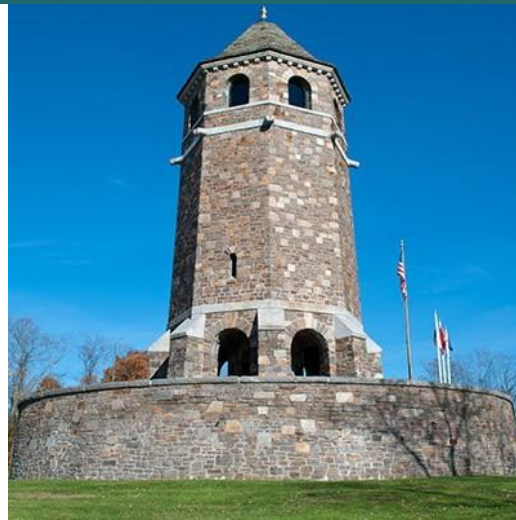


ACT GREATER HARTFORD

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
for Growth and Equity in the Capitol Region

Public Comment Presentation, 7/27/2023

2023



CRCOG
CAPITOL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

MH METRO ★ HARTFORD
A ALLIANCE

CEDS Update Committee

- Ron Angelo, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology
- Chip Beckett, Small Business Owner
- Jim Boucher, Capital Workforce Partners
- Sean Bradbury, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities
- Joe Budd, Connecticut Business Industry Association
- Leslie Francione, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology
- Jennifer Gifford, United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut
- Eric Gjede, Connecticut Business Industry Association
- Elysa Gordon, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
- Kristen Gorski, Town of West Hartford
- David Griggs, MetroHartford Alliance
- David Hopkins, Urban League
- Jim Horan, LISC
- Jackie Mandyck, The iQuilt Partnership
- Patrick McMahon, Town of Windsor
- Lisa Mercurio, AdvanceCT
- Ony Obiocha, CTNext
- Eric Trott, Town of Coventry
- Jen Widness, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC)
- Jay Williams, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
- Tom Yelich, Trinity College

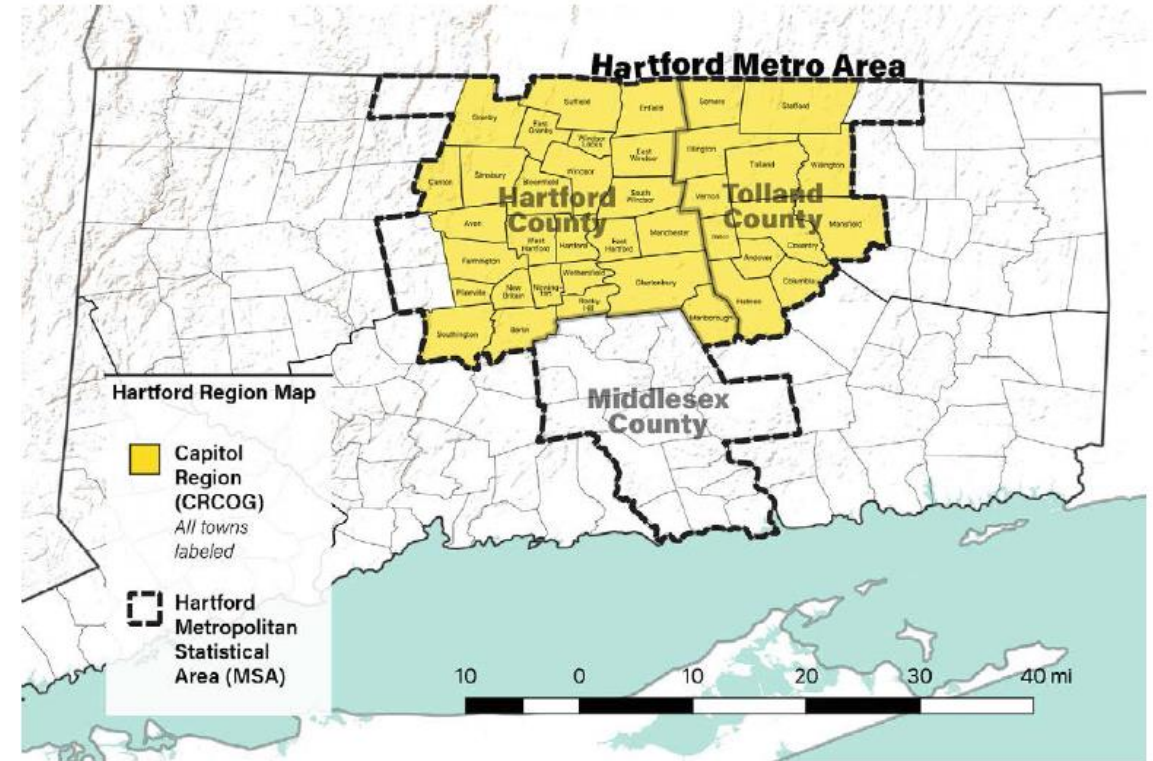
Exciting Update!

- Economic Development District Designation, U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)

What is a CEDS?

- CEDS presents the collective, coordinated actions that entities and organizations agree to take to create economic prosperity in their region.
- Actions are grounded in economic realities supported by data, information, and intelligence.

Capitol Region CEDS Region



CEDS Process

Stakeholder Engagement

- **CEDS Update Committee**
- **Industry Leaders Sub-Committee**
- **Small Business Focus Groups**
- **Service Provider Interviews**
- **Public Presentation & Comment Period**

Research & Analysis

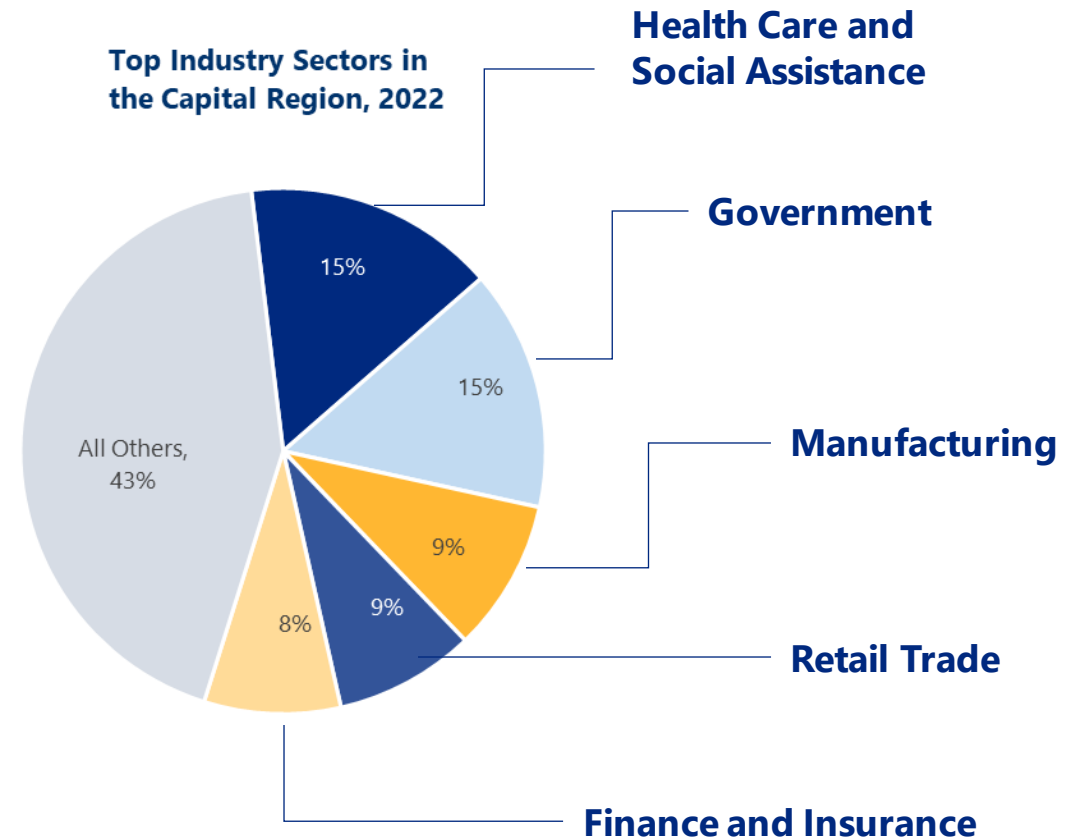
- **Demographics**
- **Economy**
- **Entrepreneurship**
- **Labor Force**
- **Real Estate**

What We Learned From the Data

4 Key Findings:

- Racial equity is improving in the Capitol Region, but significant gaps remain, specifically for wages, education, disconnected youth, and rent burden.
- The Capitol Region is struggling with resilience on measures of housing, community capital, and institutional/governance.
- As older workers retire in large numbers, attracting and retaining young people will be critical to the health of the Capitol Region's workforce.
- The office sector is declining rapidly while housing costs threaten the residential sector.

Top Industry Sectors by Employment



What We Learned From Stakeholders



CEDS implementation: The biggest hurdle. The region needs to come together, act regionally, and be focused.



Small businesses and entrepreneurs: The Region needs to do better in supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs. Better connections to existing resources are needed, and a better understanding of barriers.



Marketing: The Capitol Region needs to tell its story better (internally and externally) for talent recruitment and business attraction. Nobody owns marketing currently. There is a lack of sense of place regionally.



Workforce: This is THE critical issue that businesses throughout the region, across all sectors, and of all sizes are facing. The region needs to scale existing programs such as Dual Track, build stronger private-sector partnerships, and create more apprenticeships.



Skills in-demand: Top skills needed in the workforce include Healthcare, CDL, Tech, and Manufacturing. There is a mismatch between labor force skills and the needs of employers.



High school: Needs significantly more attention. The region's youth need to be a priority.



Housing market: The active market is an opportunity and a challenge. There is a significant need for affordable workforce housing. The region needs to prioritize homeownership.



Attraction potential: The region has strength and opportunities to attract Finance, Insurance/Insure-Tech, Life Sciences, and Advanced Manufacturing businesses.



Midsized companies: The region's midsize companies are struggling the most to attract and retain workers.



Infrastructure: Prioritize second track to increase rail access and continue to make regional connections. Elevate the airport as an asset.



City of Hartford: Equitable and inclusive growth is key. As Hartford goes, the region goes. Established a long-term vision with Hartford 400, needs short-term action.



Higher-ED: Demographic cliff on the horizon by 2025 (15-20% drop in enrollment). There is an opportunity to connect into workforce development.



Equity: Resource access is an issue in terms of who benefits from financial resources coming in. There is a need for stronger local networks to distribute resources and information. Grow from within.



Office space conundrum: Thousands of square feet coming onto the market, but no workforce availability. What is the future use of all of this space?



Quality of place: Critical for talent attraction and retention. Prioritize bike lanes and assess the viability of converting the old rail line downtown to a bike corridor. Continue investing in connections to the river, arts, and culture.

Goals

GOAL 1 ➤ **Adapt the physical environment to meet current and future needs**

GOAL 2 ➤ **Break down barriers for entrepreneurs and small businesses**

GOAL 3 ➤ **Hyperfocus on existing businesses**

GOAL 4 ➤ **Create equitable economic opportunity**

GOAL 5 ➤ **Restructure the CEDS implementation framework**

An Unyielding Commitment to
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

*DEI relates to every page of the
CEDS, as well as having its own
section of targeted action strategies.*

GOAL 1**Adapt the physical environment to meet the current and future needs of businesses and residents****Initiative 1.A) Focus on adaptive reuse of buildings in urban and suburban core areas**

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
1.A.1 Develop more collaborative workspaces	Provide flexible, affordable office space for startups, freelancers, and small businesses.	MetroHartford	iQuilt (Downtown)	
1.A.2 Create downtown neighborhood districts	These areas should have an abundance of restaurants, culture, entertainment, shopping, sports, and recreation with unobtrusive parking, and other services within walkable distances along greenway streets and open-space plazas.		CT Next CRDA (Downtown) CT Main St. (Regional) Hartford 400	
1.A.3 Provide spaces that create a strong network for spurring creative talent	To support the growth of creative industries.	Greater Hartford Arts Council CT Next		
1.A.4 Target young professionals and empty nesters by facilitating mixed-use developments	The goals are to create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods that offer a wide range of amenities and services, while also supporting the existing businesses and infrastructure.		HYPE (Metro Hartford) Planners (zoning) Banks (financing) Small scale developers	
1.A.5 Create fund for small scale developers	Partner with insurance companies in the region to establish a fund for small scale developers to use for mixed-use and housing projects.	MetroHartford	Insurance companies	

Theme Alignment: Workforce · Small Business and Entrepreneurship · Housing · Placemaking · Business Environment · Organizing for Action

GOAL 1**Adapt the physical environment to meet the current and future needs of businesses and residents****Initiative 1.B) Reshape the regional housing market**

Action		Description	Lead	Partners	Status
1.B.1	Develop a 360-degree regional future housing strategy	Advance equitable, environmentally friendly, and healthy residential development throughout the region by addressing housing supply, affordability, and availability.	CRCOG	Community leaders Planners Development community	
					
1.B.2	Create a program geared toward first-time homebuyers	Reduce housing finance and transaction costs.	To be determined as part of the housing strategy.	Banks/non-profits	
1.B.3	Support mixed-income housing development throughout the region	Vertical and horizontal mixed-use property development to help address the needs for diverse, affordable housing and to provide easily accessible, walkable, smartly designed, and environmentally sensitive communities.		AARP Age Well Collaborative	

Initiative 1.C) Advance regional connectivity

Action		Description	Lead	Partners	Status
1.C.1	Support Hartford400 Vision	Continue to move forward with core elements of Hartford400’s vision for a comprehensive, river-centered action plan that integrates environmental, economic, social, transportation, and cultural aspirations.		CRCOG	
1.C.2	Support Greater Hartford Mobility Study	Support and advance the GHMS vision to improve mobility by planning an integrated, resilient, multi modal transportation system in the Greater Hartford Region, thereby enhancing the quality of life and economy	CT DOT	CRCOG	

GOAL 2

Break down barriers for entrepreneurs and small businesses

Initiative 2.A) Take the pulse of the entrepreneurial ecosystem

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
2.A.1	Conduct a regional ecosystem assessment	Identify the disconnects between the supply and demand for small business resources.	Chambers throughout the region HEDCO SAMA Entrepreneurial Center at Hartford College SBDC CCAT	
2.A.2	Convene an advisory group of underrepresented entrepreneurs and business owners	To provide input on existing resources and programs, guide the development of new programs, and enhance reach into underserved communities.	Collaboration of Minority Women Professionals CCAT	


GOAL 2**Break down barriers for entrepreneurs and small businesses****Initiative 2.B) Grow youth entrepreneurship opportunities**

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
2.B.1	Build a pipeline of young talent	Invest in and expand youth entrepreneurship offerings.	Urise Ventures Junior Achievement Technical High Schools CCAT	
2.B.2	Weave entrepreneurship through education and workforce development	All education stages include a curriculum that focuses on the core skills of starting and running a business.	Community Colleges Goodwin University Trinity College UHart Entrepreneurial & Women's Business Center Build Hartford (UCONN) CCAT	
2.B.3	Highlight entrepreneurship as a viable career option	Promote the benefits of entrepreneurship as a career option for students, just like any other career path.	The Young Legends CWP	
2.B.4	Create experiential opportunities in entrepreneurship	Expand opportunities for the region's youth to connect with the entrepreneurial community	Co-working spaces, incubators, accelerators K-12 system Colleges & Universities CCAT	

GOAL 2

Break down barriers for entrepreneurs and small businesses

Initiative 2.C) Create a front door to the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
2.C.1 	Create a digital resource navigator Online hub where entrepreneurs in the region can search for resources and information.	UConn BUILD	SBDC CT Next AdvanceCT CCAT	
2.C.2	Hire an in-person resource navigator Champion of entrepreneurship for the region, connecting business owners to resources and bringing together partners.			

Initiative 2.D) Expand access to capital for entrepreneurs and small businesses

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
2.D.1	Review loan application processes Simplify the process for small business applicants.		Area small business lenders	
2.D.2	Deepen relationships with the region's local CDFIs Elevate their work and expand their portfolios and influence.	CT Next CCAT	Local CDFI's	
2.D.3	Attract and grow minority-owned and operating lending institutions and fintech companies Address the lack of Black-owned financial institutions in the region.	CT Next To find co-lead for small business initiatives	HEDCO	

Theme Alignment: Small Business and Entrepreneurship · Business Environment · Organizing for Action

GOAL 3 **Hyperfocus on existing businesses**

Initiative 3.A) Significantly expand business retention and expansion (BRE) efforts

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
3.A.1 Design a collaborative BRE program	Understand the immediate and future needs of Capitol Region businesses, with a focus on deeply understanding the region's current and emerging workforce needs and taking collective action to respond to those needs.	MetroHartford	Region's workforce and Economic developers Chief Manufacturing Officer CCAT	

Initiative 3.B) Prioritize investment into training and retaining the future workforce

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
3.B.1 Expand Dual Track programs	Expand program to increase the number of students and businesses participating.	Capital Workforce Partners	United Way, K-12, CBIA, ReadyCT, Work-based learning network, CCAT	
3.B.2 Expand K-12 career exploration	Help middle and high school students begin to build local professional networks and mentor relationships with area professionals.	Capital Workforce Partners	Regional sector partnerships Business community leaders	
3.B.3 Continue to advance career navigation efforts	The Hartford Career Navigation Report and Recommendations outlines steps to ensure that opportunity youth gain equitable access to training and workforce development resources.	Capital Workforce Partners	Workforce Solutions Collaborative of MetroHartford	
3.B.4 Collaborate around data	A systematic tracking system to gauge the performance and health of the workforce development system.	Capital Workforce Partners	CCAT	

Theme Alignment: Workforce · Business Environment

GOAL 3 Hyperfocus on existing businesses

Initiative 3.C) Support industry-led workforce development efforts


Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
3.C.1	Continue to prioritize Regional Sector Partnerships	Ensure leadership continues to be engaged in partnership activity to address cross-sector issues comprehensively.	CWP	
3.C.2	Elevate discussions around emerging trends to create a future-ready workforce	Utilize the partnerships as a forum to look ahead and engage with the private sector about what key trends are on the horizon so the workforce system can quickly meet talent needs.	CWP CCAT	

Initiative 3.D) Establish consistent messaging that is regionally shared

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
3.D.1	Form an image and identity partnership	Partnership to guide the development of a regional marketing and branding campaign.	MetroHartford	
3.D.2	Develop an open-source regionally generated brand identity	Brand identity can and should be used by multiple organizations when conducting talent and business attraction (i.e. Open Source).	MetroHartford CTNext CT Tourism Board Greater Hartford Arts Council AdvanceCT (CampusCT)	
3.D.3	Implement a new collaborative regional branding and image campaign	Campaign to attract and retain residents, visitors, students, talent, and businesses.	MetroHartford	

Theme Alignment: Workforce · Business Environment · Organizing for Action

GOAL 3**Hyperfocus on existing businesses****Initiative 3.E) Launch a 'smart' data-driven talent attraction campaign**

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
3.E.1	Identify top gap occupations to attract and create unique profiles for each	Through BRE tactics, connect with area employers who are trying to attract talent to understand the exact skills and competencies that are most in demand.	MetroHartford	Private sector employers AdvanceCT ReadyCT Hartford Promise CCAT
3.E.2	Conduct a geographic competitive analysis	Identify concentrations of top occupations where the Capitol Region can compete.	MetroHartford	
3.E.3 	Launch a marketing strategy	Attract individuals who can fill the top gap occupations.	MetroHartford	CT Hires CTforME

Initiative 3.F) Focus business attraction on emerging opportunities

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
3.F.1	Pursue midsize, high-growth business opportunities	Offer these companies what they need to continue to grow: highlight sustained growth practices, introduce fast-growth firms, and develop new networks, services, and resources that are best suited to help these firms.	MetroHartford	Local EDOs Community partners CCAT
3.F.2	Encourage corporations in the Capitol Region to assess their out-of-state real estate portfolios	Determine if any high-skill, management-related functions of existing firms can be consolidated in Connecticut.	MetroHartford	

Theme Alignment: Workforce · Business Environment

GOAL 4**Create equitable economic opportunity****Initiative 4.A) Embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion regionally (DEI).**

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
4.A.1	Adopt DEI Economic Development Agenda	Develop plans and action items to overcome challenges to creating an equitable economy.	CEDS Implementation Committee	State: Scott Gaul CRCOG
4.A.2	Develop a regional equity and diversity dashboard	Provide the region's stakeholders and citizens with a visual public tool to track the region's efforts to advance equity and diversity.	CRCOG	Data Haven CT Data
4.A.3	Support the formation of a Chamber(s) or other business organizations representing undersupported business owners	Form organizations that promote economic development, create opportunities for minority entrepreneurs, and address the unique challenges faced by minority-owned businesses.		

GOAL 4**Create equitable economic opportunity****Initiative 4.B) Take a collaborative, neighborhood-scale approach to development.**

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
4.B.1	Layer resources into neighborhoods disconnected from prosperity – concentrated poverty	Truly meet people where they are. Weave the DEI agenda into existing economic development, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and community development plans.	Community organizations Neighborhood leaders LISC (Coordinating CDC's) Municipalities CROCOG, CCAT	
4.B.2	Develop housing that is affordable and accessible downtown and in suburban communities	Seek solutions that encourage the development of livable and affordable housing that promotes equitable access to housing for all income levels. Align with regional housing strategy. Variety of housing options. Prioritize strategies that focus on wealth building by examining issues of access to capital.	Partnerships for Strong Communities (region) CROCOG CHFA DOH Small scale developers Funding partners Hartford Land Bank (training) DECD (policy)	
4.B.3	Increase access to childcare and health/mental care	Identify pockets where access to quality health and childcare is lacking and invest in meeting local neighborhood needs.	Hospital systems State Childcare Initiative CROCOG Women's Business Development Center	
4.B.4	Increase quality of K-12 education in areas of concentrated poverty	Create a more supportive and engaging learning environment for all students through a comprehensive approach.	K-12 System	

Theme Alignment: Workforce · Housing · Placemaking · Business Environment · Organizing for Action

GOAL 4 Create equitable economic opportunity

Initiative 4.C) Fix the broken rung to advance women and underrepresented employees into more senior roles

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
4.C.1	Conduct a 360-degree career pathways analysis and strategy for the region's economy	CWP	Regional sector partners	
4.C.2	Create, connect, and amplify management and career advancement training programs for women and underrepresented employees	CWP	Regional sector partners Women's groups at major corporations Collaboration of Women Professionals Leadership Greater Hartford Women of Voices of Color Higher Education CSC System Leadership Greater Hartford Trinity's Center for Entrepreneurship CCAT	

Theme Alignment: Workforce · Business Environment


GOAL 4 Create equitable economic opportunity

Initiative 4.C) Fix the broken rung to advance women and underrepresented employees into more senior roles (cont.)

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
4.C.3	Expand events and programming for women and underrepresented managers to build and grow their professional networks	CWP	University of Hartford's Entrepreneurial & Women's Business Center CSC system Trinity's Center for Entrepreneurship	
4.C.4	Increase accommodations for working parents	Improve the workplace for working parents. Create adaptable schedules, accommodations for nursing mothers, emergency childcare backup programs, etc.	Public and private-sector employers	

Theme Alignment: Workforce · Business Environment

GOAL 5**Restructure the CEDS implementation framework****Initiative 5.A) Restructure the CEDS**

Action	Description	Lead	Partners	Status
5.A.1 Restructure the CEDS Implementation Committee	The CEDS Implementation Committee should be brought together in its current form with adjustments made for any changes in members' organizational leadership.	MetroHartford CROCOG		
5.A.2  Procure multi-year funding to hire an experienced executive	The executive will execute the CEDS Action Matrix and develop other tools and techniques for measuring progress, monitoring program and resource needs, as well as proactively managing related programs, policies, and new initiatives.	CEDS Update Committee	MetroHartford CROCOG	

Theme Alignment: Organizing for Action