



**Regional  
Priorities Summary  
Fresno COG  
One Voice  
2019**



## 2019 Washington D.C. Fresno COG One Voice Delegates

**Alma Beltran**, Mayor, City of Parlier

**Frank Gonzalez**, Mayor, City of Sanger

**Drew Bessinger**, Mayor, City of Clovis

**Rey Leon**, Mayor, City of Huron

**Noe Rodriguez**, Councilmember, City of Parlier

**Paul Caprioglio**, Councilmember, City of Fresno, District 4

**Luis Chavez**, Councilmember, City of Fresno, District 5

**Daniel Parra**, Councilmember, City of Fowler & League of California Cities, South San Joaquin Valley Division

**Linda Hayes**, Chairman of the Board, Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission

**Lee Ann Eager**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fresno County Economic Development Corporation

**Joseph Oldham**, President/CEO, New Vision Aviation, Inc.

**Martha Elizabeth Hernandez**, President, Martha Elizabeth Consulting

**Blake Konczal**, Executive Director, Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board

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**Jeffrey T. Roberts**, Assemi Group

**Antonio Gastelum**, City Manager, City of Parlier

**Robert Phipps**, Deputy Director, Fresno Council of Governments

**Chuck Riojas**, Financial Secretary, FMKT Building Trades

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**Elizabeth Jonasson**, Strategy and Communications Officer, Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission

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**Laura Kroeger**, Associate, Townsend Public Affairs

**David Beltran**, Public Works, City of Parlier

**Elizabeth Quijano**, Granted Solutions, City of Parlier Grant's Department



### One Voice History

In 2003 Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) initiated the first "One Voice" effort, seeking Federal and/or State funding for projects of broad, community-wide benefit within Fresno County. The One Voice goal was to assemble a public-private delegation, select prioritized projects, and then visit Congressional and Federal departmental representatives in Washington, D.C. to pursue funding and grant opportunities.

Fresno COG's One Voice delegation continues to inform legislators about the region's priority needs, appealing to federal decision makers for their support during the competitive grant processes. By advocating for policy and regulatory reform we continue to find ways to eliminate unnecessary procedures so that government agencies and the business community can work together efficiently toward transportation infrastructure job creation.

# Fresno COG One Voice 2019

## ***Regional Priorities Summary***

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## Transportation Infrastructure & Policies

# Veterans Boulevard Interchange and Corridor Improvement Project

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

1. Support the Veterans Boulevard Interchange Project and Corridor Improvement project funding from INFRA
2. Increase federal funding to support large-scale transportation infrastructure needs that strengthen nationwide economic vitality

### ABOUT THE PROJECT:

The City of Fresno is poised to move dirt, lay asphalt and get people and goods moving along State Route 99 (SR-99) with construction of the Veterans Boulevard Interchange Project. Unfortunately, available funding for transportation infrastructure falls severely short of local needs. A funding gap resulting from the recent recession currently prevents moving ahead with construction. To address the funding gap, an application was submitted to the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant program for the interchange and roadway extension components of the project. Corridor improvements on Herndon and Shaw avenues were included in the March 2019 application as two additional project phases, bringing the total request for funding to \$25 million dollars. Non-Federal funding committed to the project totals over \$75 million. With Federal investment, Veterans Boulevard could be fully operational by 2023.

### PROJECT NEED:

Veterans Boulevard is a regionally significant project which will construct a six-lane connecting arterial roadway in northwest Fresno, an interchange at SR-99, and grade separations over the Union Pacific Railroad, High Speed Rail line and Golden State Boulevard. It will also construct a multipurpose trail and added improvements to roadways surrounding the project.

Each day thousands of residents face delays due to inadequate infrastructure in an area that has seen significant growth in the last 20 years. These delays clog roadways, negatively impacting residents' commutes and slow goods movement through the region. Traffic impacts response times for emergency responders such as police, fire and paramedics. School buses get caught in the queue and are delayed.

Investing in Veterans Boulevard demonstrates a federal commitment to transformative infrastructure that will improve traffic flow and goods movement, facilitate pedestrian travel and stimulate the economy through local job creation. The project will also improve east-west connectivity between north Fresno and the rural communities west of Highway 99. To truly rebuild America's infrastructure, funding must be identified to complete the Veterans Boulevard Project.

### PROJECT STATUS

Design work is complete for phase one of the project, with phases two through five scheduled for completion in 2019. Design work for phases six and seven will be completed in 2020.



Environmental work will be required for Phase 6 of the project, which widens the Herndon Avenue Overcrossing along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) alignment located between Polk and Milburn Avenues. Environmental analysis and right of way acquisition will be needed for corridor improvements; however, there is more than adequate time allotted in the schedule submitted as part of the city's INFRA grant to complete all

remaining milestones well in advance of funding obligation deadlines. The last remaining piece of the project's financial portfolio the final \$25 million needed for construction that will advance the project to completion.

### CONTACT:

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City of Fresno  
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### Veteran's Boulevard Project Video:

<https://vimeo.com/320285312>

## Veterans Boulevard Phasing (INFRA)



Phase One	Extend Bullard Avenue to its connection with Veterans Boulevard. <i>Fully Funded</i>
Phase Two	Construct a grade separation over Union Pacific Rail Road and California High Speed Rail Tracks and vacate Carnegie Avenue from Bullard to existing Golden State Boulevard. <i>Fully Funded</i>
Phase Three	Construct the State Route 99 interchange and grade separation over the realigned Golden State Boulevard. <i>INFRA Funding Requested</i>
Phase Four 4a: Shaw to Barstow 4b: Riverside to Herndon	Extend Veterans Boulevard to connections with Herndon Avenue to the north and Shaw Avenue to the south. <i>INFRA Funding Requested for 4b</i>
Phase Five 5a: Herndon to Hayes 5b: Hayes to Shaw	Construct Veterans Boulevard Class I multipurpose trail from Shaw to Herndon. <i>Fully Funded</i>
Phase Six	Herndon Avenue Bridge widening from four lanes to six lanes from Polk to Milburn. Construct pedestrian trail on the north side to bridge a gap in an existing east-west trail facilities. <i>INFRA Funding Requested for Construction</i>
Phase Seven	Installed Adaptive Signal Control Technology and traffic signal preemption equipment on Shaw Avenue from Grantland to Polk. <i>INFRA Funding Requested</i>



# Transportation Infrastructure & Policies

## Fund Interchanges Critical to Economic Prosperity In Fresno

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

Allocate \$47 million for land acquisition and construction for the Central Avenue Interchange

### ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Interchange reconstruction is needed along State Route (SR) 99 at North Avenue, American Avenue and Central Avenue to support goods movement of goods through the Central Valley. SR-99 is an extremely important trucking route for billions of dollars in Fresno County agricultural commodities and manufactured goods. Without reconstruction to improve capacity, bottlenecks will continue. Existing travel delays are costly, increase the risk of collisions and discourage private investment. Local funding has been allocated for project development, right of way and construction costs for North Avenue and American Avenue interchanges. Funding is needed for the Central Avenue interchange.

### PROJECT NEED:

State Route 99 is an important regional and local facility within the San Joaquin Valley. It is a major truck route which provides critical access for shipment of agricultural goods to markets outside of the Valley. It is also a commuter route within and between cities located along its length, and provides significant recreational access during the summer months. Route 99 extends in the south-north direction to link the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys from Interstate 5.

Existing freeway ramps at North Avenue, American Avenue and Central Avenue are one-way stop controlled and operate at an unacceptable level of service. The proposed improvements will relieve congestion from heavy truck traffic and increase traffic capacity. Competitive grant programs for large infrastructure are heavily weighted in favor of funding “shovel-ready” projects that have substantially completed design and right-of-way phases and are ready to break ground on construction. Preparing a large project for construction requires significant upfront capital investment, which presents a barrier for mid-sized cities like Fresno. Fresno has over half a million residents, with an annual median income of \$41,842 and a median home price of \$232,800. A large population with limited resources has led to a depressed tax revenue base relative to the size of the city. Demand for transportation, safety and other needs far exceed available revenues – though recent private investments in the area point to new opportunities.

Distribution centers for Ulta and Amazon opened in south Fresno in 2018, bringing thousands of high quality jobs to the area and solidifying the need for modern freeway interchanges to accommodate growing demand.

Given the priority of these improvements to the City and region, grant funds and local measure funds have been used to initiate the path to constructing the interchanges. Local and state investments of over \$1 million on the projects have focused on studies and specific plans that identify project alternatives, multimodal connections and determine the impacts of development. Local and state investments totaling more than \$156 million are allocated for future engineering, right of way and construction costs. A Federal investment of \$47 million to support the Central Avenue interchange will demonstrate a commitment to improving the nation's infrastructure in America's emerging markets and core communities.

### PROJECT STATUS

An Operational Analysis Report for Route 99 at North Avenue was completed by Caltrans Traffic Operations Branch in 2016. A Project Study Report (PSR) to request programming for project approval and environmental document phases was approved in November 2016. Further analysis of interchange design alternatives including the addition of American Avenue and Central Avenue to the Project Study Report is currently underway and expected to be completed in 2019. The projects will then be ready to move into the development phase which includes: project approval and environmental review, plans, specifications, estimates and right of way acquisition. Construction will follow upon completion of the project development phase.

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## Intersection of SR 99 at Central Avenue



# Transportation Infrastructure & Policies

## Cross Valley Rail Project Huron, CA

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

Congressional delegation support for future grant applications for the Cross Valley Corridor in general and for rail station construction in Huron, specifically.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT:

The Cross Valley Corridor (CVC) is a vital east-west rail corridor among communities in Fresno, Tulare, and Kings Counties in the Central San Joaquin Valley. While existing rail is active in certain segments and abandoned in others, the corridor presents a unique opportunity to unlock mobility improvements for the region, advance local economic development, and to improve local air quality. With a proposed California High-Speed Rail station located in the middle of the corridor, there is an opportunity to improve regional and statewide connectivity and mobility throughout the communities along the corridor, which include Huron, Naval Air Station Lemoore, Hanford, Visalia, Farmersville, Exeter, Lindsay, and Porterville.

### PROJECT NEED:

In 2016, Tulare County Association of Governments began the Cross Valley Corridor Plan to study connectivity and mobility improvements in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The project aimed to increase transit service efficiency, enable communities and cities in the Cross Valley Corridor (CVC) to promote developments that support transit use, encourage revitalization and economic development, and facilitate growth in support of the California High-Speed Rail (HSR) investment. This project evaluated a range of new public transit service alternatives that would be able to accommodate future population and economic growth, while being compatible with existing land uses and future development opportunities. By planning for a CVC transit system well in advance, right-of-way and land needs can be identified and protected now, avoiding costly acquisitions or eminent domain processes later.

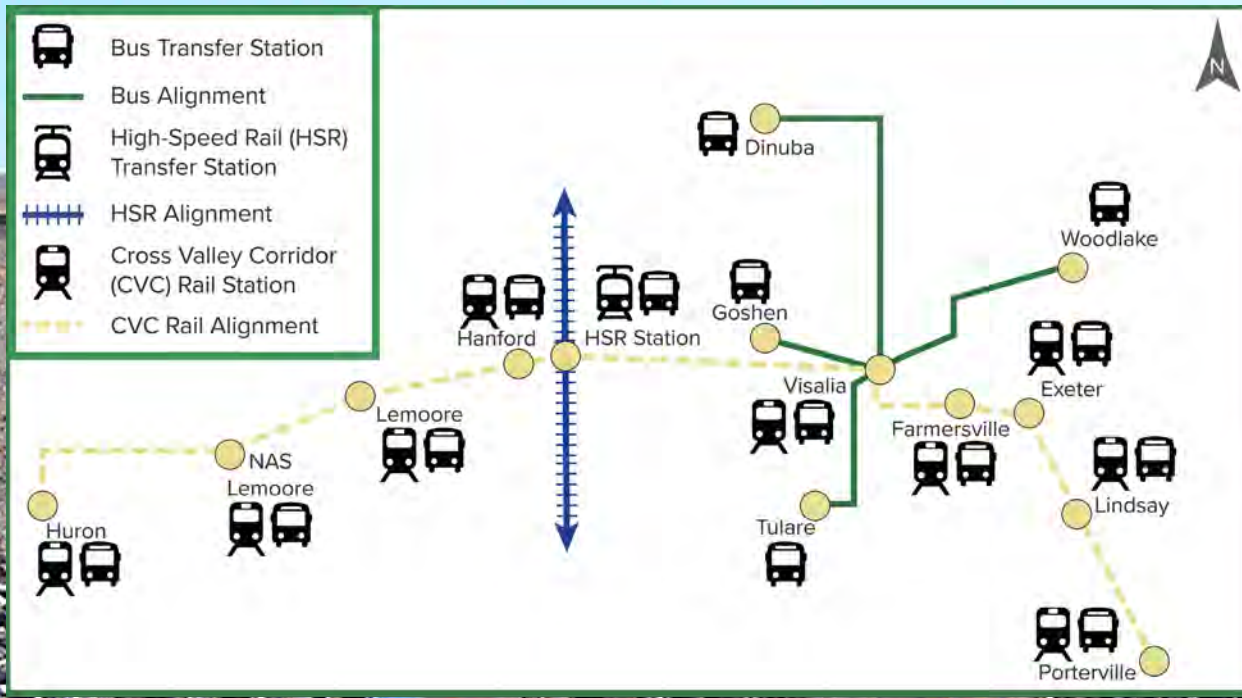
The Cross Valley Corridor (CVC) is approximately 75 miles long between the cities of Huron and Porterville, with 7-13 potential stops in cities between them, serving as the backbone for a future transit corridor. The majority of the corridor is occupied by single track freight railway owned and operated by the San Joaquin Valley Railroad (SJVRR). However, existing track conditions are not yet suitable for passenger rail operations as many structures, including railway, bridges, culverts, and crossings are aging and obsolete. The existing right-of-way (ranging from 50-200 feet wide) would

be suitable for passenger rail via a mixed use (freight and passenger rail). The alignment connects the corridor cities' downtown areas, making it an ideal route to serve the region's major activity centers and populations. A connection between the proposed Kings/Tulare Regional High-Speed Rail Station and the CVC could benefit the region by potentially linking the communities to one another.

Designing and implementing a large-scale rail project can span decades and come with a hefty price tag that may be alarming to stakeholders who are unsure that the project benefits outweigh the costs. The CVC Plan proposes a phased approach to demonstrate value in the near-term by implementing a bus or BRT service along the approximate proposed route to spark awareness among the communities along the corridor while allowing for data collection in ridership and usage trends that could be helpful in future rail planning efforts.

Huron residents would benefit from both the positive economic and environmental improvements that the CVC would provide. According to the California EPA CalEnviroScreen 3.0 tool, the City of Huron ranks in the top 70-85th percentile of pollution burden in California. Specifically, the concentration of particulate matter, or PM2.5, in Huron is in the 95th percentile, meaning it is higher than 95% of the census tracts in California. PM2.5 comes from cars, trucks, and other activities, and can have serious health effects, including heart and lung disease. Increasing local transit opportunities will help to reduce local PM2.5 concentrations. Additionally, Huron is defined by the California Department of Housing and Community Development as a low-income community. Connecting Huron to cities along the CVC, as well as the California High-Speed Rail, will improve Huron residents' access to jobs and services.

The CVC would have long-term economic development benefits for the City of Huron and improve the quality of life for residents through increased access to jobs and services, as well as environmental benefits related to air quality, energy use, noise reduction, and land use. When fully operational, California HSR service throughout the Central Valley and to the major employment hubs throughout the State can have a transformational impact on local and regional economies. The CVC presents an opportunity to better harness the High-Speed Rail's statewide impacts, and enhance intra-regional connectivity and economic integration.



**CONTACT:**

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 Phone: 559-945-2241  
 36311 Lassen Avenue, Bx 339  
 Huron CA 93234



# Transportation Infrastructure & Policies

## Modernizing the Federally Authorized Passenger Facility Charge

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

1. Support the new Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chair's desire to develop an infrastructure package which will address Passenger Facility Charge modernization
2. Support the new Ways and Means Committee's intention of forming a Transportation & Infrastructure Subcommittee to focus solely on infrastructure funding

The five-year FAA Reauthorization bill, passed in 2018, ignored the effect of inflation on airport capital improvement funding. Authorization levels were kept at the 2000 level for Passenger Facility Charges (PFCs). The industry's only option to improve airport infrastructure funding will be to support the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, and the Ways and Means Committee's efforts to bring forward a transportation infrastructure package. Moving this initiative forward is in unison with the national airport associations; Airports Council International – North America (ACI-NA) and the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE), and ensures our respective messages are consistent.

### ABOUT THE PRIORITY:

The PFC is a \$4.50 user fee paid as part of purchasing an airline ticket at airports throughout the country, including Fresno Air Terminal (FAT). The PFCs that FAT receives are used exclusively for capital improvements at our airport – local dollars, jobs and economic development. It is the primary funding source for FAT's infrastructure, such as terminal expansion and modernization, to accommodate Central California's growth. The FAA Reauthorization bill in 2018 failed to increase the PFC authorization level, which has not changed since 2000. At a time when U.S. airports have \$100 billion in unfunded capital improvement needs, including \$190 million at FAT over the next five years, Congress must be urged to modernize the PFC as part of its anticipated transportation infrastructure package. FAT's ability to meet the growing demands of Central California is critical to maintaining and growing air service.

### PROJECT NEED:

The Fresno airport system has a regional catchment area that reaches 1.8 million people and represents an annual economic impact of \$788 million and 9,300 direct, induced and indirect jobs – and we are growing.

The PFC has been an indispensable component of airport capital improvement funding/financing. PFC revenue is used to fund approved capital projects on a pay-go basis like a grant. However, unlike grants, it is also used leverage debt by paying debt service and fund eligible projects on a reimbursable basis. It is an efficient capital funding source that is generated at the airport and collected by airlines, which is remitted directly to the airport monthly. It is not filtered through Washington D.C. – it is local revenue used for Fresno airport capital projects, creating local jobs and generating local economic activity.

Congress authorized the PFC nearly three decades ago, increasing it from \$3.00 to \$4.50 in 2000. For nearly the past two decades the PFC level remained unchanged. By comparison, airport construction costs have increased 32% in just the past two years, according to a study by ACI-NA. With FAT's \$202 million capital improvement program (CIP) over the next five years and a quarter-billion-dollar CIP over the next 10 years, a diminishing level of available capital funding will make needed capital improvements increasingly difficult to accomplish.

Air service connectivity is a significant business growth consideration and key component of regional economic growth. In 2017, the Fresno Airport system provided an annual economic impact of \$788 million and 9,300 direct, indirect and induced jobs. The ability to efficiently fund FAT's capacity-enhancing infrastructure projects is vital to serving the growing needs of California's Central Valley. Modernizing the PFC will have a direct positive impact on FAT's ability to accommodate the region's growth. Without a PFC modernization capacity-enhancing infrastructure projects will be in jeopardy of timely execution.

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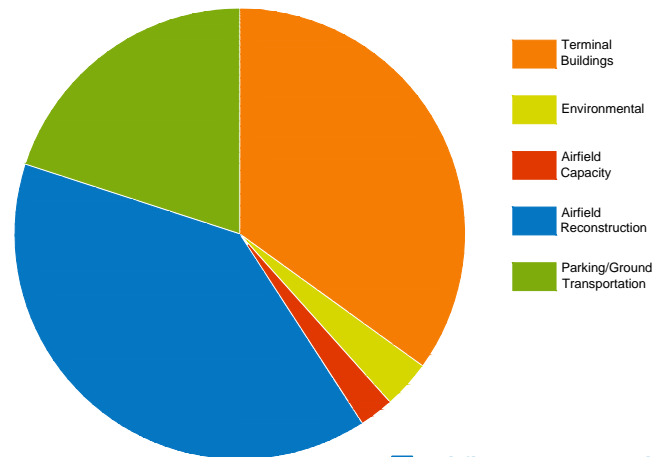




**FRESNO YOSEMITE  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**



#### AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS BY TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT



### KEEP AMERICA'S AIRPORTS FROM FALLING BEHIND

Fresno's airport needs new infrastructure investments to modernize for 21st century air travel demands. With \$202 million in infrastructure needs over the next 5 years, current funding only scratches the surface of airport funding requirements. We can meet our airport infrastructure needs by:

1. Eliminating federal restrictions on the local Passenger Facility Charge user fee.
2. Increasing the Airport Improvement Program.



**F A T ' S 5 - Y E A R  
INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS:  
\$202 MILLION**  
**JOB CREATION POTENTIAL:  
2,143**  
**ECONOMIC IMPACT:  
\$320 MILLION**

### THE PASSENGER FACILITY CHARGE USER FEE ENHANCES THE PASSENGER EXPERIENCE



INCREASED  
COMPETITION



LOWER AIRFARES



ON-TIME  
FLIGHTS



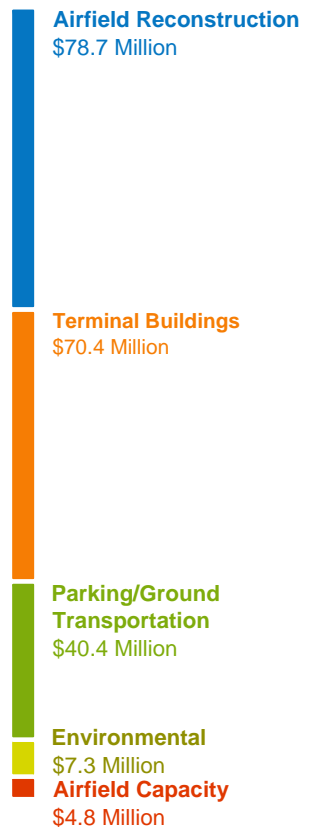
MODERN SECURITY  
CHECKPOINTS



FASTER, SHORTER  
LINES



BAGGAGE SYSTEM  
UPDATES



**INVESTING IN FRESNO'S AIRPORT COULD CREATE  
2,143 NEW JOBS**

# Workforce Development

## Regional Fire Training Center

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

\$30 - 40 million dollars to develop a Regional Fire Training Center.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Fresno is home to over 520,000 residents, the fifth largest city in California. It has one of the busiest fire departments, with over 45,000 calls for service each year. While Fresno, and the Fresno Fire Department (FFD) are leaders in the Central Valley (both in size and services) its fire training facilities are 88 years old.

Fresno's training facility was built in phases starting in the 1930's with the last major upgrade completed in 1953. The facility was built for an organization that protected a population of 50,000 and had 100 firefighters. Today, the FFD has 309 members protecting a population of over half a million people.

Additionally, firefighters throughout the Central Valley come to Fresno to train alongside the FFD. Annually, Fresno is host to over 650 firefighters who come to train at a week-long training symposium. A Regional Fire Training Center needs to be built.

### PROJECT NEED:

The Regional Fire Training Center in Fresno would serve not only FFD members, but also the fire agencies in the surrounding communities throughout the Central Valley. There is no Regional Fire Training Center within a 100-mile radius of the City of Fresno.

Specifically, the Regional Fire Training Center would consist of the following:

- Parking for up to 50 cars and 8 fire apparatus
- Four-to-five story training tower with Class-B burn props
- Training village with a closed-loop water retention/recycling system
- Drafting pit for pump operations
- Hazardous materials training systems
- Confined space training systems
- Office space and lunch room for 10-12 people
- Three-to-four classrooms (25-40 seats) and one classroom with seating for 100 -120
- Modular "burn box" for live fire training
- Showers and locker rooms
- Training video production studio

While architectural drawings were developed up to the "design phase"; the project has stalled due to the lack of funding for several years. We believe the Regional Fire Training Center could be developed for \$30 - 40 million dollars.

The Regional Fire Training Center presents an opportunity for regional partnership within the Valley and among local, state and federal governments and institutions to invest in strengthening fire response training.

Regional fire agencies must send their personnel away to Southern California or the Bay Area to get the specialized training necessary to meet the critical needs of the changing fire service. Beyond the additional cost of having to travel out of the area to attend training, the local area loses out on revenue received via sales taxes by hosting classes. The Regional Fire Training Center will provide this much needed training locally, which will draw students from throughout the state. The economic benefit to the community is significant.

### CONTACT:

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Kerri.Donis@fresno.gov  
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## STATE FIRE TRAINING CHIEF STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

"The Central Valley has always been underserved in terms of adequate fire training facilities. This is becoming more and more evident as the public safety mission continues to grow, and yet there remains a significant gap in the middle of the state that does not have access to an accredited regional fire training facility. Fresno is a very logical choice to position such a facility for many reasons. It is the only major metropolitan City and Fire Department that could support such an endeavour; is centrally located in the state; and is already recognized as an equitable location for Northern and Southern California fire agencies to meet, in that the annual California Fire Chief's Association - Training Officers Symposium has been held in Fresno for the past 22 years. State Fire Training and the quality of their programs would greatly benefit from this type of project, as long as the facility can truly meet the needs of the region as a whole."

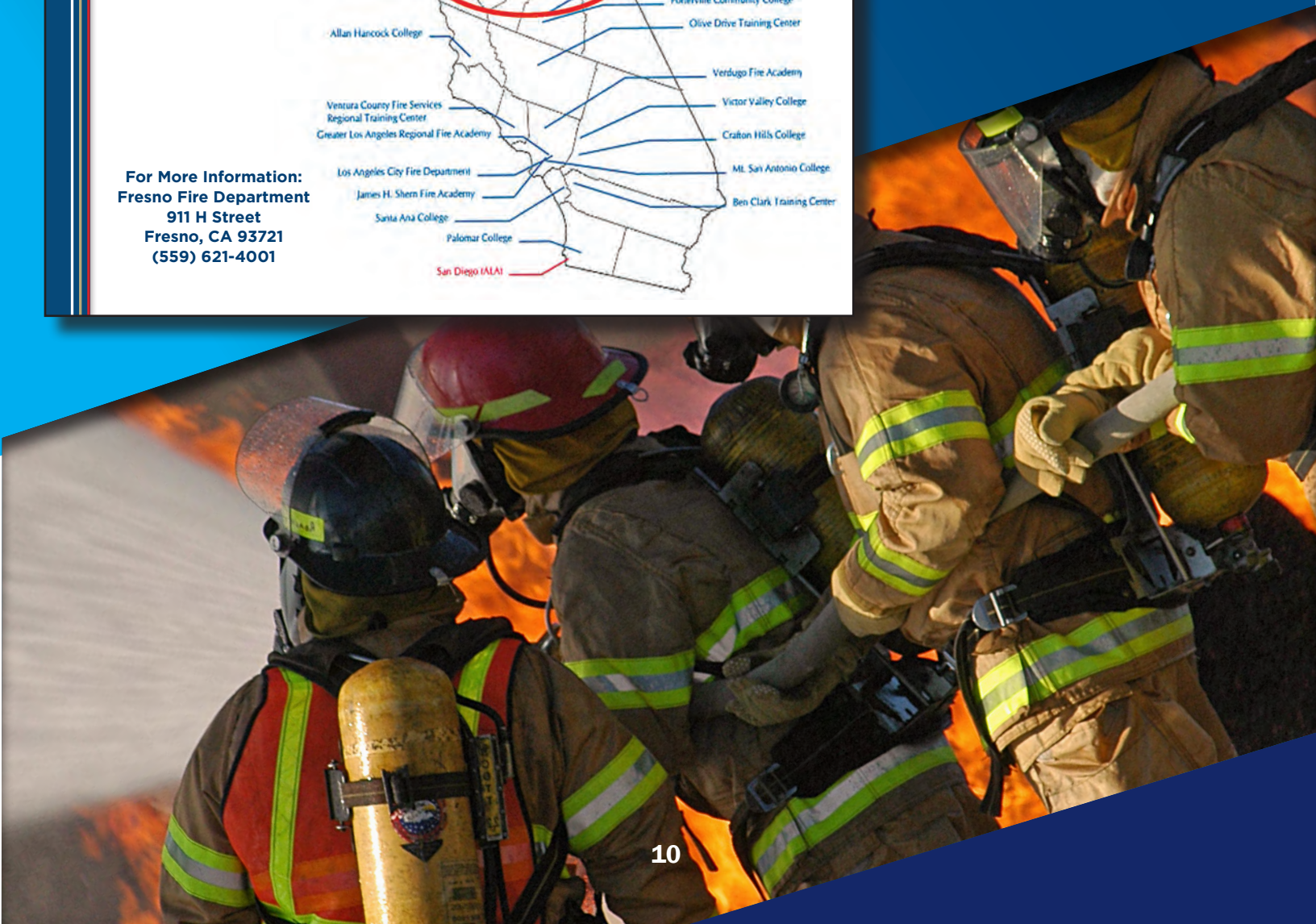
- Michael Richwine, Chief, State Fire Training, CALFIRE, Office of State Fire Marshal



### CALFIRE OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL ACCREDITED TRAINING FACILITIES



**For More Information:**  
Fresno Fire Department  
911 H Street  
Fresno, CA 93721  
(559) 621-4001



# Workforce Development

## Establishment of a Central Valley Forestry Corps

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

1. The Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board in partnership with its Local Conservation Corps and Community Colleges, requests the establishment of the Central Valley Forestry Corps through an interagency agreement with the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, in coordination with the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.
2. We are requesting \$1.26 million to recruit, train, and deploy 105 young adults tasked with removing and replacing dead trees in the Sierra Nevada Range.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Half a decade of severe drought combined with unusually high temperatures put California's trees under considerable stress. The result is a massive natural disaster for forests within California's Sierra Nevada range. As of December 2017, the United States Forest Service has identified a record 129 million dead trees within 8.9 million acres of California's drought stricken forests. Millions of additional trees are weakened and are expected to die in the coming months and years. Dead trees create many hazards, including massive wild fire risks, damage to homes and businesses, and several transportation impediments as many of the dead and dying trees are located near the state highway system. Although California and the U.S. Forest Service have taken action to address the disaster, additional assistance in removing dead and dying trees is desperately needed. As

this crisis requires substantial human capital and investments from all levels of government, we are prepared to work with all interested entities in an effort to be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars.

### PROJECT NEED:

A significant untapped resource exists in Central California's mountain communities and in the San Joaquin Valley – a large number of unemployed young adults. Over five years, this project would enroll 1,000 unemployed young adults (18 - 24) into Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) one-stop job centers. California Community Colleges would train them through a six-week Forestry Tech program, and finally, using federal funds, local conservation corps would employ them for up to two months, after which they would be placed in private sector, unsubsidized jobs. The skills learned and experiences gained through the Central Valley Forestry Corps are transferable to a wide range of growing, in-demand industries, including, but not limited to, construction, high-value agriculture, manufacturing and logistics, and energy.

### CONTACT:

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2125 Kern St. Suite 208, Fresno, CA 93721



# Workforce Development

## Transportation Training Facility

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

Provide support to establish Fresno as the hub for training workers for transportation careers including infrastructure construction including roads and bridges, truck driving, welding, and training for e-commerce employment and high-speed rail careers. A permanent facility of this kind will be necessary to keep up with the advancing technology in all areas of transportation.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Fresno County will, in the next 20 years, experience massive, unprecedented public works projects. While this is welcome to a region characterized by unabated poverty, these opportunities require the preparation of a local workforce able to meet the workforce demands of such economic expansion. Among the projects primed to deliver exceptional employment and career opportunities:

- Infrastructure projects funded by SB1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017
- Major Caltrans projects
- High Speed Rail and the High Speed Rail Maintenance Facility
- Significant expansion of Community Medical Centers
- Fresno's downtown Intermodal Transit Hub
- City of Fresno's Water Infrastructure Bond
- State Center Community College District infrastructure projects
- Fresno Unified School District bond projects

### PROJECT NEED:

The California High-Speed Rail project is well underway with thousands of jobs projected in the next 10 years. In addition, the Central Valley has billions of dollars worth of infrastructure planned for the future. The Fresno County Economic Development Corporation, the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board, California State University, Fresno, Fresno City College, along with many other partners, are proposing a campus intended to train workers for road and bridge construction, truck driving, welding, e-commerce employment training, and the construction of and maintenance of the high-speed rail. Because high-speed rail is new to the United States, it is necessary to train workers not only to build but also maintain the high-speed rail line in a world of ever-changing technology. Fresno County has both the land and population to create a Transportation Training educational center, not only for the State of California, but for the entire country.

The proposed facility is part of a broader vision associated with all facets of training including: road & bridge construction, truck driving, welding, e-commerce career training, and the location of the California High-Speed Rail Authority's heavy maintenance facility in Fresno County. That vision includes an educational center, transportation operations facility, an ongoing training site, a facility for businesses and countries to showcase



their products, and an industrial park for companies that provide services and products to the community including the high speed rail. As this burgeoning industry grows, it will be able to rely upon both the training and the firsthand experience of the professionals involved in the projects.

The Central Valley has an unacceptably high unemployment rate and lack of skilled workers to fill the jobs that the transportation industry faces. Fresno County is among California counties with the highest rates of poverty (26%) compared to (14%) rate in California. Identified as an economically distressed area due to its low per capita income figures, the region is representative of those areas needing to diversify job opportunities through technical training. With the infrastructure and roads construction that SB1 the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 is providing and the construction of high-speed rail and the need for a trained labor force to fill the jobs, the proposed training facility is exactly what is needed to grow our local economy.

Fresno County has a collaborative team which includes workforce development, economic development, education, and trade organizations, that together have developed a strategic plan to implement our vision. Fresno County's 18 public and private universities, community colleges, and technical institutes stand fully prepared to implement a cutting edge curriculum to train the workforce for road and bridge construction, welding, truck driving and high speed rail.

**CONTACT:**

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## Workforce Development

# Consistent Policies for Targeted Hiring Programs and Related Workforce Training Funds

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

1. A uniform policy pertaining to targeted hiring programs implemented by all administration departments within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)
2. All administration departments within the DOT identify workforce training funds that can be used by vocational training schools screened by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) recognized workforce boards and those used by apprenticeship programs, not just for on-the-job training

### ABOUT THE PROJECT:

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and its various administrative units do not have a uniform policy for targeted hiring initiatives and funding related to job training. This discrepancy gets in the way of local workforce development boards and their partners from implementing additional methods of getting unemployed and underemployed people back to work. In order to realize the maximum benefit of federal infrastructure projects and achieve President Trump's vision of rebuilding our infrastructure while putting millions of Americans to work, consistent policies are needed to address targeted hiring and funding related to job training at the operating administrations within the Department (Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, and Federal Highway Administration, etc.).

### PROJECT NEED:

After years of work, the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board's recommended targeted hiring policies for the California High Speed Rail project were deemed constitutional by the DOT's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and adopted by the California High Speed Rail Authority. During the course of this long-drawn-out process, discrepancies between the DOT's administrative units became apparent. While the targeted hiring recommendations were eventually cleared by the FRA, and nearly-identical recommendations made by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority were cleared by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), confusion still exists within the DOT's other administration units – namely the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). California Department of Transportation's director stated that targeted and/or focused hiring initiatives are not allowed by the FHWA. This sentiment has been echoed by those within that administration, despite the fact that targeted hiring initiatives have been allowed by

FRA and FTA after full vetting from their legal counsels. What is deemed legal by two administrations within the same department should be allowed by administrations throughout the DOT. Clearly, a uniform policy is needed, the result of which could be increased job opportunities for Americans in disadvantaged communities that need them most.

Federally-funded public infrastructure projects have the potential to produce multiple economic benefits, including employment opportunities for the nation's most economically disadvantaged areas. In its 2017 Annual Report, the DOT estimates that transportation accounted for 13 million jobs or 9% of the U.S. labor force. Targeted hiring initiatives and related job training strategies increase the likelihood that unemployed and underemployed individuals in economically distressed communities have access to these jobs. Currently, the U.S. DOT and its various administrative units lack a uniform policy for either targeted hiring initiatives or funding for concomitant job training.

There is plenty of historical evidence of targeted hiring policies getting people back to work during economic downturns. To create job opportunities for unemployed and underemployed residents, we are seeking targeted hiring recommendations that were adopted by the CA High Speed Rail Authority. The FRWIB is now recommending across the board for the DOT.

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# Workforce Development

## Technician and Pilot Training Grant Assistance

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

The Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-254) created two new grant programs to recruit and train the next generation of aerospace workers and pilots. We urge the administration to seek the full funding of \$10 million for these programs as part of its fiscal year (FY) 2020 budget request and to rapidly initiate these programs.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT:

President Trump has made career technical education a priority and these programs will help achieve the administration's workforce development goals. The resources provided through these temporary initiatives will incentivize businesses, labor and pilot organizations, schools, and governmental entities to work together to pursue innovative new strategies to develop technical talent and encourage our next generation of pilots to pursue careers in aviation. This, in turn, will help ensure the continued global leadership of America's aerospace sector.

### PROJECT NEED:

The U.S. aviation industry is facing a technician and pilot shortage that threatens to undermine the growth and competitiveness of one of the most important sectors of our economy - one that generates more than 7 percent of the

U.S. gross domestic product, contributes \$1.5 trillion to the U.S. economy and supports more than 11.5 million jobs.

Boeing's 2018 Pilot & Technician Outlook for aviation jobs projects that 790,000 new civil aviation pilots, 754,000 new maintenance technicians and 890,000 new cabin crewmembers will be needed to operate and maintain the global aircraft fleet over the next 20 years. In North America alone, Boeing suggests 206,000 new pilots and 189,000 new technicians will be needed over the next two decades.

To put the pilot forecast into perspective, North America will need slightly more than 10,000 new pilots each year on average to keep pace with air service demand and retirements. According to the FAA's airmen statistics, 5,437 original airmen Airline Transport Certificates (the certificate required to serve as a Part 121 airline pilot) were issued in the first 11 months of 2018. Failure to produce more pilots will further imperil air service to small communities, which are most vulnerable to air service losses due to the shortage.



While the number of pilot certificates issued by the FAA has decreased more than 60 percent since 1980, this mismatch of supply and demand offers a tremendous opportunity for students to pursue aviation careers, including aviation opportunities in the military. The Boeing forecast applies to the commercial aviation, business aviation, and civil helicopter industries; however, the U.S. military is also facing a shortage of pilots.

Similarly, the consulting firm Oliver Wyman has forecast that demand for aviation maintenance technicians will outstrip supply by 2022. The Aviation Technician Education Council recently determined that new entrants make up just two percent of the aviation technician population annually, while 30 percent of the workforce is at or near retirement age. Respondents to the Aeronautical Repair Station Association's 2018 member survey identified the technician shortage as the biggest strategic threat to the \$47 billion maintenance industry. More than 80 percent of respondents reported difficulty finding qualified technicians and more than half of responding companies had unfilled positions.

Initiatives for the aviation technical workforce include scholarships, apprenticeships, establishing new training programs, purchasing equipment for schools and supporting career transition for members of the armed forces. To incentivize collaboration to solve the technician shortage, the law requires grant applications to be jointly submitted by a school, local governmental entity, and a business or labor organization.

The new grant program for pilot education would support curriculum designed to provide high school students with meaningful science, technology, engineering, math and

aviation education. The program has the potential to be a solution to the pilot shortage by reaching a diverse new audience and encouraging our nation's youth to become the next generation of commercial, general aviation, drone or military pilots.

Administration leadership to recommend full funding for these programs will build on the progress from the recent FAA law and help ensure our nation's aviation industry will have the technical professionals and pilots needed to meet the growing demand for a well-trained aviation workforce.

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# Workforce Development

## Connecting People With Jobs

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

Increase funding for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, specifically allocated for transportation to and from jobs and job training programs

Fresno County receives funding from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program through the State's CalWORKs WTW program. The County's Department of Social Services uses a portion of that funding to contract with Fresno EOC to provide transportation to and from approved work and training sites (including to and from daycare) for CalWORKs WTW recipients.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Transportation is a barrier for many individuals throughout Fresno County. Those wishing to better their circumstances through employment and training often cannot access those opportunities. Even when public transit is available, the hours of operation don't always coincide with the employer's needs. This leaves many unable to break the cycle of poverty and reliance on social programs.

In an effort to bridge the transportation gap, Fresno EOC operates a program in the Fresno Metropolitan Area funded through The County of Fresno Department of Social Services for California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Welfare to Work (WTW) participants who work swing or graveyard shifts. While this program provides opportunities for many, the limited scope only scratches the surface of the needs in Fresno County.

### PROJECT NEED:

Unemployment in Fresno County is at the lowest point in the past decade at 5.9%. At the same time one quarter of our population lives in poverty and around 20% of households receive SNAP benefits.

Fresno County has understood the challenges many people in poverty face accessing employment and training for changing labor market requirements and has made funding available to Fresno EOC to provide transportation to CalWORKs WTW clients. The clients are those who work during hours not served by public transit in the Fresno Metropoli-

tan area of the county. This funding, however, is limited in the amount and scope it can cover. The current contract is \$403,620 a year with 330 participants approved. Funding for this program comes from CalWORKs Employment Services Single Allocation which is funded through the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

There remains a huge need for affordable transportation. Access to this resource could mean the difference between obtaining and keeping employment or remaining unemployed. Community members aren't able to access work-

force development and job opportunities that they may qualify for based on where they live and not having reliable transportation. This is especially true for residents outside of the Fresno Metropolitan Area. Most of the services intended to assist people with training and education are located in the urban center while a huge need persists in the rural areas.

With additional transportation funding focused on getting people to and from work, to and from educational

opportunities, we can break family cycles of poverty. Once people are on the path to self-sufficiency they will no longer need CalWORKs.

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## Economic Development

# Updating FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Funding Guidelines

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

Update The United States Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant funding guidelines to include hazard mitigation training by a qualified agency such as a community college, local conservation corps, or other training provider listed on the local Workforce Development Board's Eligible Training Provider List, as one of the qualifying fundable activities.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT:

FEMA's HMA grant funding guidelines have been in place since the founding of FEMA in 1979. These outdated guidelines have become roadblocks for agencies seeking to mitigate hazards from California's historic and record-setting wildfires. Specifically, the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board (FRWDB) sought to train unemployed and underemployed youth to remove dead and dying trees, but was denied access to grant funds because FEMA considers training to be "contingent action".

### PROJECT NEED:

In the Fresno County Hazard Mitigation plan one of our goals is to improve communities capabilities to mitigate hazards and reduce exposure to hazard-related losses by reducing wildfires, protecting life, property, and natural resources from damaging wildfires. In addition, we are seeking to develop and maintain a robust training program for disaster management.



The greatest long-term benefits would result from training unemployed and underemployed young adults for work. The skills learned and experiences gained in forestry management training programs are transferable to a wide range of growing, in-demand industries, including, but not limited to, construction, high-value agriculture, manufacturing and logistics, and energy.

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# Economic Development

## Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

For Fiscal Year 2019, CSBG was approved at \$724.65 million, which amounted to only about a \$10 million increase from Fiscal Year 2018. This was below the targeted amount we requested of \$749.6 million. Unfortunately, the increase fell short of meeting our community needs. Therefore, we request the following:

1. CSBG Fiscal Year 2020 funding set at \$775 million
2. Reauthorization of CSBG: Community Economic Opportunity Act (when introduced)

### ABOUT THE PROJECT:

The Community Services Block Grant program is the source for emergency, human service interventions and economic development Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission extends to our county's most vulnerable residents.

We encourage our local Congressional delegation to support and co-sponsor reauthorization of the Community Economic Opportunity Act when it is reintroduced. The Act authorizes funding for CSBG. Our federal representatives have consistently recognized the value of CSBG to their constituents and have all supported reauthorization and stable funding for the program. Maintaining federal CSBG funding is the single most important tool our community has to mitigate the impacts of emergencies, such as the opioid epidemic, and to create economic opportunities for our neediest residents. Fresno EOC is the locally designated steward of CSBG funds for Fresno County.

### PROJECT NEED:

CSBG honors local program assessment and design of programs that meet urgent local needs and generate economic opportunities. It requires governance of the CSBG-funded agency by locally appointed and elected leaders, as well as those representing service recipients. CSBG is particularly critical to our county, where one in four live in poverty. It is a responsible, local instrument allowing for local determination and solutions to ameliorate the persistent, unabated poverty our region has become all too well known.

- a. **CSBG funding makes it possible** for Fresno EOC to deliver emergency services such as food and utility assistance to thousands of our county residents each year.

- b. **CSBG has catalyzed robust economic** initiatives such as Access Plus Capital, a Community Development Financial Institution lending to small businesses through which hundreds of jobs have been created.
- c. **It was the source through which** vital human services such as the Sanctuary Youth Shelter, the drop in center, Central Valley Against Human Trafficking (CVAHT), the Conservation Corps, and SOUL charter school were started.
- d. **CSBG has also been leveraged** to create social enterprises such as Fresno EOC's growing solar installation business, catering, and commercial recycling efforts all of which employ and train disadvantaged workers and generate discretionary revenue for new local ventures.
- e. **CSBG has been utilized to grow** new, promising programs like our Valley Apprenticeship Connections which provides construction job training skills and connects them to a good paying job upon completion.

Fresno EOC has prioritized economic stimulus and entrepreneurship with its allocation of CSBG funding. We know that it is only through access to opportunity through programs such as those listed below that people can lift themselves out of poverty:

1. Access Plus Capital has provided \$27.3 million in loans and technical assistance to 771 businesses and borrowers low-to-moderate income neighborhoods since 2009
2. Turn-key commercial recycling operations recovering CRV containers, used oil, tires, and electronic waste
3. Commercial food production center producing and delivering more than 7,500 meals per day
4. Commercial vehicle fleet detailing
5. Nielsen Conference Center
6. Solar PV and solar water heater installations
7. Taxi scrip services
8. Landscaping and grounds maintenance
9. Investment in the formation of a thriving credit union in southeast Fresno
10. Catering business
11. Job training



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# Fresno County - Heart of California

Located in the center of California's San Joaquin Valley, Fresno County is the most productive agricultural county in the nation. Although most of the county is rural and economically driven by agriculture, a significant population resides in urban cities, most of which are along the major transportation corridors. State Route 99, a major goods movement state highway known as the backbone of California, connects southern California to Northern California, running through the City of Fresno.

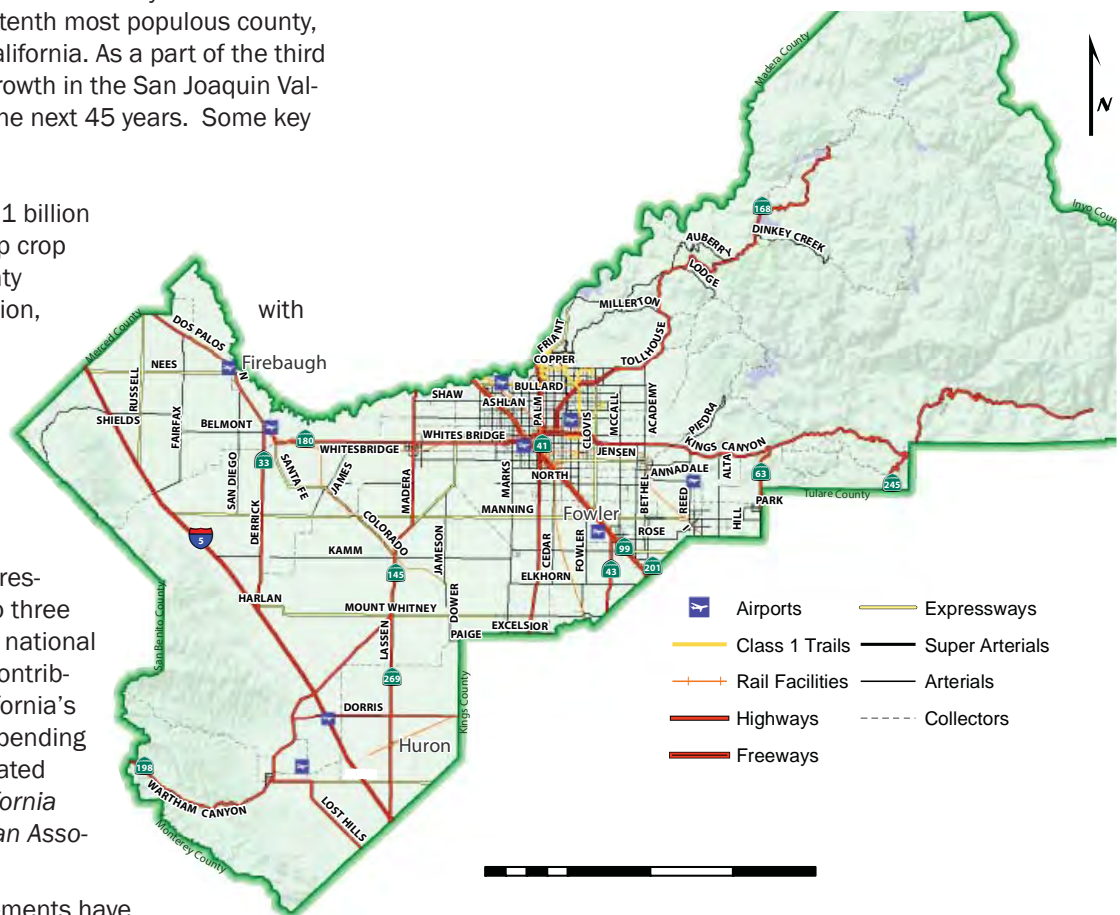
Fresno County's 15 cities share 7,048 publicly maintained road miles, 52% of which are rural. Fresno County's public road system accommodates 24,466 average daily vehicle miles traveled, approximately 2.6% of California's 943,314 total daily vehicle miles travelled (Source: Caltrans 2017 California Public Road Data Report). Due to its location in the center of the state, Fresno County serves as a major transportation corridor for goods going to and from western sea ports.

Home to a very diverse population of nearly 1 million people, Fresno County is the tenth most populous county, with the fifth largest city in California. As a part of the third largest region in California, growth in the San Joaquin Valley is projected to double in the next 45 years. Some key facts about Fresno County:

- Fresno County has one \$1 billion crop. Almonds are the top crop produced in Fresno County with a value of \$1.22 billion, grapes coming in second at \$951 million. Fresno County crop value in 2017 was \$7.028 billion in gross production. (Source: 2017 FC Farm Bureau Crop Report).
- Millions of tourists visit Fresno County on their way to three national parks and three national monuments each year, contributing to the State of California's \$121 billion in tourism spending and 1 million tourism-related jobs. (Source: 2014 California Travel Impacts, Dean Ryan Associates).
- While significant improvements have been made, the Fresno County region still has the most polluted air quality in the United States, due to the mountain ranges that border the valley, trapping particulates from the major urban areas within and adjacent to the region (source: 2015 ALA State of the Air report).

- Fresno County continues to suffer from significant economic and environmental challenges, including demographics, weather, topography, transportation deterioration and decay.

Despite a 1.7 million strong workforce—10% of California's workers—and significant business and development investment interest, Fresno County continues to be an example of problematic social and environmental justice issues, with significantly lower median household income levels and higher unemployment rates than both national and state averages. Federal support for programs and activities that protect agricultural production, strengthen transportation infrastructure, improve workforce training and opportunities for economic growth within the Fresno County region are crucial for the state's and nation's long-term health.





Fresno Council  
of Governments

