# CEDS Conversation Carousel

**2026 NADO Annual Training Conference**

**Oct. 20**

NADO Research Foundation

EDD CoP
Economic Development District Community of Practice

# A Quick CEDS Refresher & Update Before the Carousel

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More info at: www.nado.org/EDDCoP

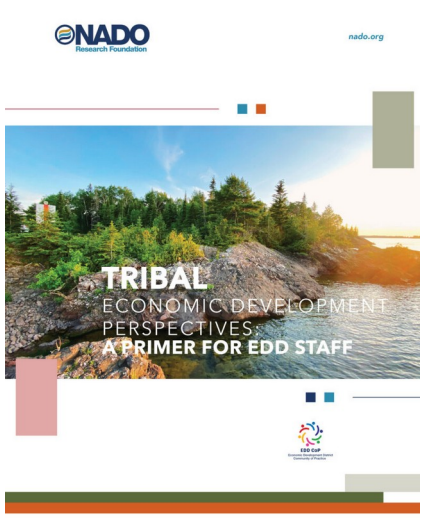
This session is offered through the Economic Development District Community of Practice (EDD CoP), managed by the NADO Research Foundation to build the capacity of the national network of EDDs. To learn more, visit: www.nado.org/EDDCoP. The EDD CoP is made possible through an award from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce (ED22HDQ3070106). The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations in this webinar are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Economic Development Administration or the U.S. Department of Commerce.

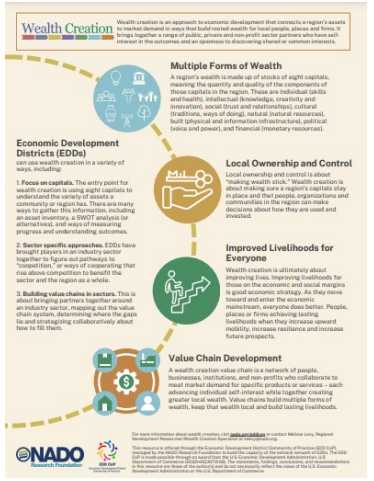
The State of the EDDs & CEDS Content Guidelines Updates (June 2023)

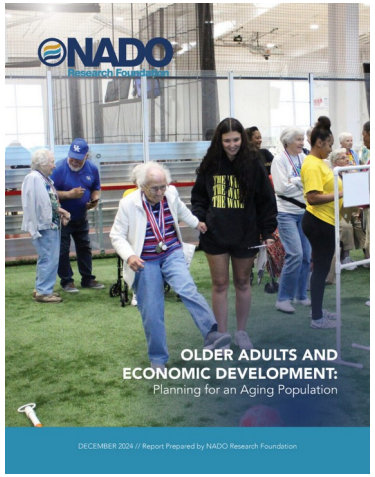
In the spring of 2023, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) designated its 400th Economic Development District (EDD) and also released updates to its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Content Guidelines. This webinar briefing provides a reflection on the state of the national network of EDDs and information about the updated CEDS Content Guidelines that highlight equity, climate resilience, and workforce development. Presentation slides are available here (PDF).

CEDS 101: What You Need to Know Right Now About the CEDS (March 2021)

During this webinar, staff from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, NADO Research Foundation, and Southeast Conference (AK) covered CEDS fundamentals, best practices, and latest trends. The session is intended primarily for new staff working on the CEDS, though it may also be of interest as a refresher for CEDS veterans. Presentation slides are available here (PDF).



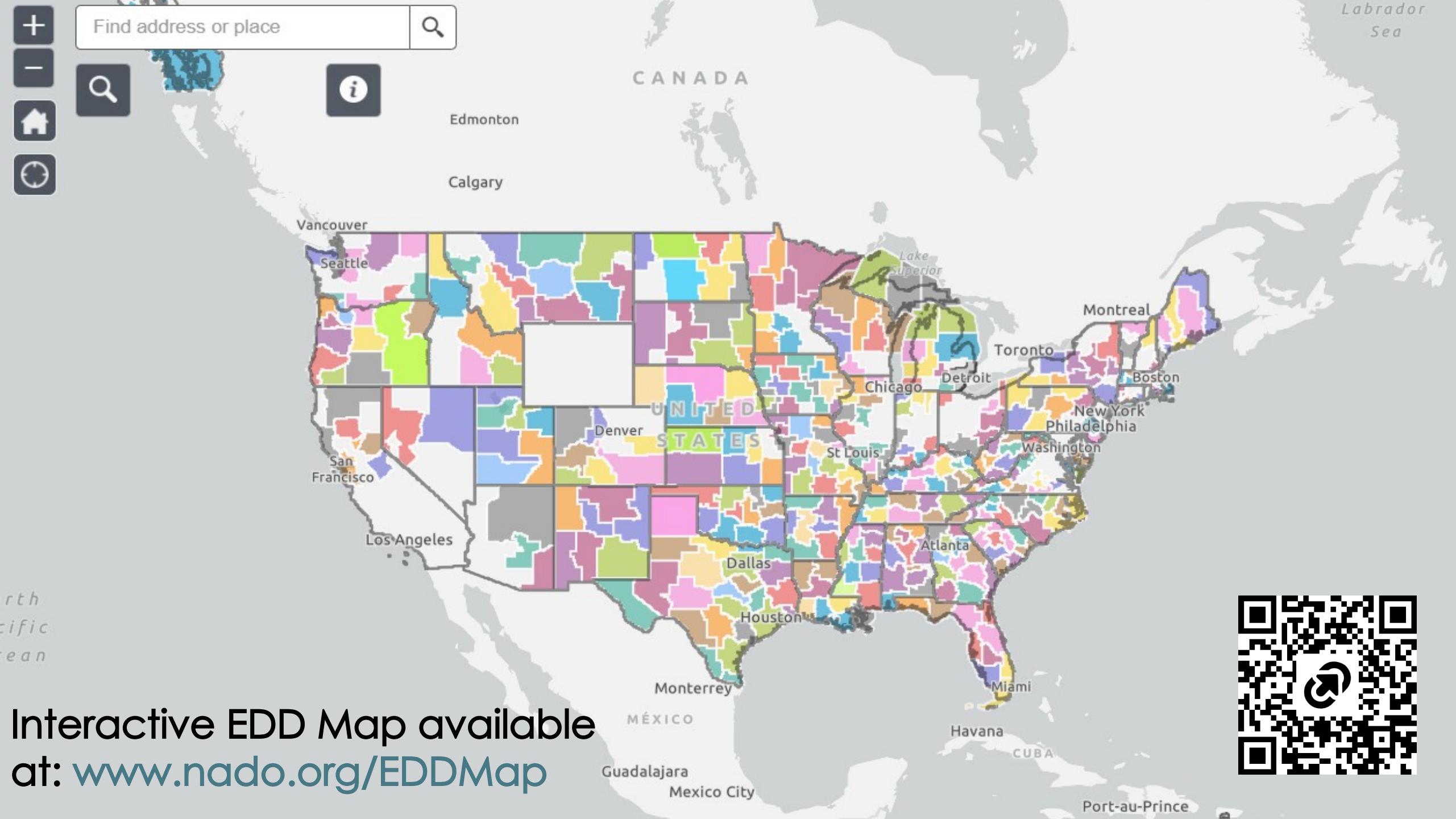
**Wisdom from the Field:**
**10 Practical Tips for EDD Staff to Improve Projects and Programs**

No one ever said doing regional economic development was easy. Whether navigating complex partnerships, aligning diverse community needs, or securing the right resources, EDD staff routinely face a wide range of challenges in their efforts to drive meaningful change. While there's no single roadmap for success, one of the best ways to chart a path forward is by learning from peers who've tackled similar hurdles.

This resource shares ten pieces of advice from Economic Development District staff whose 2025 NADO Impact Award-winning projects show how vision, planning, and collaboration can lead to meaningful results. These insights offer practical guidance for moving initiatives from concept to completion, reflecting the creativity, determination, and problem-solving needed to advance economic and community development. Whether you're starting a new effort or working to complete an existing one, these lessons provide real-world encouragement from those who've successfully navigated the path.

NADO Research Foundation · EDD CoP · September 2025

**Visit: www.nado.org/E**




Interactive EDD Map available at: www.nado.org/EDDMap

Good **economic development**…starts with good economic development **planning!**

- David Ives, US EDA

# The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

- The CEDS is a locally-driven **process and plan** for setting regional economic goals and the strategies to achieve them.

- It creates the space for your region to come to together to identify its strengths and weaknesses and engage a diverse set of partners to create good jobs, diversify the economy, and spur economic growth.

- The CEDS belongs to your region. It can and

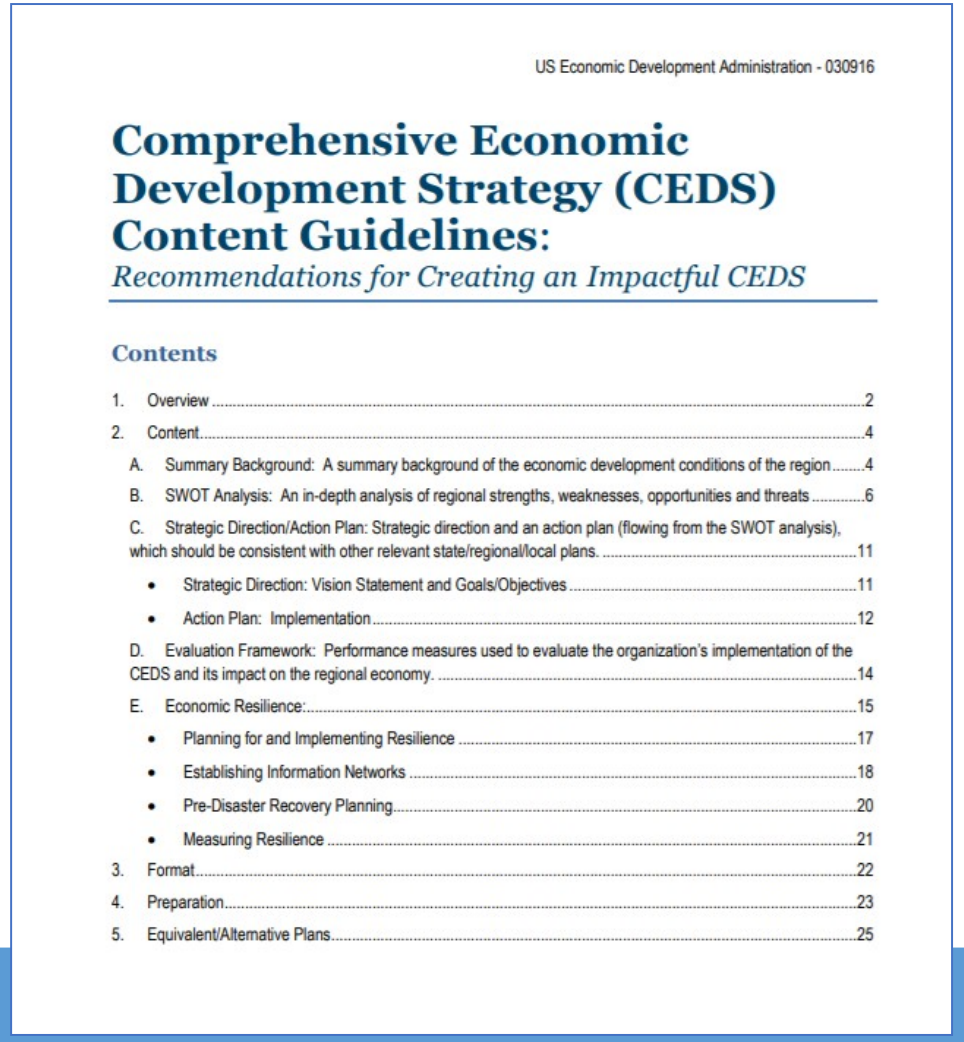
# Additional Background

- Required for designation as an Economic Development District from U.S. EDA
- Tribes and some states and municipalities also maintain a CEDS
- Updated every five years with annual reports
- Submitted to EDA regional office for approval
- Requirement for various EDA funding including EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs & other funding

The Most Impactful CEDS Are:

**C**reative
**E**ngaging
**D**riven by Data
**S**torytellers

# CEDS Content Guidelines



US Economic Development Administration - 030916

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Content Guidelines:**

*Recommendations for Creating an Impactful CEDS*

**Contents**


1. Overview ..... 2
2. Content ..... 4
   - A. Summary Background: A summary background of the economic development conditions of the region ..... 4
   - B. SWOT Analysis: An in-depth analysis of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats ..... 6
   - C. Strategic Direction/Action Plan: Strategic direction and an action plan (flowing from the SWOT analysis), which should be consistent with other relevant state/regional/local plans. ..... 11
     - Strategic Direction: Vision Statement and Goals/Objectives ..... 11
     - Action Plan: Implementation ..... 12
   - D. Evaluation Framework: Performance measures used to evaluate the organization's implementation of the CEDS and its impact on the regional economy. ..... 14
   - E. Economic Resilience: ..... 15
     - Planning for and Implementing Resilience ..... 17
     - Establishing Information Networks ..... 18
     - Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning ..... 20
     - Measuring Resilience ..... 21
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5. Equivalent/Alternative Plans ..... 25


- Intended to help regional planning organizations craft more impactful CEDS
- Provides guidance on the required sections of the CEDS
  - Summary Background
  - SWOT
  - Strategic Direction/Action Plan
  - Evaluation Framework
  - Economic Resilience
- Focused on best practices, case studies, and links
- Collection of suggestions and recommendations. . .*not* a list of additional requirements

https://www.eda.gov/CEDS

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# What are the Required Sections of the CEDS?

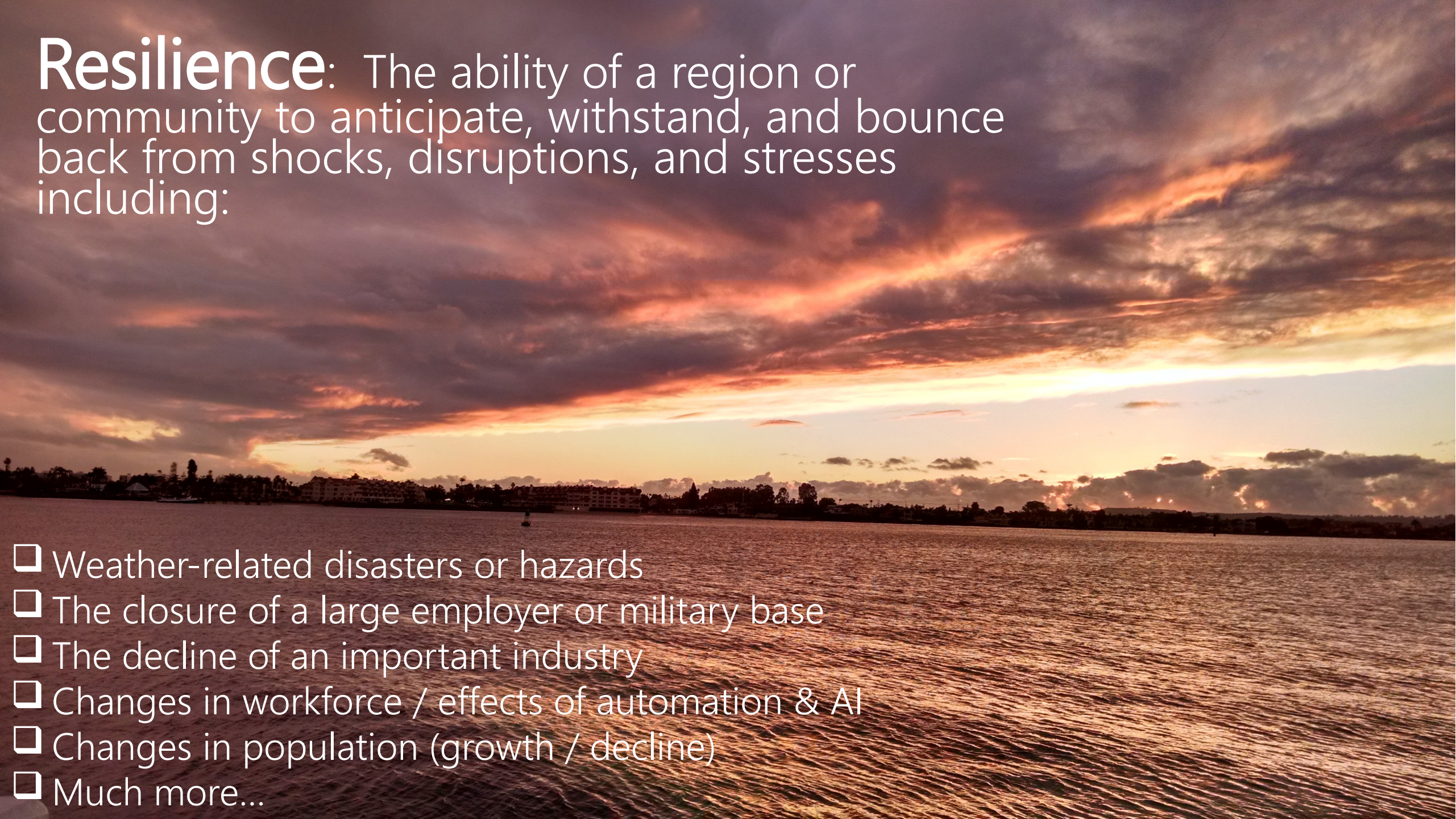
- **Summary Background:** A background summary of the region should answer the question, "What have we done?" and present a clear understanding of the local economic situation, supported by current, relevant data.

- **SWOT:** A SWOT analysis of the regional economy should answer the question, "Where are we now?" by using the relevant data and background information to help identify the critical internal and external factors that speak to the region's unique assets and competitive positioning.

- **Strategic Direction/Action Plan:** The strategic direction and corresponding action plan contained within the CEDS are the heart and soul of the document. They should answer the questions "Where do we want to go?" and "How are we going to get there?" by leveraging the analysis undertaken in the SWOT.

- **Evaluation Framework:** The evaluation framework helps answers the question "How are we doing in meeting our goals?" and serves as a mechanism to gauge progress on the successful implementation of the overall CEDS while providing information for the CEDS Annual Performance Report.

- **Economic Resilience:** In building economic resilience, it is critical that economic development organizations consider their role in the pre- and post-incident



**Resilience**: The ability of a region or community to anticipate, withstand, and bounce back from shocks, disruptions, and stresses including:

- ❑ Weather-related disasters or hazards
- ❑ The closure of a large employer or military base
- ❑ The decline of an important industry
- ❑ Changes in workforce / effects of automation & AI
- ❑ Changes in population (growth / decline)
- ❑ Much more…

**A CEDS shouldn’t just list projects.**

**It identifies regional priorities and builds the momentum, partnerships, and investment needed to advance them.**

# Latest CEDS Guidance (April 2025)

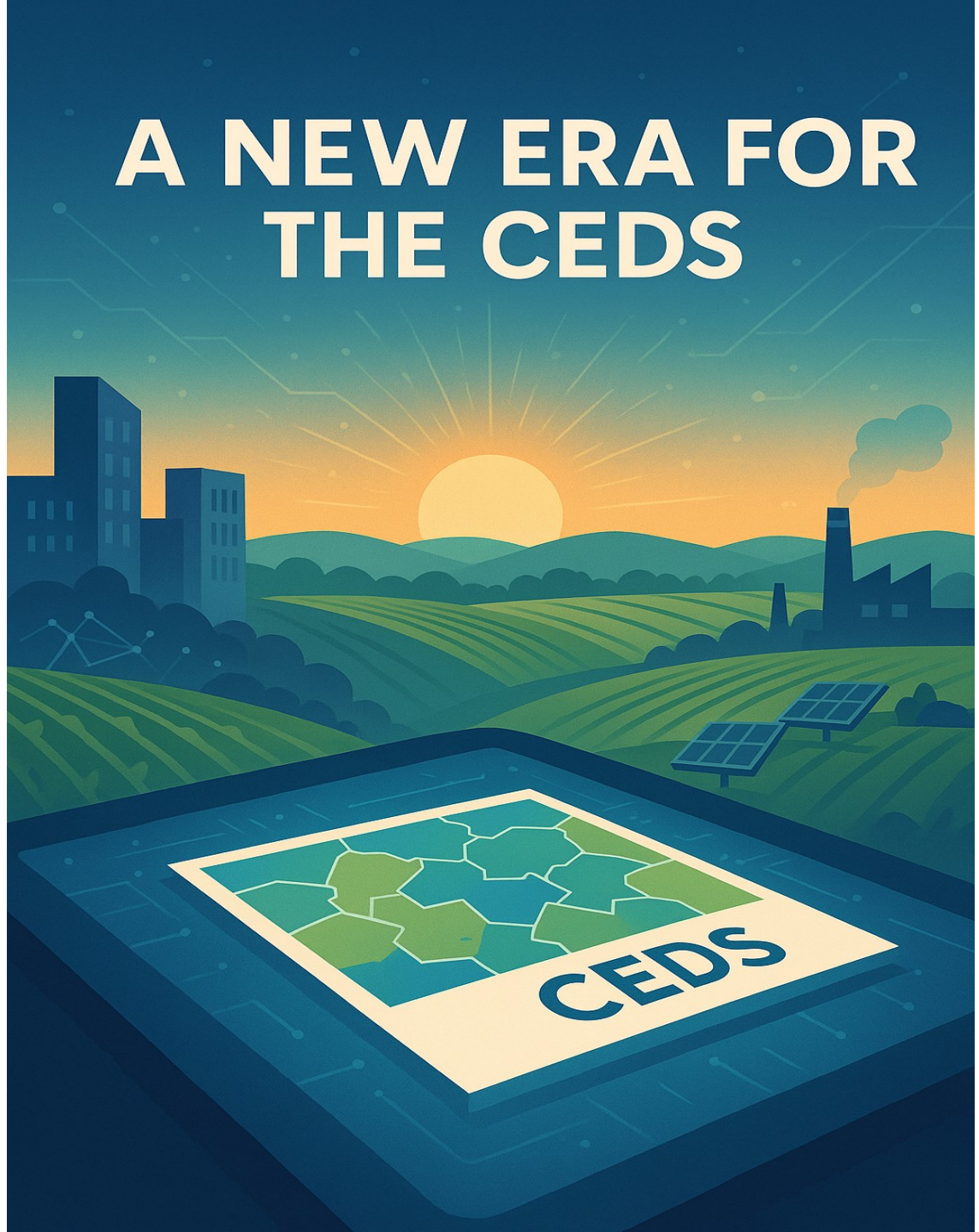
- **In-Process CEDS:** CEDS that are under development (i.e., in any stage of development prior to EDA final approval) should have all references to and sections about equity and/or climate removed from the document.

- **Previously-Approved CEDS:** CEDS that have been previously approved (prior to the change in Administration) by EDA do not need to be changed or altered in order to remove references or sections related to climate or equity. While voluntary changes to remove such language outside of the regular 5-year update process will be allowed (e.g., as part of an annual update), no changes will be required before the regular 5-year update. However, as part of the regular 5-year update, it will be expected that grantees make changes to their CEDS as noted above for in-process CEDS.

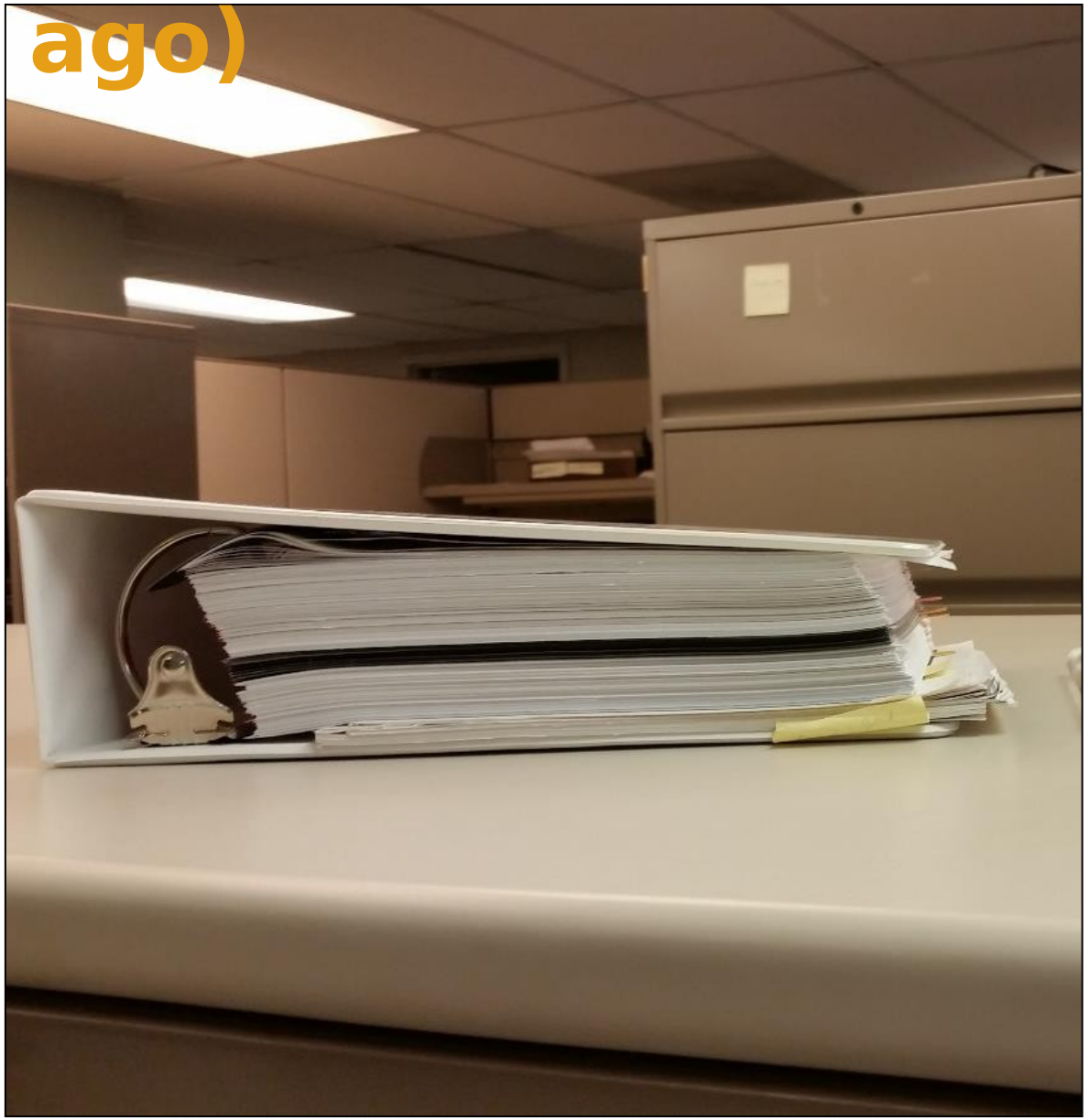
# EDA Investment Priorities

- **Critical Infrastructure**
- **Workforce**
- **Innovation & Entrepreneurship**
- **Economic Recovery Resilience**
- **Manufacturing**

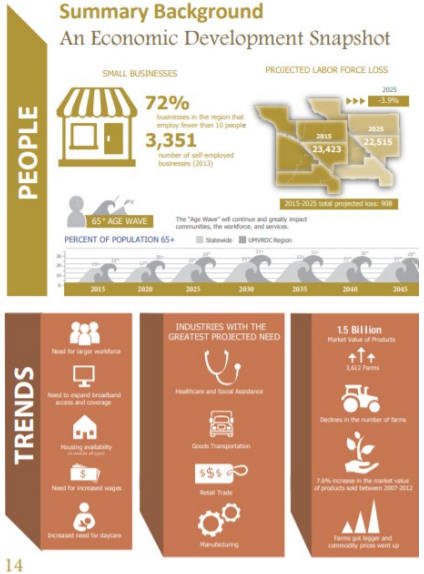
https://www.eda.gov/funding/investment-priorities

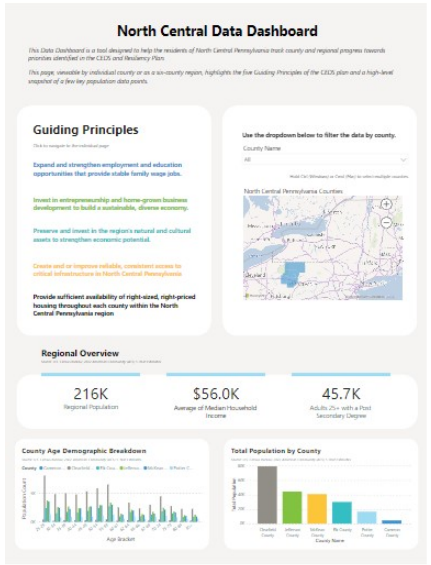

A NEW ERA FOR THE CEDS
CEDS

# The “Door Stopper” CEDS Era (~ 25 years ago)

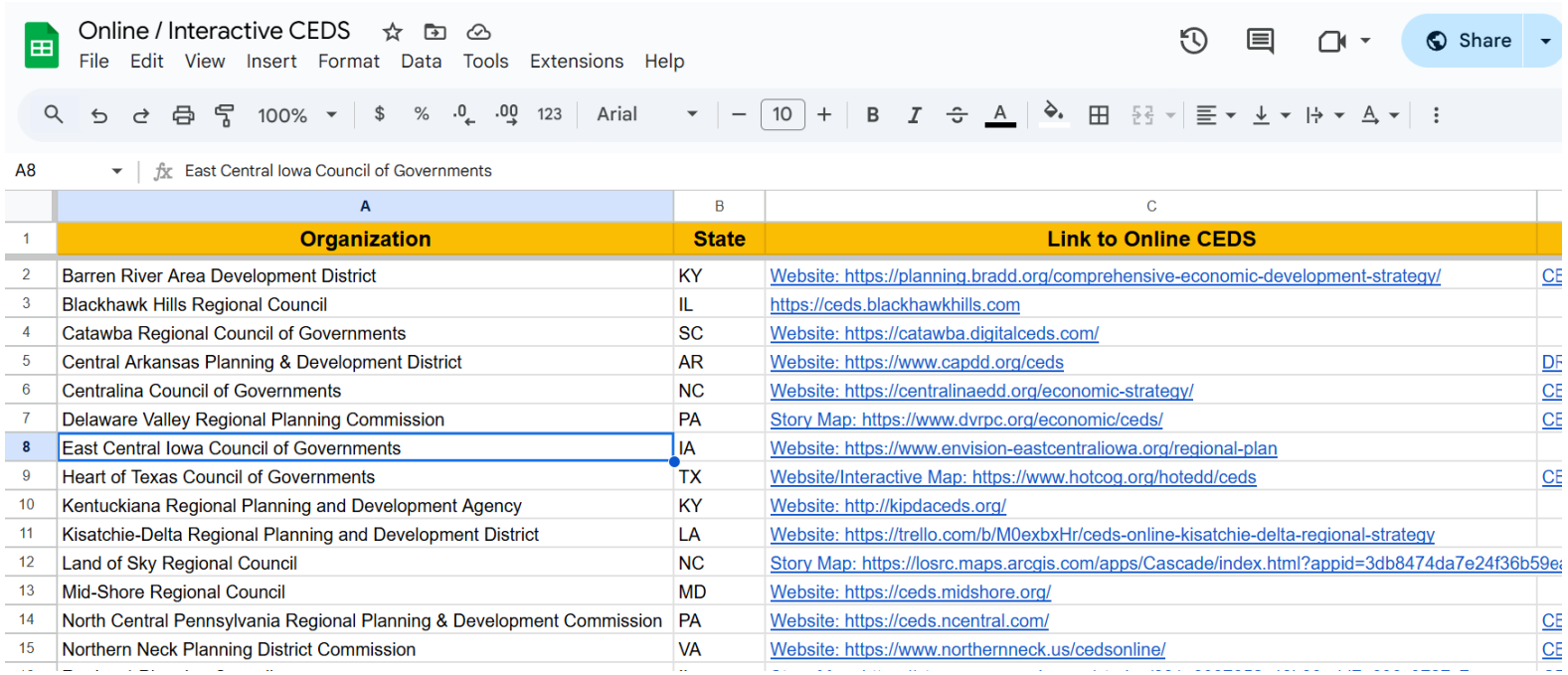


# What Do Today's CEDS Look Like?



# Spreadsheet on Online / Digital CEDS Examples



Online / Interactive CEDS

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help

Share

A8 | East Central Iowa Council of Governments

| | A | B | C |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Organization** | **State** | **Link to Online CEDS** |
| 2 | Barren River Area Development District | KY | Website: https://planning.bradd.org/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy/ |
| 3 | Blackhawk Hills Regional Council | IL | https://ceds.blackhawkhills.com |
| 4 | Catawba Regional Council of Governments | SC | Website: https://catawba.digitalceds.com/ |
| 5 | Central Arkansas Planning & Development District | AR | Website: https://www.capdd.org/ceds |
| 6 | Centralina Council of Governments | NC | Website: https://centralinaedd.org/economic-strategy/ |
| 7 | Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission | PA | Story Map: https://www.dvrpc.org/economic/ceds/ |
| 8 | East Central Iowa Council of Governments | IA | Website: https://www.envision-eastcentraliowa.org/regional-plan |
| 9 | Heart of Texas Council of Governments | TX | Website/Interactive Map: https://www.hotcog.org/hotedd/ceds |
| 10 | Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency | KY | Website: http://kipdaceds.org/ |
| 11 | Kisatchie-Delta Regional Planning and Development District | LA | Website: https://trello.com/b/M0exbxHr/ceds-online-kisatchie-delta-regional-strategy |
| 12 | Land of Sky Regional Council | NC | Story Map: https://losrc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=3db8474da7e24f36b59e |
| 13 | Mid-Shore Regional Council | MD | Website: https://ceds.midshore.org/ |
| 14 | North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning & Development Commission | PA | Website: https://ceds.ncentral.com/ |
| 15 | Northern Neck Planning District Commission | VA | Website: https://www.northernneck.us/cedsonline/ |

**https://tinyurl.com/mwwv**

# What Will Tomorrow’s CEDS Look Lil

iSmartrecruit

# www.CEDSCentral.com

# Stay in Touch!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# Conversation Carousel Instructions

In the Conversation Carousel, you will speak 1:1 with different partners about your CEDS

Choose a seat in the inner or outer circle that is directly across from another person

There are 4 discussion prompts. You will have 10 minutes to discuss each topic with each partner.

After 10 minutes, move one chair to right for a new discussion prompt and partner

After the 4 rounds, we will have 5 minutes for discussion

Share one aspect of your CEDS planning process that has been especially effective. Can this be replicated elsewhere?

What aspect of your CEDS can be improved? What steps are you taking to address this?

# Round #1

In what ways has the CEDS helped your region become more economically resilient , and what emerging risks or opportunities are shaping your next steps?

# Round #2

How are you engaging your community and stakeholders in your CEDS work, and what communication or storytelling approaches have helped build momentum?

# Round #3

What indicators or data sources have been most helpful in tracking progress on your CEDS, and where do you still need better information?

# Round #4

# Report Outs & Reflection