

Northern Colorado Cluster Study Post COVID-19

Throughout 2019, NoCo REDI dedicated thoughtful time to exploring industry clusters for Northern Colorado. The goal of aligning the regional economic development efforts around a shared set of industry clusters was to develop a common language, a unified message, and a laser-focused programmatic response that would be targeted to the industry clusters that represent the region's areas of strength and greatest prospects for resilient growth.

In many ways, this was tied to the need to continue to explore resilience models for economic development in the region. Northern Colorado is not a stranger to emergencies: notable floods, fires, tornadoes and a global economic recession have each impacted our communities sometime in the past 12 years. However, despite the risks and impacts of natural disasters and potentially devastating economic cycles, our region has adapted and thrived.

Resilience is a key trait of our region, and as Economic Developers, we sought to better formalize our approach to economic development using resiliency as a lens. Knowing and accepting that we are vulnerable to the unknown is a strength. Communities throughout the West exhibit a spirit of adventure, a need for exploration of the unknown, and the application of independent thought in the face of new challenges and new ideas.

The work underlying this report was completed in 2019, with final edits and changes made in January and February of 2020. Our original plans for publishing and sharing the report in March were put aside to focus 100% of our collective effort at the immediate regional economic response to the COVID-19 Emergency.

Now, in June 2020, we are pleased to take a moment to share this work. This regional strategy is a continuation of many of the programs and activities that individual communities are already doing on their own and that NoCo REDI has begun to formalize through its network of partners in collaboration over several years. Our cluster-based approach continues to provide a strong regional data foundation to frame how we will continue to build a resilient northern Colorado.

This work remains relevant and truly needed in a post-COVID world, as we all navigate the changes in how we work together, how businesses operate, how rapid changes to the business landscape impact in-demand worker skills, and how rapid adaptation by entire industries takes place.