

## Weingart Foundation to Address Systemic Inequity

August 12, 2016

The Los Angeles-based Weingart Foundation has announced that it will direct the full weight of its resources and influence to address systemic inequity in Southern California and will base its program and policy decisions on the goal of achieving fairness, inclusion, and opportunity for all residents of the region.

In a letter released Thursday, board chair Monica C. Lozano and president and CEO Fred Ali said the foundation regularly hears from nonprofits and community members that disparities in the region are "deepening and widening," that the safety net is eroding, and that "Southern California is increasingly divided into separate and unequal places." The letter goes on to say that "lasting change will require a collective and long-term focus that addresses the underlying circumstances that create and perpetuate *inequity*, the root of so many of [the region's] most intractable problems."

In fiscal year 2017, the foundation plans to focus all its resources on organizations serving low-income people and communities most impacted by inequity. To that end, it will make a number of significantly larger unrestricted grants in these communities, introduce new targeted initiatives, use program-related investments to put more of its resources to work, limit its support for capital projects to initiatives that bring new or expanded services to underresourced communities, and use its voice and convening power to highlight the issue of systemic inequity in Southern California and American society more generally. "By strengthening the nonprofit infrastructure within the communities we aim to uplift," the letter states, "we can change the dynamics of inequity and expand opportunities for generations to come."

"We recognize that inequity stems from the historic, long-term barriers to rights and opportunities endured by low-income communities, including those Southern Californians whose skin color, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, disability, age, sexual orientation, or zip code has prevented them from realizing the dignities and liberties all people deserve," Lozano and Ali write. "We have a responsibility to invest in the communities that have been excluded and underresourced, so they can realize their full potential. It's a matter of justice."