



Road to Economic Justice



A Policy Platform for Los Angeles
led by Inclusive Action for the City



“This is an invitation to all who are committed to creating an economically just Los Angeles, to come together to build an enabling environment that ensures the people who comprise the backbone of our economy can thrive. When one of us rises, we all rise.”



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01

What is the Economic Justice Platform?

The Economic Justice Platform at Inclusive Action for the City is a holistic approach to creating a more equitable Los Angeles for community-serving small businesses.

“When One of Us Rises, We All Rise”

What is the Economic Justice Platform?

Inclusive Action for the City (IAC) is a community organization that brings people together to build strong, local economies in Los Angeles county.

To do this, IAC seeks economic justice for underserved communities by providing access to capital and building supportive policy infrastructure.

Inclusive Action has historically served micro-businesses across Los Angeles County. Over the last decade, we have found that to best serve these entrepreneurs, we must see beyond their business’ financial statement. They are business owners, but they are also renters, immigrants, elders, women, people of color, non-English speakers, and so much more.

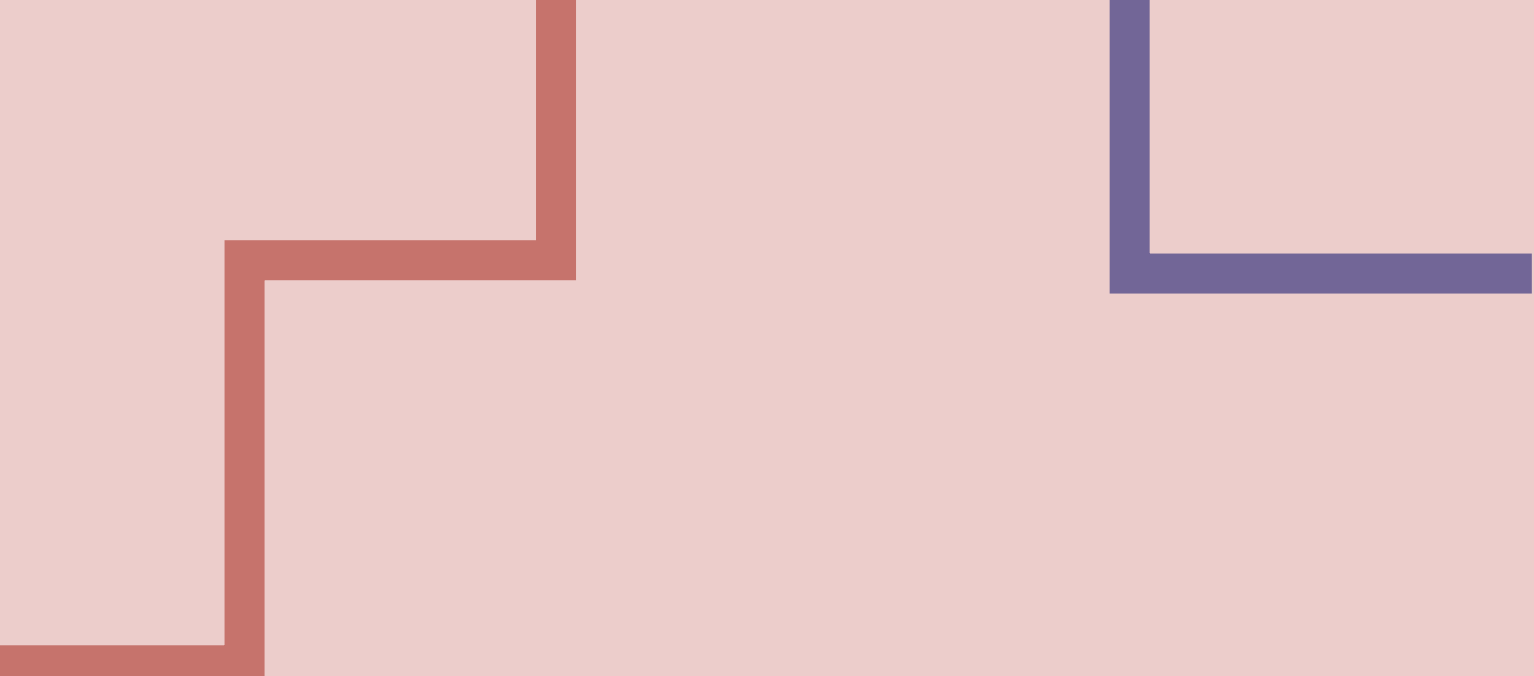
In order for these businesses and their owners to have what they need to thrive, we need to think more broadly about the systems that need fundamental changes to support the important contribution these micro-entrepreneurs give to our local economies and livelihood.

This is how we think about economic justice - what our clients need to thrive in their personal and professional lives in an ever-evolving global city, where certain communities have been routinely left out.

The team at Inclusive Action prides itself on being able to translate the needs of our clients into actionable and tangible policy changes that will better serve them. We have done this through engagement of clients, research and analysis, and strategic partnerships. But we want to do more.

This is IAC’s agenda that lays out research-informed policy priorities to create a more equitable Los Angeles through wealth building and redistribution, especially with billions of dollars of investment coming for the 2026 World Cup and the 2028 Olympics.

This is an invitation to all who are committed to creating an economically just Los Angeles, to come together to build an enabling environment that ensures the people who comprise the backbone of our economy can thrive. When one of us rises, we all rise.



02

Why is Economic Justice Critical for Los Angeles?

Rising inequality disproportionately affects immigrants and communities of color who are at greater risk for displacement and disinvestment.

Why is Economic Justice Critical for Los Angeles?

The County of Los Angeles has the largest unemployment rate in the country, the city has the second highest number of people experiencing homelessness, and both the City and the County have rapidly rising rates of income inequality.

These measures of inequality are inextricably linked to persistent and prominent issues of racial injustice.

Los Angeles is home to a unique population that has been 'majority minority' since the 1980s, and of its current 10 million residents, one in three are immigrants. It also has the most robust small business presence in the country - with over a quarter million small businesses with 20 or fewer employees, and over a million sole proprietors.

When seeking economic justice in Los Angeles, an agenda must center the communities of color that are disproportionately affected by poorly designed and implemented policy.

Income inequality - the wealth gap - in Los Angeles plays a critical part in shaping and influencing the local economy. Although evidence suggests that reducing the wealth gap is hugely positive for the overall economy, the gap remains.

Minimizing the gap requires policies that enable wealth building for the communities that lack access, and the redistribution of resources through sharing and transferring of capital and power.

Over the rest of the 2020 decade, there will be major investments in the LA region that must be thoughtfully and humanely allocated to ensure major events like the Olympics aren't just displacement machines like they have been in the past.

This is our opportunity to hold the government accountable to its people and small businesses, and ensure that entrepreneurs like street vendors have what they need to thrive.

**“This is Our
Opportunity
to Hold the
Government
Accountable”**



03

Three Pathways to Economic Justice

The following pillars guide our work, helping us build relationships and create a more economically just Los Angeles in a way that services both our clients and the advocacy that we do on their behalf.

Three Pathways to Economic Justice

Inclusive Action has over ten years of experience serving small and micro-businesses of varying levels of establishment.

Through this, we have found that there are three major ways in which we do our work - touching both the public and the private sectors and taking the onus of fixing issues off of the individual, and putting it on the systems that have kept them out of investment opportunities.

These three pillars will guide the work that Inclusive Action does currently and in the future, and will help us build our relationships in a way that services both our clients and the advocacy that we do on their behalf.

In an ideal world, we would not have to be doing this work, and the people and businesses we serve would have broad and easy access to systems that serve them, meet them where they are at, and expect nothing in return.

The systems that we are currently working within were both intentionally and unintentionally built to suppress the economic vitality of people of color, immigrants, elders - all populations Inclusive Action serves.

Our policy work aims to undo the systems that have put these Angelenos into cycles of debt, and actively barred them from investment.

Removing Barriers and Red Tape

Inclusive Action has two major functions of its work: direct access to resources today through small business investment programs and associated technical assistance, and policy advocacy to make these programs and processes more accessible for them tomorrow.

We pride ourselves on being able to assist under and disinvested businesses so that they can thrive in a way that their historically invested counterparts have. The reason we have been able to do that on an individual level is because we can help navigate complex systems and numerous systemic barriers.

Our policy work focuses much of its time on removing these barriers and creating better access to existing systems so that entrepreneurs can get the support they need without organizations like ours to assist in navigation.

Removing barriers and red tape from the existing infrastructures that our clients work within is a key component to ensuring that these small business owners are able to access capital and other necessary resources to help their businesses thrive, and to work towards closing the racial wealth gap.

To Inclusive Action, this work looks like:

OUR IMPACT

Advocating for SB 972 and amendments to the CA Retail Food Code to make access to health permits within reach for sidewalk food vendors

SB 972 looks at the current state code that regulates sidewalk food vendors and updates it in ways that is inclusive of sidewalk vendors, instead of making it effectively illegal for them to operate. In this way, SB 972 removes barriers of entry for food vendors, and cuts out red tape that has been put in place, allowing a viable pathway for these businesses to thrive.

OUR ASPIRATION

Creating new valuation models to ensure broader access to capital and redefining how we measure wealth

Current systems of accessing capital rely on racist measures such as credit scores and existing capital assets. This inherently creates deep barriers for underinvested communities of color to access the capital they need to thrive. Inclusive Action, with a network of change-makers, is dedicated to redefining these terms and building something new, including ideas around standardizing interest rates and ending predatory lending.

Justice-Oriented Investment

Our capital systems through traditional avenues such as banks are rooted in active disinvestment in the communities we serve. From redlining to credit scores, these policies are built to keep people of color and working class residents from being able to build and sustain a thriving economic livelihood.

Equity is the cornerstone of Inclusive Action's work - this means putting investment in intellectual capital, monetary capital, and general resources in communities whom have been disinvested without expectation of monetary return on that investment, and instead focus on the broader economic and social returns.

Inclusive Action will continue to work on innovative capital investments, as well as uplifting capital strategies from our community members who have been investing in themselves for decades.

Our research and advocacy will focus on how to make justice-oriented investments in our communities, and unapologetically advocate for that work to ensure small businesses and entrepreneurs get the tools they need to build generational wealth for themselves, their families, and the communities they serve. Understanding what these investments look like, how they operate, and how they clearly prioritize those who have been left out is key to making sure that our communities are truly served.

To Inclusive Action, this work looks like:

OUR IMPACT

Understanding and creating pathways for transfer of property and assets in a systematic way.

Part of the work of CORE is to ensure that small businesses that serve the community are able to remain in place by building out possible ownership opportunities. A key component of this is systematizing how it is that property and assets are put into the hands of the community. Community serving small business have an outsized social return in gentrifying corridors and need to be prioritized in building capital.

OUR ASPIRATION

Innovative tax credit and real estate acquisition models for community-serving small businesses

One of the major issues that small businesses face in gentrifying neighborhoods is the inability to access capital. Creating new tax incentives and financing products that focus on their social value rather than their capital value and support alternative real estate ownership models will be key to curbing displacement

Budget Advocacy and Government Transparency

Over the past two years, there has been historic investment from the Federal government in support of those who were affected by the health and economic collapse due to COVID-19. At the same time, racial reckonings were happening across the country, and community based organizations were doing the support work to ensure harm reduction despite the economic collapse.

Over those two years, Inclusive Action was deeply involved in advocacy around where federal monies should be invested to support small businesses and entrepreneurs who were barred from relief efforts. Moving forward, this will be a priority of ours. As many people have said - our budgets reflect our values.

The government needs to ensure it is actively investing in the well being of its residents and entrepreneurs, and making those processes accessible and transparent for Angelenos broadly. Each year, the city of LA has over a \$10 Billion budget, and the county of LA is nearly \$40 Billion. Angelenos deserve transparency and an active voice in how this money is used.

To Inclusive Action, budget advocacy means not only allocations of those tens of billions of dollars in an equitable manner, but also the transparency in that process, and advising on program design in a way that services those who have been historically left out.

To Inclusive Action, this work looks like:

OUR IMPACT

Coalition demands for equitable distribution of ARPA money to make sure that affected communities come out better than they were prior to the pandemic.

Over the last two years, Inclusive Action has been in multiple coalition spaces to advocate for equitable distribution of COVID relief money. The people who are most affected by systemic disinvestment must be prioritized in distribution of funds - both in a time of need, as well as in the annual budgeting process.

OUR ASPIRATION

Open government initiatives to create transparent and inclusive systems of budgeting at the City and County levels.

As a member of the Open Government Partnership, The City of LA aims to create budgets through participatory public processes and make them transparent for Angelenos to see. LA Repair, the pilot participatory budgeting initiative, is underway to allocate 10 million dollars of the city budget to historically disadvantaged communities and to the projects identified by members of these communities.

This is a key moment of advocacy to build meaningful partnerships, create clarity in budgeting processes that have long been opaque, and to influence the entire local government budgeting process to be more open and inclusive of voices left out at City Hall.