

NEWSLETTER

2019 / Fall

OUR MISSION

Social Justice Fund for Ventura County promotes fairness, equality and human rights. We strengthen social justice by empowering community members to create lasting change.

OUR VISION

The Social Justice Fund for Ventura County envisions a world where each person lives as a part of an inclusive community that provides them equitable access to resources and opportunities to be safe, healthy and able to reach their potential.

OUR APPROACH

Social Justice Fund for Ventura County invests in community organizing – the process of bringing people together and helping them develop their voices, realize their power and collectively act to create real change in their lives and communities.



Beginning in 2020, SJFVC will pilot Social Justice Fellowships supporting grassroots organizations, focusing its future grants on emerging leaders. Page 2 has more details.

If you are interested in supporting this important new venture, go to <https://socialjusticefundvc.org/donate/>.

2019 Campaign "Vulnerable Children of Ventura County"

This year **SJFVC** was able to grant \$30,000 to six nonprofits who are helping vulnerable children throughout the county in various ways.



The 2019 Grantees are (more details on page 4 below):

- [Padres Juntos Promoviendo la Educación](#) with [Ventura County LULAC](#)
- [New West Symphony](#)
- [Friends of Fieldworkers Inc.](#)
- [Just Communities Central Coast](#)
- [CASA of Ventura County](#)
- [Future Leaders of America](#)

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Social Justice Takes a New Direction - Fellowships for Emerging Leaders

The *Social Justice Fund for Ventura County (SJFVC)* is evolving its granting philosophy to better serve the needs of and have a greater impact on social justice in Ventura County. Building on its history of supporting grassroots organizations and new leaders in the struggle for social justice, the SJFVC will focus its future grants on emerging leaders.

These grants will take the form of *Social Justice Fellowships*. *Social Justice Fellowships* will be granted to new leaders who have projects that result in actions that promote fairness, equity, and human rights, as well as strengthen social justice by empowering community members to create lasting change. The projects may involve research and data gathering but must include actions that make a positive and sustainable impact on inequities in Ventura County. These actions might include community organizing, advocacy, public awareness building, and other actions directly affecting social justice issues in Ventura County.

The evolution of our granting philosophy toward *Social Justice Fellowships* is to maximize the impact of our funding and to help emerging leaders bring new ideas and approaches to the issues we face in Ventura County. New leaders could be a student or community member who has a project or who is establishing a non-profit organization. This new leader, with limited experience in social justice leadership, is bringing new energy and ideas to the struggle for social justice in our county and has a subject matter expert such as a professor or an established 501(c) 3 to sponsor their project. The SJFVC wishes to provide the funding that will enable them to focus more on their projects by addressing any financial needs they might have. Our grantees will be making change and learning new skills to become new voices for progress.

The Board of the *Social Justice Fund for Ventura County* is convinced that this refinement of our granting philosophy reinforces our commitment to strengthen social justice by empowering community members. Strong leadership is needed to move Ventura County closer to an inclusive community that provides equitable access to resources and opportunities. We are committed to building leaders who bring people together and who help them develop their voices, realize their power, and collectively act to create real change in their lives and communities.

Social Justice Fellowships

The *Social Justice Fund for Ventura County* will award fellowships to individuals aligned with our core values:

- Grassroots community organizing with local agents of change in Ventura County
- Projects that mobilize communities to create sustainable, positive change
- Activities developing youth or new leaders while encouraging them to learn new skills
- Projects developing networks, collaboration, and community problem solving

Social Justice Fellowships will be awarded for emerging leaders. These awards will go to an individual or a small group of individuals. Here are the characteristics for individual leaders eligible for fellowships:

- A student or member of the Ventura County community
- An individual who has limited experience in leadership but who has the potential to become a strong voice for progress in our county and who can initiate concrete change
- A leader of a project impacting Ventura County with clear outputs and objectives, including action in the community involving advocacy, awareness building, or remedial action/service
- Have a sponsor who is either an established non-profit in Ventura County and/or subject matter expert such as a professor who is willing to be a mentor or coach for the project
- Have a clear financial need which if not addressed will impede the project's progress.

Grants for the Social Justice Fellowship will range from \$4,000 to \$12,500 given the duration of the project and the financial need.

All projects for consideration for fellowships will affect Ventura County and align with the **SJFVC** mission to promote fairness, equity, and human rights. *The Social Justice Fund of Ventura County* strengthens social justice by empowering community members to create lasting change.

Applications will be available after January 1, 2020 on the **SJFVC** website (socialjusticefundvc.org). The application process requires filling out a Letter of Interest, and if shortlisted, presenting in front of the selection committee.

Details on 2019 Grantees:

- **Padres Juntos Promoviendo la Educación with Ventura County LULAC**
Padres Juntos is under the umbrella of LULAC, and they requested support to cover direct costs of their year-round program. Padres Juntos aims to educate English-language learning families through personal and informative trainings in an effort to raise authentic voices of disenfranchised sectors of the community and advocate for systemic changes in the Ventura County School Districts. They work by linking parents to administrators so that parents become effective advocates of their children's education. Focus is in Oxnard, where 93% of students in K-8 are Latino.
- **New West Symphony**
NWS symphony intends to use their grant for their Lady Harmony Project, which provides Ventura Unified School District low-income students with music training and performance opportunities in year-round programs, allowing them to pursue their education and thrive in school settings. Children in grades three and up receive free instruments on loan and a minimum of four hours per week in music training. Benefits include neurological changes, which help address the barriers often seen in low SES youth. Objectives are also measured via improvement of grades, test scores, and attendance.
- **Friends of Fieldworkers Inc,**
Friends of Fieldworkers requested the funding of the CSUCI Encampment scholarship for a fieldworker's child, in addition to the funding of water filters for approximately 50 farm working families living in poverty. These are 50 fieldworker families living in garages or single rented rooms and the request is to meet basic needs of clean and accessible water.
- **Just Communities Central Coast**
Emphasis for Just Communities will be on their Talking In Class program, focusing on children in grades 6th-12, addressing stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination before they lead to hate and violence, by facilitating peer-to-peer training, which is one of the most effective strategies for impacting student awareness and behavior. Last year they focused on the African American Talking in Class and Talking in Class for undocumented students. These programs will be repeated, in addition to Talking in Class aimed at foster students and homeless, IEP students, and underserved groups.
- **CASA of Ventura County**
Casa VC will use its grant to enhance the support of foster youth as they become adults, (ages 18-21) and also for advocacy work for their volunteer Advocates. Measurable goals include safety, reliable transportation with insurance, success in college/employment, live within budget, and helping them make responsible choices. Additionally, a goal is maintaining volunteer Advocate relationships with foster youth to ensure they are taking the steps needed to continue into Extended Foster Care, medical care, etc.
- **Future Leaders of America**
FLA requested support of the Non-citizens initiative where funds are aimed at training and empowering Latino youth. They define vulnerable children as those children who reside in underserved immigrant communities, who lack parental involvement due to language, income, immigration status, and resources. There has been further marginalization of these Latino youth given post 2016 policy changes in our country. FLA hopes to continue to help youth and staff to advocate for green card holders and undocumented to have a stronger voice with local school boards.