

# California Poverty Association Anti-Poverty Advocacy Project Proposal

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The Other Anti-Poverty Task Force ([Gannett](#), 2015).

*This fictitious foundation proposal, developed around a real-world non-profit organization, requests a \$300,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to fund advocacy efforts aimed at reducing poverty in Los Angeles.*

## Executive Summary

The California Poverty Association (CPA) is requesting a \$300,000 grant to fund a two-year anti-poverty policy advocacy project (Project). The Project is aimed at convincing public policy makers to enact recommended anti-poverty policy changes. Approximately 1.7 million Los Angeles (LA) residents live in poverty, lacking stable sources of food, shelter or other basic needs, according to 2012 US Census Bureau reports. Earlier this year, CPA and two other poverty-support organizations jointly funded research - *How Much Could Policy Changes Reduce Poverty in Los Angeles?* Results show that new or enhanced anti-poverty policies could reduce poverty levels by 44%-69%.

Known for its success in advocating for just public policy, CPA plans to convince public policy makers to enact one of three proposed anti-poverty policy-change combinations by the end of the 2017 California legislative session. The policy-change combinations include tax credits, subsidies, and a new transitional job program. Expanded tax credits can reduce childhood poverty in LA by 7%, putting an extra \$2,000 in a family's annual budget. Increased basic needs subsidies would raise family food benefits by \$200 per month and increase the number of housing vouchers for affordable apartments by 174,000. The transitional job program will help 1 million poor, working-age LA resident find jobs.

## Organization Background

CPA originated in 1939. Today, CPA serves 1.5 million low-income residents in LA through its 200+ non-profit, human-service member organizations. In its mission to build a city of equal opportunity for all families and communities, CPA's 38-member staff focuses on reducing poverty, advancing upward mobility, and creating shared prosperity. CPA's \$3 million operating budget is primarily funded by government grants, long-term investment income, and individual contributions.

CPA provides management training and financial backing to help member organizations increase their capacity to serve and to effectively meet client needs. CPA also invests in research and advocacy activities, working with policy makers to increase public funding and support. In 2014, CPA led a coalition for worker cooperatives and successfully advocated for the LA City Council to create nearly 15,000 new jobs with worker cooperative business development initiatives. Also in 2014, CPA was part of the six-member working group responsible for developing the plan to make after-school enrichment programs free to all students ages five to sixteen in LA.

## Need

According to US Census Bureau 2012 reports, 1.7 million LA residents are poor, even after accounting for cash or in-kind benefits. By Census definition, being poor means there is not enough money to pay for food, clothing, shelter, and utilities for everyone in a family unit. CPA's passion and urgency for the Project is fueled by the fact that anti-poverty policy changes could take 1 million of LA's most vulnerable out of poverty. The recommended changes will be focused on expanded tax credits, increased needs subsidies, and a new transitional job program.

**Expanded tax credits.** Children account for 22% of LA residents living in poverty. Expanded state and city earned income tax credits could reduce child poverty in LA by 7%. The new policies would give families with dependent children up to 30% in earned income tax credits, which translates to an extra \$2,000 in annual tax refunds for families.

**Increased needs subsidies.** Each year 8,500 additional LA residents enter homeless shelters, and 1.4 million LA residents cannot afford enough food for their households. With policy changes, the number of housing vouchers increase by 50% (174,000), providing affordable rent on apartments, and the monthly amount of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits increase by 31% (an extra \$200 per month).

**Transitional job program.** In LA, 66% of those living in poverty are in the working-age population (18-64 years). LA's unemployment rate is consistently higher than the national unemployment rate, and its residents are out of work for an average of nine months at a time. A new transitional jobs programs would find jobs for out-of-work LA residents, paying the employee's salary for 30 months until the employer assumes the payments.

## Project Description

CPA is requesting a \$300,000 grant from Ford Foundation to transform research findings into poverty-reducing public policy. A newly-designated project team will be created to support the Project. CPA proposes the following plan for the Project to convince public policy makers to enact one of three possible policy-change combinations, by June 30, 2017, the end of California's 2017 legislative session. In addition, three advocacy messages and two visual aid deliverables will be created to support the Project. Experienced advocates will be retained to deliver anti-poverty policy change messages to California policy makers during the 18-month Project term. Funds from the Ford Foundation grant will cover hiring costs, 18 months' salary for a Project Coordinator, a one-month contract designer, and 18 months' advocacy costs.

**Create Project team.** (January 4-March 1, 2016) The Project team will consist of a newly-hired Project Coordinator and Jennie Samms (CPA board member and full-time CPA Advocacy volunteer), supported by Mary Newton, (CPA Policy Analyst for Human Service & Poverty Reduction) and Alisa Jones (CPA Director of Communications).

The hiring search for the Project coordinator will begin on January 4, 2016, and XYZ Recruiters will provide hiring assistance for a previously agreed-upon flat fee of \$4,000. The Project coordinator will join CPA's Policy & Program Department, by March 1, 2016, for at least 18 months, reporting directly to Elizabeth Morton, Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Research. The department's current project coordinator, Justin Stinson, will train and quickly acclimate the new Project Coordinator to CPA culture and mission-orientation. The Project Coordinator's projected annual salary, \$52,000, as calculated on salary.com, is competitive for an experienced Project Coordinator in LA.

**Create advocacy message and deliverables.** (January 4-February 11, 2016) Alisa Jones, Director of Communications in CPA's Development and Communications Department, will hire a contract designer to extract data from the research report, *How Much Could Policy Changes Reduce Poverty in Los Angeles?* The designer will be paid a flat fee of \$2,000 and be given a deadline of four weeks. She or he will develop three 30-second advocacy messages, each based on one of three areas of policy changes, and design a one-page fact sheet and a two-sided pamphlet. The verbal and print creations will be used for Project advocacy efforts.

**Retain and educate anti-poverty advocates.** (January 4-April 1, 2016) Mary Newton, CPA Policy Analyst for Human Service & Poverty Reduction, will retain three anti-poverty advocates to support the Project. Each advocate will be trained to focus on one of three specific areas of anti-poverty policy – tax credits, increased safety net benefits, or a new transitional jobs program. Advocacy fees will total \$216,000.

**Deploy anti-poverty advocates.** (April 2, 2016 – June 30, 2017) By April 2, 2016, advocates will begin working towards CPA's goal of passing one of three combinations of anti-poverty policy changes. The advocates will actively engage with policy makers

through the end of the 2016 California legislature session. The second half of 2016 will be spent solidifying support to prepare for the next legislative session beginning in January, 2017. During the six-month 2017 legislative session, advocates will work to ensure that one of the three anti-poverty policy change combinations is effected into policy. The Project Coordinator, with the assistance of Mary Newton, will assess advocate performance with internally-established incremental goals.

## **Evaluation**

Throughout the 18-month Project term, all CPA efforts will directly or indirectly urge public policy makers to enact one of three recommended anti-poverty policy-change combinations. The project will be evaluated by initial Project milestones and advocacy outcomes. If additional advocacy efforts are needed, the Project term will extend beyond 18 months.

**Milestones.** Project team in place by March 1, 2016, advocacy messages and visual aid deliverables ready for use by February 11, 2016, and anti-poverty advocates deployed by April 2, 2016.

**Outcomes.** Advocates to establish working relationships with one policy maker in each area of focus—tax credits, subsidies, and transitional job programs—by June 30, 2016. Advocates to secure agreement from three legislators by December 31, 2016 to present the anti-poverty policy packages to the 2017 legislative session. Legislators to agree upon which anti-poverty policy change combination to bring to vote by March 1, 2017. Legislators to vote to enact an anti-poverty policy change package by June 30, 2017.

## **Sustainability**

Aside from non-financial assistance offered by CPA Communications, Policy, and Finance departments, the \$300,000 Ford Foundation grant will fully support the Project during its 18-month term. And while CPA is optimistic about reaching the Project's end goal during the Project term, the organization is prepared to continue efforts beyond the initial term, if needed. If necessary, the Project Coordinator salary will be absorbed into CPA's operating budget, funded by government grants or individual contributions. CPA will also cover additional advocate payments with its Lobbying Fees budget line item. By mid-year 2017, lobbying fees currently allocated to another project will be available for use by this Project. Any additional funds needed to achieve Project success will be funded by future grants and/or individual contributions.

## Conclusion

CPA is requesting a \$300,000 grant from the Ford Foundation, critically needed support to ensure the Project's success. Right now 1.7 million people in LA do not have food, shelter or other basic needs. Children go to bed hungry, seniors sleep in unheated dwellings, and out-of-work parents rely on hand-outs to support their families. This Project gives LA's most vulnerable a reason to hope, helping individuals build lives worthy of that which is possible in our great country. Together, the Ford Foundation, with its interest in reducing poverty, and CPA, with its 70+-year history of advocating for just public policy, can effect *real* change.

Any one of the three recommended anti-poverty policy change combinations can dramatically affect the lives of so many LA residents. And when the policy changes are enacted, LA's civic-minded approach to reducing poverty will provide a model worth replicating in other US cities. The ripple effect of this Project could potentially reach millions of other poverty-stricken Americans. CPA appreciates the Ford Foundation's thoughtful consideration of this grant proposal.