

San Joaquin Valley Power, Equity and Clean Water Collective

Current Investments: \$4,329,000

TIMELINE: Three years (2020 – 2022)

GOAL: Build long-term power through the development of leadership pathways and community organizing on water

BACKGROUND:

Despite being in the heart of an extremely wealthy and progressive state, the **San Joaquin Valley** has some of the highest rates of pollution, poverty and health disparity in the country. Shockingly, nearly a quarter of the Valley's residents are without access to safe and affordable drinking water, with a disproportionate impact on people of color. Elected and appointed representatives in the region do not reflect the changing demographic and have consistently failed to take actions to improve local conditions.

One immediate concern of paramount importance to the future of the Valley is the implementation of two historic water bills – the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund (SB200), which have the potential to reform decision-making around land and water management and ensure access to clean and safe water for all SJV residents. These bills have far-reaching implications beyond just water issues, ranging from health to housing, economic development and environmental conservation.

The **San Joaquin Valley Funder Collaborative**, a working group of Smart Growth California (SGCA), was founded in 2016 as a response to the needs and opportunities in the San Joaquin Valley region. SGCA has facilitated spaces for funders to come together and identify their shared objectives in the Valley, discovering opportunities for collaboration and alignment. Recognizing the long-term health and equity implications of these two bills, funders came together across issue areas to build a fund that would **equip organizations to meet the short-term needs of implementing these bills, while building leadership ecosystems that will serve long-term power-building and policy goals for generations to come.**

THE FUND:

Eight funders leveraged a generous matching grant from the **Water Funder Initiative's** Water Campaign to contribute over \$4 million for Valley organizations, which will provide three-year grants to over ten organizations and engage at least another 100 organizations. Funders are partnering with three anchor organizations – Community Water Center, Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability, and Self-Help Enterprises – to help guide the strategy and ensure alignment of funding with on-the-ground policy and organizing work. The funding will move through three aligned vehicles: Central Valley United for Power (CVUP), the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund, and the Water Foundation.

FUNDING PARTNERS:

The 11th Hour Project, The California Endowment, Ceres Trust, Kresge Foundation, Latino Community Foundation, S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation, Sierra Health Foundation, Water Foundation, Water Funder Initiative, and two anonymous donors.

*There is still opportunity to participate in this initiative. If you are interested in learning more, contact **Kerry Hastings** at kerry@fundersnetwork.org or **562.316.6179**.*