2023 Finalist and Nominations

### Mujeres en Acción

While Los Angeles and the state of California focus on recovery and vaccination, domestic workers still sit solidly within the gaps. There are no official workforce development programs to help deal with the nearly 50 percent job loss rate domestic workers and day laborers experienced during COVID. Workers with limited access to broadband still struggle with a digital divide or language barriers, which has made vaccine access a challenge. Mujeres en Acción’s member leaders engage over 500 domestic workers through street outreach, workshops, advocacy campaigns, and weekly membership meetings, focusing on domestic worker leadership development and labor rights through skills building and self determination.

### Ready to Launch

Ready to Launch is creating a more equitable and inclusive staff pipeline in government and politics by equipping women with the opportunities and support they need to learn, grow, and launch careers. Ready to Launch’s progressive values are at the core of our work to build an equitable and inclusive staff pipeline in politics and government. Their democracy truly represents their communities, including representative staffers and representative elected officials.

They ensure women from historically marginalized communities have equitable opportunities to bring their voices, talents, and perspectives to this work. Ready to Launch works to elevate the stories of women who have already succeeded in these spaces, as well as provide free resources, training, and support to women who wish to launch careers in these fields. Ready to Launch supports healthy work environments by working to equip women with the tools and training they need to advocate for themselves, practice self care, set boundaries, and support inclusive and collaborative workplaces.

One of their programs is Ready to Launch Institute helps aspiring women leaders learn and grow by providing public educational programs that increase awareness about staff careers in government and politics and offering skills building workshops and other resources, for women from historically marginalized communities, to expand access to these career paths. These public programs are provided free of charge and are open to students and other emerging leaders.
Positive Results Center (Also Black Women Leaders of Los Angeles)

Positive Results Center teaches leadership and character development skills to youth in Black communities to promote healthy communities and prevent acts and exposure to violence. In 2020, PRC completed a 2 year grant from the Dept. of Justice, The Office of Violence Against Women, to conduct Trauma and Healing awareness for Black girls and young women who have been sexually assaulted or in domestic violence relationships, 25-30% of whom identify as LGBTQ. During COVID, PRC saw a drastic rise in community members contacting them for support, counseling, coaching, awareness training, intervention and direct hands-on engagement, while their public contracts and submitted bids for this work vanished during the lockdown [budget was regained and increased in 2021]. In order to continue to serve their community, PRC restructured its programs to a virtual platform and held weekly Trauma & Awareness Series on Zoom about violence, abuse, and issues concerning the community, as well as a Youth Series and ‘Real Talk, Girl Talk,’ a biweekly virtual workshop for girls only, age 13+. They also organize annually the African-American Youth Ambassadors program of Antelope Valley; and last year, they launched the Black Women Leaders of LA network for executive directors to be able to support each other during the pandemic and in the transition to remote work.

Center for the Pacific Asian Family

Center for the Pacific Asian Family (CPAF) specializes in supporting immigrant, limited-English speaking Asian and Pacific Islander (AAPI) survivors of gender violence find their unique path to safety and healing. CPAF is the only rape crisis center in California and the only comprehensive domestic violence shelter based program in Southern California to provide culturally-responsive and language appropriate services for AAPI survivors, which include:

24 hour crisis line: survivors of domestic and sexual violence receive immediate crisis intervention services including accompaniment to hospitals for forensic exams, safety planning, crisis counseling and case management, emergency shelter, referrals to medical and/or legal services, and on-going individual and/or group counseling. In 2020, they responded to 3,746 crisis calls in 22 AAPI languages and dialects—a 4.5% increase from the previous year, although still a 10% drop from the pre-Trump administration period.

Emergency and transitional shelter: safe and confidential housing, food, clothing and other necessities, counseling, case management and educational programs are provided to address the trauma survivors of gender violence experienced, and to ready them to graduate into safe, independent homes. 100% of 109 survivors and children graduating from CPAF shelters in the 2020 program year went into safe/permanent housing. Also, CPAF was selected to participate in LA City Mayor Garcetti’s Project Safe Haven, where additional 115 survivors and children were housed in hotels while shelters remained full during the pandemic.

Prevention programs: CPAF works with high schools and community-based organizations serving youth to educate them on gender equity and healthy relationships. In 2020 they trained 65 youth to become peer advocates in their communities, and their first virtual Youth Forum *Rise Up, Speak Up, & Step Up* aligned with Black Lives Matter had 120 participants.

Community Capacity building: CPAF also works to further gender equity and healthy relationships through Nonviolent Parenting programs. In addition to
running the programs, they also train other nonprofits and community members to run the program. In 2020, CPAF trained 32 facilitators. CPAF also trained 9,152 community partners/members to end gender violence in marginalized, hard to reach communities.

**Motivating Our Students Through Experience (MOSTe)**

MOSTe (Motivating Our Students Through Experience) is a community-based mentoring, scholarship, and college-access organization dedicated to ensuring that girls from underserved areas in LA County have the support they need to reach and graduate from college. MOSTe recruits scholars in seventh and eighth grades, and inspires them to set goals and develop a college-going identity. They place students in supportive relationships with professional female mentors who act as friends, advisors, and guides on the journey toward higher education and beyond. Students attend academic and personal growth workshops, as well as cultural enrichment and community service outings. MOSTe is determined to successfully graduate all of their students from four-year colleges, preparing them for professional careers and positions of leadership within their communities. High Schoolers prepare for college with workshops, readiness events, and regional and long-distance campus tours, meeting with mentors at least once a month. College Students receive continued social and academic support with routine check-ins, social events during semester breaks, job search workshops, and internship opportunities. After college graduation, scholars can join WOM:AN – the Women of MOSTe: Alumnae Network, to support each other as young professionals through meetups and special events.

**EmpowHer Institute**

EmpowHer is the only gender-responsive organization in Los Angeles County that provides a social emotional learning course during the school day in middle and high schools. Our programs serve to support girls in developing the necessary skills to boldly break ceilings, embrace the power of their voices, engage in social justice, and end generational cycles of poverty. EmpowHer partners with middle schools in underserved communities to deliver the EmpowHer Girls Academy Program to 7th and 8th grade girls. Credentialed teachers and counselors create a safe and nurturing environment where teen girls embrace their voice and talents, gain confidence and leadership skills, and explore college and career paths. They also deliver weekly in-school and after-school workshops in marginalized communities to deliver the EmpowHer Leaders Academy to high school-aged girls to support them in navigating adolescence and prepare for adulthood. Topics are explored through a social justice lens. Professional women volunteer as mentors, exposing EmpowHer girls to careers in a multitude of industries and build positive relationships which result in EmpowHer girls feeling supported and encouraged to set and achieve personal, academic and career goals.

**Los Angeles House of Ruth**

Los Angeles House of Ruth (LAHR) was founded in 1978 to serve homeless women and children, providing all services free of charge. Many women leave their abuser when they realize their children are also in danger, essentially choosing homelessness over abuse. LAHR provides these brave women and their children a safe and secure place to heal.

The average age of the woman they serve are 26 years old and the average number of children in the families they serve is 2.5. Although the only criteria they require of women in order to attain our services is that they currently are homeless, the vast majority of the women aided have been the victims of
domestic and/or sexual violence, and 97% of our clients are women of color. Approximately 76% of those served each year are Latino, 21% are African-American, and 3% are Caucasian.

**Unique Woman’s Coalition**

Unique Woman's Coalition (UWC) is committed to fostering the next generation of Black Trans leadership from within the Los Angeles community through mentorship, scholarship, and community care engagement work. They are dedicated to being a collective voice, centering the narratives and needs of Black Trans culture. UWC provides a wide range of professional services to meet the needs of Black Trans people, not just Black Trans women, including a referral service, which bridges service gaps and creates a stronger service network to achieve a healthy and empowered community, as well as a cultural competency training for healthcare professionals, which focuses on skills and knowledge to uplift diversity, understand and respond to cultural differences, and increase awareness of providers’ and care organizations’ cultural norms. UWC also offers a Legal Documents Clinic, which helps trans folks navigate replacement and gender-affirming basic legal documents such as name change and gender alignment on ID and Social Security cards, help with completing court documents for officiating a name and gender change/affirmation, assistance retrieving birth certificates, and assistance obtaining a driver’s license. Additionally, UWC helps Black Trans folks legalize and officiate personal Advance Health Directives and choose Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) to affirm healthcare and end-of-life wishes for trans folks and their loved ones who may become unable to make decisions due to illness or incapacity. UWC also offers a monthly community support group, Melanin Magic, which is specifically tailored to address the needs and concerns unique to the Black Trans community, and continues to host a yearly “Transgiving” dinner over Thanksgiving. They also provide a ready-to-wear closet for Black Trans and Non-Binary folks, virtual supportive spaces, and in June, they offered free self-defense classes. UWC is located in the newly opened Connie Norman Transgender Empowerment Center in West Hollywood. Our focus is on empowerment, it will not be a building filled with service providers, it will be a home for several Trans-led organizations including Unique Woman’s Coalition as an anchor org and also FLUX, a national division of the Aids Healthcare Foundation. The center will focus on building capacity, leadership and advocacy while giving our siblings office space to call home, it’s our version of a Trans-powered work space. This building is the first of its kind.

**#SheCanDoIt Program**

#SheCanDolt is a group therapy program for young women ages 14-21 with a mental health diagnosis who have endured some form of physical/emotional violence and trauma. The program’s focus is to help these young women build coping skills, resiliency, empowerment, self-advocacy and friendship, and create positive futures for themselves. The latest XX Fund grants provided direct support for the 8th and 9th rounds of our 15-week trauma-informed group therapy program for young women, referred from a wide range of programs (homeless youth, parenting teens, substance use, and behavioral health programs). With 8-12 participants in each round, facilitators promote healthy cohesion and support young women to foster a healthy self image and lift each other up. Participants demonstrate trust and vulnerability when they bring their struggles to the group and their peers offer validation and solutions. Personal growth due to the program is unique to each participants’ life circumstance and struggles, but overall, participants report reduced mental health symptoms, improved connection with their family,
better functioning in school, and a stronger relationship with their community. #SheCanDoIt also reinforces participants’ goals in individual therapy by helping apply their therapeutic skills productively in the group. As a result, #SheCanDoIt amplifies the impact of mental health services at CHLA.

**Essie Justice Group**

Essie Justice Group (Essie) was founded by Gina Clayton-Johnson in Oakland, CA, in 2014 with a mission to harness the collective power of women with incarcerated loved ones to end mass incarceration’s harm to women and communities.

Today, 2.3 million people in the U.S. are behind bars; 7 million children have an incarcerated parent. An astounding 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 2 Black women has a family member in prison. This means 1 in 4 women—mothers, wives, siblings, daughters, and grandmothers of people behind bars—suffer a debilitating financial and emotional toll as they strain to bring resources into their families, bear immense feelings of shame, and are isolated from political power. In Essie’s groundbreaking report Because She’s Powerful: The Political Isolation and Resistance of Women with Incarcerated Loved Ones, Essie found that 86% of women suffer significant or extreme mental health impacts when a loved one is incarcerated, and 63% report significant or extreme physical health impacts. Many women with incarcerated loved ones are also formerly incarcerated, leading to compounding impacts. Prior to the founding of Essie, women with incarcerated loved ones were not intentionally engaged as a distinct group to drive a decarceration advocacy agenda rooted in race and gender justice.

Essie is a member-led organization: our membership is comprised of women and gender nonconforming (GNC) people with incarcerated loved ones who are the driving force behind every facet of Essie’s programmatic work and the community to which our organization is accountable. Essie’s membership is predominantly Black women who are low-income: of our cohort graduates, 70% identify as Black, and 94% are women and GNC people of color. Over 33% of Essie’s members are formerly incarcerated.

To fight the harms of mass incarceration, and ultimately reform our criminal justice system and decarcerate California, Essie uses the following three strategies: 1) build community power using Essie’s model for Healing to Advocacy; 2) drive social change through Black and Brown women-led campaign advocacy; and 3) lead the field in shifting narratives to expose incarceration’s true harm to women and communities of color.

**Spirit Awakening Foundation**

Spirit Awakening is an arts-based nonprofit dedicated to helping underserved youth and children in the juvenile justice system realize their value and self-worth. Since 1995 we have been teaching the unheard the power of positive and productive expression through creative writing, visual arts, improvisation, and meditation.

As an organization founded and run by Akuyoe Graham, a woman of color (who was born in Ghana, West Africa), SAF exists to stand up against racism, inequality and injustice, all the while offering our young people tools and techniques needed to live in a more inclusive, just and safe world. Using the tools of meditation, self-reflection, creative writing, visual arts, mentorship, service, and leadership training, all of which have been guided by evidence-based research, SAF is able to accomplish our mission to help underserved youth build character and raise self-esteem.
**Young Women’s Freedom Center**

For nearly 30 years, Young Women’s Freedom Center has provided support, mentorship, training, employment, and advocacy to young women and trans youth of all genders in California who have grown up in poverty, experienced the juvenile legal and foster care systems, have had to survive living and working on the streets, and who have experienced significant violence in their lives.

YWFC has had a transformative impact for almost three decades – providing the space, support, and resources for young people to find safety and stability in their lives, raising up movement and community leaders, changing the narrative about systems-impacted young people, transforming programs, laws, legislation, public systems, and institutions to do less harm and be more responsive to our needs.

Annually, young people who complete our programs are up to 85% less likely to recidivate or be incarcerated again; Up to 90% of those who complete the program maintain employment and reach educational goals.

**Black Women for Wellness**

Black Women for Wellness is committed to the health and well-being of Black women and girls through health education, empowerment, and advocacy. BWW organizes innovative and relevant programs for reproductive justice, environmental justice, access to quality prenatal, maternal, and child health care, voter mobilization, and civic engagement. Previous grants from XX Fund supported the programming and development of Get Smart B4U Get Sexy (GSB4UGS) curriculum sections on sexual harassment, unfair discipline policies, and healthy relationships. During the COVID crisis, Black Women for Wellness released a digital wellness guide for women of color, “Being Well in the Midst of A Pandemic,” and has provided weekly meal and grocery distribution for a cohort of pregnant women. They increased their sexual health education program online for youth, and developed and issued the Birthing People’s Bill of Rights to support pregnant people and parents going through maternity during COVID. They have also been engaged in COVID Vaccine equity, including: creating and posting a website to share resources, updates, information, and videos from trusted messengers, conducting vaccine outreach and education via phone and text banks, publishing fact sheets on COVID vaccine mis- and dis-information circulating in their community, and working with ARC (formerly incarcerated folks) to conduct vaccine outreach.

As BWW increased its policy advocacy, political education, community organizing, and integrated voter engagement to uplift Black women and girls, it formed a 501c4, Black Women for Wellness Action, which has emerged as a powerful force in policy advocacy and voter engagement for Black communities across California. When the Los Angeles City Council voted to cut $150 million from its police budget, the Black Lives Matter organizations asked BWW to shape policy recommendations for reinvesting those resources back into L.A.’s Black neighborhoods. During the 2020 Census, in one of CA’s largest Black Census outreach campaigns, BWW and BWW Action sent over 100,000 text messages to Black women. BWW also published a popular nonpartisan Vote (Her) Guide focused on Black women’s issues including information about judges, ballot measures, and propositions. A year earlier, BWW and BWW Action co-wrote the bill and built a coalition of over 100 organizations to help pass the California Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act with the legislature’s unanimous support. The law aims to improve Black maternal health by requiring that all perinatal providers go through implicit bias training; improving data collection standards; mandating the publication of maternal morbidity data; and requiring hospitals to tell patients how to file discrimination complaints.
CA Latinas for Reproductive Justice

California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (CLRJ) is a statewide organization committed to honoring the experiences of Latinas to uphold our dignity, our bodies, sexuality, and families. At the inception of our organization, a group of Latinas concerned about the absence of Latina leadership at the state level collectively designed our organization to build Latina power across the state. Over the life of the organization, our work has started with policy change and grown to include strategies such as culture shift and community organizing. For 16 years, CLRJ has focused on policy advocacy as a strategy to fight for and protect access to reproductive and sexual health services. With the challenging threats of the political climate increasing, we recognize the need to build deeper political consciousness and activism within the Latina/x community on issues of Reproductive Justice (RJ) across the state. For this reason, we incorporated community organizing with a reproductive justice lens into our core strategies.

Reproductive Justice is about centering health equity for those most vulnerable members of our communities. While issues of reproductive health and rights are often relegated to the siloed issue of “Women’s health”, Reproductive Justice requires that we take into consideration racial justice, gender justice, immigrant rights, economic and environmental justice, among others. In recent years, this has also grown to include housing justice in our communities. Because one of the four tenets of reproductive justice is the right to raise children in a safe and healthy environment, the connection between access to affordable and secure housing and reproductive justice is clear. Our reproductive justice lens allows us a unique perspective that uplifts the needs of those most disenfranchised voices from within the Latina/o population. Although our focus is the Latina/o/x community, the policies that we fight for impact all communities and protect the reproductive rights of all people in our state. This approach reclaims reproductive health care as an integral component of overall health care and makes increasing access for all people a priority. Our overarching goal is to build a base of Latinas who are actively fighting for reproductive rights and justice locally, and statewide.

Womens Reproductive Rights Assistance Project (Wrrap)

Women’s Reproductive Rights Assistance Project (WRRAP) is the largest national, independent, nonprofit abortion fund. We provide urgently-needed financial assistance nationwide to individuals seeking abortion services or emergency contraception.

WRRAP assists women and girls of all ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, and cultural backgrounds who are financially unable to pay for safe, legal abortions or emergency contraceptives. We provide funds directly to pre-screened, pre-qualified health clinics and doctors across the nation on behalf of women in need of abortion services or emergency contraceptives. WRRAP does not ask for repayment of funds.

WRRAP fills the gap between public and private funding and what low-income women are able to afford. Our highly-trained volunteers staff our telephone hotline five days a week, working directly with over 700 clinics, hospitals, and doctors across the country, getting funds to women in need. Our affiliate clinics and doctors are members of Planned Parenthood, National Abortion Federation, Abortion Care Network, and/or independent health clinics or doctors. WRRAP proudly helped found the National Network of Abortion Funds (NNAF) 30 years ago. Today, WRRAP is the largest nationwide, independent, nonprofit abortion fund assisting patients in all 50 states.