Dear Supporters,

As I reflect on my time at Causa Justa :: Just Cause, since moving across the country to join the CJJC family in February 2020, I am amazed at how much has changed and how CJJC has responded by doing what we do best: grounding our work in the conditions of Black and Brown communities and their leadership.

Back when the Covid-19 shelter-in-place order came into effect, we pivoted to ensure that our folks had no lapse in access to resources. CJJC offered services remotely, increased our housing and immigrant rights hotline staffing to meet the growing influx of calls, and provided free digital tablets, Wi-Fi access, and technology training to members. In addition to the mutual aid that CJJC provided directly, we contacted our members and helped them access additional services through Bay Resistance, which was founded by a coalition of organizations including CJJC, EBASE, Jobs With Justice, USWW, Coleman Advocates and AROC.

After we stabilized our folks, we were able to mobilize them. CJJC, and our housing justice comrades, compelled the Oakland City Council to adopt an eviction moratorium that is still protecting working class tenants despite the lifting of the statewide eviction ban.

Housing instability and displacement are connected to the criminalization of Black and Latinx folks. As CJJC shared during our 10th anniversary in July of 2021, the racial reckoning of that previous summer showed everyone what organizing can actually do. The victories we have won make us hopeful about what’s possible — how we can shift power structures that oppress us and invest in what we need for our liberation.

As the new Executive Director, I am excited about CJJC’s evolution. Staff who have been building their skills at CJJC for years have stepped into leadership roles, and new staff are bringing a fresh perspective to our work. CJJC is building power together, and our organizing needs to feel like home. So my door is always open. I invite you to reach out directly to me if you would like to learn more about how we are ready to achieve Community Rights, Community Control and Community Ownership. These are the elements of CJJC’s North Star — Community Futures.

In justice,
Shaketa Redden, Executive Director
shaketa@cjjc.org
Working Toward Systemic Change

Nationally, we served on the Right to the City Alliance (RTTC)’s Beyond Recovery Campaign strategy team, demanding a national suspension on rent, mortgages, and utility payments as a way to address the loss of income due to the COVID 19 crisis.

We came together to evaluate regional conditions and local and national strategies to address the housing crisis in the pandemic, identifying trends and making assessments to further our campaign. We worked to cancel rent, mortgages, and debt on a national level, knowing that once the eviction moratoriums lift, tenants will have to pay back months of rent. We participated in RTTCs “Rooted & Ready” Eviction series, led powerful conversations with our member base about the importance of canceling rent/debt, and participated in monthly member calls from the Beyond Recovery campaign.
Knowledge Is Power

CJJC’s Oakland Tenant Rights website, developed with the support of our partners, launched in 2021. It was created to increase access to knowledge for Oakland tenants to continue building collective power in the struggle against displacement. This interactive website is organized around four main tenant issues: harassment, evictions, rent increases, and repairs. Each section provides key information, including relevant laws, and has a series of questions for the user to navigate, which cover applicable protections. A key feature of the website is the template letter for each of the issue areas and instructions for how to personalize the letter based on the tenant’s circumstances. In alignment with CJJC’s commitment to language justice, there is also a Spanish language version of the website.

Eviction Moratorium Victory

In March 2020, CJJC led the Protect Oakland Renters coalition in securing passage of the Oakland eviction moratorium, one of the first pandemic eviction responses nationally. While almost all other California local-level moratoriums have expired and been blocked from renewal, Oakland’s moratorium continues to withstand attacks from the landlord lobby at the state level. One of the strongest eviction moratoriums in the country, it remains in place until Oakland City Council ends the Local Emergency. An April 19, 2021 article in Oaklandside found that the moratorium led to a 95% reduction in landlords filing eviction notices between February and May 2020.
Meeting Immediate Needs In Time Of Crisis

In the face of the huge crisis and disruption of the pandemic, we shifted our work overnight to continue providing our tenant services without interruption. In San Francisco, we pivoted from in-person counseling to providing support over the phone. We recruited and trained new volunteers for our Oakland Tenant Hotline to keep up with 50-70 calls weekly. We launched a series of online Know Your Rights trainings for tenants and built community and connection with each other. We continued to staff rapid response hotlines for immigrant rights — through the Alameda County Immigration Legal and Education Partnership. As part of the San Francisco Rapid Response Network, which is a coalition of six community organizations, CJJC addressed increased requests for support accessing mutual aid, mental health care, and food assistance — services that immigrant communities fear accessing due to their citizenship status.

“During the pandemic, Causa Justa responded to our immediate needs for personal protective equipment (PPE), and how to get online to talk to each other. They made sure that we were connected to resources for paying rent. I'm a senior and the mutual aid network helped to make sure that I had food in my house and that it was delivered to me and other members.”

- Ms. Towanda Sherry

Mutual Aid

Our staff focused on reaching out to our members by checking in and providing support with any immediate needs. We were in contact with more than 300 CJJC members. We helped access mutual aid support through Bay Resistance and did wellness checks, connected our members to the robust network - which we helped launch - and helped them connect on-line with training, support and technology. We offered masks and filters, some air purifiers and groceries, tech support and tablets to lead members.

Just Cause Measure V

In 2022 we worked with the Just Cause Coalition to support updated provisions to support updated provisions to Oakland's Just Cause Ordinance. Its successful passage expanded protections to over 10,000 more tenants, and offered protections to tenants living in RVs or tiny homes, prohibits no-fault evictions of educators and families with school-aged children during the school year and all units that are more than 10 years old as well as tenants living in RVs or tiny homes that have landlords.
Budget Justice

Just city budgets that prioritize community services and care over increased police presence are crucial for liberation and Community Futures. Alongside allies in San Francisco’s Budget Justice Coalition, we fought against budget cuts, demanding defunding the police and increasing funding for essential community services. This resulted in funding to launch an alternative to a police response to homelessness, the Compassionate Alternative Response Team. We continue to support and participate in community-led efforts to defund the police and invest in community through Oakland Rising and Anti-Police Terror Project.

Defund/Decarcerate

Jails and prisons were two of the hardest hit institutions impacted by COVID-19. We believe it is a human rights violation to hold people in unsafe, unhealthy living conditions during a pandemic. The criminalization and targeting of Black, Latinx, and immigrant communities - communities who were already disproportionately impacted by the pandemic - by police means that these communities are being incarcerated at far higher rates than white people. CJJC and our members have demanded the release of people in unhealthy living conditions in jails during the pandemic and pushed for sentence reduction and forgiveness for inmates. We know that organizing is key.

In Oakland, we were part of the Decarcerate Alameda County (DAC), a coalition created to respond to the human right abuses and abuses of power of the Alameda County Sheriff’s department. CJJC member leaders participated in outreach efforts with inmates and shared testimony of the inhumane conditions faced by inmates in the Santa Rita Jail and the impacts of Covid-19 with members of the Board of Supervisors. The DAC campaign has achieved big victories, including the release of hundreds of prisoners since the start of COVID-19 and the successful removal of the sheriff deputies from Peralta College and other campuses due to racial profiling and criminalization of Black and Brown students.

In addition DAC has been organizing to end the county’s reliance on jailing people with mental illness and substance use needs, and create a community-led process to build out community based mental health care. DAC’s Care First Resolution was unanimously adopted in May 2021, a major victory and a critical first step in divesting from the incarceration of people with mental illness.

In San Francisco, we helped shut down 850 Bryant jail as part of our work with the No New Jails coalition. CJJC member leaders...
gave public testimony on zoom, taking part in the coalition’s town halls to discuss restorative justice and participatory budgeting organized by the SF No New Jails Coalition. Our organizing efforts led to the successful release of 700 inmates and the official closure of 850 Bryant jail in September 2020.

CJJC member leader Margarita Acho has 3 family members inside Santa Rita jail--two brothers and an uncle. She shared her family’s struggles within the jail to the public and Alameda Board of Supervisors. Her family members shared that conditions within Santa Rita Jail are deplorable. Margarita talked about the struggles her family has had in getting proper legal representation in the jails to address these human rights abuses.

“I don’t believe it’s fair that because we don’t have the economic means to get them released on bail, that they are now exposed and their lives are at risk. My brothers told me even though people were exposed to COVID, cells were cleaned only once a week.”
In 2020, CJJC worked with the Oakland TOPA Coalition on the Moms 4 Housing Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA). TOPA seeks to stabilize Oakland’s housing market by slowing speculation and keeping long-term working-class and Black and Brown tenants in Oakland. TOPA helps tenants stay housed by ensuring they have the right to make the first offer if their home is to be sold. TOPA provides resources to help tenants compete with private speculators to purchase their homes, ensuring the permanent affordability of housing to promote stability in our neighborhoods.

Organizing Members

CJJC is organizing community members to share their stories, outreach to other community members, submit public comments and testimony, and participate in petitions and call-in campaigns. We are building Black and Brown tenant power, developing member leadership and engaging in political education to support long term organizing for community control of housing and city budgets.

In the throes of the pandemic in summer 2020, CJJC had the highest number of youth ever participate in our Youth in Power/Education for Liberation Summer (E4LS) program: 23 Oakland and SF youth, ages 13-22, most being in high school. The eight-week political education program covered topics including systems of oppression, mobilizing in this time of crisis, history of Black organizing and resistance, and building organizing and public speaking skills. CJJC's incredible organizers created a space where participants could build trust, share in vulnerability and growth together — resulting in many of them contributing to the achievements in budget justice campaigns. In addition, we graduated 41 members from a training series in December 2021, ensuring that burgeoning leaders can shape CJJC’s campaigns and lead the fight for Community Rights, Community Control, and Community Ownership.
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2019-2020 Income

Total Income: $3,870,086
Foundation and Community Grants: $2,408,071
Contributions: $225,633
Government Grants: $1,093,476
Fee for Service: $91,650
Earned Revenue: $51,256
Total Expenses: $2,501,152

2020-2021 Income

Total Income: $3,483,726
Foundation and Community Grants: $1,594,466
Contributions: $539,464
Government Grants: $951,864
PPP Loan Forgiveness: $330,328
Earned Revenues: $67,603
Total Expenses: $2,871,331

2021-2022 Income

Total Income: $1,921,678
Foundation and Community Grants: $376,274
Contributions: $367,012
Government Grants: $1,111,240
Earned Revenues: $67,152
Total Expenses: $2,529,137
Foundations

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Bothin Foundation
Burt Family Foundation
Common Counsel Foundation
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East Bay Community Foundation
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Hendrix Foundation
Hill-Snowdon Foundation
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Levis-Strauss Foundation
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Government Contracts

SF Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development
SF Dept. of Building Inspections
Housing and Community Development (Oakland)
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East Community Law Center
San Francisco Immigrant Legal & Education Network
San Francisco Rapid Response Network
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