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# GIVING BLACK IN LOS ANGELES

Donor Profiles and Opportunities for the Future

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■ ■ ■ FOR LIBERTY HILL FOUNDATION ■ ■ ■





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BY ANGE-MARIE HANCOCK, PHD

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011 the Foundation commissioned a study of African American philanthropy in Los Angeles for the purpose of moving beyond the question of whether African Americans give in comparable numbers to other racial groups and toward how and why they give their support, particularly for community organizing and social justice. **This study of identity-based giving is designed to deepen our understanding of different kinds of identity-based giving among Black donors.**

Our multi-method analysis revealed three donor profiles and four opportunities for building African American philanthropy. **Among Black Angelenos, the “Building the Black Community” Donor, the “Issue Impact” Donor and the “Hardwired To Give” Donor were identified based on their reports of discretionary income allocations, preferred recipients of their giving, motivations for giving, levels of education and religious involvement.**

In addition to the specific donor profiles, four findings suggest ways in which African American philanthropy, particularly giving focused on social justice, might be grown.

Liberty Hill wishes to thank The California Endowment, Rockefeller Philanthropy Associates and Tides Foundation for their support in producing this report.

## DONOR TYPES WITHIN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN L.A.



### “BUILDING THE BLACK COMMUNITY” DONOR

THESE DONORS WANT THEIR DOLLARS TO GO TO ORGANIZATIONS THAT TARGET AFRICAN AMERICAN RECIPIENTS.



### “ISSUE IMPACT” DONOR

THESE DONORS ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH THE ISSUE THEY CARE ABOUT THAN THE IDENTITY OF THE PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE ISSUE.



### “HARDWIRED TO GIVE” DONOR

THESE DONORS BELIEVE IN GIVING BACK. GIVING IS PART OF THEIR PERSONAL IDENTITY AND THEY GIVE THEIR MONEY ACROSS THE BOARD.

Our study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Do African American donors in Los Angeles fall into particular profile categories based on their reasons for giving? In what ways do African Americans engage in identity-oriented giving?

2. What percentage of African American philanthropy is directed toward social justice and grass-roots community organizing?

3. How might Black giving for social justice grow?

# INTRODUCTION

**A**frican Americans have a long history of philanthropy. Most Black service organizations—whether fraternities, sororities, or civic organizations like the Links or the Masons—have included both philanthropy and volunteerism in their mission and activities. Independent Black churches and religious denominations have long received the bulk of Black charitable donations to support social services and social movements alike. However, most African Americans still shy away from identifying as “philanthropists” per se, no matter their level of participation in giving.

**Our study builds on more general findings about African American philanthropy, identity-based giving, and about the status of Black America today.** Our analysis confirms what scholars and activists have faced since the end of slavery, that talking about a single homogeneous Black America is difficult, given the wide diversity of Black America.

**In his book *Disintegration*, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Eugene Robinson contends that there are five “Black Americas,” each possessing collective resources, political agendas, experiences and commitments to giving.** Our study sought to explore evidence of philanthropic activity among the five Black Americas here in Los Angeles: **the Transcendents, the Abandoned, the Mainstream, the Multiracial Blacks and the Next Generation Black Immigrants.** (The next section of this study reviews Robinson’s analysis of Black America in greater detail.)

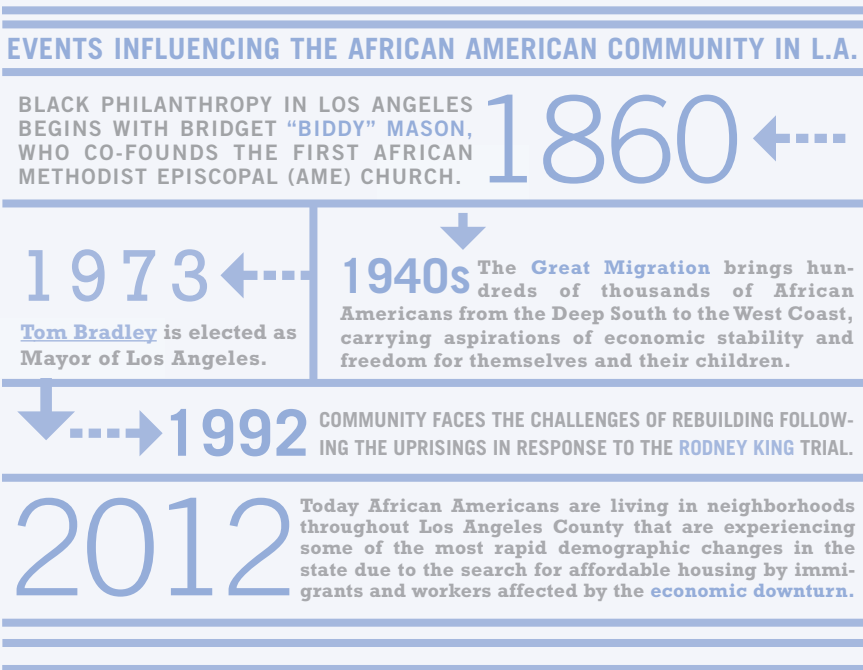
The historic record of Black philanthropy in L.A. begins in the 1860s. Bridget “Biddy” Mason, also known as “Grandma Mason,” leveraged her savvy business instincts in real estate to benefit the poor and to co-found the First African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, which still stands today. The Great Migration of the 1940s brought hundreds of thousands of African Americans along the same path as Grandma Mason, from the deep South to the West Coast, carrying aspirations of economic stability and freedom for themselves and their children.

Since that time, Los Angeles African Americans have lived through highs and lows such as the thrill of elect-

ing L.A.'s first African American mayor in 1973 and the challenges of rebuilding following the uprisings in response to the Rodney King trial 20 years ago. Today they live in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles County that are experiencing some of the most rapid demographic changes in the state due to the search for affordable housing by immigrants and workers affected by the economic downturn.

Black Los Angeles in 2012 provides a unique context in which to examine Black giving. **As with many other cities in the United States, the Black community in Los Angeles has a history of striving for equality and economic freedom. In 2011 we conducted a multi-method exploratory study to build our knowledge about African American philanthropic support particularly focused on social justice.** This research included an analysis of the landscape of Black philanthropy, in-depth interviews, an online survey of donors, and focus groups of African Americans from across Los Angeles.

Many earlier studies have analyzed patterns of giving by comparing racial groups and have demonstrated that African Americans give in comparable numbers to other groups. Based on the history of giving and these earlier studies, our study took as given the finding that African Americans' levels of giving are similar to other groups.



# FIVE BLACK AMERICAS

In his book *Disintegration*, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Eugene Robinson contends that there are five “Black Americas,” each possessing collective resources, political agendas, experiences and commitments to giving. Our study sought to explore evidence of philanthropic activity among the five Black Americas here in Los Angeles:

## The Transcendents

The Transcendents include those we call by their first names in our private conversations: “Barack and Michelle.” “Oprah.” “Magic.” Los Angeles features one of the highest concentrations of Transcendents in the country due to the powerful sports and entertainment industries.

## The Abandoned

The Abandoned have been unable to take advantage of the education, employment and residential victories gleaned from the civil rights movement. It is to this Black America that most popular culture refers when considering the persistent challenges African Americans face.



## **Mainstream Black America**

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Mainstream Black America is the largest sector of the Black community. They display high levels of racial affinity, choosing to remain in virtually all-Black residential, religious, and social contexts whenever possible and are heavily involved in sharing their time as volunteers.

## **Multiracial Blacks**

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The category of Multiracial Blacks, those who identify as Black/African American and some other race, continues to grow. Multiracial blacks are an important and growing part of the diversity within the African American community and represented most prominently by President Obama.

## **Next Generation Immigrants**

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Next Generation Immigrants continue the diversification of African American savings and philanthropic traditions. They have different relationships to Black communities based on histories not tied to U.S. slavery. This plays a role in their abilities to benefit from civil rights advances.

**P**eter and Verna Dauterive began their love story at the University of Southern California when they met as students in Doheny Memorial library. Together the banker and educator later donated \$25 million to their alma mater for African American graduate student fellowships. In the time since her husband's passing, Verna Dauterive has donated another \$30 million for an interdisciplinary social science building. Though you may not know their faces, the Dauterives are members of **the Transcendents**, the first of five Black Americas that coexist in the 21st century. **The Transcendents include those we call by their first names in our private conversations: "Barack and Michelle." "Oprah." "Magic."** **The power of such African Americans extends throughout our communities and around the world.** The transcendent group is reminiscent of what scholar-activist W.E.B. Du Bois once proposed: a "talented tenth," whose responsibility it was to "uplift" the entire race.

Despite competition from Atlanta for the title of "Black Hollywood," **Los Angeles features one of the highest concentrations of Transcendents in the country due to the powerful sports and entertainment industries.** Los Angeles County has almost double the percentage of Blacks with household incomes of \$100,000 or more than the national average (15% vs. 8%). In addition to celebrities who are well known around the world, the Black Transcendent sector of Los Angeles includes people like music executive and former Ambassador to the Bahamas Nicole Avant and attorney-to-the-stars Matthew Johnson, who has represented entertainment clients as diverse as Tyler Perry and Sacha Baron Cohen. Based on the high cost of living in Los Angeles, we define Transcendents as those who are college educated and/or make more than \$160,000 annually.

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**2X** Los Angeles County has almost double the percentage of Blacks with household incomes of \$100,000 or more than the national average (15% vs. 8%).

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THE AFRICAN AMERICAN  
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS  
**2X MORE THAN**  
WHITE AND ASIAN  
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

 **13.1%**  
2005 – 2009  
African American  
unemployment rate

The group we hear the most about is the Abandoned, those generations who have been unable to take advantage of the education, employment and residential victories gleaned from the civil rights movement. **The Abandoned** have been hit hardest by the disappearance of manufacturing jobs from inner cities and the school suspension to prison superhighway. **It is to this Black America that most popular culture refers when considering the persistent challenges African Americans face. Their compelling stories command the most media coverage, which perversely dampens public support for the very initiatives that would empower the abandoned to transform their lives and their communities.**

Abandoned Black America is dispersed widely across Los Angeles County. Los Angeles lost more than 500,000 jobs during the economic downturn, and the African American unemployment rate from 2005–2009 was 13.1%, more than double White and Asian unemployment rates and several points higher than the Latino unemployment rate. While the city of Los Angeles proper hovers around the 13.1% overall mark, cities in the extreme north (Palmdale, Lancaster) and extreme south (Long Beach) of the county have pockets of extremely high Black unemployment (25–50%).

From 2005–2009 the median earnings in Los Angeles for full-time employed Black men was \$44,436; for Black women \$40,799. Although those figures compare favorably to other cities, they do not account for the high cost of living in Los Angeles, where rents have increased and home values have declined precipitously. **We define Abandoned Black Los Angeles as those who have a high school diploma or less education and/or make less than \$60,000 annually.**

Yet the Abandoned are not completely isolated for three reasons. First, **Mainstream Black America** is heavily involved in sharing their time as volunteers in a variety of activities with their sisters and brothers: youth mentoring programs, support of domestic violence services, and support of church-related service activities like subsidized day care or substance abuse treatment. Second, though **the Mainstream segment of the Black community has solid middle-class salaries and wealth, many also have extended family members in tougher circumstances than their own that they assist with their time and treasure. Finally, working-class members of the Abandoned community do more than just receive, they also give.** For example, Osceola McCarty, a lifetime washerwoman, gave away hundreds of thousands of dollars

in scholarship funds to a university she was prevented from attending due to segregation, as well as to her church and two family members. These worthwhile efforts are best classified as charity. They are focused on an “each one teach one” philosophy rather than addressing systemic change with the intention of improving conditions for many.

**Mainstream Black America continues to be the largest sector of the Black community, even following the Great Recession.** Despite the fact that many Mainstream Black Americans decamped to upwardly mobile suburbs over the past three generations, they continue to display higher levels of racial affinity, choosing to remain in virtually all-Black residential, religious, and social contexts whenever possible. While of course both genders are represented in all five Black Americas, the Mainstream is heavily populated by single professional African American women who are financially secure and interested in gaining further information to advance that financial security in a broad way.

Despite the persistent troubles facing Abandoned Black Los Angeles, Los Angeles remains one of the top five metropolitan areas for Black household income in the country. Moreover, Los Angeles has recovered 21% of the number of jobs lost during the economic downturn and forecasts anticipated growth of nearly 60,000 jobs in a variety of professional sectors for 2012. Among Mainstream Blacks in Los Angeles the average household income is between \$80,000–90,000 per year. We define Mainstream Black Los Angeles as those with a minimum of some college education and/or bachelor's degrees who are also employed with incomes of \$60,000 to \$159,999 annually.

Though President Barack Obama is clearly a member of Transcendent Black America, he is also a member of two emergent Black Americas, which are growing in their share of the African American population. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the number of **Multiracial Blacks, those who choose to identify as Black/African American and some other race, continues to grow.** Multiracial blacks are the fourth Black America, an important part of the diversity within the African American community.

As the son of a Kenyan exchange student, Obama also portends the emergence of the fifth Black America: **Next Generation Immigrants.** Obama is part of a longstanding Black history of voluntary and involuntary migration; Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey are just two prominent Black leaders who have also had immigrant roots. **Immigrants bring their own savings and philanthropic traditions into the African American community, diversifying the many ways in which**

**Blacks give back.** Second generation sons and daughters of these legal immigrants also have different relationships to Black communities based on migration histories that are not tied directly to U.S. slavery, which plays a key role in their abilities to benefit from the advances of the civil rights movement.

The emergent Black Americas of Multiracial Blacks and Next Generation Immigrants have both grown in Los Angeles County over the past ten years. **While Black Angelenos remain mostly U.S.-born, those reporting direct ancestry from either sub-Saharan Africa or the West Indies increased, together comprising 14.8% of the Black population in Los Angeles County.** Thus one of the key questions facing African Americans in Los Angeles is how to facilitate the full incorporation of these additional Black Americas, which may involve broadening U.S.-born African Americans' sense of racial affinity.

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## LOS ANGELES REMAINS ONE OF THE TOP FIVE METROPOLITAN AREAS FOR BLACK HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE COUNTRY.

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**14.8%** OF BLACK ANGELENOS REPORT DIRECT ANCESTRY FROM EITHER SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA OR THE WEST INDIES.

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ACCORDING TO THE 2010 U.S. CENSUS, THE NUMBER OF **MULTIRACIAL BLACKS**, THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO IDENTIFY AS **BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN** AND SOME OTHER RACE, CONTINUES TO GROW.

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Los Angeles has recovered **21%** of the number of jobs lost during the economic downturn & forecasts a growth of 60,000 jobs in a variety of professional sectors in 2012.

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**\$44,436** ←---- **men vs. women** ----→ **\$40,799**

2005-2009 MEDIAN EARNINGS IN LOS ANGELES FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYED AFRICAN AMERICANS

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**MAINSTREAM BLACK AMERICA CONTINUES TO BE THE LARGEST SECTOR OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY, EVEN FOLLOWING THE GREAT RECESSION.**

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# GIVING BLACK

The majority of our Los Angeles survey respondents came from Mainstream Black America, with above average income and education levels relative to the rest of the African American community.

The table below reflects all survey respondents' giving patterns. When respondents used a sliding scale to indicate percentages of their discretionary income allocated to various sources, a fairly consistent minority gave exclusively to one category. The more common experience was to allocate funds across two or more categories. Only one of the three donor profiles outlined below gave across all five categories.

Our study indicates the existence of three general donor profiles of African American donors in Los Angeles. Our surveys and focus groups are the foundation for these profiles, all of which are statistically significant.

## ANNUAL DISCRETIONARY INCOME ALLOCATION BY L.A. AFRICAN AMERICAN DONORS

CHURCH	26%	44%
POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS	26%	40%
SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES	29%	47%
FAMILY AND FRIENDS	15%	42%
SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY/ORGANIZATIONS	34%	45%

\*PERCENTAGES DO NOT ADD UP TO 100% . RESPONDENTS WERE PERMITTED TO ALLOCATE DIFFERENT PERCENTAGES TO DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF GIVING AND ANSWERS WERE NON-EXCLUSIVE.

Many earlier studies have analyzed patterns of giving by comparing racial groups and have demonstrated that African Americans give in comparable numbers to other groups. Based on the history of giving and these earlier studies, our study took as given the finding that African Americans' levels of giving are similar to other groups.

# DONOR PROFILES

## DONOR DESCRIPTIONS

WE FOUND THREE TYPES OF DONORS WITHIN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN L.A.

### “BUILDING THE BLACK COMMUNITY” DONOR

According to our survey, “Building the Black Community” Donors were more concerned that their dollars go to organizations that target African American recipients than other respondents. They are likely to have more education, attend church frequently, and see their giving to family as part of what it takes to rebuild the African American community. This profile is most similar to the conventional definition of **identity-based giving**. According to the Cultures of Giving project, this type of identity-based giving is on an upward trend among people of color in the United States.

Focus group participants articulated this perspective on giving in comments such as:

*“Defining philanthropy only as giving to a nonprofit organization is too limiting for us. There has to be a way to acknowledge the support for your brother or sister in terms of what you’re giving beyond your own consumption.”*

*“...at the core of it is, how do you rebuild a people? I mean we know how to do it because we are doing it in Iraq and everywhere else ... but that sort of community building is something that we are going to have to do and primarily focus on the African American [community].”*

### “ISSUE IMPACT” DONOR

“Issue Impact” Donors are more concerned with the issues they care about than the identity of the people affected by the issue. This second type of identity-based Black donor sees themselves as a “cause person” and is likely to be passionate about one or more specific causes that drive their donor behavior. They are more likely to connect with donors across age, race and class who share similar policy goals.



Focus group participants articulated this perspective on giving in comments such as:

*“I think there are a number of emergency situations that exist in our community around important issues whether it is healthcare, voting—there are a whole series of issues that are urgent. Part of [our] job is to make sure people understand why they are urgent.”*

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## “HARDWIRED TO GIVE” DONOR

“Hardwired To Give” Donors have a different definition of identity-based giving. **They embrace giving as part of their personal identity, but are also identifiable by their public as well as their private behavior.** “Hardwired To Give” Donors are known among friends and family as people who believe in giving back. Thus they may be the donors most likely to eventually embrace the title, “philanthropist.” **“Hardwired To Give Donors” tend to give their money across the board—to churches, political campaigns, social service agencies, family or friends, and social justice advocacy/organizing—rather than to a specific issue or focus on a specific target population.** One of our participants explained it succinctly: “I am just hard-wired to give.”

Focus group participants articulated this perspective on giving in comments such as:

*“[My friend] said, ‘You are always on this giving stuff, what is it about this giving, what are you always talking about giving to these organizations? Why?’”*



## “BUILDING THE BLACK COMMUNITY” DONOR

WANT THEIR \$\$\$ TO GO TO ORGANIZATIONS THAT **TARGET AFRICAN AMERICAN RECIPIENTS.** DONORS ARE LIKELY TO HAVE MORE EDUCATION. MOST SIMILAR TO THE CONVENTIONAL DEFINITION OF IDENTITY-BASED GIVING WHICH IS ON AN UPWARD TREND AMONG PEOPLE OF COLOR.



## “ISSUE IMPACT” DONOR

MORE CONCERNED THAT THEIR \$\$\$ GO TO THE **ISSUES THEY CARE ABOUT** THAN THE IDENTITY OF THE PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE ISSUE. THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO CONNECT WITH DONORS ACROSS AGE, RACE AND CLASS WHO SHARE SIMILAR POLICY GOALS.



## “HARDWIRED TO GIVE” DONOR

TEND TO GIVE THEIR \$\$\$ ACROSS THE BOARD (**CHURCHES, POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS, SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES, FAMILY OR FRIENDS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY/ORGANIZING**) RATHER THAN TO A SPECIFIC ISSUE OR FOCUS ON A SPECIFIC TARGET POPULATION.

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# NEXT STEPS

## MOVING FORWARD

BUILDING AFRICAN AMERICAN PHILANTHROPY  
WITH A SOCIAL JUSTICE FOCUS

Our research suggests that opportunities exist for broadening the base of support for philanthropic investment in social justice-focused community organizing. Here are four possible ways to build African American philanthropy in L.A., particularly with a social justice focus.

### **STEP 1: EDUCATE MAINSTREAM BLACK LOS ANGELES ABOUT PHILANTHROPY AND THE RETURNS A COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT IN SOCIAL JUSTICE CAN PRODUCE.**

Several focus group participants agreed that using new strategies to educate Mainstream Black Los Angeles about philanthropy and the value of strategic investments in long-term organizing was critical.

Our study echoes findings by Prudential's 2011 African American Financial Report, which found that Mainstream Blacks across America are interested in learning more about charitable giving through sources they trust.

Donor education might also help address Blacks' discomfort with the title "philanthropist" by bringing donors into contact with other members of Mainstream Black America who identify themselves as philanthropists.

Community foundations can play a strong role in cultivating donor expertise. Los Angeles in particular has a strong network of community foundations that can collectively develop strategies to reach Mainstream Black donors and link them with nonprofit organizations.

### **STEP 2: GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES AMONG BLACK DONORS MATTER. PAY ATTENTION TO MILLENNIALS.**

A wave of affluent younger donors—Millennials (those born between 1982 and 2000)—is emerging. Those who identify as African American think differently about their affinity with the Black community in relationship to their donor behavior.

This difference was indicated by their response to two survey questions: "How much does your 'doing well'

depend on other African Americans doing well?” and “How important is it that your donations go to non-profit organizations that exclusively address the issues of African Americans?”

In their answers, younger respondents revealed that they are less concerned about helping Black communities exclusively. This difference in racial affinity for younger, educated, Mainstream Black America may produce approaches to philanthropy that are less focused solely on race. These Millennial donors also bring different expectations concerning accountability, impact, and sustainability.

### **STEP 3: BUILD THE CASE ACROSS RACIAL CONSTITUENCIES FOR A BROAD AGENDA INCLUDING BLACK-SPECIFIC CONCERNS.**

Demographic trends that emerged in 1990s California are taking root across the nation, as non-white births have outstripped white non-Hispanic births for the first time this year. Working in coalition can no longer be optional if we are to achieve the policy change we seek.

Some issues, however, have a disparate impact on Black communities. The presidency of Barack Obama poses a challenge to those who wish to make the case for some forms of Black-specific organizing. In the Obama Era, we lack a narrative to meaningfully explain the current state of Black America. A new narrative based on the value of fairness needs to be developed that makes the case for a Black-specific agenda.

### **STEP 4: CRAFT NEW COLLABORATIONS WITH BLACK CHURCHES.**

Historically Black churches have been the site of much African American philanthropy. In our survey, most respondents perceived Black churches as generating “the most financial support from the Black community,” dwarfing perceived gifts to historically Black charities such as the United Negro College Fund, or to Black political campaigns, multiracial churches and charities, or predominantly white charities such as the United Way.

That said, many Black churches are going through transitions in terms of reaching new generations and new demographics on the issues they care about. Previously excluded sectors of the Black community seek honest and open conversations with church leaders to refine the contemporary social justice agenda.

In order to facilitate better communication and solidarity, leaders in social justice philanthropy might consider developing new types of collaborations and partnerships with Black churches.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ange-Marie Hancock is an Associate Professor of Political Science and Gender Studies at the University of Southern California, where she also works with the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration and the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity. She continues to serve as a local and national expert on U.S. politics, and her most recent book, *Solidarity Politics for Millennials: A Guide to Ending the Oppression Olympics*, focuses on the development of deep political solidarity regarding issues like marriage equality and immigration reform.

## APPENDIX OF RESOURCES

African Women's Development Fund

<http://www.awdf.org/>

Black Women's Donor Action Group

[http://issuu.com/womensfundingnetwork/docs/bwdag\\_brochure](http://issuu.com/womensfundingnetwork/docs/bwdag_brochure)

Cultures of Giving Fund

<http://www.rockpa.org/page.aspx?pid=315>

Cultures of Giving Report

<http://www.wkkf.org/news/Articles/2012/01/Communities-of-Color-Find-More-Prominent-Role-within-Philanthropy-Sector.aspx>

D5 Coalition

<http://www.d5coalition.org/>

Policylink

<http://www.policylink.org/>

Prudential Research African American Financial Report

<http://www.prudential.com/media/managed/aa/index.shtml>

Program for Environmental and Regional Equity at USC

<http://dornsife.usc.edu/pere/home/>

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Thank you to the following individuals and organizations without whom this research project would not have been possible:**

Judy Belk, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

Emmett Carson, Silicon Valley Foundation

Yvette Chappell-Ingram, California Legislative Black Caucus Foundation

Jackie Copeland-Carson, African Women's Development Fund

The Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII), USC

Brickson Diamond, Big Answers LLC

Jim Ferris, Center for Philanthropy and Policy, USC

Shirmel Hayden, Research Associate

Stephen Hodges, Magic Synapse Productions

Sharon Kyle, The LA Progressive

Alisa Orduna, United Way of Greater Los Angeles

The Program on Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE), USC

Nii-Quartelai Quartey, The Sankofa Group for Civic Engagement

Virgil Roberts, Bobbitt and Roberts

Bob Ross, The California Endowment

Ed Sanders, Office of the Speaker of the California Assembly

Students of POSC 427, Black Politics in the American Political System, USC

Wayne Winborne, The Winborne Group

Michelynn Woodard, Be the Change, Inc.

Staff of Liberty Hill Foundation



Change. Not Charity.

Liberty Hill Foundation advances movements for social change through a strategic combination of grants, leadership training and alliance building. Uplifting Change, a Liberty Hill initiative now in its third year, creates spaces for African American donors to think collectively about harnessing the philanthropic power of the African American community.

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