



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Economic Development Liaison

Based on the latest County of Mendocino economic development report our project proposes a three-year contract to fill the need for an economic development agency that will implement a comprehensive economic development program over three years and serve as an information clearing house, helping stakeholders work collectively to secure funds, streamline governmental processes that inhibit economic development and oversee the implementation of the economic resiliency plan. As a steward and broker between industry sectors and among the public, and nonprofit sectors we will build new local and regional industry clusters to strengthen existing networks, pursue joint initiatives, and mitigate risks.

PROJECT GOALS

Year 1

1. Create a countywide business development program that will serve as an information clearing house for the advancement of industry, workforce, and capital
2. Coordinate grant activities to capture additional state and federal infrastructure funding
3. Provide recommendations for improved and streamlined governmental processes that currently inhibit economic development.
4. Orchestrate the ongoing implementation of the economic resiliency and CEDS plans.

PROJECT PARTNERS

SEE APPENDIX A below

AGENCY CAPACITY

APPENDIX B

SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES

Year 1

- Establishment of County's **Key Performance Indicators** (KPI) on economic performance
- **Semi-annual reports** to the Board of Supervisors on economic indicators and efforts
- Socialize the Economic Resiliency Roadmap among city jurisdictions
- A means to keep **remote regions informed** about economic activities
- A method to improve county **customer service** on website and lower barriers to entry for businesses, and improve ordinances impacting business permitting
- Create new **business friendly content** for the county website that will result in a better user experience for businesses seeking help
- A program to **advocate for more funding** and services to ensure improved business development and infrastructure (i.e., broadband, water, alternative housing)
- Prepare a **business toolkit** for use by all agencies to guide businesses toward successful launch in Mendocino County
- Engage with the business community in **long-term disaster planning** in the face of pandemic, wildfire, drought, etc.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES

Partnership

Create a public-private partnership committed to countywide economic planning and development.

Coordination

Coordinate with agencies to connect economic development to an improved talent pipeline

Identification

Identify and encourage alternative solutions to core economic development challenges (i.e., housing, broadband, energy)

Data Collection

Establish baseline metrics to secure resources to advance comprehensive economic development strategies.

Dialogue

Regular ongoing dialogue with key state, and regional officials to secure resources that advance Mendocino County’s comprehensive economic development strategies.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

West Business Development Center will implement this program over the next three (3) years. Below is a preliminary first year timeline to lay foundation towards goals.

MONTH	ACTIVITIES
Aug-Sept (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote region information sessions on economic planning • Explore ways to establish a pool of grant funding • Planning of Redwood Region Economic Development conference • Convene and participate meetings to determine business workflow process
Oct- Dec (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify chronic stressors and potential inhibitor to economic growth • Framework for delivery of county business assistance • Six-month economic report to Board of Supervisors (dec)(Spanish/English) • Redwood Region Economic Development conference (oct) • California Economic Summit participation (nov) • Develop economic emergency assistance disaster plans to mitigate the impact of economic disruptions (Spanish/English) • Remote region information sessions on economic activities • A program to advocate for more funding and services
Jan-March (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for economic growth • Develop new “business friendly” content for county website • Remote region information sessions on economic activities • More online services developed on county website • Lower barriers to entry for businesses through clear customer facing communication of ordinances impacting business planning and permitting • Convene meetings to explore diversification and wage issues
April-June (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six-month economic report to Board of Supervisors • Remote region information sessions on economic activities • Provide economic emergency assistance disaster plans to mitigate the impact of economic disruptions (Spanish/English) • Convene meetings to determine new workflows for 2022-2023 • Lay foundation for expansion and retention capability measured by business licenses, jobs retained, jobs created

ANNUAL BUDGET

Budget Item	Activity and Purpose/Justification	Hours	Rate	Cost
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine four baseline KPI's that will be most useful to determine economic growth. • Determine six specific business inhibitors and provide action plan for correction. • Documentation of grant funding opportunities • Baseline surveys 	330	\$120. per hour	\$39,600
Content Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 pages of new website content • Online portal for business license • Content developed for business toolkit • Framework for Business assistance networks • Business toolkit • Spanish translations as needed 	380	\$110. per hour	\$41,800
Reports and Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi annual economic report • Annual economic report • Remote regions presentations • 4 City Council annual economic updates 	230	\$110. per hour	\$25,300
Stakeholder Engagements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversification and wage issues • New workflows for 2022-2023 • Disaster planning for businesses • Workforce programs aligned with industry 	450	\$100. per hour	\$45,000
Subtotal				\$151,700
Indirect (10%)				\$22,755
TOTAL				\$174,455

Measurable Results

- Stronger business assistance network that provides expansion and retention capacity measured by business licenses, jobs retained, jobs created
- Grant clearinghouse to measure grants applied and received to bring infrastructure funds into the county
- Established Key Performance Indicators on economic performance
- Semi-annual report tied to key indicators and economic development efforts
- A more informed constituency on what can and can't be accomplished
- A baseline understanding of specific barriers for businesses
- A common set of guiding principles for stakeholders to conduct their work and to measure success
- Once tools are created metrics on usage will be provided
- Business toolkit for use by all agencies to guide sustainable business development

PROJECT PARTNERS

APPENDIX A

- North Coast Opportunities
- Office of Education County of Mendocino
- Healthy Mendocino
- Economic Development & Financing Corporation
- Greater Ukiah Business & Tourism Alliance
- Willits Chamber of Commerce
- Mendocino Coast Chamber of Commerce
- Visit Mendocino County
- Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (Equus)
- Broadband Consortium
- Arts Council of Mendocino County
- Municipal Advisory Councils (Westport, Gualala, Laytonville, Hopland, Redwood Valley)
- Mendocino Community College
- Community Foundation of Mendocino County
- Mendocino Council of Governments
- Rural Communities Housing Development Corporation

AGENCY CAPACITY

APPENDIX B

For over 30 years the nonprofit organization, West Business Development Center (West Center), has delivered on its mission to provide no-cost, high impact business expertise to the County of Mendocino's diverse small business community and emerging entrepreneurs. In 2020, at the height of the pandemic, West Center served over 734 businesses, delivered \$10 million in loans to the business community, and administered \$724,000 in grants to 143 entrepreneurs. As a local economic development agency, we are proud to say more than 98% of the services, vendors, and products we secure are local. Our staff and advisors live, shop, and pay taxes in the community they serve. We have given back over \$1 million to the Mendocino County economy over the past 15 months.

West Center continues to build our capacity to meet the demand. We now have 10 full-time employees. In addition to the CEO, these include a Director of Marketing, Director of Operations, Director of Strategic Programs, Training Coordinator, Business Operations Manager, and a Finance Operations Manager. Our Customer Care Team includes two full-time business advisors, an intake coordinator, and an Hispanic outreach coordinator. We continue to serve the entire county with our locations in Fort Bragg and Ukiah, serving coastal and inland clients, respectively. Since March 2020 we have transformed our internal technology systems and built up our capacity to serve the community remotely. All staff is trained to work virtually to ensure there is never down time that might occur due to emergencies or disasters.

Over the years West Center has delivered core programs to keep pace with the needs of the county's business community. We continue to provide foundational financial training programs that assist individuals with cash management and access to capital. Our entrepreneurship programs include building a new generation of start-up businesses and continuation of our business acceleration program *StartUp Mendocino*, which in its first year brought over 200 residents to listen to the pitch presentations of emerging entrepreneurs catching the attention of the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development advocate, Isabel Guzman who is now the new Administrator of the federal Small Business Administration.

For ten years we have successfully managed the county's Community Development Block Grant microenterprise technical assistance program. This program requires robust detailed reporting but it benefits thousands of individuals with limited financial resources to launch and expand their businesses helping them attain their goal of financial independence.

West Center has always been ready to help the community during its most difficult times. In the aftermath of the wildfires of 2017, we created an emergency disaster program *What to Do When Disaster Strikes Your Business* to limit the down time of businesses after a natural disaster. In April 2020 we launched our first COVID resource page and *Open for Business* web page to assist local consumers in finding businesses open during the early days of shelter-in-place orders.

In November 2019 West Center was hired by the County of Mendocino to be the project manager for the development of an economic resiliency plan. We established the governance, vision setting, SWOT analysis, data collection, and work plans. We mobilized collaboration among diverse groups to bring forward new ideas to support economic resiliency. We created the identity *MOVE 2030: Mendocino Opportunities for building a Vibrant Economy* to establish a common vision to secure economic prosperity for Mendocino County.