



Introduction

In November 2025, the Economic Development Division provided Technical Assistance to microenterprises and entrepreneurs, attended regional economic development conferences hosted by Redwood Region RISE and North Edge in Lake County, and worked to close out the 2021 CDBG Microenterprise Technical Assistance Grant administered by WEST Business Development Center.

Economic Development Events

During November, staff attended conferences on regional economic development and future outlooks

Redwood Region RISE Quarterly Collaborative In-Person Convening, November 5th Robinson Rancheria

Staff are members of the voting block for Redwood Region RISE and attended the quarterly in-person meeting held at the Robinson Rancheria near Nice in Lake County. The focus of this meeting was to create an effort towards ongoing regional economic development collaboration, share information on recent economic development progress and on future efforts.

Division staff gave a brief presentation on the economic development progress in the county, both within the Economic Development Division and Cities, Educational Institutions and local agencies. For the County Economic Development Division accomplishments include:



- Developing an internship and collaboration with WANB and Mendocino College
- Sector Meetings – Held sector meetings Behavioral Health, Cannabis, Construction/Home Hardening, Agriculture, Forest Health, Arts and Recreational Tourism to create projects between existing organizations
- CDBG Microenterprise Technical Assistance Grant – Awarded a 3-year grant to provide TA Support to businesses for permitting and governmental processes, site selection
- Business Loan Program – staff is applying to use CDBG PI funding for business loans

- Grant matching to local needs and projects – sharing all relevant grant opportunities with local agencies
- Land access for farmers – held meetings in 2023 began a collaboration with UCANR opening acreage for new farmers to develop incubator farms
- Relationship building with jurisdictions – held multiple meetings with cities, other counties, and regional agencies to discuss priorities and long term development strategies

Redwood Coast Region Economic Development Summit, November 6th – 7th Lakeport

Staff attended the Redwood Region Economic Development Summit in Lakeport, Lake County. Hosted by North Edge, this annual summit focused on downtown revitalization, tourism and innovative rural development in agri-tourism and blue economy and included a speech by Pro Tempore Senator Mike McGuire and an economic forecast presentation from Professor Robert Eyler. Senator McGuire highlighted the new exemptions to CEQA for infill housing, farmer worker housing and fire mitigation, future funding for the Great Redwood Trail, and changes to rural healthcare given current federal policy. Professor Eyler highlighted the changes in economic conditions for our region due to decline in demand for wine, an aging population and the threat of wildfire in our region. Video of presentations can be found on [the North Edge](#) website.

Economic Development by Industry Sector Meetings

Division staff held the final meeting for the economic development by industry sector series on Friday, December 5th for the Arts and Recreational Tourism in Boonville. Due to the timing of the CEO report, the meeting notes and projects will be included in the next report.

Economic Development by Industry: Sector Projects

Sector projects have been developed from the completed *Economic Development by Industry* meetings. Each project is based on the feedback and input from the public sector meetings. Division staff are working with other County departments, and community partners to move each project forward. Below is a list of current projects.

Arts and Recreational Tourism – (Meeting held 12/5/2025)

- Due to timing of report, meeting notes will be included in the next report

Forest Health and Sustainability – (Meeting held 9/17/2025)

- Pooling resources and knowledge by industry professionals, and development of working groups on specific topics within forest industries (Ex: carbon sequestration)
- Create awareness to potential workforce of job opportunities, and cross-collaboration between traditional timber and ecological/restoration-based organizations
- Workforce Development – Both soft skill and technical skill development needed in workforce
- Access to less expensive timber harvest plans for landowners with smaller parcels, and/or traditionally non-salable timber for alternative wood products

Agriculture – (Meeting held 7/17/2025)

- Explore the feasibility of animal processing facility with regional partners in Lake and Sonoma County. Research grant opportunities and possible operators
- Work with Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (WANB), Mendocino Wine Growers Association (MWGA), Mendocino County Farm Bureau (MCFB) to coordinate WANB resources to align with training needs
- Survey local farmers and agricultural producers regarding missing support services, relay information to local SBDC, chambers and other agencies to share with local entrepreneurs as potential new business or additional services
- Facilitate establishing a committee to develop county-wide/regional branding, or support further development of “Love Local Mendo” buy local campaign with Visit Ukiah
- Coordinate educational opportunities for farmers to learn cost saving or effective ways to develop additional cash flow streams

Behavioral Health – (Meeting held 3/3/2025)

- Mendocino College Behavioral Health Internships
- Stipend Structure for County Internships

Cannabis – (Meeting held 3/27/2025)

- Collaborative Marketing w/Tourism, Wine, Arts and Heritage
- Co-Operative Regional Branding
- Appellations
- Microbusiness License Code Updates
- Explore Feasibility for inclusion in the Business Improvement District

Construction and Home Hardening – (Meeting held 5/21/2025)

- Collaboration with Mendocino Fire Safe Council, North Coast Builders Exchange and Mendocino County Office of Education for student education and work experience in home hardening through existing training programs
- Workshop or training for Contractors and construction students
- Support creation of informational or instructional materials, videos and resources in one place for professionals; support distribution of materials through local building departments

Microenterprise Technical Assistance Activities

2021 Microenterprise Technical Assistance Grant:

Performance Period: April 2023 – August 2025

Contractor: West Business Development Center

The final closeout of this grant is in process and the necessary public hearing for the CDBG 2021 Microenterprise Technical Assistance Grant will be held at the December 16th Board of Supervisors meeting.

2025 CDBG PI Microenterprise Technical Assistance Grant:

The CDBG PI Microenterprise Technical Assistance Grant provides technical assistance to businesses navigating permitting, site selection and governmental regulation in the process of doing business. During October and November, staff spent 21.75 hours on technical assistance and preparation for delivery of technical assistance to three entrepreneurs/businesses.

Additionally, in collaboration with the grants division, division staff is working on another application to HCD for use of CDBG PI funds for a direct loan program to small businesses in the county.