VIVA LA UNION AFRO Y LATINA

RESILIENCE & RESISTANCE

2016 ANNUAL REPORT
In these challenging times, we find comfort in the community we have built alongside all of you, and we find power in the solidarity that’s at the heart of our work together.

As the politics of division fuel corporate power, it’s more important than ever to celebrate and build on the victories we have built through the power of our unity.

Powered by your support, in 2016 our tenant rights work culminated in a huge expansion of tenant rights in Oakland, won through a cross-sector coalition we helped anchor. Right now, Measure JJ is keeping thousands of families in their homes. And the campaign to win the measure advanced movement alignment, via an unprecedented level of regional coordination, connected to the seven cities fighting for renters rights and against displacement. As we continue to directly support tenants to fight for their rights to be honored, we are shaping a new, powerful, pro-tenant electorate - look out, forces of displacement!

In 2016 we pushed San Francisco and Oakland to divest from deportations, and protect our immigrant, mixed-status and criminalized communities. We built powerful links between Black and Latino experiences of state violence, and visions for our collective liberation. We grew vibrant, multi-generational organizing where youth leadership is front and center. This year also marked a transfer of leadership inside our organization, with María Poblet stepping out of the Executive Director post, which she held since leading the merger that founded CJJC in 2010. As Vanessa Moses steps into that role, bringing her own unique style and powerful skillset to the work, we feel a sense of pride in the ways our organization supported both her development as a leader to get to this point, and the growth of the whole new leadership team.

Causa Justa is a powerful vehicle for multi-racial solidarity, and joint struggle. It’s the kind of vehicle we need urgently to respond to the challenges of the political moment. Shoulder to shoulder, we envision a world where all of us belong — and that belongs to all of us. Thanks to all of you, our movement family, for the camaraderie that’s brought us this far, and that will carry us powerfully in the next phase of our growth!

In Solidarity,
Vanessa Moses & María Poblet

“Causa Justa is such a powerful vehicle for multi-racial solidarity and joint struggle. I couldn’t be prouder of the team I helped build and the impact we’ve had. I will be stepping into a strategic advisor role as of May 1st. I couldn’t be more inspired by my dear, visionary, heart-full comrade and our new Executive Director, Vanessa Moses!”

—Maria Poblet,
outgoing Executive Director

Dear Friends, Family, and Supporters:
This year we built more alliances and worked on campaigns that strategically strengthened our work and won renter protections in both San Francisco and Oakland for thousands and thousands of renters. From a wildly winning Measure JJ in Oakland, to firm fire protections for renters in San Francisco, we marched, filled city halls, held phone banks, knocked on doors and called on lawmakers to do the right thing – and mobilized hundreds of members in both cities to exercise their power and voice.

Fire Protections

After a string of fires in the SF Mission district left hundreds of tenants displaced, Causa Justa and our Housing Rights Committee played lead roles in pushing the SF Fire Department and the city’s Dept. of Building Inspection for stronger tenant protections and safer buildings. The legislation, introduced by Supervisor David Campos, called for landlords to develop an action plan after a fire; to notify tenants of how and when to retrieve their belongings; to provide a contact number and schedule for repairs and when tenants can return; and to post notice of compliance with smoke alarms and fire protections.

Plaza 16

Causa Justa served as a lead member of Plaza16 organizational alliance in San Francisco. This group of resident leaders, when threatened with a luxury condo high-rise in their neighborhood that would force residents out of their homes, created a concrete plan for a 100% affordable, 100% community designed multi-use development project. CJJC built a community of leaders through this visioning process who are organized, inspired and committed to a long-term development fight.

Measure JJ

Causa Justa was part of The Committee to Protect Oakland Renters, our broad cross-sector coalition of housing advocates, labor unions, community organizations, and faith communities. We stood strong in our campaign to educate and motivate. Ultimately the voters approved Measure JJ renter’s protections by a 74% landslide. It was a thrilling and hard-fought campaign that was the culmination of years of work pushing for renter protections. We gathered signatures, made calls, met with council members, sent letters, knocked on doors, collected research and shared powerful testimony — proof that passionate, grassroots organizing works and that together, our community can make a big impact. This victory will expand Just Cause protections to 15,000 Oakland residents. The work we did together helped build even stronger relationships among our allies so that we can continue to wage campaigns and will develop policy work that will keep tenants in their homes!

Regional

Bay Area Tenant Organizing Network

CJJC helped initiate and is currently co-anchoring a Bay Area Regional Tenant Organizing network (RTO) made up of almost 20 community groups across the region. The RTO has been a successful platform for strengthening local campaigns; for building power at the regional scale; and for longer-term advocacy at the statewide level. The RTO played a key role in supporting the passage of historic, new rent control and Just Cause eviction laws in four cities through the development of joint messaging, convening technical and legal advisors, and generating resources for the various campaigns.

National

Homes for All

Causa Justa helped initiate and continues to be an anchor of the national Homes For All (HFA) campaign. The goals include engaging impacted communities, homeless families, families in foreclosure or with underwater mortgages, low-income renters and tenants, as well as public housing residents. This multi-year fight calls on direct community intervention and a strong role of government to win revenue and policies that expand and preserve low-income affordable housing, decrease speculation driven displacement in our cities, and builds the power of the national housing justice movement.
CJJC Tenant Counselors supported 2000 low-income tenants this year. Oakland and SF working-class residents of color come into our clinics every day with increasing habitability and landlord harassment cases. These tenants receive the skills and resources to advocate and protect themselves from displacement. Every new clinic tenant is invited to participate in organizational trainings and to join as a member. We worked with hundreds of tenants through Know Your Rights trainings that focused on habitability like mold, repairs, landlord harassment and other health-related housing issues. In addition, our clinics continue to run smoothly with the enormous help and dedication of our volunteers.

Tenant Victories
San Francisco
The Martinez and Maldonado families are an example of fighting back hard and refusing to give up. When our SF clinic received this case, all legal recourses had been exhausted — which makes this win even more extraordinary. The two families, who lived together in a large unit as subtenants, were illegally evicted from their longtime Mission district home. The master tenant had negotiated secretly with the landlord and attempted to take a buyout, neglecting to inform the subtenants about the buyout or the legal proceedings underway. We worked with the families and used people power to pressure the landlord to establish a direct tenancy with them; we started an online petition that got over 1500 signatures; and we shut the landlord’s office down on the day of the eviction.

Local agencies and SF Supervisor David Campos stepped in to help. Ultimately, the landlord negotiated with the families to establish a direct tenancy and they received the keys to THEIR apartment. They were back in their home within a few weeks. Two more families get to stay in the Mission!

Oakland
Terry Bryant came into our West Oakland office with a notice to evict. The landlord told Terry he was being evicted because he paid the lowest rent in the building. Terry is one of the last Black tenants in his building, located by Lake Merritt. We supported Terry in helping him write a letter laying out what the landlord said; how the eviction was being done in bad faith; and pointed out several habitability issues in the unit. We also connected him with an attorney from the Eviction Defense Center. Over a course of three days, Terry and his lawyer proved to the jury that the landlord was acting in bad faith and he won. Says Terry: “Causa Justa was down for the cause, they had my back through the whole thing.”

“Counselors here gave me good advice and my case was resolved. Now I volunteer. I am so grateful and that’s why I invite everyone to come to Causa Justa and fight for your home and then volunteer and help out!”

Jose Luis

“We learn about our housing rights — if you are not aware of your rights you can be evicted, threatened. But I’ve learned. I’ve gone to City Hall and to direct actions. We have to fight and if we don’t our rights will roll back.”

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“The Maldonado family celebrating their direct tenancy after receiving keys to their apartment.

Terry Bryant feeling empowered after winning his case to remain in his home.

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Jose Luis
Our 2016 Immigrant Rights Campaign held fast to San Francisco’s Due Process for all Ordinance that we won in 2015 and continued to move toward similar protections for our residents in Alameda County.

In San Francisco we fought tremendous rightwing backlash against the Ordinance and the Sanctuary City status in 2016 — and we won. The Ordinance was threatened with an incoming new Sheriff looking to change SF policy on Police/ICE non-collaboration. We worked with allies and coalitions through the spring of 2016 to hold the support of city Supervisors as they approached a vote on Due Process in May. The board voted unanimously and we celebrated a hard-won victory! In November the SF mayor stood before defenders of immigrant rights and committed to holding San Francisco as a Sanctuary City — even if threatened with the loss of federal dollars.

In Alameda County, we worked to garner support from workers’ organizations as well as our larger alliances in Oakland and Alameda County to push against the County Sheriff’s policy to notify ICE inside of county jail. We worked with the County Board of Supervisors to draft language for an Alameda County Due Process Ordinance (Similar to the legislation that we had won in SF). In September 2016, The Alameda County Board of Supervisor passed a Due Process Resolution. We also remained active in the Justice Reinvestment coalition to build the leadership of economically marginalized and formerly incarcerated people. As a result of our coalition work, Jobs for Freedom was approved by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors allowing savings from Prop 47 to be invested into generating 1,400 jobs for formerly incarcerated folks and at-risk youth.

“We need the rapid response network. It pains me to know that so many families have been separated by deportations and displacement.”

Eduarda Cruz

“I hope to be more helpful and a stronger leader and to help people who might be going through a tough time. I’m learning more about problems around the community and the world.”

Margarita, with her mom Margarita Acho
Protagonism and human development is at the heart of building leadership of low-income Black and Latinx families, elders and youth. Our member leaders remained strongly involved through our Universidad – popular education training; and through a tremendous amount of civic engagement this election year to work toward long-term economic equality. CJJC has more than 2,000 members with approximately 250 new members joining every year. Our active member leaders participate in direct actions; testify at city hall; hold Know Your Rights trainings; and outreach to neighborhood residents.

Civic Engagement
This year our members reached out to low-income residents and offered ways to become involved in curbing displacement in our communities and 50 member leaders participated in door-to-door Civic Engagement drives.

In San Francisco — we continued to co-chair SF Rising, an electoral alliance made up of eight organizations and low-income residents from different neighborhoods. Through SF Rising, we coordinated and led civic engagement outreach drives to working class communities of color, helped reach approximately 3,230 voters, and distributed ‘Know Your Rights’ materials to over a thousand homes in the Mission District through door-to-door outreach, as well as housing clinic walk-ins and coalition-based organizing.

In Oakland — we helped to reach 4,320 low-income Oakland voters through Oakland Rising, an electoral alliance; and held door-to-door outreach with immigrant rights information in the Fruitvale District of Oakland and reached 700 Oakland residents.

Regionally — Causa Justa :: Just Cause served as a lead organization in the expansion of two Bay Area Civic Engagement Platforms: Oakland Rising and San Francisco Rising. In 2016, our Rising alliances expanded our reach to include a regional body, Bay Rising. Bay Rising aims to improve the quality of low wage jobs, increase affordable housing and development without displacement, protect voting rights and expand democratic governance, and increase transit equity and environmental justice.

Oakland United Coalition
Our member leaders were among the leadership in the Oakland United Coalition that prepared a Community Benefits Agreement detailing what equity would look like including affordable housing, good jobs, a healthier environment and accessible, affordable transportation. This platform would apply to any developers of the Oakland Coliseum City project in East Oakland for equitable development to build social cohesion with residents in the Oakland Coliseum area."
Community Planning Leaders

We trained member leaders on the negotiation skills necessary to participate in healthy urban development. Causa Justa’s Community Planning Leader’s (CPL) program equipped Oakland residents with the tools to participate in City planning processes that could impact the health and well-being of working-class communities. Our CPL’s worked with PolicyLink to develop a Community Governance Model that lays out an approach for community vision and development that genuinely includes those most impacted in the city planning process. We worked with CPL’s to develop this community training, organizing and planning process into a successful model that we will share with the City of Oakland as a resident engagement tool.

“I’m a member because we all need each other to make a difference. Everybody should care about the next person and come together. CJJC gives us access to thinking some things out, like ways to work with one another, how to resolve issues and come to a solution.”

Gerthina Harris

Universidad

We strengthened our multi-generational leadership through combining our 5-day member training series: Universidad Popular and the Youth in Power summer program. This allowed our Youth Leaders and our Adult Leaders to work more closely, fortify alignment, and deepen a shared leader-full vision of human development, just transition and protagonism.

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Zane Burton

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Zane Burton
Leadership and skill development along with political exposure to a broader youth movement framed Youth In Power this year. Youth members developed a strong vision for organizing to promote interconnectedness and relationship building. The reach of our work through presentations impacted more than 700-1,000 youth and inspired young people to take a stand in their lives.

Black Priorities Project engaged our members in key fights and movement building such as Prop 47, Free SF, Stop Urban Shield, Black Lives Matter; Justice for Mario Woods, & the State of Black Oakland People’s Assembly. We grounded our leadership development in our human development framework in spaces combating criminalization of our communities.

**Youth in Power**

We have continued to build on our youth organizing program, Youth in Power (YIP) growing the leadership of youth of color — particularly low-income Black and Latino youth. Through our Education for Liberation School (E4LS) our trainings offered youth a way to develop consciousness and community. They took part in youth-led actions like teach-ins, workshops on gentrification, urgently needed policing reforms, they led protests, testified at city hall, lifted their voices — and came to understand their power and impact on larger movement work.

“Being a part of Youth in Power changed my outlook. I realize that my voice can matter in a world run by adults. It’s been a whole new impact on me and seeing the next generation of kids come through the program — I’ve seen how they’ve changed too.”

Alejandra Ruiz

**Black Priorities Project**

CJJC’s Bay Area Black Priorities Project (BPP) amplified and strengthened our work to fight for racial justice by addressing Black displacement in key places across the Bay Area. We built the leadership of existing and new Black member leaders in Oakland and San Francisco and helped deepen their ability to assess opportunities of the current political moment, lead campaigns, and direct actions. The powerful convergence of work with the Movement for Black Lives amplified the local fight against working-class Black displacement, criminalization & police accountability. Our members took in part mass mobilizations such as Reclaim Martin Luther King Day and May 1st International Worker’s Day.

“I got interested in the Youth in Power program. It’s taught me many things and helped me understand what is happening to our neighborhoods with gentrification and how to fight back.”

Sofia Esteva with mom, Manuela Esteva

“I’m here because I want to learn more about when to speak up and when to step back. And, I want to know my rights and be empowered with that.”

Yvonne Thomas
**Right to the City**

Causa Justa continues to lead and anchor the Right to the City Alliance (RTTC), a national formation of over 50 community organizations in 30 over cities around the country working against gentrification and the displacement of low-income people, people of color, marginalized LGBTQ communities, and youth of color from their historic urban neighborhoods. RTTC seeks to create regional and national impacts in the fields of housing, human rights, urban land, community development, civic engagement, criminal justice, environmental justice, and more.

**Grassroots Global Justice**

Causa Justa is an anchor member of Grassroots Global Justice (GGJ) — a national alliance of US-based grassroots groups organizing to build an national and international agenda toward power for working and poor people and communities of color. GGJ is focused on bringing member organizations into a long-term process of relationship building, political alignment and the development of transformational leadership.

In May, some of our staff took part in a key gathering. GGJ and the SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP) co-hosted the first Feminist Organizing School (FOS2016) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Over 40 people from 17 organizations around the country participated in the school, grounded in the spirit of murdered indigenous feminist environmental activist, Berta Cáceres.

As a member of GGJ we were part of the U.S. Chapter of the World March of Women (WMW). CJC supported WMW through an international mobilization of #JusticeForBerta. In the summer of 2016, we sent a delegation of members and staff with 50 other frontline community leaders to the GGJ Alliance People’s Caravan from Cleveland to Philadelphia. Justice for Berta Cáceres actions along the way publicly condoned racism and xenophobia and helped build an interconnected movement with the roots we need to weather the storms our communities face and change the systems that cause us harm.
"We need to get together. We have to start thinking about self-care, self-determination, self-empowerment and ownership. We need to own our own homes; we need to own our own businesses. We have to live so that the next generation won't have to go through what we did."

Our beloved CJJC member, mentor and true friend Ms. Paula Beal, passed away in December. Ms. Paula is deeply missed by us all. She fought for healthy food, livable housing, and healthcare in Oakland for over 45 years. She embodied a powerful life of service to the community, of vision for humanity, of struggle for a better Oakland, of an endless energy for justice.

Ms. Paula truly represented the struggle of renters in Oakland and endured being uprooted from her housing several times due to rent increases and unscrupulous landlords. She told us: “It’s made me even more passionate. I don’t want anyone to go through this misery. We are not cattle, we are human beings. We deserve to have a home to stay in.”

Ms. Paula lived a life bigger than one life, because she lived the life of an organizer. She led Causa Justa :: Just Cause towards measure JJ, towards electoral impact, towards Black women’s leadership. Ms. Paula modeled Black-Brown unity and touched countless lives of folks always with much love.

The passing of this beautiful, proud and vibrant human being is a testament to how displacement, gentrification and uncertainty can affect someone’s life and health. Ms. Paula fought for her life with grace, up until the last moment, gifted by healer friends with special foods and drinks and prayers to give her strength. Even towards the end she still had her bright and beautiful smile and a sense of vitality that never diminished. We miss her so much. If we all could live half the life she lived and nurture those revolutionary seeds of power she planted here for us to water, we’d be better human beings, for ourselves, for community, for the world, for our children.

Rest in Power Ms. Paula — Ms. Paula ¡Presente!