



Strategic Plan
FY 2022–2024



Introduction

We are pleased to present PUENTE’s Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022 – 2024. Throughout the history of our organization, we have demonstrated our ability to adapt and meet the educational needs of the communities that we serve. This plan builds a 35-year history of multi-generational, neighborhood-focused programs and services and positions PUENTE for even greater success in the years ahead.

The educational and social service landscape has continued to change and evolve. Increasingly, we find ourselves at the intersection of Education, Workforce Development, Civic Engagement, and Community-based Social Supports. Moreover, the pandemic has underscored what we already knew – that persistent inequities and gaps in the social fabric have a disproportionate impact on the populations that PUENTE serves. What is new is the shift in public awareness and accompanying political will to substantively transform the paradigm for how we support the most vulnerable in our society.

Our strategic planning process includes reflecting on this awareness, having the critical conversations and establishing goals for continued capacity-building for the organization. We engaged our staff, board of directors, and partners, and we brought together students, parents, and program participants to set priorities and maximize our impact.

The pages that follow articulate the results both as points of continuity and as new components for shaping PUENTE’s evolution. Our strategic priorities are grounded in a commitment to greater engagement, visibility, and data. We have also outlined how we intend to work collaboratively with external partners and allies to build a more robust safety network for our community. Lastly, we will invest in internal systems, processes, and infrastructure that will continue to enable our success now and into the future.

The Strategic Plan will guide PUENTE’s operations and investments in pursuit of our shared goals and desired impact. We invite you to join with us as we continue our work to improve the lives of children, youth, and families of Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles and beyond.

Jerome Greening
CEO



Who We Are

VISION

Education is a bridge that empowers lives
and builds thriving communities.

MISSION

People United to Enrich the Neighborhood Through Education.

VALUES

Commitment to Education
Collaborative Spirit
Culture of Excellence

The Community We Serve

Located in the heart of Boyle Heights and serving the larger East Los Angeles community, PUENTE serves a population that is younger, more socio-economically disadvantaged, more predominately Latino, and more immigrant-represented compared to Los Angeles city and county. We have summarized some of our community diversity below:

Race/Ethnicity

% of Total Population that identifies as Hispanic or Latino (of any race)

94.75%

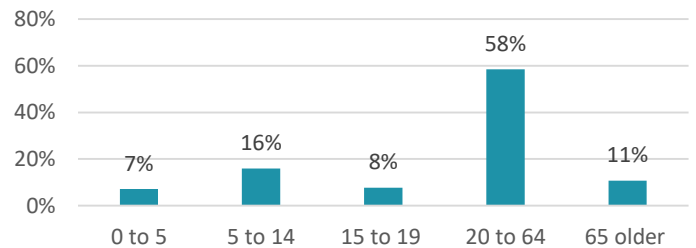
Languages

Population that "Speak English less than "very well"" (Native and Foreign Born)

38.20%

Age Distribution

Age Distribution for Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles (All Zip Codes)



Education Attainment

Educational Attainment of "Less than high school graduate" (population 25 years and over) (Native and Foreign Born)

48.50%

What We Do

Early Childhood and Elementary Education

PUENTE has a licensed California-state preschool program serving approximately 42 children ages 3-5. In addition, the PUENTE Charter Elementary school currently serves 250 students in grades TK-4 and will expand to over 300 students in TK-5 by the 2022-23 school year. All elementary students are eligible to participate in PUENTE's after-school program, which serves approximately 80 students each day.

College and Career Program

PUENTE operates a College and Career program focused on helping neighborhood youth graduate from high school college-ready, succeed in post-secondary institutions, and secure STEM-related employment. Working with two local public high schools, PUENTE serves over 500 high school (ages 14-18) and college-age youth (ages 18-24), assisting them in both college access (college admissions) and college success (persisting and thriving while in college) programming.

Adult Education

PUENTE offers adult education and career technical education classes year-round in partnership with both the Los Angeles Unified School District and Los Angeles City College. Over 1,000 adults participate monthly in English as a Second Language (ESL), High School Diploma and HiSET preparation, and career readiness training and skills enhancement.

Our Accomplishments

2019-20 Achievements

- 2,334 students and community members served
- 67% grade level proficiency for Elementary School students, surpassing the outcomes from 10 other public schools in our service area
- 0.4 average grade-level-equivalent reading gain for 161 Summer Camp students
- 96% high school graduation rate in College and Career program
- 15% increase in adult student ESL completions, despite the challenges of COVID-19
- 160 laptops distributed for high-quality distance learning
- 75,000+ free student meals served

Strategic Priorities – Introduction

This plan provides a roadmap for the future premised on a continued commitment to multi-generational, neighborhood-focused programs and services in the Boyle Heights and greater East Los Angeles communities. Taken together, the five strategic priorities expand and deepen our work as one of Los Angeles’ most trusted and longest-running providers of educational services.

1 Family Engagement	Strengthen family engagement in PUENTE’s high quality educational programs and services. Mobilize the energy and involvement of families to demonstrate our commitment to a responsive relationship with our community.
2 Community Outreach	Increase visibility and awareness of PUENTE through comprehensive outreach and communication strategies that elevate and amplify PUENTE’s unique value and distinguishing features to the communities we serve.
3 Partnerships and Networking	Identify, cultivate, and strengthen PUENTE’s partnerships with organizations and agencies providing complementary services to children, youth, and families. Expand participation in regional networks relevant to the communities we serve.
4 Continuous Improvement	Strengthen PUENTE’s structures and supports for documenting and measuring impact. Deepen staff capacity to collect, analyze, and use data for continuous improvement.
5 Stewardship and Sustainability	Invest in Board infrastructure and engagement, while expanding and diversifying revenue to ensure PUENTE’s growth and sustainability for future generations.

Strategic Priorities – Detail

The following pages elaborate on each of the five Strategic Priorities with goals and activities. It is intended to guide planning and implementation over the next three years. An annual workplan describing operational and tactical considerations – along with persons responsible and timing – is a recommended next step to guide implementation of plan strategy.

Priority 1 – Strengthen family engagement and participation in PUENTE’s high quality educational programs and services. Mobilize the energy and involvement of families to demonstrate our commitment to a responsive relationship with our community.

PUENTE has worked closely with parents and families since inception. With the expansion of the preschool and elementary education, as well as greater focus on college readiness among high school youth, there are more opportunities to engage and involve families in educational decisions. We seek to deepen the family engagement components of PUENTE’s programming, particularly in the Preschool, Charter School and College & Career program, to demonstrate our willingness to be a responsive partner in close relationship with the communities we serve.

Goals and Activities

1.1 Emphasize involvement of parents and family members in ongoing education and training.

	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
a. Offer annual training sessions to parents and family members on the instructional foci and pedagogical philosophy for both the PreK and K-5 Charter School.	●	●	●
b. Provide regular parent education and training for PreK-5 parents and family members on key instructional strategies to support and reinforce in home settings.	●	●	●
c. Provide regular parallel training workshops and counseling for parents and family members of PreK-5 students as well as families of teens involved in College and Career programming.	●	●	●
d. Collect and use data from evaluations of parent/family training to improve future workshops and other educational opportunities.	●	●	●

1.2. Clarify and expand opportunities for participant and family voice and involvement.

	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
a. Work with advisory committees to identify key topics and content for an annual calendar of workshops and trainings responsive to family and school needs.	●	●	●
b. Expand opportunities for parent and family involvement in PreK-5 decisions tied to communication and outreach, facilities use and configuration, staff selection, after-school programming, etc.		●	
c. Develop and empower a cadre of parent volunteers to identify key foci for volunteerism in PreK-5 settings.	●		
d. Continue to support the Adult Education advisory group comprised of current students and program alumni as forum for helping inform and adapt adult programming to meet community needs.	●	●	●
e. Enlist parents and program participants in adapting hybrid (in person and online distance learning) instruction to meet the realities of post-COVID recovery.	●	●	

Strategic Priority 2 – Increase visibility and awareness of PUENTE through comprehensive outreach and communication strategies that elevate and amplify PUENTE’s unique value and distinguishing features to the communities we serve.

Although a well-established nonprofit organization in Boyle Heights for 35 years, PUENTE remains undiscovered to many in the surrounding community. PUENTE can extend its reach to more constituents and provide life-changing support by raising awareness of our services and programming. In particular, PUENTE is unique in providing multi-generational educational programming accompanied by tailored, personalized support services that connect each student participant to a pathway that meets their needs. We are committed to building a larger profile for the agency, emphasizing what sets us apart along with opportunities to become involved.

Goals and Activities

2.1. Identify and showcase PUENTE’s distinguishing features and unique value to the community.

	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
a. Identify key foci and distinguishing features of the Charter School, mindful of the options available from other community public schools (charter and non-charter).	●		
b. Strengthen College and Career programming to focus on key gaps in college and career readiness programming not provided by partner high schools or other providers.	●		
c. Assess how best to integrate a greater emphasis on Career Technical Education, including technology and career certification programs, within PUENTE’s Adult Education programs.	●	●	

2.2. Expand efforts to inform the larger community about PUENTE’s services and programs.

	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
a. Strengthen PUENTE’s community engagement, highlighting mission, programs, and services.	●		
b. Refine and revise PUENTE’s website and social media presence to emphasize the unique features and foci from 2.1 above.	●	●	
c. Redesign and revise PUENTE’s print materials based on 2.1 above for dissemination within surrounding communities in a variety of venues (e.g., schools, community centers, faith-based organizations, and retail)		●	
d. Provide existing participants with a set of “talking points” they can use with family and friends to encourage more in the community to avail themselves of PUENTE’s services	●		

and programming.			
e. Plan and hold a Community Fair, Town Hall, or other annual convening event that invites the community onto the campus to hear directly from participants, celebrate key accomplishments, and learn more about PUENTE.		●	●

Priority 3 – Identify, cultivate, and strengthen PUENTE’s partnerships with organization and agencies providing complementary services to children, youth, and families. Expand participation in regional networks relevant to the communities we serve.

Our assessment of community needs revealed interest in additional services and enriched programming. However, our investigation also revealed that many of these needs could be best met through collaborative partnerships with equity-based, mission-oriented organizations and agencies. Rather than developing new service lines, PUENTE will collaborate with existing and new partners to address wraparound service needs for our program participants, with enhanced internal coordination and support.

Goals and Activities

3.1. Conduct outreach aimed at cultivating and fostering strategic partnerships and joining selected networks

	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
a. Develop a set of criteria to assess existing and potential partners for suitability and alignment with PUENTE’s vision, mission, and values..	●		
b. Identify a staff person(s) who will be responsible for community outreach and partnering, serving as a key liaison for external relationships with equity-based organizations.	●		
c. Deepen relationships and networking with key institutional partners in the community who can and should inform PUENTE’s work.		●	●
d. Continue and expand strategic partnerships and alliances that connect PUENTE to the larger ecosystem of social service agencies and nonprofits in the region.		●	●

3.2. Emphasize collaboration and partnership with organizations who either work with existing clients and/or work in areas that complement PUENTE’s strengths

	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
a. Partner to increase referrals and access to new populations expanding PUENTE’s reach in the community.	●	●	
b. Collaborate with partners to provide additional services (e.g., academic enrichment, sports and recreation, career technical education, visual and performing arts) and wraparound supports (e.g., basic needs, legal services, and mental health access) that would benefit PUENTE’s clients.		●	●
c. Conduct a more thorough landscape analysis and asset mapping to identify new services and programming lines, whether unilaterally or in partnership with other organizations and allies.			●

Priority 4 – Strengthen PUENTE’s structures and supports for documenting and measuring impact. Deepen staff capacity to collect, analyze, and use data for continuous improvement.

As PUENTE moves into the next chapter, an increased focus on outcomes-oriented accountability and data-driven decision-making are paramount. Towards this end, we will develop and refine our systems for documenting what we do and measuring outcomes tied to programming and services. Simultaneously, we are committed to helping staff become more adept with data and fluent in the language of outcomes. The emphasis on continuous improvement will both strengthen programming and help PUENTE pursue additional resources and funding.

Goals and Activities

4.1. Refine metrics and methods to measure PUENTE’s impact.

	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
a. Review and finalize Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all of PUENTE’s program and service areas.	●		
b. Develop and administer an annual survey of program participants and family members that measures satisfaction in key domains, as well as changes in perceptions and behaviors.	●	●	●
c. Conduct annual focus groups to understand and contextualize participant and family experiences with PUENTE for continuous improvement.		●	●
d. Define and develop systems for longitudinal (i.e., post-program) tracking of outcomes for Adult Education participants.		●	●

4.2. Strengthen capacity to quantify the impact of programs and services for continuous improvement.

	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
a. Use data-driven outcome measures to guide continuous quality improvement in all program and service areas.	●	●	●
b. Provide staff with access to professional development and ongoing support tied to data collection, analysis, and use.		●	●
c. Use data-driven outcome measures to leverage and develop funding to expand and augment PUENTE’s reach and impact.		●	●

Priority 5 – Invest in Board infrastructure and engagement, while expanding and diversifying revenue to ensure PUENTE’s growth and sustainability for future generations.

Fiscal sustainability and stewardship of PUENTE’s resources is a key priority for leadership and Board oversight. While PUENTE’s operating revenue was at its highest in five years during 2019-20, there is the need to plan for uncertainty and disruption with prudent allocation of reserves and diverse sources of revenue. Our needs assessment process also revealed the primacy placed by external funders on agency connection and relevance to community needs, active participation and engagement of Board members, as well as clear evidence of fiscal oversight and resource management. PUENTE is committed to ensuring that staff and Board leadership are working collaboratively to meet these expectations and guide PUENTE forward in continuing its mission of providing multi-generational educational programs and support to our Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles communities.

Goals and Activities

5.1. Focus on fiscal sustainability of existing program lines and services

	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
a. Diversify and expand PUENTE’s revenue streams.	●	●	●
b. Leverage existing donor and funder relationships to expand development revenue to achieve operating revenue of \$1.6m over the next three years.	●	●	●
c. Hold at least two annual fundraising events aimed at increasing individual donor and institutional support for youth programs by 10% over the next three years.	●	●	●
d. Establish budgetary goals by program area and aligned to strategic priorities with oversight by the Board Finance Committee	●		

4.2. Expand and engage PUENTE’s governing board.

	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
a. Establish Governance/Nominating Committee with responsibility for recruiting, orienting, developing Board members.	●		
b. Grow the size of the Board, with special emphasis on engaging leaders with desired skills, competencies, and/or background committed to PUENTE’s mission.	●	●	
c. Modify Board by-laws to allow both parent and adult education student representation on the Board of Directors, with exemption from fundraising and development responsibilities.	●		

d. Involve all Board members in agency development and fundraising, whether direct giving or indirect ambassadorial support that opens doors to potential funders and professional networks.		●	●
e. Fully utilize Board committee membership as a way for two-way mentoring and professional learning to benefit PUENTE's capacity.	●		
f. Conduct a Board self-assessment every other year to review Board of Directors performance and adherence to best practices.	●		●

How We Know We're Making Progress

PUENTE's work is focused on inspiring and assisting vulnerable individuals and families to achieve stability and self-sufficiency. While each program area has specific Key Performance Indicators, below are several measures we'll use to track agency-wide progress (and the corresponding emphasis in the plan's Strategic Priorities).

	1 Family Engagement	2 Community Outreach	3 Partnerships & Networking	4 Continuous Improvement	5 Stewardship & Sustainability
Increased clients and students served	*	*	*		
Positive client and student outcomes	*	*	*	*	
Engaged and empowered families and participants	*	*	*		
Staff retention and satisfaction	*		*	*	*
Community awareness and recognition	*	*	*		*
Increased partnerships, networks, and allies	*	*	*	*	*
Increased and diverse sources of revenue		*	*	*	*

Acknowledgements

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Staff Executive and Program Leadership

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Board of Directors

Chun Wong, Chair

Tyler M.P. Sutherland, Vice Chair

Jocelyn Rosenwald, Treasurer

Oscar Cabrales, Secretary

Greg Gonzalez

Lara Lightbody

Albert Reyes

Community Partners

Los Angeles Unified School District, Adult Education Division

East Los Angeles Occupational Center

Los Angeles City College

USC Office of Civic Engagement

Ahmanson Foundation

Think Together