

The Inclusive Economy Poll



valley vision

Community Inspired Solutions



WE PROSPER
TOGETHER

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



SACRAMENTO STATE
Institute for Social Research

May 2024



The Inclusive Economy Poll

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Contributions

Valley Vision

For more than 25 years, Valley Vision has used research to help governments, businesses, foundations, and community groups better understand the issues facing our region. We believe that knowing and understanding the facts is the best way to establish a common working foundation for collaborative problem-solving. That's why Valley Vision conducts, produces, and interprets research, including scientific public opinion polls, focus groups, community needs assessments, best practice studies, and other research tools to bring to light the information local leaders need to improve our communities.

Sacramento State's Institute for Social Research (ISR)

The Institute for Social Research at Sacramento State University supports community partners in improving programs and policies in the region and throughout the state. Located at the university's downtown location, the Institute offers a broad range of expertise conducting surveys and applied research. Since 1989, their collaborations with government agencies and nonprofit organizations have contributed to public accountability, program fidelity, and the strengthening of communities.

About the Polling Series

Valley Vision and the Institute of Social Research (ISR) at Sacramento State conduct research via scientifically administered surveys of area resident attitudes. The survey data informs policymakers and stakeholders on key regional issues by providing on-the-ground public engagement data. The approach used is highly effective and unique - establishing a scientifically valid and demographically representative panel of regional residents that reflects a microcosm of the region as a whole. The panel size is currently about 1,401 people from six counties - Sacramento, Yolo, El Dorado, Placer, Yuba, and Sutter. The panel is weighted to represent the region demographically, and each survey achieves a statistically valid margin of error of no more than +/- 3%. Additionally, an address-based sample (ABS) consisting of Nevada County, Colusa County, and the Tahoe Basin residents was included in this poll.

Media Partnership

Thank you to our media partner, **Solving Sacramento**, for their help in distributing and publicizing these findings in pursuit of a more equitable Capital Region economy.



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Report Funding

This report was made possible by the underwriting support of **Western Health Advantage**, an anchor investor in the polling series.



It was also partially funded through the **California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative**, a \$600 million initiative by the State of California for advancing inclusive regional economic development.





Advancing Our Triple Bottom Line with Data-Driven Decision-Making

As a civic leadership organization in the Capital Region, Valley Vision's mission is to support livable communities through advancing economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental sustainability. Through our polling initiative, we seek to catalyze this mission by advancing actionable research, creating space for community perspective, informing decision-makers, and affecting community change. The data in this poll is key to informing a regional agenda and aligning regional investments and leadership strategies that focus on the key issues affecting our communities most.



The Inclusive Economy Poll

A public opinion research program of Valley Vision, fielded by Sacramento State's Institute for Social Research

In a truly great economy, all stand to benefit from its growth, whether individuals, families, businesses, or entire industries. Unfortunately, the United States has a history of exclusionary practices, such as redlining, discriminatory lending practices, and unequal access to education and healthcare. These practices have, and continue to, bar certain groups from full economic participation, whether by preventing access to wealth building or by creating inequitable access to opportunities.

Guided by our mission to create livable communities and our triple-bottom-line principles of social equity, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability, Valley Vision has been a leader advancing inclusive economic goals for the Capital region for for the last 30 years. That's why we were poised to take action when Governor Newsom announced the California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative (previously known as the Community Economic Resilience Fund) in 2020. This initiative, which provides significant funding for community-led economic development planning and projects, presented an unprecedented opportunity to take a new, more inclusive approach to economic development.

Through **We Prosper Together**, we are collaborating to build a workforce and economy that meets the needs of our future while enabling all communities to thrive for generations. We created the Inclusive Economy Poll with this vision in mind and to support the ongoing work of We Prosper Together.

Valley Vision routinely conducts research on priority issues to gather and understand the community's perspectives. The Inclusive Economy Poll is Valley Vision's first public opinion poll solely focused on the economic well-being of our eight-county region.

The findings in this poll show that We Prosper Together's work is not only needed but also a priority for our residents. For instance, the poll revealed that job creation and equitable access to economic prosperity were among the top concerns about economic issues for our communities. As the Capital region of California, we have considerable assets - including beautiful and abundant natural resources, thriving cultural amenities, and a high performing economy. We must ensure that all can share in our economic prosperity and have the ability to reach their full potential.

We look forward to sharing the poll findings and continuing to take action to create a more sustainable and prosperous economy for all.



Best Regards,
Evan Schmidt,
CEO of Valley Vision

Executive Summary

The Inclusive Economy Poll provides a snapshot of experiences, perspectives, and viewpoints related to economic opportunity, access, well-being, and awareness in the eight-county Capital Region that includes Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties. The Poll was in the field from late October to early December 2023. It is demographically representative of the Capital Region and has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.3 percent.

We Prosper Together is a regional initiative bridging eight counties to build a stronger regional economy. Building on the California Jobs First program, we are working to uplift our communities, encourage regional investment, and create living wage jobs. Valley Vision is the backbone support to We Prosper Together's Collaborative of 150+ organizations and provides funding to over 20 additional partners to advance a collaborative vision for inclusive economic growth.

The Inclusive Economy Poll was created to understand community perspectives and experiences to guide the development of a regional economic roadmap.

The **Rockefeller Inclusive Economic Indicators**, a framework for economic inclusion, informed the creation of the poll's themes and questions. According to this framework, an inclusive economy is **Equitable, Accessible, Growing, Stable, and Sustainable**.

The following paragraphs summarize the poll findings within these categories.

An Equitable Economy | *An inclusive economy must have equitable access to basic needs and opportunities as well as actively reduce existing inequalities.* While most respondents report adequate access to basic needs, such as clean air, reliable power, and transportation, there are gaps in access to other basic needs, especially in rural areas. Food access remains a critical issue, with almost one-quarter of respondents indicating some level of food insecurity. There are notable disparities in access to high-speed internet, and those in rural counties are less likely to report adequate access. People of color are more likely to say they have experienced workplace discrimination due to their race or ethnicity than their peers.

An Accessible Economy | *An inclusive economy needs to provide people the ability to participate in the market (typically by buying, selling, or exchanging goods and services) and access to financial systems and tools that make their lives better.* While most people report having basic financial literacy and access to financial tools, such as savings and retirement accounts, this is less likely for those making less than \$50,000. The majority of respondents are somewhat or very confident in their ability to manage financial tasks, such as managing a household budget or credit card debt. However, respondents are split, nearly half and half, about whether they think they have entrepreneurial skills and abilities. About forty percent would take a chance and set up their own business.





A Growing Economy | *A growing economy allows for the upward mobility of people and families, especially those historically lacking access to opportunity. In an inclusive economy, individuals should have job and training opportunities that increase their economic well-being.* According to poll findings, almost half of Capital Region residents say that jobs are hard to find, especially those in lower income categories, and 28% of workers are not making a living wage. Those in rural areas are less likely to report access to adequate benefits however, overall, two-thirds or more report access to a wide range of benefits, like health, sick time, and family leave. There is an ample amount of interest in career transition or skill attainment, with most of the respondents (82%) indicating they would be interested in increasing their job skills. The findings in this section underscore the importance of investing in initiatives and projects that increase the availability of and pathways to quality jobs, which is the primary goal of We Prosper Together.

A Stable and Sustainable Economy | *An economy is stable when people can weather financial emergencies without drastically impacting their financial well-being.* Poll findings show that weathering financial hardship depends partially on household income. Fifty percent of those who make less than \$50,000 do not have any savings, and 61% of those in the same income bracket report that they would need assistance covering a \$400 emergency expense. A positive outlook for prosperity in the future is also an important indicator of economic stability and sustainability. While many feel the future will be better, those who make less money or live in rural locations are less optimistic.

A Common Vision for Economic Prosperity | *Understanding residents' own vision for their local economy is vital to ensure policy and investments address lived experiences.* Responses indicate that an inclusive and equitable economy is at the forefront of the region's collective vision. The top issue cited by respondents, when asked about their level of concern for economic issues, is ensuring all community members benefit from the economy. Respondents are most likely to say a lack of affordable housing gets in the way of financial well-being for families. They also reported high costs of other basic needs, such as healthcare and childcare, as well as the availability of quality jobs, as a barrier, especially for communities of color and those with lower incomes. Environmental sustainability also emerged at the top, with a clean and green economy noted as a major concern, especially for those in the Nevada & Tahoe Basin area.

In conclusion, As we work to grow an inclusive and thriving economy in the Capital Region, we must create conditions and advance opportunities that allow all to reach their potential. This report highlights opportunities to build a more inclusive economy and reflects some of the gaps that are hindering shared prosperity across all communities and people. Access to basic needs, welcoming work environments, access to high-quality jobs with opportunities for promotion, and reduction of key barriers like affordable housing must be enhanced to support our shared prosperity. It is through collective effort and collaborative processes, like We Prosper Together, that the Capital Region can build a lasting economy that represents and meets our community's needs, enabling families to thrive for generations.





WE PROSPER TOGETHER

Building an inclusive and sustainable economy where we can all prosper.

Transforming industries, changing populations, the rising impacts of climate change, and more is shifting our economy. We have to ensure that our communities are not left behind.

We Prosper Together is building a lasting economy that represents and meets the needs of our communities, allowing families to thrive for generations.

Building from the California Jobs First program, we will:



Attract investments into our region



Meet low carbon goals and grow clean economy



Create accessible living-wage jobs



Our Region

Eight counties, representing over 150 organizations make up WE Prosper Together.

Our region encompasses a diverse mix of landscapes and community types - including working lands, natural beauty, and bustling urban and suburban areas.

More than 52% of the region's jobs qualify as jobs that offer residents the potential to achieve financial health and sustainability.

Learn more at www.weprospertogether.org

The Findings

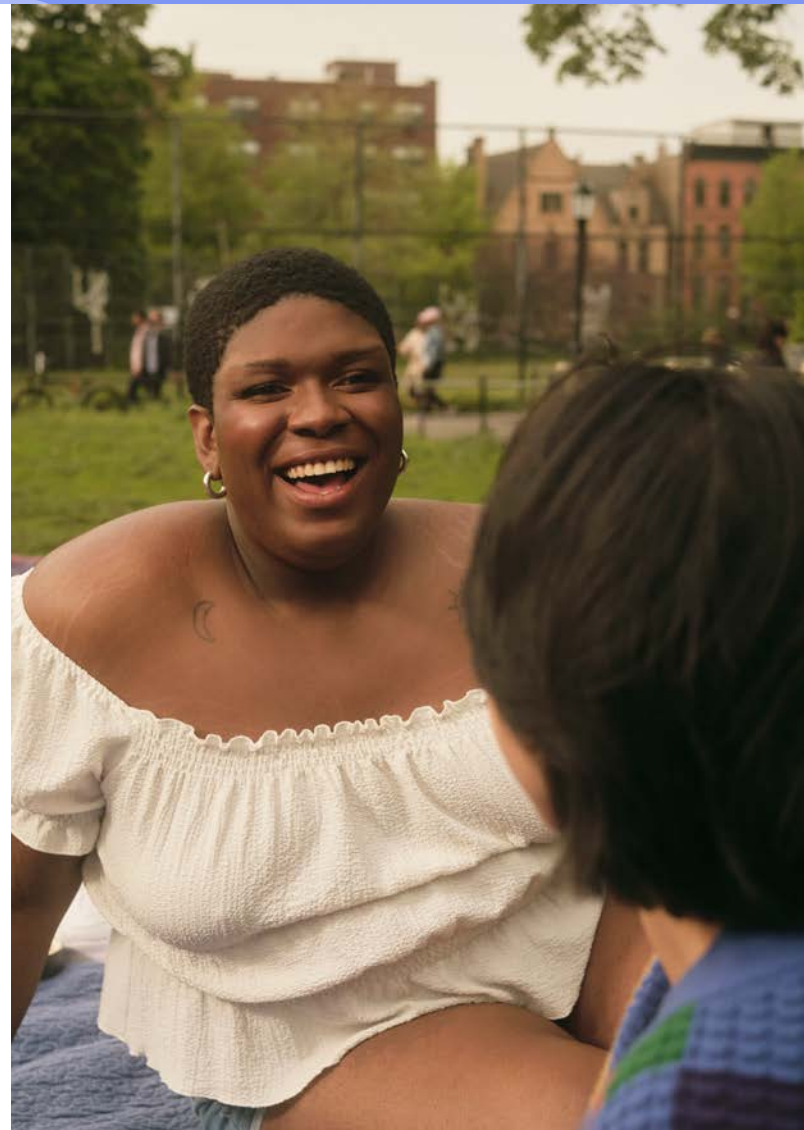
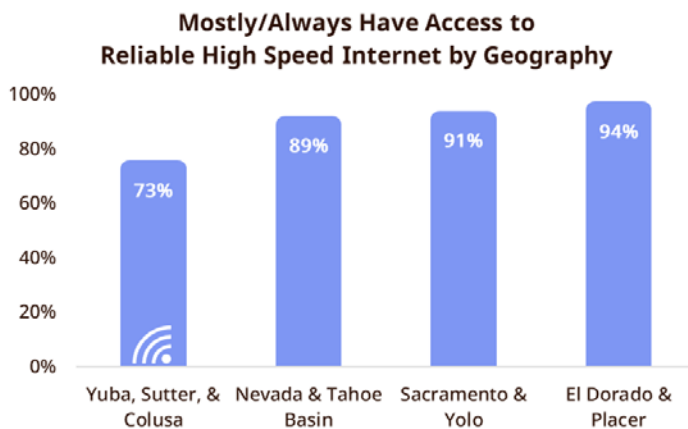
An Equitable Economy

Issues of equity, including increasing access to basic needs and decreasing inequity, are critical components of an inclusive economy. While the majority of respondents say they mostly or always have access to reliable power (98%), clean air (93%), and transportation (90%), we see notable disparities across a variety of basic needs and services across locations and demographics in our region.

Rural counties are less likely to have reliable access to high-speed internet

Those in Yuba, Sutter, and Colusa counties are less likely to say they have reliable access to a high-speed internet connection. Seventy-two percent of people in Yuba, Sutter, and Colusa counties say they mostly or always have access, compared to 90% of all respondents. These poll findings reinforce the need to increase broadband infrastructure and deployment.

Chart 1: Access to Reliable High-Speed Internet by Geography



“I want everyone to be on a level playing ground where they have access to opportunities, education, safety, and don’t have to worry about basic human conditions”

- Poll Respondent



Connected Area Broadband Consortium

The [Connected Capital Area Broadband Consortium \(CCABC\)](#) is a partnership of organizations dedicated to closing the digital divide in Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties. As the manager of CCABC, Valley Vision coordinates efforts to fill critical broadband infrastructure gaps and improve access in homes, schools, and businesses. CCABC supports state funding opportunities and efforts related to broadband infrastructure and accessibility.



Food access remains a critical need, especially in rural areas

In a region where food and agriculture produces \$12 billion in economic impact¹, food access remains a critical need. Twenty-five percent of respondents say, “In the last twelve months, the food that we bought in my household just didn’t last, and we didn’t have money to get more,” at least sometimes. The numbers are more severe in Yuba, Sutter, and Colusa counties (30%) and the Nevada/Tahoe Basin (29%).

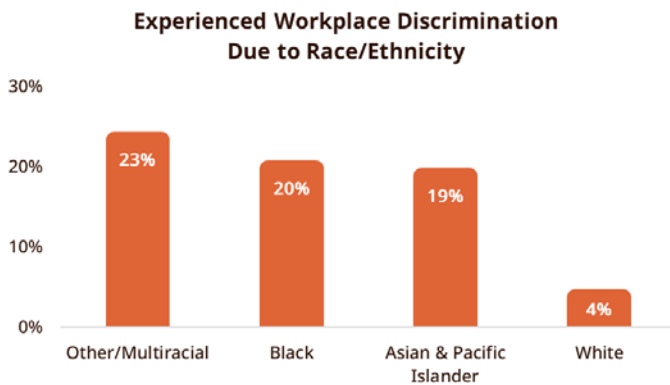


1. California's Working Landscape, prepared by the California Community Colleges Center of Excellence for the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources., November 2019.

People of color were more likely to say they have experienced workplace discrimination due to their race or ethnicity

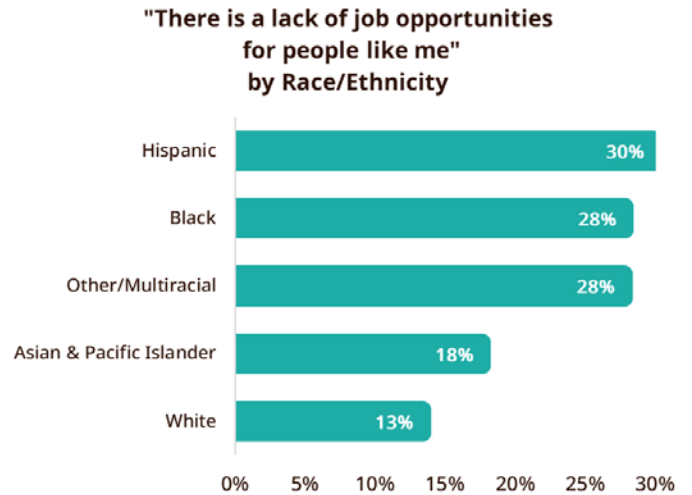
Questions about workplace discrimination also revealed inequities. The majority of overall respondents say they have not experienced workplace discrimination due to their religion (94%), sexual orientation (94%), race/ethnicity (88%), age (87%), gender (84%) or something else (96%). People of color were more likely to say they have experienced workplace discrimination due to their race/ethnicity, with 20% of Black respondents, 19% of Asian and Pacific Islander respondents, and 23% of multiracial or other respondents answering that they had. Black and multiracial or other respondents were also more likely to say they have experienced workplace discrimination due to a disability. Almost one-third of Hispanics and over a quarter of Black, multiracial, or respondents identifying as an “other” race feel like there is a lack of job opportunities for people like them.

Chart 2: Experienced Workplace Discrimination due to Race/Ethnicity



*Note: We use U.S. Census categories for race, which is treated separately from Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin. With this separation, there was no statistically significant difference between those of Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin and overall respondents. The Other/Multiracial category includes those who did not select Black, White, or Asian & Pacific Islander as their primary identifier.

Chart 3: Lack of Job Opportunities by Race/Ethnicity



Addressing discriminatory workplace behaviors and practices through training, cultural change, diverse and inclusive hiring practices, and other means is critical to creating an inclusive and thriving regional economy for all.



Capital Region Economic Assessment



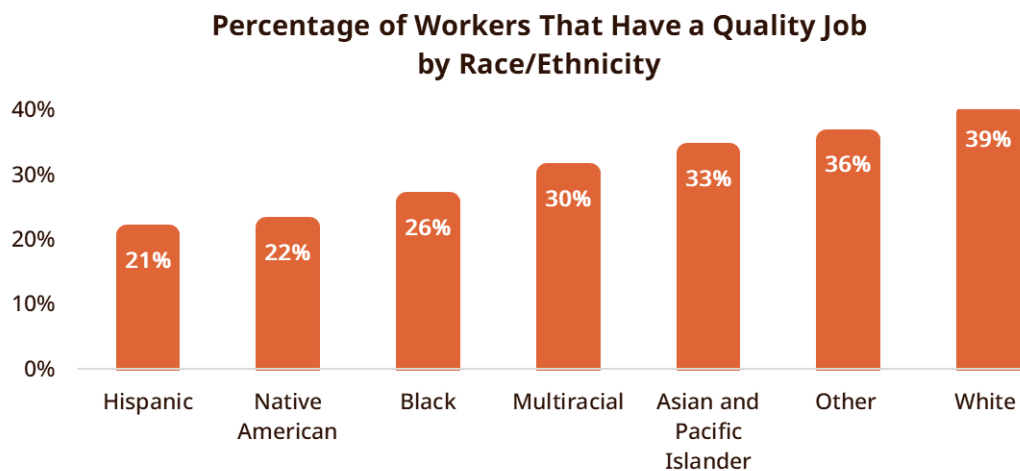
In 2023, **We Prosper Together** conducted in-depth research on the region's key economic assets, opportunities, and challenges as part of developing our economic roadmap. The findings of these analyses were reported in the Capital Region Economic Assessment.

According to the report, 35% of the region's jobs are "quality jobs," meaning they offer wages and benefits

that allow families to be self-sufficient and financially stable. Another 18% are "promising jobs," meaning they provide a pathway to a quality job within ten years.

The assessment also found that certain demographics were less likely to have a quality job, aligning with the perceptions of the poll respondents.

Chart 4: Capital Region Economic Assessment



Through **We Prosper Together**, we will invest in opportunities that support the creation of and access to quality jobs for all in order to uplift the struggling families in our region.

Read the full report and learn more at weprosper.together.org/research

An Accessible Economy

An inclusive economy also needs to give people the ability to participate in the market (typically by buying, selling, or exchanging goods and services) and access to financial systems and tools (like savings and investment accounts or access to financial programs) that improve their lives. The following data outlines how respondents use and understand financial resources and tools.

Only half of those making less than \$50,000 have a savings account

Out of a list of financial resources, 96% say they have a checking account, and 87% have a credit card. Only half of those making \$50,000 have a savings account (54%) compared to 86% or more of those making more than \$50,000.

Residents in Yuba, Sutter, and Colusa counties are less likely to have access to retirement savings

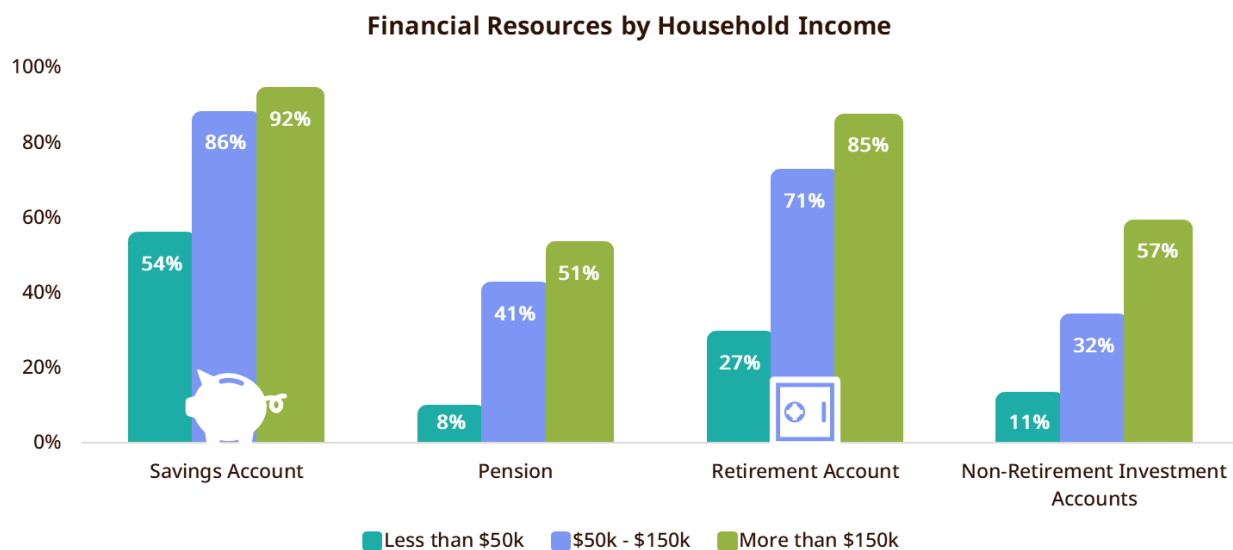
The ability to retire at an appropriate age later in one's life is also an indicator of a healthy economy and culture. However, at least one-third of respondents do not have a retirement account (34%). This is more likely for those in Yuba, Sutter, and Colusa counties (47%) as compared to those in El Dorado and Placer counties, in which 81% of respondents stated they have a retirement account. Additionally, 73% of those making less than \$50,000 do not have a retirement account.



"I'm doing great now, but at retirement (and I am old enough to retire right now), I do not think we will be able to maintain our very frugal lifestyle."

- Poll Respondent

Chart 5: Financial Resources by Household Income

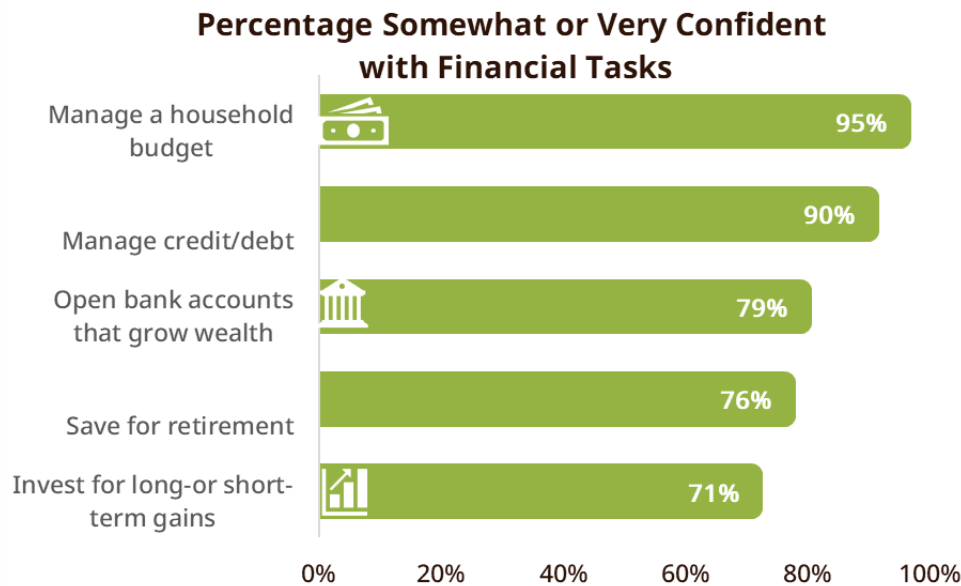




Residents are confident in their ability to manage a household budget but not to invest long-term for financial gains

Retirement is one form of long-term investment, which, according to respondents, is a financial task many rank as one of the skills they're least confident in. Out of a list of financial tasks, respondents are most confident in their ability to manage a household budget, with 95% rating themselves as somewhat confident or very confident. This was followed by managing credit or debit (90%) and opening bank accounts that grow wealth (79%). Respondents are least confident in their ability to invest for long- or short-term gains, with 71% rating themselves as somewhat confident or very confident.

Chart 6: Confidence with Financial Tasks



Despite a high amount of users, the majority of respondents are unaware of credit card debt relief programs

Not only is it important for individuals to understand methods of growing their wealth, but it is also vital that there is an awareness of how to recover from financial hardships. One of the most common financial hardships is losing one's job. Out of a list of unemployment resources, respondents are most aware of food assistance such as CalFresh, food banks, etc. (67%) and medical care and coverage such as Covered California and community health clinics (55%). Respondents are least aware of other basic necessities assistance such as BenefitsCal (91% unaware) and credit card debt relief programs (90% unaware).

People making less than \$50,000 are less likely to think they have entrepreneurial skills

Self-employment or entrepreneurship can be a potential avenue out of unemployment or a transition into another career. In an inclusive economy, individuals need to feel like they have the knowledge and skills to create their own businesses and that they have access to resources and support.

Respondents are split about whether they feel they have entrepreneurial skills and abilities (54% agree vs. 46% disagree) and whether they would take a chance and set up their own business (42% agree vs. 59% disagree). Those making less than \$50,000 reported being less likely to believe they have entrepreneurial skills and abilities (45%) than those making more than \$150,000 (65%).



A Stable and Sustainable Economy

In a stable economy, people can weather financial emergencies without a drastic impact on their financial well-being. An economy is sustainable when, in addition to stability and growth, people have positive outlooks on the prosperity of their future. While the poll results lean slightly optimistic, overall, there is a lack of consensus about the stability and sustainability of the Capital Region economy.

Stable

One-third of those in our region do not currently have financial stability, especially those with lower incomes

In the Capital Region, a significant portion of individuals do not currently have financial stability. At least one-third (34%) of people would not be able to cover the cost of a \$400 emergency expense today and would instead “ask for help/borrow/get a loan/or other.” This

is even more likely to be the case in Nevada/Tahoe Basin (43%) and Yuba, Sutter, and Colusa (42%). Those in El Dorado and Placer are most likely to believe they could cover an emergency cost using savings or cash in hand (82%). Almost two-thirds of those making less than \$50,000 (62%) report that they would not be able to cover a \$400 emergency with their own savings or cash. This is also true for 36% of people making between \$50,000 and \$150,000.

Chart 7: Would Need Assistance Covering \$400 Emergency Expense

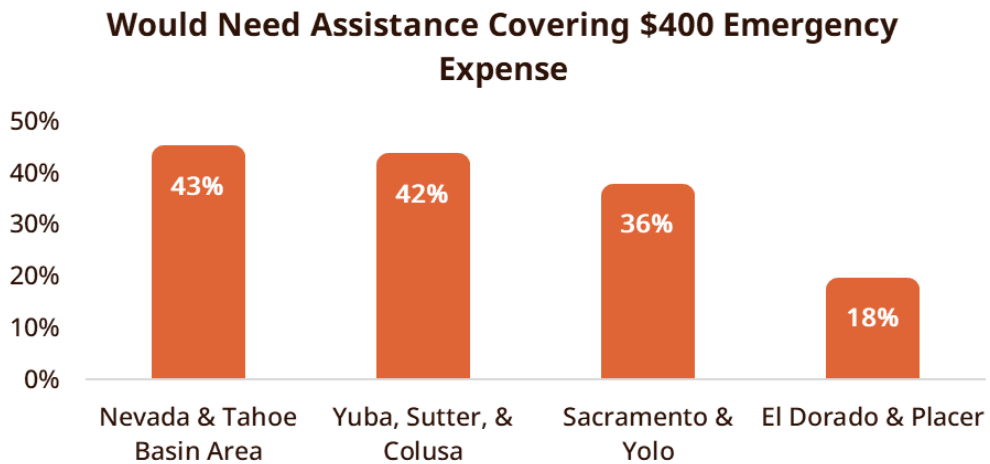
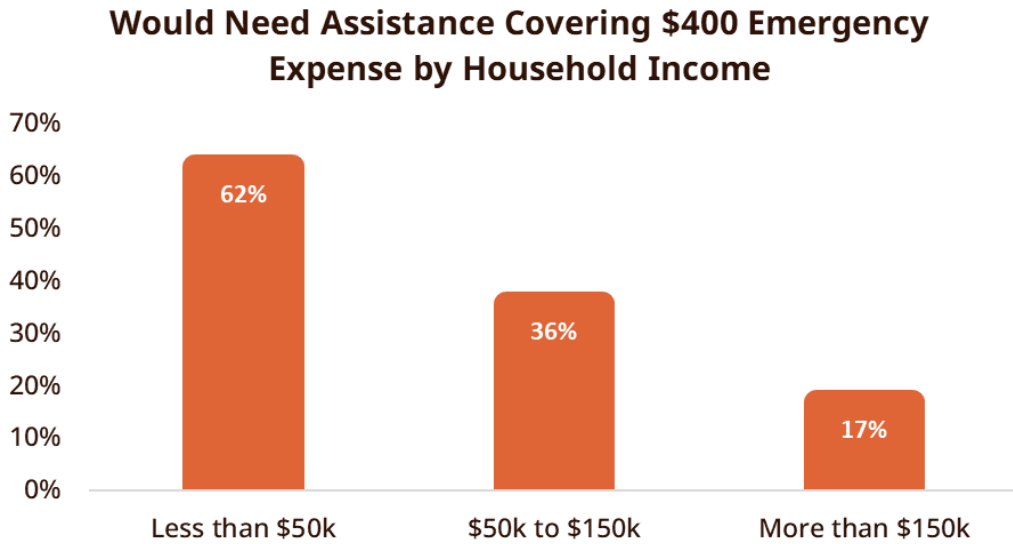




Chart 8: Would Need Assistance Covering \$400 Emergency Expense by Household Income



Fifty percent of those making less than \$50,000 do not have any savings

Savings are key to a person’s ability to cover emergency costs. While 81% of respondents said they have a savings account, the amount of savings people have varies widely. Almost 20% of all respondents do not have any savings, and half of those making \$50,000 or less don’t have any savings. Another 19% of all respondents have savings, but not enough to last more than three months if they were to lose their primary source of income. On the other hand, 49% of all respondents say their savings would last more than three months.

“Inflation is affecting the cost of living so much these days that my salary can’t keep up. It is getting harder and harder to make it through the month. Most months we are having to dip into our savings account which is almost depleted.”

- Poll Respondent





The region is divided about whether the economy has improved or gotten worse in the past five years

People are divided about how they view their current financial situation compared to 2019. A third of people believe their financial situation has improved (34%); however, more than one-third (36%) say their financial situation has gotten worse in the last five years, and a final third say their financial situation has stayed the same (30%). Those whose income is 50,000 or less are more likely to believe their situation has worsened (51%). This is also more likely for those living in rural counties in our region, including Nevada County and the Tahoe Basin area (53%) and Yuba, Sutter, and Colusa counties (48%).

Those who make more money are more likely to say their financial situation will get better in the future

Overall, more people think that their financial situation will get better (41%) than worse in the next ten years (25%), with 34% saying they believe it will stay the same. However, these results are flipped in Yuba and Sutter counties, where 37% believe their financial situation will get worse, and 26% think it will get better. The result is also flipped for those making less than \$50,000 per year — with 39% believing their financial situation will worsen in the next ten years and 33% believing it will get better.

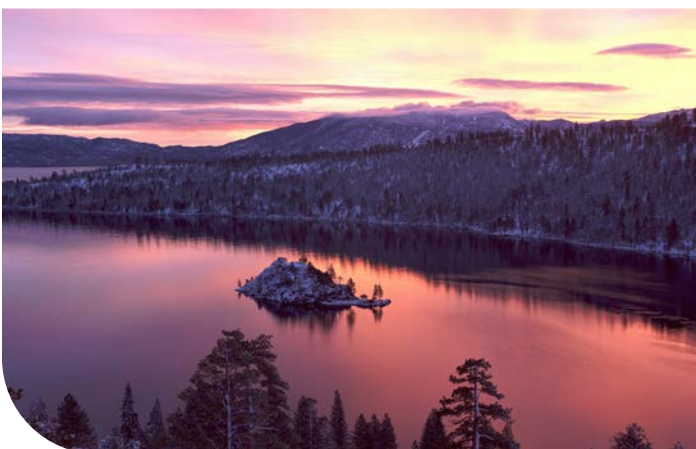
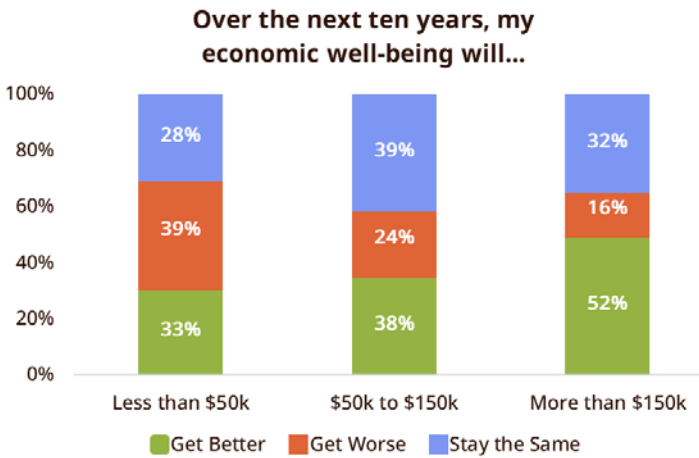




Chart 9: Economic Outlook by Household Income

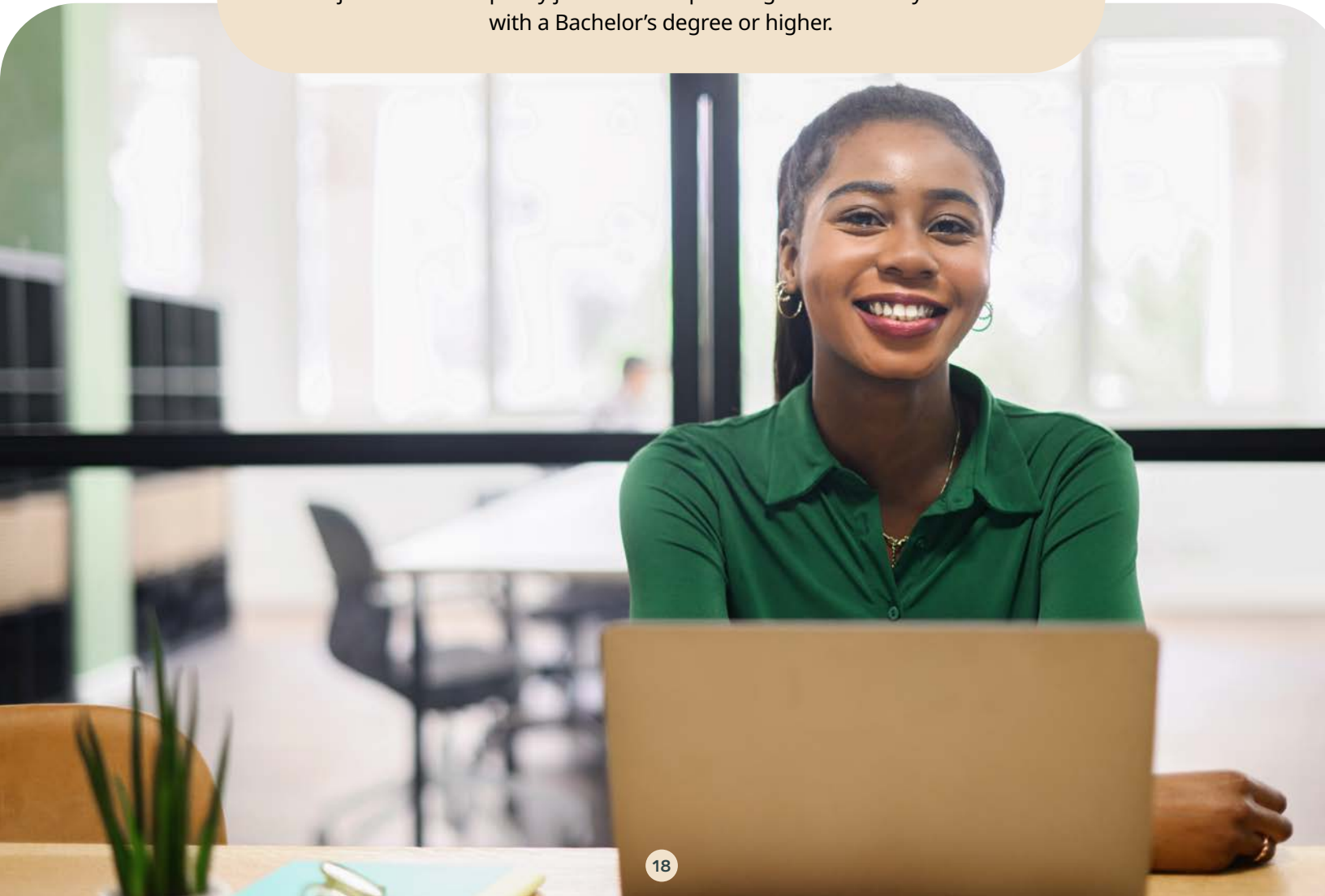


People are more optimistic about the next generation’s future than their own

Respondents are more optimistic about the future of the next generations. Almost half of respondents believe their child(ren)’s financial and professional life will be better than their own (47%), with one-third believing it will be the same (33%) and one-fifth believing that it will be worse than their own (20%). Additionally, 86% of respondents think it is likely or very likely that their child(ren) will obtain a higher education level than their own.

Education & Quality Jobs

According to the Capital Region Economic Assessment, those with a Bachelor’s degree or higher are more likely to have a quality job. 58% of all quality jobs in the Capital Region are held by those with a Bachelor’s degree or higher.



A Growing Economy

A growing economy allows for the upward mobility of people and families, especially those historically lacking access to opportunity. While growth is typically measured by producing goods and services, in an inclusive model, growth can also be measured by individuals' ability to increase their well-being, including improving quality of life and security for the future, through access to job and training opportunities.

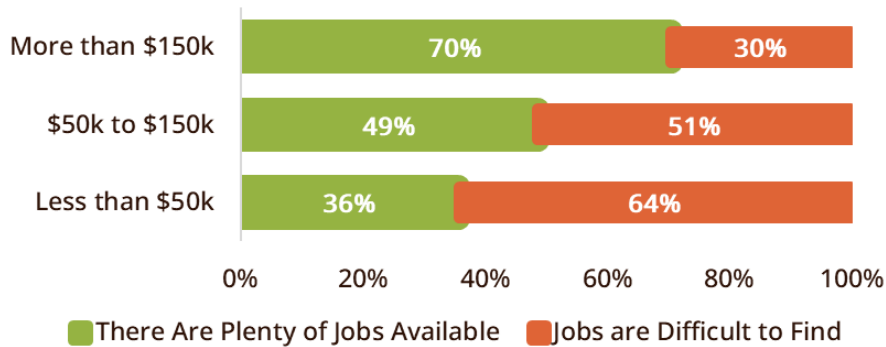
Respondents' experience of finding job opportunities differ according to income level

People are divided about how easy it is to find job opportunities where they live, with 52% of all respondents saying there are plenty of jobs available and 48% saying jobs are difficult to find. Different income groups have very different perspectives, with almost two-thirds (64%) of those making less than \$50k saying jobs are difficult to find, compared to only 30% of those making \$150k or more believing the same.



Chart 10: Job Opportunities by Household Income

Thinking about job opportunities where you live, would you say that...



Those living in rural counties were less likely to say that their job offered a livable wage and health benefits

While 71% of respondents agreed that their job offered a livable wage, almost one-third (29%) of respondents did not agree. This was consistent with a recent quantitative assessment that reported that 28% of workers in the region struggle to make ends meet.

Respondents in Yuba, Sutter, and Colusa counties were most likely to disagree (44%), while those in El Dorado and Placer were most likely to agree (87%) that their job offered a liveable wage.

Similarly, while a significant portion of respondents agreed their job offered adequate health insurance, 22% disagreed. This sentiment was especially seen in the rural counties of Yuba, Sutter, and Colusa (48%).



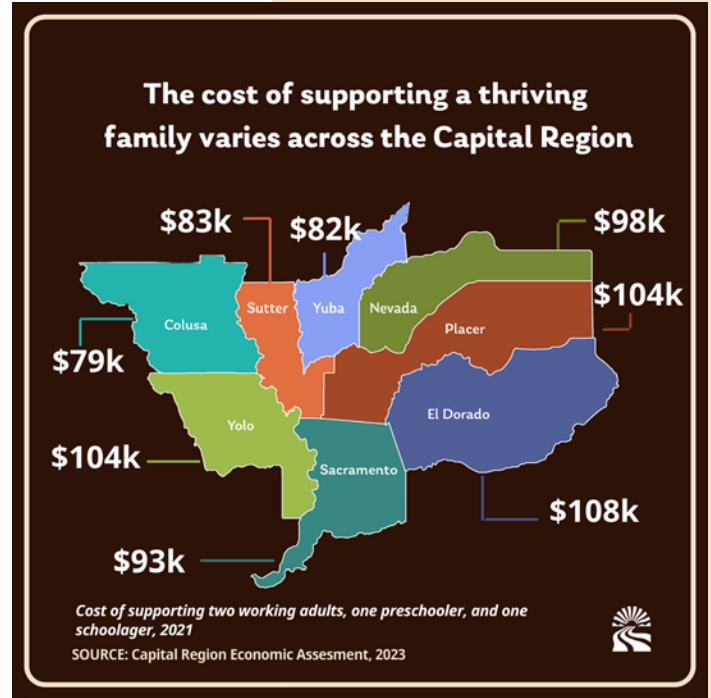
Quality Jobs in the Capital Region

According to the Capital Region Economic Assessment, 38% of residents overall and 28% of workers in the Capital Region are struggling to make ends meet.

Jobs with livable wages are needed to help uplift these families and enable them to cover basic costs like housing, childcare, transportation, healthcare, savings, and taxes.

The cost of supporting a thriving household varies by county and family makeup. This chart shows the varying household income needed to support two working adults, one preschooler, and one school-aged child across the eight counties.

Read the full report and learn more at weprospertgether.org/research



The majority of respondents report that their jobs offer a range of important types of benefits

While employer-sponsored health insurance is a highly sought-after benefit and is also used as a primary indicator of the quality level of a job, many other types of benefits are important to workers. 74% of respondents agree that their job offers adequate vacation time. There were a similar amount of respondents who agreed that their job offered adequate sick leave (71%), mental health resources (67%), career advancement opportunities (67%), and work-life balance (72%).

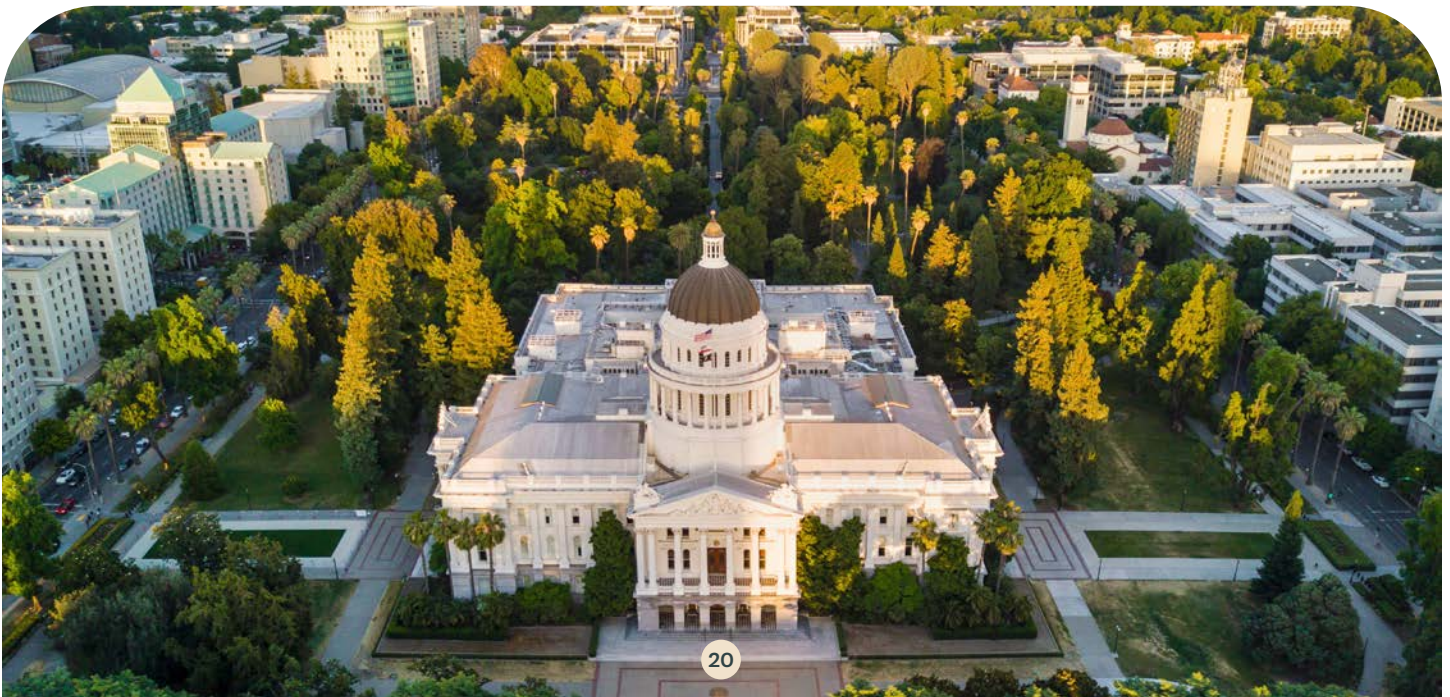
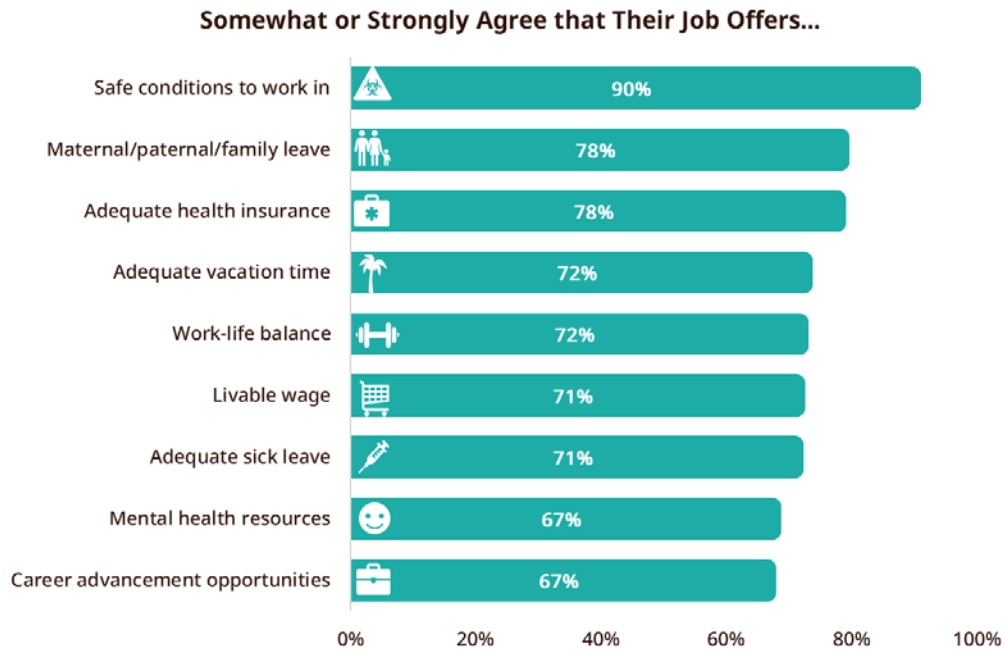


Chart 11: Job Offers Adequate ___ Benefits (Topline responses)

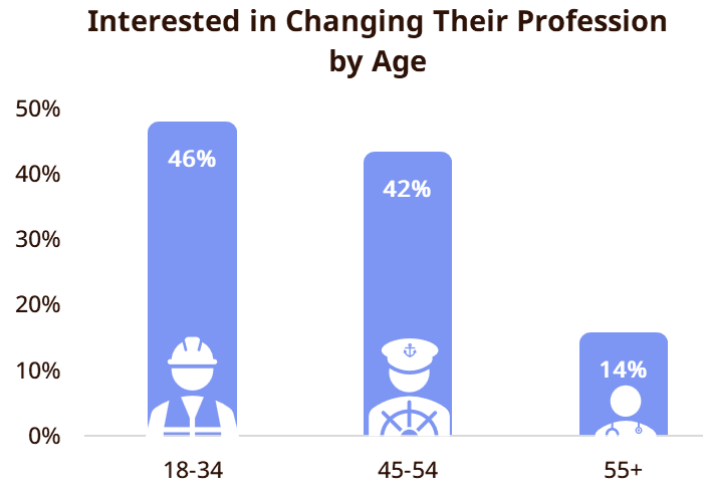


Respondents are highly interested in increasing their skills or changing careers

The attainment of additional skills can increase a person’s ability to obtain a high-quality job or receive promotions and raises in a current position. Eighty-two percent of respondents are interested in increasing their job skills. This is most likely true for Black respondents (96%). Respondents are more likely to want to increase their technical skills (89%) rather than their soft skills (61%) or other skills (6%).

Over one-third of respondents (38%) are interested in changing their profession. Unsurprisingly, those in their early or primary years of work are more interested in changing professions than those closer to the typical retirement age.

Chart 12: Profession Change Interest by Age



Of those interested in changing their profession, 91% say they would be interested in applying or learning about training programs for those professions.

Closing Skills Gaps for Quality Jobs

According to the Capital Region Economic Assessment, the average worker already has over 85% of the talent that is most important in obtaining a quality job that offers a liveable wage, health insurance, and pathways to better jobs in the future. This means select knowledge and skills gaps could be addressed through targeted short-term training.



A Common Vision for Economic Prosperity

An inclusive economy creates opportunities for prosperity and financial stability for all. Understanding residents' own vision for their local economy is vital to ensure policy and investments address lived experiences and align with community interests.

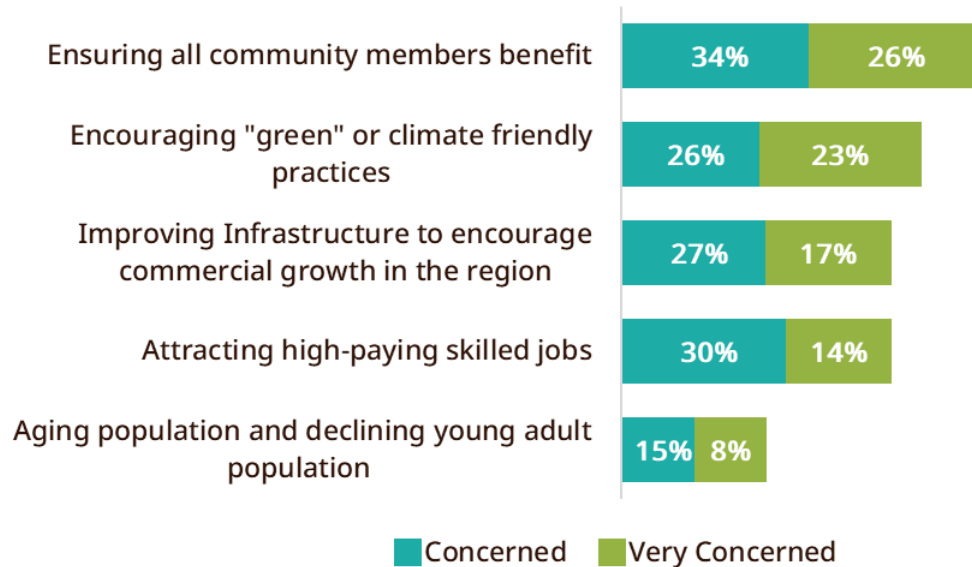
Creating an inclusive and equitable economy is at the forefront of the region's collective vision.

Fifty-eight percent of all respondents said they are concerned or very concerned with ensuring all community members benefit in our economy, ranking it number one out of a list of regional economic concerns. The second highest is encouraging "green" or climate-friendly practices, with 49% of respondents expressing concern.



Chart 13: Level of Concern for Economic Issues in Our Region

Level of Concern for the Economic Issues in Our Region





Over two-thirds of respondents want to reinvigorate retail spaces and preserve our natural resources and landscapes

There is even more alignment on how we can cultivate prosperity locally. Over two-thirds of respondents selected reinvigorating neglected retail spaces and preserving green, open, and wild spaces as one of their top four ways to improve their community's economy. The preservation of green spaces is a consistent trend across other public opinion polls conducted by Valley Vision. For example, in the [2023 Livability Poll](#), "natural spaces" was ranked as the #1 most important quality of life feature. About half of the respondents also supported the additional provision of public transportation to support community growth.

"Climate change has impacted this community as it has become a dangerous zone for wildfires. There is a need for affordable services to help residents make their homes safer from fire. This is a great place for outdoor recreation and I would like to see it remain green and open. Any new businesses should be environmentally conscious."

- Poll Respondent

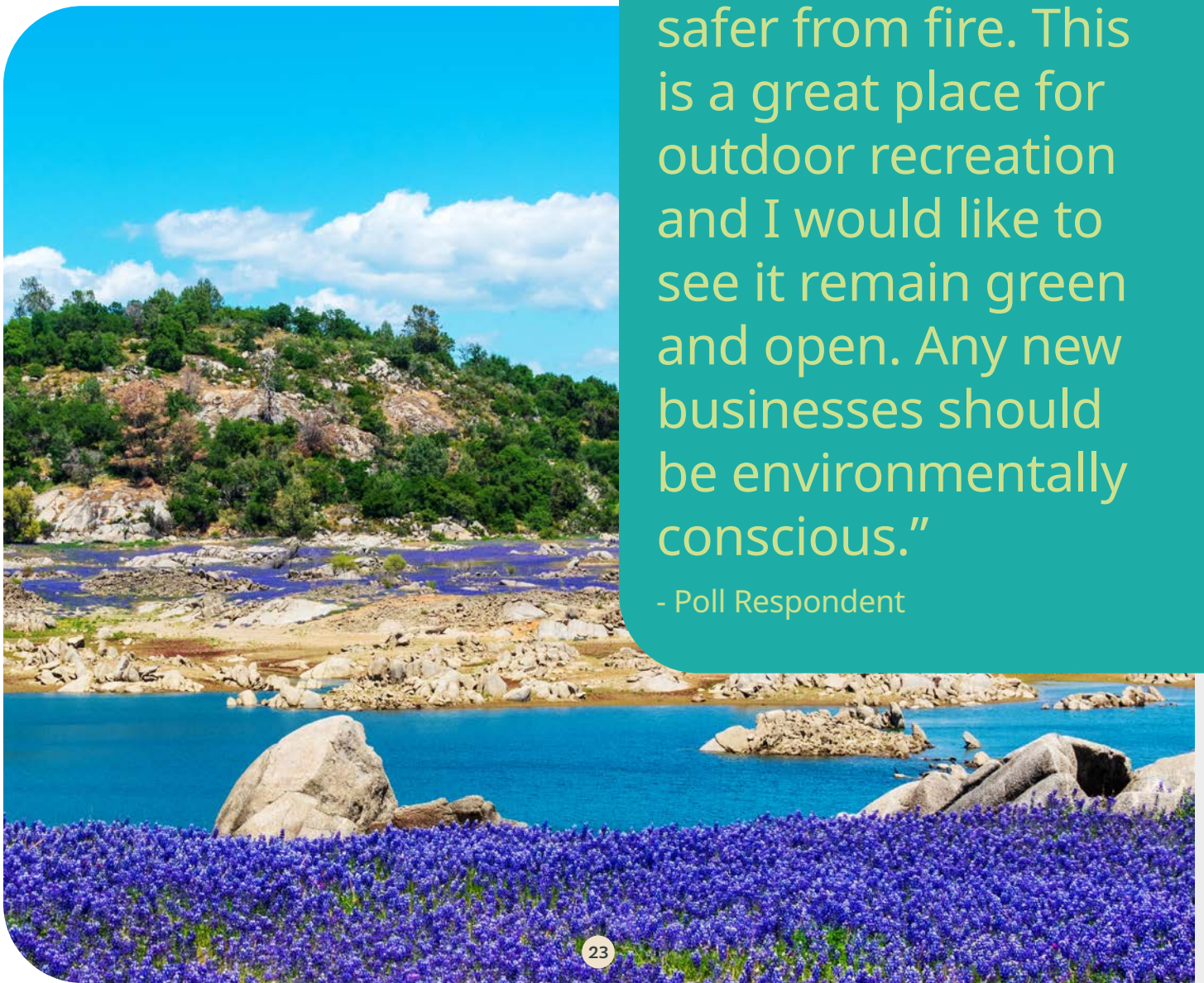
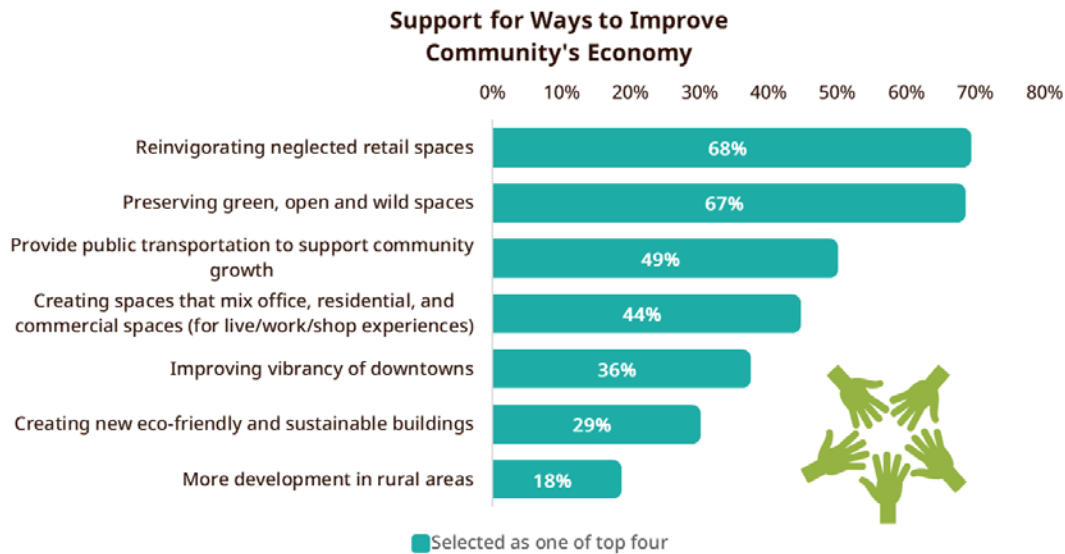


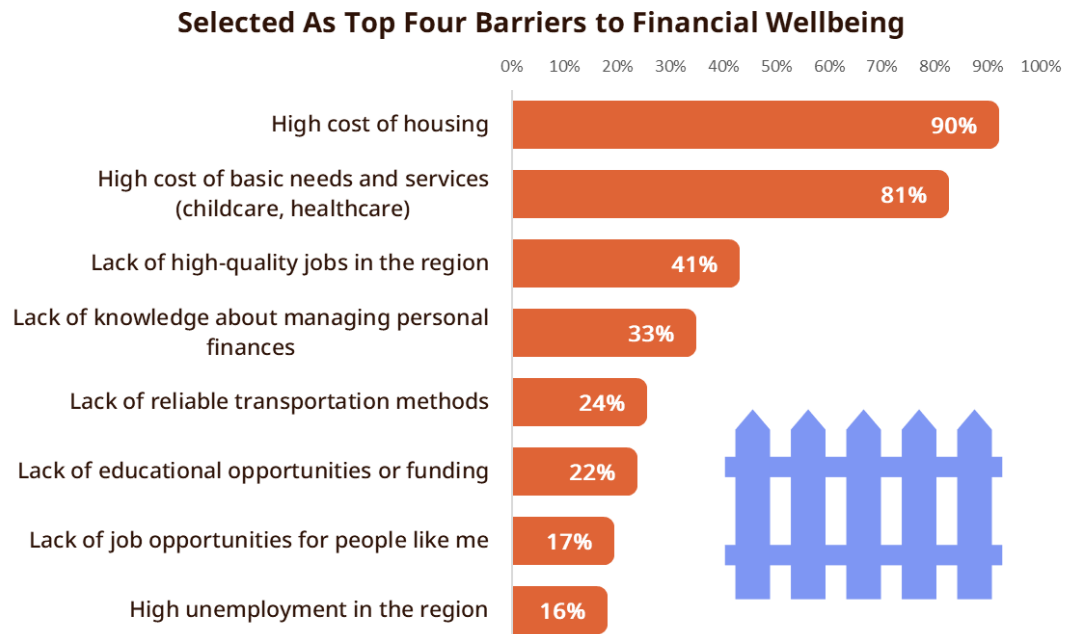
Chart 14: Top Ways to Improve Their Community's Economy



The high cost of housing is the number one barrier to financial wellbeing

There is significant consensus on the primary challenges and barriers to economic prosperity. Housing costs continue to adversely impact the ability of people to comfortably live and participate in our economy, with 90% of respondents agreeing that the high cost of housing is our communities' top barrier to achieving financial well-being. Additionally, 81% of respondents cite the high costs of other basic needs, such as childcare and healthcare, as their top concern. Finally, a lack of high-quality jobs in the region was the third most cited barrier, with 41% of respondents including it in their top four barriers.

Chart 15: Barriers to Financial Wellbeing





Catalyzing Action: What is Needed?

As we work to grow an inclusive and thriving economy in the Capital Region, we must create conditions and advance opportunities that allow all to reach their potential. Through We Prosper Together, we have an opportunity to create a thriving economy that better supports the needs of all communities. The following recommendations highlight opportunities and existing momentum that support an equitable, accessible, stable, sustainable, and growing regional economy.

Creating an Equitable Economy

- **Advocate for inclusive policies in government and business.** This includes supporting legislation that addresses systemic barriers to equality, such as employment discrimination or access to affordable healthcare and education, in the government sector; and advocating for inclusive hiring practices and pay equity, as well as participating in supplier diversity initiatives in the business sector.
- **Fund projects that aim to address disparities:** By targeting systemic inequalities and investing in initiatives that promote inclusivity and opportunity, we can level the playing field and foster a more equitable distribution of wealth and resources. Through We Prosper Together, we are building a project pipeline to assist projects in identifying and receiving funding, so long as the projects are aligned with the four objectives of the California Jobs First program: equity, sustainability, job quality and access, and economic competitiveness and resilience. To share your own project or idea, visit our website and [complete the project inventory form](#).

Creating an Accessible Economy

- **Provide financial literacy resources to youth and other high-need populations:** Having an understanding of the many financial tools, resources, and skills is key to empowering participation in our economy, especially for those who have been historically excluded. Increased financial literacy can lead to higher savings rates, improved credit scores, and enhanced access to financial products and services, ultimately enabling more people to participate fully in the economy and build long-term financial stability. The [Sacramento Financial Empowerment Center](#) is a program run by the City of Sacramento that offers free professional one-on-one financial coaching for local residents aged 18 and older.
- **Increase public awareness of available small business support:** Many organizations in the Capital Region offer or can connect aspiring entrepreneurs with invaluable resources to start and grow their businesses. Minority small business chambers and organizations, such as the [Sacramento Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce](#), [Sacramento Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#), [Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce](#), or [California Capital Financial Development Corporation](#), and more, are instrumental in supporting small business creation and growth. Getting involved with a local business chamber provides access to information about funding opportunities, mentorship programs, training workshops, and networking events.





Supporting the Stability and Sustainability of Our Economy

- **Invest in resilient industries and sectors poised for growth:** These investments can stimulate innovation, create job opportunities, and build robust infrastructures, fortifying the economy against downturns and ensuring long-term viability. Through We Prosper Together, we are advancing multiple strategies to create an inclusive and competitive economy, such as growing sustainable and high-growth potential industries, addressing uneven and inequitable growth, and improving access to high-quality jobs. Read more in the We Prosper Together [Executive Summary](#) for the Capital Region Economic Assessment.

Continuing to Grow Our Economy

- **Invest in initiatives, projects, and businesses that create quality jobs:** The California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative is just one source of funding under the state's portfolio of programs to increase quality jobs. There are also [funding opportunities](#) at local and federal levels with similar goals of uplifting local and regional economies for community benefit. Now is the time for the Capital Region to collaborate to secure additional funding for our communities to support inclusive opportunities.
- **Align our education system, employers, and workforce development programs for clear pathways to quality jobs:** Our educators, employers, and workforce development programs are the primary touchpoints for community members seeking quality jobs. By ensuring that education curricula and training programs reflect industry needs and emerging job markets, we can ensure job seekers can acquire the skills and knowledge needed to obtain employment. Our region already coordinates across networks through collaborative efforts such as the [Strong Workforce Program](#), [Sacramento K-16 Collaborative](#), and the [Capital Region Workforce Boards](#), however, there is still work to be done.

Enacting Our Common Vision

- **Fully integrate climate resilience with economic development:** We are facing a systemwide transition to a lower-carbon economy. We need all hands on deck to envision creative solutions that preserve and improve the health of our environment. Food and agriculture is one sector ripe with opportunities through sustainable and innovative practices that support our working lands.
- **Address barriers to financial well-being, like affordable housing and access to quality jobs:** Our region as well as communities across California must address housing supply and access to affordable housing. Some strategies to address housing affordability include accelerating housing construction, specifically infill and transit-oriented development, as highlighted in our regional initiative, [Green Means Go](#), creating pathways to home ownership, advancing policies that protect renters, and more. Creating high-quality jobs and expanding access to them can be achieved through goals in the We Prosper Together initiative, including building our high-priority industries, like manufacturing or life sciences, supporting capacity-building for entrepreneurs, reducing barriers to opportunity, and more.

We are at a critical moment to build inclusive economic growth and reimagine some of our core systems to support a more equitable and sustainable economy for people across our region. It is through collective effort and collaborative processes, like We Prosper Together, that the Capital Region can build a lasting economy that represents and meets our community's needs, enabling families to thrive for generations.

Survey Methodology

Since 2017, the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at Sacramento State University, in partnership with Valley Vision, has used an online survey panel to collect public opinion information about the Greater Sacramento Region. Survey panels are a representative group of individuals who have agreed to participate in multiple surveys over time. In response to the declining response rates and reliability associated with telephone surveys, online survey panels have become an alternative way to gather data about a specific region or population (e.g., GfK's Knowledge Panel, Yougov's Omnibus Panel, the National Opinion Research Center (NORC)'s Amerispeak Panel, and the Pew Research Center's American Trends). Individuals were recruited into the panel by an invitation letter, which was sent to a random sample of Sacramento Valley households. Any adult in the household, age 18 or older, could join the panel by going to the online profile or by calling ISR to indicate a preference to participate with mail-in surveys. The strength of this probability-based sampling method is that virtually everyone in the Greater Sacramento Valley had a chance of being included.

The current panel is made up of 1,401 residents from El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Yuba, Sutter, and Yolo, of which 1,198 completed at least 85% of the survey. Additionally, an address-based sample (ABS) consisting of Nevada County, Colusa County, and the Tahoe Basin residents was included in this poll. 42,883 residents of the three additional areas were sent an invitation letter to participate in the study. Of these, 550 completed at least 85% of the survey, resulting in a total of 1,748 responses.

Panelists have the option of receiving a \$5 electronic gift card every time they complete a survey. Mail-in participants receive a \$5 bill by mail with the survey. ISR uses Marketing Systems Group to conduct statistical weighting to ensure that survey responses represent the Greater Sacramento Valley.



Sampling and Recruitment | The Greater Sacramento Valley Panel uses probability-based sampling methods. Specifically, to recruit a random sample of Sacramento Valley residents, we use the United States Postal Service Delivery Sequence File (USPS DSF) of California residential addresses (stratified geographically by county and Hispanic population)[1], as a sampling frame. We send postcards or letters to the sampled residences and invite adult residents to join the panel (via a URL address or by calling us to indicate a preference for mail participation). The strength of this sampling method is that virtually everyone in the population has a chance of being included in the sample, but those sampled must also choose to do so.



Consent and Initial Profile | During recruitment (and at the beginning of each subsequent survey), panelists learn that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they have the right to opt-out at any time. They also learn that their survey responses are strictly confidential. Immediately upon agreeing to join the panel, panelists complete a 15-minute survey that includes questions about their demographics, background, interests, personality, political identity, and household composition. This profile information is merged with future survey data collections, thereby reducing the need to ask panelists to answer these questions with each survey administered.

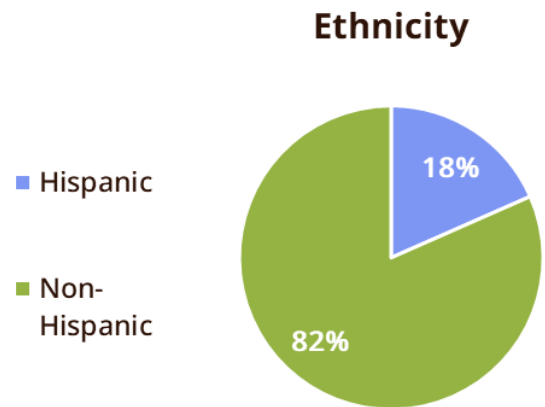
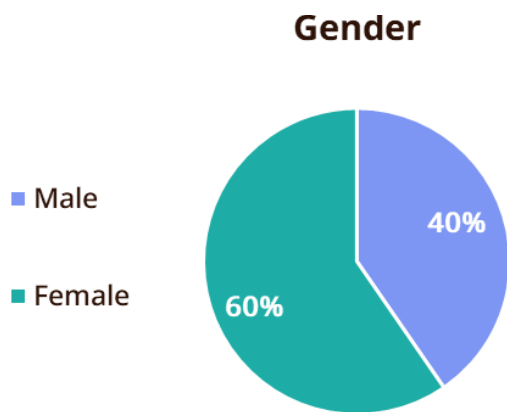
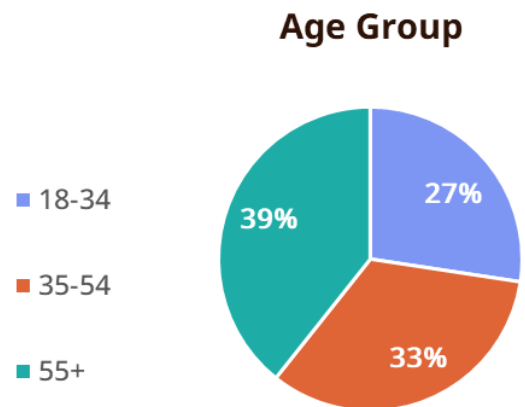
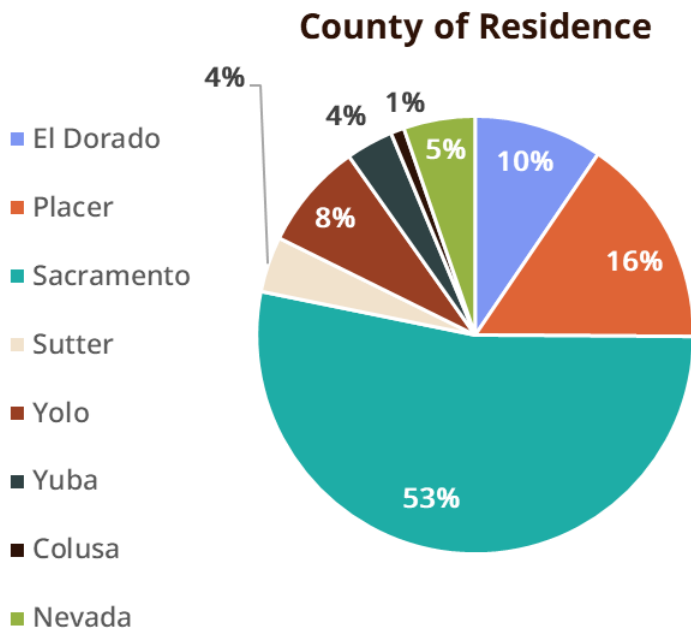
Survey Procedures | ISR uses the Qualtrics Research Suite online survey platform to administer surveys. The research team optimizes all surveys for completion on mobile phones and tablets and provides Spanish translations. Panelists receive reminders to complete the surveys every three days following the initial invitation. All subsequent surveys have been offered in both English and Spanish. Each time a panelist completes a survey, s/he receives a \$5 Tango gift card, delivered directly to his or her email inbox (or home), redeemable at most online retailers. Panelists have the option to receive the Tango gift card or “donate” it back to the study so more people can participate. Mail-in participants receive a \$5 bill by mail with the survey.

Survey Weighting and Analysis | For each survey, the weighting protocol proceeds in stages. First, the base weights are computed to reflect the various selection probabilities for respondents selected from different sampling frames. Second, responses are adjusted for nonresponse and under-coverage by calibrating the base weights to known population-based control totals for gender and age, race/ethnicity, education, income, and county using a ‘raking’ process. The population benchmarks are obtained from the most recent Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 5-year estimates and Nielsen Claritas estimates. Finally, the raked weights are trimmed to reduce extreme values. The weighting process ensures that the responses from the panelists responding to the survey will statistically represent the demographics of the Greater Sacramento Valley. Surveys are analyzed by reporting the percent of panelists (who are representative of the Greater Sacramento Valley) responding to the various questions.

Survey results are often broken down by panelist characteristics, such as gender, income levels, race, and other key demographic information. When the survey responses are broken down by these categories (or disaggregated into cross-tabulations), a statistical test is run to ensure that the differences among these groups are statistically significant (i.e., any differences are not the result of “noise” in the data).

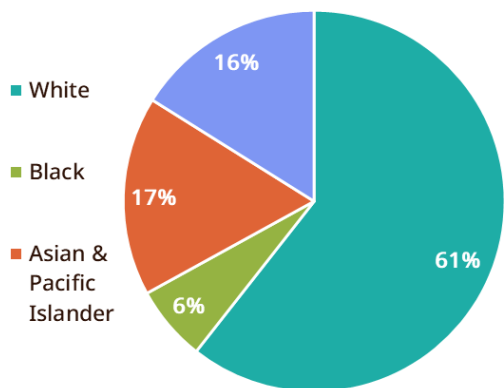


Survey Respondents' Demographics and Geographic Profile

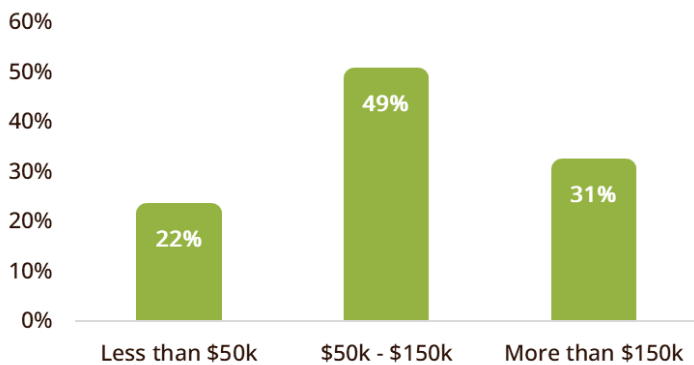




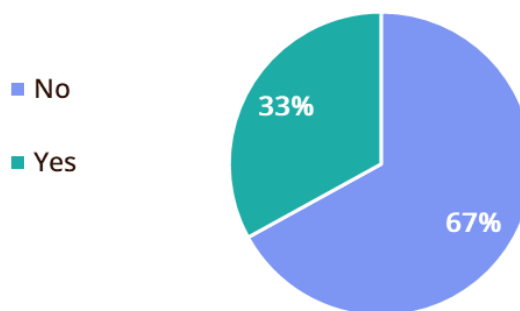
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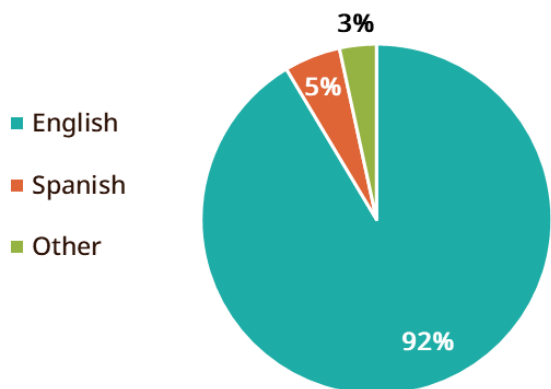
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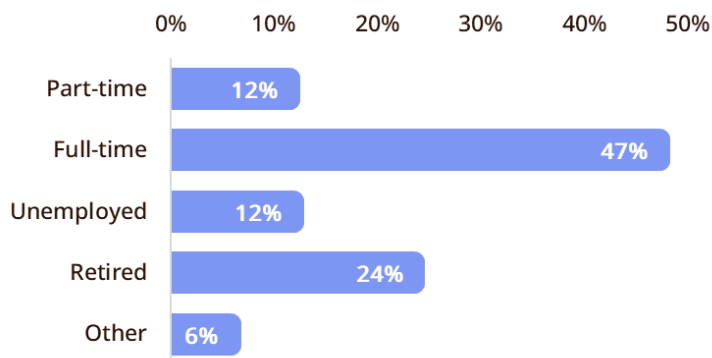
Children in Household



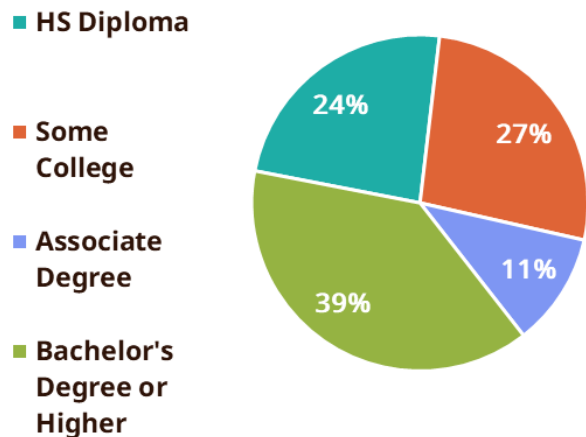
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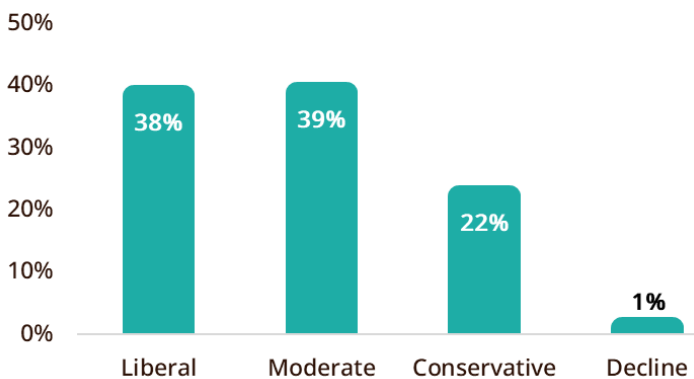
Employment Status



Education Level



Political Ideology



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