



UPLIFT CENTRAL COAST



*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

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Uplift Central Coast Coalition secures \$5 million planning grant for six-county region

The six-county Uplift Central Coast Coalition, led by REACH, the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) and the Economic Development Collaborative (EDC), has been awarded a \$5 million grant through California's Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF).

The grant will fund a 2-year planning process to create an inclusive economic development plan for the six Central Coast counties of Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura, with a focus on equity, sustainability, job quality, economic competitiveness and resilience.

The Uplift Coalition will then be eligible to apply for additional implementation funding under [CERF](#), a \$600M dollar program designed to catalyze planning and action to realize an equitable and sustainable economy across California's diverse regions and to foster long-term economic resilience.

"This expansive coastal region extending from Santa Cruz to Ventura has a lot in common. We share persistent and emerging economic challenges including extreme socio-economic disparities, high costs of living, and often highly uneven impacts of climate change," REACH President & CEO Melissa James said. "We are excited for this promising new opportunity to expand our network and bring resources to our region to spur economic opportunity for those who need it most."

The Uplift Coalition is one of 13 regional collaboratives across the state to be awarded CERF planning grants. Read the [announcement from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, and the Labor & Workforce Development Agency here](#) and find the [Uplift project summary here](#) (page 15).

Formed in 2021, the coalition shares a common mission: to uplift the region's residents as it uplifts the regional economy, growing from within to create transformative opportunities for more than 2 million people across an area larger than 10 states.

"We know there was a widely disproportionate impact on minority workers from the COVID-19 pandemic," EDC President & CEO Bruce Stenslie said. "Now we have an opportunity to address that and foster economic development investments for the region in a deliberate, thoughtful and disruptive way."

In developing the grant application, the Uplift Coalition hosted three virtual public webinars to facilitate open dialogue and input on the project plan, engaging more than 400 people from industry, government and education partners across the six counties. As part of the application package, 129 organizations representing more than a dozen different community sectors and perspectives provided letters of support, forming a strong regional collaborative that will be expanded over the course of the project.

The 2-year planning process also involves implementing an inclusive outreach and engagement plan and ultimately developing a collaborative regional plan.

Under the project plan, the Economic Development Collaborative will serve as the Fiscal Agent, managing the grant funds, and REACH will serve as Regional Convener, leading stakeholder engagement and plan development. REACH, EDC and MBEP will each serve as a co-convener in their respective subregions.

"We're very excited for this opportunity to meaningfully and intentionally engage stakeholders for the inclusive planning and development for our region and do our part to uplift our entire region, especially those in disinvested communities," said MBEP President & CEO Tahra Goraya.

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About the Uplift Central Coast Coalition

The Uplift Central Coast Coalition is a six-county partnership led by three economic development organizations — the Economic Development Collaborative, Monterey Bay Economic Partnership and REACH — that has united to attract investment and expand opportunity for residents throughout Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

About Economic Development Collaborative

A private nonprofit, the Economic Development Collaborative was founded in 1996 with funding from the County of Ventura, the 10 cities in the county and key private-sector companies to provide a pathway to business growth, economic prosperity and high quality of life for all. Today, in partnership with the Small Business Development Center, the EDC is a regional asset for economic vitality in Ventura, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles counties, giving businesses, community partners and civic leaders the resources they need to succeed. By leveraging public and private funds, the EDC has become a key player in delivering business consulting, funding and strategic initiatives that support the region. edcollaborative.com

About Monterey Bay Economic Partnership

Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) is a regional nonprofit member-supported organization consisting of public, private and civic entities located throughout the counties of Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz. MBEP's mission is to improve the economic health and quality of life in the region. mbep.biz

About REACH

REACH is a regional economic action coalition created to ensure the Central Coast of California is a place where current and future generations have the opportunity to thrive. With a mission to increase economic prosperity through big thinking, bold action and regional collaboration and the goal of creating 15,000 good-paying jobs by 2030, REACH serves the Central Coast region spanning San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. reachcentralcoast.org

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