



Redwood Region RISE Health and Caregiving Activation Plan



California's Redwood Region
Tribal Lands, Del Norte, Humboldt,
Lake, and Mendocino Counties

A Product of Redwood Region RISE
The California Center for Rural Policy
at Cal Poly Humboldt

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Executive Summary

Health and Caregiving: A Cornerstone for Regional Well-being

The Redwood Region's health and caregiving ecosystem forms the foundation of community resilience, economic mobility, and individual opportunity. Yet this sector faces critical strain: persistent workforce shortages, inadequate infrastructure, unsustainable caregiving systems, and deep inequities — particularly in Tribal and remote communities. The challenges are urgent, but so is the opportunity. By activating and aligning regional efforts, we can build a future where all residents have access to quality care and health-supportive services.

This Activation Plan outlines cross-sectoral, equity-focused strategies that prioritize both systemic change and immediate action across three strategic pillars:

- **Access Expansion:** Workforce pipeline investments, telehealth adoption, and coordinated community-based care delivery.
- **Capacity Building:** Development of Health Hubs and upgraded facilities for healthcare and caregiving.
- **Policy and Systems Innovation:** Strengthening data-driven planning and rural advocacy to secure long-term funding and regulatory improvements.

Implementation is led by the North Coast Health Improvement and Information Network (NCHIIN), in partnership with educational institutions, employers, Tribal health entities, government agencies, and community-based organizations — grounded in shared values of equity, innovation, and sustainability.

Anticipated Impact

By September 2026, we aim to achieve measurable improvements in health access, economic mobility, and caregiving sustainability. Expected outcomes include:

- Expanded and diversified health and caregiving workforce pipelines aligned with employer demand and educational opportunity.
- Greater regional capacity for training, coordination, and infrastructure development — especially in underserved communities.

- Increased availability of affordable, culturally appropriate caregiving services for working families and aging populations.
- Strengthened policy influence and funding leverage for rural and Tribal priorities.
- Heightened resilience of healthcare and caregiving systems through data transparency, collaboration, and innovation.

These impacts will be tracked through employment metrics, enrollment and training data, partnership development, and quality-of-life indicators across the region.

Regional Partners

This Activation Plan reflects the work of a wide network of regional leaders — including Cal Poly Humboldt, College of the Redwoods, the Redwood Coast K-16 Collaborative, Open Door Community Health Centers, Lake County EDC, Lake County Healthcare Education Innovation and Simulation Center, Southern Humboldt Community Healthcare District, Tribal health partners, and philanthropic and workforce development organizations. Together, these partners are advancing a coordinated, future-facing Health and Caregiving sector.

This living document will evolve as our work advances. Health and Caregiving Sector Investment Coordinators Jessica Osborne-Stafsnes, Tina Schaible, and Taffy Stockton — and their team at NCHIIN — will collaborate with the Redwood Region RISE Collaborative, Sector Advisory Council, and community partners to conduct semi-annual comprehensive reviews. An upcoming update will be provided as a Final Impact Report as California Jobs First's State-funded activities of RRRISE sunset.

Redwood Region RISE Shared Values

1. Our work contributes to the good of the community and the good of the environment.
2. Our educational (training) opportunities align with our regional needs.
3. We advocate for equitable access to resources to ensure our region is economically resilient.

Our Cross-Cutting Principles

These cross-cutting principles will be woven into the various programs and policies created by this sector table, guiding decision-making to ensure alignment with our regional economic goals as specified in our [Regional Roadmap](#):

- **Economic Resilience:** Building resilience in California's northern rural economy by investing in sectors essential for long-term growth and stability.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensuring that the benefits of economic recovery are distributed equitably across communities, including historically marginalized groups.
- **Innovation and Adaptation:** Leveraging our region's demonstrated innovative capacity to create resilient, lasting economic growth.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Centering collaboration across government agencies, private sector, non-profits, and community groups.
- **Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship:** Adhering to regenerative and sustainable principles across all sector activities.
- **Workforce Development:** Enhancing the skills and capabilities of the local workforce across legacy and emerging industries.
- **Investing in Infrastructure:** Advocating for every county in our region to secure funds for improved transportation, energy, and digital infrastructure.

Introduction of Health and Caregiving Sector

The work presented in this Activation Plan was completed by Redwood Region RISE's Sector Investment Coordinators Jessica Osborne-Stafsnes, Tina Schaible, and Taffy Stockton, and their team at North Coast Health Improvement and Information Network (NCHIIN).

The Health and Caregiving Sector includes a wide range of industries and services dedicated to promoting, maintaining, and restoring the health and well-being of community members. The region faces persistent health provider shortages, with exceptional projected need for caregivers and health professionals. The Caregiving sub-sector faces particular pressure: a recent study by the California Center for

Rural Policy (CCRP) at Cal Poly Humboldt found that only 41% of childcare demand is met in Humboldt County, with high provider turnover rates and childcare costs constituting 43% of median income – compared to 30% statewide and 27% nationally.

Sector Prioritization

The Health & Caregiving Sector is prioritized for immediate action because it is the cornerstone of community well-being, supports workforce participation across all other sectors, and is a cross-cutting lever for equity and resilience.

The healthcare sector is one of the fastest-growing and most critical workforce areas in the Redwood Region – yet faces persistent shortages of nurses, behavioral health professionals, allied health workers, and physicians, **challenges especially pronounced in remote and Tribal communities**. Without sufficient access to affordable caregiving, employees – especially women and those from underserved communities – are often forced to choose between careers and caring for loved ones.

Expanding educational opportunity, upskilling residents for health and caregiving roles, and investing in infrastructure are essential to meeting urgent regional needs and ensuring all communities have access to timely, quality care.

Operating Structure

Implementation is led by NCHIIN as Sector Investment Coordinator, given the organization's deep expertise and relationships with sector agencies, local governments, the workforce development board, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and foundations – including a track record of delivering programs such as Accountable Communities for Health.

The Sector Advisory Council guides and supports NCHIIN's work across all tactics. Lead agencies by area of focus are:

- **Workforce Pipeline (Tactic 1.1):** NCHIIN-SIC, Redwood Coast K-16 Collaborative, Cal Poly Humboldt, College of the Redwoods, and Healthcare/Caregiving Employers.

- **Telehealth (Tactic 1.2):** Healthcare Employers, Payers, Open Door Community Health Centers, and Associations.
- **Hub Models (Tactic 2.1):** Lake County EDC and NCHIIN.
- **Facility Development (Tactic 2.4):** Lake County EDC and Southern Humboldt Community Healthcare District.
- **Data & Systems Analysis (Tactic 3.1):** Research Organizations and Employers.
- **Rural Policy Advocacy (Tactic 3.2):** Sector Advisory Council and Advocacy Organizations.

Resourcing Across Strategies

Project partners draw on a variety of funding sources, including Catalyst grant funding, Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure grants, K-16 Health Pathways grant funds, Golden State Pathways funds, and K-12 Strong Workforce funds.

The Redwood Region RISE Catalyst Award provided targeted support to the Lake County HEART Hub – a training and simulation center led by the Lake County Economic Development Corporation – with confirmed funding for facility expansion feasibility studies and architectural and technology planning (\$300,766 secured). Additional Catalyst funding supported workforce pipeline and career pathway development activities. A full accounting of Catalyst investment across all workstreams will be provided in the Final Impact Report.

A key SIC responsibility is identifying and connecting regional projects with funding and financing opportunities. NCHIIN collaborates with Regional Government Services (RGS) to maintain a comprehensive list of potential sources and disseminates a monthly e-newsletter to project proponents. The Sector Advisory Council receives regular presentations on underutilized state and federal funding and financing resources.

Several tasks carry unresolved funding gaps, including: post-K16 sustainability for workforce pathway programs, loan capital for childcare facility expansion, marketing support for telehealth adoption, and dedicated advocacy funding for the rural health policy platform. These will require foundation grants, local or state funding, or other sources as opportunities emerge.

Goals and Metrics

The strategies and activities in this Activation Plan provide a roadmap to address both the immediate and long-term workforce needs of the region. Expected sector-level outcomes include growth in educational pathways and employment rates for high-demand, high-road careers — including Registered Nurses, Licensed Vocational Nurses, Social Workers, Nurse Practitioners, Health Educators, Physical Therapy Assistants, Speech-Language Pathologists, Physical Therapists, and Physician Assistants — as identified through regional labor market analysis.

Short-term progress will be tracked by engagement levels among partners, funding secured, milestones within readiness-level projects, and the implementation of workforce training programs. Key metrics include numbers of individuals trained, new programs initiated, and partnerships formalized — summarized in quarterly progress dashboards.

Sector Investment Coordinators will provide quarterly reports to CCRP including data visualizations, narrative updates on challenges and solutions, and annual summaries with recommendations for strategic adjustments.

Dependencies and Challenges

Several key dependencies shape this plan's trajectory. Affordable workforce housing remains a critical bottleneck for healthcare workforce recruitment and retention; the plan proposes collaboration with regional Chambers of Commerce and programs like "Home in Humboldt" to expand access. Securing sufficient clinical training locations is an equally pressing constraint — addressed through assessment of current training capacity, use of the Centralized Clinical Placement System (CCPS), and creation of a clinical placement consortium.

Funding instability at the state and federal levels is an ongoing risk across multiple tactics — particularly for telehealth reimbursement, K-16 pathway sustainability beyond current grant periods, childcare facility loan capital, and advocacy activities. NCHIN will engage state and national associations to stay informed on policy

changes and proactively adapt. The Advisory Council will convene regularly to evaluate risks, discuss emerging challenges, and recommend actionable solutions.

The sector's geographic breadth and diversity of sub-sectors – from clinical healthcare to early education and caregiving – requires ongoing attention to ensure balanced representation across communities, including the most rural, isolated, and Tribal areas.

Strategies

Strategy 1: Determine How to Best Address the Limited Access to Healthcare and Caregiving Services

Tactic 1.1: Cultivate, Maximize, and Expand Workforce Pipeline Programs

Tactic 1.1: Cultivate, Maximize, and Expand Workforce Pipeline Programs				
TASK	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	FUNDING SOURCE & GAPS	KEY OUTPUTS & METRICS
Education-to-employment pathway alignment & curriculum development	NCHIIN-SIC; K-16 Collaborative; Colleges; Employers	Ongoing – 9/30/2026	K-16; Golden State Pathways; Strong Workforce; post-K16 sustainability gap	Student journey maps; MOUs; enrollment growth; employer alignment
Launch new degrees & expand MA/RDA/LVN/CHW training	Cal Poly Humboldt; CR; Employers	2025–2026	Institutional + grant dependent	New programs; enrollment growth; credentials attained
Expand Behavioral Health education programs	Cal Poly Humboldt; CR; Employers	2025–2026	HRSA; BH-CONNECT alignment	Expanded BH cohorts; increased placements
Clinical Training Placement Consortium development	Sector Advisory Council; Employers; Colleges	2025–2026	Coordination funding needed	Placement inventory; lead agency identified
Recruitment & retention expansion (Home in Humboldt, Incubate)	Employers; Chambers; Workforce Boards	Ongoing	Employer + grant support needed	Improved retention; recruitment growth

Tactic 1.2: Socialize and Promote Telehealth Adoption

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TASK	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	FUNDING SOURCE & GAPS	KEY OUTPUTS & METRICS
Pilot telehealth & asynchronous models (Ascend, virtual PCP)	Healthcare Employers; Payers; Open Door CHC	2025–2026	Reimbursement dependent	Utilization & billing data; access outcomes
Expand BH workforce via telehealth	Healthcare Employers	2025–2026	HRSA & BH-CONNECT alignment	Increased BH tele-visits
Telehealth education & marketing campaign	Associations; Employers	2025–2026	Marketing funding needed	Adoption rate increase

Strategy 2: Support and Expand Capacity

Tactic 2.1: Explore and Advance Hub Models

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TASK	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	FUNDING SOURCE & GAPS	KEY OUTPUTS & METRICS
HEART Hub Business Plan Development	Lake County EDC; NCHIIN	2025	Catalyst secured	Completed business plan
HEART Hub Architectural Planning	Lake County EDC	2026	\$300,766 secured (Catalyst)	Architectural plans completed
Hub/shared services feasibility study	NCHIIN; Consultants	2025–2026	PATH CITED for CalAIM ECM service expansions	Feasibility report

Tactic 2.1: Explore and Advance Hub Models

TASK	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	FUNDING SOURCE & GAPS	KEY OUTPUTS & METRICS
Promote CIE for CBO coordination	NCHIIN CIE; CBOs	2025–2026	Operational funding ongoing	Expanded CBO participation

Tactic 2.2: Require Investment as Part of Large-scale Development Processes

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TASK	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	FUNDING SOURCE & GAPS	KEY OUTPUTS & METRICS
Collaborate with large employers, especially the new industries (offshore wind) being developed on the North Coast	Business financing organizations, County funding agencies, and local Philanthropic organizations, and Emerging Large Employers	2/1/2025–9/30/2026		Meeting notes
Conduct a feasibility study to assess possible strategies (including community benefit funding set-aside or special tax districts) to generate revenues for expanded housing, childcare and healthcare	Business financing organizations, County funding agencies, and local Philanthropic organizations	4/1/2025–12/31/2025		Feasibility study document, including health and caregiving service gaps
Study successful models of big business developing direct services or contracted	Business financing organizations, County Agencies, and local Philanthropic organizations	4/1/2025–12/31/2025		Report of potential collaborative strategies to expand

Tactic 2.2: Require Investment as Part of Large-scale Development Processes

TASK	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	FUNDING SOURCE & GAPS	KEY OUTPUTS & METRICS
services (health & childcare) for their employees and/or co-locating services on-site for their employees				access to healthcare and caregiving
Dissemination of Assessment Findings and Strategy Recommendations through meetings and reports	Sector Advisory Council; Business financing organizations, County Agencies, and local Philanthropic organizations	1/1/2026-3/31/2026		Meeting agendas, meeting minutes, written reports
Meetings or Key Informant Interviews to evaluate buy-in from large employers for potential models	Emerging Large Employers; Business financing organizations, County Agencies, and Philanthropic organizations	7/1/2025-06/30/2026		MOUs or agreements with Large Employers

Tactic 2.3: Invest in Backbone Support and Capacity Expansion for Existing Collaboratives Addressing Social Determinants of Health and Health Equity

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TASK	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	FUNDING SOURCE & GAPS	KEY OUTPUTS & METRICS
Assess ongoing initiatives in the region that address health equity & what can be scaled up	Regional Research Organizations and Non-Profit Associations	4/1/2025-6/30/2025		Asset Map

**Tactic 2.3: Invest in Backbone Support and Capacity Expansion for Existing Collaboratives
Addressing Social Determinants of Health and Health Equity**

TASK	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	FUNDING SOURCE & GAPS	KEY OUTPUTS & METRICS
Find representatives from specific interested parties to engage on collaborative efforts	NCHIIN-SIC	4/1/2025-6/30/2026		Develop list of Committee Representatives
Hold cross-collaborative convenings	NCHIIN-SIC, CBOs, Non-Profit Associations	7/1/2025-09/30/2026		Meeting agendas and meeting notes
Expand reach and impact of these existing collaboratives through collaborative funding projects	NCHIIN-SIC, RGS, Philanthropic organizations, Regional Research Organizations and Non-Profit Associations	7/1/2025-9/30/2026		Annual 990 Review for financial impact
Promote CIE for seamless communication between CBOs	NCHIIN-North Coast Care Connect CIE, CBOs	7/1/2025-12/30/2025		Expansion of the CBOs connected to CIEs

Tactic 2.4: Facility Upgrades & Development

Tactic 2.4: Facility Upgrades & Development				
TASK	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	FUNDING SOURCE & GAPS	KEY OUTPUTS & METRICS
North Edge Childcare Loan Program Expansion	Regional Partners	2026	Loan capital required	Increased childcare capacity
Facility expansion feasibility studies	Lake EDC; SHCHD	2025	\$10,000 secured (Catalyst)	Business plans completed
Architectural & technology planning	Lake EDC	2026	\$300,766 secured (Catalyst)	Design documents finalized

Strategy 3: Address System and Policy Issues

Tactic 3.1: Invest in Data & Systems Analysis

Tactic 3.1: Invest in Data & Systems Analysis				
TASK	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	FUNDING SOURCE & GAPS	KEY OUTPUTS & METRICS
Job demand analysis (employer + demographic projections)	Research Orgs; Employers	2025	Contract funding required, K-16 Collaborative Grant Support	Workforce demand report
Services/facilities assessment by payer type & demand	Research Orgs; Employers	2026	Funding TBD	Environmental scan report

Tactic 3.2: Invest in Rural Policy Advocacy

Tactic 3.2: Invest in Rural Policy Advocacy				
TASK	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	FUNDING SOURCE & GAPS	KEY OUTPUTS & METRICS
Develop rural health & caregiving policy platform	Sector Advisory Council; Advocacy Orgs	2025	Advocacy funding needed	Policy briefs; platform document
Tie regional plan to RHTP, BHCIP, BH-CONNECT funding	Sector Advisory Council	2025–2026	Staff-supported	Funding alignment matrix

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