



Inland Empire Advocacy Landscape Analysis Report

Executive Summary

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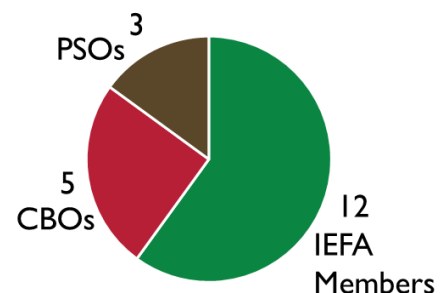
Background

In alignment with the Inland Empire Funder Alliance's (IEFA) Strategic Plan and mission to "Advance equity, advocacy, and systemic change in the Inland Empire by uplifting the region's assets and opportunities, and leveraging resources for impact," the organization established the Advocacy Planning Action Team (APAT). The APAT along with a research fellow set out to research and report on advocacy in the Inland Empire region as the first step towards developing a plan defining the potential role(s) IEFA and its members play in advocating for equity and systemic change in the region.

Methods

In addition to reviewing background documentation and advocacy resources, the research fellow participated in key IEFA meetings and conducted 20 interviews with IEFA members, Philanthropy Serving Organizations (PSOs), and Community Based Organizations (CBOs).

20 Interviews Conducted



Key Findings and Recommendations

Defining Advocacy

Most advocacy definitions revolved around policy advocacy and many IEFA member organizations did not have a formal definition of nor significant engagement in advocacy.

Recommendation:

- Establish a shared definition of advocacy and educate members on the range of opportunities for advocacy work despite organizational restrictions/parameters.

Theme 1: Collaboration and Communication between IEFA and Nonprofits is Critical

Interviewees called for the amplification of CBO voices and the need to act as an ally and partner by following CBO expertise when considering IEFA's advocacy and funding strategies.

Recommendations:

- Ask CBOs what support they need to fill gaps in funding and advocacy in the region
- Identify CBO representatives that can serve as advisors to advocacy and funding decisions
- Map out advocacy efforts in the IE in partnership with CBOs

Theme 2: Limitations of Philanthropic Funding Models in Supporting Advocacy

Systemic-change grantmaking is most aligned with IEFA's mission, yet many member organizations are restricted to funding direct-service initiatives that have more immediate and easier to track results.

Recommendations:

- Increase unrestricted grantmaking and fund projects for 2-5 years to support systemic change
- Use collaborative grantmaking opportunities to engage restricted funders in systemic-change work

Theme 3: Need to Find IEFA's Guiding Star

A critical step is to identify the topical area, population, and/or geographic area that IEFA will focus its initial advocacy efforts towards.

Recommendations:

- Involve CBOs in the decision-making process for the focus of IEFA’s advocacy
- Advocate for Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC)-led and -serving CBOs in the region who are oftentimes more engaged in systemic-change work yet under-funded

Theme 4: IEFA has a Potential Role to Play in Budgetary Advocacy

IEFA is uniquely positioned to influence budgetary decisions and bring more funding to the region.

Recommendations:

- Partner with CBOs to obtain federal grants requiring a promised matching guarantee
- Build relationships with state and county representatives to increase awareness of IE needs

Next Steps

Phase 1: Define Advocacy for IEFA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree upon a shared definition of advocacy 2. Determine a guiding star focus 3. Identify the types of advocacy IEFA will engage in
Phase 2: Build the Foundation and Infrastructure for Advocacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish infrastructure to increase CBO involvement 2. Create strategies and defined processes for engagement in each type of advocacy 3. Develop models of advocacy for individuals, member organizations, and IEFA
Phase 3: Create a Culture of Advocacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create resources and opportunities to educate members on advocacy 2. Integrate advocacy more intentionally and consistently in IEFA marketing, branding, and programing