

What Is COPA?

COPA is a regional non-profit organization spanning Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties. It is made up of 28 member institutions – churches, synagogues, public schools, labor organizations and non-profits that work together in civil society for the common good.

COPA's Mission

Our mission is to develop leadership skills in ordinary people so they can engage effectively in public life; to build power to negotiate with public and private sector leaders; to work for the common good by transforming the economic, social, political and cultural pressures on our families and neighborhoods.

15 Years of COPA Achievements

Timeline Highlights

2000 – The Central Coast Interfaith Sponsors announces it will invest \$250,000 in training lay leaders for public life.

2003 – 1500 lay leaders assemble to celebrate the founding of COPA on June 8 in Sherwood Hall, Salinas.

2005 – Measure V, a COPA-led initiative and organizing project to restore vital city services in Salinas, wins at the polls and creates a 10-year funding stream of \$10 million a year through a city sales tax.

- Re-opens public libraries
- Launches the Salinas Soccer Complex project

2009 – The shared prosperity campaign, an agenda created through thousands of conversations in COPA institutions, is ratified and presented to local elected officials for endorsement at the Mello Center, Watsonville. It is used at subsequent accountability sessions with elected officials throughout the region.

- Action organized to offer counseling and guidance to concerned homeowners to prevent foreclosure
- Building Peace goes public with a Peace Procession of 5000 residents and marchers through Alisal in Salinas to reclaim this historic neighborhood from gang members and their associates. Over the next year homicides in Salinas declined.

2010 – COPA works to release RDA funds for affordable housing development. Canterbury Cottages, when completed, provides 40 affordable units.

2011 – With a Get Out the Vote campaign, over 11,000 voters endorse COPA's Stand Up and Take Charge Agenda, and pledge to vote in the upcoming election.

2012 – COPA gets out the vote to pass Measure L, providing funds to upgrade aging PVUSD schools. The Live Oak Family Resource Center opened

2014 – COPA youth leaders in Acosta Plaza leverage \$40,000 in funding from the City of Salinas for their basketball court and family recreation area. Leaders organize to support measure G in Salinas, increasing

funding supporting families and safety. Proposition 47 (statewide) supported locally to reduce minor drug and theft convictions to misdemeanors creating opportunities to rebuild lives.

2015 – Monterey County Board of Supervisors allocates \$500,000 to a COPA-initiated Health Care Pilot Program that provides medications, lab tests and radiology services to the undocumented.

- COPA accepts “Advocate of the year” award from Santa Cruz United Way for organizing work supporting Healthy Kids Program.
- Works with Santa Cruz County to increase funding to support Prop 47

2016 – COPA, MidPen Housing and St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church break ground on St. Stephen’s Senior Housing Project with 40 units of housing for low-income seniors.

- Resource fair at Temple Beth El helps people exercise their legal right to manage their criminal records.
- Live Oak Youth Center, now known as Boys and Girls Club of Live Oak, was just a small house located on Capitola Rd. The community wanted a bigger building to have events that could accommodate child care, classes and community meetings. Parents also expressed concerns for after school care and the need for a Youth Center. Leaders organized residents to have meetings with the County supervisors and to show up at board hearings, and convinced the Supervisors to dedicate monies to the new Resource building. COPA Leaders continued to organize Live Oak School District and the County and Boys and Girls Club to join together to build the Youth Center now known as “Boys and Girls Club of Live Oak”

2017 – COPA secures the launch of “Esperanza Care” in Monterey County, expanding on the prescription and lab services in the Pilot Program, and provides full-scope primary care and speciality services for 3500 low-income undocumented residents.

2018 – COPA convenes 100 religious and business leaders in conversation on the importance of immigration to our communities and for the economy of the central coast.

Relational Power in Action

Now, more than ever, COPA believes it is important to rebuild the fabric of local democracy. It is time to redouble the efforts we began almost 2 decades ago by

- Bringing together a diverse collective that truly represents the people of the Central Coast,
- Teaching the art of conversation so that we can share our concerns, interests, hopes and dreams with one another, and
- Developing our capacity to act effectively on our overlapping interests, ensuring that we have a powerful voice in shaping the future of this region.

COPA will achieve this through a concentrated effort to raise local money from investors who believe in the importance of a healthy democracy. We will create new training opportunities for community members who want to learn how to act effectively in public life, and we will identify the institutions that want to more deeply fulfill their missions in the world, inviting them to join the existing COPA institutions in their commitment to this work.