

PROJECT NARRATIVE

A. VISION

Our vision is that all people who live and work in our community respect each other, join their strengths to create and sustain the conditions for all of us to have great health, great economic development, and social justice.

This vision will become a reality as we see:

- All families have access to a healthy home, safe from indoor and outdoor environmental harm.
- All people have quality, accessible and affordable health care
- All youth are equipped with the information, support and services needed to prevent harm from and deal with local issues such as gangs, drugs, violence, and negative peer pressures, and are provided with resources and encouragement to pursue their academic potential.
- All school-age youth are involved with high quality education that can prepare them for success in life and their career
- Health and family-focused human services focus on prevention activities that support healthy behaviors and are accessible to the entire community. Programs are affordable, culturally appropriate and geographically accessible. Men and boys, especially from populations of ethnic and racial minorities, are actively targeted by, and are actively engaged in, programs and development activities.
- All homes and neighborhoods are safe from all violence and include safe, clean outdoor recreation areas.
- All children under the age of five have access to high-quality child care and preschool programs.
- All parents have access to safe and affordable childcare when they need it, especially when children are sick and when their children may have special needs
- Communities and local governments work collaboratively to develop new, modify existing, or eliminate existing policies in order to create a more effective civic system, including policies for environmentally sound land use, a robust public transportation system, and community driven economic development.
- Local media actively and routinely represents the positive changes and improvements that are being made across the entire community and works to help increase resources and support for to solve problems and help make progress toward building healthier communities. This includes helping to bring to light disparities in these communities. Trusting relationships are established between community members and the media.

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- The communities that are the focus on this grant-funded project are better integrated and supported as part of the larger County of Merced.
- The lessons learned and success of this grant-funded project are shared and applied to other parts of our County and beyond to improve health communities everywhere.

B. AGREEMENT TO WORK ON ALL 10 OUTCOMES

Outcome 1: All children have health coverage

Local Stakeholders

The Merced County safety net providers actively work to increase health care access for children and their families. The safety net providers of Merced County include: Merced Faculty Associates, Livingston Medical Group, Golden Valley Health Centers, Castle Family Health Centers, The Merced County Human Services Agency, The Merced County Department of Public Health and Mercy Medical Center Merced.

Regional and Statewide Partners

The regional and statewide partners working to increase health coverage for children include: The Central Coast Alliance for Health, The Children's Health Initiative, Catholic Health Care West, First 5, Health Plan of San Joaquin, Health Net, The Children's Hospital of Central California, The Boy Scouts of America, Merced County Local Child Care Planning Council, The Girl Scouts of America, Women Infants and Children, California Primary Care Association, and the Community Action Agency.

Local Activities

Merced County provides several activities focused on ensuring all children have health coverage. These local activities include the following:

- Safety net clinics provide: primary care, pediatric and specialty care services, immunizations, and well child checks. In addition many advocate at the local, state and region level to ensure health care access throughout Merced County.
- The Merced County Association of Governments "One Voice" Committee is a coalition of business representatives, elected officials, and city and county staff, who travel to Sacramento and Washington D.C. to present issues of regional significance to federal and state legislators. The purpose of this committee is to communicate Merced County legislative priorities clearly and succinctly, obtain more federal and state funding for these priorities, advocate for legislation or changes to existing legislation that will benefit Merced County, and support legislators by meeting with their peers and garnering wider support for Merced priorities.
- The Central Coast Alliance for Health will bring the new Medi-Cal managed care plan to Merced County. This program will improve healthcare services under the Medi-Cal managed care program; allow an opportunity to increase reimbursements while improving the quality of care as well as increase access points for Medi-Cal patients.
- The Merced County Department of Public Health administers the Children's Health Initiative Program, which provides access to health insurance for children through three programs: Healthy Families, Medi-Cal, and Healthy Kids. Through an extensive outreach

and enrollment, workers discuss the benefits of health insurance for children with families, evaluate the families' eligibility, and assist the family in enrolling their child/children in the appropriate health insurance program by streamlining the application process.

- Central California Legal Services advocates for limited English proficient families, helps low-income children access health care, operates a health care access toll-free line, helps families navigate health care plans, provides community outreach and education to families regarding their rights in health care, assists in filing grievances, manages complaints due to barriers to care and Medi-Cal debt, and assists consumers with problems related to health care coverage, share of cost, and how to utilize services.
- The Merced County Women Infants and Children (WIC) program requires well child checks, offers breastfeeding support, nutritional counseling, and food vouchers.

Local Data Sources for Assessment and Learning

Sources for data that are currently available for assessment and learning include: the Merced County Health Status Profile, Golden Valley Health Centers, Castle Family Health Centers, Livingston Medical Group, Mercy Medical Center Merced, The Merced County Human Services Agency, Merced Faculty Associates, The Merced County Department of Public Health, The Merced County Health Care Consortium, Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program, The Health Employment Data Information Set (HEDIS), HCA database, CHIS data, Central Valley Health Policy Institute, Healthy People 2010, US Census, Insure the Uninsured, and First 5.

Outcome 2: Families have improved access to a healthy home that supports healthy behaviors

Local Stakeholders

The Merced County safety net providers and many community organizations actively work toward improving access to a health home for families to support healthy behaviors. These organizations include: Merced Faculty Associates, Livingston Medical Group, Golden Valley Health Centers, Castle Family Health Centers, Merced County Human Services Agency, Merced County Department of Public Health and Mercy Medical Center Merced. Additional stakeholders include The Boy Scouts of America, The Girl Scouts of America, Foundation for Improved Living Merced, Community Action Agency, Area Agency on Aging and Community Partnership Alliance.

Regional and Statewide Partners

Additional stakeholders who have significant interest in ensuring a healthy home for children and their families include: The Children's Health Initiative, Catholic Health Care West, First 5, Health Plan of San Joaquin, Health Net, Merced County Local Child Care Planning Council, The California Primary Care Association, and Women Infants and Children.

Local Activities

Merced County has several local activities that address the importance of having improved access to a health home. These activities include the following:

- Many of the safety net clinics provide primary care, healthcare outreach and education, immunizations, well child checks, specialty care, and pediatric services.
- The Merced County Association of Governments "One Voice" Committee is a coalition of business representatives, elected officials, and city and county staff who travel to

Sacramento and Washington D.C. to present issues of regional significance to federal and state legislators.

- Area Agency on Aging provides outreach activities to improve access to the Adult and Aging system of care services that support safe and healthy homes.
- The Merced County Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program promotes greater access to healthy foods and safe places to play.
- The Central Coast Alliance for Health will bring the new Medi-Cal managed care plan to Merced County. This program will improve healthcare services under the Medi-Cal managed care program; allow an opportunity to increase reimbursements while improving the quality of care as well as increase access points for Medi-Cal patients.
- The Merced County Department of Public Health administers The Children's Health Initiative Program, which provides access to health insurance for children through three programs: Healthy Families, Medi-Cal, and Healthy Kids.
- Central California Legal Services provides education to families on how to utilize their services, enroll low-income children into various health plans, and provide case management.
- The Merced County Women Infants and Children (WIC) program requires well child checks, offers breastfeeding support, nutritional counseling, and food vouchers.

Local Data Sources for Assessment and Learning

Sources for data that are currently available for assessment and learning include: the Merced County Health Status Profile, Golden Valley Health Centers, Castle Family Health Centers, Livingston Medical Group, Mercy Medical Center Merced, The Merced County Human Services Agency, Merced Faculty Associates, The Merced County Department of Public Health, The Merced County Health Care Consortium, Central California Regional Obesity Prevention, HCA database, Covering Kids and Families, Insure the Uninsured, Merced County Local Child Care Planning Council Needs Assessment, Central Valley Health Policy Institute, US Census, Healthy People 2010, and First 5.

Outcome 3: Health and family-focused human services shift resources toward prevention

Local Stakeholders

Many Merced County stakeholders actively work toward ensuring that health and family focused services shift resources towards prevention. These local stakeholders include: Boy Scouts of America, Community Action Agency, First 5, Foundation for Improved Living Merced, Girl Scouts of America, Golden Valley Health Centers, Healthy House within a MATCH Coalition, Lifeline Community Development Corporation, Merced County Health Care Consortium, Merced County Human Services Agency, Livingston Medical Group, UC ARTS, Poder Popular para la Salud del Pueblo, La Conexion, Art Community, Merced County Office of Education, Head Start, Gang Task Force, First 5 Council, The Merced County Police Department, City Planners, Central California Legal Services, Mercy Medical Center Merced, Merced Lao Family Community, Inc, Merced/Mariposa County Asthma Coalition, Alliance Health Care, Community Action Network, Merced County Department of Public Health, Agency on Aging, Continuum of Care, Merced County Mental Health/ Alcohol and other Drugs, Merced County Probation Department, and No Homeowner Left Behind.

Regional and Statewide Partners

Our Regional and Statewide partners for Merced County include: Lions Club International, Breastfeeding Coalition, Central Valley Air Quality Coalition, American Lung Association, Community Action to fight Asthma, American Heart Association, California Arts Council, Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program, California Welfare Director's Association, The Rotary Club, California Pan-Ethnic Health Network, Nutrition Council, and the California Health Collaborative.

Local Activities

Many activities in Merced County work toward shifting resources towards prevention. Local activities include the following:

- The Merced County Human Services Agency provides immediate assistance in crisis situations to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and provides assistance for immediate need. Their most vital role is prevention and fostering self-sufficiency. They support an array of organizations that teach people how to avoid placing themselves at risk, and how to attain economic independence. This includes preventing child abuse and domestic violence, counseling for drug and alcohol problems, encouraging healthy lifestyles, and training for jobs that can break the cycle of poverty and enable people to support themselves and their families.
- The Merced County Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program works on creating healthy environments to increase access to healthy foods and safe places to play.
- The Merced County Department of Public Health provides essential programs and services to protect and improve the health of our community such as immunizations, nutrition, dental, vision, hearing services, pregnancy services, and special health care needs, among others.
- Golden Valley Health Centers provides a diabetes program, an integrated behavioral health program, breast cancer research, dental health, the Reach Out and Read Program and Poder Popular para el Salud del Pueblo-Merced, which focuses on community and population health.
- Healthy House within a MATCH Coalition addresses the disparities in language and culture through activities such as cultural brokering and mediation, cultural training, culturally responsive interpreter services, public education, advocacy, cultural activities, language assessments, interpreter trainings, and health education.
- Foundation for Improved Living Merced seeks to mentor families and create a network to escape poverty based on the Circles Campaign in Merced County.
- The Merced/Mariposa County Asthma Coalition provides smoking cessation classes, and advocates for air quality issues.
- Hunger Task Force collaborates with local food agencies, farmers, nutritionists, dietitians, and healthcare providers to create an infrastructure that will aid in eliminating food insecurity in Merced County.
- Children's Prevention Summit is an opportunity to discover how systems improvement can enhance efforts to prevent abuse and violence, support healthy life choices, and provide quality services for individuals and families.
- No Homeowner Left Behind promotes foreclosure prevention.

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- Central California Legal Services provides education to families on how to utilize their services, as well as enroll low-income children into various health plans, and provide case management.
- Merced Community Violence Intervention & Prevention Task Force consists of local agencies, individuals, faith-based and community organizations working collaboratively to reduce violence in our community. They educate the community about violence and gang awareness, help people continue constructive behavior, assist families with parenting and other skills for character development, provide information and resources for intervention and prevention, and encourage community-wide ownership in this effort.
- The Merced County Probation Department administers corrective services that hold offenders accountable for their behavior and provide rehabilitative services in order to strengthen and protect our community. They offer a variety of programs that provide probationers and their families appropriate services to teach youth they are accountable for their actions, encourage community involvement by youth, and protect victims and children from further physical and emotional abuse.
- The First 5 Council plays an important role in the education and parent skill development through outcomes-based interventions for families with children ages 0-5.

Local Data Sources for Assessment and Learning

Local data sources that are currently available for assessment and learning include, but are not limited to: Merced County Department of Public Health, Merced County Police Department, and Merced County Child Welfare.

Outcome 4: Residents live in communities with health-promoting land use, transportation, and community development

Local Stakeholders

Merced County actively works to ensure that residents live in communities with health-promoting land use, transportation and community development. Local stakeholders include: Merced County Farm Bureau, Merced Alliance for Responsible Growth, Valley Land Alliance, Merced County Planning Department, Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program, Merced City Planning Department, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Redevelopment Agency, City Council, Childcare Planning Council, Hunger Task Force, Churches, Change Merced, Las Monarcas: a community group in Planada, South Merced Community group, Municipal Advisory Committees in Planada & Le Grand, Merced/Mariposa County Asthma Coalition, Golden Valley Health Centers, Merced Bicycle Coalition, Sierra Club, Merced County Public Health Department, Merced County Association of Governments, League of Women Voters, Boys & Girls Club, Merced Community Action Agency, Merced County Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, UC Cooperative Extension, Central California Legal Services, Area Agency on Aging and the Foundation for Improved Living Merced.

Regional and Statewide Partners

The regional and statewide partners for Merced County include: Great Valley Center, Farmland Working Group, Regional San Joaquin Valley Farm Bureau Group, California Women for Agriculture, California Farm Bureau, Central Valley Farmland Trust, East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition, San Joaquin Clean Energy Coalition, Central Valley Air Quality Coalition,

Community Action to Fight Asthma, California Asthma Partners, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, California Air Resources Board, Planning and Conservation League, Union of Concerned Scientists, and Habitat for Humanity.

Local Activities

Merced County provides several direct activities that are focused on ensuring residents live in communities with health-promoting land use, transportation, and community development. These local activities include the following:

- The Great Valley Center recognizes that land use and transportation blueprint projects have impacts on a community's health, partners with San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Planning Process to coordinate the Blueprint Regional Advisory Council, who is charged with developing a San Joaquin Valley Blueprint from the eight plans being done at the county level, and coordinates communications efforts by the Councils of Government. GVC also can provide a bridge to the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, which is aspiring to positively impact everything from student achievement to energy use to access to the internet. GVC supports the Land Use, Housing, and Agriculture Work Group, as well as the Transportation Work Group of the Partnership.
- Area Agency on Aging provides reduced and no cost transportation for low income seniors and will conduct public focus meetings for improved transportation systems.
- The Farm Bureau monitors the Board of Supervisors, City Councils, and Municipal advisory councils in unincorporated communities, advocates for smart growth policies and decisions that promote healthy, walkable communities, supports and encourages Community Supported Agriculture and farm stands, supports farming practices that reduce impacts on air quality, supports the development of community gardens, collects data from planning departments, sponsors workshops, sponsors community forums, sponsors teacher forums, and sponsors 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America and the adoption of sister high schools in urban and rural districts.
- Central California Legal Services provides direct legal advocacy to clients seeking to maintain home ownership and rental status, and they review and monitor planning decisions for parks, transportation, housing and economic development.
- Las Monarcas, a Planada community group, focuses on addressing the needs of the residents through adult workshops and civic engagement. Las Monarcas educates the community on the farm worker experience, increasing gang awareness, park improvement, and providing safe routes to school.
- The Merced County Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program works to provide healthier eating habits, safe places to play and promotes access to healthy foods in school. Recently they surveyed the South Merced area for access to healthy food, and brought Electronic Benefits Transfer capabilities to the local flea market, allowing low income residents greater purchasing ability for fresh foods. They are actively involved in engaging youth.
- Many local churches provide connections between policy makers and direct service recipients.

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- The Bike Coalition has bi-weekly bike rides around town as a means of promoting the development of safe bike paths and healthy outdoor activity.
- The Sierra Club has monthly educational meetings for promoting healthy environments.
- The Department of Public Health provides medical services, car seat inspection, children's health, nutrition/obesity education, and disease mapping.
- The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) focuses on transportation, infrastructure and improvement.
- Golden Valley Health Centers offers dental and medical care, farm worker education, health education, nutritional services, community gardens, and a South Merced walking group.
- The Merced/Mariposa County Asthma Coalition offers smoking cessation classes, adult asthma management, monthly coalition meetings, community and professional education on asthma and air pollution issues, health policy advocacy including land use issues, general plan updates, bike paths, and environmental justice.
- Head Start provides transportation to medical appointments, parent education about healthy communities, the need for outdoor play, and promotes the development of school and community gardens.
- The Local Childcare Planning Council (LPC) advocates for adequate childcare services in underserved communities in Merced County.
- Foundation for Improved Living-Merced (FIL-Merced) is an anti-poverty group, which seeks to promote collaboration among agencies and organization interested in working on eliminating poverty. FIL-Merced educates the community about the need for improvement of a wide variety of issues related to poverty, including transportation systems and community development opportunities.
- The South Merced community works to provide safe sidewalks and routes around the community, healthy eating, and gang awareness.
- The Sierra Club promotes physical activity and addresses environmental issues.
- California Women for Agriculture promotes sound land use planning for counties and cities.
- The Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program (CCROPP) ensures access to healthy food in schools.
- Valley Land Alliance monitors the Merced County Planning Department, collects data and educates community members about the importance of designing communities in appropriate land use.

Local Data Sources for Assessment and Learning

Local data sources that are currently available for assessment and learning include, but are not limited to: The California Department for Food and Agriculture, American Farmland Trust, California Farm Bureau Federation, California Women for Agriculture, Agriculture Commissioner, The California Health Interview Survey, US Census and the 2008 Merced County Asthma Report Card.

Outcome 5: Children and their families are safe from violence in their homes and neighborhoods

Local Stakeholders

Merced County works to ensure that children and their families are safe from violence in their homes and neighborhoods. Local stakeholders include: the Merced County Office of Education, ROP programs, UC ARTS, Youth Empowerment Program, the California Canine Academy, Assistance Dogs Program, the Merced County Human Services Agency, Independent Living Skills Program, All Dads Matter Program, Merced County Local Child Care Planning Council, the Family Resource Center, Parenting Center, Merced County Office of Education ASSETS after school program, Golden Valley Health Centers, Poder Popular para la Salud del Pueblo-Merced, Las Monarcas, The Valley Crisis Center, Central California Legal Services, Neighborhood Watch, The Merced County Police Department, and the Merced County Probation Department.

Regional and Statewide Partners

Regional and statewide partners for Merced County include: The Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program, The Girl Scouts of America, The Boy Scouts of America, the Boys and Girls Club, and UC Merced.

Local Activities

Merced County provides several direct activities focused on ensuring that children and their families are safe from violence in their homes and neighborhoods. These activities include the following:

- The Merced County Human Services Agency provides immediate assistance in crisis situations to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. They support an array of organizations that teach people how to avoid placing themselves at risk, and how to attain economic independence. This includes preventing child abuse and domestic violence, counseling for drug and alcohol problems, encouraging healthy lifestyles, and training for jobs that can break the cycle of poverty and enable people to support themselves and their families.
- Valley Crisis Center provides shelter, services, and self-help programs to victims of domestic violence enabling them to break the cycle of violence in their families, while they learn to lead healthy, productive lives.
- The Youth Empowerment Program increases the opportunities for youth to take control of their situations by building self-esteem, and improving the quality of life through advocacy, leadership, and education. Activities include: changing policies in family shelters to admit teenagers, assisting local shelters to build safer buildings with improved services for children and teens, partnering with national organizations to increase homeless education funding, and community service hours.
- The First 5 Council plays an important role in the education and parent skill development through outcomes-based interventions for families with children ages 0-5.
- The Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program provides healthier eating habits and safe places to play, and promotes access to healthy foods in school. They recently surveyed the South Merced area on access to healthy food, brought Electronic Benefits Transaction access to the local flea market, and have been actively involved in engaging the youth.
- The Central California Legal Services provides juvenile justice advocacy, legal services for low-income families, educational presentations, tenant's rights and homeless issues,

trainings on rights and responsibilities on language access, and assistance in filing grievances and complaints.

- The Merced County Probation Department administers corrective services that hold offenders accountable for their behavior and provide rehabilitative services in order to strengthen and protect our community. They offer a variety of programs that provide probationers and their families appropriate services to teach youth accountability for their actions, encourage community involvement by youth, and protect victims and children from further physical and emotional abuse.

Local Data Sources for Assessment and Learning

Local data sources that are currently available for assessment and learning include, but are not limited to the US Census, Covering Kids and Families, and Central Valley Health Policy Institute.

Outcome 6: Communities support healthy youth development

Local Stakeholders

Merced County stakeholders actively work to improve youth development programs and increase services to serve more youth throughout the target areas. For the past several years the following organizations have worked toward this outcome: Merced County Office of Education, Nutrition Program, Empower Program, Regional Occupation Program, Head Start Program, First 5 Council, Migrant Head Start Program, ASSETS Program, Center of Vision Enhancement, Castle Challenger Learning Center, UC ARTS Program, Human Services Agency: Independent Living (Foster Youth Program), All Dads Matter Program, Family Resource Center-Parenting Center, Planada School District, Planada Afterschool Program, Golden Valley Health Centers: Poder Popular para la Salud del Pueblo-Merced and Las Monarcas, Boys and Girls Clubs of Merced County, Merced City School District, Merced County Local Child Care Planning Council, Merced County Hispanic Chamber, UC Cooperative Extension, UC Merced, Merced County Youth Council, The Merced County Library, and the Merced County Probation Department.

Regional and Statewide Partners

Regional and statewide partners for Merced County include: Girls Scouts of America Program, Boy Scouts Program, Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program, Women Infants and Children, Central California Legal Services, and the Merced County Youth Council.

Local Activities

Merced County provides several local activities that support local youth development. These activities include the following:

- Human Services Agency promotes youth programs, including High School Assistance Dogs program for at risk youth under the California Canine Academy and All Dads Matter, a support program and services for new fathers, teen support, and new parents.
- The Youth Empowerment Program increases opportunities for youth to take control of their situations by building self-esteem, and improving their quality of life through advocacy, leadership, and education. Activities include: changing policies in family shelters to admit teenagers, assisting local shelters to build safer buildings with improved services for children and teens, partnering with national organizations to increase homeless education funding, and community service hours.

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- The Merced County Office of Education ASSETS program provides afterschool homework assistance and student supervision until 6pm for students in grades K thru 8, and the Planda School District provides tutorial services for intensive and strategic learners.
- The Boys and Girls Clubs of Merced County offers a variety of activities for youth, such as the SMART Moves/SMART Girls Program, the 5-a-Day Health and Nutrition Power Hour, recreational activities and sports leagues.
- UC Merced Police Department offers a Mentorship Program for college students to mentor 4th graders in South Merced.
- Central California Legal Services offers assistance in naturalization education/youth rights.
- Merced County Probation Department administers corrective services that hold offenders accountable for their behavior and provide rehabilitative services in order to strengthen and protect our community. They offer a variety of programs that provide probationers and their families appropriate services to teach youth accountability for their actions, encourage community involvement by youth, and protect victims and children from further physical and emotional abuse.
- UC Cooperative Extension offers the 4-H Youth Development program, a non-formal educational effort that targets youth in grades K-12. Goals of this program are to encourage development of youth who will become self-directed, resilient, and productive members of a global society using experiential learning methods. They also offer citizenship (community service, youth in governance, service learning, conferences, etc.), leadership (roles for youth as leaders, event coordinators, club officers and committees, etc.), and life skills (public speaking, mastery of project skills such as sewing, rocketry, and animal science).
- Dar A Luz Doula Program provides support to teen mothers and birthing classes to give young moms and their babies a healthy fresh start.
- The Great Valley Center's digital divide projects in the San Joaquin Valley work with younger students (ages 9 to 14) and their parents in computer repair, robotics design and programming (students) and computer literacy (parents) for Spanish-speaking families. Those who graduated from computer classes received computers for their own home use.

Local Data Sources for Assessment and Learning

Local data sources that are currently available for assessment and learning include, but are not limited to: Merced County Office of Education, First 5 of Merced County, Merced City and County Parks and Recreation, Merced County Public Health Department, Merced County Human Services Agency, Merced City School District, Planada School District, Merced Union High School District, Merced County Probation Department, California Health Interview Survey, Merced Police Department and the Merced County Sheriffs Department. California Department of Social Services, California Department of Education, California Department of Public Health, GIS Mapping Viewer, California Department of Health Care Services and California Department of Vital Statistics.

Outcome 7: Neighborhood and school environments support improved health and healthy behaviors

Local Stakeholders

Merced County stakeholders actively work to improve health and healthy behaviors in neighborhoods and school environments throughout the target areas. These stakeholders include: Merced City Police Department, Merced County Sheriff's Department, Boys and Girls Clubs of Merced County, Golden Valley Health Centers, Poder Popular para la Salud del Pueblo, Las Monarcas, Merced County Office of Education, Nutrition Program, Empower Program, Regional Occupation Program, Head Start Program, Migrant Head Start Program, ASSETS Program, UC Merced, Center of Vision Enhancement, Castle Challenger Learning Center, UC ARTS Program, Human Services Agency, Independent Living (Foster Youth Program), All Dads Matter Program, Family Resource Center, Parenting Center, Planada School District, Planada Afterschool Program, Merced County Public Health Department, The Merced County Probation Department, Merced City School District, UC Cooperative Extension and the Merced County Youth Council.

Regional and Statewide Partners

Regional and statewide partners for Merced County include: Girls Scouts of America Program, Boy Scouts of America Program, Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program the Central California Legal Services, the Central Valley Health Network Collaborative, Nutrition Network, and the Merced County Youth Council.

Local Activities

Merced County provides several local activities that address improving the neighborhood and school environments throughout the target areas. These activities include the following:

- The Merced County Office of Education provides free nutrition information, youth development programs such as the Empower Program, youth employment, youth training, and after school programs.
- The Merced County Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program helps create healthy environments to increase access to healthy foods and safe places to play.
- Golden Valley Health Centers has been working on the Healthy South Merced Project which includes a walking group and plans for a community garden.
- Merced County Human Services Agency promotes several programs such as the High School Assistance Dogs for at-risk youth under the California Canine Academy, All Dads Matter provides a support program and services for new fathers, teen support and for new parents.
- The Planada School ASSETS Program provides after-school homework assistance for students K thru 8th grade.
- The Boys and Girls Clubs of Merced County offers a variety of activities for youth, including the SMART Moves/SMART Girls Program, 5-a-Day Health and Nutrition Power Hour, recreational activities and sports leagues.
- Central California Legal Services offer health care outreach, tenant rights and concerns, education/youth rights, and educational presentations on accessing health care.
- The UC Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development program is a non-formal educational effort that targets youth in grades K-12. Goals of this program are to encourage development of youth who will become self-directed, resilient, and productive members of a global society using experiential learning methods. They also offer citizenship (community service, youth in governance, service learning, conferences, etc.),

leadership (roles for youth as leaders, event coordinators, club officers and committees, etc.), life skills (public speaking, and mastery of project skills such as sewing, rocketry, animal science).

- UC Merced Police Department offers a Mentorship Program for college students to mentor 4th graders in South Merced.
- Merced County Probation Department administers corrective services that hold offenders accountable for their behavior and provide rehabilitative services in order to strengthen and protect our community.

Local Data Sources for Assessment and Learning

Local data sources that are currently available for assessment and learning include: Merced County Office of Education, First 5 of Merced County, Merced City and County Parks and Recreation, Merced County Public Health Department, Merced County Human Services Agency, Merced City School District, Planada School District, Merced Union High School District, Merced County Probation Department, California Health Interview Survey, Merced Police Department and the Merced County Sheriffs Department. California Department of Social Services, California Department of Education, California Department of Public Health, GIS Mapping Viewer, California Department of Health Care Services, and California Department of Vital Statistics.

Outcome 8: Community health improvements are linked to economic development

Local Stakeholders

Merced County stakeholders actively work towards community health improvements that are linked to economic development. The local stakeholders include: Merced County Workforce Investment Board, The Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce, The Merced College Center for International Trade Development, Poder Popular para la Salud del Pueblo-Merced, Boys and Girls Club Merced, Faith Based Community, UC Cooperative Extension, Fondation for Improved Living Merced, Merced Alliance for Responsible Growth, City of Merced, California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, The Central California Legal Services, the Great Valley Center, the Department of Transportation and Parks and Recreation, and the Merced County Small Business Development Center.

Regional and Statewide Partners

Our regional/statewide partners include: Merced County Association of Governments, California Reinvestment Agency, Regional San Joaquin Valley Farm Bureau Group, Department of Labor, Department of Rehabilitation, Valley Small Business Development Corporation and UC Merced.

Local Activities

Merced County has many local activities that foster community members actively working towards community health improvements that are linked to economic development. These activities include:

- Workforce Investment Board coordinates job training and economic development.
- The Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce is an organization of businesses in the Merced area that promotes economic vitality in Merced County.
- The Empower Program offers free work study opportunities for GED students ages 17-21.
- WorkNet provides employment services to residents.

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- The Merced College Center for International Trade Development promotes economic development activities with the overall purpose of advancing California's economic growth and global competitiveness through quality education and services focusing on continuous workforce improvement, technological deployment and business development.
- The Merced County Small Business Development Center provides counseling and support to businesses in order to build economic sustainability and successful businesses and business models.
- Faith-based organizations promote partnerships that create jobs, provide training and information in various disciplines.
- The UC Cooperative Extension provides job development and programming in the area of farming and land use.
- Poder Popular para la Salud del Pueblo-Merced works to improve the health of farmworkers, their families, and their children who reside in areas with limited resources as well as improve their environment and communities. The program empowers residents from the cities of Planada, Le Grand and South Merced -- both adult and youth -- and creates civic leaders in these communities who are engaged in shaping local policy and improving their local communities. Poder Popular has an active Planada community group known as Las Monarcas Unidas that has been addressing such issues and works collaboratively with other organizations and local officials.
- The Great Valley Center's agriculture programs continue to work on projects increasing the sustainability of our food system. With the Central Valley's capacity for food production, the demand for sustainable and/or locally grown products and the growing momentum for sustainable food systems in California, GVC along with existing growers, suppliers and distributors in their effort, continues to commit effort to agricultural health and economic sustainability of the region.

Local Data Sources for Assessment and Learning

Local data sources that are currently available for assessment and learning include: the Workforce Development Board, City of Merced Chamber of Commerce, Community Partnership Alliance, Small Business Development Center, Downtown Redevelopment Agency, and the UC Cooperative Extension.

Outcome 9: Health gaps for young men and boys of color are narrowed

Local Stakeholders

Merced County actively works to narrow health gaps for our men and boys of color. The local stakeholders include: Merced County Human Services Agency, All Dads Matter Program, Golden Valley Health Centers, Merced Community College, the Merced County Department of Public Health, the Merced County Mental Health Department, the Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program, the Merced Meals on Wheels Program, and the Save Our Youth Program.

Regional and Statewide Partners

The regional and statewide partners for Merced County include: The Boys and Girls Club of Merced County, UC Merced, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the University of California Agricultural Extension.

Local Activities

Merced County is engaged in several local activities to narrow the health gaps in young men and boys of color. These activities include the following:

- The Merced County Human Services Agency provides immediate assistance in crisis situations to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. HSA's All Dads Matter provides a support program and services for new fathers, teen support and for new parents.
- Save Our Youth transforms the lives of at-risk youth through mentor relationships providing the skills for success in educational, emotional, and spiritual development.
- The Boys and Girls Clubs of Merced County offers a variety of activities for youth.
- Golden Valley Health Centers provides a diabetes program, an integrated behavioral health program, dental health, a Reach Out and Read Program and Poder Popular para la Salud del Pueblo which focuses on community and population health, and has provided services intended to study and find ways to diminish HIV among Mexican migrant men.

Local Data Sources for Assessment and Learning

Local data sources that are currently available for assessment and learning include, but are not limited to: the Merced County Department of Public Health, Merced County Human Services Agency, Golden Valley Health Centers, and the Merced County Police Department.

Outcome 10: Strategic use of media elevates local experience to help influence policy and systems change at all levels

Local Stakeholders

The Merced County current stakeholders include newspapers, TV news coverage, and radio news. Our newspaper sources include: Vida en el Valle, Livingston Chronicle, Los Baños Enterprise, Dos Palos Sun, Entre Amigo/Between Friends, UC Merced Prodigy, Merced County Times, and the Merced Sun-Star. Our TV news coverage sources include: KCSO, KNXT, KFSN, KGPE, KFTV, KSEE, KMPH, KFSN, KJEO, KERO, KUVI, KGET, KBAK, KNSO, CNN, MSNBC, and Univision 21. Our radio news sources include: KMJ, KMPH, KLBS AM, KYOS AM, KTIQ AM, KUBB FM, KQED, KBX FM, KAMB FM, KBRE FM, and Radio Bilingüe.

Regional and Statewide Partners

The Merced County regional/statewide partners include: McClatchy, Comcast, and Mid-Valley Publications.

Local Activities

A few local organizations such as the Human Services Department and others have dedicated personnel to interact with the media and provide public relations services, but few if not any of these activities have been identified. No currently active programs were identified as providing strategic use of the media.

Local Data Sources for Assessment and Learning

Local data sources that are currently available for assessment and learning include, but are not limited to: Merced Sun Star, UC Merced Communications Department, and the Merced County Library archives.

C. ENGAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY RESIDENTS

During the planning process, our goal is to begin to build an effective, sustainable, dynamic community-driven process for creating a healthier community over the next 10 years in partnership with The California Endowment. We understand that one broad sign of success of this 9-month planning process is the development of a strong, community-driven group that can continue the planning through critical reflection and a focus on measurable progress. We intend to do this by creating new networks and alliances as well as broadening, strengthening and deepening existing networks and alliances between community members, service providers, faith-based organizations, county officials and interested stakeholders. We understand that education, support and “empowerment” for people who may not be familiar with or commonly involved with such community-improvement efforts must be central and ongoing for this plan and future activities to be successful. The ultimate goal is to empower adults and youth in our communities to become catalysts for systemic change and community transformation. The Central Valley generally, and Merced County in particular, has long had significant problems regarding inequality and disadvantages along racial, ethnic, and gender lines ranging from employment, to educational attainment, to residential segregation.

There are several values and guiding principles that we believe are central to our work.

- It is important to note that this is going to be an iterative process, where we must learn, adapt, and build on our lessons as they evolve.
- We understand that we (even those of us who are from the targeted communities of this funded-project) cannot fix problems and then stop our work. We must work to create a community-based and community-led process where everyone, especially those most experiencing problem we aim to solve, must be part of the problem-solving and vision-seeking journey.
- We will attempt to break the cycle of “business as usual” by constantly checking our assumptions and critically reflecting on how we are engaging everyone who can improve our community.
- We will not create a project that treats the community as something to be fixed.
- We will work hard to learn from what others have learned before us, to create ways to learn about our progress and to document our lessons in a way that all can understand and learn from.

Group meetings are a critical component of this planning process. When, where and how these meeting take place (e.g., safe environment, with language assistance, with transportation) are critical issues that we will be sensitive to in order to ensure the most representative and productive ideas and actions through our meetings. We will consistently make sure to consider how the meetings and gathering can best engage youth, older adults who may need transportation and others who tend to be left out of meetings due to other responsibilities and barriers.

Specifically for youth, we will make sure we work through schools, student clubs and community youth organizations so that we can reach out to young leaders of all ages, and find the best ways to include them in this initiative.

Notes and other materials will be made available in multiple formats and in multiple locations, translated as appropriate, and take other measures as necessary to help them be most accessible and useful. We will make sure that when we use technology (like the Internet, conference calls, etc) that we will not assume it is accessible and useful to everyone.

To be successful, we must be sensitive to the issues both cultural and structural, that these communities face. For example, if we want to have successful focus groups or large-scale community meetings in Planada in June and July, we would need to be sensitive to the fact that it would be difficult to involve the large number of community farm workers that are heavily involved in the harvest. We would, therefore, reschedule the meeting in late summer/early fall when the schools are opening, and the harvest is winding down, or find other ways to engage more people during that period. This is only one example. We will ensure that the leadership of our project understands and is responsive to these types of challenges.

Similarly, we cannot treat all groups who may have a disadvantage or be under-represented in the same way, assuming all people with challenges are the same. We must take the time to learn as much as we can about all people in our community to understand specific challenges that affect specific groups. For example, we will be sensitive to the cultural differences in interacting in the Hmong community, as opposed to the African-American community in South Merced. Though the demographic, structural disadvantages are the same for both groups living in those Census areas, the nuances of how, where and when to hold community meetings, or implement surveys must be taken to account. By considering these issues, we will begin to build the trust necessary for creating those networks and alliances mentioned above.

Assessment, research and evaluation are natural components of the planning process. In order to efficiently and accurately gather and analyze our data, we will build effective teams incorporating scholars (university and community based) with service providers and representatives from organizations with expertise on each of the 10 targeted issues identified in the RFP. The scholars will lead such activities with expertise in research methods, sampling, assuring confidentiality, research ethics, conducting focus groups, data entry, cleaning, and storage, and analysis and help with interpretation of results. But, all learning and assessment processes will aim to be collaborative, engaging and educating community members how to use measurement and research for their benefit. We will create teams involving both professional researchers and “on the ground” experts to ensure that all research, evaluation and assessment activities engage and reflect our communities. We will make sure that when we find information and results that indicate weakness and potentially harmful information (such as not positive for some groups), that we will work to ensure no one is harmed and that people and groups are not treated unfairly because of bad results. For example, if a group in a community is found to mistrust a major agency in the community, we will find a way to make sure that this mistrust is not ignored and communicated in a way that can be truthful and productive in the changes promoted by our 10-year plan.

Illustration of the Data Collection Methods During the Planning Period

Participant observation is a method in which the data gatherer not only observes but also joins in with the activities of the group of people being studied as a way of learning about the intricate meanings of the activity.

Focus groups are a strategy where a trained facilitator brings together a small group of people to discuss a specific issue. The facilitator typically provides questions to guide, but not dominate, the discussion.

Surveys are a method whereby a prescribed set of questions are asked of a group of people representative of their community as a whole.

Analysis of secondary or archival data is the process of identifying, organizing and examining data existing in files and databases (that does not need to be collected) in order to assess, evaluate, or understand something.

A Research and Evaluation (R&E) Workgroup will be created to assist with the design of valid measurement tools and procedures, train and support community members in the appropriate and accurate collection and use of data and data collection, assist in the quality assurance of research and evaluation evidence that will help shape the 10-year plan, ensure the ethical use of data and measurement procedures, organize and assist with data entry and management, conduct data analyses, help community members understand and interpret data and research, assist in the preparation of reports and presentation including quantitative and qualitative data, and help community members understand and appropriately present research and data important to the planning process. The R&E Workgroup will be made up of a combination of professional researchers in our community with the support of volunteer student and community members.

The 9-month planning period will include a review of the literature from research and community sources on best practices and evidence on building health communities are appropriate to Merced. The literature review activities will provide the community planning group with ideas for what and how to do things based on what other communities have learned works and help the community planning group to prioritize and judge the value of the options for projects and interventions over the 10-year period. The literature review will be implemented by the R&E Workgroup. The R&E Workgroup will identify, read, critique, and synthesize recommendations from the literature for the community planning team. The R&E Workgroup will work closely with the community planning group to make sure they understand and respond to information needs that evolve during the planning period.

A Description of Specific Activities During the Planning Period

Multiple and diverse methods will be used to identify the needs, resources, ambitions, recommendations, and actions for a meaningful plan. These are describe in the work plan and reviewed here. A number of focus group meetings and larger community public input “town hall”

meetings will be held in various locations each month. Along with the comments during these discussions, participants will be surveyed to ensure we hear from those who may not have spoken during the meetings or did not say all that they would have liked to say. The survey will be available in multiple languages, and people will be available to interview those who for whatever reason wish not to complete a written survey. The meetings will be conducted in multiple languages with the use of a trained interpreter and wireless headset equipment. We will work with people and groups who best understand the language and literacy barriers in our community in order to ensure we have support for the necessary languages and the necessary methods of communication (e.g., American Sign Language). Refreshments and childcare will be provided to improve and encourage access. In addition, information booths will be placed at existing community events where the survey can be distributed. Event calendars from each city, each chamber of commerce, and the county will be merged to assist with scheduling meetings and attending other events.

We recognize there is a wide range of expertise, experience, and capacity in Merced County to conduct focus groups, facilitate town halls meetings, develop and analyze results from a survey instrument, and conduct individual interviews at a grass-root level. Therefore, while multiple people have generously pledged their time to assist in some or all of these various methods, a specific training will be completed during the second month of the planning process of all staff and community members assisting in any data gathering in order to ensure a base level of capacity to collect unbiased and comparable data. We will work with researchers in our community who can help to ensure that focus groups are conducted with the highest quality.

Prior to this training, community members will be encouraged to participate in trainings through a media blitz (fliers and phone recordings sent home through area schools, public service announcements in local media, fliers and word-of-mouth presentations at local events and gatherings such as at the county flea market, farmers markets, radio, TV, etc.). This will ensure that training of community leaders involved in and conducting focus groups, town hall meetings, etc., are conducted not just for agency representatives, but community representatives who can become community leaders and catalysts as well, as these leaders will intimately understand their individual communities, and the cultures, languages, and other barriers to information access that exist, as well as have a stake in the results. This will also ensure that the process works both from the “bottom up” and “top down.” Trained community leaders will receive a stipend in the form of monetary reimbursement or promotional item, likely an in-kind donation from a community partner or stakeholder.

All meetings, focus groups, discussion, town hall meetings, and other group gatherings will be recorded with digital voice recorders that automatically create files that can be stored on a website for free download (e.g., mp3, wav). This will allow anyone at anytime to listen to what occurred and to verify information. We will work with student volunteers from university and community colleges with experience in transcription to transcribe all audio-recordings. This will help people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing, and will allow for analysis of the focus group and discussion data. Names and any personal identifiers will be removed from documents that will be analyzed to ensure anonymity. But any public meeting that is recorded will be posted as it occurred, without modification.

When appropriate, incentives will be provided (e.g. promotional products and drawings) to encourage participation. Sponsors, as from local businesses and others, will be solicited for incentive items, refreshments and other in-kind resources that can increase broad participation (e.g., free press or media announcements).

A Project Coordinator will be hired to direct the administrative duties of the planning process. We will construct a job description and identify the responsibilities of the Project Coordinator prior to the beginning of the planning phase. The Project Coordinator will be hired by a group review process. All information will be forwarded to the Project Coordinator who will get help from a work group to make sure all data and information are organized and readily available for review and analysis.

The process we will be using to engage the community residents and specific activities are included in the workplan template. For the workplan please see Attachment 2

D. ENGAGEMENT OF OTHER STAKEHOLDERS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE LOCAL PLAN

Naturally, the letters of support we have included from the local stakeholders that are committed to being engaged in the planning process represent only a small fraction of who we have seen participate in meetings and that may be supportive once we begin this process. (Attachment 1 includes these letters.) We will continue our progress in indentifying and engaging other stakeholders throughout and beyond the planning period.

The Project Coordinator will guide and manage the information hub for new stakeholders to learn where to go (i.e., the Community Review Inclusion Board) to get up to speed on the planning process, as well as to gather documents (i.e., meeting minutes, work plans, calendars of planned activities, etc.) and other information necessary to participate.

Current stakeholders will recruit new stakeholders. Word of mouth is the best way to engage new people. A media blitz (see section C) and word of mouth will generate interest in other area agencies, organizations and individuals to become engaged in the planning process. Targeted groups will include local agencies as well as local businesses, non-incorporated groups, and others. Most importantly, the process of engaging others will not have an end date or be closed: interested stakeholders will be allowed to join the process at any time. The Community Review Inclusion Board will provide orientation to new members so that they are not feeling lost or out of place. The Project Coordinator will provide necessary materials and other resources. In addition to such engagement, the workplan will also take into account and include the importance of stakeholder involvement and understanding of data collection, to ensure that the information gathered during the planning process is useful.

As evident in the numerous letters of support, these stakeholders are committed to collaborate and offer essential resources during the nine months of planning for this ground-breaking community initiative. Accordingly, they pledge various in-kind resources from facility usage, printing and copying services to graphic design, outreach and marketing.

As people decide to volunteer their time to this process, we will appreciate any all time that can be provided. For people who wish to play more active roles in committees and leadership positions, we will create a clear set of procedures for the roles and responsibilities of these positions, including estimates of the amount of time and type of skills that would be useful. We will aim to prevent situations where people volunteer but are not actually assisting and filling their responsibilities.

The wealth of in-kind support we have identified so far falls into 3 main categories with resources including but not limited to:

- 1) Facility, equipment and supplies: office space/facilities for community meetings and forums, printing and copying, internet access.
- 2) Human resources: time and skills for outreach facilitation, advertising and marketing, community engagement, data collection, evaluation activities, and technical support.
- 3) Services for community-driven necessities: translation and interpretation services, materials formatted for the disabled, culturally and linguistically appropriate methods of engagement.

For in-kind support chart see Attachment 4.

The planned community activities and dates are included in the workplan on Attachment 3.

The Merced County Health Care Consortium, through its collaborative efforts, has also cultivated relationships with several stakeholders, as well as regional/statewide partners who have committed to providing in-kind resources to the project. In addition to the three types of support identified above, these resources include refreshments, staff time to perform policy advocacy training, legal assistance, information dissemination, advertising and public relations, no-cost Internet access, graphic design, printing and copying, technical support and unique expertise of staff, mentoring, research and data analysis, auto dialing phone systems, culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services, and access to patient advocacy groups.

E. FACILITATION, DECISION-MAKING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION TO ENSURE COLLABORATION

The planning period will include professional support for facilitation and conflict resolution. But, equally important, formal training and support to develop more people and develop skills among more people in our community for group facilitation and conflict resolution will ensure that we are never left without these critical community development skills. To ensure inclusion and collaboration of all stakeholders and partners, all planning discussions will be facilitated by a non-biased, third-party facilitator. This facilitator will be acquired through a RFP process during the first four weeks of the planning period. A hiring committee will review proposals and bring a decision to hire to the general convening of all members for approval. A RFP process will also

designate a conflict resolution mediator. The mediator (with training and experience in community mediation) may or may not also act as the process facilitator.

Once the facilitator is hired, he or she will guide discussions and the decision-making process for the remainder of the nine-month planning period. Decisions will be processed through organizational committees that will consist of a Steering Committee, a Community Review Inclusion Board, committees addressing each outcome and/or geographical location, as well as a general convening of all committees, stakeholders and partners where decisions will be presented and discussed. Each committee will be made up of representatives from stakeholders, partners, and community members, and care will be taken to ensure that each geographical location is also represented in each committee.

The Community Review Inclusion Board will work closely with the facilitator and/or the mediator to:

- Promote inclusion of all Merced County residents, agencies and organizations who wish to be a part of the planning process through outreach efforts, educational forums that engage new members and the development of culturally and linguistically appropriate materials for Merced County's diverse population. This will include materials for people with physical and development disabilities.
- Monitor inclusion of hard-to-reach groups including but not limited to ethnicity, homelessness, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disenfranchised youth and young adults, individuals diagnosed with chronic illnesses, etc. and adapt outreach and education methods to encourage inclusion.
- Resolve conflicts through investigation, mediation and other methods; and
- Build collaborative relationships among stakeholders, partners and community residents.

This committee will incorporate discussions about what inclusion means across boundaries of color, culture, sexual preference, physical ability and age and introduce conflict resolution processes. They will identify common values that will ground our work together. In addition, other activities are planned including the collective development and adherence to group agreements, development of socio-cultural understanding, development of common definitions to guide the work together, development of participatory decision-making processes that acknowledge and equalize rank and power, development of cross-cultural conflict resolution processes, development of common ground among people with divergent backgrounds, development and support of inter-ethnic leadership, and support of open-forum communication.

Mediation

Conflict is a natural component of growth and evolution for any community improvement effort. Decisions about what matters, the ends and means to those ends, and how we can work across potentially conflicting values are all part of building health communities. The absence of conflict in such community-wide initiatives can be a sign that we have not engaged a representative

community group. This does not mean we will necessarily invite conflict, but we will not ignore or try to undermine it when it exists. We will use conflict to identify and overcome mistrust, disrespect, and misunderstanding.

Even as we worked on this preparation of this proposal, we were able to bring out conflicting situations (such as how we can be more engaging and inclusive and how we will make sure all voices are heard). Some conflicts will need the assistance of a professional cross-cultural mediator. We must be careful when dealing with conflict in multicultural communities such as Merced: for example, formal mediation is not known or appropriate among all cultural groups. Some groups are more familiar with a traditional elder model. Efforts will be made to incorporate both as resources. The professional mediator will be skilled in cooperative negotiation and working out solutions that will offer the best possible outcome for all. Conflict transformation will be our ultimate goal, which focuses on improving the nature of relationships of all for future collaborative work.

There will need to be a variety of approaches to conflict resolution because diverse cultures will always be a factor. Processes to resolve conflict will be built upon the belief that we must recognize and act respectfully from the knowledge that communication, world views, experiences with conflict differ across cultures. Spearheaded by inclusive community engagement, local residents will be actively involved in the creation of a healthy community and engaged with private and public decision-makers to enact policies that directly improve the quality of community life.

F. FINALIZATION OF GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES AND PLACE NAME

The participants involved in this process are familiar with the methodology and decision making process used by The California Endowment in delineating the boundaries. Not all community members may fully understand the rationale for a 90,000 person area and the full goals and intentions of a “geographic” emphasis. We will ensure there is a process to make sure everyone can fully understand the need for a final geographic area for the 10-year initiative. This process may require further support from TCE in-person. TCE’s phone support so far has been very helpful, but many in our community value a more personal and in-person approach.

The final determination of the geographic boundaries and place name will occur within the first month of the planning period. This process will be inclusive as described in the earlier activities. Because this decision will be the critical decision to drive the planning and implementation process, it will be critical that we have as representative and comprehensive discussion for this. We envision that three to four facilitated group discussions will be needed during this month of decision-making. The discussions will include research support (through our local university and community scholars) and community leaders with experience in the geographic areas to be considered. Other important plans and documents, such as the Merced County General Plan, economic and population planning documents, and related strategic planning documents may be used to ensure that the final geographic boundaries and place name can be inclusive and fitting

with broader initiatives and the development of our county. This will help us to avoid creating a geographically-focused initiative that is seen as exclusionary and separate from the broader community. We will work with any concerned stakeholder with the understanding that they will first need to develop a proposal to amend and fully investigate the impact of any change to the final boundaries. The proposal will need to be submitted to the project steering committee for review and support before forwarding to The Endowment for possible approval.

G. APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

For many years, the health care leadership of Merced County has worked together informally to improve services for its residents. In 2003, a small group of concerned providers received a grant from the Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP). This provided the structure for the founding partners working relationships and a focus through which common goals could be achieved. The consortium went on to streamline and enhance the application process, targeting underserved populations, resulting in enrollment of 20,000 individuals in either Medi-Cal or Healthy Families. The consortium took the next logical step by incorporating into a 501(c)(3) and investing their own money to get the organization started.

Since June of 2007, the consortium has hired a full-time Executive Director and received funding for three major projects. A planning grant for improving access to specialty care (from the California Healthcare Foundation), funding to increase capacity and participate in local healthcare system reform (from The California Endowment), and two community grants for direct premium support of the local Children's Health Initiative (from Catholic Healthcare West).

Merced County Health Care Consortium currently consists of seven charter members: Merced Faculty Associates (a private group of physicians who are the faculty for the Family Medicine residency program affiliated with the University of California Davis and a rural health clinic), Livingston Medical Group (a Federally Qualified Health Center), The Merced County Human Services Agency (which administers over 50 social service programs), Mercy Medical Center Merced (the only hospital in the city of Merced which operates a licensed Rural Health Clinic), Castle Family Health Centers (a rural health center in the process of becoming an FQHC look-alike), Golden Valley Health Centers (a large FQHC with 8 sites in the county), and the Merced Department of Public Health (which manages the County's indigent health programs, and Children's Medical Services including CCS and CHDP. Together, the Consortium members represent the County's safety net providers and system of care.

The multitude of additional stakeholders have significant interest in the populations served as well as the services provided by the Consortium members and include: UC Merced (which plans to build a medical school in the future and whose faculty have research and program expertise that matches the defined outcomes), the Merced County Chapter of the United Way (a strong supporter of the consortium and advocate for improving health centers), and of course, our Congressman, Dennis Cardoza. Additional stakeholders which we have identified include Merced County Association of Governments, Merced Community College, the Central Valley Health Policy Institute, and members of the local Medical Society.

Merced County: Building Healthy Communities- Planning for Place Partnership

The common vision of Merced County Health Care Consortium and its partners is to increase health care services where they are lacking: to improve access through comprehensive planning and coordination, and promote the engagement of the community and its providers.

The Merced County Health Care Consortium is the perfect applicant agency for this project. John Alexander, has been employed as the Executive Director for almost two years, and has worked in community health for more than nine years. He received his MBA from California State University, Stanislaus while working as HR director at Golden Valley Health Centers in Merced. Prior to accepting this position, John was Chief Operations Officer for Clinica Sierra Vista, a large group of community health centers in Kern County. The MCHCC Board of Directors is made up of seasoned health care executives, each with many years of experience providing care for underserved populations. The forum created by the Merced County Health Care Consortium presents an exciting opportunity to strengthen commitment to a strong future for health care in this county. Monthly meetings and consortium communication methods (website and newsletter) provide a consistent forum to link health experts with different vantage points and ideas. Many times, solutions created for urban settings are poorly suited to delivering healthcare and improving health in our small towns and hospitals.

Concurrently, outside partners and supporters of this project could potentially become members of the consortium and connect with the community on different levels. We can gain fresh insights into health policy perspectives, learn what is happening around the area, and develop new contacts with people dealing with similar issues.

H. PLANNING PROCESS BUDGET

For the line item budget see Attachment 6

For the MCHCC format budget see Attachment 7

For the line item budget narrative see Attachment 8