



SIERRA

SOURCED

Program Standard

A Regional Economic Impact Certification for the
seven-county Sierra Nevada region

AMADOR • ALPINE • CALAVERAS • INYO • MARIPOSA • MONO • TUOLUMNE

ADMINISTERED BY

Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce

in coalition with regional chambers and economic development partners



PROGRAM STANDARD

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THE REGION

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Program Overview

1.1 What Sierra Sourced is

Sierra Sourced is a regional economic impact certification administered by the Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce on behalf of a coalition of chambers, economic development organizations, county governments, and producer partners across the seven-county Sierra Nevada region.

The certification identifies businesses whose economic activity meaningfully retains revenue, labor, ownership, and value within the region. Sierra Sourced is the first place-based program in the Sierra Nevada that measures where economic value is captured rather than only where products originate.

1.2 What the mark certifies

The Sierra Sourced mark certifies that the bearing business meets the Sierra Sourced Economic Impact Standard (Section 2) and operates within one of three certified pathways (Section 3): Sierra Grown, Sierra Crafted, or Sierra Forged.

1.3 What the mark does not certify

The Sierra Sourced mark does not, and does not imply:

- ◆ USDA Organic certification
- ◆ Animal welfare certification (e.g., Certified Humane, Animal Welfare Approved)
- ◆ Grass-fed, pasture-raised, or specific-diet certification
- ◆ Fair Trade certification
- ◆ Geographic Indication or Protected Designation of Origin status

Where producers carry additional certifications, those certifications are governed by their own standards bodies and are independent of Sierra Sourced.

1.4 The region

Sierra Sourced applies to producers operating within the seven-county Sierra Nevada region: Amador, Alpine, Calaveras, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, and Tuolumne Counties. References to “the region” throughout this Standard refer to these seven counties unless otherwise specified.

1.5 The economic problem this program addresses

The Sierra Nevada region faces sustained economic leakage. Tourism revenue, federal dollars, and consumer spending often pass through the region without being captured locally. Inputs are shipped in; finished goods and economic surplus flow out. The result is a region rich in cultural and natural assets but structurally underinvested in productive economic infrastructure.

Sierra Sourced exists to flag, reward, and visibly market businesses that fight that leakage, and to generate the economic data the region needs to address structural gaps at infrastructure scale.

The Economic Impact Standard

2.1 Qualifying criteria

To be certified Sierra Sourced, a business must meet at least three (3) of the following five (5) criteria. The criteria are designed to measure where the business's economic activity actually anchors, not just where its products are made, sold, or branded.

CRITERION	WHAT IT MEASURES	HOW IT IS VERIFIED
A Regional ownership	50%+ ownership held by regional residents or regionally-headquartered entities	Articles of incorporation, partnership agreements, ownership cap table, or notarized owner attestation
B Regional labor	50%+ of full-time-equivalent labor hours performed by regional residents	Payroll records, residency documentation (privacy-protected), or notarized owner attestation
C Regional production or transformation	Substantial transformation of the product physically occurs in-region	Lease agreements, business licenses, production photos, equipment lists, or facility documentation
D Regional inputs	50%+ of primary inputs by cost sourced from in-region; documented exception path for inputs not regionally available	Purchase orders, supplier invoices, or notarized owner attestation. Documented exceptions (coffee beans, cacao, etc.) do not count for or against.
E Regional revenue retention	50%+ of net revenue retained or recirculated in the regional economy	Profit & loss statement, financial summary, or notarized owner attestation. Counts wages to regional employees, payments to regional suppliers, local taxes, owner draws to regional residents, and reinvestment in regional operations.

2.2 Why “three of five”

The threshold is structured to accommodate the diversity of business models present in the region (agricultural producers, food and beverage manufacturers, services businesses, tradespeople, and creative industries) while requiring that each certified business demonstrate meaningful, multi-dimensional economic anchoring in the region.

A business that meets all five criteria is not granted additional certification standing; the certification is binary (qualified or not). The program may publicly recognize businesses that significantly exceed minimum thresholds through additional storytelling, visibility, and ambassador-tier participation.

2.3 Documentation

For each criterion claimed, the business must provide documentation sufficient for the program administrator to verify the claim. Where source documents cannot or should not be disclosed for privacy or competitive reasons, a signed and notarized attestation from the business owner is acceptable, subject to audit (Section 4.4).

Documentation submitted to the administrator is treated as confidential and is not published or shared outside the verification process.

SECTION 3

The Three Pathways

Every certified Sierra Sourced business operates under one of three pathways. The pathway determines how the business may describe its relationship to the region and which descriptor stamp accompanies the Sierra Sourced mark on consumer-facing materials.

3.1 Sierra Grown

GROWN

DEFINITION	Products that are raised, cultivated, harvested, or otherwise produced from primary biological inputs originating within the seven-county region.
EXAMPLES	Cattle, swine, lamb, and poultry raised in-region; fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, and forage grown in-region; honey, eggs, dairy, and value-added products derived from in-region sources; timber harvested in-region; wild-foraged products from in-region land (with appropriate permits).
PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY	Producers must demonstrate the in-region origin of the primary biological input. Off-region processing (e.g., USDA-inspected slaughter at a facility outside the region) does not disqualify a product from the Sierra Grown pathway, provided the animal or plant was raised or grown in-region and segregation is maintained through processing. (See Section 6 for USDA-regulated label specifics.)

3.2 Sierra Crafted

CRAFTED

DEFINITION	Products that are manufactured, processed, transformed, or finished within the seven-county region, where substantial transformation of the product occurs in-region, regardless of whether all primary inputs originate in-region.
EXAMPLES	Coffee roasted in-region from imported green coffee; chocolate made in-region from imported cacao; wine, cider, beer, and spirits produced in-region; furniture and goods crafted in-region; textiles produced in-region; prepared foods, sauces, and packaged goods manufactured in-region.
PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY	Producers in this pathway must clearly disclose, in marketing copy and product narratives, the geographic origin of inputs that are not sourced in-region. Sierra Crafted is an honest pathway. Its credibility depends on transparency about what was made here versus what was sourced elsewhere. The pathway welcomes participants across the full range of regional production, from artisanal small-batch producers to higher-volume regional manufacturers.

3.3 Sierra Forged

FORGED

DEFINITION	Service, retail, trade, hospitality, and professional businesses whose identity and operational character have been shaped by the region. These are businesses without a physical product, anchored to the region by ownership, employment, operations, and economic activity.
EXAMPLES	Construction and trade contractors based in-region; retail stores, galleries, and tasting rooms; hospitality businesses; professional service firms (legal, accounting, design, technology); guides, outfitters, and recreation operators; restaurants and food service operators.
PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY	Sierra Forged businesses do not produce or transform a physical product as their primary economic activity. They qualify based on the regional anchoring of their operations and the character of their business as forged through working in this region. The mark is used in business identity, marketing, and public-facing materials.

3.4 Pathway selection

A business selects its pathway during application. A business that operates across multiple pathways (e.g., a winery that grows its own grapes and operates a tasting room) selects the pathway most descriptive of its primary economic activity. If a business is uncertain which pathway applies, the administrator works with the business during application review to identify the best fit.

Verification and Compliance

4.1 Application

Producers apply through the Sierra Sourced administrator (Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce). The application requires:

- ◆ Business identification and contact information
- ◆ Pathway selection (Grown, Crafted, or Forged)
- ◆ Documentation supporting at least three of the five Economic Impact Standard criteria
- ◆ Producer Attestation Form (Appendix A) signed by the business owner

There is no fee to apply, to be certified, or to be listed in the Sierra Sourced producer directory. A basic listing is free and will always be free. The program charges only for trademark usage and branding rights (Section 4.3).

4.2 Administrator review

The administrator reviews each application within 30 days of receipt. Review consists of documentation completeness check, verification of supporting evidence, confirmation that the selected pathway matches the business's actual activity, and approval, request for additional information, or denial. Denials are accompanied by a written explanation and may be appealed within 30 days.

4.3 Approval, basic listing, and trademark license

Upon approval, the producer is certified and receives a basic listing at no cost. The basic listing includes:

- ◆ Inclusion in the Sierra Sourced producer directory
- ◆ Access to participating retailer and distributor networks
- ◆ Annual recertification reminders

Use of the Sierra Sourced mark is a separate, licensed right. A certified producer that chooses to use the mark obtains a trademark license from the administrator and pays the trademark license fee. Licensed producers receive:

- ◆ Sierra Sourced master mark and pathway-specific descriptor stamp files in print- and web-ready formats
- ◆ Brand Guidelines covering proper use, color palettes, minimum sizes, clear-space requirements, and pathway descriptor application

The trademark license fee and license term are set by the coalition and published in the Sierra Sourced fee schedule. No other fee is charged under this Standard.

4.4 Audit and site visits

The administrator reserves the right to conduct on-site audits and field verification, particularly for larger producers, producers operating in USDA-regulated or TTB-regulated categories, producers identified through random sampling, and producers subject to a complaint or misuse report.

Producers receive at least 14 days advance notice of a scheduled audit, except in cases of suspected ongoing misuse, where the administrator may conduct an unannounced audit.

4.5 Annual recertification

Each certified producer must recertify annually. Material changes to the business (ownership transfer, relocation outside the region, fundamental change in production model) must be reported to the administrator within 30 days, regardless of the recertification cycle.

4.6 Misuse and loss of certification

The Sierra Sourced mark may not be used by uncertified businesses, by certified businesses that do not hold a current trademark license, or in connection with products that fall outside the certified pathway. Misuse may result in:

- ◆ Written notice and required correction within 30 days
- ◆ Suspension of certification pending resolution
- ◆ Permanent revocation of certification
- ◆ Public disclosure of revocation through the producer directory
- ◆ Legal action to protect the trademark, if warranted

Producers whose certification is revoked may reapply after 12 months, subject to demonstration that the conditions that led to revocation have been resolved.

SECTION 5

Use of the Mark

5.1 Two-tier brand architecture

Sierra Sourced operates under a deliberate two-tier brand architecture. This structure preserves brand cohesion while accommodating the regulatory requirements that apply to different product categories and use contexts.

TIER 1

Program name (Sierra Sourced)

"Sierra Sourced" is the umbrella program name. It appears on chamber communications, the program website, grant applications, coalition documents, marketing collateral, retailer partner signage, press materials, certification letters, and any context in which the program identifies itself as the program. The Sierra Sourced master mark (lantern plus wordmark) is the visual identity for Tier 1 use.

TIER 2

Consumer-facing pathway descriptors

On consumer-facing product packaging, hangtags, retail signage, and producer marketing materials, the Sierra Sourced master mark is accompanied by a pathway descriptor stamp identifying the producer's pathway: GROWN, CRAFTED, or FORGED. The descriptor stamp is a small, subordinate visual element that sits beneath the master wordmark in the approved lockup. The descriptor does not replace the master mark.

5.2 Master mark

The Sierra Sourced master mark consists of the lantern icon paired with the SIERRA SOURCED wordmark. The master mark is the universal identifier of the program. Every licensed producer uses the master mark; only the pathway descriptor varies across pathways. Brand Guidelines document the master mark in its approved color and monochrome variants (Big Lake, Quartz, Ink, White, and Brick), clear-space requirements, and minimum sizes.

Use of the master mark and pathway descriptors requires a current trademark license (Section 4.3). Certification and a basic listing do not by themselves grant the right to use the mark.

5.3 Pathway descriptors

Pathway descriptors (GROWN, CRAFTED, FORGED) accompany the master mark on consumer-facing product packaging, hangtags, labels, and retail materials. The descriptor stamp is part of the approved pathway lockup; producers do not modify the descriptor or create independent pathway logos. The descriptor is recommended for product-level use and optional in contexts where the pathway is obvious (e.g., the producer's own storefront).

5.4 Permitted uses

- ◆ Product packaging, subject to Section 6 for USDA-regulated products
- ◆ Hangtags, labels, and inserts
- ◆ Point-of-sale and display materials
- ◆ Producer websites, social media, and digital marketing
- ◆ Print and digital advertising
- ◆ Vehicle signage, storefronts, and physical premises
- ◆ Trade show, festival, and event materials

5.5 Prohibited uses

- ◆ Use by uncertified businesses or on uncertified product lines
- ◆ Use by certified businesses that do not hold a current trademark license
- ◆ Modification of the mark, including color changes outside the approved palette, distortion, redrawing, or unauthorized variations
- ◆ Creation of independent pathway logos or alternate descriptor stamps
- ◆ Use in association with products or services outside the certified pathway
- ◆ Use that implies endorsement of unrelated third-party products, services, or political positions
- ◆ Use after suspension or revocation of certification

5.6 Retailer and distributor use

Retailers, distributors, and food service operators may use the Sierra Sourced mark in connection with the sale or service of certified products, provided the use is accurate (the product is in fact certified) and the mark is not modified. Retailers and distributors who wish to position their establishment as a Sierra Sourced partner may apply for a separate Sierra Sourced Partner designation, governed by a forthcoming partner agreement.

SECTION 6

USDA-Regulated Products

6.1 Scope

This section applies to products subject to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) labeling oversight, including meat, poultry, and processed egg products regulated by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Producers in these categories must follow the use modes described below.

6.2 Two modes of use

For USDA-regulated products, the Sierra Sourced mark may be used in one of two modes:

MODE 1**Off-label use (recommended default)**

The Sierra Sourced mark and pathway descriptor are used on hangtags, butcher case signage, retail display materials, websites, marketing materials, packaging inserts, and other communications that are not part of the federally regulated label panel. In this mode, the mark does not trigger FSIS source claim review.

This mode is recommended for the majority of producers because it preserves full marketing benefit without imposing FSIS documentation burden.

MODE 2**On-label source claim**

The Sierra Sourced mark or Sierra Grown pathway descriptor is included on the federally regulated label panel. In this mode, the mark constitutes a third-party certification source claim and requires the producer (and the producer's processing establishment) to submit FSIS-required documentation as part of label approval.

6.3 On-label documentation requirements

Producers seeking on-label use must, at minimum, provide the following to FSIS at the time of label submission:

- ◆ A copy of this Sierra Sourced Program Standard
- ◆ The Producer Attestation Form (Appendix A) signed and dated for the production lot
- ◆ A written description of the producer's animal or product traceability controls from origin through slaughter or further processing
- ◆ A written description of the producer's segregation procedures for non-conforming animals or products (Section 7)
- ◆ A signed statement attesting that all animals or products bearing the mark meet the Sierra Sourced standard
- ◆ A copy of the Sierra Sourced certification letter issued by the program administrator for the current year

These requirements align with FSIS guidance for source and traceability claims under 9 CFR § 412 and related labeling policy memoranda.

6.4 TTB-regulated products

For TTB-regulated alcohol products (wine, distilled spirits, malt beverages), additional Brand Guidelines apply to the use of the Sierra Sourced mark and pathway descriptors on regulated label panels. The coalition is finalizing TTB-specific guidance in coordination with compliance counsel and will issue a supplemental document upon completion of that review. Producers in TTB-regulated categories should consult with the administrator before submitting label applications that include Sierra Sourced or any pathway descriptor.

6.5 Coordination with processors

Producers using out-of-region USDA-inspected processors are responsible for confirming with the processor that segregation is maintained through slaughter, fabrication, and packaging. The administrator can provide a template segregation language statement that producers may share with their processor on request.

SECTION 7

Non-Conforming Products and Segregation

7.1 Producer obligations

Each certified producer is obligated to:

- ◆ Use the Sierra Sourced mark only on products and lots that meet the certified pathway standard
- ◆ Maintain physical and documentary segregation of conforming and non-conforming products throughout production, processing, and distribution
- ◆ Promptly report to the administrator any product, lot, or production run that does not meet the standard but inadvertently bore the mark
- ◆ Maintain segregation and incident records for a minimum of three years

7.2 Segregation procedures

For Sierra Grown producers, segregation procedures should describe:

- ◆ How conforming animals or plants are identified at the production source
- ◆ How identification is maintained through transport to slaughter or further processing
- ◆ How conforming product is segregated from non-conforming product at the processing facility
- ◆ How packaged or finished product is identified as Sierra Sourced through to point of sale

For producers using third-party processors, the producer must obtain confirmation from the processor that segregation is maintained and document this confirmation.

7.3 Non-conformance procedure

If a non-conforming animal, plant, or product is identified, the producer must:

- ◆ Immediately remove or cover the Sierra Sourced mark from the affected product, lot, or run, or pull the affected product from sale
- ◆ Document the incident in writing, including cause, scope, and corrective action taken
- ◆ Notify the administrator within 30 days
- ◆ Implement corrective action to prevent recurrence

The administrator reviews each reported incident and determines whether additional follow-up is warranted. Repeated or systemic non-conformance may result in suspension or revocation of certification under Section 4.6.

SECTION 8

Program Governance

8.1 Administrator

The Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce serves as the program administrator and is responsible for:

- ◆ Application intake, review, and approval
- ◆ Verification, audit, and ongoing compliance oversight
- ◆ Branding kit distribution and brand guideline maintenance
- ◆ Trademark protection and enforcement
- ◆ Annual recertification of all participating producers
- ◆ Coordination with regional partners and coalition members
- ◆ Periodic reporting on program scale, regional economic impact, and infrastructure gaps surfaced through producer applications

8.2 Coalition partners

Sierra Sourced is supported by a coalition of regional chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, county governments, tourism bureaus, arts councils, and producer partners. Coalition partners provide producer outreach, regional ambassador networks, promotional collaboration, and input on program standards and revisions.

8.3 Standard revisions

This Program Standard may be revised periodically to reflect program evolution, regulatory changes, or coalition decisions. Material revisions require:

- ◆ 90-day advance notice to certified producers
- ◆ A public comment period of at least 30 days
- ◆ Coalition approval before adoption

Producers will be required to recertify against the revised standard at the next annual recertification cycle following adoption.

8.4 Data and reporting

Application data is aggregated and anonymized by the administrator and used to identify regional infrastructure gaps, including aggregate demand for in-region USDA processing capacity, cold storage, distribution networks, and shared production facilities. The administrator publishes a regional economic impact report no less than annually, drawing on this data to inform Sierra Jobs First and other regional economic development efforts. Individual producer financial information is held in confidence.



ISSUED FOR COALITION REVIEW

Program Standard, Version 2.1

Program administered by the Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce

Mat Galvan

Program Director and Founder

Sierra Sourced

October 9, 2026

Producer Attestation Form

This form is signed by the certified Sierra Sourced producer for each production lot, run, or applicable certification period. A signed copy is retained by the producer and provided to processors, distributors, and regulatory authorities (including FSIS) on request.

PRODUCER INFORMATION

Business name _____

Business address _____

Owner/authorized signer name _____ Owner/authorized signer title _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Sierra Sourced certification number _____ Certification period (start – end) _____

PATHWAY

Check the pathway under which this attestation is made:

- ☐ **Sierra Grown:** raised, cultivated, or harvested in-region
- ☐ **Sierra Crafted:** manufactured, processed, or transformed in-region
- ☐ **Sierra Forged:** service, retail, or trade business anchored in-region

PRODUCT OR LOT DESCRIPTION

Product type and description _____

Lot or batch identification (dates, numbers, ear tag ranges, etc.) _____

Production location _____

Processing facility (if different) _____ Estimated quantity _____

ATTESTATIONS

By signing below, the producer attests to each of the following:

- ◆ All products covered by this attestation meet the Sierra Sourced Economic Impact Standard and the requirements of the pathway selected above.
- ◆ All animals, plants, or inputs covered by this attestation can be traced to their origin within the seven-county Sierra Nevada region (Amador, Alpine, Calaveras, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, and Tuolumne Counties), where applicable to the selected pathway.
- ◆ Conforming and non-conforming products have been segregated through production, processing, packaging, and distribution, in accordance with the producer's segregation procedures on file with the program administrator.
- ◆ Any non-conforming product identified has been removed from the certified production stream, and any incident has been or will be reported to the program administrator within 30 days.
- ◆ Live animal-raising and product-tracing records, where applicable, are maintained for a minimum of three years and are available for inspection on reasonable notice.
- ◆ The information provided in this attestation is true and accurate to the best of the producer's knowledge, and the producer acknowledges that false attestation may result in suspension or revocation of Sierra Sourced certification.

SIGNATURE

Signature _____

Printed name _____ Title _____

Date _____

NOTARY ACKNOWLEDGMENT (OPTIONAL)

Notary acknowledgment is not required by the Sierra Sourced Program Standard but may be requested by USDA FSIS or other regulatory authorities for on-label source claims.

State of _____ County of _____

Subscribed and sworn to before me on (date) _____

Notary signature _____ Notary printed name _____

My commission expires _____