

Regional Early Action Planning Grants of 2019 (REAP) Close Out Report Form



Mendocino Council of Governments

November 25, 2024

REAP Close Out Report Form Instructions

This form is for Regional Early Action Planning Grants of 2019 (REAP) grant holders to satisfy the reporting requirements of California Health and Safety Code section 50515.04. The report must be submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) via email to reap@hcd.ca.gov no later than December 31, 2025.

Additional information about the REAP program is found at the program's webpage at: <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-and-funding/programs-active/regional-early-action-planning-grants-of-2019>

Please proceed to the REAP Close Out Report Form on the next page and complete Parts I–X.

REAP Close Out Report Form

Part I – Summary

Briefly describe the grantee's REAP project(s), including but not limited to the following information:

1. Overview of the project
2. Project start date, duration and completion
3. Project goals and relevance to REAP goals
4. Proposed uses and actions taken in support of proposed uses
5. Actions that had the greatest impact on housing production
6. Overall outcomes including quantified outcomes

In early 2021, the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) applied for REAP funds to assist its local jurisdictions in implementing housing related activities that would facilitate housing production in the region. In its role as the region's Council of Governments (COG), MCOG received notice in May 2021 of an award for \$383,245 for this purpose. The majority of the funds were sub-allocated to the area's five jurisdictions (County of Mendocino, and the cities of Fort Bragg, Point Arena, Ukiah, and Willits). A Standard Agreement was approved by HCD on February 11, 2022, and was subsequently amended on August 3, 2023. Disbursement of funds was made to the last of the five sub-recipients on September 26, 2024, essentially completing the project. Funds not used for sub-allocation were put towards administrative and monitoring costs of MCOG.

As noted, the overall objective of the project was to facilitate housing production in the Mendocino County region, furthering housing related goals of the REAP program as well as those found in the housing elements of MCOG's member jurisdictions. Allocated funds provided assistance for various projects which helped simplify the residential development process through the local planning agencies. This included the following activities:

City of Fort Bragg: The City was allocated \$80,581.77 which was used towards the purchase of Permitting Software Licensing and the design of a Community Land Trust (CLT) pilot project. The funds covered most of the licensing, which will streamline the application process, while adding additional tracking capacity. The CLT project used a portion of the REAP funds, in conjunction with SB 2, LEAP, and Permanent Local Housing Allocation funds, to develop and implement a CLT to preserve long-term housing affordability. The REAP funded portion of the project was completed on September 26, 2024.

City of Point Arena: The City was allocated \$16,380.67 which was used towards updating the City's Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) ordinance. The intent of the updated ADU ordinance is to help stimulate more housing production in the City,

streamline the permitting process, make the City's code more user-friendly, and ensure that the City's regulations are consistent with the State's. The REAP funded portion of the project was completed on September 30, 2022.

City of Ukiah: The City was allocated \$95,448.53 which was used towards the purchase of Permitting Software Licensing. The funds covered most of the licensing, which will streamline the application process, while adding additional tracking capacity. The REAP funded portion of the project was completed on September 30, 2022.

City of Willits: An amount of \$61,403.80 was allocated to the City, which was used in conjunction with LEAP and SB2 fund, to develop an administrative draft environmental document for update to the City's General Plan (GP). The REAP funded portion of the project was completed on September 18, 2024. The update to the GP will accommodate current growth projections, address current community issues, and meet new statutory requirements relevant to housing needs. The update will also include an amendment to the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) to include up to 313 acres of land located south and southwest of the existing city limits for the purpose of providing new housing opportunities, streamlining the approval process, and accelerating housing development.

County of Mendocino: The County share of REAP funds, \$102,105.73, was used to purchase new permitting and GIS software. The REAP funded portion of the project was completed July 31, 2024. The new software will help streamline the permitting process for developers, homeowners, and County staff.

While the funded projects described above are expected to help streamline or simplify housing development within the region's member jurisdictions, available data does not yet show quantifiable trends at these early stages since implementation.

Part II – Lead Agency and Partnerships

List lead agency and partnerships, including names, position titles, organizations, and the roles and responsibilities of each. What did those collaborative relationships and processes look like?

The Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) was the lead agency for the project. James Sookne, Program Manager, was the primary coordinator of the project for MCOG. Partners included the RTPA's five member jurisdictions, the County of Mendocino (Planning & Building Services staff), and the cities of Fort Bragg (Sarah McCormick, Economic Development Manager), Point Arena (City staff), Ukiah (Craig Schlatter, Community Development Director), and Willits (Dusty Duley, Community Development Director), which were also the sub-recipients of the REAP funds administered by MCOG.

As the sub-recipients of the REAP funding, agency representatives worked with MCOG staff to identify appropriate housing related projects that would ultimately qualify for the program. Given the limited funding for the Mendocino County region, the sub-allocated amounts were used to partially cover projects selected for the jurisdictions. Partnering extended beyond REAP related project planning with MCOG staff adding a Regional Housing Update to its monthly Technical Advisory Committee (advisory committee to the RTPA Board) agendas in which topics on housing were discussed (e.g. benefits of Pro-Housing Designation, regional RTP/RHNA processes, legislative updates, etc.).

Part III – Drivers

Answer the following questions:

1. Did any local, state, or federal legislation or mandates drive the project(s)? (SB 35, AB 1397, etc.)
2. Was it a community-driven effort?
3. Were there additional funding opportunities present?

1. Projects identified by the local jurisdictions of the region were chosen to further goals and policies found within local housing elements. The City of Willits has used REAP allocated funds to partially cover costs associated with updating components of its General Plan. These will include in part housing element-related policies regarding affordable housing development incentives (HE-1A and HE-2A) and second units (HE-2C). Similar policies found within other city and County housing elements (County of Mendocino policies HE-2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, & 3.5; Fort Bragg policies H-1.2, 1.3, 5.1, 5.2, & 5.3; Point Arena policies 1-1, 1-2, 1-3.1, 2-1, 2-2, & 3-1; and Ukiah policies 1-1, 2-2, 2-3, & 2-4) resulted in the selection of city projects such as community development permit streamlining software, a community land trust, and zoning ordinance amendments. Projects chosen were also partially guided by State legislation such as Senate Bill 35 (2018) concerning the easing of local restrictions on affordable housing projects, and SB 9 (2021) regarding exclusionary zoning.

2. Community outreach and input played important roles in the area (general) plan development, the ADU ordinance amendment process, and the development of the CLT.

3. LEAP and SB2 funds were also used by participating jurisdictions for housing related planning projects.

Part IV – Engagement Process

Answer the following questions:

1. Who were your stakeholders?
2. What did the engagement process look like?
3. What role did stakeholders play in the process? (Keep in mind: training, education, council formation, technical assistance, etc.)
4. What were the outcomes of the engagement process?

1. The project stakeholders consisted of the sub-recipients of the REAP funds, or the community development/planning departments of the County of Mendocino and the four incorporated cities in the region, Fort Bragg, Point Arena, Ukiah, and Willits.

2. Staff worked with individual department heads/representatives to determine needs and best project types that would facilitate housing development. Public outreach was involved in cases where new/updated policies, plans, or amendments were to be considered.

3. Again, stakeholders were jurisdictions within the region. Each used its respective portion of the regional funds for projects involving housing facilitation in some capacity. Included were community development permitting software, housing related ordinance amendments, a community land trust, and area plan (as part of the larger general plan) updates, which would result, in part, in housing goal or policy implementation.

4. As a means of developing housing policy for the noted area plan updates, the engagement process is ongoing through surveys and other forms of public engagement (e.g. workshops, public hearings, etc.).

Part V – Challenges

Answer the following questions:

1. What challenges were encountered?
2. What solutions were encountered or created?
3. Are there areas for improvement of policy alignment at the state or federal level to help achieve this project more easily?

1. The primary challenges involved determining projects that were appropriate for REAP funding. MCOG worked with local jurisdiction community development staffs (ultimately, award sub-recipients) to formulate eligible housing related projects. Rural agencies such as these often have budget and related staffing/turnover problems, and at times this led to delays in defining a project.

2. The challenges were resolved once a clear project and direction were identified between MCOG and the individual sub-recipient. Originally agreed upon projects needed to be revised in some cases, which added delays related to HCD approval before they were able to move forward.

3. Ultimately, the projects were completed (or are currently near completion) because of the flexibility provided by the REAP program in approving a variety of project modifications.

Part VI – Outcomes

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the current or projected outcomes? What are the benefits?
2. Did actual outcomes meet expectations?
3. Have new opportunities arisen as a result of this project?
4. What are the next steps?

1. As mentioned in above sections of this report, REAP funds were sub-allocated to the following projects:

City of Fort Bragg: The City was allocated \$80,581.77 which was used towards the purchase of permitting software and the design of a Community Land Trust (CLT) pilot project. The funds covered most of the licensing, which will streamline the application process, while adding additional tracking capacity. The CLT project used a portion of the REAP funds, in conjunction with SB 2, LEAP, and Permanent Local Housing Allocation funds, to develop and implement a CLT to preserve long-term housing affordability.

City of Point Arena: The City was allocated \$16,380.67 which was used towards updating the City's Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) ordinance. The intent of the updated ADU ordinance is to help stimulate more housing production in the City, streamline the permitting process, make the City's code more user-friendly, and ensure that the City's regulations are consistent with the State's.

City of Ukiah: The City was allocated \$95,448.53 which was used towards the purchase of permitting software. The funds covered most of the licensing, which will streamline the application process, while adding additional tracking capacity.

City of Willits: An amount of \$61,403.80 was allocated to the City, which was used in conjunction with LEAP and SB2 fund, to develop an administrative draft environmental document for update to the City's General Plan (GP). The update to the GP will accommodate current growth projections, address current community issues, and meet new statutory requirements relevant to housing needs. The update will also include an amendment to the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) to include up to 313 acres of land located south and southwest of the existing city limits for the purpose of providing new housing opportunities, streamlining the approval process, and accelerating housing development.

County of Mendocino: The County share of REAP funds, \$102,105.73, was used to purchase new permitting and GIS software. The new software will help streamline the permitting process for developers, homeowners, and County staff.

Each of the projects are intended to help streamline or simplify housing development within the region's member jurisdictions.

2. It is difficult to measure what the current/projected impacts are/will be on housing development at this early stage.
3. Simplified or flexible permitting, zoning allowances, and area plan policies are expected to lead to new opportunities for housing development with respect to reduced time and barriers, as well as increases in density through a larger variety of zoning districts and permitted land uses.
4. Next steps will depend largely on private developer initiative.

Part VII – Replicability

Answer the following questions:

1. What aspects of the project could be replicated in other communities?
2. What useful resources and tools were implemented? Were there specific tools used for specific regions or sectors?

1. Projects funded through the REAP program are highly replicable in other communities, and in some cases even required by State law as a means of removing barriers to housing development or increasing density where appropriate.

2. Online permitting software for the Cities of Fort Bragg and Ukiah and the County of Mendocino was partially covered with agencies' shares of REAP funding. Other funds were put towards consulting costs to implement code amendments or develop area plans.

Part VIII – Project Highlights, Best Practices and Anticipated Achievements

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the most prominent project highlights and why?
2. What are some of the best practices that could be used by other agencies at a local, regional, state or federal level?
3. What are some long-term achievements that could result from the overall project?

1. The main highlight of the funding was the assistance it provided local community development agencies to move housing facilitating projects forward. Smaller rural jurisdictions often struggle to implement mandated programs without such support.

2. The policies being advanced by the regional agencies focus on removing barriers to housing development and increasing housing densities, which will be critical in reducing VMT and GHG related impacts associated with land use development relevant to all levels of government.

3. Increases in residential development will serve the dual purposes of accommodating the need for additional housing as well as reducing VMT and GHG.

Part IX – Additional Resources

Provide web links to:

1. the project itself, and
2. resources used throughout the project, and any other relevant resources.

1. REAP funds were sub-allocated towards the following projects:

City of Ukiah online permitting software:

<https://www4.citizenserve.com/Portal/PortalController>

City of Point Arena ADU Toolkit: <https://pointarena.ca.gov/adu-toolkit/>

County of Mendocino online permitting software:

<https://etrakit.mendocinocounty.org/eTRAKiT3/login.aspx?It=either&rd=~/PermitApplication/confirmation.aspx>

City of Fort Bragg: The City is using the software for internal permit processing and is working to make it available for public use as soon as possible.

City of Willits is currently in consultant led process to develop an amendment to the General Plan.

2. Product purchases or consultants used to complete projects are listed below:

Ukiah: Citizenserve online permitting <https://www.citizenserve.com/>

County: Centralsquare eTrakit permitting software

<https://www.centernalsquare.com/solutions/public-administration-software/community-development>

City of Fort Bragg: Accela permitting software:

<https://www.accela.com/solutions/building/>

City of Willits: Planwest Partners, Inc. <https://planwestpartners.com/>

City of Fort Bragg: Marie Jones Consulting: <https://www.mariejonesconsulting.com/>

Part X – Further Information

Provide information on who can be reached for HCD to obtain more information about the project. Include names, phone numbers, and email addresses for one or more individuals.

Please direct REAP related questions to James Sookne, Mendocino Council of Governments, Program Manager, (707) 234-3434, jsookne@dbcteam.net