

The USC Center on Philanthropy & Public Policy

A Generation *of* Los Angeles Philanthropy



A Generation of Los Angeles Philanthropy: *25 for 25*

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The USC Center on
Philanthropy & Public Policy
Sol Price School of Public Policy

Introduction

As The Center on Philanthropy & Public Policy marked 25 years of working to help strengthen philanthropy and its impact on the community, we took the milestone moment as an opportunity to look back, connect with leaders in the sector, and review developments in the field to create a portrait of generational change in Los Angeles. The phenomenal growth in philanthropic giving that our region experienced during this period unleashed new dynamics and a bolder mindset for private action for the public good.¹ At The Center's inaugural forum in January 2000, *What Is "New" About New Philanthropy?*, we observed that philanthropy was evolving in substantial ways, with an aspiration to have even greater impact, with new players, new giving vehicles, and new strategies and practices as well as innovative approaches to philanthropy. These trends were characterized by the region's philanthropy growing at a greater scale, practiced at a faster pace and with more complexity, leading to a pluralistic philanthropy amplifying multiple voices with diverse values and passions.

This report — *A Generation of Los Angeles Philanthropy: 25 for 25* — captures all of this in a portrait of philanthropy in Los Angeles that has emerged over the past 25 years, highlighting an array of ideas, initiatives and innovations for greater impact.

¹ The generational changes in philanthropy in general, and in the Los Angeles region specifically, that are outlined in two earlier papers inform the framing of this project: [“A Generation of Impact: The Evolution of Philanthropy over the Past 25 Years”](#) and [“Foundations for Los Angeles: An Assessment of the Last 25 Years.”](#)

Process and Methodology

The process for creating this portrait of Los Angeles philanthropy from 2000 to 2025 was initiated in anticipation of the 20th anniversary of The Center's first convening, which would have been in 2020 but had to be paused during the pandemic and a succession of crises over the following few years. In 2025, the effort was resumed and the time frame extended through 2025 — a period that generated new efforts to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges. Hence, what started out as “20 for 20” became “25 for 25.”

The Center enlisted community leaders to help frame the process and identify prominent and influential ideas, individuals and institutions in L.A. philanthropy and recommend others in philanthropy and its partners to offer their perspectives and experiences. As a consequence of these conversations, we focused on tangible efforts to innovate for greater impact, rather than highlighting individuals and institutions. This generated a robust list of approximately 30 examples for which we began to develop vignettes. When we subsequently decided to augment the list with new entries from the past five years, a number of key partners offered fresh perspectives on our developed list as well as suggestions of efforts that emerged in 2020–2025. We are indebted to the over 75 individuals who shared their astute observations and reflections.

From this process, we generated a list of 35 possible ideas, initiatives and innovations in philanthropy that stood out and created brief snapshots that identified the impetus for their creation, essential features and impact, and significance to the community. We then sorted them across five-year intervals to mark their emergence and duration, strategy that they best represented, and their broad field of endeavor, such as the arts, children and family, social services, and community development as well as new fields of endeavor. From this analysis, The Center's team selected the 25 that we believe best capture the trends and achievements in L.A. philanthropy during this era.

The 25 entries in this report are largely in chronological order. Together, they create a mosaic that defines what we believe L.A. philanthropy looks like today, reflecting the changing local context as well as broader sector trends, and providing a baseline as we begin to chart changes in the next generation. Our objective was not to focus on any one of these remarkable examples, but rather to create a portrait of how philanthropic strategy and practice have evolved along with new approaches for private action for greater impact. We understand that others might have chosen a different set of 25 examples, and we welcome your thoughts and reactions.

Strategies and Practices for Impact

The initiatives featured here represent a range of philanthropic strategies and practices that have become the hallmark of this generation of philanthropic leaders — working more strategically to build capacity, encouraging collaboration between donors and foundations, establishing partnerships with government and business, and fostering innovations in finance and giving.

Building Capacity to Make a Bigger Difference

A bedrock principle defining this generation at its onset is strategic philanthropy. Proponents of this principle suggested that philanthropy adopt a more analytical, venture capital approach to achieve intended outcomes. The twin pillar of the venture capital legacy is capacity building. Strategy is important, but without the capacity to execute, the prospects for impact are fleeting. Good programs without strong organizational structures do not last. This has led the philanthropic sector to pay greater attention to the capacity of organizations, networks and movements that can deliver results.

The “25 for 25” list includes instances of capacity building in a number of manifestations that have created an L.A. nonprofit sector with stronger organizations, deeper networks and a more robust ecosystem.

- The Durfee Foundation’s sabbatical program (#2) did so by supporting nonprofit executive directors and its subsequent programs in leadership development.
- The African American Board Leadership Institute (#11) has worked to grow a cadre of more diverse board members for governing boards.
- The Nonprofit Sustainability Initiative (#14) provided a platform to strengthen nonprofit organizations.
- The California Endowment’s Social Bond (#22) enabled the design and creation of the Movement Innovation Collaborative to strengthen advocacy efforts for equity across the state.

Collaborating Within Philanthropy for Greater Scale and Impact

While collaboration is not new, neither is it easy. Yet, we have seen it more frequently in recent years at the local level where, given the limited resources of a single donor or foundation, philanthropy coalesces around a critical problem and leverages collective assets — ideas, knowledge, networks and dollars — for greater impact. This experimentation and experience yield a number of lessons for working together.

- With its extensive local participation, Los Angeles Urban Funders (#1) — created in the aftermath of L.A.’s 1992 civil unrest — was a laboratory for collaboration and provided a foundation for a range of subsequent collaborative efforts.
- Funders grappling with L.A.’s large number of unhoused motivated them to work together to create the cross-sector Home For Good (#8).
- The Nonprofit Sustainability Initiative (#14) was created by foundations to encourage exploration of strategic restructuring and mergers to build greater nonprofit capacity following the 2008 recession.
- The LA Arts Recovery Fund (#20) brought together funders to support arts organizations coping with declining audiences during the pandemic.

Partnering with Government: Working from the Inside Out

While philanthropic foundations have worked for decades to influence government from the outside through advocacy, this generation has aimed

to work from the inside, partnering with leaders and agencies to achieve impact on an array of issues, blending the relative strengths of the two sectors: the flexibility and nimbleness of philanthropy with the scale and instruments of government.

A number of examples in “25 for 25” demonstrate what the two sectors can do when working together.

- Summer Night Lights (#6), a partnership between The City of Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Department and philanthropic groups, has provided safe places for youth to congregate during the summer months.
- The LA Justice Fund (#17) provides legal services for immigrants to navigate the system.
- The 2020 Census Outreach (#18), a public–private partnership, helped ensure an accurate count and subsequent federal funding.
- The Los Angeles County Food Equity Roundtable (#21), spearheaded by philanthropy, worked to improve food affordability, expanded access to healthy food options and strengthened community-centered approaches to food equity.
- Both the City and the County have worked to institutionalize coordination with philanthropy by establishing Offices of Strategic Partnerships (#7).

Beyond the Grant: Innovative Financing

The walls between grantmaking and investing have begun to fall, as philanthropic foundations increasingly put their endowments to work for impact. Two notable manifestations of this mindset are included in “25 for 25.”

- The California FreshWorks Fund (#9) brought community markets, food distributors and other healthy food enterprises together to address food deserts by employing financing methods to increase access to conventional capital through loans and grants.
- The California Endowment used a \$300 million Social Bond (#22) for funding beyond its endowment, supporting communities

disproportionately affected by both the COVID-19 pandemic and longstanding racial inequities, while working for systemic change across the state.

Giving and Learning Together

This generation's growing use of new structures for giving by individuals, such as donor advised funds and limited liability companies, is well-documented. Los Angeles has benefited from two creative mechanisms for collective giving.

- The Everychild Foundation (#3) was an early formalization of what until then had been informal practices of giving circles, important vehicles for pooling resources of individuals for greater impact, and just as importantly an example of how to give for those new to philanthropy.
- The LA2050 Grants Challenge (#12) was introduced to give Angelenos a voice on issues they prioritized and develop a community process to drive giving to organizations working on those issues, turning over the power of grantmaking to the public.

Innovative Approaches For Greater Impact

As we examined our list of ideas, initiatives, and innovations, we noted a set of broader, more ambitious approaches to doing philanthropy beyond strategies and practices. We wanted to underscore such efforts. They encompass defining and developing new fields of interest, creating multi-sector partnerships for place-making, and centering community.

Building Fields of Interest

While the 25 entries cover a panoply of fields of interest for donors and foundations, where philanthropy traditionally plays a significant role, three L.A. foundations have spotlighted new areas of interest, raising the bar for philanthropy here and beyond.

- The Eisner Foundation took the changing demographics of an aging population as an opportunity to create synergies in serving both youth

- and older generations by creating the Eisner Prize and Fellowships in Intergenerational Philanthropy (#13).
- Through Harbor Freight Tools for Schools (#16), The Smidt Foundation dedicated its philanthropy to creating a teacher-focused strategy that recognizes educators as a “force multiplier for student engagement and achievement” who encourage students to learn a trade that creates a career pathway in skilled trades.
 - GenSpace (#23), a project of the Wallis Annenberg Legacy Foundation, addresses social isolation and the loss of routine that comes from aging, retirement, and the lack of spaces designed for connection and continued growth by reimagining aging as a time for wellness, togetherness and discovery.

Place-Making

Some of the most ambitious, complicated highlights of this generation are philanthropic efforts at place-making, working in concert with government, business, nonprofits and community partners to shape what L.A. is and can be. Three examples are included in “25 for 25.”

- Grand Avenue Revitalization (#5) was an embodiment of philanthropist Eli Broad’s lifelong focus on giving his adopted hometown a vibrant center where people can enjoy cultural riches like museums, theater and the symphony, or take part in civic life at parades, protests and celebrations. Downtown’s Grand Avenue emerged as a rare opportunity to create such a unifying cultural corridor.
- PST ART (#10) began as an effort to highlight Southern California’s rich artistic history and transformed into a defining set of exhibitions, public programs, performances and scholarly publications around a select theme, enriching L.A.’s rich tapestry of art and cultural organizations.
- Destination Crenshaw (#19) is a landmark public art and cultural development project celebrating Black history and culture, reimagining a 1.3-mile corridor of Crenshaw Boulevard in South Los Angeles as a platform for cultural preservation, creative expression, economic opportunity and community ownership.

Centering Community

Two recent efforts in “25 for 25” put community at their center as philanthropy has become more intentional in listening to and engaging the communities that it seeks to serve.

- Department of Angels (#24) was established following the devastating Eaton and Palisades fires, in January 2025, to help affected communities lead their own recovery and strengthen their resilience by engaging with community members, disaster experts and wildfire survivors.
- Developed through several years of collaboration among philanthropic, civic, journalism and community leaders who recognized the need for a new model of local news, The LA Local (#25) was created to provide nonprofit journalism that is free, independent, and rooted in the needs and experiences of Angelenos — operating innovative youth journalism and civic programs, like LA Documenters, which trains and pays residents to cover public meetings in their communities.

From One Generation to the Next

This era has been marked by considerable growth in philanthropy, an expanded toolkit for social impact, and a maturing of L.A.’s philanthropic sector and its leadership, creating a community open to new ideas, willing to take risks and work together to innovate for a stronger and more resilient local philanthropic and nonprofit sector. The “25 for 25” is inclusive — though not exhaustive — of different time segments, issues and strategies. We believe that it demonstrates ideas, initiatives and innovations that represent the best of L.A.’s aspirations for philanthropy to have a greater impact for the public good.

While this is clearly an L.A.-centric look at the philanthropy of this generation, we recognize the synergies between our local sector and changes in communities nationwide. Many examples found root in L.A. and have been exported elsewhere, while others have been informed by ideas that bubbled up elsewhere but found a place in L.A. To be sure,

L.A. has been forward leaning during this period and has built connections across the nation establishing a broader reach.

We hope this portrait — *A Generation of Los Angeles Philanthropy: 25 for 25* — offers a useful narrative of the evolution of philanthropy in the L.A. region that provides a strong foundation for the next generation of donors and foundations to learn from and build upon for an even stronger and more impactful sector in Los Angeles in the generations to come.



25 for 25

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Los Angeles Urban Funders

1996–2006

“LAUF illustrated the potential for philanthropic leaders to undertake a collective response to a major societal crisis and offered lessons for subsequent efforts.”

—Elwood Hopkins
Executive Director, LAUF,
and Managing Director,
Emerging Markets Inc.

In 1992, Los Angeles experienced widespread civil unrest after the acquittal of four Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officers caught on video brutally beating Rodney King, a Black motorist. The events exposed deep-rooted social and economic tensions in the city. In response, 29 private and corporate foundations united to improve the conditions that had contributed to the rupture, including disbursement of \$25 million in grant funding over a decade in three of the city’s poorest neighborhoods. Los Angeles Urban Funders (LAUF) partnered with local community groups to design and implement place-based initiatives while modeling new and effective ways for foundations to work with each other and with underserved communities to build economic opportunity.

LAUF, embedded within the Southern California Association for Philanthropy, emphasized neighborhood-driven priorities, cross-foundation coordination and long-term capacity building. This structure pooled philanthropic capital for innovative approaches to align grantmaking by individual foundations, enabling flexible, transformative investments and sustained programmatic funding.

Across sites, the initiative emphasized economic mobility, resident leadership and philanthropic collaboration as pathways to neighborhood revitalization. The collaborative was intentionally time-limited, concluding in 2006 after transitioning funding and governance responsibilities back to individual foundations and community partners. LAUF’s legacy includes strengthened funder collaboration, durable neighborhood partnerships and a replicable model for place-based philanthropic investment.

Durfee Foundation Sabbatical Program

1997–PRESENT

“Organizations and movements are only sustainable if the people leading them are, too. Investing in creativity and renewal yields dividends.”

—**Claire Peeps**
Former Executive Director,
Durfee Foundation

To strengthen nonprofit leadership, the Durfee Foundation invested not only in institutions but also in the well-being of the individuals who lead them. Since 1997, the foundation has offered sabbaticals to nonprofit leaders who are particularly vulnerable to burnout due to financial pressure and the demands of their work.

The Durfee Foundation Sabbatical Program provides financial resources that allow executives to step away from day-to-day responsibilities for a defined period of at least three consecutive months, enabling them to rejuvenate, reflect and replenish their stores of energy and inspiration. Support is also offered to organizations to ensure they are well prepared for an executive’s sabbatical. The program’s success demonstrates the value of investing in people as the nonprofit sector’s most valuable asset in fulfilling its mission. Beyond fostering strong and sustainable leadership, the program encourages shared leadership within organizations, enabling senior staff to assume new responsibilities and strengthen internal pipelines and institutional resilience.

The foundation has since added the Stanton Fellowships, a two-year leadership program designed to aid nonprofit leaders in addressing complex regional challenges. Fellows are supported in pursuing cross-disciplinary solutions for urgent issues facing Los Angeles. Cohorts are intentionally cross-sector, and fellows convene regularly for peer learning and site visits. The program expands ties and the exchange of information among civic leaders, reinforcing the program’s impact. Through these alumni networks, the model extends beyond rest and renewal into collaborative problem-solving.

Everychild Foundation

2000–PRESENT

“As Everychild uniquely prioritizes funding innovative, replicable projects, our grants have had a tremendous built-in multiplier effect: transforming the lives of countless local children, and many more in the generations to come.”

—**Jacqueline Jacobs Caster**
Founder and President,
Everychild Foundation

Founded in 2000 by Jacqueline Jacobs Caster, the Everychild Foundation addresses unmet needs among vulnerable children across Los Angeles County. In addition, the group has created a vibrant policy and advocacy arm that supports efforts to improve systems impacting children and youth. Structured as a donor circle, the foundation funds large, targeted grants that maximize impact and support innovative solutions often overlooked by traditional funding strategies.

Today, the Everychild Foundation is driven by 200 Los Angeles women who each contribute \$6,000 annually. These funds are pooled to award a single \$1 million grant each year to one nonprofit organization advancing a “dream project” that meets a critical need for children. The model is intentionally structured to accommodate members with limited time and availability while offering optional engagement opportunities, including participation in grant review and advocacy efforts benefiting young people.

Since its inception, the group has generated a widespread “philanthropic multiplier effect,” reflected in members independently funding runner-up projects and the formation of approximately 30 new charitable giving groups and philanthropic collaboratives modeled on similar collective funding structures.

L.A. Foundation Leadership Group

2003–PRESENT

“The L.A. Foundation Leadership Group convenings over the years have been invaluable. Learning and sharing with colleagues has made me a better foundation leader.”

—**Victoria B. Rogers**
President and CEO,
The Rose Hills Foundation

The USC Center on Philanthropy & Public Policy launched the Los Angeles Foundation Leadership Group in 2003 as an informal peer group for lead executives from 10 of the most prominent foundations focused on Los Angeles. Over the years, it has provided opportunities for foundation CEOs to engage in peer learning and support; explore new ways to work with their boards, staff and nonprofit partners; and gain insights into the changing landscape of the local sector and trends and policies shaping the field.

This network has stimulated conversations that have catalyzed action beyond the group, including work on the creation of offices of strategic partnerships for the City of Los Angeles and County of Los Angeles, establishing the Nonprofit Sustainability Initiative and most recently creating the Philanthropy Working Group that mobilized action in response to the devastating L.A. fires in January 2025.

The Leadership Group has contributed to strengthening cohesion within the Los Angeles philanthropic community and promoted greater collaboration and coordination among the city’s major foundations and their partners in government and the community. In the process, it has helped to create a center of gravity in the local philanthropic community and has raised the profile of L.A. philanthropy in the state and the nation.

Grand Avenue Revitalization

2007–2025

“Grand Avenue reflects what civic leadership and partnership can make possible when vision and persistence come together.”

—Gerun Riley
President,
The Eli and Edythe Broad
Foundation

While Walt Disney Concert Hall was under construction, it became clear that Grand Avenue needed a full-scale master plan. In 2000, philanthropist Eli Broad founded the Grand Avenue Committee and, alongside friend Jim Thomas, co-chaired the group of City and County leaders to spark collaboration and streamline decision-making between the two governing bodies. A year later, the City and County established the Grand Avenue Authority, allowing the committee to holistically develop empty municipal parcels, paving the way for Grand Park, The Broad Museum and The Grand.

In 2007, the Board of Supervisors and City Council approved the \$2.05 billion Grand Avenue Project to develop a focal point of coordinated civic and cultural development. In 2012, The Music Center, in partnership with the County, opened the long-anticipated \$56 million Gloria Molina Grand Park. In 2013, a \$650 million plan was unveiled following extensive negotiations between the Grand Avenue Authority and master developer Related California that included development of The Grand towers, combining residential units with the Conrad Los Angeles hotel. In 2015, The Broad opened to the public, making contemporary art even more accessible to Angelenos and visitors. The overall effort is expected to generate more than 10,000 jobs and approximately \$465 million in economic activity for the City and County of Los Angeles over 25 years.

In 2025, the Board of Supervisors officially recognized The Grand Avenue Cultural District, a new nonprofit hub celebrating the arts and culture scene in the heart of the city while working to promote greater public participation in the arts, stimulate economic growth and tourism, create workforce opportunities, support the revitalization of Downtown Los Angeles and position the area as a global arts destination.

Summer Night Lights

2003–PRESENT

“The City of Los Angeles and its residents have benefited for more than a decade from this cross-sector, cross-agency partnership, which has delivered enriching programming to young people across the city and continues to serve as a national model for violence reduction.”

—**Amanda Daflos**
Deputy Mayor of Strategic Partnerships, Office of Mayor Karen Bass

Summer Night Lights (SNL) was launched in 2008 in eight City of Los Angeles parks to help reduce violence by keeping parks open late in neighborhoods historically affected by crime. Operating from late June through early August, the program keeps parks open until 11 p.m. to provide safe, positive spaces that engage youth from ages 7 through 15 during hours when there are few other places to congregate. Community-centered activities include sports, arts, gardening, free meals and family programming — and in the process strengthen neighborhood connections and foster community belonging.

The program was developed under former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and the Mayor’s Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development and subsequently partnered with the Parks and Recreation Department and Los Angeles Police Department. Since its founding, SNL has attracted additional funding that enabled the programs to extend to even more parks and has garnered support from foundations and corporations. A Californians For All Youth Workforce Development grant expanded the program to create employment opportunities for youth and young adults.

As of 2025, SNL had grown to 42 parks, bringing together more than 110,000 participants, has had a significant impact on reducing gang-related homicides, and contributed to broader public-safety efforts from the investments in youth, families and neighborhoods.

Offices of Strategic Partnerships

2009–PRESENT

“By closely partnering with philanthropy and nonprofits, OSP helped champion programs that substantially reduced crime and increased federal funding for the city.”

—**Aileen Adams**
Deputy Mayor and Founding
Director, Office of Strategic
Partnerships

Local government and philanthropy recognized that they can accomplish more together than working alone on a range of issues that both parties care deeply about. In 2009, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa established the City’s Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP), located in the mayor’s office, with the support of a few leading L.A. foundations to provide an infrastructure that catalyzes collaboration among public agencies, foundations and nonprofit organizations. It also aimed to reduce bureaucratic barriers and leverage philanthropic expertise to accomplish shared goals and help public programs achieve greater impact.

Subsequently, the County of Los Angeles along with philanthropic funders established the Center for Strategic Partnerships in 2016, launched as an initiative of Southern California Grantmakers and housed in the Los Angeles County chief executive office. The Center initially convened government, philanthropy, nonprofits and businesses to design and advance initiatives for vulnerable children, youth and families, and subsequently expanded to address a broader set of issue areas.

OSPs represent efforts to build and sustain cross-sector collaboration to strengthen public services, improve coordination and create more effective responses to pressing regional challenges.

Home For Good

2010–PRESENT

“Home For Good broke new ground, illustrating how collaboration between government, philanthropy and service providers can drive solutions to homelessness.”

—Peter Laugharn
President,
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

A Business Leaders Task Force on Homelessness study in 2009 revealed that Los Angeles County was spending nearly \$1 billion annually on emergency services and short-term responses to homelessness — without making serious long-term investments in permanent solutions. The report concluded that fragmented efforts were insufficient and called for a coordinated strategy to aid stakeholders across sectors in more effectively serving unhoused people. These findings inspired the founding of Home For Good, an initiative that “unites philanthropists, service providers, elected officials, government agencies and community members around shared priorities to support our unhoused neighbors.”

In 2011, Home For Good added a dedicated financing arm through the Home For Good Funders Collaborative, established with a \$1 million challenge grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and housed at the United Way. It brought together public agencies with private philanthropy to align investments in solutions to homelessness, with a special focus on permanent supportive housing.

Over time, Home For Good evolved its focus from coalition building and funding coordination to system reform and policy advocacy, evidenced by its work on Proposition HHH, the City of Los Angeles bond measure for homeless housing and facilities, followed by Measure H, the Los Angeles County sales tax supporting homelessness services and prevention. Measure A repealed and replaced the expiring Measure H, doubling the local funding stream to roughly \$1.2 billion annually for affordable housing and homelessness services.

California FreshWorks Fund

2011–2020

“FreshWorks, bold in vision and scale, proved that health-equity funders could engage the private sector to advance community health, economic opportunity and neighborhood revitalization.”

—**Daniel Tellalian**
Partner, Emerging Markets
Inc., and FreshWorks
Business Development Lead

The California FreshWorks Fund (FreshWorks) was an innovative public-private partnership to address “food deserts” that lacked convenient access to fresh, affordable groceries and healthy eating options. FreshWorks brought community markets, food distributors and other health-food enterprises to underserved neighborhoods by developing financing methods to promote conventional capital, which had previously been insufficient.

Launched in 2011 as a five-year initiative, FreshWorks was led by The California Endowment and Capital Impact Partners. The California Endowment’s \$30 million anchor commitment helped attract additional partners, including Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente, Los Angeles Development Fund, Morgan Stanley and the City of Los Angeles, growing the fund to \$272 million. Capital Impact Partners managed loan and grant deployment. A second FreshWorks initiative was recapitalized and relaunched in 2017.

FreshWorks demonstrated that strategic philanthropic investments can advance health, economic opportunity and community revitalization. It financed grocery stores, farmers markets, mobile food operators, business incubators and intermediary lenders. Ultimately, more than 800,000 Californians gained greater access to fresh foods, advancing healthier lifestyles and improving long-term health outcomes. At the same time, significant economic benefits were generated as a result of new retail food establishments creating jobs and serving as an anchor for broader commercial activity.

Pacific Standard Time / PST ART

2011–PRESENT

“Los Angeles arts institutions embrace collaboration like nowhere else, which has been the key to PST ART’s overwhelming success.”

—Joan Weinstein
Director, Getty Foundation,
and Vice President,
Institutional Program Planning

Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945–1980 was an effort in 2011–2012 to document, preserve and expand public understanding of Southern California’s rich artistic history. Launched by the Getty Foundation in collaboration with the Getty Research Institute, it began with oral histories and support for archival research and resulted in more than 60 deeply researched exhibitions exploring Southern California’s influential but often under-recognized artistic legacy in shaping contemporary arts during the post–World War II era. *Pacific Standard Time* created a large-scale philanthropic/nonprofit collaboration, involving museums, galleries, universities and cultural organizations across Southern California.

The success of the initial effort led to a commitment under the new umbrella of PST ART to mount the region-wide event every five years, presenting exhibitions, public programs, performances and scholarly publications around a shared theme, and creating a coordinated arts experience for the community that reaches diverse audiences. Subsequent editions to date are: *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA* (2017–2018), which explored connections among Latin American art, Latino artists and Los Angeles; and *PST ART: Art & Science Collide* (2024–2025), focusing on intersections among art, science and technology. The initiative demonstrates how sustained philanthropic collaboration can strengthen cultural institutions, expand scholarship and deepen public engagement with the arts across Southern California.

African American Board Leadership Institute

2011–PRESENT

“Given the challenges being made to programs to maintain equity in our country, the training AABLI provides to leaders is needed today in ways we did not imagine 15 years ago.”

—**Virgil Roberts**
Co-founder and Chair,
African American Board
Leadership Institute

In 2011, Virgil Roberts and Yvette Chappell-Ingram co-founded the African American Board Leadership Institute (AABLI) to strengthen civic organizations by preparing African American leaders to serve on a broad range of governing boards for public, nonprofit and corporate organizations. Supported by a coalition of executives with a range of experience and expertise across a spectrum of organizations, the institute sought to expand the pool of qualified African Americans to serve on boards and public commissions through mentorships, workshops and relationship building.

Since its first cohort in 2012, AABLI has grown into a comprehensive leadership development platform that also provides professional guidance on governance expectations while helping participants expand their professional networks and increase their civic engagement. AABLI has also partnered with organizations, including corporations and nonprofits, to deliver customized governance and leadership programs.

AABLI has built a pipeline of qualified leaders, placing more than 2,000 professionals on boards thanks to board-readiness training, mentorship and professional development. Through these efforts, the institute continues expanding access to leadership opportunities while helping organizations build stronger, more representative governance.

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LA2050 Grants Challenge

2011–PRESENT

“We’ve tapped into something much bigger than any individual or organization. We’re all in this together for a brighter future for Los Angeles.”

—Tara Roth
President,
Goldhirsh Foundation

The Goldhirsh Foundation undertook a community-guided initiative in 2011 to imagine a shared vision for the future of Los Angeles, resulting in a goal of engaging Angelenos to make L.A. a better place to create, connect, learn, live and play. Expanding on this vision in 2013, it created the LA2050 Grants Challenge, which enables Angelenos to shape funding priorities, as opposed to relying on foundation staff, and allowing community members to vote on the issues they want funded. Eligible organizations then apply for grants in those areas. The Grants Challenge creates a participatory giving structure that turns the power of grantmaking over to the public. Since 2013, the Grants Challenge has received more than 6,300 proposals and, with public guidance and funding partners, by October 2026 it will have provided over \$25 million across hundreds of organizations as well as substantial ongoing human and social capital contributions.

Beyond the Grants Challenge, LA2050 now uses original multimedia research and reporting, digital outreach, free trainings, volunteer and job opportunities, a robust youth corps and partner-funded grant rounds to creatively spotlight organizations and practitioners and identify and address local priorities. LA2050 has evolved into a movement — a broad civic infrastructure platform showing how participatory philanthropy can amplify community voices and foster locally driven solutions.

Eisner Prize and Fellowships for Intergenerational Programs

2011–PRESENT

“The Eisner Foundation is proud to champion intergenerational programs, which model how society can and should value people of every age.”

—Trent Stamp
CEO, The Eisner Foundation

Philanthropy has long supported programs for children and older adults, but The Eisner Foundation recognized that there was value in creating intergenerational programs where both children and seniors would benefit from connecting the two age groups. While undertaking this approach, it realized the potential of profiling exemplary practices that would encourage other grantmakers in pursuing a similar approach. This led to creation of the Eisner Prize in 2011, a national award to recognize outstanding intergenerational initiatives. By 2015, the foundation had committed exclusively to intergenerational programming, and the prize served as an early signal of that broader shift.

The Eisner Prize was awarded annually from 2011 to 2022 to individuals and organizations across the United States conducting exceptional generation-spanning initiatives. Recipients included nonprofit institutions, educators, advocates and community leaders whose programs connected younger and older individuals through mentorship, education, arts, health care and community engagement. These efforts have been an important catalyst for generation-spanning programs for greater impact.

Beginning in 2023, the prize was restructured into the Eisner Prize Fellowship, which supports individuals through financial resources and networking opportunities as they share fresh ideas and perspectives. This shift marks a move from retrospective recognition toward earlier-stage leadership development, innovation and field building in the intergenerational space.

Nonprofit Sustainability Initiative

2011–PRESENT

“NSI has helped to strengthen local nonprofits to adapt, collaborate, sustain their missions, increase their impact and help fuel a national movement.”

—Jennifer Price-Letscher
President and CEO,
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation

The Nonprofit Sustainability Initiative (NSI) was created in 2012 as a strategy to build greater nonprofit capacity on the heels of the 2008 Great Recession, recognizing that strategic alliances and organizational restructuring and innovation might be promising pathways for strengthening nonprofits at a moment of fiscal crisis. Established by the California Community Foundation, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation and the Weingart Foundation, NSI was designed to enable Los Angeles nonprofits to strengthen and build capacity through collaboration, restructuring and innovation, and shift focus from organizational stability to mission sustainability.

Today, this work is carried out through the Sustained Collaboration Fund, which helps Los Angeles nonprofits explore and implement partnerships that permanently strengthen how they operate and deliver services. The fund supports planning and implementation phases and, when necessary, dissolution and asset transfers to preserve community impact. In 2021, NSI expanded its work by launching the Executive Transition Fund to aid organizations navigating leadership succession. Broadening its influence beyond Los Angeles, the initiative recently co-launched the Sustained Collaboration Network to support similar initiatives and advance the field nationwide.

To date, NSI has received support from 27 funders who have collectively distributed more than \$9 million to over 300 nonprofits, and today is stewarded by the Ballmer Group, The Ahmanson Foundation, Cedars-Sinai and The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation.

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LA n Sync

2013–PRESENT

“LA n Sync exemplifies how philanthropy can amplify community power, accelerate systemic change and expand pathways to a good life for all Angelenos.”

—**Miguel Santana**
President and CEO,
California Community Foundation

LA n Sync emerged in response to various federal efforts to reduce poverty, such as Promise Zones, through coordinated local investments. In 2009, the White House launched the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative to mobilize change in communities facing systemic neglect and persistent disinvestment. This coincided with The Annenberg Foundation’s research on high-poverty neighborhoods across Los Angeles County. To align these efforts, The Annenberg Foundation and other regional funders formed the Los Angeles Neighborhood Revitalization Workgroup to coordinate public and philanthropic investment.

Building on this collaboration, LA n Sync launched in 2013 to help improve the chances of securing major federal and state funding for Los Angeles County, forging partnerships across local governments, philanthropy, academia, nonprofits and the private sector to pursue significant funding opportunities. The Strategic Response Fund, a pooled repository of matching funds from a consortium of philanthropic organizations, enables nonprofits and other regional partners to meet matching requirements on tight timelines and strengthen applications, and to make Los Angeles more competitive for federal and state resources.

In 2016, LA n Sync transitioned into an initiative of the California Community Foundation, whose billion-dollar commitment to public well-being strengthened the initiative’s funding coordination and public resource mobilization efforts. LA n Sync continues leveraging philanthropic seed funding to unlock greater public investment. In 2025 alone, approximately \$500,000 in LA n Sync support helped its partners secure nearly \$90.4 million. Altogether, the initiative has fostered successful solicitation of more than \$963.2 million in grants and federal funding for Los Angeles County.

Harbor Freight Tools for Schools

2013–PRESENT

“Combining humility, persistence and partnership, this initiative leverages support for excellent high school skilled trades education.”

—Robin Kramer
Managing Director,
The Smidt Foundation

Harbor Freight Tools for Schools was launched in 2013 by national retailer Harbor Freight Tools with a \$1.4 million donation of tools to Los Angeles Unified School District. Tools for Schools became the flagship program of The Smidt Foundation in 2017, shortly after the private foundation itself was created by Eric Smidt, owner, chairman and CEO of Harbor Freight Tools.

At its center is a teacher-focused philanthropic strategy that recognizes educators as a force multiplier for student engagement and achievement. The Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence began in 2017. Highly competitive and judged independently, the prize recognizes outstanding instruction in the skilled trades in U.S. public high schools and the valuable work of teachers who inspire students to learn a trade that prepares them for life after graduation. A total of \$2 million is awarded each year to 25 teachers and their programs, with more than 200 awardees to date. 2026 marks the 10th “Let’s Build It” summer professional development intensive, created by Harbor Freight Tools for Schools, that brings together the growing cadre of awardees to talk shop, strengthen their practice and build the skilled trades field.

In addition, Harbor Freight Tools for Schools seeded and has funded Los Angeles County Skilled Trades Summers to spur earn-to-learn, high-quality, hands-on learning opportunities. More than 2,000 students have participated since the 2021 pilot. Other initiatives include commissioned research to bolster the field, funding for the national Harbor Freight Fellows and the Harbor Freight Leadership Lab.

“The LA Justice Fund is a powerful example of real, multi-sector collaboration with public, philanthropy and community partners responding boldly, unselfishly and innovatively to build a system that truly responded to the needs of residents under crisis.”

—Joanna Jackson
President and CEO,
Weingart Foundation

In December 2016, former Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti announced creation of the LA Justice Fund in response to anticipated increased federal immigration enforcement. Recognizing that immigrant workers contribute roughly 40% of the county’s GDP and could face deportation without legal representation, local officials and philanthropic leaders established the fund to protect due process by expanding access to legal counsel for those impacted.

The fund initially designated \$10 million for legal defense, structured as a collaborative financing model combining public and philanthropic funding. At launch in 2017, Los Angeles County committed roughly \$3 million, the City of Los Angeles supplied about \$2 million, and philanthropic partners, including the California Community Foundation and the Weingart Foundation, contributed funds that were delivered to nonprofit legal organizations providing immigration defense services. The fund supported partnerships to support capacity building for nonprofit legal services and expand pro bono immigration defense funding as a continuing public policy priority for the community.

To further the work of what was originally designed as a pilot program, in 2021 the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted a recommendation from the County’s Office of Immigrant Affairs to continue the work through RepresentLA, with public and private funding supporting organizations providing legal representation for removal defense and affirmative immigration relief, as well as social support services for clients and their families.

“An accurate count is not only important for political representation; equally important is the distribution of funds to support critical services.”

—**Antonia Hernández**
Former President and CEO,
California Community Foundation

Every 10 years, the U.S. census shapes how federal dollars are distributed for an array of public programs, putting a premium on accurate population counts. Recognizing the loss of federal funds from undercounts, civic and philanthropic leaders launched an effort to ensure every Angeleno would be counted in the 2020 Census. In 2017, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors directed creation of a census-planning process. That effort soon grew into a cross-sector coalition of schools, government agencies, labor organizations, businesses, nonprofits and community advocates encouraging residents to participate in the census.

The California Community Foundation served as L.A. County’s Administrative Community-Based Organization, helping coordinate outreach and direct resources to neighborhoods most at risk of being undercounted. The We Count LA campaign reached 115 community-based organizations. With disruption to traditional outreach caused by the pandemic, the campaign pivoted to phone banking, text messaging, social media and ethnic media partnerships. The result was a countywide infrastructure for trusted community engagement and civic participation that supported census participation and an accurate population count.

Destination Crenshaw

2017–PRESENT

“Our purpose is ensuring today’s public investment creates lasting economic opportunity for the people of the Crenshaw District.”

—Jason Foster
President and CEO,
Destination Crenshaw

Destination Crenshaw is a landmark public art and cultural development project celebrating Black history and culture. Spanning 1.3 miles along Crenshaw Boulevard in South Los Angeles, the project reimagines public space as a platform for cultural preservation, creative expression, economic opportunity and community ownership. Conceived in response to concerns that the Metro K Line extension could accelerate displacement, Destination Crenshaw demonstrates how public investment can strengthen, rather than erase, the identity of historically Black communities.

Led by Los Angeles City Council President Marqueece Harris-Dawson and made possible through an unprecedented partnership among philanthropy, government, artists, architects, residents and community organizations, the initiative has leveraged more than \$150 million to bring to life this cultural corridor rooted in Black history and excellence. The City of Los Angeles partnered with Destination Crenshaw to design and construct the project, while Metro approved \$15 million for construction and later provided property support for the initiative.

While construction continues, Destination Crenshaw has commissioned and engaged more than 70 South Los Angeles artists and creative entrepreneurs, completed five City-certified murals, advanced seven monumental public artworks through fabrication and installation, and invested nearly \$1 million in facade improvements and technical assistance for corridor businesses. In addition, guided by the theme “Grow Where You’re Planted,” the corridor now regularly hosts block parties, art gatherings and cultural convenings that bring residents, artists and local organizations together to foster cultural expression and community connection. The cultural ecosystem being cultivated here will sustain the corridor for generations by preparing residents to steward the corridor while expanding pathways to economic mobility.

“Building LAARF revealed a simple truth: When philanthropy decides that arts and culture are worth protecting, communities discover they were never alone — and organizations do not just stabilize, they transform.”

—**Stephania Ramirez**
Chief Executive Officer,
Perenchio Foundation, and Former
Director of Strategic Initiatives,
California Community Foundation

The LA Arts Recovery Fund (LAARF) was launched in 2020 to help Los Angeles County’s small and mid-sized arts and cultural organizations weather the severe disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund provided critical support to help stabilize and strengthen the region’s arts and cultural sector, at a time when many organizations faced significant uncertainty with declining attendance.

Initiated by the J. Paul Getty Trust and administered by the California Community Foundation, the fund brought together philanthropic and public-sector arts funders in a coordinated effort to support arts organizations and aid in their recovery. The fund’s design reflected a strategic approach to rebuilding the sector in the aftermath of the pandemic. In addition to general operating support, it paired funding with technical assistance and relied on a review panel of more than 50 arts leaders to shape grantmaking with attention to artistic discipline, cultural representation and the diverse needs of communities across the county.

From 2021 through 2025, the fund awarded \$41.12 million to 103 nonprofit recipients. It prioritized equity, with the majority of awarded organizations being led by Black, Latino, Asian or Indigenous leaders or governed by boards reflecting those communities. By investing in both individual organizations and the broader support infrastructure of the arts sector, the fund helped promote cultural, economic and community recovery.

Los Angeles County Food Equity Roundtable

2021–PRESENT

“The office has had an extraordinary impact coordinating emergency response when reduced federal funding for food security and the deadly wildfires that tore through the L.A. challenged access to food. It’s hard to imagine L.A. County now without this office and central coordination.”

—**Cinny Kennard**
Chair, Food Equity Roundtable,
and President, Wallis Annenberg
Legacy Foundation

During the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity in Los Angeles County rose to record levels, disproportionately affecting low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, with no central coordinating point within the county or city working daily to address this persistent challenge. In response, the County and philanthropic partners launched the Los Angeles County Food Equity Roundtable in 2021, a collaboration between the Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office, The Annenberg Foundation, California Community Foundation, Weingart Foundation, and partners such as the Los Angeles Food Policy Council, Los Angeles Regional Food Bank and community leaders.

The Roundtable’s initial phase focused on research, stakeholder engagement and strategic planning, culminating in the release of an action plan in December 2022 for improving food affordability, expanding access to healthy options and strengthening community-centered approaches to food equity throughout the county. The County’s Board of Supervisors officially approved creation of the Office of Food Systems in November 2023 to help implement the Roundtable’s recommendations. The Office of Food Systems now functions as the County’s primary agency for food policy and equity. Working in coordination with the Chief Sustainability Office and a broad coalition of Roundtable partners, the office advances policies and programs that promote healthier communities and a more equitable food system.

Social Bond

2021–PRESENT

“The Social Bond opportunity provided our foundation with an innovative, never previously utilized tool to leverage our assets for the benefit of grantee partners.”

—Robert K. Ross, MD
Former President and CEO,
The California Endowment

In January 2021, The California Endowment issued a historic \$300 million Social Bond supporting communities disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and longstanding racial inequities. Built on expert research, the initiative was designed to extend The Endowment’s impact beyond traditional grantmaking by providing additional resources to strengthen nonprofit organizations, advance health equity, and promote long-term structural and social change across California.

The bond’s net proceeds were structured to fund “opportunity investments” prioritizing four areas: power infrastructure, health coverage, resilient communities, and research and evaluation. Moving from framework to action, the Social Bond maintains a growing number of investments throughout California. One of the first investments was for a power-building infrastructure across the state designed by community organizing groups, which attracted investment from other foundations and resulted in creation of the Movement Innovation Collaborative.

Today, Social Bond resources aid more than 50 publicly reported grantees. The initiative distributes resources in phases to continue strengthening community organizations, expanding opportunity and advancing healthier, more equitable outcomes for residents throughout the state.

Wallis Annenberg GenSpace

2022–PRESENT

“With a rapidly aging population and older adults across Los Angeles dealing with the challenges of social isolation and loneliness, Wallis Annenberg GenSpace is a welcome philanthropic innovation — an uplifting model for the community center of the future.”

—Paul Irving
Senior Advisor, Milken Institute,
and Scholar-in-Residence,
USC Leonard Davis School of
Gerontology

As Americans live longer, older adults increasingly face a retirement landscape marked by social isolation and loss of routine, with too few spaces designed for connection, creativity and continued growth. Wallis Annenberg established GenSpace, a project of the Wallis Annenberg Legacy Foundation, to address that gap in Los Angeles by providing an age-focused community hub for lifelong learning and social interaction. GenSpace reimagines aging as a time for wellness, togetherness and discovery, disrupting negative stereotypes and serving as a national model for community-centered social infrastructure to support healthy aging.

Opened in April 2022, GenSpace took shape as a purpose-built community center for older adults in Koreatown on the Wilshire Boulevard Temple campus. It was designed as an age-focused hub featuring classes, events and gathering spaces to serve a wide variety of interests. Inspired by Wallis Annenberg’s belief that older adults should remain active and valued members of the community, the center’s innovative model treats aging as a stage of continued learning and civic participation.

More recently, GenSpace has grown into a broad platform for healthy aging and mutual support in Los Angeles, with programs spanning health and wellness, arts and culture, technology, financial security and intergenerational engagement. By fostering community, learning and belonging, GenSpace helps reduce social isolation while building healthier, more connected lives for older Angelenos.

Department of Angels

2025–PRESENT

“Our hope is that the Department of Angels continues to serve the recovery ecosystem by moving quickly, listening deeply and keeping community at the center.”

—Brandon Levin

Vice President, Office of the CEO,
Snap Inc., and Founding Member,
Department of Angels

Following the devastating Eaton and Palisades fires of January 2025, the Department of Angels was established to help affected communities lead their own recovery. Co-founded by Miguel Santana, president and CEO of the California Community Foundation, and Evan Spiegel, co-founder and CEO of Snap Inc. and a Palisades native, the Department of Angels emerged from extensive engagement with community members, disaster experts and wildfire survivors. Going beyond immediate relief, the organization takes a long-term approach that integrates policy advocacy, community organizing and evidence-based research to strengthen community resilience and support sustainable recovery.

The Department of Angels emphasizes listening as a foundation for recovery, gathering input from more than 8,200 fire survivors in its first year to produce its quarterly *Community Voices: LA Fire Recovery Report*, which tracks progress and challenges across four pillars of focus: housing stability, insurance access and reform, environmental health and safety, and fire-resilient rebuilding. The organization also funds and supports trusted, place-based, neighborhood block-captain programs and has worked alongside survivors and policymakers to move solutions forward, including expanded CalAssist Mortgage Fund eligibility, new statewide soil-testing guidance, extended access to Los Angeles County’s Soil Lead Testing Program, and millions of public dollars for critical housing stability and environmental health projects to help families return home.

25 /25

The LA Local

2024–PRESENT

“The LA Local does more than keep Angelenos informed and connected. It provides a sense of agency and empowers residents to shape the city they call home.”

—**Monica Lozano**
Co-founder and Chair of the
Board, *The LA Local*

In a region as large and diverse as Los Angeles, trusted local news serves as essential civic infrastructure, connecting residents to their communities and one another. *The LA Local* was created to provide nonprofit journalism that is free, independent, and rooted in the needs and experiences of Angelenos. The concept was developed through several years of collaboration among philanthropic, civic, journalism and community leaders who recognized the need for a new model of local news for Los Angeles. Officially launched in January 2026, the organization combines professional journalism with community engagement, employing experienced reporters and operating innovative youth journalism and civic programs, like LA Documenters, which trains and pays residents to cover public meetings in their communities.

The LA Local's work begins with listening. Through ongoing conversations and engagement with thousands of Angelenos, the organization continually adapts its journalism to reflect the priorities and information needs of local communities. Its guiding premise is that strong, connected communities are built at the neighborhood level first, in the places where trust is formed and where people live. The organization brings community-rooted journalism to neighborhoods that have often been underserved or misrepresented by traditional media, including Koreatown, Pico-Union, Westlake, Inglewood, East L.A., South L.A., Boyle Heights and Long Beach, as well as region-wide enterprise reporting, arts and culture coverage, and community engagement initiatives. Its journalists are rooted in the communities they serve, producing bilingual and accessible journalism distributed across the platform of choice to help people navigate daily life and shape their communities.

From
one generation
to the next ...

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