As many of you know, our ten-year Building Healthy Communities (BHC) campaign officially draws to a close early in 2021, and today, we find ourselves deep in planning for what the decade “beyond 2020” will bring in terms of our grant making. From the beginning of our Transition planning we have attempted to be thoughtful, inclusive, deliberative and strategic. All of us at The California Endowment are in discussions about how we will determine our grant-making strategy for the future, allocate our grant-making resources, and how we will deploy them in the decade to come. Please be assured no decision has been made at this point. Rest assured when we do come to that decision moment we will gladly share it with everyone.

Before I get into details about what you might expect from us in the continued planning year ahead, let me provide some very relevant context that will hopefully give our grantee-partners and stakeholders a better read on where we have been, and where we are headed at this point in time. There are three key points to make and understand from the standpoint of context.

First, since our early years as a foundation (we were founded 23 years ago, and I have been President & CEO for 19 of those years), we have become converts on the effectiveness and impact of “People Power.” When I arrived at TCE, as a new President, fewer than 20 percent of our grants funded advocacy, community engagement, community organizing, or even activism for health and wellness. Today, because of our work with BHC, that ratio has flipped to 80-20 in the opposite direction. It is the single most noteworthy change in our history as a grant-making organization: “People Power” has evolved from “nice-to-do” to a “MUST-HAVE” in pursuit of our health mission. Our Board of Directors has affirmed this direction, and you can expect us to remain consistent on this front as a core strategy in the years ahead.

Second, we want you to know the Board and I feel very good about, and are very proud of, what our grantee-partners have achieved over the last decade of BHC. You have taught us and changed this foundation a great deal when it comes to the principles of agency, inclusion, equity, voice, power, and prevention—and how these principles translate into effectiveness and impact. You have also taught us how a broad definition of “health” contributes to a healthier California for all. Over the past decade, BHC has generated two very impressive categories of positive
impact: local and regional impact from the 14 BHC sites (every single one of them, from Del Norte to City Heights and all the places in-between!); and, statewide impact on issues like Health4All, Boys & Young Men of Color, School Discipline reform, SchoolsNotPrisons, and Juvenile Justice reform. It is for this reason that we are in discussions about how to build the next decade of work from the incredible progress and foundation of BHC. You have contributed to building a platform of People Power driving a new California narrative for health and wellness, characterized by “Health Happens Here,” and “Health for All.” BHC has evolved for us as a strategy to an asset to build upon in the decade to come.

Third—and you can see this theme reflected in the Vision & Three Bold Ideas approved by our Board of Directors—we are so inspired by the decade of BHC that we believe its lessons and energy represent a glimpse into the kind of California we want to see in the future. Our Board, and all of us at The Endowment, believe that your leadership and hard work contribute to a healthier California—but there is an even broader dynamic at play here. Our nation appears to be experiencing its own California “Prop 187 moment” of exclusionary and stigmatizing politics—with an attendant brand of resurgent white supremacy and anti-immigrant behavior—and the value and importance of the California “For All” counter-narrative becomes ever more critical. The inclusive, “For All,” equity-driven frame is morally, civically, spiritually, and strategically correct—the work that so many of you do makes the power of equity and inclusion very real on the ground, in the neighborhoods, in the city councils and Boards of Supervisor meetings, in local land-use and school board decisions.

On occasion, when I have had the opportunity to attend a community advocacy or social justice event—say, for “Health 4 All,” or “Schools Not Prisons”—an event organizer at the microphone will shout at the energized crowd around him or her: “Tell me what Democracy looks like??!!” And the crowd instinctively responds with a rhythmic chant, one that gets louder and louder each time: “THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE!” Gives me goosebumps every time I hear it—the power of agency, and the power of the spirit of belonging, generated by leaders and communities most directly impacted by decades and centuries of being marginalized and excluded.

So, with all of this in mind, where are we in discussions with our Board of Directors about the next decade of work? And, what can you expect to hear from us?

**Key Considerations in Deciding What Comes Next**

First among the principles underlying our planning process for “Beyond 2020”: Wherever possible, we will build from the community organizing and advocacy capacity that has been built from the past decade of BHC work in place locally, regionally and statewide. You will NOT see a sharp right or left turn from us in terms grant-making strategy. After 10 years, we are inspired—not bored—with what we have experienced together through BHC.

In short, in the years ahead, we want to leverage the people-power platform of BHC into broader strategic reach in California. This means moving from 14 relatively constrained geographies into more and expanded geographies for greater impact. Again, no decisions on exactly how to
achieve this have yet been made—but we know we must reach more people and more community partners in California to build towards the “Health For All,” equity-minded state we all aspire to.

The Board of Directors has committed to a strategic design process that includes the voices and thinking of grantee-partners, stakeholders, and staff of TCE. During the next 6-9 months we will engage grantee-partners in a conversation about the right strategies to achieve three Bold BHC-informed ideas: People Power, Reimagining and Transforming Systems to improve health, and the achievement of a 21st Century “Health For All” system.

The first step of this process of “participatory design” has been completed. Six months ago, we asked you to respond to a survey soliciting your reactions to the Vision and “Bold Ideas” statement, and 1,200 of you responded and we Thank You for participating. Your responses affirmed what we have heard from so many of you in recent years, and they tee up the key, operative questions our board will need to wrestle with in the months ahead. These key themes and questions are:

- How can TCE build from the power-laden asset of BHC, and expand into greater geographic reach and impact in the years ahead?
- How can TCE continue to move more assertively away from a foundation-initiative framework and more towards an “infrastructure” and capacity-building framework?
- How can TCE support partners in advocacy for finishing the job of “Health For All” in California?
- How can TCE continue to broaden its definition of “health,” and assert itself more in areas of economic inclusion, economic justice, and affordable housing?
- How can TCE commit further to the infrastructure of power-building, youth engagement, and People Power: more network and alliance support, more leadership support, and more narrative/messaging/communications support?

And, finally, how do we accomplish the above-cited themes within the grant budget and spending levels we currently have? Clearly, the matter of philanthropic and funding partnerships in the years ahead becomes more critical; but the excitement of planning for the coming decade of work is tempered by the reality of some very tough trade-off decisions and grant-making decisions. We cannot promise or guarantee continued levels of funding support, but we pledge transparency and timely decisions that provide every grantee with a full-year notice of any anticipated changes in grant support.

In closing, on behalf our Board and staff, THANK YOU for the work you do, each and every day, providing constructive feedback during our process of deliberation, and most of all, for your leadership. You have taught us that in the pursuit of our health mission in California, “this is what democracy looks like.”

Peace and blessings to you.