



Uplift

Central Coast

Regional Plan Part II Executive Summary

California Jobs First

SEPTEMBER 2024

Our Work

The Central Coast of California boasts beautiful open spaces, growing industries, incredible talent, growing diversity, and immense potential. The region is home to world-class education and research institutions, a wide array of innovation, and a rich blend of cultures and communities. Despite these strengths, the Central Coast faces challenges in areas such as economic growth, quality job creation, educational attainment, and access and affordability to housing, child care, healthcare, and transportation. These disparities are ingrained in our regional economy, and our future success depends on our ability to grow equitably, inclusively, and sustainably.

Our communities are central to the co-creation of the region's future, informing the unaddressed challenges, opportunities, and aspirations while building consensus around strategies for equitable growth and investment to advance economic prosperity for underserved and historically underrepresented communities. Economic development should not only generate wealth but also promote well-being, social cohesion, and environmental resilience.



Who Is Uplift Central Coast?

Residents across the region have united to form Uplift Central Coast, a coalition leading meaningful conversations with community members and working together to define what sustainable, equitable economic opportunity means for the region.

Uplift has developed this plan to inspire actions to create quality job opportunities, improve workforce skills, and address specific regional economic challenges to help our communities not only survive, but thrive.

Uplift is convened by three economic development agencies: REACH, Economic Development Collaborative (EDC), and Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP). Regions are represented by community-driven committees composed of residents from different backgrounds.



What Is California Jobs First?

California Jobs First is a state-level program designed to create economic and job creation strategies that are informed by community experiences and geared to build an economy that meets the unique needs, strengths, and aspirations of each community. California Jobs First draws funding into each region to seed and implement the strategies the region's residents have prioritized.

Community Engagement & Strategy Development Process

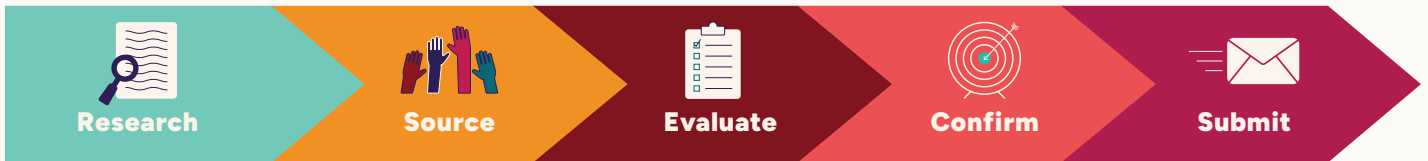
May through December 2023, Uplift conducted extensive research and worked directly with community members and community based organizations (CBOs) to better understand the Central Coast economy, including its strengths, threats, opportunities, and weaknesses. Uplift published these findings in the Regional Plan Part I.

January through July 2024, Uplift hosted industry specific Roundtables and over 60 interviews with employers and industry leaders. Uplift received input from the community and industry leaders on strategy, yielding 100+ unique ideas to consider. Strategies emerged during Listening Sessions, Roundtables, interviews, the Committee Strategy Lab, and public Community Meetings.

Throughout 2023 and 2024 Uplift conducted over 95 Listening Sessions in partnership with local CBOs, 13 industry and issue focused Roundtables, 72 employer and industry interviews, and multiple public community update meetings across the region with over 4,000 community members.

Directly informed and shaped by this process and engagement, Uplift has put together this set of strategies as a set of recommendations to address the barriers and opportunities of the Central Coast.

Uplift's Strategy Development Stages



Strategies

Introduction

Uplift's strategies are designed to increase the availability of quality jobs and enhance the quality of life for current and future residents of California's Central Coast. Uplift analysis found that only 25.5 percent of the region's jobs currently meet criteria for a quality job; while an additional 15.2 percent offer a pathway to a quality job within a decade.

WHAT'S A QUALITY JOB?

- Pays a living wage that allows families to live and save
- Offers employer-sponsored health insurance
- Provides worker stability

Target Sector Strategies

Uplift identified a combination of opportunity industries uniquely positioned in the region to deliver quality job creation accessible to those with less than a four-year degree. These sectors support specializations ranging from aerospace and advanced air mobility innovations to AgTech equipment and biotechnology. Those sectors and their tailored strategies are:

Precision Manufacturing and Advanced Business Services

1. Accelerate Sub-Baccalaureate Workforce Pipeline Development
2. Bolster the Region's Long-Term Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) Pipeline
3. Enhance the Capacity of the Region's Talent Ecosystem to Serve Priority Sectors
4. Unlock the Full Potential of the Region's Innovation Assets
5. Increase Supports for High-Growth Entrepreneurship
6. Enhance Core and Sector-Relevant Infrastructure
7. Ensure the Sustainability of Small and Middle Market Firms in Target Sectors

Additional sectors focus on enhancing the quality of existing jobs in some of the region's largest industries and improving pathways to better jobs that are currently available.

Healthcare

1. Expand Pathways into Quality Jobs for Lower Paid Healthcare Positions
2. Bolster Workforce Pipeline Between Educational Institutions and Healthcare Institutions
3. Expand Training and Awareness on Healthcare Career Paths

Agriculture

1. Create an AgTech and Regenerative Agriculture Ready Workforce
2. Strengthen AgTech Commercialization, Innovation, and Research Initiatives

Hospitality and Tourism

Efforts in this sector include creating career pathways, upskilling the current workforce, and apprenticeship programs which are highlighted in the Training, Upskilling, and Learning and Development section of Regional Plan Part II.





Economic Mobility Strategies

While some strategies are tailored for specific sectors, the strategies in this section are not specific to any one industry. Instead, they have applications across multiple sectors. Strategies within this category include:

Main Street and BIPOC Small Business Development

1. Expand Culturally Responsive Community-Focused Small Business Technical Assistance
2. Bolster Small Business Financial Capacity and Access to Capital
3. Promote Collaborative Models of Local, Broad-Based Ownership
4. Support Community Kitchens and Regional Food Hubs

Training, Upskilling, and Learning and Development

1. Expand on the Job Training and Upskilling
2. Enhance Training and Apprenticeship Programs
3. Promote Culturally and Linguistically Inclusive Upskilling Programs
4. Scale Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Programs

Child Care

1. Expand Child Care Workforce
2. Enhance Child Care Infrastructure
3. Encourage Employer Supported Child Care
4. Improve Usability of Centralized Resources to Navigate the Child Care System



Climate Resilience through Economic and Workforce Strategies

Meeting the Moment of California's Climate Leadership

The Central Coast is navigating the transition from fossil fuels to renewable resources, which may impact local employment and economic dynamics. As the region prepares for a more sustainable future, prioritizing quality jobs that advance climate resilience and nature preservation will be crucial in ensuring long-term environmental and economic stability. Uplift aims to help the region be prepared for these shifts through the following strategies:

1. Advance the State's Clean Energy Goals and Promote Job Creation
2. Develop a Clean Energy Workforce
3. Drive Equitable Access to the Clean Economy
4. Protect and Conserve the Natural Environment
5. Adapt to a Changing Climate

Community Development Strategies

There are several topics beyond the scope of the California Jobs First focus on creating quality jobs and improving access to them, but foundational to a thriving, resilient community and quality of life for Central Coast residents. Strategies within this category include:

Housing

1. Expand Employer Sponsored Housing
2. Promote Creative Housing Models

TK-12 and Higher Education

1. Strengthen Curriculum Aligned with the Regional and Future Economy
2. Prepare Disinvested Communities for Higher Education

Transportation

1. Increase Public Transportation Infrastructure
2. Support Equitable Reduced or Free Fares for Public Transit

Immigration

1. Establish an Immigrant Welcome Center
2. Expand Financial Support and Education Programs for Immigrants
3. Invest in Educational and Mentorship Program for Immigrants

Arts and Culture

1. Support Funding for the Arts
2. Revitalize Art and Culture

Nonprofit

1. Expand Diversity of Nonprofit Leaders and Boards
2. Develop Grants Training
3. Increase Capacity of Nonprofits



A Path Forward

The strategies in this report provide a big-picture plan for building a strong and successful Central Coast economy. By focusing on the needs of people who have often been overlooked, Uplift is leading the way toward a future where everyone can benefit from growth. This process has been a true reflection of the vision, values, and aspirations of the Central Coast community. Uplift is committed to working together, making sure diverse voices are heard in shaping the future of the region.

As the Central Coast starts this important journey, it's setting an inspiring example for other regions in the U.S., showing that by focusing on equity and sustainability, we can create a better and brighter collective future.

Stay in Touch

We want to hear from you. Your participation, ideas and collaboration shape the future of the Central Coast. Reach out to connect with the project or get involved with convenors in your area.

REACH

Ideas + Action for a Thriving Central Coast

reachcentralcoast.org

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY & SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

EDC

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
COLLABORATIVE

edcollaborative.com

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY & VENTURA COUNTY

MB

Monterey Bay
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

mbep.biz

MONTEREY, SAN BENITO & SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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