

Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe

Comprehensive

Economic

Development

Strategy

2024-2028



Nəxʷsłáyəm
“The Strong People”

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Introduction	4
Tribal Background & Existing Conditions	5
SWOT Analysis	21
CEDS Goals	28
Strategic Action Plan	29
Conclusion	32
References	33

Acknowledgments

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Tribal and Community Members, especially our Tribal elders and youth, who generously shared their insights and perspectives.

Lower Elwha Business Committee for their leadership and guidance.

LEKT Employees and Executives for their dedicated support and expertise.

LEKT CEDS Committee for their commitment to shaping this strategy.

EDA Seattle Office for their valuable assistance.

Your input has been invaluable in creating this roadmap for our Tribe's future. We encourage you to stay engaged and continue sharing your feedback as we work together to achieve our goals.

CEDS Committee

The following Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was developed by:

Tia Skerbeck – Tribal Council Member

Arlene Wheeler – Planning Director

Joshua Lapman – Enterprise Manager

Nicole Volkman – Heritage Center Manager, Workforce Development

Melissa Voltz – Grant Writer/Planner



Introduction

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe (LEKT) was awarded funding through the United States Department of Commerce to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for tribal economic development. The CEDS plan is designed to help the Tribe frame our current conditions in contrast to the regional economic conditions, analyze areas of strength, weakness, opportunity, or threat (the SWOT Analysis), gather community feedback (the community survey), and examine what makes us resilient as a Tribal community. These activities are designed to help us develop a strategic action plan reflecting top priority goals for 2025-2029 and create a framework for analyzing performance measures that allow us to review growth or recession trends over five years.

The CEDS plan is meant to be a working document that evolves as we grow and develop. It is meant to encourage discussion, inform areas of improvement, and provide data for continued optimal growth. LEKT's CEDS plan will be modified as we discuss with our community and continue growing as a regional economic leader.

This document is meant to reflect Tribal community participation. Constructive feedback is instrumental in addressing our community's needs while highlighting potential growth areas that will benefit the Tribe and regional economy.

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is committed to fostering sustainable economic growth that honors our cultural heritage while ensuring a prosperous future for our community. The 2025-2029 (CEDS) reflects this commitment, serving as a roadmap for our economic endeavors over the next five years.

In preparation for this strategy, a comprehensive community survey was conducted as part of our Comprehensive Strategic Plan, gathering valuable input from 367 tribal members. These responses provided critical insights into our people's needs, aspirations, and priorities. Guided by this community-driven feedback, the CEDS Committee proceeded with the development of the CEDS, ensuring that our economic goals align with the collective vision and values of the Tribe. This strategy will guide us in navigating the challenges and opportunities ahead, strengthening our economy while preserving the integrity of our community and culture.



Tribal Background

History

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is located in Clallam County, Washington, two hours west of Seattle on the Olympic Peninsula – which is bordered by the Olympic National Forest and the Strait of Juan de Fuca also known as the “Salish Sea,” separating the United States from Canada.



Klallam means “Strong People” in our native language. Since Time Immemorial, the cultural identity of the Klallam people has been centered on the location of many villages. Klallam people had abundant resources throughout Klallam territory and on the 45-mile-long Elwha River and its tributaries. Being stewards of the land was important as there was much respect for Mother Earth, which involved only taking what was needed. Where there was running water, there were Klallam villages. This traditional way of Klallam life was based on seasons and resources for hunting, fishing, gathering, and ceremony.

Before contact (1770), Klallam territory extended from the Hoko River on the Strait of Juan de Fuca on the western end to the Hamma Hamma River on the Hood Canal to the east.

In January of 1855, the Lower Elwha Klallam and the United States government signed the treaty of Point No Point and thereafter signed multiple agreements to expand trust responsibility services and holding within trust status. The Tribe received payment for land ceded 122 years after the treaty was signed, and Native Americans did not become U.S. citizens until 1924.



Between 1910-1913 the Elwha River Dam was constructed, followed by the Glines Canyon Dam from 1925-1927; both were constructed without fish passages or ladders, which deeply affected the Klallam way of life.

In 1934, the Indian Reorganization Act passed and provided money appropriated for the purchase of land for Indians. As a result, 372 acres of land and 15 houses were purchased in the Elwha River Valley for the Klallam Tribe.



After years of petitioning to deny the relicensing of both dams, the Tribe celebrated when the Elwha Act, authorizing the largest dam removal in history, was signed by Congress in 1992. Dam removal occurred from 2011-2014.

The Tribe has worked diligently since then to restore and heal the Elwha River and its valuable salmon habitat.

Two major turning points for the Tribe include the return of salmon to the river and the Tribal Canoe Journey when they land on the recently restored Elwha Beach in the summer of 2025. The Elwha River is in a constant state of healing with the River Restoration Project.

Lower Elwha Klallam Government

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is a sovereign, federally recognized Indian Nation that exercises full governmental control over its land and resources. The Lower Elwha Tribal Council, or Business Committee, comprises five elected officials who serve three staggered-year terms and govern the Tribe per the Lower Elwha Klallam Constitution and By-Laws.

The mission of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribal Council is to provide leadership and opportunity for Tribal members to live a legacy of economic, environmental, and cultural sustainability.

The Business Committee oversees all Tribal departments operating on an annual budget. Tribal members who are eligible to vote elect the Business Committee to represent the Tribe in governance and exercise Tribal Sovereignty and Self-Determination.

Tribal Vision

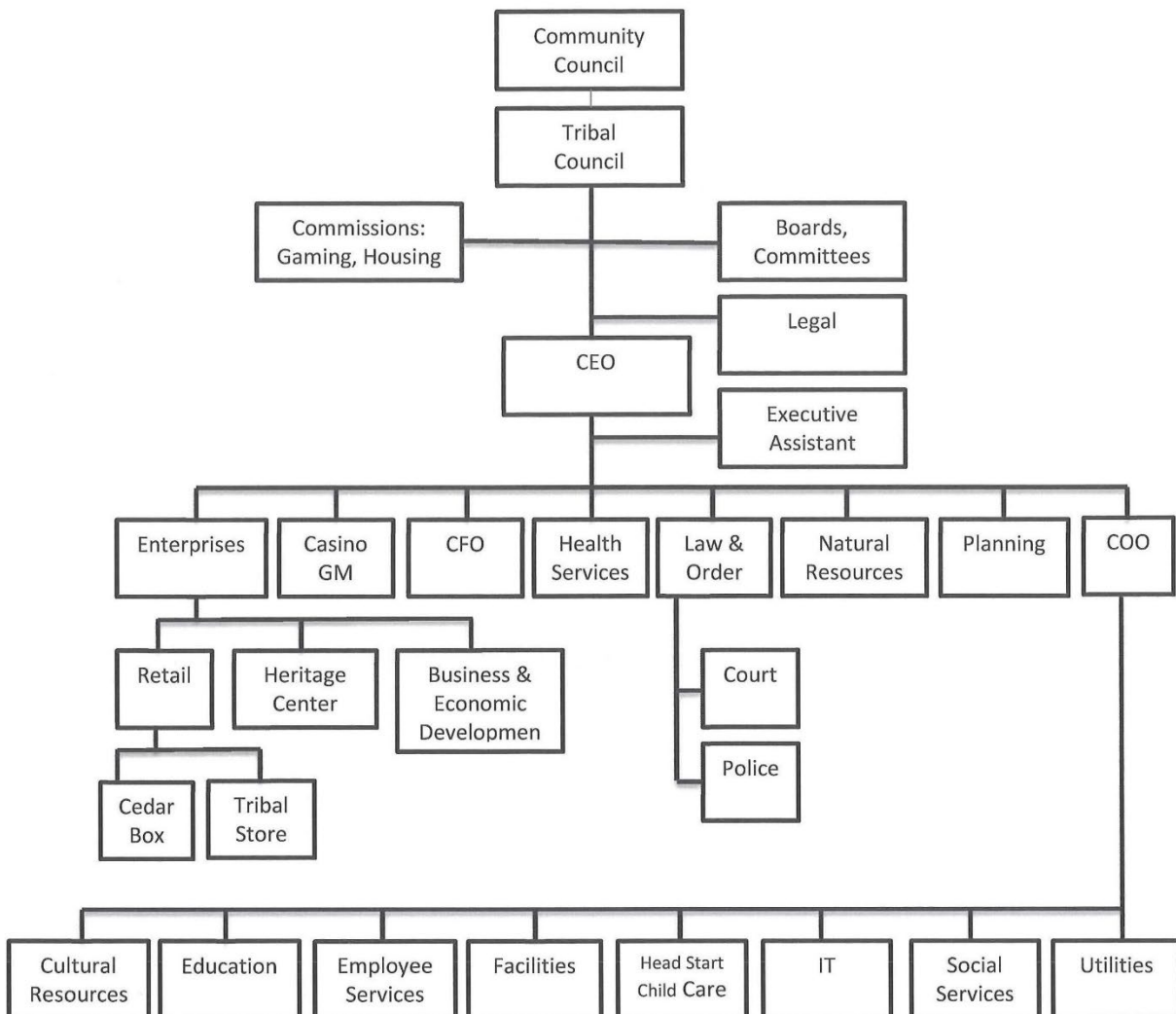
To ensure that the Lower Elwha Klallam people can pass on their way of life to their children.

Tribal Mission

To build a strong and healthy sovereign nation where Tribal members live their **values** and **culture**.

Organizational Structure

The Business Committee oversees the day-to-day Self-Governance of the Tribe in coordination with our Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, and Legal Team. The structure of our Tribe includes the Business & Economic Development Enterprise and Departments including Cultural Resources, Education, Employee Services, Gaming Commission, Health, Housing Authority, Information Technology, Law and Justice, Natural Resources, Planning, Public Works, and Social Services.



Existing Conditions

Tribal Demographics

The Tribe is home to a combined population of 1,103 individuals, including 901 enrolled members and 202 descendants. A significant portion of the community is composed of adults, with 819 individuals over 18, including 160 considered elders over 60 years old. Among the descendants, 90 are adults, and two of these are also over 60.

This demographic profile, with a strong presence of elders, underscores the importance of supporting the needs of older community members while maintaining cultural traditions and leadership. The economic impact may include an increased demand for healthcare and elder services and the need for programs that support both the older and younger generations, ensuring a balanced and sustainable community development.

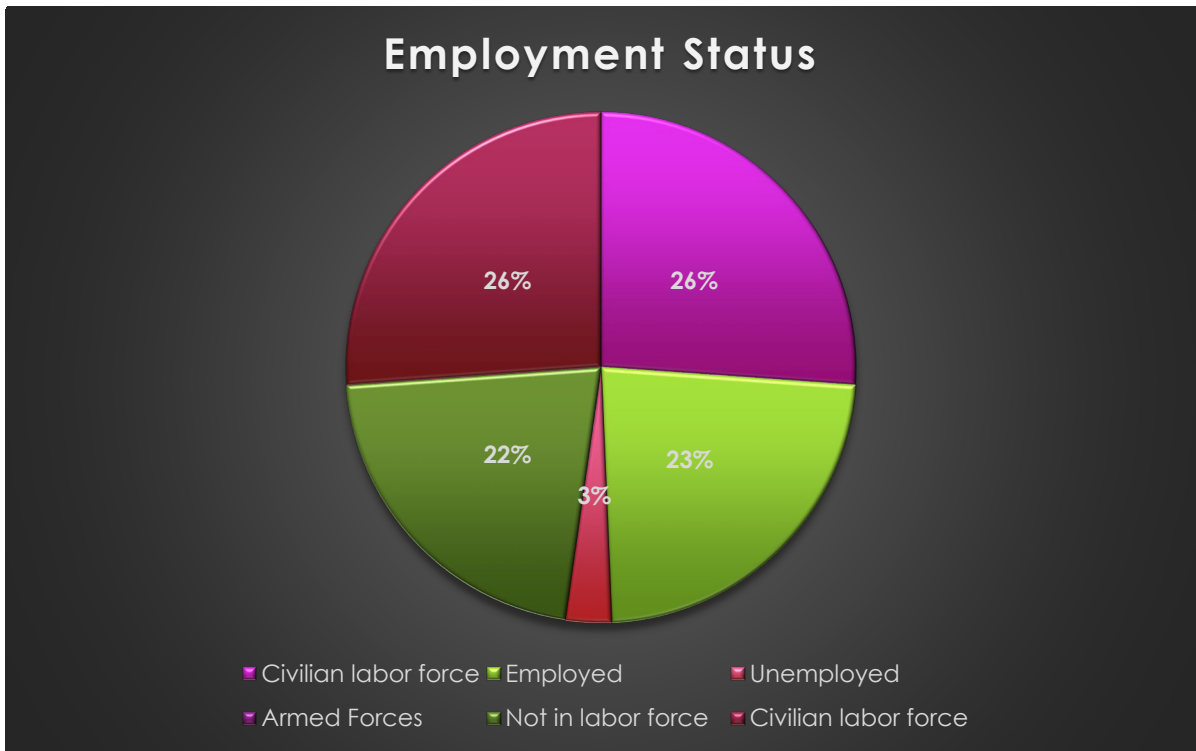
Category	Total Population	Over 18	Over 60
Enrolled Members	901	729	160
Tribal Descendants	202	90	2
Total Population	1,103	819	162

Lower Elwha Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, WA Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Employment

Employment Status	Estimate	ACS Margin of Error
Population 16 years and over	479	(+/-102)
In labor force	262	(+/-65)
Civilian labor force	262	(+/-65)
Employed	233	(+/-61)
Unemployed	29	(+/-19)
Armed Forces	0	(+/-13)
Not in labor force	217	(+/-64)
Civilian labor force	262	(+/-65)
Unemployment Rate	11.1%	(+/-6.6%)

The Tribe currently faces an estimated unemployment rate of 11.1%. This indicates that over one in ten members of the workforce is without a job. This rate suggests challenges in securing employment opportunities for the community, potentially impacting economic stability and growth. Efforts to address this unemployment issue, include job creation initiatives, workforce development programs, and partnerships with local businesses and organizations to improve employment prospects for Tribal members.



LEKT experiences fluctuating employment rates, with a significant portion of members engaged in Tribal government roles and enterprises. However, the Tribe faces challenges in maintain consistently high employment rates.



Occupation Industry

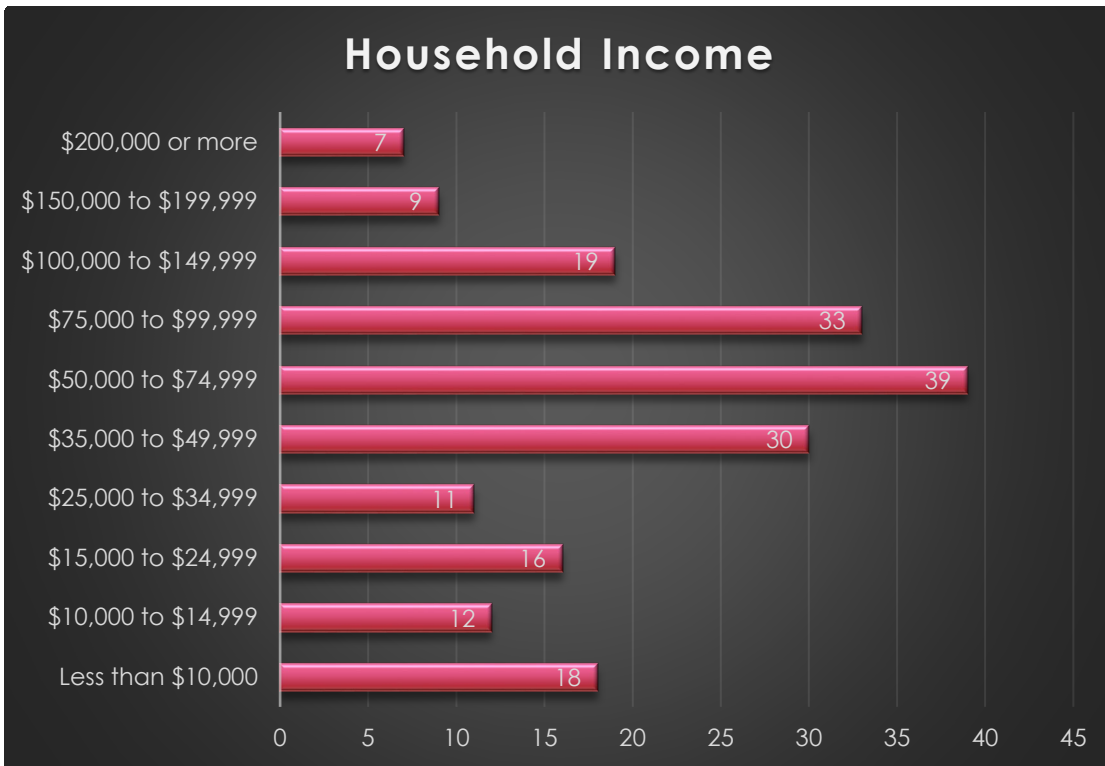


According to the U.S. Census Bureau the employment of Tribal members is notably concentrated in public administration, which employs 44 individuals, and in educational services, health care, and social assistance, which employs 38 members.

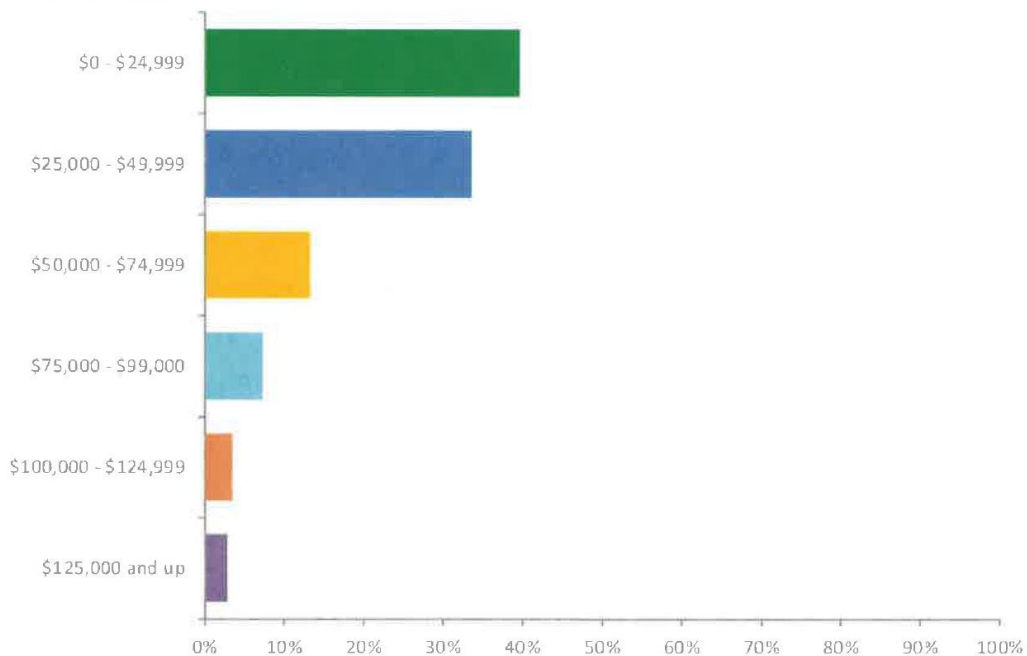
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining are also significant sectors, providing jobs for 28 members, reflecting the Tribe's rural setting. Manufacturing and the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services industries are other key areas of employment, with an estimated 26 and 22 members employed, respectively. The presence of industries such as construction, professional services, and retail trade, while smaller, still play essential roles in the local economy.

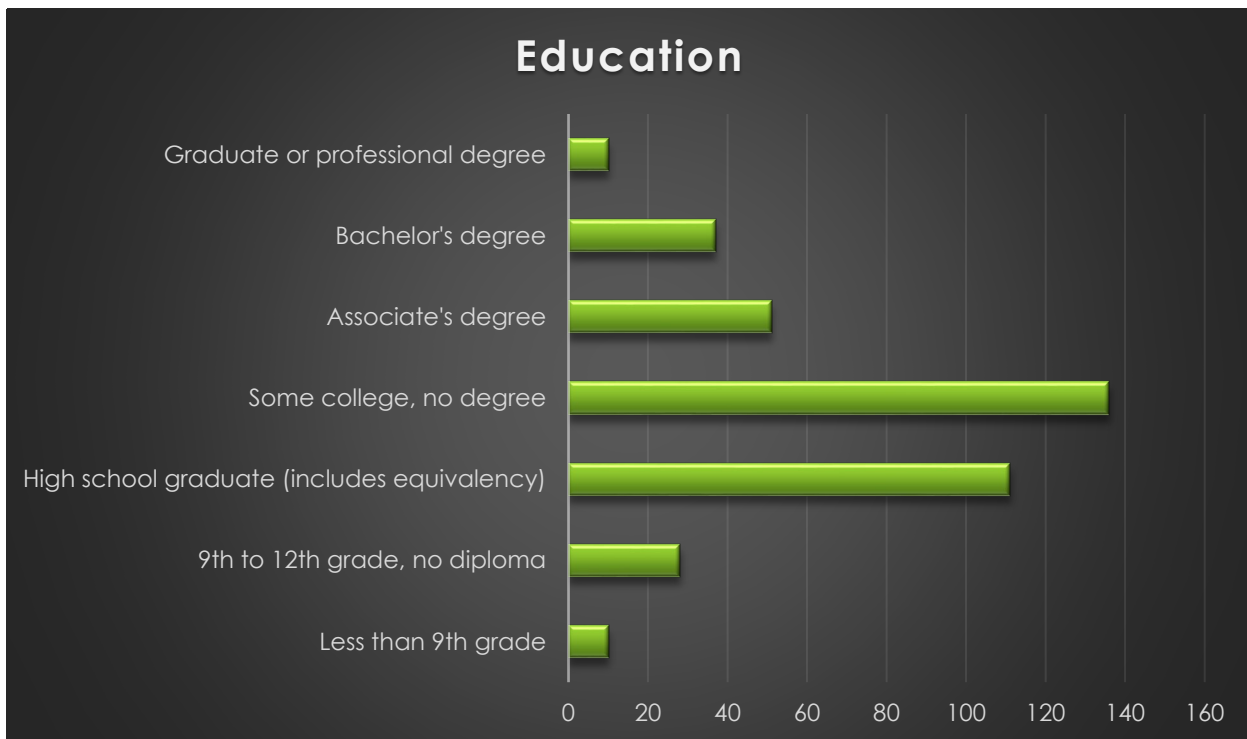
Agriculture and public administration prominence can be attributed to the Tribe's rural environment, where natural resource management and community governance are critical. Meanwhile, sectors like information, finance, wholesale trade, and real estate employ fewer members, suggesting that these industries may be less developed or in lower demand within the Tribe's economy.





The U.S. Census Bureau reports LEKT's median household income at \$54,375.00. According to our community survey, which had 367 responses, approximately 72% of respondents made \$49,999 or less. The CEDS Committee notes a margin of error exists with both the Census Bureau data and the self-reporting process.

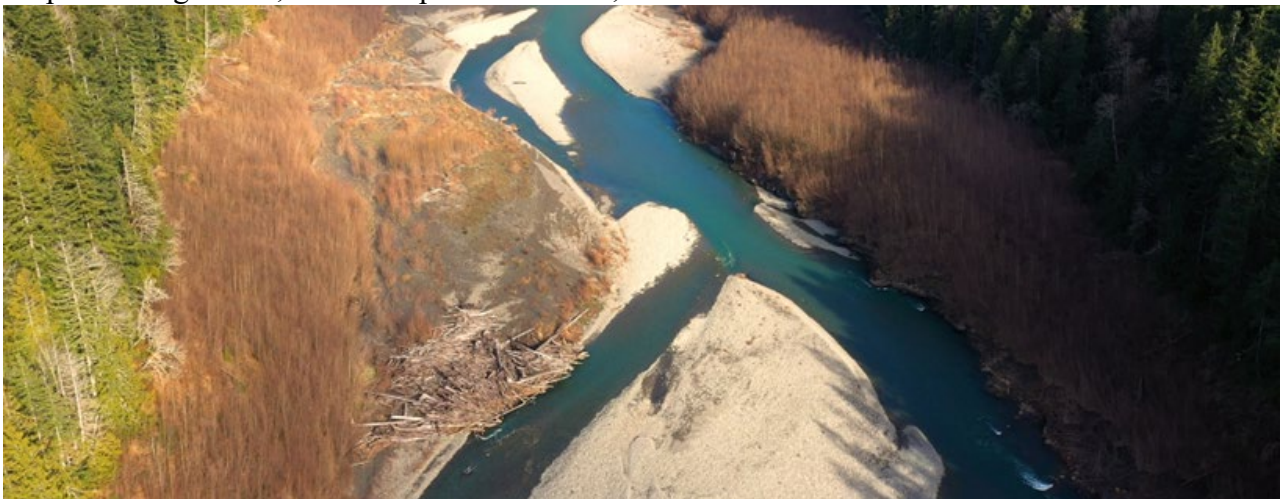




The Education graph displays the self-reported education levels provided by the 367 community survey respondents. The majority of respondents reported having some college-level education with no degree, with the second highest level of education attained being a high school graduate.

Environmental

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe conducts habitat restoration projects in multiple watersheds along the north Olympic Peninsula and within our Usual and Accustomed lands. The projects are identified through habitat monitoring programs and watershed analysis. Once identified, the Tribe seeks grant funding to construct the projects. The Tribe has an award-winning restoration crew consisting of tribal and non-tribal members. The Tribe has completed 75 projects since 1994 with a total of \$30 million. Project types include additions of wood to stream channels (engineered log jams), barrier corrections, floodplain revegetation, invasive species removal, and road abandonment.



Clallam County Demographics

<https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/county-profiles/clallam>

Clallam County was established in the 1850s with logging as the primary industry, which benefited greatly when railroads made it possible to reach further into the great conifer stands. In the 1960s, the tribes in Clallam County reclaimed traditions and reasserted tribal rights to shares of the fish harvests. The services sector has been experiencing growth over the past decade. In 2021, it accounted for over 88.5% of all nonfarm employment.

The County has continued to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The continued closure of the Canadian border through 2021 further impacted the economy. The border restrictions eased in April 2022, boosting the local economy.

Science and academic institutions in the County research important topics and educate the next generation of the labor force. The Department of Energy's Marine Sciences Laboratory is based at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Sequim. Current projects at the lab include ocean energy development, the impact of populations on marine environments, and improved coastline security. The hope is to find a vibrant opportunity for growth in marine conservation and aquaculture.

Peninsula College continues to be a vibrant part of the community by offering advanced manufacturing, community education, and worker retraining programs. It has three campus locations – Port Angeles, Port Townsend, and Forks.

Labor Force and Unemployment

Current labor force and unemployment statistics are available on the Labor area summaries page.

Clallam County's 2021 civilian labor force (29,275) increased from 2020 (28,904). The total number of employed residents increased by 1,413. The number of unemployed residents was down by 1,042 over the year. The not-seasonally adjusted preliminary 2021 unemployment rate stood at 6.5 percent, down from the 10.2 percent rate in 2020. The pandemic was the ingredient that sent the numbers into double digits in 2020, then eased to friendlier levels in 2021.

Source: Employment Security Department/Data Division

Statistics	Clallam County	Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
Unemployment Rates (16 years and over)	3.9%	11.1% (+/- 6.6%)
Education Attained: Bachelor's Degree	28.8%	12.3% (+/- 5.4%)
Median Household Income	\$66,108.00	\$54,375.00

Clallam County Population Facts

	Clallam County	Washington State
Population 2021	78,209	7,738,692
Population 2010	71,404	6,724,540
Percent change, 2010 to 2021	9.53%	15.08%

The population dynamics of Clallam County, where 30.5% of residents are 65 years and older, significantly impact the local economy. With a large portion of the population in retirement age, the county faces a reduced labor force, potentially leading to labor shortages in key sectors and decreased economic productivity. Fewer working-age individuals may slow business growth, limit innovation, and strain industries that rely on a robust workforce, such as healthcare, retail, and construction.

Clallam County, with a predominantly white population (87.1%) compared to Washington State’s 78.5%, is less diverse than the state overall. However, the county has a notably higher proportion of Native American residents (5.6%) than the state average (1.9%). Given the higher percentage of Native American residents, the county’s economy and cultural identity are intertwined with the well-being and prosperity of its indigenous communities. Initiatives that support Tribal economic development, job training, and cultural preservation are not only crucial for the Tribe but also for the broader community.

	Clallam County	Washington State
Population By Age, 2021		
Under 5 years old	4.3%	6.0%
Under 18 years old	16.7%	21.8%
65 years and older	30.5%	15.9%
Females, 2021	50.6%	49.9%
Race/Ethnicity, 2021		
White	87.1%	78.5%
Black	1.2%	4.4%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	5.6%	1.9%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	2.1%	10.4%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	6.6%	13.0%

Ongoing Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe Projects

Infrastructure

Lower Elwha Valley Water System Project

The Tribe recently constructed a Water Action Priority list to guide the Tribe's intentions and planning for water system development. The Lower Elwha Valley water system is operating close to capacity and needs expansion to allow future development of housing and tribal facilities.

Health and Wellness Campus Project

The Tribe is in Phase 1 of developing a Health and Wellness Campus on reservation property along Highway 101, west of Port Angeles. The property currently houses the Lower Elwha Health Clinic and Klallam Counseling Services. The Tribe is acquiring engineering and architecture services to continue developing the campus and the Health and Wellness Complex.



Health & Wellness Campus Wastewater Project

Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is undertaking a large-scale wastewater infrastructure project connecting the reservation property on Highway 101 to the City of Port Angeles wastewater pump station. The goal of the infrastructure project is to resolve an unsustainable septic system currently serving the LEKT Health Clinic and allow expansion for the anticipated Health and Wellness Campus. The tribe also plans to conduct a feasibility study for economic development on the enterprise property adjacent to the Health and Wellness Campus on Highway 101.

Climate Resilience

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe has developed a Vulnerability Assessment to explore the impacts of climate change on key tribal resources.

Key Findings

❖ Natural Resources

- The predicted loss of winter snowpack and associated late spring/early summer runoff are expected to result in fundamental changes to the Elwha River ecosystem.
- Lower base flows in the Elwha River during the late summer and early fall will mean less water for aquatic habitats and human uses.
- Chinook salmon in the Elwha River are recovering now that the dams have been removed but are highly vulnerable to predicted seasonal flow changes.
- Nearshore species are expected to be impacted by ocean acidification, which has significant implications for certain life stages and food webs.
- There is adaptive capacity in many of the terrestrial plant and animal species that suggests they will persist with little overall change in frequency. Locations may shift, and there is uncertainty about how species will react over time.

❖ Built Environment

- Much of the transportation and utility infrastructure that the tribe relies upon will be resilient to climate change.
- Much of the low-lying portion of the LEKT Reservation is dependent on flood and erosion protection provided by the Federal Levee along the Elwha River. The Federal Levee has recently been updated, but the improvements did not consider future increases in peak flows, so the level of protection it provides is expected to decrease over time.

Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, Natural Systems Design In collaboration with Adaptation International and Sea Grant Washington



Cultural Resilience

The Tribe was awarded a Tribal Youth Program through the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS) grant through the Department of Justice for a youth engagement project that teaches prevention through cultural engagement and practices. The five-year program highlights cultural practices, traditional customs, shared time with elders, and coordinated activities with neighboring tribes. Focusing on the culture and identity of the Klallam people, our youth participants can define their own identities while also learning prevention methods, communication skills, and leadership skills.



Broadband

The Tribe is developing the broadband project. In 2023, the Tribe won a \$500,000 National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) grant to complete environmental surveys for the sites hosting the towers by the Klallam Counseling Services building and the Gathering Place on the Tribe's upper reservation. The funding will also include prefabricated huts installed at the tower bases to store equipment needed to operate wirelessly on those towers. LEKT has applied for round two of the NTIA funding to install fiber optics to all homes on the upper and lower reservations.

Lower Elwha Tribal Economy

As of August 2024, the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is one of the largest employers in Port Angeles and Clallam County, employing 335 local residents.

Employed By	Total Employees
Lower Elwha Tribal Operations	233
Lower Elwha Enterprise	45
Elwha River Casino	57
Total	335

Tribal Revenue

The tribal revenue structure is diverse, with Federal grants contributing the largest share at 33.44%. Our enterprises generate 24.36% of the revenue, showcasing the tribe’s commitment to economic self-sufficiency. Third-party billing accounts for 16.58%, reflecting effective partnerships and service delivery. Indirect costs, at 10.55%, cover essential administrative and operational expenses. The remaining revenue is sourced from state grants, general funds, cigarette and fuel tax, and private contributions, ensuring a well-rounded financial base that supports the Tribe’s ongoing development and community initiatives.

Type of Revenue	Percentage
Federal Grants, IHS & BIA Compacts	33.44%
Enterprise	24.36%
Third-Party Billing	16.58%
Indirect Costs	10.55%
State Grants & Contracts	5.71%
General Fund/Tribal Revenue	2.62%
Cigarette Tax	2.5%
Fuel Tax	4.1%
Private Contributions	.14%
Total	100%

Enterprise

Since implementing the 2017-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe has seen significant growth within its Enterprise division. Initially, our business ventures included the Lower Elwha Food & Fuel and the Cedar Box, which have served as critical economic contributors and community resources.

Building on this foundation, the Tribe has successfully expanded its enterprise portfolio to include two new ventures: Peaks Cannabis Shop, the Ice Cream Shop, and Kwitsen Grill. These additions reflect our commitment to diversifying revenue streams, creating job opportunities, and providing valuable services to both our community and the broader public. The expansion of our Enterprise division highlights our ongoing dedication to economic growth that benefits the Tribe while supporting our people's cultural and social well-being.

Tribal Infrastructure

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is actively engaged in several key infrastructure projects to support the Tribe's economic growth and community expansion. These initiatives are crucial for laying the foundation for future development and meeting our community's needs.

The Health and Wellness Wastewater Infrastructure Project is in the engineering phase, focusing on establishing the necessary infrastructure to support the future Health and Wellness Campus. This campus is progressing through its design and architectural phase, with plans to create a comprehensive facility that will serve our community's health and wellness needs.

Additionally, the Lower Elwha Valley Water System Project is underway, with technical assistance to ensure proper planning for expanding water storage capacity. This project is vital for supporting the development of additional housing and facilities, ensuring our community can grow sustainably. These infrastructure projects are essential to building a solid foundation for the Tribe's future prosperity.



Tribal Services

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is committed to providing a comprehensive array of programs and services to meet the diverse needs of our community. With a Contract Health Service population of 2,873 individuals—Tribal and other Tribal within Clallam County—the Tribe is crucial in supporting our members and the broader community.

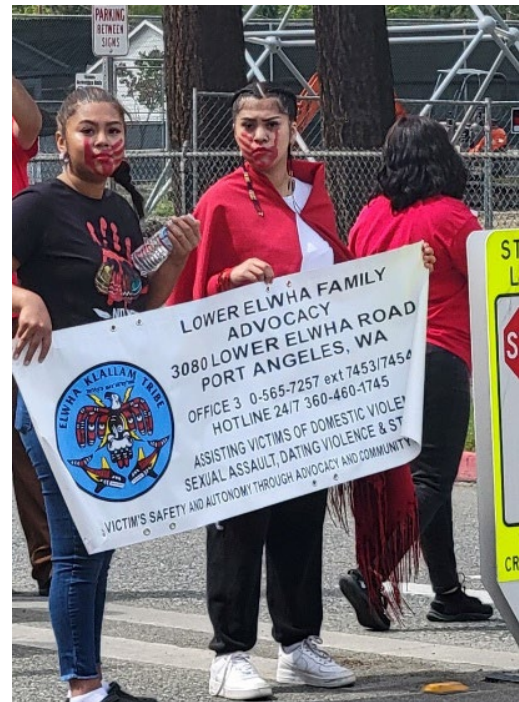
Our Tribal membership is nearly 900 strong, with an estimated 72% living within the Tribal service area, underscoring the importance of accessible and robust services.

The programs and services offered by the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe include:

Tribal Governance: Leadership and decision-making to guide the Tribe's future.

- Health Care: Comprehensive medical services.
- Dental: Oral health services for all ages.
- Behavioral and Mental Health: Support for mental wellness.

- Counseling and Recovery Services: Assistance for individuals on their healing journeys.
- Social Services: Support for families and individuals in need.
- Child Care and Early Childhood Education: Foundation for our youngest members.
- Culture and Language Programs: Preservation and promotion of our heritage.
- Cultural Resources: Protection of our ancestors' land, sacred sites, and belongings.
- Educational, After School, and Recreational Programs: Enrichment opportunities for youth.
- Justice: Including a Police Force, Probation services, and Tribal Court.
- Natural Resources: Stewardship of fisheries, wildlife, and habitat restoration, including a salmon hatchery.
- Community Development: Infrastructure and public works, including transportation.
- Enterprise and Economic Development: Business ventures that support the Tribe's economy.
- Housing: Affordable and safe housing for our members.
- Facilities and Maintenance: Management of Tribal buildings and properties.
- Information Technology: Support for digital and communication needs.
- Employee Services: Support and development for Tribal employees.
- Planning: Strategic planning to guide the Tribe's growth and development.



These programs and services are integral to the Tribe's mission of fostering a thriving, healthy, and culturally rich community for all our members.



Klallam Language



CEDAR BOX
SMOKE SHOP



EST. 2014

2024 SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- The Tribe has 17 miles of road and trails, with an additional 22 miles of county and state roads connecting Tribal roads to the regional transportation system that are eligible for cooperative projects.
- The Tribe has a 1,824-acre Reservation, Tribal Trust, and Fee land that requires management of land assignments, leases, easements, and right of ways.
- The Tribe provides an array of services, including Medical, Dental, Mental Health, Recovery Services, Eldercare, Indian Child Welfare, Family Advocacy, an Early Learning and Childcare Center, Housing, a Library, After-School and Youth Recreational Programs, Language, Natural Resources, cultural resources, Planning Employee Programs, a Food Bank, Public Works, a Mobile Clinic, and Justice Programs.
- The Tribe has the sovereign right to tax.
- The Tribe has successfully partnered with federal agencies NOAA, USGS, USFWS, the Olympic National Park; Washington agencies WDFW, WA Department of Natural Resources; the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission; the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute; timber companies Merrill and Ring, and Green Crow; and neighboring Tribes including Jamestown S’Klallam, Port Gamble S’Klallam, Makah, Quileute, and Skokomish in various environmental and fishery-related areas of concern.
- The Tribe has amassed a large amount of data on wildlife response to the Elwha Dam Removal and will continue to monitor wildlife response to river restoration.
- The Lower Elwha Police Department maintains relationships with many outside law enforcement agencies, including the Clallam County Sheriff’s Department, the Port Angeles Police Department, the U.S. Coast Guard, National Park Rangers, and the Border Patrol.



- Partnerships and MOUs are developed with Tribal and non-tribal entities, including the Port Angeles School District, City of Port Angeles, Clallam County, North Olympic Development Council, Washington State, the Burke Museum, WSDOT, DAHP, Army Corp of Engineers, Federal Highways, and other Tribal Departments.
- The Lower Elwha Early Learning Center provides community-based preschool education services to the surrounding community.
- The Tribal enterprise-generating activities include Gaming, Lower Elwha Food and Fuel, the Cedarbox, the Heritage Center, Kwitsen Grill, Peaks Cannabis Shop, VRBO rental, and fee for use parking lot.
- New construction includes Lower Elwha Food and Fuel, the Lower Elwha Early Learning Center, LEKT Food Bank, Lower Elwha Justice Center expansion, and the Elwha River Casino expansion.
- The internet network connecting all Tribal facilities is fiber-based, which provides a solid connection for communication needs.
- Lower Elwha Food and Fuel has grown to provide various fuel and convenience services.
- The Tribe acquired waterfront and downtown property in Port Angeles of economic value for the Tribe's future development.
- The Tribe and the City of Port Angeles are collaborating to promote science and culture in downtown Port Angeles.
- In addition to providing services to its Tribal members, the Tribe provides services to many local non-Native, other Tribal-enrolled, or Tribal-descendant community members including Health, Vocational Rehabilitation, Social and Youth Services.
- The Tribe has social, community, and employee services available for non-tribal staff members.
- The Tribe offers workforce training programs, job skill training, life skill training (workforce education).
- The Tribe has maintained a USDA grant to source local sourced food and create partnerships with local farms and food providers.



- The LEKT Recreation Department partnerships with local agencies, sports teams, and marathon races
- The Tribe offers tribal youth programs & a youth healing from COVID conference.
- The Tribe employs 335 employees (45 enterprise employees, 57 casino employees, and 233 tribal government employees), health and medical employee benefits, 8% match for retirement investments, health and wellness awareness and programs.
- Under a fuel tax agreement with Washington State Department of Licensing, the Tribe receives reimbursement of 75% of the taxes it pays for each gallon of fuel purchased at the rack for sale at Lower Elwha Food and Fuel.
- The Tribal Elwha Summer Science Camps are currently offered to middle school and high school students, where high school students receive partial science credit. Summer cultural programs have been provided with great attendance in previous years. There is interest to continue developing a variety of cultural camps for Youth to engage in throughout the summer.

WEAKNESSES

- Central data collection and monitoring among all programs at the Tribe has been a continual challenge.
- Programs and departments often do not share best practices and challenges, which results in a loss of potential collaboration for the most efficient and effective services provided to Tribal members and clients.
- The Tribe lacks an overall communication strategy across tribal governmental departments, enterprises, casinos, and communities.
- The Tribe lacks wrap-around care involving numerous services to help community members move from drug addiction to sobriety, and community involvement has been successful. Lack of long-term funding plans resulted in the loss of wrap-around services.
- Lack of sales tax ordinance. Having one would be an economic driver and provide funding for programming.
- Tribal Section 17 Corporation not yet fully established.
- Creating our own barriers with potentially outdated policies and procedures.

- A hunter-education program in Usual and Accustomed Areas has been prioritized and not developed.
- While low-income housing is available to community members, the extremely low-income-based housing policies recommended by the federal awarding agencies create untenable living circumstances.
- Proof of Cultural Competency is required for Tribal Health Physicians. A Cultural Education Seminar is available for non-tribal employees, but it is not required across all departments. This results in situations that lack appropriate cultural handling, lack of cultural inclusion, or lack of historical knowledge within the community for programs to run at most effective levels with best possible outcomes.
- The Tribe lacks staff mentorship programs and organizational long-term capacity.
- Despite services of the Lower Elwha Transit and the Clallam Transit System, timely transportation is not efficient and often takes hours between: the Lower reservation, Middle Reservation, Upper Reservation, the Lower Elwha Health Clinic, Klallam Counseling Services, and basic services in Port Angeles (such as the grocery store).
- T seven miles of road and a bridge over the Lower Elwha River divide the reservation.
- The hazard mitigation plan that includes the county, cities of Joyce, and Port Angeles, and the Tribe needs to be updated, to include a central mobile emergency response center.
- The Tribe lacks consistent community communication (dissemination of communication to the community from government, departments, or enterprise) creates a lack of miscommunication or misunderstanding of programs and projects.
- The Tribe lacks tribal housing assignments with houses sitting vacant.
- Some of the current tribal facilities are old and lack space for new employees.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The Elwha River Reservation Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act includes funding for land acquisition for economic development, residential use, and a home port for the fishing fleet.
- The Lower Elwha Klallam Health Department and Klallam Counseling Services is built on forty acres of property that can be developed into a larger Tribal Campus serving a variety of needs.

- Local and regional colleges and universities can provide education and training opportunities for community members.
- Current language students are interested in pursuing teaching degrees, so the Klallam Language is taught from preschool through high school and college.
- Development of ecotourism
- The Tribe is eligible for a 100% reimbursement for each gallon purchased that qualifies for the federal fuel tax exemption.
- The Tribe has implemented successful models for wrap-around recovery services and can be reinstated through applying for grant programs with long-term financial planning.
- Promoting healthy eating options and an active lifestyle is available through our walking paths, recreational and sports programs, and Elder fitness program, food bank nutritional recipe cards and cooking classes.
- Language teachers are being trained by the Klallam Language teacher to teach at the high school.
- Attention to written and verbal language (communication) can be improved to invite greater participation when working in programs, especially with Youth, Family, and Recovery Services.
- Elwha River Restoration continues to support future harvest and employment opportunities.
- Restoration opportunities of Tribal Usual and Accustomed Areas.
- Home loan options are available to Tribal and Community members.
- Expansion of infrastructure on the lower reservation lands support additional housing.



- Design of the wastewater connection to the City of Port Angeles from the Wellness Campus to include a hook-up with the enterprise campus to allow further expansion.
- Waterfront property projects
- Canoe Journeys 2025
- Design phase of the Health and Wellness Center



THREATS

- Successful programs that run out of grant funding often lack plans to continue operating and tighten budgets, resulting in the loss of critical services to clients and jobs.
- Continuing education or training funds to remain current in one's field depends on each department and/or program and their budgets.
- Availability of housing options remains a challenge for Tribal members, local community members, and potential employees.
- Rural location impacting recruitment efforts, a lack of housing for potential employees, and program capabilities.
- Surrounding governments' impact on the Tribe.
- Other neighboring Tribes or agencies provide competitive wages that take away from our key staff positions and infrastructure.
- High employee turnover rates in either departments or programs result in loss of clients and steady third-party billing.

- The North Olympic Peninsula is economically distressed, contributing to high unemployment rates.
- Substance and opioid abuse have been on the rise over the years, both in our Tribal community and in the greater Clallam County region. We are losing Tribal members to addiction.
- Low housing availability on the reservation and in the surrounding area.
- Without an overall approach to community infrastructure management, maintenance may not occur. For instance, no maintenance occurred following levee enhancements in 2011, and facilities severely deteriorated.
- During the closure of the original hatchery, all 3-phase power was cut to produce the four large bore, deep water wells. Catch-up on maintenance has proved expensive, so restoration of adequate power to operate the wells requires substantial investment.
- As the total staff grows, the cost of software and hardware to provide technology needs increases. The cost of maintaining critical infrastructure servers for email, file storage, and database needs is crucial continually. Server life averages 3-5 years before maintenance is required.
- The small manufactured building, which is 960 square feet, hosts the after-school program, a computer lab that services youth and adults, the Education Program, and the Library.
- Changes in the climate result in changes in the environment, which may overwhelm our best efforts to restore and rebuild salmon populations, community, facilities, and sustainability.
- School District dynamics, methods, and relationship with tribal and local communities
- Dissemination of grant/regional funds decisions by outsiders unfamiliar with the tribal community and its challenges.
- Inflation and cost of living increases

Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe 2025-2028 CEDS Goals

After conducting the SWOT analysis, analyzing the community survey results, and reviewing the 2024 Comprehensive Action Plan, the LEKT CEDS Committee established the LEKT CEDS's vision, mission, and goals.

Vision

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe **envisions** a resilient and sustainable economy that empowers our people, honors our cultural heritage, and ensures a prosperous future for generations to come.

Mission

The **mission** of the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe's CEDS is to cultivate a sustainable and diverse economy that enhances the well-being of our community, respects our cultural values, and strengthens our sovereignty. We aim to create economic growth, education, and self-sufficiency opportunities through strategic planning, collaboration, and innovation, ensuring a vibrant future for our people and our lands.

Goals



Expand Tribal Business Portfolio



Expand Tribal Services



Expand Tribal Infrastructure



Continue restoration efforts of Usual & Accustomed Areas



Expand Workforce Development



Continue efforts for Cultural Viability

2024 CEDS Strategic Action Plan

Goal: Expand Tribal Business Portfolio



Benchmark	Objective	Outcome	Status	Performance Measure	Activity Ownership
Development of the waterfront property	Create revenue-generating on the waterfront property.	Increase business portfolio revenue	In Progress: Land in the process of fee-to-trust designation	Land designated as trust land, business action plan for property developed	Enterprise
Feasibility analysis of trade industries	Analyze markets for the most profitable business.	Create a business expansion plan	Not started	Analyze the most feasible markets for enterprise and Construct a business action plan.	Enterprise

Goal: Expand Tribal Services



Benchmark	Objective	Outcome	Status	Performance Measure	Activity Ownership
Expand Community Health Services and Education	Provide comprehensive services to the tribal community	Increase in services provided and community members serviced	In progress: Continue SART program, public health curriculum, prevention and counseling services	Increase lifestyle education, diet/cooking courses, expansion of health services, increase recreational programs	Health Department, Social Services, Recreation
Expand the Health and Wellness Campus	Finalize designs for an expanded health and wellness campus	Designs for infrastructure and facilities	In Progress: Creating architecture designs for the expanded campus	Completed designs, wastewater expansion completed to support facilities, land clearing, go to bid for construction	Health and Wellness, Facilities, Planning

Goal: Expand Tribal Infrastructure



Benchmark	Objective	Outcome	Status	Performance Measure	Activity Ownership
Health & Wellness Campus Wastewater Connection	Sustainable wastewater infrastructure for expansion	Opportunity for expansion	In progress: wastewater infrastructure in the design and engineering phase	Engineered Designs, Construction implementation and completion	Public Works
Expand storage in the Elwha Valley water system	Expansion of the system's capacity.	Support for additional housing or facilities.	In Progress: receiving technical assistance for water expansion plans.	Plans and designs for additional water tank storage	Public Works
Plans for additional housing.	Create project to establish additional housing plans.	Comprehensive plan to expand tribal housing to apply for funding of designs and construction.	Not started.	Steering committee, infrastructure expanded , designation of reservation land for project	Housing, Planning

Goal: Restoration efforts of Usual and Accustomed Areas



Benchmark	Objective	Outcome	Status	Performance Measure	Activity Ownership
House of Salmon program implementation	Complete facility maintenance and modernization projects	Increase salmon returns	In progress: contracting with NOAA and BIA	Complete update and maintenance to facilities	Natural Resources
Construct a Climate Change Adaptation Plan	Construct and Implement a climate change adaptation plan	Sustainable practices adopted by the tribe	In Progress: Contracting with outside consulting	Community surveys, priorities identified, completed plan	Natural Resources

Goal: Expand Workforce Development



Benchmark	Objective	Outcome	Status	Performance Measure	Activity Ownership
Create apprenticeship program	Provide apprenticeship opportunities for tribal members to begin trades.	Increase in tribal member workforce in trade industries	In Progress: Developing apprenticeship partnerships	Establish partners, advertise, implement apprenticeships	Workforce Education
Develop a communication strategy	Create and implement a unified communication system	Community members receive timely information	Not Started	Survey for communication preferences, develop a strategy, implement strategy protocol	Tribal Operations Officer, Planning Department, Executive Assistant to Tribal Council, Executive Administrative Assistant
Partner with North Olympic Development Coalition	Remove barriers to the workforce	Provide services and education to remove barriers to the workforce	In Progress: Developing scope of work for approval	Establish workforce education expansion, plan for workforce development	Planning, Workforce Education, Executive Officers

Goal: Continue efforts for Cultural Viability



Benchmark	Objective	Outcome	Status	Performance Measure	Activity Ownership
Provide destination for the 2025 Canoe Journey	Plan and coordinate the 2025 Canoe Journey	Lower Elwha hosts thousands of surrounding tribal community members	In progress: planning efforts in progress	Complete strategic planning, implementation, and additional hosting responsibilities.	All tribal government departments and community members
Tribal Youth Program	Provide cultural education and practices.	Increase prevention education	In Progress: Ongoing program	Number of youth participants, number of cultural events hosted for participants	Natural Resources

Conclusion

The 2025-2029 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe outlines a path toward sustained growth and prosperity grounded in our cultural values and community priorities. By building on past successes, embracing new opportunities, and addressing the challenges ahead, this strategy serves as a vital blueprint for our Tribe's economic and social future.

Our commitment to community-driven development remains at the heart of our efforts as we move forward. The initiatives outlined in this CEDS reflect our collective vision for a resilient, vibrant, and self-sustaining future. With the continued dedication of our leadership, members, and partners, the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe will thrive for generations to come.



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