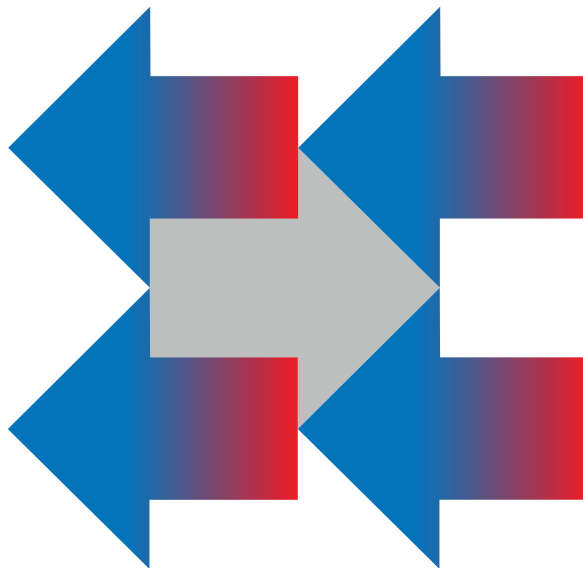


Together We Win

**How the
California Donor Table
moved California to the
left by investing in
communities of color**



California Donor Table

JUNE 2020

Letter From the Executive Director

We find ourselves in the middle of an historic moment. We are living through a pandemic that has disproportionately impacted Black people and communities of color and will devastate our economy for years to come. We are witnessing a civil uprising against the murders of Black people by police, and a widespread, multiracial call to rethink community safety. And, in a few short months, Americans will go to the polls to determine whether or not to give the boot to the racist-in-chief, and Californians will decide whether or not to continue to push our state to live up to its progressive potential by electing candidates and passing initiatives that work for all of us.

Fifteen years ago, the California Donor Table (CDT) was born from an unwavering vision of social transformation. In 2009, I was hired as the first full-time staffer for this small and mighty group of donors aligning their philanthropic and political giving to invest in organizations, leaders, and candidates that center communities of color. I brought my decades of experience bringing intersectional racial justice into movement spaces where only white organizations and leaders were funded to help those donors usher in a new Progressive Era in California in which everyone—especially the emerging people of color majority—thrived.

Today, California has moved closer to that vision. Frankly, many would have considered it a pipe dream that Orange County's entire congressional delegation would be Democratic, that the Inland Empire would be electing some of the most progressive leaders to Congress and the state legislature, and that progressive candidates would be winning in places like San Diego, the Central Valley, and Contra Costa County.

The work of the CDT made these changes possible. With hope and passion—but also with rigorous political analysis of demographics and voter data—the collective efforts of dedicated donors built up the power of people of color across this 40 million person nation-state.

In this report, we proudly share the CDT's history and lessons for how we've gotten this far. Our state has come a long way from the Trump-like Reagan and Wilson administrations that implemented racist, sexist, xenophobic, homophobic, and anti-worker policies and initiatives. We still have so much more to do to unravel that web.

We hope our example in California can help guide the rest of the nation as America transitions from the white supremacist Trump administration and, thanks to the tenacity and imagination of generations of Black organizers, we re-imagine and re-invent the institutions and offices that have kept systemic racism in place for far too long. A just, progressive California is possible.

Together we win.



Ludovic Blain

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CALIFORNIA DONOR TABLE

Overnight Success: 15 Years in the Making

In the days following the 2018 midterm elections as results slowly trickled in, Republicans fell out of congressional power in California, one by one.

This was most evident in Orange County — the traditionally conservative stronghold where Richard Nixon built his presidential library and where Ronald Reagan launched his political career. Reagan had famously described Orange County as where “all the good Republicans go to die.”

But the Orange County of 2018, home to 3.2 million residents, is a different place from the Orange County of 1984 when Reagan launched his reelection campaign for the presidency in Fountain Valley. Orange County in the 1980s was overwhelmingly white. In 2018 it was 60% Latinx, Asian, and Black.

It would take nearly a month to count all the ballots. The first congressional Republican casualty of the 2018 midterms was 15-term Congressman Dana Rohrabacher, who was bested by Harley Rouda. Next, Mimi Walters conceded to Katie Porter. When Gil Cisneros claimed victory for the race representing California’s 39th Congressional District, Democrats had flipped four seats and completed a historic sweep of all seven districts in Orange County.

But this sweep didn’t happen overnight.

Could a group
of donors, coordinating
their efforts investing
in communities of color,
move California’s
politics to the left?

While many consider California the leading progressive state today, not long ago, it led the country in a much different direction. In the 1970s through the early 2000s, California elected law-and-order Republican governors and enacted ballot initiatives that led the way for a national wave of interlocked anti-immigrant, anti-Black, and anti-tax sentiment.

But for the past 15 years, the quiet, steady work of a small group of people laid the groundwork for change. In 2005, Steve Phillips, Susan Sandler, Quinn Delaney, Wayne Jordan, and Rob McKay founded the Progressive Era Project. Combining political strategy with community organizing and training, the project aimed to develop and support Black, Latinx, and AAPI progressive leaders and organizations.

These five people, representing three families, knew each other from the Democracy Alliance, a national network of donors that supported progressive organizations. What if they worked closely at the state level? Could a group of donors coordinating their efforts investing in communities of color move California’s politics to the left? The Progressive Era Project — now known as the California Donor Table — has accomplished just that.

THE FOUR COUNTY STRATEGY

As Steve Phillips recalls it, he got the idea for the California Donor Table from Colorado. He was attending a conference in the Centennial State and saw a presentation by a group of donors who had pooled their resources strategically. The group had made significant progress in this swing state, winning elections and increasing progressive power.

This could work in California, Phillips thought. In fact, California had an advantage: it had been undergoing substantial demographic change since the mid-century. In 1990, 57% of California’s population was white. In 2020, the population is estimated to be 39% Latinx, 38% white, 14% Asian, and 6% Black. California is a majority people of color — and Democrats’ most loyal voters are people of color. They’re also more likely to support policies and issues that promote greater equity for everyone.

Phillips views the ballot measures of the early '90s — such as the three-strikes law and Proposition 187, which denied public services to undocumented immigrants — as a backlash to the demographic transformation of the state. “These were all measures designed to preserve the power and privileges of those who had previously been prominent within California,” he says.

After the conference, Phillips began talking with the other four co-founders about how to harness California's demographic shift to advance social change.

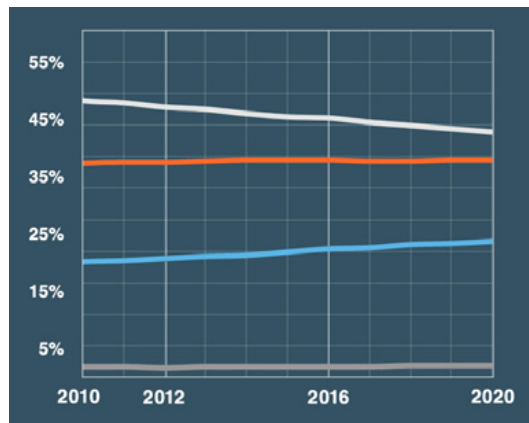
“The whole thing about Colorado was that it was shifting from red to blue. California was already blue,” says Quinn Delaney, a co-founder. “So it took a little translation from that model to figure out how to apply it in California. How do you make blue more progressive?”

They analyzed the state's population to determine where the California Donor Table could have the most impact. “From the beginning we were focused on racial equity and on the empowerment of communities of color. Then it was: where do we do it?” Delaney says. Four counties stood out not only for their changing demographics but also their large size — more than 10 million people — and potential to flip from conservative to progressive: Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego.

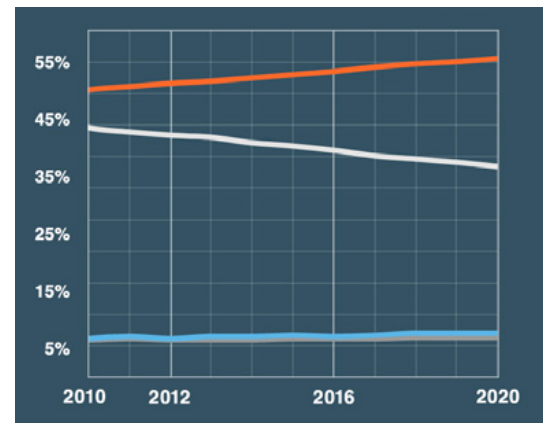
Demographic changes by % County Population, 2010-2020

● HISPANIC ● WHITE ● BLACK ● ASIAN

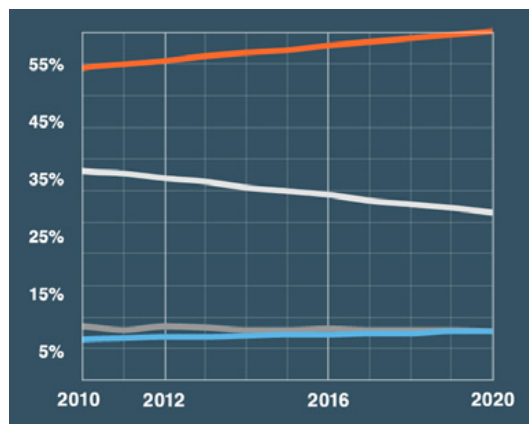
Orange County



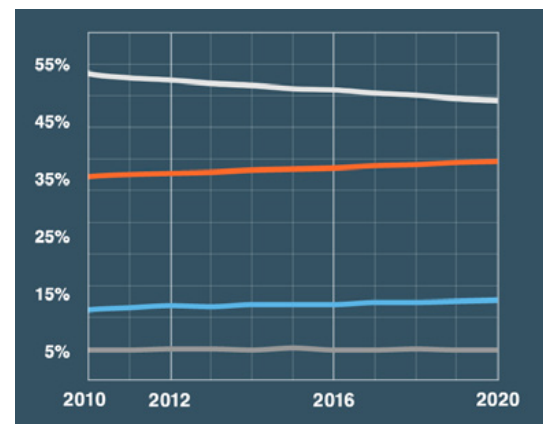
Riverside County



San Bernardino County



San Diego County



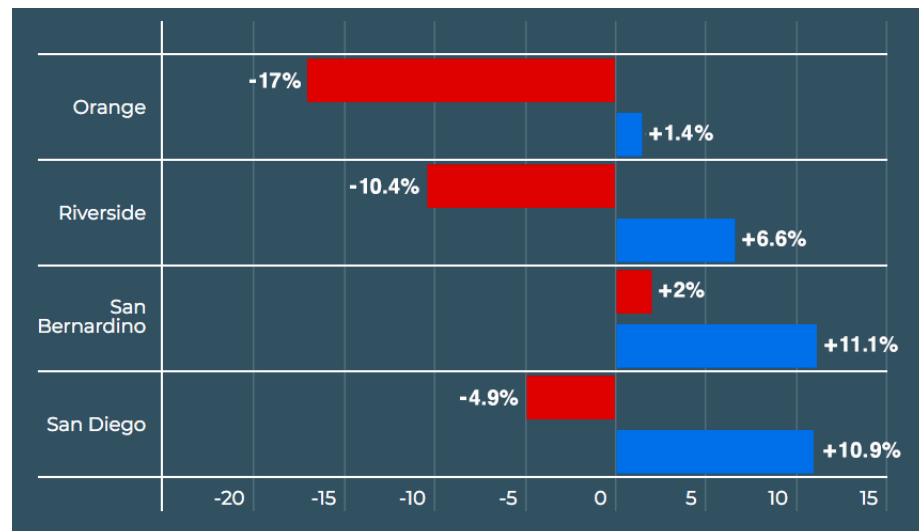
Data compiled and created by Tom K. Wong, Associate Professor of Political Science at UC San Diego and founding Director of the U.S. Immigration Policy Center.

The promise in these counties was great. While demographics were in flux in these traditionally conservative areas, few civic organizations existed to serve these new communities of color. If the California Donor Table could shore up the political infrastructure in communities of color — the progressive nonprofits, community groups, and leaders in these large areas — they could raise for the floor for the progressive movement statewide.

In 2006, the first year the California Donor Table made investments, it disbursed \$750,000. Today, it invests about \$2 million a year and supports a team of four. For the 2020 election cycle, it is projected to raise \$4 million and align a much larger dollar amount to key groups and candidates. But it hasn't been as simple as just donating money to groups. In key regions across the state, California Donor Table brought groups together from different movements, such as environmental justice, immigrant rights, and criminal justice reform, to ensure that they were developing a shared power-building strategy that would result in winning elections and advancing progressive policies.

Party registration changes 2000 to 2020

● REPUBLICANS ● DEMOCRATS



Data compiled and created by Tom K. Wong, Associate Professor of Political Science at UC San Diego and founding Director of the U.S. Immigration Policy Center.

While many people from these organizations may have known each other, they hadn't necessarily worked together. California Donor Table, along with a funder collaborative it co-founded, gathered the groups regularly to build relationships, determine possible areas for collaboration, and identify areas of training and capacity building. The idea was to increase the quality, scale, and effectiveness of community organizing, electoral work, and issues-based advocacy campaigns. Together, they laid the foundation for working as a coordinated effort for the long haul.

BUILDING A LONG-TERM MOVEMENT

Change came gradually. For years, the balance of power in the California legislature had been with moderate Democrats, says Bryan Blum, political director of the California Labor Federation, an umbrella organization of unions in California. Along with Republicans, they could block progressive bills. "There was the recognition that it wasn't good enough to just elect Democrats, that we had to, as much as possible, find and support and elect progressive Democrats in these races," Blum says.

But in the early years of the California Donor Table, most of the progressive candidates that the group backed lost their races. This caused the founders to question if their approach was the right one.

While it was frustrating to not see results immediately, in the long term, it was important for progressive candidates to run — even if they lost — because they educated the public. “Over time, there was a greater understanding that we’re not going to win every election,” Delaney says. “We have to put up candidates who are maybe ahead of their constituency, pushing for progressive ideas that maybe aren’t super well known. Even if someone isn’t going to win, they are tilling the soil and getting it ready for the next candidate.”

As change came incrementally, California Donor Table asked itself, “What are the guide posts along the way?” Getting progressive groups to work together was one. Another breakthrough for the early 2010s was for groups to conduct their civic engagement work by using the voter file. Someone in the constellation of groups needed to be trained on how to pull voter lists and how to identify where to target efforts in order to increase voter turnout across ethnicities and cultures in the region.

“Whether or not it actually affects a particular election right away, it’s an important benchmark,” Phillips says. “And then after doing that for an election or two, then it starts to be able to translate in terms of changing the composition of the electorate, particularly in looking at some of these lower turnout races, like city council races.”

“It was inspiring to see all these younger, majority women of color running for office.” Today, the long-term strategy of the California Donor Table is in full bloom. The 2018 election saw not only the complete flip of Orange County from red to blue when it came to congressional seats, but an unprecedented number of progressives running for office on a local level across the state. “It’s definitely been gradual for a couple of years and then it just snowballed and we’ve been seeing huge effect in the last election,” says Michael Gomez Daly, the executive director of I.E. United, a coalition in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties that supports candidates who commit to helping impoverished communities and people of color. I.E. United endorsed 28 progressive candidates; 13 of them won.

In the past, it had been hard to convince people from community organizations to run for office. “It was hard for them to see themselves running for office or imagine themselves sitting in an elected position,” Gomez Daly says. He credits the California Donor Table’s investments of more than a decade in the region for the change. All the candidates in some way, shape, or form, had been impacted by the donor table, he says. “It was inspiring to see all these younger, majority women of color running for office.”

Other factors contributed to the change in the political landscape. In 2010, California voters approved a slew of changes to elections and state legislative processes. The first was instituting California’s nonpartisan top-two primary. This meant that first- and second-place statewide, state legislative, and congressional candidates in the primary would face off against each other in the fall election, no matter which party they represented. Voters also created a citizen redistricting commission that un-gerrymandered district lines, which led to more Democratic seats. These two changes led to many more Democrat versus Democrat fall elections.

That same year voters also passed an initiative to end the requirement that the state budget pass with a two-thirds supermajority in both houses. This requirement had given Republicans, the minority, immense leverage. Now, budgets could pass with a simple majority. This immediately resulted in Republican irrelevance at the state level. Corporate interests like the oil industry adapted by shifting their financial support from Republicans

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California Donor Table is
in it for the long haul,”
says California Senator
Holly Mitchell.

to moderate, corporate-friendly Democrats, especially women and people of color. In a D versus R race, party affiliation signals which candidate is more progressive or more conservative. But in a D versus D race, at a glance it can be hard to tell which candidate is more progressive. As a result, progressive candidates must work harder to differentiate themselves and signal their stances to voters.

“It drastically affects the progressive movement. Generally, it’s a negative impact because it’s more difficult,” says Amber Parrish Baur, the executive director of the UFCW Western States Council. “To define a true progressive can be challenging.”

At the same time, these changes increased the stakes of the progressive movement, leading them to become smarter and more coordinated in how they approached D versus D general election races. The various movements — labor, environmental, and so on — came together to strategize. “Working with the California Donor Table brought more alignment,” Baur says. “We started talking through which major issues were in common, and aligned the criminal justice work with social justice and economic work. That came out of a research project that was funded by the donor table.”

“We are significantly in a much, much better place ideologically today. The legislature is much more progressive than it was 10 years ago,” Blum says. Progressive bills that would have been killed or barely made it through the California legislature in the past now get voted through by good margins.

This change is the result of years of dedicated effort.

“Sometimes groups come in and do something splashy for a cycle or two. But California Donor Table is in it for the long haul,” says California Senator Holly Mitchell. “They looked for people at the local level doing the work, followed their lead, and moved resources to them year after year. They really committed to their allies and developed a shared vision and strategy with them. Capacity-building takes time. This is how you build a long-term movement.”

"This is a whole new way of being. It's a huge change," he says, "And I've been getting feedback from folks on the ground that it's empowering — and it's inspiring others."

CDT sees its role as the go-to statewide organization for collaborative investing strategies that center progressive people of color. It is in a unique position to do so after cultivating relationships across the state over the years.

"One thing that CDT does well is work in partnership with the leaders in the different counties in a way where there is trust," Quinn Delaney says. "The people in the different counties know that they can depend on us. And we can depend on them. It's very mutual. That trust has been super important."

The group will take lessons learned at the regional level and bring them to the next level.

"I think our next 10 years are about tying together the local and regional organizations we've been supercharging into structures that allow them to project power at the state level," Blain says.

"The people in the
different counties know
that they can depend
on us. And we can
depend on them," says
Quinn Delaney.

That means strengthening and multiplying groups across the state, helping them to collaborate, and continuing to support — and increase — the number of progressive candidates and elected officials in local and state races and offices.

"In order to do this work, the CDT needs to build its donor network. Creating impact at the state level requires tens, if not hundreds, of millions of dollars," Blain says.

However, one long-term goal of the CDT is to actually reduce the impact of money on politics. "When we look at the path forward, one of the nexus areas is increased democracy — not just increased participation — but actually increased systemic democracy so that all votes count," Blain says. "Right now all money counts and only some votes count," Blain says, explaining that existing regulations in many areas disenfranchise people.

California is still recovering from the conservative, racist, and anti-immigrant policies of the '80s and '90s. That era in California parallels the state of the country today, Blain says.

"Forty years ago, California was descending into full-on white supremacy, but we turned it around," he says. "We are now poised to build a progressive and truly democratic state that is accountable to all its residents. Let's finish the job and show the nation how to recover from the Trump era."

CDT REGIONAL PARTNER, CANDIDATE AND INITIATIVE ENDORSEES

STATEWIDE • BAY AREA • CENTRAL VALLEY & COAST



CDT REGIONAL PARTNER, CANDIDATE AND INITIATIVE ENDORSEES













SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

PARTNERS

- LA Voice Action
- Council on American-Islamic Relations Action
- Community Coalition Action Fund
- SEIU 99
- SEIU-UHW

ENDORSEMENTS










- | | |
|---|---|
|  Senator Holly Mitchell
SD30 - 2016: WON
LA SUPERVISOR - 2020 ADVANCED TO GENERAL ELECTION |  Assemblymember Christy Smith
AD38 - 2018: WON |
|  Johnathon Ervin
SD21 - 2016: LOST
AD36 - 2020: LOST IN PRIMARY |  Assemblymember Luz Rivas
AD39 - 2018: WON |
|  Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo
AD51 - 2017: WON |  Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel
AD45 - 2018: WON |
|  Mike Eng
SD22 - 2018: LOST |  Assemblymember Sydney Kamlager-Dove
AD54 - 2018: WON |
|  Senator Maria Elena Durazo
SD24 - 2018: WON |  Senator Lena Gonzalez
SD33 - 2019: WON |
|  Vicky Santana
SD32 - 2018: LOST |  George Gascón
LA DISTRICT ATTORNEY - 2020: ADVANCED TO GENERAL ELECTION |

ORANGE COUNTY

PARTNER

- Orange County Civic Engagement Table Action

ENDORSEMENTS

- | |
|---|
|  Bao Nguyen
GARDEN GROVE MAYOR 2014: WON
CD46 - 2016: LOST |
|  Al Jabbar
ANAHEIM UNION HIGH BOARD
2014: WON |
| Anaheim Measure L & M
MANDATING DISTRICT ELECTIONS, 2014: WON |
|  Assemblymember Sharon Quirk Silva
AD65 - 2016: WON |
|  Dr. José Moreno
ANAHEIM CITY COUNCILMEMBER - 2016: WON |
|  Gil Cisneros
CD39 - 2018: WON |
|  Katie Porter
CD45 - 2018: WON |
|  Harley Rouda
CD48 - 2018: WON |
|  Mike Levin
CD49 - 2018: WON |
|  Duke Nguyen
ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF - 2018: LOST |

INLAND EMPIRE

COUNTIES

- San Bernardino, Riverside

PARTNER

- Inland Empire United

ENDORSEMENTS









- | |
|---|
|  Raul Ruiz
CD36 - 2012: WON |
|  Mark Takano
CD41 - 2012: WON |
|  Pete Aguilar
CD31 - 2014: WON |
|  Assemblymember Eloise Reyes
AD47 - 2016: WON |
|  Abigail Medina
AD40 - 2016: LOST
SD23 - 2020: ADVANCED TO GENERAL ELECTION |
|  DeniAntionette Mazingo
AD42 - 2020: LOST IN PRIMARY |

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

PARTNERS

- Engage San Diego Action Fund
- Alliance San Diego Mobilization Fund

ENDORSEMENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Scott Peters
CD52 - 2012: WON | San Diego City Measure K
MANDATING FALL ELECTIONS
2016: WON |
|  Bob Filner
SAN DIEGO CITY
MAYOR - 2012: WON |  Ammar Campa-Najjar
CD50 - 2018: LOST |
|  David Alvarez
SAN DIEGO CITY
MAYOR - 2013: LOST |  Sunday Gover
AD77 - 2018: LOST |
|  Assemblymember Shirley Weber
AD79 - 2016: WON |  Geneviève Jones-Wright
SAN DIEGO DISTRICT
ATTORNEY - 2018: LOST |
|  Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez
AD80 - 2016: WON |  Nathan Fletcher
SAN DIEGO SUPERVISOR
2018: WON |

CDT REGIONAL GRANTEE PARTNERS



Bay Area Rising 501(c)(3)
Bay Rising Action 501(c)(4)
bayrisingaction.org

Kimi Lee, Executive Director
kimi@bayrisingaction.org

Bay Rising Action is a 501(c)(4) that builds the power of communities of color by working with local grassroots organizations. They advocate for a world where all people participate in community control and political power; where everyone has a home; and where everyone has the sanctuary to live without fear of deportation or criminalization. Bay Rising Action believes in clean air, parks, and water, in environmental justice and just transition to a regenerative economy where life flourishes. They center the value of work with dignity where everyone can earn a living wage and receive quality healthcare; they believe in justice for young people and families.



San Francisco Rising 501(c)(3)
San Francisco Action Fund 501(c)(4)
sfrising.org

Emily Lee, Director
emily@sanfranciscorising.org

San Francisco Rising Action is a 501(c)(4) that builds the political power of working-class communities and communities of color in San Francisco to lead the way for democratic governance that prioritizes racial, economic and environmental justice. They are an alliance of grassroots organizations led by people of color, and a political home for San Franciscans who care about justice and sustainability.



Lift Up Contra Costa 501(c)(3)
Lift Up Contra Costa Action 501(c)(4)
liftupcocoaction.org

Danny Espinoza, Campaign Coordinator
despinoza@liftupcoco.org



Taylor Sims, Special Project Coordinator
tsims@liftupcoco.org

LUCCA, a 501(c)(4) project of Tides Advocacy Fund, is a group of economic, labor, environmental and racial justice organizations that have come together to develop a county-wide civic engagement table.

Member organizations: Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment Action, Asian Pacific Environmental Network Action, Communities for a Better Environment Action, Contra Costa AFL-CIO Labor Council, Richmond Progressive Alliance, SEIU 1021, SEIU 1015, and The Safe Return Project Action



Communities for a New California Education Fund 501(c)(3)
Communities for a New California Action Fund 501(c)(4)
anewcalifornia.org

Pablo Rodriguez, Executive Director
pablo@anewcalifornia.org

CNC Action Fund is a statewide 501(c)(4) civil and human rights organization committed to achieving public policy that is socially, economically, and environmentally just for California's families. CNC Action Fund has chapters in the Central Coast, San Joaquin Valley, Imperial, and Coachella Valley.

CDT REGIONAL GRANTEE PARTNERS (CONT.)



Inland Empowerment 501(c)(3)

Inland Empire United 501(c)(4)

ieunited.org

Michael Gomez Daly, Executive Director

michael@ieunited.org

I.E. United is a 501(c)(4) collaboration of community agents and leaders who believe in affecting change in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. They work to empower and develop leaders who look, live, and lead rooted in the broad diversity of our region.

Advisors: SEIU 2015, Planned Parenthood Riverside/San Diego, Jean Kayano (Community Action and Environmental Justice), Tom Dolan (Inland Congregations United for Change), Pastor Benjamin Briggs (Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement), Vonya Quarles (Starting Over), Sherheryar Kaoosji (Warehouse Worker Resource Center), Luz Gallegos (TODEC Legal Center), Abigail Medina (Inland Regional Equality Network), and Javier Hernandez (Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice).



LA Voice 501(c)(3)

LA Voice Action 501(c)(4)

secure.actblue.com/donate/lavoiceaction

Rev. Zach Hoover, Executive Director

zach@lavoiceaction.org



Tina Mckinnor, Director of Civic Engagement

tina@lavoiceaction.org

LA Voice Action is a multi-racial, multi-faith community organization that awakens people to their own power, training them to speak, act, and work together to transform our country into one that reflects the dignity of all people.

Partners: Council on American-Islamic Relations, Community Coalition, SEIU 99, SEIU 2015, SEIU UHW, Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, Planned Parenthood, and New Way of Life Reentry Project.



Orange County Civic Engagement Table 501(c)(3)

Orange County Civic Engagement Table Action 501(c)(4)

Jonathan Paik, Director

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OCCETA is a 501(c)(4) coalition of Latino, Asian-American, faith-based, and low-income organizations in Orange County.

Participating groups/partners: Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA), Korean Resource Center in Action, Orange County Voter Information Project, Anaheim Neighborhood Together, Orange County Communities for Responsible Development (OCCORD), and Orange County Labor Federation.



Engage San Diego 501(c)(3)
Engage San Diego Action Fund 501(c)(4)
engagesandiegoaction.org

Alan Kaplan, Director
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ESDAF is a 501(c)(4) organization dedicated to enhancing civic engagement and social justice in historically and systemically excluded communities of San Diego County, by lifting up the rights and voices of people of color, working families, immigrants, women, and LGBTQ communities.

Participating groups/partners: The ESDAF board is comprised of individuals affiliated with power-building 501(c)(4) organizations. Beyond the board, the ESDAF partners on voter engagement initiatives with San Diego Labor Council, SEIU 221, the Labor Alliance, Indivisible, Flip the 49th, Real Justice PAC, and Smart Justice CA.



Alliance San Diego 501(c)(3)
Alliance San Diego Mobilization Fund 501(c)(4)
asdmf.org

Andrea Guerrero, Executive Director
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ASDMF is a 501(c)(4) that seeks to expand the opportunity for all San Diego residents, especially marginalized residents, to reach their full potential by increasing their participation in our democracy, our economy, and our society.

ABOUT CALIFORNIA DONOR TABLE

California Donor Table is a statewide community of donors who pool their funds to make investments in communities of color so they have the power and resources they need to (1) elect people who represent their values and needs, (2) advance good policies and (3) help govern and hold decision-makers accountable. We believe that California can and must lead the nation in becoming a healthy, just place to live with shared economic success and a democracy that works for all our people.

California Donor Table is a project of the Tides Advocacy Fund.

CALIFORNIADONORTABLE.ORG

REACH OUT TO OUR TEAM FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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California Donor Table