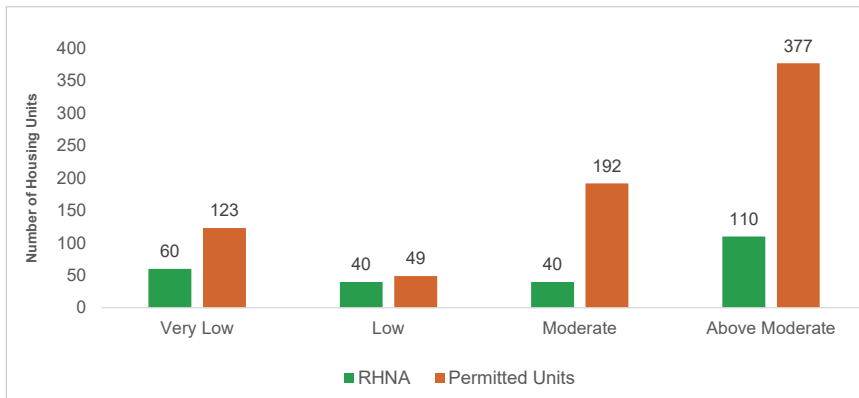
Table 8. RHNA Cycle Progress (cities and unincorporated areas combined)

	Mendocino County			Sonoma County		
5th RHNA Cycle Dates	6/30/2014 - 6/30/2019			1/31/2015 - 1/31/2023		
% Through RHNA Cycle	100%			62.5%		
	5th Cycle Permits	5th Cycle RHNA	% Attained	5th Cycle Permits	5th Cycle RHNA	% Attained
Units						
Very Low Income	123	60	205%	476	1,818	26%
Low Income	49	40	123%	628	1,094	57%
Moderate Income	192	40	480%	765	1,355	56%
Above Moderate Income	377	110	343%	4,941	4,177	118%

Source: California Housing and Community Development (HCD).

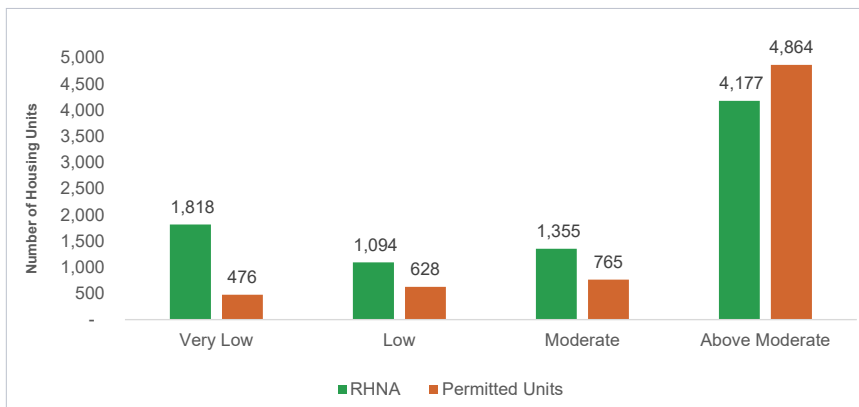
Figure 10 and **Figure 11** look at Mendocino and Sonoma Counties RHNA allocations compared to total permitted units. Both counties are producing the most above-moderate units by far, however the gap between RHNA units and permitted units in Mendocino County is greater than in Sonoma. **Figure 10** shows that Mendocino has permitted more units than its RHNA allocation in every income category, while Sonoma County has only permitted more in the above-moderate category (**Figure 11**).

Figure 10. Mendocino County: Incorporated Cities and Unincorporated County, 2014-2019



Source: California Housing and Community Development Annual Progress Report, as of 2019.

Figure 11. Sonoma County: Incorporated Cities and Unincorporated County, 2014-2019



Source: California Housing and Community Development Annual Progress Report, as of December 2020.

KEY FINDINGS

The lack of housing affordable to the region’s workforce is a threat to the region’s economic and workforce development.

Housing in both counties is relatively less affordable, with Mendocino County slightly more affordable than Sonoma County. In both counties, many renters and owner-occupied (with mortgage) households are housing cost-burdened. Simultaneously, housing unit production has recently been concentrated at above moderate-income levels. This makes it difficult for lower-income households to secure housing that is affordable and accessible to their places of work.

- As indicated by the ESRI Housing Affordability Index, housing in both counties is relatively less affordable. A number above 100 indicates housing is more affordable for the average household, while a number below 100 suggests homes are less affordable. Sonoma County’s index is 77, and Mendocino County’s index is 79. (Table 6)
- In both counties, 54 percent of renters are cost-burdened, meaning that they pay more than 30 percent of monthly income towards housing expenses. Among owner-occupied households, 49 percent of owner households with a mortgage in Mendocino County and 38 percent in Sonoma County are cost-burdened. (Table 7)
- In the 5th RHNA cycle (2014 to 2019 in Mendocino County and 2015 to 2023 in Sonoma County), unit production was concentrated in the above-moderate income sector, which accounted for 44 percent of permitted units in Mendocino County and 49 percent of permitted units in Sonoma County. Mendocino County exceeded its targets across all income levels, achieving 296 percent of its target units in aggregate. The 6th RHNA cycle is currently underway in Mendocino County. To date, Sonoma County has attained 81 percent of its 5th Cycle RHNA targets. (Table 8)

The preceding data suggest a need to increase the supply of housing affordable at all income levels, particularly housing for the region’s workforce.

Employment, Wages, and Productivity

This section presents select data about the region’s employment and wage profiles as well as industry productivity metrics across industry categories and across prior years **Table 9** looks at labor force participation (percentage of residents in the labor force) and unemployment rates (percentage of residents within the labor force that are currently without a job) in both counties. In both areas, the eligible working population (those ages 16 years and over) has declined slightly by a similar proportion. In Mendocino County, unemployment was halved over the years (pre-COVID), but the labor force participation rate also declined. In Sonoma County, the labor force participation rate increased slightly, and the unemployment rate fell by nearly 1 percent. The most recent data shows a very significant jump in unemployment rates for both counties due to the COVID pandemic; however, both counties have experienced some employment recoveries since the time of data collection.

As of September 2021, the unemployment rate dropped to 4.5 percent in Sonoma County and 5.1 percent in Mendocino County, while the State posted an unemployment rate of 7.5 percent.

Gross Regional Product for the region (**Table 10**) was at over \$35 billion collectively, with Mendocino County contributing around 12 percent. Local Government and Hospitals are the most prominent producers in Mendocino County. Sonoma County is also led by Local Government, followed closely by Wineries. Compared to California’s top industries as a whole, Local Government and Hospitals again overlapped with the two counties, while the state as a whole draws in a much greater proportion of GRP from internet and software-based industries, along with professional services like commercial banking and corporate offices. The counties’ top industries highlight a concentration in government and hospitals, revealing that support for more nascent industries could increase economic resilience to future shocks by diversifying the region’s base of jobs and incomes.

Table 9. Unemployment and Labor Force Participation Rates by County

Indicator		Population 16 years and over
Mendocino County		
2016	Total	70,701
	Labor Force Participation Rate	58.8%
	Unemployment rate	10.3%
2019	Total	70,332
	Labor Force Participation Rate	55.4%
	Unemployment rate	5.2%
2020	Unemployment rate	15.2%
Sonoma County		
2016	Total	413,205
	Labor Force Participation Rate	65.0%
	Unemployment rate	4.5%
2019	Total	411,096
	Labor Force Participation Rate	65.3%
	Unemployment rate	3.4%
2020	Unemployment rate	14.5%

Source: ACS 1 Year Estimates, Table S2301 (2016 and 2019 data), ESRI (2020 data).

Table 10. Gross Regional Product by Top Industries

Industry ¹	2020 GRP
Mendocino County	
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	\$229,962,134
Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government)	\$176,175,798
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	\$126,187,860
Natural Gas Distribution	\$114,576,446
Petroleum and Petroleum Products Merchant Wholesalers	\$109,545,799
Wineries	\$103,580,434
Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	\$82,629,903
All Other Outpatient Care Centers	\$66,262,516
Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels	\$63,394,090
Petroleum Bulk Stations and Terminals	\$59,867,501
Total, Mendocino County	\$3,873,088,013
Sonoma County	
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	\$1,355,283,096
Wineries	\$1,097,787,866
HMO Medical Centers	\$754,116,402
Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government)	\$726,496,862
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	\$665,588,691
Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	\$444,497,642
Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	\$391,105,365
Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices	\$374,008,186
Insurance Agencies and Brokerages	\$372,055,410
Electric Power Distribution	\$371,217,432
Total, Sonoma County	\$31,364,135,549
California	
Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals	\$113,309,922,427
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	\$102,413,271,268
Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government)	\$69,475,294,019
Software Publishers	\$65,022,402,717
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	\$50,518,608,350
Custom Computer Programming Services	\$48,077,125,124
Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices	\$45,933,252,356
Commercial Banking	\$41,515,808,637
Offices of Lawyers	\$40,854,346,126
Federal Government, Civilian, Excluding Postal Service	\$38,323,706,568
Total, California	\$3,032,188,165,500

¹ Highlighted cells show the common top industries between the two counties and California.

Source: EMSI.

Table 11 tells a similar story of leading industries for export, but also highlights the prevalence of Crop Production, sectors associated with tourism, and wineries in Mendocino County. In Sonoma, Crop Production also rises to the top, along with Breweries and Instruments Manufacturing for Electricity.

Tying job counts to industries, **Table 12** highlights that the Health Care/Social Assistance industry is the leader of jobs across both counties. Sonoma and Mendocino Counties also both see Construction and Retail Trade as common top job producers. Manufacturing and Professional/Scientific/Tech Services also make it into the top five in Sonoma, while Educational Services and Public Administration are the other job industry leaders in Mendocino.

Table 11. Top 10 Exports by County

Industry	Exports
Mendocino County	
State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	\$370,762,823
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	\$322,805,657
Wineries	\$248,638,306
Crop Production	\$207,537,766
Federal Government, Civilian, Excluding Postal Service	\$176,955,570
Petroleum and Petroleum Products Merchant Wholesalers	\$137,242,937
Natural Gas Distribution	\$128,847,735
Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	\$103,940,212
All Other Outpatient Care Centers	\$100,843,536
Sawmills	\$100,292,571
Total (All Exports)	\$4,041,806,327
Sonoma County	
Wineries	\$2,707,078,593
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	\$2,141,805,869
HMO Medical Centers	\$1,077,815,896
State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	\$951,276,032
Federal Government, Civilian, Excluding Postal Service	\$872,611,951
Analytical Laboratory Instrument Manufacturing	\$594,999,101
Crop Production	\$560,772,942
Federal Government, Military	\$559,933,507
Breweries	\$523,821,600
Instrument Manufacturing for Electricity	\$505,444,445
Total (All Exports)	\$27,753,639,565

Source: EMSI.

Table 12. Job Counts by Industry

Industry	Mendocino County		Sonoma County	
	Count	Percent ¹	Count	Percent
Accommodation/Food Services	1,725	4.9%	12,895	5.7%
Admin/Support/Waste Management Services	1,303	3.7%	10,031	4.4%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Hunting	2,654	7.6%	6,094	2.7%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	812	2.3%	4,742	2.1%
Construction	3,647	10.4%	21,813	9.6%
Educational Services	3,454	9.8%	19,016	8.4%
Finance/Insurance	722	2.1%	8,566	3.8%
Health Care/Social Assistance	4,974	14.2%	33,267	14.6%
Information	528	1.5%	3,972	1.7%
Management of Companies/Enterprises	-	0.0%	189	0.1%
Manufacturing	2,651	7.5%	21,937	9.7%
Mining/Quarrying/Oil & Gas Extraction	-	0.0%	108	0.0%
Other Services (excl Public Administration)	1,736	4.9%	11,643	5.1%
Professional/Scientific/Tech Services	1,869	5.3%	19,254	8.5%
Public Administration	2,701	7.7%	9,663	4.3%
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	879	2.5%	5,795	2.5%
Retail Trade	3,655	10.4%	22,451	9.9%
Transportation/Warehousing	601	1.7%	7,032	3.1%
Utilities	410	1.2%	1,965	0.9%
Wholesale Trade	795	2.3%	6,892	3.0%
Civilian Population Age 16+ in Labor Force			265,787	
Employed Civilian Population Age 16+ by Industry Base			227,325	

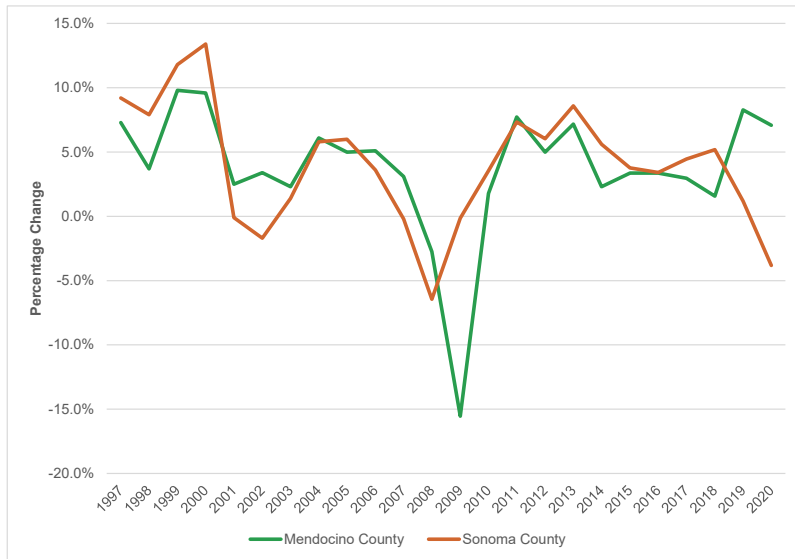
¹ Green cells highlight top five industries.

Source: ESRI, 2020.

Looking at taxable transactions (that generate sales tax) over time (Figure 12), the two counties have seen similar trends over the last 23 years, but have diverged since 2018, where Mendocino has seen more of an uptick and Sonoma has been on a downward trajectory. The Mendocino-specific data (Figure 13)

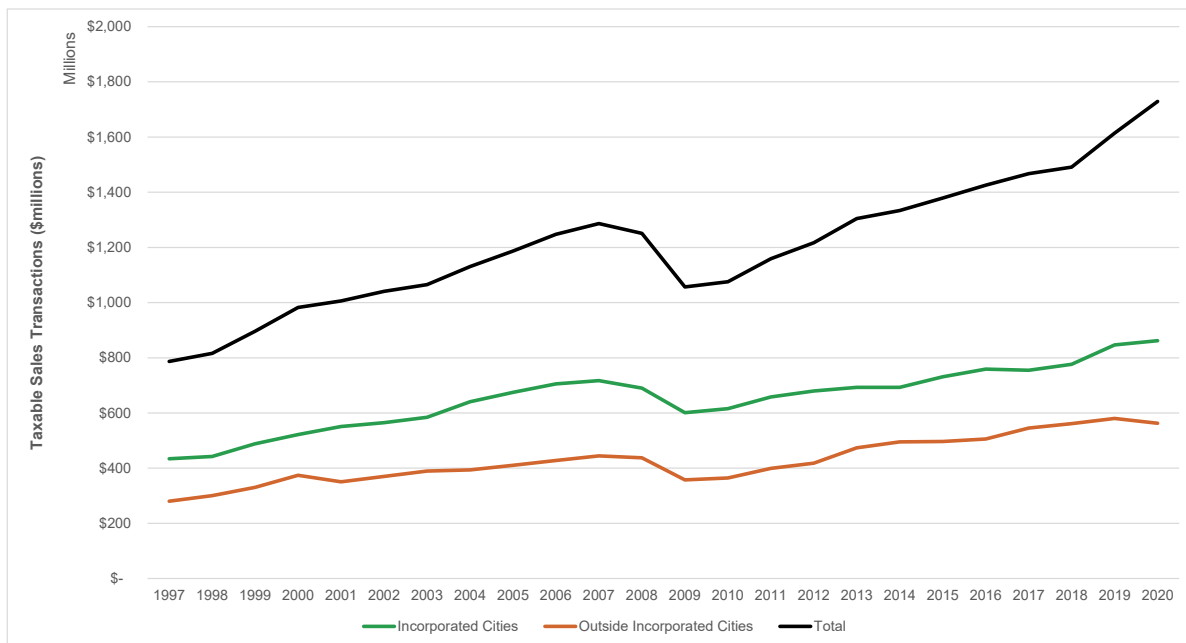
shows that these transactions have seen more positive growth within incorporated cities than outside of them. In Sonoma County (Figure 14) the opposite seems to hold true, with incorporated cities seeing a more dramatic decrease than outside of the cities.

Figure 12. Taxable Sales Transactions - Annual Percentage Change (%) by County



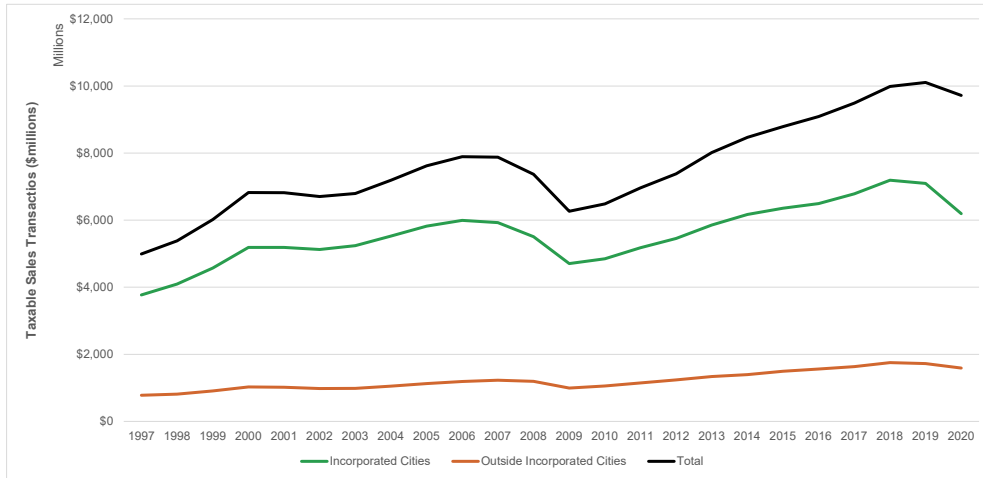
Source: California Department of Tax and Fee Administration

Figure 13. Mendocino County Taxable Sales Transactions



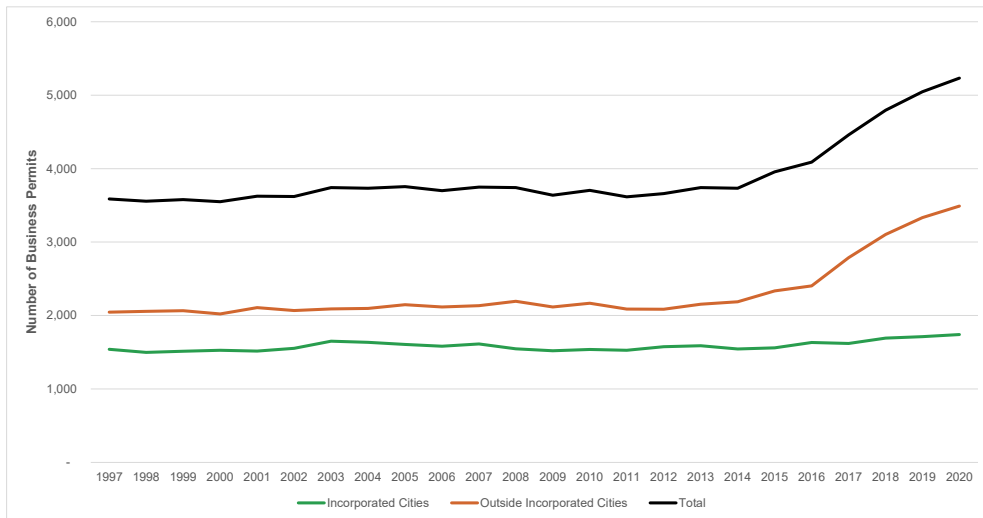
Source: California Department of Tax and Fee Administration

Figure 14. Sonoma County Taxable Sales Transactions



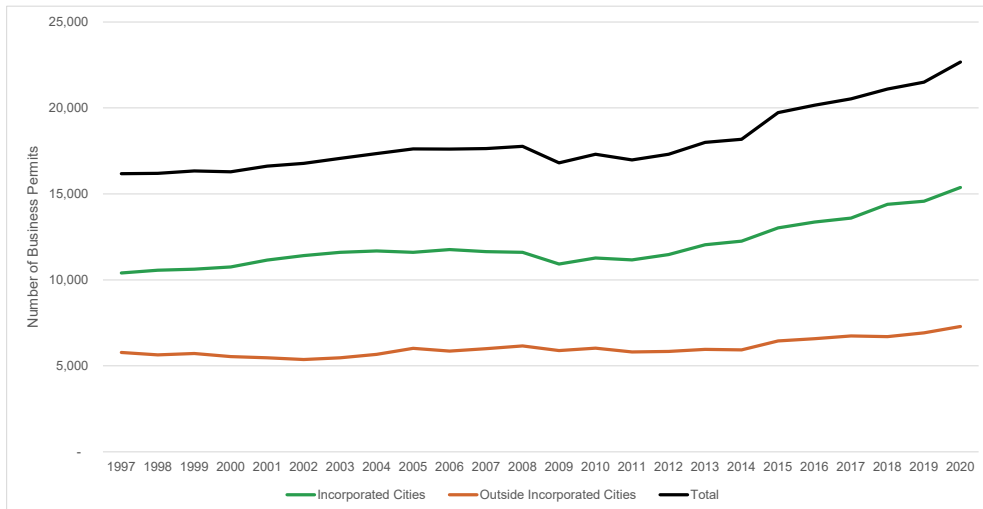
Source: California Department of Tax and Fee Administration

Figure 15. Mendocino County Business Permits



Source: California Department of Tax and Fee Administration

Figure 16. Sonoma County Business Permits



Business permits across both counties have been on a healthy rise since around 2014 (**Figure 15** and **Figure 16**). Of note is that in Mendocino County, the most permit growth has occurred outside of incorporated cities, while in Sonoma it has occurred within the cities.

Source: California Department of Tax and Fee Administration

As shown in **Table 13**, Mendocino and Sonoma Counties share the same top two occupations of Retail Sales Workers and Food and Beverage Serving Workers, both of which have median hourly earnings approximately \$15. According to Massachusetts Institute for Technology's Living Wage calculator, the living wage (hourly rate that an individual in a household must

earn to support him or herself) for one adult with no children is \$15.93 in Mendocino County and \$19.51 in Sonoma County.³ Both counties have six of their most prominent occupations paying below this living wage. The table also shows how negative job number changes are in most cases tied to service industries – those hardest hit by the pandemic.

Table 13. Largest Occupations by County

Occupation	2016 Jobs	2021 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2016-2021)	% Change	2020 Median Hourly Earnings
Mendocino County					
Retail Sales Workers	2,707	2,571	(136)	(5%)	\$14.57
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	1,368	1,901	533	39%	\$14.14
Construction Trades Workers	1,767	1,759	(8)	(0%)	\$23.12
Food and Beverage Serving Workers	1,990	1,562	(428)	(22%)	\$14.11
Material Moving Workers	1,431	1,458	27	2%	\$15.45
Other Management Occupations	1,331	1,379	47	4%	\$31.36
Preschool, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Special Ed. Teachers	1,530	1,338	(192)	(13%)	\$33.13
Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers	1,289	1,178	(110)	(9%)	\$15.04
Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	1,197	1,135	(62)	(5%)	\$44.00
Cooks and Food Preparation Workers	1,051	769	(282)	(27%)	\$14.83
Sonoma County					
Construction Trades Workers	11,262	14,154	2,891	26%	\$28.36
Retail Sales Workers	13,670	11,738	(1,932)	(14%)	\$15.82
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	7,882	10,689	2,807	36%	\$15.46
Material Moving Workers	9,925	9,656	(268)	(3%)	\$16.01
Food and Beverage Serving Workers	11,310	9,321	(1,989)	(18%)	\$14.08
Business Operations Specialists	6,870	7,962	1,092	16%	\$34.00
Other Management Occupations	6,955	7,442	487	7%	\$39.95
Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	6,890	7,403	513	7%	\$59.25
Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers	6,500	6,382	(118)	(2%)	\$15.55
Information and Record Clerks	6,340	5,626	(714)	(11%)	\$19.41

Source: EMSI.

³ Glasmeier, Dr. Amy K. "Living Wage Calculator." Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for Sonoma County, California, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2021, livingwage.mit.edu/counties/06097.

Table 14 examines the highest paying occupations in the counties and how their job counts have changed over the past five years. Both counties saw a loss of high-paying Postsecondary Teacher jobs.

Table 14. Highest Paying Occupations by County

Occupation	2016 Jobs	2021 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2016-2021)	% Change	2020 Median Hourly Earnings
Mendocino County					
Lawyers, Judges, and Related Workers	139	133	(6)	(4%)	\$54.10
Postsecondary Teachers	182	127	(55)	(30%)	\$50.37
Engineers	147	124	(23)	(16%)	\$46.23
Supervisors of Protective Service Workers	66	73	7	11%	\$45.38
Advertising, Marketing, Promotions, Public Relations, and Sales Managers	113	94	(19)	(17%)	\$45.37
Air Transportation Workers	13	18	5	39%	\$44.37
Operations Specialties Managers	270	298	28	10%	\$44.04
Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	1,197	1,135	(62)	(5%)	\$44.00
Social Scientists and Related Workers	137	127	(10)	(7%)	\$43.28
Life Scientists	70	80	11	15%	\$41.32
Sonoma County					
Air Transportation Workers	179	212	33	18%	\$77.00
Postsecondary Teachers	1,407	967	(440)	(31%)	\$67.14
Advertising, Marketing, Promotions, Public Relations, and Sales Managers	1,331	1,361	30	2%	\$63.96
Lawyers, Judges, and Related Workers	1,124	1,170	46	4%	\$62.06
Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	6,890	7,403	513	7%	\$59.25
Operations Specialties Managers	2,582	3,023	441	17%	\$58.97
Social Scientists and Related Workers	618	669	51	8%	\$55.01
Engineers	2,067	2,087	20	1%	\$53.94
Top Executives	4,376	4,078	(298)	(7%)	\$51.00
Supervisors of Protective Service Workers	158	218	59	38%	\$49.46

Source: EMSI.

From 2016 to 2021, Home Health and Personal Care Aides and Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers top the list of the fastest growing occupations in Mendocino and Sonoma County, respectively, when looking at the absolute change in jobs (**Table 15**). Compared to the largest occupations in **Table 13**, five of the fastest growing occupations pay below the living wage in Mendocino County, while only two in Sonoma County pay below

the living wage. This finding has significant livability implications, as finding affordable housing for low-wage earners is already a major challenge and may start to limit economic growth over the long term unless future housing supply is better able to track with housing demand. It also underscores the urgency around the need for upskilling workers to pursue and be competitive for the better paying, in demand jobs in the region.

Table 15. Fastest Growing Occupations by County, Sorted by 2016 – 2021 Change in Jobs

Occupation	2016 Jobs	2021 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2016-2021)	% Change	2020 Median Hourly Earnings
Mendocino County					
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	1,368	1,901	533	39%	\$14.14
Counselors, Social Workers	887	1,060	172	19%	\$23.68
Other Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	563	683	120	21%	\$16.90
Business Operations Specialists	629	732	103	16%	\$28.60
Agricultural Workers	971	1,035	64	7%	\$14.67
Other Management Occupations	1,331	1,379	47	4%	\$31.36
Other Teachers and Instructors	398	439	40	10%	\$17.37
Animal Care and Service Workers	121	149	29	24%	\$13.77
Operations Specialties Managers	270	298	28	10%	\$44.04
Material Moving Workers	1,431	1,458	27	2%	\$15.45
Sonoma County					
Construction Trades Workers	11,262	14,154	2,891	26%	\$28.36
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	7,882	10,689	2,807	36%	\$15.46
Business Operations Specialists	6,870	7,962	1,092	16%	\$34.00
Other Healthcare Support Occupations	2,936	3,507	571	19%	\$24.52
Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	6,890	7,403	513	7%	\$59.25
Counselors, Social Workers	3,878	4,366	488	13%	\$23.93
Other Management Occupations	6,955	7,442	487	7%	\$39.95
Operations Specialties Managers	2,582	3,023	441	17%	\$58.97
Other Protective Service Workers	1,417	1,828	411	29%	\$15.75
Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers	851	1,234	382	45%	\$43.73

Source: EMSI.

Table 16 shows wage information across all occupations in the region. In Mendocino and Sonoma Counties, the lowest paying occupation (Food Preparation and Serving Related) accounts for 10 percent of overall employment. Conversely, the highest paying occupation in Mendocino (Legal) accounts for .3 percent of total employment, and 6 percent in Sonoma (Management).

Another trend to note is the rise of women and minority-owned businesses. On a national level, white self-employment has been on a

decline since 2000, while minority/women self-employment and entrepreneurship have increased (**Figure 17** and **Figure 18**). despite the increase in the number of businesses, minority entrepreneurs continue to face challenges securing capital for business ventures. Studies have found that minority entrepreneurs access the same banking products or funding opportunities at lower rates than white entrepreneurs. The U.S. Census' Annual Business Survey estimates that there is a \$451 billion funding gap between white-owned and Latinx-owned businesses in California. ⁴

Table 16. Wages by Occupation

Occupational Title ¹	Mendocino County ²			Sonoma County ³		
	May 2019 Employment Estimates	Mean Hourly Wage	Mean Annual Wage	May 2019 Employment Estimates	Mean Hourly Wage	Mean Annual Wage
Total all occupations	107,310	\$23.54	\$48,950	207,870	\$28.14	\$58,539
Architecture and Engineering	920	\$38.54	\$80,174	3,440	\$48.38	\$100,613
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	680	\$25.70	\$53,463	2,200	\$33.61	\$69,908
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	4,090	\$16.46	\$34,239	7,280	\$18.52	\$38,524
Business and Financial Operations	3,620	\$29.53	\$61,424	9,880	\$37.94	\$78,915
Community and Social Service	3,960	\$23.74	\$49,377	4,220	\$27.30	\$56,803
Computer and Mathematical	860	\$31.95	\$66,456	3,310	\$43.93	\$91,379
Construction and Extraction	4,030	\$27.20	\$56,576	13,270	\$32.08	\$66,723
Educational Instruction and Library	9,340	\$30.03	\$62,472	12,200	\$31.22	\$64,923
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	2,390	\$18.83	\$39,166	3,640	\$17.05	\$35,468
Food Preparation and Serving Related	10,650	\$14.32	\$29,769	21,620	\$15.51	\$32,272
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	5,540	\$43.89	\$91,297	10,010	\$50.14	\$104,300
Healthcare Support	7,230	\$15.69	\$32,622	11,520	\$17.88	\$37,206
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	4,250	\$22.52	\$46,839	6,780	\$27.65	\$57,521
Legal	340	\$47.69	\$99,193	1,170	\$54.99	\$114,382
Life, Physical, and Social Science	1,570	\$34.35	\$71,440	1,690	\$42.71	\$88,835
Management	5,610	\$42.48	\$88,353	12,570	\$60.19	\$125,210
Office and Administrative Support	13,650	\$19.81	\$41,195	25,000	\$22.68	\$47,157
Personal Care and Service	2,920	\$16.31	\$33,910	5,520	\$18.01	\$37,453
Production	3,470	\$20.75	\$43,167	11,560	\$21.66	\$45,042
Protective Service	3,280	\$31.31	\$65,131	3,270	\$32.20	\$66,985
Sales and Related	11,910	\$17.55	\$36,498	22,810	\$23.43	\$48,723
Transportation and Material Moving	7,000	\$18.22	\$37,900	14,890	\$19.54	\$40,637

¹ These survey data are from the 2019 Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey.

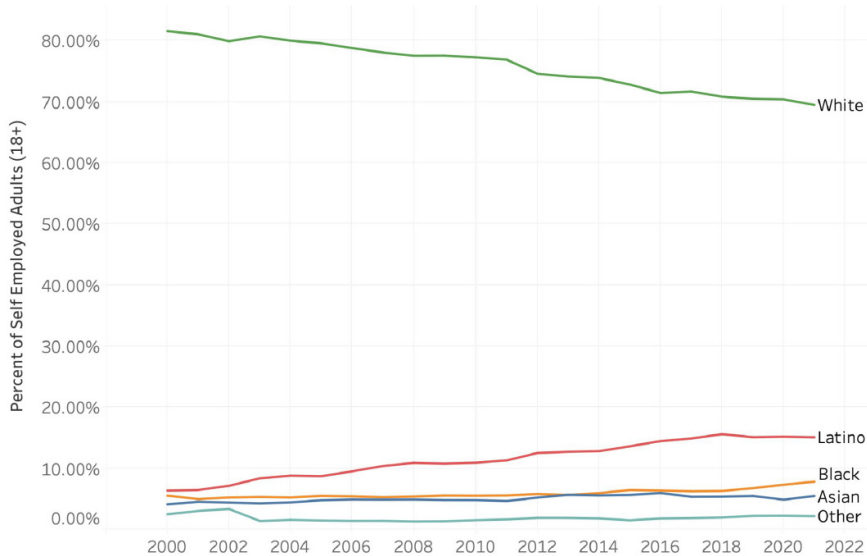
² Data is from the North Coast Region geography, which includes Del Norte, Lake and Mendocino Counties.

³ Data is from the Santa Rosa MSA geography, which includes Sonoma County.

Source: California Employment Development Department (EDD).

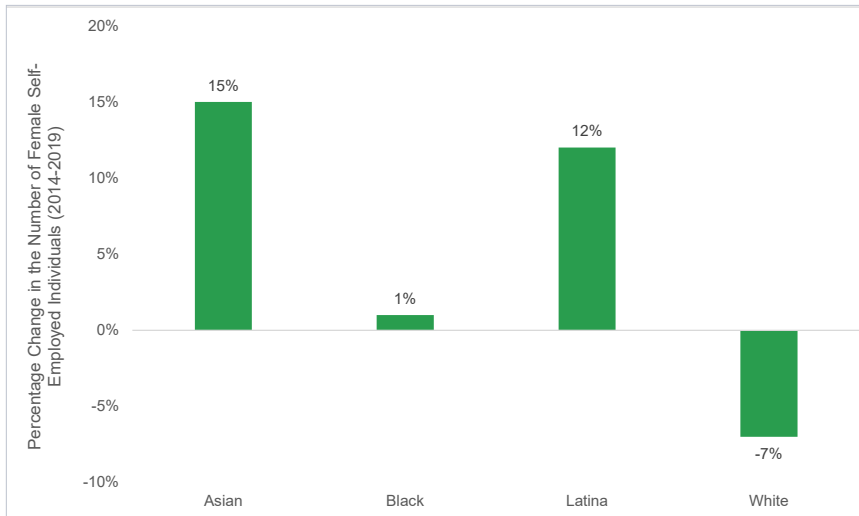
⁴ Sonoma EDB, BIPOC Entrepreneurship Webinar.

Figure 17. Percent of Self-Employed Adults by Race/Ethnicity, National (2000-2020)



Source: Extracted from Sonoma EDB, BIPOC Entrepreneurship Webinar

Figure 18. Percent Change in Number of Female Self-Employed, National (2014 – 2018)



Source: Extracted from Sonoma EDB, BIPOC Entrepreneurship Webinar

KEY FINDINGS

Both counties have a high number of relatively low-paying jobs, some of which represent the counties' fastest growing occupations. The need for upskilling workers and supporting a wider variety of businesses across a broad range of industry sectors in an effort to diversify the economy and improve economic resiliency represent opportunities across the region.

The region demonstrates strength in sectors like healthcare, wine/agricultural production, and government services. The high number of low-wage jobs in food service and retail suggests potential to diversify industries to maintain economic resilience but also upskill people towards higher paying jobs. Higher wage jobs are critical to keep up with rising housing costs in the region. The pandemic's impact on increasing remote work and schooling suggests that reliable Internet infrastructure is also necessary to achieve economic resilience. Finally, a trend to be aware of is the growing number of BIPOC-owned and women-owned businesses.

- The leading industries by gross regional product are (1) Local Government; (2) Wineries; (3) Hospitals. (Table 10)
- Approximately 15 percent of workers are employed in Healthcare/Social Assistance field, followed by Retail (10 percent) and Manufacturing (10 percent). (Table 12)
- Several of the leading jobs by employment volume have low median hourly wages, including Retail Sales Workers (\$15) and Food Service (\$14). (Table 13)
- The fastest growing occupations by volume from 2016 to 2021 was for Home Health Aides, Social Workers, and Construction Workers. (Table 15)

The preceding data suggest a need to diversify the region's economy. While the health care industry continues to expand in both counties, emerging jobs in the Blue Economy and the Clean Energy and Green economies offer opportunities for industry diversification.

Workforce Preparedness

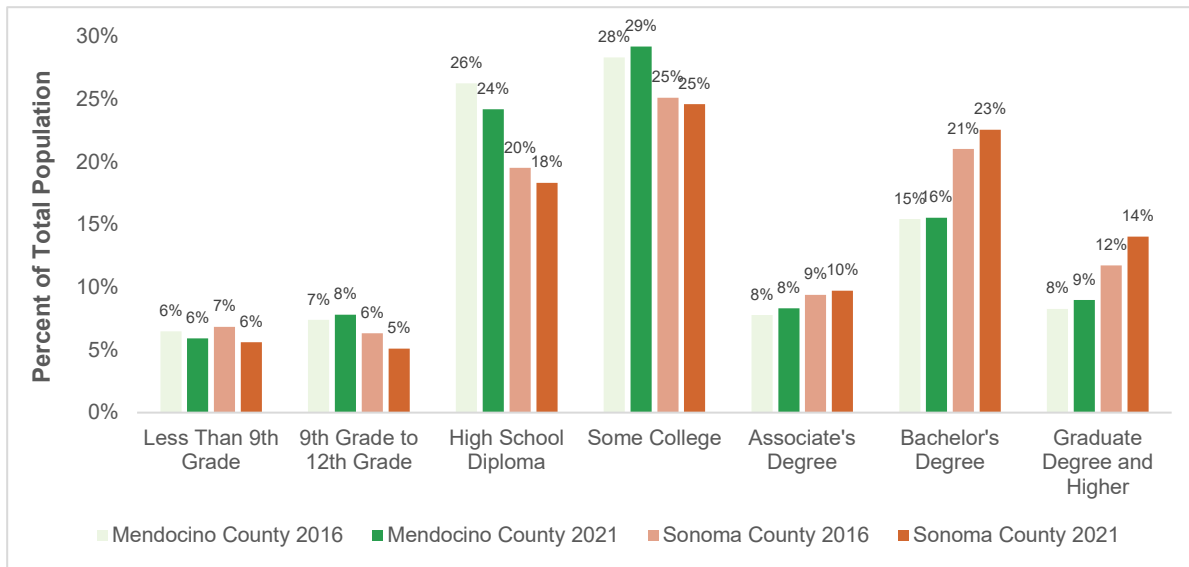
The Workforce Preparedness indicators show adult education levels, how these have changed over time, and the most sought-after experience levels and qualifications from an employer perspective. **Figure 19** reveals that educational attainment levels at the “Associate’s Degree” level and above increased in both counties between 2016 and 2021.

According to EMSI’s most recent job posting analytics, in Mendocino County, there were “43,372 total job postings for Mendocino County from October 2019 to September 2020, of which 12,183 were unique. These numbers translate to a Posting Intensity of

4-to-1, meaning that for every 4 postings there is 1 unique job posting. This is close to the Posting Intensity for all other occupations and companies in the region (4-to-1), indicating that they are putting average effort toward hiring for this position.”

In Sonoma County during the same time period, there were 322,685 total job postings of which 68,713 were unique. This reveals a Posting Intensity of 5-to-1, which is again close to the regional average, indicating average effort into hiring for positions. Top posting sources for the data include Monster.com, Nexxt.com, Santarosajobs.com, Learn4good.com, and Snagajob.com.

Figure 19. Educational Attainment by Level, 2016 vs. 2021



Source: EMSI.

Table 17 shows that employers in Mendocino County are most commonly citing a need for a Bachelor’s degree-education or higher (19 percent). In Sonoma, the preference for Bachelor’s degree or higher is cited at 26 percent. Sonoma job postings also more commonly require 2 years of experience or more (22 percent). In Mendocino, a larger share of job postings list 0 to 1 year of experience as desired. In terms of specific qualifications employers are seeking, the Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) tops the list in both counties; the rest of the list is dominated by health-oriented credentials as most other positions do not require credentials (**Table 18**). It should be noted that this data does not indicate whether postings reflect expanding opportunities, versus turnover within the labor market.

Table 17. Job Posting Education and Experience Breakdown

	Mendocino County		Sonoma County	
	Unique Postings	% of Total	Unique Postings	% of Total
<u>Education Level</u>				
No Education Listed	7,240	59%	40,782	59%
High school or GED	1,787	15%	10,914	16%
Associate's degree	1,800	15%	5,634	8%
Bachelor's degree	1,449	12%	11,895	17%
Master's degree	445	4%	4,527	7%
Ph.D. or professional degree	411	3%	1,519	2%
<u>Minimum Experience</u>				
No Experience Listed	7,812	64%	42,592	62%
0 - 1 Years	2,237	18%	10,940	16%
2 - 3 Years	1,644	13%	9,651	14%
4 - 6 Years	414	3%	4,187	6%
7 - 9 Years	39	0%	864	1%
10+ Years	37	0%	479	1%

Source: EMSI

Table 18. Job Posting Top 10 Qualifications

Qualification	Postings with Qualification
<u>Mendocino County</u>	
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	870
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)	215
Nurse Practitioner	162
Licensed Vocational Nurses	115
Certified Nursing Assistant	108
Trauma Nurse Core Course (TNCC)	86
Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)	79
Medical License	78
American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certified	76
<u>Sonoma County</u>	
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	2296
Certified Nursing Assistant	1064
Licensed Vocational Nurses	734
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)	560
Certificate of Clinical Competence In Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP)	546
Master of Business Administration (MBA)	484
Nurse Practitioner	479
Licensed Practical Nurse	348
Bachelor of Science in Business	260
Food Handler's Card	229

Source: EMSI

Figure 20 through **Figure 23** provide insight into the supply and demand of relevant hard and common skills by comparing the frequency of skills present in job postings against skills held by the regional workforce. According to EMSI, the information leverages their dataset of “more than 100M online résumés and profiles. All résumés and profiles used in these comparisons have been updated within the last three years.” In Mendocino County, there are gaps between the top hard skills and those hard skills held

by the workforce. Supply and demand of common skills in Mendocino County are more balanced, but demand is most outweighed in “Communications”, “Valid Driver’s License”, “Detail Oriented” and “Professionalism”. Looking at Sonoma County, the greatest gap between most in-demand hard skills and those held by the workforce occur for “Nursing”, “Basic Life Support” and “Caregiving”. The largest gaps on the top common skills side again include “Communications”, “Valid Driver’s License”, and “Detail Oriented”.

Figure 20. Top Hard Skills, Mendocino County

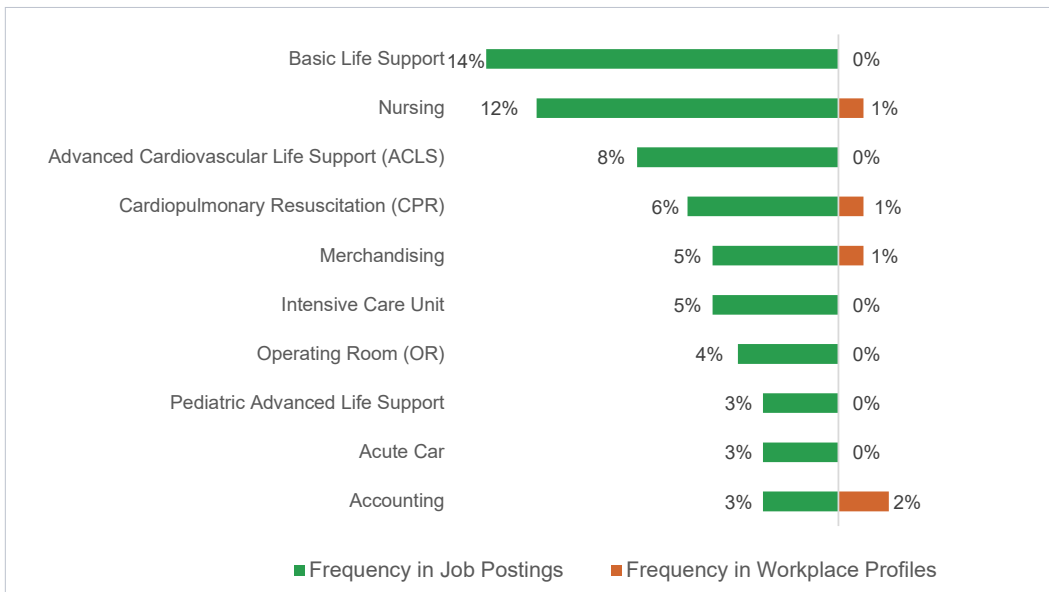


Figure 21. Top Common Skills, Mendocino County

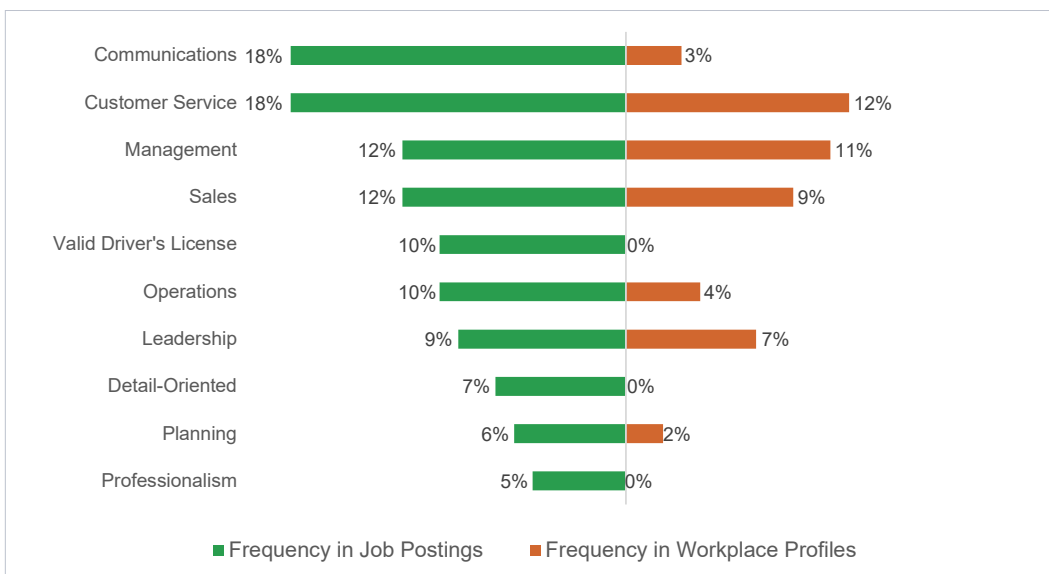


Figure 22. Top Hard Skills, Sonoma County

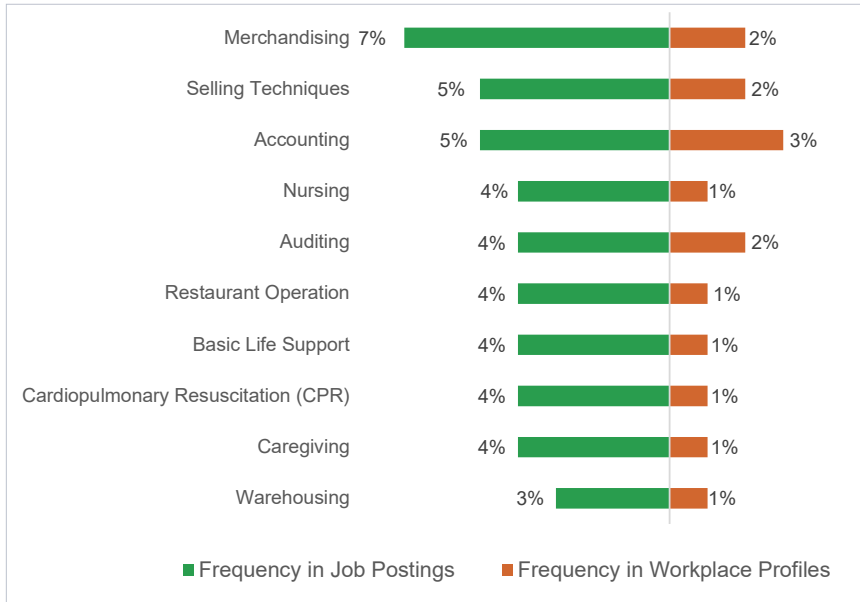
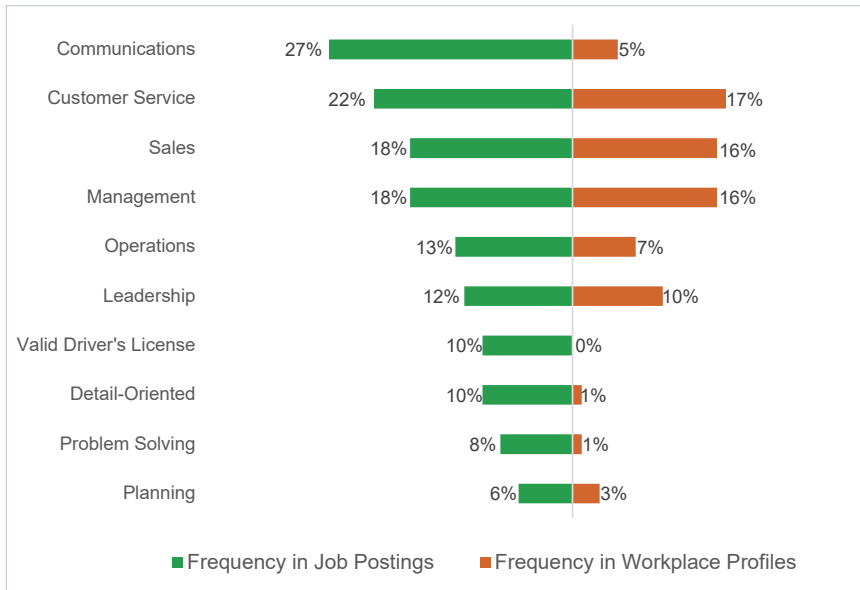


Figure 23. Top Common Skills, Sonoma County



KEY FINDINGS

Increased educational support is needed at the high school and immediate post-high school levels to ensure young adults are adequately prepared for the workforce with employer-desired qualifications, particularly in the higher-paying health and medical fields and in specialized trades.

Young people leave the region for post-secondary schooling and/or work, depleting the local workforce talent pipeline. While the majority of residents have high-school diplomas, relatively fewer people have completed their associate's degree or pursued higher levels of education. Increased educational support at the high school and immediate post-high school levels would retain young workers and ensure that they are adequately prepared for the workforce.

- In 2021, 33 percent of Mendocino County's population have an associate's degree or higher educational attainment, while in Sonoma County, 47 percent have an associate's degree or greater. (Figure 19)
- Desired certifications in health care include nursing, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and basic life support. (Figure 20, Figure 22)
- While training in specific skills, such as nursing and basic life support, are needed in both counties, there also are significant disconnects in common or "soft" skills like communication and attention to detail. (Figure 21, 23)

The preceding data suggest a need to grow the workforce and develop the talent pipeline in the region. Opportunities exist for higher-paying jobs in the health and medical fields and in emerging industries, such as the Blue Economy and the Clean Energy and Green economies. The region's BIPOC and lower-income residents especially would benefit from an expanded range of educational and workforce training opportunities.

Environment/Climate

Climate change has already begun to show damaging and devastating impacts on the region's environment and population. Extreme drought and larger, more frequent and intense wildfires and the resulting smoke threaten the livability of the region. The following environment/climate indicators document where the region falls on various health-related indices, how energy consumption has trended over the years, and to what degree and in what ways the counties are contributing to any renewable energy production.

Compared to much of the state, Sonoma and Mendocino counties have more moderate temperatures, due to their coastal geography. However, average temperatures have been rising and are projected to climb in the next few decades. Climate projections estimate that in Sonoma County, the annual average maximum temperature could rise 4.2-7 degrees-Fahrenheit by the end of the century, while in Mendocino, the projected temperature rise is 4.4-7.2 degrees-Fahrenheit.⁵

In recent years, the severity of wildfires in Sonoma and Mendocino counties have resulted in mass evacuations, lost lives, and property damage. Several large fires have burned through urban areas of the region, including 2017's Tubbs Fire in Sonoma County, which ranks among the most destructive in the state's history. These fires threaten and impact business and lives and the resulting smoke has significant impacts on the quality of life and people's health in the entire region. Drought has also severely impacted the regions agricultural and tourism economies. Sea level rise is also contributing to more flooding in low lying areas and issues in the area's harbors.

Climate events will continue to have adverse and increasing impacts on human health, particularly in more vulnerable population subgroups such as children or the elderly

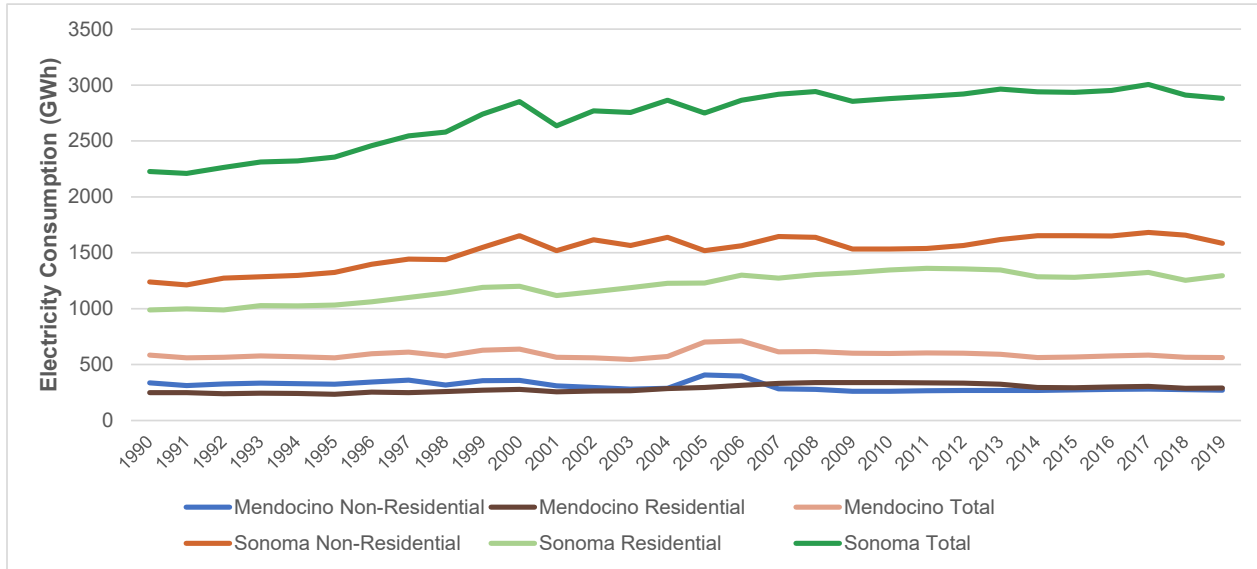
as they are more impacted by high heat conditions. Additionally, individuals with asthma and respiratory conditions are at greater risk of suffering from smoky and polluted air. Low-income households face economic vulnerabilities and reduced capacity to adapt to climate change. The Center of Disease Control's Social Vulnerability Index assigns Mendocino County a high vulnerability index of 0.88 (out of 1), a metric driven primarily by the above-average number of over-65 and single-parent households in the county.⁶

In terms of electricity consumption, Sonoma County has increased consumption during the past three decades but has decreased during the most recent two years (**Figure 24**), coinciding with population declines and the migration of indoor cannabis production to the Central Valley and Riverside County. Mendocino County, \consumption has been on a slight downward trend since 2008 and is now at a lower point than when data first became available. Sonoma Clean Power (SCP) supplies electricity to residential and commercial customers in both counties. SCP is one of the state's earliest community choice energy providers that sells a predominantly low-carbon grid mix. In 2019, an estimated 70 percent and 58 percent of electricity consumption from Sonoma and Mendocino counties, respectively, came from SCP's renewable or zero-carbon energy sources. Currently, SCP offers two rate plans that deliver 93 percent zero-carbon (CleanStart) or 100 percent renewable (EverGreen) power.

⁵ Cal-Adapt.

⁶ <https://svi.cdc.gov/map.html>

Figure 24. Electricity Consumption by County

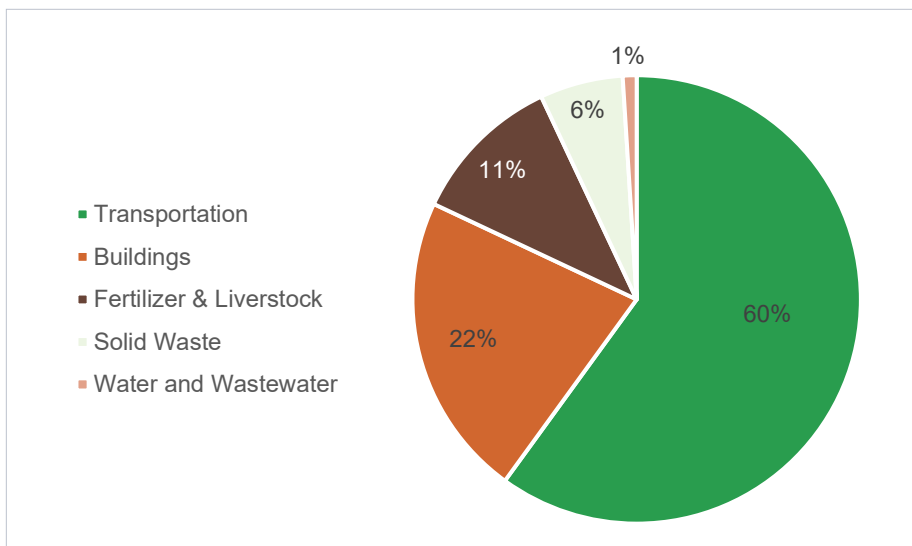


Source: California Energy Commission

Sonoma County’s greenhouse gas emissions inventory shows that 60 percent of the county’s emissions comes from the transportation sector (**Figure 25**). Building energy use (mainly space heating and cooling) additionally account for 22 percent of emissions. Overall emissions in Sonoma County have been

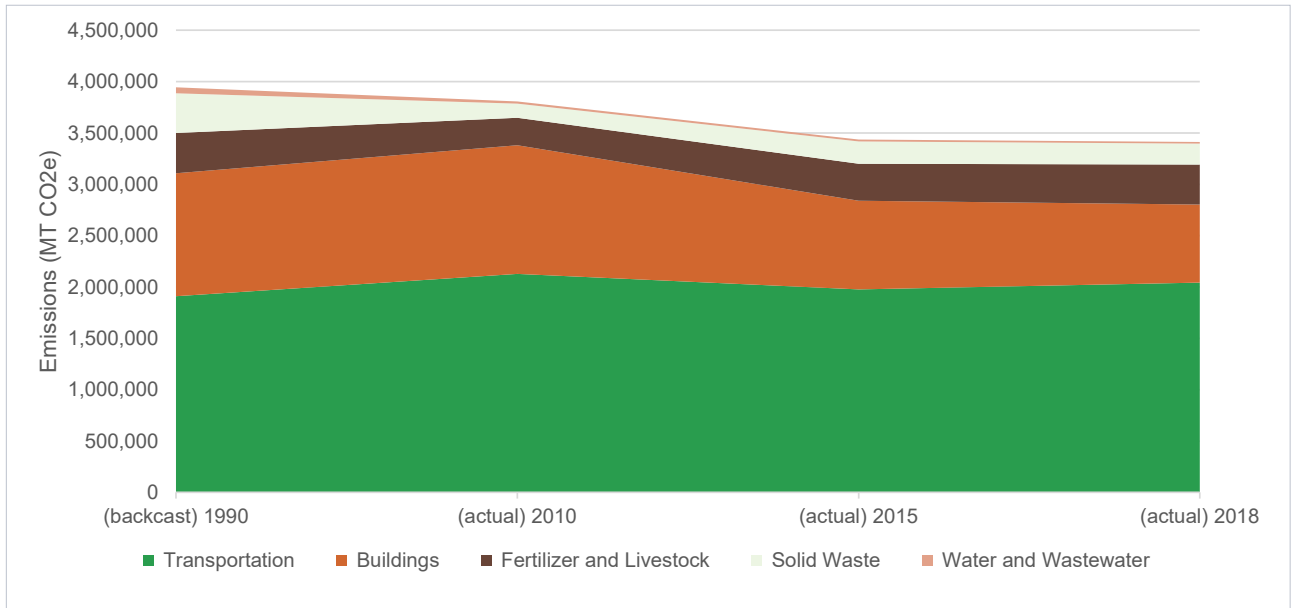
on a decline since 2010, with nearly every contributor decreasing emissions except transportation (**Figure 26**). Emissions from buildings saw the largest drop, likely due to Sonoma Clean Power coming online in 2014. Data was not available for Mendocino County.

Figure 25. Sonoma County Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Source, 2018



Source: Regional Climate Protection Authority, Sonoma County Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2018

Figure 26. 1990-2018 Emission Trends, Sonoma County



Source: Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA).

In terms of renewable energy, Sonoma County is a relatively large contributor among California counties, generating 4,804 GWh, or 7.5 percent of the state’s total renewable production, primarily from geothermal sources. Mendocino is a much smaller contributor, generating only 45 GWh, mainly from small hydropower systems, with some solar photovoltaic technologies contributions as well.

California has some of the highest electricity rates, translating to severe utility burdens among low-income households. Utility burden,

or the share of monthly income spent toward utilities, can be disproportionately high for households with the lowest incomes. In Mendocino County, households earning less than 50 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) spend 29.8 percent of household income on utilities, in addition to other housing costs. Similarly, the utility burden in Sonoma County is 28.2 percent. As shown in **Table 19**, utility burdens are highest for households with the lowest incomes and decrease as one moves up income segments.

Table 19. Mendocino and Sonoma County Utility Burdens by Income Level

Income Level	Mendocino County	Sonoma County
Less than 50% FPL	29.80%	28.20%
50-99% FPL	15.90%	15.00%
100-124% FPL	10.60%	10.00%
125-149% FPL	8.70%	8.20%
150-184% FPL	7.10%	6.70%
185-199% FPL	6.20%	5.90%

Source: Fisher Sheehan & Colton, Home Energy Affordability Gap, 2021

To address both imminent and long-term impacts of climate change, several jurisdictions in Sonoma and Mendocino counties have passed climate action plans that codify their commitment towards addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Sonoma County's regional climate action plan was last updated in 2016, and several cities in the county have passed individual plans, including Sonoma, Santa Rosa, and Healdsburg. In Mendocino County, only the cities of Fort Bragg and Ukiah have passed a CAP, although there is a volunteer Climate Action Advisory Committee that is seeking funding to create a plan for the county, signifying an opportunity for more meaningful policies towards climate mitigation.

KEY FINDINGS

The region is vulnerable to multiple climate threats and disasters, including wildfires, droughts, and sea level rise/erosion, all of which intensify with climate change and affect the region's livability, tourism economy, and valuable natural resources.

Low-income, youth, and elderly populations in the region are most susceptible to these impacts. Investments in sustainable infrastructure and climate mitigation can provide environmental and public health benefits while creating higher-paying jobs in emerging fields like renewable energy production or water conservation. For example, the recent supply of low-carbon power has made a noticeable difference in the region's GHG emissions, and sustainable construction techniques in housing may reduce emissions from building the sector and lower utility bills.

- Some estimates indicate that average temperatures could rise between 4.2 and 7.2 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century.
- In 2019, an estimated 70 percent and 58 percent of electricity consumption from Sonoma and Mendocino counties, respectively, came from Sonoma Clean Power's renewable or zero-carbon energy sources.
- Sonoma County's greenhouse gas emissions inventory shows that 60 percent of the county's emissions comes from the transportation sector. Building energy use (mainly space heating and cooling) additionally account for 22 percent of emissions.
- Sonoma County generates a large percentage of the state's geothermal power, demonstrating a burgeoning economic sector. (Figure 25)
- Low-income households spend between 10 to 30 percent of monthly income on utility bills, demonstrating the severity of high electricity rates and/or inefficient housing stock. (Table 19)

The preceding data, in combination with findings from the community survey, underscore that climate change poses an imminent threat. At the same time, from the threat of climate change, opportunities to enhance the region's environmental and economic resilience emerges, including opportunities to invest in clean power, the Green Economy, the Blue Economy, and sustainable infrastructure – all of which helps protect vulnerable populations while creating jobs to attract and retain skilled workers.

4. Community Outreach

Community outreach is essential to the CEDS process, because SMEDD decided early in the process to ensure that the community would identify the critical community priorities and Priority Projects for the strategy. Priority Projects that tie into community priorities and have the support of community members will boost the likelihood that a project is successful and able to secure funding.

The project team solicited community feedback for several purposes:

1. To understand what residents, business owners, and employees consider the largest threats to the local economy and what concerns are a top priority;
2. To develop an initial collection of project ideas; and,
3. To gather feedback on project ideas to narrow down, refine, and complete a final list of Priority Projects.

Discussions and interviews also contributed to suggested resources, best practices, and potential partnerships for each project. **Table 20** describes the six methods of outreach that the project team used and organized. Because advancing equity is a primary objective in the SMEDD Priority Projects, participants were encouraged to discuss how projects advance racial, gender, and economic equity goals throughout both counties.

Steering Committee

To provide overarching direction on producing the CEDS, a Steering Committee formed of several SMEDD board members and staff from Mendocino and Sonoma counties, met with the Consultants on a bi-weekly basis to give feedback throughout the process. The Steering Committee also helped organize and lead meetings, facilitated connections for interviews, and provided insight on SMEDD's capacity and potential roles for various project ideas.

Table 20. Summary of Community Outreach

Outreach Channel	Participation	Notes
Community Meetings	Approx. 100 registrants	2 sessions + Facebook; English (9/9/21) and Spanish (9/14/21)
Survey	330 respondents	Survey had English and Spanish options; Open Aug-Sep for 30 days
Subject Matter Expert Interviews	40+ interviews	Conducted by Consultants and Staff
Subject Matter Expert Focus Groups	24 participants total	4 sessions, each oriented around a different theme
Equity Focus Group	10 participants	1 session
Jurisdiction and Agency Outreach	<p>Mendocino: four cities, two tribes, four districts, the County, the Climate Action Committee, the County Planning Commission, supervisors, and numerous non-profits</p> <p>Sonoma: seven cities, one town, three tribes, the County, numerous nonprofits, and the Sonoma County Water Agency</p>	Outreach resulted in the identification and development of numerous high priority projects for potential, state, EDA and other federal funding. (See Appendix A)

The Steering Committee consisted of three SMEDD Board Members, three Sonoma County Economic Development Board staff, and one Mendocino Economic Development & Financing Corporation staff person.⁷ Mendocino County was additionally represented by Marie Jones of Marie Jones Consulting who served a dual staff and advisory role throughout the process.

Survey

To seek feedback from the region's residents, business owners, and employees, the project team created and distributed an online survey via SurveyMonkey. The survey included multiple choice and open-ended questions asking for top concerns, ideas, or best practices across the four themes of business, technology, climate, and livability. A survey link was available, posted through SMEDD's website and broadly distributed through email newsletters and social media. To ensure the accessibility of the survey, the survey was also available in Spanish.

The survey was open for 30 days, from August 23 to September 22. A total of 330 responses in both the English and Spanish versions were received. The full survey and its results can be found in **Appendix B**. Survey results showed that 75 percent of respondents are residents of Sonoma County, which is in line with the larger overall population of Sonoma County. One-third are business owners in the region. A majority of respondents are also older, white, and high-income, which is not reflective of the region's community overall.

While the survey collected a variety of different opinions and perspectives on urgent issues like housing and climate change, several themes clearly emerged as main topics or issues of major concern.

FEEDBACK FROM SURVEY

1. High housing costs and low availability remain a critical concern.

- 79% of respondents state that the lack of affordable housing is a significant threat to the region's resilience, affecting both residents who need housing and employers who need workers.
- Employers are keenly aware of the connection between affordable housing and an available workforce.
- The lack of housing creates challenges to attracting/retaining young families and workforce.
- Airbnb and short-term rentals contribute to the housing shortage.

2. There is widespread concern about natural disasters (e.g., wildfires, drought) and the region's vulnerability.

- 77% state that natural disasters are a major threat to the region's resiliency, reinforced by recent major wildfires in Sonoma and Mendocino counties and the ongoing drought in the region.

3. Upgrading physical and social infrastructure is critical to economic and environmental resilience and equity.

- Internet access in rural and underserved communities is critical

4. Other major concerns include economic disparities between rural vs urban communities, over-reliance on the tourism economy, and homelessness.

⁷ EDFC was initially represented by Diann Simmons, who retired from EDFC. Debbie Rasar transitioned into the role and was succeeded by Robert Gernert and Robin Peckham.

Focus Groups

Focus groups allowed for topics to be more thoroughly discussed by industry and subject matter experts sharing their experiences or viewpoints in a small group setting. With the help of Steering Committee members, EPS facilitated five focus groups – four themed focus groups and one with an equity focus.

Themed Focus Groups

The focus groups took place over Zoom, each lasted approximately 90 minutes. The focus groups centered around the following major themes: 1) Economic and Environmental Resilience; 2) Technology, Digital Literacy, and Connectivity; and 3) Business and Industry Support. A fourth focus group convened Economic Development professionals engaged in the work of economic development across the region. The theme of “Livability” was a key part of each focus group.

FEEDBACK FROM THEMED FOCUS GROUPS

1. Economic and Environmental Resilience.

- Housing development is challenging with high permitting costs, septic systems, water, etc.; cultural and behavioral shifts are necessary to develop housing. Pursue forest and wildfire management workforce training.

2. Technology and Livability.

- Pursue advocacy around community-oriented growth to facilitate strategic investment in infrastructure.
- Be ready to take advantage of wave of funding to support a publicly-governed broadband entity.

3. Business and Industry Support.

- Employers are having difficulty finding employees.
- Some businesses would like to hire locally but remote employees can work from anywhere, and the lifestyle/culture is not there yet for young people in Sonoma/Mendocino counties.
- Work with businesses and industry leaders to identify required technical skills and develop career-oriented skill-building opportunities.
- Work with middle school, high school, junior colleges, vocational programs, AND underserved populations, etc.
- Build a modular housing construction facility, which addresses housing need, workforce training, local labor and sourcing, and diversifies the economy. Tie into a procurement program so contracts are going to BIPOC businesses.

4. Economic Development Professionals.

- A regional approach to economic development is valuable.
- SMEDD’s role can be to facilitate collaboration, leverage partners, and tell success stories.

Equity Focus Groups

In addition to the themed focus groups, the Team hosted a 90-minute focus group with DEI professionals or representatives of the region's underserved communities. The purpose of this focus group was to discuss ways to define and include equity goals and principles in the CEDS. This discussion generated valuable perspectives on how equity can be incorporated into the ongoing CEDS development process and clearly identified in the proposed projects.

FEEDBACK FROM EQUITY GROUP

1. **SMEDD must advocate for systemic changes to advance equity and influence political will.**
 - Government agencies in both counties are siloed, and it is difficult to coordinate multijurisdictional efforts. SMEDD could have role in supporting agencies that are implementing projects and bring them together to further this regional approach.
2. **Augment/create childcare job opportunities for BIPOC women who already provide childcare work in many communities.**
3. **There is a role for community hubs that are focused on serving BIPOC needs and creating safe spaces.**
4. **Homelessness is a critical part of the conversation**
 - Both Sonoma County and Mendocino County have successful Continuum of Care programs.
5. **Workforce transportation also critical**
 - Farmworker vanpools with clean vehicles provides access, increases safety, and assists in meeting environmental goals. <https://calvans.org/>
6. **Look into programs that assists with workforce re-entry in construction/vocations for formerly incarcerated people.**
7. **Look towards indigenous ecological practices for wildfire management.**
8. **Digital divide was a concern exacerbated by COVID-19; people without reliable Internet are limited in their ability to work remotely, attend school, apply for new jobs.**
 - Accessibility of technologies is important – consider language access.

Interviews

Several members of the project team also completed one-on-one interviews with elected officials, tribal representatives, nonprofits, and other community leaders. Some interviews were scheduled as a follow-up to the discussions from the focus groups, while others were done to expand and diversify the outreach process. Participants were identified by the project team members and asked to participate over email.

FEEDBACK FROM INTERVIEWS

Ukiah City Council Representative

- Housing is critical to tackle regionally.
- Ukiah's recycled water system is a great success; can be replicated and grant funded.

Santa Rosa Chamber

- Greatest weaknesses in the region are workforce retention and skill gaps, lack of affordable housing, and lack of childcare.
- Need to consciously provide access to capital through institutions that may not typically loan to underserved demographics (Micro Finance). This is the best way to support DEI objectives in our region.

Social Entrepreneur

- SMEDD can offer an integrative approach to addressing regional problems – not constrained by jurisdictional or siloed departmental thinking.
- Partner with UC Davis (Climate Adaptation Research Center), Humboldt State, Mendocino College's Sustainable Construction and Energy Technology Department.

Water Providers

- There is a need for a regional entity to manage/coordinate water supply between the two counties. Sonoma County imports a lot of water from Mendocino County. Currently the Potter Valley hydraulic facility may be decommissioned by PG&E and Sonoma County will lose water supply if it is closed.
- Advocacy for programs already underway (such as Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations).

FEEDBACK FROM INTERVIEWS (continued):

Sonoma County Legal Aid

- The biggest underlying economic threat to the region is access to housing as well as access to under-served communities.
- Accessory Dwelling Units can help close the housing gap.
- To promote DEI objectives in the region, accelerate the technical needs to access services, loans and programs. Not everyone knows how to navigate the paperwork/technical side of programs.
- Consider seeding land trusts.

Internet Providers

- Be technology-neutral
- Digital literacy is important too – especially for seniors
- SMEDD could be the vehicle that attracts federal funding
- Supervisors from multiple counties collaborate in Oversight Meetings with the Broadband Consortium. Counties need to continue to work together.

Education and Career Development

- Studying the CTE model and exploring whether it is replicable in Mendocino could be an actionable project.
- CTE is very challenging in rural school districts and requires beginner, intermediate, and advanced coursework AND sufficient enrollment at each level. There needs to be a clear path to a certificate or a degree or a job.
- Goal is to build the workforce and then retain them.
- Improve synergies and connections between CTE and WIB.

Community Meetings

Community meetings provide an opportunity for direct public engagement on specific topics. Two community meetings were held online in early September. One was in English with live Spanish translation and a second separate Spanish-only session over Zoom.

Outreach for the events took place early to generate a high number of registrations. People received information about the sessions through taking the survey and through social media and other online channels. SMEDD received a total of 100 registrations across both sessions, with approximately half attending.

To facilitate the meetings and create a record of the feedback received, the project team organized projects in a web-based tool called Padlet. Padlet allowed participants to create posts or replies to express their opinions or feedback on a project. This helped structure the event so the topics of discussion were clear, and people could contribute their knowledge while simultaneously and remotely. Both meetings kicked off with an introduction to SMEDD and a presentation of economic context to set the stage, then instructed participants to join Padlet sites, which were moderated by several project team members. The presentation and Padlets were both oriented around the four SMEDD themes. Information and images from the Padlets can be found in **Appendix C**.

COMMUNITY MEETING MAIN FINDINGS:

1. Housing is a key concern.

- Distinguish between “workforce” and “affordable” housing.
- Construct ADUs for local workforce not for vacation rental market.

2. Childcare helps children, parents, employers and creates business opportunities.

- The region needs activities, resources, opportunities to involve youth in their community.

3. Community hubs are needed in the region and could include food access, disaster preparedness, maybe community health.

- Hubs could be mobile; services are currently located only in Santa Rosa (Sonoma County) and along Hwy 101.

4. Vocational training pathways need to be made easier and more accessible.

- Emphasize and encourage trade skills; vocational jobs need to demonstrate livable wages and career growth opportunities.

5. Renewable energy jobs are beneficial as both a workforce development and business attraction opportunity.

- Consider microgrids and desalination with cheaply priced electricity.

6. Internet access is critical towards attracting/retaining young families in the region.

- Cost of Internet services also a concern.

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5. Strategic Direction and Priority Project Action Plan

Project Themes

Early in the CEDS process, the Steering Committee identified four key themes that would anchor the 2021 CEDS, each of which is described below. Additionally, the equity implications of each theme are considered, so that the resulting Priority Projects are structured to create opportunities to improve access to resources and improve outcomes for the region's Black, Latino, Hispanic, and Indigenous populations.

1. Livability

Livability is a broad and multi-faceted term that gets at those qualities that make a place special and desirable and support the day-to-day needs and social wellness of residents and employees. Livability considerations include the following: the availability and affordability of housing; the availability and quality of employment opportunities; transportation options; access to healthcare, school, childcare, and services; recreation and entertainment opportunities; and shopping options. Livability factors tend to be key drivers of resident and business location decisions.

2. Business and Industry Support

Identifying emerging industries and supporting businesses is a core component of economic development that affects every aspect of life in a region. Healthy industries support businesses and thriving businesses hire and pay employees. Well-paid employees can afford housing and can put energy into other aspects of community life.



3. Environmental Resiliency

Sonoma and Mendocino counties' exceptional natural resources are one of the region's primary strengths. Recent wildfires and the current drought may be just the beginning as have made all recognize the region's vulnerability as it grapples with climate change and associated vulnerabilities. Environmental resilience is a critical and persistent theme that the region must prioritize through continued support of sustainable infrastructure initiatives for multifold benefits. Those benefits could include cost savings (responding to crisis after crisis after-the-fact is costly) as well as the furtherance of economic development objectives, including support of the emerging Green and Blue economies and jobs.

4. Technology, Digital Literacy, and Connectivity

One in 10 households in Sonoma County do not have reliable Internet, and in Mendocino County, that statistic increases to nearly one in five households without reliable Internet. Of even greater concern is

that lack of Internet, particularly Broadband Internet, and technology access tends to track with income, making high speed broadband an equity issue that has to be addressed. This issue is not just about access, it is also about digital literacy and assuring that schools are teaching computer skills and businesses have the resources they require to compete in our digital economy.

Project Identification and Prioritization

Based on review and consideration of existing studies conducted for Sonoma and Mendocino counties, the prior CEDS, the Economic Context data and analysis, the SWOT analysis, and significant community outreach, several potential projects related to the preceding themes emerged for the Steering Committee's consideration.

To better focus SMEDD's energy in the coming years, the Steering Committee determined that it was very important to be focused and effective and, therefore, had an initial goal of focusing on just a few projects, while building internal capacity and expertise. A range of criteria was used to refine the list of potential projects. A project idea advanced from "potential" to "priority" if it met the following criteria:

- The Project is of benefit to both counties.
- The Project represents the community's priorities.
- The Project is fundable.
- The Project advances identified racial, gender, and economic equity objectives.
- The Project is actionable by SMEDD during the next five years given SMEDD's constrained capacity and would benefit from the limited resources that SMEDD can contribute to the advancement of an agenda around project implementation.

Applying the criteria above, six Priority Projects to be advanced by SMEDD in the coming five years ended up rising to the top. The six SMEDD Priority Projects relate to workforce housing, childcare, development of the talent pipeline, water management and drought resiliency, industry and economic diversification, and internet/broadband access services.

Action and Implementation Plan

To guide effective implementation of the SMEDD Priority Projects, a detailed work plan will need to be created to guide SMEDD's workflow in the coming years. Indeed, the first task for each project is to formulate such a work plan. The CEDS provides a general list of actions for each Priority Project given a realistic assessment of SMEDD's current capacity to implement the projects.

SMEDD Capacity

Established in 2015, SMEDD is a relatively new district with no dedicated funding and with very limited staffing (1.5 grant-funded positions). Supplemental staff support is largely provided to SMEDD from the Sonoma County Economic Development Board and Mendocino's Economic Development & Financing Corporation. While there is tremendous potential for SMEDD to mature into a more powerful voice for the region, the SMEDD Priority Projects within this CEDS reflect SMEDD's current capacity while leaving the door open for SMEDD to expand staffing and resources. In this context, the Steering Committee indicated that SMEDD is well-positioned to advocate, collaborate, and facilitate to advance SMEDD's Priority Projects. While not intended to constrain SMEDD's future role, below are initial ideas for how SMEDD may approach the Priority Projects.

To **advocate** for projects or policies means that SMEDD may:

- Act as representative voice for the two-county region by advancing local and regional policy discussions in support of the selected priority project goals.

To **collaborate** projects and policies means that SMEDD may:

- Identify and build connections and partnerships, convene stakeholders, and encourage collaborations between agencies, partners, and/or the EDA.

To **facilitate** projects or policies means that SMEDD may:

- Engage in research that supports forward momentum on Priority Projects.
- Collect, track, and share relevant information and resources with partners and the public; serve as a clearinghouse for best practices and regional examples within each priority area.
- Identify and post funding opportunities, including EDA and state grant funding. As staff resources allow, SMEDD may help write and submit grant applications.
- Administer regular surveys to track community priorities and gauge community awareness of SMEDD projects and progress.
- Provide quarterly reporting on the progress of each Priority Project.

Implementation Specifics

To guide implementation of the Priority Projects and track progress, the Priority Project descriptions (Chapter 6) provide the next level of detail to support implementation and seek to answer the following questions for each of the six Priority Projects:

- **Ongoing vs. One-time:** Does the strategy need to be implemented and evaluated each year on an ongoing basis, or does it have a discrete start and end?

- **Stakeholders/Partners:** Are there stakeholders or partners who are already contributing work in this space and who may be a resource to SMEDD? Are there partners or entities who can take the lead to help implement the work? Are there components of the strategy that could be more effectively/efficiently assigned to stakeholders or partners? The list of stakeholders/partners is not an exhaustive list nor does it represent a commitment on behalf of the agencies and organizations listed.
- **SMEDD Board/Staff Commitment:** Can this work be accomplished within existing SMEDD staffing resources? Is more support necessary – whether on a temporary contract basis or full time?
- **Anticipated Costs/ Resources Needed:** Are there implementation costs associated with achieving the Project? Is it a one-time cost, or a recurring cost?
- **Funding Sources:** What specific entities provide funding for this type of work? Are there applicable grants that should be pursued?
- **Evaluation Metrics:** How will SMEDD measure progress towards accomplishing the Priority Projects?

With this information, the Priority Projects will serve as a framework and toolkit to help SMEDD accomplish its economic development objectives on behalf of Sonoma and Mendocino counties.

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6. SMEDD Priority Projects

This section describes the six Priority Projects that SMEDD will support on a regional level in the next five years: **workforce housing, childcare, talent pipeline development, water management and drought resiliency, industry diversification, and internet access** (specifically Broadband internet access services). Due to limited staffing and funding, the CEDS Steering Committee identified the priority activities for each project as advocacy, collaboration, and facilitation.

Each Priority Project includes a description of the project and reasons why SMEDD is focused on the project. The Priority Projects are not presented in any specific order. For additional context, the time horizon, examples of potential stakeholders and partners, funding sources, and examples, models, and resources are listed.

- ▶ A horizon indication of “near-term” suggests an immediate priority to be pursued within the next one to two years (and sustained beyond) and “mid-term” suggests a relatively lower priority to be pursued within the next two to five years (and sustained beyond).
- ▶ The list of stakeholders/partners is not an exhaustive list nor does it represent a commitment on behalf of the agencies and organizations listed.
- ▶ Potential resources needed reflects that SMEDD’s current funding and staffing constraints limit SMEDD’s potential role in each Priority Project. If additional funding or staffing is identified, SMEDD may be able to pursue a more aggressive agenda in the coming years. SMEDD may also have current resources and connections for these projects, which should be utilized to the extent possible.



- ▶ Potential funding sources reflect both broad and specific types of funding. This list is not exhaustive; new opportunities likely will emerge in the next five years.
- ▶ Potential actions are included but will be refined as implementation work plans for each project are developed. The potential actions do not represent a commitment on behalf of SMEDD but are suggested to demonstrate the path forward for each Priority Project. The action metrics are not presented in any priority order.
- ▶ Evaluation metrics are suggestions for data that SMEDD may want to track in the coming years and may also help SMEDD evaluate its own effectiveness in each of the Priority Project areas. The evaluation metrics are not presented in any priority order. The metrics are subdivided into Economic/ Industry Metrics, which track the region’s progress on the topic, and SMEDD Progress Metrics, which assesses SMEDD’s work on the priority. The metrics listed are not set in stone, but suggestions that may be refined in a future work plan as SMEDD works to implement these projects.



WORKFORCE HOUSING

Project Description

Advocate for, collaborate, and facilitate regional approaches to increasing the supply of housing in the region, particularly housing that is affordable to the region's workforce. Increasing the supply of workforce housing will require pursuing a broad range of regulatory and housing solutions across the full spectrum of residential product types and price points to better attract and retain workers and their families to help address the region's labor shortage. While SMEDD is not in a position to construct more units, the District can advocate for regulatory solutions that benefit the region and convene stakeholders and partners to facilitate an exchange of best practices and resources. Gauging and tracking residents', employees', and employers' confidence in the livability of the region through an annual survey may be part of SMEDD's role.

Project Justification

Four out of five survey respondents (79%) indicated that the lack of affordable housing options poses a significant threat to the region's economic resiliency, negatively affecting the overall livability of the region. Specifically, businesses indicated that they are unable to find and retain employees, which prevents businesses from growing and investing in the region.

Project Context

- ▶ **Time Horizon.** Near-term priority; will require ongoing effort.
- ▶ **Applicable CEDS Themes**
 - Livability
 - Supporting Businesses and Industries

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

"The lack of affordable housing and skilled workers is our business' biggest liability."

– 2021 SMEDD Survey Respondent

▶ Potential Stakeholders/Partners

- Affordable and market rate housing developers (e.g., Danco Group and Housing First Housing Program)
- Continuum of Care programs in Sonoma County and Mendocino County
- Generation Housing
- Housing Land Trust of Sonoma
- Local bank and CDFIs
- Large employers (e.g., school districts, hospitals, large industry)
- Mendocino Coast Community Land Trust
- Permit Sonoma
- Santa Rosa Metro Chamber
- Sonoma County Housing Fund
- Renewal Enterprise District
- Russian River Alliance

▶ Potential SMEDD Board Commitment

- One to two Board Members to champion this Project, serving as liaisons in the community and bringing ideas, opportunities, and concerns back to the full Board for information and discussion
- Board action will be required to approve the work plan and direct advocacy efforts
- If the Board supports the preparation of a Regional Workforce Housing Needs Analysis to focus need and allocation of resources, a SMEDD Board ad hoc committee would be needed to oversee the study

► **Potential Resources Needed**

- May require additional funding for staffing/contract work to support implementation

► **Potential Funding Sources**

- Community Development Block Grant
- [LincHousing](#)
- Public private partnerships
- [State funding tied to pro-housing policies](#)
- Tax credit financing
- [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)

- Annual tracking of advocacy activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., letters sent, local/regional meetings attended, testimony provided, etc.).
- Annual tracking of collaboration activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., number of stakeholders identified, number of referrals to partners and stakeholders, meetings/events convened, participation and attendance at events).
- Annual tracking of facilitation activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., research conducted, funding pursued, information and resources shared, etc.).
 - Resources shared may include funding opportunities, best practices, regulatory/legislative changes, training opportunities, etc.

Evaluation Metrics

Economic/Industry Metrics and SMEDD Progress Metrics are not presented in any priority order.

► **Economic /Industry Metrics**

- Number of new units constructed at all income levels (refer to Housing Elements, Housing Action Plans, 6th Cycle RHNA Progress Reports, etc.).
- Number of new units of workforce housing (SMEDD will need to define “workforce” housing for evaluation and tracking purposes).
- Decreases in the share of survey respondents indicating that the lack of affordable housing options poses a significant threat to the region’s economic resiliency.

► **SMEDD Progress Metrics**

- Quarterly reporting to SMEDD Board by designated Board “champion”.
- Work plan developed, approved by the Board, and reviewed/revise each year (note: final work plan may result in changes to evaluation metrics and inform annual survey questions).
- Distribution of annual survey to establish benchmark concerns and track progress (e.g., survey reach and response rates, year-over-year trends analysis of survey responses pertaining to regional housing).

Action Items

Action Items are not presented in any priority order.

1. Designate SMEDD Board member(s) to champion this Project and assume responsibility for regular (e.g., quarterly) reporting to the Board about opportunities, best practices, areas of concern, stakeholder/partner initiatives, etc.
2. Identify if there is staff capacity to be leveraged (the availability of staffing will affect the scope of the work that can be undertaken).
3. Develop a work plan that is focused on advocating, incubating, and supporting regional approaches to increasing the overall supply of housing in the region, particularly housing that is affordable to the region’s workforce.
4. Advocate for pro-housing policies, particularly those that are tied to state funding opportunities.
5. Review existing housing legislative updates and monitor emerging legislation related to affordable, workforce housing and advocate for the region as appropriate.

6. Create clear workforce housing policy messaging so that all SMEDD Board Members can be advocates for the regional need and opportunity (i.e., in their work and other leadership roles, in speaking with elected officials, etc.).
7. Potential specific work plan actions will depend on SMEDD capacity and staff resources and could include:
 - Retain a professional services consulting firm with expertise in housing to conduct a regional workforce housing needs analysis; leverage existing networks and launch annual “employer” and “employee” surveys across the region to establish baseline and trend data. Use existing resources and data as much as possible.
 - Regular collecting/reporting of key housing metrics on SMEDD’s webpage, or in another appropriate and accessible location (e.g., housing starts, housing affordability by region, vacancy rates, changes in housing prices (rental and for sale) on an annual basis by local housing market area, market for second homes, and short-term rentals, etc.).
 - Research and explore the potential to create an entity like 21 Elements in San Mateo County or the Mountain Housing Council in the Tahoe/Truckee region.
 - Research and explore the potential to support and potentially expand existing programs.
 - Work to identify opportunities and bridge partnerships between large employers and housing developers to build workforce housing, especially for teachers and public safety workers.
 - Working with partners and stakeholders, explore the potential to establish construction training programs in the region, focused on both conventional and alternative construction technologies.
 - Working with partners and stakeholders, explore the potential to establish a modular construction factory in the region.

Resources and Links

- ▶ [21 Elements](#) in San Mateo County takes a regional approach to supporting jurisdictions in developing, adopting, and implementing local housing policies and programs. It is a forum for sharing resources, successful strategies and best practices.
- ▶ [Factory OS at Mare Island](#)
- ▶ Free second unit designs provided by Mendocino County, Fort Bragg, and Ukiah
- ▶ Santa Rosa Metro Chamber started a [housing trust](#), which could be expanded regionally
- ▶ [Tahoe/Truckee Mountain Housing Council](#) advances workforce housing in the Town of Truckee, Nevada County and Placer counties.



CHILDCARE

Project Description

Advocate for, collaborate, and facilitate regional approaches to expanding access to quality, affordable childcare in the region. While SMEDD is not in a position to directly provide childcare or build new childcare facilities, the District can advocate for more streamlined planning approvals and support start-up childcare facilities. The District can convene stakeholders and partners to facilitate an exchange of best practices and resources.

Project Justification

The lack of quality, affordable childcare is a major concern across the region. The lack of access results in poor outcomes for children and limits the ability of parents/guardians to fully participate in the labor force, particularly as the region recovers from COVID-19. In addition, many of the region's current childcare providers are BIPOC-women who, with assistance, would establish daycare facilities in their communities or home-based childcare centers.

Project Context

- ▶ **Time Horizon.** Mid-term priority; will require ongoing effort.
- ▶ **Applicable CEDS Themes**
 - Livability
 - Supporting Businesses and Industries
- ▶ **Potential Stakeholders/Partners**
 - 4Cs in [Sonoma County](#)
 - [Boys and Girls Club of Sonoma – Marin](#)
 - [Boys and Girls Club of Sonoma Valley](#)
 - [Child Care Planning Council of Sonoma County](#)
 - City of Santa Rosa Planning & Economic Development

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

“I am struggling to find childcare options [...] which would greatly enable me to build and grow my business, and I know many of my fellow parents who are also business owners are desperate for additional childcare options in the area.”

– 2021 SMEDD Survey Respondent

- First 5 [Mendocino County](#) and [Sonoma County](#)
- [Mendocino County Family Resource Centers](#)
- [North Coast Opportunities Rural Communities Child Care](#)
- [River to Coast Children's Services](#)
- [Workforce Investment Board\(s\)](#)

▶ Potential SMEDD Board Commitment

- Board member ad hoc or team member may champion this Project, serving as liaisons in the community and bringing ideas, opportunities, and concerns back to the full Board for information and discussion
- Board action will be required to approve the work plan and direct advocacy efforts
- If the Board supports the preparation of a Regional Childcare Demand/Supply Analysis, a SMEDD Board ad hoc committee would be needed to oversee the study

▶ Potential Resources Needed

- May require additional funding for staffing/contract work to support implementation

▶ Potential Funding Sources

- U.S. Economic Development Administration “Build Back Better Regional Challenge” Grant Funding
- U.S. Economic Development Administration Economic Adjustment Assistance Funding

- California Department of Education Early Education and Support Division
- U.S. Department of Education Child and Adult Care Food Program
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Child Care and Development Block Grant
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Grant
- Annual tracking of collaboration activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., number of stakeholders identified, number of referrals to partners and stakeholders, meetings/events convened, participation and attendance at events).
- Annual tracking of facilitation activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., research pursued, information and resources shared).
 - Resources shared may include funding opportunities, best practices, regulatory/legislative changes, training opportunities, etc.

Evaluation Metrics

Economic/Industry Metrics and SMEDD Progress Metrics are not presented in any priority order.

► Economic/Industry Metrics

- Number of childcare providers (establish benchmark data and begin tracking; note there may be variability from year to year depending on state funding and the number of subsidized childcare spaces)
- Percent of monthly income spent on childcare (establish benchmark data and begin tracking through annual survey)
- Increased awareness of childcare resources (begin tracking through annual survey)

► SMEDD Progress Metrics

- Quarterly reporting to SMEDD Board by designated Board “champion”.
- Work plan developed, approved by the Board, and reviewed/revised each year (note: final work plan may result in changes to evaluation metrics).
- Distribution of annual survey to establish benchmark concerns and track progress (e.g., survey reach and response rates, year-over-year trends analysis of survey responses pertaining to childcare).
- Annual tracking of advocacy activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., letters sent, local/regional meetings attended, testimony provided, etc.).

Action Items

Action Items are not presented in any priority order.

1. Designate SMEDD Board member(s) to champion this Project and assume responsibility for regular (e.g., quarterly) reporting to the Board about opportunities, best practices, areas of concern, stakeholder/partner initiatives, etc.
2. Evaluate potential staff capacity (the availability of staffing will affect the scope of the work that can be undertaken).
3. Develop a work plan focused on advocating, incubating, and supporting regional approaches to expanding childcare opportunities in the region.
4. Review existing childcare policies, programs, and legislative updates and monitor legislation and programs related to childcare as appropriate.
5. Advocate for policies and programs that expand childcare, particularly those that are tied to funding opportunities.
6. Create clear childcare policy messaging so that all SMEDD Board Members can be advocates for the regional need and opportunity (i.e., in their work and other leadership roles, in speaking with elected officials, etc.).

7. Potential work plan actions will depend on SMEDD capacity and staff resources and could include:
- Engage with regional jurisdictional and nonprofit childcare initiatives to understand current initiatives and areas for SMEDD engagement (e.g., Sonoma County Child Care Planning Council or North Coast Opportunities Rural Communities Child Care).
 - Evaluate the potential to establish or support an entity such as the [San Mateo County's Childcare Partnership Council](#), which takes a regional approach to advancing childcare (e.g., develops policies and strategies, conducts needs assessments, tracks and studies legislation and regulation) .
 - Work with business support partners (SBDCs, EDFC, etc.) to expand capacity within existing providers.
 - Support the creation of new childcare centers and/or facilities; identify properties, discuss solutions with developers and landowners, consider partnerships with major employers or educational institutions.
 - Explore regulatory barriers to expanding childcare spaces (e.g., zoning, licensing, building inspection, fees, COVID-compliance) and, in coordination with the state and jurisdictions, serve as a clearinghouse for best practices to addressing regulatory barriers.
 - Promote resources on SMEDD website (or another appropriate location) for families and providers
 - For Families: links for available centers, FAQs about wait-lists etc.
 - For Providers: Navigating zoning/regulatory requirements, licensing/background checks process, matchmaking with available facilities.
 - Resources shared may include funding opportunities, best practices, regulatory/legislative changes, training opportunities, etc.

Resources and Links

- ▶ [California Department of Education Regional Market Rate Survey & California Child Care Portfolio](#)
- ▶ [California Department of Social Services](#)
- ▶ [San Mateo County Childcare Needs Assessment](#) (for County and each jurisdiction)
- ▶ [San Francisco Children's Council's Child Care Business Incubator](#)



TALENT PIPELINE

Project Description

Advocate for, collaborate, and facilitate regional approaches to growing the talent pipeline and workforce and career pathway development across a range of industries, particularly in the housing, green energy, and environmental **resiliency** sectors. While the specific types of jobs and required skills will change as the region's industries mature and evolve, current priorities include general workforce readiness training, as well as workforce training in housing construction, clean energy (e.g., photovoltaic and wind), climate resiliency, wildfire management, and water management. SMEDD will not be directly responsible for talent development or workforce training but can play an important role convening educational institutions and industry leaders to align the skills that are needed today and in the short term so that curriculum and internships support economic growth opportunities.

Project Justification

There is an urgent need for a skilled workforce across almost all industries across the region. Growing the talent pipeline should start in early childhood education and focus on aligning skills development with industry needs. In addition to developing an emerging workforce, SMEDD may also focus on retaining individuals who have been drawn to the region by local educational institutions or other jobs. Illuminating career pathways (e.g., training and developing a restaurant server to become a restaurant manager or owner) is necessary to retain workers. To fully develop the workforce needed to grow the economy and foster higher-wage jobs, emerging and growing economic development objectives should be paired with educational and vocational institutions. Along these lines, the growing environmental resilience sector represents

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

"[We] need to develop education and training programs to create an adequate local workforce to support this [clean energy] industry."

– Community Meeting Participant

"Engage youth in climate/clean energy career paths."

– Community Meeting Participant

opportunities to address climate change impacts and build environmental resiliency while supporting higher-wage job growth, while improving livability.

Project Context

- ▶ **Time Horizon.** Near-term priority; will require ongoing, sustained focus and effort
- ▶ **Applicable CEDS Themes**
 - Livability
 - Supporting Businesses and Industries
 - Economic and Environmental Resilience
- ▶ **Potential Stakeholders/Partners**
 - Career Technical Education programs, Green Building, Professional Certification
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Community Colleges (Mendocino, Santa Rosa, College of the Redwoods)
 - Mendocino Economic Development and Financing Corporation
 - North Coast Builders' Exchange
 - North Bay Leadership Council
 - Office of Education Mendocino County
 - [Schatz Energy Research Center](#)
 - Sonoma Clean Power

- Sonoma County Ag & Open Space educational resources for farmers
- Sonoma County Build Well program
- Sonoma State and junior college programs
- Sonoma Workforce Investment Board
- Willits workshop partners: School of Adaptive Agriculture, Abuela Gardens, Polecraft Solutions, and Straw Clay Wood

▶ **Potential SMEDD Board Commitment**

- One to two Board Members who agree to champion this Project, serving as liaisons in the community and bringing ideas, opportunities, and concerns back to the full Board for information and discussion
- Board action will be required to approve the work plan and direct advocacy efforts

▶ **Potential Resources Needed**

- Sonoma County Recovery & Resiliency Analyst
- May require additional funding for staffing/contract work to support implementation

▶ **Potential Funding Sources**

- [California Employment Development Department](#)
- [Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development](#)
- U.S. Economic Development Administration “Good Jobs” funding
- U.S. Economic Development Administration Indigenous Communities Funding to support Tribal projects related to workforce training, across all industries and especially wildfire management and the emerging Blue Economy

Evaluation Metrics

Economic/Industry Metrics and SMEDD Progress Metrics are not presented in any priority order.

▶ **Economic/Industry Metrics**

- Establishment, job and wage growth in environmental resilience sectors, including alternative construction technologies.⁸
- Employer survey responses indicating improvement in workforce readiness.

▶ **SMEDD Progress Metrics**

- Quarterly reporting to SMEDD Board by designated Board “champion”.
- Work plan developed, approved by the Board, and reviewed/revised each year (note: final work plan may result in changes to evaluation metrics).
- Distribution of annual survey to establish benchmark concerns and track progress (e.g., survey reach and response rates, year-over-year trends analysis of survey responses pertaining to workforce readiness and the talent pipeline).
- Annual tracking of advocacy activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., letters sent, local/regional meetings attended, testimony provided, etc.).
- Annual tracking of collaboration activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., number of stakeholders identified, number of referrals to partners and stakeholders, meetings/events convened, participation and attendance at events).
- Annual tracking of facilitation activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., research pursued, information and resources shared).
 - Resources shared may include funding opportunities, best practices, regulatory/legislative changes, training opportunities, etc.

⁸ For a definition of California’s Green Economy that SMEDD may use or adapt, see the [California Employment Development Department’s October 2010 California’s Green Economy Summary of Survey Results](#), which evaluates 34 occupational categories across all industry sectors. Please note that the definition provided is intended to provide guidance only and SMEDD may develop a more-regionally appropriate definition.

Action Items

Action Items are not presented in any priority order.

1. Designate SMEDD Board member(s) to champion this Project and assume responsibility for regular (e.g., quarterly) reporting to the Board about opportunities, best practices, areas of concern, stakeholder/partner initiatives, etc.
2. Identify if there is staff capacity to be leveraged (the availability of staffing will affect the scope of the work that can be undertaken).
3. Develop a work plan that is focused on advocating, incubating, and supporting regional approaches to growing the talent pipeline and workforce development and training across a range of industries, particularly in the housing, green energy, and environmental **resilience** sectors.
4. Advocate for policies and programs that effectively grow the talent pipeline in the region and bridge connections among those stakeholders and partners already actively engaged in workforce training.
5. Create clear policy messaging around SMEDD's talent development objectives so that all SMEDD Board Members can be advocates for the regional need and opportunity (i.e., in their work and other leadership roles, in speaking with elected officials, etc.).
6. Potential specific work plan actions will depend on SMEDD capacity and staff and stakeholder resources and could include:
 - Convene education and industry leaders to discuss growing the talent pipeline to align the skills that are needed today and in the short term so that curriculum and internships support economic growth opportunities.
 - Identify obstacles facing residents and employers to train in existing, centralized locations and evaluate potential opportunities for decentralized training programs (e.g., digital literacy, ESL classes, etc.).
 - Research and track funding sources to grow the talent pipeline and advance workforce training across a broad range of industries in the region, but particularly in the growing housing, green energy, and environmental **resiliency** sectors.
 - Support stakeholders/partners with application/grant support for EDA or other federal and state funding.
 - Working with partners and stakeholders, explore the potential to establish construction training programs in the region, focused on both conventional and alternative construction technologies.
 - Promote and share relevant resources to empower local communities, especially regional tribes, to define and prioritize their projects related to workforce training, generally, and in the environmental resiliency sectors, specifically.

Resources and Links

- [California Community Colleges Economic & Workforce Development](#)
- [California Workforce Development Board](#)



WATER MANAGEMENT & DROUGHT RESILIENCY

Project Description

Advocate for, collaborate, and facilitate a broad range of measures and programs that advance water management and drought resiliency in the region, through water conservation, the increased use of innovative storage, tertiary treated water and recycled water systems, and identification and development of new water sources. The need for secure water affect housing, businesses, and agriculture. SMEDD acknowledges that water management is a technical sector and SMEDD does not want to duplicate efforts or create unintended barriers.

Project Justification

Climate change is making droughts more common and more severe and will continue to harm key regional industries such as tourism and agriculture; affect the livability of the region; and create long-term concerns for the region's economic, environmental, and community resilience.

Project Context

- ▶ **Time Horizon.** Near-term priority; will require ongoing effort
- ▶ **Applicable CEDS Themes**
 - Livability
 - Supporting Businesses and Industries
 - Economic and Environmental Resilience
- ▶ **Potential Stakeholders/Partners**
 - [Association of California Water Agencies \(ACWA\)](#)
 - Lake Mendocino Water District
 - Local jurisdictions (cities, counties; note City of Santa Rosa is the supplier for several cities)

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

“Two-thirds of survey respondents consider water resources management to be a top priority for environmental resilience.”

– 2021 CEDS Survey Results

“The lack of environmental resilience in Mendocino is making national news... kind of bad for business.”

– Community Meeting Attendee

- [Sonoma Clean Power](#)
- [Sonoma Water](#)
- [California Department of Water Resources](#)

▶ Potential SMEDD Board Commitment

- One to two Board Members who agree to champion this Project, serving as liaisons in the community and bringing ideas, opportunities, and concerns back to the full Board for information and discussion
- Board action will be required to approve the work plan and direct advocacy efforts

▶ Potential Resources Needed

- Sonoma County Recovery & Resiliency Analyst
- May require additional funding for staffing/contract work to support implementation

▶ Potential Funding Sources

- [California Department of Water Resources](#)
- [State of California Climate Action bills and funding](#) (includes support for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, with a focus on small and disadvantaged communities)

Evaluation Metrics

Economic/Industry Metrics and SMEDD Progress Metrics are not presented in any priority order.

► Economic/Industry Metrics

- Number of water emergencies declared at the county and local level.
- Capacity vs. supply in Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma (as reported by Sonoma Water)
- Investments in new water infrastructure by local and regional agencies.
- Change in awareness of water management and drought resiliency efforts in the region (as measured through the survey).

► SMEDD Progress Metrics

- Quarterly reporting to SMEDD Board by designated Board “champion”.
- Work plan developed, approved by the Board, and reviewed/revise each year (note: final work plan may result in changes to evaluation metrics).
- Distribution of annual survey to establish benchmark concerns and track progress (e.g., survey reach and response rates, year-over-year trends analysis of survey responses pertaining to water management and drought resiliency).
- Annual tracking of advocacy activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., letters sent, local/regional meetings attended, testimony provided, etc.).
- Annual tracking of collaboration activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., number of stakeholders identified, number of referrals to partners and stakeholders, meetings/events convened, participation and attendance at events).
- Annual tracking of facilitation activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., research pursued, information and resources shared).
 - Resources shared may include funding opportunities, best practices, regulatory/legislative changes, training opportunities, etc.

Action Items

Action Items are not presented in any priority order.

1. Acknowledging that water management is a technical sector and SMEDD does not want to duplicate efforts or create unintended barriers, designate SMEDD Board member(s) to champion this Project and assume responsibility for regular (e.g., quarterly) reporting to the Board about opportunities, best practices, areas of concern, stakeholder/partner initiatives, etc.
2. Identify if there is staff capacity to be leveraged (the availability of staffing will affect the scope of the work that can be undertaken).
3. Develop a work plan that is focused on advocating, incubating, and supporting regional approaches to water management and building environmental resiliency within the region.
4. Advocate for policies and programs that contribute to water management and drought resiliency, particularly those that are tied to funding opportunities.
5. Review existing water management policies, programs, and legislative updates and monitor emerging legislation and programs as appropriate.
6. Create clear water management and drought resilience policy messaging so that all SMEDD Board Members can be advocates for the regional need and opportunity (i.e., in their work and other leadership roles, in speaking with elected officials, etc.).
7. Potential specific work plan actions will depend on SMEDD capacity and staff resources and could include:
 - Research and track funding sources to advance water management and drought resiliency throughout the region and make this information publicly available on the SMEDD website (or in another appropriate/accessible location) and share with stakeholders and partners.

- As staff capacity allows and if appropriate, SMEDD may support stakeholders/partners with application/grant support for EDA or other federal and state funding.
- Promote and share relevant resources to empower local communities to define and prioritize their water management and drought resiliency objectives.
- As part of SMEDD's annual survey, ask questions about water management and drought resiliency efforts in the region.

Resources and Links

- ▶ [Association of California Water Agencies Resources](#)
- ▶ [California Water Resilience Portfolio, July 2020](#)
- ▶ [City of Ukiah's Recycled Water Project](#)
- ▶ [UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences](#)



INDUSTRY DIVERSIFICATION

Project Description

Advocate for, collaborate, and facilitate diversification of the region's existing and emerging industry clusters, particularly the Blue Economy and other regenerative sectors that reinforce environmental resiliency while advancing job opportunities in both counties. The Blue Economy is the sustainable development of coastal resources in a wide range of economic sectors, including fisheries; aquaculture; maritime transport; coastal, marine and maritime tourism; coastal renewable energy; marine ecosystem services (i.e., blue carbon); seabed mining; and bioprospecting. Blue Economy development can include harbor infrastructure upgrades, building resilience against sea level rise, and science-based resource utilization.

Project Justification

The region has seen rapid decline and stagnation in many of our legacy industries. There is a need for more exploration and advancement of new industries on the horizon such as the Blue Economy and carbon-neutral industries as our region transitions from an extractive economy to one that is based on regenerative industry clusters.

Project Context

- ▶ **Time Horizon.** Mid-term priority; will require ongoing effort
- ▶ **Applicable CEDS Themes**
 - Livability
 - Supporting Business and Industries
 - Economic and Environmental Resilience
- ▶ **Potential Stakeholders/Partners**
 - Chambers of Commerce and Business Alliances
 - Harbor districts

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

77% of survey respondents believe that impacts from climate change pose a significant threat to the region.

– 2021 CEDS Survey Results

- High School/CTE programs
 - Junior Colleges
 - Kashia Band of Pomo Indians
 - Non-profit marine research institutes such as: [Noyo Center for Marine Research](#), [Bodega Marine Laboratory](#), etc.
 - Resource Conservation Districts
 - University research institutes and partnerships
 - West Business Development Center
- ▶ **Potential SMEDD Board Commitment**
 - One to two Board Members who agree to champion this Project, serving as liaisons in the community and bringing ideas, opportunities, and concerns back to the full Board for information and discussion
 - Board action will be required to approve the work plan and direct advocacy efforts
 - ▶ **Potential Resources Needed**
 - Sonoma County Recovery & Resiliency Analyst
 - May require additional funding for staffing/contract work to support implementation
 - ▶ **Potential Funding Sources**
 - California Coastal Conservancy and Coastal Commission
 - California State Parks Office of Grants and Local Assistance
 - U.S. Economic Development Administration funding for Statewide Planning, Research and Networks to research and evaluate the regional potential for the Blue Economy
 - U.S. Economic Development Administration Build Back Better Regional Challenge grants

Evaluation Metrics

Economic/Industry Metrics and SMEDD Progress Metrics are not presented in any priority order.

► Economic/Industry Metrics

- Establishment, job, and wage growth in emerging sectors, including the Blue Economy sector.⁹
- Change in awareness of the Blue Economy and its potential in the region (measured through survey).

► SMEDD Progress Metrics

- Quarterly reporting to SMEDD Board by designated Board “champion”.
- Work plan developed, approved by the Board, and reviewed/revised each year (note: final work plan may result in changes to evaluation metrics).
- Distribution of annual survey to establish benchmark concerns and track progress (e.g., survey reach and response rates, year-over-year trends analysis of survey responses pertaining to industry diversification).
- Annual tracking of advocacy activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., letters sent, local/regional meetings attended, testimony provided, etc.).
- Annual tracking of collaboration activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., number of stakeholders identified, number of referrals to partners and stakeholders, meetings/events convened, participation and attendance at events).
- Annual tracking of facilitation activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., research pursued, information and resources shared).
 - Resources shared may include funding opportunities, best practices, regulatory/legislative changes, training opportunities, etc.

⁹ The NOAA Office for Coastal Management defines the Blue Economy as composed of 48 industries within the following six sectors: Living Resources, Marine Construction, Marine Transportation, Offshore Mineral Resources, Ship and Boat Building, Tourism and Recreation. (See: <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/docs/socialcoast/2020-presentations/Sataloff.pdf>)

Action Items

Action Items are not presented in any priority order.

1. Designate SMEDD Board member(s) to champion this Project and assume responsibility for regular (e.g., quarterly) reporting to the Board about opportunities, best practices, areas of concern, stakeholder/partner initiatives, etc.
2. Identify if there is staff capacity to be leveraged (the availability of staffing will affect the scope of the work that can be undertaken)
3. Develop a work plan that is focused on advocating, incubating, and supporting regional approaches to diversifying the region’s industry clusters and growing the Blue Economy and other regenerative industry sectors in the region.
4. Advocate for policies and programs that support economic diversification and the growth of regenerative economic sectors in the region.
5. Create clear economic diversification policy messaging so that all SMEDD Board Members can be advocates for the regional need and opportunity (i.e., in their work and other leadership roles, in speaking with elected officials, etc.)
6. Potential specific work plan actions will depend on SMEDD capacity and staff resources and could include:
 - Convene Blue Economy partners to identify opportunities for collaboration in grant applications and programs and other efforts where SMEDD can assist.
 - Maintain contact with the Noyo Center for Marine Research, Bodega Marine Laboratory, the Noyo Harbor District, and other identified partners on a quarterly basis to provide information about grant opportunities and to build connections between the different partners.
 - Advocate for funding to support investment in waterfront facilities in support of the Blue Economy at the Noyo Harbor and in Bodega Bay.

- Advocate on behalf of efforts to grow the Blue Economy, including writing letters of support for grant applications, writing letters of support for key local and state regulations and legislation, etc.
- Create a web page on the SMEDD website (or another appropriate location) that discusses the partnership and activities undertaken in support of the Blue Economy.
- As part of SMEDD's annual survey, ask questions about general awareness of the Blue Economy and the sector's potential role in the region and track responses.
- Promote and share relevant resources to empower local communities, especially regional tribes, to define and prioritize their projects related to emerging industries, generally, and in environmental resiliency/regenerative sectors such as the Blue Economy, specifically.

Links and Resources

- ▶ [Climate Adaptation Research Center at UC Davis](#)
- ▶ [NOAA Blue Economy Strategic Plan, 2021-2025](#)



INTERNET/ BROADBAND

Project Description

Advocate for, collaborate, and facilitate fast, reliable, and affordable internet access services, with a particular focus on *broadband* internet access service,¹⁰ throughout the region, particularly in disadvantaged and unserved¹¹ rural communities. While the Project objective is internet access generally, there is current momentum around broadband internet access specifically, and this likely is where SMEDD can be most effective. This Project anticipates collaboration with stakeholders to collect resources and share best practices to support “dig once, dig smart” policies and identify opportunities that advance regional broadband internet access infrastructure projects.

Project Justification

Fast, reliable, and affordable internet access services are critical for participation in today’s society and digital economy, affecting healthcare, education, agriculture, public health and safety, e-commerce, tourism, telework, and community connections. Yet rural, low-income, and minority communities are often unserved and lack internet access services, which exacerbates **equity** imbalances.

¹⁰ “Broadband internet access service” means a mass-market retail service provided by a local agency in California by wire or radio that provides the capability to transmit data to and receive data from all or substantially all internet endpoints, including any capabilities that are incidental to and enable the operation of the communications service, but excluding dial-up internet access service. “Broadband internet access service” also encompasses any service provided by a local agency in California that provides a functional equivalent of that service or that is used to evade the protections set forth in this article.

¹¹ Except as provided in subclause (II), “unserved area” means an area for which there is no facility-based broadband provider offering at least one tier of broadband service at speeds of at least 25 mbps downstream, 3 mbps upstream, and a latency that is sufficiently low to allow real-time interactive applications, considering updated federal and state broadband mapping data.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

“I cannot obtain a “work from home” job because my current carrier option is not robust enough to meet job requirements.”

– 2021 SMEDD Survey Respondent

In addition, internet access, and specifically broadband internet access service, is a key component of emergency-preparedness planning and critical in building **resiliency** within the region.

Project Context

- ▶ **Time Horizon.** Near-term priority: requires ongoing, sustained effort to comply with state and federal funding programs
- ▶ **Applicable CEDS Themes**
 - Livability
 - Supporting Businesses and Industries
 - Technology, Digital Literacy, and Connectivity
 - Environmental Resiliency
- ▶ **Potential Stakeholders/Partners**
 - [Access Sonoma Broadband](#) (ASB)
 - [Broadband Alliance of Mendocino County](#) (BAMC)
 - [California Public Utilities Commission](#) (CPUC)
 - [California Emerging Technology Fund](#) (CETF)
 - [City Smart Technologies](#)
 - [Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California](#) (CENIC)
 - [Fire Safe Sonoma](#)
 - Local farm bureaus
 - [Mendocino County Fire Safe Council](#)
 - [North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium](#) (NBNCBC)
 - Offices of education and school districts

- Public safety departments and agencies
- [Rural County Representatives of California \(RCRC\)](#)
- Sonoma County [Department of Emergency Management](#) and Mendocino County [Office of Emergency Services](#)
- Tourism agencies
- [West Business Development Center](#)
- [Watza Labs](#)
- [WiConduit](#)
- Wireline and wireless internet service providers

▶ **Potential SMEDD Board Commitment**

- One to two Board Members who agree to champion this Project, serving as liaisons in the community and bringing ideas, opportunities, and concerns back to the full Board for information and discussion
- Board action will be required to approve the work plan and direct advocacy efforts

▶ **Potential Resources Needed**

- Sonoma County Broadband Department Analyst
- May require additional funding for staffing/contract work to support implementation

▶ **Potential Funding Sources**

- [US Department of Agriculture Reconnect Program](#)
- [California Public Utilities Commission \(CPUC\) California Advanced Services Fund](#)
- [The American Rescue Plan and the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund \(ARPA\) funding](#)

▶ **Economic/Industry Metrics**

- Change in proportion of unserved/served locations.
- Number (and percentage) of households with Internet/broadband access
- Number of jobs created/retained from project implementation.
- Amount of public and private investment attracted.
- Percent of annual survey respondents who indicate that the lack of “fast, reliable, and affordable” internet access throughout the region is a top concern (this percentage should decrease each year).

▶ **SMEDD Progress Metrics**

- Quarterly reporting to SMEDD Board by designated Board “champion”.
- Work plan developed, approved by the Board, and reviewed/revised each year (note: final work plan may result in changes to evaluation metrics).
- Distribution of annual survey to establish benchmark concerns and track progress (e.g., survey reach and response rates, year-over-year trends analysis of survey responses pertaining to internet access generally and Broadband specifically).
- Annual tracking of advocacy activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., letters sent, local/regional meetings attended, testimony provided, etc.).
- Annual tracking of collaboration activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., number of stakeholders identified, number of referrals to partners and stakeholders, meetings/events convened, participation and attendance at events).
- Annual tracking of facilitation activities to be determined in work plan (e.g., research pursued, information and resources shared).
 - Resources shared may include funding opportunities, best practices, regulatory/legislative changes, training opportunities, etc.

Evaluation Metrics

Economic/Industry Metrics and SMEDD Progress Metrics are not presented in any priority order.

Action Items

Action Items are not presented in any priority order.

1. Designate SMEDD Board member(s) to champion this Project and assume responsibility for regular (e.g., quarterly) reporting to the Board about opportunities, best practices, areas of concern, stakeholder/partner initiatives, etc.
2. Identify if there is staff capacity to be leveraged (the availability of staffing will affect the scope of the work that can be undertaken).
3. Develop a work plan that is focused on advocating, incubating, and supporting regional approaches to expanding internet, especially broadband internet access services, in the region.
4. Advocate for policies and programs that expand broadband internet access services, especially in unserved areas and particularly those that are tied to funding opportunities.
5. Review existing broadband internet access services policies, programs, and legislative updates and monitor emerging legislation and programs as appropriate.¹²
6. Create clear policy messaging so that all SMEDD Board Members can be advocates for the regional need and opportunity for fast, reliable, and affordable internet access (i.e., in their work and other leadership roles, in speaking with elected officials, etc.).
7. Potential specific work plan actions will depend on SMEDD capacity and staff resources and could include:
 - While broadband internet access within the region is the preferred longer-term technology, SMEDD may continue to support the region with other existing alternatives to access the internet as short-term solutions. Currently unserved areas may benefit from connections with ISPs and WISPs providing best alternatives, such as hotspots, satellite, fixed wireless services, radio, dsl upgrades, etc. even as longer-term solutions to faster and more reliable access are pursued.
 - Research and track funding sources to advance internet broadband access services throughout the region and make this information publicly available on the SMEDD website (or in another appropriate/accessible location) and share with stakeholders and partners.
 - Explore potential regional funding mechanisms to address the gap between state and federal grants and actual costs (e.g., regional Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD), community-based Community Facilities Districts (CFD), etc.).
 - As staff capacity allows, SMEDD may support stakeholders/partners with application/grant support for EDA or other federal and state funding.
 - Promote and share relevant resources to empower local communities to define and prioritize their internet access objectives.
 - As part of SMEDD's annual survey, ask questions about Internet access to support trend analysis (build on questions from 2021 Survey). Support development and distribution of each county's internet access surveys (i.e., ensure the questions are synced for better comparison).
 - Coordinate with existing emergency preparedness planning experts in each county to learn more about how SMEDD can support environmental resiliency efforts.
 - Connect unserved communities with local internet service providers.

Resources and Links

- ▶ [Access Sonoma Broadband](#)
- ▶ [Broadband Alliance of Mendocino County](#)
- ▶ [California Interactive Broadband Map](#)
- ▶ [California Public Utilities Commission Broadband Mapping Program](#)
- ▶ [North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium](#)
- ▶ [Sonoma County Watch Duty emergency alerts](#)

¹² Key definitions aligned with existing legislation are available here: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=2021202205B156



Appendix A: Local Community Projects



Appendix B: Community Survey Results



Appendix C: Community Meeting Padlet Results



Appendix D: Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments

Preparation of this CEDS was a team effort, and it is a richer document thanks to the strategic, technical, and administrative support of many contributors. EPS would like to acknowledge and appreciate the following organizations and individuals.

SMEDD Board Members

<i>NAME</i>	<i>ORGANIZATION</i>
Jeff Kelly	Tri Counties Bank
Jon Frech	Black Oak Coffee
Katrina Kessen	The Greater Ukiah Business and Tourism Alliance
Lisa Badenfort	North Bay Association of Realtors
Mary Anne Petrillo, Chair	West Business Development Center
Michael Nicholls, Immediate Past Chair	Sonoma County Economic Development Board
Paul Castro	California Human Development
Paul Garza	Garza Consulting
Robin Bartholow	North Coast Builders Exchange

2021 CEDS Steering Committee

<i>NAME</i>	<i>ORGANIZATION</i>
Bradley Johnson	Sonoma County EDB Recovery & Resiliency Analyst
Calvin Sandeen	SMEDD District Manager and Sonoma County EDB Broadband Department Analyst
Debbie Rasar	Mendocino County Economic Development and Financing Corporation
Diann Simmons	Mendocino County Economic Development and Financing Corporation
Ethan Brown	Sonoma County EDB Director of Business Development
Lisa Badenfort	SMEDD Board Member
Marie Jones	Marie Jones Consulting
Mary Anne Petrillo	SMEDD Board Member
Michael Nicholls	SMEDD Board Member, Chair
Robert Gernert	Mendocino County Economic Development and Financing Corporation
Robin Peckham	Mendocino County Economic Development and Financing Corporation

Acknowledgments

Sonoma County Economic Development Board Staff

<i>NAME</i>	<i>ORGANIZATION</i>
Aleena Decker	Conference and Communications Coordinator
Bradley Johnson	Recovery & Resiliency Analyst
Calvin Sandeen	Broadband Department Analyst
Ethan Brown	Director of Business Development
Lauren Cartwright	Business Retention & Expansion Program Manager
Marcos Suarez	Diversity Services Program Manager
Rebekah Heinze	Fiscal & Budget Analyst
Sheba Person Whitley	Executive Director

Community Meeting Spanish Language Translation and Facilitation

<i>NAME</i>	<i>ORGANIZATION</i>
Ana Horta	Spanish Facilitator
Ricardo Ibarra	Watza Creative Lab, Executive Director

Focus Group Attendees

Environmental Resilience (July 12, 2021)

<i>NAME</i>	<i>ORGANIZATION</i>
Bradley Johnson	Sonoma County EDB
Calvin Sandeen	SMEDD District Manager and Sonoma County EDB
Christopher Godley	Sonoma County Emergency Management
Cordel Stillman	Sonoma Clean Power
Crispin B. Hollinshead	Resident of Ukiah
Ethan Brown	Sonoma County EDB
Jim Roberts	The Madrones and The Brambles
Lauren Cartwright	Sonoma County EDB
Nephele Barrett	Mendocino Council of Governments
Pete Albers	Sonoma County Department of Agriculture
Roberta MacIntyre	Fire Safe Sonoma
Scott Cratty	Mendocino County Fire Safe Council

Acknowledgments

Focus Group Attendees

Technology Connectivity & Digital Literacy (July 13, 2021)

Bradley Johnson	Sonoma County EDB
Brandon Jewell	CTE Foundation
Calvin Sandeen	SMEDD District Manager and Sonoma County EDB
Jini Reynolds	Redwood Valley MAC / Redwood Valley Grange
Lauren Cartwright	Sonoma County EDB
Marie Jones	Marie Jones Consulting
Mary Anne Petrillo	West Business Development Center
Michael Nicholls	Access Sonoma Broadband
Ricardo Ibarra	Watza Lab

Economic Development Partners (July 14, 2021)

Bradley Johnson	Sonoma County EDB
Calvin Sandeen	SMEDD District Manager and Sonoma County EDB
Ethan Brown	Sonoma County EDB
Jen Klose	Generation Housing
Katie Greaves	Sonoma County Job Link
Lauren Cartwright	Sonoma County EDB
Marcos J. Suarez	Sonoma County EDB
Marie Jones	Marie Jones Consulting
Oscar Chavez	Sonoma County Human Services Department
Rafael Rivero	City of Santa Rosa, Economic Development Division
Sarah McCormick	City of Fort Bragg, Housing and Economic Development
Shannon Riley	City of Ukiah, Deputy City Manager
Tim Ricard	Town of Windsor

Supporting Businesses and Industries (July 16, 2021)

Bradley Johnson	Sonoma County EDB
Calvin Sandeen	SMEDD District Manager and Sonoma County EDB
Debbie Rasar	Mendocino EDFC
Keith Woods	North Coast Builders' Exchange
Kristen Madsen	Creative Sonoma
Lauren Cartwright	Sonoma County EDB
Marie Jones	Marie Jones Consulting
Paul Garza	West Business Development Center / SMEDD
Tawny Tesconi	Sonoma County Farm Bureau

Acknowledgments

Focus Group Attendees

Equity (September 23, 2021)

Alegria de la Cruz	Sonoma County
Ana Lugo	Equity First Consulting
Bradley Johnson	Sonoma County EDB
Elizabeth Brown	Community Foundation Sonoma County
J. Anderson	Becoming Independent
Letitia Hanke	The Lime Foundation
Lisa Carreno	United Way Wine Country
Marcus Clarke	Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County
Nancy Rogers	Sonoma County Black Forum
Paul Davis	Mendocino Coast Hospitality Center
Raissa de la Rosa	City of Santa Rosa
Sheba Person-Whitley	Sonoma County EDB
Socorro Shiels	First Five Sonoma County

Interviewees

July, August, September, and October 2021

Brad Sherwood	Sonoma County Water Agency
Brandon Jewell	Career Technical Education (CTE) Foundation Sonoma County
Brian Bottari	Comcast
Chris Boyd	Redwood Valley Municipal Council
Clint Mckay	Pepperwood Preserve
David Kelley	City of Cloverdale
David Smith-Ferri	Dry Creek Rancheria
Denick Murphy	Mendocino Sewer District
Dino Franklin	Kashia Band of Pomo
Don Schwartz	City of Rohnert Park
Dusty Duley	City of Willits
Fernando Mora	Kashia Band of Pomo
Frank Ramirez	Kashia Band of Pomo
Fred Carr	Kashia Band of Pomo
Grant Davis	Sonoma County Water
Greg Sarris	Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria
Ingrid Alverde	City of Petaluma
Jeff Kay	City of Healdsburg

Acknowledgments

Interviewees

July, August, September, and October 2021

Jeff Kelly	Tri Counties Bank
Jeff Parker	Sustainable Housing Expert
Jeney Anderson	Becoming Independent
Jessica Javied	Coyote Valley Band of Pomo
Joel Haspel	Kashia Band of Pomo
Josh Gravier	Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo
Kari Svanstrom	City of Sebastopol
Kathryn Hecht	Alexander Valley Film Society
Kendall Jarvis	Legal Aid of Sonoma County
Leona Williams	Pinoleville Valley Band of Pomo
Linda Ruffing	Noyo Center
Malinda Matson	Economic Development Agency
Mari Rodin	Ukiah City Council
Michael Hunter	Coyote Valley Band of Pomo
Michelle Hutchins	Mendocino Office of Education
Mike Dawe	Sonoma County Libraries
Nancy Sands	City of Petaluma
Nephele Barrett	Mendocino Council of Governments
Noah Housh	City of Cotati
Pablo Garza	California State Assembly
Paul Andersen	City of Point Arena
Peter Rumble	Metro Chamber of Santa Rosa
Raissa de la Rosa	City of Santa Rosa
Rebecca Simonson	Sonoma Clean Power
Richard Shoemaker	City of Point Arena
Ronit Rubinoff	Legal Aid of Sonoma County
Sage Sangiacomo	City of Ukiah
Sarah McChormick	City of Fort Bragg
Severino Gomes	Kashia Band of Pomo
Steve Dunncliff	County of Mendocino
Suzanne Dershowitz	Sonoma County Legal Aide
Tim Ricard	Town of Windsor
Tom West	North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium
Travis Scott	Visit Mendocino
Vaughn Peña	Kashia Band of Pomo