



# MERCED UNITED

A COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL  
FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

MERCEDUNITED.COM #NEVERGIVEUP



## Dear Community Stakeholders,

I hope this message finds you well.

My name is Daniel Jovan Pulido, and I serve as President of Merced United. I'm reaching out to share an overview of the work we are doing and how Merced United has evolved into a vital hub for youth and community development across the Merced region.

This report is meant to raise awareness and open the door for continued communication between our organization and local leaders. We want to ensure our story and progress are known and reflected in broader conversations around youth, education, public health, and community-building.







## ABOUT MERCED UNITED

**Merced United was founded nearly 50 years ago** as a grassroots soccer program created by local parents and volunteers. Since then, we've grown into a multi-sport organization that continues to expand with new programs supporting student athletes, serving thousands of participants annually—from toddlers in our recreational leagues to adult players, coaches, and families engaged in club-wide programming.

Although Merced United began with a focus on soccer, our identity has grown into something much broader. While the game remains central to who we are, we have evolved into a multisport, community-based organization committed to youth development. Today, we use sport not just soccer as a platform to help young people grow into strong, confident, and community-minded individuals through leadership opportunities, mentorship, and meaningful programming on and off the field.







**MERCED UNITED**  
**RECREATIONAL SOCCER**





## OUR IMPACT

Merced United serves more than **4,000 direct participants every year**, reaching **over 12,000 people annually** when family members, supporters, and spectators are included. Our programs welcome all ages and interests from Merced United Recreational Soccer and Merced United Competitive Soccer to the Merced United League (18+), Merced United Basketball, and one of the region's first youth eSports programs making us a multi-sport, multi-generational gathering place for the community. We are also a key point of access for underserved families, with an estimated **2,700 participants** each year coming from Medi-Cal-eligible households. Beyond the field or court, our initiatives open doors for growth: the Merced United Leadership Academy builds confidence and leadership, our coaching and referee programs provide skills that can lead to employment, and our partnerships with local schools create educational opportunities that extend well beyond sports. Together, this work makes Merced United one of the most far-reaching and inclusive community programs in Merced County.





# OUR IMPACT

## Total Annual Program Participants

Over 4,000 across all programs.

Average Yearly Participants in Youth Programs:  
~2,800 players

Average Yearly Participants in Adult Programs:  
~1,600 players

Over 70% of parents report 120+ mins  
physical activity per week during the season.

Participant Definition - Season-long team  
enrollment (2-3+ months)

## Community Reach

Over 12,000

Youth (2,830) × 3.5 family factor (themselves,  
parents/guardians, siblings, extended family)  
= ~9,900 people

Adults (1,600) × 1.5 support factor (themselves  
plus partners, household members, or friends)  
= ~2,400 people

## Medi-Cal Eligible

~2,700 (using county data\*)

Youth Programs: ~1,900 youth participants are  
Medi-Cal eligible (68% Medi-Cal enrollment for  
ages 0-20)

Adult Programs: ~830 adult participants are  
Medi-Cal

Eligible (52% adult Medi-Cal eligibility in  
Merced County)



**DIRECT  
PARTICIPANTS**  
Per Year

**OVERALL  
PEOPLE**  
Per Year



**MEDI-CAL  
ELIGIBLE  
HOUSEHOLDS**  
Per Year

### REC SOCCER

2 seasons + All Star Games  
2 practices + 1 game per week  
4 -16 Years Old

### COMP SOCCER

2 Seasons, games + tournaments  
Year-round training  
6 -18 Years Old

### ADULT LEAGUES

4 Seasons + Playoffs  
5 Divisions (Promotion & Relegation)  
18 Years Old - Retirement

4K

12K

2.7K



## CORE PROGRAMS

### MERCED UNITED COMPETITIVE SOCCER

Teams travel and compete across the state, representing Merced at the highest levels of youth soccer. We prioritize character, discipline, and long-term player development, with players receiving financial aid.

**30+  
TEAMS**

### MERCED UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER

Provides an affordable, inclusive entry point for families throughout Merced County. We emphasize fun, teamwork, and early development for players from U6 through middle school.

**80+ TEAMS**  
per season

### MERCED UNITED LEAGUE

Our year-round community league brings together players of all backgrounds and generations, creating opportunities for physical activity, social connection, and lifelong engagement through sport.

**40+ TEAMS**  
per season



### MERCED UNITED BASKETBALL

Our newest addition brings our values and commitment to youth empowerment into a different sport, reaching new participants and expanding community involvement.

**MERCED UNITED  
BASKETBALL**

### MERCED UNITED LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Our leadership academy introduces players to civic engagement, public speaking, career exploration, and college access. Through site visits, workshops, and mentorship, we prepare youth to lead both on and off the field.

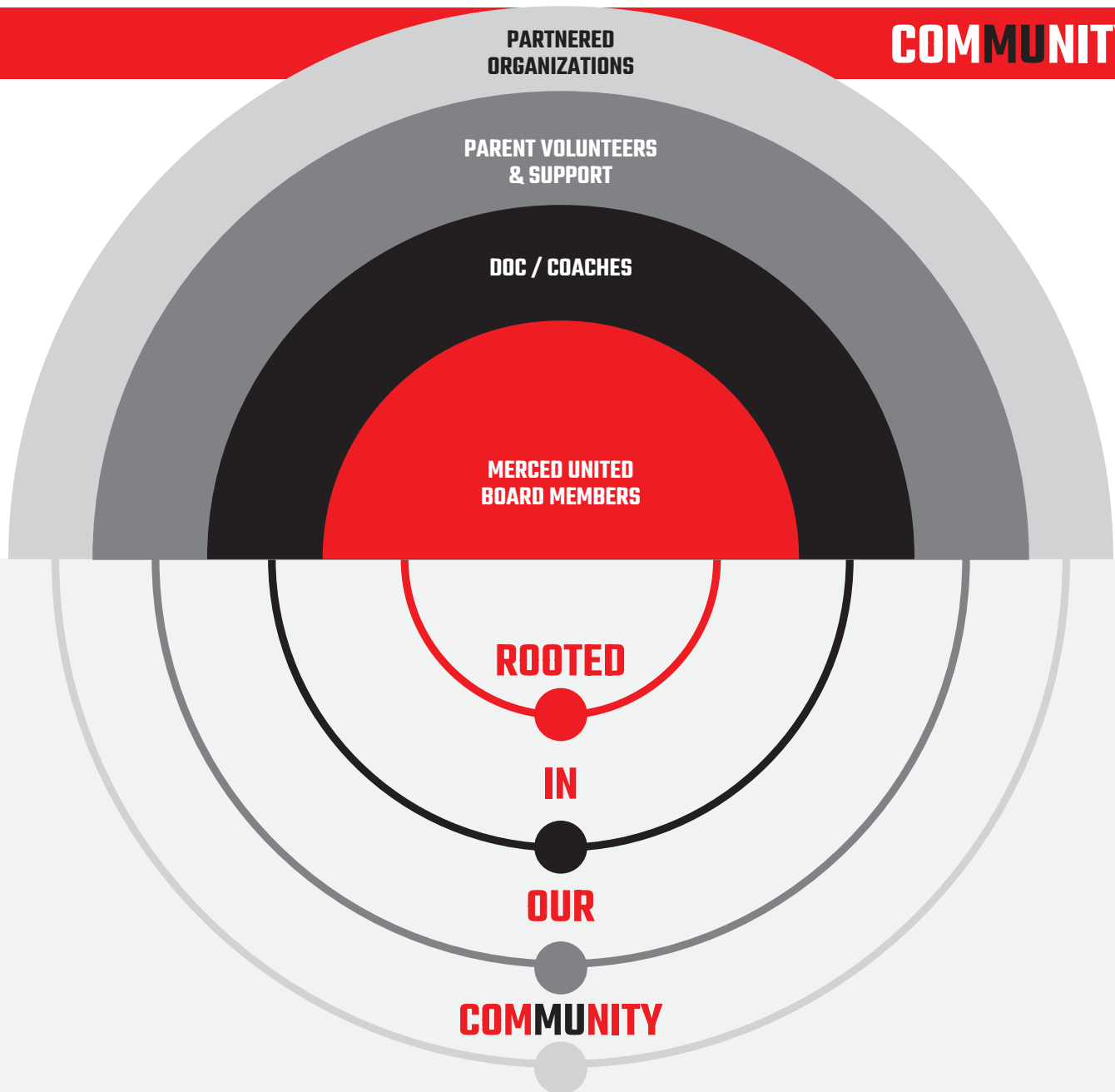
## AND IMPACT



# MERCED UNITED BASKETBALL







1

## MERCED UNITED BOARD MEMBERS

From our President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer to our Competitive and Recreational Coordinators and Registrars these leaders work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep Merced United running strong.

2

## DIRECTOR OF COACHES / COACHES

Our Director of Coaching, along with Competitive and Recreational coaches and assistants, dedicates countless hours on and off the field coordinating teams, guiding players, and shaping our youth. Often overlooked, they are the true pillars of our programs.

3

## PARENT VOLUNTEERS & SUPPORT

Merced United thrives on the dedication of educators, parents, and volunteers from coaching and mentoring to field painting and maintenance all united by a belief in the power of youth.

4

## PARTNERED ORGANIZATIONS

Our partners Zócalo Health, Merced College, Merced High, MCSD, City Parks & Recreation, Mercy Medical, Golden Valley Health Clinics, and Central California Alliance for Health make our biggest dreams possible and help Merced United thrive.

# AUXILLARY PROGRAMS

## MEDI-CAL PLAY PROGRAM

Partnering with the Central California Alliance for Health, this program aims to reduce financial barriers for families on Medi-Cal and engage adult members in physical activity. The initiative supports participants in both our Merced United Recreational Soccer program for youth and our Merced United League for adults, reimbursing registration fees upon the completion of a sports physical.

## SUNRISE SOCCER

In partnership with Merced City School District's M.A.R.S. Program, we host the Sunrise Soccer Summer Academy across multiple elementary schools, serving approximately 300 students each summer. This program combines soccer skill-building with enrichment activities, promoting physical activity, teamwork, and positive engagement during the summer months.

## SUMMER ACADEMY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM



## COACHING AND REFEREE DEVELOPMENT

We offer pathways for youth and parents to become certified coaches and referees through U.S. Soccer and local training programs. This provides professional growth, builds local leadership, and ensures high-quality experiences for all players.

## MERCED UNITED ESPORTS

The first youth organizations in our region to establish an eSports program, Merced United introduces youth to the rapidly growing world of competitive gaming. The program provides a structured, team-based environment where participants develop strategic thinking, communication, and collaboration skills while connecting them to potential education and career pathways in the digital and technology sectors.





**MERCED UNITED**  
**LEAGUE**







## LOOKING AHEAD

Looking forward, we are actively exploring the expansion of our multisport offerings, including the development of new athletic programs beyond soccer and basketball. We are also working to integrate educational components into our model through after-school programs, mentorship, and partnerships with local schools and educational institutions. In addition, we are exploring opportunities for facility development that would support year-round access to sports, learning, and wellness for our youth and families.

We welcome continued collaboration with city and county leaders to align our efforts with broader community priorities and to ensure that Merced United remains a trusted, long-term partner in building a stronger, healthier, and more united Merced.

Please feel free to reach out or visit one of our practices, games, or events. We'd be glad to show you the work happening every week on the fields, courts, and classrooms of Merced. Thank you for your leadership and continued service to our city and county.

Sincerely,  
Daniel Jovan Pulido  
President, Merced United  
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