

A Report on The James Irvine Foundation's Grantmaking to Low-Income and Diverse Communities

Background

In December 2008, The James Irvine Foundation was part of a group of private foundations that announced plans to increase support for grassroots organizations that serve low-income communities and communities of color in California. These plans sought to build upon Irvine's existing grantmaking to benefit these communities, which is at the core of our foundation's mission and grantmaking strategies.

Irvine's mission is to expand opportunity for the people of California to participate in a vibrant, successful and inclusive society. We advance this mission by making grants in three program areas: Arts, Youth and California Democracy, which seeks to advance effective public policy decision making that is reflective of and responsive to all Californians.

2009 Grantmaking Activities

Based on the analysis of our grantmaking in 2009, **approximately 50 percent of our total grantmaking of \$67 million (or \$33.5 million) was granted to organizations that explicitly focus on serving low-income and/or communities of color.** Grants that do not explicitly focus on these populations are not included in the 50 percent figure, although a majority of our other grants are also supporting low-income and/or communities of color by virtue of California's demographics. The rest of this report highlights some of our 2009 grantmaking that supports low-income and communities of color.

Community Leadership Project

We dedicated \$4 million in 2009 in support of the Community Leadership Project (CLP), a grantmaking partnership between the Packard, Irvine and Hewlett foundations to build the capacity of grassroots organizations serving low-income communities and communities of color in California. With a total budget of \$10 million, CLP grants support organizational and leadership development and other forms of assistance for grassroots organizations and leaders. CLP-funded projects will reach more than 100 organizations and 500 grassroots leaders. Irvine increased our initial CLP budget from \$2.5 million to \$4 million because of the quality and merits of the proposed projects. Along with our partners at Packard and Hewlett, we have set up a separate Web site at www.communityleadershipproject.org with more detail about the project and its partners.

California Democracy Program

In our California Democracy program, our Civic Engagement priority aims to increase civic engagement among traditionally underrepresented communities. These grants primarily target low-income, ethnic and immigrant populations. More than \$4.7 million in grants were made in 2009 as part of this priority. Additionally, Irvine made ten grants totaling \$2.1 million to organizations conducting public education and outreach to maximize participation among low-income and diverse communities in the new legislative redistricting process. Another \$1 million in grants went to five organizations that are working to increase the participation of communities of color, and low-income and immigrant communities in the 2010 Census.

Youth Program

Our Youth program goal is to increase the number of low-income youth in California who complete high school on time and attain a postsecondary credential by the age of 25. The majority of our \$24.5 million in Youth grants were focused on the Linked Learning approach. Formerly known as multiple pathways, Linked Learning provides high school students with strong academics connected to real-world experience in a wide range of fields, such as engineering, arts and media, and biomedicine and health. Research shows that the Linked Learning approach can lead to higher graduation rates, increased college enrollments and higher earning potential.

Arts Program

One of our main priorities in the Arts program is Cultural Participation, which supports the active engagement of Californians from all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds with quality art from a variety of sources and cultures. Through this priority, we support mainstream institutions, as well as culturally specific, experimental and community-based organizations to reach beyond their current constituencies and serve more people in a deeper way. Nearly \$4 million in grants were awarded last year as part of this priority. We also support the expansion of diverse, relevant arts and cultural offerings in local communities across California through our Creative Connections Fund. The fund targets small and midsize arts organizations and offers project grants of up to \$50,000, over a maximum of two years, through an open, competitive review process. We awarded nearly \$2.3 million in grants to more than 50 arts organizations through this fund in 2009.

Summary

By virtue of our focus on the state of California and our mission to expand opportunity, The James Irvine Foundation maintains a deep commitment to working in partnership with organizations that serve low-income and communities of color. Our activities in 2009 sought to build on that commitment, at the same time as we identified new ways to extend our work, primarily through the Community Leadership Project. It is worth noting that even though the economic downturn created greater demand for our diminished resources, we were able to dedicate more financial resources than we had originally projected to the CLP in 2009. We look forward to our continued partnership with the many outstanding organizations we are privileged to support, and we intend to report on an ongoing basis regarding the results of our collective efforts to expand opportunity for the people of California.