

2017 California Economic Summit to Expand Plan to Elevate Californians Out of Poverty

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SAN DIEGO, Nov. 2, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The California Economic Summit will develop a policy agenda to lift 18-million Californians who live in or near poverty into the middle class. The ambitious agenda—titled *Elevate CA*—builds on the Summit's "One Million Challenges" focused on expanding workforce training, addressing the state's housing crisis and fortifying California's water supply, which are key elements to securing prosperity for all Californians.

Four of California's leading gubernatorial candidates, the top three higher education leaders along with nearly 500 business, civic, education, and government officials from all regions of the state will convene in San Diego on Nov. 2-3, for the two-day Summit, which is now in its sixth year.

"The Summit is uniquely qualified to take on this critical issue in California," said Eloy Ortiz Oakley, chancellor of the California Community Colleges. "This is a complex issue that demands our attention. The Summit's vast network and ability to bring people together to tackle difficult issues is exactly how to attack the economic insecurity that millions of Californians feel. The California Community Colleges are proud to be part of this effort."

The Summit also is explicitly calling out the distinct needs of rural California, which covers 55 percent of the state's land mass but only 9 percent of the population. Rural California's recovery has lagged behind the rest of the state. Issues like the digital divide, watershed and land management and new natural resource industries like biomass hold the key to a rural economic recovery in California.

"We are very pleased the Summit has recognized the importance of rural California," said Bob Williams, chair of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC). "For all Californians to achieve the California dream rural areas must participate. We look forward to working with the Summit to achieve that goal."

The Summit led a statewide conversation on Elevate CA this summer and fall that attracted nearly three dozen Californians with their prescriptions on how to address the upward mobility crisis in California. With an issue this complex, there are many ideas on how to address it. Expanding the earned income tax credit, directing more resources to early education, expanding workforce training and investing more in community colleges are just some of the solutions proposed.

"This conversation is being noticed across the state. People know we simply can't wait any longer to address the upward mobility crisis in California," said Lenny Mendonca, co-chair of California Forward which manages the Summit. "The Summit, with its highly

motivated and talented network and its unique ability to gather people of different views to find a common solution, is exactly the right vehicle."

The notable state leaders in attendance include Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom; Treasurer John Chiang; former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; Senator Toni Atkins; Senator Steve Glazer; Senator Bill Dodd; Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula; University of California President Janet Napolitano; California State University Chancellor Timothy White; California Community Colleges Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley; City of San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer; and, Ben Metcalf of the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

Van Ton-Quinlivan, vice-chancellor for Workforce and Economic Development for California Community Colleges, will receive the 2017 California Steward Leaders Award, to be presented by Bill Allen, CEO of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation.

California Forward and the California Stewardship Network developed the California Economic Summit. It is the only effort bringing hundreds of leaders from across California to develop a shared strategy for advancing the state's triple bottom line: growing the economy, improving environmental quality, and increasing opportunity for all.

The first California Economic Summit took place in Santa Clara in 2012, with Los Angeles following in 2013, Sacramento in 2014, Ontario in 2015 and Sacramento again in 2016.

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