

Building Metropolitan Washington's First Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), with support from its partners in the Potomac Regional Alliance, is leading the region's first-ever Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), a collaborative effort to establish a shared vision and action plan for economic growth and shared prosperity.

What is the CEDS and how is it developed?

The CEDS is a five-year economic plan that acts as a framework for regional economic development, collaboration, and implementation. The process brings together public, private, nonprofit, and civic sector stakeholders to identify priority areas and actions that advance inclusive economic opportunities, improve competitiveness against peer regions, and build resilience.

A Steering Committee with representatives from economic development authorities, business groups, academic institutions, and foundations is guiding the development of the strategy, providing strategic direction and expertise. Along with input from a broader set of stakeholders, the CEDS will reflect a diverse and representative mix of perspectives from across the region.

The process includes analysis of regional economic conditions and trends, assessment of strengths and challenges, development of a shared vision and strategic priorities, consideration of workforce development and economic resilience, and implementation and evaluation frameworks to guide future action. COG will submit the final CEDS to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) for approval, which can unlock access to federal and state funding as well as private investment.

What is an Economic Development District?

Following approval of the CEDS, the region can apply to the EDA for designation as an Economic Development District (EDD), an organizational framework that formalizes regional partnerships and collaboration while strengthening the region's capacity to drive sustained growth, jobs, and investment. While 85 percent of U.S. counties are within an EDD, the COG region is one of the few large metropolitan areas that is not. An EDD provides the framework for implementing the CEDS and advancing the region's long-term economic competitiveness.

Stay engaged with the CEDS process

Throughout the CEDS development process, COG will provide regular updates through its website and an email distribution list, including potential engagement opportunities and sharing key project milestones. For more information, please sign up for email updates at www.mwcog.org/subscribe. You can also reach the COG team by contacting us via email: ceds@mwcog.org.