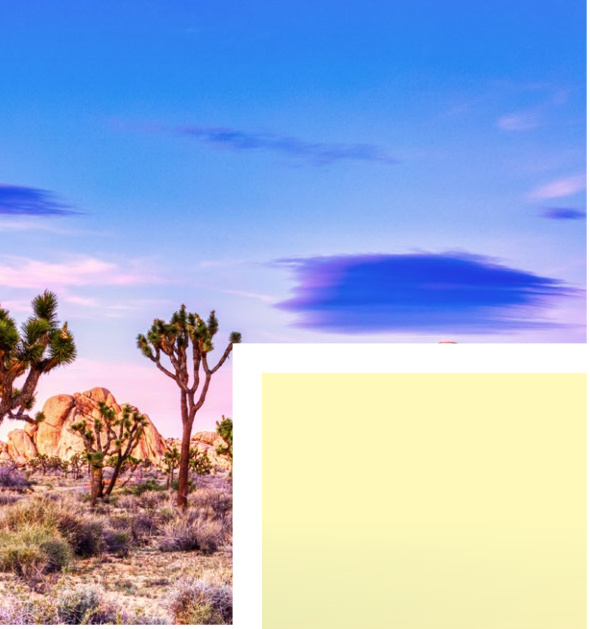
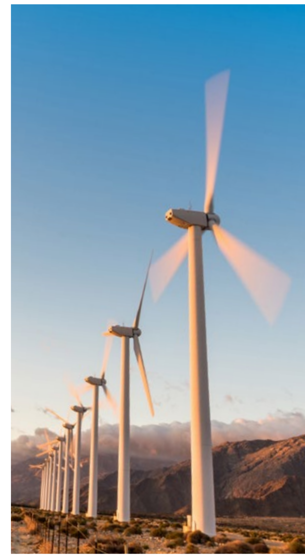


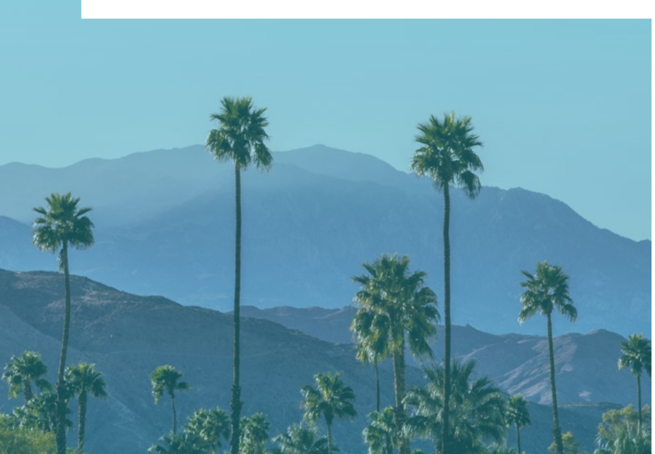




October 16, 2025

Coachella Valley Region Economic Development Strategy

RIVERSIDE COUNTY
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT




Riverside County Board of Supervisors

Jose Medina, First District

Karen Spiegel, Second District, Vice Chair

Chuck Washington, Third District

V. Manuel Perez, Fourth District, Chair

Yxstian Gutierrez, Fifth District

Riverside County Office of Economic Development

Suzanne Holland, Director

Amber Jacobson, Assistant Director

Michael Franklin, Deputy Director

Kimberly Wright, Economic Development Manager

Joaquin Tijerina, Economic Development Manager

Prepared by:

THE NATELSON DALE GROUP, INC

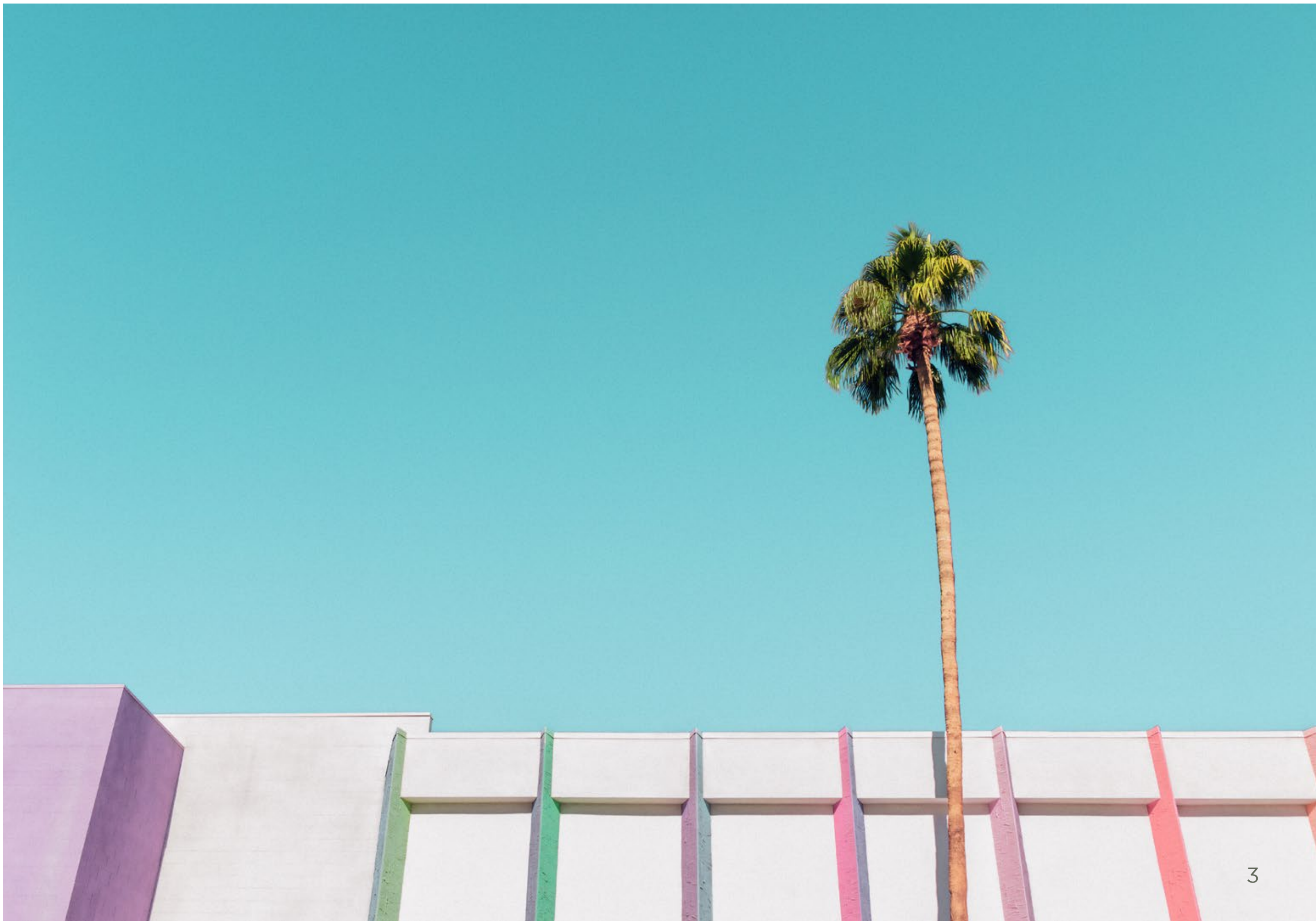
ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGIES

In cooperation with:

GREATER PALM SPRINGS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Thrive and Shine

Table of Contents



Chapter One: Introduction

The Coachella Valley is entering a transformative era in its economic development journey. As a region renowned for its cultural vibrancy, agricultural legacy, and tourism appeal, it also faces complex challenges—from economic vulnerability and infrastructure gaps to disparities in economic opportunity and environmental challenges.

This Economic Development Strategy serves as a forward-looking roadmap to harness the Valley's strengths while addressing its most urgent needs. It reflects a collaborative effort among local governments, tribal nations, community organizations, business leaders, and residents, and is grounded in the principles of comprehensive growth, sustainability, and resilience.

This strategy aims to:

- Catalyze investment in high-impact sectors such as clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and sustainable agriculture.
- Promote workforce development through continued partnerships with educational institutions and employers.
- Advocate for modernized infrastructure to support mobility, housing, and digital connectivity.
- Advance environmental revitalization, including transformative projects like Salton Sea restoration and infill redevelopment.

By aligning local priorities with state and federal resources, this strategy seeks to build a more prosperous and resilient Coachella Valley—one that benefits all communities and future generations.

Connection to Countywide Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Coachella Valley Economic Development Strategy (CV Strategy) has been prepared concurrently with a Countywide Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP), and it is intended that the two documents will be implemented in tandem. The CV Strategy focuses on industry growth opportunities, brand positioning, and strategic action items that are unique and specific to the Coachella Valley. To avoid redundancy, Countywide recommendations and action items are not repeated in the CV document.

Figure 1. Coachella Valley and Blythe Area Subregion (Cities)

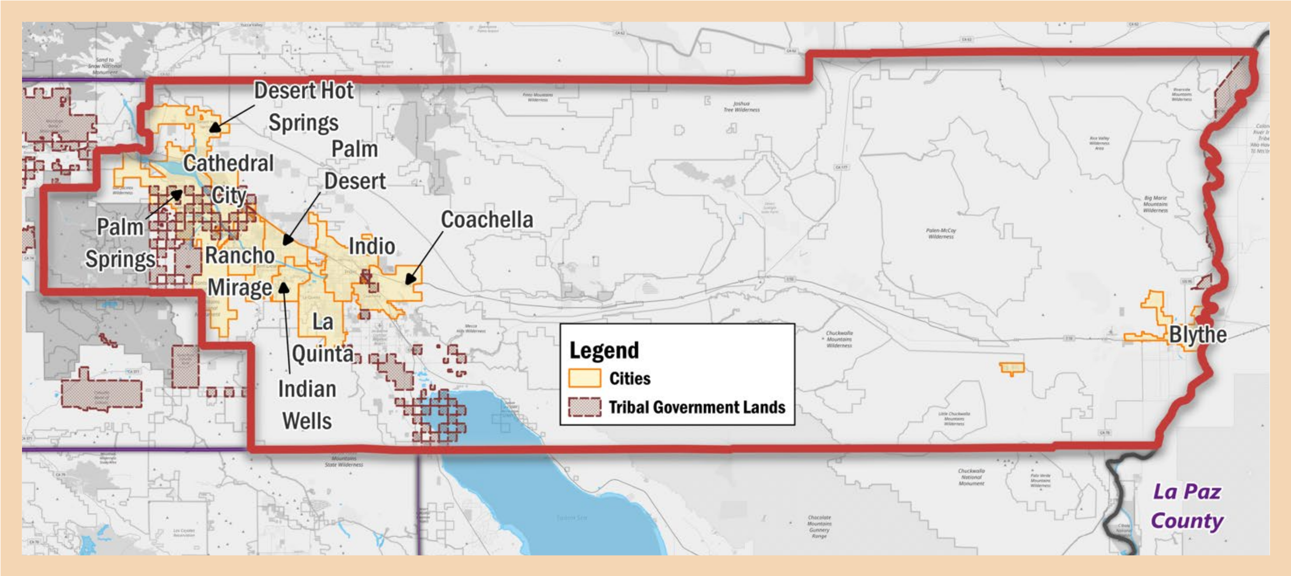
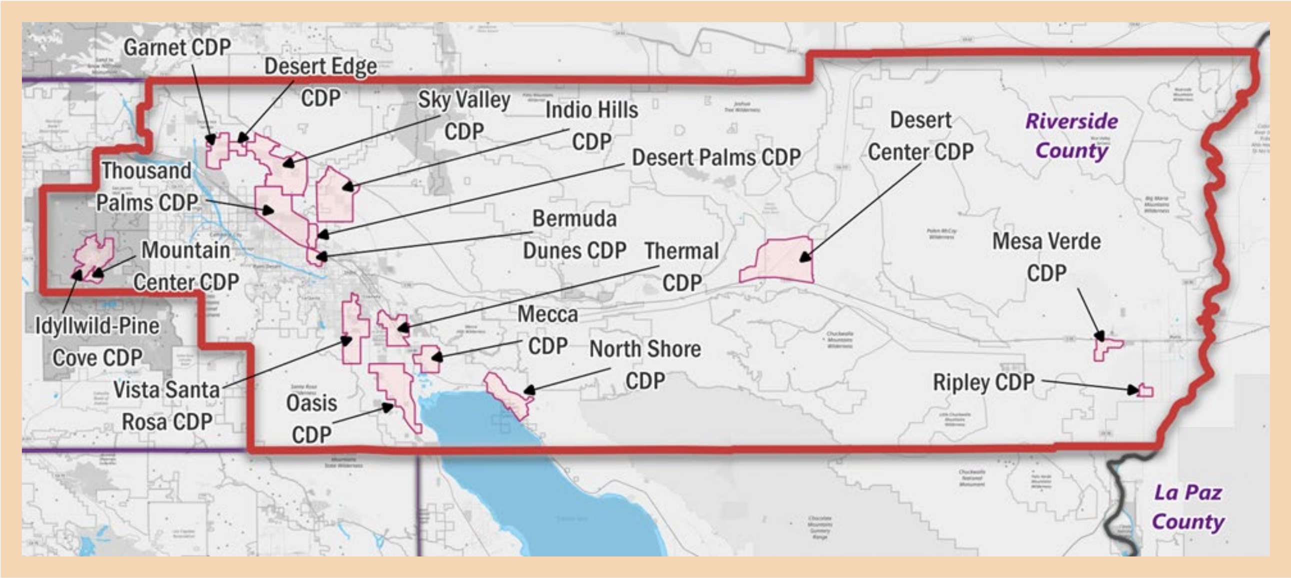


Figure 2. Coachella Valley and Blythe Area Subregion (CDPs)



Chapter Two: Plan Development

As a core component of the stakeholder engagement effort for the Countywide EDSP, the EDSP consultant team facilitated a series of workshop-style meetings (three meetings spaced over five months) with key public and private stakeholers specific to the Coachella Valley. In order to allow for continuity of the stakeholder discussions over the course of the project, the invited stakeholders were asked to commit to attending all three Coachella Valley meetings. The meetings progressed through the following sequence of objectives:

Meeting 1 (January 2025) – Orientation to the CV Strategy process; scoping of stakeholders' priorities for economic development programming in the Coachella Valley; identification of strength-weakness-opportunity-threat (SWOT) factors for the Valley.

Meeting 2 (April 2025) – Review of (and stakeholder comment on) preliminary target industry analysis completed for the CV Strategy process; facilitated stakeholder exercise to develop an economic development vision statement for the Valley and to broadly outline stakeholders' definitions of "success" for CV Strategy implementation.

Meeting 3 (June 2025) – Stakeholder confirmation of final set of targeted industry clusters; review of preliminary framework/outline of CV Strategy; review and discussion of strategy categories.

Economic Development Summit Process	
Structure:	A series of 3 workshop-style meetings in the Coachella Valley. Participation focused on invited public/private stakeholders (asked to commit to attending all three meetings).
Purpose:	Forum to review background studies and draft strategy documents; opportunity for key stakeholders to provide direct input on economic development priorities, SWOT factors, target industries, and the CV Strategy vision statement / action plan.
Participation Level:	66 total participants
Outcomes:	Coachella Valley SWOT summary; final lists of target industries for the Valley; vision statement / success criteria.

Number of Participating Stakeholders by Date Coachella Valley Economic Development Summit Meetings			
Round 1 (January 2025)	Round 2 (April 2025)	Round 3 (June 2025)	Total
21	15	30	66

Chapter Three: Economic Summary

This section of the Strategy provides highlights of existing and projected demographic characteristics that influence the economic development potential of Riverside County and the Coachella Valley subregion. This summary has been extracted from a more detailed report prepared for the Countywide EDSP process (*Draft Analysis of Key Datasets for Economic Development Strategic Plan*, dated January 16, 2025). The provided data summaries generally follow a "top-down" hierarchy geographically:

- Riverside County compared to the neighboring counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and San Diego
- The Coachella Valley compared to other Riverside County subregions
- The nine Coachella Valley cities compared to each other

Census-Based Demographic and Economic Overview

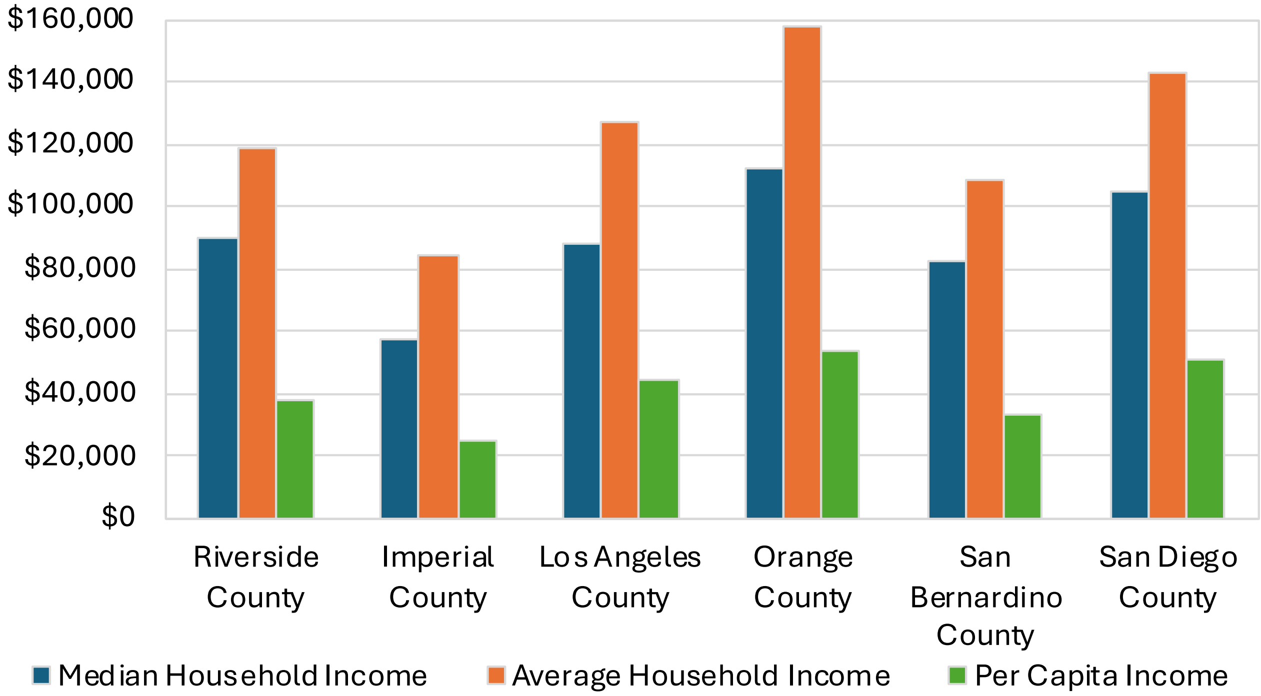
The following data were primarily obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates (2019-23); income estimates (for 2024) are from Esri. Data are provided for Riverside County as a whole, the five Riverside County subregions, and the following neighboring counties: Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and San Diego. Topics address current conditions related to economic characteristics, housing stock, educational attainment, and households/families.

It is important to note the distinction between the terms "employment" and "jobs" as discussed in this section. "Employment" is a characteristic of an area's resident workforce; it refers to the residents of an area (i.e., city, county or other geography) that are currently employed, regardless of the location of their employment (i.e., they may hold jobs in their own community or commute to work outside the community). The term "jobs" relates to the place of work; thus, the reported number of jobs in a subregion or county refers to jobs that are based in that subregion or county, regardless of where the jobholders live.

Figures 3-8 on the following pages provide a summary of economic characteristics from the ACS. Both the figures and the tables provide various data related to labor force employment and income characteristics, such as worker commute characteristics, household and per capita income levels, and public assistance income for households. Some of the data highlights include the following:

- Riverside County's median household income level ($89,700) is slightly higher than the majority of the surrounding benchmark counties with the exceptions of Orange County ($112,796) and San Diego County ($104,597).
- Poverty rates are relatively lower (8.5%) in Riverside County compared to most of the surrounding benchmark counties, with the exceptions of Orange County (6.6%) and San Diego County (6.9%). The Riverside County subregions with the highest shares of all family types with incomes below the poverty level are Hemet/San Jacinto (12.3%), Coachella Valley and Blythe Area (10.1%), and the Pass Area (9.1%).

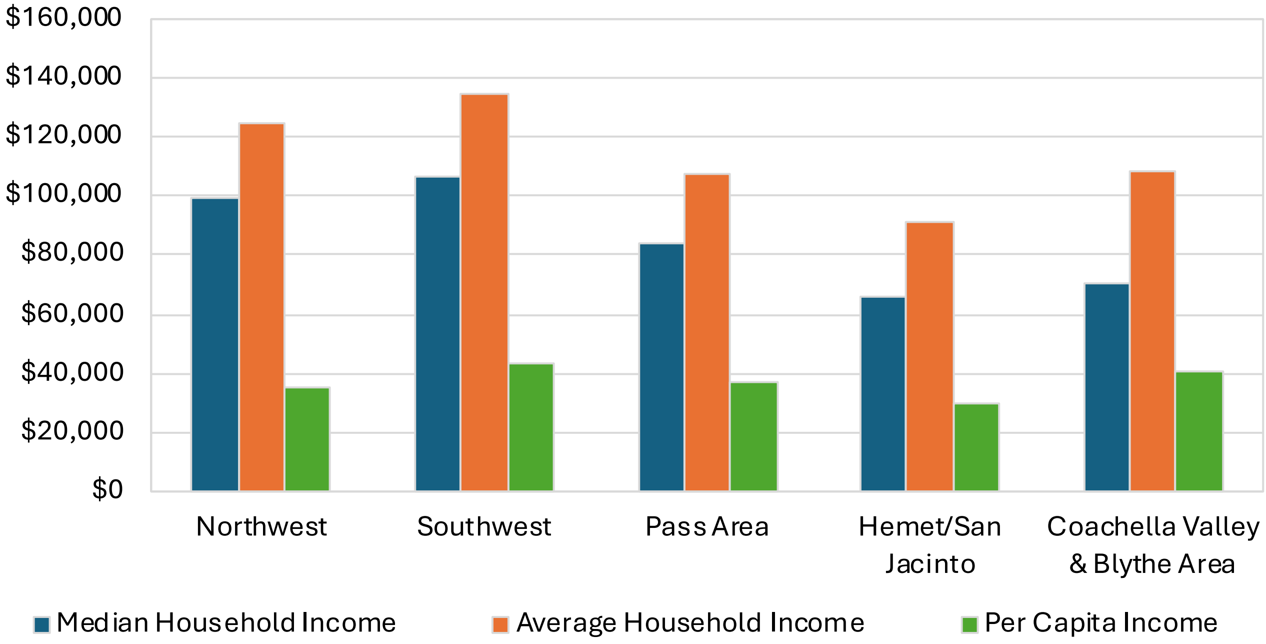
Figure 3. Median Household, Average Household Income, and Per Capita Income Metrics for Riverside Compared to Other Counties (2024)



Note: Income data obtained from Esri for 2024 is expressed in current dollars.

Source: Esri; TNDG.

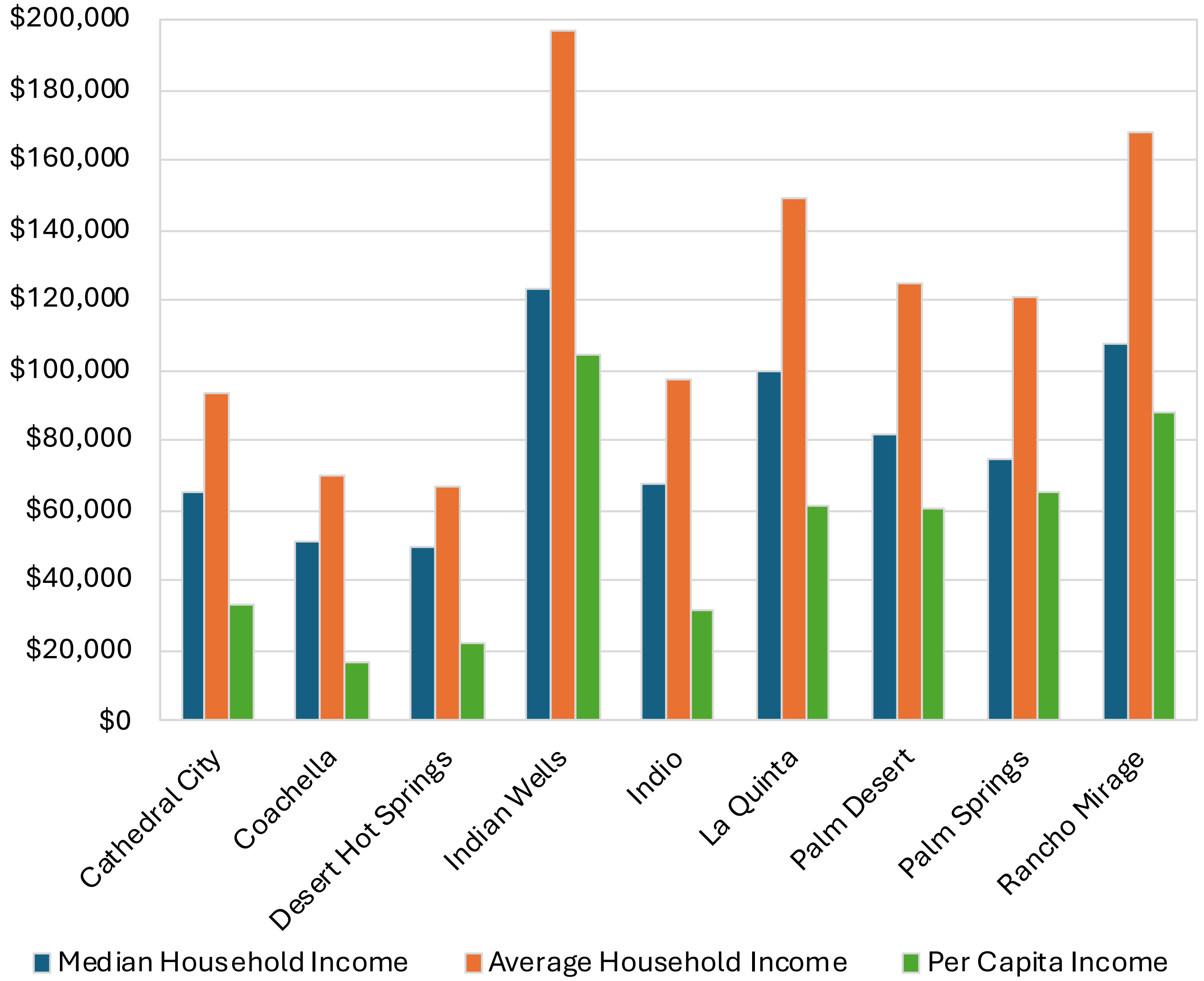
Figure 4. Median Household, Average Household Income, and Per Capita Income Metrics for Riverside County Subregions (2024)



Note: Income data obtained from Esri for 2024 is expressed in current dollars.

Source: Esri; TNDG.

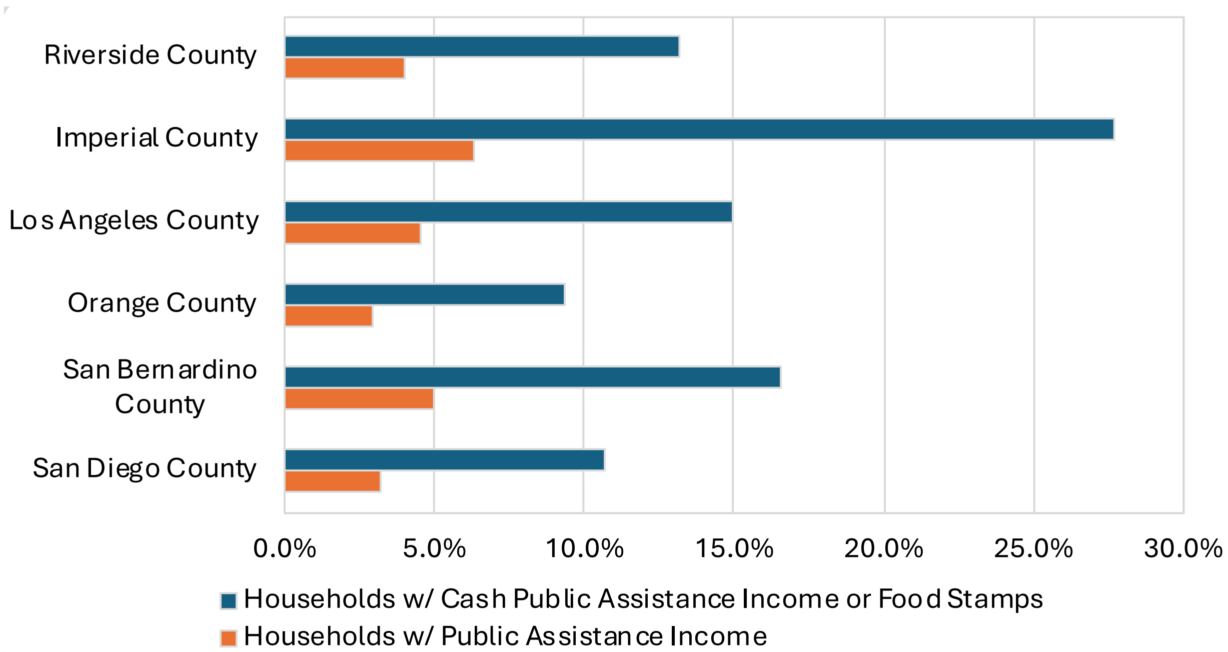
Figure 5. Median Household, Average Household Income, and Per Capita Income Metrics for Coachella Valley Cities (2024)



Note: Income data obtained from Esri for 2024 is expressed in current dollars.

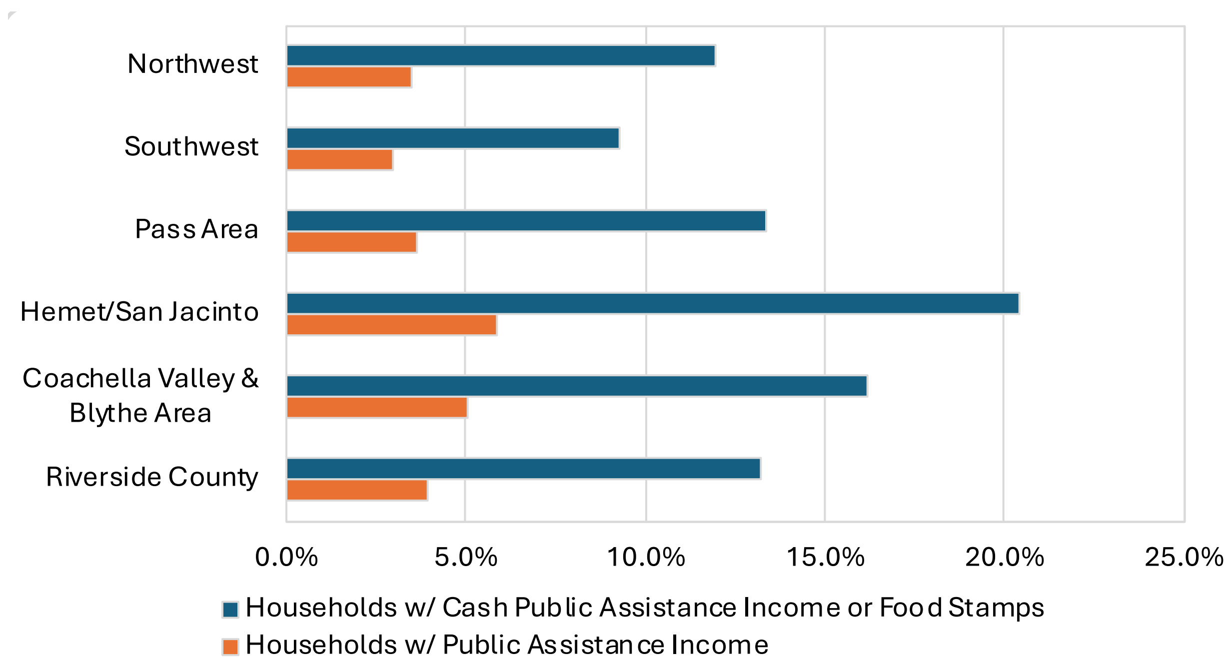
Source: Esri; TNDG.

Figure 6. Households with Public Assistance and Cash Public Assistance Income or Food Stamps for Riverside Compared to Other Counties



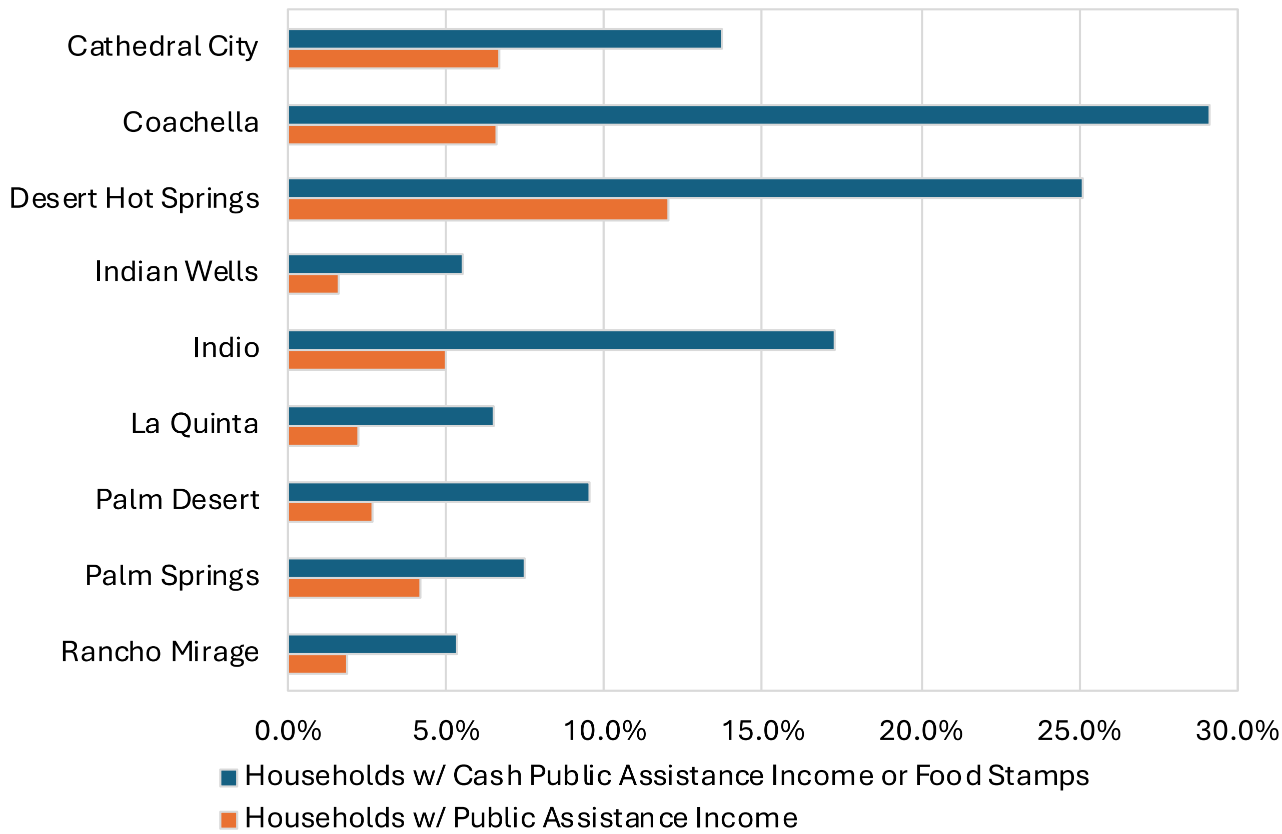
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Figure 7. Households with Public Assistance and Cash Public Assistance Income or Food Stamps for Riverside County Subregions



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Figure 8. Households with Public Assistance and Cash Public Assistance Income or Food Stamps for Coachella Valley Cities



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Tables 1-4 on the following pages provide a summary of economic characteristics from the ACS. These tables provide various data related to labor force employment and industry sector employment characteristics for resident workers. Some of the key data highlights include the following:

- For the population age 16 and older, Riverside County has a slightly lower share of the population in the labor force (60.9%) in comparison to other counties, except for Imperial County (52.7%). In terms of the subregions, the Northwest subregion (64.5%) and the Southeast subregion (62.3%) have the highest share of the population in the labor force in Riverside County.
- In terms of industry sector employment, the largest share of Riverside County residents (21.1%) is employed in the educational services and healthcare and social assistance industry sector (similar to the benchmark counties). In terms of subregions, the Pass Area subregion (26.6%) and Southwest subregion (22.9%) have the highest shares of employment in the educational services and healthcare and social assistance industry sector.

Table 1. Selected Economic Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Riverside Compared to Other Counties	Riverside County	Imperial County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County
EMPLOYMENT STATUS (POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)						
Labor Force Participation Rate	60.9%	52.7%	64.8%	65.6%	62.2%	66.3%
Jobs/Housing Ratio	0.95	1.16	1.23	1.43	1.15	1.18
INDUSTRY (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)						
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.3%	9.8%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
Construction	9.3%	5.6%	6.2%	6.0%	8.1%	6.4%
Manufacturing	8.1%	4.1%	8.6%	11.8%	7.6%	10.0%
Wholesale trade	2.7%	2.5%	3.0%	3.1%	3.0%	1.9%
Retail trade	12.1%	11.7%	9.8%	10.1%	12.3%	10.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	7.7%	6.7%	6.6%	4.2%	12.0%	4.5%
Information	1.5%	0.8%	4.5%	1.9%	1.2%	2.0%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4.9%	3.2%	5.8%	8.4%	4.2%	6.1%
Prof., scientific, and mgmt, and admin and waste mgmt srvcs	10.5%	7.4%	13.8%	14.9%	9.6%	16.5%
Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance	21.1%	23.8%	21.7%	21.0%	22.0%	21.9%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food srvcs	10.7%	9.3%	10.6%	10.1%	8.8%	10.2%
Other services, except public administration	5.0%	4.4%	5.4%	4.8%	5.1%	4.8%
Public administration	5.2%	10.7%	3.6%	3.2%	5.4%	5.0%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Table 2. Selected Economic Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Comparison of Riverside County Subregions	Northwest	Southwest	Pass Area	Hemet/San Jacinto	Coachella Valley and Blythe	Riverside County
EMPLOYMENT STATUS (POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)						
Labor Force Participation Rate	64.5%	62.3%	55.6%	54.8%	55.4%	60.9%
Jobs/Housing Ratio	1.32	0.76	0.57	0.45	0.79	0.95
INDUSTRY (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)						
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	1.6%	3.5%	1.3%
Construction	9.9%	8.6%	8.8%	10.9%	8.3%	9.3%
Manufacturing	10.0%	8.2%	5.6%	8.2%	3.6%	8.1%
Wholesale trade	2.9%	2.8%	2.4%	2.5%	2.0%	2.7%
Retail trade	12.1%	11.8%	12.1%	13.8%	11.4%	12.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	9.3%	6.1%	8.6%	9.4%	4.6%	7.7%
Information	1.2%	1.8%	1.5%	1.9%	1.5%	1.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4.7%	5.4%	4.3%	4.0%	5.1%	4.9%
Prof., scientific, and mgmt, and admin and waste mgmt srvcs	9.7%	10.6%	9.0%	8.8%	13.4%	10.5%
Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance	20.8%	22.9%	26.6%	19.0%	19.5%	21.1%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food srvcs	8.8%	10.5%	9.3%	9.7%	16.7%	10.7%
Other services, except public administration	4.7%	4.4%	5.2%	5.4%	6.3%	5.0%
Public administration	5.2%	6.2%	6.0%	4.9%	3.9%	5.2%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Table 3. Selected Economic Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Coachella Valley Cities	Cathedral City	Coachella	Desert Hot Springs	Indian Wells	Indio
EMPLOYMENT STATUS (POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)					
Labor Force Participation Rate	60.9%	68.2%	62.9%	39.8%	59.7%
Jobs/Housing Ratio	0.48	0.60	0.35	1.23	0.61
INDUSTRY (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)					
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.7%	5.5%	1.4%	0.4%	2.5%
Construction	7.0%	11.1%	9.6%	5.1%	9.9%
Manufacturing	4.7%	4.0%	2.1%	2.4%	3.4%
Wholesale trade	0.9%	2.5%	2.9%	4.8%	1.9%
Retail trade	14.1%	11.5%	13.1%	3.0%	11.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.4%	4.8%	5.4%	11.2%	5.2%
Information	1.1%	1.3%	1.9%	3.0%	1.1%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	5.1%	2.8%	1.9%	20.6%	4.4%
Professional, scientific, and mgmt, and admin and waste mgmt srvcs	13.1%	13.9%	14.4%	17.9%	11.8%
Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance	18.5%	16.5%	21.5%	15.8%	20.1%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food srvcs	20.2%	17.3%	15.6%	11.0%	16.1%
Other services, except public administration	6.8%	6.3%	7.2%	2.8%	7.7%
Public administration	3.3%	2.6%	3.0%	2.0%	4.5%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Table 4. Selected Economic Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Coachella Valley Cities	La Quinta	Palm Desert	Palm Springs	Rancho Mirage
EMPLOYMENT STATUS (POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)				
Labor Force Participation Rate	52.9%	49.3%	50.8%	40.5%
Jobs/Housing Ratio	0.72	1.08	1.06	1.56
INDUSTRY (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER)				
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.8%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Construction	5.7%	7.0%	7.2%	5.1%
Manufacturing	3.4%	4.2%	3.3%	3.3%
Wholesale trade	1.9%	2.8%	1.6%	2.9%
Retail trade	9.2%	11.8%	8.7%	8.8%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.7%	3.2%	4.8%	3.2%
Information	2.1%	0.9%	3.1%	4.2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.7%	7.2%	8.6%	5.9%
Professional, scientific, and mgmt, and admin and waste mgmt srvcs	14.2%	15.0%	16.3%	17.1%
Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance	20.2%	18.8%	21.9%	27.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food srvcs	17.6%	19.7%	15.8%	10.3%
Other services, except public administration	6.6%	5.5%	5.4%	7.0%
Public administration	4.8%	3.4%	2.7%	4.6%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Tables 5-6, and Figures 9-10, on the following pages provide housing-related data from the ACS. Some of the data highlights include the following:

- The overall occupied housing rate for Riverside County is 88.6%, which is slightly lower than all of the other surrounding benchmark counties except Imperial County. The occupied housing rates for subregions range from 73.1% to 95.8%, but are relatively similar for all of the subregions, with the exception being the Coachella Valley and Blythe Area (73.1%), which is notably lower than any of the other subregions (due to the large inventories of vacation/second homes which are occupied only part of the year).
- Riverside County has the highest share of owner-occupied housing units (68.9%), and the lowest share of renter-occupied housing units (31.1%) in comparison to all the other benchmark counties. The subregions with the highest shares of owner-occupied housing units are the Pass Area (78.8%), Southwest (74.3%), and Hemet/San Jacinto (69.0%) subregions.
- Monthly housing costs – measured as a percentage of household income have continued to increase in Riverside County. Figure 9 shows that for the highest housing costs as a percentage of household income (50% or more), Riverside County has declined from 14.59% to 14.06% from 2019 to 2023, but remains higher than both the state of California and the nation. In terms of the subregions, most of the subregions have declined, except for the Hemet/San Jacinto subregion which has had the highest increase from 14.95% to 15.98% from 2019 to 2023.

Table 5. Selected Housing Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Riverside Compared to Other Counties	Riverside County	Imperial County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS						
Occupied housing units	88.6%	84.9%	93.5%	94.4%	90.4%	93.5%
Vacant housing units	11.4%	15.1%	6.5%	5.6%	9.6%	6.5%
HOUSING TENURE (OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS)						
Owner-occupied	68.9%	56.8%	46.1%	56.4%	61.5%	54.5%
Renter-occupied	31.1%	43.2%	53.9%	43.6%	38.5%	45.5%

Comparison of Riverside County Subregions	Northwest	Southwest	Pass Area	Hemet/San Jacinto	Coachella Valley and Blythe Area	Riverside County
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS						
Occupied housing units	95.8%	94.3%	94.6%	93.0%	73.1%	88.6%
Vacant housing units	4.2%	5.7%	5.4%	7.0%	26.9%	11.4%
HOUSING TENURE (OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS)						
Owner-occupied	65.4%	74.3%	78.8%	69.0%	67.4%	68.9%
Renter-occupied	34.6%	25.7%	21.2%	31.0%	32.6%	31.1%

Table 6. Selected Housing Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Coachella Valley Cities	Cathedral City	Coachella	Desert Hot Springs	Indian Wells	Indio
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS					
Occupied housing units	82.9%	98.5%	89.4%	48.9%	84.3%
Vacant housing units	17.1%	1.5%	10.6%	51.1%	15.7%
HOUSING TENURE (OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS)					
Owner-occupied	65.3%	65.9%	49.9%	77.3%	68.3%
Renter-occupied	34.7%	34.1%	50.1%	22.7%	31.7%

Coachella Valley Cities	La Quinta	Palm Desert	Palm Springs	Rancho Mirage
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS				
Occupied housing units	63.8%	66.0%	65.7%	58.2%
Vacant housing units	36.2%	34.0%	34.3%	41.8%
HOUSING TENURE (OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS)				
Owner-occupied	74.8%	64.4%	65.0%	82.1%
Renter-occupied	25.2%	35.6%	35.0%	17.9%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Figure 9. Monthly Ownership Costs of 50% or More, as % of Household Income

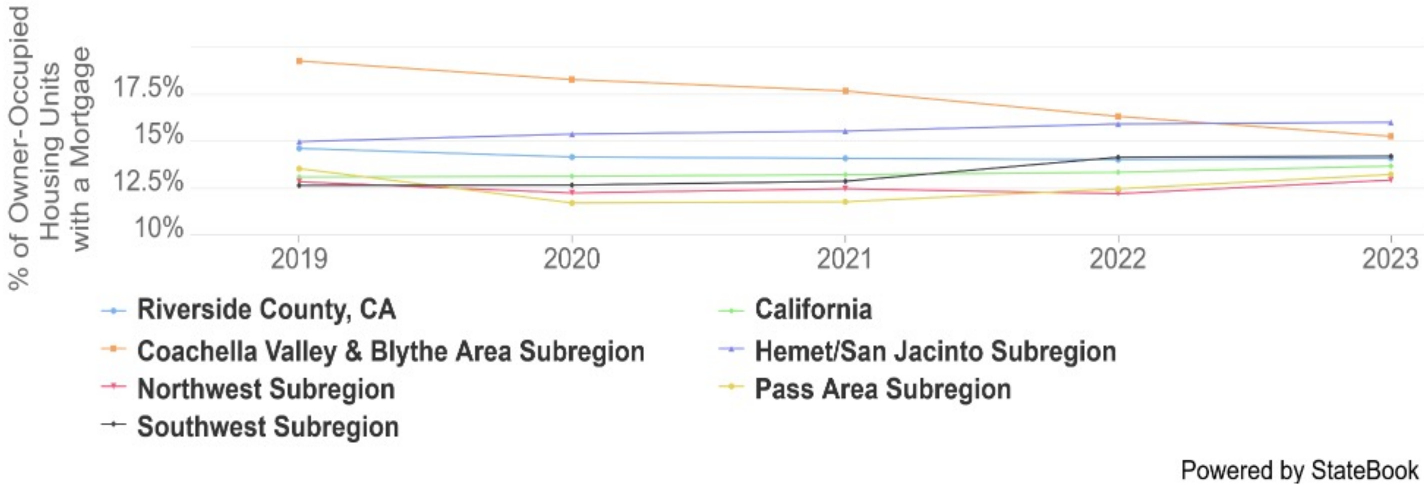
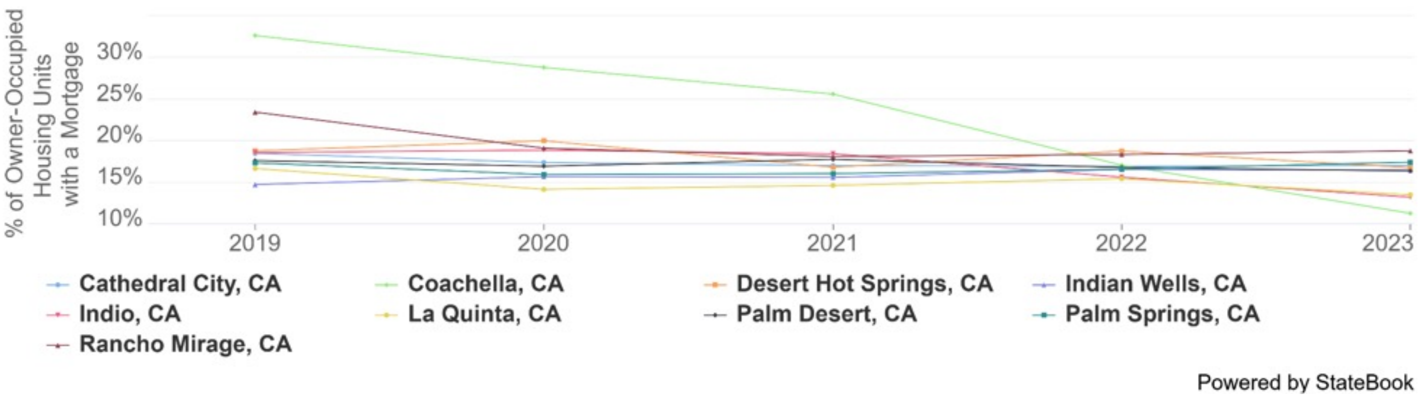


Figure 10. Monthly Ownership Costs of 50% or More, as % of Household Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; StateBook Inc., TNDG.

Tables 7-8 on the following pages provide education-related data from the ACS. Some of the data highlights include the following:

- Riverside County (25.1%) has a lower share of the population achieving a Bachelor's degree or higher in comparison to most of surrounding benchmark counties, with the exceptions of Imperial County (16.1%) and San Bernardino County (22.9%).
- In terms of the five Riverside County subregions, the Southwest subregion (29.6%) has the highest share of the population attaining a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Figure 11 on the following page illustrates that, among residents with a Bachelor's degree or higher, the highest percentage have received a Bachelor's degree in Science and Engineering fields as their first major in Riverside County. However, in comparison to the other counties, Riverside County has the lowest share of the population (34.4%) with Bachelor's degrees in Science and Engineering-related fields.

Table 7. Selected Education Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Riverside Compared to Other Counties	Riverside County	Imperial County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER)						
Less than high school graduate	16.7%	28.2%	19.3%	13.1%	17.9%	11.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	26.3%	25.9%	20.3%	17.2%	27.8%	17.9%
Some college or associate's degree	31.9%	29.9%	24.9%	26.3%	31.4%	29.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	25.1%	16.1%	35.5%	43.4%	22.9%	42.1%

Comparison of Riverside County Subregions	Northwest	Southwest	Pass Area	Hemet/San Jacinto	Coachella Valley and Blythe Area	Riverside County
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER)						
Less than high school graduate	18.4%	10.0%	13.8%	20.4%	19.3%	16.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	27.9%	23.0%	26.5%	31.1%	24.4%	26.3%
Some college or associate's degree	29.8%	37.4%	36.4%	33.8%	28.6%	31.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	23.9%	29.6%	23.3%	14.7%	27.7%	25.1%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Table 8. Selected Education Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

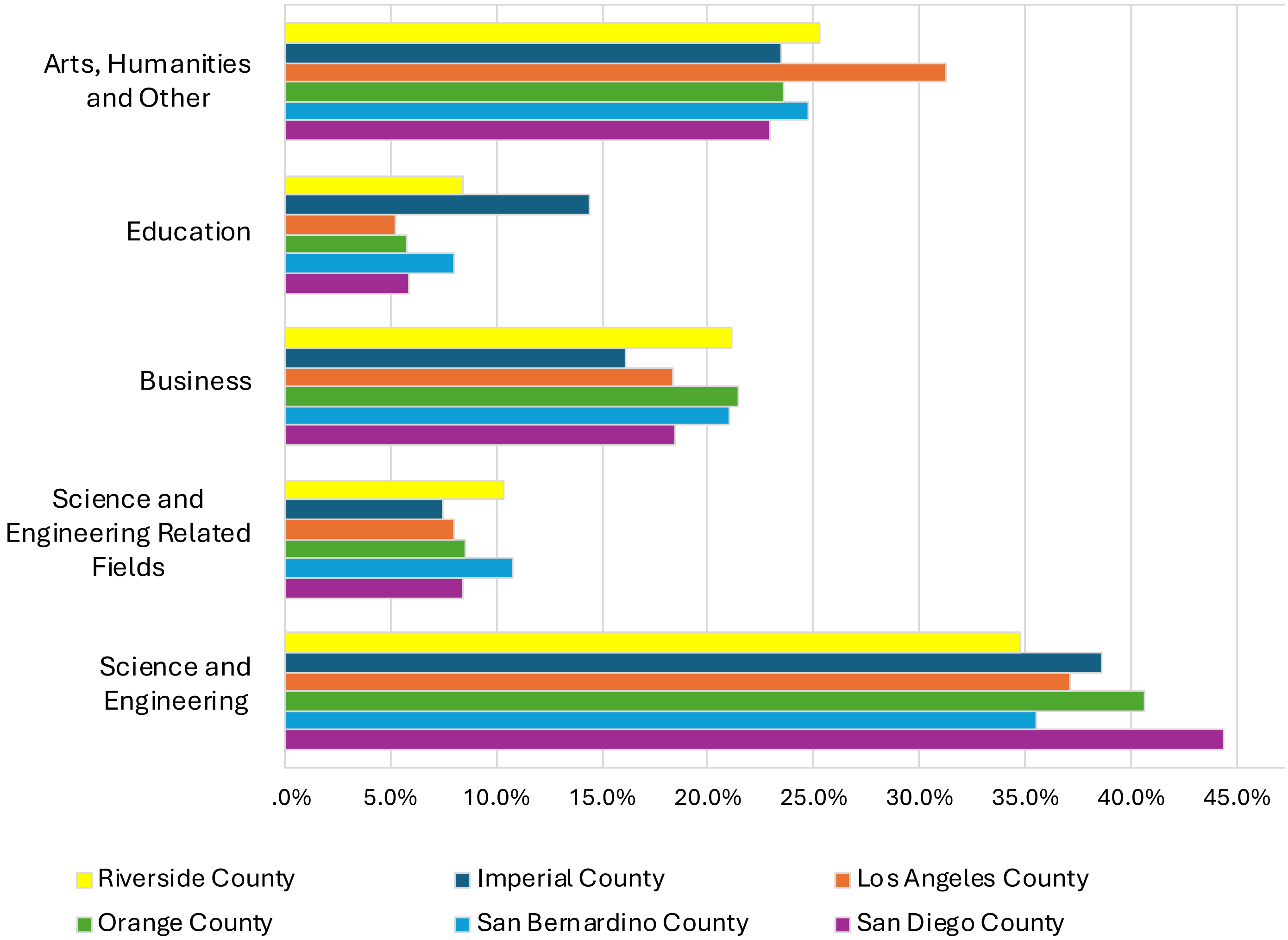
Coachella Valley Cities	Cathedral City	Coachella	Desert Hot Springs	Indian Wells	Indio
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER)					
Less than high school graduate	19.1%	43.1%	19.0%	2.6%	24.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	27.7%	36.3%	34.2%	13.5%	27.6%
Some college or associate's degree	27.4%	15.1%	31.0%	24.6%	26.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	25.8%	5.6%	15.9%	59.3%	21.1%

Coachella Valley Cities	La Quinta	Palm Desert	Palm Springs	Rancho Mirage
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER)				
Less than high school graduate	8.2%	7.3%	6.9%	5.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	21.4%	17.6%	16.7%	17.6%
Some college or associate's degree	31.5%	35.3%	31.3%	30.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	38.9%	39.9%	45.1%	46.5%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Figure 11. Bachelor's Degree of 1st Major For Riverside Compared To Other Counties



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Tables 9-10 on the following pages provide selected age characteristics from the ACS. Riverside County's distribution of population among the age groups shown is similar to the average for the other counties. Though Riverside has a slightly higher share of older adults (ages 65 and older) than four of the other counties, the County's median age is lower than three of the other counties listed. Within the subregions, Coachella/Blythe has the highest median age and highest percentage of population in the 65 years and over category. The Northwest subregion has the lowest median age and lowest percentage of elderly.

Table 9. Selected Age Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Riverside Compared to Other Counties	Riverside County	Imperial County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County
SELECTED AGE CATEGORIES (POPULATION)						
Under 25 years	33.8%	38.3%	29.8%	30.3%	35.7%	30.9%
25 to 64 years	51.1%	48.2%	55.5%	53.9%	52.0%	54.1%
65 years and over	15.1%	13.5%	14.7%	15.8%	12.3%	15.0%
Median Age	36.7	33.0	37.9	39.1	34.4	37.1

Comparison of Riverside County Subregions	Northwest	Southwest	Pass Area	Hemet/San Jacinto	Coachella Valley and Blythe Area	Riverside County
SELECTED AGE CATEGORIES (POPULATION)						
Under 25 years	36.1%	34.7%	32.6%	34.4%	27.1%	33.8%
25 to 64 years	52.7%	51.5%	46.6%	49.3%	48.7%	51.1%
65 years and over	11.2%	13.7%	20.8%	16.3%	24.2%	15.1%
Median Age	35.1	37.1	40.5	37.1	44.2	36.7

Notes:

1. Values provided as shares unless where noted.

2. Source of data is Census ACS 2019-2023, 5-Year Estimates unless otherwise specified.

3. Median Age for Riverside County Subregions provided by StateBook Inc.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; StateBook Inc., TNDG.

Table 10. Selected Age Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

Coachella Valley Cities	Cathedral City	Coachella	Desert Hot Springs	Indian Wells	Indio
SELECTED AGE CATEGORIES (POPULATION)					
Under 25 years	28.2%	36.8%	37.9%	8.9%	33.2%
25 to 64 years	52.8%	54.1%	49.9%	35.1%	47.8%
65 years and over	19.1%	9.0%	12.1%	56.0%	19.1%
Median Age	40.9	33.4	34.4	67.5	38.2

Coachella Valley Cities	La Quinta	Palm Desert	Palm Springs	Rancho Mirage
SELECTED AGE CATEGORIES (POPULATION)				
Under 25 years	23.4%	19.5%	13.9%	12.6%
25 to 64 years	45.4%	43.3%	52.4%	37.5%
65 years and over	31.0%	37.3%	33.7%	50.0%
Median Age	52.1	56.7	57.8	65

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; TNDG.

Job Data and In-Area Labor Force Efficiency

The following data were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap (OTM) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics dataset for 2022 (the latest year available) and the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates from the past five years available (2019-23). Data are mostly provided for the Riverside County subregions, and for Riverside County, Imperial County, Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Bernardino County, and San Diego County. Topics address current conditions corresponding to job-related data for each area geography, in-area labor force efficiency, job commuting destinations for workers living within each of the Riverside County subregions.

Table 11 on the following page provides job profile characteristics for workers for each area analyzed, and in-area labor force efficiency data from OTM. Some of the data highlights from Table 11 include the following:

- In comparison to other benchmark counties, Riverside County has a relatively lower share of residents that live and work in the county (46.5%), and a higher share of residents that commute out of the county (53.5%) for employment.
- In comparison of the Riverside County subregions, Coachella Valley and Blythe Area subregion has the highest share of residents that live and work in the county (59.7%), while the Pass Area subregion has the lowest share of residents that live and work in the county (16.6%).

Figures 12-13 on the following pages provide the mean commute time data for resident workers in Riverside County Subregions, and Riverside County at large in comparison to the state of California and the nation based on ACS 5-year Estimates for the past five years. Some of the data highlights from Figure 12 include the following:

- Although the mean commute time has slightly decreased from 2019 to 2023, in comparison to the state (28.98 minutes) and national (26.57 minutes) benchmarks, Riverside County has a slightly higher mean commute time for resident workers (33.81 minutes).
- In comparison of the subregions, the mean commute times for all subregions have decreased slightly from 2019 to 2023. The Coachella Valley and Blythe Area subregion has the lowest mean commute time of 22.50 minutes, which is also lower than Riverside County at large, California, and the national benchmarks. By contrast, the Southwest subregion has the highest mean commute time of 38.30 minutes of all geographies analyzed.

Table 11. In-Area Labor Force Efficiency Characteristics From U.S. Census Bureau

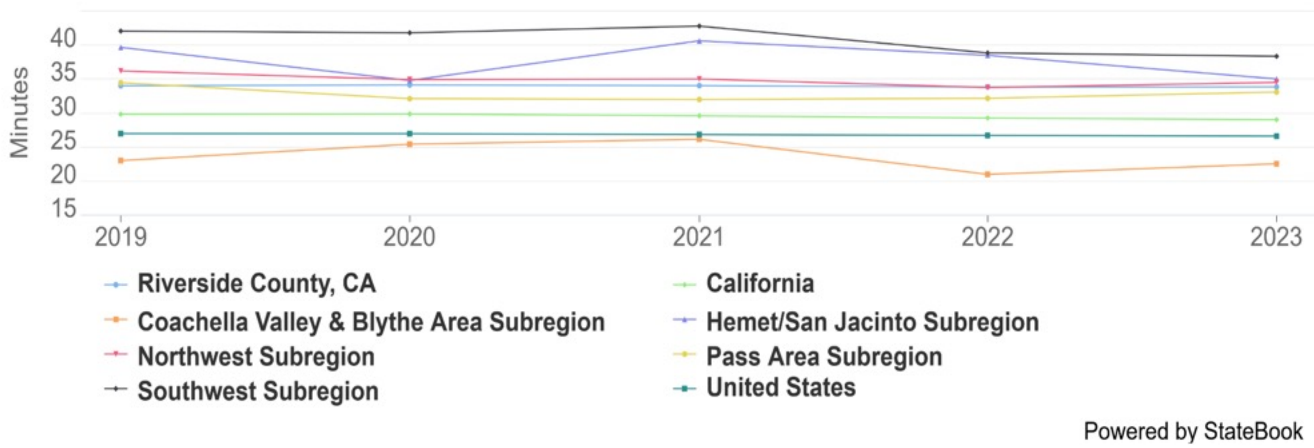
Riverside Compared to Other Counties	Riverside County	Imperial County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County
SELECTION AREA LABOR MARKET SIZE (COUNT)						
Employed in the Selection Area	722,287	56,430	4,171,886	1,538,388	767,892	1,368,022
Living in the Selection Area	939,610	67,909	3,966,190	1,340,077	854,132	1,376,682
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-217,323	-11,479	205,696	198,311	-86,240	-8,660
IN-AREA LABOR FORCE EFFICIENCY						
Living in the Selection Area (Count)	939,610	67,909	3,966,190	1,340,077	854,132	1,376,682
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	46.5%	65.3%	79.1%	63.9%	47.0%	78.8%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	53.5%	34.7%	20.9%	36.1%	53.0%	21.2%

Comparison of Riverside County Subregions	Northwest	Southwest	Pass Area	Hemet/San Jacinto	Coachella Valley and Blythe Area	Riverside County
SELECTION AREA LABOR MARKET SIZE (COUNT)						
Employed in the Selection Area	395,947	130,240	20,824	32,368	142,908	722,287
Living in the Selection Area	450,644	205,736	41,370	78,491	163,369	939,610
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-54,697	-75,496	-20,546	-46,123	-20,461	-217,323
IN-AREA LABOR FORCE EFFICIENCY						
Living in the Selection Area (Count)	450,644	205,736	41,370	78,491	163,369	939,610
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	33.7%	30.9%	16.6%	19.0%	59.7%	46.5%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	66.3%	69.1%	83.4%	81.0%	40.3%	53.5%

Note: Values provided as shares unless where noted.

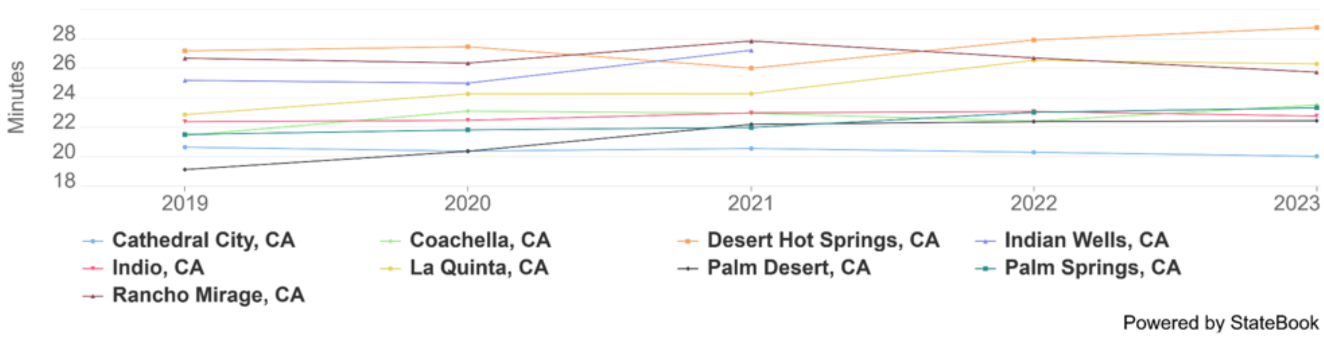
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap LEHD Origin-Destination Employment 2022; TNDG.

Figure 12. Mean Commute Time To Work



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; StateBook Inc., TNDG.

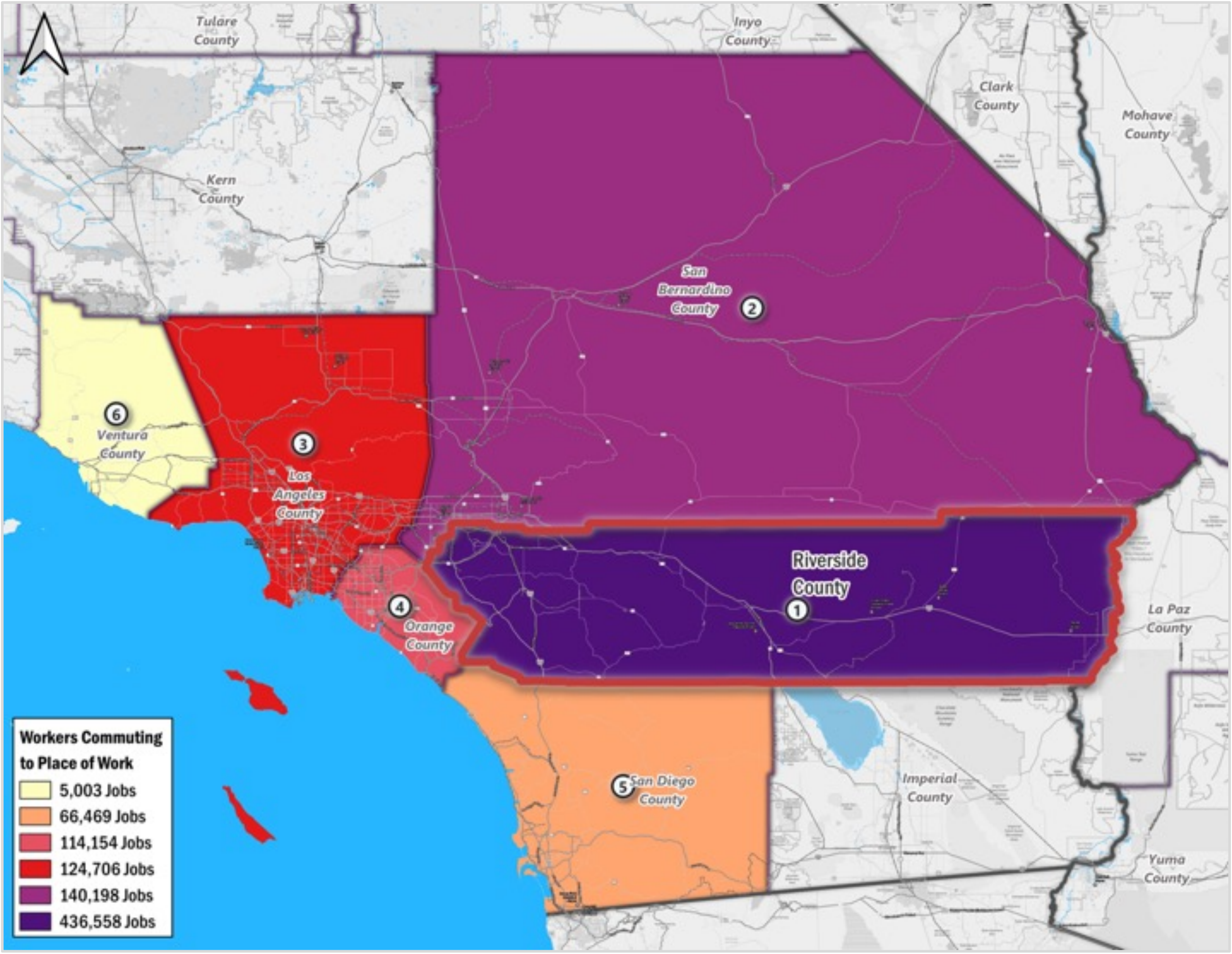
Figure 13. Mean Commute Time To Work



Note: The underlying data does not include values for the years 2022 or 2023 for Indian Wells, CA.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; StateBook Inc., TNDG.

Figure 14 below provides place-of-work commuting destinations by county for Riverside County resident workers. Each county is ranked by the number of employed county resident workers commuting to their place-of-work. Not surprisingly, the top six place-of-work destinations are the southern California counties (listed in rank order) of Riverside, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego and Ventura. Although immediately adjacent to Riverside County, Imperial County is not a prominent place of work for Riverside County residents. Imperial ranks 11th on Riverside's list of commute destinations. Interestingly, Imperial is outranked by the more distant counties of Santa Clara, Alameda, Kern and Sacramento. It is likely that Riverside County residents employed in these distant counties are to a large extent working remotely (from home).

Figure 14. Riverside County Resident Worker Job Destinations By County



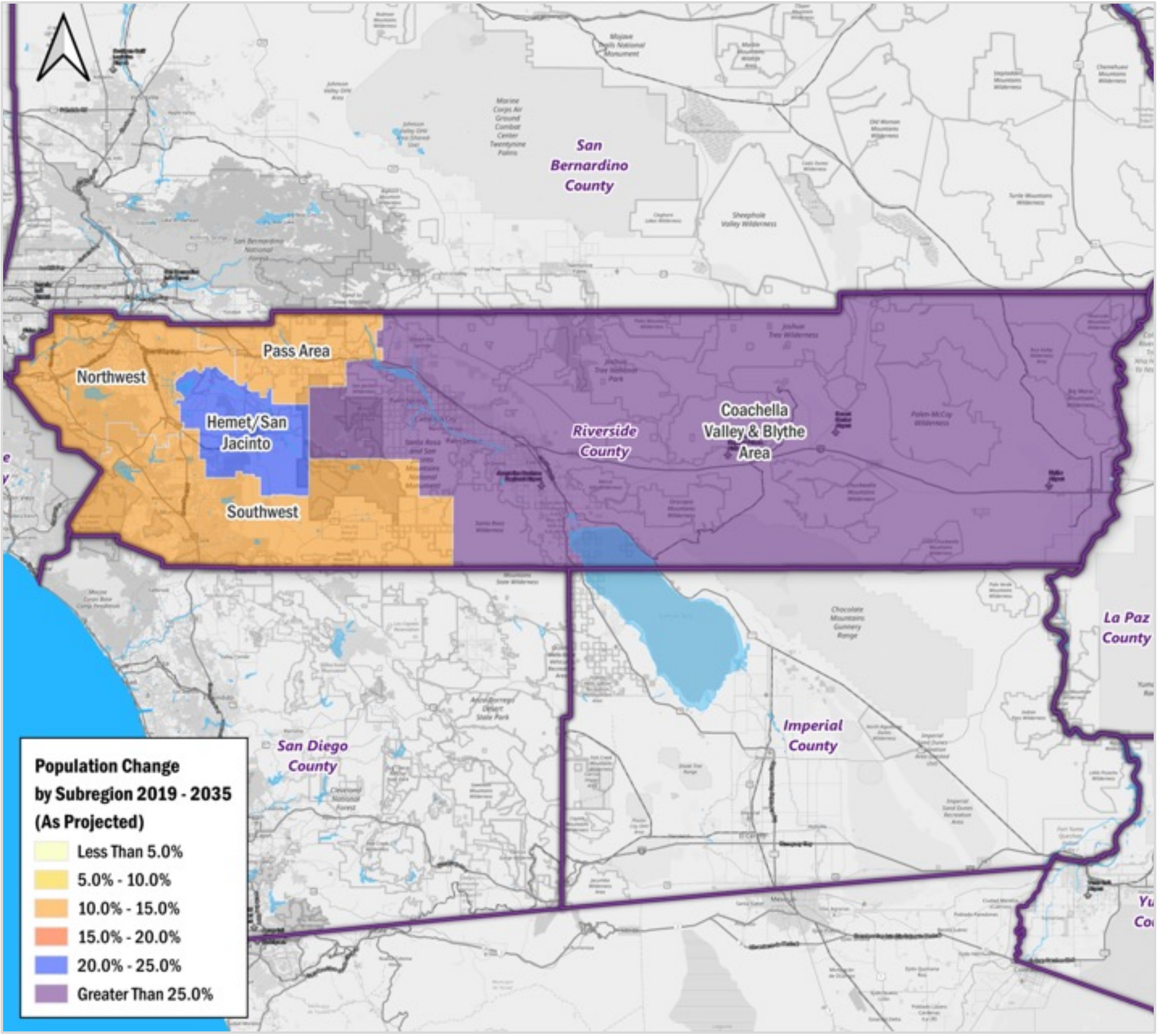
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap LEHD Origin-Destination Employment 2022; TNDG.

Population and Employment Forecasts

Figures 15-20 show demographic and employment forecasts for the Riverside County subregions, and for Riverside, Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino counties. The maps represent the percentage growth for population and employment for these geographies for the 15-year period between 2020 and 2035.

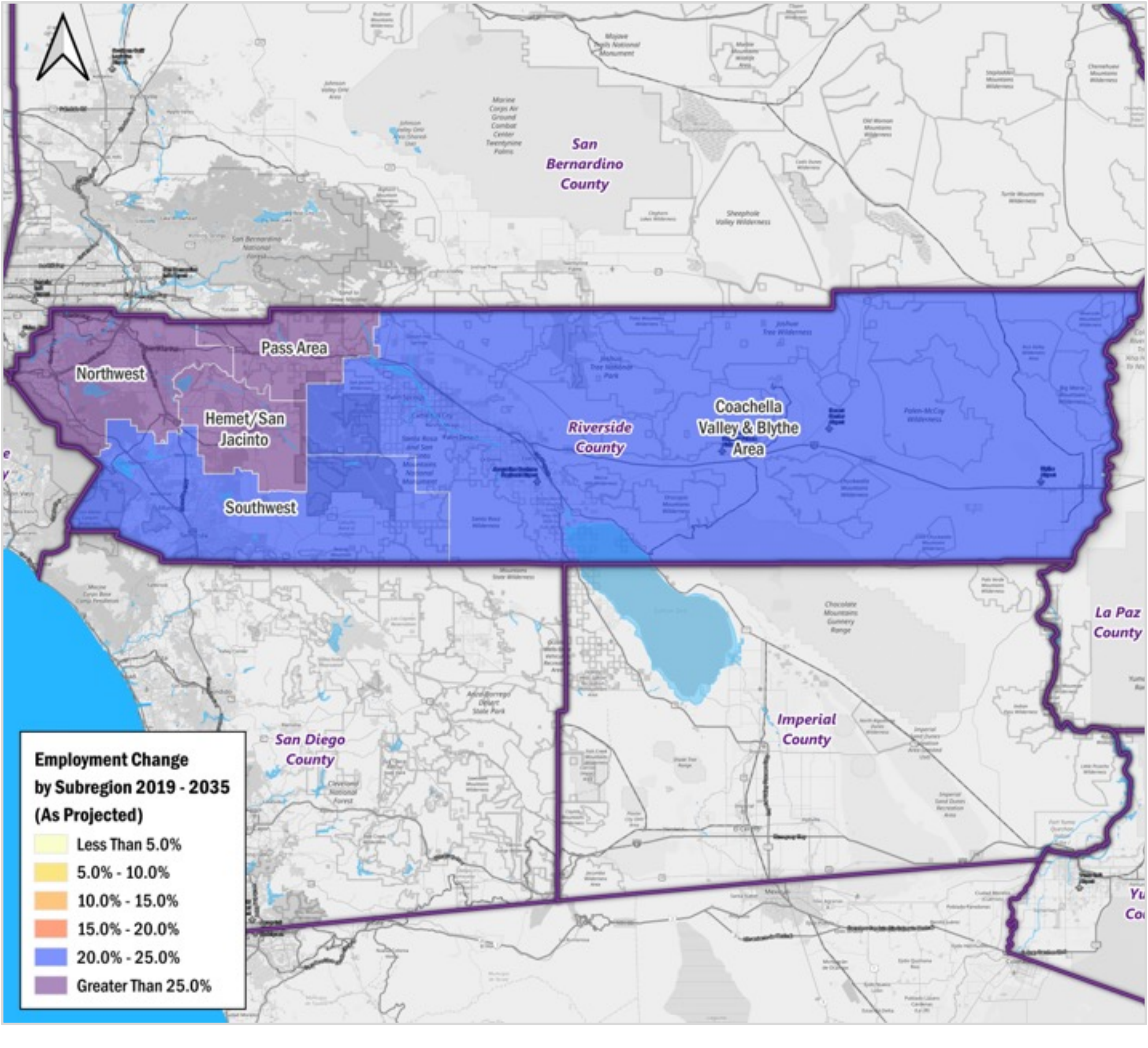
The projections in Figures 15-20 come from the Southern California Association of Governments' most recent Demographic and Employment Forecast (adopted in 2024).

Figure 15. Relative Percent Change In Population Growth: Riverside County Subregions (2019-2035)



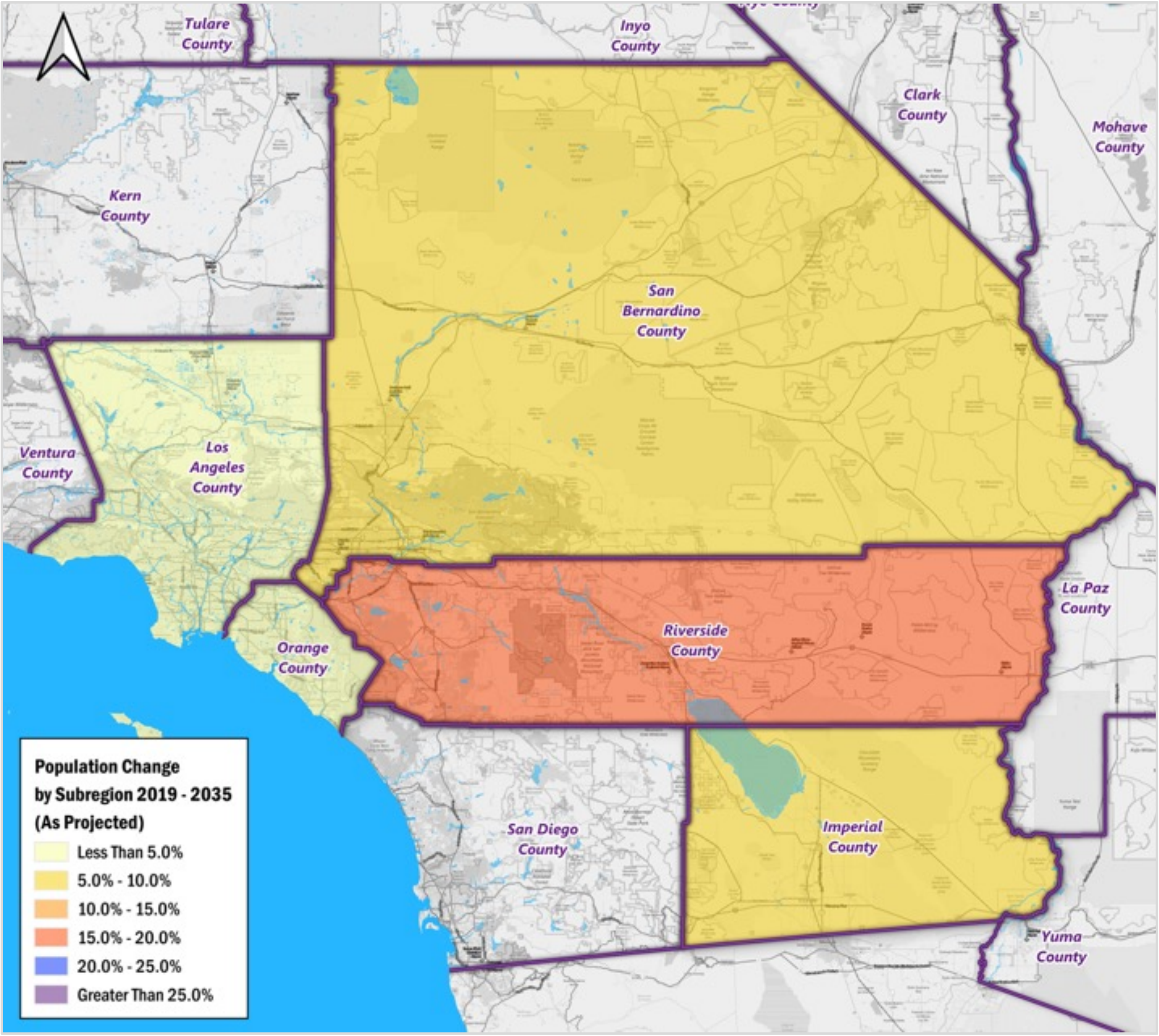
Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

Figure 16. Relative Percent Change In Employment Growth: Riverside County Subregions (2019-2035)



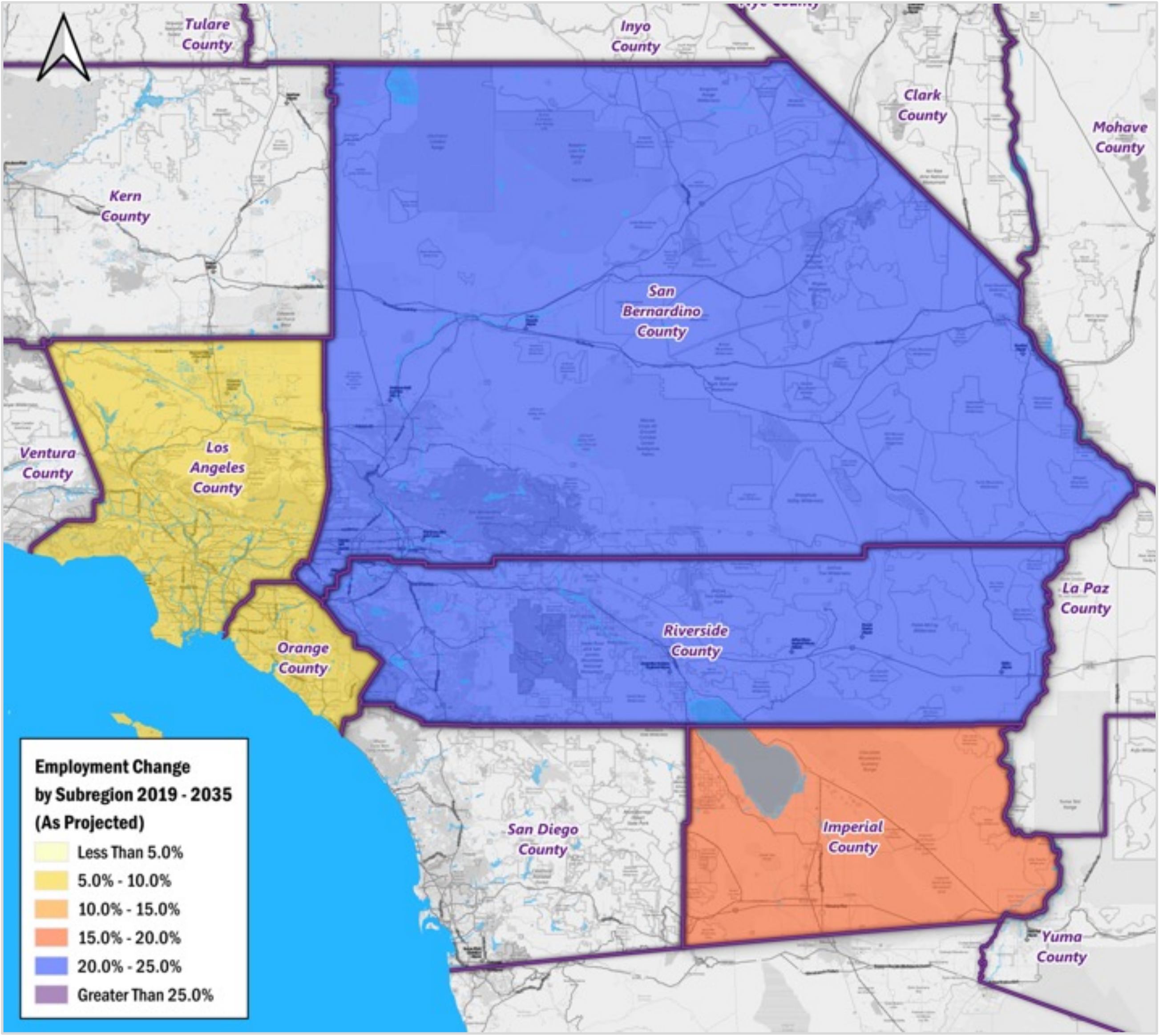
Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

Figure 17. Relative Percent Change In Population Growth:
Riverside, Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, And San Bernardino Counties (2019-2035)



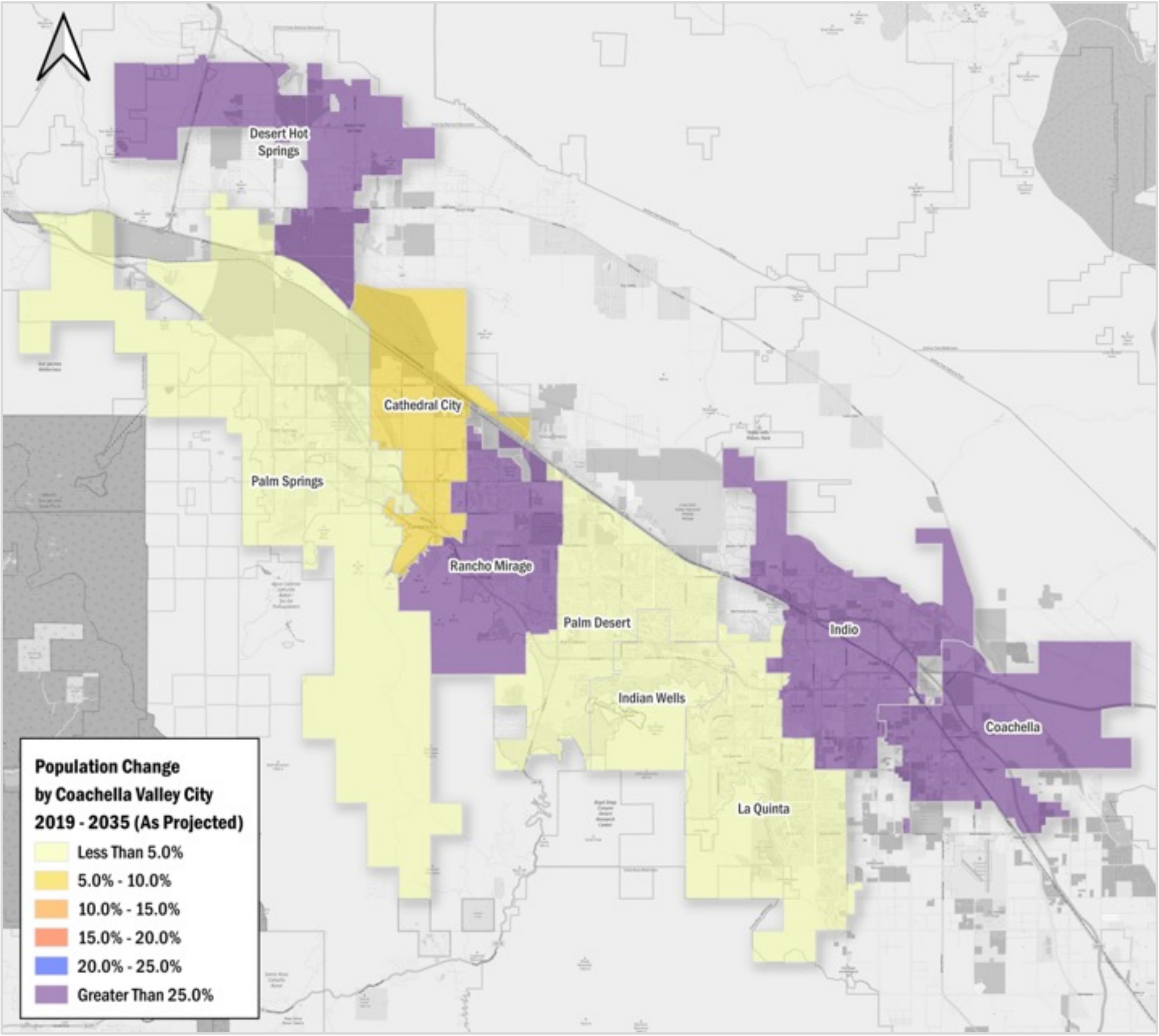
Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

Figure 18. Relative Percent Change In Employment Growth:
Riverside, Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, And San Bernardino Counties (2019-2035)



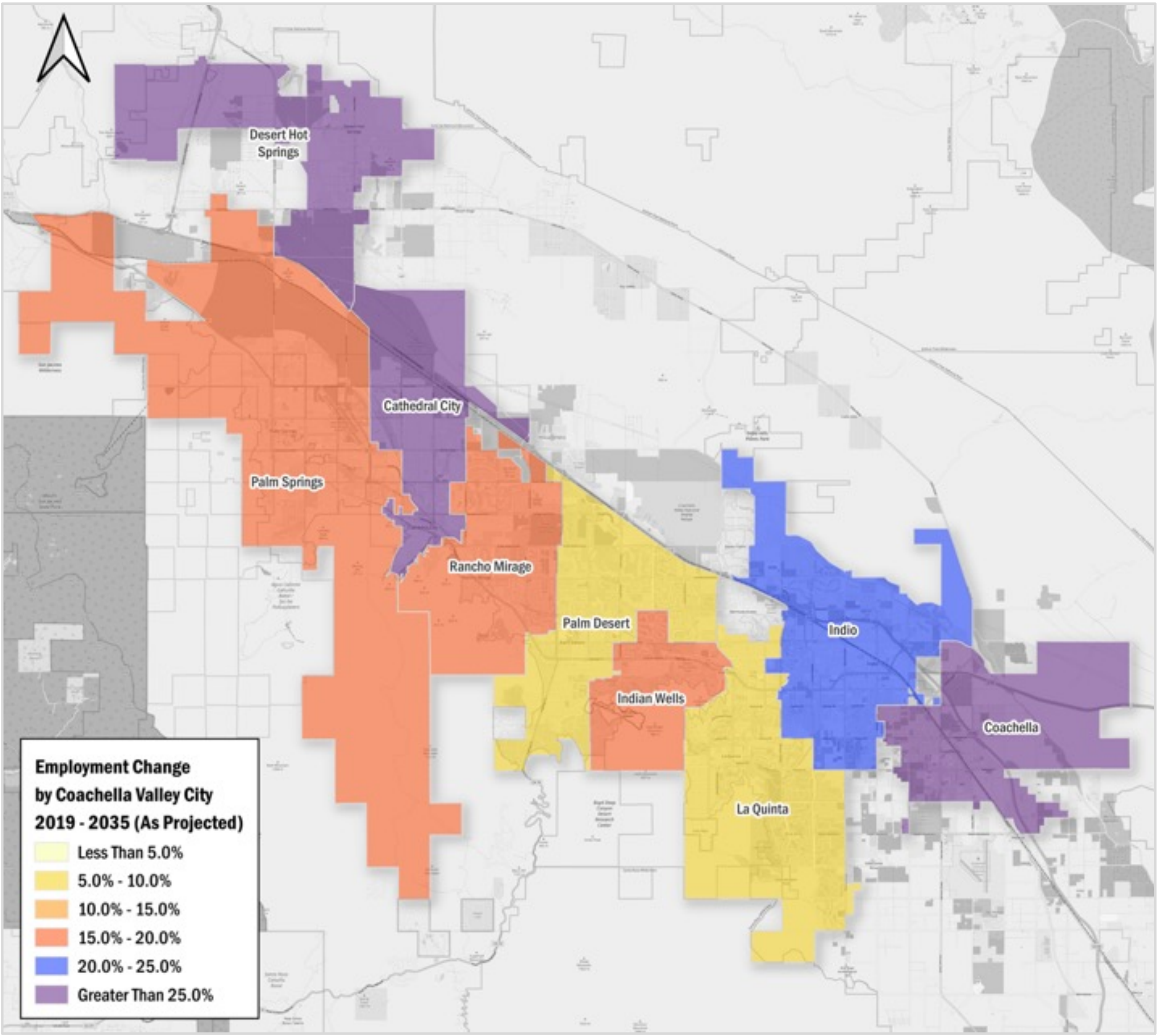
Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

Figure 19. Relative Percent Change In Population Growth: Coachella Valley Cities (2019-2035)



Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

Figure 20. Relative Percent Change In Employment Growth: Coachella Valley Cities (2019-2035)



Source: SCAG, 2024 RTP/SCS Growth Projections; TNDG.

Chapter Four: Coachella Valley Competitive Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Strengths

- **Job Creation Focus:** Strong emphasis on job creation as a primary goal.
- **Infrastructure:** Recognition of the importance of infrastructure to support economic goals.
- **Quality of Life:** High quality of life and amenities attract residents and visitors.
- **Healthcare Facilities:** Excellent healthcare facilities attract retirees and create economic opportunities.
- **Affordable Real Estate:** Relatively affordable housing and commercial/industrial real estate.
- **Geographic Proximity:** The region is close to major markets, and it has available land for growth.
- **Cultural Assets:** Rich cultural scene with A-list concerts and events.
- **Intellectual Capital:** Wealth and intellectual capacity among affluent retirees and seasonal residents.
- **Tourism:** Strong tourism opportunities with casinos, entertainment venues, and festivals.

Weaknesses

- **Utility Infrastructure:** Inadequate water and power infrastructure to support growth.
- **Development Costs:** High costs for infrastructure passed on to developers.
- **Climate:** Intense heat and potential extension of the hot season due to climate change.
- **Seasonal Economy:** Seasonality of the economy poses challenges for industry diversification.
- **Human Capital Flight:** Young people leaving the region for better career opportunities.
- **Regulatory Environment:** State taxes and regulations are a disadvantage for business retention and attraction.
- **Traffic and Transportation:** Potential traffic gridlock and need for more public transportation options.

Opportunities

- **Remote Work:** Increase in remote workers since the pandemic.
- **Film and Sound Production:** Opportunity to attract film/sound production facilities.
- **Logistics and Warehousing:** Continuing development opportunities in logistics and warehousing. Youth Sports Venues: Opportunity to attract youth sports venues and organized tournaments.
- **Higher Education:** Expansion of higher education infrastructure and trade schools.
- **Technology Jobs:** Targeting remote technology jobs and technology-oriented industries.
- **Aerospace and Drone Companies:** Attracting aerospace, space, and drone companies.
- **Artificial Intelligence:** Cultivating industry in AI utilizing the growing base of residents with significant experience in tech.
- **Healthcare Support Services:** Training ground for medical transcription and file management jobs.
- **Mining Opportunities:** Potential lithium mining related opportunities.
- **Recreation and Tourism:** Salton Sea restoration and Chuckwalla National Monument for recreation-oriented industries.
- **Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ):** Activation and expansion of the existing FTZ to attract investment and create jobs.

Threats

- **Development Entitlements:** Long timeframes for development entitlements.
- **Utility Service Providers:** Inability of utility service providers to support growth.
- **Climate Change:** Potential negative impacts of climate change on tourism and economic development.
- **Destination Competition:** Losing market share to other visitor destinations.
- **Immigration Restrictions:** Potential negative impact on agriculture and other industries dependent on immigrant labor.
- **Zoning Policies:** Outdated zoning policies and lack of flexibility.
- **Healthcare Professional Shortage:** Increasing waiting times for healthcare services.
- **Insurance Costs:** Loss of insurance companies leading to higher home insurance costs.

Job Data and In-Area Labor Force Efficiency

This section of the EDSP recommends a set of target industries for the County's business retention, expansion, attraction and entrepreneurial development programs. The summary below is based on a target industry analysis completed as part of the background phase the EDSP process and reflects input from key private and public stakeholders.

The consultant team initially identified potential target clusters for Riverside County (and subregions, including the Coachella Valley) based on the following processes and sources:

- In-depth analysis based on the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project, which also facilitates comparisons to national benchmarks
- Clusters targeted by the Thrive Inland SoCal initiative
- Riverside County's existing "Innovation Clusters"
- Clusters connected to UCR's Research and Economic Development function, focusing on innovation and entrepreneurial development initiatives

The U.S. Cluster Mapping Project is an economic development initiative led by Harvard Business School's Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness. Nationally, the Cluster Mapping Project recognizes a total of 67 clusters, with 16 classified as "local" clusters and 51 classified as "traded" clusters:

- Local clusters typically form the core of a region's economy; they primarily provide goods and services for the local (resident) population.
- Traded clusters are "export-oriented" in the sense that they include industries that are engaged in producing goods and services for end customers outside the region (i.e., they serve national and global markets).

TNDG's recommended target clusters are generally in the traded cluster category due to this group's higher potential to drive innovation, wage growth, and overall economic impact at a regional (countywide) scale.

- Table 12 is a summary of the seven recommended clusters addressed in additional detail in this section. Among these seven, within the Advanced Manufacturing cluster the EDSP recommends nine specific manufacturing industry categories, which are shown on Table 13. The recommendations listed on the tables include references to relationships with other County and regional initiatives mentioned above, specifically Riverside County Thrive, including the Thrive Regional Plan and the State Economic Blueprint documents, the Innovation clusters, and the UCR Research and Economic Development Clusters. Coachella Valley targets are highlighted.

Draft Industry Cluster (Target Industry) Study for Riverside County (dated March 25, 2025).
A cluster is a group of inter-related industry sectors in a particular region.

Industry information is compiled from Emsi (now Lightcast) data unless otherwise noted in this section.

Table 12. Summary Target Industry/Cluster Table

Target Industry/Cluster	Associated with other County/ regional initiatives of:	Strategic focus and implications	Particularly relevant to subregions:
Advanced Manufacturing, with focus on 9 manufacturing sectors (as detailed on Table 13 below)	Thrive cluster of advanced manufacturing, and numerous Innovation clusters	Involves using new technology and methods to improve efficiency, quality, and flexibility in production	All
Clean Tech and Climate Tech	Innovation cluster: Climate Tech; Thrive cluster: Clean Economy	Innovations in energy use, from transportation to the built environment	NW
Agricultural Tech Applications	Innovation clusters: Agricultural Tech, Natural Resource Management	Crop resiliency, innovations in ag inputs and their use, incl. sensors, aerial imaging, etc.	SW, C/B
Hospitality and Tourism (with Performing Arts)	Tourism and Outdoor Recreation is a strategic sector in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint	Untapped potential; quality-of-life enhancement	SW, C/B
Video Production and Distribution (with Music and Sound Recording)	Creative Economy is one of the "Strengthen" sectors in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint	Competitive opportunity with respect to LA; high LQs	C/B
Transportation and Logistics (with Distribution and Electronic Commerce)	Transport and Logistics is one of the "Strengthen" sectors in the Thrive Economic Blueprint		C/B, Pass
Cybersecurity	Relates generally to security needs across multiple sectors featured in various initiatives, including agriculture, transportation, and energy	Emerging industry of critical importance	NW

Table 13. Recommended Industry Targets

Target Cluster/Industry	Strategic focus and implications	Strength in County per analysis; cluster tie	Associated with other County/ regional initiatives of:	Relates to other cluster/ industry:	Particularly relevant to subregions:	Notes
Advanced Manufacturing, with focus on:	Generally, involves using new technology and methods to improve efficiency, quality, and flexibility in production					
Aerospace	Ties to strong sector in adjacent regions			Mobility-related; high tech	NW	Emerging industry: most employment is in suppliers. City of Riverside, Aerospace and Defense Expo
Metal products	Existing strong cluster, also supports many industries	Downstream metal products	Thrive cluster: Advanced Manufacturing	Automotive, energy production/ use, Agtech	H/JC, Pass, SW, NW	Thrive Regional Plan has list of 17 specific NAICS sectors 331-333 – metals and metal products manuf.
Medical devices	Modest employment levels but high wages and strong LQ	Medical devices	Biotech and Healthcare Innovation cluster – biomedical research at UCR	Other high tech	SW	
Plastics	Established sector with strong LQ, high employment, innovation potential	Plastics		Supplier to other sectors	SW, NW	Key areas of innovation: alternatives to traditional plastics and improving recycling processes
Wood products, construction products	Established sector with strong LQ, innovation potential	Wood products	Innovation clusters: Natural Resource Management, Climate Tech	Agricultural tech	H/JC	Innovations include refinement of engineered/mass timber products and buildings, and timber as a carbon sink
Automotive and other mobility-related, including electrical	Dynamic sector, broad applications	Recreational and small electric goods	UCR Research and Economic Development	Electric vehicles, transportation and logistics	H/JC, Pass, SW, NW	
Energy production, and energy use products	Dynamic sector, broad applications	Electric power generation and transmission	Innovation clusters: Climate Tech, Sustainable Transportation	Construction products	C/B	Major battery energy storage facility going into Menifee
Agricultural tech products	Supports agriculture, water issues	Agricultural inputs and services	Innovation cluster: Agricultural Tech; UCR: Agriculture and Agtech	Agricultural Tech applications	SW, C/B	

Target Cluster/Industry	Strategic focus and implications	Strength in County per analysis; cluster tie	Associated with other County/ regional initiatives of:	Relates to other cluster/ industry:	Particularly relevant to subregions:	Notes
Semiconductors	Existing strong base of employment in County	Information technology and analytical instruments	Thrive cluster: Information Technology as a pathway to quality jobs	Other high tech	SW, Pass	
Clean Tech and Climate Tech	Innovations in energy use, from transportation to the built environment	Electric power generation and transportation	Innovation cluster: Climate Tech; Thrive Cluster: Clean Economy	Energy production and use	NW	Ties to UCR research facilities and capabilities
Agricultural Tech Applications	Crop resiliency, innovations in ag inputs and their use, incl. sensors, aerial imaging, etc.	Agricultural inputs and services	Innovation clusters: Agricultural Tech, Natural Resource Management	Agtech products	SW, C/B	Ties to UCR research facilities and capabilities; Working Lands and Water is a "Strengthen" sector in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint
Hospitality and Tourism (with Performing Arts)	Untapped potential; quality-of-life enhancement	Hospitality and tourism; performing arts	Tourism and Outdoor Recreation is a strategic sector in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint	Clean tech (transportation); climate tech (appeal of environment)	SW, C/B	Ties to trends of agritourism and cultural tourism (e.g., see Anza Travel Guide)
Video Production and Distribution (with Music and Sound Recording)	Competitive opportunity with respect to LA; high LQs	Video production and distribution; Music	Creative Economy is one of the "Strengthen" sectors in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint	Hospitality/ tourism	C/B	
Transportation and Logistics (with Distribution and Electronic Commerce	Established clusters with evolving technology; High LQ (Distribution)	Transportation and Logistics; Distribution and Electronic Commerce	Transport and Logistics is one of the "Strengthen" sectors in the Thrive State Economic Blueprint	Industries have considerable interface with agriculture and with transportation-related initiatives	C/B, Pass	
Cybersecurity	Emerging industry of critical importance	Business services	Innovation cluster: Sustainable Transportation	Relates to security needs in agriculture, transp., and energy particularly	NW	Considered by some to be under-represented in the County

Note: Additional detail for these sectors is included in Appendix B.

Regions legend:
Hemet/San Jacinto – H/JC; Pass Area – Pass; Southwest – SW; Coachella/Blythe – C/B; Northwest – NW

[8]Sectors that have an established competitive position and/or high levels of employment, but growth or wages are "leveling."

Table 14 shows sectors that were considered for cluster targeting, by virtue of meeting certain initial screening criteria, but are not included among recommended targets based on the observations as noted.

Table 14. Sectors Considered But Not Included In Recommendations

Potential Cluster/Industry	Rationale for not Including as Target
Nonmetal Mining	Nonmetal and Metal Mining are mostly related to construction in Riverside County, and would appear to have limited innovation potential.
Metal Mining	
Apparel	This sector has a high LQ for the County, but also modest employment levels and low wages.
Downstream chemical products	Industries within this cluster appear to be those that primarily support other industrial activities, supplying basic product inputs.
Education and knowledge creation	Activities within this cluster are primarily represented in the target clusters of Clean Tech and Climate Tech, and Agricultural Tech.
Furniture	There is some crossover within this cluster with construction products manufacturing.
Leather and related products	Sector has high LQ but is likely to have a low level of association with innovation.

Coachella Valley Economic Brand Analysis

Coachella Valley is redefining its economic identity—emerging as a strategic destination for innovation, investment, and industry leadership. While rooted in a rich cultural and agricultural legacy, the region is forward-looking to bring businesses in creative media, advanced manufacturing, Health and Wellness, biotechnology, and clean energy. With competitive advantages such as affordable land, access to major markets, a growing talent pipeline, and a commitment to sustainability, Coachella Valley offers a compelling value proposition for companies seeking growth, resilience, and impact in Southern California.

Anchoring this renewed identity is the new economic development brand and marketing strategy: Thrive and Shine. More than a tagline, Thrive and Shine encapsulates the Coachella Valley's promise as a place where ambition meets opportunity, creativity fuels community, and both individuals and businesses can truly flourish. It signals a region where innovation and quality of life go hand-in-hand—an open invitation to join a community built to Thrive and Shine.

Sector Strengths

Creative Media

Coachella Valley is a rising hub for creative industries, fueled by its global brand recognition from music and arts festivals. With growing investments in digital infrastructure, film production, and immersive media, the region offers a cost-effective, inspiring environment for content creators, studios, and media tech startups. Incentives and partnerships with local colleges support a pipeline of creative talent.

Advanced Manufacturing

Strategically located near major logistics corridors and ports, Coachella Valley is ideal for advanced manufacturing in aerospace, electronics, and sustainable materials. The region offers affordable industrial land, workforce training programs, and access to Southern California's innovation ecosystem—making it a smart choice for scalable, high tech production.

Biotech

With proximity to major research institutions and a growing healthcare sector, Coachella Valley has potential as a biotech innovation zone. The region supports RandD in diagnostics, medical devices, and Agribiotech, with opportunities for public-private partnerships, clinical trials, and lab space development. Its clean environment and lower operational costs make it attractive for early-stage and scaling biotech firms.

Health and Wellness

Known for its healing climate and wellness tourism, Coachella Valley is expanding into integrative health, medical tourism, and longevity research. The region is home to top-tier hospitals, wellness resorts, and a growing ecosystem of health-tech startups. Businesses benefit from a health-conscious population, supportive infrastructure, and a reputation as a destination for holistic living.

Clean Energy

Coachella Valley is a national leader in renewable energy, with vast solar, wind, and geothermal resources. The region offers sites, grid access, and a skilled energy workforce. Clean tech companies find strong support for innovation, from energy storage and microgrids to green hydrogen and carbon capture—making it a launchpad for the next generation of climate solutions.

Coachella Valley Brand Differentiation Analysis

Advancing Regional Priorities Through Unique Strengths

As regions across the country compete to attract high-growth industries, Coachella Valley offers a distinct value proposition rooted in its natural assets, cultural identity, and forward-looking investments. Unlike traditional economic hubs, the Valley combines global brand recognition with emerging strengths in clean energy, creative media, advanced manufacturing, Health and Wellness, and biotechnology. This analysis outlines the unique differentiators that position Coachella Valley not just as a place to do business—but as a place to lead, innovate, and thrive.

Clean Energy Leadership with Lithium Valley

Home to the Salton Sea's geothermal fields and lithium reserves, Coachella Valley can position itself as a global epicenter for clean energy innovation, especially in battery storage and green hydrogen. Few regions can offer both renewable energy generation and critical mineral extraction in one place.

Global Creative Brand with Local Infrastructure

The Coachella name and Greater Palm Springs together enjoy worldwide recognition as icons of music, art, culture, and lifestyle. Pairing that with investments in media production facilities, digital infrastructure, and creative incubators creates a unique value proposition. Creative companies want authenticity, brand equity, and a place that inspires talent.

Health and Biotech in a Wellness Destination

The region's reputation for wellness tourism can be expanded into a health innovation corridor—combining biotech RandD, integrative medicine, and longevity research. It's rare to find a place where clinical research, lifestyle medicine, and wellness tourism intersect naturally.

Advanced Manufacturing with Room to Scale

Unlike dense urban centers, Coachella Valley offers affordable land, proximity to major logistics routes, and a growing workforce—ideal for clean, high tech manufacturing. Companies looking to reshore or expand need space, speed, and sustainability.

Climate Resilience as a Competitive Advantage

Coachella Valley can brand itself as a living lab for climate adaptation—with innovations in water management, energy, and sustainable design. Businesses are under pressure to meet ESG goals. Locating in a region that's actively building climate resilience is a strategic advantage.

Talent Pipeline with Local Roots

Partnerships with local colleges, workforce boards, and tribal communities can create custom training pipelines for target industries. Companies want to know if they can hire locally and invest in long-term talent development.

Key Messages

The Coachella Valley has completed an economic development branding process with North Star, resulting in the Thrive and Shine brand platform. This brand builds on the region's global reputation as a premier visitor destination and positions it as a place to live, work, and invest. It highlights Greater Palm Springs' ability to blend innovation and opportunity with lifestyle and community, offering ambitious minds and forward-looking businesses the environment they need to flourish.

The following key messages reflect Greater Palm Springs' positioning for target industries while also showcasing the region's quality of life, collaborative spirit, and inclusive identity.

- **Creative Media:** Create. Connect. Captivate — in Coachella Valley.
- **Advanced Manufacturing:** Precision Built. Future Ready.
- **Biotech:** Innovating Health at the Edge of Discovery.
- **Health and Wellness:** Wellness Starts Here.
- **Clean Energy:** Powering Progress with Clean Energy.

GREATER PALM SPRINGS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Thrive and Shine

Quality of Life and Talent Messages

- **Lifestyle Advantage:** Where year-round sunshine, outdoor adventure, and world-renowned cultural events combine with affordability, accessibility, and innovation to create unmatched opportunity.
- **Talent and Workforce:** A magnet for ambitious minds, Greater Palm Springs empowers people to reinvent themselves and their careers in a setting that inspires creativity, collaboration, and growth.
- **Residents and Families:** A thriving, connected community with excellent schools, diverse neighborhoods, and a high quality of life that blends small-town warmth with big-city potential.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Rooted in the traditions of nine cities and sovereign tribal nations, Greater Palm Springs thrives on diversity, welcoming new voices and perspectives to shape an innovative, inclusive future.
- **Collaboration and Connectivity:** Defined by collaboration across cities, tribal nations, and industries, the region transforms vision into action—building an economy where businesses, ideas, and people thrive together.

These key messages emphasize Greater Palm Springs as more than a destination—it is a launchpad for opportunity, innovation, and reinvention, set against the backdrop of a lifestyle that shines brighter than anywhere else.

Chapter Five: Strategic Direction/Action Plan

Vision for Coachella Valley's Economic Future

Coachella Valley will evolve into a vibrant, diversified economic hub—transitioning from its tourism and agricultural roots into a sustainable leader in clean energy, healthcare, entertainment, and technology. Embracing its cultural identity, the region will offer high-quality jobs with living wages, accessible opportunities, and economic resilience, attract global talent and foster innovation. It will become Southern California's new mecca destination for wellness, energy innovation, and creative industries.

Strategy Categories

Industry Diversification and Growth

To build a resilient, year-round economy with no "off-season," the Coachella Valley will pursue targeted growth in five high-potential industries: agriculture technology, hospitality/tourism, creative media, advanced manufacturing, clean energy/tech, and biotechnology. These sectors align with the region's natural assets, cultural strengths, and emerging opportunities, and will serve as the foundation for sustainable job creation, innovation, and long-term economic vitality

Clean Energy and Sustainability

The Coachella Valley is committed to becoming a leader in clean energy and environmental resilience by advancing a comprehensive sustainability agenda. This includes accelerating the cleanup and ecological restoration of the Salton Sea, significantly increasing the share of local energy needs met by renewable sources, and ensuring the region's electricity infrastructure can support targeted industry and employment growth. Additionally, the Valley will explore strategic connections to Imperial County's "Lithium Valley" initiative to align with emerging opportunities in battery technology, energy storage, and green manufacturing.

Workforce Development and Talent Attraction

To build a strong and sustainable talent pipeline, the Coachella Valley will expand partnerships with College of the Desert and leverage the presence of University of California, Riverside (UCR) and California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) campuses. These collaborations will support industry-aligned training, research, and career development programs. A key focus will be on creating meaningful career pathways for young professionals, ensuring they have opportunities to thrive locally after completing their education, and contributing to the region's long-term economic vitality.

Infrastructure Improvements

To support a thriving, full-service regional economy, Coachella Valley will invest in infrastructure that enhances both physical and digital connectivity. This Includes prioritizing infrastructure that expands power grid capacity and reliability to meet growing demand and support new development. Expanding multimodal transportation systems will ensure residents can live, work, and play within the Valley, and improving access to high-speed broadband will support the growth of target industries and remote work. These investments will help bridge geographic and economic divides, improve quality of life, and position the region for inclusive, future-ready development.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Ecosystems

To foster a dynamic and inclusive innovation economy, Coachella Valley will explore investment in incubator and accelerator facilities tailored to its tech-oriented target industries, including creative media, advanced manufacturing, Health and Wellness, biotechnology, and clean energy. These programs will be designed to support startups, attract investment, and cultivate local talent. In parallel, the Valley will promote entrepreneurial opportunities in entertainment and the arts, leveraging its global reputation for creativity and culture to support artist-led ventures, media production, and creative enterprise development.

Regional Connectivity and Trade Expansion

To strengthen Coachella Valley's position in the broader regional economy, the plan will promote a unified marketing message and collaborative identity across Valley cities. This includes aligning business attraction efforts, streamlining development processes, and ensuring consistent "business friendliness" standards to support investment and entrepreneurship. Additionally, the Valley will explore strategic connections to promote cross-border economic development partnerships, particularly those tied to logistics, clean energy, and lithium-related industries, to expand trade and regional integration.

Regional Branding and Tourism

The Coachella Valley will continue to strengthen its regional identity and visitor appeal through coordinated investment and collaboration with Visit Greater Palm Springs and countywide tourism partners. By positioning the Valley as Riverside County's premier destination, the region can amplify its global reputation for hospitality, festivals, and natural beauty. Additionally, the Valley's world-class hospitality infrastructure will be leveraged not only to attract tourists, but also to promote a high quality of life for residents and showcase the region as an ideal location for business, innovation, and talent attraction.

Quality of Life and Community Development

The Coachella Valley will prioritize inclusive community development by attracting Health and Wellness industries, celebrating its cultural diversity, and expanding opportunity in historically underserved areas. By positioning the region as a hub for integrative health and medical innovation, the Valley can enhance both resident well-being and economic vitality. At the same time, it will leverage its rich cultural heritage and diversity as a driver of entrepreneurship, tourism, and creative enterprise. Targeted investments in career pathways, affordable housing, and access to social services will ensure that all communities benefit from the region's growth.

Strategic Action for Regional Growth

The following action plan outline a bold strategy for the Coachella Valley's economic future. They are ambitious and forward-looking, designed to spark exploration, research, and collaboration across the region. While not every idea may ultimately be feasible or the right fit, pursuing them will help the Valley identify its most strategic opportunities and build the partnerships necessary to succeed. By committing to exploring these goals with focus and flexibility, the region can translate vision into action and position for sustained growth.

GOAL 1: INDUSTRY DIVERSIFICATION AND GROWTH

Develop year-round economy with no "off-season," leveraging growth opportunities in the following target industries:

- Agricultural Tech applications and products
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Creative Media (video/film production, music and sound recording)
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Clean Energy Production
- Biotechnology

1.1	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
a	Agtech: Launch an Agtech Innovation Hub Partner creating a year-round incubator for startups focused on desert agriculture, water efficiency, and climate-resilient crops.	High	2	$$
b	Agtech: Host an Annual Agtech Expo attracting global innovators and investors to showcase desert farming solutions and innovative technologies.	High	2	$$
c	Agtech: Support Controlled Environment Agriculture, encouraging vertical farming and greenhouse operations that operate year-round and can showcase new innovative methods.	Med	2	$
d	Tourism: Develop Off-Season Wellness Retreats focused on spa experiences and cultural tourism.	High	1	$
e	Tourism: Create a 'Summer Desert Arts' Festival with indoor music and visual arts events.	Med	2	$
f	Tourism: Develop Indoor Amusement and Recreation Concepts such as Desert Dome Adventure Park with climate controlled rides, Indoor Snow and Ice Experience, Desert Indoor Sportsplex with arenas for tournaments and e-sports.	Med	3	$$$
g	Creative Media: Establish a Coachella Valley Film and Sound Campus with a supportive environment for production companies.	High	2	$$
h	Creative Media: Launch a Local Talent Accelerator for youth training in editing and sound design.	Med	2	$
i	Creative Media: Host a Desert Film and Music Residency for artists to collaborate and showcase work.	High	2	$$
j	Clean Energy: Expand Solar + Storage and related projects to create year-round construction and maintenance jobs.	Med	3	$
k	Clean Energy: Develop a Renewable Energy Innovation Zone for RandD in geothermal and hydrogen tech.	Med	2	$
l	Clean Tech: Develop Green Industrial Park near Salton Sea (a zero-emissions industrial park powered by geothermal and solar, focused on lithium-based manufacturing).	Med	3+	$$$
m	Advanced Manufacturing: Establish battery component manufacturing facilities to produce cathodes, anodes, and electrolytes using locally sourced lithium.	High	2	$$
n	Biotechnology: Launch Coachella BioCicular Accelerator, modeled after BEAM Circular/ gener8tor partnership, that can offer seed funding, mentorship, access to biotech labs/ pilot facilities with a focus on desert-adapted biotech and regenerative agriculture.	High	1	$
o	Branding: Utilize branding differentiation and recommendations from North Star branding strategy to create messaging for targeted industries.	High	1	$$

GOAL 2: CLEAN ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
2.1 Salton Sea cleanup/restoration				
a	Identify global solutions in remediation technologies that use solar-powered aeration, phytoremediation, dust suppression systems or other unique technologies and encourage pilot projects.	Med	3	$
b	Continue active participation in regional restoration authorities, projects and activities.	High	1	$
2.2 Maximize renewable energy technology; substantially increase portion of local energy needs supplied by renewables				
a	Expand Utility-Scale Solar and Geothermal Projects: Prioritize development near transmission corridors and brownfield sites.	Med	3	$$
b	Promote Agrivoltaics to combine solar panels with agriculture for dual-income streams.	Med	2	$
2.3 Ensure electricity capacity for targeted industry/employment growth				
a	Conduct a Regional Grid Capacity Study: Identify infrastructure gaps and prioritize upgrades to support industrial growth zones.	High	3	$$
b	Develop Microgrid Pilots for Industrial Parks: Ensure energy resilience for logistics, manufacturing, and tech clusters.	Med	2	$$
2.4 Investigate potentials to connect to Imperial County's "Lithium Valley" initiative (potentially based on Riverside County's larger workforce compared to Imperial)				
a	Establish Fabrication Hub to focus on components for solar panels, EV charging stations, and battery storage systems. Co-locate with renewable energy projects to create a circular, low-carbon supply chain.	High	2	$$
b	Establish battery component manufacturing facilities to pro-duce cathodes, anodes, and electrolytes using locally sourced lithium.	High	3	$$

GOAL 3: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TALENT ATTRACTION

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
3.1 Expand partnerships with College of the Desert				
a	Support Dual Enrollment and Early College Pathways: Partner with high schools to expose students to higher education programs earlier.	High	2	$
b	Continue to advance the collaboration and projects of One Future CV.	High	1	$
3.2 Leverage presence of UCR and CSUSB campuses				
a	Establish Joint Research and Workforce Initiatives: Focus on lithium tech, sustainability, Agtech, and advanced manufacturing.	Med	2	$
b	Create a Regional Talent Consortium: Align curriculum, internships, and job placement across COD, UCR, and CSUSB.	High	2	$
3.3 Focus on expanding career potentials for young professionals (to retain their talent after they have completed education)				
a	Launch a "Stay Local" Fellowship Program: Provide paid internships and mentorships with local employers for recent grads.	High	1	$
b	Support Remote Work Infrastructure: Create co-working hubs and housing incentives to retain talent in the region.	Med	2	$

GOAL 4: INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
4.1	**Ensure mobility needs of full-time/full-service communities (ability for residents to live, work, and play in the Valley)**			
a	Expand Public Transit Connectivity: Increase frequency and coverage of SunLine Transit routes, especially between residential areas and job hubs.	Low	3	$$
b	Invest in Active Transportation Infrastructure: Build shaded pedestrian corridors, protected bike lanes, and safe routes to schools and transit.	High	2	$$
c	Create Mobility Hubs: Combine EV charging, bike-share, ride-share, and transit access at key nodes across the Valley.	Med	2	$
d	Advance the Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Rail Corridor Project.	Med	3	$$$
4.2	**Invest in digital infrastructure needed to facilitate growth of target industries and remote workers**			
a	Develop Remote Work and Innovation Hubs: Convert vacant retail or office space into co-working centers with high-speed internet and business support services.	Med	2	$$
b	Expand High-Speed Broadband Access: Prioritize fiber and 5G deployment in underserved and rural areas, especially near industrial zones and tribal lands.	High	2	$
c	Expand Public Wi-Fi Zones: In downtowns, libraries, parks, and community centers to support remote workers and students.	High	1	$$

GOAL 5: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
5.1	**Create incubator/accelerator facilities and programs focused on Valley's tech-oriented target industries**			
a	Develop Industry-Specific Accelerators: Tailor programs for lithium tech, renewable energy, and desert-adapted agriculture startups (see 1.4)	High	1	$
b	Launch Coachella Valley Innovation District(s): Designate a zone with co-working spaces, labs, and startup support services focused on Agtech, clean energy, logistics, and advanced manufacturing.	High	2	$$
5.2	**Consider focus on entrepreneurial opportunities related to entertainment and the arts**			
a	Launch a Creative Industries Incubator: Support startups in music, film, digital media, fashion, and visual arts.	Med	2	$
b	Host a Coachella Valley Creative Summit: Showcase local talent, connect artists with investors, and promote cross-sector collaboration.	Med	2	$$
c	Leverage Festival and Other Unique Tourism Infrastructure Year-Round: Repurpose venues and production assets (e.g. Indian Wells Tennis Gardens) for off-season creative residencies and events.	High	1	$

GOAL 6: REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY AND TRADE EXPANSION

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
6.1	**Promote unified Coachella Valley "voice" and marketing message**			
a	Implement Regional Branding Campaign: Align around a shared identity that highlights the Valley's strengths in clean energy, tourism, innovation, and sustainability.	High	1	$
b	Launch a Valley-Wide Digital Portal: Centralize information on business opportunities, workforce programs, and regional assets.	High	1	$
a	Participate in Joint Trade Missions and Conferences: Represent the Valley collectively at national and international events to attract investment and partnerships.	High	1	$$
6.2	**Ensure uniform "business friendliness" standards across Valley cities**			
a	Create a Regional Business Concierge Program: Offer stream-lined permitting, licensing, and site selection support across jurisdictions.	High	1	$
b	Develop a Shared Business Incentives Toolkit: Align tax cred-its, fee waivers, and infrastructure support to reduce friction for investors and entrepreneurs.	High	1	$
c	Standardize Zoning and Development Review Processes: Promote consistency in land use regulations and timelines across cities.	Med	2	$
d	Establish a Valley-Wide Business Retention Task Force: Coordinate outreach and support for existing employers to prevent relocation or closure.	High	1	$
6.3	**Investigate potential to connect to Imperial County's cross-border economic development partnerships**			
a	Explore Joint Industrial Zones: Near the Salton Sea or along key corridors to support lithium tech, clean manufacturing, and bi-national commerce.	Med	3	$$

GOAL 7: REGIONAL BRANDING AND TOURISM

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
7.1	**Continue Valley-wide investment/collaboration (through Visit Greater Palm Springs) on tourism and event promotion**			
a	Strengthen Multi-City Tourism Campaigns: Continue joint marketing efforts that promote the Valley as a unified destination with diverse year-round experiences — from wellness and festivals to outdoor recreation and cultural heritage.	Med	1	$
b	Expand Off-Season Promotion: Highlight indoor attractions, wellness retreats, and creative events during summer months to support year-round tourism.	High	1	$$
c	Leverage Data and Analytics: Use visitor data to tailor campaigns and identify emerging markets (e.g., remote workers, ecotourists, international travelers).	Med	2	$
7.2	**Coordinate with countywide tourism promotion, positioning the Coachella Valley as the County's premier visitor destination**			
a	Position Coachella Valley as Riverside County's Premier Destination: Align messaging with county tourism efforts to emphasize the Valley's unique assets — world-class resorts, iconic festivals, and natural beauty.	High	1	$
b	Develop Joint Itineraries and Packages: Collaborate with other Riverside County destinations to create multi-day travel experiences that start or end in the Coachella Valley.	High	1	$
7.3	**Leverage the presence of world-class hospitality infrastructure as an opportunity to promote the Valley's high quality of life (for residents) and excellent business opportunities (in other industries)**			
a	Market the Valley as a Lifestyle Destination for Entrepreneurs and Remote Workers: Highlight amenities, climate, and cultural richness as assets for talent attraction and business relocation.		2	$$
b	Host Business and Innovation Events at Hospitality Venues: Use resorts and conference centers to attract industry summits, investor forums, and startup showcases.	High	1	$$
b	Promote "Live, Work, Play" Messaging: Integrate tourism branding with economic development campaigns to show that the Valley offers not just leisure, but business opportunity and year-round community.	High	1	$

GOAL 8: QUALITY OF LIFE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

	Strategic Action	Priority	Year	Cost
8.1 Attract Health and Wellness industries				
a	Promote Medical Tourism: Leverage the Valley's climate and hospitality infrastructure to attract patients seeking elective procedures, rehabilitation, and holistic care.	Low	3	$$$
b	Develop a Desert Health and Wellness Innovation Zone(s): At-tract clinics, wellness resorts, and research institutions focused on integrative medicine, aging, and climate-adapted health solutions.	Med	2	$$
8.2 Leverage Valley's cultural diversity as a significant economic development asset				
a	Develop Cultural Districts and Events: Celebrate Latino, Indigenous, and immigrant heritage through festivals, markets, and public art.	Med	2	$$
b	Integrate Cultural Assets into Tourism and Branding: Highlight the Valley's diversity in regional marketing campaigns and visitor experiences.	Med	2	$
8.3 Improve career pathways and access to social services in Valley's lower-income communities				
a	Expand Place-Based Workforce Hubs: Co-locate job training, childcare, transportation, and digital access services in under-served neighborhoods.	Med	3	$$
b	Promote Affordable Housing Near Job Centers: Prioritize mixed-income developments with access to transit and services.	Med	2	$
c	Strengthen Nonprofit and Public Sector Collaboration: Coordinate across agencies and CBOs to streamline access to healthcare, food, housing, and legal aid.	High	2	$

Coachella Valley Region
Economic Development Strategy

RIVERSIDE COUNTY
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GREATER
PALM SPRINGS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Thrive and Shine