



Valley CERF Central San Joaquin Valley Regional Principles

Background

The Central San Joaquin Valley CERF ([‘Valley CERF’](#)) initiative is an inclusive economic development planning process funded by the State of California and involving stakeholders from four “Local Tables”: Madera, Tulare/Kings, Fresno rural, and Fresno DRIVE. The Valley Jobs First coalition represents over 130 organizations from diverse stakeholder groups, including Community Based Organizations, Education and Workforce Training, Employers and Businesses, Environmental Justice, Labor & Worker Centered Organizations, Tribal Entities, and Local Governments. The Coalition advances the following vision:

“to foster an inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economy that creates quality jobs and provides equitable economic access to all across the Central San Joaquin Valley.”

In January 2024, the Coalition launched the Regional Table which is composed of 28 representatives from each stakeholder group across the four-county region. Representatives were selected by Local Table stakeholders to voice their interests and aspirations throughout our regional economic development planning process.

Why do we need Regional Principles?

By establishing regional principles, we are centering our communities and local voice at the forefront of our regional investment initiative, ensuring inclusivity and representation. These principles will be intricately woven into the fabric of Catalyst Guidelines, the Regional Plan, and regional and local projects identified by the Regional Table. They serve as a compass guiding our collective efforts, clarifying our values that underpin our regional identity and anchoring our endeavors through our unique regional planning process.

How were the Regional Principles developed?

During the Orientation Session in January 2024, the Regional Table convened to refine our principles. Through five breakout rooms, each principle was purposefully explored by Regional Table Stakeholders to ensure resonance with our Local Tables and community, while also pinpointing any areas needing further refinement. Valuable insights from the Regional Table were captured, via tools like Jamboard. The Regional Table reviewed and finalized principles during the February Regional Table meeting.

Principles

The following regional principles were established by our Regional Table.

Equity requires identifying how the benefits and burdens of economic development, regional planning, and other relevant processes are distributed in and across the four-county region and local communities. Embedding equity, requires working towards ensuring basic needs are met, for instance language access, for broader and active participation in opportunities such as economic and academic to name a few.

- **Economic Equity:** All people have access to economic opportunities and we strive to eliminate barriers that may prevent residents from participating and/or benefiting from economic opportunities.
- **Environmental Equity:** All people have access to open space, recreation and green spaces, and natural resources.
- **Health Equity:** All people have access to opportunities that enable them to lead healthy lives.

Environmental Stewardship requires a focus on equitable economic development that is regenerative and aims at a carbon-neutral economy addressing the needs of diverse and disinvested communities. Environmental Stewardship centers the protection of our wildlands and natural resources for residents of the Central San Joaquin Valley region, including the Valley floor and Mountain communities. We must ensure that workforce infrastructure supports a climate-economy workforce that is accessible to all.

Good Jobs

To foster the creation of equitable access to quality jobs, we commit to promoting career ladders with upward mobility, supported by ongoing training and accessible educational opportunities. We commit to advancing job opportunities that are family-sustaining, provide health and retirement benefits, consistent scheduling, create opportunities for collective worker input, foster a supportive work environment, with family-friendly policies. Climate-forward approaches to industry and business development, expansion and retention will be supported.

A **Strong and Resilient Economy** will stand against external challenges like economic downturns, climate change, and pandemics, ensuring stability and sustainability. A strong economy supports workers and worker input, safe working conditions and upholds the Right to Organize/Collective Bargaining. Businesses focusing on creating local economic opportunities, hiring and training a diverse workforce, and prioritizing a climate-forward economy will be supported.

Data will be leveraged to make informed and strategic decisions on regional investments. We commit to partnering with independent data experts to support regional economic development planning. When publicly accessible data does not fully represent the richness of diverse backgrounds and lived experiences, we commit to partnering with “trusted messengers “to elevate local voices.