

REVOLUTIONIZING

LATINO
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
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DISASTER PHILANTHROPY

A Case Study: The Just Recovery Partnership

“A Just Recovery takes into account the **voices of those most affected by the disaster** and prioritizes justice for people and the planet. Together, we are looking at systemic issues and creating avenues for people to push for **policies that will further protect our people and our planet** – things like higher wages, rent control, environmental action, and immigrant protections, while at the same time **re-imagining how we tend to the land**, how we **de-commodify housing**, and how we might **share control over means of production**. A Just Recovery uses the **disaster as a unique opportunity to organize**, bring attention to the issues, and together, **reimagine the future.**”

— Davin Cardenas, former NBOP Lead Organizer

INTRO

On October 8th, 2017, the devastating Tubbs Wildfire swept across Napa and Sonoma County. Each year since, wildfires have ravaged these and a growing number of communities across the West. It has become clear that fire season is becoming longer and more intense each year with deep impacts in our community. Recent data shows that Latinos are twice as likely to live in the areas most threatened by wildfire.

Amid this backdrop, new innovations fueled by grassroots leaders are emerging about what it means to prepare for, withstand, and recover from a crisis. The Latino Community Foundation (LCF) Just Recovery Partnership was born out of our Wildfire Relief Fund begun in 2017. Providing critical financial and emergency assistance, rehousing support, hot meals and Spanish translation, LCF invested in trusted Latino-led community nonprofits in Napa and Sonoma County to ensure that Latino and immigrant families were not left to suffer in the shadows.

But we also set our sights on long-term social change. Long before the first fires sparked, Latino families across the North Bay endured ongoing struggles to find dignified work, affordable homes, and high-quality education. Latinos make up 71% of the workforce at vineyards and other agricultural businesses, and more than 40% of the workforce in the tourism and hospitality industry according to California's Employment Development Department. Many of these families live paycheck to paycheck and many are mixed status or undocumented, disqualifying them from accessing government assistance. Other families that do qualify are too fearful to apply or provide information to the government due to the political climate.



The fires exacerbated these overlapping crises, but also presented an opportunity. Given the unprecedented philanthropic response, LCF knew this was a chance to do even more – to leverage the recovery to transform the region and to invest in change, not charity.

Together with three leading Latino-led organizations in the region – La Luz Center, UpValley Family Centers, and North Bay Organizing Project (NBOP) – we co-designed a long-term strategy to unite Latino leaders, invest in Latino nonprofits, and build people power. Four years later, we are proud to report back on the Just Recovery Partnership’s incredible success, especially given how the Partnership expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic and the transformational impact this work has had on our partners, the region, and us.

In Revolutionizing Disaster Philanthropy, we share our proud accomplishments, our lessons learned, and our recommendations for how philanthropy can fundamentally change the game of crisis response once and for all.



Kickoff with families and leaders of the Just Recover Partnership

OVERVIEW

Through the Just Recovery Partnership, LCF places Latino and immigrant families at the center of relief and recovery efforts to ensure they play a pivotal role in the rebuilding of their communities. Since inception, the Partnership has been through three major wildfires, flooding, power outages, and a global pandemic. Yet our unique process of building the Partnership and our dynamic three-phase strategy has kept our leaders and organizations strong and connected.

When the earliest fires hit, the Latino Community Foundation convened three of our existing partners in the region – La Luz Center, North Bay Organizing Project, and UpValley Family Centers. We let them know the funds that were available and gave them the agency and freedom to think boldly and dream big as they planned to leverage these resources. Through a participatory grantmaking process, they identified seven additional partners, organizations with deep roots and trust in the community to join the effort. We brought on a fellow to manage the Partnership to ensure there was capacity for both coalition-wide and more targeted activities.

The trust, imagination, and openness that each leader brought into these conversations were powerful and inspiring. Over the course of several convenings with our partners, we co-designed a three-phase approach to a just recovery:

Phase I

Immediate Relief.

Grants to organizations enable them to rapidly mobilize support to families affected by wildfires, including but not limited to financial aid, food, re-housing, transportation, child care, and language translation support.

Phase II

Strengthen Community and Organizational Capacity to respond to crisis and help communities recover.

Core operating grants strengthen the infrastructure of Latino-led nonprofits. Partners were able to hire additional staff, including Promotoras and youth organizers to meet the moment. LCF also prioritized hiring a fellow to coordinate our work, ensuring that Latino leaders could focus locally and build stronger networks and partnerships through convenings, access to shared resources, and coordinating services and information.

Phase III

Building Civic and Economic Power for Systemic Change.

Leaders agreed that things wouldn't change unless we invested and prioritized community organizing for lasting social change. NBOP inspired the cohort to push for building power from day 1. Each year, the cohort of leaders define their priorities and take collective action. Efforts include increasing Latino participation in the 2020 Census and General Elections and local tenant rights campaigns.

Along the way we've continued to innovate and expand our strategies and our impact. This includes projects like the Just Recovery Promotora Network that is building the leadership of a cohort of 60 women from each of our 10 partner organizations. By focusing on the leadership of Promotoras – who already are trusted messengers in their communities – we are building our muscle to disseminate resources and information, elevating the voices of these powerful Latinas, and ensuring they have a seat at decision-making tables. LCF is proud to have invested in the capacity of these local leaders. We have equipped each Promotora with a brand-new laptop, tech training, provided bi-monthly workshops based on their feedback, and hosted a Healing Retreat to support their holistic wellness.

The Partnership model also effectively builds resilience and prosperity across the region. In 2022, the Just Recovery Partnership will expand a Disaster Resiliency training developed by Corazon Healdsburg to three additional Partnership organizations. These initiatives focused on community-rooted and community-led disaster preparedness that will serve as a model for the rest of the state and nation. We've also leveraged our resources to fund bold economic justice projects, such as providing seed funding to a micro-loan program that is now the first Latino CDFI in Sonoma County.

Just Recovery AT-A-GLANCE:

\$4 Million Invested in 20+ Latino nonprofits

2% increase in the 2020 Census count in the region compared to 2010 (despite COVID)

12% increase in voter participation among eligible voters since the 2016 Presidential Election

JUST RECOVERY Partnership Organizations:



North Bay Organizing Project



La Luz Center



UpValley Family Centers



89.1 KBBF



Community Health Initiative



Movimiento Cultural de la Union Indigena



On The Move



Corazon Healdsburg



Raizes Collective



Puertas Abiertas Community Resource Center



Latino Community Foundation



Just Recovery Partnership leaders

OUR IMPACT

Grassroots leaders feel confident and connected.

In many Latino-led organizations, staff can feel isolated because of a lack of investment and strong networks. Through the Just Recovery Partnership, grassroots leaders build new and authentic relationships with each other and LCF. Collectively, they have experienced what it means to be part of a philanthropic community that is guided by values of LOVE and TRUST. They are able to share the realities of doing the work while seeding cross-organizational and cross-community initiatives.

When you feel part of something bigger and know that people have your back, leaders and organizations are able to flourish. This work helped us move from a scarcity mentality to a much bigger dreaming and organizing mode.

Relief and wildfire recovery work prepared folks for the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the early fires that struck, organizations were scrambling to respond. Yet through the strengthening Partnership, in each subsequent crisis, there has been a more strategic and targeted response. For example, Spanish and indigenous language translation and signage have improved each year. Leaders from the Partnership serve as critical advisors to county officials on emergency preparedness, language justice, and crisis response plans. Groups in the Partnership advocated for the distribution of emergency to-go bags to families and made sure that farmworkers weren't forgotten. Most of all, the strength of relationships across counties and organizations helped leaders to respond and organize much quicker.

When you live through multiple crises as a community, you build a muscle. During the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, our leaders were already taking action. They were able to quickly set up emergency aid programs, advocate for financial assistance, ensure that undocumented families wouldn't be left behind, and shine a spotlight on the inequities in their communities impossible for their public leaders to ignore.

In early 2021, we began to collaborate on vaccination campaigns in the Latino community. To reach Latinos in Napa and Sonoma, we hosted pop-up events centered around culture, healing, and art. Promotoras and trusted healthcare workers were present to answer questions about the vaccine and help schedule vaccination appointments. Raizes Collective partnered with local artists to create posters that encouraged community members to get their vaccination, sparking trust and joy in process. Together, we continue to get through it.

Just Recovery Partners secured wins in civic engagement and representation.

Our leaders recognize that until Latino families have strong representation in civic life, it will be difficult to transform the underlying systemic issues which leave our community vulnerable when a crisis hits. They worked tirelessly in 2020 to ensure that Latinos would participate in the decennial census, creating innovative approaches such as Censoteria – a twist on the traditional Mexican game of Lotería to educate community members about the importance of the census and being civically engaged.

Despite the challenges of organizing amid shelter-in-place, Latino participation in the 2020 Census improved due to our collective efforts. Across the region, the self-participation rate increased 2% from 2010. We also ensured a strong Latino turnout for the General Election, helping to increase overall turnout in the region by 12% compared to the 2016 Presidential Election. We'll continue to build on this momentum as our partners now focus on redistricting, advocacy related to safe and affordable housing, and ramping up organizing efforts on immigration reform.

Our collective vision led to wins for housing justice.

Early in the Partnership, our leaders identified housing as one of the most critical challenges facing the community. Low housing stock with high prices in Napa and Sonoma County were an issue long before the fires. And, immigrant families have been especially susceptible to greedy, unethical landlords and housing practices. These problems were merely compounded by the fires. Yet, attention in our region because of the fires created an opportunity to elevate these problems and secure critical wins.

Through efforts led by North Bay Organizing Project, advocates won a two-year campaign to establish rent control in Santa Rosa and created a Tenants Union to assist residents with housing related challenges. They also secured a moratorium on evictions which became especially essential through the pandemic. They continue to organize apartment communities to advocate for their rights.

LESSONS LEARNED

Trusted, local grassroots organizations are Frontline Responders.

In any crisis, getting out accurate information quickly and early is key. Grassroots organizations such as family resource centers and community organizing engines are the first place to be called on in a crisis. They have built the trust and relationships with families, are able to communicate in the languages people speak, and can connect in the places where community members feel safe. Fundamental to the Just Recovery model is asking how we can resource these groups in an ongoing way so they have what they need to respond as the trusted, first responders they are.

Investing in promotoras is a win-win solution.

In Latino communities everywhere, women leaders are the backbone. The Promotora model recognizes the power and expertise of immigrant women as trusted messengers in their neighborhoods and communities. They serve as connectors, mobilizers, and organizers, often without payment or recognition. Amid the wildfires and pandemic, the Just Recovery Partnership has enabled our partner organizations to pay stipends to Promotoras, give them computers and internet to bolster their efforts, allow them to organize around the census and election digitally, and provide the support they needed to thrive.

The realities of working families surviving crisis after crisis must be centered.

The needs of our community are expansive beyond fire season because of the lack of a strong, social safety net. In times of crisis, the most pressing needs are often completely forgotten by crisis funders and public programs. Essential needs such as wage replacement for workers can help ensure help families stay in their homes and create stability amidst uncertain, challenging periods.

Other essential needs such as food and the ability to travel are also often overlooked. Consider that during recent fire seasons, regional power outages caused families to lose fridges full of food – yet families often don't have the money to replace it. Others who are out of work might not have money to fill their gas tank in order to evacuate. Low-wage workers are unlikely to have renter's insurance, yet current disaster responses often prioritize property and home-owners, not renters.

We must ask how we can create communities that are more resilient for everyone, so when disasters hit, all families are able to adapt and move forward.

Trust and love are key ingredients for success.

Everything we do at the Latino Community Foundation is grounded in love for our people, our cultures, and our community. Operating out of love and trust are legitimate ways of doing the work, but too often undervalued in traditional crisis response and philanthropic efforts.

One of the simplest approaches we brought was trusting our partners to know what was needed and how to use the funds. And yet, our partners report this was one of its most radical impacts. As Susan from NBOP reflected, “Having someone believe in us, changed us.”

Just imagine the transformation that could be possible if every leader and every organization knew that they were recognized and trusted to flex their expertise.

A shared vision builds power and impact.

Without long-term power building, crisis response is always a band aid approach. We know that disasters will continue to happen, so key to the Just Recovery Partnership was asking what it would take to build the resiliency and organizing muscle of every community before crisis strikes.

Our answer was twofold: Housing rights and access, and representation via the census and voter engagement. While each organization adopted different strategies that matched their mission and community’s needs, the shared framework helped us build together towards systemic transformation and make an impact greater than the sum of our parts. Napa and Sonoma counties are now home to a strong, united Latino coalition which will continue to grow.

Capacity grows capacity.

Key to our impact was the decision to provide a fellow who could staff the Partnership. This enabled our grantee partners to focus on what they do best – meeting the needs of the community they serve and attending vital meetings where decisions were being made about the future of the region. Our fellow helped coordinate across the partner organizations, launch the Just Recovery Promotora Network, convene the Partnership, and take the lead on county and regional advocacy on behalf of the partners.

Healing is part of a just recovery.

Central to everything we do is a focus on culture and healing. We recently hosted our first-ever Healing Festival for the Just Recovery Partnership. More than 75 Promotoras and Staff from all 10 partner organizations joined LCF on a community farm. Leaders had access to massages, herbal medicine workshops, art, music, delicious food, relationship building and an emphasis on how to prioritize our own mental, physical and spiritual health. Our leaders told us they felt loved, rejuvenated and re-inspired to continue this hard work. Our own staff expressed how empowering it is to live the values of community care. Taking care of ourselves is not outside of the work but IS the work. Without healing, there is no recovery.

Move quickly, adapt constantly.

At LCF, we've grown our muscle to not let process or perfection prevent us from acting. It's easy in philanthropy to overthink the problems and the solutions before getting started. We aren't afraid to launch something, try out things, take risks and then constantly learn, improve and strengthen the vision as we go. Especially in disaster situations, our community can't wait for us to act. We cannot overthink our way out of it. We have to learn by doing.

This model works.

Everything we've learned through the Just Recovery Partnership was quickly applied when the Latino Community Foundation launched the Love Not Fear Fund in the early days of the pandemic or our vaccination campaign in 2021. These initiatives build on the pillars of our success – listening to insight from on the ground community organizers, being in deep relationship with grassroots leaders, and combining funds for immediate action with long-term power building and capacity building. When the pandemic hit, we knew exactly what to do.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FIELD

① Move unrestricted funds to grassroots Latino-led nonprofits.

Latino-led grassroots organizations are the trusted community anchors and the first responders for our community. There is no lack of leadership – just a lack of investment in these leaders, their Promotoras, and youth organizers. Many only receive outreach dollars from other large-scale nonprofits, but these are the organizations who do the work. They are the ones with the most important infrastructure — community relationships. Foundations should recognize crisis as a time to go over the 5% floor for charitable giving and invest heavily in both immediate relief and long-term recovery.

This sometime means funding the “less sexy” stuff. For example, the Latino Community Foundation moved a grant to the North Bay Organizing Project so they could hire staff for the management of the Undocufund. While this type of back-end, infrastructure grant isn’t as exciting as moving money directly to families, these funds were critical to NBOP and the Undocufund’s success. Trust the leaders you are investing in to know how the money needs to be used and get them the resources to do so quickly.

② Invest in economic mobility programs that create stable, resilient communities in the long term.

In Napa and Sonoma, there is a huge need to help people build more stable careers and secure family-sustaining wages. The major industries – wine and hospitality – will continue to be disrupted by fires. Initiatives that provide residents training in sectors such as construction, education, and small business entrepreneurship can generate security and prosperity for entire communities.

Furthermore, greater investment in worker rights are critical. For example, as is true in counties across the state, local governments make it possible for agriculture access passes to be granted to growers during times of

② Invest in economic mobility programs... (cont.)

evacuation and danger of fire and smoke. A handful of winery bosses even drove to evacuation shelters to drive their workers back to the field even as smoke and ash filled the skies. Many vineyard workers have work visas which prevents them from accessing public relief available to citizens, residents, or funds specifically for undocumented people. We need to change these realities even as we build more pathways to family-sustaining careers.

③ Mobilize resources to help communities prevent and prepare disasters.

When disaster funding only focuses on crisis response, communities struggle to be resilient. Philanthropy should prioritize investments that help organizations and their people prevent and prepare for disasters such as funding groups that organize at the intersections of racial, economic, and climate justice in Latino communities. If more philanthropic institutions funded at these intersections, true systemic change could finally be possible.

Resources could also help grassroots leaders design and implement disaster preparedness plans, fund the deployment of emergency kits, and help working families secure renters' insurance and other critical support.

④ Listen and lead with trust.

Too often disaster funding efforts act as if the need for speed overcomes the importance of getting grassroots input. To support communities of color, it's not one or the other - it's both! If funders and local officials build relationship with community leaders and grassroots organizations all the time, those relationships translate into the ability to move quickly when a crisis hits. It also means that people on the frontlines have a voice at decision making tables so that disaster programs can be designed with the actual, lived needs of people in mind.

When you engage in deeper relationships with your grantees it transforms the work. You can't always predict when an emergency will arise. But if you have strong connections with people leading work on the ground, you can pivot more quickly and more strategically whenever crisis hits.

⑤ Fund diverse income efforts and access to homes.

In immigrant and working-class communities across California, access to living wage jobs and affordable homes remain a huge challenge that only worsens amid a fire or pandemic. Mobilizing resources so that every community has a strong safety net and every family has the stability that comes with a good job and safe home is the only way to shift the underling systemic inequities. That includes investing in universal basic income initiatives, hazard pay programs, renters' insurance, and savings programs. We can also leverage our influence to fight for new policies that protect tenants from discrimination and displacement.

⑥ Invest in grassroots philanthropic strategies.

For us, the Latino Giving Circle Network has emerged as a strong collective response force amid the crises of the past four years. Not only has the Latino led philanthropic movement approach brought new and more people into the sector, but our Giving Circles were also able to act quickly and decisively to move money to where it was needed most.

They also know and fund the smallest organizations that are traditionally overlooked by mainstream philanthropy for being too scrappy and “not ready” for major investment. For instance, most of our Giving Circles waived their application requirements during the pandemic and showed up with masks and food to support the leaders they've met through this community. The ability to move money quickly is key in the early days of a crisis, and yet, grassroots groups often wait months for funds from public or private institutions.

⑦ Don't let a crisis be the only time we do these things.

We saw incredible generosity and an appetite for bold, responsive action emerge from the crisis. For example, recognizing the grave inequities facing undocumented families amid relief efforts and creating the well-resourced Undocufund to address them. The digital divide was finally crystal clear during “shelter in place”. The exploitation of low wage farmworkers deemed essential.

What would it take to translate these priorities into constants within philanthropy? We need a philanthropic culture that is always willing to be bold and to move quickly. A culture of trust and solidarity with the grassroots, rather than one full of proces and oversight.



**HEALING
IS A JUST
RECOVERY**

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Microstory #1

LA LUZ

by Veronica Vences, Director of Development

When the fires of 2017 first began, calls to our resource center skyrocketed with people asking, “Where can I find masks?” “What do I do since I can’t go to work?” “Will I be protected if I go to a shelter?” Amid the panic, we soon saw how devastating the impact would be. More than 5,000 housing units burned in Sonoma County and the families we serve don’t have reserves for hotels. We knew people were out of work and that wage replacement would be key.



La Luz Leadership who helped design the Partnership

The Latino Community Foundation was the very first foundation to call us at La Luz Center and ask how we were doing and what we needed. Within weeks, \$50K had become \$300K. We joined forces with UpValley Center and North Bay Organizing Project and LCF gave us the power to join them in the dreaming process.

First what was needed was immediate relief. We transformed our Booker Hall into a donation center and dining hall and set up our service center to process requests for food, rental assistance, and other supplies. But from the beginning, everyone in the partnership knew that more than relief was required. We wanted to seize the opportunity to create some real, lasting change and identified additional organizations to join the Partnership.

From the beginning what was most unique was that the Latino Community Foundation trusted us to know our communities and therefore determine how to use the money. Because of the relationships and the trust, it has facilitated a level of creativity and visioning that many groups are never given the luxury of time or funds to do.

Each subsequent year La Luz Center has strengthened our disaster response muscle and have seen our partners do the same. Our shared vision for lasting change is simple but I believe it can happen – our kids, and their children will be able to live here, belong and thrive.

Microstory #2

UPVALLEY FAMILY CENTERS (UVFC)

By Jenny Ocon, Executive Director

UpValley Family Centers was born when two family resource centers in Calistoga and St. Helena merged to better support immigrant and working families in the region. We are proud to have earned the trust of community members who rely on us for culturally relevant, respectful and loving support.



UVFC Promotoras carrying out 2020 Census Outreach

When a fire in the county north of us led to mass evacuations in 2015, we noticed there was no signage in Spanish or translation services available in local shelters so we set up a table to share information. Two years later, the entire city of Calistoga was evacuated amid the 2017 Tubbs Fire creating a huge impact on our families and our team. Our presence in local shelters was critical – seeing our friendly faces there let families know it was safe to access resources despite challenges like immigration status. We also stepped up to provide 24-hour Spanish language support for public briefings, and information and referrals services.

These fires compounded an already very difficult situation where safe, affordable housing is scarce locally and many of our families are not eligible for FEMA relief. That's why the second and third phases – that looked beyond immediate relief – of this Partnership were key. We've made progress in the years since, including bilingual signage at evacuation sites and emergency shelters, as well as creating a new partnership with KBBF Radio that now allows us an easy way to communicate quickly and effectively to Spanish and indigenous language speaking families.

Our Promotoras are also a huge asset. They were very active in calling Spanish-speaking voters, inviting their neighbors to complete the census, and distributing information in the early days of COVID-19. We've demonstrated that placing everyday community members in the role of trusted messengers works.

Living through one crisis after another has been stressful for our organization and our community. But being a part of the Just Recovery Partnership has been healing. LCF knows that the work is about people and they trust us and the other partners to lead as we see fit. Responding to relief needs, while also building a more permanent and solid safety net for our families, are what is needed.

Microstory #3

RAIZES COLLECTIVE

By Isabel Lopez, Executive Director

Our name – Raizes means roots. We see culture and the arts as an essential foundation to spark activism and resiliency in our communities. We began the Raizes Collective to fill the gap in Santa Rosa for Latino cultural and organizing spaces.

In emergency situations, you don't have time to write grants and our families don't have supplemental income or savings. Becoming part of the Just Recovery Partnership gave us the resources we needed to act quickly. For example, as vaccination became widely available, we rapidly realized that mistrust was a huge issue in our community.

Through the Partnership, we connected with Spanish speaking health advocates, and were able to hire artists to create effective visual content about the vaccines. This art which motivates our community with messages about protecting our elders and elevating voices of trusted messengers have been key in building trust and participation in local vaccination efforts. We hosted a pop-up healing and arts fair to encourage sign ups as well as vaccine clinics.

Not only has LCF and the Partnership impacted what we have been able to do; but also, how we feel. We've never had a funder trust us like this before. It makes me feel seen. Doing this collective work has helped me recognize our impact – I'm so grateful to be a part of it.



Isabel Lopez

Microstory #4

NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE, A PROGRAM OF ON THE MOVE

By Yadira Chavez, Outreach Coordinator; Susana Garcia, Program Director; and Alissa Abdo, Executive Director of On The Move



Susana Garcia

At Neighborhood Initiative, our mission is to strengthen families so they can flex their power. Our work emerges from longstanding health and education inequities between White and Latinx communities in Napa county. We help young people and their parents meet their basic needs so that they have the opportunity to build and activate their inherent leadership.

Our families, many of whom are low-wage seasonal workers, have been greatly impacted by the fires in our region. Lost homes, lost jobs, lost wages all deepen the trauma that immigrant families often already carry. Because of our bicultural and bilingual staff and their talent for building deep relationships and trust with the community, Neighborhood Initiative is a first responder for any emergency.

Working with the Just Recovery Partnership allows us to address immediate basic needs while also changing the systemic conditions that puts our community at greater risk in the first place. On top of that, this effort has facilitated collaboration and continuity across city and county lines resulting in greater community resilience and power. Now we work closely across the region to create better systems and maximize the number of families we can reach.

I wish that public agencies and philanthropy would be inspired by this model and recognize the importance of equity, collaboration, and trust in emergency work and invest not just in short term relief but also in long term systemic advocacy to create permanent change.

Microstory #5

NORTH BAY ORGANIZING PROJECT (NBOP)

By Susan Shaw, Former Executive Director



Irma Garcia, NBOP Board President

When the 2017 fires first hit, it was shocking. 64 fires broke out that night, burning 5% of the Santa Rosa housing stock. We heard that families were camping out on the beach, terrified of going to local shelters, and struggling to find accurate information in Spanish. We also knew that many of the families we organized with wouldn't qualify for traditional forms of aid such as FEMA relief or rental programs focused on permanent residents.

Within days, we spoke with LCF who launched the Wildfire Relief Fund and also launched the UnDocufund. The response to both exceeded our wildest imagination. Our work at North Bay Organizing Project had always been about base building and community organizing, but entering into mutual aid and relief was new. We partnered with La Luz Center who already had a family assistance program and found 100 volunteers to help families access the funds.

As the Just Recovery Partnership expanded, it strengthened our ability to win long-term advocacy campaigns. After two years, we finally won a solid rent control policy for the city of Santa Rosa and then protected the policy at the ballot box. We launched a local Tenants Union and have organized residents of apartment buildings to win safer living conditions and fight against unfair rent increases.

Most of the improvements we've seen in local emergency response are a direct result of community organizing. We secured a statewide moratorium on evictions for those impacted by the fires which was then expanded to all Californians during the pandemic. We got the County Board of Supervisors to block ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) from emergency shelters. We now have Latino leaders on the ground at evacuation sites to help direct aid to families. And the UnDocufund model has now been replicated in more than 30 communities statewide.

On top of that, being part of this work and having the Latino Community Foundation's love, trust, and investment has changed us for the better. They asked us, "what do you need?" and then did everything in their power to help us get it; no other funder had ever done that before.

At the end of the day, our core mission of base building is about creating community and the kind of lasting relationships that give communities and organizations the capacity to respond to disasters when they strike. Love for our people motivate us every day and through the Just Recovery Partnership our community, and the love and joy in it, we are more resilient than ever before.

Microstory #6

KBBF RADIO

By Alicia Sanchez, Board President

KBBF Radio was born during the height of the Chicano Student movement in 1973 in recognition of the need to reach both English and Spanish speaking Latino communities in new ways. With our antenna on the top of Mount Saint Helena, our original signal reached 18 California counties. Many in our community remember their parents learning of KBBF when they first came to the region, as a trusted source for information, commentary, and dialogue.



Alicia Sanchez

For the past 10 years, we've been an entirely volunteer-run initiative that is a hub for resources and information for Latinos as well as other immigrants and communities of color. No matter the crisis – from fires to floods to COVID-19 – our programmers show up to get on air.

Being invited to join the Just Recovery Partnership strengthened us. No longer do our programmers have to scan the internet for updates or try and do live translation of county briefings. Our partners send us the information the community needs, and we get it out quickly and in as many languages as possible. Each partner gets to do what they do best. Some are on the ground distributing masks, PPP, and sanitizer while we can make sure people know where to find them.

The Latino Community Foundation has been an invaluable partner. They share our values, our passion, and our heart. This project has given me immeasurable hope because of the greater impact we have all made together. Plus, we didn't just get funding; We gained a whole network of partners so that we don't feel so alone. By being together, we save lives and inspire communities.

“The way of life in our region, driven by the wine and tourism industry, is highly subsidized off the backs of our immigrant communities and low-wage workers.

Those who work the land, who produce the wealth, can barely afford to live where they work. The crisis for our people was in effect before the Wildfire spread. It’s the crisis of our economic system built on the exploitation of low-wage labor.”

— Davin Cardenas, former NBOP Lead Organizer

ABOUT LCF



At the Latino Community Foundation (LCF) we are on a mission to unleash the civic and economic power of Latinos in California. As the only statewide foundation led by and for the Latino community, we bring our fierce tenacity and our focus on love, trust, and relationships to everything we do. Uniquely positioned at the intersection of corporate, political and grassroots power, LCF builds authentic relationships designed to accelerate impact in unprecedented ways.

The Latino Community Foundation was founded in 1989 as an affinity group of United Way of the Bay Area to increase workplace donations to Latino-led organizations who were neglected by mainstream philanthropy. In 2003, LCF was incubated by The San Francisco Foundation to build its leadership and expand its work. Today, LCF is an independent statewide foundation with groundbreaking initiatives like the Latino Giving Circle Network, the largest network of Latino philanthropists in the nation and the Latino Nonprofit Accelerator, the 1st ever Latino-focused and tech inspired incubator focused on building the branding and fundraising muscle of grassroots nonprofits. LCF has led effective statewide campaigns to mobilize the vote, ensure Latinos are vaccinated, and to secure an accurate Census count. LCF has made history across the state and nation with its visionary programs and a bold model for change, not charity.

A Special Thank you to: Gaby Orantes, LCF's Just Recovery Fellow – thank you for pouring you heart and soul into this work. We see you and we love you! And to Meredith Fenton, thank you for helping us craft this inspiring report – you are the best!

For more information about LCF's Wildfire Relief Fund and our Just Recovery impact please contact: Masha V. Chernyak, Senior Vice President of Programs at mchernyak@latinocf.org + Samantha Sandoval, Director of Grantmaking and Special Initiatives at ssandoval@latinocf.org

To learn more about the Latino Community Foundation, please visit: www.latinocf.org