



CALIFORNIA FOR ALL

**BUILDING POWER THROUGH
TRANSFORMATIVE SOLIDARITY
TO WIN ON EQUITY**

About This Document

This pivotal era in America has demonstrated the urgency and potency of united action. Millions of people have stood up to protect laws, rights, and fundamental values. Intersectional organizing and activism have awakened Americans everywhere to massive inequality, structural racism, and bigotry and persecution in its many guises, from immigrant deportations and family separation to mass incarceration of Black and Brown men to gender injustice and sexual harassment and exploitation.

Now it is time to advance a unified agenda. The first step is to figure out how to work together at an unprecedented scale and depth. This paper is intended to ground collective thinking about how a diverse movement of people, places, and issues can operationalize transformative solidarity in one of our nation's largest states—California.

This living document will be refined as we engage in deep, robust conversation to set a bold agenda for an inclusive, just, and prosperous California for all.

The document draws inspiration from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It synthesizes and distills values, principles, and platforms outlined in four recent documents:

- *A New Social Compact* developed by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society
- *A New Social Contract: Collective Solutions Built by and for Communities*, compiled by the National Economic & Social Rights Initiative
- *The People's Platform* developed by the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color
- *Realizing the California Dream*, developed by Northern California Grantmakers

It was originally presented at a meeting of 75 equity leaders from across California in November 2018. Their feedback is incorporated into this version. The document continues to be a work in progress, reflective of the growing set of voices providing input to strengthen it.

Across movements throughout California, there was a general reflection that the solidarity demonstrated to further broad policy goals has been lacking and more transactional than the deep, genuine, and transformative solidarity necessary to win. While there have been intermittent flourishes of the type of solidarity necessary to win at scale—as demonstrated in movements like No Dakota Access Pipeline; No Ban, No Wall; or in efforts to end family separation at the border—there is consensus that the solidarity demonstrated in these times of crisis is too reactionary, isolated, episodic, and limited to intervention, rather than organized, prolonged, and proactive.

Developing transformative solidarity is hard work. It challenges everyone to rethink priorities, push beyond comfort zones, hear and see one another, and embrace the differences within the equity movement as our greatest source of strength. The process is also exhilarating. Together, and only together, can we claim our power, accelerate and scale breakthroughs, and create a California that works for all.

Introduction

With its immense assets and challenges, California is fertile ground for creating a model of transformative solidarity that activates radical imagination, lifts up the power and wisdom of communities, and achieves sweeping systemic change.

The state has much to boast about. It has the world's fifth-largest economy, a beautiful and diverse geography, and is widely regarded as an economic and a cultural mecca. With a majority of people of color for more than 20 years, California represents the demographic future of America. It may foreshadow the political future, too. The state that gave rise to Ronald Reagan and the John Birch Society is now overwhelmingly Blue. It has led the nation in protecting immigrant rights, reforming some of the most egregious policies of the criminal justice system, and fixing partisan gerrymandering. From the grassroots to the highest levels of government, California stands at the forefront in resisting the blatant racism and xenophobia of the Trump Administration and its efforts to roll back progress on inclusion, health care, and environmental protection.

California's greatest asset, of course, is the people: a kaleidoscope of cultures and ethnicities from its first Indigenous peoples, from more than 100 tribes, to its most recent immigrants and everyone in between. This provides a wealth of human potential. Yet for too long, the state has squandered it.

For all its riches and progressive image, California has one of the highest rates of economic inequality in the United States. Almost half of Blacks and Latinos in California are economically insecure, along with 43 percent of Native Americans, compared with less than a quarter of White Californians. Many people of color are locked out of opportunity from generation to generation by an oppressive blend of structural racism, concentrated poverty, and an economic system based on the extraction of labor and resources. An epic housing crisis, an unforgiving and inequitable economy, water insecurity, infrastructure underinvestment, and devastating floods, fires, and drought related to climate change have displaced countless families and destabilized whole communities, overwhelmingly low-income communities and communities of color.

From rural Northern California through the agricultural expanses of the Central Valley and the Inland Empire, from San Francisco to San Jose to the Los Angeles Basin, California's remarkably diverse regions face unique challenges. While the state's prosperous, tech-driven, coastal metro areas struggle to manage growth and its attendant challenges of unaffordability, displacement, congestion, and inequality, much

of inland California remains resource-dependent and low-wage, suffering from a lack of investment and tax base to meet community needs for infrastructure and services. Much of inland California is also unable to retain its youth once they acquire higher education. In addition to these disparities across regions, there is also wide inequity across neighborhoods *within* regions—with communities of color often confined to the areas with the least opportunity and then pushed out from those areas when new investment finally comes. To provide opportunity to all Californians, we must reduce these geographic disparities by investing in underresourced communities and in ways that prevent the displacement of current residents.

Solutions must be driven by local needs and priorities. Yet, they will require transformative solidarity across the state, driven by the recognition that our fates are intertwined. California's future hinges on its ability to build human capabilities, eliminate barriers to participation and success, and create healthy communities of opportunity for all.

Instead of creating conditions that make it possible for all people and places to thrive, too many California laws and systems are designed to concentrate wealth and power by stripping resources, labor, and freedom from low-income communities and communities of color. It has been this way from the start. In the early days of statehood, California, like the rest of the United States, embarked on the genocide of Native American peoples through laws and tactics such as stealing of ancestral lands, paying local militias to murder Indigenous people, and forcing those who remained to live on reservations and send their children to assimilation boarding schools—all with the goal of taking the land and resources and then erasing Native Americans from history. The new state tried to keep free Black people from moving in. Migrant workers from China and Japan, beckoned by the promise of jobs, were confined to ethnic enclaves, as were Mexicans who remained on land acquired by the United States after the Mexican-American War. Discriminatory practices like real estate covenants through much of the 20th century cemented a landscape of inequity.

Visionary activists and courageous community leaders have identified what is needed for Californians to transform that landscape into one of opportunity for all. It requires a just, equitable economy, an inclusive democracy, and intergenerational leadership guided by the wisdom, voice, and experience of residents. This document recognizes the notable accomplishments of those who have come before. It stands on their shoulders with the goal of propelling the state forward.

Moving ahead we need greater unity and solidarity to achieve a new vision, inspire the electorate, and engage partners across our vast geography in creating a California in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

This document charts a path forward by first articulating a collection of shared values, defining community rights, and outlining a robust policy framework. It concludes with a corresponding set of action principles and practices that seek to change the culture of our movement. This living document will be refined as leaders across California communities—residents, organizations, and government leaders alike—engage in deep, robust conversations to set a bold agenda for an inclusive, just, and prosperous California for all.

Core Values

**We hold these values in our hearts, souls, and minds.
They are the lodestar for our work as individuals and together.**

We believe:

Every person has dignity, worth, and the power to change and grow.
All people are connected to one another and to the planet.

We are strongest and most powerful when we join in solidarity.

A just, free, and fair democracy supports all people, including youth and undocumented immigrants, to participate fully in the structures of government and civil society and in the policy decisions affecting their lives.

A true democracy fosters compassion and embraces inclusion. It strengthens the bonds and deep love of family, community, and friendship.

A true democracy rejects the systems and structures of White supremacy and colonialism and all manifestations of hate and exclusion, including racism, misogyny, homophobia, xenophobia, and discrimination and persecution based on religion, gender and gender non-conformity, age, ability, nativity, or citizenship status.

A fair, just economy respects workers, their collective voice, and rejects exploitation of land and labor. It invests in people, strengthens communities, and protects and sustains the environment. A fair, just economy rejects the extraction of labor and resources.

Government, markets, civil society, and residents share responsibility to ensure all people can be healthy, safe, and economically secure.

A transformative movement for equity, inclusion, and self-determination is needed so everyone can live as their full authentic selves and contribute their talents to collective progress and shared prosperity.

A movement of this scale requires deep, enduring changes in systems and policies that have a liberating impact for all, particularly people and communities that have been marginalized, excluded, or oppressed. This movement also supports individual healing and healing within families and communities.

Declaration of Rights

We recognize the following as fundamental human rights embodied in an equitable society. Through our individual and collective efforts, we commit to secure and advance these inalienable and inherent rights for all in California, including youth, formerly incarcerated and currently incarcerated people, refugees, and undocumented immigrants.

The right to free expression and full participation and representation in political and civic life. This includes the right to vote, dissent, protest, and advocate for change. All people, including youth and undocumented immigrants, have the right to influence policy over issues that impact their lives and to hold leaders and systems accountable.

The right to optimal physical, social, emotional, and mental health.

The right to affordable high-quality health care.

The right to safe and healthy places that support recreation, and physical activity, and access to affordable, nutritious food.

The right to clean air, safe drinking water, and a healthy, sustainable environment. To guarantee this right for future generations, we support systems and practices that foster climate resilience and ensure the planet can regenerate itself and sustain people and communities in perpetuity.

The right to participate fully and freely in the economy. This includes the right to: a job, a basic income, fair compensation for labor, and the freedom to organize in the workplace. It also includes the right to entrepreneurship, business ownership, and other wealth-building opportunities.

The right to safe, stable, affordable, quality housing with access to transportation and employment opportunities.

The right to free, accessible public education and training that unlocks the full potential of everyone.

The right to live free from fear and violence, including police violence and mass criminalization and incarceration. This includes the right to a humane, dignified, and community-driven justice system that protects the safety of residents and promotes healing and opportunity.

The right to agency, self-determination, and personal freedom. This includes freedom of movement regardless of nativity, religious affiliation, or citizenship status. This also includes the right to gender self-identification and the right to love whom you want, with the full protection of the law.

The right to reparations and other forms of compensation, healing, and reconciliation to redress the history and legacy of White supremacy and colonialism, including genocide, slavery, land theft, exclusion from jobs and other economic opportunity, and exclusion from the rights and privileges of citizenry.

A California for All Policy Framework

We join in transforming systems and policies to create a California based on justice, inclusion, and economic security for all. Some of us may lead organizing and advocacy campaigns. Others may provide institutional, financial, or political support, or the support that comes from love, friendship, mentorship, and solidarity. We prioritize investments in, protection for, and leadership by groups who have been targeted, marginalized, or excluded historically or in the current political climate. We recognize and honor the skills and knowledge within their communities to shape policy; we uphold their right to meaningfully influence the course of the state's future; and we commit to building the capacity of the next generation of leaders to design and lead a state that works for all.

Our transformational solidarity agenda focuses on but is not limited to the following policy arenas:

We call upon systems, institutions, and their leaders to advance policies that ensure **health for all**. Policies must prioritize healthy communities that ensure access to healthy food, physical activity, inclusive and safe environments, health care, culturally rooted preventive and healing modalities, and restorative opportunities.

We call for investments in a **robust safety net** that serves, protects, and strengthens the dignity of all who need support.

We call for policies that **protect and expand voter rights** and ensure the rights of all people, including youth and undocumented immigrants, to influence laws, policies, and investments that impact their lives, their communities, and their futures.

We call for the creation of a radical **new economy**, a system based on inclusion and opportunity for all, more equitable distribution of resources and wealth, and an end to the extraction of labor, land, and resources. Policies must ensure all people have access, without discrimination, to jobs with dignity, career pathways, investment capital, opportunities to own businesses, and opportunities to accumulate savings and wealth. Policies must guarantee fair family-supporting wages for all and an end to gender, racial, and other forms of inequality in pay and promotions. Policies also must ensure that communities that have been excluded from the economic mainstream have full rights and opportunities to influence the design of just, transformative economies across communities, regions, and the state.

We call upon **business and government to join in authentic partnership with communities to advance this new economic vision**. We call upon business to create and implement policies that support the creation of good jobs for all and access to opportunity, healthy communities, and environmental sustainability. We call upon government to create and implement policies that stop and prevent the extraction of land, labor, and human dignity; secure and support the rights of workers to organize; guarantee racial and gender equity in hiring, pay, and promotions; and create pipelines to jobs and ownership opportunities for those who face systemic racism, bias, or other barriers to opportunity.

We call upon leaders in all sectors to embrace a new vision of **housing as a human right**. Policies and investments must support residents to live in safe, stable, affordable housing near transportation and employment opportunities. Policies also must support residents to remain in communities threatened by displacement or to choose geographic mobility.

We call for **investments in public education**, from pre-kindergarten to post-secondary, that prepare all for productive lives, successful careers, and the responsibilities of citizenry in a robust democracy. We call for investments in job, career, and life training that unlock the potential of all.

We commit to **protecting, repairing, and improving the environment** for present and future generations. We call for policies and infrastructure investments that guarantee all communities are climate resilient, and all have clean air, safe drinking water, and healthy, balanced, sustainable environments.

We call for the **redesign of tax and public financing mechanisms** to ensure just and progressive taxation, to support equitable growth and healthy communities, and to eliminate subsidies for extractive investment. New tax policy and public financing regulations must (1) support equitable investments in education, transportation, job creation, and other resources that communities determine they need; (2) reduce wealth disparities; (3) discourage exploitation, resource extraction, and environmental damage, and (4) promote community health, community-driven development, and shared prosperity.

We call on public systems, institutions, and their leaders to uphold **the right of all to live free from fear and violence**. We call for an end to police violence, arbitrary or unjust incarceration, deportation, immigrant incarceration, and the continued punishment and exclusion of people who were formerly incarcerated or deported. Just, humane policies must dismantle oppressive police, court, and prison systems and replace them with transformative justice systems, designed by communities, that protect safety and promote individual, family, and community healing.

We call upon business, government, philanthropy, and citizens to **acknowledge that the land and its many resources were unjustly taken from the Native people** who lived, loved, and raised their families here. All in California must recognize that despite determined attempts to erase a people, Native people remain strong and resilient, and they are an essential part of our collective future. Truth-telling is the first step in healing. But it is only one step.

We call for policies that **end dehumanizing mascots and icons** of Native American people.

We call for the **creation of a Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation commission to examine past injustices**, develop policies and programs to redress and repair harms, and promote healing for Indigenous peoples, communities of color, and all Californians impacted by the legacy of oppression.

We call upon **philanthropy to acknowledge its power, join in transformative solidarity** with activists and leaders across California, and align grantmaking and other resource investments with the values, rights, priorities, and policy aspirations described in this document.

We call for policies and practices that **ensure, uphold, and protect freedom, dignity, agency, and self-determination of all people**, and every individual's right to be free of discrimination of any kind or on any basis, including race, national origin, gender, immigration status, sexuality, class, ability, physical characteristics, conviction history, age, or zip code.

Principles for Action and Practice

We commit to model our core values as we join in solidarity to design a new California. The following sets forth of a compilation of principles as a starting point to guide our individual actions, our organizational practices, and our roles and responsibilities in allied efforts to effect large-scale change.

Power. We will work together in ways that magnify our strength as individuals and as a collective force for change. We recognize that inequities exist in power dynamics within our movement. We will hear, value, respect, and honor the knowledge, experience, and contributions of everyone who joins us in solidarity.

Radical Imagination. We will think big and boldly. We will be guided by a vision of a new social, political, and economic order, not by old habits, ego, or the limited aspirations of incrementalism.

Collaboration. We will work together on an unprecedented scale to achieve a vision of a just, inclusive California. We will collaborate with all who share the values and aspirations of this accord, including business, government, philanthropy, nonprofits, and individuals, regardless of political affiliation.

Authentic Engagement. The people directly impacted by injustice and oppression must be at the forefront of change efforts. Their experience, knowledge, and wisdom will guide our strategies and the solutions we work to effect.

Culture. We recognize and support culturally based practices. These practices are essential to nurture and sustain a movement for equity and inclusion. We will support such practices to promote healing and transformative self-work and address cycles of trauma and violence within ourselves, as well as in our families, collaboratives, communities, and social systems.

Discipline. We will work with the rigor, clarity, focus, and discipline required to forge, coordinate, and sustain effective organizations, partnerships, alliances, campaigns, and the vision of transformative solidarity. We recognize it will take years, perhaps decades, to translate our vision into reality, and we will establish the processes and mechanisms to work effectively, productively, and in alignment over the long haul.

Accountability. We hold ourselves accountable for serving the interests of vulnerable populations and for producing measurable results that improve conditions, expand opportunity, and eliminate barriers for a significant number of people and communities.

Transparency. As individual change agents and organization leaders, we will provide the same level of transparency that we seek from government agencies and other institutions that serve our communities.