

Introduction

Marguerite Casey Foundation (the Foundation) opened its doors in 2001 with the mission of strengthening the voices of low-income families, and sustaining a family-led movement toward social and economic justice. This mission is grounded in the belief that those who are most affected by poverty and inequities are best suited to determine the supports and solutions they need. The Foundation centered its social change efforts on a movement building strategy and began exploring which tactics¹ could best accomplish its goals. The Foundation carefully strategized and researched which pieces needed to be in place to support this effort. After speaking with hundreds of families, thought leaders, community organizers, practitioners, and other stakeholders, the Foundation decided on a multi-faceted approach of supporting advocacy efforts to advance social change by providing general operating support, building cross-sector networks, and investing in programs and organizations aligned with its goal of cultivating a constituent-led movement. Through these tactics, the Foundation is able to stay true to its promise—that is to “Ask. Listen. Act.” and always keep families and their needs at the center of its work. As stated by the Foundation’s President and CEO Luz Vega-Marquis, “Our role is to listen rather than to lead; to provide families with the resources they need to make their voices heard.”

The Foundation’s Approach to Movement Building

Background

Early on, Marguerite Casey Foundation recognized that, to authentically foster a movement of low-income families, they needed to work across the many issue areas its constituents (i.e., low-income families) face. Instead of focusing on a specific set of issue areas, the Foundation’s leadership chose to seek out grassroots organizations that demonstrated a longstanding ability to work effectively and collaboratively in communities to assist constituents in becoming their own change agents, often through advocacy and policy change efforts. While the Foundation does not accept unsolicited proposals, it is devoted to working with organizations who have clearly articulated missions and those with strong connections and relationships with the communities they are serving. To be considered for a grant from the Foundation, organizations must have a presence in the communities they serve and be a cornerstone for the families in the area.

The Foundation also committed to supporting organizations led by people of color, and that have diverse representation on their boards across race, gender, age, and other identifiers that holistically represent the community the organization is serving. Ms. Vega-Marquis shared additional insights on this approach saying, “We recognize people of color are affected disproportionately and we want their leadership to be known and supported.” Currently, over 86 percent of the Foundation’s grantees are organizations led by people of color, underscoring the Foundation’s commitment to equity.

In 2002, the Foundation provided its first round of grants. Over time, the idea of working across multiple issue areas became further cemented into the Foundation’s overarching low-income, family-led, social change, movement building strategy. As

¹ The Foundation refers to their broader organizational approach as a movement building strategy and employ several tactics (e.g., general operating support, network building) to advance this strategy.

“General support is one of the most strategic forms of grantmaking. The funder has to know about all aspects of the organization. It’s not about one single project, but where the organization sees itself going.”

**–Luz Vega-Marquis,
President and CEO of
Marguerite Casey
Foundation**

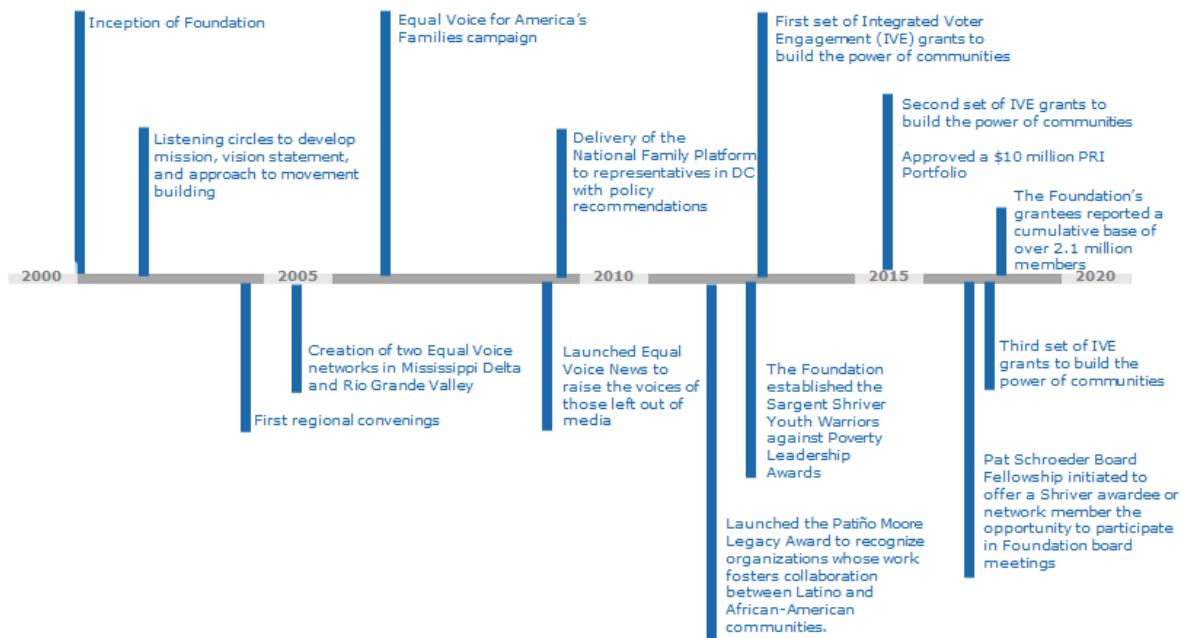
regional convenings of grantees were held across the country, it became clear that families do not experience any one issue or barrier in isolation, yet local organizations often attempted to address singular issues or multiple issues but without connecting how each issue may impact the other. The Foundation recognized this gap and found that connecting grantees across issue areas amplified the impact of each organization’s individual and collective work. It began developing Equal Voice networks in 2004, and currently supports 17 Equal Voice networks, 15 of which are regional and two of which are national. The development of these networks solidified the Foundation’s early decision to support education, advocacy and activism. These networks, funded by the Foundation and led by local organizations, strengthen connections and collaborations across organizations and other key stakeholders.

As the Foundation explored the most effective tactics to pursue in order to support its mission, it was critical to have the board’s guidance and trust. As Ms. Vega-Marquis shared, “the greatest asset the Foundation has is its board.” She emphasized the benefit of having a well-informed and courageous board that provides bold leadership in strategy development, and most importantly, that continues to demonstrate trust and promote authentic communication with staff to encourage honesty about both internal challenges and insights from constituents.

Over the last 17 years, Marguerite Casey Foundation has supported 746 unique organizations with like values and goals to: increase outcomes, expand networks and connections, achieve more policy wins, and ultimately improve the lives of families. The following timeline (Exhibit 1) indicates key milestones and events since the Foundation’s founding.

Exhibit 1. Timeline of Select Milestones in the Foundation’s History²

Marguerite Casey Foundation Milestones



² More detailed information on these and other milestones of Marguerite Casey Foundation can be found on its website: <https://caseygrants.org/who-we-are/our-history/>.

The Foundation’s Values-Driven Approach

The Foundation’s strategies are built on the premise that a trusting, value-aligned, power-sharing relationship with its grantees will ensure the wise stewardship of resources and a genuine commitment to collaboration. While this relationship-centric approach is central to the Foundation’s mission and necessary for advancing the movement to elevate the voices of marginalized and low-income families, and its ability to advocate for change. Ms. Vega-Marquis shared her thoughts on how the Foundation builds relationships with grantees, saying:

The role of the Program Officer at Marguerite Casey Foundation is in service to the Foundation’s movement building strategy and the value they add is immense. They become highly connected to the grassroots organizations working in communities, so they can access solid information about the complex regions in which they work. This intense focus on building relationships leads to long-term trusting partnerships between the Foundation, grantees, communities and families, and allows our Program Officers to serve as both resources and bridge-builders.



The following describe the key strategies the Foundation employs to bolster its movement building efforts.



General Operating Support for Advocacy and Activism. The Foundation provides substantial multi-year, unrestricted funding to community-based organizations in areas with the highest concentration of families living in poverty. The Foundation does not set the agenda on how grantees utilize the funds, rather the families and activists in the communities do. The flexible nature of this type of grantmaking reinforces grantees’ power and autonomy to respond immediately to the needs of the communities they are serving, while the multi-year nature enables them to plan for long-term strategies. As the Foundation does not provide issue- or program-specific funding, it anticipates grantees will implement educational, advocacy, and activism strategies across the myriad of intersecting issues that low-income families experience. To track progress over time, grantees regularly submit progress reports to the Foundation, outlining how the unrestricted funds were used and corresponding outcomes. Additionally, the Foundation identified a set of five indicators of movement building that align with its values and principles: movement infrastructure, leadership development, networks, public policy, and impact on families. These became the framework that Foundation staff use to measure grantees’ progress in movement building.

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Five Indicators of Movement Building

Movement Infrastructure

Leadership Development

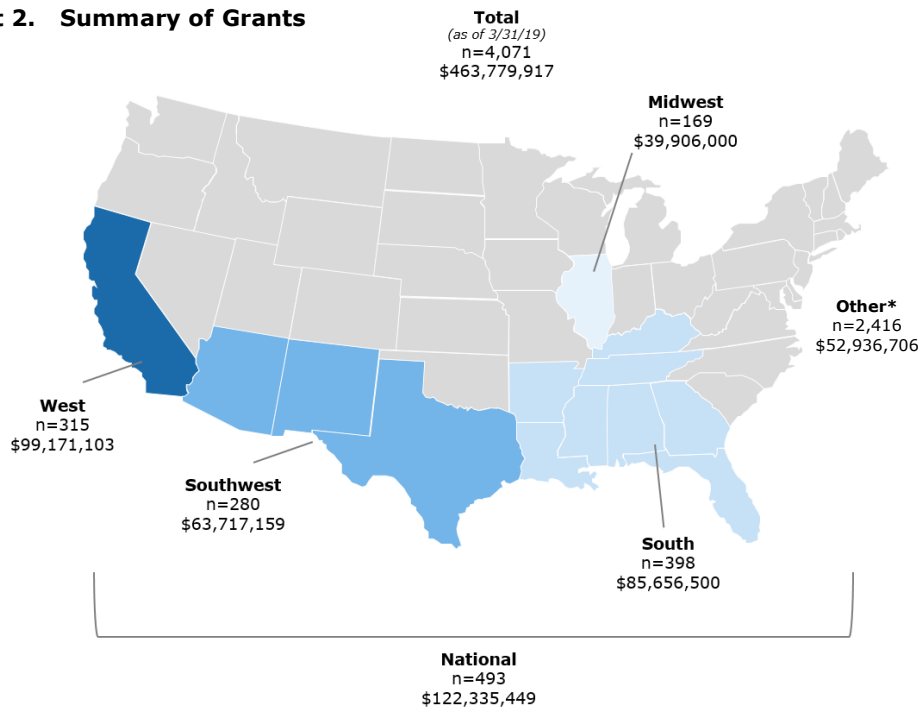
Networks

Public Policy

Impact on Families

The Foundation’s grantees span organizations across 13 states. Its grantmaking portfolio is twofold: regional and national. To address the unique needs experienced by the different geographical regions of the country, the Foundation’s regional portfolio is divided into four constituencies: Midwest, South, Southwest, and West. The Foundation’s national portfolio is overarching and supports organizations that are able to connect local and regional work to the national landscape. In 2018, the Foundation approved 85 grants of which 100 percent were for general support and 94 percent were for renewed support of existing grantees. These grants averaged \$328,529 and spanned an average of 34 months. Exhibit 2 outlines the investments and grants made within each region since the Foundation’s inception.

Exhibit 2. Summary of Grants



**Other grants include legacy grants, President’s and Board of Directors’ discretionary grants, matching grants, and home state grants. Source: Marguerite Casey Foundation*



Network building. A common saying, “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” is also true when it comes to movement building. A network of organizations/people working together on a complex issue will yield greater results than a single organization/person working alone. The Foundation recognizes this and views network building as an essential part of its work. The Foundation invests in networks, referred to as Equal Voice networks, that span a breadth of topics that low-income families face (i.e., poverty, criminal justice reform, affordable housing, living wages, affordable health care, etc.). As stated on the Foundation’s website, “These networks are the mortar of the movement, unifying families, community groups, and advocates around collective actions.” Network building is a key tactic of the Foundation’s approach starting in 2004, but networks could not operate without the guidance and expertise of network weavers³. Ms. Luz Vega-Marquis explained that a community member brought to the Foundation the idea of employing a network weaver that each network selects—someone who can facilitate connections across issues, race, culture, geography, religion, and other identifiers. Now, all of the Foundation’s

³ The idea of network weavers stemmed from a grantee, and is now built into the Foundation’s network building approach. Network weavers are selected by each Equal Voice network of grantees, and have the role of facilitating network meetings and collaboration. For more information visit: <https://caseygrants.org/how-we-work/network-building/network-weavers/>.

networks have invaluable network weavers who serve as key drivers of change.

The Foundation's approach to network building as a critical complement to general operating support in advancing advocacy and activism efforts has unique elements for the field of philanthropy. Many funder-supported networks are focused on a specific issue area, resulting in efforts that may not take into account the larger system or context that surrounds and impacts that issue area. Recognizing this, the Foundation intentionally designed Equal Voice networks to be non-issue based and allow for cross-sector collaboration to address the myriad of challenges that low-income families experience. Additionally, the networks are given a large amount of autonomy to run the Equal Voice networks without the Foundation's involvement. Fifteen regional Equal Voice networks exist today, along with two national Equal Voice networks, all stemming from the support of the Foundation. Ms. Vega-Marquis explains the benefits of the Equal Voice networks as follows:

By participating in non-issue based networks, organizations are exposed to new strategies that may not yet have penetrated their particular field. Participants gain insight into the intersections among issues, which fosters a deeper understanding of the multiple, intersecting challenges poor families face. Most crucially, by building alliances across boundaries of race, region, issue, and ego, organizers are able to build the critical mass necessary to create the kind of broad-based change that families most need.

The Foundation's commitment to network building and employing an "equal voice" approach is also reflected in its grantmaking strategy. When selecting grantees, The Foundation considers the degree to which an organization is open to collaboration and how their work will align with the local Equal Voice network. The Foundation is then able to create the space and supports for network participants to collectively strengthen the capacity of each other and their region as a whole.



“Top-down policy change misses the mark. Unless we are employing a model that is really building and empowering the voices of those impacted, families will never get justice.”

**–Luz Vega-Marquis,
President and CEO of
Marguerite Casey
Foundation**



Lifting up voices. The Foundation and its grantees strive to keep families at the center of its work to elevate their voices and ensure families are engaged every step of the way. The Foundation believes that strategic communications to share the stories of families across its network is an important aspect to advancing movement building. The Foundation is also intentional in ensuring the voices and needs of families genuinely guide its organizational focus. This practice has been incorporated into the Foundation's practices since its inception when six listening circles were conducted with hundreds of community members to help the Foundation understand where to focus its efforts and resources. Since 2013, the Foundation has won 45 national, regional, and state communications and journalism awards. The award-winning

content elevated movement building, how the Foundation works, and the voices of low-income families and grassroots organizing efforts to find solutions to poverty.



Convenings. Imperative to movement building is the ability for stakeholders to come together, bridge the gaps that exist across the landscape, and advance the movement. The Foundation has been committed to bringing stakeholders together across geographies since its founding. The Foundation leverages its connections to host regular convenings at the regional and national levels with grantees, constituents, and experts to share knowledge and best practices in order to advance social change through movement building. In doing so, these different stakeholders have the ability to collaborate and make new connections across their bodies of work that otherwise may not have been possible. The Foundation hopes that these convenings will result in forward momentum, strengthened capacity, and stronger networks.



Program related investing. As a supplement to grantmaking, the Foundation also makes investments into companies and organizations whose mission and core values align with the Foundation's. The Foundation's program-related investments are solely made with the intention of advancing its overall mission as opposed to any financial return. Staying true to its values, the Foundation considers the needs of the communities they serve in the process of prioritizing areas where program-related investments are focused. The Foundation is also exploring how to best align its overall investment portfolio and its mission through strategic impact investments.

Case Study Approach

The Foundation provided general operating support, as well as network building opportunities, since it made its first grants in 2002. The Foundation continues to grant to eleven of its original grantees. The Foundation partnered with Harder+Company Community Research to explore the impact of these efforts through three case studies that highlight the value of developing a long-term funder-grantee relationship and providing general operating and network building support. The three grantees were selected based on their collective range in organization size, scope, and communities they serve. Utilizing an investigative journalism approach⁴, the evaluation team conducted in-depth interviews with grantee staff, grantee constituents, and Foundation staff. Interviews sought to explore how the Foundation's support has influenced the following organizations, the communities they serve, and the movements they are building:

- Greater Birmingham Ministries- An Alabama-based organization serving primarily low-income and marginalized populations with a focus on mobilizing and training community organizers.
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice- A Los Angeles civil rights organization guided by the multi-layered issues that affect community members across the region experiencing systemic discrimination.
- Faith in Action (Formerly PICO)- A national organization stewarding racial and economic justice by organizing people of faith and those most impacted by the inequities that exist within the country.

This report highlights each organization's story about the impact of the Foundation's general operating and networking support over the past 17 years, as well as the common themes identified across the grantees' experiences⁵. 🇺🇸

⁴ Our investigative journalism approach was adapted from Mark Lee Hunter's manuscript titled, *Story-Based Inquiry: A manual for investigative journalists*. Retrieved from <http://www.saladeprensa.org/art956.pdf>.

⁵ The case studies are not intended to offer a comprehensive description of the organization's work. They prioritize the points that stakeholders identified as central to the organization's success.

The Investigative Journalism Approach

- **The central role of hypothesis-setting in developing the storyline of the case study.** By treating the storyline as a hypothesis, we continually collected new data to disprove and/or revise the evolving storylines.
- **Use of diverse data sources to place the storyline in the broader context.** We actively pursued secondary data and reviewed publicly available information to add context to, and confirm, our findings.
- **Consensus-driven process for framing and finalizing the case studies.** We explicitly asked interviewees representing different stakeholder groups (i.e., grantee staff, constituent of grantee organization, and Foundation staff) about the prevailing hypothesis, and sought their honest assessment from their unique perspectives. This supported ongoing refinement of each storyline and shared consensus.

Greater Birmingham Ministries

Marguerite Casey Foundation (the Foundation) supports organizations that are leading movement building efforts in communities with a history of discrimination and disinvestment. The Foundation also prioritizes supporting organizations that foster the agency of constituents utilizing its services, with the belief that those best suited to identify solutions and lead efforts to combat social and economic barriers are those who have experienced inequities first-hand. Greater Birmingham Ministries (GBM) of Alabama and the Foundation found a natural partnership based on these shared values.

GBM has a long history of serving communities across faith, ethnic, race, and economic divides. Founded in 1969, now celebrating its Fiftieth Anniversary, the organization currently accomplishes its work with 11 full- or part-time staff members and 200 volunteers, with an annual operating budget of about \$1 million. GBM's vision "incorporates transforming the relationship of oppressed and marginalized people of our communities from one of individually isolated, passive, uninformed, and disengaged 'consumers' to one of active, informed, conscious and engaged 'producers'."⁶ The organization serves primarily low-income and marginalized populations across the greater Birmingham region with a focus on mobilizing and training community organizers to advance policy reform and improve local conditions (infrastructure, health care, etc.) for all residents. Its primary constituents are African-American/Black community members, though the organization serves the broader population across race and ethnicity, including a growing Hispanic/Latino population. Its organizational focus is to increase self-governance and civic engagement among this constituency and facilitate activist efforts to reduce barriers and pursue justice for these communities through inter-faith and multi-racial collaborations. GBM seeks to achieve these objectives through three key strategies:

- **Direct services:** Addressing immediate needs through support with finances, food, clothing, and other basic human need services for families and individuals in crisis.
- **Supporting interfaith connections:** Building connections among faith communities of Birmingham and Alabama to ensure all constituents' needs are addressed in culturally appropriate ways—and for faith leaders to serve as allies in organizing efforts that move beyond direct services.
- **Community organizing:** Mobilizing and training community organizers within low-income neighborhoods to be informed and engaged in decision-making processes and work alongside institutions that have the resources to affect change for the future of their families and communities.

Scott Douglas has a unique story of his path to his current position of Executive Director that exemplifies the upward mobility that the Foundation hopes to impact through its support. In his own words, he describes his trajectory:

Case Study Informants

- Scott Douglas, *Executive Director for Greater Birmingham Ministries*
- Tari Williams, *Organizing Director for Greater Birmingham Ministries*
- Tyrone King, *constituent of Greater Birmingham Ministries*
- Joe Burris, *Program Officer (South) for the Marguerite Casey Foundation*

"GBM's mission is to serve people, build community, and pursue justice."

—Greater Birmingham Ministries' staff

⁶ 2016 Marguerite Casey Foundation Grant Application, written by GBM staff.

I first came to GBM as a client in 1976. I was unemployed and my wife was in graduate school. We had a two-year old child, we had just come from Nashville, Tennessee to Birmingham, and we needed some baby clothes. Someone told me about this place, and we came here and got some clothes for our son. About six years later, I became a volunteer for GBM, on the board, and then in 1993 I applied to become Executive Director. In between, I had worked for the Sierra Club and, before that, the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice (led by Anne Braden and Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth) as a regional organizer during the Birmingham Civil Rights Movement⁷.

Communities across the greater Birmingham region—and the social and economic context in which they live—have changed over the years, but inequities remain. GBM works to address these barriers and pursue justice for its constituents. Birmingham, Alabama has a long history of injustice including segregation and the fatal targeting of Black activists that lasted well into the 1960s, and what is colloquially referred to as “anti-poor” discriminatory policies and practices that continue to this day. Alabama has the fifth highest incarceration rate in the United States⁸, likely both the result and ongoing cause of barriers and inequities among the low-income population. According to the Alabama Sentencing Commission the total “in-house population” was 20,185 (22 percent of which were for non-violent crimes, largely possession of controlled substances)⁹. GBM staff also noted that policy changes enacted as a repercussion of the 2010 state elections have heightened additional barriers for its constituents, such as voter-suppression and deportation.

Joe Burris reflected on Scott Douglas’s contributions to GBM’s efforts to combat injustice, including his sharing of insights and context with newer organizations in the region; his deep understanding of the violence and injustices, including lynching, that have created lasting trauma in the community; and his wisdom and courage to face and combat escalating tensions, including an unearthing of discriminatory movements and discourse following the 2016 elections. Scott Douglas provided an example of this, saying:

During the Alabama immigration crisis in 2011, two groups of folks had deep experience in the plight of immigrants—African Americans and the Jewish community, who were abused in a land they traveled to. So having that theological experience allows us to really know what it means for Latino/Hispanic individuals to move to our town and experience hostility from residents, and more so from the state government.

GBM’s commitment to supporting community organizing and networking efforts across the region aligns well with the Foundation’s overall movement building strategy and core purpose to support constituent-led efforts that lift up local families. The Foundation also works across several issue areas that align with GBM’s work (Exhibit 3). In 2002, the Foundation selected GBM as one of its first grantees to support with general operating grants and network building assistance.

⁷ Scott Douglas emphasized that Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth continued to be active in the decades *after* the 1960’s, including in the peace movement and the public housing movements across the South—and Scott continued to support these efforts as Executive Director of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice from 1984 to 1989.

⁸ Sawyer, W. and Wagner, P. States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2018. *Prison Policy Initiative*. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2018.html>.

⁹ Alabama Sentencing Commission. Annual Report. (2019). Retrieved from <http://sentencingcommission.alacourt.gov/media/1070/2019-annual-report.pdf>.

Exhibit 3. Greater Birmingham Ministries Focus Areas

Focus Areas	
 Civic Engagement	 Poverty
 Community Organizing	 Racial Equity
 Food Security/Access to Healthy Food	 Transportation
 Health Care	 Voter Engagement
 Living Wage	 Workers' Rights

Partnering with Marguerite Casey Foundation

Since 2002, GBM has received 1.7 million dollars over five grant cycles from the Foundation with most grants amounts between \$100,000 and \$300,000, and increasing in the past two cycles. This long-term funding is particularly valuable in the South, a region known for having a sparse funding landscape. It has enabled GBM to support the development of several local organizations and initiatives, including a homeless shelter, children’s shelter, and meals on wheels grant, in addition to strengthening its own organizational growth and impact. Joe Burris, Foundation Program Officer, who has worked with GBM since 2015, shared the following perspective on the impact of the local funding landscape on GBM and other nonprofits:

In the South, there is sizeable charitable giving, but much goes to the church. Other funders give to the arts or give to service providers. Funding advocacy, funding activism isn’t something southern funders “get.” The mission is to really help these organizations working on advocacy and activism stay around. There are some organizations that would not have been started had it not been for our long-term general operating support grants.

Scott Douglas, Executive Director of Greater Birmingham Ministries, shared additional insights concerning the funding landscape—both locally and across the broader field of philanthropy. He reflected on observing a paradox between the discourse across the field and his own experiences, saying that, “Over the years this talk in philanthropy about expanding general operating support, I’ve seen it shrink. In the field, it has shrunk even though the national dialogue expresses otherwise, especially in the South.” Scott Douglas also echoed Joe Burris’s sentiments in regard to the sparse availability of funding in the Deep South and commented on the value that general operating support can have in a region otherwise parched for funding. He also highlighted that multi-year general operating support grants from some foundations may come with “strings attached” as the foundation emphasizes the parameters of “how long it will take to “win” or gain a big increase in capacity.” This is in contrast to the multi-year general operating support grants from Marguerite Casey Foundation that are flexible by nature, based on shared values and trust between the organizations and an understanding of the long-term efforts required to gain a “win,” as well as an appreciation for the *value* of making progress on policy reform and community engagement regardless of the current legal outcome.

Since 2002, and partially in thanks to renewable funding and support from the Foundation (see Exhibit 4), GBM has been able to increase its reach to direct

“Not only are local funding opportunities sparse, they are short term, no general operating support, and very limited.”

–Scott Douglas, Executive Director of Greater Birmingham Ministries

beneficiaries with relatively the same level of full- and part-time staff and volunteers. Its work depends on key staff members that can maintain and facilitate the organization’s vision, and a robust group of volunteers to move the vision forward through program delivery and movement building efforts.

Exhibit 4. Summary of the Foundation’s Support to GBM

Grant Decision Year	Grant Amount	Grant Term	Org. Operating Budget
2002	\$150,000	36 months	\$600,000
2006	\$150,000	36 months	\$420,000
2011	\$100,000	24 months	\$600,000
2013	\$300,000	36 months	\$740,000
2016	\$375,000	36 months	\$920,000

Impact in the Community

GBM’s most recent accomplishments include helping convince lawmakers to increase the minimum wage, forging advancements in immigration reform, and reducing barriers to public assistance for formerly incarcerated persons. In 2015, GBM was a lead partner in winning the first municipal minimum wage increase in the Deep South, raising the minimum wage in Birmingham to \$10.50/hour. Over the past several years, GBM has also promoted the integration of Ban-the-Box type policies¹⁰ through faith institutions across the state, winning a reversal of the state’s policy of denying SNAP/TANF assistance to person’s convicted on non-violent drug crimes. Notably, this policy effort was inspired from GBM staff conversations with a constituent who was personally experiencing barriers to public assistance based on their legal history. In collaboration with local coalition groups, GBM also drafted and proposed a city ordinance resolution to identify Birmingham as a sanctuary city¹¹, and have engaged as a co-plaintiff to advance DACA and DAPA efforts¹². GBM staff ties its efforts back to the historical context in the region, explaining:

GBM's organizing model stems from our landscape analysis that concludes that the participatory democracy "disconnects"...are the cumulative results of decades of denial of democracy, open and cloaked warfare against workers' rights, social and corporate intolerance of a truly "public sphere," historic and systemic disinvestment in public education, all amid still unsettled issues of racial justice¹³.

¹⁰ Bill would prohibit the State of Alabama, its agencies, and its political subdivisions, as employers, from inquiring into or considering an applicant’s arrest or conviction history for consideration of a job until after the applicant has received a conditional job offer, except when a conviction is directly related to the position of employment sought. Source: ACLU of Alabama, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.aclualabama.org/en/legislation/sb198-2018-ban-box>.

¹¹ A sanctuary city is that in which municipal laws promote practices to protect undocumented immigrants from deportation or prosecution, despite federal immigration law.

¹² Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA).

¹³ 2016 Marguerite Casey Foundation Grant Application, written by GBM staff.

“Marguerite Casey Foundation has an arc of work that is consistent with amplifying and lifting the voices of the deepest concerns of low-income families – and through a lens that accounts for race, color, ethnicity...”

–Scott Douglas, Executive Director of Greater Birmingham Ministries



“If it wasn’t for having a diverse staff, and working with various religious communities, we wouldn’t be aware of these issues.”

**–Tari Williams,
Organizing Director of
Greater Birmingham
Ministries**

In order to facilitate this work, GBM knows that “representation matters.” The organization prides itself on having a diverse board that represents the diversity of its constituents. As one staff describes,

These board members come from neighborhoods and congregations that span urban to suburban, affluent to poor, conservative to progressive, White to Brown to Black. They include Jews, Christians, and Muslims, and range from individual congregations to faith bodies such as Methodist conferences and Episcopal and Catholic dioceses¹⁴.

Tyrone King, a constituent of Greater Birmingham Ministries who also works as a volunteer, also commented on the value of the diversity of the board, and mentioned an “Equal Justice Table” event facilitated by GBM every Thursday that is open to the public, and includes the service of a Spanish interpreter, to discuss important issues as they arise. In 2016, staff also described plans for an individual membership model that would provide a pathway for low-income constituents to serve on the board. All of GBM’s efforts depend on people working together to affect real policy change, and these commitments take time to cultivate and sustain. GBM staff members recognize that “progressive changes in state childcare policies, state income tax thresholds, and landlord tenant laws have only come about after years of strategic collaboration among grassroots organizations.” In its last grant application, GBM reflected on recent successes across its own constituents noting:

The past year saw Alabama's first coordinated voter engagement campaigns between African-American and Hispanic organizations, and at its leadership was GBM and Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice. GBM continues to address these systemic issues by building relationships of trust and empowerment across faith, ethnic, race, and economic divides in our metropolitan area and state.

Tyrone King emphasized that GBM staff advocate for the needs of all community members and truly “speak truth to power.” He shared one example of how staff promptly connected with a recently elected mayor to share their knowledge of local needs and advocate for support from the local government to meet these needs and advance civil rights. He remarked on what he sees as the biggest contributions

“It has empowered me so much to be part of this organization and grow. I’ve grown up through them, as a returning citizen, as a father, as a community person.

**–Tyrone King, constituent
of Greater Birmingham
Ministries**

¹⁴ 2016 Marguerite Casey Foundation Grant Application, written by GBM staff.

of this organization in the community from the constituent perspective, saying:

The greatest contribution to me, is remaining vibrant. Board, staff, assistants that still have the pulse of what's going on in our state, city, and southeast region. They work on everything from transportation and housing to social justice and systemic racism.

GBM's most recent progress reports to the Foundation reflect the policy advancements GBM has achieved, in collaboration with coalition allies and community engagement activities, across a variety of issue areas¹⁵:

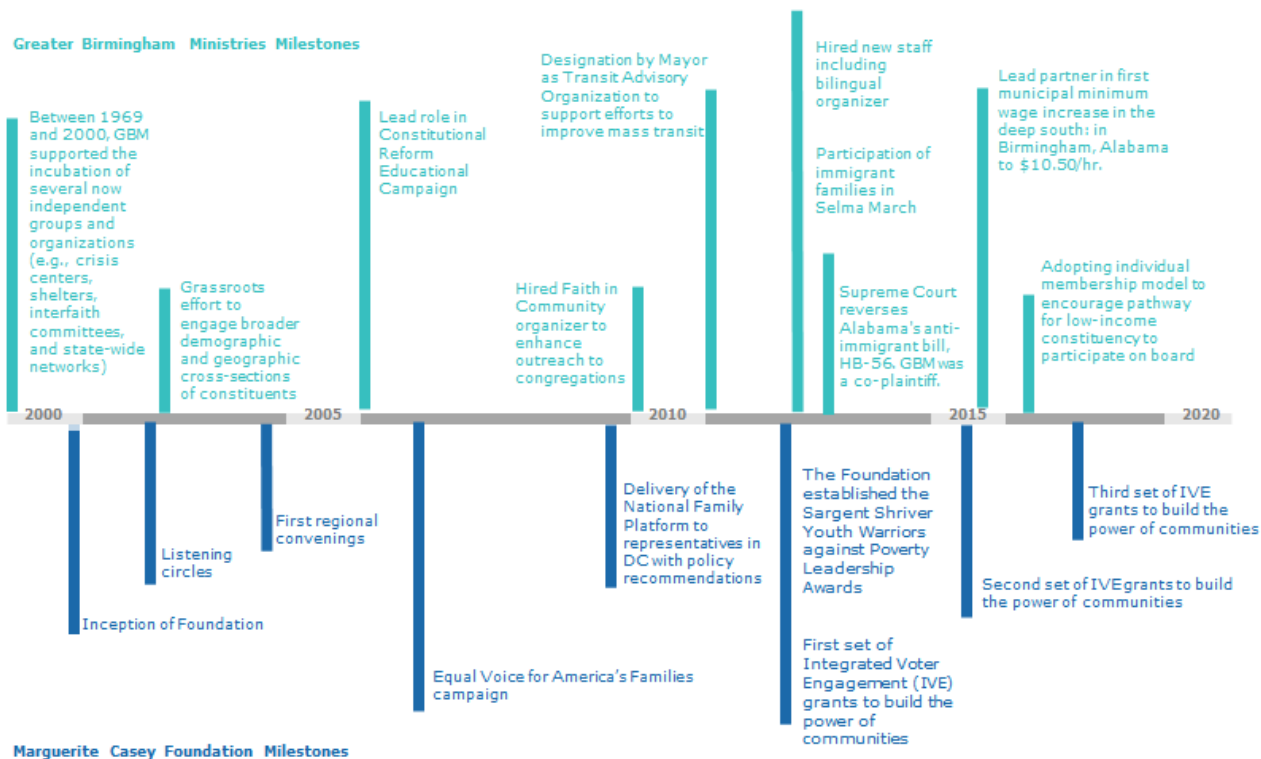
- ✓ GBM's lawsuit to reverse the state's nullification of Birmingham's Minimum Wage Ordinance—leading to the first increase in municipal minimum wage in the state—was upheld in response to GBM's efforts as a plaintiff alongside impacted low-wage workers employed across Birmingham.
- ✓ GBM has advanced voter rights by engaging in a lawsuit and appeals process against the Alabama Photo ID law¹⁶.
- ✓ GBM contributed to the success of advancing "Ban-the-Box" policy reform, with Alabama ending its policy of deny SNAP/TANF benefits to non-violent drug ex-offenders—and has successfully advocated for several individual congregations and entire denominations in the state to adopt this policy in their local institutions (e.g., United Methodist Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Episcopal Church.)
- ✓ GBM stood its ground, alongside several other coalitions, in non-cooperation with immigration law enforcement and in *support* of mutual trust and solidarity for immigrant rights—leading to a draft "sanctuary city" ordinance currently under review by the City of Birmingham's Law Department.
- ✓ GBM has supported "Winning Our Wages" efforts for several years, advocating for immigrant workers suffering stolen wages by employers; these efforts have recovered tens of thousands of dollars for victimized workers, and more recently GBM has decided to support the leadership of a partner organization, Adelante Worker Center, that is better suited to lead these efforts.

Exhibit 5 features some of GBM's key milestones over the past two decades, both related to policy advancements as well as organizational and programmatic milestones, alongside the Foundation's trajectory during this same period.

¹⁵ Other policy efforts exist, but the most prominent are displayed here; Source: 2017 and 2018 Progress Reports.

¹⁶ Nationally, upwards of 25 million eligible voters do not have a current government-issued photo ID which prevents them from engaging in the civic process in some states, including Alabama due to photo ID requirement laws. Opponents of the law consider it a form of voter suppression. Retrieved from <https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/local/solutions-journalism/2018/10/30/alabama-photo-voter-id-law-one-more-than-dozen-united-states/1652341002/>.

Exhibit 5. Overview of Greater Birmingham Ministries' Milestones¹⁷



Impacts of General Operating Support and Network Building

The general operating support grants and network building opportunities provided through Marguerite Casey Foundation have enabled Greater Birmingham Ministries to both refine its efforts and commit to long-term initiatives that are responsive to community needs. The unrestricted nature of general operating support grants has given GBM the flexibility to infuse funds where they are needed most. Over the years, the organization has used these funds to be intentional in connecting direct services to broader community work, and to even broader policy agendas. General operating support grants and network building support from the Foundation have been instrumental in strengthening GBM's approach in the following ways:

Flexible funding gave staff the space to be more intentional in their overarching program strategy—recognizing that each of its three individual strategies (direct services, supporting inter-faith connections, and community organizing) serves the same mission of “serving people, building community, and pursuing justice,” and that better integrating these components could maximize its efforts. Tari Williams, Organizing Director for Greater Birmingham Ministries, provided an example and explained that “if we have a summer food program for children, we are also looking for ways we can engage the parents and guardians in civic participation, or social justice issues.” Tyrone King echoed this experience by recalling GBM's food bank services on Fridays and shared that during this time GBM staff will facilitate presentations on various topics to engage and inform constituents in the waiting area. In conversations with multiple GBM staff, they shared that general operating support has been a crucial element for integrating

“General operating support allows us to help with immediate needs, and in turn more long-term objectives.”

**—Tari Williams,
Organizing Director of
Greater Birmingham
Ministries**

¹⁷ More detailed information on the Foundation's milestones can be found in the introduction of this report and its website: <https://caseygrants.org/who-we-are/our-history/>. For more information on Greater Birmingham Ministries' milestones, please visit its website: <https://gbm.org/>.

programs and more clearly making connections between direct service support and the deeper policy issues related to those needs and barriers. Scott Douglas expanded on this point and added:

People who come in through direct services only knew us through that door. Now, because of general operating support, we have the stability for volunteers to interview them to get their stories. We can put them in contact with leadership trainings, register them to vote, or help them or a family member have their voting rights restored. And beyond that, we can help engage them in campaigns that impact them and those they care about. Their engagement with Greater Birmingham Ministries could expand from coming in the door for food, to being part of Ban-the-Box¹⁸. It's not a requirement, but other doors are open to them.



As a constituent, Tyrone King shared that his experiences with GBM “have made me more of a complete citizen,” a more supportive family member and husband, and remarked with pride, “we go to marches with my daughter in Montgomery” and, that his nine year old daughter “has been at phone banks, marches; she has shared the table with governors. When she sees the newspaper, she recognizes people.” With this exposure during her youth, he sees her as the future of social change.

With the time and resources to more intentionally integrate its services and expertise—and deepen connections with individual community members—GBM is building a more holistic model of community engagement and support that is increasing its ability to identify and address the root causes of inequities around basic needs and other injustices.

General operating support helps provide the finances and flexibility to support diverse and locally-connected staff, and increase representation at networking events. GBM recognizes that in order to truly meet the diverse needs of the community, it is crucial to have a board that is diverse and representative of the local community to inform and guide the organization’s work. Beyond the board, the organization has continued to increase representation of its staff over the years by hiring and supporting both staff and volunteers that have direct experiences with the same issues as its primary constituents. Hiring staff with direct experiences requires a more individualized approach for supporting these staff (e.g., flexible schedules, financial support, affordable housing). For example, if a staff member is complying with probation requirements for themselves or

“For a strong organization like Greater Birmingham Ministries, in a region where needs and issues are ever-changing, general operating support enables them to pivot and respond quickly.”

**–Joe Burris,
Program Officer of
Marguerite Casey
Foundation**

¹⁸ See previous reference.

supporting a family member, they would need a work schedule that is adaptable to that schedule of meetings and commitments. General operating support helps provide the financial buttress to meet staff needs, allowing GBM to invest in the financial wellbeing and professional development of a diverse team. Tari Williams described supporting staff as a long-term commitment to their stability and wellbeing. She shared that GBM is actively researching how to most accurately determine appropriate salaries that meet a living wage beyond federal or other poverty levels, and regardless of one's title or position in the organization—noting that household size and family size are two variables it is considering for salary ranges.

Tari Williams also shared that general operating support funds are flexible enough to enable GBM to send constituents to regional conferences where they are able to make new connections and share their experiences with others across the region. Tyrone King shared the significant impact of these opportunities from the constituent perspective. He explained,

I am from Jacksonville and am formerly incarcerated. Since connecting with GBM, I've done systemic training sessions with the Alabama Organizing Project. I've met people I never would have met. I've met my Latino brothers and sisters in Chicago. GBM has just kept me in the pulse, and opened doors for me to be in legislative sessions, to sit with stakeholders in the southeast. Scott Douglas is like a mentor to me, and so many others, former legislators, formerly employed federal government, former social workers.

Network building supports from the Foundation have increased the representation of organizations and individuals in local and regional initiatives aiming to increase collaborations and affect policy change, such as Equal Voice networks¹⁹. The Foundation sees Equal Voice networks as an important space to create bridges where there were previously siloes—building network connections across organizations that work on a variety of issue areas and for various populations, recognizing that constituents' experiences are multi-faceted and that they may interact with several organizations to seek support. GBM staff note that, "GBM's primary network in Alabama is the Alabama Organizing Project, composed mostly of MCF grantees."²⁰ Joe Burriss commented on the participation of GBM and Executive Director, Scott Douglas, in these networks:

In the South, in small organizations, particularly with small staff, the tendency is to work in a silo, and I think this Equal Voice network—being part of a network that compels you to work together rather than operating in siloes—has been beneficial to Greater Birmingham Ministries and other organizations. Alabama is not a Black and White state anymore, and Scott was out in front of that in launching Alabama Coalition of Immigrant Justice. I think being able to come together around greater racial and cultural lines is important in a place where people don't do that very often.

Tari Williams noted that participating in networks facilitated by Marguerite Casey Foundation has also influenced its program strategies. For example, she shared that "one of our ideas about organizing bus riders came from a convening because someone met someone who was part of an organizing group of bus riders from another state."

"At Marguerite Casey Foundation convenings, low-income family leaders see people who are just like them...it makes them realize they aren't alone, and are part of a movement of something bigger. I can't think of another foundation that allows people to build this 'out-of-state' vision."

**–Scott Douglas,
Executive Director of
Greater Birmingham
Ministries**

¹⁹ For a full description of Equal Voice networks, see the introductory section of the report.

²⁰ 2016 Marguerite Casey Foundation Grant Application, written by GBM staff.

General operating support enables GBM staff to address both immediate and long-term needs, by having the flexibility to allocate funds where they are needed most and respond to shifting priorities over time. GBM staff noted that flexible funding allows them to both pivot efforts in the short-term and commit to long-term plans. In its most recent grant application, staff describes these grants as empowering:

The increased capacity afforded GBM by the scale and term of MCF funding has allowed us, emboldened us, to take reasonable risks in improving the lives of families and children in Birmingham and Alabama. This is particularly important when we make decisions to engage issues that had not earlier been on our priority agenda such as immigration justice, LGBTQ rights, and mass incarceration²¹.

Joe Burris shared additional insights from the funder perspective related to the trust and flexibility required when giving general operating support grants, saying, "we approach from the stand point that movement building is a work in progress, and it's a long game." Tari Williams shared similar insights from the grantee perspective, "knowing when an organization is having growing pains and having that long-term relationship allows you to build trust, ask questions, and have a meeting of the minds and a mutual understanding."

General operating support grants are often described as an investment in the organization, rather than one specific program. This has clearly been the experience of GBM in regard to its connection with the Foundation which has provided general operating support to this organization for over a decade. Addressing long-term needs—from *either* a grantor or grantee perspective—requires a deep understanding of the work, "day-in and day-out," and the perseverance required to effect impactful and lasting change. Scott Douglas shared that general operating support gives GBM the confidence to pursue these long-term strategies which he described as "our most difficult obstacles" and more specifically described that this flexible funding allows GBM to "to build the capacity, political will, and alliances necessary to have enough power to effect change."

Scott Douglas identified three key benefits of multi-year general operating support: 1) the ability to pivot to where resources are needed most, 2) take advantage of opportunities as they arise and, 3) build a track record over time. He shared several examples including efforts to promote Medicaid expansion, and that with this funding they were able to lend their resources and organizing skills to broader campaigns (e.g., Poor People's Campaign²²), and amplify their voice by collaborating with other partners. In another example, Scott Douglas illustrates the connection between staff, direct services, and broader advocacy efforts noting that:

General operating support has allowed us to begin to hire organizers who were bilingual to support the Latinx population. We were able to shift use of funds in real time, as more of our direct service clients were Spanish speaking, and to support our Latino immigrant ally organizations. The flexibility has allowed us to pivot as issues and concerns arise between grant cycles. Those emerging consciousness don't wait for the grant cycles.

"If it hadn't been for long-term general operating support—and at scale—we would not have been able to have this continuum of service, advocacy, and systems change."

**—Scott Douglas,
Executive Director of
Greater Birmingham
Ministries**

²¹ 2016 Marguerite Casey Foundation Grant Application, written by GBM staff.

²² The Poor People's Campaign is inspired from an effort organized by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the late 1960s, as a call for federal funding to improve conditions for the poorest Americans and guarantee jobs for those seeking work. Retrieved from https://www.al.com/news/2018/05/alabama_poor_peoples_campaign.html.



Multi-year flexible funding, and at scale, allows for the time and resources to be creative and try new things. Another key benefit of unrestricted funding is not only the ability to take on multi-year policy efforts, but having the space to think, reflect, and adapt (both in programs and through policies/campaigns). One staff member describes it as such:

The scale and term of MCF funding is vital to our efforts to work on issues that require multiple years to achieve even intermediate victories, such as our work on public transit. These resources allow us time to envision, strategize, act, and reflect and then with those learnings, refine our vision and our strategy²³.


Tari Williams expanded on how the consistency and flexibility of general operating support allows staff to be creative in their efforts to integrate services across GMB's program offerings. For example, staff can pilot new activities during their educational sessions such as interactive civic engagement games with prizes that provide a real benefit to participants such as bus passes, toiletries, or a gift card. In addition to combining civic and direct services into one activity, general operating support also, as Tari Williams described it, "allows us to be creative and think outside of the box...not just read a script or register voters, but incorporate alternative ways to engage the community." She also described how the flexibility of funds to be creative and innovative has positively impacted her experience as an organizer, and that multi-year and flexible funding reduces stress on staff, who like many nonprofit employees often stress about where funding will come next, or how to account for and fund shifts in programming efforts. Scott Douglas provided additional insight on the importance of flexible funding in supporting multi-year efforts through an approach that encourages learning. He shared that:

General operating support allows us to take risks, experiment, learn from experimentation, and then refine approaches. It gives us the ability to be involved in the campaigns long enough to learn from them. It allows us to build a track record, to be more strategic, build in the anticipation that we'll learn as we go, and apply as we learn.

²³ 2016 Marguerite Casey Foundation Grant Application, written by GBM staff.

For constituents like Tyrone King, the efforts and impact of GBM are clear. He shared, “I’ve been at trainings and they do utilize their budget to the greatest extent. They are good stewards. For example, renting vans to go out to community to get people to vote.” He summarized the impact stating the following:

There is a feeling of hope that there is a possibility of change. Groups, organizations, individuals have grown by being in Greater Birmingham Ministries. I have seen people concerned with community gardens and get what they needed from GBM. I saw people, who maybe weren't as knowledgeable about working with legislators, coming together to get issues done but still respectfully disagree. I'm in awe; I've been here for a while.

Over the past 26 years, the leadership of Scott Douglas has served as a guiding compass—including how best to allocate resources to improve conditions for local residents, like Tyrone King and his family, and the broader community. The support from the Foundation has enabled these efforts to be in tune with community needs as they arise and shift with the times. 

Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA

Marguerite Casey Foundation (the Foundation) supports organizations that are leading movement building efforts in under resourced communities facing systemic discrimination. The Foundation also prioritizes supporting organizations that increase constituent access and representation in local services and related policies through advocacy, education, and policy change, with the belief that those best suited to identify solutions and lead efforts to combat social and economic barriers are those who have experienced inequities first-hand. Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles (Advancing Justice-LA) and the Foundation found a natural partnership based on these shared values

As an Asian American, President, and Executive Director, Stewart Kwoh is personally familiar with the injustices and barriers for immigrants across Los Angeles and the United States—and was motivated by these experiences to establish an organization that could be a positive lever for change²⁴. Advancing Justice-LA identifies as a civil rights organization first, with its work guided by the multi-layered issues that affect community members across the region, particularly marginalized communities which include immigrant and low-income populations and racial/ethnic groups that have experienced—and continue to experience—systemic discrimination.

Since its founding in 1983 as the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, the organization now known as Advancing Justice-LA has been serving thousands of residents across greater Los Angeles and parts of Orange County. Advancing Justice-LA is a sizable organization with over 13 million dollars in revenue, and implements its work with the support of roughly 100 full-time employees as well as nearly 700 volunteers. It primarily serves Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander low-income and immigrant communities across this region—with a specific focus on first generation immigrants and limited/non-English speaking constituents, parents, and youth. Its constituency of Latino/Hispanic community members has also been increasing over the past several years, and they experience many of the same legal, linguistic, social, and economic barriers as other constituents.

Advancing Justice-LA serves roughly 20,000 constituents most of which are immigrants or refugees. The overarching organizational focus of Advancing Justice-LA is to increase constituent access and representation in local services and related policies, largely through increasing multi-lingual and culturally inclusive legal services, education, and civil rights support. Advancing Justice-LA prioritizes hires diverse staff and board members that represent the experiences of constituents across race, ethnicity, and other identities. Aligned with its primary constituent group, 88 percent of board and staff are Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders—and within this group, speak over a dozen languages and represent other identities (e.g., LGBT) as well—along with roughly five percent Latino/Hispanic and African American/Black employees. Aileen Louie noted that,

Stewart has integrated a cross-racial and collaborative approach into our

Case Study Informants

- Stewart Kwoh, *President & Executive Director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA*
- Aileen Louie, *Director of Institutional Giving of Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA*
- Cesar Cruz, *Constituent (Youth leader) of Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA*
- Elizabeth Posey, *Program Officer (West) for Marguerite Casey Foundation*

²⁴ For additional insights and reflection refer to the 2010 book, *Uncommon Common Ground: Race and Americas Future*, co-authored by Angela Glover Blackwell, Stewart Kwoh, and Manuel Pastor.

broader organization almost since inception. He was committed to ensuring—as we raised the profile of Asian Pacific Islander issues—that it’s not done in competition with other communities in need, that we need to work together to identify common issues of concern and to lift up everyone.

Advancing Justice-LA emphasizes the importance of advocacy and policy “strategies that are based in cross-racial and collaborative work in order to bring about deep and broad social change²⁵”—an approach that has guided the organization since its founding and has expanded over time. Advancing Justice-LA operationalizes this strategy through the following channels:

- **Direct services:** Provides legal services and support for low-income and immigrant communities, especially those who speak little to no English. Advancing Justice-LA offers support services across several issue areas such as citizenship, immigration, domestic violence and family law, housing, and legal intake and referrals.
- **Leadership development:** Supports leadership development for youth and parents across several high school campuses, connects individuals and organizations across identities to foster intergroup relations to advance social change, and facilitates ongoing educational efforts to support advocacy efforts.
- **Policy advocacy:** Works to advance policy reform at city, county, state, and national levels across several issue areas such as health justice, voting rights, and immigrant rights.
- **Impact litigation:** Advances lawsuits and other legal actions to address prevalent state and national issues including human trafficking, discrimination, language access, employment, and other civil rights issues.
- **Capacity building:** Resources a nonprofit center which provides mentorship, technical support, re-granting opportunities, fiscal sponsorship, and other assistance to nonprofits in the region.










Advancing Justice-LA has continued to deepen and expand its services since its founding. Over time, programs have expanded to work across constituencies,

²⁵ 2014 Application for Marguerite Casey Foundation grant, written by grantee staff.

networks, and broader advocacy efforts—leading to greater impact. Motivated by shared values and a commitment to supporting low-income families and community organizing efforts across several issue areas (see Exhibit 6).

Marguerite Casey Foundation (the Foundation) has provided general operating and network building support to Advancing Justice-LA since 2002. Additionally, Advancing Justice-LA has served as the long-term anchor organization for the Foundation-supported Equal Voice for Southern California Families Alliance (EVSCFA)—a multi-racial, cross-issue network of 20 base-building grantees working together to build collective power across their constituencies. The Foundation has provided an additional ongoing grant to support a network weaver to facilitate the network’s collective body of work. Stewart Kwoh, reflected on his 35 years leading this organization and shared that “Marguerite Casey Foundation has been a very crucial part of our growth and sustainability.”

Exhibit 6. Advancing Justice-LA Focus Areas

Focus Areas	
 Education	
 Youth Engagement	 Civic-Voter engagement
 Immigration Reform / Legal Services	 Voting Rights
 Health Care Access	 Housing / Homelessness

Partnering with Marguerite Casey Foundation

Since 2002, the Foundation has consistently supported Advancing Justice-LA with general operating support grants, with most grants at \$500,000 for a total of roughly 4 million dollars over time (see Exhibit 7). In 2014, Advancing Justice-LA received its largest grant from the Foundation for 1.5 million dollars over a 72-month term in order to meet a 1:2 match challenge from the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation. Advancing Justice-LA’s leadership emphasized that its long-term and authentic relationship with the Foundation facilitated the open communication and flexibility that enabled this sizable grant that would meet the match requirements—and both Advancing Justice-LA and Foundation staff remarked on the unique grantee-grantor relationship they have built over the years. Stewart Kwoh described the value and distinction of this support within the broader context of philanthropy saying:

Marguerite Casey Foundation has provided more flexibility, they have adapted to different situations that have really helped us, such as match grants. Bottom line, they are in a small pool of foundations that do general operating support, and they are really outstanding amongst that pool because they really listen to the grantee and try to help the grantee as much as possible. That is something I very much appreciate.

Foundation staff also remarked on how this flexibility exemplifies flipping the power dynamic between grantor and grantee, so that communication is a “two-way street” built on trust. In one Foundation staff member’s words “for the match grant, instead of the foundation asking the grantee to adapt it was the grantee asking the foundation to adapt.” Aileen Louie, the Director of Institutional Giving at Advancing Justice-LA, shared these same sentiments of the value to leverage significant funding and highlighted another value of this unique relationship, “to be

“The long-term nature of a relationship with a funder provides a natural backbone for organizations. The long-term communication provides great guidance.”

**–Stewart Kwoh,
Executive Director of
Asian Americans
Advancing Justice**

able to say we have a very important foundation partner that has tremendous confidence in our work and strongly endorses what we're doing is very powerful." Additionally, Stewart Kwoh shared that their relationship with the Foundation provides a window into the experiences and efforts of many other grantees and that "this allows us to learn from what they're doing... how people are approaching different issues and problems."

With the Foundation as a consistent support for the organization's efforts, Advancing Justice-LA has been able to increase their operating budget, and with those resources reach a broader base of constituents locally *and* engage in broader state and regional impact.

Exhibit 7. Summary of the Foundation's Support to Advancing Justice-LA

Grant Decision Year	Grant Amount	Grant Term	Org. Operating Budget
2002	\$500,000	over 36 months	\$3.6 million
2005	\$500,000	over 36 months	\$4 million
2008	\$500,000	over 36 months	\$4.7 million
2011	\$500,000	over 36 months	\$ 7.4 million
2013	\$400,545	over 15 months	\$9.5 million
2013 (follow-up grant)	\$120,000	over 24 months	Same as above
2014	\$1.5 million	over 72 months	\$ 10.9 million

Advancing Justice-LA's Impact

Despite often being identified as a hub of wealth and innovation, 13.3 percent of the population in California lives in poverty, higher than the national average of 12.3 percent—and in Los Angeles the percentage nearly doubles to 20.4 percent²⁶. Within Los Angeles specifically, communities have endured turbulent times over the years that Advancing Justice-LA has been in operation and these events have influenced the direction of the organization's services and policy efforts. For example, its "approach to leadership development built on school and community-based models was developed to respond to the growing interethnic tensions, socio-political injustice, and economic disparities that culminated in the 1992 Los Angeles Uprising."²⁷ With this context of deeply embedded divisions in the region, Advancing Justice-LA's leadership is prepared to "manage conflict, facilitate across cultural differences, and embrace leadership as a collective rather than individual

"We, as youth organizers, saw the need of student voices to be raised in their communities. We did projects based on need that students saw in their own communities."

**–Cesar Cruz,
Youth Leader of Asian Americans Advancing Justice**

²⁶ 2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census.

²⁷ 2014 Application for Marguerite Casey Foundation grant, written by grantee staff; Note: The "1992 LA Uprising" is a term used by local organizing groups to refer to the unrest that broke out in Los Angeles in 1992 in response to years of poverty, police brutality and political neglect that fueled racial tensions and police violence (with law enforcement officials indicted in several cases), Source: <https://www.blackculturalevents.com/event/re-imagine-justice-25th-anniversary-of-the-la-uprising/>.

process”²⁸.

For many decades, Advancing Justice-LA has advanced initiatives related to voter engagement, parent and youth leadership development, local and state budget advocacy, and expanding access to health care and education. For example, Advancing Justice-LA co-sponsored AB 817 legislation to expand poll worker eligibility to include legal permanent residents (simultaneously increasing multilingual capacity of this workforce), and led the College for All Coalition which advocated for SB 1050 to increase public school funding and college access for marginalized youth. In 2016, they co-sponsored several assembly bills related to immigrant and voter rights.



Cesar Cruz, a constituent of Advancing Justice-LA who worked as one of its youth organizers, expanded on the impact and growth of the organization’s programs that directly engage youth. He shared that with guidance from Advancing Justice-LA staff, he was part of a group of youth that initiated and established a referral system connecting local school populations and surrounding communities to legal support services through Advancing Justice-LA and the Immigrant Justice Coalition. The referral system was inspired to meet the needs of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) candidates, many of whom are Latino/Hispanic, and has continued to expand to schools across the region.

Additionally, youth leaders supported by Advancing Justice-LA’s Youth Parent Leadership Development (YPLD) program facilitate educational sessions and community building initiatives to meet local needs. These youth leaders are known on some campuses as “Urban Visionaries” or more broadly as “Immigrant Justice Advocates.” The YPLD program supports roughly 1,500 youth and parents each year across several high schools. Participants collaborate to find creative ways to address community needs such as through film and art activities and other neighborhood projects. Advancing Justice-LA staff provides mentorship and resources support so that youth have the opportunity to implement the project in their community, and share progress updates back with the broader participant group to exchange knowledge and get advice. The projects that students take one each year are featured in a celebratory annual Family Festival. Cesar highlighted the contribution of YPLD students in building a cross-cultural environment, within Advancing Justice-LA’s programs and activities, which is inclusive of community

²⁸ 2014 Application for Marguerite Casey Foundation grant, written by grantee staff.

members across race, ethnic, and other identities.

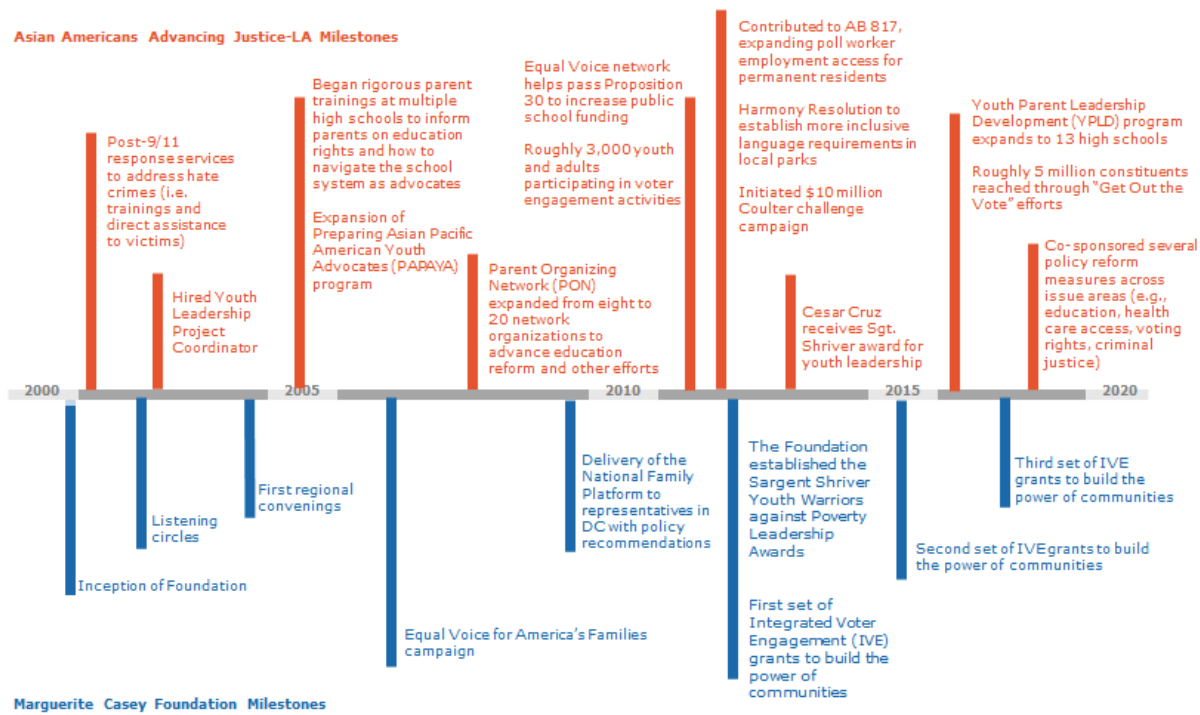
With support from the Foundation, Advancing Justice-LA continues to anchor and participate in an alliance of over twenty economic and racial justice organizations as a founding member of EVSCFA; this collective group advances policy initiatives that strive to alleviate poverty and support marginalized constituents. Advancing Justice-LA's most recent progress report to the Foundation highlights the following advancements achieved through collaborative efforts with EVSCFA and other allies²⁹:

- ✓ As a member of the College for All Coalition, Advancing Justice-LA contributed to landmark legislation, SB 1050, to improve college readiness, access, and completion by increasing funding for higher education—most directly impacting those in California's public universities including students who experience barriers as low-income, English learners, or foster youth.
- ✓ Advancing Justice-LA, in collaboration with EVSCFA, contributed to advancing Proposition 55, a constitutional amendment which would provide a tax extension to fund public education and health care—and has the potential to reach hundreds of thousands of students and other beneficiaries.
- ✓ Advancing Justice-LA, in collaboration with EVSCFA, helped to pass and approve the Proposition 47 Savings Extension, a re-evaluation of California's savings formula creating a \$67 million dollar fund to support tens of thousands of beneficiaries through reentry, drug treatment, mental health, youth development, and crime victim services.
- ✓ Advancing Justice-LA, in collaboration with EVSCFA, helped to advance a Multilingual Education Initiative Statute, Proposition 58—with the potential to benefit hundreds of thousands of English Language Learner (ELL) students.
- ✓ Advancing Justice-CA co-sponsored the Safe Place to Learn Act (AB 2845)—in partnership with Council on American-Islamic Relations California Chapter (CAIR-CA), Sikh American Legal Defense & Education Fund, and Sikh Coalition—to address bullying of students on school campuses.

Advancing Justice-LA also works on initiatives beyond EVSCFA and other coalition-specific efforts including supporting youth organizers, providing political education, and building community engagement in regional campaigns. Several of these policy advancements and other organizational milestones are featured in the following timeline (Exhibit 8).

²⁹ Other policy efforts exist, but the most prominent are displayed here; Source: 2016 Advancing Justice-LA Progress Report.

Exhibit 8. Overview of Advancing Justice-LA’s Milestones³⁰



Impacts of General Operating Support and Network Building

The contributions of general operating support grants from the Foundation have enabled Advancing Justice-LA to sustain current relationships and build new relationships across greater Los Angeles, parts of Orange County, and beyond through its statewide alliance work. The general operating support specifically, has greatly contributed to the consistency of Advancing Justice-LA’s programs and relationships, and in turn, a better supported community of individuals and families. The Equal Voice network has further strengthened its programmatic and policy efforts through increased collaboration among organizations, and their respective constituents, to build collective power and use inclusive analysis to design policy campaigns.

Multi-year general operating support grants enabled Advancing Justice-LA to sustain its efforts over time, leading to greater impact. Stewart Kwoh remarked on the contribution of general operating funds from the Foundation, how these funds enable Advancing Justice-LA to have a continuous presence in communities, and “provides the basis to do organizing.” As he describes, “Marguerite Casey Foundation has allowed us to provide the organizing expertise in a continuous way, rather than one shot, and that has really been significant, especially as we’ve worked in neighborhoods.” Stewart Kwoh also shared that the long-term funding has resulted in lower staff turnover, allowing Advancing Justice-LA to build their capacity and provide stronger and more consistent services.

“We have strong partnerships with students and teachers, and the length of time we can commit to these schools with MCF support has allowed these relationships to deepen. Our dream center wouldn’t have developed in the same way.”

**–Aileen Louie,
Director of Institutional Giving for Asian Americans Advancing Justice**

³⁰ More detailed information on the Foundation’s milestones can be found in the introduction of this report and on its website: <https://caseygrants.org/who-we-are/our-history/>. For more information on Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA’s milestones please visit its website: <https://www.advancingjustice-la.org/who-we-are/history>.

In its 2014 grant application, Advancing Justice-LA staff highlighted that “The multiyear nature of the grant provides stability for the organization as we fill in gaps with support when waiting for grant renewals or expecting temporary shortfalls.” Aileen Louie shared one example, remarking on Advancing Justice-LA’s programs in schools across the region and said, “With support from Marguerite Casey Foundation we have been able to continue this work to engage schools, students, and families in a more consistent way.” In addition to the continuity of these programs, she also commented on the value of the Foundation’s support in strengthening these programs, such as Dream Center spaces, to support immigrant youth and families and shared,

A lot of Marguerite Casey Foundation support is invested in our Youth Parent Leadership Development program. Program activities were powerful before, but a little scattered. Over time, we’ve been better able to link all of those disparate issues and feel like we are making headway on all of them, the programs have sharpened over time, and we have a more targeted audience for work.



“General operating support always gives us some ability to shore up areas of work that needed attention either because of a loss of funding, or in order to expand a certain area of work. We can use funding in creative ways.”

**–Stewart Kwoh,
Executive Director for
Asian Americans
Advancing Justice**

Network building support and flexible funding have strengthened partnerships and facilitated trust building among individuals, communities and organizations. Elizabeth Posey, Program Officer of Marguerite Casey Foundation, described the collaboration among organizations across the region saying, “Beyond building collective power, the Equal Voice networks in California are able to share their employee manuals, incentives for new organizers, or receive advice on retention issues. Trust is built and sharing of resources occurs because of the network.” Stewart Kwoh also remarked on the value of the Equal Voice coalition in building trust among organizations, including on issues as sensitive as funding which is often a tricky topic for nonprofits that may be competing for the same funding. In his words, “I think the EVSCFA has provided strength in binding groups together. When the groups trust each other, they ask for help in different matters. For example, once in a while people need a loan or advice for identifying funding.” He also shared that the “Equal Voice network is benefited by the anchor of the long-term general operating support, to be able to have the same, or close to the same, staff participating allows us to scale community involvement.”

Cesar Cruz shared an example from the constituent perspective, of movement building efforts facilitated by Advancing Justice-LA that brought different groups together. He shared,

The first march in LA, we worked with a lot of organizations in our community to not only bring out a big group of students and parents, but also community stakeholders; to raise our voice and let folks know we are all working together and not as separate as everyone thinks.

Stewart Kwoh shared an additional perspective on the role of the Foundation in encouraging even more collaboration across different groups of people, organizations, and constituents. He shared,

In California, you have to be multi-racial and multi-ethnic in your approach. But the Foundation has encouraged us from the outset to be boundary crossers. We have organized across race; we have different organizations in the Equal Voice network that organize across race and ethnicity. Different ethnicities use different services and it's been a wonderful addition to the work we do. I credit Marguerite Casey Foundation for leading the way to ensure that we are multi-ethnic.

The regional convenings that the Foundation facilitates also cultivate new connections and networks, and an opportunity for information sharing and learning from initiatives in other regions. Stewart Kwoh also noted that beyond convenings, Foundation staff members are able to share the lessons of over 100 grantees which allow Advancing Justice-LA to learn from other people and organizations and their strategies in approaching similar issues. Aileen Louie also shared that through these networks, and funding support, Advancing Justice-LA staff is able to “look up” and share what they have learned over the years with newer organizations supporting Asian Pacific Islander constituents.

Advancing Justice-LA staff highlighted that “the Foundation's convenings have enriched the network of groups our staff work with as well as increased their knowledge and skills through their attendance at trainings and conferences.”³¹ Aileen Louie expanded on this sentiment during her interview highlighting that these conversations with other organizations allow Advancing Justice-LA to both identify shared concerns as well as opportunities to convene and address those issues in collaboration. Aileen Louie also commented on the long-term presence of organizational leadership among the Equal Voice coalition, including Stewart Kwoh, and how the strength of these connections facilitates reaching out to each other's constituents and collaborating on activities such as cross-trainings and listening circles. Elizabeth Posey emphasized from the Foundation's perspective that Stewart has truly been a mentor to newer Executive Directors participating in the Equal Voice network, and shared that Advancing Justice-LA is a “powerful example of an organization of staff that have allowed themselves to be shaped by the organizations they've interacted with,” for example in expanding their intersectional lens and learning about similarities among constituents.

Long-term support from the Foundation has contributed to Advancing Justice-LA's growth and increased involvement in policy efforts. Aileen Louie shared that the community engagement work has helped to inform and build advocacy for policy advancements. She noted that “over time and with help from Marguerite Casey Foundation, we have been able to shape community engagement work to be more targeted to inform policy processes.” Aileen expanded on the role of long-term renewable nature of general operating support from the Foundation in these efforts and said,

³¹ 2014 application for Marguerite Casey Foundation grant, written by grantee staff.

It allows us to think more long term about where these programs are going and what we're trying to accomplish in the community. Community engagement, community organizing, that's not short-term work. We can provide individual services, but in terms of creating a longer-term policy change, and getting people involved in a movement for change, and having them feel like they can have some agency to affect these issues, you have to plan for that in the long term. Knowing we have this long-term strong partnership with Marguerite Casey Foundation allows us to do that.

Flexible funding from the Foundation has also enabled Advancing Justice-LA to hire new staff members that have the skills and qualities to engage communities and organize these efforts. Aileen Louie noted that "Marguerite Casey Foundation support allows us to organize internally so it's not just issue-specific. We tend to organize around issues, but having a policy director that helps to tie things together is important." She also highlighted the impact of Equal Voice networks specifically in advancing policy efforts and explained,

I think that the partnerships that we have around that table, have gone far beyond the collective work that that network does. Talking about a wide range of issues creates opportunities due to strong ongoing relationships around the table. Opportunity to bring constituents together, such as Sacramento trips to visit elected officials, which have also been very powerful.

The grassroots-up approach encouraged by Marguerite Casey Foundation sparks greater engagement and leadership of youth, families, and communities in social justice. The family-led approach of the Foundation has inspired and empowered organizations like Advancing Justice-LA to strengthen their movement building efforts. Stewart Kwoh shared that because of this family-led approach and guidance from the Foundation, "we combine leadership development with youth organizing and parent organizing, where the parents and students actually play the lead." He expanded on the broader contribution of this approach to philanthropy saying,

That approach provides a tremendous contribution to the field, because most foundations do good work, and they fund good projects, but the projects tend to be top-down and Marguerite Casey Foundation has asked us to try to get low-income families more involved. For example, we have had annual conferences of our organizing work in roughly 10 schools. Every May, we have between 600-800 students, and some parents, come together and the whole thing is run by students, they are the emcees, they help to define the workshops, they work with us as speakers for the workshops. It's a leadership development effort because when the students run it they learn a lot, and it's been very inspiring.

In 2014, Cesar Cruz received the Sgt. Shriver Award from Marguerite Casey Foundation for youth leadership and is currently part of a group working to build a network of youth leaders. He is part of a cohort of more than 100 Shriver Youth Leaders across the country that was honored in recognition of their leadership and dedication to improving the lives of families in their communities.

Cesar Cruz remarked on a student-led movement in which Lincoln High School students requested a Dream Center at their school after having participated in presentations by Advancing Justice-LA youth leaders. Cesar Cruz shared one example of how youth have really led the expansion of these programs,

Now the center is being utilized for students to learn about different legal services, but is also a place for them to feel safe and talk about things without being judged. It also serves as a center for parents who can participate and learn these things as well.

Cesar Cruz also spoke poignantly about the impact of Advancing Justice-LA on his personal growth and life trajectory. He remarked on the mentorship and support of Advancing Justice-LA staff, other nonprofit leaders he met through programming and campaigns, and the people from various states around the country that he met through convenings supported by Marguerite Casey Foundation. He shared that he hadn't always seen college as an option, and planned to work after high school, "but doing all of these presentations I saw other people getting more educated as well, then I thought community college was the best way to start" and he has now continued on to a four-year institution. He also advocated for education for the broader community during campaign activities organized by Advancing Justice-LA. He shared,

I participated in the "Sunny-Day Fund" campaign. We were trying to get the governor to properly save the money for when a good idea came up. Making sure we had budget for an emergency. I spoke at one of the rallies, and gave my testimony that if the money could be used for education it would help students get on track for school and career.



Aileen Louie also shared an example of the impact of this "grassroots-up" approach and how Advancing Justice-LA has been able to "develop a stronger cadre of community leaders" to engage in policy campaigns. She noted that the organization's safe school legislation efforts stemmed from conversations with community members. These stories exemplify the value shared by Advancing Justice-LA and the Foundation—that it is the constituents and those directly affected who are best suited to identify solutions and influence change.

The impact of Advancing Justice-LA in the greater Los Angeles and Orange County communities is centered on community building, leadership development, and relationships. The support from the Foundation for over seventeen years, and the flexibility and value-alignment of this grantor-grantee relationship, has played a significant role in Advancing Justice-LA's ability to expand, sustain, and strengthen its support of individual constituents—and the broader initiatives that support them. 🇺🇸

Faith in Action

Marguerite Casey Foundation (the Foundation) supports organizations that are leading movement building efforts in communities most affected by economic and social injustice. The Foundation also prioritizes supporting organizations that engage in leadership development, organizing, and advocacy to build a base of low-income families, with the belief that those best suited to identify solutions and lead efforts to combat social and economic barriers are those who have experienced inequities first-hand. Based on these shared values Faith in Action (formerly PICO National Network^{32,33}) and the Foundation found a natural partnership.

Faith in Action was founded in 1972 with the mission of stewarding racial and economic justice throughout the United States by organizing people of faith and those most impacted by the inequities that exist within the country. Faith in Action works across a variety of the country's most pressing issue areas, including health care, immigrant justice, gun violence, and mass incarceration, as well as broader topics such as economic dignity and voting rights/democracy. The Foundation works across several issue areas that align with Faith in Action's work (Exhibit 9). Faith in Action utilizes three key strategies to advance their mission:

- **Leadership development:** Through large leadership trainings at the state and regional levels, Faith in Action trains those most impacted by inequitable policies to be organizers and grassroots leaders, providing them with the skills necessary to coordinate a broad organizing strategy for community transformation.
- **Policy advocacy:** Faith in Action equips its constituency to lead powerful, non-partisan social justice campaigns designed to create real opportunity for families and break down historical patterns of racial inequality.
- **Community organizing:** Faith in Action organizes people to bring their voice and power to the forefront of public policy, through public issue campaigns, ballot initiatives, and integrated voter engagement.

Currently, Faith in Action employs 49 full-time employees, two part-time employees, and 15,000 part-time volunteers, with organizational revenue summing over 21 million dollars. Faith in Action has strong values rooted in empowering people to speak out and have greater involvement in the decisions that affect their lives; after all, it is families and communities who know best what they need. As stated by the organization:

Our analysis is that people have the answers to the problems their families face, but they often lack the tools and the connection to other communities across the country to have sufficient power to change policy. Faith in

³² Throughout the report, some references may still indicate PICO to accurately cite policy efforts and other activities prior to the organization's name change to Faith in Action in 2018.

³³ In 2018, Faith in Action underwent a leadership change. For the purpose of this case study, both current and former executive directors of Faith in Action were interviewed to gain an understanding of the historical and current context in which the organization operates.

Case Study Informants

- Reverend Alvin Herring, *current Executive Director of Faith in Action*
- Scott Reed, *former Executive Director of Faith in Action*
- Andrea Marta, *Faith in Action's Campaigns Director and Executive Director of the Faith in Action Fund*
- Dr. George Cummings, *Board Member, Federation Director, Clergy Leader, and Constituent of Faith in Action*
- Elizabeth Posey, *Program Officer (West) for Marguerite Casey Foundation*

Action organizes people to bring their voice and power to the arena of public policy, through public issue campaigns, ballot initiatives, and integrated voter engagement.

Exhibit 9. Faith in Action Focus Areas

Focus Areas	
 Civic Engagement	 Living Wage
 Community Development	 Poverty
 Community Organizing	 Racial Equity
 Education	 Tax Policy
 Employment	 Voter Engagement
 Health Care	 Workers' Rights
 Housing	

Faith in Action is composed of faith institutions of all denominations and spiritual traditions that join in local and state federations³⁴. These federations work to improve their communities and make them more racially equitable places to live. Federations provide training, support, and coaching to congregations and local chapters, and assist faith leaders in collaborating on larger state and national issues. Together, state and local federations utilize Faith in Action’s community organizing model, through their congregations, to equip community members with the tools necessary to advocate for social change at all levels of government. Faith in Action operates under the principle that community members are the most effective change agents and their leadership will result in the best solutions for their communities. As Reverend Alvin Herring, current Executive Director of Faith in Action, explained, “Our resources are available so people can do the most important work—that is to create strong and vibrant communities that are made more just and more equitable through their leadership.”

Andrea Marta, Faith in Action’s Campaigns Director and Executive Director of the Faith in Action Fund³⁵, reiterated the importance of putting community members at the center of the organization’s work in order to illuminate the solutions most needed by constituents:

People most impacted are in the driver’s seat around strategy implementation. We are bridging this gap between people of faith and the political world and helping people understand what it means to be called into these spaces and what that means in terms of taking next steps, in ways that might be different than what they are used to. We are really digging in and understanding who in the community are most impacted and bringing those folks in as strategists and giving them the ability to self-determine what they want to see.

“Organizing, and the overall mission of organizing, is to equip people with capacity to influence and negotiate divisions and inform decisions that impact their lives in the public domain.”

**–Scott Reed,
former Faith in Action
Executive Director**

³⁴ “Federation” is the term used by Faith in Action to describe the sub divisions of organizing groups that operate as part of Faith in Action at the local and state levels.

³⁵ Faith in Action Fund is Faith in Action’s sister c4 organization.



Faith in Action’s community organizing model is seen as a staple of Faith in Action’s work by federation members due to its unique approach and the ability for the model to be transferred across groups. Dr. George Cummings, a board member, federation director, and clergy leader of Faith in Action explains:

Faith in Action added a provable model of community organizing as a means for bringing about social change to the equation. It is one thing to be committed to the values of social change, but it is another thing to have a model that you can train people to carry out. It brings to the table, for many congregations, a model of organizing that can actually make a difference in terms of bringing about change.

Faith in Action organizes most frequently in communities of color, and its clergy and grassroots leaders comprise a multiracial community with strong representation from a diverse array of ethnic groups. Today, Faith in Action is the nation’s largest faith-based community organizing network with over 1 million members across 45 affiliates who organize more than 3,000 diverse faith congregations within 21 states.

Partnering with Marguerite Casey Foundation

Since 2002, Faith in Action has received \$8,320,000 over seven grant cycles from the Foundation with grant amounts steadily increasing over time and ranging from \$750,000 to \$1,500,000 (Exhibit 10). This long-term funding, and at scale, has supported Faith in Action’s efforts to consistently reach a broad base of community members, close to a million constituents each grant cycle. This support has also been particularly valuable for strengthening and growing Faith in Action as an organization and network.

Elizabeth Posey, Program Officer of the West region and several National grantees for Marguerite Casey Foundation, shared her observation of the exponential growth of the Faith in Action national network, both in revenue and technical capacity, over the time of their partnership. These developments have allowed them to focus their strategies and strengthen their impact:

With its organization-wide adoption of a racial and economic equity lens for all its organizing and policy campaigns to reflect the intentional make-up and needs of its base, Faith in Action is a significant partner in the fight for equity

“General operating support allows us to be led by local grassroots leaders.”

**–Andrea Marta,
Faith in Action Campaigns Director and Executive Director of Faith in Action Fund**

with families in the lead.

Revered Alvin Herring explained how this long-term support has allowed the organization to be strategic and develop interconnected regional structures that support the work. He shared the evolution of the organization’s use of general operating support, starting with strengthening local networks and the national team and then moving towards a more coordinated regional funding approach:

We have been able to use the long-term funding to create a regional structure that allows us to pull together state and local operations into a more regional model and help them develop better relationships with one another.

Exhibit 10. Summary of the Foundation’s Support to Faith in Action

Grant Decision Year	Grant Amount	Grant Term	Org. Operating Budget
2002	\$750,000	24 months	\$1,837,377
2004	\$1,000,000	30 months	\$4,089,393
2007	\$1,000,000	36 months	\$4,098,000
2010	\$1,000,000	24 months	\$7,816,872
2012	\$1,500,000	36 months	\$9,066,708
2015	\$1,570,000	36 months	\$12,855,864
2018	\$1,500,000	24 months	\$21,538,582

Faith in Action’s Impact

The political, economic, and social climates of the nation are factors that drastically affect and shape the work of Faith in Action. Not only do these dynamics exist at the national level, but they are replicated at the state and local level where they manifest in ways that are unique to the local context. In addition to taking on national campaigns/issues, Faith in Action is intentionally structured to ensure its federations design their own campaigns that are responsive to priorities identified by the members of local affiliates. This ensures that the campaigns and policies are driven by its base through authentic leadership development, organizing and advocacy.

Since Faith in Action started receiving funding from the Foundation in 2002, there have been three distinctly different federal administrations that have taken office, each significantly shifting the landscape in which Faith in Action operates. Additionally, over the past 17 years the nation has endured a recession fueled by a mortgage crisis, an up and down battle for universal/affordable health care, natural disasters that decimated entire communities, and countless other events that are stark reminders of how divided our country is when it comes to race and inequities that exist across race. The flexibility allowed by general operating support has allowed Faith in Action to quickly respond to the ever-changing challenges and threats to communities associated with these political shifts and nation-wide events.



Faith in Action's most recent accomplishments include a highly successful, volunteer-led and multiracial, integrated voter engagement program (IVE) in 2016, as well as a broad range of policy wins alongside its local allies including raising minimum wages for working people, reforming sentencing laws for incarcerated individuals, and increased revenue for essential public sectors including preschool, transportation, education, and health.

Leading up to the 2016 election, Faith in Action organized the nation's largest volunteer-led and multiracial IVE program to increase voter turnout and build power for low-income families. As a result of its efforts, federations across the network were able to train 10,079 volunteers who formed over 1,500 multi-racial teams, who then engaged 829,916 potential voters in conversations across 17 states. In 2015, Faith in Action conducted an evaluation of its IVE program and found that its relational model outperformed other IVE models. Since then, Faith in Action has been actively refining its IVE approach ahead of the 2020 election to ensure they are well positioned to change the electorate to reflect its base.

Elizabeth Posey also commented that although Faith in Action is a national organization, its PICO California State Federation has had a long-term, deep collaboration with the Foundation's West (California) region grantees which make up four cross-issue equal voice networks. She stated:

PICO California works with a large network of Black and Brown base-building grantees in California to change the electorate in order to address issues impacting these communities. It takes local coordination, deep alliance building and collaboration to build collective power and pass local, regional and statewide policies driven by the communities most impacted by the myriad of issues connected to poverty and racial inequality. After two decades of organizing together, organizations are turning the tide on divestment and harmful policies that targeted Black and Brown communities and are moving towards building governing power for those same communities.

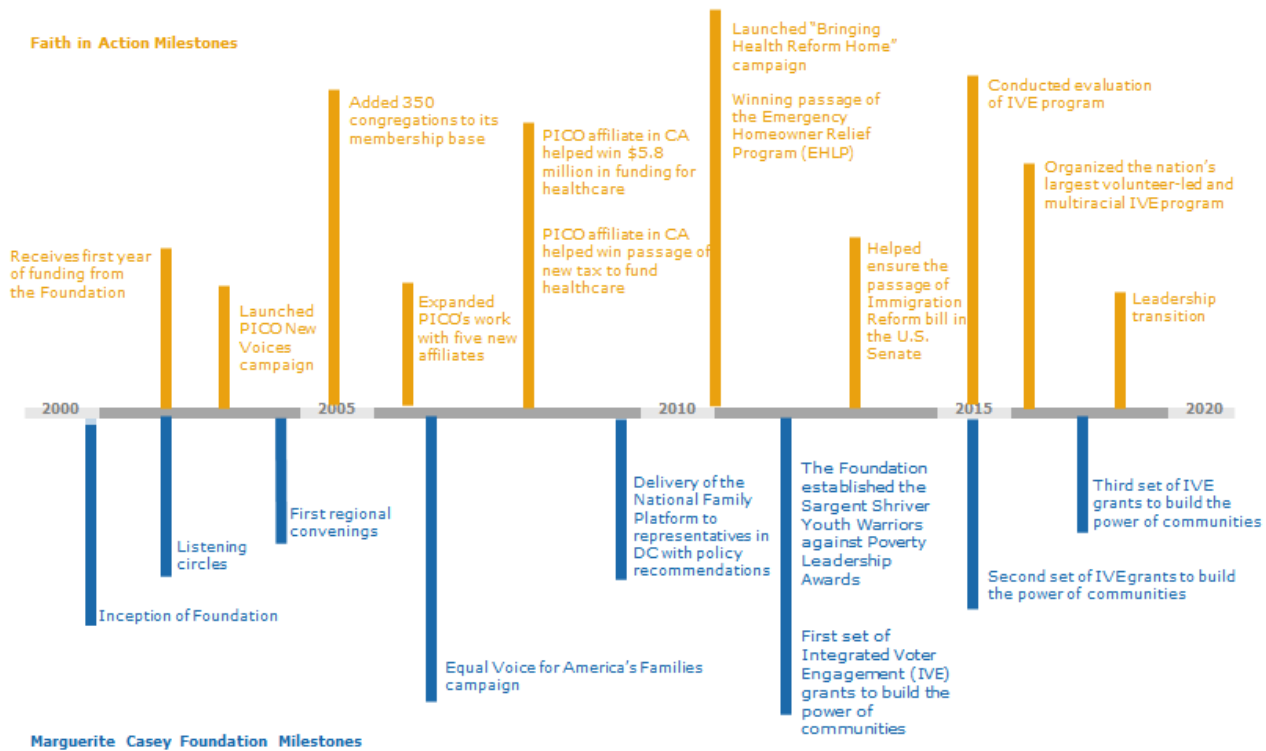
According to Faith in Action's most recent progress report to the Foundation, the organization collaborated with allies, including the four cross-issue Equal Voice networks of Foundation grantees in California, to successfully advance the following community-driven policy reforms³⁶:

³⁶ Other policy efforts exist, but the most prominent are displayed here; Source: 2016-2017 Faith in Action Progress Report.

- ✓ PICO California and allies (the Foundation's West regional grantees) built support for Proposition 55, to renew an increase in income taxes on the wealthiest Californians to generate additional funding for public education and wraparound services³⁷.
- ✓ PICO California built support for Proposition 56 which will increase the tobacco tax \$2.00. California plans to allocate these new resources to physician training, disease prevention, tobacco-use prevention, disease research, and school programs focused on tobacco use prevention.
- ✓ PICO California and allies (the Foundation's West regional grantees) built public support for Proposition 57, which ensures that judges, rather than prosecutors, make decisions about whether or not to charge juveniles as adults.
- ✓ In Texas, representatives passed a "Raise the Age" bill to move 17-year-old offenders from the adult criminal justice system to the juvenile justice system.
- ✓ In Texas, Faith in Action-affiliate Faith in Texas pressured the Lt. Governor and other policymakers, through meetings at the Capitol and in district offices and hundreds of phone calls, to pass the Sandra Bland Act, which introduced important jail and mental health reforms.
- ✓ In Indiana, Faith in Action-affiliate IndyCAN won a decisive victory for its Ticket to Opportunity campaign, which mobilized thousands of lay leaders and clergy members to advocate for a countywide transit expansion plan.
- ✓ In Colorado, Faith in Action-affiliate Together Colorado played a leadership role in a two-year campaign to place a measure to raise the state minimum wage to \$12; voters supported the measure by more than 55 percent of the vote.

³⁷ Proposition 55 was a policy initiative to extend sunset clauses and to continue the work initiated by Proposition 30.

Exhibit 11. Overview of Faith in Action’s Milestones³⁸



The Foundation’s support of Faith in Action over the years has contributed to these efforts and others. The next section will explore the distinctive value of these supports, and the overall impact of a long-standing grantor-grantee relationship.

Impacts of General Operating Support and Network Building

The general operating support grants and network building opportunities provided through the Foundation have enabled Faith in Action to be responsive to communities as new issues arise, be strategic with how it positions the organization, put race and equity at the center of its work, and leverage additional funding sources as a result of working with the Foundation.

The flexible nature of general operating support dollars enables Faith in Action to shift its priorities and be responsive to current needs. As previously mentioned, Faith in Action operates in an ever-changing landscape which can pose a challenge when it comes to focusing efforts. Despite this challenge, the flexible and unrestricted nature of the dollars provided by the Foundation allows Faith in Action the ability to be responsive to the needs of its base and shift its work as new issues arise. Andrea Marta shared the example of being able to go to Ferguson five days after the tragic shooting and provide immediate support to a community in need of additional assistance. Additionally, as a result of that event, her federations were able to focus their attention on criminal

“The general operating support dollars allow us the flexibility to shape and move our organization in response to the challenges we face.”

–Reverend Alvin Herring, Faith in Action Executive Director

³⁸ More detailed information on the Foundation’s milestones can be found in the introduction of this report and on its website: <https://caseygrants.org/who-we-are/our-history/>. For more information on Faith in Action’s milestones please visit its website: <https://faithinaction.org/about-us/history/>.

justice reform at the local level. She shared:

Thinking back to how we started to do our criminal justice work. It was a definite need, but we didn't have the program specific funding to do work on criminal justice or urban gun violence. Marguerite Casey Foundation funding allowed us to step into this new space. If there is a need that arises, or moments like Ferguson, we are able to support, in a way that is building power and responding to a crisis. That level of freedom has allowed us to be in these spaces that we otherwise wouldn't have been able to do.

In addition to being responsive to emerging needs, the flexible funding has allowed Faith in Action to authentically engage community members and best serve their current needs. Scott Reed shared:

The biggest difficulty in the world of organizing is being able to be in the most complicated spaces where you are allowing an organization to respond to today opposed to yesterday. So if I'm currently a constituent in a community being organized, the question I am likely to be asking when someone comes to visit is "Am I just a tool you need to justify funding or does my voice actually matter?" As a community member, if I want to focus on education but your funding only allows you to work on criminal justice reform, does my voice really matter? Ultimately, general operating support has an enormous impact because it allows organizations to be responsive to the work people need.

This level of responsiveness is also felt at the constituent level. Dr. Cummings shared his experience working in different sectors, such as academia or the faith community, and contrasted how Faith in Action's level of responsiveness is starkly different. He explained how Faith in Action has a strong commitment to sustaining the deep community organizing that is needed to bring about change in the country. This deep commitment to community organizing allows Faith in Action to be responsive to the challenges, burdens, and concerns articulated from communities across the nation.

Flexible funding gave Faith in Action the space to be more strategic in its work. Faith in Action staff shared how program specific funding can result in an organization's work being more process-driven versus strategic and how that can lead to mission drift. Scott Reed explained:

Philanthropy money, that is programmatic money, means you end up chasing tactics versus doing long-term strategic work. Marguerite Casey Foundation provided funding for strategic work that allowed for an emerging idea about developing a network that is integrated across local cities, counties, states, and even nationally. If that had been translated into program funding, it would have been around "x" issue in "x" geography area opposed to building the capacity of people to move power on multiple issues. General operating support is a significant tactic compared to programmatic dollars, which tend to strip an organization's capacity versus enhance it.

General operating support from the Foundation has helped mitigate these potential detriments by allowing Faith in Action the space to be strategic and intentional in its work, all the while sticking to its values and mission. Faith in Action staff shared how these flexible dollars have allowed them to take a step back, convene, evaluate, and collectively decide on how and where to move its work forward. The ability to do so has led to the organization having greater capacity to partake in long-term strategic work.

"As a consequence of funding streams, decisions get made about where staff members are allocating time to satisfy obligations of a grant. With general operating support, you are able to invest long term."

**–Scott Reed,
Faith in Action Former
Executive Director**

"With general operating support we can grow the organization as we grow into the work. Ultimately, you can achieve more of what the grantor believes you can achieve."

**–Reverend Alvin Herring,
Faith in Action Executive
Director**

Andrea Marta shared an example of how federations were able to strategically embark on an immigration pilgrimage in California that deepened the organization's capacity around immigration and expanded its network. She shared:

We stepped into a space around immigration that we have never done before at that kind of coordinated level. We were able to meet with ten congressional members, upwards of 30 congressional staff members, we engaged 25,000 people just through public action and outreach. The work that happened in the moment really deepened our capacity around immigration. We dug into targeted communities to build the capacity of existing structures. Today, those places we touched are now impacting the spaces around the economy, environment, criminal justice, and others. This couldn't have been done with program specific funding.

Similarly, Reverend Herring shared how the general operating support provided by the Foundation has allowed the organization to commit to complex long-term campaigns that can last for upwards of a decade because of the unrestricted nature of the funding and the Foundation's unwavering support. He shared:

This country has been struggling with immigration as an issue for decades. We have been organizing around that issue for that same amount of time. Just this year, we staved off 32 deportations, have helped to create sanctuary shelter for individuals and families, we created an early warning systems that allows our immigrant families to know where ICE is operating in their communities, and we have been trying to break connections through local law enforcement and ICE. Again, it is a fight that is decades long, but we have been able to stay with it because of general operating support.

Elizabeth Posey also reflected on Faith in Action's ability to take on large campaigns with the Foundation's support. She stated, "Faith in Action was able to take on large, multi-year campaigns because it knew it could count on long-term unrestricted funding. Faith in Action has stayed true to its mission and remained responsive to the communities it works alongside."



Scott Reed offered another perspective for how the Foundation's support contributes to the organization's strategy. He explained how program specific funding can be hard to come about for certain geographic regions and subject areas that have less philanthropic presence and support (e.g., the South). When this happens, general operating support can be utilized to serve these communities and plan for their future. He explained, "You're developing what become future revenue resources. At the time, no one may believe in it because they haven't seen it, but as time goes on you'll see the change."

Constituents have also noticed the impact of Faith in Action's strategic and intentional decisions to provide tools to grassroots leaders. Dr. Cummings explained:

When I got involved, there was a lot of general training around community organizing such as how to do one-on-ones, how to listen to the community about needs, etc. What was much more needed, and where we are right now, is intentionality around the social and economic analysis of our situation so that the heart of our work is power mapping and trying to understand how one can engage the right players and bring about change. There has been a lot more intentionality in teaching that to the leaders they are training in the community.

Most importantly, Faith in Action has been able to stay rooted in its mission and commit to long-term strategic work. Elizabeth Posey explained:

When you are chasing funding you often encounter mission drift to keep the lights on. General operating support allows an organization to keep a north star. It has enabled Faith in Action to carry out its mission and provide a platform for everyday people from different communities across a spectrum of identities to build relationships and coalitions to identify issues they have in common and build power to push forward and enact change that is driven by the community.

General operating support has allowed Faith in Action to be innovative, especially when it comes to putting race and equity at the center of its work. Both internally and externally, Faith in Action has shifted to putting race and equity at the center of its work over the past 13 years. This is due in part to the ability of Faith in Action to focus the flexible general operating support in this space.

Internally, the organization has hired a much more diverse staff and has put many more people of color in leadership positions across the organization. At the local level, there are a greater number of Black and Brown organizers leading the work and ensuring Faith in Action's efforts and approach are equitable and culturally relevant. This shift to putting race and equity at the center of the work is also felt by the constituency. Dr. Cummings shared:

There has been a significant growth in a core group of Black and Brown organizers who are able to help the organization figure out how to work with communities of color in such a way that they can be more effective. The whole organization has been transformed by a commitment to racial equity- from top to bottom.

Externally, general operating support from the Foundation has allowed Faith in Action to shift and put race and equity at the center of its work and, "be in empathetic relationships across a set of experiences in ways that make us stronger..." as Scott Reed described. This includes empowering a greater number of people of color through the grassroots effort of Faith in Action and having more people of color leading local federations.

"While we can talk about putting race at the center of our work, we need to ensure staff at the highest and local levels are able to walk into communities and be culturally component."

**–Andrea Marta,
Faith in Action Campaigns
Director and Executive
Director of Faith in Action
Fund**

Additionally, the general operating support provided by the Foundation has allowed Faith in Action to expand in new areas and grow a set of organizations to support local organizing with clergy in the South. Reverend Herring, shared:

We know MCF is very determined to create equity in the South and the support of the Foundation has allowed us to grow a much stronger set of organizations in the South, specifically Alabama and Florida, and has allowed us to experiment differently in these areas.

The longstanding relationship between the Foundation and Faith in Action extends far beyond the traditional grantee-grantor relationship. When asked about their partnership, words such as “thought partner,” “strategist,” “long and meaningful conversations,” and “free-flowing” all came up in conversations with Foundation and Faith in Action staff alike.

The relationship that exists between the Foundation and Faith in Action is that of a true partnership, with a high amount of trust and open communication. Scott Reed shared examples of spending time with the Foundation’s board and CEO, and having long and meaningful conversations about its work. Reverend Herring also shared how the Foundation’s resources and program officers have been instrumental in its journey to put race and equity at the center of the organization’s work. Andrea Marta explained:

The Foundation has helped us think strategically about our work and where we need to go. Having an organization that can walk with you while you do that is unique. You can’t build an organization long term on programmatic grants if you don’t have the foundation of general operating support to build off of.

This type of grantee-grantor partnership is invaluable and the impact goes far beyond this collaboration. Faith in Action staff emphasized how the long standing general operating support is a “stamp of approval” from the Foundation and outwardly validates the work of Faith in Action. According to Reverend Herring, this “stamp of approval” is an “indication of the Foundation’s confidence in the organization and the impact it’s having on the country.” He elaborated on the impact this has to build philanthropic support, “Because we have received the general operating support from the Foundation, it is an indicator to other funders that they should be offering similar support. It operates as a multiplier resource.”

From the Foundation perspective, Elizabeth Posey reflected on her time working with Faith in Action, specifically the value of working with a collaborative partner:

I’ve enjoyed getting to know the leaders at different levels. I am impressed with their thoughtfulness and the integrity of their work. I’ve appreciated how free flowing our conversations and exchange of ideas are. It’s been a pleasure to see the fruition of making such deep investments over time and to see the impact of those long-term investments on communities.

Communities across the nation—and the corresponding social and economic context—have changed over the years, but historical, deeply entrenched inequities remain. Faith in Action is one organization working hard, and deeply devoted to, addressing these barriers and providing infrastructure to strengthen the ability of its base to pursue justice. 🏠

“Marguerite Casey Foundation supported us in putting racial equity at the center of our work when other funders wouldn’t do that.”

**–Reverend Alvin Herring,
Faith in Action Executive Director**

“Without the commitment and support from Marguerite Casey Foundation, the success of Faith in Action would be a shadow in itself.”

**–Scott Reed,
Faith in Action former Executive Director**

What Have We Learned?

The inspirational stories of these three grantee organizations—Greater Birmingham Ministries, Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA, and Faith in Action (formerly PICO)—demonstrate the importance of Marguerite Casey Foundation’s (the Foundation’s) support in strengthening movement building organizations invested in meeting the needs of families and advancing broader social change. The organizations are striving to address some of the most deeply-rooted complex issues of our time and depend on strong partnerships, resources, and flexibility. These three case studies offer a window into the development of these organizations over the past 17 years, and more specifically, how the Foundation’s sizeable multi-year general operating support and network building efforts contributed to each organization’s growth and successes.

While the case studies highlight the individual experiences of each organization, they all explored the benefits of a long-term relationship with the Foundation and its general operating support and network building efforts. This chapter describes the cross-cutting themes that emerged across all three case studies, as well as Foundation insights in working with its full network of grantees.



Multi-year unrestricted funding allows an organization the flexibility to stay true to its mission without compromising values and long-term goals.

While many philanthropic infrastructure groups have pressed the importance of unrestricted grants to nonprofits³⁹, advocacy-related efforts are in particular need of flexibility in order to pursue unforeseen opportunities, adapt to the times, and adjust priorities to meet the changing political environment. Foundation CEO Ms. Vega-Marquis corroborated this point and explained, “General operating support enables grantees to pivot when the environment changes, without worrying about losing our support because a new issue for families has arisen.”

Additionally, grantee staff noted that the “strings attached” to restricted funding make using these funds challenging when staff are in the trenches responding to important changes or evolutions in community needs. Former Executive Director of Faith in Action, Scott Reed, explained:

Philanthropy money, that is programmatic money, means you end up chasing tactics versus doing long-term strategic work. Marguerite Casey Foundation provided funding for strategic work that allowed for an emerging idea about developing a network that is integrated across local cities, counties, states, and even nationally. If that had been translated into program funding, it would have been around “x” issue in “x” geography area opposed to building the capacity of people to move power on multiple issues. General operating support is a significant tactic compared to programmatic dollars, which tend to strip an organization’s capacity versus enhance it.

Multi-year unrestricted funding also allows these organizations to meet longer-term goals and broader missions, without being sidetracked by grant requirements that may be too restrictive or prescriptive. For instance, Advancing Justice-LA has been able to continue their work engaging schools, students, and families because of the

³⁹ Groups such as The National Committee for Responsive Grantmaking, Center for Effective Grantmaking, and Grantmakers for Effective Organizations have long made the case for unrestricted, multi-year grants.

Foundation's unrestricted funding. This flexible support has enabled Advancing Justice-LA to provide consistent programming and also strengthen and expand programs to adapt to constituent needs. Greater Birmingham Ministries (GBM) Executive Director, Scott Douglas, remarked that GBM's strong value alignment with the Foundation has facilitated their partnership. In his words, "I've had to explain our strategy and goals but we've never had to explain our values, what we live for," noting that this differs from experiences with some other Foundations that adapt their strategies and values more often, leading to misalignment and loss of funding.

The Foundation recognizes that this work takes time, does not happen in siloes, and may evolve based on the local context. Additionally, the needs of organizations often vary based on their size. Smaller organizations may need to focus more internally to establish a solid infrastructure and then shift priorities as they grow, with larger organizations allocating general operating support to stabilize coalitions, take on more complex policy initiatives, and in some cases re-grant to other organizations. The Foundation's general operating support approach is grounded in the principle that grantees are the experts in what their organizations and constituents need and the unrestricted funding represent the trust and confidence in the organization to decide where they need to prioritize to meet their long term goals.



Network building support has strengthened grantees efforts to work across issues and advance long-term policy efforts.

While organizations often allocate unrestricted funding toward their own development, the Foundation's funding for Equal Voice networks is focused on building a wider ecosystem that can sustain long-term change. All three grantees acknowledged the power of the networks in movement building efforts, largely because they are not issue-specific but instead promote a multi-issue strategy. They also noted the importance of collaborating not only across issues, but also across race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, class, religion, and other facets of individual and cultural identity. Ms. Vega-Marquis reflected on how grantees have been able to enact "large solutions" to the challenges low-income families are facing through the Equal Voice networks. She shared:

What Marguerite Casey Foundation is learning from our grantees and networks across the country is how they are reaching toward ever-larger solutions to problems facing low-income families—precisely by working in solidarity with one another. In the current climate, it might be tempting to hunker down in silos, seeking to protect hard-won individual gains. But networks offer critical social and political infrastructure that multiply the gains of collective action.

Aileen Louie, of Advancing Justice-LA, highlighted the impact of the Equal Voice networks in advancing policy efforts and explained that the partnerships that have formed through the network have created opportunities to bring their constituents together in powerful ways, including advocating with elected officials in Sacramento. Stewart Kwoh shared an additional perspective on the role of the Foundation in encouraging even more collaboration across different groups of people, organizations, and constituents. He shared,

In California, you have to be multi-racial and multi-ethnic in your approach—but the Foundation has encouraged us from the outset to be boundary crossers. We have organized across race, and we have different organizations in the Equal Voice network that organize across race and ethnicity. Different ethnicities use different services and the Equal Voice network has been a wonderful addition to the work we do.

Tari Williams, of Greater Birmingham Ministries, noted that participating in networks supported by Marguerite Casey Foundation has also influenced her organization's program strategies. For example, she shared that "one of our ideas about organizing bus riders came from a convening because someone met someone who was part of an organizing group of bus riders from another state." Participating in Equal Voice networks has helped all three organizations advance their advocacy and movement building efforts, drive results and policy change and expand their representation and reach.



The unrestricted support provided by the Foundation allows grantees to staff their organizing efforts for long-term, culturally responsive advocacy.

All three grantees acknowledged leveraging the Foundation's unrestricted support to hire and retain staff who can best serve their constituency in culturally appropriate ways. The flexible funding from the Foundation enabled Advancing Justice-LA to hire staff members with the skills and experience to engage communities and organize their efforts. Aileen Louie noted that the Foundation's support allowed them to hire a policy director that could make connections between issues and organize better internally.

Similarly, Faith in Action was able to leverage the Foundation's unrestricted support to hire a more diverse staff and employ more people of color in leadership positions across the organization. Additionally, they have been able to increase the number of Black and Brown organizers leading the work and ensuring Faith in Action's efforts and approach are equitable and culturally relevant.

GBM has continued to increase representation of its staff over the years by hiring and supporting both staff and volunteers that have shared lived experiences as its primary constituents. GBM has learned that retaining staff with direct experiences requires a more individualized approach for supporting these staff (e.g., flexible schedules, financial support, affordable housing). The Foundation's general operating support provides the financial buttress to meet staff needs, allowing GBM to invest in the financial wellbeing and professional development of a diverse team. Tari Williams described supporting staff as a long-term commitment to the organization's stability and well-being. She shared that GBM is actively researching how to more accurately determine appropriate salaries that meet a living wage beyond federal or other poverty levels, and regardless of one's title or position in the organization—noting that household size and family size are two variables it is considering for salary ranges.

In addition to best serving their constituencies, the unrestricted funding provided by the Foundation allows grantees to think strategically about staffing at their organization and plan for the long term. General operating support provides organizations with the flexibility to staff strategically and invest in their staff, advancing a sense of job stability among staff members, longer staff retention, and, ultimately, higher staff capacity and organizational impact.



Long-term relationships with Marguerite Casey Foundation provide endorsement value and instill confidence in the organization.

Grantees shared that receiving multi-year funding from the Foundation indicates confidence in their organization and a genuine alignment of values and efforts. Internally, this gives staff assurance to know that an esteemed funder like the Foundation believes in their cause and their ability to impact families' lives. With multi-year support, grantees are also better able to develop a track record of growth and impact over time.

"General operating support is about the success of the entire institution, not just a program."

**–Luz Vega-Marquis,
President and CEO of
Marguerite Casey
Foundation**

Scott Douglas shared that general operating support gives GBM the confidence to pursue long-term strategies which he described as “our most difficult obstacles” and more specifically described that this flexible funding allows GBM to “to build the capacity, political will, and alliances necessary to have enough power to effect change.”

Externally, the continuous investment over several years provides an “endorsement” or “stamp of approval” that allows grantees to leverage additional funding from other grantmakers. Reverend Herring of Faith in Action explained:

General operating support is an indication of the Foundation’s confidence in the grantee organization and the impact it’s having on the country. We appreciate that confidence! Because we have received long-term general operating support from the Marguerite Casey Foundation, it is an indicator to other funders that they should be offering similar support. It operates as a multiplier resource.

In 2014, Advancing Justice-LA received its largest grant from the Foundation to meet a 1:2 match challenge from the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation. Advancing Justice-LA’s leadership emphasized that its long-term and authentic relationship with the Marguerite Casey Foundation facilitated the open communication and flexibility that enabled this sizable grant that would meet the match requirements. Aileen Louie shared, “to be able to say we have a very important foundation partner that has tremendous confidence in our work and strongly endorses what we’re doing is very powerful.”

Leadership Transitions

Another commonality all three grantees featured in these case studies share includes being in varying stages of Executive Director transitions—two who are nearing retirement and one who recently transitioned into the position.

The Executive Directors of Advancing Justice-LA and Greater Birmingham Ministries have both been with the organization for several decades and are nearing retirement. Faith in Action recently transitioned to a new Executive Director from previous leadership who had also been at the organization for over four decades. Foundation Program Officer, Joe Burris, shared that of his portfolio of grantees in the South region, roughly one third of those grantees are undergoing a significant leadership transition.

While the case studies did not focus on these changes, it is important to note this commonality and highlight the ability of these organizations to build intergenerational leadership and provide leadership opportunities to staff members, which is another benefit obtained through general support. For instance, prior to his appointment, Faith in Action’s current Executive Director served as an organizing member of various Faith in Action federations for upwards of a decade. Scott Douglas’s trajectory from accessing direct services from Greater Birmingham Ministries during a time of need, to become the Executive Director of the organization exemplifies the organization’s overarching support and perspective of seeing constituents as future leaders.

Advancing Justice-LA staff noted the general operating support from the Foundation has been particularly valuable for the organization to strengthen internal administration and management structures in preparation for Stewart Kwoh’s pending retirement. Aileen Louie remarked, “Having strong general operating support will allow us to build an infrastructure that any person will be able to work with” and emphasized the value of having partners like the Foundation to support preparation for this transition.

Where Do We Go from Here?

The experiences of constituents, particularly low-income children and families, across the country are deeply impacted by historical and current policies that threaten their most basic human rights and ability to live and thrive in inclusive and supportive communities. While these values are asserted in our constitution, in reality this country has perpetuated systems of disenfranchisement and disinvestment that have created deep inequalities across the population—and significantly more so for people of color. The support of grassroots organizations committed to community organizing efforts—such as the three featured in this report—is imperative to address these inequities, as these organizations are uniquely positioned to support and empower local interests, and cultivate broader partnerships across diverse sectors and regions.

Grantmakers have the opportunity to support these movements by regularly assessing and revising their strategies to provide the resources and connections needed to advance social change. The Foundation and grantees alike are strong advocates for other funders to prioritize general operating support and network building as a grantmaking strategy, and increase the availability of these resources both regionally—such as in the Deep South and other pockets across the country that lack funding sources—and to more organizations that promote and advance policy reform through community organizing efforts. General operating support demonstrates confidence in an organization’s expertise to know and meet the local needs of their constituents, as well as offering the flexibility to address the constantly shifting dynamics in which these organizations work. General operating support is highly needed by nonprofits, and for grantees working on advocacy and activism efforts to advance policy reform, it is especially crucial to have the flexibility, confidence, and network to persevere over the course of several years in order to advance social change and improve local, state, and regional policies.

Marguerite Casey Foundation strongly believes that (i) supporting grassroots organizations dedicated to advocacy and activism and (ii) promoting a multi-issue strategy are imperative elements for any funder that seeks to advance lasting social change. The Foundation’s experience over the past 17 years and the insights from these three case studies exemplify that general operating support and network building are effective tactics in nurturing a family-led movement for an equitable and just society. 🏡