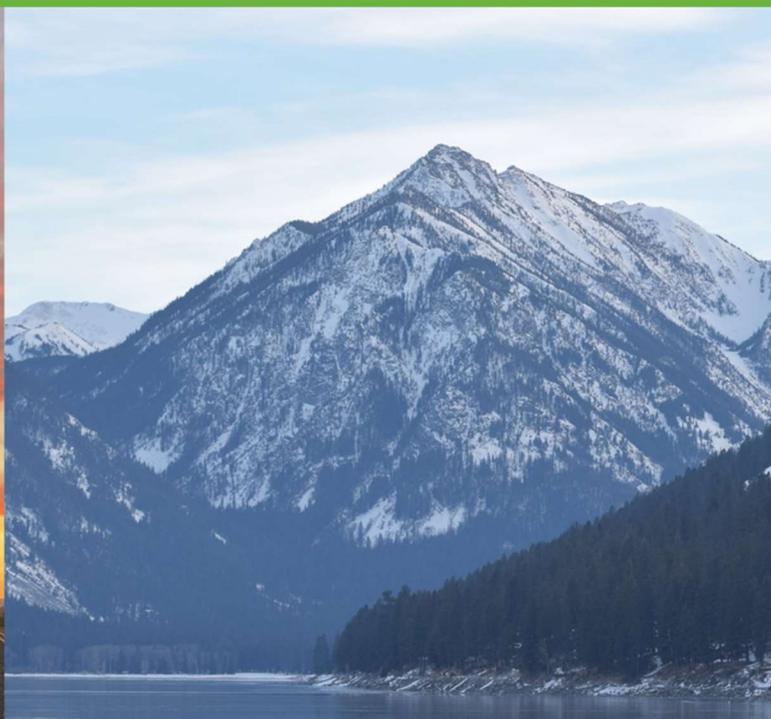


NEOEDD



**Comprehensive Economic
Development Strategy
Update 2025**



Northeast Oregon Economic Development District CEDS Update and Partnership Planning Progress Report September 30, 2025

Adjustment to the CEDS Strategy

The CEDS is meant to be a flexible document and may be adjusted to respond to changing economic conditions. The [Northeast Oregon 2023-2028 CEDS](#) was adopted in September of 2023. There were no adjustments to the CEDS since its adoption, and no changes to the CEDS committee or NEOEDD staff.

Report on CEDS Activities

This section provides a brief description of the activities undertaken to help support the development or implementation of the CEDS. NEOEDD continues to reach out and connect to cities, non-profits, and economic/community development organizations in the region to further understand the diverse efforts to improve the region's economy and quality of life.

Top Priority Workforce Initiatives		
Project/Initiative	Lead	Activities
Youth Development	Eastern Oregon Workforce Board (EOWB)	The annual educator externship helps teachers be better prepared to share job opportunities in local industries with students.
	EOWB	EO WORKS Internship Program active in Union and Baker Counties. Students explored careers in natural resources, hospitality, engineering, healthcare, aviation, nonprofit work, government, and more.
	Rural Engagement & Vitality Center (REV)	Provided 14 internships for Eastern Oregon University students.
Adult Preparation & Growth	EOWB	New project focuses on fire resiliency on local lands and building the wildfire fighting workforce.
	Training and Employment Consortium	Provided basic skills, GED preparation/high school diploma, work-based training, and occupational skills training to 638 participants.
Coordination, Leadership, and Policy	EOWB	EOWB has been facilitating the Regional Employer Partnership meetings that focus on training for employees. EOWB is also involved in the Northern Blues Restoration Partnership that focuses on youth engagement, career pathway, and natural resource career workshops. Lastly, EOWB are involved with the Early Care and Education (ECE) Partnership which focuses on funding, developing internships, and exploring employer-supported childcare. NEOEDD staff attend these meetings when possible.

Top Priority Housing Initiative		
Project/Initiative	Lead	Activities
Coordinated Housing Strategy	NEOEDD	The Economic Recovery Corps member is unable to support this strategy as other workplan items are taking priority.

Middle Priority Housing Initiatives		
Housing Production	Working Homes LLC	Working Homes purchased a lot with an old existing home in Wallowa. They updated the existing home and built a second home. These homes were sold with restrictive covenants to moderate income individuals. The covenants will maintain the affordability of the homes. They also built a home for rent to low-income renters. A project to redevelop a county-owned property in Enterprise (site of the former county library) is being pursued. The proposed use of the site would be to develop a new owner-occupied home that is designed with an integrated accessory dwelling unit. Working Homes continues to improve an historic property in Enterprise that provides affordable apartments. NEOEDD staff serve on the Advisory Committee for Working Homes.
	La Grande School District (LGSD)	LGSD launched the Tiger Homes Career Technical Education program and completed construction of two town homes.
Alternative development method	NEOEDD and REV	NEOEDD received funding to collaborate with supporters of workforce housing to promote the use of ADUs, mass timber, 3D printed and modular homes to ease the housing crisis. These activities are being conducted in collaboration with the REV Center and an advisory group including planners and small home developers. We hosted a ribbon cutting event in Baker City in September 2025. The project includes a new website - https://www.neoadu.org/ . The website provides information about ADU development steps, sample plans, and includes a financial calculator for a homeowner to use to understand the financial returns of ADU ownership.
Policy	NEOEDD	Staff serves on the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis Rulemaking Advisory Committee (RAC) through fall of 2025, participating in broad, high-level, and policy-oriented discussions about how best to implement Legislative direction to improve housing production, affordability, and choice in Oregon.
	City of Joseph & REV	Completed a Buildable Lands Inventory. NEOEDD staff attended public meetings and reviewed recommendations.
	NEOEDD	Staff have attended meetings and researched Oregon's Middle Income Revolving Loan fund program through Oregon Housing and Community Development. A presentation was given to the NEOEDD board in September 2025.

Top Priority Business Development Initiatives		
Project/Initiative	Lead	Activities
Develop a financing program for small loans & grants	NEOEDD	NEOEDD amended our defederalized EDA RLF loan management plan to include a new microlending policy for loans up to \$40,000 based primarily on credit score and available for startups.
	NEOEDD with Business Oregon \$	NEOEDD deployed \$106,000 in grant funding to 26 businesses.
	KIVA Oregon	NEOEDD assisted 6 businesses to access \$75,500 of no interest loans through KIVA.
General Coordination and Advocacy: Pursue a responsible tourism strategy	Eastern Oregon Visitors Association (EOVA)	Staff participate in the advisory group for the Hells Canyon Scenic Byway Branding & Wayfinding Project organized by EOVA. NEOEDD staff regularly meet with the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association (EOVA) to share insights and discuss regional tourism opportunities, including sustainable tourism.
Medium Priority Business Development Initiatives		
Main Street Programs	NEOEDD & Wallowa County Chamber	Administration & coordination for the Wallowa County Regional Rural Main Street program transitioned from NEOEDD to the Wallowa County Chamber. With NEOEDD's assistance, the Wallowa County Chamber received over \$1.1 million through the 2024 Main Street Revitalization Grant program providing funding for 14 revitalization projects across Enterprise, Joseph, and Wallowa. All projects in Wallowa from the previous award were completed!
Convene business development summits	Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative (OTEC)	OTEC hosts Power Eastern Oregon summits annually.
	Eastern Oregon Women's Coalition	EOWC hosts Eastern Oregon Economic Summits annually, the 2024 summit was held in La Grande.
Provide resources & consultations to entrepreneurs and small business owners	NEOEDD	88 people participated in the 10-week CO.STARTERS CORE business development classes in Baker City, Enterprise and La Grande, delivered twice in the reporting period. 10 people participated in the CORE Bootcamp in Baker City. 17 people attended one of three financial projections workshops and 8 people participated in the 6-week Destination Creation workshop in La Grande.
	NEOEDD	63 people attended the Small Business Success Days held in La Grande and Enterprise.
	NEOEDD	188 entrepreneurs received an average of 1.65 hours on one-on-one consulting services.

Top Priority Infrastructure Initiatives		
Project/Initiative	Lead	Activities
Development Strategy – increase grant writing capacity	NEOEDD	NEOEDD issued RFP for grant writers and selected five external grant writers. We are currently in the contracting stage.
	NEOEDD	NEOEDD applied to USDOE for funding to implement our CEDS. \$15 million was awarded but is not yet available.
Medium Priority Infrastructure Initiatives		
Develop energy plans for each county	OTEC & Union County Emergency Manager	NEOEDD’s AmeriCorps participant worked with project lead to conduct outreach and support an initial meeting to obtain public input on Union County’s Energy Plan.
Resilience Building	State of Oregon	NEOEDD applied to serve on the Eastern Oregon Regional Resiliency Forum.
	Univ of Oregon Institute of Policy Research and Engagement	NEOEDD applied for and received the assistance of a fully-funded RARE AmeriCorps participant to support planning and development of resiliency projects.
Water & Wastewater Upgrades	Richland	NEOEDD provided grant management for a CDBG funded extension of the Richland waster system to serve the community of New Bridge.
	Wallowa	NEOEDD provided grant management for a CDBG & DEQ funded project to improve Wallowa’s wastewater collection and treatment system.
Recreation – Visitor Services	Wallowa Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association	The WMHCTA completed maintenance and repairs on 277 miles of public trails, in addition to replacing signage and wayfinding markers and repairing guard station facilities.
	Joseph Branch Trail Consortium	Travel Oregon awarded funds to construct a one-mile public ADA trail connecting the town of Wallowa to the nearby Nez Perce Homeland site.
	Anthony Lakes Outdoor Recreation Association	Travel Oregon awarded funds to enhance ADA access at their rental shop.
	Step Forward	Travel Oregon awarded funds to construct an ADA accessible vault toilet at a public fishing site.

Evaluation of Progress on Action Plan and Goals

Workforce Strategy	Annual Metrics
Unemployment Rate	<i>2023 – 4%, 2024 – 4.67% as of Sept. 2025 unemployment rose to 5.6%</i>
Housing Strategy	Annual Metrics
Housing Price Index	<i>2023 – 3.55% increase, 2024 – 7.9% increase</i>
Unhoused Residents (based on point-in-time counts)	<i>2023 – 20, 2024 – 73, 2025 – 77</i>
New Housing Units Permitted	<i>2023 – 181, 2024 – 107</i>

Business Development Strategy	Annual Metrics
# of businesses receiving small amounts (\$25k or less) of financial support	(7/23 – 3/24) 1 KIVA loan totaling \$2,500, 8 IDA business clients made first withdrawal (4/24-9/25) 6 KIVA loans totaling \$75,500, 14 IDA IDA business clients made first withdrawal
Infrastructure Strategy	Metrics: Year 1 and Year 5
Number of projects receiving funding through Business Oregon	2023 – 7, 2024 - 13

Goals in 2024 CEDS Update, Status and 2025/2026 Goals

NEOEDD staff plan to visit each city in the District to share the CEDS and ask them about their infrastructure, housing, and community development priorities. One desired outcome of this outreach will be an increased understanding about the CEDS and how we can best deploy our resources to support workforce housing development in the region. This goal has partially been met with outreach completed in about half the cities in the District. Lack of staff time to complete outreach means this goal will continue in 2025/2026.

NEOEDD staff plan to increase our engagement with workforce development partners so that we can provide better referrals and have a better understanding of the projects and programs our workforce partners are implementing. This may include recruiting a workforce partner to NEOEDD’s governing board. This goal has partially been met through monitoring of Eastern Oregon Workforce Board committee activity. We have not yet recruited a workforce partner to NEOEDD’s board of directors and this goal will continue in 2025/2026.

If we receive the USDOE grant to implement the CEDS, we will form a grant advisory committee comprised of municipal and environmental justice community residents to develop subrecipient and grant criteria. Although the grant was awarded, the project is not yet ready to proceed as it is reliant on construction progress on the Boardman to Hemingway high voltage interstate transmission line. This goal will be changed to be consistent with current administration priorities if awarded funding becomes available in 2025/2026.

NEOEDD staff will participate in the Regional Engagement and Vitality Center’s Recharge Our Community’s Economy workshops to see how this new engagement and planning effort could lead to implementation of projects and initiatives identified in the CEDS planning process. This goal is complete. We participated in the ROCE workshops. The ADU housing project and formation of the ADU Advisory Committee were a result of the ROCE process. We have completed the ADU initiative, but we will continue to help update and maintain the NEOADU.org website.

The NEOEDD Board has also established the following goals with measurable objectives:

- Goal 1 – Collaborate in an entrepreneurial ecosystem to foster business development and growth
- Goal 2 – Enhance the ability of local government and nonprofit sectors to meet community needs and create more vibrant rural communities. One objective is number of government and nonprofits served. In our 2024/2025 fiscal year, we served 27 organizations.
- Goal 3 – Strive to be a resilient organization that lives its professed values