

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Nation's first Gender Justice Fund launches \$10 million collaborative to change culture and advance gender justice**

*The Culture Change Fund, including the Women's Foundation of California, Blue Shield of California Foundation, Ford Foundation, The California Endowment, Compton Foundation and additional philanthropic partners, will focus on changing the way we think and talk about gender justice.*

**OAKLAND, CA** - The California Gender Justice Funders Network, in partnership with several national foundations, today announced the launch of a \$10 million+ Culture Change Fund. The Culture Change Fund is the first of its kind to address how the nation understands gender justice and uses culture to change how the public thinks about wide-ranging issues including economic security and income inequality, violence against women and sexual assault, maternal health, abortion and contraception, and more.

The Fund was developed out of a recognition that policy and legislative action are not enough to erase the disadvantages that women, girls, transgender, and gender nonconforming people - especially those from communities of color - face in our society. By focusing on culture change, the Fund's goal is to create broad public support for a new way of thinking that centers gender, racial, and economic justice at the heart of the solution to systemic problems.

"The national conversation on sexual assault and harassment brought by the *#MeToo* movement and unconstitutional abortion bans in nine states has shown that problems cannot be fixed through policies alone," said Surina Khan, CEO of the Women's Foundation of California. "The Fund is invested in accelerating the shifts happening in our culture by supporting local organizing and narrative shift efforts that are attempting to change the way we think and talk about gender."

The Fund is launching with an exciting, data-driven narrative research project called Story at Scale, which will conduct audience research and create, test, and deliver a story strategy that can advance gender justice across a variety of issue areas. Story at Scale employs a collaborative research process and is designed for practical use by advocates, artists, and campaigners in all of their communications and organizing efforts.

"Storytelling is one of the most important human traditions, and stories are an integral part of how we communicate our ideas and values," said Lucia Corral Peña, senior program officer at Blue Shield of

California Foundation. “By telling true stories of gender justice in ways that all people can understand, we can change the national conversation around gender, and also change norms and minds.”

The other components of the Fund are direct grantmaking to partner organizations that are both organizing for culture change and integrating cultural strategy into their work and creating a community of practice and learning where funders, academics, and activists can contribute to a living library of ongoing resources and information-sharing. Funders and activists will be able to advance collective understanding about gender narratives and culture change and share best practices.

The Culture Change Fund is a joint effort between the Blue Shield of California Foundation, The California Endowment, Women’s Foundation of California, and Philanthropy California, an alliance of the three regional associations of grant makers in California. They are joined by national funders, including the Compton Foundation, Ford Foundation, General Service Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, the Lefkowsky Family Foundation, and others.

The Women’s Foundation of California is managing the fundraising and research phase of the project and will guide the expansion of the Fund to Georgia and Michigan by partnering with local organizations who are leading this important work in their state. More states will be added in the future as the Culture Change Fund continues to grow. To join or learn more about the Fund, visit [bit.ly/CultureChangeFund](http://bit.ly/CultureChangeFund).

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### **About the California Gender Justice Funders Network**

The California Gender Justice Funders Network is a coalition of foundations and funders aiming to advance gender justice by changing the way our culture talks about and treats women by centering gender at the heart of solutions to any systemic problem. Just as California leads the way on progressive political and cultural issues, the California Gender Justice Funders Network will advance the national conversation on what gender means and what true gender justice and liberation look like.

Convened by the Women’s Foundation of California in partnership with Philanthropy California, the Network is comprised of a diverse group of veteran funders including Blue Shield of California Foundation, Fondation CHANEL and The California Endowment.

### **About the Women’s Foundation of California**

The Women's Foundation of California is a publicly-supported grant making foundation that invests in, trains, and connects community leaders to advance, gender, racial, and economic justice. Learn more at [www.womensfoundca.org](http://www.womensfoundca.org).