

Building healthy, vibrant
and stable communities
in Los Angeles County



With pro bono assistance from thousands of dedicated attorney and law student volunteers, we build foundations for social change and transform individual lives.

These days we hear a lot about the importance of investing in infrastructure. CDP invests in human infrastructure—the social and personal ventures that increase employment, encourage economic stability and strengthen a community's overall ability to thrive.

Community Development Project **We focus on THREE key areas**

Building Financial Independence

Financial independence is a fundamental component of vibrant and economically stable communities. When entrepreneurs operate successful small businesses in low-income areas, they revitalize the local economy by increasing commerce and creating jobs.

We provide transactional legal services and training to these small businesses and the community-based organizations that assist them, promoting job growth by focusing on programs that provide job training and placement for under-skilled workers.

Supporting Neighborhood Nonprofits

Community-based nonprofits provide food, shelter, job training and other critical social services that improve lives and stabilize neighborhoods. Poverty, homelessness and school or employment achievement are all linked to health, so we are particularly interested in providing assistance to nonprofits that strengthen the healthcare safety net.

We equip nonprofit management and boards with legal and capacity building assistance to maximize their effectiveness and impact.

Advancing Affordable Housing

Safe, affordable housing constitutes the backbone of economically stable and vibrant communities—connecting families to schools, jobs, healthcare, recreation and commercial services. Increasing access to such housing is particularly important in Los Angeles, one of the least affordable cities in the country.

Our Housing Opportunities, Preservation and Enforcement (HOPE) unit promotes the development and preservation of affordable and supportive housing throughout Southern California.

“Working with CDP, I had a rare and wonderful opportunity to use my skills to help the most vulnerable population in our city obtain safe and accessible healthcare.”

— David Hatch, pro bono attorney, Hooper Lundy & Bookman, P.C.



Strengthening the Healthcare Safety Net

Two million Angelenos, including about 200,000 children, are without health insurance. Many depend on nonprofit community clinics for access to free or low cost healthcare. But clinics are struggling with increasingly complex issues that affect their survival: closure of emergency rooms, state and local budget deficits, Medicaid reimbursement battles and uncertainties about the impact of health care reform.

Every dollar of pro bono assistance that Community Development Project attorneys and volunteers provide is increasingly important in helping community clinics offer more flu shots, diabetes intervention, well-baby check-ups, HIV tests and other primary healthcare services that so many need but cannot afford. Recently, for example, CDP helped Los Angeles Christian Health Care Centers expand their operations by acquiring a new site in a public housing project—assuring that hundreds more low-income families will receive the medical attention they need and deserve.

An Entrepreneur Emerges from Homelessness

Kika Keith was determined to produce and sell an organic chlorophyll drink based on her mother's recipe. Although personal challenges led her to a homeless shelter, Kika persevered, manufacturing and selling the drink out of a small-business-incubator kitchen. As sales and interest in her products grew, Kika asked Public Counsel's Community Development Project for assistance with protecting intellectual property rights and taking on investors.

Pro bono attorneys provided valuable legal advice that allowed the company, Gorilla Life, to successfully expand. Now employing seven people and still growing strong, Gorilla Life sells products online and at more than 40 retail locations throughout Southern California.





Legal Services Helped Build Affordable Senior Housing

Ward Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) has developed more than 217 affordable housing units, created neighborhood networks and spearheaded a variety of community-building efforts in the Crenshaw area. WEDC turned to the Community Development Project for help with its latest endeavor, closing the financing on the Rosa Parks Villas.

CDP volunteer attorneys helped review documents and negotiate the complex financial arrangements that made this project possible. With their assistance, WEDC finalized a commitment from investors and completed construction of the Rosa Parks Villas, providing 60 critically needed homes for low-income seniors in the area. Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker, President of WEDC, explains: "Because of our funding sources and nonprofit mission, we cannot pass on our costs by increasing rents as a for-profit developer could. CDP's ability to engage pro bono attorneys enabled us to create affordable housing for our residents."

"CDP is a critical asset to the community—the legal support it provides to neighborhood-based nonprofits greatly enhances our work, translating directly into more affordable homes on the market and fewer families living on the streets."

— Steve Clare, Executive Director, Venice Community Housing Corporation

Preserving a Gem in Venice

Located less than a mile from the Pacific Ocean, Holiday Venice is a unique gem of affordable housing in Venice, California. Constructed in the early 1970s, the development is home to 246 families. It sustains a diverse population in an otherwise gentrifying area of Venice.

When private owners sought to prematurely remove the buildings from the federal low-income housing program, their action threatened the continued affordability of the development and violated the state and federal rights of the residents. The Community Development Project filed suit, reached out to the press and marched in solidarity with organizers throughout Venice. As a result, CDP negotiated an agreement with the owners for a new 20-year government contract, preserving Holiday Venice as affordable community housing for the next generation.



In a typical year, CDP:

Provides training to **500 nonprofits and small businesses**

Helps **250 nonprofits or small businesses** with **350 legal aid requests**

Enables construction of **200 affordable homes** for seniors and families

Recruits **350 pro bono attorneys** from **40 law firms**



CDP's legal services have:

- Helped more than **600 tenants secure safe, affordable housing**
- Created permanent jobs for youth in South L.A. by forming a social enterprise offering graffiti removal and commercial painting services
- Structured **an environmental justice fund worth up to \$50 million to mitigate port pollution** in Wilmington and San Pedro
- Created sustainable jobs by helping to form a limited liability company providing environmentally-friendly landscaping
- Helped two community nonprofits obtain **\$130,000 in emergency-need funding**
- Brought job training and low-cost organic produce to families and individuals of modest means by establishing a farm-based social enterprise
- Provided research supporting a **\$10 million allocation of public funds for affordable housing**
- Established a membership association providing education and advocacy for owners and operators of food trucks
- Enforced the right of a **60-bed emergency shelter** to locate in the City of San Bernardino
- Brought a multi-million dollar package of benefits and health care services to South L.A.—one of the country's most medically underserved—by representing the community's voice in negotiations with a luxury housing developer
- Served as the only source of free legal assistance for child care providers in Los Angeles, helping to create and sustain businesses and nonprofits that support low-income children, children with special needs and their parents

Be Part of Public Counsel's Community Development Project

Join us in helping to build strong, stable and vibrant communities.

Annually, Public Counsel provides more than \$80 million of free legal services, including assistance to low-income clients as well as impact litigation and advocacy work on systemic poverty and civil rights issues.

Pro bono legal work provides excellent training, but more importantly, it offers you the opportunity to make a real difference in people's lives. To volunteer, contact us at:



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Follow our conversation about social change on social media.
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Whether you're a licensed attorney, law student, or simply committed to helping the most vulnerable members of our community, there are lots of ways to volunteer your time and expertise at Public Counsel.

- Draft or review leases and contracts
- Aid in contract negotiations
- Protect brands and intellectual property
- Teach seminars and legal clinics
- Train Boards of Directors
- Structure joint ventures, strategic partnerships and mergers
- Research affordable housing and land use policies to support advocacy efforts
- Enforce affordable housing laws through litigation