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Leading Organizers and Funders Launch Collaborative Fund to Expand Democracy and Build Lasting Power for Communities of Color in California

14 Organizations Receive More than \$7 Million in First Round of Grantmaking

December 6, 2023 -- Today, [PIVOT](#), a first-of-its-kind partnership between community organizers and funders, announced more than \$7 million in grants to 14 organizations, coalitions and networks working to build political power among communities of color, advance racial justice, and win lasting systems change in California.

“For PIVOT’s inaugural round of grantmaking, we received dozens of applications that reflect the incredible work happening in frontline communities across California, showcasing the strength and innovation of the state’s power-building ecosystem,” said Diana Colín, director of PIVOT. “Community groups have big ideas and bold goals, and philanthropy must step up to abundantly resource people power. At a time when the future of our democracy and planet is at stake, we must invest deeply to give organizers and movements the resources and capacity to win structural reform.”

PIVOT is a three-year, \$25 million initiative that raises and deploys resources for transformative innovations in year-round voter organizing across issues and geographies at scale. PIVOT is guided by a steering committee of 14 organizers and funders (for a full list, please see [here](#)) and takes trust-based philanthropy to the next level. Community organizers and funders are forging deep partnerships, developing grantmaking strategy, and collaborating to raise pooled grant funds and decide on the use of those funds. Decision-making power around grantmaking is shared with organizers, closing the gap between funder and organizing strategies, aligning priorities, and strengthening impact.

“We need community power to ensure that economic inequality doesn’t continue to grow, protect democracy, and realize racial justice in California,” said Dr. Robert K. Ross, president and CEO of The California Endowment, which serves on the PIVOT steering committee. “PIVOT

unites practitioners and funders to shift culture and practices and accelerate investments in power building. This unique model of trust-based philanthropy enables funders to understand exactly what organizers need to build and sustain community power and fuel enduring systems change.”

With the fifth largest economy in the world, California holds significant influence over the nation. The state can lead the way in fostering organizing and movement building across geography, race, and lived experience; yet [research shows](#) that voters in California are unrepresentative of the state as a whole. PIVOT’s pooled fund addresses chronic and severe underinvestment in year-round organizing and voter engagement, and galvanizes new and large-scale investments needed to build enduring political power for communities of color.

“The PIVOT fund is an experiment in supporting the development of a more resilient ecosystem of power-building organizations, rooted in a deep partnership between practitioners and funders,” said Christina Livingston, statewide executive director of ACCE Institute. “As a member of the PIVOT steering committee, I am betting that experimentation in mid-to-long term infrastructure will increase capacity and efficacy across the network of California power builders.”

In its first round of grantmaking, PIVOT is awarding multi-year grants to 14 regional and statewide organizations, coalitions, and networks reaching more than 70 organizations around the state. These efforts are partnering with community members to design and advocate for policies that reflect their needs; play decision-making roles in the systems that impact their lives; and exercise power to win systemic change through advocacy, direct action, voter organizing, and building narrative power. The 14 grantees are engaging AAPI, Black and Latinx communities as well as young people, immigrants and rural communities. Organizations are working across California, from Orange County and Inland Empire to the Bay Area, as well as statewide. Grant amounts range from more than \$250,000 to \$1 million over two years.

- **AAPIs for Civic Empowerment (AAPI FORCE)** will develop a first-of-its kind statewide AAPI Ethnic Media Hub, creating ongoing and integrated communications infrastructure to train community leaders. AAPI FORCE will also develop narratives through research-based methods, cultural organizing, and comprehensive digital and storytelling. More than half of the grant will also be regranted to eight regional organizations.
- As the only statewide membership program dedicated to developing the political education of young Asian Americans around climate justice, **APEN Action’s** statewide membership pilot will build a membership base across wider demographics and a

broader set of constituencies who want to support climate justice and follow the lead of frontline communities.

- **Bay Rising**, a growing alliance of over 30 community-led organizations across the Bay Area representing Black, Latino, and Asian working-class communities, will kick off a groundbreaking fellowship to train lead organizers and civic engagement campaign leaders.
- **California Black Power Network**, a united ecosystem of nearly 40 Black-led and Black-serving grassroots organizations, will build a multiracial coalition with a broad set of partners, communities and capacities to expand the conversation around reparations and mobilize community power and voice to urge California to introduce and pass reparations legislation. Nearly two-thirds of this grant will be regranted to 34 organizations.
- **The Central Coast Civic Engagement Table**, a new collaborative of three power-building organizations and a community foundation in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, will mobilize tens of thousands of voters and a new wave of policymakers. The table will address key gaps in the civic engagement ecosystem, particularly in many rural parts of the state. 60 percent of the grant will be regranted to three organizations.
- **Communities for a New California Education Fund** will use organizing and narrative power-building to mobilize Latina voters across California. This innovation is focusing on multi-propensity households, emphasizing Latina voters who can mobilize entire families to vote and participate in local issue-campaigns that impact their families.
- **Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (COPE)** will grow civic and voter engagement among Black churches and community-based organizations in Inland Empire's San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Two-thirds of the grant will be regranted to local partner organizations.
- **East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy** will work with partners to organize and build neighborhood specific and citywide tenants' unions in the Bay Area, Central Coast and Orange County to advance housing justice, with a particular emphasis on immigrants, youth of color and likely voters. More than two-thirds of the grant will be regranted to four partner organizations.
- **OC Action** will build a pipeline and infrastructure for community leaders to step up into co-governing and leadership roles in Orange County, the third most populous county in California and the sixth largest county in the country. A portion of the grant will be regranted to seven organizations.
- **Gente Organizada (Gente)**, which builds intergenerational power for youth and immigrant families in Pomona, East San Gabriel Valley, and Inland Empire, will create a street team that will reach over 10,000 voters, fund grassroots leadership development for youth and parents, incubate policy campaigns, and form a 501c4 organization.

- **Orange County Congregation Community Organization** will shape strategic narratives to advance inclusion, belonging, and community voice to advance immigrant rights and build community power as a counterweight to corporate influence. More than 60 percent of the grant will be regranted to three organizations.
- **Million Voters Project** will launch a narrative power academy to grow the pipeline of movement-based narrative strategists, develop a framework and dashboard to measure and track communications and narrative power, and evolve and deepen alignment among partners in its race-class messaging project to increase support for a government of care, multi-racial solidarity, and corporate accountability. 70 percent of the funds will be regranted to MVP partners and local affiliates.
- **MOVE the Valley** will create and own community centered data, ensuring more linguistic and cultural responsiveness in data gathering. It will also bring accountability to local government leaders in how they enact policy, and build a bench of organizers to ensure all families can thrive and belong in San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys. A portion of the grant will be regranted to up to five organizations.
- **PICO California** is investing in narrative strategies to mobilize, activate, and persuade faith-based and spiritually-centered Californians. These innovations include moral-based framing and messaging of racial, social, and economic justice issues, voter modeling for electoral and digital engagement, and deep integration with research, organizing, and communications aimed at critical ideological shifts undergirding systemic change in the target audience over time.

PIVOT's grantmaking focuses on three big bets – organizing, narrative change, and independent revenue projects – supporting new and innovative efforts to build power-building infrastructure, rather than existing work. In this round of grantmaking, it sought submissions from c3, c4, and fiscally sponsored organizations or coalitions doing regional or statewide work in low-income communities and communities of color.

California Community Foundation is providing fiscal and administrative management of the fund. Additional quotes from members of PIVOT's steering committee can be found [here](#).

About PIVOT:

PIVOT is a first-of-its-kind partnership between community organizers and funders that strengthens California's power-building ecosystem and advances racial justice. PIVOT invests in year-round voter organizing, giving leaders, organizations and movements the ability to build innovative long-term approaches and strategies to win lasting structural reform in California.

www.pivotca.org