

The Center on Philanthropy & Public Policy



University of Southern California



MISSION

The Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy promotes more effective philanthropy and strengthens the nonprofit sector through research that informs philanthropic decision-making and public policy to advance community problem solving.

“The Center has been helping foundations understand the importance of developing stronger connections with business, government and the general public. This is a role that sets the Center apart from other academic centers on philanthropy and the nonprofit sector.”

Fred J. Ali, President and CEO, Weingart Foundation



Advancing the Field of Philanthropy

From its studies on new philanthropists and California foundations to its analysis of foundation strategies for public policy engagement, the Center’s research is rigorous, relevant, and accessible.

To advance the field of philanthropy, the Center’s enduring intellectual agenda focuses on three principal areas:

- **The Changing Landscape of Philanthropy:** The Center examines the motivations and strategies for philanthropic behavior; new structures for philanthropic activity; and the impact of emerging trends on philanthropy, nonprofits, and the communities they serve.
- **Philanthropic Strategies for Public Problem Solving:** The Center studies ways that philanthropists and philanthropic institutions are becoming more strategic in their efforts to problem solve by influencing public policy and by working together and in partnership with government and business.
- **Philanthropic Stewardship and Leadership:** The Center explores issues of accountability and stewardship in philanthropy as well as public policies that shape and influence philanthropic decision-making.

“The Center has built a national reputation as a leading voice and catalyst for strengthening philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. Its comprehensive research sheds critical light on a range of pressing social concerns. As importantly, the Center creates opportunities for leaders in philanthropy, government, business, and the community to collaborate on addressing these issues.”

*Irene Hirano Inouye, President, U.S.-Japan Council and
Chair, Board of Trustees, Ford Foundation*



An Engaged Research Center

Since its inception in 2000, The Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy has emphasized research and analysis as a means to deepening the understanding of complex issues in philanthropy and to ensuring important topics are addressed by the field. By conducting groundbreaking studies and widely sharing the findings, the Center provides in-depth knowledge of philanthropy’s changing landscape as well as strategies for action. This empowers philanthropic decision-makers, policymakers, and civic leaders with the information and insights needed to create meaningful change, both independently and collectively.

The Center benefits from its vantage point on the West Coast, where philanthropy continues to grow faster than in the rest of the country and where new models and forms of giving are emerging. As an integral part of the University of Southern California’s Sol Price School of Public Policy, the Center draws upon the University’s intellectual assets – its interdisciplinary strengths, its commitment to linking theory with practice, and its community involvement – to develop innovative approaches to complex societal challenges. The Center plays an instrumental role in the School’s focus on governance and public problem solving, in the process bolstering philanthropy’s influence and impact in the region, nationally, and worldwide.

“The Center has an unparalleled ability to join together visionary philanthropists and foundation executives with government and business leaders in shared pursuit of a common goal: finding new ways to advance public discourse that strengthens our communities and enhances people’s lives.”

Antonia Hernández, President and CEO, California Community Foundation



Convening Leaders to Inform and Inspire

The Center is the premier venue for high-level discourse on philanthropy in southern California, bringing philanthropically minded individuals together to share experiences, to learn from each other, and to inspire one another to greater heights. By promoting a dialogue about philanthropy’s role in public problem solving and by helping to establish networks among those working to improve our communities, the Center is providing philanthropic leaders with the knowledge and insights to think differently about how best to effect meaningful, lasting change for institutions and individuals across the region and beyond.

- **Distinguished Speakers Series:** The Center’s hallmark Distinguished Speakers Series enables leaders from different vantage points – philanthropists, foundation executives, and policymakers – to share their views on philanthropy and public policy, stimulating conversation about emerging trends in philanthropy and their public policy implications.
- **Forums and Roundtables:** The Center organizes national forums to bring together prominent thought leaders, researchers, and decision makers for in-depth analysis of the varied dimensions of philanthropy, as well as emerging trends and prospects. The Center also holds smaller roundtable discussions with renowned experts on key issues in the field, based on commissioned papers and research reports.
- **Leadership Exchanges:** The Center provides intimate settings where like-minded individuals – from CEOs of L.A.’s largest foundations to groups of new donors who are developing strategies for greater impact – can meet with their peers to discuss critical challenges they face in their philanthropic work.
- **Conversations on Philanthropy:** The Center has initiated a series that brings together the various segments of philanthropy – foundation executives, family foundation trustees, and individual donors – along with noted experts to discuss issues of keen interest such as the arts, children and youth, and the environment.

“Our work reveals a shifting philanthropic landscape; one where new and existing players are acting on a greater scale and at a faster pace. As a result, philanthropy in this century is more complex, more global, more donor-directed, and more pluralistic than ever before. This underscores the importance of educating a new generation of philanthropists, helping nonprofits understand their environment, and building the field of philanthropy.”

James Ferris, Director, The Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy



Shaping the Future

In its remarkable short history, the Center has set a new standard in cutting-edge scholarship that explores the nexus of philanthropy and public policy and informs nonprofit, business, and government leaders as they seek to address the myriad of challenges facing diverse communities. Building on its expertise, the Center also educates the next generation of sector leaders by infusing its work in the School’s nationally ranked educational programs in philanthropy and nonprofit management.

Working with its partners, The Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy will continue to pioneer the future of philanthropy. As we move forward, we aim to heighten philanthropy’s impact by expanding its knowledge base and translating research findings into practice; by overcoming fragmentation in the field to leverage many voices; and by forging stronger connections and deeper relationships that transcend the nonprofit sector. Through its research and commitment to driving the conversation around these issues, the Center will help to transform philanthropy in its scope, reach, and impact, making a crucial difference in the quality of life in communities everywhere.

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The Center is guided by a distinguished advisory board comprised of extraordinary leaders from philanthropy and the community.

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