



Rural Leaders for  
Economic Mobility

Mobility Action Plan

# San Juan County, Utah

# RURAL LEADERS FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY

# SAN JUAN COUNTY

## UTAH

*Mobility Action Plan*



County	San Juan County, Utah
County Seat	Monticello, Utah
County Population	~14,500
Geographic Area	7,933 square miles — Utah's largest county
RLEM Subgrant	\$50,000
Primary Contact	Talia Christine Hansen, Economic Development Director
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Economic Mobility Manager	Tonjee Lewis   tonjee.lewis@sanjuancountyut.gov

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Systems that serve people — coordination, voice and opportunity in Utah's only Persistent Poverty County*

San Juan County, Utah is a place of extraordinary geography and profound complexity. Its 7,933 square miles — Utah's largest county by land area — span Navajo Nation Chapters, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe at White Mesa, rural family communities and some of the American Southwest's most iconic landscapes. It is also Utah's only federally designated Persistent Poverty County, with a poverty rate of approximately 18.4 percent, unemployment reaching 12 to 13 percent in some Tribal communities, and a 4.2 percent population decline since 2020 driven largely by youth who do not see a future for themselves here.

Through participation in the Rural Leaders for Economic Mobility initiative, San Juan County's leadership arrived at a critical insight: the primary barrier to economic mobility in this county is not a lack of programs. It is that the systems those programs operate within are fragmented, difficult to navigate and poorly coordinated across Tribal, County, State and multi-state jurisdictions. Residents cannot move forward not because opportunity is absent, but because the pathway to it is unclear.

This Mobility Action Plan responds to that finding directly. Three sequenced strategies, aligning systems first, building community voice infrastructure second, and connecting to economic opportunity third, reflect a deliberate theory of change: you cannot effectively deliver economic mobility through programs if the systems those programs depend on are broken.

Strategy	Focus	Lead Partners	Timeline	Est. Annual Cost
1. Cross-Sector Systems Alignment	Improve coordination across Tribal, County, State and regional systems; reduce jurisdictional fragmentation; advance Learning Exchange and Section 17 Consortium; map roles and authority	San Juan County ED, Navajo Nation Chapters, Utah Navajo Commission, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (White Mesa), State of Utah	2025–2027	\$50,000
2. Community Voice & Engagement Infrastructure	Implement structured Public Education & Engagement Series; expand Business Basecamp with Tribal Track; upgrade Chapter House technology; leverage Weber State Wildcat Funds	San Juan County ED, Navajo Nation Chapters, San Juan School District CTE, USU Blanding, Weber State Wildcat Funds	2025–2028	\$80,000
3. Economic Opportunity Alignment	Align business development, workforce, youth and housing into clearer local pathways; expand Tribal-led business initiatives; support youth entrepreneurship; deepen K–12 and employer alignment	San Juan County ED, SERDA, San Juan School District, USU Blanding, Weber State Wildcat Funds, Dept. of Workforce Services	2027–2028	\$300,000

## **Support Requested from Capstone Partners**

San Juan County is seeking support in four areas:

- Flexible funding for ongoing coordination, convenings and cross-jurisdictional implementation — core overhead that federal categorical grants rarely cover
- Infrastructure investment — broadband expansion, Chapter House technology upgrades (computers, internet, virtual meeting tools) and community hub development to ensure residents can fully participate in economic systems
- Technical assistance in grant development, nonprofit capacity building, data systems and intergovernmental coordination design
- Long-term partnerships with funders and investors willing to engage through place-based experiences — spending time in the communities to build genuine understanding of local conditions before committing resources

## SECTION 1

*Economic Mobility Vision — Where youth choose to stay, families have stable housing, and communities experience belonging*

### VISION STATEMENT

*San Juan County envisions locally driven economic mobility where strong cross-sector collaboration, culturally grounded leadership and shared communication systems create lasting opportunity. We see a future where youth choose to stay, families have access to stable housing and dignified work, and communities experience belonging, autonomy and generational prosperity across all sectors of the county.*

### What Success Looks Like in 5 Years

Success in San Juan County does not look the same as it might in a county with a single jurisdiction, a unified labor market and a straightforward path to funding. In this county, success means something more fundamental: residents can navigate the systems that govern their lives. They know who to call to move a project forward. Chapter Houses have the technology and connectivity to participate in grant applications, virtual meetings and economic development conversations on equal footing. Young people see a future here — not because there are no opportunities elsewhere, but because there are opportunities here.

Within five years, San Juan County expects:

- Tribal, County and State systems that are easier to navigate, with clearer roles, accountability and communication across jurisdictions
- A structured, repeatable public engagement model through which communities shape economic priorities rather than receive them
- Youth staying and building careers locally — connected to internships, mentorship and clear pathways from school to employment
- More businesses — particularly Tribal-led enterprises — accessing technical assistance, seed funding and markets through expanded Business Basecamp and Wildcat Funds
- Chapter Houses and community spaces equipped with the technology infrastructure needed to participate in modern economic systems

### Why This Plan Is Structured the Way It Is

The sequencing of these three strategies is deliberate. Systems alignment must come first because without clearer governance pathways, every program that follows is harder to implement and easier to abandon when leadership changes. Community voice infrastructure must come second because sustainable economic development in a county with this level of jurisdictional complexity requires ongoing trust and participation — not one-time consultation. Economic opportunity alignment comes third not because it is less important, but because its impact depends on the foundation the first two strategies build.

Assets & Strengths	Obstacles & Challenges
✓ Utah's only federally designated Persistent Poverty County — data access for funding	X Persistent poverty: 18.4% poverty rate; per capita income ~\$26,850
✓ Business Basecamp as an established countywide convening platform with growing Tribal participation	X Population decline: -4.2% since 2020; youth outmigration driven by limited local career visibility
✓ Learning Exchange providing structured intergovernmental collaboration space	X Governance complexity: overlapping Tribal, County, State and multi-state jurisdictions across Four Corners
✓ Weber State Wildcat Funds (\$15,000 committed) providing accessible business development capital	X Housing insecurity: 38% of households cost-burdened; limited formal rental markets in Tribal communities
✓ 8 Navajo Nation Chapter presidents engaged; Utah Navajo Commission active	X Unemployment 12–13% in rural and Tribal communities; 70–80% Native student graduation rates
✓ Bears Ears, Canyonlands, Natural Bridges — natural assets for place-based investment	X Broadband gaps: uneven fiber expansion; many Chapter Houses lack reliable internet
✓ Section 17 Consortium development underway — Chapters pursuing larger collaborative funding	X Geographic scale: 7,933 sq miles; 1.9 persons/sq mile; residents travel hours to access services
✓ Council Delegate Curtis Yanito and Chapter Presidents as active governance champions	X Limited local capacity for grant writing, project management and nonprofit administration

## SECTION 2

*Local Conditions — Data, community voice and the structural context that shaped this plan*

### Who Lives in San Juan County

San Juan County has a population of approximately 14,500 across 7,933 square miles — a population density of 1.9 persons per square mile. Nearly 50 percent of residents identify as Native American. The county encompasses seven Navajo Nation Chapters, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe at White Mesa, and rural communities in the broader Four Corners region. Many residents live, work and access services across state lines — Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado — complicating service delivery, funding eligibility and coordinated planning in ways that standard rural county frameworks were not designed to handle.

Indicator	San Juan County	Utah Average	Source
Population	~14,500	—	U.S. Census ACS
Poverty rate	~18.4%	~8.9%	U.S. Census ACS
Median household income	~\$54,890	~\$79,133	U.S. Census ACS
Per capita income	~\$26,850	~\$37,200	U.S. Census ACS
Unemployment (Tribal communities)	12–13% in some areas	~2.5–3%	Local estimates
Population change since 2020	-4.2%	+4.8%	U.S. Census ACS
Housing cost-burdened households	~38%	~27%	U.S. Census ACS
Native American population share	~50%	~1.5%	U.S. Census ACS
Geographic area	7,933 sq miles	—	Utah DWQ
Population density	1.9 persons/sq mile	~36/sq mile	U.S. Census ACS

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau ACS; local and state estimates.

### What Community Engagement Has Revealed

Through Tribal listening sessions, Business Basecamp, youth workforce panels, Learning Exchange sessions and stakeholder coordination meetings, residents and partners across San Juan County have consistently named the same barriers. They are worth quoting directly rather than summarizing: communities are ready to participate and lead, but need clearer processes, stronger coordination and sustained opportunities to engage.

- Youth consistently identify limited job opportunities, transportation barriers and a lack of visible pathways connecting education to careers. They emphasize internships, mentorship and stronger school-employer connections.
- Chapter leadership identifies challenges navigating funding processes, accessing reliable information and coordinating across jurisdictions. Resources exist but are difficult to access due to unclear processes.

- A consistent pattern emerges: communities are referenced in funding justifications and data narratives without proportional investment or meaningful inclusion in project design. Resources intended for local communities are sometimes administered outside the county or without alignment to community priorities.
- Chapter Houses and Tribal partners lack the technology infrastructure — computers, reliable internet, virtual meeting tools — to participate equally in modern economic systems.

## The Structural Context

San Juan County operates within a governance environment unlike almost any other county in the RLEM cohort. County government, the State of Utah, seven Navajo Nation Chapters (within the larger Navajo Nation, which itself spans Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado), the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and regional systems that extend across state lines all intersect in this county. Policies and funding structures are often developed independently. Each layer of governance has different requirements, timelines and decision-making processes.

*"Economic mobility in San Juan County cannot advance until governance systems become navigable, transparent and aligned. When residents and local leaders cannot clearly understand funding pathways, jurisdictional authority or policy processes, progress stalls and confidence erodes." — San Juan County Mobility Action Plan*

The county has also experienced a pattern familiar to many persistent-poverty communities: external planning and analysis without consistent long-term investment or meaningful local inclusion in decision-making. This plan is built around reversing that pattern — shifting from reactive participation to proactive, locally-driven leadership.

## SECTION 3

*Mobility Pathway — How three sequenced strategies build toward economic opportunity*

San Juan County's theory of change begins with a principle: systems must serve people. Progress is limited not just by how systems operate, but by whether people can meaningfully participate in them. The three strategies are designed as a sequence, not three parallel programs. You cannot effectively connect residents to economic opportunity through Strategy 3 if Strategy 1 has not clarified how the systems work and Strategy 2 has not built the community voice infrastructure to sustain participation.

The engagement pathway that underpins all three strategies begins with community input through Tribal listening sessions, countywide forums and sector-based engagement. Input is brought into coordination spaces — the Learning Exchange, roundtables and working meetings. From there, the county facilitates action mapping: partners identify next steps, align resources and determine how projects move forward. Implementation occurs through established programs: Business Basecamp, Wildcat Funds, workforce and business development efforts, and community space investments.

	<b>Inputs</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outputs (Short-Term)</b>	<b>Outcomes (1–3 Yrs)</b>	<b>Long-Term Impact</b>
Strategy 1 Systems Alignment	RLEM subgrant; San Juan County ED; Navajo Nation Utah Chapters; Utah Navajo Commission; Ute Mountain Ute Tribe; State of Utah; Learning Exchange	Learning Exchange convenings; Section 17 Consortium development; Yanito working group jurisdictional mapping; intergovernmental roundtables; roles/authority clarity work	Increased participation in convenings; stronger cross-jurisdictional relationships; jurisdictional mapping completed; Section 17 framework developed	Reduced delays in project advancement; clearer funding pathways; more projects successfully navigating approval; better alignment between funding decisions and local priorities	Governance systems navigable for residents and local leaders; Tribal, County and State partners coordinated; San Juan County recognized as regional model for multi-jurisdictional alignment
Strategy 2 Community Voice	Navajo Nation Chapters; San Juan School District CTE; USU Blanding; Weber State Wildcat Funds (\$15,000 committed); Chapter House	Public Education & Engagement Series (quarterly Tribal listening sessions, roundtables, countywide forums); Annual Business Basecamp with Tribal Track; Chapter House tech upgrades; digital capacity assessment	25% increase in multi-jurisdiction participation; Chapter digital assessment complete; 3+ coordinated upgrade pathways identified; Basecamp	100+ residents engaged annually; 40+ youth participants; 15+ individuals accessing formal TA or funding support; improved trust and communication	Structured, repeatable engagement model institutionalized; Chapter Houses fully participating in economic systems; youth integrated into civic and economic discussions as

	technology gaps identified		Tribal Track launched	across jurisdictions	panelists and leaders
Strategy 3 Economic Opportunity	San Juan School District; SERDA; USU Blanding; Weber State Wildcat Funds; Dept. of Workforce Services; Vocational Rehabilitation; Native-led nonprofits	Tribal-led business initiative support; Wildcat Funds expansion; youth entrepreneurship and pitch programs; SERDA weatherization/housing alignment; K-12 and employer pathway strengthening; internship development	Increased Tribal-led business initiatives; youth accessing internships and mentorship; businesses accessing TA and seed funding; Tribal businesses participating in county-wide events	More locally led projects advancing to implementation; workforce pathways aligned to local industry needs; youth retention improving	Higher household incomes; reduced poverty; more youth choosing to stay and build futures locally; locally controlled economic pathways sustaining beyond any single grant cycle

## SECTION 4

### *Strategic Actions & Implementation — Three strategies, one coordinated system*

San Juan County's Mobility Action Plan is already in motion. The RLEM subgrant supported Learning Exchange convenings, Tribal listening sessions, Business Basecamp expansion, training and technical assistance, and the capacity-building that enabled local leaders to attend national and regional convenings and bring that knowledge back. Participation increased across Tribal, County and State partners. The three strategies below formalize and scale that momentum.

#### STRATEGY 1 — POWER & AUTONOMY

### Cross-Sector Systems Alignment

San Juan County's multi-jurisdictional structure creates ongoing challenges in understanding roles, authority and responsibility. Projects that should move forward stall because no one is certain who has the authority to approve them. Funding that should reach communities is administered elsewhere because the pathways are unclear. Changes in leadership across jurisdictions compound inconsistencies in communication and continuity.

This strategy addresses those structural conditions directly. It is not simply a program, it is governance infrastructure. The Learning Exchange provides structured, regular space for Tribal, County and State partners to build shared understanding and move projects forward. The Section 17 Consortium, currently under development for Navajo Nation Regions 9 and 12, creates a coordinated Chapter-led economic structure that allows communities to pursue larger funding opportunities while retaining local control. Council Delegate Curtis Yanito's working group is mapping jurisdictional pathways — defining roles, identifying where authority sits and clarifying the legislative or administrative steps needed to advance projects across water, roads, workforce, business development, land, broadband and financing.

<b>Lead</b>	San Juan County Economic Development Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	Navajo Nation Chapters and Chapter leadership, Utah Navajo Commission, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (White Mesa), State of Utah agencies, federal agencies, County department heads, nonprofit organizations, regional stakeholders
<b>Anchor Efforts</b>	Learning Exchange convenings (structured intergovernmental collaboration); Section 17 Consortium (Chapter-led economic structure for Regions 9 and 12); Yanito working group jurisdictional mapping; intergovernmental roundtables
<b>Timeline</b>	2025: Pilot convenings; support initial coordination frameworks → 2026: Formalize structures and tools; expand participation → 2027: Mentorship and capacity-building for partner-led coordination; ongoing evaluation and refinement
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	Increased clarity around roles and decision-making; reduced delays in project advancement; increased projects navigating approval and funding; improved alignment between funding decisions and local priorities; stronger cross-jurisdictional communication

<b>Estimated Budget</b>	\$50,000 annually — coordination, facilitation, convenings, technical assistance
<b>RLEM Subgrant Use</b>	Learning Exchange sessions; Tribal listening sessions; stakeholder coordination meetings; capacity-building enabling local leaders to attend regional and national trainings
<b>Support Needed</b>	Technical assistance for governance structure design and intergovernmental coordination models; facilitation support for complex multi-jurisdictional convenings

**STRATEGY 2 — DIGNITY & BELONGING**  
**Community Voice & Engagement Infrastructure**

Communities across San Juan County are not without interest in economic development. What they have lacked is a consistent, accessible structure for participation. Geographic distance, limited connectivity, a history of being brought into conversations after decisions are already made, and the absence of reliable technology in community spaces have all made meaningful engagement difficult. This strategy builds the infrastructure that makes engagement possible and sustainable.



The Public Education and Engagement Series is the structural backbone: a quarterly model with four components — Tribal listening sessions (invitation-only), inter-local and agency roundtables, countywide education forums, and action mapping and follow-through. The Annual Business Basecamp Conference and Expo (March 11–13) has been expanded to include a dedicated Tribal Track, and youth are now integrated as panelists — not just audience members. Weber State University's Wildcat Funds (\$15,000 committed) are expanding access to business development resources in rural and Tribal communities. Chapter House technology upgrades are underway to ensure communities can reliably participate in grant portals, email, virtual meetings and intergovernmental systems.

<b>Lead</b>	San Juan County Economic Development Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	Navajo Nation Chapters and Utah Navajo Commission, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, San Juan School District CTE, USU Blanding, Weber State Wildcat Funds, Utah Division of Arts & Museums, Craft Lake City, Utah Office of Rural Development
<b>Anchor Programs</b>	Public Education & Engagement Series (quarterly); Annual Business Basecamp Conference & Expo with Tribal Track; Weber State Wildcat Funds; Chapter House technology and connectivity upgrades
<b>Timeline</b>	2025: Pilot Public Education & Engagement Series; pilot Tribal Track at Basecamp → 2026: Formalize engagement systems; expand Wildcat Funds; tech needs assessment; increase sector-based programming → 2027: Full quarterly model operational; scale participation countywide; expanded Tribal Basecamp participation

<b>Key Milestones</b>	25% increase in multi-jurisdiction participation by April 2026; digital capacity assessment complete with 3+ upgrade pathways identified (2026); 100+ residents engaged annually with 40+ youth and 15+ TA recipients by 2027
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	Participation across engagement activities; business participation in Wildcat Funds; technology improvements in Chapter Houses; community feedback and engagement quality; program outcomes across key sectors
<b>Estimated Budget</b>	\$80,000 annually — speakers, facilitators, travel, tech/infrastructure, Wildcat Funds programming, broadband support
<b>Support Needed</b>	Funding for speakers, facilitators and travel; Chapter House technology investment; broadband and internet access solutions; AI training and digital tools support; website or digital platform development for accessible Tribal community resources

**STRATEGY 3 — ECONOMIC SUCCESS**  
**Business Development, Workforce, Youth & Housing Opportunity Alignment**

With coordination systems strengthened and community voice infrastructure in place, Strategy 3 connects residents to practical economic opportunity. This is where the prior work pays off — because the businesses, internships and workforce pathways in this strategy depend on the governance clarity and community trust that Strategies 1 and 2 build.



The Aneth Chapter House's locally-led business conference offers the clearest illustration of what this strategy aims to replicate at scale. That event was designed and led at the Chapter level, with county providing training, technical assistance and access to resources while the Chapter maintained full leadership and control. This balance — respecting Tribal sovereignty and self-determination while expanding access to support — is the model. Youth entrepreneurship programs, SERDA weatherization and housing connections, structured summer internships that move from entry-level to skill-based training, and K–12 to employer pathway alignment all operate through this same principle.

<b>Lead</b>	San Juan County Economic Development Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	Navajo Nation Chapters, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, San Juan School District, USU Blanding, Weber State Wildcat Funds, SERDA, Dept. of Workforce Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, adult education programs, local employers, Section 17 Consortium
<b>Community Partners</b>	San Juan County Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, San Juan County Fair, San Juan Rodeo — community events as platforms for outreach and economic participation
<b>Timeline</b>	2025: Support Tribal-led business initiatives; expand training and TA access → 2026: Strengthen workforce pathways; increase Tribal business

<p><b>Key Activities</b></p>	<p>integration into county-wide economic activities → 2027–2028: Scale locally led initiatives; strengthen long-term workforce and business pathways</p> <p>Tribal-led business initiative support; Business Basecamp and Wildcat Funds expansion; youth business pitch and entrepreneurship programs; SERDA housing and weatherization alignment; structured summer internships; K–12 and employer pathway alignment; adult education and GED access; behavioral health integration into workforce readiness</p>
<p><b>Measurable Outcomes</b></p>	<p>Increased Tribal-led business and economic initiatives; expanded workforce program participation; businesses accessing TA and seed funding; youth and residents in workforce pathways; locally led projects advancing to implementation</p>
<p><b>Estimated Budget</b></p>	<p>\$300,000 annually — business development support, workforce program delivery, youth programming, TA, infrastructure investment</p>
<p><b>Support Needed</b></p>	<p>Business development and workforce program funding; mentorship and TA delivery; workforce training partnerships; Chapter House and community hub infrastructure investment including internet, computers and Zoom capabilities</p>

## SECTION 5

### *Governance & Partnerships — Shared leadership across Tribal, County and State systems*

San Juan County Economic Development Department leads the planning and implementation of this Mobility Action Plan, serving as the central convener responsible for coordinating partners, managing implementation activities and ensuring accountability. Overall governance is collaborative — Tribal, County and State leadership along with key stakeholders shape direction, priorities and course corrections. Decision-making draws from County leadership, partner input and community engagement through Tribal listening sessions, intergovernmental meetings and stakeholder convenings.

The county's role is explicitly that of facilitator and connector rather than central decision-maker. Leadership is shared. Implementation is collaborative and community-driven. Tribal sovereignty is respected at every stage.

### Key Leaders

Leader	Role	Organization
Talia Christine Hansen	Economic Development Director — leads MAP planning, coordination and implementation	San Juan County
Mack McDonald	County Administrator — ensures alignment with County operations and strategic priorities	San Juan County Administration
Commissioner Jamie Harvey	Elected leadership and policy direction; partnership and resource alignment	San Juan County Board of Commissioners
Commissioner Lori Maughan (Chair)	Board Chair; governance and policy oversight	San Juan County Board of Commissioners
Toniee Lewis	Economic Mobility Manager — day-to-day implementation support	San Juan County ED
Brett Peters	AmeriCorps VISTA (began May 2026) — implementation and outreach support	San Juan County ED
Council Delegate Curtis Yanito	Navajo Nation Council; Utah Navajo Commission; working group for jurisdictional mapping	Navajo Nation
Martha Saggboy	Mexican Water Chapter President; Utah Navajo Commission; Navajo Revitalization Fund Board	Mexican Water Chapter

## Key Partner Organizations

Organization	Role
Utah Navajo Commission (Navajo Nation Council)	Intergovernmental coordination; Navajo Nation-Utah relationship; Chair Billy Todachennie
Navajo Nation Chapter Presidents (8)	Tribal leadership across Aneth, Dennehotso, Mexican Water, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Red Mesa, Teec Nos Pos, Tóńíkan
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe — White Mesa	Tribal partner for engagement, economic opportunity and governance coordination
Weber State University — Wildcat MicroFund	Business development capital, TA and youth entrepreneurship programs (\$15,000 committed)
Utah State University Blanding	Higher education partner; workforce and educational pathways; Extension programming
San Juan School District CTE & Adult Education	K–12 and adult career pathways; youth workforce and Business Basecamp integration
RCAC (Rural Community Assistance Corporation)	Rural technical assistance and capacity building
Utah SBDC (Price)	Small business development support for county businesses
SERDA	Southeastern Regional Development Agency — weatherization and housing alignment
Utah Dept. of Workforce Services	Workforce training, job placement and workforce program funding
San Juan County Clean Energy Foundation	Renewable energy development and economic opportunity alignment

## SECTION 6

### *Sustainability & Funding Strategy — Building a system that works beyond any single grant cycle*

San Juan County's sustainability strategy is built on a blended funding approach that combines public, private and nonprofit resources. Rather than relying on any single funding source, the county is coordinating across federal, state, regional and local partners to sustain programming, strengthen local capacity and support long-term system alignment. A critical dimension of this strategy is also place-based investment: bringing funders, investors and partners physically into the communities — to Bears Ears, to Chapter Houses, to Basecamp — so they build genuine understanding of local conditions before making funding decisions.

Funding Source / Approach	Target Use	Status
RLEM / NACo Foundation (\$50,000)	Learning Exchange, Tribal listening sessions, Basecamp expansion, capacity-building	Deployed
Weber State Wildcat Funds (\$15,000 committed)	Business development capital and TA for rural and Tribal entrepreneurs	Active
HUD / EDA / USDA Rural Development	Housing, business development, infrastructure and economic capacity investment	Pursuing
State of Utah — Rural Development, GOEO	Statewide rural and Tribal economic development programs	Pursuing
Navajo Nation Trust Fund (UNTF)	Navajo-specific programming and community development	Active engagement
Federal categorical grants (workforce, education, housing)	Strategy 3 program delivery — workforce, adult education, youth programming	Ongoing applications
Philanthropic / private investors	Place-based long-term investment; community hub development; startup capital	In development — place-based engagement model
Sponsorship revenue — Basecamp & Expo	Sustain Basecamp Conference and related convenings through partner co-investment	Growing
San Juan County Chamber of Commerce (revitalization)	Long-term business programming and outreach partner beyond county ED capacity	In development

### Policy and Systems Sustainability

- Formalize and continue the Community Engagement and Co-Design Strategy as the county's standard model for recurring cross-sector collaboration
- Institutionalize the Learning Exchange and Public Education Series as sector-based economic development working sessions within county ED's core function
- Embed mentorship and leadership capacity-building within Economic Development Department's ongoing responsibilities — ensuring skills transfer locally

- Build long-term data-sharing capacity to reduce fragmentation and improve transparency across jurisdictions
- Strengthen regional advocacy so rural and Tribal priorities are better represented at state and federal levels

### Requests to External Partners

Priority Area	Specific Request
Flexible coordination funding	Ongoing support for convenings, coordination and cross-jurisdictional implementation — the overhead that categorical grants rarely cover but that makes everything else work
Infrastructure investment	Chapter House computers, internet access, virtual meeting tools; broadband expansion; community hub development across a 7,933 sq-mile county
Technical assistance	Grant development, nonprofit capacity building, data systems, program design and intergovernmental coordination expertise
Place-based investment	Partners willing to visit the communities — spend time with Tribal leadership, understand local conditions and build long-term relationships before committing resources
Workforce development	Funding for workforce training, youth internships, re-entry programs and adult education including GED and literacy tied to local industry needs
Business capital	Seed capital and grants for small businesses and Tribal-led enterprises; expansion of Wildcat Funds model to more communities

## MOVING THE WORK FORWARD

Strategic partnership opportunities to sustain long-term community capacity and coordination.

**1**



**CROSS-SECTOR SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT**  
2025–2027

Improve coordination across Tribal, County, State, and regional systems through the Learning Exchange, Section 17 Consortium, and targeted stakeholder alignment efforts.

**PARTNERS**  
Navajo Nation & Chapter Governments  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (White Mesa)  
State of Utah • Nonprofits • Industry

ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY  
**\$50,000**

**2**



**COMMUNITY VOICE & ENGAGEMENT**  
2025–2028

Create consistent, accessible opportunities for participation through Tribal listening sessions, the Public Education & Engagement Series, and youth involvement through Business Basecamp.

**PARTNERS**  
Navajo Nation • Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (White Mesa)  
San Juan School District • Local Governments  
Nonprofits • Invitation to Key Stakeholders & Experts

ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY  
**\$80,000**

**3**



**ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ALIGNMENT**  
2027–2028

Connect business development, workforce, youth, and housing efforts to establish clearer local pathways to training, funding, and employment.

**PARTNERS**  
San Juan School District • Navajo Nation  
Workforce Partners • State of Utah  
Nonprofits • Industry

ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY  
**\$300,000**

Long-term success depends on trust, strong relationships, and informed decision-making across jurisdictions, while respecting Tribal sovereignty and governance structures.

## SECTION 7

*For More Information — Contacts and how to partner with San Juan County*

San Juan County's Mobility Action Plan is supported by a broad network across Tribal leadership, county government, education, workforce, community and regional partners. For information about partnership opportunities, funding alignment or how to engage, contact the following organizations.

Organization / Contact	Role	Contact
Talia Christine Hansen Economic Development Director San Juan County, Utah	Primary MAP contact — funding, partnerships and implementation	thansen@sanjuancountyut.gov 435.485.8521 www.sanjuancountyut.gov/econdev
Toniee Lewis Economic Mobility Manager San Juan County, Utah	Day-to-day MAP coordination and outreach	toniee.lewis@sanjuancountyut.gov
Brett Peters AmeriCorps VISTA San Juan County, Utah	Implementation and community engagement support (began May 2026)	Contact via County ED office
Mack McDonald County Administrator	Administrative functions and County operations alignment	mmcdonald@sanjuancountyut.gov 435.587.3225
Council Delegate Curtis Yanito Navajo Nation Council	Navajo Nation coordination, jurisdictional alignment	curtis.yanito@navajo-nsn.gov
Catherine Holbrook Clark Weber State Wildcat MicroFund	Business development capital and TA	catherineclark@weber.edu 801.626.7343
Donna Blake USU Blanding	Higher education workforce and extension programs	435.678.8145 www.blanding.usu.edu
Judi Collins Utah Dept. of Workforce Services	Workforce funding, training and job placement	judiancollins@utah.gov 435.650.7900

### Full Partner Network

San Juan County's full partner directory — including Navajo Nation Chapter Presidents, community hub contacts, Tribal and regional organizations, and all partner contact information — is available in Section 7 of the full Mobility Action Plan submitted to NACo. For introductions to specific partners, contact Talia Christine Hansen.

*San Juan County invites residents, Tribal leaders, regional partners, state and federal agencies, nonprofits and industry stakeholders to join in building a future grounded in dignity, opportunity and belonging. We are advancing a future where opportunity is locally determined, where youth see a path to stay and lead, and where every community experiences dignity, belonging and generational stability. — Talia Hansen, Director of Economic Development, San Juan County*

## ABOUT RURAL LEADERS FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY (RLEM)

Rural Leaders for Economic Mobility (RLEM) was a 22-month peer-learning initiative that supported rural county leaders in advancing equitable economic mobility. The initiative brought together leaders from 10 rural counties to strengthen local systems that expand opportunity for residents, particularly in communities facing persistent workforce, education and infrastructure challenges. NACo continues to share RLEM experiences with rural counties across the United States.

### **Mobility Action Plans**

The central outcome of the RLEM initiative is the development of a Mobility Action Plan (MAP) in each participating county. These locally informed roadmaps help counties move from learning to action by identifying priority economic mobility challenges, target populations and practical short- and long-term implementation strategies.