

Our Priorities

# Healing Justice

Healing justice is as much about the right to well-being as it is about building power.

## Overview

Since 1976, **Liberty Hill Foundation** has leveraged the power of community partners, individual donors, foundation partners, and other allies to advance social justice and equity.

As we witness the ongoing health and economic crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the equally urgent global attention to police brutality, Los Angeles County is being forced to reckon with the structural racism that has existed in this county since its inception.

How we respond in this critical moment will have a significant and long-term impact on the communities most affected by the multiple crises we are living through today.

## Building Power Through Healing Justice

As organizations and movement leaders face a new set of obstacles requiring them to exercise great ingenuity, commitment, and resilience, **Liberty Hill is making a commitment to Healing Justice as a key component of our work.**

**Healing Justice** is a movement that aims to address widespread generational trauma by responding with traditional holistic healing practices and building new, more inclusive ones. It is rooted in the work of The Kindred Southern Healing Justice Collective and individuals such as Cara Page who elevated this framework and the need for healing justice as integral to movement building.

The purpose of our new Healing Justice peer convenings is to create space for organizations to come together, build community, share their growing expertise, and support the healing and well-being of organizational leaders and their teams as they commit to long-term power-building and organizing work.

**The framework centers on the collective safety and well-being of communities as an integral part of their fight for collective liberation.**

## Healing Justice In Action

Our work at Liberty Hill is grounded in a definition of Healing Justice that recognizes the role of **collective trauma** (such as the shared experience of slavery or genocide or ableism) and **historical trauma** (the holding and passing down of collective trauma from one generation to the next) as causing or influencing community survival practices and endemic community health issues. We seek to lift up these experiences for the purpose of **resilience** and **transformation**.

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Community leaders and activists work tirelessly every day to transform, vision, and build beyond systems of harm and transform them into systems of care and hope. They must be creative and sophisticated strategists, courageous and hopeful organizers, vulnerable and committed workers.



*“I think of Healing Justice as a framework that involves caring for ourselves and our communities in radical ways in order to promote deep, holistic individual and collective healing of body-minds, which ultimately dismantles systems of oppression and achieves liberation for all.” — Healing Justice Workshop Participant*

This work can be strenuous, demanding, and painful, but they continue because they deserve safety and well-being. They continue because they know a better way is possible, and because they come from traditions of people who have bent history towards dignity and self-determined wholeness.

The work of Healing Justice seeks to undo, unlearn, and repair the harms that have been experienced through oppression and racism while building up resilient strategies that can be leveraged to build a care-first world.

**Centering healing justice within power building shifts the focus from reforming systems to authentic, long-lasting transformation rooted in community, justice, and equity.**

## A Model That Builds Capacity

Through our many years of providing capacity building for social justice organizations working in communities most impacted by systemic oppression, we have created a model that works and is adaptable for each new cohort. Our approach and curriculum is rooted in a commitment to anti-racism and dismantling white-supremacy culture. We have anchored our work in exploring ways to actively heal from systems of oppression, and our convenings create peer-networking spaces centered on community building for partners to explore strategies together.

### The “Five C’s” Model:

- 1. Customized:** We co-create each program with the participants, uplifting the participants’ inherent knowledge and wisdom, and supporting them to set goals for organizational transformation.
- 2. Cohort and Peer-networking:** We carefully curate cohorts and facilitate peer learning to share best practices and innovations. We also have cohorts of 2-4 people from each organization participate in the training together to ensure that learning can be successfully implemented and institutionalized.
- 3. “Coachsulting”:** We provide participants with a dedicated coach who has the cultural relevance skills and experience to facilitate transformation through a coaching and consulting approach that empowers each individual to reach their full potential.
- 4. Culturally Competent:** Coaches and trainers are experts in their field who have deep, personal knowledge of, and lived experience in, the types of organizations and communities served, and who reflect the racial, ethnic, gender, and sexuality demographics of those communities. Our training acknowledges trauma, systems of oppression, and the patterns of behavior they cause.
- 5. Comprehensive:** Our programs accelerate organizational effectiveness and help build more sustainable grantee organizations through a combination of on-the-job training, classroom-based learning, one-on-one coaches, peer learning, and flexible general operating grants to be used as needed to achieve goals.

# Convenings

We launched our first series of Healing Justice Convenings in 2021 with a cohort of 15 organizations. The result has been an ability to center authentic strategies rooted in the culture and practices of the communities our grantees are serving.

Coaches are able to partner with organizations to focus on organizational development topics such as:

- Succession planning
- Addressing staff burnout
- Developing organizational strategic plans
- Resource generation and infrastructure development
- Healing and sustainability.

Participants get the opportunity to engage in peer-learning and gain a deeper understanding of various healing approaches, including meditative practice, indigenous song, and Zumba body-work. We also invite community healers to share an exploration of other methods such as reiki healing, Afro-Brazilian dance practice, as well as ayurvedic medicine.

These convenings explore tools that support organizations in operationalizing this work and incorporating it into their institutional practices and policies.

## Rising Activists, Growing Power

A large aspect of our work also includes ensuring that smaller, emerging organizations have access to this type of training and capacity building as well. Knowledge of many of these healing practices already exists in communities, and we work to uplift the experience and expertise of our partners through this work.

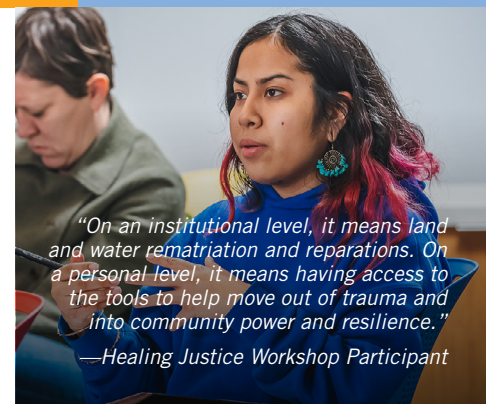
As part of our commitment to supporting emerging organizations, we developed our **Rising Activist** strategy to also target small, community-led organizations and coalitions working to make changes in policies and practices in order to advance social justice through community organizing.

These partners—many of them based in areas with little existing organizing infrastructure—have small teams and annual budgets of less than \$500k.

Our Rising Activist strategy seeks to expand our geographic reach within Los Angeles County to areas that have minimal organizing infrastructure such as the San Gabriel Valley, Antelope Valley, and southeast cities. These are also areas that have seen a significant influx of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color due to the displacement of low-income communities and communities of color in the urban core.

The strategy also supports power-building by constituencies that are underfunded and marginalized, even within social movements and equity funders, such as queer and trans people of color, women of color, Muslims, and indigenous communities.

The Rising Activist strategy enables us to identify new leaders, innovative policy solutions, and new organizational forms and power building strategies.



*“On an institutional level, it means land and water remediation and reparations. On a personal level, it means having access to the tools to help move out of trauma and into community power and resilience.”*

—Healing Justice Workshop Participant

## Why Is Healing Justice Important?

**Healing Justice** must be integrated into daily practices of traumatized communities so that they may continually remind themselves that they deserve healing and should share strategies to operationalize healing at every level of their beings.

To truly weave Healing Justice into the work of transformative change, the practices should take place at four levels, known as the “Four I’s”:



### Internal

Personal healing practices



### Interpersonal

Group communication, energy exchange, and/or relationship building that use healing practices



### Institutional

Organizational policies and frameworks that center healing practices



### Ideological

A shift in dominant values and beliefs due to the ripples created by healing practices



## How Can Philanthropy Support Healing Justice?

As funders, we can demonstrate our commitment to the well-being of our partners and the communities they serve by prioritizing Healing Justice in our work. Some examples include the following:

- Provide flexible funding to help organizations bring Healing Justice into their work through activities such as giving stipends to staff, and adding Healing Justice resources to their base.
- Fund a network of healers and health practitioners who can be available to movement leaders as needed.
- Develop and invest in sabbatical programs that allow movement leaders paid time to pause, rest, and heal.

## Partner With Liberty Hill

We look forward to hearing from our peers about similar efforts in the hope that these practices can bring about deep and lasting change among communities working to replace trauma with resiliency and hope.

To learn more about Liberty Hill's Healing Justice and Rising Activist work and how you can get involved, contact **Julio Marcial**, Senior Vice President of Programs, at [jmarcial@libertyhill.org](mailto:jmarcial@libertyhill.org) and visit our website at [libertyhill.org](https://libertyhill.org).