



TRINITY COUNTY

PLACEMAKING ACTION PLAN

PREPARED BY



ATLAS
community studios



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Atlas Community Studios would like to thank the following individuals for their participation in the strategic planning process:

Trinity County Steering Committee

Jill Cox, Trinity County Board of Supervisors (District 2)

Liam Gogan, Trinity County Board of Supervisors (District 3)

Ric Leutwyler, Trinity County Board of Supervisors (District 1-elect)

Letty Garza, Trinity County Interim CAO

Suzi Kochems, Trinity County Director of Grants and Housing Department

Travis Finch, CEO, Velocity Communications

Alex Cousins, Sales Manager, Trinity River Lumber

Wes Scribner, Owner, Scribner Construction

Karla Avila, Executive Director Trinity County Arts Council

Scott Watkins, Weaverville Chamber

ABOUT ATLAS COMMUNITY STUDIOS

Atlas Community Studios was founded by a small, diverse group of creative problem-solvers and entrepreneurs looking for the opportunity to advance the economic prosperity of small and rural communities across the country.

With decades of combined experience spanning both the public and private sectors, the Atlas team specializes in strategic planning, economic development, and creative placemaking. Atlas helps communities plan for development and growth through collaborative strategic planning and simple-to-execute, realistic strategies.

The Atlas team's portfolio of work includes more than 53 action-oriented plans in rural communities across 26 states and one Canadian province. Project partners have been communities of all sizes, as small as 80 people and as large as a U.S. state with nearly 3 million residents.



atlastcostudios.com
hello@atlastcostudios.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

5 OVERVIEW

11 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

19 HOUSING

72 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

95 REVITALIZATION & QUALITY OF LIFE

111 APPENDICES



A photograph of the Trinity River Bridge-1901, a steel truss bridge with a star-shaped antenna on top. The bridge has wooden railings and a wet, reflective deck. The background shows a forested hillside under a blue sky. Two signs are visible on the bridge structure: "MAXIMUM CLEARANCE 13' 5\"/>

OVERVIEW



ATLAS
community studios



ABOUT **THE PROJECT**

Trinity County has been awarded a Rural Business Development Grant through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help define a unified vision and identify strategic opportunity areas for economic and social development.

For this project, Trinity County has teamed up with Atlas Community Studios, a firm specializing in strategic planning and community development, to build an action plan focused on three major components: Housing, Workforce Development, and revitalization strategies related to overall quality of life.

PLAYBOOK

The Trinity County Playbook includes an analysis of key trends, opportunities, and challenges the county faces to achieve a prosperous economic and social future. Quantitative research is combined with input resulting from stakeholder outreach to ensure that Trinity County's strategic priorities reflect the communities collective vision and goals.

PLANNING PROCESS

STEERING COMMITTEE

- ▶ Trinity County established a project steering committee of ten individuals with backgrounds ranging from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.
- ▶ The Steering Committee met for its first official meeting in February 2022 to review the project goals and placemaking process before facilitating a visioning session and discussion on the city's assets, challenges and opportunities.
- ▶ The steering committee convened every other month to help guide the planning process and to ensure the development of the playbook was community-centered and in alignment with community priorities.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ A project landing page was created to host information about the process, RSVP information for visioning sessions, the public survey as well as project updates: Trinitycountycaplacemaking.com
- ▶ The Atlas team facilitated two in-person public visioning sessions, one in Weaverville and one in Hayfork, during the project site visit in March 2022.
- ▶ The project team also hosted three focus groups on housing, economic development and marketing as well as key stakeholder interviews to solicit additional feedback.
- ▶ An online community survey was created, promoted locally and generated 170 responses answering detailed questions relevant to the project focus areas.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

- A Community Assessment Report was created in partnership with Broad Ripple Strategies (BRS) analyzing the qualitative and quantitative data inputs to identify key trends, issues, and opportunities facing Trinity County as it competes for the top jobs and talent in today's economy.
- The assessment features high-level quantitative trends for Trinity County compared to three peer counties: Del Norte County, CA; Mendocino County, CA, and Plumas County, CA, the state of California, and the U.S.
- In addition to the quantitative data and stakeholder input analysis, the Atlas team conducted topical research to contextualize the key trends and issues affecting Trinity County, which ultimately informed the strategic opportunity areas in the playbook.

ACTION PLAN

- Informed by the community assessment findings, the Action Plan recommends strategic opportunity areas, partnerships, and funding resources to help advance projects from ideation to reality.

EXISTING PLANS & STUDIES

The following reports and studies helped inform the findings of the Community Assessment and are incorporated into the playbook as appropriate:

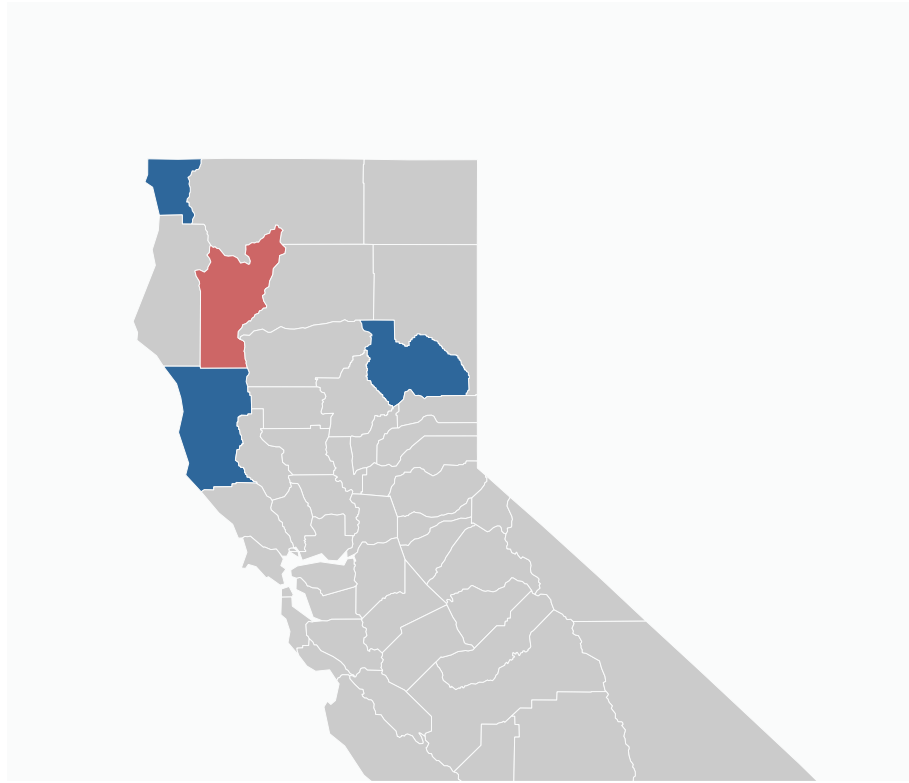
- Trinity County Housing Element Update, Placeworks (2019-2024)
- Lewiston Community Plan (1986)
- Weaverville Community Plan (1990)
- Douglas City Community Plan (1987)
- Junction City Community Plan (1987)
- Hayfork Community Plan (1996)
- Trinity County Cannabis Program, Ascent Environmental (2020)

DATA SOURCES

The community assessment utilizes a variety of data indicators to examine Trinity County's competitiveness as a place to live, work, and do business. The project team sourced data primarily from the U.S. Census Bureau and other public sources including the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

CENSUS ESTIMATES

The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey that collects and produces information on social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics for communities throughout the United States. While the survey is annual, data indicators for communities with fewer than 65,000 residents are typically provided as five-year averages in order to increase statistical reliability and reduce margins of error. The tradeoff is that ACS 5-Year Estimates are less current. For instance, 5-Year Estimates from the 2019 ACS are derived from 60 months of data collected between 2015 and 2019. Because Trinity County has a population of fewer than 65,000 residents, the community assessment exclusively uses 5-Year Estimates for ACS data indicators.



COMPARISON GEOGRAPHIES

Trinity County, CA is the primary geographic unit of analysis in this report. However, to gain additional perspective on trends in workforce, economy, and quality of life and place, Trinity County was compared to three peer counties, Del Norte County, CA; Mendocino County, CA, and Plumas County, CA, the state of California, and the U.S. Comparison areas are intended to provide context and perspective on Trinity County's trends but did not influence the determination of strategic priorities or recommendations.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

FINDINGS

KEY TRENDS & CHALLENGES

The following key trends and challenges emerged from the quantitative and qualitative research conducted for this Community Assessment.

Below is a summary of the findings in the full report.



▶ HOUSING

Trinity County is losing its housing stock – on already limited land – due to wildfires, blight and disinvestment simultaneously as construction costs are becoming increasingly more costly and restrictive.

▶ WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Trinity County suffers from brain drain of top talent due to lack of education, job diversity, housing, low wages, limited broadband access, and aging population. While some programs and resources exist, the county lacks a collective workforce development ecosystem.

▶ REVITALIZATION

Trinity County suffers from a low sense of self and lack of a shared identity. Due to this collective negative outlook, community development efforts and scaling up tourism opportunities will be especially challenging.

Trinity County residents grapple with a lack of confidence when it comes to the region's assets, which has established perceived barriers to development and growth.

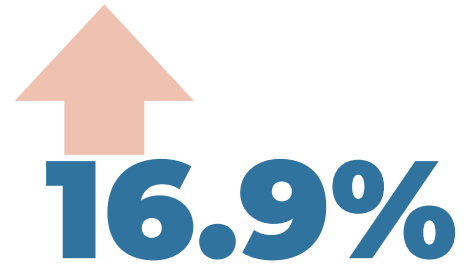
POPULATION TRENDS

Population analysis is complicated by the fact that the U.S. Census Bureau failed to count a large population of Hmong immigrants that immigrated to Trinity County between the 2010 and 2020 Census years.

Inter-decade Census estimates showed Trinity County lost residents from 2010 to 2019, but the 2020 Census reported a population increase of 2,326 – a 16.9% rise that dwarfed the growth rates of the comparison areas.

Confirming that inter-decade undercounts were likely in the Hmong population, 2020 Census figures demonstrated a 13.1 percent increase in Trinity County's Asian population from 2010, well above the benchmarks. Trinity County's White population declined by 13.0 percent from 2010 to 2020 but still comprises 70 percent of the total population.

Trinity County's age-related trends are of concern for workforce sustainability but may also be affected by Census undercounts. Residents over age 65 are the fastest growing cohort in Trinity County and comprise nearly 30 percent of the population, well above all the comparison areas.



Trinity County Population
increase based on 2020
Census Data

TALENT TRENDS

Population trends that add proprietary data to Census estimates show that Trinity County's age ranges are actually more sustainable than most of its peer counties.

However, the total size of the workforce is shrinking compared to California and experiences seasonal peaks in the summer months.

Low college degree attainment in Trinity County puts it at a competitive disadvantage for knowledge-based companies compared to the state and national averages.

Nearly three-quarters of the population over age 25 lacks a college degree and declined by 2.4% from 2015 to 2020 putting Trinity County at a competitive

disadvantage for knowledge-based companies compared to the state and national averages.

Pre-K to 12th grade public school districts operate from a position of strength as students' performance on statewide assessment tests is stronger than all the peer counties, with a high percentage of college readiness. Where the schools fall behind is in the graduation rate trailing all the comparison areas.

Public survey respondents noted that the lack of diverse job availability in Trinity County for well-paying careers limits the need for most workforce training programs.

The largest occupations by total employment in Trinity County are in lower-paying jobs. The county's most prevalent occupations compared to the U.S. average are Law Enforcement Workers and Ground Maintenance Workers.

The three occupations with the greatest projected future demand are Food and Beverage Serving Workers, Retail Sales Workers, and Home Health and Personal Care Aides.

A confluence of factors contributing to Trinity County's perceived lack of opportunity leads some residents to feel there is a "brain drain" of top talent

Trinity County's average annual wages reinforces stakeholder perceptions that the county's jobs pay lower than average rates. Trinity County's wages are the lowest of all the comparison areas, and nearly \$30,000 below the state's annual figure.

Below average wage rates are also reflected in Trinity County's lower per capita incomes. Lower incomes and higher rates of government assistance correlate with a larger distribution of households earning under \$50,000 and higher poverty rates, including the highest percentage of youth poverty compared to the benchmark areas.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

In 2021 Trinity County only had 3,170 total jobs, roughly the same number of jobs as in 2011; however, the policy-related omission of cannabis employment from official totals distorts the county's economic picture.

Unofficial estimates show that 1,236 individuals worked full time and 5,240 part time in cannabis cultivation in Trinity County in the year 2018. An



additional 112 adults were estimated to work in noncultivation occupations.

Stakeholders feel that the economy has underperformed but has key advantages like lower cost of living that can drive future growth.

Employment is mostly comprised by lower-paying service sector jobs. Of Trinity County's largest sectors, only Health Care and Social Assistance grew in the five years prior to Q3 2021. Sawmills and Wood Preservation, a subcategory of Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, is Trinity County's most specialized employment sector. Individual and Family Services is projected to be the strongest growth driver for Trinity County's future economy.

Trinity County features outsized rates of self-employment and has higher percentages of small and younger firms than the comparison geographies.

Cannabis and its role in the community and economy was a prominent input topic.

Multiple survey respondents encouraged the county to increase its licensing of commercial cannabis operations, though many structural challenges to legal cannabis exist in California. Trinity County's long-standing illegal cannabis sector has made the transition to a regulated system uniquely challenging.

PLACE-RELATED TRENDS

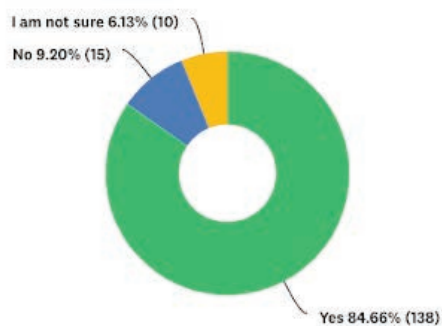
Though Trinity County is a lower-cost alternative to the average California community, it is expensive compared to the U.S. average. Lower than average wages and incomes mean that existing residents' dollars do not go as far in the county as the comparison areas.

Trinity County employees are traveling longer distances to work and spending more time commuting than the benchmark areas. However, 15% of the county's labor force works from home, over twice the closest comparison area.

Census estimates underscore stakeholders' assessments that Trinity County is underserved for broadband. Just over 70% of local households have broadband internet subscriptions, the lowest rate of all the comparison areas.

Housing was another prevalent theme discussed in Trinity County's public input process. Nearly 85% of survey respondents have had difficulties finding appropriate housing or know someone who has.

HAVE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU PERSONALLY KNOW, STRUGGLED TO FIND APPROPRIATE HOUSING IN TRINITY COUNTY?



al housing costs and
on areas. Availability of rental
County.



The devastating Monument Fire in Trinity County consumed 223,124 acres, the second largest fire in all of California in 2021. Stakeholders lamented the fire's impact on the natural environment and housing sector.

Outdoor recreation is a local strength, with the Trinity River serving as the principal showpiece with plentiful opportunities for fishing and whitewater rafting. Trinity County is also home to a small but active arts community.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The analysis in this report speaks to a community with notable assets that is struggling to transition from the past to the future. One thing many stakeholders hope will come

from the Placemaking Playbook is a clear vision of where Trinity County must go strategically to become a more competitive, thriving community.

Based on Community Assessment findings the following strategic implication categories have emerged:

- Cannabis
- Housing
- Broadband
- Fire Prevention
- Creative Industries
- Outdoors and Adventure Tourism
- Governmental Capacity

FUTURE VISION

One thing many stakeholders hope will come from the Placemaking

*Playbook is a **clear vision of where Trinity County must go strategically** to become a more competitive, thriving community.*

Aligning behind a common vision for what that future looks like will enable Trinity County to collaborate in new ways to build the capacity necessary for its current and next generations to thrive.

Establishing a community's collective identity and its goals for the future is generally articulated through a vision statement. The purpose of Trinity County's vision statement is to inform and shape future investment, policies, programs, and planning efforts to ensure the will of its residents is represented in the decision-making process.

The Atlas project team suggests Trinity County consider the following vision statement:

Beautiful Wilderness, open spaces and an inclusive community to live, play and grow.

WHAT IS A VISION STATEMENT ANYWAY?

A **mission** statement is **Why you exist** or what you provide.

Example: *The City of Albany delivers fiscally responsible, highly dependable services to the citizens in the community and the region with integrity and professionalism. (Albany, GA)*

A **Vision** Statement is **Where you want to be in the future.**

This means what the county aspires to. It should be creative, ambitious, forward thinking and of course connected to mission.

A vision statement helps guide efforts and strategic decision making decisions where to put time, money and resources.

HOUSING





HOUSING OVERVIEW

The key trends and challenges for housing that were identified in the quantitative and qualitative research conducted for Trinity County's Community Assessment is reflected in the following statement:

Trinity County is losing its housing stock due to wildfires, blight and disinvestment exacerbated by the fact that construction is increasingly costly and regulated.

Furthering these challenges is the fact that ***Trinity County has below average wages, is land locked due to Shasta-Trinity National Forest, and is under capacity on a county level.***

GOALS

- Get vacant and abandoned properties back into active use
- Increase housing options
- Expand available land for future developments
- Incentivize new development
- Build local wealth
- Increase fire resiliency
- Unified, collaborative approaches to housing challenges

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

In response to this key trend and challenge, the following strategic opportunity areas for Trinity County emerged.

- 1.** Increase available housing supply by encouraging Accessory Dwelling Units, (ADUs) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs)
- 2.** Establish a County-wide Land Bank to get properties back into productive use
- 3.** Create a Countywide Revolving Loan Fund to pool resources and spur development and redevelopment
- 4.** Engage the Forest Service regarding Land acquisition
- 5.** Brownfields - Get properties back into active use
- 6.** Build resiliency, lead efforts in fireproof housing innovation
- 7.** Create a Housing Ambassadors Community Outreach Program

STRATEGIES AT A GLANCE

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY	CHALLENGE	GOAL	TIMELINE
ADUs/JADUs	Lack of available rentals	Increase Housing Options, Build Local Wealth	Short/ Medium
Land Bank	Available land, Blighted / abandoned properties	Get properties back into active use, Increase available land	Short/ Medium
RLF	Development Cost gap	Incentivize new development / redevelopment	Short/ Medium
FS Land	Available land, Fire resiliency	Increase available land	Long
Brownfields	Available land, Blighted / abandoned properties	Get properties back into active use, Increase available land	Medium/ Long
Build fire resiliency	Wildfires	Increase resiliency / foster innovative solutions	Long
Housing Ambassadors	Lack of housing options, geographic disparity	Unified, collaborative approaches, Build local wealth	Short/ Medium



STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Detailed description per concept below

1. Increase available housing supply by encouraging Accessory Dwelling Units, (ADUs) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs)

If available land is limited, work with what you have. ADUs are often referred to as mother-in-law suites, granny flats or backyard cottages and are detached from the main housing unit. JADUs are additional housing units built within the existing structure, for example: a basement with a separate entrance converted into a separate rental unit.

ADUs and JADUs improve housing affordability and diversify housing stock without changing existing neighborhood characteristics. They can instantly increase gentle density especially where structures already exist and can help encourage infill development.


ADUs/JADUs HAVE MANY BENEFITS INCLUDING:

- Easier and faster to build or convert than traditional single-family homes or multi-family housing options and do not require new land development. They can even be easily created with existing structures.
- A more dispersed and incremental way of adding housing to communities than other options, such as apartment complexes. It is often easier to get community support for ADUs than for other housing types.
- Creates new consistent income streams for current homeowners and builds local wealth within the community
- Improves local properties and grows investments. Offers studio and single bedroom options for those wanting to live in a single family neighborhood.
- Because of their small footprint they are more affordable and attainable for moderate-income individuals or childless households (Which make up two-thirds of the U.S. population)
- They are appealing to a wide range of the population including younger demographics looking for entry-level housing as well as retirees to age in place by downsizing but staying local and independent.
- They are excellent options for temporary employment such as traveling nurses, internships or fellowships.
- ADUs work well as short-term rentals or long term leasing.
- Can be used to accommodate multi-generational housing freeing up other local housing units
- Are sustainable, more efficient and environmentally friendly options that require less resources to build and maintain.

A recent [*Freddie Mac study*](#) identified 1.4 million properties with ADUs in the U.S., based on an analysis of 600 million home sales going back to 1997.

According to this study ADU construction is on the rise, growing an average of 8.6% per year between 2009 and 2019, and doubling the number of units rented or sold during that same time period.

Demand for accessory dwellings is highest in the fastest growing regions of the country. The rapidly expanding Sun Belt states of California, Florida, Texas, and Georgia account for half of the 1.4 million ADUs identified.



“ADUs are a way for homeowners to play a big part in expanding our city’s housing stock and make some extra money while they’re at it.”

ERIC GARCETTI,
Mayor of Los Angeles

In 2017, California required all of its cities and counties to allow ADUs so long as the property owner secured a building permit, helping foster a backyard building boom.

The number of ADU permits issued across California increased from almost 9,000 in 2018 to 12,392 in 2020. From 2018 to 2020, California jurisdictions permitted 33,881 ADUs resulting in 22,695 ADUs added to the state’s housing supply.

Trinity County Zoning allows for Accessory Dwelling Units, where one additional dwelling unit can be located a lot where an already developed single-family dwelling exists. These can be an attached, detached or repurposed existing space and must have permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation on the same parcel as the single-family dwelling.

Despite the widespread success of ADUs in the state of California only one ADU was permitted in Trinity County from 2018 - 2021 according to the UC Berkeley Center for Community Innovation with data from the California Department of Housing and Community Development’s (HCD) Annual Progress Reports.

IN A 2020 ADU OWNER SURVEY, THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY INNOVATION FOUND THAT THE MEDIAN STATEWIDE CONSTRUCTION COST OF AN ADU IS \$150,000, OR \$250/SQUARE FOOT.

BEST PRACTICES & RESOURCES

Best practices and examples found in [*ADUs in California, a revolution in progress*](#) report (2020) by UC Berkeley Center for Community Innovation:

BUILD AWARENESS: Some mechanisms that have proven effective in educating homeowners and increasing knowledge of local zoning and permitting processes are websites (e.g., secondunitcentersmc.org), resident-led workshops (e.g., the Berkeley ADU Task Force¹²), and one-stop shops (as in San Mateo County). Many jurisdictions report this is important work, but that it requires increased funding from the State to implement.

PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: Provide training and resources including skill-building training sessions, local knowledge-sharing events, or one-on-one consulting time.

ENCOURAGE ADU PRODUCTION VIA PRE-APPROVED PROTOTYPES AND PLANS.

Some jurisdictions seek to simplify the ADU permitting process for homeowners by providing pre-approved ADU plans.

[*Humboldt County provides pre-approved ADU plans online*](#), free of charge.

Clovis, CA offers [*Three \(3\) cottage style housing plans*](#), provided free of charge developed to fit a variety of property configurations.

WORK WITH BANKS AND CREDIT UNIONS TO PROVIDE MORE APPROPRIATE LOAN PRODUCTS TO HOMEOWNERS SEEKING TO BUILD AN ADU.

[*Self Help Enterprises*](#) offers an ADU pilot program that provides financing for building ADUs by working with the [*City Of Clovis Cottage Home Program*](#)

More information can be found here:

[***CALIFORNIA ADU by The Center for Community Innovation \(CCI\) offers a wide variety of examples, resources and best practices.***](#)

[***Implementing the Backyard Revolution: Perspectives of California's ADU Owners***](#) (2021)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Freddie Mac – The Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (FHLMC)

Helping to drive [ADUs](#) growth are innovative mortgage options. For those with existing basements or detached garages or structures, [renovation mortgage financing](#) solutions can provide the capital homeowners need to add an ADU on their property. The project doesn't need to be an improvement or addition to the existing structure, it simply needs to be built on the same lot.

Homeowners with detached units that include their own kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms and entrances can qualify for [factory-built home mortgage solutions](#).

California Housing Finance Agency

The [ADU Grant Program](#) - provides up to \$40,000 towards pre-development and non-recurring closing costs associated with the construction of the ADU. Predevelopment costs include site prep, architectural designs, permits, soil tests, impact fees, property survey, and energy reports.

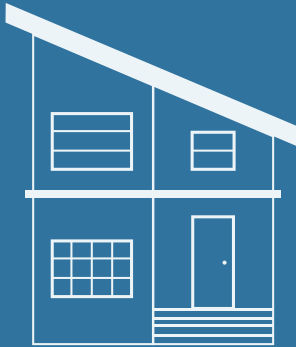
Eligibility: Homeowners with low or moderate income - [CalHFA Income Limits](#)

HOUSABLE

Provides everything needed to build an ADU in California including custom Property Reports to see estimated budgets for ADU projects. Housable's services include ADU design, feasibility, permitting and referrals to top rated local ADU builders. Site also offers [extensive guides](#) and [examples of existing ADU projects in California](#).



IN THE 2018 AARP HOME AND COMMUNITY PREFERENCES SURVEY, PEOPLE AGE 50-PLUS WHO WOULD CONSIDER CREATING AN ADU SAID THEY'D DO SO IN ORDER TO:

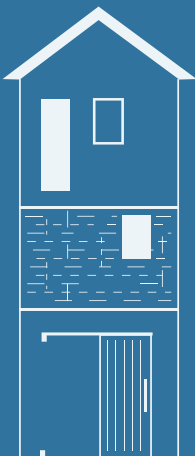
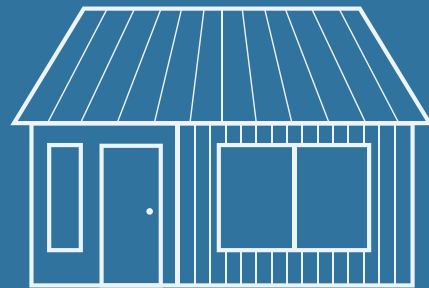


provide a home for a loved one in need of care -84%

provide housing for relatives or friends -83%

Feel safer by having someone living nearby -64%

Have a space for guests -69%



Increase the value of their home -67%

Create a place for a caregiver to stay -60%

Earn extra income from renting to a tenant -53%

The ABC's of ADUs - A guide to Accessory Dwelling Units and how they expand housing options for people of all ages, by AARP is a primer for elected officials, policymakers, local leaders, homeowners, consumers and others to learn what accessory dwelling units are and how and why they are built. The guide also suggests best practices for how towns, cities, counties and states can include ADUs in their mix of housing options.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- ▶ **Consider building a Trinity County ADU website or specific page on the county's site - explaining the process, requirements and benefits.**
 - **Example:** [*Housing Forward Humboldt*](#)
- ▶ **Raise public awareness**
 - Host public meetings, workshops, open houses, or webinars to explain the need, opportunity, process, and available funding/resources
 - Build a team of local ambassadors who can help spread the word! (Such as Real Estate agents)
 - Work with local news outlets to report on the need, benefits, opportunities, process and outcomes in a series on ADUs
 - Encourage civic organizations to help share through their networks
 - Target outreach efforts and financial assistance to low-income homeowners
- ▶ **Remove barriers**
 - Simplify the permit process
 - Offer pre-approved ADU plans free to residents
 - Waive or reduce permit fees
- ▶ **Build partnerships**
 - Work with local lenders to offer special finance options for construction of ADUs using renovation loans
- ▶ **Offer incentives to homeowners for completing the construction of an ADU**
 - These incentives could be tax rebates or more creative options that fit the brand of Trinity County such as a California Lifetime Fishing License or annual National Park Passes. Bonus: The more creative, the more likely to get media coverage!

Once ADU's are built, organize tours and media coverage to inform and inspire the community.



2. Establish a County-wide Land Bank to get properties back into productive use

Land banks are powerful legal tools with a very specific purpose: **To acquire blighted, abandoned, and vacant properties and get them back into active use.**

These community-owned entities effectively accelerate preservation and development of distressed properties into affordable (and appropriate) housing. Land Banks have the special authority to acquire tax-foreclosed property cost-effectively, hold properties tax-exempt, clear titles, generate revenue, and flexibly sell a property not by price but by best outcome aligned with the community's goals.

THE COMMUNITY BLIGHT SOLUTIONS ESTIMATES THAT EACH ABANDONED PROPERTY COSTS ITS NEIGHBORS \$70,000 IN LOSS AS IT SITS VACANT, INDEPENDENT OF ITS STATUS AS A FORECLOSURE, AND A FORECLOSED HOME COSTS THE COMMUNITY \$130,000 IN LOST PROPERTY VALUE.

Understanding the True Costs of Abandoned Properties: How Maintenance can make a Difference (2017)

ACCORDING TO THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION (FEMA), VACANT RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS ACCOUNT FOR ONE OUT OF EVERY 14 RESIDENTIAL BUILDING FIRES IN AMERICA.

They can even serve as an excellent alternative to traditional liquidation or tax lien sales, which often go to out-of-state investors who pay off the outstanding taxes but rarely put any further investment into the properties, perpetuating the blighted home challenge.

Vacant and abandoned properties:

- Decrease the property value, estimated between a 22-50% loss.
- Reduces the property value for neighbors, decreases community wealth
- Escalates community blight
- Increase risks to public health and safety as they attract crime
- Pose a high probability of fire
- Raise insurance premiums and financial liability
- Increase municipal costs for additional services and resources
- Reduces the tax base for local governments to provide essential services
- Costs and risks to the community increase over time
- Contributes to future property vacancy

How properties become Vacant and Abandoned:

- Relatives inherit the property with no intention to use it
- Tax delinquency
- Foreclosure
- Lack of employment
- Environmental hazards

While land banks currently only exist in major metropolitan areas of California, this model is they are actively being utilized in hundreds of urban and rural areas across the country. Check out the national land bank map below to see examples from other states.

[NATIONAL LAND BANK MAP](#)

BEST PRACTICES & RESOURCES

While all Land Banks serve a similar primary focus of acquiring distressed properties and returning them to active, productive use, there is a wide variety of structures and operations in how this model can meet each community's needs.

THE **CENTER FOR COMMUNITY PROGRESS** OUTLINES THAT ALL SUCCESSFUL LAND BANKS HAVE THE FOLLOWING:

- Strategic links to the property tax collection and foreclosure process
- Sufficient, predictable source of funding
- Engagement with residents and other community stakeholders
- Operations scaled in response to local land use goals
- Policy-driven, transparent, and publicly accountable transactions
- Alignment with other local or regional tools and community programs
- [Land Banks - A Tool for Addressing Problem Properties to Serve Community Goals](#)

Center for Community Progress (CCP) Resource Center

As the foremost national resources for land banks, Community Progress' is proud to lead the [National Land Bank Network \(NLBN\)](#), which unites land bank leaders to share knowledge, network, and leverage their strengths to better inform policy change, strengthen land banking as a tool, and build a national community of practice. We've developed this online land bank resource center to inform you, inspire you, and guide you. [Land Banking 101: What is a Land Bank?](#)

See Chapter 7 in [Appendix A](#) for more information on financing land bank operations.

Land Bank Authorities - A guide for the creation and operation of local land banks by LISC

Vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties are found in virtually every community, but in many of our smaller towns and large urban areas they are not simply isolated phenomena— they begin to define the community itself. The reasons and solutions for abandonment are myriad and complex. This guide is designed to be a resource for local governments, neighborhood and community development associations, as well as urban planners seeking new approaches to overcome the barriers that restrain the revitalization and redevelopment of their cities.

WRLC Land Bank

[Western Reserve Land Conservancy](#) (WRLC). Land bank playbook: A comprehensive resource for those who are planning, establishing, or operating a Land bank. This guide is specific to the state of Ohio, however, there are great resources available including proven guidelines and best practices, as well as important forms and reference materials.

How to Fund Land Banks

LISC Land Banks typically work in disinvested communities, acquiring and transferring property where housing markets are weak or nonexistent. This article offers a series of lessons supported with real world examples on how these entities sustain their operations for the benefit of their localities and what kinds of funding sources are most valuable.

While more than 250 land banks have been established across the country, including in many rural areas, the majority of the existing Land Banks in the state of California are in large metropolitan cities and neighborhoods.

[Establishing a Land Bank for Los Angeles County \(March 2022\)](#)
[San Diego Community Land Trust](#)

LAND BANK EXAMPLE #1

Marquette County, MI Land Bank Authority

The MCLBA was created in 2009 at a time when there were only 16 counties in Michigan with established land banks. Today there are almost 50 land banks in the state. The mission of the Marquette County Land Bank Authority is to work collaboratively with local governmental units and community organizations in determining the best way to return tax-foreclosed and undervalued properties to the tax roll, while eliminating blight, providing attainable housing and economic development opportunities and revitalizing communities.

[How land banks are transforming rural communities, Rural Insights](#)
(July 2020)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Access to funding is often regarded as one of the greatest barriers to economic and community development efforts. Below are methods and funding opportunities that other land banks in the U.S. have utilized to further support their efforts of revitalizing their existing housing supply.

Tax Recapture

This option would require absolute support from the local government but can serve as a stable and direct long-term funding mechanism for the initiatives of the land bank. This method would redirect a portion of the property taxes generated in the future by properties a land bank has returned to the tax rolls. However, this avenue of funding might require the land bank to prioritize tax delinquent properties more than other types of properties. If the land bank is working to return properties back on the tax rolls, it increases a revenue stream for the local government while also securing funding for future projects.

Delinquent Tax Fee

When homes become abandoned or blighted, it's very possible that the homeowner has stopped paying property taxes. This is an opportunity for the land bank to work with the local government to enact legislation that allows for penalties and/or fines on delinquent properties to go towards the operating costs of the land bank. The amount could reflect a flat fee or a percentage of the aggregate original tax bill. If enacted, Trinity County could determine the potential amount of funding during Phase II when an inventory of homes is being collected. Although it's likely that it wouldn't produce the amount of funds to support the entirety of the land bank's operations, it can serve as another stable funding source.

State Funding

The [Foreclosure Intervention Housing Prevention Program](#) is meant to preserve affordable housing and promote resident or a nonprofit organization ownership of residential property, making it a potential program the land bank could tap into in order to acquire and rehabilitate properties at risk of foreclosure or in the foreclosure process.

LAND BANKS SUCCESS

In 2021 as a part of REAP, the Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan to clean up West Virginia, the state passed legislation forming the Reclamation of Abandoned and Dilapidated Properties Program. Then in 2022 it was funded with \$10M to fund demolition of targeted properties inventoried in 21 towns and counties around the state.

“PEOPLE WHO HAVE MOVED AWAY OFTEN INHERIT PROPERTY FROM THEIR PARENTS. WHEN THE HOME BECOMES A FINANCIAL BURDEN THE NEW OWNERS ARE OFTEN UNABLE TO CARE FOR THE HOME AND THEY LEAVE IT TO SIT AND ROT.”

MATHEW WINTERS Fire Marshall, *Huntington, West Virginia*

LAND BANKS ADDRESS ABANDONED PROPERTIES PROBLEM

MARCH 31, 2022 WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Population decline and an over abundance of housing has left the Mountain State littered with abandoned homes, which come with significant health and safety hazards to neighbors and communities broadly. Many communities are now looking to solve the issue through landbank programs as a part of a state wide push to rethink how communities approach abandoned properties.

LAND BANK EXAMPLE #2

Wyandotte County, KS – Economic Development Division

The Land Bank of Wyandotte County is a model program with a very robust set of online materials to garner support from individuals and investors alike. There's guidance on how to build on a land bank owned lot as well as an outlined process for contractors and investors to be pre qualified as a preferred partner. Additional FAQ sections are available to further educate the public.

[*Land Bank of Wyandotte County, KS via Economic Development*](#)

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- ▶ **Establish a county-wide land bank to purchase and hold property. Can be set up as a government, quasi-government or nonprofit entity.**
See [Land Banks and Land Banking guide](#) for how to begin this process.
- ▶ **Establish a vacant properties registration to establish property ownership, who is the in state contact for the property, and the responsible property maintenance company. Registration fee should be nominal at first and escalate each year.**
- ▶ **Sell or convey property through locally developed policies that reflect the county's priorities**
- ▶ **Demolish deteriorated housing units to create opportunity for new construction**
- ▶ **Eliminate county tax sale. Utilize land bank financing tools for tax foreclosed and other targeted properties**
- ▶ **Sell, lease, or manage properties deemed to be in the interest of the Land Bank**
- ▶ **Can maintain permanent ownership of the land and buildings, leasing and managing housing units or redevelop and resell to new owners**



3. Prioritize Brownfield sites using available EPA resources to reactivate properties back into active use

Brownfields are vacant or underutilized properties where the redevelopment or reuse is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. The EPA estimates that there are more than 1,000,000 brownfields in the U.S. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties reduces blight, increases local tax bases, spurs job growth, utilizes existing infrastructure and both improves and protects the environment.

Although often thought of exclusively as former industrial sites, many types of commercial and even some residential properties may qualify as Brownfield sites. Old gas stations, dry cleaners, auto repair facilities, mines, mills, rail yards, agricultural sites, scrap yards and even residential housing and government buildings built before 1978 are all excellent examples of eligible brownfield sites.

ABANDONED MINES

The bureau of land management estimates that there are approximately 47,000 Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) in California. AML's are present in all 58 counties on federal lands, privately owned lands, and lands owned or managed by state agencies and local governments. AML's present significant threats to public health and safety. The California Department of Conservation Abandoned Mine Land Unit (AMLU) maintains a statewide database of abandoned mines, and works to remediate public safety and environmental hazards posed by these mines working with local, state, and federal partners.

Trinity County has a history in mining, an industry known for leaving behind contaminants such as petroleum, asbestos, lead, and other metals. Public feedback suggests that many properties in Trinity County are either known or perceived to have mine tailings (compounded waste deposits from extraction), which could contain metals or additives used in processing.

This is known as Mine-scarred lands - lands, waters, and watersheds where extraction, beneficiation or processing of ores and minerals has occurred. The good news is, they are included in the federal definition of brownfields making these properties eligible for cleanup and revitalization programs.

EPA Brownfields Programs

The EPA offers extensive technical assistance and funding opportunities to support the inventory, assessment, cleanup, revitalization planning and job training activities related to brownfields.

Benefits of Brownfields Projects include:

- Decreases blight
- Creates job opportunities
- Increases property values
- Improves public health and safety
- Creates additional land and properties available for housing and/or amenities
- Increased tax base
- Leverages private investment
- Access to grants/loans and technical assistance

BEST PRACTICES & RESOURCES

CENTER FOR CREATIVE LAND RECYCLING

CCLR's mission is to promote the sustainable, equitable and responsible reuse of underutilized and environmentally impacted properties. They serve as EPA's [Technical Assistance to Brownfields \(TAB\) provider for Region 9 and 10](#) including California.

TAB providers can help communities tap into additional partners and resources to support brownfields projects, such as planning efforts, engineering and design, and community engagement. CCLR can provide one-on-one technical assistance, help plan a redevelopment roadmap and champion the pathway, offer expert advice on regulations, funding, remediation and community engagement. Additionally they offer EPA Brownfield [Grant Review Services](#) at no cost.

In 2021 91% of the grants they reviewed were awarded for a total of \$15.3 million in brownfield redevelopment support.

CCLR has a [huge library of Resources](#) and offers a [wide variety of regular webinars](#) to help communities tackle brownfield redevelopment projects. A few to key pieces to note are:

- ▶ [ReMARCAble Opportunities – FY2023 EPA MARC Grant Guidelines & Tips to Strengthen Your Application – CCLR \(Sept 2022\)](#)
- ▶ [Successful EPA Brownfield Grant Examples](#) – Includes examples of all types of Brownfield Grants from 2021 and 2020.
- ▶ Top 3 Advance Planning Tips for a Successful Application – [Start your EPA MARC Grant Application Now](#)

According to CCLR Emphasized Areas and Activities in FY 2023 solicitations include:

- Justice 40
- Climate Change/Resilience
- Restoring Communities
- Infrastructure
- Community Services
- Housing
- Participant Support Costs
- Planning activities for smaller communities
- Capacity building
- Non-displacement
- Poorer and smaller communities

**IN 2021 91% OF THE GRANTS THEY
REVIEWED WERE AWARDED FOR A TOTAL
OF \$15.3 MILLION IN BROWNFIELD
REDEVELOPMENT SUPPORT.**



THE EPA'S BROWNFIELDS SITE

Contains a wide variety of information and resources for stakeholders including program overviews, benefits, types of grants, technical assistance, open solicitations, training and research and frequently asked questions.

EPA Solicitations for Brownfield Grants: [Multipurpose, Assessment, RLF, and Cleanup \(MARC\) Grant Application Resources](#) – General program guidelines, tips, program requirements, eligible planning activities, preparation materials and more.

Multipurpose Grants

- Assessment & Cleanup Activities: **inventory**, Phase I & II assessments, cleanup and redevelopment planning for 1 or more sites
- Eligible: States and Tribes, Local or Regional Governments, Nonprofits 501(c)(3)
- Ownership: Applicant must own at least one of the site(s) for cleanup
- No cost share or match
- Participant Support Costs* (PSCs)
- Develop plan for revitalization

Funding/Length: Up to \$800K
(5 years)

Community-wide Assessment Grants

- **Brownfields inventory**
- Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)
- Community Outreach
- Participant Support Costs* (PSCs)
- Cleanup Planning & Cost Estimates
- Infrastructure, Land Use Assessment & Site Design
- Market Evaluation
- No cost share or match
- Transportation and Streetscape studies

Funding/Length: Community-Wide
- Up to \$500k (4yrs)

**PSC examples:*

- *One community liaison per target area who is not an employee of the recipient*
- *Non-cash stipends for people who attend and meaningfully participate in community meetings. Grocery or gas gift cards*
- *Child care at the community meeting*
- *Food*

EXAMPLES

[Golden Opportunity for Abandoned Gold Mines In Nevada City](#)

Nevada City [population 3,001] has a long history of gold mining operations.

The city utilized grant funds to assess abandoned mine sites, prioritize properties for cleanup, and analyze cleanup options for mine-scarred lands with the goal to create future recreation areas. The city then assessed five major mine tailing areas located in priority areas close to residential neighborhoods and schools.

► **Grass Valley, CA**

The City of Grass Valley has received multiple EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants going back to 2009 allowing the City to proactively address contaminated properties that provide important economic development opportunities for the community. The most recent was in 2017 where [the city received \\$600,000 in a Coalition Grant](#) to investigate properties impacted by historic mining activity for the presence of contamination, and to prepare clean up plans for sites where contamination is identified. [In 2022 the findings were publicly presented](#) including seven cleanup plans prepared for 229 acres of property which characterized about 148,600 cubic yards of mining contamination.

Here are a couple specific examples of how brownfields funding was utilized to increase housing in each community, and how these projects drew in further investment:

► **[Affordable Housing – Seattle, WA](#)**

A local nonprofit began the efforts of acquiring land throughout southeast Seattle with hope of eventually building affordable housing. Through additional partnerships with local and regional entities and EPA Brownfields funding, a previous illegal dumping ground (totaling 6 acres) has been remediated of any contamination, cleaned up, and is now home to 600 units of affordable housing, totaling almost 600,000 square feet of residential and commercial space.

► **Market-rate Housing – Lincoln, NE**

The Haymarket District in Lincoln, NE required significant assessment and clean up efforts in order to begin attracting future development. Through the EPA Brownfields program, funding was acquired to remediate the previous railyard and transform the neighborhood into a residential, recreational, cultural, and entertainment space. Because of the significant investment into the Haymarket District, Lincoln is now planning a redevelopment strategy to create a new urban neighborhood, expecting to add 1,000-2,000 residential units. This adjacent redevelopment project would not be possible without the cleanup efforts funded through Brownfields dollars.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Brownfields Program through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides funding to assess, safely clean up and sustainably reuse contaminated properties, including blighted and/or vacant properties. Fortunately, there are accessible funds at the state and federal levels, as well as a network of partners that can assist communities in the planning, implementation, and redevelopment phases. Additionally, these programs could support the land bank's initiatives.

[FY23 Brownfields Solicitation has been released.](#) EPA's Brownfields Program is currently requesting applications for \$169 million available for Assessment (including Community-wide and Coalition), Cleanup, Multipurpose and Revolving Loan Fund Grants. Applications are due November 22. Several webinars have been scheduled by CCLR, EPA HQ, and our EPA Regional Brownfields Program to share information on these grants and to answer questions from prospective applicants.

State and federal Brownfields funding has been utilized all over the country to assess, clean up, and revitalize contaminated areas. This program helps communities repurpose previously undesirable and underdeveloped areas into areas that are now home to affordable and market-rate housing, business districts, recreational facilities, and more. In many cases, redevelopment of Brownfields sites generates additional investment in and around the area.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

► Prioritize creating a Brownfields Inventory

A brownfields inventory is a list of a list of properties that meet the definition of a brownfield and includes things like ownership information, street address, and lot size (you might choose to include additional site attributes, it's up to you). An inventory is a valuable land use planning tool which, when maintained and kept up to date, can increase grant readiness and help build the narrative of needs, opportunities and priority properties.

► Pursue Brownfields Assessment Funding

EPA's Brownfields assessment funding is available through several different programs: the Community-wide Assessment Grant, the Coalition grant, and Site-Specific Grants.

Trinity County is in the beginning stages of addressing brownfield challenges, so the Community-wide and Coalition Grants are most appropriate for getting started, but remember the Site-Specific resource - dollars are available for Trinity County across every stage of the redevelopment journey.

While both grants represent valuable environmental assessment and predevelopment funding for brownfield sites, it is a competitive process, so you'll want to choose the grant with the best odds for success. There are California-based resources to help you find the right fit.

Atlas recommends reaching out first to the following people to help you establish connections with free technical assistance:

COOL TOOLS

EJSCREEN - EPA'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SCREENING AND MAPPING TOOL

EJScreen is an environmental justice mapping and screening tool that provides EPA with a nationally consistent dataset and approach for combining environmental and demographic indicators. This tool may be used to support Grant writing.



Center for Creative Land Recycling
TAB Provider

Technical Assistance to Brownfield Communities

CCLR's mission is to promote the sustainable, equitable and responsible reuse of underutilized and environmentally impacted properties.

Ignacio Dayrit

Lead Program Consultant

ignacio.dayrit@cclr.org

(510) 918-3374

EPA Brownfield Regional Offices

Representatives are available to assist cleanup and redevelopment efforts at brownfields sites and are a valuable resource in providing support and guidance on applicable laws, regulations, and policies, and technical assistance associated with the selection of technologies.

\EPA Region 9 – [Pacific Southwest](#)

Brownfields Coordinators:

Scott Stollman

415-972-3729

Eric Byous

Byous.Eric@epa.gov

(415) 972-3531

**JOIN UPCOMING EPA WEBINARS FOR REGION 9 -
GRANT OUTREACH SERIES**

Every Thursday October 13 through November 17, 2022

An overview of the program and policy changes with advice from current grantees.

► **Begin collecting information and drafting your grant narrative.**

A brownfields inventory is a list of a list of properties that meet the definition of a brownfield and includes things like ownership information, street address, and lot size (you might choose to include additional site attributes, it's up to you). An inventory is a valuable land use planning tool which, when maintained and kept up to date, can increase grant readiness and help build the narrative of needs, opportunities and priority properties.

Work with your team and begin to build your grant outline and draft content. It might be helpful to begin with:

Who is the team? – Starting with existing Steering Committee members, decide who else should be invited to join this effort and who will be the lead “champion.” Identify roles and responsibilities and gather info about each person’s backgrounds, experience and skill sets, which speak to their qualifications for administering and managing the grant should it be awarded.

What’s the story? – A compelling narrative is necessary for any grant application to share the story of the proposed project, local need and community impact. Gather supporting documentation.

What’s the need? – Demonstrate how this project will impact Trinity County and how it supports existing goals previously created by the community (like in this Placemaking Playbook). This section is most heavily weighted in scoring and makes up 40% of the application points available. Use metrics to back up the need and impact if possible especially to address environmental justice.

IMPORTANT DATES:

September 2022 - Solicitations open
November 22, 2022 - Applications due
May 2023 - Awards expected to be announced

DON'T FORGET:

- A SAM.gov account is required
- *Unique Entity ID requirements have changed as of April 2022*
- A Grants.gov account is required

DOWN THE ROAD

- Build a coalition around the Brownfields effort and stagger applying for funding each year from a different entity to continue the efforts and maximize available funding (Each entity can only apply when awarded funding is not actively being used)
- Apply for RLF grant for cleanup efforts
 - Private entities can receive loans
 - Subgrants to public & nonprofit entities
- Apply for Cleanup grants (applicant owned)
 - Can include reuse planning
- Demo structures inventoried



4. Engage the Forest Service regarding Land acquisition

Trinity County is over 3,200 square miles however 76% land is owned by the government and cannot be used for private development. Another 14% is zoned for timber use or held in agricultural land conservation contracts and cannot be used for residential.

While the idea of working with the United States Forest Service on a land deal might sound like a non-starter, it is a very real possibility. While direct acquisition from the USFS isn't common, [the 1958 Townsite Act](#) authorizes the sale of land to counties and municipalities if the proposed end use is intended for community benefit.

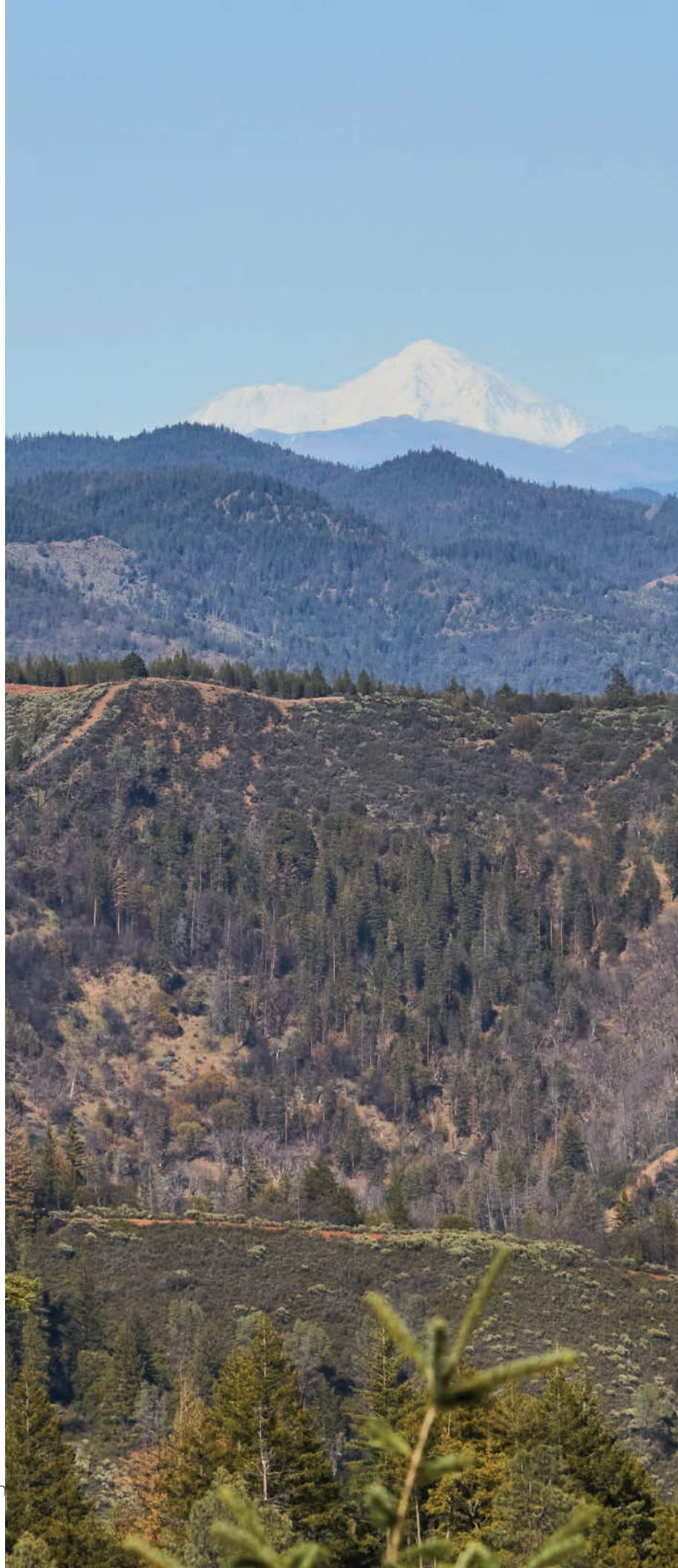
91% OF LAND IN TRINITY COUNTY IS EITHER GOVERNMENT OWNED, ZONED FOR TIMBER OR HELD IN AGRICULTURAL LAND CONSERVATION CONTRACTS

Per the USDA Forest Service
Code of Regulations:

§ 254.20 Purpose and scope.

(a) A Forest Service official may, upon application, **set aside and designate for townsite purposes up to 640 acres of National Forest System lands adjacent to or contiguous to an established community** in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming

(b) **National Forest System lands, needed by a community, may be sold under the Townsite Act**, for fair market value if those lands would serve indigenous community objectives that outweigh the public objectives and values of retaining the lands in Federal ownership. Indigenous community objectives may include space for housing and for service industries, expansion of existing economic enterprises, new industries utilizing local resources and skills, public schools, public health facilities, community parks, and other recreation areas for local citizens, but would exclude such uses as commercial enterprises or new industries and housing projects that would change the character of the local community.



BEST PRACTICES & RESOURCES

A request for purchase should be thoughtful, strategic, inclusive of environmentally responsible practice, and should be accompanied by a well-articulated plan. Chances for successful application will increase if:

- ▶ There is land upon which special uses are permitted on a permanent or recurring basis;
- ▶ There are mutually beneficial outcomes for all parties;
- ▶ There are demonstrable reasons why transfer of the land would better serve community objectives, outweighing those served if the land remained federal property
- ▶ There is strong political support for the proposed end use of the land

According to a report by the United States General Accounting Office the Townsite Act was used twice to acquire about 800 acres (nine parcels) of Forest Service land for community purposes between fiscal years 1991 through 2000.

BLM AND THE FOREST SERVICE, Federal Taxpayers Could Benefit More From Land Sales (2001). This report gives a thorough overview of how land acquisitions occurred under various key statutes during this decade, specific examples, how the land was priced, and competitive bidding or noncompetitive sale processes.

§ 254.21 APPLICATIONS

- (a) An application to purchase National Forest System lands -
 - (1) Must be made by designated officials) authorized to do business in the name of a county, city, or local governmental subdivision;
 - (2) May be in the form of a letter, ordinance, or resolution;
 - (3) Must be furnished to the District Ranger or the Forest Supervisor for the National Forest area in which the lands are situated; and
 - (4) Must be limited to 640 acres or less adjacent to an established community.
- (b) An application must be accompanied by -
 - (1) A description of the land desired; and
 - (2) A development plan, consisting of a narrative statement and map, which gives a detailed description of the intended use of the site and how essential community needs will be met by the purchase.

Review the full application and approval process as outlined in the [USDA Forest Service Code of Regulations](#)

WEST YELLOWSTONE, MONTANA

West Yellowstone, Montana is a small tourist community with access to abundant natural beauty and amenities, but with limited capacity for growth. The Town is surrounded by the Custer Gallatin National Forest and Yellowstone National Park, a recreation asset which contributes to the community's housing crisis by limiting development opportunities. In 2016, in effort to support critical housing and quality of life investment, the Town of West Yellowstone purchased 80 acres of vacant land from Custer-Gallatin National Forest. While the land purchase agreement was executed using a different, regionally-specific mechanism (Gallatin Land Consolidation Act), the successful transfer of land demonstrates growth potential for landlocked communities.

“THIS IS THE LAST TIME THE FOREST SERVICE IS GOING TO OFFER THIS LAND TO THE TOWN. IF WE DON'T BUY IT NOW, IN 10 YEARS WE WILL BE ASKING OURSELVES WHY WE DIDN'T.”

TOWN SIGNS HISTORIC LAND DEAL TO PURCHASE 80-ACRE PARCEL FROM NATIONAL FOREST

FEBRUARY 19, 2016 BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE



RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- **Contact a Specialist: Start by contacting the forest property and lands specialist in your area.**

Atlas recommends reaching out to [Cardell Johnson of the GAO office](#) to express interest in exploring land acquisition with the Forest Service and inquire if support might be available.

Cardell Johnson

oversees work on the federal government's management of public lands and water resources, including national parks and forests, mineral resources, coastal and marine resources, endangered species, and water supply.

*U.S. Government Accountability Office
Acting Director, Natural Resources and
Environment (NRE)*

johnsoncd1@gao.gov

(202) 512-3841

Areas of Expertise:

Federal lands, National parks, forests, and refuges, Mining and grazing, Oceans and fisheries, Water resources



5. Create a Countywide Revolving Loan Fund to pool resources and spur development and redevelopment

Housing construction costs have skyrocketed through the pandemic, exacerbating an already challenging situation: The cost to build does not equal the cost to rent or sell. An RLF is a public investment tool expected to result in community revitalization and economic growth. This gap financing tool which is typically used for small business expansion but can also be valuable to housing, reducing risk for developers, covering up front costs, and spurring development.

AN RLF IS A PUBLIC INVESTMENT TOOL EXPECTED TO RESULT IN COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.

BEST PRACTICES & RESOURCES

REVOLVING LOAN FUND

The RLF Committee is an essential facet of your program. It is considered a best practice and very beneficial to have a committee with diverse backgrounds to serve as a support structure. This provides well-rounded review and assistance in areas where staff may have minimal expertise. Plus, a committee made up of leaders in your community will help legitimize your program and can be a good source of connections when you are seeking new opportunities to reach local businesses or assistance with an underperforming loan. Most RLF committees include the members with the following backgrounds and expertise:

- Accountants
- Lawyers
- Bankers
- Educators
- Local business owners

It is important to help committee members understand the mission, the basic terminology, and the essential components of risk so that they can help successfully lead the program.

As part of this process, a “backbone” or leadership organization should be designated as the RLF Committee’s primary contact and be responsible for meeting logistics including schedule the meeting dates, times, and locations. This could either be Trinity County, the Chamber, or another entity.

RLF EXAMPLE #1

North West REC Community Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund

Created in 1995 to improve the quality of life in rural areas by contributing to long-term improvement in the local economy. Eligible Applicants include organizations involved in a community or economic development project that creates or saves jobs and/or provides needed community facilities that benefit rural areas (including housing). North West REC has made over \$8.32 million in low interest loans to more than 48 projects throughout northwest Iowa.

FISCAL AGENT – WHO MANAGES/ADMINISTERS THE FUNDS?

The RLF Committee can either form its own organization (i.e. non-profit 501c3 or a for-profit LLC) to manage these funds or contract with a third party to administer the financials. Regardless of who manages the funds, the RLF Committee needs to determine the basic parameters of the program including the loan size, equity requirements, maximum loan terms, interest rates and collateral requirements.

Program parameters could include:

- Loan Size: Up to \$30,000 per housing unit
- Equity Requirements: 80%
- Maximum Loans: Up to 6 housing units or \$180,000 per loan
- Interest Rates: 1%
- Terms: 10-year term with amortization scheduled up to 25-years
- Collateral Requirements: Collateral is required on financed assets. Additional collateral may also be required.

The fiscal agent will also be responsible for ongoing monitoring and servicing of the loans. Routine management of each loan—and the overall fund portfolio—often means the difference between a marginally performing fund and a successful one. Payment monitoring should be routine and followed on a weekly basis. Identifying a troubled loan before it becomes past due will increase the opportunity to begin remediation, whether in the form of additional assistance or increased monitoring. Loans that become past due face a difficult hurdle returning to current status. Being aware of problems and reporting them promptly demonstrates your understanding of the RLF's value and its importance to your funders and the greater community.

RLF EXAMPLE #2

The Santa Barbara Housing Trust Fund (HTF)

The Santa Barbara HTF operates a \$6.5 million dollar RLF launched in 2005 in partnership with community lenders to provide more low-cost loans to organizations seeking to develop affordable rental or homeownership projects. The RLF supports both urban infill and rural sites that have at least 25% of the units set to serve households earning between 0-120% AMI. The loan funds can be used for site acquisition, predevelopment costs, project construction, bridge financing, tax-credit projects, and permanent financing. In addition to assisting with financing of these affordable housing developments, the RLF also has the added benefit of coming with technical assistance for community groups interested in a potential project as well.

CAPITALIZING A REVOLVING LOAN FUND

Most revolving loan funds have at least one local public source for capitalization combined with other sources. If capitalization is exclusively local, the RLF may have greater flexibility in lending, as state and federal involvement tend to include restrictions that may not fit local business needs. State and local governments often use one or a combination of the following to capitalize an RLF:

- Tax set-asides
- General obligation bonds
- Direct appropriations from the state legislature
- Annual dues from participating counties or municipalities
- Funds directed from the state lottery

For the Trinity County Revolving Loan Fund, the committee could explore a scenario where funding would be split among Trinity County, private donations, local businesses, and the State of California. The first dollar in should be collected from the County as a show of good faith with local businesses and private donors to follow. With half the funding pledged, the State is more likely to support the loan fund. Once these first program partners have pledged their funds, the committee should approach the state with a formal request of funding to fully fund the program.

RLF EXAMPLE #3

Denver, Colorado, a \$10 million revolving loan fund

Denver, Colorado, a \$10 million revolving loan fund was launched in order to address the city's crisis of available housing. In 2015 there was a shortage of 26,000 affordable rental units. The RLF was started to support the development of multi-family rental units for individuals and families that earn up to 60% of the area median income (AMI). The Denver Office of Economic Development stated that the fund will initially provide loans for six to seven apartment projects totaling 800 to 1,000 units. The first of these seven developments – [Northfield Apartments](#) – provided 84 income-restricted units and opened in November 2016.

MARKETING

The commitment of a local entity to lead the marketing of the RLF to the county will be critical to its success. Once the program is up and running, having a strong web presence with routine updates of the most recent application materials and testimonials of existing participants is of the utmost importance. Connections should also be made with contractors and homebuilders throughout the region including builders associations and housing associations. These groups will be able to share the RLF program with their members and make them aware of the available benefits.

ANOTHER MARKETING AVENUE IS LOCAL BANKS AND CREDIT UNIONS. THIS MAY BE A BETTER PATH TOWARD CONNECTING WITH MORE LOCAL BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS INTERESTED IN THE PROGRAM.

Another marketing avenue is local banks and credit unions. This may be a better path toward connecting with more local builders and contractors interested in the program. Oftentimes, banks are unable to lend to non-qualifying borrowers due to a gap in financing. Their role in promoting the program may help them close a loan. Banks can also contribute to a revolving loan fund program and meet their Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) requirements to help meet the credit needs of the communities in which they operate, especially if the scope of your fund includes low- and moderate-income (LMI) neighborhoods.

For further information [the Council of Development Finance Agencies](#) **has excellent resources** on establishing, capitalizing, managing and administering Revolving Loan Funds. In addition they have excellent case studies, publications and training courses.

RLF EXAMPLE #4

The Northside Neighborhood Initiative (NNI)

The Northside Neighborhood Initiative (NNI) is a collaborative effort among Northside residents, the Jackson Center, Self-Help, UNC, the Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, as well as the area affordable housing agencies. Together, they work towards honoring the history of the Northside neighborhood while maintaining and strengthening its vibrant and diverse community fabric. Northside was highlighted in a previous blog post and how the initiative leveraged local anchor institutions to build their land bank model.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program

USDA provides grants to local utility organizations which use the funding to establish Revolving Loan Funds (RLF). Loans are made from the revolving loan funds to projects that will create or retain rural jobs. When the revolving loan fund is terminated, the grant is repaid to USDA.



6. Build resiliency, lead efforts in fireproof housing innovation

In conjunction with efforts to increase available housing options and expand usable land it is also critically important for Trinity County to protect what they already have.

With the increased occurrences and intensity of wildfires across the country, Trinity County has the opportunity to be a part of the solution by attracting entrepreneurs and encouraging local startups to explore fire prevention innovations.

**IT IS CRITICALLY
IMPORTANT FOR
TRINITY COUNTY TO
PROTECT WHAT THEY
ALREADY HAVE.**

IN THE PAST TWO DECADES, MANY STATES HAVE HAD RECORD CATASTROPHIC WILDFIRES BURNING MILLIONS OF ACRES, DISPLACING FAMILIES, DESTROYING HOMES, BUSINESSES AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

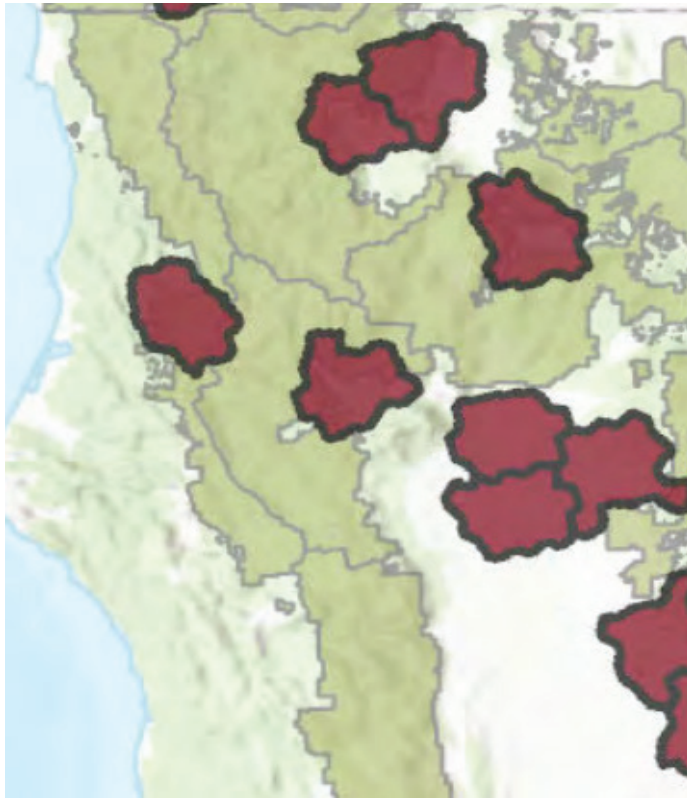
In the past two decades, many states have had record catastrophic wildfires burning millions of acres, displacing families, destroying homes, businesses and natural resources. According to USDA the running 5-year average number of structures destroyed by wildfires each year rose from 2,873 in 2014 to 12,255 in 2020 – a fourfold increase in just six years.

The additional unfortunate reality is that the increased cost of construction and materials, coupled with legislative and insurance restrictions often means rebuilding homes is impossible, or at least not financially viable. Protecting existing homes, reducing risk, and finding innovative solutions is more critical than ever.

Because of the national wildfire crisis, the Forest Service has recently launched a robust, 10-year strategy to squarely address this wildfire crisis in the places where it poses the most immediate threats to communities. **Confronting the Wildfire Crisis: A Strategy for Protecting Communities and Improving Resilience in America's Forests** combines a historic investment of congressional funding with years of scientific research and planning into a national effort that will dramatically increase the scale of forest health treatments over the next decade.

The strategy highlights new research on what Forest Service scientists identified as high risk “firesheds” – large, forested landscapes with a high likelihood that an ignition could expose homes, communities, infrastructure and natural resources to wildfire. The strategy also includes investments in fire-adapted communities and work to address post-fire risks, recovery and reforestation.

USDA Forest Services Partnerships



Trinity should continue to be a foreleader in fireproof building and technology. Trinity County has an advantage in the State as early adopters of [“Fire Adapted Community”](#) standards and practices. While many companies, individuals, and schools are beginning to take the threat of wildfires more seriously, the US still has a lot to learn in utilizing both fire-proof building materials and wildfire detection technologies.

In the past, fire safety strategies in wildfire-prone areas were limited to creating defensible space and while that is still an important step, many fire-prevention experts now state that full “home hardening” tactics are critical. Much of Trinity’s current housing stock is not fully

meeting home hardening standards, and is therefore at risk.

MUCH OF TRINITY’S CURRENT HOUSING STOCK IS NOT FULLY MEETING HOME HARDENING STANDARDS, AND IS THEREFORE AT RISK.

In addition, embracing new tech will prove that Trinity County is dedicated to resiliency. This is likely to also capture attention from a variety of interested funders, advocates, potential businesses and job-seekers. The potential benefits of this commitment include an increased population and strengthened workforce as people come to Trinity County to learn about fire-safe communities and work in the field of fire prevention.



Technology should be welcomed and tested in the community such as Wildfire Panoramic Cameras, Voice Evacuation Alerts, and Fire Fighting Robots. These technologies will protect existing homes and any new homes that may be built in the area. While wildfires may continue, Trinity County can become more equipped to protect its housing supply. Recognizing and embracing the rapid development of new technologies and building materials could potentially save thousands of lives and homes.

- Trinity County can build confidence and pride in by taking a proactive approach to ensuring homes are safe from the threat of wildfires.
- Innovative fire-resistant building technologies can help alleviate devastation to current housing stock and embracing building materials such as ICFs in future construction projects will build a more sustainable housing supply.
- Work with local community agencies, schools and libraries to distribute resources on home-hardening checklists could be valuable.
- Support this vision by creating and nurturing an ecosystem around fire prevention housing technology that will strengthen partnerships and continued growth.
- Explore a possible strategic partnership with The USDA Forest Service in conjunction with existing [Burnt Ranch Fire Resilient Community Project](#)

BEST PRACTICES & RESOURCES

BUILDING RESILIENCY - FIRE-RESISTANT HOUSING

Full list of resources available in the appendices

“Home hardening” is aimed at reducing a house’s risk of burning during a blaze and there’s evidence to suggest it works: A 2020 study from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners found that “structural modifications can reduce wildfire risk up to 40%, and structural and vegetation modifications combined can reduce wildfire risk up to 75%.” Emulate a cost-share program for Home-Hardening strategies to bring existing properties up to standard. [Yuba County](#) is a good example of steps that can be followed.

All new construction should utilize fire-resistant materials such as insulated concrete forms (ICFs) and a community initiative to work together to assess the county’s current properties against FAC guidelines. See this example: [Fireproof ICFs](#), in fires that destroyed more than 2,000 homes in Rancho Bernardo, Calif, a residence survived unscathed, thanks in large part to its fireproof ICF walls.

Another option is magnesium oxide SIPs. This [SIDCO home](#) has been built as a fire-resistant home with a clear vision to remove the fossil fuel from the housing building industry. The SIDCO home uses fire-resistant building material Magnesium Oxide SIPs, it is termite proof, mold proof, moisture resistant, and designed to reduce CO2 into the environment. Having a fire-safe housing community in California could become a huge advantage to attracting new residents.

Utilization and promotion of new fireproofing/fire fighting technology should be a focus in Trinity creating a fire resilient community. Invest, develop, and utilize tech such as [RS3](#), [LAFD’s firefighting robot](#) and see this article about [PANO AI](#), a tech startup that is making a difference in early detection of fires.

**STRUCTURAL MODIFICATIONS CAN REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK UP TO 40%,
AND STRUCTURAL AND VEGETATION MODIFICATIONS COMBINED CAN REDUCE
WILDFIRE RISK UP TO 75%.**

2020 study from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners



FIRE INSURANCE STANDARDS

Trinity County Fire Safe Council should also be taking steps to create a marketing campaign focused on bringing awareness to unjust insurance standards. California is currently working against unfair insurance rules that do not properly account for home-hardening efforts. Trinity could lead the way in raising awareness and encouraging legislation that makes homeowners insurance in fire-prone communities both accessible, fair, and affordable. In addition, homeowners who have gone “above and beyond” to mitigate wildfire risk on their properties, should receive incentives or tax cuts.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Access to funding is often regarded as one of the greatest barriers to economic and community development efforts. Below are methods and funding opportunities that other land banks in the U.S. have utilized to further support their efforts of revitalizing their existing housing supply.

California Climate Investments Wildfire Prevention Grants Program

Several types of grants available including Wildfire Prevention and Wildfire Prevention Planning. CAL FIRE's Wildfire Prevention Grants Program provides funding for fire prevention projects and activities in and near fire threatened communities that focus on increasing the protection of people, structures, and communities. Funded activities include hazardous fuels reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education with an emphasis on improving public health and safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Forest Health Research Program

The CAL FIRE Forest Health Research Program supports scientific studies that provide critical information and tools to forest landowners, resource agencies, fire management organizations and policy makers across California on a variety of topics related to forest health and management.

The Forest Stewardship Program and California's Forest Improvement Program (CFIP)

The California Forest Stewardship Program was created to encourage good stewardship of California's private forestland. The program provides technical information and assistance to landowners to promote sound forest management, and assists communities in solving forest-related issues.

Rural Fire Capacity (RFC) Grant

The Rural Fire Capacity (RFC) Program is a Federally-funded grant program that allows California to provide local and rural fire departments with minor firefighting, training, communications and safety equipment for their volunteer firefighters.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers and non-industrial forest managers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits. Provides agricultural producers and non-industrial forest managers with financial resources and one-on-one help to plan and implement improvements. Prescribed goat grazing is included in the projects allowed

California Fire Foundation

The California Fire Foundation (CFF) offers grant opportunities to fire departments, firefighter associations and community-based organizations whose vital projects focus on keeping Californians, our state's communities and first responders safe! Offers direct support for grantees actively serving high fire threat and/or under-resourced communities in regions throughout the state.

Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program

Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program aims to categorically shift the federal focus away from reactive disaster spending and toward research-supported, proactive investment in community resilience. Examples of BRIC projects are ones that demonstrate innovative approaches to partnerships, such as shared funding mechanisms, and/or project design.

For example, an innovative project may bring multiple funding sources or in-kind resources from a range of private and public sector partners. Or an innovative project may offer multiple benefits to a community in addition to the benefit of risk reduction.

State Fire Assistance Grants

The selected projects help California communities respond to the growing concern over a catastrophic wildfire and exemplify efforts to create fire-adapted communities. Through subgrants from CFSC, these projects provide support to implement fuel reduction projects such as community chipper programs, fuel breaks, and roadside and defensible space projects. These projects will also utilize educational tools to spread the Fire Safe message and engage community members.

INSPIRATION

After a tornado demolished Greensburg, Kansas [population 900] killing 12 people and leveling 95% of the city it made a priority to rebuild green without carbon emissions. Can its lessons help communities and economies rebound from fires, hurricanes and covid-19? It now gets 100 percent of its electricity from a small windfarm, all of its buildings are energy efficient, it uses rainwater for irrigation and Greensburg became the first city in the country to require all its municipal buildings to be LEED-certified.

While this example is about a devastating tornado, this is an excellent example of a community rethinking environmental solutions and sustainability.

“WE TRIED TO APPROACH IT IN A PRACTICAL WAY, NOT TREE-HUGGER GREEN, BUT ECONOMIC GREEN. RAMMING STUFF DOWN PEOPLE’S THROATS – ESPECIALLY IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD – DOESN’T WORK.”

JOHN JANSSEN Former Greensburg City Council President

THE TOWN THAT BUILT BACK GREEN

THE WASHINGTON POST, 2020

FOUR CENTS

Our 2 cents based off of your 2 cents

AMBASSADORS

Create a Housing Ambassadors Community Outreach Program

Every community has unique assets to be part of the housing solution and a one size fits all approach will not be viable across the entire county. Additionally, getting the word out about available initiatives, programs, and resources is both critical and difficult to do when residents get information in such a vast variety of ways.

One tried and true approach is good old fashioned person to person communication. Building a Community and Regional Housing Ambassadors coalition of residents from across the county who are interested in housing solutions could be a tremendous resource. There are a number of ways this could be accomplished and it does not need to be formal or expensive. It is recommended this group could meet once a quarter or bi-annually.

- ▶ **Serve as a volunteer liaison between the county and local community adding capacity and ensuring local solutions meet up with countywide goals**
- ▶ **Work with residents to identify existing community assets, resources, and opportunities to inform community specific goals and build local wealth**
- ▶ **Ensure solutions have local buy-in, are informed by, and benefit both existing and future residents. This ensures grassroots efforts are carefully partnered with grassroots support for viable change.**
- ▶ **Great opportunity for new leadership! Reach out to residents who are well connected locally and talk with a lot of people daily - real estate agents, bankers, bar tenders, hair stylists**



OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO “FIND LAND”

Explore existing assets already on the books

When looking for ways to get creative about “finding land” - don’t forget to look in your own backyard. According to the annual budget report, Trinity County currently owns \$100M in land listed under capital assets. While most of the parcels are likely being used there are many sites that are not. Feedback suggests that several of these properties are in flood zones and/or mine-scarred and all sites were environmentally evaluated a few years ago and unsuitable for affordable housing projects at the time.

With all the current brownfields funding and resources available, now is the perfect time for the County to assess, and inventory these properties for clean up efforts to get these properties back into active use.

[Trinity County GIS Data Portal](#)

PARTNERSHIPS

The best housing programs do not work solo but develop strategic partnerships with nonprofits, community organizations, lenders, and local governments – all working in a collective effort. At a minimum, the following organizations should be substantially engaged in the Trinity County Housing efforts. Together, as a coalition, the leaders from these organizations should determine who else needs to be involved and what their role should be to advance collective priorities, programs and initiatives, and significant projects.

ORGANIZATION	POTENTIAL ROLE
Trinity County	Provide leadership in efforts, building partnerships and securing funding. Lead or find partners for Land Bank initiative and provide support
Trinity County Board of Supervisors	Provide guidance in adopting a land bank ordinance and financial support to the proposed programs
Trinity County Treasurer – Tax Collector	Handles delinquent taxes, seizure and sale of defaulted assets. Potential lead partner in Land Bank replacing tax defaulted land auctions.
Local Banks	Lenders for ADUs and JADUs mortgage options. Using mortgage offerings can also help address Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) or environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals as ADUs can further support wealth building for individuals with low- and moderate-income as well as support affordable rental solutions.
United States Forest Service	Serve as potential partner (at minimum, seller) in the pursuit of property acquisition
Center for Creative Land Recycling	EPA’s Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) provider for Region 9 and 10 including California. Can assist in application of brownfields assessment grants and cleanup efforts at no cost to the county.

ORGANIZATION

POTENTIAL ROLE

Trinity County Fire Safe Council

[Trinity County Fire Safe Council](#) has done work to improve the safety of local communities and should be embraced as a leader in securing housing safety in the future.

Trinity has already taken efforts to mitigate the risks of wildfires through the controlled burn plans and the Community Wildfire Protection Plan but still, homes are at risk and residents are nervous.

Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

FAC Net exists to support and connect people and communities working on wildfire resilience. It offers community-based leaders resources, tools and connections to reduce their wildfire risk and increase community resilience. FAC Net is a catalyst for spreading fire adaptation practices and innovations nationwide.

In addition the following groups should be involved and provide input to what is implemented:

- [Local employers](#)
- [Chambers and other community organizations](#)
- [Rental Property Owners/ Property Managers](#)
- [Non profit organizations](#)

ADDITIONAL HOUSING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

STATE FUNDING

The Department of Housing and Community Development for the State of California has a number of funding opportunities that Trinity County could tap into. First, the department offers the [Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program](#) (AHSC), which provides grants and/or loans for projects that work to increase accessibility to affordable housing, employment centers, etc. Trinity County could access these funds through the Rural Innovation Project Areas (RIPA) and utilize them to increase the number of affordable housing units in the county.

The [CalHome Program](#) provides grants to local public agencies and nonprofit corporations for first-time homebuyers and housing rehabilitation assistance, homebuyer counseling and technical assistance activities to enable low- and very low-income households to become or remain homeowners. Activities can include deferred-payment loans for down payment assistance, self-help mortgage assistance, and rehabilitation on homes, such as manufactured homes.

FEDERAL FUNDING

The [HOME Investment Partnerships Program](#) provides grant funding to communities working to create affordable housing for low-income households. These funds could be used to build, buy, and/or renovate affordable housing for rent or homeownership. This program provides flexibility on activities and implementation in order to tailor the impact to meet the community's needs. However, this program does require matching funds from participating jurisdictions.

U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
[The Community Development Block Grant](#) (CDBG) Program provides annual grants on a formula basis to states, cities, and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

USDA [Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants](#) provides loans to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their homes or grants to elderly very-low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards. California is currently participating in a pilot program that increases the program limits. Grants are available up to \$10,000 and loans are available up to \$40,000 with a maximum of \$50,000 in assistance.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

The key trend and challenge for Workforce Development that were identified in the quantitative and qualitative research conducted for Trinity County's Community Assessment is reflected in the following statement:

Trinity County struggles to retain and attract top talent due to lack of education, job diversity, housing, low wages, limited broadband access, and an aging population.

While some programs and resources exist, the county lacks a collective workforce development ecosystem.

In response to this key trend and challenge, the following strategic opportunities areas for Trinity County emerged.

GOALS

- Identify existing assets and gaps in the workforce ecosystem
- Build a coalition of stakeholders to strengthen ecosystem
- Train existing workforce for new industries and opportunities
- Expand County workforce and capacity

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

In response to this key trend and challenge, the following strategic opportunity areas for Trinity County emerged.

- 1.** Map existing assets and resources, identify gaps for opportunity development
- 2.** Expand specialized training and education around key industries
- 3.** Skill up existing population to meet current, future and remote work needs

STRATEGIES AT A GLANCE

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY	CHALLENGE	GOAL	TIMELINE
Map Workforce Assets, gaps and opportunities	Limited opportunities, lack of awareness of existing programs, geographic location	Build a coalition, increase collaboration, expand opportunities and accessibility	Short/ Medium
Skill up population	Low educational attainment, lack of higher education	A trained and skilled workforce to meet existing and future industry needs	Medium/ Long
Expand specialized training and education	limited continued education opportunities	Create expanded opportunities around key industries	Medium/ Long



STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Detailed description per concept below

1. Map existing workforce assets and resources, identify gaps for opportunity development

To create an integrated workforce ecosystem it's important to first identify the existing assets in community based organizations, programs, networks and geographic location/accessibility. Additionally local culture plays an important role in the success of creating and supporting an innovative workforce system. Building an asset map will help to paint a picture of gaps or opportunities for expansion.

It is recommended that a representative from each group working in this space, or other stakeholders meet on a quarterly or bi-annual basis for check-ins. Each group can present their top priorities for the upcoming quarter, and goals for the

future year. This creates more opportunities for cross collaboration and identifying partnerships, in addition to good networking.

This is a simple, organic approach to strengthening the workforce ecosystem through regular purposeful communication. Because of geographic challenges this event could easily be hosted by Zoom but it would be ideal for the group to get together at least once a year in person, ideally in a different location each time.

A further step would be an online public resource as a go-to site for information and connections. An excellent example would be [WAM! - Colorado Springs Workforce Asset Map](#) a free, well designed, online tool that helps job seekers, employers, and students identify and easily access local workforce-related resources.

The following is a starting draft of what an asset map could look like.

Employment Skills & Job Training	Smart Business Resource Center	Weaverville
	CalWORKs (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids)	Weaverville, Hayfork, Mad River
	Trinity County Health & Human Services – Employment Services	Weaverville, Hayfork
Apprenticeship Services	(None listed on Apprenticeship.gov)	
	The Laborers' Apprenticeship Program (Brick & Plaster) – Northern California Laborers Training Center	Trinity County
	Pre-Apprenticeship Program: Construction – Smart Business Resource Center	Weaverville
	State of California – Department of Industrial Relations	

Job Placement	Smart Business Resource Center	Weaverville
	CalWORKs	Weaverville, Hayfork, Mad River
	Trinity County Health & Human Services – Employment Services	Weaverville, Hayfork
Universities, Colleges	Shasta College : Trinity Campus	Weaverville
Post Secondary Institutions	Smart Business Resource Center	Weaverville
Targeted services	Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act – Northern California Indian Development Council –Includes wrap around services	*Services Trinity County from Eureka, CA
Re-entry Programs	CalWORKs	Weaverville, Hayfork, Mad River
Military	Trinity County Veterans Services	Weaverville
Employer Services	Smart Business Resource Center	Weaverville
Youth Resources	Smart Business Resource Center	Weaverville

Summer Job Placement

[Hayfork Youth Conservation Crew \(HYCC\) – The Watershed Center](#)

Hayfork

Shasta-Trinity National Forest,
[U.S. Forest Service – Youth Opportunities*](#)

**Various service industry locations*

Youth Job Training

[Trinity Alps School District](#)

Weaverville

[Trinity County Health & Human Services - Employment Services](#)

Weaverville

[Human Response Network](#)

Weaverville

**Transitional Services for Youth (in foster care*)*

Pre-apprenticeship Program:
Construction – [Smart Business Resource Center](#)

Weaverville

Wrap Around Services

[Smart Business Resource Center](#)

Weaverville

[CalWORKs](#)

Weaverville, Hayfork,
Mad River

[Trinity County Health & Human Services – Employment Services](#)

Weaverville,
Hayfork
Weaverville

[Human Response Network](#)

IDENTIFIED GAPS

After a review of existing resources available to Trinity County, it appears there are some potential gaps in meeting the region's workforce needs.

- Technical; Specialty Institutions
- Seminary; Theological Institutions
- Workforce Advocacy
- Special Needs Employment
- Workforce Support



2. Expand specialized training and education around key industries

Trinity County offers unique assets that can be leveraged in workforce development to train local populations to meet existing and future employer needs as well as possibly become a magnet for education tourism. To further expand education and training opportunities work with schools and employers to expand internships, mentorship programs, apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeship opportunities.

TOURISM

Outdoor recreation is already clearly a huge driver of local tourism and attractor to potential residents but it could be easily scaled up creating further opportunities in travel and hospitality.

In 2019, the travel industry was responsible for over 1.2 million jobs in California. In recent decades, this industry has experienced continued growth and has become one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors globally with many direct and indirect benefits to communities:

- ▶ **Direct** - total spending within a particular area on tourism and activities for work or leisure.
- ▶ **Indirect** - investment, purchase of goods and services by sectors dealing directly with tourists (ex: purchases of cleaning services by short term lodging)

Healthy, active tourism boosts the economy, creates jobs, encourages small business growth, and strengthens local culture by identification and promotion of a shared identity. In addition, tourism provides pathways into the workforce for young adults and persons without higher education (The U.S. Travel Association).

Trinity County can leverage existing tourism based on outdoor recreation by identifying opportunities for partnership and collaboration, coordinating programming and resources for small businesses and entrepreneurs, and working with regional schools to create new educational offerings in hospitality and travel.

THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY IS ONE OF THE TOP 10 LARGEST EMPLOYERS OF MIDDLE-CLASS WAGE EARNERS IN THE U.S.

Of the 6.1 million Americans working part time while pursuing higher education in 2018, more than half were employed in travel-related industries.

Experience in travel fosters entrepreneurship and grows small businesses. The skills gained through travel industry employment inspire entrepreneurship, particularly for women.

Made in America: Travel's Contribution to Workforce Development and Career Advancement - *U.S. Travel Association*



CURVY ROAD KEGGED WINES

Owner Lisa Barrow relocated her business to Hayfork when it was struggling and is now growing and thriving as a favorite spot among locals and a destination for tourists. Curvy Roads specializes in handcrafted bubbly wine made from small mountain vineyards and partner with other complimentary local businesses for cross promotion and value add. Their scenic location hosts various social events including artist workshops, live performances, yoga and weddings/ private events. Curvy Roads is an excellent example of a business that truly serves the community as a part of the social infrastructure while also providing a unique and vibrant tourist destination.

TOURISM EXAMPLES

PATHFINDER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL IN PALMER, MA.

This high school [hospitality management program](#) teaches students career fundamentals and equips them with the certifications businesses need in their employees, including those from (OSHA) and ServSafe.

Businesses in Pathfinder's communities are taking an active role in the program's success by organizing work-based learning opportunities where students in the Co-op Education Program spend alternating weeks of full-time, paid employment and academic classes back at the school. Demand for these co-op students generally exceeds supply, and the participating companies receive a return on their investment through a better prepared pool of future applicants.

THE NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION'S PROSTART PROGRAM

A two-year, industry-backed culinary arts and restaurant management program for high school students. Students learn practical skills, work with a professional mentor, and finish the program ready to join the workforce and make an immediate impact in restaurants and foodservice. The program reaches approximately 145,000 students in nearly 1,800 schools in all 50 states, Washington, DC, and the Territory of Guam.

CANNABIS

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that, by 2025, the legal marijuana industry will support 1.5 million to 1.75 million jobs in the U.S., a more than four-fold increase in the sector's current employment totals.

As a part of the Emerald Triangle, cannabis is a deep part of the Trinity County story. The area has long-established cultivators and a wealth of intellectual property, skills, expertise, and knowledge on the growth and sale of this crop. Unofficial estimates show the county's cannabis-related employment dwarfing all other local job sectors.

Trinity County has an opportunity to embrace this identity and carve out a truly unique angle capitalizing on an elevated cannabis experience focused on health and wellness:

Trinity County is good for your mind, body and soul.

Efforts to associate the county's crop with a geographic indicator or appellation of origin model (similar to wine and spirits) could brand Trinity County cannabis as a top-shelf strain in dispensaries around the world. Further leveraging this brand could make for truly unique, specialized cannabis education and training opportunities.

There are now over 100+ cannabis degrees and courses offered at universities and educational institutions across the country such as; business, law, production, science, chemistry, and biology.

These types of innovative training programs would appeal to a wide variety of the population including traditional students seeking internships and fellowships, as well as professionals looking for a career change. Additionally, programs paired with the Emerald Triangle legacy would likely become a magnet for education tourism.

EXAMPLE: CBD is now well known for a variety of health and wellness benefits from relieving chronic pain, to reducing stress and anxiety and can be found in countless products. CBD products and services are fully mainstream and have popped up everywhere at luxury spas and resorts.

8 U.S. Hotels With CBD Spa Treatments Worth Traveling For, Travel + Leisure (September 2021)

Trinity County could work with local partners such as the Shasta School of Cosmetology and Shasta Community College, Dept of Business & Hospitality, in establishing a CBD spa and resort where students learn real life skills while guests get pampered and enjoy their stay in Trinity County. Additionally, the school could work with local cultivators and businesses to establish a “farm-to-table” model where products are locally grown/made.

Encouraging and supporting development of businesses surrounding this industry could spur growth such as:

- Spas specializing in CBD massage, pedicures
- Breweries, wineries or distilleries with CBD-infused products
- Hotels and short term lodging amenities
- Boutiques focused on specialty CBD products
- Speciality agricultural tours centered around these local assets

INSPIRATION

Dodi Blunts, the cannabis brand created by NFL star Marshawn Lynch, has teamed up with the Last Prisoner Project, a nonprofit dedicated to criminal justice reform for people with marijuana-related convictions, to launch a new apprenticeship program.

The 90 day paid program is designed to help justice-impacted individuals take their first step back into working society by offering mentoring, skill assessments, training and hands-on customized experience needed for a career in the cannabis industry.

“WE’RE FOCUSING ON THE FIRST STEPPING STONE BACK INTO SOCIETY AND HELPING PEOPLE WHEN THEY’RE AT THEIR MOST VULNERABLE AND NEED THE MOST HELP.”

JEFF GOLDENBERG co-founder of 2nd and Goal Ventures

MARSHAWN LYNCH LAUNCHES APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM FOR FORMER POT PRISONERS

GREEN ENTREPRENEUR, AUGUST 2021



CANNABIS EXAMPLES

UFCW APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS SET TO STRENGTHEN UNION CANNABIS JOBS (2021)

The UFCW's JATC cannabis apprenticeship programs, from seed to sale, will train workers and set the standards nationally for the industry. These programs will also help to ensure that cannabis jobs mean living wage jobs, pathways to advancement, and equity, especially for marginalized communities. They are developing a core curriculum that locals can use, add to, and change for their region. Along with the core curriculum, the union is also applying for accreditation so their apprentices can earn certificates and continuing education credits that can count toward college transfer credits.

"Cannabis workers care deeply about the product that they work with and deliver to the public—and every cannabis worker knows that training is key... Apprenticeship and training builds justice into the foundation of the cannabis industry."

OP-ED | WHY CANNABIS WORKERS ARE CHOOSING THE UFCW (2022)

When people think of union careers, they think factories, meat packing plants, and grocery stores. They think of the electrical workers, iron workers, and their path from an apprenticeship to a lifelong career. Now, there is a new wave of workers in the United States paving the way **in a new industry, with its own pathway from apprenticeship program to career: cannabis.**



ADDITIONAL APPRENTICESHIP EXAMPLES

Logging Academy: HCC offers a Logging Academy Program in partnership with Mississippi Logging Association and Mississippi Forestry Commission. The academy is an 8 to 16-week program designed to equip students with little or no experience to become a logging equipment operator with safety certifications as well as Professional Logging Manager (PLM) status.

Mechatronics Apprenticeship Program: This training Program's curriculum is designed to enhance and prepare an apprentice to be fully qualified in multiple aspects of advanced manufacturing technology. The two-year commitment provides both technical classroom instruction and on-the-job training using an earn-while-you-learn model with training costs covered completely by the employer. Once assigned to an employer, apprentices earn a paycheck while learning on-the-job. Apprentices alternate between eight weeks of classroom work and eight weeks at their chosen company for the duration of the program. Participants in the program gain experience in a wide range of core competencies including motor controls, basic machining (mill, lathe, drilling, tapping, etc.), blueprint reading, functions of electrical and electronic systems, and much more.

- Partners include GNO Inc., Northshore Technical Community College, Nunez Community College, Delgado Community College, Elmer Chocolate, Laitram, and Zatarain's.
- For more information, check out [this video overview of the program.](#)



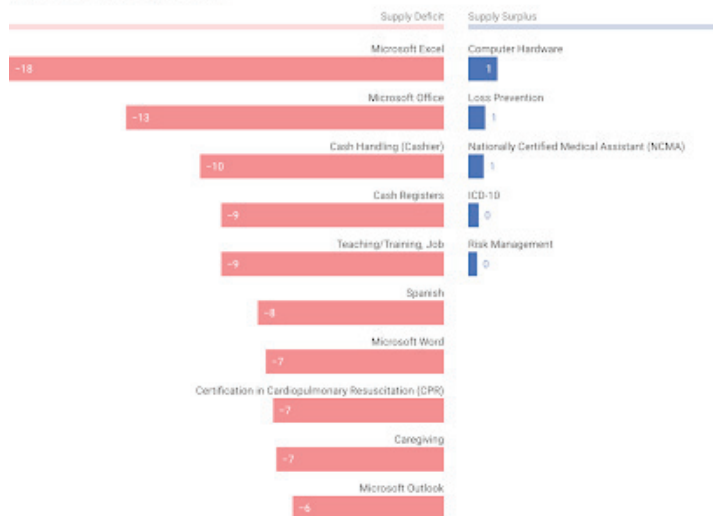
3. Skill up existing population to meet current, future and remote work needs

Just like mapping available workforce assets is important, identifying candidate skills across all occupations and comparing to local employer needs via current job postings can help identify targeted training opportunities that are needed to skill up today's workforce in Trinity County.

The following chart highlights the existing gap of skill sets in Trinity County (left columns). It ranges from technological training (Microsoft) to cash handling to certification-required skill sets. These are all skills that the Trinity County population could receive training in in order to gain employment requiring these skills.

Skill Gaps

Total - All Occupations, Trinity County, CA

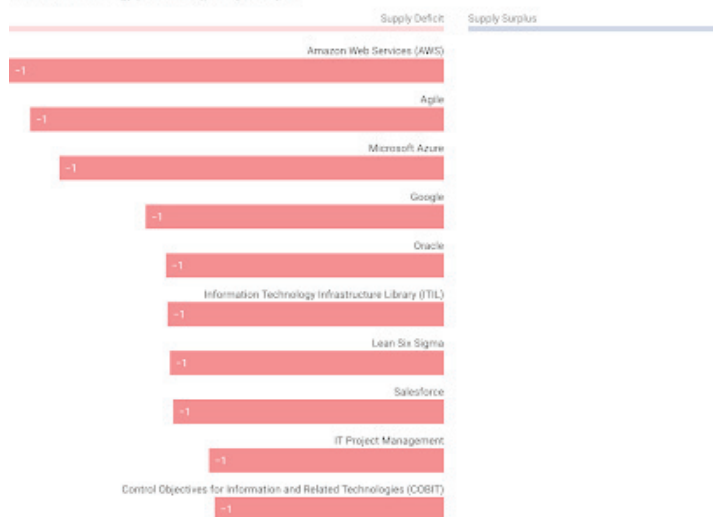


Source: JobSkill
Data as of 2022/21, openings and candidate sample compiled in August 2021

Upon further research into each of these skills, the combined skill set of Microsoft Excel, Office, Word, and Outlook is needed specifically for jobs related to general managers, bookkeeping/accounting, office clerks, and general business operations within Trinity County. There is also a deficiency in cashiers, fast food, and retail workers that require cash handling skills.

Skill Gaps

Information Technology (CTE Cluster), Trinity County, CA



Source: JobSkill
Data as of 2022/21, openings and candidate sample compiled in August 2021

Lastly, Trinity County has a deficiency in teaching/training related to firefighting, office clerks, correctional officers, and police/sheriff patrol officers. This is an area where targeted training could be provided to fill the existing gap.

In terms of skill sets related to information technology-related jobs, this graph outlines skill deficiencies in the Trinity County population. Many of these skills could be learned through strategic training rather than traditional educational programs (undergrad or graduate courses). This is where targeted program development in Trinity would be useful in order

to make residents more competitive for jobs in the professional, scientific, and technical services industries, which are typically high-paying career paths.

Various education and training opportunities are available at the SMART Center and Shasta College, however many local residents don't seem to know much about what exists. A countywide effort to market these programs would be beneficial in addition to exploring partnerships around the county for more accessibility outside of Weaverville. Perhaps a mobile unit or pop-up training in different regions of the county to remove transportation barriers.

FOUR CENTS

Our 2 cents based off of your 2 cents

COUNTY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS / PROFESSIONAL IN RESIDENCE

In feedback it was shared that the County has a hard time competing for workforce due to a variety of challenges including lower wages than neighboring counties and lack of housing. At the time of visioning sessions there were more than 50+ open positions available with the county. It was also reported that turnover is typically high and it is not uncommon for workers to only stay with the county for a year or two.

If this is a consistent challenge it might be worth the county embracing a strategy geared toward termed timeframes such as fellowships or “professionals in residence”. This makes the job a time specific commitment, reduces wasted HR time, consistently brings new ideas and perspectives to the community, as well as increases the likelihood that a fellow will choose to stay after their commitment.

Many colleges and universities offer professionals in residence, and there are countless artist in residence programs available, many with multi-year waiting lists. Many offer a small stipend, hosted housing (*ADU's would work great!*) or funding towards housing, have clear expectations of the role, usually involve community education and a capstone project, as well as the flexibility to pursue individual projects, research, or interests.

It is additionally important to remember that job seekers are looking at communities as a whole.

If Trinity County was a product, would you buy it?

In a post pandemic economy and amidst the great resignation, it is arguable that the majority of the country's workforce now prioritizes flexibility, well being, happiness, and overall quality of life more than income, stability and traditional benefits.

If Trinity County can't compete in dollars it certainly can offer a number of things that are hard to find in other places and pair with benefits that don't have to cost additional dollars. Trinity County should lead the way in fostering a culture of true work/life balance with an emphasis on wellness and recreation, enjoying all the natural resources the area has to offer.

“The pandemic has ultimately shifted Americans' mindset on how they want to live, work, and play: all things that will reshape the economy.”

- Business Insider (2021)



PUTTING THE *LIFE* IN WORK/LIFE BALANCE

TRINITY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

VISITTRINITY.COM

RECRUIT AND SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURS IN INNOVATIVE AND STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS THAT MEET COUNTY PRIORITIES SUCH AS “GOATSCAPING”

When thinking about opportunities in local business development, don't be afraid to think outside the box. While goats might be everyone's favorite petting zoo animal, they are proving their worth in a variety of ways that could greatly benefit Trinity County immensely. Goat rental businesses can provide a variety of jobs to: botanists, restoration ecologists, arborists, goatherds, livestock dog trainers, landscape crews and even in the hospitality industry.

Goatscaping or goat grazing is a proven tactic in mitigating wildfires in California by clearing overgrown brush. Goats are used to suppress non-native grasses and effectively manage the fire fuel load. They consume the unwanted vegetation, leaving behind cleared terrain which reduces the amount of plant materials that are considered fire fuel. Another benefit to promoting goats is that cutting vegetation with machines or hand tools leaves behind downed biomass (which is fast fuel as it dries out). In addition, these tools and heavy equipment have historically been known to start fires with a single rogue spark while removing brush.

A goat rental business is a sustainable career for any interested developer. Check out [Sage Environmental Group](#) as a great example.



Goats have the chance to not only mitigate forest fires, but offer tourism opportunities as well. Goat tourism is strangely popular and goat hotels and [goat yoga](#) are fun trending destinations for tourists looking for a quirky spot to stay. AirBNB is now even promoting “Animal” experiences and stays, so there is a large market for hotels and accommodations that have an [interactive animal experience](#).

A goat-themed restaurant (think cat cafe but with goats) could complete the experience and bring new visitors to Trinity County. Many goat rental companies offer educational tours of their goat grazing lands featuring their herds and livestock guardian dogs. Another idea is to retire older goats to a petting zoo experience.

Opportunities like this could qualify for a grant to start focusing on [workforce development in the field of goat grazing in forested lands](#) OR [Wildfire prevention here](#).

Goat Business Examples:

- ▶ <https://sageenvironmentalgroup.com/company/>
- ▶ <https://goatseatweeds.com/>
- ▶ <https://modernfarmer.com/2018/02/goat-yoga-goat-hotel-goatel/>

PARTNERSHIPS

Examples of organizations that should be involved in Trinity County's workforce development efforts include, but are not limited to the following. Together, as a coalition, the leaders from these organizations should determine who else needs to be involved and what their role should be to advance collective priorities, programs and initiatives, and significant projects.

- **Trinity County**
- **Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC)**
- **Trinity County Health & Human Services – Employment Services**
- **Smart Business Resource Center**
- **Trinity County Visitors and Development Bureau**
- **CalWorks**
- **Chambers - Trinity County, Weaverville, Hayfork**
- **Shasta College**
- **Local Businesses, organizations/ employers**
- **Trinity Alps School District**
- **Trinity County Ag Alliance**
- **Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity National Forest**
- **The Laborers' Apprenticeship Program (Brick & Plaster) – Northern California Laborers Training Center**
- **Trinity County Veterans Services**
- **State of California – Department of Industrial Relations**
- **Hayfork Youth Conservation Crew (HYCC) – The Watershed Center**
- **Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act – Northern California Indian**
- **Development Council**
- **Visit Trinity**

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM

U.S. DEPT. OF LABOR

The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) is a nationally-directed, locally-administered program of services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents. Career Services and Training grant recipients help farmworkers and their dependents acquire necessary skills to either stabilize or advance in their agricultural jobs or obtain employment in new industries.

NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANTS

U.S. DEPT. OF LABOR

Discretionary grants to provide resources to states and other eligible applicants to respond to large, unexpected layoff events causing significant job losses. This funding is intended to temporarily expand capacity to serve dislocated workers.

RE-ENTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

U.S. DEPT. OF LABOR

Provides funding for justice-involved youth and young adults and adults who were formerly incarcerated.

FOREIGN LABOR CERTIFICATION

U.S. DEPT OF LABOR

Application for Visa program. The foreign labor certification process is the responsibility of the employer, not the employee.

PROMISE NEIGHBORHOODS PROGRAM

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY

Goal to significantly improve the academic and developmental outcomes of children living in the most distressed communities of the United States, including ensuring school readiness, high school graduation, and access to a community-based continuum of high-quality services.

REVITALIZATION & QUALITY OF LIFE



ATLAS
community studios



REVITALIZATION & QUALITY OF LIFE OVERVIEW

The key trend and challenge for Revitalization and Quality of Life that were identified in the quantitative and qualitative research conducted for Trinity County's Community Assessment is reflected in the following statement:

Residents deeply love Trinity County but feel it is stuck expressing frustration of divisiveness, a lack of cohesive vision, no shared identity, or roadmap for the future.

In response to this key trend and challenge, the following strategic opportunities areas for Trinity County emerged.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

In response to this key trend and challenge, the following strategic opportunity areas for Trinity County emerged.

BUILD TEAM TRINITY

When asked how residents would describe Trinity County today, the results were fairly devastating. Despite challenges, one thing is certain: People love their places. Residents deeply love Trinity County for a wide variety of reasons and see endless opportunity but feel disheartened. The good news is that residents still held onto hope for the future and that should be harnessed for meaningful action.

Notable quotes from visioning sessions included:

"We need to remind ourselves who we are. We are RESILIENT."
"This place is very special. This is a place I want to protect."

Invite a coalition of local leaders, existing and newly identified to come together, learn more about their place, what makes it special, and how to support it. Their specific projects as a team can and should be established together, however overarching goals should be:

- ▶ **Be a connector bringing people TOGETHER for positive change**
- ▶ **Commit to care about the future of the county and communities individually and as a whole**
- ▶ **Bring positive energy and share optimism for the future**
- ▶ **Lead local marketing efforts to tell Trinity's story and celebrate its wins**
- ▶ **Provide public educational and social activities for positive connections and learning opportunities**
- ▶ **Lead calls to action for community support of place based initiatives**

Just like housing ambassadors this group should get together on a regular basis, ideally quarterly to share updates, wins and be in the loop about all things Trinity. This group should be thought of as the inner circle and public cheer squad. One easy way to keep the group engaged is to send email alerts, and create a private facebook group, where good news can be shared quickly and easily asking them to push it out as well.

EXPANDED ARTS AND CULTURE

Arts and culture strengthen the fabric of communities, helping neighbors feel more connected and included.

In 2010, [Gallup and the Knight Foundation found](#) “*empirical evidence that the drivers that create emotional bonds between people and their community are consistent in virtually every city and can be reduced to just a few categories. Interestingly, the usual suspects — jobs, the economy and safety — are not among the top drivers. Rather, people consistently give higher ratings for elements that relate directly to their daily quality of life.*”

Cultural landscape and local amenities are often critical elements when people consider relocating to, or staying in a place. The arts are one of the top five drivers attracting people to communities.

Access to arts and culture have been proven in numerous studies to improve local health, safety, wellbeing. Additionally, there is a strong link between the creative industries in a community and that community’s economic development, job recruitment and tourism.

Trinity County is fortunate to have a small but mighty existing arts community with tremendous energy and opportunity for growth.

Established local organizations such as The Highland Art Center and Trinity Arts Council as well as local galleries Main Street Gallery and Highland Arts Center could take the county’s arts sector to the next level.

Options for this include cheaper living costs as people look to leave larger areas for more economic space. Establishing artist live-work spaces would create the benefit of both new housing stock and opportunities for artists to move to the area.

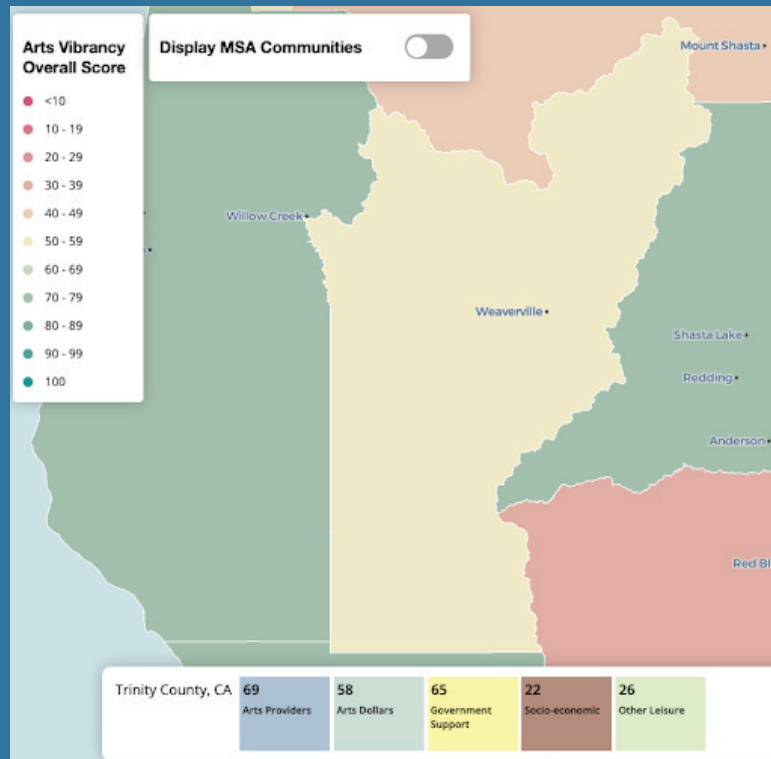
Defining the arts of the Trinity County area would create a sense of ownership by local artists similar to folk art embraced in Appalachian communities. While an artist from Weaverville may offer something different than an artist in Hayfork, their combined craft creates a fabric only found within the area.



The region seems like a natural oasis for artists and creatives. Many people noted during input sessions moving to Trinity County from the larger coastal cities to get away from the big city life including a lot of artists who want a more serene, inspiring environment.

With all this natural beauty, low cost of living and a burgeoning arts community, how can Trinity establish a creative economy that supports existing artists while also offering expanded opportunities for more creatives to establish themselves locally.

ART VIBRANCY MAP



The Arts Vibrancy Map is an interactive tool that provides arts professionals, funders, government officials, and advocates the data to help them see the relative strength of their community's Arts Providers, Arts Dollars, Government Support, Socioeconomic, and Other Leisure characteristics, each of which impacts arts organizations' performance.

Each county has an overall arts vibrancy score indicated by the colors shown in the legend, made up of weighted scores on the measures found along the bottom of the map in boxes. Each of these measures are scored akin to percentiles – i.e., if your county has a score of 56, it means it did better than 56% of communities on that measure. There are just over 3100 counties in the country, so scoring 90 means there are about 310 counties that ranked higher.

TRINITY COUNTY FALLS INTO THE 50-59% FOR ARTS VIBRANCY OVERALL SCORE.

Arts Providers (69%), Arts Dollars (58%), Government Support (65%), Socio-economic (22%), and Other Leisure (26%).

<https://culturaldata.org/>



CREATIVE ECONOMIES

Building a creative economy

- ▶ Prioritize access to the arts for people of all ages and youth including summer arts, music, theater and dance camps
- ▶ Expanded events, classes and workshops
- ▶ Possible Artist in residence program at the Highland Art Center with a suite built out on the second story
- ▶ Use the arts as a catalyst for community engagement
- ▶ Establish a co-op for artists with community studios, shared resources, business assistance, online sales, etc.

Creative Economy Toolkit **- Defining and Contextualizing the Creative Economy**

Americans for the Arts

Millions of Americans are pursuing income streams that are based in creative pursuits. Artists, creatives and makers continually seek to do their work, choosing to work with both businesses and nonprofit arts groups; resulting in an ever-blurred line between the independent and private sectors. The result is a complex ecosystem of industries, educators, resource providers and participants that centers around creativity. This toolkit provides a high-level overview of how to identify and define the creative economy in your community. We recognize that these definitions will manifest themselves differently in each community and encourage readers to use these tools as a starting point or as another way to view the work. We offer examples of communities that are establishing programs and channeling resources into the creative economy in an effort to address broader community issues

| SUPPORT LOCAL ARTS, ESTABLISH A 1% FOR THE ARTS PROGRAM

Percent-for-art programs allocate a small portion of capital construction or renovation budgets (usually one percent) for the purchase, commissioning, and installation of artworks. Percent for art programs are one effective way for states and territories to foster access to the arts and increase the aesthetic value of state-owned public buildings and public places. In the US there are more than 350 percent for art programs. Percent-for-art was first utilized in Philadelphia in 1959. Governance and management systems vary.

Percent for Art - Arts and Planning Toolkit

Includes an overview of typical partners, responsibilities, funding, process and success stories.

Example: Pierce County, WA - 1% for the Arts Program

Pierce County's One Percent for the Arts ordinance directs publicly-funded construction projects, with costs exceeding \$100,000, to allocate one percent of the project budget for public art.

This program supports our mission to increase access to the arts for all Pierce County residents through a lasting legacy of publicly held artwork located in county-owned or county-leased facilities.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

AGENCY/ ORGANIZATION

FUNDING PROGRAM

National Endowment for the Arts

OUR TOWN is the NEA's creative placemaking grants program. Through project-based funding, the program supports activities that integrate arts, culture, and design into local efforts that strengthen communities. These projects require a partnership between a local government and nonprofit cultural organization.

The McConnell Fund

THE MCCONNELL FUND awards grants primarily for the purchase of equipment or building-related projects in the following areas: Arts & Culture, Recreation, Environment, Community Vitality, Social Services, Health care, Children, Youth & Education. Trinity County is eligible to apply for up to \$30,000. Application should open in February.

The Joseph & Vera Long Foundation

THE JOSEPH & VERA LONG FOUNDATION seeks to support school and community programs that provide access to tools, materials, classes, instruction, and support and guidance for creative expression for youth. Grants will be made for:
Program Costs, Capital Improvements, Capacity Building, Materials/Supplies, Discounted Tuition

Two grant cycles each year: Spring (\$50K - \$150K) and Fall (\$10K - \$49K).

The Standard Charitable Organization

The mission of **THE STANDARD CHARITABLE FOUNDATION** is to make a positive difference in the communities we serve by supporting community development, education and disability organizations. While the foundation has a broad goal of making a positive difference in our communities, we place special emphasis on helping individuals and families who have experienced a major disability or the loss of a loved one. Focus areas include: Healthy Communities, Disability and Empowerment, Cultural Development (including the Arts), Education and Advancement.

The MONAT Gratitude Grants Program

THE MONAT GRATITUDE program's philanthropic focus is to support new and existing initiatives in the following areas -- arts and culture, youth sports and recreation, and youth entrepreneurship. Grants range from \$5,000-\$20,000 in the US.

California Arts Council: ARTS Integration Training Grant

Awards of up to \$5,000 per year support nonprofit arts organizations and teaching artists to plan and deliver professional development in arts integration strategies to classroom teachers, as well as site, district, and county-level administrators.

California Arts Council: The JUMP StARTs Program

THE JUMP StARTs PROGRAM supports arts and culture education, apprenticeship and/or mentorship via artists-in-residence programs for system-engaged, system-impacted, and/or at-risk youth and young people through the age of 24. Funding is available for community Spaces and/or County Facilities, as well as planning grants to support arts organizations in the process of developing an arts project.

\$2,500 available for a planning grants, up to \$50,000 for a full project grant.

The Statewide and Regional Networks (SRN)

THE STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL NETWORKS (SRN) program intends to contribute to the health and vitality of the creative workforce in California by creating a resilient network of arts service organizations and artists. They also provide specialized, practical services for artists, arts organizations, and cultural communities.

Eligible Request Amounts
Applicant organizations can request up to \$50,000.

Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne Grants

Its aim and purpose is to support institutional and professional projects in the areas of Visual Art, Music, and Cultural Education worldwide. The Foundation endeavors to contribute to the perception of art as a core value of our society and each individual.

CREATE A UNIFIED VISUAL INDICATOR - A TRINITY COUNTY FLAG FOR ALL

Trinity County has divisions and challenges due to geography, no incorporated cities, scars from controversies over cannabis, and a seemingly constant loop of recovery and anxious anticipation of future wildfires.

Many residents shared frustration and a sense of disconnect from a broader identity within the region. As a way to build unity across the county and instill a sense of pride in the community, a flag is a simple yet immensely powerful visual representation which can build a sense of belonging and camaraderie. A flag can be flown, branded as apparel or simply made into a sticker to place on a vehicle as a way for someone to say, "I'm from Trinity County and I'm proud of it."

Additionally, this flag can serve as an economic driver for tourists to purchase a variety of Trinity County flag swag during their visit. See examples below.

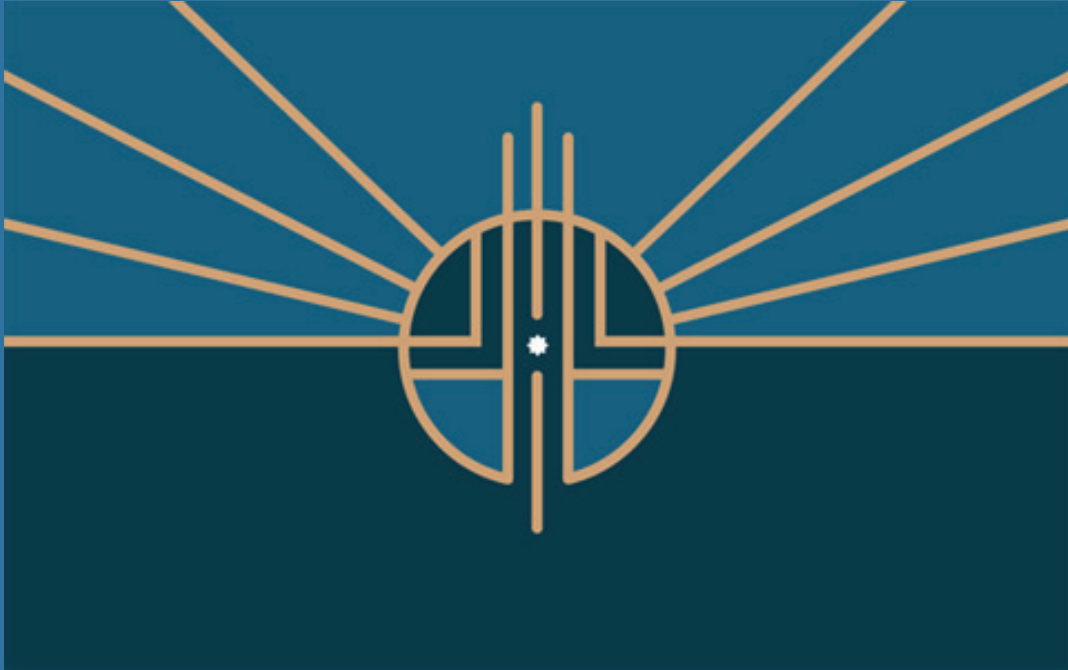
Best of all, this process doesn't have to be formally led by or adopted by the county. It can be a grassroots effort led by a group of people who want to help foster a sense of place and pride in the community.

UNITY THROUGH DESIGN: THE POWER OF FLAGS

Michael Green - TEDxTAMUSalon

"Flags may be the most underrated and yet the most powerful pieces of design. They can invoke feelings of pride, anger, or fear; we will die for them, or even kill for them. By examining how we feel about these everyday symbols, we can realize the immense power held inside simple pieces of colored cloth. Only then can we attempt to harness the power of flags to inspire us, not to further divide ourselves, but to unite us as a planet and as a species."

FLAG INSPIRATION



“The winning design, entitled *All Roads Lead to Lincoln*, was created by Ed Mejia, a local art director and graphic designer who immigrated to the United States from El Salvador. His design was inspired by the sight of Lincoln’s skyline emerging on the otherwise flat horizon as he first drove into town. He drew inspiration from art deco architecture and native artwork displayed inside the capitol building and used intersecting lines to capture the interconnection of technology, agriculture, and commerce that have drawn people to Lincoln throughout our past, present, and into the future. The beacon featured in the center of the design symbolizes the hope and optimism that the people of Lincoln are known for, as well as our reputation as a safe harbor for those seeking to make our community their home.”

the city of Lincoln, Nebraska recently held a flag design contest sponsored by American Marketing Association - Lincoln and Lincoln Young Professionals Group. The winning design was adopted by the city council in January, 2021.

Winning City of Lincoln flag design announced

BEST PRACTICES & RESOURCES

FLAG EXAMPLE - MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN



The official flag of Milwaukee was adopted in 1954. A 2004 survey by the North American Vexillological Association rated the Milwaukee flag 147th out of 150 flags of major American cities

In 2016, following a redesign contest that received over a thousand submissions, voters in an online poll selected a new flag out of 5 finalists.

The winner, “Sunrise Over the Lake”, has been termed “the People’s Flag” and has received widespread public use, although it is not the official flag of the city.



Since the adoption of “The People’s Flag” in 2016 the symbol has been used far and wide across the Milwaukee area including on official Milwaukee Brewers team apparel. There is also an online retail shop where people can buy almost anything with the logo on it.

Flag Design Rules according to the North American Vexillological Association:

- 1. Keep It Simple** - a child can draw it from memory
- 2. Use Meaningful Symbolism** - images, colors, or patterns should relate to what it symbolizes
- 3. Use 2 or 3 Basic Colors** - Limit the number of colors on the flag to 3, which contrast well and come from the standard color set
- 4. No Lettering or Seals** - Never use writing of any kind or an organization’s seal
- 5. Be Distinctive or Be Related** - Avoid duplicating other flags, but use similarities to show connections

99% INVISIBLE

Vexillologists — those who study flags — tend to fall into one of two schools of thought. The first is one that focuses on history, category, and usage, and maintains that vexillologists should be scholars and historians of all flags, regardless of their designs.

The other school of vexillology, however, maintains that not all flags are created equal, and that flags can and should be redesigned, and improved.

[Episode 06: 99% Symbolic](#)

[Episode 140: Vexillonaire](#)



PARTNERSHIPS

At a minimum, the following organizations should be substantially engaged in the Trinity County revitalization efforts. Together, as a coalition, the leaders from these organizations should determine who else needs to be involved and what their role should be to advance collective priorities, programs and initiatives, and significant projects.

- **Trinity County**
- **Trinity County Arts Council**
- **Chambers**
- **Visit Trinity**
- **Civic Groups**
- **Local Schools**
- **Highland Art Center**
- **Main Street Gallery**
- **EarthDance Art Gallery**
- **Trinity County Library**
- **Businesses/Organizations**
- **Shasta College**

FOUR CENTS

Our 2 cents based off of your 2 cents

HOST AMERICORPS MEMBERS FOR ADDED CAPACITY IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

[Americorps](#) connects individuals and organizations to help communities tackle their toughest challenges by sending people power and funding to communities across the country. Americorps programs make an impact focusing on education, disaster response, economic opportunity, environmental stewardship, healthy futures and veterans and military families.

Many of the suggested concepts in this plan could qualify for additional implementation capacity by hosting an Americorps member. There are a number of programs that would potentially be a good fit for Trinity County including:

VISTA - Volunteers in Service to America is an anti-poverty program designed to provide needed resources to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to increase their capacity to lift communities out of poverty.

NCCC - A full-time, team-based residential service program for 18-26 year-olds. The teams complete a variety of service projects, which are generally 3 to 13 weeks in duration, and respond to local communities' needs throughout the United States and territories.

State and National - Organizations identify their community need, then design and implement an AmeriCorps program that will leverage people power as a solution. They recruit, train and manage individuals, called AmeriCorps members, to deliver those services.

Americorps members live in the communities they serve to better understand the culture, participate in service-learning, and build leadership and life skills. They receive a modest living allowance to cover basic expenses during their service term.

Grant funding is available on a Federal (Competitive) and State (Formula) level. Contact [Americorps California for more information](#).



FINAL THOUGHTS

Trinity County, like rural communities across the country, faces many challenges but also holds tremendous potential in existing assets. The good news is that Trinity County residents clearly love their place and want to see it thrive. As one visioning participant shared:

“This place is very special. This is a place I want to protect.”

Purdue University identifies seven community capitals as: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built. Strong and resilient communities strive for balanced investments in these seven capitals but the reality is every community has a limited time, money and resources.

Remember, you can do everything, but you can’t do it all at once.

To build momentum and maximize impact across all community capitals focus on the following overarching goals:

1. Bring people together under vision
2. Focus prioritization
3. Expand opportunities
4. Build ecosystems of support

APPENDICES



ATLAS
community studios

APPENDICES

[Community Snapshot](#)

[Community Assessment Report](#)

[Public Survey Results](#)

[Community Visioning Results](#)

[Steering Committee Visioning Results](#)

[Fireproof Housing Resources](#)