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New \$15 Million Fund for Inclusive Economic Development

Sierra Health Foundation and The James Irvine Foundation invest in Community Economic Mobilization Initiative to strengthen community resilience and build healthier communities

The Center at the Sierra Health Foundation (The Center) in partnership with [The James Irvine Foundation](#) today launched the \$15 million Community Economic Mobilization Initiative (CEMI). The James Irvine Foundation invested \$14 million in CEMI, which was established with \$1 million from The Center's foundation partner [Sierra Health Foundation](#).

California is on the cusp of receiving and distributing an unprecedented level of financial investments for economic development, including an estimated \$93 billion in the federal [American Rescue Plan](#) and [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) and more than \$46 billion in the state's [Community Economic Resilience Fund](#) and [budget surplus](#). CEMI is an innovative approach to diversifying and increasing the number of community-based organizations that receive such funding for sustainable recovery efforts and increasing their ability to determine how these resources are invested. CEMI will equip nonprofits to be essential partners in designing inclusive economic development implementation plans. In this way, forthcoming economic recovery investments will be equitable in their allocation and impact for generations to come.

"Alongside The James Irvine Foundation, The California Endowment and other partners, we are advancing transformative change with the Community Economic Mobilization Initiative. CEMI will strengthen nonprofits working in marginalized communities and help them secure and influence the use of public funds designated to reduce economic and environmental inequities," said **Chet P. Hewitt, president and CEO of Sierra Health Foundation and The Center**. "The past few years have laid bare the impact of long-term disinvestment in poor communities. We must do all we can to position community institutions to grow power and create opportunity for the places and populations they serve."

The James Irvine Foundation is focused on creating a California where all workers paid low wages have the power to advance economically. Investing in CEMI fulfills that goal by helping grassroots nonprofits engage in the planning and implementation of anticipated public funds and ensures community voices are central to distribution and decision-making.

"We have a golden opportunity to make sure these investments reach community-based organizations that best know the infrastructure their communities need for economic growth that is inclusive and resilient. We need an economy built on inclusion, equity, and dignity for all work and workers — and that starts by making room for diverse leaders to have a say in how these once-in-a-generation investments shape their communities' futures," said **Don Howard, president and CEO of The James Irvine Foundation**.

CEMI will provide organizations with a comprehensive technical assistance and training program to leverage new funding opportunities, grow their internal infrastructure and operations and establish new models for community-led programming. Partner organizations will create a statewide network that drives equitable economic development policy, regulation and accountability at state and local levels.

"Leaders in the philanthropic sector continue to play an essential role in driving change in California," said **Governor Gavin Newsom**. "This initiative will help grow the capacity of committed organizations to continue their important work in communities across the state. This will be especially important as we focus on COVID-19 recovery and creating a healthier, safer, more equitable future for all."

The Center at Sierra Health Foundation will manage CEMI, growing support for the initiative in partnership with additional aligned funders. The California Endowment has pledged to make a future investment in CEMI.

"The availability of state and federal funding provides California with an important opportunity to address critical health and economic challenges for the most vulnerable Californians. This potential can only be realized by investing in community-led change," said **Dr. Bob Ross, president and CEO of The California Endowment**.

CEMI will begin funding organizations during the summer of 2022 and continue as funds are available. Additional information is available at shfcenter.org/CEMI.

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About The Center at Sierra Health Foundation: *The Center works to promote health and racial equity and justice in communities throughout California with local, state and national partners. Learn more at www.shfcenter.org.*

About The James Irvine Foundation: *The James Irvine Foundation is a private, nonprofit grantmaking foundation dedicated to expanding opportunity for the people of California. The Foundation's focus is a California where all low-income workers have the power to advance economically. Since 1937 the Foundation has provided more than \$2.2 billion in grants to organizations throughout California. The Foundation ended 2021 with \$3.8 billion in assets and provided \$128.9 million in grants. For more, please visit www.irvine.org.*

About The California Endowment: *The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation, was established in 1996 to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians. Headquartered in downtown Los Angeles, The Endowment has regional offices in Sacramento, Oakland, Fresno and San Diego, with program staff working throughout the state. The Endowment challenges the conventional wisdom that medical settings and individual choices are solely responsible for people's health. The Endowment believes that health happens in neighborhoods, schools, and with prevention.*