

**The California Access to Justice Commission  
Eviction Tsunami Grant Program  
Funded by The California Endowment**

**September 30, 2021**

**Award Information**

**Centro Legal de la Raza**

**Award Amount:** \$116,875

**Amount to Partners:** \$7,000

**Partners:** Street Level Health, Causa Justa Just Cause

**Region:** Alameda County and Contra Costa County

By embedding a housing stability questionnaire in the unincorporated Alameda County emergency rental assistance application, Centro Legal has been able to identify and address threats to tenant housing stability early. Centro Legal serves extremely low-income majority monolingual Latinx communities (53%), as well as Black (16%), other persons of color (15%), and whites (9%) that have been severely impacted by displacement and instability in Alameda and the hard hit Contra Costa County.

Centro Legal de la Raza's partnership with community-based organizations ensures outreach and education to low-income tenants in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Information sharing will help empower communities to achieve their rights. Centro Legal and its partners will teach tenants and community advocates through know your rights workshops, and because of its expanded capacity will be able to take on more legal eviction representation. Centro Legal's proposed staffing pattern for this program reflects a multilingual/multicultural team of staff, ensuring access to interpretation services for all residents participating in this program

**Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto**

**Award Amount:** \$116,875

**Amount to Partner:** \$0

**Partners:** Nuestra Casa, Youth United for Community Action

**Region:** San Mateo County, Santa Clara County

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA) was founded by community members to enhance community capacity to address systemic forces that threaten low-income BIPOC families. It provides transformative legal services that enable diverse communities to achieve a secure and thriving future. Ninety-nine percent of clients are indigent, 63% limited English proficient, 81% Latinx, 5% White, 4% Black, 2% Asian.

With this funding, CLSEPA will serve San Mateo County and northern Santa Clara County: it will direct clients to emergency rental assistance, prevent displacement, and provide direct representation. It will partner with Youth United for Community Action (YUCA) and Nuestra Casa through monthly meetings to plan outreach events and share information. YUCA works to prevent displacement in communities, including by organizing tenant unions. CLSEPA will provide representation including to tenant unions, and will empower Nuestra Casa with critical housing law expertise. Through this project, CLSEPA will support immediate housing needs and represent organized tenant groups in mass eviction cases.

**Legal Services of Northern California**

**Award Amount:** \$65,000

**Amount to Partners:** \$62,350

**Partners:** Her Health First, Sacramento Area Congregations Together

**Region:** Sacramento County

Using other sources of funding to support its own legal services, Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC) is allocating most of its grant funds to its grassroots partners, Her Health First and the Sacramento Area Congregations Together (SacACT), to empower those organizations to provide housing services. Through these partnerships, LSNC will increase its capacity to serve Black and Latinx families. Her Health First will provide housing resources and referrals and education on rental assistance. Organizer SacACT will help with outreach and education, which will ultimately support its focus on homelessness prevention. LSNC will increase its partners' understanding of tenant protections, aiding the community's ability to track and identify opportunities for housing advocacy, and co-developing community-led solutions to problems that families with lower means are facing. Training will be conducted in person or through Facebook Live. The partnership will also provide a direct pipeline for referral to LSNC for rental assistance applications.

Following the lead of its community partners, LSNC hopes to eventually build the "people power" necessary to achieve community-led systems change influencing the City and County's fiscal decisions to reshuffle the power dynamic. Grant funding will foster a meaningful connection with partners for the future.

#### **Open Door Legal**

**Award Amount:** \$116,875

**Amount to Partners:** \$0

**Partners:** SF Housing Development Corporation, Daybreak, SF Latino Task Force

**Region:** San Francisco County

Open Door Legal (Open Door) offers an upstream solution that works to prevent homelessness before it happens. It provides services in the high-need, low-income Bayview/Hunters Point, Western Addition and Excelsior neighborhoods of San Francisco, where it provides services to 93% BIPOC, including 50% Black and 13% who speak Spanish as their primary language. Clients are very low income, with 43% earning less than \$15,000 year and an additional 39% earning between that and \$35,000 a year. All former Open Door clients automatically become members of the nonprofit, vote on organizational issues and choose leadership at annual meeting.

The grant will support Open Door's partnership with San Francisco Housing Development Corporation to host housing clinics; and, with Daybreak, which supports calls and door-knocks in high-need areas to raise awareness about legal aid for housing issues; and, with the San Francisco Latino Task Force for referrals to the Excelsior office. Grant funds will enable expanding drop-in hours, increasing outreach, and will foster know your right workshops. It also will facilitate the consumer law practice – necessary because the onslaught of past-due rent is likely to cause consumer debt.

#### **Partnership for the Advancement of New America**

**Award Amount:** \$60,000

**Amount to Partner:** \$0

**Partners:** United Women of East Africa Support Team, Karen Organization of San Diego, Somali Bantu Community of San Diego

**Region:** San Diego County

Partnership for the Advancement of New America (PANA) focuses on assisting refugees and immigrants in San Diego County, in particular Black African, Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian (“BAMEMSA”) communities. Project funds would be utilized to provide direct assistance to families in need of legal assistance to defend against evictions, including: Provide multilingual legal support and tenant’s rights in Arabic, Somali, Oromo, Pashto, Farsi; host drop-in clinics and Know Your Rights workshops; provide direct assistance and representation to keep families housed and avoid eviction filings; connect tenants to clinics, and to power-building and organizing campaigns; increase expertise and legal capacity to serve more people.

Partners will provide outreach into hard to reach communities, as well as support for language capacity, including in Somali, Arabic, Karen, Karenni, Burmese, Swahili and Kasigwa. With this grant, PANA will expand its own expertise to include eviction defense. In addition to formal training, to ensure professional competence, the advocate will have access to technical assistance and support from an experienced housing pro bono attorney, and a housing advocate at Legal Aid Society of San Diego.

**Public Law Center**

**Award Amount:** \$45,000

**Amount to Partner:** \$5,000

**Partner:** Latino Health Access

**Region:** Orange County

Of Public Law Center’s (PLC’s) 45 staff members, 77% are BIPOC and the majority are bi-lingual. These grant funds will primarily serve members of the Latinx community, helping PLC to expand past its family law partnerships with Latino Health Access to solidify its pandemic-related housing law activities. The project includes technology-based community education; assistance with negotiations; representation; community education; self-help materials development and distribution; rental assistance application support; COVID-19 declarations support; technical assistance for tenants’ organizations; and referrals to other units and services within Public Law Center and Latino Health Access to ensure clients receive comprehensive services.

The funding will make it possible for PLC to hire an additional attorney and provide critical services, effectively jump-starting its partnerships to provide housing equity and stability before state funding for homelessness prevention is available. The grant will also foster increased engagement of pro bono attorneys and law students.

**Thai Community Development Center**

**Award Amount:** \$116,875

**Amount to Partners:** \$39,256

**Partners:** Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, Bet Tzedek Legal Services, Eviction Defense Network, Neighborhood Legal Services of Greater Los Angeles

**Region:** Los Angeles County

Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC) provides services to vulnerable mostly undocumented and limited English proficient members of the East Hollywood Thai community, including trafficked victims, welfare recipients, the medically indigent, low wage workers, seniors, and domestic violence victims. Grant funds will be used to hire a Thai-

speaking law clerk, who will work with attorney staff to field eviction cases and provide clients with systems navigation.

As Thai CDC community members are Limited English Proficiency (LEP), the law clerk will “co-case manage” and bridge to eviction attorneys at partner legal aid organizations to ensure client language needs are met. Know your rights materials will be provided in Thai, Spanish, and Armenian. The law clerk will work closely with Healthy LA Coalition comprised of 330 social justice organizations. Eviction defense and other services will be offered in both Thai and English. The anticipated outcome for the project is to halt evictions and the BIPOC displacement in Thai Town.