



Introduction

In October 2025, the Economic Development Division provided Technical Assistance to microenterprises and entrepreneurs, met with stakeholders to advance projects developed from industry sector meetings and worked to close out the 2021 CDBG Microenterprise Technical Assistance Grant administered by WEST Business Development Center.

Economic Development by Industry: Upcoming Sector Meetings

Division staff continue to hold meetings for the economic development by industry sector series to foster collaboration and create actionable goals for economic sustainability and growth. Five meetings have been held in 2025. The final meeting of the series will be held in December for the Arts and Recreational Tourism sector:

Arts and Recreational Tourism Economic Development Sector Meeting

Friday, December 5th 10am – 12:30pm

Boonville Veterans Memorial Building

14470 Highway 128, Boonville, CA 95415

For online attendance register [here](#).

Can't attend? Give your input via the [online survey](#).

2021 Microenterprise Technical Assistance Grant

Performance Period: April 2023 – August 2025

The Technical Assistance Grant contracted to WEST Business Development Center closed August 31, 2025. During the performance period of April 2023 to August 2025 the following work was completed:

- 232 clients received one-on-one advising and technical assistance, including participation in the Ascertain Readiness process
- 120 new entrepreneurs were onboarded through Ascertain Readiness
- 101 existing businesses received individualized support to expand or stabilize operations
- 499.99 total hours of personalized business advising were delivered
- 120 individualized service plans were developed to guide clients toward their business goals

Please see Attachment A for more information on the services provided through this grant funding.

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.

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

Please see Attachment B “Economic Development by Sector Projects” for a more detailed update.

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. Staff are currently providing technical assistance to three businesses. Staff continues to field inquiries and share applications for the program.

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.

Economic Development Events

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

2025 Sonoma County Economic Development Collaborative Fall Economic Perspective

October 23rd, 2025, Sonoma State University

Topic: How Entrepreneurship is Shaping Sonoma County’s Economy

Speakers: Jeff Bellisario, Nikko Kimzin, Mariam Martinez, Monica Lopez, Crista Luedtke and Kirk Lok

On October 23rd, 2025, division staff attended the Fall Economic Perspective hosted by Sonoma County Economic Development Collaborative. The event was comprised of two presentations, the first was a panel of local entrepreneurs and the second was an economic forecast by Jeff Bellisario, Executive Director of the Bay Area Council Economic Institute.

Redwood Region RISE Quarterly Collaborative In-Person Convening

November 5th Robinson Rancheria

As a member of the voting block for Redwood Region RISE, staff attended the in-person quarterly meeting held in Nice, 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.

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 an economic forecast presentation from Professor Robert Eyer.

Attachment A

CDBG Final Narrative – Mendocino County #21-CDBG-ED-10007 / UB-B23-029

Performance Period: April 2023 – August 2025

Administered by: West Enterprise Center, Inc. (DBA West Business Development Center)

Program Overview

West Business Development Center (West Center) successfully implemented the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Microenterprise Technical Assistance Program for Mendocino County under Contract UB-B23-029. Through this initiative, West Center provided comprehensive support to low- to moderate-income (LMI) entrepreneurs and small business owners, including one-on-one counseling, business training, outreach, and program administration in alignment with the approved scope of work. Technical assistance was provided in both English and Spanish to ensure inclusive access across all communities in the County.

Between April 2023 and August 2025, West Center delivered more than 499.99 hours of business advising and support, serving 232 individual clients, 101 Businesses served, including 120 new entrepreneurs who entered the program through the Ascertain Readiness process. A total of 120 individualized service plans were developed to help clients establish, strengthen, or expand their microenterprises.

Direct Program Administration

West Center maintained full compliance with all CDBG administrative and reporting requirements throughout the grant term. Each quarter, staff:

- Entered client and demographic data into the CDBG Demographic Spreadsheet and Neoserra database
- Processed client self-certification and income eligibility forms
- Submitted quarterly activity reports and supporting documentation to Mendocino County
- Coordinated closely with County staff to ensure timely invoicing and contract compliance

Administrative staff contributed approximately 366 hours to data management, fiscal tracking, and reporting over the two-year program period, ensuring accuracy, transparency, and adherence to CDBG requirements.

Outreach Development

In alignment with Exhibit A of the CDBG contract, West Center implemented a bilingual marketing and outreach strategy focused on engaging LMI and Latino/Hispanic-owned businesses across Mendocino County.

Outreach activities included:

- Spanish-language campaigns through Centro de Negocios West on Facebook, Instagram, and e-newsletters
- Advertisements in local newspapers and community publications

- Collaborations with Mendocino College, local Chambers of Commerce, and workforce partners
- Continued enhancement of the West Center website to improve accessibility
- Graphic design support for digital and print materials promoting LMI and Latino/Hispanic-focused programs
- Social media campaigns highlighting client success stories and small business initiatives

These efforts expanded West Center’s visibility and accessibility, bringing essential business resources to underserved rural and minority communities.

Contracted marketing professionals Baqi Kopelman, Zack Sampsel, Cassandra Young, and Daniela Tallman contributed to content creation, photography, and video production that showcased local business success stories. In addition to these contracted partners, Aspen Logan, a West Center staff member, played a key role in facilitating marketing and outreach development, ensuring consistent coordination, bilingual messaging, and strategic alignment with CDBG goals.

These combined efforts elevated West Center’s presence countywide and led to measurable growth in bilingual and first-time business clients throughout the grant cycle.

Marketing and Outreach Narrative

Under this CDBG-funded program, West Business Development Center strategically used marketing funds to design and execute targeted outreach campaigns aimed at increasing awareness and engagement among low-to-moderate-income (LMI) business owners and entrepreneurs throughout Mendocino County. The primary goal was to expand participation in West’s complimentary and low-cost business programs and ensure equitable access for both English- and Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs.

Marketing activities were intentionally multi-channel and bilingual, designed to reach business owners where they live and work. Campaigns were implemented through:

- Social media: Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn
- Local radio: KZYX FM
- E-newsletters and website updates
- Community partnerships and event-based outreach

Key messaging emphasized empowerment, access, and growth—highlighting West’s no-cost advising and training programs. Campaigns featured real client success stories and culturally relevant imagery to build trust and demonstrate tangible community impact.

These efforts produced measurable results, including:

- Increased engagement and awareness among LMI and Spanish-speaking business owners
- Higher participation in bilingual workshops and one-on-one advising sessions
- A 25% increase in social media reach and a 10% increase in bilingual newsletter subscriptions
- Positive feedback from community partners such as the Chamber of Commerce and City of Fort Bragg, citing greater visibility and awareness of West’s programs among underserved communities

By directing CDBG marketing resources toward inclusive and equitable outreach, West Business Development Center significantly expanded access to essential business support services for low-income and Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs and strengthened the visibility of programs that foster community resilience and economic vitality.

Workshops and Group Trainings (Expanded Details)

West Center also delivered workshops designed to meet the needs of rural and low-to-moderate-income (LMI) entrepreneurs. These sessions focused on building digital skills, online business development, and awareness of emerging technologies relevant to small business owners.

Unlocking the Power of Online Sales

Selling online presents a powerful opportunity for businesses to boost sales and expand their customer base. Whether you're a small startup or an established company, many businesses have successfully embraced e-commerce strategies to operate virtually. This includes integrating tools such as social commerce, delivery services, virtual consultations, online networking events, and even hosting health and wellness classes.

However, getting started can feel overwhelming. From choosing the right platform to juggling both physical and digital storefronts, the challenges are real.

In this webinar, we helped participants move forward by covering:

- How to begin shifting some or all of your business online
- An overview of popular e-commerce platforms and how to evaluate them
- A step-by-step guide: the 10 essential steps to successfully launch your e-commerce strategy

The Pitfalls of Artificial Intelligence – The Importance of Cybersecurity

AI is more than a buzzword—it's a transformative technology that is changing the way we do nearly everything, including cybersecurity. With far-reaching implications for how personal and sensitive information is handled, it's important for business owners to understand what AI is and isn't, what it can and can't do, and how it is already impacting daily operations.

This webinar examined how to use popular Generative AI (GenAI) systems responsibly, highlighting privacy and security considerations, as well as the ethical and legal questions surrounding AI use in business. Participants gained practical knowledge about protecting their data and integrating secure digital practices into their operations.

These sessions reached both English- and Spanish-speaking participants, emphasizing practical applications for LMI and rural business owners, and contributed to digital literacy and business resilience across Mendocino County.

Client Success Stories

Fleeky Beauty by Cristina Nava Franco



Fleeky Beauty by Cristina Nava Franco blossomed from a dream into a thriving business in downtown Ukiah. After nearly two years renting a station in a friend's shop, Cristina took a leap of faith in February 2021 by leaving her full-time job to pursue her passion full time. Specializing in semi-permanent makeup, microblading, lip blushing, threading, henna tattoos, and other beauty services, Cristina envisioned creating a welcoming, high-quality salon that reflected the needs and culture of Mendocino County's Latino community.

Through the CDBG Microenterprise Technical Assistance Program, Cristina received personalized business advising from West Center that helped her refine her business plan, strengthen her financial management, and develop strategies to expand her client base. With continued guidance and mentorship, she moved into her own brick-and-mortar salon on West Church Street in Ukiah.



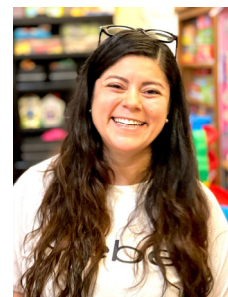
Her savvy use of Instagram and Facebook—supported by technical assistance from West Center—helped her attract a loyal following and grow her business sustainably. Today, Cristina proudly offers her services in a vibrant salon infused with her creativity and care. Her journey demonstrates how determination, the right resources, and targeted technical assistance can empower entrepreneurs to turn their vision into a successful enterprise.



Macias Family Bluebutterfly Dayschool & Daycare

Macias Family Bluebutterfly Dayschool & Daycare in Ukiah, founded by Veronica and Abraham Macias, was born from a lifelong passion for teaching and a deep desire to inspire the next generation.

Veronica's journey—from a young, widowed immigrant to a certified early childhood educator and business owner—is a testament to resilience, determination, and purpose.



Through the CDBG Microenterprise Technical Assistance Program, Veronica received personalized guidance and one-on-one business advising from West Center. With this support, she navigated complex childcare licensing and regulatory requirements, formalized her business structure, and strengthened her operations and financial planning.

West Center's continued assistance helped Veronica transform her home daycare into a safe, welcoming learning environment filled with educational tools and a nurturing atmosphere where

children thrive. Her unwavering dedication and willingness to learn have made Macias Family Bluebutterfly Dayschool & Daycare a trusted and inspiring space for families in Mendocino County.

Veronica's story reflects the heart of the CDBG program—empowering local entrepreneurs to turn their vision into sustainable businesses that strengthen their communities.

Program Outcomes and Impact

The CDBG Microenterprise Technical Assistance Program delivered measurable, community-centered outcomes that strengthened Mendocino County's small business ecosystem.

- 232 clients received one-on-one advising and technical assistance, including participation in the Ascertain Readiness process.
- 120 new entrepreneurs were onboarded through the Ascertain Readiness process
- 101 existing businesses received individualized support to expand or stabilize operations
- 499.99 total hours of personalized business advising were delivered
- 120 individualized service plans were developed to guide clients toward their business goals

Entrepreneurs represented a diverse range of industries, with support provided across eight key sectors countywide, including:

- Accommodation and Food Services
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- Construction
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Manufacturing
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Retail Trade
- Service Establishments

These outcomes demonstrate West Center's ongoing commitment to equitable, bilingual, and data-driven support for low- to moderate-income entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout Mendocino County.

Conclusion

West Business Development Center met or exceeded all program objectives outlined in the original proposal for Contract UB-B23-029. By combining data-driven accountability with human-centered service delivery, the program strengthened the foundation for small business growth, equity, and economic vitality throughout Mendocino County. West Center's collaborative, bilingual, and community-based approach continues to empower local entrepreneurs, create pathways to economic opportunity, and build long-term resilience within the County's diverse and rural business community.

Prepared by: Sasha Acevedo - Client Care Specialist

West Business Development Center

Date: October, 30th 2025

Attachment B

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY SECTOR PROJECTS

MEETING DATE	SECTOR	SECTOR IDENTIFIED ISSUE OR OPPORTUNITY	PROJECT	LEAD ORGANIZATION	ECON DEV ROLE	ESTIMATED TIMELINE	UPDATES	STATUS	TARGETED OUTCOMES
1 March 3rd 2025	Behavioral Health	Difficulty recruiting and retaining BH workers at all levels	Mendocino College BH Internships	Econ Dev Division, Mendocino College	Lead	Fall 2025	Mendocino College has been connect to Dr. Jenine Miller. College and Econ Dev to coordinate in person event at beginning of fall semester. Met w/Pamela, Molly and Filemon at Mendocino	Coordinating w/college for a fall internship program	Placement of Mendocino College Students in County of Mendocino Behavioral Health Department
2 March 3rd 2025	Behavioral Health	Lack of access to paid internships in region, affects recruitment and hiring path into F/T employment	Stipend Structure for County Internships	Econ Dev Division	Lead	Spring 2026	Met with CoCo 5/9/2025 regarding feasibility of stipend structure	Scheduling meeting with BH Dept head and CoCo to discuss further	Create a stipend structure for payment to interns, to allow for future grant funding opportunities to pay BH interns on a stipend basis.
3 March 27th 2025	Cannabis	Desire to build cross-industry partnerships	Collaborative Marketing w/Tourism, Wine Arts and Heritage	Econ Dev is lead - will hand off to partner org after meeting 2 or 3	Lead	Fall 2025 for handoff, fall 2026 for deliverables	Held initial meeting w/MCA, GUTBA, RISE on 6/10/2025. Looking for grant opportunities to fund marketing development.	Priorities and projects identified (1) cannabis tourism market positioning, (2) events for exposure (not consumption), (3) build relationships with Latino and minority communities in cannabis	Support integration of legal cannabis producers and farmers into arts, tourism and wine. Develop cohesive clear market positioning for local cannabis tourism that dispels old bias ('murder mtn') focuses on family/heritage/small farmer/rural living
4 March 27th 2025	Cannabis	Opportunity to develop regional brand identity around quality, small-farm (organic), heritage cannabis cultivation	Co-Operative or Regional Branding	MCA or GUTBA	Participant	Fall/Winter 2026	Held initial meeting w/MCA, GUTBA, RISE on 6/10/2025 and follow up meeting 8/18/2025. Looking for potential funding and lead for development.	In progress - Sequential project to above Collaborative Marketing	Increase and support local legal cannabis creating niche market/market differentiation
5 March 27th 2025	Cannabis	Need for ability to differentiate crops and based on regions and climate backed by a regulatory body designation	Appellations	Origins Council and Agriculture Dept	Watching/participant	In-progress	Strategic Meeting 9/5 between Ag Dept and CDFA regarding new Appellations Program	Ag Dept has been working with Origins Council, and set meeting with CDFA	Create designated appellations to help build awareness of uniqueness of cannabis grown within Mendocino County

6	March 27th 2025	Cannabis	Permitting processes are challenging due to different requirements between state and county for microbusiness license. County microbusiness license has limitations/zoning requirements that limits accessibility to permit acquisition.	Microbusiness License Code Updates	GGC, Haschak, PBS, Cannabis Dept	Participant	Will got to BOS September 2025	GGC met 6/25/2025 - PBS reviewed microbusiness license differences between state and county	GGC and PBS to review microbusiness license for alignment with state microbusiness license and permitting requirements	Adapt code/permitting process that allows for a more streamlined process for applicant in state and county permitting. Review requirements of microbusiness license to increase accessibility to licensing in different zoning or w/o residence on property
7	March 27th 2025	Cannabis	Desire to build cross-industry partnerships	Explore Feasibility for Inclusion in BID	Econ Dev Division	Lead, will transfer to MCTC if possible	Winter 2025	Contacted CoCo 6/11/2025 about feasibility of inclusion	Ask Visit Mendocino to include cannabis in marketing, events and promotion	Cannabis cultivators and/or dispensaries included in BID/MCTC marketing and campaign
8	May 21st 2025	Construction Home Hardening Fire Mitigation	Emerging industry - there is a lack of trained or knowledgeable workforce. There is a need to educate youth entering in construction jobs on benefits and practices around home hardening.	Collaboration with MFSC, NCBE and MCOE - student education and work in home-hardening	MFSC and MCOE	Participant	Spring 2026	Attended initial meeting 6/5/25 with MFSC (Scott Cratty) Mendocino College (Noel Woodhouse), MCOE (Eric Crawford), NCBE (Natalie Spackmen). NCBE, MCOE and MFSC are coordinating adding home hardening	MFSC, MCOE, NCBE are leading coordination for educational events	Create educational and hands-on experience to youth in construction oriented programs to learn home hardening requirements and skills
9	May 21st 2025	Construction Home Hardening Fire Mitigation	Emerging industry - there is a lack of trained or knowledgeable workforce in the general contracting and trades professions as to regulatory recommendations and insurance requirements	Workshop/training for Contractors and Construction Students	Econ Dev Division	Lead	Fall/Winter 2026	Met w/IBHS 5/15/2025. IBHS, MFSC agreed to participate in workshop/training for home hardening	Work w/contacts from IBHS, MFSC, UCANR, to develop and coordinate a 1-day workshop at Mendocino College. Use CDBG PI Mirco-Enterprise Funding to fund workshop	Educate current and future contractors on home hardening best practices, priority retrofitting, agency resources, insurance requirements. Create a knowledgeable and skill labor force in home hardening
10	May 21st 2025	Construction Home Hardening Fire Mitigation	Emerging industry - changing regulatory (zone 0) and insurance requirements. There is a need for accessible, up-to-date, and easy to understand information on best practices and potential requirements for home hardening for contractors, tradesman, and homeowners.	Support creation of information or instructional material, videos and resources in one place for professionals. Support distribution of materials through local building departments	MFSC and Econ Dev Division	Participant	Winter 2025	Delivered MFSC materials to Mendocino PBS 6/19/2025. Emailed other cities 6/20/2025 - Ft. Bragg and Willits are on board to have materials in the PBS/Community Development Depts as well. Emailed MFSC 6/21/2025 to arrange to have materials delivered. Emailed CalFire 6/23/2025 inquiring about CalFire materials	In-process - distribute home hardening best practices materials from MFSC to planning & building offices of local jurisdictions	Gather and/or create content that is available in easy to consume media format, ex video shorts, one page pdfs, with relevant information. Increase awareness of general population focusing on homeowners, contractors to recommendations for home hardening practices. Work collaboratively with PRRM for creation of materials.

11	July 17th 2025	Agriculture	Regional interest in/need for meat processing facility (Redwood Region RISE has funded feasibility study in Del Norte, still far for local producers)	Explore feasibility of animal processing facility with regional partners and neighboring Counties. Research grant opportunities to fund.	Economic Development Division	Lead	Winter 2026	Discussed with Lake County and Sonoma County EDC staff to assess neighboring counties needs.	In process - discussed with both Sonoma County and Lake County staff. Reviewing feasibility study	Small scale, humane meat processing facility within 2 hours of most locations in Mendocino County
12	July 17th 2025	Agriculture	Place-based marketing/cooperative branding and/or cooperative distribution	Facilitate establishing a committee/group that will develop county-wide branding, or infuse "Love Local Mendocino" buy local campaign	Economic Development Division	Lead - then hand off	Winter 2026	Facilitated meeting with stakeholders (RRRISE Tourism Sector, Visit Ukiah, MPG, MCA, MWGA) 6/10 and 8/18. Looking for grant opportunities to support development of brand identity or for infusion into Love Local Mendocino	In process - met with local agencies, Visit Ukiah, RRRRISE Arts & Tourism Sector Lead, Mendocino Wine Growers, Mendocino Cannabis Alliance, Mendocino Producers Guild to discuss collaborative marketing efforts	Mendocino County place-based marketing and cooperative branding - create platform for small local businesses
13	July 17th 2025	Agriculture	Basic local support services/businesses - ex: closest scale repair is Santa Rosa	Survey local farmers (and retired farmers) as to missing support services, relay information to local SBDC, chambers and other agencies to share with local entrepreneurs as potential new business or additional services	Economic Development Division, County of Mendocino Agriculture Department	Co-lead	Spring 2026	Drafting survey to agricultural businesses, will send to Agriculture Department for review prior to publishing	In progress - collaborate with Ag Dept, SBDC, EDFC to distribute survey, then develop and distribute information for needed services	Create report for local SBDC, EDC and local educational institutions to reference to help support start-ups or current small businesses in providing needed services
14	July 17th 2025	Agriculture	Safety trainings that are affordable and on-site or local and bilingual in pesticides (DPR), heat (Cal OSHA), FSMA, sexual harassment	Work with Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (WANB), Mendocino Wine Growers Association (MWGA)	WANB, Farm Bureau (MCFB), Mendocino Wine Growers Association (MWGA)	Participant/watch	Spring 2026	WANB has resources to pay for on-site and/or bilingual trainer for different required safety trainings	In progress - WANB, MCFB and MWGA are coordinating programs	Create accessible, onsite and bilingual training opportunities for local businesses and employees
15	July 17th 2025	Agriculture	Support from County Agriculture Department to take stance on state regulations, voice support/back Farm Bureau or other agencies, brings validity to voices	Legislative platform - additions, edits for continued support of farmers at state and federal level, or set up channels for communication between Farm Bureau and Agriculture Department	TBD - Farm Bureau, Wine Growers Association, Mendocino County Farm Bureau, Good Farm Fund	Participant/watch	Sep-26	Work with Ag Dept to include language in Legislative Platform to support farmers at state and federal level	Updates to Legislative Platform due end of September	Support lines of communication between the Farm Bureau, Wine Growers Association, Agriculture Dept, BOS, via Legislative Platform

