



# COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023-2027

## SIERRA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

June 2024

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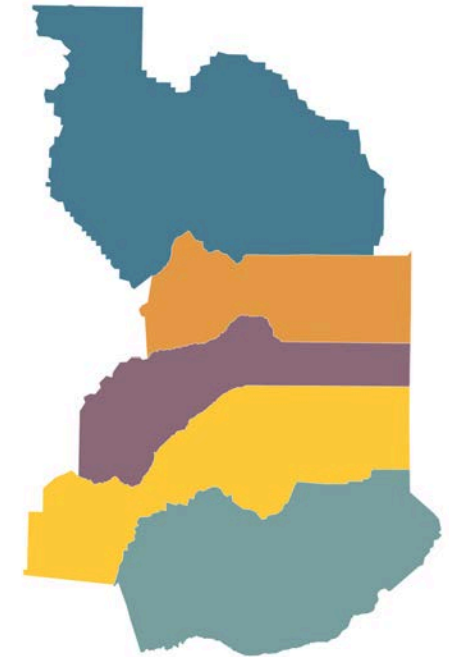
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# About the Sierra Economic Development District

The Sierra Economic Development District (SEDD) is a planning and development district designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). The SEDD is a multi-jurisdictional entity administered by Sierra Business Council (SBC).

As the region's Economic Development District, SBC is responsible for developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that identifies economic and community development priorities for the district. The SEDD is comprised of all the county governments and incorporated cities within the following five Northern California counties:

- Placer
- Nevada
- El Dorado
- Sierra
- Plumas



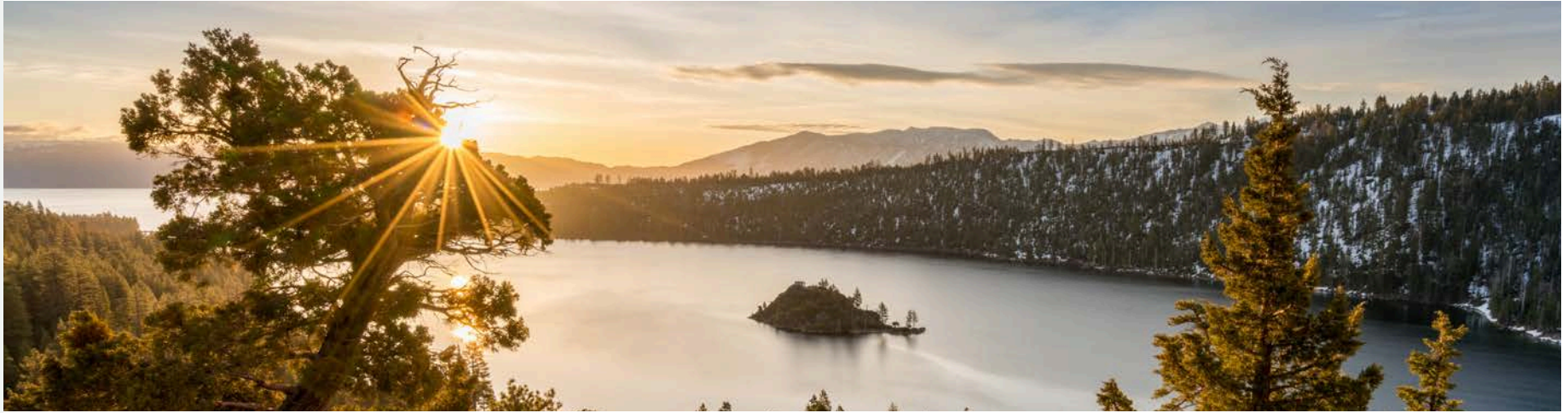
## About the CEDS

A CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. It is a planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic resiliency of a region resulting in a document created through input from public and private stakeholders that establishes a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration and prosperity. The CEDS is a cornerstone of EDA planning programs. It serves as a means to engage community leaders with a focus on the EDA's seven investment priorities: recovery and resilience, equity, manufacturing, workforce development, technology-based economic development, environmentally sustainable development, and exports and foreign direct investment.



EDA Mission:  
Promote innovation and competitiveness in order to prepare American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy





# Executive Summary

The SEDD is comprised of five counties that share common environmental, social, and economic conditions, challenges, and opportunities. While each of the five counties has its unique characteristics, this CEDS is designed to amplify their commonalities to advance economic prosperity and improve quality of life.

This CEDS articulates a strategy, action plan, and blueprint designed to achieve the region's vision. This CEDS marks a point in time but is considered a living document that will be updated with changing conditions. The CEDS captures the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), identifies economic development potential, and considers key stakeholder input to create strategies to achieve objectives, coordinate activities to implement the strategies and measure progress towards the achievement of the vision.

This CEDS was created in close collaboration with more than 98 community leaders, local government staff and elected officials, and representatives from business, education, public safety, workforce development, and key industry sectors including agriculture, technology, tourism, forestry, energy, and manufacturing. In addition, this CEDS incorporates input from nearly 1,000 responses to a focused community web-based survey.

The data research, industry sector analysis, CEDS survey, and participant input provided the basis for the SWOT. Regional strengths include the amazing geographic location and access to natural beauty, strong recreation industry, arts and culture offerings, and philanthropic community impact. Stated weaknesses were clear around housing availability and affordability, living



wage-benefitted job availability, broadband connectivity, infrastructure capacity, and climate disaster preparedness. These strengths and weaknesses also highlighted a number of economic opportunities including broadband expansion, accessible housing development, climate disaster preparedness, small business support, and increased investment in outdoor recreation. With respect to threats, the conversation centered around lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of a series of disasters that exacerbated the region’s challenges related to its rural, isolated location. Current economic threats and challenges include recovery efforts from catastrophic wildfires and extreme weather events, aging populations, the influx of tourism and new residents tasking existing infrastructure, lack of reliable broadband, low inventory of affordable or achievable housing, high cost and low availability of fire insurance, and pervasive, seasonal mono-economies in need of diversification.

The SWOT provided the baseline from which to apply this plan’s guiding principles of equity, inclusivity, impact, and resilience upon which to build the CEDS strategy and action plan. During the process of creating a strategy that would advance the SEDD’s vision of shared prosperity, equitable opportunity, and a culture of innovation in a resilient economy five goals emerged around the five core forms of capital:



**Human Capital Goal**  
Develop an inclusive and equitable workforce



**Economic Capital Goal**  
Catalyze economic diversification



**Social Capital Goal**  
Create vibrant, healthy, and resilient communities



**Natural Capital Goal**  
Build community resilience through climate adaptation and mitigation efforts



**Financial Capital Goal**  
Ensure investment readiness through regional collaboration

Each of the five goals is backed up with action items and subsequent priority projects that will advance sustainable economic development, improve resilience, and lead to prosperous communities. The projects were collectively identified by the governing board, advisory council, and community stakeholders and represent opportunities to achieve the goals in pursuit of the district’s mission. A more comprehensive project listing is included as an appendix and will be updated on a regular basis with input from local jurisdictions, the governing board, and the advisory committee.

# CEDS Process & Timeline

The CEDS process was launched officially in August 2022 with a convening of the governing board to determine the project vision and guiding principles. The year-long effort of research, interviews, data gathering, and surveys culminated in the August 2023 release of the document draft for comment and the finalization of priority projects with inclusion in the CEDS.



**August 2022**  
Convene CEDS Governing Board to establish principles and vision

**September 2022 - May 2023** Perform economic, demographic, and climate vulnerability research

**December 2022 - June 2023** Conduct web-based survey and draft preliminary SWOT; Identify baseline vulnerabilities

**December 2022 - June 2023** Conduct public outreach and one-on-one interviews to codify survey results and SWOT

**June 2023 - July 2023** Align initial goals with 5 Forms of Capital and perform internal review

**August 2023** Release CEDS for public comment and convene advisory board; finalize priority projects

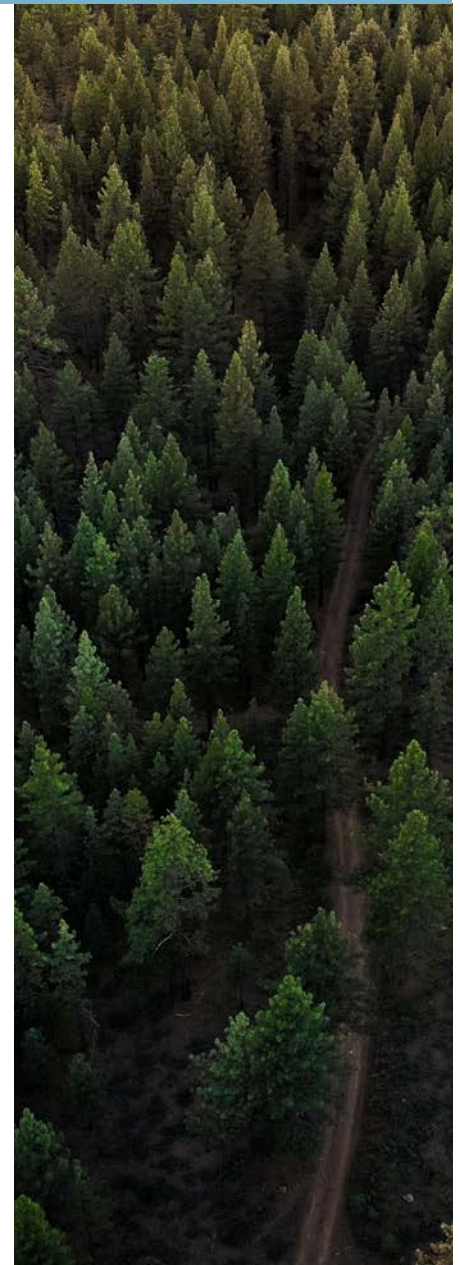
# The SEDD: A Regional Overview

## The Region

The concept of a regional economy is rooted in the people and the kind of place they want to cultivate. A regional economy must consider how best to protect and/or utilize its natural resources, transportation routes, commercial markets, suitable industries, and, most importantly, its stakeholders and relationships.

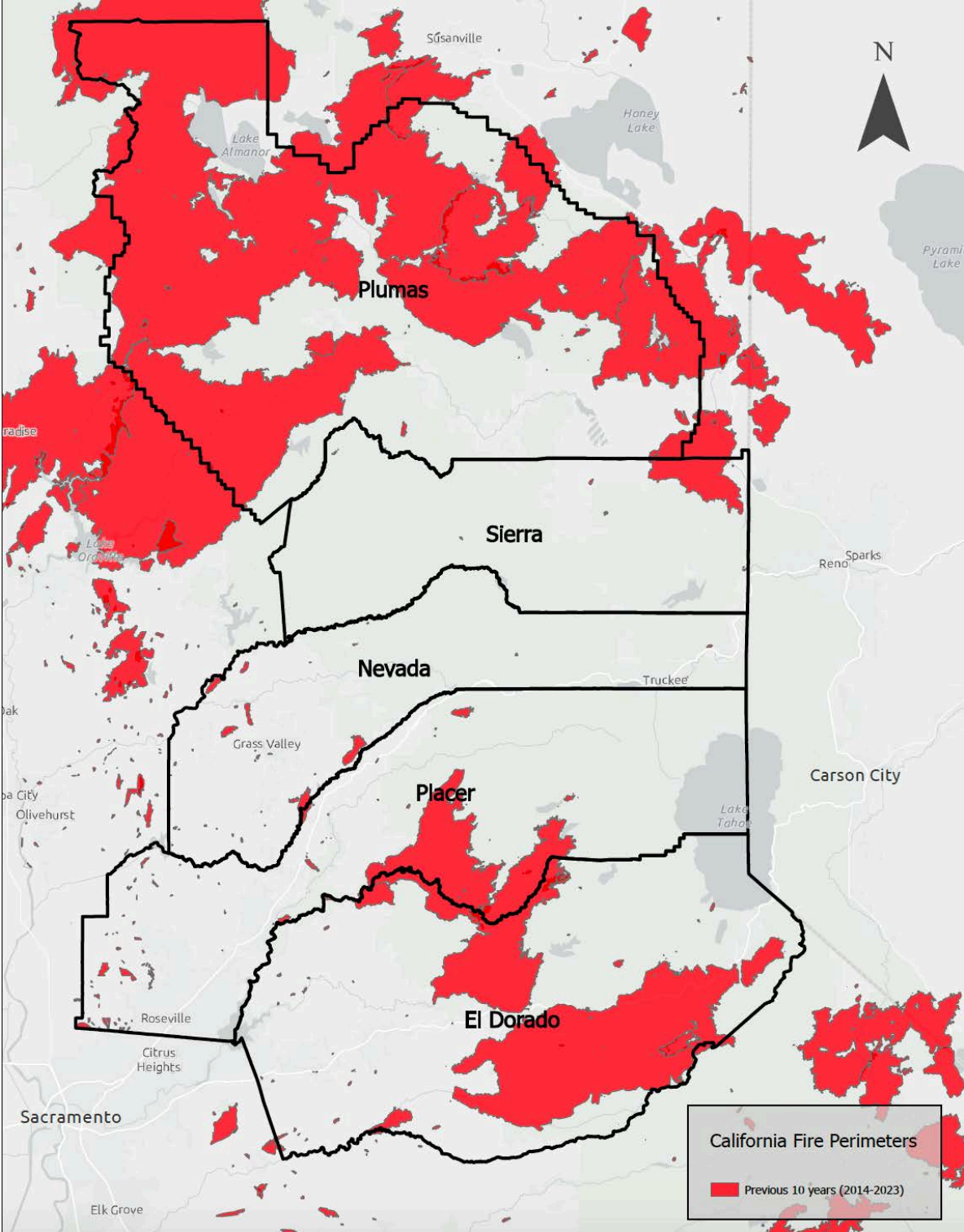
The five counties of the Sierra Economic Development District (SEDD or “District”), El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, and Sierra, are primarily rural and socio-economically and ecologically diverse. As administrators for the SEDD, Sierra Business Council (SBC) seeks to aid in the creation of prosperity through the responsible mobilization of human, economic, social, natural, and financial capital to generate a healthy and collaborative local economy. While there are many aspects of economic development, this plan focuses on preserving, creating, and attracting sustainable jobs to the region. For purposes of this CEDS, the district excludes the portions of Placer and El Dorado counties below Highway 49 (except Auburn) the emphasis of this plan is focused on the rural communities that exhibit the highest economic need. The area south of the Highway 49 corridor includes the largest cities in the region ( Roseville, Rocklin, and El Dorado Hills) have populations over 50,000 each and are not considered rural. Those communities are covered by the Valley Vision CEDS.

The five-county SEDD region includes 13 incorporated cities and a total population of just over 700,000. In general, land ownership in the CEDS region is skewed to the public sector with approximately 70% of land owned by the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, CA State Parks, and various water agencies. In addition, the region has an inordinate number of unincorporated towns creating a challenging environment for alignment on community development issues.





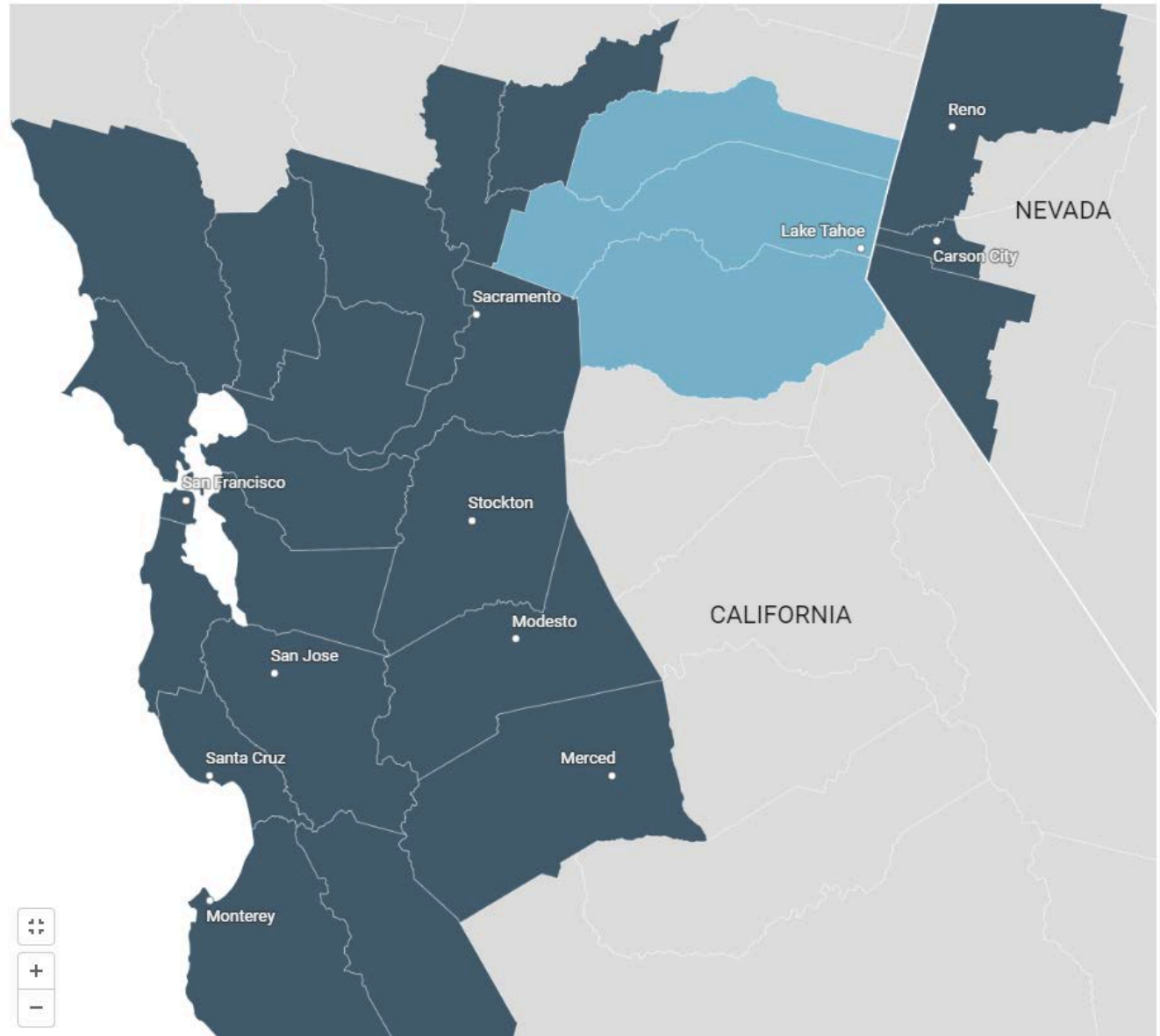
# Wildfire Activity in Sierra Economic Development District last 10 years



The SEDD region must also be viewed through the lens of the Sierra Pacific Megapolitan Area as defined by the 27-county area extending from the San Francisco Bay Area to Reno, Nevada.

The SEDD was greatly impacted by inter-regional migration during the pandemic, particularly in the foothills and eastern Nevada, Placer and El Dorado counties as remote workers relocated to these attractive rural communities. The combination of the influx of new, high-wage residents and short-term rentals has had a dramatic impact on available housing inventory and prices resulting in the displacement of low-wage workers. In addition, the subregion's population from Roseville to Reno increased by approximately 1.5 million over the past three years greatly impacting day visitation and traffic for recreational activities.

### Sierra Pacific Megapolitan Area



Counties within the SEDD and Sierra Pacific Metropolitan Area are shown in a lighter color. Sierra and Plumas County are outside the Sierra Pacific Metropolitan Area.  
Map: Sierra Business Council • Source: Megapolitan America: A New Vision for Understanding America's Metropolitan Geography • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

At the same time, the district is experiencing declining populations and aging demographics in parts of Nevada County and the entirety of Plumas and Sierra Counties.

## Labor Force

Overall, the region has a relatively strong workforce and, as of the second quarter of 2023, a low unemployment rate and poverty rates on par with statewide numbers. The more populated areas of the SEDD enjoy a relatively well-educated workforce.

### SEDD Region Age Distribution

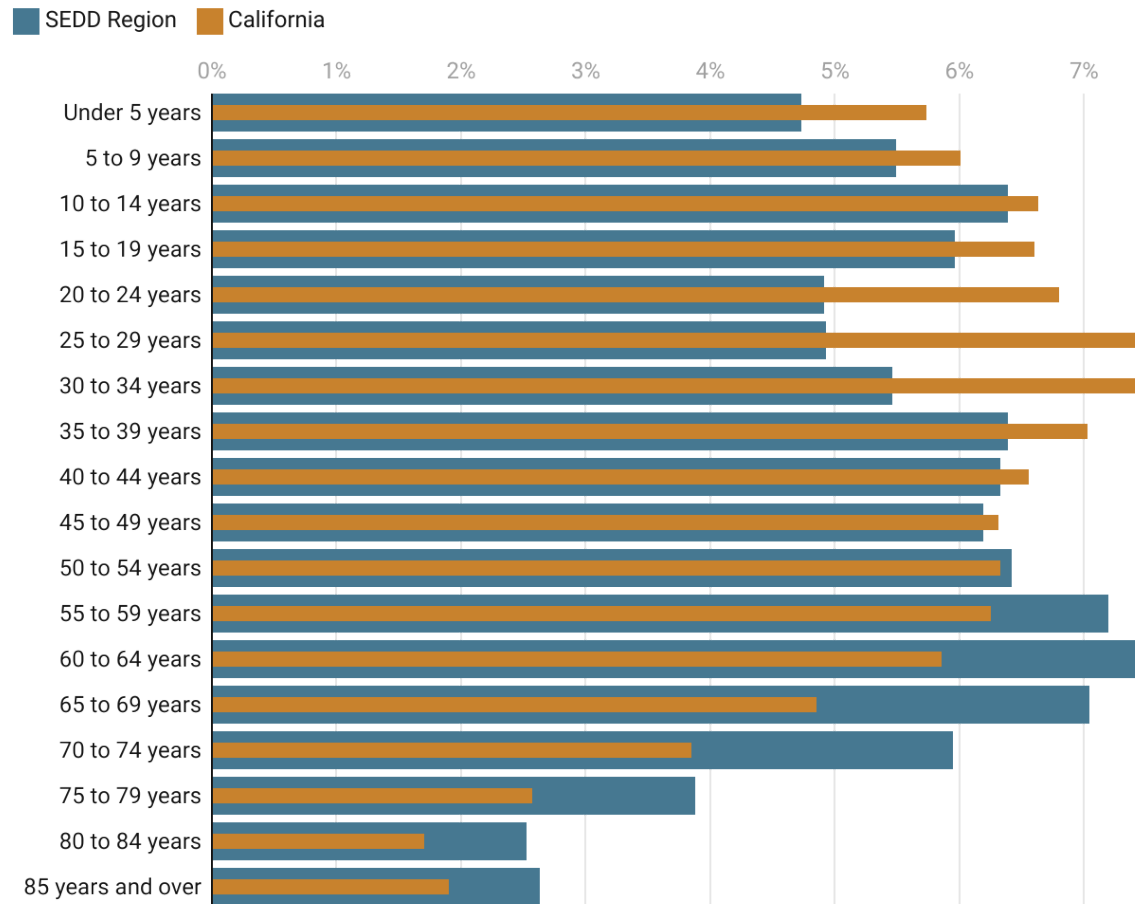


Chart: Sierra Business Council • Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2023. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C. • Created with Datawrapper

However, four key concerns have been identified related to workforce:

1. Lack of affordable workforce housing
2. Lack of living-wage jobs
3. Declining construction trade jobs
4. An aging demographic resulting in a “demographic deficit”

In particular, the smaller rural communities are experiencing a severe demographic deficit in the most productive age groups. For example, in the SEDD, the largest age group is 60-64 with severe deficits in nearly all working age groups up to age 40. This is problematic because it contributes to a declining population in rural communities and a lack of employee base. It also reduces the number of young families who tend to be the larger consumers and users of services such as school districts, healthcare, and recreation. As a general rule, communities with sustainable economic prosperity tend to have a more balanced demographic representation with a strong workforce.



# SEDD Region Demographics

	Population	Poverty Rate	Unemployment Rate
<b>Plumas County</b>	<b>19,650</b>	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>
Portola	2,427	21.1%	
<b>Sierra County</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>
Loyalton	997	17.3%	
<b>Nevada County</b>	<b>102,322</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
Grass Valley	13,964	18.2%	
Nevada City	3,142	13.3%	
Truckee	16,784	9.0%	
<b>Placer County</b>	<b>406,608</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
Rocklin	71,676	4.3%	
Roseville	148,879	6.3%	
<b>El Dorado County</b>	<b>191,713</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
Placerville	10,744	16.0%	
South Lake Tahoe	21,346	13.3%	

Table: Sierra Business Council • Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey 2022 1-year and 2018-2022 5-year estimates. • Created with Datawrapper

With respect to workforce training, the SEDD is serviced by three campuses of Sierra Community College, Lake Tahoe Community College, Feather River College, one small private four-year college, as well as a number of private vocational schools. Four major public universities are within 100 miles of the region’s core.

The area is also serviced by two workforce investment boards and the Sierra Small Business Development Center. Unemployment is considered “average” with the exception of Sierra County, Plumas County, and rural El Dorado County,

which typically experience unemployment rates double those of the rest of the region. This is primarily due to the decline of timber-related industries and the associated loss of jobs. The region as a whole exhibits a relatively high percentage of high school graduates, however this is not uniform across all counties with overall enrollment down particularly in Sierra and Plumas counties.

The Housing Challenge: There are a number of key challenges to an abundant and prosperous labor force, including lack of affordable housing, inadequate broadband, a tourism-dominated/seasonal workforce economy, and remote locations of populated areas. We know the housing issue is important because a lack of affordable housing can limit a community's ability to attract new businesses and workers to the region. Sky rocketing insurance rates and lack of availability is a compounding factor to the challenge. As mentioned, housing is typically beyond the scope of a CEDS as determined by the EDA. However, the systemic importance of housing is critical to the overall economic prosperity for the region and thus included as part of the Social Capital goal.

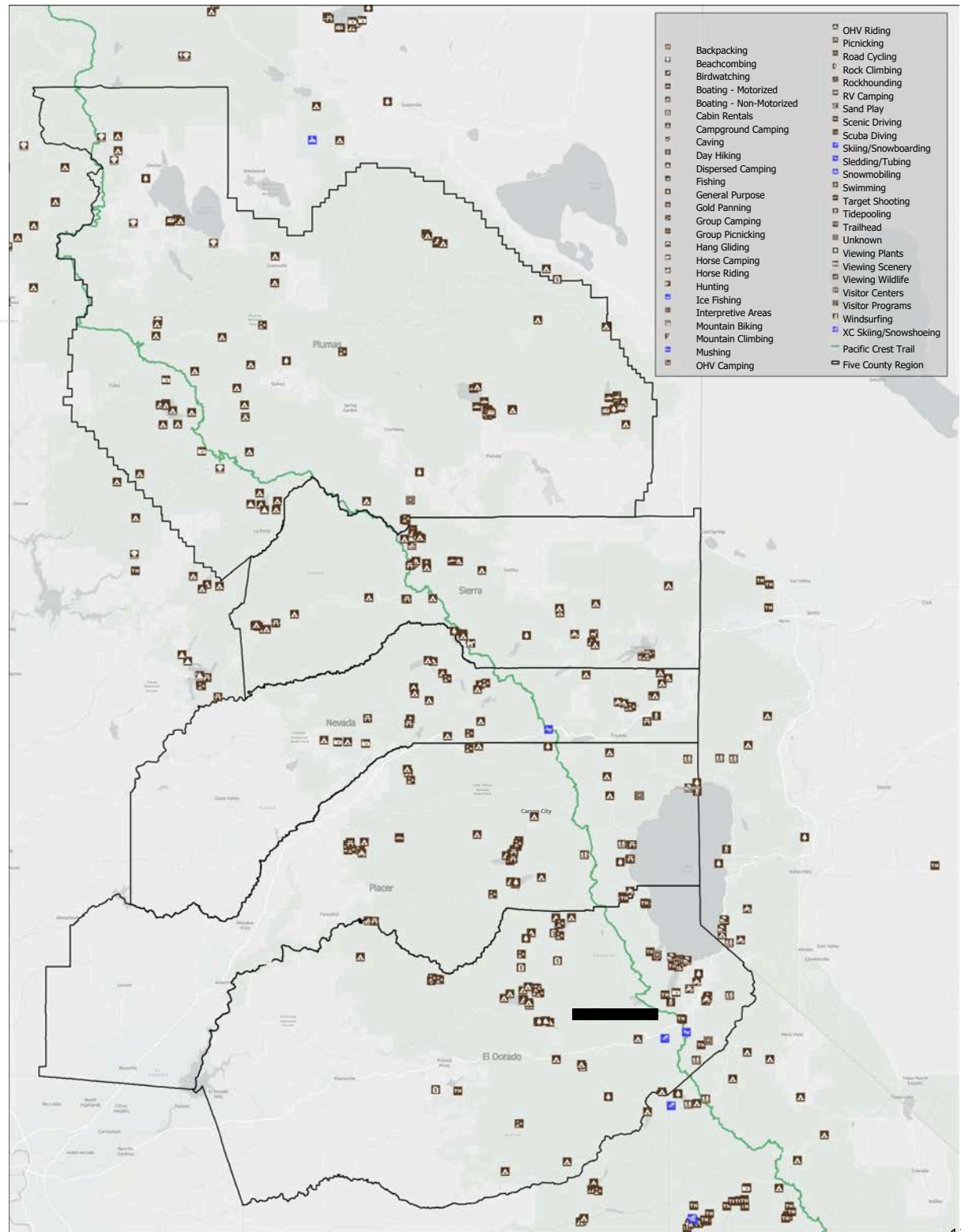


## Geographic, Climatic, and Natural Resource Profile

The SEDD covers an area of 7,639 square miles and is bisected by the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Elevations from 1,000 feet above sea level in the foothill region to over 10,000 at the mountain peaks make this one of the most geographically diverse regions of California. The unique geography provides a plethora of diverse recreation opportunities which include the El Dorado, Tahoe, Lassen and Plumas National Forests, multiple wild and scenic rivers, and the world-famous Lake Tahoe. Many recognize the Sierra region as a mecca for winter sports because of its 12 ski resorts, but it is an equally impressive summer destination with the Pacific Crest Trail crossing the entire region and access to National Forest lands. Further, Plumas and Sierra counties are considered world-class mountain biking destinations as home to the famous Downieville Downhill and Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship trail network. Principal commerce routes, like Interstate 80 and the Union Pacific rail, originate in the San Francisco Bay ports and climb over the Sierra Nevada at the Donner Pass elevation of 7,089 feet, before continuing to points east.



# Recreation Features & Amenities in Sierra Economic District





The lower elevations with milder climates boast some of the most abundant agricultural lands in Northern California and are populated by relatively small family farms and ranches. The five counties in the region rank low in terms of total production value; however, the production per acre is relatively high. According to the California Department of Agriculture 2021 Report, the total value of production by agricultural enterprises in Placer, Plumas, El Dorado, Nevada, and Sierra Counties was approximately \$251 million.<sup>1</sup> In addition to livestock (primarily dairy and beef cattle), the primary crops in the five-county region include; wine grapes, apples, rice, hemp, and alfalfa hay. Thus, agriculture is a significant factor for the district both in terms of economic development and community heritage.

## Agriculture Value of Production & Leading Commodities

County	Total Value (\$1000s)	Leading Commodities
Plumas	\$31,933	Forest Products, Cattle & Calves, Pasture (Range), Alfalfa
Sierra	\$15,904	Cattle & Calves, Pasture (Range), Alfalfa, Hay
Nevada	\$21,186	Cattle & Calves, Pasture (Range), Vegetables (Unspecified), Grapes (All)
Placer	\$114,337	Rice, Walnuts, Cattle & Calves, Almonds
El Dorado	\$72,208	Apples, Cattle & Calves, Pature (Range), Pears

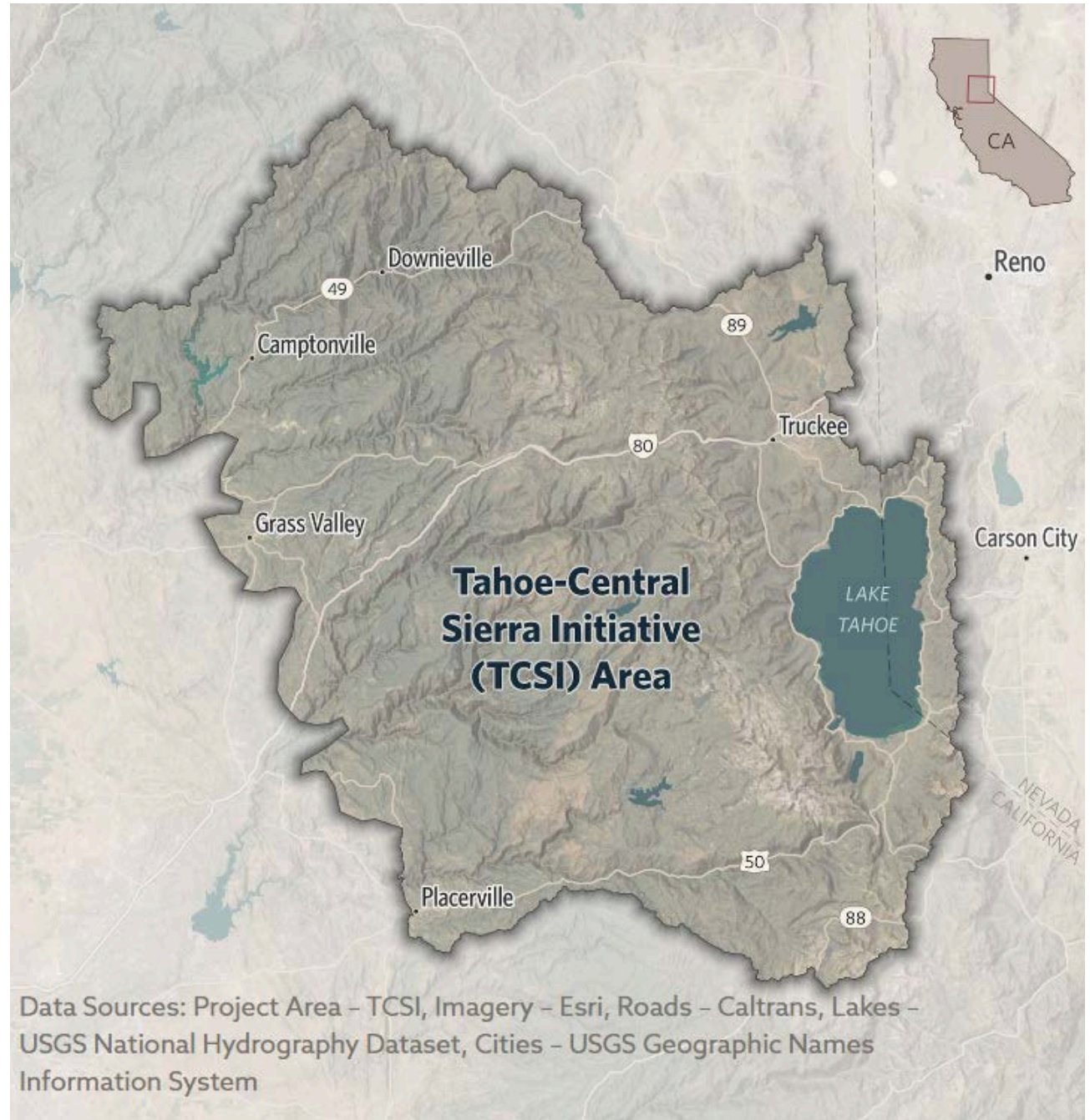
*Dollar values and leading commodities for 2021.*

Table: Sierra Business Council • Source: California Agriculture Statistics Review 2021-2022 • Created with Datawrapper

With respect to climate, the disparity in elevation makes for a wide range of weather conditions, with typically a 40-degree swing between the lower elevations and higher elevations of the region. The higher elevation Tahoe region of eastern Placer, Nevada, and El Dorado counties contains the massive winter snowpack that is vital for feeding a vast system of rivers, and reservoirs, plus the hydroelectric plants for Northern California to the west and providing most of the drinking water for the Washoe Valley to the east. Sierra and Plumas counties are home to the Upper Feather River Watershed including the North, Middle, and South forks of the Feather River, named in 1820 by Spanish explorer Captain Louis Arguello as the Rio de las Plumas, with the headwaters of the wild and scenic Middle Fork of the Feather River running from Sierra Valley, near Beckwourth, to Lake Oroville. Water from the Upper Feather River Watershed supplies the California State Water Project spanning more than 705 miles with approximately 3.2 million acre-feet of water per year for approximately 27 million downstream water users and 750,000 acres of farmland including agriculture rich areas from northern California to southern California.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Statistics/PDFs/2021\\_Ag\\_Stats\\_Review.pdf](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Statistics/PDFs/2021_Ag_Stats_Review.pdf)

In addition, a healthy snowpack is critical to the winter recreation and tourism industry, although, Plumas and Sierra counties lack much of the infrastructure to support this important economic driver. California as a whole experiences real-time water issues related to climate change and rising sea levels. The SEDD region is the source of water that mitigates impacts of climate change well beyond the actual region, making water infrastructure projects and forest/watershed restoration a key priority. Natural Resource Management in the SEDD is another critical component of the economy. The region acts as a steward for the forests and watersheds that serve the local tourism economy as well as the connected urban communities.



## Cultural Assets

Multiple major utility and water agencies handle a broad range of responsibilities including retail and wholesale supply of drinking and irrigation water, management of major water storage reservoirs that provide recreational opportunities, production of hydroelectric energy, multiple dam facilities, and surface and groundwater resource planning and management. These groups include the California Department of Water Resources, Pacific Gas & Electric, Placer County Water Agency, Nevada Irrigation District, El Dorado County Water Agency, Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District, portions of the Lahontan Regional Board, Yuba Water Agency, and the Army Corps of Engineers, among other public utility and community service districts. The nature of California water politics, while far beyond the scope of this CEDS, often leads to tension between these agencies and community and environmental groups with differing views on resource stewardship and infrastructure.

The SEDD region also includes the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative (TCSI), which brings together innovative approaches and partners to increase the pace and scale of restoration work across the region's watersheds. The TCSI creates opportunities to support a forest restoration economy and explore innovative processes, investments, and governance tools. The Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Group (RWMG) coordinates activities associated with implementation of the Upper Feather River IRWM Plan and collaborates with stakeholders in Plumas and Sierra counties and surrounding IRWM regions as part of a statewide strategic approach to planning and implementing water management programs that combine flood management, environmental stewardship, and surface water and groundwater supply actions to deliver multiple benefits across watershed and jurisdictional boundaries.





Arts and culture are key drivers of tourism and known contributors to economic vitality, education, and community well-being. The pandemic had a massive impact on the arts community as artists lost access to sales and exhibit channels and performance venues were subject to mandatory closure. Nonetheless, the region showed its resilience, and this important sector of the economy is rebounding.

The SEDD is home to an abundance of cultural and historic assets, most notably two of 14 designated California Cultural Districts: Truckee and Grass Valley/Nevada City. The districts highlight thriving cultural diversity and unique artistic identities. These communities are noted for catalyzing and inspiring art and culture through their thousands of events, annual festivals, street fairs, art walks, and studio tours. These in turn promote economic influx, retention of artists, homegrown assets, and inclusive development. In addition to the two cultural districts, all five counties have strong and active cultural arts councils.

The region also includes the gold discovery site at Sutter’s Mill in Coloma, the Donner Party’s epic survival route across the Sierra, and the original Pony Express route. The discovery of gold on the American River in 1848 sparked the 1849 California Gold Rush and the subsequent population explosion throughout the region and state. The area, known as the “Gold Country,” is home to many historic towns, preserved as tourist attractions. In 1850, the famous African-American mountain man, James P. Beckwourth, discovered the lowest pass across the Sierra Nevada and the following year navigated a wagon trail for California-bound emigrants from western Nevada, through Plumas County, to the Sacramento Valley.

El Dorado County has 19 sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Nevada County has 24, Placer County has 34 sites, Plumas County has 6 sites, and Sierra County has 13 sites. The smallest county in the region, Sierra County, boasts numerous historic mining and ranching sites along the North Fork of the Yuba River and includes the town of Downieville, the runner-up to Sacramento to be the state capitol in 1852.





Pre-dating its mining history, the SEDD contains numerous heritage and sacred sites that give testament to the robust Native American cultures of the Sierra. The Nisenan, Maidu, Miwok, and Washoe tribes all have ancestral and current ties to territory throughout the SEDD. These indigenous cultures continue to enrich surrounding communities through their educational programs, historical record-keeping, and preservation of traditions and customs. The area now known as Plumas County was inhabited by the Mountain Maidu who lived in small groups and gathered roots, berries, grasses, seeds, and acorns, supplementing these staples with large and small game and fish.





The region's diverse cultural and historical assets contribute to a strong sense of place throughout the district for both residents and visitors and provide a solid medium for place-based education of natural solutions. For example, the innovative FOREST // FIRE Project is an artistic interpretation of the Sierra Nevada Forest's 13,000 year relationship with fire and the surprising and essential role humans play within it, affecting forest, watershed, and community well-being. The exhibit inspired a broad community conversation about catastrophic fire and what can be done to build resilience in the forest, watersheds, and communities.

In Plumas and Sierra counties, the Feather River Land Trust facilitates a Learning Landscapes conservation and educational program designed to provide access to nature for approximately 2,500 schoolchildren annually with access to open space, place-based learning, and hands-on stewardship experiences. Learning Landscapes pairs the traditional skills of a land trust—working with landowners to protect land and natural resources—with place-based education in partnership with local teachers, school districts, and communities. The program has become a national model for outdoor education and fostering a land stewardship ethic in the next generation. For example, in Plumas County on the banks of the Feather River and Lake Almanor, Chester's K-12 students walk to three large Learning Landscapes to explore and learn forest ecology and trail maintenance at the interpretive Collins Pine Trail, history and birds at the Olsen Barn Meadow, and wetland and riparian ecosystems at PG&E's Chester Meadows. In Sierra County, Loyalton Elementary (K-6) and Loyalton High (7-12) are served by one large Learning Landscapes' site directly across the street from the schools with a working ranch, creek habitat, and open grassland fields. The 160-acre Smithneck Creek Meadows is protected by a conservation easement and managed for agricultural production.





# Economy and Key Industries

The SEDD’s economy is largely dictated by its diverse recreational and geographic offerings and dispersed micro-economies. While the largest single employer in all five counties is government, (primarily federal and local) the largest aggregate employer is the small business entrepreneurs that make the economy tick. Note: The data to disaggregate the government sector accurately was not available at the time of publishing this document due to the centralized nature of government payrolls for state and federal employees.

From an industry perspective, Nevada, Plumas, and Sierra Counties, as well as the eastern portions of Placer and El Dorado, have historically been impacted by the loss of extraction-related industries such as timber, mining, and logging. A significant number of jobs related to these businesses were lost when entire industries folded. Some jobs were replaced with lower-paying service sector jobs. However, there does appear to be a correlation between job losses and population decline in certain communities. Overall, the region has seen the largest growth in working lands,

## SEDD Region Employment by Industry



Values for 2023Q3. Total employment in 2023Q3 in the SEDD region was 307,425.

Chart: Sierra Business Council • Source: JobsEQ, Industry Snapshot 2023Q3. • Created with Datawrapper

The urban southern edge of the region (primarily El Dorado Hills and Roseville areas, south of highway 49) experience vastly more robust economies with a variety of healthcare, technology, construction, miscellaneous corporate jobs, and related suburban development. Because this sub-region has a relatively strong base and a rather diversified industry composition, it excluded from the SEDD and included in the Valley Vision CEDS

agriculture, tourism, renewable energy (hydro and biomass), post-COVID remote tech workers, and government-related services. Of the private sector jobs, the largest increase was seen as a result of growing small businesses and entrepreneurship.

The growth of well-paying jobs in the rural portions of the region is severely limited by two major factors; lack of access to high-speed broadband and lack of affordable housing. Broadband connectivity is absolutely essential to support high-paying and living-wage jobs. To grow and prosper, the region needs to supply job opportunities and training for residents. More and more, this is highly dependent on access to high-speed broadband and access to reliable cell phone reception for economic activity and emergency response. With respect to affordable housing, this is a nationwide problem spurred from a multitude of factors including high cost of labor and supplies in construction, market failures of housing policies, density restrictions, zoning laws, lack of available land and the growing wealth disparity. These factors were exacerbated in the SEDD region during the pandemic when the ex-urban migration trend found the district an attractive alternative and effectively raised the demand for housing units without an adequate increase of supply thus reducing available housing stock and driving up prices for both rentals and owned units.

Emerging sectors for the region include wood-products, environmental entrepreneurship, and resurging biomass industries. The region has abundant source biomaterials from forest thinning operations and dead trees. The region also has multiple idle lumber mills and biomass facilities that can be rehabilitated to accept and process small-diameter trees and forest by-products. Forests play a crucial ecosystem services role in the region and developing a sustainable industry around forest management, woody biomass transport, energy production, and wood-based products presents a substantial opportunity to create a replicable circular economy model with the assistance of grant funding related to carbon sequestration, forest restoration, and community wildfire protection. The amount of state funding dedicated to these areas has greatly increased in the past few years and is an economic driver for the area.

Based on the current economic, social and environmental trends, the priority industry sectors for job growth are working lands (agriculture, forestry, biomass), sustainable recreation, health care services and resilient renewable energy. Most new jobs are projected to result from small business growth and entrepreneurship or the government sector, primarily local government, special districts, and US Forest Service.

# Industry Cluster Analysis

Industry clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that are present in a region. Industry clusters can develop, change, and grow due to a region's resources such as location, trained workforce availability, and emerging regional needs. For example, the SEDD region has a need to mitigate and adapt to high wildfire risk, which can lead to growth in forestry sectors). If a regional cluster has a location quotient (LQ) of 1.25 or greater, the region is considered to have a competitive advantage in that cluster.

The location quotient is a measurement of concentration in an industry in comparison to the nation. An LQ of 1.00 indicates a region has the same concentration of industry as the nation. An LQ of 2.00 would indicate the region has twice the expected employment in an industry compared to the nation, and an LQ of 0.50 would mean the region has half the expected employment compared to the nation.

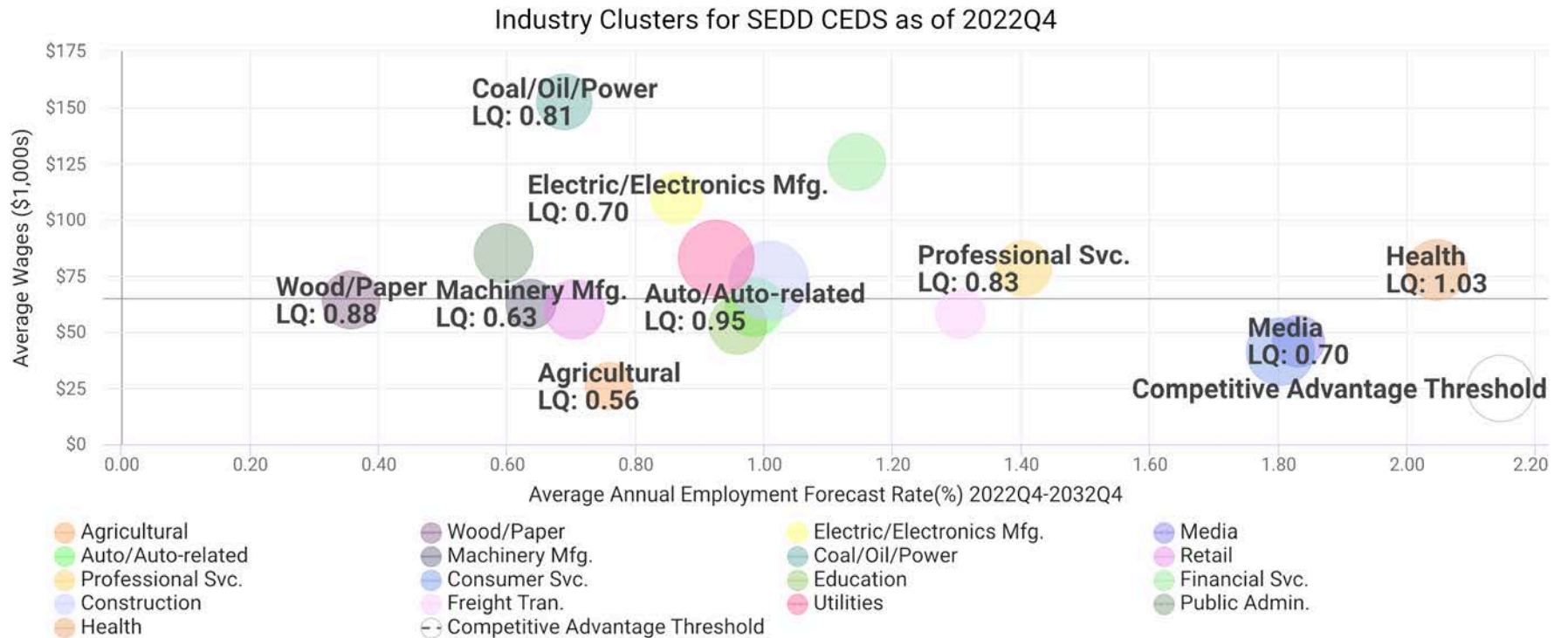
The Forecasted Industry Clusters (2022-2032) compares industry clusters, with the average annual employment forecast rate from 2022 to 2032 along the horizontal axis, and average wages along the vertical access. The dark gray horizontal line represents the average wage in the region in Quarter 1 of 2023. The size of the bubble represents the LQ. For example, a bubble in the top right corner would represent an industry that has a high forecast rate and pays a high average wage. If the bubble is smaller than most other bubbles in the chart, the industry doesn't have a nationally strong competitive advantage. A list of industries that make up the clusters can be referenced in the Appendix .

The Forecasted Career Technical Education (CTE) Clusters (2022-2032) are below and compare CTE clusters with the same axes as the Industry Clusters graphic. CTE clusters illustrate where workforce development may need to be increased to meet the demands of emerging industries. (The career pathways that make up the CTE clusters can be referenced in the Appendix. This analysis indicates that healthcare, media, technology, and energy have the highest potential wage and growth.



# SEDD Region Industry Cluster Analysis

SEDD Forecasted Clusters (2022-2032) with LQ greater than 0.50 are shown below:



Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2022Q4

This analysis shows that in Quarter 1 of 2023, the industry groups with the highest competitive advantage (LQ > 1.25) were Construction, Utilities, and Consumer Services; and industry groups with the greatest employment increases in the next ten years are Health, Media, and Consumer Services.

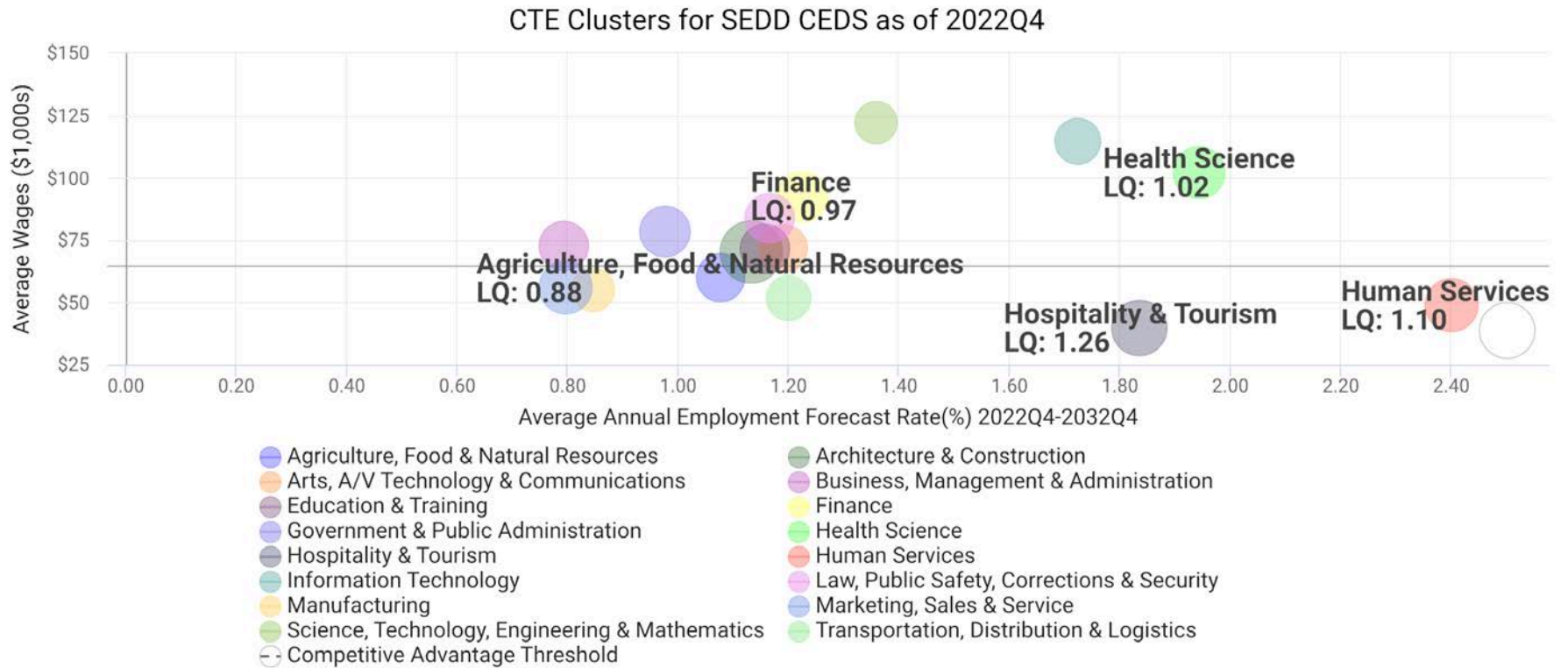
The industry groups with the highest competitive advantage show that the region's ability to build and maintain infrastructure does exist, and this is critical as the expansion of broadband, building weatherization, and renewable energy infrastructure becomes a necessary and growing part of life in the SEDD. Utilities make up energy generation and

T distribution, water and wastewater treatment and delivery, and waste management. It should be noted that renewable energies (i.e., solar, wind, biomass, nuclear, and geothermal power generation) are included in this cluster. A separate analysis shows solar energy generation in the SEDD has an LQ of 3.12 and a forecasted growth rate of 4.29% by 2032, and biomass energy generation in the SEDD has a growth rate of 0.76%. Consumer services include a gambit of services, from air transportation to warehousing and storage. Perhaps most important to the SEDD, this cluster includes recreation, accommodation, and food services. A separate analysis shows accommodation and food services in the SEDD have an LQ of 1.25 and a growth forecast of 2.11% by the end of 2032; striking, but less surprising, skiing facilities in the SEDD have an LQ of 31.89 and a growth factor of 1.40%.

The clusters with the largest growth factors being Health, Media, and Consumer Services show that there is a growing need for accessible health care in the SEDD. A dependence on exporting media from the SEDD means broadband and strong, reliable cell service in rural, forested regions will be critical in sustaining this emerging industry; and that the SEDD's reliance on tourism and recreation will not fade in the next decade. The cluster analysis shows growth in all 22 industry clusters, but in a separate analysis, forestry and logging show a decline of 1.01% by the end of 2032, while it maintains a strong competitive advantage nationally with an LQ of 3.39 at the end of 2022. This decline in forestry and logging employment, but a high LQ, can be explained by the consolidation of large logging corporations in the SEDD, increasing environmental regulations, lagging timber markets, and in recent years, a loss of harvestable trees in the SEDD due to wildfires. The forestry and logging industry in the SEDD may always have a competitive advantage in the region due to the geography and massive feedstock—the SEDD is a densely forested area, and forest management and thinning, and wood products sectors, including biomass, will likely grow as climate hazard mitigation and adaptation becomes a statewide priority with more investments.



Forecasted Career Technical Education Clusters (2022-2032) w/ LQ greater than 0.50 are shown below.



This analysis tells a similar story to the Industry Cluster Analysis above while illustrating what career paths will be necessary to support industries with higher employment growth rates by the end of 2032. For instance, careers in Human Services including early childhood development and family services are projected to grow by 2.4% by the end of 2032, but many communities within the SEDD struggle with adequate childcare and early childhood education access today. Projected growth in an industry that already has a high need for workers, and pays low wages (as can be seen by the pink circle below the average regional wage gray line), means a strategy will need to be developed to train, employ, and retain childcare and child education providers.



The hospitality and tourism cluster has a projected growth rate of 1.84% but pays the lowest average wage of all CTE clusters. In order to sustain economic growth in the SEDD's tourism and recreation industry, careers in this sector must be sustainable and provide living wages. Research conducted by Headwaters Economics found that counties with recreation economies "have, on average, lower earnings per job than Non-Recreation counties, but earnings per job in Rural Recreation counties are growing much faster than in Non-Recreation counties".<sup>3</sup> In the SEDD, this may look like full-time, year-round employment that offers benefits in the tourism and recreation industries, and prioritizing recreation projects that offer economic benefits to communities in the SEDD with less visitor traffic. A particular takeaway from this analysis is the clear alignment with the potential for new jobs at the intersection of forest management and outdoor recreation opportunities.



<sup>3</sup> <https://headwaterseconomics.org/economic-development/trends-performance/recreation-counties-attract/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1682027853645357&usg=AOvVaw3WkjvDyLorl3Y7kP03sQ7Y>

# SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) sets the baseline by answering the question, where are we now? The SWOT helps identify critical internal and external factors that impact the region's unique opportunities, capacities, and barriers to prosperity. The SWOT is used to extract the region's competitive advantages that can be leveraged to build capacity for growth and are critical to developing the strategic direction and CEDS implementation plan to promote regional economic vitality.

To inform the SWOT and gather insights on the state of the region's economy, Sierra Business Council utilized 936 responses to an online survey and interviewed 92 local citizens, business owners, elected officials, and other stakeholders during the stakeholder engagement process. Throughout the information-gathering process, the natural environment and outdoor activities, arts and culture, and everyday public safety were frequently identified as the region's greatest strengths. In contrast, the lack of affordable housing, low availability of living-wage jobs, broadband, and climate disaster preparedness were often identified as significant impediments to the region.

The SWOT and industry sector analysis and subsequent validation sessions ultimately identified the focus topics likely to influence the success of the SEDD region. These factors were bifurcated into strengths and opportunities to leverage and risks to manage as follows.

Strengths & Opportunities to Leverage	Risks to Mitigate or Manage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small business support</li><li>• Broadband expansion</li><li>• Outdoor recreation</li><li>• Nature-based solutions</li><li>• Renewable energy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need for affordable housing</li><li>• Curation of living wage jobs</li><li>• Wildland fire protection</li><li>• Disaster planning</li><li>• Aging population</li></ul>

## Strengths

- Outdoor recreation activities
- Geographic location, natural environment, and weather
- Arts and culture offerings
- Proximity to major population centers
- Entrepreneurial mindset
- Philanthropic community impact

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## Weaknesses

- Housing availability and affordability
- Career / job opportunities with liveable wage
- Unreliable broadband and cell service
- Infrastructure capacity to support sustainable growth
- Climate disaster preparedness

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## Threats

- Lack of adequate housing
- Fire prone topography and natural environment
- High cost and low availability of fire insurance
- Insufficient climate disaster preparedness
- Inadequate Investment in broadband expansion
- Declining retail and shopping destinations
- Lack of support for small business, lack of capacity to support sustainable growth.

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## Opportunities

- Investment in broadband expansion
- Investment in accessible housing
- Climate disaster preparedness
- Small business support, capital & technical assistance
- Increased amenities to support outdoor recreation
- Agricultural industry expansion

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# Resilient Communities

Community resilience is a measure of the community's ability to utilize available capital (i.e., human, economic, social, natural and financial) to prevent, mitigate, endure, adapt to, and recover from major disruptions and negative impacts. A truly resilient community is equitable, where all residents participate and have access to resources allowing them to build safe, healthy, financially secure, and fulfilling lives. This CEDS is rooted in the defining factors of a Resilient Community are effective local government, diversified economies, healthy landscapes and environments, and community well-being.

## KEY FACTORS OF A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

### Local Government:

- Collaborative & resourceful leadership
- Leveraged partnerships for funding
- Priorities aligned with risk management

### Environment:

- Natural resources valued as economic driver
- Sustainable recreation and development
- Forest restoration & climate adaptation prioritized

### Community:

- Equitable workforce development
- Ensure access to basic services & public safety
- Engaged and informed public

### Economy:

- Diversified economy, multi-sectors represented
- Infrastructure supports economic goals
- Investments have co-benefits

This resilient community framework was applied to the SWOT and industry sector analysis for the purpose of developing the CEDS strategic goals. Viewing regional threats and vulnerabilities through this lens helps identify available resources and existing resource gaps. This CEDS intends to present strategies that build economic and climate resilience and prioritize actions that deliver co-benefits. Community resilience in the SEDD is interdependent on the region's ability to adapt to climate hazards, diversify recreation and tourism economies, and access state and federal assistance.



In the SEDD region, it is important to consider two types of interconnected resilience that build community strength: economic and climate. Economic resilience is a region's ability to anticipate risk, evaluate how disruptions will impact the economy, and build a responsive capacity to handle disruption. Regions with more economic resilience have greater economic strength, or the ability to prevent, endure, and recover from economic disruptions. Economic resilience is developed through comprehensive planning efforts. The most critical part of maintaining economic strength is anticipating disruptions and the risks to economic assets. Economic diversification is key to resilience, particularly in rural mono-economies.

Climate resilience is a region's ability to anticipate climate hazards, where and how those hazards will appear, and how they will impact a region. In the Sierra, it is well-documented that climate change hazards can greatly impact the economic prosperity of a community. The effects of climate change hazards can be reduced in two ways:

- (1) Climate change mitigation refers to actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions or remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, and
- (2) Climate change adaptation refers to adjusting to actual or expected future climate conditions.

Climate resilience requires both mitigation and adaptation—we can limit our exposure to climate hazards through climate change mitigation efforts but must understand that climate hazards are caused by global emissions, therefore, climate adaptation is necessary to anticipate the hazards and adjust landscapes and communities to better handle them. Further, understanding regional and local climate change projection data and implementing climate change mitigation and adaptation measures are key to developing economic resilience.

Currently, the biggest threats to community resilience in the SEDD region are:

- Climate change hazards such as wildfire or flood
- Economic uncertainty, inflation, business interruption, and potential recession
- Dependency on a single predominant industry (tourism)
- Lack of skilled workforce in emerging local industries
- Lack of living wages for the local workforce
- Lack of affordable housing

These concerns, some initially identified in the 2018 CEDS, were borne out in the events of intervening years. Between 2018 and 2022, the five-county region experienced eight wildfires significantly greater than 5,000 acres, with numerous smaller fires. These fires destroyed homes and infrastructure, caused mass evacuations, and severely damaged the landscape. As an example of the catastrophic impact of these fires, Plumas County was the site of the second largest wildfire in California’s history, the Dixie Fire in 2021 at 936,309 acres and the seventh largest wildfire, the North Complex in 2020 at 318,935 acres. In total, nearly 70% of Plumas County has burned in wildfires.



## Case Study: Economic Loss Due to Caldor Fire

The Caldor Fire burned from August 14th, 2021 - October 21, 2021, across 347 square miles in El Dorado, Alpine, and Amador counties. While the state does not yet have a systemic way of measuring the full economic impact of wildfires, estimates prepared by Dr. Tom Harris from the University of Nevada, Reno, add up to \$50.3 million in economic activity losses for El Dorado County, alone. Harris admits the estimate is low, it does not include sectors like rental homes or recreation businesses, and it does not account for economic activity losses due to evacuations, nor the health costs associated with wildfire smoke exposure.

South Lake Tahoe restaurant, Verde Mexican Rotisserie, was forced to close for two weeks. Owner Domi Chavarria reported to CalMatters that his business lost between \$10,000 - \$13,000 in food products that could not be salvaged after the two-week closure. These expenses were not covered by his insurance, and do not include revenue losses estimated at around \$50,000. Employees at the restaurant went without paychecks for two weeks. This is an all too common occurrence in the region.



## Key Concerns from Survey:

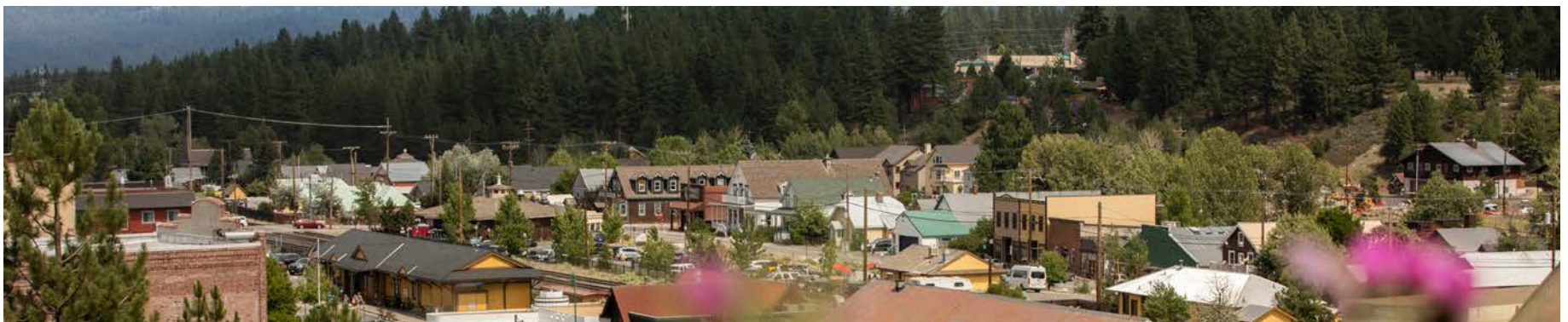
- Declining and aging population
- Lack of broadband
- Availability of living wage jobs
- Limited ability to increase tax base
- Threat of wildfire

## General Plan Economic Goals:

- Develop land use policies that encourage economic development
- Promote recreation and arts
- Protect natural resources
- Diversify and strengthen year-round economy

Recent events proved that even wildfires outside the region pose a significant threat, as evacuees coming into the SEDD can strain infrastructure, and prolonged periods of poor to hazardous air quality and closed public land access disrupt outdoor activities, a main economic driver for the region. Air quality concerns lead to long-term health issues for the community, namely outdoor workers, unhoused populations, and families without air filtration systems or home AC.

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unanticipated crisis that both exposed new weaknesses and made existing ones more acute. The economic chaos of early-stage closures led to extreme unemployment, peaking between 13% in Placer County and 18.5% in Plumas County. The SEDD’s disproportionately large tourism and service sectors ground to a halt. The lack of broadband access at private homes, previously<sup>4</sup> a concern mostly related to the region’s appeal to families and workers, became a core economic concern. Housing costs spiked due to immigration from wealthy urban cores; data from the California Association of Realtors shows the median price of an existing detached home across the five counties increased by 20-30% between Q1 2020 and Q4 2022. This housing shortage has contributed to the age demographic disparities discussed elsewhere in this report, which in turn has exacerbated a pre-existing labor shortage for local businesses, even as they are re-emerging from the pandemic.



<sup>4</sup> <https://headwaterseconomics.org/eps>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.car.org/en/marketdata/data/housingdata>

Wages are also of serious concern to community resilience. Of the five SEDD counties, only Placer has a Median Household Income (MHI) greater than the required living wage, where a living wage is defined as the required pre-tax income for a dual-income family with one child. Exact trends have varied, but the gap between MHI and the living wage has shrunk slightly in Nevada County since 2020, El Dorado County formerly met the threshold, but no longer does. At the north end of the district, Plumas County employees are amongst the lowest paid public sector workers in the state rendering few opportunities for stable, year round high wage employment.

## Median Household Income and Living Wage in the SEDD

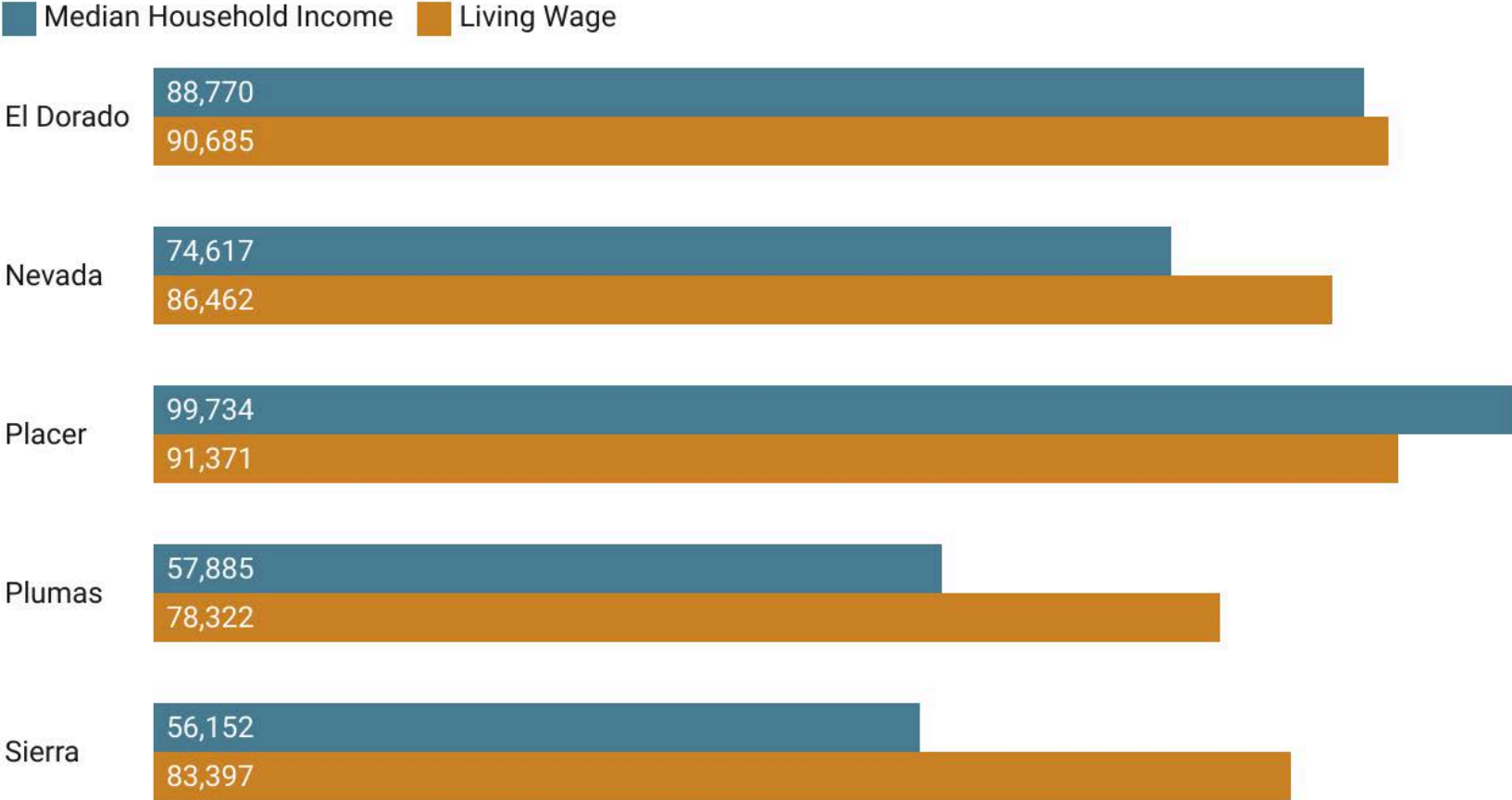


Chart: Sierra Business Council

Source: MHI: United States Census Bureau. Living Wage: Living Wage Calculator, MIT, 2021. • Created with Datawrapper

Building community resilience requires access to resources that can strengthen local economies, environmental health, community well-being, public safety, and disaster preparation. The following are examples of available resources building community resilience in the SEDD:

- Alliance for Workforce Development
- California Jobs First (formerly CERF)
- Economic Resource Council of Nevada County
- Growth Factory
- Indian Valley Innovation Hub
- Placer Business Resource Center
- Regional Community Foundations (multiple)
- Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship
- Sierra Commons
- Sierra Small Business Development Center (Sierra SBDC)
- Tahoe Prosperity Center





# Strategy & Action Plan

## The Vision & Guiding Principles

### SEDD Vision:

The vision of the Sierra Economic Development District is shared prosperity, equitable opportunity, and a culture of innovation in a resilient economy.

While traditional economic development focused on business attraction and retention, modern, 21st-century economic development proactively empowers communities by meeting the needs of the current population and planning for future generations. Modern economic development is based upon a set of clear guiding principles that render an equitable, inclusive, impactful, and resilient plan for future development. These guiding principles provide a foundation of integrity upon which this plan is built.

The guiding principles are woven into the CEDS and reflected in the goals and action plan. These particular guiding principles apply to the five forms of capital around which the CEDS action plan is created; human, economic, social, natural, and financial.

The strategy and action plan were created by intersecting the guiding principles with the collective region's SWOT assessment, survey results, industry sector analysis, economic development potential, and stakeholder feedback regarding critical areas. This plan incorporates elements of regional general plans, area specific plans, special district strategic plans, and various economic development plans. The goals are directly related to the top priorities that emerged in the SWOT analysis and are designed to advance the region's long-term prosperity. The goals and objectives are not mutually exclusive but rather are systemically synergistic, designed to promote a more prosperous, sustainable, and resilient economy.

### CEDS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### EQUITABLE

Creates benefits for all citizens equally

#### INCLUSIVE

Addresses issues of marginalized populations






#### IMPACTFUL

Efforts are leveraged across region

#### RESILIENT

Mitigates and adapts to future threats

# Strategic Goals & Action Plan

Form of Capital	Importance	CEDS Goal
 <p>Human</p>	<p>Human capital reflects the investments people make in their education, training, health, and communities through time, effort, and money. Supporting human capital leads to an inclusive and engaged business community and skilled workforce to meet the needs of the next-generation economy.</p>	<p><b>Develop an inclusive and equitable workforce</b></p>
 <p>Economic</p>	<p>Economic capital refers to the assets devoted to prosperity and is an indication of resilience during times of uncertainty. Economic diversification is critical to creating a diverse, resilient, and innovative regional economy by supporting the growth of existing businesses and attraction of new businesses</p>	<p><b>Catalyze economic diversification</b></p>
 <p>Social</p>	<p>Social capital is the glue that holds a community together. It is the true nature of the people that establishes a strong “sense of place”. It builds prosperous and livable communities that honor cultural elements, invest in recreational opportunities, and leverage natural strengths</p>	<p><b>Create vibrant, healthy, and resilient communities</b></p>
 <p>Natural</p>	<p>Natural capital supports life itself – it is the underpinning of all other forms of capital and therefore must be regarded with the utmost respect and care. Respecting and investing in natural capital shows a community values natural resources and ecosystem services while creating jobs through stewardship</p>	<p><b>Build community resilience through climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.</b></p>
 <p>Financial</p>	<p>Financial capital represents the resources needed to fund the planning, provisioning, construction, and implementation of infrastructure and programs. Financial capital ensures the capacity to identify, prepare for, and secure all forms of funding to implement priority projects and support a thriving business climate</p>	<p><b>Ensure investment readiness through regional collaboration</b></p>

# Human Capital Strategic Goal:



## Develop an Inclusive and Equitable Workforce

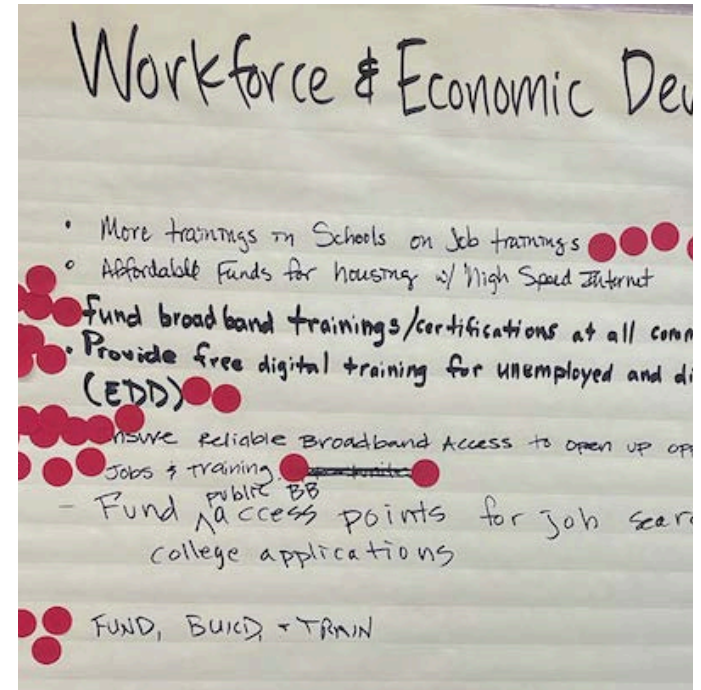
Human Capital is the collective knowledge, skills, and driver behind innovation and prosperity. It is quite simply the soul of a community.

Human capital refers to the rich and talented populace that resides in the SEDD region. To meet the needs of a rapidly changing economy, the region must invest in and support education, workforce development, recruitment, and retention. This includes providing opportunities for all residents of the district. SEDD stakeholders acknowledged that a strong support system and a wide array of workforce skills are necessary elements of a strong economy. To that end, the district’s plan includes working with existing technical assistance providers, educational institutions, maker spaces, and business incubators to provide the necessary training and support to strengthen the region’s skill base.

Additionally, developing an inclusive and equitable workforce requires reinforcing foundational, wrap-around community support systems. This includes access to childcare, transportation, healthcare, and housing, particularly for underserved or disadvantaged populations. These are vital functions in support of the workforce and in building prosperity. To support inclusive talent development in the region, this CEDS identifies the following strategies and actions consistent with this goal.

### Strategies for the next three years:

- Identify priority industry sectors to focus workforce training and programming
- Employ “access for all” principles to engage underserved communities
- Collaborate, leverage and amplify existing training programs
- Reinforce foundational, wrap-around community support systems vital to workforce





# Human Capital Strategies: Develop an Inclusive and Equitable Workforce



## H.1 Strategy:

Identify priority industry sectors to focus training and programs

H.1 Action Items	H.1 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand current and future employer needs to fill skill gaps, particularly in the top industries; recreation, tourism, forest health, wood products, renewable energy manufacturing, services and healthcare.</li><li>• Support existing workforce development partners in raising education and skill levels to meet the needs of employers.</li><li>• Encourage sustainable business growth, entrepreneurship, and job creation with targeted training</li></ul>	Number of students enrolled in educational training programs

## H.2 Strategy:

Employ “access for all” principles to engage underserved communities

H.2 Action Items	H.2 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage BIPOC community members to understand specific workforce training barriers, needs and challenges.</li><li>• Address aging population concerns by offering inter-generational opportunities.</li><li>• Prioritize STEAM education to attract and retain the region’s young workers.</li><li>• Explore training options with Maker Spacers for “Hobby to Business” programs.</li></ul>	Number of underserved communities engaged

## Human Capital Strategies: Develop an Inclusive and Equitable Workforce Continued



### H.3 Strategy:

Collaborate, leverage, and amplify existing training programs

H.3 Action Items	H.3 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support business diversity and underserved markets by accessing SBDC, Economic Resource Council, Placer Business Resource Center, Indian Valley Hub, Growth Factory, SCORE, Workforce Investment Board, and Community College resources.</li> <li>• Support Good Jobs Challenge with CA Community College Foundation</li> <li>• Engage with K-16 Collaborative Initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>Number of participants in training programs &amp; number of collaborations</p>

### H.4 Strategy:

Reinforce foundational, wrap-around community support systems vital to the workforce

H.4 Action Items	H.4 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build robust community support systems to eliminate barriers to an inclusive workforce including access to childcare, healthcare, equipment costs, language barriers, transportation, and housing.</li> <li>• Offer training to support wrap-around services where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Progress on wrap-around support systems</p>

### Human Capital Partners, Advocates, & Champions

Community Colleges & High Schools, Workforce Development Boards, Technical Assistance Providers (SBDC, ERC, Sierra Commons, Indian Valley Hub, Growth Factory, etc), Major employers

## Showcase Implementation Projects



### **Case Study: Metal Fabrication Certification at The Curious Forge**

In September 2022, the Curious Forge, a 20,000 square foot makers space in Western Nevada County, was awarded a Community Services Block Grant by the County to offer a 12-week metal fabrication and welding fast track certificate program. Developed in coordination with several local fabrication shops, the program was free to Nevada County residents who met the required criteria for sponsorship. Participants also gained professional development in related workforce skills such as safety and communication.

The program specifically targeted local youth and young adults for training, as the community otherwise lacks many options for career technical education.

### **Case Study: Sierra SBDC Supported Small Businesses through COVID**

The Sierra SBDC provides one-on-one consulting and workshops to local entrepreneurs to help their businesses start, grow, and thrive in the SEDD and beyond. When COVID hit and small businesses in the SEDD desperately needed resources, the SBDC began providing additional support. Within the first six months of COVID, Sierra SBDC advisors had helped nearly 1,000 clients understand EIDL (Economic Injury Disaster Loans) and PPP (Paycheck Protection lending programs), assisted businesses in pivoting to online selling, and worked with HR teams across the SEDD to develop COVID safety plans and bring employees back to work.

In addition to providing free advisory service, the Sierra SBDC administered COVID relief funds in 2020: the Resilience Fund for businesses in the Truckee/Tahoe Basin, the Nevada County Relief Fund (\$200,000), Placer Shares Impact Grants (\$8 million), Placer Invests (\$5 million), and Colfax Small Business Grant Program (\$41,500). In 2021, the Sierra SBDC infused an additional \$12.48 million into small businesses in the SEDD with COVID relief funding.

By the end of 2021, the Sierra SBDC had helped nearly 2,000 businesses survive COVID closures and stay-at-home orders, proving to be a vital community resource. Resources like the Sierra SBDC increase the SEDD's community resilience and are necessary for the continued economic success of local businesses.



# Economic Capital Strategic Goal:



## Catalyze Economic Diversification

Economic Capital is a community’s collective wealth derived from commerce, particularly thriving small businesses and living wage jobs.

Economic capital in the context of economic development refers to the fundamental health of the business and entrepreneurial community and the potential for long-term growth. It is the basis for a healthy economy. In the SEDD, small businesses are the lifeblood of the economy. Small businesses make up the vast majority of all businesses and represent roughly half of all jobs. Successful businesses create a strong social fabric by providing jobs, community investment, growth potential for residents, and local tax revenues.

A healthy economy in the rural SEDD depends on the strategic goal of economic diversification to better mitigate risk from economic downturns and seize growth opportunities in emerging sectors. Several communities in the SEDD have historically been dominated by extraction industries, specifically mining, and timber, rendering them highly vulnerable to the commercial obsolescence and consolidation of mines and lumber mills.

More recently, dependence on winter and summer tourism is leaving communities vulnerable to reduced snowpack, rising elevations of base snowpack from a warming climate, increasingly frequent and intense wildfires, and poor air quality from wildfire smoke.

Economic diversification will help the SEDD build a more stable economy for the long term while preparing workers trained in new growth sectors such as automation and artificial intelligence (AI). Specifically, in communities impacted by the closure of lumber mills or reduced logging (e.g. Loyalton, Camino, Foresthill, Quincy), economic diversification may result from the re-purposing of abandoned or unused facilities. In communities dominated by tourism (e.g. Lake Tahoe basin,





eastern Nevada, Placer, Plumas, and El Dorado Counties), diversification is best led by attracting businesses that are not reliant on weather patterns or snowfall. Fortunately, the SEDD has a number of technical assistance providers to assist in growing economic capital including: the Economic Resource Council, Tahoe Prosperity Center, Sierra Commons, Sierra Business Council, and the Growth Factory. These organizations are vitally important to the economic ecosystem and must be supported.

### Strategies for the next three years:

- Attract and support new industry clusters and emerging industries, particularly next economy, carbon-neutral growth sectors.
- Support a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem by collaborating with organizations that provide direct technical assistance.
- Expand non-tourism-related commerce to bolster the region's resilience to economic downturns and extreme weather events.





## E.1 Strategy:

Attract and support new industry clusters and emerging industries, particularly next economy, carbon neutral growth sectors

E.1 Action Items	E.1 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze and interpret industry sector analysis to identify best options for investment</li> <li>Leverage regional USDA funding for training assets and co-op networks to help small agriculture businesses thrive.</li> <li>Identify opportunities to leverage natural resource and forest resiliency projects for tourism-related activities such as trail systems, transportation, ecological education, etc.</li> <li>Collaborate with California Jobs First efforts in the region</li> </ul>	<p>Growth in targeted industry sectors</p>

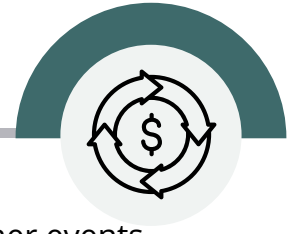
## E.2 Strategy:

Support a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem by collaborating with organizations that provide direct technical assistance

E.2 Action Items	E.2 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist TA providers with marketing, outreach, program development, and access to funding.</li> <li>Educate local governments and communities on the importance of a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem</li> <li>Help source funding for regional technical assistance providers</li> </ul>	<p>Number of partnerships established</p>



## Economic Capital Strategies: Catalyze Economic Diversification



### E.3 Strategy:

Expand non-tourism-related commerce to bolster region's resilience to economic downturns and extreme weather events

E.3 Action Items	E.3 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support re-purposing of abandoned or unused facilities, particularly old mills, biomass plants, and commercial retail locations</li><li>• Support emerging innovation hubs and small housing manufacturers with resources and funding opportunities</li></ul>	Number of facilities re-purposed for economic growth

### Economic Capital Partners, Advocates, & Champions

Chambers of Commerce, Technical Assistance Providers (SBDC, ERC, Sierra Commons, Indian Valley Hub, Growth Factory, etc), Community Colleges and High Schools



## Showcase Implementation Projects



### Case Study: Indian Valley Innovation Hub

Developed in response to needs identified after the Dixie Fire, the Indian Valley Innovation Hub’s mission is to produce products for export from Plumas County. In partnership with the Plumas Sierra County Fairgrounds, the hub connects early-stage entrepreneurs with experienced mentors for guidance, connections, and fresh inspiration. The Hub helps provide support to micro businesses by co-branding and promoting products made in the county and assists in fine-tuning marketing plans. They provide tools and equipment, and assistance with financing. In addition, the Hub connects entrepreneurs with free business counseling provided by the Sierra Small Business Development Center.



### Case Study: Tahoe Prosperity Center Envision Tahoe Venture Summit

The Envision Tahoe Venture Summit is an opportunity to catalyze change and take action to benefit our regional economy while supporting our community, quality of life, and environment. This year’s focus is on Tahoe Inc. – organizing and accelerating Tahoe’s innovation ecosystem. Spearheaded by local entrepreneurs and success stories, Tahoe Prosperity Center offers creative ideas, insight, and inspiration.

## Showcase Implementation Projects



### Sierra Commons - Business Ignitor

Since its inaugural launch in 2010, the Business Ignitor Course has helped hundreds of Nevada County entrepreneurs kickstart their businesses. One key differentiator of the course is the remarkable student experience. In addition to learning from a team of highly qualified local instructors, the Ignitor creates a safe place for students to open up about personal challenges and fears about starting an enterprise. The sessions dive into everything from business strategy, creating a minimum viable product, and mindfulness of running a business to time management, bookkeeping, taxes, law, insurance, marketing, and technology. The classroom environment is lively and interactive, with students and instructors teaching and learning from each other. Students have access to free one-to-one mentoring, weekly accountability meetups, access to broadband on-demand at the Sierra Commons coworking facility, and networking opportunities.



### Economic Resource Council of Nevada County

The ERC exists to enhance the economic vitality of Nevada County by supporting the retention, creation, and attraction of quality jobs and talent, while retaining our unique environment. Their annual Economic Spotlight is for everyone and brings together community stakeholders from both public and private business sectors, including leaders in government, healthcare, education, manufacturing, technology, agriculture, finance, and other industries throughout the region, and provides vital information regarding the health of our economy and the future of our community.



# Social Capital Strategic Goal:



## Create Vibrant, Healthy, and Resilient Communities

Social Capital is the value derived from positive community connections and collaboration to advance a common purpose

The core characteristic of a vibrant, healthy, and resilient community is one that is focused on the connection between economic vitality and quality of life. This requires both capacity and attention to all socio-economic groups to ensure no one is left behind, particularly during challenging times. We learned valuable lessons about the foundation of healthy communities from recent disasters in the SEDD. The pandemic and a spate of wildfires have taught us that a connected, responsive community where basic needs are being met is best prepared to proactively address challenges. Social capital goals are those that improve the connectivity, collaboration, and safety in a community.

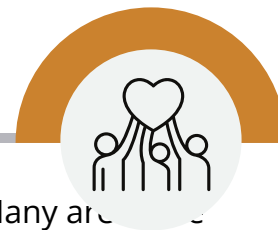
The social capital goals for the SEDD are focused on the following:

- Improved Broadband Connectivity
- Rural Public Transportation Solutions
- Affordable Housing Options
- Develop Community Resilience Centers
- Identify Funding for Arts, Culture, and Recreation
- Revitalization of Downtown Areas
- Food Security



### Improved Broadband Connectivity

High-speed broadband is an absolute necessity for a prosperous, resilient economy. It is the backbone for entrepreneurship, education, innovation, commerce, health, and quality of life. Remote workers in the gig economy are essential to economic sustainability in hard-to-reach rural communities. The criticality of broadband because even more evident during the pandemic when rural communities were at a clear disadvantage due to poor connectivity. This is particularly true in the SEDD region where the need for economic diversification to recover from industry loss, wildfire, and pandemic impacts absolutely requires access to



high-speed broadband. There is a proven need to expand the broadband infrastructure in the SEDD. Many are unserved or underserved (10Mbps or less) and suffered from ATT discontinuing service on aging copper cable POTs lines. This left many communities struggling to find an adequate wireless replacement. As the SEDD looks to the future, fiber optics is considered the required infrastructure to support economic development needs. Gigabit fiber service to commercial centers with wireless network extension to hard-to-reach areas of the SEDD is the baseline technology being considered in this plan.

### **Rural Public Transportation Systems**

Access to reliable transportation is a huge barrier for some in the SEDD. Full-scale public transportation systems are simply not feasible in most rural communities due to low-density populations, small ridership and distance between commerce centers. However, new concepts in public transportation such as on-demand micro-transit and public school bus sharing are being tested to some degree of success in rural communities.

### **Develop Community Resilience Centers**

The SEDD region has seen its share of disasters in the past decade. A well-designed community resilience center can provide shelter and resources during climate and other emergencies, as well as year-round services and programming that strengthen community connections and ability to withstand disasters. It can also serve multiple purposes including; education and training venues, community kitchen, food bank, and community meeting space. The opportunity exists in the SEDD to re-purpose existing spaces or leverage community buildings to serve as a resilience center.

### **Affordable Housing Options**

A truly prosperous community is one in which all the basic needs of its residents are fulfilled. This starts with housing. While housing is not an investment covered by the EDA, this topic is too important to not be included in this CEDS. No community that experiences high levels of housing-burdened populations or displacement of the critical workforce can be considered healthy and sustainable in the long term.



## Identify Funding for Arts, Culture, and Recreation

Arts, culture, and recreation activities are core economic elements for residents and visitors in the SEDD region. However, investment in these areas can be challenging. With thoughtful planning, documentation of economic impact, and cross-jurisdictional coordination, arts, culture, and recreation can be a strong part of a diversified SEDD economy that supports a high quality of life for all residents.

## Revitalization of Downtown Areas

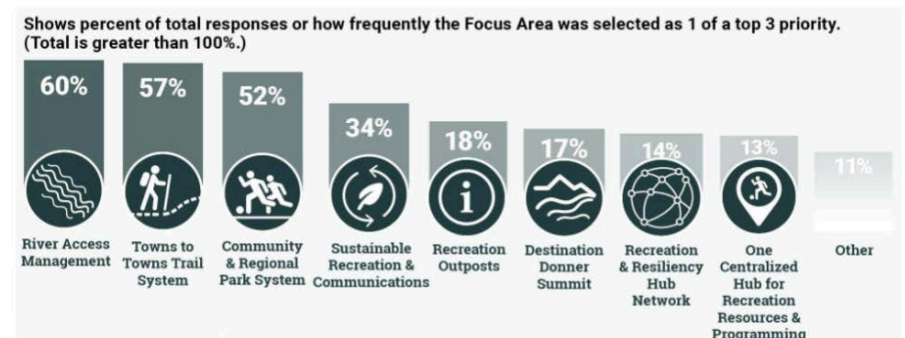
The SEDD is full of historic downtown areas ripe for investment and redevelopment. These areas are often a draw for tourism and can truly revive a struggling economy. Increasing the vibrancy of rural downtowns in the SEDD will help relieve the dependency on seasonal tourism. Revitalization activities include establishing visitor centers, building public restrooms, and beautifying business districts. In addition, assisting local businesses with technical assistance as covered in the economic capital goal.

## Strategies for the next three years include:

- Participate in the Gold Country Broadband Consortium task force and Tahoe Basin Project Consortium
- Conduct planning for effective rural public transportation systems such as micro-transit
- Identify suitable project sites to develop into Community Resilience Centers
- Prioritize Arts, Culture, and Recreation for investment and funding opportunities
- Implement existing plans revitalization plans such as the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (Plumas County) and the Recreation and Resiliency Master Plan (Nevada County)

## Input on the Master Plan

*Question: What are your top 3 priorities out of the 8 Focus Areas for recreation improvements? (select 3)*





# Social Capital Strategies: Create Vibrant, Healthy, and Resilient Communities



## S.1 Strategy:

Support investment in broadband projects

S.1 Action Items	S.1 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in cross-jurisdictional Gold Country Broadband Consortium task force and Tahoe Basin Project Consortium.</li> <li>• Support the Implementation of regional broadband plans by identifying and applying for funding resources to support broadband initiatives, policy development, infrastructure deployment, access, and adoption.</li> <li>• Support redundancy of service to withstand natural disasters and PSPS events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of new broadband installation</li> <li>• Middle mile fiber installations</li> <li>• % of population “served”</li> </ul>

## S.2 Strategy:

Collaborate with regional transportation agencies to advance last mile solutions

S.2 Action Items	S.2 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist regional transportation agencies with research, outreach, funding request support to advance public transportation and multi-modal options.</li> <li>• Support pilot projects and funding opportunities for innovative approaches to rural transportation models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilization of public transportation</li> <li>• Multi-modal programs supported</li> </ul>



## S.3 Strategy:

Assist with development of Community Resilience Centers

S.3 Action Items	S.3 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support re-purposing of abandoned or unused facilities</li> <li>• Assist with feasibility studies for resilience centers</li> <li>• Assess community readiness and support hazard mitigation plan updates</li> </ul>	<p>Funds secured for development of Community Resilience Centers</p>

## S.4 Strategy:

Support Arts, Culture, and recreation as core economic and enhanced quality of life drivers

S.4 Action Items	S.4 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding opportunities for arts, culture, and recreation projects and programs</li> <li>• Assist in the implementation of Recreation Master Plans</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for sustainable recreation on public lands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in arts, culture and recreation programming</li> <li>• New recreation projects on public lands</li> </ul>

## Social Capital Strategies: Create Vibrant, Healthy, and Resilient Communities Continued



### S.5 Strategy:

Revitalize Downtown Areas

S.5 Action Items	S.5 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist in implementation and funding strategies for RERC (Recreation Economy for Rural Communities)</li> <li>Revitalize communities through downtown redevelopment and cultural offerings</li> </ul>	<p>Increased tax revenue base</p>

### S.6 Strategy:

Support Affordable Housing Options

S.6 Action Items	S.6 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in Mountain Housing Council</li> <li>Assist jurisdictions with CDBG funding opportunities</li> <li>Administer down payment assistance programs</li> </ul>	<p>Number of affordable &amp; achievable housing units constructed</p>

### Social Capital Partners, Advocates, & Champions

Local governments, Chambers of Commerce, Human services providers



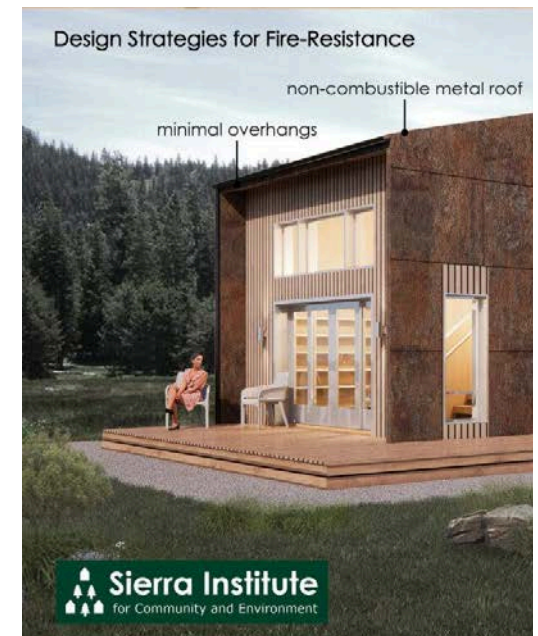
## Showcase Implementation Projects



### Case Study: Sierra Institute Mass Timber Housing

Sierra Institute's mission is promoting healthy and sustainable forests and watersheds by investing in the well-being of diverse rural communities and strengthening their participation in natural resource decision-making and programs. Sierra Institute works at the local, regional, and national levels to build the capacity of rural communities through various programs that aim to monitor and address socioeconomic well-being.

Sierra Institute has tackled two of the biggest challenges in the region, catastrophic wildfire and lack of housing, with an innovative approach. The Sierra Institute has partnered with Mass Timber Strategy and atelierjones to envision a new way of building homes using Cross Laminated Timber (CLT). CLT is a prefabricated panelized product known for its fire resistance and structural integrity. Sierra Institute's systemic solution-based model is focused on addressing the problem by converting low-value small-diameter trees from forest restoration projects into high-value CLT to build fire-resistant homes. Of note, three CLT building plans from Sierra Institute have been pre-approved for plan check by Plumas County to reduce costs and expedite the permitting process and are available to help build back from the Dixie Fire with greater resilience.

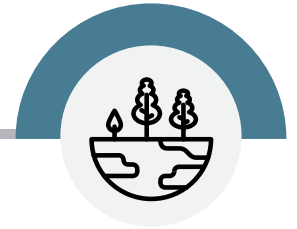


### Case Study: Nevada County Broadband Plan and EIR

Recognizing the need for better access to broadband throughout the Sierra Nevada, the Gold Country Broadband Consortium (GCBC) was established with the mission to increase digital access and use of broadband in underserved and unserved areas throughout El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sierra, and eastern Alpine counties. With funding from the California Advanced Services Fund, GCBC leverages regional, state, and private resources as an investment in improving and expanding broadband access. The process involves identifying areas in need of broadband access and then working with different internet service providers (ISP) to try and determine a connection strategy that is economically amenable for customers and the ISP. By looking at both traditional technologies, like wireless networks, and emergent technologies, like TV Whitespace, to help expand broadband coverage, GCBC is helping connect these historic counties to the 21st century.

<sup>7</sup> <https://sierrainstitute.us/about/>

# Natural Capital Strategic Goal:

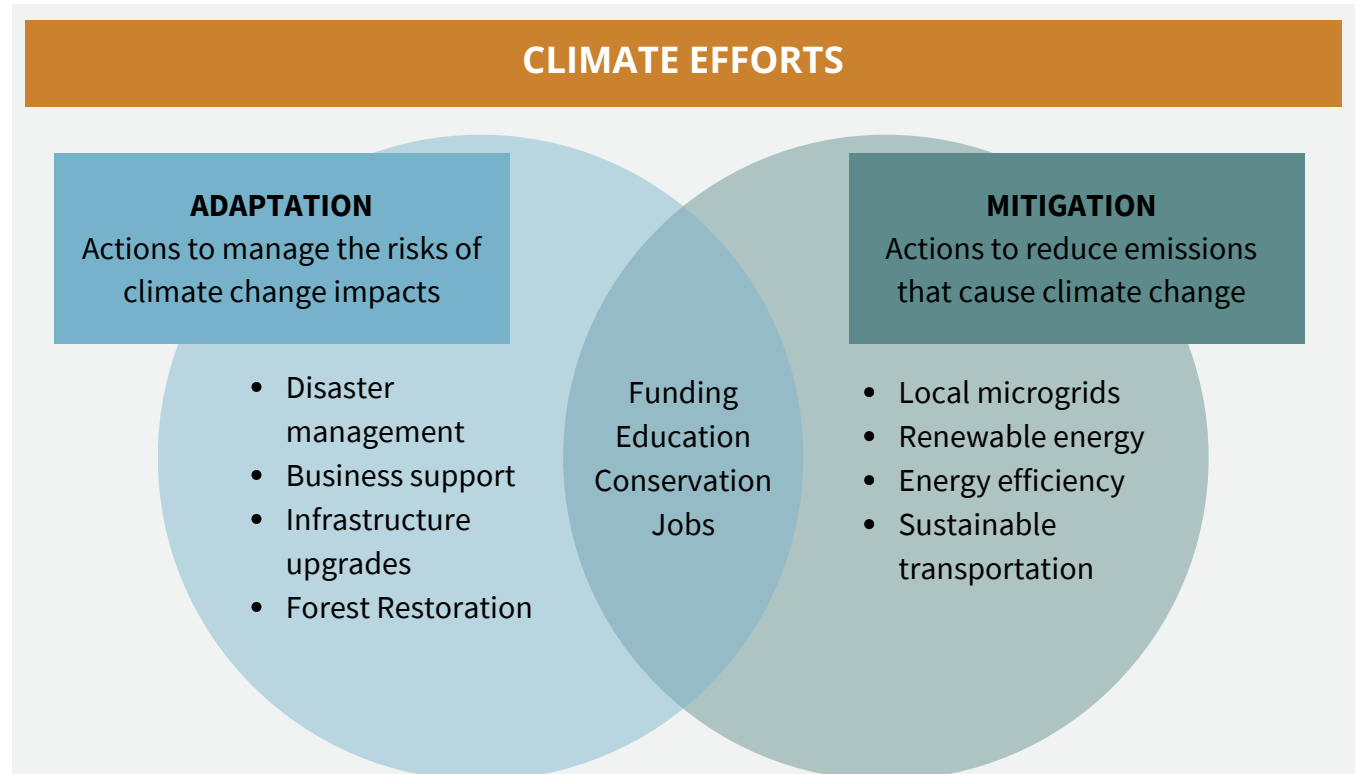


## Build Community Resilience Through Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Efforts

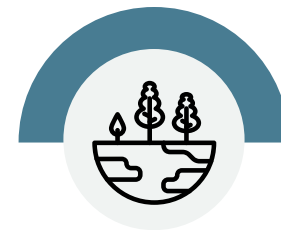
Natural Capital is the basis for all life, including air, water, soil, forest, geology and all living creatures that provide the invaluable role of ecosystem services.

The natural capital of the SEDD is the base of the entire economy. Climate change hazards such as increased temperatures, wildfires, drought, and floods pose the greatest threat to the SEDD region. In the past 10 years, over 1.5 million acres have burned, destroying nearly 2,000 structures, and displacing families, businesses, and entire communities.

With over 70% of the land in the SEDD designated as US Forest Service, National Forest, State Park, or private forest and timber, the communities and economies depend upon healthy forests. Factor in the multiple watersheds and important headwaters for California rivers and the impact of not building resilience would be catastrophic for SEDD communities and downstream urban areas. Thus, the natural working landscape must be factored into building community resilience through adaptation and mitigation.



## Adaptation



Climate change adaptation is the management of risks related to hazard impacts. Catastrophic wildfire has proven to be the most pervasive climate change-related risk in the SEDD region. In addition, while California does not have an accepted method to measure wildfire emissions, they are the largest actual source of GHG emissions in the region. Adaptation measures ultimately aim for projected and actual changes in climate hazards and impacts to reduce harm to humans, ecosystems, and infrastructure. An example of climate change adaptation includes forest thinning; lower-density forests are more resilient to wildfire, drought, and bark beetle infestation due to less competition between trees for water, sunlight, and space. In turn, this maintains healthy water quality, wildlife habitat, and less severe wildfire activity.

## Mitigation

Climate change mitigation is proactive measures that reduce emissions that cause climate change, typically requiring changes in societal behavior. In the SEDD, the largest calculated sources of GHG emissions are building energy use and transportation. To further lessen the hazards and impacts associated with climate change, it will be necessary for the SEDD to reduce human-caused greenhouse gas emissions through climate change mitigation. Examples of climate change mitigation include energy efficiency measures like increased building weatherization installing hot water heat pumps, and reduced vehicle miles traveled through increased public transportation or the adoption of electric vehicles. While this can be challenging for low-density rural communities, it is an area to tap for climate mitigation funding at the state and federal levels.

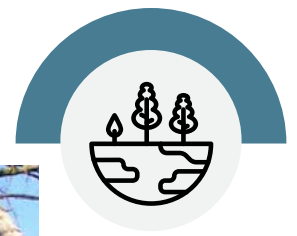
## Climate Hazards

Climate hazards will impact ecosystems, public health, and local economies in the SEDD. The economic drivers in the region are dependent on the landscape, and the state as a whole is dependent on the natural resources and ecosystem services provided by the Sierra Nevada. In addition, to the cost climate change poses to local economies, climate change hazards are expensive. In 2019, a three-day PSPS (public safety power shutoff) event affecting western Nevada County cost 323 restaurants within Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Penn Valley over a million dollars. Assuming that these events can occur multiple times within an ever-expanding fire season, the financial impact on the region's communities could lead to economic turmoil for small, locally-owned businesses. Taxpayer dollars go towards climate change hazards, too. In 2021, the Dixie Fire burned nearly 1 million acres, with initial calculations estimating that fire suppression cost \$630 million over three months of active firefighting.

<sup>8</sup> County, Grass Valley and Nevada City send letter of concern to CPUC detailing PSPS effects on Nevada County, YubaNet, 2019

<sup>9</sup> Dixie Fire finally contained after 103 days, Damon Arthur, 2021





Overgrown Forest - Before



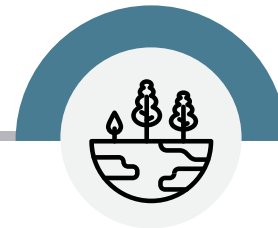
Restored Forest - After



Prioritizing climate adaptation in the SEDD will ensure communities are prepared to deal with the impacts. From reduced visitation numbers to ecosystem degradation, communities that have increased forest fuel reduction, a resilient energy supply, and an available workforce in natural resource and energy management will have more capacity to handle the stressors of climate change and endure natural disasters. Active management of forests can ease overcrowding, promote healthy tree growth, and help make our forests more resilient to wildfire, insects, and disease. In addition, sustainable active forest management increases the ability of watersheds to store water and can provide feedstock for marketable wood products and biomass energy generation. Public-private partnerships are an effective way to tackle this challenge.

Using climate change projections, jurisdictions in the SEDD can plan for relevant climate change hazards, and prioritize adaptation measures that will lessen the impacts. The table below summarizes climate projections for Plumas County, displaying climate hazards with the most impact on Sierra Nevada communities. Climate projections for the other SEDD counties can be found in the [Sierra Nevada Climate Vulnerability Assessment](#), or using the [Cal-Adapt Local Climate Change Snapshot](#) tool.

# Natural Capital Strategies: Build Community Resilience Through Climate Mitigation and Adaptation



## N.1 Strategy:

Protect and harden resilient infrastructure; invest in disaster planning

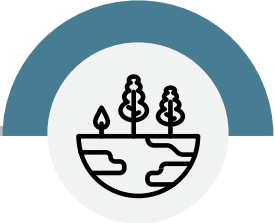
N.1 Action Items	N.1 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop partnerships with landowners, workforce training providers, local governments, and adaptation practitioners to support the region’s ability to prepare, withstand and recover from economic, natural and physical disasters</li> <li>• Develop comprehensive, location-specific evacuation plans to accommodate extreme weather and natural disaster scenarios</li> <li>• Increase planning efforts (e.g., General Plans, Climate Action Plans, Community Wildfire Protection Plans) that identify climate-resilient projects to leverage state and federal climate funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of adopted plans in SEDD with climate mitigation or adaptation co-benefits</li> <li>• Number of forest resiliency bond projects</li> </ul>

## N.2 Strategy:

Identify opportunities for resilient, renewable energy

N.2 Action Items	N.2 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct feasibility studies on existing and abandoned biomass facilities to determine forest material processing capacity, power generation capacity, and to identify obstacles to facility redevelopment</li> <li>• Partner with the Rural Renewable Energy Network to identify new opportunities</li> <li>• Invest in energy efficiency measures and energy resilient infrastructure to protect the grid from higher energy demand to reduce power outages and greenhouse gas emissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local employment numbers in EE and renewable energy sectors</li> <li>• Operational biomass facility power generation capacity</li> </ul>

# Natural Capital Strategies: Build Community Resilience Through Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Continued



## N.3 Strategy:

Value and protect ecosystem services

N.3 Action Items	N.3 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in climate resilient projects with co-benefits such as ecosystem restoration, forest health, and fuels management</li> <li>Enhance carbon storage and sequestration on natural and working lands</li> <li>Research ecosystem service valuation platforms to strengthen co-benefit aspect of funding applications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced forest density with increased prescribed burns and removal of fuels</li> <li>Rehabilitation investments to increase surface water storage, groundwater recharge, water clarity and flood management</li> </ul>

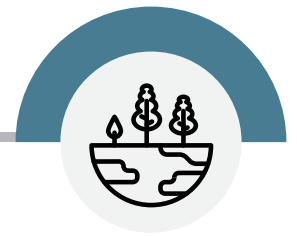
## Natural Capital Partners, Advocates, & Champions

Federal, state and local governments, water agencies & districts, utility districts





## Showcase Implementation Projects



### **Case Study: Climate Transformation Alliance Increases Building Electrification and Energy Sector Workforce**

The Climate Transformation Alliance (CTA) is a public-private partnership in the North Tahoe-Truckee region committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. CTA intends to reach carbon neutrality by 2045 through a combination of GHG emission reduction and sinking or storing carbon in natural lands.

In 2023, CTA secured a \$500,000 philanthropic donation to initiate a building decarbonization pilot project. The pilot project will train current contractors in the Truckee Tahoe sub region on retrofitting buildings from conventional natural gas systems to electric systems, with a focus on heat pumps for space heating and cooling and water heating. This pilot project will increase workforce availability in building decarbonization in the Truckee Tahoe region, test the effectiveness of an emission-reducing measure, and facilitate a conversation in a rural region generally opposed to building electrification.

### **Case Study: Collaborative Partnerships for Landscape-Scale Restoration: The North Yuba Project**

In 2018, Blue Forest Conservation and the Tahoe National Forest launched The Yuba Project, the first Forest Resilience Bond, which provides \$4 million in private capital towards forest and meadow restoration treatments across 15,000 acres of national forest in Sierra County.

The Yuba Project will improve forest health and resilience by reducing surface and ladder fuels to allow for safe fire suppression, improve wildlife foraging habitat, reintroduce fire into the fire-adapted ecosystems, restore degraded meadows, and enhance recreation by improving public safety along roads, and trails, and distribution lines.

Direct benefits from the Yuba Project include protecting ecosystems and communities from high severity fire, better water quality for downstream communities of the Yuba River Watershed, and more productive forests allowing for greater carbon sequestration (and lower fire risk, potentially minimizing or preventing GHG emissions from wildfire).

The Yuba Project is an example of the effectiveness of private-public partnerships. Blue Forest Conservation's mission of creating sustainable investment solutions to environmental challenges has allowed the Tahoe National Forest to accelerate and complete this project in four years instead of the projected 10 to 12 years. The Yuba Project's anticipated completion date is in 2023.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.blueforest.org/the-yuba-project>

# Financial Capital Strategic Goal:



## Build Investment Readiness Through Regional Collaboration

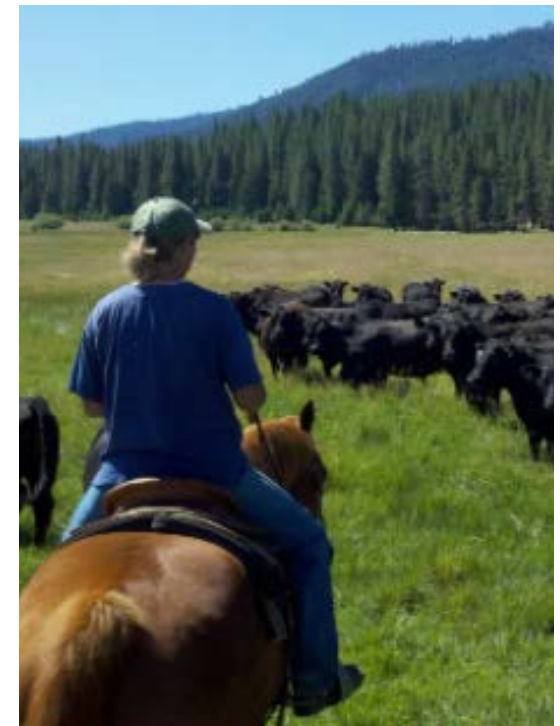
Financial Capital is the resource required to plan, build, and implement programs and projects that can benefit all other forms of capital.

A prosperous and vibrant community depends on the ability to access capital to pursue community development projects and programs. The availability of financial capital contributes to capacity building, community facility development, business growth, and individual wealth creation. Equitable access to financial capital is the key to addressing the growing wealth gap and lifting underserved populations out of poverty.

Many regions of rural Northern California including the SEDD are referred to as a “capital desert”. Meaning they are often overlooked in state funding allocations and by private investors.

The primary reason is the low-density population relative to urban areas and the perceived lack of opportunity. However, the SEDD region can also be seen as the source of so many things that urban populations need and desire to thrive including fresh water, natural resources, abundant agriculture, and recreation opportunities. Disasters like wildfires have no regard for county lines, city limits or jurisdictional boundaries and threaten the very livelihood upon which rural areas depend and urban areas benefit. It is essential that these natural assets are fairly valued, cared for, and invested in to ensure the stewardship and continuation of ecosystem services that benefit the greater population.

A strong supply of financial capital and enhanced access, particularly for underserved or disadvantaged populations, is a key factor in building prosperity. Capital attraction to rural areas requires a dedication to planning, collaboration, and commitment to investment in prosperous communities. Without this investment of financial capital to implement programs and projects, the social infrastructure fails and communities die.



# Financial Capital Strategies: Build Investment Readiness Through Regional Collaboration



## F.1 Strategy:

Identify opportunities to collaborate on regional infrastructure projects & programs

F.1 Action Items	F.1 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop partnerships with local governments, special districts, philanthropy, and private investors in region.</li> <li>• Participate in regional collaborative grant opportunities at the intersection of forest resiliency, watershed restoration, and sustainable recreation.</li> </ul>	<p>Number and dollar amount of new secured grants to advance regional infrastructure and programs</p>

## F.2 Strategy:

Identify cross-jurisdictional funding opportunities for priority economic development projects

F.2 Action Items	F.2 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with regional efforts around sustainable agriculture, tourism, broadband, transportation, forest health, and biomass.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to build capacity with centralized grant writing, management, and technical assistance through a lead agency within the SEDD region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced forest density w/ increased prescribed burns and removal of fuels</li> <li>• Rehabilitation investments to increase surface water storage, groundwater recharge, water clarity, and flood management</li> </ul>

# Financial Capital Strategies: Build Investment Readiness Through Regional Collaboration Continued



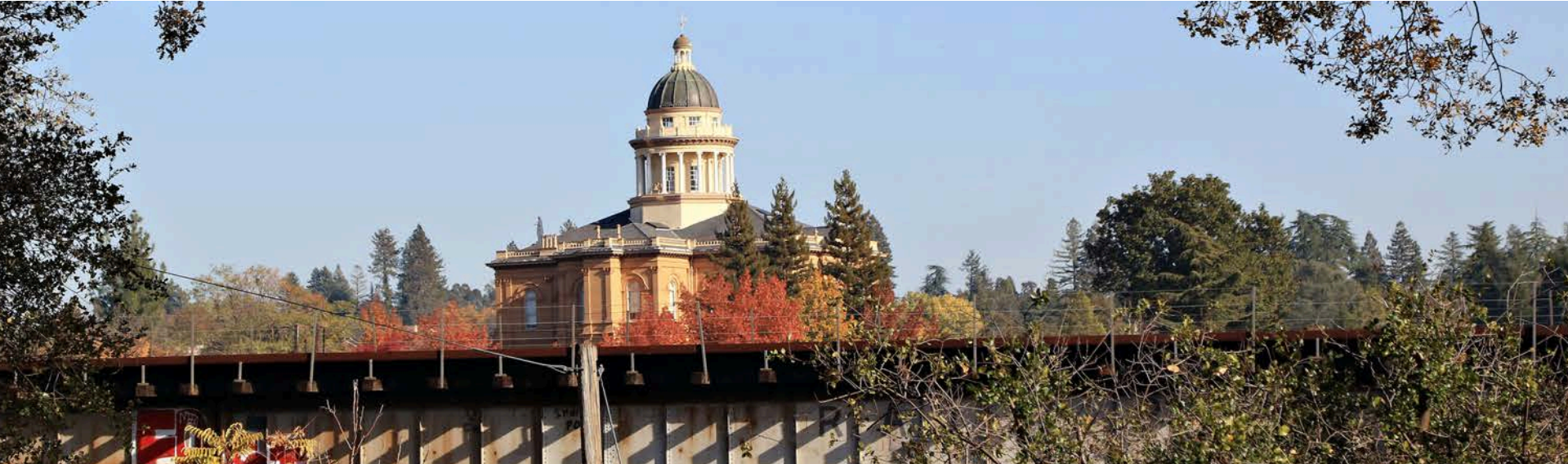
### F.3 Strategy:

Improved access to capital across region

F.3 Action Items	F.3 Success Metric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve access to capital with regional revolving loan funds to support entrepreneurial efforts</li><li>• Test regional TOT tax interest</li><li>• Engage Philanthropy in community projects &amp; programming</li></ul>	Number of local loans funded

### Financial Capital Partners, Advocates, & Champions

Federal and State granting agencies, Local governments, CERF conveners, Philanthropic Organizations and community Foundations, CDFIs, regional banks, private investors, and project proponents.





## Showcase Implementation Projects



### Case Study: Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship (SBTS) and Connected Communities

SBTS is a non-profit organization with numerous trail projects located throughout Plumas and Sierra counties, and Plumas, Lassen, and Tahoe National Forests. SBTS was formed in 2003 to restore and manage degraded trails leading to erosion and watershed siltation in Downieville, CA. The Downieville trails were being impacted by heavy trail traffic, and one solution to mitigate the environmental impact was reducing trail use—but reducing trail use in Downieville led to negative impacts on the local economy and the overall well-being of the community.

SBTS’s work showed that sustainable recreation use can build climate resilience and strengthen local economies in small, rural communities. To expand on their work in the Lost Sierra, SBTS is amid the Connected Communities Project. SBTS says the Connected Communities Project “aims to stimulate the economies of rural communities by improving trail access and connectivity and encouraging diverse user types to explore and recreate on public lands by linking 15 mountain towns by trails”. Not only will Connected Communities create new jobs and diversify the recreation and economic opportunities in the SEDD, but the extensive 600-plus-mile trail system will also support wildfire recovery and prevention efforts by supplying access to hard-to-reach geographies for fire crews, and provide shaded fuel breaks in densely forested areas.

SBTS employs 72 people, mostly residents in Plumas and Sierra counties, and offers 10+ volunteer opportunities each year, including for youth. With an annual payroll of over \$1,000,000, SBTS has shown that recreation can build resilience in SEDD communities.



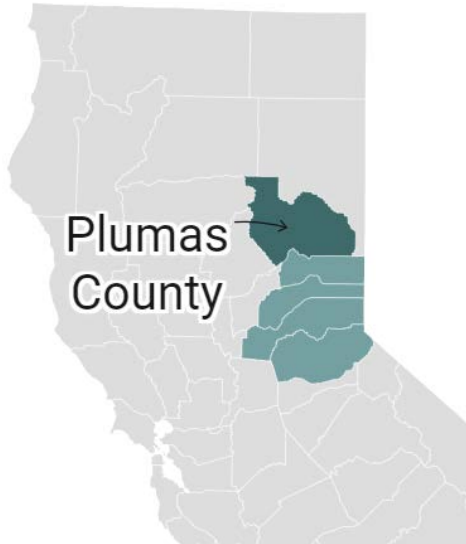
# County Profiles

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# Plumas County

## Demographics Profile



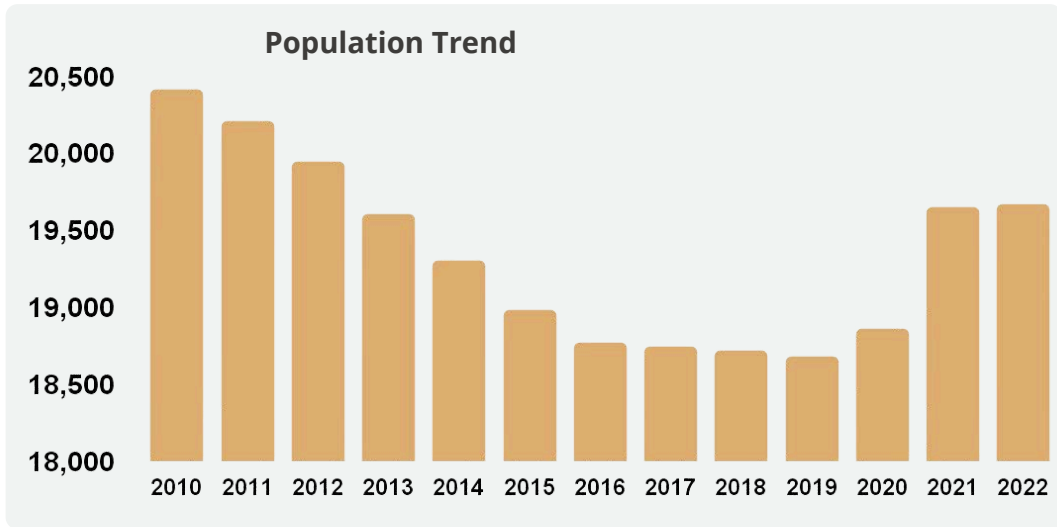
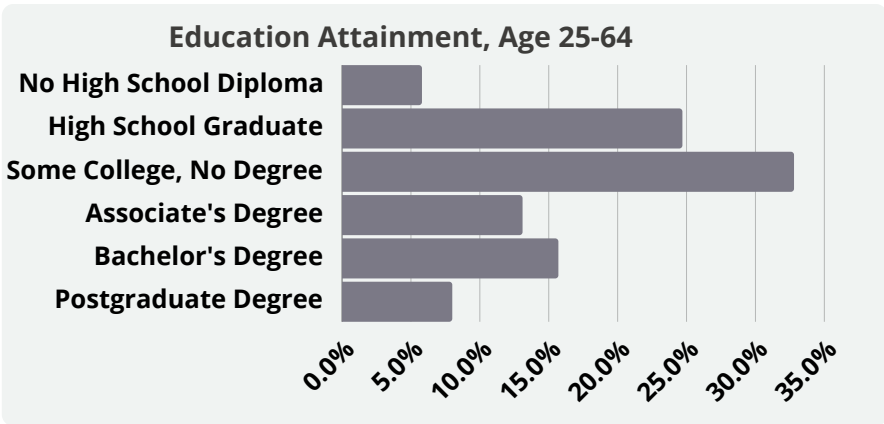
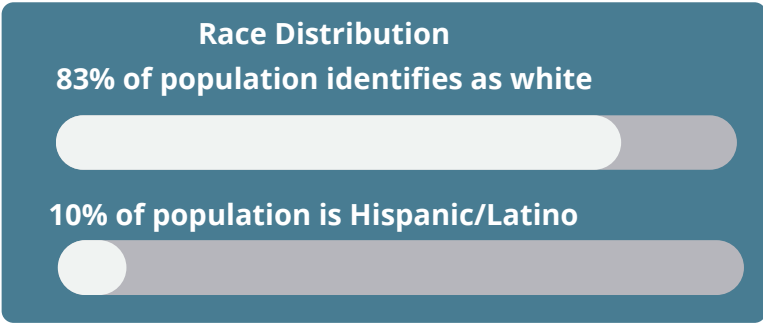
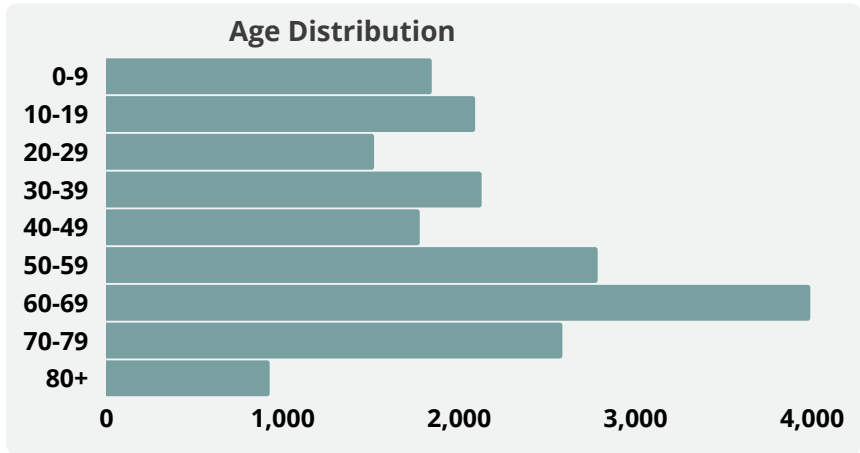
	Plumas County	Quincy	Portola
Population	19,650	1,368	2,427
MHI	\$67,885	\$75,469	\$52,500
Poverty Rate	10.9%	11.3%	21.1%

**7.7**  
People per Square Mile

**51.8**  
Median Age

**\$35,139**  
Per Capita Income

**\$268,900**  
Median House Value

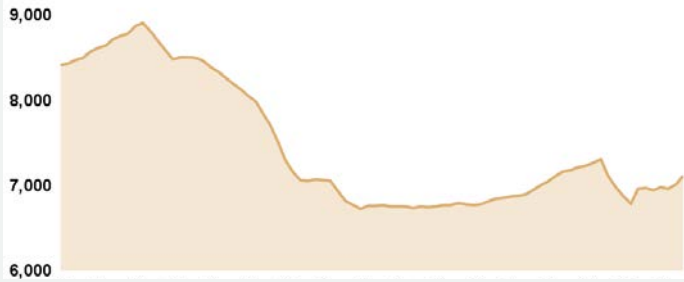


All Data: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey 2022 1-year and 2018-2022 5-year estimates.

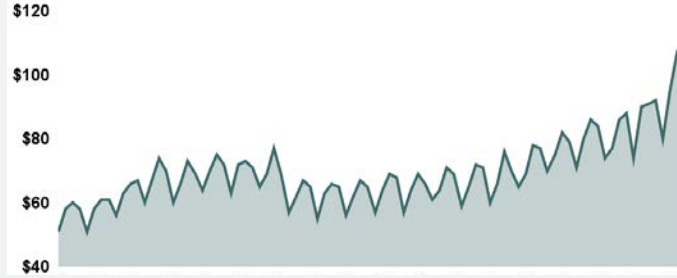
# Plumas County

## Economic Profile

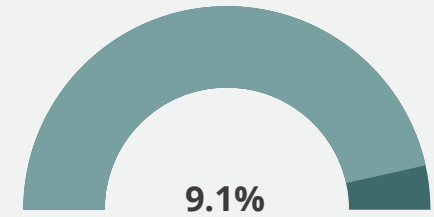
Total Employment Trend 2002 - 2023



Total Wages Trend 2002 - 2023 (\$millions)



Unemployment, 2024



Industry	Current (2023Q3)		5-Year History		5-Year Forecast		
	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,303	\$60,062	27	0.4%	657	18	0.3%
Public Administration	805	\$68,788	-154	-3.4%	341	-24	-0.6%
Retail Trade	668	\$34,845	34	1.0%	411	-35	-1.1%
Educational Services	640	\$54,138	26	0.8%	282	-16	-0.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	615	\$27,345	-111	-3.3%	520	-15	-0.5%
Construction	513	\$54,311	23	0.9%	204	-14	-0.6%
Manufacturing	512	\$69,580	-27	-1.0%	235	-18	-0.7%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	345	\$37,253	40	2.5%	189	-6	-0.4%
Utilities	212	\$124,558	0	0.0%	81	-10	-0.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	205	\$64,938	-15	-1.4%	108	-3	-0.3%

**6,914**

Total Workers

**\$55,042**

Avg Wage per Worker

**58.4%**

Privately Employed

**951**

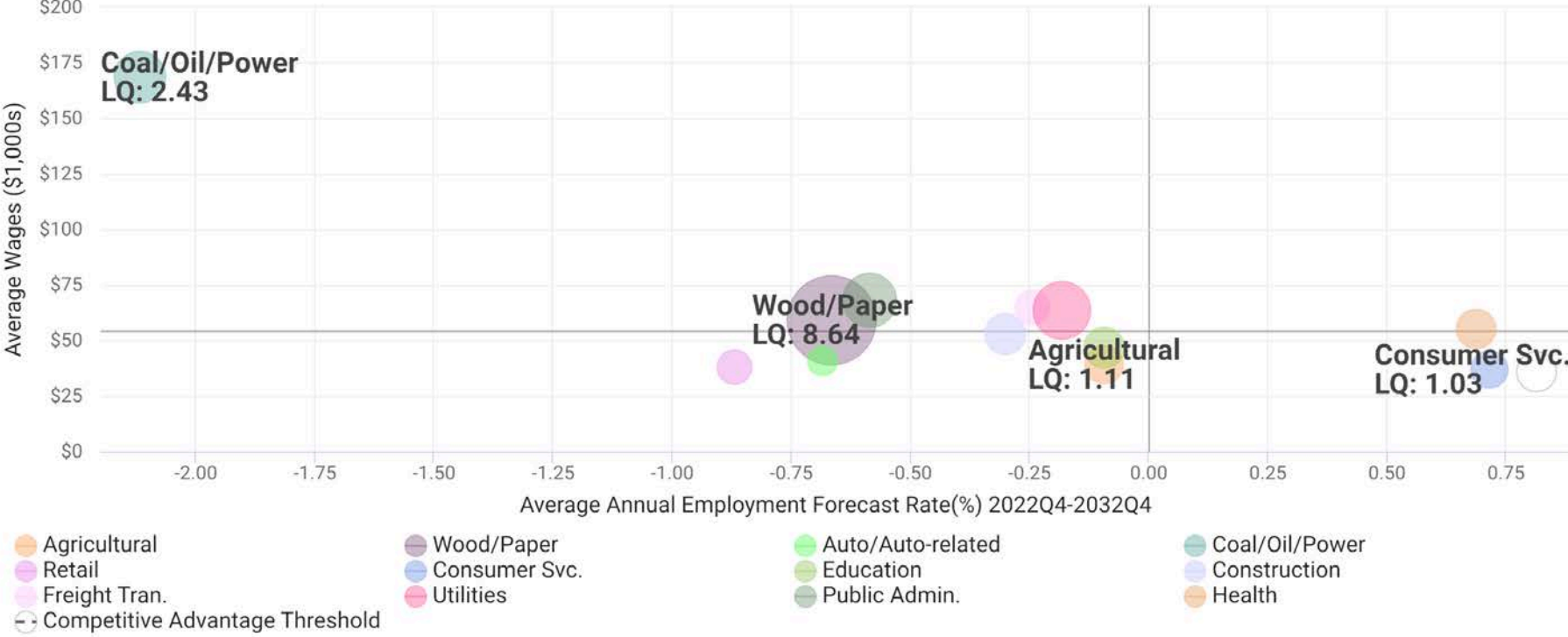
Number of Establishments

All Data: JobsEQ, 2024. Data through 2023Q3.



# Plumas County Industry Clusters

Industry Clusters for Plumas County, California as of 2022Q4



Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2022Q4

# Sierra County

## Demographics Profile



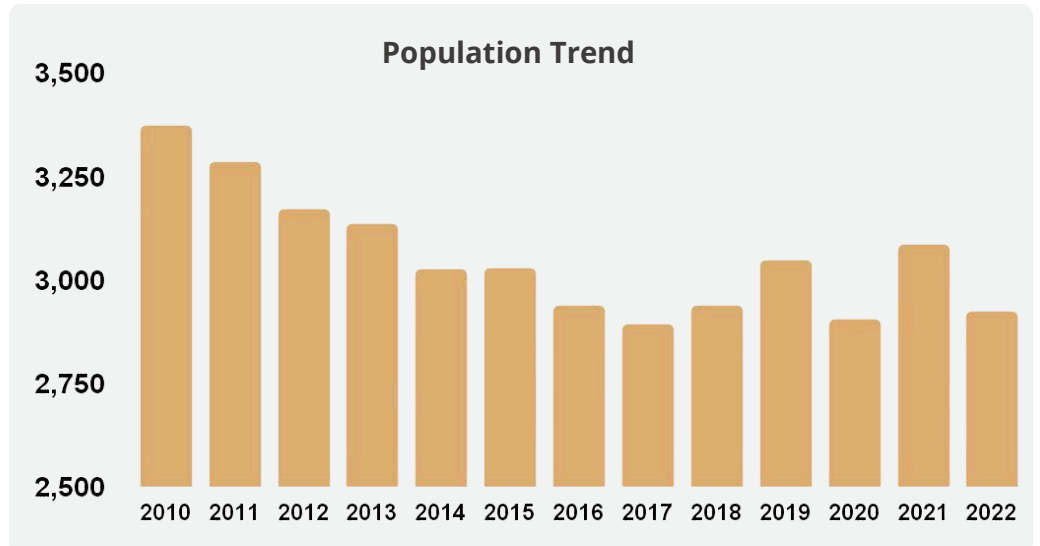
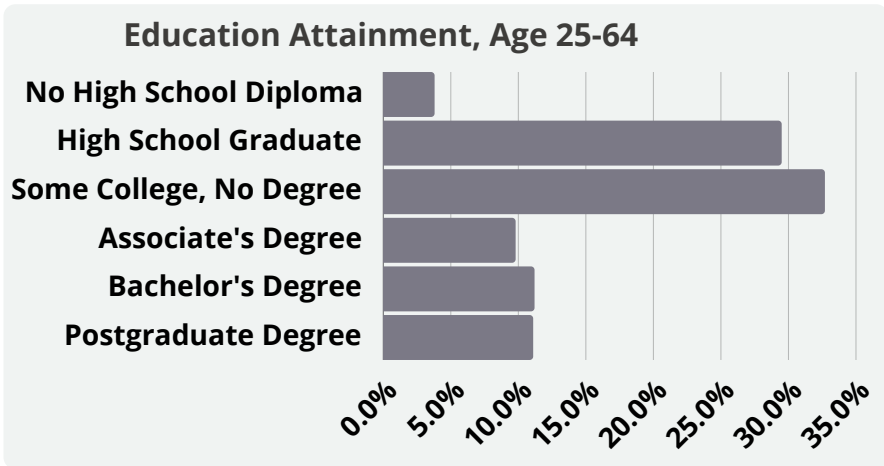
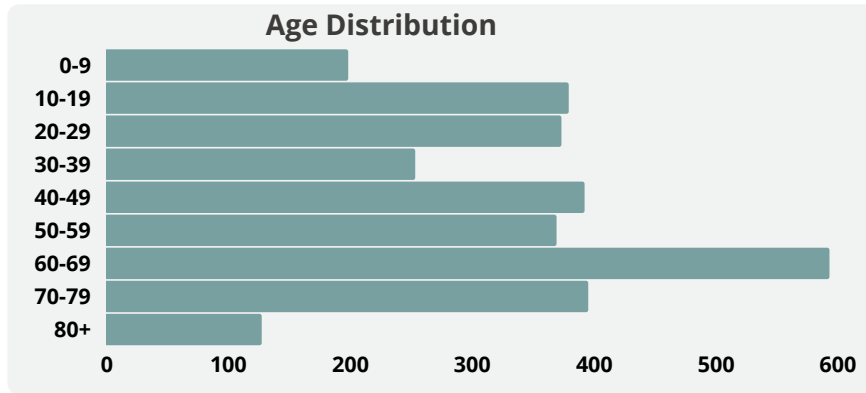
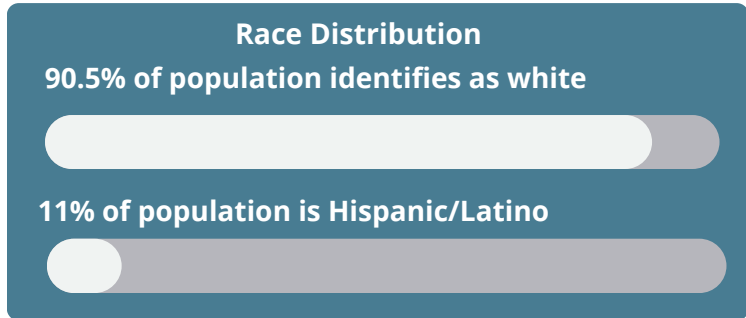
	Sierra County	Loyalton	Sierraville
Population	2,916	997	227
MHI	\$61,108	\$75,149	\$34,786
Poverty Rate	12.6%	17.3%	1.3%

**3.2**  
People per  
Square Mile

**45.9**  
Median Age

**\$34,454**  
Per Capita  
Income

**\$231,400**  
Median  
House Value

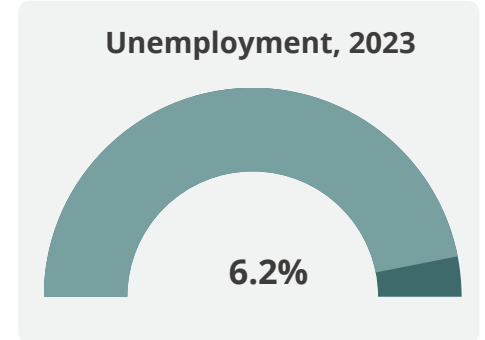
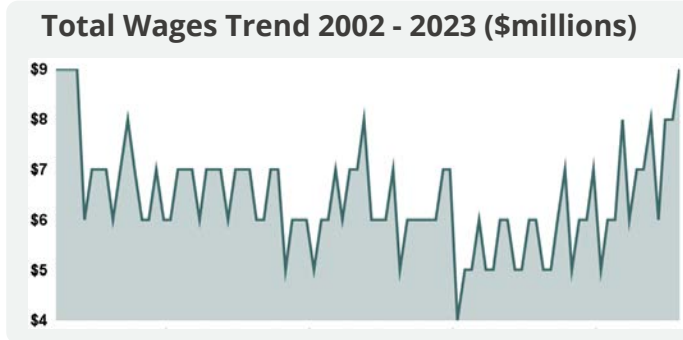
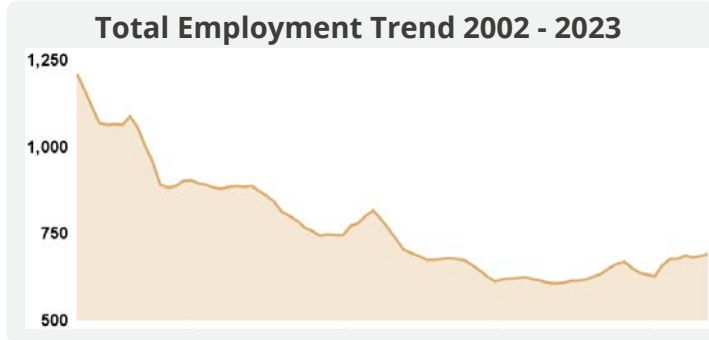


All Data: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey 2022 1-year and 2018-2022 5-year estimates.

\*Mean Household Income, Median Household income not available.

# Sierra County

## Economic Profile



Industry	Current (2023Q3)		5-Year History		5-Year Forecast		
	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
Health Care and Social Assistance	73	\$18,692	9	2.7%	39	3	0.8%
Accommodation and Food Services	73	\$29,574	14	4.2%	60	-3	-0.9%
Construction	28	\$60,064	8	7.2%	11	-1	-0.9%
Retail Trade	25	\$38,937	1	0.8%	15	-2	-1.5%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	16	\$33,871	3	4.4%	8	-1	-1.3%
Administrative and Support, Waste Management, Remediation Services	6	\$63,888	-3	-8.2%	3	0	-0.9%
Educational Services	5	\$20,695	5	n/a	2	0	-0.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	4	\$11,969	0	0.2%	2	0	-0.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	4	\$26,149	1	3.1%	2	0	-0.4%
Unclassified	3	\$16,218	2	16.5%	1	0	-0.7%

**652**  
Total Workers

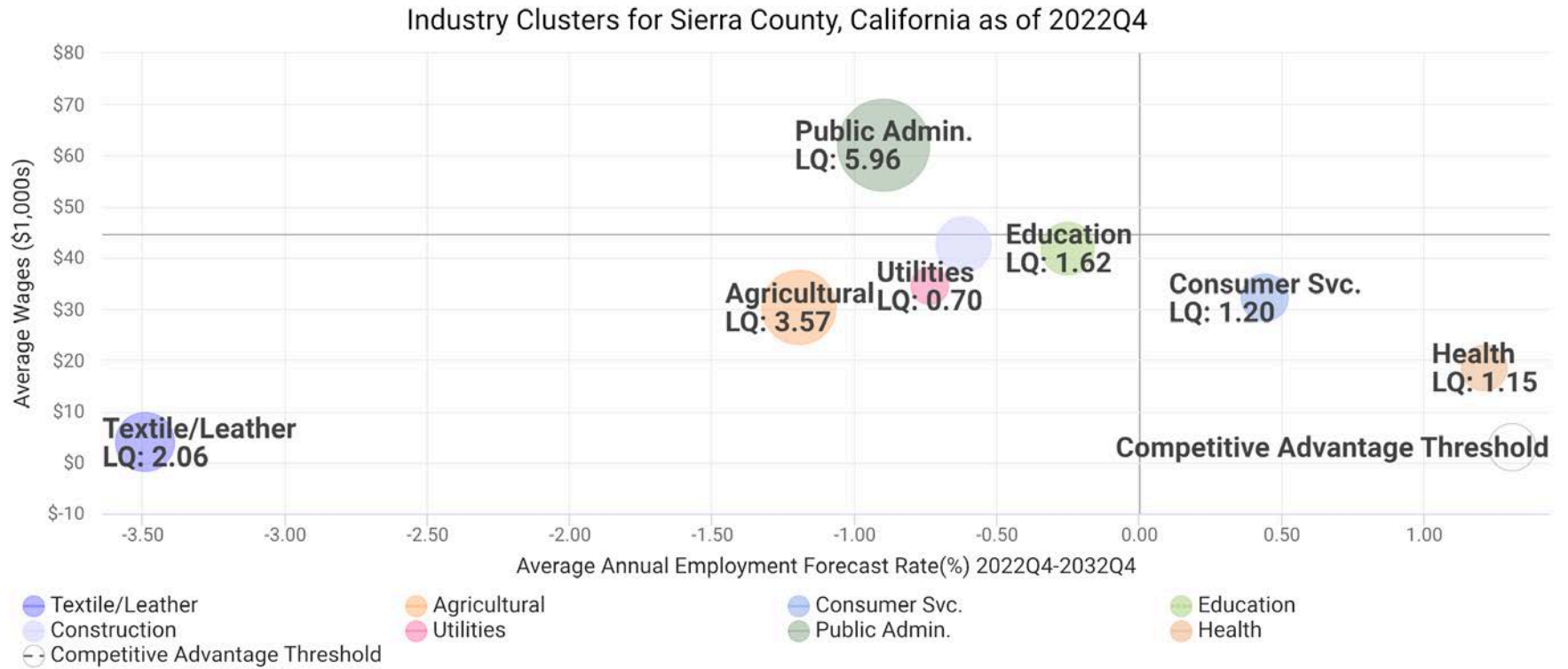
**\$43,611**  
Avg Wage per Worker

**38.2%**  
Privately Employed

**139**  
Number of Establishments

All Data: JobsEQ, 2024. Data through 2023Q3.

# Sierra County Industry Clusters

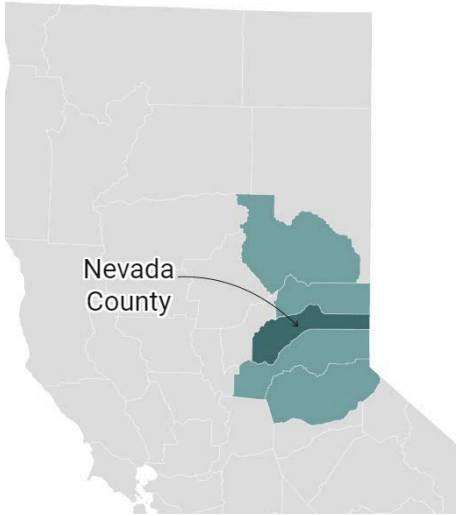


Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2022Q4



# Nevada County

## Demographics Profile



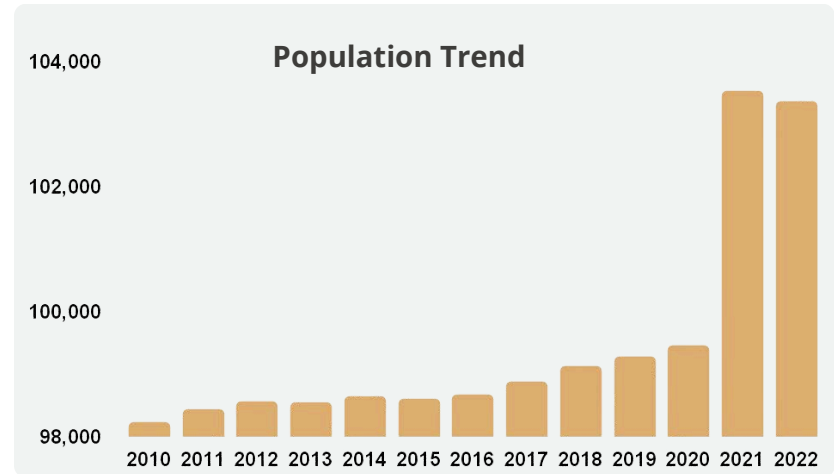
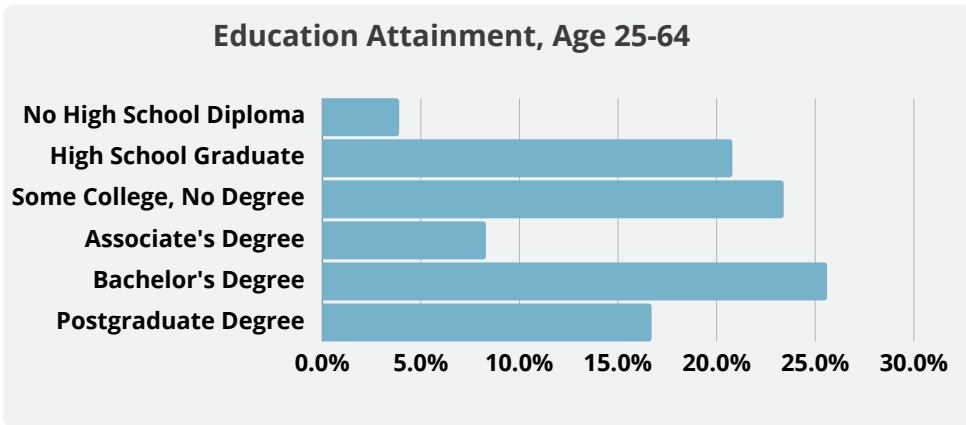
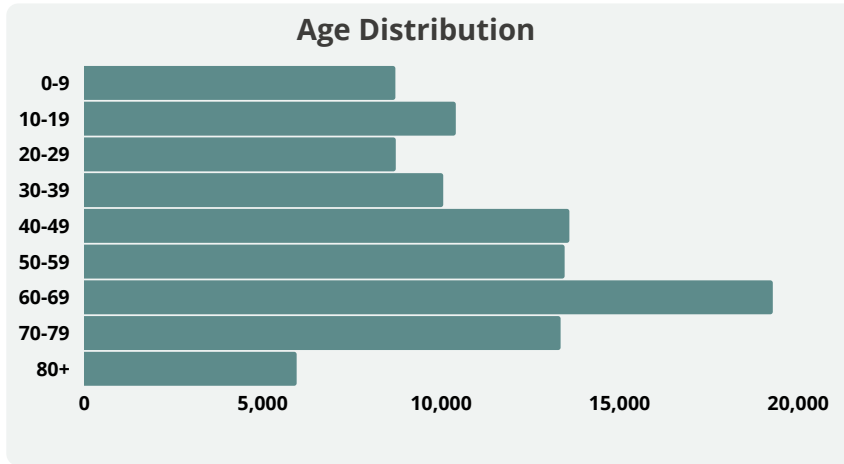
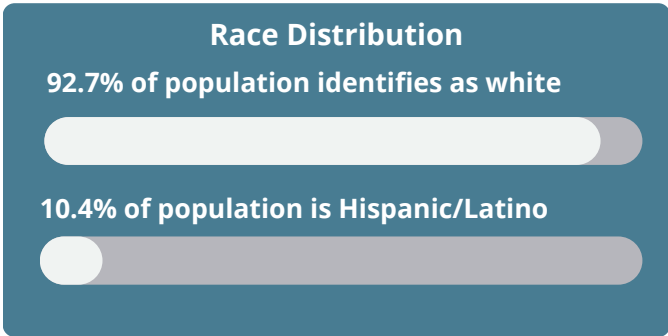
	Nevada County	Truckee	Grass Valley	Nevada City
<b>Population</b>	<b>102,322</b>	<b>16,784</b>	<b>13,964</b>	<b>3,142</b>
<b>MHI</b>	<b>\$79,395</b>	<b>\$107,423</b>	<b>\$49,855</b>	<b>\$65,032</b>
<b>Poverty Rate</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>13.3%</b>

**108.1**  
People per Square Mile

**50.2**  
Median Age

**\$46,447**  
Per Capita Income

**\$575,300**  
Median House Value

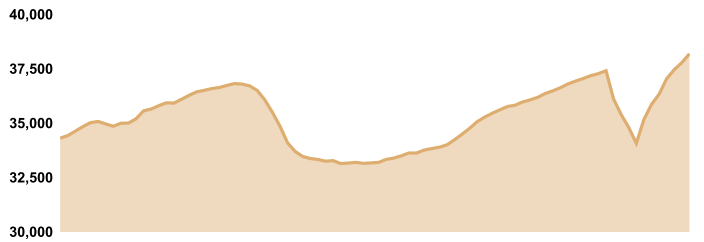


All Data: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey 2022 1-year and 2018-2022 5-year estimates.

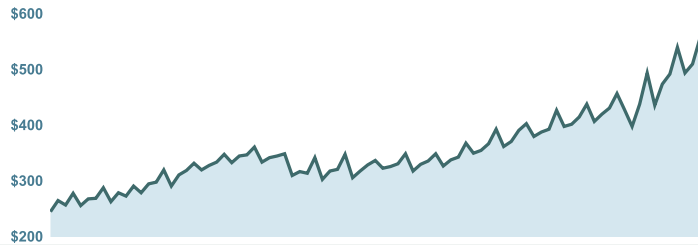
# Nevada County

## Economic Profile

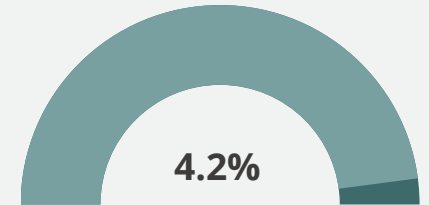
Total Employment Trend 2002 - 2023



Total Wages Trend 2002 - 2023 (\$millions)



Unemployment, 2023



Industry	Current (2023Q3)		5-Year History		5-Year Forecast		
	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
Health Care and Social Assistance	4,695	\$57,545	-176	-0.7%	2,547	209	0.9%
Retail Trade	4,055	\$42,040	59	0.3%	2,609	-129	-0.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	4,005	\$31,281	208	1.1%	3,470	-42	-0.2%
Construction	3,425	\$72,005	502	3.2%	1,430	-39	-0.2%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,963	\$42,787	62	0.6%	1,102	-14	-0.1%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,585	\$86,487	308	4.4%	691	40	0.5%
Manufacturing	1,299	\$67,237	-103	-1.5%	620	-27	-0.4%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,265	\$37,380	84	1.4%	977	26	0.4%
Administrative, Support, Waste Management, Remediation Services	965	\$53,375	10	0.2%	546	-5	-0.1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	650	\$71,547	-8	-0.3%	319	5	0.1%

**37,815**  
Total Workers

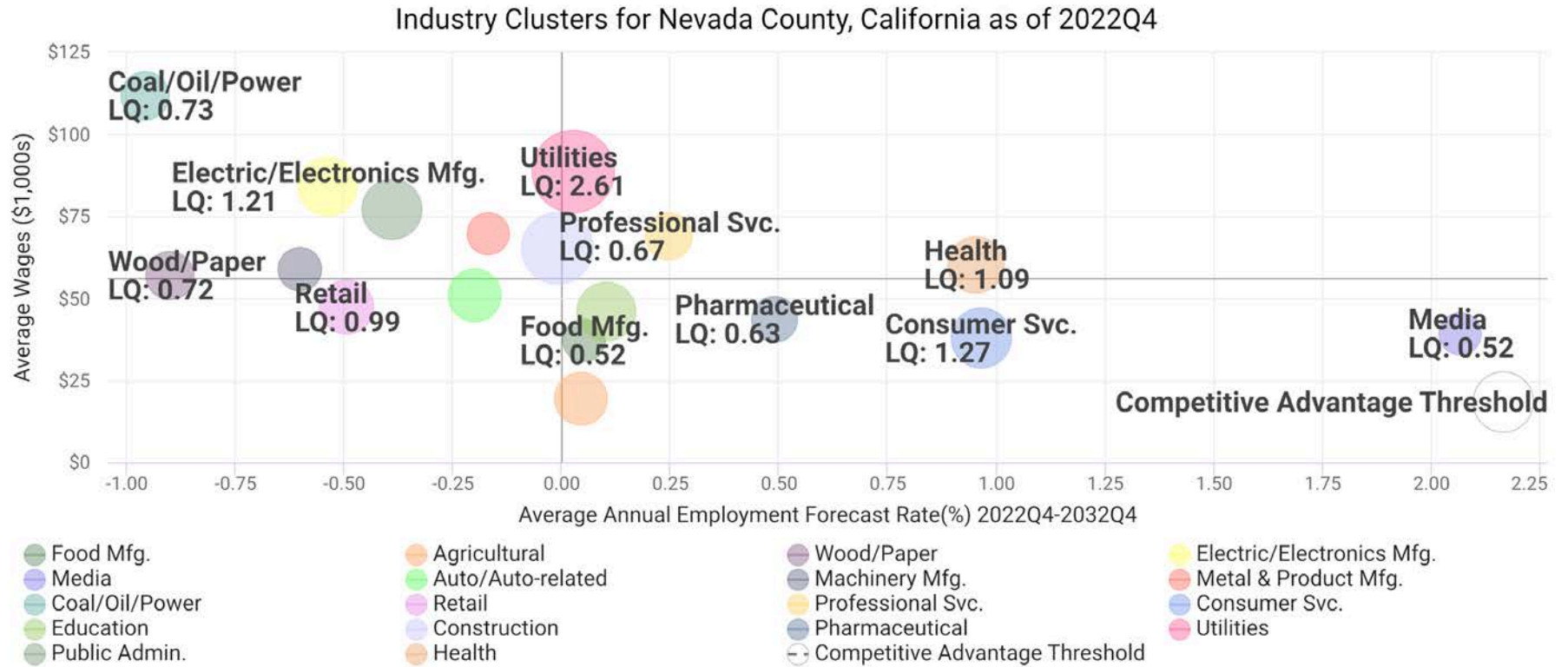
**70.7%**  
Privately Employed

**\$57,335**  
Avg Wage per Worker

**4,144**  
Number of Establishments

All Data: JobsEQ, 2024. Data through 2023Q3.

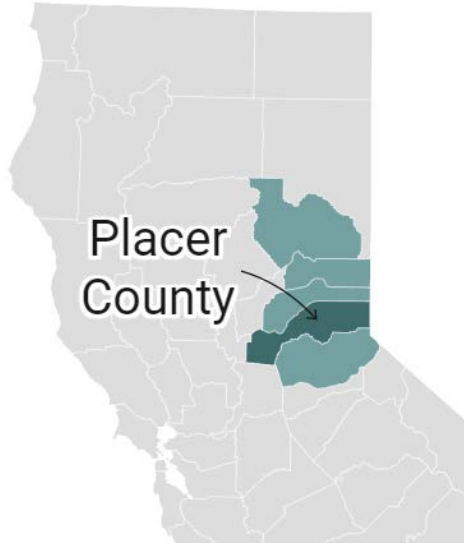
# Nevada County Industry Clusters



Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2022Q4

# Placer County

## Demographics Profile



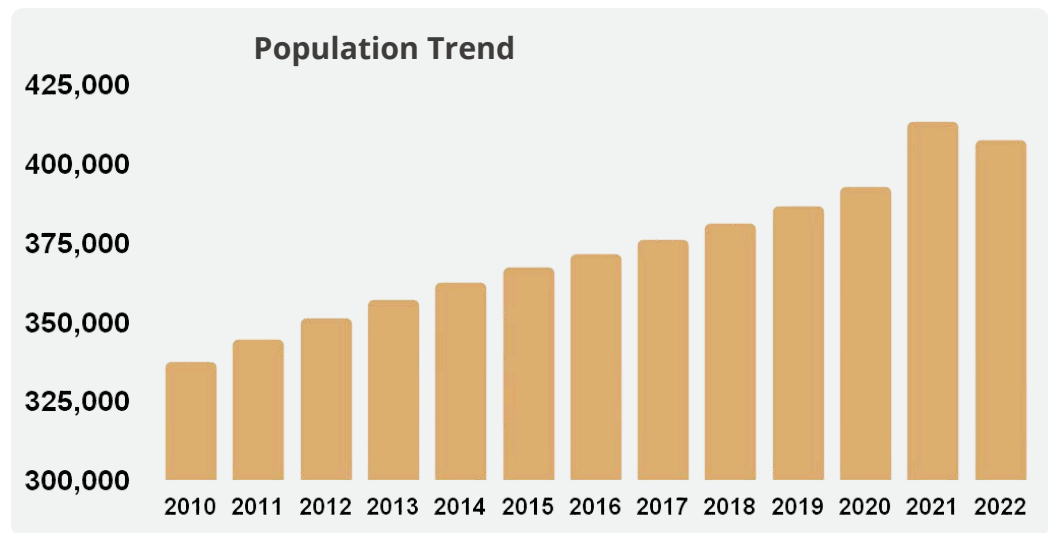
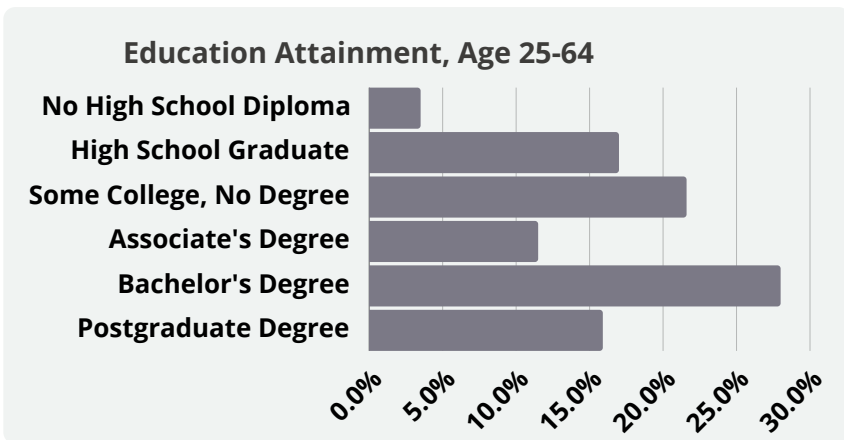
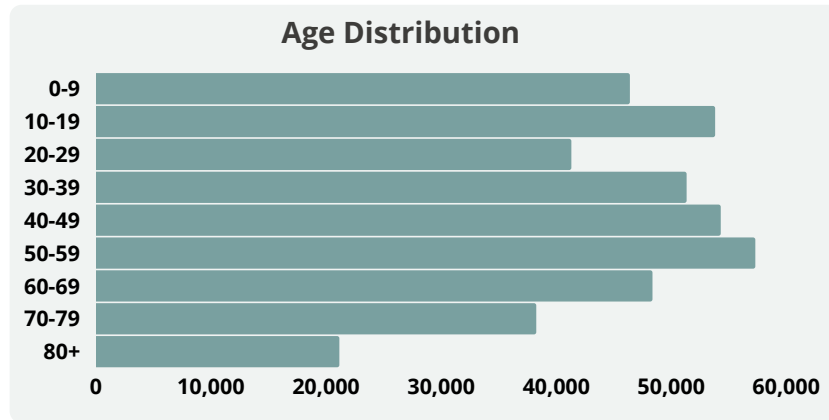
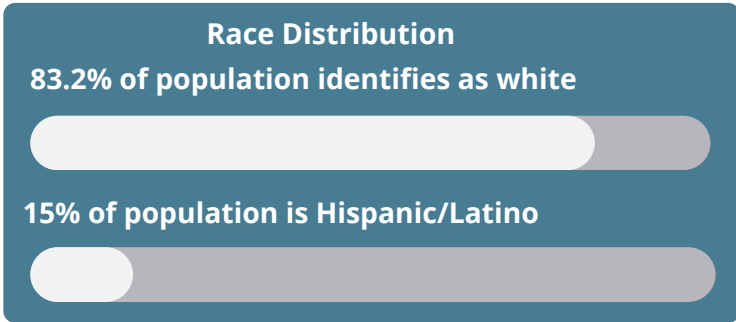
	Placer County	Roseville	Rocklin
Population	406,608	148,879	71,676
MHI	\$109,375	\$112,265	\$116,006
Poverty Rate	6.8%	6.3%	4.3%

**293**  
People per Square Mile

**42.3**  
Median Age

**\$50,256**  
Per Capita Income

**\$627,500**  
Median House Value

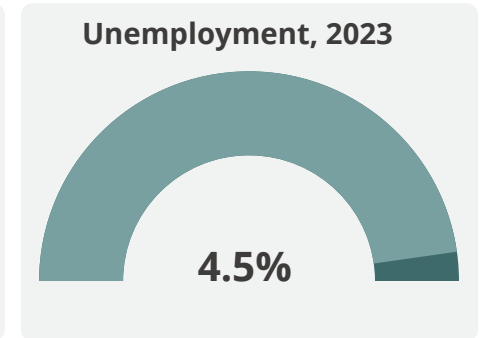
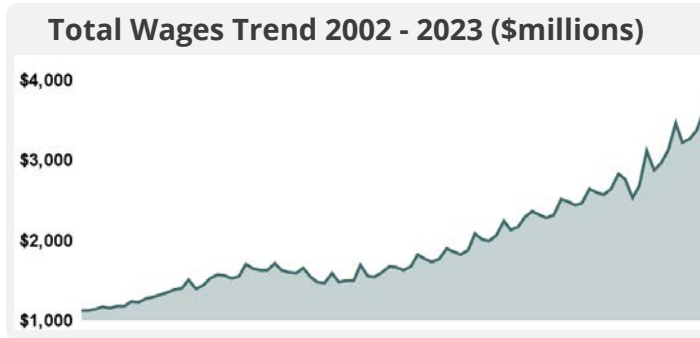
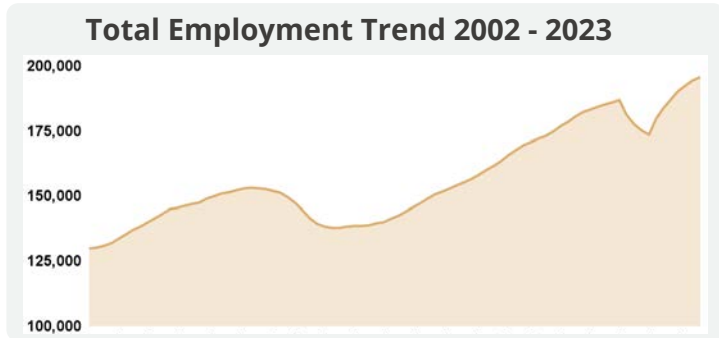


All Data: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey 2022 1-year and 2018-2022 5-year estimates.



# Placer County

## Economic Profile



Industry	Current (2023Q3)		5-Year History		5-Year Forecast		
	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
Health Care and Social Assistance	31,062	\$89,209	5,072	3.6%	19,399	3,463	2.1%
Retail Trade	22,472	\$47,706	-625	-0.5%	16,551	863	0.8%
Accommodation and Food Services	19,985	\$30,489	1,115	1.2%	19,298	1,189	1.2%
Construction	18,962	\$80,800	2,972	3.5%	9,514	1,108	1.1%
Educational Services	11,855	\$61,484	1,155	2.1%	6,029	378	0.6%
Administrative and Support, Waste Management, Remediation Services	11,560	\$65,563	330	0.6%	7,692	847	1.4%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	10,859	\$86,816	1,805	3.7%	5,592	995	1.8%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	9,275	\$42,020	2,347	6.0%	7,701	592	1.2%
Manufacturing	6,983	\$75,189	1,344	4.4%	4,045	429	1.2%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	6,840	\$51,899	976	3.1%	4,507	478	1.4%

**197,816**  
Total Workers

**\$68,846**  
Avg Wage per Worker

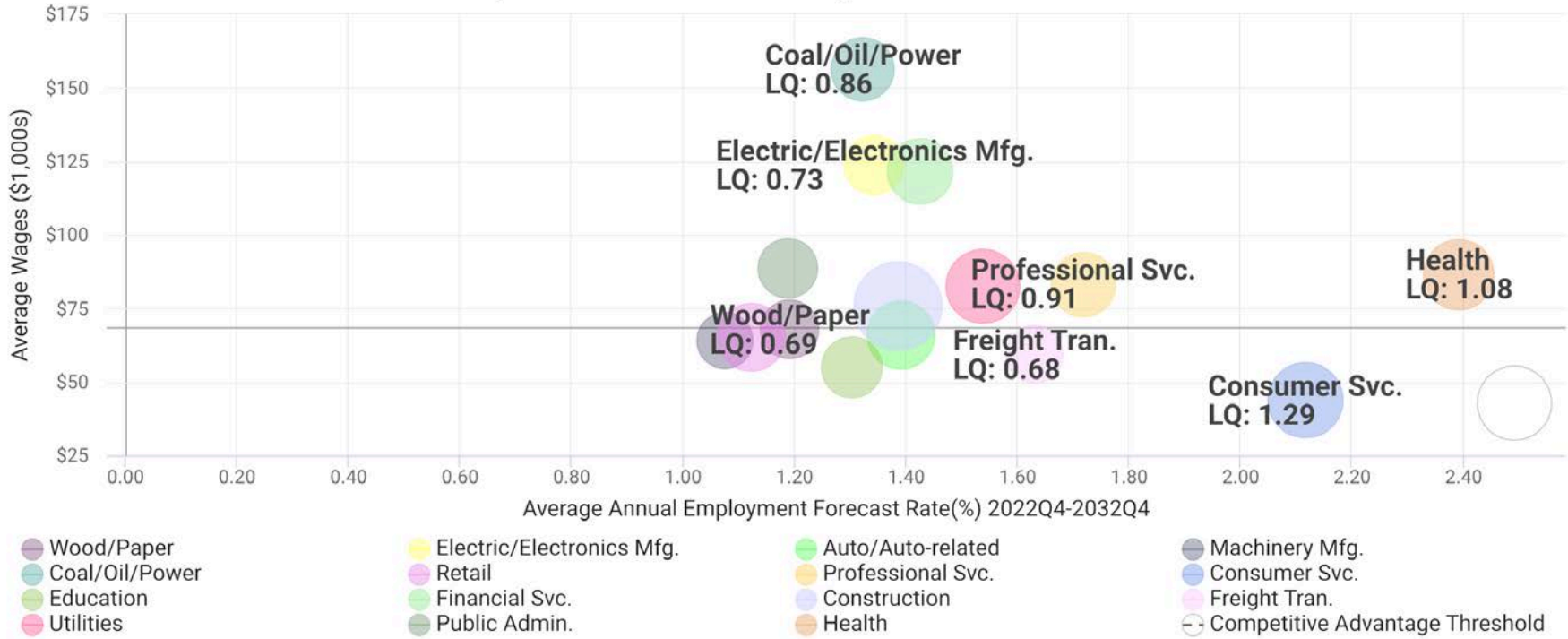
**82.8%**  
Privately Employed

**15,283**  
Number of Establishments

All Data: JobsEQ, 2024. Data through 2023Q3.

# Placer County Industry Clusters

Industry Clusters for Placer County, California as of 2022Q4



Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2022Q4

# El Dorado County

## Demographics Profile



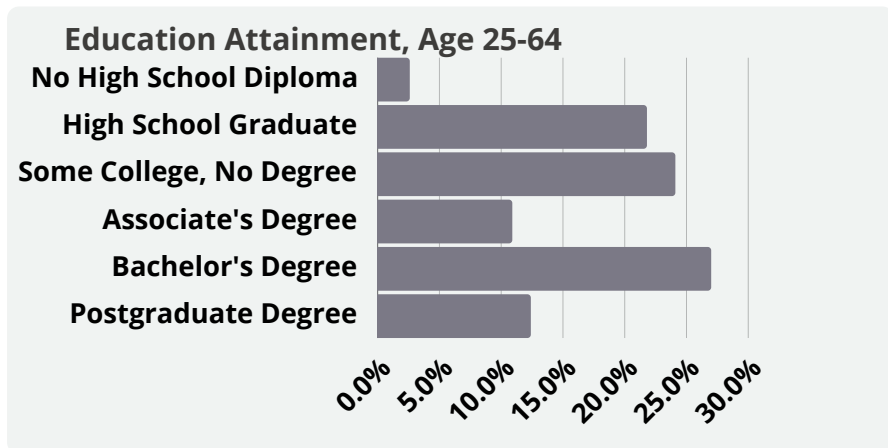
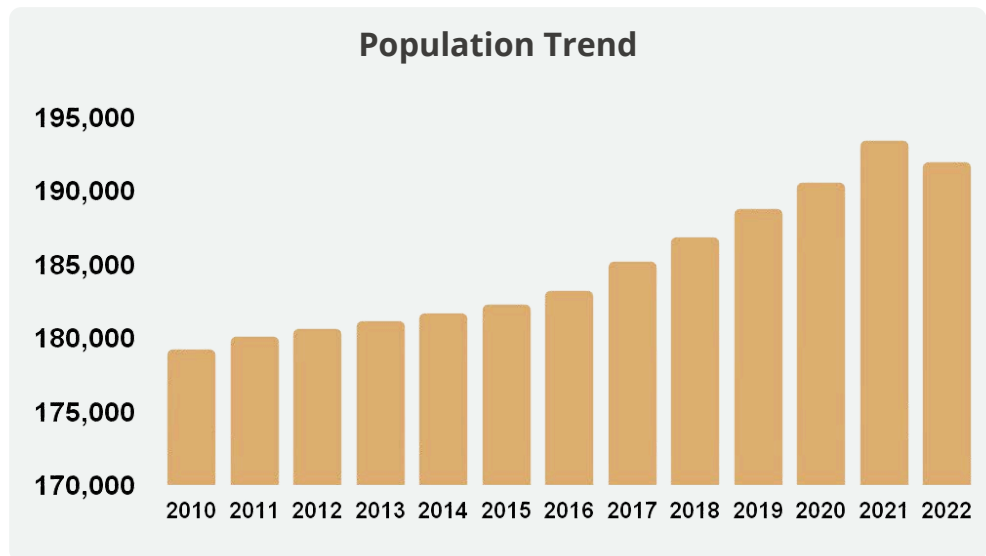
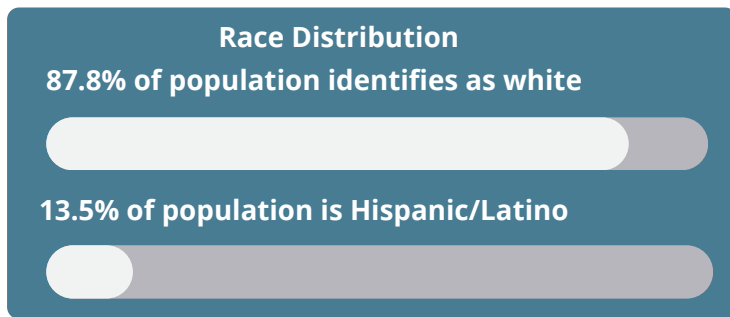
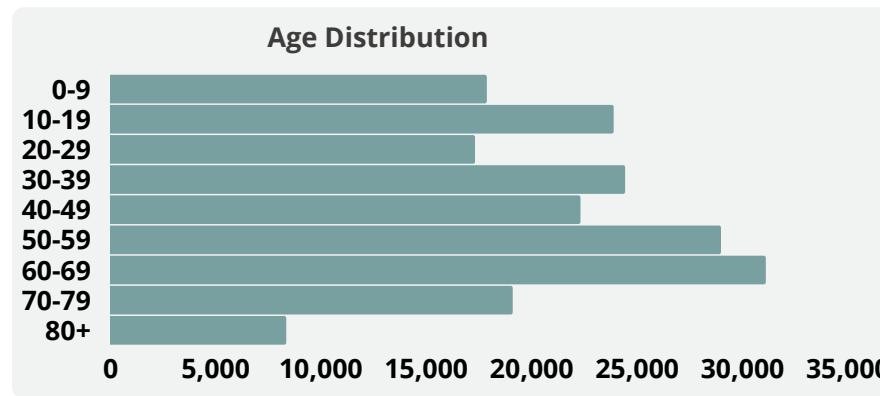
	El Dorado County	Placerville	South Lake Tahoe
Population	191,713	10,744	21,346
MHI	\$99,246	\$68,640	\$67,696
Poverty Rate	8.6%	16%	13.3%

**111.9**  
People per Square Mile

**45.7**  
Median Age

**\$48,953**  
Per Capita Income

**\$609,100**  
Median House Value

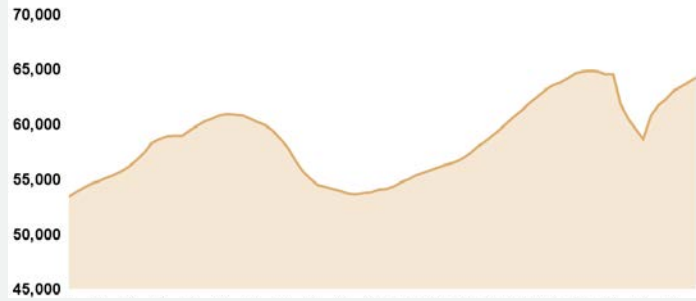


All Data: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey 2022 1-year and 2018-2022 5-year estimates.

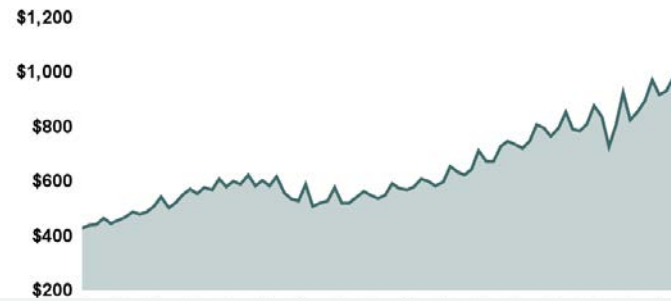
# El Dorado County

## Economic Profile

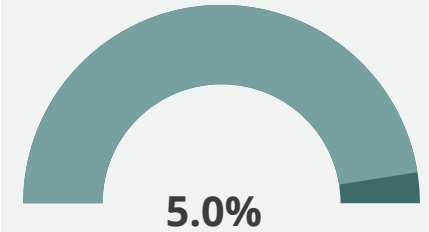
Total Employment Trend 2002 - 2023



Total Wages Trend 2002 - 2023 (\$millions)



Unemployment, 2023



Industry	Current (2023Q3)		5-Year History		5-Year Forecast		
	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
Construction	7,604	\$73,403	487	1.3%	3,445	136	0.4%
Retail Trade	6,894	\$40,408	231	0.7%	4,660	-51	-0.1%
Educational Services	5,308	\$60,967	-197	-0.7%	2,618	102	0.4%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3,655	\$83,651	131	0.7%	1,695	177	1.0%
Public Administration	3,638	\$92,515	34	0.2%	1,738	54	0.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,501	\$41,379	11	0.1%	2,685	59	0.3%
Administrative and Support, Waste Management, Remediation Services	3,479	\$58,572	-304	-1.7%	2,115	97	0.6%
Manufacturing	3,025	\$63,656	216	1.5%	1,497	-21	-0.1%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,718	\$40,616	-43	-0.3%	1,658	85	0.6%
Finance and Insurance	2,463	\$133,720	-900	-6.0%	1,134	88	0.7%

64,226

Total Workers

\$62,318

Avg Wage per Worker

74.1%

Privately Employed

6,269

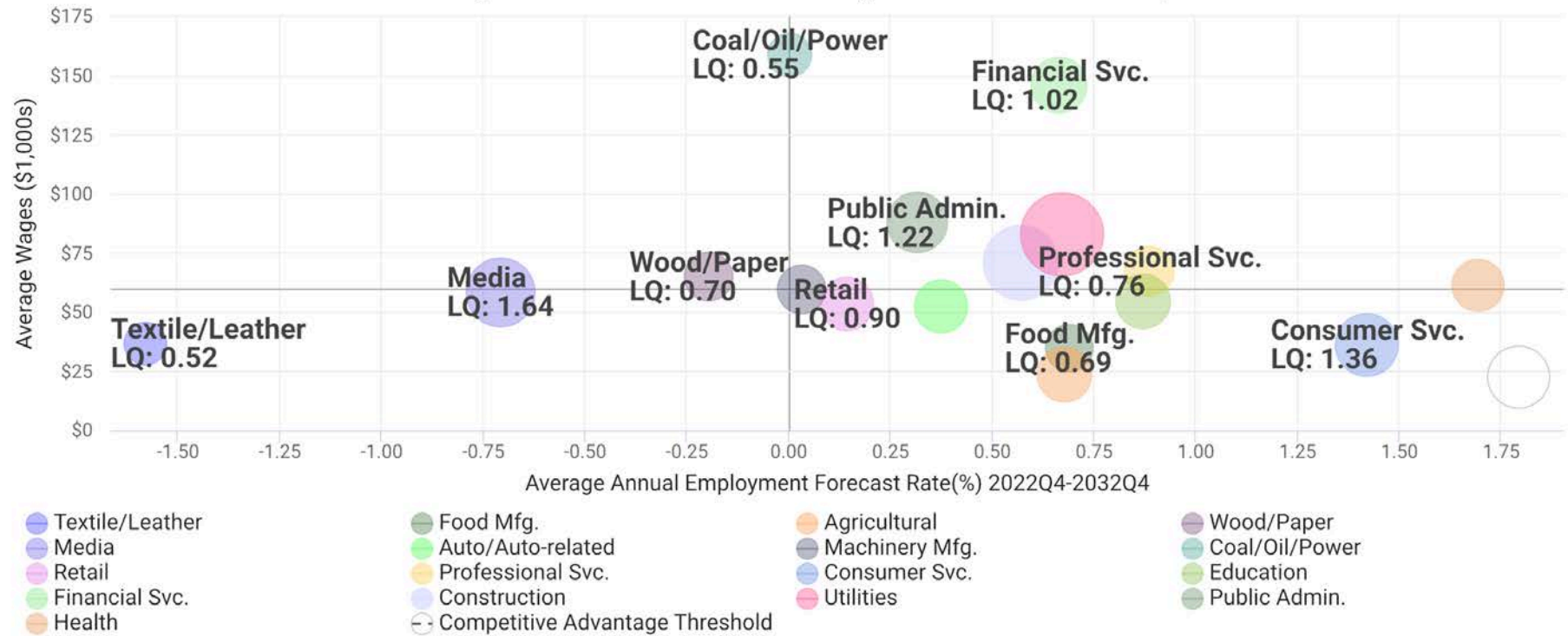
Number of Establishments

All Data: JobsEQ, 2024. Data through 2023Q3.



# El Dorado County Industry Clusters

Industry Clusters for El Dorado County, California as of 2022Q4



Source: JobsEQ@Data as of 2022Q4

# Sierra Economic Development District Stakeholders and Interviews

## Plumas County

Jeff Engel – Plumas County Board of Supervisor, District 5

Debra Lucero – Plumas County Administrative Officer

Tracey Ferguson – Plumas County Planning Director

John Steffanic – Plumas County Fair Manager / Economic Development Point of Contact / Indian Valley Innovation Hub

Paul Russell – Plumas County Museum Director

Rob Thorman – Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

Lara Wheeler – Indian Valley Innovation Hub

Kest Porter – Indian Valley Innovation Hub

Zachary Gately – Plumas County Grant Manager

Clint Koble – Sierra Small Business Development Center / Indian Valley Innovation Hub

Mark Pecotich – Plumas and Sierra County Chamber Coalition

Einen Grandi – Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District Board Chair

Paul Roen – Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group Chair

Trina Cunningham - Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group Vice Chair

Uma Hinman – Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group Staff

Rob Wade – Feather River Land Trust Learning Landscapes Coordinator

Payton Narancic – Sierra Institute for Community and Environment Mass Timber Project Coordinator

Irshad Stolden – Alliance for Workforce Development Resource Coordinator

Jessie Mazar – Lost Sierra Food Project Director and Co-Founder

Tracy Schohr – UC Cooperative Extension Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor Plumas, Sierra, and Butte

# Sierra Economic Development District Stakeholders and Interviews

## **El Dorado County**

Devin Middlebrook – Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Sustainability Program Coordinator  
Heidi Hill Drum – Tahoe Prosperity Center, Executive Director  
Kim Carr – Lake Tahoe Community College, Board Member  
Norma Santiago -  
Kyle Zimbelman - El Dorado County Economic Development  
William Robie – El Dorado Community Foundation, Executive Director  
David Spaur – El Dorado Community and Economic Development Advisory Committee  
Gina Posey - El Dorado Community and Economic Development Advisory Committee  
Derrick Martin - Tahoe Prosperity Center

## **Nevada County**

Kimberly Parker – Nevada County Economic Development Manager  
Gil Mathew – Nevada County Economic Resource Council  
Cassie Hebel - Truckee Downtown Merchants Association, Executive Director  
Jeffrey Thorsby - Nevada County Board of Supervisors Senior Administrative Analyst  
Michael Anderson - Business Owner, Client Works, Nevada City  
Caleb Dardick – Nevada County, Assistant County Executive Office  
Lisa Swarthout – Nevada County Board of Supervisors, District Five  
Hardy Bullock - Nevada County Board of Supervisors, District Five  
Robin Galvan-Davies - Greater Grass Valley Chamber of Commerce, CEO  
Stephen T. Monaghan - Nevada County Chief Information Officer  
Jessica Carr – Sierra Small Business Development Center  
Erika Seward - Nevada County, Senior Administrative Analyst  
Stacy Caldwell - Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation  
Stephen T. Monaghan - Nevada County Chief Information Officer

# Sierra Economic Development District Stakeholders and Interviews

## **Placer County**

Gloria Stearns - Placer County Economic Development Manager

Nick Martin – Placer County Deputy County Executive Officer

Keith Nesbitt – Auburn Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director

Michelle Johnson – Foresthill Divide Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director

Mora Rowe – City of Auburn Economic Development Director

Patrick Thompson – Business Owner, Mega’s Café, Foresthill

Robert Richardson – City of Auburn City Manager

Sarah Isabel Moe – We Prosper Together

Leslie Williams – Sierra Small Business Development Center

Veronica Blake - Placer Community Foundation

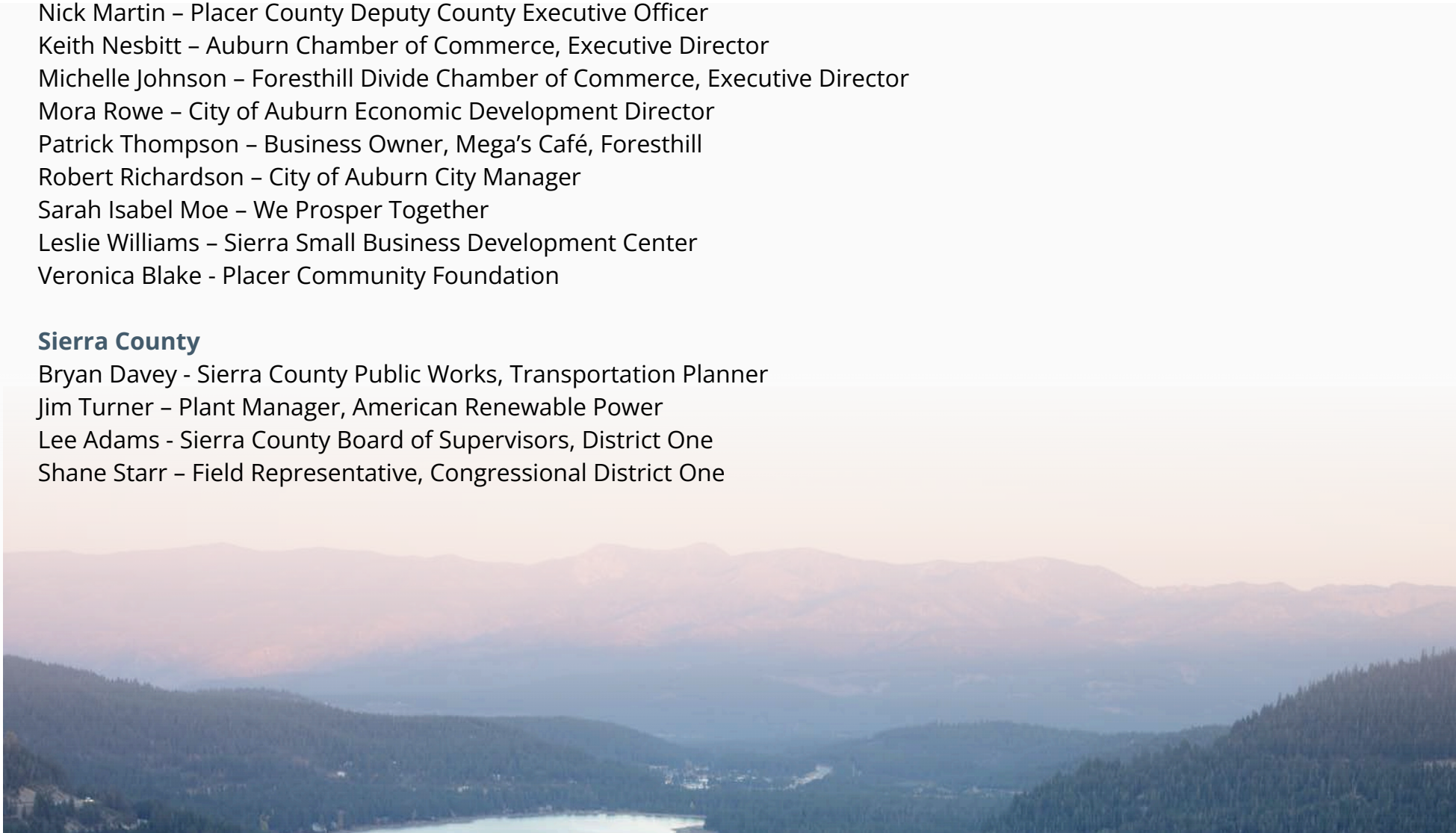
## **Sierra County**

Bryan Davey - Sierra County Public Works, Transportation Planner

Jim Turner – Plant Manager, American Renewable Power

Lee Adams - Sierra County Board of Supervisors, District One

Shane Starr – Field Representative, Congressional District One





# COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023-2027

SIERRA ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

June 2024

**Contact Information:**

[sierrabusiness.org/archives/ceds](https://sierrabusiness.org/archives/ceds)

[info@sierrabusiness.org](mailto:info@sierrabusiness.org)

