

County joins campaign to reduce poverty

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The Contra Costa Board of Supervisors voted last week to join a regional campaign to reduce poverty in the Bay Area. The campaign was launched in 2010 by Rise Together, a partnership of more than 130 Bay Area government, nonprofit, corporate and philanthropic leaders committed to the cause.

“We are thrilled that the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors has taken this important step to move our county forward,” said John Gioia, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors; Steering Council Co-Chair, Rise Together. “It’s a deep concern that many of our residents are currently living in poverty and this vote states publicly that our board is ready to take tangible steps to change that reality.”

Rise Together leaders outlined a roadmap to cut poverty in June 2013 which highlighted the focus areas of their effort. All initiatives center on what Rise Together names as the three drivers of economic success: jobs, education and basic needs. The roadmap also identifies five critical populations that are particularly vulnerable to poverty: female-headed households, families with young children, men and boys of color, immigrants and seniors.

Solano County’s Board of Supervisors was the first county to sign on to the campaign.

“Many Solano County residents have been struggling to make ends meet since the Great Recession,” said Linda J. Seifert, Solano County Board of Supervisors. “We knew that to improve the lives of Solano County residents, we needed to work with partners throughout the Bay Area. Rise Together’s campaign provides us that opportunity.”

Discussions are underway in other counties throughout the Bay Area about joining Rise Together’s poverty-cutting campaign, including Marin County.

“California’s future is tied to investing in our diverse population today in order to have a workforce with the skills, health, and housing needed to succeed,” said Steve Kinsey, Marin County Board of Supervisors. “Rise Together is a movement that knows exactly where to make those investments to have them produce a return for everyone.”

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Three years ago, dozens of Bay Area organizations came together around the collective belief that one in five Bay Area residents living in poverty is unacceptable. These partners declared a shared goal to cut that number in half by 2020 – a goal that points to a broader mission of ending poverty in the Bay Area for good. Rise Together represents a revolutionary concept: that they truly can cross boundaries – of organizations, of sectors, of counties – to tackle a problem that is too big for any one person to solve alone. In partnership with individuals and organizations throughout the region, Rise Together is setting benchmarks for their work, tracking progress and working daily to achieve their goal.

For more information on Rise Together, visit www.risetgetherbayarea.org.

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