

Color of Democracy Fund

Strengthening California by Building the Capacity of Communities of Color

As demographics shift in California, the longstanding disproportionate lack of philanthropic support to communities of color is having greater impacts, said Ludovic Blain, director of the Color of Democracy Fund.

“These communities haven’t had the scale and depth of philanthropic investments that they should have received, given their proportion of the population and the electorate,” Blain said.

The Color of Democracy Fund (CDF) — established eight years ago by five individual California donors — set off to build the power of communities of color in California by making sure they can have a stronger say on issues and policies in the state.

Over the years, CDF has not only funded community organizations but gone beyond grants to provide much-needed electoral tools and capacity building support. CDF works to ensure that grantees can collaboratively build the civic engagement infrastructure necessary to carry out their missions. With a higher priority on building long-term infrastructure than on immediate output, the fund sustainably supports successful organizations.

“We help build and support progressive infrastructure in communities of color, and we make sure organizations have the capacity to strategically collaborate,” Blain said.



Bolder Together is a report by the California Civic Funder Collaborative. See sidebar for more info.

The diversity of the communities that make up the majority of California’s population requires that the fund take a substantial amount of time to fully understand communities and the

infrastructures already in place within them. To successfully evaluate CDF’s work in a community over time, there has to be a clear understanding of the community to begin with, Blain said.

For grantmakers to have a meaningful impact in a community, they have to learn to listen to and engage with stakeholders at every level.

“We try to be a partner as communities figure out what they need to lead,” said Blain.



Ludovic Blain, director,
Color of Democracy Fund

California Civic Funder Collaborative

The Color of Democracy Fund recognizes that no one grantmakers can achieve the type of substantial community engagement that a group of coordinated grantmakers can accomplish together. The fund helped to set up the **California Civic Funder Collaborative**.

With “Coordinating grantmaking decisions without giving up autonomy” as their guideline, the California Civic Funder Collaborative is composed of the following eleven organizations:

- The California Endowment
- Color of Democracy Fund
- Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund
- The James Irvine Foundation
- The McKay Foundation
- Mitchel Kapor Foundation
- PowerPAC Foundation
- Rosenberg Foundation
- Tides Foundation
- The Women’s Foundation of California

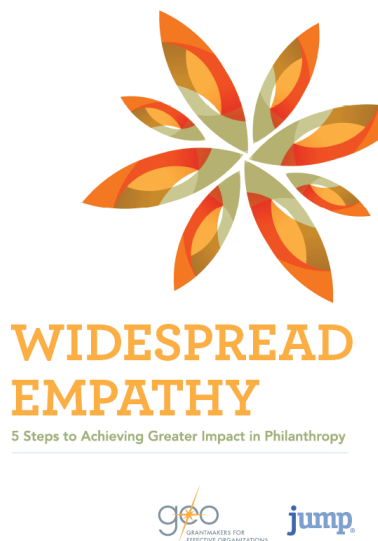
To read more about the collaborative, read the report [Bolder Together](#) (16 pages, PDF)

About **Color of Democracy Fund:** The Color of Democracy Fund (CDF) aims to promote a more just society in California by ensuring that underrepresented communities can fully participate in the political process. CDF supports the empowerment of communities of color and the increase of their electoral engagement by supporting and partnering with nonprofit organizations through provision of technical and financial resources, capacity building support, and access to electoral tools and strategies.

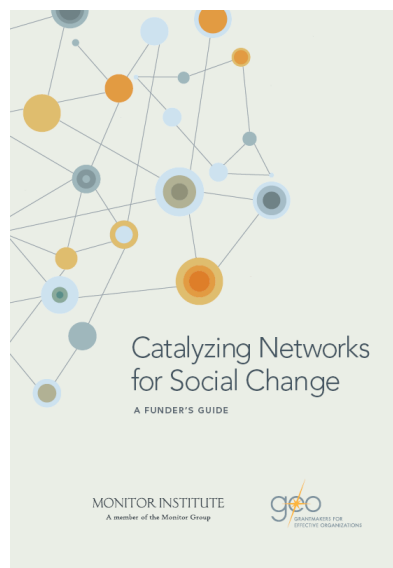
About **Ludovic Blain:** Ludovic Blain directs the Progressive Era Project and Color of Democracy Fund, working with donors to build progressive power of people of color in key counties in California. Previously he helped to direct the Closing the Racial Wealth Gap Initiative at the Insight Center, working with 140 economic and financial experts of color to develop and advocate for federal policies that would close the racial wealth gap. Previously Ludovic was the National Campaign Coordinator for the \$6 million 12 state Equal Voice for America's Families Campaign, and has led organizing and advocacy work for almost two decades on environmental justice, anti-racist strategic communications and other racial justice issues.

GEO resources that relate to the topics covered in this member spotlight:

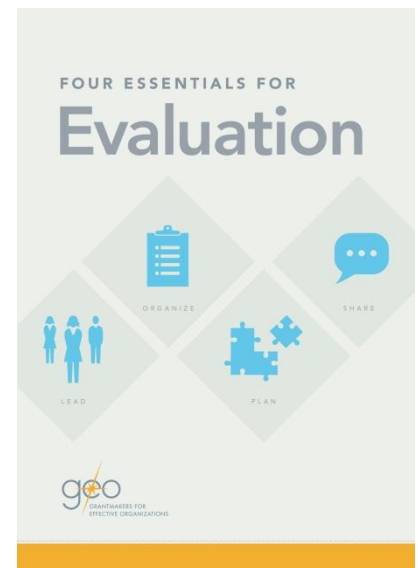
[Widespread Empathy](#)



[Catalyzing Networks for Social Change](#)



[Four Essentials for Evaluation](#)



Find these and other resources for grantmakers at www.geofunders.org