

Community Solutions Lab (CoLab)
Combining Community and Campus Knowledge for the Public Good

What's a CoLab?

- A process for generating and implementing collaborative solutions to difficult, hard to crack problems
- A long-term research-and-action partnership between people in communities and higher education that allows each of their different strengths to come together in new ways
- A collaboration between California State University Monterey Bay, Middlebury Institute for International Studies at Monterey, and Monterey College of Law faculty, staff, and students, intended to make faculty/student research and classroom work of greater service to the Central Coast economic and social justice sectors

What Makes a CoLab Unique?

- Prioritizes and builds on the existing knowledge, strengths, and aims of people in our communities
- Facilitates learning among all participants
- Builds the capacities of community members to tackle complex problems
- Organizes student/faculty/community research and action projects so they accrue knowledge and impacts over time and in relation to each other
- Attracts new resources for addressing communities' most challenging problems
- Puts academic knowledge generation in service to communities of Monterey County and permits the shaping of classes and curricula
- Develops simple and feasible measures of success, tracks them, and makes changes to future priorities based on those results
- Makes higher education visible to, and relevant to, our region's diverse communities

How Does a CoLab Work?

A CoLab can form around a specific problem or opportunity. A CoLab can form around the holistic aims of a community. In either case, a CoLab:

- Starts small and slow, prioritizing the building of trust, shared expectations and mutual understanding between community members, and academic partners
- Facilitates identifying and support the faculty and students who are most appropriate to meeting the partners' needs
- Actively helps bridge relationships between communities and academic partners
- Stays light on bureaucracy, logistics, and administration
- Focuses on the long-term and on positive impacts for people in communities

Who Can You Contact For More Information, or to Discuss a CoLab Opportunity?

Middlebury Institute for International Studies at Monterey

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CoLab Project Administration

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