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**Thrive Inland SoCal**

**California Jobs First (CJF)**

**DRAFT Regional Plan Part II report**

July 29, 2024

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# Introduction

Over the past year, stakeholders throughout Riverside and San Bernardino Counties have come together to form Thrive Inland SoCal, a regional collaborative dedicated to inclusive economic development. Organized in response to the statewide California Jobs First initiative, Thrive Inland SoCal is working to build a stronger, more resilient, and more inclusive regional economy that gives everyone in the region a fair chance at building a better life for themselves and their families.

The California Jobs First (CJF) initiative provided a process for thinking through how to grow the number of quality jobs in the region, get more workers on pathways into those jobs, and help more families in Inland SoCal achieve financial stability.

| **What is California Jobs First?**  The California Jobs First (CJF) Regional Investment Initiative (formerly known as the Community Economic Resilience Fund) is a signature effort to cultivate strong, equitable, and sustainable regional economies throughout the state. Enacted in 2021 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, this initiative is administered by the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) and the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency (LWDA).  CJF organized the state into 13 distinct regions and tasked each region with the development of a regional economic development strategy focused on generating quality jobs, fostering widespread prosperity, and transitioning to clean energy. Each region established governance structures reflecting the diversity of its population, conducted a community-informed assessment of the regional economy, and identified concrete strategies and tactics to advance CJF’s goals. Following the completion of the strategy development phase in late summer 2024, the 13 regions will compete for state funding to support the implementation of their strategic plans. |
| --- |

Thrive Inland SoCal used the CJF process to develop a roadmap for a more inclusive and resilient economy that is anchored in the region’s distinctive economic strengths. It conducted in-depth research and extensive community engagement to better understand emerging opportunities and persistent challenges as well as the actions and investments needed to help the region deliver on its potential. The strategies and tactics set forth in this plan build on these insights to provide new possibilities for the region. These proposed actions will guide Thrive’s efforts to increase the number of quality jobs in the region, strengthen and diversify the regional economy, and ensure that all Inland SoCal residents have the opportunity to flourish.

| **What is Thrive Inland SoCal?**  Thrive Inland SoCal is a regional inclusive economic development collaborative composed of a wide range of stakeholder groups from Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. It is led by a broadly representative governance framework involving multiple committees, an Inclusive Planning Council, and six subregional tables. Inland Economic Growth and Opportunity (IEGO) and the Inland Empire Labor Institute (IELI) serve as co-conveners for this effort, with the Inland Empire Community Foundation (IECF) acting as fiscal agent.  Thrive Inland SoCal recognizes the value of giving all residents a say in shaping the region’s collective economic future and addressing historical inequities. It envisions a region where everyone has access to the resources and opportunities that they need to thrive, regardless of their background or life circumstances. It is committed to closing equity gaps and dismantling systemic barriers that prevent individuals and communities from realizing their full potential.  The collaborative’s primary goal is to cultivate a region where all communities prosper from economic growth and every resident has the opportunity to live a healthy, high-quality life. It will achieve these aims by prioritizing:   * A cooperative culture anchored in a spirit of mutual respect and a desire to build consensus around solutions * A commitment to equitable hiring practices and business operations * Innovation and entrepreneurship assets in the region that support high-growth startups as well as small businesses (including those owned by members of historically marginalized communities) * Anti-racist approaches and power sharing * Inclusive, data-driven decision making * Accountability to one another for the outcomes of our decisions     Through the CJF process, Thrive Inland SoCal has taken concrete steps to:   * Assess the regional economy and identify high-potential industry clusters, core challenges, and opportunities for future growth * Invite community members into the regional economic strategy development process and incorporate their insights, priorities, and concerns into the resulting strategies * Develop strategies that strengthen industry clusters with the greatest potential for increasing the number of quality jobs in the region * Propose mechanisms for connecting more residents to pathways into quality jobs, entrepreneurship, small business ownership, and other opportunities for wealth-building. |
| --- |

**Rethinking regional economic development**

For much of the twentieth century, most Americans earned more money than their parents. Among those born in 1940, some 90% out-earned their parents (after adjusting for inflation). But for Americans born in the 1980s, only half earn more than their parents.[[1]](#footnote-0) One of the main reasons for this stems from a shortage of quality jobs.

In the past, job creation numbers were seen as a core indicator of regional economic health, alongside capital investment in factories, warehouses, and other facilities. However, although these metrics do capture overall growth, they provide little if any insight into who benefits from this growth and who is being left out.

Over the last 10-15 years, the shortcomings of this older approach to economic development have become more and more apparent. At the same time, the realization that inclusive economic development leads to more dynamic, more equitable, and more resilient economies has begun to take hold.

Many regions have started to think differently about what makes for a successful economy. This new take on regional economic development prioritizes the quality of economic growth generated and aims to improve outcomes for all residents. Metro Monitor, a tool developed by the Brookings Institution in 2016 to advance this evolution, offers one framework for this new approach. As shown in the graphic below, Metro Monitor takes traditional *growth* metrics into account but recognizes that they are not sufficient for measuring the health of a regional economy. Regions must also generate quality growth (*prosperity*) and ensure that all residents are able to benefit (*inclusion*).

By paying equal attention to measures of *growth, prosperity,* and *inclusion*, regions are redefining economic success to ensure broad-based benefit.

| A diagram of a chart  Description automatically generated  *Source: Brookings Metro Monitor* |
| --- |

Inclusive regional economic development pays attention to the quality of the jobs created and works to make these jobs accessible for all residents. But it also recognizes the importance of building on a region’s distinctive economic assets. These strengths can take many forms: a cluster of companies in an industry known for creating quality jobs, an established research university, a proven workforce development system that is able to meet area employers’ skills needs.

Once a region identifies its competitive advantages, it can then devise and implement a plan to drive growth in these industries while also boosting economic mobility and wealth-building through solid career pathways, support for entrepreneurs, help for small business owners, and other critical interventions.

**The Inland SoCal regional economy**

The first phase of CJF involved an in-depth assessment of the Inland SoCal economy and its performance between 2012 and 2022.[[2]](#footnote-1) The region saw tremendous growth during this period. Across all sectors, Inland SoCal outperformed the U.S. and California in terms of the number of jobs created, earnings, and value added. Industries that provide goods and services for area residents represented more than 60% of all job growth (nearly 270,000 jobs) from 2012 to 2022. The logistics sector was a major contributor as well, with almost 145,000 new jobs created.[[3]](#footnote-2)

Despite these impressive results, Inland SoCal struggled to keep pace with the U.S. and California on average earnings and productivity during this same period. This middling growth in terms of prosperity stemmed in large part from the fact that much of the job growth between 2012 and 2022 took the form of low-wage work with little or no opportunity for career advancement. Quality jobs—those that pay a livable wage, include employer-provided health insurance, and will continue to do so over the next ten years—were an increasingly smaller piece of the pie, accounting for just 26 percent of jobs in the region by 2022.[[4]](#footnote-3)

Inland SoCal is short more than half a million quality jobs, which means that there simply are not enough quality jobs to go around. Because of this gap, too many families in the region struggle to make ends meet each month. At least 40% Inland SoCal residents belong to a family that can’t meet its basic living expenses. Of this group, three out of four have at least one adult in their family who works. Workers of color, younger workers, and those with limited formal education face particular challenges that increase their likelihood of being part of a struggling family. As long as this quality jobs gap exists, there will always be workers in the region who cannot find a job that provides a level of financial stability and opportunities for upward mobility.[[5]](#footnote-4)

| **The Inland SoCal region has a substantial quality jobs gap**  A screenshot of a graph  Description automatically generated |
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**Quality jobs**

The term “quality job” means different things to different people. Most agree that a quality job offers financial stability and benefits. Opportunities for career advancement figure into job quality as well. Quality jobs provide training and promotions that allow workers to move up the economic ladder. Many people also view work-life balance, time spent commuting, and personal fulfillment as important factors for determining job quality.

| “…it’s one thing to have a job and you’re doing just because you have to do it . . . because it’s about survival, as opposed to something that you enjoy going to and you’re going to put your all into . . .”  — Destiny Grace (pseud.), cultural community liaison  (UCR interview) |
| --- |

For the purposes of CJF, Thrive Inland SoCal used quantitative factors—things that can be measured with numbers—to define “quality job” because these factors are measured in the same way across all different industries, employers, cities, and towns.

But this analysis only provides part of the story. Numbers can’t tell us about other important factors that affect people’s experience at work, such as hours, scheduling, and workplace environment (e.g., indoor vs. outdoor). These qualitative factors—things that are best described with words—are more difficult to assess, both because information is not collected in a way that can be compared across different companies, industries, and locations and because different people want different things out of their jobs.

To get at these insights, the Thrive research team talked with over 75 Inland SoCal residents, including workers from different industries; workforce development board leaders; entrepreneurs and small business owners; chambers of commerce, community-based organizations, and nonprofits; and public officials at the city, county, and tribal levels. These interviews paid special attention to those industries that employ the largest number of workers in the region—education, food services, healthcare, retail, and transportation and logistics.

Interview participants represented the diversity of the region in terms of age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and geographical location. Their voices helped round out the picture and provided important insights that helped inform the strategy design process.

| **What is a quality job?**  A quality job can be defined in many different ways. This report uses a method called Opportunity Industries analysis, which employs data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Opportunity Industries methodology was developed by researchers at the Brookings Institution to figure out which industries are most likely to create a large number of quality jobs in a particular location.  According to the Opportunity Industries definition, a *quality job* must:   * Pay enough over the course of a year to cover a family’s basic needs and leave some extra money left over for emergencies and savings * Include health insurance (which tends to mean that the job offers other benefits as well) * Provide a level of financial stability over the next ten years (either by continuing to be a quality job or by providing a path to a different quality job).   A *promising job* won’t meet all three of these criteria but still can help a worker move into a quality job within the next decade.  Quality jobs and promising jobs together are referred to as *opportunity jobs*.  *Source: Shearer and Shah, “Opportunity Industries: Exploring the Industries that Concentrate Good and Promising Jobs in Metropolitan America,” Brookings Institution, 2018.* |
| --- |

There are only a few proven mechanisms for increasing the number of quality jobs in a region: creating new quality jobs, improving existing jobs, and implementing policy changes. Creating new quality jobs aligns best with the regional focus of Thrive Inland SoCal and CJF. Improving existing jobs is best pursued within individual companies in collaboration with employers, workers, and local unions, and policy change implementation is handled by city, county, and state government.

**Focus areas for Thrive strategy development**

With the State of California’s CJF guidelines as a starting point, Thrive Inland SoCal also drew on insights gathered through extensive research and community engagement when selecting focus areas for this strategic plan. The three categories of action described below capture the breadth of the strategies set forth in this report.

* *Quality job creation:* Expanding the number of quality jobs in the region is the core ambition of CJF and a critical first step in ensuring that more Inland SoCal residents have the opportunity to prosper. *Economic diversification* and *growth in “opportunity industries”* (those industries most likely to create a lot of quality jobs) offer the best chance for increasing the number and proportion of quality jobs in the region. A more diversified focus on emerging regional strengths in advanced manufacturing, the clean economy, and cybersecurity will grow quality jobs and bring new money into the Inland SoCal economy by selling goods and services to customers outside the region.
* *Economic mobility and wealth-building:* To ensure equitable outcomes, quality job creation strategies must be paired with deliberate efforts to help all residents prosper. *Pathways into quality jobs, support for entrepreneurs and small business owners, access to transportation and technology,* and *childcare* all have a role to play in putting economic mobility and wealth-building within reach of Inland SoCal families.
* *Vitality and quality of life:* Throughout the CJF process, community members highlighted a number of issues as central priorities for the vitality and quality of life in Inland SoCal. Concerns such as housing, mental wellness, and food security are essential for equitable outcomes. However, because they are outside the scope of CJF, they should be prioritized for resources from other funding sources.

Inland SoCal will only be able to build an inclusive regional economy if it takes action on all three of these focus areas.

| **How will Thrive Inland SoCal make**  **the regional economy more inclusive?** |
| --- |

**Regional, local, and community action**

The Inland SoCal economy resembles a set of concentric circles. The outermost circle is the regional level, which is the focus of CJF. Within it is the local level, composed of cities and towns located within the region. At the center is the community level, which includes the many neighborhoods and groups that make up the region’s cities and towns.

Fostering a more successful and more inclusive regional economy requires work within and across all three levels. Each has a specific role to play:

* *Regional economic development* focuses on designing and implementing strategies across an entire region (in this case, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties). Activities often include regional innovation and entrepreneurship support programming, workforce development initiatives informed by area employer needs, and regional infrastructure investments. Organizations involved include regional economic development organizations, workforce development boards, labor unions, universities, community colleges, and some entrepreneur support organizations.
* *Local economic development* tends to happen at the city level. Cities and towns shape their local business environments by deciding how land can be used, overseeing permits and licenses, and setting tax rates. Some cities and towns also provide support for local entrepreneurs and small business owners, often with a focus on main street businesses that serve local customers. Organizations involved include city economic development agencies, nonprofits, local chambers of commerce, K-16 schools, and some entrepreneur support organizations
* *Community development* happens at the neighborhood level. It relies on strategies that are designed to meet the needs of a particular community, such as targeted job training programs, buy-local initiatives, downtown improvement efforts, arts and culture programming, cooperatives, and community land trusts (where community members own and manage property as a group). Organizations involved at the community level include community-based organizations, neighborhood groups, and downtown business associations.

By making the most of their unique insights and capabilities, people working at each of these levels can contribute to a more inclusive and more resilient regional economy.

Bringing local and community stakeholders into the regional economic strategy development process has been a priority for Thrive Inland SoCal from the start. Subdividing the region into six discrete subregions has allowed for closer contact with specific communities in the region who otherwise might not have taken part. The Thrive Subregional Tables (SRTs) have worked to ensure that strengths, challenges, and priorities within each subregion have been taken into account in the design of the strategies in this report.

A map of the united states

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The Thrive Inland SoCal convenors contracted with the Center of Sustainable Energy (CSE) to support the six SRTs throughout this process. CSE also took the lead on the construction of the Thrive Engagement Map, a community resource identifying all involved in the Thrive Inland SoCal collaborative, and developed and analyzed results from a Community Insights Survey fielded during Phases 1 and 2.

| **Thrive Inland SoCal’s approach to community engagement**  Community outreach and engagement for the CJF process spanned three distinct phases. This approach helped ensure engagement from community members and key affinity groups at every stage of the development of this plan.  **Phase 1: Defining a quality job** was conducted by the Thrive outreach committees and the six SRTs during October 2023 - February 2024.  **Phase 2: Identifying barriers to quality jobs and solutions** took place in SRT meetings and constituency-based focus groups (e.g., labor, reentry populations) in March and April 2024.  **Phase 3: Reviewing regional strategies** occurred via SRT-based review committees in May 2024, with additional review by these committees and the Thrive Inclusive Planning Council in July and August 2024  A Community Insights Survey augmented these activities by providing a way for community members to contribute even if they were unable to participate in the SRTs directly. This survey gathered information on job availability, job training, career advancement, and workforce readiness in the region. It was made available in English and Spanish via events, meetings, and email outreach. Inland SoCal residents typically completed the survey using a mobile phone or computer. The survey was not administered in a way that would ensure representativeness by subregion, age, affiliation, or any other demographic category.  A total of 711 responses were collected between February 13, 2024 and April 15, 2024. Of this number, 289 surveys were excluded as duplicates, overly brief responses, or fake submissions. The remaining 422 surveys included respondents from across the region, with most residing in the four metropolitan subregions (Greater Riverside, Greater San Bernardino, High Desert, Southwestern Riverside County, and Western San Bernardino County). The rural SRTs (High Desert and Coachella Valley and Morongo Basin) had the lowest survey participation with 18 and 12 surveys completed, respectively.  Survey results provided another window into the concerns and priorities of different Inland SoCal residents. Subjects receiving the greatest emphasis included access to career pathways and education and training opportunities, childcare affordability and availability, support for local entrepreneurs, the importance of social and cultural capital, and access to technology and affordable housing and transportation. |
| --- |

**Overcoming obstacles to collaboration**

Inland SoCal’s participation in the CJF process has highlighted the need for proactive coordination and collaboration that extends across the entire region. As a whole, the region has long suffered from the lack of a unified vision. Its many jurisdictions and organizations tend to vie for resources separately instead of seeking opportunities to collaborate for greater impact. The intensely competitive atmosphere that results leaves little space or appetite for working together. If Inland SoCal hopes to grow a more inclusive regional economy, the region will need to break with this fixed mindset in favor of an approach that encourages continuous learning, invites candid conversations across different constituencies, and assumes the good intent of all involved.

A wide range of Inland SoCal organizations—some affiliated with local government, others with industry, community groups, universities, and philanthropies—have published plans and reports that analyze the region’s challenges, identify potential opportunities, and set out a vision for the regional economy. But once these reports are released, the region often struggles to take action on these plans. This pattern creates frustration and erodes trust, which makes collaboration more challenging in the future. Rebuilding trust among the region’s many communities will require greater attention to every aspect of strategy implementation, including identifying funding sources, assigning organizational responsibilities, and tracking progress over time. A more deliberate, action-oriented approach to regional economy-shaping can ensure that the time and efforts invested in developing these strategies lead to tangible outcomes.

Resource constraints also pose a challenge when it comes to regional collaboration. Limited funding creates a sense of scarcity that leads to zero-sum thinking and crowds out the possibility of collaborative action. Memories of past traumas and present-day challenges reinforce these perspectives, sparking skepticism on the part of community members and organizations alike. Instances of shallow community engagement and decisions made with minimal community input have undermined trust over the years, leading some to believe that those in leadership positions are too far removed from community concerns.

A significant source of tension stems from a perceived conflict between regional economic development and community development. Each has a distinctive role to play that is anchored in particular goals, priorities, and geographies. But these differences do not mean that community development and regional economic development must be at odds. In reality, these two functions should complement one another—one focusing on regional issues and the other on community and neighborhood concerns.

California Jobs First presents an opportunity to start the much-needed transition towards a more inclusive style of economic and community development. Thrive Inland SoCal has taken on the challenging task of creating a shared language and vision that are rooted in community needs, local knowledge, and the recognition that economic growth and quality job creation are prerequisites for an inclusive regional economy.

# 

# Findings

To inform Regional Plan Part I (submitted to the State of California at the end of 2023), the Thrive Inland SoCal research team analyzed data, conducted research, and had one-on-one conversations and group discussions with a wide range of regional stakeholders to better understand the regional economy, its challenges in achieving inclusive economic growth, and potential opportunities to explore. The findings below represent a selection of insights that strongly informed the design of Inland SoCal’s Regional Plan Part II strategy report.

**Inland SoCal’s struggling families**

| **Key takeaways:**   * Inland SoCal has seen a lot of economic growth in recent years but the regional economy hasn’t created enough quality jobs to reach its full potential. * The region’s quality jobs gap means that too many Inland SoCal families struggle to make ends meet each month. * Financial, educational, and social barriers can make it harder for struggling workers to get and keep a quality job. |
| --- |

Over the past ten years, Inland SoCal has seen a lot of growth in goods movement, warehousing, and local businesses that created many new jobs and increased economic output beyond what had been seen in years past. But this growth did not produce enough quality jobs to close the region’s quality jobs gap. As a result, Inland SoCal has struggled to shift the balance, increase the proportion of quality jobs available, and get more residents on a path to financial self-sufficiency.

| “. . . I think a lot of people are just in survival mode . . .”  — Valeria Cordoba (pseud.), Riverside County labor division  (UCR interview) |
| --- |

Too many families are finding that they can’t make ends meet each month. Two out of five Inland SoCal residents are part of a family that can't meet its basic living expenses. Of this group, more than three-fourths have at least one adult worker in the family (Figure 1).

| **Figure 1. Forty percent of Inland SoCal residents  belong to a family that struggles to make ends meet** |
| --- |

The regional quality jobs gap is central to this story. In the Inland SoCal region, 26.1% of employment meets the definition of a quality job. Another 17.3% can be considered promising jobs, meaning that they will lead to a quality job within ten years. The remainder–fully 56.6% of jobs in the region–do not pay a livable wage, include employer-provided health insurance, or offer a path to a quality job within the next decade (Figure 2).

| **Figure 2. Quality jobs account for just one-fourth  of jobs in the Inland SoCal region**  **Share of Opportunity Jobs in Inland SoCal** |
| --- |

**Struggling workers face different barriers to quality jobs**

A lot of Inland SoCal workers face barriers that make it harder for them to get and keep a quality job. These challenges have a big impact on which jobs they end up pursuing. They can be grouped into three main categories:

* *Financial:* The high cost of living in Inland SoCal means that financial challenges often limit access to quality jobs. Rent, gas, and childcare alone pose major difficulties for families just trying to get through the month. Most workers can’t afford to take time off to train for a quality job; those working more than one job face even higher barriers

| “. . . a lot of our workforce is at home because there isn’t childcare options  to put those kids in programs. . .”  — Cynthia Guzman (pseud.), Menifee econ dev specialist (UCR interview) |
| --- |

* *Educational:* All too often, Inland SoCal workers don’t know about quality job options that exist in the region. In some cases, pathways into these jobs are hard to access and lack wraparound support services that support student success. Workers also need help with digital skills, job search fundamentals, and consistent access to technology and high-speed internet
* *Social:* Different events that arise in daily life can make it harder to get a quality job. Unexpected job losses, long periods of unemployment, health problems or disabilities, and incarceration interrupt people’s work lives and can make it difficult to get back on track. Language barriers, immigration status issues, and discrimination can all block pathways into quality jobs.

**Competitive drivers of an inclusive regional economy**

| **Key takeaways:**   * A strong and inclusive regional economy depends on its innovation, workforce, entrepreneurship and small business activity, infrastructure, leadership and ability to act, and industry clusters. * The region Inland Southern California has solid innovation assets thanks in large part to its universities and research facilities. * Struggling workers in the region need help learning about and successfully pursuing pathways into quality jobs. * Tech startups and local small businesses are important engines for job creation and wealth-building. * Public transportation, climate-ready infrastructure, well-maintained roads, and high-speed internet are essential for an inclusive regional economy. * Leaders in the region will need to collaborate, build community trust, and take action on strategies that support inclusive regional economic growth. * Inland SoCal has four industry clusters with a lot of potential for creating large numbers of quality jobs: the clean economy, cleantech, cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing. |
| --- |

A region's economic success depends on six crucial elements: innovation, workforce, entrepreneurship and small business activity, infrastructure, leadership and ability to act (discussed in this report’s introduction), and industry clusters. Understanding Inland SoCal’s starting point in each of these areas will provide important insights into strengths that can be leveraged and challenges that will need to be addressed to spark durable economic growth and increase the number of quality jobs in the region.

**Innovation**

A region's competitiveness in the global market is strongly linked to its innovation capacity. This capacity enables both fundamental and practical research and development (R&D), which in turn creates new market opportunities, boosts productivity, and accelerates the adoption of cutting-edge technologies.

Inland SoCal has a solid set of innovation assets that contribute to the regional economy. Home to two public institutions of higher education, leading-edge environmental science research facilities, and the state headquarters for air quality and climate programs, the region is particularly strong in innovations related to climate action and decarbonization. Research activities take place primarily at University of California, Riverside (UCR), which also fills gaps in regional economic development related to cleantech and the clean economy. Next to the UCR campus sits the California Air Resources Board (CARB) headquarters, a global leader in air quality research. Actions that strengthen connections and capabilities within the regional innovation ecosystem can help the region make the most of existing assets and emerging networks.

| “…innovation can stimulate the growth of new businesses and industries.”  — Thrive Inland SoCal Community Insights Survey respondent |
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**Workforce**

The success of a regional economy and its ability to attract and retain high-growth companies that create lots of quality jobs hinges on the skills of its workforce. How well area K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, and training programs prepare workers for quality jobs available now and in the future also factors into this equation. Regions that make education and industry-led workforce development a top priority have an advantage when it comes to strong economic growth, successful companies, and more opportunities for workers to improve their financial situation.

No matter how much education a person has, technical skills and knowledge are more important for quality jobs than they are for other kinds of jobs. Workers who have specific expertise in an industry and more developed skills are usually in a better position to get a quality job. In many cases, workers can gain the knowledge they need for these jobs by taking an industry-recognized certificate course or short-term skills training program.

Helping more struggling Inland SoCal workers become financially self-sufficient will require raising awareness about quality jobs in the region and the training they require, creating well-supported pathways that prepare workers for these occupations, and supporting struggling workers’s success as they prepare for these jobs.

Our analysis found that struggling workers in the region often have a lot of the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need to pursue a quality job. The chart below (Figure 3) shows how well the skills and abilities of Inland SoCal’s struggling workers match up with those needed for quality jobs in the region.

| **Figure 3. Struggling workers have much of the knowledge, skills,  and abilities they need to pursue a quality job in Inland SoCal** |
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Struggling Inland SoCal workers have 82.9% of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that quality jobs in the region require. The amount of overlap between the knowledge, skills, and abilities that workers have and what quality jobs require is different depending on how much education a worker has. Workers with a four-year college degree have the highest amount of overlap (91.5%). This means that they have almost all of the skills and abilities that good quality jobs are looking for. But even those workers with only a high school diploma or G.E.D. have a high degree of overlap (88.1%).

| “ . . . the community colleges are making great strides in terms of . . . tuition-free first two years of college and Pell grant increases at the federal level. . . . they more you can . . . provide resources for folks . . . the more you’re going to see people be able to take advantage of these opportunities”  — Kurt Augsburger, director of workforce development  San Bernardino Community College District |
| --- |

**Entrepreneurship and small businesses**

A region's level of entrepreneurial and small business activity indicates how well its economy can spot new market opportunities, create innovative products and companies, and boost local wealth-building and quality job growth. It serves as a measure of the region’s economic dynamism and its capacity to generate and sustain new ventures.

Throughout the region, initiatives to promote entrepreneurship have prioritized technology-driven startups with significant growth potential. These companies often look to venture capital for the funds they need to bring their innovations to market at scale. When these startups succeed, they can bring substantial benefit to the regional economy by creating quality jobs and increasing productivity.

However, tech startups are just one piece of the puzzle. Equally important are the entrepreneurs who establish and operate main street businesses and local-serving firms. These small and microenterprises keep money circulating within the regional economy and play a vital role in boosting community investment and building generational wealth. Inland SoCal offers a wide range of resources to support local residents starting and managing successful businesses, but residents’ access to these resources depends on things like proximity to public transit, program capacity, and childcare availability. For entrepreneurs and small business owners, especially those from historically underrepresented groups and/or underserved communities, the biggest challenge is often simply learning that assistance is available.

| “SMEs [small and medium-sized enterprises] are often the backbone of economies, especially at the regional level. Providing support to SMEs through access to finance, mentorship programs, and streamlined regulatory processes can enable them to thrive and expand, . . . creating more job opportunities within the subregion.”  — Thrive Inland SoCal Community Insights Survey respondent |
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**Infrastructure**

Thriving regional economies require a range of essential infrastructure elements. These include efficient public transit systems, universal broadband internet access, dependable clean energy, inclusive and sustainable local zoning, effective natural resource allocation, and well-maintained roads. Well-planned and adequately funded infrastructure projects can enhance economic activity and improve residents' quality of life.

On the other hand, lengthy administrative processes, deferred maintenance, poor local land use and resource management, and underinvestment in infrastructure can make life difficult for households, businesses, and local governments alike. Consistent upkeep of these assets is crucial for creating a physical environment that supports inclusive regional economic growth.

Inland SoCal has faced a rising number of climate-related challenges in recent years that have disproportionately affected communities with limited resources. As California's climate target deadlines draw near, local governments will need to determine how to fund and build various climate-related infrastructure projects, such as emission-free public transportation, charging and refueling stations for zero-emission vehicles, clean energy production and distribution, energy-efficient building upgrades, and other infrastructure needed for decarbonization, electrification, and climate resilience. Regular maintenance of roads and other infrastructure will likely be needed more often to address wear-and-tear caused by heavy trucks during hot weather.

Broadband connectivity represents another type of infrastructure that is increasingly difficult to live without. As more and more of our daily lives involve being online, access to high-speed internet has gone from a nice-to-have to a must-have. Extending broadband into all parts of Inland SoCal—whether cities, suburbs, reservations, or rural areas—is a regional imperative that cannot be deferred.

| “. . . the lack of both good public transportation and nearby job training programs is really hurting the ability for people to get entry-level skills and work . . .”  — Thrive Inland SoCal Community Insights Survey Respondent |
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**Industry clusters**

When businesses in the same or similar industries locate in the same place, they can benefit a great deal. Companies near each other can easily buy from and sell to each other, creating a stronger local supply chain. By grouping together, they can take advantage of a shared labor pool composed of workers with skills needed within the cluster. They can collaborate on innovations more easily and share ideas as well as important infrastructure such as lab space, buildings, and public transit.

| **How were industry cluster opportunities identified and vetted?**  With the overarching goal to narrow the region’s quality jobs gap, analysis concluded in late 2023 identified four relatively broad traded industry categories for further exploration: sustainable supply chains and distribution, advanced manufacturing, advanced business and professional services, and clean tech. These areas showed existing strengths in value-chain relationships, talent adjacencies, innovation disciplines, and unique infrastructure, in addition to concentration of mid-skill workers without a bachelor’s degree.[[6]](#footnote-5)  Over the last several months, Thrive Inland SoCal worked to validate and refine these areas through stakeholder interviews with businesses, investors, and industry experts; supplemental data analysis; and engagement with community-based Sub-Regional Tables. That led to reconsidering a vertical emphasis in supply chain and goods movement product innovation. It also resulted in the elevation of “clean economy” subclusters and cybersecurity as a particularly compelling business services opportunity, leveraging nation-leading talent development work underway in the region. Insights from this exploration are described in the following “Strategies” section of this report. |
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Informed by strategy development research and outreach, this plan focuses on four industry clusters selected based on their potential for high-value economic growth and their ability to create large numbers of new quality jobs in the region:

* The **clean economy** aims to boost climate resilience, increase energy independence, and accelerate the transition to a carbon-neutral future. It encompasses a wide range of industries, products, and services that extend into almost every aspect of daily life, including clean energy, power grid infrastructure, buildings, and transportation. This strategy will boost **innovation** and accelerate **adoption** of clean economy solutions in the region, strengthening local businesses and improving quality of life for Inland SoCal residents (particularly those communities hardest hit by climate impacts and industrial pollution) in the process.
* The region also boasts strengths in several aspects of **advanced manufacturing**, including complex commercial and industrial machinery and microelectronics, aerospace, and automotive. Both engineering and drafting services are a natural part of this landscape and thus also included in the cluster. Given the energy-hungry nature of this cluster, companies will need to combat GHG emissions and switch to clean sources in order to comply with state climate mandates.
* **Cybersecurity** (a component of advanced business and professional services)—protecting computer systems and networks against bad actors—is now a must-have for businesses of all sizes. As more and more of daily life moves online, the need to secure power grids and energy storage facilities, safeguard sensitive information, and prevent ransomware attacks will only grow. Meeting these needs is increasing demand for skilled cybersecurity workers both in the region and beyond, creating new quality jobs that often involve remote or hybrid work arrangements and do not require a college degree.

| **Why were some ideas raised through community engagement not pursued?**  Participants in Thrive’s Sub-Regional Tables (SRTs) raised additional industry opportunities, such as the arts and tourism, as potential focus areas for building a more inclusive, equitable economy. These industries are important contributors to the region’s civic fabric, quality of place, and employment base, particularly in some subregional areas. However, analysis shows that these industries provide few quality jobs.  Only 4.2% of hospitality jobs in the region meet quality jobs criteria; an additional 9.7% of jobs count as promising jobs, meaning they offer a pathway to a quality job within ten years. This encompasses activities from full-service restaurants (with 3.3% of jobs counting as quality jobs) to hotels (excluding casinos) and motels (with 10% of jobs counting as quality jobs). Given the scale of the region’s hospitality industry, the region has almost 140,000 hospitality jobs that do not enable workers to make ends meet.[[7]](#footnote-6)  Meanwhile, 11.7% of the region’s arts and recreation jobs are considered quality jobs; an additional 19.2% are considered promising.[[8]](#footnote-7) |
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# Strategies

One of the key ways that inclusive regional economic development differs from traditional approaches has to do with the focus of strategies proposed. Traditional economic development tends to prioritize industry-oriented strategies that create new jobs and accelerate sector growth. Inclusive economic development, by contrast, recognizes that job counts and industry growth alone will not necessarily lead to better economic outcomes for all residents of the region.

This strategy report instead focuses regional economy-shaping action and investment on two fronts:

* **Quality job creation strategies** seek to spur economic diversification and strengthen sectors most likely to create new quality jobs, increase household incomes, and bring money into the region by selling goods and services to customers located elsewhere.
* **Economic mobility and wealth building strategies** focused on getting more residents–especially struggling workers–into quality jobs and supporting entrepreneurship and small business success.

Both types of strategies are essential for inclusive regional economic development and must be pursued in tandem. *Investing in industries alone or in economic mobility and wealth building alone will not be enough to reduce the number of struggling families in the region.*

Taken together, the strategies presented here chart a course for regional action in the years ahead. Given the scale and scope of these proposed actions, Inland SoCal stakeholders will need to braid together funding from a broad range of sources. Some strategies are suitable for CJF funding, while others are more appropriately funded using different kinds of private-, public, and/or philanthropic-sector support.

## Quality job creation strategies

Closing the quality jobs gap must be a top priority if the region hopes to lift more struggling families into financial stability. Strengthening industry clusters that can create lots of new quality jobs must therefore be a core component of any inclusive regional economic development plan. In Inland SoCal, the clean economy, cleantech, cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing clusters are well-positioned to accelerate quality jobs growth and climate action in the region.

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### Strategy: Clean economy innovation

*Leverage the potential of the region’s emerging clean economy innovation cluster and establish the region as an ideal location for innovative clean economy firms to launch and grow*

| **Key takeaways:**   * Clean economy innovation is an emerging regional cluster with strong potential for quality job creation and climate-ready solutions. * A private / public / academic cluster-building collaborative can drive cluster expansion, global branding, tech commercialization, business growth, and workforce development in clean economy innovation. * Construction of a dedicated space for applied research, proof-of-concept testing, and startup incubation will provide a physical hub for the region’s clean economy innovation cluster. |
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**Rationale and other considerations**

Clean economy innovation is an emerging regional cluster that already shows signs of sizable potential for quality job creation and climate-ready solutions given the region’s industry strengths, research institutions, workforce programs, and strategic location in the heart of the global logistics system. By making the most of these competitive advantages, Inland SoCal can accelerate clean economy discoveries and deliver products and services to customers in the region, throughout the state, and across the world. Assessing the Inland SoCal clean economy innovation cluster at this early stage will ensure that it is set up for durable long-term growth.

The region is home to several major industries relevant to clean economy innovation. Advanced manufacturing brings capabilities in product design and production. Cybersecurity’s contributions center on protecting online systems against bad actors, which is a must given that many clean economy innovations involve some level of digital connectivity.

Inland SoCal also has several important clean economy innovation assets. UCR anchors the cluster with a solid array of research facilities, entrepreneurial programming, and expertise. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) provides world-class labs and testing facilities related to air quality and emissions, two major preoccupations within the clean economy. Together these assets are helping build momentum by generating ideas and testing potential solutions.

Company founders and others active in the cluster point to another competitive advantage: Inland SoCal’s geographic location. California’s position at the vanguard of U.S. climate action holds particular appeal for clean economy entrepreneurs. State mandates are creating markets for clean economy innovations in energy production, storage, and distribution; zero-emission vehicles; fueling and charging infrastructure; and other climate-related areas. With the largest economy in the U.S. and the fifth-largest economy in the world, California offers access to a consumer base that any startup would envy. Growing numbers of foreign entrepreneurs are applying to Inland SoCal startup incubator programs to get a toehold in the region so that they can then expand into California and U.S. markets. Relatively affordable commercial and industrial property, extensive logistics infrastructure, and close proximity to the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach further enhance the region’s locational advantage by making it less expensive to build research and production facilities and easier to get goods to market.

*Equity impact potential*

Strengthening the region’s clean economy innovation cluster will increase the number of quality jobs available for Inland SoCal residents, including those without a four-year degree. Deliberate actions to connect historically underrepresented groups with accessible pathways into these jobs will create more equitable outcomes by broadening access to the opportunities created by the growth of this cluster.

Clean economy innovations have strong potential for equity impact in the region as well. Widespread adoption of these leading-edge solutions will accelerate climate transition in Inland SoCal, which will in turn lower energy bills, reduce pollution, improve health outcomes, boost local climate resilience, and ultimately provide a better quality of life for all residents.

UCR’s Opportunity to Advance Sustainability, Innovation, and Social Inclusion (OASIS) initiative will play an important role in helping this cluster reach its full equity impact potential by advancing inclusive approaches to innovation, entrepreneurship, and workforce development focused on sustainability, cleantech, and social inclusion in the region.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy advances the state’s push for decarbonization and climate readiness. It aligns with the aims of the California Climate Adaptation Strategy, the California Climate Scoping Plan, and the mission of CARB. The OASIS Clean Tech Park also aligns with the mission of the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA), which works to strengthen and grow small businesses in the state. The park is being funded in part by the University of California Inland Rising Fund (AB 2046).

*Risk factors*

Inaction on the energy transition poses a clear threat to the region’s clean economy innovation cluster. Any delays in the shift away from fossil fuels will limit market growth by reducing the sense of urgency among consumers. Whether the region’s capacity for clean energy production, transmission, distribution, and storage can keep up with demand is another open question. Slow expansion of clean energy generation and delivery will limit the scale and speed of electrification, which in turn will slow adoption of EVs and other clean economy innovations.

In some cases cutting-edge technology can be a tougher sell, particularly when products and services have limited track records and large price tags. Uncertain which solutions will yield the greatest return on investment and fearful of the high cost of a wrong decision, many potential customers defer decision-making, which can undermine market demand to the detriment of growing clean economy startups.

Lack of early-stage capital presents another major concern for clean economy innovation in Inland SoCal. Without adequate funding, these young firms struggle to conduct research, build prototypes, run demonstration projects, and scale up their operations. Efforts to educate investors about clean economy innovation, expand the pool of available capital, and connect founders with potential funders will create an environment that is more conducive to a healthy startup community powered by clean economy innovation.

Industry-informed career pathway programs will be needed to increase the number of Inland SoCal residents working in high-demand quality clean economy innovation jobs. To ensure equitable benefit, these programs should engage workers across a broad range of education levels, with special attention to those who did not pursue a four-year degree. Training programs designed for incumbent workers in adjacent industries (including those being made obsolete by the energy transition and automation) can expand the available workforce by providing onramps into the cluster. Well-defined entry points and supported pathways into quality clean economy innovation jobs will ensure that Inland SoCal companies can find the workers they need within the region.

**Tactics**

**Clean Economy Innovation Cluster Building**: This private / public / academic collaboration will tackle issues that can benefit from regional cross-sector solutions such as cluster growth, global branding, tech commercialization, business growth acceleration, and workforce development.

* Establish a regional clean economy innovation cluster-building function that brings together leaders from industry, academia, and the public sector. This cross-sector entity (which could be based within an existing organization) will work to support entrepreneurship, durable company growth, quality job creation, workforce development, and efforts to establish Inland SoCal as a global leader in clean economy innovation.
* Conduct an inventory of clean economy innovation firms and support services in the region and create an easy-to-use online directory of regional services available to assist companies in the cluster (e.g., entrepreneurial supports, mentorship, business growth advising, technical assistance, sources of capital).
* Develop and implement an investor education strategy focused on increasing investors’ familiarity with clean economy innovation investing, with emphasis on key trends, high-potential subsectors, and the unique capital needs of innovation-intensive clean economy firms.
* Convene and organize an industry-led workforce collaborative to identify and improve pathways into high-demand clean economy innovation jobs in collaboration with local universities and community colleges, other training providers, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and others.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Industry, universities, community colleges, local economic development agencies, workforce training providers, business chambers, industry groups, entrepreneur support organizations, business support organizations, community-based organizations, capital providers

**OASIS Clean Tech Park**: A dedicated space for applied research, proof-of-concept testing, and startup incubation will provide a physical hub for the region’s clean economy innovation cluster.

* [UCR OASIS to provide detail on specific activities / investments needed]

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

University of California Riverside, California Air Resources Board, County of Riverside, City of Riverside, entrepreneur support organizations

**Metrics**

* Performance metrics may include:
* Number of clean economy startups receiving growth capital
* Success of startup incubator participants
* Number of quality jobs created
* Demographics of founders and workers in the cluster

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state grants, tax incentives, loan programs, and other public-sector funding mechanisms; private-sector investment; philanthropic support.

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### Strategy: Clean economy adoption

*Supercharge the regional clean economy with targeted interventions to accelerate the energy transition, strengthen local businesses, and improve quality of life for Inland SoCal residents, with particular attention to communities hardest hit by climate impacts and industrial pollution.*

| **Key takeaways:**   * The clean economy aims to address the effects of climate change, enhance climate resilience, increase energy independence, and accelerate the transition to a carbon-neutral future. * Warehouse rooftop community solar can begin to compensate Inland SoCal communities disproportionately affected by logistics sprawl and related pollution * Connecting local small businesses involved in the clean economy to customers in the region and beyond will make sure that they can benefit from the energy transition. * An easy-to-navigate climate transition support network will ensure that Inland SoCal small businesses are able to access the assistance they need. * A cross-sector consortium focused on the regional logistics energy transition will provide a forum for co-designing and implementing a path to sector decarbonization. |
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**Rationale and other considerations**

Companies in the clean economy aim to address the effects of climate change, enhance climate resilience, increase energy independence, and accelerate the transition to a carbon-neutral future. This cluster encompasses a wide range of industries, products, and services that extend into almost every aspect of daily life, including clean energy generation, power grid infrastructure, workforce development, building design, and the transport of people and goods.

The clean economy has particular importance in California, which has one of the most ambitious climate mandates in the nation. Achieving the state goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 will require growing the clean economy fast enough and large enough to meet rising demand. Because California has fallen short on its interim milestones thus far, action at greater speed and scale will be needed if the state hopes to meet its 2045 deadline.

A strong clean economy cluster can accelerate regional decarbonization, encourage adoption of climate-ready products and services, and support entrepreneurship and small business growth related to a carbon-neutral future. As the pace of the energy transition increases, regions that invest in the clean economy will have an advantage over those that do not.

Although the Inland SoCal clean economy is still emerging, it is poised for rapid expansion in the years ahead. State climate mandates are creating new markets for clean economy goods and services that companies in the region can provide. Regional efforts to drive adoption of clean economy solutions have sprung up throughout Inland SoCal to help cities and towns plan for climate action. Other organizations are working to connect Inland SoCal residents, businesses, and government agencies to the resources they need to make their climate plans a reality.

| **Lithium Valley and the Salton Sea**  Recent designation of Lithium Valley as a federal Tech Hub brought new attention to regional opportunities in the battery manufacturing supply chain. Experts believe that Lithium Valley has “the highest concentration of lithium contained in geothermal brines in the world.” Demand for batteries will only rise in coming years, making the raw materials present in these brines and the battery production supply chains that they will enable more important than ever.  Lithium-ion batteries are essential to the energy transition. As the most widely used type of rechargeable battery, they power everything from EVs and utility-scale energy storage systems to laptops and cellphones. However, despite intense domestic demand for these batteries, much of the production supply chain sits outside of the U.S., creating potential national security concerns that the federal government is keen to resolve.  Fortunately, the U.S. has untapped lithium resources inside its own borders that can be used for domestic battery production. Experts believe that the Salton Sea KGRA in California’s Imperial County has the world's highest concentration of lithium naturally present in geothermal brines. These mineral-rich, super-heated underground liquids can be processed using direct lithium extraction (DLE) methods to recover the lithium they contain. DLE methods are considered more sustainable and environmentally friendly compared to conventional mining and evaporation ponds because they involve less land and water, a faster timeline, and a smaller carbon footprint.  In autumn 2023, the U.S. Economic Development Administration awarded $500K to a consortium of stakeholders from academia, industry, the public sector, and nonprofits to create the Lithium Valley Clean Tech Hub. Led by Imperial County and UCR, this collaborative effort also includes CSUSB and Imperial Valley College; extraction experts Energy Source Minerals; battery manufacturers SiLi-ion, Starz Electronics, Statevolt, and Sulfuron; and battery recycler Omega Harvested Metallurgical. In addition to coordinating lab support and workforce training related to Lithium Valley activities, UCR will launch a lab at its Palm Desert campus focused on “fingerprinting” extracted lithium so that it can be traced back to its source.  As this project continues to evolve, Inland SoCal should stay alert for opportunities to contribute to this emerging supply chain. Whether by setting up needed career pathway programs or by supporting entrepreneurship related to battery production, the region can find ways to benefit from its proximity to Lithium Valley.  *Source: Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Lithium Extraction in California, December 2022.* |
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*Equity impact potential*

The clean economy can help the region become more inclusive and broadly prosperous, but only if historically underserved communities are directly involved. Both federal and state climate investments prioritize equitable outcomes in funding decision criteria to make sure that residents of these communities benefit from any public dollars spent. Organizations with strong relationships in these communities can ensure that economic development efforts take community members’ concerns and priorities as well as the specific histories and cultural knowledge embedded within these communities into account. Collaborative efforts that bring community-based organizations together with the private and public sectors, education and training providers, unions, and other stakeholders will be better positioned to design effective outreach campaigns, develop community-informed pipelines of clean economy projects, and work with community members on pilots and demonstration projects that can extend the benefits of clean economy innovation to their neighborhoods. These collaborations can also help identify local needs to be addressed through community benefits agreements related to major projects.

Inland SoCal’s historically disinvested communities have been among the most affected by environmental harms connected to the region’s warehouse facilities. Community solar installations on warehouse roofs can begin to compensate for these harms by expanding residents’ access to low-cost clean energy and creating new quality jobs that are within reach of struggling workers in the community at no cost to residents and without the need for public-sector funding. Preliminary assessment indicates that there are approximately 280 - 440 million ft² of rooftop suitable for PV systems in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties combined. Collectively this square footage could yield 9,000 - 15,000 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of clean energy each year (the equivalent of powering between 840,000 and 1.4 million homes for one year).[[9]](#footnote-8)

Warehouse rooftop community solar, support for local clean economy firms (particularly those led by residents from historically marginalized groups), rapid decarbonization of logistics, and energy transition assistance for small businesses will all benefit Inland SoCal residents from historically disinvested communities. The shift from fossil fuels to clean energy will lead to lower energy bills, cleaner air, and less pollution, all of which can have an outsized impact on struggling families’ financial self-sufficiency, health outcomes, and overall quality of life. It will also create opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses that sell clean economy services and goods in Inland SoCal. As these companies grow, they will strengthen the cluster by generating value and attracting workers to the region.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy aligns with the California Climate Adaptation Strategy and the California Climate Scoping Plan. Each proposed tactic aligns with other state strategies as well. The warehouse rooftop community solar program complements the state’s push for EV adoption by boosting clean energy production. It also advances the state’s environmental justice commitments by making low-cost solar energy and well-paying job opportunities accessible to Inland SoCal’s lower-income households.

The proposed Clean Economy Business Initiative and Small Business Climate Transition Network both support the mission of the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA), which works to strengthen and grow small businesses in the state. The Transition Network also supports compliance with the recently enacted Climate Corporate Data Accountability Act (SB 253) by preparing small Inland SoCal companies to track and share emissions data with companies in their supply chains.

The proposed Clean Logistics Consortium complements a number of state policies, regulations, and goals including the Advanced Clean Fleets and Trucks Regulations, the Medium- and Heavy-Duty ZEV programs, and Executive Order N-79-20. State regulators will have an important role to play in the Clean Logistics Consortium as it designs and implements a sector-wide decarbonization plan. Collaboration on these efforts will streamline decision-making processes and help companies find the most efficient path to carbon neutrality.

*Risk factors*

Because the energy transition is driving clean economy growth, any slowdowns in the switch to clean power will have a direct effect on clean economy adoption. Moving with the necessary speed and scale will require building momentum and coordinating investments and actions across the private, public, civic, philanthropic, nonprofit, and community sectors. All too often, scarce financial resources, zero-sum thinking, lack of political will, and a preoccupation with the short term have instead pushed climate action to the margins.

The size of the Inland SoCal clean economy workforce also poses a potential risk. Access to an appropriately skilled workforce is a binding constraint for growing clean economy companies. Fortunately, many quality jobs in the clean economy do not require a four-year degree and a number are within the unionized trades. Clear, well-supported pathways into these high-demand occupations and broader awareness of clean economy work opportunities will help attract sufficient numbers of Inland SoCal residents to pursue careers in this cluster.

**Tactics**

**Warehouse rooftop community solar**: A rooftop community solar initiative for commercial and industrial (C&I) buildings will generate clean energy, create jobs, and reduce utility bills for communities affected by the negative impacts of the logistics sector.

* Pass state legislation requiring state agencies to create a rooftop community solar program that fairly compensates C&I rooftop solar for its benefits to ratepayers, building owners, and the environment. Until such a program is established, California will waste the energy-generating potential of C&I rooftops throughout the state.
* Engage community solar developers that specialize in installations on warehouses and other C&I buildings to work with building owners, community-based organizations, and community members on warehouse rooftop community solar projects. Developers and community-based organizations should also coordinate with the Clean Economy Business Initiative (see below) to bring local businesses into the C&I rooftop solar supply chain.
* Establish clear, well-supported pathways into high-demand jobs in C&I rooftop solar. Providing priority for community members who want to train for these jobs can ensure that the economic benefits of these projects accrue to those who live nearby.
* When demand for skilled solar installation professionals begins to weaken (something that will not happen for the foreseeable future), industry, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders will need to connect these workers with follow-on training opportunities that put them on a path into another quality job.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Community-based organizations, C&I community solar developers

Collaborating entities: State legislators, CPUC, C&I building owners, training providers, local governments, utilities

| **Inland SoCal warehouses and community solar**  The proportion of Inland SoCal warehouse rooftops with solar panels is remarkably small. Most building owners would rather avoid the cost of installation; those that do opt for solar have no incentive to install more capacity than they need to run their individual property.  Commercial and industrial (C&I) rooftop solar developers offer another option. These developers take on all upfront costs, making solar panels far more attractive for property owners. Installation requires no more than a building permit from the local government, which means that the panels can come online quickly. Once the installation is up and running, owners and renters alike in the surrounding community can subscribe to the power that is generated.  Since there are no upfront costs involved in switching to community solar, ratepayers of all income levels can take part. Some projects incorporate equity-oriented provisions that require a certain proportion of lower-income subscribers to encourage less affluent households in the area to take part.  Meeting California’s ambitious climate goals will require a dramatic increase in the amount of clean electricity produced each day. Compared to the lengthy development timelines involved in wind power, large-scale solar, and other types of renewable energy production, rooftop solar on C&I buildings offers a faster way forward. These projects create additional value by producing power closer to the end user, which saves ratepayers money by eliminating the need for installing expensive long-distance transmission and distribution infrastructure.  A recent study by The Brattle Group also cites growing evidence that solar “in urbanized / industrial environments (e.g., parking lots, rooftops) reduces the likelihood that adverse environmental impacts will occur” as a result of installation.  The recent CPUC decision regarding a state community solar program represents a major missed opportunity for the state that will have serious repercussions on those California communities with the least access to affordable clean energy. Absent a state program that establishes a fair compensation scheme for C&I rooftop installations, warehouse rooftop community solar will not be financially viable in California.  *Source: The Brattle Group, “Analysis of the Incremental Value of Rooftop Community Solar + Storage in California” (June 6, 2023); Kelsey Misbrener, “Solar Industry Admonishes CPUC’s Revised Proposal on Community Solar,” Solar Power World (May 29, 2024).* |
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**Clean Economy Business Initiative (CEBI)**: Ensure that local small businesses implicated in the clean economy benefit from the energy transition by connecting them with customers in the region and beyond.

* Form a CEBI Collaborative that brings together local government, area universities, business chambers, utilities, small business support organizations, relevant community-based organizations, industry associations, capital providers, and other relevant stakeholders.
* Select one or more clean economy sectors based on existing regional assets, potential for quality job creation, and available federal (and other) funding.
* Deconstruct the supply chain involved in delivering and maintaining specific clean economy projects within the chosen sector(s). For example, the supply chain for EV charging stations can be broken into a planning stage (site selection, infrastructure agreements, grid upgrades), a development stage (EV charger manufacturing, EV charger installation), and an operations and maintenance stage (EV charger maintenance).
* Assemble an inventory of Inland SoCal businesses that are or could be involved in some aspect of this supply chain, with particular attention to businesses owned by those from historically underrepresented groups and / or disinvested communities in the region.
* Reach out to high-potential local businesses identified through the inventory and connect them with potential customers and support services such as business plan advising, workforce training, capital access, help with manufacturing certifications, introductions to prime contractors, and access to new technologies.
* Explore the feasibility of a regional program patterned after the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Mentor Protégé Program, in which participating small businesses are mentored by DOE prime contractors. The National Renewable Energy Lab designed the program “to foster long-term business relationships between small businesses and DOE prime contractors while increasing the overall number of small business entities that receive DOE contract and subcontract awards.”[[10]](#footnote-9)

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local government, utilities, business chambers and industry groups, universities, entrepreneur support organizations, small business support organizations, capital providers

| **El Paso Green Business Initiative**  The proposed Clean Economy Business Initiative is based on a similar initiative underway in El Paso, Texas. The [Green Business Initiative](https://www.thenewlocalism.com/newsletter/a-green-business-initiative-how-cities-take-full-advantage-of-the-energy-transition/) is an effort spearheaded by [Supply El Paso](https://drexel.edu/nowak-lab/initiatives/the-procurement-economy/el-paso/) in collaboration with the Nowak Finance Lab at Drexel University and the Aspen Institute Latinos and Society Program. Supply El Paso’s mission is to leverage the purchasing power of anchor institutions in support of local business growth. Recognizing the economic potential of its expanding clean energy sector (particularly given that El Paso Electric purchases roughly $500M of goods and services each year), Supply El Paso decided to focus on opportunities being created by the energy transition.  El Paso selected regional EV charging deployment as its priority supply chain based on high availability of federal funding for deployment projects, a strong regional construction sector, and growing interest in accelerating the shift to clean energy. This focus on a specific supply chain simplifies data analytics and facilitates the creation of targeted strategies in high-potential sectors. The EV charging deployment supply chain was then deconstructed into discrete stages and steps:   * Stage 1: Planning (charger site selection, infrastructure agreements, power substation upgrades) * Stage 2: Development (EV charger manufacturing, installation, inspection, pricing) * Stage 3: Operations and Maintenance   With this framework in hand, they identified the industry sectors involved at each stage and determined the region’s position in each sector based on its current industrial base and growth potential. They also mapped pathways to high-demand occupations in each stage and investigated the regulatory environment that area businesses face. Interviews with customers and suppliers in each sector provided qualitative input to complement the deep quantitative analytics conducted.  The resulting assessment revealed local business opportunities related to EV charging station construction, installation, and maintenance. Drawing on insights surfaced through the assessment, Supply El Paso realized that it would need to strengthen certain career pathways, assist local installers with regulatory compliance and certification, and provide support for local firms interested in moving into these markets. By identifying a high-potential supply chain and proactively reaching out to local businesses in relevant sectors, Supply El Paso’s Green Business Initiative is working to support local wealth-building, encourage entrepreneurship, and accelerate the deployment of EV charging infrastructure in the region  *Source: Bruce Katz and Victoria Orozco, “A Green Business Initiative: How Cities Take Full Advantage of the Energy Transition,” The New Localism, April 19, 2024.* |
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**Small Business Climate Transition Network**: An easy-to-navigate climate transition support network will ensure that Inland SoCal small businesses are able to access the assistance they need to become climate-ready. By leveraging existing programs and establishing new regional mechanisms for outreach, climate transition planning, technical assistance delivery, and other critical functions, the region can make sure that its smaller companies navigate this disruptive period successfully.

* Launch a Small Business Climate Transition Support Network composed of key stakeholders working with Inland SoCal small businesses (e.g., business chambers, industry groups, Small Business Development Centers, entrepreneurial support organizations, community-based organizations, community banks and credit unions).
* Gather information about climate-related challenges facing Inland SoCal small businesses and inventory existing programs and funding mechanisms.
* Identify gaps and engage experts with insight into best practices and leading-edge approaches to small business climate action.
* Map out a comprehensive, “no wrong door” approach to connect area small businesses with the climate transition support they seek.
* Explore creating a climate transition technical assistance program to match small businesses with specialists who can act as trusted advisors. The Network could purchase technical assistance services in bulk and make this help available to small businesses at low or no cost. Services likely to be in high demand include:
  + Energy audits and carbon footprint assessments
  + Goal setting and climate transition planning
  + Advising on available solutions and financing mechanisms
  + Implementation support
  + Regulatory compliance and emissions reporting assistance

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Business chambers, industry groups, small business support organizations, entrepreneurial support organizations, community-based organizations, climate transition assistance providers, capital providers, local governments

**Clean Logistics Consortium**: A consortium of companies, ports, railroads, utilities, regulators, and public-sector actors focused on the regional logistics energy transition will provide a forum for co-designing a path to decarbonization as well as the structure and support that stakeholders will need to accomplish this unparalleled task.

* Form a Clean Logistics Consortium of regional actors committed to working together to accelerate the energy transition in this sector and demonstrate leadership on core challenges facing the global logistics industry.
* Hire dedicated staff to handle day-to-day consortium operations and facilitate the co-design process. These staff will also connect stakeholders to resources, technical assistance, and trusted vendors (e.g., CEBI companies) to help them implement their decarbonization plans.
* Use the consortium’s convening power to bring key stakeholders to the table to co-design the sector’s transition away from fossil fuels. Specific attention to the challenges faced by independent contractors and small and medium-sized companies in the sector will ensure that firms of all sizes are able to weather the energy transition successfully.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Companies involved in the Inland SoCal logistics sector, industry groups, CEBI, academic researchers, public agencies, utilities, state regulators, regional clean economy firms

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* C&I solar installation square footage and total power generated
* Number of quality jobs created in the regional clean economy
* New business growth in the regional clean economy
* Revenue growth among CEBI small business participants
* Number of companies served by the Small Business Climate Transition Network
* Demographic diversity of program participants
* Logistics sector progress on energy transition measures

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state grants, tax incentives, loan programs, and other public-sector funding mechanisms; private-sector investment; philanthropic support.

**Policy adjustments needed**

* State legislation is needed to mandate creation of a rooftop community solar program that fairly compensates C&I rooftop solar for its benefits to ratepayers, building owners, and the environment. Compensation needs to be predictable over the long term so that community solar developers can secure project financing with reasonable interest rates. Until this legislation is enacted and such a program established, the energy-generating potential of C&I rooftops will remain untapped, with significant implications for communities near C&I zones who lack access to inexpensive clean electricity.
* Efforts to streamline state and local regulatory regimes can be a sizable help for small businesses, which face a disproportionate compliance burden due to their lack of capacity and resources. These efforts can also reduce the burden involved in monitoring compliance by eliminating unnecessary administrative tasks and consolidating regulatory requirements across public agencies.

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### Strategy: Advanced manufacturing

*Boost growth, job creation, and workforce pathways to Inland Southern California’s advanced manufacturing sector to advance economic diversification, improve access to opportunity jobs, and sustain locally-owned small and mid-sized businesses.*

| **Key takeaways:**   * Manufacturing is growing in Inland SoCal and provides opportunities for quality jobs that are accessible to residents. * The region has strengths in different types of manufacturing, including high-value materials like industrial equipment, microelectronics, and fabricated metals as well as manufacturing connected to the clean economy, such as battery and EV production. * Strengthening the capacity of small and mid-sized manufacturers will be essential for ongoing cluster growth. * Existing workforce development efforts related to manufacturing need to reach greater scale, deepen intentional engagement with priority groups, and promote employer best practices for fostering a diverse workforce. * Better coordination between regional economic and workforce development will reduce fragmentation and siloing within the cluster. |
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**Rationale and other considerations**

Inland SoCal shows strength—and recent moderate growth—in subsectors of manufacturing and related services, providing opportunities to both grow more quality and promising jobs accessible to residents, and advance the diversification of the region’s economy beyond its current overreliance on logistics and local-serving industries. Manufacturing accounted for 2.9% of regional job growth between 2012 and 2022, exceeding state and national job growth benchmarks in all subregional areas except East San Bernardino County and Southwest Riverside County.[[11]](#footnote-10) San Bernardino County manufacturers generally saw stronger performance than Riverside County peers in measures of earnings, value-added, average earnings, and productivity—often also besting national and/or state comparisons.[[12]](#footnote-11)

Regional manufacturing specializations encompass a range of activities. These include high-value materials relatively competitive to make in California, such as industrial and commercial equipment, machine components, microelectronics, instrumentation, and fabricated metals, reflecting the legacy aerospace and defense supply chain. Activity also includes some areas overlapping with the clean economy (e.g. battery and electric vehicle production). The sector also encompasses heavier manufacturing activity, such as chemical and building components production, with more significant environmental impacts.

In total, manufacturing accounts for about 99,000 jobs in the region, with roughly 28,000 positions (or 28.3%) counting as quality jobs and roughly 16,000 (or 16.1%) counting as promising jobs.[[13]](#footnote-12) This is slightly higher than the share of quality and promising jobs in the regional economy and traded sector overall, while significantly exceeding the performance of local-serving industries, among which only 37.5% of jobs count as quality or promising.

Lighter precision manufacturing activities and associated services (e.g. engineering) account for just over 19,000 opportunity jobs in the region (encompassing both quality and promising positions), with related aerospace activity contributing another ~1,200 positions and metal forging and machinery contributing an additional ~3,100 current roles. Chemical manufacturing and building components manufacturing account for about 4.600 and 2,900 opportunity jobs respectively. [[14]](#footnote-13)

Manufacturers cite multiple advantages of presence in the region. These include proximity to California customers (particularly in aerospace and defense) and specialized vendors / supply chain. Meanwhile, the region’s workforce provides relatively ready access to technician labor, while engineers can be sourced from nearby educational institutions (e.g. Cal Poly Pomona, UCLA, UC Irvine, CSU Long Beach). Other advantages include relatively affordable industrial land, reliable utilities, and efficient transportation via the region’s extensive logistics network.

However, the weighting of the region’s manufacturing base towards small and medium-sized businesses and the general diversity of production activity elevates several challenges to be addressed through strategy interventions. Small and medium-sized firms typically face distinct barriers to growth and competitiveness compared to larger national or multinational companies. These challenges include less internal capacity for talent acquisition, training, and retention; fewer resources available for adoption of new processes and technologies; and more limited access to capital for expansion and facilities improvements. Meanwhile, the lack of a consolidated locus of activity with large anchor firms – such as the automotive supply chain – means the region does not have a natural center of gravity for organizing firms for joint action. Addressing these gaps can help accelerate regional manufacturing activity and employment – and sustain local ownership of enterprises.

Meanwhile, the region also has unrealized opportunities to proactively boost manufacturing growth. These include infrastructure enablers that have yet to be maximized; the region’s concentrated logistics capacity, for instance, positions manufacturers for efficient movement of both inputs and finished goods. Engagement also suggests potential to repurpose smaller warehouses that have become outmoded and not cost effective for current operating standards, boosting industrial land availability.

*Equity impact potential*

Nearly 75% of the opportunity jobs in the region’s manufacturing sector are held by workers with less than a bachelor’s degree. Almost 67% of opportunity jobs are held by a worker without an associate’s degree. 48% are held by a Hispanic worker.[[15]](#footnote-14) This means that the sector offers significant potential to improve the livelihoods of a share of the nearly 40% of Inland Southern California residents belonging to a family that struggles to cover basic costs of living; workers with lower levels of traditional education and people of color are disproportionately represented in this group.

Engagement with Thrive’s Sub-Regional Tables validated advanced manufacturing as a priority for diversifying the region’s economy and improving employment opportunities, including for disinvested communities. Community members emphasized the importance of targeting workforce efforts with culturally-responsive approaches and support services to maximize equity outcomes. These include adapting outreach and hiring processes to engage workers who may not be familiar with traditional recruitment mechanisms (e.g. resume development); specifically targeting priority groups such veterans, the disabled, and justice-involved individuals; considering non-traditional credentials (i.e. skills-based hiring); and offering employer-subsidized support services (e.g. childcare). Strengthening the region’s small and medium-sized manufacturing base also advances the community-articulated priority of maintaining local ownership of key economic assets.

Manufacturing is already an emphasis for regional workforce and economic development leads, providing a baseline for strengthened efforts. However, many of these efforts are effectively siloed and limited to a specific jurisdiction rather than aligned for maximum regional impact. Additional investment and coordination can help deliver greater scale and sophistication of interventions.

* The Inland Empire Regional Workforce Development Plan and the Inland Empire/Desert Regional Consortium both name manufacturing as a priority sector. In the workforce system, manufacturing is prioritized for regional sector career pathway programming.[[16]](#footnote-15)
* Chaffey College’s Industrial Technical (InTech) Learning Center offers hands-on, demand-driven training for both new and incumbent workers, working with over 150 employers over the last eight years.[[17]](#footnote-16) Victor Valley College also hosts a manufacturing-focused training center in Victorville.[[18]](#footnote-17) Numerous additional community college and high school pathway programs [exist throughout the region](https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/ac378860803347a6bbc79c79551b5c57/).
* Manufacturing has been the focus of multiple K-16 Strong Workforce Partnership projects, including efforts to expand CTE education and boost STEM exposure activities via camps and maker spaces.[[19]](#footnote-18) STEM exposure efforts are also priorities of the region’s County Offices of Education.
* Riverside County’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Inland Economic Growth and Opportunity, and the Inland Empire Economic Partnership all emphasize manufacturing as regional economic development priorities.
* The Manufacturers’ Council of the Inland Empire convenes employers to address talent needs, promote best practices, and facilitate networking.
* Multiple cities prioritize manufacturing for economic development. In Fontana, Mayor Acquanetta Warren and the Fontana Chamber of Commerce have organized employers under the Mayor’s Manufacturing, Transportation & Logistics Councils to boost awareness of the sector’s importance and respond to needs. The cities of Riverside and Rancho Cucamonga name also name manufacturing as focus areas.

*Alignment with state strategies*

Maintaining California’s status as the nation’s leading manufacturing state is a significant priority for State economic development. Manufacturing [is named](https://business.ca.gov/industries/manufacturing/) as a focus industry by the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) and firms are routinely awarded incentives under the state’s signature California Competes Tax Credit, as well as other tax exemptions and exclusions. Together with the California Office of the Small Business Advocate, GO-Biz also leads a [“Made in California”](https://camade.ca.gov/) initiative to support California manufacturers and elevate California-produced products. Manufacturing training projects have also been recognized by the California Workforce Development Board under the State’s High-Road Training Partnerships program.

*Risk factors*

Analysis conducted for Thrive Inland SoCal by the Center for Sustainable Energy (CSE) suggests variable climate impacts of different advanced manufacturing subsectors.

* Advanced manufacturing businesses that focus on producing fabricated or electronic components or products (e.g. aerospace manufacturing, metal fabrication, machinery, semiconductor and electronics products) produce roughly 5-10 tonnes of CO2 per job per year (rated as “medium” impact, higher than office jobs). These higher emissions are due primarily to the electric power needed for equipment and are expected to decline as renewable energy supplies a greater percentage of the electrical grid.
* Production of plastics and rubber parts, food and beverage, textiles, and foundries, meanwhile, was rated as “high” impact, producing 20-40 tonnes CO2e/job/year. Climate impacts are due to higher energy needs in process and more high-temperature processes. However, climate mitigation is possible through greening of the electricity grid and electrification of high temperature processes that currently use fuel.
* Manufacturing of primary materials, such as iron or steel, cement, aluminum, and chemicals is rated as “very high,” associated with emissions of 200 or more tonnes/job/year (and in some cases much more). These emissions come from a combination of high fuel use required for very high temperature processes and emissions that are inherent to the material itself. Electrification of processes or shifts to alternate fuels can reduce climate impacts in some cases (iron and steel), but alternate process development is required to eliminate inherent emissions for cement and aluminum production.

As discussed above, precision or lighter manufacturing activities—which rank as the lowest-emitting—contain the most opportunity jobs in the region’s advanced manufacturing sector. Consideration of climate and public health factors, therefore, reinforces focus on these areas, notwithstanding the trade-off between de-prioritizing higher-emitting activities and the potential for marginal increased opportunity job growth through continued expansion of materials and chemical manufacturing.

**Tactics**

**1. Strengthen the capacity of small and mid-sized manufacturers for ongoing growth in the region:** Address barriers to the competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises providing the backbone of Inland Southern California’s manufacturing base, many of which are locally-owned.

* Expand technical assistance for adoption of product and process innovations to improve overall productivity, competitiveness, and energy efficiency, building on existing supports offered by California Manufacturing Technology Consulting (CMTC) and through the Manufacturers’ Council of the Inland Empire (MCIE).
* Institute an “innovation voucher” program to subsidize employer collaboration with regional or national university experts on problem-solving or application of new technologies and methods.
* Expand and target export promotion efforts to provide access to new markets and opportunities for expansion.
* Better showcase and connect firms to available supports offered by the economic and workforce development systems (e.g. Employment Training Panel funding for incumbent worker training).
* Evaluate the current landscape of maker spaces, prototyping, contract, and pre-commercial scale production facilities, and other supports for manufacturing-focused startups to ensure sufficient scale.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: TKTKTK

Collaborating entities: TKTKTK

**2. Bolster the regional manufacturing talent pipeline and improve access for underserved populations:** Build on the region’s existing baseline of manufacturing-focused workforce development efforts to reach greater scale, deepen intentional engagement with priority groups, and promote employer best practices for fostering a diverse workforce.

* Expand the scale of existing demand-driven interventions (e.g. short-term training programs, apprenticeships) positioning residents for mid-skill opportunity jobs not requiring a bachelor’s degree. This activity would build on Chaffey College’s InTech Center, Victor Valley College’s Victorville training center, and other community college programs across the region.
* Deepen partnerships between the workforce/educational system and community-based organizations to recruit priority groups (e.g. justice-involved individuals) and provide culturally-responsive supports spanning program start, completion, and job placement.
* Launch a coordinated longer-term campaign to improve awareness of manufacturing and other STEM careers among regional youth, particularly in disinvested communities and among people of color, expanding on efforts currently underway through County Offices of Education.
* Advance adoption of employer best practices around skills-based hiring, incumbent worker training, and creation of internal pathways for workers to achieve career mobility.
* Promote employer-sponsored childcare and/or multi-employer childcare collaboratives to reduce worker barriers to employment.
* Pursue community benefit agreements for new manufacturing enterprises guaranteeing opportunity job employment outcomes and requiring worker support services.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: TKTKTK

Collaborating entities: TKTKTK

**3. Improve coordination of regional economic and workforce supports to serve the industry:** Establish a more cohesive “center of gravity” for advancing the growth and sustainability of manufacturing across Inland Southern California, reducing current fragmentation and siloing.

* Bolster organizing of regional manufacturers to collectively inform regional strategy, building on the MCIE.
* Convene county, local, and other economic and workforce development interests to set shared objectives and align programs and services (e.g. business attraction, retention, and expansion) in support of advanced manufacturing growth.
* Establish a regular table for undertaking special initiatives to boost sector growth (e.g. conversion of warehouses to manufacturing facilities).

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: TKTKTK

Collaborating entities: TKTKTK

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Number of contacts with regional manufacturers offering assistance and navigation of resources.
* Number of firms utilizing support services and resources (e.g. ETP, exports assistance).
* Total output of manufacturing talent pipeline programs, compared to baseline.
* Output of manufacturing talent pipeline programs representing priority communities (e.g. justice-involved individuals), compared to baseline.
* Number of firms adopting inclusive workforce practices (e.g. skills-based hiring, incumbent worker training, childcare).
* Frequency of meetings and other collaboration between institutions/jurisdictions to serve the manufacturing industry.
* Scale-up and expansion of existing regional manufacturing enterprises (jobs, capital investment).
* Attraction of new manufacturers to the region (jobs, capital investment).

The time horizon for this strategy’s impact is largely dependent on the region’s ability to marshal capacity and effectively coordinate program delivery – a challenge in the absence of a single coordinating regional economic development organization. Some metrics – such as increasing the number of manufacturing firm contacts to advise on available supports – may see progress fairly quickly, assuming the potential to ramp-up existing efforts. Others that require new program stand-up, resourcing, and/or coordination across jurisdictions may not show results for more than a year.

**Potential funding sources**

Apart from California Jobs First, several public and private sources may support this strategy. In other regions, business engagement is often funded by firms as investors in regional economic development organizations and chambers of commerce. While this may be more challenging in Inland SoCal due to the relatively low number of large anchor employers, effort should be focused on building a private-sector funding pipeline. Mainstream public funding streams (e.g. ETP) should also be applied; state and federal grants may also seed start-up of some programs, but are likely not sustainable long-term sources. Meanwhile, philanthropy may also be tapped, particularly for workforce and equity-focused efforts; the Irvine, JPMorganChase, and Arconic Foundations are among the grantmaking organizations that have historically supported related regional efforts.

### Strategy: Cybersecurity

*Convert a burgeoning locally-grown cybersecurity talent pool into a regional specialization meeting rapidly-growing demand for services to help public and private institutions navigate an increasingly complex digital threat environment.*

| **Key takeaways:**   * Cybersecurity is a high-demand sector in our increasingly digital world. The U.S. needs about 225,000 more cybersecurity workers than are currently available. * Over the past 15 years, Inland SoCal has taken major steps to position itself as a leader in cybersecurity workforce training. * Inland SoCal can lead the nation on a more diverse cybersecurity workforce by building on current initiatives led by CSUSB and Inland SoCal community colleges. * Encouraging cybersecurity business growth can boost local quality job opportunities and deepen the region’s foothold in the industry. |
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**Rationale and other considerations**

Recent high-profile hackings and “ransomware” attacks implicating hospitals, utilities, school systems, private businesses, and government institutions underscore the rapidly growing threat of virtual incursions from both private and nation-state actors and its ability to disrupt essential functions. The proliferation of these threats has, in turn, created significant demand for cybersecurity technologies and services offering protection from such attacks. [Analysis by the consulting firm McKinsey](https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/risk-and-resilience/our-insights/cybersecurity/new-survey-reveals-2-trillion-dollar-market-opportunity-for-cybersecurity-technology-and-service-providers) suggests that the global market for cybersecurity services may reach between $1.5 and $2 trillion over time, spanning segments such as data protection, email security, cloud security, identity and access management, and security and operations management. The rapid advancement of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, is only expected to accelerate demand.

Meeting this moment requires a dedicated cybersecurity workforce equipped to staff and support a range of required functions, both within companies and through third-party vendors. In research prepared in support of the White House’s National Cyber Workforce and Education Strategy, the labor market data provider Lightcast [estimates](https://lightcast.io/resources/research/quarterly-cybersecurity-talent-report-june-24) that the United States currently has a gap of about 225,000 cybersecurity workers.

Over the last fifteen years, Inland Southern California has made significant nationally recognized, first-mover strides assembling this labor pool. The [Cybersecurity Center](https://www.csusb.edu/cybersecurity) at California State University – San Bernardino (CSUSB) is the recipient of multiple high-profile federal training excellence designations awarded by the National Security Agency, Department of Homeland Security, and National Science Foundation. Through these designations, CSUSB shapes and advises national standards and practices for cybersecurity workforce development. CSUSB is also leading a statewide CSU initiative, Workforce Innovation Tech Hubs (WITH) Cyber, establishing a cyber workforce educational ecosystem across the state of California. The Center leverages active relationships with private-sector market leaders, such as Northrop Grumman, IBM, and Google.

Meanwhile, the Inland Empire/Desert Regional Consortium has also contributed to the buildout of the region’s cybersecurity workforce; initiatives include a [two-year degree program](https://www.chaffey.edu/acc/bth/bth-academics/cybersecurity.php) and [cybersecurity center](https://www.chaffey.edu/acc/bth/bth-academics/cyber-center.php) at Chaffey College, programs at Riverside and Moreno Community Colleges, and the establishment of a network of Cyber Hubs through the [region’s Strong Workforce program](https://desertcolleges.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2020-05-iedrc-regional-swp-final-report-round-2-final-1.pdf).

Although still lacking the concentration of innovation and commercialization of leading cybersecurity hubs like the Greater Washington Region, Ottawa, or The Hague, Inland Southern California has the potential to apply its talent base to spark greater local firm activity. This, in turn, would promote additional opportunity job creation and economic diversification beyond the region’s current reliance on logistics and local serving activity. Additional enablers and signals of such momentum include:

* Establishment of a [Cyber Tech and Workforce Hub](https://www.csusb.edu/inside/article/581050/congressman-aguilar-delivers-ceremonial-check-cybersecuritys-tech-and) at CSUSB, enabled by a $963,000 federal appropriation. Industry and other partners include Space Systems Command, Pacific Northwest National Labs, Microsoft, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, and NXL Cyber.
* Announcement of new cyber research and educational agreement between CSUSB and the US Navy Surface Warfare Division, providing critical skills, workforce, and research for the Navy.
* Initiation of a first-in-the-state cybersecurity apprenticeship program expected to place hundreds of apprentices over two years, supported by the NSA and California Department of Apprenticeship Standards and led by CSUSB. Additional partners include Loma Linda University Medical Center, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, the City of Moreno Valley, Riverside County, Moreno Valley College, and Riverside City College.

*Equity impact potential*

Cybersecurity falls within overarching categories of tech-driven business services that concentrate opportunity jobs for local Inland Southern California residents. Encompassing subsectors of technical services, administrative services, and publishing, the region boasts nearly 30,000 opportunity jobs in business services, while accounting for nearly $6 trillion in gross regional product.[[20]](#footnote-19)

Existing initiatives emphasizing recruitment of diverse students and early career exposure in the K-12 system will be important to expand to achieve equity outcomes. CSUSB’s Cybersecurity Center engages in significant outreach activity, including through student clubs and a “Cybersecurity Awareness Squad;” as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, the university is particularly well-positioned to engage students of color. CSUSB also hosts a [cybersecurity summer camp](https://www.csusb.edu/cybersecurity/cybersecurity-center/cae-sponsored-programs/gencyber) for regional youth has also partnered with regional workforce and education leads on engagement tools including a [“hybrid cyber escape room.”](https://www.wsbcss.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=2353354&type=d&pREC_ID=2385164)

More broadly, action by the Biden-Harris administration to [promote skills-based hiring in tech fields,](https://www.ncyte.net/Home/Components/News/News/66/18) including cybersecurity, has the potential to broaden opportunities for those without a bachelor’s degree, particularly given the federal government’s role as a leading customer in the cybersecurity market.

Feedback from Thrive’s Sub-Regional Tables (SRTs) stressed the need to ensure graduates can find local jobs and stay in the region after program completion. CSUSB estimates that approximately 60% of its cybersecurity graduates currently find relevant employment in Inland Southern California. The continued buildout of industry presence through this strategy will boost this number.

*Alignment with state strategies*

Promoting growth and pathways to cybersecurity roles meeting opportunity job standards align with California Jobs First and other state initiatives’ focus on connecting residents to quality, family-sustaining jobs. Cybersecurity is also a State emphasis for both ensuring the security of its operations and those of other institutions and enterprises across the state and its tech-driven economy. Activities include the California Office of Emergency Services’ California Cybersecurity Integration Center and the California Cybersecurity Task Force. The Task Force includes subcommittees explicitly focused on cybersecurity-related economic development and workforce development and education.

*Risk factors*

Analysis conducted by the Center for Sustainable Energy (CSE) determined that professional and business services jobs pose “low” environmental risk (~1 tonne CO2e/job/year). Such office-based jobs have low energy needs outside of building environmental control. Climate impact can also be mitigated by reduced commuting distance and frequency, adoption of energy efficient building standards, and reducing the CO2 impact of electricity through shifts to more renewable sources.

**Tactics**

**1. Accelerate efforts to build a diverse Inland SoCal cybersecurity workforce:** Bolster and scale existing workforce pipeline initiatives led by CSUSB and the region’s community colleges, with special attention to ensuring access for people of color and women.

* Deepen partnerships with campus and community-based organizations to ensure diverse pipelines to training programs, including through K-12 exposure.
* Elevate remote-work opportunities that enable flexibility for workers with family responsibilities and/or barriers that make it difficult to commute.
* Provide support services, such as childcare, to ensure equitable participation in apprenticeships and other programs.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: TKTKTK

Collaborating entities: TKTKTK

**2. Build the firm and customer base for a more robust regional cybersecurity market presence:** Facilitate business growth to boost opportunities for local employment and deepen the region’s foothold in the industry.

* Establish core infrastructure to support the industry, such as a Secure Compartmentalized Information Facility (SCIF) required for working with federal classified material.
* Explore a regional procurement strategy (e.g. hospitals, defense installations) to aggregate local demand for cybersecurity services and build industry capacity.
* Market and provide cybersecurity services to the region’s small and medium-sized businesses – who are typically less protected from cyber threats – to both further aggregate market demand and improve resiliency of the region’s locally-grown companies.
* Evaluate and then market cybersecurity specializations tied to other regional industry assets or presence (e.g. gaming, logistics).
* Organize collective efforts to promote regional cybersecurity services to customers in other California markets, where Inland Southern California has a cost advantage.
* Launch an accelerator program to support and attract cybersecurity entrepreneurs to the region.
* Convene existing regional cybersecurity employers in an alliance to establish a center of gravity for the industry, leveraging existing hubs of activity (e.g. CSUSB).

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: TKTKTK

Collaborating entities: TKTKTK

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Number of graduates / completions from regional cybersecurity training programs (overall and disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender).
* Placement of graduates (both overall and disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender) in cybersecurity jobs located in the region.
* Number of youth engaged through career exposure events.
* Number of cybersecurity-focused firms located in the region.
* Number of cybersecurity jobs in the region (both in dedicated cybersecurity firms and as support staff in other companies)

**Potential funding sources**

Apart from California Jobs First, other federal and state grants (including through the workforce system) are likely funding sources. Industry should also be a target for supporting sector priorities, but large-scale support is unlikely pending further build out of market presence.

## Economic mobility and wealth-building strategies

The following economic mobility and wealth-building strategies aim to address historic, structural barriers that have proven to be significant roadblocks to gaining employment in quality jobs. The strategies that follow are drawn from qualitative data gathered during Phase I and II, as well as through research into lessons learned from practice. The proposed economic mobility and wealth-building strategies identified aim to boost residents’ access to information and resources, training and education (including reskilling and upskilling), quality jobs, entrepreneurship, and other wealth-building opportunities that complement, reinforce, and support cluster-focused efforts. This is accomplished by expanding the region’s available pool of skilled workers, supporting would-be founders and local small business owners, and addressing common barriers to accessing and holding on to quality jobs through expanded access to childcare, transportation, technology, and other resources. Particular consideration is given to historically marginalized and equity-seeking groups in order to help remove structural barriers to entry into the workforce.

### Strategy: Access to pathways into quality jobs

*This strategy aims to increase access to education, apprenticeships, and skills training opportunities, contributing to inclusive regional economic development by lowering barriers to quality jobs. By partnering with educational institutions and integrating career awareness initiatives into K-16 schooling, we can expose students to a broad range of job possibilities early, helping them make informed decisions about their futures. Collaborative initiatives involving schools, families, communities, and employers are crucial for promoting career awareness, addressing challenges, and creating a supportive ecosystem that enables individuals to access high-quality training and pursue successful careers.*

**Rationale and other considerations**

Increasing access to education, apprenticeships, and other skills training opportunities will contribute to inclusive regional economic development by lowering barriers to quality jobs. Partnering with educational institutions and integrating career awareness initiatives into K-16 schooling can expose students to the broad range of job possibilities early, which will help them make more informed decisions in the future. Efforts to challenge stereotypes and increase awareness of high-road job opportunities, particularly within the industry clusters mentioned earlier, can also help individuals pursue fulfilling careers and contribute to a more resilient regional economy. Collaborative initiatives involving schools, families, communities, and employers are crucial for promoting career awareness, addressing challenges, and creating a supportive ecosystem that enables individuals to access high-quality training and pursue successful careers.

Inland SoCal has a wealth of educational resources that can be leveraged to provide free or low-cost training and a number of existing programs that can serve as models. Strong partnerships with local unions, schools, and community colleges can enhance on-site job training and create clear pathways to quality jobs in various sectors.

Investing in education and training promotes economic growth by developing a skilled workforce capable of filling in-demand quality jobs in healthcare, construction, IT, and other professions. In addition, diversifying educational pathways can help ensure that individuals are equipped for a range of careers, which supports economic resilience. Addressing workforce shortages in emerging markets is also useful because it can help future-proof the regional economy.

*Equity impact potential*

Expanding access to education and training programs promotes equity by leveling the playing field for underrepresented and low-income communities. Establishing training centers in accessible public locations like libraries and community centers, community colleges, and America’s Job Center of California[[21]](#footnote-20) locations, addresses transportation barriers, while flexible scheduling accommodates those with irregular work hours or family responsibilities. Financial incentives such as scholarships and tuition reimbursement reduce economic burdens, enabling more individuals to participate. Tailored support services, including career counseling, mentorship programs, and childcare, further enhance accessibility. Inclusive outreach campaigns, conducted in partnership with local organizations and delivered in multiple languages, ensure diverse communities are informed about opportunities. Collaborative initiatives between educational institutions, unions, community colleges, employers, and community groups create a supportive ecosystem that aligns training with regional labor market needs. Challenging stereotypes and promoting careers in trades and healthcare encourage exploration of diverse professions, supported by success stories from underrepresented communities. This strategy not only boosts individual economic mobility but also strengthens the regional economy by developing a skilled, diverse workforce. A resilient workforce attracts businesses, fosters innovation, and drives sustainable growth, leading to improved living standards and community development.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy supports California’s workforce development initiatives by increasing access to education and training. It aligns with state goals for promoting diversity and inclusion in high-demand sectors, and complements efforts to address regional workforce shortages and prepare for future economic needs. Funding through the Strong Workforce Program and the Center of Excellence ensures alignment with state goals.

*Risk factors*

* *Environmental:* Potential impact created by construction of new educational facilities.
* *Disaster resilience*: Adhering to environmental standards and implementing robust health and safety protocols will boost community resilience.

**Tactics**

**1. Increase current investments in higher education (e.g., university satellite campuses, online distance learning, continuing education programming)**: Increase support for work currently being done by county workforce development boards, community colleges, K-12, and the Cal State system around investments in higher education by expanding university satellite campuses, enhancing online distance learning, and developing continuing education programs. This tactic will provide more accessible and flexible education opportunities for residents, address low education attainment rates, and meet the growing demand for skilled professionals in various sectors.

* Expand university satellite campuses in underserved areas like Southwest Riverside and the High Desert.
* Enhance online distance learning platforms to provide flexible education options.
* Develop continuing education programs that cater to working adults and professionals seeking to upskill.
* Utilize existing educational resources and online platforms effectively.
* Invest in trade schools and on-site job training for technical professions.
* Develop short certificate programs linked to high-road job qualifications, accessible in places like libraries.
* Promote and fund CTE programs, ensuring integration with college/career readiness programs.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, local universities (e.g., UCR, CSUSB), Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts

Collaborating entities: Trade schools, vocational programs, industry partners, libraries

This tactic aligns with California's goal of expanding apprenticeships and increasing higher education accessibility. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with the Inland Empire Desert Regional Consortium (IEDRC), local educational institutions, and industry partners to streamline apprenticeship and training programs.

**2. Launch outreach and recruitment efforts targeting individuals from equity-seeking groups**: Launch targeted outreach and recruitment efforts to attract individuals from historically underrepresented and equity-seeking groups. By enhancing social connections, career path exposure, and familiarity with workplace norms, this tactic seeks to help these communities navigate professional environments effectively. Engaging industry partners and emphasizing tech job opportunities will support recruitment and provide internship and job placement opportunities.

* Enhance social connections, career path exposure, and familiarity with workplace norms for underrepresented communities.
* Implement improved communication strategies to ensure underprivileged students are aware of available programs and services.
* Continue to emphasize tech job opportunities for high school students to attract diverse candidates.
* Continue to engage industry partners to support recruitment efforts and provide internships and job placements.
* Invest in CTE programs that align with local job demands and have demonstrated positive impacts on high school graduation rates and workforce earnings.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, local high schools, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts, IEGO, IECF, philanthropic organizations

Collaborating entities: Industry partners, trade schools, vocational programs, community organizations

This tactic aligns with regional workforce development initiatives and efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in high-demand sectors. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, industry partners, and community organizations to enhance recruitment and support services.

**3. Expand access to pre-apprenticeship programs**: Develop and offer pre-apprenticeship programs to prepare individuals for successful entry into apprenticeship programs. By using established models and partnering with industry, local unions, schools, and community colleges, this tactic seeks to create clear pathways to quality jobs and meet the future workforce needs of the region.

* Use pre-apprenticeship programs like the Northern American National Building Trades (MC-3) program and drone pilot pathways as models.
* Partner with local unions, schools, and community colleges to promote pathways to quality jobs.
* Conduct a gap analysis to identify high-demand job qualifications and future workforce needs.
* Implement bridging programs to help high school graduates meet vocational training requirements.
* Develop a streamlined user experience for businesses and learners interested in apprenticeships through the IE Labor Council, community colleges in the SBCCD and RCCD, and networks like LAUNCH, the InTech (Industrial Technical Learning) Center, and the California Steel Industries Apprenticeship Program

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Riverside County Workforce Development Board, San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board, local unions, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts

Collaborating entities: Inland Empire/Desert Regional Consortium (IEDRC), local high schools, vocational programs, industry partners, IEGO, philanthropic organizations

This tactic aligns with California's goal of expanding apprenticeships and the regional efforts of the IEDRC and LAUNCH Network. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, unions, and industry partners to streamline apprenticeship and training programs.

**4. Offer financial support & wraparound services such as childcare, mental health support, transportation, technology access, & legal assistance to lower barriers to participation in training and education programs**: Provide comprehensive financial support and wraparound services—including childcare, mental health support, transportation, technology access, and legal assistance—to reduce barriers to participation in training and education programs. By addressing these barriers, this tactic seeks to increase access to education and training opportunities for individuals from historically underrepresented and low-income communities, supporting their successful participation and completion of these programs.

* Create consortia to apply for grant funding and other types of financial aid to provide financial and wraparound support
* Provide financial support for tuition, books, and other educational expenses.
* Offer childcare services to support parents participating in education and training programs.
* Provide mental health support to address emotional and psychological barriers to learning.
* Ensure transportation options are available to facilitate access to training locations.
* Provide technology access, including computers and internet connectivity, to support online learning.
* Offer legal assistance to address any legal issues that may impede participation in education and training programs.
* Incentivize employers to offer on-site job training after hiring.
* Make training programs accessible in community spaces like libraries and ensure they are linked to high-road job qualifications.
* Increase access and advocacy for healthcare workers and customers to create a supportive and equitable working environment.
* Provide consistent funding for K-16 and CTE programs to support long-term planning and student success.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts, vocational schools

Collaborating entities: Community organizations, local healthcare providers, transportation services, legal aid organizations, childcare providers

This tactic aligns with regional efforts to increase access to education and training and to support workforce development. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, healthcare providers, and employers to provide comprehensive support services.

**5. Enforce anti-discrimination policies and combat implicit bias and establish mentorship programs with ongoing support services that incorporate continuous improvement and regular opportunities to gather feedback**: Enforce anti-discrimination policies, combat implicit bias, and establish mentorship programs that offer ongoing support. By incorporating continuous improvement and regular feedback opportunities, this tactic seeks to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all individuals, particularly those from historically underrepresented communities.

* Enforce strict anti-discrimination policies and provide training to combat implicit bias in educational institutions and workplaces.
* Establish mentorship programs that connect individuals from underrepresented communities with experienced mentors.
* Incorporate continuous improvement processes and regular feedback opportunities into mentorship programs.
* Enhance familiarity with workplace norms and social connections for underrepresented communities.
* Promote pathways to quality jobs through partnerships with employers, local unions, and educational institutions.
* Address early career support among healthcare workers and create mentorship programs to support career advancement.
* Overcome the stigma around CTE programs and ensure adequate investment to support diverse career paths.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, local unions, educational institutions in the region

Collaborating entities: Industry associations, community organizations, industry partners, CTE programs, healthcare systems and providers

This tactic aligns with regional diversity and inclusion initiatives and efforts to increase access to quality jobs and education. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, unions,and community organizations to enhance mentorship and support services.

**6. Redirect workforce training towards quality jobs that complement workplace automation, and consider the potential for community colleges, industry, or High-Road Training Partnerships to help meet these goals**: Redirect workforce training towards quality jobs that complement workplace automation and explore the potential for High-Road Training Partnerships. By focusing on emerging markets, aligning training programs with industry demands, and leveraging successful models, this tactic seeks to prepare the workforce for the future economy and ensure sustainable, high-quality employment opportunities.

* Invest in emerging markets and conduct gap analyses to identify future workforce needs.
* Promote pathways to quality jobs in construction, healthcare, IT, and management through partnerships with local unions, schools, and community colleges.
* Emphasize the need for tech job opportunities and align training programs with industry demands.
* Leverage successful programs like Corona Norco’s adult education and Kern County's CTE center to develop effective training models.
* Ensure industry buy-in to provide internships and job placements, supporting the transition from training to employment

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts, vocational schools

Collaborating entities: Industry partners, unions, CTE centers, educational institutions

This tactic aligns with regional workforce development initiatives and efforts to prepare the workforce for future economic needs. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, industry partners, unions, and community organizations to enhance training programs and support services.

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Enrollment and completion rates in pre-apprenticeship, workforce training, and new postsecondary programs
* CTE program enrollment and completion rates
* Program graduate job / apprenticeship placement rates
* Diversity of participant demographics
* Feedback from students and employers on training program effectiveness
* Number of registered apprenticeships in the region
* Number of students and trainees receiving financial support and / or wraparound services
* Number of individuals participating in anti-discrimination training and mentorship programs
* Number of employers participating in anti-discrimination training and mentorship programs
* CTE participant high school completion rates and workforce earnings
* Employment rates in sectors affected by automation

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state appropriations and grant programs, private-sector and philanthropic support

**Policy adjustments needed**

* Increased funding for higher education facilities expansion, online learning platforms, pre-apprenticeship programs, bridging initiatives, financial aid, wraparound services, K-16 education, CTE programs, anti-discrimination training, mentorship programs, workforce training programs, High Road Training Partnerships
* Provide incentives to encourage trade schools and vocational programs to partner with local industries.
* Make incentives available to organizations that participate in mentorship programs.
* Give incentives to employers that offer on-site job training, internships, access to worker support services; an example is on-the-job training (OJT), which is a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-sponsored program
* Incentivize unions, industry partners, and community colleges to participate in training programs and pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.
* Revise financial aid policies to cover short-term certificate programs and continuing education.

### Strategy: Pathways to quality jobs in healthcare

*This strategy aims to establish robust pathways into quality healthcare jobs, providing opportunities for skill development and career advancement. By expanding access to these jobs, the initiative seeks to support long-term economic stability and wealth-building for residents, particularly those from historically underrepresented and disinvested communities.*

**Rationale and other considerations**

The region continues to see significant growth in the number of quality jobs in healthcare and social assistance. These jobs have the potential to boost the economic mobility of workers from historically underrepresented groups (much more so than lower-paying work in other high-employment industries, such as retail, food services, and warehousing). Strengthening pathways into healthcare careers will expand residents’ access to quality jobs, even for those without a four-year degree. Because many of these occupations offer opportunities for career advancement, accessible pathways into quality healthcare jobs can foster long-term economic stability and wealth-building for those from disinvested communities.

A number of training programs in the region, including the Copper Mt. College registered nurse program and Morongo Unified K-12 pharmacy tech program, provide strong models for expansion. Partnerships with local colleges, universities, and vocational schools can ensure that these programs meet specific regional needs. Meanwhile, public awareness campaigns can highlight free or low-cost training opportunities in healthcare in order to foster a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

Expanding healthcare job pathways supports economic growth by creating stable, high-quality employment opportunities. When combined with efforts to diversify the healthcare workforce, these pathways can increase sector innovation and adaptability. Addressing healthcare professional shortages by expanding community colleges has the added benefit of strengthening regional resilience.

*Equity impact potential*

Expanding pathways to quality jobs in healthcare significantly enhances economic mobility for equity-seeking groups in Inland Southern California. Accessible training programs allow individuals without a four-year degree to enter high-paying, stable healthcare careers. Financial incentives such as scholarships and tuition reimbursement lower barriers to entry, making these opportunities available to more people. Mentorship programs and paid internships support career development, enabling equity-seeking individuals to gain valuable experience and build professional networks. Public awareness campaigns highlighting free or low-cost training opportunities ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce. Partnerships with local colleges, universities, and vocational schools align training programs with regional healthcare needs, ensuring a steady supply of qualified professionals. This strategy addresses workforce shortages and promotes diversity within the healthcare sector, fostering innovation and improving adaptability. With career advancement opportunities, individuals from equity-seeking groups can achieve long-term economic stability and wealth-building. A diverse and well-trained healthcare workforce can better meet community needs, improving overall health outcomes. Ultimately, providing accessible pathways to healthcare careers promotes equity, enhances economic mobility, and contributes to a more resilient and inclusive regional economy.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy supports California’s workforce development initiatives aimed at reducing unemployment and underemployment, and aligns with state goals for increasing access to quality healthcare and addressing physician shortages. This also complements state efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in the healthcare workforce.

*Risk factors*

Potential environmental risks include the impact of new construction projects on local ecosystems. Public health considerations include ensuring safe and equitable access to healthcare services for all residents, as well as developing more robust best practices for protecting healthcare workers from another pandemic. Mitigation strategies will need to involve adhering to environmental regulations and implementing green building practices for new healthcare facilities.

**Tactics**

**1. Implement clear pathways into quality healthcare jobs and encourage individuals to pursue long-term careers in the sector**: Creating clear pathways into quality jobs that offer professional development and advancement opportunities can encourage more healthcare workers to pursue long-term careers in Inland SoCal. By providing hands-on learning experiences through internships and apprenticeships, expanding nursing programs, and addressing transportation barriers, this tactic seeks to retain talent within the region and ensure that residents have consistent access to skilled healthcare professionals.

* Expand and support the existing Copper Mt. College registered nurse program.
* Expand and support the Loma Linda High School Summer Research Program, which provides a summer internship in health disparities research.
* Expand and support the University of California Riverside School of Medicine undergraduate internship program.
* Expand and support the Kaiser Permanente internship program.
* Expand and support the Mt. Sac healthcare apprenticeship program.
* Expand and support the Bakersfield College healthcare apprenticeship program.
* Create satellite nursing programs throughout the region.
* Offer internships and apprenticeships to provide practical skills training.
* Address transportation barriers by improving local job opportunities and accessibility.
* Replicate successful programs like the Morongo Unified K-12 pharmacy tech program.
* Ensure Project Labor Agreements are in place for healthcare facility construction projects.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, Copper Mt. College, Morongo Unified School District

Collaborating entities: Local healthcare systems, unions, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts, vocational schools, existing state-funded HRTPs (e.g., AlliedUP, Center for Caregiver Advancement, etc.)

This tactic aligns with regional workforce development plans and healthcare expansion efforts. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, healthcare providers, unions, and community organizations to enhance program reach and effectiveness.

**2. Connect people with employment search support and career training services**: Equipping people with the skills and resources they need to navigate the job market, advance in their careers, and start their own healthcare businesses can improve job readiness and entrepreneurial skills among Inland SoCal residents.

* Develop and offer employment search support services, including résumé writing, interview preparation, and job search strategies.
* Provide training on how to start a successful healthcare business, focusing on unmet demand and customer research.
* Engage healthcare unions to gather input on improving worker support and integrating their feedback into the program.
* Invest in resources and tools to deliver these training services effectively.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts, vocational schools

Collaborating entities: Healthcare worker unions, local healthcare systems, small business development centers

This tactic aligns with regional workforce development and economic growth plans. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, healthcare providers, unions, and business development organizations to enhance program delivery and impact.

**3. Expand people’s awareness of postsecondary education and training to include trade, technical, and vocational programs**: Broaden awareness of trade, technical, and vocational programs in order to attract a more diverse healthcare workforce, address regional staffing shortages, and ensure a steady supply of skilled healthcare workers.

* Develop and distribute informational materials highlighting trade, technical, and vocational programs alongside traditional four-year colleges.
* Provide scholarships, tuition reimbursement, and other financial incentives to reduce barriers to entry.
* Increase public awareness about free to low-cost training opportunities for healthcare jobs, starting outreach at the high school level.
* Expand academic offerings in healthcare fields, establish a four-year college, and increase funding for community colleges to train healthcare professionals in areas like clinical laboratory science and public health.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts, local high schools

Collaborating entities: Vocational schools, four-year colleges and universities, healthcare systems, local businesses

This tactic aligns with state and regional education and workforce development initiatives. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, healthcare providers, and community organizations to enhance program reach and impact.

**4. Collaboration among local colleges, universities, and vocational schools to develop tailored programs for in-demand healthcare roles**: These programs will provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to pursue a career in healthcare while also ensuring alignment with job market demand and increasing healthcare talent retention within the region.

* Partner with local colleges, universities, and vocational schools to develop and tailor healthcare programs.
* Collaborate with healthcare unions and employers to ensure training programs meet current and future job market demands.
* Invest in curriculum development, instructor training, and state-of-the-art training facilities and equipment.
* Provide career counseling and job placement services to ensure students transition smoothly into the workforce.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Local colleges, universities, vocational schools, Inland Empire Workforce Development Board

Collaborating entities: Healthcare unions, local healthcare systems, industry associations

This tactic aligns with state and regional workforce development plans and healthcare expansion efforts. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, healthcare providers, and unions to ensure programs are relevant and effective.

**5. Connect aspiring healthcare professionals with mentors in the sector**: Experienced mentors can provide important guidance, support, and career development advice for early-career healthcare professionals. Developing mentorship programs that involve experienced healthcare professionals and unions will create robust support networks, particularly for those from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

* Develop structured mentorship programs that pair aspiring healthcare professionals with experienced mentors.
* Engage healthcare unions and professionals to participate in mentorship programs.
* Provide training for mentors to ensure effective guidance and support.
* Invest in program management and coordination to facilitate mentor-mentee matching and track progress.
* Implement outreach initiatives to recruit participants from underrepresented backgrounds.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, local healthcare systems

Collaborating entities: Healthcare unions, community organizations, educational institutions

This tactic aligns with regional workforce development and diversity initiatives. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with healthcare providers, unions, and community organizations to enhance program delivery and impact.

**6. Promote diversity and inclusion in the region’s healthcare sector by actively recruiting and supporting individuals from historically underrepresented groups**: Implementing public awareness campaigns, adjusting policies to improve early career support, and increasing access and advocacy will create a more supportive, inclusive, and equitable working environment for healthcare workers and patients alike.

* Actively recruit individuals from equity-seeking groups through targeted outreach and community engagement.
* Implement public awareness campaigns, utilizing platforms like Good Morning Ontario, to highlight healthcare sector opportunities and encourage a diverse range of applicants.
* Examine and adjust current policies to address the lack of early career support among healthcare workers.
* Increase access and advocacy for healthcare workers and customers to ensure a supportive and equitable working environment.
* Provide training and resources for healthcare organizations to implement diversity and inclusion practices effectively.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, local healthcare systems, community organizations

Collaborating entities: Good Morning Ontario, educational institutions, healthcare unions

This tactic aligns with regional diversity and workforce development initiatives. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with healthcare providers, community organizations, educational institutions, and media platforms to enhance the effectiveness and reach of diversity and inclusion efforts.

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Enrollment, graduation, and job placement rates for program participants
* Feedback on program effectiveness from participants, employers, and unions
* Improved access to transportation among program participants
* Number of healthcare businesses started by program participants
* Number of individuals reached by public awareness campaigns
* Number of scholarships and tuition reimbursements awarded
* Diversity of participant demographics

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state appropriations and grant programs, private-sector and philanthropic support

**Policy adjustments needed**

* Increased funding for pathway program expansion, student transportation solutions, employment support services, business training programs, scholarships, tuition reimbursement programs, public awareness program development, pathway development in alignment with employer demand, mentorship programs and mentor training, and diversity and inclusion initiatives.
* Provide incentives for healthcare systems and unions to contribute to pathway activities

### Strategy: Pathways to quality jobs in construction and related trades

*This strategy aims to establish robust pathways to quality jobs in construction and related trades, ensuring inclusive regional economic development by offering accessible training, apprenticeships, and support services. By enhancing skill development and creating opportunities for underrepresented groups, the initiative seeks to build a skilled workforce that meets the evolving needs of Inland SoCal’s economy.*

**Rationale and other considerations**

Fostering pipelines to quality jobs in construction and the trades can contribute to inclusive regional economic development by providing pathways to stable employment and upward mobility for individuals from different backgrounds. By making training programs and apprenticeships in HVAC, plumbing, construction, and other trades more accessible, individuals from historically underrepresented communities can secure high-demand, well-paying jobs that help reduce disparities in income and opportunity. Investing in talent pipelines strengthens the local workforce, supports small businesses, and fosters economic resilience by ensuring that the region has a skilled pool of workers who can meet the evolving needs of Inland SoCal companies.

Construction and related trades offer high-demand, well-paying jobs. Clear pathways into these jobs will ensure a steady supply of talent for local construction and activities related to the energy transition. This strategy leverages strong community college and vocational training programs, regional growth and infrastructure projects, and local business and union engagement to increase the number of skilled workers with quality jobs in this sector.

By strengthening pathways to jobs in construction and trades, this strategy aims to diversify the job market and enhance economic stability. It will expand access to high-quality jobs that contribute to economic growth, including for underrepresented groups, which increases workforce innovation and adaptability. In addition, it will addresses labor shortages in crucial sectors, supporting long-term economic resilience.

*Equity impact potential*

This strategy aims to open doors for individuals from equity-seeking groups to secure high-paying, stable jobs in construction and related trades, thereby reducing income disparities and promoting social mobility. By offering accessible training, apprenticeships, and support services, individuals from underrepresented populations can achieve economic self-sufficiency and career advancement. Public awareness campaigns can highlight these opportunities, ensuring diverse participation and fostering an inclusive workforce. Partnerships with community colleges, vocational schools, local businesses, and unions will align training programs with regional needs, creating a steady supply of skilled workers. This approach addresses labor shortages in crucial sectors and supports long-term economic resilience. By diversifying the job market, the strategy enhances workforce innovation and adaptability, contributing to the overall economic stability of Inland Southern California. Investing in talent pipelines for construction and trades supports small businesses and strengthens the local economy.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy aligns with state goals to enhance workforce development in critical sectors and support the transition to clean energy and supports California’s initiatives to reduce unemployment and underemployment. It additionally complements efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in the labor market.

*Risk factors*

Potential risks include insufficient funding for training programs, lack of employer engagement, and misalignment between training outcomes and industry needs. Environmental risks involve impacts from increased construction activity, such as pollution and resource consumption. Public health considerations include ensuring safe working conditions and addressing potential health impacts related to construction work. Mitigation strategies include adherence to environmental regulations, green construction practices, and robust health and safety training programs.

**Tactics**

**1. Implement clear pathways into quality jobs in construction and related trades**: Creating clear pathways into quality jobs in construction and related trades and providing opportunities for skills development and career advancement will encourage individuals to pursue long-term careers in these sectors by integrating robust pre-apprenticeship programs and collaborating with unions for effective job development.

* Develop and implement pre-apprenticeship programs linked to real job opportunities.
* Partner with local unions to enhance training and job development pipelines.
* Provide resources for mentorship, career counseling, and job placement services.
* Invest in community outreach to raise awareness of these programs and opportunities.
* Support and strengthen pipelines for women in trades

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Labor Council, local unions, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts

Collaborating entities: High Road Training Partnerships, UCR Inland Empire Labor and Community Center, Inland Empire Labor Institute

This tactic aligns with California’s workforce development initiatives and local efforts such as Plug in IE. There are opportunities for collaboration with local educational institutions, industry partners, and community organizations to enhance program effectiveness and reach.

**2. Train the workforce needed to accelerate the region’s transition to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs):** By starting programs early and addressing community support gaps, hands-on training programs will put more people into quality jobs and ensure that the region has the skilled workers it needs in electrical trades, construction, and ZEV automotive technology.

* Develop specialized training programs in ZEV technology, electrical trades, and construction.
* Partner with local unions and vocational schools to align training with industry needs.
* Implement internships and apprenticeships for hands-on learning experiences.
* Start training programs in middle schools to build early interest and skills.
* Invest in community outreach and support services to ensure accessibility.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Labor Council, local unions, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts

Collaborating entities: High Road Training Partnerships, UCR Inland Empire Labor and Community Center, Inland Empire Labor Institute

This tactic aligns with California’s green energy and workforce development initiatives. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with local educational institutions, industry leaders, and community organizations to enhance the training program's effectiveness and reach.

**3. Connect Inland SoCal residents to employment search support and career training services**: Comprehensive employment search support and career training services will help bridge the gap between job seekers and available job opportunities in the region. Specialized support for formerly incarcerated individuals can ensure they have the resources needed to re-enter the workforce successfully.

* Develop employment support programs that include resume writing, interview preparation, job search strategies, and other career development resources.
* Implement specialized support services for formerly incarcerated individuals, including tailored counseling and job placement assistance.
* Provide access to workshops, training sessions, and online resources to improve job readiness.
* Invest in outreach efforts to ensure that these services are accessible to all residents.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, local nonprofits, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts

Collaborating entities: Reentry programs, local employers, vocational training centers

This tactic aligns with regional workforce development initiatives and reentry programs. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with local employers, educational institutions, and community organizations to enhance the support network and ensure comprehensive service delivery.

**4. Expand people’s awareness of postsecondary education and training to include trade, technical, and vocational programs**: Providing financial incentives and promoting these opportunities through community outreach will encourage more Inland SoCal residents to explore these pathways into quality jobs.

* Develop and distribute informational materials highlighting various postsecondary education and training options.
* Provide scholarships, tuition reimbursement, and other financial incentives to reduce barriers to entry.
* Conduct community outreach to promote these educational opportunities and financial incentives, particularly to underrepresented groups.
* Partner with local employers and unions to ensure trades education programs are aligned with job market needs and lead to employment opportunities.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts, vocational schools

Collaborating entities: Local employers, unions, high schools, nonprofits

This tactic aligns with state and regional education and workforce development initiatives. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, industry leaders, and community organizations to enhance awareness and access to diverse postsecondary options.

**5. Introduce the trades as a viable career option in K-16**: Exposing students to different career paths and giving them opportunities to acquire relevant hands-on skills will increase student awareness of these career possibilities and build interest early in their academic careers.

* Integrate trades education into the K-16 curriculum by offering courses such as wood shop and automotive technology.
* Develop and implement pre-apprenticeship programs starting in middle school.
* Provide training for teachers to effectively deliver trades education.
* Partner with local unions, vocational schools, and employers to support program development and provide hands-on learning opportunities.
* Invest in outreach to inform students and parents about the benefits of trades careers.
* Support and strengthen pipelines for women in trades.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Local school districts, Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts

Collaborating entities: Local unions, vocational schools, industry partners

This tactic aligns with regional education initiatives and workforce development plans. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, local businesses, and community organizations to support program implementation and sustainability.

**6. Partner with local colleges, universities, and vocational schools on tailored training programs for in-demand roles in construction and related trades**: Greater collaboration among educational institutions, unions, and employers on programs related to construction and the trades can ensure that these programs are effective and relevant.

* Develop and customize training programs in collaboration with local colleges, universities, and vocational schools.
* Engage unions and employers in the development process to ensure alignment with job market demands.
* Provide funding for program development, including curriculum design, instructional materials, and instructor training.
* Establish apprenticeship and internship opportunities to provide hands-on experience.
* Implement outreach initiatives to inform students about these tailored programs and the career opportunities they provide.
* Support and strengthen pipelines for women in trades.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Local colleges, universities, vocational schools, Inland Empire Workforce Development Board

Collaborating entities: Local unions, construction companies, industry partners

This tactic aligns with regional workforce development initiatives and educational improvement plans. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, unions, and industry leaders to ensure comprehensive program development and implementation.

**7. Actively recruit and support individuals from equity-seeking groups and connect aspiring trades and construction professionals with mentors**: Improved recruitment, support, and mentorship programs for workers from historically underrepresented groups will help them navigate their careers and achieve their goals.

* Actively recruit individuals from equity-seeking groups through targeted outreach and community engagement.
* Develop mentorship programs that connect aspiring professionals with experienced mentors in the trades and construction sectors.
* Collaborate with organizations like High Road Training Partnerships, the Inland Empire Labor Council, and others to design and implement comprehensive diversity initiatives.
* Provide training and resources for mentors to effectively support and guide mentees.
* Invest in outreach initiatives to raise awareness about opportunities and support available for equity-seeking individuals.
* Support and strengthen pipelines for women in trades.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Labor Council, High Road Training Partnerships

Collaborating entities: Local unions, construction companies, community organizations, vocational schools

This tactic aligns with regional diversity and workforce development initiatives. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, and industry leaders to enhance the effectiveness and reach of diversity and inclusion efforts.

**8. Address employment stability and develop solutions to ensure consistent employment for tradespeople**: Collaboration between companies and unions can help workers find continuous employment, improving their job security and financial stability.

* Collaborate with unions and construction companies to develop policies and practices that ensure continuous employment for tradespeople.
* Implement incentives for construction companies to maintain a stable workforce and reduce gaps in employment between projects.
* Establish a centralized job matching system to connect tradespeople with available projects quickly.
* Provide support services, such as financial planning and temporary job placements, to tradespeople during transitions between projects.
* Invest in training programs that enhance the versatility and employability of tradespeople, making them suitable for a wider range of projects.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Local unions, construction companies, Inland Empire Workforce Development Board

Collaborating entities: High Road Training Partnerships, community colleges, industry associations

This tactic aligns with regional workforce development and job stability initiatives. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with unions, construction companies, and community organizations to develop and implement effective solutions for employment stability.

**9. Pursue Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) and local workforce policies that require PLAs**: These types of agreements and policies ensure fair wages, benefits, and safe working conditions and can expand union contractor hiring capacity, which is necessary to increase capacity in union apprenticeships.

* Collaborate with governments, unions, and developers to develop policies and practices around PLAs, especially for large-scale construction projects
* Promote the use of PLAs in planning and project implementation for private and public construction projects
* Implement incentives for integrating PLAs into project planning and implementation, emphasizing the benefits of a secure, stable, skilled workforce
* Offer training and resources to contractors on the benefits and requirements of PLAs to facilitate their implementation
* Conduct outreach and education campaigns to inform the community about the positive impacts of PLAs on local employment and economic development

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Local unions, construction companies (including subcontractors), Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, local governments, developers

Collaborating entities: High Road Training Partnerships, community colleges, industry associations

This tactic aligns with regional workforce development and job stability initiatives. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with local governments, unions, construction companies, developers, and community organizations to develop and implement effective solutions for increasing union employment and apprenticeships.

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Number of program participants
* Program completer job placement rates
* Diversity of program participants
* Number of scholarships and tuition reimbursements awarded
* Number of K-16 schools offering trades education courses
* Number of K-16 students enrolled in trades education and pre-apprenticeship programs
* Number of workers participating in continuous employment initiatives
* Reduction in length of unemployment periods between jobs for workers participating in continuous employment initiatives

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state funds, private-sector and philanthropic support

**Policy adjustments needed**

* Increased funding for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, ZEV-related workforce training, employment support services, post-incarceration re-entry programs, scholarship and tuition reimbursement programs, K-16 trades education, K-16 pre-apprenticeships, diversity and inclusion programs in the trades and construction
* Offer incentives to companies that work with unions and educational institutions to provide consistent employment opportunities and effective training programs
* Provide incentives to firms that offer internships, apprenticeships, and job placements and/or participate in post-incarceration re-entry programs or diversity initiatives
* Create incentives for schools that implement and promote trades education
* Give incentives to companies that maintain continuous employment for tradespeople, participate in job matching systems, and/or provide transitional support services

### Strategy: Pathways to quality jobs in information technology

*This strategy aims to make it easier for people to get quality jobs in the IT field. It will help people learn new skills, find better jobs, get real work experience, and get help with job searches. It also includes financial help for education, working with local schools, connecting IT learners with mentors, and promoting diversity and inclusion in the sector.*

**Rationale and other considerations**

Clear, well-supported pathways into quality information technology (IT) jobs make it easier for people to prepare for and find higher-paying work. These jobs range widely from IT support to data analysis to cybersecurity. Outreach, programming, and wraparound supports tailored to the needs of those from historically underrepresented communities can help the region tap into a more diverse talent pool and foster innovation and creativity. Greater worker diversity in IT can not only improve economic outcomes for historically marginalized groups but can also strengthen the overall competitiveness and dynamism of the sector.

This strategy provides the following competitive actions. It can help attract and retain a diverse talent pool. It can enhance innovation and creativity through diverse perspectives. And it can strengthen the local IT industry, reducing talent migration to other regions.

This strategy encourages the development of mid-sized companies and startups, which will spur job creation. It will give more Inland SoCal residents access to quality jobs in a high-demand sector, enhancing their economic mobility and opening up new wealth-building opportunities.

*Equity impact potential*

This strategy has the potential to significantly improve economic outcomes for equity-seeking groups by providing accessible pathways to quality jobs in the IT sector. By offering tailored outreach, skill development, mentorship, and financial support for education, individuals from equity-seeking communities can gain the skills needed to enter high-paying IT roles. Enhancing diversity and inclusion within IT not only fosters a more innovative and creative workforce but also ensures that historically underrepresented groups have opportunities for economic mobility and wealth-building. The strategy emphasizes partnerships with local schools and educational institutions to create a robust pipeline of diverse talent. Mentorship programs can connect IT learners with industry professionals, providing valuable guidance and networking opportunities. Financial assistance and job search support remove barriers to entry, making IT careers more accessible to a broader population. By developing mid-sized companies and startups, the strategy encourages job creation and retains talent within Inland Southern California. Increased diversity in leadership roles within the IT sector can drive systemic change, promoting greater inclusion and representation. Ultimately, this approach not only strengthens the local IT industry but also contributes to a more dynamic and competitive regional economy.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy supports state goals for workforce development and economic inclusivity, and aligns with state initiatives to promote STEM education and careers.

*Risk factors*

There is potential environmental impact with increased technology infrastructure. Development of IT facilities should be undertaken with sustainable practices.

**Tactics**

**1. Implement clear pathways into quality jobs in the IT sector**: Pathways that include hands-on learning experiences via internships and apprenticeships allow individuals to acquire new skills working alongside experienced professionals.

* Support and continue to develop region-wide ecosystem mapping and technological support.
* Continue to support a funding and incubator system for startups to commercialize and hire locals.
* Continue supporting funding and incubator systems for entrepreneurs and small businesses to commercialize
* Continue to implement internships, apprenticeships, and bootcamp programs in collaboration with local governments.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local governments, educational institutions (all levels), technology firms, and community organizations, IEGO

This tactic aligns with local economic development initiatives and educational programs. There is opportunity for collaboration with startups and mid-size companies in the region.

**2. Connect people with employment search support and career training services**: Comprehensive employment search support and career training services will help bridge the gap between IT job seekers and available IT job opportunities in the region.

* Continue to develop employment support programs that include resume writing, interview preparation, job search strategies, and other career development resources.
* Continue to provide access to workshops, training sessions, and online resources to improve job readiness.
* Continue to invest in outreach efforts to ensure that these services are accessible to all area residents.
* Continue to connect potential employees with entrepreneurs and small businesses.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Inland Empire Workforce Development Board, local nonprofits, Riverside and San Bernardino Community College Districts, IEGO

Collaborating entities: Local employers, vocational training centers

This tactic aligns with regional workforce development initiatives. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with local employers, educational institutions, and community organizations to enhance the support network and ensure comprehensive service delivery.

**3. Provide financial support to overcome barriers (e.g., unpaid internships, educational requirements, certificates) to obtaining training necessary to achieve careers in IT**: Jobs in technology are often viewed as potentially lucrative career options, but many higher-paid technology jobs require an applicant to have existing on-the-job skills and/or equivalent education, which can be a barrier to entry, particularly for youth and those who wish to make a career change. Addressing financial barriers preventing individuals from pursuing IT careers will make it easier for individuals from lower-income households to pursue IT careers.

* Partner with educational institutions and local corporations to offer financial incentives.
* Partner with educational institutions, industry, and nonprofits to identify paid internships and job-shadowing opportunities.
* Develop scholarship and tuition reimbursement programs.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Educational institutions, local corporations, and community organizations

This tactic aligns with educational programs and corporate social responsibility initiatives.

**4. Partner with local colleges, universities, and vocational schools to develop programs for in-demand IT roles**: Students will start down the path toward a career in IT by acquiring skills and knowledge needed for quality jobs in IT.

* Develop partnerships with local colleges, universities, and vocational schools.
* Create tailored educational programs in collaboration with IT firms.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Educational institutions, IT firms, and community organizations

This tactic aligns with existing educational initiatives and IT industry needs. There is opportunity for collaboration with local businesses and educational institutions.

**5. Connect aspiring IT professionals with mentors in the sector**: Mentors can provide early-career IT workers guidance and support in navigating challenges and achieving career goals.

* Develop a coaching and mentoring network.
* Actively recruit mentors and mentees from historically underrepresented backgrounds.
* Secure funding for mentorship programs and sector-based nonprofit management training.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Nonprofits, IT firms, and community organizations

This tactic aligns with existing diversity and inclusion initiatives. There is opportunity for collaboration with local businesses and nonprofit organizations.

6. Entrepreneurial and Small Business Support for IT Jobs

* Support entrepreneurs and small businesses to drive job creation and innovation in IT
* Develop entrepreneurial support programs
* Provide access to capital and resources
* Facilitate networking and collaboration opportunities

Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration

* IT firms, government, nonprofits, trade organizations, special interest organizations
* This tactic aligns with existing diversity and inclusion, workforce development, and small business development initiatives.

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Program enrollment, completion, job placement, and career advancement rates
* Number of startups and mid-sized companies engaged
* Number of scholarships and tuition reimbursements awarded

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state appropriations and grants, private-sector support

**Policy adjustments needed**

* Increased funding for IT incubator programs, scholarships, tuition reimbursement programs, IT training programs, mentorship programs

### Strategy: Career pathways into management

*Expanding pathways to careers in management for equity-seeking groups in the region means creating opportunities for skills development and career advancement, ensuring these individuals have access to leadership roles. This approach aims to increase diversity in management and promote inclusive decision-making.*

**Rationale and other considerations**

Given the impending wave of retirements of those in their 60s and 70s, there is a unique opportunity to fill upcoming leadership vacancies with diverse candidates from these equity-seeking groups, ensuring a smoother transition and continuity in corporate knowledge and culture. Expanding opportunities for those from historically underrepresented groups to advance into management roles increases diversity at the leadership level and helps ensure that corporate decision-making reflects a wider range of perspectives and experiences. These pathways can create economic mobility and wealth-building opportunities while also fostering innovation, resilience, and sustainable growth in the region.

This strategy provides the following competitive advantages. Diverse leadership can drive innovation and better decision-making. Companies with diverse management are more attractive to a broader talent pool. This strategy can also lead to an enhanced corporate reputation and community relations.

This strategy can promote sustainable regional growth by leveraging diverse talents, enhancing economic resilience through a diversified leadership, and stimulating wealth creation within underrepresented communities.

*Equity impact potential*

This strategy has the potential to significantly increase the representation of equity-seeking groups in leadership roles, promoting upward mobility. By providing skills development, career advancement programs, and leadership training, individuals from historically underrepresented communities can access and thrive in management positions. This helps to dismantle systemic barriers that have traditionally limited their career progression. Diverse leadership brings a wider range of perspectives and experiences to corporate decision-making, driving innovation and better business outcomes. Companies with diverse management teams are more attractive to a broader talent pool, enhancing their ability to recruit and retain top talent. This strategy also enhances corporate reputation and strengthens community relations, as businesses become seen as more inclusive and socially responsible. Promoting diversity in leadership roles contributes to sustainable regional growth and economic resilience. By stimulating wealth creation within underrepresented communities, the strategy fosters a more inclusive and robust local economy.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy supports state initiatives on diversity, equity, and inclusion and aligns with state-funded programs like High-Road Training Partnerships. It can also promote compliance with state equity and inclusion mandates.

*Risk factors*

This strategy may be met with resistance to change within corporate culture, and it will need sustained investment in training and mentorship programs. However, if successful, it can address potential stress and burnout among participants.

**Tactics**

**1. Provide clear pathways for career advancement to management:** Pathway programs that include opportunities for skills development and promotion (especially for individuals from equity-seeking groups and historically underrepresented communities) can increase diversity at in corporate management

* Develop structured career advancement programs within companies.
* Offer training programs focused on management skills.
* Provide scholarships or funding for advanced education and certifications.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local businesses and corporations, industry associations, chambers of commerce, educational institutions, workforce development boards

This tactic aligns with the state’s High-Road Training Partnerships. There are opportunities to collaborate with local colleges and universities for educational programs, as well as with industry associations to identify key skills and competencies needed.

**2. Connect individuals with mentors in management roles:** Mentors can offer guidance and support throughout an individual’s career journey and help them navigate challenges and achieve their goals.

* Establish mentorship programs within companies and across industries.
* Train mentors on effective mentorship practices and cultural competency.
* Provide platforms (both physical and virtual) for mentor-mentee interactions.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local businesses and corporations, industry associations, chambers of commerce, nonprofits focused on workforce development, professional associations and networks

This tactic provides an opportunity to leverage existing professional networks and industry groups and integrate with corporate diversity and inclusion initiatives. There is also potential for partnership with local educational institutions for additional mentorship resources.

**3. Encourage firms to actively recruit and support individuals from historically underrepresented backgrounds and equity-seeking groups for management roles:** Proactive efforts on the part of companies can help create a more representative and culturally competent leadership class.

* Implement targeted recruitment strategies.
* Offer training on cultural competency and inclusive leadership.
* Provide support systems for new hires to ensure their success and retention.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local businesses and corporations, industry associations, chambers of commerce, recruitment firms specializing in diversity and inclusion, diversity and inclusion consultants

This tactic aligns with corporate diversity and inclusion goals. It provides an opportunity to collaborate with local universities and job fairs focused on diversity, as well as partner with community organizations to reach a broader talent pool.

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Program enrollment, completion, promotion, and retention rates
* Diversity in management-level roles
* Success of recruiting efforts

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state funds, private-sector and philanthropic support

**Policy adjustments needed**

* Provide incentives for companies to adopt internal career advancement programs and diversity recruitment goals
* Create tax benefits for businesses investing in employee development
* Offer grants or subsidies to companies that implement mentorship programs

### Strategy: Entrepreneurial ecosystem for high-growth startups and main street businesses

*Developing an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem aims to support high-growth startups and Main Street businesses, particularly those led by underrepresented entrepreneurs. This strategy will provide tailored programs, funding initiatives, mentorship, financial literacy, and networking opportunities to foster innovation, job creation, and economic growth in the region.*

**Rationale and other considerations**

A strong entrepreneurial ecosystem is a vital component of any inclusive regional economic development strategy. When entrepreneurs start new companies, they also create jobs, new business for suppliers, and new products and services for potential customers. Making it easier for would-be entrepreneurs to develop their ideas and launch their companies means more economic activity for the region and a chance at wealth-building for company founders. This is especially true for those from historically underrepresented groups that were systematically excluded from entrepreneurial opportunities in the past. Facilitating the development and launch of entrepreneurial ventures, especially for those from equity-seeking groups, stimulates economic activity and provides wealth-building opportunities. Tailored programs that address specific challenges and offer targeted support can help overcome historical barriers to entrepreneurship.

This strategy will jumpstart entrepreneurial activity (with additional support for founders from underrepresented groups) using established models and programs tailored to meet the needs of high-growth startups and main street businesses. It will strengthen the regional network of entrepreneur support organizations, local chambers of commerce, community organizations, and other stakeholders working to support entrepreneurial efforts. In addition, it will incorporate emerging cybersecurity and advanced manufacturing clusters into the region’s entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Developing an entrepreneurial ecosystem will create new jobs and stimulate economic development. Establishing satellite locations for existing companies and creating innovation hubs will also attract and create jobs.

Providing access to training, mentorship, and networking opportunities for underrepresented groups will foster personal and professional growth, enhancing economic resilience.

*Equity impact potential*

This strategy offers significant equity impact potential by ensuring that historically underrepresented entrepreneurs have access to tailored programs, funding, mentorship, financial literacy, and networking opportunities. By focusing on equity-seeking groups, this strategy aims to dismantle barriers that have historically limited their entrepreneurial success. Providing targeted support such as financial management training, marketing skills, and business planning workshops ensures that these entrepreneurs are well-equipped to start and grow their businesses. Mentorship programs, particularly those that connect entrepreneurs with mentors from similar backgrounds, can build confidence and provide valuable guidance, fostering personal and professional growth. Tailored funding initiatives and financial literacy programs level the playing field, making capital more accessible to those who have been systematically excluded. The establishment of co-ops and innovation hubs encourages collaborative growth and shared resources, enhancing community resilience and economic stability. Highlighting success stories of underrepresented entrepreneurs inspires new ventures and demonstrates the potential for business growth and community impact. By creating a supportive and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem, this strategy not only promotes economic mobility and wealth-building for equity-seeking groups but also drives innovation, job creation, and sustainable growth in the region. Ultimately, fostering diverse entrepreneurial talent strengthens the regional economy, making it more dynamic and competitive, and ensures that all residents of Inland Southern California have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy supports California's initiatives to expand entrepreneurship and innovation, complements state efforts to invest in emerging markets and advanced manufacturing sectors. It also aligns with state goals to promote diversity and inclusion in economic development efforts.

*Risk factors*

There are several risks associated with this tactic, including environmental risks related to new business activities and industrial developments, public health considerations connected to safe working environments and mental wellness among entrepreneurs. Risk mitigation strategies include adherence to environmental regulations and robust health and safety protocols.

**Tactics**

**1. Improve access to funding and capacity-building programs for historically underrepresented groups facing barriers**: Offering tailored capacity-building initiatives and skills development opportunities can better meet the needs of entrepreneurs from historically underrepresented communities. This tactic includes financial management training, marketing skills, business planning, and advocating for policy changes to address discrimination in lending. In addition, it will provide legal support for entrepreneurs facing discrimination and other challenges, fostering a supportive community that encourages collaboration and resilience.

* Develop and offer financial management training, marketing skills, and business planning workshops tailored to the needs of underrepresented entrepreneurs.
* Advocate for policy changes to address discrimination in lending and provide legal support for entrepreneurs facing discrimination.
* Implement capacity-building initiatives to help entrepreneurs determine unmet needs and build prototypes.
* Provide financial assistance and wraparound services such as childcare, mental health support, transportation, technology access, and legal assistance.
* Develop targeted funding initiatives and financial literacy programs.
* Create mentorship programs with mentors from similar backgrounds.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Entrepreneurial Resource Center / Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship, small business development centers, iHUB 2.0, other local community organizations, financial institutions

Collaborating entities: Youth Mentoring Action Network (YMAN), local chambers of commerce, legal aid organizations

This tactic aligns with regional efforts to promote entrepreneurship and economic development, particularly for underrepresented groups. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with community organizations, financial institutions, and mentorship networks to enhance funding access and business support.

**2. Improve access to mentorship, training programs, and networking opportunities, especially for small business owners from historically underrepresented groups**: By facilitating networking and community engagement activities, this tactic will connect entrepreneurs with potential collaborators, customers, and supporters, building strong networks within the local business community and creating opportunities for growth.

* Develop and offer mentorship programs with mentors from similar backgrounds to provide relevant support and guidance.
* Organize training programs on business skills, including financial management, marketing, and business planning.
* Facilitate networking and community engagement activities to connect entrepreneurs with potential collaborators, customers, and supporters.
* Build networks with local chambers of commerce, small businesses, and community organizations.
* Launch an accelerator program to support and attract cybersecurity entrepreneurs.
* Invest in incubators to determine specific needs and support business growth.
* Utilize rotary groups for networking and fundraising.
* Promote swap meets and flea markets as platforms for community engagement and business growth. These venues can provide strong local community connections, business opportunities, and a platform for cultural exchange.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Entrepreneurial Resource Center / Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship, iHUB 2.0, local community organizations, local chambers of commerce, Small Business Development Centers, IEGO

Collaborating entities: Yucca Valley and 29 Palms Chambers of Commerce, community organizations, rotary groups, incubators, accelerator programs

This tactic aligns with regional efforts to promote entrepreneurship and economic development, particularly for underrepresented groups. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with community organizations, chambers of commerce, and mentorship networks to enhance access to support services.

**3. Tailor funding initiatives, mentorship programs, training programs, and other entrepreneur supports to meet the needs of historically underrepresented entrepreneurs**: Designing programs with historically underrepresented entrepreneurs in mind can help address barriers that hinder their ability to start, sustain, and grow successful businesses.

* Develop targeted funding initiatives to provide capital specifically for underrepresented entrepreneurs.
* Offer mentorship programs with mentors from similar backgrounds to provide relevant support and guidance.
* Organize training programs that address specific challenges faced by underrepresented entrepreneurs, including financial literacy, business planning, and marketing.
* Build relationships with local chambers of commerce and tourism industry venues to support networking and business growth.
* Pay participants to conduct research on unmet needs and build prototypes.
* Train childcare owners to run businesses, particularly focusing on issues faced by preschool and childcare business owners, especially women of color

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Entrepreneurial Resource Center / Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship, iHUB 2.0, local community organizations, local chambers of commerce, Small Business Development Centers, IEGO

Collaborating entities: Community organizations, tourism industry venues, financial institutions

This tactic aligns with regional efforts to promote entrepreneurship and economic development, particularly for underrepresented groups. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with community organizations, chambers of commerce, and mentorship networks to enhance access to tailored support services.

**4. Promote co-ops to enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem for high-growth startups and main street businesses owned by individuals from equity-seeking groups**: Co-ops provide shared resources, democratic decision-making, and mutual support, improving access to capital, training, and market reach while fostering community engagement and resilience. More widespread adoption of this model can empower underrepresented entrepreneurs by addressing systemic barriers and creating a collaborative environment for business growth.

* Focus on legacy businesses in need of succession planning assistance
* Develop and promote co-ops to provide shared resources and mutual support.
* Establish startup studios to provide co-working spaces, meeting rooms, training, and event venues.
* Create collaborative partnerships with cybersecurity companies, research institutions, and other relevant organizations.
* Build local Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) that are homegrown to provide financial support.
* Focus on community-oriented strategies and leverage local organizations for support.
* Implement democratic decision-making processes within co-ops to ensure inclusive participation.
* Provide and promote technical assistance for retiring main street business owners to transition their business to an employee ownership model (e.g., LA County).

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: local co-op organizations

Collaborating entities: Community organizations, cybersecurity companies, research institutions, local CDFIs

This tactic aligns with regional efforts to promote entrepreneurship and economic development, particularly for underrepresented groups. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with community organizations, co-op networks, and financial institutions to enhance access to support services.

**5. Showcase success stories from historically underrepresented entrepreneurs in the region in order to provide examples and role models for others to follow**: Highlighting these success stories will inspire and motivate new entrepreneurs, demonstrating the potential for business growth and community impact.

* Identify and document success stories from historically underrepresented entrepreneurs in the region.
* Create multimedia content (videos, articles, social media posts) to share these stories widely.
* Organize events and workshops where successful entrepreneurs can share their experiences and insights.
* Tailor success stories to reflect the local culture and follow models from other regions.
* Highlight the decline of traditional industries and the shift towards advanced manufacturing and entrepreneurship.
* Share successes and highlight small businesses to position the region as a place where businesses can get started.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Entrepreneurial Resource Center / Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship, iHUB 2.0, local community organizations, local chambers of commerce, Small Business Development Centers, IEGO

Collaborating entities: Community organizations, local media outlets, successful local entrepreneurs

This tactic aligns with regional efforts to promote entrepreneurship and economic development, particularly for underrepresented groups. Collaboration opportunities include partnerships with community organizations, media outlets, and successful local entrepreneurs to enhance visibility and impact.

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Participation in entrepreneur support programs
* Number of program participants receiving financial assistance and/or legal support
* Diversity of participant demographics
* Participant feedback on programs and services
* Entrepreneur support program participant access to capital and business growth
* Number of entrepreneurs who are successful in securing capital
* Number of entrepreneurs participating in co-op initiatives and startup studios

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state appropriations and grant programs, private-sector and philanthropic support

**Policy adjustments needed**

* Increased funding for entrepreneur capacity-building initiatives and legal support; entrepreneur mentorship, training, and networking programs; co-op development and startup studios; and entrepreneur showcase content creation and events.
* Provide incentives for financial institutions to offer targeted access to capital initiatives and support services for underrepresented entrepreneurs
* Offer incentives for organizations that participate in mentorship programs, provide training and networking opportunities for entrepreneurs, and / or participate in co-ops
* Policy advocacy that prioritizes the growth of high-quality businesses that generate and retain wealth within the community over municipal finance models that provide tax breaks and other incentives to low-road national businesses

### Strategy: Technology access

*This strategy aims to bridge the digital divide by enhancing technology access for all residents of Inland SoCal. This includes improving internet connectivity, providing access to digital devices, and offering digital literacy programs to ensure everyone can participate in the digital economy.*

**Rationale and other considerations**

Technology is an increasingly large part of everyday life. All sorts of activities—searching for a job, paying bills, obtaining government services—now require internet access and some level of digital literacy. Unfortunately, the digital divide remains a challenge for some in the Inland Empire, particularly those from low-income households and / or rural communities. Improving internet connectivity and access to laptops and tablets can advance inclusive regional economic development by ensuring that everyone has the resources and skills they need to make use of technology in their daily lives.

This strategy can potentially reduce the digital divide, increasing the population’s overall digital literacy. Enhanced connectivity can also attract more businesses to the region and encourages innovation and technological advancements.

Better technology access allows people to pursue job opportunities in tech-related fields. It can also help diversify the regional economy by bringing more sectors into the digital economy and increases resilience by supporting remote work and online education.

*Equity impact potential*

This strategy can improve equity by ensuring that all residents, particularly those from underserved communities, have the tools and skills needed to participate in the digital economy. By providing subsidized internet access and refurbished devices, this strategy addresses the digital divide and promotes social inclusion. Establishing community centers with free computer labs and partnering with libraries for device lending programs will provide essential technology access and support, enabling more people to access job opportunities, education, and vital services.Expanding digital skills training workshops and classes can boost digital literacy and technical skills across socioeconomic backgrounds, empowering individuals to pursue careers in various fields. Mobile technology units will bring essential digital resources to remote and underserved areas, ensuring no community is left behind. Encouraging employers to provide technology allowances and partnering with tech companies for device donations further bridges the digital divide, supporting remote work and online learning.Investing in broadband infrastructure and advocating for digital inclusion policies will expand internet access in underserved areas, creating a more connected and resilient region.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy supports state goals for digital inclusion and broadband expansion. It also aligns with initiatives to improve educational outcomes and workforce readiness.

*Risk factors*

*This tactic has several risks. The technology provided may not be environmentally friendly and energy-efficient. Additionally there are potential health concerns related to prolonged screen time and ergonomic setups.*

**Tactics**

**1. Provide subsidized internet and device access**: Subsidized internet access and refurbished devices can help ensure that low-income families have the necessary tools to participate in the digital economy and access essential services.

* Implement subsidized internet access programs.
* Collaborate with technology companies to secure donations of refurbished devices.
* Establish partnerships with local organizations to distribute these resources.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local government agencies, internet service providers, device manufacturers, community-based organizations and nonprofits

This tactic aligns with existing digital inclusion initiatives. There is potential to leverage resources from programs like the County of Riverside Community Action Partnership. There is additionally potential to collaborate with clean energy providers to create combined work/play spaces, providing a multifaceted approach to community support.

**2. Enhance community resources**: Bridge the digital divide by establishing community centers with free computer labs and Wi-Fi access and partnering with local libraries to create laptop and tablet lending programs. These resources will provide essential technology access and support to underserved communities, enabling them to participate in the digital economy and access vital services.

* Establish community centers with free computer labs and Wi-Fi access.
* Partner with local libraries to create laptop and tablet lending programs.
* Secure funding for the purchase and maintenance of digital devices and infrastructure.
* Provide digital literacy training and technical support at community centers and libraries.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local government agencies, public libraries, community-based organizations and nonprofits, technology companies, internet service providers

This tactic aligns with existing digital inclusion initiatives and could leverage resources from programs like the County of Riverside Community Action Partnership. It also offers opportunities to collaborate with clean energy providers on combined work/play spaces that offer a multifaceted approach to community support.

**3. Expand digital skills training**: Enhance digital literacy and technical skills in underserved communities by offering technology training workshops and classes and improving access to affordable or free software and online tools for skills development and entrepreneurship.

* Develop and implement technology training workshops and classes focused on digital skills.
* Collaborate with the San Bernardino and Riverside Workforce Development Boards, Small Business Development Centers, educational institutions, non-profits, and technology companies to provide affordable or free access to essential software and online tools.
* Create collaborative work/play spaces with public-private partnerships such as Opportunities to Advance Sustainability, Innovation, and Social Inclusion (OASIS) where parents can charge their vehicles while children participate in afterschool technology programs.
* Secure funding to support these initiatives through grants, partnerships, and donations.
* Promote critical thinking around digital literacy, including the ability to assess the purpose and framing of information and to understand the social costs of corporate control over digital tools.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

*San Bernardino Workforce Development Board, Riverside Workforce Development Board, Small Business Development Centers, l*ocal government agencies, public libraries, community centers, K-16 schools, colleges, universities, nonprofits, technology companies, internet service providers, clean energy providers

This tactic aligns with existing digital inclusion and skills development initiatives. Resources from programs like the County of Riverside Community Action Partnership and other local efforts can be leveraged here, and there is opportunity to collaborate with clean energy providers to create multifunctional spaces that support both technology training and community needs.

**4. Implement mobile technology solutions**: Deploying mobile technology units will bring internet access and technology resources directly to remote and underserved areas, ensuring that residents have the tools and connectivity they need for education, employment, and daily activities.

* Design and deploy mobile technology units equipped with Wi-Fi, computers, and other essential digital tools. This involves outfitting vehicles with solar panels for sustainable power, high-speed Wi-Fi routers, computers, and other digital tools. These units should be equipped with ergonomic workstations and secure storage for equipment.
* Partner with local clean energy providers such as SoCal Edison to create combined work/play spaces that can support mobile units. Equip mobile technology units and fixed spaces with solar panels, charging stations, and energy-efficient infrastructure.
* Develop a schedule and route for mobile units to ensure they reach various remote communities regularly. Deploy the units on a regular schedule to underserved and remote areas, ensuring they are accessible during peak community usage times.
* Secure funding for the initial purchase, maintenance, and operation of the mobile units through grants and partnerships via nonprofits collaboration with local governments, technology companies, and community-based organizations and/or via federal grants tied to the Digital Equity Act or grants from the FCC and/or via state or local funding.
* Implement at the county or regional level to target deployment based on specific local needs and conditions, depending on each area’s demographics and geographic challenges.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local government, public libraries, community centers, nonprofits, technology companies, internet service providers, clean energy providers

This tactic aligns with existing digital inclusion and infrastructure improvement initiatives. There is potential to leverage resources from programs like the County of Riverside Community Action Partnership and other local efforts, and collaborate with clean energy providers to create multifunctional spaces that support both technology access and community needs.

**5. Encourage employer-supported tech access**: Encouraging employers to provide technology allowances or reimbursements for remote work setups and collaborating with tech companies to donate refurbished devices can help bridge the digital divide that afflicts underserved and low-income communities in the region.

* Encourage employers to offer technology stipends or reimbursements for remote work expenses.
* Partner with technology companies to secure donations of refurbished devices.
* Establish programs for distributing donated devices to communities in need.
* Employers gain improved employee productivity, access to more diverse talent, more employee retention and satisfaction, an enhanced reputation for social responsibility and commitment to DEI goals, and possible grants/subsidies/tax deductions

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local employers and businesses, technology companies, refurbishing organizations (e.g., Human-I-T, Byte Back, Computing for All, Compudopt), community organizations, local governments

This tactic aligns with regional digital equity initiatives and workforce development programs. There is potential to collaborate with organizations already addressing digital access and literacy, such as the County of Riverside Community Action Partnership and others.

**6. Invest in broadband infrastructure and advocate for digital inclusion**: Infrastructure investments and government efforts to prioritize digital inclusion can expand broadband access in underserved areas and address the digital divide.

* Invest in broadband infrastructure projects to expand access in underserved areas.
* Advocate for government programs and policies that support digital inclusion and address the digital divide.
* Collaborate with clean energy providers to create combined work/play spaces with internet access and charging stations.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local governments, policymakers, technology companies, broadband service providers, community organizations, advocacy groups, clean energy providers.

This tactic aligns with regional digital equity initiatives and infrastructure development plans. There is potential to collaborate with organizations already addressing digital access and literacy, such as the County of Riverside Community Action Partnership and link with previous broadband initiatives to create a cohesive strategy.

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Number of low-income households with internet access (by collaboration with school districts to gather data on students’ home internet access or via local surveys fielded by local nonprofits or community centers like the IELCC)
* Number of devices distributed to low-income households
* Number of devices borrowed from lending programs
* Number of individuals using community center computer labs and wifi
* Number of individuals completing a digital skills training workshop or class
* Number of individuals accessing distributed software and online tools
* Digital literacy and internet usage rates
* Number of mobile tech units deployed and areas served
* Number of people using mobile tech units
* Number of employers providing tech allowances or reimbursements
* Number of refurbished devices collected and distributed
* Number of broadband connections established in previously underserved areas
* Amount of funding secured for broadband infrastructure projects
* Number of policies and programs implemented to support digital inclusion

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state appropriations and grants, private-sector and philanthropic support

**Policy adjustments needed**

* Government subsidies for internet access programs, digital skills training, mobile tech units,
* Design policies that encourage tech companies to donate devices, provide free or low-cost software licenses, and support digital inclusion efforts
* Enact legislation that encourages donations of refurbished devices and provides tax benefits to companies that do so
* Prioritize broadband infrastructure investments in underserved areas

### Strategy: Transportation access

*This strategy aims to reduce transportation barriers, increase economic opportunities, enhance community engagement, and improve access to transportation by expanding public transit options, creating pedestrian-friendly areas, and establishing transit-oriented industries.*

**Rationale and other considerations**

A lack of reliable transportation poses significant barriers to economic mobility in Inland SoCal by limiting people’s access to education, training, and job opportunities. In a region where many people rely on cars, limited public transit options and lack of access to a car make it harder to get and keep a job, especially in rural areas. Better access to transportation expands people’s economic opportunities by making it easier to get to school, work, the grocery store, doctor appointments, and other activities of daily life. Transportation access ensures that people can participate in the economy and the world around them, which contributes to more inclusive and broadly prosperous communities.

This strategy provides the following competitive advantages. Enhanced mobility can increase access to a wider range of job opportunities, and improved transportation infrastructure attracts businesses to the region. Additionally, reduced traffic congestion and pollution through increased public transit use.

This strategy facilitates economic growth by connecting workers to employment centers. It supports diversification by making it easier for people to access various types of jobs and increases regional resilience by improving infrastructure and reducing reliance on single modes of transportation.

*Equity impact potential*

Enhancing transportation access will significantly improve equity by ensuring that all residents, especially those from economically disadvantaged communities, have reliable means to reach essential services and job opportunities. By investing in infrastructure for bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, and smart transit technologies, this strategy expands transportation options and reduces barriers to economic mobility. Implementing smart transit technologies, such as real-time arrival information and mobile ticketing apps, further enhances accessibility. Providing subsidies or vouchers for public transportation, car ownership, and need-based gas subsidies ensures that low-income individuals can afford reliable transportation. Establishing ride-sharing and carpooling programs, particularly those focusing on electric vehicles, reduces costs and promotes environmental sustainability. Collaborating with employers to offer transportation benefits, shuttle services, and flexible work arrangements expands workers' transportation options and reduces single-driver commutes. Advocating for policies that improve public transportation funding, expand routes, increase service frequency, and prioritize equity and accessibility will strengthen public transit systems and ensure they serve all community members effectively, including those with disabilities. Developing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in residential, commercial, and industrial areas supports the transition to clean energy and makes EVs more accessible to a broader population.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy supports California’s goals for sustainable development and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and aligns with state initiatives to promote public transit and active transportation (biking, walking). It also complements efforts to create livable, pedestrian-friendly communities.

*Risk factors*

Increased construction activities may potentially impact the environment. Additionally, public health measures need to be integrated into transportation planning. Managing a shift in transportation habits and infrastructure changes may help minimize disruptions.

**Tactics**

**1. Invest in infrastructure for bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, and smart transit technologies**: These investments will expand transportation options, which currently hinder economic mobility; restrict access to jobs, education, and essential services; and contribute to traffic congestion and environmental issues.

* Develop and expand bike lanes and pedestrian pathways based on actual uses and needs to facilitate access to quality employment and other activities.
* Implement smart transit technologies, such as real-time arrival info and mobile ticketing apps.
* Conduct sensitivity tests to evaluate the potential outcomes of different investment scenarios

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local government transportation departments, public transit agencies, community organizations, advocacy groups

This tactic aligns with state and local transportation initiatives. There is potential to collaborate with community organizations and advocacy groups to ensure equitable access, as well as work with employers to support transportation benefits.

**2. Provide subsidies or vouchers for public transportation, car ownership, and need-based gas subsidies**: These solutions address the challenge of limited access to affordable and reliable transportation, which restricts economic mobility, job access, and participation in education and essential services, particularly for low-income and underserved populations.

* Implement a subsidy or voucher program for public transportation, similar to Philadelphia’s Zero-Fare Policy.
* Develop a car ownership program modeled after Vehicles for Change, providing affordable cars and low-interest loans.
* Offer need-based gas subsidies to assist those who rely on personal vehicles for commuting.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local and regional governments, public transportation authorities, nonprofits such as Vehicles for Change, financial institutions

This tactic aligns with state and local transportation and economic development plans. There is potential to collaborate with community organizations to ensure equitable access, as well as work with employers to provide transportation benefits and support programs.

**3. Establish ride-sharing and carpooling programs**: These initiatives can expand transportation options and reduce costs for commuters, especially those who have few public transit options.

* Implement ride-sharing programs similar to BlueLA, focusing on electric vehicles to promote environmental sustainability.
* Create carpooling incentives such as priority parking, reduced toll fees, and financial rewards.
* Develop infrastructure for carpooling depots and designated parking areas.
* Partner with employers to offer transportation benefits or shuttle services for employees.
* Provide subsidies and grants to support the establishment and maintenance of these programs.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local and regional governments, nonprofits specializing in transportation solutions, private ride-share and carpool companies, employers, business associations.

This tactic aligns with state and local transportation and environmental sustainability plans. There is potential for collaboration with community organizations to ensure equitable access and participation, as well as with employers and business associations to promote transportation benefits.

**4. Work with employers to offer transportation benefits, shuttle services, and flexible work arrangements**: Expanding workers’ transportation options increases access to job opportunities and reduces daily single-driver commutes.

* Collaborate with employers to offer transportation benefits such as subsidized transit passes and ride-sharing options.
* Develop employer-sponsored shuttle services to key employment hubs.
* Implement flexible work arrangements, including remote work and staggered shifts, to reduce peak-hour commuting.
* Partner with agencies to help individuals obtain driver's licenses, such as the California Indian Manpower Consortium.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local and regional governments, major employers, business associations, transportation service providers, community organizations, workforce development agencies.

This tactic aligns with regional transportation plans and employer engagement strategies. There is potential to collaborate with community organizations to ensure equitable access and participation, as well as leverage existing transportation and workforce development initiatives.

**5. Advocate for policies to improve public transportation funding, expand routes, increase service frequency, and prioritize equity and accessibility**: Strong and well-funded public transit systems expand and enhance transportation services for everyone, including those with disabilities.

* Advocate for increased public transportation funding.
* Expand public transportation routes.
* Increase service frequency.
* Prioritize equity and accessibility in transportation projects.
* Enhance services for individuals with disabilities.
* Prioritize proximity to transit in funding and other incentives for new jobs or businesses planned or created through California Jobs First.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local and regional transportation agencies, state and local governments, disability advocacy groups, community organizations

This tactic aligns with state and local transportation plans, collaborate with community organizations, disability advocacy groups, and regional transit authorities.

**6. Develop electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in residential, commercial, and industrial areas**: Greater access to EV charging infrastructure will be essential as the state transitions away from fossil fuels.

* Install EV charging stations in key areas such as residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, and industrial zones.
* Provide incentives for property owners and businesses to install EV charging stations.
* Collaborate with utility companies to ensure adequate electrical capacity and grid support for increased EV charging demand.
* Develop public-private partnerships to fund and maintain EV charging infrastructure.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local governments, utility companies, private sector partners, community organizations, EV manufacturers

This tactic aligns with state and local clean energy and transportation plans, collaborate with utility companies and private sector partners, and leverage existing incentive programs for clean energy infrastructure.

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Miles of bike lands and pedestrian paths added
* Usage of smart transit technologies
* Number of bike and pedestrian trips
* Public transit ridership
* Traffic congestion and commute times
* Number of subsidies and vouchers distributed
* Number of cars distributed through car ownership programs
* Job access and retention rates among program participants
* Number of individuals using ride-share and carpool programs
* Commuting cost reductions for program participants
* Amount of public transit funding secured
* Reach and frequency of public transit services
* Public transit accessibility ratings
* Public transit ridership among low-income individuals and / or those with disabilities
* Number of EV charging stations installed
* Percentage of EV chargers located in under-resourced communities
* EV adoption and charging station use rates
* GHG emissions reductions

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state appropriations and grants, private-sector and philanthropic support

**Policy adjustments needed**

* Increased funding for transportation subsidies and vouchers, ride-share and carpool programs
* Policies to support increased transit accessibility and equity-focused transportation initiatives
* Provide incentives for EV infrastructure investments
* Municipal and county zoning amendments to enable increased density in order to create or build out regional job centers that are proximate to transit.

### Strategy: Access to childcare

*Improving childcare availability helps people keep their jobs, increases worker productivity, and supports new businesses. Affordable childcare allows workers, especially women and single parents, to advance in their careers without financial strain. It also helps people pursue education and training for better jobs, leading to a stronger and more stable economy in Inland SoCal, where childcare resources are currently unstable and limited.*

**Rationale and other considerations**

Improving childcare availability increases people’s ability to hold a job, bolsters employee retention and productivity, and fosters entrepreneurship. By addressing the caregiving responsibilities that many workers (particularly women and single parents) face, access to affordable childcare can help workers advance in their careers without placing a major financial burden on their households. Accessible childcare can also make it easier for people to pursue education and training on the path to a quality job, which in turn can lead to greater economic mobility and a more vibrant and resilient economy. This issue is crucial in the region. For instance, the Coachella SRT reported that childcare resources are not stable, and the only currently available childcare is at the military base, which not everyone has access to. The High Desert SRT discussed how important it is not only to make childcare more available but also to provide affordable and reliable childcare services equitably across different communities.

Reliable childcare enables more parents, especially women, to join the workforce, increasing the region's labor pool and enhancing competitiveness. Regions with strong childcare support are also more likely to attract and retain families and young professionals, leading to greater economic investment and job creation.

Access to childcare provides several benefits. It allows parents with access to childcare to be more productive at work, boosting overall economic output. It also allows more individuals, particularly women, to start businesses, diversifying the economy and fostering innovation. Additionally, a diverse workforce with childcare support is better equipped to withstand economic downturns.

*Equity impact potential*

This strategy has potential to significantly reduce economic disparities and support individuals and families from equity-seeking groups in Inland Southern California. By expanding affordable and reliable childcare options, particularly through collaborations with local childcare providers and community organizations, this strategy ensures that parents, especially women and single parents, can participate fully in the workforce and advance in their careers without financial strain, while also benefiting women and minority entrepreneurs. Providing financial assistance and wraparound services, such as mental health support and transportation, further allows people to pursue education and training for better job opportunities. Incentivizing businesses to offer on-site childcare facilities or subsidies enhances workforce participation and job satisfaction. Advocacy for policy changes to increase funding for childcare subsidies and infrastructure improvements ensures that high-quality childcare is accessible to all, fostering a more inclusive economy. Establishing government-funded childcare assistance programs specifically targets low-income families, improving employment rates. Investing in training and certifying more childcare professionals addresses the shortage of qualified workers, thus creating jobs while enhancing the quality of childcare services and meeting growing demand. Partnering with community organizations to provide childcare vouchers or scholarships reduces financial barriers, ensuring broader access to early childhood education. Promoting flexible work arrangements and remote work options through employer incentives helps parents balance work and home responsibilities, increasing workforce participation and reducing stress.

*Alignment with state strategies*

Access to childcare aligns with the following two strategies: California’s workforce development goals, and Early Childhood Education Initiatives.

*Risk factors*

* *Environmental:* Childcare centers must comply with environmental regulations to ensure safe conditions for children.
* *Public health***:** Childcare access can improve public health by providing children with nutritious meals and health check-ups and respecting other public health protocols.
* *Disaster resilience***:** Childcare facilities need robust emergency preparedness plans to protect children and staff in disasters.

**Tactics**

**1. Collaborate with local childcare providers to expand capacity to offer reliable and affordable childcare options**: Support women entrepreneurs of color and others interested in starting childcare businesses to meet local demand. Helping these businesses launch and grow will increase the availability and affordability of quality childcare options, which are essential for enabling parents, especially women, to participate fully in the workforce.

* Provide financial assistance and wraparound services such as childcare, mental health support, transportation, technology access, and legal assistance.
* Focus on helping people start childcare businesses to meet local demand.
* Expand the Center for Early Childhood Education and ensure it meets the needs of parents and children.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: First Five, CSUSB, Child Resource Center, and Quality Start San Bernardino (QSSB)

Collaborating entities: Boys and Girls Club, local nonprofits, entrepreneur support organizations, and public-private partnerships

This tactic could be aligned with existing initiatives led by First Five, CSUSB, Child Resource Center, and QSSB. There is potential to collaborate with local nonprofits and advocacy groups such as the Boys and Girls Club and other community organizations to streamline program administration and support.

**2. Provide incentives for businesses that offer on-site childcare facilities and/or subsidies for employees**: Reliable and affordable childcare options for workers help increase workforce participation, employee satisfaction, and business productivity.

* Provide tax incentives or grants to businesses that establish on-site childcare facilities.
* Develop subsidy programs for businesses to offer childcare support to employees.
* Implement a public awareness campaign highlighting the benefits of employer-sponsored childcare.
* Collaborate with local childcare providers to ensure high-quality services.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Local government agencies, economic development councils Collaborating entities: Local businesses, childcare providers, community organizations, and community groups such as the Western San Bernardino Subregional Table

This tactic aligns with state strategies for workforce development and economic growth, as it supports local economic development plans and integrates with broader industrial policy and wealth-building efforts. There are opportunities for collaboration with existing childcare programs and business development initiatives.

**3. Advocate for policy changes to increase funding for childcare subsidies and infrastructure**: Secure increased funding for childcare subsidies and infrastructure to improve access to affordable, high-quality childcare. This tactic addresses the critical need for comprehensive training programs for childcare professionals and integrates funding streams from various sources, including schools and HR departments.

* Advocate for increased state and federal funding for childcare subsidies and infrastructure improvements.
* Develop partnerships with schools and HR departments to combine existing funding streams and training resources.
* Secure grants and other financial resources to expand childcare facilities and programs.
* Implement comprehensive training programs for childcare professionals to enhance the quality of care.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Subregional tables, local government agencies

Collaborating entities: Schools, HR departments, childcare providers, community organizations.

This tactic aligns with state strategies for early childhood education and workforce development, and supports local economic development plans by integrating funding streams and training initiatives. There are additionally opportunities for collaboration with existing childcare programs and educational institutions.

**4. Establish government-funded childcare assistance programs for low-income families**: Increase the accessibility and affordability of quality childcare for low-income families in the region by providing government-funded assistance. This tactic will support working parents, improve maternal employment rates, and ensure children receive high-quality early education.

* Increase government funding for childcare assistance programs.
* Establish eligibility criteria and streamline the application process for families.
* Develop partnerships with local childcare providers to ensure high-quality care.
* Implement regular monitoring and evaluation of funded programs to ensure effectiveness.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Local government agencies, social service departments

Collaborating entities: Childcare providers, community organizations, schools, and workforce development agencies

This tactic aligns with state and federal initiatives to support early childhood education and workforce development, and supports local economic development plans and poverty reduction strategies. It will also provide opportunities for collaboration with existing childcare programs and community-based organizations.

**5. Invest in training and certifying more childcare professionals to meet demand**: address the shortage of qualified childcare professionals in the region by investing in comprehensive training and certification programs. By enhancing the skills and qualifications of childcare workers, this tactic will improve the quality of childcare services and meet the growing demand in this region.

* Develop and fund training programs for childcare professionals, combining existing funding streams with those available from schools and HR departments in the region.
* Implement pedagogic counseling to enhance professional development and encourage reflective practices among childcare workers.
* Establish certification programs to ensure childcare providers meet high standards of care and education.
* Provide financial incentives and support to encourage participation in training and certification programs.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Local government agencies, educational institutions, HR departments in the region

Collaborating entities: Childcare providers, community organizations, schools, and training centers

This tactic aligns with state and federal initiatives to support early childhood education and workforce development. It also supports local economic development by enhancing the skills and qualifications of the childcare workforce. Opportunities for collaboration existing with childcare programs, educational institutions, and HR departments in the Inland Empire.

**6. Partner with community organizations to provide childcare vouchers or scholarships**: Increase access to affordable childcare for low-income families in the region by partnering with community organizations to provide childcare vouchers or scholarships. This tactic will help alleviate the financial burden of childcare and ensure that more children have access to high-quality early education.

* Partner with community organizations such as First Five, CSUSB, and Child Resource Center to manage and distribute childcare vouchers and scholarships.
* Incentivize nonprofits to collaborate with employers to offer low-cost childcare on-site or nearby, and explore opportunities to provide low-cost or free childcare at libraries and apartment complexes.
* Address the experiences and challenges of childcare providers within the voucher system, including payment levels, administrative procedures, and support systems.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: First Five, CSUSB, Child Resource Center, Quality Start San Bernardino (QSSB)

Collaborating entities: Nonprofits, employers, libraries, apartment complexes, and community organizations

This tactic aligns with state and federal initiatives to support early childhood education and workforce development. It also supports local economic development by enhancing the skills and qualifications of the childcare workforce. Opportunities for collaboration existing with childcare programs, educational institutions, and nonprofits in the region

**7. Incentivize employers to provide flexible work arrangements and remote work options that accommodate parental responsibilities**: Promoting flexible work arrangements and remote work options will help parents in the region balance their responsibilities at work and at home. This tactic will increase workforce participation, improve employee satisfaction, and reduce the stress associated with managing childcare and work commitments..

* Provide tax incentives or grants to employers who implement flexible work arrangements and remote work policies.
* Develop guidelines and resources for employers to create and manage flexible work programs.
* Partner with local business organizations to promote the benefits of flexible work arrangements.
* Offer training and support to help businesses transition to flexible and remote work models.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Local government agencies, economic development councils, and chambers of commerce in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

Collaborating entities: Employers, business organizations, HR departments, and community groups

This tactic aligns with state and federal initiatives to support workforce development and family-friendly workplace policies, and supports local economic development plans by promoting a more flexible and resilient workforce. It also provides opportunities for collaboration with existing business support programs and HR organizations.

**8. Support initiatives that improve the quality and accessibility of early childhood education**: Providing financial assistance, wraparound services, and improved early education programs will ensure that children from low-income families receive high-quality early education that supports their development and prepares them for future academic success.

* Provide financial assistance for low-income families so that they can afford quality early childhood education.
* Offer wraparound services such as mental health support, transportation, technology access, and legal assistance to support families.
* Increase funding and availability of Head Start and other high-quality early education programs.
* Partner with community organizations to deliver comprehensive early childhood education services.
* Implement policies that support the professional development and retention of early childhood educators.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: First Five, CSUSB, Child Resource Center, local government agencies

Collaborating entities: Community organizations, Head Start programs, schools, and early childhood education providers

This tactic aligns with state and federal initiatives to support early childhood education and workforce development, and supports local economic development plans by enhancing the availability and quality of early childhood education. It also provides opportunities for collaboration with existing early education programs, community organizations, and local businesses.

**9. Raise awareness about the importance of affordable childcare for economic mobility and regional development**: Increase public and policymaker awareness of the critical role that affordable childcare plays in supporting economic mobility and regional development in the Inland Empire. By highlighting parents' needs and the economic benefits of investing in childcare, this tactic will build support for policies and initiatives that improve childcare affordability and accessibility.

* Conduct public awareness campaigns to educate the community and policymakers about the importance of affordable childcare.
* Engage nonprofits in child advocacy to amplify the voices of parents and childcare providers.
* Collect and share data on parents' needs and the economic impact of affordable childcare.
* Partner with local businesses, community organizations, and educational institutions to promote the benefits of investing in childcare.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Lead organizations: Local government agencies, economic development councils, and chambers of commerce in Riverside and San Bernardino counties

Collaborating entities: Nonprofits, child advocacy organizations, local businesses, and educational institutions

This tactic aligns with state and federal initiatives to support early childhood education and workforce development, and supports local economic development plans by promoting the economic benefits of affordable childcare. It also provides opportunities for collaboration with existing childcare advocacy programs and community organizations.

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Number of new childcare slots created
* Number of low-income families receiving childcare subsidies, vouchers, scholarships, and/or wraparound support services
* Childcare facility quality ratings and parent/caregiver satisfaction
* Number of childcare businesses that are financially stable
* Number of women entrepreneurs of color starting and maintaining childcare businesses
* Workforce participation rate for working-age women and parents/caregivers
* Number of childcare professionals and early childhood educators trained and certified
* Number of businesses offering flexible work arrangements and/or remote work options
* Number of policymakers and community leaders supporting childcare initiatives

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state appropriations and grant programs, philanthropic support

**Policy adjustments needed**

* Increase funding for expanded access to affordable and reliable childcare; early childhood education programs; wraparound support services; new childcare businesses; training and certification programs; childcare subsidies, vouchers, and scholarships for low-income families; and additional infrastructure.
* Standardize training and certification requirements and support the retention of childcare workers and early childhood educators.
* Design policies to address the specific needs of parents and children in the community.
* Adjust tax codes to provide incentives for businesses offering childcare, flexible work arrangements, and/or remote work opportunities.
* Standardize the quality of employer-sponsored childcare services.
* Streamline funding from multiple sources, including schools and HR departments.
* Streamline and simplify application and eligibility determination processes for low-income families seeking childcare subsidies and other supports.
* Ensure that policies support equitable pay for childcare workers (many of whom are people of color) as well as ongoing professional development and continuous quality improvement in childcare and early education.
* Standardize and simplify administrative and payment processes for providers.
* Support flexible work arrangements and remote work options
* Address the compensation disparities between childcare providers and public school educators

### 

### Strategy: Building social and cultural capital

*Enhance cultural and social capital by implementing initiatives and programs focused on financial literacy, networking, and exposure to different career paths. This strategy aims to break down barriers to economic opportunity, career advancement, and wealth building for historically underrepresented communities.*

**Rationale and other considerations**

Cultural and social capital—which includes social connections, exposure to different career paths, access to training and education, familiarity with workplace norms, and more—play a major role in determining a person’s economic situation. Helping people from historically underrepresented communities boost their cultural and social capital can help break down barriers to economic mobility.

This strategy will boost the region’s competitive advantage by increasing workforce readiness through improved soft skills and career awareness, building stronger community networks and support systems, and expanding local engagement and participation in economic activities.

This strategy will diversify the region’s economic base by fostering entrepreneurship and small business development. It will promote long-term economic stability through a well-prepared and adaptable workforce and encourages investment in local communities to boost their overall economic resilience.

*Equity impact potential*

This strategy helps reduce economic disparities and promote social mobility for equity-seeking groups in Inland Southern California by implementing initiatives focused on financial literacy, networking, and exposure to different career paths. Individuals will be equipped with the tools and knowledge necessary for economic success through community mentorship programs, networking events, and professional development workshops that foster supportive networks, providing guidance and encouragement in ways that help individuals navigate professional environments more effectively. Offering workshops on networking, interpersonal skills, and professional norms helps individuals from equity-seeking groups develop essential soft skills and professional competencies. Enhanced career counseling services provide tailored guidance on workplace etiquette and social connections, ensuring students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds are well-prepared for their careers. Expanding grants and programming to organizations serving diverse communities supports initiatives that build social and cultural capital, including financial literacy and networking opportunities, further enhancing economic resilience. This strategy promotes wealth building and social inclusion, fostering a more cohesive and supportive community.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy supports California's goals for equitable economic development and workforce preparedness, and complements state efforts to enhance public education and community development programs. It also aligns with initiatives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in economic activities.

*Risk factors*

This strategy can help address economic instability and ensure continuous support during economic downturns. But in order to do so, entrenched cultural and social norms will need to change and sustained investment and long-term commitment will both be needed to achieve meaningful change.

**Tactics**

**1. Foster community mentorship programs**: Connecting individuals with successful industry professionals and facilitating networking events and professional development workshops, (including online platforms and resources) will help foster supportive networks and affinity groups that can provide peer mentorship and encouragement.

* Develop mentorship programs that pair individuals with industry professionals.
* Organize regular networking events and professional development workshops.
* Create online platforms for mentorship and networking to increase accessibility.
* Promote and support affinity groups that provide peer mentorship and encouragement.
* Pay individuals for training and serving as mentors to ensure commitment and value.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local chambers of commerce, community-based organizations, educational institutions, industry professionals and associations

This tactic provides opportunities to collaborate with existing mentorship programs and initiatives as well as educational institutions and industry associations. There is also an opportunity to leverage resources from local libraries and community centers.

**2. Offer workshops and seminars on networking, interpersonal skills, and professional norms**: Provide workshops and seminars that enhance networking, interpersonal skills, and professional norms, helping individuals from equity-seeking groups to navigate professional environments successfully.

* Develop a series of workshops on communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.
* Offer practical job search skills workshops such as resume writing, interview preparation, and professional attire.
* Provide financial literacy and training programs through the school system and youth events.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Educational institutions, community-based organizations, local libraries and community centers

This tactic provides an opportunity to collaborate with existing training programs and workshops as well as educational institutions and community centers. There is also an opportunity to leverage resources from local libraries and community organizations.

**3. Collaborate with educational institutions to enhance career counseling services**: enhance career counseling services at educational institutions to offer guidance on professional development, workplace etiquette, and cultivate social connections among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

* Strengthen partnerships between educational institutions and career counseling services.
* Develop comprehensive career counseling programs that include guidance on professional norms, workplace etiquette, and social connections.
* Incorporate social equity training programs, such as restorative justice and anti-bias training.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Educational institutions, community-based organizations, local businesses, industry professionals

This tactic provides an opportunity to collaborate with existing career counseling services and professional development programs and local businesses and industry professionals for mentorship and guidance. There is also opportunity to leverage resources from educational institutions and community organizations.

**4. Expand grants and programming to organizations serving diverse communities**: Expand grants and programming to organizations serving diverse communities to support initiatives that build social and cultural capital.

* Increase funding for grants to organizations serving diverse communities.
* Develop programming that supports initiatives to build social and cultural capital, including financial literacy and networking opportunities.
* Support the creation of worker-owned co-ops, collectives, land trusts, and local businesses.

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Community-based organizations, local businesses, industry professionals, educational institutions

This tactic provides an opportunity to collaborate with existing grant programs and initiatives and partner with local businesses and community organizations. There is an opportunity to leverage resources from educational institutions and community centers.

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Event and workshop attendance and participant feedback
* Number of mentorship pairs established
* Number of students receiving career counseling
* Number of community-based organization grants awarded and programs developed
* Participant surveys to gauge satisfaction and program impact on social and cultural capital

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state appropriations and grant programs, private-sector and philanthropic support

**Policy adjustments needed**

* Increased funding for mentorship programs, professional development workshops and seminars, career counseling, community-based organization grant programs
* Provide incentives to businesses that participate in mentorship programs, networking events, training programs, and initiatives that build social and cultural capital.

### Strategy: Employer-investments into increasing supply of housing (type and price)

*Employer-investments into promoting a range of housing developments (type and price) is important for making sure everyone in the region can afford a place to live. This helps companies hire and retain workers. By increasing the type and price of housing, employers can attract and keep a diverse group of workers, shorten travel times, and boost the overall economy of the area.*

**Rationale and other considerations**

Employer-investments into increasing a range of housing available (type and price) can contribute to inclusive regional economic development by increasing the number of affordable housing options, reducing commutes, encouraging employee recruitment and retention, promoting diversity and inclusion in the workforce, supporting economic mobility, fostering community development and revitalization, and facilitating partnerships and collaboration.

Investments by employers into ensuring that there is an adequate supply of housing is crucial for inclusive regional economic development as it directly addresses the housing affordability crisis. It can enhance employee recruitment and retention by offering a range of affordable living options, as well as reduce commuting time and costs, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction. It can also promote a diverse and inclusive workforce, supporting equitable economic growth. By investing in a range of affordable housing options, employers can support the overall economic health and vitality of the region.

This strategy encourages economic growth by making the region more attractive to potential employees and businesses and can support diversification by attracting a broad range of industries that value workforce stability. It also enhances resilience by fostering stable communities that can better withstand economic fluctuations.

*Equity impact potential*

This strategy helps address the housing affordability crisis by increasing the available stock of housing types and entry price points, reducing the displacement of residents due to rising housing costs and short-term rental markets. By investing in a range of living options, employers can help mitigate long commutes, lower commuting costs, and improve overall job satisfaction and productivity. This strategy promotes a diverse and inclusive workforce by making it easier for individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds to live and work in the region, thus supporting equitable economic growth. Collaborating with local governments, housing authorities, and tribal communities ensures that housing developments are well-integrated and beneficial to the broader community. Public-private partnerships can further enhance these efforts, securing necessary funding and resources to develop stable, resilient communities.

*Alignment with state strategies*

This strategy supports state initiatives for affordable housing and sustainable community development, and aligns with policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by decreasing long commutes.

*Risk factors*

There is a potential risk of an imbalance of housing types developed, highlighting the need for regulatory action. The environmental impact of new housing developments must be managed to ensure sustainability.

**Tactics**

**1. Collaborate with and incentivize small- and medium-sized employer engagement in housing initiatives**: Work with major employers to develop affordable housing options near key employment centers and establish housing assistance programs. Small- and medium-sized businesses can make meaningful contributions to housing initiatives without shouldering the whole financial burden at once. Collaboration, innovative financing, and leveraging available resources can help make investments feasible for smaller businesses.

* Develop affordable housing options near employment centers
* Establish employer-sponsored housing assistance programs
* Provide tax incentives or credits to employers
* Collaborate with tribes for land needed for housing projects
* Contractors participate in mutual help programs
* Businesses pool resources via business consortiums or community investment funds
* Apply for low-interest loans from community development financial institutions that support community development projects

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Major employers, local governments, housing authorities, Tribes, contractors

This tactic aligns with local government housing initiatives. There is an opportunity to coordinate with tribal housing projects.

**2. Encourage employer collaboration with local governments and housing authorities**: Partner with local governments and housing authorities to facilitate employer-supported housing projects and advocate for zoning policies that prioritize workforce housing development.

* Partner with local governments and housing authorities
* Advocate for zoning policies that prioritize workforce housing
* Develop a hybrid model of social housing

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Local governments, housing authorities, employers

This tactic provides opportunities to collaborate with existing local government housing initiatives, as well as integrate with hybrid social housing models.

**3. Leverage public-private partnerships for housing development**: Establish public-private partnerships to fund and develop housing, ensuring that these initiatives are well-supported and effectively implemented.

* Form public-private partnerships for housing development
* Secure funding and land for housing projects
* Develop stable communities through collaboration

*Organizations involved and opportunities for alignment and collaboration*

Major employers, local governments, housing authorities, housing developers

**Metrics**

Performance metrics may include:

* Number of affordable housing units available
* Employee commute times
* Employee retention rates
* Changes to zoning policies that expand opportunities for residential construction
* Employee-tenant satisfaction feedback

**Potential funding sources**

Federal and state appropriations and grant programs, public-private partnerships, private-sector and philanthropic support

**Policy adjustments needed**

* Provide tax incentives or credits for large employers that invest in a range of housing (type and price)

# Vitality and Quality of Life Priorities

Ultimately, access to quality jobs that enable residents to sustain themselves and their families is one (albeit extremely important) dimension of what constitutes a thriving region. Residents’ ability to meet basic needs, secure housing, live in safe neighborhoods, and be part of a vibrant community are among a broader set of crucial inputs to prosperity (see Figure 1). Reinforcing the holistic nature of these issues, these conditions also enable residents (and their children) to attain higher levels of education, connect to better jobs, and contribute to higher levels of regional growth. Cross-cutting investments are thus critical to spurring the “flywheel” of a more inclusive Inland SoCal.

**Figure 1: Seven Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework *(Source: Community Commons*)**



Reflecting the State of California’s California Jobs First guidelines, this report focuses on increasing the number of quality jobs in the region and getting more residents on pathways into those jobs. However, complementary action and investments in other enablers of prosperity are critical; priorities raised by the region’s Sub-Regional Tables include:

**Housing**

Significant housing supply shortages in the State of California and many local jurisdictions point to the need for policy action to reduce barriers to the construction of new homes (e.g. easing permitting procedures and promoting higher-density zoning), promotion of retrofitting existing structures to include additional accessory-dwelling units, as well as potential adoption of land bank trusts to acquire and preserve units for community use.[[22]](#footnote-21) Meanwhile, where supply is available, strategies such as down payment assistance and housing voucher programs improving access to private rental markets (particularly in higher or mixed-income “opportunity areas”) have been shown to support greater economic mobility.[[23]](#footnote-22) Investments in permanent supportive housing (particularly with wrap-around services), as well as displacement prevention (e.g. providing legal assistance for eviction proceedings) have also been shown to aid those experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.[[24]](#footnote-23)

**Community Services and Amenities**

Living in a safe, well-maintained community with access to basic services (e.g. grocery stores, pharmacies) and assets (e.g. libraries, parks) is critical to quality of life. Studies have suggested a potential – though not conclusive – connection between broader economic mobility outcomes and commercial corridor revitalization strategies encompassing improved local retail options, public art and placemaking, and bolstered pedestrian infrastructure.[[25]](#footnote-24) Other strategies may include reclaiming and converting vacant and abandoned lots to productive uses (e.g. community gardens) and community-led violence prevention programs, leveraging mentoring and other structured supports to build social capital and improve safety.[[26]](#footnote-25)

**Health and Mental Wellness**

Ensuring equitable access to affordable and culturally-appropriate healthcare – including mental wellness services often not covered by insurance programs or where there is a scarcity of providers – is fundamental to building a thriving region. Interventions may include mobile health centers, expansion of telehealth offerings, and implementation of vouchers and subsidies to lower costs.[[27]](#footnote-26) Access to healthy food can also be expanded via incentives and subsidies for such foods, community and school gardens, and efforts to improve utilization of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).[[28]](#footnote-27) Sub-Regional Tables emphasized the importance of working with promotoras and other trusted messengers to connect these services to communities.

***Additional Considerations and Overarching Factors***

The success of these vitality and quality of life strategies is dependent on strong social infrastructure and an intentional focus on equity. This requires investment in the region’s nonprofit sector, with special attention to building the capacity of local community-based organizations, nonprofits, and social enterprises. Sub-Regional Tables also emphasized the importance of social equity and restorative justice training to help communities acknowledge past traumas and begin the difficult process of rebuilding trust among community members.

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# Conclusion

With its dual focus on quality job creation and economic mobility and wealth-building, this report offers a roadmap leading to a regional economy that works for everyone. The strategies outlined above make the most of Inland SoCal’s economic strengths by investing in high-potential sectors that are known to create quality jobs. They also provide solutions for longstanding barriers that prevent people from finding quality jobs, opening businesses, and engaging in other wealth-building activities.

Whether these strategies deliver on their promise hinges on continued efforts to overcome longstanding obstacles to regional collaboration. Historically, Inland SoCal has struggled with a lack of unified vision, zero-sum competition among jurisdictions, and difficulty implementing strategic plans. CJF has helped the region begin to address these issues by requiring deep collaboration, broad stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning focused on inclusive ends. These efforts will need to continue during implementation. Rebuilding trust and establishing a culture of cooperation across the region’s many different stakeholder groups will be an ongoing process. The work of Thrive Inland SoCal marks an important first step but a long path lies ahead.

Structures put in place over the course of CJF have helped position the region for this next stage of this work. As the regional collaborative moves into implementation, it will need to assign specific responsibilities to stakeholders with the capabilities and capacity to carry out the proposed strategies. Because the region’s economic development needs exceed the funding available through CJF, Thrive Inland SoCal will also play a role in identifying and securing funding from a wide range of public, private, philanthropic, and civic sources. By weaving together the necessary funding and coordinating activities across Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, Thrive Inland SoCal will help the region move toward a more inclusive and resilient regional economy.

# Appendix: CJF community engagement

## Thrive Inland SoCal outreach and engagement vision and goals

The mission, vision, and values statements for Thrive Inland SoCal were developed by the governance committee in open weekly meetings during April and May 2023, and were then shared with the Equity Council and the full collaborative for additional feedback before being added to our governance document. They read as follows:

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**Mission**: Our mission is to build an equitable and inclusive region where all residents have a say in shaping our collective economic future and addressing historical inequities.

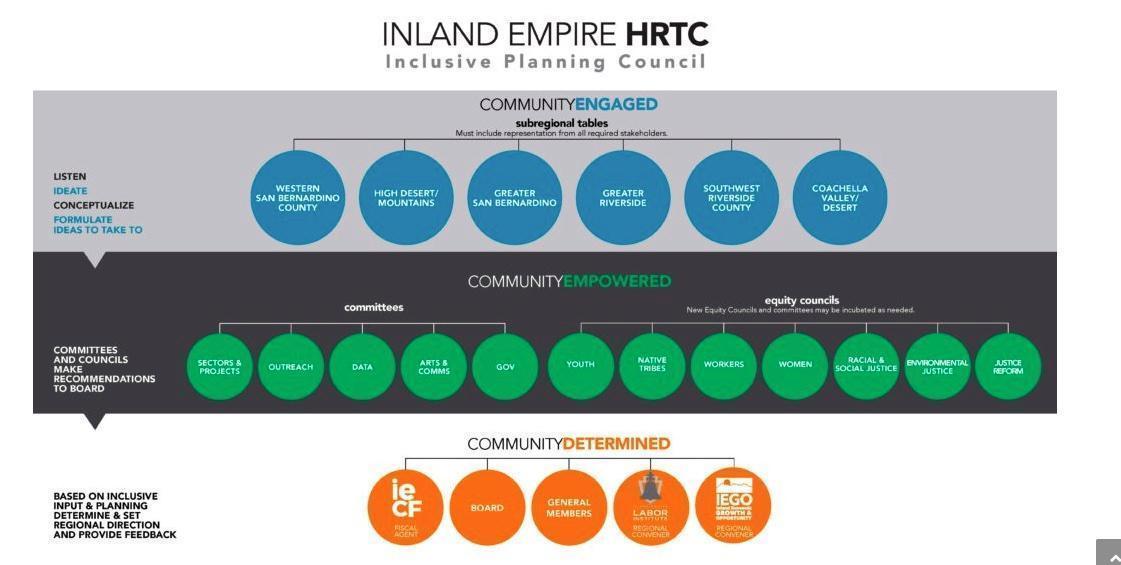
**Vision**: Our collaborative envisions an Inland Southern California where everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, has access to the resources and opportunities necessary to thrive. We are committed to closing equity gaps and dismantling systemic barriers that prevent individuals and communities from realizing their full potential. Ultimately, our goal is to create an Inland Empire where every community prospers in a sustainable and innovative economy, and every individual has the opportunity to live a healthy, quality life.

**Operating values**: Thrive Inland SoCal achieves this by prioritizing:

* Cooperative culture: We engage with each other in a spirit of mutual respect and build consensus around solutions. Everyone’s voice deserves to be heard.
* Following the High Road**:** As part of this cooperative culture, we share a commitment to equitable hiring practices and business operations. All private business partners and subcontractors must meet the minimum California Jobs First-defined standards of a high road employer, including:
* Family-sustaining wages
* Clearly defined routes to advancement into higher-wage jobs
* Benefits (such as paid sick and vacation time)
* Adequate hours and predictable schedules
* Access to training
* Occupational health and safety
* Worker representation or right to organize
* No record of wage theft, ongoing labor dispute, health/safety violations, or other violations of labor law.
* Innovation and entrepreneurship: Recognizing that innovation and entrepreneurship can be a powerful regional engine for equitable economic growth, we leverage assets and attributes unique to Inland Southern California. This includes both growth areas where local educational institutions play a leadership role (such as clean transportation, cybersecurity, and agriculture), as well as small businesses serving immigrant and historically marginalized communities. We empower innovators across multiple sectors to create synergies and leverage local talent from disadvantaged communities.
* Addressing historical/structural inequalities: We center anti-racist approaches, power sharing, and inclusive decision making in each phase of the planning process. We define inclusion broadly to incorporate communities impacted by discrimination based on many factors, including race, sex, gender, sexuality, religion, color, physical/developmental ability, immigration status, and prior history of incarceration.
* Data-driven decision making: We collect, review, and evaluate relevant quantitative and qualitative data as part of our cooperative decision-making process. Guided by our commitment to equity, we seek out and incorporate equity-focused data analysis methods and tools.
* Accountability: We are transparent in our communications and responsible to each other for the outcomes of our decision.

## Thrive Inland SoCal outreach and engagement structure

The structure for Thrive Inland SoCal laid out in the final approved proposal to the state derived from the merger of two competing applications. One, led by IEGO and the Inland Empire Community Foundation, emphasized a task-based committee structure while the other, led by the Inland Empire Labor Institute, emphasized equity and subregional committees as well as sector-based committees. The merged application combined these approaches, with seven topic- or affiliation-based equity councils, six (6) subregional tables, and a group of five task-based committees. Chairs and leads from each of these bodies, along with a limited number of at-large members, would make up a steering committee known as the Inclusive Planning Council.



The original structure was as follows:

| **TASK-BASED COMMITTEES** | Governance and Budget |
| --- | --- |
| Data and Accountability |
| Outreach and Engagement |
| Multimedia, Comms, and Culture |
| Sectors and Projects |
| **EQUITY COUNCILS** | Youth |
| Native American Tribes/Tribal Organizations |
| Workers/Labor |
| Women |
| Racial and social Justice |
| Environmental Justice |
| Justice Reform |
| **SUBREGIONAL TABLES** | Western San Bernardino County |
| Greater San Bernardino |
| High Desert and Mountains |
| Greater Riverside |
| Southwest Riverside County |
| Coachella and Morongo |

When the conveners began to build the actual collaborative, participants expressed concern about maintaining seven separate equity councils for a number of reasons, including but not limited to: 1) the fact that people would be forced to choose a single topic or affiliation when they might identify with several; 2) the time commitment for both participants and staff of maintaining seven additional weekly or biweekly meetings; and 3) that the range of perspectives on equity might be diluted through multiple, separate meetings as compared to having the opportunity to share multiple equity-related conversations in the same meeting space.

As a result, after an initial meeting in April 2023, the seven equity committees were merged into a single Equity Council that continues to meet on a biweekly basis. However, to ensure that the degree of steering committee participation by equity council members was not impacted, the number of seats (7) on the Inclusive Planning Council set aside for equity council chairs did not change. The Equity Council is tasked with advocating for specific actions related to representation, equity, and inclusion. Participation on the Council is open to anyone, and in May 2023 seven (7) members were democratically elected through a public nomination process and online ballot to serve as voting members of the Inclusive Planning Council. The voting members represent organizations serving disinvested communities such as the [Warehouse Workers Resource Center](https://warehouseworkers.org/), [Alianza Coachella Valley](https://www.alianzacv.org/), and [Just San Bernardino](https://justsb.org/), among others.

Their responsibilities include providing review and feedback on:

● outreach and engagement

● data development

● data collection

● planning document content

● project assessment,

● project development

● project qualification

● and consultant approval

In addition, the conveners found continuing confusion among collaborative participants over the distinction between the scope of work for the Outreach and Engagement Committee and the Multimedia, Comms, & Culture committee. In order to clarify the work and goals of each committee, their names were changed to the Business and Community Leaders Outreach Committee and the Community Engagement, Arts, & Culture committee in January 2024. The Business and Community Leaders Outreach committee focuses on bringing participants into Thrive who are leaders in local industry and also of local community-based organizations (CBOs). The Community Engagement, Arts & Culture (CEAC) committee has been particularly tasked with outreach to youth and disinvested communities.

These changes have produced the current structure of Thrive Inland SoCal:



The collaborative as a whole, with input from the Equity Council, has emphasized accessibility and inclusion. Simultaneous Spanish/English translation is available at all committee meetings, the Equity Council meetings, and biweekly general Thrive meetings. The website is also available in both languages and we have translated core documents such as our bylaws into Spanish and made them available through the website. An Equity Council subcommittee also developed a set of Community Guidelines to ensure that our interactions are guided by considerations of equity and access.

### Phases of outreach and engagement

Community outreach and engagement as part of the Thrive Inland SoCal collaborative was separated into three phases to ensure community members and key affinity groups were engaged throughout each step of developing the regional strategies and the regional economic development plan.

**Phase 1**: Defining a Quality Job, October 2023 - February 2024

* **Objective**: Community members were tasked with defining what constitutes a quality job in their communities.
* **Outcome**: People transitioned from using the term “good job” to using the term “quality job.” The definition of a quality job included, but was not limited to, family-sustaining and mortgage-sustaining wages, benefits, and access to career growth opportunities to live, work, and play in the region with financial stability. This definition helped establish foundational values that were incorporated in Phase 2 of the work..

**Phase 2**: Identifying Barriers to Quality Jobs and Solutions, March - April 2024

* **Objective**: Community members were tasked with identifying barriers to quality jobs, wealth building, and entrepreneurial opportunities in the region. Additionally, community members identified existing solutions within the region that assist residents in accessing and maintaining quality jobs.
* **Outcomes**: This identification exercise focused the proposed strategies to further reduce the impact of these barriers and highlighted already existing organizations and initiatives providing solutions to these barriers in the region.

**Phase 3**: Reviewing Regional Strategies, May 2024

* **Objective**: Community members provided feedback on the proposed strategies to support priority tradable industry clusters and wealth-building and economic mobility as well as to address community-identified concerns and needs.
* **Outcome**: The feedback collected by the subregional tables was incorporated into the proposed strategies as the regional economic development plan was drafted and finalized.

The community outreach and engagement process was integral to developing an inclusive and comprehensive regional economic development plan. The insights gained from community members across Inland Southern California during each phase helped shape the strategies that are intended to be responsive to the needs and desires of the community. Engaging with the community in each phase increased and improved understanding and collaborative problem solving, fostering an increased sentiment of co-ownership and commitment across the entire region.

### Outreach and Engagement Committees

Since the inception of Thrive in April and May 2023, the Business and Community Leaders Outreach Committee (BCLO, formerly Outreach and Engagement) and Community Engagement, Arts and Culture Committee (CEAC, formerly Multimedia, Comms, & Culture) have hosted biweekly virtual meetings that were open to the general public. Key tasks for both committees have included assisting Thrive Inland SoCal (Thrive) with outreach to priority populations for the gathering of qualitative data on strategies to increase high-road jobs in Inland SoCal. In May 2023, both committees conducted a democratic selection process to choose their committee chairs. The nomination and voting process was open to the entire Thrive collaborative.

The BCLO Committee selected Pamela Deans, a local entrepreneur, as chair. Pamela Deans stepped down from the position in late April 2024, near the end of her one-year term, due to the need to commit more time to her business. An application to fill the vacancy was opened to the region, leading to Monica Robles, another local entrepreneur who had long served as unofficial committee co-chair, becoming our current BCLO committee chair.

The BCLO team has organized several engagements, including the Small Business Roundtable event. The Thrive Small Business Roundtable featured entrepreneurs from the region offering their perspectives on barriers and opportunities for owners while providing space for networking and connecting to regional assets. BCLO members wanted to leverage this opportunity to amplify voices not often heard in economic development spaces including street vendors, women, and people with disabilities, and to highlight opportunities for communities of color in emerging industries. Previous engagements for BCLO have included a convening in December 2023 at Chaffey College Chino Community Center. Our target audience were business and industry community members. The panel portion of the event included representatives from small business, government, industry, labor, and chambers of commerce, among others. We had nearly 100 participants that attended. The event was in partnership with Chino Valley Chamber of Commerce and Chaffey Community College District. Our panelists represented various sectors in our region, such as the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, Chino Airport Business Development Manager, Small Business Majority, Chair of the National Association of State Workforce Board Chairs, IE Black Worker Center, Assistant City Manager of the City of Chino, among others. The qualitative data gathered on industry sectors through these events has helped us develop targets for the Regional Economic Plan (REP).

Additionally, in August of 2023, the BCLO committee held an Appreciative Inquiry session in partnership with the Mexican Consulate of San Bernardino. This event was filled with over 40 community members, community-based organizations, small business owners, and youth. Simultaneous Spanish/English translation was available, lunch was served, and gift cards were made available as participant compensation. Attendees reimagined their communities and the data gathered helped formulate our ongoing engagement strategies and informed the Phase 1 Planning Report submitted to the state on December 31, 2023.

Despite changes in leadership, the Community Engagement, Arts and Culture Committee has also been able to effectively implement initiatives for the project that offer lively opportunities for Inland SoCal residents to connect with Thrive. CEAC was originally led by Tim Dupree, a local creative entrepreneur, who was elected through the same process as Pamela Deans in May 2023. Tim Dupree stepped down from his post in March 2024 in order to take on video marketing and social media work with the collaborative. During Tim’s tenure, the CEAC held two events, both reflecting the creative arts economy that is prospering here in the region. The first event was held in December 2023 in Downtown Riverside and drew a large crowd through co-scheduling with the city’s annual Festival of Lights and its monthly Artswalk event. The committee collected survey responses from over one hundred local residents. All materials, including the survey, were available in both English and Spanish and Spanish-speaking volunteers were on site. The second event was held in February 2024 in the City of Ontario in conjunction with the Western San Bernardino County subregional table during a monthly artswalk event. Community members were able to stop by to learn about Thrive and fill out the community insights survey. We found that meeting community members where they are has been an effective method to increase engagement and participation.

Upon Tim’s departure, an open application was made available to Inland SoCal residents to fill the vacancy. Noraly Sainz was selected as chair. Noraly has been leading the committee through their next venture, a Thrive Arts Contest. The Thrive Arts Contest was launched in Spring 2024 to engage artists across the two county region in an effort to share their vision of what it means to thrive in their communities. Partners for this initiative have included the Arts Area, Palm Springs Tourism Center, Riverside Arts Community Association, Arts Connection, KVCR and the Boys and Girls Club of Inland Empire. Live, in-person announcements of the winners served as additional engagement opportunities with exhibitions of art submissions at multiple locations throughout the region. Prior to serving as chair, Noraly had worked with the committee to expand Thrive outreach in our local high schools - for example, convener staff member Esmeralda Vazquez visited San Gorgonio High School in November 2023 to discuss California Jobs First and collected nearly 100 surveys from the students. Several of the students then volunteered at the CEAC’s December 2023 event in Downtown Riverside, where they extended their participation in the Thrive regional collaborative. Additional youth engagement included sponsoring and gathering feedback at the Youth Career and Trades hosted by Uplift San Bernardino in July 2024, a nonprofit consortium in the region. Approximately 300 high school San Bernardino students were invited to hear panels related to local career pathways while connecting with various community based partners through a resource fair.

### Subregional Tables

#### Geography and Subregional Table designation

The Inland SoCal Region was divided into six subregional tables through a comprehensive process considering various factors. This division aimed to promote governance and geographic equity in Inland Southern California. The subregional divisions were determined based on economic, transit, management, and environmental factors to ensure a balanced and fair approach.

The geography of the subregions can be mapped as follows:



| **Subregional Table Backbone Organization Selection and Chair Selection** | |
| --- | --- |
| Greater San Bernardino | Fontana, Rialto, Colton, San Bernardino, Redlands, Highland,Loma Linda, and Yucaipa  **Backbone**: San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools **Chair**: Susan Gomez, Inland Empire Community Collaborative |
|
|
| High Desert | Adelanto, Victorville, Hesperia, Barstow, Apple Valley and Needles  **Backbone**: Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice  **Chair**: Maria Okpara, Apple Valley Unified School District |
| Western San Bernardino | Chino Hills, Chino, Ontario, Upland, Montclair, and Rancho Cucamonga  **Backbone**: Reach-Out  **Chair**: Karen May, SEIU 1000 |
| Greater Riverside | Eastvale, Jurupa Valley, Norco, Corona, Riverside, Perris, Moreno Valley, Beaumont, Banning, San Jacinto, and Hemet  **Backbone**: Amplify Communities  **Chair**: Aicherria Bell, entrepreneur |
| Coachella Valley/ Morongo Basin | Yucca Valley, 29 Palms, Desert Hot Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indio, Indian Wells, La Quinta, Blyth, and Coachella  **Backbone**: IBEW Local 440  **Chair**: Bryan Barrera, entrepreneur |
| Southwest Riverside County | Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake, Menifee, Wildomar, Murrieta, and Temecula  **Backbone**: Economic Development Coalition  **Chair**: Gabrielle McClanahan, youth representative |

During the summer of 2023, an application process was finalized through an iterative process incorporating several components of our Thrive structure, including the governance committee and the Equity Council. An online application form was created so that organizations in the various subregions could apply to be a backbone organization. All applications were then read and scored by a selection committee consisting of volunteers from the governance committee. To ensure transparency, inclusivity, fairness, and equity, members of the selection committee could not review applications if a conflict of interest existed. After being reviewed, the top two applicants for each subregion were interviewed by the conveners and selection committee members via Zoom. Once those interviews were completed, the selection committee voted and then all applicants were notified of determinations.

Once subregional backbone organizations were selected and onboarded in September 2023, they began working on their first contract deliverable – selecting a subregional table chair. To ensure that all subregions were given autonomy and space to create their unique respective tables, they were only provided with a few guidelines for their selection process: 1. The chair selection must be a democratic process. 2. The selection process must be open and accessible to the community. 3. The process must follow overarching Thrive guidelines as outlined in the governance document. Subregional table chairs were selected between September 2023 and January 2024. To ensure fairness and accuracy, members of the convener team assisted with counting the votes. Following the chair selection process, all chairs received an onboarding session to launch into their work. These chairs represent key local organizations such as labor unions, CBOs, and educational entities.

#### Subregional Table initial affinity group outreach process

Once selected, every subregional table (SRT) backbone organization and subregional table (SRT) chair were tasked with building their SRT. Multiple mediums of outreach and communication were launched simultaneously, in order to bring people to their respective SRT. Each of the SRT meetings occur at a mix of days and times to accommodate different working schedules, and typically have a Zoom or hybrid component. Simultaneous Spanish/English translation is typically offered and food is often provided. Participant compensation is available via gift cards.

The SRTs also are tasked with making an effort to successfully outreach to our state-designated affinity groups and all community members in their subregion. These tables are open, inclusive, and accessible to everyone. Each organization began by reaching out to their existing networks to invite people to the first meeting. They also used social media and information outlets (i.e. newsletters) to reach people. During each meeting, the SRT leads have a call to action: invite a friend. This has helped grow the engagement and participation throughout the six SRTs. Our SRT leads also use community events as an opportunity to invite community members to their next gathering; meeting people where they are at remains an effective method. Subregional table leads also have time during our general regional Thrive meeting to provide updates and invite members to their local subregional table gatherings. Each SRT meeting date/time and location is also noted on the calendar on the Thrive Inland SoCal website.

#### Contractual obligations

Central to the planning process were six backbone organizations, each of which received a $100,000 grant to serve as subregion conveners. To ensure geographic equity, each table had to include participation from all 12 affinity groups or make efforts to include them. Additionally, each subregion had to hold open meetings to incorporate individuals who typically did not participate in such planning processes.

All subregional table backbone organizations must:

1. Be open and accessible to all community members
2. Hold at least one subregional table meeting per month
3. Attend monthly Community of Practice meeting
4. Attend general regional Thrive meeting to provide updates
5. Submit monthly narrative report with expenditures

#### Meeting structure and frequency

The Subregional Tables (SRTs) and the two (2) outreach committees held a total of 95 events between October 2023 - August 2024 throughout Riverside and San Bernardino counties. The table below shows meetings held during this timeframe.

|  | **Business & Community Leaders Outreach** | **Coachella Valley/ Morongo Basin** | **Community Engagement, Arts & Culture** | **Greater Riverside** | **Greater San Bernardino** | **High Desert** | **Southwest Riverside** | **Western San Bernardino** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Aug | Appreciative Inquiry Session - 8/22/2023 |  | Committee Meeting - 8/31/24 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sept |  | Community of Practice- Subregional Backbones - 9/28/24 | Committee Meeting - 9/7/24  9/14/24 | Community of Practice- Subregional Backbones - 9/28/24 | Community of Practice- Subregional Backbones - 9/28/24 | Community of Practice- Subregional Backbones - 9/28/24 | Community of Practice- Subregional Backbones - 9/28/24 | Community of Practice- Subregional Backbones - 9/28/24 |
| Oct |  |  | Committee Meeting - 10/5/24  10/12/24  10/19/24  10/26/24 | SRT Meeting- 10/18/24 | SRT Meeting - 10/242023 | SRT Meeting  10/26/2023 |  | SRT Meeting - 10/5/2023 |
| Nov |  |  | Committee Meeting - 11/2/24 | SRT Meeting- 11/2/24 | SRT Meeting - 11/1/2023 |  |  | SRT Meeting - 11/2/2023 |
| Dec | Business Leaders Event - 12/13/2023 | SRT Meeting 12/9/2023 | Thrive Unplugged Events - 12/2/2023 and 12/9/2023 |  |  |  | SRT Meeting - 12/27/24 | SRT Meeting - 12/7/2023 |
| Jan | Committee Meeting - 1/12/2024 | SRT Meeting 1/9/2024 | Committee Meeting - 1/11/2024 |  | SRT Meeting - 1/16/2024 | SRT Meeting  10/26/2023 | SRT Meeting - 1/31/24 |  |
| Feb |  |  |  | 44th Annual Black History Expo & Parade - 2/10/2024 | SRT Meeting - 2/20/2024 |  | SRT Meeting - 2/28/24 | SRT Meeting - 2/1/2024  Art Walk  Outreach Event - 2/17/2024 |
| Mar | Committee Meeting - 3/22/2024 | SRT Meeting - 3/29/2024 | Committee Meeting - 3/7/2024 and 3/21/2024 | Starting Over Inc Event - 3/7/2024  Listening Session - Reentry Conferenc-e - 3/28/2024 | SRT Meeting - and Post- Secondary Student Panel: Voices on the Region’s Economy 3/19/2024 |  | SRT Meeting - 3/19/2024 | SRT Meeting - 3/7/2024 |
| Apr | Committee Meeting - 4/8/2024 and 4/22/2024 | SRT Meeting - 4/15/2024 | Committee Meeting - 4/4/2024 and 4/18/2024 | Listening Session - Staff at California Indian Manpower Consortium - 4/5/2024  SRT Meeting - 4/10/2024  Boys & Girls Club Listening Session - 4/16/2024 | Barriers & Solutions Workshops  4/2/2024 and 4/3/2024  SRT Meeting - 4/25/2024 | SRT Meeting - 4/2/2024 | SRT Meeting - 4/16/24 | SRT Meeting - 4/4/2024  SRT Meeting - 4/30/2024 |
| May | Committee Meeting - 5/3/2024, 5/17/2024,and 5/31/2024 | SRT Meeting - 5/8/2024 | Committee Meeting - 5/2/2024, 5/16/2024, and 5/30/2024 | Strategy Reviewer Meeting - 5/15/2024  SRT Meeting- 5/30/24 | Strategy Reviewer Meeting - 5/13/2024  SRT Meeting and Community Insights Panel: Amplifying the Voices of Our Non-Profit Business Leaders 5/28/2024 | Strategy Reviewer Meeting - 5/30/2024 | Strategy Reviewer Meeting - 5/21/2024 | Strategy Reviewer Meeting - 5/24/2024 |
| Jun | Committee Meeting - 6/14/2024 and 6/28/2024  Small Business Roundtable - 6/20/2024 | SRT Meeting - 6/6/2024  Strategy Reviewer Meeting - 6/26/2024 | Committee Meeting - 6/13/2024 and 6/27/2024  Art Contest - Launched 6/2024 | SRT Meeting - 6/20/2024 | SRT Meeting  6/25/2024 | SRT Meeting - 6/6/2024  Strategy Reviewer Meeting - 6/13/2024 | SRT Meeting - 6/18/2024 | SRT Meeting - 6/6/2024 |

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#### Activities at monthly Subregional Table meetings and key takeaways

Meetings were held in-person, virtually, and in hybrid formats and included: open discussions, breakout rooms, individual interviews, group share-outs, a youth panel, a nonprofit panel, and presentations and talks. The topics discussed included: strategies for economic mobility and wealth building, prioritizing quality jobs, the language of equity, expanding access to childcare, transportation, and housing as well as the importance of collaboration with relevant organizations with an emphasis on barriers and solutions to improving quality of life within the region. In-meeting conversations were made accessible through online plug-ins and virtual translation as well as on-site translation services.

Across each of the 6 SRTs, community members discussed questions, such as:

* How do we reach out to the community to engage a variety of affinity groups, or targeted sub-groups historically excluded from the planning process?
* How can we incentivize quality healthcare jobs and upward mobility in our region?
* What are the biggest barriers that residents face?
* Which barriers are being or not being addressed effectively?
* Which barriers are most challenging for historically disinvested communities in your subregion?
* What efforts already exist in the region to address the barriers identified?
* Which efforts should be expanded?
* What's stopping people from getting quality jobs and living well in our area?
* What are some barriers to getting and keeping a quality job, and what barriers to advancing might come up in the next 5 years in that job?
* What are some barriers to starting and maintaining a business, and what type of support might you need in the next 5 years to grow that business?
* What kinds of cities and opportunities for play on our days off do we want to see in the region if we are to keep our trained workers in the region?

The SRTs also explored the strategies presented in this Regional Plan when they were initially drafted. The convener team asked SRTs to create reviewer groups with regular attendees that have been participating in the Thrive Inland SoCal collaborative. These reviewer groups provided targeted feedback on the tradable sectors strategies and the wealth-building and economic mobility strategies. For the tradable sectors strategies, reviewer groups explored a variety of questions, for example:

* Advanced Manufacturing
  + What advanced manufacturing training programs and supports exist in the region? How effective are they? Do they meet firm needs? What else is needed?
* Business Services
  + To what extent is the region advancing innovation in cybersecurity (for example, by developing new methods and technologies) as opposed to meeting customer needs for standard cybersecurity services?
* Cleantech
  + What are the best ways to encourage cleantech adoption, especially for smaller businesses that may not have much background knowledge or resources?
* Sustainable supply chains
  + How would rapid decarbonization of this cluster affect environmental outcomes for residents of the region’s most disinvested communities?

For the wealth-building and economic mobility strategies, reviewers were asked to consider the extent to which similar past efforts were successful and how they could be improved, and, for those efforts that were successful, how scalable or broadly applicable the approaches were. Reviewers commented on the extent to which the strategies focused on expanding residents’ access to quality jobs and encouraging entrepreneurship and small business success while addressing day-to-day barriers in the region.

Valuable input and feedback was collected through the SRT monthly meetings and reviewer group discussions. Some of the key topics that emerged from these activities and discussions included: barriers to accessing public transportation, affordable childcare and housing, accessible transportation, building social capital, and jobs with career growth and training opportunities. SRTs and their attendees also discussed solutions to these barriers including resources needed in the region and expansion of already existing solutions. Brookings and UCR used this feedback to inform strategy development.

#### Activities organized by SRTs in addition to monthly SRT meetings

The table below highlights additional outreach events and activities organized by the SRTs and convener team.

| **Date** | **Event Name** | **SRT or Committee** | **Event Type** | **Agenda** | **Target Audience** | **Location** | **Number of Attendees** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 8/22/2023 | Appreciative Inquiry Session | Business and Community Leaders Committee | In-person  panel and breakouts event | Asset-based approach  Inquiry:  - What is a quality job? | Business and Community Leaders and Spanish speakers | San Bernardino | 40+ |
| 12/2/2023  12/9/2023 | Thrive Unplugged | Community Engagement, Arts & Culture Committee | 2 in-person arts and culture outreach events | Inquiry:  - What is a quality job?  - Health  - Arts and culture as placekeeper | General and disinvested community and Spanish speakers | Riverside | 500+ |
| 12/13/2023 | Thrive Inland SoCal Workforce Event | Business and Community Leaders Committee | In-person panel and breakouts event | Inquiry:  - What is a quality job?  - Regional resources | Small Businesses, Workforce Development, and Community Leaders | Chino | 40+ |
| 2/17/2024 | We Are All Community Developers | Western SB County | In-person arts and culture outreach event | Inquiry:  - Community Insight Survey  - Arts and culture as placekeeper | General and disinvested community and Spanish speakers | Ontario | 75+ |
| 7/21/2024 | Thrive Art Contest | Community Engagement, Arts & Culture Committee | Online | Inquiry: What does it mean to thrive in our region? | General community and Spanish speakers | Online | 40+ |
| 6/20/2024 | Small Business Roundtable | Business and Community Leaders Committee | In-person panel and breakouts event | Inquiry:  - Barriers and solutions for small businesses  - Resource fair | Small businesses and entrepreneurs and Spanish speakers | San Bernardino | 60+ |
| 6/19/2024 | Thrive Juneteenth Mixer | Convener | In-person panel | Inquiry:  - Barriers and solutions for African American residents | African American residents, providers, organizations | Moreno Valley | 60+ |

#### Activities outside of monthly SRT meetings

Additional engagement sessions were conducted with partners representing key populations that elicited feedback on barriers and solutions to accessing quality employment in the region. Typically a partner would recruit a group of participants that would agree to answer key questions in an informal group discussion either in-person or over Zoom. Sessions lasted approximately 30 - 40 minutes and feedback was gathered through online collaboration tools or through facilitator and participant notes. Some of the partners that co-hosted these sessions included:

* Back to the Future Youth Conference (San Bernardino high school students)
* Reentry Conference: Barriers and Solutions Workshop
* African American Family Wellness Advisory Group Presentation on Thrive/Barriers and Solutions
* Barriers and Solutions Sessions w/Greater San Bernardino SRT
* Thrive Presentation at Oak Tree Learning Center
* Barriers and Solutions session with the Child Care Resource Network
* Youth Career and Trades Fair, Uplift San Bernardino
* Thrive Juneteenth Mixer event in partnership with the African American Family Wellness Advisory Group
* Union Local SEIU 2015 focus group with members on Thrive/Barriers and Solutions (2 sessions)
* Union Local United Auto Workers focus group with members on Thrive/Barriers and Solutions
* Union Local ATU 1704 focus group with members on Thrive/Barriers and Solutions (2 sessions)
* Southwest Carpenters union focus group with members on Thrive/Barriers and Solutions

Inland SoCal is home to the largest Labor Council in the state which is the umbrella organization for approximately 93 local unions. Because unions are key to the discussion of high quality jobs and employment, we have engaged locals to further integrate the voices of workers in the region into strategy development. With these goals in mind we were able to conduct additional union focus groups with SEIU, UAW, ATU and the Southwest Carpenters to gather feedback.

## Outreach and community engagement process

The convener team and CSE provided support to the outreach committees and the SRTs to plan and coordinate events, provide guidance, and to gather community insights. The image below provides an overview of the elements of this process. Additionally included is a retrospective summary of the successes and challenges that occurred.



One of CSE's key roles within the Thrive Inland SoCal project was supporting the six subregional tables (SRTs) as well as the Community Engagement, Arts & Culture Committee and the Business and Community Leaders Outreach Committee. This critical support ensured effective communication, timely information sharing, and steady progress toward achieving the project's objectives.

Breakdown of CSE's Outreach and Engagement Responsibilities:

1. Monthly SRT Meeting Support

* CSE collaborated with SRT leads, at the SRT leads’ discretion, to define meeting agendas, identify key discussion points, plan and support in-meeting activities, and prepare any necessary materials (e.g., presentations, reports) to facilitate productive meetings.
* CSE ensured comprehensive documentation of all discussions, decisions, and action items discussed during the meetings. This included capturing key points from both in-person and virtual attendees.
* CSE met with SRT leads and discussed the previous SRT meeting. Any lessons learned were incorporated into the next SRT meeting.

2. Monthly and Weekly Check-In’s

* CSE proactively reached out to each SRT weekly to confirm receipt of important project information and updates, and met at least once a month to discuss meeting support and facilitation needs. This two-way communication helped identify any gaps and address them promptly.
* CSE served as a resource for SRT members. By addressing their questions and concerns, CSE fostered an environment of open communication and knowledge sharing, which was crucial for project success.

## Next steps

Having built the Thrive Inland SoCal structure and completed the Phase 1 Planning Report in 2023, the focus in 2024 has been on using that structure to engage the region in the Phase 2 strategy development process through tailored outreach led by the committees and subregional tables and a range of mechanism to collect feedback and use it to inform the decision-making processes. As noted above, the collaborative has engaged small business, CBOs, and industry through events and outreach led by the Business and Community Leaders Outreach (BCLO) committee, and has engaged youth, grassroots and arts communities through arts events and school outreach led by the Community Engagement, Arts & Culture (CEAC) committee.

Additional engagement and outreach has been solicited in partnership with community events and through targeted “barriers and solutions” sessions with labor unions, reentry populations, and other valued community members. The subregional tables have participated in this process by sharing and facilitating use of our community insights survey, hosting informative panels and speakers, and convening a subcommittee to review multiple iterations of the core economic development and mobility strategies. Finally, our CSE partners developed both short-term (the survey) and long-term (the engagement map) tools to gather information and feedback and track engagement.

Following the close of Phase 2 in September 2024, Thrive will enter the Catalyst/Implementation phase of California Jobs First from October 2024 through September 2026. During this period, we must maintain some of the already-developed mechanisms and also develop new ones to foster engagement with inclusive economic development and gather feedback on specific projects and overall strategies.

A key ongoing engagement mechanism will be the SRTs. Although they will be moderately reconfigured to operate more efficiently and in line with current economic affinities and transportation opportunities, they will continue to lead the process of sharing information out and gathering ideas and responses back in. The backbone organizations will hold two public forums each year as well as eight meetings with subregional steering committees, new entities made up of members of affinity groups and the Inclusive Planning Council based in that region. The SRTs will do the core work of sharing information about Catalyst and Implementation funding and updates on Catalyst-funded projects, as well as continue to foster connections and partnership-building that will empower the region to successfully pursue additional funding opportunities and provide alignment across regional strategies.

In addition, the Thrive engagement map will continue to be updated and available as a data source and partnership resource, and a range of data tools and other resources will be available to regional organizations on the Thrive and IEGO websites. With CSE, the conveners have carefully archived findings and materials from throughout the engagement process that will be made available (where personal identifiable information is not involved) to regional stakeholders. The Equity Council will also continue to meet and provide feedback on our efforts going forward.

As part of these efforts, we have put in place a set of transparent and accessible decision-making processes. For example, on the Catalyst fund, all applications will be scored by committees of volunteers drawn from our collaborative who sign conflict of interest statements to ensure they are not scoring any applications they have a personal connection to. The committee volunteers were chosen through an online form available and publicized to the entire collaborative. Similarly, the members of the Inclusive Planning Council that is responsible for voting on projects and making other key decisions have either been democratically elected through a process open to the entire collaborative, or are at-large members chosen through an application process open to the entire collaborative. Typically, by the time information or an issue is brought to the Inclusive Planning Council it has already been vetted by the governance and sometimes other (data, projects & sectors) committees as well as the equity council and sometimes one or more SRTs as well. In this way, we are able to (and will continue to) maintain broad-based engagement and feedback collection with regards to the strategy development process and opportunities to sustain and expand the work of Thrive beyond the term of California Jobs First.

## Stakeholder and affinity group participation

### Stakeholder demographics

See “Thrive Engagement Map” section below.

### CBOs receiving CJF funding and services provided

See “Overview of Subregional Tables” section above.

### Thrive Engagement Map

The Thrive Engagement Map is a community resource developed by Center for Sustainable Energy (CSE) to assist community members in identifying and locating organizations and services that can support potential partnerships, funding opportunities, and workforce development initiatives. This map aims to foster collaboration and connection within the community, enhancing access to valuable resources and support networks in the Inland Southern California region.

**Key features**

* **Interactive map**: Users can hover over the map to view additional details such as: definitions, organization lists, affinity group identifications, and accessibility tools.
* **Keys and definitions**: The map has a key to easily identify areas and markers, and definitions are available where necessary.
* **Available filters**: Users can use a variety of filters to narrow down results as well as the map view.

**Community inclusion**

* **Ability to opt-In**: Community members that participate in the Thrive Inland SoCal collaborative have the ability to opt-in to be included on the map.
* **Continuous participation**: Any new community members that participate in the Thrive Inland SoCal collaborative will be able to opt-in to be included on the map.

**Benefits of the Thrive Engagement Map**

* **Enhanced visibility**: Organizations and individuals who opt-in gain increased visibility within the community making it easier to form partnerships and access resources.
* **Resource accessibility**: The map provides a centralized location for finding information on workforce development services and potential partnerships or funding opportunities.
* **Community connectivity**: By highlighting various community centers and organizations, the map promotes a more connected and collaborative community.

The Thrive Engagement Map is a living resource available to community members for the foreseeable future. The convener team plans to update the map on a regular basis through September 2026 to include new Thrive Inland SoCal participants and stakeholders in the region.

## Community Insights Survey

### Survey purpose and administration

The Thrive Inland SoCal Community Insights survey was created to gather community responses to key questions that sub-regional tables (SRTs) and researchers wanted to ask the broader communities of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Its purpose was to ensure that members of the community who may have been unable to join the meetings were still able to provide input and participate in the inclusive economic development process. It was intended to serve as a feedback form; it was not designed to be a survey that would generate generalizable results.

The survey was open and available from February 13 to April 15, 2024. The survey was distributed through Thrive Inland SoCal SRTs and committees at meetings, events, and via email. The survey was also made available in Spanish. Respondents typically took the survey on a mobile phone or computer.

A total of 711 responses were collected, but it is important to note that the survey results are based on an opportunistic sample; it was not administered in a way to ensure representativeness by subregion, age, affiliation, or any other group. 289 surveys were excluded from this analysis as they were found to be duplicate (more than one response submitted by the same individual), laconic (little to no effort was taken to answer, such as listing “NA” for all questions), or fraudulent (completed by the same individual and submitted with identical or AI-generated responses).

The remaining 422 surveys were spread across the six sub-regional tables and two committees with the majority of responses concentrated in the four metropolitan SRTs of San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The rural SRTs of High Desert and Coachella Valley & Morongo Basin had the lowest survey participation rates, making up only 18 and 12 of the 422 responses, respectively.

The survey consisted of four main sections and, given the nature of the survey response results and the intention to use survey results to inform the economic development plan, CSE analysts focused analysis of the 422 survey responses primarily on the job availability, job training, and workforce advancement/preparedness survey questions.

| **Survey structure** | |
| --- | --- |
| Demographic and firmographic information | Mostly multiple-choice response options to inquire about:  • Where people lived and worked  • How they were involved with Thrive Inland SoCal  • Contact information  • Age  • Which of 13 affinity groups they identified with,  • Whether they would like to be represented on the   Thrive Engagement Map |
| Thrive Engagement Map opt-in |
| Community insights regarding job availability, worker resources for job access, and partnerships | Open-ended questions to gather survey respondents’ perspectives on employment and economic development in the Inland SoCal region.  Partnerships section sought to gather names and information on local organizations relevant to Thrive Inland SoCal’s efforts in Inland Southern California. |
| Additional thoughts |

Responses were divided between barriers and solutions based on the tone and wording of the response. Respondents were more likely to present solutions and it is important to note that most survey responses were short and concise in their wording, such as providing one or two word responses. Where more than one theme was present, a response was coded with multiple themes.

### Survey findings by SRT and outreach committees

The following themes and definitions are a result of a meta analysis conducted on 150 survey responses.

| **Theme** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| Building Cultural and Social Capital | This theme includes responses related to knowledge of existing services and programs, information silos and language barriers, competition and scarcity mindsets, and lack of involvement with disadvantaged communities and minority groups |
| Career Pathways | This theme includes responses related to a lack of job opportunities in the region, especially entry level jobs without higher education requirements, career support such as resume building and career planning, and quality jobs with livable wages |
| Childcare Access | This theme includes responses related to the high costs of childcare and the opportunity costs of utilizing childcare, distance to childcare facilities, and lack of knowledge on good childcare programs |
| Education and Training Access | This theme includes responses related to barriers to higher education due to tuition costs, location and commute times, and lack of knowledge about existing resources for tuition assistance and education planning |
| Housing | This theme includes responses related to affordable housing, rent control policies, and services for homelessness.  Employer supported housing was a theme the strategy authors wanted feedback on, but most survey respondents discussed affordable housing in general, not employer supported housing specifically. |
| Entrepreneurship | This theme includes responses related to financial barriers including access to capital, high insurance costs, and access to investors |
| Technology Access | This theme includes responses related to lack of internet access or poor connectivity and lack of technology devices such as cell phones to access public transportation and computers to access online job interviews and applications |
| Transportation Access | This theme included responses related to insufficient public transportation, commute times, the inability to rely on highways due to weather events and construction, gas prices, and insufficient infrastructure for electric vehicles |

Theme breakdowns by subregional table and committees reflect the percentage of responses indicating one or more of the themes that emerged from the analysis of barriers and solutions. Significance tests were not conducted for these results.

| **Notable barriers** | |
| --- | --- |
| Building Cultural and Social Capital | All but 2 SRTs, High Desert and Coachella Valley/Morongo Basin, indicated some level of barrier related to building cultural and social capital. |
| Career Pathways | Every SRT indicated that Career Pathways was a barrier.  35% of Unaffiliated respondents, 30% of respondents in Greater Riverside and Western San Bernardino respectively, were in the top 3 of SRTs listing Career Pathways as a barrier.  Within their respective SRTs, Greater San Bernardino, Southwest Riverside and High Desert had the highest percentage of respondents who indicated Career Pathways was a barrier. |
| Childcare Access | Business and Committee Leaders Committee had the highest percentage of respondents indicating that Childcare Access was a barrier. |
| Education and Training Access | Business and Community Leaders Committee had the highest percentage of respondents among all SRTs (26%) who indicated an Education and Training access barrier.  Community, Arts & Culture Committee had the second highest percentage at 25% or respondents  Within a single SRT, 21% of respondents within Western San Bernardino cited Education and Training access as a barrier.  Within their respective SRTs, Greater San Bernardino, Southwest Riverside and High Desert had the highest percentage of respondents who indicated Education and Training was a barrier. |
| Housing | Greater Riverside and Western San Bernardino were the only two SRTs in which respondents noted housing as a barrier. |
| Entrepreneurship | Greater San Bernardino and Unaffiliated respondents were the top two groups listing Entrepreneurship as a barrier. |
| Technology Access | 17% of respondents in Coachella/Morongo Basin noted technology access as a barrier.  3% in Greater Riverside noted technology access as a barrier |
| Transportation Access | Western San Bernardino and Coachella Valley/Morongo Basin respondents were the top two groups listing Transportation Access as a barrier. |

| **Notable solutions** | |
| --- | --- |
| Building Cultural and Social Capital | Community, Arts & Culture Committee had 29% of responses and Business and Community Leaders Committee had 26% of responses indicating Building Cultural and Social Capital as a solution, the two highest among the SRTs. |
| Career Pathways | Within their respective SRTs, Greater San Bernardino and Greater Riverside had the highest percentage of proposed solutions related to Career Pathways.  The highest percentage of proposed solutions for Southwest Riverside were related to Career Pathways. |
| Childcare Access | With the exception of High Desert, Southwest Riverside and Unaffiliated respondents, all SRTs proposed Childcare Access as a solution. |
| Education and Training Access | 56% of the High Desert SRT respondents proposed or indicated a need for solutions to Education and Training Access – the highest among all SRTs.  Within their respective SRTs, Southwest Riverside, Greater San Bernardino, Western San Bernardino, Greater Riverside as well as respondents who were Unaffiliated had the highest percentage of proposed solutions related to Education and Training Access. |
| Housing | With the exception of the Business and Community Leaders Committee, Coachella Valley/Morongo Basin, and Unaffiliated respondents, all SRTs proposed affordable housing programs as a solution. |
| Entrepreneurship | Business and Community Leaders Committee and Community, Arts & Culture Committee had the two highest percentages of solution-oriented responses for Entrepreneurship. |
| Technology Access | Community, Arts & Culture and High Desert had the highest percentage of respondents offering solution-oriented responses for Technology Access. |
| Transportation Access | Coachella Valley/Morongo Basin had the highest percentage of proposed transportation access solutions. |

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2. Due to lags in data releases by the U.S. Census and other sources, 2022 represents the most recent data available. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Brookings and Cities GPS analysis of Lightcast estimates. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. Brookings and Cities GPS analysis of Lightcast estimates and American Community Survey 1-year public-use microdata sample. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Brookings and Cities GPS analysis of University of Washington Sufficiency Standard and American Community Survey 1-year public-use microdata sample, 2019-2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Industry clusters analysis applied an initial filter for prioritization: (1) The sector can expand access to quality jobs because it either: concentrates quality jobs for a) all workers, or b) mid-skilled workers with some college, a certificate, or an associate’s degree; (2) The sector is tradable and has a high growth multiplier, meaning each job created spurs several others in the economy; (3) The sector is either a clear specialization in the region or emerging as growing faster locally than nationwide; (4) The sector can continue to be competitive given environmental standards and advances California Jobs First’s goals of promoting a transition to a low-carbon economy (oil and gas-based industries are excluded; impacts of other industries can be remediated to varying degrees). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. Brookings / Cities GPS analysis of Lightcast estimates and American Community Survey 1-year public-use microdata sample. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
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10. National Renewable Energy Lab, “Mentor Protégé Program,” available at https://www.nrel.gov/docs/gen/fy22/83161.pdf (accessed July 6, 2024). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
11. Brookings/Cities GPS analysis of Lightcast estimates. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
12. Brookings/Cities GPS analysis of Lightcast estimates. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
13. Brookings/Cities GPS analysis of Lightcast estimates and American Community Survey 1-year public-use microdata sample. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
14. Brookings/Cities GPS analysis of Lightcast estimates and other indicators. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
15. This analysis uses the term “Hispanic” to reflect the terminology used by U.S. Census in its data collection and reporting. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
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26. “Vacant properties” and “Community-led violence prevention,” Results for America Economic Mobility Catalog,

    <https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/vacant-properties> and https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/community-led-violence-prevention [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
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