RISE TOGETHER BAY AREA

Rise Together’s mission is to unite the 9-County region to advance a Bay Area where all individuals and families can access opportunities for self-sufficiency and where the rules of the game give everyone a chance to thrive. When we reduce barriers to self-sufficiency so everyone in our region can equitably participate in the economy and in our communities, we all win. We work toward this mission through a regional coalition of over 200 organizations across the region working to accelerate systems and policy change in employment, education, housing and basic needs. We believe we are stronger together and through collective learning and action, we can create a Bay Area that works for everyone.

The Regional Challenge: Opportunity Disparities

- The Self-Sufficiency Standard, or the average income required by a family of four to cover their basic expenses in the Bay Area is **$76,543** (compare to two full-time minimum wage jobs at $10/hour = $41,600)

- For many families and individuals struggling to make ends meet, finding one full-time minimum wage job is nearly impossible because of the numerous barriers to entering the workforce such as: - lack of work experience - conviction of a crime - inequitable access to training and educational opportunities - discriminatory hiring practices - unstable housing - lack of transportation or mega-commutes of over 1.5 hours

- California real estate prices have risen 3 times faster than household incomes. **40% of Bay Area residents** pay more than 1/3rd of their income on housing. Between 2000-2013 there has been a loss of **106,000 naturally occurring affordable housing units** across the region, a figure development of new units hasn’t kept up with.

- **48% of Bay Area neighborhoods are experiencing displacement**, forcing households to move to areas where opportunities and resources are thinner. Low-income communities of color are more likely to be displaced and impacted by the housing crisis.

- **1 in 5 children** in California live below the Federal poverty line. Access to quality early education and care can help mitigate the effects of living in poverty, breaking its generational cycle. It also increases a family’s employment and income while reducing the need to miss work or cut hours. In 2015, however, the cost of child care for an infant and school-age child in a licensed center was over **90 percent of the annual income** for a single mother of two living at the federal poverty line (Federal Poverty Guideline = $24,000).

Many of these issues cannot be solved at the local level alone, and are shared across the region as a whole. Therefore an aligned regional approach is necessary to help accelerate results. A regional approach also helps level the playing field, providing space and voice to those counties and communities that are often underrepresented in regional efforts.
An Inclusive Regional Approach
Rise Together engages multiple sectors to be the only unifying table in the Bay Area that brings together and gives equitable voice to community advocates, public and private entities, elected officials, service providers and clients to address issues directly related to poverty. We are guided by a 20-member Steering Council representing business, philanthropy, nonprofit, government and social service sectors and by representatives from the 9 Bay Area counties who help develop and implement our core strategies and priorities.

Through Rise Together’s 4 pillars – Leadership Development & Partnership Building / Policy Advocacy / Strategic Communications for New Narratives / Data for Informed Decision Making - we help inform, connect and align organizations across the Bay Area working on the key drivers of poverty to create a more powerful regional voice for change. We focus on amplifying and scaling systems and policy strategies at the local, state and federal level that will reduce barriers to self-sufficiency and help lift up critical populations that are disproportionately locked out of economic security (seniors, single female heads of household, families with young children boys and men of color and immigrants).

Key Collaborations
Please see our full list of Steering Council members and partner organizations here: https://www.risetogetherbayarea.org/our-partners

A few highlights from our Steering Council roster:
Supervisor Wilma Chan, Alameda County Board of Supervisors / Oscar Chavez, Sonoma Health and Social Services / Dr. David Grusky, Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality / Supervisor Erin Hannigan, Solano County Board of Supervisors / Melissa Jones, Bay Area Health Inequities Initiative / Jim Mayer, California Forward / Kay Fernandez Smith, San Francisco Foundation / Micah Weinberg, Bay Area Council

Results
Since its inception in 2012, Rise Together has: Produced a Family Economic Security Report for the Bay Area with the HAAS Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society and the Insight Center for Community Economic Development which highlighted promising policies for self-sufficiency through economic modeling; produced a Roadmap to Cut Poverty through which 200 organizations who signed on as partners; held 4 regional convenings on current and related issues; and supported 22 pieces of California legislation. In process is a statewide administrative level database to inform policy and practice related to fighting poverty and a local database of local policy solutions and action plans on barriers to employment, access to affordable housing and funding early childhood education.

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