



The Case for the Stanislaus County El Plan del Pueblo (The People's Plan for Stanislaus County)

Background

In 2021, Stanislaus County and the 9 incorporated cities updated the 2022-2027 [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#) (CEDS) master document in an effort to present the, “socio-economic overview of the County with the mission of creating new jobs and providing critical services to the residents of Stanislaus County.”

Despite the proximity to the Bay area (90 miles) , Stanislaus County faces severe challenges in terms of lack of high paying jobs, lack of skills to meet current employer demands, lack of affordable housing and low per capita income. Continued growth, rising real estate costs, continued poverty and low wages for unskilled workers, water resource impacts, road infrastructure deficits, and major gaps in education and workforce preparation skills training are just a few of the many issues our communities face.

As part of the CEDS plan, a regional economic development initiative [Stanislaus 2030](#) led by the Stanislaus Community Foundation consisted of a collaboration among business, government and civic stakeholders to create and deliver a joint strategy and an investment plan for regional economic growth and opportunities for the coming decade.

The mission of Stanislaus 2030 is to create pathways for Stanislaus County residents to achieve **economic mobility** by **building an economy that is diverse, inclusive, connected, vibrant and sustainable**.

The Stanislaus 2030 initiative began in summer of 2021 and included a leadership council of 100 leaders representing the community and executive committee of 31 private public and civic leaders representing geographic demographic and sectors of the community as well an elected officials round table of city, county, state and federal elected representatives.



A small number of residents (**ASK DEBRIEF FOR NUMBER**) of Stanislaus County provided input through one-on-one interviews, listing sessions, focus groups, digital surveys and community forums led by [Debrief Methods](#).

Of special interest to the West Modesto Community Collaborative and like-minded community capacity building organizations was the highlights and takeaways from residents living in “developing neighborhoods,” i.e, underserved communities of color which included the following:

Developing Neighborhoods

Highlights and takeaways.

Highlights



View the Economy as an Access Issue
Concerns that a lack of access to essential services (e.g., banking, public transportation, healthy food) hinders economic vitality.



Perception Hinders Growth
Residents point to closed store-fronts, lack of maintained public spaces, and dirty streets prevent business growth and push businesses out.



Educational Disparities
Believe lack of school quality in poor areas creates poverty because children are less interested in college and not a degree is needed for a good job.

Takeaways

1

Community revitalization is viewed as helping grow, attract, and keep business

2

A strong belief that racial and income discrimination keeps communities poor

3

Lack of trust and information keeps the underground economy from mainstream

4

Legal status, criminal records, and debt burdens create hurdles to employment

The takeaways clearly amplify what many BIPOC living in Stanislaus County underserved neighborhoods continue to voice, “racial and income discrimination keeps communities (of color) poor and lack of trust and information keeps the underground economy from mainstream.

Other [notable data findings](#) from Stanislaus 2030 related to the disparity of people of color stating:

1. Over half of Stanislaus County’s residents and 62% of its children belong to families that struggle to afford necessities, such as nutritious food, suitable housing, and childcare.



2. Most of these “struggling families” (74%) contain at least one working adult. Most of the workers in these families (83%) have a degree. Over a third have some postsecondary education.
3. The high ratio of people in struggling families largely reflects the high cost of living in Northern California, but also reflects the poor quality of jobs in Stanislaus County.
4. Only 13% of jobs in the county are “good jobs” and only 22% of jobs will lead an incumbent worker to a good job within 10 years, leaving a huge gap of nearly 41,000 struggling workers in the county who need a good job that does not currently exist.

While the findings of the Stanislaus 2030 Investment Blueprint are critical to the County's efforts in aligning federal, state and local funding and opportunities what the initiative has failed to accomplish is recognizing and identifying the racial, social and economic challenges faced by our underserved BIPOC, immigrant and monolingual residents as well as the economic value that our farm working families whether documented or not bring to the vitality of Stanislaus County.

El Plan del Pueblo aka the People's Plan for Economic Justice

The People's Plan for Stanislaus County, El Plan Del Pueblo is an underserved community, resident-driven effort to tackle economic and social challenges that will serve as “a roadmap for economic policies and projects to develop local, grassroots-based solutions focused on job creation that is sustainable and community-owned to create an economy where all residents can thrive, not just industry ag and manufacturing titans.

Different from traditional economic planning efforts (top-down leadership led), the People's Plan relies on BIPOC resident engagement and innovative strategies that put people first in inclusive economic planning (grassroots bottom-up solutions and leadership).

High income inequality, low economic mobility, and persistent poverty raise serious questions about the economic future for low-income families. We cannot disentangle income inequality



from issues of racial equity, given the disproportionate share of people of color at the low end of Stanislaus County's economic spectrum.

The People's plan will piggyback on the data book and findings presented in Stanislaus 2030 as well as address **barriers to work** from the lived experience of our underserved, underinvested communities of color. The barriers to opportunity go beyond income and drive disparities in health, education, and housing across race and region; identifying and proactively addressing these barriers are necessary to ensure economic vitality now and for the future of residents of Stanislaus County.

The Plan del Pueblo will address **systemic disparities**. Persistent disparities across race, gender, and region demand more intentional policy efforts to overcome them. Historical patterns of underinvestment in low-income neighborhoods have contributed to disparities in income, education, health care, and housing. These patterns cannot be repeated. Policymakers, elected officials, business, and industry leaders will need to take action to reverse these trends and to identify the structural barriers that perpetuate these divides.

The Plan del Pueblo will address **economic mobility investments and job opportunities for future generations** in mind not based on the needs of existing industries but with the lens of generational shifts in sectors and the changing labor market, future employment and industry patterns—including changes in remote work, skill/education requirements, automation, technology to ensure state and federal funding opportunities respond to these changes and plan for the future of the labor market, not its past.

The Framework

Organizing grassroots efforts towards economic justice is an ongoing process that requires dedication, commitment, and a willingness to work together towards shared goals.



Needs Assessment

- Identify and share the specific economic injustices that the low-income monolingual community faces, such as low wages, lack of affordable housing, limited access to healthcare, or lack of job opportunities with our residents living in underserved communities of color.
 - Data to be provided by Dr. Manuel Pastor, UC Merced Labor Center, Debrief, relating to the economic lens of our underserved population and farm working communities.
 - Data sets needed: Demographics of low-income community in Stanislaus County, Forecast the prospects for future job and industries in order to get to the living wage of \$28/hour
What are the barriers to economic justice, i.e. transportation, housing, language, education, access, infrastructure, health disparities. What kind of economic investments make sense for the underserved communities of color vs what the leadership stakeholders put together in Stanislaus 2030.

Define the Problem to Residents

- Identify the specific economic injustices that low-income monolingual communities are facing. This could include issues such as low wages, lack of access to affordable housing, limited access to quality education and healthcare, and systemic racism.
- Conduct research to gather data on the extent of these problems and how they are affecting the community.
- Use this information to develop a clear and concise problem statement that can be used to guide the People's Plan efforts
- Build Trust and Leadership within Residents: Building trust with our residents is crucial for success. This can be achieved by engaging community members in the decision-making process and demonstrating that their input is valued related to economic justice.



- Conduct a needs assessment to identify the challenges and barriers to economic mobility faced by the community. This assessment should involve the community members themselves, as they will have firsthand knowledge of the issues they face.

- Build a Stakeholder Coalition of Partners: It's essential to build a coalition of individuals and organizations that share a commitment to economic justice. This coalition can provide additional support and resources to the community. Identify potential allies, such as community organizations, labor unions, or religious groups, who can support the organizing and outreach efforts.
 - Project Sentinel (Housing)
 - CRLA Foundation
 - El Concilio
 - Faith in the Valley
 - NAACP
 - Tuolumne River Trust
 - Latino Giving Circle
 - Latino Community Roundtable
 - Invest in Me
 - Grayson Community
 - John Mataka
 - Ben Nakamura
 - Oakdale
 - Ceres - Mayor Javier Lopez
 - Turlock
 - Empire MAC
 - Salida MAC
 - Latino Leaders
 - Newman - Crema y Nata
 - Hughson
 - Riverbank
 - Waterford
 - Migrant Housing Centers - Housing Authority
 - CVOC - Farmworkers (Migrant Community)



- Mothers of West Modesto

Building Awareness, Momentum and Engagement

- Educate underserved residents throughout Stanislaus County and the nine cities about economic justice and its relevance to their lives through community events, social media, and local media coverage.
- Develop Goals and Objectives: After identifying the community's issues and building a coalition, develop a campaign strategy that is focused on achieving economic justice. This strategy should include a clear set of goals, tactics, and Set goals and objectives
 - Develop specific, measurable, and achievable goals for the organizing efforts. These goals should be focused on addressing the economic injustices identified in step one.
 - Break down each goal into smaller, more manageable objectives.
 - Assign timelines and deadlines for each objective.
- Build a core group of committed community members who are interested in organizing around economic justice and empower them to become leaders in the effort, providing incentives for participation.
- Develop clear messaging and outreach materials that resonate with the monolingual community. To ensure that monolingual community members can participate fully, it is crucial to use multilingual materials. This includes video, flyers, posters, and social media engagement.

Mobilization, Outreach and Action

- Build momentum and energy for economic justice through community meetings, host community events such as town hall meetings, community forums, and rallies to raise awareness about economic justice issues and build support focusing on specific



economic justice issues, such as affordable housing initiatives, etc.

- Mobilize the community: Use social media, phone banking, and door-to-door canvassing to mobilize the community and encourage them to get involved in the campaign actions, such as phone banking, letter writing, and public speaking, to demand policy changes that promote economic justice.
- Elected Officials Accountability and Education: Meet with local elected officials to discuss economic justice issues and hold them accountable for their actions related to racial and economic equity, this includes allocating funding that is culturally responsive to the needs of the community. This may include lobbying for policy changes or advocating for budget allocations that benefit low-income communities.

Publish Findings for El Plan del Pueblo



People's Plan Campaign Launch (June 7)

Outreach and Engagement:

Update Outreach Flyer - El Plan Del Pueblo, the People's Plan, Social Media Outreach, Community Partner Outreach

Proposed Agenda June 7:

Welcome and Introductions

Recap of 2022 Community Builders Wins

El Plan Del Pueblo (Just San Bernardino)

Stanislaus 2030

Debrief Data

Stanislaus Community Foundation

USC Data - Dr. Manuel Pastor

UC Merced Data - Ana Padilla

Next Steps and Timeline



Example timeline for grassroots organizing campaign aimed at achieving economic justice for low-income monolingual communities:

Year 1

- Month 1: Develop problem statement and set goals and objectives
- Months 2-3: Conduct community outreach and education
- Months 4-6: Build relationships with stakeholders and allies
- Months 7-9: Mobilize community members and hold direct actions
- Months 10-12: Conduct advocacy and lobbying efforts with elected officials

Year 2

- Months 1-3: Continue community education and outreach
- Months 4-6: Develop and launch a media campaign to raise awareness of the economic injustices faced by low-income monolingual communities
- Months 7-9: Conduct targeted advocacy and lobbying efforts to secure policy changes
- Months 10-12: Evaluate progress and make adjustments to the strategy as needed

Year 3

- Months 1-6: Continue outreach and advocacy efforts
- Months 7-9: Launch a campaign to secure increased funding for community resources and services
- Months 10-12: Celebrate successes and continue to evaluate and refine the strategy for ongoing efforts.



Overview of Themes for El Plan Del Pueblo

Economic Justice: Low-income communities often experience higher rates of poverty, limited access to resources and opportunities, and economic exploitation. Addressing economic injustice is crucial to uplift these communities, provide them with equitable opportunities for income generation, and reduce the wealth gap.

Racial Justice: Low-income communities are disproportionately composed of racial and ethnic minorities due to historical and systemic factors. They often face discrimination, limited access to quality education, employment opportunities, and housing. Addressing racial injustice is essential to ensure equal treatment, opportunities, and the elimination of disparities faced by these communities.

Education Equity: Low-income communities often have limited access to quality education due to resource disparities, underfunded schools, and inadequate support systems. Ensuring education equity is important to provide equal educational opportunities and address the achievement gap experienced by these communities.

Environmental Justice: Low-income communities are frequently located in areas with environmental hazards, pollution, and limited access to green spaces. They bear a disproportionate burden of environmental degradation and its associated health risks. Environmental justice efforts aim to address these disparities, promote sustainable development, and ensure that these communities have a healthy and safe environment.



Criminal Justice Reform: Low-income communities often face over-policing, harsh sentencing, and limited access to legal representation, leading to a cycle of incarceration and perpetuating systemic inequalities. Criminal justice reform is essential to address these issues, reduce mass incarceration, and ensure fair and equitable treatment within the justice system.

Healthcare Equity: Low-income communities often lack access to affordable and quality healthcare services, leading to disparities in health outcomes. Addressing healthcare equity is crucial to ensure that these communities have equal access to healthcare facilities, preventive care, and resources to address health disparities.

Housing Justice: Low-income communities often face challenges such as homelessness, inadequate housing conditions, and housing insecurity due to unaffordability. Ensuring housing justice involves advocating for affordable housing options, fair housing policies, and protection against eviction and homelessness.



Pláticas Con El Pueblo - Temas de conversación Conversations with Community - Table Topics

Economic Inequality and Poverty:

Can you share your experiences regarding economic inequality within your community?

How does poverty affect your day-to-day life, and what measures do you think could help alleviate this?

Desigualdad Económica y Pobreza:

¿Puede compartir sus experiencias sobre la desigualdad económica dentro de su comunidad?

¿Cómo afecta la pobreza a su vida diaria y qué medidas cree que podrían ayudar a aliviarla?

Access to Opportunities:

What are some of the barriers you've encountered in seeking better employment or income generation opportunities?

What resources or support do you think would help overcome these barriers?

Acceso a Oportunidades:

¿Cuáles son algunas de las barreras que ha encontrado al buscar mejores oportunidades de empleo o generación de ingresos?

¿Qué recursos o apoyo cree que ayudarían a superar estas barreras?



Exploitation:

Have you or anyone you know experienced economic exploitation, such as wage theft or unfair work conditions? Can you share more about these experiences? What changes would you like to see in the workplace to protect workers from such exploitation?

Explotación:

¿Usted o alguien que conoce ha experimentado explotación económica, como robo de salarios o condiciones de trabajo injustas? ¿Puede compartir más sobre estas experiencias?

¿Qué cambios le gustaría ver en el lugar de trabajo para proteger a los trabajadores de tal explotación?

Education:

Have you or your children faced any barriers to accessing quality education? If yes, can you describe these barriers?

What resources or changes do you think would help improve educational opportunities for your community?

Educación:

¿Usted o sus hijos han enfrentado barreras para acceder a una educación de calidad? Si es así, ¿puede describir estas barreras?

¿Qué recursos o cambios cree que ayudarían a mejorar las oportunidades educativas para su comunidad?



Access to Healthcare:

Have you faced any challenges in accessing healthcare services? If so, can you share more about these experiences?

How do you think healthcare accessibility can be improved in your community?

Acceso a la Atención Médica:

¿Ha enfrentado desafíos para acceder a los servicios de atención médica? Si es así, ¿puede compartir más sobre estas experiencias?

¿Cómo cree que se puede mejorar la accesibilidad de la atención médica en su comunidad?

Housing:

Have you encountered any difficulties in securing stable, affordable housing?

Can you describe these experiences?

What measures do you think would help improve access to quality, affordable housing in your community?

Vivienda:

¿Ha encontrado dificultades para asegurar una vivienda estable y asequible?

¿Puede describir estas experiencias?

¿Qué medidas cree que ayudarían a mejorar el acceso a una vivienda de calidad y asequible en su comunidad?

Access to Government Services:

Have you faced any challenges in accessing government services or understanding your rights due to language barriers or other issues?

What changes or resources do you think would improve access to these services?



Acceso a Servicios Gubernamentales:

¿Ha enfrentado desafíos para acceder a los servicios gubernamentales o entender sus derechos debido a barreras del idioma u otros problemas?
¿Qué cambios o recursos cree que mejorarían el acceso a estos servicios?

Financial Literacy:

Can you share your experiences in understanding financial services, like banking, loans, or taxes?
What resources or programs would help improve your financial literacy?

Educación Financiera:

¿Puede compartir sus experiencias en entender los servicios financieros, como la banca, los préstamos o los impuestos?
¿Qué recursos o programas ayudarían a mejorar su educación financiera?

Community Empowerment:

How do you think your community can come together to address these issues of economic justice?
What roles can individuals, community organizations, and government play in uplifting your community economically?

Empoderamiento Comunitario:

¿Cómo cree que su comunidad puede unirse para abordar estos problemas de justicia económica?
¿Qué roles pueden desempeñar los individuos, las organizaciones comunitarias y el gobierno en el mejoramiento económico de su comunidad?



Art & Culture

Community Interests:

What types of art and culture activities are you most interested in?

Are there any forms of art or cultural traditions that you think our community needs more of?

Intereses Comunitarios:

¿Qué tipos de actividades de arte y cultura te interesan más?

¿Hay alguna forma de arte o tradiciones culturales que crees que se necesitan más en nuestra comunidad?

Art as Expression:

How would you like to see your culture and experiences represented in art?

Arte como Expresión:

¿Cómo te gustaría ver tu cultura y experiencias representadas en el arte?

Participation and Learning:

Would you like to participate in art workshops or classes? If so, what type would you prefer (for example, painting, dance, music, theater)?

Participación y Aprendizaje:

¿Te gustaría participar en talleres o clases de arte? Si es así, ¿qué tipo te gustaría (por ejemplo, pintura, danza, música, teatro)?

Events and Performances:

What type of cultural events or shows would you like to see more of in the community?



Eventos y Actuaciones

¿Qué tipo de eventos o espectáculos culturales te gustaría ver más en la comunidad?

Art for Community Development:

How do you think art could improve our community?

Are there any places in our community where you would like to see more art?

Arte para el Desarrollo Comunitario:

¿Cómo crees que el arte podría mejorar nuestra comunidad?

¿Hay algún lugar en nuestra comunidad donde te gustaría ver más arte?

Youth Engagement:

What art and culture activities do you think would engage the youth in our community more?

Participación Juvenil:

¿Qué actividades de arte y cultura crees que involucrarían más a los jóvenes en nuestra comunidad?

Collaboration and Partnerships:

Are there local artists, cultural organizations, or community groups that you think we should work with?

Colaboración y Asociaciones:

¿Hay artistas locales, organizaciones culturales o grupos comunitarios con los que crees que deberíamos trabajar?