Community Economic Resilience Fund

valley vision
Community Inspired Solutions

Colusa County Roundtable
Thursday, June 30, 2pm - 4pm

Hatamiya Group

COLUSA COUNTY CALIFORNIA

Discussion Notes

Key Issues in the Community
- Infrastructure - Specifically, water as a dire issue, especially with the drought
  - Older towns in Williams have infills, really poor water & sewage infrastructure. See it as an opportunity to upgrade those and bring in business
  - For example: There isa business park that is 95% vacant right now. One of the issues is water.
  - In Stonyford, the well started to dry up from drought. Some residents were able to get some water storage tanks set up at homes, but now the states are asking for them back
- Broadband
  - Broadband gaps were exacerbated during the pandemic. Broadband connectivity for kids in schools was below 60%. Some innovative band aid solutions were implemented, but there is still a large need.
    - In the day that we live in, access to internet is education, economic development, andsafety
    - Starlink is working for some folks;For example: the fire department was happy about the increase in upload and download speeds
- Agriculture
  - There is going to be a lot of legislation (e.g. ag burning) that will affect farmers. Many aren't ready Need to support the ag industry in this transition
    - Have heard from farmers "if this continues, we're going to have to pick up and leave."

Concerns About CERF
- Even when we are trying to go for funding, we struggle to get our projects shovel ready to be competitive
- Colusa County is on the fringes. We don't have the population/tax base that other counties have.
- Not only are we more rural, but we're also behind when it comes to economic planning. Other counties have planned projects sitting on the shelf and ready to go. It's hard to score and compete

Opportunities
- County is very interested in helping facilitate this. Ultimately, what we put into this is what we'll get out of it. Representation in the governance structure and involvement in the planning phase is critical.
- We can highlight that this region is a great opportunity for business.
  - Ex: Aymium recently bought a tomato plant and is converting it to a biofuel production plant, project breaks ground next month.This is also a great example of a project that aligns with the low carbon objective. Aymium on why they chose

to invest here - Very skilled labor here for lower cost, cost & process of procuring land.
- ■ Generate their own power & water (in excess that they will be sharing with the community)
- ■ Building a sister plant in Oregon which has been harder. The personalized attention we've gotten here has made a huge difference
- ● Positive is that we are more unique and will stand out from the rest of the counties. In some ways, this is better than competing in a region where all the counties are rural and have the same needs
- ● We have a number of communities with Community Service Districts (CSDs) that are struggling. We can seize this as an opportunity to work together on this. Maybe we can do a comprehensive infrastructure assessment and development so we can be more competitive
- ● Project incubator: getting all of these projects ready. This might be the opportunity to take the long view and set us up so we're not just reacting.
  - ○ Noticed that recovery fund had restrictions about projects needing to be shovel ready
    - ■ Maybe for infrastructure plans that weren't funded, there is an opportunity to get them shovel ready

Outreach & Engagement Strategies
- ● Who's missing from the room:
  - ○ Local business
  - ○ Local townspeople but its hard to get everyday people here to talk about these things
- ● How to build capacity/reach people
  - ○ If you want to reach community members, a bilingual format is critical. Also translated materials
  - ○ Having projects in mind that they can relate to

Q&A

- ● **What is happening in the application process vs. planning phase?**
  - ○ The goal of the application is to establish the Fiscal Agent and Regional Convener for each region. In order for us to complete our application on the region, Valley Vision has established 4 subcommittees based on the activities in the planning phase outlined in the CERF Guidelines, These 4 subcommittees are. Backbone Support & Governance; Capacity Building and Technical Assistance; Community Engagement; and Data, Research, and Evaluation. The application requires us to do a basic analysis of the

region, propose a governance structure, outline a budget, and establish the initial Collaborative.
- These will be further developed in the planning phase. The planning phase will continue building the Collaborative as well as create the regional plan.

- **Is this a one-time fund or do you see it continuing?**
  - The state has defined this as a one-time fund. However, our goal is that the regional plan created in the planning phase will go beyond CERF. If done well, we can set projects up to be ready and competitive for other funding opportunities.

- **Do you see the initial involvement as being joining the subcommittees?**
  - For now, yes. We are in the very beginning stages, "pre-planning." Currently the subcommittees are set up to help with the application process. However, we understand that there are capacity restraints for many people. You don't have to attend the workshop to be involved in the community. You can be added to a mailing list to receive notes from the meetings and other opportunities for feedback via email and/or survey.
  - We will also need people to sign our Collective Partnership Agreement Letter. This document is part of the application. By signing the letter, you commit to being a part of the initial collaborative and agree to the goals laid out in the Application Package.
  - We're hoping you will share CERF with your networks and continue to aid us in our outreach efforts in Colusa county
  - You can also subscribe to our CERF newsletter to stay informed about other opportunities, especially once the planning phase begins

- **Has the State released guidelines for the implementation phase?**
  - No, the guidelines for the implementation phase have not been released yet.