

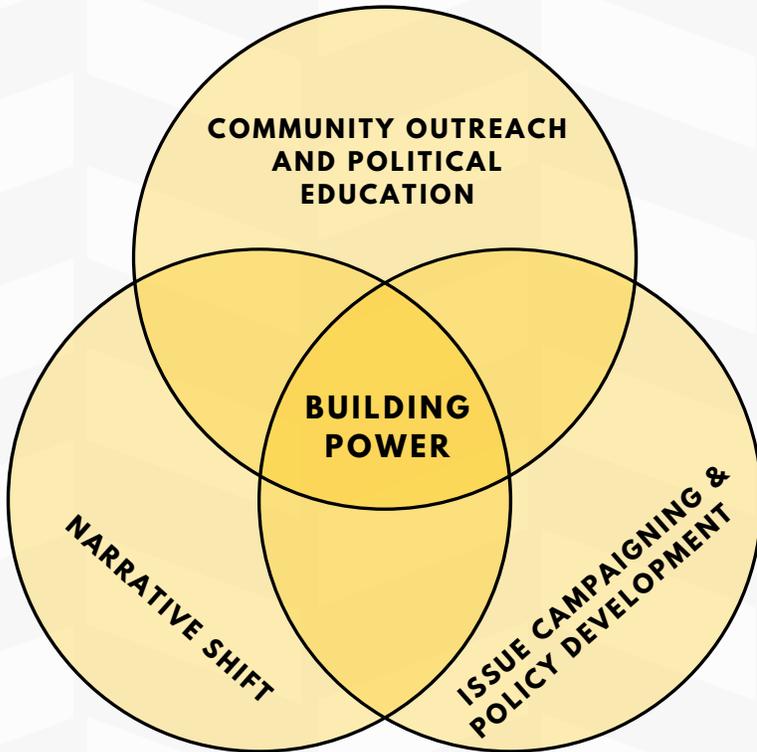
# ACCE INSTITUTE IN 2020



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

# WHO WE ARE

The mission of the ACCE Institute is to improve the lives of California's traditionally underserved residents, including communities of color, low-income and working families, and the undocumented population, by carrying out work that fosters deep, indigenous leadership development, policy creation, robust civic participation, and broad community empowerment.



## 2020 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In 2020, ACCE Institute contacted a total of 38,894 voters. In the March primaries, ACCE contacted over 16,000 voters via text, calls and doors to encourage them to vote and in San Diego during the general election we contacted nearly 8,000 voters.

To educate people about the census and encourage them to participate in it, ACCE Institute contacted 12,678 voters between February and October. And in Los Angeles we participated in a program called Stay Housed LA where we called nearly 1,700 voters to inform them about their rights under the new county-wide renter protection laws.

# TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

ACCE's training programs seek to develop the organizing skills and social and political understanding of our members for the purposes of better informing their strategies and campaigns to change the systems that impact their daily lives. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, In 2020 we launched a new online training program that over the course of six sessions focused on the history of US housing discrimination and the work ACCE does to change it. Our goal is to train 60 to 75 new ACCE members from the five regions ACCE operates in, transforming them from concerned community members to well trained volunteer organizers.

In addition to issue analysis and organizing skills the communications and training teams have begun to hold monthly spokesperson trainings, offering opportunities for ACCE members to practice sharing their stories and the solutions they believe will have a meaningful impact on their lives and the lives of others like them.

## OAKLAND YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

In summer 2020, Oakland ACCE piloted a new Youth Leadership Academy - a 5 week pilot program exploring ACCE's ability to train up youth organizers in our organizing model. 8 Oakland youth from ACCE's membership base worked with ACCE 3 days each week for 5 weeks. Due to COVID, we were unable to engage the youth in our traditional community outreach/door-knocking work, but held interactive trainings on topics such as Why We Organize, Housing Justice 101, Housing Policies, Power Mapping, and Direct Action. Each training included a skills and community engagement component, where youth learned and refined their version of an organizing rap, recruited tenants to attend trainings about their legal rights, lobbied local and state legislators, worked with ACCE tenant leaders to plan and execute direct actions, and created a video for the Cancel Rent campaign.



# HOUSING JUSTICE

In response to a raging pandemic that left millions of Californians out of work and unable to pay rent, ACCE Institute launched several full scale housing justice campaigns to keep Californians housed and informed of their rights. At the beginning of the pandemic, through an aggressive social media campaign, **ACCE gained pledges from over 75,000 tenants unable to pay rent to join the campaign** to urge state legislators to pass an eviction moratorium and rent forgiveness. This also led to the formation of a statewide facebook group of nearly 700 tenants that live beyond our traditional geographies where tenants were trained on how to organize, what their rights under state law are, and were provided a space for mutual aid, networking and community.

By the Fall of 2020, after the California Judicial Council's Rule 1 expired and the state legislature passed a patchwork extension on eviction protections that left thousands of tenants at risk of eviction, ACCE sought to create a statewide eviction defense program called the Keep Families Home campaign. Through radio ads, aggressive social media programming, a mass texting program, a new website, and legal aid programming, ACCE Institute educated tenants across California on their rights, provided free legal support, and most importantly taught them how to organize to keep themselves and their neighbors housed.

*"Through ACCE, I learned that I have power. I learned that there is power in numbers. I learned that when we lose our fear, they lose their power. I never used to care about politics - I had never even been to a city council meeting before - but when the pandemic hit and I lost my job and my family became at risk of becoming homeless, I knew I had to do something. ACCE taught me my rights, and taught me how to understand the laws that protect me. I never thought I would be an activist before, but ACCE has made me a fighter - they helped me find my calling and I'm never going back."*

- Patricia Mendoza,  
ACCE Member San Diego



# COVID RELIEF

As the pandemic hit and our communities were under distress from many angles, ACCE offices built out multi-pronged strategies to meet the overwhelming needs of our base. To address the great need for education and understanding in a constantly shifting political and legal landscape, across all of our offices, **ACCE held over 150 know your rights trainings and legal clinics. Nearly 3,000 participants attended.**

In addition, given the dire need for financial assistance in undocumented communities where stimulus checks and traditional unemployment wasn't being accessed, Through direct distribution or connecting tenants to state or private funds, **ACCE offices helped 433 undocumented families secure financial assistance, with a total of \$221,500 distributed.**

Blanca Retano is a long time Richmond ACCE member/leader. She has 6 people living in her household. As a result of the pandemic her husband lost hours at work. He works as a chef at a local restaurant. Blanca's husband now works only 12 hours a week. Neither Blanca or her husband qualified for unemployment or the stimulus payments. Blanca borrowed money to pay April's rent and at that time owed \$711 for PG&E. She used the direct financial assistance to buy food, pay rent and pay part of her PG&E bill.



While our traditional model of door knocking was no longer safe given the pandemic, ACCE still left informational know your rights flyers to tenants at risk of eviction at over 15,000 doors across the state. In Sacramento, San Diego and Los Angeles, ACCE sent letters to landlords, and city and state officials on behalf of tenants who either faced language barriers communicating with their landlord or were being harassed.



"ACCE is about the business of building an undeniable force for progressive change. We seek out and empower impacted people, because we know people power is the only power that has ever changed the world for the better."

**CHRISTINA LIVINGSTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**