Building Social and Cultural Capital



7 Why is this topic important?

This strategy aims to break down barriers historically underrepresented communities face in their pursuit of economic opportunity, career advancement, and wealth-building through implementing social and cultural capital enhancing programs and initiatives emphasizing financial literacy, networking, and exposure to different career paths.

Social and cultural capital- which includes social connections, exposure to different paths, access to training and education, familiarity with workplace norms, and more-play a major role in determining an individual's economic situation. Helping historically underrepresented groups increase their social and cultural capital can help break down barriers to economic mobility, and thus create a stronger and more inclusive regional economy.

What we have heard from the community ...

Monét Warren of the IE Black Worker Center acknowledged "a general knowledge gap in communities of color. My worker experience is my experience, and my knowledge with working with workers is limited to Black and Latinx [workers]. There seems to be a knowledge gap in hard and soft skills . I'm blown away by how many people don't know how to write a resume and cover letter..."

Target Facility Attendant Marco Perez explained how his upward trajectory was the result of knowing the right people: "After a few years there, you know, just networking, talking to management and all that, they recommended, 'Hey man, we know you have experience doing this and that. We think you'd be perfect for engineering facilities department. You can start up as a [apprentice] and work your way up to a mechanic.' He kind of helped me get my foot in the door, helped me cross train and, in a couple months, I ended up switching over within a couple months of me talking to them ."

Ryan, who grew up on a tribal reservation, recalled that "they put us through these classes, explaining like . . . how to fill out all of your application, and . . . like, how to talk to people now, because a lot of us here, like I said, we don't know how to speak to people. We don't know what I need to get to those classes. It helped me understand how to speak and how to socialize with a boss or coworker . And I went to a class that teaches how to have these . . . soft skills. I was able to take a class, and they hooked me up before I went and got this job. I learned how to speak to these people. I mean, it wasn't that big of a class . . . I paid attention. And it helped me immensely, like, you know, how to write a resume stuff like that."



Key data findings...

It just gets hard when you don't have resources as far as like finances or just like even knowing what to do building credit, stuff like that, just like figuring out life and not really having anyone to show you if your like, parents aren't showing you. -Greater San Bernardino

Many people need assistance in understanding what jobs are available to them, how to apply for those jobs, and how to make themselves stand out from other applicants. Career counseling can provide this type of support.



Strategies and tactics

This strategy boosts the region's competitive advantage by increasing workforce readiness, building stronger community networks, and expanding local engagement. By fostering entrepreneurship and small business development, long-term economic stability is promoted and investment into local communities encouraged strengthening their overall economic resilience and diversifying the region's economic base.

Building social and cultural capital can help reduce disparities by providing underrepresented groups with the tools and knowledge needed for economic success. It can also promote social mobility and wealth building for marginalized populations, since this strategy aims to enhance social inclusion and cohesion within the community.

Proposed Actions:

Foster Community Mentorship Programs: Develop mentorship programs and networks facilitating professional development and support systems

Offer Workshops & Seminars: Prepare individuals by offering guidance on how to secure jobs, navigate professional environments successfully, and financial literacy skills.

Enhance Career Counseling: Strengthen partnerships between educational institutions and their career counseling programs to include more comprehensive coaching and social equity training programs.

Expand Grants and Programing: Increase support of current organizations and initiatives already increasing social and cultural capital in local communities.



TOPIC (Economic	Mobility and	Vealth	-Building)	
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