2025 ANNUAL REVIEW

Updates on Our Work, Giving, and Organization

The James Irvine Foundation

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PROGRESS TOWARD OUR NORTH STAR

The James Irvine Foundation

North Star Indicators

IRVINE'S NORTH STAR

A California where all low-income workers have the power to advance economically.

TESTS TO THE STATE'S RESILIENCE, VALUES, AND COMMITMENT TO WORKERS

Any progress low-wage workers in California saw last year met immediate challenges in 2025. Los Angeles County was devasted by wildfires. The destruction, tragically, took 29 lives and upended the livelihoods of tens of thousands of workers, including Californians already struggling to make ends meet. And the difficult work of cleaning up the debris also meant workers paid low wages faced high risks with hazardous materials left behind by the fires.

The healing and rebuilding process began as a new federal government took actions that further impacted working Californians — and significantly tests the state's values and efforts around inclusion and equity. As Irvine's CEO wrote in January, one lesson from the November election is that:

> *People feel aggrieved about economic inequality and their ability to secure — or even envision — a better economic future. The inequities in our economic systems, structures, and policies threaten working Californians and democracy. We will fail to unite people and find meaningful solutions until we acknowledge and end these inequities. This includes honestly addressing the biases that block economic opportunity and fuel political division and scapegoating.*

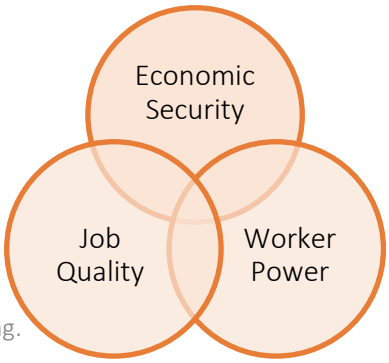
This underscores the importance and timeliness of Irvine's North Star goal: The "all" in that goal is intentional and critical — and why we support organizations advocating for the working Californians left behind by and out of decision-making in our economy. The needs feel particularly acute now, with attacks on DEI and threats to federal grant dollars that many states and organizations rely on to serve communities.

The following section provides annual data to support reflection on the needs and experiences of low-income Californians. We use these context indicators to monitor three important, inter-related dimensions of our North Star: **economic security**, **job quality**, and **worker power**.

We update these indicators annually with the most recent figures from nonpartisan polling and other public data sources. To better understand disparities, we analyze available data by these demographics: race/ethnicity, gender, age, income, region, and employment status.

We note changes in demographic breakdowns highlighted last year, in the narrative, if they are 5% or more.

Workers can afford basic needs and are resilient against unanticipated financial hardships.



Workers have access to employment that offers a living wage, stable job, opportunities to grow and advance, and benefits that support health and well-being.

Workers have influence over decisions that impact their lives and are represented in related decision-making bodies.

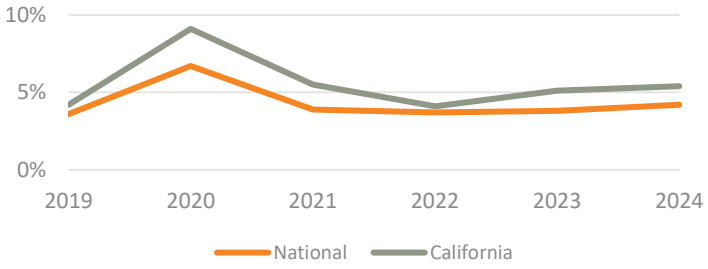
ECONOMIC SECURITY

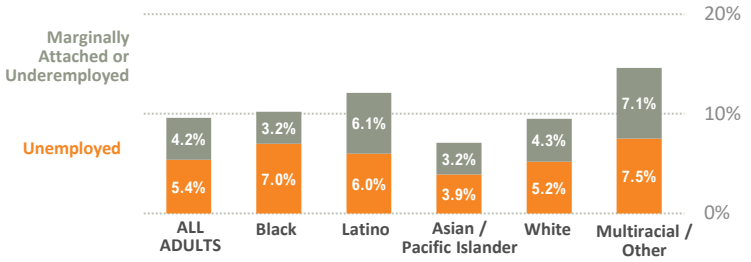
Workers can afford basic needs and are resilient in the face of financial hardships.

In 2024, only a small share of Californians benefited from increased economic growth. Californians continue to face challenges to their economic security, with Black households in particular experiencing rising challenges to make ends meet, and more than one in 10 households at risk of family separation. Housing affordability continues to challenge the state, with significant variation among regions in who can afford the cost of housing.

EMPLOYMENT

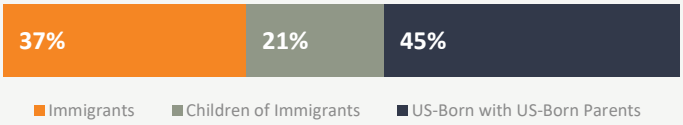
The California unemployment rate remains higher than the national rate. When considering those who are underemployed or marginally attached to the labor market, 9.6% of Californians need work.[1]





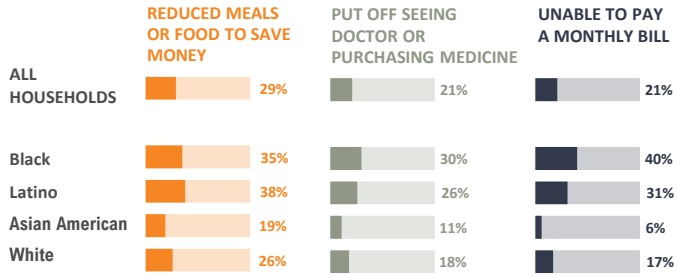
Note: "Underemployed" refers to individuals seeking full-time work but working part-time instead. "Marginally attached" describes individuals neither working nor job-hunting but who want, are available for, and have searched for work within the past 12 months.

Most working Californians are immigrants or children of immigrants. 13% of California households are mixed-status, putting them at risk of family separation due to uncertain legal status.[2] [3]



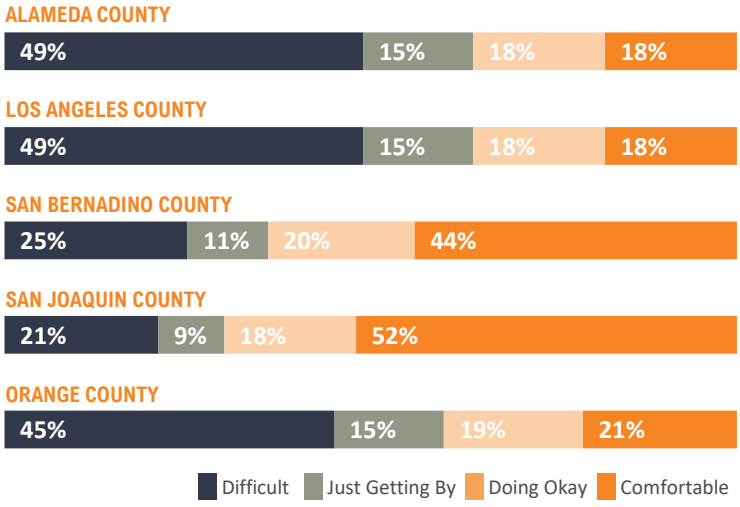
MAKING ENDS MEET

Households faced similar financial challenges as last year. Black households faced greater hardship in 2024: increases in meal or food reductions (6%), delayed medical care or prescriptions (8%), and missed bill payments (11%). Asian Americans saw improvements, while Latino and White households experienced mixed outcomes.[4]



HOUSING BURDEN

There are large regional differences in who can afford to live in California. Among renters, more households in Central Valley and Inland Empire counties can afford housing, while those in the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and Orange County are more likely to struggle — a misalignment of local wages and housing costs.[5]



[1] Bureau of Labor Statistics (November 2024), Public Policy Institute of California calculations from EDD as of January 2023
[2] California Budget and Policy Center, "Over Half of All California Workers Are Immigrants or Children of Immigrants", May 2024
[3] FWD US, "28 million people, including nearly 20 million Latinos, are at risk of family separation in 2025", October 2024
[4] Public Policy Institute of California (November 2024)
[5] Terner Center, "Affordability for Whom? Introducing an Inclusive Affordability Measure", May 2024

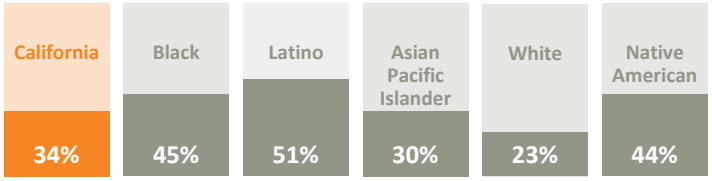
JOB QUALITY

Workers have access to employment opportunities that offer a living wage, job stability, opportunities for growth and advancement, and benefits that support health and well-being.

Fewer than seven in 10 California households earn enough to afford the real cost of living in California. This rate is higher for Latino, Black, and Native American families in California. Latino workers reported the least access to job benefits and opportunities for advancement compared to other racial groups, while Black workers reported the least job stability. Those with higher incomes tend to report greater access to benefits and opportunities for advancement, as do full-time workers as compared to part-time workers.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

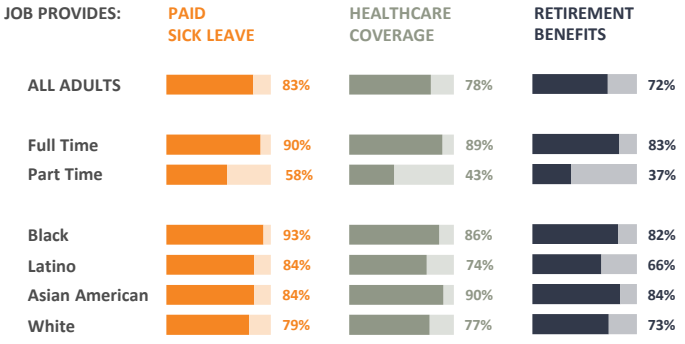
34% of families cannot afford California's real cost of living.[1]



Note: The real cost of living includes costs such as housing, food, health care, childcare, transportation, and other basic needs, and requires an average income of $93,691 for a household of four.

JOB BENEFITS

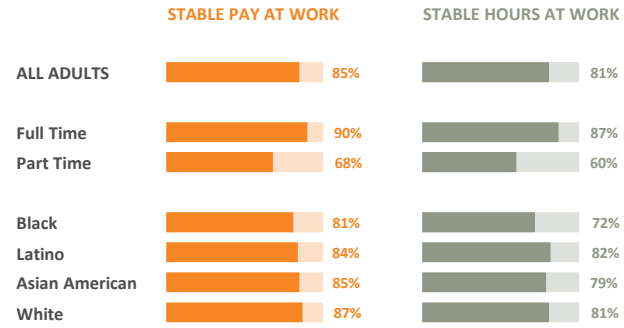
Most Californians have access to benefits through employers. Similar to past years, part-time workers fare worse than full-time workers, although they reported a 7% increase in access to paid sick leave. Californians earning below $40K per year receive benefits at lower rates through their jobs (55% receive paid sick leave at their job, 48% can access healthcare coverage through their job, and 47% have jobs that provide retirement savings).[2]



Note: Census American Communities Survey data reveals a higher rate of insurance coverage at 92% for all Californians: Black (95%), Latino (89%), Asian (97%), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (93%), American Indian or Alaska Native (89%), White (97%), and Multiracial (93%). This suggests that many Californians purchase coverage on their own.[3]

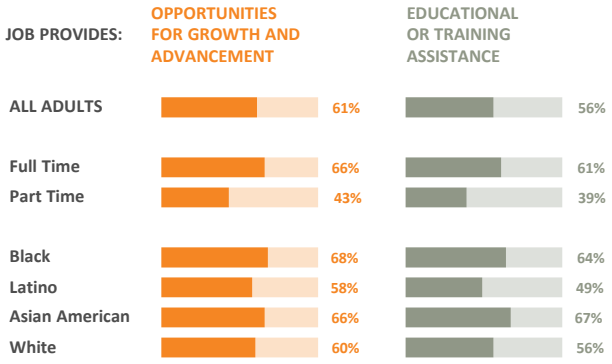
JOB STABILITY

Most Californians report stable pay and hours at work, though Californians working part-time have less job stability than full-time workers. Those earning less than $40K per year are less likely to have stable pay or hours, at 64% and 57%, respectively.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT

Californians have different access to advancement opportunities and education/training assistance at work. Asian Americans reported a 20% increase in access to growth and advancement at work and a 7% increase in access to education and training; other racial groups experienced less significant variation from last year.



[1] California Poverty Measure (2023), Real Cost Measure (2023)
[2] Public Policy Institute of California (November 2024)
[3] University of Minnesota, SHADAC analysis of the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files (2024)

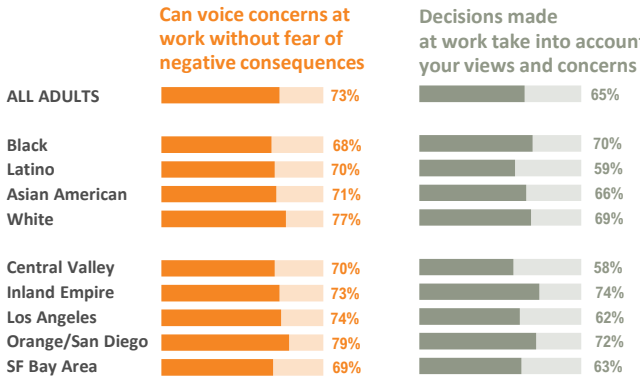
WORKER POWER

Workers have influence over decisions that impact their lives and are represented in related decision-making bodies.

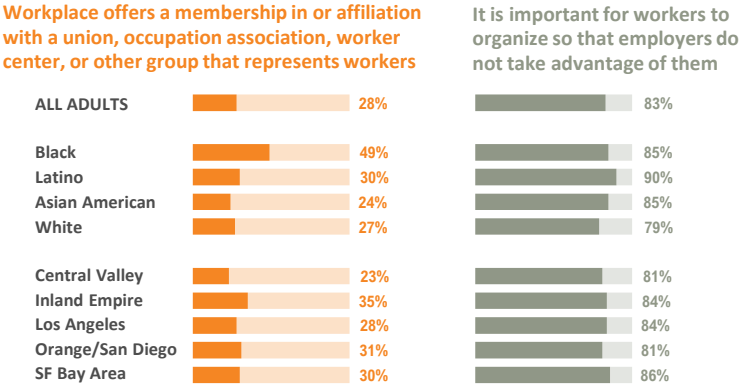
Californians agree on the importance of worker organizing, but only one in three workers have a formal way to organize around workplace concerns and rights. Despite popular belief in the importance of unions and in civic participation through voting, membership rates have remained flat, and voter turnout was down significantly in 2024 compared to the prior general election.

WORKER VOICE

73% of California workers feel they can voice concerns at work, and nearly two-thirds say that decisions made at work take their views into account. Compared to last year, 6% more workers reported that decisions made at work take their views and concerns into account, including 16% more Black workers and 10% more Latino workers.



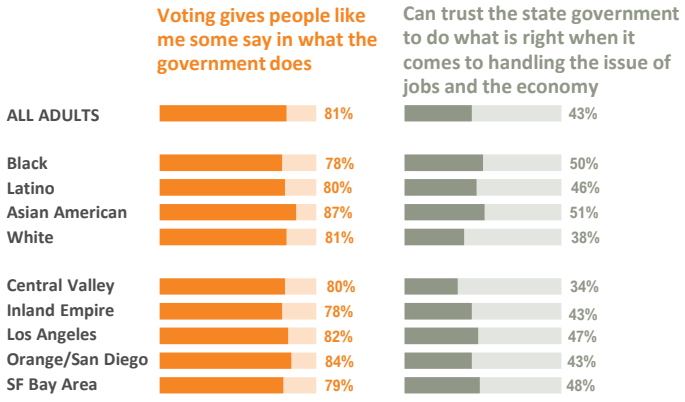
While eight in 10 Californians believe workers should organize so that employers do not take advantage of them, only three in 10 have formal venues for representation at work. Regionally, membership decreased by 13% for Central Valley workers while other regions remained about the same.



Note: The graph on the right includes survey respondents who chose "completely agree" and "somewhat agree".

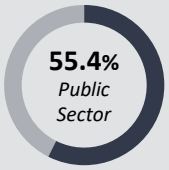
VOTING AND REPRESENTATION

Californians agree that voting is important in having some say in the government. This belief has been constant since 2022, although 6% fewer Latino voters agreed, while Black, Asian American, and White voters responded more favorably. Californians have reported higher levels of trust in state government than in the federal government since 2021.[1, 2]



Notes: The left graph is respondents who chose "completely agree" and "somewhat agree." The right graph includes those who chose "just about always" or "most of the time."

16.3% of workers are covered by unions statewide.[3]



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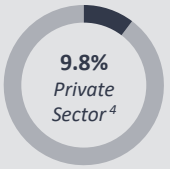
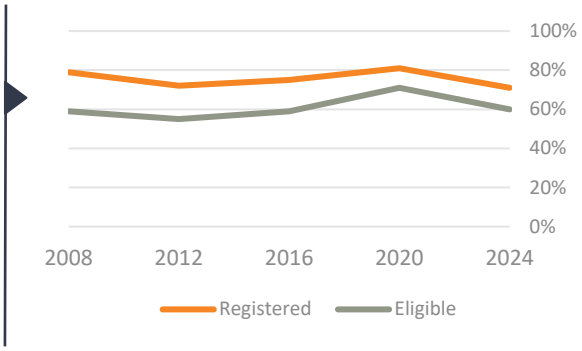


GENERAL ELECTION VOTER TURNOUT

Turnout among eligible and registered voters dropped significantly in the 2024 general election compared to 2020.[5]



[1] Public Policy Institute of California, "More Californians Trust Sacramento than Washington" (2024)
[2] Public Policy Institute of California (November 2024)
[3] Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024
[4] Barry T. Hirsch, William Even, and David A. Macpherson, "Union Membership and Coverage Database from the Current Population Survey"(2023)
[5] University of Florida Elections Lab, "State and National Turnout Rates for Selected Elections" (2024)

2024 Programmatic Highlights

We aim to fulfill our mission through the following key strategies:

A singular goal that unites our work: a California where all low-income workers have the power to advance economically

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Initiatives, not program areas, that have specific outcomes, timelines, and resources

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Developing and adjusting initiatives by learning from those closest to the work

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Providing, whenever possible, large, flexible grants to organizations at the core of our initiatives

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Seeking impact on individual, field, and statewide levels

Partnering with and across other sectors to better advance our and our grantees' goals

We approach this work with our institutional values top of mind: Accountability, Curiosity, Empathy, Equity, Nimbleness, Partnership, and Transparency. And we are committed to addressing barriers to economic opportunity due to racial discrimination in how we give and how we operate. Please see 'Our People and Culture' section for more on that commitment.

This section includes updates and insights related to our:

- Initiatives
- Additional Grantmaking
- Cross-Portfolio Investments
- Listening and Learning

Initiatives

Notable in 2024

- ***Leadership change:*** Initiative Director Leslie Payne departed for new endeavors in the fall, and Director of Program Development Landon Dickey — already on the team — was named the new Initiative Director.
- ***Core grantees finalized:*** The team finalized, as part of the strategy approved in 2022, core grantees related to apprenticeships and workforce service providers who are accountable to the communities they serve. This included new grantees with the potential to better address barriers to economic opportunity that disproportionately affect women and people of color.
- ***Workforce Development Board grants:*** The initiative invited regional Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to apply for grants to strengthen their ability to connect all clients to quality jobs and/or services. Of the state's 44 WDBs, 33 applied, and we awarded grants to 10 organizations recommended by an advisory committee.

BETTER CAREERS

In December 2022, Irvine's board approved a new strategy for Better Careers, committing an additional $170 million over seven years to ensure that:

- More Californians are placed in and have the support they need to stay in quality jobs
- Nonprofits can provide sustained access to quality jobs and address racial equity
- Public workforce service providers are more equitable and responsive to all the communities they serve

In 2024, we invested $31.2 million in 57+ grantees toward those goals and by:

1. **Strengthening apprenticeship intermediaries** to provide sustainable, inclusive, debt-free paths for low-wage workers to access jobs with good benefits and wages, opportunities to advance, and worker voice
2. **Supporting community-led and -accountable organizations** that Californians (who have been failed by multiple systems) trust to provide comprehensive support, build power, and connect them to quality jobs
3. **Promoting inclusive public workforce services and investments** to focus public dollars on efforts to better meet the needs of all the communities they serve

Key Learnings

- **Uncertainty in public systems.** California's budget shortfall meant cuts to important workforce development efforts that were already under-funded. Apprenticeship funding will likely drop, and nonprofits who are grantees of or contractors for the state report delays in payment. All this underscores the need to support public partners focused on our goals and the nonprofits who can demand the public sector do better.
- **Growing inclusive apprenticeships requires technical and equity-oriented supports for emerging organizations.** Many of our apprenticeship-related grantees are new to the intermediary role and/or growing quickly. This requires general technical assistance but also support to build equity into their work and learn from one another. We anticipate it taking two to three years for some organizations to be able to help a significant number of Californians, as they initially ramp up on internal capacity and expertise, and partnership building with key, diverse stakeholders.
- **Workforce service providers want to use funds to go deeper, not serve more people.** Grantees who are rooted in and know their communities have bold ideas about how workforce development must change to better serve those failed by multiple systems. This means serving people more deeply over serving more people, which public funds rarely cover. We can fill gaps as part of this new cost/benefit analysis for equitable impact.

Initiatives

Notable in 2024

- **Yungsuhn Park,** previously a Senior Program Officer on the team, **was named Fair Work Initiative Director** when the previous Initiative Director, Andre Oliver, moved on from Irvine to pursue a new opportunity.
- **The California Coalition for Worker Power held its first worker assembly** with more than 350 leaders from nonprofits, unions, and funders. Their organizing and advocacy yielded tangible wins for workers in 2024, including preempting a ballot initiative that threatened enforcement and workers' right to sue for workplace violations. This also preserved funding for the California Workplace Outreach Project to help workers access education and tools about workplace rights.
- Despite a significant budget deficit, **the 2024-2025 California budget included $83 million for worker outreach efforts** (in rural areas, low-wage industries, and for domestic workers). Grantees successfully advocated for these funds and will continue to partner with the state to implement these critical programs.
- **Worker rights leaders helped Fair Work develop its learning plan** to examine impact, understand what's working, and identify where further progress is needed. We learned that grantees are open to learning and assessing strategy in partnership with the Foundation, which could prioritize learning as integral to our collective work.

FAIR WORK

In 2023, Irvine's board approved $186.5 million through 2030 for the Fair Work initiative. At its center is the belief that workers will do better economically when they have a meaningful voice on the economic issues that affect them, are fully afforded their labor rights, and have opportunities for advancement that enhance their livelihoods. Informed by grantees, the initiative envisions progress in three areas:

- Low-wage workers are informed and civically engaged, and benefit from workplace improvements within industries.
- Strong, sustainable nonprofits improve conditions for low-wage workers.
- Organizations make progress in shifting the underlying conditions that adversely affect low-wage workers.

In 2024, we invested $25.5 million in 29 grantees (some in partnership with another Irvine initiative) who further Fair Work's strategies to:

1. **Expand worker organizing** to help partners engage more California workers around their rights and opportunities for family-sustaining work
2. **Advance integrated approaches** to strengthen labor enforcement and ensure workers receive their full wages due
3. **Support promising innovations, policy solutions, and public-private partnerships** that improve job conditions in low-wage industries and increase access to secure employment
4. **Address racial equity in the worker rights movement** by deepening support to groups serving people of color, and connecting them to key state and regional coalitions

Key Learnings

- **We need greater investments to strengthen worker organizing and advance labor rights in inland California.** Fair Work will build on 2024 grantmaking in these regions and partner with Priority Communities on investments to improve conditions for farmworkers and warehouse workers and drivers, among others, and for organizations with an expertise in addressing economic barriers Black, Indigenous, and other workers of color face.
- **Workers in enforcement cases have recovered wages, but backlogs and understaffing at the state agency hamper progress.** Grantees are working with the Labor Commissioner to address cases more quickly and exploring alternatives (e.g., private litigation, local enforcement partnerships).
- **Grantees and their partners are innovating to improve job quality in low-wage industries.** Combining organizing with job training, forming worker-owned cooperatives, and partnering with cities and the state improves conditions and creates more secure employment. We will evaluate where more private or public investments could scale promising work and help organizations leverage public funds and partner with employers.

Initiatives

Notable in 2024

California Work & Family Coalition and partners played a key role in passing two laws that allow workers to confirm Paid Family Leave and State Disability Insurance eligibility and receive benefits sooner.

California Native Vote Project secured $10 million from the Los Angeles Unified School District to implement the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Comprehensive Plan, and to increase resources for American Indian and Indigenous education programs.

The **California Immigrant Policy Center** and partners successfully advocated for protecting budget allocations for In-Home Supportive Services benefits for undocumented Medi-Cal recipients and maintaining $29 million in the Rapid Response Fund to support migrants in Imperial, San Diego, Riverside, and Los Angeles counties.

We Are California, a multi-issue coalition including Just Prosperity grantees, launched to align efforts responding to anticipated federal actions. More than 73 power-building organizations and partners, including labor, the small business community, and service sector, are mobilizing to build a more inclusive California.

JUST PROSPERITY

In 2022, Irvine's board approved the Just Prosperity initiative, which aims to ensure that low-income Californians have the power to influence lasting change in our economic and political systems. The specific goals of the four-year, $107 million initiative are to:

- Increase capacity and coordination within and across organizations and networks that seek to build the voice and power of communities historically excluded from opportunity and policymaking
- Build public and political will for policies, practices, and narratives that advance the power and prosperity of low-income Californians
- Create and implement new approaches and solutions that address racial equity and improve economic outcomes for all low-income households

In 2024 we invested $28.5 million in 46 grants for organizations focused on:

1. **Organizing and advocacy:** supporting organizations and efforts that elevate worker leadership, so their voices are heard and represented at decision-making tables
2. **Research and storytelling:** investing in quality research, compelling stories, and opportunities to amplify worker perspectives and promote dialogue that complements the efforts of worker advocates
3. **Partnerships and new ideas:** supporting collaborations across sectors to spark new ideas and solutions that lead to a more equitable California

Key Learnings

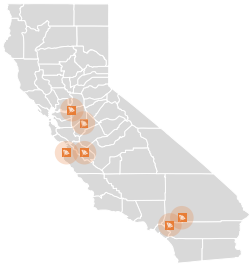
- **We see a critical need to ensure movement organizations are secure and able to fulfill their missions.** Changes at the federal level challenge the safety of grantees and the communities they serve, so we are collaborating across the Foundation on how to help nonprofits and the social sector continue to build power.
- **We are encouraged by the increasing collaboration among grantees.** More than half of grantees we surveyed responded that Just Prosperity helped connect their organization to partners, coalitions, and networks. Our support has strengthened core grantees' ability to execute successful campaigns and created a unified advocacy effort that successfully changes policies to benefit low-income workers and their families.
- **We are developing a framework to understand how grants fit within our commitment to addressing racial equity** and consider how historically marginalized communities — based on immigration status, exclusion from economic advancement programs and support, contact with justice or foster care systems, etc. — have the power to shape lasting changes in our economic and political systems.

Initiatives

Notable in 2024

- Engage R+D's evaluation of four years of grantmaking informed our updated strategy and showed progress in the work to ensure workers and families – particularly those harmed by structural racism – have the power to set the economic agenda.
- We partnered with small business advisory firm Next Street to examine the small business landscape in **Stockton, Salinas, Fresno, San Bernardino, and Riverside** and offer recommendations for ensuring small business remains a viable pathway to good jobs. (See the report and webinar.)
- In **Salinas**, Ventures launched Futuro, a co-op incubator and accelerator to provide good-paying jobs in the region in homecare, community health, environmental services, and other industries.
- **Stockton** leaders are developing strategies to make the city more competitive for federal and state grants. For example, the Port of Stockton won a $110.5M Clean Ports Program grant from the Environmental Protection Agency.
- The UC **Merced** Community and Labor Center's policy research led to large-scale systems change for rural and noncitizen workers, including informing a $65 million program by the USDA to provide subsidies to agricultural employers for raising labor standards.

PRIORITY COMMUNITIES



In 2020, Priority Communities launched with a focus on five cities critical to California's future, given their population growth and diversity: Fresno, Stockton, Salinas, San Bernardino, and Riverside. The initiative aimed to strengthen communities' abilities to improve the quality of jobs and create a thriving economy.

After five years and $125 million invested, we accomplished our impact goals, notably: helping communities leverage $1.2 billion in opportunities to prioritize local needs and workers; seeding 10 innovative projects that expand access to good jobs; and more than 4,800 workers trained via partnerships funded by Better Careers.

In December 2024, Irvine's board approved a strategy for Priority Communities' next seven years, specifically to:

1. **Strengthen the power of workers and communities** to advance regional economic development goals, investments, agendas, policies, and programs that work for all residents
2. **Grow public and private investment in community-led and -owned economic development models** that boost the prosperity of residents and address systemic barriers for low-income workers
3. **Expand the capacity of nonprofits** to improve opportunities and address the economic barriers that disproportionately impact residents of color and the effects of ongoing lack of public and private investment

The new strategy will also:

- **Maintain commitment to our five communities and add Merced.** The original cities can embed change in economic development, and Merced's proximity to Fresno and Stockton (and involvement in regional economic planning) is an opportunity to leverage and scale the existing relationships, resources, and partners in those cities for greater impact.
- **Invest in select, existing collaborations in Bakersfield and the Imperial Valley.** We will provide short-term funding to projects that strengthen early-stage organizations and coalitions that help those communities transition to a green economy.

Key Learnings

- **Build the power of workers and communities to set their community's economic agendas.** Transformational economic change requires the collective, organized political power of those most impacted by oppressive systems to shape decisions and conditions for workers.
- **Invest in small business and community-led and -owned economic development models to ensure shared economic prosperity.** These models can build community wealth, worker well-being, quality jobs, and leverage public and private investments.

Additional Grantmaking

Notable in 2024

- In November, Los Angeles County voters approved Measure A, an initiative led by **Our Future Los Angeles** (a coalition of 115+ community organizations and labor groups) that will raise an estimated $1.2 billion annually to increase the production of affordable housing, preserve currently affordable housing, and expand rental and legal assistance for vulnerable resident.
- Sustained advocacy by **Housing California** and other Irvine grantees helped protect important affordable housing programs and homelessness prevention programs from cuts in California's state budget.
- The **Community Ownership for Community Power Fund** announced $1 million in grants to 12 organizations in the San Joaquin Valley. The investments support community land trusts, tribal organizations, and other community-based organizations in the region to work on land stewardship, sovereignty, housing preservation, and climate resilience projects.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

California's high housing costs are a significant barrier to economic advancement for families living on low incomes. Systemic discrimination based on race in housing policy and practice have contributed significantly to the high rates of rent burden and housing insecurity for communities of color as well as exclusion from low-poverty, high-opportunity neighborhoods.

We believe the voices, ideas, and priorities of the Californians most deeply impacted by the housing crisis must inform efforts to address the state's affordability crisis. In 2021, Irvine committed **$40 million over four years** to:

1. **Build the capacity of housing policy advocates** across the state to elevate the voices, interests, and ideas of low-income residents
2. **Engage impacted populations** in the design and implementation of policy solutions
3. **Advance a 3Ps agenda**: Protect tenants, Preserve affordable housing, and Produce new affordable units

As of December 2024, we have invested **$41.8 million in 15 grantees** to support statewide and regional housing advocacy efforts, strengthen the capacity and coordination of community advocates, and advance equity-centered policy research. Our funding has also supported community priorities, such as equitable development and land use, community ownership models, and rural, tribal, and farmworker housing.

This year we will continue to engage and learn from existing grantees to assess progress, share lessons learned, and determine how Irvine might continue to support housing-related efforts within and/or alongside our four major grantmaking initiatives.

LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Each year, The James Irvine Foundation Leadership Awards recognize leaders whose innovative solutions to critical state challenges improve people's lives, create opportunity, and contribute to a better California. The Foundation grants each organization $350,000 and shares their approaches with policymakers, peers, and other audiences via an event in Sacramento, traditional and social media activity, and individualized creative/artistic projects. Read about these impressive leaders here.

Cross-Portfolio Investments

Grantee Highlights

The **Redwood Region Climate and Community Resilience Hub** played a key role in coordinating efforts by tribes and the Redwood Coast Energy Authority to secure $87 million in federal funds to develop microgrids owned and operated by the Hoopa Valley, Yurok, Karuk, and **Blue Lake Rancheria** Tribes. The latter is a Better Careers grantee we support to build expertise in apprenticeships and prevailing wage compliance.

Our grant to the **Strategic Growth Council (SGC)** helped them launch Connecting Communities, an initiative focused on positioning community coalitions to effectively pursue federal dollars — after many of these coalitions did not receive federal climate funding. Three out of the four Community Change applications that received technical assistance from SGC went on to secure federal funds.

The **Families and Workers Fund** chose two California grantees for its Powering Climate and Infrastructure Careers Challenge for jobs in the clean energy and infrastructure sectors: a pre-apprenticeship program by the San Diego Association of Governments and the United Auto Workers' Center for Manufacturing a Green Economy (see more on the right).

LEVERAGING PUBLIC FUNDS

Because we cannot achieve our North Star goal alone, we often collaborate with funders, the public sector, organized labor, and employers to improve outcomes for Californians paid low wages. This has been a particularly ripe opportunity in recent years because of the significant funding coming from the state and federal government to rebuild our economies, infrastructure, and to prepare for climate change.

Leveraging Public Funds are grants made across our portfolio, using Research and Development and initiative resources, to ensure that historic public investments in climate, infrastructure, and economic development translate into good jobs and community benefits. Since 2022, we have allocated approximately $80 million across the portfolio for capacity building, technical assistance, and pre-development resources — strategically filling gaps to empower community organizations and underserved regions to access, deploy, and maximize the impact of public dollars.

In 2024 we also made grants to ensure workers and communities are at the forefront of shaping equitable and sustainable economic growth. Examples:

- R&D and Better Careers are funding **Jobs to Move America (JMA)** to advance good jobs and environmental justice in Lithium Valley (e.g., research on the job quality and environmental impacts of lithium extraction; profiles of regional developers; worker surveys; and reports on the electric vehicle battery supply chain). It also supports educating public agencies on good jobs standards for federal funding and subsidies and helps JMA build a community/labor coalition to negotiate Community Benefits Agreements that help workers and communities.
- The **Sierra Health Foundation** continues to manage the Community Economic Mobilization Initiative, which provides its grantees with technical assistance and peer learning so they can better participate in economic development planning and implementation. A portion of the grant is dedicated to supporting nonprofit infrastructure and collaboration in the Salton Sea region, Central Coast, and Northern California.
- R&D, Better Careers, and Priority Communities made a grant to the **Center for Manufacturing a Green Economy (CMGE)** — the nonprofit created by United Auto Workers Region 6 — to support the creation of high-road training programs in California green industries, including a pilot in the Sacramento area that could expand into the Imperial Valley to connect lithium extraction and battery production. This investment allows CMGE to partner with community organizations to prioritize the recruitment of low-income and workers of color into green training programs.

Exploratory Investments

Principles Guiding AI Investments in 2025

What we learned shaped the principles for our AI investments:

- Increase awareness and understanding of how AI impacts low-wage workers through research, education, and narrative change efforts
- Strengthen emergent coalitions to advance public and private policy frameworks and sector strategies for the equitable deployment of AI
- Advance human-centered AI solutions and pilots that address challenges faced by low-wage workers and families

In 2025, we anticipate using these principles to invest $1 million, in coordination with our initiatives, to advance worker-centered AI implementation and support community partners in adapting to this evolving political and technological landscape.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Emerging technologies play a major role in the labor market, especially for the low-wage workers who are more susceptible to job shifts and have less control over workplace decisions. We believe that those most impacted by Generative Artificial Intelligence and AI-enabled automation should have the knowledge, tools, and agency to influence these technologies at the company, sector, and policy/systems levels.

In speaking with partners, we have learned:

- **Nonprofits lack the capacity to engage in policy and workforce conversations about AI.** Community partners have said that AI is evolving so quickly that they feel perpetually behind and ill-equipped to participate in larger conversations. We see an opportunity to support organizations' ability to equip workers and organizers to engage on this topic.
- **The rapidly evolving AI regulatory landscape has risks and opportunities.** AI's regulatory frameworks will be solidified within two or fewer years. These policies will have direct implications on worker and family protections (and on housing, employment, healthcare, and education). We have already seen bills in the California legislature — and expect more.

To those ends, Irvine invested $1.85 million in 2024 in the following:

Brookings Institute – supporting their work to understand and shape the implications of generative AI on the workforce. The goal is to foster policies that enable low- and middle-income workers, particularly women and people of color, to benefit from AI advances and avoid its harms.

National Domestic Workers Alliance – supporting their initiatives focused on the impact of AI on domestic workers, with goals to incorporate worker voices into AI discussions, explore AI tools that support organizing and worker rights, and reduce risks like surveillance. Their project includes having care workers engage with tech leaders, piloting a Know-Your-Rights chatbot, and creating a strategy that ensures AI aligns with workers' needs.

TechEquity Collaborative – supporting their initiative to create responsible AI governance in California by centering worker rights and community well-being. Their diverse coalition aims to counterbalance the influence of the tech industry, educate legislators, and communities on AI, and develop policy frameworks that protect vulnerable workers.

UC Berkeley Labor Center (Fair Work grantee) – supporting them to develop and lead statewide education and outreach on AI and tech policy for worker organizations and allies, as well as helping organizations to test and access new worker rights under the California Consumer Privacy Act.

Working Partnerships USA – supporting their initiative on the intersection of AI and labor, particularly for low-income communities. They aim to build knowledge, strengthen community-labor alliances, and develop a municipal policy agenda via convenings, a landscape analysis of public policy and organizing strategies, and strengthening of efforts around data.

Listening and Learning

Listening to the people we seek to support and partner with is at the core of our work. Our approach is driven, in part, by our Impact Assessment and Learning Framework, which guides how we assess progress and impact, and use what we learn in our grantmaking, strategy, and operations. We support many forms of listening across Irvine to inform our thinking, approaches, and practices — and to advance equity. We also share what we learn with others, where relevant and useful.

Below are 2024 examples of listening to and learning from grantees, California workers, and Native-serving grantees.

LISTENING TO GRANTEES

- **Fair Work organized regional convenings** in the Central Valley, Inland Empire, Los Angeles, and Bay Area to hear grantee perspectives on challenges low-income workers face and the solutions that worker centers, grassroots organizations, and others pursue. The Fair Work team will use learnings from the convenings to develop investment strategies to protect workers and support movement-building organizations.
- **Just Prosperity established an advisory group of grantees** and conducted a grantee survey to inform the initiative's ongoing evaluation and learning activities and the development of a grantee learning agenda.
- **Priority Communities convened grantees from all five regions** to share learning around community priorities. The initiative also convened a grantee committee to inform the development of the updated seven-year strategy that our board approved in December.
- **Better Careers and its advisory group of grantees gathered insights on data collection** to assess the progress of the initiative's impact goals.

LISTENING TO CALIFORNIA WORKERS

Irvine supported the Public Policy Institute of California's annual Economic Well-Being Survey about Californians' economic situations and perspectives on economic mobility. The survey of 2,344 adults has an over-sample of households making less than $40,000 per year. Key findings include:

- Eight in 10 Californians agree that it is important for workers to organize so employers do not take advantage of them.
- 26% of residents, including about four in 10 adults living on low incomes, worry every day or almost every day about housing costs.
- 61% of working Californians have jobs with opportunities for advancement and 56% report access to education and training assistance. But fewer than half of low-wage workers have jobs with these opportunities.
- Eight in 10 Californians support increasing government funding for job training programs.

Listening and Learning

Example Grants

- Blue Lake Rancheria
- California Indian Manpower Consortium
- California Native Vote Project
- Decolonizing Wealth Project to support the California Truth and Healing Fund and California Land Return Project
- Friendship House Association of American Indians of San Francisco
- Humboldt Area Foundation-Klamath Fund
- Humboldt Area Foundation – Redwood Core Hub
- IllumiNative
- Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council
- Karuk Tribe
- Northern California Indian Development Council
- Pukuu Cultural Community Services
- Pulikla Tribe of Yurok People to support the work of the Tribal Marine Stewards Network
- So'oh-Shinálí Sister Project
- The California Tribal Families Coalition
- Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance
- Tribal Marine Stewards Network
- True North Organizing Network

NATIVE-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS AND TRIBES

With Irvine support, IllumiNative conducted the third Indigenous Futures Survey — the largest, national study by and for Native peoples that highlights Native priorities and gathers valuable data to inform Native-focused work. Learn more about the survey and related reports here.

A cross-departmental Native Learning and Investments Workgroup at Irvine continued its learning-by-investing approach to deepen our understanding of the economic priorities and capacity-building needs of California's Tribal Nations (Tribes) and Native communities.

Since 2022, Irvine has **invested more than $14 million via 25 grants to** support California's Tribes and Native Communities, including:

1. Practices to increase data on California's Tribal and Native communities
2. Workforce development strategies (apprenticeships, small businesses)
3. Power building for Tribal and Native peoples around the policy issues critical to advancing their own economic opportunity while also protecting Tribal sovereignty
4. Storytelling and narrative-change campaigns to center the unique history and experiences of California's Tribal and Native peoples
5. Participation in determining California's green energy development
6. Land and waters return and stewardship

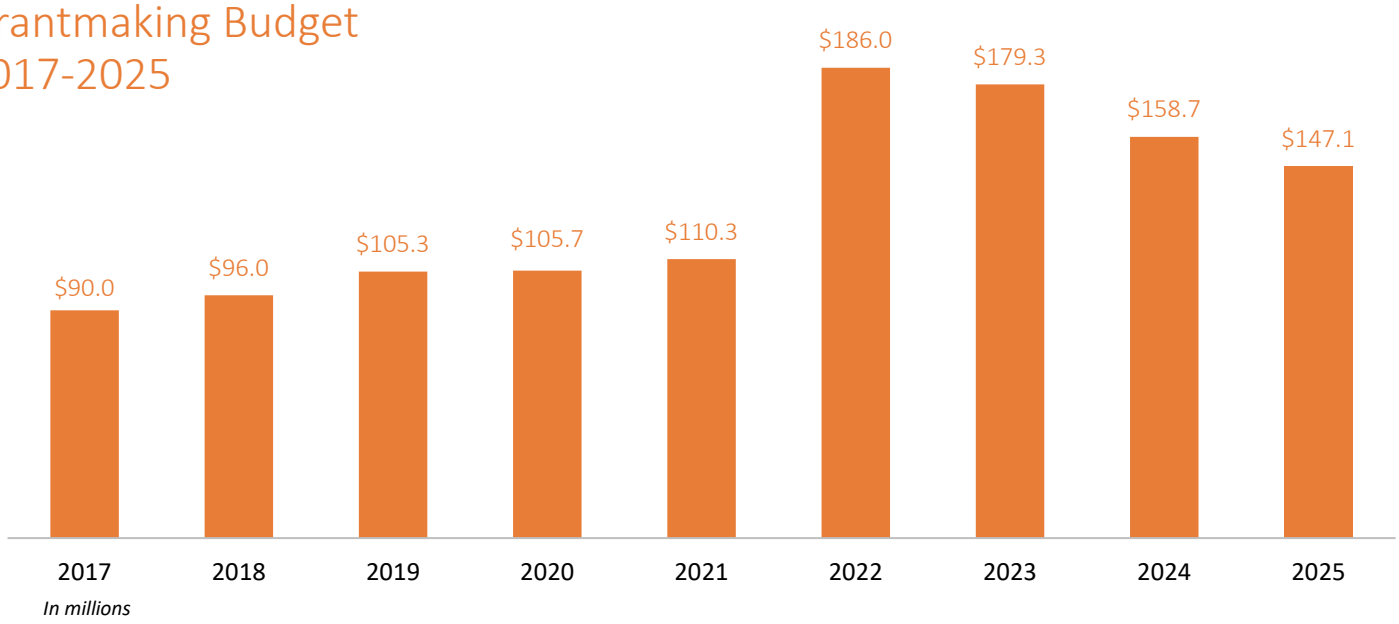
Key Learnings

- **The priorities of Native-focused organizations and Tribal partners align with Irvine's initiative goals and North Star.** Supporting Native communities within initiatives requires a grantmaking approach that honors their unique needs and respects Tribal sovereignty.
- **Native American communities are chronically underfunded.** Philanthropy can play a critical role in supporting the economic priorities of Tribes and Native peoples while respecting cultural values and practices.
- **Native peoples are often either missing entirely from the public discourse or used as a cultural stereotype.** Addressing this institutionalized erasure and stereotyping (e.g., the continued use of Native mascots) is a priority for Native peoples and Tribes.
- **Indigenous power must be built in a way that aligns with Tribal Nations and Native communities' unique needs and values.** For Native peoples, building power can be community organizing and deep, civic engagement, but also supporting Tribal sovereignty and protecting Native peoples' inherent rights.
- **For California's Tribal and Native peoples, the concept of "wealth" goes beyond accumulated capital.** It extends to the health of the land, community, and relationships; a shared sense of reciprocity; cultural preservation; and strong educational systems.

2024 GRANTMAKING PORTFOLIO BY THE NUMBERS

The James Irvine Foundation

Grantmaking Budget 2017-2025



2024 Grantmaking Budget

	2024 Actual
Initiatives	
Better Careers	$ 31,204,307
Fair Work	$ 25,973,000
Just Prosperity	$ 28,517,000
Priority Communities	$ 28,227,859
Projects	
Housing Affordability	$ 13,000,000
Leadership Awards	$ 2,143,500
Program Development	
Research and Development	$ 20,300,000
Additional Grantmaking	
Impact Assessment and Learning	$ 1,157,800
Institutional Relationship Grantmaking	$ 1,758,000
Opportunistic Grantmaking	$ 2,968,000
Flex Fund	$ 528,000
Membership/Sponsorship	$ 678,550
Board/Staff Discretionary Grants	$ 2,168,980
Total	$158,675,000

2024 Grantmaking Portfolio Overview

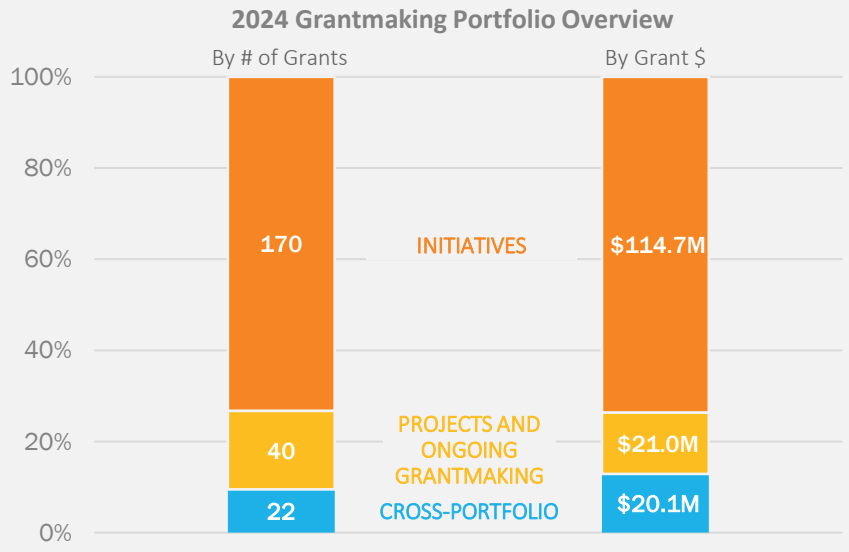
2024 GRANTMAKING CATEGORIES

Initiatives
- Better Careers
- Fair Work
- Just Prosperity
- Priority Communities

Projects and Ongoing Grantmaking
- Additional Grantmaking*
- Housing Affordability
- Impact Assessment and Learning
- Leadership Awards

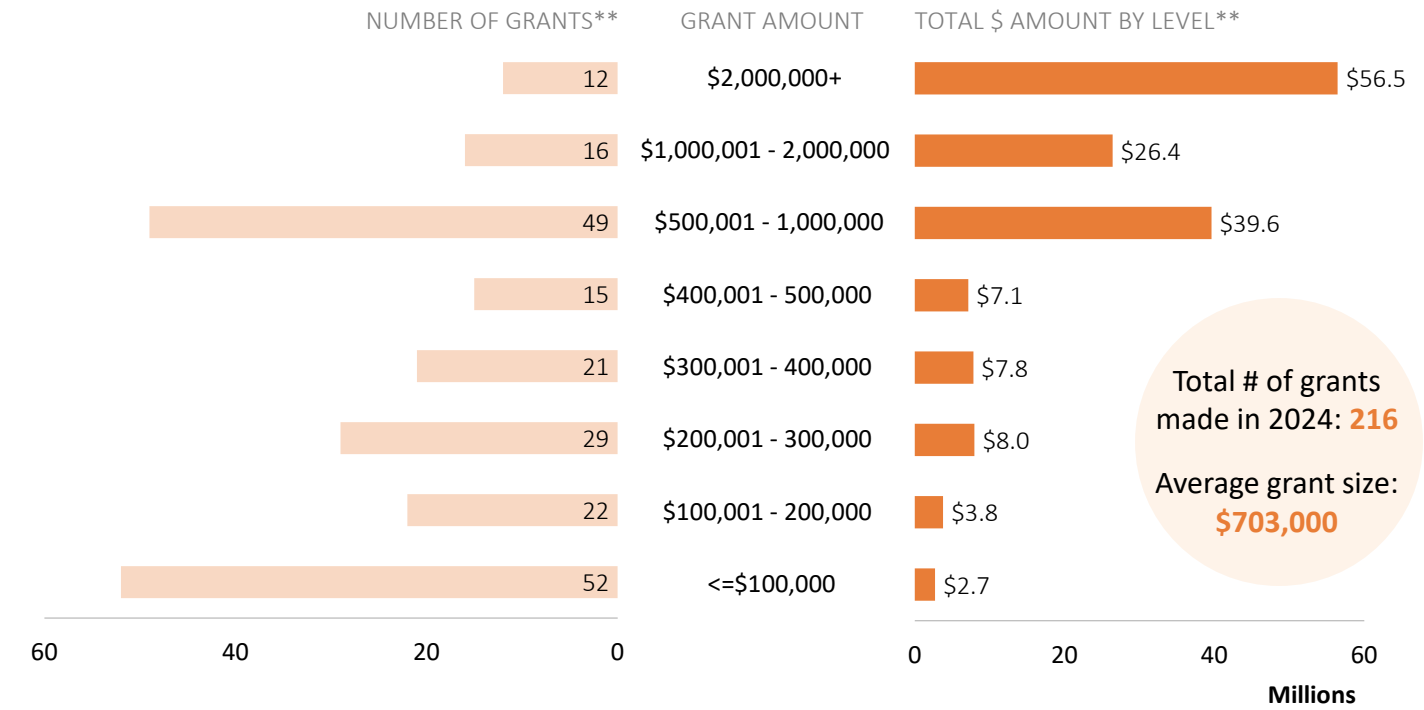
*Includes Flex Fund and Institutional Relationship and Opportunistic grantmaking

Cross-Portfolio Grantmaking
- Research and Development



Notes: The above does not include memberships/sponsorships or board/staff discretionary grants. This chart includes Direct Charitable Activities (DCA) and Flex Fund grants, while other graphs in this section exclude DCA (including the graph below).

Total Grantmaking in 2024 by Grant Amount



**Number of Grants and Total $ Amount includes Flex Fund grants but not Direct Charitable Activities (DCA), memberships/sponsorships, and board/staff discretionary grants.

2024 Grantmaking by Region of California

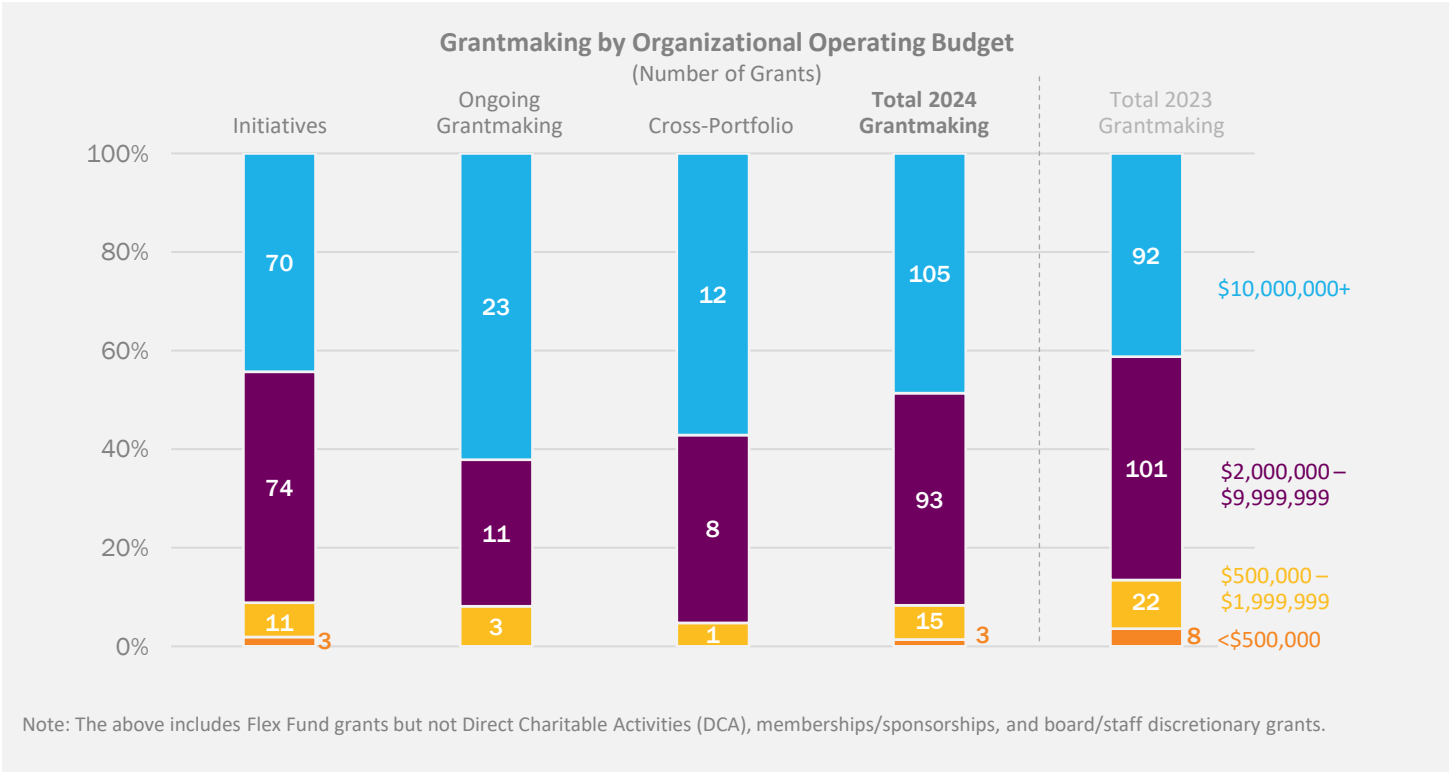
	2024 Regional Grantmaking	% of Total 2024 Regional Grantmaking	Active Portfolio* (as of 1/2025)	% of Total Active Portfolio Regional Grantmaking	% of California Population** (2023)	% of Californians At Or Near Poverty (2023)***
CALIFORNIA REGIONS						
Bay Area	$ 8,341,142	10%	$26,837,392	10%	19%	16%
Central Coast	$8,949,497	11%	$28,328,980	10%	4%	4%
Los Angeles Metro	$16,142,014	20%	$48,208,414	18%	27%	32%
North Coast and North State	$2,035,100	3%	$6,814,100	3%	1%	1%
North Valley	$1,061,000	1%	$1,094,000	0%	2%	1%
Orange County	$3,780,439	5%	$9,698,939	4%	8%	8%
Riverside and San Bernardino	$21,913,243	27%	$54,868,525	20%	12%	12%
Sacramento Metro	$3,512,150	4%	$5,381,850	2%	6%	5%
San Diego and Imperial	$3,770,400	5%	$16,127,850	6%	9%	9%
San Joaquin Valley	$10,971,043	14%	$74,556,925	27%	11%	11%
Sierra	$33,325	0%	$29,000	0%	1%	1%
TOTAL REGIONAL GRANTMAKING	$80,509,353	100%	$271,945,975	100%		

	2024 Grantmaking	% of Total 2024 Grantmaking	Active Portfolio** (as of 1/2025)	% of Total Active Portfolio Grantmaking
TOTAL REGIONAL GRANTMAKING	$80,509,353	52%	$271,945,975	58%
TOTAL STATEWIDE GRANTMAKING	$75,316,211	48%	$200,528,180	42%
TOTAL REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE	$155,825,564	100%	$472,474,155	100%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

*Active Portfolio is comprised of grants made in 2024 and multiyear grants made in previous years.
**California regions have grouped counties based on the geographic detail in the Census Bureau American Community Survey, on which the California Poverty Measure (CPM) research is based.
***% of Californians At or Near Poverty — e.g., 32% of Californians at or near poverty live in Los Angeles. Source: PPIC calculations from the Q1 2023 CPM research, as of October 2023. Based on the American Community Survey in 2019, with projections to Q1 2023. CPM poverty thresholds are basic needs estimates for a family of four that rents its place of residence, averaged over all Californians in the state or region. The CPM differs from the federal poverty line in that it takes cost of living into account. "At or near poverty" is defined as 150% of the CPM, which corresponds to approximately 250% of Federal Poverty Guidelines.

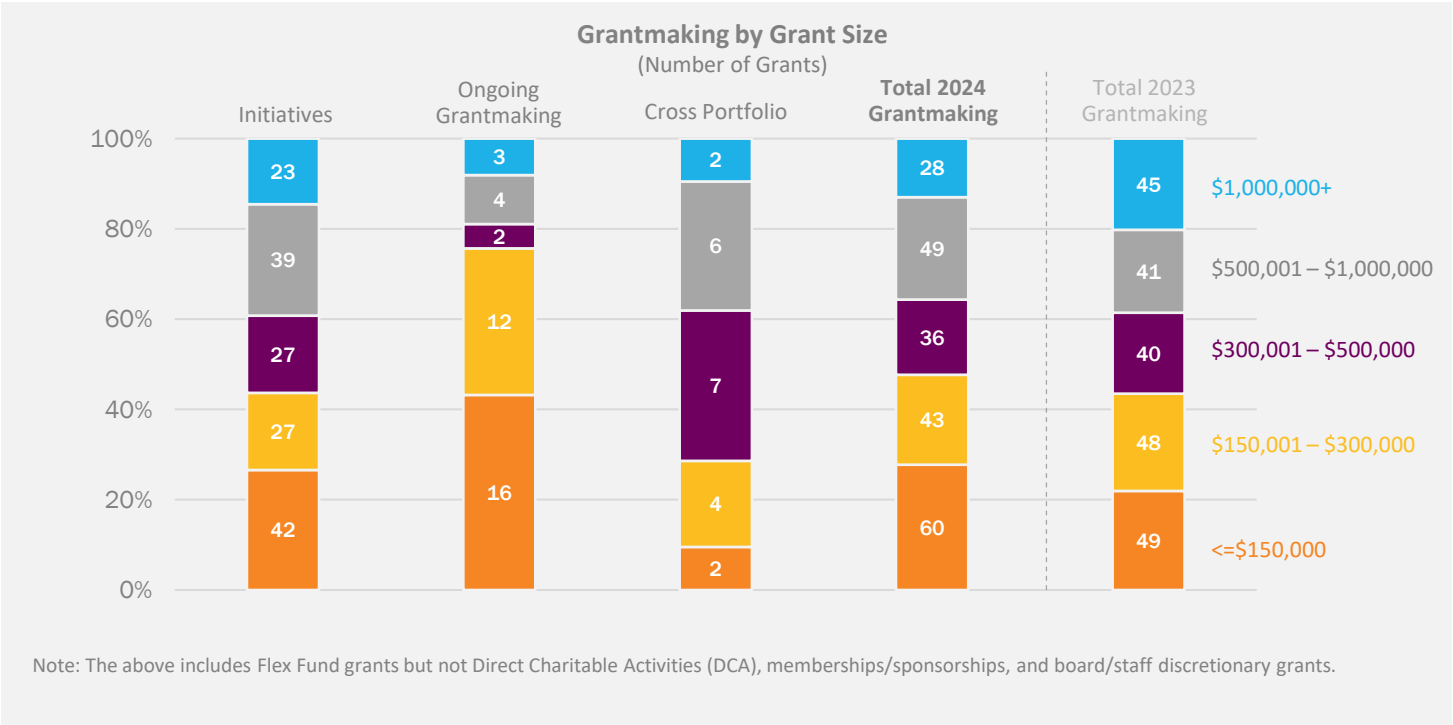
Operating Budget Size of 2024 Grantees



Note: The above includes Flex Fund grants but not Direct Charitable Activities (DCA), memberships/sponsorships, and board/staff discretionary grants.

Grant Size in 2024

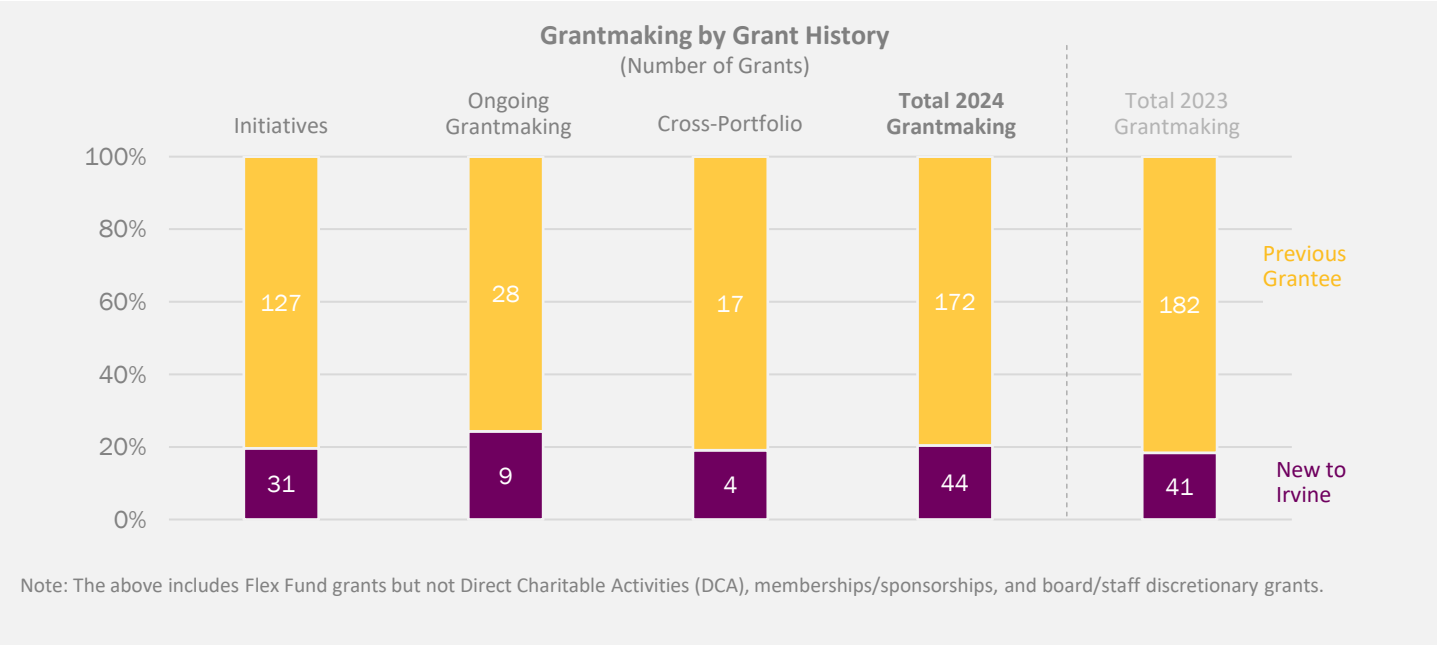
Our average grant size decreased in 2024 to $703K, compared to $789K in 2023, but remained significantly higher than our average of ~$420K prior to 2021. This is due, in part, to an increased number of grants made for less than $150K and from $500K-$1M in 2024.



Note: The above includes Flex Fund grants but not Direct Charitable Activities (DCA), memberships/sponsorships, and board/staff discretionary grants.

Previous vs. New Organizations to Irvine in 2024

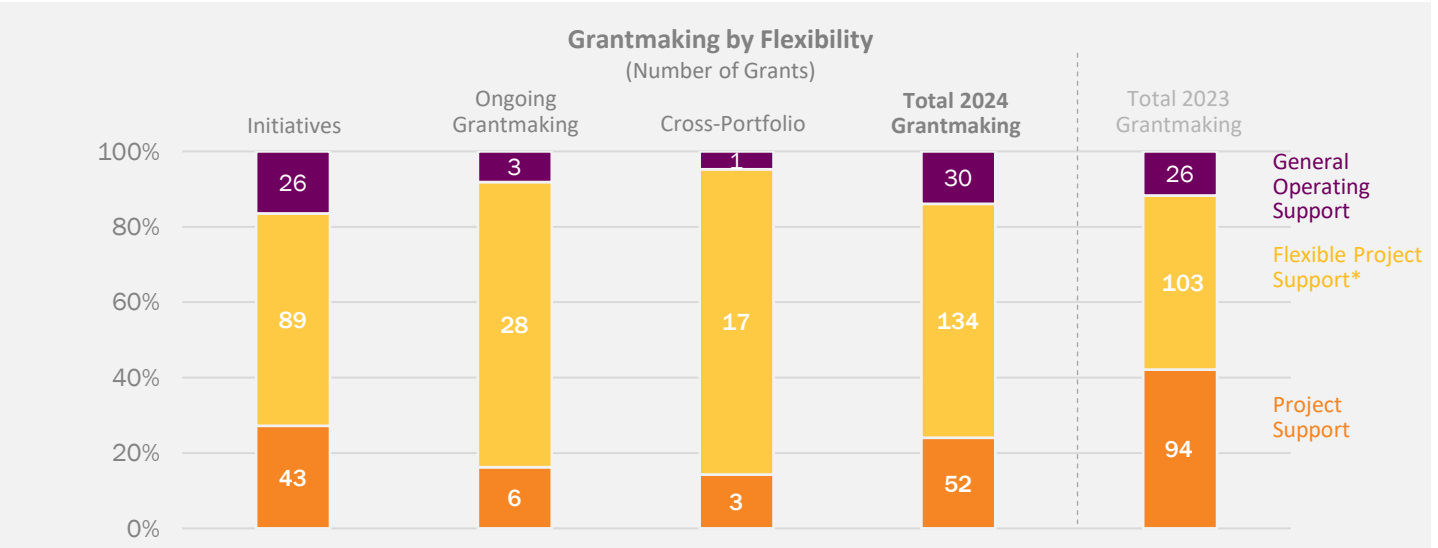
Our initiative model supports, typically, a set of core grantees over the course of an initiative, resulting in a significant percentage of our grants going to organizations that received prior Irvine support. We also engage new partners in our initiatives and cross-portfolio work.



Note: The above includes Flex Fund grants but not Direct Charitable Activities (DCA), memberships/sponsorships, and board/staff discretionary grants.

Types of Grant Support in 2024

We strive to provide funding that is as flexible as possible to support grantees to achieve their goals. We are not able to provide general operating support to some organizations, for reasons including when they are national or broad in scope, serve as fiscal sponsors, and/or regrant Irvine dollars. We provided more general operating and flexible project support than project support grants in 2024 (76%) compared to 2023 (58%).



*Flexible project support is funding that provides organizations with wide-ranging flexibility to meet goals and expected outcomes agreed upon during the proposal process.

Note: The above includes Flex Fund grants (under Project Support) but not Direct Charitable Activities (DCA), memberships/sponsorships, and board/staff discretionary grants.

THE PEOPLE AND CULTURE OF IRVINE

The James Irvine Foundation

People and Culture

We strive to find opportunities to embody our organizational values and foster a diverse, inclusive, and equitable culture at Irvine.

We are committed to addressing barriers to economic opportunity due to racial discrimination as an important element of our North Star. This requires us to reevaluate our practices and do ongoing work to ensure our grantmaking, partnerships, and internal policies, practices, and systems are aligned with our commitment to ensuring fairness in economic opportunity for all.

We continue our equity efforts within a broader understanding of identity and to foster an environment where everyone feels included and valued.

MOVING TOWARD A CULTURE OF BELONGING

Irvine's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Staff Advisory Committee relaunched in 2024 with a charter that includes "Belonging" as a focus. The DEIB Committee aims to move beyond inclusion to a culture that provides a sense of overall well-being by supporting fair treatment, opportunity, and voice for all staff.

Core activities in support of this are geared to:

- Promote authentic belonging, connection, and community across teams, geographies, and identities, with a focus on staff not in leadership positions
- Engage committee members meaningfully to share lived experiences that inform policies, staff engagement, events, and communications
- Elevate staff voices to leadership

DEIB Committee activities are optional and are part of the organization's broader effort to create a long-term culture that includes, welcomes, and supports everyone. The next page details highlights of 2024 efforts.

People and Culture

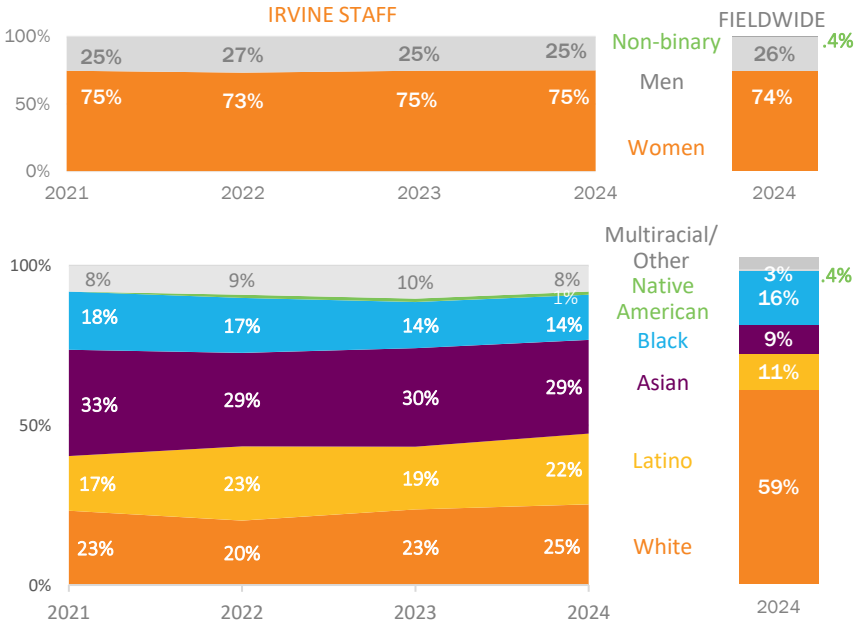
FOCUS	2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Education and Training	**Advisory Community of Practice** Irvine launched this supportive space for staff who manage people, recognizing the unique responsibilities of staff with positional power. The community aims to: • Foster meaningful discussions on best practices and emerging trends • Share expertise and learn from peers • Continuously improve advisory services **Organizational Learning Agenda** This brings timely and salient topics of relevance to teams to foster greater connection and coherence among staff. In 2024, we focused on solidifying our understanding of Irvine's racial equity aspirations, while fostering discussion about how advancing equity necessitates building a culture of belonging.
Inclusive Representation	**DEIB Committee** The staff advisory committee: • Includes 13 diverse members from across departments who opted to participate • Increased representation of staff voice • Advised on the annual staff pulse-check survey to improve understanding of our organizational culture • Piloted a pooled fund for staff to make grants to four community organizations • Began a new process to elicit questions and input from all staff before and during leadership townhalls **Leadership Team (LT)** Restructured to include leads from all teams and departments across the organization. The new LT has increased understanding, empathy, and mutual support of organization-wide and individual department priorities at the leadership level.
Internal Structural Improvements	**Policies and Procedures Review** Irvine worked to create a centralized repository for organizational policies, offering a framework to assess and refine policies to remove structural barriers and biases, and to ensure our commitment to organization-wide inclusion and belonging.

Staff and Board Demographics

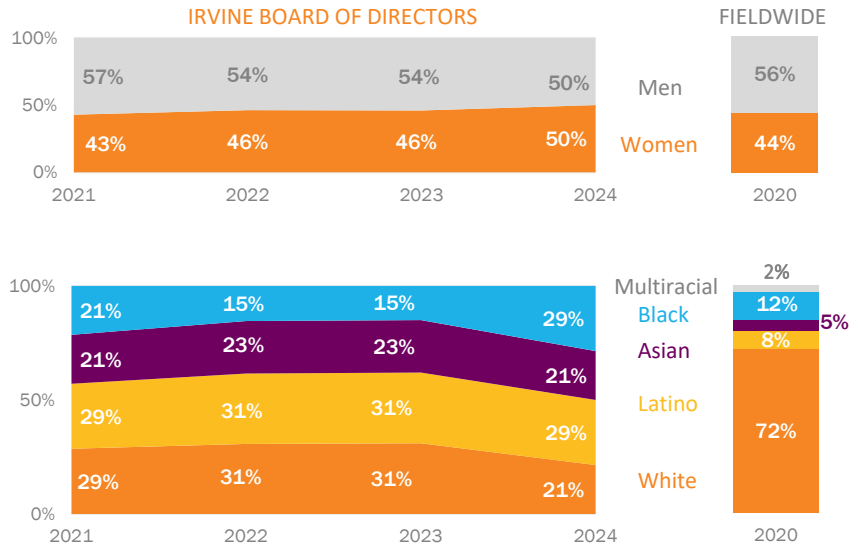
Below we provide demographic data on Irvine's board and staff. Sharing this information is optional and is used solely for internal education and awareness. The Foundation is an equal opportunity employer. All staff and board-recruitment decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other protected characteristic.

The charts incorporate self-identification data, where staff and board members were asked to identify their own demographic representation.

As of December 31, 2024, 31 staff were in our Los Angeles office and 45 in San Francisco.



Note: Fieldwide data comes from the Council on Foundations' "2024 Grantmakers Salary and Benefits Report." Irvine data includes staff as of December 2024. The graph excludes staff who have chosen not to disclose their data.

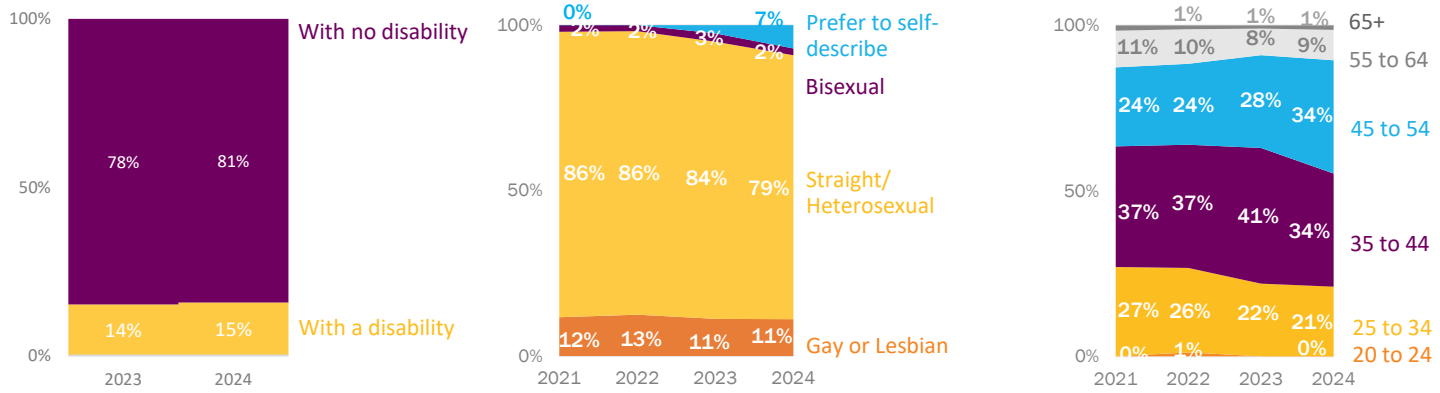


Note: Fieldwide data comes from the Croner 2020 DEI Survey sponsored by the Ford Foundation (more recent data is not available). Irvine board responses are captured from a self-identification survey from 2024. Irvine data includes board members as of December 2024 and includes Irvine's President and CEO, who is an ex-officio board member.

Staff and Board Demographics

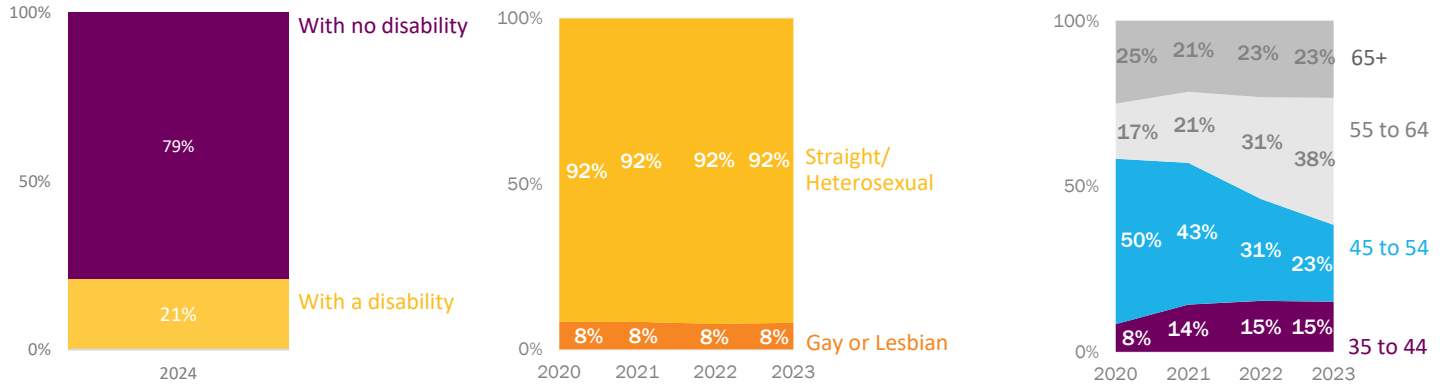
We use a self-identification method with our staff and board to collect data for demographics related to sexual orientation, age, and ability. Sharing this information is optional and is used solely for internal education and awareness. The Foundation is an equal opportunity employer. All staff and board-recruitment decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other protected characteristic.

IRVINE STAFF

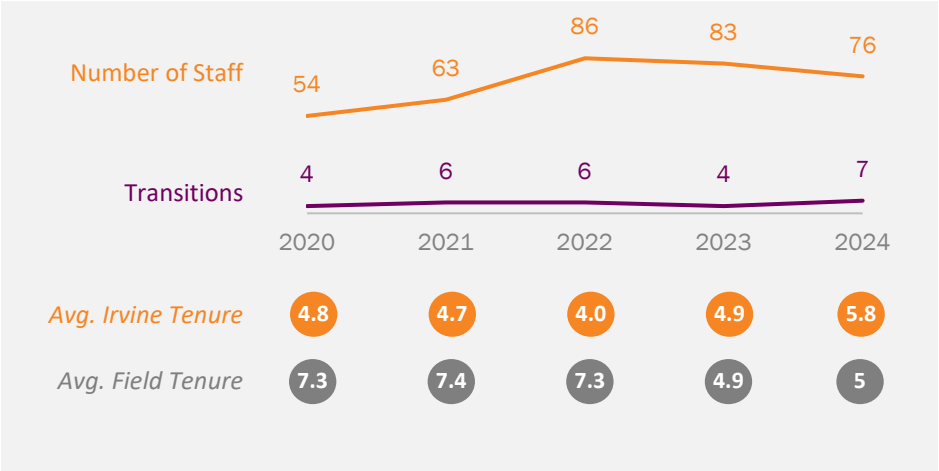


Note: Irvine data includes staff as of December 2024, and only responses captured from the staff self-identification survey are represented (ability data collected since 2023). The graph excludes staff who have chosen not to disclose their data or who were on leave at the time of survey. No fieldwide data is available for these categories.

IRVINE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Note: The above includes board members as of 2024 (including the President and CEO) and excludes any trustee who chose not to disclose their data. Responses for sexual orientation and age are captured from the board self-identification survey from 2020-2024 (ability data collected since January 2024). No fieldwide data is available for these demographic categories.



Note: Fieldwide data comes from the Council on Foundations, 2024 Grantmakers Salary and Benefits Report. Irvine data is as of December 2024.