



Amigos de Guadalupe
Center for Justice & Empowerment

Strategic Plan

FY2024 – FY2027



January 2024

Executive Summary

On behalf of the Board of Directors, our amazing staff, and our public and private partners, it is my pleasure to present our 2024-2027 Strategic Plan to all our constituents and the greater community. The Strategic Plan is filled with big bold goals and far reaching in its outlook because that is what our community demands. This new Strategic Plan is the result of hundreds of hours of hard work on the part of our Board, staff members, partners, and community members who all have given of their time and talents to accomplish this document. As Founding Executive Director, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who believe as I do that we can end poverty in East San Jose and who have devoted their efforts to that end. Through our inclusive practices of Radical Hospitality and our 2-Gen (two-generation) approach to service, and alongside of our Si Se Puede partners, Amigos believes that we can empower our community to create its own just and equitable society. What follows in the paragraphs immediately below is the basis on which the Strategic Plan is built, the approach Amigos de Guadalupe Center for Justice and Empowerment takes to serve our community, and the values and principles on which we base our transformative work.

Our Journey: Amigos de Guadalupe Center for Justice and Empowerment, founded in 2012, envisions a just and equitable society for East San José and Mayfair communities. With a focus on housing, immigration services, education, mental health, and advocacy, Amigos aims to empower individuals to achieve their dreams. Rooted in community values, the organization seeks transformational change through stable homes, financial security, and educational opportunities.

Our Approach: Mayfair, historically rich yet economically disadvantaged, is the heart of Amigos' work. Radical hospitality defines their community-centered approach, breaking barriers and building trust. The organization collaborates with the community, fostering shared leadership, determination, knowledge, and innovation.

Strategic Principles:

1. Center Community:

- Develop a comprehensive impact strategy to empower the community.
- Increase civic engagement for Spanish-speaking immigrants.
- Incorporate community feedback for program improvement.

2. Invest in People:

- Prioritize staff excellence through servant leadership principles.
- Create a comprehensive onboarding experience grounded in radical hospitality.
- Streamline communication and coordination.

3. Deepen Impact in Mayfair:

- Preserve Mayfair's cultural legacy through the César Chávez Family Home.
- Track longitudinal outcomes to showcase the impact of community empowerment.
- Address housing challenges and advocate for affordable housing.

Si Se Puede Mayfair:

- Engage 80% of families in Mayfair through house meetings and 1:1s
- Develop a long-term plan to address affordable housing and rising living costs.
- Ensure collective impact on breaking down systems of oppression and poverty.

Conclusion: Amigos de Guadalupe's strategic plan centers on community, invests in people, and aims for broader impact in Mayfair. With a commitment to economic, social, and racial justice, the organization envisions a vibrant and connected community where all individuals can thrive. As we embark on this journey, Amigos remains grateful for community support and eagerly looks forward to a new season of hope and stability in East San José.

¡Adelante Mayfair, Si Se Puede!

Maritza Maldonado



Our Journey

A migos de Guadalupe Center for Justice and Empowerment believes everyone deserves to live in a just and equitable society where every person is empowered to achieve their dreams. Since our founding in 2012, we have centered the East San José and Mayfair communities by providing impactful support in housing and homelessness prevention, immigration legal services, educational support, mental health services, and community organizing and advocacy. Amigos has built a strong reputation in the local community by listening closely to the brilliance and resilience of the people who live, work, and raise families in East San José.

At Amigos, we believe that education is our right and the great equalizer, empowering our children and families to access lifelong opportunities. Inspired by the power of a vibrant and determined community, our vision is to bring about transformational change in East San José. With stable homes, financial security, and access to educational opportunities, people will be more self-sufficient and connected to each other, enabling them to work for the systemic change they want to see, and thrive for generations to come.

Building upon the inherent strength of our people, Amigos de Guadalupe ensures that the basic needs of our community and families are met, delivering high-quality programs, and assisting our community to further build their own power to mobilize and organize for justice. Our partnership with the community is rooted in the values and teachings of César Chávez described below, and provides direction for our work and guides our efforts to achieve economic, social, and racial justice.

- **Vibrant Community:** We celebrate the joyous and respectful expression of cultural diversity through the reinforcement of the values of equity and responsibility to and for one another. We believe that we cannot seek achievement for our own selves without also remembering the need for progress and prosperity across the entire community.
- **Quality:** We believe that the most vulnerable among us deserve the highest quality programs and services, with no exceptions.
- **Shared Leadership:** From one's needs and day-to-day reality comes a joint realization that challenges and issues are shared and can be collectively solved.
- **Determination:** We firmly believe that with constant faith, steadfast commitment, patience, and optimism, we can prevail against all odds.
- **Knowledge:** Knowledge and education form the core of our work. We promote the pursuit of self-directed learning and the development of critical thinking and constructive problem-solving skills for every member of our community.
- **Innovation:** Our programs develop creative ways to build strategies and tactics to resolve problems and situations that often seem insurmountable to others.



Building upon the inherent strength of our people, Amigos de Guadalupe ensures that the basic needs of our community and families are met, delivering high-quality programs, and assisting our community to further build their own power to mobilize and organize for justice.



Amigos de Guadalupe is built on strong foundations, and strengthened every day by the people we serve and empower to fight against systems of injustice. We open our arms and hearts with radical hospitality to all Mayfair residents and community partners. We have a home in Mayfair, and Mayfair is our home. The neighborhood is reflective of our shared values, guiding our community-wide aspirations and keeping all of us connected and unified.

Our Approach

The Mayfair neighborhood is a culturally and historically rich community, made up of vibrant and resilient families. It is one of East San José's most notable districts, known for being the home of grassroots activists like civil rights leader César Chávez. Despite this rich and significant history, Mayfair is the most economically disadvantaged part of Santa Clara County, with correspondingly high numbers of unhoused families, disproportionately high COVID rates, and a low rate of school success.

The Mayfair community has the skills, knowledge, and strength to overcome continuous marginalization and the inequities caused by systemic oppression and racism. Amigos is a partner in helping our community fight for access to stable housing, better schools, meaningful and rewarding jobs, and a safe and thriving community. We welcome all residents of Mayfair, and prioritize serving and supporting Spanish-speaking immigrant families. At the core of our work is radical hospitality. We do not turn people away; we welcome our community members with open arms and open hearts.

The concept of radical hospitality is lived every day at Amigos. We put extraordinary effort and emphasis on making people feel welcome. Our staff, most of whom are bicultural, bilingual and have their own personal experiences living with poverty and/or growing up in East San Jose , intentionally work to be proactively welcoming and nurturing. Through radical hospitality we look to empower our community members to overcome their current challenges, inviting our guests to belong to a larger community and build deep connections with their neighbors. At Amigos, we break down barriers that prevent people from feeling fully embraced by and engaged with their community.

Building trust is a critical component of radical hospitality. For ten years we have partnered with the immigrant community in Mayfair and East San José, which has resulted in a caring and trusting relationship between Amigos and our community. Years of intentional trust-building has been possible by empowering our community, and placing the strengths of our people at the center of our work. Amigos seeks to stop the cycle of destabilization and constant crisis caused by unfair economic and social practices by empowering every member of our community with the tools to mobilize, advocate, and organize for a more just tomorrow. Our people have the solutions to the issues they face, and they will lead the way in our fight for economic, social, and racial justice.

To further advance the spirit of empowerment and a collective approach to creating a thriving Mayfair and East San José, Amigos is also a founding member of the Sí Se Puede Collective (SSPC). The SSPC is composed of five established and respected organizations working in the Mayfair community and envisions a rooted and thriving community where resilient families have confidence in their gifts, choices, and dreams. We will materialize our future together, by the community, for the community. We are committed to working together in solidarity to reach community sovereignty, to challenge existing systems, and to shift power back to the hands of community members.

Image Credit: Jovenes and Vecinos Activos, SOMOS Mayfair





Our Strategic Principles

Looking ahead, three principles will drive our strategy:

- **Center Community:** We center community in all of our work, and community drives all our decisions.
- **Invest in People:** Elevate our vision of empowerment through program and staff excellence.
- **Deepen Impact in Mayfair:** *Si Se Puede Mayfair* is a community-wide strategy to move toward economic, social, and racial justice.

We are moving forward with strength, clarity, and focus. Our resolve and commitment to our community is as strong as ever. We will continue to be a foundation for Mayfair and East San José, offering comprehensive services, compassion, resources, and a path toward lasting change. In the coming years, three strategic principles will guide our work, centering on community self-determination, empowering teams to implement impactful programs, and elevating a collective community vision that ensures Mayfair will prosper now and long into the future.

Strategic Principle #1: We center community in all of our work, and community drives all our decisions.

1. Comprehensive programming drives economic, social, and racial justice

Amigos de Guadalupe is a community-based organization, created by the community, for the community. Since its creation, Amigos has proven its ability to envision a radical future for Mayfair, and translate that radical vision into successful programs rooted in authentic partnership and responsive services. To sustain our growth and ensure our programmatic foundations are strong far into the future, we will develop a comprehensive impact strategy that clearly defines the Amigos approach to empowering our community, based on authentic relationships with each community member through 1:1's. We have learned so much from our community. To ensure those lessons continue to inform and inspire our work, we will refine our empowerment model, documenting how our wrap-around services lead to community empowerment to activate our vision and mission and ensure powerful outcomes for our community.

The needs of the community have evolved, and so has the work of Amigos de Guadalupe. In a constantly changing landscape, we will remain effective by manifesting a willingness to listen to and collaborate with our neighbors, as well as a willingness to examine our work and learn from it in partnership with the community. To this end, we are committed to increasing the civic engagement for Spanish-speaking immigrants to ensure they are shaping and defining their own futures while also being more data-informed by combining qualitative data that centers the experience and knowledge of our community members with compelling quantitative data. Amigos is steadfast in our commitment to partner with Mayfair residents, acknowledging and elevating their needs, challenges, desires, and hopes on the road to economic, social, and racial justice. The data we collect and share will clearly reflect and portray the experiences of our community. The collective voice of the community will lead to important improvements in our practice, the ability to fine-tune programs, and will inform a bold vision for the future that is shared by all.

“Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot un-educate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore. We have seen the future, and the future is ours.”

Cesar Chavez

Expected Outcomes:

- Create a well-defined program model that aligns and clarifies our approach to partnering with and empowering our community.
- Increase civic engagement and overall impact for Spanish-speaking immigrants in East San José.
- Improve programming by continuing to incorporate feedback from the community with robust data analysis.

2. Our data practices are in service of an authentic community partnership

Amigos de Guadalupe is driven by a fundamental truth: we are not separate from the community, we are the community. We embrace this truth by ensuring that we collect data equitably, with respect, and in shared leadership with the community. To maintain authentic partnerships and truly center our residents and their experiences, we will intentionally create opportunities to elevate community voice and community accountability. Specifically, Mayfair and other East San José communities are battling against the opposing forces of displacement through gentrification and community empowerment. This fight creates an ever-changing landscape that impacts the way community members live, work, and raise their families. The collective voice and knowledge of the community on what is needed to win this fight are powerful tools in enhancing our data and amplifying what is required for lasting change.

Data is a dynamic and effective tool of change when it is borne out of authentic dialogue. Amigos de Guadalupe is committed to opening spaces for more true, in-person conversation, discourse, and learning. Our fundamental work is based on relationship-building and on-going dialogue with community, where courageous conversations and community design of our work is co-created. To this end, we will create opportunities for these community conversations through 1:1's, house meetings, Amigos' organizing groups, and annual outreach efforts such as staff-wide Knock n Talks and Community Walks. Amigos will also host community updates, or report-backs, that include both staff and community members to share progress, successes, and challenges, give feedback on our programs, and give input into our future. Alongside this, we will activate our current Amigos Community Committee in new ways to build shared leadership and community co-designing of initiatives, aimed at addressing racial and systemic inequities that continue to oppress East San José communities like Mayfair.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increase in-person outreach efforts to support true dialogue and shared leadership within the community.
- Develop meaningful opportunities for capturing the voices and experiences of our community to improve programs and service delivery and inform organizational direction.
- Establish annual report-backs to the community.
- Revamp the Amigos Community Committee to ensure meaningful, grassroots collaboration with community members.



Strategic Principle #2: Elevate our vision of empowerment through program and staff excellence.

1. Implement high expectations to ensure program quality

At Amigos de Guadalupe we recognize the intrinsic value and strength of our community. That is why we make a deliberate effort to hire from the community and/or people with shared lived experience. At Amigos, lived experience, deep empathy, and unwavering resolve to change historical injustices are considered just as important as technical skills. The principles of servant leadership guide our work with the community, how we hire and onboard talent, and train and support team members. We emphasize key attributes such as listening, awareness, commitment to the growth of people, and building community when hiring and developing talent, designing programs, and building organizational capacity.

With a growing team and growing community challenges, we must ensure our staff have the tools and knowledge to implement strong programs that are informed and directly shaped by the voices and experiences of the community. We will nurture a supportive Amigos staff community founded in trust, empowerment, and high expectations. Our goal is to sustain a culture and environment where staff work collaboratively, are responsive to community needs, and remain focused on our vision to bring about transformational change in East San José. In support of this goal, Amigos will ensure opportunities for staff to provide feedback and request support. We will elevate and acknowledge contributions, and support staff through mentorship and career advancement pathways.

Clear, effective, streamlined communication will be foundational to how Amigos engages with our community, connects with staff, and sustains an inclusive and vibrant culture. We will model access, growth, and inclusivity by creating an environment where leadership is responsive, open, and promotes trust and transparency. Directors and managers will be expected to develop professional development plans and pathways for staff while leveraging their own expertise to advance their respective teams. We will standardize most of the aspects of the employee experience, from hiring and onboarding to mentorship and professional feedback by incorporating guest/community member feedback as well as established best practices. Additionally, we will continue to create opportunities such as our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Retreat, where we focus on deep listening, individual healing, and collective transformational change.

Expected Outcomes:

- Create a comprehensive onboarding experience for staff that is grounded in the core principles of servant leadership and Radical Hospitality.
- Utilize guest/community member feedback to continually improve staff training, knowledge, and expertise that translates into deeper impact.
- Invest in our community and staff by creating opportunities for professional development.
- Ensure staff training is robust, and mentorship and supervision expectations are clear.
- Streamline communication and coordination across the organization.

2. Invest in strong operations that result in quality services

As a multi-service organization operating out of different locations, we must create programs that encourage independent and confident program leaders while promoting program fidelity with consistent quality and outcomes. We will continue to shape our staff as subject-matter experts through intensive and ongoing training. Annual Action Plans, incorporating program and staff input will be intentional about professional development needs and will determine training needs at all altitudes of the organization. To the extent possible, budgets will reflect our commitment to investing in team members and in achieving program excellence, prioritizing resources for professional development and disciplined growth in services to meet the evolving needs of our community. An internal collaborative effort where we incorporate data and lean on each other's expertise to advance our combined efforts will create a new framework for an impact and learning lens to evaluate teams, services, and outcomes.

Amigos believes in the inherent wisdom that exists within our organization and our community, and we plan to harness this collective knowledge to design and implement robust protocols and procedures in human resources, financial oversight, and talent development to support the delivery of high quality services. We are committed to holding ourselves accountable to strong and ambitious outcomes that go beyond output data or funder expectations, and align to our intended impact and community vision.

We understand the importance of growing our internal community practice and capacity, and are excited to see these investments translate into stronger programs and an organizational culture committed to continuous quality improvement and reflection.

Expected Outcomes:

- Leverage quarterly reviews to inform training for programs, sites, and across the organization.
- Incorporate data and staff expertise to advance learning and evaluate teams, services, and outcomes.
- Implement robust protocols and procedures in human resources, financial oversight, and talent development.
- Utilize data to support a culture of continuous quality improvement and reflection.



In the coming years, three strategic principles will guide our work, centering on community self-determination, empowering teams to implement impactful programs, and elevating a collective community vision that ensures Mayfair will prosper now and long into the future.

”





Strategic Principle #3: *Si Se Puede Mayfair* is a community-wide strategy to move toward economic, social, and racial justice.

1. Achieve a more just society by achieving stability of Mayfair and preserving our community's history, cultural legacy, and sense of belonging

Amigos de Guadalupe was founded with knowledge that Mayfair will be a thriving and sustainable community once conditions of equity and access replace the marginalization and institutional and historical oppression that have existed there for decades. Amigos is already deep in the struggle to create a distinct, vibrant Mayfair community that is flourishing and is enjoyed for generations to come. Creating *Si Se Puede Mayfair* will require a clear vision, new strategies, and collective efforts from numerous partners to leverage political and financial systems toward the power and necessity of community self-determination.

A cornerstone to developing *Si Se Puede Mayfair* is preserving the cultural history of our neighborhood. Amigos de Guadalupe has acquired the César Chávez Family Home and will now work with the community to help create a community-based vision for how to both honor and activate this sacred space. Some possibilities include a community-centered Interpretive Learning Center and a Center for Community Action. Both options will allow community members to have space to gather, build relationships and build community, so that they can strategize on how best to advocate for community needs. Teachings of non-violent resistance and community organizing will be central to the educational component of the Center.

The César Chávez Family Home is one of the ways we plan to enhance and preserve the shared pride we feel of being part of this community. As we lean into efforts to lift up community voices, we plan to utilize the empowerment and social capital data we collect from program participants to showcase successes and further highlight Mayfair pride and strength. Amigos will also activate data that shows how our services provide real, long-term solutions that impact at an individual and collective level. Specifically, we will create a long-term plan to track longitudinal outcomes to show how programs from the community and for the community build social capital. We believe in the tangible impact that radical hospitality and empowerment can have on mindsets, community behaviors, and political capacity, as determined by our ability to navigate systems, access resources, know our rights, and organize and mobilize for justice.

Breaking the norms of institutional racism that hinder wealth building and educational opportunities for our community is another tangible way in which we will support the empowerment of East San José and Mayfair. Our ability to access high-quality education, especially higher education, is determined by institutional barriers rooted in systemic racism, and as an organization, we will not perpetuate a system that keeps our incredibly talented and dedicated people out of career opportunities. We will continue to model hiring lived experience as a way to create wealth building and access to meaningful employment and as a pathway to educational opportunities. Our unique approach of providing pathways to economic, social, and racial justice is another cornerstone to developing *Si Se Puede Mayfair*.

Expected Outcomes:

- Create a physical space at the César Chávez Family Home that offers community-centered services and serves as a symbol of Mayfair Heritage and resistance.
- Create a long-term plan to track longitudinal outcomes that shows the impact of the Amigos approach to community empowerment and community self-determination.
- Highlight local people and stories to elevate pride and culture, but also the challenges that are rooted in social, economic and racial injustice.
- Model system disruption by breaking norms of institutional racism that hinder educational and vocational opportunities.

2. Break down systems of oppression and institutional racism to end community poverty so families can thrive

We are determined to design *Si Se Puede Mayfair* in a way that shows what the intersection of collective action and self-determination can accomplish. We believe that we can achieve a more just society by securing stability for the community of Mayfair and preserving our community's history, cultural legacy, and sense of belonging. By demanding and creating our place, we can break systems of exclusion. We will build our own table and create our own future, and by doing so, we will impact the systems that marginalize and oppress our community.

Our biggest and boldest strategy is *Si Se Puede Mayfair*, which is designed to end poverty in Mayfair block-by-block, house-by-house. This is our North Star; it guides our work and informs how we partner with our neighborhood. Amigos is intently focused on showing how a community can be empowered to create lasting systems change, one person, one home, one block at a time. Amigos will be the lead agency on the ending poverty campaign in Mayfair along with the *Sí Se Puede* Collective. We plan to engage 80% of families that live within the one-square-mile area of Mayfair, and Amigos will employ a house-meetings strategy as part of this effort while also continuing to support immigration reform efforts as another avenue for ending poverty in our community.

Many challenges exist in Mayfair, and perhaps the most pressing are the lack of extremely low-income affordable housing options and the rising cost of living. Housing is a human right, and homelessness is the unavoidable result of racism, generational poverty, low-wage jobs, and lack of access to good education. Education began as the heart of Amigos' work. Education is our right and the great equalizer. Then, remaining true to its roots to listen and respond to our community's needs, Amigos began providing housing to help stabilize our community. Driven by the fundamental truth that we are not separate from the community, we are the community, Amigos remains responsive as it continues to address housing and homelessness in East San José.

As part of the *Si Se Puede* Collective, Amigos will be organizing and empowering community to be the leading voice in advocating for extremely low-income affordable housing and the exploration of the creation of community development corporations to support the sustainability of a vibrant and thriving Mayfair. Amigos plans to explore the use of land trusts and home ownership through co-op models to reclaim our land as an important strategy in creating pathways to affordable housing, home ownership and building intergenerational wealth, preserving our culture, and our community by developing deep connections within our community. Lastly, we will focus on creating policies that support access to safe, affordable housing and defend from displacement, such as a local preference policy, that makes it easier for our residents to stay in the community and have priority to live in new, affordable housing units in their own neighborhood.

As we deepen our collective action efforts through the *Sí Se Puede* Collective (SSPC), we will design new ways in which our collaboration will partner with our community to align on intended impact as we leverage expertise, partnerships, and resources. Amigos will review and identify important indicators through the Collective, especially those that require multi-agency involvement, such as job creation, housing, and education-based outcomes. We will also sharpen how we think about data more globally, from both an organizational and community-wide perspective, with the goal of finding sustainable ways to collaborate across agencies to maximize impact, understanding, and accountability. Determining the geographical footprint and operational scope of *Si Se Puede Mayfair* will be an essential step in outlining the roles and responsibilities of the core partners of the SSPC, as well as understanding the financial implications of creating *Si Se Puede Mayfair*.

Expected outcomes:

- Engage 80% of Mayfair families that live within the one-square mile area.
- Develop a long-term plan to address a lack of affordable housing and the impacts of the rising cost of living.
- Ensure collective impact is focused on breaking down systems of oppression and institutional racism to end community poverty.
- Determine the geographical footprint, operational scope and intended impact of the Si Se Puede Mayfair.



Amigos de Guadalupe has acquired the César Chávez Family Home and will now work with the community to help create a community-based vision for how to both honor and activate this sacred space.





Conclusion

Our strategic goals are to center the community, invest in people, and broaden impact in the Mayfair community and East San José. Our community members are resilient, and the need remains strong in the wake of the pandemic. Amigos de Guadalupe is rooted in this community and we are poised to continue to meet head-on the inequities caused by decades of racism, oppression, and marginalization. Collectively, our strategic principles create a powerful approach for how Amigos, in partnership with our community, can continue to be a leading voice for change.

Economic, social, and racial justice for our community is the goal. We are working in partnership with our community to lift barriers and build a brighter future. As we embark on our new Strategic Plan, we envision a diverse, vibrant, and connected community where individuals and families from all backgrounds and experiences are able to live, work, learn, celebrate, and thrive. As we move closer to fulfilling our vision to bring about transformational change in East San José, we believe our best work is still to come. We remain grateful for the support and dedication of our community, and eagerly embrace a new season of bringing hope and stability to East San José. ¡Adelante Mayfair, Si Se Puede!





Amigos de Guadalupe

Center for Justice & Empowerment

1897 Alum Rock Ave #35 San Jose, CA 95116

(408) 341-6080

info@amigosdeguadalupe.org

www.amigosdeguadalupe.org

