

Bay Area: Building Community Power from the Ground Up



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 the Bay Area, while uplifting the work of our partners. We aim to share what is possible with sustained, flexible funding driven by community priorities.

Regional Context

In recent years, the skyrocketing costs of housing in the San Francisco Bay Area has made the region increasingly difficult to live in for hundreds of thousands of families, especially for families living on low incomes, and Black, Indigenous and immigrant communities. In 2018, San Francisco made global headlines when families earning \$117,000 qualified as low-income according to the federal government. The region's role as a central hub for the tech sector has largely driven rising housing costs and soaring income inequity.

According to the Bay Area Equity Atlas, the region has long been among the nation's most diverse; in recent years, Latinx and Asian Pacific Islander populations have been increasing while the Black population has seen a steady decline. Though median earnings have increased over the past 20 years, the disparity in wealth persists; white workers earn a median income of \$92,054 while Latinx workers earn \$44,050 and Black workers earn \$54,008.

In the past 20 years, the percentage of Bay Area residents whose rent is more than 30% of their overall household income has increased to 47%, with Black, Indigenous and communities of color being most impacted. Families across the region are being displaced from expensive cities like San Francisco and Oakland, moving to cities outside the urban core that lack quality infrastructure, ultimately driving up prices in those areas as well.

FUNDING SNAPSHOT



13

Community Advisors and grantees



9

Focus area counties

Sonoma, Napa, Marin, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara



\$2.14M

in grants

78% Core operating
8% Rapid response
14% Capacity building

Impact Toward Community-Driven Priorities

To tackle longstanding housing and economic issues, while also responding to changing community needs over the past few years, Bay Area partners have prioritized leadership development and “bridge-building across local and regional differences.” Community Advisors have credited the Fund’s Regional Capacity Building Program as being successful in bringing Bay Area base-building groups together to grow tenant power across neighborhoods and cities.

These groups built strong regional tenant unions and organizing networks to power hyper-local organizing, empowering residents to fight for the right to live and stay in their homes and neighborhoods. Strong local organizing networks in the Bay Area act as building blocks that bolster regional and statewide power for housing justice.

“The multi-year support allowed us to have the confidence to hire additional staff. The additional organizing staff capacity allowed us to increase our ability to build a deeper and wider leadership base in multiple districts and cities, as well as to grow our collective power to push campaigns and policies forward.”

**BAY AREA
COMMUNITY ADVISOR**

INVESTING IN HYPER-LOCAL ORGANIZING FOR REGIONAL POWER BUILDING

Bay Area partners work at a hyper-local level in response to the housing and community priorities they tackle through power building and advocacy. Recognizing this, housing justice networks such as the Bay Area-based Regional Tenant Organizing (RTO) network and national Right to the City Alliance focus on boosting the capacity of individual organizations to grow leaders, organize communities and build the power of Black, Indigenous and people of color so they can live in thriving, affordable neighborhoods.

Across the region, community and organizational leaders show up for one another, joining each other’s protests, campaigns or policy meetings. Local leaders understand that an organizing victory in one corner of the Bay Area has implications for all corners of the region, e.g. fighting in favor of a rent protection ballot measure in Mountain View will benefit families and tenants in Santa Rosa.

Bay Area residents are organizing for their lives. In communities like San Mateo, Redwood City, Antioch, Sonoma, Southern Alameda County, and Vallejo, people living on low incomes are organizing to preserve and hold onto the few affordable housing options that exist, which makes organizing and power building crucial for community well-being.



“The support from F4ICA has enabled us to grow our tenant organizing work. Specifically in the last year we connected with over 800 tenants from buildings in [the region]. More recently, we engaged these residents as part of a citywide committee of tenants who are building power to address the lack of policy protections for tenants in [the area].”

**BAY AREA
COMMUNITY ADVISOR**

GROWING THE BIGGER “WE” OF HOUSING JUSTICE

Over the last four years, the Fund has supported the deepening and growing of local organizing efforts and campaigns in cities and counties where people of color, particularly Black and Indigenous people most harmed by systemic racism, are being displaced. We are growing a greater “we” in the housing justice movement by expanding the organizing capacity of communities that experience the brunt of the housing affordability crisis. We supported organizations in the Bay Area working at the intersection of immigrant rights, environmental justice, as well as workers’ rights, and with seniors.

F4ICA’s resources were intended to support under-resourced organizations and coalitions, and deepen local organizing. Boosting individual organizations and their networks has a broader effect of strengthening regional and state-level efforts to build power for housing justice, as local groups access greater capacity to establish and maintain relationships beyond their individual organizations.

POWER BUILDING AND HOUSING JUSTICE EFFORTS

Bay Area Community Advisors cited F4ICA’s support as being beneficial to their power building and housing justice efforts in the Bay Area.

88% responded that the Fund’s support increased their membership base

100% cited the Fund’s support in helping increase the advocacy skills of base members

100% credited the Fund for helping increase the organizing capacity of the local communities they work with

88% responded that the Fund’s support increased their capacity to effectively develop, pass and implement policy changes that expand housing justice and equitable development strategies

88% cited the Fund’s support in establishing new or deepened relationships with funding institutions



A CLEARINGHOUSE TO SUPPORT REGIONAL ORGANIZING

The Regional Tenant Organizing Network — funded and supported by F4ICA and led by local organizations — acts as a clearinghouse for groups organizing for tenants’ rights and housing justice and provides much-needed support, particularly to less well-resourced organizations and communities in the Bay Area. The Network offers a space where groups can share and learn with each other, and activate leaders in neighboring communities to support specific organizing campaigns or advocacy efforts that have the potential to benefit the entire region.

Community Advisors identified the need for the Network to hire a Regional Coordinator to build leadership and organizational capacity among Bay Area groups. The Coordinator is adding regional capacity for the Network to strengthen organizing infrastructure, membership and leadership development, implementation of network projects and cultivation of regional, statewide and national relationships.

BAY AREA COMMUNITY ADVISORS AND GRANTEE PARTNERS



ACCE Institute, Contra Costa

ACCE Institute, Oakland

AYPAL: Building API Community Power

Causa Justa :: Just Cause

East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy

East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative

Eastside Arts Alliance

Eden Community Land Trust

Faith in Action Bay Area

Filipino Advocates for Justice

Glad Tidings Community Development Corporation

North Bay Organizing Project

Regional Tenant Organizing Network

Priorities Going Forward

The Fund is learning and applying lessons of the last four years to ensure leaders and residents can sustain organizing and community engagement for the long-haul. We are working to heed the call of base-building organizations in the Bay Area urging philanthropy to invest significant resources in leadership development, mental health and community well-being.

Looking ahead, Community Advisors have emphasized the need for F4ICA's continued role to maintain and deepen support across the Bay Area. Groups cited these examples of how F4ICA has contributed to their success in power building for housing justice: "helped us get closer to defining the role and power of culture...in the context of housing justice," "able to take our first big step in doing a network wide direct action at the local Courthouse to highlight the continued evictions," and "our tenant organizer greatly benefited from networks and training."

To ensure our continued responsiveness to the needs of the Bay Area 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 and visit fundforaninclusiveca.org to learn more about our work, partners and how to get involved.

