

November 5, 2025 In-Person Convening Recap

Breakfast Morning Sessions:

8:00–10:00am

Arts, Culture, and Tourism

The Arts, Culture, and Tourism morning session centered on an engaging and thoughtful conversation about the region's tourism, natural assets, and cultural opportunities.

Participants discussed the importance of balancing local interests with increasing levels of tourism. Attention was given to how best to position the region to attract visitors while honoring and protecting local lands.

The group reflected on how tourism can elevate regional recognition, making the area more visible, valued, and inviting to potential visitors. Discussions on building a robust tourism ecosystem emphasized the need for a sustainable model—one that respects the environment, culture, and heritage while supporting economic growth.

Participants highlighted the importance of strengthening connections across agencies and organizations, noting the value of having point representatives who can coordinate efforts and advance shared goals. The group also emphasized the critical role of building strong partnerships with Tribal Nations and government representatives to ensure that tourism development aligns with community values and cultural stewardship.

Health and Caregiving

The session addressed issues including aligning workforce pipelines with demand; addressing equity and resilience in the region's health and caregiving systems, increasing capacity, with discussion focused on developing more hubs and/or better access to hubs; and cultural concerns including acknowledgement of traditional caregiving practices.

The session provided participants with an opportunity to build stronger connections across the region. Participants were each given the opportunity to introduce themselves and their organizations, and offer some regional travel insights. This was well received and served to highlight the diversity and size of the region, which proved to be a recurring touchstone underlying the session's discussion items. The participants discussed the regional challenges, changes in health and caregiving's broad landscape and those impacts on the region's sector ecosystem. Participants are seeking strategies and solutions to address the underlying or systemic challenges of having enough health

and caregivers, whether in-training or trained locally or attracted from outside the region, and then retaining them, with competitive wage rates being of concern, and the access-to-services and/or transportation challenges specific to serving a disbursed population across a large region.

Renewable and Resilient Energy

The morning discussions showcased strong progress across the region in building renewable energy capacity tied to community and workforce benefits. The Pinoville Tribe's solar carport project stood out for linking clean energy deployment with cultural and educational opportunities, including a master apprenticeship program, Head Start engagement, and EV charging infrastructure. The Humboldt Area Foundation emphasized climate and tribal resilience through initiatives like offshore wind and port development for turbine assembly, connecting these efforts to youth education and training. Sonoma Clean Power highlighted both opportunities and barriers—particularly around geothermal expansion, baseload power needs, and the lack of regional transmission infrastructure. Participants agreed that regulations, fragmented training systems, and a lack of rural policy attention create a “catch-22” that requires coordinated advocacy. The session underscored the value of regional collaboration across utilities, tribes, and community colleges to develop a skilled workforce and resilient, equitable energy infrastructure.

Working Lands and Blue Economy

The Working Lands and Blue Economy morning session was well attended and provided a valuable opportunity for sector-focused participants to introduce their work and build synergies. The group discussed several regional challenges, including emergency food access, fuel reduction, utilization of existing natural resources, and breaking down silos across organizations and initiatives.

Discussions emphasized the need to prioritize clearly defined, concrete actions and to be strategic about attracting investors and increasing the region's overall investment readiness. The group also explored forming a collaborative and creating an information repository to house completed and ongoing work, helping to streamline coordination and reduce duplication across projects.

Additional ideas included developing regional working hubs and creating a sustainability plan to continue momentum after California Jobs First funding concludes.