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Funders Join Together to Launch \$100 Million California Black Freedom Fund
New Fund Invests in Black Power-Building and Organizing in California

February 4, 2021 -- Today, philanthropic organizations and funders joined together to launch the California Black Freedom Fund, a new \$100 million initiative to provide abundant resources to Black-led power-building organizations in the state over the next five years. Co-created with Black leaders and organizers, the first-of-its-kind fund will ensure that California's growing ecosystem of locally rooted Black-led organizing efforts have the sustained investments and resources they need to eradicate systemic and institutional racism.

"Over the past year, we've seen Black communities across the country step up boldly as the conscience of our nation to challenge the status quo," said Cathy Cha, President and CEO, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund. "The California Black Freedom Fund represents a great opportunity to build on that momentum and support Black-led organizations and a movement that can keep racial justice front and center and reimagine a better future for all of us."

The fund addresses a history of underinvestment in Black-led organizations and power-building by philanthropy; for example, an estimated 1 percent of community foundation support was specifically designated for Black communities in recent years, according to the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

"To make racial justice and equity real in California, philanthropy needs to elevate its investments in Black organizers that are focused on advocacy, organizing and holding our institutions accountable -- something that we call power-building," said Lateefah Simon, President, Akonadi Foundation. "The vision of the California Black Freedom Fund is to bring justice to our communities by making sure Black-led organizations are sufficiently supported and strong, and their leaders are galvanized."

The fund's focus on "power-building" means that it will support an interconnected and locally rooted ecosystem that gives Black community members the power to: design and advocate for community agendas that reflects their needs; play decision-making roles in the policies and

systems that impact their lives; and exercise power to win systemic change through advocacy, direct action, and voter organizing and mobilization.

“This is a bold move by philanthropy,” said Robert K. Ross, M.D., President and CEO at The California Endowment. “But we know it will take bold moves such as this in order to reimagine institutions that are more inclusive and racially equitable for all Californians. The pandemic and the racial divide in this country have exposed the anti-Black systems that are in place. These resources will make sure we build and sustain an ecosystem of Black-led organizations and networks that can move racial equity work forward, while leading California towards healing and structural change.”

With an initial investment of \$32.4 million, the California Black Freedom Fund will raise additional dollars over the next five years through a mix of foundation, corporate and individual donor support. Funders currently participating in the California Black Freedom Fund include Akonadi Foundation, Annenberg Foundation, Bishop Ranch, Blue Shield of California Foundation, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Crankstart, Emerson Collective, Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, Farella Braun + Martel LLP, Friedman Family Foundation, Hellman Foundation, JPMorgan Chase, Liberty Hill Foundation, Libra Foundation, Rob McKay, Rosenberg Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, Sierra Health Foundation, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Stuart Foundation, Tundra Glacier Fund and Weingart Foundation. Silicon Valley Community Foundation will provide fiscal and administrative management of the fund.

“The California Black Freedom Fund sets forth a model that can be replicated across the nation, potentially bringing significant resources to movement-building networks and organizations that are fighting racial injustice on behalf of marginalized groups,” said Nicole Taylor, President and CEO, Silicon Valley Community Foundation. “Silicon Valley Community Foundation is proud to support the California Black Freedom Fund, as it aligns with our aspirations of advancing equity and opportunity for all members of our communities.”

Over the next five years, the California Black Freedom Fund will strategically increase the resources available to Black-led organizations throughout California, prioritizing the courageous and visionary grassroots advocates and organizers leading California as a whole toward systemic transformation. In its first round of grantmaking, the California Black Freedom Fund is investing over \$6 million to support three established Black networks that have proven, long-term working relationships with more than 50 Black-led organizations across the state:

Black Census and Redistricting Hub - A network of over 30 Black-led and Black-serving organizations maximizing participation in the census and redistricting process among hard-to-count Black communities.

Black Equity Collective - A community-public-private partnership strengthening the long-term capacity and infrastructure of Black-led and Black-empowering social justice organizations in Southern California (Los Angeles County and Inland Empire).

PICO California: Live Free/ Bring the HEAT - An organizing intervention to protect the basic health, safety, and well-being of all people by demanding a series of immediate and sweeping changes to the current policing system in the United States.

“Black-led organizations have been leading the work to advance racial justice and dismantle anti-Black racism,” said Miguel A. Santana, President and CEO, Weingart Foundation. “We are proud to join our colleagues in investing at greater scale to support these movement leaders and stand shoulder to shoulder with them in the work to eradicate systemic racism.”

Three rounds of grantmaking are anticipated in 2021 to reach a wide and diverse set of Black-led organizations across the state, with the next round of grantmaking anticipated in late February 2021. In addition to grantmaking, the fund will also provide capacity-building support through technical assistance in communications, narrative change, and policy; research and data; and convening and learning opportunities.

“Building a better future for everyone starts with centering those who have been politically, socially, and economically marginalized,” said Priscilla Chan, Co-founder and Co-CEO, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. “We support the California Black Freedom Fund and its work to ensure that Black-led organizations and movements have the power, resources, and recognition to continue their missions and make racial equity a reality in California.”

About the California Black Freedom Fund:

The California Black Freedom Fund (CBFF) is a five-year, \$100 million initiative to ensure that Black power-building and movement-based organizations have the sustained investments and support they need to eradicate systemic and institutional racism. Learn more **CBlackFreedomFund.org**

