

Prosperity! 2018

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2018-2023

Humboldt County
California



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A Summary of Humboldt County's 2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, or CEDS, is a plan that helps guide local economic development efforts. It is also required for a region to be eligible for certain federal grants. Goals in writing a CEDS include deciding on and prioritizing economic development initiatives and helping to plan for a vibrant and resilient economy. Humboldt County produces a new CEDS every five years.

In the past, this document has focused on several "industry clusters." Industry clusters are related by industry, geography, shared workforce needs, transportation issues, or other factors. Certain clusters, named the "Targets of Opportunity" gained attention because they each fit a number of criteria including providing good jobs, sending exports outside the region, and producing growth over time. The Targets of Opportunity were:

1. **Diversified Health Care**
2. **Specialty Food, Flowers & Beverages**
3. **Building & Systems Construction**
4. **Investment Support Services**
5. **Management & Innovation Services**
6. **Niche Manufacturing**

In addition to the six industries above, two additional industries that did not fit all of the criteria were selected for additional focus: Tourism and Forest Products.

Previously the CEDS focused on identifying and taking advantage of strengths and opportunities related to the clusters, while addressing, as much as possible, weaknesses and threats. The 2018 CEDS process was initiated with a focus on these still-promising industry clusters. However, stakeholder and community input consistently revealed that the region's most pressing economic issues and promising opportunities cut across industry clusters. These include enhancing our workforce, addressing transportation and infrastructure limitations and more. As a result of these findings, 2018 CEDS is organized around cross-industry themes and strategies.

2018 CEDS

Organizers conducted over 70 stakeholder interviews, several strategy sessions and distributed 18,000 surveys to Humboldt County citizens seeking their input on the local economy.

Consultants and staff working for the County of Humboldt and the California Center for Rural Policy then analyzed the input and distilled an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT).

This analysis revealed the need for two overarching strategies:

- ▶ *Strategy 1: Support Efforts to Address Infrastructure Needs, especially for Transportation and Broadband*
- ▶ *Strategy 2: Support Efforts to Improve Workforce Development Programs for all Industries*