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## **Inland Empire Community Foundation Launches New Office of Policy & Engagement to Focus on Regional Priorities Together**

Riverside, CA – The Inland Empire Community Foundation announced on Thursday, July 22, 2021, the launch of its new Office of Policy & Engagement at its virtual event entitled Policy & Engagement Launch: Leading Together in the IE. With over 300 attendees, this unique gathering brought together elected officials, community partners, and philanthropic leaders on the opportunities to build policy capacity to ensure policymakers hear the needs of the IE at the local, state, and federal levels.

“IECF is incredibly thankful to our elected leaders for sharing this platform with us to advocate for a better IE,” said IECF President & CEO Michelle Decker. “This is a time of celebration, yet an important moment for action. Of particular importance is making sure this work is done in partnership with our communities and with a lens of equity.”

Leading with remarks were Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gómez Reyes (D-San Bernardino), State Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh (R-Yucaipa), and Assemblymember Jose Medina (D-Riverside) who presented IECF with an Assembly Resolution.

“One of the critical areas for impact is directly felt through public policy. Policy that incorporates our shared experiences, our hopes for the future, and solutions to problems that are unique to the Inland Empire,” said Majority Leader Reyes.

Participants also heard from a panel of nonprofit leaders on how tables and coalitions are growing to help different sectors work together on policy issues.

Shared Karen Suarez, Executive Director of Uplift San Bernardino, “We’ve known for a long time that collaboration, coalition-building, and sharing resources are effective and powerful. What I

see different and exciting is the energy and passion for this region and the desire to work together.”

The second panel, moderated by IECF Board Member Dora Barilla, included State Senator Connie M. Leyva (D-Chino), Assemblymember Jose Medina (D-Riverside), San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Chairman Curt Hagman, and Riverside County Supervisor V. Manuel Perez in discussing the challenges and opportunities with the Inland Empire, and meeting the region’s growing needs for better jobs, housing and educational opportunities for all.

Moving this work also requires investing in regional partnerships and IECF is grateful to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. As a result, grants will go to the first cohort of organizations that were announced during the program. They are: Alianza, Autism Society of Inland Empire, BLU Educational Foundation, Inland Empire Community Collaborative, TODEC, TruEvolution, Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (COPE), Inland Congregations United for Change (ICUC) and Inland Empire Immigrant Youth Collective.

Said Julian Cuevas, IECF’s Director of Policy & Governmental Affairs, “Today’s event is just the formal beginning of this work. There will be workshops and strategy sessions announced soon as we prepare for the 2022 legislative and budget cycle. The goal is to have tangible asks by the fall, and pipelining them to our elected officials.”

For more information on IECF’s Office of Policy & Engagement, contact Julian Cuevas @jcuevas@iegives.org.

See the following links for video replay, photos and a full list of speakers:

Full video: <https://vimeo.com/578169959/4510c6e97e>

Photos: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/DzT3rmEuA241rR84A>

Speaker list: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/161677123629>

*Founded in 1941, the Inland Empire Community Foundation is the oldest and largest community foundation in Inland Southern California. We partner with individuals, families and corporations to help them achieve their charitable goals. Since inception, we have given out over \$100 million in grants and scholarships. For more information visit the IECF’s website at [www.iegives.org](http://www.iegives.org). Be a part of our conversation on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.*

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