

**NWCCOG Economic Development District  
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy  
Regional Action Plan**

**October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2026**

**Progress Report: 10/1/22 – 3/31/25**

**Updated: 9/1/24**

**\*Key: NS – not started; IP – in progress; C – Completed**

**Workforce**

**Goal:** Support our workforce such that their needs are met, and the workforce needs of businesses are met

**Strategies:**

**W1. Support the region’s programs, policies, and incentives which aim to increase the availability and affordability of housing for the workforce**

<b>Proposed Action</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>YR 1</b>	<b>YR 2</b>	<b>YR 3</b>	<b>YR 4</b>	<b>YR 5</b>
Assist towns and counties navigate and utilize new funding sources now available via recent legislation passed.	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Continue to monitor state, federal and local legislation as it pertains to affordable and attainable housing	NWCCOG EDD, EDCC	IP	IP	IP		
Provide information to stakeholders regarding programs, funding opportunities, success stories and best practices in affordable workforce housing	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Collaborate with community partners to expand the reach of the region’s workforce housing efforts.	NWCCOG EDD, Towns, Counties	IP	IP	IP		
Convene regional think tanks on key issues like housing, workforce	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Bring attention to the unique needs of our region; advocate for designated funds for the NWCCOG Region	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		

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**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- Provide information on funding available via recent legislation passed
- 2023 Regional Workforce Housing Report –completed by 10.31.23
- Explore solutions to short-term rentals and their effect on the availability of affordable workforce housing
- Work with Insights Collective on Forces at Play (present at 2022 Economic Summit; continued work on Community Assessment project in 2023, complete Mountain Community Survey; present results at 5.4.24 Economic Summit; White Paper completed 6.2024: <https://www.nwccog.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Community-Assessment-White-Paper-Executive-Summary-Final.pdf>)
- Funding opportunities provided in EDD Resources Bulletins (archived here: <https://www.nwccog.org/programs/nwccog-economic-development-district/resources/>)

**W2. Support efforts that seek to provide affordable health insurance options as well as other benefits such as retirement for individual wealth building**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Assist towns and counties navigate funding sources and new programs which seek to connect the workforce with benefits such as affordable health insurance and retirement plans	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- Retirement Plans for small businesses –4/13/22 call w/ Sen. Hickenlooper’s Office staff re: 3 bills introduced by Sen. Hickenlooper on encouraging creation of retirement plans for small businesses. 76% of employers in our region have 9 employees and less.
- Sept. 19 workshop on Colorado SecureSavings Program – partner with Anna Stevens, Outreach Specialist, Colorado Department of Treasury
- Oct 12, 2022 Workshop with CDLE on FAMILI program
- Employee Ownership Programs – presentation by Marion Champoux-Pellegrin Rural Employee Ownership Director, Rocky Mountain Employee Ownership Center at 7/11/24 NWCCOG EDD Board meeting

**W3. Support efforts to develop and improve workforce needs and services including broadband, transportation, childcare, education, training, healthcare, and mental health services**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Support actions in NWCCOG Regional Assessment of Child Care Industry Report (Feb. 2021)	NWCCOG EDD	NS	NS	NS		

Continue Project THOR to improve broadband in the region	NWCCOG EDD, EDCC	IP	IP	IP		
Provide information on funding sources for improvements to workforce needs such as broadband, childcare, healthcare, mental health services, transportation, education and training	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- Project THOR: <https://www.nwccog.org/programs/broadband-program/>
- EDD Resources Bulletins: <https://www.nwccog.org/programs/nwccog-economic-development-district/resources/>

**W4. Network, support, and partner with other organizations on workforce development efforts**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Support local and regional and statewide workforce development efforts which seek to providing training, education, and career pathways	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Work with partner organizations to provide small business development training and education throughout the region	NWCCOG EDD, EDCC	NS	NS	NS		
Engage K-12, CMC, CDLE, Workforce Centers on resources for mapping career pathway opportunities; work with partners to develop and promote programs in this area	NWCCOG EDD	NS	NS	NS		
Explore regional training programs for the trades	NWCCOG EDD, Towns, Counties	NS	NS	NS		
Promote on the job training programs within businesses in the region	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- Connected Communities Digital Bridge is excited to announce the launch of the first Hubs in Grand County. - initiative that provides workforce stability through digital training; common issues in our Mountain markets, such as skilled labor, trailing spouses, access to living wages, leveraging digital work to create primary jobs, and market diversification.
- Good Jobs Initiative – Results for America (NWCCOG a partner)
- Vail Valley Partnership—contracted and working with Learn Formula and Skill Builders Pro for online learning opportunities. This has been successful (Skill Builders) and we’ve recently launched Learn Formula. Our professional development programs can be found at <https://www.vailvalleypartnership.com/vvw/course-catalog/>
- Meet with Erin Young, Employment Coach, CDLE new role and partnerships with NWCCOG EDD in building “good jobs”; will present at Dec. 1, 2023 EDD Board meeting.

- CDLE Workforce activities in the region during this period include: Eagle County School District Youth Career Fair; Hidden Talent webinar series; Skilled trades pipeline development; Job quality checklist and business counseling; Employer onboarding toolkit; Recruitment, retention and succession planning; apprenticeships.
- Vail Health – workforce development program: The Patient Care Technician program at Colorado Mountain Medical gives employees on-the-job training to become certified medical assistance. <https://www.vaildaily.com/news/vail-health-spending-194m-in-2023-taking-big-steps-to-attract-and-retain-its-workforce/>

## Economy

**Goal: Cultivate a diversified, stable, balanced, sustainable, vibrant economy**

### Strategies:

#### E1. Support, strengthen, build capacity in our region’s key industries and existing businesses

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Connect economic development stakeholders with resources and information	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
NWCCOG EDD Resources Bulletin	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
NWCCOG EDD website: <a href="https://www.nwccog.org/programs/nwccog-economic-development-district/">https://www.nwccog.org/programs/nwccog-economic-development-district/</a>	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Establish regional business retention and expansion program/position to support existing businesses and all key industries in the region	NWCCOG EDD, EDOs in the region	NS	NS	NS		
Provide access to capital for existing businesses	NWCCOG EDD, Northwest Loan Fund, EDOs in the region	IP	IP	IP		
Provide education and workshops on succession planning and exit planning for businesses	NWCCOG EDD, EDOs in the region	NS	NS	NS		

#### Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25

- Build capacity in Grand Enterprise Initiative – providing free business consulting and technical assistance to businesses in Grand County – grant administrator for DOLA REDI grant (2022 & 2023)

- Jackson County Enterprise Initiative – providing free business consulting and technical assistance to businesses in Jackson County

**E2. Partner with stakeholder organizations to provide business training opportunities**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Provide business training programs	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/24**

- Partnership with Summit Chamber/SPI on Co.Starters, Summit Biz Bootcamp program
- 10/12 workshop on FAMLI
- 7/13 email: FIRC working on programming to help locals learn how to start and/or grow their business
- Partner with NW SBDC to promote business training programs offered

**E3. Tell the region’s success stories through newsletters, website, and other modes of communication to promote a positive vision for the region**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
NWCCOG EDD website	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
CEDS	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
EDD Resources Bulletins	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- Update EDD website, CEDS, Resources bulletins throughout reporting period
- Updated EDD website (2023)
- EDD Resources Bulletins archive: <https://www.nwccog.org/programs/nwccog-economic-development-district/resources/>

**E4. Support our communities’ efforts towards responsible tourism**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Support local strategies outlined in local destination management plans and other plans dealing with responsible tourism	NWCCOG EDD, DMOs, EDOs	IP	IP	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- [Breckenridge Destination Management Plan](#)

- [Aspen Chamber Resort Association’s Destination Management Plan](#)
- [Vail Destination Stewardship Plan](#)
- Grand County – EDA grant awarded for Grand County Tourism and Diversification Strategy
- Destination Management panel at May 2023 Economic Summit
- 2024 – Participate in Statewide Destination Stewardship Program
- Community Metrics Project – research/survey started in 2023; Rollout of deliverables June 2024; Presentation at Economic Summit (5/3/24); White Paper; PPT; Data set – this project was funded by OEDIT CEDS implementation grant – it is a project identified in CEDS
- CTO Destination Stewardship Planning Initiative – discuss at 7/11/24 BOD meeting; EDD board to be regional stewardship coalition for Rockies Playground region as requested by CTO

**E5. Support the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Develop entrepreneurial resources in the region including mentorship programs, investors, venture capital, angel investment networks, accelerators incubators, events, co-work spaces, training programs	NWCCOG EDD, EDOs, towns, counties, OEDIT, EDA	IP	IP	IP		
Monthly call on workforce, SBDC, CMC, business support community, chambers; organizations working on entrepreneurship	NWCCOG EDD	NS	NS	NS		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- EDOs in the region working in the area of developing entrepreneurial resources include Northwest SBDC, Vail Valley Partnership, Grand County Economic Development, Routt County Economic Partnership, and Summit Economic Partnership

**E6. Encourage the development of higher-paying jobs outside of the tourism industry**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Support the Digital Workforce Development program currently underway in Grand County (pending EDA funding)	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	NS	X	X
Support development of “Good Jobs”	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Disseminate and present information in the Colorado Self-Sufficiency Standard; Colorado Legislative Council Cost of Living Study (every other year); have more participation in the	NWCCOG EDD	NS	NS	NS		

development process so that the numbers accurately reflect the conditions in our region; make data readily available and as useful as possible to be used as a benchmark						
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**Progress: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

Adjustment: Grand County did not receive grant for digital workforce development program, so that action item will not be completed.

## Community

**Goal: Enhance the region’s quality of life and unique community character**

**Strategies:**

**C1. Support efforts to strengthen community infrastructure including broadband, transportation systems, healthcare facilities, mental health services, educational opportunities, and community amenities**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Help communities navigate and take full advantage of new funding available (Federal – American Rescue Plan; State - HB 21-1271 Innovative Affordable Housing Strategies; HB 21-1253 Renewable and Clean Energy Infrastructure; HB 21-1289 Broadband Development.)	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
NWCCOG Project THOR; Support efforts to strengthen high-speed internet in the region	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Provide letters of support, grant writing and technical assistance as requested	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- Disseminate info on funding opportunities from ARPA, IIJT/Infrastructure Act; housing funding provided by DOLA; mental health funding, all funding as a result of 2022 legislative session via monthly resources bulletins and archived on website: <http://nwccog.org/edd/business-resources/resource-bulletins/>
- Project THOR - ongoing
- Support local communities’ efforts with support letters to funding agencies for grant applications (EDA, DOLA, etc.)
- NWCCOG hired Regional Grants Navigator (2023)

- Community Assessment Project/Insight Collectives –proposal responds to current economic conditions and new economic forces that have emerged over the past several years post-Covid. This project commenced in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2023 and will continue throughout 2023.
- NWCCOG Hosted CBO Regional Roadshow on June 6, 2024

**C2. Serve as a community development and planning resource to our region**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Provide data, research, and other resources to inform policymaking and planning	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Develop and maintain a regional data clearinghouse on the EDD website	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Disseminate regional economic and demographic data on a regular basis	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Respond to data requests	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Conduct studies and prepare reports on topics of regional interest and value	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Collect, present, analyze, and disseminate regional data for use in policy making and business development (Qtrly Economic Updates; community profiles; website)	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- Data Center on EDD website: <https://www.nwccog.org/programs/nwccog-economic-development-district/data-center/>
- Quarterly Regional Economic Updates – on data center page
- County Profiles – on data center page
- Data requests – EDD Director responds to data requests
- Data presentations – EDD BOD mtg 7/7; 10/27
- Regional Workforce Housing Report (Oct. 2023)

## Resiliency

**Goal: Bolster the long-term economic durability of the region**

**Strategies:**

**R1. Encourage diversity in industry and jobs**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Support efforts to grow new industries not tourism-related	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Support workforce development and training programs which seek to train the workforce in in-demand skills for higher paying jobs in new industries	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- Summit Biz – training program w/ Chamber/Co.Starters
- Partnerships/work with CDLE
- Possible future work with Digital Hub project in Grand County

**R2. Cultivate entrepreneurship as a strategy towards economic recovery and long-term resilience**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Provide access to capital for startups	NWCCOG Northwest Loan Fund	IP	IP	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

Northwest Loan Fund activity:

- 2024:
- 2023: 13 loans for \$1,971,928.00 Average loan \$151,687.00
- 2022: 8 loans for \$1,222,650.00. Average loan \$152,831.00
- 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr 2021: 3 loans for \$339,000. Avg for that Qtr: \$113,000

**R3. Maintain strong partnerships between regional stakeholders to share problems, data, stories, information, best practices and solutions**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
EDD Board of Directors meetings (in conjunction with NWCCOG Council meetings)	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Regional Economic Forum – bring back Spring 2022	NWCCOG EDD	NS	C	C		
Conduct studies/surveys/prepare reports on economic development topics of regional interest and value	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		

Maintain frequent communication between federal, state, regional, and local partners	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
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**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- Regional Economic Summits completed: 5/5/22; 5/4/23; 5/4/24
- EDD Board Meetings (7 meetings held 2022, 2023, 2024). EDD board meetings provide forum for information sharing among federal, state, regional, and local partners
- Studies and reports on ED topics of value – Mtn Migration report; NLF report; childcare study; Budgeting practices study
- Regional Workforce Housing Report – completed Oct. 2023
- Frequent communication maintained w/ federal partners via council and EDD board meetings – congressional reps present at each meeting

**R4. Collaborate with the region’s counties on economic recovery and resiliency plan development**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Partner with counties on DOLA Regional Resiliency Roadmaps (Eagle, Grand, Pitkin, Summit – all submitted applications)	NWCCOG EDD, all DOLA roadmap teams	IP	IP	C		
Carry out all projects/activities/deliverables of the EDA CARES Act grant (\$400,000) - report out on county-level projects; COVID lessons learned/best practices report from RBRC	NWCCOG EDD, 5 counties receiving grants	NS	IP	C		
Utilize the work of the Mountain Migration Report; present strategies and identify those the region’s stakeholders want to focus on which will bolster the long-term economic durability of the region	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Help coordinate best practices for the region on recovery plans	NWCCOG EDD	NS	IP	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- Summit Roadmap Project – provided information on economic development/small business resources to consultant (Better Cities); participated in core team meeting on 2/16
- Report out of all DOLA Roadmap teams in NWCCOG region at NWCCOG EDD board meeting – 3/24/22

- Follow up meeting: Regional DOLA roadmap teams in NWCCOG region with state partners, OEDIT and DOLA resiliency office (4/19/22)
- Summit – DOLA Roadmap meetings 5/23 and 6/6
- DOLA grants to all Roadmap projects in the NWCCOG region – each received \$41,000 implementation grant to carry out projects identified in their roadmap plan:
- **Eagle County** – Eagle Valley - Complete workforce development ecosystem mapping that will consider community needs and workforce development opportunities holistically across the northwest Colorado region’s interdependent smaller rural communities. This study will identify all current and potential partners/programs to support workforce development; identify career pipelines to address industry needs; identify technical assistance programs across the region; provide feedback related to commuter patterns.
- **Grand County** – work with Clear Creek County on broadband projects
- **Pitkin County** - Pitkin/Roaring Fork Valley - Fund professional services to implement projects coming out of the region’s Roadmap, which created the West Mountain Regional Housing Coalition and the Regional Housing Toolkit.
- **Summit County** - Survey local businesses to identify needs, while also mapping the opportunities and resources available to entrepreneurs at each stage of their trajectory. This will create a stronger support network and more intentional connections, and a compilation of relevant resources into brochures and web materials for local business owners.

**R5. Support the region’s efforts to combat climate change**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Monitor and disseminate information on new legislation and funding sources to fund sustainable resource use and production	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Encourage installation of renewable energy technologies and sustainable resources	NWCCOG EDD	NS	NS	NS		
Monitor and disseminate information on new legislation and funding sources to fund renewable energy technologies	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Create a clearinghouse of plans in the region which encourage use of energy efficiency technologies and share best practices (such as Summit County Climate Action Plan and Sustainable Building Code)	NWCCOG EDD	NS	NS	IP		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- Promote Mtn Town 2030 conference to be held in our region (Vail, CO October 18-20, 2023) which is a movement of mountain communities committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030 through bi-monthly resources bulletins. This is the third annual climate solutions summit.

- Resiliency page created on EDD website: <https://www.nwccog.org/programs/nwccog-economic-development-district/resiliency/>. Contains resources for resiliency including a clearinghouse of climate action plans in the region.

**R6. Encourage opportunities for community collaboration with respect to wildfire preparedness and mitigation**

Proposed Action	Responsible Party	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Climate Change: Gather all county plans together. Convene regional climate change forum	NWCCOG EDD	NS	NS	IP		
Disseminate information on funding opportunities and support local efforts for wildfire mitigation and forest health management	NWCCOG EDD	IP	IP	IP		
Explore working with Colorado Climate Corps, which will work in 55 of the 64 counties in Colorado to clear trees and ground cover in wildfire mitigation projects as well as clear and contour land to avoid floods and mudslides.	NWCCOG EDD	NS	NS	NS		

**Key Initiatives: 10/1/21 – 3/31/25**

- EDD Director has been participating in the Yampa Valley Climate Action Plan Economic Development working group since September 2022; continued throughout first quarter of 2023
- The following communities in our EDD region have developed Climate Action Plans: Eagle County, Pitkin County, Summit County
- NWCCOG applied for grant for EV charging infrastructure (EV charging stations) throughout the region (June 2024)
- Clearinghouse of climate action plans in the region on EDD website here: <https://www.nwccog.org/programs/nwccog-economic-development-district/resiliency/>