

The James Irvine Foundation invests \$2.7 million in the first phase of Just San Bernardino Collaborative Project

10,000+ residents of the City of San Bernardino to engage in a landmark, multiyear economic development project

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Photo IECF: Formed in late 2019 with the support of the Inland Empire Community Foundation (IECF) and The James Irvine Foundation, Just SB spent a year learning together and developing strategies in response to the historic and growing disparities in education, health, housing, and job opportunities and wage equity in the Inland Empire, specifically in San Bernardino.

The Just San Bernardino Collaborative (Just SB) announced on Mar. 11 the launch of a People’s Plan for Economic Inclusion with a generous \$2.7 million project grant from The James Irvine Foundation, and support from its community partner, the Inland Empire Community Foundation.

Set to engage over 10,000 residents in San Bernardino over the next year, the People’s Plan and the strategies used to develop it will address the lack of economic growth of low-income communities through the lens of labor, housing, education, environmental justice, economic development, arts/culture, and healthcare. It is a grassroots-driven process that focuses on community-centered approaches, even during socially distanced times. Some of these approaches will include an upcoming survey, community listening sessions, and other creative events.

Under the leadership and expertise of nine community-based organizations in the Inland Empire, the People’s Plan specifically mobilizes power-building around economic development in the City of San Bernardino. Called “Just SB,” the group chose this title to clearly focus the efforts on centering justice for future economic development in the city. These collaborating organizations represent a broad spectrum of industries and include Time for Change Foundation, BLU Educational Foundation, Youth Action Project (YAP), Arts Connection, Inland Empire Labor Council,

Warehouse Workers Resource Center, Inland Congregations United for Change (ICUC), Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (C.O.P.E), and the People’s Collective for Environmental Justice (PCEJ).

“I am extremely proud to be intimately associated with the work of the JUST SB People’s Plan. I firmly believe that those closest to the conditions that they find themselves in are best equipped to inform this process and path forward,” shared Pastor Samuel Casey, Executive Director of C.O.P.E. “By focusing our efforts on a participatory process involving community voices, we believe it will produce a true People’s Plan.”

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“Through the tragedy of COVID, we have learned so much more about what equity and justice should mean, and what is essential work and workers. The People’s Plan is an exciting and concrete way for the residents of San Bernardino to answer that question directly, for themselves,” said Michelle Decker, CEO of Inland Empire Community Foundation. “We are all learning that building an economy that closes economic, racial, and gender gaps will require truly inclusive conversations and leadership by those most affected, and we believe Just SB will help us all learn how to do that authentically.

The Irvine Foundation investment in Just SB and the People’s Plan is aligned with their Priority Communities strategy to create and protect more good jobs that offer family-sustaining wages, benefits, and advancement opportunities for workers in low-wage jobs – and support communities as they create economies that work for all residents.

For more information about the survey launch (coming in early April) and Just SB’s work, visit www.justsb.org

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