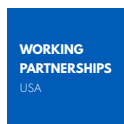


Building Resilient Futures: New Pathways for Inclusive Economic Development

South Bay / Peninsula High Road Roundtable



Acknowledgements

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Contents



Our Story	4
Artists and Cultural Workers	8
High Road to Childcare and Early Education Consortium	11
Green Infrastructure Workers	14
Manufacturing Futures	17
Caregiver Resiliency Team Training	20
Stronger Entrepreneurs Coalition	23
Worker Cooperative Hubs	27



Our Story

The South Bay / Peninsula High Road Roundtable started with just five groups: two labor councils, one business organization, and two community groups, all committed to advancing economic and racial justice in our region. We came together around the unique opportunities offered by unprecedented Federal funding for economic growth focused on equity, workers' rights, and community voice. In this pivotal moment, we sought to create a space where the region could come together to develop new, bottom-up approaches and seize the opportunity to make them real.

In June 2023, our five groups put out a call for grassroots communities and stakeholders across the South Bay and Peninsula to join us to incubate a common vision: to re-envision regional economic development planning, centered around the values of equity, high-road employment, sustainability and climate resilience, and shaped by workers and impacted community members themselves.

The response has been extraordinary. More than 400 stakeholder organizations, representing hundreds of thousands of community members, workers, and businesses small and large, have joined the Roundtable to participate in learning and co-creating new ways of thinking and doing -- in arenas spanning clean manufacturing, arts and culture, care work, and beyond.

As co-conveners, we deeply appreciate the time, thoughtfulness, and openness that each of those stakeholders and their constituencies have brought to this collaboration. Moving towards structural change isn't easy—we're consciously trying to shake

things up, and turn the conventional top-down economic development approaches on their heads, and that means that we're building these roads together as we walk them.

What Is a “High-Road” Approach?

In a nutshell, “high-road” means a model of economic growth that is based on investing in diverse workforces to create high-quality, family-sustaining jobs that serve community needs locally and globally.

The High Road model focuses on creating a sustainable and fair economy by emphasizing quality jobs, worker empowerment, racial equity, environmental sustainability, and community resilience. Achieving these goals requires a systemic approach bringing together all stakeholders as equal partners to address critical issues of equity, job quality, worker voice, industry efficiency, and sustainability.

“High Road” Approaches

High-road employers: Firms that compete based on quality of product or service provided through innovation and investment in human capital, thus generating family-sustaining jobs where workers have agency and a collective voice.

High-road economic and workforce development: A systemic approach bringing together high-road employers, unions, workers, grassroots community organizations, and public workforce systems to address critical issues of equity, job quality, worker voices, industry efficiency, and sustainability.

One of the biggest challenges our Bay Area communities face is the prevalence of low-wage jobs that don't pay enough for families to survive or thrive, especially in positions predominantly held by workers of color, immigrants, and women. Yet many of these jobs are crucial to society—the COVID-19 pandemic starkly revealed the importance of “essential workers.” We all depend on the people who work at restaurants and grocery stores, provide health care or care for our children and elderly, teach in our schools, collect our garbage and clean our streets, and all the other foundational jobs without which our city and our economies would collapse. But over the past 40 years, our regional economies have become so unbalanced that our neighbors, friends, and family members doing these jobs can barely afford to support themselves, leading to many leaving those fields or leaving the Bay Area altogether.

This persistent problem highlights the need for systemic change: to make these essential jobs sustainable for families and for the future, to value and respect the work done by people of color, immigrants, and women, and to equalize power imbalances underlying poverty and inequality.

The high-road approach is also a consciously people-centered approach. We are striving to build workforce and economic development ecosystems where we recognize and value the skills and experiences that our incredibly diverse, resourceful community members bring to our region. This “asset-based” approach is a shift away from the traditional “deficit-based” workforce development model which focuses solely on trying to “fix” people to fit them into an existing labor market, even when that existing structure simply isn't working for the people in it.

This shift from training individuals to changing the whole system and improving job structures is tough. But it's vital. This shift is about creating a community where everyone, regardless of background, has a fair shot at economic stability and prosperity. By focusing on equitable opportunities, well-paying jobs and

sustainable practices, the High Road model tackles root causes of complex issues like housing affordability, occupational segregation, and income inequality, making our region a place where everyone can thrive.

New Partnerships Sparkling New Ideas

At its launch, the South Bay / Peninsula High Road Roundtable sought to accomplish three long-term outcomes:

- 1) Incubate pilot high-road initiatives designed to improve job quality and expand the number of good quality, sustainable jobs and employers; increase access to those jobs for workers of color, immigrants, and women; and ensure a sustainable “homegrown” local workforce to meet future needs of high-road employers.
- 2) Position the South Bay and Peninsula as a leader on high-road economic initiatives in the Bay Area region and drive region-wide collaborations on high-road projects.
- 3) Leverage Federal and State funding sources to advocate for structural shifts in South Bay economies towards creating and retaining high-road jobs; expanding equitable access to those jobs; ensuring a just transition from extractive economic models towards regenerative, carbon-neutral economies; and reducing income inequality.

This initiative represents a collective effort to shift how we all think about this work: a strong desire to explore systemic change and innovative approaches through collaboration. What brought people into our meetings was the prospect of joining together in new ways to address interconnected challenges such as displacement, the growth of low-income jobs in communities of color, and the local impacts of climate change.

The deep work of these partnerships has been within the High Road Roundtable’s workgroups, which are small, member-driven spaces where stakeholders came together around issue areas to collectively understand the region’s needs, build relationships, and move towards designing solutions. The proposed initiatives developed by these workgroups represent a year or more of intensive, intentional work by organizations and institutions—some of whom have been working on economic justice and inclusion for years, and some of whom are stretching to learn to partner across silos and build together in new ways.

Seven of these workgroups have moved forward to develop collaborative concept proposals in high-priority sectors:

- Artists and Cultural Workers
- High Road to Childcare and Early Education Consortium
- Green Infrastructure Workers
- Manufacturing Futures
- Caregiver Resiliency Team Training
- Stronger Entrepreneurs Coalition
- Worker Cooperative Hubs



These seven concepts, and the stakeholders behind them, are highlighted and detailed in this report.

From Incubation to Launch

The High Road Roundtable was convened as an incubator space, with the vision of a focused, 18-month effort to design and launch new partnerships to tackle some of our region’s biggest challenges to equity and sustainability.

Our vision is for the new partnerships and ideas incubated in the workgroups to launch into their own initiatives and thrive independently. These groups will be pivotal in advocating for the high-road approach, fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration, and emphasizing its significance beyond state and federal funding. The ultimate mission is to catalyze a movement around a high-road vision for our regional economy, promoting long-term economic resilience through systemic change driven by workers and impacted community members themselves.

Now, these seven nascent partnerships are advancing towards the next step: to ask for our community’s support, investment, and engagement to make those concepts real.

Read on to learn about each concept proposal, the initial partners behind it, and how you can take part in the High Road movement.

In community,

Maria Noel Fernandez, Working Partnerships USA

Victor Vásquez, SOMOS Mayfair

Rosanne Foust, San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA)

Julie Lind, San Mateo Labor Council

Jean Cohen, South Bay Labor Council



Artists and Cultural Workers

Summary

The Bay Area's arts and culture sector is vital for economic diversity and livability. Yet artists and cultural workers here are underpaid and inconsistently employed, holding two to three jobs to survive. Lack of sustainable career opportunities has forced many arts and cultural workers, especially those of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) heritage, to leave the Bay Area.

The Silicon Valley Creative Corps (SVCC) initiative is a systems change approach that aims to address these issues by establishing wage standards, ensuring a living wage, and creating sustainable job opportunities for arts and culture workers.

Silicon Valley Creative Corps will center the economic, employment, transportation, and housing needs of marginalized BIPOC artists and cultural workers, put decision-making about these critical areas directly in their hands, track the impact of their decisions, and link their work to broader economic resources and studies.

Focusing on BIPOC arts and culture workers from disinvested communities in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, SVCC will pay these workers a livable wage, offer employment benefits, provide more consistent work by moving them from contract work to part-time or full-time employment, offer professional development and training opportunities, provide them with access to an employment network, provide career development advice, offer referrals to locally based jobs, and work together to build career ladders internally and in the broader arts ecosystem.

This initiative is being piloted by a network of BIPOC-centered arts and cultural employers in the South Bay and Peninsula. The impacts of the SVCC pilot on this network and on the communities it serves will be studied and documented, providing insight into integrating the grassroots arts and culture sector into broader economic development efforts. SVCC partner organizations will also develop their capacity to participate in economic studies and manage traditional workforce development funds, learn from one another, share their findings, and create case statements for additional investments.

This project aims to demonstrate that a worker-driven, arts-focused workforce development initiative can align with traditional economic research and strategies while fostering non-financial capital, such as worker knowledge, social connections, and well-being.

Strategy

Silicon Valley Creative Corps seeks to prioritize inclusive self-governance by BIPOC artists and BIPOC-led institutions, and to provide arts and culture workers with access to good jobs that pay a livable wage on an ongoing basis while ensuring that they have an equal say in the research, decisions, and economic policies that impact their lives.

The arts and culture sector, particularly in BIPOC communities, often depends on low-wage freelancers or gig workers, and under-resourced employer nonprofits that receive lower levels of support compared to other types of nonprofits. To ensure job quality, the SVCC will develop a worker benefits agreement that will include a living wage policy, wage standards, and sectoral minimum-hour requirements based on the cohort.

The SVCC Initiative adopts a systems change approach to creating an ecosystem of economic prosperity by bringing multiple arts and culture employers together, co-designing an intervention into their current practices, encouraging them to learn from one another, providing them with resources, empowering them to adjust based on what they learn, sharing their findings with others, and integrating the impact of their work with traditional economic and workforce development resources.



Key Partners

EPACenter

San José Taiko

Creative West

Local Color

Step It Up Dance

Movimiento de Arte y Cultura
Latino Americana (MACLA)

School of Arts and Culture
(SOAC) at Mexican Heritage
Plaza

San Mateo County Office of
Arts and Culture

Initial development will include engagement with the Greater Bay Area Arts and Cultural Advocacy Coalition, a regional coalition that includes representatives from 30 grassroots organizations, artist networks, individual artists, culture bearers, and arts advocates.

Impact

- Define and build the field of arts-centered workforce development.
- Create model pathways for other arts organizations to benefit from economic development initiatives.
- Reframe how the sector sees itself as contributors to regional economic and community development.
- Strengthen the financial sustainability of BIPOC-centered arts and cultural organizations in both counties so that they can serve as high-road employers.
- Catalyze a long-term shift towards diversification of our region's economy to include a larger share of jobs in the arts and culture sector.



High Road to Childcare and Early Education Consortium

Summary

Deep collaboration will increase the availability and affordability of childcare and early childhood education (ECE) in underserved communities, and advance job quality, climate resilience, and opportunities for workforce mobility in this essential sector, on which all other economic sectors depend.

The challenges in our childcare ecosystem are systemic and multi-faceted. Significant efforts are needed to better meet childcare/ECE needs, especially in historically underserved communities. The workers who provide these essential services—most of whom are women, immigrants, and BIPOC—are often underpaid, lacking benefits and access to training. Many parents and providers need multilingual support, while competing priorities often prevent collaboration around the urgent need to address climate resilience in this sector.

Stakeholders committed to equity, climate resiliency, and job quality have come together around an initiative that will reinforce advocacy efforts, and streamline and expand support and services for parents, license-exempt Family Friend and Neighbor (FFN), Family Child Care Home (FCCH), and center-based childcare/ECE providers.

This initiative will be accomplished through a broad, worker- and community-led, multi-county High Road to Childcare & Early Education Consortium whose members are committed to breaking down silos, partnering, and securing funds for specific initiatives that lift up equity, climate resiliency, availability of appropriate services, and job quality in the childcare/ECE sector.



Strategy

An equitable, high-road transition to a climate-resilient economy will require scaling up affordable and appropriate childcare to allow workers, especially women and BIPOC, to enter the job market, which will in turn contribute to more equitable life outcomes, environmental justice, and economic growth.

The Consortium will provide regional coordination to help consumers and providers understand and navigate existing support, and secure strategic investment to improve and expand supportive structures, programming, and families' access to subsidized childcare. The Consortium will build on ongoing efforts to develop upward career pathways, expand collective bargaining, facilitate shared services for FCCHs, and meet the diverse needs created by the Transitional Kindergarten transition. Language justice will be a transversal goal, and a majority of the decision-making structure will be childcare providers and consumers.

The Consortium's goals include 1) formalizing regional coordination, 2) conducting research and publishing information on existing workforce programming, networks, and relevant funding streams, 3) supporting efforts to advocate for more funding and subsidized care, 4) working with Resource and Referral (R&R) agencies to ensure effective mixed delivery of childcare/ECE and increase subsidized care, and 5) exploring the expansion of the scale, affordability, quality, and climate resiliency of childcare and ECE in FFN, FCCH, and center-based settings.

Key Partners

Alameda County Office of Education

Bay Area Community College Consortium, ECE/EDU Regional Joint Venture

Child Care Coordinating Council of San Mateo County

CocoKids

Contra Costa County Office of Education

First 5 Contra Costa

First 5 San Mateo County

First 5 Santa Clara County

Grail Family Services

Healthy and Active Before Five

NOVAworks

Office of Children and Families Policy, Santa Clara County

Parent Voices CA

Parent Voices Oakland

San Mateo County Family Childcare Organization

San Mateo County Office of Education

Santa Clara County Office of Education

SEIU Education and Support Fund

SEIU Local 521

The Institute for Families and Nannies

UDW/AFSCME Local 3930

Working Partnerships USA

YMCA of Silicon Valley

Impact

Impact goals for the first two to three years:

- The Consortium will become a coordination hub for thought partnerships and deep collaboration around advocacy, strategizing, fundraising, and implementation initiatives to forward its goals.
- Ten new partnerships will secure funding to improve educational frameworks and job quality in FFN and FCCH environments, including expanded access to union benefits and career advancement in multiple languages.
- Five to ten center-based, high-road employers will partner with diverse stakeholders to address workforce and resiliency-related needs.
- Resource and Referral agencies in participating counties will have joint strategies in place to ensure effective mixed delivery of childcare/ECE and increase subsidized care.



Green Infrastructure Workers

Summary

Climate change poses an existential challenge to communities across the globe. In San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, the impacts are already being felt, especially for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and immigrant communities, who are less likely to be protected from the effects of extreme heat, flooding, and wildfire smoke.

Regulators and policymakers have begun the process of adopting green building policies to meet ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets and improve our home and work environments. Building electrification – shifting buildings from natural gas to electric systems for heating and cooking – will bring significant health, comfort, and financial benefits, but those benefits will only be shared if the costs can be driven down, and the job creation can be equitable.

Furthermore, proposed electrification projects have the potential to displace workers in carbon-intensive industries, while problematic approaches in some strategies seek to cut labor costs and exert downward wage pressure on existing building and construction occupations, thus adding to the economic disparity that many workers already experience. An equitable transition away from fossil fuels is a key strategy in addressing systemic environmental racism and injustice.

The Green Infrastructure Workers initiative aims to address job disruption effects that California’s electrification plans will have on BIPOC communities. We propose to lay the groundwork for restorative and transformational action through research that assesses the current state of green building, decarbonization, and maintenance and operations. Based on that research, the community will design approaches to increase training, equity, and job quality within the existing workforce and identify gaps or needs for career pathways.

Strategy

Our initial research and development phase will increase the region’s understanding of the green buildings sector workforce, support workers, and meet regional GHG reduction targets through joint action.

Our proposed work will be driven by a broadly and deeply representative Research Action Committee (RAC) who will prioritize participation and voices of the workers and constituents in the San Mateo/Santa Clara County region who most need an equitable approach to the green building transition. The RAC will center equity by allowing space for more voices and lived experiences, and to help define which barriers, issues, and problems need solutions. We will intentionally and directly seek the viewpoints of members of the community. We view equity as being a transition to power owned and held by the communities who have long been excluded from economic viability and opportunity.

The RAC will work with the researchers to identify and develop job quality metrics for consideration by workers, employers, and contractors. These standards will be available to public and nonprofit agencies to use when engaging in employer recruitment and industry consulting practices. Industry voice will be included throughout the research process to ensure buy-in during the final publication. At the end of the project, business leaders and employers will be invited to a public presentation of the research results and given opportunities to affirm their future support of high road job quality standards.



Key Partners

Building Skills Partnership

JobTrain

Joint Venture Silicon Valley

Lighthouse Silicon Valley

Menlo Spark

NOVAworks

Peninsula Clean Energy

San Jose Clean Energy

Silicon Valley Clean Energy

Working Partnerships USA

Impact

- Improve job quality and equity by identifying high road training principles, job standards, and industry intelligence to empower all stakeholders, including workers, community organizations, civic leaders, and businesses operating in the green industry.
- Build a cross-sectoral coalition of stakeholders with common interests around electrification and workforce development opportunities.
- Empower stakeholders and funders to build high-road funding parameters, partnerships, and training programs that will put the researchers' conclusions into action.



Manufacturing Futures

Summary

Manufacturing is the largest employer industry in Santa Clara County, and one of the region's largest employers of BIPOC and immigrant workers. Two-thirds of Silicon Valley production workers are immigrants, and 83% are people of color.

Yet the majority of blue-collar production workers are paid low wages and subject to precarious and often hazardous working conditions, with little opportunity for advancement. At the same time, most Silicon Valley manufacturers are now reporting challenges in attracting and retaining a skilled production workforce.

The Federal government has launched a once-in-a-lifetime industrial policy agenda to reinvigorate and expand the U.S. manufacturing industry, including unprecedented investments in semiconductor supply chains via the CHIPS Act and in clean energy-related manufacturing via IRA, tax credits, and State funds.

Alongside these investments are renewed commitments to building a high-road, sustainable, equitable manufacturing sector, including the U.S. Department of Labor's Good Jobs Principles, the Justice40 initiative for disinvested communities, childcare access for workers, and requirements for Community Workforce Agreements.

This creates a unique opportunity to shift Silicon Valley's manufacturing sector away from low-road, precarious jobs. By bringing together unions, businesses, community advocates, and the public workforce development system, our Manufacturing Futures initiative can transform this industry.

The goal of Manufacturing Futures is to place workers, under-represented communities, job quality and equity at the heart of this new model. We intend to do this through convening a multi-sectoral partnership to shape how Federal, State, and local investments in manufacturing are deployed, and by focusing local economic and workforce development services and advocacy on manufacturers which commit to high-road jobs, environmental justice, worker voice, and equitable employment practices.

Strategy

Manufacturing Futures will design and launch a pilot to support high road manufacturing employers in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, in alignment with the regional Bay Area High Road Manufacturing Initiative supported by UC Berkeley and the Blue-Green Alliance.

Pilot development will include:

- 1) Designing supports for equitable outreach, recruitment, and/or training of new workers to meet hiring needs, and
- 2) Designing clear career paths and supports for incumbent manufacturing workers to advance to higher-level in-demand positions.

Both the new hire and incumbent worker elements of the pilot will center job quality, equity, and climate standards, to be defined by the regional High Road Manufacturing Code of Conduct.



Key Partners

Working Partnerships USA

JobTrain

SMART Local 104

Bay Area Community College Consortium

Machinists Institute

IBEW Local 1245

Silicon Valley Economic Development Alliance (SVEDA)

SEMI Foundation

Services, Immigrants Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)

Work2future

GILLIG

Pilipino Association of Workers and Students (PAWIS)

NOVAWorks

Step Forward

IAM District 93

Impact

Impact goals for the first 2 to 5 years:

- At least 10 employers will join Manufacturing Futures and commit to job quality standards.
- We'll collectively support at least 500 workers at those employers, through a combination of recruiting or training new workers to meet hiring needs, and supporting retention and career pathway advancement of incumbent workers who are already at those companies.
- 80% of new hires recruited through Manufacturing Futures will be from underrepresented communities or populations with barriers.
- At least \$1 billion in Federal investments will be awarded to manufacturers in our region with commitments to create quality jobs, and to increase equity in their workforces.
- Collectively develop and commit to a long-term goal of reducing racial and gender wage gaps in production-level jobs.



Caregiver Resiliency Team Training

Summary

Over 40,000 people work as In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) providers in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, a critical part of the home health care workforce, which supports the daily lives of people who are elderly, disabled, or have special needs. The IHSS care workforce is disproportionately female and foreign-born and has been historically and persistently marginalized. The proposal aims to harness the collective power of IHSS providers into connected and resilient communities, ensuring consumers receive the care they need, especially during climate-related emergencies.

Most IHSS care workers lack formal specialized training. While this system has benefits, such as entry-level accessibility, the decentralized structure combined with structural racism and sexism makes career advancement difficult and limits opportunities for sustainable careers.

In 2022, the Center for Caregiver Advancement (CCA) developed the Caregiver Resiliency Team (CRT) training, which prepares IHSS caregivers to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and emergencies that are linked to the effects of our changing climate. In just under two years, we have trained over 4,000 workers in 126 cities, extending this transformative skill set to underserved and under resourced communities in California.

In collaboration with South Bay and Peninsula partners, we are now seeking to expand the CRT program to IHSS caregivers in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, with the eventual goal of making these resources available to caregivers anywhere in the greater Bay Area.

Strategy

IHSS caregivers are often on the frontlines of climate-related emergencies such as wildfires, floods, and other extreme weather events. When caregivers are trained and equipped with the skills to respond to these emergencies, they can be a lifesaving resource for seniors and people with disabilities. CCA's CRT training provides caregivers with skills and tools to prepare for and respond to climate-related emergencies for those in their care, coupled with strategies for managing the emotional impact of traumatic climate-related emergencies, practicing self-care to enhance caregiver resilience, and expanding long-term caregivers' skills in their roles as essential workers and first responders.

CRT will teach specialized skills to caregivers, professionalizing and creating sustainable career pathways in a sector that historically has neither recognized the need for professionally trained workers nor provided access to training. Graduates earn an industry-recognized credential that provides pathways to professional skills attainment.

We will also offer the training in eight languages, and eliminate barriers to training (e.g., enrollment support; language access; financial support) that can improve job quality and economic opportunity.

The program will include:

- 6 weeks of live, instructor-led training.
- A curriculum tailored to specific work environments, such as assembling emergency kits, first aid / CPR, transferring people with mobility needs, communication, sheltering, and evacuation.
- Workers will receive the equivalent of their hourly pay for training, a \$500 stipend upon completion, and an emergency kit.



Key Partners

CCA designed the CRT program in collaboration with SEIU Local 2015, IHSS Public Authorities (PA), the California Office of Emergency Services Office of Access and Functional Needs, environmental experts, disability rights advocates, and IHSS workers and consumers.

Key partners moving forward will include county social service agencies and IHSS Public Authorities (PA), the employer of record for IHSS workers. We are currently in discussions with Santa Clara Social Service Agency and PA, San Mateo PA, and San Francisco PA. We also plan to engage local Offices of Emergency Services because investing in the IHSS workforce has a direct impact on local emergency response infrastructure.

Impact

- Train 3,500 providers while providing payment for hours in training and stipends for completion.
- Expand provider knowledge in emergency preparedness by 15%.
- Increase job satisfaction and likelihood to stay in the job.

“I learned so much in this training, but the most important thing I learned is [that] preparedness is important. It is important to have knowledge and share it with others. Our planet is in trouble and a climate emergency is inevitable. Safety for ourselves, loved ones, and those we care for is super important, so we have to do everything in our power to be prepared.”

—IHSS provider



Stronger Entrepreneurs Coalition

Summary

Small businesses are critical economic engines for job creation, and resilient local economies require the participation of all entrepreneurs to flourish. Startup or growth capital are vital resources to grow a business and provide quality jobs. However, BIPOC residents tend to lack access to or distrust the available support and access to capital necessary to build enterprises that can build generational wealth, climate resilience, and good jobs at scale.

Small business resources have not been effectively distributed to our most at-risk communities—including undocumented immigrants—and BIPOC clients have been more likely to seek riskier credit lines due to lack of access to culturally aware programming. Green industries, in particular, are seen as disproportionately white or privileged, while economic displacement leads to increased greenhouse gas emissions caused by long commutes.

The Stronger Entrepreneurs Coalition will use the transformative power of collaboration to address these problems by facilitating community-based underwriting and expanding the reach of the technical assistance services that business owners need to fully take advantage of lending opportunities.

Strategy

- Co-create a plan to increase access to capital readiness, and the administration of equitable loan options, through community-based underwriting and the provision of coordinated, diverse, and culturally tailored capacity building.
- Develop an online directory, resource guide, and referral system to provide entrepreneurs with information on available economic resources provided by all coalition partners.
- Serve as a zero-emissions resource clearinghouse and analyze barriers that prevent BIPOC participation in the green economy.

This initiative will increase the flow of resources to underrepresented people and emerging or established small business owners, propelling their capacities to create better jobs (including for themselves), and empower our region’s lower-income residents to become a driving force for socioeconomic advancement and climate resiliency.





Key Partners

Co-anchors:

Prosperity Lab
Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center

Committed partners:

Centro Community Partners	Community Strong Strategies	South San Francisco Chamber of Commerce
City of Daly City, Economic and Community Development	Elevate Community Center	Sunday Friends
City of Half Moon Bay, City Manager's Office	Enterprise Foundation	SFMade
City of San Jose Office of Economic Development	Immigrants Rising	TMC Community Capital
City of South San Francisco, Economic Development	Lighthouse Silicon Valley	Veggielution
	Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce	Yacanex Community
	Small Business Majority California	

Impact

In 2 years:

- Create MOUs among partners
- Convene and facilitate monthly meetings
- Community engagement and outreach through town halls, surveys, and focus groups
- Develop a plan to scale up community-based underwriting
- Fundraise to support the coalition and its partner organizations
- Map the micro-enterprise and small business ecosystem, including available resources
- Host networking events and expand the coalition
- Conduct annual evaluations

In 5 years:

- Implement a marketing plan to promote new and existing services
- Create an online directory of services
- Secure contract opportunities for small businesses through diverse corporate and government suppliers
- Offer small business services including:
 - Training
 - Consulting
 - Mentorship
 - Access to capital and related technical support
 - Loan packaging support
 - Consulting support
- Set up a zero-emission clearinghouse
- Explore and refine alternative indicators to gauge the economic and social impact of individual and collective community-based organizations working with underserved and underinvested communities



Worker Cooperative Hubs

Summary

This proposal aims to shift the landscape for excluded workers and their families by developing local and lasting infrastructure for a cooperative ecosystem.

Many of our region’s families and communities are excluded from economic opportunity because of immigration status, educational background, language, and access to childcare. Workers facing these structural barriers are often pushed into low-wage, precarious jobs with no benefits and harmful working conditions, while others are excluded from the workforce entirely. The South Bay and Peninsula urgently need alternative pathways to build equitable, sustainable opportunities for immigrant workers and workers of color.

Worker-owned cooperatives, also known as co-ops, are a proven solution for excluded workers to create dignified, democratic, sustainable, healthy, living-wage jobs in their communities. Co-ops also contribute to generational community wealth-building and climate resilience. However, despite extensive interest, support services and infrastructure for coops in our region are extremely limited.

We plan to build two co-op hubs in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, rooted in deep cross-sector partnerships, that will offer the resources and infrastructure needed to start and sustain worker-owned co-ops that benefit local communities. We will offer technical assistance, capital access, leadership development, climate education, and networking, while creating an innovative model and best practices to share with other communities.



Strategy

Our vision is to create a model for economies driven by the power of worker-ownership, providing the best possible working conditions for currently excluded workers and their families, who in turn will offer critical services that lead to equitable and sustainable economic development. This initiative will expand access to quality employment, build community wealth and resiliency, and anchor capital and jobs in under-resourced communities.

Two hubs—one in Santa Clara County and one in San Mateo County—will help community members establish and expand climate-resilient, community-serving co-ops, build public support for this model, and develop an ecosystem of diverse partners regionally and beyond.

The hubs will provide integrated technical assistance, training, financial services, leadership development, and advocacy. Excluded workers will be included in governance structures and existing co-ops will be engaged as service providers.

They will also pilot a network of local co-ops that will identify job quality standards and allow co-ops to pool resources to establish shared benefits. This networking, as well as expanded access to capital opportunities, will support co-ops to uphold these high-road standards. The project builds local capacity to respond to climate change by providing climate curriculum for workers, increasing lending and services for co-ops supporting community-based climate resiliency, and piloting and assessing new climate-focused co-op models.

By developing a lasting infrastructure to sustain a local worker-owned cooperative ecosystem, community members will gain access to alternative economic pathways that offer dignified living-wage jobs and equitable ownership, while contributing to building resilient communities.

Key Partners

SOMOS Mayfair

Latino Business Foundation of Silicon Valley

Excite Credit Union

El Concilio

Committed Partners

Mission Action

De Colores C. Consulting

Sobrato Philanthropies

City of Redwood City

META

Veggielution

City of San José

Corazón y Pueblo Consulting

Cocinando con Amor

Lazos Fuertes

Impact

- Establish two place-based hubs that will build out a local ecosystem of support.
- Develop an integrated co-op service model and an accessible training curriculum that will help generate new co-ops and strengthen existing co-ops.
- 90% of workers supported are people of color, immigrants, and/or other underrepresented community members.
- 75% of workers supported earn wages above industry average, reducing the gender and racial wealth gap.
- 75% of co-ops supported are businesses that contribute to community wellbeing and climate resilience, filling critical needs such as childcare, local food supply, climate education, and clean transit.
- Expand access to capital and financial services, developing innovative lending policies and building partnerships with equity-focused financial institutions.

- Launch a regional Community of Practice and Learning to strengthen the co-op ecosystem regionally, and eventually state-wide.

“We firmly believe that having a center like the Hub will bring sustainable economics, well-being, and prosperity to excluded workers and their families, and therefore the economic development, well-being, and prosperity of an entire community and local cities.”

—De Colores, C. Consulting, a worker-owned cooperative based in San José

To connect with any of these initiatives and the stakeholders leading them, or to learn more about the High Road convening model, contact highroad@wpusa.org.



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