



# August 27, 2025 Advisory Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 27, 2025

7:40am - 9:00am

Economic Development Collaborative

141 Stony Circle Suite #110

Santa Rosa, CA, 95401

For special accommodations please contact: [juanita.fong@sonomacounty.gov](mailto:juanita.fong@sonomacounty.gov)

## EDC Meeting Agenda

### I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

### II. CONSENT ITEMS

A. July 2025 Minutes - 3

### III. POLICY/PROGRAM UPDATES

A. Board Feedback/Questions on Information Items

i. Executive Director Updates

ii. Creative Sonoma - 5

iii. Business Diversity - 7

iv. Special Projects and Research - 9

### IV. BOARD BUSINESS

A. Guest Speaker: Mira Patel, Equitable Education Services Division, Sonoma County Office of Education

B. Community Wealth Development Presentation/Discussion

C. Board Reports on district updates and challenges (15 mins)

D. Action Items for next meeting (5 mins)

E. Ask the Board

### V. NEW BUSINESS

### VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA BUT WITHIN THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE BOARD

Comments are restricted to matters within the Board's jurisdiction. Each person is usually granted time to speak at the discretion of the Chair. Any additional public comments will be heard at the conclusion of the meeting. While members of the public are welcome to address the Board, under the brown Act, Board members may not deliberate or take action on items not on the agenda.

### VII. ADJORN - NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING - Wednesday, September 24, 2025

**Economic Development Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, July 23, 2025

**I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLLCALL**

ADJORN

Kathryn Phillip, Chair called to order the Economic Development Collaborative (EDC) at 8:02 am on July 23, 2025

The following EDB Board members were present: Kathryn Philips, Wayne Leach, Nick Schwanz, Jordan Kivelstadt, Meilin Tsao, Richard Marzo

The following EDB staff members were present: Ethan Brown, Marko, Tara Thompson, Christine Palmer, Jack Kampmann, Patricia Andrews, Debbie Yarrow, Lindsey Collins, Katherine DiPasqua, Brad Johnson, Christine Palmer, Marcos Suarez, Jessica Martinez, Ailish McGiffin, Trevor Bagan

**II. ACTION ITEMS**

A. Officer Elections are as follows

- Kathryn Philip: Chair
- Wayne Leach: Vice Chair
- Secretary: Ethan Brown

The elections of the officers were approved.

Motion: Jordan Kivelstadt: Richard Marzo

Yay:6 Ney 0: Abstained:0

**III. CONSENT ITEMS**

A. The meeting minutes from May & June 2025 were approved

Motion: Meilin Tsao Second: Nick Schwanz

Yay: 6 Ney:0 Abstained: 0

**IV. POLICY PROGRAM UPDATES**

A. Executive Director updates

The Advisory Board reviewed the 2025 EDC Annual report and discussed with staff. Feedback was given to share the annual report publicly and it was

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**Board of Directors**

Kathryn Philip, Chair | Meilin Tsao | Wayne Leach | Linda Kachiu  
Regina Mahiri | Richard Marzo | Jordan Kivelstadt | Nick Schwanz  
Ethan Brown, Executive Director

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suggested we post it to our website. Katherine DiPasqua mentioned that we will be outsourcing our outreach and marketing to a consultant starting in August. Ethan asked the Board members to assist with suggestions or ideas to continuing connections and strengthening our relationships with anchor businesses.

**B. Creative Sonoma**

Program officer recruitment is going well. Anticipated start date TBD, but tentative start date is late October.

**C. Business Diversity**

Upcoming events:

- Café Puente Talleres/8 Week Small Business Workshop Cohort in Spanish Petaluma – Mondays, 6pm-8pm, May 12, 2025 – July 14, 2025
- River to Coast Children’s Services/8 Week Small Business Workshop Cohort in Spanish/ Guerneville – Begin in August
- The State of Black Businesses- in partnership with the North Bay Black Chamber of Commerce – Friday, August 15, 2025
- Russian River Pride
- Springs MAC Meeting in Sonoma- Presentation on resources and services and Small Business Survey – 07/09/25
- Multi-Chamber Mixer at Region in the Barlow- Presentation about our Small Business Survey – 06/24/25

**V. BOARD BUSINESS**

**A. Guest Speaker: Andrew Lemen, County of Sonoma Risk Management Department**

Andrew gave a presentation on Workplace Violence Prevention (SB553) which is a mandatory training for all County employees.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Kathryn Philip adjourned the meeting at 9:02 am

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**Board of Directors**

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**Economic Development Collaborative  
Creative Sonoma Update  
August 2025**

**ARTS EDUCATION**

**Prop 28**

The amount of Prop 28 funding that each local education agency will receive this school year was shared by the CA Department of Education. Sonoma County will receive \$10.7M. This coming school year (SY) is the 3rd year of Prop 28, meaning funding that was received in SY 2023-24 must be used by the end of the year or returned to the state. Click "Funding Allocations for School Year 2025-26" under [Prop 28 | Arts and Music in Schools \(AMS\)](#) to learn how much is being received by each local education agency.

**Alternative Education**

SCOE is seeking to expand arts experiences in their alternative schools. Creative Sonoma has met with administrators to learn more about the need and connect them with teaching artists. A meeting has been set with SCOE, Creative Sonoma, and Riverside COE to learn more about [RCOE's alternative/incarcerated programs](#).

**Arts Education Alliance Mixer**

Join the [Arts Education Alliance for a Mix and Mingle](#) on August 20 from 5:30pm-7:30pm at Mitote Food Park. Connections and reconnections will be made with the AEA community for this back-to-school event.

**GRANT MAKING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Arts Impact Grants for Organizations (AIGO)**

The [AIGO 2026](#) application opens on August 20. A virtual general information and application workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, August 27 at 1pm. Register online [HERE](#). Applications are due October 1, and award notifications will be in early November.

**District 5 Community Public Art Project Grants**

Some projects have been completed this Summer and many more are underway! Visit the [webpage](#) for funded projects to get event or install dates, locations and how to participate. Also, search for and follow hashtag #D5PublicArt on social media to see project updates.

**Emerging Artist Incubator**

The fall cohort of emerging artists has been selected and will be announced soon! Produced in partnership with Sebastopol Center for the Arts, this program is designed to empower and support talented emerging artists on their journey to establish themselves as successful and sustainable artists by providing professional development. All workshops are open to the public! To learn more click [HERE](#).

**Teaching Artist Training**

Creative Sonoma is partnering with the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts to support and promote teaching artist training to earn the [LBC Teaching Artist Certificate](#). The workshops begin this October and are also available to attend individually. A practicum will be offered in the spring to gain teaching

experience with a mentor teacher in a classroom. Scholarships will be offered to cover the program's \$50 fee. An honorarium will be available to those who complete the entire program. To answer questions and provide more information, a Q&A will be held via Zoom on Sept. 3.

*Stay informed with Currents, Creative Sonoma's monthly e-newsletter! Subscribe [HERE](#)*

## Business Diversity

August 2025

A major highlight this month was the State of the Black Business Address, hosted in partnership with the North Bay Black Chamber of Commerce. The event brought together local Black business leaders and community stakeholders to highlight the contributions of Black-owned businesses and address opportunities and challenges they face. We also facilitated business visits with Supervisor Gore in recognition of black business month. This was an opportunity for us as an organization to show appreciation to our local business owners for their contribution to our local economy.

Looking ahead, we are preparing a series of Spanish-language business workshops in West County, hosted by River to Coast Children Services. This series is tentatively set to launch in late September, providing culturally relevant support on topics such as business planning, licensing and permits, and digital marketing and more. In addition, our upcoming Access to Capital Summit will connect diverse entrepreneurs with lenders, investors, and resource partners through panels, advising sessions, and networking opportunities. We are collaborating on this event with several community partners including, RCU, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Vamos North Bay, AAPIC and more to provide an inclusive effort for these resources.

Picture of event:



# Access to Capital Business Summit



## Monday, September 15th

RCU Administrative Office – 3033 Cleveland Ave., Santa Rosa

**English Session** 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Spanish Session** 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Please join us for an educational session featuring a moderated panel including representatives from these organizations.

**Redwood Credit Union**

**Creser Capitol**

**Summit Bank**

**SBDC Finance Center**

**Working Solutions**

**TMC Community Capitol**

**Marble Bridge Funding Group**

Learn about financial services, loan options, eligibility requirements, and helpful tips for growing or sustaining a business.

Presented by







## Special Projects & Research August 2025

### TEAM MEMBERS

Trevor Bagan, Economic Research & Workforce Initiatives Fellow

Aleena Decker, Grants Analyst

Brad Johnson, Special Projects Analyst

Jack Kampmann, Special Projects Coordinator

Ailish McGiffin, Tourism & Marketing Fellow

Christine Palmer, Business Insights & Research Program Manager

Katherine DiPasqua, Director

### PARTNERSHIPS

On [August 12, 2025](#) the Board of Supervisors approved an agreement between the EDC and Town of Windsor for Economic Development Fellowship Support. Under this agreement, Windsor will pay for half of an EDC Fellowship position to support the city and county's shared mission of economic development and vitality. Key initiatives will align with goals outlined in [Windsor's Economic Development Strategic Plan](#), including efforts such as financial, business, and demographic research and data analysis, expanding the local tax base through business retention and attraction, and investing in infrastructure improvements spanning transportation, public art, and business support.

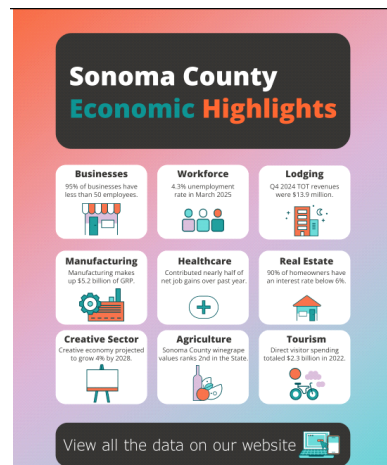
### EVENTS & COMMUNICATIONS

#### Events

- The Event Advisory Team has been planning the upcoming Fall Economic Perspective Event, which will focus on **How Entrepreneurship is Shaping Our Local Economy**.
- The event will be **Thursday, Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> at Sonoma State University, from 9:00am to 11:30am**.
- The **Keynote Speaker will be Jeff Bellisario** from Bay Area Council Economic Institute and there will be a panel discussion moderated by Nikko Kimzin, owner of Kimzin Creative, with four entrepreneurs from different backgrounds and generations discussing their motivations for business ownership, what they have learned along the way, and how their approaches may differ from one generation to another.

## Communications

- The EDC started working with Bay Area Digital Solutions to expand our social media outreach.
- **This month, the EDC launched an Instagram** and will be working with Bay Area Digital Solutions to create content for all of our social media platforms.



## BROADBAND

- The EDC is currently in its second round of outreach to connect individuals with one year of free internet through the ARPA Free Internet Program with Xfinity. Following more intentional and targeted efforts, sign-ups have increased by 28%. The inclusion of free laptops has also proven to be a valuable incentive in driving interest in the program. We are actively working with Mid-pen and Burbank housing staff to schedule more site visits for August and into the early Fall.
- The North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) held its in-person oversight committee meeting on August 6, 2025, at the EDC office. The meeting featured an update on the region's Fixed Wireless Study, led by Etheric Networks, which has now completed its [100% High-Level Design](#).

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### **Ag Tech Update – Reservoir Farms Incubators**

The EDC is continuing to work with Sonoma County Wine Growers, the Santa Rosa Junior College, and Reservoir Farms to develop an ag tech innovation incubator facility in Sonoma County. This project is in its planning and feasibility stage and will model the Reservoir Farms incubators currently being created in Salinas and Merced.

The incubator aims to be one solution that addresses the challenges faced by our local producers. From the increasing pressures of climate change, labor shortages and costs, increased regulatory costs, and the demand for innovative value-added products – the headwinds faced by local agriculture will require multiple solutions. Ag-tech is one avenue for relief to our local producers, all the while diversifying our local economy. Additionally, the incubator will serve as a workforce development opportunity. Partnering with SRJC's School of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Dean of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics, an education to workforce pipeline is being developed by providing: (1) students access to ag tech companies, and (2) a curriculum to develop skills applicable for employment in the sector.

The initial vision is a space that starts at the Sonoma County Winegrower's property on Guerneville Road and eventually migrates or expands to Shone Farm. While the initial focus will naturally center on wine grape production, given the leadership of the Winegrowers on this project and the prominence of winegrapes in our County, there is a conversation underway to diversify the focus to ensure the incubator supports a broader range of North Bay agricultural producers, including apple orchard, dairy farmers, and cattle ranchers.

The space is proposed to be composed of private workshops and shared facilities, which will be leased to ag-tech companies that facilitate product development and prototyping. The space would also provide shared infrastructure for small- medium scale Ag producers and connect businesses with technical assistance, research partners, and capital. The incubator will aim to:

- Provide companies working proof of concept and R&D, vital for venture capital acquisition and growth
- Provide companies access to local producers to focus on local problem-oriented solutions
- Create an industry-centered hub for ag-tech in Sonoma County
- Create well-paying jobs, provide workforce development, and career pathways in the ag-tech sector
- Retain and expand ag-tech companies, manufacturing, and talent in Sonoma County

The EDC will play a role in the development of the incubator by connecting partners, providing data and research for funding applications, and downstream business retention and expansion programing to support the growth of the sector in Sonoma County.

## **RESEARCH**

- The EDC Tourism and Marketing Fellow is working with Tourism on a research project looking at the influence of county events on overnight visitation. Sonoma County events are being compared with events hosted by San Luis Obispo, South Lake Tahoe, Napa, Palm Springs, and Monterey Counties. To analyze the impact on visitor spending, the dates of the events are being cross-referenced with the STR Reports that analyze weekly occupancy and revenue rates of hotels. The project aims to determine which events are having the largest impact on attracting visitors.
- The EDC, in collaboration with Permit Sonoma (PRMD) and Bay Area Council Economic Institute (BACEI) completed its first deliverable in early August that uses economic data as a means of providing land use recommendations for the county's General Plan. The industries in-focus included Leisure/Hospitality, Food/Beverage Manufacturing, the Blue Economy, and Agriculture. The deliverable will be incorporated into PRMD's existing conditions analysis, which will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in the next phase of the project.
- The EDC and BACEI are partnering with Regional Parks to develop an economic analysis of the Bodega Bay marinas. The report will serve as both a strategic and informational resource,

providing insight into current outcomes and potential drivers shaping this sector of the regional economy.