

Community Economic Resilience Fund Program
 CERF 2022-24
 Executive Summary

Applicant Name	Economic Development Collaborative - Ventura County
<p>Phase 1 Concept Proposal: The Uplift Central Coast Coalition (“Uplift Coalition”) is supported by three economic development organizations: the Economic Development Collaborative (EDC) as Fiscal Agent, the Central Coast Regional Economic Action Coalition (REACH) as Regional Convener, and the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP). The Uplift Coalition collectively represents the six counties in the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) Central Coast region, a diverse set of initial High Road Transition Collaborative (HRTC) members from all 12 CERF constituent groups, and our disinvested communities. The Uplift Coalition embraces a shared mission: to <i>uplift</i> our residents as we <i>uplift</i> our regional economy, growing from within to create transformative opportunities for more than 2 million people across an area larger than 10 states over more than 300 miles from Santa Cruz to Ventura. Around the world, the pandemic-induced economic downturn has disproportionately affected Black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities, women, Native American tribes and other underserved populations; the Central Coast of California is no exception. This region is undergoing persistent and emerging economic challenges: extreme socio-economic disparities, an overabundance of low-wage jobs, high costs of living, and acute, often highly uneven, impacts of climate change, the energy transition, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a changing economy. Our ultimate goal is the creation of thousands of high-quality carbon-neutral jobs that are broadly and equitably accessible to all Central Coast residents, especially low-income workers and their families to have the power to advance economically. An equally critical goal is integrating a regional mindset and partnership to overcome geographic barriers, diverging interests and jurisdictional boundaries and realize a collective vision for an equitable and inclusive economy. The Uplift Coalition has engaged widespread regional participation to design a governance structure, build capacity and resource communities, and develop a stakeholder engagement plan that builds on the regional state of affairs, meets the objectives of the CERF program and lays the groundwork for the next stage of collaboration. Our goal is to develop an inclusive regional plan that aims to reduce economic inequalities and drive toward shared prosperity across the region. Economic opportunity, equity, and sustainability guide the Uplift Coalition’s inclusive economic planning process to achieve meaningful and enduring changes in the region by recognizing who sits at the table, how people are engaged, who is resourced to participate, what projects are prioritized, and how they are implemented.</p>	
<p>Collective Partnership Agreement Partners: The Uplift Coalition conducted widespread outreach for a broad cross-section of stakeholders to join the initial HRTC and shape the development of the application. Four regionwide working sessions were held with a combined total of 553 registered attendees who reviewed, commented, discussed, and shaped the application. A total of 129 organizations from every constituent category have joined the growing HRTC and have committed to support the Phase 1 planning process. The Uplift Coalition has developed a governance structure informed by the direct input and feedback of a wide cross-section of community interests and perspectives to ensure that the model keeps our planning goals of equity, sustainability and economic opportunity at the forefront in a manner that acknowledges the unique demographic and geographic diversity of our region. The governance structure balances decision-making of all critical constituencies outlined in the CERF process with an emphasis on empowering the voices of historically marginalized and disinvested communities. All governance compositions will seek to</p>	

integrate and balance gender, racial, and geographic diversity. Two tri-county subregional steering committees (a Northern encompassing Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties and Southern encompassing San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties) will be established, each with 1 individual from each of the 12 CERF constituency groups. A Regional Steering Committee will encompass the combined membership of the subregional steering committees and will be responsible for guiding the overall planning process and final decision-making. An Uplift Vision Committee with representatives from each of the six counties will be formed and responsible for ensuring alignment to the CERF vision and the planning north star lens of equity, sustainability, and economic opportunity.

Project Description: The Uplift Coalition aims to develop a flexible work plan that recognizes the need to build trust and ensure meaningful engagement across the full Phase I planning period, develop a concrete, inclusive Regional Plan that can be validated and activated across a diverse and geographically large region, and enable projects, programs, and deliverables to be surfaced and advanced throughout the process. We envision undertaking a multi-phase planning process over a 24-month timeline: a staging period (3 months) to stand up the governance structure and lay the groundwork for planning efforts, an economic planning period (9 months) focused on intensive research, stakeholder outreach and planning, a refinement and validation period (6 months) to incorporate further community feedback, and an activation period (6 months) to socialize the final Regional Plan, encouraging its adoption, co-ownership and advancement toward implementation.

Outreach and Engagement Plan: The region's geographic scale, its diversity of social and economic ecosystems, and the isolation and lack of resources in disinvested communities all present challenges for assuring inclusive engagement and collaboration. To overcome these barriers, a stakeholder outreach and engagement process will take place across multiple channels with the goal of ensuring a transparent planning process and capturing critical participation and input from community stakeholders, with an emphasis on historically excluded voices. The following stakeholder engagement activities will be supported with a focus on inclusion and accessibility:

- **Uplift Website:** The website will include multilingual or translation capabilities and will house key information on the region's CERF activities and progress to keep the public informed and engaged.
- **Data Dashboard:** A real-time interactive web-based map created using Geographic Information Systems and performance measurement tracking will be publicly available.
- **Listening Sessions:** Listening sessions will be conducted in disinvested communities to build HRTC's understanding of issues, concerns and challenges including race and systemic barriers that have prevented underrepresented communities from participating in economic opportunities.
- **Inclusivity Fund:** A \$1.25M Inclusivity Fund will be established to provide disinvested community stakeholders with the resources to participate in the CERF planning process. The fund will include two operational pathways: 1) **Participant Reimbursement**—offsetting expenses (travel, childcare, etc.) for under-resourced organizations to participate in convenings and planning activities, and 2) **Service Agreement/Contract Structure**—providing funding resources to organizations serving in disinvested communities to support meaningful engagement and undertake other activities to support the planning process. The approach will build strong network capacity across the collection of community partners in disinvested communities.
- **Language and Translation Services:** Language can be a significant barrier to opportunity and engagement. To bridge this divide, the Uplift Coalition will produce program materials in Spanish and other languages as needed. Resources will also go toward providing language support.
- **Local Engagement to Build Trust and Credibility:** Uplift plans to leverage the robust community outreach arms of community-based organizations with the history, expertise, and cultural

sensitivities necessary to build trust and engage with diverse populations. This is particularly important to ensure participation by racial minorities, disinvested communities, and women.

- **Racial Equity and Justice Training for Leaders:** To ensure leaders are best equipped and centered to engage with disinvested and underrepresented communities, an ongoing equity and justice learning program will be created.