



**AGENDA**  
**Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District**  
**Board of Directors Meeting - Friday, April 19, 2024, at 1:00 pm PST**

**Remote Attendance Link:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82922778261>

**In Person Meeting Locations:**

West Business Development Center (707) 964-7571  
345 North Franklin Street, **Fort Bragg**, CA 95437  
and

Mendocino County Executive Office (707) 463-4441  
Conference Room A

501 Low Gap Road **Ukiah**, CA 95482 and  
Sonoma County Economic Development Board (707) 565-7170  
141 Stony Circle, Suite 110, **Santa Rosa**, CA 95401

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**CALL TO ORDER** by Robin Bartholow, Chairperson

**ROLL CALL** by Norma Alley

- Chairperson Robin Bartholow
- Vice Chairperson Paul Garza
- Board Member Lisa Badenfort
- Board Member Tim Karas
- Board Member Jeff Kelly
- Board Member Mary Anne Petrillo

Vacancies:

- Board Member Mendocino Appointment Vacant Seat
- Board Member Sonoma Appointment Vacant Seat
- Board Member At-Large Vacant Seat

**AGENDA CHANGES AND DELETIONS** - To Current Agenda Only

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - Open time for Public Expression

*Time reserved for members of the public to speak on matters not otherwise appearing on the agenda.*

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

*Matters listed under the Consent Calendar are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion and one vote. Unless otherwise requested by a Board Member, there will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Calendar and will be considered separately.*

*There will be one opportunity for public comment on all consent items. Comments are limited to 3 minutes each, and the Chairperson may limit this time if reasonable under the circumstances.*

**Item 1** Approval of Check Register as of March 31, 2024

**Item 2** Financial Reporting: Receive and File Summary Reports

**Item 3** Approve Meeting Minutes:

- February 24, 2023
- April 21, 2023
- May 19, 2023
- June 16, 2023
- July 21, 2023
- February 16, 2024

**MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION** - Action Items

**Item 4** [Approve Draft FY 2023-2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update Report](#)

**Item 5** [Approve EDA Supplemental Grant \(Grant No. ED20SEA3070045\) & Planning Grant \(Grant No. ED22SEA3020033\) Progress Reports for Submission to the United States Economic Development Administration](#)

**Item 6** [Receive an Update on the Status of Biomass Utilization Symposium Planning and Provide Guidance as Appropriate](#)

**Item 7** [Receive an Update on California Jobs First: Redwood Region RISE; North Bay Working Group; EDF Working Group](#)

**Item 8** [Receive Update on SMEDD Board Seats; Receive Update on SMEDD Board Seats; Discuss and Consider Recruitment and Appointment of a SMEDD-Appointed At-Large Member and of Members Appointed by the Mendocino and Sonoma County Boards of Supervisors](#)

**DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT**

**UPDATES**

- [CALED Annual Conference](#) - “Elevate”, Hyatt Regency, Santa Rosa
- Administrative Matters
- Sheba Person-Whitley, Regional Director, U.S EDA, possible Fall 2024 regional tour

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

- Jobs First Catalyst Funds
- EDA PWEAA Assistance

**Letters of Support Issued & Outcomes**

Request From	Topic/Project	SMEDD Letter Issued to Requestor	Status of Grant Award
Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit District (SMART)	Connecting Cloverdale to the Bay – Equitable Transportation Access & Resilience Project	02/26/2024	Under Review -
Regenerative Forest Solutions	Woody FeedStock Pilot Project (CalFire)	9/27/2023	Under Review -
Regenerative Forest Solutions	Woody FeedStock Pilot Project (Bay Area Council)	9/27/2023	Awarded -
Mendocino Forest Products	Biomass-to-Hydrogen Grant Application	9/15/2023	Awarded -

West Business Development Center	CalOSBA Blue Economy iHub	8/31/2023	Under Review ▾
Regenerative Forest Solutions	Woody FeedStock Pilot Project USDA Forest Service	8/9/2023	Under Review ▾
Regenerative Forest Solutions	NCRP Woody FeedStock Pilot Project	8/9/2023	Awarded ▾
Sonoma County Meat Company	USDA Local Meat Capacity Grant	6/21/2023	Under Review ▾
Noyo Harbor	Noyo Harbor District Port Infrastructure Development	4/24/2023	Under Review ▾

**UPCOMING EVENTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST** - *not necessarily SMEDD connected*

- **May 1, 2024** [NorthBay NEXT - MSIV](#), College of Marin - Jonas Center, Novato
- **May 1, 2024** EDF Working Group Expert Session - Tribal Funding
- **May 2-3, 2024** [Biomass Utilization Symposium](#) - HREC, Hopland
- **May 13-15, 2024** [Pacific Offshore Wind Summit](#) - Sacramento

**BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OR COMMENTS**

*Time reserved for members of the Board to report on AdHoc Committee activities and to speak on matters not otherwise appearing on the agenda. No Actions.*

**ADJOURNMENT** by Robin Bartholow, Chairperson

For a copy of Board Packet materials, please visit [smedd.org](http://smedd.org) or email Abigail Scott ([abigail@smedd.org](mailto:abigail@smedd.org)).



**SONOMA MENDOCINO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**  
**Disbursements / Check Register**  
**Payments Through March 31, 2024**

*Changes  
since last transmittal\**

*Transmittal on April 19, 2024, to the Board of Directors at their Board Meeting*

Check No.	Amount	Date	Paid to (Payee)	Description
<b>*CHANGES SINCE LAST TRANSMITTAL:</b>				
	\$5.95	1/22/2024	District's Bank	Banking Fees - Bill Pay monthly service charge
Bank Bill Pay	\$229,872.66	2/15/2024	Regional Government Services	Professional Services - Administration; CEDS; EDA Grant Projects December 2022 - December 2023
	\$30.00	2/15/2024	District's Bank	Banking Fees: Wire Fee
<b>PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ACTIVITY:</b>				
1300	\$2,956.50	1/4/2023	William Adams; Johnson and Thomas LLC	Legal Services
1301	\$28,280.22	1/4/2023	US Dept of Commerce / NOAA	Reimbursement to Grantor (EDA) of unexpended Partnership Planning grant funds: Grant No. ED17SEA3020055; Period 7/1/2017 - 6/30/2022
1302	\$20.00	3/1/2023	Streamline	Website Platform Service - February 2023
1303	\$28,303.55	3/17/2023	County of Sonoma	Sonoma County staff reimbursement for services for Partnership Planning grant funds: Grant No. ED17SEA3020055; Period 7/1/2017 - 6/30/2022
1304	\$225.00	3/17/2023	Marie Jones Consulting	Provided CEDS Project Prioritization Services
1305	\$6,786.95	7/12/2023	Regional Government Services	Professional Services - Administration; CEDS; EDA Grant Projects December 2022
1306	\$8,426.75	7/12/2023	Regional Government Services	Professional Services - Administration; CEDS; EDA Grant Projects January 2023
1307	\$10,000.00	8/11/2023	AgInnovations	Ag Innovation Hub Brainstorming Workshop 5/30/2023
1308	Check Voided			
1309	Check Voided			
1310	Check Voided			
1311	Check Voided			
Bank Bill Pay	\$1,097.66	12/4/2023	West Business Development Center	EDA Round Table, M. Petrillo, Expenses Supplemental Grant



**DATE:** April 19, 2024  
**TO:** Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Norma I. Alley, MMC, Clerk of the Board  
**SUBJECT:** Consider approval of the Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

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**STATEMENT OF ISSUE:**

The purpose of this item is to approve minutes of the Board of Directors meetings for the historical preservation and posterity of the Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD) Board actions for future generations to understand the valuable work considered and accomplished by SMEDD for the vitality of the two county's economic development.

**FINANCIAL IMPACTS:**

There are no anticipated financial impacts.

**BACKGROUND:**

The SMEDD Board holds regular meetings in compliance with the Brown Act and public records laws, those meetings are recorded in minutes, which are to be retained, in perpetuity, in the Sonoma County's and Mendocino County's archives.

Minutes for consideration for approval today are:

1. February 16, 2024
2. July 21, 2023
3. June 16, 2023
4. May 19, 2023
5. April 21, 2023
6. February 24, 2023

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Motion to approve the minutes.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Minutes



**Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting  
February 24, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.**

**Meeting was held virtually over Zoom**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Petrillo called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Board Present:            Lisa Badenfort, Vice Chair                    Robin Bartholow  
                                  Jon Frech    Paul Garza  
                                  Jeff Kelly, Treasurer                            Mary Ann Petrillo, Chair

Board Vacancies:        Three Seats

**Management Team:**

Joshua Metz, District Manager/Economic Development Advisor  
Tracy Fuller, Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor  
Bradley Johnson, Sonoma County Economic Development Board Management Analyst  
Carrie Rogers, Economic Development Senior Advisor  
Harrison Tregenza, Clerk of the Board  
Abigail Scott, Economic Development Advisor

**AGENDA CHANGES AND DELETIONS**

There were no changes or deletions to the agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Petrillo called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Item 1** U.S. Economic Development Administration Supplemental Grant No. ED20SEA3070045 – Consideration and Discussion of Qualifying Projects and Approval of a Project List

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz, Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor Fuller, and Economic Development Senior Advisor Rogers presented the report and fielded inquiries from the Board.

Chair Petrillo called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

General discussion of the Board ensued regarding the components to this item.

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Vice Chair Badenfort to approve a list of programs and projects upon which the remaining grant funds may be expended (“Proposed Work Plan”); and direct the management team submit any forms and/or documents that may be required by the U.S. Economic Development Administration such that the Proposed Work Plan be approved by the U.S. EDA if needed; and to Authorize the negotiation of any contracts which may be required with vendors or service providers, subject to contract execution limits outlined below, and to expend remaining grant funds because of the time constraints; therefore, the Board authorized the SMEDD Board Chair to execute contracts for U.S. Economic Development Administration Supplemental Grant expenditures without further Board approval subject to the following provisions: to Individual contracts which exceed \$25,000 shall be executed only after review and approval by the Board at a regular or special meeting; to Individual contracts up to \$25,000 may be executed by the Board Chair provided that, once the total proposed contracts for any single vendor reach \$25,000, any proposed subsequent contracts be submitted to the Board of Directors for its approval. Motion was approved by a 6 Yes/0 No roll call vote.

**Item 2** Consideration and Approval of \$180,000 Contract Amendment with Regional Government Services to Perform Development Administration Supplemental Grant No. ED20SEA3070045.

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Director Bartholow to approve the contract amendment with Regional Government Services in the amount of \$180,000 to perform services in accordance to the Development Administration Supplemental Grant. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No roll call vote.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz asked the Board to consider holding the next Board Meeting on March 17, 2023, at 1:00 p.m., and moving forward with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month at 1:00 p.m. It was consensus of the Board to move forward with times and dates suggested.

RGS staff introduced themselves and gave a brief background.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Petrillo adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

APPROVAL:

ATTEST:

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Robin Bartholow, Chair of the Board

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Norma I. Alley, MMC, Clerk of the Board



**Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting  
April 21, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.**

**Meeting was held virtually over Zoom and  
In Person Meeting Locations:**

Windsor Regional Library, Public Meeting Room, 9291 Old Redwood Highway, Building 100,  
Windsor, CA 95437

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Petrillo called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Board Present: Lisa Badenfort, Vice Chair Robin Bartholow  
Paul Garza Jeff Kelly, Treasurer  
Mary Ann Petrillo, Chair

Board Absences: Jon Frech Board Vacancies: Three Seats

**Management Team:**

Joshua Metz, District Manager/Economic Development Advisor  
Tracy Fuller, Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor  
Bradley Johnson, Sonoma County Economic Development Board Management Analyst  
Carrie Rogers, Economic Development Senior Advisor  
Norma I. Alley, MMC, Clerk of the Board  
Abigail Scott, Economic Development Advisor

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Management Team requested Item 4 be pulled from the agenda. Director Garza requested an Agenda Title of Board Reports be added today for time to discuss housekeeping items of the Board. Vice Chair Badenfort requested Item 2 be pulled from the Consent Calendar for discussion.

**MOTION:** Treasurer Kelly and seconded by Director Garza to approve the Agenda, as amended. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Petrillo called for public comment.



Genevieve Taylor, AG Innovations Executive Manager/Managing Facilitator, noted the company works across the state as facilitators and collaborative processes. Ms. Taylor noted she was working with Sonoma County and is pleased to support the Ag Tech Innovation Hub endeavor.

Seeing no further comments, Chair Petrillo closed public comment.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Item 1** Resolution to Approve Conflict of Interest Policy with California Fair Political Practices Commission

**MOTION:** Director Bartholow and seconded by Director Garza to approve the Consent Calendar Item 1. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

**Item 2** Authorize SMEDD to offer Letters of Support for Local Agencies to Granting Agencies for Grant Applications that are Aligned with SMEDD's Mission

*This item was pulled from the Consent Calendar and heard under Action Items.*

## **ACTION ITEMS**

**Item 3** Approve Contract with AG Innovations for Agricultural Technologies Innovation Center Workshop Facilitation

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz provided the report and fielded inquiries from the Board.

Chair Petrillo called for public comment.

Genevieve Taylor, AG Innovations Executive Manager/Managing Facilitator, noted the need for cultivating tech in Mendocino County.

Seeing no further comments, Chair Petrillo closed public comment.

General discussion and deliberation occurred amongst the Board.

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Treasurer Kelly to approve a contract with AG Innovations for Agricultural Technologies Innovation Center Workshop facilitation. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

**Item 4** Approve Application to Fill a County of Mendocino Appointment to a Vacant SMEDD Board Seat and Letter of Endorsement

*This item was pulled from the agenda.*

**Item 5** Approve SMEDD to Request an Extension of the June 30, 2023, Supplemental Grant Deadline of U.S. Economic Development Administration

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz provided the report and fielded inquiries from the Board.

Chair Petrillo called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Treasurer Kelly to approve the SMEDD request an extension of the June 30, 2023, Supplemental Grant Deadline of the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

Vice Chair Badenfort stepped away from the meeting and returned to the meeting at 2:11 p.m.

**PRIMARY AMENDMENT MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Treasurer Kelly directed staff draft a letter to state that SMEDD requests an extension of the June 30, 2023, Supplemental Grant Deadline of U.S. Economic Development Administration; for Board Members to review the letter; if there were no objections, management team was to send the letter to the appropriate agency; if there were objections, the letter was to be provided at the next meeting. Letter. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

**VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:** To approve the request, as amended. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

**Item 2** Authorize SMEDD to offer Letters of Support for Local Agencies to Granting Agencies for Grant Applications that are Aligned with SMEDD's Mission

*This item was pulled from the Consent Calendar and heard out of order.*

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz and Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor Fuller provided the report and fielded inquiries from the Board.

General discussion commenced amongst the Board. It was requested future letters be prepared with a note of what SMEDD's priorities are and how that aligns with CEDS, as well as, putting the letters on future agendas for the Board to be kept informed. Support by the Board was given for this action.

Chair Petrillo called for public comment.

Jenn Mendoza spoke in support of the letters of support.

Public member spoke in support of the letters of support.

Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Director Bartholow to approve providing letters of support, including in the letter noting the request is in line with the CEDS and purpose of SMEDD, and be placed on a future agenda for receive and file by the Board. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

## **BOARD MATTERS**

Director Garza reported SMEDD had a commitment from Mendocino County, when ADFC was unable to provide a match for SMEDD, stating they would provide that match. There was no Memorandum of Understanding with the County of Mendocino for this match and requested one be obtained. Second, SMEDD needed a Memorandum of Understanding with Sonoma County as well. Lastly, SMEDD Board had appointed a Treasurer therefore the Bylaws needed to be updated to allow for this position on the Board.

Chair Petrillo stated SMEDD does have a letter from Mendocino County expressing their commitment to the financial match. The Board directed RGS to research the validity of the letter and a future audit.

## **DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. EDA Roundtable
2. Mendocino & Sonoma Counties Familiarization Tour
3. Timing of a periodic CEDS Review and a Reconvening of the CEDS Strategy Committee
4. RGS Work Plan Implementation Status Update

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz updated the Board on general matters of the District.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. Attachment - Recently-released Milliman and CoreLogic analysis of "the financial benefits of selected risk reduction actions through the lens of a probabilistic catastrophe model."
2. Upcoming Events that may be of interest (not necessarily SMEDD connected)
  - May 30, 2023 - 10am-2pm Agricultural Technologies Innovation Center Workshop
  - July 11, 2023 - Grand Opening of the Ukiah Visitor Center
  - July 18 & 19, 2023 - Innovative Agricultural Communication Workshop
  - September 21 & 22, 2023 - The State of the Redwood Coast Region: Our Elemental Economy, the 3rd annual regional economic development summit, Ukiah, Mendocino County

Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor Fuller reviewed the agenda items.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Bartholow adjourned the meeting at 3:02 p.m.

APPROVAL:

ATTEST:

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Robin Bartholow, Chair of the Board

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Norma I. Alley, MMC, Clerk of the Board



**Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting  
May 19, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.**

**Meeting was held virtually over Zoom and  
In Person Meeting Locations:**

West Business Development Center, 185 E Church Street, Ukiah, CA 95482  
and

Sonoma County Economic Development Board Room - 141 Stony Circle, Suite 110, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Petrillo called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Board Present: Robin Bartholow Jon Frech  
Paul Garza Jeff Kelly, Treasurer  
Mary Ann Petrillo, Chair

Board Absences: Lisa Badenfort, Vice Chair Board Vacancies: Three Seats

**Management Team:**

Joshua Metz, District Manager/Economic Development Advisor  
Tracy Fuller, Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor  
Bradley Johnson, Sonoma County Economic Development Board Management Analyst  
Harrison Tregenza, Clerk of the Board  
Abigail Scott, Economic Development Advisor

**AGENDA CHANGES AND DELETIONS AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

There were no changes or deletions to the agenda. By consent of the Board the Agenda was approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Petrillo called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

## CONSENT CALENDAR

**Item 1** Minutes from February 10, 2023, Board Meeting

**Item 2** Approval of Check Register as of April 30, 2023

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Treasurer Kelly to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Badenfort) roll call vote.

## MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

**Item 3** Resolution to Approve Budgets for Fiscal Years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024

Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor Fuller presented the report.

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Treasurer Kelly to approve Resolution No. 2023-02 Adopting SMEDD Budgets for Fiscal Years 2022-2023 and 2023-24. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Badenfort) roll call vote.

**Item 4** Approve Adjustment to CARES Act Supplemental Grant Work Plan

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz presented the report and recommended adjustments to the CARES Act Supplemental Grant Work Plan. Mr. Metz fielded inquiries from the Board.

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Director Bartholow to approve adjustments to the CARES Act Supplemental Grant Work Plan. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Badenfort) roll call vote.

## DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz updated the Board on general matters of the District.

## BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OR COMMENTS

Director Garza provided a verbal report on the Ad Hoc Committee work and fielded inquiries from the Board.

## UPCOMING EVENTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST

May 30, 2023 - Agricultural Technologies Innovation Hub Brainstorming Session

July 11, 2023 - Grand Opening of the Ukiah Visitor Center

September 21 and 22, 2023 - The State of the Redwood Coast Region: Our Elemental Economy, the 3rd Annual Regional Economic Development Summit, Ukiah

There were no additional events announced.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Petrillo adjourned the meeting at 2:47 p.m.

APPROVAL:

ATTEST:

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Robin Bartholow, Chair of the Board

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Norma I. Alley, MMC, Clerk of the Board

Draft as of 2/20/2024



**Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting  
June 16, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.**

**Meeting was held virtually over Zoom and  
In Person Meeting Locations:**

West Business Development Center, 185 E Church Street, Ukiah, CA 95482  
and

Sonoma County Economic Development Board Room - 141 Stony Circle, Suite 110, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Petrillo called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Board Present: Lisa Badenfort, Vice Chair Robin Bartholow  
Paul Garza Jeff Kelly, Treasurer  
Mary Ann Petrillo, Chair

Board Absences: Jon Frech Board Vacancies: Three Seats

**Management Team:**

Joshua Metz, District Manager/Economic Development Advisor  
Tracy Fuller, Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor  
Lauren Cartwright, Sonoma County Economic Development Board Business Services & Research Director  
Bradley Johnson, Sonoma County Economic Development Board Management Analyst  
Ashley Metzger, Communications & Engagement Advisor  
Harrison Tregenza, Clerk of the Board  
Abigail Scott, Economic Development Advisor

Director Garza requested the Board approve his participation by teleconference for just cause in accordance with AB2449.

**MOTION:** Director Bartholow and seconded by Vice Chair Badenfort to approve Director Garza's remote attendance at the meeting under the rules contained in Section 54953 of the California Government Code. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

**AGENDA CHANGES AND DELETIONS AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

There were no changes or deletions to the agenda. By consent of the Board the Agenda was approved.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Petrillo called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Item 1** Approval of Check Register as of May 31, 2023

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Treasurer Kelly to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

## **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Item 2** Approve the Annual CEDS Update Process as outlined in the Annual CEDS Update Process document and Authorize the District Manager to devote EDA Planning Grant Funds to the effort

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz presented the report and fielded inquiries from the Board.

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Director Bartholow to approve the annual CEDS update process document and authorized the district manager to devote EDA planning grant funds to the effort. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

**Item 3** Authorize the District Manager to submit a Letter of Interest to the International Economic Development Council - Economic Recovery Corps Program for Fellows to Engage in Economic Development Projects or Plans that Generate New Practices and Paradigms for Equitable and Inclusive Change

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz, Sonoma County Economic Development Board Management Analyst Johnson, and Sonoma County Economic Development Board Business Services and Research Director Cartright presented the report and fielded inquiries from the Board.

**MOTION:** Director Bartholow and seconded by Director Garza to authorize the district manager to submit a letter of interest to the International Economic Development Council – Economic Recovery Corps Program for fellows to engage in economic development projects or plans that generate new practices and paradigms for equitable and inclusive change. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

**Item 4** Approve a Letter of Congratulations to Ethan Brown on his Appointment to the Position of Executive Director of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz presented the report.

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Director Kelly to approve a letter of congratulations to Ethan Brown on his appointment to the position of Executive Director of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.



**Item 5** Election of Board Chair and Election of Board Vice Chair

Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor Fuller presented the report and fielded inquiries from the Board.

**MOTION:** Director Garza and seconded by Vice Chair Badenfort to appoint Director Bartholow as the Board Chair for a term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending on June 30, 2024. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Badenfort and seconded by Director Bartholow to appoint Director Garza as the Board Vice Chair for a term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending on June 30, 2024. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/1 Absent (Frech) roll call vote.

**DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT**

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz updated the Board on general matters of the District and fielded inquiries from the Board.

Sonoma County Economic Development Board Business Services and Research Director Cartright and Sonoma County Economic Development Board Management Analyst Johnson fielded additional inquiries from the Board.

**BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OR COMMENTS**

Director Garza provided a verbal report on SMEDD’s Bylaws. There was feedback and general discussion regarding this topic.

Treasurer Kelly requested recognition of Chair Petrillo’s work as Board Chair at a future meeting.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz updated the Board on funding opportunities.

**UPCOMING EVENTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST**

June 30, 2023 - North Coast Farmers Convergence

July 11, 2023 - Grand Opening of the Ukiah Visitor Center

September 21 and 22, 2023 - The State of the Redwood Coast Region: Our Elemental Economy, the 3rd annual regional economic development summit, Ukiah

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz announced Chair Petrillo, Lauren Cartwright, and himself were going to attend the California Association for Local Economic Development Conference on June 21-23, 2023.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Petrillo adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

APPROVAL:

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Bartholow, Chair of the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Norma I. Alley, MMC, Clerk of the Board

Draft as of 2/20/2024



**Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting  
July 21, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.**

**Meeting was held virtually over Zoom and  
In Person Meeting Locations:**

West Business Development Center - 345 North Franklin Street, **Fort Bragg**, CA 95437  
and

Sonoma County Economic Development Board Room - 141 Stony Circle, Suite 110, **Santa Rosa**, CA 95401

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Bartholow called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Board Present: Robin Bartholow, Chair Lisa Badenfort  
Paul Garza, Vice Chair Jeff Kelly, Treasurer (arrived at 1:07 pm)

Board Absences: Jon Frech and Mary Ann Petrillo Board Vacancies: Three Seats

Due to a lack of quorum, the meeting proceeded to only receive presentations and no action was taken. The meeting was repurposed and convened as an Ad Hoc Committee of the Board of Directors.

**Management Team:**

Joshua Metz, District Manager/Economic Development Advisor  
Tracy Fuller, Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor  
Bradley Johnson, Sonoma County Economic Development Board Management Analyst  
Xuyen Mallela, Mendocino County Principal Administrative Analyst  
Kelly Hansen, Mendocino County Executive Office Administrative Analyst  
Carrie Rogers, Economic Development Senior Advisor  
Ashley Metzger, Communications & Engagement Advisor  
Norma I. Alley, MMC, Clerk of the Board  
Abigail Scott, Economic Development Advisor

**AGENDA CHANGES AND DELETIONS**

There were no changes or deletions to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Due to lack of quorum, there was no action taken on this item.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Bartholow called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Item 1** Approval of Check Register as of June 30, 2023

Due to lack of quorum, there was no action taken on this item.

## **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Item 2** Receive and File the Business Friendly Communities Status Report and Approve the Business Friendly Communities Survey Tool for City and County Distribution

Economic Development Senior Advisor Rogers presented the report and fielded inquiries from the Ad Hoc Committee Members.

Chair Bartholow called for public comment.

Elise Weiland, Sonoma County 5<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Lynda Hopkins' Representative, spoke to her staff's support to SMEDD in grant preparation and efforts of the SMEDD.

Seeing no further comments, Chair Bartholow closed public comment.

**Item 3** Authorize the District Manager to Submit a Letter of Intent to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office for Coastal Management's Climate Resilience Regional Challenge Grant Program

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz presented the report.

Chair Bartholow called for public comment.

Elise Weiland, Sonoma County 5<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Lynda Hopkins' Representative, spoke to full representation with inclusion of the Counties and communities in unincorporated areas.

Seeing no further comments, Chair Bartholow closed public comment.

**Item 4** Approve the Draft FY 22-23 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update and Performance Report and Authorize the District Manager to submit the Report to the Economic Development Administration

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz presented the report and fielded inquiries from the Ad Hoc Committee Members.

Chair Bartholow called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

**Item 5** Receive the FY 23-24 Annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Process Status Report and Provide Direction As Needed

Communications & Engagement Advisor Ashley Metzger and District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz presented the report and fielded inquiries from the Ad Hoc Committee Members.

Chair Bartholow called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

**Item 6** Discuss and Consider Approving the SMEDD Team to Research and Develop a Scope of Work for a Biomass-to-Hydrogen Feasibility Study, Scope to be Provided to the Board for Consideration at a Future SMEDD Board Meeting

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz presented the report and fielded inquiries from the Ad Hoc Committee Members.

Chair Bartholow called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

**DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT**

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz updated the Ad Hoc Committee on general matters of the District.

Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor Fuller provided an update on the Climate Resilience Accelerator Program.

**BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OR COMMENTS**

Treasurer Kelly provided an update on the public banking movement and the Ad Hoc Committee supported the topic to be placed on a future meeting agenda.

**UPCOMING EVENTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST**

September 12 & 22, 2023 – State of Redwood Coast Region: Our Elemental Economy

There were no additional events announced.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Ad Hoc Committee requested to schedule a meeting of the Board of Directors on July 26, 2023, at 3:30 p.m.

Chair Bartholow adjourned the meeting at 3:06 p.m.

APPROVAL:

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Bartholow, Chair of the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Norma I. Alley, MMC, Clerk of the Board



**Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting  
February 16, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.**

**Meeting was held virtually over Zoom and  
In Person Meeting Locations:**

West Business Development Center - 345 North Franklin Street, **Fort Bragg**, CA 95437

and

Mendocino County Campus - 880 North Bush Street, **Ukiah**, CA 95482

and

Sonoma County Economic Development Board Room - 141 Stony Circle, Suite 110, **Santa Rosa**, CA 95401

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Bartholow called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Board Present: Robin Bartholow, Chair Paul Garza, Vice Chair  
Jeff Kelly, Treasurer (participated remotely)  
Jim Mayfield Mary Ann Petrillo

Board Absences: Lisa Badenfort and Tim Karas Board Vacancies: Two Seats

Treasurer Kelly requested the Board approve his participation by teleconference for just cause in accordance with AB2449.

Clerk Alley announced Director Petrillo's term of office had expired. It is common practice and allowance to extend her Oath of Office and service for this meeting as SMEDD was in an emergency to hold the meeting due to no quorum to conduct business without her attendance. This allowance would be extended for this meeting only as there is active recruitment for the open seats, and all seats have a reasonable expectation to be filled for the April meeting. There was consensus of the Board for this allowance.

Chair Bartholow called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

**MOTION:** Vice Char Garza and seconded by Director Mayfield to accept Treasurer Kelly's request to participate in the meeting by teleconference. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/2 Absent (Badenfort/Karas) roll call vote.

Management Team:

Joshua Metz, District Manager/Economic Development Advisor  
Tracy Fuller, Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor  
Bradley Johnson, Sonoma County Economic Development Board Management Analyst  
Katherine DiPasqua, Director of Special Projects and Partnerships of Economic Development District  
Anna Macken, Mendocino County Administrative Analyst  
Norma I. Alley, MMC, Clerk of the Board  
Abigail Scott, Economic Development Advisor

**AGENDA CHANGES AND DELETIONS**

There were no changes or deletions to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Director Mayfield and seconded by Vice Chair Garza to approve the agenda. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/2 Absent (Badenfort/Karas) roll call vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Bartholow called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Item 1** Approval of Check Register as of January 31, 2024

**Item 2** Financial Reporting:

- Receive and File Board Report following Jim Mayfield’s recommended format
- Receive and File Summary Expenditures Report as of 12/31/2023

**Item 3** Approve Meeting Minutes:

- November 21, 2022
- December 6, 2022
- February 10, 2023
- September 26, 2023
- October 20, 2023
- October 20, 2023 - Special Meeting
- December 8, 2023

Chair Bartholow called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Garza and seconded by Director Mayfield to approve the Consent Calendar.

Director Mayfield requested discussion on each item.

**Item 1**

Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor Fuller provided a brief summary of the agenda item.

Directors Mayfield requested future Check Registers presented be activity showing only new transactions since last approved by Board.

**PRIMARY AMENDMENT MOTION:** Director Mayfield and seconded by Treasurer Kelly to approve the check register of activity since December 8 and receive and file previous activity. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/2 Absent (Badenfort/Karas) roll call vote.

## Item 2

Fiscal Agent/Economic Development & Finance Advisor Fuller provided a brief summary of the agenda item.

After general inquiry from the Board, a few members of the Board, less than a quorum, decided to meet with Ms. Fuller to gather further information and clarity.

## Item 3

Clerk of the Board Alley provided a brief summary of the agenda item and fielded inquiry from the Board.

**VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:** Motion is to approve the Consent Calendar, as amended. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/2 Absent (Badenfort/Karas) roll call vote.

## MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

**Item 4** Approve a Request to Produce a Letter of Support for United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program Submission for a Coalition Comprised of Sonoma County, the City of Cloverdale, and Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART)

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz presented the staff report.

Chair Bartholow called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Garza and seconded by Director Badenfort to approve the request. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/2 Absent (Badenfort/Karas) roll call vote.

**Item 5** Consider and Authorize the SMEDD to Respond to a Request Regarding a Sonoma Clean Power Annual Brand Awareness Research Survey

Chair Badenfort presented the staff report and fielded questions from the Board.

General discussion commenced amongst the Board expressing concerns for the use of the logo, access to the research data, ability to include a few questions, and alignment with the CEDS' and SMEDD's goals.

Chair Bartholow called for public comment. Seeing no one come forward, she closed public comment.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Garza and seconded by Director Petrillo directing the management team to assess the request ensuring it was in alignment with the CEDS' and SMEDD's goals, and if so, authorizing the



management team to respond to the request for use of the logo. Motion was approved by a 5 Yes/0 No/2 Absent (Badenfort/Karas) roll call vote.

**Item 6** Receive an Update on the Status of Biomass Utilization Symposium Planning and Provide Guidance as Appropriate

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz presented the staff report and fielded inquiries from the Board.

President Garza requested Chair Bartholow provide the welcome and be the first to speak.

Director Petrillo noted an opportunity with California Jobs First Program.

**Item 7** Receive an Update on California Jobs First: Redwood Region RISE; North Bay Working Group; EDF Working Group

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz, Director Petrillo, Mendocino County Administrative Analyst Macken, and Sonoma County Economic Development Board Management Analyst Johnson provided an update and fielded general inquiry from the Board.

**DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT**

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz updated the Board on general matters of the District and fielded inquiries from the Board.

General discussion commenced regarding creating a tool, check list, or resource that clearly develops and outlines CEDS' and SMEDD's strategies, purpose, and expectations. This tool would be used to initially field requests and provide the management team with means for follow-up or redirection of the request.

**UPCOMING EVENTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST**

April 10-12, 2024 - CALED Annual Conference - "Elevate", Hyatt Regency, Santa Rosa

May 1, 2024 - NorthBay NEXT - MSIV, College of Marin - Jonas Center, Novato

May 2-3, 2024 - Biomass Utilization Symposium - HREC, Hopland

District Manager/Economic Development Advisor Metz announced on March 12 the Mendocino Economic Development Finance Committee would be holding a workshop in Ukiah.

Sonoma County Economic Development Board Management Analyst Johnson announced on February 19-25 the Annual Restaurant Week was to be held and all were invited. He noted more information could be found on the [scorerestaurantweek.org](http://scorerestaurantweek.org) website.

**BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OR COMMENTS**

Director Petrillo reported Capital Summitt had developed a successful Spanish Training Business Program and requested to expand the program into Sonoma County.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Bartholow adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

APPROVAL:

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Bartholow, Chair of the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Norma I. Alley, MMC, Clerk of the Board

Draft as of 2/20/2024



**DATE:** April 19, 2024

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Josh Metz, Regional Government Services, District Manager  
Anna Macken, Mendocino County, Management Analyst  
Brad Johnson, Sonoma County Economic Development Board, Management Analyst

**SUBJECT:** Approve Draft FY 2023-2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update Report for submission to the United States Economic Development Administration

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**STATEMENT OF ISSUE:**

The purpose of this item is for the Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD) Board of Directors to consider and discuss the approval of submitting the draft FY 2023-2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) update report to the United States Economic Development Administration.

**FINANCIAL IMPACTS:**

There are no anticipated financial impacts.

**BACKGROUND:**

The SMEDD is responsible for overseeing coordination, monitoring implementation progress, and supporting on-going planning of the Sonoma-Mendocino CEDs and its economic development goals. This core function of the District is intended to occur annually through a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process, whereby progress towards existing Goals are noted, opportunities to support improved implementation are identified, and new Goal-aligned projects are identified.

Each year the Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District is required to provide an update to the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The purpose of the update is to provide a gauge of progress on projects that are directly related to the four main goals in the CEDs: Develop Innovative and Value-Added Economic Sectors, Increase Equitable Community-Wide Prosperity, Support People, and Plan for & Implement Resilience.

The EDA requires that a CEDs update is comprised of five major components:

- Adjustment to the Strategy;
- Report on Economic Development Activities;
- Evaluation on Action Plan and Goals;

- Schedule of Goals for the next year;
- and Economic Resiliency.

The section that primarily changes year to year is the, “report on economic development activities” section of the update.

**DISCUSSION:**

The draft FY 2023-2024 CEDS Update and Performance Report encapsulates critical component insights gained during FY 2023-2024. Submitting this report to the EDA will satisfy the EDA’s requirement for an annual CEDS update. This year’s update is more comprehensive than years past given the outreach to economic development project proponents. Through the outreach efforts, The SMEDD management team has connected with a project lead on approximately 50% of the one-hundred-two total CEDS projects. The CEDS update outlines twenty-five projects that show substantial progress and alignment with the four CEDS goals. Additionally, the CEDS update describes in detail project updates and descriptions on six projects that the management team has been directly involved with. Below is a list of those projects, respectively:

Projects displaying substantial progress:

1. Project 1: Mendocino Coast Blue Economy
2. Project 3: Noyo Center Ocean Science Center
3. Project 4: Seawater Intake Project
4. Project 5: Hopland Research Center Facilities & Infrastructure Project
5. Project 7: Kashia Biofuel Production Facility
6. Project 11: Great Redwood Trail
7. Project 12: Ensure Communications Redundancy
8. Project 13: North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium
9. Project 19: Extension of Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit’s rail line and bicycle-pedestrian pathway northward to Healdsburg and beyond
10. Project 20: Mendocino County Mobility Solutions in Rural Communities Project
11. Project 21. Ukiah Transit Center
12. Project 23: Permitting Predictability & Process
13. Project 25: Santa Rosa Burbank Housing Project
14. Project 28: Santa Rosa - Red Housing Fund
15. Project 30: Santa Rosa - Childcare Support Program
16. Project 33: Environmental Resilience Upskilling for Green Building
17. Project 35: Dry Creek Rancheria Small Business Park
18. Project 37: Potter Valley Project
19. Project 43: Improve Redwood Valley Calpella Fire District facilities
20. Project 51: Dry Creek Rancheria Wetland Mitigation Bank
21. Project 52: Coyote Valley Riverbank Restoration/Stabilization
22. Appendix Project 3: Noyo Harbor Marina Redevelopment
23. Appendix Project 12: Point Arena Visitor Center
24. Appendix Project 26: Santa Rosa Downtown Infill Development
25. Appendix Project 38: Coyote Valley Emergency Fire Egress (Road) & Emergency Preparedness

Projects the SMEDD has been directly involved in:

1. Broadband Implementation
2. CA Jobs First Funding Planning and
3. Supporting momentum on Blue Economy innovations along the Sonoma and Mendocino Coast
4. Exploring biomass hydrogen feasibility along the 101 corridor
5. AgTech innovation and implementation
6. EDFC Revolving Loan Fund

As outlined in the CEDS update under the, “schedule of goals for the next year” section, the Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District Management Team will continue to implement the current CEDS update process by maintaining contact with stakeholders to assist and provide information on funding opportunities as they become aware. The team has also developed a webform to facilitate consolidated, consistent, and simple project updates. The team will distribute the form as it reaches out to project proponents with workshop information. In addition, one on one, in person or zoom meetings have been held with project stakeholders. We plan to continue with this process through FY 2024-2025 and utilize it for our 2025 CEDS update.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

**1:** Approve the Draft Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update Report for Submission to the United States Economic Development Administration.

**2:** Consider, *modify*, and approve the Draft Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update Report for Submission to the United States Economic Development Administration.

**3:** Other approach(s) as may be developed after public comments and Board deliberations.

**4:** Decline to act.

**RECOMMENDATION for Alternative 1:**

Move to:

- o Approve the Draft FY 2023-2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update Report for submission to the United States Economic Development Administration

**Attachments**

[Attachment A: DRAFT 2023 Annual CEDS Update an Performance Report](#)



# 2023 ANNUAL CEDS UPDATE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

INNOVATION

EQUITY

PEOPLE

RESILIENCE

# 2023/2024 Annual CEDS Update and Performance Report

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## Adjustment to Strategy

Our vision is that by 2030, the Sonoma-Mendocino region will be home to a vibrant, resilient, inclusive, and diverse economy. The values driving this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) are to increase prosperity for all by working to ensure that:

- Our economy will be more vibrant, prosperous, innovative, thriving, entrepreneurial, diverse, and resilient
- All communities are more equitable, collaborative, inclusive, community-oriented, open, and welcoming
- Our environment is more resilient, green, sustainable, and fire-safe

The Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District’s CEDS Strategy Committee broadly represents the economic interests of the region and the members are held in high regard in their respective fields. The composition of the Strategy Committee remains almost the same as last year, however there are two people who are unfortunately unable to continue. Both Mike Nicholls and Rosanne Ibarra have vacated the committee. As we continue future updates, we will either recruit to fill their spots or conduct outreach in their respective fields, technology and healthcare.

### STRATEGY COMMITTEE

First	Last	Organization/Affiliation	Industry	County
Patrick	McDonell	Legal Aid of Sonoma County & Los Cien	Youth and Latine Community Leader, Workforce Housing	Sonoma
David	Smith Ferri	Dry Creek Rancheria	Tribes/Tourism	Sonoma
John	Bailey	University of California Hopland Research and Extension Center	Education	Mendocino
Ananda	Sweet	Santa Rosa Metro Chamber	Business	Sonoma
Lisa	Schaffner	NC Builders Exchange	Construction	Sonoma
Devon	Boer	Mendocino County Farm Bureau	Agriculture	Mendocino
Grant	Davis	Sonoma County Water Agency	Utility	Sonoma
Paul	Garza Jr.	Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District	Economic Development	Mendocino

Over the course of the next year the Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District professional team will continue to engage with our Strategy Committee and local stakeholders in the region. From recent events, such as the May 30, 2023, Ag-Tech Innovation Brainstorming workshop, we have received feedback that local stakeholders are interested in the continuation and expansion of Goal One in the CEDS: developing innovative and value-added economic sectors. This call to action did not go unnoticed. In June, 2023, the District submitted a letter of interest to the International Economic Development Council to host an Economic Recovery Corps Fellow to implement CEDS Goals 1 and 2 in mutual fashion. The primary objective of the Fellow will be to “foster equitable economic prosperity through strengthening and developing efforts and partnerships among local tribes, nonprofits, governments, and businesses to embrace business growth, job creation, job training and education, research, and innovation around the blue (ocean related), green (land and agriculture related), and creative/tourism



economies”. Additionally, through our outreach, we were able to gain feedback on expanding our goal in developing the green economy to include, “Support innovations in technologies to support a healthy, climate resilient agricultural sector”. Moving forward, this expansion will be critical to our considerations for an ag-tech innovation hub and diversifying North Coast agriculture as a whole.

In addition to doubling down on the efforts around the green economy, the SMEDD professional team is engaging in a series of meetings with both the Sonoma County and Mendocino County Supervisors’ offices. From these meetings, the team has received feedback on additional projects, strategies, and SWOTs that fall in the purview of the CEDS Goals and should be added to the appendix of the CEDS.

## *Report on Economic Development Activities*

The Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD) has conducted hours of outreach, resources, and drafting to update the new CEDS. In doing so, the team has interviewed and convened stakeholders to report on progress of existing projects and development of new opportunities and projects that directly align with the Sonoma Mendocino CEDS. Below are a list of relevant projects, their descriptions, their CEDS relation/impact, and future involvement by the District.

In early January 2024, the SMEDD undertook a review of CEDS projects and prioritizing them according to the following criteria:

1. The project organization’s staff capacity
2. Has a project budget been established, and if so how detailed is it?
3. What level of economic impact will the project provide?
4. Has the project been started? Does it have momentum?

Below are a list of the CEDS projects that were identified as promising based upon the above criteria:

- Project 1: Mendocino Coast Blue Economy
- Project 3: Noyo Center Ocean Science Center
- Project 4: Seawater Intake Project
- Project 5: Hopland Research Center Facilities & Infrastructure Project
- Project 7: Kashia Biofuel Production Facility
- Project 11: Great Redwood Trail
- Project 12: Ensure Communications Redundancy
- Project 13: North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium
- Project 19: Extension of Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit’s rail line and bicycle-pedestrian pathway northward to Healdsburg and beyond
- Project 20: Mendocino County Mobility Solutions in Rural Communities Project
- Project 21. Ukiah Transit Center
- Project 23: Permitting Predictability & Process
- Project 25: Santa Rosa Burbank Housing Project
- Project 28: Santa Rosa - Red Housing Fund
- Project 30: Santa Rosa - Childcare Support Program
- Project 33: Environmental Resilience Upskilling for Green Building
- Project 35: Dry Creek Rancheria Small Business Park
- Project 37: Potter Valley Project
- Project 43: Improve Redwood Valley Calpella Fire District facilities
- Project 51: Dry Creek Rancheria Wetland Mitigation Bank
- Project 52: Coyote Valley Riverbank Restoration/Stabilization
- Appendix Project 3: Noyo Harbor Marina Redevelopment
- Appendix Project 12: Point Arena Visitor Center
- Appendix Project 26: Santa Rosa Downtown Infill Development
- Appendix Project 38: Coyote Valley Emergency Fire Egress (Road) & Emergency Preparedness

This exercise has outlined a new method of project tracking that the team can utilize moving forward. As we continue to monitor economic development activity related to the SMEDD CEDS, we anticipate that understanding the momentum and feasibility of each project will be critical.

In addition to the CEDS being updated, the SMEDD professional team has worked directly with and assisted in implementation activities related to the 2022 CEDS. The most notable of these activities include:

1. Broadband Implementation
2. CA Jobs First Funding Planning and
3. Supporting momentum on Blue Economy innovations along the Sonoma and Mendocino Coast
4. Exploring biomass hydrogen feasibility along the 101 corridor
5. AgTech innovation and implementation
6. EDFC Revolving Loan Fund

These activities directly relate to strategies in the 2022 CEDS including, but not limited to, Inclusive Economic Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and Human Capital.

### **Broadband Implementation**

In the fall of 2022 the Counties of Sonoma and Mendocino, in partnership with Golden State Connect Authority, applied for and received two grants of \$499,554 and \$500,000 from [the California Public Utilities Commission's Local Agency Technical Assistance grant program](#). The funding is planned to provide a refined high-level broadband network design for unincorporated areas with little or no internet service and low-level, construction-ready design for priority areas. The high-level engineering design derived from this work will be leveraged to acquire additional engineering and infrastructure deployment funds. The scope of work for this grant program is anticipated to be completed within 18 months of the grant award (June 2024).

Both Sonoma and Mendocino Counties have collaborated on Local Agency Technical Assistance grants, which have analyzed the broadband landscape and identified priority projects throughout the region. Additionally, in partnerships, all four NBCBC Counties have successfully submitted Federal Funding Account applications, cumulatively totaling \$96,169,593. Additionally, NBCBC is helping to establish regional digital equity planning through a California Emerging Technology Fund Regional Leadership Grant. SMEDD has been active in the process of planning and bridging the digital divide for the most rural and underserved communities.

For milestones anticipated in the next year, the NBCBC is processing work plan change requests, which anticipate analysis of wireless connectivity and tower costs, as well as documentation service levels of regional multi-dwelling units where digital redlining may exist.

### **CA Jobs First**

SMEDD staff is actively participating in the planning and collaboration of the California Jobs First Initiative implementation. California Jobs First formerly CERF (Community Economic Resiliency Fund) is a \$600 million state-wide initiative designed to promote sustainable and equitable recovery from the economic distress of COVID-19. Funding is allocated by region. Sonoma and Mendocino counties are designated to different regions, however they share the common goal of bringing forward projects for funding which align with the 2022 CEDS goals. The SMEDD team is utilizing existing planning and convening efforts to advocate for the development of Ag-tech in the region. Additionally, Biomass utilization is another area in which the SMEDD is working to have regional alignment across the state. The SMEDD team is regularly engaged with each region's respective planning councils to provide data, regional economic insights, and proposals.

## **Letters of Support**

SMEDD has continued to offer letters of support to projects that align with the 2022 CEDS goals. These include the following:

- Regenerative Forest Solutions, Woody FeedStock Pilot Project, USDA Forest Service, Submitted 8/9/2023 - Under Review
- Regenerative Forest Solutions, NCRP Woody Feedstock Pilot Project, Submitted 8/9/2023 - Awarded
- Regenerative Forest Solutions, Woody FeedStock Pilot Project, CalFire, Submitted 9/27/2023 - Denied
- Regenerative Forest Solutions, Woody FeedStock Pilot Project, Bay Area Council , Submitted 9/27/2023 - Awarded
- Mendocino Forest Products, CalFire Biomass-to-Hydrogen Grant Application, Submitted 9/15/2023
- West Business Development Center, CalOSBA Blue Economy iHub, Submitted 8/31/2023 - Under Review
- Sonoma County Meat Company, USDA Local Meat Capacity grant, Submitted 6/21/2023 - Under Review
- Noyo Harbor District Port Infrastructure Development, Submitted 4/24/23 - Under Review
- Mendocino Community Health Clinic, Congressional Earmark Funding, Submitted 3/11/2024
- Manzanita Co-Operative, USDA Value Added Producer Grant, Submitted 4/3/2024
- Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART), Sonoma County, City of Cloverdale, USDOT RAISE Grant, Submitted 2/16/2024

## **Climate Smart AgTech Innovation**

Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District continues to support Ag-Tech innovation and collaboration. Engagement from regional stakeholders has been robust and diverse including participation from wine growers, local vintners, UCANR and county staff.

Stakeholders have come to understand the vision of an AgTech Innovation and how it can support Mendocino and Sonoma economic development. Opportunities and challenges related to these sectors have been identified and strategies laid out for moving forward.

Results of this diverse engagement and robust feedback included observations and recommendations on how to focus efforts in the District's CEDS goals surrounding supporting the Green economy and the Blue economy, economic resiliency, and supporting people. The next step for this development, and momentum on its CEDS involvement, is to bring together cohorts to seek funding and actualize the strategies and goals for ag-tech advancement and production/product creation.

The SMEDD has engaged various organizations on the topic of Ag-Tech. Two of the most prominent being the Sonoma County Winegrowers Association and the VINE by the University of California department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR). The Sonoma County Winegrowers have integrated themselves as the premier technology incubator for one of the region's largest cash crops, wine grapes. The Sonoma County Winegrowers have successfully engaged in and implemented private public partnerships with Ford, John Deere, and others to incubate sustainable, efficient, resilient, and climate smart agricultural technologies in their member's vineyards. Such technologies include fully electrified vehicles from Ford and Tractors from John Deere. Additional tech includes AI generated smart spraying systems. The VINE is a knowledge based network organization funded by UCANR. They are currently developing a physical ag-tech incubator and pilot center in California's Sacramento Valley. Their expertise and assets span beyond the physical location. Their primary asset is the vast network of

knowledge that implements ag-tech along each node of the supply chain from producing food to putting it on the table.

Using conversations, knowledge, and enthusiasm from Ag-Tech entities, the SMEDD has been working with regional economic development planning and funding organizations under the CA Jobs First opportunity (previously known as the California Economic Resiliency Fund). Unfortunately, the state has separated the district into two separate regions with Sonoma County joining the Bay Area region and Mendocino County joining the North Coast. This has provided a challenge to planning and advocating for SMEDD CEDS related goals, but has provided an opportunity to identify sectors that fit the needs of a greater region. Ag-Tech is that sector. Sonoma County has been paired with Marin County to identify approximately four projects to propose to the Bay Area Committee for a portion of the \$9,000,000 of regional funding. The SMEDD has developed a proposal for \$300,000 that would fund a feasibility study and subsequent strategic plan to implement an ag-tech hub in the North Bay North Coast region. The feasibility study would outline the existing regional assets, opportunities, threats, and weaknesses to the ag-tech sector. Additionally, it would provide a comprehensive implementation plan (strategic plan) to develop value added and climate smart industries that are directly and indirectly related to ag production through innovative technology. Leveraging the relationships with the VINE and Sonoma County Winegrowers Association, the feasibility study will outline the existing network and gaps for ag-tech development in our region.

### **Revolving Loan Fund**

The Economic Development and Financing Corporation (EDFC) is a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that offers loans to start-ups and local businesses that are unable to qualify for a conventional loan. Over the course of the past year, there were several applications for loans from the Sonoma Revolving Loan Fund and with loan funding nearly expended, EDFC in partnership with the Sonoma EDB is looking for creative ways to recapitalize the fund to continue offering financing to Sonoma County businesses. At current EDFC is servicing 8 loans with over \$940,000 from the EDA grant of \$1 million, deployed into the local Sonoma County businesses. Geographically funds have reached almost all segments of the County with loans in; Cloverdale, Healdsburg, Windsor, Santa Rosa, Sonoma, Sebastopol and Annapolis. These loans have gone to create or retain 20.5 FTE jobs in the community.

### **Blue Economy**

Coastal communities and organizations in Sonoma and Mendocino County are interested in pursuing coastal resilience and climate adaptation projects. In collaboration with them, SMEDD facilitated meetings, and spearheaded the grant pre-proposal application to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management's Climate Resilience Regional Challenge grant program. Unfortunately, NOAA declined to invite the working group's letter of intent and subsequent ability to apply for the award. The effort was not in vain, as the working relationships, planning, and documents will serve the district well for CEDS projects in the future.

The Blue Economy initiatives in Fort Bragg and Coastal Mendocino County stem from community-engaged planning and development activities centered in the City of Fort Bragg and the Noyo Harbor. Resulting from the 2022 City of Fort Bragg - Former Mill Site Economic Diversification Feasibility Study, a number of key strategic plans and activities have occurred in the past year including: implementation of the Blue Economy Symposium and Learning Festival in Spring 2022; a \$1 million grant from the CA Department of Water Resources to the City of Fort Bragg for a Wave-Powered Desalination Demonstration Project; a \$825,000 EDA grant to Noyo Ocean Science Center for its Marine Science and Visitors Center preliminary design and engineering; and the \$3.2 million Noyo Harbor Revitalization CERF-Pilot Grant Award. Sonoma County is also pursuing infrastructure revitalization funds at Bodega Bay, as well as increasing collaboration with UC Davis Marine Laboratory and the coastal tribes on kelp forest, abalone, and sea otter restoration efforts. The SMEDD team is engaged with on-going coordination around the Blue Economy initiatives exploring cross-jurisdictional funding and project opportunities.

### **Biomass Utilization for Renewable Energy & Hydrogen**

In May the Sonoma Economic Development District will host a Biomass Symposium that brought together

industry, academia, Tribes, government and community-based organizations to explore the opportunities and challenges of implementing forest biomass utilization projects for fire safety, forest health, renewable energy, and wood products, and supporting the appropriate growth of sustainable, stewardship-based, rural economic development. The objectives of the symposium are to:

1. Support stakeholders to understand the vision of biomass uses and how it can support Mendocino and Sonoma economic development
2. Discuss opportunities and challenges related to biomass harvesting and utilization and whether it can support local and/or regional Mendocino and Sonoma growth and sustainability
3. Bring together different sectors, communities and individuals to learn from one another and share knowledge on how to sustainably and effectively use biomass

The potential to convert forest biomass into hydrogen fuel has increased in recent years due to technological innovation around treatment, processing, and fuel utilization. Simultaneously, interest has grown within the resource management, conservation, and wildland fire management communities about the potential for utilizing biomass hydrogen technologies and market dynamics to positively impact watershed health and fire risk reduction. Consistent with CEDS Goals 1, 2, and 4, the SMEDD Board is supporting pursuit of a feasibility study focused on the potential of catalyzing a biomass hydrogen supply chain along the Highway 101 corridor linking northern California to the Bay Area. The scope of this feasibility study is in development and funding opportunities are being explored.

## Evaluation of Progress on Action Plan and Goals

Below is an econometric driven summary of progress on goals listed in the 2022 CEDS.<sup>1</sup> The population in Sonoma and Mendocino counties was 579,581 per American Community Survey data for 2018-2022. The region has a civilian labor force of 303,331 with a participation rate of 63.3%. Of individuals aged 25 to 64 in Sonoma and Mendocino counties, 33.4% have a bachelor's degree or higher, which compares with 36.7% in the nation. The median household income in Sonoma and Mendocino counties is \$93,420 and the median house value is \$705,059.<sup>2</sup>

### **CEDS Goal 1: Develop Innovative and Value-Added Economic Sectors**

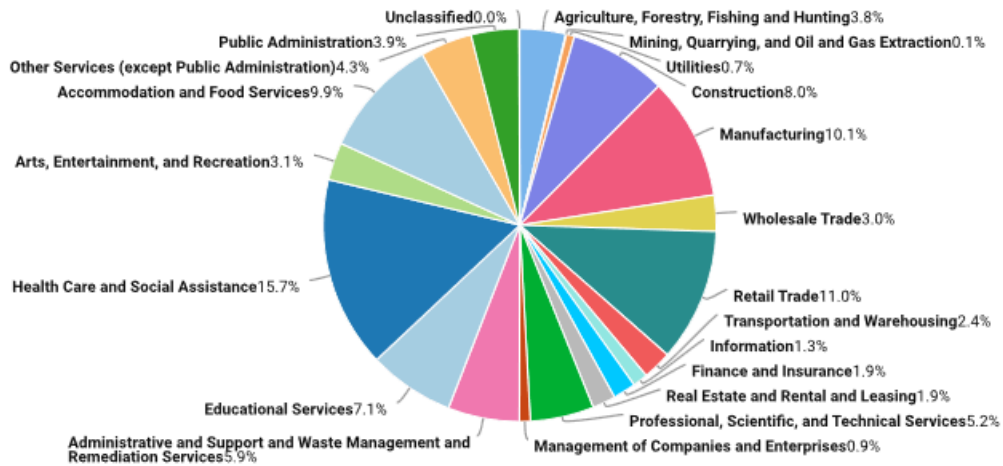
The largest sector in the Sonoma Mendocino EDD is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 41,025 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Retail Trade (28,564 workers) and Manufacturing (26,234). High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region are Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (LQ = 2.97), Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (1.59), and Construction (1.33).

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<sup>1</sup> No relevant data available for Goal #4

<sup>2</sup> Source: JobsEQ®, <http://www.chmuraecon.com/jobseq>

### Total Workers for Sonoma Mendocino EDD by Industry



Source: JobsEQ® Data as of 2023Q3

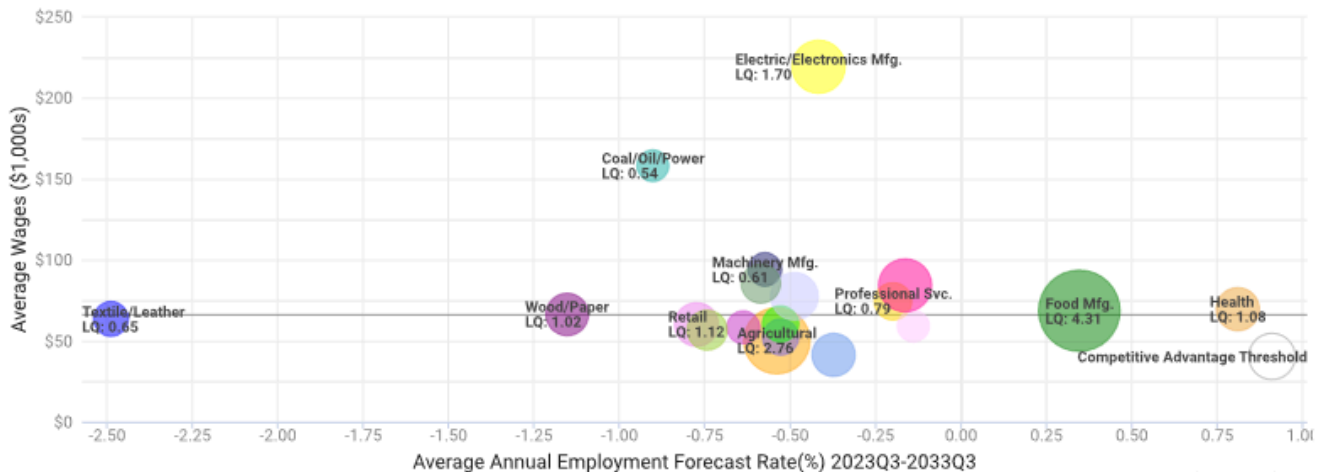
Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2023Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q3.

Sectors in the Sonoma Mendocino EDD with the highest average wages per worker are Utilities (\$141,142), Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$123,093), and Finance and Insurance (\$106,373). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 5 years are Construction (+1,677 jobs), Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (+1,452), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+409).

Over the next 5 years, employment in the Sonoma Mendocino EDD is projected to contract by 3,427 jobs. The fastest growing sector in the region is expected to be Health Care and Social Assistance with a +0.8% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Health Care and Social Assistance (+1,691 jobs), Management of Companies and Enterprises (+44), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+3).

A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. The industry cluster in the Sonoma Mendocino EDD with the highest relative concentration is Food Mfg. with a location quotient of 4.31. This cluster employs 13,441 workers in the region with an average wage of \$68,611. Employment in the Food Mfg. cluster is projected to expand in the region about 0.3% per year over the next ten years.

### Industry Clusters for Sonoma Mendocino EDD as of 2023Q3

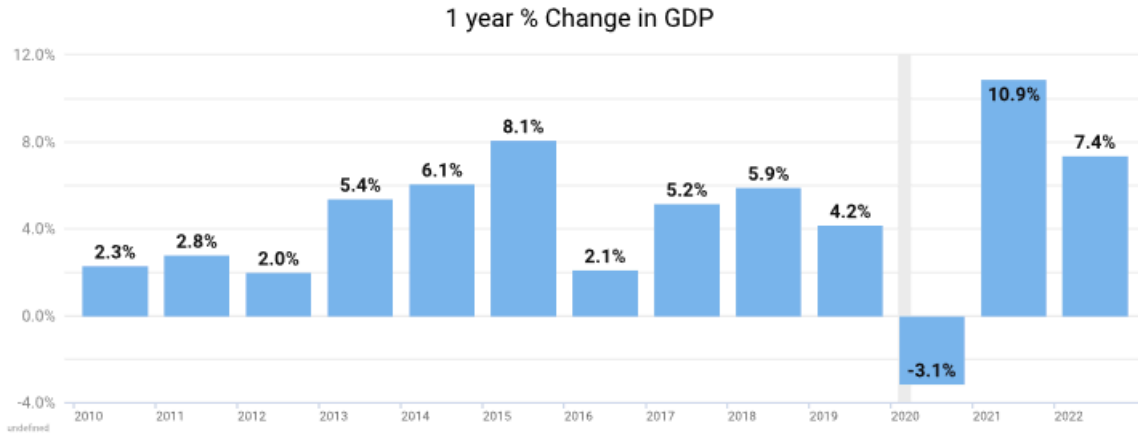


Source: JobsEQ® Data as of 2023Q3

Location quotient and average wage data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, imputed where necessary, and updated through 2023Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q3. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of goods and services produced by a region. In 2022, nominal GDP in the Sonoma Mendocino EDD expanded 7.4%. This follows growth of 10.9% in 2021. As of 2022, total GDP in the

Sonoma Mendocino EDD was \$38,458,211,000.



Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2022.

Of the sectors in the Sonoma Mendocino EDD, Manufacturing contributed the largest portion of GDP in 2022, \$6,396,083,000 The next-largest contributions came from Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (\$4,850,267,000); Health Care and Social Assistance (\$4,034,894,000); and Retail Trade (\$3,235,249,000).



## GDP (in \$ millions)

Manufacturing (31)



Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (53)



Health Care and Social Assistance (62)



Retail Trade (44)



Construction (23)



Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (54)



Wholesale Trade (42)



Educational Services (61)



Accommodation and Food Services (72)



Public Administration (92)

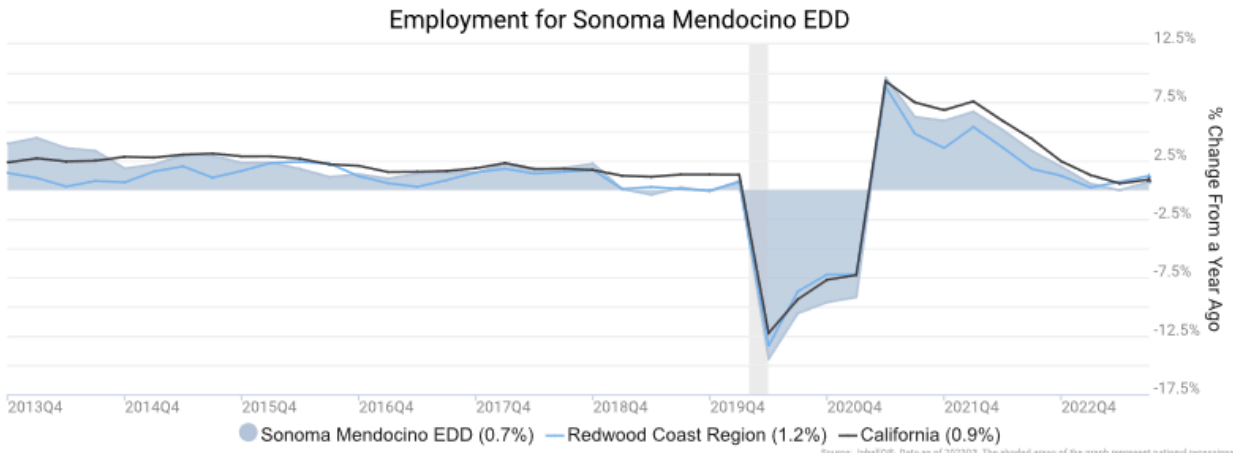


Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2022.

### **CEDS Goal 2: Increase Equitable Community-Wide Prosperity**

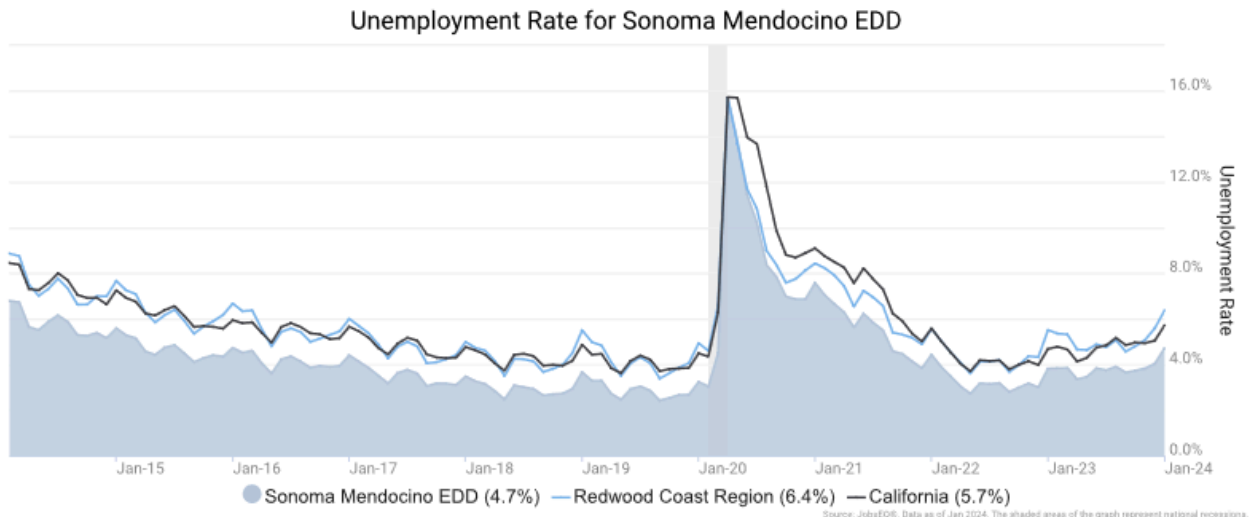
As of 2023Q3, total employment for the Sonoma Mendocino EDD was 260,722 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2023Q3, employment increased 0.7% in the region.





Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2023Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q3.

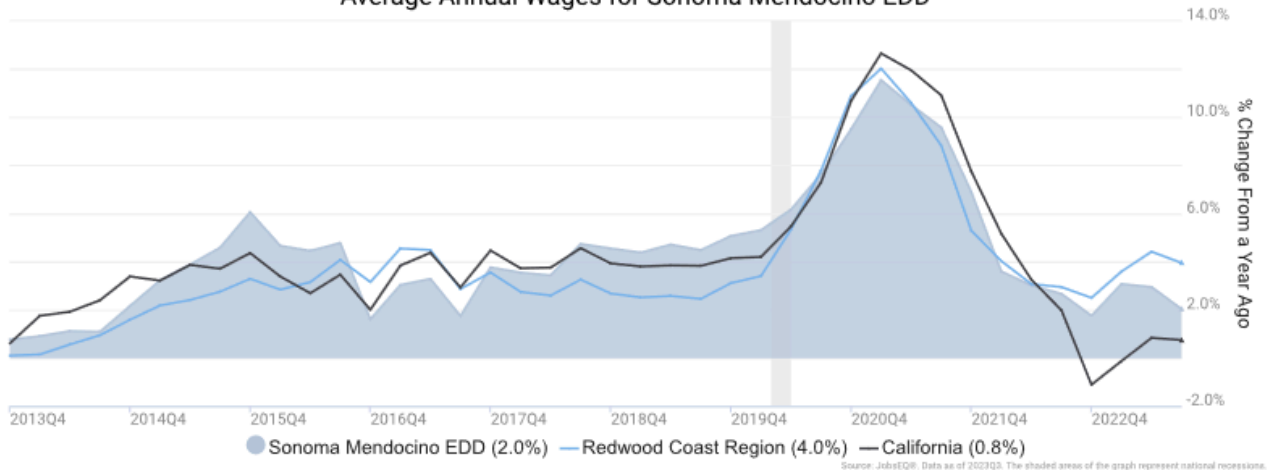
The unemployment rate for the Sonoma Mendocino EDD was 4.7% as of January 2024. The regional unemployment rate was higher than the national rate of 4.1%. One year earlier, in January 2023, the unemployment rate in the Sonoma Mendocino EDD was 3.8%.



Unemployment rate data are from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and updated through January 2024.

The average worker in the Sonoma Mendocino EDD earned annual wages of \$66,504 as of 2023Q3. Average annual wages per worker increased 2.0% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$70,183 in the nation as of 2023Q3.

### Average Annual Wages for Sonoma Mendocino EDD

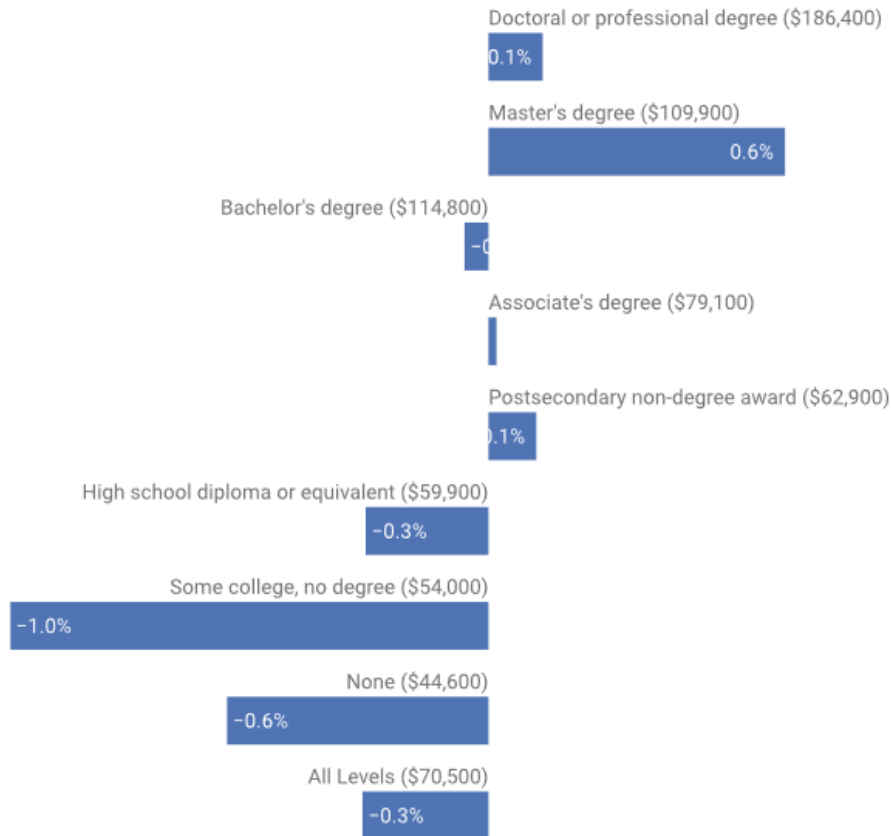


Annual average wages per worker data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2023Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q3.

### CEDS Goal 3: Support People

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the Sonoma Mendocino EDD is projected to contract 0.3% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 0.1% per year, those requiring a bachelor’s degree are forecast to contract 0.1% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 0.0% per year.

### Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Education Levels



Source: JobsEQ®  
Data as of 2023Q3

Employment by occupation data are estimates as of 2023Q3. Education levels of occupations are based on BLS assignments. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

	Percent			Value		
	Sonoma Mendocino EDD	Redwood Coast Region	California	Sonoma Mendocino EDD	Redwood Coast Region	California
<b>Demographics</b>						
Population (ACS)	—	—	—	579,581	322,763	39,356,104
Male	49.3%	50.1%	50.1%	285,588	161,792	19,708,947
Female	50.7%	49.9%	49.9%	293,993	160,971	19,647,157
Median Age <sup>2</sup>	—	—	—	42.9	41.8	37.3
Under 18 Years	19.6%	20.2%	22.3%	113,332	65,167	8,774,570
18 to 24 Years	8.0%	9.4%	9.5%	46,235	30,204	3,738,836
25 to 34 Years	12.2%	12.2%	15.0%	70,681	39,290	5,884,283
35 to 44 Years	12.8%	12.3%	13.6%	74,263	39,761	5,350,976
45 to 54 Years	12.3%	11.3%	12.6%	71,353	36,473	4,977,216
55 to 64 Years	14.1%	13.6%	12.1%	81,943	43,921	4,764,923
65 to 74 Years	12.9%	13.3%	8.7%	74,918	42,802	3,427,460
75 Years and Over	8.1%	7.8%	6.2%	46,856	25,145	2,437,840
Race: White	68.6%	73.2%	48.1%	397,657	236,406	18,943,660
Race: Black or African American	1.4%	1.5%	5.6%	8,247	4,809	2,202,587
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	1.5%	4.0%	1.0%	8,700	13,018	394,188
Race: Asian	4.1%	2.5%	15.1%	23,794	8,132	5,949,136
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	1,691	750	150,531
Race: Some Other Race	12.6%	7.8%	16.2%	72,893	25,081	6,388,999
Race: Two or More Races	11.5%	10.7%	13.5%	66,599	34,567	5,327,003
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	27.8%	19.5%	39.7%	161,028	62,822	15,617,930
<b>Population Growth</b>						
Population (Pop Estimates) <sup>4</sup>	—	—	—	572,433	320,066	39,029,342
Population Annual Average Growth <sup>4</sup>	-0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	-464	602	108,479
People per Square Mile	—	—	—	112.6	34.3	250.4
<b>Economic</b>						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over)	63.3%	55.7%	63.6%	303,331	147,448	20,011,853
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54)	83.7%	75.5%	82.0%	180,485	86,990	13,219,214
Armed Forces Labor Force	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%	896	287	156,809
Veterans, Age 18-64	2.9%	3.7%	2.8%	10,057	7,030	694,459
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64	77.4%	61.8%	76.4%	7,781	4,344	530,489
Median Household Income <sup>2</sup>	—	—	—	\$93,420	\$58,741	\$91,905
Per Capita Income	—	—	—	\$49,764	\$33,798	\$45,591
Mean Commute Time (minutes)	—	—	—	24.9	21.8	29.2
Commute via Public Transportation	1.2%	0.9%	3.6%	3,288	1,105	662,772
<b>Educational Attainment, Age 25-64</b>						
No High School Diploma	12.3%	12.2%	14.8%	36,678	19,520	3,102,710
High School Graduate	20.5%	27.3%	20.5%	61,042	43,516	4,301,348
Some College, No Degree	24.6%	27.6%	20.1%	73,387	43,991	4,225,814

Continued on the next page.

	Percent			Value		
	Sonoma Mendocino EDD	Redwood Coast Region	California	Sonoma Mendocino EDD	Redwood Coast Region	California
Associate's Degree	9.2%	10.1%	7.9%	27,344	16,075	1,653,189
Bachelor's Degree	21.8%	15.6%	23.1%	65,062	24,925	4,844,003
Postgraduate Degree	11.6%	7.2%	13.6%	34,727	11,418	2,850,334
<b>Housing</b>						
Total Housing Units	—	—	—	246,773	149,102	14,424,442
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) <sup>2,5</sup>	—	—	—	\$705,059	\$375,844	\$659,300
Homeowner Vacancy	0.5%	1.3%	0.9%	715	1,060	70,543
Rental Vacancy	2.7%	2.3%	4.0%	2,380	1,166	250,250
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	38.5%	38.5%	44.4%	86,245	48,148	5,908,461
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units)	5.3%	7.0%	6.9%	11,786	8,748	922,535
<b>Social</b>						
Poverty Level (of all people)	10.0%	17.7%	12.1%	57,408	55,527	4,685,272
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	7.1%	15.7%	10.3%	15,970	19,600	1,373,232
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.4%	1.3%	1.5%	8,256	4,322	591,072
Disconnected Youth <sup>3</sup>	2.2%	3.1%	1.7%	632	480	36,399
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children)	32.9%	38.0%	33.1%	35,271	23,031	2,767,482
Uninsured	6.2%	7.1%	7.1%	35,486	22,518	2,752,067
With a Disability, Age 18-64	9.9%	16.6%	8.3%	33,967	30,936	2,022,803
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	46.6%	39.0%	45.5%	15,834	12,056	919,685
Foreign Born	15.5%	8.5%	26.5%	89,826	27,336	10,442,880
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	10.4%	5.5%	17.1%	57,439	16,972	6,358,142

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

1. American Community Survey 2018-2022, unless noted otherwise

2. Median values for certain aggregate regions (such as MSAs) may be estimated as the weighted averages of the median values from the composing counties.

3. Disconnected Youth are 16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.

4. Census Population Estimate for 2022, annual average growth rate since 2012. Post-2019 data for Connecticut counties are imputed by Chmura.

5. The Census's method for calculating median house values changed with the 2022 data set, so pre-2022 values are not directly comparable with later data.

Sonoma Mendocino EDD, 2023Q3<sup>1</sup>

NAICS	Industry	Current			5-Year History		5-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	41,025	\$69,875	1.08	-327	-0.2%	22,088	9,821	10,576	1,691	0.8%
44	Retail Trade	28,564	\$45,723	1.10	-2,179	-1.5%	17,721	8,483	10,642	-1,404	-1.0%
31	Manufacturing	26,234	\$97,857	1.25	-172	-0.1%	12,952	5,265	7,889	-201	-0.2%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	25,844	\$34,119	1.14	-297	-0.2%	21,926	10,147	12,381	-602	-0.5%
23	Construction	20,800	\$77,651	1.33	1,677	1.7%	8,373	3,598	5,274	-499	-0.5%
61	Educational Services	18,429	\$60,565	0.89	-873	-0.9%	7,732	4,166	4,320	-754	-0.8%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	15,354	\$54,570	0.93	1,452	2.0%	8,445	3,747	4,968	-271	-0.4%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	13,624	\$88,781	0.71	409	0.6%	5,535	2,240	3,292	3	0.0%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	11,141	\$44,151	1.00	-284	-0.5%	6,184	2,759	3,559	-135	-0.2%
92	Public Administration	10,266	\$85,767	0.86	338	0.7%	4,356	2,053	2,600	-297	-0.6%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	9,838	\$50,664	2.97	-374	-0.7%	5,499	2,811	2,971	-284	-0.6%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8,112	\$44,383	1.59	-243	-0.6%	5,759	2,527	3,437	-205	-0.5%
42	Wholesale Trade	7,763	\$83,010	0.79	-764	-1.9%	3,537	1,544	2,301	-309	-0.8%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	6,236	\$65,842	0.48	328	1.1%	3,382	1,483	1,918	-19	-0.1%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	4,984	\$72,036	1.08	-296	-1.1%	2,321	1,142	1,245	-66	-0.3%
52	Finance and Insurance	4,883	\$106,373	0.47	-974	-3.6%	1,972	851	1,176	-55	-0.2%
51	Information	3,276	\$79,125	0.63	-214	-1.3%	1,350	568	875	-92	-0.6%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	2,335	\$123,093	0.58	-182	-1.5%	1,048	409	595	44	0.4%
22	Utilities	1,733	\$141,142	1.31	246	3.1%	675	304	439	-68	-0.8%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	175	\$85,627	0.19	-18	-1.9%	75	31	50	-5	-0.6%
99	Unclassified	105	\$48,005	0.19	-240	-21.2%	57	25	33	-1	-0.3%
<b>Total - All Industries</b>		<b>260,722</b>	<b>\$66,504</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>-2,986</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>	<b>137,661</b>	<b>62,179</b>	<b>78,909</b>	<b>-3,427</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>

Source: [JobsEQ\\*](#)

Data as of 2023Q3

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

1. All data based upon a four-quarter moving average

Exits and transfers are approximate estimates based upon occupation separation rates.

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2023Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q3. Forecast employment growth uses national projections adapted for regional growth patterns.

## Schedule of Goals for the Next Year

The Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District's primary objectives are to support economic resilience in the region and become more responsive and nimble in the face of an uncertain future. The CEDS is the primary planning tool to accomplish these objectives. While the SMEDD's most recent CEDS was adopted in 2022, it is a *living* document that requires ongoing engagement. Therefore, the SMEDD intends to keep moving CEDS objectives and projects forward with an annual update process that includes extensive stakeholder engagement.

Given that the SMEDD is responsible for overseeing completion, monitoring implementation progress, and supporting on-going planning of the Sonoma-Mendocino CEDS, we have carefully prepared a robust engagement plan for the CEDS development for this upcoming year. This core function of the District is intended to occur annually through a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process, whereby progress towards existing Goals are noted, opportunities to support improved implementation are identified, and new Goal-aligned projects are identified.

The Board approved FY 23-24 CEDS Update Process, which provides a comprehensive framework to conduct community outreach and engagement has provided the SMEDD team with thorough direction. The SMEDD team will continue to implement this process, maintaining contact with stakeholders to assist and provide information on funding opportunities as they become aware. We have developed a webform to facilitate consolidated, consistent, and simple project updates. The team will distribute the form as it reaches out to project proponents with workshop information. In addition, one on one, in person or zoom meetings have been held with project stakeholders. We plan to continue with this process through FY 24-25 and utilize it for our 2025 CEDS update.

### Economic Resiliency

The Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District's 2022 CEDS has detailed economic resiliency strategies outlined in the Goals and Objectives section of the document. Activities that the District has been involved in that complement resiliency include economic diversification through the Biomass Symposium and planning, AgTech innovation program, exploration of economic impact studies around key water infrastructure decisions, developing green energy solutions including hydrogen reuse, continued expansion of key communications/broadband infrastructure, and development of a workforce specialized in fire-safe landscaping and design.

We have convened community members, leaders, and stakeholders from our region, aligned goals and strategies. For FY 24-25 we seek to bring together cohorts from Blue and Green Economies, Ag-tech, and Biomass to apply for funding, and actualize strategy, implementing projects and bringing the product of these regionally aligned organizations and businesses to market, creating a more sustainable economy.



**DATE:** April 19, 2023  
**TO:** Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Brad Johnson, Sonoma County Economic Development Board, Management Analyst  
**SUBJECT:** Approve EDA Supplemental Grant (Grant No. ED20SEA3070045) & Planning Grant (Grant No. ED22SEA3020033) Progress Reports for Submission to the United States Economic Development Administration.

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**STATEMENT OF ISSUE:**

The purpose of this item is to consider approving the submission of Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District’s supplemental and planning grant update reports, covering the period October 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, to the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA).

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Approve submission of the supplemental and planning grant update reports, covering the period October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, to the Economic Development Administration.

**FINANCIAL IMPACTS:**

There are no anticipated financial impacts.

**BACKGROUND:**

In accordance with the terms and conditions of the 2022-2025 planning grant award and 2020-2024 CARES act award (commonly known as the supplemental grant) to SMEDD, the District must submit update reports twice per year. The biennial reporting periods are October 1 through March 31 and April 1 through September 30.

**DISCUSSION:**

The reports contain updates on planning activities leveraged by the planning grant and progress on the supplemental grant work plan approved by the Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District Board of Directors and the EDA in 2023. Major updates outlined in the reports include:

1. SMEDD Education, Awareness, and Capacity
2. Recovery and Resiliency Technical Assistance
3. Economic Development Recovery and Resiliency Funding

4. NOAA Coastal Resilience Challenge Regional Working Group
5. Grant Compliance and Oversight
6. Ag Tech Innovation
7. Broadband Deployment Planning
8. Biomass Utilization
9. California Jobs First
10. Letters of Support
11. CEDS Update Facilitation

**ALTERNATIVES:**

**1:** Approve submission of the supplemental and planning grant update reports, covering the period October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, to the Economic Development Administration.

**2:** Consider, *modify*, and approve submission of the supplemental and planning grant update reports, covering the period October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, to the Economic Development Administration..

**3:** Other approach(s) may be developed after public comments and Board deliberations.

**4:** Decline to act.

**RECOMMENDATION for Alternative 1:**

Move to:

- Approve EDA Supplemental Grant (Grant No. ED20SEA3070045) & Planning Grant (Grant No. ED22SEA3020033) Progress Reports for Submission to the United States Economic Development Administration

**Attachments**

[Attachment A: U.S. Economic Development Administration's Planning Grant No. ED22SEA3020033 Update Report covering the period October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024](#)

[Attachment B: U.S. Economic Development Administration's Supplemental Grant No. ED20SEA3070045 Update Report covering the period October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024](#)





## CEDS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

October 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024

Grant Award Number: ED22SEA3020033

Program Manager: Ethan Fogg

### *Grant Description*

Organization: Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD)

Address: Sonoma County Economic Development Board  
141 Stony Circle, Suite 130  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Phone: 707-565-6456

Report Prepared By: Bradley Johnson, Administrator

Project Title: Implementing the 2022 Sonoma Mendocino Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Reporting Period: October 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

Grant Amount: \$70,000 in federal funds and \$70,000 in matching funds in each fiscal year for 3 years, or \$140,000 x 3 = \$420,000. Total grant amount \$420,000 (2022-2025).

Total Federal Expenditures for Reporting Period: \$xx,xxx

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## Ag Tech Innovation

In May, 2023, The Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD) hosted an Ag-Tech Innovation conference which invited regional stakeholders from Academia, Private Industry, Tribes, Farm Associations, and Government to participate in developing a framework for a feasibility study that would outline the development of an Ag-Tech Innovation Hub in the North-Bay North-Coast Region. The Event was a success, and the SMEDD has been using the framework to develop Ag-Tech partnerships, facilitate conversations, and apply for funding to develop a feasibility study and subsequent strategic plan.

During the reporting period, The SMEDD has engaged various organizations on the topic of Ag-Tech. Two of the most prominent being the Sonoma County Winegrowers Association and the VINE by the University of California department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR). The Sonoma County Winegrowers have integrated themselves as the premier technology incubator for one of the region's largest cash crops, wine grapes. The Sonoma County Winegrowers have successfully engaged in and implemented private public partnerships with Ford, John Deere, and others to incubate sustainable, efficient, resilient, and climate smart agricultural technologies in their member's vineyards. Such technologies include fully electrified vehicles from Ford and Tractors from John Deere. Additional tech includes AI generated smart spraying systems. The VINE is a knowledge based network organization funded by UCANR. They are currently developing a physical ag-tech incubator and pilot center in California's Sacramento Valley. Their expertise and assets span beyond the physical location. Their primary asset is the vast network of knowledge that implements ag-tech along each node of the supply chain from producing food to putting it on the table.

Using conversations, knowledge, and enthusiasm from Ag-Tech entities, the SMEDD has been working with regional economic development planning and funding organizations under the CA Jobs First opportunity (previously known as the California Economic Resiliency Fund). Unfortunately, the state has separated the district into two separate regions with Sonoma County joining the Bay Area region and Mendocino County joining the North Coast. This has provided a challenge to planning and advocating for SMEDD CEDS related goals, but has provided an opportunity to identify sectors that fit the needs of a greater region. Ag-Tech is that sector. Sonoma County has been paired with Marin County to identify approximately four projects to propose to the Bay Area Committee for a portion of the \$9,000,000 of regional funding. The SMEDD has developed a proposal for \$300,000 that would fund a feasibility study and subsequent strategic plan to implement an ag-tech hub in the North Bay North Coast region. The feasibility study would outline the existing regional assets, opportunities, threats, and weaknesses to the ag-tech sector. Additionally, it would provide a comprehensive implementation plan (strategic plan) to develop value added and climate smart industries that are directly and indirectly related to ag production through innovative technology. Leveraging the relationships with the VINE and Sonoma County Winegrowers Association, the feasibility study will outline the existing network and gaps for ag-tech development in our region.

## Broadband Deployment Planning

Sonoma and Mendocino Counties have taken significant action to close the internet availability gap by directing staff to research options to expand broadband access. These efforts have been focused on

infrastructure development and advancing utilization (“adoption”) of existing resources, where barriers to connectivity are related to affordability rather than lack of infrastructure. The Board’s actions parallel recent state and federal grant programs that fund and facilitate broadband planning, infrastructure, and adoption.

In the fall of 2022 the County of Sonoma and Mendocino , entered into partnership with [Golden State Connect Authority](#), applied for and each received a ~\$500,000 grant from the California Public Utilities Commission’s [Local Agency Technical Assistance](#) grant program. The funding is planned to provide a refined *high-level* broadband network design for unincorporated areas with little or no internet service and *low-level*, construction-ready design for priority areas. The engineering process is a two-step process: 1) the *high-level* general design typically maps out the route the fiber network will take, and 2) the *low-level* design typically shows the fiber to the curb, identifies infrastructure assets like pull boxes, and maps a clear outline for development. These funds will support both types of design. The scope of work for this grant program is anticipated to be completed within 18 months of the grant award (June 2024).

In July and August of 2023, Golden State Connect Authority delivered high-level engineering designs for project areas in both Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. Both Counties used the designs and corresponding metrics to select priority project areas to apply for [last mile funding](#) through the California Public Utilities Commission’s Federal Funding Account award opportunity. In both counties, the project areas are located directly adjacent to the [state's planned middle mile network](#). The County of Mendocino’s project area encompasses the coastal region off of state highway one. Sonoma County’s selected projects are non-continuous and located in: Jenner, East Santa Rosa, East Cloverdale, and Walsh Landing. Sonoma and Mendocino Counties are working closely together to coordinate plans to expand service to unserved residents.

To further broadband accessibility and advanced adoption, the County of Sonoma has been awarded a \$300,000 grant from the [Federal Communications Commission](#) (FCC) [Affordable Connectivity Program](#) (ACP). The grant is intended to be used to drive awareness and enrollment in the largest broadband affordability program in the nation’s history. Building upon current community partnerships, the FCC has issued grants to support partner organizations nationwide to serve as trusted community messengers about the ACP and to better equip agencies with the funding necessary to pursue innovative outreach strategies to effectively reach historically unserved and underserved communities. During the reporting period, the County engaged private providers to develop outreach partnerships to serve the communities in need. Additionally, outreach has been conducted via radio, social media, email, events, and physical flyers. Since the award, Sonoma County Staff has engaged in a variety of community outreach events and efforts and the County has seen approximately a 5.5% increase in eligible households enrolled, from 10,438 to 14,412. Unfortunately the Affordable Connectivity Program stopped accepting new household applications in February 2024 due to a lack of funding. The two counties will continue to promote digital adoption and access through partnering with local community organizations and private internet service providers to identify funding for digital training and literacy purposes.

During the reporting period Sonoma and Mendocino Counties redeveloped a MOU with Marin and Napa Counties to engage in a regional broadband planning organization known as the North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC). The consortium is composed of staff from each county regularly working on planning and implementing broadband infrastructure expansion. The Consortium is guided

by an oversight committee of four County Supervisors, one from each County. The Consortium has been awarded \$600,000 of funding from the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) from the California Public Utilities Commission and \$120,000 from the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF). The work plan for the CASF funding is under redevelopment as each County has identified a broadband infrastructure implementation model that best serves its needs. Currently the Consortium is working to develop a workplan that would provide a feasibility study for wireless infrastructure to serve the residences that are considered economically difficult to connect to fiber optic infrastructure. Additionally, there is a desire to develop GIS databases that will provide relevant information to local organizations to apply for CASF infrastructure funding. The CETF funding is being utilized to promote digital access and equity in the region. Including developing community partnerships with nonprofits to connect their clients to resources that can help them financially or technically get connected to the internet.

## Biomass Utilization

In May the Sonoma Economic Development District will host a Biomass Symposium bringing together industry, academia, Tribes, government and community-based organizations to explore the opportunities and challenges of implementing forest biomass utilization projects for fire safety, forest health, renewable energy, and wood products, and supporting the appropriate growth of sustainable, stewardship-based, rural economic development. The objectives of the symposium are:

1. Support stakeholders to understand the vision of biomass uses and how it can support Mendocino and Sonoma economic development
2. Discuss opportunities and challenges related to biomass harvesting and utilization and whether it can support local and/or regional Mendocino and Sonoma growth and sustainability
3. Bring together different sectors, communities and individuals to learn from one another and share knowledge on how to sustainably and effectively use biomass

The potential to convert forest biomass into hydrogen fuel has increased in recent years due to technological innovation around treatment, processing, and fuel utilization. Simultaneously, interest has grown within the resource management, conservation, and wildland fire management communities about the potential for utilizing biomass hydrogen technologies and market dynamics to positively impact watershed health and fire risk reduction. Consistent with CEDS Goals 1, 2, and 4, the SMEDD Board is supporting pursuit of a feasibility study focused on the potential of catalyzing a biomass hydrogen supply chain along the Highway 101 corridor linking northern California to the Bay Area. The scope of this feasibility study is in development and funding opportunities are being explored.

Additionally, the SMEDD management team has been working closely with project proponents and stakeholders in the biomass utilization space. Partnering and convening with organizations such as the University of California Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) and the California Energy Commission, SMEDD has provided insightful resources for planning regional projects. One project in particular being the project number seven in the district's CEDS. Fernando Mora, lead, is working on behalf of the Kashia tribe in Sonoma County and with a business development team to acquire the Berry's sawmill property in Cazadero, CA. The tribe will be a part owner to the lumber

production. The mill is intended to be retrofitted to run off a biofuel source and further serve a microgrid for West Sonoma County. As of mid-February, the team is closing in on the property acquisition. The SMEDD management team has assisted the project managers by connecting them to resources at UCANR, the California Energy Commission, the Jobs First initiative, and more. Additionally, the project team will be featured on a panel at the upcoming Biomass symposium. Additionally, with the work of the SMEDD management team, Fernando was connected to an opportunity to acquire more feedstock from Cal Fire Forest Management. The logistics of that deal has not been born out.

Beyond direct assistance, the SMEDD has distributed letters of support and provided planning assistance for five projects in this sector, three of which have been awarded for over \$600,000. See the full list of letters below.

### California Jobs First

The SMEDD has been heavily engaged with a statewide economic development effort named California Jobs First (formerly known as the California Economic Resiliency Fund - CERF). Unfortunately, the state has separated the district into two separate regions with Sonoma County joining the Bay Area region and Mendocino County joining the North Coast. This has provided a challenge to planning and advocating for SMEDD CEDS related goals, but has provided an opportunity to identify sectors that fit the needs of a greater region. As mentioned above, the SMEDD team is utilizing existing planning and convening efforts to advocate for the development of Ag-tech in the region. Additionally, Biomass utilization is another area in which the SMEDD is working to have regional alignment across the state. The SMEDD team is regularly engaged with each region’s respective planning councils to provide data, regional economic insights, and proposals.

### Letters of Support

One of the most effective ways SMEDD can be used is to provide letters of support to organizations applying for grant funds for a project that directly relates to the goals in the CEDS. In May, the SMEDD Board of Directors approved the district manager to provide such letters of support in instances of time sensitive need. Since the approval, the Board and district manager have distributed the following letters of support for regional projects:

Request From	Topic/Project	SMEDD Letter Issued to Requestor	Status of Grant Award
Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit District (SMART)	Connecting Cloverdale to the Bay – Equitable Transportation Access & Resilience Project	02/26/2024	Under Review
Regenerative Forest Solutions	Woody FeedStock Pilot Project (CalFire)	9/27/2023	Under Review
Regenerative Forest Solutions	Woody FeedStock Pilot Project	9/27/2023	Awarded

	(Bay Area Council)		
Mendocino Forest Products	Biomass-to-Hydrogen Grant Application	9/15/2023	Awarded
West Business Development Center	CalOSBA Blue Economy iHub	8/31/2023	Under Review
Regenerative Forest Solutions	Woody FeedStock Pilot Project USDA Forest Service	8/9/2023	Under Review
Regenerative Forest Solutions	NCRP Woody FeedStock Pilot Project	8/9/2023	Awarded
Sonoma County Meat Company	USDA Local Meat Capacity Grant	6/21/2023	Under Review
Noyo Harbor	Noyo Harbor District Port Infrastructure Development	4/24/2023	Under Review

## CEDS Update Facilitation

The SMEDD team developed a strategic planning process to proactively engage CEDS project proponents during the FY 23-24 year to obtain most current project status information and use that along with key econometrics for the 2024 CEDS Update Report. Response was limited from the projects for a variety of reasons including: staffing turnover, project attrition and relevancy, and other factors leading to project evolution. This year, the SMEDD strives to accomplish the development of a system in which new projects can be formally submitted to the SMEDD and be displayed in a living public database. This will assist the district in more effectively conducting outreach and providing resources to various regional projects.



## ECONOMIC RECOVERY and RESILIENCY GRANT PROGRESS REPORT

*October 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024*

Grant Award Number: ED20SEA3070045

Program Manager: Ethan Fogg

### *Grant Description*

Organization: Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD)

Address: Sonoma County Economic Development Board  
141 Stony Circle, Suite 130  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Phone: (707) 565-6456

Report Prepared By: Brad Johnson, Administrator

Project Title: Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD)

Reporting Period: October 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024

Grant Amount: Total grant amount \$400,000 (2020-2022)

Total Expenditures for Reporting Period: \$xx,xxx

### *Progress Report*



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## SMEDD Education, Awareness, and Capacity

As stated in the first component of the recovery and resiliency work plan, RGS and SMEDD associates have worked to increase stakeholder understanding, interest and engagement in SMEDD. In early April, the SMEDD team conducted in person outreach, interviews, and listening sessions with Mendocino and Sonoma stakeholders. The outreach efforts for this tour began in late March. The information was well received from local stakeholders and department heads.

The second main goal to accomplish this aspect of the work plan is to Strengthen SMEDD information resources to support resiliency and recovery. During the reporting period, RGS has put in a substantial amount of work to continue developing the district's website, [SMEDD.org](https://www.smedd.org). Having a web platform and presence allows for the district to effectively reference recovery and resiliency resources such as funding opportunities, local events, partner organizations, and resiliency strategies.

The third main goal to accomplish SMEDD education, awareness, and capacity is to develop productive stakeholder relationships. Though the district has this in some capacity with the CEDS strategy committee, RGS and SMEDD staff are continuously developing these relationships to further recovery and resiliency planning in the region. As outlined below, SMEDD has hosted events such as the business friendliness webinar, a regional Ag-Tech innovation event, a Biomass utilization symposium, and facilitated numerous sector focused working groups aimed to increase industry and economic development/resiliency in the region.

## Recovery and Resiliency Technical Assistance

The RGS and SMEDD associates provided recovery and resiliency technical assistance for Mendocino County and Sonoma County cities through an assessment of business friendliness.

- 1) **Providing a business friendliness assessment:** The primary objective for the business assessment is to review incentives, programs, communication, processes, fees, timelines, and demonstrated commitment to economic development as a priority, to facilitate existing businesses, business expansion and attraction. On September 28th, SMEDD provided a webinar to City Managers and Economic Development Directors/ Managers outlining the BFC check up assessment tool. The Business Friendly Check-up establishes a baseline of key metrics that city and community leaders can reference to better understand their communities' strengths and weaknesses in this area. Communities are welcome to view the past webinar and take use of the tool anytime at the following link. <https://www.smedd.org/business-friendly-check-up-webinar>.

## Economic Development Recovery and Resiliency Funding

As illustrated in task 3 of the approved work plan amendment for the CARES act award, the SMEDD team evaluated and built the SMEDD's capacity to pursue and secure various sources of grant funding and exceeded the deliverable by pursuing two unique funding sources to promote economic recovery and resiliency in the Sonoma Mendocino region.

## **NOAA Coastal Resilience Challenge Regional Working Group**

The Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District served as the lead convener and facilitator for regional stakeholders to work together on developing a letter of intent to apply for an award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for Coastal resilience projects. Below is a summary of the letter resulting from the working group led by SMEDD.

### **Regional Context:**

The letter describes the challenges faced by coastal communities in Sonoma and Mendocino counties due to climate change, including the erosion of oceanfront lands, damage to kelp and estuarine ecosystems, and the decline of red abalone populations. The decline in these ecosystems has significant economic and cultural implications, and it affects the fisheries, wetlands, and recreational resources in the region.

### **Resilience Vision:**

Given the context, the SMEDD developed project goals and a vision with the working group to address climate impacts posed by warming waters, rising seas, drought, and increased flooding. The vision includes the following key components:

1. Protect, restore, regenerate, propagate, and extend kelp forest refugia.
2. Build economic resilience and support a just transition to the changing climate.
3. Mitigate estuarine flooding through enhanced ecosystem services.
4. Adapt critical harbor infrastructure and public access to rising seas.

### **Proposed Activities and Outcomes:**

The letter outlines several activities and outcomes associated with the project, including:

**Kashia Band of Pomo Indians Conservation Aquaculture and Ocean Ecosystem Restoration:** This involves working with various partners to launch a regional kelp forest ecosystem restoration alliance and Tribally operated abalone production and restoration facility. The activities include conservation aquaculture, urchin management, ocean stressor assessment, and construction of green infrastructure aquaculture facilities.

**Estuary Resilience and Flood Risk Mitigation:** This component focuses on rehabilitating and supporting climate adaptation for estuaries in Sonoma and Mendocino counties. Activities include minimizing flooding, sustaining the role of floods in delivering sediment to marshes, sustaining estuaries as rearing habitats for juvenile salmonid species, and sustaining the importance of estuaries as bases for recreation and tourism.

**North Coast Harbor Economic and Climate Resilience:** After restoring the kelp and marine ecosystem, the project aims to strengthen the blue economy through climate-resilient infrastructure and job diversity. This includes upgrading infrastructure at Bodega Bay, such as the ice plant and docks, and replicating native hatchery salmon releases.

**Noyo Center for Marine Science:** The project supports the construction of the Ocean Science Center Building in Fort Bragg, which will serve as a hub for marine science education and research. The building

will include research laboratories, a marine mammal skeleton articulation workshop, and a marine mammal triage center. The Noyo Center for Marine Science engages with the community and aims to address climate change impacts on coastal ecosystems.

SMEDD Program Coordination & Climate Resilience Regional Amplification: SMEDD plays a pivotal role in coordinating and amplifying the regional response to climate threats. This involves convening workshops, compiling progress reports, supporting elected leaders, and developing and maintaining web resources for project teams and the public.

Unfortunately, the letter of intent was not provided an invitation to apply for the award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The SMEDD will use the working relationships formed from this experience to continue working toward developing value added, climate smart, blue economy jobs.

### **California Jobs First Ag Tech Innovation Feasibility Study Proposal**

Using conversations, knowledge, and partnerships from regional Ag-Tech entities, the SMEDD has been working with regional economic development planning and funding organizations under the CA Jobs First opportunity (previously known as the California Economic Resiliency Fund). Unfortunately, the state has separated the district into two separate regions with Sonoma County joining the Bay Area region and Mendocino County joining the North Coast. This has provided a challenge to planning and advocating for SMEDD CEDS related goals, but has provided an opportunity to identify sectors that fit the needs of a greater region. Ag-Tech is that sector. Sonoma County has been paired with Marin County to identify approximately four projects to propose to the Bay Area Committee for a portion of the \$9,000,000 of regional funding. The SMEDD has developed a proposal for \$300,000 that would fund a feasibility study and subsequent strategic plan to implement an ag-tech hub in the North Bay North Coast region. The feasibility study will outline the existing regional assets, opportunities, threats, and weaknesses to the ag-tech sector. Additionally, it would provide a comprehensive implementation plan (strategic plan) to develop value added and climate smart industries that are directly and indirectly related to ag production through innovative technology. Leveraging the relationships with the VINE and Sonoma County Winegrowers Association, the feasibility study will outline the existing network and gaps for ag-tech development in our region.

### **Grant Compliance and Oversight**

RGS and SMEDD associates are working together to ensure reporting and administrative compliance are in order. This work is being conducted on the County, State, Federal levels.



**DATE:** April 17, 2024  
**TO:** Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Josh Metz, SMEDD District Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Receive an Update on the Status of Biomass Utilization Symposium Planning and Provide Guidance as Appropriate

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**STATEMENT OF ISSUE:** The purpose of this item is to receive a Biomass Utilization Symposium planning status update and provide further direction to the District Management team.

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**FINANCIAL IMPACTS:**

Coordination of the Biomass Utilization Symposium will draw down County in-kind staff support (Grant No. ED22SEA3020033) and RGS effort under remaining CARES Act Supplemental Grant funds (Grant No. ED20SEA3070045). External sponsorship and event donations will cover event specific costs. As of April 15, 2024, SMEDD has received a total of \$6,000 in sponsorship pledges from RCRC, Sonoma Water and Mendocino Forest Products. As of April 8th, SMEDD has \$1,630 allocated from West Business Development Center, the fiscal sponsor for the event.

**BACKGROUND:**

At the December 12, 2023 SMEDD Board of Directors meeting, the District Manager introduced the concept of the SMEDD co-hosting an Biomass Utilization Symposium as an educational opportunity for the region's stakeholders. The SMEDD Board reviewed a preliminary Symposium Agenda, discussed logistics, and budgeting, and designated Chair Bartholow and Member Garza to serve as an Ad Hoc Committee to work with the district management team to continue planning and coordination for the Symposium. Mendocino County Supervisor Glenn McGourty volunteered to join the Symposium planning committee.

**DISCUSSION:**

Since the February meeting, the management team, Ad Hoc Committee and Mendocino County Supervisor McGourty met several times to prepare and finalize the event agenda, secure speakers, and pre-symposium tour options. As of this meeting the SMEDDBiomass Utilization Symposium plans are in are in place, registration is open and tickets are being sold, and the main effort is focused on filling the target 100 seats (+20 scholarships and 30 speakers) for a total of 150:

- Date: May 2-3, 2024
- Location: UCANR Hopland Research and Extension Center Shippey Hall
- Website Landing Page:  
<https://smedd.specialdistrict.org/2024-05-03-2024-biomass-utilization-symposium>
- Press Release:  
<https://www.smedd.org/files/75f1cbf4e/2024+Biomass+Utilization+Symposium+Press+Release+-+032724.pdf>
- Flier:  
<https://www.smedd.org/files/689b5d954/SMEDD-Biomass-Utilization-Symposium-Flyer-041424.pdf>
- Themes: Fire Safety, Forest Health, Wood Products, Renewable Energy and Sustainable, Stewardship-based, Rural Economic Development
- Target audience: community members, planners, economic developers, educators, elected leaders, entrepreneurs, and funders.
- Current Co-Sponsors: UC Agriculture & Natural Resources, Sonoma Water Agency, Golden State Resources, Rural County Representatives of California, Mendocino Forest Products

**ALTERNATIVES:**

- 1:** Receive Biomass Utilization Symposium planning status update and provide further direction to the District Management team
- 2:** Consider, *modify*, and approve the recommendation for the District to Receive Biomass Utilization Symposium planning status update and provide further direction to the District Management team
- 3:** Other approach(s) as may be developed after public comments and Board deliberations.
- 4:** Decline to act.

**RECOMMENDATION for Alternative 1:**

Move to:

- Receive an Update on the Status of Biomass Utilization Symposium Planning and Provide Guidance as Appropriate

**ATTACHMENTS:**

[Attachment A: Biomass Utilization Symposium Sponsorship information](#)



**DATE:** April 19, 2024  
**TO:** Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Josh Metz, SMEDD District Manager  
Bradley Johnson, Management Analyst  
**SUBJECT:** Receive an Update on California Jobs First: Redwood Region RISE; North Bay Working Group;  
EDF Working Group

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**STATEMENT OF ISSUE:** The purpose of this item is for the Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD) Board of Directors to receive an update from the management team on respective regional efforts and progress from the California Jobs First Initiative.

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Receive and file.

**FINANCIAL IMPACTS:**

There are no anticipated financial impacts for this item.

**BACKGROUND:**

During the December 8, 2023 and February 16, 2024 regular SMEDD Board of Directors meetings, the SMEDD Management team provided the Board an overview and update of the CA Jobs First (previously known as CERF) initiative. The overview and update included the following:

- Regional Representation: Sonoma County is represented by the Bay Area Jobs First Collaborative. Mendocino County is represented by the Redwood Region RISE Coalition.
- Both regions have conducted a solicitation for regional projects to be funded by catalyst funds at \$9 million per region
- Each region is guided by the principle to create high wage, climate resilient, and sustainable jobs.

Mendocino County is part of Redwood Region RISE (Resilient Inclusive Sustainable Economy) which is a regional community coalition of close to a thousand members working together to develop a 10-year vision that aims to bring good, sustainable jobs to Tribal Lands, Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino Counties - through the California Jobs First (previously known as Community Economic Resilience Fund [CERF]) initiative.

The Sonoma County EDB has been working with a subregional round table under the Bay Area Jobs First Collaborative. The subregional roundtable includes Sonoma and Marin Counties. The Subregional roundtable collected projects that meet the fundamental industry and vision priorities. Projects must promote the growth of sustainable, climate forward, high wage, and high growth jobs.



## DISCUSSION:

### **Mendocino County - Redwood Region RISE**

The \$9 million in catalyst funds is marked as fully spent within our 4 county region. The allocation of how it will be spent is not yet decided. The CCRP, AEDC and voting table will be responsible for allocating funds. RISE is holding an in-person meeting for voting block members in late April in Humboldt. Voting criteria and scoring will be workshopped by attendees at this meeting. The County of Mendocino Economic Development Division is a member of the voting block for Redwood Region RISE. Economic Development Division staff will participate in the voting selection of projects submitted for development in our region.

There are many Mendocino County engaged actors in the Redwood Region RISE coalition across industry, academia, government and community-based organizations. Within the SMEDD, Board Members, Mendocino County Staff, and the Regional Government Services team are engaged in a variety of intersecting ways. This report summarizes work being led by Mendocino County Staff, Board Member Mary Anne Petrillo, as the Blue Economy & Working Lands Sector Table co-leader, and a new Economic Development Finance Working Group being led by the RGS team.

### **Blue Economy Update: 3/21/24**

In our pursuit of developing a robust strategy and work plan for the Blue Economy sector, we have made significant strides over the past six weeks. Through a combination of virtual and in-person meetings, our team has grown to over 20 participants, reflecting a diverse array of organizations invested in the region's economic and environmental prosperity.

#### Achievements:

1. **Vision Statement:** We have crafted a vision statement: *The Redwood Region is poised to become a global leader in rural regenerative blue economies. To achieve this, we will form collaborative networks of stakeholders to advocate for policy and investment, drive innovative technologies, revitalize infrastructure, create robust and expanded markets, and advance oceanic research.*
2. **Strategic Directions:** Our strategic directions outline key areas of focus, including advocacy, market expansion, ocean research, and innovation. These directions serve as guiding pillars for our future endeavors.
3. **SWOT Analysis:** We have conducted a SWOT analysis, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the Blue Economy sector. This analysis will provide valuable insights for informed decision-making and strategic planning.

While we acknowledge the challenges posed by climate change and sea-level rise, we remain optimistic about the opportunities for development and innovation within the Blue Economy sector. By leveraging





our collective expertise and resources, we are confident in our ability to overcome these challenges because the local Blue Economy presents a multitude of promising opportunities for sustainable growth. Some highlights are streamlined permitting, efficiently managed dredging, advancements in direct sales and harvesting technologies by fishermen, and the proliferation of online platforms for seafood commerce are just a few examples. Additionally, infrastructure improvements and collaborative research initiatives will further enhance the region's potential for both economic and environmental prosperity.

In conclusion, we are progressing in developing our strategy and work plan for the Blue Economy sector in partnership with our working lands contingent because it takes a collective effort to create economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and community resilience. We are poised to make meaningful contributions to the advancement of a rural regenerative economy in the California Redwood Region.

#### **Economic Development Finance (EDF) Working Group**

Regional Government Services, under a separate service contract with the Arcata Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) serving as the Redwood Region RISE Fiscal Agent, is facilitating the Redwood Region RISE Economic Development Finance (EDF) Working Group. The EDF Working Group is occurring in two phases with Phase 1 happening Jan - June 2024, and Phase 2 following directly through December 2024. Additional information is readily available to the public at the following website:

<https://ccrp.humboldt.edu/edf-working-group>

- Wednesday April 3, 2024, the EDF Working Group held an Expert Session focused on Tax Increment Financing and heard from industry and public agency representatives involved in creating the Samoa Peninsula EIFD. Recordings and slide shows from this meeting are available on the EDF Website: <https://ccrp.humboldt.edu/edf-working-group>
- RGS is taking on an expanded role providing Technical Assistance to Sector Table leads in preparing evaluation frameworks for subsequent Catalyst and Implementation funding rounds.

#### **Sonoma County - Bay Area Jobs First Collaborative**

The Sonoma-Marin Regional Roundtable's facilitators will vote on a set of initial project submissions and bring them to the larger Bay Area Collaborative in May. In June, the Bay Area Collaborative will bring a set of projects to the State to be funded as pilot projects in this first phase. The Sonoma EDB submitted a project proposal for \$300,000 to fund an Ag-Tech Innovation Hub Feasibility Study for the North Bay that will leverage the May 2023 SMEDD Ag-Tech Brainstorming Session. The feasibility study would investigate key partnerships, regionally unique focus areas, functions, services, phasing options and location alternatives for a potential North Bay Ag-Tech Innovation Hub. Additionally, the feasibility study will take into consideration the efforts that are already underway in the region, and determine if there are opportunities to expand those, rather than start anew.



The SMEDD management team has engaged various organizations on the topic of Ag-Tech to prime regional engagement in this feasibility study . Two of the most prominent being the Sonoma County Winegrowers Association and the VINE by the University of California department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR). The Sonoma County Winegrowers have established themselves as the premier technology incubator for one of the region’s largest cash crops, wine grapes. They have successfully implemented private public partnerships with Ford, John Deere, and others to incubate sustainable, efficient, resilient, and climate smart agricultural technologies in their member’s vineyards. Such technologies include fully electrified trucks from Ford and tractors from John Deere. Additional tech includes AI generated smart spraying systems.

The VINE is a knowledge-based network organization funded by the UCANR. The VINE and UCANR are active across the State with Ag-tech innovation centers serving as nodes of a growing state, national and international knowledge and innovation network. Their primary asset is the vast network of knowledge that implements ag-tech along each node of the supply chain from producing food to putting it on the table. Both the Sonoma County Wine Grower and The VINE will be essential partners in the development of a North Bay / North Coast Feasibility Ag-Tech hub Feasibility Study.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

**1:** Receive and file the California Jobs First: Redwood Region RISE; North Bay Working Group; EDF Working Group update

**2:** Consider, *modify*, and approve the recommendation for the District to Receive and file the California Jobs First: Redwood Region RISE; North Bay Working Group; EDF Working Group update

**3:** Other approach(s) as may be developed after public comments and Board deliberations.

**4:** Decline to act.

**RECOMMENDATION for Alternative 1:**

Move to:

- Receive an Update on California Jobs First: Redwood Region RISE; North Bay Working Group; EDF Working Group



**DATE:** April 19, 2024

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Josh Metz, Regional Government Services, District Manager  
Tracy Fuller, Regional Government Services  
Brad Johnson, Sonoma County Economic Development Board, Management Analyst  
Anna Macken, Mendocino County, Administrative Analyst II

**SUBJECT:** Receive Update on SMEDD Board Seats; Discuss and Consider Recruitment and Appointment of a SMEDD-Appointed At-Large Member and of Members Appointed by the Mendocino and Sonoma County Boards of Supervisors

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**STATEMENT OF ISSUE:**

The purpose of this item is to update the Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD) Board of Directors on the status of Board recruitment efforts in Mendocino and Sonoma counties, provide an update on County processes, and recommendations to fill three vacant board positions.

**FINANCIAL IMPACTS:**

There are no anticipated financial impacts.

**BACKGROUND:**

The SMEDD Board has nine seats. Three seats are currently vacant. One vacant seat is to be appointed by the County of Mendocino; one vacant seat is to be appointed by the County of Sonoma; the remaining vacant seat is a singular At-Large seat to be appointed by the Board of Directors of the SMEDD. The purpose of this item is to provide the Board with the opportunity to discuss and take action as may be appropriate to filling the two vacant SMEDD Board seats that must be appointed by the respective County Boards of Supervisors, and/or the vacant at-large seat that must be appointed by the SMEDD Board of Directors.

**DISCUSSION:**

The County of Sonoma has received three applications for the Sonoma County vacant seat. The Sonoma County Economic Development Board has reviewed these applications and has decided to keep the recruitment for this seat open to allow for a larger breadth of potential applicants to be considered. With the assistance from the Business Diversity Program Manager at the Sonoma County Economic Development Board, the Sonoma County Management Analyst is promoting the vacancy to regional stakeholders that have small business enterprise experience. To date, this effort has produced one

potential applicant that the Sonoma County Economic Development Board is considering for appointment, pending an official application.

The County of Mendocino has a newly vacant Board Member position. Jim Mayfield resigned from the SMEDD Board at the beginning of April. The County of Mendocino has received an application to fill the empty seat. The County's Economic Development Division will be reviewing the application in the next week, and make a determination whether to recommend the candidate to the County of Mendocino Board of Supervisors for appointment to the SMEDD Board.

The SMEDD Board should discuss a process and timeline for recruiting and filling the vacant at-large seat, which is the Board's only at-large seat and the only seat appointed directly by the SMEDD Board. The SMEDD has posted the vacancies on the SMEDD web page, and is using other available opportunities to publicize all the vacancies and invite interested individuals to apply. If the SMEDD Board would like to recruit with an application process, an application form could be based upon the existing forms used by the Counties. The At-Large vacancy could be publicized either with an application deadline or as "open-until-filled". The Board may wish to personally recruit candidates.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

**1:** Discuss and Consider Recruitment and Appointment of a SMEDD-Appointed At-Large Member and of Members Appointed by the Mendocino and Sonoma County Boards of Supervisors. Provide Direction to the General Manager if appropriate.

**2:** Consider, *modify*, and approve the recommendation to Discuss and Consider Recruitment and Appointment of a SMEDD-Appointed At-Large Member and of Members Appointed by the Mendocino and Sonoma County Boards of Supervisors. Provide Direction to the General Manager if appropriate.

**3:** Other approach(s) as may be developed after public comments and Board deliberations.

**4:** Decline to act.

**RECOMMENDATION for Alternative 1:**

Move to:

- Discuss and Consider Recruitment and Appointment of a SMEDD-Appointed At-Large Member and of Members Appointed by the Mendocino and Sonoma County Boards of Supervisors. Provide Direction to the General Manager if appropriate.