

# Los Angeles Times

## Goal of foundation's grants is integrating immigrants into Southern California life

### Nearly \$1 million will aid such efforts as easing black-Latino conflicts and pushing workers rights

By Teresa Watanabe, Times Staff Writer  
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Aiming to accelerate the integration of immigrants into Southern California life, a leading California foundation will announce today that it is issuing \$900,000 in grants to help ease conflicts between blacks and Latinos in Pasadena, promote worker rights in Artesia, organize to bring supermarkets to minority neighborhoods and other initiatives.

The grants represent the first outlays in the California Community Foundation's five-year, \$3.75-million initiative to help immigrants learn English, improve job skills, increase civic participation and build trust with African Americans and other residents.

Foundation President Antonia Hernandez said immigrants, who make up nearly half the Los Angeles workforce and contribute 40% of Los Angeles County's gross regional product, were essential to the broader society's well-being.

"In order to offer a good quality of life for everyone, we have to provide pathways and opportunities for newcomers to integrate," she said.

Six of the grants were aimed at increasing cross-cultural collaboration to solve community problems. Hernandez said they reflected one of the foundation's aims: to help minimize conflicts between immigrants and long-standing residents.

Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice of California, a grass-roots alliance of faith leaders, is set to receive \$100,000 to build ties among evangelical Latino pastors, evangelical white ministers in Orange County and African American faith leaders in South Los Angeles. The Rev. Alexia Salvatierra, the alliance director, said immigrant pastors have shared stories about the wrenching impact of deportations on families, while African Americans have described the pain of violence among their youth.

The grant, she said, will help deepen ties beyond leaders and into the congregations.

In Artesia, the South Asian Network plans to use its \$100,000 to launch efforts to bring together Latino

and South Asian workers to press for labor rights. Hamid Khan, the network's executive director, said workers have reported problems with unsafe working conditions, sub-minimum wages, no overtime pay and other labor violations.

The grant will help break down isolation between workers of different cultures, develop multilingual material, bring in legal aid and launch an oral history project.

In Hollywood, the Thai Community Development Corp. will receive \$160,000 to help the polyglot neighborhood become an active player in influencing the massive developments planned there. The area's population -- which is 57% foreign-born and whose top native languages are Spanish, Russian, Armenian, Korean and Tagalog -- could be significantly affected by at least a dozen major developments in the works, including the planned Museum of the Motion Picture on Vine Street and Fountain Avenue, said Chancee Martorell, the Thai center's executive director.

The grant will help the Thai center organize the community to work with developers for affordable housing, open space, local hiring, protection of small shops and other benefits, Martorell said.

"We're trying to democratize the planning process so developers don't dictate the terms of it," Martorell said. "Many of our community members have no idea that they can be part of the development process."

Other major grant recipients include the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, which will receive \$120,000 for work easing conflicts between Latinos and African Americans in northwest Pasadena. The Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy will get \$200,000 to help communities develop supermarkets and jobs in South and East Los Angeles and Sylmar and Pacoima.

The YMCA of Greater Long Beach will receive \$120,000 to help increase educational opportunities for immigrant and African Americans youth.

In addition, four other groups will get \$25,000 grants each to increase immigrants' access to services. The proposals involve reaching out to Mexican hometown associations, Armenian refugees, immigrant and homeless youth and Tongans, Cambodians and South Asians.

"These people aren't going back," Hernandez said of the immigrants. "This is their new adopted homeland. To the extent we can accelerate their integration, we will improve the quality of life for all residents in our community."

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