

The San Joaquin Valley is rising for equity!

We call on elected officials to partner with communities and address issues of **Immigration, Health, Housing, Education, Environmental Justice, Land Use and Planning**, and the **Digital Divide**—detailed in our 2025-2027 IHHEEL Policy Platform.

Immigration

CHALLENGE

Immigrants and refugees play a vital role in San Joaquin Valley communities and the economy, yet they are experiencing increased anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies and are often challenged by a broken safety net system, including limited access to legal services.

OPPORTUNITY

- **Access to Legal and Support Services:** Increase funding for affordable, high-quality legal representation and community-based organizations assisting immigrants.
- **Economic Inclusion and Stability:** Expand eligibility and outreach for social safety net programs to include immigrant families.
- **Enforcement and Due Process:** Ensure local law enforcement agencies invest in community-based alternatives that support communities and fully comply with state law limiting cooperation with immigration enforcement efforts.

Health

CHALLENGE

San Joaquin Valley residents face systemic barriers to healthcare, leading to worse health outcomes, especially for immigrants and low-income communities.

OPPORTUNITY

- **Expand Healthcare Workforce:** Address the severe shortage of healthcare providers, particularly in primary and behavioral health care.
- **Improve Equity in Coverage and Access to Services:** Strengthen Medi-Cal outreach and navigation to services, ensuring culturally competent care, regardless of immigration status.
- **Strengthen Public Health Infrastructure:** Increase funding for community-based health initiatives and environmental health protections.

Housing

CHALLENGE

Housing is increasingly unaffordable, with over 70% of low-income Valley residents paying more than half their income on rent or mortgages.

OPPORTUNITY

- **Preserve and Expand Affordable Housing:** Invest in mixed-use developments and permanent affordable housing solutions.
- **Protect Renters and Homeowners:** Strengthen tenant protections, anti-displacement policies and pathways to homeownership.
- **Ensure Safe, Quality Housing:** Improve code enforcement and increase access to resources for home repairs in vulnerable communities.



Education

CHALLENGE

Students—particularly those from marginalized communities—face systemic educational barriers to success due to underfunded schools, inequitable curricula and disciplinary practices.

OPPORTUNITY

- **Expand Education Access and Improve Outcomes:** Invest in early childhood education, support English learners and students of color, and increase resources for college and career readiness—especially for first-generation students.
- **Support Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Schools:** Recruit diverse educators and fully implement ethnic studies curricula that reflect students' identities.
- **End the School-to-Prison Pipeline:** Reduce youth arrests and expulsions through restorative justice and community-based intervention programs.

Environmental Justice

CHALLENGE

San Joaquin Valley communities suffer from unsafe drinking water, air pollution, extreme heat and climate disasters.

OPPORTUNITY

- **Ensure Clean Air and Water:** Strengthen enforcement of environmental regulations to reduce air pollution, create buffer zones to protect the health and safety of residents, and invest in water infrastructure.
- **Support Climate Resilience:** Direct funding to frontline communities for climate adaptation and disaster response.
- **Advance Environmental and Economic Justice:** Prioritize employment programs in sustainable agriculture and green jobs.

Land Use and Planning

CHALLENGE

Poor land use policies have led to urban sprawl, pollution exposure and a lack of green space, worsening health and economic disparities.

OPPORTUNITY

- **Promote Smart Growth and Conservation:** Protect farmland and invest in infrastructure that prioritizes community health and biodiversity.
- **Prevent Displacement and Pollution Burdens:** Implement equitable zoning and planning policies that center historically marginalized communities.
- **Address Groundwater Scarcity and Climate Risks:** Ensure sustainable land management strategies that support both economic and environmental resilience.

Digital Divide

CHALLENGE

Limited broadband access in the San Joaquin Valley restricts education, jobs, healthcare and civic participation, deepening economic and social inequities.

OPPORTUNITY

- **Protect and Increase Access to Essential Communications:** Ensure that people have access to reliable, basic communications services by maintaining a designated Carrier of Last Resort in California, so people are served, regardless of location. In addition, leverage federal Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment funds to complete the construction of broadband infrastructure before federal funding disappears.
- **Ensure Affordable and Equitable Access:** Establish broadband as a fundamental right and require internet service providers to provide low-cost, reliable internet to low-income households.
- **Promote Digital Literacy and Workforce Development:** Partner with public and private entities to expand digital skills training, job placement and community outreach.

The San Joaquin Valley Health Fund is a collaborative that has worked with over 170 dedicated nonprofit community organizations and 40 state and national funders.

For 11 years, we've funded, convened and catalyzed unified efforts for policy and systems change to improve health outcomes across the San Joaquin Valley. We're managed by The Center at Sierra Health Foundation. The IHHEEL Policy Platform is developed every other year by the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund Policy Committee, comprised of community partners. Read the full platform at shfcenter.org/san-joaquinvalley-health-fund.

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