We were delighted to have served as co-chairs for CA FWD’s Leadership Council during 2022. The organization’s mission—to make California’s economy and government work for everyone in all of the state’s regions—is one that resonates for us and the rest of the Leadership Council. This board and the staff of the organization are drawn from all of the regions of California and represent all of the wonderful diversity of this great state.

Loving this state means acknowledging its challenges along with its values and its beauty. California still has the highest rate of poverty when adjusting for our high cost of living. We still have significant inequities across ethnicity, income and region. But what makes this state great is that we do not shy away from addressing these issues, and in 2022, CA FWD helped to lead that effort.

We are so grateful to all of our donors and partners for working alongside us in tackling the different issues—2022 demonstrated a lot of progress! One of the 2022 milestones includes working with Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins’ and Treasurer Fiona Ma’s staff to design the California Dream for All program. This $500 million program is the largest homeownership down payment assistance program in the state’s history. It will target low-income communities and communities of color who have been locked out of the opportunity to create generational wealth.

Another important 2022 milestone is CA FWD was at the heart of implementing the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF). This $600 million program that we helped craft and pass in 2021 is a paradigm-changing economic development program that centers local priorities and brings people together to build communities and regions that are vastly more equitable, sustainable and economically thriving. This program was inspired by the work of our partners in our California Stewardship Network, and it has been so encouraging to see people begin to collaborate together in new ways, share power and develop shared priorities.

Even more important, perhaps than what we have done, is how we are committed to doing it. In a time of deep conflict between people with different perspectives, we have remained true to our calling of bridging these divides. Whether it is through the intergenerational policymaking led by the members of our Young Leaders Advisory Council or the work of our Leadership Council itself—of the last highly functioning multi-partisan groups in the country—we are and will remain committed to bringing people together to address the state’s most pressing challenges.

Because if we can do it here, in the nation’s most diverse and populous state, we can do it anywhere in the country and even the world. We hope that the tide is turning in our country, away from discrimination, rancor and narrow-mindedness towards inclusion, compassion and pragmatism. We are going to continue to work hard to be true to these values in 2023. Thank you again to everyone who has been a part of this effort, and for those of you who are learning about it for the first time, come join the movement!

Ashley Swearengin
CEO, Central Valley Community Foundation
Former Mayor of Fresno

John Chiang
Board Member, Apollo Medical Holdings
Former CA State Treasurer and Controller
ENERGY CALL TO ACTION

A PROPOSED SHARED APPRECIATION LOAN INVESTMENT FUND FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In partnership with the State Treasurer’s Office, and in collaboration with California Community Builders and real estate and municipal advisors HR&A Advisors and CSG Advisors, CA FWD developed the California Dream for All homeownership program, which was included in the legislative budget and signed by Governor Newsom in 2022. The program will be administered by the California Housing Finance Agency and is expected to be available to lenders in early 2023.

Here are some of the reports, events and programs we delivered in 2022:

- **INCLUSIVE, REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
  In May 2022, CA FWD released *Empowering Communities through Inclusive, Regional Economic Development*, a report showcasing the regional groundwork laid by communities and partners across the state.

- **ENERGY CALL TO ACTION**
  As California continues to decarbonize its economy and reduce overall emissions, ensuring the state’s energy system is sustainable, equitable and reliable must be a top priority of policymakers. In advance of the 2022 California Economic Summit in Bakersfield, CA FWD released our *Energy Call to Action*, which compiles key data and insights on the state’s energy system and provides a series of recommendations to ensure an abundant and sustainable energy future.

Throughout 2022, CA FWD partnered with non-traditional economic development organizations, including the Latino Community Foundation, Arts for LA and Californians for the Arts to host informational webinars on the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF), as well as networking events for cross-sector stakeholders interested in CERF. CA FWD also supported the Californians for the Arts annual Regional Conversations by connecting regional stakeholders to CERF tables.

From the beginning, CA FWD has leveraged our civic infrastructure and deep partnerships to create policies and programs that benefit all Californians. For 15 years, CA FWD has proven to be a leader in designing and influencing a broad range of programs for the State of California, as well as building in-depth reports and regional events aimed at influencing policy. As a thought partner to the state and a leader in program design and delivery, CA FWD works to ensure the economy and government work for all of the state’s regions and communities.
The California Dream Index (CDI) is a tool measuring 10 trackable indicators for economic mobility, security and inclusion; the data in the CDI helps hold policymakers, decision-makers, ourselves and others accountable for progress.

NEW MEASURE: HIGHER WAGE JOBS

Economic mobility is essential to building an economy that works for everyone. The availability of good paying jobs, however, varies starkly across California’s regions. CA FWD developed a new measure of higher wage jobs to examine economic performance across the state and help benchmark progress.

IN PARTNERSHIP
Using Data to Drive Equitable Solutions

Since its launch in 2020, the CDI has anchored the data behind various CA FWD initiatives, including equitable economies efforts, public policy recommendations and research reports. Throughout 2022, the CDI played an important role for partner organizations in our California Stewardship Network (CSN). CSN partners used the CDI to gain a better understanding of the unique challenges and needs facing their respective regions as they began to prepare applications for the first phase of the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) opportunity. Insight from the CDI provided solid, evidence-based findings for CSN organizations to show how CERF dollars could be used to minimize or eliminate disparities and inequities within their regions. CA FWD continues to seek out new avenues to integrate and expand the CDI, allowing for more data-driven solutions to unfold.

With key support from funders like the Blue Shield of California Foundation, the CDI will continue to serve as an accessible data tool for anyone to use.

“With key support from funders like the Blue Shield of California Foundation, the CDI will continue to serve as an accessible data tool for anyone to use.”

Debbie Chang, President and CEO, Blue Shield of California Foundation

HARNESSING DATA TO DRIVE POLICY

How The Number Of Higher Wage Jobs Varies Across California’s Regions

PERCENTAGE OF HIGHER WAGE JOBS BY REGION IN 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Median Higher Wage Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern San Joaquin</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kern</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>North State</td>
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<td>Bay Area</td>
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<td>Central Coast</td>
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<td>Orange</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redwood Coast</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego-Imperial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Data-driven policymaking is at the core of CA FWD’s mission to create inclusive, sustainable growth for everyone. Our policy and research work elevates key issues facing the state’s diverse communities and reflects a collective action agenda developed and advanced through collaboration with cross-sector leaders statewide.

CA FWD’s commitment to creating inclusive and sustainable growth is driven by supporting interrelated policy action areas that help all Californians prosper.

Throughout the year, CA FWD convenes work groups aligned with the organization’s action areas and composed of cross-sector leaders from throughout the state. These work groups are the main vehicles through which we advance our policy work. In 2022, CA FWD expanded our work groups to include California’s creative economy and cultivating regional collaboration around inclusive and equitable economic development.
The most important part of the Summit is that you’re joining policy, legislators and elected officials with other organizations that are trying to make change on the ground. A lot of folks don’t understand how to take advantage of what’s offered, so the regions-up approach really allows people to understand what’s out there... and where they can connect resources to rise up.

— Karen Woodruff, Senior Vice President of Social Impact and Sustainability, Wells Fargo
As part of our commitment to equity and inclusivity, CA FWD offers interpretation services to Summit attendees. At the 2022 Summit, CA FWD provided interpretation services in Spanish and Punjabi, two of the most spoken languages in the Kern County region. The interpretation services gave non-English speaking community members the opportunity to contribute to the conversation on the issues impacting their region and the state. For some, it was a transformative experience:

"I am so excited that CA FWD is building a bridge between the creative industry - a key economic contributor and source of innovation - and the economic development of California. It’s long overdue."

— Gustavo Herrera, CEO, Arts for LA; Co-Lead, CA FWD’s Creative Economy Work Group; Member, CA FWD Leadership Council

"We know the systemic barriers that can hinder progress and create an environment where women and people of color lack support. That is why I am happy to be a part of the California Economic Summit network, elevating solutions that will promote access to capital and also bring together diverse business voices to address tough issues facing California’s small businesses today."

— Josaline Cuesta, California Program Director, Small Business Majority; Co-Lead, CA FWD’s Entrepreneurship and Small Business Ownership by People of Color Work Group

INCLUSIVE, PRODUCTIVE SPACES AT THE 2022 SUMMIT

CREATIVE ECONOMY WORKING SESSION

Connecting Communities Through Interpretation Services

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"Hearing my mother tongue, Punjabi, being spoken at the California Economic Summit made me feel seen in a way that I have never been seen before."

— Raji Brar, COO, Countryside Corp.; Co-Founder, Sikh Women’s Association; Gubernatorial Appointee, Central Valley Water Board

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Lifting up arts and culture at the Summit fostered a multisensory approach to better understanding complex policy issues.
We're at a very different moment. This is our moment. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make things better in our state.

The Latino Community Foundation’s partnership with CA FWD was instrumental to engaging Latinos across California, especially in historically underserved communities in the state’s CERF program. By providing timely information, analysis and even matchmaking with regional partners, the CERF sessions ensured that over 100 grassroots Latino nonprofit organizations could take their seat at the table and have a voice in building more equitable regional economies.

CA FWD was instrumental in Orange County Business Council (OCBC) being awarded the CERF grant for the Orange County region. CA FWD’s CERF community of practice allowed many organizations from their respective regions to share best practices as we navigated this first-of-its-kind grant application process. CA FWD provided invaluable advice and expertise to OCBC that dramatically enhanced our process for understanding CERF.

Leveraging Philanthropy for Regional Impact

Philanthropy and the nonprofit sector continue to play a central role in bringing diverse and non-traditional economic development organizations to the conversations happening around CERF. nonprofits and other community-based organizations are voicing how CERF dollars can be maximized in their local communities, especially communities of color and low-income communities.

The James Irvine Foundation, with its deep commitment to ensuring Californians thrive, is one of the major philanthropic engines propelling CERF efforts. In partnership with CA FWD, the James Irvine Foundation helps to advance CERF resources that include an evergreen economic development educational hub, regional listening sessions, technical assistance and more. As a result of this partnership, many organizations that are less familiar with inclusive economic development can get the tools they need to make CERF even more effective in their communities.

We’re at a very different moment. This is our moment. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make things better in our state.
It is critical that we are engaging voices in this work who have not been engaged before as we think about the equitable future of internet connectivity.

The most invaluable contribution from YLAC and CA FWD is the opportunity to connect with leaders in different areas and serve as allies and force multipliers to assist in their work. The Becky Morgan Steward Leadership Program provides the opportunity for local leaders to deepen their understanding of regional and statewide policy issues, hone their decision-making skills and unite with other leaders to learn, grow and change California.

Members of YLAC bring a host of skills and interests that they are eager to share and utilize to create a brighter, more equitable California for all. Expanding broadband access is one of YLAC’s priorities; in 2022, YLAC worked in Tuolumne County, serving as a contractor on the Central Sierra Broadband Roadmap project, an initiative covering a five-county area. YLAC was responsible for developing outreach strategies to target and survey students (ages 13-18) and older adults (ages 65+), two populations identified as having significant challenges with internet connectivity. YLAC’s collected data and recommendations informed the final report which provides strategies and guidance to improve broadband services in the Central Sierra region.

The partnership with Tuolumne County offered YLAC members a tremendous opportunity to put their skills and passions to work, and demonstrated the positive and much-needed impact that youth and young adult voices can have in the public and civic sectors.

As noted by Michael Wiafe, YLAC alum and YLAC’s Tuolumne County project lead:

"YLAC has been an outlet for me to connect with young people in the policy space who share a mutual passion for making change. More often than not, young people tend to be the only voices in the room, so the opportunity to break bread and hear the great work others have been leading is inspiring and motivating. YLAC has been a great source of new information for me!"

The Young Leaders Advisory Council (YLAC) empowers and develops the voices of emerging leaders by connecting generations and addressing critical policy issues. Each year, YLAC develops and moves forward an agenda that aligns with CA FWD’s key objectives of racial and geographic equity, environmental sustainability and economic growth.

CULTIVATING
THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS
CA FWD is cultivating the next generation of leaders and equipping regional stewards to help achieve a more equitable future for California.

Our programs bring together diverse talent, representing all of California’s regions, ages and backgrounds, to elevate intergenerational policymaking and regional stewardship.

IN PARTNERSHIP
YLAC at Work – Closing the Digital Divide in the Central Sierra Region

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The California Forward Action Fund (Action Fund) is the 501(c)(4) advocacy arm of CA FWD. Known for the Top-Two Primary and Rainy Day Fund ballot propositions, as well as legislative wins such as the Community Economic Resilience Fund and the California Dream For All homeownership program, the Action Fund seeks to capitalize on these achievements to deliver even more victories for all Californians.

We have a reputation for convening “middle tables” that bring divergent schools of thought and approaches closer together to spur collaboration, out-of-the-box thinking and common-sense solutions that position all of us who love this great state to organize with—instead of against—each other. When addressing the complex issues of the regions, the most transformative path forward has rarely been to the right or left; rather, it is often through the middle. CA FWD will continue to hold the space and extend an open invitation to local, regional and state stakeholders curious and courageous enough to meet us in the middle where we can collectively move California forward.

In 2023, the Action Fund is quickly positioning our priorities to be front and center with legislators and legislative leadership, the administration, key political stakeholders and our regional partners throughout the state and will help craft legislative and budget language that further advances our organization’s mission and policy priorities.

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- John Chiang, Co-Chair
- Ashley Swearengin, Co-Chair
- Catharine Bank, Vice-Chair
- Caroline Whistler, Treasurer
- Sunita Cooke
- Jim Heerwagen
- Jennifer Hernandez
- Gustavo Herrera
- Jacqueline Martinnez Garcel
- Lenny Mendonca
- Nick Ortiz
- Pete Peterson
- Kastruk Rajapal
- Dave Regan
- Evan Schmidt
- Jeffery Wallace
- Micah Weinberg

OUR KEY INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS

- Access Plus Capital
- Aera Energy
- Asian Business Association Foundation
- AT&T
- Bank of America
- Blue Shield of California Foundation
- California 100
- California Access Plus Capital Foundation
- California Department of Housing & Community Development
- California Resources Corporation
- California State University, Bakersfield
- Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
- Central Valley Community Foundation
- Chevron
- College Futures Foundation
- Employment Training Panel
- First 5 LA
- Greater Bakersfield Chamber
- Half Moon Bay Brewing Company
- Health Net
- Heron Foundation
- Highlands Community Charter & Technical Schools
- Kaiser Permanente
- Kern Community Foundation
- Kern County Superintendent of Schools
- Mastercard
- Morgan Charitable Foundation
- Moulton Niguel Water District
- PayPal
- PG&E
- Sunstone Management
- The James Irvine Foundation
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- The Wonderful Company
- UC Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Valley Strong Credit Union
- Wells Fargo

IN GRATITUDE

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- Lenny Mendonca
- Nick Ortiz
- Pete Peterson
- Kausik Rajgopal
- Dave Regan
- Evan Schmidt
- Jeffery Wallace
- Micah Weinberg

OUR CALIFORNIA STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

BAY AREA
- Bay Area Council
- North Bay Leadership Council
- San Mateo County Economic Development Association
- Silicon Valley Leadership Group
- Sonoma County Economic Development Board
- Sonoma County Human Services Department

CENTRAL COAST
- Economic Development Collaborative
- Monterey Bay Economic Partnership
- REACH

GREATER SACRAMENTO
- Valley Vision

INLAND EMPIRE
- Inland Empire Community Foundation
- Inland Empire Economic Partnership
- Lift To Rise

LOS ANGELES
- Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
- Los Angeles County EDC
- UNITE-LA

NORTH STATE
- SCORE
- North State Planning & Development Collective, CSU Chico

ORANGE COUNTY
- Orange County Business Council

REDWOOD COAST
- Redwood Coast Rural Action

SAN DIEGO
- San Diego Regional EDC

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY
- Central Valley Community Foundation
- Fresno Business Council
- Stanislaus Community Foundation
- Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce

SIERRA NEVADA
- Sierra Business Council
- Tahoe Prosperity Center

STATEWIDE MEMBER
- University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources

OUR CALIFORNIA STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

- 3CORE
- North State Planning & Development Collective, CSU Chico
- Orange County Business Council
- Redwood Coast Rural Action
- San Diego Regional EDC
- Central Valley Community Foundation
- Fresno Business Council
- Stanislaus Community Foundation
- Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce
- Sierra Business Council
- Tahoe Prosperity Center
- University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources
DO YOUR PART TO POWER THE MOVEMENT
DONATE

California Forward (CA FWD) leads a statewide movement to improve government and create inclusive, sustainable growth for everyone in all of the state’s regions.

A 501(c)(3) organization, CA FWD, in partnership with the California Forward Action Fund (Action Fund), drives collective action to identify solutions that can be taken to scale to meet the challenges the state is facing. The organization is driven by the belief that the collective impact of regional solutions across the state will help ensure the economic, environmental and equitable prosperity of all people.

Learn more about the team behind the work of CA FWD.