

Group Discussion: What will CERF look like in the Inland Empire? What projects are underway that need to be considered for CERF? What do students, residents and workers need to access and secure a better future?

Some of the group discussion points include the following:

- Access to good transportation is one of the biggest barriers to employment and training in the region—we need to think in a different way than just providing bus passes and thinking that solves the problem
- [National CORE](#) is an affordable housing developer and will be launching CORE Academy to train more residents in this field (Project Management, Development, Construction, Asset Management, Compliance, etc.)
- We need to make it easy for all groups who need assistance to get assistance, i.e., shorter wait times, less bureaucracy—we need to think about how we can streamline existing processes or make new ones
- Students need reliable access to technology and broadband so they don't experience delays/challenges in their education that snowball into challenges in workforce development down the line
- Across the region and the state, there is a lack of access to affordable, high-quality child care—this is one of the highest barriers for people to access employment and impacts those in lower-income areas more
- One participant shared the [2021 State of Entrepreneurship](#) report published by CSUSB on the region, noting that the forthcoming 2022 report will include data that can inform this CERF process to help drive decision-making specifically around small business and entrepreneurship support
- The governance structure will be really important—this is the hard work that is being done to ensure that different sectors and stakeholders are involved
- Special populations are often left out in both San Bernardino and Riverside Counties—there are good organizations that work with different populations and we need to have unity in our work across the two counties and operate as one
- With such a large geographical region, we need to recognize that in order for a regional planning table to be successful, we need to consider the sub-regional economic dynamics and be intentional about including lower capacity, far-reaching and unincorporated areas that are often left out of decision-making
- We need to use the data to identify the population(s) that are severely impacted; there are inequities statewide, but even within this region there is inequality—we need to be united, organized and each do our part to end poverty. [Community Action Partnership](#) is committed to this work in the region
- The Coachella Valley's Housing Catalyst Fund aims to develop sustainable, affordable and quality housing

Breakout Discussion Question 1: Which specific organizations within your region need to be engaged to ensure that CERF is an inclusive process?

Breakout room participants noted a number of key industries that should be involved in the CERF process; below are the groups/industries organized by theme, as well as a table listing specific organizations.

Community Representation

- Whatever is done goes back to the community and it is the community who benefits from resources—we need to connect back to communities and folks on the ground, especially low-income residents, the Black and Brown collective and the Latino community
- We need to make sure we have regular, pre-scheduled meetings with parity in representation
- Make sure the indigenous community has a seat at the table, especially early on

Education/Higher Education

- Community colleges and universities have or support programs, internships and apprenticeships in technology and other industries that train people for high-quality and high-wage jobs; this helps the region not miss future opportunities and prevents brain drain in the region
- We need to make child care affordable and increase the supply for child care providers; we need to support the education sector as there is an expected loss of teachers
- Education representatives need to be in the room; we should involve school districts (middle and high schools) with businesses—students want to know what their career will be and want to explore different pathways

Public/Private/Non-Profit Sector Partnerships

- We need cross-sector partnership with local governments and public agencies; how are cities using their ARPA dollars and how can that be aligned with CERF? We need to make sure cities are engaged to utilize their resources accordingly and make sure folks know about this initiative
- It can be difficult to get local funds—advocating for bringing private dollars to the region can help; key private sectors need to be included, which ties back to the job piece; make sure industry, manufacturing, and others are in the room
- Folks who are in charge of making hiring decisions/employers are not a part of the process—we should involve employers (including large employers like Kaiser and Dignity Health) to get their early buy-in and participation
- There is an opportunity to leverage the philanthropy and non-profit sectors, which can play critical roles with CERF in the Inland Empire

Green Technology

- We need to expand green tech pathways and training opportunities and focus on urban and high-tech agriculture

Transportation

- Focus on a transportation plan, as transportation access is a huge barrier to jobs; we should engage with CBOs and regional nonprofits that provide bus passes and transportation

Organizations named specifically by listening session participants include the following:

Key Organizations to Engage	Stakeholder notes (if applicable)
Center for Social Innovation (UCR)	The Center for Social Innovation is one regional organization that is working to engage community voices
Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE)	Can provide pathways into various sectors
GRID Alternatives	
Healthcare industry	Including Kaiser Permanente, Dignity Health, Loma Linda Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital
LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network	
Lift to Rise	
National Autism Society	Highly engaged in job training, employment and equity
OASIS: Opportunities to Advance Sustainability, Innovation, and Social Inclusion	
San Bernardino City Unified School District	
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Employment Training • Colton Redlands Yucaipa ROP • Manufacturers' Council of the Inland Empire (MCIE) • San Bernardino Council of Governments • Western Riverside Council of Governments 	Note: These groups were submitted by participants via the post-listening session survey

Breakout Discussion Question 2: What would a successful CERF planning process look like in your region?

See below for details on the themes that emerged among the breakout sessions.

Entrepreneurship, Small Businesses and Job Creation

- We need to focus on initiatives that support bridging the gaps between wealth and equity and fostering entrepreneurship, as well as ensuring we are inclusive in planning and execution efforts
- The majority of jobs will be created by entrepreneurs and small businesses—there are a lot of ongoing initiatives to put efforts and resources into developing small businesses and entrepreneurs in the Latino community and helping existing businesses scale up; an example is the City of San Bernardino/Cal State San Bernardino project with the Aspen Institute and Latinos of Society program—we need to leverage these types of initiatives to support job creation
- On the other side of that, we need to make sure there is enough housing for economic development, as job creation may impact the housing crisis
- Coming out of the pandemic, many people do not have the knowledge of resources out there, how to get a loan, etc.; we need to assist small businesses in the Inland Empire and also make sure small business takes a lead role in this process

Making Data-Informed Decisions

- We need to make decisions driven by data and develop a process that really looks at the data and makes connections to people—data tells a story, so by understanding the real people behind the data, this will help us understand where investments need to go
- We also need to collect data that discusses community actions and initiatives (e.g., who is working on what, who is bringing what to the table)
- It is important to recognize areas that are data blind and difficult to quantify for whatever reason; also important for the community to review the data (to have the representation of community)
- The ArcGIS Pathways map is a great tool for identifying where there are industry gaps in our two counties

Cross-Sector Collaboration and Using Resources Already in Place

- We need to make sure we (including individual cities in the region) are not siloed; especially from a customer standpoint, we can be much more innovative when we are not siloed, are working together and have good communication
- We need to decide as a collective of cities what is best for our region and determine what success looks like in the region
- We need to get to know each other better and foster positive relationships—we have to do this at the grassroots and build up and connecting 1:1 is part of contributing to this collaborative

- Starting from scratch is not necessary—we need to use what we have already; in lieu of building new coalitions, we should leverage the coalitions that are already happening
- Timing is important; if we have something to share, then that’s when we should share it and identify who should do it

Breakout Discussion Question 3: Which sustainable sector/projects do we need to consider for CERF? (e.g. housing, healthcare, cyber, green tech)

Participants noted the importance of working toward skills that are transferable now and for future workers, including folks in the workforce who were most left behind during the pandemic—it is important to help these folks get into new fields that we are putting money behind.

Participants also discussed how the region can improve how it catalogs historical sector growth, and noted there is a current project working through a newly acquired 20-year data set to heat map where sector growth has been happening from an entrepreneurial and small business perspective, all the way down to the zip code level.

The following sectors/projects were brought up in the breakout rooms during this conversation: early childhood education, agricultural technology, energy/lithium efforts, healthcare, cybersecurity, logistics and manufacturing.

For answers to Frequently Asked Questions, as well as questions discussed during the Inland Empire Listening Session, please see [here](#).

