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Nearly \$20 Million Secured for North San Joaquin Valley Through California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative

One in every four state dollars awarded to projects within the North Valley THRIVE coalition

North San Joaquin Valley, CA – The California Jobs First Council has announced **\$80 million in statewide funding**, with an extraordinary **\$19.6 million awarded to the North San Joaquin Valley**. This represents **one out of every four dollars of the total fund**—a remarkable outcome for a region that makes up just 4% of California’s population and has historically received far fewer resources and investments compared to other parts of the state.

The funding supports projects in innovation and agriculture-based technology, directly advancing the **strategic priorities of the North Valley THRIVE coalition**. Local awardees include:

- **BEAM Circular (\$10,367,000)** – for development of the California Bioeconomy Innovation Campus and expansion of its accelerator program.
- **Merced County Community Foundation (\$9,233,851.18)** – to expand three Smart Farms, including UC Merced (research & development), Merced College (workforce development), and startup incubation.





This round of state funding builds on **\$3.4 million awarded by the THRIVE Steering Committee just two months ago**—including \$1.8M to BEAM Circular and \$1.6M to the Merced smart farms project. Those local “down payments” helped make the case for larger state investment, showing THRIVE’s ability to catalyze and leverage bigger funds for the region.

“The Central Valley has long been under-resourced compared to other parts of California. This award is a clear signal that our region’s innovation and agricultural leadership deserve investment,” said **Erick Serrato, Director of North Valley THRIVE.**

“North Valley THRIVE exists to bring together partners and champion our region for outsized investment. This outcome demonstrates the value of a coalition that works together, advocates with one voice, and puts skin in the game locally to unlock state resources.”

Serrato added that the success of BEAM Circular, UC Merced, Merced College, and Merced County Community Foundation—all members of the THRIVE coalition—reflects the region’s strength in collaboration.

About North Valley THRIVE

North Valley THRIVE is a dynamic regional coalition uniting community organizations, government agencies, educational institutions, and economic development partners across Merced, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin counties. Together, the coalition advances a shared vision for a resilient economy that fosters innovation, supports quality jobs, and expands opportunity for all who call California’s North San Joaquin Valley home.

To learn more about the California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative, visit [California Jobs First](https://CaliforniaJobsFirst.org).

