A Brown Paper on Movement Building & Collective Action
To Leverage Historic Federal Funds for Enduring Social Change
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Executive Summary

On April 19, 2022, the Latino Community Foundation (LCF) and The California Endowment (TCE) convened philanthropic, nonprofit, and government leaders around a call to action to end and reverse historic disinvestments in Latino communities.
This Brown Paper aims to capture the powerful voices of community leaders, the vision and solutions offered by grassroot organizers, and the commitments made by bold, dedicated philanthropic and government leaders. The room was filled to capacity by people who dare to envision a new normal for California—a place where shared values for justice and equity are met with love, joy, culture, and community power.

Leaders from across California’s civil society agreed to come together to pave a way for Latino-led grassroot organizations to seize the moment and leverage historic federal investments to build a more equitable and just California. The organizing event was part of LCF’s historic Latino Power Fund, a groundbreaking $50 million initiative to unleash Latino civic and political power in the state.

The day began with a healing circle—a sacred space to ground participants in their interdependence for healing, visioning, collective care, and community building. Masha Chernyak, Senior Vice President of LCF, reminded the group: “A circle has no beginning and no end—as do the dreams and hopes of people who dare to imagine a new world.” Local Bay Area poet Jose Cordon stepped into the circle to recite a poem entitled “Essential”—honoring the lives of Latinos who were classified essential but who have been essentially forgotten and beaten down by oppressive cycles of racism that inhibit their greatness.

Jacqueline Martinez Garcel, CEO of LCF, closed out the circle with a time of remembrance and prayer for the over 41,000 Latino families who lost a mother, father, sister, daughter, tía, tío, abuelo to COVID-19 in the last two years. She reminded everyone gathered that the day’s commitment was to change the circumstances that have cast people to the margins of society and left them vulnerable to the crises that claimed their lives. The relationships in the circle were not meant to be transactional or based on charity. The intention of the day and years ahead is to unleash the power of the collective group to be a force for deliberate and transformational social change.

Dr. Robert K. Ross, CEO of TCE, opened his remarks with a call to action to philanthropic leaders to liberate capital to fund the people. Less than year ago, LCF launched the Latino Power Fund to amplify the voices of Latino grassroot leaders and invest in their solutions.

Dr. Ross closed his remarks pointing to the privilege and responsibilities of leaders in the philanthropic sector. His words, “when the most disenfranchised are funded, it signals that they are seen, and they belong,” restate the purpose of the Latino Power Fund, a message

“We are a people of strength, vision, and power. We will build a democracy that reflects us and an economy that includes us. A nation where we thrive, not simply survive. That’s why we launched the Latino Power Fund.”

— Jacqueline Martinez Garcel, CEO of LCF
from our gente: ¡Aquí estamos! For Dr. Ross, it is not just a moral but a spiritual responsibility to honor his ancestors who made it possible for him to stand where he is today.

The group then transitioned to hear from Gene Sperling, White House ARP Coordinator and Senior Advisor to President Biden, who joined the conversation virtually. He reiterated that, “President Biden created this once-in-a-generation investment not just to have a recovery that looks good on paper, but to have an equitable recovery that addresses structural inequities and lifts everyone impacted by the pandemic.”

Nancy Lindborg, CEO of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, summarized the opening session stating that, “this is an extraordinary moment to reimagine our country for the benefit of everyone. It is the reason why, “supporting the Latino Power Fund was a no brainer” for Packard. For these federal funds to reach the people who need them most, then funding the civic and grassroot organizations that have the relationships with family and community is a critical component that foundations have the capacity and resources to do.

As part of the Latino Power Fund, LCF invested in 35 Latino-led grassroot organizations working to ensure the equitable distribution of the American Rescue Plan (ARP), President Biden’s $1.9T piece of legislation intended to help communities hardest hit by COVID-19. As Jacqueline Martinez Garcel emphasized, these resources belong to the people, especially considering when Latinos contribute over $300 billion in taxes regardless of citizenship status.

Christian Arana, Vice President of Policy at LCF, then led a conversation with three Latina grassroot leaders who are organizing and using their voices to secure adequate ARP resources to fund community-led solutions for an equitable recovery. From Napa Valley to the Central Valley and the Imperial Valley, Latino leaders are using their agency to advocate and secure resources for housing, mental health services, essential workers’ pay, and youth programs. Community leaders shared their stories and spoke to the opportunities and challenges to seize this moment for transformational change.

“when the most disenfranchised are funded, it signals that they are seen, and they belong”

– Dr. Robert K. Ross, CEO of TCE

Latino Community Foundation
The Key Takeaways from the Conversation

Defending democracy is not a sprint, it is a marathon. It requires bold investments in grassroots organizations led by people of color.

“Nonprofit leaders are the defenders of our democracy, yet they’re the least funded part of philanthropy. By engaging in the American Rescue Plan, they’re influencing how hundreds of millions of dollars are spent with an LCF grant.” - Julio Marcial, Senior Vice President of Programs at Liberty Hill Foundation

Our Latino leaders understand the potential of these federal investments and LCF immediately strategized with community leaders to mobilize and leverage these resources for local cities and counties. Latino nonprofit leaders working on issues of criminal justice, public health, and housing were present and the resounding message in the room was: They know the transformational moment that ARP brings for their communities, and they also know that a functioning government that is responsive to the people is critical for communities to believe in their elected leaders and in their democracy. This is why through the Latino Power Fund, LCF is investing, convening, and providing technical support to secure these dollars for the benefit of Latino communities who suffered devastating losses because of COVID-19.
The advocacy of Latino grassroots leaders has already resulted in significant wins that will help Latino families and workers recover from the pandemic.

- In the City of Calexico, on the California-Mexico border, the Imperial Valley Equity and Justice Coalition (IVEJC) passed a community-led budget for $7 million in ARP funds, which included $1 million in bonus pay for essential workers.

- In the City of Merced in the Central Valley, 99Rootz secured a $1.25 million investment for a youth jobs program that will help prepare residents to enter high-paying, in-demand jobs.

- Across the state of California, LCF and 13 Latino-led nonprofits successfully advocated to U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen for greater emergency rental assistance funds, resulting in an additional $136 million for the state of California.

ARP implementation efforts vary across the state and the lack of transparency is cause for concern among advocates. Constituents are frustrated with elected officials who do not proactively engage the public in ARP budgeting decisions, especially community members who stand to benefit the most if resources are spent equitably. Many California cities and counties are already spending a significant share of ARP funds on law enforcement in lieu of funding community driven solutions to longstanding challenges in historically disinvested neighborhoods.

“ARP is one-time funding that should be going to people at the margins. It should be going to our farmworkers, to formerly incarcerated, and to our young people—to support them in getting good jobs so they can live with dignity and support their families with honor,” said Crisantema Gallardo of Power California.

The exclusion of public buy-in or disclosure of use of these funds underscores the important role that nonprofit organizations with deep roots in communities play in holding local government accountable. By law, ARP requires transparency and community participation. These organizations become the clarion call to open up the decision-making process and build transparency in the use and distribution of these tax dollars intended to be reinvested in community.

“Our coalition of nonprofit agencies in Napa County are going to help community leaders take a step forward and advocate to be a part of the ARP decision-making. This money belongs to the community,” said Indira López of UpValley Family Centers.
Multi-year funding is fundamental to advancing advocacy agendas that address the root causes of poverty and poor health.

Latino nonprofit leaders expressed the need for multi-year, trust-based funding to transform, remake, or tear down the systems that failed our communities, even before the arrival of the pandemic.

Consistent longer-term investments build strong anchor organizations, which in turn continue produce generations of change makers that steadily advance equity across social, economic, and political determinants of health and wealth. Organizations limited to program specific and one-year grants have limited ability to challenge systemic inequities and societal injustices.

Latino grassroot leaders want funders to embrace a trust-based approach in grantmaking, which includes simplifying reporting requirements. Transitioning grantmaking away from quantitative data reporting and towards open dialogue and relationship-building practices, alleviates power imbalances between donors and grantees.

“We need the confidence to know funders trust our work,” said Daniela Flores of IVEJC. “Be open to methods beyond quantitative data reporting and be willing to listen to personalized narratives.”

This approach recognizes that Latino nonprofit leaders have the knowledge, skills, and experience for using funds to serve and advocate for their communities.

Increase support in regions of the state that have been historically underfunded—and go beyond the check.

Regions like the Central Valley, Central Coast, and the Inland Empire—which are also predominantly Latino—continue to be severely underfunded and under-resourced. The Latino Power Fund will prioritize these regions and invest beyond the dollar by providing technical assistance, and creating networks and peer learning communities to help organizations leverage larger public and private investments to achieve their visions.

“When LCF invests in organizations, they also build connections and networks,” says Camille Llanes-Fontanilla of Sobrato Philanthropies. “There are organizations across the state doing great work not getting seen by philanthropy.”

Her message is not limited to merely cutting a check. It also means bringing visibility to these areas by inviting them into larger philanthropic networks. This is how LCF’s Latino Nonprofit Accelerator has helped 18 organizations raise more than $10 million in new funding. Organizations are connected to a pool of influential people that will champion their mission and invest in their work.
It’s Time to Break the Mold.

“LCF is breaking the model of how philanthropy thinks of itself. It embraces its history, and its connection and relationship to community in an authentic way.” —Miguel Santana, CEO of the Weingart Foundation

To date, LCF has invested over $20 million in Latino-led nonprofit organizations across the state, including anchor organizations that reach the most underserved populations, including rural, Indigenous, and farmworker communities. LCF’s impact also goes beyond the dollar. LCF’s Latino Nonprofit Accelerator and the Latino Giving Circle Network center cultural strength and the power of authentic relationship building, while increasing civic engagement among Latinos.

The Latino Nonprofit Accelerator, the first-ever 16-month incubator for Latino nonprofits, invests money, provides marketing training and fundraising mentorship, and a loving community to amplify the voice and accelerate the impact of grassroots organizations. To date, it has helped 18 organizations raise more than $10 million in new funding. The Latino Giving Circle Network (LGCN), the largest network of Latino philanthropists in the country with more than 400 active members united by a shared sense of justice and generosity, has invested over $2.4 million into 100+ Latino-led nonprofit organizations across California.
Meet our Funded Partners
Advancing our Latino Power Fund in 2022

Latino Nonprofit Accelerator

Latino-led organizations play a vital role in building the civic and economic power in our communities yet they only receive 1.1% of all philanthropic dollars. Through our groundbreaking Latino Nonprofit Accelerator, LCF is helping leaders step off year-to-year crisis response fundraising and step into deeper, more proactive statewide power building. Through world-class fundraising, branding, and a unique Retreat model, LCF’s Accelerator participants have doubled their confidence, united as a community, and have collectively secured over $10 million in new funding. Visit our website to learn more about the impact of our model.

Meet our 2022-23 cohort!

Visit our website to learn more about the impact of our model.
## American Rescue Plan Cohort

**Bay Area**
- Chicana Latina Foundation
- Fruitvale Development Corporation, Inc. (The Unity Council)
- KBBF FM
- Monument Impact
- Nuestra Casa de East Palo Alto
- North Bay Organizing Project
- UpValley Family Centers of Napa County

**Central Coast**
- Center for Farmworker Families
- MICOP
- MILPA
- Mujeres en Accion
- Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos
- Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County

**Central Valley**
- California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
- Dolores Huerta Foundation
- Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
- Power California
- SIREN
- Valley Voices
- Youth Leadership Institute

**Los Angeles County**
- CHIRLA (fbo Immigrants Are LA)
- Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance
- The Translatin@ Coalition

**Mendocino County**
- UVA, Vecinos en Acción

**Orange County**
- Chispa Education Fund

**Riverside County**
- Pomona Economic Opportunity Center
- Alianza Coachella Valley
- TODEC

**Sacramento County**
- United Latinos
- Western Service Workers Association

**Silicon Valley**
- Fondo de Solidaridad de Mountain View
- Latinas Contra Cancer
- SOMOS Mayfair

**Imperial County**
- Comite Civico Del Valle
- Imperial Valley Equity and Justice Coalition
The Road Ahead

When working properly, philanthropy, nonprofit organizations, and government are part of the same ecosystem striving to restore justice and eliminate inequities. In the months ahead, LCF in partnership with The Raben Group will host two virtual convenings for organizations working to leverage federal funds and seize this moment. These convenings will be an opportunity for organizations to network with other Latino nonprofit leaders and share their triumphs, hurdles, and priority agendas for the equitable implementation of ARP funding.

LCF and Latino Power Fund partners also committed to continuing the work with government agencies to amplify the voices of Latinos in California. With key leaders like Secretary Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez from the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, there are ample opportunities to advance housing justice through tenant protection policies, rental assistance, and homeless prevention efforts. LCF and the partners in the room understand that to realistically address housing issues during threatening inflation, Latinos need to access better paying jobs and/or increase their skills to enter high-demand, high-paying jobs. In partnership with Secretary Natalie Palugyai of the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency, LCF is ready to help equip Latinos for these opportunities. This is a historic moment. With these two key Latina decision-makers—grounded in a deep sense of justice and a shared lived experience with millions of Latino Californians—leading two of the most important agencies in California.
The vision and dreams of the Latino Power Fund extend far beyond the immediate federal and state resources promised to these communities. LCF is also committed to heal and rebuild a multi-racial, multi-generational movement of changemakers that are guarding our democracy and creating a more inclusive, and just economy. To get there, these are just a few of our plans and dreams for the road ahead:

1. **Deepen Investments in Cultural Organizing.**
   To heal from years of unprecedented loss and trauma, LCF will seek to double down on funding the arts to shape the broader culture and embolden our movements.

2. **Support Capital Campaigns for Latino Nonprofits.**
   To move beyond the crises, organizations need a sustainable financial base, so that they can plan for their long-term goals. Through the Power Fund, LCF will begin making these investments in 2022.

3. **Invest Boldly in Voter Engagement Year-Round.**
   Year-round support of civic organizations led by people of color is key to a strong and representative democracy. Beyond funding the cycles of elections, LCF is committed to investing in the infrastructure of these civic organizations working to expand the electorate, inspire new voters, and engage youth leaders.

4. **Join Forces with the California Black Freedom Fund.**
   The shared vision of the Black Freedom Fund and the Latino Power Fund is a force to be reckoned with. The winners will be Black and Brown communities who shape their own political agenda, lead their movements for change, and restore healing and justice—all while centering joy, love, and culture in communities.

5. **Launch a Statewide Communications Campaign to Tell Our Own Stories.**
   Our stories are our power. Brown and Black communities are ready to shape the narrative of who we are as a people—as leaders, as changemakers, as philanthropists.
Mil Gracias

The Latino Community Foundation and The California Endowment would like to express our deepest gratitude to the organizations that took part in this inspiring and powerful convening. After two years of virtual gatherings, it was an honor to create this space for community.

Thank you for trusting us. Thank you for showing up with an open heart and open mind. Thank you for your willingness to lead with empathy, compassion, and vulnerability. It is the only way forward where we can truly heal from the collective trauma and universal pain that we all experienced.

The conversation at this first Latino Power Fund briefing was just the beginning. We will see you again...as we deliver on the promise of a new normal centered on love, power, and culture.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Jacqueline Martinez Garcel
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