



## Press Release

### Foundation Center Study Shows Growth in California Grants Benefiting Communities of Color

*New York, NY – June 30, 2008.* As the diversity of California’s population continues to grow, a new Foundation Center analysis of grantmaking by 50 of the state’s largest independent foundations finds that at least 39 percent of California-focused grants benefited populations of color. According to the report, *Embracing Diversity: Foundation Giving Benefiting California’s Communities of Color*, in 2005 alone, these 50 California-based foundations awarded a minimum of 2,700 grants totaling nearly \$300 million to support health, education, social services, and other programs that serve ethnically or racially diverse populations. In addition, 10-year trends show that giving benefiting these populations grew nearly twice as fast as overall giving between 1996 and 2005.

The report, commissioned by a group of regional grantmaker associations (**Northern California Grantmakers**, **Southern California Grantmakers**, and **San Diego Grantmakers**), provides a comprehensive estimate of the extent to which communities of color are being served by foundation giving in California.

“Most of the data previously available has undercounted the level of philanthropic giving that benefits ethnic communities,” said Larry McGill, senior vice president for research at the Foundation Center and the primary author of the study. “This report provides a more complete picture about the level of investment made by foundations to help California’s diverse populations.”

Key findings from the report include:

- At least 39 percent of domestically focused grants and 33 percent of domestically focused grant dollars awarded by 50 of the largest

independent California-based foundations (all with assets in 2005 of at least \$100 million) primarily benefited populations of color. The level of giving is considered to be a conservative estimate and researchers believe the numbers may be even higher.

- Most grants intended to benefit the economically disadvantaged also served populations of color, even if they were not explicitly targeted to benefit such populations. An estimated 75 percent of grants meant for low-income populations also served communities of color.
- Among a group of nearly 100 large independent California foundations, domestic giving explicitly targeted to serve populations of color increased by 177 percent between 1996 and 2005 (adjusted for inflation), while domestic giving overall increased by 98 percent. At the same time, domestic giving targeted by these foundations to benefit the economically disadvantaged increased 236 percent.
- Grants explicitly targeted to serve populations of color were overwhelmingly concentrated in the health area, reflecting the grantmaking priorities of large foundations such as the California Endowment and the California Wellness Foundation.

While the study found that at least 39 percent of California-focused grants benefited populations of color, McGill noted that it should not be inferred that the other 61 percent of domestically focused grants benefit white populations only: "All that can be said about these grants is that specific information about the demographic characteristics of the populations they are intended to serve is unavailable. Many, in fact, may not be targeted to serve specific populations at all; rather, they may be intended to support activities ranging from scientific research to environmental preservation. And to the extent that some of these grants are intended to benefit the general public, they may also benefit Californians of all backgrounds."

"The state's foundation leaders are committed to improving the lives of communities of color, and, for that matter, all Californians," said Colin Lacon, president of Northern California Grantmakers. "And foundations will continue to support efforts that address the underlying challenges and problems facing diverse populations in our state."

The report can be **downloaded** at no charge from the Gain Knowledge area of the Foundation Center's web site.