



2025-2027 IHHEEL Policy Platform

Immigration – Health – Housing – Education – Environmental Justice –

Land Use & Planning – Digital Divide

Immigration Policy Platform

VISION

Our vision is for a San Joaquin Valley where every community meaningfully includes immigrants and refugees and where these residents can access support services, economic opportunity and high-quality legal representation and actively participate in civic life. A just, equitable and prosperous San Joaquin Valley requires an inclusive democracy and due process for all.

BACKGROUND

Immigrants and refugees are essential to California and are the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. According to the 2020 Census, the immigrant population for the eight-county region is estimated at 926,000. Foreign-born people make up 22% of the population in the San Joaquin Valley and 34% of its workforce. The region has a long history of refugee resettlement from many parts of the world, including Southeast Asia, Central America and the Middle East, a process that continues today. Roughly 284,000 undocumented persons call the San Joaquin Valley home, while 321,000 U.S. citizens and 85,000 lawful permanent residents reside with an undocumented family member. Approximately 13% of California's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) -eligible residents live in the San Joaquin Valley.

The San Joaquin Valley also contributes in myriad ways to the regional economy and the fiscal well-being of local communities. In addition to their well-known contributions to the regional labor force, immigrants pay taxes, establish businesses and create jobs. In Fresno County alone, immigrants paid an estimated \$1.2 billion in taxes and had a spending power of \$3.6 billion in 2018. There were also 10,569 immigrant entrepreneurs in the county, providing a wide range of goods and services.

Anti-immigrant rhetoric and changes to federal policies have created fear, confusion and uncertainty among immigrant and refugee communities. Local organizations work tirelessly to support the

community and mitigate harmful impacts, but they largely operate in a context devoid of meaningful support from local governments. Given the changing federal policy landscape, fear and confusion about access to social services and healthcare persist among immigrant communities. In addition, immigrant families are often left out of various forms of economic relief or are fearful of receiving assistance due to their unstable immigration status. The lack of a safety net for immigrant families facing economic challenges negatively impacts their stability and well-being.

Immigration enforcement leaves low-income immigrants vulnerable to detention and without the ability to pay bond or for legal representation, resulting in family separations and financial hardship. In 2018, there were 2,279 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) related arrests in the San Joaquin Valley, with Kern County having the highest number of arrests (1,235). Despite state laws that aim to protect immigrants, local law enforcement agencies collaborate with federal immigration authorities. The dearth of low-cost, high-quality legal service providers, who can offer representation in the client's language of choice, means many immigrants appear in immigration court without legal representation. This lack of representation greatly reduces an individual's chance of being granted relief and being able to remain in the United States.

PATHWAY

To address the challenges and attacks on our immigrant and refugee communities, we stand united in our call to:

- Establish a robust regional Rapid Response Network and Know Your Rights and Family Preparedness Campaign to ensure advocates monitor the presence of immigration agents in our communities, defend against arrests and provide legal triage in cases of detention.
- Disentangle local law enforcement from immigration enforcement efforts by enacting more protective legislation, at a minimum ensuring full implementation of SB54 and advocating for local governments to enact more protective policies.
- Secure robust public and private investments to facilitate access to economic mobility for all families and small business owners, regardless of immigration status, including micro-grants, training opportunities and technical assistance.
- Advocate for programs designed to promote the economic well-being of immigrant families, including those without immigration status or who face the loss of work authorization, including SafetyNet4All and inclusive workforce development programs.
- Strengthen partnerships with local governments and other institutions to encourage pro-immigrant policies and increased access to education, health care and support services for immigrant community members.
- Promote funding and training initiatives that foster the growth and sustainability of non-profit immigration legal service providers that are reflective of and responsive to the legal needs of San Joaquin Valley residents.

- Develop educational campaigns to combat disinformation and strengthen consumer protections against immigration fraud by predatory *notarios publicos*, immigration consultants and attorneys.

Health Policy Platform

VISION

Our vision is a strong State commitment to and momentum toward increased access to high-quality, affordable, culturally and linguistically appropriate physical and behavioral health services regardless of race, ethnicity, immigration status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or other social, economic and demographic factors so that every Californian can thrive.

BACKGROUND

The San Joaquin Valley is disparately impacted by environmental, economic, social and access- to-care obstacles and adverse conditions that negatively affect the health of residents. San Joaquin Valley residents face many barriers to accessing health services, including fear of immigration-related risks, lack of access to technology and insufficient or unreliable broadband, language barriers, discrimination and difficulty accessing health services such as behavioral, mental and oral health care.

The COVID-19 pandemic left a lasting legacy of health disparities in the San Joaquin Valley. Even after the pandemic subsided, residents continue to face unequal access to healthcare and poorer health outcomes. This is especially true for immigrant families and those who were most vulnerable during the crisis. The pandemic's lingering effects highlight the urgent need for systemic changes to ensure equitable healthcare for all.

Community members in the Valley continue to lack trust in the institutions that should provide the safety nets for their well-being. It is easy to understand why. Disparities in access continue, especially for primary care and behavioral health, and there is a lack of providers to deliver critical care services. The Valley also suffers from a severe shortage of providers. For example, in 2020, the ratio of primary care physicians in the San Joaquin Valley was 47 per 100,000 residents, a 20.5% change from the previous year (39 per 100,000), but still 27% below the state average of 60 primary care physicians per 100,000 residents. Despite expanding Medi-Cal eligibility for more residents, regardless of immigration status and age, Valley residents still do not have full coverage.

Four of the eight counties that make up the region—Madera, Fresno, Tulare and Kern—rank among the bottom 10 California counties for health outcomes. More than two out of every five (44% or 1.8 million) of the 4.2 million people who live in the Valley are enrolled in Medi-Cal. As of 2023, the average life expectancy ranged from 77.5 to 79.7 years, about the same as the statewide average life expectancy of 79 years, and significantly lower than in 2019, when the state average was 81.5 years. Significant disparities remain in life expectancy across demographic groups and neighborhoods, reflecting the cumulative impact of social, economic and environmental factors.

PATHWAY

To address health disparities, we stand united in our call to expand and protect investments, on a local, state and federal level, in the following areas:

HIGH-QUALITY PREVENTIVE PRIMARY CARE, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, DENTAL CARE AND OTHER RELATED SERVICES

- Maintain culturally and linguistically appropriate primary care that is effective, equitable and patient-centered and available at no cost to community members of diverse backgrounds, practices, gender identification, income and immigration and housing status.
- Inform all individuals of language assistance services in healthcare services, clearly and in their preferred language, verbally and/or in writing, to facilitate timely access.
- Ensure equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and relief resources for long COVID-19 and COVID-related issues to those hit hardest by the virus after the end of the public health emergency.
- Advocate for the State Office of Oral Health to fund initiatives such as school-based sealant programs and public campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of oral health and support local oral health departments to improve access to and utilization of dental services.
- Invest in vision benefits, under Medi-Cal, at no or very low cost for annual routine eye exams, contact lens access and low-vision testing for the community.
- Maintain county agencies' funds from the Mental Health Services Act and State Innovation Funds to promote locally and culturally informed efforts to address mental health, behavioral health and substance abuse.
- Ensure that subsidies in Covered California are for all residents, regardless of their diverse background, practices, gender identification, income and immigration and housing status, beyond the short-term federal relief in the American Relief Act.

ADDRESS THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

- Ensure and safeguard the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), which protects the rights for patients' health information to be private and protected, which includes electronic health records (EHR).
- Fully implement CalAIM to address the social determinants of health of Medi-Cal members through partnerships among Medi-Cal healthcare plans, community-based organizations and local agencies.
- Ensure that local health jurisdictions and community-based organizations in the Valley leverage all available funding streams (e.g., Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative) for youth and adults to access behavioral health support.
- Support flexible policies for unrestricted funding for community-based organizations that address food security issues experienced by families and individuals, while seeking additional investments to improve the food access infrastructure to include local products from the farm-to-fork, farm-school, gleaning, WIC and Senior Farmers market programs, to be served in school meals.
- Support federal-, state- and local-level expansions of food security programs where recipients, especially those who are unhoused or have challenges in preparing food from raw ingredients, can use benefits to purchase nutritious hot or prepared foods.

- Support federal comprehensive immigration reform that includes pathways to citizenship and eligibility for federal benefits.
- Educate immigrant communities on the current status of public charge regulations and encourage uninterrupted participation in health and nutrition programs, regardless of immigration status.
- Actively monitor bio-economic policies and practices in the San Joaquin Valley that promote job creation and sustainable agriculture to positively impact the health, food security and effects of environmental pollution on disadvantaged communities.
- Support systems that reduce social and economic inequities and protect the health and well-being of children and families in underserved communities.

FUND, TRAIN AND SUPPORT COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS/PROMOTORES TO BRIDGE THE GAP IN DELIVERY OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES

- Expand funding and implementation of policies that support non-clinical community-based organizations, as well as traditional and non-traditional health workforce pipelines to prepare students and community members of diverse backgrounds, practices, gender identification, income and immigration and housing status for health professions.
- Leverage and implement the Community Health Worker (CHW)/Promotor Medi-Cal benefit so members and uninsured populations navigate healthcare access, as CHWs/Promotores serve as a bridge between the formal healthcare system and vulnerable communities.
- Increase Medi-Cal reimbursement rates to attract and retain healthcare professionals, invest in preventive care that leads to early interventions and better health outcomes and ensure access to high-quality healthcare.
- Promote the implementation of the community school model to help integrate trauma-informed, social-emotional learning into curriculum to teach students emotional regulation, empathy and problem-solving skills.

ENSURE HOSPITAL COMMUNITY BENEFIT PROGRAMS ADDRESS COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Raise standards for hospital community benefit agreements to ensure transparency and comparability, so that more investments are made to improve services and resources for the communities they serve, such as in physical, technological and human infrastructure.
- Increase consulting between hospitals and community groups to create a community-based accountability board to identify community needs that include the new “vulnerable populations” definition categories, as part of their regular Community Health Needs Assessments.

ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY AND INVESTMENTS IN JUSTICE POLICIES THAT ADVOCATE FOR REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM, VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SUPPORT FOR LGBTQIA+ INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

- Advocate for a health insurance system that is inclusive and protective of identifiable information for reproductive health and abortion services and expands investments and

eligibility in the Medi-Cal and Affordable Care Act programs for all Californians to close healthcare gaps.

- Strengthen accountability and investments that support the implementation of comprehensive gender and reproductive justice policies.
- Advance the collection of sexual orientation/gender identity and expression data (SOGIE) to better understand the challenges and needs of community members, ensure their safety and well-being and address inequities.
- Increase funding and long-term support opportunities and services for domestic violence and sexual violence prevention education to interrupt the cycle of violence.

Housing Policy Platform

VISION

Our vision is that San Joaquin Valley residents, especially the most vulnerable, have full access to safe, accessible, permanently affordable housing. We will reach this goal by promoting mixed-use developments, preserving existing affordable housing and protecting residents through improved housing affordability, housing quality and home ownership and community ownership opportunities.

BACKGROUND

Agricultural land in the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund is the source of livelihood for many residents, generating tens of billions of dollars a year in economic contribution and food for the nation. Yet, in this land of abundance, more than 70% of low-income residents pay 50% or more of their income on rent or mortgages.

PATHWAY

To address these housing disparities, we are united in our call to:

- Actively address segregation by securing true housing choice through incentivizing development in growth areas to facilitate and incorporate housing opportunities for all.
- Support policies and investments to close the racial wealth gap, produce new affordable housing, preserve existing affordable housing and protect residents for improved housing affordability, housing quality and home ownership opportunities. Preserve existing housing stock—especially manufactured housing parks—and provide means for low-income homeowners to repair or replace their homes.
- Advance measures and policies that make affordable housing more accessible, such as a universal application in multiple languages and a statewide database showcasing the availability of affordable housing units in each region.
- Support models of housing development and land management that promote long-term affordability and community control by creating community land trusts, housing cooperatives and other opportunities for resident ownership and management of housing. There should be a particular focus on housing whose construction or preservation is subsidized with public or philanthropic resources for low- and very-low-income communities. Prioritize housing models developed on public land and land value recapture on land that has increased in value due to public investment and other government actions.
- Enforce proactive rental housing inspection rules, promote a baseline inspection of all rental properties and create a standard registry list of all rental units.
- Protect tenants by strengthening and enforcing local and statewide rent stabilization, just- cause eviction and source-of-income discrimination laws. Strengthen and enforce policies that provide housing stability, including eviction moratoria and rental assistance.

- Advocate for enforcement of a strong Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) that promotes equitable lending to low-income communities of color and rural markets. Advocate for a state-level CRA that leads to community benefit agreements that support local communities.
- Increase equitable allocation of state and federal funds for housing projects in rural and farmworker communities by creating set-asides within programs like Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities and the Tax Credit program and redefining density so it works for these communities.
- Increase community understanding of homes as the answer to homelessness and prioritize the development of permanent housing and supportive services that help people struggling with chronic physical and mental health issues maintain stable housing and receive appropriate health care.
- Advocate for policies that remove barriers to housing for those re-entering the community after incarceration (e.g., Fair Chance Housing) and end policies that criminalize homelessness.
- Support the collection of eviction data and the provision of legal aid to prevent undue evictions, displacement and homelessness.
- Rally behind local education efforts around tenant rights for residents and landlords along with other tools to limit and prevent evictions. This may include providing income-eligible tenants who are sued for eviction with a right to a defense attorney, also known as a local right to counsel.
- Advocate for expedited utility hookups to residential properties to ensure timely occupation of tenants and avoid vacant units staying off market and project delays.
- Support and promote the adoption of dedicated sources of funding that leverage public investments into local and/or regional housing trust funds.
- Advocate for investment in water, wastewater, electric and other infrastructure systems necessary to support the development and preservation of safe, healthy, affordable housing choices.
- Uplift legislative proposals for statewide water resource mapping to prevent anti-housing local governments from using water scarcity and restrictions to deter housing development.
- Support climate mitigation/adaptation and wildfire resilience measures to help homeowners across the income spectrum protect their homes from climate change.
- Support proactive changes to the state's insurance marketplace in both informing residents of their options and reforming insurance policy to reduce costs, improve coverage and retain providers.
- Support state policies to protect mixed-status households that receive federal housing vouchers and backfill housing resources when federal resources are lost.

Education Policy Platform

VISION

Our vision is that all San Joaquin Valley communities have equitable, inclusive, safe, autonomous, just classrooms as a cornerstone of a holistic and effective educational system absent of systemic racism. All families and students would be protected in schools and institutions without having to fear deportation or incarceration. Students would have real-world knowledge and skills with their diversity celebrated and centered. Trauma-informed and restorative practices, leadership and content would reflect the hopes of the communities served. We envision students and families as co-creators of the campus community, equipped to advocate for their needs and their communities' needs. In this vision, schools are trusted anchors for neighborhood and community development, and state and local education agencies are transparent, accountable and democratic. Our vision is that all Californians are instilled with a shared sense of empowerment and responsibility for our most vulnerable neighbors.

BACKGROUND

The San Joaquin Valley is home to more than 10% of California's public-school students (800,000+) and to one of the highest proportions of English learners. Among the youngest students, almost 75% of eligible 3-year-olds and 20% of eligible 4-year-olds are not enrolled in government-sponsored preschool programs. These children are missing a strong start to their educational journey. Once in the K-12 system, these same students experience the worst outcomes in math and language arts proficiency, with the lowest rates among Southeast Asian, African American/Black students, Hispanic/Latino and American Indian/Alaska Native students. LGBTQIA+ students often face a hostile school climate with little support, where officials attempt to stifle their expression and being.

Disengagement among students can, in part, be attributed to curricula that do not include them and a teaching cohort that does not reflect their experiences. We need stronger and wider recruitment of teachers and more-inclusive K-12 ethnic studies curricula. In addition, parents do not feel connected and involved with their kids' schools.

The Valley's juvenile felony arrest rate is higher than other regions of the state, and disproportionately affects Hispanic/Latino, African American and Southeast Asian students, contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline and high dropout rates for disadvantaged students. Among the high school class of 2015, more than one in 10 (10.8%) San Joaquin Valley students failed to graduate. The average expulsion rate of 2.25 per 1,000 students is double the statewide average.

COVID-19 exacerbated existing inequities, such as access to broadband, teacher retention and behavioral health needs of our students. Recovery requires additional resources and capacity in the Valley and concentrated, organized efforts to secure sufficient funding for student services and support. Also needed are increased social-emotional learning opportunities, green spaces free from toxins and other efforts that confront the challenges of systemic inequities and racism.

The San Joaquin Valley celebrates its role as a land of refugees and opportunities. From those who came before to new arrivals from Southeast and South Asia, Central America and indigenous communities of Mexico, our challenge is to advance an approach to education that centers communities' learning and opportunities that expand into economic justice for students beyond their education.

PATHWAY

To address these educational disparities, we stand united in our call to:

ENHANCE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Ensure that San Joaquin Valley grantees in the California Community Schools Partnership Program are improving school responsiveness to student and family needs and organizing school and community resources to address barriers to learning. Programs must improve inclusion and responsiveness to students and families from the LGBTQIA+ community and those with physical, developmental and intellectual disabilities.
- Fully leverage opportunities from the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative through school-linked partnership and capacity grants to provide equitable, appropriate, timely, accessible services for emerging and existing behavioral health (mental health and substance use) needs for children and youth ages 0-25.
- Decriminalize school campuses and implement restorative justice practices and trauma-informed care to create welcoming schools that foster strong community engagement.
- Develop innovative public-private partnerships and legislation to increase pay for educators from PreK to 12th grade to attract and retain the best multilingual education workforce.
- Increase participation of community, parents and students in developing Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) to ensure fiscal transparency and increased assurances that students receive benefits of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Participation must improve inclusion and responsiveness to students and families from the LGBTQIA+ community and those with physical, developmental and intellectual disabilities.
- Create opportunities and strengthen funding opportunities to provide adequate services for students with disabilities that will result in successful, inclusive K-12 education. This includes students with hearing impairments.
- Build an inclusive and empathetic system for students, families and communities to report hate incidents and microaggressions by other students, faculty and staff. Develop a system of accountability that investigates thoroughly in a process that centers the experiences of students. Ensure protection of students and families that may be under-represented, such people with hearing impairments and people from the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Ensure school-community partnerships expand their focus to include entry to and completion of higher education and post-graduate professional development.

ENSURE ONGOING FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR HIGH-QUALITY, EQUITABLE PRE-K-12 SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

- Ensure funding and support for universal preschool and mixed Pre-K-3 delivery systems in ways that prevent gutting of the early education system for children ages 0-2.
- Increase funding and support for financial literacy from preschool through post-secondary education to ensure students can manage and grow their wealth and prosperity.
- Increase school and extra-curricular education and training in entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship to ensure all students understand their options for business ownership and community impact.
- Increase investments in locally informed and culturally competent academic strategies that help place students on a path to achieving and maintaining proficiency by the third grade.
- Leverage dual-immersion opportunities as early as Pre-K, when language acquisition is most effective.
- Increase K-12 funding and support to ensure all students with special needs understand and can pursue their options of higher education. This includes attention to students with mild limitations and severe limitations.
- Support investments in partnerships and programs that provide students with access to high-quality opportunities that enhance their academic programs through after-school programs, arts, music, sports and access to healthy food and safe drinking water.
- Protect some of the most vulnerable populations from bullying and provide well-rounded systems of support for LGBTQIA+, undocumented, BIPOC and low-income students.
- Adopt a new rate system for childcare that covers the true cost of providing childcare to help attract and retain the childcare workforce.
- Increase funding and support long-term investments in dating and sexual-violence-prevention education to improve student safety and interrupt the cycle of violence.

ENSURE PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE TRAINED AND RECRUITED FOR EDUCATION POSITIONS AT ALL GRADE LEVELS

- Increase recruitment of people of color into education professions and ensure alignment between teacher preparation programs and on-the-job training to equip teachers with tools to implement restorative disciplinary practices that are culturally responsive and trauma informed. School staff should be trained in the delivery of LGBTQIA+ and culturally competent and sensitive curriculum and instructional practices, including a comprehensive, unbiased sexual health curriculum as required by the Healthy Youth Act, as well as healthy living practices as required by the Local School Wellness Policy.
- Increase investments in and availability of high-quality early childhood programs, facilities and staff that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and designed to meet the needs of vulnerable and underserved communities.
- Increase education and training for entrepreneurship and business leadership, including social entrepreneurship.

- Provide all students with mentoring and access to interactions with professional role models and entrepreneurs, including those representing cultural and linguistic diversity, so students can envision careers with upward mobility.
- Establish grant programs and other incentives for higher education institutions to develop and implement the PreK-3 early childhood education specialist credential and create apprenticeship programs to increase teacher diversity.
- Invest in adult education and training to build a sustainable workforce that includes support for community-based re-entry programs.
- Provide access to community college vocational training for all immigrants, regardless of immigration status.
- Ensure college access for all students, including undocumented students, by protecting laws that provide resources to students, such as AB 540, CA DREAM ACT and College Corp programs that promote student success.
- Support a well-rounded curriculum that allows students to be culturally competent and financially literate.

ENHANCE CURRICULUM FOCUSED ON SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING, HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

- Support school-based social-emotional learning curriculum and incentivize outdoor activities, including environmental and experiential education, to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors associated with negative mental health outcomes for all youth.
- Address disparities in services and outcomes for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, especially children from marginalized ethnic/racial populations.
- Ensure curriculum on healthy relationships and dating abuse is included in health education programs or other appropriate courses at middle and high schools, as required by the California Healthy Youth Act.

Environmental Justice Policy Platform

VISION

Our vision is that all communities of all races, cultures, classes and creeds in the San Joaquin Valley have clean air, clean food and clean drinking water; improved health and quality of life; and just, ecological, climate-resilient programs and farming practices.

BACKGROUND

In the heart of California, more than four million residents of the San Joaquin Valley are disproportionately exposed to multiple hazardous contaminants, including unsafe drinking water, pesticides and air pollution. In recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic, rampant wildfires and historic flooding have further heightened inequities and disproportionately impacted frontline and marginalized communities. Climate change also exacerbates existing environmental hazards—extreme heat worsens smog and air quality, flooding and storms threaten water quality and wildfires often release toxins into the air and soil. To equitably advance environmental justice, climate resilience and economic justice, we center racial equity. Proposed funding and response strategies must therefore be intentionally targeted toward these vulnerable communities, with affected community members driving the vision for solutions.

PATHWAY

To address these environmental disparities, we stand united in our call around the following:

ACCOUNTABILITY OF DECISION MAKERS

- Ensure that all California residents have a direct role in the decision-making process to design community-led solutions and implement the environmental and social policies that impact them.
- Require government agencies to comply with state and federal civil rights and language access laws and policies.
- Address environmental racism through equitable enforcement and oversight.
- Ensure that government agencies use information about cumulative health impacts in all regulatory and permitting decisions, especially for industries and land uses with significant environmental burdens.
- Guarantee that adequate stockpile of personal protective equipment is distributed to farmworkers during emergencies, such as wildfires or disease outbreaks.

PROVIDE CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE DRINKING WATER

- Support the successful implementation of the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund for San Joaquin Valley communities with contaminated and/or unaffordable drinking water, including those reliant on private domestic wells and state small water systems, to secure interim

solutions and prioritize a path to long-term solutions. Protect the Valley's groundwater through regional water management and groundwater sustainability planning, including by implementing the Human Right to Water and Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in a manner that preserves access to safe and reliable drinking water for communities, holding agriculture and oil companies accountable to pay for drinking water solutions through implementation of the Central Valley Basin Plan Amendment, and promoting proactive drought planning and climate resilience.

- Provide an avenue for universal water affordability rate assistance for public water systems, helping low-income Californians with water affordability.

REDUCE AIR POLLUTION AND SUPPORT CLIMATE JUSTICE

- Reduce air pollution from the region's largest sources, such as oil and gas facilities, agricultural burning, dairies, biomass plants, pesticide-treated agricultural fields, vehicle transportation and magnet sources. Require the use of best available control technologies on these sources.
- Collaborate with government agencies to prioritize direct emission reductions and reduce reliance on voluntary programs, taxpayer-funded incentives and credit-based systems.
- Strengthen enforcement, community engagement and regulations on toxic air emissions. Establish zero-emission health and safety zones around homes, schools and hospitals.
- Advocate for timely, culturally appropriate notification systems that alert the public to unsafe levels of air pollution. Ensure access to air filters, protective equipment and clean air resources.
- Support a just transition from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy and sustainable, equitable storage that provides direct emissions reductions and community protections aligned with environmental justice goals.
- Expand greenery and reforestation initiatives and access to mitigate extreme heat and improve air quality in underserved areas.
- Include synthetic pesticide and fertilizer emissions in all climate-related plans to reduce air pollution.
- End the discriminatory permitting of land uses in low-income communities of color.
- Expand local air quality monitoring particularly to and by communities surrounded by sources of pollution.
- Address the health impacts of air pollution, including asthma and Valley Fever, and prioritize education on environmental justice to help residents understand their rights and protections.

PROVIDE EQUAL ACCESS TO GREEN SPACES

- Ensure equitable access to outdoor spaces for low-income and rural communities of color, disabled residents, special-needs residents and youth, thus reducing the park-to-population ratio in the San Joaquin Valley.
- Develop green spaces near schools in underserved communities to promote environmental literacy, healthy alternatives to out-of-school time and opportunities for vocational and hands-on learning to fill the anticipated need for a "greener" workforce in the future.

- Foster green areas and other green infrastructure such as green walls and green roofs in low-income communities that experience extreme heat as an adaptation strategy to climate change effects. Green walls can also provide other ecological services with plants that can remediate environmental pollution, and green roofs can provide food security and a source of income for communities impacted by food apartheid.
- Promote policies and incentivize initiatives that grant Tribes access to ancestral lands for traditional practices, such as cultivating indigenous plants for food sovereignty, cultural materials and ecological stewardship.

PROTECT COMMUNITIES FROM TOXIC PESTICIDE EXPOSURE

- Restrict the use of the carcinogenic fumigant pesticide 1,3-dichloropropene.
- Quickly phase out the most hazardous, drift-prone and outdated agricultural pesticides in use in California, including organophosphates and fumigant pesticides.
- Uphold the public's right to know, in advance and in multiple languages, about upcoming applications of hazardous pesticides.
- Make the Department of Pesticide Regulation and County Agricultural Commissioners more transparent and publicly accountable to the communities they serve.
- Build momentum for pesticide reform by organizing in highly impacted communities.
- Conduct ongoing watchdogging/ground truthing to ensure that AB 1864 improves compliance.
- Ensure that the Department of Pesticide Regulation Environmental Justice Advisory Committee is full and active, and that it meets before the statutory deadline of January 1, 2026.
- Engage and empower pediatricians, community health workers and promotores to provide pesticide exposure mitigation education for patients in their homes and communities.
- Support transitions to agriculture innovation zones/safe organic agroecological practices around communities (and schools).

SUPPORT SMALL FARMERS AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

- Improve access to land, capital, infrastructure and equipment for California's small-scale, beginning and underserved producers. Identify additional revenue sources.
- Provide dedicated funds and technical assistance for education and workforce development, particularly in regions suffering from environmental injustices, to
- promote the adoption of ecological farming practices that enhance soil health, protect air and water quality and improve resilience to climate change.
- Support the development of climate resilience plans for small- and mid-scale farmers, with a focus on historically underserved producers, to help them adapt to changing climate conditions. Provide resources for technical assistance, risk management tools and access to climate-smart farming practices that enhance long-term farm viability.
- Prioritize repurposing cropland in and around disadvantaged rural communities and schools to protect them from agricultural and industrial pollution exposures. Promote low- or no-tillage practices to decrease dust emissions and other practices to improve soil health. Transition away from reliance on excessive fertilizer and pesticide use. Incentivize voluntary cropland

repurposing and the adoption of safe agroecological practices that support diverse soil uses for public benefit and facilitate Land Back efforts. Incentivize the restoration of historical natural landscapes to enhance ecological services, benefiting both natural and agroecological systems by improving biodiversity and pollinator habitat on agricultural lands, such as hedgerows or windbreaks.

- Prevent food and green waste through ecologically based composting of organic material, which can be used to aid in soil restoration and fertilizer. Ensure food and nutrition security for agricultural workers by diverting surplus organic food to populations vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity, including the sale of organic alternatives in grocery stores. Support participation in local farmers' markets, particularly near communities in food apartheid zones, and create financial programs to assist with registration fees for small local farmers and farmworkers.

Land Use & Planning Policy Platform

VISION

Our vision is for land use and planning policy decisions to be directly connected with equity and justice outcomes and to actively contribute to biodiversity conservation and access to the outdoors for all communities.

BACKGROUND

By 2050, the San Joaquin Valley is projected to be home to one-tenth of California's population. However, misguided land use and disinvestment in existing communities have already resulted in widespread urbanization of farmland, habitat and other green space; disproportionate exposure to and health impacts from pollution-causing land uses in disadvantaged communities; a lack of safe places for physical activity; and a dearth of decent, affordable housing. Land use decisions are one of the primary reasons that the strongest predictor of a person's lifespan and quality of life is their zip code.

The San Joaquin Valley is also going through a historic change in land use, with groundwater scarcity and Sustainable Groundwater Management Act implementation potentially leading to the retirement of up to a million acres of agricultural land. The fate of this land—and the lives that depend on it—will impact the San Joaquin Valley for generations to come.

PATHWAY

To address disparities in land use and planning, we stand united in our call to:

- Support robust funding for conservation to help meet state and federal goals of conserving 30% of natural and working lands by 2030, including conservation investments in the San Joaquin Valley to support community land trusts, biodiversity, equity and access to the outdoors for all communities.
- Raise community awareness and advocate with agencies to promote holistic, sustainable, mixed-use communities with access to public transportation infrastructure, amenities and complete streets. Promote requirements that industry not be intermixed with residential land through defined land use and/or economic development incentives.
- Equip local decision makers and community residents to ensure that zoning promotes infill development and allows for alternative forms of housing, including accessory dwelling units and smaller housing units.
- Conserve agricultural land and natural habitat to promote access to green space and help mitigate the environmental impacts of development.
- Require mitigation of environmental impacts of projects that consume habitat, agricultural land or other open space through permanent conservation easements, with mitigation ratios of at least 1:1 for farmland and higher ratios as appropriate for habitat.

- Secure the adoption of school district policies that support the use of public-school playgrounds for neighborhood use.
- Educate agencies to adopt policies and raise public awareness to ensure that vacant municipal lots are conveyed through long-term ground leases that secure community control of them rather than sell these scarce resources.
- Require jurisdictions to support, enforce, fund and implement public engagement processes that prioritize underserved communities for proposed residential and industrial development.
- Establish firm, secure buffer areas around cities and unincorporated communities to protect residents from pesticide spraying and other land uses that threaten public health by exacerbating air and water pollution. Promote adoption of Good Neighbor guidelines that address potential impacts of diesel particulate matter to neighborhoods from on-road trucks associated with warehouses and distribution centers.
- Reimagine the spheres of influence of cities and areas near unincorporated communities as equity and justice areas bolstered by targeted urban growth boundaries, affordable housing mandates, directed mitigation investments, equitable access to water and the use of community land trusts as multi-benefit infrastructure.
- Promote private and public investment without displacement by requiring strong anti-displacement policies, community benefit agreements, meaningful and robust public engagement practices and inclusionary housing policies that create mixed-income neighborhoods.
- Educate local decision makers and community residents to ensure that city- and county- level general plans commit to directing new development and resources into existing disadvantaged communities instead of new towns and greenfield development at the periphery, and that regional transportation investments in each county's Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy are selected accordingly.

Digital Divide Policy Platform

VISION

Our vision is for every marginalized community in the San Joaquin Valley to have access to affordable, high-quality broadband, empowering residents to engage in civic life, achieve educational success and drive economic growth. By prioritizing digital literacy, we aim to equip individuals with the tools to protect against fraud, access essential services like healthcare and banking and embrace the benefits of paperless billing. With reliable broadband, we envision a future where workforce development flourishes, opening opportunities for remote work and economic mobility for all.

BACKGROUND

In the San Joaquin Valley, many residents in marginalized, low-income communities face poverty worsened by COVID-19. Systemic racism, disinvestment and inequality have left these communities without the infrastructure needed for economic opportunities and access to essential services, including high-speed broadband. The digital divide limits civic engagement and access to education, telehealth and jobs. Improved digital literacy and fraud awareness can empower these communities to participate in the digital economy, offering hope to break the cycle of inequality. Without these resources, they remain excluded, deepening existing disparities.

The California Public Utilities Commission, the California Department of Technology, the California State Legislature, educational institutions and California Forward are working to improve broadband access in the San Joaquin Valley. While the governor's executive order is a step forward, more action is needed to fully meet underserved communities' needs.

A comprehensive strategy should start with a "Dig Once" policy to integrate broadband into infrastructure projects, reducing costs and expanding access. Creating a permanent state-funded alternative to the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is crucial to ensure affordable high-speed internet for all, and internet service providers (ISPs) must offer low-cost plans to low-income households.

Digital literacy programs in schools, religious institutions and community centers are essential for skill development and fraud protection. Affected communities must be directly involved, with trusted organizations leading outreach efforts. Developing local and Tribal broadband services as public utilities is vital for affordable, reliable internet that supports essential services like telehealth and online banking. Workforce development programs should leverage broadband to fuel job growth, entrepreneurship and small businesses.

PATHWAY

To address disparities in broadband access, we stand united in our call to:

- Educate policymakers regarding the need for policy solutions at the federal, state, county, municipal and school board levels to promote greater infrastructure, digital literacy and

- affordable and reliable broadband service options for residents.
- Establish widespread partnerships and engagement with local community-based organizations to advocate on behalf of and organize residents so their needs and concerns are addressed and their desired outcomes are realized.
- Promote digital skills training through public and private partnerships with job placement opportunities upon completion.
- Increase funding and investments in infrastructure and services, digital literacy and affordable, reliable broadband offerings from the public, private and philanthropic sectors.
- Prioritize “Dig Once” planning with high-speed rail, electric utility buildings and new housing and commercial building projects.
- Reaffirm that broadband access must be equitable, universal, affordable and viewed as a fundamental right for all residents.