

# Los Angeles: Advancing a Shared Vision for Housing Justice



## About the Fund

The Fund for an Inclusive California (F4ICA) is a collaborative philanthropic effort that centers community-driven solutions to the urgent need for housing justice that will create vibrant neighborhoods across California. Over the last four years we set out to grow philanthropic support for community power building for equitable development, focusing on four regions and statewide efforts. This brief highlights F4ICA's efforts and learnings in Los Angeles, while uplifting the work of our partners. We aim to share what is possible with sustained, flexible funding driven by community priorities.

## Regional Context

Los Angeles County is the nation's most populous county. Housing is an issue that cuts across all communities, but impacts them in different ways. While stronger housing justice organizing infrastructure and power building activities are mostly located within the city limits, as people are pushed outside the county they are forced to live in substandard, unsafe housing, and the smaller nonprofits and movement groups in these areas have limited resources for advocacy.

The county has a significant and growing unhoused population who not only struggle to find safe places to stay, but are also often criminalized. While some reduce the problem to mental health issues faced by individuals, the reality is that people are being pushed out of their homes in the thousands due to the ever-escalating costs of housing across LA. While housing justice groups have made strides in the areas of tenant rights and affordable housing production, organizers agree that the ability of developers to prioritize financial gain over providing affordable, accessible shelter creates a substantial and growing danger. As an illustration, rent-stabilized units are often purchased, taken out of affordable housing inventory, and then turned into hotel rooms by short-term rental companies.

Two-thirds of the Fund's Los Angeles partners are not exclusively focused on housing, they are largely community groups centered on building power to hold decision makers accountable and to transform their neighborhoods. Responding to pressure from these community-based organizations, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic the county recognized the scale of the challenge and passed the nation's first tenant protection laws during that period.

### FUNDING SNAPSHOT



15

Community Advisors and grantees



1

Focus area county  
Los Angeles



\$2.43M

in grants

77% Core operating

7% Rapid response

16% Capacity building

*"Things we thought would take years to do are happening in a matter of months. The pressure we built in the first few years really got traction and came to a head during COVID. We were able to move the needle in these four years."*

**SOCIAL JUSTICE LEARNING INSTITUTE, LA COMMUNITY ADVISOR**

*"When opportunities arise for collaboration [we] move quickly and effortlessly because of the trust, common goals and relationships we've already built. We see all of the Community Advisors as essential partners."*

**LA COMMUNITY ADVISOR**

*"Not having to react in the moment with 15 different small policy proposals, but being ready to say what we need to decommodify housing, and having that at the start of the echo chamber, ready to roll, that was really, really helpful."*

**STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR A JUST ECONOMY (SAJE), LA COMMUNITY ADVISOR**

*"The North Star process was really profound in the sense that we are working in a bunch of different spaces on a bunch of different campaigns, but there is this connective overarching objective that we're building towards. There was recognition that there is this connective tissue between a lot of different movement work that's happening and community-led work. It has created a mind expanding experience in terms of how to build strategy."*

**PUBLIC COUNSEL, LA COMMUNITY ADVISOR**

## Impact Toward Community-Driven Priorities

Over the past few years, Los Angeles Community Advisors were able to use their unique strengths and leverage public dollars toward their vision of decommodifying housing. The impact in the region is a testament to the Community Advisors' work, and the approach of the Fund to honor and build on existing place-based relationships, resource their vision and step out of the way.

Community Advisors explained that they are more easily able to access project funding for campaign work, but what they really required from F4ICA was to support their visioning so groups could more effectively play to their strengths and design strategies that center housing as a human right, and counter speculative practices at the root of increased housing costs. We were catalytic in responding with funding to plan long-term. By providing resources and leaving decision making to the leaders closest to the work, organizations had greater autonomy to develop a long-term, transformational vision while being resourced to do so.

### SETTING A SHARED VISION TO ADVANCE WORK INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY

The LA-based Community Advisors raised the need for a planning retreat that would bring groups together and build relationships to coalesce in a broad, shared vision for housing justice and equitable development. We resourced and helped convene the LA planning retreat in late 2019 to set a shared north star vision for housing justice across 15 organizations that continues to guide Community Advisors today. As a result of this retreat participants agreed to take the bold step of creating a regional planning and coordination framework, the LA Housing Movement Lab, to analyze progress, campaigns and opportunities on an on-going basis.

By working together with the convening support of the Fund and their north star vision, they have been able to align on longer-term work, not just from campaign to campaign. This is a key strategy in longer-term power building. Each organization continues powerful individual organizational work that is relevant to their base, and builds under this shared vision.



**STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR A JUST ECONOMY (SAJE)**





LA HOUSING MOVEMENT LAB



COMMUNITY POWER COLLECTIVE

*"The work that we did with the support from the Fund has fundamentally and radically altered the living environment and the political environment here in Inglewood. More specifically, rent control is the law of the land right now, which was the first time it was passed in Southern California since the 70s."*

LA COMMUNITY ADVISOR

## CREATING LEVERAGE FOR PUBLIC DOLLARS AND POLICY

In 2020, LA groups came together to advocate for Project Roomkey, which allowed Californians made vulnerable by the pandemic to access affordable housing in hotels and motels. In 2021, some of these LA groups established the Los Angeles Acquisition/ Rehabilitation Working Group in partnership with Los Angeles Community Land Trust Coalition (LACLTC), affordable housing developers, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, and Enterprise Community Partners.

The working group secured \$14 million in public funding to resource social housing strategies focused on community land trusts, received additional philanthropic funding and successfully advanced policy changes to work toward tenant ownership through the community land trust model.



SOUTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

## POWER BUILDING AND HOUSING JUSTICE EFFORTS

Community Advisors cited F4ICA's support as being beneficial to their power building and housing justice efforts in Los Angeles.

**77%** responded that the Fund's support increased their membership base, and 100% cited the support helped increase the advocacy skills of members

**100%** cited the Fund's support expanded the number of members that took leadership roles to advance their organization's work

**100%** responded that the Fund's support increased their capacity to effectively develop, pass and implement policy changes that expand housing justice and equitable

**100%** cited the support helped shift the narrative in their region or statewide about housing justice and equitable development

## LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY ADVISORS AND PARTNERS



- ACCE Institute, Los Angeles
- Alliance for Community Transit – Los Angeles
- Burbank Tenants' Rights Committee
- Community Power Collective (a project of Right to the City Alliance)
- East LA Community Corporation
- InnerCity Struggle
- Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA)
- LA Voice
- LiBRE Long Beach Residents Empowered
- Little Tokyo Service Center Community Development Corporation
- Los Angeles Center for Community Law and Action
- Public Counsel
- Social Justice Learning Institute for the Uplift Inglewood Coalition
- Southeast Asian Community Alliance
- Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)

## Priorities Going Forward

The Fund is learning and applying lessons from the past few years to ensure organizations can sustain their progress and power for the long-haul. Looking ahead, Community Advisors have emphasized the need for F4ICA's continued role to maintain and deepen support in LA County and to grow the support of neighboring areas. Organizations and coalitions in the region are exploring innovative social housing solutions and sophisticated policy approaches, including new types of negotiation in conjunction with labor organizers and unions to bring about their shared long-term vision for dignified housing.

This long-term planning requires inclusion of community decision-making in city planning, such as the General Plan and transportation planning, which map a future in 20-year cycles. This generations-long planning must be connected to community priorities.

Finally, as leaders transition from nonprofits to appointed and elected roles, there is tremendous potential to carry the mantle of the north star vision to move public funding and policy forward.

To ensure our continued responsiveness to the needs of Los Angeles County and its communities, we must affirm, deepen and expand our commitment and call on others in the public, private and philanthropic sectors to join us.

LEARN MORE



Reach out to us at [F4ICA@commoncounsel.org](mailto:F4ICA@commoncounsel.org) and visit [fundforaninclusiveca.org](http://fundforaninclusiveca.org) to learn more about our work, partners and how to get involved.



LOS ANGELES CENTER FOR COMMUNITY LAW AND ACTION



KOREATOWN IMMIGRANT WORKERS ALLIANCE (KIWA)