

Imperial Valley Civic Ecosystem Initiative



About the Imperial Valley

The Imperial Valley is a dynamic border region located southeast of the Salton Sea that experiences some of the highest poverty, pollution, and health burdens in California. A history of boom-and-bust economies has left the region with inadequate infrastructure, a 20% unemployment rate, and a “brain drain” of young talent. Despite the dedication and tenacity of local leaders, historic disinvestment has deprived Imperial Valley local governments and community-based organizations of the capacity they need to effectively compete for funds that could help improve quality of life and long-term outcomes for residents.



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The Imperial Valley Civic Ecosystem Initiative (IVCEI)

The Imperial Valley Civic Ecosystem Initiative (IVCEI) is a collaboration between the State of California, the Institute for Local Government, the Latino Community Foundation, and local partners to promote civic engagement and achieve the community’s vision of a thriving Imperial Valley. The Strategic Growth Council, the Governor’s Office, and the California Energy Commission collaborated with local partners, trusted practitioners, and philanthropic supporters to develop this multi-pronged public-private partnership to help address the severe deficiencies of investment and resources impacting the area. The two core pillars of IVCEI are led by the Institute for Local Government (ILG) and the Latino Community Foundation (LCF), which aim to expand the bandwidth of the local public and nonprofit sectors through two interconnected programs: **BOOST Imperial Valley** and **Activate Imperial**.

Core Programs

BOOST Imperial Valley

BOOST Imperial Valley is a capacity-building program led by ILG that aims to empower under-resourced cities across Imperial Valley. The program's support to local government helps ensure a healthy, resilient, and prosperous future for local residents. This is the third round of the BOOST Program, a longstanding partnership between ILG and SGC, which has become a statewide catalyst for change: empowering under-resourced cities and regions to access critical public funding, foster meaningful community partnerships, and build long-term institutional strength. BOOST Imperial Valley is the most regionally focused round of the program—supporting Imperial County and its seven cities: Brawley, Calexico, Calipatria, El Centro, Holtville, Imperial, and Westmorland.

Activate Imperial

Activate Imperial is a capacity-building program led by LCF that provides tools, resources, and support to increase the collective and individual capacity of community-based organizations across Imperial Valley. The program's core objective is to ensure that community priorities are represented and prioritized through collaboration, technical assistance, and strategic support. Through Activate Imperial, LCF is helping nonprofits located in Imperial Valley navigate challenges, build partnerships, scale their impact, and become sustainable forces for good.

Together, these sister programs take a holistic approach to supporting the region by increasing the capacity of both the public and nonprofit sectors to access investment and partner on building a bright future for the Imperial Valley. With the prospect of lithium development and a variety of other evolving opportunities and challenges on the horizon, IVCEI aims to build a community ecosystem to help the region achieve its goals.

Partner Roles

IVCEI brings together a cross-disciplinary team of dedicated partners to support capacity building:

- **Implementing Partners:** The Institute for Local Government and the Latino Community Foundation carry out the day-to-day technical assistance and support offered to local partners through the BOOST Imperial Valley and Activate Imperial programs.
- **Coordination Partners:** The Strategic Growth Council and Freedman Consulting foster collaboration among partners, build external relationships, and leverage best practices to ensure the overall success of IVCEI.
- **Strategic Advisors:** The Governor's Office and the California Energy Commission bring expertise related to energy, lithium development, and state and local policy and help engage key state and/or philanthropic partners to advance the region's goals.

Change not Charity

IVCEI is funded through a combination of philanthropic and public dollars, including contributions by the 11th Hour Project and the Strategic Growth Council. To date, LCF has raised 71% of its Y1 goal and is seeking an additional \$6.3 million to support Activate Imperial through early 2027. ILG has raised 55% of its current goal for BOOST Imperial Valley and is seeking an additional \$500,000 to continue support through early 2027.

Learn More

More information about IVCEI can be found on the [SGC website](#). To connect with us, please reach out to CACE@sgc.ca.gov