

JUNE 2022



RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY PLAN

Panhandle Area Council

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The *Regional Economic Resiliency Team (RER Team)* for the Panhandle Area Council, Inc. (PAC) comprise educational institutions, economic development professionals, regional Office of Emergency Management, non-profits, and the business community. The *RER Team* represents the economic and community interests of the five counties of the Panhandle Area Council Economic Development Planning District of north Idaho – Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai, and Shoshone.

The role of the *RER Team* was to develop a recovery and resiliency plan in response to the economic injuries COVID-19 suffered in the region. A collaborative approach to support economic priorities of the region guided the *RER Team* as they developed a short-term economic plan focused on strengthening resiliency and hastening economic recovery.

Funding through the Economic Development Administration (EDA), planning and preparation by the Economic Development Districts of Idaho (EDDI) Disaster Recovery Initiative, and the consultation of TIP Strategies were integral to the development and implementation of this plan.

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- Alex Barta, Executive Director, Greater St. Joe Development Foundation/Timber Plus
- Amy Voeller, North Idaho Regional Engagement Manager, Innovia Foundation
- Colleen Rosson, Executive Director, Silver Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Dave Darrow, Manager Idaho Department of Labor, Kootenai County Local Office
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- Kalynn Raugh, Community Engagement Specialist, Community Action Partnership
- Loren Whitten-Kaboth, Investor Relations/Special Projects, CdA Area Economic Development Corp.
- Mark Tucker, Executive Director, United Way of North Idaho
- Ryan Arnold, Director, Entrepreneur Center, North Idaho College
- Ryan Robinson, Acting Executive Director, Bonner County Economic Development Corporation
- Sandy VonBehren, Citizen, Retired Manager of Kootenai County Office of Emergency Management
- Vicki Isakson, Director, Workforce Training, North Idaho College



WALLY JACOBSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

11100 N. Airport Drive, Hayden, ID 83835
208-772-0584
www.pacni.org

NANCY MABLE, REGION I ECONOMIC PLANNER

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ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY CONTEXT

IMPORTANCE OF RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY PLANNING

Resilience is the ability of a region or community to anticipate, withstand, and recover from any type of shock, disruption, or stressor. These shocks can include natural disasters, hazards, and the impacts of a changing climate, but also man-made economic disruptions such as the closure of a region's large employer, the decline of an important industry, changes in the workforce, and shifts in population trends. The power of resilience planning is that it focuses both on emergency response – how to deal with the immediate impact of a disruptive event – as well as how to prepare and organize in advance and rebuild afterwards with a coherent framework.

The Recovery and Resiliency Plan is necessary in the event of economic distress during an economic crisis that may result from natural disasters, epidemics, pandemics, and man-made destruction. The Recovery and Resiliency Plan can be used as a guide to build a better resilient economy so that recovery time and progress is an expedited deliverable, and/or the disaster is mitigated as a part of the resilience measures.

Through setting up the Recovery and Resiliency Plan, PAC and partners will have the tools, guide, and resources available to our region to execute an actionable plan of protection. The plan was created through collaborative meetings with the *RER Team*. PAC also consulted with local chambers of commerce and other representatives in Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties to gather the plan criteria developed through the EDDIs and TIP Strategies, an economic development and strategic advisory firm with more than 20 years of experience and an extensive portfolio of federally funded recovery work.

The effort to develop the Recovery and Resiliency Plan included monthly meetings between August 2021 through January 2022 and utilized emails as a communication tool between meetings. The planning process began by reviewing relevant regional data, followed by a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats) analysis. Based on those inputs the *RER Team* developed an economic recovery and resilience framework built around three distinct areas for economic resilience – housing, workforce, and infrastructure. Progress will be measured on metrics, data, and partnerships.

HISTORY OF RECENT EVENTS AND RESPONSES

The region is abundant with many natural features including mountains, prairies and valleys, rivers, lakes, and streams, and as such, is subject to natural disasters such as wildfires, landslides, windstorms, winter storms, excessive moisture, flooding, and dam failure. Threats of man-made hazards are also present, such as hazard-material spills, transportation (ground and air) accidents, amber alerts, cyber-attacks, civil unrest, and terrorism.

Each county has their own set of challenges including the increasing number of oil and coal shipments through the region by rail, which has the potential to have a significant negative environmental impact. A cyber-attack

can jeopardize all citizens, public/private sectors, and infrastructure systems such as power. There are environmental impacts with endangered species, and historic preservation. Boundary County borders Canada, which introduces additional threats such as drugs and arms trafficking, and terrorism. A 100-square mile area in Shoshone County was designated as a National Superfund Site in 1987. Excessive moisture and flooding will carry contaminants, resulting in re-contamination of areas considered “clean” by the Superfund clean-up efforts.

Although the following is not an all-inclusive list, some of the most significant incidents occurring in the region include:

- Heavy snowfalls and rapid snow melt resulted in approximately \$28 million in recovery efforts in 1996 and 1997 in Benewah, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties.
- It was Superbowl Sunday, January 2000, when boulders came crashing down resulting in the largest landslide in Kootenai County’s History, stranding hundreds of residents in Bonner County’s Cape Horn near Bayview.
- Fire broke out at Myrtle Creek in 2003, the watershed for the City of Bonners Ferry, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, and surrounding residents. The cost to fight the fire was estimated at \$4.5 million. In 2012 this area experienced road closure due to mudslides and flooding.
- In 2006 a railroad trestle collapsed into the Coeur d’Alene River in Benewah County, leaking about 50 gallons of fuel from equipment making repairs to the tracks.
- A flash flood in spring 2008 annihilated the diversion dam for the water system at East Hope in Bonner County.
- The year 2008 also brought a powerful windstorm across the Rathdrum Prairie.
- Cocolalla Loop Road in Bonner County collapsed in 2012 because of spring runoff, heavy rain, and soil saturation.
- It was 1992—over 400 members of the FBI, military and local law enforcement converged at Ruby Ridge in Boundary County to County to capture Randy Weaver, who sold sawed off shotguns to an Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) informant.
- A full-blown Amber Alert in 2005 occurred in Kootenai County. Joseph Duncan killed a child and mother at their home, taking the remaining two children. Duncan killed the son and kept the daughter until his capture in Coeur d’Alene and was convicted as a serial killer and sex offender. He has since died in prison.

The region experienced damage from the 1980 Mount St. Helen’s volcanic eruption, as well as loss of major employers and diminishing forestry industries such as logging, lumber mills, related truck driving, and forestry management.

None of the region’s disasters have created economic injuries throughout the entire region such as the disruptive events of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each county had different occurrences caused by the pandemic and dealt with them differently, which led to different economic outcomes. The rate of infection varied within rural and quasi-urban population centers. Rural residents lacked access to tele-healthcare, and supply chain disruptions impacted all.

Many of the responses were effective and can be used as a disaster response plan, however many of the reactions were ineffective and possibly harmful. The *RER Team* reviewed early regional pandemic government, nonprofit, human services, and industry responses through a survey to evaluate effective measures that can be implemented and responses that can be improved.

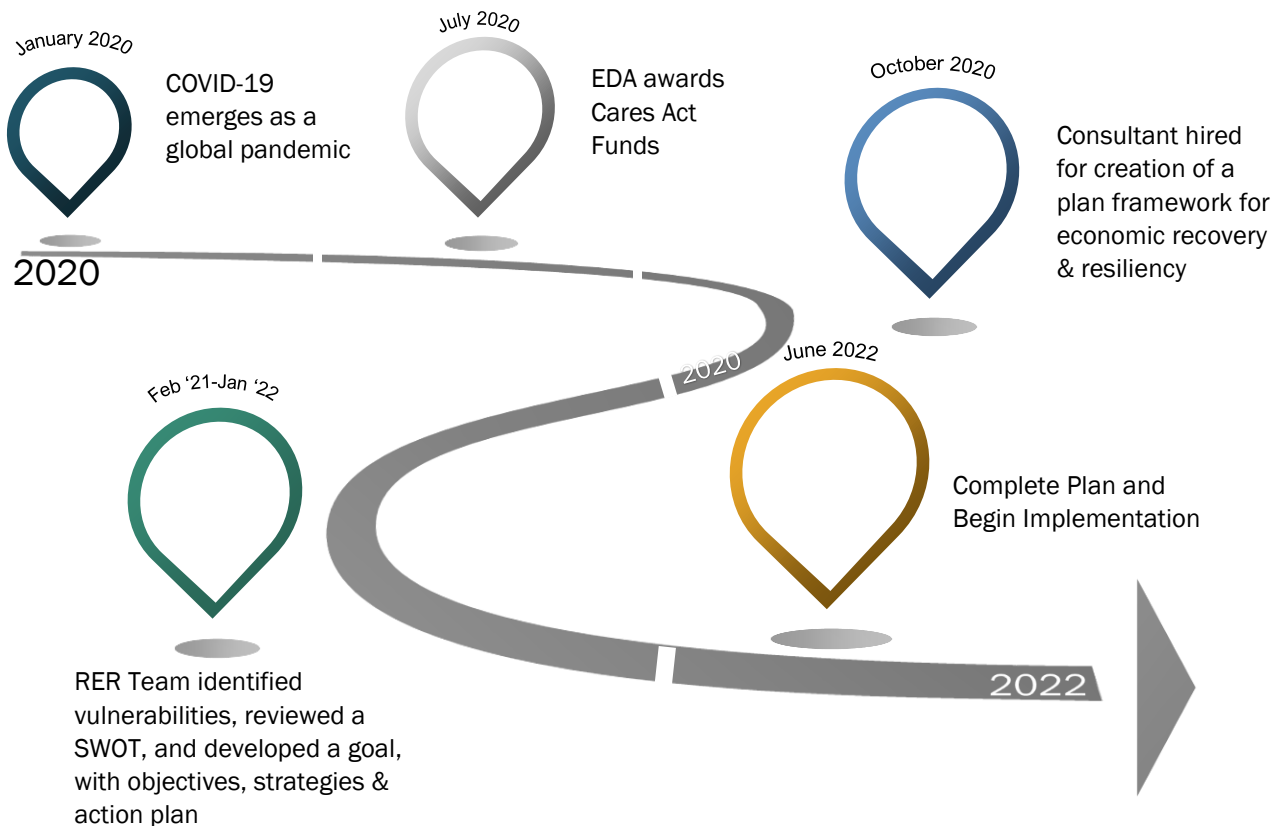
The pandemic demonstrated just how difficult it is to participate in our modern economy without access to reliable high-speed internet, and certainly emphasized the deficiencies of the broadband systems across the State of Idaho. Adverse impacts to healthcare, education, industry, and public safety were exacerbated by the higher demands of those who had to work from home, students who had to learn from home, and healthcare providers assisting patients through online platforms. School and childcare closures placed extreme burden on parents, especially those deemed essential and who had to continue to work away from the home. PAC worked with Boundary and Kootenai Counties to secure funding to expand broadband. Continuing work is being done in the remaining counties, particularly through the State of Idaho's Broadband Grant Program and the NTIA program.

Quick to address business disruptions were municipalities, area chambers of commerce, the Small Business Development Center, local economic development organizations, and PAC. Assistance included small business loans and PPE distribution. Panhandle Health District issued local public health announcements and worked with other health care providers on vaccine distribution. Unfortunately, many community events were cancelled, impacting service organizations, non-profits and supporting industries such as lodging, catering, and transportation. Some events were able to pivot to online platforms, but several may not recover or return due to loss of revenues.

Lack of direct mental and health services, food insecurity, and isolation impacts are still being recognized. Through learning about our past responses, we see better strategies to help with economic shortfalls such as dealing with the supply chain disruption, access to healthcare and childcare, and fire mitigation for the protection and continuation of regional businesses and industries.

Disaster Planning for Economic Recovery

The flowchart below identifies COVID-19 emerging as a global pandemic in 2020, resulting in severe economic distress in communities across the U.S. To assist with response and recovery, the federal government approved the Coronavirus Air, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to mitigate financial impacts of the virus. Each of the Economic Development Districts in Idaho (EDDI) received CARES Act funds from EDA to support activities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The EDDIs pooled a portion of their CARES Act funding from the EDA along with funding support from partner agencies like the Idaho Department of Commerce and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Rural Development to build a standardized, yet customizable, framework for economic response, recovery, and resiliency. Beginning in October 2020, the EDDIs engaged TIP Strategies, an economic development and strategic advisory firm to assist their efforts to create an economic recovery and resiliency framework.



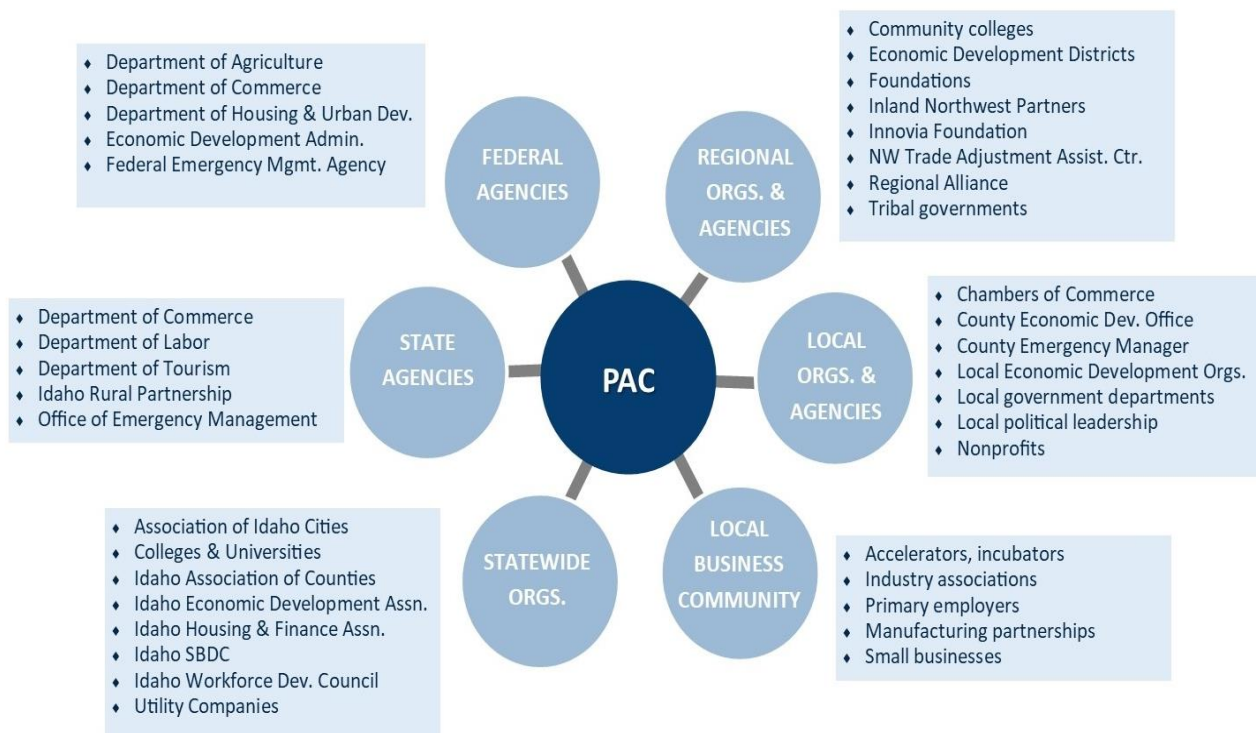
ROLE IN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY

As mentioned above, in the summer of 2020 the EDDIs pooled funding to create a standardized, yet customizable framework for response, recovery and resiliency. Working with TIP Strategies allowed for district-based customization for further collaboration between districts including alignment of economic recovery within each of the district’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This is different than the roles of other response and recovery groups, such as first responders, the federal government, and private enterprise.

The success of any recovery effort is dependent on all stakeholders. Each County Office of Emergency Management has a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to foster public awareness of any hazard, and encourage public involvement in emergency planning, training, and exercise. The LEPC’s partner with local, state, and tribal governments, first responders and business and industry for planning, prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. In addition to the LEPC, each County Office of Emergency Management has an All-Hazard Mitigation Plan (AHMP) and Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and cross jurisdictional boundaries when the assistance is needed. Through each County’s EOP there is a framework in place for roles and responsibilities of local, state, Tribal and federal governments for pre- and post-disasters.

Sustainability and resiliency in disaster recovery are a collaborative effort of interagency and intergovernmental coordination. Pre-disaster activities focus on integrating resiliency practices into day-to-day operations, while recovery starts at the beginning of a disaster, whether natural or man-made. Coordination is critical to recovery efforts from pre-disaster to full economic recovery. The County Offices of Emergency Management, with assistance from the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, focus on coordination of the immediate needs during and after a disaster.

The figure below shows that PAC’s role can serve as a coordinator of interagency economic recovery activities. This is achieved through collaboration with each County Office of Emergency Management, Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security, and other local, State, Tribal and Federal agencies at all levels of the whole community.



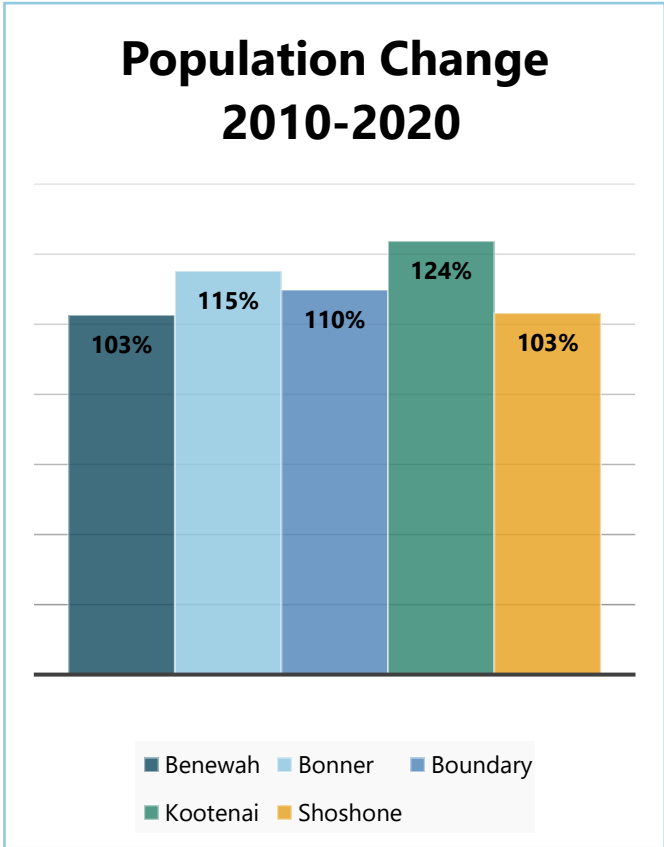
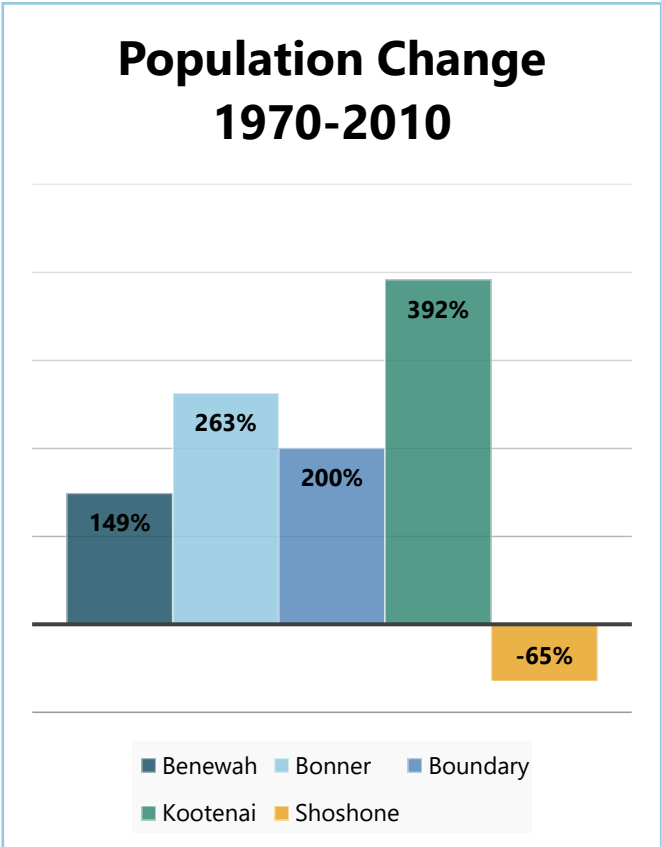
DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC DATA

POPULATION

The increasingly diverse economic base and lifestyle of the northern Idaho region have attracted thousands of new residents in recent years, making it Idaho’s second most populous region. As Benewah and Boundary Counties steadily increased their population over the past 50 years, the remaining counties have a different story. The natural beauty of the mountains and Lake Pend Oreille in Bonner County and Lake Coeur d’Alene in Kootenai County, along with low taxes, available land and housing prices brought people in droves from all over the nation, but primarily from the states of Washington and California, followed closely by Oregon and Utah.

Population in Shoshone County plummeted in the 1980’s as mining companies, once having the largest recorded silver production area in the world, shut down from a rapid drop in silver prices. Over 6,000 jobs were lost in the county, and a 100-square mile area was declared a Superfund by the Environmental Protection Agency—one of the largest and most complex Superfund sites in the nation.

Diversification from resource-based industries to manufacturing, aerospace, tourism, health care, and construction industries can be attributed to the expanding population. The region is no longer isolated and has been discovered as a place to live. The charts below identify the population change between 2010 and 2020 (US Census).



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment impacts economic resilience as people who attain higher education and/or have specialized skills are more likely to be employed and earn higher wages and less likely to primarily depend on public services. Regions that have educational opportunities can provide essential resources and training for residents preparing to join the workforce. In addition, if economic conditions change and the local employment sectors shift, educational opportunities can be an asset for the community by offering community members new or additional training.

North Idaho is home to North Idaho College (NIC), University of Idaho, Lewis-Clark State College, and Workforce Training at NIC. This provides residents and industries a variety of educational and training programs that can respond to both long-term economic changes as well as immediate disaster-related responses to disasters and economic injuries.

The percent of people over the age of 25 with a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree affects the types of jobs accessible to the current population.

	Region	Benewah County	Bonner County	Boundary County	Kootenai County	Shoshone County
Less than 9 th Grade	1.1%	1.2%	1.9%	1.6%	0.8%	2.1%
High school graduate (with equivalences)	7.3%	26.1%	21.9%	30.1%	18.7%	27.2%
Some college, no degree	20.2%	16.5%	19.3%	16.7%	21.0%	20.3%
Associate degree	7.3%	7.0%	7.1%	4.3%	7.2%	7.8%
Bachelor's degree	10.9%	8.6%	13.1%	8.9%	12.3%	4.9%
Graduate or professional degree	5.6%	4.0%	6.7%	3.5%	6.2%	2.8%

Source: Idaho Department of Labor

EMPLOYMENT

According to the Idaho Department of Labor, north Idaho's economy traditionally relied on forest products and mining. Diversification is changing the historical economic trends as the top three industry sectors that employed most of the region's population in 2021 were Education and Health Services; Trade, Transportation and Utilities; and Leisure and Hospitality. The top ten regional employers are Kootenai Health, Wal-Mart, Coeur d'Alene School District, Hagadone Hospitality, Kootenai County, North Idaho College, Coeur d'Alene Casino, Idaho Forest Group, Post Falls School District, and the Lakeland School District.

The COVID-19 pandemic substantially impacted job losses as nonessential businesses had to close or adjust to alternative methods of operation, such as remote working and limited services. In March 2020, statewide estimates

of job losses by industry indicated the highest impacted industries were in accommodations and food services (26% loss), arts/entertainment/recreation (18% loss), retail trade (13% loss), and healthcare/social services (12% loss). Least impacted industries included utilities (1% loss), public administration (2% loss), management services (2% loss), finance and insurance (3% loss), and agriculture/forestry/fishing (3% loss).

Unemployment in the region rate spiked to nearly 15% (April 2020) when the COVID-19 pandemic hit but remained lower than the state and federal averages and is starting to return to pre-pandemic numbers (3.5% - April 2022).

North Idaho (Panhandle) Industry Employment and Wages – 2011, 2020 and 2021

Industry Sector	2011		2020		2021	
	Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages
Total Covered Wages	75,291	\$32,638	89,490	\$43,377	94,097	\$47,177
Natural Resources and Mining	1,874	\$59,959	2,087	\$60,632	2,253	\$68,012
Construction	4,370	\$34,355	7,273	\$47,027	7,940	\$50,839
Manufacturing	7,081	\$38,624	8,055	\$50,940	8,346	\$54,232
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	15,887	\$30,460	17,859	\$40,788	18,635	\$44,378
Information	1,078	\$41,150	1,043	\$62,053	1,130	\$89,778
Financial Activities	3,653	\$39,535	4,317	\$59,858	4,460	\$64,771
Professional and Business Services	7,675	\$37,046	8,054	\$48,078	8,493	\$54,731
Education and Health Services	16,193	\$33,838	20,617	\$45,922	21,012	\$49,578
Leisure and Hospitality	10,500	\$15,994	12,698	\$21,105	14,184	\$23,768
Other Services	1,920	\$22,076	2,224	\$31,742	2,375	\$33,925
Public Administration	5,050	\$40,769	5,260	\$53,028	5,263	\$54,748

Source: Idaho Department of Labor-Quarterly Census of Employment Wages

The increasingly diverse economic base and lifestyle of the northern Idaho region have attracted thousands of new residents in recent years, making it Idaho’s second most populous region. The largest city, Coeur d’Alene, is just 33 miles from Spokane, Wash., where many Panhandle residents work.

Industries playing major economic roles include lumber, manufacturing, mining, tourism, retail, agriculture, call centers and the Coeur d’Alene and Kootenai tribes. North Idaho College and the satellite campuses of University of Idaho, Lewis-Clark State College and Boise State University are a key component of providing a highly skilled and trained workforce.

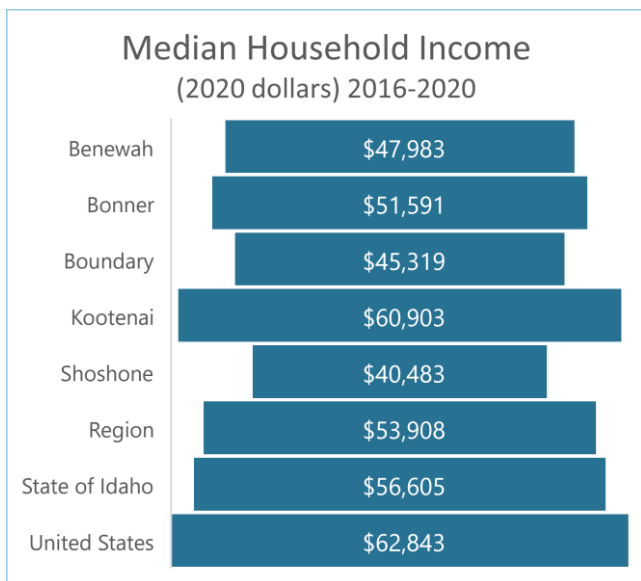
The Idaho Department of Labor reports that postings for help wanted in November 2021 totaled 55,673 statewide. Compare this with 23,811 of Idaho’s total number of unemployed, there are 2.3 job postings per unemployed person.

United Way of North Idaho Workforce Participation survey indicates that 1.1 million women were still out of the workforce in January 2022, and a 3:1 ratio of women lost their jobs relative to men since February 2020. Survey participants with children ages 0-5 indicate that 57% of women and 38% of men held back professionally due to childcare responsibilities. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines childcare as affordable if it costs families no more than 7% of their income. In north Idaho, childcare costs exceed affordability for 80% of families, and 69% of those looking for work are more likely to choose an employer with childcare benefits.

In recent years, research has made it abundantly clear that the availability of affordable childcare is a major obstacle in keeping people, especially women, out of the labor force. Many months into the COVID economic crisis, the data made it clear that this problem only grew worse in 2020. The literature is overwhelming on this subject and consistently points to the same conclusion, that **a shortage of affordable childcare is a serious impediment to the labor market.**

~ Samuel Wolkenhauer, Region I Labor Economist, Idaho Department of Labor

INCOME

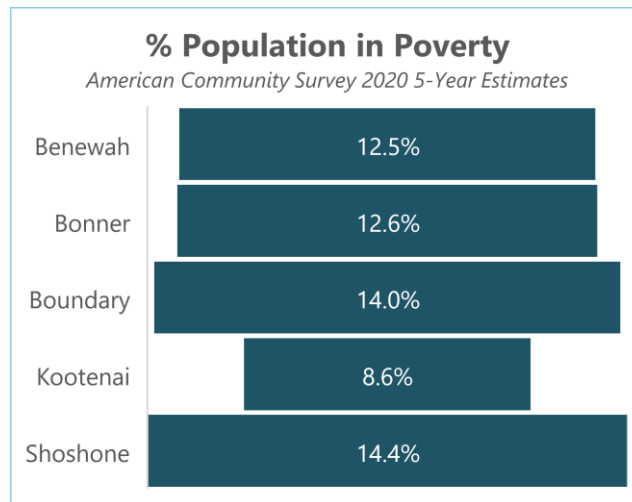
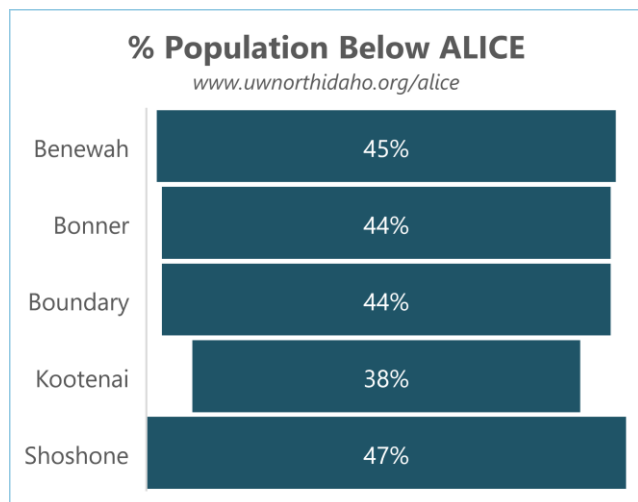


Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey

North Idaho’s median household income is \$53,908, which is below the state of Idaho’s median income of \$56,505 and the \$62,843 median income of the United States. The more populated counties of the region have higher median incomes.

Idaho’s minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Urban Studies and Planning was used to calculate a living wage, which is a hypothetical income for families or individuals to pay for necessities, such as food, shelter, and transportation. In the state of Idaho, in the state of Idaho a living wage for one adult is \$16.16 per hour; one adult and one child is \$31.45; and, with two children the living wage increases to \$38.77 per hour.

As far as making a livable wage, the Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed or (ALICE population) is an indicator of livable wages. According to Community Action 2021 Community Needs Assessment (<https://www.uwnorthidaho.org/alice>), the Alice population is growing faster than the regional population in poverty. ALICE households earn too much to qualify as ‘poor’ but are still unable to make ends meet. They often work as cashiers, nursing assistants, office clerks, laborers, and security guards. These types of jobs are vital to the regional economy but do not provide adequate wages to cover the basics of housing, childcare, food, transportation, and healthcare. The following charts identify the percent of population below ALICE and the percent of population in poverty.



BUSINESSES

Business resilience is the capacity of an organization to quickly adapt to disruptions while maintaining continuous business operations and safeguarding people, assets and overall brand equity. Business disaster recovery focuses on business continuity by developing post-disaster strategies to avoid identify vulnerabilities, costly downtime, and maintain business operations.

PAC’s Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is set up to lend to small local businesses in need of financial support. With assistance from the CARES Act funds, PAC’s RLF program was able to assist those in need of financial support due to the COVID-19 pandemic economic hardships. PAC provided RLF CARES Act funds to 10 businesses in Bonner and Kootenai County’s totaling \$2,868,495 and is working on additional RLF loans in Kootenai and Shoshone Counties in the amount of \$445,000.

According to the Idaho Department of Commerce, by September 2021, 41% of Idaho’s businesses reported that the pandemic had moderate negative effects on their business. About a quarter (23.4%) reported currently having decreased operating revenues/sales. Almost 90% of Idaho businesses do not require employees to have proof of vaccination, 89% don’t require a negative COVID-19 test to return to work in person. Still, 35.1% report that they are still experiencing domestic supplier delays and 45.7% reports a moderate increase in prices paid for their businesses’ goods and services. Against the 35.7% of businesses that believed it would only take 6 months, 23.9% of businesses believe it will take more than 6 months for businesses to return to their “normal” levels of operations.

The region’s businesses range from non-employers to large scale employers. A non-employer is a small business that has no paid employees. While non-employers are most concentrated in industries like performing arts and passenger transportation, these businesses appear in practically every industry. Non-employer businesses comprise nearly 73% of the region’s economy.

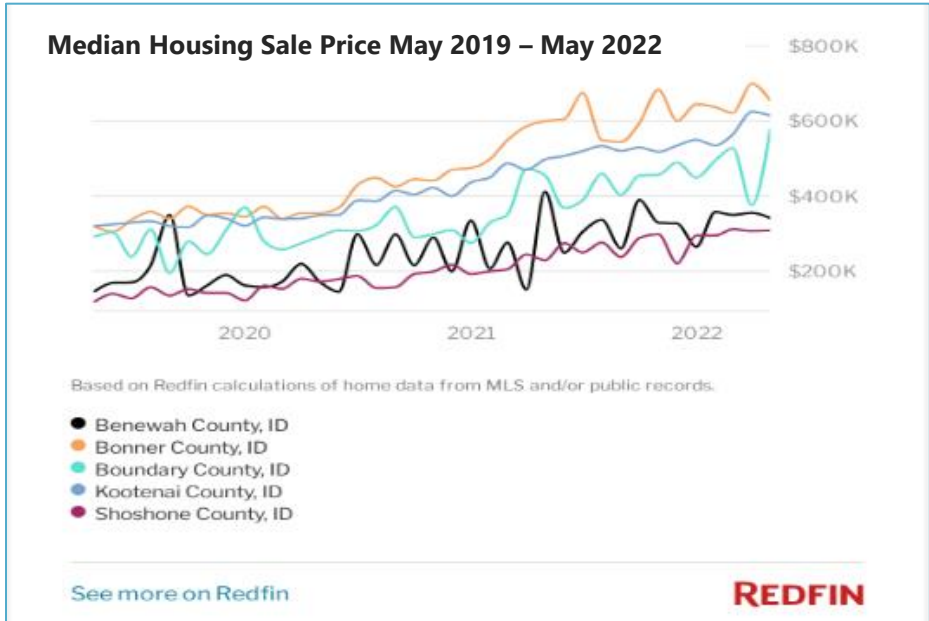
COUNTY	NONEMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS 2020	EMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS 2019	TOTAL EMPLOYMENT 2020
Benewah	680	254	2,141
Bonner	4,489	1,733	13,401
Boundary	1,081	411	2,751
Kootenai	14,546	5,372	57,834
Shoshone	807	341	4,011
Region	21,603	8,111	80,318

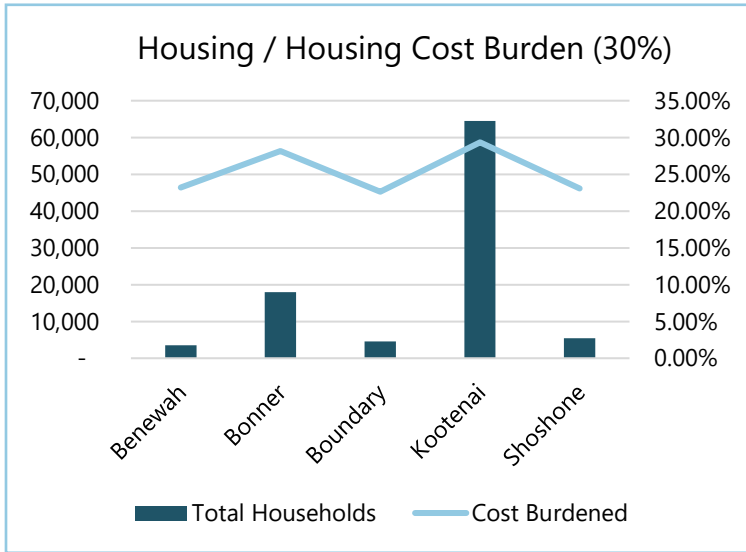
Source: US Census QuickFacts

HOUSING

In the past ten-years incomes have increased in most areas of north Idaho but buying power has been eroded by the combination of home price appreciation and a shortage of supply. *The Housing Availability and Affordability Study for Kootenai County* completed in December 2021 by the University of Idaho provided a reality check for Kootenai County. The methodologies can be used for the neighboring four counties in the region. This report identifies that in Kootenai County alone, the median housing prices increased 120% between 2016 and 2021 from \$220,000 to \$485,000. In this same four-year period, the average price increased 144% from \$256,000 to \$624,000. The report concluded that only 24% of Kootenai County households could afford to purchase a median priced house in its largest city, Coeur d’Alene. Forecasts indicate demand for new housing units in Kootenai County need to increase 161%, from 1,156 units to 3,015 units per year to stabilize prices at their current level.

(<https://rhgip.com/news-%26-events/f/the-housing-availability-affordability-study>) Although Kootenai County saw the strongest growth in income, in each of the five counties, incomes cannot keep up with housing or rent prices.





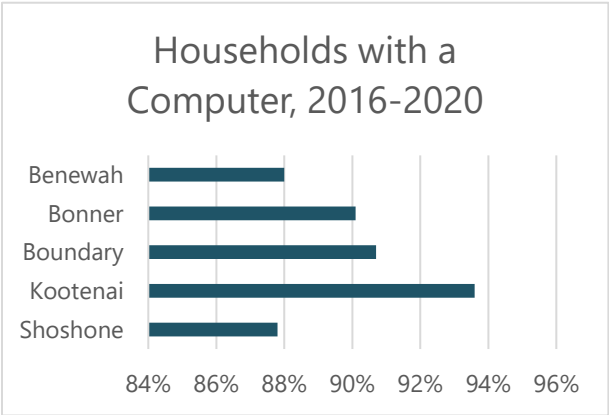
Source: Idaho Housing and Finance Association

Cost Burdened Housing occurs when more than 30% of household income is paying for rent or mortgage, plus utilities. Severely cost burdened is defined as paying more than 50% of household income for housing.

Within PAC’s District, over 27,000 households classify as cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened. Extremely low-income and very low-income renter households are highly concentrated in Benewah, Boundary, and Shoshone counties.

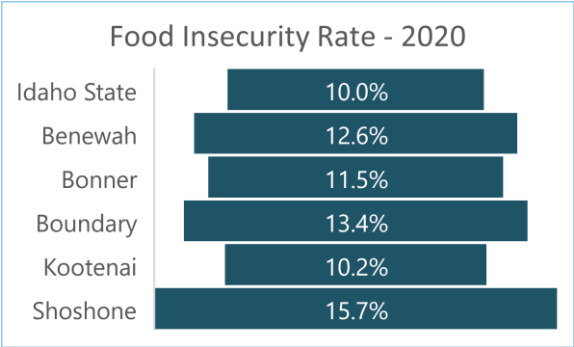
ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Access to public or private insurance, broadband internet, and measurements of food insecurity are indirect indicators of economic health. Gaps in access can impact the resiliency of the local economy and its people. Access to health insurance is associated with improved health outcomes and quality of life, which has an impact on the local workforce. Broadband has become increasingly important during the COVID-19 pandemic as school, work, healthcare, and retail services have shifted to more of an online model. Without sufficient access to broadband, community members might miss opportunities to adequately engage with the local economy. Households that are food insecure do not consistently have enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members, which affects resiliency.



Broadband is a resource in which the region has experienced major service insufficiency. During the Covid-19 pandemic this resource turned out to be incredibly necessary as distance learning, remoting work, and tele-healthcare occurred across the state. However, the issue of unavailability of broadband services, or very poor services available to our rural counties impacted rural residents in many ways. Rural residents often traveled to public school parking lots and libraries to access broadband for remote learning and work.

Food insecurity is an involuntary lack of access to food. Closure of the senior meal centers and food distribution sites in the counties brought food insecurities to vulnerable populations; closure of schools impacted low-income students access to onsite meals. Idaho Food Bank and area communities opened remote distribution centers, nonprofits collected for homebound and vulnerable populations, and churches offered weekly onsite/delivery meals for community members.



Source: Feeding America

Affordable housing is consistently a leading core challenge in our communities. Rising costs of rent and real estate coinciding with the economic impact of the pandemic have only exacerbated the issue. An Idaho full-time worker needs to earn \$17.36/hour to afford a two-bedroom unit. Stable, affordable housing reduces childhood poverty and creates economic mobility for area residents.

Nonprofits such as the United Way, Community Action Partnership, Idaho Food Bank, Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, Habitat for Humanity, Trinity Group Homes, Kootenai Medical Center, Head Start, and Panhandle Health District are ongoing resources for north Idaho residents. All have robust outreach networks and can reach both those they serve and partners that may be able to provide assistance.

ASSESSMENT OF VULNERABILITIES AND RISKS

EXISTING VULNERABILITIES OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic caused major economic disruptions to the region. Impacts included closure of nonessential businesses and childcare providers, supply chain interruptions, and mandated remote work and learning. Healthcare providers had to quickly adjust to telemedicine and changes to in-person care. The Idaho National Guard was called in for assistance in hospitals and mortuaries were overflowing. Cost of living rates and pandemic shocks has contributed to an influx of people moving from larger cities to the state, paying cash for housing. This increased home values and rents, subsequently squeezing out lower-income folks that have lived in their house all their lives. This surge of people moving to Idaho, couple with slowed construction, lack of labor, increased cost of building materials, and current residents staying in their homes has created an unstable housing marketing throughout the state.

I'm an excellent renter and have never been in any trouble. I'm a caregiver in my mid 40's with one cat. I was forced to move from my home of 12 years because people out of state bought the unit and wanted to cash in on the growth around here. -Michelle.

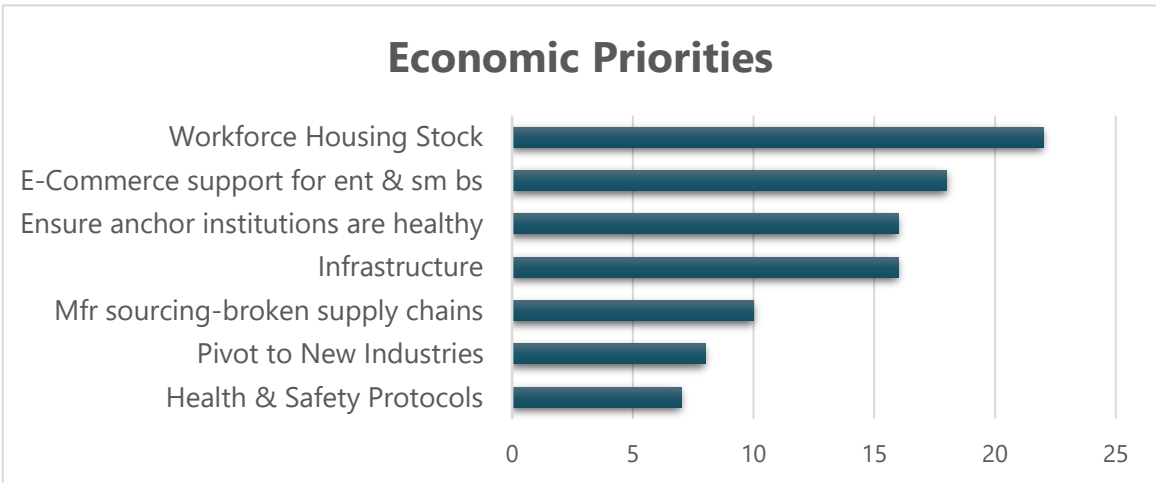
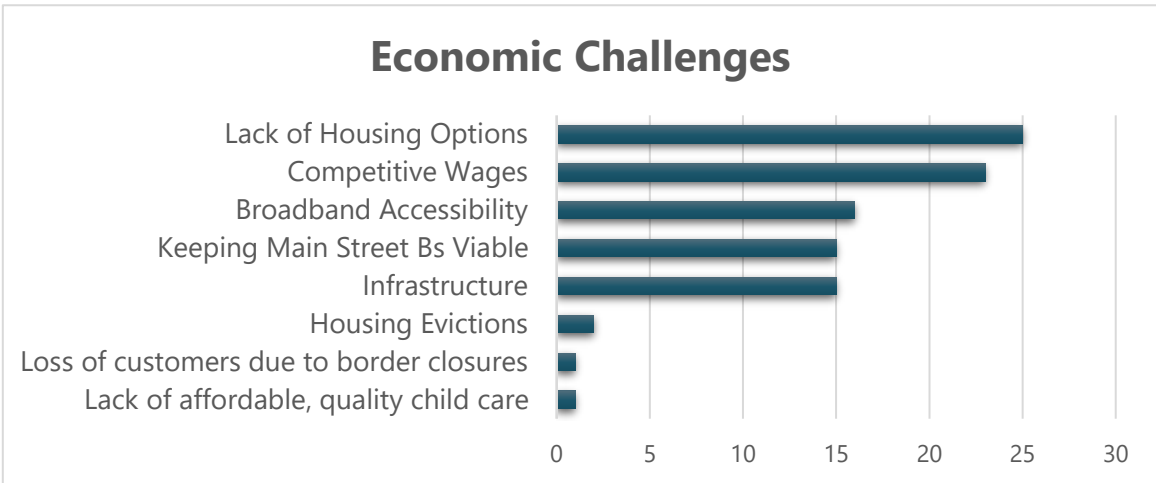
PAC's *RER Team* and regional stakeholders involved in the development of the 2020-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) have identified significant regional economic vulnerabilities as inadequate infrastructure, housing shortages, lack of childcare, fragility of supply chains, and incohesive leadership. By identifying the greatest risks that might impact the local economy, that district is better able to identify priorities for action and investment and to develop contingency plans for response, recovery, and resiliency.

The insights learned from this process will guide us as we continue the process of planning, implementing, analyzing results, and improving upon the strategies.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND INVESTMENT

PRIORITIES

An exercise in determining the region’s challenges and priorities was conducted with the RER Team and each of the EDC Boards, 6 in total, with over 100 participants. The following graphs identify the top challenges and priorities.



The RER Team evaluated the economic challenges and priorities and developed a vision, overarching goal and three strategies, all while keeping it simple to ensure that each of the goals and strategies are achievable.

VISION

North Idaho and its communities enjoy a vibrant, resilient, and sustainable economy as a result of coordinated planning and a shared commitment for a high quality of life

GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

OVERARCHING GOAL

The region shall foster and support a robust business climate, increased housing opportunities, and upgraded infrastructure systems, including broadband access, to protect communities from economic shocks that ensure the region will provide sustainable services.

GOAL 1. INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGY: Grow capacity building for rural communities to get ahead of infrastructure needs.

ACTIONS

1. Coordinate and facilitate access to affordable broadband/internet.
2. Create resource guide on funding sources information of infrastructure projects.
3. Create a leadership training program that successfully builds grass roots in communities.
4. Identify the need for improved transportation corridors for movement of commerce.

GOAL 2. WORKFORCE

STRATEGY: Closely align employers and workforce with education for responsive pathways.

ACTIONS

1. Educate and encourage employers to provide childcare / childcare benefits.
2. Create local partnerships to form childcare centers collectively.
3. Bring together employers and workforce. Educate workforce on availability of training programs and how to get involved in the programs.
4. Educate and provide access to high school students in workforce opportunities – CTE type programs.

GOAL 3. HOUSING

STRATEGY: Develop creative ways to provide affordable housing to the most affected.

ACTIONS

1. Evaluate existing zoning codes and review options for potential inventory, and further research best practices of what is working for housing options in other parts of the country.
2. Create a Task Force to develop a resource list to decipher who is doing what.

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The following are implementable action items that are associated with a responsible organization(s), and a timeline for implementation and completion.

Infrastructure: Grow capacity building for rural communities to get ahead of infrastructure needs

ACTION ITEM	POSSIBLE PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
1. Coordinate and facilitate access to affordable broadband/internet	Idaho Department of Commerce Internet Service Providers Cities Counties Broadband committees NTIA North Idaho EDC's State of Idaho USDA Rural Development Innovia Idaho Business for Education	2022 Ongoing- review annually
2. Create resource guide on funding sources information of infrastructures projects.	PAC North Idaho EDC's North Idaho Emergency Management Innovia	2024 Ongoing- review annually
3. Create a leadership training program that successfully builds grass roots in communities.	NIC Idaho Department of Commerce Idaho Nonprofit Center PAC North Idaho EDC's North Idaho Emergency Management Association of Idaho Cities Idaho Association of Counties	2024
4. Identify the need for improved transportation corridors for movement of commerce.	Idaho Transportation Department Kootenai MPO Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC) US Dept of Transportation Cities / Counties North Idaho Emergency Management Idaho State Police Local Sheriffs	2022

Workforce: Closely align employers and workforce with education for responsive pathways

ACTION ITEM	POSSIBLE PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
1. Educate and encourage employers to provide childcare / childcare benefits.	United Way of North Idaho Local businesses Head Start Early Head Start Idaho Assn of Commerce & Industry (IACI) Idaho Association for Education of Young Children (AEYC)	2022
2. Creating local partnerships to form childcare centers (collectively)	United Way of North Idaho Local businesses North Idaho EDC’s IACI AEYC	2022 Ongoing- review annually
3. Bring together employers and workforce. Educate workforce on availability of training programs and how to get involved in the programs.	Idaho Department of Labor North Idaho College (NIC) Employer Associations Unions School-to-Work programs Hard Hats, Hammers & Hot Dogs North Idaho EDC’s High Schools Community Action Partnership Workforce Development Council (WDC)	2023
4. Educate and provide access to high school students in workforce opportunities – CTE type programs.	State Board of Education NIC Idaho Department of Labor North Idaho EDC’s GIZMO High Schools WDC Idaho Career & Technical Education (CTE)	2023

Housing: *Develop creative ways to provide affordable housing to the most affected*

ACTION ITEM	POSSIBLE PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
1. Evaluate existing zoning codes and review options for potential inventory, and further research best practices of what is working for housing options in other parts of the country.	North Idaho EDC's Association of Realtors Cities / Counties LEAP Housing Panhandle Affordable Housing Alliance (PAHA) Idaho Housing Company Idaho Housing & Finance Association (IHFA) USDA Rural Development Regional Growth Partnership Disability Action Center	2023
2. Create a Task Force to develop a resource list to decipher who is doing what.	Idaho Rural Partnership (IRP) WeCAN Network University of Idaho Idaho Housing Company North Idaho EDC's	2022

COMMUNICATION PLAN

COMMUNICATION PLAN

As 2020 began, COVID-19 emerged as a global pandemic, resulting in severe economic distress in communities across the U.S. This brought new challenges as there was little preparation on how to recover economically from a pandemic.

Each County Office of Emergency Management has a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to foster public awareness of any hazard, and encourage public involvement in emergency planning, training, and exercise. The LEPC’s partner with local, state, and tribal governments, first responders and business and industry for planning, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. In addition to the LEPC, each County Office of Emergency Management has an All-Hazard Mitigation Plan (AHMP) and Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

Sustainability and resiliency in disaster recovery are a collaborative effort of interagency and intergovernmental coordination. Pre-disaster activities focus on integrating resiliency practices into day-to-day operations, while recovery starts at the beginning of a disaster, whether natural or man-made. Coordination is critical to recovery efforts from pre-disaster to full economic recovery. The County Offices of Emergency Management, with assistance from the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security, focus on coordination of the immediate needs during and after a disaster.

As the Region I Economic Development District of Idaho, PAC can assist municipalities in Pre-Disaster, Event Response, and Post Disaster Roles. PAC will be using the following Communication Strategy as a guide to coordinate and collaborate with state and local governments, Tribal Nations, Private Industry, and the public. The chart below identifies the possible roles of federal agencies, statewide organizations and agencies, regional organizations and agencies, and local stakeholders.

GROUP	PRE-DISASTER (PLANNING, PREPARATION, MITIGATION)	EVENT (RESPONSE)	POST-DISASTER (RECOVERY, RESILIENCY)
FEDERAL AGENCIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request funding; fulfill reporting requirements Data/information sharing Relationship building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased communication: identify regional needs and gaps Monitor for federal announcements and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fulfill reporting requirements Communicate ongoing needs Data/information sharing
STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request funding; fulfill reporting requirements Data/information sharing Relationship building Maintain up-to-date state CEDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased communication: identify regional needs and gaps Monitor for state announcements and resources Identify opportunities for short-term response activity collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fulfill reporting requirements Communicate ongoing needs Data/information sharing Identify long-term areas of collaboration (services, programs, funding)

GROUP	PRE-DISASTER (PLANNING, PREPARATION, MITIGATION)	EVENT (RESPONSE)	POST-DISASTER (RECOVERY, RESILIENCY)
REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data/information sharing • Ongoing economic development and planning activities • Monitor for signs of economic stress • Regular cross-functional response team meetings • Relationship building • Maintain up-to-date regional CEDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-functional team takes the lead in coordinating and disseminating information • Frequent, consistent messaging and outreach to local stakeholders • Develop short-term response activities and opportunities for collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct impact assessments to identify ongoing needs • Lead a post-event review • Data/information sharing; monitor trends • Adapt planning and response strategies • Adjust program, service, and funding opportunities • Identify long-term areas of collaboration
LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data/information sharing • Regular cross-functional response team meetings • Relationship building • Coordinate emergency management and other planning efforts with economic development planning • Engagement and communication with business community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in cross-functional response team activities • Frequent, consistent messaging and outreach to stakeholders • Develop short-term response activities and opportunities for collaboration • Create pathways for information gathering from stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide impact assessments to identify ongoing needs • Monitor data trends • Participation in post-event review • Adjust program, service, and funding opportunities • Identify new areas of collaboration