

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



ITEM: 2.12
(ID # 30254)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, April 28, 2026

FROM : OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Receive and File 2026-2030 Economic Development Strategic Plan and Subregional Strategy, All Districts. [\$0])

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive and file the 2026-2030 Riverside County Economic Development Strategic Plan and its subregional strategy, the 2026-2030 Coachella Valley Economic Development Strategy;
2. Approve and adopt the 2026-2030 Riverside County Economic Development Strategic Plan and its subregional strategy as the County's framework for economic development initiatives and priorities;
3. Direct the Office of Economic Development, in collaboration with County departments, cities, regional partners, and industry stakeholders, to advance and support the strategies and initiatives outlined in the Strategic Plan and subregional strategy; and,
4. Authorize the Office of Economic Development to make non-substantive updates to the Strategic Plan and subregional strategy as needed to reflect changing economic conditions, funding opportunities, and implementation progress.


ACTION: Consent


Suzanne Holland, Director of Office of Economic Development 4/7/2026

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Washington, seconded by Supervisor Perez and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is received and filed as recommended.

Ayes: Medina, Spiegel, Washington, Perez, and Gutierrez
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: April 28, 2026
xc: OED

Kimberly A. Rector
Clerk of the Board
By: 
Deputy

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost
COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
NET COUNTY COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A			Budget Adjustment: No	
			For Fiscal Year: 25/26-30/31	

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve

BACKGROUND:

Summary

On October 22, 2024, the Board of Supervisors approved a professional services agreement with Natelson Dale Group, Inc. (TNDG) to develop a countywide economic development strategic plan for Riverside County. The Riverside County Office of Economic Development (OED) has since completed the 2026-2030 Riverside County Economic Development Strategic Plan, which provides a framework to guide economic development initiatives and priorities across the county over the next five years. As part of the same contract, TNDG also developed the 2026-2030 Coachella Valley Economic Development Strategy, a complementary subregional plan that provides more focused strategies to support economic growth and investment in the Coachella Valley.

The planning process included economic and industry analysis, stakeholder engagement, and collaboration with regional partners to ensure the plan reflects the diverse economic opportunities and needs across Riverside County. The plan was shaped through 18 regional stakeholder meetings involving more than 125 business and community leaders, followed by broader public engagement. Input from businesses, economic development organizations, workforce partners, and community stakeholders helped inform strategies to strengthen the county's economic competitiveness and expand access to quality job opportunities.

The Strategic Plan identifies priority industry sectors for growth, including Tourism and Hospitality, Agriculture and Ag Tech, Renewable Energy and Clean Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, and innovation-driven industries. The plan outlines strategies to support business attraction and expansion, encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, strengthen workforce development, and stimulate investment throughout Riverside County.

The 2026-2030 Riverside County Economic Development Strategic Plan will serve as a guiding framework for OED and its partners to support sustainable economic growth and elevate Riverside County's economic profile. This Plan has been formally approved by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and serves as Riverside County's five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs).

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As defined by the EDA, a CEDS is a regionally driven, data-informed strategy developed through broad stakeholder collaboration to identify economic challenges, establish priorities, and implement actionable solutions that strengthen regional competitiveness and resilience. The EDA-approved CEDS positions the County to remain eligible for federal funding and technical assistance programs that support infrastructure investment, workforce development, innovation, and economic resilience.

Impact on Residents and Businesses

The 2026-2030 Riverside County Economic Development Strategic Plan provides a framework to support business growth, attract investment, and strengthen key industries across Riverside County. Implementation of the plan is expected to support job creation, expand economic opportunities for residents, and enhance the overall competitiveness of the county's business environment.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A. 2026-2030 Riverside County Economic Development Strategic Plan
Attachment B. 2026-2030 Coachella Valley Economic Strategy



Aaron Gettis, Chief Deputy County Counsel 4/16/2026

2026-2030

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN





DESERT HILLS
PREMIUM OUTLETS

BURBERRY

BURBERRY



Riverside County **Board of Supervisors**

Jose Medina First District

Karen Spiegel Second District, Chair

Chuck Washington Third District

V. Manuel Perez Fourth District

Yxstian Gutierrez Fifth District, Vice Chair

Riverside County **Office of Economic Development**

Suzanne Holland Director

Amber Jacobson Assistant Director

Michael Franklin Deputy Director

Kimberly Wright Economic Development Manager

Prepared by:



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Riverside County:

California's Economic Future

Riverside County is emerging as a top-tier destination for business and innovation. With a population of 2.5 million¹ and a strategic location at the heart of the Western United States' major economic corridors, Riverside County is poised to become a national leader in innovation, job creation, industry expansion, and business investment.

This Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) lays out a bold vision and related implementation framework for maximizing quality economic growth in Riverside County. The recommended Action Plan reflects Riverside County's substantial development capacity and impressive industry growth opportunities, while also recognizing a range of foundational challenges that will need to be addressed in order for Riverside County to fully realize its strategic potential. Implementation of the EDSP is expected to be spearheaded by the Riverside County Office of Economic Development (RivCoED) in collaboration with a wide array of public and private partners identified in the Plan. In this regard, the EDSP is designed to align with and enhance ongoing economic development efforts across the Inland Empire and the broader State of California, while focusing on strategic priorities uniquely relevant to Riverside County.

Sizing Up Riverside County's Economic Development Potential and Challenges

Historic and projected development patterns within the Southern California (SoCal) megaregion indicate a promising economic future for Riverside County but also underscore some of the county's fundamental challenges. For decades Riverside County's abundant supply of developable land, relatively affordable housing, and excellent quality of life attributes have fueled strong population growth, in

The Riverside County Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) is both an actionable blueprint for catalyzing inclusive regional growth and a compliant framework that aligns with the U.S. Economic Development Administration (USEDA) Guidelines for a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). Recognizing the dynamic needs of our region, the EDSP is crafted as a flexible and integrative tool that satisfies federal regulatory requirements while also advancing locally driven priorities.

The USED A encourages the use of alternative or equivalent plans, so long as the content and process are consistent with USED A regulations (13 C.F.R §303.7). The Riverside County EDSP meets and exceeds these expectations—not only by incorporating the required statutory elements, but also by reflecting meaningful engagement with community leaders, stakeholders, and underrepresented voices throughout the County.

In alignment with USED A guidance (see Appendix A) the Riverside County EDSP is not a standalone document, but a convergence point for broader regional, state, and local plans. It operationalizes the USED A's vision of integrated development by building bridges between economic goals and complementary planning efforts in housing, transportation, economic resilience, broadband infrastructure, and more.



large part driven by migration from SoCal's more expensive and congested coastal counties.

In addition to leading Southern California in population and housing growth, Riverside County has also experienced impressive growth in local employment opportunities. However, job gains have generally lagged population increases and have largely been concentrated in local-serving industries (which typically generate lower-paying jobs than “traded” or export-oriented industries). Other than local-serving industries, logistics has emerged as Riverside County's most prominent traded industry cluster in recent years, playing a vital role in strengthening the Inland Empire's economic base, particularly in the post-Great Recession recovery. However, the momentum of this sector has slowed in the aftermath of the pandemic, as shifting global supply chains and regional saturation have tempered further expansion. As the region looks ahead, there is growing momentum to build on this success by expanding into other traded sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, clean technology, and professional services, that offer broader career pathways and long-term economic resilience. With increasing awareness of the environmental and infrastructure challenges associated with large-scale logistics development, communities across Riverside County are embracing a more balanced and forward-thinking approach.

The above-described dynamics have resulted in an economy that, while very strong by traditional measures (population/housing growth and gross numbers of jobs), has not fully met the economic needs of Riverside County's workforce. As such, many Riverside County residents must commute to jobs outside the county. Indeed, Riverside County's resident workforce has the largest proportion of out-commuters (and the longest commute times) among all counties in Southern California. Improving this longstanding condition, by increasing both the quantity and quality of Riverside County based job opportunities, is a fundamental objective of the EDSP.

Notwithstanding these underlying challenges, Riverside County's unique institutional assets (most notably, industry-supporting research and business development functions at UC Riverside) provide a tremendous springboard for promoting innovation, supporting expansion and attraction of high-paying industries, and nurturing technology-oriented entrepreneurial investments.

Reflecting this combination of very favorable conditions with notable concerns, the EDSP focuses on strategic actions that can harness the county's economic momentum, leverage a partnership approach to economic development, and maximize the growth potentials of legacy and emerging industries to continue to improve both the quantity and quality of employment opportunities accessible to Riverside County's resident workforce.

Connection to Regional and State Initiatives

Significantly, the EDSP is being launched at a time when the State is rolling out a groundbreaking initiative (California Jobs First, or CJF), to transform California's economic future. The strategic vision for CJF is articulated in the State Economic Blueprint released in February 2025.

The three-year planning effort for CJF embraced a bottom-up approach whereby opportunities and needs were comprehensively evaluated within each of California's 13 economic regions, allowing for the development (separate from the statewide Blueprint) of region-specific aspirational targets (industry clusters) and implementation structures. As noted in the Blueprint, this process forged new coalitions in each of the 13 regions that "brought together voices from business, labor, community, education, local government, and more to collectively design the economic future they envision for their respective communities."

CJF's "Inland SoCal" region encompasses Riverside and San Bernardino counties, reflecting the commonalities and shared economic assets of the Inland Empire's two counties. The implementation framework for Inland SoCal is provided in the Thrive Inland SoCal California Jobs First (CJF) Regional Plan (also released in early 2025).

Riverside County's Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) is designed to align with and amplify CJF initiatives, serving as a catalyst for deeper regional collaboration while affirming RivCoED's commitment to addressing Riverside County-specific priorities. The EDSP selectively integrates best practices, research insights, and the overarching vision articulated in CJF planning documents, ensuring coherence with broader regional goals. At the same time, the EDSP positions Riverside County to capitalize on state and regional investments in high-growth industry sectors, particularly those that represent the county's strongest opportunities for sustainable job creation and inclusive economic advancement.

What Sets Riverside County Apart

- **Strategic Location within Dynamic Southern California Megaregion:** Situated at the crossroads of Southern California's major transportation corridors, Riverside County offers unmatched proximity to the Western U.S. market. With direct access to interstate highways, freight rail, and international airports, businesses can reach over 30 million consumers within a day's drive, making it an ideal launch point for regional, national, and global operations.²
- **Available Land and Lower Business Costs:** Compared to coastal metros, Riverside County offers more affordable commercial and industrial real estate, with average lease rates 25-30% lower than in San Diego, Orange, and Los Angeles counties.³ Combined with a strong inventory of development-ready sites, this cost advantage makes Riverside County a smart choice for businesses seeking expansion.
- **Housing Options and Affordability:** Riverside County also enjoys a significant advantage in terms of housing affordability. The diverse housing stock provides a wide range of ownership and rental options, at prices 30-55% lower and rents 20-30% lower than SoCal's coastal counties. These marked differences in affordability are important both from the perspective of resident quality of life and from the standpoint of attracting and retaining the workforce needed to support the growth of targeted industry clusters.

- **Business-Friendly Environment:** Riverside County is generally recognized by the business/development community as a business-friendly alternative to Southern California’s more costly and land-constrained coastal counties. This positive image (which was confirmed by stakeholders participating in the EDSP process) stems from both market realities (less expensive real estate) and broader community/political support for quality growth. From a municipal government standpoint, Riverside County and its incorporated cities offer streamlined permitting and targeted incentives to support business growth. The County Office of Economic Development proactively coordinates with 75 organizations to deliver workforce training and site selection assistance. However, perceptions about business friendliness in Riverside County vary from city to city, with each municipality following its own practices for development entitlement, permit processing, etc. A potential role of RivCoED (through the EDSP) is to provide technical guidance to its partner cities to ensure that Riverside County as a whole can present a unified front of business friendliness as part of Countywide economic development messaging.
- **Innovation:** As documented in the CJF planning effort, Riverside County stands out as the innovation core of Inland SoCal, with a concentrated set of high-impact assets that contribute to regional economic growth. Home to 20 higher education institutions, leading environmental science research facilities, and the state headquarters for air quality programs, the region has underlying strengths in innovations related to climate or clean tech action – in energy systems, emissions, and materials. Research activities take place primarily at UCR, which also fills critical institutional capacity roles in regional economic development. Adjacent to the UC Riverside campus stands the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Southern California Headquarters, one of the world's most advanced facilities for vehicle and mobile-source emissions testing. Strengthening connections and capabilities among these and other assets can help the region make the most of its innovation ecosystem.



What is a quality job?

The Inland SoCal CJF Plan uses a method called Opportunity Industries analysis, which was developed by the Brookings Institution to identify industries likely to create large numbers of quality jobs.

According to the Opportunity Industries definition, a quality job must:

Pay enough over the course of a year to cover a family's basic needs and leave some extra money left over for emergencies and savings

Include health insurance (which tends to mean that the job offers other benefits as well)

Provide a level of financial stability over the next ten years (either by continuing to be a quality job or by providing a path to a different quality job).

The Opportunity Industries analysis also considers “promising jobs — positions that don't meet all three of these criteria but can still help a worker move into a quality job within a decade.”

Attention to promising jobs reflects the fact that many entry-level positions do not meet the definition of a quality job but can play an important role in helping workers gain the skills and experience they need to advance in their careers. Quality jobs and promising jobs together are referred to as “opportunity jobs.”

- **Growing Workforce:** Riverside County is characterized by a young, diverse labor pool, with 35% of the population under age 25⁴, supported by UC Riverside, a top-tier research university known for advancing economic mobility and labor education, CSU San Bernardino, CSU San Marcos (Temecula), California Baptist University, Loma Linda University, University of Redlands, La Sierra University, Chapman University, UMass Global, and a robust community college network.

The CJF analysis underscores the need for continued improvements to Inland SoCal's educational and workforce development capacities. Overall, the region's educational attainment is comparatively low, lagging both state and national high school diploma and bachelor's degree rates by nearly 10 percent. The region has been addressing this fundamental challenge through a range of interventions for more than a decade, with some progress, yet this differential is still recognized as a major factor constraining Inland SoCal's economic competitiveness and mobility.

On average, Inland SoCal workers have 82.9 percent of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that quality jobs in the region require (see sidebar for discussion on quality/promising jobs). The amount of overlap between the knowledge, skills, and abilities that workers have and what quality jobs require is different depending on how much education a worker has. Workers with a four-year college degree have the highest amount of overlap (91.5 percent). This indicates that they possess nearly all the skills and qualifications that employers seek in high-quality jobs. But even those workers with only a high school diploma or G.E.D. have a high degree of overlap (88.1 percent). These findings suggest that focused training programs with wraparound supports that address key barriers to participation (e.g., childcare, transportation, affordability concerns) could help more Inland SoCal workers, including those with lower levels of formal education, secure a quality job⁵.

Priority Industry Clusters

Based on a rigorous analysis and extensive stakeholder engagement process, the EDSP identifies eight priority industry clusters positioned to drive Riverside County's future growth:

1

Advanced Manufacturing

Aerospace, defense, semiconductors, medical devices, and mobility tech.

2

AgTech

Precision agriculture, irrigation tech, and food systems.

3

Biotech

Pharma/biotech, medtech, healthtech, and other life sciences

4

Clean Energy

Solar, battery storage, and microgrid innovation.

5

Creative Media & Digital Production

Film, music, and digital content production.

6

Cybersecurity

Cloud security, operational technology protection, and digital forensics safeguarding critical systems and data.

7

Hospitality & Tourism

Outdoor recreation, cultural venues, and destination development.

8

Transportation and Logistics

Supply chain technologies, automation, and innovation enhancing competitiveness across established logistics infrastructure

9





The Opportunity Ahead

Riverside County⁶ has laid a strong foundation for growth, creating over 194,000 new private-sector jobs in the past decade and seeing a 64% surge in new business formation since 2014⁷. Looking forward, the region is poised to unlock more than \$200 million in potential federal and state funding for infrastructure, workforce development, and innovation⁸. The Economic Development Strategic Plan outlines a clear vision for growth and economic prosperity that is anchored in an existing business ecosystem with key pillars for the future:

It prioritizes **industry diversification and growth**, modernizing legacy sectors where Riverside County has a competitive edge while strategically expanding into high-growth industries, harnessing the clusters as engines of innovation and quality job creation.

The EDSP emphasizes **workforce development** that taps into a young, diverse population and strong educational institutions that are fueling a skilled talent pipeline, with expanded training and apprenticeship programs tailored to industry needs.

Riverside County will cultivate a **dynamic business environment** by supporting startups, expanding access to capital, and fostering innovation through collaborative networks, engaging with existing businesses and streamlining support for new investment, enhancing the prevailing business-friendly environment.

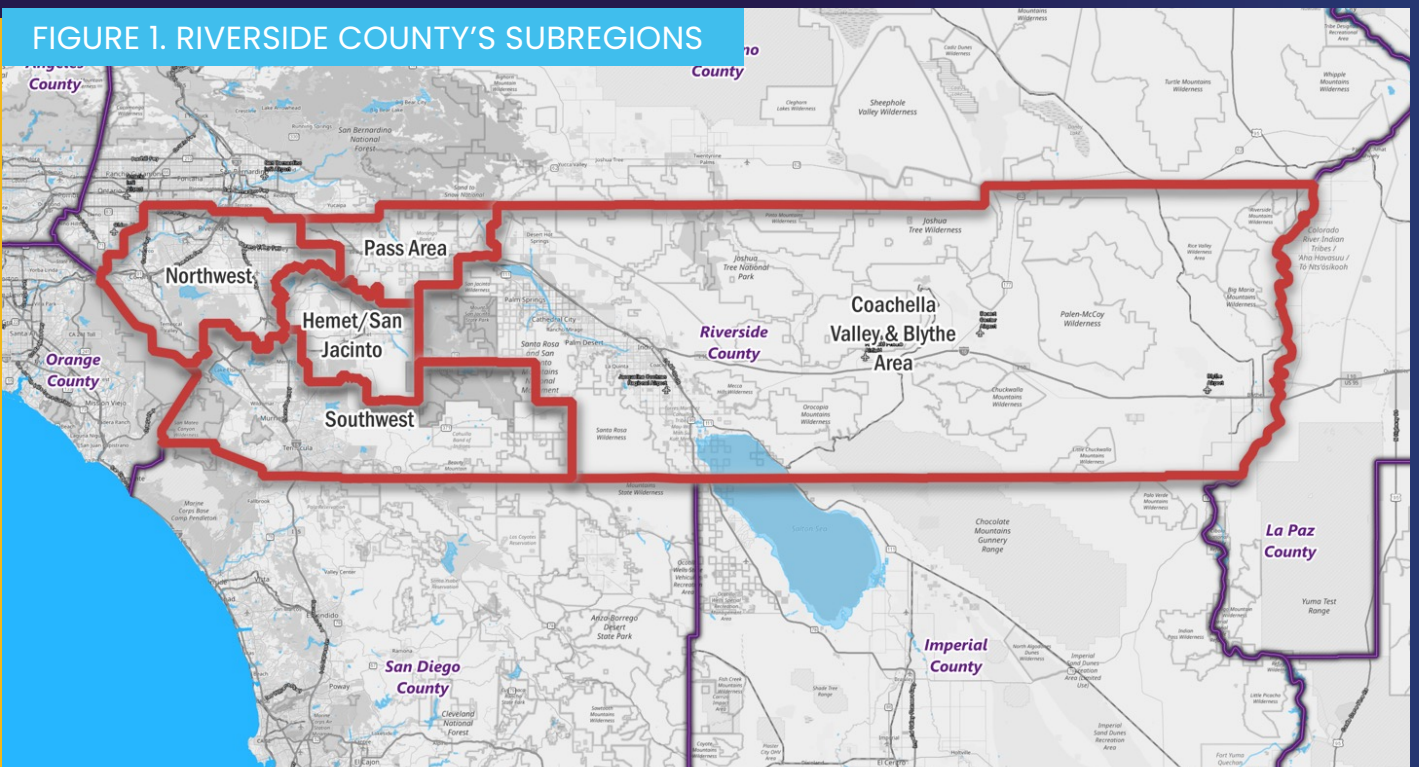
The EDSP encourages **infrastructure and site readiness**, promoting strategic investments in transportation, digital connectivity, and land-use modernization, laying the groundwork for long-term economic growth and regional mobility, with a focus on revitalizing underutilized properties and supporting activities that ensure key sites are development-ready.

The Plan encourages strengthening cross-jurisdictional partnerships and positioning the County as a strategic hub for trade, investment, and integrated regional development. The EDSP promotes efforts to elevate the region's identity by promoting Riverside County as a destination for culture, recreation, and business, enhancing visibility and economic impact.

Focusing on livability, the Plan encourages investments in housing, healthcare, public amenities, and placemaking to create vibrant, healthy communities.

// Mapping the Future: Subregional Insights Driving Countywide Impact

FIGURE 1. RIVERSIDE COUNTY'S SUBREGIONS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Riverside County, TNDG.

The EDSP is organized around Riverside County's five distinct subregions: Northwest, Southwest, Pass Area, Hemet/San Jacinto, and Coachella Valley/Blythe. This structure reflects the County's geographic and economic diversity, allowing strategies to be tailored to the unique assets, challenges, and opportunities within each area. Maps of the County and its subregions are included in Appendix B, highlighting cities, unincorporated Census Designated Places (CDPs), and Tribal lands.



// Economic Summary

▶ Economic Base Analysis

This section provides highlights of existing and projected demographic characteristics that influence the economic development potential of Riverside County and its subregions. This summary has been extracted from a more detailed report prepared for the EDSP process (Analysis of Key Datasets for Economic Development Strategic Plan, Appendix E).

Key Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics

Labor Force Efficiency and Commuting Patterns

Patterns in labor force efficiency and commuting behavior point to strategic opportunities for strengthening business development and improving livability across the region. The variation in commute times across subregions presents a strategic opportunity to align business growth with workforce accessibility, particularly in areas with shorter commutes that can support local employment hubs.

- 46.5% of Riverside County residents work within the County, while 53.5% commute out, creating a significant resource for local job creation.
- Subregional gaps are evident:
 - Pass Area: 16.6% of residents work locally, with the remainder commuting within the region or beyond.
 - Coachella Valley and Blythe: Highest local employment at 59.7%.
- Commute times above average:
 - County average: 33.8 minutes, above state (28.98 minutes) and national (26.57 minutes) benchmarks.
 - Southwest Subregion: Highest commute at 38.3 minutes.
 - Coachella Valley and Blythe: Lowest at 22.5 minutes.

Industry Sector Employment

Riverside County benefits from a robust foundation in essential services and trade-related industries, with logistics and warehousing standing out as strategic assets. Meanwhile, professional services and manufacturing are well-positioned for expansion, offering potential to attract investment and elevate the region's economic profile.

- Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance dominate employment at 21.1%, with Pass Area (26.6%) and Southwest (22.9%) leading.
- Construction (9.3%) and Retail Trade (12.1%) are also major employers.
- Transportation and Logistics (7.7%) is a standout sector, especially in logistics-heavy subregions.
- Professional Services (10.5%) and Manufacturing (8.1%) show potential for expansion.

Housing

High rates of homeownership signal a stable and invested population, which is a key asset for long-term economic development. Low vacancy rates across most subregions reflect strong housing demand, while seasonal patterns in Coachella Valley and Blythe offer unique opportunities for tourism and second-home markets. Tackling affordability challenges will be essential to sustaining livability and workforce retention.

- Owner-occupied housing is high at 68.9%, the strongest among peer counties.
- Vacancy rates are low across most subregions, except Coachella Valley and Blythe (26.9%), due to seasonal housing.
- Housing cost burden (50%+ of income) remains elevated:
 - Countywide : 14.06% of households
 - Hemet/San Jacinto saw an increase from 14.95% to 15.98% (2019–2023).

Education and Workforce Readiness

Riverside County's growing base of college-educated residents, especially in the Southwest Subregion, provides a strong foundation for workforce development. Expanding STEM education and improving rural access to advanced training facilities will help unlock the region's full innovation potential and support high-growth industries.

- Bachelor's degree or higher: 25.1% Countywide
 - Southwest Subregion leads at 29.6%
 - Hemet/San Jacinto lags at 14.7%
- STEM degrees are underrepresented:
 - Only 34.4% of bachelor's holders have Science & Engineering majors—lowest among peer counties.
- Workforce development gaps:
 - Limited access to advanced labs and training in rural areas.
 - Weak articulation between high school pathways and college-level programs.

Age and Demographics

Riverside County's age diversity, from a young and growing population in the Northwest to a mature community in Coachella Valley and Blythe, offers a unique opportunity to design multi-generational strategies that enhance livability, support workforce development and meet the evolving needs of residents across all stages of life.

- Median age: 36.7 years, younger than most peer counties.
- Coachella Valley & Blythe: Highest share of residents aged 65+ (24.2%) and highest median age (44.2).
- Northwest Subregion: Youngest population, with 36.1% under age 25.

Population and Employment Growth Forecasts (2020–2035)

Riverside County is projected to lead Southern California in population and employment growth through 2035, outpacing neighboring counties and reinforcing its role as a regional economic engine. Subregional trends highlight strong momentum in the Southwest and Northwest, driven by housing, amenities, and transportation access. Moderate growth in the Pass Area and revitalization potential in Hemet/San Jacinto offer room for strategic investment, while Coachella Valley and Blythe benefit from sector-specific drivers like tourism, agriculture, and clean energy.

Countywide Trends

- Riverside County is projected to experience robust growth in both population and employment over the 15-year projection period.
- This growth is expected to outpace neighboring counties like Imperial and San Bernardino, positioning Riverside County as a key driver of Southern California's economic expansion over the next 15+ years.

Subregional Population Growth Highlights

- **Southwest Subregion:** Highest projected population growth, driven by housing development and quality-of-life amenities.
- **Northwest Subregion:** Strong growth due to proximity to major transportation corridors and urban centers.
- **Pass Area:** Moderate growth, with potential for expansion tied to infrastructure upgrades.
- **Hemet/San Jacinto:** Slower population growth, but opportunities exist through targeted revitalization and housing affordability.
- **Coachella Valley and Blythe:** Growth influenced by tourism, agriculture, and clean energy investments.

Riverside County's Target Industries:

Building the Next Generation Economy

Riverside County is not just growing—it's strategically positioning itself to lead in high-impact, innovation-driven sectors. The EDSP identifies eight priority industry clusters that offer the greatest potential for creation of quality/promising jobs, investment attraction, and long-term economic transformation.

This table summarizes the eight priority industry clusters identified in the Riverside County Target Industry Analysis (Appendix G). Each cluster is aligned with strategic goals for job creation, innovation, and regional competitiveness.

Industry Cluster	Strategic Focus	Subregional Relevance	Economic Potential
Advanced Manufacturing	Aerospace, semiconductors, medical devices, mobility tech, plastics, and energy use	Countywide (esp. NW, SW, Pass)	High-wage jobs, innovation, supplier networks, export-oriented growth
AgTech	Precision irrigation, sensors, aerial imaging, crop resiliency	Southwest, Coachella Valley & Blythe	Modernizing agriculture, water efficiency, food systems innovation
Biotech	Pharma/biotech, medtech, healthtech, and other life sciences	Northwest, Southwest	High-wage jobs, innovation, supplier networks (tied to advanced manufacturing), ties to UCR research
Clean Energy	Battery storage, microgrids, hydrogen, grid modernization	Northwest, Coachella Valley	Sustainability, infrastructure investment, ties to UCR research
Creative Media & Digital Production	Film, music, streaming, branded content, post-production	Coachella Valley & Blythe	Competitive with LA, high location quotients, mobile production labs

Industry Cluster	Strategic Focus	Subregional Relevance	Economic Potential
Cybersecurity	Cloud security, operational tech, digital forensics	Northwest	Cross-sector digital protection, NSA-designated programs, emerging talent pipelines
Hospitality & Tourism	Culinary, resorts, agri-tourism, outdoor recreation	Southwest, Coachella Valley	Quality-of-life driver, cultural asset, gateway to regional tourism
Transportation and Logistics	Advancing innovation in supply chain technologies, automation, and sustainable freight solutions	Countywide	Inland port potential, academies, automation training

Alignment of EDSP Target Industries with Regional/State Initiatives

Although derived through an independent research process, the EDSP’s target industry clusters significantly overlap with current State and regional investment priorities emerging from the California Jobs First (CJF) initiative. Relevant highlights of the CJF findings include:

- **Clean economy** opportunities in the region focus on regional capabilities in energy systems, emission controls / remediation (air and water), advanced materials, and mobility tech. The clean economy cluster aims to boost climate resilience, increase energy independence, and accelerate the transition to a carbon-neutral future. It encompasses a wide range of industries, products, and services that extend into almost every aspect of daily life, including clean energy, power grid infrastructure, buildings, and transportation. This strategy for innovation and commercialization will be complemented by accelerating adoption of clean economy solutions in the region to adapt existing activities, strengthening local businesses and improving quality of life for Inland SoCal residents in the process.

- **Advanced manufacturing** potential in the region focuses more specifically on reinforcing and repositioning legacy strengths from aerospace and similar production, including complex commercial and industrial machinery, microelectronics, and components. In service-oriented sectors, both engineering and drafting are a natural part of this landscape and thus also included in the cluster.
- **Cybersecurity** is a refinement of opportunity within advanced business and professional services, protecting computer systems and networks against bad actors. An urgent demand from governments, businesses, and organizations of all sizes, the regional potential nearly a decade ago centered on a strength in simply training to fill unmet quality job openings. However, as capabilities and workforce production have expanded, along with acceptance of remote services, that possibility has extended to business and job creation. The technical and talent capacity in the region is converging with new relationships meeting needs of federal and defense agencies, emerging as a new base for economic growth in cybersecurity activities not already occupied by regions focused on basic research or a government operation. Inland SoCal has strong momentum in the cybersecurity sector. Over the past 15 years, the Center for Cyber and AI (CyAI) at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) has positioned the region at the forefront of cybersecurity workforce development. During this time, the Center for CyAI received high-profile federal designations from the National Security Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Science Foundation for excellence in cybersecurity education. Through these designations, the Center shapes standards and best practices in cybersecurity training nationwide.



The Future of Logistics in Riverside County: A Focus on Transition and Innovation

The inclusion of logistics as one of the EDSP's eight priority industry clusters warrants further explanation. While logistics has clearly been a major job creator in Riverside County over the past two decades, it has also increasingly been the subject of community concerns about job quality (see sidebar) and environmental impacts. Even from a market perspective, there are current indications that the industry is overbuilt, with a substantial uptick in vacancies of major warehouse buildings.

To be clear: the EDSP is not recommending that RivCoED expend resources to target attraction of new warehouse facilities. Instead, the EDSP recommends a focus on facilitating an eventual transition of the industry to include a higher concentration of innovation-oriented jobs related to transportation and goods movement, consistent with the growing technological capacities in other targeted industries.

The EDSP recommends that RivCoED also play a direct role in encouraging creative reuse of surplus warehouse buildings in a manner that enhances the region's capacity to attract and grow other targeted industries such as advanced manufacturing.

The Outsized Role of Logistics in Inland SoCal (From CJF Document)

The Inland SoCal logistics sector is a substantial economic force in the region and a key node in the national and global goods movement network. State policies have promoted growing supply chain and logistics as both an economic engine and enabler of other industries in California.

Massive industry investment over the years has resulted in an expansive system of warehouses, distribution centers, and intermodal logistics infrastructure. The immense scale of the sector in SoCal is reflected in its workforce: 215,000 residents work in logistics. The quality of jobs in this sector – particularly in warehousing that comprises the vast majority of employment – often receives criticism because only about one-third of logistics jobs meet the standard of quality/promising jobs.

Although past efforts to move the sector up the value chain by making the region a “center of excellence” for innovation and commercialization of sustainable logistics products and services have not come to fruition, some elements of those plans still hold relevance.

Digitization and decarbonization are of particular potential given looming state climate targets. Improved coordination and collaboration with the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and the Los Angeles area more broadly, alongside similar investments, will streamline and accelerate logistics-related climate action throughout the Southern California megaregion.

// Competitive Analysis

A comprehensive understanding of Riverside County's economic position is essential for shaping effective development strategies. This Competitive Analysis provides a multidimensional assessment of the County's strengths, challenges, and opportunities within the broader regional and national landscape. It integrates a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, industry trend insights, and benchmarking against peer counties to identify Riverside County's competitive advantages and areas for improvement.

The analysis also examines key components of economic competitiveness, including workforce development capacity, business retention and expansion dynamics, recruitment strategies, and the effectiveness of business assistance services. Additionally, it evaluates site selection factors that influence investment decisions, offering a data-driven foundation for policy and program development. Together, these elements inform a forward-looking strategy to enhance Riverside County's economic resilience, innovation potential, and long-term prosperity.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)



Strengths

- Strong job creation focus and business-friendly environment
- Availability of land and real estate for expansion
- Intellectual assets and innovation hubs driving tech and biotech growth
- Significant infrastructure investments supporting business expansion
- Positioned along Southern Trade Corridor and Interstate 10 for logistics and manufacturing
- Well-developed logistics infrastructure (air, rail, highways)
- Reliable public utilities and lower energy costs enhancing competitiveness
- Growing workforce with a strong emphasis on training and development
- Presence of higher education institutions strengthening talent pipelines
- Affordable housing and living costs attract residents and businesses
- Healthcare facilities supporting retirees and economic opportunities
- Rich tourism and cultural assets, including ecotourism, entertainment venues, and festivals.
- Presence of Foreign Trade Zones



Weaknesses

- Limited water, power, and septic/sewer capacity to support growth in some areas
- Restricted access points and infrastructure controlled by Caltrans

- High infrastructure costs passed on to developers
- Difficulty retaining local talent and young professionals leaving for better opportunities
- Limited business incentives compared to other states
- Difficulty retaining small businesses due to lack of resources and support
- Seasonal economy posing challenges for industry diversification
- Burdensome state taxes and regulations impacting business attraction and retention
- High dependency on retail developments for infrastructure improvements
- Resistance to new developments within some communities
- Increasing traffic congestion and potential gridlock
- Limited public transportation options in some regions



Opportunities

- Growth in healthcare, manufacturing, renewable energy, aerospace, and clean technology
- Potential for foreign direct investment and onshoring
- Business attraction from higher-cost regions like LA/OC counties
- Retaining local talent and reducing economic leakage
- Expanding higher education infrastructure and trade schools
- Developing nursing programs and healthcare workforce training
- Targeting remote work and technology jobs
- Investments in broadband infrastructure for technology-driven industries
- Expansion of regional transportation and transit-oriented development
- Adaptive reuse of obsolete land-uses to maximize development potential
- Growth in sports tourism, youth sports venues, and equestrian facilities
- Expansion of outdoor recreation, including hiking, biking, and water-based tourism
- Collaboration for recreation-driven industries
- Strengthening partnerships with regional agencies and educational institutions
- Establishing a strong county identity focused on industrial innovation and skilled workforce
- Leveraging population growth to enhance economic vitality.
- State initiated CEQA reforms.



Threats

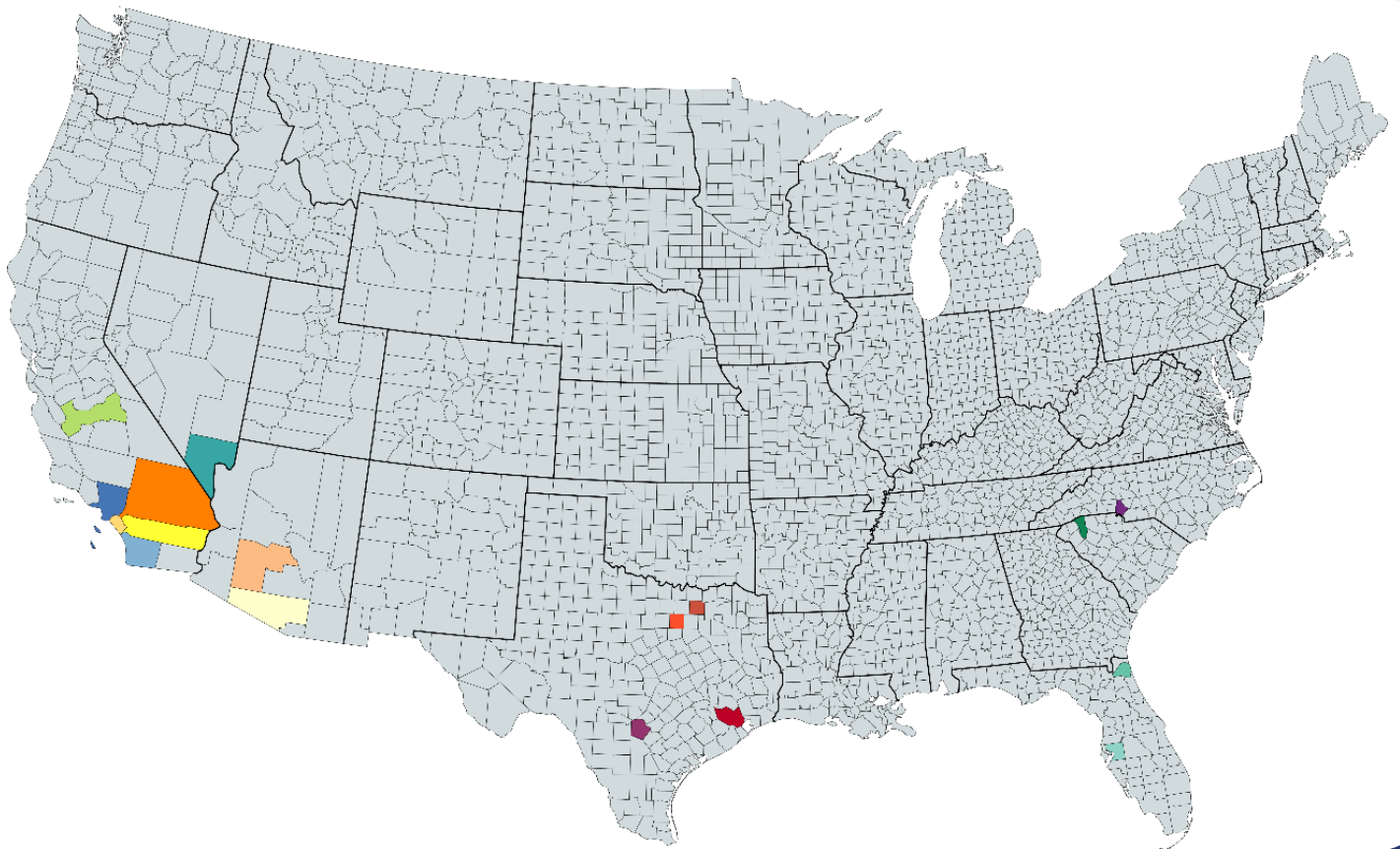
- High development costs, fees, and entitlements delaying projects
- Difficulty securing funding for infrastructure improvements
- Increased shortages in healthcare professionals, engineers, and skilled workers
- Economic leakage as talent and businesses move to neighboring regions
- Limited business incentives compared to other states
- Complex regulatory environment, including CEQA and permitting delays
- High development costs due to state and local regulations
- Outdated zoning policies restricting business flexibility
- Competition from neighboring regions like Arizona and larger metropolitan areas
- Wildfire risks and increasing insurance costs
- Resistance to change and new development within communities






















Benchmark Comparison

The benchmarking assessment compares Riverside County’s economic performance to 17 peer and aspirational counties nationwide, selected in collaboration with Office of Economic Development staff. The analysis provides data-driven insights into key indicators such as job growth, business formation, industry specialization, and workforce readiness. By focusing on sectors critical to Riverside County’s future, the assessment helps shape a strategic, evidence-based Economic Development Strategic Plan that aligns with the county’s long-term competitiveness and talent development goals. The full benchmark analysis is found in Appendix K.



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  Riverside County, CA |  Bexar County, TX |  Clark County, NV |
|  Collin County, TX |  Duval County, FL |  Fresno County, CA |
|  Greenville County, SC |  Harris County, TX |  Hillsborough County, FL |
|  Los Angeles County, CA |  Maricopa County, AZ |  Mecklenburg County, NC |
|  Orange County, CA |  Pima County, AZ |  San Bernardino County, CA |
|  San Diego County, CA |  Tarrant County, TX | |



Key Economic Performance Highlights (2014-24)

Riverside County has demonstrated strong private-sector momentum and post-pandemic resilience, with notable gains in job creation and business formation. While employment density and labor force participation remain areas for improvement, the county's recovery and sustained growth position it as a rising economic force in the region.

- Private Sector Job Growth:** +38.4% total growth, 3.31% CAGR, 194,984 new jobs.
- New Business Formation:** +64% increase in establishments, 5.1% annualized growth.
- Employment Density:** 275.2 jobs per 1,000 residents, lowest among peers.
- Labor Force Participation:** 60.6%, second lowest among benchmark counties.
- Economic Resilience:** After a 5.0% employment drop in 2020 (the steepest among the Benchmark Counties), Riverside County not only regained pre-pandemic job levels by 2022 but sustained above-average growth through 2024, demonstrating economic resilience.

Benchmark County Comparisons

Riverside County is positioned as a “fast follower”. As a fast follower, Riverside County is demonstrating a rapidly growing and evolving economy and strong potential for catching up or surpassing peers by adopting successful strategies, targeted investments and building on innovation. Compared to peers:

- Top Performers** (e.g., Collin, Maricopa, Mecklenburg) combine high job growth with high employment density and educational attainment.
- Mature Markets** (e.g., Los Angeles, Orange, Harris) show high density but slower growth.
- Emerging Markets** (e.g., Fresno, San Bernardino) share Riverside County's growth trajectory but face similar infrastructure and workforce challenges.

Targeted Industry Performance (Riverside County)

Riverside County's clear strength in transportation and logistics provides an opportunity for utilizing local innovation to transform the future of this industry. Likewise, the opportunities in other industries provides opportunity for increased economic diversification. Full target industry analysis available in appendix G.

Strengths:

- Transportation & Logistics: 75,305 jobs; LQ 2.14.
- Hospitality & Tourism: 4,500+ establishments; LQ 1.18.

Opportunities:

- Advanced Manufacturing: Weak presence in aerospace, semiconductors, and medical devices relative to peer counties.
- AgTech: Low employment and establishment LQs in most components of this cluster.
- Biotech: Low employment and establishment LQs in most components of this cluster.
- Clean Energy: Low employment and establishment LQs.
- Cybersecurity & Media Production: Minimal presence; LQs near zero.

Riverside County is on a strong upward trajectory, consistently outperforming peer regions in job creation and business formation. To evolve from a fast follower into a regional leader, the County must address key structural challenges, particularly in workforce readiness and industry diversification. With strategic investments in education, infrastructure, and targeted sector development, Riverside County is well-positioned to become an innovation-driven economy over the next decade, setting a new benchmark for growth and adaptability across the Western U.S. and outperforming peer communities.

An LQ of 1.0 indicates that an industry's concentration (percentage of total jobs) in a local area is the same as the national average.





Workforce Development Integration

Closing Gaps, Unlocking Potential

As global markets shift, technologies advance, and demographic pressures reshape industries, Riverside County must proactively adapt to remain competitive. Understanding and responding to the changing demands of key industry sectors is not just important, it is essential for sustained economic growth and long-term regional resilience.

Riverside County faces a unique mix of challenges and opportunities. Rapid technological innovation, significant demographic shifts, climate-related policy changes, and evolving global dynamics are converging to redefine the landscape of economic development. These forces underscore the urgent need for robust, flexible, and forward-thinking workforce development strategies that align education and training with both current and emerging industry needs.

Benchmarking Riverside County against peer and aspirational counties across the U.S. reveals a mixed picture. The County excels in Transportation and Logistics and Hospitality and Tourism, sectors that have long been regional strengths. However, it lags in five critical areas that are increasingly driving national and global competitiveness: Advanced Manufacturing, Agricultural Technology, Clean Energy Technology, Cybersecurity, and Video Production and Distribution.

Compounding this challenge is a pronounced skills gap. While 24% of the adult population holds a bachelor's degree, nearly 25% lack a high school diploma. This imbalance limits the County's ability to attract and grow industries that depend on highly skilled talent and advanced technical capabilities.

Closing this gap is not only possible, but also already underway. Initiatives like OneFuture Coachella Valley demonstrate the power of collaborative, industry-led models that bring together public agencies, educational institutions, employers, and community organizations. These partnerships are essential to identifying strengths, addressing weaknesses, and building a resilient, skilled, and competitive workforce.

By aligning workforce development with priority industry cluster/ sector growth, Riverside County can lay the foundation for a more diversified economy, greater regional resilience, and a leadership role in the innovation-driven priority industries of the future.

Advanced Manufacturing

Riverside County's advanced manufacturing base remains underrepresented compared to peer regions, particularly in aerospace, semiconductors, and medical devices. Employers report gaps in production, industrial maintenance, and automation skills. The County, however, has strong foundations for growth, including development-ready sites along major highways, rail, and air corridors, three Foreign Trade Zones, and a large, young labor pool supported by UC Riverside, California State University campuses, and community colleges. To convert these advantages into jobs and investment, the County could certify pre-entitled priority sites for clean, high-value manufacturing, bundle state and federal incentives with local tools to de-risk capital expenditures, and expand work-based learning, short-cycle credentials, and apprenticeships aligned to mechatronics, robotics, and quality assurance. A coordinated business attraction program targeting supplier co-location and scale-up manufacturing, coupled with partnerships for shared lab and pilot production space, will build an innovation-driven manufacturing ecosystem, raise wages, and strengthen regional competitiveness.

AgTech

Riverside County's agricultural economy spans Coachella Valley produce, Temecula vineyards, and Palo Verde row crops. Local colleges such as College of the Desert, Mt. San Jacinto College, and Palo Verde College offer certificates in irrigation, pest management, and food safety. UCR Extension's modern agriculture certificate introduces automation and sensors, but precision agriculture tools like drone scouting and GIS mapping are still underutilized. To address these gaps, the County should launch a smart farm demonstration site jointly operated by UCR and local colleges to pilot advanced technologies and host internships. Bilingual micro-credential programs for incumbent farmworkers can improve access to training, while a rotating internship exchange with growers and ag-tech startups will strengthen industry connections and accelerate adoption of innovative practices.

Biotech

Riverside County's biotech sector is poised for growth, anchored by UC Riverside's life sciences research and medical innovations, including genomics, bioengineering, and agricultural biotechnology. The region benefits from proximity to major Southern California biotech hubs, but lacks dedicated wet lab space, incubators, and commercialization support for early-stage ventures. While UCR and CSU campuses offer strong bioscience curricula, industry-aligned training in biomanufacturing, regulatory affairs, and clinical data management remains limited. To accelerate sector development, the County should establish a biotech innovation corridor linking UCR, local hospitals, and industrial parks with shared lab facilities and pilot-scale production space. A modular biomanufacturing certificate, covering GMP standards, cell culture, and quality control, could be introduced at community colleges, with stackable pathways into CSU and UC programs. Paid internships with biotech firms, CROs, and public health labs will strengthen experiential learning. A coordinated business attraction strategy targeting diagnostics, bioinformatics, and agricultural biotech firms can leverage Riverside's research assets, talent pool, and available industrial land to build a globally competitive biotech ecosystem.

Clean Energy

Riverside County is emerging as a clean energy hub, with strong solar training led by GRID Alternatives and College of the Desert. SunLine Transit Agency adds specialized zero-emission bus maintenance training. Palo Verde College's solar technician program and HVAC offerings at Moreno Valley and Norco colleges provide solid foundations, but lack exposure to battery storage, microgrids, and hydrogen systems. To

close these gaps, the County should deploy a mobile clean tech lab rotating through Blythe, Hemet, and Coachella Valley. Modular certificates in energy storage and microgrid controls should be added to existing programs, and training should be aligned with electrician apprenticeships and CSU engineering pathways to create seamless career advancement opportunities. UC Riverside's Center for Environmental Research and Technology (CE-CERT) leads applied research in sustainable transportation, air quality, and energy systems, and partners with CARB's on one of the most advanced vehicle emissions testing centers globally, on zero-emission vehicle technologies and other innovations.

Creative Media & Digital Production

Riverside City College, College of the Desert, and UCR offer strong media programs that connect Inland Empire creatives to the Los Angeles market. High school media academies across the County prepare students for production roles, but rural access to professional studios and internships is limited. Curricula seldom cover digital distribution economics, emerging platforms, or monetization strategies. To address these limitations, a mobile production lab could be deployed with 4K cameras, LED lighting, and portable editing bays rotating through Blythe, Hemet, and Temecula. A concise digital distribution and monetization certificate should be introduced, covering OTT platforms, analytics, and rights management. A Countywide internship consortium with regional film offices, advertising agencies, and streaming startups will guarantee an on-set or post-production experience for students. Evening boot camps in short-form branded content production can support rapid reskilling for career changers.

Cybersecurity

Riverside City College's National Security Agency designated Cyber Defense program anchors the County's cyber talent pipeline, supported by CSU San Bernardino's Palm Desert campus and UCR Extension. Indio High School's network systems pathway prepares students for A+ and CCNA certifications, but advanced labs are concentrated in western Riverside and San Bernardino, creating geographic inequities. Community colleges other than RCC rarely cover cloud security, operational technology security, or digital forensics. To expand access and deepen expertise, satellite cyber labs should be established at College of the Desert and Mt. San Jacinto College using virtual ranges shared with RCC. A Countywide dual credit sequence should enable high school students to complete RCC's cyber certificate within a year of graduation. Additionally, post-associate credentials in cloud and operational technology security co-taught by cloud providers and local utilities, along with paid apprenticeships in County IT departments, healthcare systems, and logistics firms, will strengthen the pipeline.

Hospitality & Tourism

Hospitality is a cornerstone of Riverside County's economy, with world-class resorts in the Coachella Valley, wineries in Temecula, and culinary destinations across the Coachella Valley. College of the Desert offers hospitality management degrees, Riverside City College operates a public culinary academy, and CSU campuses in Palm Desert and Temecula deliver bachelor-level hospitality concentrations. Martha's Village in Indio provides barrier-free culinary training. However, advanced coursework in luxury services, sustainability, and digital marketing is limited, especially in resort-heavy desert communities. To address this, the County should introduce a post-baccalaureate certificate in hotel revenue management, sustainability practices, and digital marketing. Pop-up culinary labs at partner resorts in Coachella Valley can localize training and support direct hiring. A cooperative education model rotating students through wineries, resorts, and event venues during peak seasons will enhance experiential learning and improve retention.

Transportation and Logistics

Riverside County’s logistics infrastructure is highly developed, with various support programs at Moreno Valley College, Norco College, and College of the Desert. SunLine’s zero-emission bus center and K–12 automotive pathways add alternative fuel skills. However, eastern communities lack full program access, and analytics training is missing from current certificates. To fill these gaps, the County can promote additional logistics centers of excellence that advance innovation, a warehouse simulation floor, and evening supervisory academy. Riverside County can position itself to integrate emerging technologies, such as AI-driven routing, autonomous freight systems, and smart inventory platforms, into its logistics workforce strategy. A short supply chain leadership certificate emphasizing communication, lean operations, and team management should be added. Coordination between EV technician programs and fleet operators must be strengthened, and logistics analytics micro-credential teaching SQL, dashboarding, and AI routing will help technicians advance into analyst roles.

// Business Retention, Recruitment and Expansion

Riverside County’s economic development strategy is built around a focused approach to supporting key industries through targeted business retention, recruitment, and expansion efforts. The County prioritizes major sectors such as logistics, healthcare and life sciences, advanced manufacturing and technology, tourism, and agribusiness. These sectors have unique needs, such as infrastructure development, access to skilled labor, research partnerships, and sustainability initiatives.

To meet the needs of these industries, Riverside County offers a range of supportive programs and tools. These include industry-specific networking events, such as Innovation Month, which connect businesses with investors and peers. Riverside County also fosters strong public-private partnerships with universities and workforce development agencies to ensure a steady pipeline of talent and innovation. Additionally, Riverside County provides support and access to business incentive programs, including state and federal tax credits and grants, to encourage both new investment and the expansion of existing operations.

These efforts reflect a comprehensive strategy to create a business-friendly environment that supports long-term economic growth and resilience across the region. The following table highlights the existing programs available to businesses by key industry.

Program Name/Resource	Adv. Mfg.	AgTech	Biotech	Clean Economy	Healthcare	Logistics	All
Advanced Manufacturing Production Credit (45X)	✓			✓			
Business Assistance NOW Program (County of Riverside)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CAEATFA Sales and Use Tax Exclusion (STE)	✓	✓		✓			
California Capital Access Program (CalCAP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
California Competes Tax Credit (CCTC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Program Name/Resource	Adv. Mfg.	AgTech	Biotech	Clean Economy	Healthcare	Logistics	All
California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) Grants			✓		✓		
California Research & Development Tax Credit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
California State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Capital Investment Incentive Program (CIIP)	✓	✓					
Carl Moyer Memorial Air Quality Standards Program	✓	✓		✓		✓	
CHIPS Act Semiconductor Incentives	✓						
Commercial Clean Vehicle Credit (45W)	✓	✓		✓		✓	
EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program	✓		✓		✓		
Employment Training Panel (ETP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Energy Efficiency & Sustainability Rebates (SCE & SoCalGas)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Export-Import Bank Export Assistance	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Film & Television Tax Credit (Program 4.0)							✓
Foreign Trade Zones	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
HUBZone Program	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Hybrid & Zero-Emission Truck/Bus Voucher (HVIP)	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Industrial Development Bonds (IDBs)	✓	✓				✓	
Manufacturing & R&D Equipment Sales Tax Exemption	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
New Employment Credit (NEC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
On-the-Job Training Wage Reimbursements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Opportunity Zones (OZ)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Financing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Program Name/Resource	Adv. Mfg.	AgTech	Biotech	Clean Economy	Healthcare	Logistics	All
Qualifying Advanced Energy Project Credit (48C)	✓	✓		✓			
Recycling Market Development Zone (RMDZ)	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Renewable Energy Investment Tax Credit (ITC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Renewable Energy Production Tax Credit (PTC)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Research & Development Tax Credit (Section 41)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Riverside County Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Riverside County Small Business THRIVE Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Riverside Public Utilities Energy Efficiency Rebates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SBA Loan Programs (7(a), 504 & Microloan)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-Generation Incentive Program (SGIP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) & STTR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Small Business Loan Guarantee Program (SBLGP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Southern California Edison Economic Development Rate (EDR)	✓	✓		✓		✓	
USDA Business & Industry Loan Guarantee Program		✓		✓			
Veterans Business Resources NOW Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Economic Growth Strategies, 2024, Appendix J

Business Incentives and Assistance

Riverside County and local jurisdictions have adopted a range of administrative policies and tools to support economic development, including streamlined permitting programs and business assistance services. However, the effectiveness of these tools is often constrained by broader regulatory and fiscal frameworks, particularly the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Proposition 13, which influence land-use, infrastructure investment, and local revenue generation. This section provides a review of local policies, regulatory frameworks, and incentive program alignment, while identifying opportunities for strategic improvement in the design and delivery of business incentives.

Local Policies and Regulatory Frameworks

Expedited Permitting and Business Assistance Programs

These programs are designed to foster a business-friendly environment by streamlining approvals and reducing bureaucratic barriers. In principle, they support EDSP/CEDS goals around responsiveness and efficiency. However, compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) often results in substantial delays, undermining the intended impact. Despite local efforts, which include full use of CEQA statutory, categorical and ministerial exemptions, state-level regulatory constraints remain a significant obstacle to timely project implementation.

Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFDs)

EIFDs offer a promising tool for funding critical infrastructure aligned with EDSP/CEDS priorities. They enable long-term investment in transportation, utilities, and public facilities. Yet, the requirement for voter approval to issue bonds introduces uncertainty and can delay or derail projects. This limits the reliability of EIFDs as a mechanism for advancing strategic infrastructure goals.

Fiscal Constraints from Proposition 13

Proposition 13 restricts local governments from adjusting property tax rates, severely limiting their ability to offer tax-based incentives. This constraint reduces fiscal flexibility and hampers the County's capacity to use property tax tools to attract or retain businesses. As a result, alignment with EDSP/CEDS objectives around competitive incentive structures is weakened.

Incentive Program Alignment

Incentive programs available within Riverside County broadly reflect the goals of the EDSP/CEDS, although with some gaps and limitations:

Advanced Manufacturing Incentives and California Competes Tax Credit

These programs are highly effective in supporting EDSP/CEDS goals. They attract high-quality jobs, promote innovation, and encourage regional diversification. Their strategic focus on growth industries makes them valuable tools for recruitment and expansion.

Opportunity Zones and New Markets Tax Credits

These federal incentives align with EDSP/CEDS goals around equity and community resilience by channeling investment into economically distressed areas. However, their complexity often favors large firms and institutional investors, limiting accessibility and impact for small and mid-sized businesses.

Workforce Development Programs

State and local workforce training initiatives are well-aligned with EDSP/CEDS objectives. They address critical skills gaps, improve job quality, and create direct pathways to employment. These programs are essential for building a resilient and adaptable labor force.

Clean Economy Incentives

Incentives supporting clean energy are directly aligned with sustainability and resilience goals. However, legislative uncertainty at the state and federal levels may affect their predictability and long-term effectiveness, potentially discouraging investment.

Local Business Assistance Programs

Programs such as revolving loan funds and Small Business Development Center (SBDC) services support entrepreneurship and small business growth. While they align with EDSP/CEDS objectives, limited funding and reach constrain their overall impact compared to larger-scale initiatives.

Opportunities for Strategic Improvement

Despite broad alignment, several systemic issues hinder the full realization of Riverside County's economic development strategy:

Regulatory Constraints (CEQA): The complexity and time requirements of CEQA compliance continue to delay critical projects, reducing the effectiveness of local incentives and strategic initiatives.

Fiscal and Political Limitations: Proposition 13 and related measures restrict revenue generation and fiscal flexibility. The need for voter approval for new taxes or bonds further limits the County's ability to finance transformative economic development efforts.

Interjurisdictional Inconsistency: Variation in incentive availability, administrative capacity, and policy implementation across municipalities creates uneven conditions for business development. This fragmentation complicates coordinated, Countywide progress toward EDSP/CEDS goals.

// Site Selection Factors

Riverside County is primed for accelerated economic growth, backed by strategic advantages in location, business climate, and innovation capacity. Its proximity to major markets, ports, and transportation corridors positions it as a natural hub for logistics, advanced manufacturing, and clean energy. Industries such as aerospace and climate tech benefit from this connectivity and a growing talent pipeline supported by local colleges and universities. The County's commitment to sustainability and alignment with state-level clean energy goals further strengthen its appeal to future-focused industries.

To fully capitalize on these strengths, Riverside County must proactively address persistent challenges that could constrain growth. Workforce readiness—especially in technical and specialized fields like biotech, clean energy, and creative media—requires targeted investment in education and training. Infrastructure gaps, including broadband and utility capacity, continue to impact rural and industrial areas. Regulatory complexity, particularly in sectors like agriculture, biotech, and aerospace, can slow innovation and development. This chart shows the results of a site selection review of local policies, regulatory frameworks, and incentive program alignment, identifying actionable opportunities to enhance business competitiveness and unlock the county's full economic potential.

Category	Advanced Manufacturing	Agribusiness	Defense/Military	Tourism	Clean Energy	Aerospace	Biotech	Creative Media/Entertainment
Strategic Geographic Location	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Infrastructure & Logistics	✔	▲	✔	▲	✔	✔	▲	▲
Workforce & Talent	▲	▲	✔	▲	▲	▲	▲	✔
Business Environment	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Innovation & Technology	✔	▲	✔	▲	✔	✔	✔	✔
Sustainability & Environment	✔	✔	▲	✔	✔	▲	▲	✔
Policy & Regulation	▲	▲	✔	▲	✔	▲	▲	▲

Key:

✔ Meets Need | ▲ Needs Improvement



// Strategic Direction/Action Plan

Riverside County is driving a new era of growth rooted in innovation, strategic investment, and a commitment to regional competitiveness. This strategic framework connects vision to action—organizing key priorities such as industry diversification, clean energy, workforce development, and infrastructure investment into a cohesive plan for long-term prosperity. Together, these pillars position the region to lead in economic competitiveness and community vitality across Southern California and beyond.

Vision for Riverside County's Economic Future

Riverside County is emerging as a dynamic economic hub fueled by innovation, sustainability, and opportunity. By advancing industries like advanced manufacturing, technology, health care and the creative sector, we're creating quality jobs, attracting global talent, and opening paths to prosperity. Strategic investments in infrastructure, entrepreneurship, and economic resilience are building strong, thriving communities. Together, we are positioning Riverside County as a leader in economic growth shaping the future of Southern California and beyond.

Strategic Direction

Industry Diversification and Growth

Aims to strengthen the local economy by modernizing traditional sectors and strategically expanding into high-growth industries. This includes attracting new businesses through tailored incentives, supporting retention and expansion of existing businesses, promoting the region as a destination for innovation, fostering collaboration among key stakeholders, and investing in infrastructure that supports emerging technologies and specialized industries.

Highlighted Strategic Actions:

- Identify and market shovel-ready sites based on target industry opportunity.
- Develop industry consortiums to foster collaboration between businesses, research institutions, and workforce partners.

Clean Energy and Sustainability

Focuses on aligning economic development with environmental stewardship by promoting clean energy investments, modernizing infrastructure, and supporting climate resilience initiatives. This includes leveraging public-private partnerships, securing funding for remediation and revitalization projects, and incentivizing businesses to adopt sustainable technologies and practices.

Highlighted Strategic Actions:

- Advocate for the implementation of Community Choice Aggregators in Riverside County to provide locally controlled electricity at competitive prices.
- Partner with lithium extraction and geothermal companies to encourage supply chain businesses and end users of minerals to locate in Riverside County.

Workforce Development and Talent Attraction

Seeks to build a resilient talent pipeline by aligning education and training with industry needs, expanding access to skill-building opportunities, and creating programs to attract and retain a skilled workforce. This includes fostering partnerships between employers and educators, supporting vocational and technical training, and offering incentives to draw talent to the region.

Highlighted Strategic Actions:

- Develop and launch the “Riverside County Plus One” program, a workforce and talent retention strategy designed to support the partners of newly relocated professionals, especially in sectors like healthcare, education, tech, and government, by helping them find meaningful employment and community connections.
- Establish a Countywide Career Pathways Report Card & Summit to annually assess and showcase progress in expanding access to career pathways through digital learning, certifications, and workforce training, while fostering collaboration among education, industry, and community partners.

Infrastructure Improvements

Supports long-term economic growth by investing in modern, efficient infrastructure systems. This includes enhancing transportation networks to improve mobility and trade, expanding digital connectivity, and updating land-use policies to support mixed-use development. The strategy also aims to reduce commuter traffic by promoting live-work communities and strengthening regional logistics corridors.

Highlighted Strategic Actions:

- Develop model ordinances that provide for adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings (strip malls, warehouses, etc.) into mixed-use spaces.
- Develop model ordinances that provide for hybrid, mixed-use zoning districts, transit-oriented development and flexibility in use-based zoning.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Ecosystems

Promotes a dynamic business environment by supporting startups, small businesses, and innovation-driven enterprises. This includes expanding access to capital, creating collaborative innovation spaces, streamlining regulations, and fostering mentorship networks. The strategy also encourages digital transformation and continued investment in entrepreneurial support systems.

Highlighted Strategic Actions:

- Hold “Next Wave Venture Capital Forum” to connect emerging, next generation of startups to potential investors.
- Utilize and expand RivCo Small Business Thrive Program as a connection point and referral network for small business financing options.

Regional Connectivity and Trade Expansion

Aims to enhance economic integration by strengthening partnerships across jurisdictions and positioning the region as a strategic hub for trade and investment. This includes coordinating development efforts, promoting business relocation, and fostering collaboration among public and private stakeholders to support cohesive, cross-regional growth.

Highlighted Strategic Actions:

- International Consulate Engagement Program which will position Riverside County as a premier destination for FDI, trade partnerships and cultural exchange, by hosting targeted visits from international consulates.
- Create/host SelectUSA investment summit (or spinoff event) or create “Invest RivCo” summit with emphasis on FDI.

Regional Branding and Tourism

Focuses on elevating the region’s identity by promoting its unique assets, cultural richness, and quality of life. This includes launching cohesive branding campaigns, investing in signature events to attract visitors, and integrating tourism with broader economic development efforts to amplify marketing and business opportunities.

Highlighted Strategic Actions:

- Develop and distribute brand activation toolkit to economic development partners to utilize branding assets and messaging across the region as applicable.
- Create Countywide portal for events that take place within the County and distribute among the visitor network.

Quality of Life and Community Development

Concentrates on creating healthy and vibrant communities by expanding access to affordable housing, healthcare, and public amenities. This strategy supports placemaking efforts that enhance public spaces and cultural assets, while promoting livability and long-term community well-being.

Highlighted Strategic Actions:

- Encourage the development of clinics, hospitals or deployment of mobile health clinics to areas of need within the county.
- Develop a subregional mobility and connectivity framework that integrates complete streets, public transit, and rail to create safer, more accessible, and multimodal transportation options across Riverside County.

The following shows the incentives available to assist in the attraction, retention and expansion of target industry clusters.

Advanced Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing Production Credit CAEATFA Sales and Use Tax Exclusion California Capital Access Program California Competes Tax Credit California Research & Development Tax Credit Capital Investment Incentive Program CHIPS Act Semiconductor Incentives Employment Training Panel Foreign Trade Zones Manufacturing & R&D Equipment Sales Tax Exemption
AgTech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAEATFA Sales and Use Tax Exclusion California Capital Access Program California Competes Tax Credit California Research & Development Tax Credit Capital Investment Incentive Program Employment Training Panel Foreign Trade Zones Manufacturing & R&D Equipment Sales Tax Exemption
Biotech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Capital Access Program California Competes Tax Credit California Institute for Regenerative Medicine California Research & Development Tax Credit Employment Training Panel Manufacturing & R&D Equipment Sales Tax Exemption
Clean Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing Production Credit CAEATFA Sales and Use Tax Exclusion California Capital Access Program California Competes Tax Credit California Research & Development Tax Credit Employment Training Panel Renewable Energy Investment Tax Credit Renewable Energy Production Tax Credit
Creative Media/Digital Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Capital Access Program California Competes Tax Credit California Research & Development Tax Credit Employment Training Panel Film & Television Tax Credit
Cybersecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Capital Access Program California Competes Tax Credit California Research & Development Tax Credit CHIPS Act Semiconductor Incentives Employment Training Panel
Hospitality and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Capital Access Program California Competes Tax Credit California Research & Development Tax Credit Employment Training Panel
Transportation & Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Capital Access Program California Competes Tax Credit California Research & Development Tax Credit Employment Training Panel Foreign Trade Zones

Goal 1: Industry Diversification & Growth

		Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
1.1	Enhance and modernize traditional industries like tourism, defense, and agriculture while strategically expanding into advanced sectors such as clean energy, aerospace, biotech, creative media, technology, advanced manufacturing, and entertainment/media.				
	a	Advanced Manufacturing: Establish sites (see 1.2) program that identifies key opportunities for advanced manufacturing as well as biotech, technology and aerospace.	High	1	\$
	b	Advanced Manufacturing: Expand supply chain analysis to identify large suppliers that are outside of the region for expansion closer to customers.	Med	1	\$\$
	c	Advanced Manufacturing: Support ongoing funding for SoCal OASIS Park (see 1.5).	Med	2	\$\$\$
	d	Agribusiness: Identify innovations used in agriculture and introduce them to industry, particularly as early adopters.	Med	2	\$
	e	Agribusiness: Create model land-use and zoning policies that promote agribusiness innovation such as agrivoltaics, microgrids and water conveyance.	Med	2	\$
	f	Tourism: Implement digital kiosks or mobile apps that increase visitor experiences and promote in-county tourism opportunities.	Med	3+	\$\$\$
	g	Clean Energy: Launch community based microgrid projects in commercial and industrial districts where scale is applicable.	High	1	\$
	h	Advanced Manufacturing: Identify Aerospace companies in the SoCal market that are in expansion mode and assist with expansion to Riverside County.	High	1	\$
	i	Creative Media: Support the development of coworking spaces, sound stages and studio-style lots with an initial focus on indie creators and digital media start-ups.	Med	3+	\$
	j	Research & Development/Manufacturing: Advocate for the creation of sector-focused business parks or industrial areas that are developed with amenities for use by target industries (labs for biotech, studios for media).	High	2	\$
	k	Lithium and Batteries: Promote manufacturing and supply chain opportunities as part of a related focus on climate resilience planning (see 2.1).	High	1	\$
1.2	Establish sector-specific business attraction & retention programs with tailored incentives.				
	a	Incentives: Expand existing Foreign Trade Zone designations to focus on Advanced Manufacturing attraction.	High	1	\$\$
	b	Sites: Identify state and federal owned surplus property that can be transferred to local control for innovative development.	Low	3+	\$

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Goal 1: Industry Diversification & Growth

		Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
	c	Sites: Identify and market shovel-ready sites based on target industry opportunity.	High	1	\$\$\$
	d	Resources: Designate a RivCoED staff member to serve as industry sector ambassador.	Low	1	\$
	e	Incentives: Bundle state and federal grants, tax credits and incentives with local incentives.	Med	1	\$
	f	Business Retention/Expansion: Continue deployment of County's existing business retention and expansion program resources and integrate with new activities and resources as outlined in EDSP.	Med	2	\$
1.3	Launch targeted marketing campaigns to position Riverside County as a hub for emerging industries.				
	a	Marketing: Create videos and collateral material (digital) to highlight attributes for emerging industries.	Med	2	\$\$
	b	Marketing: Create editorials and advertorials for trade publications within targeted industries.	Med	2	\$\$
	c	Marketing: Create a Team California type approach where Riverside County brings groups together for trade shows and events.	Med	2	\$\$
	d	FDI: Host international trade forum/roundtable highlighting the FDI investment in the County.	High	1	\$\$
1.4	Develop industry consortiums to foster collaboration between businesses, research institutions, and workforce partners.				
	a	Advanced Manufacturing Alliance: Establish Advanced Manufacturing Alliance that would focus work on technology adoption and innovation, supply chain resilience and business recruitment support.	High	1	\$
	b	Clean Energy & Sustainability Collaborative: Establish collaborative that would focus on coordination of microgrid and other development across jurisdictions and serve as advocate for increased transmission and distribution in the County.	High	1	\$
	c	Health & Life Sciences Partnership: Group would facilitate partnerships between higher education and existing industry to create shared lab space, incubators, accelerators and other activities that increase commercialization of biotech and other life sciences.	High	1	\$
	d	Logistics & Supply Chain Innovation Network: To accelerate innovation, resilience, and sustainability in logistics and supply chain operations across Riverside County by fostering collaboration among industry leaders, technology providers, academic institutions, and public agencies.	High	1	\$
	e	Creative Economy and Digital Media Hub: Would cultivate a vibrant ecosystem for creative professionals and digital media innovators in Riverside County by fostering collaboration, entrepreneurship, and access to cutting-edge tools, spaces, and talent—positioning the region as a dynamic center for storytelling, design, and digital production.	High	1	\$

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Goal 1: Industry Diversification & Growth

		Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
1.5	Secure funding for innovation-focused infrastructure, such as clean energy, biotech or other specialized campuses.				
	a	Investment: Leverage federal and state grant programs such as USEDPA, DOE, NIST, CEC to fund innovation/research centers.	Med	2	\$
	b	Innovation: Expand biotechnology and life sciences infrastructure (lab space, wet labs, scaled manufacturing) to support additional commercialization.	Med	3	\$\$\$
	c	Partnerships: Collaborate with anchor companies, utilities and developers to co-invest in development of building space suitable for innovation firms.	Med	2	\$
	d	Partnerships: Strengthen Higher Education-Industry collaboration by expanding translational research programs with a tech focus and encouragement of joint ventures.	High	1	\$

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Goal 2: Clean Energy & Sustainability

		Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
2.1	Align economic growth with climate resilience planning				
	a	Partnerships: Partner with lithium extraction and geothermal companies to encourage supply chain businesses and end users of minerals to locate in Riverside County.	Med	2	\$
	b	Partnerships: Foster innovation and public private partnership by supporting R&D in climate technologies, resilience analytics and development of sustainable materials and other adaptive technologies.	Med	3	\$
2.2	Expand public-private partnerships to accelerate clean energy investments and grid modernization.				
	a	Energy: Advocate for the implementation of Community Choice Aggregators in Riverside County to provide locally controlled electricity at competitive prices.	High	1	\$\$
	b	Energy: Advocate for the establishment of Distributed Energy Resources (DER) that help to reduce costs to commercial users.	High	2	\$
2.3	Secure federal and state grants for environmental remediation projects, including Salton Sea revitalization.				
	a	Revitalization: Consider the creation of a Salton Sea Infrastructure Investment Fund that can pursue state and federal grants and secure private or philanthropic contributions to invest in projects that enhance economic development.	Med	2	\$\$
	b	Partnerships: Continue to advocate for the Salton Sea revitalization efforts and leadership in investments to revitalize area.	High	1	\$
	c	Investment: Apply for EPA funding for brownfield sites that can be reutilized for commercial or industrial development.	Low	3	\$

Goal 3: Workforce Development & Talent Attraction

3.1	Increase industry-driven apprenticeship and internships and training programs to upskill residents in priority sectors.				
	a	Encourage the continued deployment and expansion of workforce development programs and offerings with emphasis on advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, and industrial technology.	High	1	\$
	b	Training: Facilitate the creation of Rapid Skills Bootcamp(s) that would be designed as intensive, hands-on training program(s) designed to quickly upskill residents for high-demand careers in advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and industrial technology in just 6 to 10 weeks.	Med	2	\$\$
	c	Innovation: Establish Logistics Tech Training Hub(s) that will equip residents with the skills and certifications in the rapidly evolving logistics and warehousing sectors, especially in areas like robotics, automation, and AI-driven operations.	Med	2	\$\$

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Goal 3: Workforce Development & Talent Attraction

		Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
3.2	Strengthen collaboration between educational institutions and employers to align curricula and job training with job market needs.				
	a	Workforce Development: Utilize consortiums established to serve as technical resources to ensure continued alignment between education, workforce development and industry.	Med	2	\$
	b	Workforce Development: Communicate and refer opportunities outlined in the Workforce Development Integration portion of the EDSP to the appropriate education and workforce development organizations.	Med	2	\$
3.3	Develop programs to attract and retain skilled professionals, including student loan assistance and relocation incentives.				
	a	Incentives: Develop model programs for employers that create Employer Student Loan Repayment Assistance programs, tuition reimbursement, or student loan buydown opportunities for key industry sectors and in demand workers.	Med	2	\$
	b	Incentives: Develop and launch the "Riverside County Plus One" program, a workforce and talent retention strategy designed to support the partners of newly relocated professionals, especially in sectors like healthcare, education, tech, and government, by helping them find meaningful employment and community connections.	High	1	\$
	c	Incentives: Continue to expand on needs assessments for increasing childcare options for workers, with an emphasis on facilities closer to job centers.	Med	2	\$
3.4	Increase accessibility of career pathways by expanding digital education, technical certification, and skill-building initiatives				
	a	Marketing: Establish a Countywide Career Pathways Report Card & Summit to annually assess and showcase progress in expanding access to career pathways through digital learning, certifications, and workforce training—while fostering collaboration among education, industry, and community partners.	Med	2	\$
	b	Marketing: Implement "Train Local, Hire Local" marketing campaign that would increase employer awareness and participation in local job training and certification programs by demonstrating value, building trust, and offering easy access to talent pipelines.	Low	3	\$

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Goal 4: Infrastructure Improvements

		Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
4.1	Advance major transportation projects that reduce congestion and improve connectivity.				
	a	Transportation: Continued investment (via RCTC) and completion of currently planned projects: I-15 express lanes, 91 eastbound corridor improvement project, mid-county parkway phase 3 and the SR-60 Potrero Interchange mid-term projects (RCTC Priorities).	High	1	\$
	b	Transportation: Continue to seek state and federal funding for other long term Regional Transportation project priorities.	Med	2	\$
	c	Rail: Continue to secure investments for rail and transit improvements with priority of mobility to and from workplaces and attraction of visitors from other parts of the SoCal region.	Med	2	\$
4.2	Upgrade digital infrastructure by expanding broadband access for businesses and residents.				
	a	Broadband: Continued implementation of Broadband Master Plan with a focus on areas with low subscription rates, limited speed tiers and gaps in last mile infrastructure.	High	2	\$
	b	Broadband: Apply for federal, state and private funds to improve broadband access, digital literacy and Tech On Wheels program.	Med	2	\$
4.3	Modernize zoning and land-use policies to promote mixed-use developments that integrate work, living, and recreational spaces.				
	a	Land-use: Develop model ordinances that provide for hybrid, mixed-use zoning districts, transit-oriented development and flexibility in use-based zoning.	Med	2	\$
	b	Land-use: Develop model ordinances that provide for adaptative reuse of underutilized buildings (strip malls, warehouses, etc.) into mixed-use spaces.	High	1	\$
	c	Permitting: Encourage the streamlining of permits for mixed-use projects, particularly live/work style projects.	Med	2	\$
4.4	Reduce commuter traffic by enabling residents to live and work in the same region.				
	a	Development: Encourage development of remote work facilities that offer high-speed internet, ergonomic workspaces, and collaborative environments for individuals who work remotely (thereby reducing commuting, supporting local, and promoting work-life balance.	Low	2	\$
4.5	Expand basic (water, sewer, drainage) infrastructure capacity to facilitate job growth in key industries.				
	a	Infrastructure: Encourage the continued expansion of basic infrastructure (water, sewer, drainage) that is under local control and serve key industry sectors.	High	2	\$
	b	Infrastructure: Seek/support federal and state grant investments for increasing local service capacity.	High	2	\$

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	c	Infrastructure: Create model ordinance that encourages on-site water treatment, reuse or other on-site recycling programs that divert wastewater, process water, and/or solid waste from collection systems.	Low	3	\$
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Goal 5: Entrepreneurship & Innovation Ecosystems

5.1 Expand access to startup capital through venture funds, microloans, and local investment networks.

	a	Financing: Establish a Catalyst Capital Network which would connect venture capitalists to businesses as a catalyst for innovation and growth.	High	1	\$
	b	Financing: Hold "Next Wave Venture Capital Forum" to connect emerging, next generation of startups to potential investors.	Med	2	\$
	c	Financing: Utilize and expand RivCo Small Business Thrive Program as a connection point and referral network for small business financing options.	High	1	\$\$

5.2 Encourage technology adoption and digital transformation for businesses.

	a	Assistance: Support additional programs throughout the County to promote innovation and startups.	Med	2	\$
	b	Continue and expand Innovation Month activities to include a focus on introducing innovative technologies to local businesses.	High	1	\$

5.3 Continue supporting small businesses and entrepreneurship.

	a	Assistance: Expand Business Assistance NOW Program page to include links and resources for Countywide business assistance.	Med	2	\$
	b	Sites: Encourage the development of space, building and sites options to accommodate various levels of business growth.	Low	2	\$

Goal 6: Regional Connectivity and Trade Expansion

		Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
6.1	Strengthen partnerships with neighboring regions and cross-border economies				
	a	Partnerships: Continue an active leadership role in Inland Economic Growth & Opportunity (IEGO) and advocate for fair distribution of state funding.	Med	1	\$
	b	Partnerships: Collaborate with neighboring counties to support projects and opportunities that generate value to Riverside County.	Med	1	\$
6.2	Position Riverside County as a manufacturing onshoring gateway for domestic and international trade.				
	a	Marketing: Create/host SelectUSA investment summit (or spinoff event) or create "Invest RivCo" summit with emphasis on FDI.	High	1	\$\$
	b	Marketing: Consider expanding the County FDI website in multiple languages to attract investment from key global areas.	Low	3	\$\$
	c	Marketing: Consider rebranding of existing resources into "Global Business Gateway: Riverside County" as a means to attract, support and scale FDI and international partnerships in the County.	Low	3	\$\$
	d	Marketing: International Consulate Engagement Program which will position Riverside County as a premier destination for FDI, trade partnerships and cultural exchange, by hosting targeted visits from international consulates.	Med	2	\$
6.3	Encourage collaboration between municipalities, businesses, developers, and residents.				
	a	Partnerships: Expand and enhance Economic Development Alliance as an opportunity to encourage continued intracounty collaboration.	High	1	\$
	b	Partnerships: Host an annual roundtable of municipalities, developers, building associations and others involved in commercial and industrial development to highlight areas of success and areas needing improvement and increased collaboration.	Med	2	\$
6.4	Coordinate development efforts across municipalities to ensure cohesive economic strategies.				
	a	Resources: Develop and maintain a comprehensive, Countywide land-use inventory that identifies and monitors the availability of developable land to support strategic planning, investment, and sustainable growth.	Low	3	\$\$
	b	Resources: Develop model (best practices) for development streamlining, permitting and incentives for use by local jurisdictions.	Med	2	\$\$

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Goal 7: Regional Branding & Tourism

		Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
7.1	Develop a cohesive regional branding campaign highlighting Riverside County's strengths in innovation, sustainability, and quality of life.				
	a	Marketing: Develop and distribute brand activation toolkit to economic development partners to utilize branding assets and messaging across the region as applicable.	High	1	\$\$
7.2	Invest in signature events that drive tourism and showcase the county's cultural assets.				
	a	Tourism: Support the designation of a state park in the Pass subregion.	Med	3	\$
	b	Tourism: Identify increased opportunities for agritourism.	Low	3	\$
	c	Events: Create Countywide portal for events that take place within County and distribute among visitor network.	Low	2	\$
7.3	Strengthening ties between tourism, hospitality, and local economic development initiatives that result in expanded marketing opportunities.				
	a	Tourism: Establish an immersive, hands-on boot camp designed to equip hospitality professionals, front-line staff, and community ambassadors with the knowledge and tools to elevate the visitor experience across Riverside County by exploring the region's diverse tourism assets while learning best practices in guest services, local storytelling, and destination marketing.	High	2	\$\$
	b	Tourism: Utilize key events in Riverside County (and individual communities) to promote business location opportunities.	Med	2	\$

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Goal 8: Quality of Life & Community Development

		Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
8.1	Increasing affordable housing options and homeownership rates.				
a		Community Development: Collaborate with large employers to co-develop housing on or near their campuses for employees (especially workers in key, in-demand professions).	Low	3	\$
b		Community Development: Advocate for inclusionary housing bonuses such as increased density or reduced parking requirements for employer-sponsored housing developments.	Low	3	\$
8.2	Improve access to healthcare where lacking in region.				
a		Quality of Life: Encourage the development of clinics, hospitals or deployment of mobile health clinics to areas of need within the county.	Med	2	\$
8.3	Activate placemaking initiatives that enhance public spaces, parks, and cultural districts.				
a		Infrastructure: Develop a subregional mobility and connectivity framework that integrates Complete Streets, public transit, and rail to create safer, more accessible, and multimodal transportation options across Riverside County.	Med	2	\$
b		Quality of Life: Promote the arts by encouraging investment in public art, supporting local artists and organizations, and creating arts and cultural districts that celebrate the region's diversity.	Med	2	\$
c		Quality of Life: The Santa Ana River Trail should be elevated as a regional example by expanding access points, enhancing safety and amenities, and connecting nearby neighborhoods, parks, and transit.	Low	3	\$

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Evaluation Framework

To ensure accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement, the Evaluation Framework provides a structured approach for assessing the effectiveness of programs and initiatives aligned with the Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP). This framework emphasizes the use of targeted Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure direct outcomes, enabling Riverside County and its partners to track progress, refine strategies, and demonstrate impact across priority industry clusters. Broader economic trends can be addressed in separate Countywide reports, such as the Riverside County Regional Intelligence Report (December 2024).

Performance Measurement Guidelines



Categorize by Industry/Cluster

All performance data must be organized by relevant industry or cluster, where applicable, to support targeted analysis and strategy refinement.



Track Program Impact

RivCoED will monitor the outcomes of its internal programs and those of partner organizations (e.g., cities) when those efforts align with EDSP initiatives.



Recognition of Quality/Promising Jobs

Performance metrics related to job creation and retention will be segmented by quality jobs, promising jobs and other jobs (as defined in the Thrive Inland SoCal California Jobs First Regional Plan).



Focus on Direct Outcomes

KPIs will measure the specific impacts of EDSP-related programs and services, rather than the overall performance of the Riverside County economy.

KPIs by category

Business Attraction

- Number of business attraction leads responded to.
- Number of development sites certified through shovel ready sites or comparable programs.
- Number of new firms attracted through RivCoED (or partner) programs.
- Number of jobs created through RivCoED (or partner) business attraction programs.

Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)

- Number of businesses receiving BRE services through RivCoED programs (or partner referrals).
- Number of jobs retained through business retention services (RivCoED and partners).
- Number of jobs created through business expansion services (RivCoED and partners).

Business Startup Services

- Number of inquiries for entrepreneurial development support.
- Number of individuals or businesses receiving entrepreneurial development services/referrals (RivCoED and partners).
- Number of new business startups attributable to RivCoED (or referred partner programs).
- Participation in business training programs.
- Participation in business incubation programs.
- Dollar value of startup funding secured by firms assisted by RivCoED (or referred partners).

Workforce Development

- Number of participants in job training/certification programs tied to RivCoED targeted industry clusters.
- Numbers of job placements in RivCoED targeted industry clusters.
- Additional KPIs established by the Countywide Career Pathways Report Card.

Marketing Exposure/Resource Attraction

- Total circulation (and open rates) of RivCoED e-newsletter.
- Web traffic and analytics
- Number of tourism-promoting special events (and estimated number of participants) sponsored by RivCoED (and partners).
- Number of industry/trade shows attended by RivCoED (and partner) staff.
- Participation (number of attendees) in SelectUSA summit.
- Dollar value of grant funding secured from federal, state and regional agencies.



Economic Resilience

Economic resilience refers to the ability of an economy, whether at the level of households, firms, or entire regions, to withstand, recover from, and adapt to economic shocks or disruptions.

The following recommendations emerged from an economic resilience analysis and are embedded within the EDSP’s strategic action items. Targeted initiatives are outlined below and designed to strengthen Riverside County’s ability to withstand and adapt to locally occurring hazards. A key innovation of the EDSP is the development of the Economic Resilience Scorecard, a dynamic tool that will guide ongoing strategy refinement, track progress, and ensure that resilience remains a central pillar of the County’s economic future.

Economic Resilience Area	Strategic Focus
Strengthen Infrastructure Resilience	Identify opportunities to upgrade energy, water, and transportation systems with resilient design, redundancy, and proactive maintenance to ensure business continuity.
Bolster Healthcare Systems	Retrofit facilities, stockpile supplies, and expand telehealth and surge capacity. Ensure backup utilities and coordinated emergency response.
Support Workforce Mobility	Enable remote work through broadband investment and telework policies. Integrate preparedness into workforce training and employer partnerships.
Strengthen Supply Chains and Diversification	Encourage local production, contingency planning, and regional logistics hubs. Support industries that reduce reliance on external supply chains.

// Appendices

The following appendices are referenced in the EDSP. They can be reviewed or downloaded at the Riverside County Digital CEDS/EDSP webpage.


A	Alignment with USEDA CEDS Guidelines
B	Subregion Maps
C	Plan Development & Stakeholder Engagement
D	Glossary & Organizational Index
E	Contributing Policies & Documents
F	Demographic Background Report
G	Target Industry Analysis
H	Economic Resilience Analysis
I	Full SWOT Report
J	Analysis of Business Segments, Incentive Programs, and Implementation Policies and Constraints
K	Workforce Integration Analysis
L	Benchmark Report
M	Implementation Partners
N	Projects Supported by the 2025–2030 CEDS

Endnotes

1. State of California, Department of Finance, May 2025.
2. Based on August 2025 data from CoStar Group.
3. Based on July 2025 data from the California Association of Realtors.
4. Riverside Metro Region Workforce Demand Assessment, 2024.
5. Cited percentages of knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by workers and required to secure quality jobs..
6. Riverside County Economic Forecast, CalTrans & Bureau of Labor Statistics.
7. US Census Bureau, Business Formation Statistics.
8. EGS research of state and federal funding awards in Riverside County documents.



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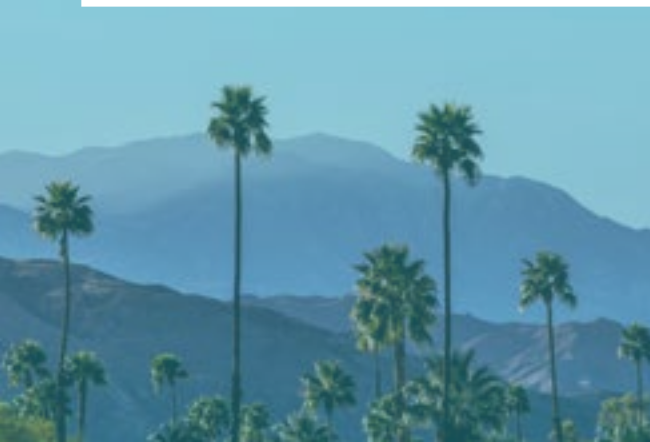
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2026-2030



Coachella Valley Region Economic Development Strategy



Riverside County Board of Supervisors

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**ECONOMIC GROWTH
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Chapter One: Introduction

The Coachella Valley is entering a transformative era in its economic development journey. As a region renowned for its cultural vibrancy, agricultural legacy, and tourism appeal, it also faces complex challenges—from economic vulnerability and infrastructure gaps to disparities in economic opportunity and environmental challenges.

This Economic Development Strategy serves as a forward-looking roadmap to harness the Valley’s strengths while addressing its most urgent needs. It reflects a collaborative effort among local governments, tribal nations, community organizations, business leaders, and residents, and is grounded in the principles of comprehensive growth, sustainability, and resilience.

This strategy aims to:

- Catalyze investment in high-impact sectors such as clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and sustainable agriculture.
- Promote workforce development through continued partnerships with educational institutions and employers.
- Advocate for modernized infrastructure to support mobility, housing, and digital connectivity.
- Advance environmental revitalization, including transformative projects like Salton Sea restoration and infill redevelopment.

By aligning local priorities with state and federal resources, this strategy seeks to build a more prosperous and resilient Coachella Valley—one that benefits all communities and future generations.

Connection to Countywide Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Coachella Valley Economic Development Strategy (CV Strategy) has been prepared concurrently with a Countywide Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP), and it is intended that the two documents will be implemented in tandem. The CV Strategy focuses on industry growth opportunities, brand positioning, and strategic action items that are unique and specific to the Coachella Valley. To avoid redundancy, Countywide recommendations and action items are not repeated in the CV document.

Figure 1. Coachella Valley and Blythe Area Subregion (Cities)



Figure 2. Coachella Valley and Blythe Area Subregion (CDPs)



Chapter Two: Plan Development

As a core component of the stakeholder engagement effort for the Countywide EDSP, the EDSP consultant team facilitated a series of workshop-style meetings (three meetings spaced over five months) with key public and private stakeholders specific to the Coachella Valley. In order to allow for continuity of the stakeholder discussions over the course of the project, the invited stakeholders were asked to commit to attending all three Coachella Valley meetings. The meetings progressed through the following sequence of objectives:

Meeting 1 (January 2025) – Orientation to the CV Strategy process; scoping of stakeholders’ priorities for economic development programming in the Coachella Valley; identification of strength-weakness-opportunity-threat (SWOT) factors for the Valley.

Meeting 2 (April 2025) – Review of (and stakeholder comment on) preliminary target industry analysis completed for the CV Strategy process; facilitated stakeholder exercise to develop an economic development vision statement for the Valley and to broadly outline stakeholders’ definitions of “success” for CV Strategy implementation.

Meeting 3 (June 2025) – Stakeholder confirmation of final set of targeted industry clusters; review of preliminary framework/outline of CV Strategy; review and discussion of strategy categories.

Economic Development Summit Process	
Structure:	A series of 3 workshop-style meetings in the Coachella Valley. Participation focused on invited public/private stakeholders (asked to commit to attending all three meetings).
Purpose:	Forum to review background studies and draft strategy documents; opportunity for key stakeholders to provide direct input on economic development priorities, SWOT factors, target industries, and the CV Strategy vision statement / action plan.
Participation Level:	66 total participants
Outcomes:	Coachella Valley SWOT summary; final lists of target industries for the Valley; vision statement / success criteria.

Number of Participating Stakeholders by Date Coachella Valley Economic Development Summit Meetings			
Round 1 (January 2025)	Round 2 (April 2025)	Round 3 (June 2025)	Total
21	15	30	66



Chapter Three: Economic Summary

This section of the Strategy provides highlights of existing and projected demographic characteristics that influence the economic development potential of Riverside County and the Coachella Valley subregion. This summary has been extracted from a more detailed report prepared for the Countywide EDSP process (*Draft Analysis of Key Datasets for Economic Development Strategic Plan*, dated January 16, 2025). The provided data summaries generally follow a “top-down” hierarchy geographically:

- Riverside County compared to the neighboring counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and San Diego
- The Coachella Valley compared to other Riverside County subregions
- The nine Coachella Valley cities compared to each other

Census-Based Demographic and Economic Overview

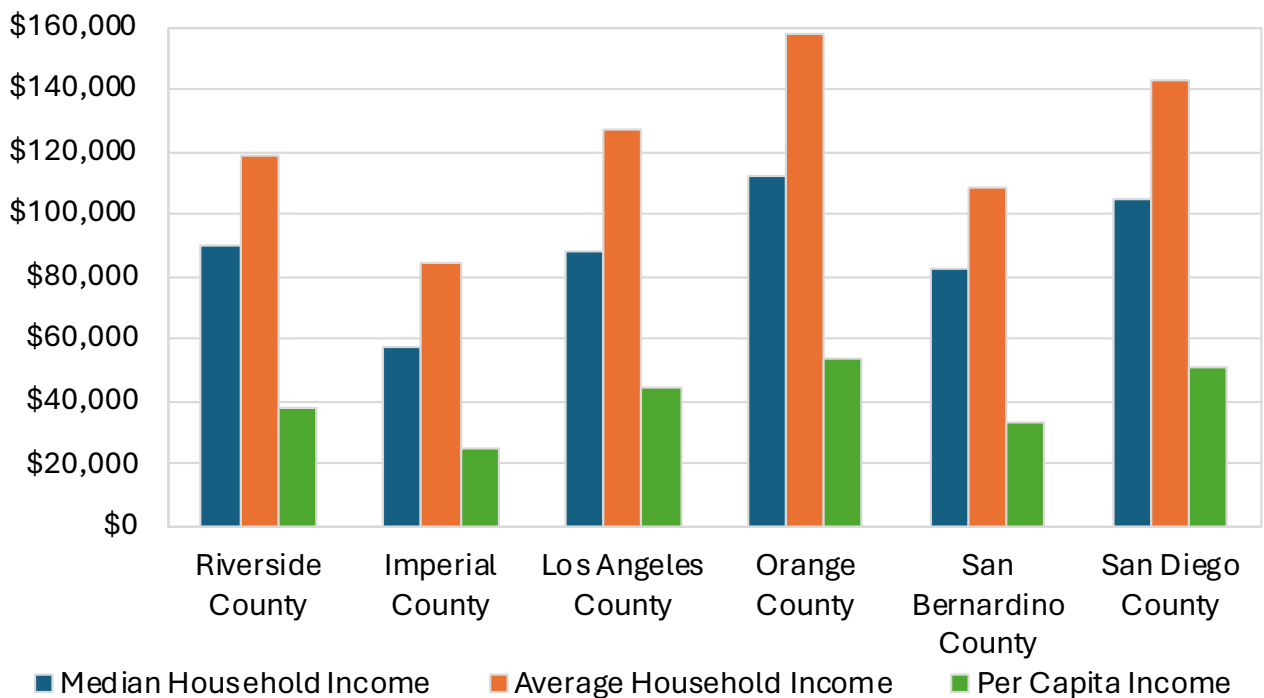
The following data were primarily obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates (2019-23); income estimates (for 2024) are from Esri. Data are provided for Riverside County as a whole, the five Riverside County subregions, and the following neighboring counties: Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and San Diego. Topics address current conditions related to economic characteristics, housing stock, educational attainment, and households/families.

It is important to note the distinction between the terms “employment” and “jobs” as discussed in this section. “Employment” is a characteristic of an area’s resident workforce; it refers to the residents of an area (i.e., city, county or other geography) that are currently employed, regardless of the location of their employment (i.e., they may hold jobs in their own community or commute to work outside the community). The term “jobs” relates to the place of work; thus, the reported number of jobs in a subregion or county refers to jobs that are based in that subregion or county, regardless of where the jobholders live.

Figures 3-8 on the following pages provide a summary of economic characteristics from the ACS. Both the figures and the tables provide various data related to labor force employment and income characteristics, such as worker commute characteristics, household and per capita income levels, and public assistance income for households. Some of the data highlights include the following:

- Riverside County’s median household income level (\$89,700) is slightly higher than the majority of the surrounding benchmark counties with the exceptions of Orange County (\$112,796) and San Diego County (\$104,597).
- Poverty rates are relatively lower (8.5%) in Riverside County compared to most of the surrounding benchmark counties, with the exceptions of Orange County (6.6%) and San Diego County (6.9%). The Riverside County subregions with the highest shares of all family types with incomes below the poverty level are Hemet/San Jacinto (12.3%), Coachella Valley and Blythe Area (10.1%), and the Pass Area (9.1%).

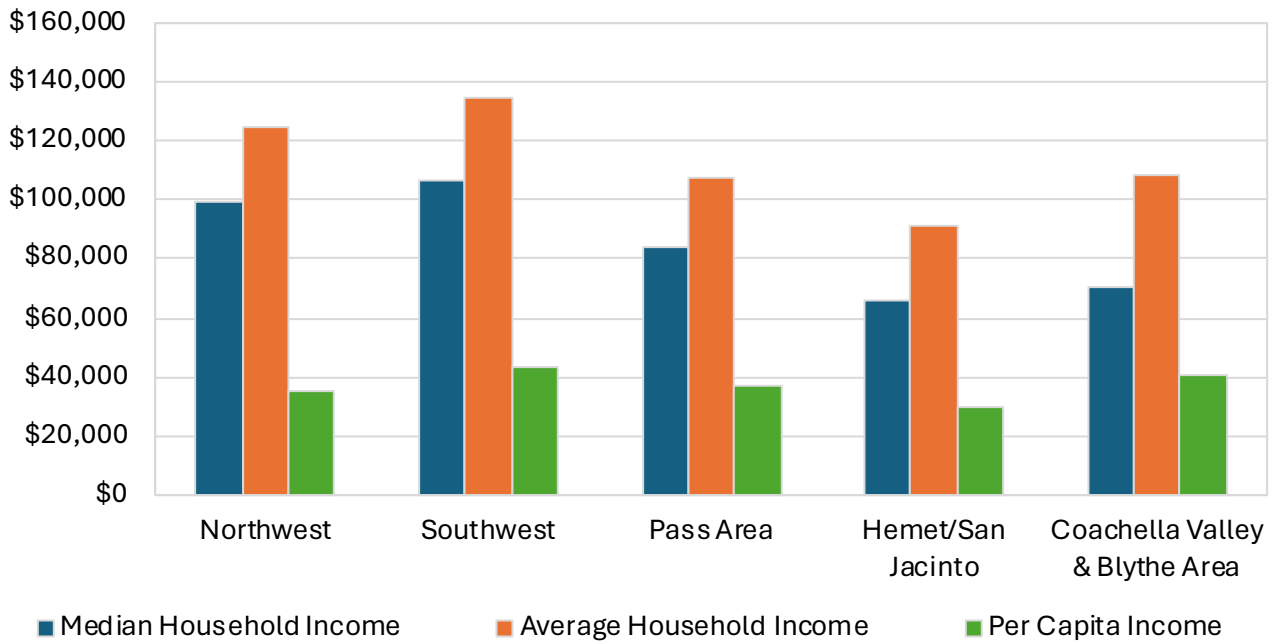
Figure 3. Median Household, Average Household Income, and Per Capita Income Metrics for Riverside Compared to Other Counties (2024)



Note: Income data obtained from Esri for 2024 is expressed in current dollars.

Source: Esri; TNDG.

Figure 4. Median Household, Average Household Income, and Per Capita Income Metrics for Riverside County Subregions (2024)

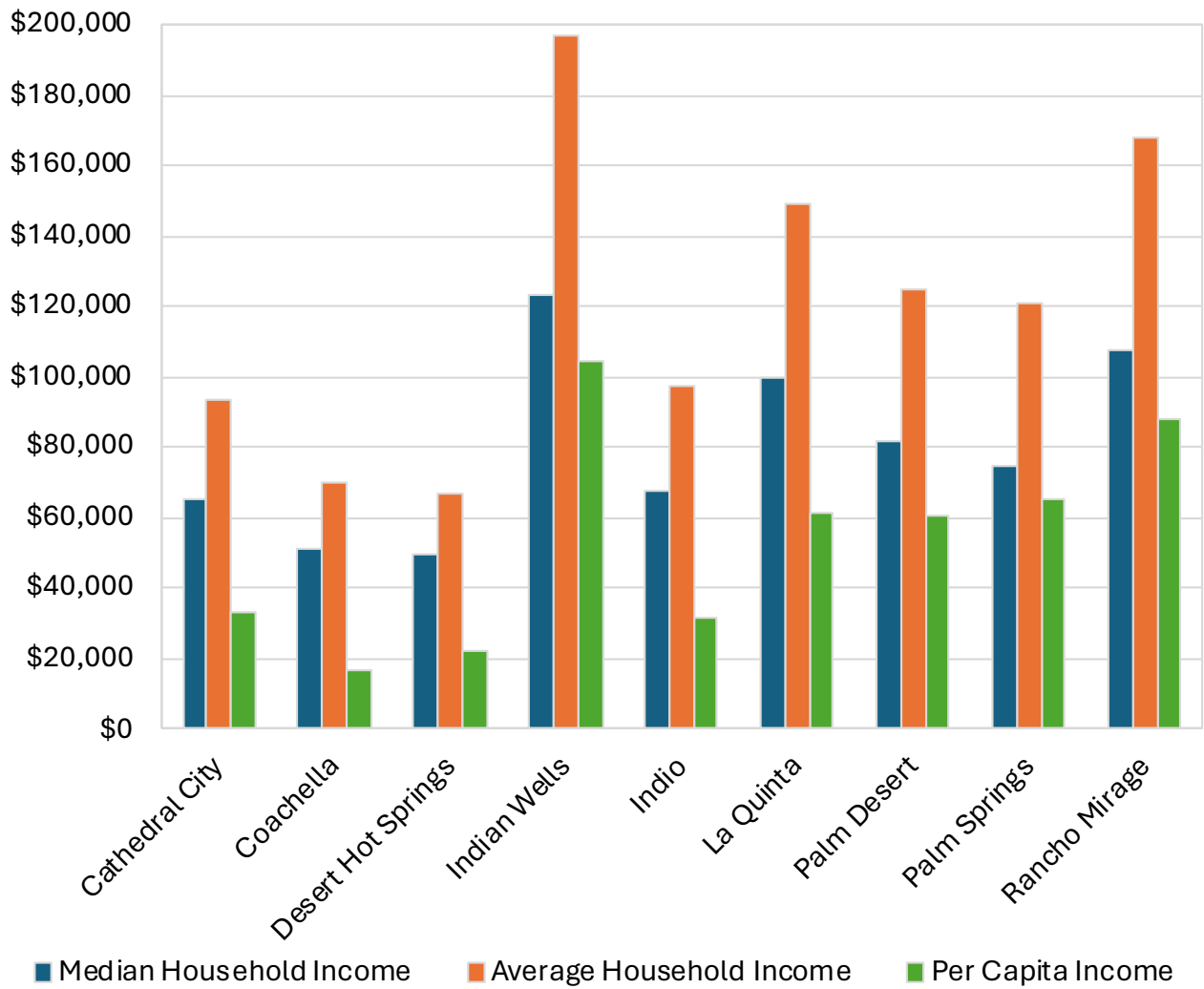


Note: Income data obtained from Esri for 2024 is expressed in current dollars.

Source: Esri; TNDG.



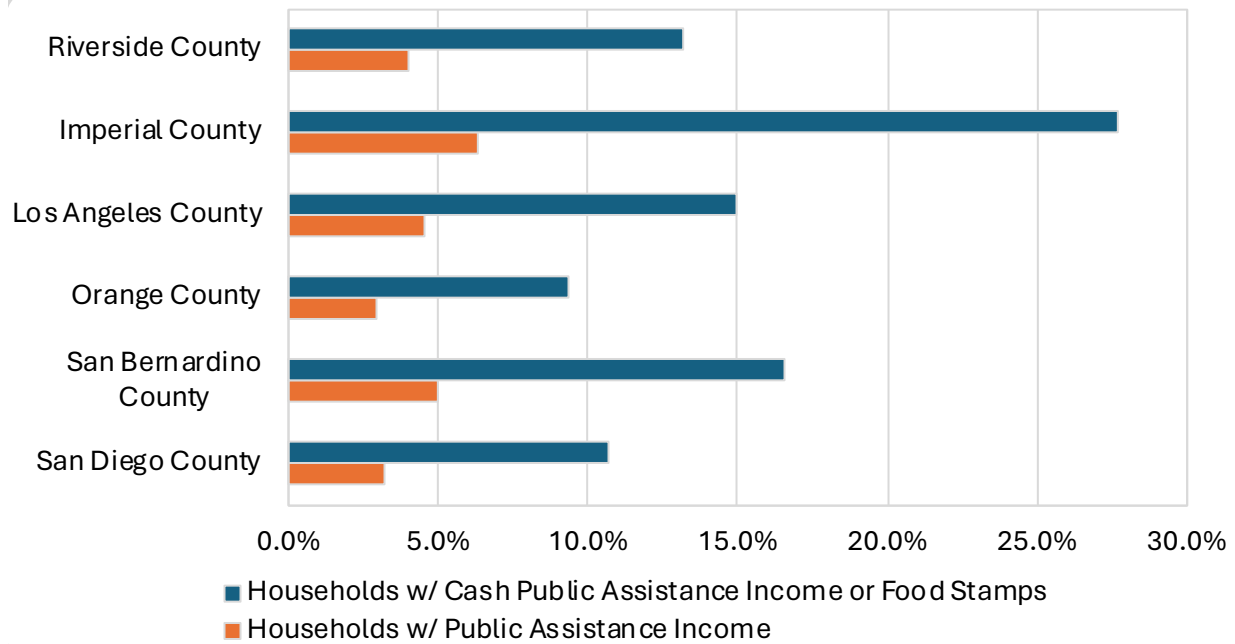
Figure 5. Median Household, Average Household Income, and Per Capita Income Metrics for Coachella Valley Cities (2024)



Note: Income data obtained from Esri for 2024 is expressed in current dollars.

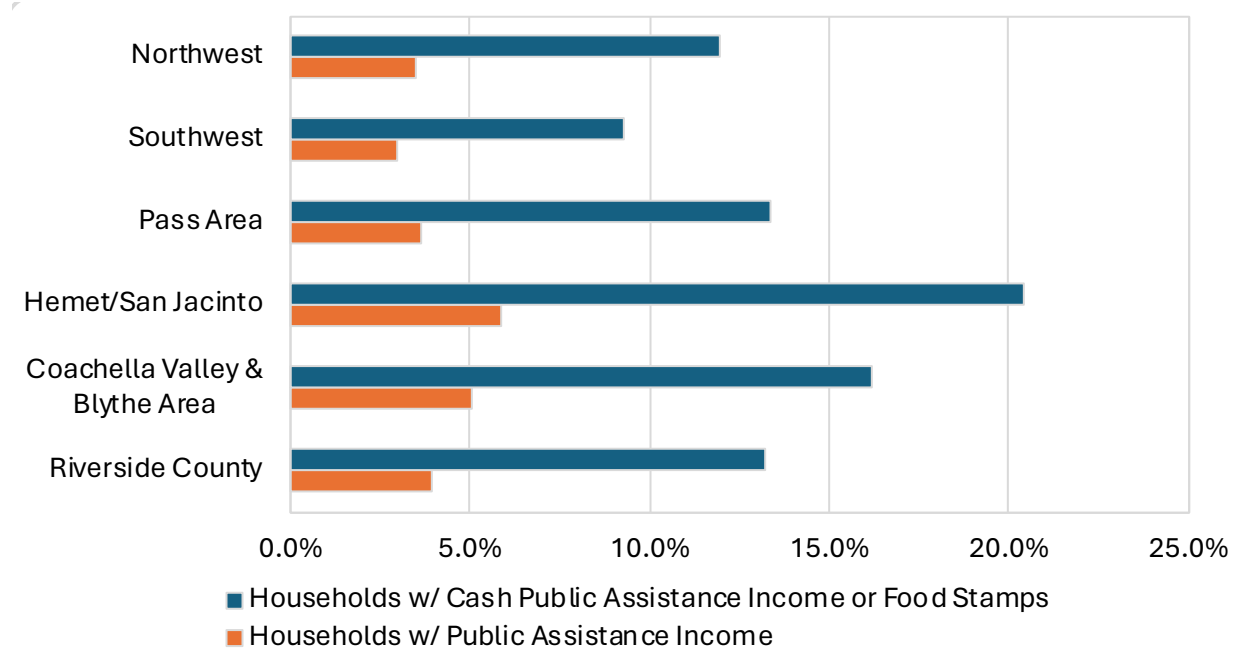
Source: Esri; TNDG.

Figure 6. Households with Public Assistance and Cash Public Assistance Income or Food Stamps for Riverside Compared to Other Counties



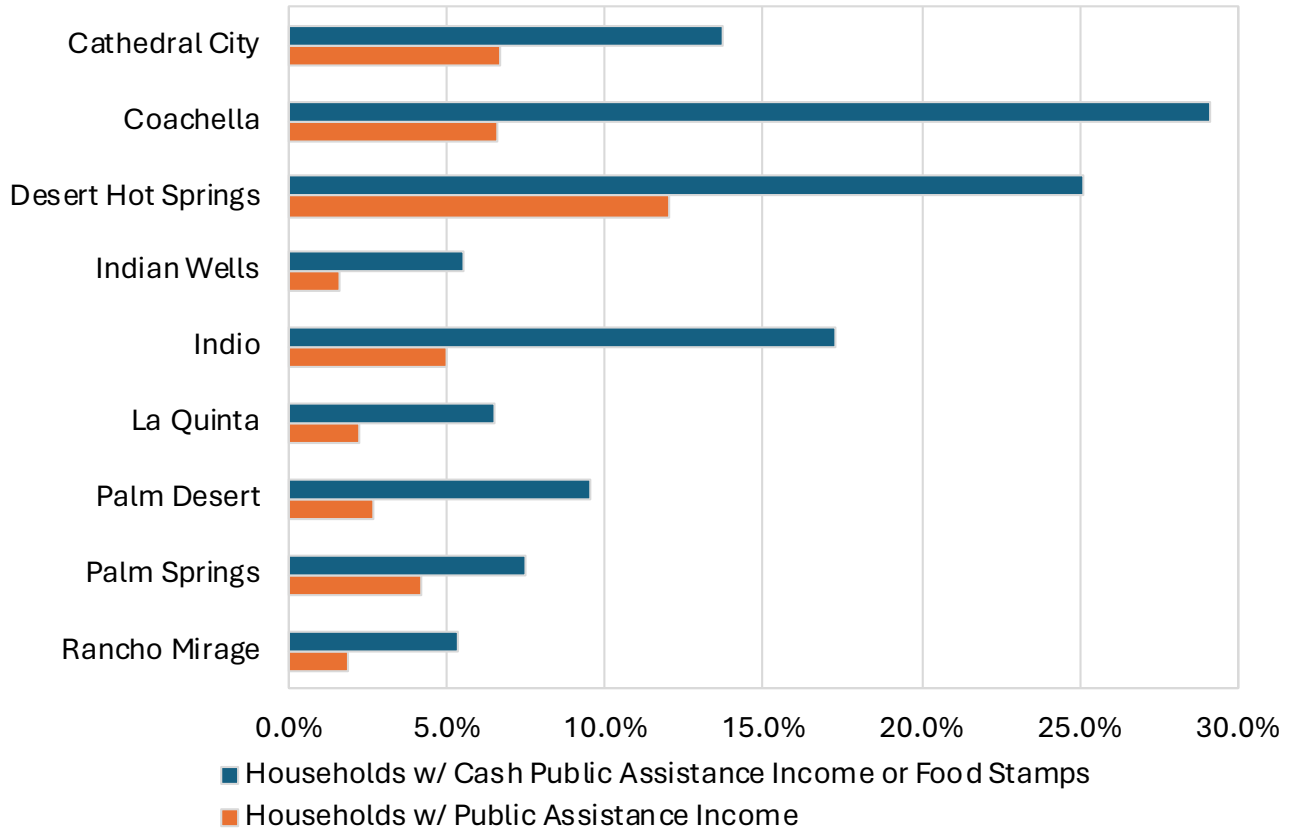
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Figure 7. Households with Public Assistance and Cash Public Assistance Income or Food Stamps for Riverside County Subregions



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Figure 8. Households with Public Assistance and Cash Public Assistance Income or Food Stamps for Coachella Valley Cities



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.



Tables 1-4 on the following pages provide a summary of economic characteristics from the ACS. These tables provide various data related to labor force employment and industry sector employment characteristics for resident workers. Some of the key data highlights include the following:

- For the population age 16 and older, Riverside County has a slightly lower share of the population in the labor force (60.9%) in comparison to other counties, except for Imperial County (52.7%). In terms of the subregions, the Northwest subregion (64.5%) and the Southeast subregion (62.3%) have the highest share of the population in the labor force in Riverside County.
- In terms of industry sector employment, the largest share of Riverside County residents (21.1%) is employed in the educational services and healthcare and social assistance industry sector (similar to the benchmark counties). In terms of subregions, the Pass Area subregion (26.6%) and Southwest subregion (22.9%) have the highest shares of employment in the educational services and healthcare and social assistance industry sector.



Table 1. Selected Economic Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Riverside Compared to Other Counties	Riverside County	Imperial County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County
EMPLOYMENT STATUS (POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)						
Labor Force Participation Rate	60.9%	52.7%	64.8%	65.6%	62.2%	66.3%
Jobs/Housing Ratio	0.95	1.16	1.23	1.43	1.15	1.18
INDUSTRY (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)						
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.3%	9.8%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
Construction	9.3%	5.6%	6.2%	6.0%	8.1%	6.4%
Manufacturing	8.1%	4.1%	8.6%	11.8%	7.6%	10.0%
Wholesale trade	2.7%	2.5%	3.0%	3.1%	3.0%	1.9%
Retail trade	12.1%	11.7%	9.8%	10.1%	12.3%	10.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	7.7%	6.7%	6.6%	4.2%	12.0%	4.5%
Information	1.5%	0.8%	4.5%	1.9%	1.2%	2.0%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4.9%	3.2%	5.8%	8.4%	4.2%	6.1%
Prof., scientific, and mgmt, and admin and waste mgmt svcs	10.5%	7.4%	13.8%	14.9%	9.6%	16.5%
Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance	21.1%	23.8%	21.7%	21.0%	22.0%	21.9%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food svcs	10.7%	9.3%	10.6%	10.1%	8.8%	10.2%
Other services, except public administration	5.0%	4.4%	5.4%	4.8%	5.1%	4.8%
Public administration	5.2%	10.7%	3.6%	3.2%	5.4%	5.0%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Table 2. Selected Economic Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Comparison of Riverside County Subregions	Northwest	Southwest	Pass Area	Hemet/San Jacinto	Coachella Valley and Blythe	Riverside County
EMPLOYMENT STATUS (POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)						
Labor Force Participation Rate	64.5%	62.3%	55.6%	54.8%	55.4%	60.9%
Jobs/Housing Ratio	1.32	0.76	0.57	0.45	0.79	0.95
INDUSTRY (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)						
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	1.6%	3.5%	1.3%
Construction	9.9%	8.6%	8.8%	10.9%	8.3%	9.3%
Manufacturing	10.0%	8.2%	5.6%	8.2%	3.6%	8.1%
Wholesale trade	2.9%	2.8%	2.4%	2.5%	2.0%	2.7%
Retail trade	12.1%	11.8%	12.1%	13.8%	11.4%	12.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	9.3%	6.1%	8.6%	9.4%	4.6%	7.7%
Information	1.2%	1.8%	1.5%	1.9%	1.5%	1.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4.7%	5.4%	4.3%	4.0%	5.1%	4.9%
Prof., scientific, and mgmt, and admin and waste mgmt srvc	9.7%	10.6%	9.0%	8.8%	13.4%	10.5%
Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance	20.8%	22.9%	26.6%	19.0%	19.5%	21.1%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food srvc	8.8%	10.5%	9.3%	9.7%	16.7%	10.7%
Other services, except public administration	4.7%	4.4%	5.2%	5.4%	6.3%	5.0%
Public administration	5.2%	6.2%	6.0%	4.9%	3.9%	5.2%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Table 3. Selected Economic Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Coachella Valley Cities	Cathedral City	Coachella	Desert Hot Springs	Indian Wells	Indio
EMPLOYMENT STATUS (POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)					
Labor Force Participation Rate	60.9%	68.2%	62.9%	39.8%	59.7%
Jobs/Housing Ratio	0.48	0.60	0.35	1.23	0.61
INDUSTRY (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)					
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.7%	5.5%	1.4%	0.4%	2.5%
Construction	7.0%	11.1%	9.6%	5.1%	9.9%
Manufacturing	4.7%	4.0%	2.1%	2.4%	3.4%
Wholesale trade	0.9%	2.5%	2.9%	4.8%	1.9%
Retail trade	14.1%	11.5%	13.1%	3.0%	11.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.4%	4.8%	5.4%	11.2%	5.2%
Information	1.1%	1.3%	1.9%	3.0%	1.1%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	5.1%	2.8%	1.9%	20.6%	4.4%
Professional, scientific, and mgmt, and admin and waste mgmt srvc	13.1%	13.9%	14.4%	17.9%	11.8%
Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance	18.5%	16.5%	21.5%	15.8%	20.1%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food srvc	20.2%	17.3%	15.6%	11.0%	16.1%
Other services, except public administration	6.8%	6.3%	7.2%	2.8%	7.7%
Public administration	3.3%	2.6%	3.0%	2.0%	4.5%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Table 4. Selected Economic Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Coachella Valley Cities	La Quinta	Palm Desert	Palm Springs	Rancho Mirage
EMPLOYMENT STATUS (POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)				
Labor Force Participation Rate	52.9%	49.3%	50.8%	40.5%
Jobs/Housing Ratio	0.72	1.08	1.06	1.56
INDUSTRY (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)				
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.8%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Construction	5.7%	7.0%	7.2%	5.1%
Manufacturing	3.4%	4.2%	3.3%	3.3%
Wholesale trade	1.9%	2.8%	1.6%	2.9%
Retail trade	9.2%	11.8%	8.7%	8.8%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.7%	3.2%	4.8%	3.2%
Information	2.1%	0.9%	3.1%	4.2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.7%	7.2%	8.6%	5.9%
Professional, scientific, and mgmt, and admin and waste mgmt svcs	14.2%	15.0%	16.3%	17.1%
Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance	20.2%	18.8%	21.9%	27.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food svcs	17.6%	19.7%	15.8%	10.3%
Other services, except public administration	6.6%	5.5%	5.4%	7.0%
Public administration	4.8%	3.4%	2.7%	4.6%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Tables 5-6, and Figures 9-10, on the following pages provide housing-related data from the ACS. Some of the data highlights include the following:

- The overall occupied housing rate for Riverside County is 88.6%, which is slightly lower than all of the other surrounding benchmark counties except Imperial County. The occupied housing rates for subregions range from 73.1% to 95.8%, but are relatively similar for all of the subregions, with the exception being the Coachella Valley and Blythe Area (73.1%), which is notably lower than any of the other subregions (due to the large inventories of vacation/second homes which are occupied only part of the year).
- Riverside County has the highest share of owner-occupied housing units (68.9%), and the lowest share of renter-occupied housing units (31.1%) in comparison to all the other benchmark counties. The subregions with the highest shares of owner-occupied housing units are the Pass Area (78.8%), Southwest (74.3%), and Hemet/San Jacinto (69.0%) subregions.
- Monthly housing costs – measured as a percentage of household income have continued to increase in Riverside County. Figure 9 shows that for the highest housing costs as a percentage of household income (50% or more), Riverside County has declined from 14.59% to 14.06% from 2019 to 2023, but remains higher than both the state of California and the nation. In terms of the subregions, most of the subregions have declined, except for the Hemet/San Jacinto subregion which has had the highest increase from 14.95% to 15.98% from 2019 to 2023.



Table 5. Selected Housing Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Riverside Compared to Other Counties	Riverside County	Imperial County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS						
Occupied housing units	88.6%	84.9%	93.5%	94.4%	90.4%	93.5%
Vacant housing units	11.4%	15.1%	6.5%	5.6%	9.6%	6.5%
HOUSING TENURE (OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS)						
Owner-occupied	68.9%	56.8%	46.1%	56.4%	61.5%	54.5%
Renter-occupied	31.1%	43.2%	53.9%	43.6%	38.5%	45.5%

Comparison of Riverside County Subregions	Northwest	Southwest	Pass Area	Hemet/San Jacinto	Coachella Valley and Blythe Area	Riverside County
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS						
Occupied housing units	95.8%	94.3%	94.6%	93.0%	73.1%	88.6%
Vacant housing units	4.2%	5.7%	5.4%	7.0%	26.9%	11.4%
HOUSING TENURE (OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS)						
Owner-occupied	65.4%	74.3%	78.8%	69.0%	67.4%	68.9%
Renter-occupied	34.6%	25.7%	21.2%	31.0%	32.6%	31.1%

Table 6. Selected Housing Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Coachella Valley Cities	Cathedral City	Coachella	Desert Hot Springs	Indian Wells	Indio
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS					
Occupied housing units	82.9%	98.5%	89.4%	48.9%	84.3%
Vacant housing units	17.1%	1.5%	10.6%	51.1%	15.7%
HOUSING TENURE (OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS)					
Owner-occupied	65.3%	65.9%	49.9%	77.3%	68.3%
Renter-occupied	34.7%	34.1%	50.1%	22.7%	31.7%

Coachella Valley Cities	La Quinta	Palm Desert	Palm Springs	Rancho Mirage
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS				
Occupied housing units	63.8%	66.0%	65.7%	58.2%
Vacant housing units	36.2%	34.0%	34.3%	41.8%
HOUSING TENURE (OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS)				
Owner-occupied	74.8%	64.4%	65.0%	82.1%
Renter-occupied	25.2%	35.6%	35.0%	17.9%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Figure 9. Monthly Ownership Costs of 50% or More, as % of Household Income

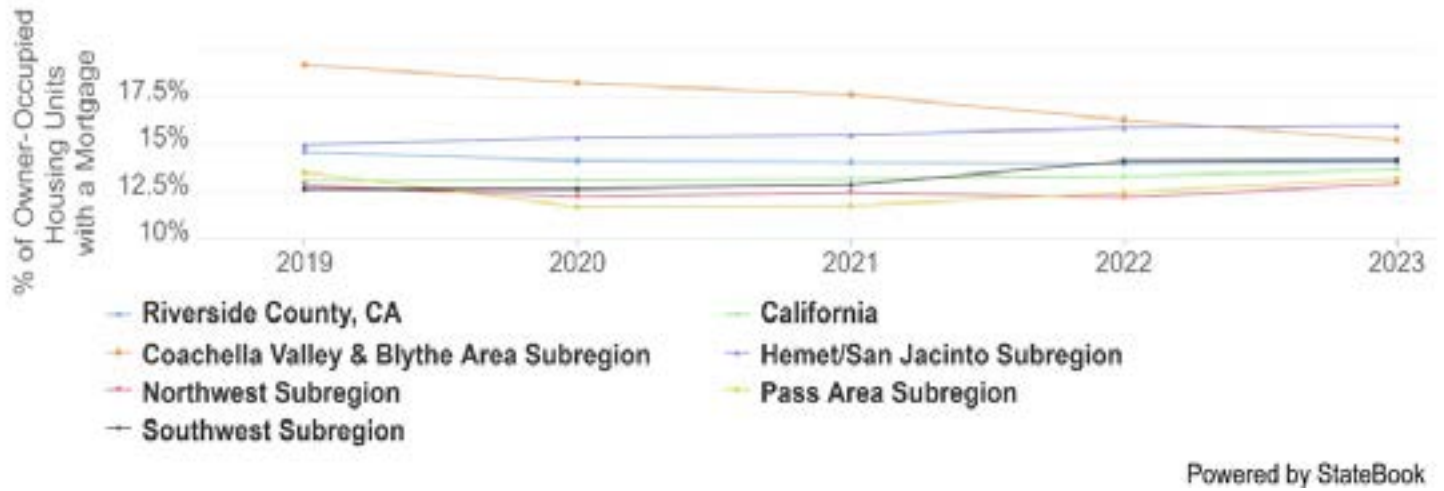
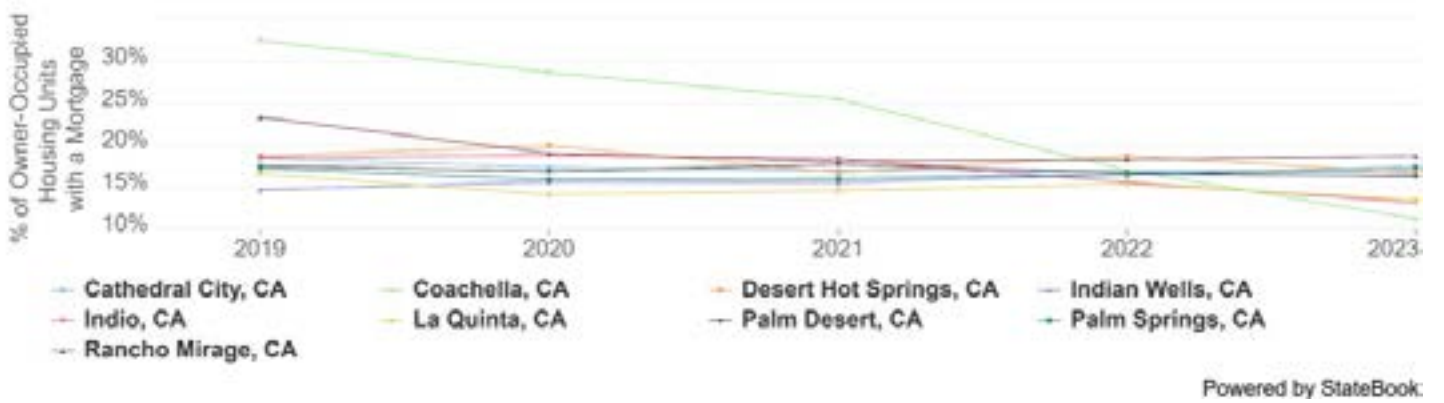


Figure 10. Monthly Ownership Costs of 50% or More, as % of Household Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; StateBook Inc., TNDG.



Tables 7-8 on the following pages provide education-related data from the ACS. Some of the data highlights include the following:

- Riverside County (25.1%) has a lower share of the population achieving a Bachelor's degree or higher in comparison to most of surrounding benchmark counties, with the exceptions of Imperial County (16.1%) and San Bernardino County (22.9%).
- In terms of the five Riverside County subregions, the Southwest subregion (29.6%) has the highest share of the population attaining a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Figure 11 on the following page illustrates that, among residents with a Bachelor's degree or higher, the highest percentage have received a Bachelor's degree in Science and Engineering fields as their first major in Riverside County. However, in comparison to the other counties, Riverside County has the lowest share of the population (34.4%) with Bachelor's degrees in Science and Engineering-related fields.





Table 7. Selected Education Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Riverside Compared to Other Counties	Riverside County	Imperial County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER)						
Less than high school graduate	16.7%	28.2%	19.3%	13.1%	17.9%	11.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	26.3%	25.9%	20.3%	17.2%	27.8%	17.9%
Some college or associate's degree	31.9%	29.9%	24.9%	26.3%	31.4%	29.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	25.1%	16.1%	35.5%	43.4%	22.9%	42.1%

Comparison of Riverside County Subregions	Northwest	Southwest	Pass Area	Hemet/San Jacinto	Coachella Valley and Blythe Area	Riverside County
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER)						
Less than high school graduate	18.4%	10.0%	13.8%	20.4%	19.3%	16.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	27.9%	23.0%	26.5%	31.1%	24.4%	26.3%
Some college or associate's degree	29.8%	37.4%	36.4%	33.8%	28.6%	31.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	23.9%	29.6%	23.3%	14.7%	27.7%	25.1%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Table 8. Selected Education Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Coachella Valley Cities	Cathedral City	Coachella	Desert Hot Springs	Indian Wells	Indio
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER)					
Less than high school graduate	19.1%	43.1%	19.0%	2.6%	24.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	27.7%	36.3%	34.2%	13.5%	27.6%
Some college or associate's degree	27.4%	15.1%	31.0%	24.6%	26.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	25.8%	5.6%	15.9%	59.3%	21.1%

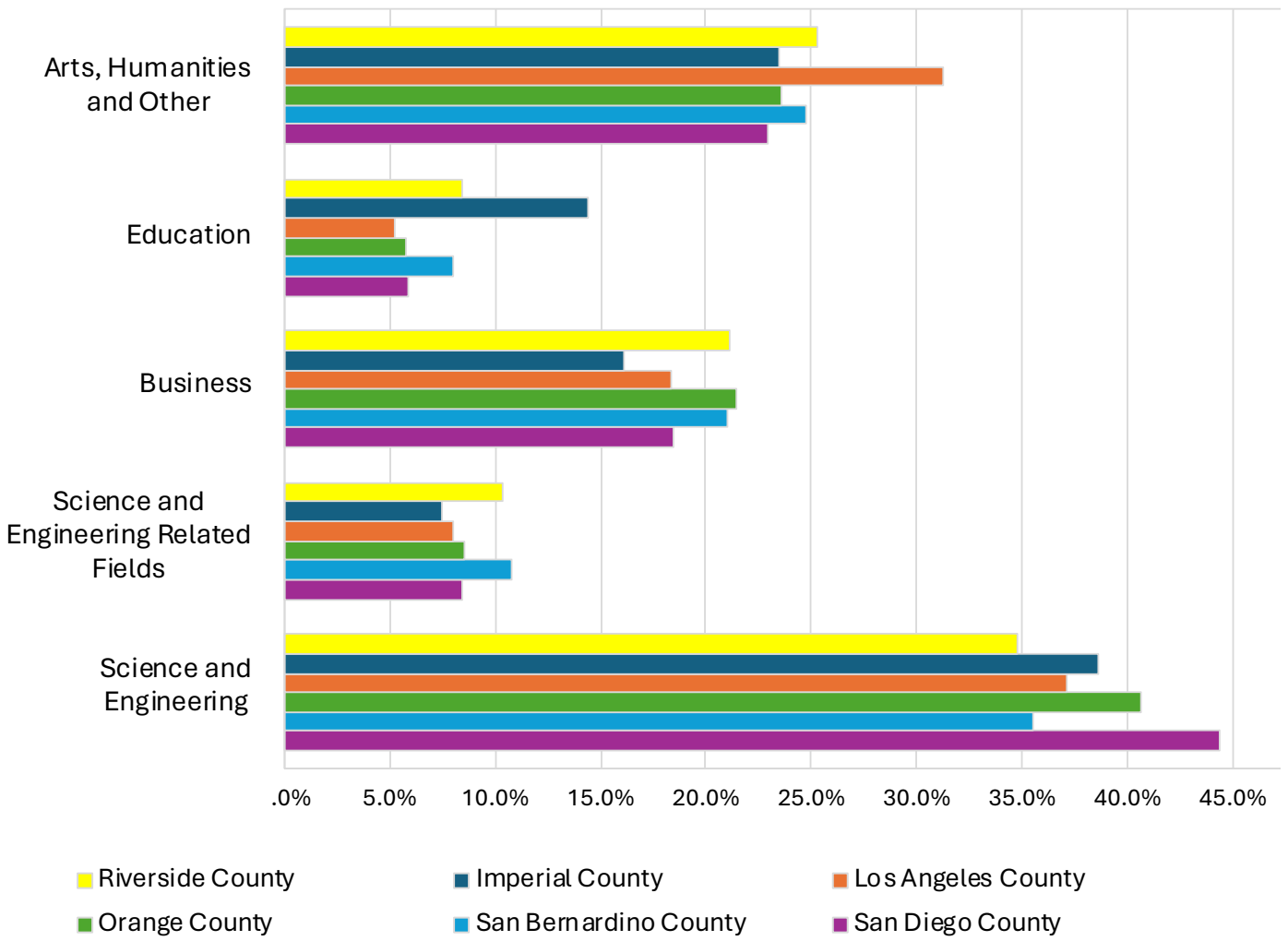
Coachella Valley Cities	La Quinta	Palm Desert	Palm Springs	Rancho Mirage
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER)				
Less than high school graduate	8.2%	7.3%	6.9%	5.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	21.4%	17.6%	16.7%	17.6%
Some college or associate's degree	31.5%	35.3%	31.3%	30.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	38.9%	39.9%	45.1%	46.5%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.



Figure 11. Bachelor's Degree of 1st Major For Riverside Compared To Other Counties



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Tables 9-10 on the following pages provide selected age characteristics from the ACS. Riverside County’s distribution of population among the age groups shown is similar to the average for the other counties. Though Riverside has a slightly higher share of older adults (ages 65 and older) than four of the other counties, the County’s median age is lower than three of the other counties listed. Within the subregions, Coachella/Blythe has the highest median age and highest percentage of population in the 65 years and over category. The Northwest subregion has the lowest median age and lowest percentage of elderly.

Table 9. Selected Age Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Riverside Compared to Other Counties	Riverside County	Imperial County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County
SELECTED AGE CATEGORIES (POPULATION)						
Under 25 years	33.8%	38.3%	29.8%	30.3%	35.7%	30.9%
25 to 64 years	51.1%	48.2%	55.5%	53.9%	52.0%	54.1%
65 years and over	15.1%	13.5%	14.7%	15.8%	12.3%	15.0%
Median Age	36.7	33.0	37.9	39.1	34.4	37.1

Comparison of Riverside County Subregions	Northwest	Southwest	Pass Area	Hemet/San Jacinto	Coachella Valley and Blythe Area	Riverside County
SELECTED AGE CATEGORIES (POPULATION)						
Under 25 years	36.1%	34.7%	32.6%	34.4%	27.1%	33.8%
25 to 64 years	52.7%	51.5%	46.6%	49.3%	48.7%	51.1%
65 years and over	11.2%	13.7%	20.8%	16.3%	24.2%	15.1%
Median Age	35.1	37.1	40.5	37.1	44.2	36.7

Notes:

1. Values provided as shares unless where noted.
2. Source of data is Census ACS 2019-2023, 5-Year Estimates unless otherwise specified.
3. Median Age for Riverside County Subregions provided by StateBook Inc.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; StateBook Inc., TNDG.

Table 10. Selected Age Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Coachella Valley Cities	Cathedral City	Coachella	Desert Hot Springs	Indian Wells	Indio
SELECTED AGE CATEGORIES (POPULATION)					
Under 25 years	28.2%	36.8%	37.9%	8.9%	33.2%
25 to 64 years	52.8%	54.1%	49.9%	35.1%	47.8%
65 years and over	19.1%	9.0%	12.1%	56.0%	19.1%
Median Age	40.9	33.4	34.4	67.5	38.2

Coachella Valley Cities	La Quinta	Palm Desert	Palm Springs	Rancho Mirage
SELECTED AGE CATEGORIES (POPULATION)				
Under 25 years	23.4%	19.5%	13.9%	12.6%
25 to 64 years	45.4%	43.3%	52.4%	37.5%
65 years and over	31.0%	37.3%	33.7%	50.0%
Median Age	52.1	56.7	57.8	65

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.



Job Data and In-Area Labor Force Efficiency

The following data were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap (OTM) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics dataset for 2022 (the latest year available) and the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates from the past five years available (2019-23). Data are mostly provided for the Riverside County subregions, and for Riverside County, Imperial County, Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Bernardino County, and San Diego County. Topics address current conditions corresponding to job-related data for each area geography, in-area labor force efficiency, job commuting destinations for workers living within each of the Riverside County subregions.

Table 11 on the following page provides job profile characteristics for workers for each area analyzed, and in-area labor force efficiency data from OTM. Some of the data highlights from Table 11 include the following:

- In comparison to other benchmark counties, Riverside County has a relatively lower share of residents that live and work in the county (46.5%), and a higher share of residents that commute out of the county (53.5%) for employment.
- In comparison of the Riverside County subregions, Coachella Valley and Blythe Area subregion has the highest share of residents that live and work in the county (59.7%), while the Pass Area subregion has the lowest share of residents that live and work in the county (16.6%).

Figures 12-13 on the following pages provide the mean commute time data for resident workers in Riverside County Subregions, and Riverside County at large in comparison to the state of California and the nation based on ACS 5-year Estimates for the past five years. Some of the data highlights from Figure 12 include the following:

- Although the mean commute time has slightly decreased from 2019 to 2023, in comparison to the state (28.98 minutes) and national (26.57 minutes) benchmarks, Riverside County has a slightly higher mean commute time for resident workers (33.81 minutes).
- In comparison of the subregions, the mean commute times for all subregions have decreased slightly from 2019 to 2023. The Coachella Valley and Blythe Area subregion has the lowest mean commute time of 22.50 minutes, which is also lower than Riverside County at large, California, and the national benchmarks. By contrast, the Southwest subregion has the highest mean commute time of 38.30 minutes of all geographies analyzed.

Table 11. In-Area Labor Force Efficiency Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

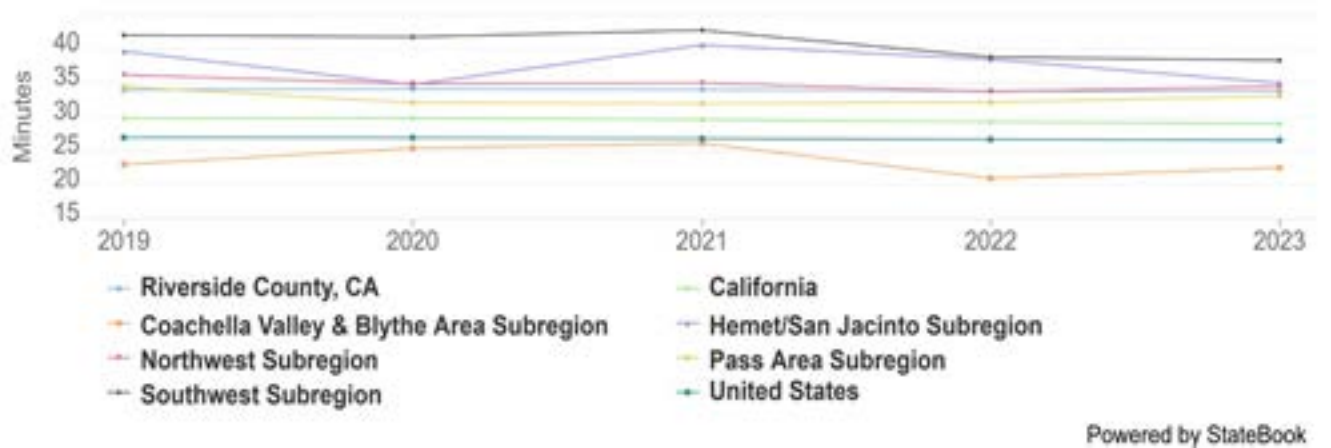
Riverside Compared to Other Counties	Riverside County	Imperial County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County
SELECTION AREA LABOR MARKET SIZE (COUNT)						
Employed in the Selection Area	722,287	56,430	4,171,886	1,538,388	767,892	1,368,022
Living in the Selection Area	939,610	67,909	3,966,190	1,340,077	854,132	1,376,682
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-217,323	-11,479	205,696	198,311	-86,240	-8,660
IN-AREA LABOR FORCE EFFICIENCY						
Living in the Selection Area (Count)	939,610	67,909	3,966,190	1,340,077	854,132	1,376,682
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	46.5%	65.3%	79.1%	63.9%	47.0%	78.8%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	53.5%	34.7%	20.9%	36.1%	53.0%	21.2%

Comparison of Riverside County Subregions	Northwest	Southwest	Pass Area	Hemet/San Jacinto	Coachella Valley and Blythe Area	Riverside County
SELECTION AREA LABOR MARKET SIZE (COUNT)						
Employed in the Selection Area	395,947	130,240	20,824	32,368	142,908	722,287
Living in the Selection Area	450,644	205,736	41,370	78,491	163,369	939,610
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-54,697	-75,496	-20,546	-46,123	-20,461	-217,323
IN-AREA LABOR FORCE EFFICIENCY						
Living in the Selection Area (Count)	450,644	205,736	41,370	78,491	163,369	939,610
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	33.7%	30.9%	16.6%	19.0%	59.7%	46.5%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	66.3%	69.1%	83.4%	81.0%	40.3%	53.5%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

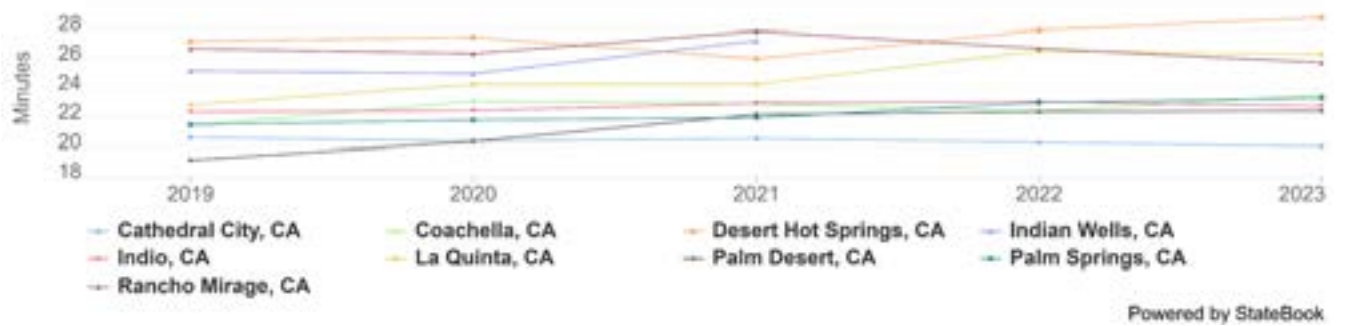
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap LEHD Origin-Destination Employment 2022; TNDG.

Figure 12. Mean Commute Time To Work



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; StateBook Inc., TNDG.

Figure 13. Mean Commute Time To Work



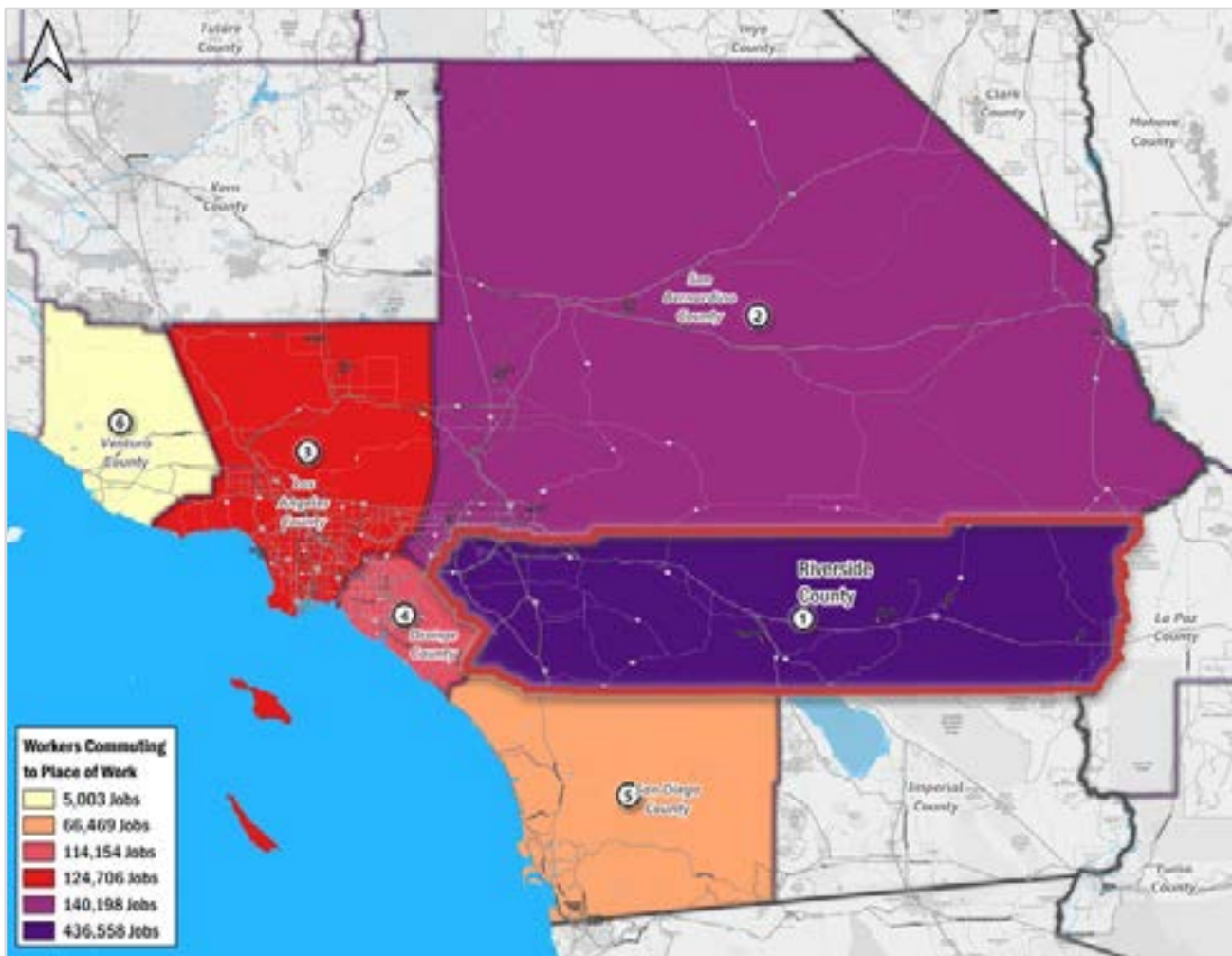
Note: The underlying data does not include values for the years 2022 or 2023 for Indian Wells, CA.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; StateBook Inc., TNDG.



Figure 14 below provides place-of-work commuting destinations by county for Riverside County resident workers. Each county is ranked by the number of employed county resident workers commuting to their place-of-work. Not surprisingly, the top six place-of-work destinations are the southern California counties (listed in rank order) of Riverside, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego and Ventura. Although immediately adjacent to Riverside County, Imperial County is not a prominent place of work for Riverside County residents. Imperial ranks 11th on Riverside’s list of commute destinations. Interestingly, Imperial is outranked by the more distant counties of Santa Clara, Alameda, Kern and Sacramento. It is likely that Riverside County residents employed in these distant counties are to a large extent working remotely (from home).

Figure 14. Riverside County Resident Worker Job Destinations By County



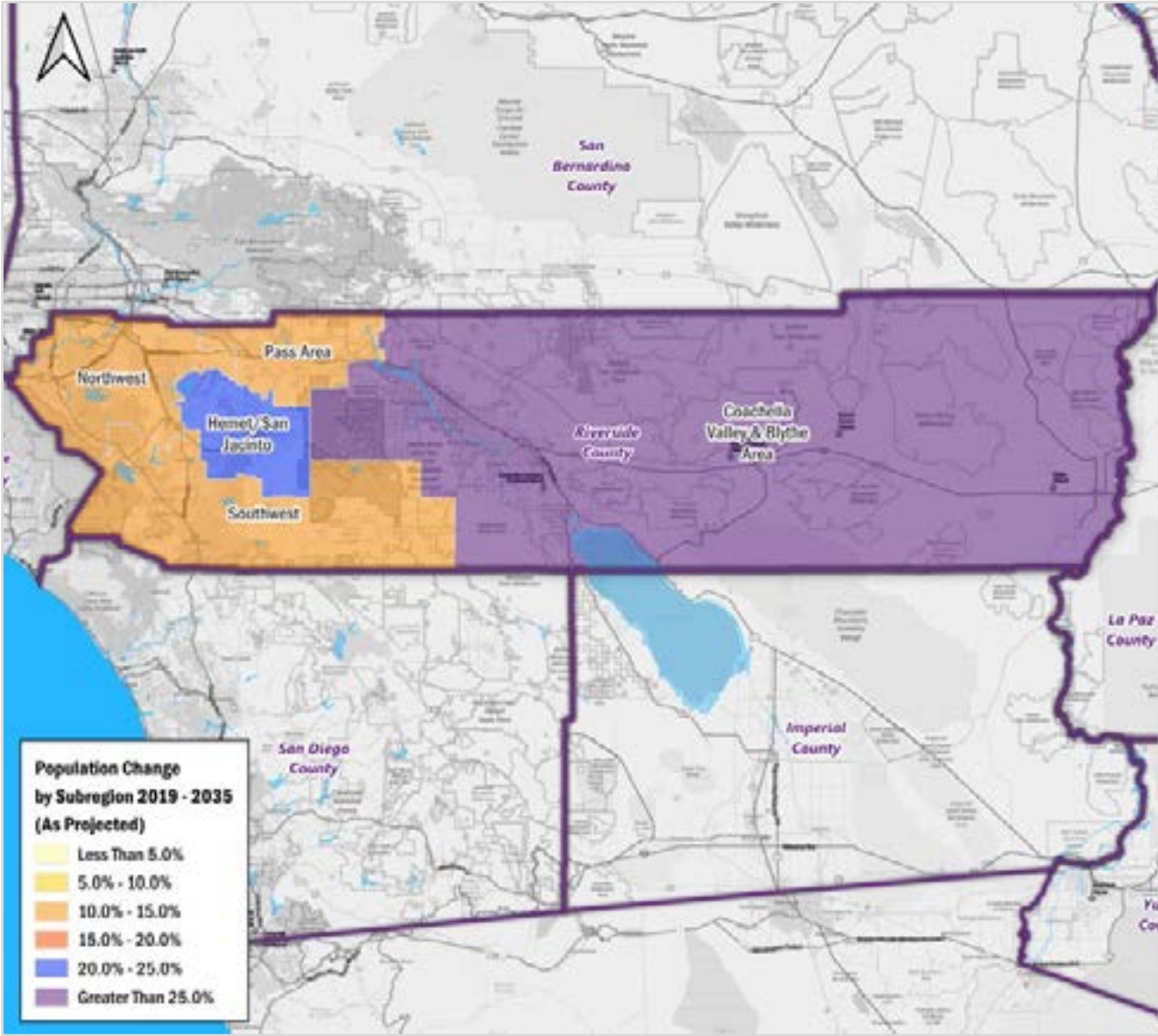
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap LEHD Origin-Destination Employment 2022; TNDG.

Population and Employment Forecasts

Figures 15-20 show demographic and employment forecasts for the Riverside County subregions, and for Riverside, Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino counties. The maps represent the percentage growth for population and employment for these geographies for the 15-year period between 2020 and 2035.

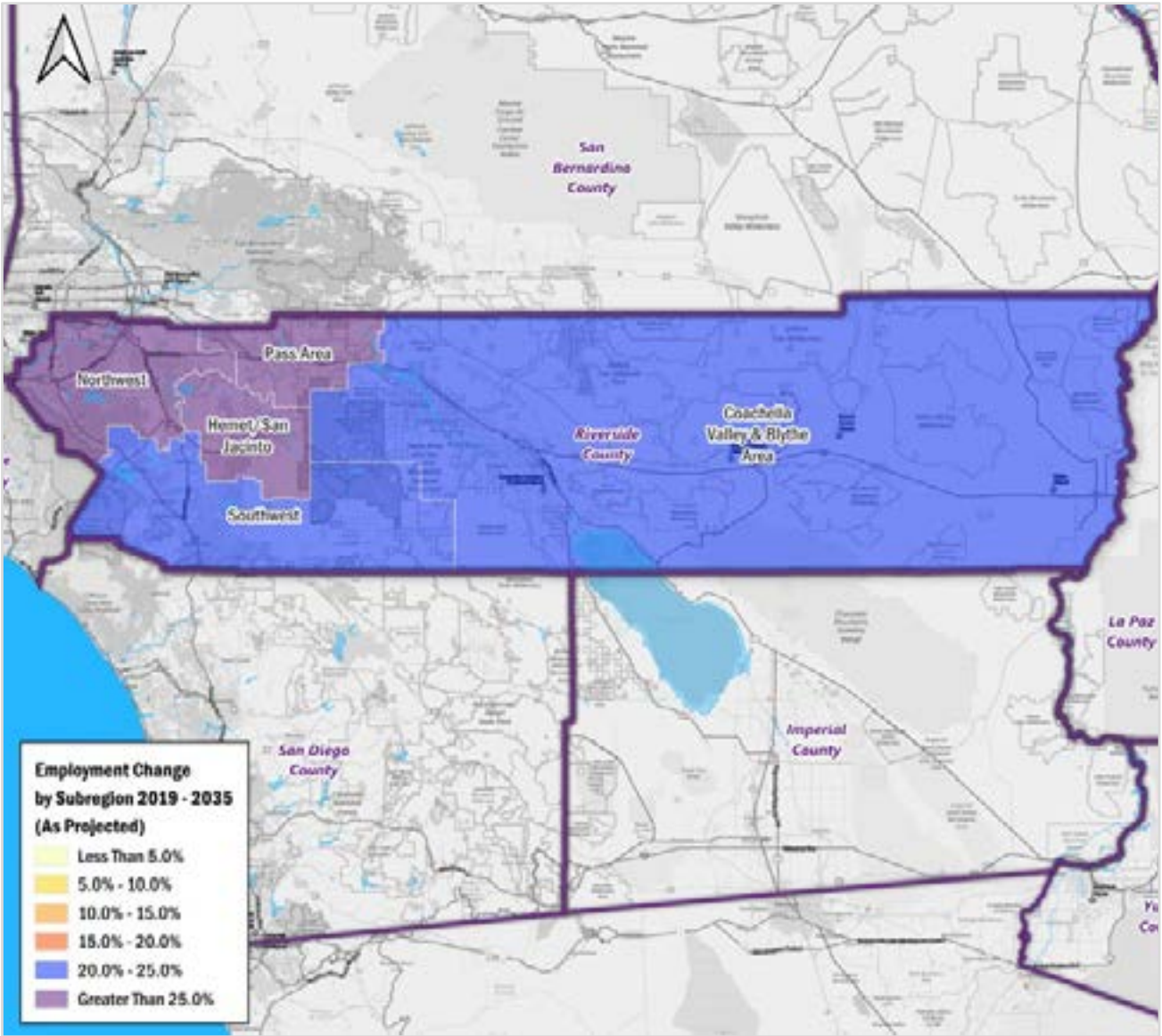
The projections in Figures 15-20 come from the Southern California Association of Governments' most recent Demographic and Employment Forecast (adopted in 2024).

Figure 15. Relative Percent Change In Population Growth: Riverside County Subregions (2019-2035)



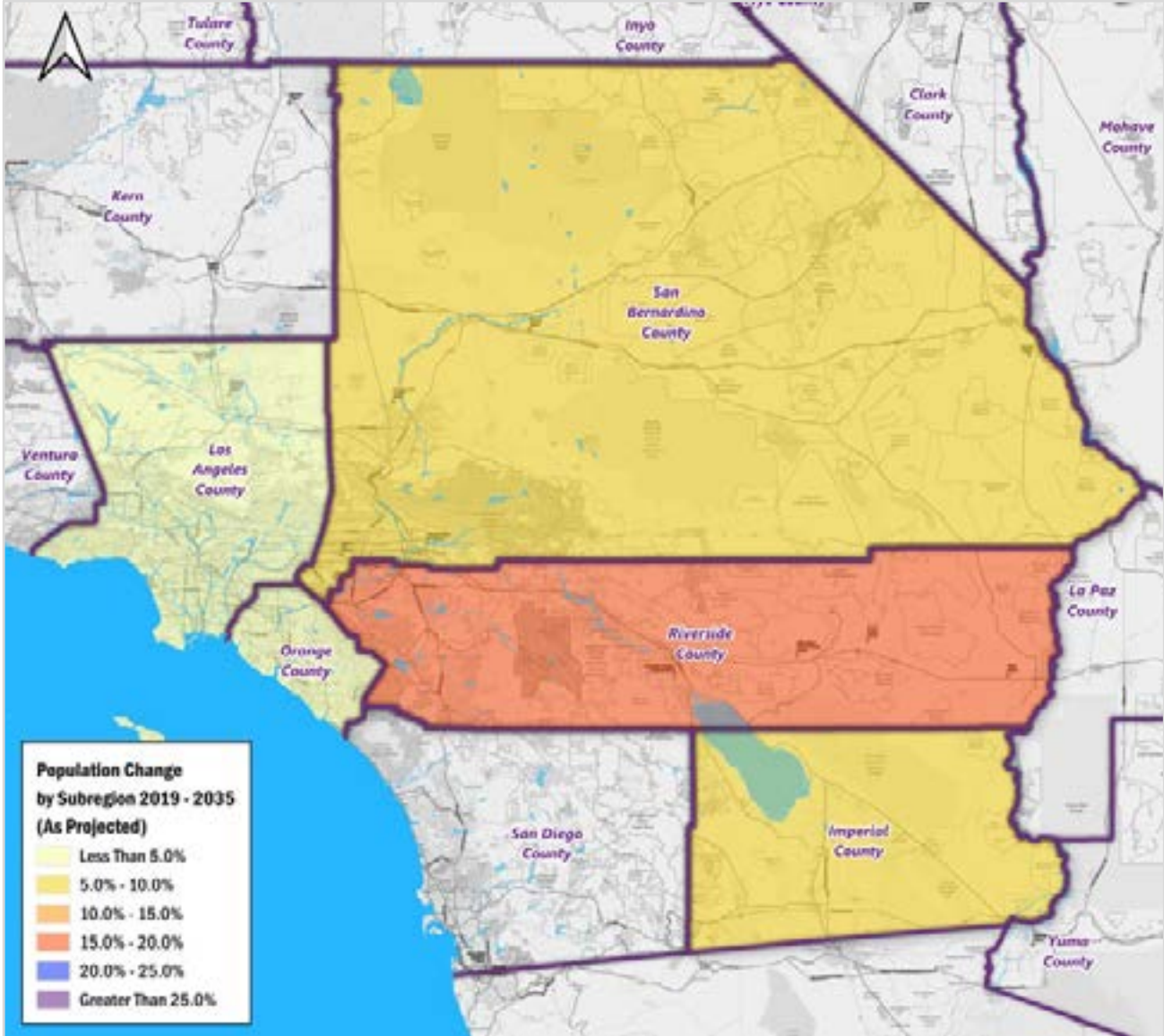
Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

Figure 16. Relative Percent Change In Employment Growth: Riverside County Subregions (2019-2035)



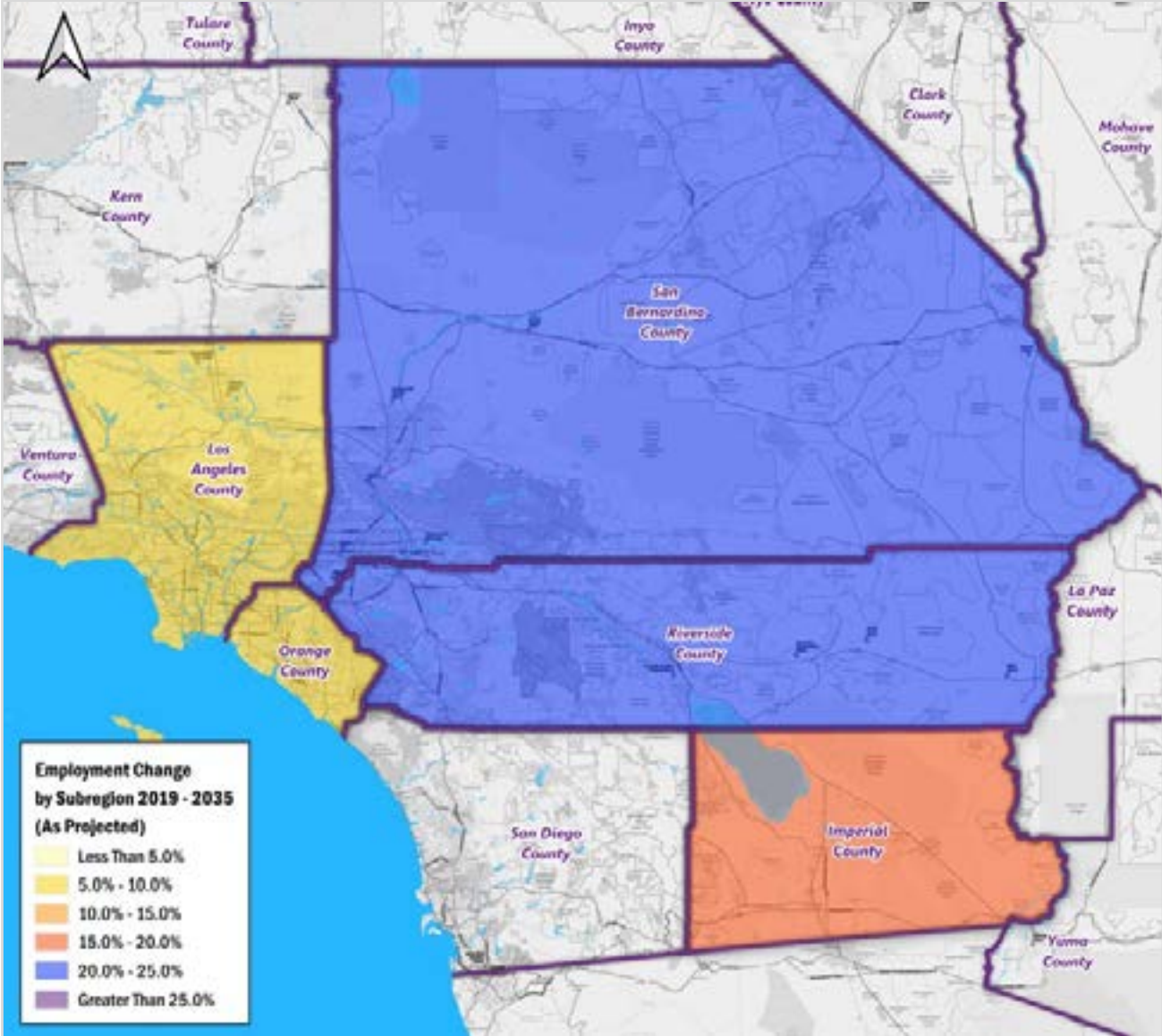
Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

**Figure 17. Relative Percent Change In Population Growth:
Riverside, Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, And San Bernardino Counties (2019-2035)**



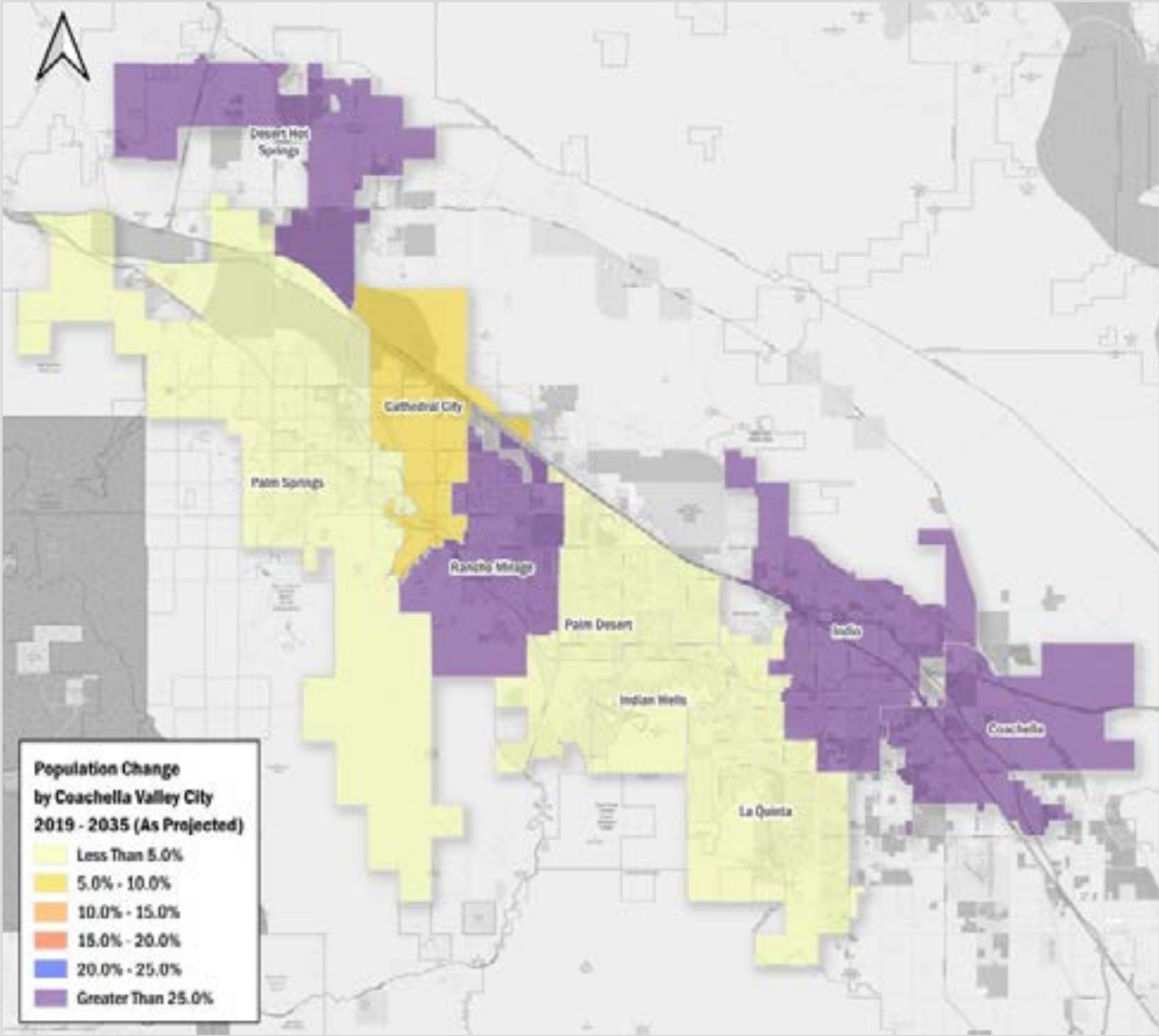
Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

**Figure 18. Relative Percent Change In Employment Growth:
Riverside, Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, And San Bernardino Counties (2019-2035)**



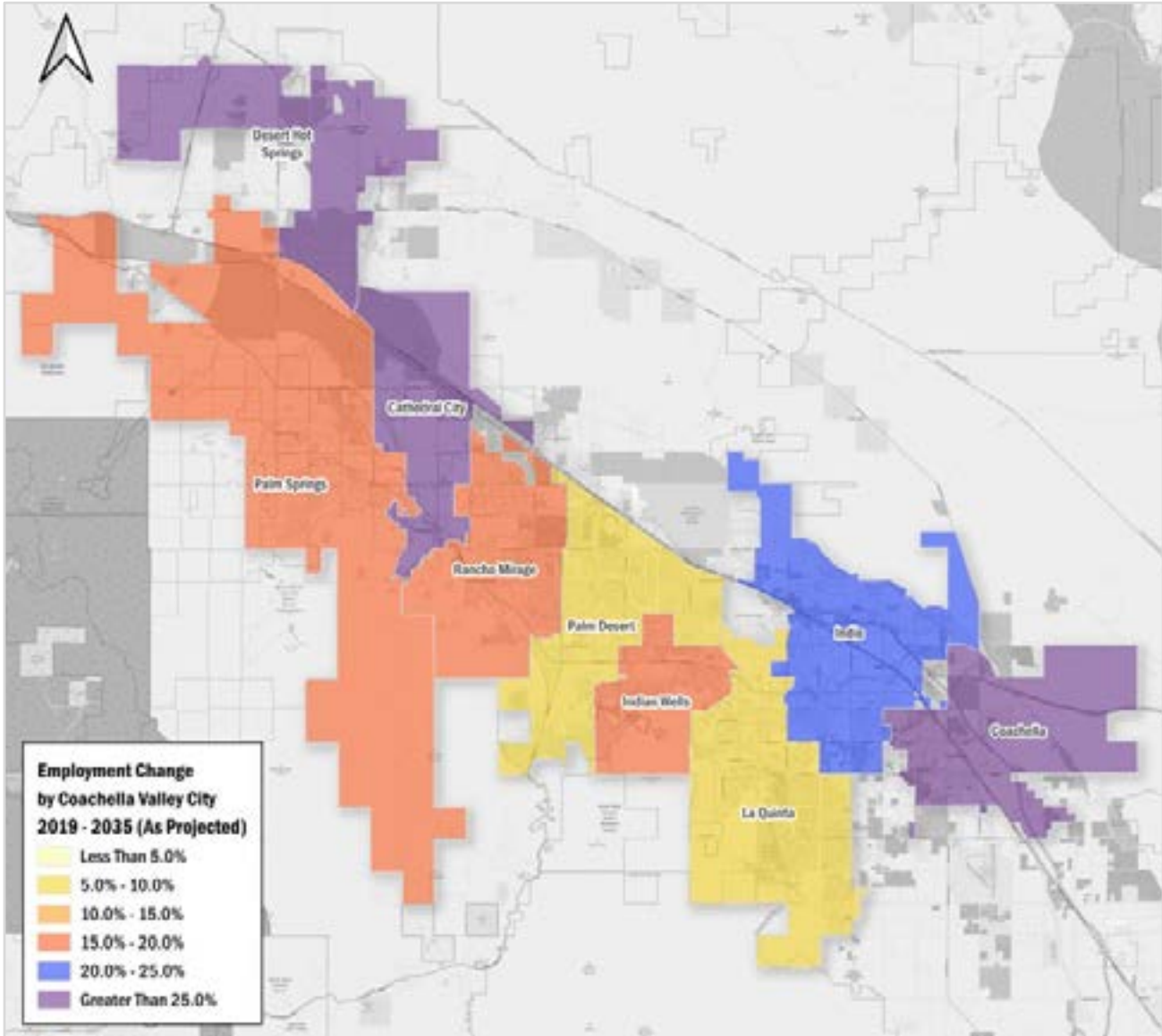
Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

Figure 19. Relative Percent Change In Population Growth: Coachella Valley Cities (2019-2035)



Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

Figure 20. Relative Percent Change In Employment Growth: Coachella Valley Cities (2019-2035)



Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

Chapter Four: Coachella Valley Competitive Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)



Strengths

- **Job Creation Focus:** Strong emphasis on job creation as a primary goal.
- **Infrastructure:** Recognition of the importance of infrastructure to support economic goals.
- **Quality of Life:** High quality of life and amenities attract residents and visitors.
- **Healthcare Facilities:** Excellent healthcare facilities attract retirees and create economic opportunities.
- **Affordable Real Estate:** Relatively affordable housing and commercial/industrial real estate.
- **Geographic Proximity:** The region is close to major markets, and it has available land for growth.
- **Cultural Assets:** Rich cultural scene with A-list concerts and events.
- **Intellectual Capital:** Wealth and intellectual capacity among affluent retirees and seasonal residents.
- **Tourism:** Strong tourism opportunities with casinos, entertainment venues, and festivals.

Weaknesses

- **Utility Infrastructure:** Inadequate water and power infrastructure to support growth.
- **Development Costs:** High costs for infrastructure passed on to developers.
- **Climate:** Intense heat and potential extension of the hot season due to climate change.
- **Seasonal Economy:** Seasonality of the economy poses challenges for industry diversification.
- **Human Capital Flight:** Young people leaving the region for better career opportunities.
- **Regulatory Environment:** State taxes and regulations are a disadvantage for business retention and attraction.
- **Traffic and Transportation:** Potential traffic gridlock and need for more public transportation options.



Opportunities

- **Remote Work:** Increase in remote workers since the pandemic.
- **Film and Sound Production:** Opportunity to attract film/sound production facilities.
- **Logistics and Warehousing:** Continuing development opportunities in logistics and warehousing. Youth Sports Venues: Opportunity to attract youth sports venues and organized tournaments.
- **Higher Education:** Expansion of higher education infrastructure and trade schools.
- **Technology Jobs:** Targeting remote technology jobs and technology-oriented industries.
- **Aerospace and Drone Companies:** Attracting aerospace, space, and drone companies.
- **Artificial Intelligence:** Cultivating industry in AI utilizing the growing base of residents with significant experience in tech.
- **Healthcare Support Services:** Training ground for medical transcription and file management jobs.
- **Mining Opportunities:** Potential lithium mining related opportunities.
- **Recreation and Tourism:** Salton Sea restoration and Chuckwalla National Monument for recreation-oriented industries.
- **Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ):** Activation and expansion of the existing FTZ to attract investment and create jobs.

Threats

- **Development Entitlements:** Long timeframes for development entitlements.
- **Utility Service Providers:** Inability of utility service providers to support growth.
- **Climate Change:** Potential negative impacts of climate change on tourism and economic development.
- **Destination Competition:** Losing market share to other visitor destinations.
- **Immigration Restrictions:** Potential negative impact on agriculture and other industries dependent on immigrant labor.
- **Zoning Policies:** Outdated zoning policies and lack of flexibility.
- **Healthcare Professional Shortage:** Increasing waiting times for healthcare services.
- **Insurance Costs:** Loss of insurance companies leading to higher home insurance costs.

Job Data and In-Area Labor Force Efficiency

This section of the EDSP recommends a set of target industries for the County's business retention, expansion, attraction and entrepreneurial development programs. The summary below is based on a target industry analysis completed as part of the background phase the EDSP process and reflects input from key private and public stakeholders.

The consultant team initially identified potential target clusters for Riverside County (and subregions, including the Coachella Valley) based on the following processes and sources:

- In-depth analysis based on the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project, which also facilitates comparisons to national benchmarks
- Clusters targeted by the Thrive Inland SoCal initiative
- Riverside County's existing "Innovation Clusters"
- Clusters connected to UCR's Research and Economic Development function, focusing on innovation and entrepreneurial development initiatives

The U.S. Cluster Mapping Project is an economic development initiative led by Harvard Business School's Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness. Nationally, the Cluster Mapping Project recognizes a total of 67 clusters, with 16 classified as "local" clusters and 51 classified as "traded" clusters:

- Local clusters typically form the core of a region's economy; they primarily provide goods and services for the local (resident) population.
- Traded clusters are "export-oriented" in the sense that they include industries that are engaged in producing goods and services for end customers outside the region (i.e., they serve national and global markets).

TNDG's recommended target clusters are generally in the traded cluster category due to this group's higher potential to drive innovation, wage growth, and overall economic impact at a regional (countywide) scale.

- Table 12 is a summary of the seven recommended clusters addressed in additional detail in this section. Among these seven, within the Advanced Manufacturing cluster the EDSP recommends nine specific manufacturing industry categories, which are shown on Table 13. The recommendations listed on the tables include references to relationships with other County and regional initiatives mentioned above, specifically Riverside County Thrive, including the Thrive Regional Plan and the State Economic Blueprint documents, the Innovation clusters, and the UCR Research and Economic Development Clusters. Coachella Valley targets are highlighted.



Table 12. Summary Target Industry/Cluster Table

Target Industry/Cluster	Associated with other County/regional initiatives of:	Strategic focus and implications	Particularly relevant to subregions:
Advanced Manufacturing, with focus on 9 manufacturing sectors (as detailed on Table 13 below)	Thrive cluster of advanced manufacturing, and numerous Innovation clusters	Involves using new technology and methods to improve efficiency, quality, and flexibility in production	All
Clean Tech and Climate Tech	Innovation cluster: Climate Tech; Thrive cluster: Clean Economy	Innovations in energy use, from transportation to the built environment	NW
Agricultural Tech Applications	Innovation clusters: Agricultural Tech, Natural Resource Management	Crop resiliency, innovations in ag inputs and their use, incl. sensors, aerial imaging, etc.	SW, C/B
Hospitality and Tourism (with Performing Arts)	Tourism and Outdoor Recreation is a strategic sector in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint	Untapped potential; quality-of-life enhancement	SW, C/B
Video Production and Distribution (with Music and Sound Recording)	Creative Economy is one of the “Strengthen” sectors in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint	Competitive opportunity with respect to LA; high LQs	C/B
Transportation and Logistics (with Distribution and Electronic Commerce)	Transport and Logistics is one of the “Strengthen” sectors in the Thrive Economic Blueprint		C/B, Pass
Cybersecurity	Relates generally to security needs across multiple sectors featured in various initiatives, including agriculture, transportation, and energy	Emerging industry of critical importance	NW

Table 13. Recommended Industry Targets

Target Cluster/Industry	Strategic focus and implications	Strength in County per analysis; cluster tie	Associated with other County/ regional initiatives of:	Relates to other cluster/ industry:	Particularly relevant to subregions:	Notes
Advanced Manufacturing, with focus on:	Generally, involves using new technology and methods to improve efficiency, quality, and flexibility in production					
Aerospace	Ties to strong sector in adjacent regions			Mobility-related; high tech	NW	Emerging industry: most employment is in suppliers. City of Riverside, Aerospace and Defense Expo
Metal products	Existing strong cluster, also supports many industries	Downstream metal products	Thrive cluster: Advanced Manufacturing	Automotive, energy production/ use, Agtech	H/JC, Pass, SW, NW	Thrive Regional Plan has list of 17 specific NAICS sectors 331-333 – metals and metal products manuf.
Medical devices	Modest employment levels but high wages and strong LQ	Medical devices	Biotech and Healthcare Innovation cluster – biomedical research at UCR	Other high tech	SW	
Plastics	Established sector with strong LQ, high employment, innovation potential	Plastics		Supplier to other sectors	SW, NW	Key areas of innovation: alternatives to traditional plastics and improving recycling processes
Wood products, construction products	Established sector with strong LQ, innovation potential	Wood products	Innovation clusters: Natural Resource Management, Climate Tech	Agricultural tech	H/JC	Innovations include refinement of engineered/mass timber products and buildings, and timber as a carbon sink
Automotive and other mobility-related, including electrical	Dynamic sector, broad applications	Recreational and small electric goods	UCR Research and Economic Development	Electric vehicles, transportation and logistics	H/JC, Pass, SW, NW	
Energy production, and energy use products	Dynamic sector, broad applications	Electric power generation and transmission	Innovation clusters: Climate Tech, Sustainable Transportation	Construction products	C/B	Major battery energy storage facility going into Menifee
Agricultural tech products	Supports agriculture, water issues	Agricultural inputs and services	Innovation cluster: Agricultural Tech; UCR: Agriculture and Agtech	Agricultural Tech applications	SW, C/B	

Target Cluster/Industry	Strategic focus and implications	Strength in County per analysis; cluster tie	Associated with other County/ regional initiatives of:	Relates to other cluster/ industry:	Particularly relevant to subregions:	Notes
Semiconductors	Existing strong base of employment in County	Information technology and analytical instruments	Thrive cluster: Information Technology as a pathway to quality jobs	Other high tech	SW, Pass	
Clean Tech and Climate Tech	Innovations in energy use, from transportation to the built environment	Electric power generation and transportation	Innovation cluster: Climate Tech; Thrive Cluster: Clean Economy	Energy production and use	NW	Ties to UCR research facilities and capabilities
Agricultural Tech Applications	Crop resiliency, innovations in ag inputs and their use, incl. sensors, aerial imaging, etc.	Agricultural inputs and services	Innovation clusters: Agricultural Tech, Natural Resource Management	Agtech products	SW, C/B	Ties to UCR research facilities and capabilities; Working Lands and Water is a “Strengthen” sector in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint
Hospitality and Tourism (with Performing Arts)	Untapped potential; quality-of-life enhancement	Hospitality and tourism; performing arts	Tourism and Outdoor Recreation is a strategic sector in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint	Clean tech (transportation); climate tech (appeal of environment)	SW, C/B	Ties to trends of agritourism and cultural tourism (e.g., see Anza Travel Guide)
Video Production and Distribution (with Music and Sound Recording)	Competitive opportunity with respect to LA; high LQs	Video production and distribution; Music	Creative Economy is one of the “Strengthen” sectors in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint	Hospitality/ tourism	C/B	
Transportation and Logistics (with Distribution and Electronic Commerce)	Established clusters with evolving technology; High LQ (Distribution)	Transportation and Logistics; Distribution and Electronic Commerce	Transport and Logistics is one of the “Strengthen” sectors in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint	Industries have considerable interface with agriculture and with transportation-related initiatives	C/B, Pass	
Cybersecurity	Emerging industry of critical importance	Business services	Innovation cluster: Sustainable Transportation	Relates to security needs in agriculture, transp., and energy particularly	NW	Considered by some to be under-represented in the County

Note: Additional detail for these sectors is included in Appendix B.

Regions legend:

Hemet/San Jacinto - H/JC; Pass Area - Pass; Southwest - SW; Coachella/Blythe - C/B; Northwest - NW

^aSectors that have an established competitive position and/or high levels of employment, but growth or wages are “leveling.”

Table 14 shows sectors that were considered for cluster targeting, by virtue of meeting certain initial screening criteria, but are not included among recommended targets based on the observations as noted.

Table 14. Sectors Considered But Not Included In Recommendations

Potential Cluster/Industry	Rationale for not Including as Target
Nonmetal Mining	Nonmetal and Metal Mining are mostly related to construction in Riverside County, and would appear to have limited innovation potential.
Metal Mining	
Apparel	This sector has a high LQ for the County, but also modest employment levels and low wages.
Downstream chemical products	Industries within this cluster appear to be those that primarily support other industrial activities, supplying basic product inputs.
Education and knowledge creation	Activities within this cluster are primarily represented in the target clusters of Clean Tech and Climate Tech, and Agricultural Tech.
Furniture	There is some crossover within this cluster with construction products manufacturing.
Leather and related products	Sector has high LQ but is likely to have a low level of association with innovation.

Coachella Valley Economic Brand Analysis

Coachella Valley is redefining its economic identity—emerging as a strategic destination for innovation, investment, and industry leadership. While rooted in a rich cultural and agricultural legacy, the region is forward-looking to bring businesses in creative media, advanced manufacturing, Health and Wellness, biotechnology, and clean energy. With competitive advantages such as affordable land, access to major markets, a growing talent pipeline, and a commitment to sustainability, Coachella Valley offers a compelling value proposition for companies seeking growth, resilience, and impact in Southern California.

Anchoring this renewed identity is the new economic development brand and marketing strategy: Thrive and Shine. More than a tagline, Thrive and Shine encapsulates the Coachella Valley’s promise as a place where ambition meets opportunity, creativity fuels community, and both individuals and businesses can truly flourish. It signals a region where innovation and quality of life go hand-in-hand—an open invitation to join a community built to Thrive and Shine.

Sector Strengths

Creative Media

Coachella Valley is a rising hub for creative industries, fueled by its global brand recognition from music and arts festivals. With growing investments in digital infrastructure, film production, and immersive media, the region offers a cost-effective, inspiring environment for content creators, studios, and media tech startups. Incentives and partnerships with local colleges support a pipeline of creative talent.

Advanced Manufacturing

Strategically located near major logistics corridors and ports, Coachella Valley is ideal for advanced manufacturing in aerospace, electronics, and sustainable materials. The region offers affordable industrial land, workforce training programs, and access to Southern California's innovation ecosystem—making it a smart choice for scalable, high tech production.

Biotech

With proximity to major research institutions and a growing healthcare sector, Coachella Valley has potential as a biotech innovation zone. The region supports RandD in diagnostics, medical devices, and Agribiotech, with opportunities for public-private partnerships, clinical trials, and lab space development. Its clean environment and lower operational costs make it attractive for early-stage and scaling biotech firms.

Health and Wellness

Known for its healing climate and wellness tourism, Coachella Valley is expanding into integrative health, medical tourism, and longevity research. The region is home to top-tier hospitals, wellness resorts, and a growing ecosystem of health-tech startups. Businesses benefit from a health-conscious population, supportive infrastructure, and a reputation as a destination for holistic living.

Clean Energy

Coachella Valley is a national leader in renewable energy, with vast solar, wind, and geothermal resources. The region offers sites, grid access, and a skilled energy workforce. Clean tech companies find strong support for innovation, from energy storage and microgrids to green hydrogen and carbon capture—making it a launchpad for the next generation of climate solutions.

Coachella Valley Brand Differentiation Analysis

Advancing Regional Priorities Through Unique Strengths

As regions across the country compete to attract high-growth industries, Coachella Valley offers a distinct value proposition rooted in its natural assets, cultural identity, and forward-looking investments. Unlike traditional economic hubs, the Valley combines global brand recognition with emerging strengths in clean energy, creative media, advanced manufacturing, Health and Wellness, and biotechnology. This analysis outlines the unique differentiators that position Coachella Valley not just as a place to do business—but as a place to lead, innovate, and thrive.

Clean Energy Leadership with Lithium Valley

Home to the Salton Sea's geothermal fields and lithium reserves, Coachella Valley can position itself as a global epicenter for clean energy innovation, especially in battery storage and green hydrogen. Few regions can offer both renewable energy generation and critical mineral extraction in one place.

Global Creative Brand with Local Infrastructure

The Coachella name and Greater Palm Springs together enjoy worldwide recognition as icons of music, art, culture, and lifestyle. Pairing that with investments in media production facilities, digital infrastructure, and creative incubators creates a unique value proposition. Creative companies want authenticity, brand equity, and a place that inspires talent.

Health and Biotech in a Wellness Destination

The region's reputation for wellness tourism can be expanded into a health innovation corridor—combining biotech R&D, integrative medicine, and longevity research. It's rare to find a place where clinical research, lifestyle medicine, and wellness tourism intersect naturally.

Advanced Manufacturing with Room to Scale

Unlike dense urban centers, Coachella Valley offers affordable land, proximity to major logistics routes, and a growing workforce—ideal for clean, high tech manufacturing. Companies looking to reshore or expand need space, speed, and sustainability.

Climate Resilience as a Competitive Advantage

Coachella Valley can brand itself as a living lab for climate adaptation—with innovations in water management, energy, and sustainable design. Businesses are under pressure to meet ESG goals. Locating in a region that's actively building climate resilience is a strategic advantage.

Talent Pipeline with Local Roots

Partnerships with local colleges, workforce boards, and tribal communities can create custom training pipelines for target industries. Companies want to know if they can hire locally and invest in long-term talent development.

Key Messages

The Coachella Valley has completed an economic development branding process with North Star, resulting in the Thrive and Shine brand platform. This brand builds on the region's global reputation as a premier visitor destination and positions it as a place to live, work, and invest. It highlights Greater Palm Springs' ability to blend innovation and opportunity with lifestyle and community, offering ambitious minds and forward-looking businesses the environment they need to flourish.

The following key messages reflect Greater Palm Springs' positioning for target industries while also showcasing the region's quality of life, collaborative spirit, and inclusive identity.

- Creative Media: Create. Connect.
Captivate — in Coachella Valley.
- Advanced Manufacturing:
Precision Built. Future Ready.
- Biotech: Innovating Health
at the Edge of Discovery.
- Health and Wellness:
Wellness Starts Here.
- Clean Energy:
Powering Progress with Clean Energy.



Quality of Life and Talent Messages

- Lifestyle Advantage: Where year-round sunshine, outdoor adventure, and world-renowned cultural events combine with affordability, accessibility, and innovation to create unmatched opportunity.
- Talent and Workforce: A magnet for ambitious minds, Greater Palm Springs empowers people to reinvent themselves and their careers in a setting that inspires creativity, collaboration, and growth.
- Residents and Families: A thriving, connected community with excellent schools, diverse neighborhoods, and a high quality of life that blends small-town warmth with big-city potential.
- Diversity and Inclusion: Rooted in the traditions of nine cities and sovereign tribal nations, Greater Palm Springs thrives on diversity, welcoming new voices and perspectives to shape an innovative, inclusive future.
- Collaboration and Connectivity: Defined by collaboration across cities, tribal nations, and industries, the region transforms vision into action—building an economy where businesses, ideas, and people thrive together.

These key messages emphasize Greater Palm Springs as more than a destination—it is a launchpad for opportunity, innovation, and reinvention, set against the backdrop of a lifestyle that shines brighter than anywhere else.

Chapter Five: Strategic Direction/Action Plan

Vision for Coachella Valley’s Economic Future

Coachella Valley will evolve into a vibrant, diversified economic hub—transitioning from its tourism and agricultural roots into a sustainable leader in clean energy, healthcare, entertainment, and technology. Embracing its cultural identity, the region will offer high-quality jobs with living wages, accessible opportunities, and economic resilience, attract global talent and foster innovation. It will become Southern California’s new mecca destination for wellness, energy innovation, and creative industries.

Strategy Categories

Industry Diversification and Growth

To build a resilient, year-round economy with no “off-season,” the Coachella Valley will pursue targeted growth in five high-potential industries: agriculture technology, hospitality/tourism, creative media, advanced manufacturing, clean energy/tech, and biotechnology. These sectors align with the region’s natural assets, cultural strengths, and emerging opportunities, and will serve as the foundation for sustainable job creation, innovation, and long-term economic vitality

Clean Energy and Sustainability

The Coachella Valley is committed to becoming a leader in clean energy and environmental resilience by advancing a comprehensive sustainability agenda. This includes accelerating the cleanup and ecological restoration of the Salton Sea, significantly increasing the share of local energy needs met by renewable sources, and ensuring the region’s electricity infrastructure can support targeted industry and employment growth. Additionally, the Valley will explore strategic connections to Imperial County’s “Lithium Valley” initiative to align with emerging opportunities in battery technology, energy storage, and green manufacturing.

Workforce Development and Talent Attraction

To build a strong and sustainable talent pipeline, the Coachella Valley will expand partnerships with College of the Desert and leverage the presence of University of California, Riverside (UCR) and California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) campuses. These collaborations will support industry-aligned training, research, and career development programs. A key focus will be on creating meaningful career pathways for young professionals, ensuring they have opportunities to thrive locally after completing their education, and contributing to the region's long-term economic vitality.

Infrastructure Improvements

To support a thriving, full-service regional economy, Coachella Valley will invest in infrastructure that enhances both physical and digital connectivity. This includes prioritizing infrastructure that expands power grid capacity and reliability to meet growing demand and support new development. Expanding multimodal transportation systems will ensure residents can live, work, and play within the Valley, and improving access to high-speed broadband will support the growth of target industries and remote work. These investments will help bridge geographic and economic divides, improve quality of life, and position the region for inclusive, future-ready development.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Ecosystems

To foster a dynamic and inclusive innovation economy, Coachella Valley will explore investment in incubator and accelerator facilities tailored to its tech-oriented target industries, including creative media, advanced manufacturing, Health and Wellness, biotechnology, and clean energy. These programs will be designed to support startups, attract investment, and cultivate local talent. In parallel, the Valley will promote entrepreneurial opportunities in entertainment and the arts, leveraging its global reputation for creativity and culture to support artist-led ventures, media production, and creative enterprise development.

Regional Connectivity and Trade Expansion

To strengthen Coachella Valley's position in the broader regional economy, the plan will promote a unified marketing message and collaborative identity across Valley cities. This includes aligning business attraction efforts, streamlining development processes, and ensuring consistent "business friendliness" standards to support investment and entrepreneurship. Additionally, the Valley will explore strategic connections to promote cross-border economic development partnerships, particularly those tied to logistics, clean energy, and lithium-related industries, to expand trade and regional integration.

Regional Branding and Tourism

The Coachella Valley will continue to strengthen its regional identity and visitor appeal through coordinated investment and collaboration with Visit Greater Palm Springs and countywide tourism partners. By positioning the Valley as Riverside County's premier destination, the region can amplify its global reputation for hospitality, festivals, and natural beauty. Additionally, the Valley's world-class hospitality infrastructure will be leveraged not only to attract tourists, but also to promote a high quality of life for residents and showcase the region as an ideal location for business, innovation, and talent attraction.

Quality of Life and Community Development

The Coachella Valley will prioritize inclusive community development by attracting Health and Wellness industries, celebrating its cultural diversity, and expanding opportunity in historically underserved areas. By positioning the region as a hub for integrative health and medical innovation, the Valley can enhance both resident well-being and economic vitality. At the same time, it will leverage its rich cultural heritage and diversity as a driver of entrepreneurship, tourism, and creative enterprise. Targeted investments in career pathways, affordable housing, and access to social services will ensure that all communities benefit from the region's growth.

Strategic Action for Regional Growth

The following action plan outlines a bold strategy for the Coachella Valley's economic future. They are ambitious and forward-looking, designed to spark exploration, research, and collaboration across the region. While not every idea may ultimately be feasible or the right fit, pursuing them will help the Valley identify its most strategic opportunities and build the partnerships necessary to succeed. By committing to exploring these goals with focus and flexibility, the region can translate vision into action and position for sustained growth.



GOAL 1: INDUSTRY DIVERSIFICATION AND GROWTH

Develop year-round economy with no “off-season,” leveraging growth opportunities in the following target industries:

- Agricultural Tech applications and products
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Creative Media (video/film production, music and sound recording)
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Clean Energy Production
- Biotechnology

1.1	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
a	Agtech: Launch an Agtech Innovation Hub Partner creating a year-round incubator for startups focused on desert agriculture, water efficiency, and climate-resilient crops.	High	2	\$\$
b	Agtech: Host an Annual Agtech Expo attracting global innovators and investors to showcase desert farming solutions and innovative technologies.	High	2	\$\$
c	Agtech: Support Controlled Environment Agriculture, encouraging vertical farming and greenhouse operations that operate year-round and can showcase new innovative methods.	Med	2	\$
d	Tourism: Develop Off-Season Wellness Retreats focused on spa experiences and cultural tourism.	High	1	\$
e	Tourism: Create a 'Summer Desert Arts' Festival with indoor music and visual arts events.	Med	2	\$
f	Tourism: Develop Indoor Amusement and Recreation Concepts such as Desert Dome Adventure Park with climate controlled rides, Indoor Snow and Ice Experience, Desert Indoor Sportsplex with arenas for tournaments and e-sports.	Med	3	\$\$\$
g	Creative Media: Establish a Coachella Valley Film and Sound Campus with a supportive environment for production companies.	High	2	\$\$
h	Creative Media: Launch a Local Talent Accelerator for youth training in editing and sound design.	Med	2	\$
i	Creative Media: Host a Desert Film and Music Residency for artists to collaborate and showcase work.	High	2	\$\$
j	Clean Energy: Expand Solar + Storage and related projects to create year-round construction and maintenance jobs.	Med	3	\$
k	Clean Energy: Develop a Renewable Energy Innovation Zone for RandD in geothermal and hydrogen tech.	Med	2	\$
l	Clean Tech: Develop Green Industrial Park near Salton Sea (a zero-emissions industrial park powered by geothermal and solar, focused on lithium-based manufacturing).	Med	3+	\$\$\$
m	Advanced Manufacturing: Establish battery component manufacturing facilities to produce cathodes, anodes, and electrolytes using locally sourced lithium.	High	2	\$\$
n	Biotechnology: Launch Coachella BioCicular Accelerator, modeled after BEAM Circular/gener8tor partnership, that can offer seed funding, mentorship, access to biotech labs/pilot facilities with a focus on desert-adapted biotech and regenerative agriculture.	High	1	\$
o	Branding: Utilize branding differentiation and recommendations from North Star branding strategy to create messaging for targeted industries.	High	1	\$\$

GOAL 2: CLEAN ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
2.1 Salton Sea cleanup/restoration				
a	Identify global solutions in remediation technologies that use solar-powered aeration, phytoremediation, dust suppression systems or other unique technologies and encourage pilot projects.	Med	3	\$
b	Continue active participation in regional restoration authorities, projects and activities.	High	1	\$
2.2 Maximize renewable energy technology; substantially increase portion of local energy needs supplied by renewables				
a	Expand Utility-Scale Solar and Geothermal Projects: Prioritize development near transmission corridors and brownfield sites.	Med	3	\$\$
b	Promote Agrivoltaics to combine solar panels with agriculture for dual-income streams.	Med	2	\$
2.3 Ensure electricity capacity for targeted industry/employment growth				
a	Conduct a Regional Grid Capacity Study: Identify infrastructure gaps and prioritize upgrades to support industrial growth zones.	High	3	\$\$
b	Develop Microgrid Pilots for Industrial Parks: Ensure energy resilience for logistics, manufacturing, and tech clusters.	Med	2	\$\$
2.4 Investigate potentials to connect to Imperial County's "Lithium Valley" initiative (potentially based on Riverside County's larger workforce compared to Imperial)				
a	Establish Fabrication Hub to focus on components for solar panels, EV charging stations, and battery storage systems. Co-locate with renewable energy projects to create a circular, low-carbon supply chain.	High	2	\$\$
b	Establish battery component manufacturing facilities to produce cathodes, anodes, and electrolytes using locally sourced lithium.	High	3	\$\$

GOAL 3: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TALENT ATTRACTION

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
3.1 Expand partnerships with College of the Desert				
a	Support Dual Enrollment and Early College Pathways: Partner with high schools to expose students to higher education programs earlier.	High	2	\$
b	Continue to advance the collaboration and projects of One Future CV.	High	1	\$
3.2 Leverage presence of UCR and CSUSB campuses				
a	Establish Joint Research and Workforce Initiatives: Focus on lithium tech, sustainability, Agtech, and advanced manufacturing.	Med	2	\$
b	Create a Regional Talent Consortium: Align curriculum, internships, and job placement across COD, UCR, and CSUSB.	High	2	\$
3.3 Focus on expanding career potentials for young professionals (to retain their talent after they have completed education)				
a	Launch a "Stay Local" Fellowship Program: Provide paid internships and mentorships with local employers for recent grads.	High	1	\$
b	Support Remote Work Infrastructure: Create co-working hubs and housing incentives to retain talent in the region.	Med	2	\$

GOAL 4: INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
4.1 Ensure mobility needs of full-time/full-service communities (ability for residents to live, work, and play in the Valley)				
a	Expand Public Transit Connectivity: Increase frequency and coverage of SunLine Transit routes, especially between residential areas and job hubs.	Low	3	\$\$
b	Invest in Active Transportation Infrastructure: Build shaded pedestrian corridors, protected bike lanes, and safe routes to schools and transit.	High	2	\$\$
c	Create Mobility Hubs: Combine EV charging, bike-share, ride-share, and transit access at key nodes across the Valley.	Med	2	\$
d	Advance the Coachella Valley-San Geronio Rail Corridor Project.	Med	3	\$\$\$
4.2 Invest in digital infrastructure needed to facilitate growth of target industries and remote workers				
a	Develop Remote Work and Innovation Hubs: Convert vacant retail or office space into co-working centers with high-speed internet and business support services.	Med	2	\$\$
b	Expand High-Speed Broadband Access: Prioritize fiber and 5G deployment in underserved and rural areas, especially near industrial zones and tribal lands.	High	2	\$
c	Expand Public Wi-Fi Zones: In downtowns, libraries, parks, and community centers to support remote workers and students.	High	1	\$\$

GOAL 5: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
5.1 Create incubator/accelerator facilities and programs focused on Valley’s tech-oriented target industries				
a	Develop Industry-Specific Accelerators: Tailor programs for lithium tech, renewable energy, and desert-adapted agriculture startups (see 1.4)	High	1	\$
b	Launch Coachella Valley Innovation District(s): Designate a zone with co-working spaces, labs, and startup support services focused on Agtech, clean energy, logistics, and advanced manufacturing.	High	2	\$\$
5.2 Consider focus on entrepreneurial opportunities related to entertainment and the arts				
a	Launch a Creative Industries Incubator: Support startups in music, film, digital media, fashion, and visual arts.	Med	2	\$
b	Host a Coachella Valley Creative Summit: Showcase local talent, connect artists with investors, and promote cross-sector collaboration.	Med	2	\$\$
c	Leverage Festival and Other Unique Tourism Infrastructure Year-Round: Repurpose venues and production assets (e.g. Indian Wells Tennis Gardens) for off-season creative residencies and events.	High	1	\$

GOAL 6: REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY AND TRADE EXPANSION

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
6.1 Promote unified Coachella Valley “voice” and marketing message				
a	Implement Regional Branding Campaign: Align around a shared identity that highlights the Valley’s strengths in clean energy, tourism, innovation, and sustainability.	High	1	\$
b	Launch a Valley-Wide Digital Portal: Centralize information on business opportunities, workforce programs, and regional assets.	High	1	\$
a	Participate in Joint Trade Missions and Conferences: Represent the Valley collectively at national and international events to attract investment and partnerships.	High	1	\$\$
6.2 Ensure uniform “business friendliness” standards across Valley cities				
a	Create a Regional Business Concierge Program: Offer stream-lined permitting, licensing, and site selection support across jurisdictions.	High	1	\$
b	Develop a Shared Business Incentives Toolkit: Align tax cred-its, fee waivers, and infrastructure support to reduce friction for investors and entrepreneurs.	High	1	\$
c	Standardize Zoning and Development Review Processes: Promote consistency in land use regulations and timelines across cities.	Med	2	\$
d	Establish a Valley-Wide Business Retention Task Force: Coordinate outreach and support for existing employers to prevent relocation or closure.	High	1	\$
6.3 Investigate potential to connect to Imperial County’s cross-border economic development partnerships				
a	Explore Joint Industrial Zones: Near the Salton Sea or along key corridors to support lithium tech, clean manufacturing, and bi-national commerce.	Med	3	\$\$

GOAL 7: REGIONAL BRANDING AND TOURISM

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
7.1 Continue Valley-wide investment/collaboration (through Visit Greater Palm Springs) on tourism and event promotion				
a	Strengthen Multi-City Tourism Campaigns: Continue joint marketing efforts that promote the Valley as a unified destination with diverse year-round experiences — from wellness and festivals to outdoor recreation and cultural heritage.	Med	1	\$
b	Expand Off-Season Promotion: Highlight indoor attractions, wellness retreats, and creative events during summer months to support year-round tourism.	High	1	\$\$
c	Leverage Data and Analytics: Use visitor data to tailor campaigns and identify emerging markets (e.g., remote workers, ecotourists, international travelers).	Med	2	\$
7.2 Coordinate with countywide tourism promotion, positioning the Coachella Valley as the County’s premier visitor destination				
a	Position Coachella Valley as Riverside County’s Premier Destination: Align messaging with county tourism efforts to emphasize the Valley’s unique assets — world-class resorts, iconic festivals, and natural beauty.	High	1	\$
b	Develop Joint Itineraries and Packages: Collaborate with other Riverside County destinations to create multi-day travel experiences that start or end in the Coachella Valley.	High	1	\$
7.3 Leverage the presence of world-class hospitality infrastructure as an opportunity to promote the Valley’s high quality of life (for residents) and excellent business opportunities (in other industries)				
a	Market the Valley as a Lifestyle Destination for Entrepreneurs and Remote Workers: Highlight amenities, climate, and cultural richness as assets for talent attraction and business relocation.		2	\$\$
b	Host Business and Innovation Events at Hospitality Venues: Use resorts and conference centers to attract industry summits, investor forums, and startup showcases.	High	1	\$\$
b	Promote “Live, Work, Play” Messaging: Integrate tourism branding with economic development campaigns to show that the Valley offers not just leisure, but business opportunity and year-round community.	High	1	\$

GOAL 8: QUALITY OF LIFE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
8.1 Attract Health and Wellness industries				
a	Promote Medical Tourism: Leverage the Valley’s climate and hospitality infrastructure to attract patients seeking elective procedures, rehabilitation, and holistic care.	Low	3	\$\$\$
b	Develop a Desert Health and Wellness Innovation Zone(s): At-tract clinics, wellness resorts, and research institutions focused on integrative medicine, aging, and climate-adapted health solutions.	Med	2	\$\$
8.2 Leverage Valley’s cultural diversity as a significant economic development asset				
a	Develop Cultural Districts and Events: Celebrate Latino, Indigenous, and immigrant heritage through festivals, markets, and public art.	Med	2	\$\$
b	Integrate Cultural Assets into Tourism and Branding: Highlight the Valley’s diversity in regional marketing campaigns and visitor experiences.	Med	2	\$
8.3 Improve career pathways and access to social services in Valley’s lower-income communities				
a	Expand Place-Based Workforce Hubs: Co-locate job training, childcare, transportation, and digital access services in under-served neighborhoods.	Med	3	\$\$
b	Promote Affordable Housing Near Job Centers: Prioritize mixed-income developments with access to transit and services.	Med	2	\$
c	Strengthen Nonprofit and Public Sector Collaboration: Coordinate across agencies and CBOs to streamline access to healthcare, food, housing, and legal aid.	High	2	\$

Coachella Valley Region Economic Development Strategy

