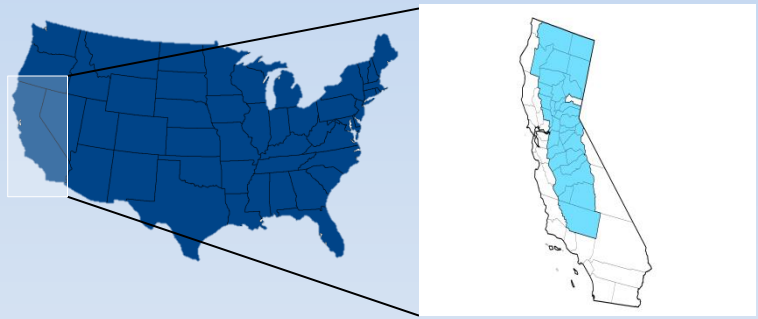


Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership

The Central Valley AgPlus Food and Beverage Manufacturing Consortium



The Community

California's food system is the largest agricultural economy in the U.S. and among the top ten globally. It produced nearly \$105 billion in economic output in 2012, and it was responsible for over 198,000 jobs tied directly to manufacturing. The Central Valley, comprised of 28 counties located in California's heartland, plays a dominant role in this economy as America's "Farm to Fork Capital." Production agriculture has been the Central Valley's mainstay and competitive advantage, fueling growth in the food manufacturing sector as those industries are part of a highly integrated supply chain. Claiming more value from agricultural production through the food processing industry, along with its supply and distribution chains, is the Central Valley's opportunity and challenge.

The Vision

The mission of the AgPlus Consortium is to foster the growth and creation of food and beverage businesses and middle-skills manufacturing jobs in the Central Valley. The AgPlus Implementation Strategy will build upon the Central Valley's unique asset base, committed partnerships and networks to: capture more value-added cluster manufacturing and supply chain activity within the region, including to meet new demand and for local specialty products such as through the Farm to Fork efforts; provide the workforce with the needed skills through successful career pathways models; accelerate the development and adoption of innovative technologies so that the Central Valley's food and beverage manufacturing industry is the most efficient, safe, healthy, viable, and sustainable national and global center of innovation for next-generation processing and supply chains; facilitate the transformation of the industry to adapt to the short- and long-term impacts of drought and climate change; and strengthen business operations and access to capital.

The Strategy

Workforce and Training: AgPlus will help align the Central Valley's cluster-related education and training assets to ensure that the workforce is prepared to fill projected job openings in food and beverage manufacturing by expanding the availability of career pathways and mentoring and career awareness programs.

Supplier Networks: AgPlus will include a comprehensive mapping of supplier networks

in the Central Valley with identification of target priorities to address leakage gaps. Implementation Strategy Partners leading cluster initiatives will organize forums where firms can connect with one another. The AgPlus strategy will foster local/regional sourcing among industries as a more widespread business practice.

Research and Innovation: AgPlus will work to connect and enhance regional State of California-Designated Innovation Hubs (iHubs) by building additional capacity among small business consultants to enhance the region's capacity to deliver SBIR and STTR grant assistance to firms. AgPlus will also work to leverage the networks of iHubs to promote and implement additional technology transfer and commercialization activities in the region.

Infrastructure and Site Development: Major plans are being executed for projects that will help to implement projects that will contribute to the economic competitiveness of the region – and the U.S. as a whole – by improving efficiency, reliability, sustainability, and/or cost-competitiveness in the movement of workers and goods and creating jobs. Examples include site development planning that will improve capacity in existing urbanized areas that have infrastructure, utilities, transportation access, and can serve as centralized hubs, while also contributing to the economic revitalization of the region's rural communities.

Trade and Investment: AgPlus will increase trade literacy among businesses in the Central Valley by expanding existing training models and services. The Northern California Trade Center and the CalAsian Chamber of Commerce will develop resources such as international business mentoring programs and online platforms to facilitate export promotion and expand markets. AgPlus will also offer a 'Made in Rural America' export-focused regional forum to help rural businesses take advantage of new market opportunities.

Operational Improvement and Capital Access: The AgPlus Implementation Strategy will include assessing the feasibility of developing a regional finance fund for business and infrastructure, with a focus on supporting food and ag enterprises.

The Partnership

Consortium members represent major Central Valley public and private institutions from the education, business, economic and workforce development and civic sectors. **Higher Education:** California State University, Fresno; California State University, Chico; University of California, Davis; Central/Mother Lode Regional Consortium; CSU Fresno Water, Energy, and Technology Center; Los Rios Community College District; NextEd; UC Merced Small Business Development Center. **Government Entity:** Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority; City of Avenal; City of Fresno; City of Winters; Sacramento Area Council of Governments. **Nonprofit:** Valley Vision; Center for Land-Based Learning; Fresno Community Development Financial Institution; Northern California World Trade Center; Sacramento Employment and Training Agency; Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce; Solano Economic Development Corporation. **Private Sector:** AgTech Innovation Fund; CalAsian Pacific Chamber of Commerce; Davis Chamber of Commerce; JBT FoodTech; PackageOne, Inc