

Foundation puts \$6.7 million more toward domestic violence prevention, economic security, and equity

Communities across California stand to benefit from a \$6.7 million package of grants, unanimously approved by Blue Shield of California Foundation's Board of Trustees at their third quarterly meeting of 2024.

These 22 grants are designed to support the Foundation's mission – to make California the healthiest state and end domestic violence – and organizations that share our focus on Californians of color with low incomes.

“With our grantee partners, we serve the Californians most affected by health inequities and domestic violence,” said Debbie I. Chang, president and CEO of the Foundation. “We focus on changing policy and systems, such as public health and housing, because we aim to help as many people as possible.”

Many grants this quarter are renewed investments in the Foundation's core strategies, including strengthening economic security for Californians, making sure community priorities are reflected in public systems, and the prevention of domestic violence.

Break the cycle of domestic violence: total grants of \$3.5 million

A new cohort of five organizations will learn together and continue to build the evidence base for multigenerational domestic violence prevention work, using \$2 million over two years. One of the organizations is Mujeres Unidas y Activas (<https://mujeresunidas.net/>) (MUA), where Juana Flores is executive director.

“Thanks to the grant from Blue Shield of California Foundation, MUA will be able to continue growing our domestic violence prevention programs, which at their core develop the leadership of immigrant women throughout Alameda and San Francisco counties,” Flores said. “This will include personal transformation



activities as well as policy advocacy, since it is not only about changing women's self-esteem, but also the system that makes women economically vulnerable to abusive relationships.”

The other four members of this cohort are Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (<https://beam.community/>), in Los Angeles; Time for Change Foundation (<https://www.timeforchangefoundation.org/>), serving San Bernardino and Riverside counties; Visión y Compromiso (<https://visionycompromiso.org/>), with a strong presence in the Central Valley; and Young Women’s Freedom Center (<https://youngwomenfree.org/>), in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Santa Clara counties.

Another way the Foundation supports Californians in healing from and preventing domestic violence is through restorative practices. A \$500,000 grant to the Collective Healing and Transformation (CHAT) Project (<https://chatproject.org/>) extends our commitment to collecting and sharing data about the effectiveness of restorative practices (https://chatproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/0806_CHAT2024_ExecutiveSummary_02.pdf) for another two years.

Align systems with community priorities: total grants of \$1.1 million

The Foundation continues to support change in public systems so that they better respond to the priorities of their communities, especially those most affected by domestic violence and health inequities. Grantee partners at the Othering and Belonging Institute (<https://belonging.berkeley.edu/>), for example, will use \$450,000 over two years to build stronger relationships between local and state government agencies and the communities they serve.

When community-based organizations can organize and advocate for systems changes that promote health and racial equity, entire regions may benefit. The San Joaquin Valley Health Fund (<https://www.shfcenter.org/programs-and-initiatives/san-joaquin-valley-health-fund/>) is receiving \$400,000 over two years to advance this kind of work.

“Blue Shield of California Foundation is a critical ally to the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund and our community-based partners,” said Kaying Hang, president of The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, which manages the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund. “Their long-term commitment to building capacity and local leadership has enabled collective achievements in advancing health care for all, access to clean water, funding for affordable housing, improved educational outcomes for students of color and much more.”

Strengthen economic security and mobility: total grants of \$920,000

Recognizing that domestic violence is one of the major causes of homelessness for women and children, the Foundation is investing in coalitions that bring women experiencing homelessness into policy discussions about housing. This model has proven successful in Los Angeles, with the Domestic Violence and Homeless Services Coalition (<https://dvhsc.org/>). Now, a grant to Community Forward SF (<https://communityforwardsf.org/>) will put \$200,000 toward the San Francisco Women's Housing Coalition, a group of nine organizations, over the next two years.

“Because women are often lumped into the general adult population experiencing homelessness, the system often fails to address their unique needs to successfully exit homelessness,” said Jack Hill at Community Forward SF. “The Women's Housing Coalition is advocating for the creation of systems and services that directly respond to women's homelessness. This work is vital in not only getting women off the streets, but to shifting the narrative about homelessness. It will no longer be seen as an insurmountable problem, but rather that we can solve homelessness when we focus and implement evidence-based practices.”

The Foundation team also works with grantees to expand access to – and use of – benefits that support economic security and health. For example, with a \$150,000 grant to Watsonville Law Center (<https://www.watsonvillelawcenter.org/>), the Foundation is supporting free legal services for people with low incomes on the Central Coast who may need disability and paid leave programs.

Other grantmaking to advance our mission: \$1.1 million

The Foundation's communications team supports journalists in improving coverage of health equity and domestic violence, particularly for Californians of color with low incomes who are most affected by those issues. A \$609,000 grant to the Center for Health Journalism (<https://centerforhealthjournalism.org/>) and \$100,000 for El Tímpano (<https://www.eltimpano.org/>) will advance this strategy.

Civic engagement is another pathway to addressing social drivers of health such as economic security and domestic violence prevention, so the Foundation is supporting nonpartisan civic engagement through PICO California (<https://picocalifornia.org/>) and Latino Community Foundation (<https://latinocf.org/>) with \$100,000 for each.

“Californians are making their voices heard,” Chang said. “When we work together on improving the big systems, focusing on the social drivers of health such as housing and economic opportunity, we can help thousands if not millions of people at a time to thrive.”