



California Partners  
PROJECT

**2025**

# Impact Report

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# In a state as vast and diverse as California, lasting change begins with listening.

We founded the California Partners Project to build bridges—between communities and policymakers, between lived experience and learned expertise. We work to ensure that what reaches the rooms of power reflects the realities of 39 million people—including over 8 million children and their families—and that the guidance we share back to our communities is grounded in research.

This year, that purpose has taken shape in meaningful ways. Born out of focus groups with California parents and experts, our free, bilingual Tech/Life Balance series now reaches families across the state.

At our Gender Equity Summit, experts and advocates for safer and more human-centered AI spoke directly with state leaders and industry representatives, ensuring policy conversations were rooted in everyday realities.

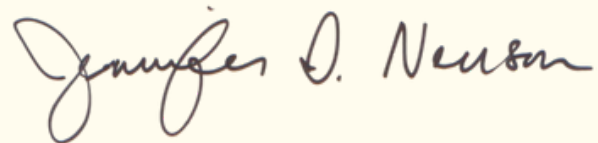
Dozens of board directors shared lessons and reflections that emerged when all-male public company boards appointed women directors for the first time.

The twelve exceptional high school students of our Youth Advisory Committee shared invaluable insights about how teens want to connect offline and in real life and, in doing so, inspired a whole new research initiative.

The voices and experiences of Californians reaffirm what we hold at our core: that pairing community insight with expert knowledge leads to solutions that work better, reach further, and last longer.

As we reflect on this year, we are grateful to those who trusted us with their stories, to the partners who shared their expertise, and to the leaders who heard these insights and took action. Together, we are building a future where decisions are not just made for Californians, but with Californians—and we invite you to continue this work with us.

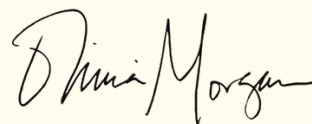
In partnership,



**Jennifer Siebel Newsom**

First Partner of California

Co-Founder, California Partners Project



**Olivia Morgan**

Co-Founder & Board Chair,

California Partners Project





# Our Progress

Since our founding in 2020, the California Partners Project has stayed true to our co-founders' vision of a strategic, nimble organization with partnership at the heart of everything we do.

Partnership is a strengths multiplier, and it's how we scale. We measure progress not just by what we create, but by the voices we lift up and the change we spark together with our partners.

Even as challenges mount and headwinds grow, our work moves forward thanks to a broad coalition of generous collaborators and the remarkable progress already underway across California.

On the following pages, we highlight some of the ways we've measured our progress this year—through the voices we've amplified, the insights we've gathered, and the communities and decision-makers we've engaged.

# Phone-Free Schools

After Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 3216, the [Phone-Free Schools Act](#), in 2024, parents across California had questions about what the new law requires, what say they would have in policymaking, and what to expect in the classroom. Listening closely to these concerns and drawing on expert guidance, the California Partners Project presented a workshop on “Smartphones in Schools” at the California State PTA Convention, the largest Parent/Teacher Association gathering in the state.

To support families unable to attend the convention, we also created a [clear, easy-to-use resource](#) that demystifies the law, highlights different, developmentally-appropriate approaches to school device policies, and offers conversation starters to help families engage in policymaking in their local communities. Shared at the convention and online, the resource quickly became one of our most-used tools of the year.



*I get the hesitation amongst some people about [phone-free school] policies because, for so long, schools and top-down leaders have been dictating what is right and what is good for us without including us in that discussion. Any school or district that wants to move forward with a policy like this has to make sure that they are including young people in this conversation.”*

— Khoa-Nathan Ngo  
Youth fellow, California Child & Youth Behavioral Health Initiative


# Movement & Outdoor Activity Family Guide

The Tech/Life Balance series helps families thrive in a digital world. In spring 2025, we released the [Movement & Outdoor Activity Guide](#) to inspire families to move more and scroll less.


The guide was shaped through focus groups and conversations with nearly 100 California caregivers and more than 75 experts, ensuring it reflects the real experiences of families across the state.

Designed for busy households, it provides simple, practical, family-tested strategies for active play at home, in the neighborhood, or on the go.

The guide has already been widely shared by partners, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, California Department of Education, California Association of School Counselors, National Parents Union, Aspen Institute/Project Play, and others, helping meet families where they are.

 *Motivation is built through action, and this guide helps us keep that momentum going with simple, clear strategies that work.”*

— Mother of four children, ages 5, 8, 10, 12

 *In this tech consumed world, I often feel alone in parenting and after reading this guide, I feel more understood and see that other parents struggle with the same issues. I’m excited to try out some of these ideas with my tween”*

— Mother of child, age 10



# Youth Advisory Committee

In 2024, the California Partners Project launched a nine-month Youth Advisory Committee cohort, which concluded in June 2025. The twelve-member committee, hailing from across the state, provided essential insights into the lived experiences, needs, and perspectives of young people in California and demonstrated why youth should be included in the decisions, policies, and systems that directly impact their lives.

Members engaged in dialogue with tech industry representatives; revealed challenges facing teens today such as the decline in youth-dedicated spaces and the pressure to always be “on”; and created campaigns on healthy balance and youth sports. They also conducted two peer research projects and presented their findings to First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom, the Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Mental Well-Being, and other state leaders.



*The most meaningful part of my experience was the opportunity to engage with some of the most interesting, talented, and well-rounded youth advocates from across California on the committee. Each member broadened and deepened my perspective on important topics like digital literacy, youth mental health, and sports culture. I’m incredibly grateful to have met such like-minded and driven individuals, and I’m committed to staying in touch with them.”*

— Youth Advisory Committee Member







# Women in Trades

On Equal Pay Day 2025, California First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom convened industry leaders in construction trades at the LA Trade-Technical College to explore how we can build a more inclusive and dynamic workforce across all trades, increase the number of women in the construction talent pipeline, and help close both the workforce gap and gender pay gap.

The discussion followed the launch of the Governor's [Master Plan for Career Education](#) and announcement of new Equal Representation in Construction Apprenticeship (ERiCA) Grants by the Department of Industrial Relations, initiatives aimed at creating more equitable access to living-wage work.

With hundreds of thousands of new construction jobs on the horizon, the discussion centered on how women are gaining hands-on training in carpentry, electrical work, and construction, preparing them for earn-as-you-learn apprenticeships and wealth-building careers.

Attendees included representatives from state and county labor and workforce agencies, labor unions, advocacy organizations, community colleges, and tradeswomen themselves, ensuring a broad set of perspectives informed the conversation.



*Retention within our programs for women is the foundation for the strategy. Mentorship is key. Industry knowledge and not gatekeeping info is so important."*

— Participant in the Roundtable on Women in Trades



# Gender Equity Summit: Tech & Well-Being

California First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom and the California Partners Project hosted the [2025 Gender Equity Summit](#), spotlighting the intersection of gender, technology, and well-being. At a moment when rapid technological change is reshaping childhood, straining families, and exposing women and girls to new forms of online harm, this annual Summit underscored the urgent need to design digital spaces that prioritize safety, equity, and humanity.

Against this backdrop, the Summit convened cross-sector leaders in technology, education, philanthropy, and

more to discuss the current digital environment and its effects on youth and women, while underscoring the need for innovative partnerships and solutions to promote online safety, equity, and well-being for all.

As First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom reminded participants, "I will never back down from fighting for a world that honors our children's dignity, their well-being, and their protection. Just as I will never back down from celebrating and uplifting women so that they can take their rightful seats at decision-making tables."



*Every time we convene, every new partnership we form, any idea that's exchanged, no extremist or troll can silence that. So let's get to work."*

— Debbie Chang,  
President & CEO, Blue Shield of California Foundation

# Nourishing Mind & Body Family Guide

In the fall of 2025, we expanded the Tech/Life Balance series with the release of the [Nourishing Mind & Body family guide](#) that explores how digital technology shapes kids' perceptions of food, nutrition, health, and body image.

From recipe hacks to influencer body transformations, young people today are surrounded by digital messages that can inspire creativity—but also fuel confusion and anxiety about what's "healthy" and how they "should" look.

Developed with insights from parents, caregivers, and experts, the guide equips families with practical strategies to help kids navigate these messages. It encourages parents and caregivers to question unrealistic ideals, foster body confidence, and strengthen kids' relationships with food and well-being. Most importantly, it centers the power of family connection, reminding us that one conversation and one meaningful meal at a time can guide kids toward balance in a hyperconnected world.



*Anything that they see online ends up in our house and their body at some point."*

— Father of two tweens



# Tech & Well-Being

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# Teens, Tech & Third Places Research

Digital technology has profoundly transformed childhood, with screens now an almost constant part of young people's daily lives. But simply logging off or opting out doesn't address the deeper issues of why young people are living their lives online.

When we asked teens what keeps them from connecting in person, one question stood out—and inspired a new line of research: “Where can we go?”

In fall of 2025, we launched a study on how our state's investments in real-world “third places” (places beyond home and school) can help young people reclaim offline connection, build resilience, and support healthy development in a digital world. Surveying over 1,000 teens, our research will document what's working, surface barriers, and highlight positive outliers that can inspire change across California and beyond. The report will be released in 2026.



*We tell young people to unplug from their phones and go outside. Okay, how do we make the outside world, the physical world, a place where people can hang out and socialize?”*

— Youth leader

# “Who Is Governing AI Companies?” Study

California is the global center of artificial intelligence, with 32 of the world’s 50 leading AI companies headquartered here. With so much of this new technology being developed in our state, California has an opportunity to lead—not just in developing these technologies, but in shaping them for long-term economic growth and social benefit. But who is governing AI companies?

That’s the question that we set out to answer in partnership with Crunchbase and illumyn Impact. We analyzed 140 high-growth AI startups headquartered in California to produce a [first-of-its-kind study on who governs AI companies](#).

What we discovered surprised us. While women make up more than half of the population, they hold only 15% of board seats in California’s private AI companies, and 43% of these boards have no women directors at all.

The findings highlight a significant opportunity to increase representation of women in a sector poised to reshape our economy, culture, and society. We know change is possible; California tripled the number of women on public company boards in just three years. And organizations like illumyn Impact are ready to introduce CEOs, investors, and board members to diverse and qualified independent directors.




*This is a call to action for all of us. Here's the truth to focus on: There is no shortage of talented executive women—plenty at the forefront of AI innovation—ready to bring their voices and operational expertise to the boardroom.”*

— Jocelyn Mangan  
CEO and founder, illumyn Impact

# Women on Boards Qualitative Research

What happens when formerly all-male boards bring on women directors? That question guided the qualitative research we continued in 2025. Using the implementation years of California's Women on Boards Law (SB 826) as our research window, we studied the historic shift in which California public company boards went from some of the least gender-diverse to some of the most gender-diverse in the nation.

By speaking with directors who experienced this transition firsthand, we explored the ripple effects of how policy can transform culture. Our findings make one thing clear: California's first-in-the-nation Women on Boards Law didn't just add seats for women—it changed how boards lead. Conclusions from this qualitative study will be released in a new report in 2026.

 *The exceptional women in these seats did not materialize overnight; it took California's law and persistent efforts from organizations, investors, and other corporate stakeholders to shake up old ways of thinking and encourage companies to broaden their recruiting networks, think more critically about candidate qualifications, and create recruiting processes that allow them to see all the talent available to them."*

— California First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom &  
Olivia Morgan, California Partners Project co-founders







# In Partnership

We are profoundly grateful for the support we have received since our organization's founding in 2020. Our collaborators and supporters have deepened our work, magnified our impact, and demonstrated the true meaning of partnership.

Thank you for supporting the non-profit California Partners Project!

**Artemis Rising Foundation**  
*Founding Supporter*

**Abbaszadeh Family Foundation**  
**Annenberg Foundation**  
**Aura**  
**Blue Shield of California Foundation**  
**California Chamber of Commerce**  
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**Kirsten Green**  
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**Kaitlyn Krieger**  
**LSP Family Foundation**  
**Omidyar Network**  
**Pinterest**  
**SSP Universe Trust**  
**Young Futures**  
**Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation**

## OUR TEAM



**California First Partner**  
**Jennifer Siebel Newsom**  
Co-Founder



**Olivia Morgan**  
Co-Founder & Board Chair



**Carolyn Gan**  
Executive Director



**Jennifer Heifferon**  
Director, Child Well-Being



**Leigha Weinberg**  
Director, Gender Equity



**Elizabeth Cheong**  
Associate Director,  
Gender Equity



**Orlena Perez Watson**  
Manager,  
Finance & Operations

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Olivia Morgan**  
Co-Founder & Board Chair



**Becky Beland McNaught**  
Sacramento Kings



**Devika Bhushan, MD**  
Pediatrician



**Lisa Dawe**  
ACES



**Lisa Ling**  
Journalist



**Ahmad Thomas**  
Silicon Valley Leadership Group



**Norah Weinstein**  
Baby2Baby



**Tom Willis**  
Olson Remcho



# Our Advisors

## CHILD WELL-BEING ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Elizabeth Estes**, Founder, Breaking Barriers California, Children and Education of Counsel, AALR

**Lisa Fortuna, MD, MPH**, Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Neurosciences, University of California, Riverside, School of Medicine

**Vicki Harrison, MSW**, Program Director, Stanford Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing

**Tim Kendall**, Co-Founder, Moment

**Larissa May**, Founder, #HalftheStory

**Saahil Mishra**, Founder, Unwiring

**S. Marshall Perry, Ph.D.**, Vice Provost of Graduate Programs & Academic Innovation, St. Mary's College of California

**Caroline Uchechi Adanma Okorie, MD, MPH**, Clinical Associate Professor, Stanford University School of Medicine

**Emi Sakamoto**, Founder, Our Minds United California

**Esta Soler**, Founder and President, Futures Without Violence

**Veronica Terriquez, Ph.D.**, Director, UCLA Chicano Research Studies Center

**Shafia Zaloom**, Author & Health Educator

## GENDER EQUITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Esther Aguilera**, former President & CEO, Latino Corporate Directors Association

**Annalisa Barrett**, Senior Advisor, KPMG Board Leadership Center

**Betsy Berkhemer-Credaire**, President, 50/50 Women on Boards

**Reveta Bowers**, former Board Chair, CommonSense Media

**Julie Castro Abrams**, CEO & Chair, How Women Lead

**Belen Gomez**, VP Strategic Initiatives & Communications, Equilar, Inc.

**Hannah-Beth Jackson**, retired California State Senator, author of SB 826

**Donna Lucas**, CEO & Founder, Lucas Public Affairs

**Heather McCulloch**, Founder, Women in the Economy, Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Aspen Institute Financial Security Program

**Amanda Packel**, former Managing Director, Stanford University's Rock Center for Corporate Governance

**Eve Rodsky**, *New York Times* bestselling author and founder, Fair Play Policy Institute

**Anne Sheehan**, former Director of Corporate Governance, CalSTRS

**Miriam Warren**, Chief Diversity Officer, Yelp

# Looking Ahead

The work ahead demands creativity, courage, and collaboration—but that’s exactly what California does best. Across our state, people are shaping a future where technology brings people together, gender equity is the norm, and every voice helps drive change.

At the California Partners Project, partnership is both our method and our mission. The progress reflected in these pages belongs to the parents and business leaders who spoke up, the young people who led with insight, the experts who shared their knowledge, and the policymakers who listened and acted. Together, we’re proving what’s possible through bold, collective leadership.

As we look to the year ahead, we’re inspired not only by how far we’ve come but by the possibilities before us. Conversations are growing into movements. Insights are becoming solutions. And partnerships are paving the way for a more equitable, innovative, and connected California for all.

We invite you to continue this journey with us—to listen, to lead, and to help build a California where every child, every family, and every community can thrive.

— California Partners Project







**In partnership with the people of California,  
the California Partners Project champions  
gender equity across the state and ensures  
our state's media and technology industries  
are a force for good in the lives of  
all children.**

