

# The Impact of Collaboration and Regional Networking on Economic Development in Missouri

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“When I first started in economic development, it was very closed. You’d go to an economic development conference and everybody sat at the table quietly. They didn’t talk to each other because it was all considered confidential, highly secretive, and so on...

Today, it is a wide open network. I want to learn what you’re doing, so maybe it helps me do what I’m doing better.”  
(Interview respondent, 2020)

# Collaboration

Collaboration is no longer just an option but is increasingly viewed as **a necessary aspect of being successful** in economic development.

While collaboration remains uneven and emergent, the discourse has shifted from being recognized as increasingly important into an integrated dimension of the practice today.



# Benefits of Collaboration

- 1) Excessive competition can reduce efficiency and increase inequity between neighboring communities
- 2) Encourages the development of economies of scale
- 3) Benefits smaller communities that may lack resources
- 4) Helps small communities become more competitive in an increasingly global economy

# Conceptualizing a Community of Practice

**Domain:** Membership implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people.

**Community:** Members of the Community of Practice engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other.

**Practice:** Members develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems.



# A Distributed Community of Practice

Etienne Wenger describes a distributed community of practice as one that “**cannot rely on face-to-face** meetings and interactions as its primary vehicle for connecting members”.

Distributed communities of practice can also have competing interests *between units* of the community.

# Key questions

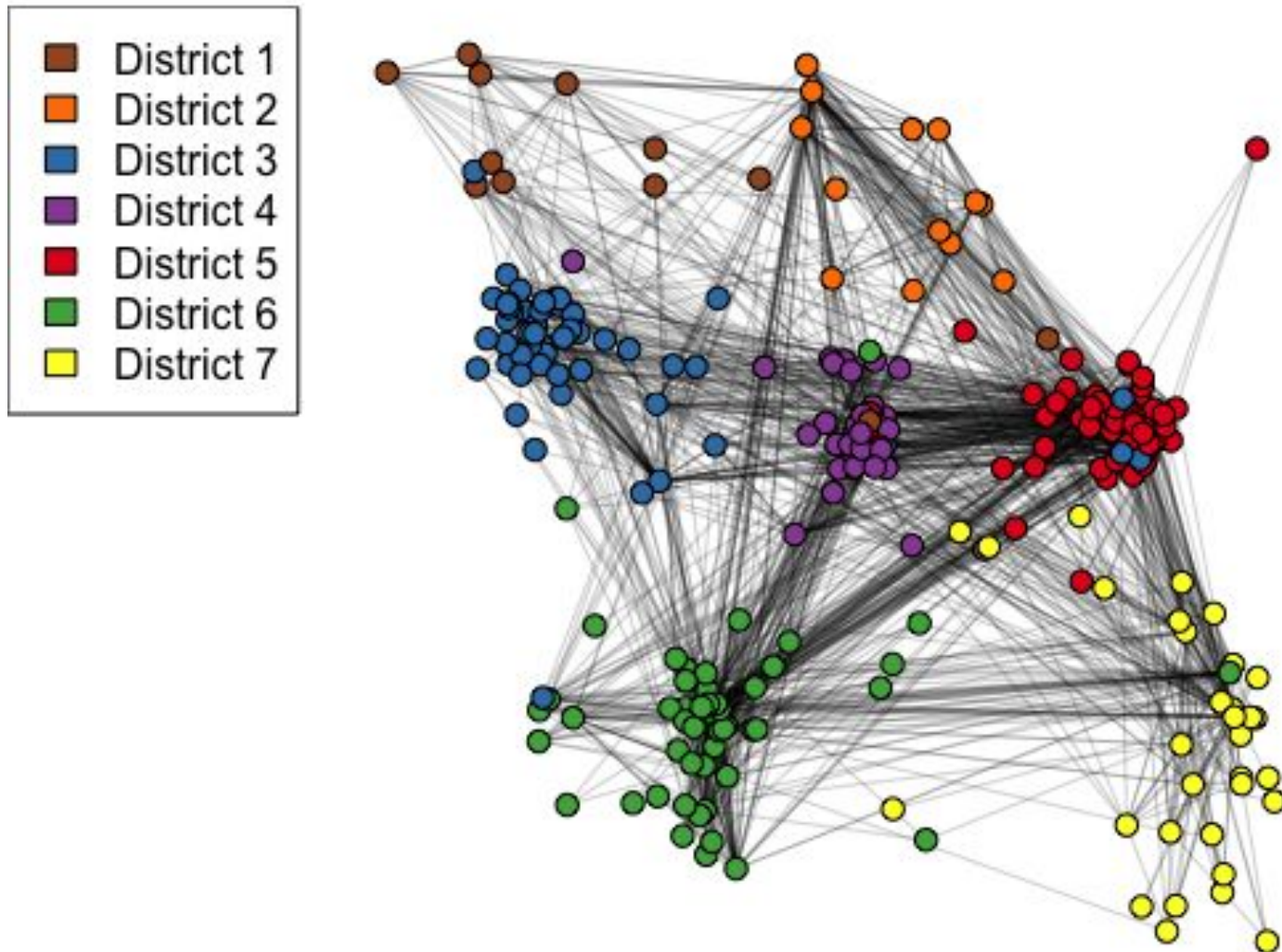
Where are collaborations happening in our state, and among whom?

How does the type/strength of collaboration vary across the state?

# Survey Methods



# Mapping Collaborations



# Survey Distribution

- Survey sent by email February 2025
- 402 respondents invited: MEDC members and a selection of DED employees.

# 1: In-District Names

“A collaboration may range from working together on a formal project, to simply informal information sharing. Please select anyone you may have collaborated with in the last year.”

	<b>Shared information informally</b> (e.g. telephone call, email, cup of coffee).	<b>Collaborated indirectly</b> as part of a local or regional collective or association.	<b>Collaborated on a shared or jointly funded effort</b> (e.g. shared marketing budget or a joint report).	<b>Direct collaboration on a formal project.</b> (e.g. sharing advice or information)	<b>Intensive Collaboration on a formal project.</b> (e.g. working jointly)
Matthew	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rachel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jonas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 2: Across-District Names

“If you have collaborators in MEDC member districts different from your own, please select them from the lists below. You may select multiple names using the control or command key.”

### District 1 (Northwest)

Kristie  
Monica  
Lauren

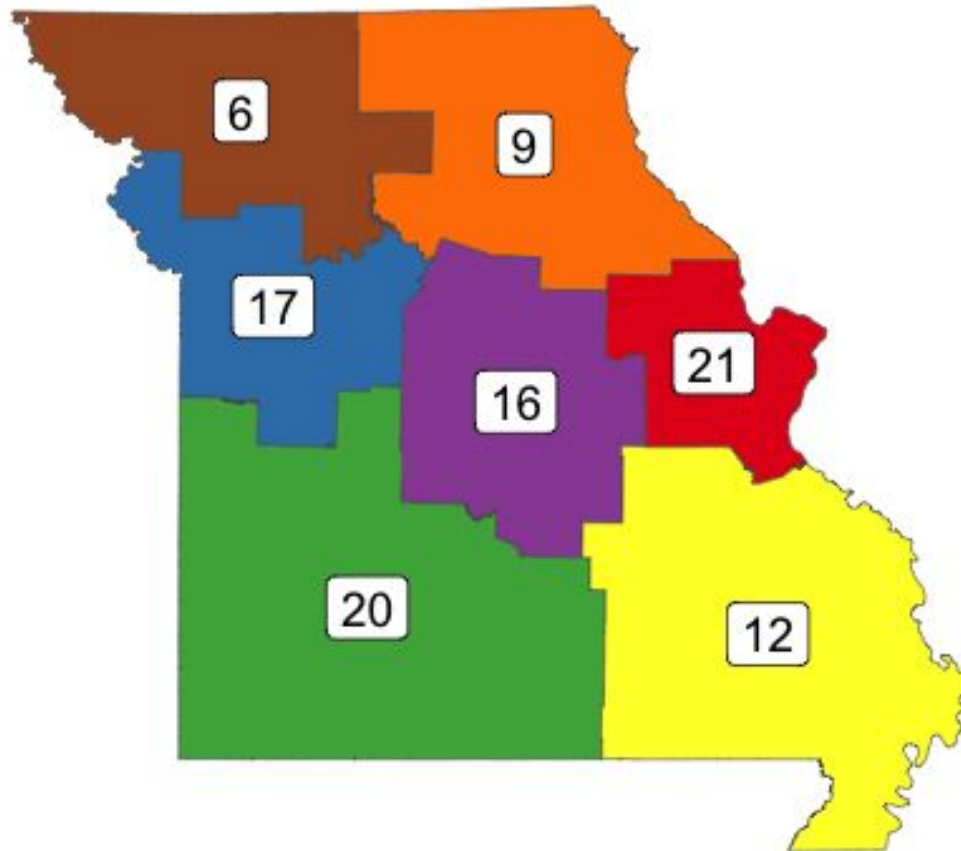
### District 2 (Northeast)

Allie  
Laura  
Carolyn

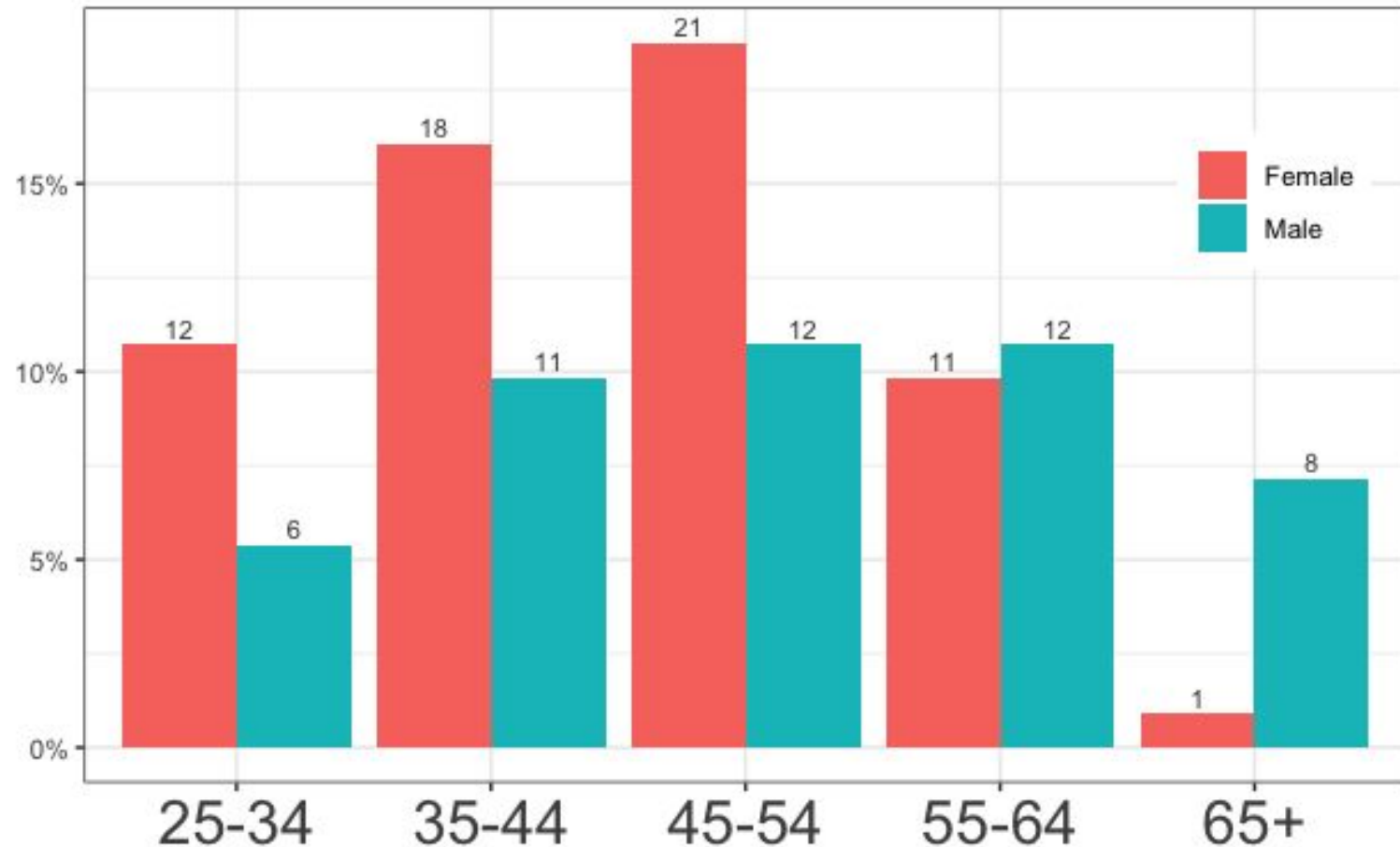
# Survey Response

- Survey sent by email February 2025
- 402 respondents invited: MEDC members and a selection of DED employees.
- 127 respondents completed the survey
- Response rate: 31.6%
- 273 individuals included in the collaboration graph

# Respondents by MEDC District

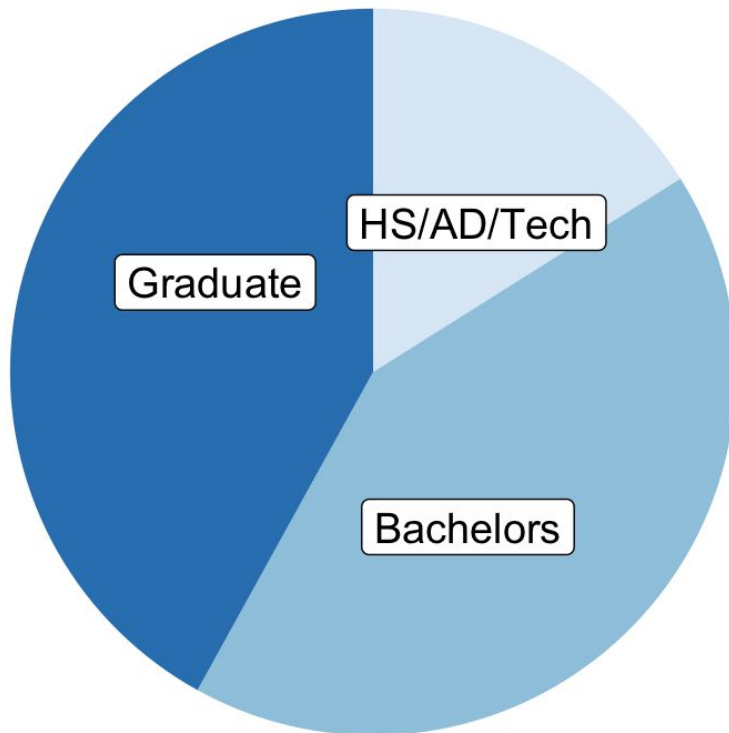


# Respondent Gender and Age

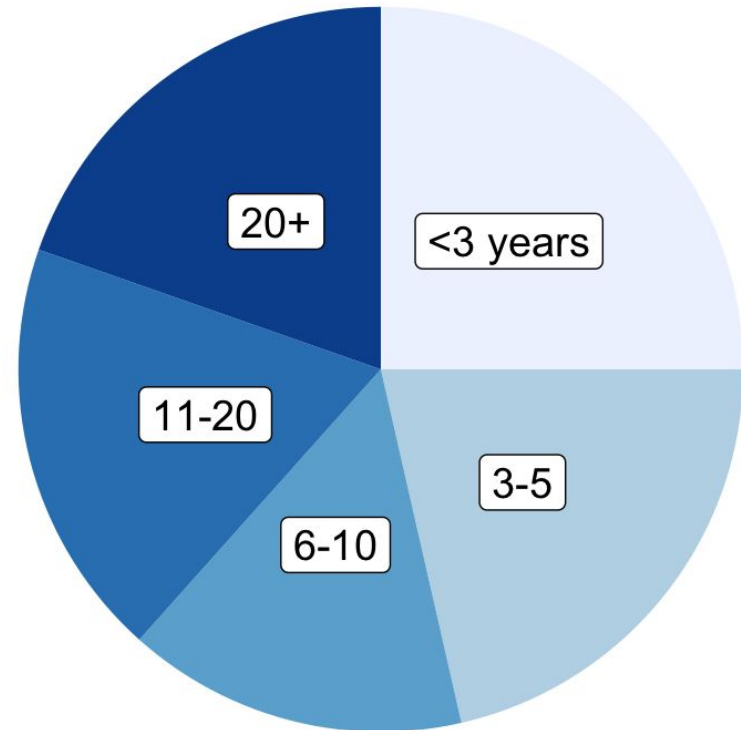


# Respondent Background

Education



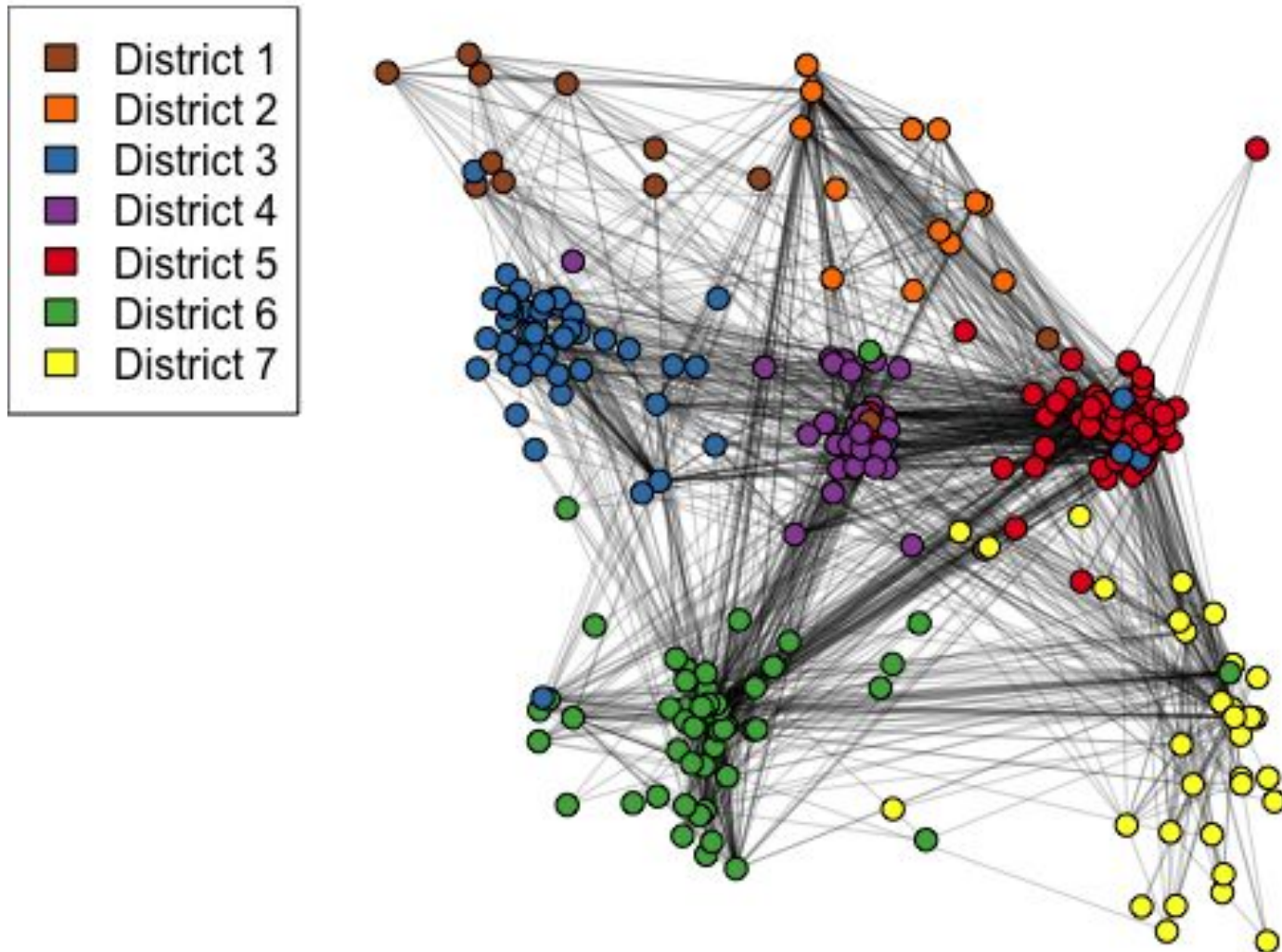
Experience as Developer



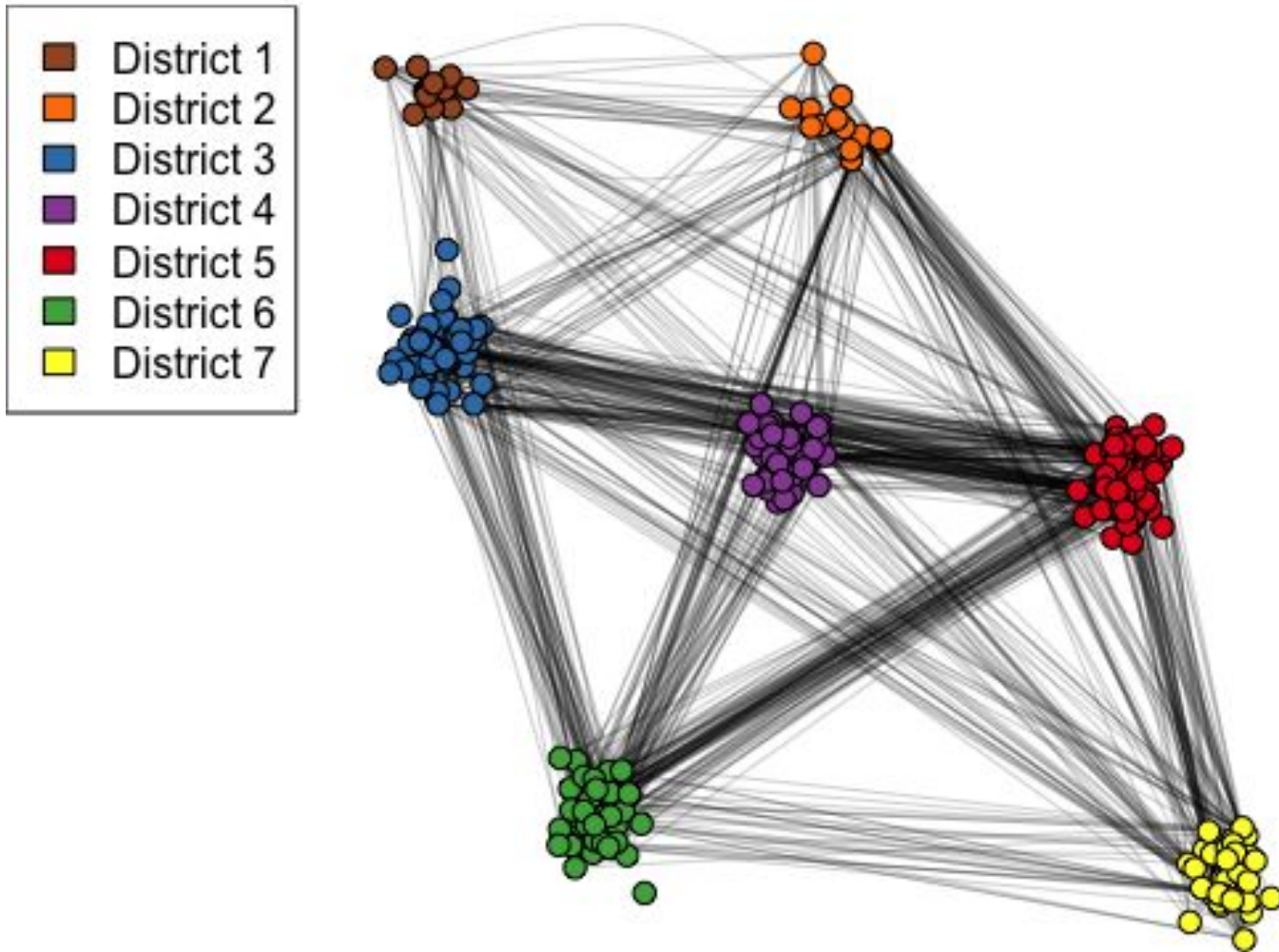


# Collaboration Network

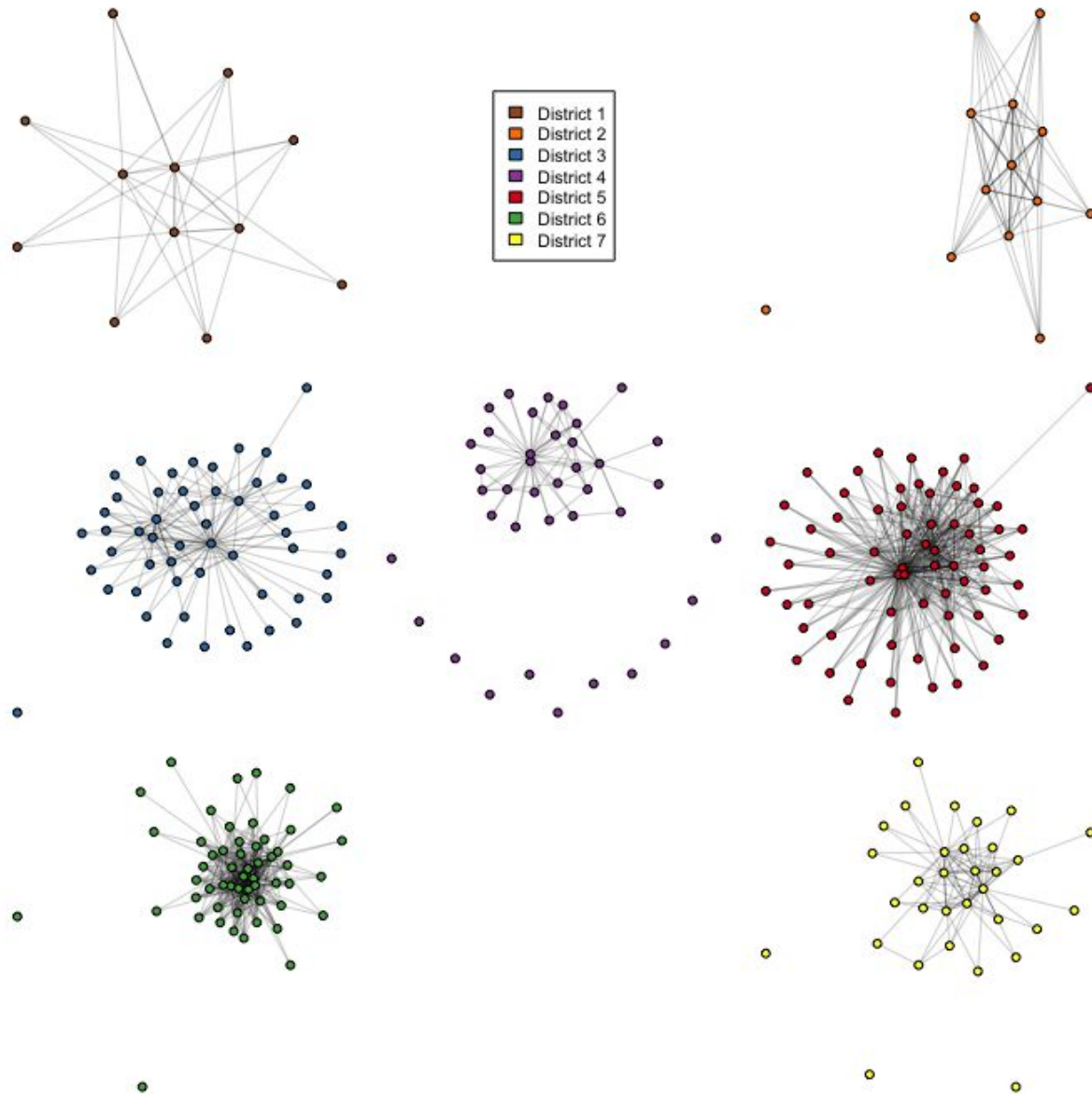
# Collaboration Network



# Between District Collaborations



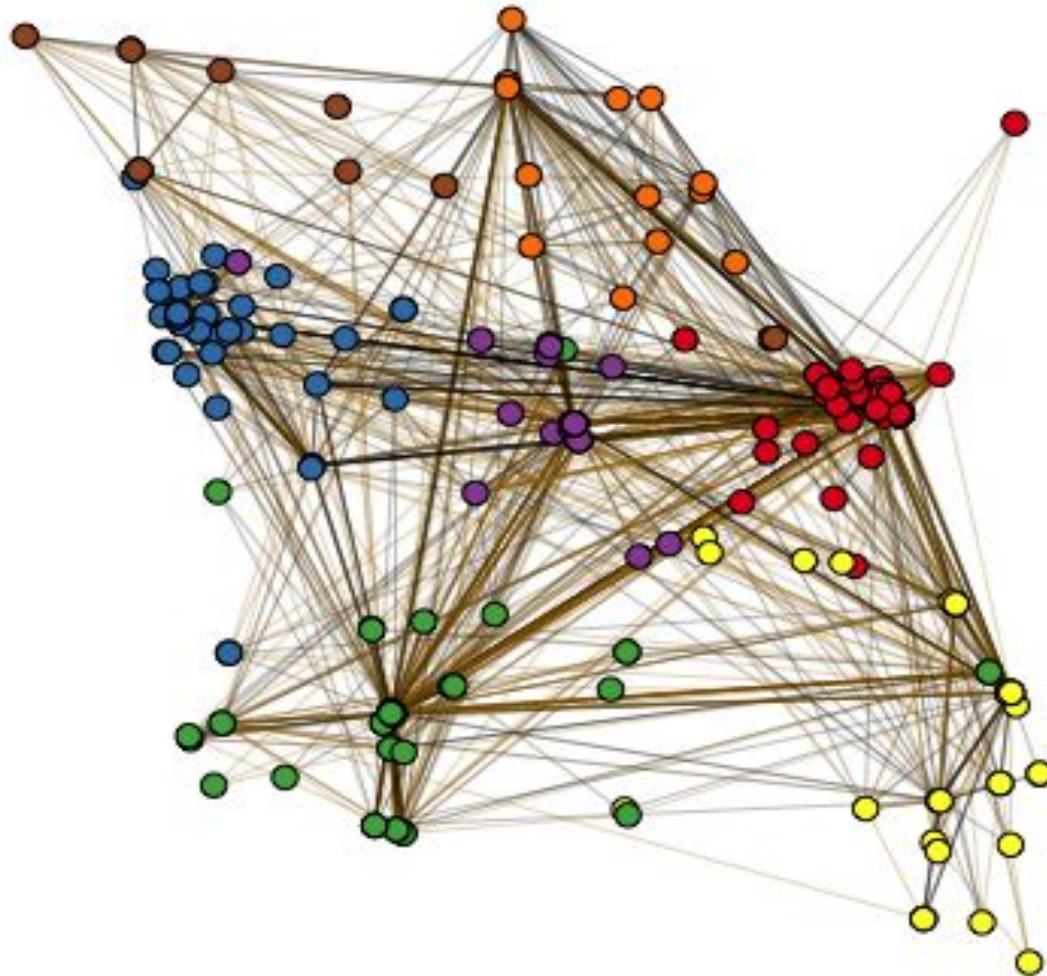
# Within District Collaborations



# Collaboration Categories

	Shared information informally (e.g. telephone call, email, cup of coffee).	Collaborated indirectly as part of a local or regional collective or association.	Collaborated on a shared or jointly funded effort (e.g. shared marketing budget or a joint report).	Direct collaboration on a formal project. (e.g. sharing advice or information)	Intensive Collaboration on a formal project. (e.g. working jointly)
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Jonas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Strength of Collaborations



# Conclusion



# Acknowledgements

- Survey Participants
- MEDC Board of Directors
- MEDC Strategic Planning Committee
- Brandon Atchison
- SLU Stolle Fund



# We welcome your questions and insight

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