

CRADLE TO CAREER

FRESNO COUNTY



2024
ANNUAL
REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM LINDA GLEASON

DIRECTOR, FRESNO C2C



2024 has been a busy and fruitful year for Fresno Cradle to Career (C2C), and our steady work over the last seven years to build our collaborative muscle is paying off. Multiple cross-sector initiatives are underway that are putting more children and their families on a path away from poverty and toward economic mobility. In this year's annual report, we have included several examples highlighting the tangible results of collaborative action grounded in Fresno C2C's guiding principles.

One thing we have learned over time is that certain conditions must be in place for collaborative action to be effective. We call these "the enabling conditions for improvement," and Fresno C2C and the C2C Leadership Council work to ensure that these conditions are embedded in cross-sector collaborations. In our report this year, the role of the enabling conditions and the Community Agenda, both foundational to our work, are woven throughout the document.



Guiding Principles:

- Advance Equity
- Engage the Community
- Encourage Collaboration
- Collect and Connect Data
- Leverage and Align Resources
- Apply Continuous Improvement

HIGHLIGHTS THIS YEAR INCLUDE:

- The Community Information Exchange
- Early Matters Fresno
- The Foster Youth Networked Improvement Community
- Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion
- Career Nexus
- Community Engagement and Resident Power Building

These efforts are changing how systems operate and the benefits to our partners, children, and families across our community are genuine. Thank you to our partners for another year of hard work and also to the Fresno C2C team for their commitment and passion for making a difference.



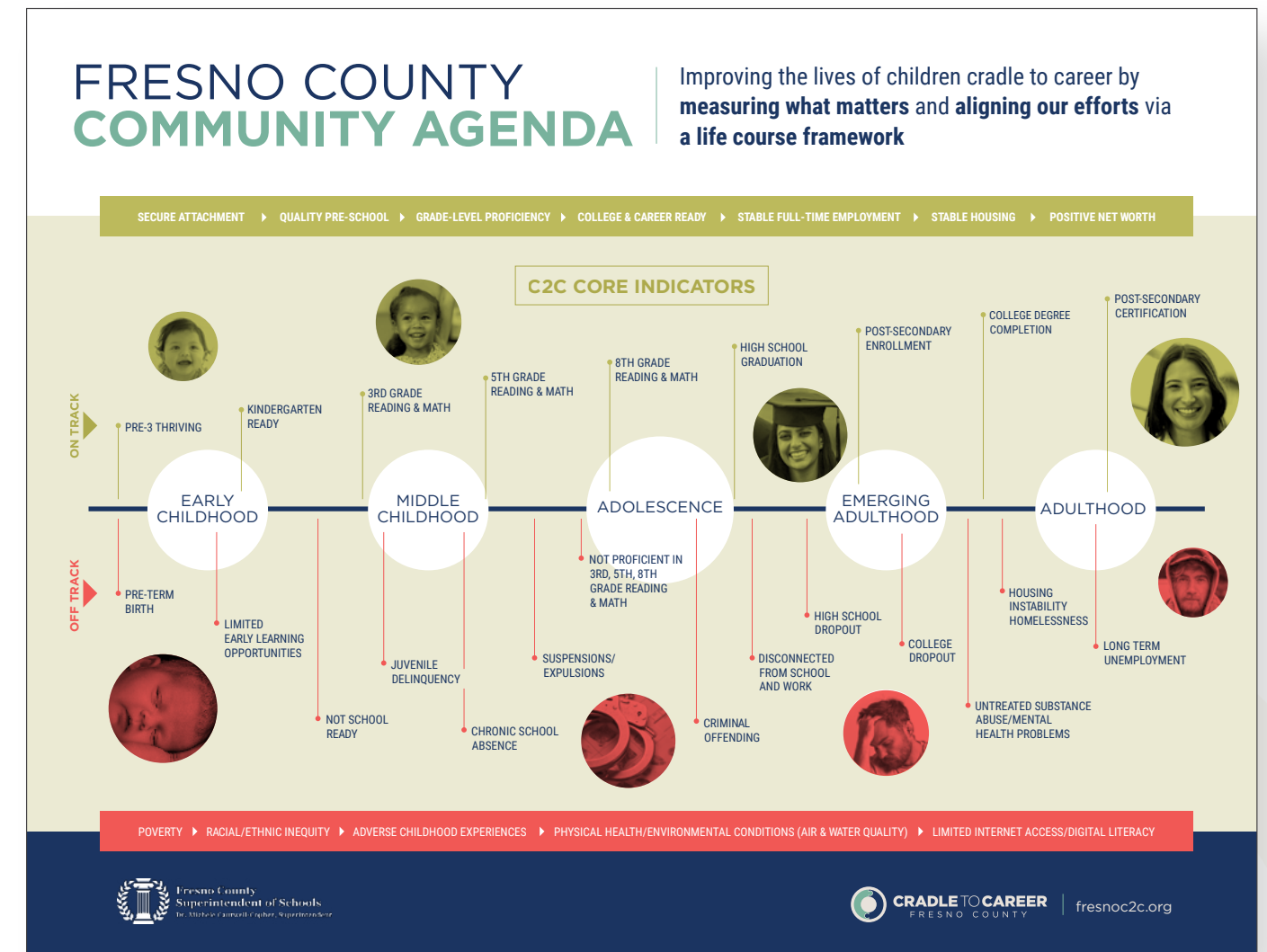
I am inspired by the collective dedication of our cross-sector partners who are uniting their expertise and resources to improve educational outcomes in Fresno County. Together, we are building strong foundations for our students, aligning efforts across education, community organizations, and industry to ensure every child embarks on a positive school trajectory and is equipped to thrive in school, career, and life.

-Dr. Michele Copher, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools



THE POWER OF A POSITIVE TRAJECTORY

We need a collective vision for children's success so that they can achieve their full potential. The Community Agenda illustrates the shared vision of the Fresno Cradle to Career Partnership. This life-course framework highlights the on-track outcomes that lead to a well-paying career and economic mobility, and the off-track challenges that too often derail that journey.



WHAT FRESNO C2C SUPPORTS ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT



C2C LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

BRIAN ANGUS
Interim CEO, Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission

FABIOLA GONZÁLEZ
Executive Director, First 5 Fresno County

JEFFREY NKANSAH
Chief Executive Officer, CalViva Health

DR. MICHELE COPHER
Superintendent, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools

MISTY HER
Interim Superintendent, Fresno Unified School District

WILL OLIVER
CEO, Fresno Economic Development Corporation

KETTI DAVIS
Superintendent, Central Unified School District

DR. SAÚL JIMÉNEZ-SANDOVAL
President, Fresno State

TODD SUNTRAPAK
President and CEO, Valley Children's Healthcare

THE HONORABLE MARY DOLAS
Superior Court Judge, Fresno County Juvenile Dependency Court

KURT MADDEN
Executive Director, Career Nexus

ASHLEY SWEARENGIN
President and CEO, Central Valley Community Foundation

DR. CAROLE GOLDSMITH
Chancellor, State Center Community College District

STEPHANIE NATHAN
President and CEO, United Way Fresno Madera Counties

TYRONE RODERICK WILLIAMS
Chief Executive Officer, Fresno Housing

PAUL NERLAND
Chief Administrative Officer, County of Fresno



Stable, affordable housing is the foundation for educational success, empowering children and families to thrive. Fresno Housing remains committed to working alongside our C2C partners to create opportunities that ensure every child has the support they need to learn, grow, and succeed in school and beyond."

- Tyrone Roderick Williams, CEO, Fresno Housing



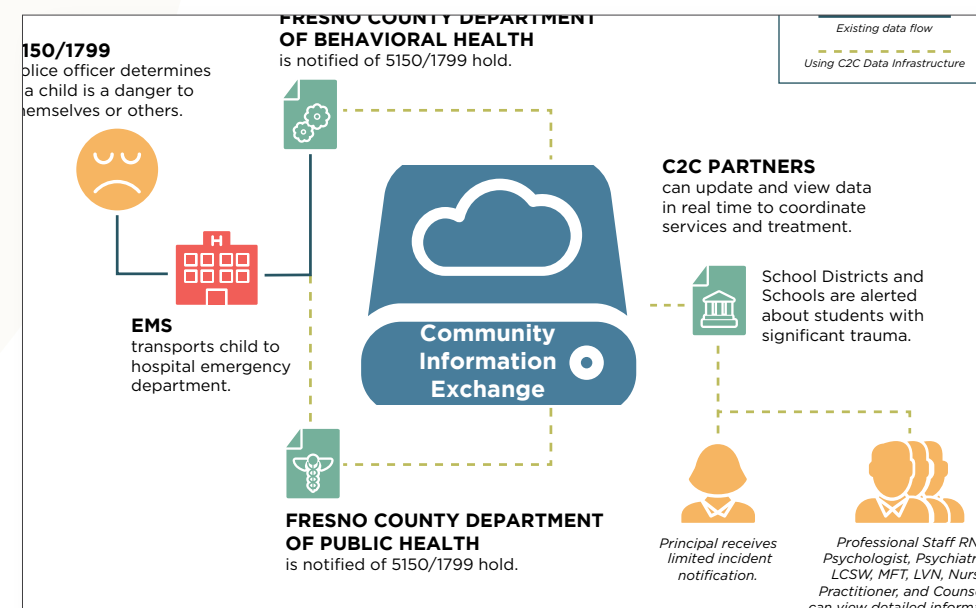
COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE



The Fresno County Community Information Exchange (CIE) is an ambitious initiative that explicitly aims to improve the lives of Fresno County residents and put more children and families on a path to economic mobility. Fresno C2C began developing a cross-sector data-sharing platform in 2018 and has steadily built the trust and collaborative will needed to make cross-sector data sharing a reality.

Fresno County and the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools are working closely to operationalize the Community Information Exchange (CIE). Two work groups have been formed. The first will focus on saving lives through youth suicide prevention, and the second will improve the lives of families raising our youngest children.

YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION FLOW CHART FOR CHILDREN



Youth safety and mental health are prioritized across the Fresno C2C partnership. De-stigmatizing mental health and creating the necessary communication loops between schools and public agencies are essential to saving young lives. The youth suicide prevention pilot is putting in place a data-sharing pathway that ensures children who are struggling are supported and receive the services they need to improve their mental health. For example, the principal would know that one of their students is experiencing serious behavioral health issues and could then work with other school staff to be sure that the youth is receiving the care that the school can help provide.

HOME VISITATION COORDINATION

Improving maternal and child health is crucial for family well-being and prosperity. Therefore, it makes sense to focus on strategies that support mothers and their children's early development. Home Visitation services are a proven method for ensuring parents and children access the resources necessary for good

physical and mental health and quality educational opportunities.

For the past six years, Fresno C2C has been instrumental in convening and networking the multiple home visitation services offered by community-based organizations and public agencies across Fresno County. The Home Visitation Network is

now the foundation for a CIE pilot project that aims to expand and coordinate services so that more children are developmentally on track and more parents are physically and mentally healthy with access to educational opportunities that can improve their lives over time.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE BENEFITS BY USER

CIE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Addressing the Social Determinants of Health (the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age) improve a household's earning potential and economic mobility. However, working parents are often unaware of the services available and unsure how to navigate the maze of entry points to access them. The CIE will empower parents, turning them from frustrated navigators of a fragmented system into informed and proactive participants in their family's future.

When the CIE is fully implemented:

- Service delivery will be streamlined and enhanced and parents will state their needs once to a service provider. The provider will then enter the client into the system and provide access to services that the client may be eligible for to meet the family's individual needs.
- The family will not have long wait times and receive potentially redundant services. Instead, parents will have a clear overview of the services available and unified support to access them.

CIE FOR PRACTITIONERS

For practitioners (public health nurses, for example), the CIE is set to transform day-to-day operations:

- Eliminating the need for multiple entries of the same data across various systems saves time and decreases the likelihood of errors.
- Reducing the duplication of services leads to more service provision.
- Improving communication and fostering better collaboration and coordination among service providers benefits clients through more integrated care.

CIE FOR DECISION-MAKERS

The CIE is not just a tool but a strategic asset for decision-makers:

- The longitudinal aspect of data collection and connection illuminates a portfolio's return on investment (ROI) over time.
- Understanding what is working helps determine where to direct resources.
- By interconnecting services and supports, care coordination and impact are improved.
- Identifying duplication and gaps in service delivery facilitates more confident resource allocation.



Thriving children and secure families are essential ingredients to a vibrant economy. **Early Matters Fresno** is focused on ensuring the well-being and educational success of families raising our youngest children, setting the path to economic mobility now and for future generations. For the past eight years, Fresno Cradle to Career has worked to build the trust, relationships and will to collaborate needed to change lives. By establishing a shared vision, a data collection/connection culture, awareness of key challenges and solutions, an improvement model and sustaining investment, Fresno C2C is creating the operational framework to reach our ambitious goals.

114,600
CHILDREN

on a path to economic mobility

BY 2035

Fresno County will have a well-functioning, culturally responsive, two-generation family support model that reduces preterm birth, promotes kindergarten readiness, and produces notable gains in third-grade reading and math assessments.

Early Matters Fresno is an anchor portfolio in the human development area of Fresno County's ambitious 10-year community investment plan, **Developing the Region's Inclusive and Vibrant Economy (DRIVE)**. Managed by Fresno C2C and First 5 Fresno County, the portfolio is focused on the well-being and economic mobility of families raising our youngest children. The investment priorities include maternal/child health and quality early care and school readiness, with an explicit focus on reducing preterm birth, increasing healthy growth and development, and increasing the availability of quality child care.

All partners are committed to achieving Early Matters Fresno outcomes by participating in the following ways:

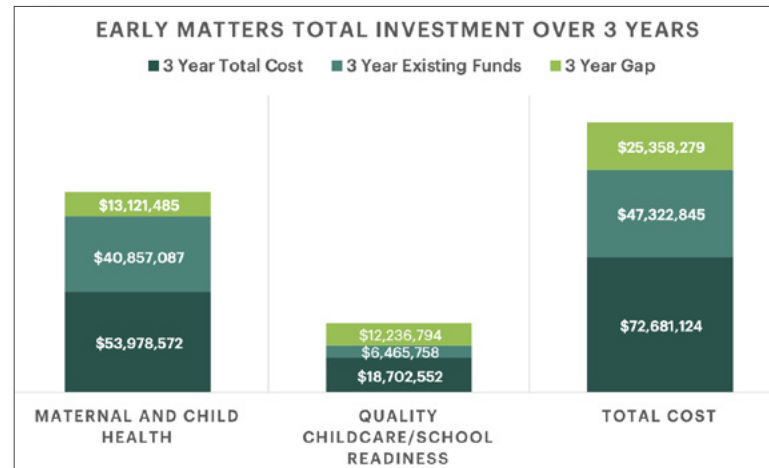
- Collect data and participate in the development of the Community Information Exchange.
- Use data to develop and refine programs and policies.
- Work with other Early Matters Fresno partners to strengthen community resources through purposeful coordination.
- Advocate for policy and practice changes where relevant and beneficial.
- Leverage financial and/or in-kind institutional resources to support implementation.
- Celebrate progress through shared messaging, spreading awareness about the work and advocating that others get involved.

These commitments help all partners undertake new levels of coordination toward shared results on an ongoing basis. Commitments will be monitored by the Fresno C2C staff and championed by the C2C Leadership Council.

To reach our 2035 goal, the Early Matters Fresno investment plan includes the strategies, progress measures, and three- and ten-year investment requirements represented by the gap between current public funding and actual funding needs.

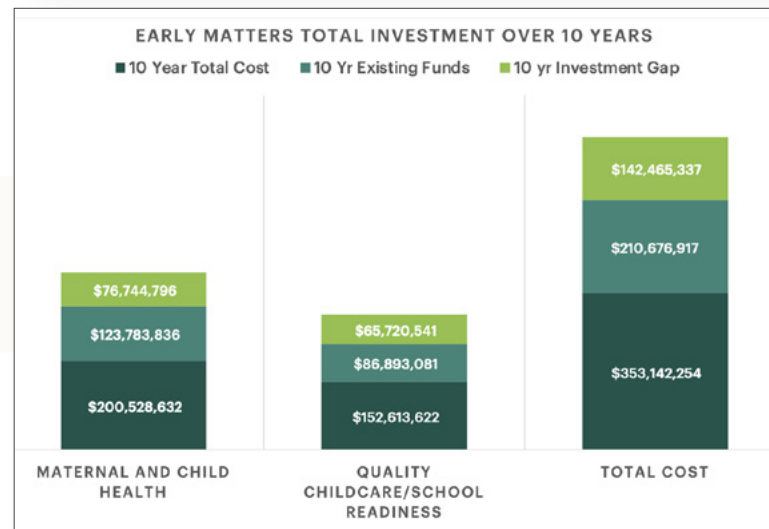
Three-Year Investment Overview

- The three-year total investment need is \$72,681,124
- Over \$47 million is currently being directed to the effort
- The needed funding gap is \$25,358,279



Ten-Year Investment Overview

- The ten-year total investment need is \$353,142,254
- Over \$210.5 million is currently being directed to the effort
- The needed funding gap is \$142,465,337



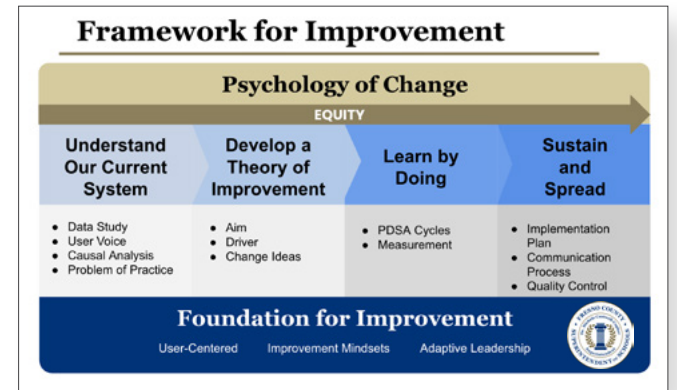
“
At Fresno State, we know that the journey to college starts at birth. We are committed to collaborating with Fresno Cradle to Career to ensure that many Valley kids become proud Bulldogs!
- Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, President, Fresno State”



[CLICK HERE](#) to access the **Early Matters Fresno Investment Plan**

A PROVEN IMPROVEMENT MODEL

A key ingredient in Fresno C2C’s success is our ability to measurably improve educational and health outcomes for children and families across Fresno County. To ensure our collaborative actions achieve results, Fresno C2C uses a proven improvement science model: the **Networked Improvement Community**. This model brings together people connected to a particular set of challenges, from top leadership to those working closest to children and families. In the process, those leading our public institutions align resources and work in the best interest of students by strategically contributing to their academic success.



FOSTER YOUTH NETWORKED IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITY (NIC)

Facilitators from Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Data, Strategy and Improvement (DSI) used their combination of training in Improvement Science to develop this model.

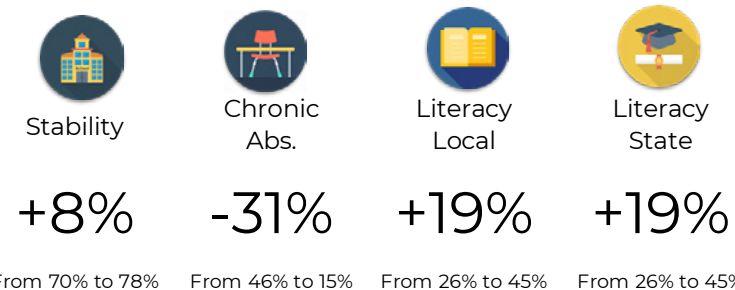
When Fresno C2C asked for their help with cross-sector systems change, the team was up for the challenge and began by conducting in-depth interviews to understand the various systems connected to foster youth. A group of top-level leaders from related systems (justice, Child Welfare

Services, Fresno Unified) was convened to address system issues. Communication from those working closest to foster youth and families about systems needs and potential solutions was then shared with the leaders and vetted for practicality. The decision-makers could suggest adaptations and put solutions to the test. Knowing that their Director supported them helped break the “it’s always been this way” thinking of lower-level staff.

“
Working with cross-sector partners in a C2C Networked Improvement Community, the Court is ensuring beneficial changes to our system and helping to improve the educational outcomes of the foster youth we serve, regardless of whether the child is in care of child welfare or probation.
- The Honorable Mary Dolas, Superior Court Judge, Fresno County Juvenile Dependency Court”

Foster Youth Cohort Progress Report

Key metrics show positive trends for the foster youth cohort over two years and the impacts of our improvement model



The explicit aim of the Foster Youth NIC is to improve high school graduation with a focus on stability for the youth (keeping them in the same school), reducing absenteeism and improving literacy rates. The end of year two data is promising and the work has been scaled to include three more districts-Selma Unified, Sanger Unified and Coalinga-Huron Unified.

EARLY MATTERS FRESNO NETWORKED IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITY

Based on the success and learnings from the Foster Youth project, Fresno C2C conceived and launched the Early Matters Fresno NIC. This collaborative initiative uses a place-based approach with two different schools in different neighborhoods – one rural and one suburban, mirroring the different types of neighborhoods throughout the county.

The focus age range of the school NIC students is TK-3rd grade. The external partners also focus on reaching parents who are pregnant or have children under age four and connecting them earlier to the school while providing them with needed services. Schools are learning more about available resources and will be trained to help their parents navigate the

various systems. Community organizations benefit from creating relationships with the school system to better reach those in the neighborhoods.

School teams include a district representative, school site administrator, data lead, Community Schools Coordinator, literacy specialist/lead, and counselor/social worker who will also be trained as a Community Health Worker, nurse, or other health personnel. The extended team includes community partners from home visitation, early childhood education, health clinics, and family members. With this combination of participants, we are building a bridge to the community and connecting them to resources outside the school system.

The Early Matters Fresno NIC has a three-fold purpose:

1. Coordination improvement with external partners at schools
2. Increase internal coordination among the Early Matters partners in all strategies by working together in these pilot schools
3. Advance Community Schools implementation plans of the two schools involved

PROBLEM:

ONLY 39%

of our third graders can read on grade level in Fresno County.

AIM:

Our TK-3rd EMF NIC cohort students will be on grade level for reading at Martinez and Teague elementary schools

BY JUNE 2025

Like the Foster Youth NIC, the Early Matters NIC leadership includes Fresno C2C and Fresno County Superintendent of Schools with the addition of First 5 Fresno County.



Early Matters Fresno is uniting educators, policymakers, and community organizations to learn how to best support families raising children to thrive. We are making it clear, raising the next generation is our shared responsibility.

- Fabiola González, Executive Director, First 5 Fresno County



BROADBAND ACCESS IS FOUNDATIONAL FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Broadband access varies widely across Fresno County, ranging from near zero in rural areas to extremely uneven across metro Fresno. Lack of access to online learning, telehealth, banking, job seeking, and more presents significant challenges to students and families because digital access is a key driver of economic mobility.



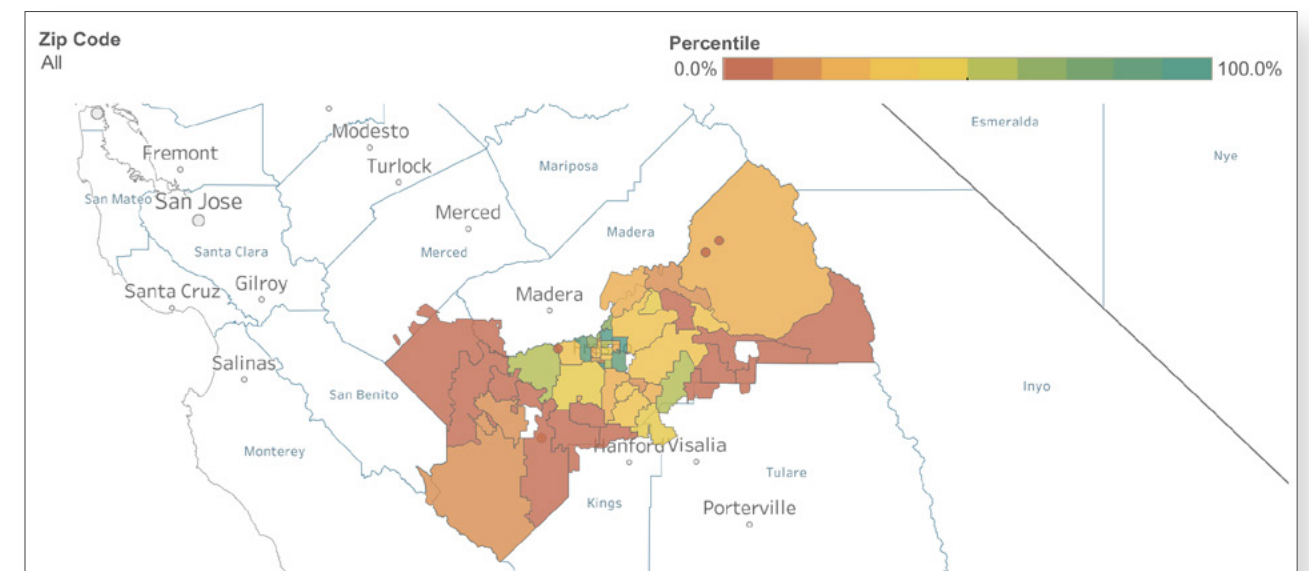
In 2021, Fresno Cradle to Career convened multiple cross-sector partners, including education, local government, housing, health care and community-based organizations, to confront the enormous digital divide across Fresno County revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion was launched within the year with a shared vision for equitable digital access and literacy.

Since its inception, considerable progress has been made. The Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion (<https://www.connectfresno.org>) has been formalized as a 501(c)(3) organization and is now a member of the California Alliance for Digital Equity (CADE). In the past six months, Fresno Coalition For Digital Inclusion (FCDI) became the convener of a Broadband workgroup for a four-county (Fresno, Madera, Tulare, Kings) regional opportunity through the State of California Jobs First initiative. The initial product of this effort was the development of the S2J2 Initiative's (<https://www.s2j2initiative.org>) broadband plan. The S2J2 plan is a comprehensive roadmap to improving outcomes for the four-county region, covering all aspects of infrastructure, workforce development, literacy, and adoption. Historically an all-volunteer coalition, FCDI received \$400,000 over two years to hire dedicated staff to work on the implementation of the S2J2 broadband plan.

ACCESS TO BROADBAND INTERNET SERVICES

Broadband Usage by Zip Code

Source: 2020 US Broadband Usage Dataset from Microsoft Airband Initiative, AI For Good Lab Department, Microsoft



ECONOMIC MOBILITY THROUGH PAID INTERNSHIPS

Career Nexus

Career Nexus is a collaborative effort between employers, education and training institutions, community-based organizations and job seekers. The grounding idea is to match interns with businesses that can provide work-based learning opportunities suited to the intern's strengths, interests, and skills. The goal is to strategically collaborate and align low-income, BIPOC career seekers, Fresno County employers, workforce development systems, government, and community partners to deliver 1,000 high-quality, paid internship opportunities by 2025 in the advanced manufacturing/engineering, health care, banking, and public sectors.

As the initiative was getting underway, the leadership team realized that providing unpaid internships was a barrier since several studies showed little benefit to the employee or employer. Low-income interns cannot afford to work without pay. Employers are reluctant to participate if they pay the cost of the intern due to increased workers' compensation, liability insurance costs, and increased governmental paperwork for hiring and letting go.

The pilot with the initial 20 interns in 2021-22 uncovered an additional barrier. The interns needed to gain the soft skills that employers expect and desire. For example, the lack of ability to communicate clearly, get along well with others or manage time effectively negatively impacted intern success.



Career Nexus boldly confronted these barriers by becoming the Employer of Record for the interns. This was an expensive and risky decision, but the risk paid off as employers were immediately more willing to participate. They also began to see the opportunity as a valuable way to find new employees. It is always a challenge for employers to make decisions based on just a resume and an interview. Career Nexus also selected 28 soft skills training videos for the interns to complete before they join an employer.

Young adults who have completed internships or are employed sit on the Career Nexus Board. Each intern has regular one-to-one conversations with staff where challenges and successes are shared. Challenges are then addressed at the team level. In addition, post-internship surveys are conducted to learn about their experience.

As of July 2024:

- Sixty-five percent (65%) of interns received job offers upon completion of an internship.
- 68 employers are now involved, including the City of Fresno, the County of Fresno, Fresno Chaffee Zoo, Fresno Unified School District, several large manufacturers, the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, real estate, and community-based organizations.

At Career Nexus, we've seen the power of paid internships provide a bridge for low-income young adults to connect with a career, not just a job. After seeing the impact of nearly 1,000 paid internships over the past 3 years, we believe that paid internships are critical for young adults entering the workforce and for a community's economic success.

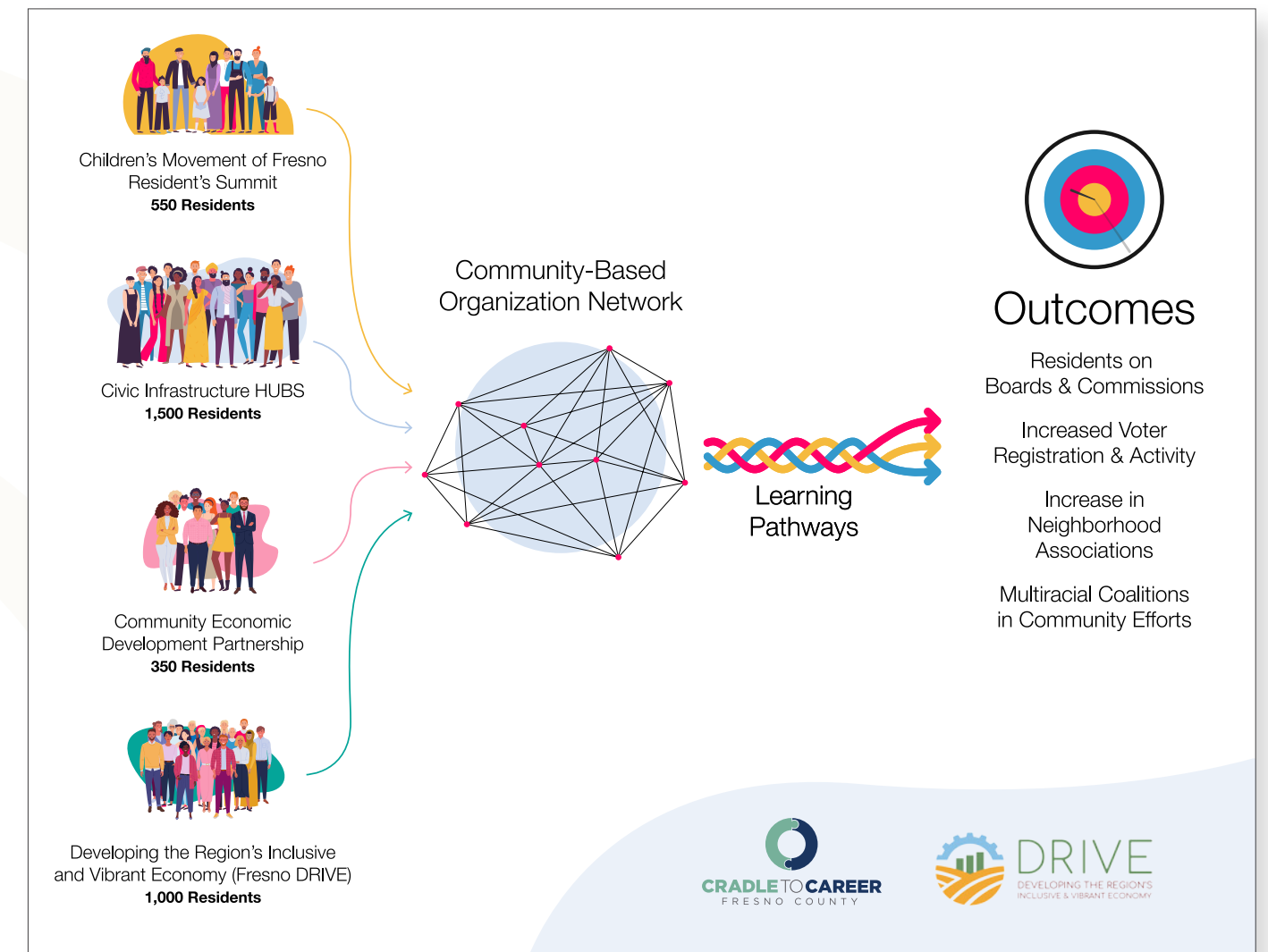
- Kurt Madden, CEO, Career Nexus

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND POWER BUILDING

In 2024, with funding from Fresno C2C, The Children's Movement of Fresno (TCM) led community engagement efforts across Fresno County. TCM held its first Residents Summit in 2023 with an attendance of 500. In 2024, the Residents Summit grew to 750 people, and the focus areas included housing, mental health, education, and environmental justice.



A large part of resident power building comes from deeper learning about an issue. Fresno C2C, TCM and Fresno DRIVE are helping to construct the infrastructure needed to provide residents with learning pathways that ultimately result in greater understanding and civic participation.



The topic-based power-building work TCM is leading is finding a significant nexus with the DRIVE neighborhood work. The two efforts have recognized that place-based and topical engagement support each other. If you are focused on place, it can be challenging to keep people engaged, but with a topic issue, you can anchor people to place and use the issue as a motivator. Conversely, if you are topic-focused, you can activate people in neighborhoods and all of the networks that exist in a place to grow your organizing capacity.

Sample flyer for 2024/25 housing learning pathway.

HOUSING LEARNING LABS



RESIDENTS SUMMIT

Join us for a 5-part Learning Lab series on Housing. Learn who provides affordable housing and how to access it, how to advocate for your rights, and understand rent increases. Learn about policy that can affect tenants and how to be homebuyer ready.

- 1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN FRESNO**
DATE: NOVEMBER 6, 2024
TIME: 5PM-7PM
LOCATION:
 3253 E SHIELDS AVE
 FRESNO, CA 93726
- 2. BLIGHT AND HOUSING SYSTEMS**
 DECEMBER 5, 2024
- 3. COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS: FRESNO**
 JANUARY 9, 2025
- 4. HOMEOWNERSHIP STRATEGIES**
 FEBRUARY 12, 2025
- 5. TOPA/COPA: POLICY CHANGES**
 MARCH 12, 2025

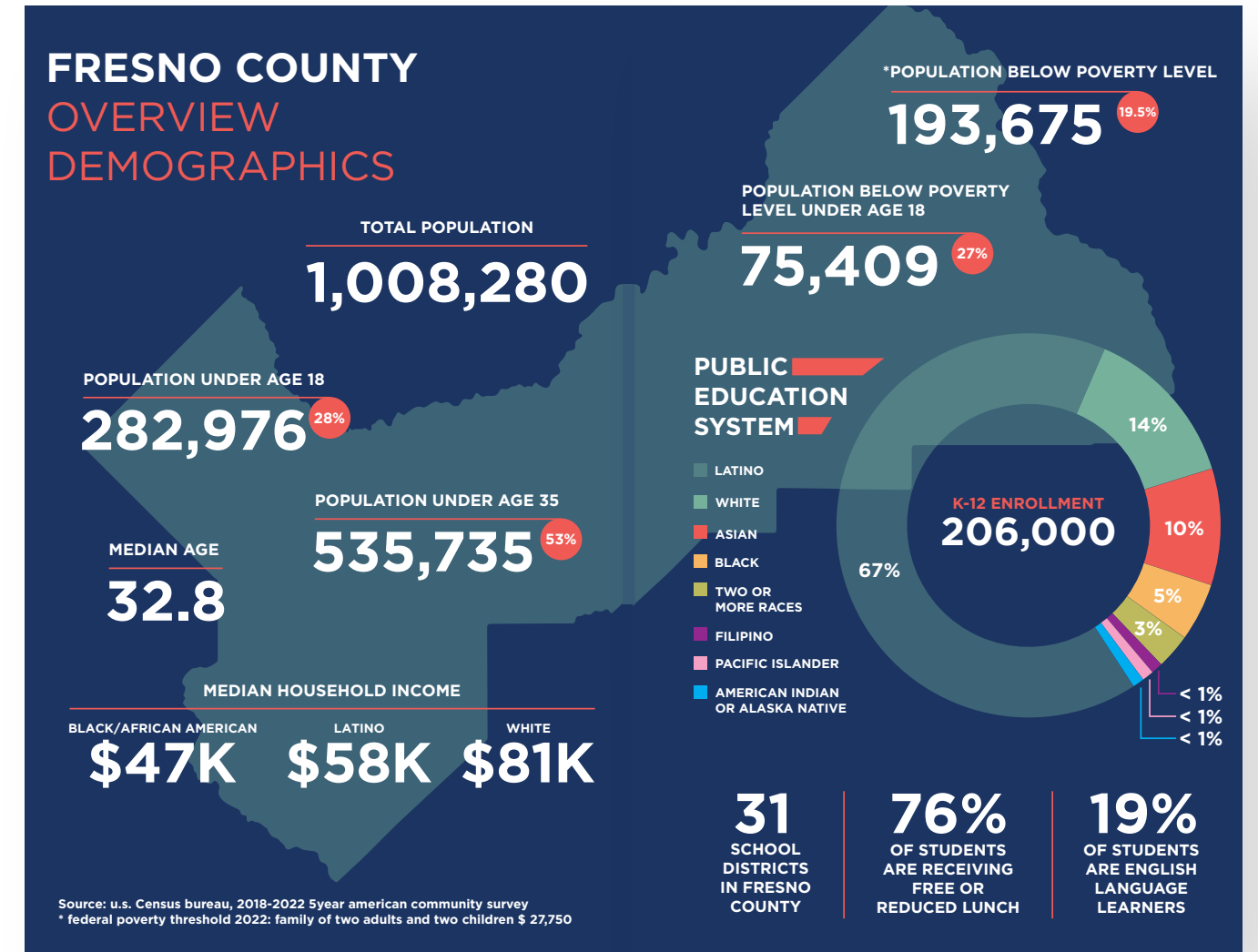
For More Info Contact:
 Juana Iris Meza at Juana@tcmfresno.org







NETWORK AT A GLANCE/ DEMOGRAPHICS

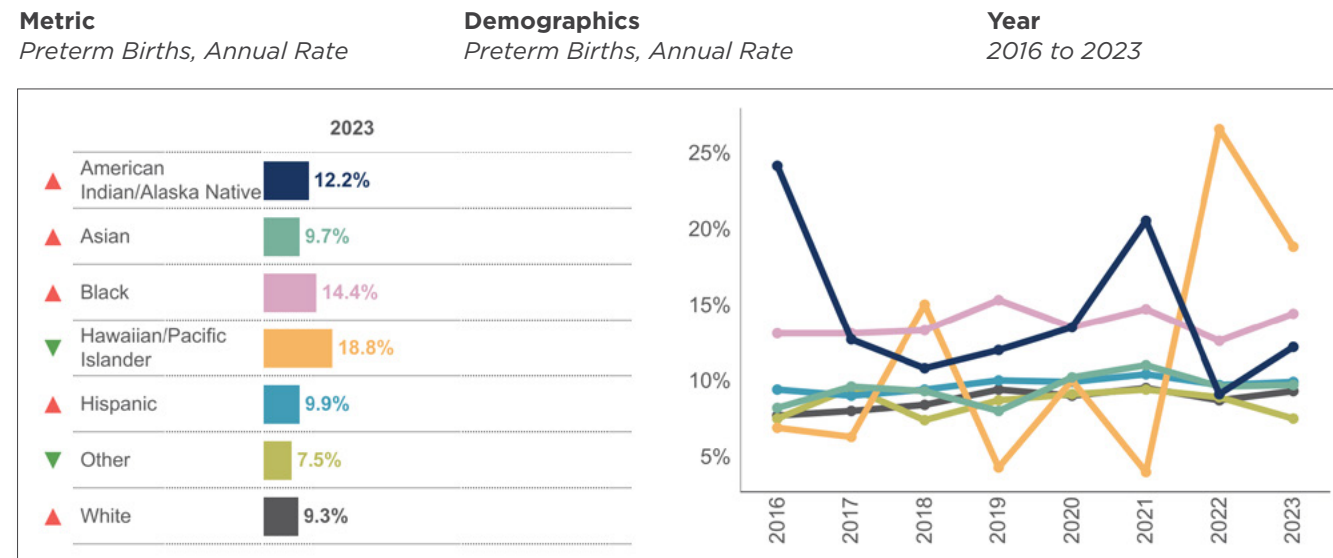


CRADLE TO CAREER INDICATORS

Preterm Birth Rates

Percentage of infants born preterm. Preterm birth is defined as births delivered at less than 37 completed weeks of gestation, based on the obstetric estimate of gestation. Births on or after 37 weeks are considered full term.

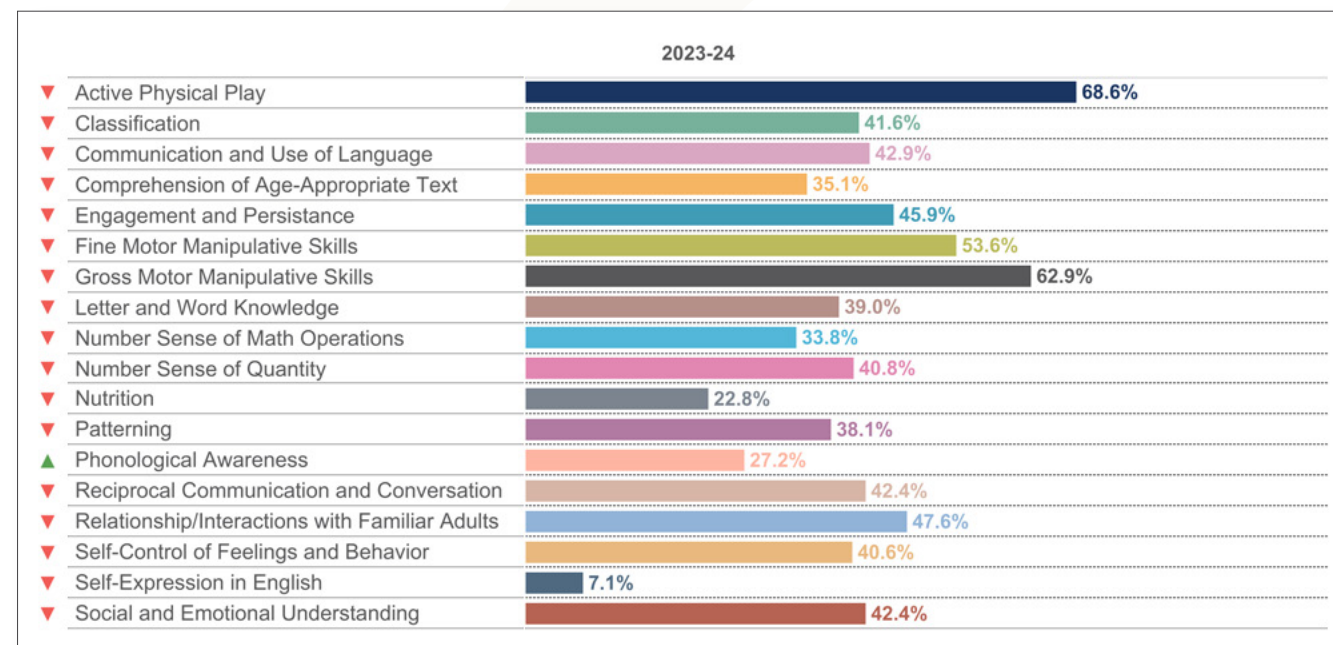
Source: MCAH Preterm Births Reports (Annual Rate), Division of Epidemiology, Surveillance and Data Management at Fresno County Department of Public Health



Kindergarten Readiness

Kinder readiness at Fresno Unified

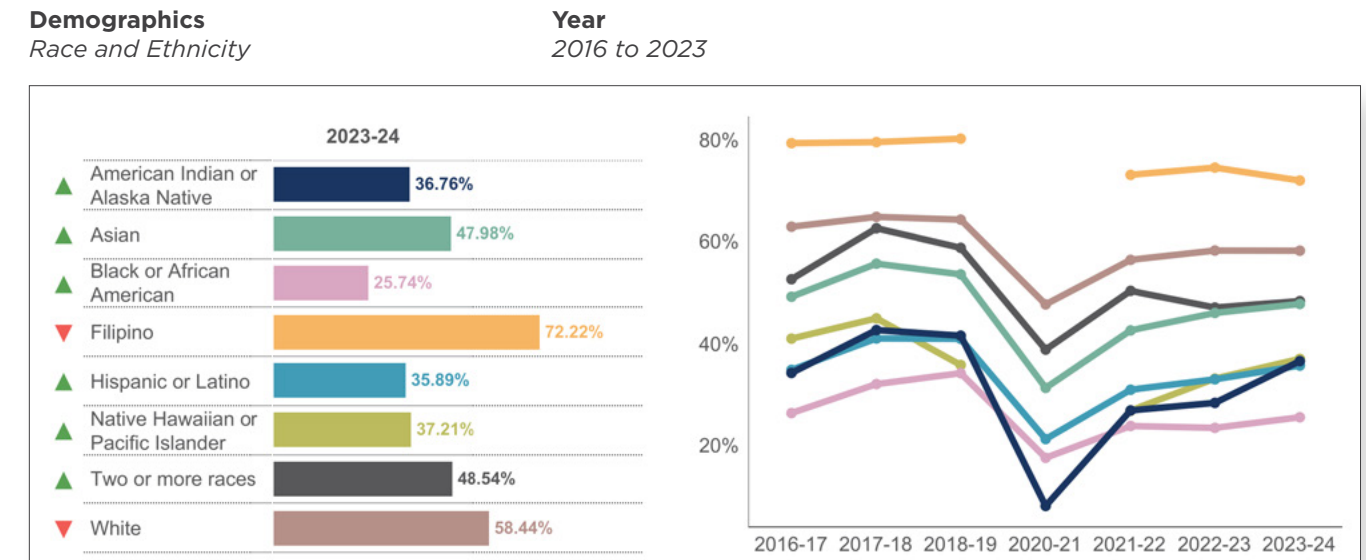
Percentage of students who reached the highest two developmental levels on selected measures from the Desired Results Development Profile (DRDP) at Fresno Unified School District. Students who reached the highest two developmental levels exhibit a growing understanding or the ability to perform the skills assessed by the measure.



Early Grade Reading

Percentage of third grade students achieving scores met or exceeded in the English Language Arts Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments.

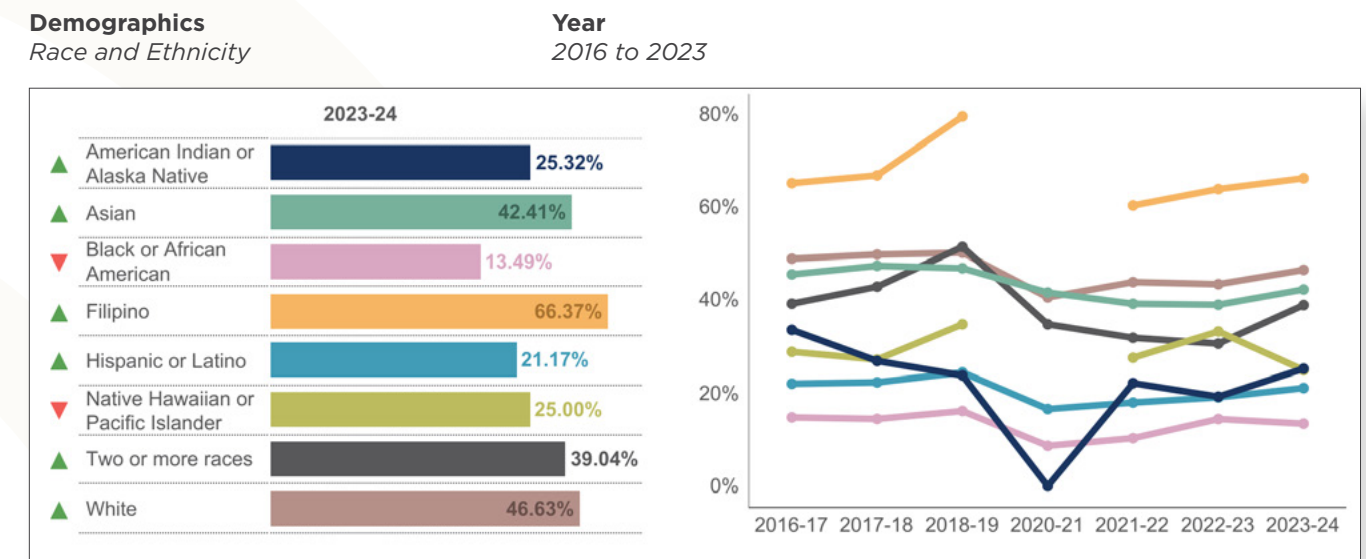
Source: Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments from the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) website, California Department of Education Note: 2019-20 data is not available due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Middle School Math

Percentage of eighth grade students achieving scores met or exceeded in the Math Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments.

Source: Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments from the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) website, California Department of Education Note: 2019-20 data is not available due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



[CLICK HERE to see the Fresno Cradle to Career Dashboard](#)

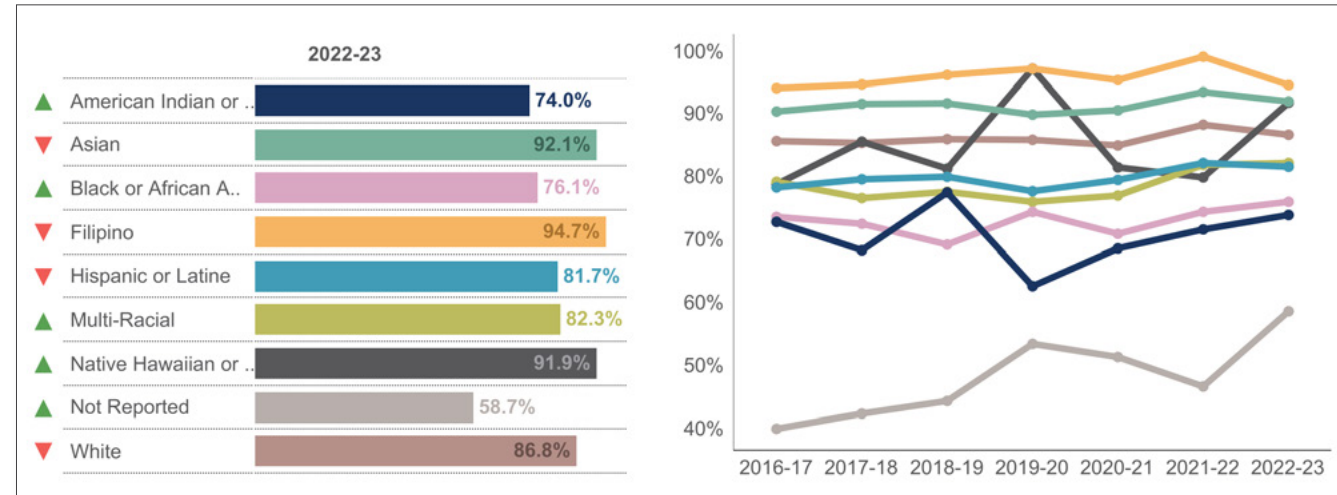
High School Graduation Rate

Percentage of students who graduated from high school in four years with a regular high school diploma.

Source: Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and Outcome Data, Downloadable Data Files from California Department of Education

Demographics
Race and Ethnicity

Graduation Year
2017 to 2023



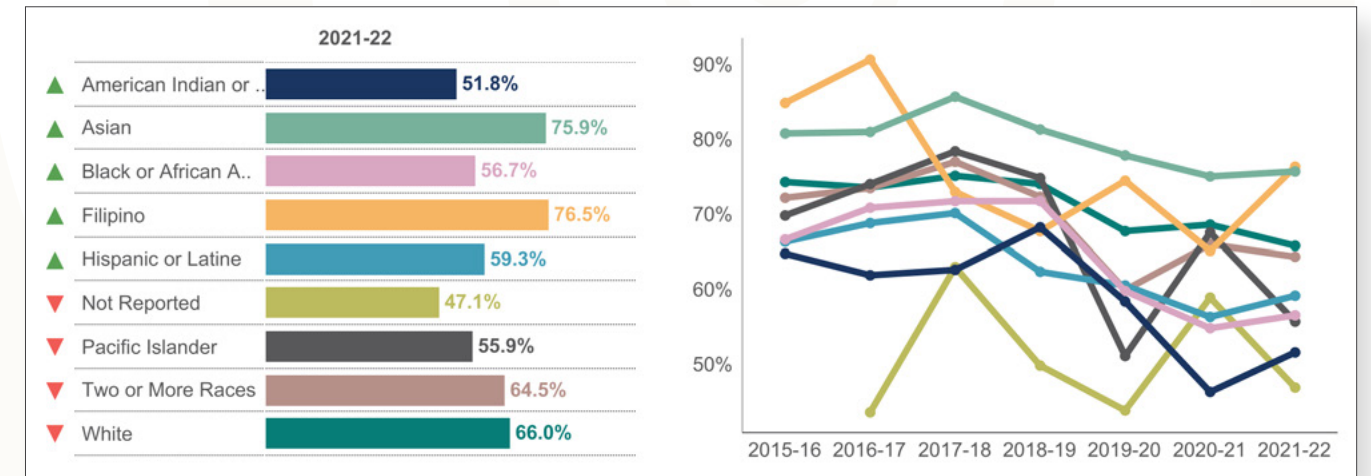
College-Going Rate for High School Students

Percentage of high school completers who enrolled in a postsecondary institution of higher education (e.g., college or university) within 12 months of completing high school. The graduation year represents the year the high school students completed high school.

Source: College-Going Rate for HS Completers (12-month), Downloadable Data Files from California Department of Education

Demographics
Race and Ethnicity

Graduation Year
2016 to 2022



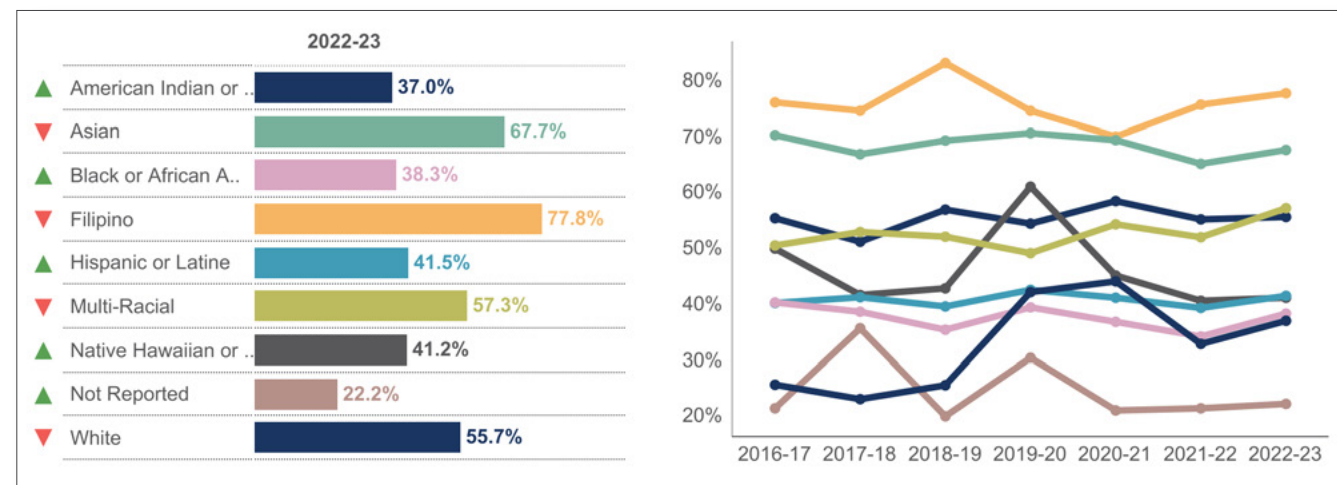
College Readiness: A-G Completion

Percentage of high school graduates who met UC/CSU entrance requirements. Population includes students who graduated from high school in four years with a regular high school diploma.

Source: Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and Outcome Data, Downloadable Data Files from California Department of Education

Demographics
Race and Ethnicity

Graduation Year
2017 to 2023



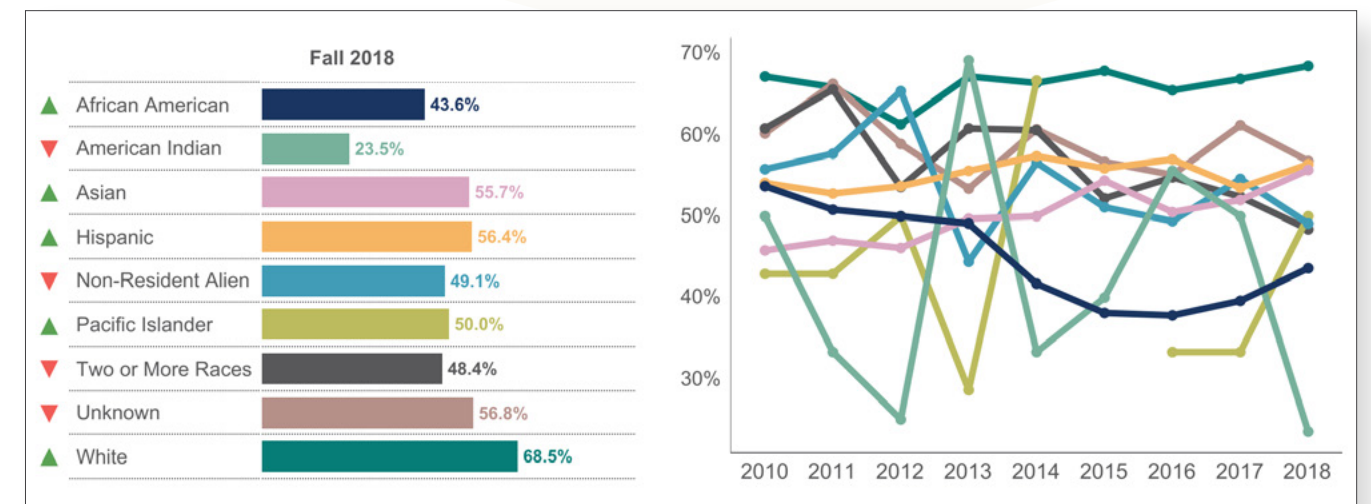
Postsecondary Completion Rate at Fresno State University

Percentage of first-time students who enrolled during Fall semester and graduated within 6 years of enrollment at Fresno State University. Reporting year represents the Fall semester students enrolled at Fresno State University.

Source: Retention & Graduation Dashboard from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness Department, Fresno State University
Note: Non-Resident Alien definition: A student who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely.

Demographics
Race and Ethnicity

Enrollment Semester (Fall)
2010 to 2018



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



Central Valley RTAC
**COMMUNITY
SCHOOLS**

blue
meridian
partners



THE DAVID & LUCILE

Packard Foundation



StriveTogether[®]
Every child. Cradle to career.



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