El Plan del Pueblo

The People's Plan for Social and Economic Justice

Acknowledgment

The creation of *El Plan del Pueblo: The People's Plan for Economic Justice* was a collective effort that involved extensive collaboration, dedication, and commitment from numerous individuals and organizations. We would like to acknowledge and express our deepest gratitude to the following contributors:

Perfecto Munoz, CEO • Miriam Nuño, PhD • Jose Cricelio Montecinos-López, PhD • Reyna Perales, Chief Program Officer • Noel Paramo, California Rural Legal Foundation • Maribel Torres, Research Consultant • Likhi Rivas, Research Lead • Blanca Marin, Executive Assistant •Karlha Arias, Korazón Konsultants

The West Modesto Community Collaborative (WMCC), in collaboration with under-represented communities, played a pivotal role in the planning and development of this report. This initiative sought to amplify the voices of the underserved and underrepresented, providing them a platform to share their perspectives on the future direction of the City of Modesto and Stanislaus County.

The development of the report required meticulous planning and community engagement over the course of two years. Numerous town hall meetings were held, featuring guest speakers who addressed the overall economic status of the county and the city. These activities raised critical questions about housing and climate resiliency, culminating in three summits focused on economic prosperity, housing, and climate resiliency in alignment with the community's overall health challenges.

This led to the development of a comprehensive questionnaire aimed at gathering opinions and recommendations to foster a healthier community. Surveys and focus groups were conducted in various parts of the City of Modesto, including West and South Modesto, the Airport district, and through community-based organizations. Our research team, representing WMCC staff, recommended expanding our efforts to include rural and other locations in Stanislaus County, resulting in a more impactful report that reflects the concerns of community members across a broader geographic area.

El Plan del Pueblo: The People's Plan for Economic Justice would not have been possible without the participation of the West Modesto People Action Council under the leadership of Ron Deloach, Chair, along with community builders, organizations, and the dedicated staff of WMCC who contributed countless hours to organizing surveys and focus groups.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Board of Directors of WMCC, whose unwavering support and commitment ensured that the voices of the community were heard. Special thanks to Jocelyn Cooper, Anita Rubio, Dr. Juan Lopez-Solorza, Homero Mejia, Joshua Clayton, Adolfo Lopez, Sergio Camarillo, Sterling Fountain, and Guadalupe Tafolla.

We are deeply grateful to our funders and to the UC Merced Labor Center for their guidance, support, and contributions to this report. A special thank you to Ana Padilla, Director of the Labor Center, Dr. Edward Flores, and Ingrid Brostrom. We also appreciate Dr. Manuel Pastor, Professor at USC Dornsife Equity Research Center, for his summit presentations, and Dr. Irva Hertz-Picciotto, Professor and Dean of the School of Public Health at UC Davis, for her wisdom and support.

In the words of The California Endowment, community power is defined as "the ability of people facing similar circumstances to develop, sustain, and grow an organized base of people who act together through democratic structures to set agendas, shift public discourse, influence who makes decisions, and cultivate ongoing relationships of mutual accountability with decision-makers that change systems." This vision has guided our efforts and will continue to inspire our work towards economic justice and community empowerment.

Thank you all for your invaluable contributions and dedication.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Methods

Results

Conclusion

Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

Background

Stanislaus County, located in the heart of California's Central Valley, is a vibrant region known for its rich agricultural heritage, diverse communities, and dynamic economy. Established in 1854, the county encompasses an area of approximately 1,515 square miles and is home to over half a million residents. The population, evenly split between males and females, has a median age of around 34 years, with 27% under 18, 58% between 18 and 64, and 15% aged 65 or older. The largest group by age is 10-14 years old (**Figure A1**).

The largest age group is children aged 10-14 years, reflecting a significant younger population alongside 27% under 18, 58% between 18 and 64, and 15% aged 65 or older (Table 1). Stanislaus County is ethnically diverse, with Hispanic or Latino residents making up 61.2% of the population, followed by non-Hispanic Whites at 25.9%, Asians at 7.3%, and African Americans at 2.7%.

Educational attainment data reveals that while 80% of residents aged 25 and older have at least a high school diploma, only 19% possess a bachelor's degree or higher, highlighting the need for increased investment in higher education. The county faces significant economic challenges, with a poverty rate of 19.4% overall, 22.2% among Latino, higher than the state average of 12.2%, and a median household income of $75,886, compared to $91,551 statewide. Additionally, educational attainment is lower, with only 18.8% of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 37.0% in the state.

The employment rate in Stanislaus County is 58.0%, slightly lower than the state average of 60%. Notably, one-third of the county's jobs offer pathways to prosperity. Despite the region's growth, over half of the county's residents and 62.0% of its children live in families that struggle to afford necessities such as nutritious food, suitable housing, and childcare. Furthermore, a significant portion of struggling families (74.0%) have at least one working adult, and most workers in these families (83.0%) hold a degree. The high percentage of people in struggling families largely reflects the high cost of living in Northern California, as well as the poor quality of jobs in Stanislaus County. Only 13.0% of jobs in the county are considered 'good jobs,' resulting in a substantial gap of nearly 41,000 workers who need better employment opportunities that currently do not exist. Younger workers aged 18-24 years constitute a significant portion of struggling workers (84%) compared to those aged 55-64 (29.0%). Workers of color are also more likely to face economic hardships, with 57.0% of Hispanic workers struggling compared to 32.0% of White workers.

To achieve self-sufficiency in Stanislaus County for more families, earnings must significantly increase from the current minimum wage of $28.58. This increase is necessary to meet the rising cost of living, which includes expenses such as housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, and nutritious food. With higher wages, families would be better equipped to afford these essentials, reduce their financial stress, and improve their overall quality of life. Moreover, higher earnings can lead to greater economic stability, allowing families to invest in education and skills development, which in turn can foster a more skilled and competitive workforce. This would not only benefit individual families but also contribute to the broader economic health and resilience of Stanislaus County.

Despite the multifaceted challenges in Stanislaus County, it is essential to hear directly from residents about their experiences and perspectives. As the ones who face these issues daily, residents provide invaluable insights into the root causes and potential solutions. Community feedback ensures that interventions and policies address the true needs and priorities of the people. Engaging residents helps them feel empowered and involved in shaping their community's future. This approach builds trust with policymakers and leads to better, long-lasting solutions. By listening to residents, we can find new ideas and use local knowledge to address economic problems, improve education, create better job opportunities, and solve health and environmental issues. Including residents' voices is essential for a thriving and equitable Stanislaus County.

In 2021, Stanislaus County and its nine incorporated cities updated the 2022-2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) master document (*ref*). This effort aimed to present a socioeconomic overview of the county with the mission of creating new jobs and providing critical services to its residents. As part of the CEDS plan, the Stanislaus Community Foundation launched the Stanislaus 2030 regional economic development initiative. This initiative involved a collaboration among business, government, and civic stakeholders to develop and implement a joint strategy and investment plan aimed at promoting regional economic growth and opportunities over the next decade (*ref*). The mission of Stanislaus 2030 is to create pathways for residents to achieve economic mobility by building a diverse, inclusive, connected, vibrant, and sustainable economy.

The Stanislaus 2030 initiative, which began in the summer of 2021, comprises a leadership council of 100 community leaders and an executive committee of 31 private, public, and civic leaders representing various geographic, demographic, and sectoral interests. Additionally, the initiative includes an elected official's roundtable with representatives from city, county, state, and federal levels. A small number of Stanislaus County residents provided input through one-on-one interviews, listening sessions, focus groups, digital surveys, and community forums facilitated by Debrief Methods.

Of particular interest to the West Modesto Community Collaborative and similar community capacity-building organizations were the insights and feedback from residents living in "developing neighborhoods," specifically underserved communities of color. These residents provided valuable perspectives on the unique challenges they face, including limited access to quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Their feedback highlighted systemic issues such as racial discrimination, economic disparities, and inadequate infrastructure. Understanding these lived experiences is crucial for developing targeted, effective interventions that can empower these communities and foster sustainable development. The highlights and takeaways included the following: 1) Community revitalization is viewed as helping grow, attract, and keep businesses, 2) A strong belief that racial and income discrimination keeps communities poor, 3) Lack of trust and information keeps the underground economy from mainstream, and 4) Legal status, criminal records, and debt burdens create hurdles to employment. The takeaways clearly amplify the concerns many BIPOC residents in Stanislaus County's underserved neighborhoods have voiced: "Racial and income discrimination keep communities of color impoverished, and a lack of trust and information prevents the underground economy from integrating into the mainstream.

While the findings of the Stanislaus 2030 Investment Blueprint are crucial for aligning federal, state, and local funding and opportunities, the initiative has fallen short in recognizing and addressing the racial, social, and economic challenges faced by our underserved BIPOC, immigrant, and monolingual residents. These communities continue to experience significant disparities in income, education, health care, and housing, which have not been adequately addressed by the current blueprint.

Furthermore, the initiative has not fully acknowledged the substantial economic contributions of our farm-working families, regardless of their documentation status. These families are the backbone of the local agricultural economy, yet their labor often goes unrecognized and undervalued. They face numerous hardships,

including poor working conditions, low wages, and limited access to essential services. Addressing these gaps requires a more inclusive approach that prioritizes the needs and voices of all community members, especially those historically marginalized. This means implementing targeted policies and programs that promote racial equity, economic justice, and social inclusion. It also involves recognizing and leveraging the strengths and contributions of all residents to create a more resilient and prosperous Stanislaus County.

To truly achieve the goals of the Stanislaus 2030 Investment Blueprint, it is imperative to engage with these communities, understand their unique challenges, and develop solutions that are both equitable and sustainable. Only by doing so can we ensure that the benefits of economic growth and development are shared by all residents, fostering a vibrant and inclusive community for future generations.

El Plan del Pueblo

El Plan Del Pueblo is a resident-driven initiative aimed at addressing economic and social challenges in underserved communities. This effort serves as a roadmap for developing local, grassroots-based solutions focused on sustainable, community-owned job creation. The goal is to build an economy where all residents can thrive, not just the major players in agriculture and manufacturing.

Unlike traditional top-down economic planning efforts, the People's Plan prioritizes BIPOC resident engagement and employs innovative, people-first strategies. This grassroots, bottom-up approach emphasizes inclusive economic planning and leadership, ensuring that solutions are community-driven. High income inequality, low economic mobility, and persistent poverty cast serious doubts on the economic future for low-income families. Addressing these issues requires acknowledging the link between income inequality and racial equity, as people of color are disproportionately represented at the lower end of Stanislaus County's economic spectrum.

The People's Plan will build on the data and findings presented in Stanislaus 2030, while specifically addressing

work-related barriers experienced by our underserved and underinvested communities of color. These barriers extend beyond income and contribute to disparities in health, education, and housing across racial and regional lines. Identifying and proactively addressing these obstacles is essential to ensuring economic vitality now and for the future of Stanislaus County residents.

El Plan del Pueblo will address systemic disparities, recognizing the need for intentional policy efforts to overcome persistent inequities across race, gender, and region. Historical patterns of underinvestment in low-income neighborhoods have led to significant disparities in income, education, healthcare, and housing. These patterns must not be repeated. Policymakers, elected officials, and business and industry leaders must take decisive action to reverse these trends and identify the structural barriers that perpetuate these divides.

El Plan del Pueblo will focus on economic mobility investments and job opportunities with future generations in mind. Instead of catering solely to the needs of existing industries, the plan will consider generational shifts in sectors and the evolving

labor market. This includes anticipating future employment and industry patterns, such as changes in remote work, skill and education requirements, automation, and technology. The goal is to ensure that state and federal funding opportunities respond to these changes and prepare for the future labor market, not just the past.

El Plan del Pueblo Framework for Grassroots Economic Justice

Organizing grassroots efforts towards economic justice is an ongoing process that demands dedication, commitment, and a collaborative spirit. This framework outlines the essential steps and principles to effectively mobilize and empower communities in the pursuit of economic equity:

1. **Establish a Clear Vision, Goals, and Needs Assessment**

   - Define a shared vision for economic justice that resonates with the community's aspirations.
   - Set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals to guide efforts and track progress.
   - Identity 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.
   - 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.

2. **Engage and Empower the Community**

   - Conduct outreach to ensure diverse community participation, particularly from historically marginalized groups in Stanislaus County.
   - Create ways for community members to share their experiences, insights, and ideas through townhalls, conference, surveys and focus groups.
   - Develop leadership skills within the community by offering training and support for emerging leaders.

3. **Build Strong Coalitions and Partnerships**

   - For alliances with local organizations, advocacy groups, faith-based institutions, and other stakeholders who share the vision for economic justice.
   - Foster a sense of unity and purpose by organizing joint initiatives and collaborative projects.
   - 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
- 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

4. **Conduct Research and Gather Data**

- Collect data on economic disparities, social inequalities, and community needs to inform strategies and actions.
- Use both qualitative and quantitative research methods to capture a comprehensive understanding of the issues in Stanislaus County.

5. **Develop and Implement Strategic Actions**

- Create an action plan that outlines concrete steps to address economic injustices, such as advocating for policy changes, increasing access to resources, and promoting fair labor practices.
- Prioritize initiatives that have the potential for significant impact and scalability.

6. **Advocate for Policy Changes**

- Engage with policymakers at local, state, and federal levels to promote legislation and policies that advance economic justice.
- Organize campaigns, petitions, and public events to raise awareness.

7. **Build Awareness, Momentum, and Engagement**

- Utilize various communication channels, including social media, newsletters, and local media, to disseminate information and keep the community informed.
- Share success stories and progress updates to maintain momentum and encourage continued involvement in the community.

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.

8. **Mobilization, Outreach, and Action**

- Build momentum and energy for economic justice by organizing community meetings and hosting events such as town hall meetings, community forums, and rallies. These events should aim to raise awareness about economic justice issues and garner support for initiatives like affordable housing and other critical concerns.

- Mobilize the community through social media, phone banking, and door-to-door canvassing. Encourage community members to participate in campaign actions, including phone banking, letter writing, and public speaking, to demand policy changes that promote economic justice.

- Engage with local elected officials to discuss economic justice issues and hold them accountable for their actions related to racial and economic equity. Advocate for the allocation of funding that is culturally responsive to the needs of the community. This may involve lobbying for policy changes or pushing for budget allocations that benefit low-income communities.

El Plan del Pueblo Goals

The People's Plan for Economic Justice of Stanislaus County, also known as El Plan del Pueblo, is modeled after a successful initiative in San Bernardino aimed at addressing long-standing racial inequities. In San Bernardino, advocates developed their plan throughout 2021 by conducting surveys, focus groups, and coalition-building through the Just SB alliance. This effort focused on building community capacity to lead economic development and informing policymakers about the urgent needs of underserved communities. The Just SB alliance identified key issues such as housing, public safety, education, healthcare, and jobs through their engagement. They have used their report to advocate for equitable development in collaboration with the community.

In Stanislaus County, we are adopting a similar approach by building the People's Plan in collaboration with the community and partners to transform how local decision-makers address the region's numerous challenges. Launched in June 2023, the Plan is currently focused on gathering in-depth input from underserved communities to gain a clearer understanding of residents' lived experiences. While official data provides some insight, it is essential to engage directly with community members to work together towards a more equitable region.

The short-term goals of this project are to:

1) Conduct outreach to community members and organizations through presentations and community meetings to inform them about the People's Plan, 2) Research models for equitable community engagement and policy change that focus on the experiences of historically underrepresented communities, 3) Gather input on community needs through surveys and focus groups, and 4) Produce reports and documents summarizing the results of outreach activities and identifying community needs in the region.

The long-term goals of this project are to:

1) Conduct ongoing surveys and focus groups on priority areas identified by the community, including housing, workforce development, transportation, public spaces, healthcare, and environmental quality/resilience, and 2) Build relationships with communities in innovative ways to create coalitions for equitable development and governance.

The goal of this report is to summarize the findings from surveys and focus groups and provide recommendations for the ongoing efforts. It highlights lessons learned and identifies opportunities for continued community engagement in the specific areas targeted at the program's inception. The summary of the surveys and focus groups will focus on findings in five key areas: 1) Civic Engagement and Community Building, 2) Economic and Social Health, 3) Transportation Options and Equity, 4) Housing Experiences and Development, and 5) Climate Resilience.

Approach for Recruiting Survey and Focus Group Participation

Our recruitment strategy aimed to identify, engage, and secure participation from individuals who met specific demographic criteria relevant to our research objectives. To ensure a diverse and representative sample, we initially defined our target audience by pinpointing key demographics such as age, gender, location, and occupation. Working closely with our county's partners, who serve our target demographic, we collaborated on recruiting participants for the survey and focus group. To secure their involvement, we scheduled meetings to clearly communicate the study's purpose and the benefits of participation. These discussions covered the study's objectives, potential impact, detailed information about the survey and focus group (including duration, format, and requirements), as well as incentives offered for participation.

Project Timeline and Activities

Planning Phase: March-December 2022

- Launch- Held our first Community Builders Advocacy Project meeting (March)

    Topic:

    o   What is community engagement and why is it important
    o   Understanding today to transform tomorrow

Speakers:

- o Ron: West Modesto People of Action Council
- o Tony Madrigal: Former city council member
- o Manuel Pastor: Professor at University of Southern California

- Held monthly community meetings to discuss concerns and changes to improve West Modesto *(March-Dec 2022)*: Brough in stakeholders and local government officials

  - o City and county members- Future of mini golf course, housing element for unincorporated areas, etc.
  - o Mayor, Sheriff department, and county supervisor

- Held a Community Builders Dinner (June) "Be part of the change"

  - o Guest Speakers

During the planning phase of the Community Builders project, our primary focus was on engaging the community and fostering collaboration. We initiated the project by actively involving residents, key stakeholders, and local officials to establish connections and discuss residents' concerns, changes for improvement, and ongoing or upcoming projects in the community. These meetings provided residents ample opportunities to express concerns and ask questions, ensuring their feedback guided the project's direction.

January-December 2023:

- January-December: Continuation of monthly Community Builders

- April-June: Recruitment
  - o Recruitment of Project Coordinator and Economic Analyst

- June: Launch of Peoples Plan framework
  - o After a 3-hour summit of interactive engagement and breakout tables community helped us identify 5 priority areas for the Peoples Plan

- July-August: Planning of Peoples Plan activities
  - o Development of survey and focus group script
  - o Outreach material
  - o Research
  - o Roadmap for survey and focus groups

- September-December: Launch of focus groups and surveys

From January to December 2023, the Community Builders meetings continued monthly. Between April and June, we focused on recruitment efforts, successfully onboarding a Project Coordinator and an Economic Analyst. In June, we launched the Peoples Plan framework, following a 3-hour summit that featured interactive engagement and breakout tables, during which the community helped identify five priority areas for the Peoples Plan. In July and August, we planned the Peoples Plan activities, which included the development of a survey and focus group script, creation of outreach materials, conducting research, and establishing a roadmap for surveys and focus groups. From September to December 2023, we launched the focus groups and surveys,

further advancing our community engagement and data collection efforts.

January-June 2024:

- January-June: Continuation of monthly Community Builders meetings
- January-April: Continuation of focus groups and surveys
- March: Climate Resilience Summit

    o Discussion on climate change effects on health, climate effect on economic development, and workforce and community discussion

    o Speakers

- May-June: Data Analysis and progress report

From January to June 2024, the Community Builders meetings continued monthly. During this period, from January to April 2024, we also carried on with the focus groups and surveys. In March, we hosted the Climate Resilience Summit, which included discussions on the effects of climate change on health, economic development, and the workforce, as well as community discussions and presentations by various speakers. In May and June 2024, we focused on data analysis and compiled a progress report to evaluate the outcomes and insights gained from these activities.

METHODS

This progress report describes the People's Plan (El Plan del Pueblo) findings of the first two years of this program. As a grassroots initiative aimed at tacking the pressing economic challenges and social issues within the communities in Stanislaus, this collaborative seeks to empower residents by fostering participation, innovation, and sustainable solutions to enhance the overall well-being and equity in the community. To ensure the People's Plan is truly reflective of the community's needs and aspirations, we employed a comprehensive approach involving surveys and focus groups.

Procedures and Analysis

Surveys

Two surveys were conducted among Stanislaus County residents to assess their perspectives on key areas: 1) Civic Engagement and Community Building, 2) Economic and Social Health, 3) Transportation Options and Equity, 4) Housing Experiences and Development, and 5) Climate Resilience. Prior to implementation, these surveys were meticulously designed in both Spanish and English to gather comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data on various community issues. Complete surveys can be found in the Appendix Section.

Surveys were distributed through multiple channels, including online platforms, community centers, schools, and local business, ensuring broad participation (**Figure 1**: map). Efforts were made to reach underrepresented and marginalized groups. Responses were collected and analyzed to identify key trends, common concerns, and areas requiring immediate attention. The data will help prioritize initiatives and allocation resources effectively in future efforts.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus groups were organized to facilitate in-depth discussions on the specific topics that were also included in the survey. Focus groups participants consisted of diverse community members, ensuring a wide range of perspectives. Skilled and trained facilitators guided the discussions, encouraging participants to share their experiences, ideas, and solutions. This qualitative data provides deeper insights into the community needs. Complete guide used to conduct the focus group discussions can be found in the Appendix Section.

Regular Meetings

Team meetings were held every Friday for the Peoples Plan to monitor progress, ensure accountability, maintain clear communication, address challenges, align goals, and foster collaboration and support. These weekly check-ins were vital in keeping the team focused and on track. By meeting regularly, the team ensured that the Peoples Plan progressed steadily and in the right direction. This consistent interaction allowed for timely problem-solving, continuous improvement, and reinforced the collective commitment to the project's success.

Community meetings

Monthly community meetings were held every 2nd Wednesday of the month from 10 am 12 pm. These gatherings actively engage the community with the People Plan initiative, providing a platform for residents to express their opinions, share concerns, and contribute ideas that shape the project's

direction and priorities. The WMCC team utilizes these meetings to promote transparency by sharing updates on project progress, upcoming events, and gather valuable feedback and input from attendees.

Furthermore, these meetings offer a valuable opportunity to educate residents and increase awareness about ongoing community projects and developments aligned with the priorities of the Peoples Plan. We actively engage local stakeholders and organizations to present updates and discuss these initiatives, promoting transparency and holding them accountable for their contributions and commitments.

These meetings also play a crucial role in building relationships among community members, stakeholders, and project organizers. By facilitating networking and mutual support, these relationships strengthen collaboration and contribute to the sustainability and effectiveness of the initiative.

RESULTS

Quantitative Findings

Table 1 presents a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of the Stanislaus County residents who participated in the survey. A total of 289 residents completed the survey, with 56.4% respondents participating in Spanish. The high level of bilingual engagement highlights the county's diverse linguistic landscape and underscores the importance of providing Spanish-language resources to gather comprehensive community insights. The majority of survey participants were between the ages of 36 and 45 (33.3%), followed by those aged 46 to 59 (27.5%). Additionally, half of the respondents indicated that their highest level of education was high school.

Additionally, only 11% of participants completed a four-year college or university degree, and 1.4% reporting a postgraduate education. A significant proportion of participants (72.3%) identified as White, with an overwhelming majority (95.4%) also reporting Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. The survey population was predominantly female, comprising 83.6% of respondents. In terms of sexual orientation, 93.7% identified as heterosexual or straight. Additionally, 7.3% of participants reported having disabilities, and 18.7% indicated that English was spoken in their households. A significant portion of participants were born in Latin America (76.0%), while the remaining 23.3% were born in the United States. The survey results revealed significant economic challenges in Stanislaus County communities, with 61.7% of participants reporting an annual family income of less than $35,000. Notably, all respondents reported annual household incomes significantly lower than California's average household income of $90,901.
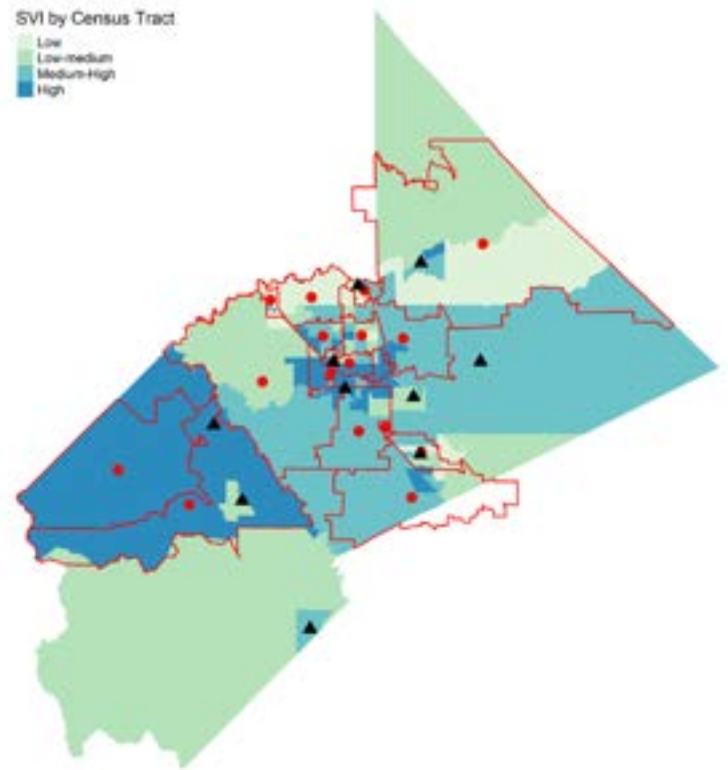
Significant differences were observed among survey participants based on the language in which they completed the survey, especially race, sex and concerning educational attainment. Participants who completed the survey in English were less likely to identify as White compared to those that completed the survey in Spanish. Despite this difference in facial identification, the proportion of participants identifying as Hispanic or Latino was similarly high in both groups. This suggests that while there is racial diversity among English-speaking participants, the Hispanic or Latino identity is prevalent regardless of the language in which the survey was completed.

Overall, out project captured the opinions of a limited number of males (N=25, 16.4%). A significantly higher proportion of males completed the survey in English (34.3%) compared to those who completed it in Spanish (11.1%).

Participants who completed the survey in English reported higher rates of college or higher education (31.5%) compared to those who completed the survey in Spanish (24.3%).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants.

Variable	All N=289	Spanish N=126 (43.6%)	English N=163 (56.4%)
Age in years, N (%)			
16 to 26	18 (11.8)	10 (8.5)	8 (22.9)
26 to 36	11 (7.2)	10 (8.5)	1 (2.9)
36 to 46	51 (33.3)	40 (33.9)	11 (31.4)
46 to 59	42 (27.5)	37 (31.4)	5 (14.3)
59 to 69	19 (12.4)	12 (10.2)	7 (20.0)
69 and above	12 (7.8)	9 (7.6)	3 (8.6)
Completed Education, N (%)			
Less than high school	35 (24.0)	30 (27.0)	5 (14.3)
High school	73 (50.0)	54 (48.6)	19 (54.3)
2-year college	20 (13.7)	13 (11.7)	7 (20.0)
4-year college or university	16 (11.0)	13 (11.7)	3 (8.6)
Post-graduate	2 (1.4)	1 (0.9)	1 (2.9)
Race, N (%)			
White	86 (72.3)	74 (88.1)	12 (34.3)
African American or Black	3 (2.5)	2 (2.4)	1 (2.9)
Native American or American Indian	2 (1.7)	1 (1.2)	1 (2.9)
Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	1 (0.8)	1 (1.2)	0 (0.0)
Other	27 (22.7)	6 (7.1)	21 (60.0)
Hispanic or Latino, N (%)			
Yes	146 (95.4)	114 (96.6)	32 (91.4)
No	7 (4.6)	4 (3.4)	3 (8.6)
Gender, N (%)			
Female	127 (83.6)	104 (88.9)	23 (65.7)
Male	25 (16.4)	13 (11.1)	12 (34.3)
Gender, N (%)			
Heterosexual or straight	104 (93.7)	73 (96.0)	31 (88.6)
Other	3 (2.7)	0 (0.0)	3 (8.6)
Decline to Answer	2 (1.8)	2 (2.6)	0 (0.0)
Gay or Lesbian	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.9)
Bisexual	1 (0.9)	1 (1.3)	0 (0.0)
Disability, N (%)			
No	135 (89.4)	103 (88.8)	32 (91.4)
Yes	11 (7.3)	8 (6.9)	3 (8.6)
Unsure	3 (2.0)	3 (2.6)	0 (0.0)
Decline to Answer	2 (1.3)	2 (1.7)	0 (0.0)
Household Language, N (%)			
Spanish	122 (81.3)	103 (89.6)	19 (54.3)
English	28 (18.7)	12 (10.4)	16 (45.7)

Birthplace, N (%)			
Latin America	111 (76.0)	94 (84.7)	17 (48.6)
The United States	34 (23.3)	16 (14.4)	18 (51.4)
Philippines	1 (0.7)	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)
Annual Family Income, N (%)			
< $35,000	90 (61.7)	64 (57.6)	26 (74.3)
$35,000 to $45,000	25 (17.1)	20 (18.0)	5 (14.3)
$45,000 to $55,000	12 (8.2)	12 (10.8)	0 (0.0)
$55,000 to $75,000	13 (8.9)	9 (8.1)	4 (11.4)
Greater than $75,000	6 (4.1)	6 (5.4)	0 (0.0)

*master's degree or higher

Table 2 provides a detailed overview of the housing and home characteristics of survey participants. Nearly half of the respondents (47.4%) reported living at their current residence for more than 10 years. Homeownership and renting were nearly evenly split among participants, with 49.3% indicating they rented their homes, and a comparable proportion reporting homeownership.

Most participants reported living with family members (55.0%) or partners (36.2%), while a smaller proportion (7.4%) indicated they live alone. Additionally, most respondents had children, with 42.4% having 1-2 children and 24.8% having 3-4 children. Notably, 28.8% of participants reported having no children.

When comparing the housing and home characteristics between English and Spanish survey respondents, a notable disparity emerged. A significantly higher proportion of English-speaking participants (77.1%) reported living in their current home for over 10 years, compared to just 38.5% of Spanish-speaking participants. This suggests a higher level of long-term stability in housing among the English-speaking respondents. A significantly higher proportion of participants who completed the survey in English (42.9%) reported having no children, compared to those who completed the survey in Spanish (22.2%).

Table 2. Home and Housing Characteristics of Survey Participants.

Variables	N=289	Spanish N=126 (43.6%)	English N=163 (56.4%)
How long lived in current residence			
1-4 years	40 (26.3)	38 (32.5)	2 (5.7)
4-7 years	23 (15.1)	21 (17.9)	2 (5.7)
7 to 10 years	17 (11.2)	13 (11.1)	4 (11.4)
More than 10 years	72 (47.4)	45 (38.5)	27 (77.1)
Housing situation			
Rent	69 (49.3)	60 (55.6)	9 (28.1)
Own	61 (43.6)	42 (38.9)	19 (59.4)
No applicable	6 (4.3)	6 (5.6)	0 (0.0)
Other	4 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	4 (12.5)
Living situation			
With relatives or family	82 (55.0)	54 (47.4)	28 (80.0)
With a partner	54 (36.2)	49 (43.0)	5 (14.3)
Alone	11 (7.4)	10 (8.8)	1 (2.9)
With friends and other	2 (1.3)	1 (0.9)	1 (2.9)
Children under 18 years in household			
0	35 (28.0)	20 (22.2)	15 (42.9)
1-2	53 (42.4)	39 (43.3)	14 (40.0)
3-4	31 (24.8)	25 (27.8)	6 (17.1)
4-5	4 (3.2)	4 (4.4)	0 (0.0)
7 or more	2 (1.6)	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)

Civil Engagement and Community Building

In this section we present the findings of the survey about concepts focused on the involvement or awareness of community members in the social, economic, and political life of their community, aimed at improving the quality of life and fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment.

When respondents were asked about whether they belive the region provides residents, including youth, with adequate opporunities to participate in its economic, cultural and political development, only 30.3% responsed positively. However, 44.1% acknowledged that the region offers adequate opportunities such cultural centers, museums, and culturally specific markets, and other gathering spaces to learn about and undersntand the diverse community.

Respondents were also asked about their participation in local or county workshops, with 36.4% indicating they had attended such events. Among those who had previously participated in workshops, 46.2% reported attending one workshop, 26.4% attended two workshops, 10.7% attended three workshops, and 16.8% participated in more than three workshops.

Familiarity with key city planning processes was relatively low: only 23.9% were aware of the city's housing element process, and just 17.8% were familiar with the city's general plan. Awareness of local governance was slightly higher, with 43.5% of respondents knowing their city district county, and 28.5% able to name their current city council members. Additionally, only 38.1% of participants felt that government staff and elected or appointed officials valued their opinions.

In summary, when respondents were asked about their satisfaction with current opportunities to voice their opinions on county issues, onlly 7.5% of participants expressed being very satisfied, and an additional 18.0% responded being somewhat satisfied. The low satisfaction levels with current opportunities for residents to voice their concerns on county issues underscore the need for improved communication, increased civic engagement, enhanced trust and transparency, targeted outreach, and better resource allocation. Addressing these areas can foster more effective and inclusive community participation in local governance.

Only 30.3% of respondents agreed that the Stanislaus County region provides residents, including youth, with adequate opportunities to participate in the region's economic, cultural, and political development. The remaining nearly 70% offered specific feedback on changes they believe would better enable themselves and youth to engage more effectively in these processes.

These responses indicate a strong desire for enhanced communication, more accessible information, and greater opportunities for youth engagement. Participants specifically called for educational programs, cultural activities, and supportive community resources to facilitate better participation in the region's economic, cultural, and political development.

1. **Reaching Out to Homes**:
   o Door knocking and direct community invitations.
   o More active community outreach (phone banking, social media).

2. **Increased Advertising and Information Dissemination**:
   o Advertisements at schools, including middle/high school campuses.
   o Provide information through TV, radio, and social media.
   o Flyers and door-to-door communication.
   o Direct advertising at local school entrances.

3. **Youth Mentoring and Engagement Programs**:
   o More youth mentoring programs.
   o Civic engagement education starting earlier, focusing on local government.
   o Youth-led meetings and workshops on school campuses.
   o Incentives for participation (food vouchers, gift cards).

4. **Community Centers and Safe Spaces**:
   o Better community centers, pools, and study areas.
   o After-school centers with tutors and interns.
   o Creating welcoming community spaces and improving parks.
   o More social and cultural activities aimed at students and families.

5. **Educational Opportunities and Workshops**:
     - More free/low-cost educational opportunities for youth.
     - Workshops on politics, cultural events, and community functions.
     - Mental support, tutoring, and job training programs.

6. **Addressing Barriers to Participation**:
     - Outreach in multiple languages.
     - Addressing cost barriers for activities.
     - Ensuring inclusivity and diversity in programs.

Survey participants were also asked how local governments (e.g., city, county, special district) and elected and appointed officials could better engage the community and reach its residents. Respondents feedback is described in Table 3.

Table 3. Themes, frequency, and top 10 words per category.

Theme	Count	Top 10 Words
Visibility and Presence	22	community, people, talk, meetings, events, attend, presence, knock, show, visible.
Communication	26	email, mail, social, media, information, announcements, call, flyers, reach, updates.
Addressing Community Needs	18	streets, clean, help, fix, homeless, infrastructure, services, improvements, needs, patch.
Inclusivity	17	engage, young, low-income, languages, bilingual, demographics, accessible, inclusive, multicultural, diverse.
Education and Outreach	16	workshops, schools, lectures, educational, sessions, students, inform, community, events, outreach.

We provide more in-depth description of the categories that respondents shared information about in Table 3:

- **Visibility and Presence**:
     - **Get Out in the Community**: Many respondents emphasized the importance of local government officials physically being present in the community, talking to people, knocking on doors, and attending local events and meetings.
     - **Hold More Meetings**: Regular meetings, town halls, and community events were frequently mentioned as ways for officials to engage with residents directly.

- **Communication**:

  - **Multiple Channels**: Utilize various communication channels such as mail, email, social media, phone calls, flyers, and community forums to reach a wider audience.

  - **Transparency and Consistency**: Regular updates and transparency about government activities were highlighted. Respondents suggested live-streaming meetings on social media, making information easily accessible, and ensuring consistent communication.

- **Addressing Community Needs**:

  - **Infrastructure and Services**: Issues such as street repairs, cleaning up the city, and addressing the homeless situation were mentioned as critical areas where visible action would help build trust.

  - **Implementing Feedback**: Listening to community feedback and implementing suggested changes was seen as essential for building credibility and trust.

- **Inclusivity**:

  - **Engaging All Demographics**: Ensuring that all age groups, particularly young people and low-income residents, feel heard and involved.

  - **Multicultural Engagement**: Providing information and holding events in multiple languages to ensure inclusivity for non-English speaking residents.

- **Education and Outreach**:

  - **Educational Workshops and Lectures**: Hosting workshops and informational sessions in schools, universities, and community centers to educate residents about local government processes and encourage participation.

  - **Promotion of Public Participation**: Actively promoting public participation through surveys, polls, and outreach programs to gather input and foster a sense of community involvement.

- **Community Projects**:

  - **Visible Projects**: Investing in visible projects that directly impact residents' daily lives, such as improving parks, providing safe spaces for kids, and supporting local initiatives.

Economic and Social Health

A very small portion of the participants reported using childcare services (5.4%), and 61% expressed interest in career training opportunities.

When asked about the factors that contributed to securing employment, participants reported the following:

A significant portion of participants identified several factors that contributed to their ability to secure employment, including race (69.1%), disability (29.9%), gender (17.5%), and sexual orientation (12.4%). However, only 6.5% reported that childcare options in the region are affordable and accessible. Additionally, just 6.5% stated that they had been contacted by local government about job training and career transition opportunities, and only 9.3% believe that jobs in the region pay well enough to cover the cost of living.

Participants rated the region's economic prosperity, with only 7.2% describing it as very prosperous and 31.6% considering it moderately prosperous.

Nearly half of Stanislaus County residents (49.4%) believe that they must leave the county to find better opportunities. Nearly half of the respondents reported having good access to development classes or courses that teach professional and life skills. However, 74.4% believe that schools should offer more opportunities for students to learn how to start a business and become successful entrepreneurs. Additionally, almost 80% agree or strongly agree that attaining a college degree or trade school education is important.

General Questions About Economic and Social health

Participants rated their current access to healthcare services in the region as very accessible, with 17.1% expressing this view. They identified the top three sectors of the region's economy as agriculture (59.4%), government (15.9%), and healthcare (9.6%). When asked about their current employment status, 33.5% of participants reported being unemployed. Of those employed, 11.9% worked in healthcare and 10.8% in agriculture. When considering job training opportunities, participants expressed a preference for online training (44%), followed by workforce training centers (39.8%), and local workforce development offices (35.6%).

Survey participants were asked about the major barriers they perceive in accessing healthcare. The majority cited cost (66.8%), lack of providers (44.9%), location (34.0%), and language (28.7%) as the most common obstacles. Participants were allowed to identify multiple barriers simultaneously, highlighting the multifaceted nature of the challenges they face.

When asked about the impact of the pandemic on healthcare access, 42.6% of respondents indicated that their access to healthcare has remained unchanged since before the pandemic. However, a significant portion (33.3%) reported that their access to healthcare has worsened considerably since the pandemic began.

Overall, only a small fraction of Stanislaus County residents who participated in this survey rated the county as very prosperous (7.2%), while 31.6% considered it moderately prosperous.

When queried on the types of economic development deemed most necessary for their regions, respondents provided the following insights (**Table 4**):

1. **Affordable Housing**: Emphasizing the need for more affordable housing options.

2. **Educational Services**: Highlighting the importance of educational opportunities and services.

3. **Healthcare**: Stressing the need for better healthcare services and facilities.

4. **Job Creation**: Focusing on creating better-paying jobs and job opportunities.

5. **Support for Small Businesses**: Advocating for support and resources for small businesses.

6. **Logistics and Transportation**: Calling for improvements in logistics and transportation infrastructure.

7. **Industrial and Technological Development**: Suggesting the development of industrial and tech sectors.

8. **General Economic Development**: Miscellaneous suggestions for overall economic improvement.

Table 4. Themes, frequency, and top 10 words per category.

Theme	Count	Percentage	Top 10 Words
Affordable Housing	43	21.4%	housing, affordable, rent, cost, home, low, income, places, living, advocates.
Educational Services	40	19.9%	education, educational, services, opportunities, trades, training, school, classes, career, improve.
Healthcare	33	16.4%	healthcare, health, care, medical, hospital, services, clinics, mental, facilities, advocates.
Job Creation	43	21.4%	jobs, paying, better, more, create, opportunities, wages, employment, factory, growth.
Support for Small Businesses	13	6.5%	small, business, support, loans, development, grow, money, resources, local, training.
Logistics and transportation	19	9.5%	transportation, logistics, travel, public, infrastructure, cost, warehouse, improve, logistics, access.
Industrial and Technological Development	10	5.0%	industrial, tech, technology, science, factories, industry, high, skilled, sectors, develop.
General Economic Development	7	3.5%	agriculture, economic, financial, local, projects, improve, region, invest, development, areas.

Respondents were asked about training and career transition opportunities that they believe should be available to Stanislaus County residents. This is how they responded to this question:

Residents provided a variety of suggestions regarding training and career transition opportunities needed in Stanislaus County. Key themes include healthcare training, technology and computer skills, trade and vocational training, general education and career guidance, and specific training for local industries (**Table 5**).

Categories:

1. **Healthcare Training:** Emphasizing the need for more healthcare-related training and education.
2. **Technology and Computer Skills**: Highlighting the importance of technology and computer training.
3. **Trade and Vocational Training:** Stressing the need for trade schools and vocational training.
4. **General Education and Career Guidance:** Focusing on general education, career transition programs, and job readiness skills.
5. **Specific Training for Local Industries**: Advocating for training that supports local industries and specific job roles.

Table 5. Themes, frequency, and top 10 words per category.

Theme	Count	Percentage	Top 10 Words
Healthcare Training	26	17.3%	healthcare, medical, nurses, training, health, field, programs, care, education, senior.
Technology and Computer Skills	30	20.0%	technology, computer, skills, training, classes, tech, excel, internet, proficiency, digital.
Trade and Vocational Training	42	28.0%	trade, vocational, welding, mechanic, construction, jobs, skills, training, education, certification.
General Education and Career Guidance	36	24.0%	education, career, training, workshops, classes, job, resume, guidance, transition, opportunities.
Specific Training for Local Industries	16	10.7%	local, industries, training, opportunities, forklift, business, support, programs, jobs, community.

Key themes include general practitioners, routine check-ups, dental care, standard diagnostics, mental health services, and vaccinations (**Table 6**).

Categories:

1. **General Practitioners**: Emphasizing the need for more general practitioners.
2. **Routine Check-ups**: Highlighting the importance of regular health check-ups.
3. **Dental Care**: Stressing the need for more dental services.
4. **Standard Diagnostics**: Focusing on the need for standard diagnostic services.
5. **Mental Health Services**: Advocating for mental health services and support.
6. **Vaccinations**: Emphasizing the importance of vaccination services.
7. **Specialist Services**: Suggesting the need for more specialist doctors.

Table 6. Themes, frequency, and top 10 words per category.

Theme	Count	Percentage	Top 10 Words
General Practitioners	38	18.9%	general, practitioners, doctors, primary, care, medical, healthcare, physicals, services, routine.
Routine Check-ups	44	21.9%	routine, check-ups, health, physicals, blood, diagnostics, regular, work, general, standard.
Dental Care	15	7.5%	dental, teeth, oral, care, services, general, health, routine, check-ups, practitioners.
Standard Diagnostics	18	9.0%	diagnostics, standard, routine, health, blood, work, general, care, services, check-ups.
Mental Health Services	12	6.0%	mental, health, services, care, support, stress, management, check-ups, diagnostics, general.
Vaccinations	10	5.0%	vaccinations, health, care, routine, check-ups, general, services, standard, practitioners, diagnostics.
Specialist Services	13	6.5%	specialist, services, care, general, health, practitioners, urologist, diagnostics, medical, doctors.
All Healthcare Services	50	25.0%	all, healthcare, services, general, diagnostics, routine, check-ups, mental, dental, care.

When asked about how they thought that childcare can be more accessible in the region, this is what they reported in **Table 7**:

Categories:

1. **Affordability**: Emphasizing the need for lower-cost or free childcare options.
2. **Availability**: Highlighting the importance of increasing the number of childcare providers and locations.
3. **Financial Assistance**: Advocating for subsidies and financial aid for low-income families.
4. **Communication and Outreach**: Stressing the need for better promotion and communication of available services.
5. **Quality and Safety**: Focusing on improving the quality and safety of childcare services.

Table 7. Themes, frequency, and top 10 words per category.

Theme	Count	Percentage	Top 10 Words
Affordability	58	38.7%	affordable, cost, lower, less, free, cheaper, pay, price, reasonable, income.
Availability	32	21.3%	more, locations, providers, centers, increase, childcare, community, available, local, accessibility.
Financial Assistance	27	18.0%	help, assistance, program, subsidies, support, aid, financial, low-income, funding, pay.
Communication and Outreach	13	8.7%	promote, notify, information, languages, outreach, services, parents, district, referrals, programs.
Quality and Safety	18	12.0%	quality, safe, training, staff, secure, licensed, certified, caregivers, improve, standards.

Transportation Options and Equity

Survey participants were asked about transportation options in Stanislaus County. When asked about the means of transportation that they utilize to meet their regular transportation needs, a significant proportion responded that they drive alone (73.8%), carpool (14.8%), walk (13.3%), and 5.9% work from home.

Respondents identified cost as the most significant transportation challenge they face (76.2%), followed by travel distance (28.9%) and the lack of alternatives to driving (18.4%). Additionally, approximately 10% reported commuting for more than one hour each day, while another 10% reported commuting between 30 to 60 minutes daily.

Most respondents reside in the Central Valley region of Stanislaus County (86.1%), while a smaller proportion live in the Bay Area (7.0%).

A significant portion of respondents found traveling around Stanislaus County to be very stressful, with only 18.1% reporting that it was very easy. Additionally, a mere 9.7% recalled being contacted by local officials or informed about opportunities to participate in transportation projects.

A substantial portion of respondents indicated that transportation costs consume a significant portion of their shared income. Specifically, 22.7% reported that transportation expenses account for more than 20% of their income, while 28.3% stated that transportation costs account for 10-20% of their income.

Housing Experiences and Development

When asked about the share of their income allocated to housing expenses, a significant portion of respondents indicated that more than 50% of their income is spend on housing (36.5%). additionally, 31.7% reported that 30-50% of their income goes toward housing expenses.

Respondents reported limited diversity in housing within the Stanislaus County region. Specifically, 32.1% indicated there is not enough diversity, 20.1% described it as typical, and only 14% considered it very diverse.

Respondents also highlighted the need for various types of housing in the region. Specifically, they reported a demand for single-family homes (55.3%), duplexes and triplexes (45.9%), apartment buildings (36.1%), and townhomes (29.9%).

The biggest hurdles in accessing housing in the region include cost (80.0%), insufficient housing supply (50.8%), qualification requirements such as credit checks, deposits, and fees (48.0%), family size (27.6%), and language barriers (15.2%).

When asked whether factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and/or disability might have prevented them from securing housing, 21.2% of respondents indicated that these factors had indeed been a barrier. Among those who reported experiencing discrimination in securing housing, 50.0% attributed to race, 16.9% to gender, 11.9% to disability, and the remaining 21.2% to other reasons.

When asked about how they would like to be engaged in developing housing policy in the region, this is what respondents reported:

Key themes include attending meetings and workshops, being informed about housing opportunities, participating in surveys, and having more transparency and communication from local authorities (**Table 8**).

Categories:

1. **Attend Meetings and Workshops**: Residents expressed interest in attending community meetings, workshops, and being part of committees.
2. **Information and Communication**: Emphasizing the need for more information and transparency through various channels such as newsletters, social media, and direct communication.
3. **Surveys and Feedback**: Highlighting the importance of community surveys and feedback mechanisms to gather resident input.
4. **Affordable Housing Advocacy**: Advocating for more affordable housing options and engaging with developers and officials to promote low-cost housing.
5. **Not Interested or Unsure**: Some residents are unsure or not interested in engaging in housing policy development.

Table 8. Themes, frequency, and top 10 words per category.

Theme	Count	Percent-age	Top 10 Words
Attend Meetings and Workshops	38	31.7%	meetings, workshops, community, attend, involved, planning, committee, participate, engagement, join.
Information and Communication	32	26.7%	informed, information, notified, planning, communication, aware, transparent, council, updates, share.
Affordable Housing Advocacy	22	18.3%	affordable, housing, cost, build, low-income, developers, promote, advocate, support, policy.
Not Interested or Unsure	18	15.0%	not sure, unsure, not interested, don't know, ambiguous, no interest, no opinion, don't understand, no idea, unclear.
Surveys and Feedback	10	8.3%	surveys, feedback, opinions, input, participate, community, gather, share, mechanism, response.

Climate Resilience

Survey participants indicated that they strongly agree (24.0%) and somewhat agree (19.0%) that the region's climate has become less predictable in recent years. A significant portion of respondents believe that climate change resilience should be the top priority, with 26.0% rating it as the number one concern, while only 13.2% do not consider it a top priority. An overwhelming majority (74.6%) agree that not enough is being done to ensure the region can adapt to the effects of climate change. Additionally, almost all participants (95.6%) reported that they have never been contacted by local government regarding climate resilience efforts.

When asked about in what ways does climate change personally affected you, this is what respondents reported:

Residents provided a variety of responses about how climate change has personally affected them. Key themes include health impacts, economic effects, changes in weather patterns, and increased costs for utilities and other necessities (**Table 9**).

Categories:

1. **Health Impacts**: Effects on health, including asthma, allergies, and other respiratory issues.

2. **Economic Effects**: Financial strain due to increased costs of living, including utilities and food.

3. **Weather and Environment**: Changes in weather patterns, such as increased heat, flooding, and extreme weather events.

4. **Work and Daily Life**: Impact on work and daily activities, including difficulty traveling and outdoor work.

5. **No Significant Impact**: Respondents who reported no or minimal personal impact from climate change.

Table 9. Themes, frequency, and top 10 words per category.

Theme	Count	Percentage	Top 10 Words
Health Impacts	53	35.3%	health, asthma, allergies, bad, air, quality, respiratory, illness, pollution, conditions.
Weather and Environment	48	32.0%	weather, heat, flooding, storms, rain, hot, extreme, unpredictable, wildfires, temperatures.
Economic Effects	37	24.7%	cost, bills, increased, economic, utilities, pay, electricity, expensive, financial, food.
Work and Daily Life	31	20.7%	work, difficult, travel, outdoor, affected, working, farming, strain, activities, job.
No Significant Impact	20	13.3%	nothing, no, not, minimal, unaffected, none, little, no impact, personally, hardly.

When asked about what changes they would like to see to combat climate change in your regions, this is what residents reported. They provided diverse suggestions on how to combat climate change in their region. Key themes include renewable energy, public education, infrastructure improvements, policy changes, and community initiatives (**Table 10**).

Categories:

1. **Renewable Energy and Technology**: Suggestions for more solar power, electric cars, and sustainable technologies.
2. **Public Education and Awareness**: Emphasis on increasing public knowledge about climate change and its impacts.
3. **Infrastructure Improvements**: Calls for better infrastructure, including drainage systems, green spaces, and improved public transportation.
4. **Policy and Incentives**: Recommendations for policies and incentives to reduce emissions and promote eco-friendly practices.
5. **Community Initiatives and Support**: Ideas for community involvement, such as more recycling programs, support for the homeless, and local clean-up efforts.
6. **General and Miscellaneous**: Other suggestions and general calls for more action without specific details.

Table 10. Themes, frequency, and top 10 words per category.

Theme	Count	Percentage	Top 10 Words
Infrastructure Improvements	34	22.7%	infrastructure, drainage, flooding, systems, water, streets, green, spaces, public, roads
Public Education and Awareness	30	20.0%	education, public, people, awareness, schools, health, problems, climate, know, initiatives
Renewable Energy and Technology	29	19.3%	solar, electric, cars, power, renewable, energy, affordable, panels, vehicles, homes
Community Initiatives and Support	29	19.3%	community, support, programs, recycling, clean, up, homeless, local, initiatives, involvement
Policy and Incentives	25	16.7%	incentives, policies, pollution, emissions, reduce, government, taxes, enforce, control, regulations
General and Miscellaneous	15	10.0%	unsure, not sure, none, nothing, ideas, involved, more, action, changes, climate

When asked about project in the region that you consider especially harmful or impactful to the area's environment, this is what respondents described:

Residents expressed various concerns regarding regional projects impacting the environment (**Table 11**). Key areas of concern include air quality, water contamination, and the impact of specific facilities like the Stanislaus Waste Incinerator. Additionally, the need for better infrastructure, road repairs, and more information on the environmental impact of certain projects were highlighted.

Categories:

1. **Air Quality and Pollution**: Concerns about air pollution from incinerators, pesticides, and vehicle emissions.
2. **Water Quality and Contamination**: Issues related to water contamination and its impact on health and appliances.
3. **Infrastructure and Road Repairs**: Calls for better road repairs and infrastructure to manage environmental impacts.
4. **Waste Management and Incineration**: Specific mentions of the Stanislaus Waste Incinerator and its potential harm.
5. **General Environmental Concerns**: Broader concerns about environmental impact without specific project references.
6. **Lack of Awareness/Knowledge**: Responses indicating uncertainty or lack of knowledge about harmful projects.

Table 11. Themes, frequency, and top 10 words per category.

Theme	Count	Percentage	Top 10 Words
Air Quality and Pollution	19	20.4%	air, pollution, incinerator, smog, contaminants, harmful, health, particles, cars, emissions
Infrastructure and Road Repairs	18	19.4%	roads, repairs, streets, traffic, highways, development, projects, impact, improve, infrastructure
Waste Management and Incineration	16	17.2%	incinerator, waste, harmful, air, pollution, burning, health, shut, impact, environment
Water Quality and Contamination	15	16.1%	water, contamination, health, tested, appliances, drains, rivers, quality, chemicals, environment
General Environmental Concerns	14	15.1%	environment, impact, health, harmful, climate, change, projects, community, area, chemicals
Lack of Awareness/Knowledge	11	11.8%	unsure, not sure, unknown, no, don't know, none, don't, knowledge, any, aware

Climate Resilience SEED Survey

Data was collected on eight additional questions regarding climate resilience. Participants were asked to consider the extent to which they believe the region's climate has become less predictable in recent years. A significant portion, 43%, either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, indicating a notable perception of increased climate unpredictability among the respondents.

Over 61% of participants expressed the belief that climate change will have a somewhat negative or very negative impact on the region's economy. Additionally, 26% identified climate resilience as the top priority for the region. More than 54% of participants reported feeling somewhat or very concerned about the impacts of climate change on the region.

Nearly 75% of participants believe that not enough is being done to ensure the region can adapt to climate change. Nearly 60% of participants reported thinking that climate change will have a very negative impact on the region's health. Nearly 75% of participants believe that current efforts to ensure the region can adapt to climate change are insufficient. Additionally, almost 60% of participants think that climate change will have a very negative impact on the region's health. The combination of these findings suggests that there is a strong perception among participants that more robust actions are necessary to both mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and protect the health and well-being of the region's population.

Qualitative Findings from Focus Group Discussions

This section summarizes the findings from 12 focus groups conducted across seven locations in Stanislaus County, including multiple sites in Modesto, Turlock, Grayson, and Patterson. A total of 173 individuals participated in these discussions. Most of the focus groups were conducted in Spanish and later translated into English. The following analysis presents the key insights and themes that emerged from these discussions. Key themes emerged from these conversations and the findings are presented for each of the five categories that were evaluated in this program.

Civil Engagement and Community Building

Key themes include that emerged during the focus group discussions:

- Career and Educational Opportunities
- Community Involvement
- Economic Barriers
- Engagement and Activities
- Engagement Barriers
- Feeling Ignored
- Homelessness
- Lack of Awareness
- Lack of Engagement
- Lack of Engagement and Availability of Information
- Lack of Information and Outreach
- Limited Participation
- Low political engagement
- Meetings and Feedback
- Need More Community Centers
- Outreach and Information

- Time and Accessibility
- Transparency and Advocacy

Specific key concerns and comments shared during focus group discussions about civil engagement and community building is described in Tables 12 and 13. These tables compile the primary issues raised by participants, reflecting their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for enhancing community involvement and strengthening local ties. The discussions highlighted various barriers to civic engagement, such as language barriers, lack of awareness about civic engagement, and limited access to resources. They also emphasized the importance of community building activities that foster trust, collaboration, and a sense of belonging among residents.

Table 12. Key concerns raised during focus group discussions on civil engagement and community building.

Insufficient county engagement and information about available resources and events.	Lack of resources and services for homeless residents.	Need more community centers and resource centers to facilitate engagement and support.	Frustration with the government's lack of responsiveness, feeling that their voices are often not heard or acted upon despite repeated attempts to communicate their concerns.
Frustration with lack of transparency in decision-making processes. Importance of community involvement and consistent advocacy for change.	Residents felt that local government officials do not adequately engage with all community members. Outreach efforts often target prominent community members rather than students or people of color.	High cost of living and lack of income are significant barriers preventing people from participating in civic activities.	Community unable to participate due to work and family responsibilities, also, fear of judgment.
Increased town hall meetings but lack of visible results frustrates residents. Confusion about what civic engagement. More meetings during the day are preferred.	Residents desire more progress and results from meetings. Continuous surveys with no actionable outcomes are a concern.	Limited interesting projects to engage the community.	Timing of events often conflicts with work schedules. Residents, especially Latinos, feel disconnected from local policymaking. Childcare during events is a concern for parents who want to participate.
Better outreach initiatives are needed as many residents are unaware of council meetings and available programs.	Opportunities for civic engagement exist but are hard to find and not well-publicized.	Residents unaware of local government activities and officials.	Lack of information, language, transportation issues, and time constraints due to work and family commitments are major barriers.
Low political engagement, possibly due to a significant non-citizen population.	Civic engagement is low due to insufficient awareness and promotion of community events and workshops. Need better communication strategies to reach a broader audience.	Many students feel excluded from civic engagement activities, which seem geared towards adults.	Events are poorly promoted, often only announced through school channels.
Some students avoid attending events because they feel their opinions are undervalued or they lack knowledge about the topics.	Organize more job and career fairs specifically for teens.	Increase college fairs to help students decide on their future educational paths.	Offer more scholarships and opportunities for financial aid.
Solicit more donations for school clubs.	Hold more fundraisers to support student activities.	Create safer and more engaging activities for teenagers.	Host more social events and crafting workshops to encourage teen interaction.

Table 13. Specific comments shared during focus group discussions on civil engagement and community building.

"So you need to figure out a way to try to notify everybody as to what's going on."
"Because there's a lot of homelessness and even though they're homeless doesn't mean that they're not capable of getting a job or coming to meetings or groups or whatever, what have you, because a lot of them, they're not able to go and bathe and feel good about themselves to be able to come to a setting like this. And I just feel like the county is not doing enough for homeless."
"Most of the time they listen to you, but they don't listen to you. They give you options, he says. Yes, well, that's the way it is. But I don't know. They don't act so they don't tell you."
"People, they have responsibilities. They've got to go to work, they've got to take care of them, they've got things to do, or they're probably tired." "I think with anything, any incentive to an event people is going to want to come out.
"I think transportation and childcare, especially because even professors who think we're tenured and who think you know aren't living good, even they struggle with childcare and it's like, What? I thought you had a good job and everything. Even seeing them struggle.
"Or me, for example, working the 40 hours, sometimes I don't find time, like we said earlier, with wanting to go be participating in the two-way council meeting in my own class or I don't have time to be a part of the city council or be even aware of what's going on in my city because I'm so involved in a lot of the school, with essays, working."
"a lot of times people are either afraid to reach out or when they have an issue, or they don't know who to reach out to. They're not going to just say. I think they're back I'm not just saying. I think they agree with themselves. They don't even know where to begin or who to talk to be able to fix whatever problem they're going to do."
"Sometimes they all the information is in English, and people are not able to understand the information, or they think they cannot participate in any workshop because mostly it's in English. When it's out of this community, it's in English. We need workshops in Spanish because it's a hard work. It's a lot of farmer workers."
"Maybe workshops, especially for seniors on the voting process, because I know that I educate my mother on those things. But I can imagine someone doesn't have transportation Out of Grayson, even just to go to Patterson. It's difficult. So maybe they had workshops on the voting process."

Economic and Social Health

Key themes include that emerged during the focus group discussions:

- Access to Services
- Career Pathways and Internships
- Challenges in Educational Consistency and Discipline in Schools
- Economic Challenges
- Education Needs
- Educational Barriers
- Employment and Income
- Employment Barriers
- Employment Challenges
- Healthcare Access
- Healthcare Accessibility
- Healthcare Confusion
- High School Career Exploration
- Income Disparities
- Job Availability and Training
- Job Market Challenges
- Schools are overpopulated
- Training Programs

Specific key concerns and comments shared during focus group discussions about economic and social health is described in Tables 14 and 15. Participants highlighted several critical issues: economic stability, including the lack of stable, well-paying jobs, the high cost of housing, and limited access to financial services; healthcare access, including difficulties in obtaining insurance and affordable care, as well as the need for better mental health support; and social cohesion, emphasizing the importance of community engagement and cultural inclusivity. These tables capture the nuanced experiences of participants, providing direct quotes and examples to illustrate the economic and social challenges they face and offering insights into potential areas for improvement.

There was also a common theme about the desire for more schools and opportunities for youth, stating, "I would like to have the opportunity to have more schools, because I feel that the more children there are in a school, the safer it is. So, I think that if there were more schools, the schools would have fewer children, it would be easier to control and supervise so many children." This comment underscores the need for increased educational opportunities and resources for youth as a vital component of economic and social health. Enhancing educational facilities and youth opportunities can significantly impact economic and social well-being. More schools can lead to smaller class sizes, providing a safer and more manageable environment for students, improving the quality of education, and increasing student engagement. Additionally, expanding youth opportunities beyond traditional schooling, such as through extracurricular activities, vocational training, and community programs, can help young people develop essential skills, build confidence, and establish a sense of belonging and purpose.

Table 14. Key concerns raised during focus group discussions on economic and social health.

Age discrimination and lack of job opportunities are significant issues.	There is a perceived lack of education pathways and job training that align with the community's needs.
Lack of job opportunities, with existing jobs requiring qualifications and experience many residents do not have. Concerns about the inefficiency and inflexibility of programs like CVOC and Workforce, which do not accommodate personal schedules and require extensive documentation.	Especially among seniors, navigating healthcare services is confusing, with a need for better communication and assistance. Significant costs associated with healthcare.
Access to healthcare and education services is limited, with barriers such as high costs, lack of insurance, and insufficient support for those seeking employment.	Many students work multiple jobs while studying, which impacts their ability to focus on education and civic engagement.
While some participants felt their schools provided adequate career counseling and internship opportunities, others noted a lack of opportunities, particularly for fields outside of agriculture and local government.	There is a consensus that healthcare is not easily accessible to everyone, largely due to national issues rather than local ones.
Lack of affordable healthcare and meaningful job opportunities. Current low-paying jobs, such as those at McDonald's, are seen as traps for youths, hindering their pursuit of higher education or trade schools.	Limited job opportunities, particularly for students and young professionals.
Accessing higher education and vocational training is difficult due to long waitlists and high costs. Lack of skills or education for available jobs, with barriers to enrolling in free classes or training programs. Technology advancements create barriers for older generations.	Lack of job opportunities and high qualification requirements make employment difficult. Hiring process is competitive, often requiring degrees and extensive experience. Many need to work multiple jobs and commute long distances for better pay.
Participants highlighted the lack of job opportunities and the high qualifications required for available jobs. Unpaid training and job development opportunities are unaffordable for many families.	Limited access to healthcare, with long wait times and fear among undocumented individuals. Limited affordable healthcare.
Lack of job opportunities and high qualification requirements for available jobs. Training programs are inaccessible to those who cannot afford to stop working. Many residents travel to the Bay Area for better job opportunities. Local jobs, especially in agriculture, are low-paying and involve heavy workloads. Immigrant community members struggle to find well-paying jobs.	Schools are overcrowded with limited capacity and college prep programs. Need more middle and high schools to accommodate the growing number of children. Programs like TRIO are not easily accessible in Patterson, requiring travel to Modesto.
Some students felt their high schools did not help them explore career options effectively. Older counselors made some students uncomfortable, hindering open communication. Career counselors prioritize seniors, giving fewer opportunities to younger students. Students desire more guidance in choosing classes. Limited interaction with counselors, only seeing them when necessary.	Limited medical facilities in Patterson; residents often travel to Modesto, Ceres, Turlock, and Salida. Local clinics are mostly private and may not accept Medical, limiting healthcare access. Medicine is expensive, and many lack medical insurance.

Table 15. Specific comments shared during focus group discussions on economic and social health.

"Work, you go to apply and no. Sometimes there are jobs, but they ask for a lot of requirements. Like I helped a lady this morning to fill out a job application and for most of them she said I don't have such and such. And well she knows how to do what they ask for, but she doesn't have the experience, she doesn't have the."	"Because I just turned 65 January, so it's all confusing to me." "I would like to see classes where someone helps them with applications for medical, stamps or stamps." "Very high Co-payments, they even think, even if they are sick, then they don't even go."
"The training is given to you during working hours. So, you have to stop working to get training and it's six months of training. So, what are you going to do in those six months? What are you going to struggle with? ..."	"I personally would never live here because there is nothing to do for work. It's rare to find a hiring job here."
"That's where we are at a national level, that healthcare is not considered a right and wrong approach, so it's not super easily accessible to everyone."	"How are you going to gain that experience if you're not giving anybody opportunity? But how are you going to get to that future job if you're not getting that?"
"I think it's hard. I think it's getting more and more difficult before you can just go right out of high school and get a semi-decent job. But nowadays, even the basic jobs are requiring a lot more from individuals, making it even more difficult. The hiring process is becoming more and more competitive, where I'm finding that a lot of people don't have the skillsets, they don't have the education."	"And then even with the degree that you said, it's hard to even find it off because then they ask you for so many years of experience. So, it's like, I actually did four years of college, but now you're asking me for two years of experience, but I just graduated. So, it's like, Why am I going to get the experience if nobody gives me a chance?"
"...They offer training in carpentry... Construction, welding, various things, truck driving, but you don't get paid. Why are you going to school. People that are farmworkers have families, and how are they going to survive to go to school if they don't have any income? No wonder they're doing such a poor job. It's not designed right."	"Because my husband, just because he doesn't have papers and just because he doesn't have a diploma of high school or a training, he gets paid less." "You don't feel like there's a career pathway for him (farm workers) to be able to get that certification He has tried, but because of his immigration status. It's been difficult."
"I would like to have the opportunity to have more schools, because I feel that the more children there are in a gender, being a school, the safer it is. So, I think that if there were more schools, the schools would have fewer children, it would be easier to control and supervise so many children."	"For me, here in Patterson, it has made it difficult for me what the medical service is doing. When we have emergencies, we have to go out to Turlough or Modesto, and you're talking about a 35-to-45-minute drive..."
"I know that program, it's called Trio... but how far do they have to go, do they have to go to Modesto or to Turla. Yes, there are none here. So, we need it, we need more schools… And the trio is only limited, as it depends on your income, not everyone is welcome."	"…many travel to the bay, really, to work, but the majority, here in agriculture too, do not travel there, but here in agriculture it is very poorly paid anyway. It's very hard work, but it's very poorly paid and we don't have enough to."

Transportation Options and Equity

Key themes include that emerged during the focus group discussions:

- Safety, Accessibility, and Affordability
- Challenges for Students
- Cost, Accessibility, and Awareness
- Inefficiency and Limited Routes
- Infrastructure and Safety
- Medical Transportation Needs
- Road Safety Concerns
- Security and Maintenance Concerns of Public Transport
- Need more Street lights and Sidewalks

Specific key concerns and comments shared during focus group discussions about transportation options and equity is described in Tables 14 and 15. These include several critical issues, including accessibility and affordability, challenges for students, inefficiency and limited routes, infrastructure and safety, medical transportation needs, public transportation issues, road safety concerns, and the need for more streetlights and sidewalks.

Safety concerns with public transportation are a significant issue, as many residents report feeling unsafe while using buses. This perception of insecurity contributes to the broader problem of public transportation being viewed as a major failure. Participants highlighted incidents of inadequate security measures, poorly maintained vehicles, and insufficient lighting, which exacerbate these safety concerns. Consequently, the lack of a safe and reliable public transportation system discourages its use, impacting the mobility of residents and limiting their access to essential services. Addressing these safety issues is crucial for restoring public confidence and ensuring that transportation services meet the community's needs effectively.

These key concerns and comments underscore the critical need for improvements in transportation infrastructure and services to promote equity and ensure that all community members have reliable, affordable, and safe transportation options.

Table 16. Key concerns raised during focus group discussions on transportation options and equity.

While some seniors appreciate services like Dial-a-ride, others face high costs, particularly in terms of fuel prices. Public transportation is often unreliable and does not cover all necessary areas, creating difficulties in accessing essential services. Transportation is difficult for residents living farther out, requiring long walks to bus stops or multiple transfers.	There are issues with the safety and maintenance of public transportation facilities, such as inadequate lighting, speed bumps, shelters at bus stops are necessary, and seating at bus stops.
There are not enough sidewalks or streetlights, leading to dangerous walking conditions. Speeding and illegal parking are also significant issues.	The bus schedule is inconsistent, with some locations lacking bus stops, forcing residents to walk long distances in unsafe conditions.
There were concerns about the safety and cleanliness of bus stops, particularly regarding poor lighting and the presence of homeless individuals.	High gas prices and confusion about public transportation routes and schedules were major concerns.
Interest in affordable public transit options like a "dollar ride" and a senior bus card.	Crowded highways and lack of reliable public transportation options make commuting difficult.
High transportation costs, including services like Lyft and Uber, and high gas prices are barriers. Lack of awareness about an app for purchasing bus tickets.	Bus stations and stops are perceived as unsafe, with inadequate monitoring and lighting. Safety concerns due to individuals with mental health issues.
There is a need for better medical transportation services, especially for seniors and those with health issues.	High gas prices and limited transportation options add financial strain.
They would like to see more streetlights and more sidewalks.	Inability to participate in extracurricular activities due to lack of parental transportation.
School buses cannot pick up students who live too far from the school, creating transportation challenges for those residing in distant areas.	Safety concerns on roads, lacks adequate road development, and lack of police presence.

Table 17. Specific comments shared during focus group discussions on transportation options and equity.

"Speed as if it were a freeway. And that is very dangerous because both a person and a child, well, it is dangerous. I think the city should, I don't know, put, I don't know, a speed limit, a stop something."	"They run later now. They have different routes now on streets that they never ran down. I just get on it sometimes, see where they go."
"now sometimes it gets complicated because the buses don't arrive on time, I mean, it's different, it's like they take longer. Different schedule."	"They come very hard, sometimes they even pass the stop signs. People don't respect the streets."
"Yeah, it would be a long transportation. I think when you do take public transportation, one thing that might be a factor is time and having to get somewhere, like if you have to get to a job or something and factors that may play a role into that."	"To get from this side of town to North Modesto takes you two hours on a bus. That's crazy. That's where you take It's really awful. I'm sorry. It's just crazy."
"… my neighbor… both of them are on dialysis. And one of them drives at 5:00 in the morning to dialysis. They have no medical transportation to take them as they have to go. So that's a problem with transportation, actually getting to your medical facility that you need to go to. That would be something good to have, like a little bus that would do this. It's significant, but then it's not done."	"Well, yeah, because sometimes the bus They're just not safe. There's nobody on the bus that's monitoring the safety of the riders. You get people with mental health that just act out. I know that they call it in and stuff, but still, in that moment of riding in a vehicle with somebody that's not in the right line, it's a scary thing."
"Well, I have some issues with the safety of. This street is really dangerous for the people who drive it all the time. Because The majority of the drivers, they speed up. They drive like any mile. If you have to come to the Grayson, you put your signal, but the other cars go around. Yeah, and you buy. Yeah, and it's really dangerous. I think we need a full stop or a light stop."	"… it has changed a little bit, there are more buses. But But the bus stops are not so visible, so you don't know if you are coming or going. There is not much information in sight. There are also some bus stops in the center, but in the center there are a lot of homeless people, so it's a little bit dangerous"
"…I know there are buses, I have seen them, where are they, what is the schedule? I don't know, but I know they exist, because I know they exist. But there is so little information, as she says, that they send me to the bus stop, I don't know, so what about before? I used to look at it here at the mouth, I go behind the bus, it's not good. But here the car stays here and I already explained to myself that I have to walk, because I have no idea where the bus stops. The information of the bus itself is very little…"	"With the roads also, when I moved here I was very afraid to drive, because I still did not know very well. Later on, as I knew everyone was afraid, because for starters there are no lights, there are many on the streets that were not in our, lights, it must be said, there are."

Housing Experiences and Development

Key themes include that emerged during the focus group discussions:

- Housing Affordability and Rates
- Barriers to Housing Access
- Community Cleanliness and Safety
- Discrimination in Housing
- Eviction Issues
- High Rent and Barriers
- Inadequate Housing
- Homelessness Risks
- Housing Quality and Location Issues
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Lack of Housing Options
- Living Arrangements
- Long Wait Lists
- Safety and Community Concerns
- Section 8 Challenges
- Tenant Exploitation
- Unfair housing practices

Specific key concerns and comments shared during focus group discussions about housing and development is described in Tables 18 and 19. These include a wide range of issues. Key concerns include housing affordability and high rent, which create significant barriers to access. Discrimination and unfair housing practices further exacerbate these problems, leading to eviction issues and long wait lists for housing assistance programs like Section 8. The risk of homelessness is heightened by inadequate and poorly located housing options, as well as tenant exploitation. Additionally, community cleanliness and safety are compromised by substandard living arrangements and infrastructure deficiencies.

Table 18. Key concerns raised during focus group discussions on housing experiences and development.

Rising rents contribute to homelessness, particularly affecting women and children.	Strong demand for more affordable housing options, including senior housing, duplexes, and tiny homes.
Housing costs are high, with participants facing steep deposits and strict rental requirements, leading to financial strain and limited options. Rent is unaffordable for many, often doubling within short periods. Many renters live in substandard conditions and fear eviction, especially if they are undocumented.	Participants noted that Section 8 housing is often limited to certain areas, and there is a stigma against Section 8 tenants.
Many participants mentioned the rising cost of rent and the difficulty in finding affordable housing. There was also a mention of rent prices being higher for single-family homes compared to apartments.	Landlords exploit tenants by unjustifiably increasing rents and neglecting maintenance, leading to housing insecurity and a sense of unfair treatment among residents.
Concerns were raised about the safety of certain neighborhoods and the impact of the homeless population on perceived safety. The importance of community-based safety measures and the need for more affordable and safe housing options were emphasized.	High interest rates and unaffordable housing are major concerns, especially for first-time buyers and seniors. Maintenance costs are also high, adding to the financial burden.
Perceived discrimination in renting based on race, income, and family size.	Unfair housing practices and discrimination against certain groups.
Increased housing costs make renting and homeownership unaffordable. Renters face high deposits and fees, with renting a room becoming common but lacking privacy.	Insufficient affordable housing units, especially for single individuals and small families. Available land is sometimes used for other purposes, like orchards.
Strict requirements for renting and buying homes, including high application fees and the need for multiple jobs to afford rent. Perceived segregation in housing opportunities, with Hispanic families facing fewer options.	Extended wait times for housing support, often leading to removal from waitlists without receiving assistance.
Evictions severely impact future housing opportunities, and there is a need for fairer processes.	Lack of transportation options exacerbates housing accessibility issues.
Homes in poor parts of the city are prone to flooding, causing mold and health issues, particularly affecting children. Affordable housing built for low-income families often goes to commuters from the Bay Area, not local residents.	Documentation requirements prevent many immigrants from accessing housing. Credit requirements and income thresholds are too high for many local families to meet. Local residents are excluded from applying for housing at the migrant center.
Most participants have extended family living with them, leading to a lack of privacy and increased distractions.	Housing safety is a concern, with incidents like car thefts.
Parks are often occupied by homeless individuals, resulting in messes and safety concerns. Some neighborhood areas, especially near schools, are poorly maintained with overgrown weeds and trash.	More stop signs are needed to improve traffic safety. Potholes should be covered to improve road conditions.

Table 19. Specific comments shared during focus group discussions on housing experiences and development.

"COVID messed everything up. Rents were okay until COVID, and then everything shot up about over 50%."	"A lot of people are trying to get away from apartments because they don't really like people living on top of them."
"First of all, the rent is very high. And besides, when you go and apply, if you have a lot of requirements, the deposit they ask for first and second deposit, like first and last deposit. And sometimes they feel sorry for you if you are filling in."	"They can raise it so much percentage every month or something like that. But some of them are doing it like. Every other month, they'll raise up the rent and they force you out to move out."
"There were several of those who have already moved from here, who raised their rent from, as they say, 800 to 1400, 1600, or who asked them for the house, because logically, others came from the bay, who were able to pay them more."	"...they don't want to rent to you because Section Eight scares them. And I wish they'd open up more areas for Section Eight."
"The most common thing that I see and see is you need to have your credit score, which more or less makes sense, especially if you're going to try to see in which they are. But there's another wall that seems common is your employment has to be three times the amount of rent. You have to have first and last one's deposit, plus if you have a dog or something, you have to pay for the pet deposits."	"So speaking of income and different jobs here, how do you guys feel about access to affordable housing? It's terrible. Affordable housing is a myth. It does not exist."
"Person wants to rent and doesn't have a lot of credit. It's very hard to be in the system." "There are people who are coming from the Bay to purchase homes out here because the prices are cheaper in comparison to there.	"I would say the homeless population is definitely something that is affected. I know the past week I walked outside my little apartment door and boom, there's a homeless. There's a nice little homeless car."
"There's a lot of people out there that are the young ones that are coming out that don't have a job yet, but then they get to two or three people together to try to get an apartment, can't get an apartment. They can't do it singly. They can't do it with a group of people. So given just single aid."	"I believe that the documentation barrier also had something to do with it, because I investigated about it with the camps, and it was a requirement to have documents. So, that was an impediment for them. I think there should be more houses and more accessible to the low-income community."
"Yeah, multi. Because we have larger families. A single family house is fine if it's just a couple and a child or two. But we have Large, small, large. When we did a survey for COVID, there was families up to nine, 10, several families were nine, 10 people."	"I have to drive my son to school to Paris because they don't have transportation for him. I'm spending $80 to $100 per week to take my son to school. If we are talking to extend the community to build And apartment, houses, we have to think in the schools. Build a school."
"I just want to jump back to safety. Know your neighbors. I know all my neighbors. I got names from neighbors. Even though I don't know them, I gave them a name. I have a bad neighbor, but all my neighbors, everybody here knows who I am... So if you know where you're surrounding, you get more comfortable, you'll be able to expand yourself out a little bit more."	"I agree that we need more housing, but speaking by myself that I have children, we have a terrible school site because there is a lot of kids in the school, and When, for example, from here, if we have more houses, they have to come and put in another school because the size of the classroom is really crowd."
"I think there should be a control on the cost of housing here, because to date I have three colleagues who are being evicted from their houses where they were renting because they want to raise the rent, but the rent is already very high, they are almost reaching the prices of the bay and here there is no possibility of paying those prices in local jobs. So, there should be a rent control, because a house that they were paying 1800 they want to raise it to 2600. In other words, the difference is enormous and there is no control, there is no one who is controlling this, who says: Okay, the rent has to be at this level, because it is the logical thing to do. There is no control. There should be a control that says up to what would be correct to charge in this area."	"The truth is that I rent a house and one of my problems is that rent is very expensive nowadays, it has gone up a lot. There are very few houses that are affordable for someone who can't afford to pay such a high rent. And another thing that I have noticed is that homeowners often do not want to repair the houses and they are in a bad state. For example, in my house I spent years telling the lady that the house had a lot of mold and she did not. She just wouldn't put up a one-day house. So it is also a problem."

Climate Resilience

Key themes include that emerged during the focus group discussions:

- Air Quality and Temperatures
- City Involvement and Communication
- Climate Concerns and Risk
- Community Involvement and Environmental Needs
- Community Impact
- Cost of Food
- Drought
- Education and Communication
- Environmental Education
- Extreme Weather
- Financial and Resource Constraints
- Flooding and Heat Mitigation
- Government Support and Response
- Health and Economic Impact
- Infrastructure Concerns and Unmet Needs
- Job Security
- Pesticide
- Preparedness and Resources
- Preparedness for Natural Disasters
- Resource Availability
- Workplace Accessibility

The community identified several key factors essential for enhancing climate resilience. These include active city involvement and effective communication to address climate concerns and risks, and the importance of community involvement in addressing environmental needs (Tables 20 and 21). The impact of climate change on the cost of food and job security, exacerbated by extreme weather events like droughts and flooding, highlights the need for robust government support and response. Education, particularly environmental education, is crucial for raising awareness and preparedness for natural disasters. Addressing infrastructure concerns, financial and resource constraints, and ensuring workplace accessibility are also vital. Mitigating the health and economic impacts of climate change, managing pesticide use, and ensuring resource availability were also significant points raised by the community. Comprehensive strategies incorporating these elements are essential for building a resilient and sustainable community.

Table 20. Key concerns raised during focus group discussions on climate resilience.

Extreme weather conditions, particularly intense heat and cold, negatively impact residents' health and economic stability. Vulnerable populations, including outdoor workers and children with asthma, are especially affected. High utility costs for constant heating and cooling add to the burden.	Effective climate resilience requires better communication and involvement from government officials, who should engage directly with the community.
Students often have to walk home in extreme weather conditions (heat, cold, rain). Some schools lack drinkable water fountains, while others do not have the funds for filtered water fountains.	Clogged drains exacerbate flooding issues. Lack of air conditioning (AC) in homes and classrooms makes learning difficult, especially during extreme heat.
There is a call for more governmental action on climate resilience, including planting more trees, reducing pesticide use, creating green spaces.	There is a need for better drainage systems to handle flooding and resources like cooling stations during extreme heat. Insufficient water resources.
County is not adequately prepared for climate disasters such as flooding and extreme heat. Participants noted a lack of workshops or resources to educate the community on handling these events.	Calls for better infrastructure to cope with climate changes, such as improved housing insulation and reliable heating and cooling systems.
Need better dissemination of information and resources related to climate resilience was highlighted. Some participants felt that other counties were more proactive in preparing their communities.	Need for more community education on climate issues, including fire safety, which is particularly relevant in California.
Mixed reviews on the responsiveness of government agencies, with some issues like flooding remaining unresolved and costly. Lack of action and investment in addressing climate change issues. Feeling like concerns are not being heard or addressed.	The community faces challenges due to heatwaves, flooding, and extreme weather conditions, affecting outdoor workers, including Latinos and farmworkers.
Participants feel that county, state, and federal governments are not doing enough to enhance climate resilience, emphasizing the need for community-level efforts.	Frequent flooding damages homes and properties, highlighting inadequate flood zone designations and lack of landlord support.
Fire, floods, mosquitos, extreme heat, and poor air quality are primary climate concerns.	Many feel unprepared for climate-related disasters like floods and extreme heat.
Natural disasters disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, such as seniors and low-income families.	There is a lack of information and resources on how to handle climate emergencies.
There were some concerns about food costs, use of pesticides.	An intense drought is exacerbating water scarcity and increasing the cost of water and produce.
Flooding, extreme heat, and strong winds significantly affect the area, leading to accidents and discomfort. Heavy rains cause rivers and streets to flood, impeding transportation. Chemicals used in agriculture impact residents' health, causing allergies and asthma.	Climate change-induced events, like flooding and extreme weather, disrupt local businesses and agriculture, leading to job instability and potential layoffs.
Financial constraints prevent residents from using air conditioning during extreme heat. Water prices have increased, making it difficult for families to afford. Power outages during extreme heat highlight the need for generators. There is a call for financial assistance for air conditioning and incentives for solar panel adoption.	Flooding can render workplaces inaccessible, leading to missed workdays and lost income, particularly for hourly wage workers. High temperatures can lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke, impacting productivity and overall health.
Low resident turnout at city meetings indicates a communication gap between residents and policymakers. Residents want the city to be more informed and proactive in addressing climate challenges and supporting affected residents.	More greenery, such as trees, gardens, and greenhouses, is needed to alleviate heat and improve air quality. City clean-up efforts are necessary to address dry greenery and debris from fields. Improved water quality in schools is needed due to complaints about poor water quality.

Table 21. Specific comments shared during focus group discussions on climate resilience.

"I have five children, three have disabilities. I have to have the air or the heat, the cold or heat, and it's extreme. My kids depend on that. If I don't have them and it happens every year, they cut our service, it also means that my life is going to be extreme and I'm not going to be able to afford it and they've cut our services."	"There is such a need for having someplace to cool down, whether they don't have a air conditioner, don't have. That's a big need right here in this community. In regards to the flooding, the mosquito could come after that."
"I was up about five o'clock and I walked outside, I could smell a strong odor of a chemical, some pesticide. And when my wife was going to help with the grandson, and I'm babysitting at seven o'clock, she called me and she said that she was right there by those fields, and her eyes were burning and she could really smell it. So, I followed the report. The guy called me back, and he's checking it out. He said a guy was spraying herbicide, something that"	"Too much pesticide for everyone. Using pesticides for irrigation, they use pesticides for spiders, they use pesticides for fish, they use pesticides to grow fruit, because they grow them. So, artificially, everything is already pesticide."
"My house got flooded and water actually went all the way inside my living room, and they were like, Okay, what do I do now?.. The water's already inside. So it's like You reach out to people for help, and then it's just like, Oh, you got to come, take your insurance. Did you have flood insurance? They're like, No, I don't have flood insurance because my area is not considered a flood zone. So now How would I have to go through your landlord. My landlord doesn't want to have anything to do with it. It's basically just a waste of time..."	"There is drought and there is also flooding. When it rains, all the streets are flooded. It is not just one. Everywhere they are flooded and you don't want to go out to be modest, everything is flooded, all the streets where you go there are just puddles. You can't even get through in a little cart, you can't get through."
"Also spreading the word out more from different media, from newspapers, from television, and radio station as well. But it's also on the people as well because it also depends if you really want to be interested in it or not. But it's also on the community as well. They really think. It goes both ways, to be honest."	"That San as well as County should have some program that just, I guess, issues things through the mail just to educate people because some of these people don't have the sufficient knowledge of what's even going on around their community"
"...It's the Hispanic community who's having to take whatever produce in the season at. We know they're supposed to stop working past 100 degrees, but not all contratistas really do that."	"I don't know about you guys, but I can't take that heat when it gets too hot. But then, too, people don't have the money to leave the AC or they have a water-cooler. We have for many years, and a water-cooler only works up to about 100 degrees. And after that, forget it. We've been affected out here a lot."
"Another part of the climate resilience that's really important is the cost of food. Yes. When it gets hot and the food source, we're in, we're paying more money for what we buy because it's either too hot or it's too wet or it's too cold, and we pay for the price of that."	"We talk about going green, green initiatives. But then when it comes to the extreme heat, we say the flex alert, Turn off your AC, turn off your power. How are we going to greenify the state if we don't have the infrastructure?"
I think it's all connected in a circular way. Because precisely, we talk about climate resilience, and we talk about extreme heat weather conditions that affects our field workers or people who are working on doors that affects the electrical side of things, where we have to increase our bills, which affects our economy. Then It's a vicious cycle that goes on and on... So if we really think about something high level, climate has a lot to do with... So that we've talked about tonight. I think it's super important. I don't think that the county is doing enough for the state or federal government.	"In my opinion, the city is not prepared for the changes that are happening right now. As mentioned, when they arrive, it is not a house, it is not an area, it is in several specific places in the city and to get out of the city where water is stored and produces many accidents."
"I think more drainage. Drainage, definitely more drainage because that corner over here at the corner of California and what is it? Martin Luther King. It's flooded every time it rains during the winter or whenever it rains. I mean the water just sits."	"I would also like there to be more dissemination of solar panels, thatthe city would support in some way so that people could put their solar panels on their houses, help them either with information or guide them or some incentive."

CONCLUSION

Civil Engagement and Community Building

Quantitative Findings:

Urgent Communication Improvements. Only 7.5% of participants are very satisfied, and 18.0% are somewhat satisfied with current opportunities to voice their opinions on county issues, indicating widespread dissatisfaction.

Insufficient County Engagmetn and Communication: There is a need to foster greater civic engagement to ensure residents feel heard and valued in local governance.

Build Trust and Transparency. Building trust and ensuring transparency in decision-making processes are crucial to improving satisfaction and participation.

Call for Enhanced Participation and Outreach Opportunities: With only 30.3% of respondents agreeing that Stanislaus County provides adequate participation opportunities, nearly 70% offered specific feedback on needed changes. This underscores the necessity for the region to implement more inclusive and accessible avenues for all residents, including youth, to engage in economic, cultural, and political development.

Qualitative Findings:

Insufficient County Engagement and Communication: Residents feel disconnected due to poor communication and lack of information about resources and events.

Lack of Resources for Homeless Residents: There is a need for more services and support for homeless individuals, highlighting a significant gap in current provisions.

Frustration with Government Responsiveness and Transparency: Residents are frustrated with the perceived lack of responsiveness and transparency from local government officials.

Barriers to Civic Participation: High living costs, work and family responsibilities, and fear of judgment prevent people from engaging in civic activities.

Need for Effective Outreach and Communication: Poor promotion and accessibility issues mean many residents are unaware of local government activities and available programs.

Scheduling and Accessibility of Events: Events often conflict with work schedules and lack of childcare, making participation difficult for many residents.

Youth and Student Engagement: Students feel excluded from civic activities, which are perceived as being geared towards adults.

Low Political Engagement: A significant non-citizen population and lack of awareness and promotion of community events contribute to low political engagement.

Economic and Social Health

Quantitative Findings:

Employment Barriers. Factors such as race (69.1%), disability (29.9%), gender (17.5%), and sexual orientation (12.4%) significantly impact employment opportunities.

Childcare Accessibility Crisis. Only 6.5% of participants find childcare options affordable and accessible, highlighting a major barrier for working parents.

Lack of Government Outreach. A mere 6.5% have been contacted by local government about job training and career transition opportunities, indicating a need for proactive engagement.

Insufficient Wages and Economic Challenges. Only 9.3% believe that jobs in the region pay well enough to cover the cost of living, stressing the need for higher wages and better employment conditions. Only 7.2% of residents view Stanislaus County as very prosperous, and 31.6% see it as moderately prosperous, indicating widespread economic difficulties in the region.

Migration for Opportunities. Nearly half of participants feel that they must leave Stanislaus County for better opportunities, highlighting a significant retention issue.

Skill Development and Job Creation. While nearly half have good access to development courses, 74.4% believe schools should provide more entrepreneurial education. Great need of job creation, educational services, and support of resources for small local business.

Educational Importance and Industrial and Technological Development. Almost 80% agree that attaining a college degree or trade school education is crucial, emphasizing the value placed on higher education for economic advancement.

Pandemic's Healthcare Impact. While 42.6% saw no change in healthcare access during the pandemic, a significant 33.3% experienced a considerable decline, underscoring the pandemic's strain on healthcare services.

Qualitative Findings:

Age Discrimination and Job Opportunities: Age discrimination and a lack of job opportunities are significant concerns. Many available jobs require qualifications and experience that residents do not possess. The

inefficiency and inflexibility of job training programs like CVOC and Workforce further exacerbate these challenges, as they do not accommodate personal schedules and demand extensive documentation.

Education and Job Training: There is a perceived lack of education pathways and job training that align with the community's needs. Students and young professionals find it difficult to access higher education and vocational training due to long waitlists and high costs. Additionally, current job opportunities are seen as low-paying and do not provide meaningful career advancement, trapping youths in roles that hinder their pursuit of higher education or trade schools.

Healthcare Accessibility and Costs: Navigating healthcare services is particularly confusing for seniors, who require better communication and assistance. The significant costs associated with healthcare, lack of insurance, and insufficient support make accessing necessary services challenging. Many residents, including undocumented individuals, face long wait times and limited affordable healthcare options, often needing to travel to nearby cities for medical attention.

Community and Government Engagement: Participants expressed frustration with the government's lack of responsiveness and transparency, feeling their voices are not heard despite repeated attempts to communicate their concerns. The importance of community involvement and consistent advocacy for change is emphasized, but high living costs, work, and family responsibilities prevent many from participating in civic activities. There is also a need for better outreach initiatives as many residents are unaware of council meetings and available programs.

Educational Support and Career Counseling: While some schools provide adequate career counseling and internship opportunities, others lack such resources, particularly for fields outside agriculture and local government. Overcrowded schools with limited capacity and college prep programs hinder students' ability to explore career options effectively. Students desire more guidance in choosing classes and better interaction with counselors.

Transportation and Accessibility: The need for more accessible and affordable transportation options is evident, as many residents travel long distances for better job opportunities. Local jobs, especially in agriculture, are low-paying and involve heavy workloads, making it difficult for immigrant community members to find well-paying jobs. Programs like TRIO are not easily accessible in Patterson, requiring travel to Modesto, further complicating access to educational resources.

Transportation Options and Equity

Quantitative Findings:

Travel Difficulties. A significant portion of respondents find traveling around Stanislaus County very stressful, with only 18.1% finding it very easy, underscoring urgent transportation infrastructure issues.

Community Engagement Gap. A mere 9.7% of respondents have been contacted by local officials about transportation projects, revealing a critical lack of community involvement and awareness.

High Transportation Costs. Transportation expenses are a heavy financial burden, with 22.7% of respondents spending over 20% of their income and 28.3% spending 10-20%, highlighting the urgent need for more affordable transportation options.

Severe Housing Cost Burden. An alarming 36.5% of respondents spend over half their income on housing, while 31.7% allocate 30-50%, underscoring an urgent crisis and the critical need for affordable housing solutions.

Qualitative Findings:

High Transportation Costs: Many seniors and other residents face significant financial strain due to high transportation costs, including fuel prices and services like Lyft and Uber. This issue is compounded by confusion over public transportation routes and schedules, as well as a lack of awareness about convenient options like an app for purchasing bus tickets.

Unreliable and Inadequate Public Transportation: Public transportation is often unreliable and does not cover all necessary areas, making it difficult for residents, especially those living farther out, to access essential services. The bus schedule is inconsistent, with some locations lacking bus stops, forcing residents to walk long distances in unsafe conditions.

Safety and Maintenance Concerns: There are significant safety and maintenance issues with public transportation facilities, including inadequate lighting, lack of speed bumps, and the need for shelters and seating at bus stops. Safety concerns are exacerbated by the presence of homeless individuals and people with mental health issues at bus stops, making these areas feel unsafe.

Infrastructure Deficiencies: The lack of sidewalks and streetlights leads to dangerous walking conditions, compounded by issues such as speeding and illegal parking. Residents expressed a need for more streetlights, sidewalks, and adequate road development to improve safety and accessibility.

Medical Transportation Needs: There is a critical need for better medical transportation services, particularly for seniors and those with health issues. This includes affordable options like a "dollar ride" and a senior bus card to alleviate the financial burden.

Barriers to Educational Participation: Transportation challenges hinder students' ability to participate in extracurricular activities. School buses are unable to pick up students who live too far from the school, creating significant barriers for those residing in distant areas.

Safety Concerns on Roads: Safety concerns on roads include inadequate police presence, poor road development, and lack of adequate monitoring and lighting at bus stations and stops. These factors contribute to a general sense of insecurity among residents.

Housing Experiences and Development

Quantitative Findings:

High Housing Cost Burden Among Residents. A significant portion of respondents reported that over 50% of their income is spent on housing (36.5%), and an additional 31.7% indicated that 30-50% of their income goes toward housing expenses.

Perceived Lack of Housing Diversity. A significant 32.1% of respondents report a lack of housing diversity in Stanislaus County, with only 14% finding it very diverse; they reported a demand for single-family homes

(55.3%), duplexes and triplexes (45.9%), apartment buildings (36.1%), and townhomes (29.9%).

Major Hurdles in Accessing Housing. The biggest hurdles in accessing housing in the region include cost (80.0%), insufficient housing supply (50.8%), qualification requirements such as credit checks, deposits, and fees (48.0%), family size (27.6%), and language barriers (15.2%).

Discrimination in Securing Housing. 21.2% of respondents indicated that race, gender, sexual orientation, and/or disability were barriers to securing housing, with discrimination attributed to race (50.0%), gender (16.9%), disability (11.9%), and other reasons (21.2%).

Qualitative Findings:

Rising Rents and Homelessness:
High rent prices are contributing to homelessness, especially among women and children, and there is a strong demand for affordable housing options.

Financial Strain from Housing Costs:
Residents face high housing costs, steep deposits, and strict rental requirements, leading to financial strain and limited options. Fear of eviction is particularly high among undocumented residents.

Section 8 Housing Limitations:
Section 8 housing is limited to certain areas and carries a stigma, reducing accessibility for those in need.

Landlord Exploitation:
Landlords increase rents unjustifiably and neglect maintenance, leading to housing insecurity and a sense of unfair treatment.

Safety and Neighborhood Conditions:
Safety concerns in neighborhoods, exacerbated by homeless populations, highlight the need for better community-based safety measures and safe housing options.

High Interest Rates and Maintenance Costs:
High interest rates and maintenance costs burden first-time buyers and seniors, making housing unaffordable.

Housing Discrimination:
Discrimination in renting based on race, income, and family size is prevalent, with unfair practices affecting certain groups.

Shortage of Affordable Housing Units:
There is a lack of affordable housing, especially for singles and small families, with land often repurposed for other uses.

Strict Renting, Affordable Housing, and Buying/Renting Requirements:
o   High application fees and the need for multiple jobs to afford rent are significant barriers, especially for Hispanic families.

- Long wait times for housing support often lead to removal from waitlists without assistance.
- Affordable housing often goes to commuters from the Bay Area, not local residents.
- High documentation and credit requirements exclude many local families, including immigrants.

Transportation and Accessibility Issues:
Lack of transportation options exacerbates housing accessibility issues, particularly in flood-prone areas causing health issues.

Overcrowded Living Conditions:
Overcrowding due to extended family living together leads to privacy issues and distractions.

Neighborhood and Infrastructure Maintenance Issues:
- Poorly maintained parks and streets, with safety concerns from homeless individuals, require more attention.
- More stop signs and pothole repairs are necessary for better traffic safety and road conditions.

Climate Resilience

Quantitative Findings:

Need for Increased Action. 75.0% agree that not enough is being done to ensure the region can adapt to climate change, indicating a critical gap in current efforts.

Lack of Government Communication: Nearly all participants (95.6%) have never been contacted by local government about climate resilience efforts, highlighting a significant communication and engagement deficiency.

Urgency for Proactive Measures. The high levels of concern and perceived inaction underscore the urgency for local governments to adopt more proactive measures and effectively communicate with residents about climate resilience plans.

Community Engagement: There is a pressing need for local governments to engage with communities, solicit their input, and keep them informed about ongoing and planned climate adaptation initiatives.

Policy Enhancement: These findings suggest that enhancing policies and ensuring robust implementation of climate adaptation strategies are crucial for building regional resilience.

Climate Resilience SEED Survey

Urgent Need for Enhanced Climate Adaptation Strategies. Nearly 75% of participants believe current efforts are insufficient, signaling the need for improved infrastructure, water management, and sustainable agricultural practices.

Health Sector Preparedness: Almost 60% of participants fear severe health impacts from climate change,

highlighting the need for increased healthcare capacity, early warning systems, and public health initiatives.

Economic Resilience: Over 61% expect negative economic impacts, emphasizing the importance of diversifying the economy and investing in green technologies.

Public Awareness: The concerns suggest a need for educational campaigns to help communities understand climate risks and take proactive measures.

Regional Collaboration. There is a strong case for neighboring regions to collaborate on shared climate challenges through joint research and emergency response plans.

Qualitative Findings:

Health and Economic Impacts of Extreme Weather:
Extreme heat and cold negatively affect residents' health and economic stability, particularly impacting vulnerable populations like outdoor workers and children with asthma. High utility costs for heating and cooling exacerbate financial strain.

Insufficient Government Action and Communication:
There is a call for more direct engagement from government officials to improve climate resilience, including better communication and involvement with the community. Residents feel their concerns are often unheard and unresolved.

Student Safety and School Infrastructure:
Students face challenges walking home in extreme weather, and some schools lack adequate drinkable water and air conditioning, hindering the learning environment.

Infrastructure Deficiencies:
Issues such as clogged drains exacerbating flooding, insufficient drainage systems, and lack of air conditioning highlight the need for better infrastructure to handle climate challenges. Improved housing insulation and reliable heating and cooling systems are necessary.

Need for Climate Resilience Initiatives:
Residents call for governmental action to plant more trees, reduce pesticide use, and create green spaces. There is also a need for cooling stations during extreme heat and workshops to educate the community on handling climate events.

Preparation for Climate Disasters:
The county is perceived as inadequately prepared for climate disasters like flooding and extreme heat. There is a need for better dissemination of information, resources, and community education on climate issues, including fire safety.

Impact on Vulnerable Populations:
Vulnerable groups, including seniors, low-income families, and outdoor workers, are disproportionately affected by climate-related disasters. Financial constraints prevent many from using air conditioning during extreme heat, and water scarcity increases costs.

Economic and Employment Challenges:

Climate change disrupts local businesses and agriculture, leading to job instability and potential layoffs. Flooding can render workplaces inaccessible, causing missed workdays and lost income, particularly for hourly wage workers.

Community Involvement and Support:
There is a communication gap between residents and policymakers, as evidenced by low resident turnout at city meetings. Residents desire more proactive measures from the city to address climate challenges and support affected individuals.

Environmental Improvements:
More greenery, such as trees, gardens, and greenhouses, is needed to alleviate heat and improve air quality. City clean-up efforts are necessary to address debris, and improved water quality in schools is a concern due to complaints about poor water quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil Engagement and Community Building

Improve Communication and Outreach by 1) implementing robust communication strategies using diverse channels to reach all community members, specially those with limited access to resources, 2) allowing residents to voice their opinions and provide feedback on county issues, and 3) utilizing social media, town hall meetings, and online forums to ensure diverse community engagement.

Enhance Civic Engagement by 1) creating initiatives and programs to encourage greater participation in local governance, and 2) developing partnerships with community organizations to reach underrepresented groups and foster a culture of civic involvement.

Increase Transparency and Responsiveness by 1) increasing transparency in decision-making processes by regularly updating the community on county actions and policies, and 2) implementing open data initiatives to make county information more accessible and understandable to the public.

Expand Participation Opportunities by 1) developing targeted outreach programs to include youth and other marginalized groups in economic, cultural, and political development activities, and 2) offering workshops and educational programs to empower residents with the skills and knowledge needed to engage effectively.

Foster Inclusive Community Engagement by 1) regularly surveying residents to gather feedback and suggestions on improving participation and engagement, and 2) actively incorporating community input into policy-making and project planning to ensure that initiatives reflect residents' needs and priorities, and 3) engaging a broader cross-section of the community, including marginalized groups and students.

Support and Promote Local Initiatives by 1) providing funding and resources for community-led projects and initiatives that promote civic engagement and development, and 2) recognizing and celebrating successful community efforts to inspire further participation and investment in local governance.

Expand Resources for Homeless Residents by 1) developing more community centers and resource hubs to provide essential services and support and disseminate critical information.

Address Barriers to Participation by 1) providing financial support and schedule events at accessible times to accommodate working individuals, parents, and youth, and 2) creating job and career fairs, college fairs, scholarships, and safe, and engaging activities for youth.

Economic and Social Health

Improve Job Training and Education Programs by 1) developing flexible and accessible job training programs that align with the community's needs, accommodating personal schedules and reducing documentation requirements, and 2) increasing the availability of education pathways and vocational training that provide meaningful career advancement opportunities.

Enhance Healthcare Services by 1) improving communication and assistance for seniors navigating healthcare services, 2) increasing affordable healthcare options, reduce wait times, and expand medical

facilities to better serve local residents, and 3) addressing significant costs associated with healthcare and provide better support for those without insurance.

Increase Government Responsiveness and Transparency by 1) ensuring that the government is more responsive and transparent in its decision-making processes, 2) engaging all community members, including marginalized groups, in civic activities and address their concerns promptly, and 3) implementing better outreach initiatives to inform residents about council meetings and available programs.

Support Educational and Career Development by 1) expanding career counseling and internship opportunities, particularly in fields outside of agriculture and local government, 2) address school overcrowding and improve college prep programs, and 3) providing more guidance and interaction between students and counselors, ensuring younger students also receive adequate support.

Improve Transportation and Accessibility by 1) developing more accessible and affordable transportation options to reduce the need for residents to travel long distances for job opportunities, 2) ensuring local jobs provide fair wages and manageable workloads, particularly for immigrant community members, and 3) enhancing access to educational resources by making programs like TRIO more accessible locally.

Transportation Options and Equity

Improve Affordability and Awareness by 1) introducing affordable public transit options such as a "dollar ride" program and senior bus cards, and 2) increasing awareness about existing resources, such as the app for purchasing bus tickets, to make transportation more accessible and affordable.

Enhance Public Transportation Coverage and Reliability by 1) expanding the coverage of public transportation to underserved areas and improve the consistency of bus schedules, and 2) ensuring that all necessary areas are covered by reliable public transportation routes.

Address Safety and Maintenance Issues by 1) improving safety and maintenance at public transportation facilities by installing adequate lighting, speed bumps, shelters, and seating at bus stops, and 2) increasing monitoring to ensure the safety of passengers, especially at bus stops frequented by vulnerable populations.

Invest in Infrastructure by 1) developing more sidewalks and streetlights to create safer walking conditions, and 2) addressing issues such as speeding and illegal parking through better road infrastructure and enforcement.

Enhance Medical Transportation Services by 1) developing dedicated medical transportation services for seniors and those with health issues to ensure they can access necessary healthcare without financial strain.

Support Educational Participation by 1) addressing transportation barriers that prevent students from participating in extracurricular activities by expanding school bus services and providing additional support for those living in distant areas.

Improve Road Safety by 1) increasing police presence and improve road development to enhance safety for all residents, and 2) ensuring that bus stations and stops are safe, clean, and well-monitored to create a secure environment for public transportation users.

Housing Experiences and Development

Increase Affordable Housing Supply by developing more affordable housing options, including senior housing, and duplexes.

Improve Housing Support Programs by expanding Section 8 housing availability and reducing its stigma.

Regulate Landlord Practices by implementing regulations to prevent unjustified rent increases and ensuring proper maintenance.

Enhance Community Safety by increasing community safety measures and improve neighborhood conditions.

Facilitate Housing Accessibility by reducing housing costs and barriers by lowering deposits and application fees and offering flexible rental requirements.

Combat Housing Discrimination by enforce anti-discrimination laws and ensure equal housing opportunities.

Support Immigrants and Low-Income Families by simplifying documentation and credit requirements to make housing accessible.

Expand Transportation Options by improving transportation to enhance access to housing and services.

Improve Infrastructure and Maintenance by repairing roads, increase stop signs, and maintain public spaces.

Climate Resilience

Improve Communication and Community Involvement by 1) enhancing direct engagement from government officials with the community to better understand and address climate resilience needs, 2) increasing the dissemination of information and resources related to climate resilience through workshops, community meetings, and digital platforms.

Enhance Infrastructure and Utilities by 1) upgrading drainage systems to handle flooding and reduce the risk of clogged drains, 2) Improving housing insulation and ensure reliable heating and cooling systems to help residents cope with extreme temperatures, and 3) Providing financial assistance for air conditioning and incentives for solar panel adoption to reduce utility costs.

Support Vulnerable Populations by 1) establishing cooling stations during extreme heat and provide additional support for outdoor workers and children with asthma, and 2) developing targeted initiatives

to support seniors and low-income families, who are disproportionately affected by climate-related disasters.

Increase Green Spaces and Environmental Measures by 1) planting more trees and create green spaces to alleviate heat and improve air quality and 2) reducing pesticide use and implement city clean-up efforts to address debris and overgrown greenery.

Improve School Facilities by 1) ensuring that schools have drinkable water fountains and allocate funds for filtered water fountains, and 2) installing air conditioning in homes and classrooms to create a conducive learning environment, especially during extreme heat.

Climate Disaster Preparedness by 1) conducting workshops to educate the community on handling climate emergencies, including fire safety and flood preparedness, and 2) developing better infrastructure to cope with climate changes, such as improved flood zone designations and landlord support for flood-prone areas.

Economic Support and Job Stability by 1) providing financial support for residents to use air conditioning during extreme heat and address increased water prices, and 2) supporting local businesses and agriculture to mitigate job instability caused by climate change-induced events.

Address Public Health Concerns by 1) improving water quality in schools and ensure accessibility to safe drinking water, and 2) implementing measures to reduce the health impacts of chemicals used in agriculture, such as promoting alternative farming practices.

Enhance Public Transportation and Safety by 1) improving transportation infrastructure to ensure safe and accessible travel during heavy rains and extreme weather, and 2) increasing community education on climate issues to foster better preparedness and proactive measures.

Boost Resident Participation in Civic Activities by 1) encouraging a higher resident turnout at city meetings by addressing the communication gap and ensuring residents feel heard and supported, 2) organizing more community-level efforts to enhance climate resilience and engage residents in proactive climate action, 3) boosting civic participation among youth and those most affected by climate change, establish targeted outreach programs, accessible platforms like youth councils, and community forums, and 4) offering incentives such as stipends and volunteer credits and implement educational campaigns to emphasize the importance of civic involvement.
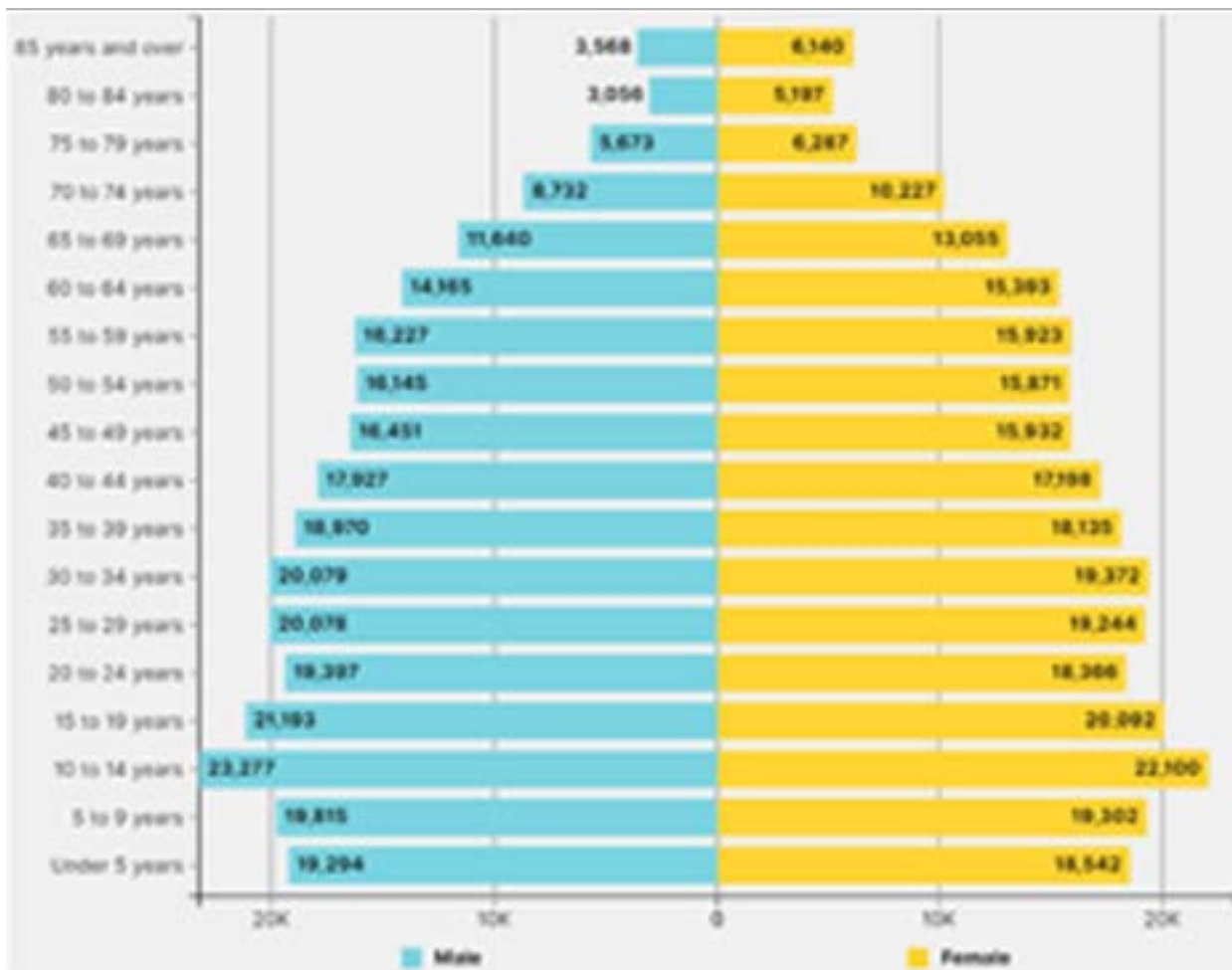
APPENDIX

Figure A1. Population by age and sex in Stanislaus County, 2022 American Community Survey.

REFERENCES

1. Benner, Chris and Pastor, Manuel, Solidarity Economics: 2021.
2. Benner, Chris and Pastor, Manuel, Just Growth Inclusion and Prosperity in America' Metropolitan Regions: 2012.
3. City of Modesto Housing Element 2023-2031, June 16, 2023.
4. COVID-19 Farmworker Study; 2020-2021: California Institute for Rural Studies.
5. COVID-19 in Stanislaus, 2022 Fact Sheet ORALE: Organization to Reduce and to Advance and Lead for Equity Against COVID. January to September 2022.
6. Flores, Edward, Improving the Lives of California Ag Workers: Sector Analysis and Recommendation for Intervention. June 2023.
7. Flores, Edward, Worker Inequality in the Central Valley, UC Merced Community and Labor Center 2024.
8. Pastor, Manuel; Making Change: Understanding Today and Transform Tomorrow
     March 23, 2022.
9. Pastor, Manuel: A People Plan: Our Economy, our movement, Our Modesto; June 5, 2023.
10. Saul, Jason, Deiglmeier, Kriss, Unlocking the Power of Data Refineries for Social Impact, Stanford Social Innovation Review April 27, 2023.
11. Shillingford, Aisha, Building the Cultural Power Ecosystem, Stanford Social Innovation Review; Winter 2024.
12. Southwest Modesto Plan; Plan de Suroeste de Modesto, 2023 Community Workshop on Vision and Opportunities.
13. Stanislaus 2030 Investment Blueprint and Action Plan 2022.
14. Stanislaus County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2023-2028 Plan; September 24, 2023.
15. Stanislaus Sustainable Community Coalition; SSCC Environmental Justice Recommendations 2050; California of Public Health Contract Number 19, 8-10815, 2023.
16. Stanislaus County draft 2023-2031 Housing Element Update; August 2023.
17. Taylor, Edward J. and Martin, Philip L. The new rural poverty: Central Valley evolving into patchwork of poverty and prosperity. University of California, Davis; California Agriculture, page 54, 26-32 January 1, 2000.
18. The impact of Chronic Underfunding on America's Public Health System;
     Trends, Risks and Recommendation: 2022   Trust for America Health.
19. Taylor, Edward J, Martin Phillip L. The new rural poverty: Central Valley evolving into patchwork of poverty and prosperity. January 2000.
20. Trust for America Health; The impact of Chronic underfunding on America's Public Health System; Trends, Risks, and Recommendation; July 2022.
21. Wadsworth, Gail and Riden, Heather E. Farmer perceptions of climate, adaptation, and management of farmworker risk in California; Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development; Volume 11, Issue 2 Winter 2021-2022.