



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2016

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FROM: STEVE DUNNICLIFF & DEBRA DOCKINS

RE: SONOMA MENDOCINO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT COMPREHENSIVE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (SMEDD CEDS)

Sonoma County and Mendocino County share similar economic opportunities and challenges which can be addressed more efficiently and effectively working together on a regional basis. The District has been working with a consultant since January to complete a CEDS that encompasses both counties. Each county had completed a CEDS in the past, but applying for designation as a federally-funded District requires that a current CEDS be completed that covers the entire region.

Extensive public participation went into completing the Sonoma Mendocino CEDS, titled "*Innovate, Sustain, and Compete*", including an online community survey (English and Spanish) that received 353 responses, 55 public sector and private sector organizations invited to give input through interviews, and two public workshops, held in Santa Rosa and Ukiah, attended by 80 people. In addition, drafts of the CEDS have been posted online for public review, and District board meetings were open to the public. Sonoma and Mendocino Workforce Investment Board (WIB) members, also on the District participated actively in preparing and reviewing the CEDS.

The Sonoma Mendocino CEDS focused on four core themes: (1) economic diversification; (2) human capital; (3) innovation and entrepreneurship; and (4) inclusive economic development, or the idea that true economic development happens only when as many residents as possible are able to fully participate in it. There are nine goals identified under those four core themes, all critical to achieve the vision of a sustainable, inclusive, and diverse economy. But perhaps most important is the need for greater focus on workforce development. While the regional economy may be working well for residents who have the education, training, and wages to keep up with the rising cost of living, a large and increasing share of our residents do not.

The CEDS is a high-level roadmap for future economic development of the two-county region. If EDA approves District designation and awards funding, then resources will be in place to implement the CEDS. At that time, the designated and funded District will need to create a workplan detailing how CEDS implementation will be achieved, but workforce development is likely to be an early priority.

The CEDS includes three specific goals that will establish targets for CEDS implementation:

1. Exceed the US rate of population in the primary working age group (age 25-64) to achieve healthy and sustainable expansion of the Sonoma Mendocino labor force.
2. Raise the postsecondary completion rate for the 25-64 age group until Sonoma Mendocino again exceeds the US rate.
3. Close the postsecondary completion gap between Sonoma County and Mendocino County in the age 25-64 group.

Early implementation efforts are likely to include coordinating with education, workforce training, and other service providers on how best to achieve those three measurable goals.