

The California Endowment

- **Began in 1996**
- **Evolved from mostly “responsive” grant-making to a focus on policy and systems change to benefit low-income communities and people of color**
- **New initiative, Building Healthy Communities, explicitly embraces community organizing as a core strategy.**

TCE's Current Approach

- 14 place-based efforts plus funding for state-level policy research and advocacy
- **Outside-in:** funding for youth/adult organizing in all 14 sites.
- **Inside-out:** funding for system leaders at the local/state level.
- **Both/and:** attempt to create and manage constructive tension

Why embrace organizing?

- **Growing awareness and comfort with understanding the role of power in systems change**
- **Systems evolve based on the needs and interests of the powerful**
- **Systems overlook or discriminate against low-income communities of color**

Added value of organizing

- **To create sustainable change, systems require external pressure and internal leadership**
- **Empowering the voices of those at the margin is essential to creating a more inclusive and just society**
- **Those who benefit from the status quo resist change**
- **Change involves tension**

Organizing vs. advocacy

- Organizing develops volunteer leadership; advocacy is dominated by paid professionals
- Organizing
 - develops voter power and can force public officials to respond
 - activates people through face-to-face contact, community building and training
- Organizing and advocacy are complimentary and synergistic
- Some organizations do both.

Not all organizing is the same

- Individual member vs. institution-based
- Multi-ethnic vs. single ethnic
- Faith-based
- Independent vs. network-based
- Labor-affiliated
- Issue-driven verses leadership/relationship focused
- Approach to conflict and systems

Issues facing foundations

- **Taking sides verses “neutrality”**
- **Conflict avoidance**
- **Academic culture: knowledge drives change**
- **Reliance on euphemisms (civic engagement, community building...)**
- **Concern about the bottom line, tangible results**
- **Difficulty with non-linear, complex situations.**



Healthy Community

**LEVERAGING
PARTNERSHIPS**

**CHANGING THE
NARRATIVE**

**COLLABORATIVE
EFFICACY**

**RESIDENT
POWER**

**YOUTH
LEADERSHIP**